

# The Kyogen Room

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## The Drunken Wife

(Inabado)

A man goes to Inaba Temple to pray for a new wife because his old one is a heavy drinker, but she finds out and stands in as the new wife.

### Cast of Characters

Man (Shite)  
Woman (Ado)

MAN: I am a resident of this neighborhood. My wife is a most incorrigible woman. She sleeps till long after dawn. She neither does her needlework, nor can she even manage to weave a single scrap of grasscloth. All of this I could put up with, but she nags at me so much, I hardly ever have a chance to get a single word in. Today, for some matter or other, she has gone to her parents' village. Thus I took this happy chance to send along after her a letter of divorce, and that has settled that. But since it is quite impossible for a man to handle a household alone for even the briefest span of time, and since I have heard that the Soul Healing Buddha of Inaba Temple has powers wondrous to behold, today I have decided to go there and pray that he provide me with a new wife. (*He sets out.*) Well, I must say, after having wanted to divorce her for such a long time, I feel I have been cured of some awful fatal disease. And I feel quite certain if I make my prayer with true sincerity of

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heart, I will surely be blessed with a truly fitting wife. Well, here I am already. First I will approach the altar. (*He goes to the entrance and strikes the gong.*) Ja-gan, ja-gan. (*He kneels to pray.*) The matter I have come about at this time is of no great import. As the wife I had before was a most incorrigible woman, and such a heavy drinker that she was of no use at all, I gave her a divorce. Oh, mighty Soul Healing Buddha! By your divine name I pray, do grant me a truly fitting wife. (*Folding his hands and bowing.*) In the azure-glowing name of the Soul Healing Buddha, in the azure-glowing name of the Soul Healing Buddha! This night I will spend secluded in this place. (*He goes to sleep.*)

WOMAN: I say, I say, how angry I am! Oh, how angry I am! My husband has taken a disliking to me, and while I was at my parents' village for a certain matter, he sent along after me a letter of divorce. Also I have heard he has gone to the Soul Healing Buddha of Inaba Temple to pray for a new wife and is now secluded there. I have never heard of anything so spiteful. I will go to him there and show him what is what. (*She sets out.*) Oh, how I do despise him for taking a disliking to me and leaving me like this. As soon as I find him, I'll show him what is what.

(*She arrives at the temple and sees her HUSBAND. Then she moves away and speaks in an aside.*) Well, there he is over there, completely sound asleep. What shall I do? Oh, I know. I will pretend I am the Soul Healing Buddha and give him a revelation. (*She moves close to her sleeping HUSBAND.*) Hey, you there, listen well! Take the one you find standing on the first step of the Western Gate to be your new wife. Ei! (*She exits.*)

MAN: Haaaaa. (*He opens his eyes.*) Oh, what a blessing! In the short space of a light doze, I have received a divine revelation. (*Folding his hands and bowing.*) Oh, I must say, what great favor I enjoy! The revelation said I am to take the one I find standing on the first step of the Western Gate to be my new wife. (*Folding his hands and bowing once more.*) I am

most grateful for this great blessing. Now I must hurry to the Western Gate.

*(The WOMAN enters with a brocade veil over her head and stands waiting at the Western Gate.)*

MAN: *(Getting to his feet and setting out.)* Truly, one must never for a moment doubt the benevolence of the Buddha. Never has there ever been such a wondrous miracle. *(Arriving.)* Well, here I am at the Western Gate already. *(Looking around.)* Now I wonder where the promised one might be. Well, I see standing over there, a woman with a brocade veil on her head. First I must speak to her. I-s-s. . . *(Laughing and speaking aside.)* I feel so very shy that I cannot say a single word. If there was only someone passing by, I could ask them to speak for me. No, this will never do, for they say the heart of a man must be sturdy as a temple pillar. I must pluck up my heart and speak to her myself. *(Facing WOMAN and bowing.)* I say, I say. Might you not be the one of my divine revelation?  
*(The WOMAN nods her head twice.)*

MAN: *(Nodding in unison with the WOMAN.)* Uh, huh! Uh, huh! *(Laughing and speaking aside.)* Oh, how happy, how happy I am! When I asked if she is the one of my divine revelation. . . *(Nodding.)* Uh, huh! Uh, huh! *(Laughing.)* I must say, this is a matter of great happiness! *(He goes to the WOMAN's side and begins leading her home.)* If that is the case, come, come. Let us be on our way. It may seem strange to speak of such a thing upon our first meeting, but as you will surely come to know of it, I will tell you of it now. The fact of the matter is, I was not always single.

The wife I had before was a most incorrigible woman. She would sleep till long after dawn, and she spent her time drinking tea and gossiping with the neighbors. All of this I could put up with, but listen to what else she did. Most unseemly for a woman, she was a heavy drinker, and got vicious when she was drunk. Thus I gave her a divorce. But as you were brought to me by the grace of the Soul Healing Buddha, let us remain together for five hundred eighty years and all eternity. Well, here we are at my house already. First come all the way inside.

*(Seating the WOMAN inside the house.)* Make yourself at home.

*(The MAN goes to get a cup and a pitcher of wine.)*

MAN: Well now, let us perform the wine cup ceremony. First remove your brocade veil.

*(The WOMAN shakes her head vigorously.)*

MAN: What's that? You say you will not? As you are so sweet and innocent, I can understand how shy you must feel. The fact of the matter is, I also feel most shy. As that is how you feel, stay just as you are. Now it is said, on occasions such as this, it is proper for the wife to drink and after serve the husband, so you must drink first.

*(The MAN gives the WOMAN the cup and pours just a little wine into it. The WOMAN thrusts the cup toward him demanding that he pour it full.)*

MAN: So you are a drinker too? *(Pouring the cup full.)* If that is the case, come, come. Have a full cup.

*(The WOMAN drinks the wine in a single gulp.)*

MAN: You are a drinker indeed. *(Reaching for the cup.)* Here, here. Now pass the cup to me.

*(The WOMAN jerks the cup out of the MAN's reach.)*

MAN: You want to drink still more?

*(The WOMAN thrusts the cup in the MAN's direction, beckoning for him to fill it again.)*

MAN: *(Filling the cup.)* Come, come. Have another cup. *(He moves away and speaks aside.)* What is this? My happiness is gone once more, for while I was able to put up with all the other bad habits of the wife I had before, it was my dislike of her heavy drinking that made me give her a divorce. And now this wife is an even heavier drinker than the other. Oh, I must say, what a vexing situation. *(He moves back to the WOMAN and reaches for the cup.)* Here, here. Let me have that cup. *(The WOMAN still refuses to give up the cup.)*

MAN: Haa! So you say you want to finish off the three cup ceremony.

*(She beckons for him to fill the cup once more.)*

MAN: Then come, come. Have another cup.

(*He pours just a little wine and she demands another full cup.*)

MAN: (*Pouring the cup full.*) In that case, drink as much as you want.

(*The WOMAN drinks her wine.*)

MAN: Well, I must say, what a hopeless fix I'm in. Here, I say! It is not seemly for a woman to drink so very much. (*Taking the cup away from the WOMAN by force.*) Let me have that cup.

(*The MAN pours himself a ceremonial sip, drinks it, and puts the cup and pitcher away.*)

MAN: Now let me see your face. Take off your brocade veil.

(*The WOMAN shakes her head vigorously.*)

MAN: How can you still refuse? Remove it quickly!

(*The WOMAN continues to shake her head.*)

MAN: (*Pulling the WOMAN's veil off and throwing it on the floor.*) What an uncomprehending woman! How long do you think you can keep your face covered?

(*The MAN moves around to look at the WOMAN's face. She glares and him so angrily that he is visibly shocked and tries to sneak away.*)

WOMAN: (*Stamping on the ground and shouting.*) Hey, you rascal!

(*The MAN drops to the floor moaning, and bows with his head to the ground.*)

WOMAN: So you say I am an incorrigible woman?! Do you really mean to give me a divorce?!

MAN: The fact of the matter is, it was from a desire to become a monk that I decided to become single again. And that is why I gave you a divorce.

WOMAN: In that case, for what purpose did you run off here to Inaba Temple?

MAN: Why, I came here to pray for your future health and happiness.

WOMAN: (*Stamping on the ground and shaking her head angrily.*) Eecceit! How angry I am, how angry I am! You cowardly rascal! Shall I wring your neck, or shall I bite your head off?!

MAN: Oh, forgive me!

WOMAN: (*Chasing him off.*) Oh, how angry, how angry I am!

MAN: Oh, forgive me, please forgive me!

WOMAN: How angry I am, how angry I am!

MAN: Oh, forgive me, please forgive me!

WOMAN: How angry I am, how angry I am!