



DEMONS. Very well, sir.

Come, you sinner! Hell is ever at hand, but one cannot say that about Heaven. Make haste. (*A demon takes hold of Kiyoyori, who resists violently.*)  
*Tai, yai!* You are different from most of the sinners of the earth. What was your profession on the terrestrial plane?

KIYOYORI. I was Kiyoyori, the famous bird-catcher.

FIRST DEMON. Bird-catcher? Taking life from morning till night! Your sins are unfathomably great. I must send you to Hell at once.

KIYOYORI. Oh, no! I am not such a bad sinner as you make me out to be. Please let me go to Heaven.

FIRST DEMON. No, that cannot be! But first I shall ask the King about your case.

Pardon, sir!

YAMA. Well, what is it?

FIRST DEMON. The sinner who has just arrived says that he was a very famous bird-catcher on the terrestrial plane. So I told him that having taken life day and night, he committed deep sin and certainly is doomed to Hell. But he protests and says that we misjudge him thoroughly. What shall we do about him?

YAMA. Call the sinner to me.

FIRST DEMON. Very well.

Come along this way. King Yama wishes to see you.

KIYOYORI. I am coming.

FIRST DEMON. Here is that sinner you sent for.

YAMA. Come, you sinner! You have been sinning all through your life snaring birds, and you are indeed a very wicked man. I am going to send you to Hell at once.

KIYOYORI. What you say about me is very true, but the birds I caught were used to feed the falcons. There was really no serious harm in that.

YAMA. A falcon is another kind of bird, isn't it?

KIYOYORI. Yes, indeed.

YAMA. Well, then! That puts the case on a slightly different basis. I do not consider that a serious offense.

KIYOYORI. I am glad you don't. It really was more the falcon's fault than mine. That being the case, I hope you will send me straight to Heaven.

YAMA. Since I, the mighty king of Hades, have not yet tasted a bird, catch one with your pole, and let me taste it right here. Then I will grant your wish without further ado.

KIYOYORI. Nothing could be simpler. I shall catch a few birds and present them to you.

CHORUS. To the bird-hunt, bird-hunt!

All at once from the southern paths of the mountain of death,

Many birds come flocking.

Swifter than a flash

The bird-catcher darts and

Snares many with his pole.

KIYOYORI. I will roast them for you. Here, they are ready. Please try one.

YAMA. Well, well! I will have a taste.

*Meri, meri! Yum, yum!*

Oh, this is uncommonly delicious.

KIYOYORI (*to the demons*). You would like to try them too?

DEMONS. Indeed, we shall!

*Meri, meri! Yum, yum!*

What marvelous flavor!

YAMA. I have never tasted anything so wonderful. Since you have given us such a treat, I am going to send you back to the terrestrial plane. There you may catch birds for another three years.

KIYOYORI. I am greatly obliged to you, I am sure.

## KYOGEN

CHORUS. For another three years, you shall snare birds!

Pheasant, goose, peacock, stork, and many others.

Thus commanded, Kiyoyori has turned his step once more to the world beneath. But Yama, loath to see him depart bestows on Kiyoyori a jewelled crown. Our bird-catcher marches lightly to the world below, there to begin his second span of life.

