

## TONIGHT'S PLAY

The kabuki theatre of Japan had its origin in certain dramatic dances performed by a woman named O-Kuni in Kyoto in 1603. It was, from the beginning, a theatre of the people, and in spite of repeated efforts of the authorities to repress it as a means of social criticism, the kabuki has remained to this day one of the most interesting art forms of Japan. Probably at only one point in its varied history was the existence of kabuki seriously threatened; this was during the period of about 1710-1760, the golden age of the puppet theatre in Kyoto and Osaka, when the puppets became more popular than the living actors. About 1780 the kabuki began to take over the plays, the music, and, in part, the style of acting of the puppet theatre, and shortly thereafter regained its popularity.

Tonight's play, *Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami* (a title that defies adequate translation into English), was written for the puppet theatre by three collaborating playwrights, Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Senryu. The play, first performed in 1746, was built around the character of an historical person, Sugawara Michizane, who was Minister of the Right in the Imperial Court at the end of the ninth century. He had performed great services for the state, but through the machinations of his enemy, the Minister of the Left, Fujiwara Tokihira (Shiheji), he was disgraced and exiled to the island of Kyushu, where he died in 903. After his death, Japan was visited by a series of natural disasters, and legends arose explaining these as the works of Sugawara's vengeful spirit, which at one time took the form of a thunderbolt and killed Tokihira and his followers. In order to placate Sugawara, he was deified as the god Tenjin, and a shrine honoring him was set up in Kyoto. The tradition grew that Tenjin was the god of scholarship and calligraphy, and he subsequently became the patron deity of school children. The playwrights also made use of a contemporary event: shortly before the play was written a woman in Osaka had given birth to triplets and received nation-wide congratulations. Under the names Sakuramaru (the cherry), Umeomaru (the plum), and Matsuomaru (the pine), these triplets appear in the play as retainers of Sugawara.

The name *kabuki* is written in Japanese with three characters meaning song, dance, and skill; and a kabuki performance draws its elements freely from various forms of the dance, the *noh* play, the music of the *samisen*, and several varieties of vocal music. There is no exact western counterpart of the kabuki, but in its general non-realistic effect, it is in some ways comparable to ballet or opera. It is important, in watching a kabuki play, not to regard it as a kind of exaggerated western realism, but rather to accept it on its own ground as being basically non-representational, non-realistic, and purely theatrical.

The most significant features of the kabuki are utilized in the present production. The *hanamichi*, a runway from the stage through the auditorium, is used for important entrances and exits and at times (as at the end of Act III) as an independent stage. The narration, which is an important choral element of the play in Japan, is here taken over by a speaking chorus, which comments on the action of the play, has its own feelings concerning the characters, and, under certain circumstances, speaks the lines of the actors. The music of the *samisen*, a three-stringed instrument, is essential to all kabuki performances; in this production the *koto*, a thirteen-stringed instrument, is also used. The so-called property-men appear in the play, but it should be remembered that in the Oriental theatre they are stagehands who are disregarded by the audience, and that never, under any circumstances, is attention directed toward them nor do they figure, as characters or individuals, in the action of the play. *Mie* are the static, non-realistic attitudes which actors assume at significant points in the play; the attitudes are emphasized by the beating of wooden clappers, *hyosbigi*, which also accompany the opening and closing of the curtain.

This is the first complete translation of the play and the first production in English. The translation of the play has been made possible by a grant of funds to the University by the Rockefeller Foundation for the purpose of translating for production Oriental plays previously unavailable in English.

The play is being presented as part of the celebration of International Theatre Month, which is sponsored by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Dr. Jaime Torres-Bodet, Director General of UNESCO, has said, "The theatre is a mirror in which human societies throughout the world can examine their own problems, passions, absurdities, aspirations and values; it is a teacher of the arts of thinking and living of unequalled persuasion, and if it sets itself to accuse or to instruct, it is more effective than many schools and much literature . . . transcending all barriers of language and frontier."

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Theatre Group is especially indebted to Toshio Sakaguchi, of the Hawaii Times, for innumerable service during the translation and production of the play, and to Kendo, Kiyose, and Masao Tsujita, who have provided the costumes and have assisted with technical aspects of the production.

The S. M. Iida Store has furnished many of the properties used; the Kawahara Nursery and Landscaping Co. has provided the dwarf trees used in Act IV. Photographs have been done by Benny's Studios.

The director has been greatly assisted by Kathleen Sullivan and Lucie Bentley.



THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
HAWAII  
THEATRE  
GROUP

# THE HOUSE OF SUGAWARA

MARCH 15, 16, 17 and  
20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 1951  
FARRINGTON HALL

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII THEATRE GROUP

presents

THE HOUSE OF SUGAWARA

(Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami)

by

TAKEDA IZUMO, MIYOSHI SHORAKU, and NAMIKI SENRYU

Translated into English by Albert Miyasato and Shigeru Yamaguchi,  
with the assistance of Toshio Sakaguchi

Revisions for production by Louis M. Steed and Earle Ernst

ACT I: THE BANKS OF THE KAMO RIVER

加茂堤	<i>Shiromata</i> .....David Eum	<i>Yae</i> .....Rose Kimura
	<i>Kuromata</i> .....Melvin Ho	<i>Prince Tokiyo</i> .....Shuichi Okino
	<i>Sakuramaru</i> .....Henry Nishimura	<i>Kiyotsura</i> .....Arthur Wong
	<i>Princess Kariya</i> .....Irene Yamato	

*Chorus:* Thomas Kimura, Florence Lum, Henry Mizuno, Shirley Nagao, William Paz, Leila Villada, Nancy Young.

ACT II: IMPARTING THE SECRET ART

筆法傳授	<i>Mareyo</i> .....Henry Nakasone	<i>Tonami</i> .....Shirley Nagao
	<i>Koshiji</i> .....Irma Kop	<i>Lord Sugawara</i> .....Dan Taba
	<i>Katsuno</i> .....Barbara Kashinoki	<i>Kiyotsura</i> .....Arthur Wong
	<i>Lady Sonoo</i> .....Maryanne Shimabukuro	<i>Chikara</i> .....Dick Nagata
	<i>Kan Shusai</i> .....Alvin Yanagisaku	<i>Umeomaru</i> .....Raymond Shigaki
	<i>Genzo</i> .....David Harada	

*Chorus:* William Boyd, Lorraine Chai, David Eum, Gordon Kushimaejo, Eleanor Martinez, Albert Miyasato, Ruth Smith, Michiko Yamato.

INTERMISSION

ACT III: THE TEMPLE OF THE ENLIGHTENED PATH

道明寺	<i>The Maids</i> .....Lorraine Chai, Ruth Smith, Nancy Young	<i>Haji-no-Hyoe</i> .....Ted Hirata
	<i>Lady Tatsuta</i> .....Leila Villada	<i>Lord Sugawara</i> .....Dan Taba
	<i>Princess Kariya</i> .....Irene Yamato	<i>Takumai</i> .....Gordon Kushimaejo
	<i>Sukune Taro</i> .....William Paz	<i>Yatoji</i> .....Henry Mizuno
	<i>Kakuju</i> .....Florence Lum	<i>Terukuni</i> .....Miyoshi Ikeda

*Chorus:* David Harada, Melvin Ho, Barbara Kashinoki, Shirley Nagao, Henry Nakasone, Maryanne Shimabukuro, Arthur Wong.

INTERMISSION

ACT IV: THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

賀の祝	<i>Shirodayu</i> .....Albert Miyasato	<i>Haru</i> .....Irma Kop
	<i>Yae</i> .....Rose Kimura	<i>Matsuomaru</i> .....Finny Tsui
	<i>Chiyo</i> .....Ethel Chung or Lorraine Chai	<i>Umeomaru</i> .....Raymond Shigaki
		<i>Sakuramaru</i> .....Henry Nishimura

*Chorus:* William Boyd, David Eum, Gordon Kushimaejo, Eleanor Martinez, Dick Nagata, Ruth Smith, Michiko Yamato.

ACT V: THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

寺小屋	<i>Dimwit</i> .....Ted Hirata	<i>Chiyo</i> .....Ethel Chung or Lorraine Chai
	<i>Kan Shusai</i> .....Alvin Yanagisaku	<i>Sansuke</i> .....Gordon Kushimaejo
	<i>Children</i> .....Peter Espiritu, Michio Yamato, George Watanabe	<i>Gemba</i> .....William Boyd
	<i>Tonami</i> .....Shirley Nagao	<i>Genzo</i> .....David Harada
	<i>Kotaro</i> .....Franklin Seki	<i>Matsuomaru</i> .....Finny Tsui
		<i>Lady Sonoo</i> .....Maryanne Shimabukuro

*Chorus:* Melvin Ho, Irma Kop, Henry Nakasone, Dan Taba, Leila Villada, Arthur Wong, Irene Yamato, Nancy Young.

Production designed and directed by EARLE ERNST

Lighting by ELBERT SMITH

Set construction supervised by EDWARD LANGHANS

Choreography by GERTRUDE TSUTSUMI

Samisen, Gertrude Tsutsumi; Koto, Grace Sera

PRODUCTION CHAIRMAN

Business Manager.....	IRENE YAMATO
Stage Manager.....	ARTHUR CALDEIRA
Lighting.....	MIYOSHI IKEDA
Costumes.....	ANN DAVIS
Properties.....	MILVERDE WOOLSEY-LEE
Make-Up.....	IRENE CASEY
Publicity.....	WILLIAM YAMAZAKI
Head Usher.....	ROBERT GRAY

PRODUCTION CREWS

SET CONSTRUCTION—Arthur Caldeira, Joseph Ezaki, Robert Gray, William McAuliffe, David Mahoney, Axel Petterson, Owen Sheets, Louis Steed, Hoover Tateishi, David Harada and the class in Dramatic Production.

COSTUMES—Loretta Fraine, Harriet Fujita, Janet Hirata, Jane Kam, Yoshie Odo, Marjorie Roberts, Patsy Shishido, Helen Tom, Agnes Tong, Mabel Yamamoto.

PROPERTIES—Juliet Cabral, Pearl Mori, Axel Petterson, Rosalie Roberts, Minnie Sato, Lillian Young.

MAKE-UP—Margaret De Velschow, Hazel Hill, Kay Linn, Barbara Nevis, Rosalie Roberts, Alice Simpson, Ellen Simpson, Kathleen Sullivan, Margery Tucker.

LIGHTING—Phyllis Shield, Hoover Tateishi.

PAINTING—Irene Casey, Ann Davis, Joan Garvie, Raymond Shigaki, Hoover Tateishi.

BUSINESS—Florence Amaki, Charles Char, Patricia Creel, Robert Gray, Barbara Kashinoki, Myrle Pung, Rosalie Roberts, Arthur Wong, Michiko Yamato, Nancy Young, Samuel Young.

PUBLICITY—Kay Akamine, Margaret De Velschow.

THEATRE GROUP COUNCIL

Arthur Caldeira	William Yamazaki	Robert Gray
Irene Casey	Rosalie Roberts	Miyoshi Ikeda
William Paz	Phyllis Stine	Samuel Young
Ann Davis	Milverde Woolsey-Lee	Irene Yamato

Joel Trapido and Earle Ernst (Directors)

All actors and production workers in the Theatre Group are registered students at the University of Hawaii.