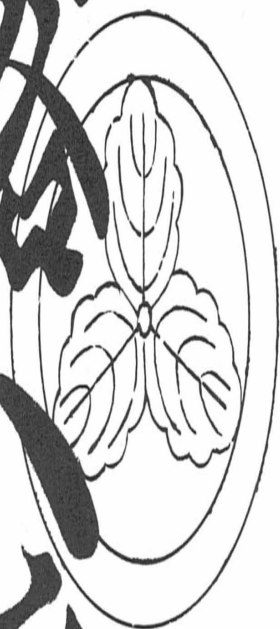


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## Libretti

Translations of four scenes from plays presented by The Awaji Puppet Theater

On their tour of the United States February 1–March 30, 1974

Under the auspices of The Performing Arts Program Of The Asia Society

1. Pilgrimage Song Scene from *KEISEI AWA NARUTO*  
*translated by Alfred H. Marks*
2. Suma No Ura Scene from *ICHI-NO-TANI FUTABA GUNKI*  
*translated by Shigeharu Takeda*
3. Tsubosaka Temple Scene from *THE MIRACLE OF TSUBOSAKA TEMPLE*  
*translated by Alfred H. Marks*
4. *EBISU DANCE*  
*translated by Alfred H. Marks*

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## KEISEI AWA NARUTO

*Awa no Jurobei is a ronin (masterless samurai) of Tokushima. In order to seek the treasure of his dead lord, he has moved to Naniwa and become a thief. His daughter, Otsuru, has been left with her grandmother. Years later a pilgrim girl comes to his hideout begging. It is Otsuru, who has journeyed all over searching for her parents. The mother, Oyumi, fearing that the child may suffer someday if her lawless parents are apprehended by the authorities, pretends not to know her, and weeping, she sends the child away. As Otsuru continues her journey, she is robbed and killed by a thief—her own father, who, not knowing the child is his own, commits this tragic deed in order to get the money she carries.*

*This play was first presented in Japan in 1768.*

## PILGRIMAGE SONG SCENE

from *Keisei Awa Naruto*

Narration

She has come far from home here to Mii Temple, in Ki, calling, "Give to a pilgrim," in her gentle country accent, a truly fetching pilgrim.

OYUMI "Here, something for you," the white-haired one said, holding out an offering on a tray.

OTSURU "Thank you very much," she said, in a way befitting a very pretty girl.

OYUMI "Your parents must be with you. Where are you from?" she asked.

OTSURU "I am from Tokushima, in Awa."

OYUMI "My, Tokushima, that makes me homesick. I was born in Tokushima. Did your father and your mother come with you on this pilgrimage?"

OTSURU "No, I am looking for my father and mother, and have made this trip to Saikoku alone."

Something in her words caught OYUMI, and she came closer and asked: "Why have you come to Saikoku to look for your father and mother, I wonder?"

OTSURU "I don't really know why. When I was three my father and mother left me with my grandmother and went somewhere, so grandmother took care of me. But then I decided I wanted to see my father and mother. So I have been walking everywhere inquiring."

OYUMI "Well, what are the names of your parents?"

OTSURU "My father's name is Awa no Jurobei, and my mother's name is Oyumi."

Oyumi was thunderstruck to hear this. Her father's name Jurobei, her mother's name Oyumi, brought up by her grandmother since her third year—the girl was, beyond a doubt, her daughter.

She looked at her, and as she looked she saw the baby face and the mole on the forehead she remembered. She was about to say, "Oh, my child, how I have missed you," but she hesitated.

"My you're so young to be traveling so far away from home, asking about so bravely. Your parents would certainly be proud to hear about it. They would be so happy they would leap—they would leap straight up for joy!

"In this sad world, where things never go as you wish, your parents must have had some terribly important reason to leave the child they would give all for and forsake their home. You must never, never hate your parents because they have been cruel."

OTSURU "No, no, I love my father and mother. And I would like to go on searching for them, but because I am traveling alone, none of the inns will let me in. I sleep in the fields, I sleep in the hills; but when I sleep by a house someone comes and hi-, hi-, hi-, hi-, hits me.

"These awful, and frightening things—if only my mother and father were with me, I wouldn't have to go through them. I wonder where they are and how they are. I want to see them! I want to see them! I want—" and with that she burst into tears.

The mother found watching more than she could bear. "Of course, how touching, how sad," she said, forgetting herself, embracing the girl, losing herself in grief. "Even though you are begging alone, if you have enough money, they will house you. This isn't much, but it will help. Use it for lodging on the way, and go right back home. Now, by all means, by all means, take care of yourself!"

And with that she handed her the money, but the girl refused it: "I'm very grateful, but I have plenty of money—what they call a *koban* of it. Now I must go. Thank you," she said, departing tearfully.

Oyumi pulled her back, forced the money on her and brushed the dust from her clothing. "Are you going already? I hate to see you go. Let me see your face again," she said, drawing her closer.

The more she looked, the more her heart filled and the sadder and more difficult it became to let her go. Though the girl did not know it, it was their blood relationship that held them.

Reluctant to leave, she kept looking back. "Where will I look? How will I look to find my father and mother? Please let me see them, Blessed Kannon—'Kokawa Temple where parental love is preached.'"<sup>1</sup>

Following and following that departing figure in tearful farewell, on tiptoe now: "My child, turn around once more, turn around once more. Otsuru! Otsuru!"

"Here she has come all this way, through all these hardships, crossing the sea and the mountains, my dear child, yearning, inquiring. And now, when she has somehow run into her mother, her mother doesn't even tell her who she is! What kind of mother is this, I ask?

"I must be half mad and half dead—that child with so much of life before her! Is she being put out to beg by her parents?" She sank down in a heap on the spot, almost dissolved in grief.

Then she rose and dried her tears: "I cannot give her up. If I let her go now, we will not meet again. Let what may happen, happen. If so, my husband will think of something. I don't think she has gone far. I must catch her and bring her back.

"I must," she said, and, longing, pursued her down the path where longing sealed their separation.

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<sup>1</sup>From the *Saikoku Thirty-three Temple Missal*.

## ICHI-NO-TANI FUTABA GUNKI

The play from which this scene is taken is a poignant war story based on the *Heike Monogatari* and the *Gen-Pei Seisui-ki*, which are perhaps the best-known war tales written in Japanese.

The action derives from the struggle between the Taira and Genji families representing the Heike and Minamoto clans, respectively. The Taira, under pressure from the Genji, leave Kyoto for Fukuhara, where they suffer a surprise attack by their enemies at nearby Ichi-no-tani. The Taira, badly mauled in battle, flee to their warships. Atsumori, a young Taira warrior, and last to escape from the battle, rides to the coast of Suma no Ura, where he catches sight of the warships. He rides into the sea, but then hears the voice of his Genji enemy, Kumagai Naozane, deriding him for fleeing. He returns to the shore and grapples with Kumagai. Kumagai is about to cut off his head, when he recognizes Atsumori as being the son of a former emperor. He takes pity on him and wishes to save his life. But the Genji soldiers taunt him and he pretends to kill Atsumori. Actually, he kills his own son and presents the severed head as proof of Atsumori's death.<sup>1</sup> Heartbroken by his own act and unable to confront his wife with this tragic deed, Kumagai retires to a Buddhist monastery to live in seclusion.

## SUMA-NO-URA SCENE

from *Ichi-No-Tani Futaba Gunki*

### Narration

The Lord Atsumori, having broken off contact with the enemy, came to the shore of Suma in the hope of reaching the Imperial ship in time, and telling his father of what had happened. He found no ship nearby and so he was compelled to spur his horse and ride into the sea. Just then Kumagai Jiro Naozane came galloping up on his horse, calling after him. Kumagai cried out, beckoning to Atsumori with his fan held high.

"Ho! I see you are a great general of the Heike. But you run away from your enemy, you coward! Come back and fight! I am Kumagai Jiro Naozane, a man from Musashi. Come back and face me. Hold on!"

There should be no time lost when one is challenged by an enemy and, thus, Atsumori returned, and Kumagai rode up to him, and, drawing swords, they fought. Rushing their horses at each other again and again, their weapons, glittering like lightning in the morning rays, were brandished over their heads, and they clashed fiercely. Standing on their stirrups, they attacked each other, the sides of their helmets flapping like the wings of butterflies. Now rushing, now retiring, the hoofs of the horses crashed on the beach. As often as the sea winds of Suma-No-Ura blew, the sleeves of their armor fluttered. As swiftly as the flight of beach plovers into the air at ebb tide, drawing close to and parting from each other, over and over again, they used every skill at their command. There seemed no end to it. Then suddenly Atsumori threw his sword away in order to wrestle with his enemy.

Kumagai, too, flung away his weapon and dashed at Atsumori. The two began to grapple on horseback, shouting as they fought. Then both of them lost their stirrups

<sup>1</sup>To kill the heir of an emperor is repugnant to the samurai mind.

and fell down heavily between the horses. In an instant, Kumagai had pinned his rival under his knees.

"Now, your fate has been sealed. Tell me your name and honor me with the fame of having brought you down. If you have anything that you regret leaving undone in this life," said Kumagai compassionately, "I'll see to it. SPEAK!"

Atsumori replied in a calm voice, "Ah, what more could I want? Though my enemy, you are a brave, gallant soldier. To be killed by such a kind-hearted warrior as you is an honor. On the battlefield, I have thought neither of my home nor of myself, for I have realized that I would be killed sooner or later; I have nothing to regret. Yet, how can I forget my parents' love? If they hear that I have been killed, they will be greatly grieved. And so to console them in this slight way, pray send my body to them after you kill me. I myself am the youngest son of the State Councillor Tsunemori, Atsumori by name."

Kumagai took pity on the youth who had thus introduced himself. Strong as he was, he shed tears because he was a human being, not wood or stone. As Kumagai helped Atsumori up and brushed the dust off his armor, he thought to himself that even if he set this honorable man free, victory would not be lost.

He said, "Just at this moment, there is no one else near. Flee from here. Now, be quick, quick!"

He was on the point of leaving him when a troop of soldiers came down from the mountains behind, calling and jeering, "Kumagai! You've pinned down a general of the Heike, and now will you let him go? You double-dealing traitor! Let neither of them escape."

Kumagai was startled and wondered in silence what to do. Lord Atsumori said calmly, "The fate of the Heike cannot be escaped. I would rather be killed by you than

be spared now only to be captured and put to a shameful death by menials and churls later."

He turned to the west, placed his hands together in prayer, and closed his eyes, saying, "Pray clear yourself of suspicion by killing me yourself." He waited.

Touched, Kumagai came behind him and chanting the Buddha's name to himself, raised his blade above his head, "Ah! Divine sword of Buddha. Let me . . ."

Though he raised his sword, the strength went out of his hands. He could not strike off the head of this beautifully clad young noble. He exclaimed, "What a wretched and miserable thing to do!" His heart broken, he lost his nerve. While Kumagai, lamenting, was unable to let the blade fall, Atsumori urged him, "Do not hold back, Kumagai. Quick, cut off my head." Kumagai, his eyes blurred with tears, lost heart to see Atsumori's face turned up to him.

He stood up and prayed to himself, "There is nothing else to be done. Whether the old die before the young, or the young precede the old, it comes to the same salvation in Buddha. In the other world we shall share the same lotus leaf and fate. Save us, merciful Buddha! Namu, Amida Butsu!"

Down fell the head in front of the body. Fearing others would think it disgraceful for him to remain thus, Kumagai, holding the head in his arms, shouted at the top of his faltering voice, "Kumagai Jiro Naozane has just captured and killed young Lord Atsumori, the pride of the Heike."

Then, loosing a cloth from his armor, he wrapped Atsumori's body in it and fastened it to the saddle of the horse. And with Atsumori's head in his left hand, reins in his right, he went off, tears in his eyes, leading his horse as sad as the Boy Shiyonoku, who had escorted Prince Siddhartha to Mt. Dandoku only to part from him.



## THE MIRACLE OF TSUBOSAKA TEMPLE

*Toyozawa Dampei II and wife, Chiga, collaborated in adapting The Miracle of Tsubosaka Temple from an old tale, author unknown. Dampei wrote the music. The play was first presented in October of 1880 and has achieved great popularity.*

*Countless stories are told of the Kannon of western Japan's Thirty-three Temple pilgrimage. This one-act play is based on the story of the couple that experienced the good fortune of having the husband's sight restored by a miracle at the sixth temple, at Tsubosaka. Its first scene is set at the couple's house and its last at the temple.*

*The blind Sawaichi, who lived in Tosa, was a samisen and koto teacher. His wife, Osato, took in washing and helped them eke out a bare subsistence. When they had been married three years, however, Sawaichi began to get suspicious when he found his wife leaving the house every morning at 4 a.m. Osato was shocked to hear of his doubts and confessed to him that she was doing nothing more than going out to pray earnestly to Kannon in determined efforts to have her husband's sight restored.*

*Sawaichi, penitent over the blind sense of inferiority that had led him to doubt his faithful wife, made, at her request, a pilgrimage to Tsubosaka temple.*

*Sawaichi planned to fast there for three days, but when he was left alone he lost hope and threw himself into the*

*deep ravine beside the temple. When Osato returned to the mountain and could not find her husband, she searched all about in great anxiety, and when she found the cane he had left behind, followed her husband's example by leaping into the valley. Then, however, Kannon appeared and revealed that, as reward for the wife's steadfastness and her daily pieties, their lives were being extended. Not only that, but Sawaichi's sight, too, was restored, and he could see the world in all its divine light.*

*The happy couple danced the manzai as they started a pilgrimage of gratitude and praise.*

### TSUBOSAKA TEMPLE SCENE

*from The Miracle of Tsubosaka*

#### Narration

Of the famous and much-visited Kannon of Tsubosaka, it is said that when the 50th Emperor, Kammu, reigning in Nara, suffered from a terrible eye disease, the abbot of the temple, Doki, held a service of 107 days and His Majesty was immediately cured. It is now, as everyone knows, the sixth temple of Saikoku's famous circuit of thirty-three—a truly blessed holy place.

OSATO "Oh, oh, Sawaichi, we have come to Kannon."

SAWAICHI "Yes, yes, is this Kannon already? Well, well, Amen, Amen. Praise Amida Buddha. Praise Amida Buddha. Praise Amida Buddha. Praise Amida Buddha."

OSATO "And now, my dear husband, let us devote ourselves to prayers here all night." And then they sang, husband and wife together, in penetrating tones: "The

rocks rose, the water welled and the sands of Tsu-  
bosaka . . .”<sup>1</sup>

SAWAICHI “Listen, Osato, I came here at your urging, even though I didn’t think it would help; but now that we have come here I don’t feel as if my eyes are going to get better very soon.”

OSATO “Oh, you are impossible! You keep saying that, over and over. But before I go, let me warn you, this mountain road is very treacherous, particularly up the slope. There to the right is a valley I don’t know how deep. So be sure not to move from this spot.”

SAWAICHI “Ha! Where would I go? Beginning tonight I’m tied up with Kannon.”

OSATO “Ha, ha, ha.”

Laughing, the wife left him, but not with a light heart, and not knowing that this parting would be like the dew’s melting, eternal. As she hurried off, Sawaichi, alone, found his pent-up feelings more than he could bear and suddenly threw himself down and wept.

SAWAICHI “How I love you, my dear wife. You have cared for me these years and borne poverty, too, without complaint. Never once have you left me, you have indulged me, who cannot even see you, with so much kindness. And yet, ignorant of this, how I doubted you! Please forgive me! Please forgive me!

“Now she said that up the hill and to the right there is a valley no one knows how deep—the ideal place to do away with myself. Since this is holy ground, perhaps I shall be spared in the next life. Fortunately it is late now, so while nobody is around . . .

“Very well then! Very well then,” he said rising, calming his tortured heart. He walked upward four or five steps. The sound of the late bell rang out.

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<sup>1</sup>The first words of the chant recited at Tsu-bosaka by pilgrims. From the *Saikoku Thirty-three Temple Missal*.

SAWAICHI “Now I must hurry and do it.” He groped his blind way with his staff and finally scrambled up a rock beside the path, from which he heard the roar of the turbulent current of the valley stream. “Buddha is calling,” he thought, and stabbed his cane into the ground beside him.

“Praise Amida Buddha,” he said and then hurled himself to where his body came to a sad end.

Knowing nothing of all this, his wife came back along the way. Gasping, uneasy, she took the mountain road she knew so well and yet kept slipping and falling as she made her way up the slope.

OSATO “Oh, my! I don’t see my husband! Sawaichi! Sawaichi! Sawaichi, where are you? Sawaichi, where are you?” she called. She ran about calling, but she received no reply and saw no human form. She ran frantically about, here and there. “Sawaichi, where are you? Sawaichi, where are you?” she called everywhere. Then, where the moonlight came through the trees, she saw something standing. When she ran to it, she saw the cane she knew.

Shocked, she looked far down into the valley. In the glittering moonlight she discerned her husband’s corpse. “Oh, my, what shall I do? How awful!” she said.

Her agony then was like that of one possessed. She would fly, but she had no wings. She would call, she would shout, but there would be none to answer but the echoing forest. OSATO “Oh! My husband, I don’t understand you! I don’t understand you at all! All the pains of all these years I didn’t mind; I bore them. I only, singlemindedly, prayed to Kannon. ‘Please help him to see again soon! Help him, please help him,’ I prayed without ceasing. And now today you do this, and what am I going to do without you? What will I do? What can I do? What, what, what, what can I do? If I had thought you would do this, I would never have brought you here. Please forgive me. Please forgive me. Please forgive me!

"Look at me. Is there anything so sad as I? How sad to be human and not to know the moment one is parting from a mate one swore to love through two existences. Was this sadness the result of something in a former life? Was it sin? Oh, how terrible! Oh, how terrible! This blind man, who could not see the world, now after death journeying from dark to dark—who is there to guide him? Who will see when he goes astray? The poor thing," she sobbed, writhing. Sobbing, entreating, she shed tears enough to swell the waters of Tsubosaka's valley.

OSATO "I shall not mourn. I shall not grieve. I shall see it as something decided in an earlier life—my death's journey with my husband. I must quickly leave this world and deliver this cane he has left behind. Please tell me how to go! Praise Amida Buddha! Praise Amida Buddha!" Repeating this, she fell into the valley, this wife so steadfast, so tragic in her end.

It was the middle of the second month. Shortly before dawn, as from the clouds, a divine light flashed forth, blended with the sound of music. In it, in the guise of a noblewoman, appeared Kannon. Her voice was soft and refined.

KANNON "Hear me, Sawaichi. Because of your karma you have been blind in this life. Not only that but both you and your wife were destined to die today. Thanks to your wife's fidelity and the pieties she has practiced daily, I shall extend your life. From now on you must be even more devout and fervent in your devotions, and visit the thirty-three temples to show appreciation for the grace of Buddha. Hear my words, Osato, Osato, Sawaichi, Sawaichi," she proclaimed, and disappeared.

The morning bell echoed all about in the valley, dim beneath the dawning sky. The two awakened suddenly, not knowing whether they were still dreaming.

OSATO "Oh, that is my dear Sawaichi. But, my husband, you can see!"

SAWAICHI "Oh? Yes, really; I can really see. I can see. I can see. I can see. I can see, see, see. I can see. Kannon has done it. It is thanks to her! And yet, come to think of it, who are you?"

OSATO "Who am I? Who do you think? I am your wife. That's who I am."

SAWAICHI "Oh? Are you my wife? Excuse me. Pleased to meet you. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, how happy I am! And yet, strangely enough, I am certain I fell into this valley. I thought I was dead, and while I was lost to this world, Kannon came. She told me all about my earlier lives."

OSATO "Why, I too, came after you and, I am sure, jumped into this valley, and yet I don't have a single scratch. And then, too, your eyes are better. Is it maybe only a dream?"

SAWAICHI "Do you know? That must have been Kannon just now who said, 'Sawaichi, Sawaichi,' calling me and bringing me back to life. Ha, ha, ha, ha, how grateful I am. How thankful!

"Now, as our devout pilgrimage begins with—O joy of joys—worship of the sun's light, I feel as if my life is starting over. Is this what Kannon has done for us? Eyes that could not see now are clear. The blessed years seem to be given shining back to me. A husband and wife so close in love have been brought back to life. How wonderful it is! Today, happily, as I put away my cane, I pray to the rising sun, and give thanks to the gods and Buddha. It was Kannon who showed me all—Kannon who showed us all, and through whose great vow, 'The rocks rose, the waters welled, and the sands of Tsubosaka's basin became the Pure Land.'<sup>2</sup> How great this manifestation of the Law!"

<sup>2</sup>The full prayer as given in the *Saikoku Thirty-three Temple Missal*.



## EBISU DANCE

## EBISU DANCE

### Narration

From the northwest enters the Lord Ebisu. Fishing pole over his shoulder, he comes in, tramp, tramp, tramp, and says:

EBISU "The greatest god of good luck in the three kingdoms has arrived."

HEADMAN "Well! Well! How nice of you to pay us a visit. Right this way."

EBISU "Purify the house. Offer the god some sake."

HEADMAN "Yes, sir. Yes. Yes. At your service."

EBISU "Hurry, hurry, bring it!"

*After three rounds of sake, EBISU gets ready to dance.*

Now if you want to know the happy date Ebisu was born, it was in the great year 1490, January 3rd, fully the hour of the tiger, the hour of the hare not yet in sight, in Shinano in Shinshu, in the shrine of Takei.

Healthy and robust he came into this world, into this world. They brought hot water from the kitchen and lukewarm from Atsuta, and cooled the hot with lukewarm to make his first bath water.

"The happy god, Lord Ebisu Saburozaemon no Jo, of Nishinomiya, brings luck to all virtuous men and looks after fortune"—say that and deck your storehouses and have your congregations come to flute and boom of bass drum.

Drawn by maidens' bell-like voices, Ebisu comes floating, floating, floating. His black high hat and fishing suit are all pressed and trim, and he moves about in braided sandals—"Shanzuri-shan, shanzuri-shan, shan."

When he runs into a storehouse and casts his stare about its four corners, suddenly it bulges, flowing to the brim—good things from the sea, good things from the hills.

*The monk Dokunbo, thought to be the father of the Awaji Puppet Theater, was born in Nishinomiya, in Settsu, in the Tensho era, four hundred years ago. As a Shinto priest, he used puppets to propitiate the gods, and thanks to his efforts, it is said, the seas were calm and the fish abundant—a story probably related to beliefs of the Ebisu Shrine at Nishinomiya, where Ebisu is the object of worship.*

*The fishing villages of Awaji present puppet plays on the beaches and in the shrines during their fishing festivals. Among these performances, the "Ebisu Dance" always has a place. Its concluding lines go: "On the sea the catch is heavy, on the slopes the harvest great. How joyful is that reign everlasting!" It petitions for fine catches and safe voyages, helping us to see in puppets meanings that go deeper than the aesthetic.*

"Let me have them, these good things," he says, pulling them to him; "but first, let's have a drink!

"Now, let's have a drink to peace in the world!

"And now, let's have a drink to Japanese-American friendship!

"When I, Ebisu, am drunk with sake, in my cups I weave to the right, right, right; and now I weave to the left, left, left. Leaning, leaning, leaning, just about to fall.

"I have brought luck to this place."

Now he is taking a boat ride. Rowing out into the offing, into the offing he goes, to Suma or to Suzaki as waves come in or waves go out, and beach plovers call back and forth: "Cheery, cheery, cheerily," rowing where leaves fall.

Ebisu has caught a bream! He dances; he dances. On the sea the catch is heavy, on the slopes the harvest great. Business booms. How joyful is that reign everlasting!

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