

*Sections highlighted in represent variations in phrasing according to different schools.

1. The King Enters His Palace with His Imperial Ministers

It is the time of the reign of King Mu of Zhou dynasty in ancient China. The king arrives at his palace. There, many local lords, including imperial ministers and high-ranking officials, congratulate His Majesty on his reign.

[*Kyogen-Kuchiake*]

Ai (a court official in this piece) appears on the stage and leads in to the beginning of the story.

Court Official

I am an official in the service of King Mu of the Zhou dynasty. My lord is a wise and enlightened king who well governs the county in stability and in peace, and thus has been realized his peaceful reign over the realm. In addition, such a man is His Majesty that he made use of eight horses to travel to the Vulture Peak in India in order to receive, directly from Shakyamuni Buddha, two lines of verse from the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara Chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Indeed, in all matters, he follows his heart. Today he honors this palace with a visit. Here he will amuse himself with many enjoyable pastimes. Everyone, come to the palace. Prepare yourselves and come to the palace.

[The King and His Ministers Enter the Stage]

「帝王、大臣が舞台に入る」

官人 私は周の穆王にお仕えする官人でございます。我が君は、賢明な王であらせられ、治安も良く平和で、天下泰平の御代を実現されています。そのうえ、八匹の馬を召されて、天竺の靈鷲山までおいでになり、釈尊より直に法華経普門本品の二句の偈を授かったほどのお方なのです。何事もお心のままになさいます。今日はこの御殿に御幸なされ、いろいろお楽しみあそばすとのことですので、皆、参内なされよ、心得て来られよ。

官人 私は周の穆王にお仕えする官人でございます。我が君は、賢明な王であらせられ、

はじめに、間狂言（アイ…「西王母」では官人）が登場して、物語のはじまりを導く。

【狂言口開】
きょうげんくちあけ

古代中国、穆王の時代。帝王が宮殿に入ると、大臣高官はじめ諸侯が、帝王の御代を祝福する。

一 帝王、大臣を伴い宮殿に入る

* は流儀によって異なる場合を示す。

西王母
せいおうぼ

After Ai leaves, the king and his ministers come onto the stage, as if they are entering the palace.

King Truly it is a blessing, is it not, that since the ancient times of the Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors* down until the present day, there has never been a sovereign as sagacious and virtuous as I?

Group Reciters / Ministers

Indeed, Your Highness' august dignity shines forth as bright as the sun.

Ministers / King

With a mind as vast as the ocean,

Reciters / Ministers

The rich and plentiful blessings you bestow

King Illuminate the heavens and

King / Ministers / King and Ministers

and fill the earth.

Reciters Around the polar star, around the polar star, turn all of the other stars in the sky. Similarly, it goes without saying that all of the officials and ministers serving at the imperial court, as well as the local lords who reign over hundreds and thousands of households, line up with their banners, lay their spears on the ground, and show allegiance to His Majesty. They have gathered together in swarms before the four gates of the palace.

The palace is covered in gold, silver, and various gems that glitter brilliantly. They dazzle us so much, we cannot say if it is day or night. Were this palace to be compared with something, we suppose it would be the Castle of Joyful Sight in the heavens above.

アイが退いた後、ワキの帝王、ワキツレの大臣が、宮殿に入ってくる態で、舞台に入ってくる。

帝王 実にありがたいことだ、太古の三皇五帝※1の昔から今の御代に至るまで、これほど聖徳の高い天子はいない。

地／大臣 ご威光は日光のように輝き、

大臣／帝王 そのお心は海のように広く、

地／大臣 豊かで広々とした恵みは、

帝王 天に輝き

帝王／大臣／
帝王と大臣 地に満ちている。

地 北極星に向かって、北極星に向かって、空一面の星が廻るように、朝廷に仕えるす

べての大臣、官吏はいうまでもなく、千戸、万戸を領する諸侯が旗をなびかせ、銚を横たえて王に恭順し、四方の門のあたりに群がり、集まっている。

金銀珠玉で造られた宮殿は燦然と輝き、眩いばかりで、昼夜の区別もないほどである。これをたとえれば、かの天上の喜見城だろうか。そのように偲ばれる、いかに

This is how it looks to us, a most pleasing and enjoyable place, a most pleasing and enjoyable place.

* Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors: Rulers in ancient Chinese mythology. According to one legend, the Three Sovereigns are Fuxi, Nuwa and Shennong, while another legend says that the Three Sovereigns are Heavenly Sovereign, Earthly Sovereign, and Peaceful Sovereign (Human Sovereign). The Five Emperors are often listed as the Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu; Emperor Ku; Emperor Yao; Emperor Shun; and Emperor Yu.

2. A Young Woman Appears in the Palace

There appears at the palace a young lady holding a branch of a peach tree (later revealed to be the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu (Seiōbo)** in Japanese).

** The Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu (Seiōbo): A female Daoist goddess, worshiped in ancient China. She appears in the *Liezi*; the Tale of King Mu, Son of Heaven; the Chronicle of Mountains and Seas; and in many other classical accounts of legends describing mythological deities and Daoist sages.

Young Lady and Another Lady / Young Lady

Although the peach and plum trees do not speak, people are enticed by the beauty of their flowers and naturally gather beneath their branches. So is it also with the imperial capital, for whether rich or poor, the people are drawn here by the august virtue of His Majesty and have gathered in droves, filling every corner of the city.

Young Lady

How wonderful! Knowing the four seasons, one by one the trees and the plants put forth their beautiful flowers,

Young Lady and Another Lady / Young Lady

And all of their hues and fragrances manifest the Thusness of Buddha's teaching. Especially now, it seems that the time has

も楽しい有様である、いかにも楽しい有様である。

※1 三皇五帝…古代中国の天子を表す。諸説あるが、三皇には「伏羲、女媧、神農」「天皇、地皇、泰皇（人皇）」などが当てられ、五帝には「黄帝、顓頊、嚳、堯、舜、禹」などが当てられる。

二 若い女が、宮殿に現れる

桃の枝を持った若い女（実は西王母※2）が、桃の枝を持って、宮殿に現れる。

※2 西王母…古代中国で信仰を集めたという仙女。「列子」「穆天子伝」「山海経」ほか数々の神仙伝説を取り上げた書物に伝わる。

若い女ともう一人の女／若い女
桃や李は物も言わないけれど、ただその花の美しさに誘われて、人は自然と樹下に集まるといふ。この都もまた、君の徳を慕い、貴賤を問わず群れ集うので、隙間もないほどだよ。

若い女
ああ面白い、四季折々に草木は時を心得て、美しい花を咲かせ、

若い女ともう一人の女／若い女
そのすべてが、仏の教えの真如を示す色、香りを現すよ。殊に今は、妙なる法華経の有難い教えの行き渡る時が満ちたとみえて、三千年に一度咲くという仙境の桃の

come when the blessed teaching of the wondrous Lotus Sutra will be extensively disseminated. The peaches in the sacred hermitage that bloom only once in three thousand years know that this auspicious moment has come, and they have started to bloom, like a decorative comb adorning the hair of spring.

Let's offer these auspicious peach blossoms to His Majesty. Let's offer these auspicious peach blossoms to His Majesty.

His Majesty's mind is so vast that it extends to every corner of the realm, just as the Buddha's teaching spreads for thousands of miles to the distant edge of the world and enables living beings to attain the Way of clear enlightenment. His Majesty is a sovereign of elevated wisdom and virtue, just like the vast, great teaching preached by Shakyamuni Buddha at the Vulture Peak, and therefore, everyone gladly and willingly follows him, everyone gladly and willingly follows him.

3. Young Woman Offers the Branch of Peach Blossoms to the King

The young lady offers to the king the branch of peach blossoms from the tree that blooms only once in three thousand years in the hermitage.

Young Lady

There is something that I would humbly like to tell Your Majesty.

King

You have something to tell me. Tell me who you are. /Who on earth are you?

Young Lady

This is a branch of blossoms from a peach tree that blooms and bears fruit only once in three thousand years. Thanks to the magnificent dignity of Your Majesty, it blooms now. Therefore I have come to offer these peach blossoms to you.

花も、めでたい時機を知って、春の簪かんざし（髮挿かんざし）にと咲き出して来たよ。

さあ、めでたい桃をわが君に捧げよう、さあ、めでたい桃をわが君に捧げよう。

天子の御心はあまねく隙間なく広がって、まるで仏法が遠く千里の道の外までも弘まり、衆生が明らかな悟りの道に至れるようになったのと同じである。あの霊鷲山上で釈迦如来が説法された広大な教えのように、天子は聖徳の高い君であるから、皆が喜び勇んで、つき従うのだよ、皆が喜び勇んで、つき従うのだよ。

三 若い女は桃の枝を帝王に献上する

若い女は、三千年に一度咲くという仙界の桃の花が開いた枝を、帝王に献上した。

若い女 奏上いたしたいことがございます。

帝王

奏上したいとは、何者であるか。／いつたい、何者だ。

若い女 これは三千年に一度花が咲き、実がる桃の花でございます。今、この御代で花が咲いたのは、ひとえに君の御威徳／御威光によるものですから、こうして献上させていただきます。

King How mysterious. [A few schools include this phrase] You said it blooms once in three thousand years. Do you mean that this branch is from the legendary peach tree growing in the garden of Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West?

Young Lady Yes, but, well ... I, I cannot tell you what kind of flower this is just yet.

King Oh, I see. The reason must be that this is “the silent flower.” That is a famous flower, indeed.

Young Lady “In silence, do the peaches and plums

King Pass through

Young Lady Many springtimes.” Just as this poem says, the peach tree did not bloom for many years, however,

King / Young Lady / King and Young Lady this spring,

Reciters “This is the year I encounter the spring, / When blossoms are put forth / By the peach that bears fruit / Only once in three thousand years.” Just as depicted in this old poem, thanks to Your Majesty’s generous blessings, which cover every quarter of your realm, the peach tree has blossomed for the first time in the last three thousand years. These auspicious peach blossoms signal the beginning of a thousand generations of the flourishing of this country.

帝王 これは不思議なことだ。「一部流儀にあり」そもそも三千年に一度花咲くとは、伝え聞いた西王母の園の桃であろうか。

若い女 はい。あ、いえいえ、何の花であるとも今は物を言いますまい……。

帝王 ああ、だからこそだ。「物言わぬ花」とは、それこそ有名な花。

若い女 「桃李は物を言わず、

帝王 幾年かの春を

若い女 送り迎えた」と詩に詠まれたように、長らく花も咲かず過ごしてきたけれど、

帝王 / 若い女 この春、

地 「三千年みちとせになるちよう桃の今年より、花咲く春に逢ひにけるかな（三千年に一度実がで
きるという桃が、今年花開く春に廻りあったよ）」という古歌のように、三千年目に花が咲
いたのは、ただただ、君の四方に広がる厚い恵みのおかげである。この国土が千代
に栄える始まりに、こうしてめでたい桃の花が咲いたのだよ。

4. Young Lady Reveals Her Identity and Rises to the Heavens

The king is surprised to be meeting a celestial maiden, but the young lady informs him that she is actually a transformation of Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West. She then promises that she will return in her true form and give the king some peaches, and flies up to heavens.

Reciters How mysterious. How mysterious. [A few schools include this phrase] What a surprise to meet with a celestial maiden. What a great mystery this is.

Young Lady

Please do not doubt what I have said. The vast blessings of Your Majesty have reached even to the heavens, where the moon shines. I am so grateful for and attracted by your virtue that I have come here.

Reciters I am not from the transient world of human beings,

Young Lady

but from the heavens above.

Reciters Spending my days in pleasant amusements, no matter how many years have passed, my long life is never depleted and I never age. I am a transformation of Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West. I will make a brief return to my home and return to you in my real form as a goddess, bearing an offering of some of my peaches. So saying, the young lady ascends in the sky. She ascends in the sky and returns to the heavens.

四 若い女、正体を明かして天に上がる

帝王が、天女かと驚いていると、若い女は、西王母の分身であると告げ、改めて真の姿となって、桃の実を捧げようと約束し、天へ上がる。

地 まったく不思議なことだ。まったく不思議なことだ。「一部流儀にあり」天女の姿を目の前に見るとは、まことに不思議なことだよ。

若い女 決してお疑いにならないように。わが君の広い御恵みが、月の照る天上界へまで行き届き、その有難さに引かれてこうしてやってきたのだ。

地 移ろいやすい人間界の者ではなく、

若い女 この私は、天上界の者。

地 楽しみの中に月日を送り、どんなに年月がたつても、寿命は尽きず、老幼の区別もない。私こそ実は、西王母の分身なのだ。いったん帰って、真の天女の姿を現して桃の実を捧げよう、そう言って女は天に上がっていった、天に上がってしまわれたのであった。

[Interlude]

5. King Holds a Music Party and Waits for Xiwangmu

The court official appears on the stage and explains that Xiwangmu has offered a branch of peach flowers to the king. Then, he recounts the story associated with the peach grove in the garden of Xiwangmu. He then calls out for divine birds and court musicians to come to the palace as the king is hosting a party with music while he waits for her to bring him some of her peaches.

6. Xiwangmu Appears, Offers the King Her Peaches, and Dances

While court music plays, Xiwangmu appears in her true form, along with her attendant who is carrying some peaches. After offering the peaches to the king, she performs a dance. She then rides the spring wind and ascends to the heavens, vanishing from sight.

King, Ministers / King

How mysterious. The Queen Mother of the West pays us a visit, appearing in her true form. [Some schools include this phrase]
The court music resonates high and low,

Ministers / King

The court music resonates high and low,

King, Ministers / King

its sounds harmonizing to become beautiful music. It resonates clearly into the sky. Winds, please make sure that the pathway traveled by the celestial maiden to earth is clear and that no clouds cover her figure. Winds, make sure that no clouds cover her figure.

「中入り」

五 帝王は管絃の催しを開かせ、西王母を待つ

官人が登場し、西王母が桃の花を王に捧げたことを述べる。次いで、西王母の園の桃にまつわる話を紹介する。そして、西王母が桃の実を持ってくるのを待つ間に、帝王が管絃の催しを開くので、霊鳥、管絃の役者たちに、参内するようにと触れて回る。

六 西王母が現れ、桃の実を帝王に献上し、舞を舞う

管絃の響くなか、真の姿となった西王母が、桃の実を持った従者とともに現れる。西王母は、帝王に桃の実を献上した後、舞を舞い、春風に乗って天上へ消えていく。

帝王、大臣
/ 帝王

これは不思議なことだ。あの西王母が真の姿をお見せになったのであろうか。「一部流儀にあり」管絃の音が、高くも低くも響き、

大臣 / 帝王

管絃の音が、高くも低くも響き、

帝王、大臣
/ 帝王

美しく整えられた音楽となって奏せられ、その音色は空に澄み渡って聞こえる。ど

[Sagariha]

The entrance music is performed by a Japanese flute, small and large hand drums, and a drum. Xiwangmu's attendant enters the stage to this music, and Xiwangmu also appears on the gangway bridge.

Reciters How interesting. How interesting. Since the queen governing the heavenly realm of Daoist sages is paying us a visit, peacocks, phoenixes, Kalavinkas and other sacred, divine birds are flying around, dancing and singing with exquisite voices. What a spectacular sight to behold. Their wings look like the robes of celestial maidens, look like the robes of celestial maidens.

Xiwangmu

I will offer you many gifts.

Reciters

I will offer you many gifts and so saying, among all of the items she offers the most outstanding is herself, the beautiful Queen Mother of the West. Her beauty illuminates the large garden of the palace. She wears an embroidered scarlet robe,

Xiwangmu

a sword hanging at her waist,

Reciters

a sword hanging at her waist, and her head adorned with a crown decorated with hawk feathers. From her attendant she receives a jade plate piled high with peaches,

うか空吹く風よ、天女の天降る雲路に、雲がかかって天女の姿が隠れないように、気をつけよ、雲がかかって天女の姿が隠れないように、気をつけよ。

〔下羽〕

笛、小鼓、大鼓、太鼓で奏される登場楽。この囃子に乗り、侍女が舞台に入り西王母も橋掛かりに姿を見せる。

地 ああ面白い、面白い。このような天上仙界を治める王である西王母が、来臨なさる

ので、孔雀、鳳凰、迦陵頻伽といった、数々の霊鳥が飛び廻り、麗しい声々で鳴きながら舞う様子は、まことに面白い、鳥の翼はまるで天空の衣のようだ、天の羽衣のようだよ。

西王母 色々の捧げものを差し上げましょう、

地 色々の捧げものを差し上げましょうと言って、献上する品のなかに、ひとときわ素晴

らしく見えるのは、西王母の姿である。その光は御殿の広い庭に輝き、その身には紅錦の御衣を着て、

西王母 剣を腰に提げ、

地 剣を腰に提げ、晨纓しんえいの冠（鷹羽で飾った冠）を戴き、玉觴りやう（玉盤のこと）に盛った桃を

Xiwangmu

and offers the peaches to His Majesty.

Reciters Sipping *sake* from a cup in which floats a flower, she feels tipsy as soon as the party starts.

[*Chū-no-mai*]

Xiwangmu performs a dance, accompanied by a Japanese flute, small and large hand drums, and a drum. It is performed at a medium pace.

Reciters It is such a drinking party that the people become tipsy and even the flowers become tipsy. It is such a drinking party that the people become tipsy and even the flowers become tipsy. Truly, this party is just as wonderful as the legendary "meandering stream" party. A beautiful woman twirls her sleeves and the hemline of her dress, and toying with the stream in the palace garden, she dances. With clouds trailing across the skies, the spring winds lift the peacocks and phoenixes. At last they start to fly along the pathway of clouds to the heavens. Xiwangmu joins them and ascends in the sky, Xiwangmu joins them and ascends in the sky. No one knows where she has gone, as she vanishes out of sight.

侍女の手から受け取って、

西王母 君に桃の実を捧げる。

地 花を浮かべた盃で、酒宴が始まったとたんに酔いは回り、

〔中之舞〕

西王母の舞。笛、小鼓、大鼓、太鼓で奏される。速すぎず、遅すぎず、中庸の速さで舞われる。

地 人も酔い、花も酔うほどの酒宴は、人も酔い、花も酔うほどの酒宴は、これこそ曲

水の宴さながら。美しい女が袖も裳裾も翻し、庭の御溝水みかわみず（宮中庭園の水の流れのこと）

に戯れて舞う。雲はたなびき、やがて孔雀、鳳凰などの鳥が春風に乗って雲路を天

上へと行けば、西王母も共に天に上がり、西王母も共に天に上がり、行方も知れず、

姿は見えなくなった。

Seiōbo (Xiwangmu)

Synopsis

The setting is ancient China, during the reign (976-922 BCE) of King Mu of the Zhou dynasty. When the king is entertaining himself in the palace at a party celebrating his reign, a young lady appears. She holds a branch of peach blossoms in her hand. She says that this peach, which blooms only once in three thousand years, is blooming now thanks to the dignity and virtue of the king. She then offers the branch to the king. The king asks the woman if the peach branch is from the legendary garden owned by the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu (in Japanese, Seiōbo). Without answering his question, she responds that “peach blossoms do not speak, passing many years in silence.” In order to laud the reign of the king, she also recites an old poem: “This is the year I encounter the spring, / When blossoms are put forth / By the peach that bears fruit / Only once in three thousand years.” Then she reveals that she is a transformation of the Queen Mother of the West and leaves for the heavens after promising the king to return in her true form and present him with the fruit of the peach.

The king has musicians perform while he awaits for the return of Xiwangmu, who appears in her celestial form. Her attendants are bearing peaches that she offers to the king. A joyful drinking party starts. While both people and flowers become tipsy and enjoy the festive mood, Xiwangmu dances airily. Congratulating the king on his reign, she rides the spring wind and ascends heavenward with peacocks and phoenixes, disappearing from sight.

Highlight

This *waki-Noh* is based on an ancient Chinese myth about the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu (Seiōbo in Japanese). The story develops around the peach groves in Xiwangmu's garden, which flower and bear fruit once every three thousand years. The piece is imbued with an auspicious, refreshing, and celebratory atmosphere.

The first and second halves both have impressive scenes that gently draw the audience into the ethereal world. In the first half, the chants depict the palace during a peaceful reign, after which a young lady appears on the stage, bringing with her the delicate fragrance of peaches. The story calmly proceeds in this fragrant atmosphere. In the second half, Xiwangmu appears on stage and dazzles against a gorgeous spring backdrop with peacocks and phoenixes flying around. She performs a dance from the celestial world that expresses the feeling of the *kyokusui-no-en*, the party by a meandering stream.

This play offers an escape from today's world and the chance to enjoy the mythological world of an ancient Chinese legend, which is certainly one of the major attractions of Noh dramas.

Schools	All five
Category	<i>Waki Noh-mono</i>
Author	Unknown
Subject	Unknown
Season	Spring (March in the lunar calendar)
Scene	The palace of King Mu of the Zhou dynasty in ancient China
<i>Tsukurimono</i>	<i>Hikitate-Ōmiya</i> or <i>Ōyatai</i> (a wooden frame with a roof which is supported by four pillars at the corners).
Characters	<i>Mae-shite</i> Young Lady (The Transformation of Xiwangmu) <i>Nochi-shite</i> Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West <i>Mae-tsure</i> Woman (often does not appear) <i>Nochi-tsure</i> or child actor Xiwangmu's attendant
	<i>Waki</i> King <i>Waki-tsure</i> Ministers of His Majesty (two) <i>Ai</i> Court Official
Masks	<i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Zō</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> , <i>Nakizō</i> <i>Nochi-shite</i> <i>Nakizō</i> , <i>Ko-omote</i> <i>Mae-tsure</i> Same as <i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Nochi-tsure</i> <i>Ko-omote</i> (no mask is worn if the role is performed by a child actor)
Costumes	<i>Mae-shite</i> <i>Kazura</i> (wig), <i>kazura-obi</i> (band for a wig), <i>karaori</i> with scarlet in its pattern (a short-sleeved kimono outer robe worn by female characters), <i>kitsuke / surihaku</i> (short-sleeved kimono, worn as the innermost layer of the costume of a female character), and a branch of a peach tree. <i>Nochi-shite</i> <i>Kazura</i> and <i>kazura-obi</i> or <i>kuro-tare</i> (a black wig with hair extending slightly below the shoulder), <i>tengan</i> (a crown for celestial beings and court ladies), <i>maiginu</i> in purple or <i>chōken</i> (an unlined, long-sleeved elegant garment worn by dancing female characters), <i>kitsuke / surihaku</i> , <i>hakama</i> in <i>ōkuchi</i> -style (scarlet), <i>koshi-obi</i> (belt) or belt and a sword, and a fan. <i>Mae-tsure</i> <i>Kazura</i> , <i>kazura-obi</i> , <i>karaori</i> with scarlet in its pattern, <i>kitsuke / surihaku</i> , and a branch of peach tree. <i>Nochi-tsure</i> or child actor <i>Kazura</i> , <i>kazura-obi</i> , <i>sobatsugi</i> (lined <i>happi</i> -style kimono with no sleeves, worn by warriors or Chinese characters), <i>karaori</i> with scarlet in its pattern, <i>kitsuke / surihaku</i> , and a peach. <i>Waki</i> <i>Tō-kanmuri</i> (a type of crown worn by gods or Chinese emperors), <i>iro-hachimaki</i> (colored headband), <i>awase-kariginu</i> (a lined long-sleeved style kimono worn by male characters, especially gods and other dignified characters), <i>kitsuke / atsuita karaori</i> (a type of short-sleeved kimono mainly worn by male characters), <i>hakama</i> in <i>ōkuchi</i> -style (white), <i>koshi-obi</i> , and a fan or a Chinese fan. <i>Waki-tsure</i> <i>Hora-eboshi</i> (<i>eboshi</i> -style headdress worn by stately roles), <i>awase-kariginu</i> , <i>kitsuke / atsuita</i> , <i>hakama</i> in <i>ōkuchi</i> -style (white), <i>koshi-obi</i> , and a fan. <i>Ai</i> <i>Kanjin-zukin</i> (a type of headdress), <i>sobatsugi</i> , <i>kukuri-bakama</i> (a way of wearing <i>hakama</i> trousers by tucking the bottoms up at the knee with a string), and a pair of gaiters.
Number of scenes	Two
Length	About 1 hour and 15 minutes

西王母 (せいおうぼ)

あらすじ

古代中国、周の穆王の時代のこと。宮殿で祝賀の楽しみに興じているところに、一人の若い女が現れます。女は、手に桃の花が咲いた枝を持っていました。この花は、三千年に一度だけ咲くという桃で、帝王の威徳により、時機を得て今咲いたのだと女は言い、この花を帝王に捧げました。帝王は、伝え聞く西王母の庭園の桃かと女に問いますが、女は答えず「桃花物言わず、幾年か過ぎた」「三千年ごとに実るといふ桃が、今年は花開く春に巡り逢った」という古歌を引き、帝王の治世を讃えます。その後、女は、西王母の化身であると明かし、後で真の姿となって桃の実を捧げまじょうと帝王に約束して天に去ります。

王が、管弦の催しを開いて西王母を待っていると、西王母が天女の姿で現れました。西王母は侍女に持たせていた桃の実を帝王に献上します。喜びの酒宴が始まり、人も花も酔うなかで、西王母は軽やかに舞を舞い、御代を寿ぎながら、春風に乗って、孔雀や鳳凰とともに天へ上がり、消えていきました。

みどころ

古代中国の西王母伝説をもとにした協能です。三千年に一度花が開き、実を結ぶという西王母の庭園の桃の木を物語の柱に据えて、祝賀の雰囲気満ちた、めでたく颯爽とした能に仕上げられています。

前場、後場のそれぞれに見せ場が設けられ、観る人が浮世離れた世界に軽々と入っていけるようしつらえてあります。前場では、謡によって、泰平の御代の宮殿の情景が描き出される中、桃のやさしい香りを運ぶかのように一人の若い女が登場し、その香気を含んだまま、静かに物語が進行していきます。後場では、孔雀や鳳凰が飛びまわる春の華やかな情景の中に、颯爽と西王母が登場し、異界の舞を披露し、曲水の宴の風情をもたらします。

現代の世界からかけ離れて、このような古代中国の、神話と伝説の融合した世界に浸れるのも、能の大きな楽しみです。

流儀 五流にあり
分類 協能物
作者 不明
題材 不明
季節 春 (旧暦三月)
場面 古代中国・周の穆王宮殿
作り物 引立大宮 (大屋台)

登場人物 前シテ 若い女 (西王母の化身)
後シテ 西王母
前ツレ 女 (出ない場合が多い)
後ツレ (子方) 侍女
ワキ 帝王
ワキツレ 大臣 (二人)
アイ 官人

面 前シテ 増、小面、泣増
後シテ 泣増、小面
前ツレ 前シテと同じ
後ツレ 小面 (子方の場合は直面)

装束 前シテ 鬘、鬘帯、色入唐織、着付・摺箔、桃の枝
後シテ 鬘と鬘帯 (黒垂)、天冠、紫舞衣 (長絹)、着付・摺箔、色大口、腰帯 (腰帯と剣)、扇
前ツレ 鬘、鬘帯、色入唐織、着付・摺箔、桃の枝
後ツレ (子方) 鬘、鬘帯、側次、色入唐織、着付・摺箔、桃の実
ワキ 唐冠、色鉢巻、袷狩衣、着付・厚板唐織、白大口、腰帯、扇または唐団扇
ワキツレ 洞烏帽子、袷狩衣、着付・厚板、白大口、腰帯、扇
アイ 官人頭巾、側次、括袴、脚絆

場数 二場
上演時間 約 1 時間 15 分

西王母 (せいおうぼ)
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