

* は、流儀によって異なることを示す。

一 旅僧の登場

出家した旅僧が東国へと修行の旅に出る。道中、美濃の国・赤坂の里に着く。

旅僧

この世を生きるのがつらいと言って出家したのであるが、行方も知れないこの旅はいつまで続くのであろうか。私は都の僧です。まだ東国を見たことがないので、この度、思い立って東国へ修行に向かおうと思います。夜ごとに枕を替えて、宿を数多く移ってきたけれども、旅寝がつらいことはどこでも同じです。そのうちに、美濃の国、青野が原にたどり着いた。／逢坂山を越えて、近江路を通り、粟津の森を見て、勢田の長橋を渡り過ぎ、野路篠原を夜の明けないうちに立ち、朝行く道の露は深い。土地の名前は「青野が原」であるが紅葉で赤く色づいていて、赤坂の里に着いたころには夕暮れの日が差し込んでいた。

二 熊坂の亡霊の登場

旅僧の前に、僧に扮した熊坂の亡霊が現われ、ある者の回向を求めるが、その者の名前は知

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

1. Traveling Monk Appears

A monk, a man who has renounced worldly matters, departs for the eastern provinces in order to undertake Buddhist training. On his way, he arrives at the village of Akasaka in Mino Province.

Traveling Monk

I renounced this world because it is a difficult place to live in. How long does this journey of life continue? I am a monk residing in Kyoto. Since I have never seen the eastern part of the country, I decided to make a pilgrimage to the eastern provinces. Every night, I stay at a different inn and sleep with my head on a different pillow. Sleeping is never easy when traveling. Having repeated such hard nights, I now arrive at Aonogahara in Mino Province. / I walk across Mount Ōsaka, follow the road in Ōmi Province, look at the forest in Awazu, and cross the long bridge in Seta. I leave Noji Shinohara before dawn and travel on the road deeply steeped in morning dew. Although the area is called Aonogahara (literally, “Green Field”), the leaves in that area are now turning crimson. When I arrive in the village of Akasaka, the light of the setting sun is still shining.

2. Ghost of Kumasaka Appears

The ghost of Kumasaka, who is dressed in the robes of a monk, appears in front of the traveling monk. He requests the traveling monk to perform a memorial service to console someone’s soul, but never reveals the name of the deceased.

Monk Excuse me, reverend monk, standing over there. May I speak with you?

Traveling Monk
Are you talking to me? How may I help you?

Monk This is the day that marks the anniversary of someone's death / a day upon which to perform a memorial service for someone. When he was alive, his evil deeds went against the teaching of the Buddha, but so would you please be so kind as to perform a memorial service for him.

Traveling Monk
That is indeed my aim, to renounce the world. / That is easy for me to do. However, would you tell me for whom I should perform the memorial service?

Monk Although I will not say the name, you need only look over there at the bush before the pine tree standing alone. / You need only look at that bushy, slightly raised area around the pine tree standing alone over there. That old tomb in the bushes is the person's grave. As you will perhaps not return to this village, I am telling you about it.

Traveling Monk
What do you mean by not telling me the name? How can I transfer the merits of my sutra recitation to someone's soul without knowing that person's name?

Monk Not knowing the name of the deceased makes no difference, since all living beings equally receive blessings from Buddha.

らされない。

僧 もしもし、そこにいらつしやる御僧に申すべきことがございます。

旅僧 私のことでしょうか。何事でしょうか。

僧 今日はある者の命日／供養を行う日です。昔は仏法に背いて悪事を働いていたものであったがお申いをなさってください。

旅僧 それこそ出家の望みです。／たやすいことです。ですが、誰のために回向すればよいのでしょうか。

僧 たとえその名を申さずとも、あそこに見える一本松の少し手前にある茅原の中にあるのが、／あそこに見える一本松あたりの、草が茂っていて小高い茅原にあるのが、ただ今申した者の古い墓です。往來の道ではないので申し上げます。

旅僧 それはどういふことか。誰とも名前を知らないで、回向するとはどうすればよいのでしょうか。

僧 いえ、それでも構いません。生命あるものは、みな平等に仏のご利益を受けることができます。

Traveling Monk

This delusionary world of life and death

Monk must be left behind in order to attain Buddhahood.

Group of Reciters

Although you may not know his name, for the deceased in the tomb to receive the merits of your prayers will be a great joy. Receiving the merits of sutra recitation can lead grasses, trees, earth, and stones—indeed, all things, without exception—to attain Buddhahood. If you perform a memorial ceremony, even without knowing the name of the deceased, as long as you transfer the merits of your sutra recitation, that person certainly will be able to attain Buddhahood.

3. The Monk Narrates a Story

When the traveling monk enters the Jibutsudō, a temple enshrining Buddhist statues, to recite scripture, he finds a long-handled sword and other arms in the hall, instead of Buddhist statues. Finding this suspicious, the traveling monk asks the monk about it. The monk tells him that he fights against bandits lurking in this area with the long-handled sword.

Monk Now, please come this way. There is a humble room I usually stay in, so please use it and stay here overnight.

Traveling Monk

All right, let's go. Oh, allow me ask you something, / As the night grows late, I tried to start reciting scripture, but strangely, when I went to the hall of Jibutsudō and tried to start reciting scripture, I found a large long-handled sword placed against the wall, instead of the Buddhist statues and paintings that are supposed to be

旅僧

生死の迷界を

僧

脱け出して、成仏せよという

地

弔いを身に受ければ、たとえその名は名乗らずとも、回向を受けて喜ぶのはまさしく墓の主。回向を受ければ、草木や土石まで漏らさず成仏ができるのですから、名を頼りとしなくても、回向していただければ、成仏しないということはないでしょう。

三 僧による語り

旅僧は勤行しようとして持仏堂に入るが、あるべきはずの仏像などはなく、代わりに薙刀や武具が置いてある。旅僧は疑念を抱き、僧に尋ねると、僧自身が土地の盗賊たちを、薙刀を持って追い返していることを述べる。

僧

それではこちらへお入りください。私の庵室がございますので、一夜をお明かしください。

旅僧

では、参りましょう。おや、少しお伺いしますが、／さっそく夜になって勤行を始めようとしたのです。めようとしたりと、不思議な事に、持仏堂に参って勤行を始めようとしたのです。

enshrined there. The temple is full of iron rods and other kinds of weapons, instead of the canes used by Buddhist practitioners. Would you explain why this is.

Monk That's right. / No wonder that you find it strange. I will tell you an interesting story about this. I renounced the world just recently. As you have seen, we have the villages of Tarui, Aohaka, and Akasaka in this region. Though there are a few villages with houses, / there is Aonogahara between these villages, / which is covered by tall grasses. the grove of Koyasu in Aohaka is densely forested and therefore quite dark, even during daytime. That attracts gangs of bandits both day and night, especially on rainy days. They rob not only the cargos carried on horseback but also steal things from local servants, men and women alike, as they move between the villages. People who have been robbed scream and cry. Their cries continuously reach my ears. When I hear such a voice crying out, I take up the long-handled sword and shout, "Leave them to me!" Then, the bandits run away. Because my actions sometimes help people escape being robbed, I think my deeds benefit the local people and actually some villagers are happy with my actions. Although I have renounced the world, these deeds reveal the wretched state of my mind.

Monk / Reciters

These exploits are hardly worth mentioning.

Reciters While it does not suit a monk to boast of such a thing, even buddhas sometimes use military might in order to save living beings. Amida Buddha wields the power of reciting the Buddha's name like a sword that cut offs earthy desire and evils. Ragaraja, the God of Love, holds a bow and arrow as a mean to lead living beings,

地

僧には似合わない自慢は、おかしいと思つているでしょう。しかし、仏も衆生を救うためには、武力を用いることがあります。阿弥陀仏は称名念仏を煩惱や悪魔を断

僧
地

とりわけて言うほどでもない手柄。

さようでございます。／不審に思うのはもつともです。これについては面白い物語がございまして、語つて聞かせ申し上げましょう。私は出家して間もない身です。ご覧頂いたように、このあたりは垂井、青墓、赤坂といった里々がありますが、人家の建つた里は多いけれども、／その道の途中の／青野が原には草が高く生え茂つていて、青墓の子安の森は草木が茂つているので、昼でも薄暗く、雨が降るような時には、山賊や夜盗などの盗人たちが、馬の積み荷を奪います。里まで通う下女や下人のものまで剥ぎ取るので、奪われた人々は泣き叫ぶのです。その声は耳に絶え間なく聞こえてきます。そのような時は私も雑刀をひきつけて、「ここは私に任せなさい」と呼びかけると、盗賊たちは逃げ隠れました。時には盗賊たちからの被害を免れる時もあるので、そのような時には、この土地のためになつていであろうと、実際住んでいる人々も喜んでいたので、思つておりました。出家したにもかかわらず、あさましい心です。

僧

が、安置してあるべき絵像や木像は形もなく、壁には大薙刀なぎなたが掛けてあり、修行者の持つ杖である柱杖しじょうの代わりに鉄の棒があり、その他にも武具が所狭しと立て置かれているのは、どのようなことでありましょうか。

and Vaisravana takes up a lance to defeat demons and wipe out misfortunes.

Monk The mind of compassion that arises from affectionate attachments

Reciters is superior to the enlightenment attained by Devadatta, who had committed the Five Deadly Sins. Committing murder as a tactful means of saving living beings is superior to the nirvana attained by bodhisattvas through the six kinds of dharma practices. Although I have seen and heard many things, I still do not know right from wrong, and it is up to my own mind alone to determine whether I wander about lost or find my way to enlightenment. An old proverb says that we should be the teacher of our own minds but should not let our minds be our teacher*. A new day is dawning while I have been telling such a story. Please take some rest. I will also go to bed. So long, now. So saying, he seems to go into his bedroom, but he vanishes and the hut turns into a bush. How mysterious that I find myself sitting under a pine tree in the middle of the night.

* This phrase is derived from a verse of the Nirvana Sutra and means that you should not go astray and control your mind.

[Interlude]

僧

ち切る剣とし、愛染明王は衆生を教え導くための方便として弓矢を持ち、毘沙門天は鉾を持って悪魔を降伏して災難を払われる。

愛執から起こる慈悲心は、

地

提婆達多が五逆の罪を犯したにもかかわらず成仏をしたことよりは勝っています。衆生を救うための方便として殺生を行うことは、菩薩が六種類の行法によって涅槃に入るよりも優れているといえます。あれこれを見聞きしても是非を知らない身であり、行方を迷うのも悟るのもこの心ひとつ。「心の師とはなれ、心を師とはするな※」と古い言葉でも知られています。このような物語を申し上げておきますと、夜が明けてしまいます。どうぞお休みください。私も寝ましょう。それでは。

と言って寢室に入るように見えたが、形も消えて、庵室も草むらとなって、松陰で夜を明かしていたのは不思議なことであった。

※「『涅槃経』の詞をもとにしている。」「惑うことなく、自らの心を制御せよ」という意味。

「中入」

4. Dialogue between Traveling Monk and Villager

The traveling monk meets a villager and asks if in the past, anyone committed evil deeds in this area. The villager tells the traveling monk about Kumasaka Chōhan and encourages the monk to perform a memorial ceremony to transfer merits to his soul.

5. Kumasaka Chōhan Appears

When the traveling monk stays there all night reciting a sutra, Kumasaka Chōhan appears.

Traveling Monk

Although I have stayed here all night, the cold autumn winds prevented me from dozing off for even a moment, for even a moment as short as the newly sprouted horns of a buck**. I have therefore recited sutras aloud all night long, under the pine tree. / As I stayed in this field where cold gusts of wind blow over a pine tree, I performed a memorial service for the whole night, which felt as though it would last forever. For that, I am grateful.

Kumasaka Chōhan

A strong gust blows from the southeast, and the clouds rapidly flow to the northwest***. After the sun sets and until the moon rises, the evening winds blow fiercely over the mountains.

Reciters The tree tops must be rustling loudly.

Kumasaka The moon rises late tonight and will stay in the dawn sky.

四 旅僧と所の者の会話

旅僧は土地の者と会い、以前ここで悪行を為した者がいないか尋ねる。土地の者は、熊坂長範のことを旅僧に教え、弔いを勧める。

五 熊坂長範の登場

一晩中、経を唱えていた旅僧のもとに、熊坂長範が現われる。

旅僧

一晩ここに留まっていたが、生え代わったばかりの牡鹿の角の短さのような東の間も※2、寒い秋風のために寝られず、松の下で一晩中声を出して読経したことであるよ。／松風が寒いこの原で旅寝をするところに、一晩中、永遠にも思えるような弔いをするようになったのはありがたいことだ。

熊坂長範

東南から強い風が吹いて来て、西北に流れる雲が穏やかではない※3。日が暮れてから月が出るまでの間、夜風が激しく山陰に吹いて

地 木々の梢が騒がしくなっているであろう。

熊坂長範 今日月の出が遅い有明の月の頃で

Reciters Even if it rises, it will be hazy in the storm. Take this opportunity and attack the caravan. I am an evil bandit who gave orders to the members of my gang, keep my eyes sharp, and rob people of their valuables. The attachments that I clung to while living in this world still have a hold on me and so I appear as a ghost. Look at me. How miserable I am.

** The source of this phrase is a poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro included in the *Manyōshū* (the Anthology of Myriad Leaves): “Even for a moment / As short as the newly sprouted horns of a buck / Walking across a summer field, / I will never forget / My love for you.” “The newly sprouted horns of a buck” is a prefatory modifying phrase (a poetic rhetorical device) expressing an extremely brief moment.

*** This is an altered version of a phrase used in other Noh dramas, such as “Kureha”: “Clouds stand still in the southeast sky and the wind to the northwest is calm.”

6. Chōhan Narrates His Battle Story

Chōhan reveals his identity and tells the story of what happened when he attacked the caravan of the wealthy merchant, Kichiji Nobutaka. Although he and many other fierce bandits attacked the caravan, Ushiwaka fought back against them. After a fierce battle, Chōhan was killed by Ushiwaka. After telling the story, he requests the traveling monk to perform a memorial service for him and vanishes into thin air.

Traveling Monk

Are you Kumasaka Chōhan? Please tell me what happened to you when you were alive.

Kumasaka Kichiji Nobutaka, who resided in Sanjō in Kyoto, was a merchant who dealt in gold. / He collected many treasures every year and was traveling to Mutsu Province with stacks of cargo.

Kumasaka / Reciters

“That sounds fine. Let’s rob him.” I do not recall who said that.

熊坂長範
/地

「おおこれは素晴らしい、取つてやろう」といった時の仲間は誰だったであろうか。

熊坂長範

三条の吉次信高といって、黄金を扱う商人がいて、／毎年多くの宝を集めて、荷物を高く積み重ねて奥州へ下る。

旅僧

あなたが熊坂長範ですか。その当時の有様をお話ください。

長範は自らの素性を明かし、大商人の吉次信高を襲った際の様子を物語る。屈強の盗人たちと吉次を襲ったが、そこには牛若が立ちはだかつて返り討ちに合い、熊坂も切り合いの末、牛若に切られてしまう。顛末を語った長範は、旅僧に申してくれるよう頼み、姿を消す。

六 長範の戦語り

地 月が出たとしても嵐で朧月となるであろう。これを機に「切り入って攻めよ」と部下に命令して、左右に心を配って、人の宝を奪う悪逆である。浮世に生きていた時の執心が残り、幽霊として現われたのである。ご覧ください。あさましいことです。

※2…『万葉集』に「夏野行く牡鹿の角の束の間も妹が心を忘れて思へや」（柿本人麻呂）の歌があり、「牡鹿の角」が「束の間」などを引き出す序詞のようになった。

※3…謡曲「呉服」などにみられる「東南に雲収まり西北に風静かなり」といった表現を反転したもの。

Kumasaka	Story
Traveling Monk	I assume gangs of bandits from different provinces must have gathered here. Who were the foremost splendid of them all? From the province of Ōmi
Kumasaka	In the province of Ōmi, were Kakushō from Kawachi and the brothers of Surihari Tarō, the strongest thieves in Japan, who were unparalleled when it comes to shooting their way through a main entrance.
Traveling Monk	Well, many of them must have joined the gang from Kyoto. Who was the strongest among them?
Kumasaka	Emon from Sanjō and Kozaru (“Small Monkey”) from Mibu or Kogitsune (“Small Fox”) from Abura no Kōji were the strongest.
Traveling Monk / Chōhan	They were the best at stealing things by lighting up a room with torches and slashing their way into a house.
Kumasaka	No one could do that kind of job better than them.
Traveling Monk	And then, from Echizen Province in Hokuriku region,
Kumasaka	Matsuwaka from Asō and Kurō from Mikuni joined us.
Traveling Monk	From the province of Kaga came, first of all, this Kumasaka
Kumasaka	Chōhan, among many especially superior robbers. Seventy bandits worked together, and

旅僧 それは諸国から集まったであろうが、とりわけて優れていたのは誰であったのだろうか。／江州では

熊坂長範 近江の国の河内の覚紹、磨針太郎兄弟は、日本一の強い者で、正面からの討入には

並ぶものがいなかった。

旅僧 さて、都から来た者も多かったであろうが、中でも誰が強かったのか。

熊坂長範 三条の衛門と壬生の小猿また油の小路の小狐であった。

旅僧／熊坂長範 松明で部屋中を煌々と照らし、人を押しわけて切り込むのが上手だったのは

熊坂長範 彼らより上の者はいなかった。

旅僧 それから北陸、越前の者では

熊坂長範 麻生の松若と三国の九郎がいた。

旅僧 加賀の国では熊坂の

熊坂長範 長範をはじめとして、特別に優れた手柄を立てる盗人がいて、七十人は力を合わせ

Kumasaka	Story
Traveling Monk	placed watches on the roads, in the fields, and at inns where Kichiji would travel. While keeping vigil,
Kumasaka	Kichiji arrived at the inn here in Akasaka. This is a good place. I can manage my escape in many directions, as a number of roads connect in this place. Spying on Kichiji, we saw that he called for women of pleasure and was enjoying a variety of entertainments such as drinking and gambling.
Traveling Monk	As the night grew late, the Kichiji brothers drank heavily and fell asleep. However,
Kumasaka	a small boy around sixteen or seventeen years old with exceptionally sharp eyes was keeping guard. He paid attention to even faint noise that came from between the sliding papered doors.
Traveling Monk	It looked like he would not sleep at all.
Kumasaka	Even in our dreams, we could not imagine that he was Ushiwaka.
Traveling Monk	These robbers were doomed.
Kumasaka	Now is the time.
Traveling Monk	Quickly,

旅僧
吉次が通る道には、野にも山にも宿にも、見張りを立てて、見ているうちに

熊坂長範
この赤坂の宿に吉次が辿り着いた。こここそ丁度良い場所だ。逃げ場所も四方にあ

つて道が多い。見ると、吉次は遊女を呼んで様々な／酒や博打といった遊びをしな
がらすごしている。

旅僧
夜も更けていくと、吉次兄弟は正体もなく寝てしまったが

熊坂長範
十六七歳の小男で、人並ならぬ鋭い眼光を放っている者が、障子の隙間などから、

ささいな音がするのにも気を配っていて

旅僧
全く寝ない様子であったが

熊坂長範
この男が牛若殿であるとは夢にも知らない。

旅僧
運の尽きた盗人たちである。

熊坂長範
好い頃合いだ

旅僧
早く

Kumasaka Let's go in.

Reciters So saying, all the robbers scrambled pell-mell into the house, throwing torches into it. So great was their momentum, it would have overwhelmed even the unruly God of Plague. However, it was Ushiwaka who fought against them. Without the slightest hesitation, he unsheathed his short sword and fought against the robbers. Because Ushiwaka used various military strategies such as Furious Lion, Intruding Tiger, and Flying Bird, the robbers could not withstand his assault, and the thirteen of them who broke into the house through the main entrance were cut down in the same place. The other robbers had been wounded and abandoned their swords, or had their weapons taken away. They escaped by creeping on the ground. Some of them barely managed to save their own lives. Kumasaka said, "Only a demon could handily beat those strong men and defeat them. He must not be human. I can only continue to be a robber if I keep my life. I must now abandon this plan." Using his long-handled sword like a cane, he reluctantly began to retreat, but

Kumasaka Kumasaka reconsidered the situation.

Reciters Kumasaka reconsidered the situation. "Such an arrogant youth can hardly be so skilled in swordsmanship. If this Kumasaka deploys his secret skills, he can grab any sort of demon or devil, throw him into the air, and smash him into pieces. Such revenge will be some consolation for the souls of those poor fellows who were killed." He then returned to the inn by the way he had come. Carrying the long-handled sword under his arm and shielding himself with an opened door, Kumasaka looked for a chance to attack the boy. Ushiwaka caught sight of him, unsheathed his sword, and waited for Kumasaka from a short distance. Kumasaka held his long-handled sword at the ready, and they both were waiting for the other to strike. Then, becoming impatient,

入れと

言うが早いか、みな我先にと、松明を投げ込みながら乱れ入る。あまりの勢いに、荒ぶる疫病神も立ち向かうことができなそうであった。しかしそこは牛若、少しも恐れる様子はなく、小太刀を抜いて渡り合った。牛若は獅子奮迅、虎乱入、飛鳥の翔りといった兵法を用いながら攻め鬪ったので、盗人たちはこらえきれず、正面を進んでいた十三人は、同じ場所で切り伏せられた。その他の盗人は傷を負い、太刀を捨て、武器を奪われ、這いながらも逃げ出して、命だけは助かった者もいた。熊坂が言うには「この屈強の者たちを思うままに討ち倒すとは、もはや鬼神であつて、人間ではあるまい。盗みも、命あつてのものだ、仕方がない」と、薙刀を杖にして、不本意ながらも、一旦後ろに引いたが

熊坂は思い直して

熊坂は思い直して、「仰々しいその若造が、切るといつてもたいしたことはないであろう。この熊坂が秘術を奮つたならば、どのような天魔・鬼人であつても宙につかんで、微塵にしてやろう。討たれてしまった者たちの、供養にしてやろう」と、道を取つて返し、例の薙刀を小脇にかかえて、開き戸を盾にして、あの小男を狙つた。牛若はこれを御覧になって、太刀を抜き、距離を少し取つて待っていた。熊坂も薙刀を構え、互いに先手を打つのを待っていたが、あせつて熊坂が左足を踏みこみ、鉄の壁も通すかのごとく突いた薙刀を、牛若ははつしと打ち止めて、左の方へ

Kumasaka stepped forward with his left foot and thrust his long-handled sword as fiercely as if he were piercing through an iron wall. Ushiwaka blocked Kumasaka's attack and dodged to the left. Kumasaka chased after Ushiwaka and immediately attacked him again. Ushiwaka then nimbly rushed onto Kumasaka. Re-gripping the long-handled sword he had aimed at Ushiwaka, Kumasaka pulled back to fight but Ushiwaka then swerved to the right and avoided him. Repositioning his grip on the long-handled sword and slashing forward, Kumasaka's blade crashed against Ushiwaka's sword. Ushiwaka disengaged and when Kumasaka slashed at him with the long-handled sword, Ushiwaka leapt up and away. Kumasaka lost sight of Ushiwaka. While Kumasaka was searching here and there for Ushiwaka, he suddenly attacked from behind, slashing Kumasaka through a gap in his armor. "How can this be? How infuriating that this mere stripling has cut down Kumasaka." So saying, thus did he meet his destiny, as his luck ended there, much to his chagrin.

Reciters As I cannot beat him with my sword, I will grab hold of Ushiwaka. So thinking, Kumasaka threw his long-handled sword on the floor and with arms opened wide, ran from one end of the long hallway to the other, trying to lay hands on Ushiwaka. However, Ushiwaka, like a mirage or a lightning bolt / a phantom or like a reflection of the moon dancing on the water, could never be caught, although he was in Kumasaka's sight.

Kumasaka / Reciters

Eventually, Kumasaka was gravely wounded.

Reciters Eventually, Kumasaka was gravely wounded. His awesome strength and mighty heart growing weak.

Kumasaka Finally, at the base of this pine tree,

Reciters his life faded away, disappearing just like the dewdrops or frost on

地

苔／草の露や霜が消えるように死んでしまったというのは、昔の物語です。後世のため吊って、どうぞお助けください。熊坂がそのように言うとき、鶏の鳴き声が時を

熊坂長範

ついにこの松の根のもとで、

地

次第に重い傷を受けて、猛っていた力も心も弱っていき

熊坂長範
／地

次第に重い傷を受けて

地

広げて、こちらの長廊下からあちらの方へと隅々まで、追っかけまわして捕まえようとするけれども、陽炎、稲妻／まぼろし、水に映る月のように、姿は見えても手に取ることができない。

避ける。熊坂が追っかけてすかさず薙刀を打ち込むと、牛若はひらりと乗り込んでくる。薙刀の刃を牛若の方へ向け直し、後へ下がって構えると、牛若は右の方へ避ける。構え直してちようと切れれば、薙刀と太刀とがぶつかる。牛若はこれをほじぎ、熊坂が切り払ってきたところを飛び上がり、そのまま姿が見えなくなった。熊坂がここかそこかと探していると、思いもよらない後ろから、熊坂の武器の隙間を牛若がちようと切りつけた。「これはなんとということか、あの若造に、切られることの腹立たしさよ」と言ったところで、天命であり、運の尽きてしまったのは無念な事であった。

moss / grass. His is a story from long, long ago. Please perform a memorial service for him and help him find peace in the afterlife. As Kumasaka makes this request, the crowing of a rooster announces the dawn. While a new day is breaking, there in the shadow under the pine tree lurks the ghost of Kumasaka.

告げ、夜も白々と明けていくと、熊坂の亡霊は赤坂の松陰に隠れてしまった。

Kumasaka

Synopsis

A monk leaves Kyoto in order to undertake a pilgrimage in the eastern provinces. On his journey, he arrives at Aonogahara in Mino Province, where a monk approaches and talks to him. The monk asks the traveling monk to perform a memorial service for someone today because it is the anniversary of his death. Although the traveling monk wonders why it is not revealed for whom he has been asked to perform the ceremony, he recites a sutra and transfers the merits of his recitation to the soul of the deceased. At night, he enters the Jibutsudō, a temple enshrining Buddhist statues reserved for monks' practices, and finds that numerous weapons are stored there, including a large long-handled sword and iron rods, instead of Buddhist statues and paintings. The traveling monk is quite surprised, but the other monk explains that as gangs of bandits and thieves have attacked the residents of this area, he has stockpiled these weapons to protect the locals. After hearing his explanation, the traveling monk expects the monk to retire to his bedroom, but the monk vanishes into thin air together with his humble hut. The traveling monk is puzzled by this strange event.

The traveling monk meets a local man and asks him if in the past, someone had committed evil deeds in this vicinity. The villager tells him about Kumasaka Chōhan and encourages the monk to offer prayers to console his soul.

Around dawn, the ghost of Kumasaka Chōhan, who earlier had appeared in the form of a monk, now appears before the traveling monk. His hand holds a long-handled sword and he starts to tell his story. Kumasaka mentions that when Kichiji Nobutaka, a wealthy merchant dealing in gold, passed through this region, he was one of many tough bandits who tried to rob Kichiji's caravan. However, at that time, Ushiwaka (later known as Minamoto no Yoshitsune), who was travelling with the caravan, fought back against the bandits. Kumasaka and Ushiwaka fought alone against each other, but finally Kumasaka was stabbed and killed by Ushiwaka. Having finished his story, Kumasaka once again asks the traveling monk to perform a memorial service for him and then vanishes into thin air.

Highlight

Among a number of Noh plays describing the episodes of Minamoto no Yoshitsune, only a few, such as "Yashima," make Yoshitsune the lead character (*shite*). In most of other plays, the role of Yoshitsune is performed by a child actor (*kokata*). Indeed, in this "Kumasaka," Yoshitsune does not appear at all and instead, the ghost of Kumasaka Chōhan, the leader of the bandits, relates to the traveling monk his feelings of bitterness against Ushiwaka (Yoshitsune), who killed him. This play adopts the otherworldly, dreamlike structure of *mugen Noh*.

In the first half of the drama, a traveling monk who has come from Kyoto happens to meet a monk who is a transformation of Kumasaka in lonely, desolate field. It is very unusual that *shite* (lead actor) and *waki* (supporting actor) are similar in appearance. They are both dressed in monk's robes, worn in *kinagashi*-style, and wear no mask. Making them intentionally look alike generates an eerie, uneasy atmosphere. The lead actor does not move much in the first half of the drama, creating the unique ambience in this piece, and the audience is not even told the identity of the lead character during the first half.

The ambience changes dramatically in the second half of the play. The lead actor appears wearing a mask, such as *chōreibeshimi*, and a hood called *chōhan-zukin*, and is holding a long-handled sword. He looks exactly like the leader of a band of thieves. The lead character, Kumasaka, moves across the stage freely to fully describe the scenes of his battle with Yoshitsune. The last scene, in which Yoshitsune jumps up lightly and slashes Kumasaka, is especially entertaining with a series of eye-catching movements, such as Kumasaka leaping up and sitting cross-legged in mid-air. On one hand, the tempo beat out by a drum emphasizes the random vigor of the fierce battle scene. On the other hand, it simultaneously expresses the sadness of Kumasaka, a man whose life is meeting its end.

In the first half, the two monks quietly face each other in a humble hut, while in the second half, Kumasaka dances, making sweeping motions with his long-handled sword. The clear contrast between the first and the second halves makes this drama unique and entertaining.

The bandit Kumasaka Chōhan is also featured in another Noh play, "Eboshi-ori" which describes him while still in the prime of life. This piece of *genzai Noh* (a play depicting real-world events) is called "Genzai Kumasaka (Living Kumasaka)." In contrast, the Kumasaka of this *mugen Noh* play, in which his ghost appears, is sometimes called "Yūrei Kumasaka (the Ghost Kumasaka)".

Schools	All five	
Category	The Fifth Group Noh, <i>mugen Noh</i> with two scenes	
Author	Unknown	
Subject	<i>The Tale of Heike</i> (Heike Monogatari) volume 3; <i>The Tale of Minamoto no Yoshitsune</i> (Gikeiki) Volume 2, etc.	
Season	Autumn (September in the lunar calendar)	
Scene	Akasaka in Mino Province	
Characters	<i>Mae-shite</i>	Monk (Ghost of Kumasaka Chōhan)
	<i>Nochi-shite</i>	Kumasaka Chōhan
	<i>Waki</i>	Traveling Monk
	<i>Ai</i>	Villager
Mask	<i>Mae-shite</i>	None
	<i>Nochi-shite</i>	<i>Chōrei-beshimi</i> (or <i>Kuro-beshimi</i>)
Costumes	<i>Mae-shite</i>	<i>Sumi-bōshi</i> (a hood for regular Buddhist monks), <i>mizugoromo</i> (a type of knee-length <i>kimono</i>), <i>kitsuke / muji-noshime</i> (short-sleeved <i>kimono</i> with no pattern), <i>koshi-obi</i> (belt), a fan, and Buddhist prayer beads.
	<i>Nochi-shite</i>	<i>Chōhan-zukin</i> (a type of hood), <i>iro-hachimaki</i> (colored head band) or wearing no head band, <i>awase-happi</i> (lined <i>happi</i> -style <i>kimono</i>) or wearing no <i>happi</i> , <i>kitsuke / atsuita</i> (a type of short-sleeved <i>kimono</i> mainly worn by male characters), <i>hangire</i> (a type of <i>hakama</i> -style trousers worn by powerful characters such as demons, gods, and warriors), <i>koshi-obi</i> , and a long-handled sword.
	<i>Waki</i>	<i>Sumi-bōshi</i> , <i>mizugoromo</i> , <i>kitsuke / muji-noshime</i> , <i>koshi-obi</i> , a fan, and Buddhist prayer beads.
	<i>Ai</i>	Tops and bottoms of <i>kimono</i> for <i>Kyōgen-kata</i> , <i>kitsuke / shima-noshime</i> (short-sleeved <i>kimono</i> with check patterns), <i>koshi-obi</i> , and a fan.
Number of Scenes	Two	
Length	About 1 hour and 10 minutes	

あらすじ

都を出立した旅僧は東国へ向かい、その途中で美濃の国、青野が原にやってくると、そこにいた一人の僧に話しかけられます。旅僧はこの僧から、今日がとある人の命日であり、その人物を弔ってほしいと頼まれます。誰を弔えばいいのか明らかにしてもらえないことを不審に思いながら、旅僧は経を唱えて回向します。夜になって持仏堂に入ると、そこにあるべき仏の絵像や木像は無く、代わりに大薙刀や鉄の棒、多くの武具が置かれていて、旅僧は驚きます。僧は説明を始め、このあたりに山賊や夜盗が出て人を襲うため、土地の人々を助けるために備えていることを話します。やがて、僧が寝室に入って行くかと見ていると、僧の姿は消え、庵室も無くなり、旅僧は不思議に思います。

旅僧は土地の者と出会い、以前にこのあたりで悪行を為した者がいなか尋ねます。土地の者は、熊坂長範のことを旅僧に教え、弔いを勧めます。

明け方近くなった頃、さきほどまで僧の姿をしていた熊坂長範の亡霊が、薙刀を手にして、旅僧の前に現われ、以前の出来事を語り始めます。熊坂は、黄金を扱う大商人・吉次信高(きちじのぶたか)がこのあたりを通った際、多くの屈強の盗賊たちと共に襲おうとしましたが、吉次に同行していた牛若(後の源義経)に返り討ちにあってしまいます。熊坂は牛若と二人きりで戦いますが、ついに牛若に刺されて命尽きてしまいました。語り終えた熊坂は、再度旅僧に弔いを頼んで消えていくのでした。

みどころ

源義経を扱った能は数多くありますが、シテが義経のものは「八島(屋島)」など数少なく、多くの作品では子方が義経を演じます。本作に義経は登場せず、盗賊の首領・熊坂長範が、旅僧の前で牛若に討たれた無念を語る、夢幻能の構成となっています。

前段は都から来た旅僧と、熊坂扮する僧の二人が荒涼とした野原で対峙します。シテとワキが二人とも直面の着流し僧であり、こうした例は他に多くありません。二人の違いを敢えて抑えることにより、不気味な雰囲気が出されているとも言えます。前シテは動きが少なく、独特な雰囲気が進み、シテが誰であるかも明かされずに前段は終わります。

後段は雰囲気様が変化します。後シテは、長霊癒見などの面をつけ、長範頭巾をかぶって大薙刀を持っており、まさしく盗賊の頭領といった装いです。熊坂は舞台を縦横無尽に動き回り、義経との奮闘ぶりが舞台いっぱいに表示されます。ひらりと舞った義経が、熊坂を切りつける最期の場面では、飛びあがって安座をするなど目を引く型が続きます。乱戦に合わせて響く囃子の太鼓も場を盛り上げます。一方で最期を迎える熊坂には、哀愁も込められています。

草庵で向き合う二人の僧の静かな前場と、熊坂が薙刀を持って舞う後場の鮮やかな対比がみどころです。

熊坂長範を扱った現在能には「烏帽子折」があり、こちらを「現在熊坂」とも呼ぶのに対して、夢幻能の本作は「幽霊熊坂」と別称されることもあります。

流儀	五流にあり
分類	五番目物、複式夢幻能
作者	不明
題材	『平家物語』巻三、『義経記』巻二など
季節	旧暦九月
場面	美濃国・赤坂

登場人物	前シテ	僧(熊坂長範の亡霊)
	後シテ	熊坂長範
	ワキ	旅僧
	アイ	所の者
面	前シテ	直面
	後シテ	長霊癒見(黒癒見など)
装束	前シテ	角帽子、水衣、着付・無地熨斗目、腰帯、扇、数珠
	後シテ	長範頭巾、色鉢巻(または無し)、袷法被(または無し)、着付・厚板、半切、腰帯、薙刀
	ワキ アイ	角帽子、水衣、着付・無地熨斗目、腰帯、扇、数珠 狂言上下、着付・縞熨斗目、腰帯、扇
場数	二場	
上演時間	約1時間10分	

熊坂 (くまさか)
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