

SHOCHIKU

TRAVELLING TROUPE

From Sept. 5th

"HONCHO NIJYU-SCHIKO"

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Synopsis

The Takeda family and the Uesugi family were at enmity with each other on account of the missing helmet and there was a rumour that Katsuyori Takeda had died holding himself responsible for it.

Yaegakihime, daughter of Uesugi-Kenshin, who was Katsuyori's fiancée had his portrait painted and was making a memorial service, when the gardener of the Uesugi family named Minosaku appeared. In fact he was Katsuyori himself who had been said to have committed harakiri.

Yaegakihime, knowing this, attained her desire by the good offices of her attendant, Nureginu. Her father Uesugi-Kenshin sent Minosuke on an errand knowing that he was Katsuyori and attempted to dispose of him on the way. Yaegakihime ran after Minosuke with the helmet for the purpose of saving him from danger.

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SCENE I

The stage indicates a two storied scene

The curtain rises with Gidayu reciting.

From the inner room Minosuke makes his appearance wearing an old ceremonial dress.

Minosaku: Taking advantage of the fact that born as a common man I am not known by sight, I have got the berth in this mansion disguised as a gardener, for I wish to watch over the young master, anxious about his future. Did they employ me knowing this circumstance?

(Gidayu reciting starts. To the right side Princess Yaegakihime daughter of Kenshin Uesugi is heard chanting a Buddhist sacred book. She is the fiancée of Katsuyori, son of Shingen Takeda who is said to have died at the responsibility of the missing helmet. Her lady attendant Nureginu who has had an affection for Katsuyori is striking the gong sitting before a desk on the left side of the stage.)

Nureginu: What a pity that nobody should hold a mass for you who had to commit harakiri knowing nothing about your father's intrigue. You must be restless in your grave. I heartily wish that you will rest in peace. I adore thee. O eternal Buddha.

Minosuke: Oh, today is November 20th. Just one year has elapsed since Katsuyori died in place of me. Oh, may the protection of Buddha be with your spirit!

Yaegakihime: Say, Katsuyori-sama. What a regrettable thing it is that you died before we married each other. I had your portrait painted in memory of you. (Gidayu reciting begins. Yaegakihime gets choked with tears saying prayers for the dead and burns incense.)

Minosaku: Oh, that is Yoegakihime's tearful voice. Both Yaegakihime and Nureginu are making memorial service taking it for granted that Katsuyori is dead while I am Katsuyori himself. How pitiful they are!

(Minosuke gets moved to tears against himself.

Gidayu reciting starts.)

Nureginu: Say, Mr. Minosaku. I cannot understand why you are in such a figure. What is the matter with you?

Minosaku: You may well wonder it. Truly speaking I was engaged by the lord of Uesugi.

Nureginu: How marvellous! You are the very counterpart of Mr. Katsuyori I cannot see you without recalling my husband, Mr. Katsuyori. I am wandering in the circle of transmigration.

(She bursts into tears. Yaegakihime has been hearing over it and looks at Minosuke through the chink in the sliding-door.)

Yaegakihime: Oh, he is my husband Katsuyori-sama isn't he?

(Gidayu reciting. She feels her heart leap with joy, but gets ashamed of her delusion out of consideration for the portrait, and continues to chant the Buddhist sacred book. Katsuyori enters into Nureginu's feelings --.)

Minosaku: It is natural for you to moan but you must abide by the inevitable; it was a short-lived love.

(Gidayu reciting. Yaegakihime again thinks he may be Katsuyori, for they are the very counterparts of each other. She runs towards Minosuke and clings to him bursting into tears.)

Ninosaku: What do you mean? I am not Mr. Katsuyori. I am a gardener named Minosuke recently employed by your father.

Yaegakihime: Is that so? Oh, I am ashamed of myself. You are almost the perfect image of Mr. Katsuyori. (to Nureginu) Have you long been acquainted with this person?

Nureginu: Eh?

Yaegakihime: Is he a person of your heart?

Nureginu: No, by no means. How can it be? I met him just now for the first time.

Yae: Don't tell a lie. I see it from your looks and manner.

Nureginu: No, I am not telling a lie. I will never carry on with a man in secret.

Yae: Well. In that case, would it be too much to ask you to act as a go-between for me that he may love me?

Nureginu: What do you say? Is it not an inordinate desire that you should set your heart upon Mr. Minosuke? I thought you were still a mere child.

Yae: Now that I have fallen in love with him, please act as middleman at once.

Nureginu: If you are so anxious I may do according to circumstances.

Minosaku: Be careful about what you say.

Nureginu: Oh, I see. (to Yaegakihime) Do you really feel an affection for Mr. Minosuke? I may act as a go-between for you, if you show me something as a proof about the matter.

Yae: Oh, it's an easy thing. I will readily write a pledge.

Nureginu: I have a favour to ask of you about the matter.
I should like to ask you to steal out that valuable
helmet of the Takeda family.

Yae: Eh, what do you say? Now, I see, you must be
Mr. Katsuyori as I expected.

Minosuke: Nothing can be more absurd than such an idea. I am
never Mr. Katsuyori.

(Gidayu reciting starts. Yaegakihime clings to
Minosuke asking that he would reveal the truth.)

Minosuke: How unreasonable you are! I am nothing but
a gardener. Stand aside, please; it would be
bad to attract others' attention.

(Minosuke pushes her away.)

Yae: Are you really not Mr. Katsuyori?

(Yae tries to kill herself with a small accessory
sword. Nureginu stops her.)

Nureginu: Don't commit a rash act, please.

Yae: No, let me kill myself. I cannot but feel
ashamed of myself to have made advances to a
person who is not Mr. Katsuyori.

Nureginu: Wait a moment, please. As might be expected from
a daughter of samurai, your spirit is admirable. Now you
can see Mr. Katsuyori. There! He is really Mr.
Katsuyori as you correctly guessed.

(Nureginu pushes Yaegakihime towards Minosuke.

They throw themselves into each other's arms. Thereupon
Kenshin appears)

Kenshin: Say, Minosaku, you must start for Shiojiri as soon
as possible.

Minosuke: Well, I may start at any moment if it is got ready.

Kenshin: ~~This~~ ^{the} letter in this box will relate the whole circumstances.

Minosuke: Certainly sir.

(Minosuke exits hurriedly carrying the letter-box.
Kenshin sees him off.)

Kenshin: Say, go after him at once if you have got ready.

Rokuroh:
Kobunji: Yes, sir.

(Rokuroh and Kobunji make their appearance)

Kenshin: As the lake of Suwa is frozen now, it is impossible
to go across it. The lake is the cut part of the land
route as far as Shiojiri. You must never be taken off
your guard.

Rokuroh: Well, I see.

Kobunji: Brave as Katsuyori is, he is like a rat in a trap now.

Rokuroh: He shall surely be killed.

Kobunji: We shall soon inform you of the result.

Rokuroh: I hope you will set yourself at ease.

The two: Now we must be going.

Kenshin: Well, go hurriedly.

The two: Good-bye.

(The two exit in a hurry.)

Yaegakihime: Say, father, what is the matter and who are they?

Kenshin: Well, they are the attacking party against Katsuyori Takeda.

Yae: What! Attacking party against Mr. Katsuyori?

Nureginu: What do you mean?

Kenshin: As I overheard about your plot to steal out the helmet, I have made arrangements for killing Katsuyori on his way home ordering him to go to Shiojiri as a messenger.

Yae: Eh! Then they are -----.

Nureginu: Mr. Katsuyori is about to be killed.

Yae: Oh! (breaks down.)

Today I was very glad to have met my husband after a long time, but how sorrowful it is to have to part from him again!

(Gidayu reciting. Yaegakihime asks Kenshin with tearful voice to spare Katsuyori's life but Kenshin shows no sign of sympathy.)

Kenshin: What a detestable woman you are!

You must be a spy sent from Takeda. Come here, I have still something to hear from you.

(The curtain falls with Gidayu reciting.)

SCENE II

The stage represents the inner garden of the Uesugi family. There is a pond to the right side. A front shrine ornamented with the helmet is seen to the left side.

The curtain rises with music and Gidayu reciting begins. Yaegakihime makes her appearance with a hand-lamp.

Yaegakihime: Poor Katsuyori-sama! He little expects such an evil design. And how cool-hearted and selfish my father is! Now, it is not the time to be regretful vainly. I must inform Mr. Katsuyori of this matter getting ahead of the attacking party.----- But now the lake is frozen and it is impossible to go across it. How could I overtake them by way of land route? Oh, I wish I had wings! There is no alternative but to pray to God. (She takes the helmet and goes towards the pond when a strange figure is reflected in it. She gets surprised and draws back a little.)

That was surely the figure of a fox. It's strange. (Again she looks into the pond with fear, but she finds only her shadow.)

Oh, it's only my shadow. Was that a mere fancy? (She lift up the helmet and looks into the pond where. She finds the shadow of a white fox.)

Oh, I see. That fox must be the messenger of God who will watch over me. It is said the fox begins to go across the lake when it gets frozen. I am sure I shall succeed in overtaking the attacking party and delivering

Mr. Katsuyori from danger supported by the messenger.

Thank Heaven!

(She wears the helmet when the will-o'-the-wisp
appears as if it were going to protect her on the way.
Yaegakihime behaves herself like a fox and exits
hurriedly)

----- The curtain -----