

# THE HONINBO

(after "The Mikado")

by Bob High

## ACT I

*Scene -- Courtyard of KO-KO's palace. Japanese shodans discovered in attitudes suggested by go players. They chorus:*

### **Gentlemen Who Play Go**

If you want to know who we are,  
We are gentlemen who play go:  
On many a vase and jar --  
You will find us depicted so.  
Our game is a fine pastime;  
As slowly the ranks we climb  
It surely is not a crime, oh!

If you think that it's done off-hand  
Like some casual sport or game --  
Then you really don't understand  
Which is certainly quite a shame!  
Perhaps you think we're not strong  
Enough to play all day long -  
If that's your idea, you're wrong, oh!

*Enter TWENTY-KYU, in great excitement. He carries a go-ban on his back, and a bowl of go stones suspended from his obi.*

### **Recitative -- TWENTY-KYU:**

Gentlemen, I pray you tell me  
Where a gentle player dwelleth  
Named YUM-YUM, the ward of KO-KO  
In pity speak -- oh, speak, I pray you!

A Shodan:  
Why, who are you to ask this question?  
TWENTY-KYU:  
Come gather round and I'll tell you.

*[TWENTY-KYU presents his tale, somewhat metaphorically:]*

## A Wandering Group Am I

A wandering group am I -  
A thing of jumps and keimas,  
Of hanes and ogeimas,  
Just dreaming of an eye!  
My full extent is long,  
Through half the go-ban ranging,  
As prospects keep on changing,  
My shape stays as light as a song!

Are you in a sacrificial mood?  
I'll die for you,  
Oh sorrow!  
Furikawari do you brood?  
I'll split in two,  
Oh sorrow, sorrow!  
I'll give up half my stones,  
As queen bees shed their drones;  
A phoenix from the bones  
I'll spring anew --  
Tomorrow, morrow!

But if resolute resistance is in order  
I'll provide our bold opponent a surprise  
For where rival territory has a border  
I'll cut and thrust and throw in to steal eyes!  
My scattered stones, apparently so jumbled  
Have no weakness -- or conceal it if they do -  
And I shouldn't be surprised if moyos crumbled  
Before my thick reducing moves are through!

CHORUS: We shouldn't be surprised if moyos crumbled  
Before his thick reducing moves are through!

And if you call for a territ'ry  
We'll heave our capstone round  
With a huge moyo, in a winning spree  
A framework wide and deep you'll see --  
Hurrah! we're safe and sound!

CHORUS: Oh, huge moyo -- Hurrah! We're safe and sound!

To float unsettled may be fun  
If suspense is to your taste,  
But I'm happiest, when all's said and done

When a group my size  
Has solid eyes  
And the game's been soundly won, ho ho!  
nd the enemy disgraced!

CHORUS: We link our stones securely -- so!  
As the middle we surround,  
With a huge moyo,  
And no threat of ko --  
Hurrah! We're safe and sound!

[ Enter TWO-DAN: ]

TWO: And what may be your business with YUM-YUM?

TWENTY: I'll tell you. A year ago I was a member of the local team. It was my duty to play low board in the annual ceremonial game with the royal team. I was paired with YUM-YUM. We loved each other at first sight, but she was betrothed to her sensei KO-KO, a cheap go hustler, and as I would have to defeat him in an even game to win her, I saw that my suit was hopeless. I left town, determined to study the game until I had become stronger than KO-KO, but thoughts of YUM-YUM kept me from concentrating on the game. Imagine my delight when I hear, a month ago, that KO-KO had been condemned to forfeit all his games! I hurried back to challenge him and win YUM-YUM for my bride!

TWO: It's true that KO-KO was condemned for committing hamete, but he was reprieved at the last minute, and raised to the exalted rank of Lord High Tournament Director under the following remarkable circumstances:

### **Song: TWO-DAN and Chorus**

Our great Honinbo, virtuous man  
When he to rule our game began  
Resolved to try  
A plan whereby  
Young players might be steadied.  
So he decreed, I am afraid  
That all who self-atari played -  
(Or other solecisms made)  
Should forthwith be forfeited!

And I expect you'll all agree  
That he was right to so decree.  
And I am right,  
And you are right,  
And all is right as right can be!

CHORUS: And you are right,

And we are right, etc.

This stem decree, you'll understand  
Caused great dismay across the ban  
For weak and strong  
It proved ere long  
Were equally affected.  
The youth who muffed a semeai  
Or left a struggling group to die  
"Resign!" was quickly forced to cry --  
He usually objected.

And you'll allow, as I expect  
That he was right to so object.  
And I am right,  
And you are right,  
And everything is quite correct!

CHORUS: And you are right,  
And we are right, etc.

And so we straight elected one  
Who grievous hamete had done  
Whose awful move  
Was next to prove  
The source of his disgrace --  
We made HIM head TD, for we  
Reasoning most logically  
Said ere he forfeits others, he  
Must rule on his own case!

And we are right, I think you'll say,  
To reason in this kind of way:  
If I am right,  
And you are right,  
Then it's all right for us to play!

CHORUS: If you are right,  
And we are right, etc.

[ Enter OKI-DANGO ]

TWENTY; KO-KO, the cheap hustler, TD Ex-Officio -- why, that's the highest rank a player can attain!

OKI: It is. Our logical Honinbo, seeing no moral difference between the dignified Tournament Director who formulates the rules defining forfeits and the industrious

monitor who carries them out, has rolled the offices into one, and by a stroke of fortune, KO-KO is now judge, jury and executioner.

TWENTY: But how good of you, sir, (for I see that you are a noble dan of high rank) to condescend to tell all this to me, a mere double-digit kyu player!

OKI: Don't mention it. I am, in point of fact, a particularly sensitive and refined player, of exquisite taste. You will understand me when I tell you that I have never won a game except by resignation or default. Consequently, my pride is inconceivable. But I struggle hard to overcome this defect. I mortify myself by avoiding actual tournament play, and instead undertaking the most diverse and sundry organizational tasks. When all the officers of our association resigned because they were too proud to serve under a cheap go hustler, did I not at once accept all their posts?

TWO: And all the honorary ranks and titles that accompanied them? You did.

OKI: It is consequently my degrading duty to serve this upstart as Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Chair of all Commissions and (hmph!) Ratings Coordinator as well. As Tournament Coordinator, I even mix among the minor players, occasionally inclining my head and even smiling, accepting their complements as graciously as possible.

TWO: And it does you credit.

OKI: But I don't stop at that. I meet with club organizing committees; I provide boards and stones and clocks and even prizes, for a very modest gratuity. I also retail dan diplomas at a very low figure. In my effort to efface my congenital nobility, no insult is too great. (TWENTY-KYU takes the hint and passes a handful of go stones to OKI-DANGO.) [Aside:] Another insult, and, I think, a light one!

TWENTY: But surely KO-KO can't still plan to wed YUM-YUM! Before I'd see that, I'd challenge him to a match myself!

**[SONG: OKI-DANGO with TWENTY-KYU and TWO-DAN]**

Young man, give way:  
Likewise, no go;  
Yum-Yum today  
Shall wed, although  
A fit you throw,  
But the facts are so --  
And surely fair Yum-Yum will miss you!

This afternoon,  
Yum-Yum from school  
Will homeward, soon  
Return, and you'll  
Look quite the fool  
If you fight a duel  
With the Lord High TD Ex-Officio!

For your walls he'd smash  
And your groups he'd slay  
Were a kyu so brash  
The TD to play!  
So marry she will, just as we show  
To the TD Ex-Officio!

[20K & 2D:]

For your walls he'd smash, etc.  
So marry she will, just as we show, etc.

[ALL:]

It's a hopeless fate --  
Though she's clam shell  
And you think you're slate,  
It's known quite well --  
Though under her spell  
In love you fell,  
Sadly, it's but a hex of ishi-o!

Deluded, you  
Recall a quote:  
"A twenty-kyu  
Will die in got-  
E"; You can't float  
A sinking boat --  
So extravagant pining should cease you!

[20K & 2D:]

For your walls he'd smash, etc.  
So marry she will, just as we show, etc.

[Enter CHORUS OF SHODANS, followed by KO-KO]

Chorus of Shodans

Behold the TD Ex-Officio!  
A personage of noble rank and title -  
A dignified and potent officer,  
Whose functions are particularly vital!  
Defer, defer,  
To the TD Ex-Officio!

Solo -- KO-KO

Taken from a casual game  
By a set of curious chances;  
Liberated from all blame,  
In extraordinary circumstances;  
Wafted by a breeze that came  
As one sometimes is in trances,  
To a height of pomp and fame,  
Which my in-born wit enhances;

Surely never has such shame  
At a pastime which Japan's is  
Led to an exalted name,  
Such as TD of go-bans is!

KO-KO: Gentlemen, I'm touched by this reception. I only hope that by strict adherence to the letter of the Honinbo's law I shall maintain my privileged position. If I should ever actually be called upon to act professionally, I'm confident there will be no lack of players whose absence from the go-ban will be a distinct gain to society at large: [Song -- KO-KO with Chorus of shodans.] -

### **I've Got a Little List**

As someday it may happen that a victim must be found  
I've got a little list, I've got a little list!  
Of insufferable players who might well be underground  
And who never will be missed - who never will be missed!  
There's the pestilential nuisances who blow smoke in your face,  
And those refusing handicaps who won't resign with grace,  
And players up on joseki, who floor you with 'em flat --  
And those who, when they play their stones, play their stones like THAT --  
And know-it-all observers who on commenting insist  
They'll none of 'em be missed - they'll none of 'em be missed!

CHORUS: He's got 'em on the list -- he's got 'em on the list;  
And they'll none of 'em be missed -- they'll none of 'em be missed

There's the maniac invader, who a moyo cannot stand,  
And the contact pugilist -- I've got him on the list!  
The one who hits his time clock while his stone's still in his hand  
He never will be missed -- he surely won't be missed!  
Those who gallop through joseki just as if it were a race,  
Then proceed to play the yose at a truly glacial pace --  
Who politely say "atari" when one stone is all they'd take,  
But conveniently omit it when a larger group's at stake,

And those who hide their prisoners inside a ham-like fist -  
They'll none of 'em be missed -- they'll none of 'em be missed!

(CHORUS)

And those who drum their fingers and make irritating sounds,  
And mutter "ho!" and "hst!" -- I've got them on the list!  
Those who sing and hum and pop their gum and make their eyes go  
round  
They never will be missed - no, they never will be missed!  
Those who fiddle with their go stones and then drop them on the floor,

And those who mutter to themselves as they attempt to count the score,  
And the overbearing amateur who loses on the board,  
Then proceeds to give a lecture on the lessons you've ignored --  
And the one who stares you in the eye, the would-be hypnotist --  
They'll none of 'em be missed - they'll none of 'em be missed!

(CHORUS)

The ones who think the game should be preserved from scruffy types,  
And the go misogynist -- I've got HIM on the list!  
The players who promote themselves before their time is ripe,  
They never will be missed -- they never will be missed!  
Beginners who have swollen heads because they're good at chess,  
And those who try to help you count, but only make a mess;  
The tournament director who manipulates the draw --  
And the championship contender who thinks he's above the law.  
The list is long, I could go on - but I think you've got the gist:  
They'll none of 'em be missed -- they'll none of 'em be missed!

KO-KO: OKI-DANGO, it seems to me that we should schedule some special celebrations in connection with my approaching marriage. What would you suggest?

OKI: In which of my capacities do you consult me? As Treasurer, Tournament Coordinator, Press Officer or Historian?

KO-KO: Let's say as Tournament Coordinator.

OKI: As Tournament Coordinator, I suggest a round of tournaments in which all the citizens of your realm would take part. A Ju-ban-go -- a Universal Tournament -- what better homage to your coming union? [ Aside: ] And what better chance for me to exercise my talents!

KO-KO: A Universal Tournament. I like that idea! Everyone will be a part of our celebration.



OKI: Exactly. We'll make participation compulsory. And as it's a very special occasion, we'll collect special tournament fees from all the players. A sort of Round Robin -- that should top up the Association's coffers!

KO-KO: Excellent! But before we set the details, I spy my betrothed approaching, with her bridesmaids. Let's greet them. [ Exeunt together. ]

[ Enter a group of young go students, heralding YUM-YUM and her companions, PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH'. ]

### **Chorus of Students**

Comes a string of little students  
From their dojo lately free,  
Curious despite their prudence,  
Wondering what this game can be!

Is it but a world of struggle,  
Thrust and cross-cut, hack and squeeze,  
As the stones the players juggle  
Form a fierce and martial frieze?

Or are shapes of stunning beauty  
Formed from slate and clam-shell stones  
As, following joseki's duty  
Players stake out balanced zones?

Students we, ten-kyu and under  
From our dojo lately free,  
And we wonder -- how we wonder! --  
What on earth this game can be!

Trio -- YUM-YUM, PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH', with Chorus of Students ]

Three Neophytes From School

[THE THREE]:

Three neophytes from school are we,  
Rank as a neophyte can be;  
Filled to the brim with bad aji --  
Three neophytes from school!

[YUM-YUM]: Every move's a source of fun.

[PEEP-SO]: No group's safe, for we care for none!

[AJI-KESH']: Go's a game that's just begun -

[THREE]:  
Three neophytes from school!

[ALL]  
Three neophytes who, all unwary  
Pluck their stones from bowls mulberry --  
O'er their moves they hardly tarry

[THREE]:  
Three neophytes from school!

[YUM-YUM]: One neophyte - to wed's her fate --  
[PEEP-SO]: Two neophytes attend and wait --  
[AJI-KESH']: Three neophytes complete the slate.

[THREE]:  
Three neophytes from school!

[YUM-YUM]: From three neophytes take one away.  
[PEEP-SO]: Just two remain, enough to play  
[AJI-KESH']: Another game, until they stray --

[THREE]:  
Three neophytes from school!

[ALL]:  
Three neophytes who, all unwary  
Pluck their stones from bowls mulberry --  
O'er their moves they hardly tarry

[THREE]:  
Three neophytes from school!

KO-KO: At last, my bride! (About to embrace her.)

YUM-YUM: You're not going to kiss me before all these people?

KO-KO: Well, I'm certainly not going to kiss you after them!

YUM-YUM [Aside to PEEP-SO:] He's such a bore. Every time he hugs me, he says "atari"! He says he admires my "light shape" and my "beautiful eyes". I can't stand it!

PEEP-SO: But after all, you are engaged --

[KO-KO embraces YUM-YUM -- and says "atari". YUM-YUM draws back.]

YUM-YUM: Thank goodness that's over. [Sees TWENTY-KYU, and rushes to him.]  
TWENTY-KYU! [The three neophytes rush to him.]

KO-KO; May I be presented?

YUM-YUM: This is TWENTY-KYU; we were paired in the annual tournament last year. He's the only player I've ever beaten in a tournament!

KO-KO: Hmm. Congratulations, my dear.

TWENTY: Sir, I have the honor and misfortune to love your ward. Oh, I know I deserve your anger --

KO-KO: Anger? Not a bit; I love her myself -- just look at that light shape, and those perfect eyes. [YUM-YUM rolls her eyes.] Everyone loves her. I'm glad to hear my opinion seconded. [To TWO-DAN:] Take him away. [TWO-DAN removes him.]

AJI: [who has been examining OKI-DANGO] What's this dumpling shape?

KO-KO: He is rather a heavy group, isn't he?

OKI: I beg your pardon!

AJI: Oh! It's alive!

KO-KO: YUM-YUM, allow me to present my Grand Panjandrum and Factotum Extraordinaire, OKI-DANGO. OKI, this is my wife-to-be, and these are her companions.

OKI: What do you want me to do? Address them? I'm not accustomed to addressing players beneath the rank of dan [Aside: except for an emolument], and these are mere neophytes!

KO-KO: Come, come, you can do it -- you've done far more demeaning things!

OKI: [grudgingly] How de do.

KO-KO: There, that's better. It's really quite hard for him. You girls probably don't properly appreciate the burdens of rank quite yet.

### **Quartet and Chorus of Neophytes**

[YUM-YUM, PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH']:

So please you sir, we're desolate  
The rank to underestimate  
Of an officer so prominent  
(You'd hardly fit him in a tent!)  
But youth, of course, must have its sprees,  
So think of us,  
Please think of us,  
And don't be cross-cut at us, please  
And wink at us,  
Just blink at us,  
When we take extra liberties!

[CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES]:

But youth, of course, etc.

[OKI-DANGO]:

I think you ought to be aware  
That dignity is only fair  
To grant the highly titled few  
But no one else does; why should you?  
That youth at us should laugh and sneeze  
And wink at us,  
And blink at us,  
Is hard enough our hearts to freeze --  
So think of us,  
Please think of us,  
When you take extra liberties!

[Exeunt all but YUM-YUM. Enter TWENTY-KYU]

TWENTY: YUM-YUM, at last! I've been seeking you for three weeks, in the belief that your sensei KO-KO had been defaulted; now I find you are to marry him this very afternoon!

YUM-YUM: Alas, yes!

TWENTY: But you do not love him?

YUM-YUM: Alas, no!

TWENTY: Modified rapture. Why, then, not reject him?

YUM-YUM: Because he is my sensei, and he wouldn't let me marry you.

TWENTY: But I would wait for you until you could choose for yourself!

YUM-YUM: You forget that the Honinbo has ruled that only dan-level players can make such important choices. You might have a long wait.

TWENTY: Hmm, yes...recalling our game a year ago, another plan might be advisable.

YUM-YUM: Besides, a double-digit kyu player who plays low-board in municipal tournaments is hardly a fitting husband for the ward of the TD Ex-Officio.

TWENTY: But -- what if I were to tell you that I'm not a twenty-kyu player after all, but an insei of the Honinbo himself?

YUM-YUM: An insei of the Honinbo? What were you doing playing low board in a municipal tournament, then? Are you crazy? Or in disgrace?

TWENTY: Perhaps a little of both. Some years ago I had the misfortune to attract the eye of Katsura, a lady of my teacher's court, who mistook my politeness for affection and claimed my hand in marriage; under the Honinbo's own laws, he could not refuse a

member of his own court, and the Honinbo is nothing if not logical. I couldn't abide Katsura -- she's dry as a board -- so I took on the disguise of an itinerant go-player and fled to the provinces. But I had promised the Honinbo early in my training that I would play no bad moves in a tournament game -- and as the converse (or is it the contrapositive -- I'm not as strong at logic as my teacher) of that promise is that I'll play nothing but bad moves in other than tournament games, I haven't been able to rise above twenty-kyu! I was only invited to play in the municipal tournament last year because an epidemic had stricken all the other eligible players.

YUM-YUM: But I won my game with you, and I'm only a neophyte!

TWENTY: [Aside:] (Perhaps some psychology is indicated here.) YUM-YUM, you had already stolen four comers and won the heart of the board from me before you played your first stone! That's why I resigned immediately -- I couldn't think, and I couldn't break my promise to the Honinbo!

YUM-YUM: Very prettily said. But what do we do now?

TWENTY: We MUST think of a way to get you out of your engagement! [moving closer] I have an idea...

### Duet -- YUM-YUM and TWENTY-KYU

[TWENTY-KYU:]

Were you not by Ko benighted,  
I would save you, tender stone;  
Loved one, let us be united --  
See our fates together thrown

Two weak groups, once joined together  
Gain two eyes and can't go wrong;  
What was fragile as a feather  
Would be solid, thick and strong!

[BOTH:]

We'd be solid, thick and strong!

[YUM-YUM:]

But as I'm engaged in Ko, so  
To embrace you would be oh, so  
Wrong, and I suppose you know so;  
We could only gain more woe so --

[BOTH:]

Ko so, oh so, know so, woe so!

[TWENTY-KYU:]

So, in spite of all temptation  
I will calmly play a threat;  
And on no consideration  
Will I let you sit and fret!

Let me my intentions show --  
I will surely win this ko!  
This ko, this ko, this ko, this ko --

[They kiss, in a to-and-fro, ko-like motion]

[BOTH:]

This ko, this ko, this ko, this ko!

YUM-YUM: [some time later] And you didn't even say atari!...

[Exeunt, in opposite directions.]

[Enter KO-KO.]

KO-KO: There she goes! My wife to be! Only the best clam-shell for me! . . . [Enter TWO-DAN and OKI-DANGO] Now, what do you want? Can't you see that I'm busy soliloquizing and apostrophizing and metaphorizing -- or is it simulating? Anyway, what do you want?

OKI: [Aside, to TWO-DAN:] More like dissimulating, I think!

TWO: I bear a message from the Honorable Honinbo.

KO: What can the Honinbo want with me ...I haven't heard from him since he appointed me TD Ex-Officio. [Reads letter.] Oh-oh, here we are! He says he's upset that in the year since my appointment, not one player has been forfeited -- he orders me to find a player to make an example of, this player is not only to be suspended from all aspects of the game for a month, but at the end of that period, I'm to give proof that he's been beheaded! And by me -- the Lord High TD! Otherwise, our city is out of the tournament league, and I'm out of a job (which means a new TD would sentence me!) .

TWO: But that would mean ruin for all of us!

KO-KO: Yes...particularly me! I guess I'll just have to find someone to suspend... who would you suggest?

OKI: Well, it may be indelicate to raise the matter, but since you're already under an, er... suspended sentence yourself, you would seem to be the logical candidate.

KO-KO: Nonsense. I can't very well suspend myself -- why, the moment I began to pronounce the sentence, I'd lose my right to pronounce it -- the Honinbo explicitly says "suspended from all aspects of the game". I suppose that includes refereeing, don't you?

TWO: There's some logic in that.

KO-KO: Exactly. And our Honinbo is nothing if not logical. And besides, I'd have to execute myself at the end of the month, and we all know suicide is illegal (and damned inconvenient as well, I'd say!) No, no, it'll have to be someone else... We need a substitute... OKI, I hereby appoint you Lord High Substitute...

OKI: I would naturally be delighted if only I could accept such an exalted appointment, but I fear I must draw the line on my insatiable ambition at this point. Besides, the city could hardly afford to lose all its appointed officers!

[TRIO -- KO-KO, OKI-DANGO and TWO-DAN]

KO-KO:	OKI-DANGO:	TWO-DAN:
My brain it teems	I am so proud,	I heard one day
With endless schemes--	If I allowed	A shodan say
Both new and old,	My family pride	That sacrifices
Both calm and bold;	To be my guide,	Are devices
But if I quit,	I'd gladly say	Most useful if
The benefit	'Suspend my play	The fighting's stiff,
That I'd diffuse	Instead of yours,'	When a vital group
The game would lose.	But that ignores	Is in the soup;
Now every man	That family pride	If this is true,
Who's worth his dan	Must be denied	It's jolly for you;
Should plot and plan	And set aside	Your courage screw,
As best he can,	And mortified	Bid us adieu,
And so,	And so,	And so,
To show	Although	We'll know
My love of go,	I love my go,	Your love of go --
I'll just reflect,	And greatly pine	How much you care.
Be circumspect,	To brightly shine,	I'm quite aware
And not neglect	And take the line	It's your affair,
To thus effect	Of a hero fine,	Yet I declare
This aim direct,	With grief condign	I'd take your share,
So I object --	I must decline --	But I just don't dare -
So I object --	I must decline --	I just don't dare --
So I object --	I must decline --	I just don't dare --

[ALL:]

To sit in sullen silence by a big brown ban,  
In a claustrophobic clubroom with a frightful fan,  
Observing other players as they shout "san-san!",  
And not even be permitted to protest their plan!

[Then to sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,  
In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,  
Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,  
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!]

KO-KO: This is just appalling (or at least most unappealing): I, who have been generous to a fault - possibly to several faults -- with my talents, am now to die within a month, and at the hand of someone I've never hurt, never said a harsh word to, never even harbored an ill thought for! What am I to do?

[Enter TWENTY-KYU, a rope in hand.]

KO-KO: What's that?

TWENTY: [In a hollow voice.] This, sir, is a ko threat.

KO-KO: [Taking a step back.] Watch your language! That's an unlucky phrase for a man with a name like mine ...and at the moment I have all the ill luck I can use! What are you going to do with it?

TWENTY: End my life, as you are to wed the woman I love!

KO-KO: End your life! Isn't that rather .. final?

TWENTY: That it is, but I'm determined: no YUM-YUM, no hope; no hope,  
no life!

KO-KO: But suicide is illegal, and I'm sworn to punish any lawbreaker. And if you commit this act, I'll hardly be in a position to suspend you! I mean, you'll be in no position to be suspended ...oh, hang it! Wait a minute ...are you absolutely determined to put an end to yourself?

TWENTY: Absolutely.

KO-KO: [Rubbing his hands.] Then let me offer an alternative. This city finds itself in need of a vic-...er, a volunteer to be executed at the end of a month. If you volunteer, you will be assured of dispatch with no fuss or bother on your part, and you'll have a final month to enjoy life! And we'll make sure you enjoy that month to the fullest! How about that?

TWENTY: [Absent-mindedly playing with the rope.] Let me get this straight -- if I volunteer, you'll arrange my execution in a month, and give me everything I desire for the next month? Is that right?

KO-KO: Right!

TWENTY: Then I want YUM-YUM: I'll marry her today, and we'll have a blissful month together! Then I'll perish.

KO-KO: YUM-YUM! That's asking rather a lot! And I was to marry her today myself.

TWENTY: She'll be a widow in a month -- you can marry her then. No YUM-YUM, no execution.



KO-KO: You drive a hard bargain ...but, considering the alternative, I accept.

TWENTY: Done. But you must say nothing of this to YUM-YUM.

KO-KO: Depend on me. She'll not hear of it from me.

[Enter CHORUS, TWO-DAN and OKI-DANGO]

## FINALE

[CHORUS:]

It puzzles us;  
Though filled with dread,  
We're curious --  
Who'll soon be dead?

Whose life you'll wreck --  
What soul so sorry --  
Whose gentle neck  
You'll soon place in atari!

KO-KO: Gentlemen! I've found a way! I could have told you so!

TWO: Congratulations! Only tell us what we want to know:

OKI: Who from the Ju-ban-go's go-ban KO-KO's go ban bans go?

KO-KO: [Presenting him.] 'Tis TWENTY-KYU!

ALL: Hail TWENTY-KYU!

KO-KO: I think he'll do?

ALL: Yes, yes, he'll do!

[KO-KO:]

He yields his life if I'll YUM-YUM surrender,  
For a month, no more, to TWENTY's passion tender --  
I could not yield my own dearest clam shell  
Her sacrifice,  
See her wed twice,  
Loved I not my own life ten times as well!

[Enter YUM-YUM, PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH']

[ALL:]

Ah, yes!  
Loved he not his own life ten times as well!

KO-KO: [to TWENTY-KYU] Take her -- she's yours!

[Exit KO-KO]

[ENSEMBLE]

2OK: The semeai has been postponed --  
YUM: The threatened ko-fight we bemoaned;  
2OK: And though our group is in a squeeze,  
YUM: We've yet a bunch of liberties!

[TWENTY-KYU, OKI-DANGO, TWO-DAN, YUM-YUM, PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH':]

Then let the stones  
Begin their dance;  
With joyous tones  
They strike the bans,

[CHORUS:]

With happy snap and solid crack,  
We'll strew the board, before -- snapback!

AJI: A stone, a string, a group, a game --  
YUM: Oh fleeting fame, oh fleeting fame!  
OKI: Life's yose moves come much too soon --

AJI: Joseki is a honeymoon!

[ALL:]

Then let the stones, etc.

[SOLO -- OKI-DANGO:]

As in a month you've got to die,  
If KO-KO tells us true,  
'Twere empty compliment to cry  
'Long life to TWENTY-KYU!  
But as one month you have to seek  
Ko threats against KO-KO,  
This hopeful maxim we will speak:

"Long life" -- instead of ko!

[CHORUS:]

May all good fortune smile on you,  
May you have power, and thickness too;  
And when the semeai is through -  
"Long life" -- instead of ko!

[Enter KATSURA, melodramatically.]

KAT: Your revels cease! I cannot be ignored!

[CHORUS:]

Why, who is this whose wooden stare  
Casts evil aji everywhere?

AT: I claim my TWENTY-KYU, my secret lord!  
Oh, fool, to shun security and wealth!

CHORUS:

Go, this is naught we can afford!

KAT: Come back, oh, shallow fool, come back to health!

HORUS:

Away, away thou pitted board!

WENTY: [Aside to YUM-YUM:]

Ah!

Tis KATSURA!

The maid of whom I told you.

[TWENTY-KYU makes to leave with YUM-YUM. ]

AT: [Detaining him.]

No!

You must be mad!

To wed her will destroy you!

[KATSURA: to TWENTY-KYU]

No link, to aid you

In making life;

No base, have made you

With her as wife!

No eyes, to save you  
From sure defeat;  
No ko, though crave you  
And sore entreat!  
Downfall, disgrace --  
No link, no base!  
Alas, oh, woe!  
No eyes, no ko!

[CHORUS:]

KATSURA, scorned, would have you so:  
No link, no base, no eyes, no ko!

[YUM-YUM: to KATSURA]

Blunt nose, that knoweth  
Tesuji's sting;  
Red ear, that showeth  
Awakening --  
False eye, that faileth  
To save a life;  
False heart, that wailleth  
'I am his wife!  
No threat or fear --  
Blunt nose, red ear,  
Will make us part --  
False eye, false heart!

[CHORUS:]

YUM-YUM, stung, won't see them part --  
Blunt nose, red ear, false eye, false heart!

[AJI-KESH':]

Begone, you cannot win your aim -  
Now come what may, you've lost the game;  
You cannot will it!  
No matter what, your next ko threat,  
With calm indifference will be met:

He's going to fill it!  
For he's going to tenuki in ko -  
ALL;]                      ho! ho!

AJI:]  
Your anger's annoying  
While we're all enjoying --  
think you had better just go -  
ALL:] ho! ho!

AJI:]  
And turn to Mah-Jong or shogi.  
I suggest you abandon the show --  
[ALL:] ho! ho!

[AJI.]  
If you try for a seki  
You'll find when you check he  
Will still be ahead, don't y'know?  
[ALL:] ho! ho!

[AJI:]

After taking account of komi.

[ALL:]

I think you had better just go, etc.

[SOLO -- KATSURA]  
The hour of sente  
Is dead and gone  
And with it went a  
Last trace of dawn;  
The move I cherished  
In gote lost,  
And as it perished  
Alas, I pay the cost;  
Oh, faithless one, who hides behind a pose,  
And insults me, my ears, my eyes, my nose!  
I'll set the stage for your defrocking!

[20K:] Now comes the price!  
[KAT:] Prepare yourselves for news most shocking!  
[20K:] Ruin in a trice!  
[KAT:] No kyu is he; he dwells in limbo:  
[YUM:] Take my advice!  
[KAT:] He is the in--  
[ALL:] O! Me ari me nashi, oh, no!

[KAT:] In vain you interrupt, with arms akimbo:  
He is the insei of your -  
[ALL:] O! Me ari me nashi, oh, no!  
[KAT:] I'll spoil --  
[ALL:] O! Me ari me nashi, oh, no!  
[KAT:] He is the in--  
[ALL:] O! Me ari me nashi, oh, no!  
[KAT:] Insei of your --  
[ALL:] O! Me ari me nashi, oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no!

[ENSEMBLE]

KATSURA:

Now stones be smashed!  
Bowls split and crack!  
I will strike back?  
Savor the chuban; yose soon  
Will bring revenge, and TWENTY's  
doom!  
Prepare for woe,  
Ye dans and kyus:  
To HONINBO  
I shall accuse!  
My lid with captives shall resound!  
  
My lid with captives shall resound!

OTHERS:

Your threats so rash  
Let armies clash  
Of white and black;  
The game will end this afternoon,  
As marriage grants this pair its  
boon!  
Away you go --  
Curse as you choose;  
Such greed, you know  
Can only lose!  
In wedlock he and she, once  
bound,  
Vast territories will surround!

[KATSURA rushes furiously upstage.]

[END OF ACT I]

## ACT II

[SCENE -- KO-KO's garden. YUM-YUM is seated at her go-ban, surrounded by the other neophytes, who are helping her lay out a position.]

### **SOLO -- AJI-KESH' and CHORUS of NEOPHYTES**

[CHORUS:]

Play the ebon stone --  
Made of polished slate --  
On the go-ban lone --  
Partners to await.  
Now the clam-shell bright  
Joins it on the ban --  
Both their shapes are light;  
The opening is on!  
Art and Science, thus combine  
True joseki to define!

[SOLO -- AJI-KESH':]

As the stones are played,  
Each one has a plan --  
Tricks and traps are laid --  
Avoid them if you can!  
Territ'ry's exchanged:  
Influence for power;  
Complications ranged  
With each passing hour.  
You'll discover all too soon  
That joseki's a honeymoon!

[CHORUS:]

Play the ebon stone, etc.

[Exeunt PEEP-SO, AJI-KESH' and CHORUS]

Here I am with this go-ban and these stones, on the very day of my wedding. They say the entire world is reflected in a game of go...but sometimes I think my own self is reflected in the stones themselves.

### **SONG -- YUM-YUM**

Clam shell, so bright,

So pearly white,  
A treasure from the oceans  
Deigns not to hide  
His glossy pride;  
He scorns such silly notions!  
He would not stay  
All rough and gray  
And lumpy on the beaches:  
His polish high,  
He comes to lie  
Within the go-ban's reaches!

Like shell of finest grade,  
I'll shine as well;  
We know how this game's played,  
Me and clam-shell!

Observe her fate  
The stone of slate,  
The earth's own favorite daughter;  
She knows her place  
Is nothing base:  
A thousand men have sought her!  
So, cool and dark,  
She makes her mark  
On go-bans made of kaya;  
From nature mined --  
Polished, refined --  
She rises ever higher!

And though it might not strike  
You so to state --  
We're very much alike,  
Me and the slate!

[ENTER PEEP-SO and AJI-KESH']

YUM-YUM: How happy I am? To marry today the man I love best! Life is like a perfect game of go?

PEEP: Indeed, nearly perfect...

YUM-YUM: nearly perfect?

PEEP: Well, there is the matter of TWENTY-KYU's impending execution at the end of the month...sort of puts a time limit on the game!

AJI: Indeed. And no overtime...



YUM-YUM: Sudden [sob] death!

PEEP: Precisely.

[ENTER TWENTY-KYU and GO-TO]

Why, what's the matter?

YUM-YUM: You're going to be beheaded!

AJI: Chopped off!

PEEP: Cross-cut!

True, the notion does cast a slight shadow over the festivities ...but a month's a long time ...I'll find a way out; some clever tesuji. Meanwhile, let's enjoy our wedding day!

PEEP: That's the spirit. Just forget he's to be beheaded.

AJI: Chopped off!

PEEP: Cross-cut!

YUM-YUM: Oh, all right. I'll try. Let's play a game together.

### **MADRIGAL -- YUM-YUM, TWENTY-KYU and GO-TO**

Loud resounds our opening play --  
Joyfully shimaris making!  
Soon, oh! soon, oh! patterns breaking;  
No book moves to guide our way!  
When we build our moyos hollow,  
Uchikomi's sure to follow.  
Though a tocsin sounds, the clock:  
Tick, tock! Tick, tock!  
Yet until the flag shall fall,  
Into overtime and all,  
We'll continue with the brawl!  
So-ka!, So-ka! etc.

Let us try a ko fight here;  
Though the minutes fast are creeping,  
As a ko-threat I am peeping,  
Leaving you a cut to fear!  
Tit-for-tat won't make me sorry --  
Let it be furikawari!  
Listen to the timepiece mock:  
Tick, tock! Tick, tock!  
What, though now the flag must fall  
Sooner, later, after all --  
We'll continue with the brawl!

So-ka! So-ka! etc.

Now, with precious seconds left --  
Where there's life there's hope remaining,  
So, another ko ordaining,  
I prepare my stroke most deft:  
My final span the clock doth swallow,  
Like the sword so soon to follow;  
Hinting at the chopping block:  
Tick, tock! Tick, tock!

Just before the flag's to fall --  
Triple ko will stun them all,  
force them to annul the brawl!  
So-ka! So-ka! etc.

YUM-YUM: [EMBRACING TWENTY-KYU] Oh, how clever! If only real life were so simple!

[Exeunt AJI-KESH' and GO-TO ENTER KO-KO]

KO-KO: Go on -- don't mind me.

TWENTY-KYU: But we must be paining you!

KO-KO: Oh, I'll get used to it.

YUM-YUM: And [Alas!] it's only for a month.

KO-KO: When it comes to that, I have some glad news and some sad news for you two. Which would you like first?

TWENTY-KYU: Give us the sad news first; it can hardly make things worse, and we'll have the glad news to cheer us up.

KO-KO: Alas, I will never be able to marry YUM-YUM!

[TOGETHER:]

20K: What!            YUM: I'm so glad!

TWENTY-KYU: But what's happened? And what is the glad news?

KO-KO: Oh, that. You'll be pleased to hear that you and YUM-YUM won't be separated after all at the end of the month.

YUM-YUM: They've rescinded his execution!

KO-KO: No, no, but we've discovered that by the Honinbo's law, when a married man is executed, his wife is buried alive with him.

[TOGETHER:]

YUM: Buried alive! 20K: Buried alive!

KO-KO: Buried alive. It's a most unpleasant fate. [ASIDE: If this were a different parody, I'd call it smothered mate!] But you have the consolation that you'll be together.

TWENTY-KYU: But this is terrible! There must be something we can do!

YUM-YUM: TWENTY...darling...about the wedding plans...I hope you see that this does rather change things...that is...

[TRIO -- YUM-YUM, TWENTY-KYU and KO-KO]

Here's a How-de-do!

[YUM-YUM:]

Here's a how-de-do!

If I capture you,

When your time has come to perish

Then the group I dearly cherish

Must be slaughtered, too!

Here's a how-de-do!

[TWENTY-KYU:]

Here's a pretty mess!

In a move or less,

I must die: no compensation

Do I get: what devastation!

Witness my distress!

Here's a pretty mess!

[KO-KO:]

Here's a state of things!

To her life she clings!

A sacrificial ritual motion

Has no place in her devotion:

Burial it brings!

Here's a state of things!

YUM-YUM and TWENTY-KYU:

Territory that's immense

I covet and desire,

But discretion now makes sense;

I'd better just retire --

To capture you is rash --

I'd turn my game to hash!

KO-KO:

Territory that's immense

You covet and desire,

But discretion now makes sense;

You'd better just retire --

To capture would be rash --

It'd turn the game to hash!

YUM-YUM: Oh, bother! I wish this day had never dawned. Every time I'm to be married, something dreadful is attached. Either death . . . [to KO-KO] or you!

KO-KO: [ASIDE: I've been compared to prettier things!] Well, you know what they say...early to wed, early too wise!

[EXIT YUM-YUM]

TWENTY: Farewell!

KO-KO: Why, where are you going?

TWENTY: To end it all. No YUM-YUM, no hope; no hope...

KO-KO: no life; I remember. But you can't do that -- you promised I could execute you! If I don't, my own head's back on the block!

TWENTY: I'm afraid that's no concern of mine.

[ENTER OKI-DANGO]

OKI: The Honinbo approaches, with his retinue!

KO-KO: The Honinbo! This is it! There /must/ be an execution!

TWENTY: [laying his head on the go-ban] Then do it now!

OKI: Chop him up! Make two ten-kyus of him!

KO-KO: I don't believe I asked your advice ...No, I can't... I've never executed anyone. I was planning to work up to it...start with hamsters and work my way through the animal kingdom up to twenty-kyu players. [ASIDE: That shouldn't take long!] I'm just not prepared.

TWENTY: Then it's you they'll chop in two.

OKI: Then they can just call him Ko!

KO-KO: This will never do . . . I've got a notion! All the Honinbo's edict called for was proof that there'd been an execution...I'm judge, jury and executioner, and you, OKI, are all the honorable witnesses one could ever hope to find ...just notarize us a statement that TWENTY-KYU has been duly executed, and we'll send him away!

TWENTY: No YUM-YUM...

KO-KO: Oh, bother YUM-YUM! You can have YUM-YUM ...OKI, go fetch her.

[EXIT OKI-DANGO:]

Take YUM-YUM and marry YUM-YUM, only go away and never come back again.

[ENTER OKI-DANGO with YUM-YUM.]

Here she is. YUM-YUM, do you have five minutes? Would you like to marry this fellow?

YUM-YUM: But burial alive? Suffocation and destruction?

KO-KO: Forget all that, just do as I say. Now, run along. Here comes the Honinbo!

[EXEUNT TWENTY-KYU and YUM-YUM]

KO-KO: Not a minute too soon. Make sure that execution certificate is ready, OKI, and make it convincing!

[OKI-DANGO EXITS.]

[ENTER THE HONINBO, with RETINUE and KATSURA]

### **March of the Honinbo's Groups**

Ikken-tobi, ikken-tobi  
Ishi-no, no shita-ni  
Dame dame suru nobi  
Tenuki  
Doko nadare nadare na?

DUET -- HONINBO and KATSURA

[HON:] From every kyu and dan  
True reverence I expect;  
I'm Honinbo of the ban --

[KAT:] And I'm the jotter-of-laws select!  
His insei he'll wed  
(Though his ears turn red!)  
To the jotter-of-laws select!

[HON:] My logic has been declared  
Particularly correct

[KAT:] But it's nothing at all compared  
To the jotter-of-laws select!  
Bow -- Bow --  
To the jotter-of-laws select!

[HON:] In a fatherly kind of way,  
I've made her the architect  
Of the rules that govern play --

[KAT:] I'm his jotter-of-laws select!  
As hard as a stone  
With a mind of her own  
Is his jotter-of-laws select!

[HON:] My shape is sabaki-light;  
My freedom from all defect --

[KAT:] Is insignificant; quite,  
Compared with the jotter-of-laws!  
Bow -- Bow --  
To the jotter-of-laws select!

[ALL:] Bow -- Bow --  
To the jotter-of-laws select!

SONG -- HONINBO and CHORUS

A more precise Honinbo never  
Held the game in thrall --  
To nobody second,  
I'm certainly reckoned  
Impeccably logical!

It is my very precise endeavor  
To make, to some extent,  
Each sinning player  
A brand new purveyor  
Of riotous merriment.

My Purpose I exhalt;  
Distraction will not halt --  
To make the penalty fit the fault --  
The penalty fit the fault;  
Each perpetrator bent  
Unwittingly represent  
A source of innocent merriment,  
Of innocent merriment!

The casual player who enters a match,  
And then decides to drop,  
Is forced to play  
Eight rounds a day  
'Neath the watchful eye of a cop!  
And tournament sharps, too clever by half  
Who beneath their ranks do play  
Are sent to the delta  
From flooding to shelter  
With sand-bags night and day!

The joseki hound, who's eager to lecture,  
Although you've heard it before  
Is made to redact  
His speech as a tract  
Until he is thoroughly bored.  
The roku-dan who shuns teaching games  
Encounters an odd mishap;  
He's paired each night

With a neophyte  
At a twenty-stone handicap!

The player who takes back his moves --  
His doom's extremely horrid:  
He's made to play,  
For a year and a day,  
On an n-dimensional board.  
And the one who takes his move back twice  
His doom is even worse;  
Both night and day,  
To simuls play  
Blindfolded is his curse.

The player who dumps his ashes in  
The lids of his go bowls  
Is made to play,  
It's sad to say,  
With stones of burning coals  
And the kibitzer who makes commentaries,  
His fate's too grim to tell:  
Every flaw in his life  
They dissect with a knife  
For a thousand years in Hell!

KO-KO: I am honored by your presence, sensei. I want to assure you, I have faithfully obeyed your edict, and an execution has just taken place!

HONINBO: Oh, you've had an execution have you?

KO-KO: Yes, indeed, following the usual ritual last game. Here is the Dismembership Secretary's certificate -- witnessed by the Appeals Committee, and the ranking heads of all the major committees.

HONINBO: Hmm. Must have been quite a crowd!

KO-KO: Indeed, it was massive. And he put up quite a fight.

HONINBO: Tell me about it.

### **TRIO and CHORUS -- KO-KO, AJI-KESH' and OKI-DANGO**

[KO-KO:]

His group cried out, he ran for the edge,  
For eyes he gamely tried --  
With a wicked, winged warlike wedge  
I barred him from the side.  
I chased him out -- he ran away --

And sprawled across the board,  
As he squirmed and wriggled,  
And jittered and jiggled,  
I drew my magic sword.  
Oh, never shall I  
Forget the cry  
Or the clatter of stones that roared  
As I jumped and capped  
And once I'd trapped  
Him, drew my magic sword.

[CHORUS:]

We know his way,  
He cannot play  
Bad aji or bad shape;  
He always tries  
to make false eyes,  
But somehow life he'll scrape.

[AJI-KESH':]

He shivered and shook as he prepared  
For the throw-in, extend and squeeze --  
But as he had one eye, he dared  
Like some acrobat on a trapeze  
To threaten escape, with sabaki shape,  
And anikken-tobi played;  
But the cutting stones  
Cut short his groans  
And ended his escapade.  
When a group's alone  
And its fate is known

Some compensation's great --  
So I'm glad to say  
He found a way  
To profit from his grim fate.

[CHORUS:]

Her terrible tale  
You can't assail,  
With truth it quite agrees:  
Her taste exact  
For faultless fact



Amounts to a disease.

[OKI-DANGO:]

For though you'd have said that his group was dead  
(For it plainly lacked two eyes)  
It raised up its cyclopean head  
And gave us a surprise.  
It was none of your shabby, off-hand moves;  
But as bold as ever could be --  
For he clearly knew  
The deference due  
To a mass of bad aji!  
He started a ko  
With a clever blow  
And with ko-threats one-two-three,  
He sealed his fate,  
But not too late  
To wrest another group free!

[CHORUS:]

This dumpling shape  
Can't stoop to jape;  
The solemn truth speaks he.  
And in this case,  
It all took place  
From one to quarter-past-three!

HONINBO: This is all rather interesting, and I'd have liked to see the entertainment, but I come on other business. A year ago, my most gifted insei, heir to my title, disappeared from our court.

KO-KO: Indeed! What reason had he to flee?

KATSURA: None whatsoever. On the contrary, I was to wed him!

OKI: How could he leave such loveliness?

KATSURA: Oh, I know you don't think I'm attractive. You think I'm a played-out game. But I have my qualities. My elbow tesuji is exceptional, and I have some unusual knight-moves.

OKI: Indeed!

KATSURA: And yet he fled!

HONINBO: And now he is hiding in this town, disguised as a twenty-kyu.

KO-KO, AJI-KESH', and OKI-DANGO [TOGETHER]: A twenty-kyu!

HONINBO: Yes -- in fact, that's the name he goes by: TWENTY-KYU. Would it be asking to much for you to find him?

KO-KO: I -- er -- believe he's departed.

OKI: Or at least parted.

KATSURA: [READING THE EXECUTION CERTIFICATE] Ah! What's this? You've cut my lover's head off! The insei and heir!

[KO-KO, OKI-DANGO and AJI-KESH' fall to their knees.]

HONINBO: You don't say. In your haste to comply with my edict, you've executed the heir to my title. Well, well.

KO-KO: Allow me to be the first to offer my condolences. Of course, had we known...

HONINBO: Of course. But you didn't.

OKI: No.

HONINBO: Well, it's unfortunate, but I understand, It's a logical error, and I'm nothing if not a logical man. No use crying over spilt blood, and all that.

KO-KO: We're very much obliged, sensei.

OKI: Indeed, much obliged.

AJI: Very much obliged.

HONINBO: Don't mention it. Now all that remains to be taken care of is the punishment.

KO-KO, OKI and AJI: [TOGETHER] The punishment?

HONINBO: Yes, for effecting the death of the Honinbo's heir. Something lingering, I think -- perhaps it was eating go stones 'til you burst or strangle ...would you prefer clam-shell or slate?

KO-KO: But can't we talk about this?

HONINBO: Not after the first few hundred, I'd imagine. Well, we'll work out the details after lunch. Will you join me?

OKI: I don't feel like lunch.

HONINBO: I quite understand. It's an unjust world. Someone really ought to do something about it.

**[AJI-KESH', KATSURA, KO-KO, OKI-DANGO and HONINBO]**

[HONINBO:] See how the fates their gifts alot --  
For A is honte -- B is not.  
Yet B is worthy, I dare say,  
Of greater territ'ry than A!

[KO, OKI and AJI:]

Is B more worthy?

[KAT:] I should say  
It's worth a great deal more than A.

[ALL:] Yet B is honte,  
Truly honte,  
Lightly, Ho! ho!  
Brightly, Ho! ho!  
Oh, so rightly, Ho! ho! ho!  
Ever honest, ever brave --  
Honte, sente saving A!

[KO, OKI and AJI:]  
If I were Fortune -- which I'm not --  
B should enjoy A's honte spot,  
And A'd be miserable aji  
That is, assuming I play B.

[HON and KAT:]  
But should A suffer?

[KO, OKI and AJI:]  
So say we --  
(Of course, assuming we play B).  
B should be honte,  
Truly honte,  
Lightly, Ho! ho!  
Brightly, Ho! ho!  
Oh, so rightly, Ho! ho! ho!  
But condemned to gote's he  
Wretched, meritorious B!

[EXEUNT HONINBO and KATSURA]

KO-KO: Well, a fine mess you've gotten us into, with your certificate and your corroborative details!

AJI: What about you with your magic sword?

OKI: No use feuding. There's only one thing to do: TWENTY-KYU must be resurrected. Here he comes now.

[ENTER TWENTY-KYU and YUM-YUM, prepared for a voyage.]

KO-KO: TWENTY-KYU! I've good news for you! You're reprieved!

TWENTY-KYU: Too late for that; I'm dead and married, and better off that way. If I came back to life, KATSURA would have YUM-YUM here beheaded just to marry me.

KO-KO: But good sir, isn't there any way?

TWENTY-KYU: One way, I suppose. You could persuade KATSURA to marry you -- then I'd be free to reappear.

KO-KO: Marry KATSURA! That's rather hard to swallow!

OKI: No harder than a few hundred go stones! Your choice is clear!

TWENTY: It comes to this: While KATSURA is single, I prefer to remain a happily married corpse. If KATSURA weds, life will again be as welcome as a flower-watching ko.

### **DUET -- TWENTY-KYU and KO-KO**

[TWENTY-KYU:]

The ko-threats that bloom on the board,  
Tra la,  
Breath promise of profit to be --  
And every one I can afford,  
Tra la,  
And I promise I've got quite a hoard,  
Tra la,  
Brings victory closer to me.  
And that's what I thought when I carefully scored  
The ko-threats remaining all over the board --  
Tra la la la la, etc.

[ALL:]

Tra la la la la, etc.

[KO-KO:]

The ko-threats that bloom on the board,  
Tra la,  
Have nothing to do with the case;  
I'm going to be tied with a cord,  
Tra la,  
To a woman who can't be implored,  
Tra la,  
With a katsura-ban for a face!  
And that's why I say, whether whispered or roared,  
'Oh, bother the ko-threats that bloom on the board!'  
Tra la la la la, etc.

[ALL:]

Tra la la la la, etc.

[EXEUNT TWENTY-KYU, YUM-YUM, OKI-DANGO, AJI-KESH' and KO-KO]

[ENTER KATSURA]

**RECITATIVE and SONG -- KATSURA**

One eye, and yet by double-ko alive;  
Barren, for points in seki do not thrive --  
Remote the surcease death alone can give --  
My doom, to wait! My punishment, to live!

Enclosed, no break --  
They cannot take --  
I merely quake,  
But do not die.  
Kos witnesseth,  
Though near to death,  
I have for breath  
A single eye!

Oh, single eye!  
Come, tell me why,  
When hope is gone,  
Dost thou stay on?  
Why linger here,  
Where all is drear?  
Oh, single eye!  
Come, tell me why,  
When hope is gone,  
Dost thou stay on?  
May not a seki simply die?

KO-KO: [Approaching timidly]. KATSURA!

KATSURA: The fiend who robbed me of my love! But you'll soon rue it -- they're preparing the stones!

KO-KO: Mercy, KATSURA, let me open my heart to you!

KATSURA: Mercy? Did you show TWENTY-KYU mercy? He chose another over me, but I loved him still. He thought me unappealing, but KATSURA is solid and lasting. I was even thinking of having myself refinished for him! Now, where shall I find another?

KO-KO: Here! here!

KATSURA: Hear, hear?

KO-KO: No, no! I mean, KATSURA, I love you! I have doted on you for years -- for too many years. For more years than I want to imagine. I once had a chance to speak to you, but I was too timid; I missed my move, and my game was ruined. My life has never been the same -- that's the source of all my airs and pretensions.

KATSURA: I can't believe you! No-one's life was ever ruined by a single bad move.

KO-KO: NO? Listen:

### **KO-KO's Song**

On a chair by the go-ban a kibitzer sat

Saying "Fill-oh, just fill-oh, just fill-oh!"

I said "Kibitzer, what makes you think I'd do that?"  
"I won't fill-oh, won't fill-oh, won't fill-oh!"  
"Is it weakness of intellect, buddy?" I cried,

"Or a kadoban lost that has wounded your pride?"  
With a shake of his poor little head, he replied,  
"Just fill-oh, just fill-oh, just fill-oh!"

He slapped at his brow, as he sat there and said  
"Just fill-oh, just fill-oh, just fill-oh!"  
And a cold perspiration bespangled his head,  
Saying "fill-oh, just fill-oh, just fill-oh!"  
He sobbed and he sighed as he saw how I played;  
My enemy took; what a price I had paid!

My ko threat was bogus; the group that I'd made

He could kill-oh, could kill-oh, could kill-oh!  
Now I feel just as sure as I'm sure that my game's  
Turned to jell-o, to jell-o, to jell-o

That 'twas pure affectation that made him exclaim,  
"Oh well-oh, oh well-oh, oh well-oh!"  
And if you remains callous and obdurate, i

Shall die like my group, always wondering why  
A player so clearly inferior should cry

"Just fill-oh, just fill-oh, just fill-oh!"

[During this song, KATSURA has been greatly affected, and is nearly in tears.]

KATSURA: Did you really wish to speak up, then?

KO-KO: As if my life depended on it.

KATSURA; And how long ago was this?

KO-KO: Oh, ten or twenty years -- I was just a boy, of course, but you were just as magnificent then as you are today!

KATSURA: And you've harbored these feelings for me all these years?

KO-KO: What I feel for you can hardly be put in words!

KATSURA: And you won't hate me because I'm a little, well, hard?

KO-KO: There's a beauty even in hardness.

KATSURA: My feeling exactly.

### **DUET: KATSURA and KO-KO**

[KAT:] There is splendor in a sudden semeai,  
When you finally find a way to make it die,  
After everything is ended,  
And your prisoners appended,  
You luxuriate in triumph by and by!

[KO:] Yes, I'm really not offended  
When those dead stones are up-ended  
I'll luxuriate in triumph by and by!

[KAT:] There's excitement in a ko fight deftly won,  
Finding ko-threats where you thought that you had none,  
Your opponent says atari,  
You accept furikawari,  
And emerge with greater profit when its done!

[KO:] Yes, I'll rarely say 'I'm, sorry'  
For dispatching with a quarry  
And emerging with a profit when its done!

[BOTH:]  
If that is so,  
Sing cherry bowl, cherry!  
It's evident, very,  
Our tastes are one.  
Away we'll go,  
And merrily marry,  
Not tardily tarry  
Till day is done!

[KO:] There's enjoyment in a yose monkey-jump,  
Keeping sente, you make eight points in a lump;  
And if you can find another,  
With more monkey business, brother,  
You can bury your opponent in the dump!  
[KAT;] With one sente move or other,  
Your opponent you can smother,  
And leave him deeply buried in the dump!

[KO:] There is pleasure in an ancient, pitted ban,  
And the go stones cracked and, chipped played thereupon,  
For, though mind you I'm not whining,  
I can't help but keep opining,  
It'll be that much less time before they're gone!  
[KAT:] If for YUM-YUM you are pining,  
You'd best leave off such designing;  
It'll be a good long while before I'm gone!

[BOTH:]  
If that is so,  
Sing cherry bowl, cherry!  
It's evident, very,  
Our tastes are one.  
Away we'll go,  
And merrily marry,  
Not tardily tarry  
`Till day is done!

[EXEUNT TOGETHER]

[ENTER the HONINBO, attended by TWO-DAN and his retinue]

HONINBO: Now, then. We've had a delicious lunch, and we're quite ready. Are the stones present?

TWO: Present.

HONINBO: Plentiful?

TWO: Plentiful

[ENTER KO-KO, KATSURA, OKI-DANGO and AJI-KESH']

KATSURA: [Throwing herself at the HONINBO's feet.] Mercy! Mercy for KO-KO, mercy for AJI-KESH'; mercy even for OKI-DANGO.

OKI: Even?

HONINBO: What's this?



KATSURA: My husband-to-be is dead, so I have wed KO-KO.

HONINBO: Rather quick business, eh?

KO-KO: We were married by the Registrar.

OKI: I am the Registrar.

HONINBO: I see. But, logically, since my heir is dead... j

[ENTER TWENTY-KYU and YUM-YUM]

TWENTY: The heir is not dead.

HONINBO: I say, my insei!

YUM-YUM: And your insei-in-law, as it were!

OKI: If you ask me, we've had enough insane laws!

KATSURA: Traitor! You've deceived and betrayed me!

HONINBO: Yes, there does appear to have been a bit of confusion...

KO-KO: You see, sensei, your original edict demanded proof that a miscreant had been executed -- not an actual execution. And being gentlemen, we didn't want to harm anyone -especially a player as obviously noble as your insei, even if we didn't realize that he was your insei at the time.

OKI: And I just added some details from the ritual game -- we had to have a ritual game, of course; no certificate without a game -- mere corroborative details intended to lend artistic verisimilitude . . .

HONINBO: I see...most logical. And it seems that all the promised brides and grooms have been accounted for, in some order or other. Quite satisfactory, I'd say!

## FINALE

[AJI-KESH':]

For he's gone and tenuked in ko --

[ALL:] ho! ho!

[AJI:]

Your anger's annoying

While we're all enjoying --

I think you had better just go --

[ALL:]

ho! ho!

[AJI:]

And join our expressions of glee!

[KO-KO:]

Just accept that you've married KO-KO

[ALL:] ho! ho!

[KO-KO:]

If you try for a seki

You'll find when you check he

Will still be ahead, don't y'know?

[ALL:] ho! ho!

[KO-KO:]

After taking account of komi.

[ALL:]

I think you had better just go --

ho! ho!

Just accept that you've married KO-KO --

ho! ho!

If you tire of him shortly,

You'll find, if you're courtly,

There are plenty more stones in the bowl!

[YUM-YUM and TWENTY-KYU]

20K: The semeai has been postponed --

YUM: And brightly shine the shell and stone --

20K: What, though the game must surely end --

YUM: We've moves aplenty yet to spend!

[ALL:]

Then let the stones

Begin their dance;

With joyous tones

They strike the bans,

[CHORUS:]

With happy snap and solid crack,

We'll strew the board, with white and black!