

### Hana-arasoï (Dispute over “flower” versus “cherry blossom”)

On a pleasant spring day, the lord plans a flower-viewing excursion and invites Taro-kaja to accompany him. Taro-kaja gladly accepts the invitation, but protests that it ought to be phrased as cherry-blossom-viewing, the actual business being the appreciation of cherry blossoms, not flowers. A dispute breaks out over the accuracy of the term, the lord standing by “flower” and Taro-kaja by “cherry blossom.” Each tries to defeat the other by reciting old *waka*-poems on “cherry” and “flower.” After a long dispute, Taro-kaja inadvertently recites verses including “cherry” which, however, is immediately followed by “flower”; and he loses his ground, as is his wont.

Old poems on flowers, recited one after another, radiate a wonderful aura of petals dancing over the stage.

### Yuya

Yuya, a mistress of Taira-no-Munemori in the golden days of the Heike clan, is kept in his palace at Rokuhara, Kyoto. Her old mother who lives at Ikeda, Shizuoka Prefecture, falls ill and letters arrive about the serious nature of the illness. But as she cannot obtain leave to go home, her concern about her mother’s health daily increases, when a woman messenger called Asagao arrives to tell her of her mother’s critical condition. At this sad news Yuya shows Munemori her mother’s letter, and begs him for leave to visit her mother, but he refuses. It is a cherry blossom season, and he is thinking of a cherry-viewing excursion to Kiyomizu. Asked to accompany him, she cannot but obey, but she was in no mood for pleasure-going. At Kiyomizu, she enters a temple and prays that her mother’s life will be preserved. While praying, she is called away to the banquet under the cherry blossoms and serves her lord with drinks and dancing performances. Suddenly there comes a wind and shower, and the petals of flowers begin to fall. Yuya receives those petals with her fan, seeing in them the precarious life of her mother. She composes a *waka*-poem and presents it to Munemori.

I know not what to do;  
Reluctant though I am to leave behind  
The spring of Kyoto, the flowers of my familiar east  
May have gone and are no more.

The lord, feeling much sympathy for her, gives her leave to go home at once. Yuya cannot thank him enough and gladly travels towards the east to see her mother at Ikeda.

The point worth noting in the play is in its second half where Yuya dances superbly, masking her melancholy by seeming to enjoy the season.

(Takao Saijo)