

An Old Nun Names a Young Man
(*Bikusada*)

Oryo, the Nun
Father
Son

FATHER I am a resident of this neighborhood. I have one son. As today is a most auspicious day, I have decided to take Sonny to visit the nun Oryo and have her place the ceremonial lacquer hat of adulthood on his head. First I will call Sonny and inform him of this my intent. (He crosses downstage left as the SON crosses to upstage right.) Sonny, are you there? (Facing the SON.)

SON (Facing the FATHER.) Here.

FATHER There you are.

SON At your service.

FATHER The matter I have called you here about is of no great import. As you have finally reached adulthood, I want to take you to the nun Oryo, and have her place the ceremonial lacquer hat of adulthood on your head. What do you think?

SON If that is what you wish, I will comply.

FATHER Then go get the bamboo wine flask.

SON As you say. (He gets the wine flask and returns.) I have brought the wine flask.

FATHER Then let us set out. Come, come, let's be on our way.

SON With all my heart.

FATHER (They set out on their trip, circling the stage and the bridgeway in single file.) Well now, the nun Oryo is blessed with both long life and honor, and everything else this world has to offer. Thus I advise you to take her as an example for attaining good fortune for your own life.

SON As you say.

FATHER Well now, after she places the ceremonial lacquer hat of adulthood on your head, you must take care in all things you do, so you be as well-behaved as possible.

SON With all my heart.

FATHER Well, here we are already. First I will announce myself. You wait over there.

SON As you say, Father.

FATHER Hello in there? Are you at home, Oryo?

ORYO Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

FATHER It is I.

ORYO Oh, Someone (the name of the actor playing the FATHER.) You have come to see me, you have come to see me. First, come all the way inside.

FATHER With all my heart.

ORYO Well, I must say, how unusual! For some time past, you have not once visited me. I was just saying to myself that you must have forgotten old Oryo completely. And what wind blows you here today?

FATHER Truly, you have every reason to be angry with me, but for one reason and another, the world has kept me so busy that I have not been able to find a free moment to visit you.

ORYO I can truly understand how the world has kept you so busy that you have not been able to find a free moment to visit me. But what have you come to see me for today?

FATHER Today, I have brought Sonny to visit you.

ORYO You say you have brought Sonny to visit me?

FATHER Indeed I have done so.

ORYO Oh, where is he?

FATHER I left him to wait outside your gate.

ORYO Oh, what a thing to do. How could you leave such a small child outside all alone? Call him to come in quickly.

FATHER With all my heart.

ORYO Call him quickly.

FATHER Ha. (To the SON.) Come, come. Come on inside.

SON With all my heart.

FATHER Well, here is Sonny.

ORYO Well, well, is this Sonny?

FATHER That he is.

ORYO Oh, I am so glad you came, so glad you came. Since the last time I saw you so long ago, you have grown very large, have you not? If I had seen you somewhere else, I would not have recognized you.

FATHER (Offering **ORYO** a gift.) This is in gratitude for the hospitality you have extended to Sonny today.

ORYO Why, I am happy just to see him. What need have I of any other gift? Well, I must say, how big you have grown. Do you still call him Sonny?

FATHER Well, that is what we have come about. Since he has rapidly grown up, I feel that it is not proper to continue forever calling him Sonny. Thus as today is a most auspicious day, I came to have you place the ceremonial lacquer hat of adulthood on his head.

ORYO Oh, what foolish things you say. Such ceremonies as placing the lacquer hat of adulthood on a man's head or celebration of attainment of an official position are things that men do. I have no knowledge at all of how to do such things.

FATHER I understand well your objections, but Sonny himself says that he wants you to do the ceremony for him, so I earnestly beg you to comply.

ORYO Oh, I say, what is that you say? You say that Sonny himself wants me to do the ceremony for him?

FATHER He does indeed.

ORYO Well, well, how sweet of him to say so, how sweet of him to say so. Then shall I just do what I can to do the ceremony for him in the hope that he will take this Oryo who is blessed with both long life and honor, and everything else this world has to offer, as an example for attaining good fortune in his own life?

FATHER For that I would be most grateful.

ORYO Do you have any preference as to the name I give him.

FATHER I have no particular preference, But the men's names in our family have always ended with Taro down through many generations.

ORYO Truly, when you were a child, you were called something-or-other-Taro, were you not?

FATHER You have a fine memory.

ORYO Taro. . . Taro. . . No matter how much I think, I do not think I will come up with anything better. People call me Oryo because of this hut in which I live, so how about using the Chinese reading of the character for my name and call him Antaro?

FATHER That is a fine name. (To the SON.) Here, here, she has given you the name Antaro to use from now on.

SON I am most grateful.

ORYO Well, does he like it?

FATHER He appears to like it.

ORYO Whoever else may not like it, as long as he likes it, I am happy. Well now, at times such as this, I have heard that men give their son's

swords or daggers. But since I do not own any such things as that, in celebration, I will give now him two hundred and fifty barrels of rice

FATHER I thank you heartily for this. Here, here, in celebration, she says she now gives you two hundred and fifty barrels of rice. Thank her for it.

SON I am most grateful.

ORYO He has become so well behaved, and he has expressed his gratitude most politely.

FATHER While you are at it, I would be most grateful if you could add some more ground to his name?

ORYO For Antaro, I would give anything at all that I might have, but I do not own so much as a single acre of land.

FATHER I did not mean that sort of ground, what I meant was to add a bit more to his name.

ORYO What's that? You want a bit more added to his name?

FATHER Most certainly.

ORYO I have just given him a name, so have some man give him another.

FATHER It will only be a good name if it is one you give him. Please give him one more name.

ORYO Since you insist, I cannot refuse. I will see what I can do to give him one more name.

FATHER I humbly beg you to do so.

ORYO I have heard that families have a number of names that they pass down through the generations. Do you have such names in your family?

FATHER Indeed, our family has also used the name Sada down through the generations.

ORYO Sada. . . Sada. . . Now matter how long I ponder on it, I will not come up with anything better. Another name people often call me is Nun Biku. So how would it be if I add this Biku to Sada and give him the name Bikusada?

FATHER I thank you heartily for this. Here, here, Oryo has given you another name and it is Bikusada. Thank her for it.

SON I am most grateful.

ORYO He likes this name too, and he has expressed his gratitude.

FATHER That he has.

ORYO In celebration of this, I now give him eight hundred pounds of gold.

FATHER I am most grateful, but as you gave him such a huge amount of rice earlier, I feel I cannot accept this gold.

ORYO Oh, but you must keep it in trust for him, that it may provide the means for him to live a long and prosperous life when he is fully grown.

FATHER For this I thank you heartily. (To the SON.) Here, here! In celebration of the other name she has just given you, she has presented you with eight hundred pounds of gold. Thank her for it.

SON I thank you time and again for all you have done for me.

ORYO Oh, I congratulate you. Now bring out that wine flask you brought with you and let us drink in celebration.

FATHER With all my heart.

ORYO Here, Antaro! From now on you must listen well to all you father says, you must work hard on your penmanship, and you must obey your parents in all things

SON I will with all my heart.

FATHER I have opened the wine flask.

ORYO Oh, you have brought out your favorite big wine cup.

FATHER Please drink from it.

ORYO I will drink first as a gesture of congratulations.

FATHER That is a fine idea. (He pours for ORYO.)

ORYO Oh, it is full, it is full! (She drinks.) Mmmm. What fine wine! It has a particularly delicious flavor.

FATHER Does it not?

ORYO I would like to pass the cup to you next, but as today's celebration is for Antaro, I now pass the cup to him.

FATHER I am most grateful. (To the SON.) Receive the cup and drink.

SON As you say.

ORYO Oh, the boy is a good drinker.

FATHER He does indeed appear to be a good drinker.

ORYO As they say, eggplants do not grow on melon vines. So as he is your son, how could he not be a good drinker?

FATHER Well now, while I realize how rude it may seem, he says he wants to pass the cup to you once more.

ORYO Oh, please pass it to me.

(The **FATHER** pours for **ORYO**, and he and his **SON** sing a drinking song as she drinks.)

ORYO When men sing, the song becomes brilliantly celebratory.

FATHER That it does indeed.

ORYO Well now, your son used to dance when he was little. Does he still dance now?

FATHER Indeed he does still dance a little now.

ORYO Ask him to do a dance in celebration.

FATHER With all my heart. (To the **SON**.) It is her desire that you dance.

SON I will with all my heart. (He sings and dances.)
All beneath heaven, to the sea's rough waves,
Our loving emperor pacified;
He built his nation on a foundation like iron;
He laid down wide roads for even such as we
Who travel in a wheel barrow;
This peaceful land is his very shadow.
Who has the right to say we must depart?

ORYO Oh, how skillful, how skillful. It appears that you have taught him with enthusiasm, for Antaro's dancing has improved greatly.

FATHER I think you grossly overpraise him, for his dancing is very poor indeed.

ORYO I have finally managed to empty the cup, so I pass this cup to you.

FATHER And I receive it.

ORYO Antaro, pour for your father.

SON I will with all my heart. (He pours.)

FATHER Well, I have received a full cup. Oryo, I have a small request to make of you.

ORYO What is it?

FATHER I have not seen you dance for quite some time. I would be most grateful if you would do a dance for me.

ORYO What's this? You are asking me to do a dance for you?

FATHER That I am.

ORYO Oh, how frightful, what a frightful thought. When did you ever see this Oryo dance?

FATHER I do clearly remember that you danced one time some time ago.

ORYO Oh, but that was indeed a very long time ago. What a good memory you have. Well then, since today is such a celebratory

one, would it be all right with you if I recall something from the past and dance it for you?

FATHER For that I would be most grateful.

ORYO Then you sing to accompany me.

FATHER I will with all my heart.

(ORYO dances.)

**Kamakura lady, you're all decked out for travel,
Skirts tucked up high showing chilled ankles,
Soft cloth covers your delicate hands,
Utsunomiya sedge hat set
Smartly on your head,
Dressed so fine
You set out on your way.
Set out early on your way,
Celebrating the good day ahead.**

FATHER Well done, well done.

ORYO Oh, how embarrassing, how embarrassed I am. You must promise absolutely not to tell anyone that I danced for you.

FATHER Oh, no never. I will not tell anyone.

ORYO Antaro, you must not tell anyone either.

SON As you say.

FATHER Oh, how meek and lovely you are.

ORYO What about me is meek and lovely?

FATHER Well now, while I realize how rude it may seem, I pass this

cup to you.

ORYO Please pass it to me.

(The FATHER sings as he pours the cup full for ORYO.)

ORYO No matter how often I hear singing, I never weary of it. How cheerful music is.

FATHER That it truly is.

ORYO (She drinks.) Well, now I pass this cup to Antaro.

FATHER I am most grateful.

ORYO Tell him to have another cup.

FATHER As you say. (To the SON.) Receive the cup once more.

SON With all my heart.

FATHER (He pours for ANTARO.) Well, now Antaro's cup is full. (To ORYO.) The dance you did before was far too short, so I would be most grateful if you would dance a longer dance for me.

ORYO Oh, what is this? You say you want me to dance more?

FATHER Yes.

ORYO Oh, how persistent you are. Even the dance I did before, I was barely able to manage. Please allow me not to dance any more.

FATHER I understand your feelings on this matter, but there is a thing here that must be considered. Before you danced for me over my full cup of wine, so if you do not drink for Antaro also over his full cup of wine, what disappointment will his tender heart feel? While I

realize what a great imposition it is, I would be most grateful if you would dance just one more dance for him.

ORYO Well I must say, you put things so skillfully into words that you make it quite impossible to refuse your requests. Since, after all, today is a most celebratory occasion, and since I am a bit drunk on your wine, I will dance a longer dance in honor of the day. You sing, please, to accompany me.

FATHER I will with all my heart.

ORYO (Singing and dancing.)
I say, how unusual, how very unusual,

FATHER & SON (Singing.)
From the ancient past up unto this very day
This is the first time a nun has ever said the words and
Placed the lacquer hat of adulthood on a young man.

ORYO (Singing.)
As head priestess, I possess great wealth,

FATHER & SON (Singing.)
As head priestess, I possess great wealth,
Temple and hermitage,
Much gold and plentiful food,
And being so very rich in things,
It is my custom to receive from and give things
To all my parishioners.
So as celebratory gifts today,

ORYO (Singing.)
Two hundred bushels of rice,

FATHER & SON (Singing.)
Plus eight hundred pounds of gold,

And the name Bikusada.

Speaking thus the head priestess, bids us a fond farewell,

Speaking thus the head priestess, bids us a fond farewell,

And enters into her hermitage sleeping chamber.

(Source: *Kyogen Shusei*, 394-397, Nogaku Shorin, Tokyo, 1974)