

A Lesson Plan for  
*The Twilight Crane*  
by Junji Kinoshita

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Wooster, OH  
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Grade 9  
English 9 (with inclusion options)  
4 Days (50 minute periods)

## I. Summary

*Twilight Crane*, a contemporary Japanese play by Junji Kinoshita, begins when a group of children arrive at the isolated country hut of Yohyo, a peasant. They are regular visitors because Yohyo's wife Tsu will good-naturedly play with them and sing, even now in the snowy winter. They wake the sleeping Yohyo, and though he grouches at them, he comes out to play when they cannot find Tsu because she has gone out. When she does return, Yohyo lovingly persuades her to join him with the children.

Conflict arrives with the appearance of the remaining two characters who are men from the village: Sodo, who hopes to persuade Yohyo to let him broker the fine cloth Tsu weaves, and Unzu, who is Sodo's sidekick, and previously has purchased this fine cloth. They barge right into the unoccupied house and only apologize when Tsu finds them. They question her about the fantastic cloth—could it be the famed semba ori (made from 1000 feathers plucked from a live crane), but she appears not to understand, and flutters, birdlike, away.

Sodo and Unzu want Yohyo to make Tsu weave more cloth, but he has noticed that every time she weaves she becomes thinner. They wonder at his luck in getting Tsu as his wife and find that she arrived at his door one night and has been loving wife since then. Sodo recalls to himself a folktale about a man helping a crane once. The crane became the man's wife in gratitude. Could this folktale be happening in real life?

Because of Sodo's promise of more money than he has ever imagined and travel to Tokyo, Yohyo persuades Tsu to weave more cloth, even though he had promised she would not need to do so. She knows she is losing her simple husband to the greedy villagers. She agrees to weave again, and reminds Yohyo he must NEVER look in on her while she is weaving.

Sodo and Unzu have been hiding nearby. When they see Tsu has gone to her weaving, they rush to find Yohyo. Sodo intentionally breaks the "no look" rule and peeps into the weaving room where he sees a crane weaving in place of Tsu. Unzu and then Yohyo also peek.

When Tsu emerges very thin and weak, she has made not one, but two beautiful pieces of cloth. She knows he has broken the "no look" promise also. She tells him she has lost most all her feathers and now has just barely enough to allow her to fly back. She asks him to keep one piece of cloth because she has made it for him with her heart (not for material gain). Tsu disappears from the stage just as the children come once again to play. One of them sees a crane flying away in the distance.

## II. Historical/Literary Context

*Twilight Crane's* author Junji Kinoshita (1914–2006) bases this example of contemporary Japanese theatre on the Japanese folk tale "The Crane Wife." *Yuzuru* (Japanese title) was first presented in 1949. Due to increased wartime censorship, he had departed from more traditional historical/contemporary themes and began to develop a new genre of folk plays. *Yuzuru* is

arguably his most prominent (Kinoshita). Actress Yasue Yamamoto performed the lead role in 1949 when *Twilight Crane* was first produced. Both she and Kinoshita received national awards, and in 1952 when the play was again performed, accolades increased, which was also a boon to her company Budo no Kai, for which he also became a leader (reader). Others would adapt the script into opera and Noh play (Keene 483). (See Huffman chapter 6 for additional background on Japanese history of this time period.)

Later, Kinoshita and *Twilight Crane* would come under fire due to his leftist ideology. In the early 1980's a school textbook company which had been planning to use the play for an elementary level text succumbed to political pressure to remove the selection--due to both the selection itself and the author's reputation. Opponents of the play inclusion objected to its "anti-capitalist" theme. Only due to press articles and public protest did the censorship not take place (Nobuyoshi).

After the wartime era Kinoshita returned to historical and contemporary themes including war guilt and humanity being held accountable for its actions. He continued as a playwright until the late 1970's. Additionally he is well known as a translator of Shakespeare and other western playwrights and as a theatre essayist. Finally, he is a famed student of the Japanese language itself (Kinoshita)

### III. Discussion Questions and Answers

(see **Appendix 1** for classroom handout)

#### QUESTIONS

1. What references/foreshadowing are present in the children's games in the opening scene?  
*Eiderdown cover/quilt from song (reference to down used for human covering); bird in a cage game (later Tsu physically is the bird that is trapped)*

2. Compare/contrast the characters of Sodo and Unzo.  
*Compare-Both characters are greedy and want to take advantage of Yohyo's simplemindedness; in fact, Unzo already had made money from the first piece of cloth.*

*Contrast-Sodo is the leader of the two, with bigger plans. Sodo is also derogatory from his first appearance, calling Yohyo stupid (139), he is the first to peep in on Tsu weaving, and he derides Unzu for having compassion for Yohyo at the end. Unzu is more a reflection of a "negative Yohyo" — a bumbling fool.*

3. Why has Tsu come to be wife to Yohyo?  
*When Tsu was a crane Yohyo found her wounded by an arrow. He removed the arrow and let her fly away. She arrived out of gratitude. She believes he is different from other men because of his kindness to her.*

4. Why does Tsu make the first cloth?  
*Tsu makes the first cloth to provide income sufficient so that Yohyo does not need to struggle to survive.*

5. Explain what **sempra ori** is and how it is made.

*Sempra ori* is a rare, fine cloth made from crane feathers. It is made by plucking 1000 feathers from a live crane and weaving them on a loom into the cloth.

6. Identify multiple descriptions/comments of Tsu in human form that suggest her animal form.

*p. 140- "looking at him with her head on one side like a bird" and "with a fluttering movement";*

*p. 141- "she looked just like a bird ;*

*p. 157- "I have used all my feathers...";*

*p. 158- "I can no longer remain a human being."*

7. On one hand, Tsu speaks the language of the men. Yet, she also comments that she does not understand the words of "terrible" men. How can this be?

*Tsu understands everyday language and the language, words and actions of love; she does not comprehend the greediness of humans, taking more than they need. She does, however, sense the evilness of what she does not understand.*

8. In the play, Sodo is the only character aware of the folktale upon which the play is based. Find evidence to support this statement. Why is the ignorance of Yohyo and Unzu significant?

*Sodo is the character that mentions the story first on p. 141 after he has noticed the presence of a feather in the weaving room when he enters it the first time. He mentions the story to Unzu.*

*Unzu is so unnerved that Sodo then lies to Unzu and tells him there is really no such story. This provides exposition for the reader, but does not enlighten the other male characters. As for Yohyo, he spends all night and day looking for Tsu AFTER he has seen the crane weaving the cloth.*

9. How does Yohyo change after he sells the first cloth?

*At first Yohyo is happy to have sold the cloth; he has been a hard worker, and having money now he can rest in his hut; he only desires more money after Sodo and Unzu persuade him he needs more. Then he goes to Tsu for more even though he has promised not to request cloth. He wants money to travel to the capital. Due to peer pressure from Sodo and Unzu, he is infected with their greed.*

10. Which characters provide comic relief? Identify examples.

*Unzu—when he is scared by the folktale crane story Sodo tells; when he almost (Sodo stops him) tells Yohyo the true value of the cloth*

*Yohyo—when he doesn't "order" Tsu to make cloth, but meanders around the request; when he verbally argues with himself whether to look at the crane in the weaving room.*

11. Why does Yohyo break his promise not to ever look in on her while she is weaving?

*After Sodo and Unzu peek, Unzu announces there is a crane in the room. This wonder is too great for Yohyo to resist.*

12. Why does Tsu want Yohyo to remain in the country hut with her, avoiding Sodo and Unzu--and the capital?

*Tsu hopes that if she can just keep Yohyo away from people like Sodo and Unzu, who represent corrupt society (on several levels), they will remain happy together.*

13. Would it make any difference if Yohyo were rich instead of being a peasant? Explain why or why not.

*Answers will vary. Some students may believe so; others will point out that flaws in human nature allow for greed, or the fact that the isolation Tsu craves is not realistic.*

14. Tsu agrees to make one more cloth, but actually presents Yohyo with TWO. Explain her initial reason for agreeing to weave another piece. At what point do you think she decided to make the second, and why would she make this decision?

*Answers may vary. Tsu originally decides to make another cloth to make Yohyo happy and keep him with her; at the end she presents him with two, one for him to keep, which she may have decided to make after she found he had peeked into the room.*

15. What is the significance of the children returning to play in the final scene?

*The children's reappearance brings the cycle of the play back to the beginning and emphasizes the loss of the happiness, love and inner beauty of Tsu.*

16. Will Yohyo sell Sodo the final cloths Tsu has woven? Why or why not?

*Answers will vary. Students may argue that Yohyo again will be persuaded by the others, (even though we do see sadness in Unzu); others may argue he will keep one as Tsu had requested; idealists may believe he has "learned his lesson" and will keep both.*

17. Does Yohyo ever realize who Tsu is? Explain.

*Answers will vary. Yohyo does not understand what has happened at the end of the play. The play takes place over a short amount of time. Students may argue he will understand when he has a chance to think. Others may see him as needing someone to explain, or never really knowing.*

18. Explain a major theme of *The Twilight Crane*.

*Possible themes: man's greed destroys nature; man's greed destroys happiness/natural balance; society corrupts the individual; wild animals cannot thrive in captivity; capitalism corrupts society; and there may be others.*

\*19. What political and social factors would be present in Japan during WWII that would prompt the author Junji Kinoshita to turn to folktales for inspiration as opposed to the historical or contemporary ideas he had used previously?

*Adapting a folktale would be considered a "safe" or culturally acceptable topic at this time.*

*Promoting a political stance, historic or contemporary, would be dangerous in the war climate unless it rubber stamped official government ideology. Since Kinoshita's personal political beliefs did not mimic Japan's, his prudent or self-preservation choice was to select a non-political subject.*

\*20. This play was almost censored from a Japanese elementary school text in the early 1980's due to political concerns. Modern Japan is a capitalist society; some politicians viewed the play

as Marxist. Use your knowledge from World Studies class to infer the controversy regarding this censorship issue.

*Some Japanese politicians saw the play as a condemnation of Japan's capitalist society because the author was known to have leftist (Marxist) leanings (Alvis).*

\*21. How had Japan's political and economic climate changed so significantly between the WWII era and the 1980's that the subject of a folktale went from being considered politically "safe" to igniting the censorship controversy of the 1980's?

*Japan had moved cataclysmically through the frenzy of world war, atomic disaster, reconstruction, and an eventual embracing of capitalism. Its fear of socialism and/or Communism was increased by the proximity of North Korea and the USSR.*

\*22. Review the definition of the term **allegory**. *The Twilight Crane* could be read as a "destruction of innocence" allegory on a couple different levels. Select ONE of the following to show your understanding of the term.

- \*Explain how *The Twilight Crane* could be viewed as a **political allegory regarding censorship in question 20**.
- Compare to the Bible's *Garden of Eden* story. Be sure to include which characters from the play would represent which biblical characters.
  - *Allegory—a story or poem where the characters, settings and/or events stand for other people, events, situations or ideas. An allegory has at least two meanings: the literal one from the surface story and symbolic one, used to teach a moral or lesson.*
  - *\*Political allegory—This would be the 'capitalism corrupts society' theme: due to the capitalist greed of Sodo and Unzu, Yohyo is corrupted and so loses his blissful life with Tsu in which they had communally lived happily together. (See Nuboyoshi citation for related activity. This article would be an excellent addition for discussion with upper level classes.)*
  - *Eden allegory—Yohyo loses his Eden/paradise/Tsu when he allows Evil (Sodo/Unzu) to tempt him to break the one rule Tsu has while weaving. When he does, he loses her/paradise forever.*

\*23. What is the significance to Japanese culture that this folktale uses a crane as the specific type of bird to become the woman character in the story?

*In Japanese culture the crane is a well-known symbol of honor and loyalty. Tsu represents an honorable and loyal wife in that she loves and cares for her husband, acquiesces to his wishes when he reneges on his promise, and even provides for his future living needs when she must leave him again for the animal world.*

\*denotes question linked to social studies-cultural, political, or economic forces

#### IV. Activities

Although this plan is written for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, it can easily be adapted for higher levels. Use the question bank to select appropriate discussion questions. Adjust reading and discussion complexity as needed. Inclusion classes may need more structure as noted. Higher-level classes

may want to compare/contrast various versions of this folk tale. See Quiring in the citation section for copies of different versions.

### Day 1

Prior to start of lesson, post Japan-related posters, artwork, etc., strategically around the room. Take time to point out to students as they enter, and answer queries as needed. What do students really know about Japan during WWII. Generate discussion from their questions and comments. Remind them, as with all societies, of the importance of understanding the culture from which authors drawn inspiration and ideas for their work. Have *Modern Japan: A History In Documents* by James L. Huffman (applicable pages earmarked) available for interested students.

Poll the class to identify their familiarity with live theater and discuss. What do students know about Japanese theatre? Offer as extra credit research options topics from the play and the Japanese theatre topics listed in **Appendix 2** to be due by Day 3.

Introduce *The Twilight Crane*, explaining it is an adaptation of a Japanese folk tale. Also verbally present highlights of the introductory material included with the play. To give students an idea of the beauty of a Japanese crane, show the brief video clip *Dance with Japanese Cranes* via infocus projector (approximately 3 minutes).

<http://in.youtube.com/watch?v=MFtOcixOhXM>. Pass out copies, assign parts and begin reading in class. Complete reading for homework. (Inclusion class option-may not want to give as homework, but finish reading the next day.)

### Day 2

(Inclusion class may need to finish reading.) View the following web cast performance of *The Twilight Crane*, which is approximately 7 minutes in length.

<http://in.youtube.com/watch?v=gS8bYiKG19U>. Class will then discuss similarities/differences with play version they have read. How does seeing a performance differ from reading the lines? Do stage directions play a big role in this play? Explain.

Activity: In pairs, take turns pulling single questions made from the question bank out of a hat and answering for class. (Hold the social studies linked questions for separate discussion.) This activity may be done in teams and awarding points. If done as a game, have students pull questions individually. Also, the **theme** question may be used more than once.

Pass out a master sheet of questions to students and have them jot down answers as a review to be completed by tomorrow. Remind students that the extra credit is due tomorrow, too.

### Day 3

Ask students who have completed extra credit to report out to class. Teacher supplement as needed. (Give credit as desired.)

**Discuss the social studies-linked questions as a class, reemphasizing the relationship between literature and culture/events of the times.**

Activity: As a review before the culminating writing activity, complete Postcard Activity. Randomly pass out postcards from *The Art of Japan A Book of Postcards* and/or *Mount Fuji A Book of Postcards* (see citations; books available at Indiana University Art Museum). A combination of pictures, photos, or artwork from magazines or the web will also work. Put students in groups of four and give them three minutes to get creative and put themselves into order, using postcards as visuals, which will allow them to retell key events in the play. The groups then rotate through each other using the postcards to enhance their review.

Ask students to hold their question sheets for tomorrow.

#### Day 4

Writing Assignment: Complete a 1-2 page response to the following prompt: Put yourself in the place of one of the characters of *The Twilight Crane* and explain **What Went Wrong** from your character's perspective.

Option: Students may use their completed Discussion Question sheet if they desire. For this assignment complete prewriting, rough draft and final copy. (Inclusion students may need more time.) Collect and assess according to school expectations. Discussion Question sheet may also be collected. If you have a class that enjoys listening to music while they work, treat them to the "The Crane Wife" tracks from the album of the same name (Decemberists). See following sections for more information on this album.

## V. Connections To Other Literary Works

The following are options for additional or alternative lessons:

A. Previously mentioned items appropriate for more detailed or upper-level studies

- For study of multiple versions of the folk tale see Quiring materials in citations.
- censorship of literature in Japan use Nobuyoshi article from citations.

B. Explore the link between Kinoshita and Shakespeare. Kinoshita was a respected translator of the Bard; both drew upon existing materials as sources for acclaimed plays, etc.

C. Approach the study of *The Twilight Crane* from a mythology/folktale perspective, such as through a lesson regarding the commonality of folk themes, specifically man with animal/wife character in Japanese folk tales, as well as the relationship to music, lyrics and melodies.

Resource details are included in the citations.

- "Crane Woman 1 and 2" and "Crane Woman 3"-- Colin Meloy of the indie pop group The Decemberists was intrigued with the folktale who used multiple tracks to retell the story in an album of the same name (Decemberists)  
(lyrics in **Appendix 4**)
- Swans replace cranes as beautiful bird/human in Western content: note lyrics and music when applicable.
  - "Molly Ban" from album *Down the Old Plank Road* (Chieftains)
  - "She Moved Thru' the Fair" from album *Celtic Woman* (Celtic Woman Ltd.)



- “The Wild Swans” (Andersen)

## VI. Citations

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**VI. Appendix**

1. *The Twilight Crane* Discussion Questions Handout
2. *The Twilight Crane* Discussion Questions --separate answer key
3. Extra Credit Topics
4. Crane Wife 1 and 2 Lyrics
5. Crane Wife 3 Lyrics

**Appendix 1**  
**THE TWILIGHT CRANE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Per. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS**

1. What references/foreshadowing are present in the children's games in the opening scene?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Compare/contrast the characters of Sodo and Unzo.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why has Tsu come to be wife to Yohyo?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why does Tsu make the first cloth? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Explain what sempa ori is and how it is made.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Identify multiple descriptions/comments of Tsu in human form that suggest her animal form.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. On one hand, Tsu speaks the language of the men. Yet, she also comments that she does not understand the words of "terrible" men. How can this be?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. In the play, Sodo is the only character aware of the folktale upon which the play is based. Find evidence to support this statement. Why is the ignorance of Yohyo and Unzu significant?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. How does Yohyo change after he first sells the cloth?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which characters provide comic relief? Identify examples.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
11. Why does Yohyo break his promise not to ever look in on her while she is weaving?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
12. Why does Tsu want Yohyo to remain in the country hut with her, avoiding Sodo and Unzu--and the capital? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Would it make any difference if Yohyo was rich instead of being a peasant? Explain why or why not. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Tsu agrees to make one more cloth, but actually presents Yohyo with TWO. Explain her initial reason for agreeing to weave another piece. At what point do you think she decided to make the second, and why would she make this decision?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is the significance of the children returning to play in the final scene?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
16. Will Yohyo give Sodo the final cloths Tsu has woven? Why or why not?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does Yohyo ever realize who Tsu is? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

18. Explain a major theme of *The Twilight Crane*. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*19. What political and social factors would be present in Japan during WWII that would prompt the author Junji Kinoshita to turn to folktales for inspiration as opposed to the historical or contemporary ideas he had used previously?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*20. This play was almost censored from a Japanese elementary school text in the early 1980's due to political concerns. Modern Japan is a capitalist society; some politicians viewed the play as Marxist. Use your knowledge from World Studies class to infer the controversy regarding this censorship issue.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*21. How had Japan's political and economic climate changed so significantly between the WWII era and the 1980's that the subject of a folktale went from being considered politically "safe" to igniting the censorship controversy of the 1980's?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*22. Review the definition of the term **allegory**. *The Twilight Crane* could be read as a "destruction of innocence" allegory on a couple different levels. Select ONE of the following to show your understanding of the term.

- \*Explain how *The Twilight Crane* could be viewed as a **political allegory regarding censorship in question 20**.
- Compare to the Bible's *Garden of Eden* story. Be sure to include which characters from the play would represent which biblical characters.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*23. What is the significance to Japanese culture that this folktale uses a crane as the specific type of bird to become the woman character in the story?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*denotes question linked to social studies-cultural, political, or economic forces

## Appendix 2

### *The Twilight Crane* Discussion Questions --separate answer key

#### QUESTIONS

1. What references/foreshadowing are present in the children's games in the opening scene?
2. Compare/contrast the characters of Sodo and Unzo.
3. Why has Tsu come to be wife to Yohyo?
4. Why does Tsu make the first cloth?
5. Explain what **sempra ori** is and how it is made.
6. Identify multiple descriptions/comments of Tsu in human form that suggest her animal form.
7. On one hand, Tsu speaks the language of the men. Yet, she also comments that she does not understand the words of "terrible" men. How can this be?
8. In the play, Sodo is the only character aware of the folktale upon which the play is based. Find evidence to support this statement. Why is the ignorance of Yohyo and Unzu significant?
9. How does Yohyo change after he first sells the cloth?
10. Which characters provide comic relief? Identify examples.
11. Why does Yohyo break his promise not to ever look in on her while she is weaving?
12. Why does Tsu want Yohyo to remain in the country hut with her, avoiding Sodo and Unzu--and the capital?
13. Would it make any difference if Yohyo was rich instead of being a peasant? Explain why or why not.
14. Tsu agrees to make one more cloth, but actually presents Yohyo with TWO. Explain her initial reason for agreeing to weave another piece. At what point do you think she decided to make the second, and why would she make this decision?
15. What is the significance of the children returning to play in the final scene?
16. Will Yohyo give Sodo the final cloths Tsu has woven? Why or why not?
17. Does Yohyo ever realize who Tsu is? Explain.
18. Explain a major theme of *The Twilight Crane*.

\*19. What political and social factors would be present in Japan during WWII that would prompt the author Junji Kinoshita to turn to folktales for inspiration as opposed to the historical or contemporary ideas he had used previously?

\*20. This play was almost censored from a Japanese elementary school text in the early 1980's due to political concerns. Modern Japan is a capitalist society; some politicians viewed the play as Marxist. Use your knowledge from World Studies class to infer the controversy regarding this censorship issue.

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*The Twilight Crane* Discussion — separate answer key

## ANSWERS

1. Eiderdown cover/quilt from song; bird in a cage game (later Tsu physically is the bird in the game)

2. Compare-Both characters are greedy and want to take advantage of Yohyo's simplemindedness; in fact Unzo already had made money from the first piece of cloth. Contrast-Sodo is the leader of the two, with bigger plans. Sodo is also derogatory from his first appearance, calling Yohyo stupid (139), he is the first to peep in on Tsu weaving, and he derides Unzu for having compassion for Yohyo at the end. Unzu is more a reflection of a "negative Yohyo" — a bumbling fool.

3. When Tsu was a crane Yohyo found her wounded by an arrow. He removed the arrow and let her fly away. She arrives out of gratitude. She believes he is different from other men because of his kindness to her.

4. Tsu makes the first cloth to provide income sufficient so that Yohyo does not need to struggle to survive.
5. **Sempra ori** is a rare, fine cloth made from crane feathers. It is made by plucking 1000 feathers from a live crane and weaving them on a loom in to the cloth.
6. p.140-”looking at him with her head on one side like a bird,” and “with a fluttering movement”;  
p. 141-”she looked just like a bird”; p. 157-”I have used all my feathers...”; p. 158-”I can no longer remain a human being.”
7. Tsu understands everyday language and the language, words and actions of love; she does not comprehend the greediness of humans, taking more than they need. She does, however, sense the evilness of what she does not understand.
8. Sodo is the character that mentions the story first on p. 141 after he has noticed the presence of a feather in the weaving room when he enters it the first time. He mentions the story to Unzu. Unzu is so unnerved that Sodo then lies to Unzu and tells him there is really no such story. This provides exposition for the reader, but does not enlighten the other male characters. As for Yohyo, he spends all night and day looking for Tsu AFTER he has seen the crane weaving the cloth.
9. At first Yohyo is happy to have sold the cloth; he has been a hard worker, and having money now he can rest in his hut; he only desires more money after Sodo and Unzu persuade him he needs more. Then he goes to Tsu for more even though he has promised not to request cloth. He wants money to travel to the capital. Due to peer pressure from Sodo and Unzu, he is infected with their greed.
10. Unzu—when he is scared by the folktale crane story Sodo tells; when he almost (Sodo stops him) tells Yohyo the true value of the cloth;  
Yohyo—when he doesn’t “order” Tsu to make cloth, but meanders around the request; when he verbally argues with himself whether to look at the crane in the weaving room.
11. After Sodo and Unzu peek, Unzu announces there is a crane in the room. This wonder is too great for Yohyo to resist.
12. Tsu hopes that if she can just keep Yohyo away from people like Sodo and Unzu, who represent corrupt society (on several levels), they will remain happy together.
13. Answers will vary. Some students may believe so; others will point out that flaws in human nature allow for greed, or the fact that the isolation Tsu craves is not realistic.
14. Answers may vary. Tsu originally decides to make another cloth to make Yohyo happy and keep him with her; at the end she presents him with two, one for him to keep, which she may have decided to make after she found he had peeked into the room.



15. The children's reappearance brings the cycle of the play back to the beginning and emphasizes the loss of the happiness, love and inner beauty of Tsu.

16. Answers will vary. Students may argue that Yohyo again will be persuaded by the others, (even though we do see sadness in Unzu); others may argue he will keep one as Tsu had requested; idealists may believe he has "learned his lesson" and will keep both.

17. Answers will vary. Yohyo does not understand what has happened at the end of the play. The play takes place over a short amount of time. Students may argue he will understand when he has a chance to think. Others may see him as needing someone to explain, or never really knowing.

18. Possible themes: man's greed destroys nature; man's greed destroys happiness/natural balance; society corrupts the individual; wild animals cannot thrive in captivity; capitalism corrupts society; and there may be others

\*19. Adapting a folktale would be considered a "safe" or culturally acceptable topic at this time. Promoting a political stance, historic or contemporary, would be dangerous in the war climate unless it rubber stamped official government ideology. Since Kinoshita's personal political beliefs did not mimic Japan's, the prudent or self-preservation choice would be to select a non-political subject.

\*20. Some Japanese politicians saw the play as a condemnation of Japan's capitalist society because the author was known to have leftist (Marxist) leanings (Alvis).

\*21. Japan had moved cataclysmically through the frenzy of world war, atomic disaster, reconstruction, and an eventual embracing of capitalism. Its fear of socialism and/or Communism was increased by the proximity of North Korea and the USSR.

\*22. allegory-a story or poem where the characters, settings and/or events stand for other people, events, situations or ideas. An allegory has at least two meanings: the literal one from the surface story and symbolic one, used to teach a moral or lesson.

- Political allegory-This would be the 'capitalism corrupts society' theme: due to the capitalist greed of Sodo and Unzu, Yohyo is corrupted and so loses his blissful life with Tsu in which they had communally lived happily together. (See Nuboyoshi citation for related activity. This article would be an excellent addition for discussion with upper level classes.)
- Eden allegory-Yohyo loses his Eden/paradise/Tsu when he allows Evil (Sodo/Unzu) to tempt him to break the one rule Tsu has while weaving. When he does, he loses her/paradise forever.

\*23. In Japanese culture the crane is a well-known symbol of honor and loyalty. Tsu represents an honorable and loyal wife in that she loves and cares for her husband, acquiesces to his wishes when he reneges on his promise, and even provides for his future living needs when she must leave him again for the animal world.

\*denotes question linked to social studies

### Appendix 3

Extra Credit:

What is the significance of the crane to Japanese culture?

*The crane has long been a well-known symbol of loyalty and honor in the culture of Japan.*

What is eiderdown?

*Eider duck feathers, especially the extra soft breast feathers of the female eider duck*

See Quiring citation for detailed information on these forms of Japanese theatre:

Noh Theatre

Kyogen Theatre

Kabuki Theatre

Bunraku Theatre

## Appendix 4

## Crane Wife 1 and 2

It was a cold night  
 And the snow lay low  
 I pulled my coat tight  
 Against the falling down

And the sun was all  
 And the sun was all down  
 And the sun was all  
 And the sun was all down

I am a poor man  
 I haven't wealth nor fame  
 I have my two hands  
 And a house to my name

And the winter's so  
 And the winter's so long  
 And the winter's so  
 And the winter's so long

And all the stars were crashing 'round  
 As I laid eyes on what I'd found

It was a white crane  
 It was a helpless thing  
 Upon a red stain  
 With an arrow, its wing

And it called and cried  
 And it called and cried so  
 And it called and cried  
 And it called and cried so

And all the stars were crashing 'round  
 As I laid eyes on what I'd found

My crane wife, my crane wife  
 My crane wife, my crane wife

Now I helped her  
 And I dressed her wounds  
 And how I held her  
 Beneath the rising moon

And she stood to fly  
 And she stood to fly away  
 And she stood to fly  
 She stood to fly away

And all the stars crashing 'round  
 As I laid eyes on what I'd found

My crane wife, my crane wife  
 My crane wife, my crane wife

My crane wife arrived at my door  
 In the moonlight  
 All star bright and tongue-tied  
 I took her in

We were married and bells rang sweet  
 For our wedding  
 And our bedding was ready  
 When we fell in

The sound of the keening bell  
 To see its pain erect  
 Soft as fontanel, the feathers and the thread  
 When all I ever meant to do was to keep you

(cont.)  
 (Crane Wife 1 and 2 p.2)

My crane wife  
 My crane wife  
 My crane wife

We were poorly  
 Our fortunes fading hourly  
 And how she loved me  
 She could bring it back

(cont.)  
 But I was greedy, I was vain  
 And I forced her to weaving  
 On a cold loom, in a closed room

Down the hall

The sound of the keening bell  
To see its pain erect  
Soft as fontanel, the feathers and a thread  
When all I ever meant to do was to keep you

My crane wife  
My crane wife  
My crane wife

There's a bend in the wind and it rakes at  
my heart

There is blood in the thread and it rakes at  
my heart

Rakes at my heart, heart  
Heart, heart

Heart, heart  
Heart, heart  
Heart, heart

My crane wife

<http://music.yahoo.com/The-Decemberists/The-Crane-Wife-1--2/lyrics/39252425>

**Appendix 5**

**Crane Wife 3**

And under the boughs unbowed  
All clothed in the snowy shroud  
She had no heart so hardened  
All under the boughs unbowed

Each feather, it fell from skin  
'Til thread bare while she grew thin  
How were my eyes so blinded?  
Each feather, it fell from skin

And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low  
And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low

A gray sky, a bitter sting  
A rain cloud, a crane on wing  
All out beyond horizon  
A gray sky, a bitter sting

And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low  
And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low

And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low  
And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low

And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low  
And I will hang my head  
Hang my head low, low, low

<http://music.yahoo.com/The-Decemberists/The-Crane-Wife-3/lyrics/39250436>