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Family Plays

The Emperor's New Clothes

By
Judith Baker Kase



The Emperor's New Clothes

Fairy tale. By Judith Baker Kase. Based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen. Cast: 6m., 6w. The Emperor's New Clothes is a play in two acts based on the tale by Hans Christian Andersen as retold in Japan most delightfully and faithfully in the fashion of the Kabuki or Noh drama. Made thoroughly and appropriately Japanese, the beloved tale of the emperor is spiritedly brought to life and given further perspective in the Island Empire of Japan. Cynical courtiers and idealistic rogues act out their destiny to everyone's recognition and laughter. The result is an Oriental tapestry of theatrical pleasures. A platform stage. Approximate running time: 55 minutes. Code: E65.

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(THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

The Emperor of the Land of the Smiling Sun

The Empress

Gengo, Lord High General of the Imperial Guard

Minamoto, His Small Daughter

Mikilu, Minamoto's Cousin

Haiton, Lord High Supervisor of the Imperial Wardrobe

Takaguchi, An Ancient Traveler

Morotaka, His Companion

Keeper of the Stage

First Protector of Stage Properties

Second Protector of Stage Properties

Stage Musician

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

This play opened in the Hennessey Theatre at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire on December 9, 1966. The play was directed by Judith Baker Kase.

THE ORIGINAL CAST

The Emperor of the Land of the Smiling Sun — Duncan Tuiniga

The Empress — Linda Billings

Gengo, Lord High General of the Imperial Guard — Robert St. Cyr

Minamoto, His Small Daughter — Peggy Gordon

Mikilu, Minamoto's Cousin — Winnie Chapin

Haiton, Lord High Supervisor of the Imperial

Wardrobe — Dale Perry

Takaguchi, an Ancient Traveler — John Carmichael

Morotaka, His Companion — Harvey Campbell

Keeper of the Stage — Tinka Darling

First Protector of Stage Properties — Joanne Makris

Second Protector of Stage Properties — Maureen Carney

Stage Musician — Estelle Merchant

THE USF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE/LETTERS
EDUCATIONAL THEATRE

presents

1978 TOURING COMPANY

The Emperor	Fred Goodman
The Empress	Deborah Stull
Gengo, General of Imperial Guard	Richard Dittmar
Minamoto, his Small Daughter	Susannah Pels
Mikilu, Minamoto's Cousin	Carol Fisher
Haiton, Lord High Overseer of Imperial Wardrobe	John Huls
Takaguchi, an Ancient Traveler	Mary MacDonald
Morotaka, Takaguchi's Companion	Rosalind Kalinsky
Keeper of the Stage	Jill Pascouau
Stage Musician	Rebecca Grutman
Protector of Stage Properties	Regina Masem
Understudies	Rebecca Grutman Jill Pascouau
Artistic Direction	Judith Baker Kase
Scenery and Costume Design	Mary Delie Quigley
Company Manager	Richard Dttmar
Stage Managers	Carol Fisher Mary MacDonald
Technical Assistant	Carol Fisher
Production Manager	Fred Goodman
Music Director	Rebecca Grutman
Teacher Guidelines	Jill Pascouau Adreinne Baeder Rebecca Grutman
Program Design Cover	Cynthia Anderson
Costumes	Rosalind Kalinsky Susanna Pels
Scenery	John Huls Regina Masem

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TO ELIZABETH BAKER KASE
who introduced me and my family to
the wonderful world of children's
theatre.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

ACT I SCENE I

A platform stage, formal and highly theatrical in the style of either the Japanese Kabuki or Noh play or both.

MUSICIAN: *Low, resonant gong.*

The Keeper of the Stage and the two Protectors of Properties enter. The Protectors of Properties are dressed entirely in black. The Keeper of the Stage may be more elaborately costumed. They bow.

KEEPER: Ten thousand greetings. And welcome, O favored and most courteous of audiences. We come before you to offer our unworthy drama of "The Emperor's New Clothes." Those of you who read many good books will know that we have borrowed our presentation from a tale by a most honorable and exalted storyteller, Hans Christian Andersen. With your permission, I shall perform the lowly duties of Keeper of the Stage. My most trustworthy companions, here, shall serve you as Protectors of Stage Properties. [*THE PROTECTORS OF PROPERTIES BOW.*] We humbly request that no attention be paid to us whatsoever, for at most times and in all places we are of little importance, and you should think of us as being invisible. Our play has its place in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Gengo enters. Throughout this scene, he is in motion, crossing from one side of the stage to the other.

Please be so kind as to imagine that our opening scene will happen in the Imperial Corridor, half-way between the Imperial Chamber and the Imperial Court. [*The Keeper begins to follow Gengo.*] We are following General Gengo, who will

bring the Emperor's new Ceremonial Gown from the Imperial Wardrobe. [*Gengo remains, pacing back and forth. Exit keeper.*]

GENGO: [*To audience*] I am Gengo, Lord-High General of the Imperial Guard, the fiercest warrior in all the Empire. The many well-deserved ribbons I wear tell that I have fought and won ten thousand battles for his Imperial Majesty, Our Most Illustrious Emperor. Also, twice a week I give him exercises to keep him in trim. Because of my clever tactic of leading all charges from the safety of the Imperial Palace, I have survived 10,000 battles and his Imperial Highness has rewarded my valor by making me Protector of his Most Precious Person. Even now I am on my way to the Imperial Wardrobe to pick up this morning's first new ceremonial robe, which I bring into the exalted presence of his Majesty. Only I may be trusted with such an important duty. [*Starts to Exit.*] [*Keeper hands Gengo robe. He begins to exit, but freezes as Haiton begins to speak.*]

Enter Haiton, trying to catch up with Gengo.

HAITON: [*Sees audience, stops to address them before continuing to pursue Gengo*] We are Haiton, Lord High Overseer of the Imperial Wardrobe. Please forgive this individual elevation for not stopping. We must speak with General Gengo at once about a matter of most important vitality!

GENGO: [*Continues pacing*] Lord Haiton. I am on an Imperial errand. It is exactly one and one-quarter minutes from here to his Majesty's Chamber, and whatever you have to say had better take no longer than that.

HAITON: [*Barely able to keep up*] If you could see fit to stop for a moment, you might find out what we've

discovered! You could at least slow down a bit.

GENGO: A little regular exercise, Lord Haiton, and you might be able to keep up.

HAITON: That is not a question! [*Haiton stops, out of breath*] All right, then! We shan't trouble to tell you about the Pattern-pickers!

GENGO: What are you talking about?

HAITON: Style-stealers, that's what! My Knights of the Wardrobe have reported two strangers skulking about the palace!

GENGO: Ho! Then your Knights must also have mentioned how I drove these two from the Imperial Courtyard!

HAITON: Drove them? You should have arrested them! Those men were incorrigible simple robenappers!

GENGO: Robenappers?

HAITON: Yes! And they've just napped his Majestic Supremacy's new ceremonial gown! I hung it up in the Wardrobe not ten minutes ago!

GENGO: [*Pointing to the robe he carries*] Is this, by chance, the gown you have in mind?

HAITON: [*Inspecting the robe through his magnifying glass*] That's it! We've been searching all over the palace for it! You are to give it to us at once! His High Imperialness wishes to try it on.

GENGO: Get your exalted hands off this robe! I have a direct order to bring this robe to his Majesty!

HAITON: Order? Ha! No one had to order *us*! We are thoroughly complete! We thought of it, and the Emperor sent us to bring it!

GENGO: Well, I'm under orders! [*Haiton tries to take the robe.*] This is insubordination.

HAITON: We're not subordinate to you, anyway!

GENGO: I could have you arrested for this!

HAITON: You just try it! Go ahead! Then you'll see what happens!

MUSICIAN: *Mid-range gong and triangle. [Gengo and Haiton bow and freeze. Each is holding half of the Robe. The Empress enters.]*

EMPRESS: [*To audience*] I am the inferior, unworthy, and not-very-attractive Empress of this extremely picturesque country. My husband, his Imperial Highness, has his faults, but he means well. One of his worst faults is his fearful temper. At this very moment he is in a bit of a rage. As a matter of fact, he is simply furious! You see, this morning's latest new ceremonial gown has failed to arrive on time, and I have been sent to find it. [*The Empress turns, sees the robe held by Gengo and Haiton.*] Ah, here it is. Strange I have never noticed it there before. [*She takes the robe and exits.*]

MUSICIAN: *Triangle. [Gengo and Haiton stand erect, watch the Empress exit, double take, then rush after her.]*

ACT I

SCENE 2

Enter Keeper of the Stage.

KEEPER: Now respected audience, we find ourselves just outside the Imperial Palace, and just inside the Grand Imperial Gate. This place is called the Imperial Courtyard . . .

MUSICIAN: *Wood block. March tempo.*

KEEPER: But listen! This way someone military comes.
[Exit]

Minamoto enters to beat of wood block, marching, followed closely by Mikilu.

MINAMOTO: Watchdogs . . . Halt, please!

Mikilu halts at attention. Minamoto steps forward and speaks to audience.

MINAMOTO: I am Minamoto, industrious daughter of General Gengo. My father is a most important man, and the Emperor smiles on him many times. This useless girl is Mikilu, my cousin.

MIKILU: [At attention, but peeking to audience] I am Mikilu, worthless cousin to Minamoto.

MINAMOTO: Puppy First Class Mikilu is fortunate to be my cousin, for I am Beagle-Major of the Junior Watchdogs!

MIKILU: I'm tired of playing Junior Watchdogs!

MINAMOTO: Shame, Mikilu! You only want to get out of an honorable and important duty. We are to be on the alert for two suspicious looking strangers. Lord Haiton thinks they may be spies.

MIKILU: How do you know?

MINAMOTO: I heard him say so, so there! Your job is to march up and down here and keep a sharp lookout.

MIKILU: All right, but tomorrow may I be the Beagle Major?

MINAMOTO: Only if you earn so exalted an office. Buy you'll have to stop be a wishy-washy watchdog!

MIKILU: I'll try.

MINAMOTO: Attention! About face! Forward march!

Takaguchi enters, followed by Morotaka. Takaguchi stops suddenly, and Morotaka walks into him.

They are carrying a large, ornamental travel chest with a lid. It is almost large enough to contain the two of them. Morotaka leads.

TAKAGUCHI: Please advise of any further intention to fall on one's face!

MOROTAKA: One's worthy companion has been requested before to announce all decisions to stop. [*Morotaka drops his end of the chest.*]

TAKAGUCHI: Ai! Another time one's gentle associate must not feel hesitant about uttering a warning before releasing his end of a travel chest!

MOROTAKA: A travel chest is not designed for carrying!

TAKAGUCHI: Humble apologies. One's long-suffering acquaintance must see, however, that carrying is essential under present circumstances.

MOROTAKA: Please forgive one stupid question, but what exactly is a travel chest supposed to contain?

TAKAGUCHI: One's impetuous colleague wishes to hear all answers at one time. Ha! Soon it shall be clear what two ancient gentlemen have carried. A small sentinel approaches! Be so kind as to assume an unhappy expression.

Mikilu enters, still marching. She crosses in a direction counter to that of her previous entrance. Takaguchi and Morotaka look miserable.

MIKILU: [*Stopping; to audience*] Here are the two suspicious looking strangers. To this small girl they do not look suspicious at all. Indeed, they seem most unhappy!

MOROTAKA: Misery, ah, misery!

MIKILU: Why do these ancient travelers appear so miserable?

TAKAGUCHI: Oh, woe! All for nothing! What a disappointment that honest visitors be forced away after many miles of carrying a heavy present!

MIKILU: A present? Do you bring the Emperor a present?

MOROTAKA: A most handsome present, most handsome.

MIKILU: May a worthless child beg to know what these strangers bring?

MOROTAKA: A weary traveler would be highly interested to hear the guesses of a small sentry.

MIKILU: Is it crimson shoes with silver soles?

TAKAGUCHI: Oh, no; alas! It is not shoes! Oh, if only one had thought of shoes!

MIKILU: Then it must be gold and precious jewels.

MOROTAKA: [Whispering to Takaguchi] What is it?

TAKAGUCHI: No, no not jewels, not gold! [Whispering to Morotaka] Who can say?

MIKILU: Ah, then it is a beautiful new robe!

MOROTAKA: Not even close! It's not close, is it?

TAKAGUCHI: A robe? Oh, sad misfortune. A robe might have *pleased* an Emperor, but this —

MIKILU: Then it is something which would *not* please?

TAKAGUCHI: Oh, misery; despair! In this the trouble lies. Two foolish, foolish strangers believed this unfortunate present would delight an Emperor; but now it is discovered to be the one thing feared most terribly!

MIKILU: Ah, but that can be only one thing!

MOROTAKA: Do not say it!

MIKILU: But his Majesty is terrified of dragons!

TAKAGUCHI: Ah, ha! A perceptive child has guessed!

MOROTAKA: An excellent guess!

MIKILU: You bring the Emperor a dragon.

TAKAGUCHI: Only a small dragon.

MOROTAKA: But now two downcast men must take a wretched gift away.

MIKILU: Worthy elders, please — this provincial young person has never before seen a dragon.

MOROTAKA: Oh, it cannot be shown! An Emperor would know of it.

MIKILU: This silent girl would not tell.

TAKAGUCHI: Perhaps no harm comes from a brief look, having never seen a dragon . . .

MIKILU: It would be most delightful to peek at one.

TAKAGUCHI: Come, then; but quickly. One has no wish to terrify an Imperial Majesty: [*They raise the lid. Mikilu peeks in.*]

MIKILU: Nothing is here!

TAKAGUCHI: What?

MOROTAKA: Impossible!

TAKAGUCHI: Further misfortune! The dragon has escaped!

MOROTAKA: Woe! Nine million miseries!

MILIKU: Escaped? But where?

TAKAGUCHI: It was *here* a minute ago!

MIKILU: Then it must still be in the palace!

Minamoto enters.

MOROTAKA: Oh, ai, ai! O gloom! A dragon is afoot! A palace is in peril! Woe!

TAKAGUCHI: Pain!

MINAMOTO: Private Mikilu, why do these suspicious strangers disturb the peace?

MIKILU: Minamoto, a dragon has escaped! It runs about the palace!

MINAMOTO: A dragon belongs to these peculiar foreigners?

TAKAGUCHI: Yes, yes — but nothing is to fear!

MOROTAKA: It is only a small dragon.

MINAMOTO: His Imperial Highness is not particular.

MIKILU: Any dragon terrifies him!

MINAMOTO: He shakes. We must report this to my father at once. [*Minamoto and Mikilu start to leave.*]

TAKAGUCHI: No, no — please say nothing! It will be captured in time!

MOROTAKA: There is no reason to upset an Emperor!

TAKAGUCHI: Dragon hunting is a person's chosen profession. [*Points to Morotaka*] This person's.

MOROTAKA: [*Points*] And that person's.

MIKILU: These unhappy hunters brought an excellent dragon with hopes of delighting his Majesty!

MOROTAKA: One wretched mistake. Most terribly sorry.

TAKAGUCHI: Come! One must go like the wind, worthy friend, to recapture such a fiery beast!

MOROTAKA: Please, be so agreeable as to help! Small girls search that way. Two ancient imbeciles will give chase in this direction.

TAKAGUCHI: But first one should promise not to speak a word of this.