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Noh *Tenko*

The cover photographs show some scenes from a Noh play (classical Japanese musical drama) titled *Tenko*.

Tenko was a drummer boy in China in the Later Han era who had a drum that had fallen from the sky. The drum's sound was so beautiful that its reputation reached the Emperor. The Emperor issued an order that the drum should be presented to him. Tenko refused the order and escaped to the mountains with his drum. However, he was arrested and then drowned in the Ryosui River. Thus, the Emperor was able to obtain the drum. However, the drum made no sound at all, regardless of who tried to play it. The Emperor was mystified and had Tenko's father, Oh-Haku (the right figure on the cover photographs), hauled in. The Emperor ordered Oh-Haku to play the drum. Although Oh-Haku mourned his son's death, he submitted to the Imperial order. When Oh-Haku beat the drum, it responded to the tie between the father and son and made beautiful sounds. The Emperor was deeply impressed. He rewarded Oh-Haku, and also promised to hold a service for the repose of Tenko's soul.

When the memorial service was being performed on the banks of the Ryosui River, Tenko's spirit (the left figure in the cover photographs) arose from the river, beat the drum offered at the riverside, and expressed its pleasure and gratitude for the memorial service by dancing. At dawn, the spirit vanished, leaving behind the beautiful sound of the drum.

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