

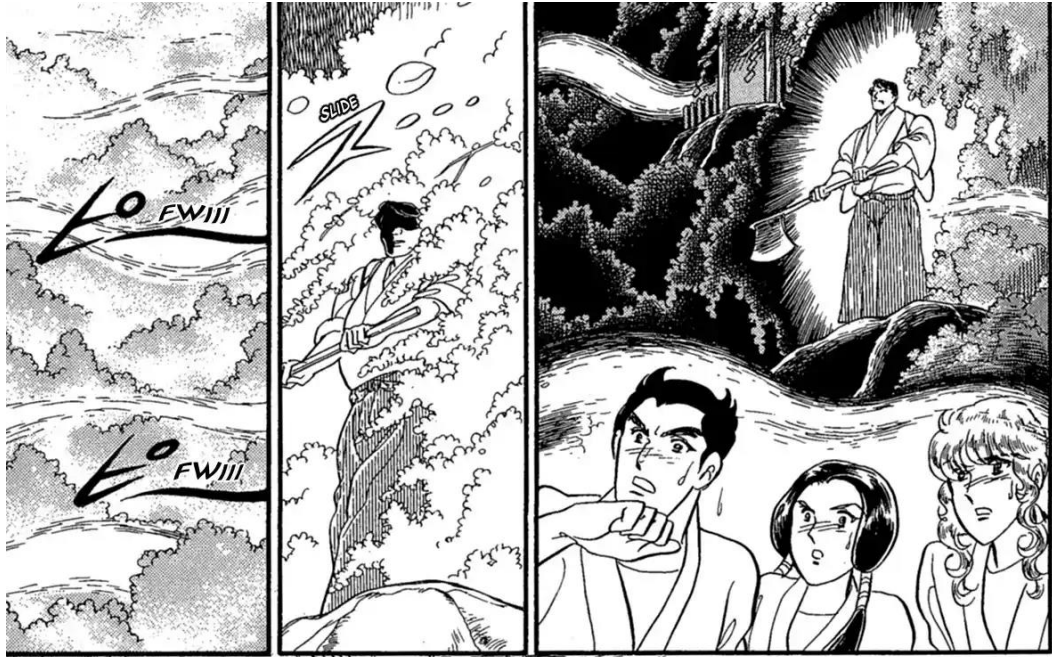


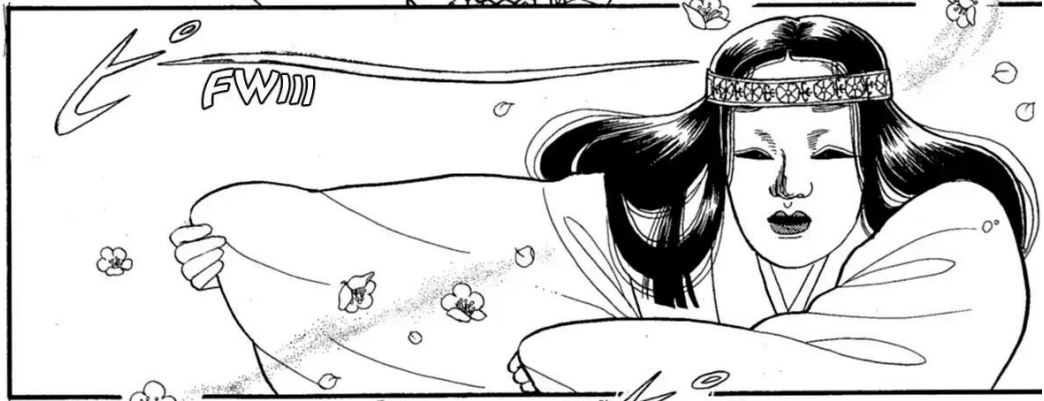


THE CRIMSON  
GODDESS...!



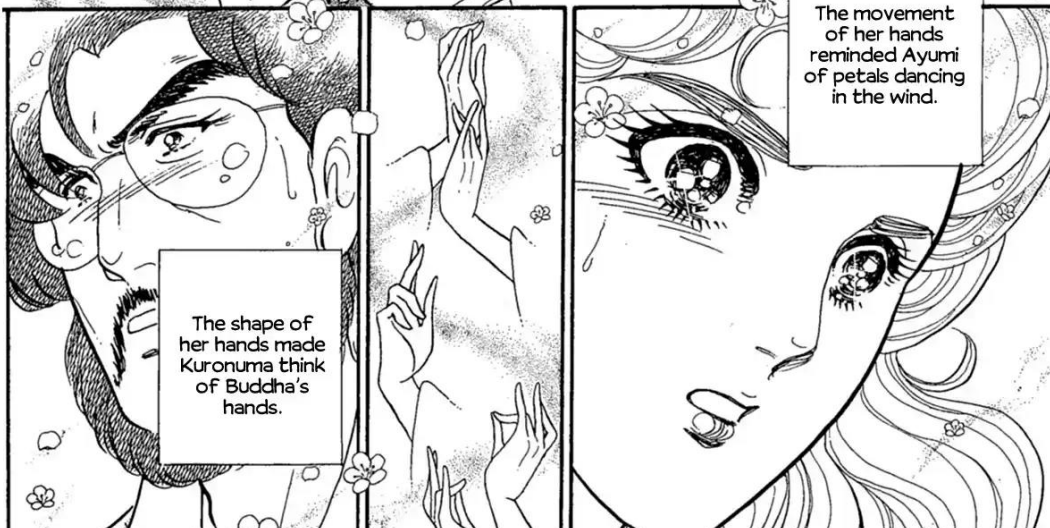
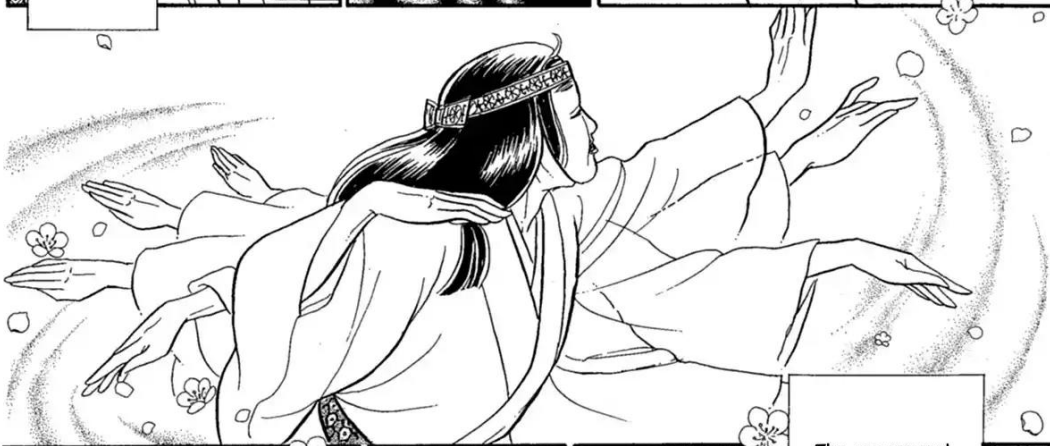
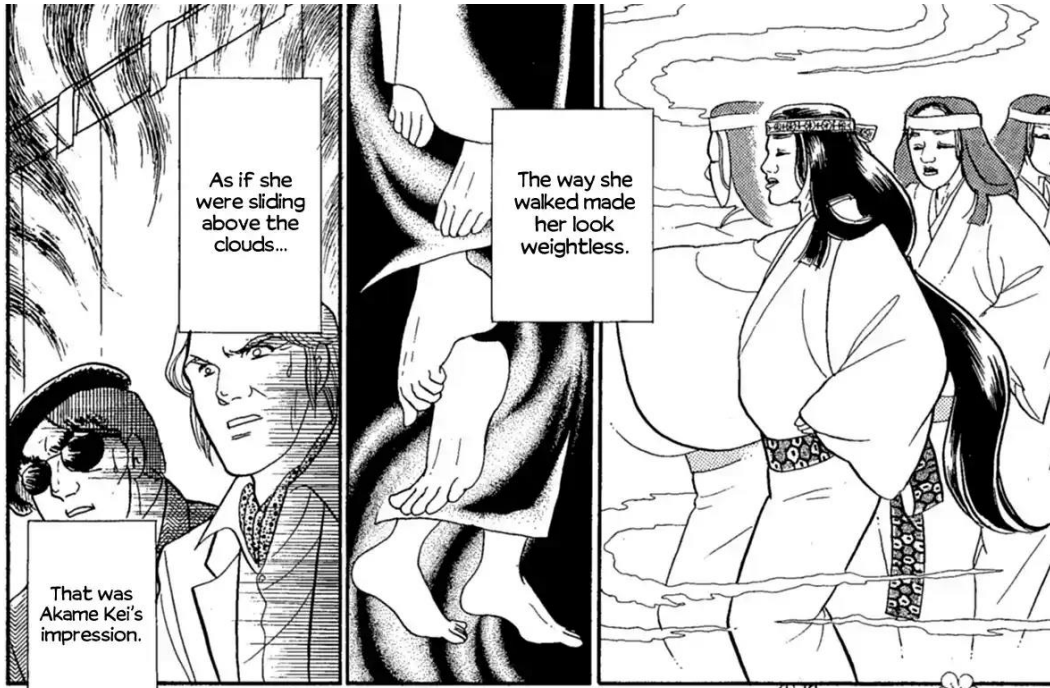
BLOSSOM  
NOW, O  
THOUSAND-  
YEAR CRIMSON  
FLOWERS  
OF LIFE!









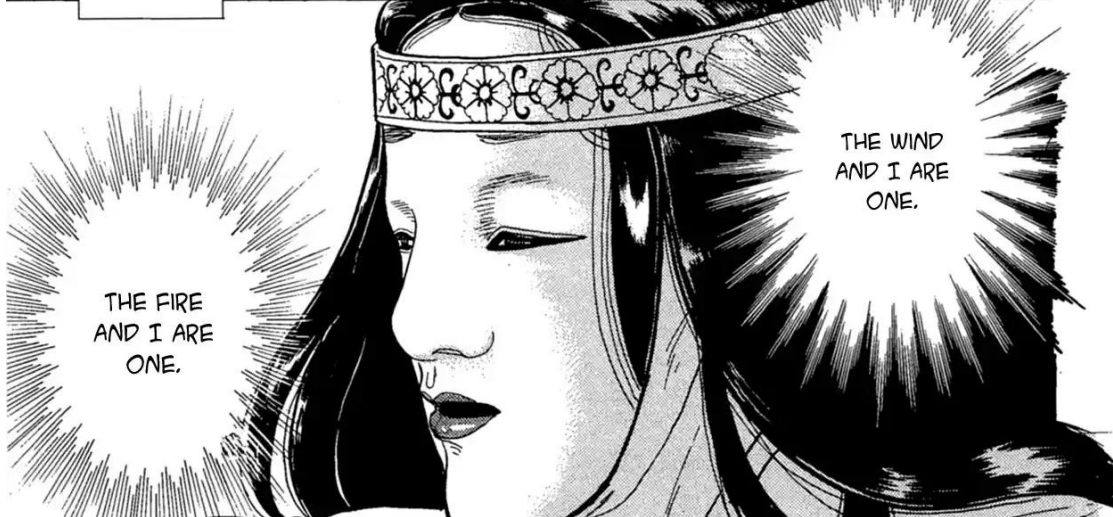




Her movement was like that of the air itself.



That was Hamel's impression.



THE FIRE AND I ARE ONE.

THE WIND AND I ARE ONE.





MY  
BRETHREN

YOU  
MOUNTAINS

YOU SKIES

YOU SEAS

WE ARE  
ONE AND THE  
SAME...!

I AM  
SPACE.

I AM  
ONE WITH  
ALL LIFE IN  
HEAVEN AND  
EARTH.





I AM  
THE WIND.  
I AM  
THE SKY.

I AM  
THE TREES.

WHO  
AM I...?

THE SOUL  
MANIFESTS TO  
BECOME LIFE.

TIME HAS  
NOT EXISTED  
FOR ME SINCE  
I CAME INTO  
BEING.

I AM ON  
AN ENDLESS  
JOURNEY.

I AM  
THE EARTH.

I AM  
THE BIRDS.

AND LIFE  
DISSIPATES  
TO BECOME  
A SOUL.



I AM THE  
ONE WHO  
BINDS HEAVEN  
AND EARTH.



I AM  
THE GREAT  
WILL THAT  
RAINS DOWN  
FROM THE  
HEAVENS.



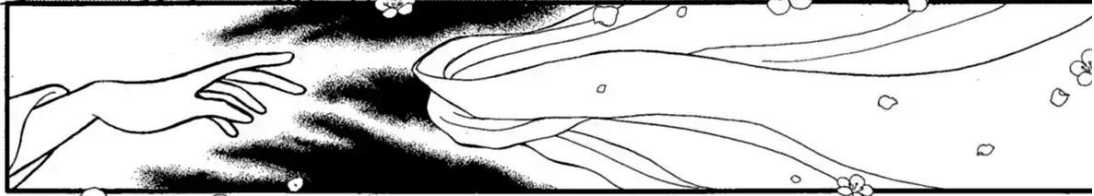
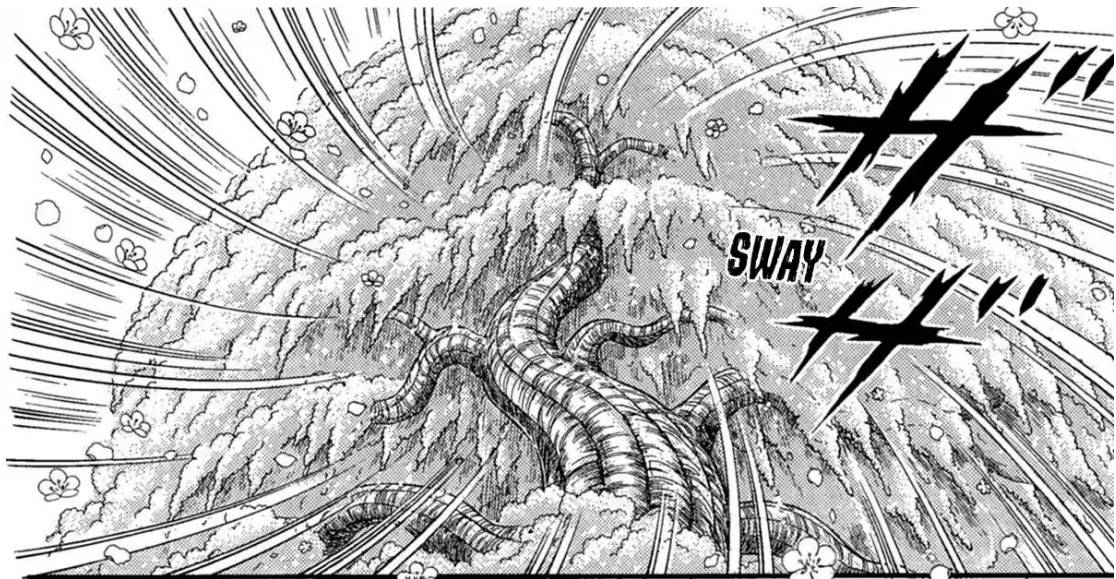
I AM THE LIFE  
FORCE THAT  
WELLS UP FROM  
DEEP WITHIN  
THE EARTH.



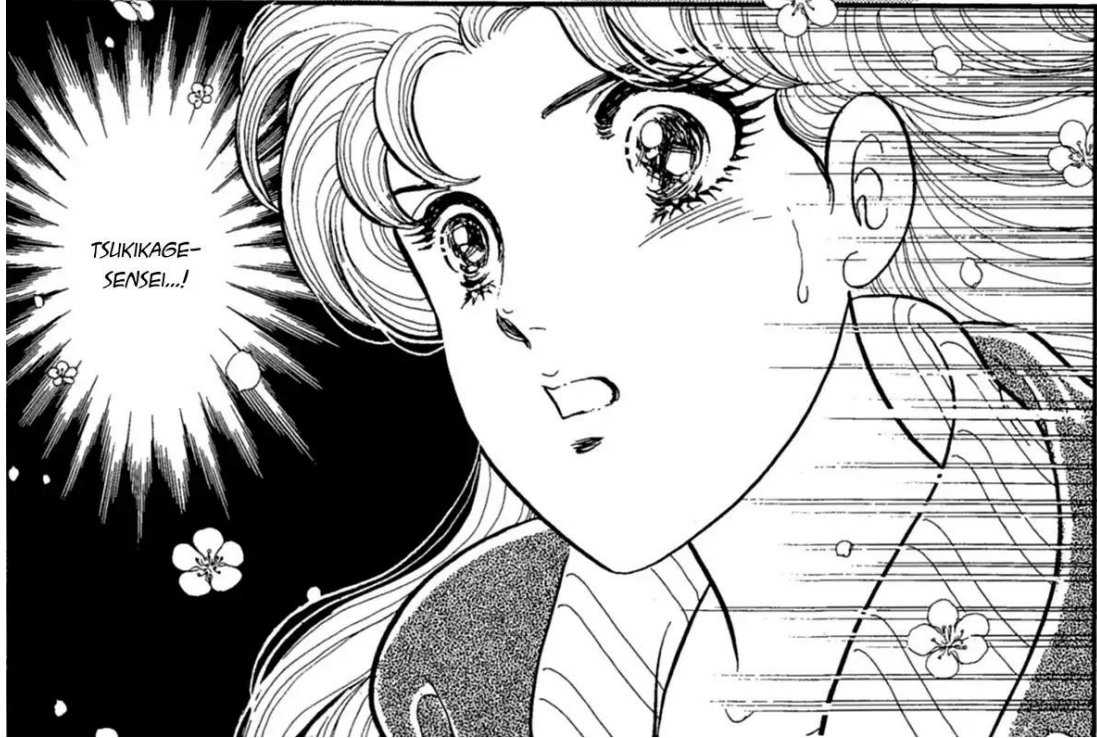
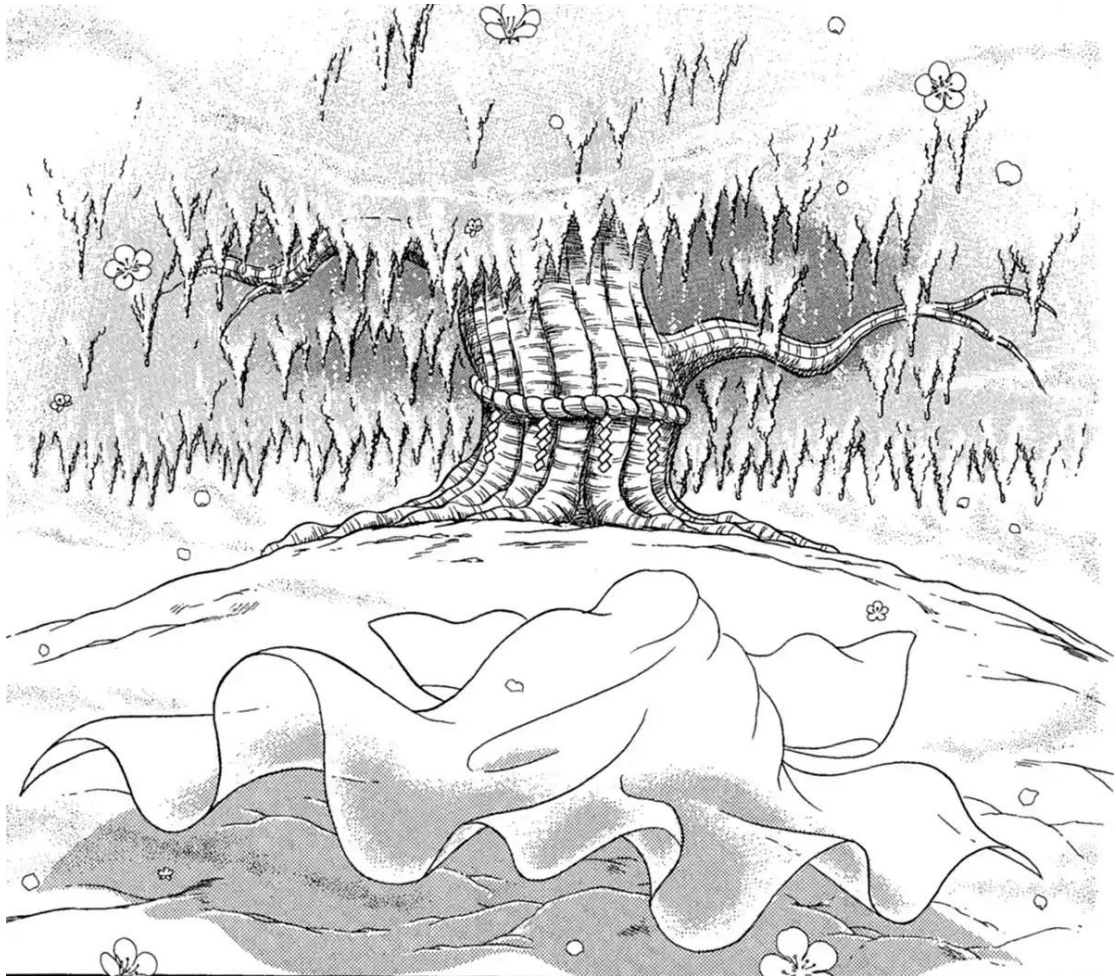
WHO AM I?

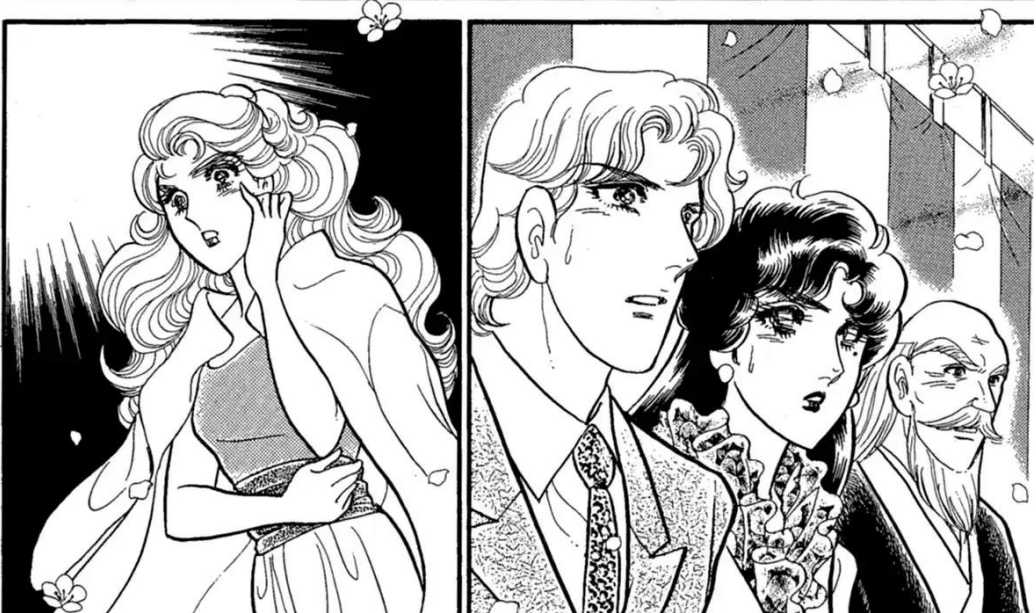


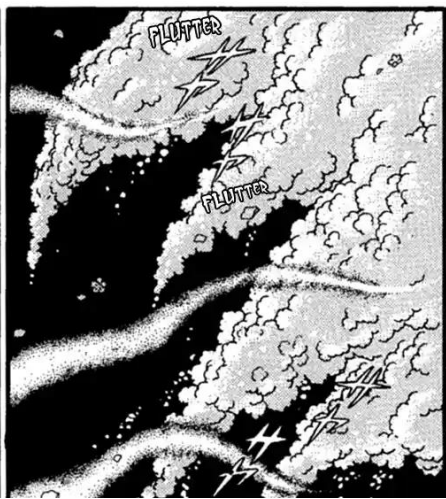
I AM THE  
CRIMSON  
GODDESS!













WE MUST HAVE ALL BEEN SEEING THINGS.

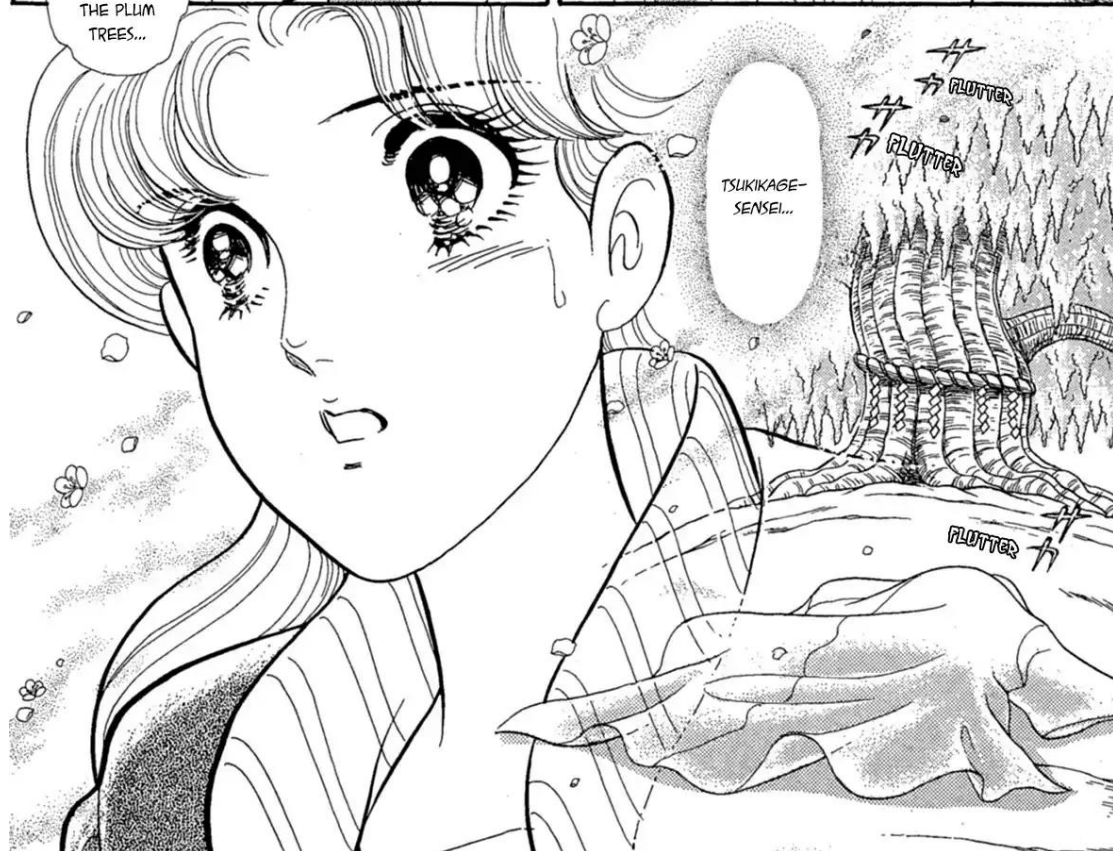
IF NOTHING ELSE, THAT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN REAL.

AN ILLUSION...? MAYBE IT WAS...

WHAT... DID WE JUST SEE?

WHAT ON EARTH...

...HERE IN THIS VALLEY OF THE PLUM TREES...





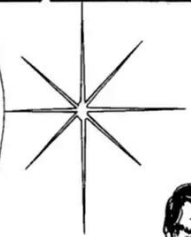


STAND

BANG

AH

AS FOR WHAT  
TRANSPIRES  
BETWEEN  
THE TWO  
OF THEM,  
AND WHAT  
HAPPENS IN THE  
VALLEY OF THE  
PLUM TREES...



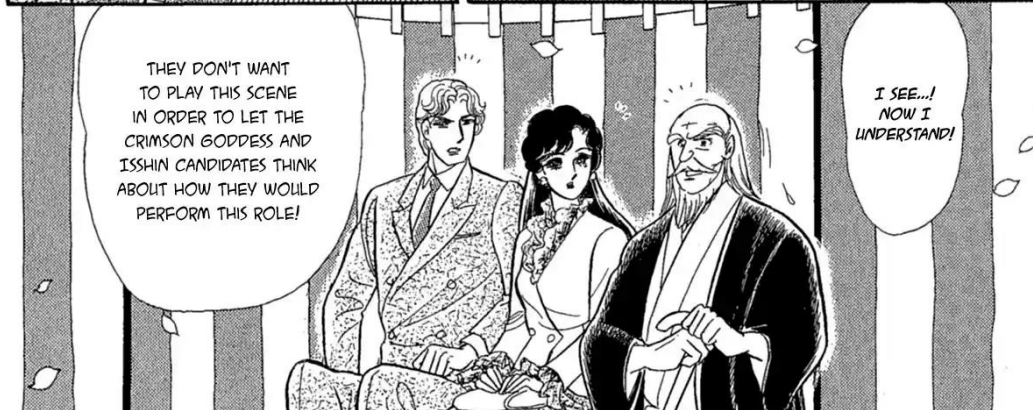
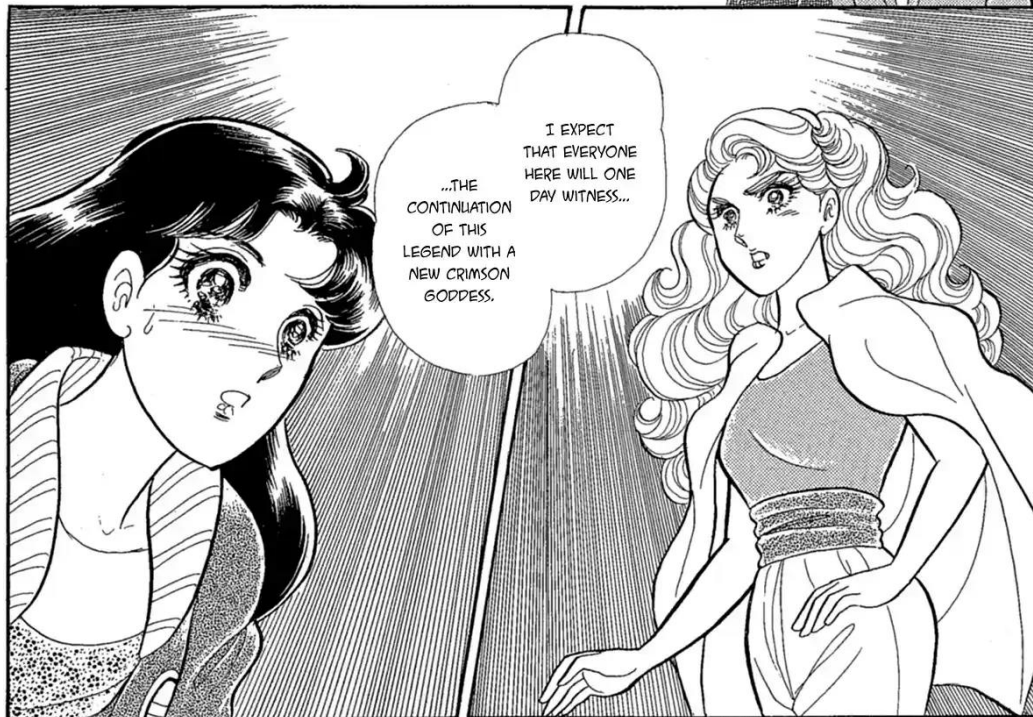
ON THE  
OTHER HAND WE  
HAVE AKOVA, THE  
AVATAR OF PLUM  
TREE, WHO CARRIES  
THE SPIRIT OF  
THE GODDESS.

ON ONE  
HAND WE HAVE  
ISSHIN, WHOSE  
MISSION WAS  
TO CUT DOWN  
THE THOUSAND-  
YEAR PLUM TREE  
AND CARVE A  
STATUE OF THE  
GODDESS.

NOW,  
THEN!



...THAT IS A  
TALE FOR  
ANOTHER  
DAY.





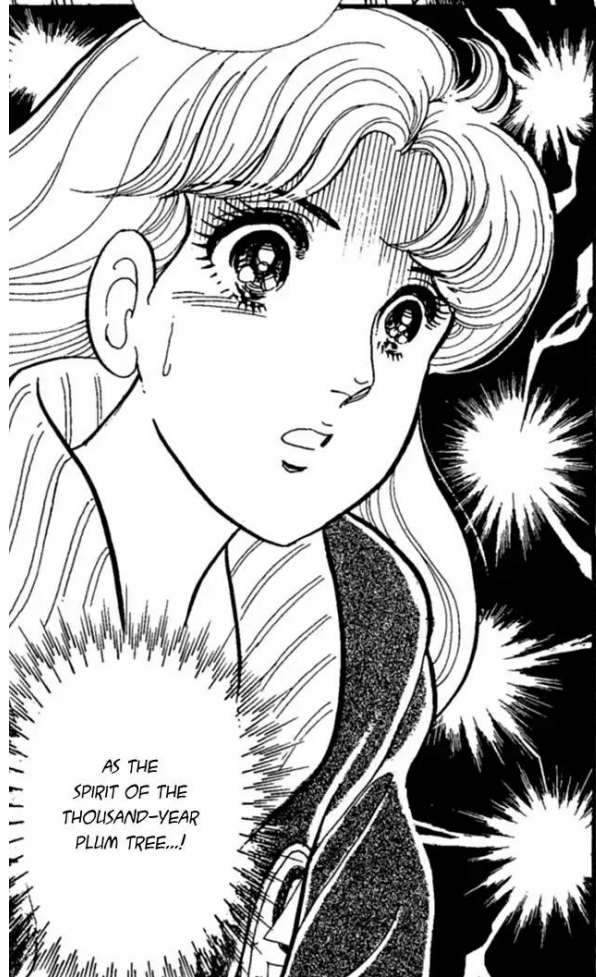
AKOYA BECOMES THE GODDESS, AND ISSHIN UNDERSTANDS THE HEART OF BUDDHA. THE CHALLENGE IS TO ACT OUT THEIR CONFLICT EVEN THROUGH THEIR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

WHO WILL LIVE AND WHO WILL DIE...!?

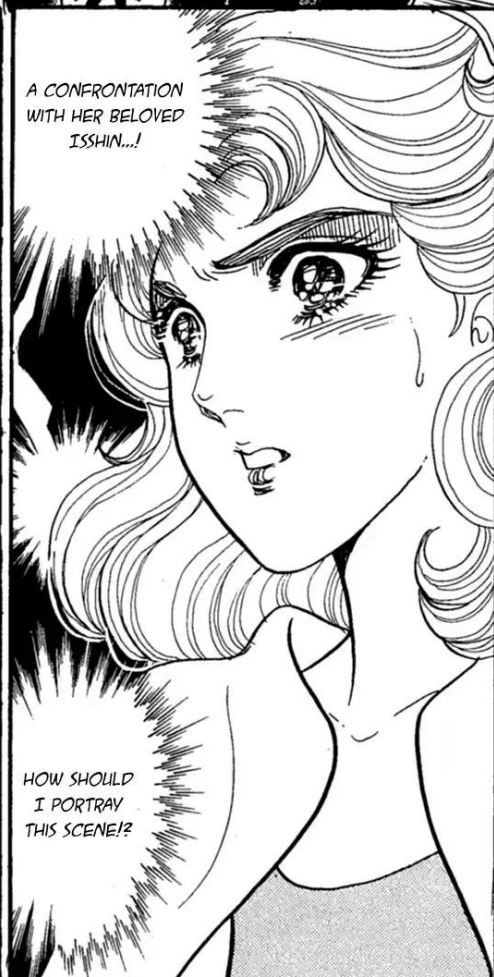
WE HAVE THE CRIMSON GODDESS, THE SPIRIT OF THE PLUM TREE THAT DESCENDED INTO AKOYA AND ISSHIN, WHO INTENDS TO COMPLETE THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO HIM BY THE EMPEROR.

TSUKIKAGE CHIGUSA HAS LEFT THIS CHALLENGE TO THE TWO CRIMSON GODDESS CANDIDATES AND ISSHIN...!

THESE ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ROLES.

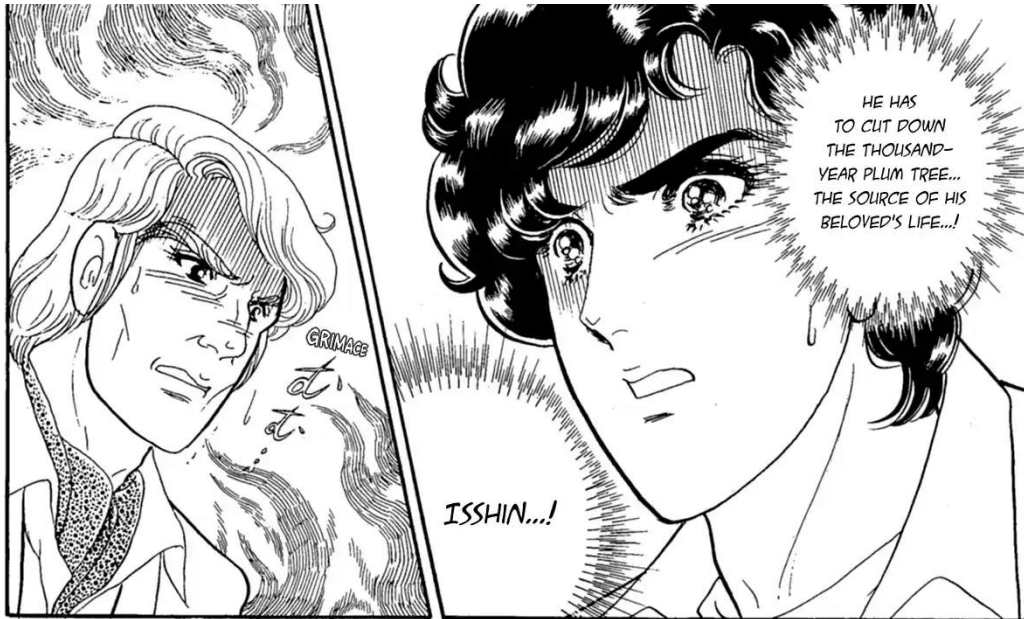


AS THE SPIRIT OF THE THOUSAND-YEAR PLUM TREE...!



A CONFRONTATION WITH HER BELOVED ISSHIN...!

HOW SHOULD I PORTRAY THIS SCENE!?



HE HAS TO CUT DOWN THE THOUSAND-YEAR PLUM TREE... THE SOURCE OF HIS BELOVED'S LIFE...!

ISSHIN...!



AND SO HE TOLD THE EMPEROR OF THE RUMORS THAT SWIRLED AROUND THE MYSTERIOUS WANDERING MONK.

HE SPOKE TO TERAFLUSA, SOUNDING FORLORN. THE SEVENTH PRAYER FESTIVAL FOR PEACE HAD JUST ENDED, AND THE EMPEROR WAS LOOKING UP AT A PLUM TREE.

SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THAT DAY

IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE OF THE EMPEROR IN KYOTO

NOW, THEN!  
I MUST SPEAK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AFTER.

"HE NEVER GIVES HIS NAME AND CARVES SPLENDID BUDDHA STATUES INSTEAD OF CHANTING SUTRAS."

"I DON'T BELIEVE WE WILL EVER FIND HIM."  
TERAFLUSA HAD A READY RESPONSE.

"I SEE... SO WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THAT MAN HAS GONE..."  
"I WAS HOPING TO REWARD HIM IN SOME WAY..."

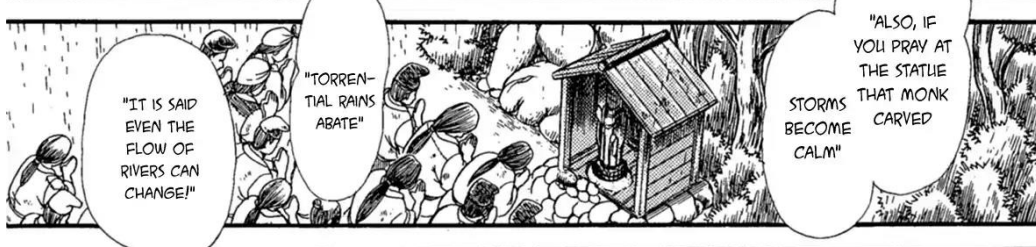




"SPRINGS WELL UP FROM THE DRIED EARTH...!"

"BOUNTIFUL HARVEST WILL GROW FROM THE RAVAGED SOIL."

"IF YOU PRAY TO THE STATUE THE MONK CARVED, BLESSED RAINS WILL FALL FROM THE PARCHED SKIES."



"IT IS SAID EVEN THE FLOW OF RIVERS CAN CHANGE!"

"TORRENTIAL RAINS ABATE"

"ALSO, IF YOU PRAY AT THE STATUE THAT MONK CARVED STORMS BECOME CALM"



"HE HAS SAVED COUNTLESS SICK PEOPLE."

"THEY SAY HE IS ALSO WELL VERSED IN THE MAKING OF MEDICINE, AND TEACHES OTHERS HIS WAYS."



"A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE WERE HEALED RIGHT ON THE SPOT."

"AND WHEN HE CARVED STATUES FOR VILLAGES RAVAGED BY DISEASE, HE ALSO PRAYED FOR THE SICKNESS TO BE ERADICATED."

"AND WITHOUT FAIL,  
WHEREVER THIS MONK  
GOES, HE LEAVES BEHIND A  
STATUE FILLED WITH LOVE  
AND COMPASSION.

ON THE  
BOTTOM OF WHICH  
IS CARVED ONE  
CHARACTER: SHIN,  
OR 'TRUTH.'"

"WE BELIEVE  
WE KNOW  
HIS TRUE  
IDENTITY..."

"BUT MUCH LIKE  
THE CLOUDS IN THE SKY,  
NO ONE KNOWS WHERE  
HE WILL GO NEXT."

"HE IS EVEN  
FRIENDLY WITH  
THE CLOUDS  
THAT ROAM  
THE SKY."

"AND  
WITH THE  
EARTH."

"HE SPEAKS  
WITH THE  
HEAVENS"

"HE NEVER  
STAYS LONG  
IN ANY ONE  
PLACE,

AND TRAVELS  
AS HE CARVES  
HIS STATUES."

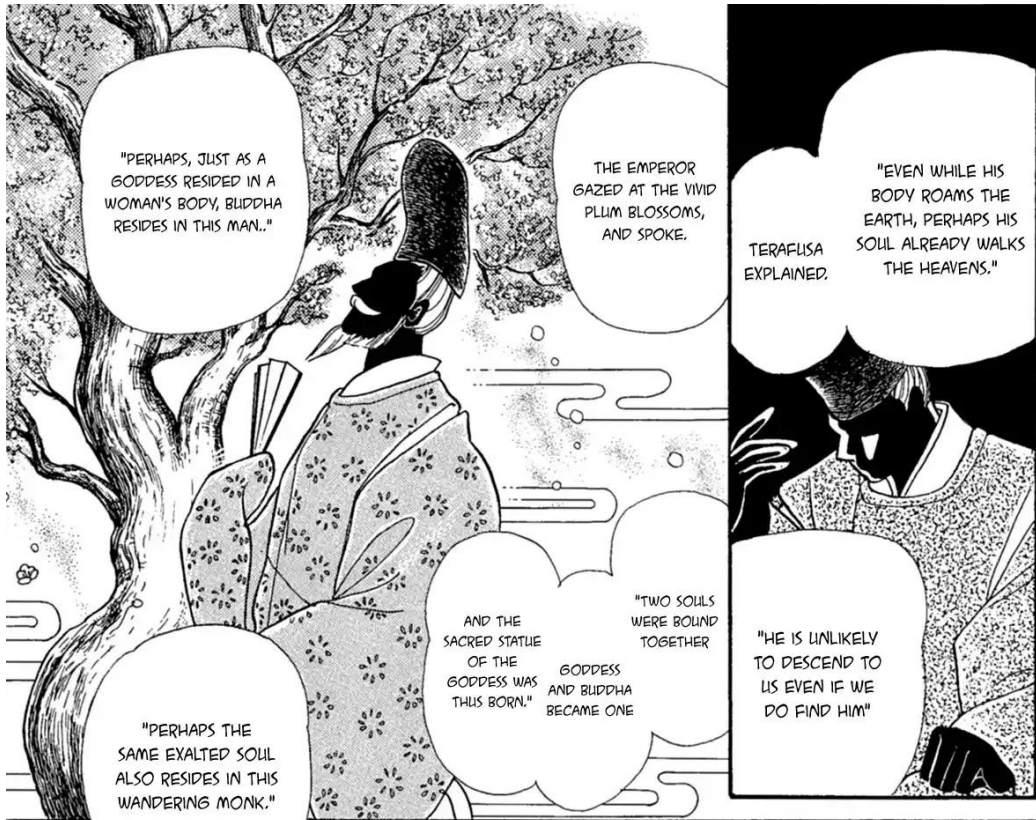
"AT TIMES,  
PEOPLE PRAY  
FOR PEACE IN  
THE LAND."

"AT TIMES,  
THEY PRAY  
FOR MERCY."

"AT TIMES,  
FOR PLENTIFUL  
HARVESTS."

"THESE ARE  
ALL THINGS THAT  
PEOPLE PRAY TO  
HIS STATUES OF  
BUDDHA FOR."





"PERHAPS, JUST AS A GODDESS RESIDED IN A WOMAN'S BODY, BUDDHA RESIDES IN THIS MAN."

THE EMPEROR GAZED AT THE VIVID PLUM BLOSSOMS, AND SPOKE.

"EVEN WHILE HIS BODY ROAMS THE EARTH, PERHAPS HIS SOUL ALREADY WALKS THE HEAVENS."  
TERAFUSA EXPLAINED.

"TWO SOULS WERE BOUND TOGETHER  
AND THE SACRED STATUE OF THE GODDESS WAS THIS BORN."  
GODDESS AND BUDDHA BECAME ONE

"PERHAPS THE SAME EXALTED SOUL ALSO RESIDES IN THIS WANDERING MONK."

"HE IS UNLIKELY TO DESCEND TO US EVEN IF WE DO FIND HIM"



AS IF TO REACH TO THE EVER BLUE SKY.

...THEIR BRANCHES RISING,

THE EMPEROR LOOKED UP TOWARDS THE SKY  
THE CRIMSON PLUM BLOSSOMS SEEMED ESPECIALLY RADIANT,



FWIII  
FWIII  
FWIII



WHEEZE

TIME MAY PASS  
AND THE AGE  
MAY CHANGE, BUT,  
THE LEGEND WILL  
CONTINUE TO BE  
TOLD. ITS SOUL  
WILL LIVE ON...

...AND REGAIN  
A YOUNG AND  
RENEWED LIFE.

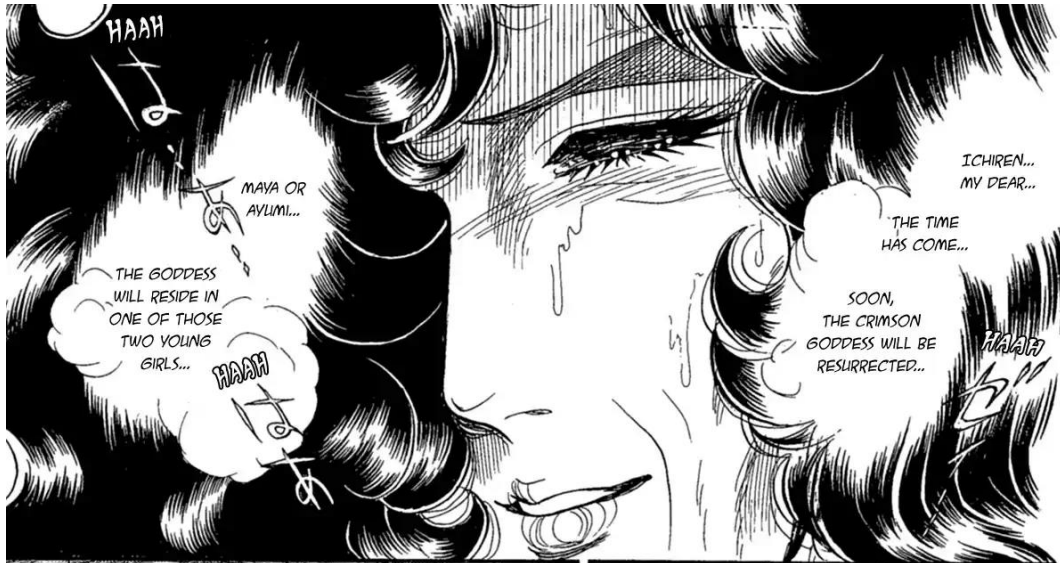
ICHIREN

THE LIFE  
YOU GAVE  
ME...

AH...  
THE CRIMSON  
GODDESS HAS  
ENDED..

IS AT  
ITS END..





HAAH

MAYA OR  
AYUMI...

THE GODDESS  
WILL RESIDE IN  
ONE OF THOSE  
TWO YOUNG  
GIRLS...

HAAH

ICHIREN...  
MY DEAR...

THE TIME  
HAS COME...

SOON,  
THE CRIMSON  
GODDESS WILL BE  
RESURRECTED...

HAAH

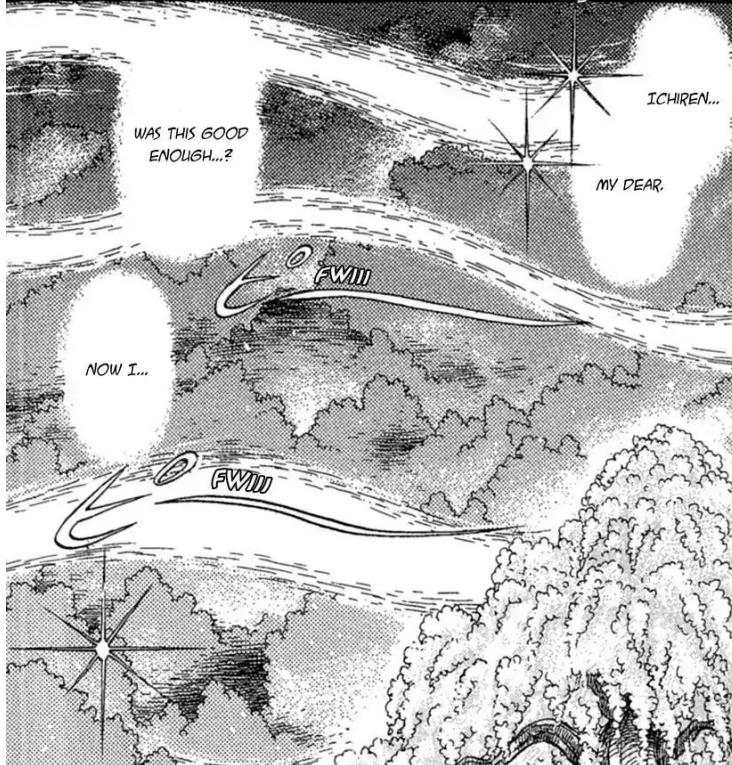


SOON...

MY LONG  
ROLE WILL  
SOON COME  
TO AN END...



...AND SO  
THE CRIMSON  
GODDESS WILL  
CONTINUE TO  
LIVE...!



WAS THIS GOOD  
ENOUGH...?

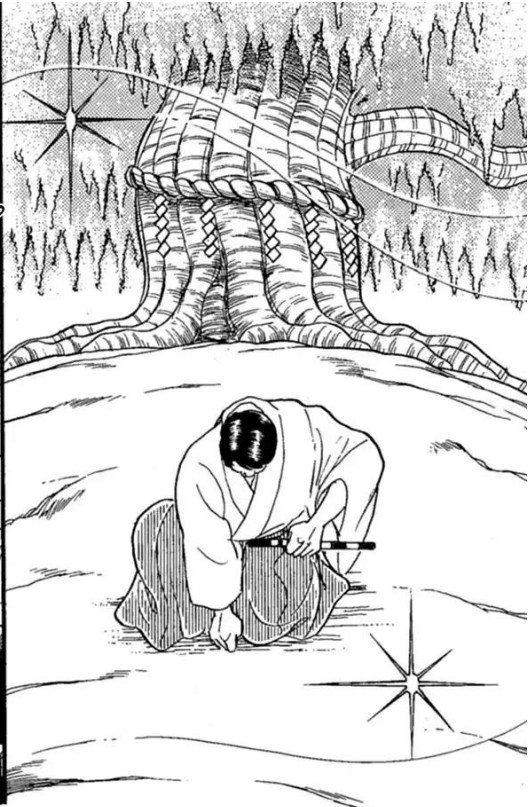
NOW I...

ICHIREN...

MY DEAR...



DRIP





CHIGUSA...

WHOOOO BRAVO!

I'M SURE OZAKI ICHIREN IS DELIGHTED TOO...

TSUKIKAGE-SENSEI... YOU DID WELL!



YEAH...

THE MASK DIDN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL! IN FACT, I THOUGHT IT MADE THE PERFORMANCE MORE EFFECTIVE.

THAT WAS WONDERFUL...  
DON'T YOU AGREE, MASUMI?



I WONDER WHICH ONE OF THOSE TWO WILL GET THE ROLE OF CRIMSON GODDESS...

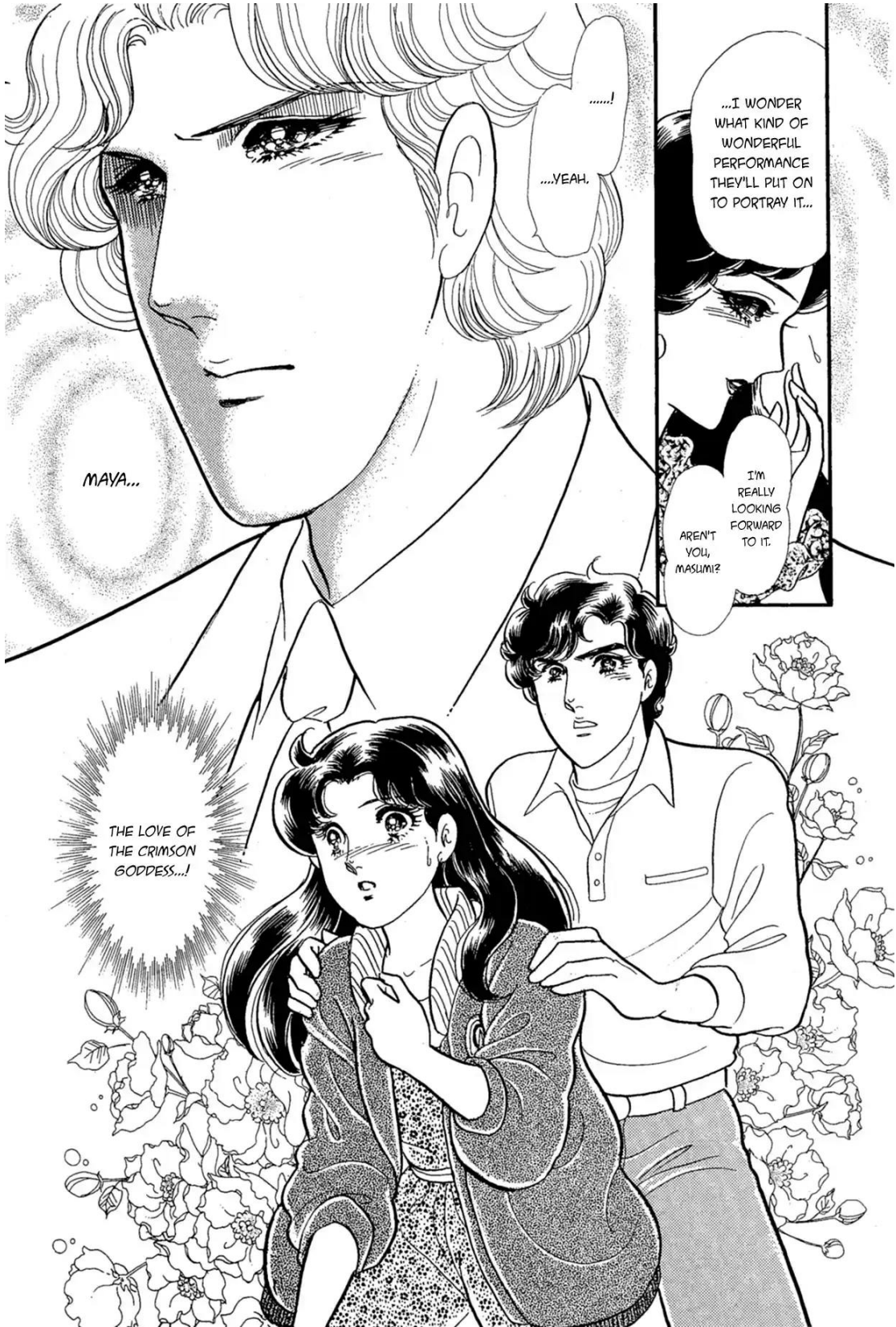
LOVE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF THE THOUSAND-YEAR PLUM TREE AND THE BUDDHIST PRIEST ISSHIN...

I FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHY YOUR FATHER HAS WANTED TO PRODUCE THIS PLAY FOR SO LONG. IT TRULY WAS LOVELY

SPEAKING OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS'S LOVE...

I WISH WE COULD HAVE SEEN THE CLIMAX...

LOVE BETWEEN A GODDESS AND BUDDHA...



MAYA...

.....!  
...YEAH.

...I WONDER  
WHAT KIND OF  
WONDERFUL  
PERFORMANCE  
THEY'LL PUT ON  
TO PORTRAY IT...

I'M  
REALLY  
LOOKING  
FORWARD  
TO IT.  
AREN'T  
YOU,  
MASUMI?

THE LOVE OF  
THE CRIMSON  
GODDESS...!



