The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature

BY Earl Miner, Hiroko Odagiri, AND Robert E. Morrell

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PART FIVE  Theaters

The major kinds of Japanese theater—nō, kyōgen, jōruri, and kabuki—are so complex in development and sufficiently different from major Western kinds as to require more explanation than is feasible in the terms set by Parts One and Four. What follows provides brief characterizations along with figures to illustrate the stages used.

Dance is, with song, probably the art most universally performed by individuals, and although the role of a dancer is prescribed, it leaves him or her freer as a creator than any other performer. Dance also suits well with song and with representation, and thereby has a strong potential for lyric, dramatic, and narrative enrichment. The combinations may vary as numerous social, religious, and entertainment needs are fulfilled, and certainly not all kinds of Japanese dance have led to dramatic creation. But beginning with the story in the *Kojiki* (1, 17) that the Sun Goddess was tempted out from her cave by a dance that amused the other gods, we can see that dance, representation, religion, and much else have been involved in the various dramatic and quasi-dramatic kinds of performance in Japan, as is shown by the various kinds of *bugaku, kagura*, and other performance (see Fig. 5-1.)

So numerous are they that only general reference is feasible, but no small element in the history of the evolution of drama in Japan involves development dependent on dance and then away from it, with numerous returns.

A. Nō

Nō was the first kind of drama to acquire the esteem that enabled it to influence the course of classical Japanese aesthetics, as we have seen in Part One A. This priority derived, in no small measure, from the lyric cast of nō poetics as well as from the verse passages of its text. It also has an unusually strong tendency to narrative. The elements of narrative and lyricism distinguish nō from Western drama, but the body movements of nō actors are quite properly classified as *shimai*, performance-dance. The ritual effect conveyed by nō has much to do with shimai, especially in the slowed-down versions of performance known to us today.
As nō gained prestige in Muromachi times, it was still a much more mimetic (involving monomane, imitating things) and rapidly performed art than that practiced today. Where formerly five main plays were typically performed along with kyōgen interludes, today the slow presentation allows for but one, two, or three, normally accompanied by a Forepiece or interlude from kyōgen or by intervals of shihai.

Nō plays are distinguished in certain traditional ways that involve the kind of character represented by the main actor, shite. This holds true especially for the distinction between two kinds of plays: mugenno and genzaino. “Mugen” suggests dream and mystery, that is, the other world. In these dramas, the shite plays a spirit, divinity, or soul of a dead person. “Genzai,” by contrast, deals with a “presently living” person: that is, the shite—the central determinant in nō—is of the same time or period as the waki. The plays are further distinguished, again chiefly on the basis of the character played by the shite, but also to some extent by subject matter and the manner of representation (for example, with or without masks). An example follows of each kind.

1. Wakinō 魅能, kaminō 神能. The shite is a divinity and the piece therefore has a celebratory, auspicious tone. Takasago.

2. Nibanmemono 二番目物, sharamono 梟羅物. The shite is likely to be a hero from the Genpei wars and the subject is his suffering or refinement, Sanemori.

3. Sanbanmemono 三番目物, katsuramono 萬物. The shite is usually a beautiful young woman. With little action but idealized beauty, this kind is thought essentially nō-like in character. Not surprisingly for a male-acted theater, many of the most beautiful masks have been made for this kind. Izuisu.

4. Yobanmemono 四番目物, including kyōmonjo 狂女物, genzaimono, etc. The shite is a mad person (male or female); or from “modern” times, in which case masks are almost never worn. This group is the largest and the most actively dramatic. Sumidagawa.

5. Gobanmemono 五番目物, kirinō 切能, ki(chiku)mono 鬼(畜)物. The shite tends to be a supernatural character. The action moves with relative despatch, generally requiring a two-part sequence. Funana Benkei.

The mnemonic for the five is, then: God-Warrior-Woman-Mad One-Devil. It should be said that different schools of nō classify some of the plays differently, and that the play with oldest roots, Okina, stands apart from the classification. And it must be added, moreover, that the division of works into these five kinds was a featt of the eighteenth century. With whatever antecedents, the division is one made after nō had long since seen its prime. Even the issue of which plays are in the repertory of a given house is subject to change: the present head of the Komparu school has recently redefined the canon of his house. And yet some effort must be made to describe nō in terms that one encounters in Japan.

See Part Six G for two lists of nō by title and by groupings, and with an alphabetical finding list offering variant titles.

Nō took on a distinct character during the lifetime of *Kan’ami (1333–1384). In the first half of the fourteenth century, a number of troupes of proto-nō existed, whether of the sarugaku (or sangaku) or dengaku kind, particularly in the Kyoto-Nara areas (see Fig. 5-2). These two kinds were not wholly unlike, but by the second half of the century sarugaku (or sarugaku no nō), particularly that working from temples and shrines near Nara, eased out most competitors and provided the beginnings of four of the main shite schools today: Kanze, Komparu, Hōshō, and Kongō. The fifth, Kita, emerged early in the 1600s. Of these the Kanze school has had the most prestige from the outset by virtue of its patronage by the Ashikaga shoguns and the genius of Kan’ami and Zai. The Kanze school has not monopolized talent, however, and in addition to having produced famous actors and playwrights, the other four have maintained certain textual variants (kogaki) as well as different traditions of performance of individual plays. In addition, there are waki schools with their own important textual variants although less prestige. Both shite and waki (and their tsure or accompanying characters, if any) wear white mitten-toed socks (tabi), unlike the age (kyōgen) actor, who wears orange (originally deerskin).

Some plays employ only a shite (main character) and waki (secondary role) as actors, along with the musicians (hayashi) and the chorus (jiuji, ji), both groups of whom come from the shite schools. Masks are often worn, according to the class of play and example of the class, but only by the shite or a shitezure in a woman’s role, spirit role, and the like. For plays divided into two parts, the characters played by the shite and shitezure may change from the apparent to the real person, so that critics distinguish fore- and after-shite and tsure (maeite, maetsure; nochii, nochizure). Other roles are sometimes distinguished, such as kokata, a child actor, who sometimes, however, plays adult characters. The waki normally enters the world to the play by announcing his identity in a part termed ranoru and recounting the foot journey to the scene in a mihiyuki. The shite role comes to dominate—to define—the play and, with help from the chorus, enacts the climax in a “dance” part known as kuse or kusunai and, with the chorus as surrogate, is the last speaker in the play. Waki, shite, and all(kyōgen) have specified home areas on the stage (see Figs. 5-3 and 5-4).

The stage also has set areas for the chorus and the musicians. The chorus consists today of eight chanters. They take on the words of the shite during dances, moments of deep emotion, and so on. The musicians almost always consist of but three or four, of whom the most important plays a transverse flute, fui. Another beats an hour-glass-shaped hand drum, kotsuzumi, held by the left hand on the right shoulder. A third beats a slightly larger drum of like shape, dissonum, held at the left side. Sometimes there is a fourth who uses a stick in each hand to strike a large drum, taiko, on a stand. The musicians also utter a number of emphatic, rhythm sounds that initially disconcert a Westerner but that contribute effectively to the complex of musical, dance, and other rhythms.

Amateurs often practice features of nō to understand performance better and to participate in the training of the schools. The most popular of such pastimes are the chanted recitation, utai, and the patterned motion or dance, shihai. Some
amateurs engage in actual performance after a lengthy period of training. Audiences usually find it difficult to follow recitation, especially by masked actors, since the masks are made for visual effect rather than vocal projection. For such reason, it is common either to purchase in the theater the texts of the day’s plays, or to carry to the theater an edition of plays, utabon, that will include the 100 most popular plays (hyakuban) from the 250 or so commonly presented (more than 2,000 are extant, the majority from early Edo times). But many in the audience simply have plays memorized from uta recitation or other experience. (Yokkyoku is uta, strictly speaking, but is often used to designate the texts or nō itself.)

Like other kinds of premodern Japanese drama, nō is first and last a theatrical art. The texts do exist and often have great beauty, but one could hardly infer the nature of performance from a bare text. Modern editions help in visualizing by including stylized figures of the actors, stage directions, and so forth. Editions also often include specification of the parts of a play and divide them into sections. Some of the terms are modern, and even the most important may be difficult to understand. For example, the sections referred to are called dan, which in the case of jōruri and kabuki correspond well to the Western notion of act. In nō, however, there is in one sense never a shift in scene. That is, if there is one, as in the two-part Takasago, the waki “takes us” to the second place by means of another michiyuki. The mae and nochi or ate parts of a two-part play correspond most closely to acts, since at least the exit and reentrance of the shite will be involved.

In what follows, the basic features of a nō text are described, beginning with language, which is basically of two kinds, depending on whether a passage is written in prose or verse. The prose is a variety of wabun that uses Shinified pronunciations and sōrōbu (verbal terminations like -sōro-, -sōrae). The verse is characterized by a language close to waka and a prosody using a 7- or 5-syllable composite measure, with the variations accommodated by shortening or lengthening in delivery. The manner of delivery involves a range of chanting (from near speech to near singing) that varies from shite to waki to jiutai, from prose to verse, and from kind of unit to kind of unit.

The rich visual and auditory experience of nō renders full explanation in words infeasible. But because even rudimentary descriptive accounts are very difficult to find in Japanese, and because little consistency is to be found between accounts, we offer in the ensuing pages a reasonably complete and consistent explanation of the order and the constituents of works of nō. To enable a reader to understand a description abounding in Japanese terms, our moves in stages of detail. We begin with the jo-ha-kyū rhythm as used in nō. That is followed by general structural distinctions. We then turn to an account of an outline of a two-part nō, followed by a detailed description of the constituents of a two-part nō, with attention to major variations. We conclude with a reduced description of a one-part nō. This order leads from the simpler to the complex, from the more regular to the more irregular.

The jo-ha-kyū rhythm governs nō generally and in almost every detail—in theory at least. Not only is a given work divided into the pattern of jo or introduction, ha or agitated development, and kyū or fast close (as will shortly be set forth); but it is further held that the jo, the ha, and the kyū themselves each have their jo, ha, and kyū. Ideally speaking, all else is so governed. A given subpart (mondo, ageuta, rongi, and so on) should be governed by the same three-part rhythm. Even a given gesture—for example, the shite’s raising the right hand slowly toward the eyes of the downward inclined face as a gesture of weeping—should be governed by the jo-ha-kyū rhythm. In considering such details, we perhaps do best by considering the rhythm an ideal with which the actor imbies his art, having made—through his practice and interpretation of a given work—the rhythm second nature and a feature of aesthetic habit in performance of parts and the whole.

Students will wish to know the Japanese characters for the terms sprinkled so heavily in what follows. Rather than disfigure an already diagrammatic text with them, we offer them here (terms in Part Four are not included).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fukushikinō</td>
<td>复式能</td>
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<tr>
<td>tanshikinō</td>
<td>半式能</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakairi 中入り</td>
<td>中入り</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shidai 次第</td>
<td>次第</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nanori 名ノリ</td>
<td>名ノリ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ageuta 上歌</td>
<td>上歌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsukizerifu 着せりフ</td>
<td>着せりフ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serifu セリフ</td>
<td>セリフ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issei 一聲</td>
<td>一聲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sageuta 下歌</td>
<td>下歌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mondō 問答</td>
<td>問答</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shodō 初同</td>
<td>初同</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katari 語り</td>
<td>語り</td>
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<tr>
<td>nakanoriji 中乗地</td>
<td>中乗地</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hiranoi 平乗</td>
<td>平乗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rongi ロンギ</td>
<td>ロンギ</td>
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<tr>
<td>kuri クリ</td>
<td>クリ</td>
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<tr>
<td>sashi サシ</td>
<td>サシ</td>
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<tr>
<td>kuse クセ</td>
<td>クセ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ageha アゲハ</td>
<td>アゲハ</td>
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<tr>
<td>iguse 居グセ</td>
<td>居グセ</td>
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<td>maiguse 舞グセ</td>
<td>舞グセ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aigatarai 聞語り</td>
<td>聞語り</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machiuaitai 待語</td>
<td>待語</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakeai 拝合</td>
<td>拝合</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakeri カケリ</td>
<td>カケリ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jo no’mai 序の舞</td>
<td>jo no’mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naka no mai 中の舞</td>
<td>中の舞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyū no mai 急の舞</td>
<td>急の舞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamimai 神舞</td>
<td>神舞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hayamai 早舞</td>
<td>早舞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ōnoriji 大乗地</td>
<td>大乗地</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USHIMA 八島</td>
<td>USHIMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashikari 声刈</td>
<td>Ashikari</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The order is that of the appearance of the terms in the discussion.

The structure of nō has been determined with very great precision by recent Japanese criticism, and essentially the analysis is the same as that given by *Zami in treatises on nō composition such as Nōzakusho (also Sandō) and Fushihaku Sho. Zami distinguished between two-part and one-part nō. Contemporary critics further differentiate the former between double pieces (fukushikinō) and single pieces (tanshikinō). Because double nō are more complex, we begin with them and then offer a brief account of single nō.

The term “double” refers to the two appearances on stage by the shite. Between the two, the shite actor returns to the dressing room. The shite of the earlier part, the maeshite, is the ghost or specter of a person involved in events long ago at the imagined site of the action who appears in the guise of a quite
The end of the second appearance repeats the disappearance of the shite at
the end of the first. Because this structure of the second appearance has
been fundamentally honored since Zeami’s time, it is certain that nō authors
wrote with awareness that the second appearance repeats the first in abbrevi-
ated fashion. When nō is staged, and when the second appearance is enacted
at a pace like that for the first appearance, the whole gives a sense of inte-
grated relaxation, which leads people to regard the second appearance as a
single, fifth part.

The two appearances are made up from combination of briefer and well
defined constituents called subparts (shōdan) by some scholars. The subparts
involve combinations of various kinds of verbal and musical composition, and
each is designated by a given term. Certain scholars have made extremely precise
distinctions as to the nature of the subparts, but the following explanation
employs terms for the subparts that are used in common among the schools of
nō. (The terms are designated in small capital letters.)

**FIRST APPEARANCE**

**Jo**
Shidai. Consists of two composite 7-5 syllable verses. Since the former of
the two is repeated, the actual total is three. There may be variants like 8-5 or
7-4, but these are changed by vocal syncopation or elongation so that their
rhythm accords with the 7-5.

Nanori. In prose and spoken. The waki introduces himself and explains
why he has come to the location.

Ageuta. Beginning with a 5-syllable verse, this is chanted in measures of 5-7
composite verses (again with variants). It has the same rhythm as the shidai,
but is chanted in a more heightened tone. For the most part it is the waki’s
descriptive account of the places passed in journeying to the site of the action.

Tsukiserifu. In prose and spoken. The waki relates his arrival.

**Ha: first section**
Issei. Chanted in a 3-verse measure of 5- and 7-syllable verses. Before and
after the issei, a sashi prose unit is chanted. The sashi has a much greater
measure of recitation than tsukiserifu, but it is not prosodic and falls into no
set rhythm. A lengthy vibration of the voice is used to extend the ending of
each unit.

Ageuta. Two or three composite 7-5 verses chanted in a middle and a
lower tone, ending in a lower. Rhythmic. In content it forms a set with the
next unit in describing the scenery of the location where the waki has arrived.

**Ha, second section**
Mondo. Exchange of dialogue between waki and shite. In prose.
Shido. In verse much like an ageuta. With a rise in feeling in the dialogue
between the waki and shite, the jūta (chorus) takes over, chanting an
ageuta. During this interval, the kyōgen actor appears, sitting at the
kyōgen position on the hashigakari (see Fig. 5-4).
Ha, third section

This part is the showpiece of the first appearance, taking on many forms. The two most frequently observed kinds are given here.

**TYPE A**

**KATARI.** Prose without rhythm. It involves, however, a more solemn recitation than serifu, and mime often accompanies it.

**NAKANORIJI.** This is an ageuta chanted by the jiutai. Because it does not have a 7–5 measure, it differs in rhythm from the ageuta of the shite and waki (which are classified as hiranori rhythm).

**RONGI.** An exchange of chanting between the shite and jiutai in a rhythm using the 7–5 measure. A heightened tone is essential, but the rhythm differs slightly in nature from that of an ageuta.

**TYPE B**

**KURI.** Although a less rhythmical recitation, there is a heightened tone and the rhythm used is attractive. The tone must be lyrical, since this provides an introduction to the next two following.

**SASHI.** A prose unit, like the sashi in ha, the first section. Although ending with some chanting, it is mostly near speech—a kind of subsection ha.

**KUSE.** The jiutai is in charge. Begins in a lowered tone, but at the point where the shite chants a 5-syllable verse (called ageha), a high tone dominates. The contents are the same as in Type A, a relation of what happened in former times at this place, but instead of using the narrative features of Type A, the kuse is lyrical. There are two kinds of kuse:

1. **IGUSE.** While the jiutai chants the kuse, the shite sits in center stage, not in action.
2. **MAIGUSE.** The shite rises and, in time with the jiutai, performs a simple dance.

(Kuri, sashi, and kuse constitute a series of subparts, none of which may be cut.)

Temporary Exit (NAKAIRI)

When the shite leaves stage by the hashigakari and is once more inside, the waki calls to the local person (the kyōgen actor) at the kyōgen position and inquires about doubtful matters heard in dialogue with the shite. The kyōgen actor gives an AGATARI or narration of what happened in the past at the site. This is more colloquial than the shite's account in Type A, and since it gives just a bare outline of events in an accent typical of kyōgen, there is little sense of repetition.

SECOND APPEARANCE

**Kyū**

MACHIUTAI. The waki is in charge. An ageuta whose contents involve the expectation of a dreamlike meeting with the character (formerly the ghost, though not really known to be so by the waki) in the first appearance.

**ISSEI.** In verse, as in the first appearance. This involves a striking impression as the shite now appears in its proper guise from the past. Lyric.

**MONDO.** In prose, serifu is sometimes used, but a sashi is more common. Now in a dream state, the waki engages in conversation with the shite.

Since in *kakeai* the shite and the waki divide between them the relation of a single passage, it is appropriate that the contents be in the charge of the jiutai.

It may happen that the jiutai will continue with an ageuta or the like; it is usual to go directly from an issei to the MAI (dance).

Since what follows is the central feature of the second appearance, there are many forms used. The two most common are set forth.

**TYPE A**

**KURI.** In musical terms, the same as for the maeshite (first appearance, type B).

**SASHI.** In musical terms the same as for the maeshite (first appearance, type B). It is usual to have a kakeai between the shite and the jiutai.

**KUSE.** In musical terms, the same as for the maeshite (first appearance, type B). But it is not an iguse. (At this point the shite may also do a kakeri—a type of action only involving circling the stage following a rhythm.)

**KAKEAI.** The shite and the jiutai chant an ageuta that is not set to a rhythm.

**NAKANORIJI.** In musical terms, the same as for the maeshite (first appearance, type A). Although the jiutai is in charge, the chanting of the shite may also be involved here and there. Or, there may be a shift to some other element such as a rongi.

**TYPE B**

**MAI.** It is usual to make central a *jo no mai* (introductory dance) or *naka no mai* (middle dance). But a kyō no mai (fast close dance), kamimai (god dance), or hayama (rapid dance) may also be used. It also happens that a *ha no mai* (development dance) will accompany the jo no mai. These various dances are distinguished chiefly in terms of their speed.

**ONORIJI.** The jiutai is in charge, but it may happen that the shite will also chant a bit. Since an onoriji has one sound per beat, its rhythm will also be found in Western vocal music. The onoriji differs from the nakanorji of Type A just preceding in the greater irregularity of the nakanorji. The onoriji is not just more regular, however, but will also involve some chanting by the shite within the dominant chanting by the jiutai.

After this, the shite's concluding beat (a single stamp of the foot as a sign of ending) sounds, and the whole play is over. Starting with the shite, all performers leave the stage.

The preceding describes the established structure of no works, a structure perfected a short time after Zeami. There are not many works that provide complete examples, and the model given is therefore idealized. Yashima is a good example of the perfected structure, but most no lack one part or another. Certain other differences exist, especially in short pieces.
In what follows there is an outline of a one-part no. Since all the terms have previously been explained, they will not be explained here. For one-part no, genzaimono are the most common.

Jo
SHIDAI—NANORI—AGEUTA—TSUKISERIFU. The sequence is the same as for two-part no, and the waki is in charge. It sometimes happens just after this that there will be a mondō between the waki and a kyōgen actor.

Ha, first section
ISSEI—SASHI—AGEUTA—AGEUTA is the sequence. This is the part in which the shite appears on stage.

Ha, second section
MONDO—SHODŌ is the sequence. The mondō occurs between the waki and the shite; it may also happen that the juitai will shift to ageuta, sageuta, or rongi.

Ha, third section
KAKEAI—AGEUTA—MONDO—KURI—SASHI—KUSE is the usual sequence, but there are other kinds.

Kyū
RONGI—ISSEI—MAI—ONORIJII is the sequence. With the shite’s concluding stamp of the foot, the performers leave the stage.

As an example of a single-part no akin to the two-part pieces, there is Ashikari. But since the one-part pieces are so often genzaimono, their theatrical character differs, and they are much more given to variation than are two-part no.

The historical development of no resembles its elusive art in certain complexities of detail not always easily kept in the mind. By the Edo period, no had achieved (with kyōgen) the status of an art worthy of support by the military aristocracy. In that tidy way favored by the Edo bakufu, four houses were recognized as “the four companies with one style” (shiza ichiryō). The four are named in various orderings but include Kanze, Komparu, Hōshō, and Kongō. The Kita school was omitted from that recognized group, but it has its own respected traditions as a shite school.

B. KYŌGEN

Consideration of kyōgen allows for a further analogy between renga and no. Renga began as a kind of amusement, an entertainment, a pastime, and only gradually developed as a serious literary art claiming kinship with waka. Even in so becoming ushin or serious, however, renga had its mushin, nonstandard or comic counterpart. Nō had also begun as a kind of dramatic performance meant to elicit laughter from the onlookers, only later becoming sufficiently serious for *Zeami to claim it as an element in “the central artistic tradition.” As it became serious, nō had its comic sister in the “wild words” of kyōgen—which is more properly styled nō no kyōgen or even sarugaku no nō no kyōgen. Nō and kyōgen share the same stage, just as the ai or aikyōgen may appear in the interval of the two parts of various nō. In much the same fashion, kyōgen has historically alternated with, or provided interludes for, the five pieces of a full nō performance. It is generally agreed that in Zeami’s time the two arts resembled each other more than they do today, when nō has been slowed and otherwise altered. In both its origins and in its historic role, kyōgen has been an integral part of the experience of nō.

In other words, although kyōgen may be formally regarded as an equivalent of kyoka to waka, a comic version of a serious model, kyōgen is more than that. It is a genuine counterpart, a second half of a single drama that bears in it more of its origins than the other half does. In an important sense, comedy is more essentially dramatic than tragedy, since it is freer of ritual origins and social rites. Certainly, kyōgen is one of the most universally accessible of all kinds of Japanese drama and a spiritual home of the Japanese comic imagination.

The origins of this drama are so mixed as to be obscure. The early Edo master *Okura Torakikara wrote in his Warambogusa (or Kyōgen Mukashigatari Shō) that kyōgen had long been a kind of variety show. That is, he said it consisted of such things as little dances (komai), narrative, and other such elements until the Namboku writer Gen’e (d. 1350) had brought unity to such constituents. Whether Gen’e played so material a role may be doubted, but the variety-show nature of early versions seems definite. We need only recall that before kyōgen emerged in its recognizable form, sarugaku was itself comic, along with much of denkai, kōwakamai, and such other early performances as engikabuki. In a sense, these quasi-dramatic performances—and many others practiced by priests and nuns, jongleurs and minstrels, reciters and entertainers—all existed before drama proper, before plays were regularly presented on permanent stages. Such predrama has ancient roots, as was observed of nō. There is no cause for surprise that Fujiwara Akihira (d. 1066) should write in his Shinsharagōki that this “new sarugaku” was a kind of entertainment with such enduring comic staples as the rustics’ visit to the capital (cf. the kyōgen, Kanazu).

One distinction seems possible. It appears that public storytelling-recitation and what Japanese term kabu (song-dance) or enacted entertainments developed separately before both kyōgen and nō brought together, each in its own way, elements of both into sarugaku no nō and sarugaku no kyōgen. For the latter, this coalescence appears to have taken definite form around 1400, with a predecessor called sarugowaza providing the stimulus.

The problem of accounting for the development of later kinds probably rests more with nō than kyōgen, with the development of high seriousness rather than the comic spirit. A famous account of sarugaku as late as 1423 tells of three character types common to the performances: the exhausted noble character, monkeys, and the bumbling priest. Characters in such guise provide obvious comic material. That date represents a time when both nō and kyōgen had assumed something like their mature, full status. It therefore suggests the extent to which “sarugaku” continued to be a term comprehending both as a single
dramatic art, just as they continued, and still continue, to use the same stage. The distinction between these two kinds of sarugaku surely involves the efforts by Zeami to bring nō into the waka-renga aesthetic, and by such means to obtain social recognition for a serious art. Yet just as Zeami was patronized by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, so was Ōkura Torakira by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu.

The strongly emergent decorum that distinguished the two kinds of sarugaku marks that tidying-up which Edo authorities brought in with their stabilizing, conservative, and feudal mentality. As performances of nō have slowed and as kyōgen has ceased to be performed in the four intervals of five nō plays, we have come to share the mental outlook of the Edo shogunate. We too wish to separate nō into the category of the quiet, serious, remiscent, allusive, and aristocratic, and kyōgen into another of the bumptious, funny, this-worldly, social, and common. Zeami himself would have been surprised at so radical a distinction. Even today, that unclassifiable nō, Okina, with its black-masked Sambasō resembles celebratory kyōgen more than it does first-category nō.

Zeami’s sympathy with the comic art of his colleagues finds expression in his remark that kyōgen “embraces the joyful amid its laughter” (Shōdōsho). With some exceptions, kyōgen leads us to a laughter without cruelty, even if our “sudden glory” leads us to a sense of safe removal from the plights of the characters whose comedy discomforts them. As the sufferings of the people in nō are bearable in tragic fashion because they involve personages exalted or otherwise remote from our times and experience, the situations of characters in kyōgen are easily tolerated because they so palpably exist on their own terms in their own preoccupied world of hunger, thirst, greed, and other fundamentally human, absorbing preoccupations.

Kyōgen may sometimes include dance, masks, and much else that reminds us of nō. But its fundamental character, its comic understanding of human life, derives from two quite distinct aesthetic components that can be termed language and stage action. Viewed in one way, the language is of course less exalted than that of its solemn sister. It developed from versions of actual Muromachi speech as subsequently modified. To that flavor of an older time, but of a time more recent than the language of nō, it adds the tang of a syntax and verve much closer to actual speech, and indeed to modern Japanese. But the “language” comprehends far more. Records from the fifteenth century show that “kyōgen” was a term often applied to the performances of storytelling priests and especially to rapid-patter stories (hayamonogatari). The association between rapid talk and comedy is an enduring one in Japan, uniting the egregious Omi Lady in the Genji Monogatari with the manzai we associate with kamigata comedy and with television skits to this day. In this sense, “language” involves comic delivery and fun with words ranging from puns and wit to a sense of what will take with audiences. But “language” also has a yet more fundamental role in making kyōgen a distinct kind of sarugaku.

As a counterpart of the stage action (shigusa) of kyōgen, dialogue (serifu) provides the basis for an internationally accessible kind of drama. The dialogue shows that nō rather than kyōgen is the theatrical exception. As we have seen, one of the shōdan 小段 or elements of nō is mondō 職問, “dialogue.” Yet mondō is less dramatic, an essentially narrative answer to a dramatic question. In fact, nō is far more narrative in cast than is any other major dramatic kind in the world. The dialogue (serifu) of kyōgen, on the other hand, is recognizable theatrically as verbal human interchange, as dynamic question and answer, as remark and rejoinder, as a dynamic process whereby one thing leads to another and a series of speeches directs us to a climax. The action (shigusa) is stylized, as the stage requires, but it is not stylized into narrative and lyric such as mark nō. In a word, kyōgen is more dramatic. In this respect, although nō bequeathed stories and motifs to jōruri and kabuki, the words and actions of kyōgen bequeathed the dramatic temper itself. It is no accident that kabuki is properly styled kabukikyōgen.

In its early stages as a distinct kind, kyōgen appears to have involved a good deal of the impromptu and ad lib. This again reminds us of kabuki. There is in the Tenshō Kyōgenbon a late sixteenth-century tendency to set down texts of plays for reading, and that implies that plays were becoming fixed in their “language.” But since the texts so presented vary from their present counterparts, the spirit of improvisation must have lasted on. Just before 1650, Tokugawa Iemitsu sought to have nō and kyōgen settled into proper feudal houses or guilds, and players were so organized and recognized. In view of what happened when waka and renga earlier became the property of rival houses, this institutionalizing of kyōgen probably marks the date from which standardizing began for the acting texts (daihon) of kyōgen.

Iemitsu’s regularizing led to the recognition of a number of kyōgen schools, including the three principal ones: Ōkura 大蔵, Sagi 鳥, and Izumi 和泉. Texts for yet other schools were published in a series after 1660: Kyōgenki 狂狂記, Kyōgenki Gai 狂狂記外, Zoku Kyōgenki 袴狂狂記, and Kyōgenki Shū 狂狂記拾遺. But the texts most familiar today derive from the roughly 200 of the Ōkura canon and the roughly 250 of the Izumi school. A few of these plays appear in one school’s canon but not the other’s. See Part Six H for a list of kyōgen titles.

Like the many plays of nō, those of kyōgen are classified into groups or types. There are seven, not the five of nō as distinguished by Zeami and later—although it does appear that nō also once had seven kinds. In any event, the kyōgen groups can be set forth with their names, some brief description of grounds for distinction, and a famous example of plays in each category:

1. Waki Kyōgen 出狂言. These are celebratory. (See first-category nō.) Daikoku Renga.
2. Daimyō Kyōgen 大名狂言. The shite plays a daimyo’s part. Utsubosaru (one of many plays involving the rascally Tarōkajā).
4. Muko Onna Kyōgen 妻女狂言. Although in two instances the shite plays
the woman's role in these comedies about couples and domestic life, usually the waki does. Futaribakama.
5. Oni Yamabushi Kyōgen 鬼山伏狂言. This corresponds somewhat to nō dealing with demons (fifth-category) and yamabushi. Asahina.
6. Shukke Zatō Kyōgen 騌隊頭狂言. Originally this involved ridicule of the blind, but changing sensibilities have led to making such characters more sympathetic. Kanazu.
7. Atsume Kyōgen 集狂言. Miscellaneous plays. Many of these resemble Daimyo Kyōgen. They involve such subcategories as thieves and stripteases. Akutagawa.

If it is impossible not to admire and ponder the high art of nō, it is very easy to give one's heart to kyōgen. Because it has never had a Zeami to claim these plays as a part of "the central artistic tradition" of Japan, it seems impossible to expect any such criticism at this late hour; the only real kyōgen criticism is that by *Okura Torakira. But since so much of the world's high literature, including that of Japan, seems to post a warning, Laughter Not Permitted, kyōgen offers a welcome reminder that our lives do not consist solely of the solemnity with which the French regard food, we regard Shakespeare, and the Marxists economics. In its relative lack of theory and High Seriousness, kyōgen is not entirely the loser. The schools of kyōgen actors do not have recorded histories as long as those of nō schools. The three main schools seem to have begun to take on definition in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, but there are no adequately annotated texts of plays that can be traced back so far. Thereafter, however, the Okura, Sagi, and Izumi schools received official recognition and maintained separate traditions as well as somewhat variant texts. There are at present few texts accessible, printed in modern type and annotated. Those commonly so presented are really reading versions. As texts are now being published in seventeenth-century acting versions, kyōgen begins to gain something of its proper theatrical and literary status. Unfortunately, during the Meiji period the Sagi school and its resources were lost. The then head of the school taught kyōgen principles to a kabuki actor. So incensed were the samurai-born sponsors of kyōgen that they withdrew all support. This illustrates what was said at the outset, that kyōgen is really nō no kyōgen, something far above the pretensions of the kabuki theatre and its kabukikyōgen. We may deplore the attitude, but the kind of thought involved is highly informative, and it lends no little credence to the ga and zoku distinctions traditionally made for different kinds of literature.

C. Mibu Kyōgen 王生狂言 and Kōwakamai 幸若舞

Any effort to give a clear account of the performed arts in classical Japan can only distort a most complex period of evolution. A very large number of kinds of performance existed, many of them designed for the lower classes, and many originating from such classes. They survived by virtue of the Japanese instinct to preserve and by taking on characteristics of the higher culture and the social organization emerging after the interregnum of sengoku times (1476–1568).

There are many, many terms to describe various sorts of performance. Often the same thing is given different names. Often the same name comes to designate quite different things in the course of time. Mibu kyōgen and kōwakamai may be taken as examples of performances that have just barely survived. Moreover, they offer us some sense of the kind of performance existing about nō and kyōgen, and possess features that made jōrari and kabuki possible.

Mibu kyōgen is also termed Mibu sarugaku and Mibu nembutsu (nembutsu, or recitation of the Buddha's name, having led to various kinds of performance earlier). A standard dictionary defines it as "one of a number of kinds of folk-drama of the sarugaku line" (Kōjitsuya). It is still performed annually at Mibu Temple in Kyoto for a few days in the latter half of April by people who have inherited the costumes, roles, and site. For our purposes, it is especially significant that its action is extremely vigorous. Perhaps it shows us what nō or at least sarugaku once was like, although it is not humorous. The action is performed to the accompaniment of a temple gong, a flute, and a large drum. As a performance ends, there is a ritual breaking of simple dishes by pushing them down to the ground beneath the stage. The audience also sits in an elevated position, regarding the players across a gulf of space, with broken dishes lying below from the preceding performance. The plays include, for example, Tsuchigumo, on the huge spider, and the actor for the role has a great time casting webs about. This topic was, of course, used also by nō and kabuki in their ways. The Mibu kyōgen version differs from those others in that it, like all its performances, is purely pantomime, without a word of text. This may lead us to infer that the art is closely related to religious ritual, but its present version is distinct from any sectarian emphasis.

Kōwakamai has been more thoroughly studied. As might be expected, that has made matters more complex. The art has continued to be performed only in the village of Ōe in Fukuoka. However, fifty texts have survived from the seventeenth century, and the titles of another sixty-odd are known. Of those forty, forty deal either with figures from the Gempei wars or with the Soga brothers' revenge. Comedy and romantic attachments are rigorously excluded in this male depiction (for male audiences?) of the heroic era. The scripts are in prose, and performances take two to three hours.

Unlike Mibu kyōgen, kōwakamai does not consist solely of miming, though it does include mime with dance elements that involve stamping of feet. The texts have no dialogue but rather recitation. There are also passages designated "kotoba." These words are spoken by individual players rather than by the reciter, although most of the play is given to the reciter. It is as if the chorus in nō handled most of the text and the shite or waki said just a bit now and again. The characters have nō-like designations: tayū 太夫 (shite), waki, and tsure.

The rest remains open to varying description. The pieces have usually been termed kōwakamai bukkyoku 幸若舞曲, or dance pieces, and there are many records praising early performers for their dances. It is not clear whether the footstamping, which is about all that constitutes dance in performance now, was considered especially appealing or whether several other kinds of movement
have been lost. The texts also show up in places that may seem natural or unexpected. It is not surprising that they should be included among “old jōruri” (kojōruri), but it is another matter to find them among otogizōshi and ukiyozōshi.

Those who acted kōwakamai were often called shōmyō, which strictly speaking refers to Buddhist liturgical musicians or chanters. But such people had long since taken on the role of entertainers to propagate the faith, so the title could have purely secular overtones; performers, much like nominal or actual nuns (bikuni, etoki bikuni), traveled about the country performing by explaining religious pictures or reciting long narratives. The actors were also sometimes referred to as senzu manzai, after the performers of auspicious rites at New Year’s. The names are not as important in themselves as the glimpse they give of a welter of kinds of performance in pre-Edo Japan.

The heyday of kōwakamai was relatively brief. According to legend, it was founded by Momonoi Naoakira, whose dates are variously given. Whether or not he had anything to do with the development of the art, the dates assigned are those of the fifteenth century, and it does seem likely that that much is right. This kind emerged, then, a half century or so after sarugaku-style nō and kyōgen had taken on their distinct character. About the middle of the sixteenth century, its texts were set down and seem to have remained fixed thereafter. During the following fifty years kōwakamai flourished and thereafter declined. Various explanations have been given for the decline. The most likely seems to be that as the performers achieved status as samurai in the decline, they no longer thought acting worthy of their status.

Mibu kyōgen shows that lively action or pantomime was part of the Japanese sense of drama. Kōwakamai shows how drama could develop with action explained by recitation. Both features were to be taken up by the major subsequent kinds that developed during the Edo period, and in jōruri we discover a kind of drama whose genius was like that of kōwakamai, if also far greater.

D. Jōruri

Very numerous kinds of entertainment have been termed jōruri, some old and some late: for example, kabujōruri properly designates kabuki music. For something of the variety, see the jōruri entry in Part Three. What follows concerns one line, that involving puppets.

Although it shares very much in its development with numerous other kinds of performance, jōruri (today termed bunraku) is different from other kinds of Japanese drama, and probably from all other important kinds in the world, in being a theater using puppets. The elimination of actors placed greater importance on other elements, which came to include the following four in decreasing order of importance:

- recitation
- music
- manipulated puppets
- text

Modern ideas have come to rate the author of the text more highly than did the practitioners of jōruri in its heyday, but it remains quite clear that for actual theater the other three are still crucial to performance.

What may be termed proto-jōruri is a kind of puppet entertainment. Puppet manipulators, kugutsu, were functioning as early as the Nara period, at first men but later women also. The puppets they used were small, after the fashion of Western kinds, and were made from wood or pottery. Early puppet shows seem to have concentrated on representing dance or fights. A more sophisticated manipulation appeared with the ebisukaci 恵比須木 group of kugutsu. This developed in Nishinomiya (Hyōgo prefecture) and became a type of performance.

About the Muromachi period, proto-jōruri had many resemblances with heikyoku, sekkyō, kōwakamai and other kinds of performance, and even at later stages of development it retained features from these other kinds. For a long time its performers, including the ebisukaci, were as much strollers as were the performers of heikyoku and so forth. Yet the ebisukaci gradually attached themselves to temples and shrines, and acquired a degree of respectability and interest. By the middle of the sixteenth century, courtiers had taken notice of them. Ono no Otsū 小野お通, a female attendant of Oda Nobunaga, composed her Jōruri Junidansōshi 渋谷璃十二段草子 (A Jōruri Book in Twelve Acts), so suggesting some degree of interest among the Azuchi–Momoyama authorities. By the mid-fifteenth century, jōruri seems to have enjoyed special popularity in Mikawa province (near modern Nagoya). During this time it resembled other kinds of performance in being essentially a kind of mimed narrative accompanied by music, but it differed in using puppets. Yet, as this account also shows, the identification of jōruri with puppets is a later stage.

The old jōruri (kojōruri), as it is called, came about with the adoption of what is now termed the shamisen, a three-stringed lute–or banjo-like instrument plucked by fingers or a plectrum. Like the French horn among wind instruments, this is a very expressive invention and very difficult to play truly well. The instrument arrived in Japan from China via the Ryukyu Islands about 1555 to 1570. Between about 1595 and 1625, it was adapted to Japanese tastes, so that the sanshin or jabisen at last became the shamisen. The instrument is light enough and small enough to be easily portable. But there is something about it that has led Japanese to use it in preference to other instruments for performance on the popular classical stage. In this sense, its adoption by jōruri signifies a potential for performance in theaters rather than by strolling minstrels.

Old jōruri seems to have begun in Kyoto, but by the second quarter of the seventeenth century was flourishing more in Edo. Thereafter its history is one of the rivalry between theaters in three centers—Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo—and with kabuki. In the middle of the century, popularity shifted to Kyoto, where at last the lines of great reciters began to emerge, and this may be thought the crucial period for the development of the art as it is usually known. With the emergence about 1677 of the most famous of reciters, Takemoto Gidayū, the old jōruri was established as an independent art, at once popular and worthy of separate aesthetic consideration. With the addition of the literary genius of
Part Five Theaters

Chikamatsu Monzaemon, the art realized its potential. From the appearance in 1685 of Shusse Kagekiyo, written by Chikamatsu for Gidayū, Japanese scholars date the new jōruri (shinjōruri). The date is somewhat arbitrary, and in fact certain kinds of jōruri have continued to be called Gidayūbushi. (The rest of the development is properly the part of history in Part One.)

Many discriminations (and even more names) have been made over the centuries, one of which involves the distinguishing of three kinds of jōruri. The kind that concerns everybody most is ningyōgeki, which includes old jōruri, Gidayūbushi, and new jōruri. A second joins jōruri with kabuki. And a third involves domestic performance.

A more important distinction, one passed on to kabuki, is that between two kinds of plays: jidaimono or period pieces and sewamono or contemporary pieces. The former was itself subdivided:

ōdaimono dealing with courtly matters
jidaimono dealing with older matters
oiemono dealing with daimyo or samurai matters

These categories are obviously not fully parallel or exclusive. Sometimes a simpler distinction is drawn between military pieces, gunkimono, and others. This would seem to suggest the primacy of jidaimono. But the existence of that which is called sewajidaimono seems to suggest the opposite, that sewamono exerted influence on the period pieces. (For plays exemplifying such kinds, see the next section, on kabuki.)

Both kinds are usually divided into dan and ba, for which “act” and “scene” are accurate enough (meaning as they do different things in Italy, France, and England). The old jōruri seems to have taken on a five-act sequence:

1. Sambasō 三番叟
2. kyōgen 狂言
3. kyōgen
4. kyōgen
5. shūgen 祝言

Sambasō (as we saw in connection with Okina in nō) and shūgen are felicitous, offering an auspicious beginning and ending, at least in name. The three middle acts are those of the action proper. Later, Gidayū also distinguished five acts, but his categories obviously signify a quite different kind of play:

1. love (koi) 恋
2. battle (shura) 修羅
3. offense (shūtan) 慈璃
4. travel piece (michityuki) 道行
5. dialogue (mondō) 間答

This seems quite arbitrary, an adaptation from nō. These two five-act distinctions were thought characteristic of jidaimono, whereas sewamono were divided into three acts. (Nobody knows where these five- and three-act divisions came from, but they are also most common in the West, where their origins are equally obscure.)

Chikamatsu distinguished for sewamono a three-act or three-part sequence:

1. opening (kuchi) 口
2. middle (naka) 中
3. end (kiri) 切

The same divisions may in fact be made for jidaimono, as can be shown variously but most simply in terms of the divisions in old jōruri: Sambasō, three kyōgen, shūgen. This makes the middle portion much longer than the other two. This sorts well with Japanese senses of proportion. In fact, whether deliberately or simply out of a sense of fitness, Chikamatsu was obviously distinguishing something very like the jo-ha-kyū rhythm of gagaku, nō, renga, and haikai.

A jōruri stage can be set up in a kabuki theater or on a Western stage. As the audience enters, it faces the stage where the puppets are manipulated. (See Figs. 5-8 and 5-9.) To the right (stage left) and jutting out toward the audience are places for two men to sit. The one closest to the audience is the reciter (tayū, Gidayū, etc.). At his right (nearer the stage) sits the shamisen player. The puppets of jōruri kugutsu were once small enough to be carried in a box suspended from the shoulders, while the hands manipulated two puppets from behind and the manipulator could comment or relate. Being of about the half-human size they are today, the puppets are now more than one manipulator can handle. Also, since the facial features can be moved, elaborate dances be staged, and puppets be made to seem to smoke a pipe or throw and catch fans, the three manipulators have specialized parts of the body to deal with, and must be extremely skillful. The puppets may have their own stage, as it were (perhaps a domestic interior), but essentially the manipulators stand behind a boarded area that covers the lower parts of their bodies. The audience can see the manipulators from the waist up, including heads and arms. They are dressed in black and covered with a kind of black gauze. So skillful is the handling that, in fact, one is caught up in the acting.

The shamisen used to accompany the action and reciting, as also to give some music on occasion, is of a heavier kind than that used in kabuki or to accompany dances (odorī). It has a wonderful strength of tone and a range of effect that requires hearing to appreciate. The reciter (in Edo-style clothes) sits before his text rack and gives the only speaking voice (or voices) heard. All that is narrated or spoken by the characters derives from him. A soldier boasting of his name and threatening his enemy blusters through the reciter. A couple weeping last vows for the next world as they go to double suicide do so in the shaking voice of the reciter. It may be that in theory three such dissimilar elements should not make up effective theater, yet they do. Although kabuki has a range beyond that of jōruri, the theatrical spirit is purified to a degree in jōruri that enables us to understand why it could exceed kabuki in popularity over periods of time. And it seems likely that no other Japanese theatrical art holds the same interest as jōruri for theories of dramatic possibility.
Kabuki achieved full development between 1780 and 1850—along with some signs of decadence in dwelling on the lurid and melodramatic rather more than previously. Yet the Iwai and, particularly, the Onoe houses of actors had also made their mark. All the main kinds of kabuki came to full development, and what we know of kabuki today is essentially what was known then (although contact with the West and more recently with film and television has left marks on the older entity).

As kabuki matured, it brought into being plays that have been variously distinguished. The most general distinction is that between buyōgi (i.e., shosagoto) and engeki. The former are dance plays by name, although they involve as well action and dialogue. The dancing is accompanied by singing and above all by shamisen playing. This combination uses nagauta or jōruri music. Engeki are dramatic plays emphasizing dialogue (serifu). Another distinction is taken over from jōruri. For jidaimono, the same subcategories were distinguished as for the puppet theater. For sewamono, an extra category of kizewamono (“living,” that is, melodramatic domestic plays), including both kaidamono (spectral or mystery pieces) and shiranamimono (rogues' and villains' pieces). This general category was developed by one of the last great kabuki playwrights, *Kawatake Mokuami* (1816–1893). A title like Shiranami Goin Oito reminds us of *Ihara Saikaku*, who would have liked these plays.

Before this dramatist there were many others of high importance, such as *Tsuruya Namboku*. Their position—relative to other people involved in the plays—was in general superior to that of their counterparts for jōruri. But just as that theater had been dominated by the reciter, kabuki has always been dominated by actors. The playwright would have to change what would not show off an actor’s talents to best effect, and an actor might improvise as the idea struck him. But literary students must understand that such are more or less the conditions of living theater throughout the world, and one might go farther still to say that audiences control even the actors, since what will not bring people to the theater will not long be played.

The types of roles became more and more specialized. In general, actors earned their careers by being able to play numerous kinds of parts, but it was no doubt inevitable that the special talents required have led some actors to specialize in women's roles, onnagata, some men's, otokogata, and within these groups other roles such as comic, romantic, or heavy characters. Actors often make their debuts as young children and gradually work their way along to playing old men and women. It must be remembered, however, that many of the most esteemed performances of young women's parts have been by older actors. The following categories of actors are usually distinguished.

**Otokogata** 男形. Male Roles

**Wagoto** 和事. Attractive men, often lovers, whether samurai or of ordinary class

**Jitsugoto** 実事. Straightforward men
ARAGOTO 荒事. Great heroes; bold, bustling men
BUDÔGATA 武道方. True warriors
KATAKIYAKU 戦役. Villains, contrasted with tachiyaku
JITSUAKU 実様. Downright evil characters, usually samurai
IROAKU 色様. Amorous villains
OYAIGATA 親仁方. Old villains
TÉDAIGATA 手代敷. Villainous managers or servants in mercantile houses
DÔKUGATA 道敷. Comic men, fools
HANDÔ(GATAKI) 半道敷. Comic male villains

ONNAGATA 女方. Female Roles
WAKAONNAGATA 若女方. Women about twenty or so
TAYÔ 太夫. Courtesans of high rank in the licensed quarters
MUSUMEGATA 娘方. Young women of ordinary class
AKIBA 悪婆 or DOKUFUGATA 鬼婦方. Villainous women
KASHAGATA 花単方 (形). Old women

MISCELLANEOUS
WAKASHUGATA 若衆方. Young men or boys
OYAIGATA 親仁方. Old men (cf. kashagata)
KOKATA 子方. Children, especially boys

Other roles, such as those of the nobility, spirits, and even animals also exist, but those specified here pertain to the kinds that the government wished, in its feudal and bureaucratic way, to classify, and in fact did manage to control to some extent until there was a relaxation in the eighteenth century. It has been remarked with great penetration that “modal beauty” rather than merely particularized or realistic portrayal is the essential quality of kabuki, and, more provocatively, that this lies most essentially in the art of the onnagata. There are some who hold that when the onnagata disappear from the stage, kabuki will be no more.

The acting houses took on various characteristics, including names in a hierarchy of esteem, acting techniques, and favorite plays that have become part of the traditions of the theater. Some of us will never forget the great onnagata Onoe Kikugorô VI 尾上菊五郎 (1876–1949) playing the title role in Musume Dôjôji at the age of seventy-one, making the dancing girl come to graceful life. For a generation, then, a given actor of a given house may seem to define a specific role or kind of role. One symptom of this tendency has been the definition of semi-official lists of prime plays by a given actor for a given school. These include Shinô Engeki Jasshu 新歌舞伎十八集, ten plays selected by Onoe Kikugorô V (1844–1903) from those made most famous by his acting and that of his predecessors. This group was subsequently altered. Another selection, the Shin Kabuki Jûhachiban 新歌舞伎十八番集 selected by Ichikawa Danjûrô IX (1838–1903), includes both dramatic and dance pieces in which he starred. As this name suggests, there was before it the most famous collection of all, Kabuki Jûhachiban, said to have been compiled by Danjûrô VII (1791–1859), which included plays especially suited to the Ichikawa aragoto style.

Perhaps one of the readiest ways of showing something of the nature of kabuki (and also joruri) plays is to run through all eighteen of the Kabuki Jûhachiban plays with various comments.


2. Narukami 善神 (1684). Jidaimono. The priest named in the title as the divinity of thunder raves in anger after having given himself to the enchantments of a beautiful woman. Like Fuwa, not among the enduring favorites.

3. Shibaraku 柴丸 (1697). Jidaimono. “Just a Moment.” The title comes from the word rung out by the hero, a good samurai who rescues another from a tyrant lord. This is performed each kaomise and is one of the most famous of all.

4. Fudô 不動 (1697). Jidaimono. The title refers to the Fire Divinity, to represent the distraught jealousy of a woman.


6. Zôbiki 象引 (1701). Jidaimono. This “Plundering an Elephant” is an ancient moralizing story. An imperiously proud nobleman rides to view plum blossoms on an elephant. A righteous warrior punishes him and takes the elephant. Edo people were hardly familiar with live elephants, and the staging of this must have been spectacular as well as exotic.

7. Kanjinchô 勘進帳 (1703). Buyôgeki. An adaptation of the nô, Ataka, “The Subscription List,” and one of the kabuki favorites. Benkei, the retainer of Yoshitsune, uses various ruses to get his master past the Ataka Barrier. The acting, dancing, and posturing make this a wonderful spectacle.

8. Sukeroku 助六 (1713). Sewamono, named after the hero, lover of the high-ranking Yoshiwara courtesan, Agemaki. Although a commoner, Sukeroku defeats the samurai villain who is trying to get the woman by force. This has a fine Edo sewamono plot, and is a long-time favorite.


10. Uirô 外郎卖 (1718). Buyôgeki. “The uirô seller” does little more than give a long mountebank speech, with dance, on the miraculous curative powers of his ware. Tour de force.

11. Kan-u 関羽 (1737). Jidaimono. Pretending to be the legendary Chinese warrior, Kan-u, the hero lays bare the machinations of evil samurai.

12. Ya no Ne 柵の根 (1729). Jidaimono. One of the many Sogamono 曽我物, or stories of the Soga brothers and their revenge, this tells how Gorô, while polishing the arrowhead of the title, falls asleep, dreams of Jirô’s plight, and rushes off to assist him. The dream presentation on stage makes the play.


15. Kenuki 毛抜 (1742). Jidaimono. Wrongdoers are discovered and put to death by the strange means of the hair tweezers of the title and a magnet.


18. Kamahige 鳳髪 (1774). Another Kagekiyo play. The disguised Kagekiyo falls into argument with a swordmaker whom he encounters on his travels. “The Beard-Sickle” of the title refers to the swordmaker’s ruse to shave Kagekiyo with a sickle. He intends to cut off his head, but Kagekiyo has impermeable skin. More splendid aragoto.

Somedother plays are as noteworthy and famous as even Shiharaku, even if not as consistently performed. Just a few may be noted, beginning with three adapted from joruri. Kokusen’ya Kassen 国性院合戦, The Battle of Coxinga, is adapted from a play with the same title by Chikamatsu (opened 1715). The hero’s role is aragoto at an extreme. Shinjū Ten no Amijima 心中天縁島, or more simply Koharu Jihē 小春治兵衛 after the two central characters, tells of “The Double Suicide at Amijima,” and is taken from a sewamono by Chikamatsu that opened in 1720. Sonezaki Shinjū 曽根崎心中 deals with another double suicide, at Sonezaki, and also was written by Chikamatsu. It was performed in 1703, and is a sewamono.

Meiboku Sendai Hagi 伽羅先代豪 or Sendai Hagi was originally written for joruri by collaborators, and as “The Disputed Succession of the Date Family,” is probably the finest of the Date plays. It involves conspiracies and features children playing highly affecting roles. An oiemono variety of jidaimono.

Yoshitsune Sembonzakura 義経千本桜 or Sembonzakura. Jidaimono. The joruri version by *Takeda Izumo and others was performed in 1743; the kabuki version of this “Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees” appeared the next year. Yoshitsune’s valor had helped establish his brother, Yoritomo, as ruler of Japan. But now the brother has accused Yoshitsune of sending false heads for the three Taira generals, he was supposed to do away with. This complicated play deals with Yoshitsune’s wanderings, his encounters with the three Taira, his chivalric treatment of them, and, above all, with his mistress Shizuka. She is given a wonderful michiyuki and dance with a magic drum. She is united with Yoshitsune at Yoshino, famous for its cherry flowers, and so on, and so forth.

Soga no Taimen 曽我の対面. This “Revenge of the Soga Brothers” is one of a half dozen or so plays on this enduringly popular story. Jidaimono.

Kanadehon Chushingura 仮名手本忠臣蔵 or Chushingura. Originally a hit jidaimono in joruri by *Takeda Izumo and others, it is one of the all-time favorites on the kabuki stage as well. It deals with the forty-seven masterless samurai (rōnin) who carefully bide their time to avenge their lord, who was disgraced and made to commit ritual suicide. The full kabuki version runs to many, many hours. It is sometimes played entire, although as usual with kabuki today, the tendency is to excerpt favorite scenes.

(Kyō Kanoko or Kyōganoko) Musume Dōjōji (京鹿子娘道成寺, Musume Dōjōji, or Dōjōji is a nagauta shosagoto that has been popular since its appearance in 1753. Dōjō Temple is about to have a new bell dedicated on a day when women are barred from the precincts. A young woman appears (the ghost of Kiyohime, a former shirabyōshi), and pleads to enter. The priests refuse, but yield to her request that at least she dance. As she does so, a loud sound is heard. She disappears during the confusion. The bell has fallen. The priests pray, the bell rises, and a serpent is seen inside—a manifestation of Kiyohime.

Kurawa Bunshō 鹿足文書. A sewamono adapted from Chikamatsu’s Yūgiri Awa no Naro 夕霧阿波の鳴波, this “Tale of the Licensed Quarter” was played in Edo in 1808. The revision well illustrates Edo tastes in sewamono. Izaemon, now exiled to the Fujiyama for his love of the Shimnachii courtesan Yūgiri, arrives in winter at the licensed house where she lives. Although she has a new patron and is reduced by poverty to a paper kimono, they are reconciled. At the right moment a messenger arrives with familial forgiveness, consent, and the money to buy Yūgiri out of her bond.

Kagamijishi 瑞獅子. Shosagoto. Strictly speaking, this belongs to modern literature, having first been produced in 1893. But this “Lion Mirror” has a spectacular dance that well represents the spirit of one kind of kabuki.

Ichinotani Futaba Gunki 一谷駅軍記 Jidaimono. One of a number of plays involving the valiant Kumagai Naoyane and the young Atsumori. In this, Kumagai is ordered by his lord to bring Atsumori’s head if at all possible. He captures the young man but, because the lad’s mother had once saved his life, lets him go. He therefore presents his own son’s head to his lord, takes the tolerance for a life of austerities, and leaves a grieving lord, suffering wife, and his own heroic past. The final scene on the hanamichi is one of the most moving and tragic in drama, although only half a dozen words are spoken.

Sambaso 三番叟. A shosagoto adapted, ca. 1650, from the no and joruri. One of several auspicious plays of similar nature: see also Shikisambaso and Ayatsuri Sambaso.

Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami 薩摩伝授手鏡, better known as Terakoya 寺子（小）屋, “The Temple School.” Jidaimono, adapted from a joruri play by Takeda Izumo and others presented in 1746. One of the great favorites, this play shows a loyal retainer offering his son to be killed in place of his lord’s, intrigue, and so on.

The kabuki season began on the first day of the eleventh month (all dates by the lunar calendar) with the kaomise, face-showing performance. The newly reconstituted troupe would offer itself to the public. In the kabuki year ensuing, actors would perform about two hundred days in the various subseasons. These include spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The bayō run began on the third of the Third Month and the satsuki on the fifth of the Fifth Month. The bon run, beginning the fifteenth of the Seventh Month, was so named for starting at about the time of the bon festival of the dead. There was also an onagori or keepsake run, a farewell production, beginning on the ninth day of the Ninth Month.
A typical kaomise production would consist of two parts, a jidaimono followed by a sewamono. But “parts” is ambiguous, since it was something of a medley, with the jidaimono normally a version of Shibaraku redone by various playwrights in the house. In outline, the production might run as follows.

First Piece (ichibanme kyōgen: jidaimono)
1. opening (jobiraki) 序阙, a comic introduction
2. second part (hitatatemee) 二立目
3. third part (mitatatemee) 三立目
4. fourth part (yotatatemee) 四立目
5. fifth part (itsuratatemee) 五立目
6. sixth part (mutatatemee) 六立目

Second Piece (nibanme kyōgen: sewamono)
7. sewa part (sewaba) 世話場
8. grand finale (ōgiri 大切: often a dance performance at dusk)

The fifth and sixth parts might be omitted, or they might be used as a big ending (ōzume 大越) of the jidaimono. In general the sewamono was thought more important. Various modifications were made for other runs.

The kabuki theater evolved so continuously that it is difficult to describe except in a given period. Today’s versions are theaters of some size with a proscenium arch—an importation from the West, as are the chairs for the audience. Today the musicians usually sit behind lattice work to audience left (stage right front), and from a point just to audience right of them a ramp or causeway, the hanamichi, runs out from the stage into the audience. The audience is divided into a small group on the left of that ramp and a much larger group on the right. Some ramps go straight to the back, but the usual way today is to have them go off at an angle to the audience’s left side of the theater, where there is an exit door. The ramp running straight is a vestige of the early kabuki stage, in which an actor could take the ramp straight into the audience, turn 90° left and walk horizontally across the theater, make another left turn and walk back to the stage along the audience-right side of the theater. The revolving stage (mawashi), first invented in Japan, has grown increasingly sophisticated, and sometimes more than one will be used for spectacular effects (see Fig. 5-12).

The actors dress in clothes more or less appropriate to the period in which the play is set, as also to the sex, social class, and so on of the characters. Onnagata have whitened faces and wigs in an appropriate style for the character. Many plays require large casts; others small. In such matters, kabuki is so much more various than its predecessors that general characterization is not possible. But certain things are distinctive: the brown, black, and green stripes of the curtain, colors also associated otherwise with kabuki; the wooden clappers (hōsbigi 拍子木) announcing the opening of the play in a beat of increasing rapidity; and the kabuki enthusiast who will cry out just the right word at the right time from somewhere at the back of the audience.

Plays are performed today in the Kabukiza, the National Theater (Kokuritsu Gekijō), and elsewhere in Tokyo; at the Minamiza in Kyoto; at the Shinkubukiza in Osaka; at the Misonoza in Nagoya; and at other theaters.

**Figure 5-1.** Design of a Kagura Stage. Adapted from Frank Alanson Lombard, *An Outline History of Japanese Drama* (London: Allen, 1928).

**Figure 5-2.** Reconstructed Design of a Dengaku Nō Stage from a Description Dated 1349. In a, one possibility; in b, another. From Peter Arnott, *The Theatres of Japan* (London: Macmillan, [1969]).
Figure 5-3. A Modern Nô Stage. From Koyama Hiroshi, et al., eds., Yôkyôkushû (Shôgakkan, 1973).

Figure 5-4. The Nô Stage in Outline. Upper portion from Koyama, Yôkyôkushû (Shôgakkan, 1973); lower from P. O'Neill, A Guide to Nô (Hinoki Shoten, 1954).

1. Curtain between hashigakari and dressing-rooms  
2. Kyôgen’s place  
3. Stage assistants  
4. Side exit  
5. Third pine  
6. Second pine  
7. First pine  
8. Shite’s pillar  
9. Taiko drum  
10. Otsuzumi drum  
11. Kotsuzumi drum  
12. Flute  
13. Flute pillar  
14. Naming place  
15. Chorus  
16. Chorus leader (Hôshô, Komparu, Kongô and Kita schools)  
17. Chorus leader (Kanze school)  
18. Gravel surround  
19. Guide pillar  
20. Steps  
21. Waki’s pillar
Figure 5-5. Kyōgen. Ko Nasubito (The Kidnapper). The kidnapper finds himself taken by the charms of the child. From Geinō Kenkyūkai, Kyōgen (Heibonsha, 1970).

Figure 5-6. Kyōgen. Bōshibari. To prevent them from drinking his sake, the master ties Tarōkaja's arms to a pole and the arms of the other servant, Jirōkaja (not shown), to his body. With some cunning and work, they manage to get the drink. Actor: Nomura Manzai. From Geinō Kenkyūkai, Kyōgen (Heibonsha, 1970).

Figure 5-7. Early Itinerant Puppeteers. From Andō Tsuruo and Charles Dunn, Bunraku (Dankōsha, 1967).
Figure 5-8. Joruri in a Late Edo Depiction. Shows puppets, puppeteers (the lesser ones covered with black cloth, as today); to the right, the tayü and shamisen player. From Andö and Dunn, Bunraku (Dankôsha, 1967).

Figure 5-9. The Joruri Stage in Edo Times. From Yokoyama Tadasu, ed., Jorurishû (Iwanami Shoten, 1971).

a. place of reciter (Tayü)
b. place of shamisen player
c. area for puppeteers and puppets
d. back stage to which puppets can be taken: here an indoor scene
e. passageway for taking puppets among the audience (cf. the hanamichi or ramp for kabuki, Fig. 13)
f. audience.

Figure 5-10. A Modern Bunraku Version of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's Sonezaki Shinju (The Love Suicides at Sonezaki), Adapted. Compare with the next. From Sasahara Nobuo, Bi to Aku no Dentô (Ôfûsha, 1969).

Figure 5-11. A Modern Kabuki Version of Sonezaki Shinju. This is the moment before the final curtain is drawn. Compare with the preceding. From Sasahara Nobuo, Bi to Aku no Dentô (Ôfûsha, 1969).
PART SIX Collections, Kinds, Criticism; Buddhism and Confucianism; Dictionaries

The fourteen sections of this part provide information that concerns, in one or another, titles by groupings relating to literature along with titles relating to religious and philosophical matters. Since there are so many sections, it will use to letter them here in the order of appearance:

A. Waka, p. 341
B. Histories, p. 344
C. Diaries and Travel Accounts, p. 344
D. Monogatari and Setsuwa, p. 346
E. Zuihitsu, p. 347
F. Renga and Haikai, p. 348
G. Nō, p. 350
H. Kyōgen, p. 357
I. Jōruri and Kabuki, p. 360
J. Kyōka, p. 360
K. Senryū, Maekuzukke, and Tsukuku, p. 361
L. Works in Chinese, p. 362
M. Criticism, p. 364
N. Buddhist Sects, p. 368
O. Sūtras, p. 376
P. Confucianism, p. 393
Q. Dictionaries, p. 397

The lettered titles here are simplifications but should enable a reader to labeled material, and somewhat more. In keeping with the emphasis of Companion, Chinese works are treated less copiously than Japanese.

Titles and authors with asterisks will be found in Part Three, Major Auth and Works. Italicized words, other than titles, will be found in Part Fc Literary Terms. Extra dates and Chinese characters have been supplied when generally available elsewhere in this book. Short narrative sections are giver explain various matters.

A. Waka

Over the centuries, waka was taken as the most representative example literature. History did matter, and other kinds came to matter also. But cert. kinds of history were not deemed literary, and every other kind began as pastime until it was subsequently elevated to literary status. Yet it is a remarkable that the poetry so often sorts well with prose, and in fact ma important works go under alternative titles designating poetic collections (~)