

# STUDIES IN KABUKI

*Its Acting, Music, and Historical Context*

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# The Social Environment of Tokugawa Kabuki

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## TOKUGAWA KABUKI AND KABUKI TODAY

The audience of "classical kabuki" in Tokyo today witnesses a production which closely approximates its eighteenth-century prototype. If the new play is indeed a classical piece, the text was written during the latter half of the Tokugawa period and hence in subject matter and language remains an artifact of that time. The actors, all descendants of professional theater families, seem to have preserved in mime, dance, and elocution, the conventions of their predecessors. Instrumental and singing styles, handed down from father to son by rote imitation, are probably faithful transmissions of the Tokugawa art. Costumes and props follow those depicted in early woodblock prints. Many of the staging techniques also date from premodern times. In short, today's viewer sees on the kabuki stage a world familiar to his Tokugawa forebears.<sup>1</sup>

Although he may enjoy the performance and empathize with the dilemmas enacted on the stage, the modern Japanese brings with him attitudes and experiences substantially different from those of a Tokugawa observer. A more modern logic and a changed ethical orientation separate him from the action on the stage. A considerable part of the kabuki repertoire consists of history plays which, while

they concern events of a much earlier era, depict a moral system and feudal psychology ideally characteristic of the Tokugawa samurai class. The domestic tragedies deal with shopkeepers, artisans, prostitutes, farmers, and the tragic-mundane problems of their lives. Specific events in the city—a murder, a double suicide, an arson case, a swindle—were quickly given sensational treatment on the stage. Other plays treat the more fabulous social outrages—the vendetta of the forty-seven *rōnin* or scandals in the mansions of feudal lords. As it was forbidden to write about the affairs of the ruling families, these plays were cast in an earlier historical period as camouflage.<sup>2</sup> Public curiosity and the daring of the playwright afforded them particular titillation. There are also plays which reflect the aspirations and fantasies of the drifters in society—masterless samurai, gangsters, gamblers, and above all, chivalrous commoners who defy their samurai superiors. This audacity of playwright and actor would be misinterpreted if it were considered an expression of protest against the social and political system. It was, rather, good box office to electrify an audience with bold passages and parodies which spoke to the experience of the commoner.

Both the history and domestic dramas assume inevitable capitulation to the ethical code which governed society. Characters entangle themselves in nets of loyalties and obligations which come into conflict with unexpected personal desires or sympathetic impulses. The code tolerates no generosity of interpretation. The hero transgresses, fully resigned to pay with his life. The fairness of the code remains unquestioned.

The conscientious, perhaps compulsive reenactment of these dilemmas suggests the importance of the plays as emotional outlets for an audience well disposed to weep over tragedies so suggestive of the conflicts in their daily lives. Kabuki taxes every feeling. It shifts from scenes of love or maternal solicitude to violent murders and graphic *harakiri*. This rather basic function of theater as response to a rigid social system with a relentless ethical code is little perceived by a modern audience. A substantial difference in the content of his moral difficulties isolates a present-day viewer from some of the deeper reactions of a Tokugawa audience to the plays.

The ambience of the theater and its social environment have also undergone fundamental changes. The theater itself has been transformed. Today's western-style building offers upholstered seating and all the amenities of a lavish opera house. The Tokugawa au-

dience, which might have numbered slightly over a thousand, was less than half the size of a modern audience. Yet it was squeezed together on the floor of a hall only a fraction the size of a new theater. The stage was far smaller than those we know in kabuki today and, normally deprived of the use of even torches for lighting, the old theaters were quite dark.

Yet there was an intimacy between actor and audience, due not merely to physical proximity but to the familiarity of the audience with the actor and the freer interaction between them. Attending the theater was a more joyful, uninhibited experience than we know today. The theater was part of the world of sensual entertainment provided in the cities for the pleasure of the commoners. The origins of kabuki were deeply tied to both male and female prostitution, and although the government repeatedly attempted to forge clear separations between the two professions by banning women from the stage and concentrating houses of prostitution in designated quarters detached from the theaters and actors' residences, the distinction of function was not always cleanly drawn. Female dancers continued to perform kabuki dances and skits at private parties and many of the actors served as social and sexual companions.

In principle, at least, the theatrical and prostitution quarters became parallel facilities for amusement—the two wheels of the vehicle of pleasure. They were tolerated in the conviction that vulgar diversions for the lower classes, unprepared by education or lineage for more refined recreation, were necessary evils. It was further argued that while the three great cities—Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto—were under Tokugawa control, they would lose their commanding positions in population and hence in commerce without the presence of lively amusement areas.<sup>3</sup> The two professions, therefore, received some official recognition insofar as they were licensed and relegated to separate quarters removed from the rest of society and treated as analogous groups.

Prostitutes and actors, like others who took money from performing, were classified by the officials as pariahs. The operators of houses of prostitution in Edo were placed under the jurisdiction of the head of the *eta*, *Danzaemon*, and denied certain privileges given to other residents of the city. They were known by the derogatory name *kuruwa mono*. Kabuki managers and actors, who were treated in much the same way, were called *kawara kojiki* (riverbed beggars) or *koya mono* or *shibai mono*, equally derisive terms.<sup>4</sup> When they

did go out of the quarter, they were required to wear woven hats made of sedge grass to hide their faces, the same type of hat worn by outcastes and criminals under arrest.

The common people, while regarding these members of the demi-monde as somewhat disreputable, found them endlessly fascinating. They were admired for their beauty and their splendid clothes, their social poise and *savoir faire*. They were the purveyors of entertainment and pleasure for the nonaristocratic residents of the city, and provided the social stage on which the more prosperous could enjoy their wealth and make reputations as men of importance within their levels of society.

Both quarters were intended for the entertainment of commoners. Yet the excitement of the kabuki theater and the glamor of the pleasure houses were irresistible to the numerous samurai who visited these quarters exercising only a moderate degree of discretion in concealing their faces with large hats or scarves. Since involvement in any altercation would be embarrassing, they could ill afford to insist upon the prerogatives of their class. Muro Kyūsō (1658–1734), the Confucian scholar, lamented: "There are even feudal lords and district governors who like to enjoy themselves secretly in houses of prostitution, and there are warriors and great men who vie in learning the customs of the theater."<sup>5</sup>

Prostitutes of the highest grades were reputedly accomplished entertainers, skilled in music or dance and surpassing in coquetry. The leading players of male roles had prodigious reputations as lovers. Some of the beautiful young actors were sought after as sexual partners, and women's roles were played by male actors (*onnagata*) who also had an erotic fascination for both men and women. In a society in which there was an easy acceptance of homosexual relations, the presence of actors on the stage who deliciously exploited sexual nuance occasioned far more excitement than it does today.

Confucian advisors to the government, who expected drama to edify the viewer, were distressed by the pernicious influence of kabuki. One of these scholars, Dazai Shundai (1680–1747) remarked: "Because our kabuki plays of today put on licentious and unrestrained matters which obtain among the people in present-day society in order to cater to vulgar sentiment, they all set examples of licentiousness. There is nothing worse than this in breaking down public morals."<sup>6</sup>

Thus the kabuki performance in Tokugawa times was charged with

a far more erotic atmosphere than it is today. The social environment in which the actors lived and the social role they performed off the stage conditioned both their private lives and their style of acting as well as the content of the plays. These were important factors in the shaping of early kabuki and must be taken into account to understand classical kabuki. With the profound changes that have transformed modern Japanese society, and the quite different private lives now led by actors, the sensual elements in the performance have paled and only faintly touch the present-day audience. With the "reform" of kabuki in the last decades of the nineteenth century, by which is meant primarily the ending of public prostitution by actors and the raising of their social status to the level of other artists, the special relationship between kabuki and the pleasure quarters finally ended. Kabuki was removed from the social environment in which it had developed, and it became "classical" theater.

The extent of this change can be appreciated if we recreate the proper social atmosphere of Tokugawa kabuki, describing the physical arrangement of the theater and its surroundings and the sexuality of the actors in the eyes of the Tokugawa audience. Of particular interest is the situation in the early eighteenth century when kabuki first flourished. By that time the style of acting of the various type roles, the structure of the plays, and most of the conventions and traditions of the theater had been established, although they were to be considerably refined and elaborated during the following century or more. To understand the social milieu of the theater and the many interconnections between the kabuki and the prostitutes' quarters (a theme which will be developed later), a review of the early history of these quarters is instructive.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF KABUKI AND LICENSED PROSTITUTION

The conventional account of the origins of kabuki opens with the appearance in Kyoto of Okuni in 1603 or perhaps earlier. An itinerant dancer who claimed association with Izumo Shrine, she was said to have performed suggestive dances and skits in the dry riverbed of the Kamo River by Gojō Bridge, then the eastern edge of the city proper, which was given over to amusements and sideshows. Shrine dancers from earlier times had engaged in prostitution, and those who traveled around to solicit funds, frequently renegades who performed for their own profit, were called *aruki miko* (walking priestesses) or *uta bikuni* (singing nuns). Okuni's dances were probably standard con-

temporary skits dressed up with novel dramatic elements and a farcical or erotic twist. Her particular contribution to the development of kabuki may have been no more significant than that of similar entertainers, but it is at least certain that performances by small troupes of female dancers were popular in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. One of these troupes performed in 1608 at Sumpu (the present Shizuoka), where Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu, had retired. A brawl erupted, whereupon Ieyasu banned such groups from the town, setting aside a place for them next to the prostitutes' quarters outside the town at Abekawa.<sup>7</sup>

Within a few years of Okuni's appearance in Kyoto, there were imitations of her performance by troupes of prostitutes. In 1612 Sadoshima Yosonji set up a stage on the riverbed at Shijō, and brothel proprietors in that vicinity followed suit in order to solicit patrons. These shows were known as *yūjo kabuki* (prostitutes' kabuki). Many of the skits demonstrated techniques used by prostitutes to approach prospective clients or mimed the style of gallants accosting a favorite. They were, in fact, a kind of burlesque with risqué lines and suggestive dance movements. Occasionally male performers assumed female roles, producing a great deal of sexually confused pantomime. A contemporary Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) remarks: "The men wear women's clothing; the women wear men's clothing, cut their hair and wear a man's topknot, have swords at their sides, and carry purses. They sing base songs and dance vulgar dances; their lewd voices are clamorous, like the buzzing of flies and the crying of cicadas. The men and women sing and dance together. This is the kabuki of today."<sup>8</sup>

Screens and handscrolls of the time depict the girls swinging their hips and throwing their arms about with an abandon not to be seen in later dancing. Descriptions of performances leave no doubt that they were prostitutes as well. The diary kept by Richard Cocks from 1615 to 1622, while he was head of the English trading post at Hirado, refers to them as "*caboques* or Japan players (or whores)." He mentions being entertained by a Japanese merchant who "provided *caboques*, or women plears, who danced and songe; and when we returned home, he sent eavery one one of them."<sup>9</sup>

Early "theaters" copied the rudimentary structures found in amusement areas around the edge of Kyoto which were used for occasional performances of subscription *nō* (*kanjin nō*), staged to raise money from the general public for temple construction or repair.

Only the small square stage was covered with a roof. Spectators paid admission to enter an enclosure formed by a high fence of bamboo palings covered with straw mats. There they stood or sat on mats on three sides of the stage.

Fights sometimes occurred among the more hotblooded samurai or footsoldiers in the audience. Many were *rōnin*, samurai who lost employment during the purges of daimyo in the first decades of the Tokugawa period. They drifted to the cities in search of new masters, employment, or excitement, and were often a disorderly element in the streets. Because brawls were touched off by rivalries over the performers, female players were banned from the kabuki stage in 1629. This ban was repeatedly issued, and after a few years actresses ceased to appear in the theaters of the principal cities. Their place was taken by young male actors.<sup>10</sup>

The exile of women from the stage was, of course, the basic step in the separation of the professions of prostitute and actor. It served the government's objective of creating greater social order and stability by recognizing the various trades and affording them a degree of security and protection from competition by new operators.

The practice of licensing prostitutes began in the Muromachi period. At the end of the sixteenth century, Hideyoshi took the first steps to isolate their houses from good society by establishing a quarter in Kyoto at Madenokōji Nijō. It was moved in 1603 to Rokujō (Misujimachi) south of the political and commercial areas. Yet prostitutes continued to scatter through all parts of the city. In 1641 an extremely large quarter called the Shimabara, replete with luxurious establishments, was founded in the fields of the southwest corner of the city. In the shogun's capital, brothels sprang up in various parts of the city in the early years of the Tokugawa rule, but in 1617 they were brought together to form the Yoshiwara, just east of Nihonbashi. Bathhouse girls and other prostitutes in competition with the Yoshiwara were rounded up repeatedly during the next few decades and deposited in the licensed quarters. After the Meireki fire of 1657 which destroyed two-thirds of Edo including the Yoshiwara, the houses were moved outside the city to the open fields beyond Asakusa Temple, some four miles from Nihonbashi. Two hundred houses were licensed there as the New Yoshiwara. In Osaka, Shimomachi was established in 1629, and in other cities and castle towns sections for prostitutes were also set aside.

The prosperous condition of the cities in the seventeenth century

supported the creation of opulent houses of assignation in the licensed quarters. These *ageya*, or more popularly, *chaya* (teahouses), were tasteful parlors for drinking and dining where dancing girls, reciters, jesters, and other entertainers could be summoned. Prostitutes lived in separate houses called *okiya* to which they were indentured. Several ranks of prostitutes populated each quarter. A guidebook to the Yoshiwara of 1642 mentions 75 girls of *tayū* rank, 31 *koshi*, and 881 *hashijorō*.<sup>11</sup> By the next century the quarter distinguished among its 4,000 inmates at least six ranks representing a wide range of fees. A girl of the highest rank, indulged like an aristocrat, might refuse a client who did not interest her. Perhaps she would require considerable wooing—several visits and various gifts—before she would bestow her favors.

In addition to the official quarter there were other centers of prostitution, some of which came to be tacitly recognized but were not accorded the same status and privileges. Because of the great distance to the Yoshiwara from Edo and its theaters, unlicensed houses kept appearing in more convenient locations within the city. In 1673, 512 illegal prostitutes were seized in 74 houses near the theater quarter and sent out to the Yoshiwara. A decade later another 300 were rounded up at various unlicensed parlors. Such sweeps on a much larger scale were conducted during the Kansei and Tempō reforms of the late Tokugawa period.<sup>12</sup> Since it proved too difficult to confine all prostitution to one quarter of the city, the authorities in later years permitted prostitution at Shinagawa, Fukagawa, Nakasu, and Ryōgoku, and in Kyoto at Gion, Nijō, Shichijō, and Kitano. There was also a considerable amount of less formal prostitution in public places of entertainment and relaxation. At many bathhouses, restaurants, and inns, female attendants liberally sold their favors. The great variety and gradation among professional sexual practitioners is suggested by the over four hundred terms used to designate prostitutes. There were other female entertainers: dancers (*odoriko*) who entertained at private parties, and geisha who made their appearance in the 1750s. Prostitution was commonly practiced by entertainers of all kinds, both male and female—dancers, actors, jōruri reciters, musicians—as well as by young itinerants calling themselves nuns or monks, and youths who were peddlers of toilet articles and incense. Frequent prohibitions were issued against private prostitution, but the main concern of the authorities seems to have been the prevention of exploitation of girls and boys by unscrupulous panders. The young

kabuki actors as public entertainers, like the actresses before them, could be engaged as sexual partners.

Even before the ban against actresses, at least as early as 1612, there were troupes made up entirely of boys or young men who performed *wakashu kabuki* (youths' kabuki). Homosexual practices had become extremely prevalent during the military campaigns of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were also common in Buddhist monasteries. During the seventeenth century some of the shogun and feudal lords exercised their preference for beautiful youths.<sup>13</sup> Homosexuality was, moreover, widely practised among commoners, following the example of their betters. The playlets performed in youths' kabuki were of two types: those in which homosexual love was acted out, emphasizing the loveliness of these boys (*shudō goto*), and those which demonstrated techniques to accost prostitutes (*keisei goto*). The latter was, as mentioned earlier, a popular convention in women's kabuki. City officials attempted to curb the erotic effect of the young female impersonators as rivalries over these youths led to altercations between admirers. Homosexual prostitution was banned in 1648, but to little effect. Finally, in 1652, the authorities seized upon an incident to close the theaters in Edo and other cities and youths' kabuki, or at least kabuki by that name, came to an end.<sup>14</sup>

Following repeated entreaties by theater owners, an agreement evolved which permitted kabuki performances to be staged again, henceforth known as *yarō kabuki* (fellows' kabuki). One basic change required female impersonators to dress their hair in the masculine fashion, shaving the forelock. Further, youths over fourteen were no longer permitted to use girls' clothes or hairstyles.<sup>15</sup> Since men in the Tokugawa period had a shaven pate, a coiffured forelock was erogenous. The young actors were inspected periodically to make certain that they were closely shaved. They hid their bald spot with kerchiefs, although this too was prohibited, and later with patches of dark purple silk to give the impression of glistening dark hair. By the end of the century it became common practice to wear a wig on the stage. While this indicates the enduring concern over appearance, there was a gradual tendency to assign female roles to older performers who relied more on acting resources than on physical attraction, and the art of the *onnagata* (female impersonator) developed. Government repression, ironically, had inspired the transformation of these popular performances from burlesque into a more serious art form.

The beneficial effects of the reforms of 1652 were realized only

gradually. For some years the most characteristic scenes continued to be the prostitute-accosting routines, known as Shimabara *kyōgen*. In fact, kabuki was frequently called "Shimabara" until these plays were banned in 1664.

The reforms of 1652 were intended to separate homosexual prostitution from kabuki and to relegate the kabuki theaters and actors' residences to one or two quarters of the cities. In the first respect the reform was only partially successful. It did remove from the stage those youths who were more prostitute than actor. These continued their service in separate sections of the city. Yet in the "reformed" *yarō kabuki*, young actors, especially those apprenticed to the role of *onnagata*, continued to be sought after. *Yarō*, a somewhat derogatory term for "fellow," carries the connotation of homosexuality. An account in an Edo guidebook suggests that even in this form of kabuki there was at first excessive interest on the part of the audience in these beautiful boys:

When these youths, their hair beautifully done up, with light make-up, and wearing splendid padded robes, moved slowly along the runway, singing songs in delicate voices, the spectators in front bounced up and down on their buttocks, those in back reared up, while those in the boxes opened their mouths up to their ears and drooled; unable to contain themselves, they shouted: "Look, look! Their figures are like incarnations of deities, they are heavenly stallions!" And from the sides others called: "Oh, that smile! It overflows with sweetness. Good! good!" and the like, and there was shouting and commotion.<sup>16</sup>

The display of youths on the stage differed little from the line-up of prostitutes within the lattice fronts of the Shimabara houses.

Only four years after the reform, an incident in Kyoto again closed the kabuki theaters in that city for a time. The *onnagata* Hashimoto Kinsaku was drinking in a box with a samurai admirer when the latter, in a fit of jealousy, drew his sword, inspiring Kinsaku to leap into the pit to save himself.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEATER BUILDINGS

The earliest kabuki performances, as noted, were staged in rudimentary enclosures which could be hastily constructed if subscription *nō* stages were not already available in the amusement quarters at the edge of the cities. From about 1617 Kyoto began issuing licenses to operate theaters. As was true of houses of prostitution, the theaters were increasingly restricted to certain quarters of the city. In Kyoto

they were clustered in the area of Shijō, just east of the river, and although as many as seven licenses were issued by 1669, it is not clear how many were in operation at one time.<sup>18</sup> This concentration parallels the establishment of the large prostitution quarters at Shimabara, several miles to the southwest, in 1641. The Shijō theater area and riverbank was a large amusement center in which kabuki was one of many dozens of diversions. There were smaller playhouses, puppet theaters, and a number of wayside entertainers who recited tales from military epics, the *Taiheiki* and *Heike monogatari*. There were fortune-tellers, dentists, *sumō* wrestlers, jugglers, and tightrope walkers. There were sideshows exhibiting such freaks as the female giant and the armless woman archer. There were exotic animals—tigers, bears, porcupines, eagles and peacocks, performing monkeys and dancing dogs. Teahouses, restaurants, and refreshment stands lined the streets. Paintings of the period show these establishments crowded together, thronged with people of every description.<sup>19</sup>

Edo performances of women's kabuki and youths' kabuki took place as early as 1617 in the Yoshiwara and the nearby amusement area of Nakabashi. The first theater to be licensed was the Saruwakaza in Nakabashi in 1624, later renamed Nakamura-za, which continued to operate at a succession of locations until 1893. It serves as a particularly remarkable example of the exercise of an hereditary license to operate a theater. This and later kabuki theaters were ordered to move from time to time and finally, after the Meireki fire of 1657 forced the Yoshiwara far outside the city, were restricted to Sakai-chō and Kobiki-chō and shortly limited to four in number. The Tokugawa government continued to follow a policy of treating the prostitution and theater quarters as parallel concerns. When the theater quarters burned in 1841, nearly two centuries later, they were ordered to move to Saruwaka-chō in Asakusa, close by the Yoshiwara. In Osaka too, where the issuing of regular licenses to theaters followed the Edo precedent, they were restricted from the 1660s to Dōtombori and Horie.

With the issuing of licenses permitting the construction of permanent theaters, the buildings became gradually more substantial. The mat fence was replaced by solid board walls, and a row of boxes (*sajiki*) was built along the two sides of the parquet (*dōma*) for spectators who required more comfort and privacy. Later boxes were added at the rear of the parquet. City officials, seeking to keep kabuki a simple form of entertainment, forbade the construction of roofs over the

parquet. But resourceful theater owners devised a method of stretching mats across the parquet to serve as makeshift shelters which provided shade from the sun and protection against light showers. Over a period of two centuries the theater buildings became gradually more elaborate and comfortable as the authorities made concessions, alternating between a resigned attitude and a stricter policy of sumptuary regulation.

Set back slightly from the street so as not to obstruct traffic, the theater facade was dominated by a tower on which ornamental spears were mounted to indicate possession of an official license. This spear (or drum) tower was draped with a cloth bunting featuring the large design of the theater's crest. The Nakamura-za first used the wheeling crane (*maizuru*) design. The Ichimura-za chose a rounded crane within an octagon.<sup>20</sup> Most theaters placed large billboards on the tower, the center board announcing in bold characters the name of the proprietor, those on either side the names of leading actors. Lower billboards, typically four in number if the offering was a four-act play, gave the titles of each act. From the 1720s a tableau from each act was painted above the title.

Before these signs stood low platforms where barkers waved their fans to attract the attention of passersby and entice them into the theater. In addition to the cruder techniques of whistling and calling to onlookers, they would attempt to draw a crowd by staging impersonations of the leading actors, imitating their voices as they recited tantalizing lines from the play, and parodying their characteristic poses and gestures. Contemporary paintings record the remarkably exuberant commitment of these *kido geisha* (entrance performers) to their task (Plate 1).<sup>21</sup>

The early theaters had only one entrance, located in the center of the building under the drum tower. It was a small opening with a high threshold which the customer had to step over while ducking under a low overhead. Aptly called the mouse-entrance (*nezumi kido*), it was a holdover from the enclosures used for subscription *nō* and was presumably designed to make it difficult for anyone to slip in quickly without paying. As the theaters grew larger in the eighteenth century, an entrance was provided on each side of the drum tower for admission to the parquet. The stoop entrance was abandoned and a short curtain (*noren*) hung across the top of the doorway, as is customary in Japanese shops. Tickets were purchased outside and other fees paid within for the rental of a reed mat (*hanjō*) and a

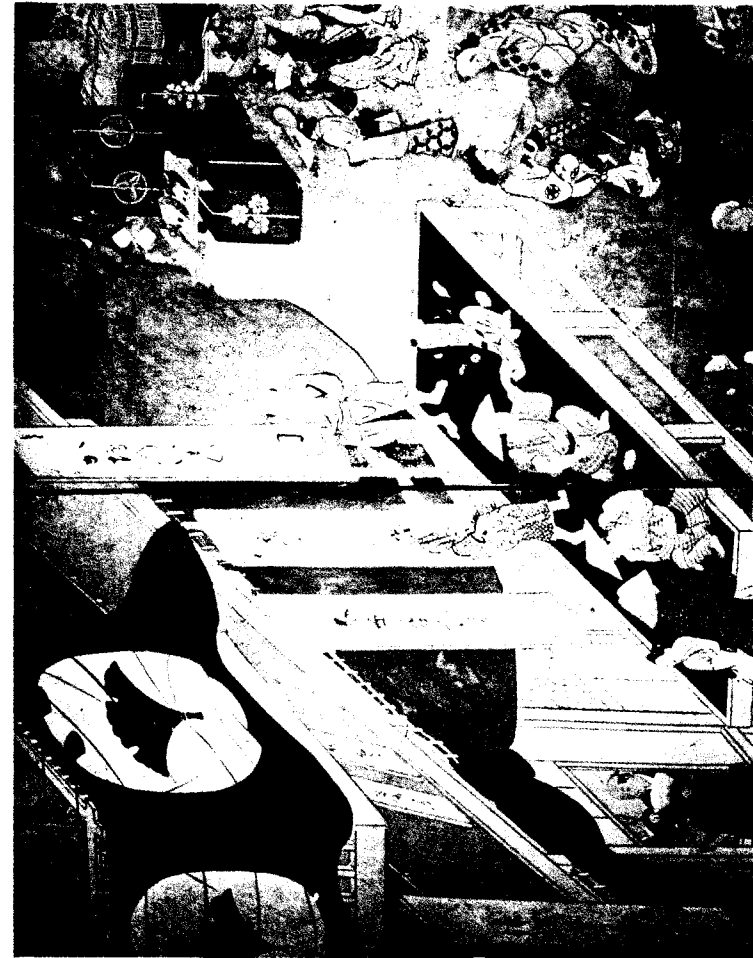


PLATE 1. Barkers in front of the Nakamura-za in Edo, about 1694, with placards announcing the plays, and a display of gifts presented to the theater. Detail of a screen painting attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; screen painting courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)



length of smoldering cord to light one's pipe. On each side of the front of the building an entrance was added for guests going to boxes in order to avoid jostling by the plebs. Inside, stairs led to the upper level of boxes.

The price of tickets ranged widely between the cheapest and the best seats. In 1714, boxes in Edo theaters commanded 1200 *mon*, single spaces 200 *mon*. Parquet tickets averaged 64 *mon*. When space was available, single-act tickets were sold for 12 *mon*. Rental of a mat was 6 *mon* additional.<sup>22</sup> These prices increased rather steadily through much of the Tokugawa period, probably following the general inflationary trend, but exacerbated at certain times by the escalating salaries of the star actors. Attending a major theater was not cheap. The cost of a box seat in 1828 was 1 *ryō* 2 *bu*, the equivalent of 3 bales (*hyō*) of rice or a servant's salary for three or four months. When a performance was popular, the price of tickets rose abruptly.<sup>23</sup>

While the Nakamura-za in Edo provides a detailed illustration of the physical design of a theater, it should be noted that no two were identical. Theaters were, moreover, periodically rebuilt, for fires frequently ravaged Edo. In the 1690s the outer dimensions of the Nakamura-za were 71.5 feet by 97.5 feet, or 6,971 square feet.<sup>24</sup> At its largest in 1809, it measured 80 feet by 138.5 feet, or 11,080 square feet.<sup>25</sup> The structure remained a fraction the size of the present Kabuki-za in Tokyo which has 39,000 square feet of space on the ground floor, seating 1,078 people, approximately the same number as the Tokugawa structure. But the modern building has five floors with 120,000 square feet of floor space and accommodates an additional 1,522 people on the mezzanine and balconies.<sup>26</sup> The Nakamura-za of 1720 had a row of boxes along the two sides and across the back. Although only one tier was allowed at that time, by 1724 a second tier of boxes had been added. It was repeatedly forbidden to hang bamboo blinds across the front of the boxes and to install screens or other partitions which would provide privacy for the occupants. However, a number of paintings from this period show such items in use, partially concealing from the gaze of the populace ladies-in-waiting of the shogun's or daimyo's households, members of the Buddhist clergy, and rich merchants.<sup>27</sup>

The parquet (*dōma*) of the Nakamura-za, 52 feet wide and 82.4 feet deep in 1720, had a capacity of 800 persons. Later, the front half with its better seats was divided into partitions (*masu*) not quite five feet square which narrowly accommodated seven or eight people.<sup>28</sup>

Rear parquet space was unreserved. The last back seats, called the *ō-mukō* (greatly beyond) were so far from the stage that they were also known as the "deaf gallery." Thus including boxes and the cheapest parquet seats the theater held about 1,200.<sup>29</sup> Operating policy was to crowd in as many as possible. According to a book of 1703: "The people came in pushing and jostling, and eight persons sat knee over knee on a mat. It is very pleasant to see them pressed together like human *sushi*."<sup>30</sup>

By the early eighteenth century, wooden roofs occasionally sheltered part of the pit, although not officially sanctioned until 1724. Thereafter tile roofs were recommended to decrease the danger of fire from flying embers. Even after the theaters added roofs, artificial lighting remained proscribed because of the danger to the wooden structure from the open flame of oil lamps and candles. Performances, expected to end about 5 P.M., depended on natural light from windows with translucent paper-covered *shōji* installed on both sides of the theater behind or above the upper row of boxes.<sup>31</sup>

Dressing rooms, located directly behind the stage, were built in two stories by the 1670s. Before the end of the century the Morita-za in Edo added a third level.<sup>32</sup> This section of the building was built high to take as little ground space as necessary from the stage and parquet. A passageway leading to the dressing room section was constructed behind the boxes. Though intended for use by actors to gain access to the end of the runway (*hanamichi*), it was soon traveled by actors summoned to boxes or patrons visiting dressing rooms.<sup>33</sup> The usual arrangement called for baths and quarters for musicians, writers, and *wakashu* on the first floor, *onnagata* on the second, and players of men's roles on the third. A large rehearsal area also occupied the third level. Leading players had individual dressing rooms, although partitions had not received official sanction.<sup>34</sup>

The early kabuki stage basically recreated the square *nō* stage with pillars in the four corners supporting a thatched roof. The main platform had two narrow appendages, one to the right used by the chorus in the *nō*, the other at the rear for the musicians. Off the left of the stage a "bridge" (*hashigakari*) for entrances and exits extended back at an oblique angle with a railing on each side and a long roof. These features of the *nō* stage were gradually modified in the kabuki theater, although it is surprising how long they persisted. The stage itself was only nineteen feet square at the outset. Rather than alter its design, more space was gained by greatly widening the bridge and

eliminating its handrails. It then emerged as a secondary performing area, a rectangle set back slightly from the main stage. A platform was appended to the front of the stage (*tsuke-butai*) which jutted into the audience. Though these changes were not completed until the first decades of the eighteenth century, some stages had already become quite large. That of the Nakamura-za measured 32.5 feet by 37.7 feet in 1724. Not until 1796, however, was the roof over the main stage eliminated.<sup>35</sup>

One of the most distinctive inventions of the kabuki theater is the *hanamichi*, a five-foot-wide runway which extends from the left side of the stage to the rear of the audience. It is used for more dramatic entrances and exits and as an occasional pivot of activity. Its origins are unclear. The more obvious assumption, that it began as a second *hashigakari* directed through the audience, appears to be incorrect. Perhaps as early as the 1650s a small platform was attached to the stage slightly left of center where members of the audience placed gifts (*hana*) of money or goods for their favorite actors. These were called *hana* because the gift was attached to a flower (*hana*) branch. Such a platform appears in a drawing of the Nakamura-za in 1687.<sup>36</sup> By 1724, at least, the *hanamichi* was a runway 52 feet long, set at an oblique angle, probably ending toward the rear end of the row of boxes on the left side of the hall. Although the word *hanamichi* may originally have meant "a path for gifts," by the 1720s and perhaps several decades earlier, it was used primarily as an extension of the stage. Woodblock prints of the next decade show actors standing or seated upon it. Occasionally a small platform called the *nanori-dai* was added about the midway point where an actor could stand almost dead center of the parquet to announce the name and pedigree (*nanori*) of the character he was portraying. After 1780 another narrower runway was sometimes erected on the right side of the hall. Perhaps as a result, the main *hanamichi* was set at right angles to the stage, parallel to its narrower companion.<sup>37</sup>

Most of the physical features of the theater discussed on the preceding pages are illustrated in a woodblock print by Okumura Masanobu (1686–1764) of the Ichimura-za in Edo in 1744 (Plate 2). The *nō* stage with its roof and front pillars, the appended *hashigakari* stage right and *tsuke-butai* stage front and the *hanamichi* are clearly evident. There is a raised walk (*ayumi*) across the hall for easier access by customers and vendors to the front part of the pit. A tea and a food vendor pass through the audience. The stage curtain is drawn to



PLATE 2. Interior of the Ichimura-za in Edo in 1744. Woodblock print by Okumura Masanobu. (Photo taken by the author; woodblock print courtesy of the Atami Bijutsukan)

stage right. Boxes of the first tier were known as quail boxes (*uzura sajiki*) because their wooden bars made them resemble crates for keeping quail. The second tier of boxes retained eaves from the days, a few decades earlier, when there was no roof over the pit. Sliding doors of translucent paper let in daylight above the boxes.<sup>38</sup>

In such a theater the play moved easily into the audience. The tiers of boxes at the front of the hall were alongside the stage. Later in the eighteenth century a low balcony intruded behind the left corner of the stage (stage right). Known as the *rakandai* (arhat dais), its tightly lined-up spectators hovered over the stage like the five hundred arhats of a Buddhist painting. A seventeen-syllable satirical poem (*senryū*) observes: "The five hundred went home, having seen the actors' backs." A second balcony inevitably grew above this. It was called *tsūten* (passing through to heaven), or Yoshino (a mountain district noted for cherry blossoms), as its perspective barely penetrated the artificial cherry blossoms suspended from the ceiling of the hall. A woodblock print (Plate 3) of the last decades of the Tokugawa period shows the plebs, crammed in these galleries at the edge of the stage, watching gleefully, mouths agape, as the actors perform, almost within reach.<sup>39</sup> When the play was a great success, the management, not impervious to the potential boon, seated customers on the stage itself. This practice is recorded by the satirical poems: "A big hit—the action is performed in a six-foot square," and "Spectators and actors are lined up together—a big hit."<sup>40</sup> With an audience thus gathered on three sides of the performers and cheap balcony seating available over one corner of the stage, no concept of a platform-framing proscenium arch emerged.

#### RAPPORT BETWEEN ACTOR AND AUDIENCE

The intimacy of the theater and the consequent physical closeness between actor and audience was conducive to easy communication. Regulars were familiar with the lineage and careers of the actors whose private lives were examined in critical booklets (*yakusha hyōbanki*) printed for theatergoers. When a new or visiting actor was first presented on stage, or a rising performer given a new name as a mark of promotion, a formal announcement took place between acts. The entire company, seated by rank on the stage, participated in this ceremony called *kōjō*. On such occasions the manager and leading actors would thank the audience for past favors, and with heads bowed to the floor ask for continued patronage. At other times actors ad-



PLATE 3. Plebs, packed into the "arhat dais" and "Yoshino" at stage right, revel in the action on the stage, while well-dressed ladies in boxes watch quietly. Detail of a woodblock print by Utagawa Toyokuni III. (Photo taken by the author; woodblock print courtesy of The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University)

dressed the audience in a more informal manner. In the midst of a scene a player might step out of role to welcome another actor back to the city or introduce his protégé or a new colleague and ask the audience's favor. The new names given to less important actors were sometimes announced in the course of the dialogue as informal *kōjō* within the play (*kyōgen no nakaba no kōjō*), and these were especially relished by alert members of the audience.<sup>41</sup> Occasionally an actor would humorously refer to himself or to another performer by a personal name as if to draw attention to the fact that their play was make-believe. Kabuki was never intent upon sustaining the illusion of reality, and the audience considered such asides less an interruption than a familiar confidence.

Another variety of communication was the *homekotoba* (words of praise) which originated in the mid-seventeenth century as the *onna-gata* offered a few lines of praise to the male lead as he made his entrance.<sup>42</sup> A variation on this practice was for a member of the audience to interrupt the action of the play by rising to make a declaration of his admiration for an actor, either from his place in the parquet or from the *hanamichi*. This type of *homekotoba* probably began in Edo. Kyoto people, more reticent, first committed their laudatory sentiments to writing and sent them to the dressing room. But by the first decade of the eighteenth century, they too surrendered to speechmaking.<sup>43</sup> This was sometimes annoying to the actors, especially if it stranded them in an awkward moment: an actor playing a ghost, caught in the middle of his haunting scene by an overly long speech, could not fade away.<sup>44</sup>

A less disruptive form of audience reaction involved spontaneous shouts from enthusiastic viewers (*kakegoe*) to applaud an especially skillful pose or vocal coloration in the delivery of a dramatic line. A fan might merely call out the actor's name or his house name (*yago*). A better compliment is to call out the actor's father's name, indicating the attainment of skill equal to his predecessor. (Such calls are frequently heard in kabuki theaters today, but they usually come from a paid clique or employee of the theater to provide a taste of the atmosphere of the old days.) Often the calls were much more subtle allusions to be savored only by aficionados. Words of criticism or insult were heard too, such as "*daikon*" (radish). The front rows sometimes showed their displeasure by throwing their mats onto the stage (*hanjō o ireru*).<sup>45</sup> Not infrequently, when a critic's remarks angered one of an actor's more rabid admirers, a fight would break

out. Woodblock prints of the theater interior show plebs in the front part of the parquet striking each other with fists and with wooden clogs. The theater assigned two of its employees during each scene as "stage guards" (*butaiban*) to quiet such disturbances (Plate 3). The informality of the theater was also expressed in humorous comments from the audience. During a drinking scene an inebriated viewer might call out: "If you don't have enough, I've got more here."

Audience support also found expression in clubs of enthusiasts known as *teuchi renjū* (handclapping groups). Several dozen club members, dressed in identical clothes, would sit together like a cheering section, clapping hands or wooden clappers as they sang rhythmic songs to stir support for their favorites. Sometimes the actors would join in, clapping hands in unison with the group. The handclapping groups originated in Kyoto and Osaka, and then spread to Edo, where clubs were usually composed of men of some standing in the business community. The most active were associations of dealers in fish, vegetables, and rice, and the association of Yoshiwara proprietors. These vied with each other in presenting novel stunts and songs. The Yoshiwara group prided itself on having the honor, when the play *Sukeroku* was performed, of supplying the umbrella and purple headband which play such a distinctive part in the hero's performance.<sup>46</sup> The tradesmen groups also supplied gifts of stage curtains and festoons for the boxes of the theater, and sometimes contributed subsidies for the production.

A more artistic kind of rapport was the appreciation of the audience for the skill of both the playwright and the actor. Because kabuki became increasingly a repertory theater in which the story lines of most of the cycles of plays were already known to the audience, and the actors performed largely according to type-roles (*kata*), innovations in the plot and variations in the style of acting were refinements which gave excitement to the performance. As Donald Keene has observed: "Virtuoso actors require virtuoso audiences to appreciate their skill, and in this sense the Kabuki audience forms part of the performance. Unless an actor can be sure that a slight change in *kata* will be noticed and appreciated, there is no temptation to study and vary the parts."<sup>47</sup>

#### KAOMISE: OPENING THE SEASON

It became customary for a kabuki theater to offer six programs during the year, each new offering beginning about the first of the odd-

numbered month. The season opened in the eleventh month. Since this was the occasion for introducing actors under contract to the theater for the year, it was called *kaomise* (showing the faces). This practice began in Kyoto in the 1650s and 1660s. From the twentieth day of the tenth month the theater began to bustle with activity. The facades of the theater were decorated with bamboo palings and signboards announcing the cast and titles of the play and its scenes. Hawkers went through the streets distributing playbills (*banzuke*) carrying this announcement.<sup>48</sup> Actors dressed in formal clothes and, preceded by runners with lanterns calling "*hyōban, hyōban,*" made the rounds of the patrons' homes to inform them of the *kaomise* program. Gifts received by the troupe—bales of rice, barrels of sake, bundles of charcoal, and trays of seabream and pheasant—were piled in front of the theater (Plate 1). The surrounding streets and tea-houses were decorated with lanterns. These also hung inside the theater across the beams and above the boxes.

Actors coming from other cities to join a Kyoto troupe as visiting performers made a formal arrival by palanquin and were borne directly onto the stage where they were greeted by their Kyoto colleagues with the exchange of wine cups. The actors took turns reciting, singing, and playing the samisen. The scholar Motoori Norinaga records such a scene in his diary: "I did not go to see this," he hurries to mention, "but I heard it from other people."<sup>49</sup> Spectators, fearing to miss the opening of the performance during *kaomise*, started from home through the cold morning long before dawn in order to arrive for the 5 A.M. curtain. They stopped at a theater teahouse for a bowl of oyster potage, changed from wooden clogs to slippers, and entered the theater.

An actor's memoir of 1830 describes the special part played by handclapping groups during the *kaomise* in Kyoto. When the first drum was sounded at 2 A.M., the actors were in readiness. Partitions directly before the stage were occupied during each of the first ten days of *kaomise* by one of the handclapping groups dressed in colorful matching costumes and caps. They came down the runway of the theater by twos and threes, and when they were settled in their places, word was sent to the dressing rooms. The curtain was drawn open and the son of the head of the theater, ushered across the stage by the stage manager, took his place at stage left. He was followed by the *onnagata*, the child actors, and the players of male roles, led by the most popular actor and the head of the troupe. The stage

manager spread a red carpet at the front of the stage and, seating himself there, offered greetings. The group responded by standing and beating out various rhythms with their clappers. Next the head of the troupe stepped onto the carpet, danced a *Sanbasō*, a short auspicious number, and offered formal greetings. The leading *onnagata* performed a longer dance, followed by welcomes from the other actors. Before each actor spoke, a member of the group read a list of gifts presented in his honor: the number of bales of rice and pack-horse loads of sake. The ceremony closed with greetings from the head of the troupe, then the curtain was drawn. After the first ten days of the performance, this ritual was replaced by a one- or two-act filler.<sup>50</sup>

*Kaomise* at the Osaka theaters had two unique features. The first was the ceremonial arrival by boat of the visiting actors. This was a publicity stunt, enthusiastically backed by the brothel proprietors and others of the entertainment world. A dozen or more boats, colorfully decorated and carrying musicians, carried the guest actors along the river from the Kunosuke Bridge to the theater at Dōtombori where they were welcomed to the stage by the local actors. Further, the Osaka *kaomise* came to be performed at night. This was because competition for seats during the *kaomise* was so keen that the audience crowded the theater by ten o'clock the night preceding the performance. The custom began, therefore, of starting the proceeding at midnight, the hall filled with a great number of lanterns and the stage illuminated by several dozen wooden candlesticks. Because of the danger of fire, the *kaomise* run was cut to only ten days.<sup>51</sup>

#### GOING TO THE THEATER

Since normally theater performances were supposed to conclude before dark, they began early in the morning, usually at 6 A.M. or slightly later, with the second sounding of the drum in the theater tower. The first drum was sounded hours before, although from time to time the authorities forbade this early disruption of sleep. Since performances could not be given on rainy days in the early years before the theaters had proper roofs, the drum served the neighborhood as a weather forecast. Those who wished to arrive in time for the opening curtain left their homes well before dawn during the winter months. The second drum was the signal for the beginning of the ceremonious *Sanbasō* which preceded the play. From the theater entrance the call rang out "*Sanbasō, Sanbasō,*" but there was only a

scattering of spectators in the theater when the performance began. Many were visitors up from the country or servants of city people who were sent early to hold good seats in the parquet.

It was an exciting experience to go to the theater, especially for the womenfolk who had little occasion to appear in their best clothes or to eat and drink in public. Because they would have to start out early in the morning, they began preparations the day before—getting their hair dressed and going to the bathhouse. These preparations were similar, it was said, to those made by men anticipating a visit to the Yoshiwara.

One of the pleasures of going to the theater for women was to be seen in stylish kimono by their favorite actors. While there are a number of paintings showing well-dressed ladies seated in theater boxes, one handscroll has an unusual detail (Plate 4) of young ladies drinking and dallying with actors behind the protection of a folding screen in a box.<sup>32</sup>

The theaters were surrounded by small establishments known as theater teahouses (*shibai jaya*), which provided a number of services to theatergoers. The first, which appeared in Edo as early as 1624, served tea and food and reserved tickets for the better seats. Not until the end of the century did they take on the broader social function of the Kyoto houses. In that city the banks of the Kamo River from Sanjō to Matsubara were lined with restaurants and teahouses during the summer months. Among these were some which catered especially to theater patrons, providing food and refreshment between the acts and after the performance. Here too actors could be called to drink with the guests, but it was prohibited to send for prostitutes.<sup>33</sup>

Before long there were various classes of theater teahouses: large (*ō-jaya*), medium (*naka-jaya*), small (*ko-jaya*), front (*mae-jaya*), and finally "water" (*mizu-jaya*) whose function was limited to serving food and drink in the theater. Their proprietors, many of whom were connected with the theater world, some actors and managers themselves, provided part of the financial backing for new performances. Box seats in the theater were consigned to the teahouses for sale to their patrons; large teahouses released most of them and turned the remainder over to smaller establishments. By the late Tokugawa period, when much of the parquet was also reserved, the large teahouses (then also called *omote-jaya*, front teahouses) of Saruwaka-chō assigned both tiers of boxes, and the small teahouses (also known as *ura-jaya*, rear teahouses) had half the parquet but were often favored

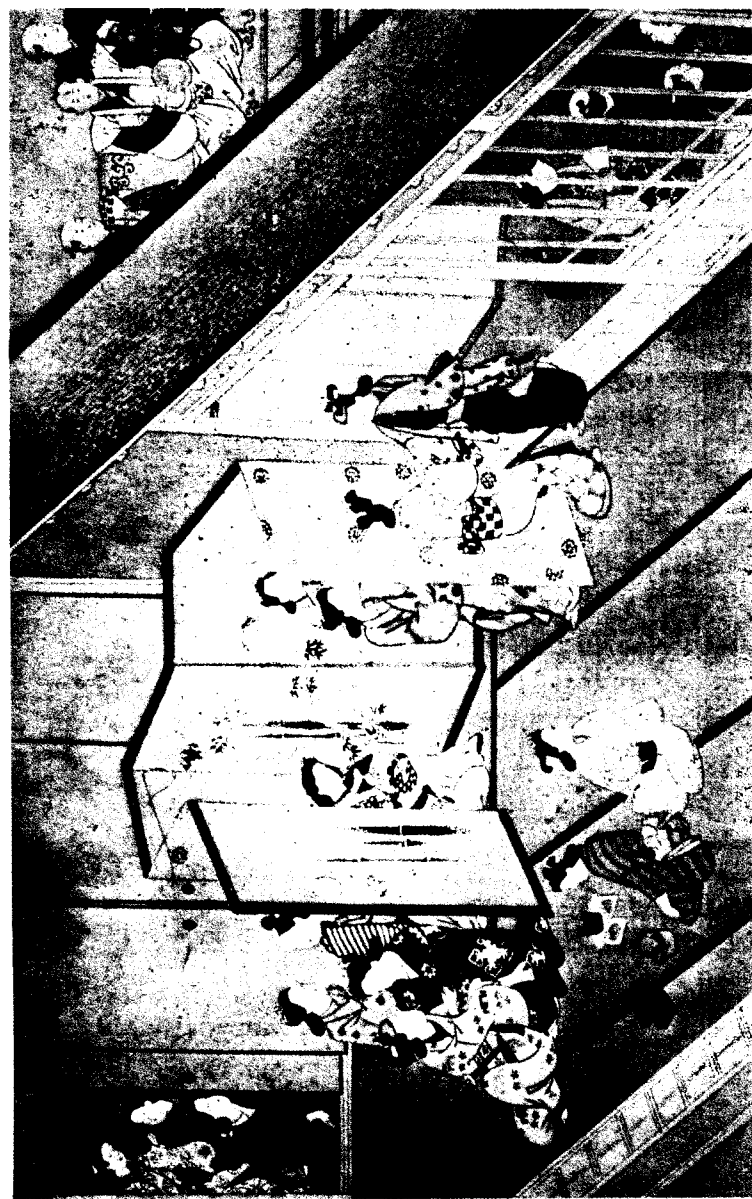


PLATE 4. A young lady welcomes a kabuki youth to her theater box (musicians can be seen on the stage, upper right). Behind the folds of a screen to the left a kabuki youth offers a wine cup to a young lady, while behind her another lady begs an actor of male roles for some favor. Detail of a handscroll attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; handscroll courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)

by enthusiasts because of their better access to the actors' dressing rooms. Attendants from the teahouses prepared the boxes before the arrival of the guests. They arranged ashtrays, mats, and cushions, and hung red carpets over the railings of the boxes. They greeted guests in the street, escorted them to the teahouse to leave wraps, canes, swords, and other articles. Slippers were provided to use instead of footgear and, during the summer, some patrons changed to informal summer dress (*yukata*). After they were offered refreshment, the customers were led to their boxes, in some cases by a direct passageway from the teahouse to the theater.<sup>34</sup>

The attendants in Edo were young men, but in Kyoto and Osaka they were girls (*ochako*). The cheerful solicitations of these maids are described in a guide to the theater district of Kyoto:

... the morning drums of the theaters reverberate to Otowa Hill. The maids with their red aprons bright as the morning sun come out into the street and, with welcoming glances, call out: "Come, buy your tickets. I will pick out a good place or a box for you. I'll take care of your coat, hat, and your cane. I'll bring you tea later on. The performance has already begun. One thousand-kan Mandayū prospers year after year, the Kameya theater has Kumenojō, and in the puppet theater it is the felicitous Kaganojō. Come, buy your tickets." So they egg people on like boiling pots—*rin rin shan*.<sup>35</sup>

The girls first brought their customers tea and sweets and illustrated booklets containing a synopsis of the play. As there were no restaurants in the theater, they served appetizers and sake, then lunch, and later an afternoon meal of *sushi*. After the performance dinner was available at the teahouse. An important part of theater-going was eating and drinking. The guests could also go to the teahouses to relax during the long intermissions and to use the toilets, facilities usually lacking in the theater building itself, at least in Edo. The women might make several trips to the teahouse during the day to tidy their coiffure and freshen their make-up. Some changed to a new garment. The practice of wives and daughters of prosperous merchants of changing their kimono at the teahouse during the course of the day is noted in satirical poems: "Wishing to be noticed by the actors, they change clothes frequently," and another, "The Komachi in the box changes seven times."<sup>36</sup> (Ono no Komachi was a famous beauty, poetess and lover of the ninth century.)

The audience in the parquet could also order food and drink. As the parquet was often crowded, it required a great deal of squeezing

and maneuvering for the vendors (*dekata*) to deliver food. Vendors brought tea or sake, and a limited choice of food: cakes (*kashi*), a simple lunch (*bentō*) and *sushi*. The acronym *kabesu* was made from these three words to designate a patron who would not leave his box for better fare lest he miss an exciting development on stage.<sup>37</sup>

The Osaka theater teahouses, numbering 47 by 1700, served patrons of any of the theaters of the district. In this they were like the Kyoto establishments. In Edo, however, a teahouse was affiliated with a single theater and served its patrons exclusively. By 1714 there were at least 58 teahouses surrounding the kabuki and puppet theaters.<sup>38</sup> Their number increased steadily and, after the move to Saruwaka-chō in 1842, totaled 142, classified into four grades. Here at last the Tokugawa bureaucrat's ideal theater quarter layout was realized. Each of the three large kabuki theaters, arranged in a row, was situated in the middle of a separate block and surrounded by its designated teahouses.<sup>39</sup> The quarter itself was enclosed by a high wooden fence with four gates which were closed at night, rather effectively sealing the quarter from the rest of society.

We are provided with a considerable amount of pictorial information about the Nakamura-za in Edo, its dressing room and an adjoining theater teahouse in the excellent pair of painted screens dating from the end of the seventeenth century and attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694), now in the collection of the National Museum in Tokyo.<sup>40</sup> The first two right panels of the left screen show a dressing room, and the third panel shows a gate in the fence leading directly to an elegant teahouse. The remaining three panels display young actors, mostly female impersonators, entertaining guests in the teahouse. In one room a young actor dances, surrounded by musicians and guests. Leaning against the post in the corner, a patron and an actor hold hands and gaze at each other (Plate 5). On the veranda a group gathers around a *go* board, while nearby a guest peeks around the sliding door and makes eyes at a passing youth (Plate 6). Here too an actor plays the samisen to accompany the *shakuhachi* (vertical flute) of a guest. On a Chinese carpet in the garden, one visitor, relaxing with an enormous cup of wine after dancing, waves to an intoxicated companion being steadied on his stool by two young actors. Other couples walk about the garden. To the extreme left, a mounted samurai disguised by a woven reed hat arrives at the gate. Female impersonators and attendants from the house welcome him.





PLATE 5. A kabuki youth dances in the parlor of a theater teahouse, accompanied by a blind samisen player, while a patron watches, flanked by two other actors. To the right another kabuki actor and a patron gaze into each other's eyes. In the foreground a blind masseur ministers to a guest. Detail of a screen painting attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; screen painting courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)

Moronobu and his contemporaries depict the houses of assignation in the courtesan quarter in precisely the same manner. While youths have replaced prostitutes in these scenes of a theater teahouse, the posture and arrangement of figures is common to both worlds. Plates 6 and 7 and Plates 8 and 9 juxtapose details of paintings, all attributed to Moronobu, which illustrate the similarity in treatment of scenes from the teahouses of the two quarters.<sup>61</sup>

The more opulent teahouses were also first-class restaurants, and they were patronized by wealthy merchants who sought not merely their own amusement; there they entertained the majordomos (*ru-sui*) of the Edo mansions of feudal lords and other samurai of better rank who served as intermediaries for contracts and purchase orders. They were invited to the theater and the teahouses to be plied with food, drink, young actors, and bribes.

Special patrons of the large teahouses in Edo were the ladies-in-waiting from the shōgun's castle and the lords' mansions and, in Kyoto, the Imperial Palace. It was customary for them to receive vacations during the third month to visit their parents, but many headed straight for the theater. Plays were often scheduled during that month on themes drawn from classical literature appropriate to this clientele. Although, in theory, it was not proper for ladies of the samurai class to go to the theater, attendance was not only condoned but encouraged by their lords who wished them to improve their skill in kabuki dances. They came elegantly dressed and added a great deal of color and beauty to the theater during the month.<sup>62</sup>

#### THE EJIMA-IKUSHIMA AFFAIR

The fascination which samurai ladies felt for kabuki actors led to a delicious scandal in 1714. Ikushima Shingorō, the most talked about actor in Edo, was a handsome specialist of love scenes, which he played wonderfully, according to a critical booklet of his day, "causing the ladies in the audience to be pleased." Another book states that he enacted love scenes "realistically and provocatively," and that all the women of Edo were mad for him.<sup>63</sup> One whom he well satisfied was Ejima (1681-1741), a high-ranking lady official in the service of the shōgun's mother.

There are differing accounts of the particular incident which brought their affair to light. While the story appears to have been somewhat embroidered and the details are unreliable, the basic facts are verified. Ejima was instructed to make a pilgrimage on the twelfth





PLATE 6. A patron in a theater teahouse eyes a passing kabuki youth. Detail of a screen painting attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; screen painting courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)



PLATE 7. A patron in a Yoshiwara brothel catches the skirt of a passing girl. Detail of a handscroll attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; handscroll courtesy of the Atami Bijutsukan)

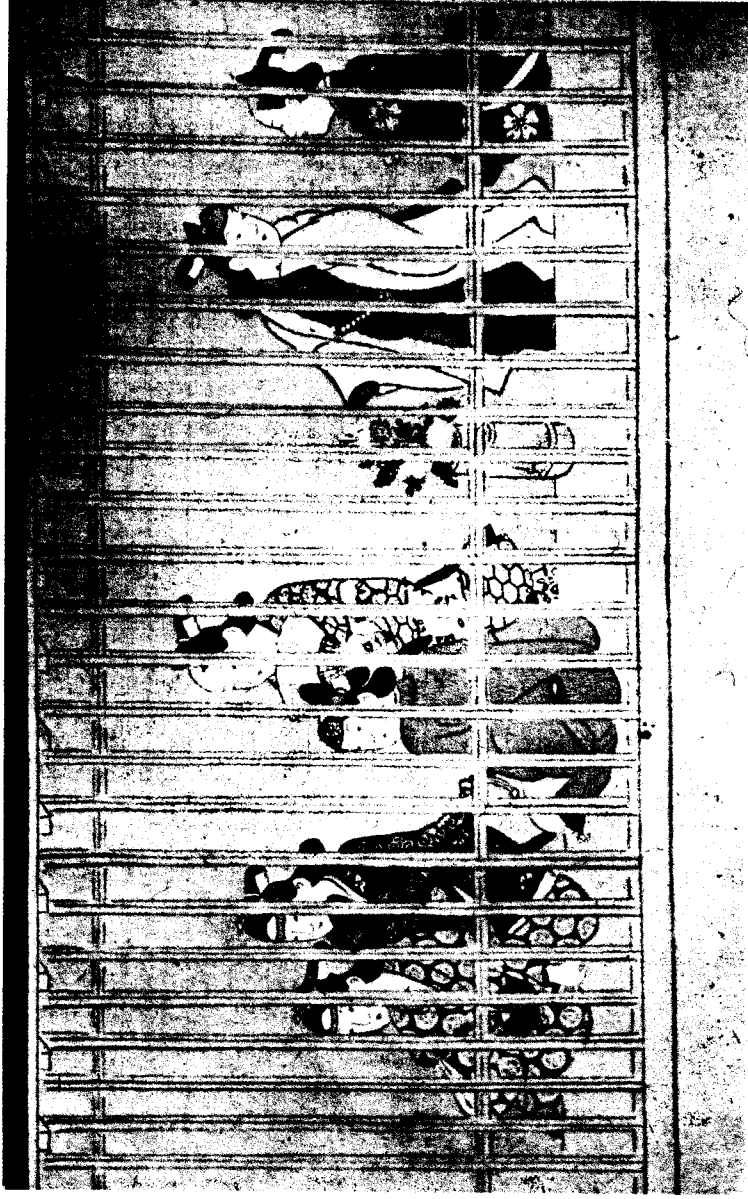


PLATE 8. Kabuki youths at the lattice window of a theater teahouse. Detail of a handscroll attributed to Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; handscroll courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)

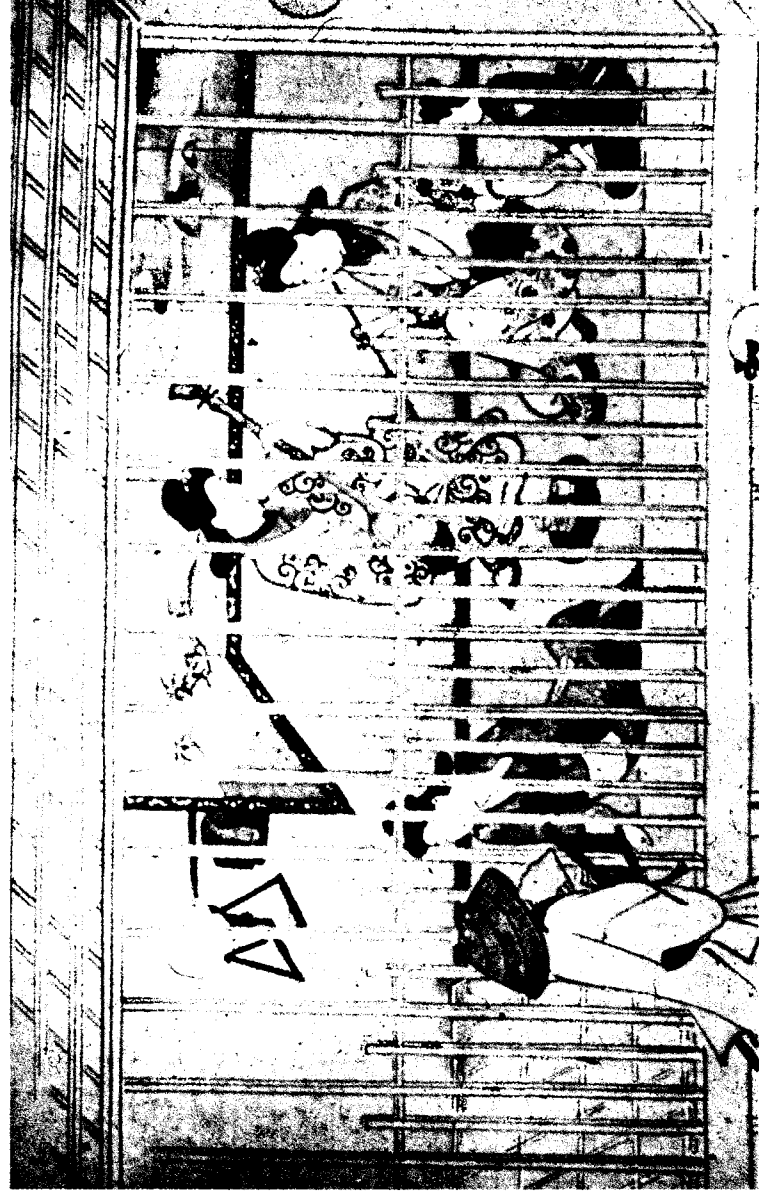


PLATE 9. Prostitutes in the front room of a Yoshiwara brothel. One chats through the lattice window with a samurai wearing a woven hat for disguise. Detail of a handscroll by Moronobu. (Photo taken by the author; handscroll courtesy of the Tokyo National Museum)

day of the first month on behalf of Gekkōin, the mother of Shōgun Ietsugu, to the Tokugawa family mausolea at Zōjōji in the Shiba district of Edo. According to usual procedure, Ejima and her entourage were expected to pause for refreshments at the abbot's residence after the ceremony. Instead she left the temple directly and, with eleven attendants, went to the Yamamura-za to see the play. They called actors to their box and drank sake with them. Among the actors was Ejima's lover, Ikushima. News of the theater party leaked out and investigation resulted in full exposure, not only of the party, but of the love affair which had continued for nine years. All those implicated in the affair and the party were given punishments ranging from banishment to death. The lady officials were placed in the custody of different lords, and Ikushima was exiled to Miyake Island.<sup>64</sup>

The following is a more colorful account of the incident which should be read less for its factual reliability than for its description of what a rousing theater party could become.

The scene on this day was a hubbub which cannot be described. In the boxes carpets were spread, and the theater owner, Nagadayū, Ikushima Shingorō, and Nakamura Seigorō, wearing *hakama* and *haori*, were invited to be drinking partners. The party was so noisy that the sounds of the play could not be heard. . . . At this time occupying a lower box was a retainer of Matsudaira Satsuma-no-kami, a person called Taniguchi Shimpei, who was watching the play with his wife. In the upper box, Ejima, quite intoxicated and not knowing what she was doing, spilled her sake, and it poured on Shimpei's head. He sent a messenger to the upper box. A *kachi-metsuke*, Okamoto Gorōemon, made apologies, but this did not satisfy Shimpei. Gorōemon apologized over and over, and finally Shimpei accepted the apologies, and although it was only about midday, he and his wife left the theater. . . . Thereupon Gorōemon several times urged Lady Ejima to leave, but she would not consent, and instead became very angry. At 2 P.M. a passageway was installed from the second-floor box by which they went to Yamamura Nagadayū's house, and the capers of the many maids from the castle were beyond words. . . . For the entertainment of Ejima, many actors, young actors, and youths were summoned as drinking partners. . . . At 4 o'clock they left Nagadayū's rooms and went to a teahouse called Yamaya on the street behind. On the second floor the maids and actors kept coming and going and there was a great hubbub. . . . They finally left Kobiki-chō and returned by the Hirakawaguchi Gate (of the castle) at 8 o'clock.<sup>65</sup>

The most serious consequence of this affair for the history of kabuki was the fate of Yamamura-za. Founded in 1642 and the most popu-

lar among the Edo theaters for more than a decade, it was closed, the building demolished, and the assets of the theater and of its owner sold at auction.<sup>66</sup> For the remaining one hundred fifty years of the Tokugawa period there were three, instead of four, large theaters in Edo. All theaters were closed for three months and permitted to reopen only under stringent conditions. The twenty-four leading actors of Edo were required to submit written statements that they would not violate any of the orders of the government. The regulations imposed on the managers were set forth in a document on the ninth day of the third month:

1. The boxes of the theaters have been made two and three tiers in recent years. As formerly, not more than one tier will be permitted.
2. It is prohibited to construct private passages from the boxes or to construct parlors for merry-making backstage, in the theater manager's residence, or in teahouses and such places. Nothing at all should be done by the actors other than performing plays on the stage, even if they are called to the boxes or teahouses or the like. Of course pleasure-making patrons must not be invited to the actors' own houses.
3. In the boxes it is not permitted to hang bamboo blinds, curtains, or screens, and to enclose them in any other way is prohibited. They must be made so that they can be seen through.
4. In recent years the roofs of theaters have been made so that even on rainy days plays can be performed. In this matter also roofs must be lightly constructed as was done formerly.
5. The costumes of actors in recent years have been sumptuous; this is prohibited. Hereafter silk, pongee, and cotton will be used.
6. It is strictly prohibited that plays continue into the evening and torches be set up. They should be planned so that they will end by 5 P.M.
7. Teahouses in the vicinity of the theaters should be simply constructed, and parlorlike accommodations are entirely prohibited. Concerning those which are in existence at present, petitions should be submitted to the city magistrate's office and, upon inspection, a decision will be given.

The above must be observed without fail. If there are violations, the principals, of course, and even the representative of that quarter and the five-man group will be considered offenders.<sup>67</sup>

After the order was issued, enforcement was strict for a time as officials were sent by the city magistrates to make periodic inspections, not only of the theater buildings, but of the fifty-six teahouses. It was not very long, however, before the teahouses were again well appointed, and actors resumed making calls on their patrons. More-

over, within a decade, after complaints from theater owners that rainy days were bankrupting them, roofs were permitted as well as a second tier of boxes.<sup>68</sup> After the incident the dressing room section was limited to one story, but by 1720 it was again up to three stories. As a gesture of deference toward regulations, the second floor was called a mezzanine (*chū nikai*), and the third floor the second (*hon nikai*).<sup>69</sup>

The details of the incident and the regulations which it provoked provide considerable insight into the social environment of kabuki. We see that the quarter was equipped with generous facilities for guests of either sex to drink and flirt with actors and other entertainers. They might rendezvous in dressing rooms, in boxes, in the greater privacy of the teahouse parlors, or in the homes of the actors themselves. The personnel of the theater, from the manager to apprentice boy-actors, were in the business of social entertaining which could range, according to the preference of the customer, from genteel conversation and private performances of music, dance, storytelling, impersonations, and skits, to risqué banter and lovemaking. Although Tokugawa society was regulated by a class system of finely graduated hierarchical distinctions, in the pleasure quarters even high officials interacted intimately with theater people who, though beautiful, accomplished, and expensively dressed, were outcasts.

#### THE LIFE AND ART OF ACTORS

The life of the actor—his background, training, and professional and social relationships—was fascinating to the wider audience of theatergoers. The main focus of kabuki was less the play than the actor who attracted attention not only because of his dramatic talent but because of his lineage, his physical assets, and his private life. Boyish beauty, unusual acting ability, elaborate reputations for a luxurious lifestyle, and romantic entanglements titillated a public vulnerable to the glamor of the theater world.

Actors were instructed to live in the quarter or in its close vicinity. In Kyoto their homes were found especially in Gion-machi, Miyagawa-chō, and Kawara-machi north of Shijō. The great Genroku actors Sakata Tōjūrō and Miyuki Tatsunosuke lived at the latter address, a few blocks west of the theaters. Minor performers sometimes lived in their dressing rooms under rather wretched conditions, while the established actors and managers usually had fine residences.<sup>70</sup> According to the colorful version of the Ejima story, the home of the

manager of the Yamamura-za must have been a large and comfortable building to permit the entourage from the castle to hold one phase of its party there, drinking with "many actors, young actors, and youths."

The most popular actors lived in luxury, commanding high salaries and receiving lavish gifts from admirers and patrons. Some of the more prosperous, particularly in Kyoto and Osaka, became theater owners. Others owned or had a part interest in teahouses. Some kept a considerable number of beautiful youths in their homes whom they trained as actors. Customers of the teahouses could arrange for these boys to entertain and drink with them and serve as sexual partners. Daimyo and men of wealth summoned them to their mansions to entertain and to spend the night. Called *iroko* (sex youths) or *butaiko* (stage youths), they ranged in age from thirteen to about seventeen. Estimates claim that 80 or 90 percent of the *onnagata* during the first half of the Tokugawa period started as *iroko*. Segawa Kikunōjō (1693?–1749) was a catamite in Dōtombori before becoming a famous actor. Onoe Kikugorō, Yamashita Kinsaku, Onoe Shōroku, Ichikawa Monnosuke III, Nakamura Riko II, Sawamura Kito, and Nakamura Kikuyo are among the many others who emerged from this background.<sup>71</sup>

Most of the youths were given no spoken lines, but merely lined up as extras on the stage with powdered faces and beautiful clothes or were brought on in dance numbers.<sup>72</sup> Those who showed some ability in acting began with children's parts. The less talented were kept in their teacher's home to work as prostitutes, while continuing to be called actors to avoid difficulties with the authorities.<sup>73</sup> During the 1670s and 1680s young catamites were extremely popular and, despite official disapproval, became increasingly numerous.<sup>74</sup> Laws of 1689, 1694, and 1695 forbade actors or catamites to answer summons and specified that troupe managers alone could keep youths exclusively for dramatic training.<sup>75</sup> These were limited to twenty young actors and ten apprentices.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, there must have been some kind of understanding on this matter, as a law of 1709 required those on the stage to shave their forelocks while sparing the youths innocent of dramatic appearances. In 1723, "several tens of persons" were punished because of violations and the *iroko* held by troupe managers were freed, that is, contracts indenturing them were cancelled, and they were sent home to their parents.<sup>77</sup>

In time the number of such youths in Edo became so large that it

was inconvenient to keep them all in the theater teahouses or other houses in that quarter. Therefore they were placed in establishments in Yoshi-chō. These houses were called *kagama-jaya* (catamite teahouses), and although it appears that in many instances the youths were indentured to the master of the teahouse, the fiction was maintained that they were employees of the theater or troupe manager. Their names appeared on the playbills (*banzuke*) of the three theaters, and in the twelfth month, at the time of the investigation and registration of the populace, a special fee of 100 silver *biki* was paid to the officials to overlook the irregularity. This fee was paid by the masters of the catamite teahouses.<sup>78</sup> When the youths were called to the stage to appear as extras or members of the chorus, their masters were pleased to have them perform without pay and to supply costumes because of the excellent publicity.<sup>79</sup> As their forelocks were unshaven, the front hair was concealed by a purple crepe cap, slightly larger than the patch worn by the *onnagata* over his shaven pate.<sup>80</sup>

Edo theater practice dictated that these youths be summoned only by customers in the lower level boxes on the west side. Further nicety of convention delicately prevented female geisha from attending the same parlor in a teahouse.<sup>81</sup> The youths who appeared on the stage held a higher status than the ordinary catamites, which was reflected in their different costume and precedence in seating. Their patrons were frequently women, sometimes ladies of the shōgun's castle or daimyo mansions, who were referred to by the argot "golden sliding doors" (*kin-busuma*). It was policy, however, that youths decline invitations from Buddhist nuns.<sup>82</sup>

Catamite teahouses which were not directly connected with the theaters also appeared in Edo. The first were probably the Yushima Tenjin houses of the 1740s.<sup>83</sup> They were, however, part of the same social world. The actor Ichikawa Gennosuke became enamoured of a youth from one of these houses, bought him for fifty *ryō*, and later, when he became twenty-one, arranged (with some difficulty) to put him on the stage as an *onnagata*.<sup>84</sup> In the 1760s there were ten quarters in Edo which had catamite teahouses, only three of which had direct connections with the theater quarters.<sup>85</sup> Most were in front of shrines, suggesting the patronage of Shinto and Buddhist priests.

The situation in Kyoto appears to have been much the same. One of the first critical booklets on actors, *Yarō mushi* (Fellow [or Actor]

Bugs) (1660), describes the kabuki youths who were sought after by Buddhist monks:

In these times in the capital there is a great number of what are called "fellow bugs" who eat away the bamboo and wood of the five Zen monasteries and ten abbeys, the books of the learned priests, and even the purses of fathers and grandfathers. . . . "Fellow bugs" are about the size of a human being fifteen or sixteen years old; they are equipped with arms, legs, mouth, nose, ears, and eyes, wear a black cap on the head, fly around Gion, Maruyama, and Ryōzen, and have eyes on people's purses. When I asked someone: "Are those not the young kabuki actors of Shijo riverside?" he clapped his hands, laughed, and said: "You are right." These young kabuki actors have multiplied in number especially in the past year and this year. The handsome among the children of lowly outcasts and beggars are selected; their faces never without powder, and dressed in clothes of silk gauze and damask, they are put on the stage to dance and sing, and the old and the young, men and women, become weak-kneed and call out: "Gosaku! Good! Good! I'll die!" Not only do they call to them, but seduced by their alluring eyes, they go with them after the performance to Higashiyama; borne away in woven litters and palanquins, they proceed in high spirits, calling: "Here, here! A palanquin, a palanquin." Ah! What grateful affection! Bilked of a large amount of gold and silver for one night's troth, the droll priests of the temples, their bodies wasting away day by day, desire only to engage the fellows. Having no money, they sell the treasure of paintings and tea ceremony utensils that have been handed down generation after generation in the temples, and if these do not suffice, they cut bamboo and timber grove trees, and with that money, engage fellows.<sup>86</sup>

Saikaku devotes the second half of his *Great Mirror of Homosexuality* (*Nanshoku ōkagami*, 1687), to the kabuki youths of Kyoto and Osaka. He states that there were thirty-one of these youths in Kyoto at the time.<sup>87</sup> Catamite teahouses also became numerous; a book of 1766 lists 85 in Miyagawa-chō in Kyoto and 47 in Dōtombori in Osaka.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from the kabuki youths who at best were apprentices or bit players, there were some young actors of ability and beauty known as *wakashu-gata*, usually fourteen to seventeen years of age.<sup>89</sup> They played the roles of boys or handsome young men, gentle and somewhat effeminate. Their slightly plump faces and bodies were said to have a neutral quality intermediate between male and female, and they were likened to statues of Buddhist deities of the style sculpted

by Annami Kaikei in the early Kamakura period. Some also played girls' parts, and most turned to *onnagata* roles when they became older. The best of the *wakashu-gata* were given star billing along with the leading players of men's roles (*tachiyaku*) and the mature *onnagata*. This is evidence that despite the abolition of youth kabuki in 1652 and its replacement by *yarō kabuki*, the audiences continued to admire beautiful young actors. This is further attested by the first extant playbill of 1675 which listed them after the *tachiyaku*, but before the *onnagata*.<sup>90</sup>

Most of the *onnagata* had, of course, been kabuki youths. Yet as they grew older, they relied increasingly on a more subtle skill in playing women's roles. They could not merely mimic for, aging and wrinkled, their lantern chins and heavy noses more pronounced, their voices more gravelly, they could hardly be mistaken in appearance for women. A more abstract method of interpretation was required. Thus they singled out the most essential traits of a woman's gestures and speech and gave to these a special emphasis in much the same way that puppets exaggerate human gestures to appear alive. The stylized manner of the *onnagata*, together with the interplay between the *onnagata* and *tachiyaku*, became the essence of kabuki acting to the extent that attempts by women in modern times to play the female roles have not been satisfactory. A number of factors contribute to this situation. The beauty of *onnagata* acting lies in its formalized grace. Women in these roles appear too natural, too realistic. Furthermore, since male roles are played in a strong, sometimes exaggerated manner, women lack the physical strength to project an equal stage presence. And again, women do not exude the peculiar eroticism with its homosexual overtones which has become an inherent characteristic of kabuki. Actresses become plausible only when they play their parts, not by miming women, but by imitating *onnagata*.

The lack of realism in the acting style of the *onnagata* was not a deficiency in the eyes of a Tokugawa audience. One of the more popular styles of male acting, *aragoto* (rough business), which was characterized by the exaggerated movement and bombastic language appropriate to the superhuman prowess of warrior heroes, was equally unnatural. In the earliest kabuki, not only did women play men and men women, but plots were steeped in the fantastic. In later plays as well, action is often illogical and fantastic elements frequently intrude. The art of the theater makes such action plausible, not real.

Realistic representation is not an objective in other forms of traditional Japanese drama. This is well illustrated by the puppet theater, a major art which rivalled kabuki in popularity during some decades of the Tokugawa period. As part of the kabuki repertoire was drawn from the puppet theater, the movements of the puppets actually influenced the human acting styles. Earlier dramatic forms, *bugaku*, *nō*, and *kōwakamai*, are even less concerned with realism of conception and detail.

The actors of women's roles portrayed in an idealized manner chastity, virtue, patience, and tact—embodying the ideals of Tokugawa women prepared to sacrifice their lives for their children or husband or parents, or give themselves solely to enhance the honor of the family. They were also models of etiquette in their bows, their deferential movements, their modesty. They were retiring in the presence of men, often keeping to the back of the stage (upstage), which also served the purpose of making them appear smaller in stature than those playing men's parts. *Onnagata* did not step out in front of an actor in a male role, but sat slightly behind him. They sat on a lower level on the stage more commonly than on a raised set, and never on the stools which were used on occasion by men of high rank. In short, they played women's place in society to an extreme degree.

Some players of women's roles, even after they reached *onnagata* status and were no longer indentured, continued to have homosexual relationships. If they were prominent actors, they would of course be selective. Inasmuch as they were trained and experienced homosexual partners and since their stage roles as *onnagata* depended on assumed femininity, it was their practice to lead rather feminine lives, to live their art. The many stories concerning the practices of *onnagata* in the Tokugawa period include accounts that they dressed like women when off the stage. The younger *onnagata* wore long-sleeved kimono (*furisode*) and flowery patterns appropriate to young girls. They dressed their hair in a unique style resembling a woman's coiffure. Some are said to have entered the women's side of public bathhouses, and "no one thought this strange."<sup>91</sup> They developed the motor habits of women in hand gestures, walking, and sitting, and it has been said that some squatted to urinate. They used women's language—vocabulary, verb endings, honorifics—not to mention female pitch and intonation. The famous early *onnagata*, Yoshizawa Ayame (1673–1729) said that an *onnagata* should continue to experience the feelings of an *onnagata* even in the dressing room, eating only the

kind of food appropriate to women, and modestly turning away from the leading man when eating.<sup>92</sup>

The extent to which *onnagata* lived their art is illustrated by an anecdote about the Edo *onnagata* Segawa Kikunōjō. A man from Osaka went to call on him at his home, but when he arrived Kikunōjō was in the kitchen talking to the fishmonger. The visitor, mistaking Kikunōjō for his wife, asked to meet the actor.<sup>93</sup>

The appeal of *onnagata* was not merely to the men of the audience. They were admired by the ladies for the elegance of their gestures and the gentleness of their dispositions—since they played women in an idealized manner. Occasionally they became involved in love affairs with ladies of higher status. In 1706 the *onnagata* Ikushima Daikichi (1671–1706) hid himself in a clothing chest and was smuggled into the Edo mansion of the Tokugawa daimyo of Kii.<sup>94</sup>

The leading players of male roles were also admired for their sexuality and were more openly idolized than the *onnagata*. Sakata Tōjūrō (1647–1709) specialized in playing the part of the great lover and big spender in the prostitute quarters. He was called the “original master of love scenes” and “the first in the line of the engagers of prostitutes.” His skill in these scenes, we are told, was due to a great deal of practice off the stage, although, in fact, this may well not have been true in his case. When he died, the women of the entire city of Kyoto wept “crimson tears.”<sup>95</sup>

His contemporary, the Osaka actor Arashi San’emon (1635–1690), held a similar title: “pioneer of lovmaking in the West.” His biographical sketch in a critical booklet states: “There is not a prostitute with whom he is not intimate.”<sup>96</sup> Reputations as free-spending lovers of courtesans were important publicity for actors. Ikushima Shingorō was much admired by the ladies for the way he played love scenes. A description in a critical booklet written many years before his affair with Ejima, seems to foreshadow the danger ahead: “He quickly came to be gossiped about for his amours. It is due to the large-heartedness with which he was born that the cord he uses to tie up his hair becomes undone. The god of Izumo sends a shower which causes him to enjoy love scenes on the stage, pleasing the ladies of the audience.”<sup>97</sup>

Actors set fashion in some sectors of society. The new patterns used in their robes, their hair ornaments, their styles of speech were aped even by wives and daughters of prominent merchants. The many examples of popular styles copied from actors include the Kikuchi

knot, inspired by the manner in which Uemura Kikuchi tied his sash, the Miyuki hat, adapted from Miyuki Tatsunosuke, and Rokō brown, a color sported by Segawa Kikunōjō (Rokō).<sup>98</sup>

Some actors opened shops which sold products carrying their endorsement. Shops specializing in cosmetics were the most common, but there were also shops selling fans and clothing material. One of the best known, dating from the 1680s, was established by the actor Uemura Kichiya at the end of Takasegawa Bridge on Shijō to sell cosmetics.<sup>99</sup> The actor in his shop is occasionally the subject of a woodblock print. Sanogawa Ichimatsu is shown in his establishment where incense and toothpowder were sold, wearing a robe of checkered pattern which he made popular (*Ichimatsu-zome*). In another print, an actor, perhaps Matsumoto Kōshirō IV is seated in his shop which offered a special wafer, writing a poem on a fan for a young woman.<sup>100</sup> The *yago* or “shop names,” which are still associated with the names of famous actors, probably had their origins in the actors’ shops, for example, Takashimaya for Ichikawa Sadanji and his disciples.

The craze for actors was extreme among the Edo fans, a reflection of the ebullience and rashness of the Edokko temperament. Their first great actor, Ichikawa Danjūrō, a hero to the plebs in the pit, was referred to as “The Flower of Edo.”<sup>101</sup> Excitement shot up to a high pitch when a great star made his entrance on the *hanamichi*, paused, and slowly turned his face toward the audience: “One glance, a thousand *ryō*—Kikunōjō on the *hanamichi*.”<sup>102</sup> The obsession with actors in Edo is distastefully borne out by a tale of Ichikawa Yazoō II, a great favorite in the role of Sukeroku, chivalrous commoner. At the conclusion of the play he makes his escape by concealing himself in a water barrel. After the performance the water was bottled and sold to his female admirers, some of whom drank it.<sup>103</sup>

From the last decade of the seventeenth century, when the first actors with prodigious reputations began to appear, the salaries paid the leading players rose to large sums. It is not known for certain how much was actually received as figures were sometimes inflated to enhance the fame of the actor. Ichikawa Danjūrō is said to have received 500 *ryō* a year in 1694, but his own record indicates payment of 320 *ryō*. Yet this was a time when ordinary actors might expect about 25 or 30 *ryō*. The highest figure reported for Sakata Tōjūrō, 800 *ryō*, is certainly an exaggeration; a critical booklet of 1701 quotes his salary at 500 *ryō* and that of Ikushima Shingorō at 250 *ryō*.<sup>104</sup> In



any case, this was the beginning of very substantial payments. A few decades later various actors are listed at 1,000 *ryō*, but in fact some received little more than half the publicized figure.<sup>105</sup> The three Edo managers were hard pressed to restrain demands for higher and higher salaries. In order to check the ruinous competition among themselves, they agreed in 1794 not to pay more than 500 *ryō*. This agreement was soon broken, but the government ordered them to observe this ceiling in 1827 and again in 1842. Actors were expected to provide their own costumes, but when the wage ceiling came into effect, they demanded a supplement for costumes.<sup>106</sup>

The leading actors did live luxuriously with large homes, expensive delicacies, and gorgeous clothing. Attended by many apprentices and disciples, they adopted the style of a wealthy merchant or minor daimyo. Sakata Tōjūrō was renowned for extravagance. He would not wear clothes once they had been washed, would use candles alone rather than the more economical oil lamps, and had his sake heated over a fire of aloes wood, or so we are told. When he went to Osaka to perform, he had drinking water brought in barrels from Kyoto. His rice was checked grain by grain before cooking to insure that there were no pebbles which might damage his teeth. When a member of his household suggested that he refrain from such extravagance, he laughed: "The reason I am receiving a salary now of close to 1,000 *ryō* is because I am not frugal. As I am well known and am called a celebrated man of the theater in the three great cities, I must be large spirited and nothing should be heard or seen concerning me that could be considered small."<sup>107</sup> The publicity value of such stories is undoubted.

Despite the prohibition, some leading actors had residences in the suburbs of Edo: Danjūrō II in Meguro, Danjūrō IV in Kiba, Danjūrō V in Ushijima, and Nakamura Nakayo in Ukechi. The Edo *onnagata*, Segawa Kikunojō II, had three homes, three mistresses, and supported fifty-three people. Over thirty persons lived in Nakamura Utaemon III's residence in Dōtombori, Osaka. He had three additional houses, inflating his living expenses to 3,000 *ryō* a year. During the Tempo Reform of 1842, however, the government strictly enforced laws for the control of actors, confining them to the new quarter at Saruwaka-chō, and investigating those who mixed with commoners. Sawamura Sōjūrō and Onoe Baikō were manacled for appearing without sedge hats, and Nakamura Utaemon was jailed for going to a bout of *sumō* wrestling. Danjūrō VII (1791–1859) was

punished for his opulent style. His residence at Kiba and its expensive furnishings were confiscated, he himself was banished from Edo.<sup>108</sup>

Some actors, men of education and character, were occasionally entertained by daimyo, or at least, by retired daimyo. Danjūrō II tells in his diary of an invitation to the residence of the retired lord of Matsura where he drank so much that he was forced to stay the night. Nakamura Chūzō frequently went to the Mōri residence for tea with the retired lord, and was presented with an inkstone from Chōshū. The retired lord of Izumo, a Matsudaira and a patron of Segawa Kikunojō II, went to the theater for Kikunojō's final rehearsal and returned for the opening performance.<sup>109</sup>

An account of the 1840s laments the improper behavior of actors of its day who sat in the teahouses with their high-born patrons and behaved as intimates. It contrasts their conduct with earlier times when Onoe Baikō I and Sōjūrō were performing. Retired daimyo came incognito to the theater to watch them and invited them to a teahouse. The actors came dressed in formal clothes, took their seats in a humble position at a distance from the lords, and when they had received cups of sake, they took leave.<sup>110</sup>

#### THE DEPICTION OF ACTOR AND PROSTITUTE IN UKIYOE

Second only to the principal actors in notoriety and public curiosity were the leading courtesans of the pleasure quarter. The fame of the leaders of both professions was spread by woodblock prints and critical booklets. Indeed, the prints and booklets developed in competence, sophistication, and circulation largely in the effort to cope ever more imaginatively with subjects so voraciously consumed by the public. There are numerous parallels in the manner in which actors and courtesans were treated in these two types of publication.

The art of ukiyo paintings and prints dealt largely with prostitutes and actors from its beginnings throughout a century and a half of development. Even in the nineteenth century when landscape and bird and flower themes became common, portraits of prostitutes and actors continued to dominate ukiyoe. The popularity of these prints and books has given Japan a larger illustrated record of actors and prostitutes than is found in any contemporary culture.

Hishikawa Moronobu who, more than any other artist, shaped the early development of ukiyo painting and prints, divided his work largely between these two worlds. This is neatly demonstrated by two



handscrolls made up of a series of scenes from both Edo kabuki and the Yoshiwara.<sup>111</sup>

In 1690 Torii Kiyomoto did the first poster for the Ichimura-za, thus originating a professional kabuki style, perfected by his son, which remained popular for several decades. From the middle of the eighteenth century, prints which displayed actors posed in their roles were regularly issued with changes of the Edo programs. Many of the actor prints depict a single, strong figure in a dramatic moment of the play. The dramatic climax is not necessarily at the end, for the kabuki play is more a series of striking climactic images as the actor holds a pose to show an intense emotion, rolling his head, crossing one eye, grimacing, flinging out his arms and legs. The most dramatic of these conventional postures, *mie*, are the discrete high points recorded in prints (Confer, chapter 2, pp. 84-86). These are the moments the audience applauds by shouts of praise.

While the word "dance" suggests in the West a fluid, continuous movement, Japanese kabuki dance leads from one dramatic posture to another, and these moments are also recorded in prints. In fact the kabuki scene contains a series of tableaux in which the arrangement and spacing of figures on the stage—the patterns formed by the lines and colors—observe the same principles of composition as an ukiyo print or painting.

This commitment to the depiction of highly conventionalized, tableau-like scenes instead of more natural or unstudied postures is sustained in the courtesan prints. The leading beauty accompanied by an attendant en route to a rendezvous is endlessly repeated. Triptychs of characteristic beauties of the three great cities become familiar exercises. And portraits of courtesans before their shops often occur. All sense of motion is eroded as the static figure is caught in a standardized gesture.

The presentation of a single, bold, voluptuous figure against a plain ground is perfected in the courtesan paintings and prints of the Kaigetsudō during the early eighteenth century. Again there is a close parallel to the artistic treatment of the actor who is most frequently featured alone, poised commandingly before the viewer with little peripheral distraction. The three leading actors of a play frequently appear in a triptych, but as each actor occupies an individual panel, the figures are essentially independent prints as in the case of courtesan triptychs.

Actors are usually identified in the prints, the majority of them by

1700, although prostitutes remain largely anonymous until after the middle of the eighteenth century. Yet both subjects are represented in a style which gives little attention to individual personality. Most ukiyoe lack the concern for facial detail of true portraits. Costume is recorded more painstakingly than the face, as though both types of print were more fashion plate than portrait. The public preoccupation with clothing and ornament is documented by the loving concentration devoted to fabric and design in these prints.

Women of the pleasure quarter are depicted in much the same unreal style which governs their portrayal by *onnagata* on the stage: as idealized girls of the Yoshiwara, they represent the romance, the fidelity, and half-real, half-fantasy world epitomized in the anonymous portraits by Okumura Masanobu. The courtesans of the domestic plays are simply fictionalized figures from the real pleasure quarter and, indeed, are occasionally biographical versions of a real life (though deceased) figure. The idealization and lack of unflattering comment that characterize the playwright's interpretation of his heroine is paralleled by the treatment of the courtesan prints and is reflected again in the actor print of the courtesan role. The role itself, the representation of the actor in the role, and the basic courtesan study are alike in their fascination not so much with the details of the Yoshiwara but with its appeal to the imagination. That the actor-courtesan so often appears in a conventionalized pose without background, boldly detached from the content of the play, seems to divorce the print from the world of kabuki and return it directly to the Yoshiwara.

The portrayal of actors in stage roles, which significantly dominates more personal, offstage studies, suggests that they too were expressive vehicles for the imagination of artist and audience much like the prostitutes. The basic repertoire of courtesan poses and the studied manner of depiction reduces the idiosyncratic importance of the individual and inflates her value as a symbol of a lifestyle. So too the depersonalization of actor and absorption in the beauty of theatrical pose preserves his identification with a glamorous world, wide enough to accommodate the most flamboyant imagination.

The kabuki prints commonly carry the name of the actor and his role. In the Torii school, identification often depends upon depiction of the actor's crest on his costume. Occasional inclusion of a crest may also offer a clue to identity in the more typically anonymous courtesan prints. Yet the actors are known, not by personal names, but by

hereditary stage names which invoke the reputation of a great forebear. Among the courtesans it was also common practice to repeat noted professional names, not to establish any legitimate affiliation, but to borrow the reputation for skill or beauty of a romantic predecessor. This use of traditional names by both actors and prostitutes adds an additional factor of impersonality and anonymity to the prints. As it is the idealized Hanaōgi who is important, so it is the idealized Ichikawa Danjūrō as Benkei who is important. No matter what generation of Hanaōgi or Danjūrō-Benkei the artist portrays, an imaginative ideal replaces reality.

This emphasis on the symbolic importance of the actor and the courtesan prints is not to deny the personality feature altogether. The print did, to some extent, serve the personality cults of actors so ardently sustained by fan clubs. Prints of courtesans were also made in expectation of satisfying an audience which, by dint of the mechanics of her art, was necessarily more limited than that of the actor. However, for the wider audience of both actor and prostitute prints, the idealized treatment of the subject in colorful and stylish costume provided easier entry to the fantasy world of the pleasure quarter.

The faces in the earlier prints are so lacking in individual traits that actors could rarely be identified if their name or crest were not provided. The courtesans' features are feminine and graceful, but they are impassive, and there is no hint of temperament and little sensuality. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, both the actor and courtesan prints undergo a change, more or less simultaneously, due in part to improved techniques in multicolor printing. Close-up facial treatment is given preference by some artists over full-length studies and more personal characteristics are stressed. In some instances an actor might be recognized by face alone in the work of different artists. In the large heads (*ōkubi*), beginning in the 1770s, and shortly in the large faces (*ōgao*) of Bunchō, Shunshō, and Shukō, which lead to the faces of Sharaku, the change lies more heavily on the side of caricature than portraiture. Nonetheless it signifies a transition from fascination with the symbolic to fascination with the idiosyncratic. A parallel development takes place in the increased attention to individual personality in the depiction of women, but possibly because this subject lends itself less to caricature than the grimacing of actors, the way was opened for the more interesting psychological studies of Utamarō. Unlike the impassive faces of the earlier courtesan prints, sensual beauty now emerges in a variety of

physiognomical studies of vanity, fickleness, passion, and so forth. This change toward portraiture was accompanied by the identification of the individual beauty, frequently her name and house, and sometimes the address, written in a cartouche in a corner of the composition.

The intimate connection between the two worlds in the public mind is best illustrated by prints which posed actor with prostitute, geisha, or *kamuro*.<sup>112</sup> The consummate works on this theme are those erotic prints, delicately called "spring pictures" (*shunga*), which show in breathtaking detail a popular actor and a prostitute in the act of love. Considered neither libelous nor invasive of privacy, they simply depicted leaders of the two professions performing as the public expected.

#### CRITICAL BOOKLETS ON ACTORS AND PROSTITUTES

Critical booklets (*hyōbanki*), quoted earlier, also publicized the leading actors and courtesans. The conception and the design format of these books were very similar for both groups. They developed from the *kanazōshi* tradition of guidebooks to cities and famous places which appeared during the early decades of the seventeenth century. The first booklet on prostitutes (*yūjo hyōbanki*) was probably the *Tōgenshū*, a 1655 guide to the Shimabara quarter and its inmates, followed directly by guides to the quarters in Osaka and Edo. The *Naniwa monogatari* on the Shimmachi quarter of Osaka rated twelve girls of *tayū* rank and thirty of *tenjin* rank. In the next years the first of the guides to actors (*yarō hyōbanki*) appeared, the *Yakusha no uwasa* in 1656 and the *Yarō mushi* in 1660. The latter describes forty-one boys of the theater. These illustrated books extol the physical attractiveness of the young actor-prostitutes but overlook their ability on the stage. The *Muki tokoro* of 1662 shows an advance by making some reference to acting, but not until the end of the century is the main concern of the booklets turned to dramatic talent.

From this time, when not only the youths but the more serious actors are listed, the booklets are known as *yakusha hyōbanki*. In the 1690s the *onmagata* were listed first, followed by youths, and finally by the varieties of masculine roles: *tachiyaku*, villain, and comic character. However, beginning with the *Yakusha kuchi jamisen*, published in 1699, the books increasingly listed the three masculine roles first.<sup>113</sup> This work, like many to follow, devotes one volume to each of the three cities. The usual format is first to give the actor a rating,

list the roles he has played, followed by stories about him, and a critique of his skills. Occasionally information on salaries was included. The books came to be published in the first month, focused on the *kaomise* performance of the preceding eleventh month. A second book was published to deal with the program of the first month, and sometimes one was issued concerning the seventh-month performance.

The system of rating performers was modeled on the prostitute booklets. The earliest extant booklet to rate actors, dating from 1687, employed only three ranks, but by 1702 six were in use, from "superior-superior-excellent" (*jōjōkichi*) down to "medium" (*chū*). The *Yakusha nichō jamisen* of that year listed 302 actors in the three cities, placing 26 in the highest category and 135 in the lowest.<sup>114</sup> Variations on this scheme were used for some years, but in time the schedule of ratings was devalued by overuse of the higher grades. By the middle of the eighteenth century one book used eleven grades, with "superior-superior-excellent," originally the highest rank, now third from the bottom.<sup>115</sup>

There is also great concern in these professions themselves for a system of hierarchical rank. This is quite clear among the prostitutes of the official quarters. Although the names varied from city to city and changed over time, there was never any doubt about the order. In Shimabara and Shimmachi during the Genroku period, for example, four ranks were recognized.<sup>116</sup> There were also semiofficial quarters and unlicensed brothels, such as bathhouses, which used different names and their own ranking systems. In the case of actors, an order of precedence was acknowledged between the different roles. But further, within each role category, there were levels ranging from master-actor to bit players and apprentices. These are set forth with care in playbills (*banzuke*) which appeared from the 1660s on, initially as handbills for distribution, and later also for posting at crossroads and in bathhouses and barbershops.

Playbills recorded a rank list for the year for all actors in a troupe. Others listed the actors of all three cities—Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. The rating system used for prostitutes was copied in *banzuke* as it was in booklets on actors. In format, however, the playbills came to resemble increasingly the *banzuke* of *sumō* wrestlers.

#### INTERRELATION OF THE KABUKI AND PROSTITUTE QUARTERS

The close relationship between the two social centers of the Tokugawa city also becomes apparent in the fluid exchange of fashion,

language, and other cultural innovations which characterized these groups. The current mode and the latest slang of the prostitutes' quarters were introduced in plays and passed on to a wider public. Styles in weaving and dyeing, in color and pattern of dress, in cosmetics, hairstyles, combs and bodkins, constantly passed between them.

The music, the popular songs, the styles of recitation, were shared. The standard instrument of both quarters was the *samisen*, introduced into Japan in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The *samisen* of the kabuki and pleasure quarter was higher pitched than that of the puppet theater and had a plaintive, sensuous quality scandalous to Confucian scholars who considered it the most harmful of "licentious music." The numerous schools of recitation used in the kabuki theater were drawn from a variety of sources, but most were shared with the prostitutes' quarters. Some were developed as teahouse music and transported to kabuki, such as *Katō-bushi* and *Shin-nai*,<sup>117</sup> but by and large, the recitation of teahouse entertainment was adapted from styles found in kabuki. The two worlds were also linked by styles of dance. Female dancers from the courtesan establishments adopted stage movements and kabuki performers promptly assimilated new material developed in the brothel.

The interconnection between the two worlds appears most fully in those acts of kabuki plays set in houses of assignation. The glamorous but mysterious life of a fine establishment is revealed for an audience thus able to taste vicariously what only a rich man can devour. The personnel of the pleasure quarter, proprietor, madame, courtesan, attendant, maid, and jester, could be amply purveyed. The manner of speaking of these inhabitants of the quarter—the jargon of their trade, the unique honorific verb endings, the peculiar intonation—all attracted great interest. The cultural accomplishments of the *tayū*, focus of so many improbable claims, could be proven on the stage as the courtesan answered the challenge of a guest to perform virtuoso pieces on the *koto* or *samisen* and compose a poem in a skillful hand. The presentation of a customer's first meeting with a courtesan, its protocol and characteristic banter, is indeed an ultimate refinement of the prostitute-accosting skits popular in primitive kabuki.

These immensely popular scenes in the licensed houses began as insertions in historical plays. Hence the astonishing anachronism of Minamoto or Taira warriors encountering virtuous wives and beautiful mistresses of both kin and foe in up-to-date brothels. Plays were soon written, however, which centered on the life of the quarter. A

piece dating from 1698 is an exuberant tour de force, for it includes scenes in the pleasure districts of each of the three cities.<sup>118</sup> These were early steps toward the full-blown domestic play which dealt entirely with the common people of the day. Among the first were those concerning the double suicides (*shinjū*) of thwarted lovers, the girl usually a prostitute, the man a young clerk or shopkeeper who could not afford to buy her out. The sensational and romantic treatment of these suicides by playwrights such as Chikamatsu seems to have tempted frustrated lovers to rash death covenants, anticipating the publication, if not immortalization, of their passion. To check the popularity of this practice, plays about love suicides were banned in 1722. But the prohibition was effective for only a short time. Each theater tried to scoop the others by getting on the boards first a play concerning a recent suicide or scandal. With the domestic play, theater and society finally met. Real life tragedies were enshrined in a make-believe world.

The best and most challenging role in kabuki is that of the courtesan. The role combines beauty of person and character with attraction as a sexual object. Inasmuch as the prostitute was sold into bondage to relieve her father of debt, her submission to the contract is an act of filial devotion. The courtesan is characteristically portrayed as a person of noble feelings, of dignity and pride. She is courageous and faithful in the midst of feudal intrigue, ready to die rather than betray a samurai lover. This is the *tayū* of the history play. In the domestic play the girl is not of this expensive rank which is meant for the high-born or wealthy but a lower-ranking prostitute, approachable by the commoner, a more girlish and vulnerable lover. But she too is willing to forsake love and sacrifice freedom rather than allow her paramour to fail a family obligation. Her role is a subtle one as her true feelings are rarely revealed before the denouement. This complicated psychology, the tension between honor and passion, considerably enriches the dramatic possibilities open to the *onna-gata*.

The life of the quarter revealed in kabuki was glamorized by idealizing the prostitute and romantically depicting the brothel. This was yet another dimension of the sexual fantasy of theatergoing. The content of the plays and the presence of actors with scandalous reputations provided a far more sensual atmosphere than one would suspect from the perspective of kabuki today.

If kabuki was unexpectedly erotic, the brothel could be described

as a theater of love, where country girls masqueraded as sophisticated beauties and lowly merchants assumed the airs of men of affairs. Here merchants, to whom the ruling class allowed little dignity, could act out a fantasy of influence and power and be accorded gracious admiration. Here the daughters of impoverished peasants were transformed, their dark skins painted white and rustic dialect replaced by the elaborate polite language of Kyoto. Trained in at least one artistic accomplishment, dressed in sumptuous robes, they were tutored in every technique of the love goddess. A courtesan of *tayū* rank was addressed by her maids in language of formal deference accorded a daimyō's wife by her ladies-in-waiting. The latter-day *tayū* (the *oiran* of the Yoshiwara) was overdressed, overpainted, overloaded by a coiffure bristling with dozens of bodkins. Her entrance into the parlor was staged. She might keep a suitor waiting, his anticipation whetted by the preliminary byplay and solicitous visits of maids and madame while, surrounded by two *kamuro*, one or two maids, and lantern and parasol bearer, she began her deliberate parade from her residence to the house where her guest waited. At last the sliding doors of the parlor were flung open, revealing the *tayū* poised at the threshold with her attendants like an *ukiyo* print. At first she was cool and reserved, fencing verbally with her admirer, now flattering him, now putting him down, besting him in repartee.

The parlor had its subtle rules of sophisticated speech and deportment. There was a dread of blundering in this exchange, of revealing too deeply one's feelings. It was bad form to fall in love. Some common prostitutes and their lovers fell into hopeless infatuations which ended in double suicides; they misunderstood the game. The art, as in kabuki, was to make fiction seem plausible.

Deception was the business of the theater as well. Social outcasts masqueraded as heroes of the past—brave warriors, loyal ministers, even military overlords, analagous to the Tokugawa shogun himself. The chivalrous gallants who defied those of higher status to right injustices were the embodied fantasies of the underprivileged. But the most cherished charade, and that which best portrays the social environment of the theatrical world, was the tender, threatened union of the courtesan and her lover.

#### CONCLUSION

The interconnections between kabuki and the pleasure quarter illustrate how specifically the theater was a product of the social environ-

ment of Tokugawa cities. The physical presence of attractive youths acting out the roles of glamorous courtesans had more immediacy for an audience which was curious about or knew firsthand the sensual world of prostitute and catamite which was to be found in the cities. But the excitement of kabuki was not limited to such gross features. Kabuki was a stage on which to display many of the accomplishments of the new urban society. These were not limited to the immediate ingredients of drama, such as the elaboration of more subtle plots and variety in acting styles. Kabuki called for new musical forms, recitative styles, composition of songs, and especially choreography. It inspired innovation in fabric and costume design, hairstyles and personal ornamentation. Whatever was new and striking found its way quickly to the stage.

With kabuki as the most exciting form of entertainment, it is not surprising that fashions seen on the stage were copied and that the speech and mannerisms of the popular actors were emulated. Kabuki also provided subjects for painters and printmakers and inspired a new boldness in composition. The traditions and tales on which kabuki drew for its material were returned into the stream of literature to make stories with intricate plots and more dramatic structure. This continuous interchange between the theater and its social environment wove kabuki into the fabric of urban culture.

## NOTES

1. While this might be unusual in some other cultures, it is not remarkable in Japan, for the Japanese, more than any other modernized people, have managed to preserve a large variety of traditional cultural skills. *Nô* drama is much more faithful than kabuki in carrying on traditions from earlier times, and even the puppet theater, whose development is interwoven with that of kabuki, follows Tokugawa conventions more closely.
2. See D. H. Shively, "Chikamatsu's Satire on the Dog Shogun," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies (HJAS)* 18 (1955): 159-180.
3. The "necessary evil" thesis is discussed in my article, "Bakufu versus Kabuki," in *HJAS* 18 (1955): 326-356; reprinted in John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen, eds., *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 231-261.
4. At the time of the Tempō Reform of 1842, actors were counted by the numerary adjunct or counter, *biki*, used for animals. Gunji Masakatsu, *Kabuki to Yoshiwara* (Tokyo: Asaji Shobō, 1956), p. 68. After the Edo theaters brought a successful suit to free themselves from Danzaemon's jurisdiction (1708), actors were generally considered to be in an intermediate position between commoners and outcaste groups such as *eta* and *hinin*. Gunji Masakatsu, *Kabuki: yōshiki to denshō* (Tokyo: Nara Shobō, 1954), pp. 155-159.

5. *Sundai zatsuwa* (1750), in *Nihon zuhitsu zenshū* (Tokyo: Kokumin Tosho Kabushiki Kaisha, 1929), III:230.
6. *Keizairoku* (1729), in *Nihon keizai sōsho* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Sōsho Kankōkai, 1914), VI:55.
7. Ihara Seiseien (Toshiro), "Kabuki no fuzoku," in *Nihon fuzokushi kōza* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1929), IX: 44.
8. *Razan sensei bunshū*, quoted in *Dainihon shiryō*, Ser. 12 (Tokyo: Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku, 1901), I:260-261.
9. Edward M. Thompson, ed., *Diary of Richard Cocks*, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1933), I:156, 177, 180, 193, 211, and II:27. Cocks also refers to them as *cabokes*, *cabukis*, *coboke*, *cabukes*, and also as "dansing beares." In an entry at Osaka, he says: "Our host brought us *cabuques*, 3, one the cheefe, with their musick, and staid all night." His notation two days later makes it clear that the "cheefe" was a woman, who evidently stayed two nights.
10. On the history of early kabuki, see Benito Ortolani, *Das Kabukitheater: Kulturgeschichte der Anfänge*, Monumenta Nipponica Monographs No. 19 (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1964); Shively, "Bakufu versus Kabuki."
11. Gunji (1956), pp. 186-187, quoting the *Azuma monogatari*.
12. In 1790, 1,200 private prostitutes were seized in Kyoto and were put in the Shimabara quarter. In 1842, 533 girls were again moved in Kyoto, while in Edo, 4,181 were rounded up and placed in the Yoshiwara. Gunji (1956), pp. 188, 197-199.
13. D. H. Shively, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the Genroku Shogun," in A. M. Craig and D. H. Shively, eds., *Personality in Japanese History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 85-126, esp. 97-99.
14. According to the official Tokugawa chronicle, the *Tokugawa jikki*, the shōgun bannermen (*batamoto*) were addicted to the kabuki youths. In Osaka this year (1652) at the mansion of the *daimyō* Hoshina Masasada, co-commander of the guard of Osaka Castle, there was a drinking party with kabuki youths and a fight broke out. *Kokushi taiki* (Tokyo: Kokushi Taiki Kankōkai, 1932), XLI:53b; Ihara Toshiro, *Kabuki nempyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956), I: 64-66; Ihara Toshiro, *Nihon engeki shi* (1902; reprint, Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1924), pp. 92-93.
15. *Kabuki nempyō*, I:66.
16. *Edo meisboki* (1662), by Asai Ryōi (d. 1691), in *Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), VIII:757-758.
17. *Kabuki nempyō*, I:70. See C. J. Dunn and Bunzō Torigoe, trans. and eds., *The Actors' Anecdotes (Yakusha Rongo)* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1969), pp. 44, 177.
18. Dōmoto Kansei (Yatarō) *Kamigata engeki shi* (Tokyo: Shun'yōdō, 1934), p. 41; Takano Tatsuyuki, *Nihon engeki shi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō-dō, 1948), II: 265-269. Dōmoto believes that seven theaters were licensed as early as 1624, but Takano's opinion that this did not happen until 1669-1670 seems more probable.
19. There are many illustrations of the scene at the Shijō riverbank, including performances of *onna kabuki*, *wakashu kabuki*, and a variety of sideshows in screen paintings of the second quarter of the seventeenth century, as in Kondō Ichitarō, *Japanese Genre Painting: The Lively Art of Renaissance Japan*, trans. R. A. Miller (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1961), plates 4, 66-71, pp. 22 and 24; also Kikuchi Sadao et al., eds., *Kinsei fūzoku zukan* (Tokyo: Mainichi

- Shimbunsha, 1974), II:109; and Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, comp., *Rakuchū rakugai zu* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1966), unnumbered plates at back.
20. The use of the crane became taboo in 1690 because the word for crane (*tsuru*), was used by the shōgun Tsunayoshi in his daughter's name, Tsuruhime. Thereafter the Nakamura-za used a ginkgo leaf design and the Ichimura-za changed its crest to an orange-tree design. Suda Atsuo, *Nihon gekijō shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sagami Shobō, 1957), p. 330.
  21. The six-fold screen (Tokyo National Museum) of the Nakamura-za with its new ginkgo-leaf crest and stage, attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694), appears in Kondō, plate 76 (identified inexplicably as the Morita-za); Gunji (1969), plate 416; and Suwa Haruo, *Kabuki kaika* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1970), plate 58. See note 60.
  22. Takano, II:242–243.
  23. Gunji (1956), pp. 62–63; Gunji (1969), pp. 51–52. Only the large theaters of the three cities are discussed in this chapter, but there were also small, low-priced theaters known as *miyachi shibai* located on temple grounds, which were permitted to give performances for one hundred days during the year. Gunji (1956), pp. 38–42.
  24. Suda, p. 328.
  25. Zushi Yoshihiko, *Nihon no gekijō kaiko* (Tokyo: Sagami Shobō, 1947), p. 61. The largest Kyoto theaters seem to have been somewhat larger, at least in 1689 when one measured 106 by 196 feet, over 20,000 square feet. Suda, p. 330.
  26. Yoshida Teruji, ed., *Kabuki-za* (Tokyo: Kabuki-za Shuppanbu, 1951), p. 324.
  27. Zushi, p. 60; Suda, pp. 331–333; Takano, II:341. Three-tiered boxes are mentioned in 1701, but this perhaps means two tiers raised above the floor, allowing space underneath. Suda, p. 331.
  28. From 1772, wooden partitions replaced ropes to divide the *masu*, and later the size of the *masu* was reduced until finally there was space for only four people. Suda, 339.
  29. Takano, II:343; Iizuka Tomoichirō, *Kabuki gairon* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1928), p. 469; Gunji (1969), p. 50.
  30. "(Kyō-Ōsaka) Yakusha hyōban iro jamisen," in *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), III:327a; Takano, II:343.
  31. Suda, p. 333.
  32. Suda, p. 327.
  33. Suda, pp. 327, 329.
  34. Suda, pp. 335, 345.
  35. Suda, p. 337. The present Kabuki-za stage is 77 feet by 95 feet.
  36. Suda, p. 329. There is some evidence that it was used as part of the stage by 1668. Iizuka, p. 421; Takano, II:361–363.
  37. Suda, pp. 337–341.
  38. The pillar at stage left bears the name of the play, *Nanakusa wakayagi Soga*, followed by the name of the theater, Ichimura-za. The other pillar gives the name of the scene, "Yaoya Oshichi kyōdai biraki." On the beam joining the pillars we see that the Ichimura-za has reclaimed its crane crest. On stage beside her shop counter stands the vegetable dealer (*yaoya*) Oshichi, played by Segawa Kikujirō in this performance of the first month of 1744. Kichizō, played by Onoe Kikugorō, approaches on the *hanamichi*. A stage attendant waves his fan to quiet the audience. This print is an example of the Western-

- style perspective picture (*ukie*, "floating picture") which came into vogue about 1736. Yoshida Teruji, *Kabuki-e no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ryokuen Shobō, 1936, 1963), pp. 98–101. The print is in the collection of the Atami Bijutsukan.
39. Detail of a print of a theater interior by Utagawa Toyokuni III (1786–1864), in the collection of the Waseda Daigaku Engeki Hakubutsukan (The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University). The entire print is reproduced in Gunji (1969), plate 448.
  40. Gunji (1956), pp. 59–60.
  41. Toita, pp. 66, 99.
  42. Iizuka, p. 484.
  43. Dōmoto, p. 166. Beginning in the last decade of the seventeenth century, *homekotoba* were printed up for wider distribution. For examples, see Shuzui Kenji and Akiba Yoshimi, *Kabuki zusestu* (Tokyo: Man'yōkaku, 1931), plates 69 and 72.
  44. Iizuka, p. 486.
  45. Gunji (1956), p. 61.
  46. Iizuka, pp. 481–482; Gunji (1969), p. 50. A woodblock print of about 1790 by Katsukawa Shun'ei (1768–1819) shows Nakamura Kumetarō II seated on the stage, bowing to the audience, receiving applause, as he takes leave to go from Edo to Osaka. In the foreground we see draped over the heads of three men in the audience identical scarves bearing Kumetarō's crest. These are doubtless members of his booster club. Illustrated in Harold P. Stern, *Master Prints of Japan: Ukiyo-e Manga* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 173.
  47. Toita, p. 65.
  48. The earliest copies extant date from 1675; see Shuzui, plates 29–30.
  49. Entry dated 1756; Dōmoto, p. 246.
  50. *Temae miso*, the autobiography of Nakamura Chūzō III (1809–1886), Gunji Masakatsu, ed. (Tokyo: Seiyō, 1969), pp. 135b–136a; Dōmoto, pp. 248–249.
  51. Dōmoto, pp. 249–252; Takano, II:415.
  52. On theater-going, see Gunji (1956), pp. 49–53. The handscroll known as "Hokurō oyobi engeki zukan" [Picture Scroll of the Northern Brothels (Yoshiwara) and Theaters], attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu, is in the Tokyo National Museum. It was not originally a single scroll, but it is made up of segments dated and signed by Moronobu, seven of the segments bearing dates ranging from 1672 to 1689. Plate 4 is the left edge of a section, bearing the date 1687, which shows the action on a stage, identified by Suwa, pp. 118–119, as the Nakamura-za. The stage, omitting the box, is illustrated in Suwa, plate 51, and Gunji (1969), plate 408. The handscroll is reproduced in full in *Kinsei fūzoku zukan*, vol. III.
  53. Dōmoto, pp. 169–174. In Osaka, however, prostitutes were allowed to go to the theater teahouses. Sometimes dancing girls appeared in teahouses in Edo and Kyoto, which suggests that enforcement was not always complete.
  54. Suda, p. 336.
  55. Takano, II:364, quoting Uji Kaganojō's *Shijō-gawara suzumi bakkei*.
  56. Gunji (1956), p. 52.
  57. Gunji (1956), pp. 53–54; Zushi, pp. 61–62; Gunji (1969), p. 50.
  58. Suda, p. 265.
  59. Suda, p. 305. For a sketch map of the quarter, see plate 62 in Suda.
  60. The right screen, depicting the Nakamura-za entrance (plate 1) and interior, are referred to in note 21. The left screen is reproduced in full in Kondō, plate

- 77; and the two right and two left panels only in Suda, plates 59–60. The pair of screens in the Tokyo National Museum is designated an Important Cultural Property.
61. Plate 7 is a detail of Moronobu's "Edo fūzoku zukan" [Picture scroll of Edo customs] in the Atami Bijutsukan. In plate 8, kabuki youths look down from the second-story lattice window of a theater teahouse at two samurai dueling in the street. This detail, like the scene in plate 9 of the latticed front of a brothel, is from the "Hokurō oyobi engeki zukan" (Tokyo National Museum) described in note 52.
62. Gunji (1956), pp. 54–55. For an illustration of elegant ladies seated in a box, see Kondo, plate 76; and Gunji (1969), plate 416. The women of *daimyō* households were taught kabuki dances by a master (*kyōgen-shi*) who came to instruct in the lords' mansions.
63. *Yarō nigiri kobushi* (1696) in *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei*, II:65a; and *Yakusha-za no furumai* (1713), *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei* (1974), V: 187b; Takano, II:337. Ikushima appears in a print with two other actors in 1712, reproduced in James A. Michener, *Japanese Prints: From the Early Masters to the Modern*, with notes by Richard Lane (Rutland and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959), no. 22.
64. Takano, II:338–339. According to some accounts, Ikushima died in exile in 1733, but others say that he returned to Edo and lived until 1743.
65. In *Chiyoda-jō ōoku*, by Nagashima Imashirō and Ōta Yoshio (1892; reprint, Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1971), II:86–94, in *Meiji hyakunen-shi sōsho*, no. 168, quoting an unnamed source.
66. Suda, p. 262.
67. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, eds., *Ofuregaki Kampō shūsei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1934), no. 2734 and also 2733.
68. Takano, II:340–341; Ihara, *Nihon engeki shi*, I:454–455.
69. Suda, p. 333.
70. Dōmoto, p. 262.
71. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," p. 16; Sekine Shisei, *Tōto gekijō enkaku shi* (Tokyo: Chinsho Kankōkai, 1916), I:73a.
72. Sekine, I:72b.
73. Sekine, I:73a.
74. Sekine, I:72a, cites the *Chinjidan* (1692) which claims that catamites surpassed female prostitutes (in popularity or in numbers?), and that there were over five hundred male prostitutes of various types in Edo.
75. Sekine, 63b, 72a; Ishii Ryōsuke, ed., *Tokugawa kinreikō* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1959–1961), V, no. 3396.
76. Sekine, I:57a, 64a.
77. Sekine, I:72a.
78. Sekine, I:73c.
79. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," p. 16; Sekine, I:72b.
80. Sekine, I:72b.
81. Sekine, I:73a. The institution of female geisha did not begin until the 1750s. It was possible for youths and geisha to attend the same box in the little theaters (*miyachi shibai*), Sekine, I:73a.
82. Sekine, I:73ab.
83. Sekine, I:72b.
84. Sekine, I:72b.
85. Sekine, I:73b, citing the *Nanshoku shina sadame* (1764).
86. *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei* (1972), II:27; Takano, II:57–58.

87. Dōmoto, p. 264.
88. Dōmoto, p. 264.
89. For a portrait of a *wakashu-gata* of the Genroku period, see Shuzui, plate 105.
90. Shuzui, plates 29–30. Although most *wakashu-gata* were in their teens, this was not always the case by the eighteenth century. Sanogawa Ichimatsu (1722–1762) was a popular *wakashu* at sixteen, and although he did not change to *onnagata* roles until he was thirty-two, he played *wakashu* parts occasionally until he was forty.
91. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," p. 17.
92. In *Ayame gusa*, cited in *The Actors' Analects*, pp. 61–62.
93. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," p. 17.
94. The affair came to light, Daikichi was imprisoned, and the theater, the Nakamura-za, was closed for a time. Takano, II:331.
95. Takano, II:433, 440, 460. An anecdote which casts doubt on Tōjūrō's experience as a lover is cited in *The Actor's Analects*, p. 130. He is also quoted as having said that he did not go to teahouses in the prostitutes' quarters, in Iizuka, p. 254.
96. Takano, II:396, quoting the *Naniwa tachigiki mukashi banashi* (1686).
97. *Yarō nigiri kobushi* (1696), see note 63.
98. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," p. 53.
99. Dōmoto, p. 262.
100. Helen C. Gunsaulus, *The Clarence Buckingham Collection of Japanese Prints: The Primitives* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1955), pp. 207 and 269. I follow Stern, *Master Prints of Japan*, p. 111, in identifying the latter as Kōshirō IV, rather than as Sanogawa Ichimatsu, as Gunsaulus does. Stern also suggests that Gunsaulus' "young woman" may be the actor Osagawa Tsuneyo II.
101. Gunji (1956), p. 65.
102. Gunji (1956), p. 66.
103. Gunji (1956), p. 68.
104. Takano, II:457; Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," pp. 53–54.
105. In 1741 Danjūrō II demanded 2,000 *ryō* to go from Edo to the Sadoshima-za in Osaka.
106. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," pp. 55–61.
107. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," pp. 51–52.
108. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," pp. 49–52.
109. Ihara, "Kabuki no fūzoku," pp. 47–48. It is significant that in each instance the lord was retired, past the age of responsibility, and he could therefore indulge himself without being reprimanded by the Bakufu.
110. Iizuka, p. 255.
111. The two handscrolls in the Atami Bijutsukan and the Tokyo National Museum, referred to in notes 52 and 61. I am indebted to Mary Elizabeth Berry for contributions to the interpretation developed in the balance of this section.
112. An example is the first plate in Gunji (1956): Kikukawa Eisan's portrait of Iwai Hanshirō V (1776–1847) with a Yoshiwara *oiran*. Among other examples are: Kiyonaga's print of Matsumoto Kōshirō IV with a geisha, Michener, plate 157; Onoe Shōroku with a *tayū* and *kamuro*, *Ukiyoe zenshi* (1955), vol. 5, figs. 53, 54; Sanogawa Ichimatsu with two *kamuro* looking at a guidebook, probably to the Yoshiwara, Gunsaulus, p. 222. On the importance of prostitutes as subject in the development of ukiyoe, see Richard Lane, *Masters of the Japanese Print* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1962).

113. *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei*, II:173–289; Takano, II:304.
114. *Yarō tachiyaku butai okagami* (1687) is found in *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei*, I:229–268; *Yakusha nichō jamisen* in *Kabuki yakusha shūsei*, III:175–292.
115. *Sangatsu gei gashira*, cited in Iizuka, p. 238.
116. *Keisei iro jamisen* (1702), cited by Gunji, p. 135.
117. Iizuka, pp. 628, 637.
118. *Keisei Edo zakura*, a Sakata Tōjurō play, probably written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, appears in Takano Tatsuyuki, ed., *Chikamatsu kabuki kyōgen shū* (Tokyo: Rikugōkan, 1927), pp. 305–357.

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*Bibliographic Note.* This chapter describes the relation between kabuki and the world of public entertainment in which it developed in the Tokugawa period. It does not repeat a general account of kabuki as a dramatic form which can be found in other books. The reader is referred to Earle Ernst, *The Kabuki Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956; reprint, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974); A. C. Scott, *The Kabuki Theatre of Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955); and Faubion Bowers, *Japanese Theatre* (New York: Heritage House, 1952). More recent works, less detailed but rich in illustrations of Tokugawa as well as modern kabuki, are Masakatsu Gunji, *Kabuki*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1969); and Yasuji Toita, *Kabuki, The Popular Theatre*, trans. Don Kenney (New York: Walker/Weatherhill, 1970), the latter with an interesting introduction by Donald Keene.

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