

"*Api no Ue*"

Traditional Japanese Literature

AN ANTHOLOGY, BEGINNINGS TO 1600

Edited with Introductions and Commentary by Haruo Shirane

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The victorious Benkei, hearing this, planted his halberd upside down on the ground, rocking with laughter. He stood there like one of the two Guardian Kings.⁶

"See how that monk keeps looking over here! He's getting ready to attack. There's something uncanny about his laugh. Don't get near him unless you want to be killed," the besiegers warned one another.

After an interval during which none of the enemy ventured to approach, someone spoke up. "I have heard it said that heroes sometimes die on their feet. Let someone go up and take a look." None of his comrades volunteered, but just then a mounted warrior came galloping past and the swish of wind caught Benkei, who had indeed been dead for some time. As he fell, he seemed to lunge forward, gripping his halberd. "Look out, here he comes again!" the warriors cried, retreating hastily. Only after he had remained motionless on the ground for some minutes was there an unseemly rush to his side.

In time, people realized that Benkei had stood like a statue to protect his lord from intrusion while he was committing suicide.

[Translated by Helen McCullough]

NŌ DRAMA

Nō drama consists of dance, song, and dialogue and is traditionally performed by an all-male cast. Sometime in the late Kamakura period (1192–1333), *sarugaku* (literally, "monkey/comic art"), a performance art that includes comic mime and skits, evolved into nō drama. Sarugaku troupes served at temples, and it is believed that their roles in religious rituals have been preserved in the oldest and most ritualistic piece in the current nō repertoire, *Okina* (literally, *Old Man*), in which the dances of deities celebrate and purify a world at peace.

By the mid-fourteenth century, nō had gained wide popularity and was performed not only by sarugaku but also by *dengaku* troupes. Dengaku had originally been a type of musical accompaniment to the planting of rice, but its troupes came to specialize in acrobatics and dance as well. In the late fourteenth century, a period of intense competition (among troupes and between sarugaku and dengaku), the Kanze troupe, a sarugaku troupe from Yamato Province (now Nara Prefecture), led first by Kan'ami (1333–1384) and later by his son Zeami (1363?–1443?), shaped the genre into what is seen on today's stage.

Kan'ami attracted audiences with his rare talent as a performer and a playwright. Among his innovations was the introduction of the *kusemai*, a popular genre combining song and dance, in which the dancing performer rhythmically chants a long narrative. By incorporating the rhythms of kusemai singing into

6. Statues of *niō*, two fierce deities, are frequently placed at temple gates.

his troupe's performances, Kan'ami transformed the hitherto rather monotonous *nō* chanting into a more dramatic form, one that became very popular and was soon emulated by other sarugaku and dengaku troupes.

In 1374, Kan'ami's growing popularity finally inspired the seventeen-year-old Yoshimitsu (1358-1408, r. 1368-1394), the third Ashikaga shogun, to attend a performance by Kan'ami's troupe in Inagumano (in eastern Kyoto). From that time on, the young shogun became a fervent patron of Kan'ami's troupe. Yoshimitsu also was charmed by a beautiful boy actor, the twelve-year-old Zeami. Zeami soon began serving the shogun as his favorite page, mixing with court nobles and attending linked-poetry (*renga*) parties and other cultural events. After Kan'ami's death, however, Yoshimitsu's patronage shifted from Zeami, now a mature *nō* performer and the head of his own troupe, to Inuō (also known as Dōami, d. 1413), a performer in a sarugaku troupe from Ōmi Province (now Shiga Prefecture). Inuō had gained a reputation for his "heavenly maiden dance" (*tennyo-no-mai*), an elegant dance that was said to epitomize *yūgen*, a term signifying profound and refined beauty and the dominant aesthetic among upper social circles.

In order to maintain the shogun's favor, Zeami had to keep producing new plays and reforming his troupe's performing style in accordance with shifting aesthetic trends. Zeami's plays, of which he wrote nearly forty (or more than fifty, if his revisions of existing plays are included), are marked by exquisite phrasing and frequent allusions to Japanese classical texts. In addition, Zeami incorporated Inuō's elegant dance into his own plays, even though his troupe had originally specialized in wild demon plays and realistic mimicry. In an effort to adjust his troupe's performances to the principle of *yūgen*, Zeami created plays with elegant dances and refined versification, which poetically represented aristocratic characters often drawn from Heian monogatari. In his twenty or so theoretical treatises on *nō*, he also emphasized the importance of using *yūgen* in every aspect of *nō*.

Another of Zeami's innovations was the *mugen-nō* (dream play or phantasmal play), which typically consists of two acts. In the first, a traveler (often a traveling monk) meets a ghost, a plant spirit, or a deity, who, in the guise of a local commoner, recalls a famous episode that took place at that location, and in the second act, the ghost, spirit, or deity reappears in its original form in the monk's dream. The ghost usually recalls a crucial incident in its former life, an incident that is now causing attachment and obstructing its path to buddhahood. By reenacting that incident, the ghost seeks to gain enlightenment through the monk's prayers. The focus of these plays thus is less on the interaction between the characters than on the protagonist's emotional state.

Ashikaga Yoshinori (Yoshimitsu's son), who became the sixth Ashikaga shogun in 1429, favored Zeami's nephew On'ami, eventually placing him at the head of the Kanze troupe. With the loss of the shogun's patronage, Zeami's second son took the tonsure and left the theater. His elder son Motomasa, the

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author of *Sumida River* (*Sumidagawa*) and Zeami's last hope, died in 1432, in his early thirties. In 1435 Zeami was exiled to Sado, a remote island in north-eastern Japan. The year of his death is not certain, nor is it known whether he died on Sado or was pardoned and permitted to return to Kyoto.

After his death, Zeami's plays were recognized as central to the repertoire and were followed especially faithfully by Zeami's son-in-law Zenchiku (1405?–1470?), the author of *Shrine in the Fields* (*Nonomiya*). In the late Muromachi period, following the Ōnin war (1467–1477), audiences began to exhibit a taste for different types of *nō*, spurring the creation of more spectacular plays, such as those depicting dramatic events occurring in the present (for example, *Ataka*) and often featuring realistic battle scenes.

Nō became especially popular among the warrior class. When Tokugawa Ieyasu founded his shogunate in Edo in 1603, he bestowed his official patronage on four sarugaku troupes: Kanze, Hōshō, Konparu, and Kongō, all from Yamato (later the Kita troupe was added). As a result, only those performers affiliated with these four (or five) troupes were officially allowed to perform *nō*. It also became customary among provincial lords (*daimyō*), following the shogun's lead, to employ performers of official *nō* troupes, who performed on ceremonial occasions. One of the direct outcomes of this ceremonialization of *nō* was a lengthening of performance times, as a result of which the plays came to be performed with much more rigorous precision. The intention was not to bring *nō* into line with changing trends but to preserve and refine the established plays and performance styles.

Although around 2,000 *nō* plays still exist, the current repertoire consists of only about 240 plays, most of which were written between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. And even today, many of the most frequently performed plays are those written by Zeami.

THEATRICAL ELEMENTS

The *shite*, or protagonist, is often a supernatural being such as a ghost, plant spirit, deity, or demon. Most *nō* plays center on the *shite*'s words and deeds—that is, his or her telling of a story, usually about the *shite*'s own past, in the form of a monologue and dance. The characters subordinate to the *shite* are called *shite-tsue* (companions to the *shite*) or simply *tsue*. In two-act plays, the *shite* in the first act is called the *mae-shite* (or *mae-jite* [shite before]), and in the second act, the *nochi-shite* (or *nochi-jite* [shite after]). The *nochi-shite* usually appears in a different costume, signifying the revelation of his or her true identity, and sometimes even as a different character altogether.

The *waki* is the character opposite—although not necessarily antagonistic to—the *shite*. When the *shite* is a supernatural being, the *waki* is usually a traveling monk who listens to the *shite*'s retelling of the past. But when the *shite* is a living warrior, the *waki* is most often a warrior of the opposing camp.

Unlike the shite, waki always are living men. The characters subordinate to the waki, often their retainers or traveling companions, are called *waki-tsure* (or *waki-zure*). The *ai* or *ai-kyōgen* is a minor character in a *nō* play, such as a local villager, who might provide the waki, and thus the audience, with a relatively colloquial, prose recapitulation of what the shite has already recounted in poetry. In some plays, especially those written in the late Muromachi period, comical characters appear *during* the acts as, for example, in *Ataka*. These characters are also called *ai*.

The chorus consists of six to ten members who sit motionless throughout the play on the right side of the stage and do not have a specific role in the play. Sometimes they chant the words of one or another of the characters, and at other times they describe the scene. The main *nō* stage is a square about nineteen by nineteen feet. During a performance, the actors usually enter and exit the stage along the bridgeway (*hashigakari*) to the left. *Nō* never uses painted scenery or backdrops. The setting is depicted only verbally, and many plays have no stage props at all. Others have only a symbolic prop used for the most significant element of a play's setting. When placed on the bare stage, this prop attracts the audience's attention and becomes the play's focal point. The characters sometimes hold swords, rosaries, or willow boughs that signify that the holder is crazed (as with the mother in *Sumida River*). All performers carry fans, which are sometimes used as substitutes for other props, such as a writing brush, a saké flask, or a knife.

Most actors wear masks, although the waki and waki-tsure, who always portray living male characters, never do. A performer without a mask must never show any facial expression or use makeup; he is expected to use his own face as if it were a mask. Except for some masks that are made for specific characters (such as the shite's mask in *Kagekiyo*), most masks represent generic types. For example, *waka-onna* masks, which show a young female face, are used for both the female saltmaker in *Pining Wind* (*Matsukaze*) and Lady Rokujō in *Shrine in the Fields*.

Demon masks, with their ferocious faces and large, protruding eyes, express fierce supernatural power, while masks of human characters (including ghosts), whose feelings and emotions are often the focus of a play, usually display a static and rather neutral expression instead of a specific emotion. These masks are paradoxically said to be both "nonexpressive" and "limitlessly expressive," since the expression appears to change according to the angle of a performer's face. The actor's unchanging "face" also encourages audience members to project onto his mask the emotional content that they detect from the chanting. Interestingly, the *nō* masks are slightly smaller than the human faces they cover, revealing the tip of the performer's lower jaw and thus disrupting the audience's full immersion in dramatic illusion.

Nō costumes are famous for their splendor and exquisite beauty. Most are made of stiff, heavy materials that are folded around the performer's body like

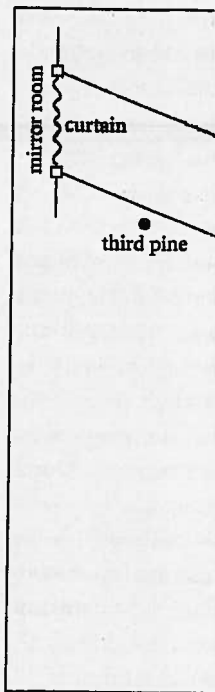


Diagram of a *nō* stage.

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Movements on the slow and highly stylized, lifting the right hand economy of movement can express joy, resolve. The fundamental basis (*kamae*) and a stylized actors of both sexes, and the performer's limbs in age, social status, and emphasis is placed on characterized as "the

Dance in *nō* is performed by the actor alone or the musician

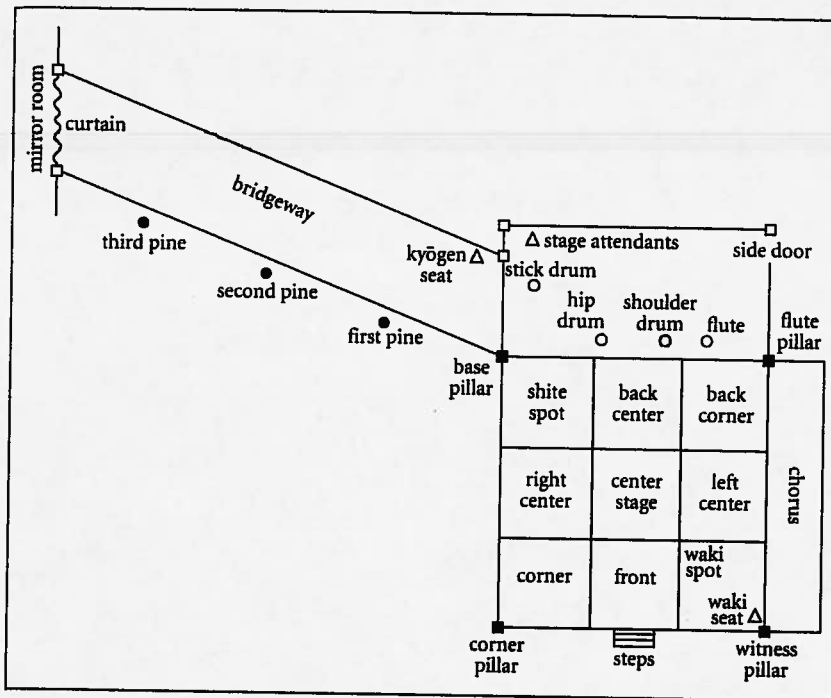


Diagram of a nō stage.

origami. A lighter kimono, made from a translucent fabric and with long, wide sleeves, is sometimes worn over these costumes. Thus, just as masks conceal the actor's facial individuality, so the costumes conceal his physical individuality. The beauty and expressiveness of his performance thus are not in the particular features of his own face and body but in the grace and expressiveness of his movements.

Movements on the nō stage are strictly choreographed and are generally very slow and highly stylized. Weeping, for example, is expressed merely by slowly lifting the right hand toward the eyes and then lowering it again. This strict economy of movement infuses each gesture with meaning. One step forward can express joy, resolution, or any other feeling that seems to fit the context. The fundamental basis for the dances and gestures of nō is the standing posture (*kamae*) and a stylized manner of walking called *hakobi*. Shite actors play characters of both sexes, with gender expressed by subtle variations of the angles of the performer's limbs and, above all, by the way he stands and walks. Differences in age, social status, and mental state are indicated similarly. Because so much emphasis is placed on a simple movement like walking, nō has often been characterized as "the art of walking."

Dance in nō is performed to musical accompaniment, by either the musicians alone or the musicians and chorus together. In many plays, dances set to

the chanting of the chorus appear in the *kuse* section and at the end of the play. The dance in the *kuse* section consists mostly of abstract movements. Because they do not have any fixed meanings, dances can be interpreted according to the general context or to that of the lines that accompany them, in much the same way that a single *nō* mask can project a broad range of emotions. By contrast, the dance at the end of the play usually includes many specifically representational movements that mimetically render the words of the text. Dances set to instrumental music generally are abstract as well and usually are similar in both movement and music. The same series of movements can appear in a rapid, exuberant "deity dance" (*kami-mai*), an elegant and gentle dance (*chū-no-mai*), or a tranquil and meditative dance (*jo-no-mai*), depending on the tempo and mood of otherwise very similar music. As with the masks, these dances, too, are generic. The same *chū-no-mai*, for example, is performed by a noble youth in *Atsumori* and by the female saltmaker in *Pining Wind*.

The chanting styles of *nō* are divided into speech (*kotoba*) and song (*fushi*), with the speech actually more intoned than spoken. Song can be further subdivided into "congruent song" (*hyōshi ai*), which is chanted in a steady rhythm, keeping precise time with the drums, and "noncongruent song" (*hyōshi awazu*), which incorporates prolonged grace notes into important phrases and is not chanted in measured time. There also are two modes of singing: a "dynamic mode" (*tsuyogin* or *gōgin*) and a "melodic mode" (*yowagin* or *wagin*). The dynamic mode is generally used for the roles of warriors and demons, and the melodic mode is reserved for female and elderly roles. In many plays, however, the same character may use both modes. For example, in *Kiyotsuna*, even though the shite chants mainly in the dynamic mode, he frequently switches to the melodic mode (in segments indicated, for example, as *ge-no-ei*, *kakeai*, *jō-no-ei*, or *uta*) in order to convey two different aspects of the same character: warrior and loving husband.

Except for the preceding modes, which were introduced only after the Tokugawa period, the distinctions in chanting styles, as well as the rhythmic patterns and the degree of regularity of the syllabic meter, are necessary for distinguishing subsections (*shōdan*) of plays. In the following translations, the names of subsections are indicated in parentheses preceding the text. Each subsection has its own pattern of musical structure and/or content, which remains consistent from play to play. For example, the subsection called the *nanori* is a self-introduction by a character and is chanted mostly in the speech style, while a *kuse* is a congruent song with narrative elements that starts in a lower register and then moves to a higher one.

Instrumental music accompanies the dances and some of the chanting, as well as the entrance and exit of the characters. The music is provided by one flute and three different types of drums, each played by a single musician. With this dominance of percussion instruments, the music of *nō* consists more of silence than of sound. In fact, silence (*ma* ["interval" or "gap"]) is traditionally

regarded as the principal element as well as the intermittent element that interrupts the flow of time in all the more noticeable.

Among the several ways widely used today is the "five" according to the type of spirit (*kami-nō*), in which a deity enters and celebrates the peaceful play" (*shura-nō*), in which the realm of constant battle known from his previous life. The third is for onists are mostly elegant female plant spirits. The "four" to as "miscellaneous plays" (of the other four categories, for the spirits of the dead with attachments. The fifth category plays" (*kiri-nō*), in which the

This categorization scheme that time until the present, a includes one play from each order, with a *kyōgen* play between in this full formal configuration New Year's Day.

Most *nō* plays contain Buddhist themes are the reunion of through the merciful intervention about the miraculous origins vengeful or unenlightened spirit mon in *mugen-nō* plays, in which at the end of the play. Because used as a means of attracting popular solicited donations. *Nō*'s close the structure and the content lishment of the *mugen-nō* for

Many *nō* plays draw on ancient *Tale of Genji*, or folk legends and classical texts were largely dissipated plays also reflect contemporary condition, playwrights often introduced. Indeed, the *mugen-nō* structure reinterpretations, as famous episodes the personal recollections of a

regarded as the principal element of *nō* music. The sounds of the instruments, as well as the intermittent cries of the drummers, are introduced in order to interrupt the flow of time in *nō* plays and to make the silence between sounds all the more noticeable.

Among the several ways in which *nō* plays are categorized, the one most widely used today is the "five categories," which generally are differentiated according to the type of *shite*. The first category is the "deity play" (*waki-nō* or *kami-nō*), in which a deity explains the origin of a shrine, or a related legend, and celebrates the peaceful reign of an emperor. The second is the "warrior play" (*shura-nō*), in which the ghost of a warrior, now tormented in the hellish realm of constant battle known as the *shura* realm, reenacts a battle scene from his previous life. The third is the "woman play" (*kazura-mono*), whose protagonists are mostly elegant female figures, including the ghosts of women or female plant spirits. The "fourth-category plays" (*yobanme-mono*), also referred to as "miscellaneous plays" (*zō mono*), include all plays that do not fit into any of the other four categories, including plays about mad people, living warriors, or the spirits of the dead who linger in this world because of their excessive attachments. The fifth category is "demon plays" (*oni-nō*), also called "ending plays" (*kiri-nō*), in which the protagonists usually are demons.

This categorization scheme originated in the late seventeenth century. From that time until the present, a formal program for a *nō*-play performance usually includes one play from each of the five categories, performed in the preceding order, with a *kyōgen* play between each *nō* play. Today, however, performances in this full formal configuration are staged only on special occasions, such as New Year's Day.

Most *nō* plays contain Buddhist or Shinto elements. Among the most popular themes are the reunion of a long-separated parent and child (or two lovers) through the merciful intervention of a bodhisattva or a Shinto deity, legends about the miraculous origins of temples and shrines, and the pacification of vengeful or unenlightened spirits (*chinkon*). This last theme is especially common in *mugen-nō* plays, in which the ghost typically attains religious salvation at the end of the play. Because it was popular among commoners, *nō* was often used as a means of attracting people to *kanjin*, events at which Buddhist monks solicited donations. *Nō*'s close association with *kanjin* may have affected both the structure and the contents of its early repertoire, including Zeami's establishment of the *mugen-nō* form.

Many *nō* plays draw on and allude to classical texts like *The Tales of Ise*, *The Tale of Genji*, or folk legends of such famous figures as Ono no Komachi. Since classical texts were largely disseminated through medieval commentaries, many plays also reflect contemporary interpretations of their source material. In addition, playwrights often introduced their own new twists to familiar narratives. Indeed, the *mugen-nō* structure gave playwrights the perfect format for such reinterpretations, as famous episodes could be subjectively reconstrued through the personal recollections of a ghost.

Nō plays are also interlarded with citations from famous poems and classic tales. *Atsumori*, for example, offers an analogy between its eponymous hero, who is a character from *The Tales of the Heike*, and the protagonist of *The Tale of Genji*; similarly, the crazed mother in *Sumida River* compares herself with the nobleman protagonist of *The Tales of Ise*. Such heavy dependence on classical allusions is especially noticeable in Zeami's and Zenchiku's plays and suggests an audience with a high level of literary erudition. In fact, the most popular literary activity at the time in high society—also practiced, to some extent, even among commoners—was the composition of linked verses (*renga*), which required the participants to allude constantly to a wide range of earlier literary works. It was in such a cultural milieu that nō developed.

The following plays are presented in chronological order, so as to give some sense of the historical development of the genre.

[All nō introductions by Akiko Takeuchi]

*Subsections
According to Styles*

Primary Speech Styles

<i>katari</i>	story narration
<i>yomimono</i>	recitation
<i>mondō</i>	question and answer
<i>nanori</i>	self-introduction
<i>tsuki-zerifu</i>	arrival speech

Noncongruent Song Styles

<i>ei</i>	chanted poem
<i>ge-no-ei</i>	waka recited in the lower register
<i>jō-no-ei</i>	waka recited in the upper register
<i>issei</i>	song in regular 7/5 meter mostly in the upper register, typically chanted right after the entrance of a character
<i>kakeai</i>	segment chanted alternately by two characters
<i>kudoki</i>	song sung mostly in the lower register, expressing lament or sorrow
<i>kuri</i>	short segment sung mostly in the high register, incorporating the highest pitch (also called <i>kuri</i>) and prolonged grace notes
<i>kudoki-guri</i>	<i>kuri</i> just before <i>kudoki</i>
<i>nanori-guri</i>	<i>kuri</i> that delivers a character's self-introduction
<i>sashi</i>	song that starts in the upper register, narrating a scene in a relatively plain rhythm and melody
<i>waka</i>	recitation of a waka just after a dance

uta
age-uta
sage-uta
dan-uta

chū-noriji

kiri

kuse

noriji

rongi

shidai

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Congruent Song Styles

<i>uta</i>	song in regular 7/5 meter
<i>age-uta</i>	song sung in the upper and middle registers
<i>sage-uta</i>	song sung in the middle and low registers
<i>dan-uta</i>	song starting in the fashion of <i>age-uta</i> but developing into a different pattern
<i>chū-noriji</i>	song sung in vigorous <i>chū-nori</i> rhythm, in which each syllable matches a half beat; typically used in the ending scene of a warrior play
<i>kiri</i>	simple song sung in the middle register with almost no grace notes, at the end of a play
<i>kuse</i>	song with narrative elements, which starts in the low register and then moves to a higher one
<i>noriji</i>	song sung in <i>ōnori</i> rhythm, characterized by an especially steady, rhythmical beat, with each syllable lasting a whole beat
<i>rongi</i>	segment chanted alternately by characters (or a character and a chorus)
<i>shidai</i>	short song in regular meter, starting in the upper register and ending in the lower one

Subsections that do not fit the preceding categories are listed as “unnamed.”

LADY AOI (AOI NO UE)

Anonymous, revised by Zeami

Lady Aoi is the oldest of the numerous *nō* plays that draw on *The Tale of Genji*. In the *nō* treatise *Conversations on Sarugaku (Sarugakudangi)*, Zeami recalls watching the play performed by Inuō (d. 1413), a senior *sarugaku* performer from Ōmi Province. The text included here is probably Zeami's revision of a play that was originally written for Inuō's troupe.⁷ Since the play still preserves what are regarded as basic characteristics of *nō* theater from Ōmi Province—such as a female demon as the protagonist and a struggle between a monk and a vengeful spirit—Zeami's contribution was probably rather minor and may have been largely limited to refinements in phrasing.

The play is based on a famous episode in *The Tale of Genji*, in the “Heartvine” (Aoi) chapter, in which the young Genji has an affair with Lady Rokujō, a widow of

7. Zeami lists the play's title in his treatise *Five Sounds (Go-on)*, but without mentioning its author. Because Zeami refers in this treatise to the author whenever he mentions a play that is not his own, the extant version of *Lady Aoi* is most likely his revision.

the late crown prince known for her sophistication and beauty. Before long, his visits to her become less frequent, and she feels deeply wounded, particularly since their relationship has come to be widely known. Nevertheless, on the day before the Kamo Festival, she decides to view the procession, hoping to secretly glimpse Genji. In order to conceal her identity, she appears in an inconspicuous carriage, which is roughly pushed to the back of the crowd by Aoi's drunken male attendants (who do in fact recognize Rokujō) to give their own mistress a front-row view. Genji passes Rokujō without noticing her half-wrecked carriage, instead acknowledging Lady Aoi, his principal wife, who is pregnant with his first child. Soon thereafter, Aoi is possessed by an evil spirit, which later kills her shortly after she has given birth to Genji's son. The evil spirit turns out to be the jealous and vengeful spirit of Lady Rokujō, which, without her conscious knowledge, had wandered from her body and attacked her rival.

Several tales contemporaneous with this play depict exorcisms of vengeful spirits in a surprisingly similar manner, suggesting that the play followed an existing pattern of exorcism tales and borrowed the names of characters from *Genji*. On the one hand, because the text of *Genji* was largely inaccessible to the general population, the play is written in such a way as to entertain even those who might not be familiar with the original. On the other hand, the text of the play repeatedly refers to a carriage and to the humiliation associated with it (without recounting the incident itself), which allows those familiar with the original *Genji* episode to appreciate these cryptic allusions to Lady Rokujō's carriage.

In early performances of the play, a carriage was used as a stage prop, with a weeping young lady-in-waiting clinging to its shaft. Later, both the carriage and the lady-in-waiting were omitted, giving rise to certain discrepancies between the text and the action on stage. For example, although Lady Rokujō appears alone on stage, the shaman refers to a weeping lady-in-waiting. Moreover, in the *mondō* section, the shaman sympathizes with Rokujō and joins her in tormenting Aoi. Originally, it was presumably the lady-in-waiting, not the shaman, who chanted this section and acted as Rokujō's accomplice. The reason for eliminating the lady-in-waiting and the carriage is not entirely clear, but it may have been to avoid the difficult task of getting both of them off the stage without disrupting the performance.

In the first act, the golden eyes indicate he mask of a woman with been transfigured into a kimono. This stage prop similarly folded cloth to: The following translation

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Stage attendant places kimono, which represents mask, wig, gold-patterned wide-sleeved robe, and lined hunting robe, and enter the stage. The white spot.

COURTIER: (*nanori*) I demon that has possessed intransigent. His Lord to perform secret and tried everything but shaman, who is known. She will ascertain by dead person. I shall a

Teruhi faces the kosode for calling forth an evil

8. In *The Tale of Genji*, Su

In the first act, the performer who plays Lady Rokujō wears a *deigan* mask, whose golden eyes indicate her repressed jealousy. In the second act, he wears a *hannya*, a mask of a woman with two horns and a wide mouth, signifying that her spirit has now been transfigured into a demon. On stage, Aoi herself is represented only by a folded kimono. This stage prop is said to have inspired William Butler Yeats, who used a similarly folded cloth to symbolize the well in his *nō*-inspired play *At the Hawk's Well*. The following translation is based on the current text of the Kanze school.

Characters in Order of Appearance

TERUHI, a shaman (<i>ko-omote</i> mask)	<i>tsure</i>
A COURTIER in the service of Emperor Suzaku	<i>waki-tsure</i>
VENGEFUL SPIRIT OF LADY ROKUJŌ in the form of a noblewoman (<i>deigan</i> mask)	<i>mae-shite</i>
A MESSENGER of the minister of the left	<i>ai</i>
THE HOLY MAN of Yokawa	<i>waki</i>
LADY ROKUJŌ as an evil spirit (<i>hannya</i> mask)	<i>nochi-shite</i>

Place: Mansion of the minister of the left in the capital

Act 1

Stage attendant places toward the front of the stage an embroidered kosode kimono, which represents Lady Aoi on her sickbed. Teruhi, wearing a ko-omote mask, wig, gold-patterned underkimono, brocade outer kimono, and white wide-sleeved robe, and the Courtier, wearing a cavity cap, heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe, and white wide divided skirt, appear, cross the bridgeway, and enter the stage. Teruhi sits at the waki spot, and the Courtier stands at the shite spot.

COURTIER: (*nanori*) I am a courtier in the service of Emperor Suzaku.⁸ The demon that has possessed Lady Aoi, daughter of the minister of the left, is intransigent. His Lordship has invited the most revered and eminent priests to perform secret and solemn rites of exorcism as well as cures. They have tried everything but to no avail. I have been ordered to call in Teruhi, a shaman, who is known far and wide for her skill in birch-bow divination. She will ascertain by the bow whether the evil spirit is that of a living or a dead person. I shall ask her.

Teruhi faces the kosode kimono and, to azusa music, chants an incantation for calling forth an evil spirit.

8. In *The Tale of Genji*, Suzaku is Genji's elder brother.

TERUHI:

(unnamed) May Heaven be cleansed,
 May Earth be cleansed,
 May all be cleansed within and without,
 The Six Roots, may they all be cleansed.⁹
 (jō-no-ei) Swiftly, on a dapple gray horse,
 Comes a haunting spirit
 Tugging at the reins.

To issei entrance music, the spirit of Lady Rokujō, wearing a mask with gold-painted eyes, long wig, serpent-scale-patterned underkimono, embroidered outer kimono in the koshimaki style, and brocade outer kimono in the tsubori style, appears, advances along the bridgeway, and stops by the first pine.

ROKUJŌ:

(issei) Riding the Three Vehicles of the Law
 Others may escape the Burning House.¹⁰
 Mine is but a cart
 In ruins like Yūgao's house;¹¹
 I know not how to flee my passions.¹²
 (Enters the stage and stands in the shite spot.)
 (shidai) Like an ox-drawn cart, this weary world,
 Like an ox-drawn cart, this weary world
 Rolls endlessly on the wheels of retribution.
 (sashi) Like the wheels of a cart forever turning
 Are birth and death for all living things;
 Through the Six Worlds¹³ and the Four Births¹⁴

9. The six organs of perception are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

10. A reference to a famous parable in the Lotus Sutra: a fire once broke out in the home of a wealthy man. His children, absorbed in their play, did not understand the danger and would not listen when he warned them to get out of the house. He then told them that waiting for them outside the gate were a cart drawn by sheep, another drawn by deer, and a third drawn by oxen. Beguiled by this trick, the children rushed out of the burning house. This parable allegorizes Buddha's various "expedient" doctrines for saving mankind.

11. Genji's affections had earlier shifted to Yūgao (Evening Faces), whom Rokujō's wandering spirit had killed, before carrying out a similar attack on Aoi. Yūgao was staying in a shabby house, with yūgao flowers clinging to the eaves, in a squalid alley.

12. Jijū Chūnagon, *Shirakawadono shichityakushu*, no. 688: "I know not how to escape my lovelorn thoughts. It is like a broken-down cart, this sad heart of mine!"

13. The six worlds (or realms)—those of heavenly creatures, human beings, fighting demons, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings—through which a soul, unless enlightened, must transmigrate eternally according to the merits or demerits of its deeds done in successive lives.

14. Viviparous birth (for example, humans), oviparous birth (for example, birds), birth from moisture (for example, worms, mosquitoes), and apparitional birth—that is, sudden birth—by

You must journey;
 Strive as you will, I
 What folly to be bl
 To the frailty of thi
 Like the banana sta
 Like a bubble on t
 Yesterday's flowers
 How sad my fate!
 Upon my sorrow o
 Now, drawn by the
 The ghost has com
 To find a moment
 (sage-uta) Ah, how
 I should shun the c
 As on that festive d
 (age-uta) Though a
 Though all night lo
 I, a phantom form,
 Hence, by the bircl
 I shall stand to tell
 I shall stand to tell
 (unnamed) From w
 From where does t

TERUHI:

(ge-no-ei) Though I

ROKUJŌ:

As I have no form,

TERUHI:

(unnamed) How str
 Though I know not
 Riding in a decrepi
 And one who seem
 Clutching the shaft
 And weeping, bathe

spontaneous generation, without
 for all sentient beings.

15. An allusion to a passage i
 regard sentient beings? Like . . .
 [frail] core of a plantain tree . . .

16. An echo from Bo Juyi's

17. Refers to the day of the

You must journey;
 Strive as you will, there is no escape.
 What folly to be blind
 To the frailty of this life,
 Like the banana stalk without a core,
 Like a bubble on the water!¹⁵
 Yesterday's flowers are today but a dream.¹⁶
 How sad my fate!
 Upon my sorrow others heap their spite.
 Now, drawn by the birch bow's sound,
 The ghost has come
 To find a moment of respite.
 (*sage-uta*) Ah, how shameful that even now
 I should shun the eyes of others
 As on that festive day.¹⁷
 (*age-uta*) Though all night long I gaze upon the moon,
 Though all night long I gaze upon the moon,
 I, a phantom form, remain unseen by it.
 Hence, by the birch bow's upper end,
 I shall stand to tell of my sorrow,
 I shall stand to tell of my sorrow. (*As if listening, steps forward.*)
 (*unnamed*) From where does the sound of the birch bow come,
 From where does the sound of the birch bow come?

TERUHI:

(*ge-no-ei*) Though by the mansion gate I stand,

ROKUJŌ:

As I have no form, people pass me by. (*Steps back and weeps.*)

TERUHI:

(*unnamed*) How strange! I see a gentle-born lady,
 Though I know not who she is,
 Riding in a decrepit cart,
 And one who seems a waiting-maid,
 Clutching the shaft of the ox-less cart
 And weeping, bathed in tears.

spontaneous generation, without any apparent cause. These are the ancient Indian classifications for all sentient beings.

15. An allusion to a passage in the Vimalakirti Sutra (J. Yuima-kyō): "How should a bodhisattva regard sentient beings? Like . . . a cloud in the sky, like a bubble on the water . . . ; like the [frail] core of a plantain tree . . . —thus does a bodhisattva regard sentient beings."

16. An echo from Bo Juyi's line: "The glory of yesterday declines today."

17. Refers to the day of the incident involving Rokujō's cart.

Oh! pitiful sight! (*Speaks to the Courtier.*)
 (*mondō*) Is this the evil spirit?

COURTIER: Now I can guess who it is. Tell me your name.
 (*Not seeing Rokujō's spirit, turns to Teruhi.*)

ROKUJŌ:

(*kudoki-guri*) In this world
 Where all passes like lightning,
 There should be none for me to hate
 Nor any fate for me to mourn;
 Why did I leave the way of truth? (*Speaks to Teruhi.*)
 (*kudoki*) Attracted by the birch bow's sound,
 Here I now appear. Do you still not know me?
 I am the spirit of Lady Rokujō.
 In days of old when I moved in society,
 On spring mornings I was invited
 To the flower feasts at the palace,
 And on autumn nights
 I viewed the moon in the royal garden.
 Happily thus I spent my days
 Among bright hues and scents.
 Fallen in life, today I am no more
 Than a morning glory that withers with the rising of the sun.¹⁸
 My heart knows no respite from pain;
 Bitter thoughts grow like fern shoots
 Bursting forth in the field.
 I have appeared here to take my revenge.

CHORUS:

(*sage-uta*) Do you not know that in this life
 Charity is not for others?
 (*age-uta*) Be harsh to another,
 Be harsh to another,
 And it will recoil upon you.¹⁹
 Why do you cry?
 (*Rokujō gets up and, gazing at the kosode kimono and stooping down,*
weeps. She stares at it again.)
 My curse is everlasting,
 My curse is everlasting.

18. Kii, *Horikawa hyakushū*, no. 767: "I must get up at dawn to see the morning glory in flower, whose beauty will be gone before the sun begins to shine."

19. Refers to a poem by Owari, *Shinkokinshū*, Love 5, no. 1401: "Remembering my harshness to others, I will not grieve my lot; this is a retribution that has come while I am still alive."

ROKUJŌ:
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TERUHI:
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ROKUJŌ:
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 (*Walks*)
 So sayi
 (*Return*)

TERUHI:
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 So sayi
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ROKUJŌ:
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 For past

TERUHI:
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ROKUJŌ:
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TERUHI:
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ROKUJŌ:
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CHORUS:
 (*dan-uta*)
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20. This refers to
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 former husband's h
 21. From a verse
 fire; before the fire

ROKUJŌ:

(*mondō*) Oh, how I hate you!
I will punish you.

TERUHI:

What shame!
For Lady Rokujō, gentle born,
To seek revenge²⁰
And act as one lowborn:
Are you not ashamed?
Stop and say no more.

ROKUJŌ:

Say what you will, I must strike her now.
(*Walks to the kosode and defiantly strikes it with the fan.*)
So saying, I walk toward the bedside of Lady Aoi and strike her.
(*Returns to her seat.*)

TERUHI:

Now that things have come to such a pass,
There is nothing more to do.
So saying, I walk toward Lady Aoi's feet
And torment her.

ROKUJŌ:

Present vengeance is the retribution
For past wrongs you did to me.

TERUHI:

The flame of consuming anger

ROKUJŌ:

Scorches only my own self.²¹

TERUHI:

Do you not feel the fury of my anger?

ROKUJŌ:

You shall feel the fullness of its fury. (*Fixes her gaze on the kosode.*)

CHORUS:

(*dan-uta*) This loathsome heart!
This loathsome heart!
My unfathomable hatred
Causes Lady Aoi to wail in bitter agony.

20. This refers to "beating the new wife," a Muromachi-period custom in which, when a man remarried, his divorced wife or her relatives would vent their anger by forcing their way into her former husband's home and beating his new wife.

21. From a verse in the *Dai-Shōgon-ron*: "Man's self is like dried-up wood, his anger a flaming fire; before the fire destroys another, it first consumes its own self."

But as long as she lives in this world,
Her bond with the Shining Genji will never end—
The Shining Genji, more beautiful than a firefly
That flits across the marshland.

ROKUJŌ:

I shall be to him

CHORUS:

A stranger, as I was once,
And I shall pass away
Like a dewdrop on a mugwort leaf.
When I think of this,
How bitter I feel!
Our love is already an old tale,
Never to be revived even in a dream.
Yet all the while my longing grows
Until I am ashamed to see my love-torn self.
Standing by her pillow,
I shall place Lady Aoi
In my wrecked cart
(*Rokujō pulls the outer kimono over her and,
stooping, withdraws to the stage-attendant position.*)
And secretly carry her off,
And secretly carry her off.

Act 2

A Messenger of the minister of the left, wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe, and trailing divided skirt, is seated at the kyōgen seat.

COURTIER: (*mondō*) Is anyone here?

MESSANGER: I am at your service. (*Comes forward in front of the Courtier.*)

COURTIER: Lady Aoi, who is possessed by an evil spirit, is grievously ill. Go! Fetch the holy man of Yokawa.

MESSANGER (*returns to the shite spot*): (*unnamed*) I understood that Lady Aoi, though possessed by an evil spirit, was very much better. Now I am told that she is more ill than ever. Therefore I am ordered to go to Yokawa and bring the holy man back with me. I must make haste. (*Goes to the first pine and, turning toward the curtain, calls out.*) I have arrived. If you please, I wish to be announced.

The Holy Man, wearing a small round cap, brocade stole, heavy silk kimono, wide-sleeved robe, and wide white divided skirt and carrying a short sword and a rosary of diamond-shaped beads, appears and advances along the bridgeway, stopping at the third pine.

HOLY MAN:
(*mondō*)
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Who is it

MESSANGER:
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HOLY MAN: (C
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MESSANGER:
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COURTIER: I a

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COURTIER: Pr

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HOLY MAN:
(*unnamed*)
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In which, i

22. The nine categories (sight, hearing, smell, subconscious mind, and

23. The ten "vehicles" to nirvana.

24. Yoga, a Sanskrit word and thus with ultimate

25. The Three Mystical Hand Gestures, the mystic hand gestures and mentally visualize

26. The Nara-period

HOLY MAN:

(*mondō*) Before the window of the Nine Ideations,²²
 On the seat of the Ten Vehicles²³
 I am filled with the waters of *yoga*,²⁴
 Reflecting the Moon of Truth in the Three Mysteries.²⁵
 Who is it that seeks admission?

MESSENGER: I am a messenger from the minister. Lady Aoi, who is possessed by an evil spirit, is grievously ill, and I am commanded to ask you to come at once and perform an exorcism.

HOLY MAN: Of late I have been engaged in performing special rites and cannot leave, but since it is a request from the minister, I will go immediately. You may return at once.

MESSENGER: I will lead the way.

I have returned, my lord, accompanied by the holy man.

The Holy Man enters the stage and stands in the shite spot, where the Courtier turns to him.

COURTIER: I am much obliged to you for coming.

HOLY MAN: I received your message. Where is the lady who is ill?

COURTIER: She is there in the gallery. (*Turns to the kosode.*)

HOLY MAN: I shall perform the exorcism at once.

COURTIER: Pray do so.

To notto music, the Holy Man moves in front of the musicians, tucks up his sleeves, and advances toward the kosode.

HOLY MAN:

(*unnamed*) He now performs the healing rites,
 Wearing his cloak of hemp,
 In which, in the footsteps of En-no-Gyōja,²⁶

22. The nine categories of consciousness in Buddhist psychology: the five sense perceptions (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), the conscious mind, the two different aspects of the subconscious mind, and the undefiled consciousness.

23. The ten "vehicles" of spiritual disciplines that, according to Buddhist doctrine, carry one to nirvana.

24. *Yoga*, a Sanskrit word meaning "union," refers to perfect union of oneself with the Buddha, and thus with ultimate truth, attained by properly regulating one's mind and body.

25. The Three Mysteries are body, speech, and mind. To attain the state of *yoga*, one forms the mystic hand gestures known as *mudras* (yogas of the body), recites *mantras* (yogas of speech), and mentally visualizes the Buddha (the *yoga* of mind).

26. The Nara-period originator of mountain asceticism (*shugendō*).

He scaled the peaks²⁷
 Symbolic of the sacred spheres
 Of Taizō and Kongō,²⁸
 Brushing away the dew that sparkles like the Seven Jewels,²⁹
 And with a robe of meek endurance³⁰
 To shield him from defilements,
 Fingering his reddish wooden beads,
 And rubbing them together, he intones a prayer: *Namaku, samanda,*
basarada.

The spirit of Lady Rokujō, having exchanged the golden-painted-eyes mask for a hannya mask and covered her head with her brocade outer kimono, stands behind the Holy Man with a hammer-shaped staff in her hand and fixes her gaze on him.

(Quasi dance: inori)

The Holy Man turns toward Rokujō and tries to vanquish her by his incantation, but she wraps her brocade outer kimono around her waist and takes a defiant attitude. Then she kneels, supporting herself with her hammer-shaped staff.

ROKUJŌ:

(*kakeai*) Return at once, good monk, return at once.
 Otherwise you will be burdened with regret.

HOLY MAN:

However evil the evil spirit,
 The mystic power of a holy man will never fail.
 With these words I once again finger my sacred rosary.

CHORUS:

(*chū-noriji*) Gōzanze Myōō, Wisdom Kings of the East,

ROKUJŌ:

Gundari-yasha Myōō of the South,

27. Referring to a range of mountains called Ōmine, extending more than thirty miles in Yamato and Kii Provinces. It contains several high peaks above five thousand feet, and the head temple of mountain asceticism is located there. Those who have undergone mortification and asceticism in these mountains and have been initiated into the mysteries of the sect are regarded as master ascetics, and their prayers and invocations are said to possess superhuman powers. The holy man in the present play is such an accomplished master.

28. Taizō-kai (Womb World, All-Embracing Realm) is a view of the sentient world, including all states of existence, from buddhas to devils, as embraced in the infinite love of the Great Sun Buddha (Mahavairocana), of whom all sentient beings are manifestations. The pictorial representation of this view is one of the most important mandala of Esoteric Buddhism. The other is the Kongō-kai (Diamond World), representing the powers and works of the Great Sun Buddha's supreme wisdom, which is likened to a diamond, since it is immutable and can destroy the attachments of mortals.

29. The Buddhist paradise is said to be adorned with seven jewels (treasures).

30. Endurance of all insults and injuries from others. The Lotus Sutra says, "The garment of the Buddha is the spirit of meekness and forbearance."



In act 2, the princess wears the hannya mask, from the illustrations by Tawaraya Sōtatsu.

CHORUS:

Daiitoku

ROKUJŌ:

Kongō-yō

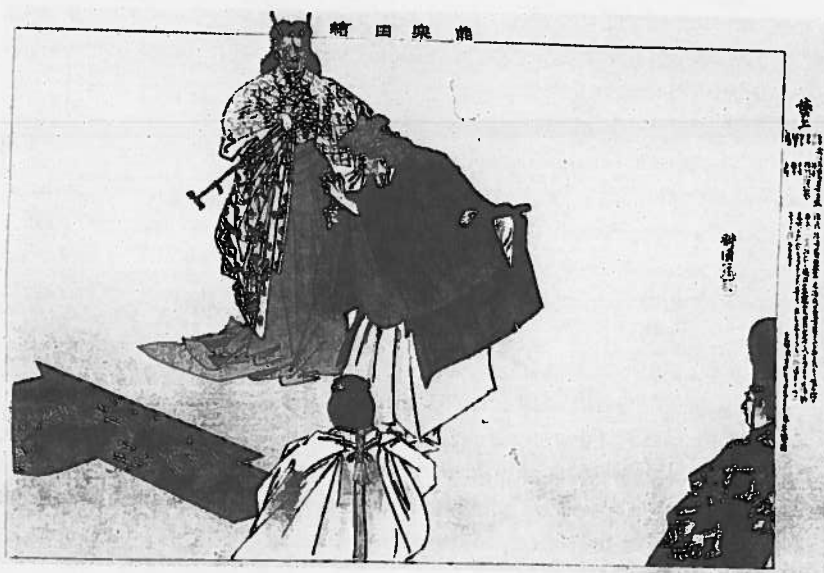
CHORUS:

Of the N

ROKUJŌ:

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31. Myōō (*vidyā*) assume features of the eight directions: the one in the east, has four arms, and is the god of covetousness, and the one in the west, has six arms, and is the god of anger; the one in the north, has eight arms, and is the god of desire; the one in the south, has four arms, and is the god of attachment. Myōō (Acalanathā), reality a form that I assume. His right hand holds a sword, and his left hand holds a mace. He stands on a rock.



In act 2, the prayers of the Holy Man of Yokawa prevent Lady Rokujō's spirit, wearing a *hamya* mask, from harming Aoi (represented by a folded kimono). (From *Meiji-Period Nō Illustrations* by Tsukioka Kōgyo, in the Hōsei University Kōzan Bunko Collection)

CHORUS:

Daiitoku Myōō of the West,

ROKUJŌ:

Kongō-yasha Myōō

CHORUS:

Of the North,

ROKUJŌ:

The most Wise Fudō Myōō of the Center—³¹

31. Myōō (*vidyaraja* [wisdom kings]) are manifestations of the Great Sun Buddha. They assume features of terrible anger in order to quell the rebellious spirits of men and demons. The five mentioned here are especially venerated in Esoteric Buddhism. Gōzanze (Trailokya) Myōō sits in the east, has three faces and eight arms expressing great anger, and destroys the three vices of covetousness, anger, and folly. Gūndari-yasha (Kundali-yaksa) Myōō sits in the south, has one face and eight arms, and destroys all angry spirits and devils. Daiitoku (Yamantaka) Myōō sits in the west; has six faces, six arms, and six feet; rides a great white ox; and carries various weapons in his hands to destroy all poisonous serpents and evil dragons. Kongō-yasha (Vajra-yaksa) Myōō sits in the north, enveloped in flames, has three faces and six arms, carries various weapons in his hands, and destroys all fierce *yaksa* (demons). Finally, the Great Holy One—that is, Fudō Myōō (Acalanatha, the Immovable One)—sits in the center, expressing great anger; he is in reality a form that Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana Tathagata) takes in order to conquer all evil spirits. His right hand clasps a sword, which symbolizes the infinite wisdom of the Great Sun Buddha, and his left hand holds a lasso, which symbolizes the Buddha's supreme compassion. He stands on a rock, amid flames.

CHORUS:

*Namaku samanda basarada senda makaroshana sowatayauntara
takamman!*³²

Whoever hears my teaching
Shall gain profound wisdom;
Whoever knows my mind
Shall gain the purity of buddhahood.³³

Rokujō, subdued, drops her staff and covers her ears.

ROKUJŌ:

(unnamed) How fearful is the chanting of the sutra!
My end at last has come.
Never again will this evil spirit come.

CHORUS:

(kiri) Hearing the voice of incantation,
Hearing the voice of incantation,
The demon's heart grows gentle. (*Rokujō rises, as if rid of her curse.*)
Forbearance and mercy incarnate,
The Bodhisattva comes to meet her.
She enters nirvana,
Released from the cycle of death and rebirth—Buddha be praised!
Released from the cycle of death and rebirth—Buddha be praised!

Rokujō goes to the shite spot, joins her hands in prayer, and stamps twice.

[Adapted from a translation by Gakujutsu shinkōkai]

STUPA KOMACHI (SOTOBA KOMACHI)

Attributed to Kan'ami and revised by Zeami

The image of Ono no Komachi as a flawlessly beautiful poet has prevailed for more than a thousand years. The *Kana Preface to the Kokinshū* (ca. 905) praises her as a successor to Sotoori-hime, a legendary princess of peerless beauty who was re-

32. A romanized transcription of a *dharani*, a passage of Sanskrit that, in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist sutras, is left untranslated because it would lose the mystical power of its sounds. This *dharani* is a formula for subduing evil spirits and is used in exorcism by a devotee of Fudō Myōō. A very rough translation might read: "Homage to all indestructible ones. Wrathful destroyer of evil, may you crush the evil demons within our hearts!"

33. The latter half of Fudō Myōō's vow, which was often cited by mountain ascetics in their prayers.

garded as the source of the life. From those arose that late describing her the medieval pieces of other pieces sh of a coldhearted shape in the le Komachi is said condition that the legend goes fulfillment of his c Subsequently *Decline of Tama* as the definitive most likely by a old beggar, who, how she once be youth and family story originated i *matsukuri* contril old beggar.

These legends and the tale of S between two trav *tsukuri*, in the pla also borrows or p clothes and miser latter part of the p (Lesser Captain), visits to her, as if t

The play was Since the original certain, except for that the original v *Tamatsushima*—a

Such ambiguity of which remained revising others' pla playwrights, includ time as it is now, a