FEMININE MADNESS IN THE JAPANESE NOH THEATRE

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamic nature of Japanese cultural traditions by tracing the development of the performance of *onna monogurui* or the ‘mad female character’ in Noh, a traditional theatre art of Japan. Throughout the centuries, medieval Noh librettos on the theme of madness have been interpreted and reinterpreted and plays on this motif have enjoyed long-standing popularity. Interpreting the traditions of medieval Noh librettos requires not only an understanding of the original Noh texts’ relationship to the socio-cultural contexts in which plays were composed, but also of its theatrical development in which various art forms such as music, chorus, dance, and poetry have come to constitute the total theatre experience of Noh. An interdisciplinary probe of the phenomenon of feminine madness in Noh is effective in unraveling such a complex series of relationships that characterizes the traditional theatre of Japan.

The term for madness as a motif in Noh is *monogurui*, which refers to an altered state of consciousness in which a person forgets himself or herself because of some kind of traumatic event that induces mental disequilibrium. *Monogurui* created a liminal moment in which the unpredicted might emerge and the unspeakable be spoken, often in reference to injustices that a woman would never address publicly if it were not for her state of *monogurui*. The continuing draw of *monogurui* style plays may well have to do
with this power that is conferred upon characters who would otherwise be punished if they were ‘in their right minds’.

Chapter 1 introduces an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the madwoman motif in Noh drama. In this chapter I address key issues in representations of madness and gender in Noh drama. Chapter 2 provides the historical background of Noh plays to enhance understanding of plays featuring monogurui. Chapter 3 explores an innovative use of the monogurui motif in the Noh play Sakuragawa (The Cherry-Blossom River), a classic exemplar of the onna monogurui grouping. In Chapter 4 my focus shifts to resistance expressed in the form of feminine sexuality, obsession, and suffering. I take a close look at the case of an unfulfilled spirit in the Noh play Kinuta (The Fulling Block). Chapter 5 investigates a different type of monogurui play on the possession motif titled Fujidaiko (The Fuji Drum).

My study of selected Noh plays on the theme of onna monogurui explores the workings of the relationships between gender politics and tactics for self-expression among subjugated populations in the hierarchical society of medieval Japan. In this study, I thus make the case that monogurui, on the one hand, provides openings for expression of what would otherwise remain repressed due to social constraints governing the expression of desire and overt social criticism. On the other hand, it functions as the catharsis for all involved in the production of the total theatre of Noh. The dynamic process of continuing performance and interpretation of the medieval monogurui Noh librettos suggests that these plays have something to say to audiences then and now.
Dedicated to the memory of my mother
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:
THE MADWOMAN MOTIF IN NOH DRAMA: METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND

This study explores the dynamic nature of Japanese cultural traditions by tracing the development of the performance of onna monogurui or the ‘mad female character’ in Noh, a traditional theatre art of Japan. The Noh (formerly called sarugaku) has a continuous performance tradition spanning 600 years. Throughout the centuries, medieval Noh librettos on the theme of madness have been interpreted and reinterpreted, and plays on this motif have enjoyed popularity. Interpreting the traditions of medieval Noh librettos requires not only an understanding of the original Noh texts’ relationship to the socio-cultural and political contexts in which plays were composed, but also its theatrical development in which various art forms such as music, chorus, dance, mimesis, and poetry have come to constitute the total theatre experience of Noh. An interdisciplinary probe of the phenomenon of feminine madness in Noh is effective in unraveling such a complex series of relationships that characterizes the traditional theatre of Japan.

The term for madness as a motif in Noh is monogurui, which refers to an altered state of consciousness in which a person forgets himself or herself because of some
traumatic event that induces mental disequilibrium. Such a display of madness when viewed as performance is referred to as *monogurui*. *Monogurui* also refers to a person in such a condition. My analysis of representations of madwomen in Noh problematizes the concept of madness and its strong associations with the feminine. Hysteria was originally, and still is, often conceived as a female characteristic. My study, however, suggests that the association of madness and women in Noh pertains more to a complex series of relationships among cultural, social, religious, and theatrical elements than to such monolithically conceived gender-based characteristics of women. Against such a historical and cultural backdrop, I elucidate different layers of *monogurui* reflected in the varying representations of feminine madness in Noh.

Interpreting the traditions of medieval Noh librettos requires not only an understanding of the original Noh texts’ relationship to the socio-cultural as well as political contexts in which plays were composed, but also of its theatrical development in which various art forms such as music, chorus, dance, mimesis, and poetry have come to constitute the total theatre experience of Noh. An interdisciplinary probe of the phenomenon of feminine madness in Noh is effective in unraveling such a complex series of relationships that characterizes the traditional theatre of Japan.

**Culture and Performance**

The dynamic nature of Noh performance and literary traditions of Noh is a reminder that theatrical performances are expressive of the culture that nurtured them. As Marvin Carlson points out, the relationship between culture and performance has
become a matter of inquiry in both folklore studies and general anthropology. For example, Milton Singer’s “cultural performance” approach has contributed to the convergence of anthropological and theatrical theory in the area of performance from the early 1970s onward. For Singer, cultural performances such as traditional theatre and dance, concerts, recitations, religious festivals, and weddings share distinctive features: “a definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance.” These features of cultural performances could easily apply to the traditional concept of drama. Carlson further argues that Singer’s view of performance as “a discrete concretization of cultural assumptions” might be regarded as “the conservative interpretation of performance’s role in culture.”

Carlson’s review of Singer’s theory of cultural performance gives an insight into the relationship between culture and performance. While Singer and others generally view performance as an activity somehow “set apart” from everyday life, Carlson stresses that Victor Turner “...emphasizes not so much the ‘set-apartness’ of performance but its ‘in-betweenness,’ its function as transition between two states of more settled or more conventional cultural activity.” Turner’s view of “in-betweenness” suggests the intimate relationship between culture and performance.

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2 Carlson, 2004, 16.
Culture, to quote Turner, “affects such aspects as the style and tempo of the social drama.”

Building on the work of Arnold van Gennep, Turner defines social drama as having four phases of public action: breach, crisis, redressive action, and re-integration or recognition of schism:

(1) Breach of regular norm-governed social relations occurs between persons or groups within the same system of social relations…
(2) Following breach of regular social relations, a phase of mounting crisis supervenes …unless the conflict can be sealed off quickly…
(3) In order to limit the spread of breach certain adjutivse and redressive mechanisms … are speedily brought into operation by leading members of the social group…
(4) The final phase I have distinguished consists either in the reintegration of the disturbed social group or social recognition of an irreparable breach between the consisting parties.

Richard Schechner contends that Turner’s four-phase plan is universally found in human social organization as well as in all theatre; it helps us understand the dramatic effect of the performance of feminine madness in the Japanese Noh theatre. In Noh plays featuring a madwoman, breach of social norms is permissible in the condition of _monogurui_. Breach of regular social relations is followed by emotional crisis, which is often expressed in a form of dance through changes in tempo, which I discuss further in the following chapter. In the climax of her _monogurui_, the madwoman reveals her distress and resentment, which have driven her into _monogurui_. In the case of a Noh drama on the _monogurui_ motif, there is no mediator. However, the awareness of her own

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monogurui helps the madwoman allay her resentment, which may lead her into the path of salvation.

Monogurui in Noh is thus quite different from clinically diagnosed insanity. It is more appropriate to call it a liminal state triggered by some kind of trauma. Turner’s idea of liminality clarifies how performing arts serve as a means of enacting social critique. As Turner defines it, liminality is where fixed conditions are open to flux and change, and where art and ritual are generated.6 Being detached from mundane life, out of this phase emerges something unpredicted.7 Staging monogurui creates a drama within a drama, which corresponds in Turner’s model to the transitional phases between the first and the second phases. Breach of social norms gives rise to a phase of mounting crisis. This liminal moment causes tension. Its effect is inherently dramatic and allows self-expression. Monogurui created such a liminal moment in which the unpredicted might emerge and the unspeakable be spoken, often in reference to social injustices that a woman would never address publicly if it were not for her state of monogurui. Therefore, it offered a context for the feelings of female characters to be represented without incurring social censure. A madwoman’s complaints, for example, reveal her discontent over the unfair treatment she is receiving and also convey a tacit criticism of the social institutions that dictate her fate. Within the framework of the monogurui-style play, the inner landscapes of ‘mad women’ become the dramatic focus and are expressed as language. The power of monogurui language reveals the reality of a person's inner life

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7 Turner, 1990, 11.
and thoughts by virtue of its irrealis framing—that is, because the speaker is ostensibly 'crazy', the words have the power of truth.

*Monogurui* came to be more associated with the feminine gender in Noh, as such a liminal state offered the traumatized woman or female character a context in which to demonstrate her feelings without incurring social censure. The following section provides the development of Noh dramas on the *onna monogurui* motif to enhance understanding of the perception of madness in the contexts of medieval Japan.

**Overview of The Development of the Madwoman Motif**

The perception of madness was affected by culture and religion in medieval Japan. The continuing draw of *monogurui* style plays may well have to do with this power that is conferred upon characters who would otherwise be punished if they were ‘in their right minds’. Such a theatrical effect of *monogurui* arose under the circumstances in which social realities such as political, religious, and economic stratification had an impact on Noh playwrights, who were on the lowest rung of the social ladder in the hierarchical society of medieval Japan. These social forces must have fostered a certain artistic tension for playwrights, who had to strike a balance between own artistic convictions and the necessity to cater to the tastes of their warrior patrons.

A Noh playwright and performer, Zeami Motokiyo (1363?-1443?) composed or revised a number of Noh plays on the *monogurui* motif. Two of the three plays treated in this study are attributed to him. He is the first medieval Noh playwright of his generation to leave a written record of his critical thinking on his art, and the first in the tradition to do so. This reflects a literary turn in the *sarugaku* tradition—a critical reflexivity about
the art. A study of Zeami’s critical writings is therefore crucial in analyzing Noh dramas on the onna monogurui motif. One of his critical writings on the subject, for example, states that onna monogurui was one of the most challenging and interesting role types for performers and playwrights. This is a reason for singling him out for attention in this study. I thus explore how Zeami interpreted and expressed the feminine, particularly through a woman revealing her altered state of consciousness on stage. What factors influenced his ideas on the feminine, and how did his thinking on this subject evolve as his artistic insights developed and his political environment changed? Comparing plays written on the monogurui motif before and after Zeami’s time, I will reconstruct how representation of monogurui in Noh evolved in chūsei or the medieval period, roughly from the late twelfth to the late sixteenth centuries.

Japanese of medieval times are designated as “creators of Japanese culture,” as Barbara Ruch notes in her essay entitled “The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan.”

The Muromachi period (1336-1573) is especially notable as an epoch for Japanese culture during which all kinds of arts and entertainment flourished. The Muromachi years were particularly a seminal time for the development of Noh as this art enjoyed the patronage of the Ashikaga shoguns. Medieval performing arts and entertainment drew people from all walks of life, providing them with occasions for social gatherings. As Nishino Haruo notes, this period is characterized as yorai no jidai or a period in which

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people gather and enjoy arts/entertainment.9 Yorii in spirit gave rise to the ‘esprit de corps’ of the Muromachi period. The cultural landscape of the Muromachi period embraced varied demographics, not just elite classes, but also members of humbler callings such as reed cutters, fortune tellers, religious practitioners, courtesans, musicians, servants, or fisher girls.10

The popular theatre of sarugaku (lit., “monkey musical entertainment,” or sarugaku nō, later shortened to nō or Noh), featuring comical skits or mimetic scenes, began to appear during the Heian Period (794-1185)11 and flourished in the Muromachi period. The art reflected its audiences, who belonged to a range of economic and social classes and age groups. Many of the Noh plays written and revised in the medieval period are performed to this day, often while going through changes reflective of shifts in patronage, audiences, and social climate. The study of Noh theatre thus not only gives us an insight into the culture of medieval Japan, but also helps us focus on certain cultural continuities bridging traditional and contemporary Japanese societies.

The following section reviews the study of madness in Western literature in order to enhance understanding of the function of madness and its association with women.

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9 Nishino Haruo, ed, Yōkyoku hyakuban, Shin Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 57 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), 734. (This collection of Noh plays is hereafter referred to as SNKBT.) Unless otherwise acknowledged, the translations of the Japanese texts are mine.

10 For further discussion of cultures of medieval Japan, see Ruch, 500-502.

The Use of Madness in Western Literature

As seen in the development of the performance of a madwoman character, the feminine often came to be associated with madness, particularly in Noh plays. On the Noh stage madness functioned as a vehicle for self-articulation and a breaking away from prescribed social norms of the time. Madwoman plays, which have been performed continuously for the last six hundred years, appeal to both Noh connoisseurs and general audiences. Although in some earlier madwoman plays monogurui is the manifestation of a separation or release from self caused by possessing spirits, in other medieval plays written between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries it is performed madness as means for revealing characters’ interiority. In madwoman plays, madness brought with it the opportunity to express feminine attitudes and desires—dancing, acting, and speaking in ways that were restricted by the existing social order.

To enhance understanding of madness expressed in Noh, I will look into the study of madness in Western literature. As Lillian Feder notes in her study of literary madness, the study of the symbolic expression of the complex inner experience of madness elucidates the nature of madness as an incorporation of the very values and prohibitions it challenges.\(^\text{12}\) She stresses that literary interpretations of madness both reflect and question medical, cultural, political, religious, and psychological assumptions of their times.\(^\text{13}\) Feder’s definition of madness elucidates how madness is perceived differently in political, social, and aesthetic contexts and yet is defined commonly as deviation from a norm. Politically, she points out, madness is used as a legitimate motive for


\(^{13}\) Feder, 4.
confrontation, as it designates a long-repressed sense of injustice; socially, it is interpreted as an illness of the mind or as a withdrawal from the values of a repressive society; and aesthetically, it is depicted as the ultimate self-expression that is inevitably self-destructive.\textsuperscript{14} While pointing out that the concept of madness has changed in relation to centuries of political, social, religious, medical, and personal assumptions, Feder attempts to cover persistent and variable characteristics of actual as well as literary madness.

She defines “madness as a state in which unconscious processes predominate over conscious ones to the extent that they control them and determine perceptions of and responses to experience that, judged by prevailing standards of logical thought and relevant emotion, are confused and inappropriate.”\textsuperscript{15} Feder further argues that literary madness functions as an excuse or an expedient explanation of deviation from social conventions and expectations. For authors, literary madness is a vehicle of self-revelation and an exploration of mind.\textsuperscript{16} Feder points out that “The treatment of madness in literature reflects human ambivalence toward the mind itself...In literature, as in daily life, madness is the perpetual amorphous threat within and the extreme of the unknown in fellow human beings.”\textsuperscript{17}

Like literary madness, \textit{monogurui} is used as a vehicle of self-revelation that risks self-destruction. Yet in the case of Noh plays featuring a madwoman, \textit{monogurui} not only serves as a means for a madwoman to vent her resentment against injustice or her

\textsuperscript{14} Feder, xii-xii.
\textsuperscript{15} Feder, 5.
\textsuperscript{16} Feder, xii.
\textsuperscript{17} Feder, 4-5.
suffering from worldly attachment, but also enables her to reflect upon her circumstances under which she has been plunged into the condition of *monogurui* and become aware of her delusion.

**Constructed Gender in Cultural Negotiations**

Gender identity is intricately related to cultural, social, and political forces. In Noh plays gender identity reflects the climate of the time when the plays were first performed. That said, to identify medieval Japanese society as patriarchal, and then “map” the gender workings in Noh according to universal patriarchy, limits what can be revealed. In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler criticizes the fundamentalist reasoning of identity politics that assumes an identity must first be in place in order for political action to be taken. She negates such an assumption that there must be a “doer” behind the deed and contends that the “doer” is constructed through the deed.\(^{18}\) My purpose is neither to identify the agent behind gender oppression nor to reinforce an idealized womanhood. Nor do I intend to psychoanalytically diagnose the psychic complaints of madwoman characters in Noh. As Butler further points out, gender is variably constituted in different historical contexts. Thus, it becomes impossible to separate our “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.\(^{19}\)

Butler’s view on the performative nature of gender also reveals how a female versus male gender binary is always in the process of constructing itself. Referring to

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\(^{19}\) Butler, 3.
Butler’s view, Terry Kawashima, in her book entitled *Writing Margins: The Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan*, affirms how Butler’s clarification of the constructed-ness of “sex” as well as “gender” has shed light on the center versus margin binary by showing how the seemingly prediscursive quality of “sex” is in fact an effect produced by “gender.” Butler argues: “…the institution of a compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term…gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be.”

As Kawashima points out, Butler’s view on the performative nature of gender reveals a female versus male gender binary always in the process of constructing itself.

Moreover, there is no such thing as a prediscursive gender identity. The dichotomy of the male versus female binary is, to employ Kawashima’s term, a product of cultural negotiations. The binary between male and female is a critical point of argument in the study of Noh.

Noh was fully established as an all-male performance art in fourteenth-century Japan, with the exception of a few non-mainstream female performers. Zeami would not see any contradiction in males performing female roles, in terms of their physical appearance. As a necessary fact of life for performers, medieval Noh playwrights created their librettos with the assumption that male actors would be performing all roles, including those of female characters. In performance of Noh, the dichotomy of male

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versus female is challenged, questioned, and redefined because representations of women in Noh were originally performed by men. As I discuss in detail in the following chapter, Zeami’s ideas about the feminine on stage evolved as his artistic insights developed and his political environment changed. Tracking the development of Zeami’s ideas of the feminine representation on stage helps us understand how gender is constructed in the process of cultural negotiations.

**Representations of the Feminine in a Predominantly Male Performing Art**

Gender plays a prominent role at multiple levels in the performance of Noh. Medieval Noh playwrights created their librettos with the assumption that male actors would be performing all roles, including those of female characters. Therefore, rather than realistic mimesis, stylized artistic expression became the signature style. As Kenneth Yasuda notes, Zeami insisted upon “restraint”, not merely as an aesthetic preference, but as an essential tool of Noh. Much of the stylized and symbolic nature of the Noh art is a result. The function of Noh masks, for example, supports this point. Noh masks do not completely cover the face of the actor, which serves the purpose of reminding spectators to appreciate the performer’s art of acting rather than deluding them into believing that what they see on stage is as real as it could be. The fact that masks limit an actor’s vision makes it possible to interpret that *suriashi* or sliding footwork as the outgrowth of masking. The symbolism of Noh masks thus suggests a deliberate effort

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to remind the audience that what matters is the art of the performance that actors are creating on stage, not the realistic representation of the role that the actor is playing.\textsuperscript{23}

The establishment of the stylized art of Noh may also have much to do with its development as an all-male performance art in medieval Japan, which challenged playwrights and performers to promote the artistic development of performing female roles. The use of masks for female roles may also have been as a result of the exclusion of female performers. It should be also mentioned that performers’ attitudes toward the use of masks change over time. The original purpose of adopting masks may have been more for the purpose of ‘realistically’ disguising men playing women’s roles.

Although the purpose of incorporating masks into the art of Noh is unclear, it is apparent that the early exclusion of women on the Noh stage has much to do with pre-modern perceptions of women as defiled. It is most likely that women were excluded when Noh troupes performed \textit{shinji} or sacred performance at shrines. Such performances at shrines comprised major activities of the Noh troupes at that time. I discuss this point in detail in the following chapters.

In the modern era, women’s participation in Noh performance was not allowed until the 1950’s. Nōgaku Kyōkai or the Association of Noh and Kyogen performers granted membership to women for the first time in 1948. This led to the arrival of the first professional female Noh performer in the Kanze School. Even now the notion of women as impure is reflected in the convention according to which women are not

allowed to participate or even be near the performers when the auspicious Okina\textsuperscript{24} is
performed on New Year’s Day.\textsuperscript{25}

Today, in spite of the fact that many connoisseurs and students of Noh are
women, professional performers are still predominantly male. Although there are some
accomplished female performers, it is very rare for a female performer to play the
Johnson pointed out that the belief that women should not be allowed on the Noh stage
still persisted. Some of the Noh schools refused to grant professional status to women
even though they were qualified. As she further suggested, those who disapprove of
professional female Noh performers include male and female audience members. She
pointed out that some theatergoers would leave their seats when a female member of the
cast performed as the shite (principle actor).\textsuperscript{26}

Since that article, the number of female practitioners has increased; even today,
however, it is unusual for a woman to be granted the privilege of playing the shite role.
For example, according to the monthly Noh program posted at Kanze.net, a site
sponsored by the Kanze Nōgakudō [Kanze Noh Theatre]) and Kanzekai (Association of
the Kanze School), out of the 110 Noh performances scheduled for six months between
January and June 2008, only five female performers are listed as a shite: Gō Mieko in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} It is named Okina or the old man today, but originally called Shikisanban, which “is thought to
be the oldest play in the sarugaku [or Noh] repertoire, dating back to the Heian period (794-1185).” For
more on Okina, see Shelley Fenno Quinn, Developing Zeami: The Noh Actor's Attunement in Practice
(Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), 29 and Yoshida Tōgo, Nōgaku koten Zeami jūrokubu shū
\item \textsuperscript{25} Tsumura Reijirō, \textit{No ga wakaru 100 no kīwādo} (The 100 Keywords to Understand Noh)
\item \textsuperscript{26} Irmgard Johnson, “Women in the Man's World of Noh,” \textit{Journal of Asian Affairs} 2/1 (1977) 2-4.
\end{itemize}
Noh play *Hyakuman* in February, Iwaya Masako in *Hibariyama* (Mt. Hibari) and Tsumura Satoko in *Sessyōseki* (The Death-Stone) in March, Kizuki Masako in Seiōbo and Sagimi Atsuko in *Sotoba Komachi* (Komachi on the Stupa) in May 2008. My data suggest that the percentage of female *shite* on stage is five percent.

In spite of the persistent patriarchal and hierarchical nature reflected in the practices of Noh, madwoman plays that were produced during the medieval period still appeal to contemporary audiences across gender and age groups. There are approximately twenty plays that feature a madwoman, out of the approximately two hundred fifty plays that are performed today. In spite of the fact that the percentage of the plays featuring madwoman characters is no more than ten percent of the entire repertoire, madwoman plays are regularly performed. According to the monthly Noh program at Kanze.net, for example, a number of plays featuring a madwoman are performed monthly.

The continuing popularity and strong support of madwoman plays suggests that madwoman roles are still challenging for performers to perform and appealing for audiences to behold. It also suggests that sympathy is still generated in performers and in audiences through seeing women achieve a means to express themselves more freely.

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The Dynamic Nature of Noh Performance

A comparison of feminine madness in Noh plays written between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries to contemporary Noh performances of the same madwoman plays complicates the perception of Noh plays. Noh plays featuring men in mad roles were also produced, but madwoman plays outnumber them, and they are the group regularly performed today. While the textual descriptions of feminine madness in Noh embody and reflect social and religious constructions of femininity and womanhood, practices pertaining to the performance of feminine madness that appeal to both Noh connoisseurs and general audiences have continued to evolve.

While my textual analysis illuminates the socio-cultural context in which plays were written and the continuing relevance of the plays, performance analysis is crucial in order to view the development of Noh as a continually evolving set of artistic practices. Such an integrated approach is effective in illuminating the effect of performance media as a form of expression. In an article entitled “The Impossibility of Canon,” collected in Teaching Oral Traditions, John Miles Foley delineates how canon is tenable only if one subscribes to what he refers to as the “illusion of object” and “the illusion of stasis.” In the process, anything not recorded in writing, such as an oral tradition, is easily disregarded. What Foley refers to as “the illusion of object” is a conviction held about the necessary relation between the author and works. He criticizes the Alexandrian ‘librarians,’ for example, who equated Homer and the scroll: “for the purpose of collection, the two were indistinguishable.” He further argues “the illusion that the work of verbal art was a collectible object made possible the library’s foundation and its
continuing existence.”29 “The illusion of stasis” is, for Foley, cognate with “the work-as-object assumption.”30 He argues that the model was created governing what is worth collecting and what is not. And this model has reigned for two millennia and more:

Everything written was worth collecting; everything unwritten was defined out of existence. The [Alexandrian] library could aspire to universal coverage because that universality was restricted solely to texts. Because performances of oral tradition were neither objective nor static, since in contemporary terms there was no substance to them, they could not qualify as entries in the grand inventory of concrete items. Oral traditions were not so much unwelcome as unshelvable in the library canon.31

If one applies such a reductionist approach, there is a risk of not fully acknowledging or appreciating Noh plays as performance traditions in which the text is one component part of a larger set of expressive variables. The choice of mask in which to perform, for example, is an interpretative move by the shite or his/her school that determines the age, characteristics, and overall persona of the madwoman character. This interpretive move is not a totally idiosyncratic choice on the part of the actor. Conforming to a performance tradition of his or her school, however, the shite may wear it interpretively to suit the way he wants to represent the character. As I mentioned earlier, performers’ attitudes toward the use of masks may also change over time, reflecting the shift in patronage and audiences, and social climate.

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And while textual descriptions of the transformation into madness evoke images of frenzied, distraught, furious women, in performance the actor works to keep the madness under the mask. In *Fujidaiko*, for example, the text says,

…How hateful it is when I think of it,” says the wife of the drummer, Fuji. She then suddenly turns into a strange figure, beyond words. It appears that she is possessed by the spirit of her husband…Then she [he] starts beating the drum…Using the drum stick as a sword, the flames of her [his] anger are like the shape of the carved flames on the drum…

From this description of the female character’s transformation, one might easily imagine a frenzied and distraught woman filled with uncontrollable fury. In the performance that I observed,33 however, the actor concealed the character’s anger under his mask and expressed it in a stylized movement, following a performance tradition that minimalizes emotional demonstrativeness. Because the female character’s fury was not outwardly expressed, I was able to feel more of the anguish of the female protagonist that the *shite* was playing.

The theatrical experience thus needs to be taken into consideration in understanding of Noh drama. In his discussion of cultural meaning in theatre and spectacle, William Beeman sums up the interrelationship between social dramas and staged dramas proposed by Turner and Richard Schechner. As he points out, Turner assumes that much theatrical activity has its ultimate origins in ritual behavior while Schechner suggests that the theatrical experience enables the spectator to feel the force of

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32 “*Fujidaiko*” in Koyama Hiroshi and Satō Ken’ichirō, eds., *Yōkyōkushū* 2, Shinpen Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū 59 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1998), 113. (This collection of Noh plays is hereafter referred to as SNKBZ.)

33 Osaka kanze-kai teiki nō (Subscription Noh Performance by Association of Kanze in Osaka) on September 11th, 2004 at Osaka Nōgaku Kaikan. The role of the *shite* was performed by Kanze Kiyokazu and that of the *waki* by Fukuō Shigejūrō.
the original unmediated experience. Therefore, the spectator must collaborate psychologically in the total theatrical event while the performers strive to ensure that this collaboration between performer and spectator is maintained throughout the performance. Beeman further analyzes the supportive mechanisms of theatre and spectacle posited by Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), who had a huge impact on many areas of study such as social anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, aesthetics, and poetry. He argues that the supportive mechanisms of theatre and spectacle such as the costumes, language, music, and motion not only fulfill the poetic function posited by Jakobson, they also fulfill a phatic function.\footnote{William O Beeman, “The Anthropology of Theater and Spectacle,” Annual Review of Anthropology 22 (1993), 385-386.}

Referring to the phatic speech as that used for social or emotive purposes rather than for communicating ideas or information, Beeman further notes that the phatic function in Jakobson’s analysis of communication helps us understand how theatre engages participants and spectators in the immediate context of the theatrical event. Furthermore, theatre, as Beeman contends, solidifies “a network of social and cognitive relationships existing in a triangular relationship between performer, spectator, and the world at large.” As the phatic connection is constantly shifting, Beeman stresses that the experience of theatre or spectacle is different each time, which partly makes theatre forever intriguing.\footnote{Beeman, 1993, 386.}

This is precisely true in the case of Noh performances. In Noh narrative, dramatic, and musical elements are all well integrated. Actors, chorus, and musicians play major roles in the performance of Noh. Today, because each role requires highly
specialized skills, actors are trained either as principal actors in a school of shite or supporting actors in a school of waki. The shite plays the most important role as the principal actor. Currently there are five schools of shite: Kanze, Hōshō, Komparu, Kongō and Kita. Tsure (role of companion to the shite), on-stage attendants (kōken), and the members of the chorus (jiutai) also come from the same school as the shite. The waki also plays a crucial role as the supporting actor. Because they come from different schools, it is rare for all the same participants to come together more than once to perform the same play. Hence, each performance is a different experience, not only for the audience, but also for the performers themselves. Komparu Kunio, a contemporary performer of Noh, in his book entitled The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives, illuminates such an interactive theatrical experience, which echoes Beeman’s contention as mentioned above:

Noh is an event to be experienced directly and personally. It is not a panorama like opera or Kabuki, aimed at a large group of spectators in a one-way process. Thus a person who goes to see Noh has certain responsibilities. A different drama is created for each member of the audience because Noh effects a direct exchange between the hearts of the performers and of each spectator...[A] given actor will perform in a given play with a given group of performers only once on any given day.37

This theatrical experience illustrates how a performance can be seen as being declarative of our shared humanity as Schechner suggests in his introduction to By Means of Performance. Quoting Turner, Schechner further notes that a performance utters the

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36 Kan’ami was assigned posthumously as the first head of the Kanze lineage. Kanze was named after Kan’ami’s childhood name. Toita Michizō, ed. Nōgaku Handobukku (Tokyo: Sanshōdō, 2000), 188.

Theatre, therefore, provides us instances in which spectators experience different cultural identities. Studying the cultural representation expressed in Noh can thus show how action and awareness become one in performance in close relation to a particular culture.

Analysis of the Noh texts reveals medieval playwrights’ awareness of the significance of using familiarity or, in John Miles Foley’s term, “a shared body of knowledge that is [the audience’s] inheritance,” according to which the audience interprets the text or the performance of the Noh text. Although Foley is referring to modern audiences, medieval Noh playwrights were also aware of the effect of their audience’s prior knowledge on the interpretation of a text or its performance.

In his discussion of intertextuality in the non-literary arts, Graham Allen similarly illuminates how the ‘languages’ of the non-literary arts such as cinema, painting or architecture involve productions of complex patterns of encoding, re-coding, allusion, echoing, and transposing of previous systems and codes. In order to interpret the languages of the non-literary arts, as Allen notes, one must inevitably rely on an ability to interpret their relationship to previous “languages” or “systems” of those arts. Just like literary texts, as he contends, the non-literary arts constantly talk to each other as well as to the other arts. In the case of Noh theatre, various art forms such as music, chorus, dance, mimesis, and poetry have come to constitute total theatre while being mutually

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integrated, assimilated, and influenced in the course of their development. Understanding
the meanings in a Noh text thus requires an ability not only to interpret the Noh text’s
relationship to the contexts in which those plays were originally composed, but also to
unclear such an intricate series of relationships among various art forms. And yet, I
contend that the Noh librettos are written for audiences to appreciate on several levels for
different degrees of background knowledge and cultivation. The heart of the art of
medieval Noh, as a theatre for all classes, lies in its artistic attunement to the interests of
its spectators.

Chapter Outlines:
Outline of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides the historical background of Noh plays to enhance
understanding of plays featuring monogurui and introduces a chronological overview of
Noh plays featuring monogurui. I first explore how Zeami’s ideas on the feminine,
particularly a representation of a woman revealing her altered state of consciousness on
stage, evolved as his artistic insights developed and his political environment changed.
In the early stage of his career, for example, as Shelley Fenno Quinn notes in her analysis
of the development of Zeami’s representational style, Zeami seems to have been more
interested in how actors could adeptly imitate the outward appearance of feminine
beauty, but his ideas on female role-playing gradually shifted toward the expression of
inner experience.41 Zeami states that performing as a gentlewoman who momentarily
loses her mental equilibrium could appeal charmingly like scattering flowers. In her

41 Quinn, 2005, 81.
disturbed state of mind, she reveals her beauty and emotions more than she would normally do. Zeami believes that herein lies the appeal of the madwoman character.42

The chapter also introduces an overview of Noh plays featuring monogurui in approximate chronological order. Comparing monogurui type plays from before and after Zeami’s time, I reconstruct how representation of monogurui in Noh evolved during the Muromachi period (1336-1573).

I will also analyze representative monogurui character types, including male monogurui which likewise emerged and developed roughly at the same time. I further discuss the traditional organization of a Noh performance program, called gobandate (five-play program), which was fully established in the Edo period (1603-1867). A number of different classifications of Noh have been established based on such elements as the shite’s characteristics or identity, the structure of plays, their themes, the programs, and the degree of popularity of specific plays. These classifications help us understand how madwoman plays have come to be positioned in the repertoire and help us identify some common characteristics among these plays in terms of their function in a larger program of plays.

Outline of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 explores Zeami’s innovative use of the monogurui motif in the Noh play Sakuragawa (The Cherry-Blossom River), a classic exemplar of the onna monogurui or madwoman grouping, a number of which feature women who lose their

42 Omote Akira and Katō Shūichi, eds., Zeami, Zenchiku, Nihon Shisō Taikai (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1995), Shūgōyoku tokuka (Finding Gems and Gaining the Flower). 194. (This is a collection of treatises by Zeami and Zenchiku; hereafter referred to as ZZ.)
mental equilibrium grieving over separation from loved ones. Like Sakuragawa, the majority of these plays feature a mother's affection for her child and her suffering when parted from that child. It should be noted, however, that there are also plays about lovers such as Hanagatami (The Flower Basket) and Hanjo (Lady Han), both of which are attributed to Zeami.

My textual analysis of Sakuragawa reveals how a web of poetic allusions is used to invoke the inner landscape of the protagonist’s madness and thus to allow us a glimpse of her purity of heart. Such aesthetic expression of monogurui relies on the power of language rather than on the dramatic action per se to invoke the imaginative involvement of the audience. By virtue of her monogurui state, the madwoman in Sakuragawa is able to liberate herself briefly from social norms and ethics and be true to her own innermost feelings. Such a pure and uncompromised expression of her emotional caliber may be what deeply appeals to audiences. For instance, allusions to cherry blossoms are linked to the name of her child (Sakurago, lit. ‘Cherry child’), whose disappearance is what triggers her madness. Zeami then employs a web of received associations involving the image of the sakura throughout the play to bring the madwoman’s extreme grief over separation from her child further into relief.

Outline of Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 my focus shifts to resistance expressed in the form of feminine sexuality, obsession, and suffering. I take a close look at the case of an unfulfilled spirit in the Noh play titled Kinuta (The Fulling Block). The female protagonist of Kinuta cannot vent her sufferings or suppressed desires and consequently dies from the intensity
of her own pent-up emotions. It should therefore be mentioned that Kinuta is a kind of counterexample to Sakuragawa, which is at the heart of the monogurui grouping of plays. In the taxonomy of the Noh repertoire, Kinuta is not categorized as a monogurui type play. This chapter demonstrates a thematic variation on the centrifugal dynamic of monogurui.

In the first act of Kinuta, yearning for her husband who has been away on official business for three years, an estranged wife complains about his absence as she pounds a kinuta or a fulling block. A kinuta is a tool used, with a mallet, to soften fabric and give it luster. The association of pounding kinuta with yearning for one's husband goes back to an ancient Chinese anecdote concerning a general named Sobu who was a prisoner for many years. During his absence his yearning wife pounded a kinuta, believing that its familiar sound would ease his mind. In the Noh play, however, this symbolic kinuta is strategically used as a vehicle to convey the wife's desire for her husband and to protest the neglect that his absence creates. Believing that she has been abandoned, she goes insane with longing and dies from her distress. In the second act, she reappears in the form of a spirit to recount her state of madness. In accordance with medieval Buddhist doctrine, the wife reveals that she is being punished for the worldly desires she expressed. While she berates her husband for his lack of love and recounts to him her suffering in Hell, the husband chants the Lotus Sutra on her behalf. She reaches enlightenment.

In Kinuta, feminine desire and suffering are expressed within the constraints of the Buddhist belief system, prevalent in medieval Japanese society, which promulgated that women were susceptible to strong attachments and resentment, and therefore sinful
by nature. The woman in *Kinuta* bewails her husband’s negligence during his prolonged absences. I will make the case that these complaints are her form of protest against his unfair treatment of her.

**Outline of Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 investigates a different type of *monogurui* play that features the motif of spirit possession. This chapter explores a play on the possession motif titled *Fujidaiko* (The Fuji Drum, author unknown). Possession scenes, in which some outside spiritual force takes possession of the *shite*, were popular in some of the earliest extant Noh plays, such as *Sotoba Komachi* (Komachi on the Stupa), a play dating to Zeami’s father’s generation. *Fujidaiko*, believed to have been composed sometime later, adopts the possession scenario. However, instead of making the possession scene the dramatic climax in its own right, as was the case for earlier plays on the theme, the unknown playwright of *Fujidaiko* employs the possession motif as one part of a more complex plot involving a wife’s efforts to avenge injustice. The plot of *Fujidaiko* unfolds when a woman learns that her husband was murdered by a rival drummer because of a dispute about a royal order assigning a drummer for an upcoming court music concert. The wife, who deeply laments the murder of her husband by the rival drummer, becomes ostensibly ‘possessed’ by her husband’s spirit and conveys his resentment over his wrongful murder. In the condition of *monogurui*, the character reveals what would normally remain repressed because of social constraints; in the case of *Fujidaiko*, I argue that the female protagonist uses the ostensible possession by her husband’s spirit as a means to
vent on her own behalf as well. That is, she consciously wards off social censure by appearing to be under the sway of *monogurui*.

My study of selected Noh plays on the theme of *onna monogurui* explores the workings of the relationships between gender politics and tactics for self-expression among subjugated populations in the hierarchical society of medieval Japan. I thus make the case that *monogurui*, on the one hand, provides openings for expression of what would otherwise remain repressed due to social constraints governing the expression of desire, sexuality, and overt social criticism. On the other hand, it functions as the catharsis for both performers and audiences who are involved in the production of the total theatre of Noh.

A woman in Noh who slips into an altered state of consciousness typically displays a buildup of her repressed emotions, which only get stronger as she herself becomes more aware that they are the causes of her madness. Such self-awareness and reflexivity help her to find her own liberation from the torments that she suffers. Eventually her path may lead her to salvation. I argue that it is the artistic representation of this process of slipping into *monogurui* that captures spectators’ hearts. The next chapter seeks to illuminate the dynamic of *monogurui* and the innovative artistry of medieval playwrights and performers. The ensuing chapters will turn to textual analysis of the specific plays introduced above.
CHAPTER 2

ZEAMI'S IDEAS ON THE MADWOMAN MOTIF IN NOH DRAMA

This chapter discusses the socio-cultural development of Noh, exploring how the examination of the historical background of Noh enhances the understanding of Noh plays featuring monogurui, the majority of which were composed or revised by Noh playwright and performer Zeami Motokiyo. Building on the accomplishments of his gifted father, Kan’ami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384), Zeami developed ideas about performing the feminine on stage that evolved over years as he became more interested in feminine monogurui. His interest in monogurui reveals his growing social consciousness as a sarugaku artist\(^\text{43}\) who was dependent on the patronage of the political leader of his time. According to Zeami, the deranged female character (onna monogurui) is considered one of the most challenging and interesting roles for performers and playwrights.

The Development of Noh (Sarugaku): Contributions of Kan’ami and Zeami

Looking at the historical background of Noh is useful for understanding Noh plays featuring monogurui in their political, religious, and cultural contexts in the early phases of the development of this type of play. During the Heian period (794-1185) sarugaku, influenced by Chinese sangaku (literally, a miscellany of musical entertainments), began to appear featuring comical skits using mimesis.\textsuperscript{44} Sangaku was introduced from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) along with gagaku court music during the Nara period (710-784).\textsuperscript{45} The emergence of sarugaku Noh can partly be explained by the fall from power of the Fujiwara toward the end of the Heian period, which forced temples and shrines to support themselves. Drawn into a vortex of wars that cost them their estates, the temples and shrines began losing financial power, and this gave rise to the performance of various types of popular theatre at shrines and temples in order to generate income.\textsuperscript{46}

Elements of such popular performance developed more into a form of drama during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) when the performers began to wear masks.\textsuperscript{47} Takemoto Mikio argues that it is possible that there were no female performers in sarugaku troupes in early medieval Japan because the heart of a troupe’s activities was

\textsuperscript{44} Takemoto 1999, 3.
\textsuperscript{45} Takemoto, 1999, 3.
\textsuperscript{46} Sanari Kentarō quotes a description of a performance at a festival recorded in Shinsarugaku ki (a new sarugaku account) attributed to Fujiwara Akihira (989-1066). Sanari states that performances at shrines are called shinsarugaku and those at temples called noronji, or also known as jushi and shushi. It is noteworthy that noronji included not only dancers, but also chorus, which might have influenced their use in sarugaku performance. For further discussion see Sanari Kentarō, Yōkyoku taikan, shukan, 3rd ed (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1963), 6-9.
sacred performance (shinji) at shrines. He further argues that this exclusion of female performers might have given rise to the use of masks for female roles, as they were already in use to depict supernatural characters such as ghosts and demons.\(^{48}\) While sarugaku Noh troupes were predominantly male—according to the often-mentioned record of performance of Noh held at the Kasuga Wakamiya in Nara in 1349—there was a case in which a female sarugaku performer was allowed to perform on stage. According to this record, a miko or maiden in the service of a shrine played the main character (female) in the sarugaku play while a male performer played the main character (male) in the dengaku (literally, “field music”) play.\(^ {49}\) Sarugaku and dengaku were flourishing by the Nambokuchō period (1336-1392).\(^{50}\) In this case, it is most likely that a female performer was allowed to be on stage because she was a ‘maiden in the service of a shrine,’ which already entitled her to the special privilege of not being regarded as ritually impure in spite of the fact that women were widely considered to be impure.

As Makiko Fujiwara-Skrobak notes in her study of social conscience and madness in Zeami’s life and work, in the process of sarugaku’s development from sacred Noh performance at shrines to kanjin Noh, a more entertainment-oriented performance for the purpose of collecting contributions, sarugaku performers became more conscious of their audiences.\(^ {51}\) As popular theatre, sarugaku continued to develop. Performance of comical

\(^{48}\) Takemoto, 1999, 3.

\(^{49}\) Takemoto, 1999, 3.

\(^{50}\) Period of the Northern and Southern Courts: Northern court in Kyoto; Southern court in Yoshino. Fujiwara-Skrobak compares sarugaku with dengaku, pointing out how dengaku became courtiers’ entertainment in the 9th century while the art of sarugaku was considered as an art compatible with dengaku until the 14th century. For further discussion, see Fujiwaka-Skrobak 23.

\(^{51}\) Fujiwara-Skrobak, 19.
skits often played second string to the *chigo*, beautifully dressed boys and girls whose elegant dance and physical beauty attracted audiences.\^52 Later, chant and dance were incorporated into the performance of comical mimesis and, in order to compete with the *chigo*, adult males began to perform the auspicious role of *okina* or old man, making performance skills the attraction.\^53 The comical dimension of mimesis is preserved in Kyogen, while the unification of performance in chant and dance is fundamental to Noh.\^54 By the mid-Kamakura, *sarugaku* unified and harmonized mime and dramatic elements with dance and chant accompanied by flute and drums.\^55

During the Muromachi period, the Ashikaga Shoguns\^56 helped promote the artistic development of performance. This was the time when two prominent *sarugaku* performers appeared: Kan’ami Kiyotsugu, the head of the Yūzaki troupe in the school of Yamato *sarugaku* and father to Zeami, and Inuō (also known as Dōami) (dates unknown)

\^52 Sanari, 11-12.


\^54 Unlike Noh, Kyōgen plays were most likely constantly improvised over times and totally susceptible to the climate of audiences of the time without any scripts of plays written for more than 200 years. Although Zeami wrote about the principles of Kyōgen performance in *Shūdōsho* (1430), the oldest extant collection of Kyōgen scripts *Tenshō kyōgenbon* was, for example, not written until 1578. In the beginning of the Edo period (1600-1868) a Kyōgen treatise *Waranbegusa* was written by Ōkura Toraaki (1597-1662). For discussion of the historical background of Kyōgen and its development see Yasuda Akira, “Kaietsu,” in Kitagawa Tadahiko and Yasuda Akira, eds, *Kyōgenshū*, Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 35 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1972), 5-18. This collection is hereafter referred to as NKBZ. For discussion of the comparison of Noh and Kyōgen, see Sanari, 122-124.

\^55 For more on the development of *sarugaku*, see Nose Asaji, *Nōgaku genrī kō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1938), 392-393.

\^56 A title conferred by the court upon military rulers.
from the school of Ōmi sarugaku. Inuō is believed to have stressed the cultivation of
elegant dance and chant, faithful to the traditional dengaku style. Kan’ami, responsive
to the demands and tastes of his patron, connoisseurs, and general audiences, successfully
mimicked the style of sarugaku performance by blending popular kusemai music and
dance with dengaku’s elegant elements into conventional monomane or imitation.

Kusemai was a popular type of dance performance using epic songs. It flourished from
the Nanboku time (1336-1392) to the Muromachi period. Kan’ami borrowed the
structure and rhythm of kusemai dance. The court poetry that was first anthologized in
the first imperial anthology, the Kokinwakashū (Collection of Ancient and Modern
Japanese Poems, 905) had by Kan’ami’s and Zeami’s time developed a substantial body
of writings on poetics, with a rich set of esthetic concepts and terms. One such concept
was yūgen. Following in his father’s footsteps, Zeami incorporated the medieval poetic
concept of yūgen into his art of Noh and referenced it as an ideal beauty that evoking a
sense of depth and mystery. Yūgen is an elusive aesthetic notion that takes on different
nuances over time. It is a crucial concept for understanding Zeami’s performance theory.
I discuss the concept further below.

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57 Both Kan’ami and Inuō are believed to have trained under the accomplished dengaku master
Ichū (dates unknown). See more on Kan’ami and Inuō, Sanari, 23.
58 Sanari, 23.
59 For more details, see ZZ 276-277, also Nishino Haruo, and Hata Hisashi, eds, Noh kyōgen jiten
(Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 250-251. Donald Keene explains, “Kanami’s chief stylistic contribution to
Noh was the kuse, a section of the play sung by the chorus to irregular meter during which the main subject
of the play is narrated.” Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the
The third Ashikaga Shogun Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) (r. 1368-1394)\(^\text{60}\) was an especially enthusiastic patron of sarugaku performance.\(^\text{61}\) Yoshimitsu began to favor Kan’ami’s son, Zeami,\(^\text{62}\) who later greatly contributed to the full development of Noh theatre. As a Noh performer and playwright, Zeami’s greatest achievement was the composition of a number of treatises recording and explicating the accomplishments of his gifted father, Kan’ami, as well as his own accomplishments, for the purpose of handing down the secrets of the sarugaku art to his successors. These texts allow us to explore how Zeami interpreted and expressed the feminine, particularly through a woman revealing an altered state of consciousness on stage; what factors influenced his ideas of the feminine; and how his thinking on this subject evolved over time as his artistic insights developed and his political environment changed.

**Zeami’s Achievement and His Military Patron’s Influence**

In the introduction to *Theatre/Theory/Theatre*, Daniel Gerould states, “Theatre is the most public of the arts, and for centuries the stage has been an institution close to the seats of power and patronage and subject to state control. Rules and regulations affecting plays in performance inevitably have political dimensions.”\(^\text{63}\) A close look at the

\(^{60}\) The third Shōgun Yoshimitsu (1358-1404), unlike the first two Ashikaga Shōgun, his father (Yoshiakira) and grandfather (Takauji), was born and raised in Kyoto and sought to combine his warrior heritage with the values long cherished in the capital. In gratifying his taste for fine architecture and beautiful gardens, he spared no expense. For more discussion, see Conrad Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993), 102-104.

\(^{61}\) Sanari, 26-35.

\(^{62}\) Zeami was 12 years old and his childhood name was Fujiwakamaru when Yoshimitsu first saw him. Zeami is his Buddhist name.

historical background of Noh shows clearly how political dimensions shaped the
development of Noh and the fate of its performers. Although the evolution of Zeami’s
theory of nyōtai or the female mode was rooted in his personal growth as a playwright
and performer, it also seems to have been deeply affected by the shifts in patronage he
experienced during his lifetime. Arguably, Zeami’s dramatic approach to one form of
human suffering, the embodiment on stage of graceful beauty in madness, is a reflection
of such vicissitudes in his life. To cite another example, his pursuit of the ideal beauty of
yūgen has much to do with his awareness of the importance of winning over connoisseur
audiences, especially his patron the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. As this powerful
political figure’s playwright of choice, Zeami received special attention and favor, albeit
not exclusively. However, the fortunes of patronage were fickle. When Yoshimitsu’s
son, Yoshimochi (1386-1428) (r. 1398-1423), became the new shogun, he favored the
dengaku performer Zōami (dates unknown) instead of Zeami,\textsuperscript{64} though he continued to
patronize Zeami. For this reason, Zeami no longer received the special attention from the
ruler that he had enjoyed while Yoshimitsu was alive. When another of Yoshimitsu’s
sons, Yoshinori (1394-1441)(r. 1429-1441), became shogun, he favored Zeami’s nephew
Saburō Motoshige (hereafter referred to as On’ami, 1398-1467)\textsuperscript{65} over Zeami and his
sons. It is ironic that Zeami’s most formidable rival was his own nephew, who was
possibly his adoptive son as well. As Quinn points out, Zeami may have decided not to
make On’ami his successor when his son, Jūrō Motomasa (Kanze Motomasa, ?-1432)
was born, which partly explains the seeming lack of closeness between Zeami and

\textsuperscript{64} Katō Shūichi, “Zeami no senjutsu mata wa nōgakuron,” in ZZ, 515-516.

On’ami in later years. In 1434 after Yoshimitsu’s death, Zeami was exiled to Sado, a remote island in the Japan Sea.

Fujiwara-Skrobak, in her reading of *Zeshi rokujū igo Sarugaku dangi* (*Zeami’s Talks on Sarugaku after Reaching Sixty*; hereafter referred to as *Sarugaku dangi*, 1430), argues that Zeami saw two functions for *sarugaku*: “to bring back peace to society and to entertain people.” In her analysis of Zeami’s treatises and plays, she thus stresses her view of Zeami as an egalitarian thinker. She maintains that Zeami’s social consciousness as a *sarugaku* artist “inspired his plays created for everyone, hoping to serve as a force to improve the human condition.” Although her study inspired me to explore critical issues embedded in the representation of feminine madness in Noh, my position differs from hers. While she argues Zeami’s human egalitarianism originates from his sense of social responsibility as a theatre artist, which he inherited from his father, I argue that the human suffering highlighted in his plays cannot be solely seen as a manifestation of his desire or responsibility as an agent for social change. I will further discuss Fujiwara-Skrobak’s view of Zeami’s egalitarianism in relation to *monogurui* below.

I will now return to the political implications of Noh. As another example of political dimensions in the development of Noh, Michele Marra, in his study of the political implications of Japanese medieval literary texts, states that the *shura mono* or

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66 Quinn 2005, 36.
67 For more detailed discussion, see Nishio Minoru’s commentary in *Karonshû, Nōgakuronshû* edited by Hisamatsu Sen’ichi and Nishio Minoru. For a more discussion of the role of the audience in Noh, see Janet Goff’s article of that title.
68 Fujiwara-Skrobak, 59.
69 Fujiwara-Skrobak, 4.
70 Fujiwara-Skrobak, 2.
warrior plays, which mythologize war heroes, were created to obscure from the Shogun’s view the violent nature of the military society he ruled.\textsuperscript{71}

The shogun’s new ideologies applied the paradigm of Buddhist enlightenment to valorous warriors and obedient subjects, using the ritual of representation to portray their employer as a primary actor in the acts of pacification and purification that guaranteed and maintained social and political stability…The no actor played a major role in the fabrication of images of power, projecting the political center in all its majesty to peers and subjects alike.\textsuperscript{72}

Marra examines the cultural politics of dominant ideologies and what role literary texts played in the creation and maintenance of political power. He argues that a study of the historical development of Noh clarifies how Zeami transformed sarugaku into an artistic entertainment to please the new military patrons of Noh. Zeami’s earlier treatises reveal his awareness of the importance of capturing the hearts of connoisseur audiences, especially his patron, the shogun Yoshimitsu. Zeami’s incorporation of courtly language and tropes into Noh provided the military class with access to the aristocracy’s literary tradition, a source of mythical/symbolic power from which military leaders had until then been largely excluded, even though they wielded economic and political power. Both Zeami and his patron, the shogun, obfuscated the historical contingency of the origins of Noh, transforming it into an art form that was a symbolic representation of its patrons’ “high” values.\textsuperscript{73} Marra’s contention and Fujiwara-Skrobak’s assertion reveal conflicting images of the medieval theatre artist: one dedicating himself to pleasing his politically

\textsuperscript{71} Marra, \textit{Representations of Power}, 111-112.

\textsuperscript{72} Marra, \textit{Representations of Power}, 107.

\textsuperscript{73} Marra, \textit{Representations of Power}, 55. In Marra’s words, Zeami stresses “[sarugaku’s] religious connotations through linkage with the Indian history of the Buddha’s life.” For discussion of this legend, see Marra, \textit{Representations of Power}, 56-61.
powerful patron at the top of the social hierarchy, and the other reaching out to the oppressed at the bottom of the social ladder. Is one more attuned than the other to Zeami’s artistic principles? My answer to this question is that both views are worth taking into consideration, provided we view them as snapshots of the life of the sarugaku performer. I believe that these different views of Zeami’s life and his ideas lead us to a more integral picture of the social and cultural climate of his time.

**Zeami’s Ideas on Madwoman Roles**

Early in his career, Zeami was interested in how actors could adroitly imitate the outward appearance of feminine beauty, but his ideas on female role-playing gradually shifted toward the expression of inner experience. In *Kaden* (Transmission of the flower, a.k.a. *Fūshikaden* or Transmission of style and the flower, 1402-1418?), for example, Zeami discusses nine styles of role-playing,\(^7^4\) including women (*onna*) and deranged persons (*monogurui*). It is believed that the first three books of the first treatise of Zeami, *Kaden*, are in large part records of the accomplishments of his gifted father Kan’ami. In order to transmit the secrets of this traditional performance art to his successors, Zeami followed his father’s traditions of *sarugaku*, and included his own observations as performer and playwright.

The precepts on performing female roles reveal that, at this early point in his career, Zeami felt that playing the role of a woman required an acting style that conveyed delicacy and pliability. He notes that a young principal actor is, in general, most suitable

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\(^7^4\) They are women (*onna*), old people (*rōjin*), young male roles that do not wear masks (*hitamen*), deranged persons (*monogurui*), priests (*hōshi*), warring spirits (*shura*), deities (*kami*), demons (*oni*), and Chinese persons (*karagoto*).
for performing a female role, and emphasizes the importance of proper dress.\textsuperscript{75}

Moreover, since high-ranking aristocratic women were not often seen in public, Zeami advised actors to secretly inquire into their ways of dressing. Appropriating the style of commoner women, easily observable in public, posed less of a challenge.\textsuperscript{76}

When performing a madwoman, Zeami says, the actor should hold a fan or a sprig of flowers loosely in such a way as to give the impression of weakness or fragility (\textit{yowayowa to}). The actor should wear a robe with long sleeves in order to conceal the fingertips and wear the \textit{obi}, or belt, loosely (\textit{yowayowashiku}). Zeami places importance on head posture as well; if an actor bends his head back or looks down, or if he holds his neck too stiffly, he will not look like a woman.\textsuperscript{77} In the early stage of his career Zeami thus seems to see the feminine as some sort of formulated essence that an actor should imitate adeptly.

Over time, however, he became more interested in expressing on stage the suffering of human beings. Fujiwara-Skrobak argues that Zeami’s interest in \textit{monogurui} is rooted in his egalitarian view:

\begin{quote}
His [Zeami’s] egalitarianism led him to question widely practiced prejudicial attitudes toward all those whom society discriminated against as “different.” Zeami battled against the unfairness of judging certain people as mad and/or non-human from their appearance. He realized that the ‘different’ people whom society categorized as \textit{monogurui} (madman, madness) and/or \textit{igyō irui} (different appearances and different species) were the victims of social imperfections and conventions, which added grief to their already difficult lives.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{75} ZZ, 21.
\textsuperscript{76} ZZ, 21.
\textsuperscript{77} ZZ, 21.
\textsuperscript{78} Fujiwara-Skrobak, 15.
Her argument convinces us of the importance of taking the social contexts of Zeami’s time into consideration. However, I would argue, we also need to pay attention to his theatrical interest in monogurui as good theatre. Kitagawa Tadahiko, for example, notes that during Kan’ami’s time, monogurui in Noh was often regarded as the result of spirit possession epitomized in Sotoba Komachi, a play attributed to Kan’ami. Subsequently, in plays of Zeami’s time monogurui caused by excessive affection was more popular. Following Kitagawa’s argument, Hosokawa Ryōichi conjectures that Noh actors other than Zeami would have interpreted monogurui on stage as a result of spirit possession. To support his argument, Hosokawa points out that Zeami, in his first treatise Kaden, placed a low value on plays in which a female character was possessed by a warrior spirit or demon or vice versa. Hosokawa’s argument is not convincing because in the text in question, Zeami only criticized composing spirit possession plays in which a madwoman is possessed by fierce beings such as a warrior or a demon, or in which a male character is possessed by a woman, which does not encompass the totality of monogurui types. For Zeami, such plays showed a lack of harmony. When the character becomes mad or deranged due to spirit possession, the madness or derangement must be that of the being who possesses the character. Zeami believed that when the character becomes mad or deranged due to spirit possession, the madness or derangement of the character must be performed in terms of the being who possesses the character. In the following passage

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81 ZZ, 23.
82 ZZ, 23.
from the same treatise Zeami asserts that performing the mad person (monogurui) role is the most interesting and challenging type of role. He acknowledged two types of monogurui in Noh, one caused by spirit possession, and the other by internal suffering originating from excessive affection:

This skill [playing a role of mad persons] represents the most fascinating aspect of our art...there are various types of possessed beings... if the actor studies the nature of the spirit who possesses the character, he should be able to manage the part well. On the other hand, the really difficult parts involve those characters whose thoughts have become confused because their minds have become crazed—a parent searching for a lost child, for example, a wife thrown over by her husband, or a husband who lives on after his wife. Even a relatively skillful shite [the principal actor] may fail to make the distinction between them, and he will create his mad gestures in the same manner, so that no emotional response is engendered in those who watch him. In the case of characters of this sort, the actor must have as his intention the manifestation of the precise feelings that can indicate the character’s emotional disturbance, and make them the core of his Flower; then, if he feigns madness with all the skill he has at his command, there will certainly be many arresting elements in his performance. If an actor possesses this kind of skill, and if he can make his spectators weep, his art will represent the highest attainment possible.\(^8^4\)

Zeami states here, on the one hand, that spirit possession should not relinquish entirely the original nature of the possessed one, e.g. the femininity of a female character, while revealing the nature of the spirit. For Zeami, revealing such feminine essence through possession makes spirit possession interesting. But Zeami goes on to stress that monogurui is most challenging and interesting when madness is revealed not as a result of possession, but as a consequence of internal suffering. Zeami asserts that a simple attempt to perform madness in a uniform manner will not reach the heart of an audience


\(^8^4\) Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 13. The original text is from ZZ, 23-24.
(...tada ippan ni kurui hataraku hodo ni miru hito no kan no nashi). When an actor has mastered skills, exerting all his strength to express suffering in a form of madness, his audience will be impressed with his performance of monogurui.

On the basis of Zeami’s statement, Ogasawara Kyoko argues that it appears that people in medieval times were aware of a distinction between monogurui due to spirit possession and monogurui due to psychological shock. However, when it came to performance, all actors except Zeami and Kan’ami performed “monogurui” by dancing madly and intensively (hageshiku maikuruu),” as if possessed by an evil spirit, and that such a style of performing madness scenes was already the established way in sarugaku performance. From her statement, it is not clear how the type of dance she refers to as “dancing madly and intensely” differs from the kind of dance Zeami and Kan’ami performed to express madness. I would contend that Zeami’s interest in monogurui as a result of internal suffering further reveals his awareness of one prevailing Buddhist belief of his time. According to this belief, the suffering of being apart from loved ones such as parents, siblings, or spouses (aibetsuriku) is considered one of the eight sufferings of human beings. More importantly, as Ōtani Setsuko points out, the separation of a mother from her child or vice versa was considered the most severe suffering. This

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85 ZZ, 23.
86 Ogasawara Kyoko, Geinō no shīza, Nihon geinō no hassō (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1984), 84.
87 The other seven sufferings are the suffering of birth; the suffering of old age; the suffering of sickness; the suffering of death; the suffering of being together with despised ones; the suffering of not getting what one wants; the suffering of the Five Skandhas, i.e. the five elements that sum up the whole of an individual's mental and physical existence (iro or form, earth element, shō or emotional feelings and physical sensations, sō or perceptions, gyō or volition, karmic conditioning, and shiki or consciousness). Bokyōgō Daijiten (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1981), 511.
belief might have made a play featuring a mad mother seem most appealing. In
Sakuragawa, for example, the mother loses her senses as she longs for her missing son.
Her madness is highlighted by the beautiful and poetic image of scattered blossoms,
which makes the female character in Sakuragawa a quintessence of the most interesting
type of role.

By the time Zeami had written Nikyoku santai ningyōzu (Sketches for the human
figures for the two modes and the three styles, 1421) and Sandō (The three techniques,
1423), the nine role-types he discussed in Kaden had been reduced to three: the old man,
the woman, and the warrior, and his discussion of performing female roles, including
deranged women, emphasized dance, chant, and the aesthetic concept of ineffable beauty,
or yūgen. In Nikyoku santai ningyōzu, which provides illustrated descriptions of acting
styles, Zeami was promoting taishin shariki, the concept that an actor should make the
woman’s heart the principal form and style of performance (kokoro o tai ni shite) and
abandon all forcefulness (chikara o suteru).\textsuperscript{89} The concept of taishin shariki reflects the
development of Zeami’s ideas on female role-playing. In Kaden, he described the
woman’s style or mode as acting “yowayowa to or yowayowashiku” (lit. weakly,
delicately, or in a frail or feeble manner).\textsuperscript{90} By the time of Nikyoku santai ningyōzu,
however, abandoning forcefulness is specifically prescribed, as a consequence of a newer
focus on the mind of the woman in performing the female role. Evidently, Zeami’s focus
has shifted more toward the expression of state of mind rather than of outward
appearance.

\textsuperscript{89} ZZ, 126.
\textsuperscript{90} ZZ, 21.
In *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu*, Zeami also sees *taishin shariki* as quintessential to a form of female role-playing that evokes the ineffable beauty of *yūgen* through dance and chant.  

The term *yūgen* appears in *Kaden*, describing the graceful beauty evoked in a child actor’s performance, for example. Zeami stresses the importance of the embodiment of the aesthetic concept of *yūgen* in his plays, particularly plays featuring women. In *Nikyoku santai ningyōzu*, he elucidates *yūgen* as an effect that a performance of *nyotai* (Woman’s Mode) might evoke:

The dance in the Woman’s Mode is of particularly elevated style and allows a vision of the sublime form of *yūgen*. The Woman’s Mode is supreme among the Two Arts…and the Three Modes. Do not forget to make sensibility the basis of your acting and reject strength, and carry this disposition over into your dance and singing; it is the highest manifestation of these in our art. Such elegant style as this allows the fusion of dance and song for a unified apprehension of profound beauty.

Zeami further discusses the notion of *yūgen* in *Kakyō* (A Mirror Held to the Flower, 1424), in which he stresses that a noble person’s appearance that Reveals his high rank and attracts people’s admiration should be called *yūgen*. His later treatises demonstrate a shift in interest towards deeper psychological portrayals of madness in the feminine mode. Zeami may have considered *monogurui* the most challenging aspect of

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92 Thomas Blenman Hare, *Zeami’s Style: The Noh Plays of Zeami Motokiyo* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 134. The original text is found in ZZ, 126.

93 ZZ *Kakyō*, 97. As Quinn notes, in a section in *Kakyō* entitled “Entering into the Realm of Yūgen” (*Yūgen no sakai ni irukoto*), “[Zeami] talks about how the quality can be evoked at a number of levels: physical demeanor, language, music, dance, the three styles of *monomane*, and the angry stage presence, such as that of a demon.” For details, see Quinn 2005, 84-88.
performing female roles because these characters gave thought, voice, and action to that which would normally be repressed.

In Sandô, a critical treatise discussing the composition of Noh plays, Zeami states that “the style of the mad woman, since it is a question of madness, must be skillfully composed, and the music must be carefully composed so as to be in keeping with the comportment; if the figure is endowed with the graceful and elegant beauty that evokes yūgen, then whatever she does should be interesting.”⁹⁴ In Sandô, Zeami also connects yūgen to the performance of possessed females, highlighting the significance of the function of dance and chant,⁹⁵ whereas monogurui had been traditionally identified as the condition of being possessed by spirits or supernatural creatures. Zeami explains how beauty is evoked in female characters in the Genji monogatari (The Tale of Genji, c. 1014). He refers to the yūgen evoked by Yūgao and Ukifune, both possessed by evil spirits. For Zeami, these noble female representations are like “a gem among gems” (tama no naka no tama).⁹⁶ Zeami mentions another key female character in the Tale of Genji, Lady Rokujō, who casts a curse on Genji’s wife Lady Aoi. He compares the effect of the performance of such noble females possessed by spirits to that of the old poem: ume ga ka o sakura no hana ni niowase te yanagi ga eda ni sakasem (“Let’s make a fragrance of the plum exude from the cherry blossom; make it bloom on the willow

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⁹⁴ ZZ Sandô, 138.

⁹⁵ Nikyoku santai (two modes and three styles) and buga nikyoku (two modes of expression, dance and chant) are key terms to understand Zeami’s critical theory. Quinn translated nikyoku as “two modes’ to emphasize Zeami’s idea that all stage action should unfold via these two forms of expression.” The three styles refers to three types of representation: “venerable style” (rōtaï), “feminine style” (nyōtaï), and “martial style” (guntaï) (Quinn 2005, 6). For more on nikyoku santai, see “The Actor’s Attunement and Nikyoku Santai” in Quinn 2005, 201-284.

⁹⁶ ZZ Sandô, 137.
branch.”)97 The first part suggests that the beauty of the cherry blossom should be enhanced by a fragrance of the plum. Zeami crystallizes feminine essence in the image of such ideal noble women from the classical texts. The ineffable beauty that Zeami mentions here, is the graceful beauty that evokes the effect he calls yūgen. Quinn demonstrates how “the aesthetic concept [yūgen] was originally closely constrained by the social and artistic aspirations of a particular time and place,” which partly explains why “for today it is a very fuzzy concept.”98 In my interpretation of this poem, the latter part (“make it bloom on the willow branch”) visualizes the effect of monogurui; how beauty is manifested and revealed in an unlikely context. Zeami’s aesthetic concept (yūgen) and madness (monogurui) are thus merged in the feminine representation on stage. The onna monogurui acting style created a liminal moment in which the unexpected might emerge and the unspeakable be spoken. It also offered a context for female characters to demonstrate their feelings and reveal complex psyches.

The later treatise called Shūgyoku tokuka (Finding Gems and Gaining the Flower, 1428) reveals the further development of Zeami’s principles of the woman’s style. In this treatise Zeami answers six questions regarding the art of sarugaku. Here Zeami again stresses, for the woman’s style, the concept of ‘making heart the principal form and style of performance and abandoning all forcefulness’ (taishin shariki).99 He maintains that if an actor applies this to his performance of the female role while dancing and chanting, he

97 ZZ. Sandō, 138. This poem is attributed to Nakahara no Munetoki; Goshūiwaakashū: Shinpen Kokka Taikan, vol. 1 (Spring 1). For more detailed discussion of the original poem, see Quinn, 2005, 296n65.
99 ZZ. Shūgyoku tokuka., 193.
will enter the scope of his range of accomplishment (*gaibun*). For Zeami, what is important in playing female roles is not to faithfully imitate what appears on the surface of the character, but to capture the heart of the role. In this context physical differences between male performers and the female roles they are playing become immaterial. Although in his first treatise, *Kaden*, as I mentioned earlier, Zeami stresses the importance of an actor’s physical appearance, stating “in general a young *shite* (the principal actor) is most suitable for performing a female role,”\(^{100}\) obviously Zeami expanded his ideas about feminine representation on stage over the years.

In *Shūgyoku tokuka*, he continues his discussion of “making heart the principal form and style of performance and abandoning all forcefulness *“(taishin shariki) in the woman’s style in contrast with *tairiki saishin* for the warrior role, “making the strength or forcefulness the principal form and style of the warrior type (*chikara o tai ni shite*) and yet revealing a tender heart (*kokoro o kudaku*)”\(^{101}\). Zeami says that if an actor tries to imitate a female without “making heart the principal form and style of performance and abandoning all forcefulness” (*taishin shariki*), assuming instead that for a female role he just needs to make the figure look beautiful, the character will appear devoid of vigor (*jintai naete*) and will reveal no distinctive identity.\(^{102}\) Zeami points out that such a performance is far from entering the scope of one’s range of accomplishment in the woman’s style. Although in the earlier *Kaden* he described the woman’s style as acting in a feeble manner, here again he disapproves of such acting. In *Shūgyoku tokuka* Zeami

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\(^{100}\) ZZ *Fūshikaden*, 21.

\(^{101}\) ZZ *Shūgyoku tokuka*, 193.

\(^{102}\) ZZ *Shūgyoku tokuka*, 193.
asserts that the performance of a female role should go beyond simple imitation. He says pointedly, “As for imitating a woman, that is something a woman herself never does” or “imitating a woman is not [being] a woman” (onna o nisuru wa onna narazu). According to Zeami, performing a female role in a feeble-looking manner undermines the potential for the actor’s body to resemble the female character. Therefore, an actor should be aware of his own range of accomplishment in the woman’s style and act accordingly.

Instead of seeing ‘cross-acting’ as an unfortunate but necessary fact of life for male performers who take on female roles—the norm in sarugaku—Zeami thus incorporates it into the artistic development of the performance of female roles. Instead of striving to make the actor look more like the female that he is playing, Zeami stresses the importance of the actor identifying himself as the female character of the play. Imitating outward feminine appearance not only has the effect of bringing out the physical differences between men and women, but also limits the possible scope of artistic expression. If on the other hand, an actor focuses more on the mind of the character and expresses it artistically within his range of accomplishment, such performance will be perceived to be extremely appealing and interesting.

In Shūgyoku tokuka, writing on the woman’s style, Zeami discusses the deranged or possessed female role. Zeami suggests a more developed theory of this role than he had in his earlier treatises:

As for mad person roles, since they expose their disgracefulness without reserve, one might think that they need not be incorporated into our Noh performance as material; yet it is the incorporation of such roles that

103 ZZ Shūgyoku tokuka, 194.
creates the art of sarugaku performance. As for a woman, inasmuch as she conceals herself in a gentle manner, she does not appeal to the eyes of the audience. However, when an actor, imitating a deranged woman, dances, chants, and speaks in a ludic fashion, it adds an effect that is charming in the manner of falling blossoms, to the refined appearance, and appeals to the eyes of the audience. This is indeed a form of style more interesting than any other.\textsuperscript{104}

Here Zeami recommends an intensified femininity, which can be presented in the mad woman’s type through her dance and chant. This statement clearly demonstrates the shift in Zeami’s interest in female roles away from the ostensible representation of gentlewomen toward madness, which can reveal hidden feminine beauty.

This shift in Zeami’s interest in the feminine on stage reflects the growth of his artistic insights. His evolving idea of the representation of beauty on stage is embodied in the concept of the effect that can be evoked through graceful $yūgen$ beauty. Providing an overview of the scholarship on what Zeami’s $yūgen$ signifies, Quinn has thoroughly reconstructed Zeami’s thought on $yūgen$ from a developmental perspective in her book entitled \textit{Developing Zeami: The Noh Actor’s Attunement in Practice}.\textsuperscript{105} Part One, Section Three entitled “Fierce Moons, Gentle Demons,” for example, discusses a shift in Zeami’s conception, elucidating how Zeami came to realize more of the importance of integrating visual, atmospheric, and mimetic expression to elicit $yūgen$ effects in performance. Zeami’s ideas on $yūgen$ are painstakingly analyzed. Inspired by her study, I have focused on $yūgen$ in relation to feminine representation, particularly that of the madwoman. In the earlier treatises, Zeami refers to such graceful $yūgen$ beauty as

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{104} ZZ Shūgyoku tokuka, 194.
\item \textsuperscript{105} For discussion of the contribution of such scholarship, see Quinn, 2005, 18-19.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
something that can be evoked in the performance of specific characters, namely noble persons. At this stage, Zeami sees the feminine, the ideal noble gracefulness in particular, as an inherent property to be replicated on stage. However, as the later treatises indicate, Zeami seems to have begun developing his understanding of the ideal feminine as something to be constituted in the audience’s response to the process of a performance. The aesthetic notion of yūgen should be thus best understood as a process that produces an effect – an emergent property, not an essence.\footnote{Mae J. Smethurst, Masterworks of the Nō Theater (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1989), 5.} Mae J. Smethurst, similarly pointing out that it is almost impossible to define yūgen inasmuch as its meaning changed even during Zeami’s lifetime, offers a working definition: “half-revealed or suggested grace, tinged with wistful sadness.”\footnote{Kenneth Yasuda, Masterworks of the Nō Theater (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1989), 5.} Yūgen is one of the most important aesthetic concepts in understanding Zeami’s theory of sarugaku art.

Zeami’s interest in aesthetic beauty can also be explained by another key concept of Zeami’s performance, hana, or the flower. These ideals are interrelated in the manifestation of a successful performance. Yasuda explains that “This flower is both an aesthetic principle and the ‘soul’ of the actor or the character or the play, and it is, beyond that, a spiritual quest. Every element of the play, every gesture, must be devoted to producing the flower.”\footnote{Mae J. Smethurst, The Artistry of Aeschylus and Zeami: a Comparative Study of Greek Tragedy and Nō (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 19.} Thomas J. Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu also point out: “To this great artist [Zeami], a flower was beautiful because it would shed its petals. In the sense that a flower undergoes constant changes in front of the viewer, it can be compared
to an artistic ideal.” As Komparu Kunio further points out, *yūgen* can be understood as
the ultimate beauty of the flower. This crucial artistic concept is used in several of his
treatises, *Kaden, Kakyō*, and *Shūgyoku tokuka*, for example, as mentioned above. As
Zeami discusses in *Kaden*, the flower is true beauty, and it comes into existence through
performance. *Shūgyoku tokuka* treats Zeami’s detailed analysis of the concept of the
flower, referring to the ranking of the flower, which he fully discusses in another treatise
called *Kyūi* (‘Notes on the Nine levels’). It is noteworthy that in *Shūgyoku tokuka* Zeami
compares the flower with the idea of *omoshiroki*, or “fascination,” and
*mezurashiki*, or “novelty,” which he had already discussed in the *Kaden*. What becomes
apparent in his discussion in *Shūgyoku tokuka* is that these elements can only be created
in the process of performance on the stage through the interaction between the actors and
their audience like the ineffable effects of *yūgen*, the ‘flower’ too is an emergent
property.

As Quinn clarifies, Zeami’s quest to intensify the *yūgen* elements in Yamato
*sarugaku* originated from “the necessity that Zeami felt to increase the prevalence of
musical elements such as singing and dancing in order to keep up with the competition
and maximize possibilities for powerful patrons.” Here it is also important to
understand, as Quinn points out, that Zeami’s interest in incorporating moments with the

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109 Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., xxxiv.
110 Komparu Kunio, *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, trans., Jane Corddry and
111 The exact date has not been determined.
112 Quinn, 2005, 8.
The yūgen quality into his sarugaku art is not solely explained by his desire to win patronage, but also by his efforts to improve his style of sarugaku performing art.\textsuperscript{113}

The evolution of Zeami’s theories on how to perform a female role reveals his own growth as a playwright and performer while his pursuit of the ideal beauty of yūgen in his art has much to do with his awareness of the importance of winning the hearts of the connoisseur audiences, especially his patron, the shogun Yoshimitsu. It also seems to have been affected by shifts in patronage during his lifetime. In the beginning of his career, he seems to have devoted himself to developing his performance art to satisfy his patron’s aesthetic tastes. Later in life, however, when he fell out of favor with the new shoguns, he seems to have become more conscious of deeper nuances of human experience as a means to create a profound effect appealing to the eyes of the audience. For a female role, for example, his focus shifted from the pleasing outward appearance of a female character toward the appeal of human suffering. Zeami thus contributed to ideas in Noh about performing the feminine on stage. Later in his career, he composed or revised the majority of the madness plays that are extant.

As some scholars argue, it is also significant that Zeami recognized derangement as a result of emotional conflict, even though it was generally believed in his time that derangement was due to external forces such as spirit possession.\textsuperscript{114} However, it must be clarified that Zeami’s awareness of madness as a result of a disturbed mind has much to do with its theatrical effects. In general, the monogurui motif was used in the following

\textsuperscript{113} Quinn, 2005, 10.

\textsuperscript{114} Hosokawa, 1993, 24. Tsuchiya Keiichirō argues it is significant that Zeami identified the source of derangement as a work of one’s own mind instead of external forces such as spirit possession. This idea of Zeami’s is very modern. Ōtani Setsuko notes Zeami established the view in which derangement was seen as a psychological problem. (Hosokawa 1993, 39)
two types of scenarios. Two types of madness are identified in madwoman plays: derangement due to spirit possession (tsukimono ni yoru monogurui) and derangement due to excessive affection (omohi yue no monogurui). The cause of madness expressed in Noh plays is not, however, always apparent. The line between derangement due to excessive affection and derangement due to spirit possession is blurred in some Noh plays such as Matsukaze (Pining Wind, revised by Zeami)\textsuperscript{115} and Izutsu (The Well-Cradle, Zeami). In Izutsu, due to excess affection for her lover Narihira, the female character appears as a ghost, and she dances as if possessed by Narihira’s spirit, wearing her lover’s robe. Matsukaze is another example in which a female character, Matsukaze, becomes deranged as if possessed, upon donning her late lover Yukihiro’s robe. Kitagawa points out that Matsukaze becomes possessed at this point,\textsuperscript{116} while Hosokawa Ryūichi argues that the ghost of the fisher girl Matsukaze is aware of her identity in her state of derangement wearing Yukihiro’s robe. Therefore, the cause of her derangement is her excessive affection for Yukihiro, not spirit possession.\textsuperscript{117} The two types of madness are also differentiated from each other by whether the character is aware of her state of madness or not. As Hosokawa notes, in a spirit possession scene the possessed is supposed to be unaware of her state of derangement, while a female character who slips into an altered state of consciousness as a result of her own mental anguish is aware of her state of madness.\textsuperscript{118} Whether the character is aware or unaware of her madness, or

\textsuperscript{115} For more details about authorship, see Royall Tyler, ed. and trans., Japanese Nō Dramas (London, Penguin, 1992), 183.

\textsuperscript{116} Kitagawa Tadahiko, Zeami (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1980), 115.

\textsuperscript{117} Hosokawa, 1993, 34. For detailed discussion of Izutsu, see Hosokawa 1993, 35-36.

\textsuperscript{118} Hosokawa, 1993, 39.
the degree of her awareness, is, however, not articulated in the script. I would argue that it is determined by the mutual interpretation of the performer and audience.

Zeami composed or revised a number of plays featuring women who become deranged while being torn away from loved ones. In so doing, as Oda Sachiko points out, Zeami succeeded in expressing the sadness of a madwoman while achieving striking theatrical effects of derangement.\textsuperscript{119} In the condition of monogurui, the characters reveal what would normally remain repressed, such as their sexuality. In Shūgyoku tokuka, Zeami describes the performance of the deranged or possessed female role as a “charming effect.” The original Japanese word for “charming effect” is iroka. Its literal meaning is color and fragrance, but it also indicates eros or sensuality. Interpreting it as eros, Oda discusses eroticism in depictions of women in Noh, which I address further in the following chapters.\textsuperscript{120}

\textbf{Representational Medieval Mad Character Types}

Noh plays are often categorized based on the principal actor’s characteristics or identity. Zeami introduces in Sandō, four types of personages as suitable types for the Noh principal actor: “figures that perform kagura [Shinto hymns involving singing and dancing], men associated with the arts, women associated with the arts, and hōka entertainers.”\textsuperscript{121} The quintessence of men associated with the arts are, for Zeami,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[119] Oda explicates monogurui nō (Noh plays featuring madness) in Nishino Haruo, and Hata Hisashi, eds, Nō kyōgen jiten (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 333.
\item[121] ZZ Sandō, 134. Quinn 2005, 123. “Kagura is a generic term for song and dance performed in the context of Shintō-related rituals.” For more discussion on Kagura, see Quinn 2005, 123.
\end{footnotes}
Ariwara no Narihira (825-880) and Ōtomo no Kuronushi (ninth century), two famous Heian poets, and Hikaru Genji, the protagonist of the eleventh-century classic *The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari)* by Murasaki Shikibu.¹²²

*Hōka* is the prototypical character of a type of play called *yükyō* or “playful madness,” as the *monogurui* character is in *monogurui* plays.¹²³ *Monogurui* not only indicates the condition in which one loses mental equilibrium, but also refers to (a) a person in such a condition or (b) such a display of madness in a performance. For Zeami, *yükyō* is the purview of professional performers. As he discusses in *Sandō*, Zeami’s *yükyō* is closely related to the role called *hōka*, which indicates a type of popular male entertainer in medieval Japan skilled in singing, dancing, and playing instruments.¹²⁴ Quinn clarifies Zeami’s idea on *yükyō* type performers being “motivated to perform—and to perhaps forget themselves—as part of their calling...” In Miyake Kōichi’s words, “...It is not the brand of madness associated with the mental patient, but poetic behavior purified of all worldly calculation.”¹²⁵ Madness presented as entertainment is found in *yükyō* plays. The line between entertainment and madness is blurred in the *yükyō* type of plays on the Noh stage. *Yükyō mono* or *yükyō* pieces feature a character who often loses himself while being moved by the beauty of the environment. The etymology of *yükyō* consists of two morphemes, *yū* (generally understood as “play” associated with

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¹²² *ZZ Sandō*, 134. For an annotated translation of Zeami on this point, see Quinn 2005, 293 and 382n8.

¹²³ Zeami lists Jinen Koji, Kagetsu, Tōgan Koji, and Seigan Koji as *hōka* (itinerant entertainers dressed as lay Buddhist priests) of the *yükyō* type. For further discussion of Zeami’s idea on *hōka* and *yükyō*, see Quinn, 2005, 293 and 382-383n12.

¹²⁴ For more on *hōka*, See Quinn, 2005, 122-124.

¹²⁵ Quinn, 2005, 382-383n12.
“pleasure”) and kyō (often translated as madness and derangement). The term indicates an intricate relationship between madness and performance. In modern times, the morpheme yū (a Chinese pronunciation adapted for Japanese) or asobi (the Japanese word written with the same) often connotes “dissipation” or “diversion” in contrast to “work.” Different uses of asobi are found in various dictionaries of earlier Japanese: recreation, hunting, play, music, and dance. These are all activities that distract the mind, relax, or entertain. In ancient times the Chinese character with which yū or asobi was written was used to signify entertainment in connection with religious rites. This association between yū/asobi and ritual is an important aspect of the origin of the word as it implies “spirit pacification.” The term asobi-be (the ancient royal morticians) can also be interpreted as a form of “diversion” in the sense that the men to whom it referred, distracted the minds of people grieving over the loss of family members by reciting poems of praise, eulogies, and appeasement for the spirits.

Besides two Heian poetesses Ise no Go (also known as Ise no Miyasudokoro (ca. 875-ca. 938), and Ono no Komachi (ninth century), as women associated with the arts, Zeami lists female entertainers such as Giō and Gijo (also read Ginyo; shirabyōshi dancers in The Tale of the Heike, or Heike monogatari), Shizuka Gozen (twelfth century),

128 Saeki gives an example of the use of asobi in this sense in the first literary work in the history of Japan, Kojiki, or “Record of Ancient Matters” (712). She points out that asobi was used in “...hi yō ka yō ya yo asobi kī,” meaning [after the death of a man, his wife and his father] have spent eight days and eight nights pacifying the spirit of the dead. Saeki claims that this implication of the word asobi, “pacifying a spirit (tamashii o nagusamu) explains why the ancient royal morticians were called asobi-be in Yūjo no bunkashi, 4th ed. (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1988), 21-22. Akima Toshio also suggests that the asobi-be was “probably a group of shamans in charge of the appeasement of the spirits of dead emperors...” in “Song of the Dead: Poetry, Drama, and Ancient Death Rituals of Japan,” Journal of Asian Studies 41, no. 3 (May 1982): 490. Asobi-be also, as Gary L. Ebersole points out, recited eulogies and poems of praise in Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989), 155.
who was a famous shirabyōshi associated with Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1189),
the influential warrior of the Minamoto clan, and also the half-brother of the head of the
clan, Yoritomo, and Hyakuman, a legendary female kusemai dancer (fourteenth
century).\textsuperscript{129}

There were in fact many episodes about celebrated shirabyōshi that have been
handed down through the centuries. The Noh plays Hotoke no hara (author unknown)
and Giō (author unknown), for instance, feature shirabyōshi named Hotoke Gozen and
Giō respectively. Both of them were favored by Taira no Kiyomori, the head of the
ruling Taira clan and one of the most dominant political figures in the twelfth century.
Futari Shizuka (The Two Shizukas, author unknown), Yoshino Shizuka (Lady Shizuka in
Yoshino by Kan’ami), and Funabenkei (Benkei on Board by Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu
1435-1516) also deal with Shizuka.

Zeami refers to these women as yūjo, “accomplished female artists.” The word
yūjo consists of two morphemes, yū and jo (woman). As I mentioned earlier, yū is
generally understood as “play,” but is strongly associated with “pleasure.” According to
Dai Nihon hyakka jiten (The Large Encyclopedia of Japan), by the tenth century
prostitutes in Japan began to settle in cities, towns, and near temples and shrines, and
increased in number rapidly. Prostitutes from both the lower and upper classes began to
appear. By the twelfth century these women who had settled in such areas began to
develop a system of social relations; they were called yūjo or female
entertainer/prostitute. Some of them became chōja or brothel mistresses.\textsuperscript{130} The

\textsuperscript{129} ZZ Sandō, 134. For an annotated translation, see Quinn 2005, 293 and 382n9.
\textsuperscript{130} Ono Takeo, Yūjo to kuruwa no zushi (Tokyo: Tenbōsha, 1983), 76-77.
protagonist of the Noh play *Eguchi* fits this prototype. Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira interpret the theme of *Eguchi*, in which a *yūjo* is transformed into a bodhisattva Fugen (Samantabhadra) or the Bodhisattva Universally Worthy,\(^{131}\) in the following way: if one is accomplished in *shīka-bukyoku*, that is, chanting Chinese and Japanese poetry, dancing, and music, one will be able to reach enlightenment.\(^{132}\)

Interestingly, while Zeami differentiates male poets from male entertainers as suitable types for the principal actor, he does not differentiate female poets from female entertainers, who were often associated with prostitution. The three historical and fictional Heian poets he mentions are aristocrats, while medieval *hōka* entertainers are more or less street performers. The difference in social class may explain why Zeami differentiates between these two groups of male “artists.” However, he does not use the same criteria for female artists. The Heian poetesses that he mentions are daughters of more established social classes than the *shirabyōshi*. The latter were professional performers, and first appeared in the late Heian period, around the twelfth century.\(^{133}\) Although they were singers of *imayō* (songs in the modern style) and dancers, they also engaged in prostitution. *Shirabyōshi* wore special costumes, dressing like men, wearing the *hitahire*, a long divided skirt for men, a nobleman’s tall headdress, called *tate-eboshi*, and a sword. As Nakayama Tarō points out, however, *shirabyōshi* were considered more respectable and sophisticated than other female entertainers because many of them were

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\(^{131}\) The bodhisattva Fugen is an important bodhisattva in Mahāyāna Buddhism as well as in the *Lotus Sutra*, especially associated with the Buddha’s *risēi*, or reasoning power. Inoue Mitsusada, ed., *Zusetsu rekishi sanpo jiten*, 2nd ed., (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1983), 283.

\(^{132}\) Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira, ed., *Yōkyokushū* 1, 4th ed., *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 40 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1964), 49. This collection is hereafter referred to as NKBT.

accomplished in chanting imayō, which expressed or somehow reflected Buddhist doctrines.\textsuperscript{134} They were also frequently invited to perform by emperors, courtiers and upper class warriors. It is, for instance, well-known that the Retired Emperor Go-Toba (1180-1239) loved a shirabyōshi named Kamegiku and had sexual relations with her. Nishiguchi Junko also mentions that Kamegiku was from the group of shirabyōshi whose origins traced back to shrine maidsens (miko).\textsuperscript{135} It is also known that the Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127-92) himself engaged in studying and chanting imayō, and invited shirabyōshi to the court. He also compiled a collection of imayō, Ryōjinhishō (Songs to Make the Dust Dance), in 1179. The reason why shirabyōshi were favored by emperors and the upper classes is not only because they excelled in appearance and presented themselves attractively, but also because they were skilled in their performance and familiar with traditional songs such as kagura and saibara (folk songs sung to the accompaniment of a harp, flute, lute, or flageolet) as well as modern songs such as imayō and rōei (sung Chinese poems).\textsuperscript{136} Over time, however, they came to rely more and more on prostitution for patronage and thus also came to be called yūjo. Miyagi Eishō et al., mention two factors explaining the shirabyōshi’s change in professional role from artistic performers for aristocrats to prostitutes for commoners: the development of cities and transportation systems and the increase in taxes in the medieval period.\textsuperscript{137} It is probable that the increase in taxes created desperate conditions in which poor families sold their

\textsuperscript{134} Nakayama Tarō, Baishō Sanzennenshi (Tokyo: Parutosusha, 1984), 273-274.
\textsuperscript{136} Nakayama, 280-285.
female members outright for money or forced them to work as prostitutes to bring more money to the family. The development of cities and more available transportation could have also increased the demand for prostitutes to provide pleasure, entertainment, and comfort for city dwellers or tourists. The function of professional female performers changed in response to the changes in society.

As I mentioned above, some shirabyōshi such as Giō and Hotoke thus became well-known for being the lovers of historical figures. Their stories were dramatic because their lives were intertwined with and dependent on powerful men. Their stories were intriguing because they lived in the marginal world of entertainers on the low rung of the social ladder, yet were capable of becoming celebrated artists or lovers. Their popularity was based on their physical beauty, fine voices, and extraordinary performance skills; their accomplishments in traditional areas of performance helped to tone down their image as prostitutes.

The close analysis of the morpheme yū as in yūkyō as the purview of professional performers and its association with hōka, one of the four types of personages that Zeami introduces as suitable types for the principal actor helps us understand how madness and entertainment are viewed as closely related to each other in Zeami’s time. Viewing madness as entertainment demonstrates how theatrically effective it is to have a madwoman dance on stage, which I further discuss below.

Monogurui Plays in the Classification Systems of Noh

A number of different classifications of Noh have been established based on the principal actor’s characteristics or identity, the structure of plays, their themes, the
programs, the degree of popularity of specific plays, and so forth. These classifications help us understand how madwoman plays have come to be a part of the repertoire and help us identify some common characteristics among these plays in terms of their function in a larger program of plays.

One of the most important aesthetic concepts in Noh is the three organizational steps: jo (beginning and preparation), ha (breaking), and kyū (lit. rapid or urgent), which Zeami employed as organizing principles in a number of domains. The term jō-ha-kyū is originally associated with gagaku, ancient court music imported to Japan from China, indicating each part is used separately with reference to a particular portion of a gagaku piece. As Quinn points out, however, it is more likely that Zeami’s understanding of the concept originated from renga or linked verse poetics through his contact with a prominent poet of his time, Nijō Yoshimoto (1320-1388). More importantly, she further suggests that the concept which pervades Zeami’s theory of Noh at all levels appears to be largely his own.138 Kenneth Yasuda succinctly conceptualizes the jo-ha-kyū. Jo is slow and deliberate, ha builds and vacillates, kyū reaches a state of controlled frenzy. What Yasuda refers to here as “a state of controlled frenzy” is what builds to a climax according to the musical concept of the traditional court music (gagaku) that Zeami borrowed.139 Mark Nearman, in his analysis of one of Zeami’s treatises, Kakyō, elucidates the concept of jo-ha-kyū as follows:

Jo, ‘preface, the beginning [item in a series]’, referred to a slow and dignified tempo used for the opening part of a dance or for the music accompanying the ‘procession’ of the dancers onto stage. Ha, literally

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138 For further discussion of jo-ha-kyū in gagaku, see Quinn, 2005, 127-129.
139 Yasuda, 5.
‘break, rupture’, designated a shift to a somewhat faster tempo. Kyū, ‘hurry’, referred to an even more rapid tempo used to conclude the piece.\textsuperscript{140}

This concept of jo-ha-kyū is incorporated in every aspect of the art of Noh, including the compilation of the program, the composition of plays, the layout of the performance space, the speed of performance, as well as the internal structure of a play.\textsuperscript{141} In the treatise Kakyō Zeami discusses the jo-ha-kyū principle in terms of the relative tempos of plays in a day’s program.

Since the term jo means “beginning,” the first Noh of the day should embody a basic style and posture, and be felicitous in nature without any complex detail… The second Noh, being a part of the jo mode, must have no complex detail, yet be vigorous while maintaining gracefulness. This type of play should be based on authentic sources… The focal play of the program, the third play of the day, begins the ha section and should display more complex and refined acting techniques… From the third play onward, included in the ha section, the performer should make every effort to perform well… Breaking up the mode of jo, the ha section allows the performer to display all his talents. Extending the limits of the ha in the kyū section, the performer should perform vigorously and dance a rapid dance in order to dazzle the eyes of the spectators.\textsuperscript{142}

Zeami claims that if a program enters the kyū phase too soon and the span of the kyū is prolonged, the rapid pace of the kyū cannot be sustained. Therefore, to maintain the


\textsuperscript{142} ZZ Kakyō, 90-91. For the full translation of this section, see Tom Hare, trans. Zeami: Performance Notes (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 105-106, Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 83-85 and Komparu, 26-27.
effect of the jo-ha-kyū rhythm, the ideal Noh program devotes the longest time to the plays performed in the ha category.\textsuperscript{143}

In Zeami’s day, the number of plays performed in a program was not fixed. In \textit{Shūdōsho} (Learning the way, 1430), Zeami makes the following comment:

Formerly, a program of \textit{nō} included no more than four or five plays. These days as well, as concerns performances at sacred festivals and at subscription performances, usually three \textit{nō} plays and two \textit{kyōgen} pieces are selected, making a total of five. Recently, however, when plays are performed at the request of the nobility, the number of plays requested has increased, so that seven, eight, even ten plays are included. Since such programs are presented by command, however, an actor is obliged to accept them.\textsuperscript{144}

The traditional organization of a Noh performance program, called \textit{gobandate} (five-play program), was not fully established until the Edo period. In this scheme, the first play is a \textit{kami-mono} (a deity play, also referred to as \textit{waki nō}),\textsuperscript{145} in which the protagonist is typically a Shintō deity. As an introductory \textit{jo} play, this type of play is composed primarily of \textit{nikyoku} and having little in the way of detailed dramatic scenes. The second is a \textit{shura-mono},\textsuperscript{146} in which the protagonist is usually the ghost of a legendary warrior. The third is a \textit{kazura-mono} (wig play) in which a female protagonist typically performs an elegant dance. The fourth would be a \textit{zatsu-mono} (miscellaneous play, also referred to

\textsuperscript{143} ZZ \textit{Kakyaō}, 91.

\textsuperscript{144} Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 170-171. For the original text, see ZZ \textit{Shūdōsho}, 239.

\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Waki nō} literally means “side play.” It is said that this type of play came to be called \textit{waki nō} because it was originally performed following a ceremonial play known as \textit{Shikisanban} (the three rites, also referred to as \textit{Okina}, or old man). For more details, see Koyama Hiroshi and Satō Ken’ichirō, ed. and trans. \textit{Yōkyokushū} 1, SNKBZ 58 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997), 532-533.

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Shura} is an abbreviation of \textit{ashura}, or Asura; “Ugly devils who live by the seashore and dote on fighting. Under the leadership of their King, Asura, they wage constant war against the god Indra (Taishakuten).” Helen Craig McCullough, trans., \textit{The Tale of the Heike} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 477
as yo-ban-me mono, or “fourth piece”), perhaps a madwoman play or some other play that does not fit in the other categories. While the second play also has some ha elements, the third and fourth plays have predominant ha elements, revealing dramatic intensity and complexity. The fifth play in the typical gobandate is an oni-mono (demon play, also referred to as kiri-Noh, or final play), which is the kyū component, having the greatest intensity of movement, with supernatural characters such as demons cast as the protagonists.147

In the Edo classificatory system of Noh programs (gobandate), the madwoman motif plays were situated in the program’s fourth phase. As Nogami Toyoichirō argues, this may have much to do with the fact in which plays on the madwoman motif outnumber those of the madman motif. Nogami notes that the last 500 years of Noh performance history suggests that there was a tendency in which a play featuring a female character was placed in the fourth position in a full day program. He concludes that including at least two plays with a female protagonist in the five-play program must have been considered appropriate. Repetition is, however, a taboo for any kinds of art form, as he comments. Therefore the woman play introduced after a wig play should be more upbeat, rhythmical, and active, focusing more on ninjō (human feelings), which makes it easier to empathize with the character.148 The term ninjō suggests the range of human emotions such as sympathy, compassion, love, and friendship. After a wig play, which typically highlights the feminine beauty with a slow dance, it would be effective to place a play featuring a more dramatic female character, such as a madwoman motif piece. An

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147 For more detailed explanation of gobandate, see Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 1, SNKBZ 58, 532-533.

expression of a disturbed state of mind, for example, also requires swift movements. The rapid tempo of madwoman plays makes it perfect for the fourth category play, followed as it is by the final fast-paced kyū mode of the program. With the effect of strong ‘breaking’ (ha) elements, madwoman plays were highlights of the Edo period’s daylong program of Noh category. Madwoman plays are more frequently performed than other types, which I discuss further below in my discussion of classification of Noh.

In order to organize a full day Noh program, classifications of plays are thus fully taken into consideration. There were, however, other important elements that affected the way in which the Edo traditional program was organized. As Andrew Gerstle notes, for example, such a traditional program is organized to take the audience through a journey.

Auspicious plays begin and conclude the program. In contrast, the middle plays generally are tragic. The warrior, woman, and demon dramas all depict suffering in one of the Buddhist samsaric realms in retribution for transgressions in former lives. This pattern of auspicious beginning, journey through the agonies of hell, and return to the auspicious ending, is what I call the cyclical journey or progression of Japanese drama…In religious terms, the purpose of the imaginative cyclical journey in which the audience participates is a kind of “awakening.” In the terms of Western dramaturgy, “catharsis” might describe the intended effects of such a performance.149

In this journey of religious “awakening” or “catharsis” of emotions, plays featuring those who are in agony, such as the deranged characters in madwoman plays, highlight the journey that the audience goes through. As Zeami mentions in Kaden, he considered the condition of monogurui to be the most challenging aspect of performing female roles.

Such challenging aspects of madwoman plays also situate them in the process of transition from the heart of the *ha* phase to the final *kyū* phase of a five-play program. In *Kakyo*, Zeami says, “The term *ha* requires breaking the mood of *jo*, and is an art that brings complexity and great artistic skill to the performance.”

The *jo-ha-kyū* principle is important to our understanding of the function of performance of *monogurui* and its popularity. Today it is rare for a sequence of five Noh plays to be performed at one time. Typically, two or three Noh plays are performed, with one selected from either the second or third categories, i.e. a warrior play and a wig play, and one or two more from the fourth miscellaneous play and fifth demon play categories. For its integrated dramaturgical effects (including maintaining the *jo-ha-kyū* rhythm in a day’s program) as discussed above, a madwoman motif play seems to have been more frequently performed than other types. This demonstrates one aspect of the complex contexts behind the enduring popularity of madwoman motif Noh drama.

**Chronological Overview of Noh Plays in the Monogurui Style**

More than 2,500 plays have been composed since the Muromachi period (1336-1573) and 250 of them are still performed today. Collections of Noh librettos often select two hundred plays organized into two groups based on popularity: *uchi-hyakuban* (lit. ‘inner 100 plays’) and *soto-hyakuban* (lit. ‘outer 100 plays’). This grouping based on popularity is not standardized, however. Half of the Noh plays featuring madwoman

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150 Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 84. For the original text, see ZZ *Kakyo*, 90-91.
151 *No kyōgen jiten*, 283.
152 For more details on collections of Noh librettos, see Yokomichi Mario, , SNKBT 57, 1-2.
are, for example, included in *Kanzeryū yōkyoku hyakuban* (Kanze Canon of the First Hundred Noh).

In *Yōkyoku nihyakugejōban shū* (The Collection of 250 Noh librettos; 1978), as listed in *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*, there are ninety-seven plays that constitute the fourth category of plays, the miscellaneous grouping. The *kyōjo-mono* (madwoman plays) are subset of this fourth of five categories of plays. There are more plays in the fourth-category than any other category: forty-two plays in the first-category, sixteen in the second, forty-seven in the third, ninety-seven in the fourth, and fifty in the fifth. In the fourth category, twenty-two plays feature madwoman characters while six to eight plays depict madmen.\(^{153}\) Prototypical madwoman plays are referred to as *kyōjo-mono* (a madwoman piece). Yet, this ‘madwoman piece’ labeling is not universal. In *Nō kyōgen jiten* (Dictionary of Noh and Kyōgen), for example, only the following fifteen plays are classified as *kyōjo-mono*. *Hyakuman* (revised by Zeami)\(^{154}\) and *Kashiwazaki* (revised by Zeami) are considered older plays as they were revised by Zeami and first mentioned in *Sandō*.\(^{155}\) The following plays are assumed to have been composed before 1430 as they were first mentioned in his later treatise, *Sarugaku dangi: Hanagatami* (The Flower Basket, Zeami), *Hanjo* (Lady Han, Zeami), *Hibariyama* (Mt. Hibari, author unknown), *Minazukibarae* (The June Purification Rite, Zeami?), *Sakuragawa* (The Cherry-Blossom River, Zeami), *Seminaru* (Zeami?), and *Sumidagawa* (The Sumida River, Motomasa). The following plays were not mentioned in Zeami’s

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\(^{153}\) For more on plays in this collection, see Miner, Odagiri, and Morrell, 356-357.

\(^{154}\) I am basing my attributions of authorship on *Nō kyōgen jiten*.

\(^{155}\) I am basing my chronological order of plays on Takemoto Mikio and Hashimoto Asao, eds., *Nō, kyōgen hikkei, Bessatsu Kokubungaku*, no. 48 (1995).
treatises: *Kamo monogurui* (The Madwoman at Kamo Festival, author unknown), *Miidera* (Mii Temple, author unknown), *Rōdaiko* (Prison Drum, author unknown) and *Torioibune* (Bird-Chasing Boat, author unknown). *Asukagawa* (The Asuka River, author unknown) is considered composed after the stylistic norms of plays on the *monogurui* theme had been established.  

156 *Fujidaiko* (The Fuji Drum, author unknown) is also considered composed later, as the first performance record dates from 1516.  

In *Nō kyōgen jiten*, the following five plays are classified as pieces featuring a madman (*otoko monogurui*): *Kōya monogurui* (The Madman at Mt. Kōya, authorship unknown) and *Tango monogurui* (The Madman of Tango, revised by Zeami) are mentioned in *Sandō* and predate Zeami. *Tsuchiguruma* (The Wheelbarrow) is attributed to Zeami, and *Utaura* (Fortune Telling by Poems) to Motomasa. According to *Nō kyōgen hikkei* (Handbook on Noh and Kyōgen), *Ashikari* (The Reed Cutter) was revised by Zeami.  

158 The *monogurui* type of play featuring a madman, such as *Tsuchiguruma* or *Kōya monogurui*, was believed to have been composed prior to *monogurui* plays featuring madwomen. Ōtani Setsuko points out that, as seen in *Kōya monogurui*, the plot in which a person loses his mind after taking the tonsure out of grief for the loss of a child and searching for the missing child seems to have become a prototype of *monogurui* plays.  

159 She argues that the emphasis in motherhood in this type of *monogurui* plot is a

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156 Takemoto and Hashimoto, *Nō, kyōgen hikkei*, 57.
158 Takemoto and Hashimoto, *Nō, kyōgen hikkei*, 57.
later development based on early male monogurui plays.\textsuperscript{160} In the following chapter I will further discuss an exemplary play on the monogurui motif in which a mother’s suffering due to separation from her child is depicted.

According to the data on the number of plays performed by the Kanze School between 1950 and 2000, the most frequently performed play is a third category wig play, \textit{Hagoromo} (The Feather Mantle, author unknown), performed 1,509 times between 1950 and 2000. The second most popular play, \textit{Aoi no Ue} (revised by Zeami), featuring a spirit possession, was performed 1,361 times. The following eight madwoman plays were also performed frequently: \textit{Hanjo, Sumidagawa, Hyakuman, Hanagatami, Miidera, Fujidaiko, Rōdaiko,} and \textit{Sakuragawa} were performed 778, 762, 655, 636, 338, 213, and 173 times respectively for those 50 years.\textsuperscript{161} This is a significant number as there is a standard repertoire of about 250 Noh plays performed today, and only eleven out of 250 are classified as madwoman plays.

Most of the fourth-category miscellaneous plays center on characters alive in this world while in the second warrior- and third wig-category plays, the protagonist often reveals his/her true identity as a ghost or spirit of a person from the past. Spirit possession plays are, for example, typically staged in the dramatic present, and their protagonists are living persons. Modern scholars classify this type of play as a \textit{genzai nō} or “present-time” play, while a play in which the protagonist reveals his/her true identity

\textsuperscript{160} Ōtani, 2003, 35.

\textsuperscript{161} This is based on the data on the number of plays performed by Kanze School between 1950 and 2000. For more details, see http://jiuxia.web.fc2.com/tokei/WebTBL2.htm.
as a spirit of a person from the past as a *mugen nō* or “dream play.” The *mugen* classification is based on the structure of these plays. I will further discuss *mugen nō* in Chapter 4.

As previously mentioned, earlier forms of feminine derangement often appear as a result of spirit possession. Komachi in *Sotoba komachi* (Komachi on the Stupa, by Kan'ami) becomes deranged while possessed by her lover who died trying to visit her for a hundred consecutive nights. Lady Rokujō, a lover of Hikaru Genji, also appears in *Aoi no Ue* as an angry spirit and torments Aoi no Ue, the principal wife of Genji.

Not all plays featuring spirit possession are older plays, however. *Utaura* and *Makiginu* (Rolls of Silk, author unknown) both feature *kamigakari* or trance-induced divine messages. *Utaura* is attributed to Motomasa, and first mentioned in Zeami’s treatise *Goon* (The Five Vocal Sounds; undated). It was probably composed using spirit possession as a motif. *Makiginu* is also a spirit-possession play centered on the trance of a shaman who speaks for a god. This play reflects the ancient belief in shamanistic spirit possession. I discuss these two plays in detail in Chapter 5.

A dramatic plot-driven spirit possession play such as *Fujidaiko* appeals to late Muromachi sensitivities, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. *Fujidaiko* centers on dramatic plot development, unlike some earlier madwoman plays, which focus more on the manifestation of a separation or release from self that is caused by external forces such as spirits. In *Fujidaiko* a wife who laments the murder of her husband by a rival drummer becomes momentarily ‘possessed’ by his spirit as she puts on his robe and

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162 For more explanation of these two classifications on Noh repertoire, see Frank Hoff and Willi Flindt, eds., "The Life Structure of Noh" (Adapted from the Japanese of Yokomichi Mario), *Concerned Theatre Japan*, no. 2 (1973): 213-214 and Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, NKBT 40, 7-10.
conveys her husband’s resentment over the injustice done to him. One element that makes this play dramatic is that it is not apparent whether the wife is ‘possessed’ by his spirit or using the ostensible ‘possession’ as a means of protest and self-expression.

Madwoman plays from Zeami’s time or thereafter often feature women who become deranged due to the loss of or separation from loved ones. As previously noted, a number of Noh plays feature a mother who becomes crazy after her child is lost or kidnapped. *Hyakuman, Kashiwazaki, Sakuragawa, Miidera, Sumidagawa* and *Asukagawa* are prototypes of such plays. In *Minazukibarae* and *Kamo monogurui*, a wife becomes deranged longing for her absent husband. Both *Kamo monogurui* and *Minazukibarae* are happy-ending stories about a deranged wife whose husband returns home to find her dancing in this condition. *Minazukibarae*, first mentioned in *Goon*, was probably composed by Zeami, as I mentioned earlier. *Kinuta* (*The Fulling Block, Zeami*) also features a wife who reveals her altered state of consciousness in the depths of longing for her absent husband. Although *Kinuta* is not a play belonging to the formal *monogurui* classification, it too features a woman who slips into an altered state of consciousness. However, in contrast to the demonstrativeness of a *monogurui* character, the woman featured in *Kinuta* cannot vent her sufferings and dies from the intensified emotions that she keeps pent up. Zeami composed *Kinuta* late in his career.\(^{163}\)

*Hanagatami* and *Hanjo* feature women who lose their mental equilibrium when separated from their lovers. Zeami probably composed these two plays and *Sakuragawa* some time before 1430, as he mentioned them in *Goon* and *Sarugaku dangi*. *Hibariyama* features a nursemaid’s affection for her princess. The name of this play also first appears

\(^{163}\)Takemoto and Hashimoto, *Nō, kyōgen hikkei*, 71.
in *Sarugaku dangi*. All of these women become deranged due to extreme attachment to loved ones. However, at the end all of these plays, except for the tragedy of *Sumidagawa*, the separated ones are reunited. By 1430, the prototype for the madwoman play probably had been established.

Musical Infrastructure of *Monogurui* Plays

One of the characteristics of the structure of madwoman plays lies in the three climax structures, *kakeri, kurui*, and *kuse*. The music infrastructure of Noh was not absolutely fixed in Zeami’s time. However, as Komparu Kunio, a modern Noh actor succinctly describes it, the extant Noh librettos show that, “…a Noh is composed of a series of *shōdan*, sections in set forms with defined uses. The process of composition is a process of selection and combination of *shōdan*, in accordance with a number of rules and conventions.”¹⁶⁴ Many Noh plays can also be divided into two sections: section one (*maeba*) and section two (*nockiba*). The first section ends with the exit of the principal actor from the stage. In the second section, the principal actor returns to the stage in his or her new identity. Furthermore, each ‘section’ (*ba*) can be divided into five segments (*dan*), which are based on the function of the principal actor or supporting actor (*waki*). For example, the scene in which the principal actor enters can be designated as a segment. *Shōdan* (a modern term) is based on the linguistic and rhythmic characteristics of the section. *Shōdan* can be further divided into seven categories, according to similar criteria. One such category is the *kuse*. Lastly, some *shōdan* can be also divided into

smaller units called *setsu*, based on the various pitch patterns of the chants or rhythmic patterns of the instruments.\(^{165}\)

The roots of the *kuse* lie in a dance piece called *kusemai*, which developed between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Kan’ami is known for integrating *kusemai* into Noh plays. *Kuse* can be thought of as that section of the performance in which the epic starts to unfold through choral chanting, often highlighted by the dance of the principal actor. A typical modern or post-Zeami *kuse* dance consists of three major sequences: an initial left circle sequence, a middle zigzag sequence, and a closing left circle sequence. These movements usually take the principal actor from upstage to downstage and back. The sequences, however, constitute only an outline of the *kuse*. Dances are routinely abbreviated or expanded to fit the libretto, as well as in response to the particulars of the performance such as audience characteristics or the occasion of the performance. The principal actor picks up on the performance environment and shapes the dance accordingly. *Kurui* is another category of *shōdan* in which the chorus typically describes the condition of madness.\(^{166}\) The structure of *Sakuragawa*, in this regard, is not that of typical madwoman plays. In this play, *kuse* and *kurui* are merged into one, reaching a climax gradually toward the end of the play.\(^{167}\)

*Kakeri*, another category of *shōdan*, expresses the distressed character’s state of mind. The agony is expressed with two sequences of choreographic movements: the left

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\(^{165}\) These definitions are based on my reading of Frank Hoff and Willi Flindt, eds., "The Life Structure of Noh" (Adapted from the Japanese of Yokomichi Mario), *Concerned Theatre Japan*, no. 2 (1973): 218-233. For more explanation of *shōdan*, see Nishino Haruo, SNKBT 57, 9-13 and 738-739.

\(^{166}\) For more on *kurui*, see its entry by Okuyama Keiko in Nishino and Hata, 305.

\(^{167}\) For further discussion of this effect, see Yashima Masaharu, *Zeami no nō to geiron* (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1985), 638-639. Yashima notes that this structure is similar to that of *Tango monogurui*. 

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circling and the right circling. 168 Monica Bethe and Karen Brazell delineate this type of dance: “This [kakeri] dance expresses anguish largely through changes in tempo.” “The tension caused by unexpected speeding up and slowing down of the movements reflects the agony of the character who is suffering the loss of a lover or child, or a warrior suffering in hell.” Bethe and Brazell also describe another type of dance: “…it [the iroe dance] does not express any particular meaning or state of mind; it is a purely formal dance which serves as a decoration, a touch of added beauty.” “This is the most elegant and dance-like of the action pieces [hatarakigoto].” 169

Bethe and Brazell further note how suffering may also be indicated by a costuming convention in which the right arm is slipped out of the sleeve of the outer garment. In the case of a madwoman like the mother in Sakuragawa, they explain that the kakeri dance is part of the principal’s entrance in act two in which she appears as a traveler dressed in a traveling robe (mizugoromo) and searching for her loved one. 170

Focusing on the same play’s structure, Takemoto Mikio points out that in monogurui Noh plays, the principal actor’s entrance scene is the focal point of the play. A series of the shōdan of the entrance scene usually consists of sashi or naming (“shōdan with a rhythm not following a beat and spoken as ‘recitative.’”), 171 issei or solo voice (shōdan with the basic seven-five rhythm; “one type of entrance song for the waki, in a

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169 Bethe and Brazell 1982, 2: 171-172. For more detailed analysis of these two dances, see Bethe and Brazell 1982, 2: 238-244.
171 Hoff and Flindt, 225.
free rhythm, with a rich melodic style\(^\text{172}\), and *kakeri*. Takemoto suggests that *kakeri* is the embodiment of *monogurui*.\(^\text{173}\)

Takemoto classifies Noh plays featuring *monogurui* due to the parting between a parent and a child into three groups: *tsuihō-gata* or banishment type in which a parent throws the child out of the home; *shukke-gata* or taking-the-tonsure type in which either a parent or a child leaves home to take the tonsure, and *yūkai-gata* or kidnapped-child type in which a child is kidnapped or sells himself or herself into slavery.\(^\text{174}\) *Sakuragawa*, according to this classification, is a kidnapped-child play. Typically, those who accompany the kidnapped child play unique roles.\(^\text{175}\) In analysis of *Sakuragawa*, I discuss the role of the head priest who has custody of the missing child. The pattern in which a missing child is found in the custody of a head priest is also seen in other madwoman plays such as *Miidera*. Hosokawa Ryōichi argues that, in both of these stories, the head priests buy the boys from slave traders to satisfy their sexual desires.\(^\text{176}\) There might be some truth in his argument, but there is no textual evidence to support it.

\(\text{172} \) Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 265.

\(\text{173} \) For more on the structure of the shite’s entrance scene and the function of *kakeri*, see Takemoto, 1999, 220-221.

\(\text{174} \) Takemoto, 1999, 189.

\(\text{175} \) Other plays included in this type are *Kagetsu* and *Miidera*, both of which are older forms of Noh and their authors are unknown. *Hyakuman, Ōsaka monogurui* (The Mad Man at Osaka), *Sakuragawa*, and *Tokusa* (Rush Cutter) were composed or revised by Zeami. For the further analysis of this classification and this role in each play, see Takemoto, 1999, 206. For analysis of *Ōsaka monogurui*, see Sagara Toru, *Zeami no uchū* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1990), 172-173.

\(\text{176} \) Hosokawa 1993, 47.
Situating Monogurui Plays in the Noh Repertoire

As mentioned previously, Noh plays are also often categorized based on the principal actor’s characteristics or identity. The image of women behaving madly is a particularly dominant motif in Noh plays categorized as kyōjo mono (pieces centering on a mad woman), shūnen mono (pieces featuring a deep attachment), onryō mono (pieces with vengeful ghosts), and kijo mono (pieces with female demons). This categorization is established by Nōgaku gihō kenkyūkai (The Research Group of Noh Kyōgen Theatrical Techniques).  

To cite some examples, Tamakazura (The Jeweled Chaplet, Komparu Zenchiku), Ukifune (A Drifting Boat, Yokoo Motohisa and Zeami), and Mitsuyama (The Three Mountains, author unknown), present the distraught ghost of a woman who returns to his world to depict her anguish. Kinuta, as in other mugen nō plays, also centers on a ghost, which I discuss further in Chapter 4. The woman of Kanawa (The Iron Crown, author unknown) is abandoned by her husband, appears as a wraith, and attacks him and his lover. This group of plays is called shūnen mono, pieces about obsessive attachment. The following plays also fall into this category: Aya no tsuzumi (The Damask Drum, author unknown), Koi no omoni (The Burden of Longing, Zeami), Matsura (Matsura Bay, Zeami?), Nishikigi (The Brocade Tree, Zeami). The principal actor in all these plays, except Matsura and Mitsuyama, takes the role of a male character. As Bethe and Brazell note, the ghosts in shūnen mono usually hold a grudge towards a lover who failed

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177 For details, see the introductory notes in Nō kyōgen jiten.
178 For further discussion of types of plays in the fourth category, see Bethe and Brazell, 2: 99-100.
179 I am basing my attributions of authorship on Nō kyōgen jiten.
them in their former lives. Some of these plays, such as Kinuta, have characteristics similar to third category wig plays, while others, such as Dōjōji (Dōjōji Temple, author unknown) and Aoi no Ue— in which the principal actor appears wearing the vengeful horned hannya mask—have much more in common with fifth category demon plays.\footnote{180} In Kanawa and Aoi no Ue, the principal actor becomes obsessioned and deranged out of jealousy and outrage. Her anger intensifies, and eventually she appears as an angry spirit. These female characters display strong and tenacious characteristics. These plays are classified as kijo mono or demonic woman pieces.

Choreography should also be considered in the classifying of monogurui plays. The two major choreographic classifications are the formal dances (mai) and vigorous moves (hataraki), both of which are matched to the instruments. Regarding Zeami’s distinction between the two, Quinn notes “…the vigorous moves tend to be much briefer than the formal dances and are not as finely matched to the flute instrument.”\footnote{181} She further elucidates these two types of movement: “Plays featuring gentle shite [the principal actor], in the venerable or feminine style, tend to include formal dances, whereas warriors, demons, or rambunctious deities are more likely to perform sequences of vigorous moves.”\footnote{182} The majority of madwoman plays draw on the latter type of choreography. Two types of vigorous moves (hataraki) are employed to express madness or derangement in contemporary Noh performance. They are the kakeri and the iroe dances.

\footnote{180} Bethe and Brazell, 2: 98. For further discussion of shōnen mono plays, see Bethe and Brazell, 2: 100.

\footnote{181} Quinn, 2005, 135.

\footnote{182} Quinn, 2005, 135.
Nogami Toyoichirō explains that *kakeri* and *iroe* are both employed to express madness or derangement, and the principal actor typically dances *kakeri* or *iroe* in the beginning or middle of the *ha* section of the play. By this point in the play, the madwoman begins to recover from her agitated state of mind, becomes more conscious of her derangement, and begins to reveal more of her suffering. This suffering is expressed through dance. At the end of the dance she weeps and grieves for her situation.

Some representative plays featuring a madwoman with *kakeri* dances are *Tamakazura*, *Ukifune*, *Hanagatami*, *Mitsuyama*, *Sakuragawa*, *Miidera*, *Kashiwazaki*, *Sumidagawa*, *Seminaru*, and *Rōdaiko*. Madwoman plays with other types of dance such as *iroe*, *tachimawari*, and *gaku* dances, are *Hyakuman* (*tachimawari-mono* or *iroe-mono*), *Fujidaiko* and *Umegae* (*gaku-mono*), and *Sotoba Komachi* (*iroe-mono*). Monogurui plays featuring a madman include *Kōya monogurui* (*chūnomai*), *Ashikari* (*otokomai-mono*), *Tsuchiguruma* (no dance), *Yoroboshi* (The Tottering Beggar, Motomasa, *iroe-mono*), *Utaura* (*kakeri-mono*), and *Tokusa* (*jonomai-mono*). Some madwoman plays, such as *Tamakazura*, *Ukifune*, *Mitsuyama*, and *Kashiwazaki*, consist of two acts, each of which follows the *jo-ha-kyū* structure (referred to as *kazura-mono* style). Others such as *Hanjo*, *Hibariyama*, and *Hanagatami* contain two acts within one articulation of the *jo-ha-kyū* structure (referred to as fourth-category style).

Since Zeami’s time, as Quinn points out, various types of vigorous movement sequences have evolved under the rubric of *hatarakigoto*. “Examples of *hatarakigoto* today are *kakeri*, typically performed by a mad person or the ghost of a warrior, or

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183 Nogami categorizes *Yoroboshi* as a *male monogurui* play. For further discussion of male *monogurui*, see Nogami, *Yōkyoku zenshū*, vol. 3, 199.

184 Nogami, *Yōkyoku zenshū*, vol. 3, 201-205.
maibataraki, performed by demons or other strong beings.” Choreographed movement employed in madwoman plays is a key to understanding how madness is expressed in Noh. These associations between the representation of disturbed, unstable, and excited states of mind and types of choreographed movement also reflect the fact that madness or derangement was also a theatrical device for introducing danced elements on stage that were credible dramatically. Characters in Noh often indicate that they want to watch crazy women dance and sing.

As I mentioned above, in a Buddhist context, a mother being apart from her child was considered a most unbearable kind of suffering. Women are particularly associated with madness in Noh plays. Out of such intense suffering an image of a woman losing her mind might have also been effective to appeal to the audience. Tokue Gensei points out that medieval female street performers often pretended to be insane as a way to protect themselves while on the road. Performances of madness might also have been a means for them to earn money or food while in between towns. For their erotic and sexual appeal, crazy female dancers might also have drawn more attention than their male counterparts.

Shoshana Felman in “Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy” reminds us of the fact that hysteria was originally, and still is, often conceived as a female characteristic. The association of madness and women in the context of medieval Japan may also partly originate from such preconceived gender-based characteristics of

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185 Quinn, 2005, 349n49. For more on hatarakigoto, see Nō kyōgen jiten, 324.
187 Felman, 133.
women. However, as mentioned above, there are many other cultural, social, religious, and theatrical elements to be considered in the relationship between madness and women reflected in Noh. The monogurui motif drama, for example, came to be an essential dramaturgical element of the traditional Noh program. Monogurui is, for another, an effective theatrical means of the expression of human suffering. “The appeal of madwoman plays” in Donald Keene’s words, “lies in their human interest.” Thus Zeami crafted the madwoman role in Noh as a more active vehicle for the expression of agony and sorrow in derangement while maintaining its audience appeal. This demonstrates one aspect of the complex contexts behind the enduring popularity of Noh drama in the madwoman motif.

The following chapter analyzes an exemplary play on the monogurui motif attributed to Zeami and explores how monogurui is depicted in Noh texts and how it is performed and expressed in Noh plays.

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188 Keene, 1993, 1027.
CHAPTER 3

THE NOH PLAY SAKURAGAWA (THE CHERRY-BLOSSOM RIVER)

The study of Zeami’s writings shows his struggle between the need to secure patronage for his troupe’s survival and his desire to pursue the art of sarugaku performance. Such ambivalence is discernible in Zeami’s madwoman plays. This chapter explores Zeami’s innovative use of the onna monogurui motif in the Noh play Sakuragawa. My textual analysis of Sakuragawa reveals how a web of poetic allusions is used to invoke the inner landscape of the protagonist’s madness. By virtue of her monogurui state, the madwoman in Sakuragawa is able to liberate herself briefly from social norms and ethics. She is able to be true to her own innermost feelings, allowing the audience a glimpse of her purity of heart. It is the power of language that invokes the imaginative involvement of the audience rather than the dramatic action per se. Such a pure and uncompromised expression of her emotional caliber is what deeply appeals to audiences.
Separation From A Loved One: A Motif in Buddhist Didactic Narratives

As the Noh play Sakuragawa begins, a slave trader is delivering a letter from a child named Sakurago (Child of the Cherries) to his mother. The boy has sold himself to the slave trader to help his mother. There is also another Noh play featuring a child selling herself to a slave trader, Jinen Koji, in which a girl sells herself to buy a robe to hold a memorial service for her late parents. Stories such as these featuring the motif of filial piety often occur in Buddhist setsuwa (short narratives on Buddhist-related themes). Using the terms “explanatory talk,” “informative narration,” or “telling,” Helen Craig McCullough explains setsuwa as short tales having an uncomplicated plot, with character delineation through dialogue and action rather than description and psychological analysis. She also notes that setsuwa often convey Buddhist messages, relating instances of karmic retribution, recording miraculous events in the lives of eminent monks and the like. Although McCullough’s definition does not specify which setsuwa were created for the purpose of advocating Buddhist teachings, this kind of setsuwa is specifically referred to as bukkyō setsuwa, or “Buddhist narratives.” Although the purposes of setsuwa vary, many have a religious or moral message. The tradition of bukkyō setsuwa began in the Heian Period (794-1185). At that time, many people were curious about discovering possible ways to achieve salvation. Later, during

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189 For discussion of the costuming and plots used in Sakuragawa, see Fujiwara-Skrobak, 197-200.
190 Itō Masayoshi, ed., Yōkyokushū, vol. 2, Shinchō Nihon Koten Shūsei (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1988), 93. This collection is hereafter referred to as SNKS.
192 The nature of bukkyō setsuwa is explained in detail in Kikuchi Ryōichi, Chūsei setsuwa no kenkyū (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1972), 21-60.
the medieval period, some of this interest shifted to learning about *kokoro no arikata*, or the “state of mind’ necessary to reach salvation.\(^\text{193}\) It was believed that the stronger the desire to attain salvation, the more likely it was that one would reach enlightenment. Because salvation was predicated more on the strength of a believer’s desire than on his or her social class or gender, religious salvation was within anyone’s reach.

The motif of the separation from a loved one is often invoked in the early Kamakura Buddhist *setsuwa* such as *Hōbutsushū*. Such separation is considered as the most unbearable of the eight human sufferings, with the worst of the worst being the separation of a parent and a child.\(^\text{194}\) Such intense suffering that originates from excessive affection is typically expressed in plays featuring separation from a loved one. Excessive affection and the pain it engenders often lead us to religion in order to attain salvation. This pattern leads us to explore the religious influence in these plays.

The plot in which a missing child is found in the custody of a head priest in plays featuring a crazy mother not only highlights the suffering of the mother but also leads to witty repartee between her and the head priest, as in the case of another work of the *monogurui* classification, *Miidera*. In this play, a boy named Senmitsu is kidnapped by a slave trader. Years later the child, in the custody of the head priest of Mii Temple in Shiga, meets his mother, who had gone crazy in the aftermath of his disappearance.


\(^{194}\) For further discussion of the separation of a parent and a child, as a motif, see Ōtani, 2003, 26-27.
According to an oracle of Bodhisattva Kannon\textsuperscript{195} at Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto, the mother of Senmitsu visits Mii Temple to find her child who was kidnapped. Lapsing into madness, she strikes the bell of the temple, which attracts the attention of a young monk, who happens to be her missing son.

Unlike Miidera, in Sakuragawa the priest, without realizing that the mad woman is the child’s mother, brings the child to the scene where a mad woman is performing monogurui. He does so in order to entertain the child. The familiar patterns that we find in monogurui plays, such as those featuring a kidnapped child, do not necessarily suggest that kidnapping or buying children was a frequent occurrence at the time when these plays were composed, though it may not have been unheard of. Ōtani, for example, points out that a play such as Sakuragawa belongs to the miuri-gata or kidnapped-child type, or the type having a child that sells him/herself-to-a-slave-trader. Such a kidnapped-type play is most likely developed from didactic story patterns used to promulgate Buddhist teaching, like the shukke-gata or taking-the-tonsure type of play such as Karukaya (Kiami?)\textsuperscript{196} It should be noted that, however, when monogurui plays were first being composed, there were most likely no such frameworks, or at best, these frameworks were still emerging.

\textsuperscript{195} The term Kannon is the abbreviation of Kanzeon. There are also other Japanese terms referring to Avalokitesvara such as Kôseon and Kanjizai bosatsu. Kannon is one of the most important bodhisattvas in Mahâyâna Buddhism. Kannon embodies compassion, one of the two fundamental aspects of buddhahood. Kannon’s motherly image was associated with fertility in Japan. Suzuki Masataka, “Kannon to sei,” Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyôzai no kenkyû 43, no. 5 (1998): 10-11.

\textsuperscript{196} Ōtani, 2003, 33-37.
The Source for the Story Material in *Sakuragawa*

In his discussion of *Sakuragawa*, Itô Masayoshi states that a similar plot in which a child sells himself to a slave trader is found in volume two of *Shijūhyakuinnenshū* (1257), written by Jushin (late 12th – early 13th). According to the story in this medieval *setsuwa*, a twelve-year-old boy decides to sell himself to a slave trader because he can no longer bear to see his poor mother begging for food every day.¹⁹⁷ Itô points out that *oyako monogurui* or parent-child *monogurui* in which a parent, most often a mother, recovers her missing child is a prominent motif in *monogurui* plays. *Sakuragawa*’s plot falls into this pattern: (1) a mother learns that her child has been kidnapped upon receiving a letter; (2) the child, who is in the custody of a priest, appears at a place where he and his mother are reunited; and (3) the priest requests that the mad woman (the mother) dance to entertain the child.¹⁹⁸ Such familiar patterns may have contributed to the popularity of plays featuring *monogurui*. Unlike the character in Buddhist didactic stories, the madwoman in Noh is given a voice, and presented as an independent and cultivated figure.

The fact that some plays featuring a dutiful child who sells him/herself to a slave trader exist does not mean that this phenomenon was common.¹⁹⁹ In fact, Wakita Haruko notes in *Nōgaku no naka no onnatachi* (Women in Noh drama) that it was most likely more common for parents to sell their children to slave traders. She further argues that the reason the latter is not a common theme in Noh plays is because it was considered too

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¹⁹⁷ Itô, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 442-443.
¹⁹⁸ Itô, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 442-443.
pathetic to treat as a theme for plays and, more importantly, such a social problem might have been considered an unpleasant theme for politically powerful patrons.\textsuperscript{200} Also, the \textit{shite} would be a less sympathetic character.

The letter that Sakurago entrusted to a messenger reads: \textit{kono nengetsu no arisama miru mo amari no kanashisa ni hitoakibito ni mi o urite, azuma no kata ni kudari sōrō ...(As I’ve watched, these months and years, the wretched quandary of your life, the sadness of it has proved too much, so I’ve sold myself to a slave trader and gone off to the East.)}\textsuperscript{201} Knowing his mother’s terrible circumstances, Sakurago suggests that she take the tonsure and sell himself to a slave trader. Wakita and Watanabe Tamotsu both argue that the letter implies that the mother prostitutes herself out of poverty to support herself and her son. To support their argument, they maintain that if the above statement only refers to poverty, it is hard to explain why Sakurago asks her to take the tonsure.\textsuperscript{202} The mother’s involvement in prostitution is not, however, explicitly stated in the letter. One may argue that poverty can lead to one’s taking the tonsure. What should be emphasized, however, is that self-sacrifice such as selling oneself to a slave trader, is effective not only in stressing the quintessence of filial piety, but also in highlighting the extremely miserable circumstances into which the mother has fallen.

\textsuperscript{200} Wakita, 2005, 175-176.

\textsuperscript{201} The translation of the play is Huey’s. Robert N. Huey, trans., “\textit{Sakuragawa, Cherry River},” \textit{Monumenta Nipponica} 38.3 (1983): 300. The original text is Itō Masayoshi, ed. \textit{Yōkyokushū} 1, SNKS (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1983), 94.

\textsuperscript{202} For this interpretation, see Wakita, 2005, 173 and Watanabe Tamotsu, \textit{Nō no doramatsurugī} (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995), 193.
The Structure of the Monogurui Noh Drama

As discussed in Chapter 2, the line between entertainment and madness is blurred in the type of play called yükyō mono or ‘playful madness piece’, such as Jinen Kōji. Plays of this type are commonly associated with hōka, popular medieval male artistic entertainers. In the Muromachi period, many hōka dressed as lay Buddhist monks, “probably for the purpose of making Buddhist teaching more accessible to the populace through their art.”

Viewing madness as entertainment is also found in some onna monogurui plays, such as Sakuragawa. As in Jinen Kōji, the mad character in Sakuragawa performs upon request. This type of request is effective in introducing the shite’s dance performance on stage, highlighting the significance of chant and dance as these elements in Noh became more emphasized in Zeami’s time.

In Sakuragawa, out of grief, the mother loses her mind and starts looking for her child. Time passes. The boy is now in the custody of a priest of Isobe Temple in Hitachi, present-day Ibaraki prefecture, which is known for the beautiful river called the Sakuragawa, or ‘Cherry-Blossom River’. The priest sees a madwoman dancing when the cherry blossoms are at their peak. The priest and a villager describe her:

Villager: Yes, indeed, the blossoms are at their peak. And besides that, there’s quite an interesting thing going on here. There’s a madwoman who carries a beautiful scoop-net, and she’s dipping up the cherry petals that are floating in the Cherry River. It really is an extraordinary madness. Why don’t you stop here for a while and let the young child [the Cherry child] see this crazy woman?

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203 Quinn, 2005, 124.
204 This plot is similar to the Noh play Miidera. A boy named Senmitsu is kidnapped by a slave trader. Years later the child, in the custody of the head priest of Miidera, or Mii Temple, meets his mother, who had gone crazy in the aftermath of his disappearance. Hosokawa 1993, 47.
205 Huey, trans., 302.
The priest asks the villager to call the woman and have her bring her scoop-net to perform for the child. As I mentioned above, up to this point, the plot of \textit{Sakuragawa} falls into the pattern of the \textit{monogurui} Noh type. And yet, as Itō argues, unlike in other prototypical \textit{monogurui} plays, in \textit{Sakuragawa} the child recognizes his mother and reports it to the priest, and the priest serves as a mediator.\textsuperscript{206} This structural feature of \textit{Sakuragawa} appears to be Zeami’s innovation.

Interestingly, Ōtani states that the familiar structure of \textit{Sakuragawa}, as in other \textit{onna monogurui} plays, may be a function of the original source material (\textit{honzetsu}).\textsuperscript{207} Ōtani’s assertion is presumably based on Zeami’s idea about ‘the original source material,’ which he articulates in \textit{Kaden}, stressing the importance of composing plays based on folklore or the classics so that the audience can recognize the subject matter of the opening plays of a program. Zeami’s theory of the faithful adaptation of original stories into Noh librettos (\textit{honzetsu tadashi}), however, should be understood in a broader sense. For Zeami, \textit{honzetsu} refers to established sources of story material not only in folklore and the classics, but also in Japanese poetry (\textit{waka}), linked verse (\textit{renga}), and Chinese poems. I argue that in \textit{Sakuragawa}, famous poetry and place names serve as ‘the original source material’. In \textit{Kaden} Zeami also maintains that, when composing plays at the core of the Noh program, it is important to use poetic words and phrases familiar to the audience, so that poetic allusions may be recognized:

\textsuperscript{206} Itō, \textit{Yōkyokushū} 2, SNKS, 442-443.

\textsuperscript{207} Ōtani, 2003, 27.
First of all, in the opening play, the source for the text should be authentic [based on legends or the classics], and the play composed in such a way that from the opening speech on the audience can recognize the subject matter. It is not necessary to compose the text in any complex artistic fashion, but the general effect should be smooth and gentle, while giving a colorful impression from the beginning. On the other hand, when it comes to the plays that make up the rest of the program, they must be composed with the greatest care given to the words and to the general style to be employed. For example, if a play involves a location famous in history, or an ancient spot of interest, it is wise to collect and write into the key passage of the play some poetic phrase the words of which are well known to the audience.208

Here Zeami refers to “waki no sarugaku” (the opening play): plays in this category were typically performed in the beginning jo phase of the program. In his treatise Kakyō Zeami further discusses the function of jo-ha-kyū (introduction, development, and climax): the first Noh of the day in the ‘introduction’ phase should be auspicious in nature without any complex detail, but with a basic style and contour. For the opening play, Zeami thus believes that it is important for the audience to be able to identify the subject matter. For this reason, the effective use of ‘the original source material’ is crucial for composing plays in the ‘introduction’ phase. For the ‘development’ and ‘climax’ phases, Zeami emphasizes the importance of using familiar poetic words, phrases, and place names. He discusses his theory of ‘the original source material’ in most detail in Sandō:

Write down the important content from the original source material for the play into words that open the mind’s ear of the listener, and [this] one auditory dimension—that is, the written word that conveys the import—should blend with the vocal expressiveness and foster an aural impression in which content and expressiveness are as one sound; this is the site for

208 Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 43. For the original text, see ZZ 47.
[actualizing] a deep impression [of the type] to instantly stir the admiration of all.²⁰⁹

“Open the mind’s ear’ is a translation of shinni o hiraku, which refers to “the capacity to perceive at a deeper level than the senses.’ The expression refers to “the important content of the material, conveyed by means of the words, strikes a chord of understanding in the listeners.”²¹⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, Zeami’s theory of ‘the faithful adaptation of original stories’ shows his awareness of the significance of the effect of his audience’s prior knowledge on the interpretation of a text or its performance or, in Foley’s terms, “a shared body of knowledge that is [his audience’s] inheritance.” According to Zeami, allusion to source materials in Japanese poetry and renga (linked verse) as well as familiar stories, themes, and places is also critical for dramatic effect. In Sandō, Zeami stresses the importance of having a setting designated by the source material.²¹¹ Zeami said “for what is called made-up Noh, which has no source but is newly conceived and formed in connection with a noted place or historical site, there are times when the visual affect of the performer alone can move an audience. This task demands the skill of the consummate master.”²¹² Zeami used poetic association of well-known places and allusions to famous poems in Sakuragawa for effective euphonic appeal. In the following section, I analyze how Zeami transposes the literary metaphor into its visual

²⁰⁹ Quinn, 2005, 299. The original text is from ZZ, 141
²¹⁰ Quinn, 2005, 389n115.
²¹¹ This is a translation of “honzetsu ni zaisho arubeshi.” ZZ 135.
²¹² Quinn, 2005, 293. For the original text, see ZZ 134.
“embodiment” on the Noh stage. Examining linguistic elements in Zeami’s Noh is crucial to understanding how the acting and the lines complement each other.213

Rhetoric to Invoke the Inner Landscape of the Madwoman

The language of Noh texts is produced through a complex process of alluding to, echoing, reproducing, revising, or reinterpreting previous art and literary works. Interpreting the meanings in a Noh text thus requires an ability to interpret the Noh text’s relationship to the contexts in which those plays were originally composed. As Etsuko Terasaki points out, the use of special literary devices is one of the essential elements of Noh: poetic allusions, figurative speech, intertextual manipulations, and repetition of legends produce multiple layers of meaning.214 Terasaki makes the point that inner landscapes of the protagonist are being portrayed through descriptive and allusive techniques.

Similarly, Donald Keene stresses in his critical writings that Zeami “mentioned on occasion his conviction that the texts themselves were of paramount importance,” describing how Noh can be fully appreciated as literature.215 Although I argue that Keene’s view dismisses one of the key aspects of librettos, namely their euphonic appeal, and reduces them to one-dimensional texts, his detailed analysis of the rhetoric of Noh is valuable, as are his other discussions of poetic devices used in Noh. Quoting or alluding

213 Quinn delineates, in the opening act of the Noh play Takasago how “the emotional life of a character is depicted metaphorically by means of lines that serve the dual purpose of also providing exposition of the story.” For details, see Quinn, 2005, 120-121.


to old poems is effective in evoking nostalgia for the past, reproducing the mood of a scene and feelings described in the past.\textsuperscript{216} However, the new poem also has its own expressive content derived in part from its superimposition onto an older poem.

Noh librettos are replete with wordplay such as ‘pivot words’ (kakekotoba) or “syntactic doubling” in Edward Kamens’ terminology,\textsuperscript{217} ‘related words’ (engo), and ‘pillow words’ (utamakura). Zeami’s innovation is prominent in the rhetoric and thematic treatment of Sakuragawa. As Itō points out, the mother’s affection for her beloved child, Sakurago, is assimilated into her admiration for the beauty of the cherry blossoms.\textsuperscript{218} This assimilation has the effect of foregrounding the poetic image of cherry blossoms while revealing the greatly disturbed and distressed state of mind of the mother in search of her missing child.

In the beginning of the play, the priest introduces himself as follows:

\begin{quote}
I am the resident priest at Isobe-ji in Hitachi.
\end{quote}

\textit{He looks at Sakurago.}

This young person here came from nowhere to me, simple priest that I am, asking for my instruction. So he has become my disciple. Near here, there is the Cherry River, famous for its blossoms, and since they say that the trees are in full bloom now, I’m hurrying along with this child to the Cherry River.\textsuperscript{219}

The Sakuragawa or the Cherry River is a ‘pillow for a poem (utamakura)’ for the province of Hitachi, present-day Ibaraki prefecture. To clarify the function of ‘pillow

\textsuperscript{216} Keene 1973, 46.
\textsuperscript{218} Itō, \textit{Yōkyokushū} 2, SNKS, 442.
\textsuperscript{219} Huey, trans., 301.
words’, Kamens quotes Kamo no Chōmei’s (1155? - 1216?) analogy: “To make a water garden, we place rocks close to the spot where we plan to plant pine, and where we plan to dig a pond and set water running in streams we construct an artificial ‘mountain’ which can further beautify the view. In the same way, we improve the configuration of a poem through our use of the most important of the elements of our poetic heritage.”

Here the place name Hitachi serves as a jo “preface,” i.e. lead-in to the introduction of the famous place Sakuragawa, the locus of the play.

The poetic images in the play are key components that hold it together. Yashima Masaharu notes that the “unity of image” plays a decisive role in identifying Zeami’s plays. Pointing out that Ezra Pound, in his poetic translation of Zeami’s plays, was perhaps the first to recognize the “unity of image” in Zeami’s plays, Yashima acknowledges Pound’s poetic sensitivities. Yet, Yashima argues that what distinguishes Zeami’s plays is not just static image of poetry that lingers, but also sounds and rhythm that resonate in the mind of the audiences. He further makes the case that “unity of image” in Zeami’s oeuvre plays an important role as ‘painted backdrops’ (kakiwari) on which scenery is drawn for stage performance. Such “painted backdrops” are, as Yashima stresses, representations of the inner landscape of the protagonist.

In *Sakuragawa*, we find a series of allusive images to cherry blossoms and water. The mad mother’s grief is associated with the ephemeral beauty of the cherry

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220 Kamens, 236.
221 Yashima, 1985, 641.
222 Yashima provides a list of “unity of images” in thirty-five plays that are traditionally attributed to Zeami. This list is based on the study done by Konishi Jin’ichi and Fukakusa Seiryō, “Zeami no sakuhin to Geijutsuron,” *Bungaku* (January, 1963). Yashima, 1985, 643.
blossom. The fleeting beauty embodied in the nature of cherry blossoms (hana) is a conventional image often used in Japanese poetry. In Zeami’s treatise Goon, *Sakuragawa* is listed as a *yūkyoku* (lit. ‘yūgen piece’), a play strongly associated with the beautiful image of the cherry blossoms. Quinn notes that “[the] yūgen theme overlaps with one of the five types of vocal music set down in … Go on, the style labeled *yūkyoku*.”

She further points out that Zeami said the cherry tree embodied this style, citing as a model the following poem by Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204):

| Will I ever view again cherry blossom blooming at Katano? Snowy petals falling in the spring dawn | Mata ya min Katano no mino no sakuragari hana no yuki chiru haru no akebono |

In *Sakuragawa*, the mad mother’s longing for her missing son and her misery are intensified by comparison to the image of scattered blossoms. The following passage, for example, contains many allusions and wordplay such as ‘pivot words’ and ‘related words’.

…‘Scattered blossoms gather
At the mercy of the waves.
*Lowering her scoop-net, she advances onto the stage,*
Already in the mountains,
Spring has passed away.
Hearing the poet’s song,
I fear that during even a moment’s rest,
These uncaring snowy blossoms
Will have drifted far away—
These flowers of the cherry tree.”

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223 Quinn, 2005, 142.


225 Huey, trans., 302.
Hana chireru
mizu no ma ni ma ni
tomekureba
yama ni mo haru wa
naku nari ni keri to kiku toki wa
sukoshi nari to mo yasurawaba
hana ni ya utoku yuki no iro

The image of scattered blossoms floating in a mountain stream in the first four lines is an allusion to a poem from the Kokinwakashū. The association of cherry blossoms with snow is a conventional poetic expression as seen in the above-mentioned poem by Shunzei. Such associated or related words, as I mentioned earlier, are referred to as engo. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, for example, define engo as “the use of a word that has or creates an association with a preceding word or situation, often bringing out an additional dimension of meaning.”

The reference to cherry blossoms (sakura) serves as a catalyst for the mother to confess her suffering and longing for her lost child (Sakurago). The mother’s derangement is poetically expressed as she performs a kakeri dance:

She performs a dance indicating her madness.
‘These flowers of the cherry tree,
Remnants scattered in the wind,
Raise waves across the sky,
Through these flows no water.’
They raise, too, longings deep
She gazes off into the distance.
As the snow of passing blossoms

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226 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 96-97.
227 Kiyowara no Fukayubu’s poem. For an interpretation of this poem, see Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 96n6.
Which falls in a river of tears
Across these flowing waves.229

sakurabana chirinishi kaze no nagori niwa
mizunuki sora ni namizo tatsu
omohi mo fukaki hana no yuki
chiru namida no kawa yaran230

The mother’s profound longing for her child overlaps with her deep thoughts towards the scattering cherry blossoms in the wind. The mother couples the image of scattering blossoms with the deeply accumulated falling snow. The depth of the accumulated snow-like blossoms suggests the depth of her longing. Her thoughts then turn towards falling blossoms in a river. Waves of fallen blossoms rise high in the water. The flowing water suggests the tears she sheds out of longing for her child. In order to fully appreciate the significance of the use of this imagery, we need to examine some passages from Renju gappeki shū, a classic text of Zen Buddhism (Secret of the Blue Cliff Record, 12th-14th centuries), to which Zeami alludes.231 The following verse is included in section 25 of this collection:

Dust and sand in his eyes, dirt in his ears,
He won’t stay in the myriad peaks.
The falling flowers and flowing waters are very extensive—
Take a quick look—who knows where he’s gone?232

Hakuin, Zen Master of the Rinzai sect of Buddhism, offers the comment that “…He [the hermit] won’t stay in the myriad peaks”—He’s neither in the realm of Buddhas nor in the

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229 Huey, trans., 302-303.
230 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 97.
231 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 97n9.
232 Thomas Cleary, trans., Secrets of The Blue Cliff Record (Boston; London: Shambhala, 2000), 78.
realm of demons; when you perfect knowledge of all kinds, if this is not visible to you then neither is the hermit. *The falling flowers and flowing waters are very extensive*—Is he among the falling flowers? Is he by the flowing water? It cannot be known where the hermit is, or where he’s going…”233 Hakuin preaches against getting lost in differentiations. In section 82 of the same collection, Hakuin further cautions against dualism, giving a monk’s question to his master as an example: “The physical body decomposes; what is the immutable reality body?” His master said: “The mountain flowers bloom like brocade; the valley streams brim blue as indigo.”234 For Hakuin, this monk views the physical body and the reality body as two entities. He states that “this is differentiation without equality, while if they are viewed as one entity, that is equality without differentiation.” He questions: “*The mountain flowers bloom like brocade*—What is this? What about in a storm? When a sweet flavor comes out like this, you’re a Zennist. *The valley streams are brimming*—What about when the waters dry up and the mountains collapse?”235 Hakuin elucidates the importance of the denial of dualistic thinking. The monk who distinguishes the physical body as one that decomposes and the reality body as the one that is immutable is confounded by arbitrary discriminations characteristic of the unenlightened mind.

This consubstantial idea is key to understanding the above-mentioned opening lines of the mother. The mother compares falling snow to falling blossoms; she

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233 Cleary, trans., 78.
234 Cleary, trans., 280.
235 Cleary, trans., 281.
compares the depth of the accumulated fallen blossoms to that of her longing for her lost child (Sakurago, the Child of the Cherries).

Introducing herself as a madwoman, she describes her state of mind as a long journey: “Longing for my dear lost child, with grieving heart confused and weary, I crossed the mountains and the sea…”

The Madwoman’s Spiritual Journey

Prototypical monogurui plays often include a section called michiyuki (lit. going on a journey). The ‘journey scene’ is a stylized verse detailing the sights and emotions of a journey. In the ‘journey scene’, the sights of the journey are invoked, along with the emotions associated with travel. Filled with poetic allusions, ‘journey scenes’ are meant to evoke poetic images and feelings by alluding to older poems. Itō states that in Sakuragawa, the ‘journey scene’ is omitted since the play is set from start to finish in the “destination” where the mother meets her missing child. Itō further points out that the kurui section, which is often included in monogurui plays, is also omitted in Sakuragawa. In this connection, he argues that Sakuragawa may be closer, structurally speaking, to the ‘playful madness’ type of plays, which feature a hōka entertainer. As Itō points out, from a structural point of view, the ‘journey scene’ is missing in Sakuragawa, but I argue that the mother’s describing her state of mind as a long journey serves as an emotional michiyuki:

The mother circles to the left and stands at the shite position.

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236 Huey, trans., 303.
237 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 442.
The mad one you see before you
Is a woman of Hyūga in Tsukushi.
Longing for my dear lost child,
With grieving heart confused and weary
I crossed the mountains and the sea
From sad Tsukushi,
Setting out on waves from Hakozaki,
Sweeping past the shores of Suma,
Over the Sea of Suruga,
At last I have come to this place,
Hitachi it seems to be called.
But for the love between mother and child,
How could one make such a long springtime journey?

*She turns to the right.*
Here flows the Cherry River,
Its name has spread afar.
In truth a striking place it is,
River flowing blossoms.
These trees,
And my lost child, as well,
Bear the name of Cherry.

*She turns to the front.*
At the mention of his name,
And the flowering of the season,
How the river, Cherry River,
Fills me with sad longing!\(^{238}\)

\[
\textit{Kore ni idetaru monogurui no} \\
\textit{kokyō wa Tsukushi Hyūga no mono} \\
\textit{sa no omohigo o ushinahite} \\
\textit{omohi midaruru kokoro zukushi no} \\
\textit{umi yama koete Hakozaki no} \\
\textit{nami tachi idete Suma no umi} \\
\textit{mata wa Suruga no umi sugite} \\
\textit{Hitachi to ka ya made kudari kinu}^{239}\]

In response to the priest’s inquiry, the mother introduces herself as mad and compares her prolonged suffering to her long journey. These phrases are tightly constructed with a

\(^{238}\) Huey, trans., 303.
\(^{239}\) Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 97.
series of wordplay. I supplement Robert Huey’s translation above by providing my more literal translation in the following analysis of the lines. The Japanese phrase translated here, “sa mo omohigo o ushinahite (having lost one so beloved), omohi midaruru kokoro-zukushi no (with grieving heart confused and weary) umi yama koete” (I crossed the mountains and the sea) is tightly constructed with a series of ‘pivot words,’ which “shift in meaning depending on the words preceding and following.”

Sa mo omohigo combines two phrases: “sa mo omohu” (to truly long for someone) and “omohigo” (lit. child one longs for). The mother’s longing for her missing child is intensified by the use of the pivot word omohu. “Omohi midaruru kokoro zukushi” suggests her disturbed and confused state of mind. While “kokoro zukushi” literally refers to “the condition in which one is concerned or worried about something,” “zukushi,” a phonetic variant of “tsukushi” is associated with the mother’s home province, Tsukushi, in present-day Kyūshū, the southernmost of the main islands of the Japanese archipelago.

The following michiyuki section alludes to the poem in the Tokonatsu chapter in The Tale of Genji: “From sad Tsukushi, setting out on waves from Hakozaki, sweeping past the shores of Suma, over the Sea of Suruga, at last I have come to this place, Hitachi it seems to be called.”

Then, O wave, arise, yonder along Suma Shore in far Suruga on the sea of Hitachi: the Hakozaki Pine waits!

Hitachi naru Suruga no umi no Suma no ura ni nami tachi ide yo Hakozaki no matsu

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240 Keene, 1973, 46-47.
241 A name of a pink flower (wild carnations), a.k.a., nadeshiko.
242 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 97n11.
This poem was composed in response to the following poem:

Tender as she is, the plant from Hitachi Shore longs on Query Point to see as soon as she can the billows on Tago Beach.245

Kusa wakami Hitachi no ura no Ikagasaki
ikade ai min Tagonoura nami246

By listing famous place names, the latter poem has intended to convey such a message as “ikade ka ai min” (How could I see you?). “Query Point” is Royall Tyler’s translation of the place name “ikaga saki,” which includes the word ikaga, which by itself also means “how [is it]?” The sender presumably uses the place name Hitachi, which also means “days passing [while I was thinking how I could meet you].”247 Tyler comments on the poem composed in response: “These places, too, are outrageously unrelated to each other.”248 I would argue, however, that it is rather witty on the poet’s part to compose another “nonsense” poem responding to the place names that were chosen at random in the original poem, while also effectively including two more place names. There is no geographical connection between Hitachi and Suruga. Suruga is used in her reply in response to the place name Tagonoura, which is in Suruga. The new addition “Suma no ura” alliterates with “Suruga no umi.” Hakozaki is included in this poem as a ‘poem pillow’ for matsu “pine trees,” which can also mean “to wait.” The intention of the sender in her response is expressed in “tachiide yo” and “matsu.” “Nami tachi ide yo”

246 Abe, Genji Monogatari 3, SNKBZ 22, 249.
247 Abe, Genji Monogatari 3, SNKBZ 22, 248n17.
means “Waves, arise!” However, “tachi ide yo” by itself can mean “come and visit.” Her message is “Come and visit me. I’m waiting for you.”

In the text of Sakuragawa, such plays on words in playful poems from The Tale of Genji are used with a deeper and graver tone of sentiment. Zeami’s use of the “nonsense” reply from The Tale of Genji in Sakuragawa is interesting. Itō states that, in Sakuragawa, the mother’s departure and destination points are reversed from the original poem. The place names are listed in a reverse order in the text, but the intended meaning is the same: “O Hakozaki Pine, come and visit me here in Hitachi.” The underlying message of the original poem serves as a reason for the mother’s trip. The mother personifies the Hakozaki Pine in Sakuragawa. As if drawn to Hitachi, the place known as the home of the Cherry River (Sakuragawa), she departs Hakozaki, passing though Suma and Suruga, and arrives at her destination. As I discuss above, Zeami emphasized the importance of poetic associations of well-known places and allusions to famous poems that are familiar to audiences. The use of poetic allusions to these poems from The Tale of Genji very likely served as a source in Sakuragawa.

Leaving Tsukushi with a disturbed mind, the mother passes the shores of Hakozaki in Fukuoka and arrives on the shores of Suma in Kobe. Hakozaki is a ‘poem pillow’ for Chikuizen province (the northwest area of the present day Fukuoka prefecture). Here, the use of the ‘pillow word’ technique is effective in a number of ways. As I mentioned above, “zukushi,” a phonetic variant of “tsukushi,” has a double meaning in this context: “exhausting [one’s mind],” and the place name Tsukushi. While

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249 For further comments on these two poems, see Abe, Genji Monogatari 3, SNKBZ 22, 248n17 and 250n16.

250 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 97n11.
“tsukushi” first functions as an expression of the mother’s disturbed state of mind in the word/compound *kokorozukushi*, the use of the place name Hakozaki as a ‘poem pillow’ effectively evokes the second meaning, Tsukushi. Hakozaki is known for pine trees, which also evoke the image of the shore, creating an association with Suma. Suma is the place where Hikaru Genji, the protagonist of *The Tale of Genji*, went into exile. This association reminds the audience of the source of the allusion of the poem. “*Suma no ura*” (the shores of Suma) alliterates with “*Suruga no umi*” (the Sea of Suruga). Suruga refers to the central area of present day Shizuoka prefecture. Her journey ends at Hitachi, which is the ‘pillow for poems’ for Sakuragawa, as I mentioned earlier.

*She turns to the right.*
Here flows the Cherry River,
Its name has spread afar.\footnote{251 Alluded to Fujiwara no Motoie’s poem. For the translation of this poem, see Huey, trans., 303n8.}
In truth a striking place it is,
River flowing blossoms,
These trees
And my lost child, as well,
Bear the name of Cherry,

*She turns to the front.*
At the mention of his name,
And the following of the season,
How the river, Cherry River,
Fills me with sad longing!
And from its waters I dip up
Its fallen floating petaled snow,
And thus on flowered glossy sleeves
Spring remembrances remain.\footnote{252 Huey, trans., 303.}

*Geni ya oyako no michinarazu wa*
*harukeki tabi o ikani sen*
*koko ni mata nani nagaretaru Sakuragawa tote*
The depiction of her journey also suggests her prolonged anguish. Arriving at her destination, the Cherry-Blossom River, her longing for the missing child is intensified because the name of the river reminds her of his name, Child of the Cherries. Through narrative description, the scene at the river has been established as the physical setting of the action. At the same time, the flow of Cherry River and the scattering cherry petals likened to snow exist on a metaphoric plane, evocative of the impermanence of this world. This metaphoric plane is achieved in part by reference to the web of associations linked with cherry blossoms in the received tradition of court poetry.

Her statement is self-diagnostic/reflexive. The words reveal that she is both deranged and level-headed. In the beginning of the passage describing her journey, she introduces herself as a mad person: “I am a mad person from Hyūga in Tsukushi.” Following this, she states the reason why she has become disturbed and agonized: “having lost my dear child and longing for him, I am disturbed and exhausted in my mind.” This demonstrates her awareness of her state of monogurui as well as the reasons for madness.

Viewing the Sakuragawa at the peak of cherry blossom season, she alludes to a poem about parents parting from their children.

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253 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 97n11.
As the birds of spring have flown,
As these gathered petals scattered,
From his mother the child has gone,
From his mother the child has gone,
Where I do not know,
Since I’ve grown weak and wasted
On the long road to this back country,
Even if mother and child do meet,
Perhaps he’ll have forgotten my face,
And I his — oh, what would I do?
    Ah, how cruel!
Hidden away in winter’s sleep,
For a time the flowers are unseen;
Yet even now that spring has come,
O child, the flower of my tree,
Why have you still not bloomed forth?
O child, the flower of my tree,
Why have you still not bloomed forth?²⁵⁴

*hana tori no*
tachiwakaretutsu
*oya to ko no*
tachiwakaretutsu
*oya to ko no*
yukue mo shirade amazakaru
hina no nagaji ni otoroeba
tatoe au tomo oya to ko no
omo wasureseba ikanaran
utatya shibashi koso
fuyugomori shite miezu tomo
ima wa harube naru mono o
waga ko no hana nado sakanu
waga ko no hana nado sakanu²⁵⁵

The first line “*hana tori no*” (lit. flowers and birds) is an introductory line (*jo*) which produces continuity linking to “wakare” or parting. This line also alludes to two lines

²⁵⁴ Huey, trans., 304.
²⁵⁵ Itô, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 98.
from a poem: “hana tori no akanu wakare ni haru kurete.” These lines may be rendered: “Spring has gone while there is lingering sadness of parting as cherry blossoms scatter and birds fly away.” Here again the allusion to the poem evokes the evanescence of this world, while highlighting the mother’s profound sadness. The line “amazakaru/ hina no nagaji ni otoroeba/ tatoe au tomo oya to ko no/ omo wasureseba ikanaran” is rendered: “Since I’ve become a withered woman during the long journey across the countryside, even if parent and child, we meet, if he should have forgotten my face [and not be able to recognize me], what will I do?” This line alludes to two poems included in the Kokinwakashū and the Shinkokinwakashū (Collection of Ancient and Modern Japanese Poems, 1205). The line, “utate ya shibashi koso/ fuyugomori shite/miezu tomo/ ima wa harube naru/ mono o wagako no/ hana nado sakunu,” is a reference to the famous poem cited by Ki no Tsurayuki (ca. 872 - 945) in his preface to Kokinwakashū. This line is rendered: “How reproachful! For a while, my child, Child of the Cherries, you have been withdrawn from the chill of the winter. Now, despite spring having already come, why have you not yet blossomed [shown up]?” This poem expresses how the mother “confuses” her child with the cherry blossoms. It poetically depicts her troubled state of mind.

As her sadness is deepening, the priest asks her what has disturbed her so much. She explains:

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257 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 98n2.
258 Ki no Tsurayuki is a poet, critic, diarist, and one of the compliers of Kokinwakashū.
259 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 98n3. For the translation of this poem, see Huey, trans., 303n10.
When I was separated from my only child, who was born after his father had died, my mind was thrown into confusion.

... The goddess of our village is Konohana-Sakuyahime, the Lady of the Flowering Trees, whose spirit resides in a cherry tree. Since my child was to be protected by her, I named him Sakurago, Child of the Cherries, and raised him under her care.\footnote{Huey, trans., 304.}

Motherhood is highlighted here with the introduction of the goddess named Konohana-Sakuyahime, the Lady of the Flowering Trees. She is the patron deity of easy birth\footnote{“The daughter of Øyamatsumi (according to the main text of Nihongi, the offspring of Øyamatsumi and a heavenly kami). Married to Ninigi, Konohana Sakuyahime became pregnant in a single night, and gave birth to three children in the midst of fire. The name Konohana (“tree-flower”) refers to the short-lived beauty of the cherry blossom...” http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=93} whose spirit resides in a cherry tree. The mother explains since her child is protected by the goddess, she named him Sakurago, Child of the Cherries, and raised him under her care. This goddess or \textit{kami}, the patron deity of her child, is central to the play as not only her image is strongly associated with motherhood, but also reinforces the unity of image in the play. At the root of the \textit{sakura} wordplay, a web of associations with cherry blossoms, is indeed this goddess, Konohana no Sakuyahime. This suggests even more of a karmic connection with all things that remind the mother of cherry blossoms, which I discuss further later.

The passage above shows that here again she is conscious of her madness and explains what has driven her mad. Her explanation of the reason why she named her son Cherry Child, elicits the following poem, which sums up the various associations of the child’s name: The names of the goddess, the river, and the flower:

\begin{center}
Sakuyahime, Lady of the Flowering Tree,
\end{center}
Such is the name of the goddess.
Sakurago, Child of the Cherry,
Such is the name of my sought-for son.
And Sakuragawa, the Cherry River,
How full of memories its name!
Could I treat my cherished bloom as dust?
No, I’ll not neglect these fallen flowers.  

Such is the name of my sought-for son.

And Sakuragawa, the Cherry River,
How full of memories its name!
Could I treat my cherished bloom as dust?
No, I’ll not neglect these fallen flowers.

kami no onna mo Sakuyahime
tazuneru ko no na mo Sakurago nite
mata kono kawa mo Sakuragawa no
na mo natsukashiki hana no chiri o
ada ni mo seji to omohu nari

Using numerous words related to one theme, i.e., cherry blossoms in the above passage, is called zukushi. As I mentioned above, zukushi basically means “to exhaust or use up something.” In this context, it means “exhausting all the verbal associations that one can come up with.” Its phonetic variation reminds audiences of the name of the mother’s hometown, Tsukushi. Triggered by this, the priest immediately mentions Tsukushi and her long journey from there to Sakuragawa. All these associations with the cherry blossom and the name of the river remind the mother of a poem composed by Ki no Tsurayuki with the following jo or preface: “Sakuragawa to iu tokoro ari to kikite...” or “Upon hearing that there is a place called Sakuragawa.” On one hand, the mention of this noted poet from the Heian period (794-1185), the golden age of classical court culture, effectively conjures up the aristocratic, poetic world of the past. On the other, this famous poet’s name, Tsurayuki (one meaning of yuki is “snow”), is skillfully used to

262 Huey, trans., 304-305.
263 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 99.
264 This poem is compiled in Gosenshū, Spring, vol. 3. Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 99n10.
string together the conventional poetic associations between cherry blossoms and snow in
the following passage:

Even more than other streams,
When spring has come to Cherry River,
When spring has come to Cherry River,
The petals scattered on its waves
Collect—unbroken billows.
Thus did Tsurayuki laud
A falling snow of petals,
And unto later ages last
These words and the poet’s fame.
Cherry River—

tsune yori mo
harube ni nareba Sakuragawa
harube ni nareba Sakuragawa
nami no hana koso
manaku yosurame to yomitareba
hana no yuki mo Tsurayuki mo
furuki na nomi nokoru yo no
Sakuragawa

“Tsune yori mo harube ni nareba Sakuragawa nani no hana koso manaku yo surame” is
a direct quote from Tsurayuki’s poem in Gosenwakashū (Later Collection of Gleanings
[of Japanese Poetry], 951), which is a mid-Heian imperial poetry collection. As the
phrase “harube ni nareba” is used earlier in the play, it indicates “when Spring has come
to Cherry River.” The two phrases “tsune yori mo” or “more than usual” and “manaku”
or “continuously” describe the verb “yosu rame,” “to surge,” which refers to “nami” or
“waves.” Tsurayuki adds the word “hana” to “nami,” comparing the white caps of waves
to cherry blossoms. A literal translation of the poem might go thus, “When spring has

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265 Huey, trans., 305
266 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 99.
267 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 99n11.
come, cherry blossoms are falling into the river continuously as the unbroken waves will surge [against the riverbank] more than usual.” Because Tsurayuki composed this poem about scattering cherry blossoms like snow, his poem and his name are both passed down from generation to generation.

The Madwoman’s Reflexivity

Now the priest asks the villager why the madwoman doesn’t entertain them with a performance. The villager replies that if the priest tells her that the blossoms are falling into the Cherry River, she will perform her madness. True to the nature of the particular brand of madness that typifies plays on the monogurui motif, the shite’s subsequent interaction with the priest is full of poetic allusions and Buddhist metaphors, such as her evocation of the flow of the river, a classic Buddhist metaphor for transience:

Flowers ever deeper,
White upon the water.
Are they waves I see?
Yet they’re fallen from above.
Are they cherry blossoms?
Or snow, or wave, or flowers,
There floating clouds that rise
In the river wind?
As they scatter blooming
On the waves of Cherry River,
I will save these fallen flowers,
Scooping them from the water’s flow.  

Hana no mikasa wa shirotae no
nami ka to mireba ue yori chiru
sakura ka yuki ka nami ka hana ka to
ukitatsu nami no kawakaze ni
chireba zo nami mo Sakuragawa
chireba zo nami mo Sakuragawa

268 Huey, trans., 306.
The flow of the river also has connotations for her status as a woman, that is, a courtesan or prostitute since they are referred to as *kawatake no nagaremi*, or women drifters like a wrack of riverside bamboo. As I mentioned earlier, her involvement in the prostitution trade is thus an interpretive possibility.

Up until this point, in the mind of the mother, the images of her missing son and all the association of cherry blossoms overlap with each other, making it difficult for her to distinguish one from another. The passage above depicts her deluded state of mind. The first two lines, “*hana no mikasa wa shirotae no nami ka to mireba ue yori chiru*” can be more literally interpreted. “*Hana no mikasa*” metaphorically meaning “a mound of fallen cherry blossoms on the river,” more literally means “the river level.” “*Shirotae*” is a *makurakotoba* or ‘pillow word,’ which is “a conventional five-syllable guide phrase” preparatory to the word that comes next. “Pillow words’ are formulaic epithets borrowed from 5-7-5-7-7-syllable verse. As Sanari Kentarō points out, the rhetoric of Noh is designed to please the ears, following a basic seven-five rhythm. Hence, the art of poetry recitation can be appreciated in Noh. Here “*shirotae*” plays on the suggestiveness of the sound of “*shirazu*” meaning “without knowing or realizing,” while it is used as a guide phrase for “*nami*” or “wave.” Conventionally, it is used for words such as “*koromo*” (robe), “*sode*” (sleeve), and “*yuki*” (snow). However, such

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269 Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 100.
270 For details, see Kamens, 67.
271 For more on ‘pillow words,’ also see Yasuda, 5 and Miner *et al.*, 287-288.
272 Sanari, 71-72.
273 Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 100.
embellishment is used here in order to evoke the series of associations of “white waves,” “white snow,” “white flowers” (cherry blossoms). It is deft on the playwright’s part to use such embellishments to appeal not only to the ears, but also to the visual imagination of the audiences. The inner landscape of her maddening suffering is gradually painted as such ‘unity of image’ appears one by one as if ‘painted backdrop’ on stage in the mind of the audiences.

The first two lines thus mean, “I cannot tell how many petals of cherry blossoms have fallen into the river, just as I cannot tell how deep the river is. Those white flowers appeared to be white unbroken billows. Yet those white flowery waves fall from the top.” The mother “confuses” white waves with white flowers. The following line, “sakura ka yuki ka nami ka hana ka to,” lists all the associated words such as cherry blossoms, snow, white billows, and flowers, suggesting that the mother is being self-reflective.

In the next two lines, “ukitatsu nami no kawakaze ni chireba zo nami mo Sakuragawa,” she tries to reason with the audience about her delusion: “When the river wind blows, cherry blossoms scatter, blooming on the waves of Cherry River like white waves rise when the river wind blows.” Huey’s translation above is based on another version of the text, in which the word “cloud” is used instead of “waves.” In this context, the choice of “waves” makes more sense than “clouds.” The last two lines (the first line is the same as the previous line), “chireba zo nami mo Sakuragawa nagaruru hana o sukuwan” confirm her state of monogurui. “Saku,” as in Sakuragawa, puns on
“bloom.” She is confused again: “As cherry blossoms scatter blooming on the waves of Cherry River, I will scoop up the fallen blossoms from the water’s flow.”

For the informed spectator, the mother’s act of scooping the blossoms will accrue such metaphoric nuances. The Japanese term suki, a nominalization of the verb suki (to scoop), puns on the word suki (salvation). Her action of scooping the blossoms suggests that she too will be swept up in Buddha’s net in the end. Existing both as an external landscape and a poetic trope, this riverbed serves as a potent index of the agitation the mother is experiencing due to her deeply rooted attachment to her child. Her act of scooping the petals floating on the flowing river adumbrates her disturbed state of mind. Informed and enriched by the web of poetic associations, this landscape offers a canvas on which to paint this woman’s inner landscape—her innermost preoccupation.

As the villager has told the priest, she performs her madness with the mention of the blossoms fallen into the Cherry River, lapsing into an iroe dance. Her circling choreographic movement suggests her madness. And yet, the following passages are philosophical, suggesting the mother’s awareness of the impermanence of this world, which hints at the possibility of religious awakening in the mother:

And true as well,  
‘Since flowers fall  
And then turn to dust,’  
Is this not the fate of all,  
Even those who understand?  
Yet somehow we delude ourselves  
That such a dream-brief destiny  
Is one that only flowers know.  
So shallow are our thoughts!  
And though we may feel moved,  
‘When blossoms fall like useless dust,

274 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 100.
Fleeting, from the branches,
And scatter, foam upon the water,”
So brief these white and flowery waves,
Yet how we ignore their passing!

makoto chirinureba
nochi wa akuta ni naru hana to
omohi shiru mi mo sate ikani
ware mo yume naru o
hana nomi to miruzo hakanaki
sareba kozue yori
ada ni chirinuru hana nareba
ochitemo mizu no aware to wa
isa shiranami no hana ni nomi

These passages are full of allusions to poems compiled in the *Kokinwakashū*. The first five lines allude to a poem composed by a Heian poet, Archbishop Henjō (816-890):

“Chirinureba, ato wa akuta ni naru hana o omohi mo shirazu mo modou chō kana.”

The original poem means “Infatuated, the butterfly little dreams that those fair blossoms will decay and become dust after they scatter to earth.” Alluding to this poem, the mother expresses an awareness of her delusion. My interpretation of these five lines differs from Huey’s translation above. The mother says, “I have thought it understood well that when flowers fall, they only turn to dust in the end, but now I wonder if I have truly understood [the impermanence of this world] as I now realize that my own existence is indeed like a dream. It is not discreet of me to think that it was just flowers that turn to dust in the end.”

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275 Huey, trans., 307-308.
277 For details, see Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 101n13, n14, n15, and 102n1.
When she has heard “the cherry blossoms fallen into the Cherry River,” she lapses into an *iroe* dance, inwardly disturbed as she comes to realize that she has been deluding herself. While performing the *iroe* dance, she confesses her realization of the impermanence of this world, comparing a fleeting life of flowers to that of her own. Afterwards, she expresses her bitterness, revealing her grudge against her misery—not directly, but indirectly:

Lamentable, the cherry flowers  
Lamentable, the cherry flowers  
Their fault is that they scatter  
Bitterness in their wake  
‘Tragic are the blooms,  
And cruel the wind.  
As they fall the wind arises,  
At the rising wind they fall.”

*atarasakura no*  
*atarasakura no*  
toga wa chiruzou urami naru  
*hanamoushikaze motsurashi*  
*shireba zo sasou…*280

The first part of the passages alludes to a poem by the eminent Heian monk-poet Saigyō (1118-1190), in which he laments that the one fault of beautiful cherry blossoms is the fact that they fall.282 The latter part further depicts the vanity of this world: “*hanamoushikaze motsurashi,*” meaning, “the flowers make me feel melancholy; the wind is

280 Huey, trans., 309.  
281 Itō, *Yōkyōshū* 2, SNKS, 102.  
282 For a translation of this poem, compiled in *Gyokuyōshū* 144, see Huey, trans., 309n25. Huey points out that the latter part of this passage alludes to a poem, which appears in *Ungyokushū,* compiled in 1514. He argues that this suggests the poem would have been composed many years after Zeami’s death, and that it would cast doubt on the traditional attribution of *Sakuragawa* to Zeami. He also proposes that the poem may have been added later to the text of the play. Huey has no other evidence to overturn the traditional attribution of *Sakuragawa* to Zeami. For details, see Huey, trans., 309n26.
merciless.” While lamenting the hardship of this world, the mother gradually realizes that what she has scooped up is only blossoms fallen from the tree, and she confesses:

All pure white—the blossoms,
   Flowers, snow, and waves.
   I see them all and scoop them up.
   Yet gather though I will,

*She makes a dipping motion.*
   These are but blossoms from the trees.

*She sits and weeps at the shite position.*
   What I truly seek is
   Sakurago, my beloved Cherry Child
   Sakurago, my beloved Cherry Child.²⁸³

\[
\begin{array}{l}
   hana \ mo \ sakura \ mo \\
yuki \ mo \ nami \ mo \ minagara \ ni \\
sukui \ atsume \ mochitare \ domo \\
korewa \ kigi \ no \ hana \\
makoto \ wa \ waga \ tazuneru \\
Sakurago \ zo \ koishiki \\
Waga \ sakurago \ zo \ koishiki²⁸⁴
\end{array}
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As Huey points out, the mother has been deluding herself about the world and she finally realizes this fact. He comments on the passage above: “This psychological state of total surrender makes a religious experience possible, and at this right moment in the play the Cherry child returns, and mother and child take religious vows.”²⁸⁵ Although Huey sees the mother’s confession as the psychological state of total surrender, I interpret it as the emotional apex of the mother’s state of mind. The mother’s longing intensifies after her realization. Therefore I argue that she has not yet reached enlightenment because she suffers from her strong attachment to her child. What makes her religious awakening

²⁸³ Huey, trans., 310.
²⁸⁴ Itō, *Yōkyokusō* 2, SNKS, 103.
²⁸⁵ Huey, trans., 297-298.
possible is the reunion with her beloved child. As Itō Masayoshi points out, this story is also a variant on the miraculous karmic retribution (reigen) motif. One can read the reunion with her child as karmic and her attraction to the name of the river Sakuragawa—where her son turns out to be—as the karmic work of the boy’s namesake, Sakurago:

She embraces Sakurago and weeps,
Together now, they take their leave,
Together now, they take their leave.

The mother leads Sakurago to the shite position.
The child is her salvation.
For him she receives holy orders,
Starting on the path that leads
To final buddhahood.
So strong the bond of these two lives,
Their peace will last through future ages.
Truly blessed is the way of mother and child.

The literal translation of the first two lines of the original text, “haha o mo tasuke sama kaete, bukka no en to nari ni keri” is “[The child] has helped his mother [as well as himself] take religious vows, which will lead them to reach enlightenment.” The mother suffers due to her strong bond of affection with her missing son, who at the end relieves her from her suffering and steers her into the way of salvation. The mother’s

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286 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 443.
287 Huey, trans., 311-312.
288 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 103-104.
289 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 103-104.
condition of monogurui has been intensified in confusing the fallen blossoms in the flow of the river with her missing Cherry Child. Such a liminal moment of monogurui suggests that one gets beyond the boundaries that the ego normally imposes. While expressing her state of monogurui in her performance of an iroe dance, she gradually realizes the transience of this world and starts lamenting the evanescence of the beauty of nature. She acknowledges that the blossoms are not the same thing as her son, which indicates that she is coming back to reality. And her long spiritual journey reaches an end.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of the feminine in Sakuragawa is the embodiment of Zeami’s idea of ‘a charming effect’ (iroka). As treated in Shūgyoku tokuka, for him the performance of madness contributed “a charming effect like scattering flowers to the originally refined appearance of a woman, and [appealing] to the eyes of the audience.”\textsuperscript{290} The charm of monogurui is likened to the image of scattering flowers. My textual analysis of Sakuragawa has revealed how the inner landscape of the protagonist’s madness is invoked by a web of received associations involving the image of the cherry blossoms throughout the play. The image of scattering cherry blossoms is effectively used to bring the madwoman’s extreme grief over separation from her child further into focus. By virtue of her monogurui state, the madwoman in Sakuragawa is able to abandon herself to her innermost feelings without monitoring her behavior out of worry.

\textsuperscript{290} ZZ, 194.
about infringing on social norms and ethics. Such a pure and uncompromised expression of her emotional caliber is what deeply appeals to audiences.

My study of *Sakuragawa* also shows how madness and arts/entertainment are closely associated with each other on the Noh stage. In *Sakuragawa*, the mother performs her dance of madness upon request, highlighting the significance of chant and dance on stage, and thus the feminine madness in *Sakuragawa* blurs the line between a ‘playful madness’ (*yūkyō*) type and a *monogurui*-type display of a disturbed and confused state of mind. Itō points out that although *Sakuragawa* shares some similar characteristics with other madwoman plays, the mother’s confusion between her child and the cherry blossoms is the playwright’s innovation because, rather than stressing the misery of this world to move the audience to tears, it highlights the aesthetic pleasure of nature’s beauty. The mad characters are motivated to perform and to forget themselves, and their minds are purified of all worldly calculation as they lose themselves, moved by the beauty of the environment. As Itō argues, this suggests in *Sakuragawa* there is a strong ‘playful madness’ element, not unlike professional performers who perform simulated madness for entertainment purposes according to Zeami, as I have discussed in the preceding chapter. Zeami’s innovative use of *monogurui* is evident in this strong ‘playful madness’ element in which the line between entertainment and madness is blurred.

According to medieval religious dictums, love and passion were hindrances to one’s salvation. And yet, by means of the performance of madness, the playwright skillfully expresses the mother’s longing for her missing child. Erika Bainbridge notes

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291 Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKS, 442.
that “[the] Buddhist attitude toward maternal love is ambivalent…maternal love is valued only when it is synonymous with selfless dedication.” To further understand the ambivalent attitude toward maternal love, we need to look into the perception of motherhood in medieval Japan. As Wakita points out, motherhood, in its association with productivity—or more accurately with the production of an heir—was highly valued in medieval Japan. She further argues, however, that this respect for motherhood did not arise from appreciation for an individual woman’s capabilities or caliber.

Motherhood is particularly highlighted in the play by the introduction of the goddess named Konohana-Sakuyahime, the Lady of the Flowering Trees. She is the patron deity of easy birth whose spirit resides in a cherry tree. The mother explains since her child is protected by the goddess, she named him Child of the Cherries, and raised him under her care. This goddess or kami, the patron deity of her child, is central to the play as not only her image is strongly associated with the motherhood, but also reinforces the unity of image in the play. At the pun of the sakura wordplay, a web of associations with cherry blossoms, is indeed this goddess, Konohana no Sakuyahime. This suggests even more of a karmic connection with all things that remind the mother of cherry blossoms. As Itō Masayoshi points out, this story is also a variant on the miraculous karmic retribution (reigen) motif. One can read the reuniting with her child as karmic

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294 Itō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKS, 443.

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and her attraction to the name of the river Sakuragawa—where her son turns out to be—as the karmic work of the boy’s namesake, Sakurago.

Kanbayashi Sumio points out that by the late thirteenth century, according to *The Japanese Account of Those Who Went to Paradise* (*Nihon ōjō gokurakukī*), several million practitioners danced and chanted in ecstasy during their prayers to the Buddha Amida (*nenbutsu odorig*) as a form of religious expression. This suggests that lapsing into a state of *monogurui* expressed in chant and dance made it possible to experience a more sacred state of being. The culminating section of the play is therefore, as Itō says, the section in which she is in that liminal zone. That is, she acknowledges that the blossoms are not the same thing as her son. It indicates that she is coming back to reality. The liminal moment of *monogurui* suggests that one gets beyond the boundaries that the ego normally imposes. This state is what allows the mother to appeal to the *kami* or Shinto deity more effectively, which results in realization of miraculous karmic intervention in the play. The realization of karmic retribution stressed by its association with the image of Sakuyahime draws the audiences and creates the effect of an emotional catharsis for them, leaving a deep impression on her audiences even today.

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CHAPTER 4

THE NOH PLAY KINUTA (THE FULLING BLOCK)

This chapter demonstrates a thematic variation on the centrifugal dynamic of monogurui featured in the Noh play titled Kinuta (The Fulling Block). The female protagonist of Kinuta cannot vent her sufferings or suppressed desires and consequently dies from the intensity of her own pent-up emotions. Kinuta is therefore a kind of counterexample to Sakuragawa, which is at the heart of the monogurui grouping of plays.

The Noh play Kinuta is often regarded as a play describing a woman’s resentment of her husband due to her excessive affection for him. For example, Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira, in their introduction to the play, attribute the wife’s unenlightened mind to her strong emotional and sexual desire for her husband and her resentment towards him. They argue that the more the wife longs for her husband while she sleeps alone in his absence, the stronger the resentment grows, and it knows no bounds. They further point out that, even after she dies, there is no end to the wife’s desire for her husband. That is what love does, they argue.296 Koyama Hiroshi and Satō Ken’ichirō

296 For further discussion of the theme of Kinuta, see Yokomichi and Omote, Yōkyokushū 1, NKB T 40, 331.
also note that the play highlights the wife’s suffering in hell due to her strong sexuality and deluded mind. Even after her death, she still complains about her husband’s infidelity. And yet, they explain, through the merits of chanting the *Lotus Sutra*, she reaches enlightenment in the end.\textsuperscript{297} As Wakita points out, however, *Kinuta* reveals the suffering and resentment of those who are doomed to accept their vulnerable situations in which all they can do is wait.\textsuperscript{298} *Kinuta* thus presents not only a woman’s pining for her husband’s return, but also the vulnerability and evanescence of the lives of both men and women who are submissive to those in power.\textsuperscript{299} Such layers of interpretation echo in the audience’s minds as they imagine the sound of the pounding of a *kinuta*, or fulling block, on a lonesome autumn evening. A *kinuta* is a tool used as a mallet to soften fabric and give it luster. This practical tool is transformed into a refined image having poetic nuances in the climactic scene of this play in which the *shite* beats the fulling block.

The analysis of *Kinuta* elucidates some important aspects of the society in which this play was written. During the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods, spanning roughly the late fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, when many Noh plays were written, the status of women was generally higher than in previous periods. Unlike in the polygynous court society of the earlier Heian period, the status of the lawful wife had stabilized.\textsuperscript{300} This stabilization would be an underlying factor affecting the interpretation of Noh plays having a female protagonist who articulates her innermost feelings. In such plays, the voices of women could be heard. The woman in *Kinuta*, for instance, bewails her

\textsuperscript{297} Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 260.
\textsuperscript{299} Wakita, 2005, 101.
\textsuperscript{300} For further discussion of women’s status in medieval times, see Wakita, 2005, 101-102.
husband’s negligence, suspects him of having love affairs, and grumbles about his inattentiveness to her needs during his prolonged absences. Such complaints, on the one hand, give us a glimpse of a women’s discontent over the unfair treatment she is receiving. On the other hand, they convey a tacit criticism of the social institutions by which one’s fate is dictated.

The wife’s confession and expression of anger reveal her vulnerability as a wife whose existence depends on her husband’s support. Because she is a legal wife, however, as far as her social status is concerned, she is not as vulnerable as women in a lower status than hers such as her servant, Yūgiri. And yet, at least emotionally, we do not see much difference between the stability of her situation and that of her servant, Yūgiri, who is possibly the mistress of her husband. Their fates are both subject to the whims of their master.

Similarly, Noh performers such as Zeami were at the mercy of their patrons’ backing. The evolution of Zeami’s theory of performance was rooted in his personal growth as a playwright and performer. However, it also seems to have been affected by shifts in patronage during his lifetime. His pursuit of the ineffable beauty of yūgen as discussed in Chapter 2, for example, has much to do with his awareness of the importance of winning over connoisseur audiences, especially his patron, the shogun Yoshimitsu. As this powerful political figure’s playwright of choice, Zeami received special attention and favor, albeit not exclusively. However, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the fortunes of patronage were fickle; after Yoshimitsu’s death, Zeami was exiled in 1434 to Sado, a remote island in the East Sea. The embodiment of graceful
beauty and madness in the representation of the feminine on stage thus came to reflect Zeami’s dramatic approach to expressing human suffering.

The voices of the oppressed merge into one in the Noh play *Kinuta*. The poetic, sorrowful tone of the woman’s lamentations obscures a poignant protest against oppression, presenting suffering and desire within preestablished social constraints. The woman’s expression of her sexuality and jealousy—which is fueled by a strong affection for her husband—is considered sinful because such desire is regarded as dangerous and deviating from social and religious norms. I discuss this issue further below.

The metaphoric significance of the *kinuta* is preceded in Japanese letters. For instance, the strong poetic association of the *kinuta* and autumn is found in the “Yūgao” chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. Yūgao, literally meaning ‘evening faces’, is the name of a flower that blooms briefly in summer evenings. In this chapter the name of the flower is used to refer to a lady whose hidden ephemeral beauty intrigues the protagonist Genji. As the summer passes and the autumn comes, their romance waxes and wanes. It comes to a tragic end as she mysteriously dies, a victim of spirit possession perpetrated by another lover of Genji. The sound of the *kinuta* is effectively used in this chapter to produce the lonesome atmosphere of autumn, and stirs Genji’s feelings of love for Yūgao, as expressed in the following: “The sound of snowy robes being pounded on the fulling block reached him [Genji] faintly from all sides, and wild geese were crying in the heavens. These and many other sounds roused him to painfully keen emotion.”301 As Tyler points out, the cries of *kari*, or migrating wild geese, also evoke the melancholy of

autumn and farewell. The image of the kinuta is also strongly associated with one’s longing for a loved one who is at a distance. In the case of Genji, he longs for Yūgao, who is gone: “In memory Genji treasured even the noise of the fulling blocks, which he had found so intolerable at the time. ‘The nights are very long now,’ he sang to himself as he lay down to sleep.” The phrase, “the nights are very long now” is an allusion to a poem entitled “On hearing the sound of a kinuta at night” compiled in Hakushi monjū (The Bai Collection, 1287) by the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi (772-846). The poem depicts the grief of a wife who longs for her absent husband while she beats a fulling block. This image of the kinuta resonates with such earlier literary allusions in the text of the Noh play Kinuta.

The uki or ‘melancholic feeling’ that pervades the play is adumbrated by the sound of the kinuta. Although there is no such sound actually made on stage, the pounding sound of the kinuta echoes in the imagination of the audience, serving as a vehicle to console those who suffer and grieve. Ultimately, the pounding of the kinuta has the effect of helping the wife attain enlightenment. It soothes her frustration and allows her to express her feelings, which address confession and penitence. Muromachi Hisao points out that Zeami’s use of the confessional narrative on the part of a spirit, that is, the ghost of a character who has already passed on, functions as kuyō or a ‘memorial mass’, which has the effect of pacifying the anger of the spirit.

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303 Tyler, trans., 2001, 76 and 76n74. For the original text, see Abe, Genji Monogatari 1, SNKBZ 20, 189 and 189n14.
304 Abe, Genji Monogatari 1, SNKBZ 20, 189 and 189n14.
In Kinuta, feminine desire and suffering are expressed within the constraints of the Buddhist belief system, prevalent in medieval Japanese society, which preached that women were susceptible to strong attachments and resentment, to the extent of condemning women for being sinful. Kinuta and many other Noh plays composed or revised by Zeami promote and illustrate the concept of Buddhist salvation through a suffering female protagonist who is saved after she confesses that her suffering is due to unmitigated attachment, the confessional act allowing her release from the attachments that have plagued her. As Sagara points out, in the case of Kinuta, the role of pounding the kinuta is crucial because the wife in effect plants the seeds of salvation through this action.\(^\text{306}\) According to medieval Buddhist beliefs, a restless spirit is able to release himself/herself from attachment by expressing resentment and thereby creating an opportunity for enlightenment.\(^\text{307}\) With these two steps, the wife in Kinuta eventually succeeds in releasing herself from worldly desires and attains enlightenment.

In order to demonstrate how the voice of the oppressed is expressed in this play, I will first provide the historical and political context in which the play was composed. The favoritism of the political leaders of Zeami’s time affected the playwright’s life and his artistic interest as expressed in his plays. I will also discuss the playwright’s own comments on the work, which afford a deeper understanding of the context in which the play was written.

\(^{306}\) Sagara, 130.

\(^{307}\) Wakita, 2005, 103.
Zeami and Kinuta

Zeami wrote Kinuta in his advanced age\textsuperscript{308} while enduring great hardship after the death of his powerful patron, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408, r. 1368-1394), who highly valued Kan’ami and Zeami’s performance of sarugaku nō. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Yoshimitsu’s successor, Yoshimochi (1386-1428, r. 1394-1423), favored performers of dengaku nō over Zeami and his sarugaku cohort. And yet, Yoshimochi continued to patronize Zeami, though not as exclusively as his father had done.\textsuperscript{309} During the tenure of Yoshimochi as shogun, for example, dengaku nō performances for the shogun came to exceed those of sarugaku nō in number. Zeami’s fortunes worsened later when another son of Yoshimitsu, Yoshinori (1394-1441, r. 1429-1441), who succeeded Yoshimochi as shogun, favored Zeami’s nephew, On’ami, over Zeami and his sons. In 1429, for example, scheduled performances by Zeami and his sons were called off by order of Yoshinori.\textsuperscript{310} Zeami’s fate was in the hands of the shoguns, which arguably had direct bearing on his works. Kinuta was probably written under such unhappy circumstances.

Zeami’s two famous quotes on Kinuta are recorded in Sarugaku dangi, which was written by Zeami’s son Shichirō Motoyoshi (b. 1400?). They convey Zeami’s thoughts on composing Kinuta: “On a quiet evening, listening to the melody of Kinuta, I wonder if anyone in the latter days would ever fully appreciate such an appealing play as


\textsuperscript{309} Ogawa Kayoko, “Zeami bannedki no nō to hyōgen to ōeiki no renga (A Comparative Study of Zeami’s Late No Plays and a Collection of Renga)” Geinōshi kenkyū, no. 162 (July, 2003): 39.

\textsuperscript{310} Nō kyōgen jiten, 531.
this. I even feel reluctant to write it down.”311 It is unclear whether Zeami used suer no yo (‘the latter days’) in this passage to mean ‘these days’ or ‘in future generations’.

Omote and Katō suggest that the phrase suer no yo probably indicates the declining era of mappō, or the latter days of the Buddhist law.312 Similarly, Wakita comments on this phrase as something that makes her wonder whether Zeami was lamenting over the fact that his lofty work remained unappreciated in those days including and outlasting his own time.313 Eileen Kato, however, excludes Zeami’s lifetime and translates suer no yo as ‘the people of aftertime’.314 The important point to be made here is whether Zeami felt that his work was being underappreciated in his time, or whether he thought that anyone in future generations would fully appreciate it. As Miyake Akiko clarifies, such thoughts of Zeami on Kinuta suggest that he lamented the disappearance of critical commentators on his art.315 It is not too far-fetched to think that Zeami was complaining about the lack of appreciation of art among the Noh connoisseurs of his time, particularly his patron, Yoshimochi, who favored other playwrights and performers over him. It may be that for this reason, Zeami doubted that there would be Noh connoisseurs in future generations.

The following passage articulates Zeami’s doubt concerning whether the value of his work would be recognized by posterity: “As for the Noh play Kinuta, in generations to come, no one will appreciate it. How bitter and disappointing it is!”316 These passages

311 For the original text, see “Sarugaku dangi,” in ZZ, 265.
312 ZZ, 266.
313 Wakita, 2005, 93-94.
316 For the original text, see “Sarugaku dangi,” in ZZ, 284.
suggest Zeami himself regarded his own work Kinuta highly. Despite Zeami’s fears, the records indicate that On’ami performed Kinuta in 1464 and 1465 (about twenty years after Zeami’s death). As I mentioned earlier, it is ironic that it was Zeami’s nephew and strongest rival who appreciated and performed one of Zeami’s most admirable works. Zeami’s fears were partially realized, however, as it is likely that Kinuta fell out of performance for over two hundred years afterwards. The fact that, unlike many other Noh plays, the entire staging of Kinuta today differs from one school to another suggests that the methods of staging this play were not handed down from generation to generation.

What Zeami could not have imagined is that Kinuta today is held in high esteem. The question remains then: What made Zeami think that a work such as Kinuta was underappreciated? The answer to this question may be found in the evolving ideas of Zeami’s art of sarugaku and the protean nature of the tastes of the connoisseurs. In the preceding chapters, I have discussed Zeami’s concept of the ineffable beauty of yūgen. In Sakuragawa, the mother’s awareness of madness is used as a device to effectively establish an association between the ephemeral beauty of cherry blossoms and her longing for her son, the Cherry Child’. In this play, the aesthetic ideal that Zeami sought after earlier in his career—often associated with specific roles such as refined courtly ladies—is embodied and evoked in a series of poetic associations of the fleeting beauty of

317 Yashima, 1985, 721; Seida Hiroshi, Nō no hyōgen (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2004), 146.
318 For further discussion, see Tsutsui Yōko, Onna no nō no monogatari (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1988), 129 and 133. It is noteworthy that, as Seida points out, the text of Kinuta began to be used exclusively as a chanting libretto by the end of the sixteenth century. For further discussion, see Seida, 146. Wakita also points out that Kanginshū (Songs for Leisure Hours, 1518?) includes a poem that quotes a phrase from Kinuta. Wakita, 2005, 94.
319 For further discussion, see Seida, 146.
cherry blossoms in spring. In Kinuta, however, Zeami’s contextualization of ‘unity of image’ is shifted to autumn, which effectively evokes the lonesome image of the autumnal kinuta. Ogawa Kayoko describes the tone of this play using Zeami’s term, hie. There is no English equivalent to hie. It refers to a feeling of chill. In my reading of Zeami’s statement regarding what he considers the epitome of a play embodying the hie quality in “Judging the Noh” (hihan no koto), a section in Kakyō, I find that for Zeami, the hie quality is “sabisabi to shitaru naka ni (‘in the midst of the lonesome and simple atmosphere’), nani to yaran kanshin no aru tokoro nari (‘a certain Noh play has something that moves the hearts of his audience’).” When Zeami later composed Kinuta, the embodiment of this quality of hie he had been seeking, he found it deplorable that no one could appreciate its artistic refinement. He comments on the elusive concept of hie as follows:

There is a Noh performance that succeeds through the heart of the audience. Such a Noh does not necessarily entail high attainment in dance, chant, and mimicry, or interesting rhetoric, yet in the midst of the lonesome and simple atmosphere there is something that moves the heart of the audience. Only after one experiences performing the whole repertory, can he perform a Noh like this. Such performance can be referred to as a hietaru or chill and subdued Noh. Even great connoisseurs cannot easily appreciate this level of attainment, let alone lesser connoisseurs. It must be indeed beyond their imagination. Such a level of attainment seems to be manifested by the inherent talent of an accomplished actor. Such a performance is referred to as a Noh that succeeds through the heart of the audience; a Noh that is achieved without deliberate working of the mind; a Noh that reaches the heart of the audience without words or techniques.

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320 Ogawa, 45-47.
321 ZZ Kakyō, 103.
322 ZZ Kakyō, 103.
This statement echoes what Motoyoshi recorded several years later in Sarugaki dangi, as I mentioned above. In fact, what Zeami advocates in Kakyō reflects the social and political conditions in which it was written. This is the era known as Ōei (1394-1427) during which Yoshimochi had been active as a political leader. As Ogawa points out, Yoshimochi preferred the aesthetic poetic concept of hie and favored Zōami’s dengaku Noh, seeing his art as the embodiment of hie beauty. Zeami’s lamentation in Sarugaku dangi suggests his struggle to compete against his rival.

Let us now shift our attention to the subjugation of women in medieval society, as depicted in the wife in Kinuta, a character who laments her lonely life while recalling happier days with her husband, and hoping that he soon will return to her.

The Waxing and Waning of One’s Life

In the first act of Kinuta, the shite in the role of a wife yearns for her husband (identified only as a man from Ashiya in Kyūshū), who has been away for about three years since going to the capital to settle a lawsuit. The husband sends his female servant, Yūgiri, home to deliver a message to his wife, promising that he will come home by the end of that year.

The tsure in the role of Yūgiri tells the shite, her mistress, that though she did not want to, she had ended up spending three years in the capital while serving her master (her mistress’ husband). Upon hearing her servant’s confession, the wife feels offended. The following exchange between the wife and Yūgiri displays the complex relationship between these two women:
MAID  Sanzorō. *Toku ni mo mairitaku wa sōrai-tsuredomo onmiyazukai no hima nakute, kokoro yori hoka ni mitose made miyako ni koso wa sōraišika.*

You see, madam, I wanted to come home sooner, but the service I owe my master allowed me no time to do so. Quite against my will, I ended up spending three years in Miyako [the capital, present-day Kyoto].

WIFE  *nani miyakozumai o kokoro no hoka to ya. Omohi yarege ni wa miyako no hanazakari, nagusami ooki oriori dani, uki wa kokoro no narai zo kashi.*

It was against your will, you say, that you stayed on in Miyako? Think of that! There in the blossoming Capital, amid a wealth of consolations, it is still the heart’s way to grieve.  

There is a strong element of sarcasm in the wife’s response to Yūgiri, for she is suspicious of Yūgiri’s sincerity. It is likely, on the other hand, that Yūgiri feels guilty about staying with her master in the capital while her mistress was left at home by herself in a lonely village with nothing to do but await her husband’s return. The wife feels offended because Yūgiri dares to claim that it was against her will that she stayed on in the capital, which is the center of cultural activities and offers a plethora of entertainments. On top of that, Yūgiri had been with her master all the time. The wife’s frustration may be rooted in her suspicion that such service to the master may have entailed serving him in bed at night.

As a prelude to this exchange, the wife had expressed her longing for her husband metaphorically: “Like *oshidori,* those male and female mandarin ducks snuggling beneath bedclothes, lovers still grieve, fearing that they must part some day; like *hiboku*  

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or flatfish with their eyes very close together, lovers pillow their heads side by side, yet they fear the waves may tear them apart.”324 *Oshidori* is a metaphor for a loving couple and their harmonious relationship. Because their eyes are close to each other, *hiboku* are conventionally used to indicate a man and a woman sleeping close together. These expressions effectively convey the wife’s sexuality and her longing for those days when she and her husband could spend their nights together. The wife continues to lament, pointing out that even when lovers are together, they still lament their inevitable separation. Even when together their grief is so deep, so how much more keenly must those who have long been distant from each other, such as she and her husband, feel their separation. She further laments her husband’s absence and her unfulfilled desires. “Even while we are still alive,325 we must endure [the suffering of separation] in memory [of our happy days together]. I have not forgotten [those days] and I sob. As tears spill from my sleeves like rain, my cloudy heart has never cleared up.”326

It is amidst such somber ruminations that Yūgiri delivers her master’s message. The brunt of the wife’s complaint is now borne by Yūgiri. The wife chastises Yūgiri for not writing to her even once in all these years. As Tyler points out, the fact that the wife has been out of contact with her husband and his servant is crucial in this play, yet no explanation is ever given for it. He comments, “Zeami seems to have radically stripped the play of any anecdotal material that might distract one’s attention from his theme.”327

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324 Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59: 262.
325 At that time conjugal love was believed to last even after death. Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, NKBT 40, 332-333n23.
The lack of communication between the husband/Yūgiri and the wife might be a tactic to bring out the doubt and suspicions that the wife feels—regardless of whether she has grounds to feel that way.

As the glories of the capital were conventionally associated with its cherry blossoms,\textsuperscript{328} the expression ‘the blossoming Capital’ is an effective contrast with the following phrases, which depict the wife’s lonely life in the countryside, set in autumnal imagery. In stark contrast, Yūgiri’s active life in the splendid capital is associated with spring:

CHORUS \hspace{1cm} hina no sumai ni aki no kure, hitome mo kusa mo karegare no chigiri mo tae hatenu, nani o tanoman mi no yukue,

(sageuta) Village life palls as autumn ends.
None pass the door, the grasses die;
old loves and friendships lapse.
What have I to trust, in time to come?

(ageuta) mitose no aki no yume naraba, mitose no aki no yume naraba, uki mo sono mama same mo sede, omohide wa mi ni nokori, mukashi wa kawari ato mo nashi.

\hspace{1cm} Ge ni ya itsuwari no
\hspace{1cm} naki yo nari-seba ika bakari
\hspace{1cm} hito no koto no ha ureshi karan

\hspace{1cm} oroka no kokoro ya na, oroka nari-keru tanomi ka na.

Were they a dream, these three autumn years
were they a dream, these three autumn years,
I should wake from sorrow, yet do not.
Only memories stay with me.
The old days are changed and gone.
O it is true:

\hspace{1cm} Were this world of ours
\hspace{1cm} Unstrained by lies

\textsuperscript{328} Tyler, trans., 1992, 162n5.
to hear him speak
such sweet, welcome words.

O foolish heart! O foolish trust!

One the one hand, these passages describe the wife’s sorrowful recollection of her happy married life in the past, contrasted with her lonely, miserable situation in the present. On the other hand, they convey universal human suffering as one goes through the waxing and waning cycle of one’s life. Tsutsui Yōko describes what is conveyed in Kinuta as a “crying out of intense grief of human beings, sorrowful songs of lonely souls, and pathos and bitterness that one feels when one’s last hope is lost.”330 The wife’s frustration is thus sublimated into the suffering of the oppressed, whose lives are in the hands of those who are in power. This partly explains why the wife and Yūgiri are reconciled while they pound the kinuta together to console themselves. After all, neither of them has any choice but to remain dependent on the patriarch.

**The Kinuta’s Sound in Tradition: Effect of the Sound of the Kinuta**

While the wife bitterly regrets her foolishness in relying on her husband’s unreliable promise, she hears the sound of the pounding of the kinuta. The wife recalls an ancient Chinese anecdote concerning a general named Sobu who was a prisoner for many years. During his absence, Sobu’s yearning wife pounded a zhen, the Chinese equivalent of a kinuta, believing that its familiar sound would ease her husband’s suffering.

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329 Tyler, trans., 1992, 162. Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 263.
The poem on the sound of a *kinuta* at night by Bai Juyi mentioned earlier is one in a sequence of three poems on the same topic also included in *Wakan rōeishū* (Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing, ca., 1012). The first two poems by Bai Juyi depict the feelings of a Chinese woman’s longing for her absent husband on a long autumn night. It is on such a lonely moonlit night that she beats the *kinuta*. The last poem, by Liu Yuanshu (ninth century?), also expresses the grief of a wife who awaits the return of her husband, who was dispatched to a remote sea town in the north. This last poem by Liu Yuanshu further illustrates the sentiments of the estranged wife. She laments that her husband has been dispatched to the far north and suspects that there might be a bustling town such as Rakuyō in Henan (Kanan in Japanese) province and he may not come back this year as well. While a goose flies over the Big Dipper heading to the south, she remains here and beats her husband’s winter clothes, worrying about him on a moonlit night.\(^{331}\) The use of such an established poetic image of the *kinuta* is effective in bringing out the intolerable sorrow of parting that a wife experiences when separated from her husband.

The sentiments of the wife in *Kinuta* resonate with those of these Chinese women. The *Kinuta* woman decides that she will also console herself by beating a fulling block. Yūgiri at first hesitates to prepare the *kinuta* for her mistress, claiming that it is a tool for humble laborers. However, she too understands the *kinuta* allusion, hoping that it will ease her mistress’ heart, and she relents and helps her mistress beat the *kinuta*. Like the Chinese wives mentioned above, the wife in *Kinuta* thus beats the fulling block in the hope that the sound will convey her feelings to her husband.

\(^{331}\) For further discussion of these three poems, see Abe, *Genji Monogatari* 1, SNKBZ 20, 443.
The fulling block also reminds us of the Confucian emphasis on the importance of a wife staying loyal to her husband and on the patriarchal practice of confining women to prescribed roles in the private sphere as daughters, wives, and mothers. In the Noh play, this kinuta is deftly exploited as a vehicle for conveying the wife’s desire for her husband and, at the same time, for protesting the neglect that his absence imposes. While the wife pounds the kinuta, her feelings intensify. As she begins beating, her attention is on expressing her attachment to her husband. Sagara Tōru suggests that her focus then shifts toward expressing that pent-up suffering, and “her excessive attachment turns into resentment.”\(^{332}\) Unlike in the Chinese precedents, beating the kinuta thus becomes a means for the wife to express both her attachment to her husband and the resentment she bears towards him for his neglect.

Ultimately, Sagara argues, “The wife’s idea of pounding the kinuta to console herself indeed leads her on a path to self-salvation.”\(^{333}\) The pounding of the kinuta has the effect of venting her frustration, which serves as a prologue to her liberation from her fatal obsession. As earlier stated, according to medieval Buddhist belief, a restless spirit is able to release himself or herself from obsession by voicing the resentment that feeds the obsession. The sound of the kinuta thus plants a seed for her enlightenment as we will see at the end of the play. As Kitagawa points out, Zeami thus uses the kinuta effectively to embrace both of its facets: as an everyday tool for humble laborers and as an elegant poetic theme associated with the loneliness of autumn.\(^{334}\) Zeami also employs

\(^{332}\) Sagara Tōru, Zeami no uchū (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1990), 125-126.

\(^{333}\) Sagara, 127.

this technique of fusing incongruous facets of one image in another play, *Koi no omoni*, which I will discuss below.

The association of the *kinuta’s* thud with a lonely wife’s consolation in a melancholic autumn night had been established in Chinese poetry and fully developed as a motif in Japanese poetry by the twelfth century.\(^{335}\) In *The Tale of Genji*, as I have mentioned above, the sound of pounding of a *kinuta* associated with the cry of wild geese in autumn is used to invoke deep emotion. The use of the motif of a *kinuta* is thus effective in conjuring the image of a forlorn wife softening the silk of a robe by pounding the *kinuta* on a long, lonesome autumn evening. This awareness of the coming of autumn eventually leads to the realization of the impermanence of the world.

Zeami’s effective use of the *kinuta* in the play demonstrates his awareness of the expressive efficacy of a traditional image for invoking the interpretive engagement of audiences based on their foreknowledge. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Foley has written about the technique of employing materials that invoke networks of associative linkages in relation to oral or oral-derived works of art. He notes that the multiple associative links enjoyed by a traditional image need not be explicitly spelled out to audiences familiar with a traditional art form because, “All members of the audience interpret the text according to a shared body of knowledge that is their inheritance.” Although in this particular instance, the *kinuta* image is derived more from literary sources than oral ones, the notion that such traditional material enables audience members to draw on their intuitions and foreknowledge rather than on explicit exposition ‘contained’ in the work, is

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\(^{335}\) For further discussion of this association and the poetic image of a *kinuta*, see Sagara, 124, Tyler, trans., 1992, 159, and Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, NKBT 40, 334n9.
of relevance to us here. Such connotative meanings rely for their coherence on what
Foley calls ‘the immanence of tradition’. He points out that material that, on the surface,
may seem too heterogeneous to follow in performance will gain its coherence from “the
audience’s earlier acquaintance with the work and its parts.” He continues:

For all the members of the audience bring to the process of interpretation a deep
knowledge of how to ‘read’ the text before them, how to construe the traditional
signals in their full metonymic, inherent meaning.\textsuperscript{336}

Although Foley is focusing on patterns of audience reception that continue to this day,
Zeami was aware in much earlier times of the effect of audience foreknowledge on the
interpretation of play scripts or performances. By using this well-known poetic motif, the
kinuta, Zeami was able to convey multiple connotative nuances as we will explore further
in the ensuing discussion of the section of the play termed kinuta no dan i.e. the musical
sequence titled “Kinuta”.

**The Musical Sequence “Kinuta”\textsuperscript{337}**

Musical Sequence “Kinuta” (kinuta no dan) is a highlight of the play, consisting
of a series of musical segments. Each segment describes different states of mind of the
wife. Yet, as a whole, it describes the scene of the wife’s pounding of the kinuta and her
state of mind throughout. In these sections, the character’s feelings and the scenery are

\textsuperscript{336} John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic*
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 44.

\textsuperscript{337} My analysis of kinuta no dan owes much to the lecture by Miyake Akiko in a NHK program,
*Nō to kyogen kanshō nyūmon*. Miyake Akiko. “Kinuta 2: kotoba no majutsushi Zeami.” Nihon dentō
geinō: Nō Kyōgen kanshō nyūmon.
skillfully depicted in the poetry. The imagery of a lonesome autumn night resonates with the loneliness of the character.

The wife laments how the distance between Kyoto and Kyushu has estranged her from her husband. Communication with him has ceased and their love has grown as cold as the autumn wind, which signals the end of summer. The Japanese term for autumn, aki puns on the homophonous noun aki from the verb akiru (‘be weary’ of something). It implies the wife’s fear that her husband might have grown weary of her. The loneliness of one who feels abandoned is poetically expressed in the following passages of kinuta no dan:

WIFE (sashi)  
*omoshiro no ori kara ya*
*koro shimo aki no yûtsukata*

O, the hour has its own beauty!  
Autumn is here, and the closing dusk.

WIFE&MAID  
*oshika no koe mo surudoku*
*minu yamakaze o okuri kite*
*kozue wa izure hitoha chiru*
*sora susamashiki tsukikage no*
*noki no shinobu ni uturoite*

Loud on the unseen mountain wind,  
a stag’s cry quivers in the heart,  
From desolate heavens, the moon  
Shines in through grasses at the eaves

WIFE  
*tuyo no tamadare kakaru mi no*

agleam with dew, while I

WIFE&MAID  
*omohi o noberu yosugara kana*

night-long, disclose abiding grief.\(^{338}\)

In the *sashi*, the lonely image of evening evokes pathos. In addition, the motif of the mating call of the stag is often used as a sexual metaphor as well as an autumn metaphor in Japanese poetry. On one hand, the powerful male mating call hints at a possible affair between the husband and Yūgiri. On the other hand, it suggests the wife’s sexuality contrasted against the lonely autumn.

The chorus suggests the wife’s state of mind metaphorically through a description of nature. As the mating call of the stag comes along the unseen mountain wind, it suggests how feelings of unease creep over the wife on the bleak autumn evening. Her suffering is imposed by society and by her husband’s callousness. However, I would argue that what makes her pain truly acute and truly enhances the dramatic and psychological interest of the play is the fact that it is also self-imposed. It is not discernible whether her husband has been true to her or not. She is in a vacuum – that is the problem.

*Jō no ei*, or a section of introductory chant in verse in the high range, follows the *sashi*. The *jō no ei* section is one in which “the rhythm does not follow a beat and which [is] recited like traditional Japanese poetry.” This section begins with a full expression of continental immenseness: “The palace clock points aloft; the wind veers to the north. Nearby, a block [kinuta] beats slow then fast; the westering moon sinks low.” These

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339 For more on *sashi*, see Chapter 2.
341 Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, NKB 40, 335n29.
342 Hoff and Flindt, 225; Nishino, *Yōkyoku hyakuban*, SNTBT 57, 690.
343 Tyler, trans., 1992, 164.
verses are based on Chinese poems by Tomohira Shinnō (Prince Tomohira)\(^344\) from *Shinsen rōeishū (A New Collection of Poetic Recitations)*\(^345\), compiled by Fujiwara no Mototoshi (~1142). The clock is a water clock. Its hand is pointing aloft, telling that it is midnight. Under the moonlight, the poet hears the sound of the *kinuta* being pounded, sometimes slowly and sometimes quickly. The moon is sinking to the west. The Japanese verb used to describe the ‘sinking’ of the moon is *nagareru* or ‘flow’. The image of the moon ‘flowing’ is effective in evoking the openness and expansiveness of the continent and its magnificent view as it suggests the leisurely passing of time. The moon setting over the mountains or the sea would be a familiar image for the Japanese, rather than over a wide-open horizon.

The *ageuta*, or song in the high range, that follows displays the wife’s passion and frustration. In this *ageuta*, each sentence is rhythmically connected as in a word-association game, in which a word from one sentence is used differently in the next sentence, connecting the two sentences while introducing a new context. As Rimer and Yamazaki have noted, the *ageuta* section consists of “a relatively high-pitched musical passage, with a fixed rhythm, that can run up to ten units of 5-7 syllables.”\(^346\) The following is an excerpt from the *ageuta* section, which reveals the wife’s tumultuous mental state:

\[
(ageuta) \quad \ldots \text{ima no kinuta no koe soete} \\
\text{kimi ga sonata ni fuke ya kaze.} \\
\text{Amari ni fukite matsu kaze yo,} \\
\text{waga kokoro kayotte hito ni miyu naraba,}
\]

\(^{344}\) *Shinnō* is a Japanese title meaning “Prince.”

\(^{345}\) Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, NKB 40, 335n32.

\(^{346}\) Rimer and Yamazaki, trans., 264.
sono yume yaburu na.
Yaburete nochi wa kono koromo,
tare ga kite mo tou beki.

…Take up this block’s voice, O wind,
blow it to my husband yonder!
Yet softly, kind wind in the pine--
for should all of my heart
reach him, and he dream of me…
O do not break his dream!
For if you do, this robe of his –
who ever will come and wear it?347

While the first two lines allude to the ancient Chinese anecdote in which Sobu’s wife’s loyalty is emphasized, the sound of a kinuta here is transformed from the restrained expression of Sobu’s wife’s devotion into the passionate longing of the wife in Kinuta. Kaze or the wind in ima no kinuta no koe soete, kimi ya sonata ni fuke ya kaze (“…Take up this block’s voice [this sound of the kinuta], O wind, blow it to my husband yonder!”), for example, is repeated with the word kaze in amari ni fukite matsukaze yo, waga kokoro kayoite hito ni miyuru naraba, sono yume yaburu na (“Yet softly, kind wind in the pine – for should all of my heart reach him, and he dream of me … O do not break his dream!”) in the following phrase. The first reference to kaze suggests her desperate condition in which she must depend on something as capricious as the wind to convey her message, hoping that it blows to her husband far away. In the following sentence, the term kaze is introduced as matsukaze. In the above translation, the effect of the “pivot word” technique (kakekotoba) is not fully expressed. Matsukaze literally means “wind blowing in pine trees or the sound itself.” Here, however, this line plays on the double meaning of matsu, which is also a verb meaning “wait,” implying her condition of pining

347 Tyler, trans., 1992, 164-165. Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokusū 2, SNKBZ 59, 266.
while waiting and longing for her husband’s return, or more literally ‘waiting for the
wind [to reach her husband’].

Tyler’s translation embraces the beauty of the poetic melody while being faithful
to the original text. The beautiful flow of the original language is, however, lost in
translation and substantial annotation is required to recover the interconnectedness of the
language. If her wish comes true and she appears in her husband’s dream, the wife begs
the wind not to ‘break’ his dream. ‘Break’ is a translation of the Japanese word yaburu
(lit. ‘tear’ or ‘rip’), which links with the following phrase: ‘If a robe is ripped, no one will
wear it’. Corresponding to the verb yaburu in this sentence, the following sentence starts
as yaburete nochi wa kono koromo, tare ka kite mo tou beki (‘For if you do [break his
dream], this robe of his – who ever will come and wear it?’ The verb ‘break’ connects
the two sentences as it signifies both the breaking of ‘his dream’ and the breaking of
‘this robe of his’. In this context, ‘break’ also implies breaking their relationship.

‘Wear’ is the translation of kite, from the verb ki-ru, which puns on the
homophonous kite, from the verb ku-ru, or ‘come’. As it shifts in meaning depending on
the words preceding and following, this rhetorical device, kakekotoba or pivot-word is
effectively used to link the phrases. The sixth to eighth lines contain double meanings:
‘If his dream breaks, he will not ‘come’ [home], just as if a robe is ripped, no one will
wear it’. 348 All this wordplay thus makes multiple interpretations simultaneously
possible. As earlier noted, it literally suggests a rhetorical question: ‘if the robe is ripped,
who would wear it”? On another level of interpretation, it implies: ‘if our marital tie is
broken, who would come [home] and wear this robe”? The phrase ‘his dream breaks’

348 Yokomichi and Omote, Yōkyokushū 1, NKB T 40, 336n2.
suggests the wife’s wish to meet her husband even in his dream, and her belief that if her husband also wishes to meet her in a dream, she will appear in his dream. For this reason, for her, ‘his dream breaks’ suggests their broken relationship. She continues to express her longing for her husband, metaphorically associating the robe with their relationship:

*Kite tou naraba itsu made mo koromo wa tachi mo kaenan. Natsugoromo, usuki chigiri wa imawashi ya.

But if he comes, then for all time we shall cut the cloth anew. Ah, summer robe, so thin: so thin, his old promises, I hate them!349

Following from above, the first two lines continue to carry double meanings: ‘If he comes home, I shall cut the robe anew’. On one level, she talks about remaking the old robe anew. On another level, she may possibly indicate the renewal of the *chigiri* or the troth they pledged as she mentions *chigiri* immediately after this phrase. *Chigiri* between a husband and a wife suggests a marriage vow, which also alludes tolovemaking. ‘Summer robe’, mentioned in the phrase that follows, is an introductory phrase for *usuki* or ‘thin’. It is also a related word (*engo*) with *tatsu* or ‘cut’, introduced in the previous phrase. One phrase is thus tightly woven together with another. With the words ‘Ah, summer robe, so thin’, she also refers to her husband’s *chigiri* as being equally ‘thin.’ She expresses her resentment against his unreliable pledges. The Japanese term used here, ‘*imawashi*’, can be translated as ‘hate’ or ‘hateful’. However, the original meaning of *imawashi* is to abhor and avoid something because of its inauspiciousness. While ‘a thin summer robe’ reminds her of her husband’s ‘superficial’ promises, she realizes that

she should refrain from mentioning such an inauspicious word, as it has connotations of ‘a brief span of life’. Realizing the ominous tone of her words, she shifts to more auspicious phrasing as follows:

\[
\text{kimi ga inochi wa nagaki yo no} \\
\text{tsuki ni wa totemo nerareru ni} \\
\text{izaiza koromo utō yo}
\]

Yes, may the man I love live long as those long nights the moon keeps me from sleep! Come, beat upon the robe!350

To negate the idea of a ‘thin’ life, she prays for her husband’s ‘long’ life. Nagaki, the Japanese adjective nagashi (‘long’) conjugated as the predicate of ‘life’ simultaneously modifies ‘moon’. This ‘pivot word’ effectively links the phrases. ‘Long’ is associated with ‘long [autumn] night’ in the subsequent phrase. The word ‘night’ is linked with ‘moon’. The image of a long, sleepless lonely night in autumn in turn invokes the sound of softening the robe with a kinuta.

Zeami’s skillful poetic depiction of the scenery to reflect a character’s feelings stands out in this section. Here, again, ‘unity of image’ serves as ‘painted backdrops,’ on which inner feelings of the wife are drawn. A detailed analysis of the language of the text thus shows how Zeami reveals the inner landscape of the estranged wife’s suffering. As we appreciate the beautiful image of a lonely autumn night through the chant, for example, we also imagine how the character feels on such a dreary night. Zeami’s witty adaptation and ironic usage of the image of the pounding of the kinuta, which traces back to an anecdote from China, intensifies the self-imposed suffering of the estranged wife in

Kinuta. On one hand, the image of a yearning wife who pounds the kinuta for her absent husband, hoping that he will hear, overlaps. On the other hand, the image of a commoner’s tool, the kinuta, along with its familiar allusion, perfectly fits the beautiful lonesome image of an autumn night. The suffering of the lonely wife in Kinuta is thus highlighted.

The wife continues to lament her misery and solitude while beating the kinuta, whereupon another messenger from the capital arrives to convey that the master won’t be able to return home this year after all. Believing that her husband has abandoned her, the wife goes out of her mind, like flowers blown to pieces by the wind. She becomes ill and dies of despair. This is how the first act ends:

CHORUS (sageuta) omowaji to omohu kokoro mo yowaru kana

Never think of him,
urged my too fond heart,
that now is breaking.

[As Chorus sings on, Wife slowly traverses stage and bridge, and vanishes through the curtain. At first, Maid follows her, supporting her faltering steps. At third pine, Maid, moving behind Wife, places her hands on Wife’s shoulders to comfort her.]

(ageuta) Koe mo kareno no mushi no ne no
midaruru kusa no hanagokoro
kaze kyōjitaru kokochi shite
yamai no yuka ni fushishizumi
tsui ni munashiku nari ni keri
tsui ni
munashiku nari ni keri

The cries fade out. In wintry fields, insect voices falter and die. The tangled grasses’ blossom heart feels the wild wind’s withering touch. Sunk upon a bed of sickness, she yields up her breath and is no more
she yields up her breath and is no more.\(^{351}\)

*Kare*, a form of the verb *kareru* (dry) as in *koe mo kareno no mushi no ne*, shifts in meaning. When it is linked to the preceding word *koe* (‘voice’), *koe mo kare* means ‘lose one’s voice’ or ‘voice grows hoarse’. When *kare* is linked to the following word *no* (‘field’), *kareno no mushi* means insects in the field with withered plants and trees. Linking to *midaruru kusa* (tangled plants), *hana* means flower of the tangled plants. *Hana* with *gokoro*, the phonetic variation of *kokoro* (‘mind’, ‘heart’), on the other hand, connotes ‘a woman’s heart’.\(^{352}\) While *kaze* (wind) is a word having traditional poetic associations with *hana*, it also puns on the homophonous noun *kaze* (cold or influenza) of which the wife dies.

**The Woman’s Resentment and Penitence**

The second act begins with the reappearance of the *shite* as the ghost of the wife. She begins to complain to her husband. This berating shows a different side to the character of the wife, whose devotion to her husband more or less resonates with that of the ancient Chinese wife. It is her expression of resistance in the form of feminine sexuality, obsession, and suffering that differentiates her from the Chinese wife. Also contrasting with the magnificent image evoked in the Chinese poetry in *kinuta no dan*, the focus here shifts more to the internal suffering of the estranged wife.

\(^{351}\) Tyler, trans., 1992, 166. Koyama and Satô, *Yôkyokushû* 2, SNKBZ 59, 268.

\(^{352}\) Koyama and Satô, *Yôkyokushû* 2, SNKBZ 59, 268n10.
Although the second act is much shorter than the first act, it is as significant as the first act in terms of the development of the plot. The part of the waki, in the role of the man from Ashiya (the husband), is limited in both the first and second acts. That being said, the husband performs an especially important dramatic function in the second act, expressing his love to his lost wife, and he requests a shamanistic ritual in order to communicate with her spirit. While the significance of the shite on the Noh stage is often stressed, Tyler maintains that in the second act, the husband’s [the waki’s] presence matters a great deal. He stresses, “The wife’s words, spoken in extreme agony, are the unadorned truth. So is the husband’s care. Both are so convincing that The Fulling Block does not fall back from the heights of part one. It rises.”\(^{353}\) As Tyler underlines, in part two the play reaches its dramatic climax. In a fit of remorse, the husband expresses his desire to speak with the spirit of his dead wife:

**HUSBAND**

\begin{verbatim}
muzan ya na sashimi chigirishi tsumagoto no,
hiki wakare ni shi sono mama nite,
tsui no wakare to narikeru zo ya.
\end{verbatim}

It is too cruel!  
Angry that three years had gone,  
the wife I missed in separation  
now has left me, never to return.

**(ageuta)**

\begin{verbatim}
aki datanu, kui no yachitabi monoyogusa  
kui no yachitabi monoyogusa no  
kage yori no futatabi  
kaerikuru michi to kiku kara ni  
azusa no yumi no urahazu ni  
kotoba o kawasu awaresa yo  
kotoba o kawasu awaresa yo\(^{354}\)
\end{verbatim}

\(^{353}\) Tyler, trans., 1992, 158.

\(^{354}\) Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 270.
All in vain… remorse stings me a thousand times.
Yet from beneath the sod, I hear,
there is a way to bring her once again,
to call her to the curved bow’s tip…
poor soul, that we two may speak.\textsuperscript{355}

The bow is made of a catalpa wood. Conventionally, it is believed that catalpa bows have a special power to call the spirit of a dead person. Out of his remorse, the husband abandons himself to such a shamanistic belief, hoping to communicate with the spirit of his dead wife. The husband empathizes with his wife; he does penance for his sins. The concern that the husband reveals in act two contrasts with the resentment that the wife holds against him in act one. As a spirit, the wife is now able to confront him and directly vent her frustration.\textsuperscript{356} According to medieval Buddhist beliefs, excessive attachment between a wife and husband was regarded as hindrance to one’s salvation.

Under such constraint, she is obliged to conceal her frustration. She describes her maddening suffering after her death as a result of her lustful mind. As Tsutsui points out, Zeami highlights the dreadful hell of \textit{kikokushūshū}, a Buddhist hell filled with the wistful cries of unfulfilled spirits.\textsuperscript{357} Toward the end of the play, the unfulfilled spirit of the wife recounts the frightful scene of that hell and its torment as follows:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
WIFE (\textit{kudōki}) & Sarinagara, ware wa jain no gō fukaki omohi no keburi no tachii dani yasukarazarishi mukui no tsumi no midaruru kokoro no ito semete gokusotsu \textit{Abōrasetu} no shimoto no kazu no hima mo naku ute ya ute ya to mukui no kinuta
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{355} Tyler, trans., 1992, 167.
\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{356} Sagara, 129.
\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{357} Tsutsui, 1988, 136.
urameshi karikeru
ingga no mōshū

My sin’s harsh punishment
With endless torment
Racks my deep troubled heart.
My cruel torturers,
The infernal minions and Abōrasetu,
Never ceasing
Scourge me with their whips,
And shriek, “Beat, beat
Upon the Kinuta of Retribution.
Oh, hateful, hateful!  

Raining blows upon her, the Fiend of Hell, Abōrasetu, commands her to beat the
kinuta and pay the penalty of her sin. The howls of the demons are also mentioned in
another play called Aya no tsuzumi (The Damask Drum, author unknown).  

Aya no tsuzumi is an older play, with which one of Zeami’s works called Koi no
omoni (Love’s Heavy Burden) shares some characteristics. Tyler, for example, refers to
Koi no omoni as a revised version of Aya no tsuzumi, even suggesting that the latter, too,
may be one of Zeami’s. However, as Yashima points out, although Zeami notes in
Sandō that “Koi no omoni goes back to Aya no taiko,” it is not clear whether Aya no
taiko and Aya no tsuzumi are identical. Taiko and tsuzumi are both types of drums.

358 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyōkushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 270.
359 Eileen Kato, 344.
360 A gaoler of the subterranean prisons. For detailed description of this creature, see Nippon
363 ZZ 143.
364 Yashima, 1985, 714.
Both *Koi no omoni* and *Aya no tsuzumi* feature a humble old gardener’s fatal attachment to a court lady and his resentment of her. While Yashima has linked *Koi no omoni* and *Kinuta* in terms of their structural similarity, Kitagawa finds commonality in both plays in the combination of a number of polarized images such as sanity versus insanity and reality versus illusion woven into the plays. By combining such seemingly conflicting images, I argue that Zeami creates tension, dramatizes internal suffering, and leads the unenlightened to enlightenment.

In both plays, the shite, who is the emperor’s old gardener, falls in love with a court lady. In *Aya no tsuzumi*, the court officer says to the old gardener, “if you can beat the drum that the court lady has hung in the laurel tree and the sound reaches her in the palace, she will let you see her.” It turns out to be a false drum so it does not make any sounds no matter how hard he beats. In *Koi no omoni*, the officer tells him if he can carry the seemingly light burden on his back and carry it many thousand times around the garden, then the lady will let the gardener see her. The burden is, however, too heavy to carry for the old man. Like in *Aya no tsuzumi*, the old man dies of a grudge against the court lady. Unlike *Koi no omoni*, the old man’s resentment lingers on at the end of *Aya no tsuzumi*. In *Aya no tsuzumi*, the act of beating the drum itself intensifies the resentment of the spirit. The description of suffering and agony from beating the tsuzumi in *Aya no tsuzumi* in fact is very similar to the section in *Kinuta* above:

CHORUS  
*ute ya ute ya to seme tsuzumi*
*yose byōshi tōtō*
*uchitamae uchitamae tote*

---


366 For further discussion of the polar images, Kitagawa, 1980, 122-124.
Beat, O beat, he cries, a loud tattoo,  
as when armies clash: beat, madam, beat!

*Seizes the breast of Consort’s robe, drags her to the laurel tree.*

and threatens her, hellish whip raised high.

*At side, brandishes mallet. Below, circles stage, then from base square [upright stage] calls to Consort.*

The drum is silent. Only her own voice bursts forth,  
wailing: Horror, horror! What have I done? And, in  
answer, his: Repent, repent your cruelty!  

In *Aya no tsuzumi* the old man’s grudge against his unrequited love intensifies in  
reenacting of beating the false *tsuzumi* since it only reminds him what a futile attempt he  
has made and how cruel she has been. In *Kinuta*, on the other hand, reenactment of  
beating the *kinuta* makes her reflect more upon her own actions in the past. In Eileen  
Kato’s translation above, the phrase *urameshi* is rendered into English ‘hateful’. Tyler  
also translates it as ‘for all my hate’.  

The court lady’s feeling of *urameshi* indicates  
her deep desire to set herself free from attachment as she regrets that there is nothing that  
she can do but to feel bitter about ‘the *kinuta* retribution’ (*mukui no kinuta*) and

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367 Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 257-258.
368 Tyler, trans., 1992, 56.
‘consequences of her deep delusion (inga no mōshū). Gradually, the woman in Kinuta liberates herself from her delusion.

**CHORUS (dan-uta)**

WIFE

... urami wa kuzu no ha no

urami wa kuzu no ha no

kaeri kanete shūshin no omokage no

hazukashi ya omohizuma no

futayo to chigirite nō

sue no Matsuyama chiyo made to

kakeshi tanomi wa adanami no

aya yoshina ya soragoto ya

somo kakaru hito no kokoro ka.

...yosamu no koromo utsutsu tomo

yume tomo semete nado

omohi shirazu ya urameshi ya


Anger, creeping like vine

Anger, creeping like vine,

only spreads. My face, O shame,

is the very face of desperate clinging!

Husband I so love, it was two lives

you pledged to me, as man and wife will do,

and swore devotion for a thousand ages,

till seas swallow the inviolate mountains.

Yet your vows were empty.

They were lies.

Was that really all your love was worth?

...Why, o why, my husband, far away,

if not in daylight thought, at least in dream,

did you hear me beating on the block

and know my pain? O, you are hateful!


Here the adjective urameshi is again used to describe her feelings as in omohi shirazu ya urameshi ya above. Tyler translates the phrases in question as “...did you hear me beating on the block and know my pain? O you are hateful!” Kato similarly interprets

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370 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 271.

371 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 272.

them as “Did you then know the deep heart’s longing? Ah, bitter, bitter sorrow!”

I argue, however, that the particle ya as in omohi shirazu ya is exclamatory and expresses her assumption that he has no way of knowing her deep feelings. It is not an interrogative particle here. At this point she comes to a realization, that she has been deluding herself. Her desire for liberation is highlighted with another interjectional ya suggesting this emotional climax.

The wife in Kinuta relieves her frustration by pounding the kinuta in the first act as the sound of pounding of a kinuta evokes the cry of wild geese in autumn. As she mentions Sobu, who is believed to have tied a letter to a wild goose to carry his love message to his wife, the association of kinuta with conjugal love invokes deep emotion. On the other hand, its poetic association with aki (autumn), mentioned earlier, not only reminds us of the pun on the homophonous noun ‘aki’ (weariness), but also on the changing of seasons, connoting the approach of winter. Hearing the sound of the kinuta in the first act is a prelude to her coming to a realization in the second act:

(kiri)  
Hokke dokuju no chikara nite
Hokke dokuju no chikara nite
yūrei masa ni jōbutsu no
michi akiraka ni nari ni keri
kore no omoeba karisome ni
uchishi kinuta no koe no uchi
akuru nori no hanagokoro
bodai no tane to nari ni keri
bodai no tane to nari ni keri

So powerful, the chanted Lotus Sutra
so powerful, the chanted Lotus Sutra

373 Kato, 346.
374 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 272.
375 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 273.
before the spirit a bright path of light
opens out straight to Buddhahood.
See, how from the block she briefly beat,
its complaint own, a perfect flower
has blossomed; the true Teaching
now the seed of her illumination.
now the seed of her illumination.  

The wife thus succeeds in planting the seed of salvation by her pounding of the *kinuta*. By venting her resentment, she is able to release herself from attachment, ultimately
attaining enlightenment in accord with medieval Buddhist beliefs. In the *Kanajo* (“Kana
preface”) to the *Kokinwakashū* (Collection of Old and Modern Japanese Poetry, ca. 905),
Ki no Tsurayuki (872?-945?) stresses the effect that poetry has of “calming the hearts of
fierce warriors.” Sagara argues that, living in a time period when such poetic traditions
were valued and emulated, Zeami took a hint from the earlier *Kanajo* and ascribed the
same effect of poetry to the *kinuta*. I contend, however, that Zeami skillfully uses the
*kinuta* as a means for the estranged wife to express her aggrieved feelings toward her
husband. While venting her emotion through pounding the *kinuta*, her loneliness and the
lonely autumn night merge, eventually helping her allay her resentment.

**The Buddhist Topos of Woman as Sinful**

As the wife delineates her suffering in Hell, she is inwardly disturbed by her
shame and regret about revealing her lustful mind and strong attachment to her husband.
The wife’s feelings are summed up in the adjective *hazukashi* (shameful or

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*377* For further discussion of the sound of the *kinuta* as a means of one’s enlightenment, see Sagara, 130-132.
As Oda Sachiko points out, when a female protagonist slips into the state of madness and puts her disturbed mind on display on stage, she reveals her sensuality. As she further argues, this emotional expression of ‘shamefulness or embarrassment’ (hazukashi) suggests the female protagonist’s awareness of her revelation of what is normally hidden or suppressed under preestablished social constraints. That is, she has revealed her sensuality. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this revelation reminds us of Zeami’s idea about ‘a charming effect’ of scattering flowers. When the madwoman puts what is normally hidden on display, it adds an effect of iroka or ‘color and fragrance’, or more specifically ‘eros or sexual appeal’ to her graceful appearance.

Filled with such a sense of shame and regret, she continues to recount her agony in Hell. She describes how the Fiend of Hell commands her to pay the penalty of her sin. This may reflect the fact that in the late medieval period, there was an increasing prevalence of the Buddhist belief that all women were born tainted with sin. The condemnation of the impurity and vices of women and the relegation of women to subordinate positions may originate in a fear of the feminine and women in general. Alan Sponberg, for example, stresses the Buddhist association of impurity with female fecundity versus the association of masculine celibacy with ‘transcendent purity.’

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378 Yokomichi and Omote, Yōkyokushū 1, NKBT 40, 339.
381 An excerpt from discourses by the Buddha and his chief disciples that Sponberg quotes from Anguttara Nikāya (lit. Graduated Collection, fourth collection of the Sutra-pitaka), for example, shows “…a fear of the feminine, and a fear specifically of its power to undermine male celibacy” and “…the
vices that were regarded as inherent to women’s nature and their strong association with the goshō (the five obstructions)\textsuperscript{382} and sanjū (the three rules to follow)\textsuperscript{383} had reinforced the notion that women were viewed as sinful in medieval Japanese culture. The Buddhist claim of women being unbridled and indulging themselves in lust, for example, emanates from the notion that women possessed the grave vices of being seductive and having excessive desire to fall into delusion.\textsuperscript{384} Ostensibly, the wife in Kinuta displays such a stereotypical predisposition when she complains about her husband’s absence and expresses her longing for him so overtly and demonstratively. At the hands of Zeami, such a gender biased predisposition transforms into a means of poetic self-expression and self-actualization. Her awareness of her ‘sinfulness’ indeed increases her chance to attain religious salvation, according to a popular Buddhist belief that the stronger the desire to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{382}{The goshō or “five obstructions” hindered women from becoming any one of the five sacred beings. For an extended discussion of condescension of women reflected in the ‘five obstructions’ topos, see Edward Kamens, “Dragon-girl, Maidenflower, Buddha: The Transformation of a Waka Topos, ‘The Five Obstructions,’” \textit{Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies}, vol. 53 no. 2 (December, 1993), 393-401.}

\footnote{383}{Sanjū proscribes obedience for women: obedience to parents when young girls, obedience to husbands after marriage, and obedience to sons after the husband’s death. Oguri (50-51) explains how, according to Buddhist teaching, women exist in a state of original sin. As Kajiya points out, the theory of the subordinate positions of women is found both in Chinese classics, such as the \textit{Li-jì} (The Book of Rites) and \textit{Kongzi jiayu} (The School Sayings of Confucius), and Indian classics, such as the \textit{Mānavadharmaśāstra} (the Law Book of Manu). Kajiya bases his argument on the information found in \textit{Mochizuki Bukkyō Daizitten}, Kajiya, 56.}

\footnote{384}{In her article on women, sexuality and enlightenment, Rajashree Pandey notes that in his \textit{Tsuma Kagami} (Mirror for Women, 1300), Mujō Ichinen (1226-1312) quotes Dao-xuan (596-667) “to elaborate on the seven grave vices of women”: feeling no guilt for being seductive, jealousy, deceit, self-centeredness when it comes to seducing men, obsessiveness, excessive desire to lead men into shamelessness and delusion, and possession of unclean bodies. Pandey, Rajashree, "Women, Sexuality, and Enlightenment," \textit{Monumenta Nipponica} 50, no. 3 (1995), 326. Dao-xuan was an active Buddhist scholar and the founder of the Chinese lùi or “discipline” school of Buddhism. His disciplinary Buddhist school emphasized strict adherence to the \textit{vinaya}, or monastic regulations. William H., Nienhauser, Charles Hartman, Y.W. Ma, and Stephen H. West, eds., \textit{The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature}, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 475.}
\end{footnotes}
attain salvation, the more likely one was to attain it. Because salvation was predicated more on the strength of a believer’s desire than on his or her social class or gender, religious salvation was within anyone’s reach, even for ‘sinful’ women.

The disadvantageous position of women as aspirants to salvation was also widely acknowledged as it was stated in the ‘Devaladatta’ chapter of the Lotus Sutra, that advocates a woman’s salvation through requisite gender-transformation from female to male. By the Heian period, the notion of women as sinful was prevalent in brief narratives of the medieval period on Buddhist-related themes (bukkyō setsuwa). Such a negative example of women possessed by the worldly desires (bonnō) was constructed as a literary invention or an expedient didactic device (hōben) and became a recurring topos by medieval times.

By the eleventh century in the late Heian period, as I mentioned earlier, the fear of mappō (the degenerate days of the Buddha’s law) was endemic in Japan. Paul Varley describes the source of this Buddhist ideology: “This doctrine held that after the death of Gautama… Buddhism would pass through three great ages: an age of the flourishing of the law, of its decline, and finally of its disappearance in the degenerate days of mappō. Once the age of mappō commenced—by Japanese calculations that would be in the year of 1052—individuals could no longer hope to achieve Buddhist enlightenment by their own efforts …”

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385 This story is recorded in Chapter 12 of Roll 5 in the Lotus Sutra. The interpretation of this story is based on the translation in Leon Hurvitz, trans. Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sutra): Translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 195-201. For more on the idea of “a woman’s body is filthy” stated in the “Devaladatta” chapter and its influence in waka, see Kamens, 1993, 401-416.

a possible salvation for women, those who are possessed by ‘the worldly desires (bonnô),’ were written to underscore the importance of the belief in the miraculous efficacy of the Lotus Sutra.

The Noh play Dôjôji,\textsuperscript{387} for example, is developed from several variants of Dôjôji setsuwa (brief narratives) traced back to setsuwa collections compiled in the late Heian period and ostensibly influenced by other variant tales written during the Kamakura and the Muromachi periods.\textsuperscript{388} One of the older versions of the Dôjôji tale\textsuperscript{389} unfolds when a monk rents a lodging for the night from a young widow, and her lustful desires are deeply aroused by him. Fearful of breaking his vows carelessly, the monk turns away her sexual advances by promising to stop on his way back. She waits in vain a long time for his return. Greatly disturbed, she dies, and later comes back to life in the form of a poisonous snake. She begins to search for the monk. Finally finding him hidden

\textsuperscript{387} The Noh play Dôjôji has taken the place of an earlier version of the play, Kanemaki, which includes more episodes than Dôjôji.

\textsuperscript{388} There are many variants of Dôjôji tales, in which a monk is seduced by a woman who later transforms into a serpent or a dragon such as a tale from Konjaku monogatari (Tales of Times Now Past, ca. 1120), Gishôe (Picture scroll of Gishô) in Kegon engi or also known as Kegonshû sôshi eden (The founding of Kegon sect, 1225-1231), and Dôjôji engi emaki (Picture scroll of the founding of Dôjôji temple, late 15th century. It has not been confirmed exactly when Konjaku monogatari was compiled. 1120 is regarded as the approximate date of its completion. Although this collection is traditionally attributed to Minamoto Takakuni (1004-1077), the question remains who continued the work of Takakuni to complete it 43 years after his death. For more detailed discussion of the authorship of this collection, see the introduction of Marian Ury, trans., Tales of Times Now Past: Sixty-Two Stories From A Medieval Japanese Collection (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). It is also known that there are other older versions of the story appeared in Heian setsuwa collection such as a tale titled “Kii no kuni muronokoori akujo (A wicked woman in Muronokoori, Kii Province)” no. 129 in Dai Nihonkoku Hokkekyôgenki or Honchô Hokkekyôgenki (1040-1044), attributed by the priest Chingen. For the comparative analysis of the older versions of the Dôjôji story, see Hitoshi Kikuchi, “Dôjôji engi — kawa o wataru hebi nyōbō,” Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyû 43, no. 5 (1998), 76-82.

\textsuperscript{389} It is entitled ‘How a monk of the Dôjôji in the province of Kii copied the Lotus Sutra and brought salvation to serpents’ (no. 14. 3) and is compiled in Konjaku monogatari (Tales of Times Now Past). The synopsis of this story is based on Ury’s translation, Marian Ury, trans., Tales of Times Now Past: Sixty-Two Stories from a Medieval Japanese Collection (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 93-96. There are many versions of the Dôjôji tale that depicted a lustful woman seducing a monk such as “Kii no kuni muronokoori akujo” (A wicked woman in Muronokoori, Kii Province) from Hokkekyôgenki (Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan, 1040-1044).
underneath the bell of Dōjōji temple, the serpent coils herself around the belfry and burns it down. This half of the story depicts a woman obsessed with ‘evil passions/lusts’ (bonnō). The latter half tells us how this woman reaches salvation. The dead monk appears in a dream of the monk of Dōjōji temple. Now in the form of a snake and husband to a snake woman, the dead monk begs the (sleeping) monk to help him and his wife reach enlightenment by copying the Lotus Sutra. From the narrator’s perspective, this is a story about a monk who falls into ‘evil passions/lust’ (bonnō) because of an evil woman, and of how he and the woman are eventually saved, attaining salvation through the miracle of the Lotus Sutra. The following ending passage suggests this interpretation of women as sinister for the purpose of advocating the miraculous efficacy of the Lotus Sutra: “You see, therefore, the strength of the evil in the female heart. It is for this reason that the Buddha strictly forbids approaching women. Know this, and avoid them. So the tale’s been told, and so it’s been handed down.”390

The Noh play takes places at the Temple Dōjōji years after the incident of the serpent-woman. The following is the synopsis of the play:

A female dancer (shirabyōshi) appears at Dōjōji temple in order to participate in a rededication ceremony for the temple bell there. She persuades the temple servants to let her in. A little while after she begins her dance performance, she leaps inside the bell. In the second act, the dancer reappears in her true serpent-woman form under the bell. She struggles against the prayers of the monks and finally leaps into the nearby river to escape the searing heat that emanates from her own body.391

390 Ury, 96.

391 This synopsis is based on the manuscript of Shelley Fenno Quinn, “Dōjōji: A Noh Play.” (CD ROM script, The Ohio State University, 1999).
During the interlude between the first and second acts, the Abbot explains to the temple
servants why he has given the order to refuse women admission to the temple. His
narrative serves to refresh our memories about the source story. However, it also
incorporates familiar elements from other later Dōjōji tale renditions such as the
Kamakura period work, Kegon engi (Tale of the origins of the Kegon sect). In the Noh
version, the woman who turns into a serpent is not a lustful widow, but rather an innocent
girl. The girl falls in love with the monk when her father jokingly tells her that the monk
is the person destined to be her husband. The image of the lustful woman in earlier
Dōjōji setsuwa shifts into the depiction of a more sophisticated woman who justifies her
entry into the temple because she is a shirabyōshi accomplished at chanting imayō, a
popular verse form replete with references to Buddhism doctrines. She argues that the
shirabyōshi’s dance and chanting of imayō, with its Buddhist implications, is appropriate
for this occasion. Also for performance, shirabyōshi traditionally dress like men, as I
mentioned in Chapter 2. If she enters the temple for her performance, she should not be
considered a ‘woman.’ As in Kinuta, the woman in the play Dōjōji is no longer
voiceless. Unlike women in setsuwa tales, women in Noh find a path to her religious
salvation under her own power.

The study of the Noh play Kinuta reveals an ambivalent attitude toward women in
medieval Japan. On one hand, the wife’s grumbling reminds us of the ‘female vices’

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392 This synopsis is based on the text of Noh play Dōjōji from Haruo Nishino, ed., Yōkyokushū

393 Klein in her comparative analysis between Kanemaki and Dōjōji, criticizes the way in which
woman gains entrance in Dōjōji. For further discussion, see Susan B. Klein, “Woman as Serpent: The
Demonic Feminine in the Noh Play,” Religious reflections on the human body, ed. Jane Marie Law
(Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 223.
such as “greed, anger or folly, pride, envy, or other defilements” that are inherent to women as depicted in the *Lotus Sutra*. On the other hand, the fact that she is allowed to articulate her resentment against her husband openly suggests that a playwright such as Zeami was able to create a venue for women of her status to do so.

As Wakita maintains, in marriage practices tracing to the twelfth century, the status of brides as legal wives in their husbands’ households was more established and stable than it had been previously. Because the wife in *Kinuta* enjoyed a stable status in her husband’s household, it was socially acceptable for her to accuse her husband of negligence. In her article entitled “Women and the Creation of the *Ie* in Japan: An Overview from the Medieval Period to the Present,” Wakita discusses the social position and functions of the medieval housewife within the home. She argues that the beginning of the medieval period in Japan should be defined by the establishment of the *ie* system in which the couple lived together (*yometori* marital system), which spread to the commoner and the warrior classes. Wakita discusses the fact that Takamura Itsue was the first to conduct research on changes in the marriage institutions of Japan, including *tsumadori* marriage practice, in which a husband and wife lived in separate residences; *mukotori* marriage, in which the husband was adopted into the wife’s family, and *yometori* marriage. Wakita opposes Takamura’s assertion that “the establishment of a

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395 Wakita, 2005, 101-102. For more discussion of the status of women and the establishment of the *ie* (or household) the *yometori* (or the marriage system in which the husband provides a residence for himself and his wife the wife) marriage, see Wakita Haruko, “Women and the Creation of the *Ie* in Japan: An Overview from the Medieval Period to the Present,” *U.S.-Japan women's journal, English supplement*, no. 4 (1993): 88-102.
396 Wakita, 1993, 83-84.
397 Wakita, 1993, 84-85.
patriarchal system through *yometori* marriage resulted in lower status and oppression for women.” Rather, she argues that, for women of lower status, *yometori* marriage was, in fact, desirable, as it offered a possibility for them to marry into the households of their suitors when they did not have the option of *tumadori* or *mukotori* marriages.\(^{398}\)

Wakita’s argument clarifies that *yometori* marriages were not the direct cause of the lower status of women in medieval Japan, as Takamura had contended.

Wakita’s study further presents “an alternative to the common image of wife forced into subservience under the control of patriarchy, focusing instead on images from that formative period that depict the *ie* [or household] as created by the common labor of husband and wife.”\(^{399}\) The relationship between the wife and the husband in *Kinuta* suggests such equality between the two. This partly explains the husband’s penitence in the second act for his negligence and his sense of responsibility for the death of his wife.

This equality between couples is also evidenced in a number of Kyōgen plays. Kyōgen plays often portray the husband-wife relationship using female characters that are *wawashii*—that is to say bold, strong, sly, and/or nagging wives, married to timid, simple-minded husbands. This relationship can be found in *Kamabara* (The ‘Sickly’ Stomach), *Chigiriki* (Cautious Bravery), and *Oko Sako* (Oko and Sako). The wives in these plays express their devotion to weak patriarchs with whom they have relationships of unquestioning fidelity, lazy husbands whom they attempt to prod into action.


Unlike the wawashii wives in these Kyōgen plays, however, the wife in Kinuta is able to confront her husband only as a dead spirit. It can be argued that Zeami exploits the mugen nō or dream-play structure in a way that allows the wife to confront her husband. In the case of Kyōgen, the confrontation between the domineering, hardworking wives and their laid-back husbands is highlighted in a comical contrast, which is not only effective to induce laughter from the audience, but also a good tactic to avoid any criticism that such plays might be questioning patriarchal authority. I argue that Zeami’s use of the mugen nō structure and also his use of madness are successful in articulating the unspeakable protest, desire, and grief that were seen as deviating from the social and religious norms of the time.

The Dream Play and Kinuta

It is believed that the term mugen nō was first used by Sanari Kentarō in 1926.\textsuperscript{400} The literal translation of this term is ‘dream and phantasm play’, though it is often translated simply as ‘dream play’. Since this term is a latter-day characterization, it is more formulaic than the plays themselves. The term, genzai nō, or ‘real-time’ Noh play, was also invented to contrast with mugen nō.\textsuperscript{401} Contemporary scholars use these two classifications to break the structure of Noh plays into two large groupings, although some plays do not fit neatly into this binary system. Yokomichi and Omote define the basic pattern of mugen nō, in a typical mugen scenario: “a local person (mae-shite) tells a


traveling priest a story about a person from long ago who is often identified with the
place the traveler is visiting."⁴⁰²

In *mugen nō*, the line between reality and fantasy is blurred. The events in the
play are presented as in a dream. The blurred line between dream and reality reminds us
of the poetic conventions of *yume* (dream) and *utsusu* (reality). The following poem
composed by Bishop Shinkei (1406-1475), for example, denotes how this idea of the
blurred line between dream and reality as a motif had been established in poetry by the
medieval period:

At dawn, one cannot tell
what is dream, what reality.
Blossoms scattering
in the light of the moon
are not of this world.⁴⁰³

*yume utsusu to mo
wakanu akebono
tsuki ni chiru
hana wa kono yo no
mono narade*

Shinkei’s poem is effective in evoking the transience of this world using the ephemeral
images of scattering cherry blossoms and the disappearing moon at dawn. As one cannot
tell dream from reality, or vice versa, this world is, after all, an illusion. *Mugen nō*
structure is not only effective in creating such an illusory world, but also successful in
making the invisible visible, the inaudible audible, and the impossible possible. The
result is inherently dramatic. However, in Zeami’s time, as mentioned earlier, those

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⁴⁰² Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushū* 1, SNKBT 57, 7-8.
plays that developed such dream-like scenes were not assigned a separate classification. They only later came to be called *mugen nō*, or dream plays.

The role of the *waki* is crucial to the dramatic structure of *mugen nō*. The *waki*’s journey to a particular site leads to the *shite*’s appearance and the telling of his or her story. The way the *shite* tells the story foreshadows the local person’s identity. It is the *waki* who reacts to the foreshadowing, wondering whether the *shite* is somehow related to the person mentioned in the tale. In most cases, the *shite* has a double identity: initially appearing in the form of a local person and, later, appearing as a ghost. In addition to the role of scene setter, in *mugen nō*, the *waki* also leads the audience into the story. The *waki* functions as a medium between the *shite* and the audience. The *shite*’s message is transmitted to the audience when he or she is questioned by the *waki* so that the story becomes clear to the audience. The story may concern this person’s suffering over the inability to reach enlightenment because of his or her past. The story is related in the hope that the priest can guide him or her to salvation. Zeami is credited with fully developing this structure for Noh. 404

Although *Kinuta* is, in this sense, not a typical *mugen nō*, it is significant that the *mugen nō* structure makes it possible for the wife to confront her husband as a spirit in the second act and articulate her frustration. As I mentioned earlier, venting her frustration allows her to liberate herself from worldly desire and attachment. As an act of penitence, she must confess her sinful past, bound by strong attachment to her husband. As Yashima points out, faithful recounting of one’s sinful past thus serves as a form of

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penitence, which is in fact typical of Zeami’s warrior plays.\textsuperscript{405} In \textit{Kinuta}, her confession thus helps her liberate herself from her suffering.

The significant effect of \textit{mugen nō} structure is thus that it enables the main character to reveal innermost feelings crossing multiple layers of time. For this reason, \textit{mugen nō} structure imparts greater complexity than the more realistic \textit{genzai nō}, which are “plays of ‘contemporary’ life in one scene.”\textsuperscript{406} The use of \textit{mugen nō} structure makes it possible to compress the two layers of time, the past merging with the present as the now deceased main character recalls his or her past in spirit form. By recalling the past, the character’s feelings are stirred and he or she is further drawn into the past.\textsuperscript{407} The Noh play \textit{Kinuta} thus depicts the conflict between attachment to matrimonial ties in this world and suffering from such attachment after death.

The \textit{mugen nō} structure is effective for presenting the multiple layers of time, this world, and the world after death as seen in the Buddhist cosmology of the \textit{rokudō} (six paths) of transmigration. William LaFleur asserts that Noh incorporates the Buddhist cosmology of the \textit{rokudō} that prevailed in medieval Japan as follows:

\begin{quote}
The rokudō system establishes a way of understanding a tension between appearance and reality. It asserts that, although we are ordinarily caught in a web of illusion so that we think only in terms of this present life, we are, in fact, beings-in-process, moving up and down through innumerable lives and according to a rigorous law of karma.\textsuperscript{408}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{406} Keene, 1993, 1019.
\textsuperscript{408} LaFleur, 1986, 117-119.
The rokudō is the system of transmigration (rinne) through the six realms: 1. divine ones (deva-gati); 2. human ones (mansusya-gati); 3. warring ones (āsura-gati); 4. animal ones (tiryagyoni-gati); 5. hungry-ghost ones (preta-gati); 5. hell-abiding ones (naraka-gati). As LaFleur points out, Noh incorporates this basic Buddhist cosmology in two ways. In the style of mugen nō, for example, Noh plays in the second category often offer a moment in which the shite discloses his or her real identity as a reincarnation of someone who lived previously, particularly warriors of the past who end up in the realm of warring ones.

LaFleur also argues that the plays in the third and fourth categories present the shite as the crazed or tortured ghosts of historical figures, reincarnations in the realm of preta. LaFleur further elucidates how the system of six realms came to be in accord with the progression of the five categories of Noh, which constitutes a sequence of plays in a day’s program featuring typically a deity, a warrior, a woman, various characters such as a mad person, and finally a demon. In the majority of Noh plays from the third and fourth categories featuring kyōran (mad persons), shūshin (infatuated and attached ones), and onryō (vengeful ghosts), for example, the distinguishing characteristics of the preta are present: “its shadelike mode of existence and its passions that bring it into delirium.”

In Kinuta, the description of the wife’s suffering in hell suggests that she has been reincarnated in the realm of preta. The mugen nō format is thus

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409 LaFleur, 1986, 118.
410 LaFleur, 1986, 121.
411 LaFleur, 1986, 119-120.
412 LaFleur, 1986, 120-121.
successful in entailing the inevitability of Buddhist transmigration. While Zeami established such complex *mugen nō* structure, in composing *Kinuta*, he incorporated *genzai nō* structure in the first act with *mugen nō* structure in the second act. Regarding the use of *mugen nō* structure in *Kinuta*, Nishino Haruo argues that it is “a new method utilizing the virtue of both the real-time and dream Noh structures.” ¹⁴¹³ *Kinuta* is thus an innovative *mugen nō*. Such innovation on Zeami’s part might partly explain why Zeami himself highly regarded this play, yet deplored that it would not be fully appreciated by future generations.

**Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates a counter-example to the centrifugal dynamic of *monogurui*—the suppressed desires of a woman who cannot vent her sufferings but who dies from the intensity of the emotions that she keeps pent up. This is indeed the plight of the *shite* in the first act of the play *Kinuta*. Yet she is able to liberate herself from obsession as she reappears as a spirit in the second act. The woman in *Kinuta* bewails her husband’s negligence during his prolonged absences. Such complaints reveal a woman’s discontent over the unfair treatment she is receiving and convey a tacit criticism of the social institutions on the basis of which her fate is dictated. Although suppressed by dominant medieval social and religious practices, feminine desire and resistance against patriarchal oppression were given voice by means of madness in the Noh play *Kinuta*. The madness of the woman’s spirit is what makes the expression of desire and protest in

¹⁴¹³ Nishino, *Yōkyoku hyakuban*, SNTBT 57, 753.
the first act permissible and allows the woman’s spirit to reproach her husband directly, and society indirectly, in the second act.

The study of Kinuta shows multiple layers of critical issues that characterize the society of medieval Japan. The status of women, especially that of legal wives, was relatively secure, albeit not absolute at that time. That partly explains why, in Kinuta, the woman’s desire and sexuality is expressed intensively in the condition of madness. And yet, the protagonist is not entirely liberated from social constraint, displaying the complexity of the attitudes toward women in medieval Japan.

The wife in Kinuta is, in some cases, regarded as an akusai or a tyrannical wife. In his analysis of Kinuta, Watanabe Tamotsu, for example, argues that the wife in Kinuta is an archetypal egoistic woman, who is solely preoccupied with the question of her husband’s devotion to her while he is away to settle a lawsuit in the capital.\textsuperscript{414} Such criticism suggests that the notion of female vices as discussed above still persists, according to which women feel no guilt for their jealousy, deceit, self-centeredness, and excessive desire to lead men into delusion. More importantly, Watanabe’s argument deviates from the focus of the play. Whether the woman’s husband has been out of touch because he is busy working or having an affair is not important to understanding the significance of the play. Rather, as I argue, the process the wife undergoes to transform her resentment into a realization of the impermanence of this world is the main theme of this play.

It is through the act of pounding the kinuta that the woman assimilates herself into the loneliness of the autumn night. The conflict between her longing for her husband and

\textsuperscript{414} Watanabe Tamotsu, Nō no doramatsurugi (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995), 73.
her rancor against him continues to torment her until, on that lonely autumn night, she begins to appreciate the transience of this world. On a personal level, we see the female protagonist suffering from her attachment to her spouse. On a social level, the wife’s suffering is representative of all those who are oppressed by authority and resigned to their fates.

It is significant that Zeami employed the *mugen nō* structure, giving the female protagonist the form of a spirit, which allowed her to express herself and eventually attain enlightenment. According to Buddhist belief, the wife’s excessive attachment to her husband is considered sinful and an impediment to salvation. And yet, the wife’s awareness of it leads her into confession and penitence, which has the effect of soothing the anger of the spirit. The social norms that stigmatized women are the backdrop against which Zeami carves out a message about this woman that lifts her above the stereotypes.

In the introduction of the Noh play *Kinuta*, as mentioned above, Japanese scholars and critics tend to focus on the negative image of the yammering wife complaining about her husband’s faithlessness. Yokomichi and Omote, for example, highlight the wife’s strong emotional and sexual desire for her husband and her resentment against him. Koyama and Satō also note how the wife suffers in hell due to her strong sexuality and evil mind, and complains about her husband’s infidelity even after death. When we look at the effect of the use of madness, the act of pounding the *kinuta*, and the *mugen nō* structure, however, we realize how the internalization of the suffering of the main character is effectively embodied in the play, revealing the self-imposed nature of her pain. Miyake interprets such self-imposition as the wife’s weakness, stressing the wife’s introverted nature, and her passive hope that external forces will intervene to resolve her
predicament. Miyake further argues that what makes the play particularly appealing to the audience is the theatrical effect in which the wife dies while pounding the *kinuta*, which is effective in beautifying the scene. The wife in *Kinuta*, for Miyake, reflects Zeami’s idealized image of a woman. It is because of her *junsuisa* or purity that the female character drives herself mad.415

I argue that although the wife’s awareness of her weakness may lead her to self-destruction in the first act, in the second act she reappears as a spirit, confronts her husband, vents her rancor, and recounts her dreadful experience in hell. While she confesses her longing for her husband, she blames her husband for his infidelity, contrasting him to Sobu. The allusion to Sobu, who purportedly entrusted his letter to his wife to a wild goose, which is the sign of his deep love for her, is also contrastive to the case of the *shite*’s husband, and therefore quite ironic.

CHAPTER 5

THE NOH PLAY *FUJIDAIKO* (THE FUJI DRUM)

Zeami’s plays often focus on the *shite*’s inner feelings as we have seen. The story of *Kinuta* unfolds as the female protagonist undergoes a process of spiritual purification. This chapter explores a play on the motif of spirit possession titled *Fujidaiko* (The Fuji Drum, author unknown, also known as *Fujitaiko*). It departs from earlier plays with spirit possession scenes. It centers more on *monogurui* as a dramatic element in the plot. Possession scenes, in which some outside spiritual force takes possession of the *shite*, were popular in some of the earliest extant Noh plays. *Fujidaiko* is believed to have been composed sometime later. It adopts the possession scene scenario, but instead of making the possession scene the dramatic climax in its own right, *Fujidaiko* exploits the possession motif as one element in a more complex plot involving a wife’s efforts to avenge the murder of her husband.

My analysis of *Fujidaiko* is in four parts. I first probe spirit possession phenomena as well as the relationship between madness and performance in the context of medieval Japan in order to further illuminate the concept of *monogurui* in Noh. The
study of historical evidence of spirit possession phenomena in classical and medieval documents helps us identify shamanistic elements reflected in Noh plays featuring monogurui. Secondly, I examine two types of madness traditionally identified in Noh plays. The two classifications of madness in Noh are states caused by external forces such as spirit possession, or states resulting from internal conflicts caused by excessive affection for a loved one. I discuss two exemplary plays featuring spirit possession that evolve around historical, legendary, or fictional women: the Noh plays Sotoba Komachi and Aoi no Ue. Thirdly, I analyze the stylistic differences between Noh plays produced during Zeami’s time and those believed to have been composed after Zeami’s generation.

In Zeami’s Noh, the shite’s inner feelings are often the focal point of the play and such emotions are poetically expressed, appealing to the shared knowledge of his elite audiences. By late medieval times, however, the Noh theatre had begun to appeal to wider audiences. Plays with spectacle or vivid dramatic scenes became popular. Fujidaiko, which features a plot-driven scenario of spirit possession, fits this description. Finally, I conduct a textual analysis of Fujidaiko, whose shite becomes ostensibly ‘possessed’ by the spirit of her beloved husband Fuji because his unfulfilled desires have persisted even after his death. The wife of Fuji learns of her husband’s death and, longing for her husband, she puts on his robe. She slips into madness out of her love for her husband and anger towards his killer. This state of spirit possession enables her to convey her resentment over the injustice done to her husband.
Madness, Spirit Possession, and Performance in Medieval Japan

The Noh play Fujidaiko probably gained its popularity sometime after the 16th century, as the first performance on record dates to 1516. However, the spirit possession motif featured in this play is a rather old one. A shamanistic belief in spirit possession existed in Japan throughout the Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi periods. In the mid-fifteenth century Noh plays such as Kinuta, for example, such a shamanistic belief is apparent. It will be recalled that, in the play, the man from Ashiya requests a shamanistic ritual in order to communicate with the spirit of his dead wife. As Moriya Takeshi notes, in a play featuring a woman who becomes deranged due to excessive affection, such a character often appears as a madwoman holding a spray of bamboo in her hand, referred to as kurui sasa, to symbolize the shite’s madness. This gesture originates from shamanistic belief in the power of bamboo to call spirits. The madwomen of Noh thus preserve on stage traces of the tradition of shamanistic madness. Seen as the manifestation of a separation or release from self, madness or derangement in Noh functions as a theatrical device allowing characters to dance, act, and speak in ways unconstrained by existing social norms governing behavior.

A belief in monogurui entailed the idea that madness was the work of external forces such as spirits. In medieval Japan, engaging in the performance of dance and singing was often regarded as the work of spirit possession, ultimately a form of trance


\[417\] Moriya Takeshi, Chūsei geinō no genzō (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1985), 108.
for the purpose of delivering divine messages. As Fujiwara-Skrobak points out, “the verb mai-kuruu (dance in a crazed manner) was originally used to describe the dance of a possessed person, and later shortened to kuruu [driven to a frenzy].” The term kuruu originally meant the condition of being driven crazy or mad that was triggered by some kind of external force. As Moriya also notes, people often described dancing and singing as kuruu or being crazed or deranged as a result of spirit possession. It was believed that such dancing and singing were the work of Shinto deities (kami), or other supernatural beings.

In medieval times a number of madwoman plays were produced featuring female protagonists who become deranged as a result of excessive affection or attachment. Compared to older plays in which madness is caused by spirit possession, reflecting shamanistic beliefs, the internalization of monogurui highlighted in these plays creates more complex characterization. However, the line between madness induced by spirit possession and madness produced by internal suffering is not always distinct.

The etymology of monogurui also suggests an integral relation between madness and performance. The term originally referred to a condition of being driven crazy or mad that was induced by some kind of external force. In the early Heian collection of Buddhist setsuwa (short narratives), Nihon reiki or Nihon ryōiki (Miraculous Stories of

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418 Moriya, 98. Moriya also notes that in a Chinese diary that Fujiwara Teika (1162-124) kept from 1180 to 1235, Meigetsuki (The Record of the Clear Moon), Teika described engaging in performance of dance and singing as being in a condition of madness (Moriya, 89). For more examples that indicate performance was regarded as a form of monogurui, see Moriya, 87-93.

419 Fujiwara-Skrobak, 162-163.

420 Moriya, 87.


422 Kurui or gurui is a nominalization of the verb kuruu (go crazy or mad, or become deranged).
Karmic Retribution of Good and Evil in Japan, ca. the ninth century) the Chinese character oni or demon is used for mono. Oni are defined as abstract supernatural beings rather than “demons.” In this collection, the way shamans delivered divine messages or messages from the dead were described as kuruu (become mad or deranged).\textsuperscript{423} In the Kamakura collection of setsuwa, Uji shūishū (Stories Gleaned at Uji, ca 1190-1242), mono also apparently indicated some kind of spirit or divine force. In his diary entitled Meigetsuki (The Record of the Clear Moon), Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) refers to the action of engaging in performance of dancing and singing as mono kuruu.\textsuperscript{424} These examples suggest that in classical and medieval Japan kuruu indicated a form of trance, the condition in which a person is possessed by mono or mononoke (an evil spirit) and, as a result, becomes deranged. The historical evidence demonstrates how people perceived such a transformation as the work of spirit possession, ultimately a form of trance enabling a medium to be the bearer of messages from the spirits.

Such shamanistic belief in monogurui is reflected in some older madwoman plays. As I mentioned earlier, the performer’s use of kuru sasa or a “bamboo spray marking its bearer as mad” suggests the shamanistic origin of the madwoman motif in Noh. The original function of this bamboo stick was to invite the divine spirit, although it seems to have come to be used symbolically in many Noh madness scenes to invoke associations with shamanistic practices. Madwomen in Noh thus should be understood against such a cultural and historical backdrop. Moriya contends that, for this reason, the shite in madwoman plays could have been regarded as descendants of miko (sibyls,

\textsuperscript{423} Moriya, 90-92.
\textsuperscript{424} Moriya, 89.
mediums, or shamans) who performed in festivals.\textsuperscript{425} Shamanistic elements in madwomen are indeed, as he suggests, strong.

Similarly, Tokue Gensei argues that the concept of monogurui originates from the performance of shamans who were believed to have the power to deliver messages from kami. For him, Noh plays such as Makiginu are reminiscent of this original form of monogurui.\textsuperscript{426} In Makiginu a shaman speaks for a kami in a state of trance, unconscious of his or her own altered state of consciousness. In this play a man from the capital, Kyoto, is sent upon imperial order to the Kumano shrine complex to dedicate rolls of silk to Yuya gongen\textsuperscript{427} (or Kumano sansho gongen)—that is, the three kami of Kumano. Upon arriving in Kumano, the man first paid homage at Otonashi tenjin. He composed a poem and dedicated it to the kami of Otonashi. After that, he delivered the rolls of silk, but missed the delivery deadline and was tied up with ropes as punishment. Suddenly being possessed by the kami of Otonashi, a shaman appears to deliver the divine message. She thanks him for his poem and unties the rope for him. After delivering the message, she becomes deranged. She regains her senses when the spirit has left her.

Utaura is another play, which features kamigakari or trance in which the medium is possessed by a kami in order to deliver a sacred message. In Utaura, one day a fortune-teller dies and then is miraculously resuscitated in three days. The horrible experience in hell turns all his hair white. The man’s son, who is accompanied by a man

\textsuperscript{425} Moriya, 108.
\textsuperscript{427} According to honji suijaku, which is the Buddhist theory adapted by Shintō as the theoretical foundation, gongen is the bodhisattvas who are believed to be appeared in the form of kami, who are considered as “manifest traces” (suijaku) or counterparts of the “original substances” (honji) of particular Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Earhart, H. Byron, Japanese Religion, Unity and Diversity, 3rd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1982), 108. For further discussion on honji suijaku see Earhart 110-110.
from Hakusan in Kaga, starts looking for him. The man finds the fortune-teller and asks him to tell the boy’s fortune. The fortune-teller relates that the boy has already met his father, whereupon they realize that the fortune-teller is in fact the boy’s father. The fortune-teller performs a dance during which he becomes possessed by a kami spirit. These two plays demonstrate strong shamanistic influence in Noh plays.

Anthropologist Yoshida Teigo has noted that spirit possession was often regarded as a result of friction between those who are possessed and those who are claimed to be ‘possessing’ them from the perspective of the possessed. Therefore in most cases the possessed and the ‘possessing’ have close relationships formed by a sense of social duties and obligations. When such relations lose their equilibrium, grudges or hatred may result. Thus spirit possession is typically observed in a small, close, and closed society. Out of fear of being possessed by an evil spirit, people make efforts to behave modestly so that no one bears a grudge against them. Yoshida points out that such fear of spirit possession works to maintain social order. In most cases, according to Yoshida, possessing spirits were considered those of women. The widely accepted explanation for this phenomenon is that women were considered to be jealous beings.\(^\text{428}\) This reminds us of spirit possession depicted in the eleventh century masterpiece, The Tale of Genji. The Noh play Aoi no Ue, for example, is based on an episode in which the principal wife of the protagonist Genji is killed by the possessing spirit of one of his lovers. I will discuss this play further below.

Hosokowa also points out that madness or derangement was seen as a sign of illness caused by supernatural spirit possession. Hosokawa gives us an example, in which Minamoto no Nakakuni’s wife was possessed by the spirit of the late Emperor Goshirakawa (1127-1192). Through divine revelation, Nakakuni’s wife was ordered to erect byōsho (a mausoleum) for the late Emperor. However, a prominent Tendai poet priest Jien (1155-1226), opposed the plan and claimed that the possession was caused not by a vengeful ghost of Goshirakawa, but by a fox or a tengu (a Japanese goblin) instead. Jien further pointed out that those who believed in the divine revelations communicated through Nakakuni’s wife numbered mostly among lower class performers or artisans. More importantly, Jien identified these people as “yononaka no kurui mono,” or the crazy/insane people in society. This adumbrates the close association between madness and performance. Drawing on Jungian theory, Hosokawa argues that Nakakuni’s wife would have to be regarded as sane if her divine revelation were accepted as authentic by her society; however, she would have to be considered insane if her unconscious state of mind made her believe that she was possessed by an evil spirit.

This leads us to investigate the significant effects of shamans and spirit possessions in medieval Japan. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, there are a number of Noh plays which feature spirit possession. Shamanistic rituals are concealed in many of these plays. As Carmen Blacker points out, spirit-possession in medieval Noh plays in which a supernatural being is manifested, such as the Noh play Aoi no Ue, reveal a shamanistic

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429 Nakakuni is often associated with a tragic love of Kogō, an illicit lover of the Emperor Takakura (1161-1181), a son of the Emperor Goshirakawa. The Noh play Kogō, for example, spotlights his role being loyal to the emperor and he made the brief reunion between Kogō and the Emperor Takakura possible.

fusion of Shintō and Buddhist ideas, exemplified by the appearance of the Shintō miko and the Buddhist ascetic, whose functions were both to connect this world and the other with the help of special divine power. Medieval Noh plays featuring spirit possession thus evince the syncretic nature of religious practices of the period. Some shamans were attached to shrines; others were independent from religious institutions. The latter were referred to as aruki-miko or itinerant female shaman, whose profession was ancient. Her performance of mysterious power must have been thus perceived as out of the ordinary. Traveling performers, who live as vagrants, were often considered crazy or insane. Arguably one can surmise that travelers, especially women, might have exploited this preconceived notion by appropriating the persona of such a mad performer as a means of protection while traveling. Feigning madness and dancing may have served as a means for traveling women to support themselves as well. Traveling is not only regarded as deviation from routine, but also allows travelers to deviate from social norms.

Historical evidence further shows how madness was perceived as performance in Japanese culture. In his study of traditions of medieval Japanese popular culture, Kanbayashi Sumio states that, according to the Nihon ōjō gokurakuki (Japanese account of those who went to paradise), in the tenth century people danced in ecstasy during nenbutsu odori, or the dancing and chanting of prayers to the Buddha Amida. By the late

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432 Ruch, 521-522.
433 Hosokawa, 18.
434 Tokue, 17-19.
thirteenth century the number of those practicing this form of religious expression had reached several million.\textsuperscript{435} This is the time that people began to believe that dancing animatedly would protect them from plague, whereas those in power thought that such frantic dancing resulted in plague, rather than preventing it. Up until the Edo period (1600-1867), people often danced crazily to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, in most cases famine. The close relation between madness and dance seems to have been a natural reaction aroused by fear of natural disasters.\textsuperscript{436} In 1259, there was a great famine and that year, records show that people often performed these frantic dances.\textsuperscript{437} Ogasawara Kyoko argues that \textit{dengaku} performers invited the audience to dance frenetically, while \textit{sarugaku} performance featured spirit-possessed madness performed solely by the principal actor. To support her argument, she notes that such frantic \textit{dengaku} dance once prophesied social crisis and overthrowing of the government, but there is no specific reference given to this statement.\textsuperscript{438} Fujiwara-Skrobak similarly points out how authorities and people of the upper echelons associated \textit{dengaku} performances with disasters.\textsuperscript{439}

To illuminate the strong association between madness and performance epitomized in the \textit{dengaku} dance craze in medieval Japan, I will further discuss the esprit of 1336, the time when the \textit{Kenmu shikimoku} or the ‘Kenmu statutes’ was enacted by the first Ashikaga Shôgun, Takaui (1305-1368). In the Kenmu statutes, frugality is praised,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[436] Kanbayashi, 175-178.
\item[437] Kanbayashi, 209.
\item[438] Ogasawara, 1984, 98.
\item[439] For more discussion on \textit{dengaku} dance craze, see Fujiwara-Skrobak, 46.
\end{footnotes}
while those who wear clothes in a *basara* (gaudy and extravagant) style are criticized and termed *bukkyō*, or insane. The term *basara* held strong negative connotations, as it also meant ‘disruptive’ or ‘potentially destructive’. Matsuoka Shinpei argues that *akutō* or groups of pirates who began to appear at the end of the Kamakura period, were the quintessence of *basara* as depicted in a medieval topographical document about the Harima area (present-day Hyōgo prefecture) called *Hōsōki* (also known as *Mineaiki* or *Bushōki*, author unknown, 1348?). He further points out that *Taiheiki* (*The Record of the Great Peace*), which vividly covers recurring war between 1318-1367, also depicts the *basara daimyō* or ‘feudal lords in the *basara* mold’ who burgeoned during the Nanbokuchō era. Such riotous *akutō* and extravagant *basara* phenomena also influenced *dengaku*, which came to be referred to as *basara geinō* or the ‘*basara* art’. As depicted in *Taiheiki*, incorporating the guerilla warfare style acrobatics and extravagant *basara* into their performance, *dengaku* continued to be in high favor with people of all classes. At the apex of *dengaku*’s success, *dengaku* performers performed at the Shijōgawara *kanjin dengaku*, or the subscription performance of *dengaku* held at Shijōgawara in 1349, during which a gallery-like three- or four-storied structure collapsed when the audience became too rambunctious. This dance craze phenomenon suggests the esprit of the mid-fourteenth century. In the *Kenmu Statutes*, along with behavior described as *basara*, behavior labeled as *bukkyō* becomes a target for criticism.

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**Bukkyō** is written with the same combination of Chinese characters that are allotted to write *monogurui*. Hosokawa argues that for medieval people, as stated in the *Kenmu Statutes*, nonconformity or deviation from the norm was a sign of *bukkyō* (insanity). These examples illuminate the dynamic nature of *monogurui* and demonstrate how *monogurui* was perceived differently depending on the contexts in which the term was used and how the concept of *monogurui* changed over time.

**Spirit Possession or Self-inflicted Disequilibrium: Two Medieval Takes on Madness**

As some scholars argue, it is significant that Zeami recognized derangement as a result of emotional conflict related to excessive affection (*omohi yue no monogurui*), even though generally in his time, it was believed that derangement was due to external forces such as spirit possessions (*tsukimono ni yoru monogurui*). Tsuchiya Keiichirō points out that Zeami identified the source of derangement as the workings of one’s own mind instead of external forces such as spirit possession. Ötani Setsuko notes that Zeami helped to establish the view that derangement was a psychological problem. She argues that Zeami’s use of madness as a means of revealing inner sufferings was innovative. I argue that Zeami’s perspective on madness as the product of a disturbed mind was in part motivated by his desire to create theatrical effects. Although generally madwoman plays are classified into two types, whether the madness is caused by spirit

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444 Hosokawa, 19-20.
445 Hosokawa, 24.
446 Hosokawa, 39.
possession or trauma due to excessive affection, the cause of the madness expressed in Noh plays is not always apparent.

In earlier spirit possession plays such as Aoi no Ue or Sotoba Komachi, vengeful spirits typically possess the victim and inflict anguish on her. Sotoba Komachi is an excellent example of a Noh play featuring the motif of spirit possession. The play begins with the witty conversation between a traveling priest and an old lady who is actually the legendary Heian poet Ono no Komachi (ca, 833-857), celebrated in her youth for her great physical beauty. While Komachi is arguing down the monk in response to his accusation that she is sitting on a sacred object, a stupa, she suddenly becomes possessed by the spirit of her suitor, Fukakusa no Shōshō. Years earlier, Shōshō had died trying to visit her for a hundred consecutive nights, a pledge of his love for her that Komachi had demanded. He died on the ninety-ninth night. Etsuko Terasaki applies a psychoanalytic approach in her analysis of Sotoba Komachi in Figures of Desire: Wordplay, Spirit Possession, Fantasy, Madness, and Mourning in Japanese Noh. Terasaki contends that Komachi is unable to cope with the guilt she feels about her former suitor Fukakusa’s death, which resulted from her cruel demand, so she lets Fukakusa take over her being, making him the domineering figure so as to virtually ‘hide’ herself in his being.\(^{447}\) Komachi’s putting on of his robe signifies his sexual possession of her body and control of her mind; Komachi is now dominated and Fukakusa becomes the dominator.\(^ {448}\) Terasaki’s psychoanalytic readings of Komachi suggest that by letting Fukakusa dominate her in the form of spirit possession, Komachi’s act of repentance is realized, her


\(^{448}\) Terasaki, 113-114.
unconscious spills out, the injuries that Komachi inflicted on Fukakusa are healed, and his angry spirit is appeased.

In *Sotoba Komachi*, Komachi, the possessed woman, is the focus of the play. In *Aoi no Ue*, however, the possessing woman, Rokujō Miyasudokoro, a lover of the protagonist Genji, is the one who is in the limelight. The Rokujō lady appears as an angry spirit and torments Aoi no Ue, the wife of Genji. In *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in “The Tale of Genji, ”* Doris Bargen discusses the literary spirit possession described in *The Tale of Genji* as women’s strategy of empowerment. In her analysis of episodes dealing with spirit possession in *Genji monogatari*, Bargen states, “[Murasaki Shikibu’s] possessed female protagonists employ *mono no ke* [evil spirits] as a creative device to express the otherwise inexpressive…the possessed woman is not a passive victim but an active agent who uses –subconsciously, surreptitiously, subversively–the charisma of others in the guise of *mono no ke* to empower herself.”¹⁴⁴⁹ Bargen’s readings thus shed new light on a long tradition of *Genji* scholarship, which has been mostly focused on identifying and analyzing the possessing spirit rather than the possessed; the possessed are dismissed simply as passive victims. Bargen proposes a different dynamic between the possessed woman and her empowering spirit, not as an antagonism (the male viewpoint), but as an alliance (the female viewpoint).¹⁴⁵⁰ I agree with Bargen’s position in which spirit possession phenomenon involving the two female characters achieves the effect of women’s union. In the case of Aoi no Ue (the possessed) and Rokujō (the


¹⁴⁵⁰ Bargen, 27.
possessing) in *The Tale of Genji*, they are both depicted as ‘victims’ of the Heian polygamous society.

In the Noh play *Aoi no Ue*, the possessed woman in the play is simply represented as a folded robe in order to highlight the internal conflict and the suffering of the possessing spirit. In her analysis of the play *Aoi no Ue* in *Noh Drama and The Tale of Genji: the Art of Allusion in Fifteen Classical Plays*, Janet Goff notes that, while *Aoi no Ue* expands and reshapes some elements from *The Tale of Genji*, a surprisingly small amount of material is directly borrowed from the *Genji*; characters such as the shaman or sorceress are invented; a single figure, the holy man of Yokawa confronts the *shite*, the vengeful spirit of Rokujo.\(^{451}\) The anguish and madness of the possessing spirit is not caused by her lover, Genji, or her rival, Aoi no Ue, but is the result of her own worldly desire, obsession, and attachment.

We know that *Aoi no Ue* was revised by Zeami. Many madwoman plays composed or revised by Zeami feature the internal suffering of the character who is in a state of *monogurui* rather than staging spirit possession phenomena, making it difficult to generalize about the nature of madwoman plays as a classification. The Noh play *Fujidaiko*, which I discuss below, is traditionally regarded as a spirit possession play, but unlike the earlier plays on the theme mentioned above, the possession scene is one part of a complex plot of *Fujidaiko*.

**Fujidaiko: A Dramatic Plot-Driven Play**

Unlike *Sakuragawa* and *Kinuta*, *Fujidaiko* is unattributed. In spite of the fact that the play has been attributed to Komparu Zenchiku (1405-1470),\(^{452}\) or Zeami, the authorship is not verifiable.\(^{453}\) The play stylistically varies from Zeami’s style. As I have discussed in the preceding chapters, in Zeami’s Noh, the *shite* is often the sole focus and his/her inner feelings, anguish and suffering, are poetically and dramatically revealed in his/her chanting and dancing as the play unfolds. Zeami must have been aware of the need to cater to the tastes of his patrons. They are the political and military leaders who sought to associate themselves with the aristocratic cultural heritage from the Heian period, partly for the purpose of legitimizing their authority. As I have demonstrated in my analyses of plays attributed to or revised by Zeami, many of Zeami’s plays are based on earlier literature and well-known poetry and are loaded with allusions to such classical works. His plays were thus composed to appeal to the shared knowledge of his patrons. Noh actors and playwrights during Zeami’s time had to contend with each other for patronage and recognition as artists.

By late medieval times, however, the Noh theatre had been accepted as an established and legitimate theatrical form. As Lim Beng Choo contends, Noh plays produced during the late Muromachi period were stylistically different: the tempo in which the play progresses is typically lively, the development of the play is dramatic and spectacular, and there are more characters with stronger dramatic emphasis on them than on the *shite*. She further argues that all of these are representative characteristics of

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\(^{452}\) Nishino, *Yōkyoku hyakuban*, SNKBT 57, 637.

\(^{453}\) Ito, *Yōkyokushū* 3, SNKS, 471.
“furyū Noh.” In Choo’s rendition, “furyū Noh” (elegant spectacle Noh) refers to “the flamboyant style of presentation and the more dramatic plots.” In the introduction to the collections of Noh plays in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* published in 1960, Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira proposed calling Noh plays that stage a magnificent spectacle “furyū Noh,” applying the term furyū to name one classification of Noh plays: “Because we have been calling *supekutakuru* (spectacle) and *shō* (show) as furyū since the old days, why don’t we provisionally call this kind of Noh plays [such as *Tsuchigumo* which features various actions and its magnificent presentation on stage] as furyū Noh?” Although Choo renders furyū as “elegant spectacle,” I question whether Noh plays categorized as furyū Noh espouse any elegant qualities, judging from the description that Yokomichi and Omote give for furyū *nō* in the above passage. Nevertheless, Choo’s discussion of furyū Noh is useful: “…furyū nō exhibits characteristics including lively performance and elaborate scenery, often with a big cast. In terms of content, too, it is not so much the individual’s psychological, introspective narratives that form the core of the play. Rather, the plays are usually more complex than earlier ones in that they often involve multiple plots and characters.” Noh plays thus classified as furyū Noh tended to introduce elaborate plots and spectacular presentation.

As Choo points out, such retrospective categorizations of Noh plays on the part of modern scholars suggest that Noh produced during the late Muromachi period had

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456 Yokomichi and Omote, *Yōkyokushā* 1, NKBT 40, 11.
differing characteristics from those plays composed in Zeami’s time.458 Another significant change, in terms of the spectator-performer relationship, is that the practice of chanting and dancing among amateur Noh connoisseurs became common. Choo’s discussion of the diary of the court noble Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455-1537) is helpful to gain insight into how the Noh theatre was fully recognized as “a socially sanctioned and accepted form of entertainment” by the late Muromachi period.459

Examining the historical and stylistic development of Noh helps us understand the dynamic nature of Noh. Structurally speaking, Fujidaiko is linear in its plot structure, unlike Zeami’s mugen nō (dream plays), which often present time in a circular manner. As Choo points out, plays postdating Zeami’s generation tend to focus more on “dramatic tensions” and “visual effects” than on the psychological dimensions of the shite’s internal conflict as expressed in lyrics and dance.460 However, as Quinn points out, according to the oldest extant record in 1427 of a complete program put on by sarugaku professionals, plays featuring spectacular staging or technical virtuosity were performed in Zeami’s time. As she further notes, the inclusion of the titles of such plays is surprising because until this program was discovered in 1999, many scholars had assumed that spectacular plays were more characteristic of late Muromachi styles that postdated Zeami, who advocated poetic lyricism as primary attractions.461 This suggests that the dramatic tension that Fujidaiko draws heavily on is not conclusive evidence whether it is a post Zeami play. However, judging from its first performance record dated 1516 and its

458 Choo, 2004, 128.
459 Choo, 2004, 120.
460 Choo describes characteristics of Komparu Zenpō’s play here. Choo, 2005, 34.
461 Quinn, 2005, 31-32.
innovative use of a rather old spirit possession motif, in all likelihood, *Fujidaiko* postdates Zeami. There was in fact a record of an actual incident similar to what is featured in this play in 1441. According to the record, a court musician was killed by a rival musician, and the victim’s wife committed arson and suicide afterwards.\(^{462}\) Whether this historical incident had a direct influence on the play is uncertain. However, plays featuring a current event often appeal to wider audiences than the highly allusive style of Zeami’s plays, which appeals to the prior knowledge of the highly cultivated elite audience. This is also another characteristic of plays produced in the late Muromachi period. It is also important to point out that in *Kaden*, Zeami cautioned his successors not to compose a play that shows a lack of harmony such as a play featuring a woman possessed by a male spirit or vice versa:

> Although I said that the madness of the character must be performed in terms of the being who possesses that character, when it comes to playing a madwoman possessed by a warrior or a demon, for example, the circumstances are made quite difficult for the actor. Thinking to act out the true nature of the being who possesses such a character, the actor will show masculine wrath while playing a woman, and his performance will seem quite inappropriate. On the other hand, if the actor concentrates on the womanly traits of his character, there will be no logic to the possession. Similarly, when a male character is possessed by a woman, the same difficulty arises. In sum, to avoid plays with such characters represents an important secret of our art. Those who compose such texts simply to not understand the nature of our art. A writer who truly understands the art of *nō* would never compose a text that showed such a lack of harmony. To possess this truth is another secret of our art.\(^{463}\)

If one accepts Zeami’s teaching at face value, *Fujidaiko* is the kind of play to be avoided by all means in Zeami’s style since it features a wife being possessed by the angry spirit

\(^{462}\) Nishino, *Yōkyoku hyakuban*, SNKB 57, 637.

of her husband. Yet Fujidaiko has continued to be performed for almost 500 years. For
the last 50 years, for example, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, Fujidaiko has been performed
twice as often as Sakuragawa.464 What Zeami valued in his art reflects the tastes of his
patrons, the cultural elites: refined harmony and beauty. Such qualities are fostered by
Zeami in techniques such as unity of image, as we see in Sakuragawa and Kinuta.

As Choo notes, Komparu Zenpō (1454-1532) challenged the character/role
structure by having the kokata perform the main dance instead of the shite.465 As I
mentioned earlier, this indicates a departure from earlier plays in which the shite’s
performance was solely highlighted. Like some of Zenpō’s plays, in Fujidaiko, the
kokata, a child performer, rivals the shite in dramatic importance. As Choo points out,
however, it is interesting to learn that Zenpō defended himself by clarifying that his
intention was to facilitate performance opportunities for the younger members of the
troupe, not to challenge or disregard the standard Noh structure.466 In fact Zenpō’s
rationale may provide clues concerning the continuous popularity of a play like
Fujidaiko, which also casts a kokata in an important role. The kind of play that may have
been considered to lack harmony in Zeami’s circle could come to be considered as
innovative or novel for diverse audiences in later generations. As I have discussed above,
in all likelihood, Fujidaiko became popular only after the sixteenth century. The

464 This is based on the data on the number of plays performed by Kanze School between 1950 and

465 For discussion of the important role that the kokata plays in Zenpō’s plays, see Choo, 2005, 36-
37.

466 Choo, 2005, 37. Choo’s argument is based on Omote and Takemoto’s discussion. Omote Akira
and Takemoto Mikio, eds, Nōgaku no densho to geiron. Iwanami kōza nō kyōgen 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami
Shoten, 1988), 276.
following analysis of *Fujidaiko* will illustrate this innovative treatment of the spirit possession scenario as an element that furthers the plot development.

**A Poem as Inspiration for Fujidaiko**

The story begins when Emperor Hanazono (1297-1347)\(^{467}\) plans to hold a seven-day orchestral music concert at court and summons an accomplished drummer, Asama, from Tennōji,\(^{468}\) to perform. In the meantime, another accomplished drummer, Fuji from Sumiyoshi,\(^{469}\) arrives in the capital to present himself as a drummer for the concert. Poetry often serves as a catalyst in Noh. In the case of the Noh play *Fujidaiko*, a single poem from the second imperial anthology (951 ff.), *Gosenwakasha*\(^{470}\) acts as an impetus for the narrative development. Upon hearing the drummers’ names, the emperor is amused because their names are also the names of two volcanoes: Mt. Asama and Mt. Fuji.\(^{471}\) The emperor recalls an old poem:

*Shinano e makarikeru hito ni takimono tsukawasu tote:*

*Shinano naru*  
*Asama no yama mo*  
*moyunareba*

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\(^{467}\) Emperor Hanazono abdicated the throne in favor of Emperor Go-Shirakawa in 1318. Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 106n.1.

\(^{468}\) Refers to the place where Shitenno-ji (Shitenno Temple) is located. In this area, there was a *gakusho* or *gakuso* (music hall) where Buddhist services were held regularly. Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 106n.1.

\(^{469}\) Refers to the place where Sumiyoshi Shrine is located. In this area, there was also a *gakusho*. There were many musicians affiliated with this shrine. Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 106. Itō, *Yōkyokushū* 3, SNKS, 161.

\(^{470}\) Ordered by Emperor Murakami (r. 946-967), it was compiled by Ōnokatomi Yoshinobu, Kiyowara Motosuke, Minamoto Shitagō, Ki no Tokibumi, and Sakano Mochihi. Miner, Odagiri, and Morrell, 158.

\(^{471}\) Mt. Fuji, which last erupted in 1707, is now extinct. Mt. Asama is still active. *Kōjien*, 4th ed., s.v. “*Fujisan*” (Mt. Fuji) and “*Asamayama*” (Mt. Asama).
When I send incense by someone going to Shinano:
As Mt. Asama in Shinano
is aflame,
will smoke from Mt. Fuji [in Suruga]
have much effect?

As the title of the poem above suggests, a certain woman called Suruga composed this poem to accompany her gift of incense to someone (possibly her lover). “Smoke from Mt. Fuji” is likened to the smoke of her incense because Mt. Fuji is located in Suruga, which is also her name. “Smoke from Mt. Fuji” also conventionally implies flames of love. By indicating her incense’s inferiority, she is taking a humble, deferential stance. I supplement my translation above by providing a more literal translation in the following analysis of the poem. “As Mt. Asama in Shinano also flames [erupts], I wonder if the smoke that comes from the love flames of Mt. Fuji [her gift of incense] would have that much effect?”

In spite of the fact that the poet intended that reference to the inferiority of Mt. Fuji primarily as a deferential disclaimer, and secondarily as love innuendo, the emperor takes this poem literally as proof of Fuji’s inferiority to Asama and concludes that Asama must be the better drummer. Therefore, Fuji is not considered as a replacement for Asama. This is an ironic twist since the image of Japan’s highest mountain, Fuji-san, is traditionally invoked as a symbol of eternal beauty in Japan; as the emperor himself

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473 Kudō, 284,
originally admits in the introductory passage of the play *Fujidaiko*, “the name Fuji sounds superior, as Mt. Fuji is the greatest mountain in Japan.” The mythological stature of Fuji-san as eternally present is amplified by a pun on the place name. Fuji may also be read to mean ‘never dying’. Fuji-san is also immortalized in the widely known tale of the Heian period (794-1185), *Taketori monogatari (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter)*.

Poems composed by a famous eighth-century poet Yamabe no Akahito, for example, praise Mt. Fuji’s symbolic perpetual power.\(^{474}\) A strong associative link between the smoke from erupting Mt. Fuji and the secret burning longing between lovers was first established in poems referring to Mt. Fuji found in the first imperial anthology *Kokinwakashū*. This linking is partly based on further word play, for the term ‘*omohi*’ in its classical spelling, or in its modern spelling, ‘*omoi*’, means ‘longing’, and the word ‘*hi*’ also may be read as ‘fire’ or ‘flames’.\(^{475}\) The associative linking spans a series of images related to the theme of love, such as ‘burning love’ (*moyuru omohi*) and ‘eternal love’ (*kawaranu omohi*), as seen in the poem above.

Since it was the emperor who extrapolated on this poem to decide which of the two drummers should perform at court, no one else dares to oppose his opinion. Therefore, Fuji is not considered as Asama’s replacement. In spite of the fact that the emperor dismisses Asama’s rival, Fuji, based on his whimsical interpretation of the poem, Asama, upon hearing of Fuji’s purpose in the capital, becomes indignant with Fuji for his assertiveness. He seeks out Fuji at his lodging and kills him. We learn what has happened when the *waki*, who plays the role of the servant to the emperor, impassively


narrates the incident. Asama’s manslaughter is not condemned publicly. Rather when Fuji’s murder is reported to Fuji’s wife, it is framed simply as an unfortunate event.

The emperor passes capricious judgment on which of the two drummers is superior based on a poem about two mountains bearing the same names, and thereby disregards Fuji’s plea. Given the fact that his rival has already been dismissed by the emperor, Asama has no grounds for murdering his rival, Fuji. Yet, he commits the rash act out of rage. Such a series of unfortunate and devastating events as these that lead to Fuji’s demise are seemingly not logical or plausible. However, the waki’s narration of these events is effective not only in presenting Fuji’s wife more sympathetically to the audience,476 but also in creating tension in the mind of Fuji’s wife. This tension becomes a catalyst for her slipping into monogurui in a later scene.

**Journey to The Capital: The Devotion of a Wife to Her Husband’s Memory**

The shite appears on stage with a kokata playing her daughter by Fuji.477 On the night of Fuji’s departure for the capital, his wife had an ominous dream of rain on a moonlit night, foretelling that something unfortunate would happen and that “tears would wet her sleeves.” The following day, she leaves for the capital with her daughter.

The shite and the kokata begin to sing, delineating their journey to the capital as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nerarenu mama ni omohitatsu} \\
\text{nerarenu mama ni omohitatsu} \\
\text{kumoi ya sonata furusato wa}
\end{align*}
\]

476 She is referred to only as “tsuma” or wife in the play.
477 She is referred to only as “ko” (child) and “hime” (daughter).
Unable to sleep, we decided to depart. Unable to sleep, we decided to depart. That way to the capital, our hometown is now behind us, we gaze between the Sumiyoshi pine trees. The moon is setting over Yamashiro province, where we quickly arrived and we take off our straw hats. I wore a kakeobi [ceremonial red belt] when my husband and I prayed to the deity of Hachiman Shrine and exchanged marriage vows. May it not be as last night’s dream, but in this waking world that I meet my husband (otoko). Passing Otokoyama, quickly we have arrived at the capital.

This stylized verse detailing the sights and emotions of a journey (michiyuki) effectively invokes the sights of the journey, along with emotions associated with travel. It will be recalled that michiyuki scenes are composed of a fabric of poetic allusions, figurative language, and rhetorical techniques, such as pillows words, pivot words, and related words, creating a sense of continuity.

In this michiyuki scene, the wife of Fuji suggests her sexuality by the term chigiri, which indicates that a man and a woman may be united ceremonially, emotionally, and/or

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478 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 108.

479 Allusion to a poem by Minamoto no Yorimasa (1104-1180) a warrior of the Genji clan who fought against the Heike: “Sumiyoshi no matsu no koma yori nagamureba tsuki ochikakaru Awajishima yama” (As I see the moon through the gaps between the pine trees, I find it now setting over the mountains on Awaji island). This poem is compiled in a number of poetry collections, Mumyōshō, Kasen rakusho, and Shinjidai futō utaawase. Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 108n5.

480 Thanks to Professor Naomi Fukumori for her inspiring discussion of “michiyuki” in her class on poetry in Japanese travel literature.
sexually. Her strong desire and impatience to see her husband is expressed with a series of pivot words such as *yama* as in Yamashiro, *kake[ru]* as in *kake obi*, and *otoko* as in Otokoyama, all of which have double meanings. For example, when the *shite* sings “*tsuki ochikakaru yama shiro mo***” meaning ‘the moon is setting over *yama* (the mountain),’ they are already approaching Yamashiro (lit. Mountain Castle). This phrase plays on the double meaning of the term *yama* (mountains), which is also a part of the place name, Yamashiro. This play on *yama* is not only effective in expressing how much time has passed and how far she travels, but also indicating difficulties that she has to overcome in order to reach the capital, her destination. The place name, Yamashiro is also significant because it is a place where a large-scale peasant revolt (*ikki*) took place in 1485, under the leadership of local samurai against the dominant clan in the area, the Hatakeyama clan. In the following year, they proclaimed a provisional government for Yamashiro, which lasted for eight years.  

As I have discussed above, the date when *Fujidaiko* was composed is not confirmed. It is interesting to speculate on whether specific to place name may have carried a connotation of resistance against authority in the mind of medieval audiences.

As for the *kakeobi* (ceremonial red belt) as in “*Yawata ni inori kake obi no musubuchigiri,*” meaning ‘I wore a *kakeobi* when my husband and I prayed to the deity of Hachiman (or Yawata) Shrine and exchanged marriage vows.’ The *kakeobi* refers to the ceremonial red belt, with which women cover their breasts as a sign of their purity when they pay homage at a shrine or temple.  

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term *kake[ru]* as in “*inori o kakeru*” (‘pray for’), which is also a part of the name of the belt *kakeobi* (lit. ‘belt to cover’).\(^{483}\)

As the journey comes to its end, her desire to see her husband is adumbrated by the use of poetically related words such as *musubu* as in “*musubu chigiri*” (exchanged vows or sexually and emotionally tied), *yume* (‘dreams’), *utsutsu* (‘reality’), *au* (‘meet’), and *otoko* (‘man’, ‘husband’, ‘lover’) that are often used in love poems. The series of phrases “*musubu chigiri no yume narade utsutsu ni au ya Otokoyama*” breaks down as follows. The phrase “*musubu chigiri,*” as mentioned above, means ‘[My husband and I] exchanged marriage vows.’ The term *musubu* as in “*musubu chigiri no yume narade,*” (‘May it not be as last night’s dream’) is a related word (*engo*) to ‘*yume*’ (‘dream’).\(^{484}\) In the following phrase “*yume narade utsutsu ni au ya Otokoyama,*” the term *utsutsu* (lit. ‘reality’) is used as a pair with *yume* or dream. The line “*utsutsu ni au ya Otokoyama,*” plays on the double meaning of *otoko* (‘man’ or ‘husband’), which is also a part of the place name Otokoyama (‘Male Mountain’),\(^{485}\) meaning ‘…in this waking world that I see my husband (*otoko*). Passing Otokoyama, soon we will arrive at the capital.’ Filled with word play such as pivot words and related words, the *michiyuki* section effectively creates and delineates the wife’s intensifying desire throughout the journey to the capital.

\(^{483}\) Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 108n10.
\(^{484}\) Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 108n11.
A Wife’s Admonition

She hurries to the capital only to find out the bad omen of rain on a moonlit night
indeed had been true; her tears wet her sleeves upon hearing of the death of her husband.

shite:
Sareba koso omohi awaseshi yume no ura
kasanete towaba nakanaka ni
Asama ni utare nasakenaku

That is indeed what I was afraid of. Now I realize that the potent in my dream has
come true.
The more I think about it, the more evident it becomes.
How sordid it is! My husband was killed [by Asama].
How merciless!

chorus:
sashimo nadakaki Fuji wa nado naredo
kemuri to wa narinuran486

Although such a celebrated drummer, Fuji has vanished in smoke like the smoke
of Mt. Fuji. The association of his name Fuji and Mt. Fuji reminds the audience of the
poem, which serves as a catalyst for the series of devastating events that led to the death
of Fuji. The word asama in “kasanete towaba nakanaka ni Asama ni utare nasakenaku”
has multiple meanings. As an adjective, asamashii means ‘sordid’ or ‘shameful’.487
Asama also means ‘apparent’ or ‘evident’.488 And of course it is the name of the
murderer, the drummer Asama. Therefore, my rendering of this line above includes all
three words: ‘The more I think about it, the more evident it becomes. How sordid it is!
My husband was killed [by Asama]. How merciless!’ This polyvalent use of the word is

486 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 110.
487 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 109n3. Iwanami Kogo jiten, s.v. “asamashi.”
488 Itō, Yōkyokushū 3, SNKS, 163n15. Iwanami Kogo jiten, s.v. “asama.”
effective in revealing the wife’s avoidance of directly explicit criticism of the killer Asama, the emperor’s chosen drummer, while conveying her indignation, dismay, and bewilderment. Her prudence and wittiness are observable in the following confession that she makes:

...Itawashi ya ka no hito idetamaishi toki, mizukara mōsuyō, Tennōji no gakunin wa meshi nite noboritari, onmi wa chokujō naki ni oshite maireba shimo to shite kami o hakaru ni nitaru beshi.\(^{489}\)

How piteous it is! When he was leaving for the capital, I told him that the drummer from Tennōji went to the capital in obedience to an Imperial command. You have not received such an imperial edict. If you, being a subject, present yourself without a decree, such action will be regarded as challenging Imperial authority.

Disregarding his wife’s warning, Fuji leaves for the capital. Her confession demonstrates how dutiful and discreet she is as a wife. In spite of her deliberate efforts to persuade Fuji not to offend the emperor, Fuji indiscreetly dismisses her reservations. This interaction between Fuji and his wife is effective to cast Fuji’s wife in a more sympathetic light.

**Costume Change on Stage between Acts**

Fuji’s wife laments failing to prevent Fuji from carrying his plan into action. She is tortured by remorse and distraught with despair over the loss of her husband. As a kind of consolation, the emperor’s servant has her late husband’s robe\(^{490}\) and headpiece\(^{491}\) returned. Faced with unmistakable proof of her husband’s death, she begins to grieve.

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\(^{489}\) Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 110-111.

\(^{490}\) Refers to *kariginu* or a hunting robe.

\(^{491}\) Refers to *torikabuto*, a headpiece that a *bugaku* dance musician wears.
She puts on the robe and headpiece, while the chorus delineates her distraught state of mind.

\[ \text{shite:} \\
Ara urameshi ya ika ni hime, 
are ni tsuma no kataki no sōrō zo ya 
iza utō \]

Oh, it is indeed hateful, my little one, \( (\text{Looks at the kokata.}) \) Look, there is my husband’s enemy. Let’s take our revenge for my murdered husband. \( (\text{Walks over to the prop [the drum].}) \)

\[ \text{kokata:} \\
Are wa taiko nite koso sōrae 
omohi no amari ni onkokoro midare 
sujinaki koto o ōsesōrō zo ya 
ara asamashi ya zōrō \]

\( (\text{Stands up and stops the shite from walking over to the prop.}) \) That is just a drum. Lost in your suffering, your mind is disturbed. What you said does not make any sense. How pitiful it is! \( (\text{Both of them move slightly backwards. The kokata looks at the shite, and makes a shiori movement, indicating she is weeping.}) \)

\[ \text{shite:} \\
Utate no hito no iigoto ya 
Akade wakareshi waga tsuma no 
usenishi koto mo taiko yue 
tada urameshiki wa taiko nari 
Tsuma no kataki yo iza utō \]

What a foolish remark that is! Although happy with my husband, I am now separated from him. The cause of my husband’s death is indeed this drum. What stirs my resentment is the drum. That drum is the enemy of my husband. Let’s strike!

\[ \text{kokata:} \\
Ge ni kotorari nari chichigoze ni 
wakareshi koto mo taiko yue 
Sa araba, oya no kataki zo kashi 
uchite urami o harasu beshi. \]

\(^{492}\) Koyama and Satō, \( Yōkyokushū 2, \) SNKBZ 59, 111-112.
Indeed, it makes sense. The cause of the loss of my father too is the drum. So the drum is the enemy of my father. Let’s strike to appease our resentment!

The brunt of the malice they feel toward Asama is directed to the drum for a number of reasons--political, poetic, and theatrical. Since Fuji’s rival drummer was summoned by the emperor, showing spite against him could be considered a sign of disrespect for the emperor. Thus, as if the wife eschewed overt or direct social criticism or satire of the authority, she directs the brunt of her anger toward the taiko. By doing so, the wife is able to express her anger by striking the drum. Finally, Noh plays generally do not require large casts. The story develops through dialogue between the shite and a supporting actor such as the waki and the kokata in Fujidaiko. Therefore, Asama’s physical presence on stage would not be required or would even dilute the focus.

Absence of Asama or Fuji on stage is a means of concentrating the dramatic focus on the shite (Fuji’s wife) as well as on the kokata (Fuji’s child).

Spirit possession plays are often centered on this world and their protagonists tend to be living persons situated in the dramatic present. This type of play is referred to as genzai Noh, in which the shite is cast as a living person. Whereas in mugen nō (dream Noh), the true identity of the protagonist is typically the ghost or spirit of a person from the past, in the genzai Noh structure of Fujidaiko, the protagonist appears in a normal state of mind first and then slips into a deranged condition. In Fujidaiko, costume change on stage (monogi) is the impetus for the shite revealing an altered state of mind. In contrast to Fujidaiko, another Noh play titled Umegae featuring the same protagonist as in Fujidaiko, belongs to the dream Noh prototype. Unlike the spirit possession play
Fujidaiko, in the dream Noh Umegae, the shite appears as a local woman in the first act and as the ghost of the wife of the drummer Fuji in the second act. Such structural differences in Noh plays make it possible to create a different play with the same protagonist. Aside from the structural differences, the story of Umegae is slightly different from that of Fujidaiko. In Umegae, Fuji is designated as a drummer for the music concert at court, which prompts Asama to kill Fuji. In spite of such discrepancies between the two plays, it is possible to appreciate both Fujidaiko and Umegae as variations while each of them provides us with a different perspective on the same incident.\(^{493}\)

**The Use of Spirit Possession as a Dramatic Device**

The chorus describes the growing wrath of the wife as she is seemingly possessed by her husband’s spirit:

chorus:

_Nao mo omoeba haratachi ya_  
_Nao mo omoeba haratachi ya_  
_keshitara sugata ni hikikaete_  
_kokoro kotoba mo oyobarenu_  
_Fuji ga yūrei kitaru to miete_  
_yoshi na no uramiya_  
_modokashi to taiko uchitaru ya\(^{494}\)

How hateful it is when I think of it. _The shite stamps._  
How hateful it is when I think of it.  
Her atmosphere has changed completely. _Takes a few steps [downstage]_  
It is beyond words. _Stamps._

\(^{493}\) According to the data on the number of plays performed by Kanze school between 1950 and 2000 that I mentioned in Chapter 2, Fujidaiko was performed three times as often as Umegae. For more details, see [http://jiuxia.web.fc2.com/Tokei/WebTBL2.htm](http://jiuxia.web.fc2.com/Tokei/WebTBL2.htm).

\(^{494}\) Koyama and Satō, _Yōkyokushū_ 2, SNKBZ 59, 111-112.
She appears to be possessed by the ghost of Fuji. *(Looks at the bridgeway [connecting the stage and the mirror room.])*\(^{495}\)

What kind of grudge is this?
How maddening! Then she [he] starts beating the drum.

The chorus thus narrates the scene of spirit possession while little actually changes in the *shite’s* appearance. The *monogi* or costume change on stage works as a prelude to the spirit possession. The state of change is indicated only by the *shite’s* stamp as the chorus chants, “How hateful it is when I think of it.”

In the climax of the play, the *shite*, ostensibly possessed by her husband’s spirit performs a dance piece of the *gaku* type (lit. ‘court dance’), which immediately follows this section.\(^{496}\) “Using the drum stick as a sword, the flames of her anger are like the shape of the carved flames on the drum…”\(^{497}\)

**Conclusion**

In madwoman plays what is suppressed comes to the surface and multiple perspectives can be voiced. This play is no exception. In *Fujidaiko*, the *shite* reveals what it would normally be socially unacceptable for her to voice. In the case of *Fujidaiko* the possessed wife gives vent to her grudge as well as expressing her longing. Fuji’s wife voices resentment against her husband’s killer. The Emperor is also implicated, since it was his misapplication of an old poem that led to Fuji’s plight. This

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\(^{495}\) In this play, the bridgeway symbolically connects this world and the other world. Her gesture, looking at the bridgeway, suggests that her husband’s spirit is entering this world through this bridge.

\(^{496}\) Monica Bethe and Karen Brazell explain that it is an imposing dance performed to special music similar to *gagaku* court music and it suggests exotic foreign tastes. Bethe and Brazell, 1982, 1: 166.

\(^{497}\) Koyama and Satō, *Yōkyokushū* 2, SNKBZ 59, 113.
tacit criticism is revealed at the moment of derangement. Unlike other spirit possession plays in which the spirit’s anger is directed at the person who is being possessed, in *Fujidaiko* the voice of Fuji’s spirit and that of the wife merge into one and are aimed at a third party, the killer, a rival drummer Asama. Ultimately, their anger is directed at the Emperor as well. The tacit criticism of the Emperor is not the thematic crux of the play. However, it should be noted that there is no Noh text that comes as close as *Fujidaiko* to censuring the Emperor, albeit in an indirect manner. The Emperor’s unfortunate extrapolation of the *Gosenshū* poem, and consequent dismissiveness of Fuji in fact makes the poem an important element in the plot of this play. In *Fujidaiko*, the plot action does indeed develop in adherence to the Emperor’s reading of the poem and the personification of the two mountains. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the madness play *Asukagawa* (Asuka river), which was probably composed after the stylistic norms of plays on the *monogurui* theme had been established, the plot action is also largely inspired by a poem. While chanting an old poem, which reminds her of the emptiness of human endeavor, she misses her child and slips into *monogurui*. Like in *Asukagawa*, the use of the poem as the inspiration of the play is significant in *Fujidaiko*.

What is also significant about *Fujidaiko* is the use of a spirit possession scene. Although the Noh play *Fujidaiko* features a spirit possession scene, it is not clear whether the wife is actually possessed by her husband’s spirit or is deluded into believing so. Whereas in older spirit possession plays such as *Sotoba Komachi* and *Aoi no Ue*, for example, there is no question that we are to see the scenarios as involving spirit possession, the most intriguing thing about *Fujidaiko* seems to be its ambiguity, concerning whether there is spirit possession or not. Both in *Sotoba Komachi* and
*Fujidaiko*, the female characters are ‘possessed’ by the male spirit of a husband or lover who persists in enacting his unaccomplished desire even after death. Although women in these Noh plays are both seemingly exploited by the masculine voice in their feminine bodies, they reveal their own subjectivities and display resistance. In the case of *Fujidaiko*, unlike *Sotoba Komachi* or *Aoi no Ue*, the possessed is apparently not made the target for the spirit’s anger. Therefore, the tension and power struggle between the possessing and the possessed observed in earlier spirit possession plays are absent on *Fujidaiko*. Instead, the seemingly possessed is empowered to give voice to her thoughts and indignation within the framework of *monogurui* of the established ‘spirit possession’ type. It is up to the audience to interpret whether she slips into *monogurui* out of her strong attachment to her husband, or whether possession by his spirit drives her into such an altered state of mind. The two types of *monogurui*—that resulting from excessive affection and that resulting from spirit possession thus both emerge as interpretative possibilities in *Fujidaiko*. I would argue that such ambiguity suggests that the playwright is exploiting the spirit possession convention of older plays for his own purposes. The simulation of spirit possession by the wife could allow her to voice her true feelings without censure. By means of the pretense that Fuji is speaking, she is thus allowed to vent what she thinks. If she cannot control what comes out of her mouth because it is framed as the spirit dictating what she says, then she cannot be blamed for it.

As I have demonstrated in my analysis, there is no clear textual evidence that a spiritual possession by Fuji takes places in the play. To strengthen this point, I indicate the fact that the scholarly treatment of the play also varies. For instance, the *Nō, kyōgen*
jitën and Nishino Haruo suggest that there is spirit possession, whereas Sanari and Itō do not. In his synopsis of Fujidaiko, Nogami states that this play features madness (kyōran) caused by the shite’s strong attachment to her husband. Putting her late husband’s robe on, out of agitation she slips into monogurui. Similarly, Itō notes that the madwoman in her late husband’s robe strikes the taiko believing that it is his enemy. This ambiguity leaves an opening for interpretation in performance. There is thus a range of interpretations concerning the existence of Fuji’s spirit made possible in actual performance.

Regardless of various interpretations of the cause of her monogurui, ultimately, the wife returns to sanity still yearning for her late husband, but no longer holding a grudge:

reijin no mai nareba,  
taiko no yaku wa motoyori kikoyuru  
na no shita munashikarazu,  
tagui na ya natsukashi ya

This is a dance piece performed by a musician. The role was played by my husband, known as a celebrated drummer and indeed deserved such fame. He had indeed no rival. Oh, I miss him so much.

“To celebrate our emperor’s thousand years of life,” she suggests, “let us play the propitious gagaku piece Taiheiraku.” As is typical of the occasional nature of Noh, in

498 Nō kyōgen jitēn, 129. Nishino, Yōkyoku hyakuban, SNKBT 57, 637.  
500 Itō, Yōkyokushū 3, SNKS, 160.  
501 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 113-114.  
502 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 2, SNKBZ 59, 114.
which celebratory themes are often expected in the final phase of a play or a program of plays, this one ends on an auspicious note.

Although suppressed by medieval social and religious practices, feminine desire and protest against oppression were often given voice in medieval Noh through the use of feminine madness or derangement. The woman’s masquerading as possessed in *Fujidaiko* makes her own words permissible. The use of madness thus provides openings for otherwise unexpressed feminine subjectivities, passions, and sexuality, giving audiences a glimpse of resistance by female characters to patriarchal oppression.
CONCLUSION

For Japanese Noh theatre the seminal period occurred during the medieval years. The Muromachi period, during which all kinds of arts and entertainment flourished, is especially celebrated as a watershed epoch for Japanese culture. While the art of Noh particularly enjoyed the patronage of the Ashikaga shoguns, medieval performing arts and entertainment in general drew people from all walks of life since such an art form provided them with occasions for social gatherings. Such communal arts were integral to the ‘esprit de corps’ of the Muromachi period. Such group spirit shared by those who gathered to enjoy the performing arts shaped and influenced the way plays were performed. Zeami, throughout his career, strove to capture his spectators’ hearts and create an experience of catharsis for them.

Because of their position on the lowest rung of the social ladder, sarugaku performers had no choice but to seek ways to satisfy the tastes of their warrior patrons, who were at the apex of the political power structure. Yet, being true to their roots, sarugaku performers remained committed to sarugaku as a theatre art appealing to all classes. The Noh developed fully under such stringent circumstances. Most Noh dramas on the monogurui motif were composed and revised against such a historical and cultural backdrop.
The long-lasting popularity of monogurui dramas suggests that the power of monogurui language continues to hold appeal for spectators. Because of the monogurui scenario, Noh playwrights were able to allot madwoman characters utterances that real-life women in their right minds normally may have dared not utter. Monogurui thus empowers such characters on stage, as well as the audiences, and permits the discharge of pent-up, socially ‘unacceptable’ emotions, resulting in relief from the repressed feelings.

Sugisawa Yōko, in her article entitled “Nō no monogurui ni tsuite no kenkyū” (“A Study of monogurui Noh”), argues that Zeami established monogurui Noh in order to promote peace of mind, a tactic intended for the purpose of gaining patronage from local temples and shrines. Sugisawa argues that the formulaic ending of monogurui plays, in which the mad character is reunited with the loved one and returns to her quotidian self, is the key to establishing such a communal peace of mind. However, my study of selected Noh plays featuring madwomen who slip into altered states of consciousness illuminates more complex artistic and theatrical effects in monogurui plays. The effects of the feminine madness (onna monogurui) relate closely to gender politics and tactics for tacit social criticism among subjugated populations in the hierarchical society of medieval Japan. By virtue of monogurui, what is normally suppressed by medieval social and religious practices is given voice on stage.

The phenomenon of the feminine madness in Sakuragawa is the embodiment of Zeami’s idea of ‘a charming effect’ (iroka). As treated in Shūgyoku tokuka, his idea of iroka is summed up in the image of beautiful scattering flowers. The charm of

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monogurui is likened to this image of scattering flowers. My textual analysis of Sakuragawa has revealed how the inner landscape of the protagonist’s madness is invoked by a web of received associations involving the image of cherry blossoms throughout the play. The image of scattering cherry blossoms is effectively used to bring the madwoman’s extreme grief over separation from her child further into focus. By virtue of her monogurui state, the madwoman in Sakuragawa is able to abandon herself to her innermost feelings without monitoring her behavior out of worry about infringing on social norms and ethics. Such a pure and uncompromised expression of her emotional caliber is what deeply appeals to audiences.

Kinuta, on the other hand, is a kind of counterexample to Sakuragawa, which is at the heart of the monogurui grouping of plays. The estranged woman of Kinuta will not vent her sufferings or suppressed desires and consequently dies from the intensity of her own pent-up emotions. The woman’s working through these feelings in a kind of process of purification becomes the dramatic focus of this play. Through the act of pounding the kinuta, the woman attunes herself with the loneliness of the autumn night. The conflict between her longing for her husband and her rancor against him continues to torment her until, on that lonely autumn night, she begins to appreciate the transience of the world. According to Buddhist belief, the wife’s excessive attachment to her husband is considered sinful and an impediment to salvation. And yet the wife’s awareness of it leads her into confession and penitence, which has the effect of soothing the anger of her spirit after death. Through that process, the woman in Kinuta ashamedly comes to realize that her attachment to her husband and this world have prevented her from attaining salvation. With this realization, the power of the Lotus Sutra that her husband chants for
her and the residual effect of her pounding of the kinuta combine to lead her to religious
enlightenment in the end.

What links these two Zeami’s plays together is that both female protagonists
undergo a process of spiritual purification, and the audience experiences this process of
catharsis as well. Their spiritual journeys unfold as their self-absorption is revealed.
These journeys involve their excessive affection for loved ones and their self-induced
pain of separation from the loved ones. Such self-reflexivity steers them to self-
actualization and eventually to self-salvation. Zeami’s suffering women thus reveal the
inner landscape of their disturbed minds. What makes their pain truly compelling and
truly enhances the dramatic and psychological interest of these dramas is the fact that the
madwoman’s pain is expressed in the power of poetic monogurui language. Zeami’s
preference for madness resulting from the mental anguish of a disturbed mind thus has
much to do with its intrinsic theatrical potential.

Fujidaiko is, on the other hand, a different type of monogurui play, one which
features spirit possession. However, what is most intriguing about Fujidaiko is its
ambiguity about whether there is spirit possession or not. This contrasts with other
earlier spirit possession plays, such as Sotoba Komachi or Aoi no Ue, in which there is no
question that we are to see the scenarios as involving spirit possession. In these earlier
spirit possession plays the possession scene is the dramatic climax in its own right. The
unknown playwright of Fujidaiko, however, employs the possession motif as one part of
a more complex plot involving a wife’s efforts to avenge injustice, which differentiates
Fujidaiko from earlier plays on the spirit possession motif. The adaptation of the old
possession scene scenario is another example that demonstrates the dynamic nature of
monogurui as a theme in Noh. The wife in Fujidaiko, who laments the murder of her
husband by a rival drummer, becomes ostensibly possessed by his spirit and conveys her
late husband’s resentment over his wrongful murder. By doing so she consciously wards
off social censure by appearing to be under the sway of monogurui.

One the one hand, as seen in all three plays in question, the monogurui scenario
provides openings for expression of normally inexpressible desire, sexuality, and overt
social criticism. On the other hand, such liberating moments on stage foster a catharsis
for all involved in the production of the total theatre of Noh. A woman in Noh who slips
into an altered state of consciousness typically displays a buildup of repressed emotions,
which only get stronger as she herself becomes more aware that they are the causes of her
madness. Such self-awareness and reflexivity help her to find her own liberation from
the torments that she suffers. Eventually her path may lead her to salvation.

It is the artistic representation of this process of slipping into monogurui that
captures spectators’ hearts. Such monogurui scenes in Noh may well allow spectators, as
well as performers and the playwrights themselves, release from their own repressed
emotions. Drama not only more generally affords opportunities for expression that
would normally receive censure, but also fosters shared experience among those who are
gathered to witness the performance. Such ‘esprit de corps’ of the Muromachi period
formed a support for monogurui plays. The dynamic process of continuing performance
and interpretation of the medieval monogurui Noh librettos clearly indicates that these
plays have something to say to audiences then and now.
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