THE IMAGE OF THE YūJO (JAPANESE PROSTITUTE/ENTERTAINER) IN A
SELECTION OF MEDIEVAL TEXTS WITH A FOCUS ON THE NŌ
PLAY EGUCHI

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This thesis explores how the image of a yūjo (prostitute/entertainer) in medieval Japan is transformed in Zeami’s Nō play *Eguchi*, in the playwright's reworking of two well-known stories.

To shed light on the protagonist of *Eguchi*, Chapter One of this study discusses the origins of the term yūjo, as well as various Japanese terms for prostitution. This chapter also explains the yūjo's double identity as both professional entertainer and prostitute, and the quality of their existence, debased yet sacred.

Chapter Two examines two legends found in collections of short narratives, or *setsuwa*, on which *Eguchi* is probably based. One episode tells of poetic exchanges between the eminent monk-poet, Saigyō (1118-1190) and a brothel mistress named Tae, or the Lady of Eguchi (*Eguchi no kimi*). Saigyō accused her of begrudging him a "temporary" lodging, while in reply, her poetry revealed the wit and depth of the reasoning behind her refusal. The second episode is about a yūjo who was a manifestation of the
bodhisattva Fugen. The venerable monk Shōkū (1177-1247) had a dream in which he was told that there was a brothel mistress who was the bodhisattva Fugen. He visited the mistress and saw her transform into Fugen and rise into the sky.

Chapter Three discusses the style of the prototypical mugen Nō, and then the style and themes of the play Eguchi. This chapter also explores how the play exploits Buddhist overtones to portray the Eguchi lady and how the revisions made by Zeami bring out a central theme of the play, the falsity of dualistic thinking. The play depicts the consubstantial nature of the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen. Those who would distinguish between a yūjo as a debased person and a bodhisattva as a holy one are confounded by Zeami's treatment of the protagonist as both yūjo and bodhisattva. This unenlightened, dualistic state of mind is represented by the waki, or the supporting actor, in the beginning of the play. When the waki is brought to realize that there is no world outside of this world, no difference between a layman and a holy man, he is at last able to see the yūjo for the bodhisattva she is.
Dedicated to Masae Yamamoto, my mother
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INTRODUCTION

Nō plays unify and harmonize mime and dramatic elements with dance, chant, and music. On the Nō stage, traditional images of womanhood are invoked through these media. The subdued and symbolic movements of Nō depict impressive images of heroines of classical and medieval provenance. Nō librettos draw on episodes from older texts, as well as folktales featuring historical or legendary heroes and heroines. The female characters in Nō plays are often refined. Their speech and actions may embody idealized images of medieval femininity. Nō texts reproduce memorable images of women who are already familiar to audiences from earlier depictions in literature and legend. The image of the ōjo, or “prostitute/entertainer”, is one such memorable prototype.

This paper explores how the image of a ōjo is portrayed in medieval literature, leading to and centering on the Nō play Eguchi. The Nō play Eguchi revolves around a fabled ōjo, also a
chōja (mistress of a brothel) in the town of Eguchi, present-day Higashi Yodogawa ward in Osaka. Eguchi, a seaport town, was once known for its large number of establishments housing prostitutes.

According to Dai Nihon hyakka jiten (The Large Japanese Encyclopedia), 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. Some of them became chōja, or brothel mistresses.¹ The protagonist of Eguchi fits this prototype.

The images of yūjo in pre-modern Japanese literature can be easily misread. The interpretation, for example, of yūjo as prostitutes is not always accurate. This case study of a yūjo in a Nō play, as well as her earlier literary precedents, helps us to pursue a truthful picture of yūjo in medieval contexts. Chapter One of this study explores the facts surrounding the yūjo’s image so as to shed light on the protagonist of Eguchi. The chapter discusses the various terms denoting prostitute and the origin of the term yūjo, as well as the double identity of the yūjo as professional
entertainer and prostitute. Yūjo form one group in a larger category of female prostitutes/entertainers.

The sorrowful and elegant elements of the heroine of Eguchi can only be understood by appreciating the vicissitudinous nature of life as a yūjo. Prostitutes, on the one hand, had a sad and burdensome lot. A study of the portrayal of yūjo reveals the difficulties they could encounter. As performers, on the other hand, they were respected as refined artists. The history of yūjo bespeaks their contribution to the performance traditions. This dual nature generated many stories about them. Receiving accolades as celebrated performers and scraping the bottom as prostitutes, their unstable lives were full of ups and downs, which made their stories especially moving. Another contradiction regarding yūjo is that they were depicted both as sacred and debased. Because of their lifestyle, yūjo were considered to be debased. Yet, by accepting their sinful fate and willingly easing the sufferings of their passing guests, at times they were also considered sacred. This contradiction is the basis of the Eguchi story, in which a yūjo transforms into the bodhisattva Fugen.² These conflicting elements surrounding yūjo captured the literary imagination.
The Nō play *Eguchi* was based on two separate episodes found in earlier literature. Chapter Two of this paper discusses the plot of the Nō play *Eguchi*, and explores the extensive allusions to materials coming from the two legends found in collections of short narratives, or *setsuwa*. Both of these episodes appear in several *setsuwa* collections, which in fact suggests the popularity of episodes about *yūjo*, as well as the highly allusive and intertextual nature of Nō. An examination of these literary precedents is key to understanding the particular *yūjo* depicted in *Eguchi*. As a point of intersection for these two legends, this Nō play offers an interesting case study of how famous tales can be transmitted and reworked.

In one episode, a brothel mistress named Tae, or the Lady of Eguchi (*Eguchi no kimi*), exchanges poems with the eminent monk-poet, Saigyō (1118-1190). Saigyō asked for shelter from the rain at the port-town Eguchi, known for its brothels, on his way to a pilgrimage in the western provinces. The brothel mistress turned down his request. Poetic exchanges between Saigyō and the mistress ensued. Saigyō accused her of begrudging him a "temporary" lodging. In reply, she composed a poem indicating her true motivation for turning down his request. Her poetry
reveals with the wit and depth of the reasoning behind her refusal.

The second episode, mentioned earlier, is about a yūjo who was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. The venerable monk Shōkū (1177-1247) prayed constantly to see the living bodhisattva as proof of his religious enlightenment. One day he had a dream in which he was told that there was a brothel mistress who was the living bodhisattva. He visited the mistress and saw her transform into the bodhisattva and rise into the sky.

Chapter Three discusses various interpretations of the Nō play Eguchi. In order to shed light on how Eguchi came to be interpreted in such various ways, this chapter includes a discussion of authorship of the prototypical style of the play Eguchi, called mugen Nō, and of the themes of the play. Chapter Three will also explore how Buddhist overtones are exploited to portray the Eguchi prostitute and how the revisions made by Zeami represented the yūjo in a much more positive light.

Eguchi falls into the classification of play called kazura-mono, or “wig play.” Most kazura-mono follow a form known today as mugen Nō, or “dream play” and Eguchi is no exception. The focal point of mugen Nō is the discovery of the true identity of the principal actor, or shite, by close observation of his
storytelling in the form of chanting and dance. The important role of the supporting actor, or waki, is to reveal the shite's identity by asking questions. In the prototype of the mugen Nō, it often turns out that everything was a dream of the waki. This, however, is not the case in Eguchi. In fact, for many mugen plays, the line between dream and reality is not always clear.

In Eguchi, the dream-play format is effectively exploited to express the sophisticated reasoning behind the yūjo's refusal of Saigyō's request. The mugen Nō format also lends itself well to the final scene, in which the yūjo ascends into the sky as the bodhisattva Fugen. Moreover, as observed in the exchanges between the traveling priest and the yūjo, and in the transformation scene in Eguchi, Buddhist teachings are often presented in Nō plays. Eguchi displays the depth of influence that Buddhism had on medieval literature.

Another important discussion in Chapter Three is the effect of Zeami's revisions of the play. Two revisions made by Zeami indicate that he was aware of "a shared body of knowledge that is [his audience's] inheritance," according to which the audience decodes the text or the performance, as John Miles Foley notes. What Foley means by "a shared body of knowledge" is "a critical methodology... unified by the act of (re-) making and (re-)
'reading' traditional verbal act.” Foley furthermore discusses the way that audiences interpret oral performances as follows:

If each member of the group present at an oral performance or serving as audience for an oral-derived work were confronting the text without prior experience of its encoded significance, then we would expect a large and unintegrated range of interpretive responses. The variety in individual preparation would make for a corresponding variety in cocreation of the work’s literary quality. But what could potentially be a crippling degree of heterogeneity in response is forestalled by the audience’s earlier acquaintance with the work and its parts, 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.4

Although Foley is referring to modern audiences, Zeami was also aware of the effect of his audience’s prior knowledge on the interpretation of a text or its performance. By using the bodhisattva Fugen, Zeami was able to weave two presumably well-known stories into his *Eguchi*, as we shall see.

More importantly, the changes that Zeami made also underscore a central theme of the play, the denial of dualistic thinking. The play depicts the consubstantial nature of the *yūjo* and the bodhisattva Fugen. Those who distinguish a *yūjo* as a debased person and a bodhisattva as a holy one are confounded by arbitrary discriminations that characterize the unenlightened
mind. This state of mind is represented by the waki, or the supporting actor, in the beginning of the play. When the waki realizes that there is no world outside of this world; no difference between a layman and a holy man, he is able to see the yūjo as the bodhisattva Fugen rising on a white elephant in the final scene of the play.

As I shall demonstrate, an examination of the two setsuwa stories: one about a yūjo and the venerable monk Shōkū and the other about another yūjo's interaction with Saigyō, helps us to better understand the theme of the Nō play Eguchi.

2 Samantabhadra.


CHAPTER 1

THE DOUBLE IDENTITY OF YūJO

1.1 Yūjo and Other Various Terms For Prostitutes/Entertainers

While yūjo were regarded as artistic performers, they were also considered prostitutes. Their role changed in response to changing demands, and the fates of yūjo were often associated with sadness and misery in Japanese literature. In modern days especially, the image of yūjo is often misunderstood.

The protagonist of the Nō play Eguchi, a yūjo, strikes us as quite different from the image of the yūjo, associated mostly with prostitution. Although there are a number of other textual elements involved in creation of the cultivated image of a yūjo in Eguchi, understanding of the traditional role of the yūjo partly explains her cultivated image. To lead to a better understanding of their role in pre-modern Japan, it is thus important to focus on the
history behind the *yūjo* and spotlight the *yūjo*’s contribution to performing arts traditions.

The term *yūjo*, or prostitutes/entertainers, is believed to have first appeared in the late Heian Period, around the end of the eleventh century and the early twelfth century. This is confirmed by *Yūjoki* (The Records of *Yūjo*), written by Ōe no Masafusa (1041-1111), one of the most learned scholars of Chinese classics and poetry of his time. Although the term *yūjo* began to be used as a general term to indicate female prostitutes/entertainers, there was another reading of the two characters of *yūjo*—*asobi* or *asobime*—which was used to describe particular professional female entertainers who flourished during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Japan. *Asobi* are also believed to have been engaged in prostitution. *Asobi* will be discussed in detail in section 1.2 below. Prior to the generic term *yūjo* rendered here as “prostitutes/entertainers,” there were other Japanese written terms used to describe them.

The examination of the original Japanese term for a prostitute helps us to understand the function that prostitutes fulfilled, which is discussed in the section below. The first written term used to describe a prostitute in Japan is probably the term
ukareme, which appeared in the Man’yōshū, or “Anthology of Ten Thousand Leaves” in the eighth century, and is thought to have been the earliest Japanese word for a prostitute.¹ Three different ways to write ukareme in Chinese characters are attested in pre-modern literary texts. The first four-character word written (遊行女婦) is read as both ukareme and yūkōjofu, and literally means “wandering woman.” In both Dai Nihon hyakka jiten (The Large Japanese Encyclopedia) and Dai hyakka jiten (The Large Encyclopedia) this word is used when referring to ukareme, which appears in Man’yōshū as mentioned above.² Takigawa Masajirō meanwhile uses the reading of yūkōjofu for the same four characters in his Yūjo no rekishi.³ Although both readings were used to indicate a prostitute, it is not clear when the yūkōjofu reading began to appear. The same four characters can also be read as yugyōjofu, although no source materials in which this reading is recorded could be found in this study. The term yugyō, which consists of the same two characters as yūkō, is a Buddhist term which means “making a pilgrimage or traveling for the purpose of religious training or preaching.” The last two characters jofu indicate “woman.” Because of the difference in meaning between yugyō and yūkō, whether we read the same
four characters as yugyōjofu or yūkōjofu conveys a different implication. Yūkōjofu will be discussed in detail below.

The second four-character word written (宇加利女) is another way of writing ukareme in phonograms, which is used to define another term for prostitute (遊女兒) in Wamyō ruijushō (Thesaurus of Japanese words; undated) by Minamoto no Shitagō (911-983). These four Chinese characters are phonetically equivalent to ukareme. The written system in which Chinese characters are used to record Japanese sounds is called, man'yōgana. The other way the word ukareme was written, in a mixed style of phonograms and Chinese characters (遊女) was used more literally to mean “floating women.” The word written this way appears in a poem to describe a group of female prostitutes/entertainers in Utsuho monogatari (Tales of Utsuho; c. 970-999).

Starting from the tenth century through the twelfth century, many other terms followed ukareme to refer to prostitute/entertainers, such as asobi, asobime, and yūkun, as well as Sino-Japanese words such as gijo, shōjo, and keisei. Female entertainers, kugutsume and shirabyōshi, were also known for their involvement in prostitution, and those terms also came to take on the connotation of prostitution. After the twelfth century,
the term ējo emerged as a widely used generic term to identify various kinds of prostitutes/entertainers. As mentioned in *Nihon rekishi daijiten*, Chinese characters for *asobi*, *asobime*, and ējo, are believed to be abbreviated forms of ēkōjofu, taking the first and third characters of this compound word, or more specifically, the first morpheme of ēkō “undirected going” and the first morpheme of jofu “female servant.” Takigawa claims that ējo is a borrowed word, but it is more convincing to think of the term ējo as a contraction of the earlier term ukareme (遊行女婦). There is no other satisfactory explanation of how the characters ū and jo were first translated as ukareme, and later ējo. This discussion of the original Japanese term for a prostitute leads us into the question of exactly what activities were associated with prostitutes. I discuss this in the section below.

1.2 The Origins of the Words *Asobi, Asobime, and Yūjo*

*Asobi, asobime, and yūjo* were all written with the same Chinese characters,遊 and 女. Determining just what the first element in either compound refers to is, however, more complicated. There are various theories about the original
implication of the term and how this relates to the history of this first character of the word.

In modern times the word asobi (遊び) is generally understood as “play” associated with “pleasure,” but also often connotes “dissipation” in contrast to “work.” Therefore, the modern definition of yūjo often carries the image of dissolute women indulging men in pleasure. Like most words, however, in different cultural contexts the word takes on different nuances of meaning. The meaning of the word asobi thus varies, depending on the time period, the type of “play,” and the kind of “pleasure” in question. What is common among the various implications of the word asobi, however, seems to have been the concept of “kibarashi,” or “diversion.” Shinsen kogo jiten (The New Classical Japanese Dictionary) lists various definitions of asobi found in various anthologies of classical poetry: recreation, hunting, play, music, and dance. These are all activities that distract the mind, relax or entertain. Takigawa also argues that asobi sometimes implies “hyōhaku,” or “drifting,” a concept suggested in the word yūjo. According to the definition in Kōjien, however, the notion of “drifting” seems to come from the following definition, i.e., “noyama nado o kiraku ni aruki mawaru (walking around in a field at ease without any specific purpose),” which was derived from
the use of the term *asobi* in *Man'yōshū*\(^{10}\). By this definition, we seem to be back to the idea of "diversion," rather than just drifting.

The implication of *asobi* as "pacifying a spirit," though it is not specifically recorded in the above-mentioned dictionaries, is an important association with the word *asobi*. In ancient times, the Chinese character with which *asobi* or *yū* was written was, in fact, as Nakayama Tarō notes, used to signify entertainment in connection with religious rites.\(^{11}\) Saeki Junko gives a well-known 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 yo ya yo asobi ki*, 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. Although Saeki does not explain how they pacified the spirit, it is probable that they played music, sang, and danced as part of a ritual. In this sense, this use of *asobi* also applies to the definition listed in *Shinsen kogo jiten* above. This association between *asobi* and ritual is, however, an important aspect of the origin of the word *asobi*. Saeki claims that this implication of the word *asobi*, "pacifying a spirit (*tamashii o nagusa mu*) explains why the ancient royal morticians were called *asobi-be*.\(^{12}\) From the example usage of *asobi* appearing in *Kojiki*, her theory is
persuasive. The word *be* was used to indicate a group of people who were organized for a certain purpose by the Yamato court, which was in power starting around the fourth and fifth centuries, and *be* continued functioning as a group organization until the mid-seventh century.\(^{13}\) Therefore, the fact that the word *asobi* was used to name a *be* which performed in the death rituals for royal families reinforces the association between *asobi* and rituals. 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...”\(^{14}\) *Asobi-be* also, as Gary L. Ebersole points out, recited eulogies and poems of praise.\(^{15}\) This function of *asobi-be* can also be interpreted as a form of “diversion” in the sense that they distracted the minds of people grieving over the loss of family members by reciting poems of praise, eulogies, and appeasements for the spirits.

More importantly, Saeki construes that this notion of the word *asobi*, “pacifying a spirit,” indicates the original function that *yūjo* fulfilled, which was similar to that of *miko*.\(^{16}\) *Miko* were priestesses, or maidens in the service of a Shinto shrine. Her theory is derived from the fact that the first character of *yūjo*, *yū* (or *asobi*) was associated with rituals as discussed above.\(^{17}\) Saeki’s theory is important in the sense that she offers a different
perspective of the relationship between miko and yūjo. Before Saeki, the common explanation of the yūjo/miko connection was that some miko began to engage in prostitution and came to be called yūjo. This theory considers yūjo to be "fallen" miko and the distinction between the two is clear: yūjo are debased, miko are holy. Connecting yūjo and miko, in fact, needs more clarification because the scope of the two terms yūjo and miko are not equal. The term yūjo can be used generally to indicate any kind of prostitute, but miko is a specific term for a priestess or shrine maiden. It is, however, noteworthy that Saeki’s perspective, which places prostitution and religious ritual on the same level, allows us to answer the question why yūjo were often connected with miko. In fact, early accounts of prostitution in Japan also suggest a connection between prostitutes and ritual performers, as discussed in detail below.

Yung-Hee Kim Kwon points out the dual function of female entertainers called asobi (another reading of the same two characters of yūjo), tracing their origin back to "a shamanistic exorcism," which was also labeled "asobi," giving as an example the famous episode of Ameno-uzume-no-mikoto in Kojiki. In this episode, Ameno-uzume, divinely possessed, dances half-naked in the presence of myriad gods gathered in front of the cave in
which the Sun Goddess Amaterasu had locked herself. The gods burst into laughter, at the sight of Ameno-uzume's exposed body, and this uproar draws Amaterasu out of the cave, bringing light back into the world. Out of this episode, Kwon suggests the complex function of the *asobi*: "an archetypal image of the *asobi* with a dual or combined function of a priest and entertainer, mediating between the two worlds of light and darkness, order and chaos, and ultimately, life and death." What Kwon points out helps us to understand an important aspect of the original notion of *asobi*: duality. The example of the use of *asobi* as "shamanistic exorcism" in the episode of Ameno-uzume, also suggests the involvement of sexual acts in rituals. With this in mind, we can understand that the theory claiming that a *miko* degraded herself to a prostitute is the product of a modern sensibilities and morals. A strong connection existed between ritual and sexual acts in early Japan, and the image of females engaging in religious rituals and the image of females engaging in sexual acts were not as contradictory as we may seem to think they are.

Kwon also identifies *asobi-be* as the royal morticians up to early in the eighth century and points out another aspect of their role as *asobi-be*, which explains the beginning of a new connotation of *asobi* now widely accepted. Kwon explains that
since the *asobi-be* were in charge of important funerary services at the imperial court, they were exempted from conscripted labor and paying taxes. As a result of their disengagement from these mundane burdens, they naturally came to be associated with more non-essential, dispensable activities and consequently, "the *asobi-be* as a whole became a superfluous and expendable component of the society." In this sense, Kwon claims that the Taihō era (701-707) in which a tax-based economy was established in Japan, "marks the beginning of the present-day connotation of 'asobi' as 'play' implying labor-free pleasure-oriented activity, and also the beginning of the derogatory implications of *asobi-be* as a social group."  

The tax-based economy emphasized the difference in concept between "work" and "non-work" activities. Although as the discussion above shows, the notion of the word *asobi* signifying diversion or recreation, seems to have existed earlier, it is probable that the Taihō era does mark the beginning of the derogatory implication of "asobi," but it is also important to point out that, even in the Heian period, as Akima mentions, *asobi* almost always meant "music making" rather than "playing." Especially in the earlier period, he emphasizes "it meant something more orgiastic, that is to say, ritual merrymaking with singing, dancing, and drinking, in which women played important roles."  

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Akima’s citation from the *Ryō no Shūge* (a collection of classical notes on ancient legal codes), which was compiled in the late ninth century tells us that the derogatory implication of *asobi* was also established by this time although sometimes confusingly: “The Asobi-be stand as mediators between the seen and the unseen worlds, and appease the evil spirits that cause great harm. They have no work to do, hence the name Asobi-be, ‘the playing group.’” It is probable that, as discussed above, this occupational group based on fictive kin relationships was dubbed *asobi-be* because they performed death rituals and sang, danced, and played music in order to pacify spirits, but later became associated with idleness and gratification in a derogatory sense. By the ninth century, it would understandably confuse people to think that one group could embrace such disparate activities.

Kwon explains that “since the *asobi-be*’s members delivered such critical services at the time of death at the imperial court, they were granted the privilege of lifelong immunity from the conscript labor and taxes and accordingly enjoyed special status.”22 It should also be mentioned that the *asobi-be*’s privilege of exemption from state land taxes and corvée labor is in all likelihood due to the fact that they belonged to temples and shrines, which enjoyed these institutionalized privileges. Akima’s
explanation supports this idea when he suggests that those who engaged in occupations requiring direct contact with corpses served as menial laborers in temples and shrines of early Japan.\(^{23}\)

Kwon also suggests that “by the mid-eighth century, the *asobi-be* as a court functionary ceased to exist,”\(^{24}\) and some female *asobi-be* members became itinerant entertainers, often engaging in prostitution.\(^{25}\) Nakayama also points out that many *ukareme* or *yūkōjofu* who belonged to *asobi-be* were originally in charge of pacifying the sprits of the dead of the royal family, but gradually began to also engage in prostitution.\(^{26}\) This is a complicated issue. It is not clear whether the female members of *asobi-be* performed many, some, or no sexual acts during the course of ritual performances. It also remains to be explained how these itinerant female entertainers came to engage in prostitution; whether they were part of orgiastic performances or their job as entertainers was similar to present-day prostitutes. What is obvious is that after their original function of performing death rituals was no longer required, whether sexual acts were performed or not, some female *asobi-be* members did evolve into professional entertainers. Although Takigawa denies the relationship between *asobi-be* and *asobime* (or *asobi*), emphasizing the difference between morticians and entertainers,\(^{27}\) there is a connection. As
Nakayama suggests, if the female members of asobi-be were called ukareme or yūkōjofu, the theory that claims that the term yūjo is a contraction of yūkōjofu suggests the connection between yūjo and their religious rituals.

The history of the word asobi or yū, which is the first element of the term yūjo is thus complex. The word took on different nuances throughout the history of Japan. It is, however, noteworthy that as seen in the history of the word asobi, the word yūjo did not originally carry the negative connotation that it does in modern times.

1.3 Early Accounts of Prostitution

Investigating the origins of prostitution in Japan leads to interesting connections between prostitution and other professions. Nakayama, for example, explains how miko, as shrine maidens, became involved in prostitution in ancient times. Nakayama also notes that in some areas, the miko were also called kugutsu, later to become known as professional entertainers who engaged in prostitution. (Kugutsu will be explained in detail below.) Suzuka Chiyono says that legends from the eighth century tell of two women who lived by the sea; one named Mama
no Tegona, and the other Sue no Tamana. They were both so beautiful that they attracted many men. As a result of this attraction, Mama no Tegona threw herself into the sea to refuse all the men who came to her, while Sue no Tamana accepted every man and had sexual relations with all of them. Mama no Tegona was regarded as having a sacred nature like that of miko, while Sue no Tamana was regarded as having a seductive nature like a prostitute. What is revealing about this legend is that both women were characterized as sacred. Mama no Tegona devoted herself to the god of the sea, while Sue no Tamana devoted herself to men. Suzuka claims that both women were believed to come from the families of divers, and that their legend might have been the beginning of others related to ukareme, many of whom were said to wander among seaside towns. Although it is not clear how much truth these legends contain, they indicate an association between female divers and prostitutes which is traceable to the poems in the Man’yōshū, in which umibe no otome (lit. seashore maidens, i.e., divers) appeared.

Nakayama also explores the connection between divers and prostitutes, pointing out that the term kugutsu originally referred to a basket used by female divers. This is also found in Man’yōshū.
Nakayama argues that as female divers began to engage in prostitution, the term *kugutsu* became the metonymy for them.\(^{31}\)

Nishioka Toranosuke, explicating the cause of the *miko*'s involvement in prostitution, points out that among *naishi* (another term for shrine maidens), some were referred to as *maiko* and it was these who later came to be known as *shirabyōshi*.\(^{32}\) *Shirabyōshi* were, like *kugutsu*, known as prostitutes/entertainers. *Shirabyōshi* will be described in detail below.

Takigawa, on the other hand, claims that prostitution among *yūjo* originated with itinerant Koreans who immigrated to Japan in ancient times. As support, Takigawa explains that the etymology of *yūjo* indicates that *yū* is taken from the word *yūkō*, or wandering travel, which is what the female itinerant Koreans (Hakuchō-min), called *yūjo* did. Takigawa, as mentioned earlier, argues that these female Hakuchō-min were called *yūjo* because they were wandering women.\(^{33}\) Although Takigawa is strongly against the above-mentioned idea in which *the miko* are considered to be the original prostitutes in Japan, his theory about Korean immigrants as the first prostitutes in Japan is not persuasive. It is more natural to think that prostitution evolved independently from several sources, and a good deal earlier than in historical Japan.
1.4. Professional Entertainers: Kugutsu, Asobi, Asobime, and Shirabyōshi

Some professional entertainers called kugutsu(shi) or kairai(shi), first emerged in the eighth century and flourished for the next 400 years. It was also said that they engaged in prostitution.\textsuperscript{34} To differentiate female kugutsu from male kugutsu, the term kugutsume was also used of females. According to Kuiraishi no ki (The Record of Kugutsu), written by Ōe,\textsuperscript{35} kugutsu traveled in troupes, the men performing with swords, puppets, and magic, while women chanted songs and engaged in prostitution.\textsuperscript{36} For this reason, women referred to as kugutsume were considered prostitutes as well as performers.

There were also professional female singers of low social status who flourished during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They were called asobi, or asobime. Kwon defines asobi as imayō singers, "the first private performing artists ever identified by formal, specific group designations. They were also the first known female artist groups who specialized in one single performing arts genre."\textsuperscript{37} The imayō, (meaning "modern style"), a popular song genre, treated various kinds of topics many of which had deep Buddhist implications. Because of the variety of their
topics, including elevated themes such as Buddhist teachings, these songs prevailed not only among the common people, but were also patronized among the aristocrats of the late twelfth century. Kwon’s comment on the interdependency of the relation between the popularity of imayō songs and that of female entertainers is interesting:

As the imayō genre flourished, so thrived asobi, carving their artistic niche in the society and life of the people they entertained. With the decline of imayō as a song genre by the mid-Kamakura period in the late thirteenth century, the tradition of asobi as imayō singers died out.

Asobi were thus professional female singers whose lives and livelihood were closely tied to the popularity of imayō songs. This instability of the lives of these asobi would foreshadow the fate of other female entertainers to follow.

Although the involvement of asobi in prostitution cannot be denied, asobi’s contribution to keeping performing arts traditions alive and memorable is a more prominent feature of their history. The asobi or asobime blurred the line between entertainment and prostitution, in response to a growing urban and centralized society changing the roles of female entertainers.

Both kugutsume and asobi were thus considered professional entertainers. There were, however, some
distinctions between *kugutsume* and *asobi*. Takigawa Masajirō, for example, indicates there was a difference in the melodies of *imayō* songs chanted by *asobi* and *kugutsume*. Sakurai Masanobu also points out that *asobi* were settled performers while *kugutsume* were itinerants. Thus both *asobi* and *kugutsume* were entertainers who engaged in prostitution, but they were considered distinct, in regard to their life styles and performance skills.

There were also professional performers called *shirabyōshi*, who first appeared in the late Heian period, around the twelfth century. Although they were *imayō* singers and dancers, they also engaged in prostitution. Unlike *kugutsume* or *asobime*, however, when *shirabyōshi* performed, they wore special costumes. They dressed like men, wearing the *hitahire*, a long divided skirt for men, a nobleman's tall headdress, called *tate-eboshi*, and a sword. As Nakayama points out, however, *shirabyōshi* were considered more respectable and sophisticated than other female entertainers because many of them were accomplished in chanting *imayō*, which expressed or somehow reflected Buddhist doctrines.

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 maidens (*miko*). It is also known that the Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127-92) himself engaged in studying *imayō* chanting and invited *shirabyōshi* to the court. He also compiled a collection of *imayō*, *Ryōjinhishō* (Treasured Selections of Superb Songs) 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* (Shinto hymns involving singing and dancing) 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* (Chinese poems). 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. It is probable that the increase in taxes created desperate conditions in which poor families sold their 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.

There were in fact some celebrated shirabyōshi and many episodes about them have been handed down through the centuries. A number of Nō plays are based on these stories. Hotoke no hara and Giō, 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, Yoshino Shizuka, and Funabenkei also deal with a shirabyōshi named Shizuka, a lover of Minamoto no Yoshitsune, the influential warrior of the Minamoto clan and also the half-brother of the head of the clan, Yoritomo. Some shirabyōshi thus became well-known for being the lovers of historical figures. Their stories were dramatic because their lives were intertwined with and dependent on these powerful men. Their stories were intriguing because they lived in the marginal world of entertainers on the low rung of the social ladder, but yet were capable of becoming
celebrated artists or lovers. Their popularity was based on their physical beauty, fine voices, and extraordinary performance skills, and their accomplishments in traditional areas of performance helped to tone down their image as prostitutes. Takamure Itsue refers to these performers who engaged in prostitution, such as kugutsu and shirabyōshi, as groups of "geinō-teki shishō" (artistic prostitutes).\textsuperscript{47}

1.5 The Topos of the Suffering Yūjo

Throughout their history, yūjo were considered to belong to the lower class, but given their beauty and their talent, some yūjo were greatly admired. There were, for example, some court ladies who had risen from the ranks of yūjo or shirabyōshi.\textsuperscript{48} As Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai (Research Group of the History of Japanese Women) explains, because of their talent in artistic performance, in the early and mid-medieval period, starting around the Heian period (794-1185) through the Kamakura period (1185-1333), people were not necessarily contemptuous of yūjo, including asobi or asobime, kugutsu, and shirabyōshi. Thereafter their social status became considerably lower as many different kinds of entertainers appeared, starting at the end of the Kamakura period through the Nanbokuchō period (1336-1392).\textsuperscript{49} Shōmonji was, for
example, one of them. They were originally referred to as official fortune-tellers of in'yō (the principle of Yin and Yang). Soon there were many individuals accomplished in this technique. These new fortune-tellers also began to chant the Buddhist scriptures and perform a kusemai dance as a part of their function. Acting troupes which included yūjo, kugutsu, and shirabyōshi also began to be called shōmoji, (or shōmonji). They gathered in the city of Kyoto and slept on the riverbank with the beggars.

There were also other reasons behind the deterioration of the social status of yūjo in general. In the early medieval period, in which women's social status was in general higher than in later periods, motherhood was respected, but this respect was both a reflection of the contempt that aristocratic society held for work and an attempt to close women out of social activities. Under the guise of respect for motherhood, women were confined to their homes. Wakita Haruko believes the reason behind this respect for motherhood is that it produced heirs. Similarly, the editors of Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai consider the relationship between the respect for motherhood and virtue in the medieval period to be that the “virtue” of motherhood was lauded in order to pressure women to behave in a socially acceptable (“virtuous”) manner. Tabata Yasuko illustrates society’s high regard for such virtue by
citing the cases of kugutsune and shirabyōshi, who were allowed to inherit the property of their spouses only if they were considered virtuous wives.⁵⁴

With these dubious “virtues” and a disrespect for working women, in addition to the emergence of different kinds of entertainers around the middle and the end of fourteenth century, contempt for yūjo prevailed in the medieval period, putting them firmly on the bottom rung of the social ladder.

Another reason behind the contempt for yūjo in the late medieval period was the increasing prevalence of the Buddhist belief that all women were born tainted with sin.⁵⁵ Yūjo were considered the epitome of this.⁵⁶ Because of this belief, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a Buddhist push to bring ōjō, or salvation, to women and outcasts.

Women were considered sinful because of goshō (five impediments) and sanjū (three rules to follow). The goshō “five impediments” hindered women from becoming any one of the five sacred beings: Brahma the Creator (Bonten ō); the Devil, Sakra devānām Indra (Taishaku ten); Cakravarti-rāja (ma ō); and the Buddha (hotoke). Sanjū “three rules to follow” are obedience to parents when women are young, obedience to husbands after marriage, and obedience to children after the husband’s death.⁵⁷
woman who followed these rules could not also devote herself to religious life, which required one to renounce worldly relations. Many medieval religious figures such as Hōnen (1133-1212), Shinran (1173-1262), Nichiren (1222-82), and Ippen (1239-89), advocated the Buddhist idea of nyōnin ōjō, or salvation for women. The term ōjō, as Alicia Matsunaga and Daigan Matsunaga explain, literally meaning “go and be born,” theologically refers to “the ‘attainment’ of Enlightenment (rebirth in the Pure Land).” As Alicia Matsunaga and Daigan Matsunaga suggest, Hōnen first developed this idea by encouraging followers of the Pure Land teaching to welcome people of all classes as well as women, who by this time were generally believed to be incapable of attaining Enlightenment because of goshō (five impediments) and sanjū (three rules to follow) as explained above. This development of the idea of salvation for women is significant in that it marks the rising role of women, whose status had declined as the samurai class became the most powerful political force in the Kamakura period (1185-1333).

This background helps explain why yūjo in Nō plays such as Eguchi, Hanjo, and Higaki deplore their fate as yūjo. In Eguchi, the yūjo bemoans her fate as a sinful yūjo. Hanjo features a yūjo hopelessly lovelorn and grieving over her life as a yūjo. Higaki
features the ghost of a *shirabyōshi* who suffered from not being able to reach enlightenment because of her sinful past as a *yūjo*.

1.6. The Social Utility of the *Yūjo*

Although *yūjo* were perceived as sinful in the medieval period, they continued to play significant roles in society. The legend about the *yūjo* who became a reincarnation of the bodhisattva Fugen\(^6\) is just one example of this. Because they accepted their sinful fates and eased the sufferings of transients such as travelers and sailors, these women were simultaneously regarded as both debased and holy.\(^6\) The saga of the *yūjo* being the reincarnation of the bodhisattva Fugen reshapes the sinful *yūjo*’s image into a heroic one.

Regardless of their good or bad reputations, *yūjo* satisfied the needs of various kinds of people in various ways. Where people sought pleasure in cultural entertainment, *yūjo* served as artistic performers; where they sought physical pleasure, *yūjo* served as prostitutes. Because of these changing demands and the general instability of their lifestyle, the fates of *yūjo* were always depicted in literature as consisting of large portions of sadness and misery. Even as such, however, *yūjo* and other female entertainers
contributed to the preservation and improvement of the literary and performing arts traditions in pre-modern Japan. *Eguchi* is one of the best examples of a Nō play which presents the sophisticated image of the *yūjo* in medieval society.

2 *Dai Nihon hyakka jiten*, vol. 17(702) and *Dai hyakka jiten*, vol. 14, (1301)


7 *Nihon rekishi daijiten*, 132.


9 Takigawa, 17.


16 Saeki, 20.

17 Saeki Junko, interview by author, 4 November, 1998, Columbus.


19 Kwon, 207.

20 Kwon, 208-209.

21 Akima, 499.

22 Kwon, 208.

23 Akima, 503.


25 Kwon, 209.

26 Nakayama, 76-82.

27 Takigawa, 90.

28 Nakayama, 6-14, 70-76, 82-109.

29 Nakayama, 86.


31 Nakayama, 210-24.

35 Takigawa, 14-23.

34 Takigawa, 68.

35 Ōe uses the word kuiraiishi, which is the old reading of kairaishi.


37 Kwon, 206.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Adachi Naorō lists kugutsu as prostitutes. Adachi Naorō, Yūjo fūzoku shi saiken (Tokyo: Tenbōsha, 1967), 46. Takigawa (28) also mentions that kugutsu were prostitutes.


42 Takigawa, 69.

43 Nakayama, 2!3-274.


45 Nakayama, 280-285.


51 Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai, 2: 96-97.


53 Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai, 76-80.


56 Endō Motoo records a story about yūjo who suffered from the sin as being yūjo. Endō Motoo, *Nihon josei no seikatsu to bunka*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Shikai Shobō, 1941), 201.

57 Oguri (50-51) explains how, according to Buddhist teaching, women exist in a state of original sin.

58 Amino (124-125) refers to the Buddhist precept of salvation for women and outcasts. Oguri (70-131) also describes the Buddhist idea of salvation for women as advocated by Hōnen, Shinran, Nichiren and other Buddhist sages.


60 Alicia Matsunaga and Daigan Matsunaga, 304-305.

CHAPTER 2

SETSURA AND EGUCHI

2.1 The Nō Play Eguchi

The traditional organization of a Nō performance program was established in the Edo period (1603-1867) and consists of a series of five Nō plays. The first is a “deity play,” (also referred to as waki nō), in which the typical protagonist is a god. The second is shura-mono, or “warrior play,” in which the protagonist is usually a legendary warrior. The third is kazura-mono, or “wig play,” in which a female protagonist typically performs an elegant dance. The fourth would be “a miscellaneous play” (also referred to as yo-ban-me mono, or fourth piece), perhaps “a mad woman play” or some other which does not fit in the other categories. The fifth is “a demon play,” (also referred to as kiri-nō) in which supernatural characters such as demons serve as the protagonists.¹

Eguchi is a kazura-mono, or “wig play.” The origin of the term probably comes from the fact that male actors wore wigs to play
female roles. The dance piece is the main attraction of this type of play. In *Eguchi*, just before the protagonist transforms into the bodhisattva Fugen at the end of the play, she performs a slow dance piece called *jo no mai*. This dance piece represents the transition for the protagonist between her identity as a ghost of the Lady of Eguchi and the revelation of her real identity as the bodhisattva Fugen. Audiences are drawn into a mysterious atmosphere as they see the protagonist dancing in an elegant way, which sets the proper tone for the miracle of transformation. The *yūjo* in *Eguchi* is a mysterious figure; she is witty in her exchange of poems with Saigyō; she is ashamed of being a *yūjo*; and she is confident, admonishing the itinerant monk for his attachment to worldly matters.

The play starts with the chanting of the itinerant monk (*waki*, or the supporting actor) and his companions: “Since the moon is our old friend from this world, where might the world outside of this one be?” This chanting, called the *shidai*, implies that although they have entered religious life, they are still struggling with their attachments to this world. (This can also imply the consubstantial idea: there is no distinction between this world and outside of this world. This consubstantial idea is discussed in the section 3.6 in Chapter Three below.)
This struggle is a key to understanding the play. In other Nō plays, often an itinerant monk, the waki, is the one who guides the shite, the principal actor, usually a ghost of someone from long ago, into salvation. In Eguchi, however, the fact that the monk and his companions themselves reveal their weakness of not being able to let go of this world suggests that they are the ones who need guidance. This raises the question of who might help the monks to reach enlightenment, and makes the play intriguing. The itinerant monk then introduces himself; he is from the northern provinces, and he and his companions have been in the capital lately, but it is time for them to leave on a pilgrimage to holy temples and shrines. Following this, the monk and his companions chant. In poetic verse, they describe their trip from the capital to Eguchi.

Arriving in Eguchi, the monk finds a cairn which looks like a grave marker of someone of some consequence. He asks a villager about the cairn.

A villager (ai, or an interlude actor) explains that the cairn is a grave marker for a well-known courtesan called the Lady of Eguchi, who lived a long time ago. The villager explains that she was a poet, but her real identity was the bodhisattva Fugen. The villager also mentions that when the famous priest Saigyō chanted
a poem for her, she composed a witty poem in reply. As seen in this part, the role of the interlude actor in a Nō play is important in helping the audience to understand the background of the protagonist, which is key to understanding the plot of a Nō play. This villager tells us the true identity of the Lady of Eguchi, a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. If the audience is not paying attention to these words, or unless they know the story already, they will likely misunderstand the plot of the play, especially when the Lady of Eguchi transforms into the bodhisattva Fugen in the final scene.

At the suggestion of the villager, the monk and his companions visit the grave marker of the Lady of Eguchi to pray for her. The monk chants the poem that Saigyō composed for her. Admiring the wittiness of this poem, the monk says that the courtesan was really heartless for refusing to offer him temporary shelter. This remark triggers the appearance of a mysterious woman on the stage.

The waki's (monk's) action is very important in mugen Nō because he creates the context in which the mae-shite (or mae-jite), the principle actor in the first act, reappears. The reappearance of the mae-shite begins a new dialogue between the monk and the village woman. The village woman (the mae-shite)
asks the monk why he chanted Saigyō's poem. While the monk is still bewildered by her sudden appearance and her question, the village woman explains her appearance. Though for so many years she had forgotten that poem, hearing it again reminds her of the old days, when the Priest Saigyō chanted the poem for her. She especially remembers the lines: “it is reaching a point of hating this (temporary) world and renouncing it that would be really hard to do. You, however, would even cling to a temporary lodging.” Saigyō’s line plays on the double meaning of the term “kari no yado,” or “a temporary lodging,” which also implies “this world.” The interpretation of this poem is fully discussed below.

With the monk still in surprise, the village woman explains that Saigyō misunderstood her. She asks the monk why he did not chant her reply to Saigyō, in which she explained that she did not cling to a temporary lodging. At this point, the monk and the woman take turns explaining the situation, in which the poetic exchange occurred from the yūjo’s point of view. The village woman reminds the monk of the poem that the yūjo composed in reply: “because I heard that you were a person who hated this world and renounced it, I did not think that you should set your heart upon a temporary lodging.” Understanding what Saigyō implied, the yūjo challenged him by pointing out that a person
who has renounced the world should not become attached to “a temporary lodging.” The monk agrees with her logic. Then, the village woman further explains that the yūjo was reluctant to offer a temporary lodging to Saigyō because she was the mistress of a brothel, a place religious men should avoid by all means. The way she explains the yūjo’s circumstances is replete with meaning. The chorus then chants the woman’s part; “This temporary lodging that I don’t regret, why should he say I begrudge it? After all, the exchange of poems is in the irrevocable past.” Then, she speaks to the monk before her, “since you are also one who has renounced the world, you should not set your heart upon such a worldly matter.”

The monk agrees that he should not concern himself over such a worldly matter as what befell a yūjo long ago. The monk and his companions ask the village woman who she really is. She asks, ashamed of herself as a yūjo, if they cannot really see her as a courtesan of the town of Eguchi of long ago. After this first dialogue, the monk and his companions, and the Lady of Eguchi take turns explaining who she was in short sentences or phrases, and then the chorus starts chanting the Lady of Eguchi’s words directly to the monk; “... in the previous world, perhaps we sheltered together under the same tree, perhaps we drew water
together from the same stream... Please understand that I am the spirit of the Lady of Eguchi.” At this point, the woman exits.

The villager tells the monk more about the Lady of Eguchi; “they say that lately in an august person’s dream, even this mistress of a brothel at Eguchi of long ago appeared chanting with a drum on a riverboat and later she transformed into the bodhisattva Fugen... If you are truly a holy monk, you will see the Lady of Eguchi chanting on the boat. They say that she was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen.” This section serves to remind the audience of the short narrative about the Venerable Shōkū, who saw the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen in the form of a yūjo. Only those who reach enlightenment can see the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen.

The monk talks to himself: “what a privilege it would be to be able to see such a miracle! ... I will chant the sutra and pray for the Lady of Eguchi.” Then the monk announces that he now sees a wonder lit by the moonlight. With this the first act comes to a close.

The climax of the play comes in the second act, when the courtesan of Eguchi (the nochi-shite, nochi-jite, or the principle actor of the second half of the play,) appears. Two companions also appear and start chanting, explaining their lives as yūjo in a
melancholy way, rich with allusion and poetic imagery. They continue chanting; "...all are transient as foam on the water, but let us enjoy it."

The monk then says that he sees courtesans chanting on the boat. He wonders whose boat it is. The courtesan of Eguchi tells him with much shame that long ago she sailed for pleasure on this boat. Then the courtesan of Eguchi and her companions take turns revealing to the monk who they are. He is confused and cannot fathom why the courtesan of Eguchi of long ago would appear before him. Her logic is interesting. She says "...it's not a long time ago... just look. The moon is unchanged, isn't it?" The courtesan of Eguchi implies that she and her companions exist the same as before, since the moon is still the same; they are not from the past. Tiring of presenting explanations to the monk, at the end they say, "...never mind. Whatever he asks, we shall not say anything or hear anything, since it is complicated." The courtesan of Eguchi and her companions thereafter describe the way that their boat swept downstream as they chanted boating songs. After that, the chorus takes turns with them describing their yearning for the old days.

This is the starting point of the second climax of the play, which continues until the end. The chorus and the courtesan of Eguchi take turns describing the impermanence of this world.
Then she and the chorus continue, speaking about the good fortune of being born human, and the misfortune of losing the opportunity to have a religious awakening, and the sinful life of yūjo. The courtesan of Eguchi then dances, and as she does, the chorus continues describing how difficult it is for human beings to reach enlightenment.

After the choral chant concludes with “How enlightening!”, the courtesan of Eguchi quietly dances a jo no mai dance. The courtesan and the chorus then continue taking turns describing the process of reaching enlightenment:

Eguchi: On the ocean of the Realm of True Enlightenment the winds of the Five Objects of Cognition and the Six Desires never blow,”

Chorus: ...yet, waves of Absolute Reality in the form of illusion rise each day.3

The courtesan returns to the theme of her poem given in reply to Saigyō’s, “a temporary lodging.” She and the chorus then tell us about attachments to the impermanent world as clinging to a temporary lodging, which is after all in vain.

The chorus then relates that the yūjo has transformed into the bodhisattva Fugen rising into the sky westward riding on a white elephant, which is known as the image of Fugen. This use of
the chorus in the final scene effectively reinforces the transformed image of the yūjo because there is no outward change in her appearance on the stage. The audience, prompted by the chorus, must visualize the yūjo's transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen. In this way, the images of the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen are bound together as one.

2.2 Setsuwa and the Nō Play Eguchi

_Eguchi_ was based on source materials coming from two legends found in short narratives, or setsuwa. One episode is about the poetic exchange between a yūjo named Tae and the priest Saigyō. The other is about the Venerable Shōkū (Shōkū Shōnin), who witnessed a yūjo's transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen. Both of these episodes appear in several setsuwa collections, although the stories vary to some degree. This variance is in the nature of setsuwa, a point that will be addressed below.

One of the most important characteristics of setsuwa is its oral roots. The dynamic relationship between a storyteller and an audience is reflected in the diversity of setsuwa; based on the same source material, some setsuwa developed into more
dramatic tales as seen in a tale in Senjūshō, while others did not
deviate from the original source material very much as seen in a
tale in Jikkinshō. This is discussed below in the sections, 2.4 and
2.5. The genre of setsuwa has been defined in English in a variety
of ways. In the Dictionary of Oriental Languages setsuwa is
described as “[tale literature], a genre of medieval Japanese
anecdotal writing in the oral tradition...” Edward Putzar, in his
translation of Nihon bungaku, edited by Hisamatsu Sen’ichi,
defines setsuwa as “brief stories.” He furthermore claims that
setsuwa can be defined as “folk literature, or folk stories.”5 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.6 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.”7 Although the purposes of setsuwa vary, many setsuwa
have a religious or moral message.

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The tradition of *bukkyō setsuwa* began in the Heian Period (794-1185). At that time, many people were interested in learning what would make salvation possible. Later, during the medieval period, some of this interest shifted to learning about *kokoro no arikata*, or the "state of mind" necessary to reach salvation.\(^8\) 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. This explains how a *yūjo* could be a believable candidate for salvation. Because of their sufferings, *yūjo* were often depicted in literature and their sacred image originated from the connection with religious rituals, as discussed in Chapter One. This explains why they often appeared in medieval *setsuwa* such as the two source *setsuwa* for *Eguchi*.

The reasons behind the popularity of *yūjo* as characters in *setsuwa* were not only that *yūjo* were good candidates for salvation, but also that *yūjo* were perfect figures into which a bodhisattva could transform. According to *Nihon shūkyō jiten*, originally a bodhisattva referred to a person who makes efforts in order to reach enlightenment. Consequently, it came to indicate those who are going to become a Buddha.\(^9\) What made a *yūjo*
perfect as a manifestation of a bodhisattva was her profession. Yūjo were in a situation in which they met a great number and all kinds of people. Michele Marra also points this out: “the paradigm of the shaman/courtesan/bodhisattva became a common topic in one strain of the anecdotal literature of the Japanese Middle Ages that asked the courtesan to play the role of mouthpiece for the Buddha.” In this case, a yūjo served as a figurative means for priests to engage in their dialogue with the sacred. Not only because of their suffering, but also because of their beauty and accomplishment in performance art, the image of the yūjo fit perfectly as a protagonist of setsuwa to attract people’s attention and to leave a lasting impression.

Marra also notes the influence of setsuwa in the medieval period:

Figures of the Japanese cultural tradition who are known to us today for their accomplishment in religion or the literary arts were known to the Japanese of the Middle Ages as fictional heroes of Buddhist tales (setsuwa), who, like the holy man Shōkū Shōnin, were idealized for their alleged possession of transcendental powers. In the popular imagination, the recluse Saigyō was certainly known less for his poetic production than for his encounter at Eguchi with a courtesan who denied him a night’s shelter during a storm.
It is true that the *setsuwa* about Shōkū and Saigyō are in part memorable because of the accomplishments of these men in religion and literary arts, respectively. It is, however, also important to remember that the use of *yūjo* characters contributed to the popularity of the tales about them.

2.3 The Episodes in the Nō *Eguchi* and the *Setsuwa* Collection, *Kojidan*

*Kojidan* (c. 1212 - 1215)\(^{13}\) is believed to have been compiled by Minamoto no Akikane (1160 - 1215). Many stories in *Kojidan* were exact copies from stories in older collections.\(^ {14}\) *Kojidan* consists of six books. The first book is a collection of tales about Emperors; the second, well-known courtiers and court ladies; the third, various priests; the forth, famous warriors and wars; the fifth, temples; and the sixth, miscellaneous stories on topics such as music, education, and sumō wrestling. Like other *setsuwa* collections from the medieval period, *Kojidan* is a nostalgic look back at Heian culture. *Kojidan* emphasizes the traditional values of Heian culture. At the same time, however, *Kojidan* includes some tales about warriors, Buddhist and Shinto tales, and even amorous
accounts of courtiers. The tales in *Kojidan* mainly advocate religious belief and teach morals through strong plots.

This episode about the Venerable Shōkū is from Book Three in *Kojidan*:

The Venerable Shosha (Shōkū) wished to see the living Bodhisattva Fugen. There was a divine message: “If you wish to see the living Bodhisattva Fugen, go and see the chief yūjo at Kanzaki.” Then happily Shōkū went to Kanzaki. When he visited her brothel, it was in the middle of the dance performance for the court servants who came from the capital. The chief yūjo was sitting in the center and playing the hand drum for the ranbyōshi dance.

In this tale Shōkū is called Shosha, which is the name of the place where he was leading his ascetic life. The narrator does not explain the background of the Venerable Shōkū, but he was portrayed as a saint because his rokkon, or six sense organs, were free from any worldly distractions, as his actions in this brief tale prove.

He arrived in Kanzaki, which was well-known for its brothels such as those at the towns of Eguchi and Muro. While he was listening to the imayō singing and watching the chief yūjo perform, he experienced a miracle:

The words of the imayō’s song were: “On the River Mitarashi in Murozumi, Suhō, the rippling waves rise, though the winds do not blow.” Then, Shōkū sensed a
miracle. While he closed his eyes with folded palms, he saw the chief yūjo as the living bodhisattva Fugen riding on a white elephant and emitting light from the middle of her forehead to shine for priests and laymen. He also heard the bodhisattva Fugen speaking in a subtle voice: "On the ocean of the Realm of True Enlightenment, the winds of the Five Objects of Cognition and the Six Desires never blow, yet, waves of Absolute Reality in the form of illusion rise each day." Hearing that, the Venerable Shōkū felt so reverent that he was moved to tears. However, when he opened his eyes, he saw the chief yūjo playing the drum and singing: "...in Murozumi, Suhō..." He closed his eyes again and he saw the Bodhisattva again speaking the words of the Buddha.

The passage that I have underlined is almost exactly the same word for word as that found in the Nō play Eguchi. Since this setsuwa was compiled more than a hundred years before Zeami's lifetime, it is likely that Zeami borrowed this passage. As Abe Yasurō points out, the miracle of the yūjo's transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen seems to have made a strong impression on the listeners and readers of this tale. When he closed his eyes, he saw the holy bodhisattva Fugen and heard the holy Buddhist teaching. When he opened his eyes, he saw the yūjo's worldly figure and heard her imayō singing. This contrast between holiness and worldliness, reality and illusion, must have appealed to many people; otherwise there would not have been so many similar tales.
in other *setsuwa* collections. After this miracle occurred the Venerable Shōkū left the brothel. The story concludes:

The Venerable Shōkū bowed several times to show his respect and left. The *yūjo* then stood up all of a sudden and ran after the Venerable Shōkū until she reached a deserted place. She said “You must not tell anyone.” Then after saying that she passed away. At that time, they said that the air was filled with the smell of an easy and peaceful death. The sudden death of the chief *yūjo*, however, spoiled the pleasure of the party.24

In this story, the *yūjo’s* voice is not really heard. All she says is “you must not tell anyone,” meaning that the Venerable Shōkū should not tell anyone that he saw the living bodhisattva Fugen in the form of a *yūjo*. The *yūjo’s* death is mentioned merely as an incident that spoiled the pleasure of the party, and then the story ends. This understated ending contrasts with the Venerable Shōkū’s spiritual experience and with the pleasure of the party. Shōkū and the partygoers see the same *yūjo* and hear the same *imayō*, but perceive them in different ways. This seems to emphasize the difference between priests and laymen, which is also mentioned earlier in the tale when the narrator describes the light coming from the bodhisattva: “...he saw the chief *yūjo* as the living bodhisattva Fugen riding on a white elephant and emitting light from the middle of her forehead to shine on priests and laymen.” In this context, priests are those who are able to see
coexisting identities of the yūjo simultaneously as the bodhisattva Fugen, and laymen are those who only perceive the distinction between the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen. This consubstantial idea parallels the implication of the shidai, or the chanting in the beginning of the play, in the Nō play Eguchi. The implication of the shidai is mentioned above in the section 2.1 and the consubstantial idea is discussed in detail in the section 3.6 in Chapter Three below.

This tale in Kojidan is considerably shorter than the tale in the setsuwa entitled Senjūshō, about which more will be said below. Unlike Senjūshō, the narrator of setsuwa in the Kojidan does not explain the feelings of the characters. There is no empathy in the story, as it is told in Kojidan. Since the plot of this Kojidan setsuwa is interesting, but not fully developed, it is easy to understand why many subsequent tales expanded upon it.

2.4 The Episodes in the Nō Play Eguchi and the Setsuwa Collection, Senjūshō

The episode about the Venerable Shōkū also appears in the setsuwa collection Senjūshō under the title, Shōkū Shōnin hosshin narabi ni yūjo o ogamu koto (the story about the Venerable
Shōkū’s religious awakening and his witness of the yūjo with respect. The other source episode for Eguchi appears in Senjūshō under the title, Eguchi no yūjo no uta no koto (the story about the poem that the yūjo in Eguchi composed).

Until the end of the 19th century, scholars believed Senjūshō (c. 1250) to have been written by Saigyō. Subsequent years of study of the texts have provided evidence that Senjūshō could have been completed by one person or by several people writing in the style of Saigyō. The claim that not all of the text was written by Saigyō is based on the fact that some of the events mentioned in Senjūshō occurred after his death in 1190. Even if Saigyō himself wrote some of the setsuwa in the collection, it is certain that the final form of Senjūshō was revised later by others, presumably priests.

One of the characteristics of the setsuwa in Senjūshō is the frequent use of poetic expressions and expressions that indicate religious awakening such as kokoro no sumu, literally “clear one’s mind” or “reach enlightenment.” And not surprisingly, one of the dominant themes of the setsuwa in Senjūshō is whether a protagonist reaches enlightenment. The two episodes in Eguchi share these characteristics. Both the Venerable Shōkū in Senjūshō and the traveling priest in Zeami’s Eguchi were able to witness a
manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen after they reached enlightenment. The stories about Saigyō and a yūjo in both Senjūshō and Eguchi were developed based on the poetic exchange between Saigyō and the yūjo.

The summary at the beginning of the setsuwa about the Venerable Shōkū (6: 10) in Senjūshō is as follows:²⁹

A long time ago, there was a saint called Shōkū who lived at a mountain temple named Shosha in the province of Harima.³⁰ When he was younger (and called Chūta no kosaburō), he served a dainagon, or a chief councilor of a province as a servant. This dainagon had a precious ink stone. One day, out of curiosity, Chūta sneaked in to see the inkstone. When he heard someone coming, he was upset and dropped the inkstone. The inkstone was broken into two. Feeling sorry for Chūta, the 10 year-old son of the dainagon offered to say that he did it, so that his father would forgive the mistake. His father, however, did not forgive the mistake because the inkstone was so important to him. He cut off his son’s head. Chūta was awfully sorry for the son. That is how he came to renounce the world and to pray for the son.³¹

This beginning part of the story effectively indicates the strong motivation for the young Chūta’s belief in the Lotus Sutra.

Believing in salvation for the son and wishing to cleanse himself of his own sin, Chūta took the tonsure and named himself Shōkū. It seems that the more earnest he was in his belief, the stronger his desire became to see the proof of his achievement: to see the
living bodhisattva Fugen. The story of the bodhisattva Fugen appears in the section 28 of chapter eight of the *Lotus Sutra.* The following are selected passages of the episode in *Senjūshō* in which Shōkū was able to see the living bodhisattva Fugen, just as the traveling priest was able to do in *Eguchi:* 

Realizing the impermanence of this world, Shōkū often shed tears. He prayed for the son of the dainagon, believing in salvation for him who had borne the blame for him [Shōkū].

Thanks to his reading of the *Lotus Sutra,* his six sense organs had become free from any attachment, yet he was unable to see the living Bodhisattva Fugen. He continued praying for seven days and at dawn on the seventh day, he received a divine message; “Go and see the chief yūjo at Muro with a reverent attitude. She is the true Bodhisattva Fugen.”

He saw the chief yūjo. She offered him sake and began dancing. When he closed his eyes, he was able to see the bodhisattva Fugen riding on a white elephant, chanting: “On the ocean of the Reality of Enlightenment, the moonlight of the gentle Bodhisattva Fugen shines gently...” When he opened his eyes, however, he saw the yūjo again, chanting: “...the waves rise.”

While she spent time as a yūjo, no one ever thought that she was the living Bodhisattva Fugen. Everyone thought she was just a woman. How blessed it is that she is the true living Bodhisattva.

How sad it is that while facing the Bodhisattva, we only see a yūjo, and while listening to the Lotus Sutra, we only hear the sounds of rippling waves.

This yūjo soon passed away, but it would have been a blessing for her that the Venerable Shōkū was able to see her as a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen.

This story is from *Shūishō.* Because this episode is so significant, I decided to write it down. *If you reach*
spiritual awakening, you will learn that the sounds of winds and waves all become the holy Lotus Sutra and the chant of a yūjo becomes the words of the Buddhist teachings.

The underlined phrases above directly correspond to passages in Eguchi:

...rokkon shōjō o e tamai ni keri.
"...his six sense organs have been free from any attachment..."

...rokujin no kyō ni samayoi, rokkon no tumi o tsukuru koto mo...
"Indeed, as all human beings wander lost in the realm of the six objects of cognition, they commit the sins of the six sense organs."

In the setsuwa in Senjūshō, the term "six sense organs" is used in pointing out how remarkable Venerable Shōkū was as a person able to have his six sense organs free from any attachments, whereas in Eguchi, the "same six organs" is used in telling why people are not able to reach enlightenment. Although the term is used to a different end in either work, both uses indicate that committing sins of the six organs prevents people from reaching enlightenment, and that only those who are able to free their six organs from attachment can experience religious awakening.

The phrases "On the ocean of the Reality of Enlightenment, ...the waves rise..." and "the sounds of winds and waves all become
the holy ‘Lotus Sutra’” also correspond to passages in Eguchi: “On the ocean of jissō muro, or the Reality of Enlightenment, the winds of the Five Objects of Cognition and the Six Desires never blow, yet waves of Absolute Reality in the form of illusion rise each day...”

In Senjūshō, the Buddhist term “hosshō” is used, while in Eguchi, it is “jissō.” Both of these Buddhist terms, however, mean “reality” or “truth.” In Senjūshō, the phrase, “on the ocean of the Reality of Enlightenment...” is the voice of the bodhisattva Fugen, which the Venerable Shōkū was able to hear as he closed his eyes, and “...the waves rise...” is the voice of the yūjo, which Shōkū heard as he opened his eyes. In Eguchi, the expressions used as the voice of the bodhisattva Fugen and the expressions used in the voice of the yūjo were both combined. That is, on the surface, this sounds like a description of a miracle in nature: “on the ocean, the winds never blow, yet waves rise each day...,” in depth, however, it is a metaphorical expression of the Buddhist idea: the reality of all things in the universe (jissō) is the state of enlightenment (muro), in which there will not be the Five Objects of Cognition (gojin) or the Six Desires (rokuyoku). Yet when the absolute reality
(shinnyo) appears in various forms according to karma (zuien), illusion (mayoi) will occur....

According to Nihon kokugo daijiten kankōkai (The Association for the Publication of the Unabridged Dictionary of the Japanese Language), the Buddhist term hosshō “reality or truth of all things” is often associated with the ocean in order to indicate the immeasurable breadth and depth of its meaning.” 37 The Venerable Shōkū’s miracle depicted in the setsuwa in Senjūshō, in which he hears the voice of the bodhisattva Fugen as the yūjo chants, is technically reproduced with the support of the same kind of illusive context in Eguchi. That is, the audience or the readers of the setsuwa were drawn into Shōkū’s experience of the miracle, as if they themselves could imagine the voice of Fugen as they listened to the yūjo’s chanting. The audience of Eguchi are also drawn into a similar illusion: they could hear Buddhist teaching as they listened to the description of natural phenomena.

The lines [...yūjo to miru koto o... ] “we only see a yūjo” [...sazanami no kotoba to omoukoto o..] “we only hear the sounds of rippling waves” also correspond to the expressions used in Eguchi: “That is because they are misguided by what they see and what they hear.” The passages in both Senjūshō and Eguchi indicate that in order to see the true figure and hear the true voice,
your rokkon “six sense organs” must be free from any attachment. Otherwise, you will be misguided by the surface of what you see and hear.

In the above passage from Senjūshō, the author mentions that this story is in Shūishō. Identifying the source material like this is, as indicated in Setsuwa bungaku hikkei (A handbook of setsuwa literature), often seen in the stories in Senjūshō. Identifying the source material confirms the significance of the story as well as lending it credence. Identifying honzetsu, or source materials, is in fact, one of the significant stylistic characteristics of all medieval art and literature.38 The story in Senjūshō concludes like this:39

How pitiful! I wish I could reach a bit of enlightenment. I cannot help thinking how stupid they are who still seem to be attached to this world... We all die and go somewhere. Somewhere we always stay. We are born, not knowing the beginnings of our life. We die, not knowing the ending of our life. The end of the Sanzu, or Styx40 is not even our settlement, wherever we stay is all just a temporary lodging. It is just like a football being kicked up and down in the air, or a wheeled vehicle going round in a circle in a yard. How stupid it is that we cling to this short life in this temporary lodging, not wishing to accept the ultimate end, that is, to reach enlightenment.

The expression kari no yado, “a temporary lodging,” is also used in Eguchi as the theme of the poetic exchange. The other underlined
expression: *a wheeled vehicle goes round in a circle in a yard (...,kuruma no niwa ni meguru...) also appears in the kuri section of Eguchi. This expression is used in Rokudō kōshiki (Hymn of the Six Paths) as well.

What is significant about this episode is the narrator’s condescending air toward the yūjo as well as toward women in general. This writer’s contemptuous attitude toward women is expressed clearly: “while she spent time as a yūjo, no one ever thought that she was the living Bodhisattva Fugen. Everyone thought she was just a woman. (Tada nabete no onna koso omohikeme.)” This condescension toward the yūjo also indicates condescension toward this world, as in the following passage: “How sad it is that while facing the Bodhisattva, we only see a yūjo, and while listening to the Lotus Sutra, we only hear the sounds of rippling waves.” In this analogy, yūjo is equated with the insignificant sounds of rippling waves, which also implies the narrator’s condescending attitude toward this world.

The episode about the poetic exchange between Saigyō and the yūjo referred to in Eguchi also appears in Senjūshō (9: 8). The following is a quotation of the episode:

It was around the 20th day of the ninth month, when I was passing through a place called Eguchi... Looking at houses by the river, where yūjo there seemed concerned about the travelers’ boats coming and going,
I was thinking how pitiful they were. Meanwhile there was an early shower, which could not wait for winter, and it was getting late. I stopped by at a humble brothel to ask for temporary shelter from the rain. The mistress of the brothel seemed to begrudge this. [His poem]:

\[\text{yo no naka o itoukoto koso katakarame} \]
\[\text{kari no yado o oshimu kimi kana} \]

It would be hard enough, indeed, to renounce this world,  
But would you be the one to begrudge me even a temporary lodging?

Then, the mistress apologized.

\[\text{ie o izuru hito to shi mireba kari no yado ni} \]
\[\text{kokoro o tomu na to omou bakari zo} \]

Understanding that you are  
a person who has renounced the world,  
My only thought is that you  
"do not set your heart upon such a temporary lodging."

Hearing that you were  
a person who had renounced this world,  
All I thought was  
"Do not set your heart upon such a temporary lodging."

She replied and let me in right away. Although I first thought that it was going to be a temporary shelter
while I waited for the rain to stop, I decided to stay overnight because of this interesting exchange of poems with her.

This poetic exchange is also seen in the play *Eguchi*. In the story in *Senjūshō*, it is obvious that the narrator is speaking as Saigyō, and Saigyō speaks of *yūjo* with a superior air. He tells us that he feels pity for them. He describes the mistress' house as “*keshikaru shizuga fuseya,*” literally “a humble house of the lower classes.” In his poem, he suggests that he is far superior to her, saying that because of the difficulties he is going through he deserves a temporary lodging. He even says that ...*aruji no yūjo uchi wabite...* “the mistress of the brothel did apologize.” This statement confirms his feeling of superiority to the *yūjo* insofar as she was merely explaining the true meaning of her reluctance to let him stay at her house. However, there is no apologetic tone in her poem.

This poetic exchange was considered to be taken from *Sankashū*, Saigyō’s personal poetry collection. *Sankashū* and this poetic exchange will be discussed in detail in section 2.6 below. In *Senjūshō*, Saigyō introduces this *yūjo* as follows: 42

This mistress seems about 40 years old... She says “When I was still very young, I became a *yūjo*. Although I have been involved in this business for years, I feel that I am still immature. *Because women are*
considered to be sinful and I have been involved in even this business, I am concerned about sins from my previous life. For the last two or three years, I have been so concerned about it because I am getting old...”

The underlined part (onna wa koto ni tsumi fukaki to uketamawaru ni, kono furumai o sae shihaberu koto geni saki no yo no shukushū no hodo omoi shirarete...) corresponds to the passage in Eguchi; (...zaigō kukai mi to umare, koto ni tameshi sukunaki kawatake no nagare no onona to naru, saki no yono mukui made, omoiyau koso kanashi kere) “...we were born as sinners and became women drifters like a wrack of riverside bamboo, which is most rare. Even about sins in our previous lives, it is pitiful to be concerned.” Both passages in Senjūshō and Eguchi indicate that the yūjo is ashamed of being a yūjo, since women are considered sinful and yūjo even worse.\(^{43}\)

Then Saigyō quotes what the yūjo told him:\(^{44}\)

...I often shed tears, wondering how long I will be around in this fleeting world because I feel that there is nothing that I can do...,” she sobbed. Listening to her, I felt so moved and grateful that I hesitated to squeeze my wet black sleeves. Although I was reluctant to leave her, I said good-bye at dawn, promising her that I would come back again.

After this, the tone of the narrator’s voice changes:\(^{45}\)
On my way back, thinking that [what she said] was so precious, I shed tears several times... This is what must be believed: “In literature counter to the truth, decorative words are used tactically and what is said is without real sense, but literature can offer an opportunity to appreciate Buddhist teaching.” In my humble poem I said to the yūjo “you would even cling to a temporary lodging” while mixing my own situation, as a person who has renounced this world, with hers. This yūjo, however, got at the transience of this world when she came back with her “temporary lodging.” If this means what I think it does, in her I have met a person of some substance...

“In literature counter to the truth, decorative words are used tactically and what is said is without real sense” suggests the idea called kyōgen kigyo (kyōgen kigo), which claims that this is the nature of literature. Being impressed by the Buddhist implication in the yūjo’s poem, Saigyō, however, admires literature as language arts, which indicate Buddhist teaching. Literature as “an opportunity to appreciate Buddhist teaching” is a translation of bungei soku buppō, or “language arts-as-Buddhist teaching.” The compiler of Ryōjinhishō, Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, emphasizes this idea in chapter ten of Ryōjinhishō kōdenshū. Since yūjo were known for their skill as imals singers, it is most likely that the narrator used this idea to connect the yūjo, the poetic exchange, and Saigyō.
This part of the story shows that Saigyō appreciated the true significance of the yūjo’s poem and the value of his encounter with her. In the play Eguchi, however, the traveling priest, not knowing what was behind this poetic exchange, accuses the yūjo of inhospitality. This provides the motivation for the ghost of the Lady of Eguchi to appear and explain what was behind the poetic exchange. It might make more sense, in viewing the play, not to mistake the traveling priest for Saigyō or someone like him, considering the fact that this part of the setsuwa indicates that the narrator, who is supposed to be Saigyō, realized the yūjo’s true intention and even thanked her for giving him the opportunity to meet someone significant like her.

Saigyō explains that he has not been able to see her again, although he promised to do so. So he asks someone to deliver his poem and the yūjo replies:47

“Do not set your heart upon this temporary world.”
That’s what I heard in your poem, which I cannot forget...

Then she replied:
“Cannot forget...”
As soon as I heard that,
my sleeves got wet.
I even hate myself in this world of dreams.
She added:
(I have changed my appearance. [“Changing appearance” here indicates that she took the tonsure.]
However, **my heart being cold....**)

Then she composed a poem:

> Although I put down my hair
> and dyed my clothes,
> **what is still cold is my heart.**

Reading this, I sobbed so hard that I could not hold my tears with my sleeves. She was truly a **yūjo** of substance.

Such a **yūjo** as she would most likely be loved by someone equal to her. Not clinging to such an idea, she concentrates on praying for her life in the other world... Even after she changed her appearance, I was wishing to see her. After she changed her appearance, however, I heard that she moved out of Eguchi and finally I gave it up. I am so eager to know how she died.

In her reply, she mentions twice (the underlined parts) that **“kokoro wa tsurenakute nan” and “tsurenaki wa kokoro nari,”** meaning that she still has a cold heart, though she has entered a religious life. These expressions also imply that she thinks that she is still far from reaching enlightenment. Keeping these expressions that the yūjo used in the tale in Senjūshō in mind, it is interesting that in *Eguchi*, the traveling priest mentions **“aruji no kokoro nakarikere ba...”** (lacking a [compassionate] heart, the mistress of the house....) when remembering the yūjo, who turned down Priest Saigyō’s request for a temporary lodging.
At the end of the story, Saigyō tells us that he feels that his mind is clear and he sheds tears, as is typical for endings to setsuwa in Senjūshō. This may indicate that Saigyō felt so sympathetic to her because he himself knew how difficult it was to renounce the world and reach enlightenment.

2.5 The Episodes in the Nō play Eguchi and the Setsuwa Collection, Jikkinshō

Jikkinshō ("Notes on Ten Maxims") is believed to have been completed in 1252, as mentioned at the end of the introduction of the collection. The authorship of Jikkinshō is debatable. There are two theories: one claims that it was written by the lay priest, Rokuhara Jirōzaemon, and the other by Sugawara no Tamenaga. Kojidan as well as other setsuwa collections are considered to be source materials for Jikkinshō. One of the significant characteristics of setsuwa in Jikkinshō is their emphasis on the aristocratic culture of the Heian Period (794-1185). Like Senjūshō, the writer or narrator of Jikkinshō also adds his comments on the tales. In Jikkinshō, the episode about the poetic exchange between Saigyō and a yūjo is not recorded. Only the tale about the Venerable Shōkū is found. The first half of the tale in Jikkinshō is almost an exact copy of the tale in Kojidan. While the
tale in *Kojidan* ends by saying “the sudden death of the chief *yūjo*, however, spoiled the pleasure of the party,” the tale in *Jikkinshō* continues:\(^{51}\)

...and they grieved over her death so deeply that they wept endlessly. Feeling even sadder, the Venerable Shōkū went back home. Since that mistress was a *yūjo*, who would have known that she was a manifestation of a bodhisattva?...

Although there are no comments by the narrator in *Kojidan*, the narrator of *Jikkinshō* describes more of the feelings of the characters in the tale. The tale continues, and two other priests, Eshin and Danna, appear and question the Venerable Shōkū. Shōkū gives answers that demonstrate his enlightenment, for which he is praised by them.

Since the beginning of this tale is an almost exact copy of the one in *Kojidan*, it is probable that this tale is one among several in *Jikkinshō* that are based on the tale in *Kojidan*.

2.6 The Nō play *Eguchi* and the Historical Saigyō

Saigyō was born in 1118 with the name Satō Norikiyo, the son of a warrior family that was a branch of the flourishing Fujiwara clan. After entering the priesthood in 1140, he made a number of trips around the country to visit temples and shrines.\(^{52}\)
As Burton Watson mentions in the introduction of his translation of *Saigyō: Poems of a Mountain Home*, “his main aim in quitting secular life, at least initially, may simply have been to create for himself an atmosphere of quiet in which his poetic talents could mature and flourish most effectively,” Saigyō devoted himself to composing poetry during his priesthood.\(^3\)

*Sankashū*, the principal collection of his poetry, is believed to have been completed sometime between 1168, when Saigyō left for his trip to Shikoku, and 1180 when he moved to Ise.\(^4\) It contains about 1,552 poems\(^5\) Several of them were later included in the *Shinkokin wakashū* (1205), the imperial anthology of poetry ordered by the Retired Emperor Go-Toba.

The poetic exchange between Saigyō and a *yūjo* is recorded in both *Sankashū* and *Shinkokinshū*. The following are the poems by Saigyō and the *yūjo* in *Sankashū* (Miscellaneous, 752 and 753).\(^6\)

Tennōji he mairi kera ni, ame no furi kereba, Eguchi to mōsu tokoro ni yado o kari-keru ni, kashi zari kereba,...

Yo no naka o  
itofu made koso  
katakara me  
kari no yadori o  
oshi mu kimi ka na

Since I was caught in a shower on the way to Tennōji Temple, I asked for shelter at a place called Eguchi. Because I was turned down, [I composed the following poem]:

76
It would be hard enough, indeed,  
to reach the point of renouncing this world,  
But would you be the one to begrudge me even  
a temporary lodging?

Ie o iduru  
hito to shi kikeba  
kari no yado  
kokoro tomu na to  
omofu bakari zo  

Hearing that you are  
a person who has renounced the world,  
My only thought is that you  
“do not set your heart upon  
such a temporary lodging.”

The first underlined phrase, ie o iduru, can mean “leaving home,”  
but also denotes “renouncing this world,” for example by taking  
the tonsure. The term shukke, or suke, (renouncing the world) in  
written with two Chinese characters for ie (home) and idu (leave).  
Because renouncing the world really means leaving your home to  
enter religious life as a Buddhist monk, it makes sense that ie o  
iduru refers to renouncing the world in the poem composed by  
the yūjo.
The second underlined phrase, *kari no yado*, can mean "borrowed lodging," but also implies a temporary one. This is a key phrase for its conventionalized blend of two senses: "do not cling to the idea of a borrowed lodging" and "do not cling to a temporary lodging." Combining these double meanings in her poem, one can interpret this poem to mean "because I heard that you were a person who left home, ‘do not cling to the idea of borrowing a lodging,’ that is just what I thought.” The tone of the poem is more scornful and ironic than explanatory, similar to the same poem in *Senjūshō* above. The *yūjo* expresses herself in a simple way with some word play on the surface, while Saigyō’s poem has a superior tone.57 Saigyō’s poem implies “a temporary world” by using the phrase *kari no yado*, “temporary lodging”. As a Buddhist term, the phrase *kari no yado* was often used to refer to the impermanence of this world, as also seen in the above-mentioned tale about the Venerable Shōkū in *Senjūshō*. Saigyō, on the surface, castigates her for not letting him into her brothel. In using the idea of “a temporary lodging,” Saigyō suggests she is a layperson who cannot bring herself to throw off this ‘temporary’ or ‘impermanent’ world, to the extant that she cannot spare him temporary lodging. In order to persuade her to let him in, he thus tries to remind her of her humble status compared to his holy
status. Her reply, on the other hand, reveals the simplicity and vulgarity of his argument. What impressed Saigyō, at least enough to make him decide to include this poetic exchange in his collection, must have been, in part, her understanding of his Buddhist metaphoric expressions. Her reply indicates a thorough appreciation of Buddhist teaching: because he has renounced the world, she did not think that he should cling to “a temporary lodging,” especially since the lodging in question is a brothel, which a truly holy person ought to avoid at all costs. Thus, she turns Saigyō’s emphasis on his holy status against him and challenges his logic in a meaningful way.

In the poem listed in Shinkokin wakashū, the underlined phrase, ie o iduru is changed to yo o itofu, and the reply poem is attributed to “Yūjo Tae.” The phrase yo o itofu in the reply poem here corresponds to the phrase yo no naka o itofu in Saigyō’s poem, both of which mean “hate this world.” More interestingly, this phrase could be also interpreted as “distaste for a love,” because “yo no naka” can also connote for “a love relationship.” By using the same phrase as Saigyō’s, Tae’s poem confirms that she has heard that he had renounced the world and also understood that he had no interest in such a worldly matter as a love relationship. Her poem therefore implies that “if you yourself
declare that you are a person who was able to reach the point of not clinging to this world or to a love relationship, why on earth would you desire to cling to the temporary lodging of such a worldly place as a brothel?” Her use of the phrase yo o itofu instead of ie o iduru also points out the weakness of his statement in his poem by repeating what he said. By saying that it is hard not to be attached to this world even to the point that you hate it (itofu made koso), in a way he is admitting his struggle in detaching himself from this world completely. Beginning with Saigyō’s own phrase, Tae’s poem admonishes Saigyō for his attachment to worldly matters still more than the one attributed to Eguchi in Senjūshō.

According to the history of Hōrinzan Jakkōji Temple located in Eguchi-chō, Higashi Yodogawa-ward, Osaka, Tae was the daughter of Taira no Sukemori,60 a son of Shigemori (1138-79) and a grandson of Kiyomori (1118-81), the head of the ruling Taira clan. After the fall of the Taira clan, she fled from the capital to stay with her nursemaid in the village of Eguchi, the latter’s home village. Time went by, but she was still unhappy in her situation. Grieving over her sad fate, finally she became a courtesan. This is what has been recorded in the history of the temple. It is, however, most unlikely that the Tae who exchanged a poem with
Saigyō was a daughter of Sukemori. Saigyō would have been as old as her great grandfather, Kiyomori. However, the fact that this was recorded in the history of this temple, considered a historical site for the Lady of Eguchi, tells us that the elegant image of the yūjo Tae made this legend attractive, if not believable enough to be entered into the record of the history of the temple. Tae's poetic exchange with Saigyō, several setsuwa about this poetic exchange, and the Nō play Eguchi created an image of Tae as a cultivated lady rather than as a humble woman, and connected her image with that of a daughter from the prominent Taira clan in the twelfth century.

The poetic exchange recorded in Shinkokin wakashū is the same as the exchange in the play Eguchi. Therefore it is likely that the poetic exchange in Eguchi was taken from Shinkokin wakashū, or a source influenced by that work, rather than from Sankashū.

2.7 Source Materials for the Nō play Eguchi

Along with the Kojidan, Senjushō, and Jikkinshō collections, the episode about the Venerable Shōkū is found in the setsuwa collections entitled Shiju hyakuinnenshū (1257),
Sangoku denki (1394?, 1407-1408?, 1408?, 1431?, 1446?),\textsuperscript{65} and Hokkekyō jikidanshō (completed by 1540).

In Sangoku denki, both the episode about the poetic exchange between Saigyō and a yūjo (14: 6) and the one about the Venerable Shōkū are listed in succession.\textsuperscript{66} Yabuta Kiichirō argues that the Nō play Eguchi is based on Sangoku denki, rather than on Kojidan or Jikkinshō, because of the close similarity to both tales, though he admits the possibility that this setsuwa could be a copy of the play.\textsuperscript{67} As Nishimura Satoru claims, however, it seems reasonable to suggest that the setsuwa in Sangoku denki and Hokkekyō jikidanshō were both influenced by the Nō play Eguchi in which two setsuwa about a different yūjo were first combined. These two tales were found in older sources such as Kojidan, Jikkinshō, or Senjūshō.\textsuperscript{68} There is, for example, evidence that Sangoku denki used the setsuwa in Senjūshō as source material: in Sangoku denki, the extended poetic exchange found in the setsuwa in Senjūshō is used. In Sangoku denki, the voice of Fugen that Shōkū hears says "hosshō muro...," or "the reality of enlightenment..." as it does in Senjūshō. As noted above, Senjūshō also records both tales.\textsuperscript{69}

Another reason why it is difficult to conclude that Eguchi is based on Sangoku denki is because the completed date of this
setsuwa collection is debatable. If it had been completed in 1446, there would have been no chance for Zeami to have known it before his death (c. 1443). It therefore makes more sense to think that the setsuwa in Sangoku denki was modeled after the setsuwa in older sources like Senjūshō, and it is probable that the tales in Sangoku denki were influenced by the Nō play Eguchi. This explains the similarity of the tales in Sangoku denki and Eguchi.

Taguchi also points out that the setsuwa in Hokkekyō jikidanshō has a passage similar to the one found in Eguchi, but it is also possible that the author of Hokkekyō jikidanshō, Eishin, already knew about the Nō play Eguchi and wrote the setsuwa based on it.70

Because of the close similarity of the tale in Jikkinshō (1252) to the one in Kojidan (1212-15), it seems that the tale in Jikkinshō must have derived from the tale in Kojidan. The place where Shōkū saw the yūjo is, for example, Kanzaki, and the voice of Fugen that Shōkū hears says “jissō muro...,” or “the reality of enlightenment...” in both tales.

In the tale in Shiju hyakuinnenshū (1257), the yūjo is in Kanzaki, as in Kojidan, but Fugen’s words are “hosshō muro,” which is at variance with Kojidan, Jikkinshō, and Eguchi. The rest of the story is very close to the tale in Kojidan. The tale in Shiju
hyakuinnenshū is thus almost like a copy of the short narrative in Kojidan.

Given that exact phrases in the tale about the Venerable Shōkū in Kojidan are found in Eguchi, and that Kojidan was an established setsuwa collection long before Zeami’s day, it is possible that in Zeami’s revision the phrases in Eguchi were taken from Kojidan, or possibly Jikkinshō. Because the poetic exchange in Eguchi is exactly the same as the exchange recorded in Shinkokin wakashū, the poetic exchange in Eguchi is believed to have been taken from Shinkokin wakashū.

As far as the plot of Eguchi is concerned, Zeami probably borrowed the idea from the tales in Senjūshō, which were more developed than the similar tale in Kojidan or Jikkinshō. Zeami’s idea of combining the two different tales about yūjo might have also originated from the two tales recorded in Senjūshō. The cultivated and holy image of the yūjo presented in the tale about the poetic exchange in Senjūshō, for example, reminds us of the protagonist yūjo of Eguchi. The miracle of the Venerable Shōkū’s witnessing the bodhisattva Fugen in the form of a yūjo in the tale in Senjūshō also occurs in the final scene of Eguchi.71

The great contribution of Zeami in his revision of Eguchi is that he gave a real voice to the yūjo who had previously appeared
in the *setsuwa* collections. In the variant tales about the Venerable Shōkū, the *yūjo* does not have any voice. She is portrayed simply as the bodhisattva Fugen in disguise. When his mission is completed, she is abandoned and dies.

The account of the poetic exchange in *Senjūshō* presents the *yūjo* with a more developed character; she reveals her weakness, her struggle, and her inability to reach enlightenment in her conversation with Saigyō. Zeami also emphasizes this suffering of the *yūjo* in *Eguchi*. By doing so, Zeami fully develops the *yūjo* as a character in his play. That is why the *yūjo* in *Eguchi* leaves a deep impression on the audience, while the *yūjo* in the tales in the various *setsuwa* collections is remembered just as a *yūjo*, or at best, as the bodhisattva Fugen in disguise.

Another important contribution of Zeami is his innovation in combining the two source *setsuwa*. The *yūjo* Tae, who exchanged poems with Saigyō, is originally a different *yūjo* from the one who was believed to be the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. The tale about the *yūjo* Tae’s poetic exchange with Saigyō and the tale about the Venerable Shōkū were both well known, since both of the tales and the poetic exchange were recorded in several different collections. By combining the two well-known tales about a *yūjo*, Zeami further developed a sacred image of a *yūjo*.  

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Given a voice, the yūjo in *Eguchi* is presented as a figure more independent and stronger, as well as more elegant and cultivated, than in any of the other tales. As seen in the play *Eguchi*, only such a fuller character could be believable as a match for Saigyō’s verbal jousting.
1 Koyama and Satō, Yōkyokushū 1, 532-533.

2 Yokomichi and Omote, Yōkyokushū 1. My analysis is based on the version of Eguchi in this text.

3 Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira, ed., 56.


7 The nature of bukkyō setsuwa is explained in detail in Kikuchi Ryōichi, Chūsei setsuwa no kenkyū (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1972), 21-60.


10 Nishimura Satoru, “Yūjo no honji: Eguchi shudairon o megutte,” Kanazawa Daigaku Kokugo kokubun 14 (1989): 37. Nishimura points out that this is the reason behind the belief that Eguchi was the manifestation of the Bodhisattva Fugen.


12 Marra, 93-94.

Stories such as *Gōdanshō* by Ōe no Masafusa, and *Chūgaishō* and *Fukego* by Fujiwara no Tadazane.

Hinotani *et al.* (104-9) note the contents of *Kojidan* in detail.

Kikuchi (53) mentions that other *setsuwa* such as *Jikkinshō* and *Shasekishū* are similar to *Kojidan*.

The English translation of this episode is based on the modern Japanese translation by Shimura (163-4) The original tale, written in *wakan konkō bun*, or a mixed style of Japanese and Chinese, can be found in “*Kojidan,*” *Kokushi taikei* (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1901), 91.

Kanzaki is the present-day Kunikawabe-gun, Settsu.

“*Kojidan,*” *Kokushi taikei*, 91.

“Jissō muro no taikai ni gojin rokuyoku no kaze ha fukazu tomo zuinen shinryo no nami no tatanu toki nashi.” In Eguchi, the first underlined phrases goes: “fukan domo” and the second underlined word is *hi* (days), instead of *toki* (time).


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"Kojidan," Kokushi taikei, 91.

This story is recorded in book 6, no. 10 in Senjūshō. Senjūshō, ed. Nishio Kōichi, 190-195.

This story is recorded in book 9, no. 8 in Senjūshō. Senjūshō, ed. Nishio Kōichi, 294-298.


Komine (141-2) explains the characteristics of the setsuwa Senjūshō.

All translations are of the Konoe bon version of Senjūshō, edited by Nishio.

Present-day Hyōgo prefecture.

Senjūshō, 190-191.


Senjūshō, 191-194.
Also known as Muotsu or Murō no tsu, a port town once known as a town of brothels in Ibo-gun, Hyōgo prefecture.

Kōjien, ed. Shinmura Izuru, 4th ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1979), 1040. Fujiwara Kintō’s poetry collection has 10 books. The anthology Shūi wakashū (c. 995-1011) was probably compiled by revising this collection and adding more poems.


Ibid.

Hinotani et al., 215.

Senjūshō, 194-195.

There are three paths through which the dead pass: jigokudō where the dead are burned; chikushōdō where they eat each other; gakidō, where the dead are tortured with swords. Kōjien, ed. Shinmura Izuru, 4th ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1979), 923.

Senjūshō, 294-295.

Senjūshō, 295.


Senjūshō, 296.

Senjūshō, 296.


Senjūshō, 297-298.

Hinotani et al., 177-178.


50 Hinotani et al., 179-80 and Komine, 151-152.


54 For a discussion of possible completion dates for Sankashū, see Kubota, 31-35.

55 Gotō Shigeo, ed., Sankashū, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei, 4th ed. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1990), 434. Although at the end of the Yōmei bunko version of Sankashū, Saigyō mentions that it contains 1553 poems, there are only 1552 poems. Kubota (246) also points out the different numbers of Saigyō's poems included in four versions of Sankashū.

56 Gotō, 206-207.

57 Nishimura, 41.

58 Travel, no. 978 and no. 979


60 This temple is also known as Eguchi no kimi dō (A Temple of the Eguchi Lady). Kanze Henshibu, "'Eguchi' o tazune te," in Kanze (October 1973): 25.

61 Book three in Kojidan

62 Book six, no. 10 in Senjūshō

63 Book three, no. 15 in Jikkinshō
64 Book four in *Shiju hyakuinnenshū*

65 Book 14, no. 5 in *Sangoku denki*. Hinotani *et al.* (155) discuss five theories for the date of *Sangoku denki*.


68 Nishimura, 37.

69 Konmoto (87) points out that the tale about the poetic exchange in *Senjūshō* was probably modeled after the poems in *Shinkokin wakashū* or *Sanka shū*, and *Kan'iyū* (dated 1222).

70 Taguchi, 5.

71 Ochiai also points out the similarities in episodes of *Eguchi* and *Senjūshō*. Ochiai, 7.
CHAPTER 3

THE TRANSFORMED IMAGE OF YūJO IN ZEAMI’S EGUCHI

3.1 The Authorship Question

Eguchi\(^1\) is believed to have been given its final form in 1424 by Zeami Motokiyo (c. 1363-c. 1443). However, the authorship of Eguchi is still being debated. Before Zeami’s treatises were first published at the beginning of the twentieth century, Eguchi was believed to have been written either by the priest Ikkyû,\(^2\) or by Zeami’s son-in-law, Konparu Zenchiku (1405-c. 1470).\(^3\) After the discovery of Zeami’s treatises, the composer and writer of Eguchi was believed by most scholars to be Kan’ami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384),\(^4\) since one of Zeami’s treatises, Goon (undated), states that Eguchi yūjo was composed by his father.\(^5\) After study of Zeami’s original manuscript, however, it became clear that only the music of the kuri, sashi, and kuse sections was composed by Kan’ami.\(^6\) As Omote mentions, one theory is that Zeami created the present
form of Eguchi by adopting the music of the kusemai piece composed by his father.7

Kusemai, which was developed from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, is a dance piece in which dancers chant narrative poetry to the accompaniment of drums. Kan’ami is known for integrating this kind of dance piece into Nō plays.8 Omote argues that the kuse, sashi, and kuri sections were an independent kusemai piece. Omote rests this conclusion on two observations. First, those three sections do not correspond coherently to the rest of the sections of the play completed in Zeami’s own hand in 1424. Second, Zeami wrote down the music for all the other sections of the play in detail in his manuscript, except those three sections. Omote claims this proves that the music for those sections already existed. Since his successor, Zenchiku, would have known the music of these sections well, it would not have been necessary for Zeami to write it down.9 A slightly different theory is expounded by Itō Masayoshi, who emphasizes that Zeami largely revised the existing play, including the kuri, sashi, and kuse sections composed by his father, and developed it into the present form of Eguchi.10 Ochiai also mentions that it is possible that Zeami revised an existing text of Eguchi, assuming there was such a text.11 Kitagawa Tadahiko
suggests that if there were a pre-existing play, it would have been in a style of a genzai, or “real-time” Nō, and it was Zeami who reshaped it into its present mugen style. Although it is thus debatable whether the present form of Eguchi is a revised version of the original Eguchi yūjo or a new play written by Zeami adopting his father’s kusemai piece, most scholars acknowledge that the final form of Eguchi was mostly written by Zeami. The name of the play Eguchi is, in fact, used to indicate the final form of the play. Before Zeami’s final revision, it was listed as Eguchi nō.

This discussion over the authorship leads us into the section below analyzing the structure of the Nō play Eguchi, called mugen nō, or dream play, which is believed to have been fully developed by Zeami, and the concept of yūgen, which Zeami also emphasized. In Eguchi, the elegant, subtle, and profound beauty of yūgen highlights the effect of the structure of mugen nō.

3.2 The Nō play Eguchi as Mugen Nō

The protagonist of the Nō play Eguchi is a yūjo, but when she reveals her real identity as the bodhisattva Fugen at the end of the story, the audience or readers realize the protagonist of the play is the bodhisattva Fugen as well. Just as the line between the
bodhisattva Fugen and the yūjo is blurred, so is the line between reality and fantasy in the play. The events in the play are presented like a dream. Witnessing the living bodhisattva Fugen or becoming a bodhisattva as a result of ultimate salvation are in themselves miraculous events. Nō plays which developed such dream-like scenes were later called mugen Nō, or dream plays.

It is believed that this term was first used by Sanari Kentarō in 1926. 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” Nō play, was also invented to contrast with mugen Nō. Contemporary scholars use these two classifications to break the structure of Nō plays into two large groupings. Some plays do not fit neatly into this binary system. Yokomichi and Omote define the basic pattern of mugen Nō as follows:

A traveler is visiting a historical site and encounters the protagonist in the form of a local citizen. This local recounts what happened to another person long ago in the vicinity of the site. After telling this story, the local claims to be the person in the tale, and then disappears.

The protagonist reappears as the person from the story in his or her real identity, and begins to tell the tale. He or she then dances and disappears again as dawn approaches. Later in the morning, it occurs to the traveler that he has dreamed all these events. The
climactic moment of *mugen* Nō occurs during the protagonist's storytelling and dance.\(^{15}\)

This pattern does not apply to all plays, however. The *mugen* Nō *Eguchi* deviates from this pattern in that it is not clear whether what the itinerant priest is experiencing is a dream or not. In either case, it is true that the events of the play are dream-like. In this sense, *Eguchi* has elements of *mugen* Nō.

The more important issue concerning *mugen* Nō, however, is its dramatic structure. The role of the *waki*, or supporting actor, is crucial in *mugen* Nō. The *waki*’s journey to a particular site leads to the *shite*’s appearance and the start of the tale. The way the *shite* tells the story foreshadows the local person’s identity. It is the *waki* who reacts to the climactic foreshadowing, wondering whether the *shite* is somehow related to the person mentioned in the tale. The *waki*’s point of view leads the audience into the story. The *waki* thus functions as a medium between the *shite* and the audience. The *shite*’s message is transmitted to the audience when he, appearing first as a local person, is questioned by the *waki*, so that the story becomes clear to the audience.\(^{16}\) Zeami is believed to have fully developed this structure for Nō.\(^{17}\) Taking this structure
as the defining characteristic of *mugen* Nō, *Eguchi* is a prime example of this type of Nō.

However, *Eguchi* is different from other *mugen* Nō in that the *shite* in the second part of the play has a double identity. The local person reveals only one identity, the ghost of the Lady of Eguchi, at the end of the first act. The second identity, the bodhisattva Fugen, is the true identity of this local person, the Lady of Eguchi. This discussion is based on the interpretation that the bodhisattva Fugen has taken the form of a *yūjo*, the Lady of Eguchi.

In a typical *mugen* Nō, 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. The story concerns 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. In the case of *Eguchi*, the *mae-shite* does not tell the traveler about the Lady of Eguchi's suffering. It is the priest who indicates his own uncertainty caused by his attachment to this world. The priest says: “Since the moon is our old friend from this world, where might the world outside of this one be for recluses?” The priest and his companions confess their attachment to this world; although they have entered
religious lives as Buddhist monks, they are struggling from attachments to the material world. The fact that they still see the moon as their old friend from their secular lives is evidence that they have not fully renounced the world.\textsuperscript{18}

In this sense, \textit{Eguchi} is unique among \textit{mugen} Nō. The usual role of the \textit{waki} and the \textit{shite} are reversed. The \textit{shite}, a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen, appears before the \textit{waki} to guide him to salvation, unlike in other \textit{mugen} Nō in which the \textit{waki} guides the \textit{shite} to salvation.\textsuperscript{19}

In Zeami’s day, Nō was fully established as an art form and was patronized by the shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408),\textsuperscript{20} and the upper classes, though Zeami still continued to perform for popular audiences also. Building on his father’s achievements, Zeami emphasized the expression of refined beauty as the key element of the Nō.\textsuperscript{21} The quality that Zeami sought was \textit{yūgen}, or elegant, subtle, and profound beauty.\textsuperscript{22} To picture the concept of \textit{yūgen}, Ueda Makoto quotes, “Zeami has an apt image to suggest the beauty: ‘a swan with a flower in its bill.’”\textsuperscript{23} Shelley Fenno Quinn also explains the concept of \textit{yūgen} as follows:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Yūgen} is a concept that he (Zeami) borrowed from medieval poetics. It takes on different nuances over time and from one poet to the next, but in all of its permutations it refers to a beauty evoking a sense of depth and mystery only suggested by the object imbued therewith. For Zeami, the term comes close to
\end{quote}
meaning beauty, but a beauty ever steeped in the aforementioned mystery and colored by a gentle and refined grace of comportment reminiscent of the idealized image of the court aristocrat.\textsuperscript{24}

The concept of \textit{yūgen} aptly fits the structure of \textit{mugen} Nō in the case of \textit{Eguchi}. The \textit{mae-shite}'s admonishment of the priest for clinging to worldly matters, her description of the life of a \textit{yūjo} and the impermanence of the world in a metaphorical way, and her allusions to classical poetry contribute to creating an image of a refined person, and foreshadow the revelation of her real identity as a bodhisattva of wisdom. Observing the way the \textit{mae-shite} reasons with the priest, the audience may wonder about the real identity of the \textit{mae-shite}, creating an atmosphere of mystery around her.

Confessing that she is ashamed, the \textit{mae-shite} suggests that she was long ago a courtesan at Eguchi. At this point, the audience believes she must have been the Lady of Eguchi, a courtesan known for her witty poetry. Having the image of this cultivated \textit{yūjo} in mind, the audience is drawn into the story. The \textit{yūjo} furthermore discusses the impermanence of the world in a metaphoric and poetic way. The climax of the play, in which the \textit{yūjo} performs the elegant \textit{jo no mai}, before her transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen, presents the idea of \textit{yūgen} most
graphically. The refined and mysterious image of the protagonist is highlighted in this scene and creates an atmosphere in which the miracle of her transformation occurs. Zeami’s concept of yūgen and the way he presents the yūjo character, thus ennoble the yūjo.

3.3 The Bodhisattva Kannon and a Bodhisattva of Chant and Dance

The reason why it seems most reasonable to suggest that Eguchi is attributed to Zeami is not only because the final form of Eguchi was mostly written by Zeami, but also because Zeami created a new theme in Eguchi by making some significant changes to his original manuscript of the play. The changes made by Zeami are discussed in this section, 3.3, and the effectiveness of those changes in the section below, 3.4.

The following passage is from the beginning of the play. A villager is explaining the legendary yūjo when he is asked by an itinerant priest about the history behind a certain grave marker.

Kore wa, kajin nite iraresōrōkeru ga, makoto wa, kanon no keshin na to, mōshitsutaete sōrō.

Although this person was a poet, it was believed that her true identity was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Kannon, [Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva].

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The underlined word *kanon* (Kannon) was changed to *Fugen bosatsu*, or “the bodhisattva Fugen” (Samantabhadra).

Kannon bodhisattva in the original draft was changed to Fugen bodhisattva. The term Kannon is the abbreviation of *Kanzeon*. There are also other Japanese terms referring to Avalokiteshvara such as *Kōseon* and *Kanjizai bosatsu*. Kannon, or Avalokiteshvara, is one of the most important bodhisattvas in Mahāyāna Buddhism. In Japan, Kannon is generally considered female. Kannon embodies compassion, one of the two fundamental aspects of buddhahood. Kannon has the ability to help all beings who turn to him at times of extreme danger. Kannon also has the ability to change shapes, cure diseases, cleanse sins, and bring happiness. The belief in Kannon plays an important role. Kannon’s popularity in relation to her motherly image associated with her femininity and compassion, emphasized the positive role of women in the Buddhist world in which traditionally women were considered sinful. Most importantly, Suzuki Masataka suggests a connection between the motherly image of Kannon and fertility, which is also a factor in Kannon’s popularity. To underline how Kannon came to be worshipped as a bodhisattva of fertility, Suzuki cites a story about a childless couple who wanted have children found in *Shintošū* (Collection of
writings on Shintō). As a result of their offering a prayer with a vow to the bodhisattva Kannon, they were blessed with a daughter.\textsuperscript{32} That Kannon's motherly image was associated with the fertility in Japan and that Kannon was also believed to embody all of these abilities to save suffering people help to explain the popularity of the bodhisattva Kannon in Japan.

The popularity of the bodhisattva Kannon may well be one of the reasons for the original selection of the name of Kannon in the play *Eguchi*. There was a *yūjo* named Kannon in the town of Eguchi, as Ōe no Masafusa notes in his *Yūjoki*.\textsuperscript{33} This may be also related to the first choice of the name of Kannon. It seems, however, most reasonable to suggest that the name of Kannon was selected first because of the strong connection between *sarugaku* and Kannon, as Suzuki suggests.\textsuperscript{34} *Sarugaku* is the original term for Nō. Sarugaku troupes, whose dramatic works were based on mimicry, chant, and dance, seems to have appealed to various audiences. Kan'ami was the head of the Yūzaki troupe in the style of Yamato Sarugaku. Suzuki explains that the founder of the Yūzaki troupe was related to Hase Temple located in present-day Nara prefecture, which is a sacred place for the bodhisattva Kannon.\textsuperscript{35} It is also believed that both Kan'ami and Zeami experienced *reigen*, or a miracle at Hase Temple.\textsuperscript{36} Kan'ami's
worship of Hase Temple’s Kannon is recorded in *Yoza yakusha mokuroku*. The strong connection between the bodhisattva Kannon and Sarugaku also suggests that the name Kannon in the original *Eguchi* text might have been chosen by Kan’ami or other Sarugaku playwrights.

A significant revision also occurs in the following passage. The villager is explaining the appearance of the ghost of the Lady of Eguchi and her transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen:

Sareba koso, kore wa, kono hodo mo tōto hito no yume ni mo, mukashi eguchi no chō, kawafune ni nite, tsutsumi syōka ni te, asobitamau ga, nochi ni wa kabu no bosatsu to na[t]e ten ni agaritamau to, yume ni mo mi, mata wa maboroshi ni mo, tsukiyo nanto ni wa, mietamau to, ōseraresōrō zo, kono kawahata ni te, kokoro o sumaite, goranseraresōrō he.

And so, recently again, in the dream of a noble person even appeared the mistress of Eguchi of a long time ago, who—on a riverboat, chanting with drums—performed music, and then became a bodhisattva of chant and dance. It is said that she appears in dreams and visions, on moonlit nights. On this riverbank, please clear your heart and watch.

The underlined word was changed to “fugen bosatsu” as in “nochi ni wa fugen bosatsu to nat[e],” or “soon after, she became the bodhisattva Fugen.” In the second passage, the term *kabu no bosatsu* was originally used. *Kabu* literally means chant (*ka*) and
dance (*bu*). As Saeki notes, *yūjo* were often associated with *kabu no bosatsu* because of their accomplishment in chanting and dancing.39

Despite this association between *kabu no bosatsu* and *yūjo*, *kabu no bosatsu* was also associated with people other than *yūjo*. As Saeki mentions, the famous male poet, Ariwara no Narihira (825-80) was, for instance, associated with *kabu no bosatsu*.40 In Narihira’s time, then, the association of *kabu no bosatsu* specifically with *yūjo* was perhaps rather weak, if only because the term *kabu bosatsu* was too generic. Yashima Masaharu also points out that Izumi Shikibu, one of the most famous poets, who lived from the end of tenth century to the beginning of the eleventh century, was also known as *kabu no bosatsu* because of her accomplishment in poetry. To illustrate his point, he cites a phrase from a Nō play *Seiganji* of the Muromachi period (1336-1573). In this play, the protagonist, Izumi Shikibu, claims that she is a *kabu no bosatsu*.41 These uses of *kabu no bosatsu* suggest that because of the protagonist’s accomplishment in poetry and dance as a *yūjo*, the name of *kabu no bosatsu* in the play *Eguchi* was first selected. On the other hand, because *kabu no bosatsu* as a generic term is often used to indicate a person who accomplished in poetry and dance, it seems more reasonable to think that Zeami changed *kabu
no bosatsu to the more specific bodhisattva Fugen in order to
make two tales originally about different yūjo cohere in the
dramatic text of the Nō play.

In his discussion of the text as it stood before Zeami’s final
revision, Ochiai thinks it is not so strange that the yūjo, whose real
identity is the manifestation of Kannon, appears as a bodhisattva of
chant and dance at the end of the play. Ochiai, however, does
not give any evidence for his argument. The artistic intention
behind using two different bodhisattvas to refer to the protagonist
of Eguchi can be, however, explained. First, Yamato Sarugaku’s
ritual traditions mentioned above suggest that there was a strong
connection between Kannon and Yamato Sarugaku. Regardless of
whether the original play Eguchi nō was written by Kan’ami, or by
another playwright, the choice of the name of Kannon in Eguchi
nō can perhaps be attributed to Yamato Sarugaku troupe’s ritual
traditions concerning Kannon. Second, the selection of kabu
bosatsu in the second passage may have been motivated by the
fact that this generic term was often associated with
accomplished performers of chant and dance. Yokomichi and
Omote, for example, interpret the theme of Eguchi in the
following: if one is accomplished in shika-bukyoku, or poetry,
chanting, dancing, and music, one will be able to reach enlightenment.\footnote{43}

The term *kabu bosatsu* rather than Kannon at the end of the play might have been to emphasize the importance in Nō of chanting and dancing. The emphasis of the original play *Eguchi nō* thus might have been that the *yūjo* of *Eguchi*, accomplishing the artistic form of *buga*, or dance and chant, was able to become a bodhisattva of those arts. Although the association between a *yūjo*, the Bodhisattva Kannon, and a bodhisattva of chant and dance (a kind of bodhisattva, not an individual) can be explained in this way, the co-occurrence of *Kannon bosatsu* and *kabu no bosatsu* in the earlier version of the play is still a mystery. Zeami’s decision to change both *kabu no bosatsu* and *Kannon bosatsu* to the bodhisattva Fugen reflects his literary consciousness. Zeami emphasizes the idea of the *honzetsu tadasahi*, or the faithful adaptation of original stories into Nō libretti.\footnote{44} In terms of the *honzetsu*, or source materials, Fugen was an obvious choice. This is discussed in detail below.
3.4 The Bodhisattva Fugen

As discussed in detail in Chapter Two, the strong connection between the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen was created in popular short narratives (setsuwa). Zeami borrowed the idea of witnessing the transformation of a yūjo into Fugen from a tale about the Venerable Shōkū (1177-1247). To review the story briefly, thanks to Shōkū’s reading of the Lotus Sutra, his rokkon, or “six sense organs,” had become free from any attachments. He prayed that he could see the living bodhisattva Fugen as a reward for his religious achievement. One day he had a dream in which he was told that he should go and see the chief yūjo of Eguchi, who was really the living bodhisattva Fugen.

The bodhisattva Fugen is an important bodhisattva in Mahāyāna Buddhism as well as in the Lotus Sutra, especially associated with the Buddha’s risei, or reasoning power. While the bodhisattva Kannon and the bodhisattva Daiseishi accompany the buddha Amida in Buddhist iconography, the bodhisattva Fugen and the bodhisattva Monju accompany Shaka, or S(h)akyamuni, the historical buddha. With his gentle feminine face, the bodhisattva Fugen attracted female believers in the mid-Heian Period (around the tenth century) seeking his protection and the support of Hokkekyō, or the Lotus Sutra, in which salvation for
women is advocated. This gentle image of Fugen and his support of salvation for women also fits the image of yūjo as depicted in *Eguchi*.

Belief in the bodhisattva Fugen first prevailed throughout the aristocracy starting in the Heian period (794-1185). Prior to Fugen’s popularity, belief in the bodhisattva Kannon had spread widely in India, Central Asia, China, and Japan. During the Kamakura period (1185-1333), new schools of Buddhism were established. The Jōdo sect, in which the Buddha Amida was worshipped as the savior of mankind, emphasized salvation by faith. Belief in the bodhisattva Fugen also stressed this. One of the benefits of the belief in the bodhisattva Fugen was believed to be the forgiveness of sin. The bodhisattva Fugen as well as the bodhisattva Kannon were believed to guide those who suffered among the Six Paths to salvation by transforming themselves into various forms to accompany the sufferers. Later this developed into a belief that the living bodhisattva Fugen walked the earth.

It is also possible that Zeami’s decision to use the image of the bodhisattva Fugen instead of the bodhisattva Kannon in his revision was influenced by this belief in the living bodhisattva Fugen that prevailed in medieval Japan. The tale of Shōkū and
other similar stories about witnessing the living bodhisattva Fugen prove that this belief was familiar in medieval Japan.

By employing the image of the bodhisattva Fugen, instead of the bodhisattva Kannon or the bodhisattva of chant and dance, Zeami achieved certain effects. The association between a yūjo, and Kannon bosatsu or kabu no bosatsu was weak without supporting background stories. These terms in themselves are too generic to create a strong connection with a yūjo. A connection between a yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen would be, however, very strong and appealing to the audience, which in all likelihood would have recognized the miracle of Shōkū's witnessing of the living Bodhisattva. Riding a white elephant was the image of the bodhisattva Fugen, and these audiences might very well have been able to imagine the bodhisattva Fugen riding a white elephant at the end of the play while they were in reality watching the shite, or the principal actor, in the form of a yūjo, acting as if she had transformed into the bodhisattva Fugen. This partly explains why Zeami stressed the importance of honzetsu tadashi. The association of a yūjo and Fugen immediately connects the Nō play Eguchi to the popular setsuwa about Shōkū. Zeami’s choice of Fugen was most likely a decision made to effectively aid the imagination of the audience.
Another key element of his choice of Fugen is that the bodhisattva Fugen is the bodhisattva of wisdom, while the bodhisattva Kannon more associated with compassion. Kannon brings to mind the yūjo’s benevolence: easing her customers’ suffering and offering pleasure. Fugen, as the bodhisattva of wisdom, creates an image of a cultivated yūjo, such as the Lady of Eguchi. What connects two popular tales about yūjo—a tale about the poetic exchange between a yūjo and the Priest Saigyō, and the tale about the Venerable Shōkū—is the image of a cultivated yūjo who embodies “wisdom”: the wisdom of the Lady of Eguchi and the wisdom of the bodhisattva Fugen. By using this image of Fugen, Zéami was able to tap into these two tales successfully.

According to the Hokke sanbu kyō, or the Lotus Sutra, it is said that if you enshrine the Hokkekyō in a seminary for Buddhist priests and repent of your Six Sources of Sin, then the bodhisattva Fugen will appear on a white elephant. This too connects to the story of Eguchi in that the traveling priest was able to see the bodhisattva Fugen after he was admonished by the yūjo of Eguchi for setting his heart upon worldly things. Then the same yūjo explained to him the impermanence of this world and the Six Sources of Sin. It is also possible that the tale about Shōkū was in fact based on or inspired by this teaching in the Hokke sanbu kyō.
Zeami probably knew about this teaching, as well as the legends surrounding Shōkū. That would explain why Zeami mentioned the Six Sources of Sin in *Eguchi*.

The changes that Zeami made raise another important issue. As Nishimura points out, this story advocates that priests like Saigyō, who could not completely detach themselves from this world, devote themselves to Buddhist teaching in order to reach enlightenment, like Shōkū. With this intention in mind, these two tales become one in *Eguchi*: the protagonist (a local woman in the first act and a ghost of the Lady of Eguchi in the second act) guides the monk to realize the impermanence of this world. The protagonist turns out to be a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. Therefore, the priest was guided by the bodhisattva Fugen in the form of a yūjo.

3.5 Variations in Interpretations of the Nō play *Eguchi*

The authorship of *Eguchi* raises many questions, regarding *Eguchi* as Kan'ami's work or Zeami's. The thematic interpretation of the play is also divided into two different perspectives.

Scholars of the play typically interpret *Eguchi* in the following two ways. I will briefly describe both interpretations.
and then discuss some of the factors underlying them. One interpretation regards the yūjo as the protagonist. The yūjo ultimately becomes the bodhisattva Fugen as a result of reaching enlightenment. The other line of interpretation regards the bodhisattva Fugen in the form of a yūjo as the main character. The bodhisattva's task is to guide the supporting character, the traveling priest, onto the path enlightenment.

On the surface in both interpretations, Eguchi is understood as a play in praise of yūjo, by way of their association with the holy bodhisatva Fugen. On a deeper level, however, the former interpretation debases the image of the yūjo, while in the latter interpretation, the image of the yūjo is revered.

The image of the yūjo is debased in order to heighten the contrast between the yūjo and the holiness of the bodhisattva. A yūjo as protagonist exemplifies the lowest position in the social hierarchy of the Buddhist world. Such baseness transformed into an enlightened state stands to be recognized by audiences as an amazing success story. This is especially true in the medieval Buddhist world, in which women were considered sinful. Yūjo were considered the worst of the worst. Therefore, the play conveys the message that, if someone like a yūjo can reach enlightenment, it is possible for any man or woman.
A number of scholars have offered rationales for the "yūjo - turned - bodhisattva" perspective. Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira attribute *Eguchi* to Kan'ami in the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*. Central to their understanding of the play is the yūjo's devotion to her profession, which leads her to a greater understanding of the impermanence of life and, ultimately, to attaining bodhisattvahood. Yokomichi and Omote introduce *Eguchi*'s focal point as follows: if a yūjo absolutely devotes herself to her profession, availing herself of this opportunity, she will come to understand the impermanence of life and ultimately she will become a bodhisattva herself.\(^5^3\) Mutō Chizuko, who attributes *Eguchi* to Kan'ami, argues that such an interpretation rests more on the debased image of the yūjo rather than on any enlightenment brought about by devotion to the profession, pointing out that even a yūjo whose life is most showy and precarious as a prostitute, can become a bodhisattva.\(^5^4\) Ochiai Hiroshi points out that the revised *Eguchi* is now considered to be Zeami's work. In his discussion of an earlier version of the text of *Eguchi*, in which at the end of the play the protagonist yūjo appears as a bodhisattva of chant and dance (*kabu no bosatsu*) instead of the bodhisattva Fugen, Ochiai reminds us that it makes sense that a yūjo, who performed *kabu*, or chant and dance, and
also was believed to be a manifestation of Kannon bodhisattva, 
would appear as a *kabu no bosatsu*, or a bodhisattva of chant and 
dance.\(^\text{55}\)

The negative image of *yūjo* was used to elicit in the audience 
the idea that even a sinful woman, the lowest of the low, can reach 
enlightenment. This reflects the Buddhist idea advocating *ōjō*, or 
salvation, for women and outcasts, which prevailed in the 
medieval period, especially during the thirteenth and fourteenth 
centuries. A *yūjo*, as both woman and outcast, was therefore the 
best example for advocating the Buddhist idea that salvation is 
possible for all. Because they are oppressed and suffer in this 
world, their desire for a peaceful life in the other world is stronger 
than the more fortunate. The more suffering they endure, the 
stronger their desire of salvation became.\(^\text{56}\) Their strong desire to 
attain enlightenment was inspired by the incentive of salvation for 
women and outcasts.

Thus the perspective "*yūjo* - turned - bodhisattva" seems to 
be influenced by this idea of the advocacy of salvation for women 
and outcasts. Being ashamed of a *yūjo*'s sinful life, she becomes 
more conscious of her sin than anyone else. Living such an 
unstable life, aware of the transience of the world, and knowing 
that her fate is something beyond her control, she resigns herself
to it. Meeting many people in search of physical and mental comforts, she eases their suffering. Ultimately, this is the path to becoming an enlightened bodhisattva.

While in the above-mentioned interpretation, the difference between the debased image of a yūjo and the holiness of the bodhisattva Fugen was emphasized, in the other interpretation a coterminous identity is stressed, in which the protagonist is both the bodhisattva Fugen and a yūjo simultaneously. This interpretation can also be supported. Saeki, for example, notes that yūjo were considered to be sacred women as kabu no bosatsu, or “bodhisattvas of chant and dance,” and that this association of yūjo with a bodhisattva prepared the way for the transformation in Eguchi. Similarly, Itō characterizes Eguchi as presenting the idea of yūjo soku bosatsu, or yūjo as bodhisattva, meaning that the yūjo here and now is simultaneously a bodhisattva. The legendary yūjo whose clever poetic exchange with Priest Saigyō was known far and wide, and the wisdom of the bodhisattva Fugen, overlap so well that the audience would most likely be unable to say until the final transformation scene whether it was a yūjo or the bodhisattva Fugen admonishing the traveling priest.
This blurred line between a yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen in the play reflects the playwright's intention to suggest the coterminous idea rather than to emphasize a clear distinction between the debased image of a yūjo and the holiness of the bodhisattva Fugen. Nishimura also suggests the importance of the consubstantial identity as a key to understanding the theme of the Nō play Eguchi. This is discussed in detail below, in section 3.6, which throws light on the theme of Eguchi.

Each of the above interpretations is supported by textual evidence, such as word choice and dramatic structure, as well as extra-textual concerns. The language of the final transformation scene is ambiguous. The yūjo's transformation into the bodhisattva is described as the moment in which the yūjo “appears” as the bodhisattva Fugen (...fugen, bosatsu to araware,...). The language allows two interpretations. The first is that the yūjo is changing into the bodhisattva Fugen, and the second that the bodhisattva Fugen is revealing his true identity. This linguistic ambiguity might have contributed to the differing interpretation of Eguchi. This is, however, a minor factor. There are more rather complicated factors underlying the different interpretations.

The perspective “yūjo - turned - bodhisattva” might have been influenced by the idea reflected in the original play Eguchi
nō, in which the protagonist yūjo, who was believed to be the manifestation of Kannon, in fact, turned into a bodhisattva of chant and dance at the end of the play. In this context, the idea “yūjo - turned - bodhisattva” seems to be easily explained. However, in the final form of Eguchi, the perspective “yūjo as a bodhisattva,” indicating that the yūjo is simultaneously a bodhisattva, can be explained better in relation to the theme of the play.

3.6 The Theme of the Nō play Eguchi

The discussion of the different interpretations of Eguchi leads us to the question of the theme of the play. As Nishimura suggests, the idea of consubstantial identity seems to be a key issue to understanding the theme of the play. To support his idea, he discusses the implication of the first line called shidai in the play. In the shidai, the itinerant monk (waki, or the supporting actor) and his companions chant: “since the moon is our old friend from this world, where might the world outside of this one be?” (tsuki wa mukashi no tomo nareba, yo no hoka izuku narunaran.) On the surface, this chanting implies that in spite of the fact that they are monks, they are still struggling with their attachments to this world. However, more importantly, it seems reasonable to suggest
that this chanting implies the idea, which underlines the theme of the play. By questioning where the world outside of this one might be, they suggest that there is not a world outside of this world. That is, there is no distinction between this world and outside of this world. Furthermore, it suggests that there is no distinction between laymen and holy men. In this sense, this shidai, though it is chanted by the waki and his companions, can be considered as the voice of the playwright, suggesting the consubstantial image of the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen as the protagonist. In his discussion of the Buddhist idea reflected in Zeami’s and Zenchiku’s Nō plays, Yashima explains this idea of dual, coexisting identities, which comes from the philosophy of the Tendai sect, is often used as an important element in Nō plays. In philosophy what underlies this idea is the concept of emptiness, or boundlessness. Allan G. Grapard explains emptiness as one of the fundamental propositions of Tendai philosophy, “the basic demonstration that all dharmas are empty of proper nature (kū)...” The idea of yūjo as bodhisattva reflects this, rejecting the distinction between the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen as arbitrary.

Another important implication of the consubstantial idea is reflected in the shite’s lines: “the moon is unchanged” (tsuki wa
mukashi ni kawarame ya,...). When the shite tells the waki: “The Courtesan of Eguchi of long time ago sailed for pleasure on this boat. Look at the boat in the moonlight,” the waki says: “That is strange. Speaking of the Courtesan of Eguchi, she is of a long time ago...” The shite, in the form of the Courtesan of Eguchi, denies what the waki has just said: “No, it’s not a long time ago, just look. The moon is unchanged, isn’t it?” By saying so, the shite emphasizes that the yūjo the waki now sees is the same yūjo of a long time ago, just as the moon is the same as before. Nishimura points out that what the shite indicates here is that, as the moon is unchanged, the honshitsu, or the nature of the yūjo’s existence is also unchanged.62 The lines of the shite indicate that there should not be a distinction between the present and the past. Regardless of time, there is no change in the honshitsu.

The shite’s indication of the idea of consubstantiality expressed through the metaphorical use of the moon, suggests that the waki’s attachment to this world prevents him from being able to see the yūjo as the bodhisattva Fugen. As Nishimura suggests, in this sense, Eguchi is a story that admonishes priests like Saigyō who are not able to completely detach themselves from this world, and praises priests like Shōkū for finally being able to
reach enlightenment. The traveling priest (waki) himself in the
play goes through these two stages.\textsuperscript{63}

The significance of the Nō play \textit{Eguchi} thus lies not only in
its suggestion of the yūjo-as-Bodhisattva idea, but also its
innovation on the traditional role of the waki as seen in a
prototype of mugen Nō. In the prototype, the waki is the one who
leads the shite to the path of enlightenment. This innovative role
of the waki is fully developed by Zeami's son-in-law, Konparu
Zenchiku and becomes known as his style of Nō play. Yashima
points out that the popularity of Nō these days seems to be
supported by the attraction to this style of Nō, mostly known as
Zenchiku's, in which the shite tells the waki about his or her
enlightenment.\textsuperscript{64} This is in contrast to the paradigm in which the
unenlightened shite's suffering is addressed in the prayers of the
waki.

Thus the changes that Zeami made not only shifted the
theme of the play toward the representation of the philosophic
idea of consubstantiality, but also contributed to an innovative
style of Nō play which created the basis for further development
of Nō by Zenchiku and other playwrights.
1 The old name of the play *Eguchi* is *Eguchi yūjo*.


3 Omote, vol. 2, 504-505. This appears in a list of Nō playwrights formerly in the possession of the Ōkura family and now in the care of the Hōsei University Nogami Memorial Nōgaku Research Institute. Sanari Kentarō also points out that *Eguchi* was presumably written by Zenchiku. Sanari Kentarō, ed., *Yōkyoku taikan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1963), 471-472.

4 Yokomichi and Omote, 49.


6 Kan’ami inherited his role as a performer and head of the Yamato Sarugaku troupe.

7 The author of the kusemai piece is unknown.

8 Shinmura, 627.


11 Ochiai, 8.


15 Yokomichi and Omote, 7-8.

16 Tashiro supports Kinoshita Junji’s emphasis on the importance of the *waki* as a medium between the main actor and the audience. Tashiro, 50-59.


18 It also seems reasonable to suggest that this chanting suggest that there is not world outside of this world. That is, there is no distinction between this world and outside of this world. This interpretation is discussed in the section below, 3.6.

19 Nishimura sees this as Zeami’s “*shinpū no kokoromi*” or “trying of a new style.” Nishimura, 40-41.

20 He was the third shogun of the Ashikaga, who established the Muromachi shogunate. In 1378 he had a mansion built in Muromachi in Kyoto and conducted affairs of state there. That is how the shogunate came to be called the Muromachi shogunate. The Muromachi period started in 1336 and lasted until 1573.


27 Also called Kannon, Kanzeon, Kōseon, Kanjizai bosatsu.


29 Ibid., 25. The Bodhisattva Daiseishi, or Mañjushrī embodies wisdom, the other fundamental aspect of buddhahood.

30 Ibid., 24-25


34 Suzuki, 15-16.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

38 Gotō et al., 105.

39 Saeki, 59.

40 Saeki, 166.


42 Ochiai, 3.

43 Yokomichi and Akira, 49.


47 Ibid.


49 Taniguchi mentions Hayami’s theory of the popularization of the belief in the Bodhisattva Fugen. Taniguchi, 319.

50 See Appendix, note 33.

51 Taniguchi, 318.

52 Nishimura, 40-41.

53 Yokomichi and Omote, 49. Yokomichi and Omote explain that behind this theme lies the belief that if you are accomplished in poetry, chant, dance, and music, you will be able to reach enlightenment.
Mutō Chizuko, “Utaikata to kanshō ‘Eguchi,’” Kanze (October 1973): 27. Mutō also believes that the theme of Eguchi is that this floating world is a temporary world and even a yūjo, whose life is most showy and precarious as a prostitute, can become the bodhisattva of “kabu,” or singing and dancing. This is a Mahāyānist Buddhist teaching, and typical for Kan’ami’s Nō. The bodhisattva Kabu will be explained in detail later.

Ochiai, 3.


Saeki, 59.

Itō, 414.

Nishimura, 40-41.

Yashima, 94.


Nishimura, 42.

Nishimura supports this interpretation of Eguchi, expounded previously by Hori Bakusui (1780) and Horiguchi Yasuo (1987). Nishimura, 40-41.

Yashima, 112.
CONCLUSION

Modern readers and audiences might be tempted to think negatively of yūjo. However, as I hope this study has made clear, interpreting the medieval image of the yūjo as a mere prostitute does not suffice. Study of the portrait of the particular yūjo depicted in Eguchi helps us to identify a more complex image of what a yūjo might represent, at least to medieval audiences.

The images of the bodhisattva Fugen and the yūjo are connected by the tale of the venerable monk Shōkū, which treats two characters as one. Zeami in fact may have been aware of the importance of his audience's prior knowledge of Shōkū's tale when he created his version of Eguchi. As far as we know, the bodhisattva Fugen and the yūjo had not been connected in any other literary sources except in the setsuwa tale about Shōkū. In the Nō version, the way the yūjo admonishes the traveling priest hints that the yūjo might be the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen appearing to guide the priest on the path to salvation. It
does not, however, become clear until the end when the chorus
tells the audience that the yūjo has transformed into the
bodhisattva Fugen rising westward into the sky on a white
elephant. This final scene is effective because it reinforces the
transformed image of the yūjo, inviting the audience to visualize
the yūjo's transformation into the bodhisattva Fugen. In this way,
the images of the yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen are strongly
linked in a way that engages the imaginative participation of the
audience.

This would seem to be Zeami's deliberate effort to suggest
the idea of consubstantiality that underscores the theme of the
play. That is, there is no clear distinction between the identity of
the Eguchi yūjo and the identity of the bodhisattva Fugen. There is
no distinction between this world and the world outside of this
world, as there is no distinction between laymen and holy men,
unless dualistic thinking makes it so.

By giving a voice to the yūjo in the play, Zeami effects such a
consubstantial identity, indicating that the yūjo is simultaneously
the bodhisattva. Although the yūjo appears in the variant setsuwa
tales about Shōkū's meeting with the bodhisattva Fugen in the
form of a yūjo, she is portrayed simply as a tool for the bodhisattva
Fugen to carry out his mission. In the other tale in Senjūshō about

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the poetic exchange between the yūjo Tae and the priest Saigyō, Tae is presented as a slightly more developed character, but along with her wit and perspicacity, also reveals her weakness and inability to reach enlightenment. By linking Tae to the enlightened yūjo that Shōkū encounters, Zeami portrays her character as more independent, stronger, more elegant, and more cultivated than in any of the tales to be found in the setsubōwa collections. By doing so, Zeami brings out a double identity as the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen.

Examining these literary precedents helps us to better understand Zeami’s depiction of the yūjo in Eguchi. As mentioned above, the Nō play connects two popular tales about yūjo: a tale about a poetic exchange between a yūjo and the Priest Saigyō, and another tale about Shōkū’s meeting with a yūjo who is a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. The key to connecting the two legends is the image of a cultivated yūjo who embodies “wisdom,” the wisdom of the Lady of Eguchi and the wisdom of the bodhisattva Fugen. By introducing this image of Fugen, Zeami was able to connect these two tales successfully. While the association between a yūjo, Kannon bosatsu and kabu no bosatsu was weak, since it lacked literary precedents, the legendary connection between a yūjo and the bodhisattva Fugen was already
established and exploited audience foreknowledge of the miracle of Shōkū’s witnessing of the living Bodhisattva.

The dramatic role of the shite in Eguchi, who leads the waki to the path of enlightenment, is also an important role for connecting the two different stories about Shōkū and Saigyō. In the beginning of the play, the waki plays the role of Saigyō, who is not completely detached himself from worldly things and can only see the shite as a yūjo, while at the end of the play, as the waki comes to understand the idea of consubstantiality, finally he is able to see the shite as the bodhisattva Fugen in the same insightful way that like Shōkū had. The changes that Zeami made thus invoke an important theme. The yūjo in Eguchi admonishes a priest for not being able to completely detach himself from worldly matters and makes him realize the impermanence of this world. The yūjo turns out to be the manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. That is, the priest is in fact guided by the bodhisattva Fugen disguised in the form of a yūjo. This appears to be an innovation on the more common structure of a mugen play in which the waki assists the shite to escape from her own illusions.

By exploiting the image of the bodhisattva Fugen, Zeami thus made the Nō play Eguchi more memorable. Eguchi thus functions
as a point of intersection for the two previously discrete legends. By marrying two stories in which the intelligence of a yūjo is depicted, Zeami creates a character whose depth and greater wisdom must challenge all tendencies to ascribe an inferior social status to yūjo simply on the basis of their livelihood.

The Nō play Eguchi established a positive image of a yūjo. I argue that Zeami transformed the didactic message seen in earlier versions of the story that even the most sinful yūjo could reach salvation, into one which insisted on the inherent holiness of one particular yūjo.

The influence of this alteration to the image of a yūjo may well have influenced later artistic expression. In a painting by Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-92), the Lady of Eguchi is depicted riding on an elephant.¹ This painting reinforces the elegant and holy image of the yūjo. In the Edo period, the term “Fugen bosatsu,” or the bodhisattva Fugen, came to be used to indicate a beautiful person or a prototypical beauty.² This may well be because of the influence of the Nō play Eguchi.

In revising Eguchi, Zeami created a masterpiece. The success of Zeami’s Eguchi lies in the following points. First, with prior knowledge of his audience in mind, Zeami faithfully incorporated intertextual elements from waka poetry and setsuwa into the play.
Second, he skillfully brought out the image of a yūjo of artistic accomplishment by means of the key elements of Nō plays, chant and dance. He used those elements to highlight the climactic final scene in which the yūjo transforms into the bodhisattva Fugen, vividly suggesting the non-dualistic idea of yūjo as bodhisattva. Third, Zeami established a new associative link between Fugen and the Lady of Eguchi. By doing so, he gave the Eguchi yūjo a voice in the play having dignity and depth. Eguchi is thus one of the best examples of how a Nō playwright may exploit pre-existing sources while, at the same time, adding new interpretive dimensions. The Nō play Eguchi elevates the image of yūjo from vulgar prostitute to sacred person.

2 Inoue, 283.
APPENDIX

This is a translation of *Eguchi* from *Yōkyokushū* 1, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 40. The source book is the text written in Zeami’s own hand (*Zeami jihitsubon*).

Persons:

The ghost of the courtesan of Eguchi disguised as a village woman (a manifestation)

- *mae shite* (*mae jite*), or the principal actor of the first part

Courtesan of Eguchi (ghost)

- *nochi shite* (*nochi jite*), or the principal actor of the second part

Companion’s to *yūjo* (ghost)

- *tsure*, or companions to the principal actor

Traveling monk

- *waki*, the side actor

Companion monks

- *wakizure*, or companions to the side actor

Villager

- *ai kyōgen*, or an interlude actor

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1. [shidai] With the music of the hayashi playing in the background, a traveling monk and his companions quietly appear and stand downstage center (shômôncnsaki).

(shidai - Congruent with the music)

**MONK AND COMPANIONS**

Chant facing each other in the same place.

Since the moon is our old friend from this world,

since the moon is our old friend from this world,

where might the world outside of this one be (for recluses)?

(nanori - Incongruent)

**MONK**

Faces audience.

I am a monk from the northern provinces. I have been in the capital lately, and now I wish to visit other provinces. I plan to make a pilgrimage to the holy temples and shrines in the provinces near the capital first, so I am off today with a couple of companions.

(ageuta - Congruent)

**MONK AND COMPANIONS**

Chant facing each other.

Leaving the capital while (it is) still late at night,

when our boat on the Yodo River has passed Udono,

we see the reeds in the dim light of daybreak

Perform walking pattern.

The hazy waves breaking on the shore of pine trees

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at Eguchi,\textsuperscript{4} where we have arrived

at Eguchi, where we have arrived

Perform arriving pattern.

(*tsukizerifu* - speech; incongruent)

**MONK**

Faces audience.

This is the place called the village of Eguchi. Now I see a cairn in the shade of that tree behind the river wall of rocks over there. It looks like a grave marker of someone who was of some important consequence. I want to ask a villager about the cairn.

Companions sit behind the base area for *waki*, the left front corner of the stage (*waki-za*).

2.

(*mondô* - intoned prose; incongruent)

The monk goes upstage right where the bridge is connected to the stage (*jōza*) and calls the *ai*, or the villager, from behind the *jo-za* (*ai-za*). The villager stands up at the *ai-za*. The monk asks him about the cairn.

**VILLAGER**

This cairn is a grave marker for a well-known courtesan of long ago called the Eguchi lady. She was a poet, but they say that she was really a manifestation of the bodhisattva Fugen. They say that when Priest Saigyō chanted a poem for her, she composed a witty poem in reply. Compassionate people mourn here for her. It would be well for you to stop and pray for her in the after life.

The monk thanks him and returns to his place. The villager goes back to the *ai-za* and sits.
3.

unnamed segment; incongruent

MONK

Faces the audience in the middle of the stage.

Well then, this is the grave marker for the Eguchi lady. Although her body is buried beneath the ground, her name still lingers even now.

What a rare privilege it is
to have the chance to pray for her
on this historic spot
whose story has been handed down
to this day

Indeed, when Priest Saigyō asked her for a night’s lodging, “lacking a compassionate heart for you, the mistress of the house,
- to reach the point of renouncing this (temporary) world⁵-
- this would be really hard to do.

Yet, you would begrudge even [this] temporary lodging.”⁶

So Saigyō’s poem went
and the lodging in question was hers!

Walks toward the waki-za.
Oh, it is a clever poem!7

4.

(*mondō* - intoned prose; incongruent)

**VILLAGE WOMAN**

Appears quietly at the far end of the bridge (*hashigakari*).

Excuse me, traveler! What made you chant that poem just now?

**MONK**

Looks toward the village woman while staying at the *waki-za*.

How strange! Where there is no house around, a woman has appeared and asked why I chanted that poem! Why did you ask me that question?

**VILLAGE WOMAN**

Though for so many years I had forgotten about that poem,8 hearing it again reminds me of the old days,

On the bridge (*hashigakari*), chants facing the audience.

"to reach the point of renouncing this world

of dew on shadowy grasses9

this would be really hard to do—

Yet, you would begrudge

even [this] temporary lodging," he said.

His words were a source of shame

for I was not so grudging;

Takes a few steps toward the monk.
and to speak of what I meant, I have come.

MONK

The village woman walks to the main stage and stands at the jō-za.

What a surprise! While I was just praying here at the site where Priest Saigyō composed his poem in which he said “you would begrudge even [this] temporary lodging,” here you are, saying that she did not cling to a temporary lodging as he said. Now, who might you be to explain such a thing?

VILLAGE WOMAN

Both the village woman and the monk still stay standing where they are and speak quietly. It is because the spirit of the line that goes “begrudge [this] temporary lodging,” causes me such shame that I wonder why you won’t recite the answering poem, which shows I am not grudging.

MONK

Indeed, the poem goes:

“To reach the point of renouncing this (temporary) world
and...

VILLAGE WOMAN

I heard you are one
who has renounced this world.
So I simply thought,
“Don’t set your heart
upon a temporary lodging.”
Since she advised him that he should not set his heart upon a temporary lodging, wasn’t it right that she didn’t let him stay at a house of women?

MONK

Indeed, it is true. Priest Saigyō was one who had renounced this temporary lodging.

VILLAGE WOMAN

Her place was a house of prostitutes where, like fossilized wood buried under ground, many hidden things often happened. ¹⁰

“Upon such a lodging...

MONK

...you should not set your heart.”

What made her recite this to him...

VILLAGE WOMAN

...was only that she cared about him, having renounced this world.

In spite of that...

MONK

...to just say that she begrudged a temporary lodging.

VILLAGE WOMAN

Walks toward the monk.

Those words,
(ageuta - Congruent)

CHORUS

The village woman faces the audience.

are what I begrudge.

This a temporary lodging that I don’t regret,
why should he say I begrudge it?

The monk sits at the waki-za.

Evening waves\textsuperscript{11} do not return,

The village woman takes a few steps toward the front of the stage.
nor do the old days.

This talk of one who renounced the world,

The village woman walks toward the monk.

Now don’t let your heart set upon it.\textsuperscript{12}

5.

(rongi - Congruent )

MONK AND COMPANIONS

The village woman still stands at the jō-za.

Indeed, it is a worldly tale.

Indeed, it is a worldly tale.

As I listen to it, dusk has fallen
and the light on your figure grows dim.

Whoever can you be?

VILLAGE WOMAN

In the twilight,
a figure lingers dimly, a figure lingers dimly, appearing, disappearing in the bends of the river, Might you see in its flow the Eguchi lady?\textsuperscript{13} How ashamed I feel.

**MONK AND COMPANIONS**

Now there is no doubt, a wave disappears on a dreary shore, The village woman walks toward the pillar in the right front corner (metsuke bashira), turns to left and goes to the jo-za. The Eguchi lady passes away and you are what remains.\textsuperscript{14}

**VILLAGE WOMAN**

At this temporary abode of mine

**MONK AND COMPANIONS**

...the trailing branches of the plum you must have seen...

**VILLAGE WOMAN**

...because unexpectedly...

**CHORUS**

...you have come.\textsuperscript{15}
In previous lives,
perhaps we sheltered together
under the same tree,

In the *jo-za*, the village woman faces the monk and takes a few steps toward him while opening her arms (*hiraki* movements), she reveals her identity.

perhaps we drew water together
from the same stream...¹⁶

Please realize that
I am the spirit of the Eguchi lady.

The village woman turns right to go to the *jo-za*, faces the front opening her arms, and ends with disappearing pattern.

Only her voice lingers
while her figure has gone.

Only her voice lingers
while her figure has gone.

The village woman walks quietly down the bridge through the curtain for the interlude between the two parts (*nakairi*).

6.

(*mondō* - intoned prose; incongruent)

The monk tells the villager about the woman who has just disappeared and asks him if he knows anything about her.

**VILLAGER**

Well, speaking of the lady, they say that lately even in an august person’s dream, this mistress of a brothel at Eguchi of long ago
appeared chanting with a drum on a riverboat and later she
transformed into the bodhisattva Fugen and rose into the sky. They
also say that they can see her phantom on a moonlit night. Why
don’t you clear your heart and mind and look for her? If you are
truly a holy monk, you should see the mistress of Eguchi of long
ago on her pleasure boat. Wait and look. Truly, they say that the
mistress of Eguchi of long ago was a manifestation of the
bodhisattva Fugen.

The monk thanks the villager. The villager exits.

7.

(unnamed - segment; intoned prose; incongruent)

MONK

Stands in the middle of the stage.

Indeed, since I am a traveling monk making a pilgrimage to holy
temples and shrines from province to province, I have the
privilege of seeing and hearing about such a holy wonder. Tonight
all through the moonlit night,

When the monk goes to the center downstage (shōmensaki), the companions stand up and
go to where the monk is and stand in line with him.

I will chant the Sutra and pray for the Eguchi lady here by her
grade...

(ageuta - Congruent)

MONK AND COMPANIONS

They chant facing each other.
Before we finish speaking...oh, how strange
that on the water lit by the moon a boat appears
with courtesans aboard chanting
what a wondrous sight
in the moonlight.

Go back to the waki-za and sit.
what a wondrous sight
in the moonlight.

8.

[issei] incongruent

The stage attendant (kōken) brings a boat from behind the curtain and places it on the
bridge or at the jō-za. The courtesan of Eguchi appears with companions in front and behind
her and gets on the boat. The stage attendant peels the companion’s overrobe off one
shoulder, a costume adjustment that indicates she will engage in physical activity. She is
handed a pole and begins a rowing motion.

(ageuta - Congruent )

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI AND COMPANIONS

They sing while standing, brilliant but melancholic.

A river boat,
we moor to tie the knot of fleeting love
pillowing on the waves
we moor to tie the knot of fleeting love
pillowing on waves.17
Too familiar with this floating world.

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made of dreams,
we fail to awaken
to our own evanescence.\textsuperscript{18}
Lady Sayo\textsuperscript{19} spread her sleeve wet with tears
because she abhorred parting
from her lover who left by boat
for Cathay\textsuperscript{20} from Matsura shore.\textsuperscript{21}
It is also pitiful that
the Lady of Uji Bridge kept waiting for
someone who did not even try to visit her any more,
She looks downward, suggesting deep emotion.
their lives are the same as ours, courtesans.\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{(sageuta - Congruent )}

\textbf{COURTESAN OF EGUCHI AND COMPANIONS}

Alas, be that as it may.

Like Yoshino’s

Alas, be that as it may.

Like Yoshino’s\textsuperscript{23}

cherry blossoms and snow, clouds, and waves

Look around.

all are transient as foam on the water.\textsuperscript{24}

Seem to keep thinking.

but let’s enjoy it.
9.

(kakeai - incongruent)

MONK

Still sitting at the waki-za.

On the water the moon shines down as the night grows late,
where a boat is floating I look inside,
I see many courtesans chanting.
Since their figures look so flowery and seductive,
I wonder whose boat it is.

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

Looks at the monk from the boat.

You wonder whose boat this is.

It is shameful to tell,
but the Courtesan of Eguchi of long time ago
sailed for pleasure on this boat.

Look at the boat in the moonlight.

MONK

That is strange. Speaking of the Courtesan of Eguchi, she is of a long time ago...

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

No, it's not a long time ago, just look. The moon is unchanged, isn't it?
COMPANIONS OF EGUCHI

We have also come to be seen like this. How can you say that we are from the past? You are bereft of reason.

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

Ah, never mind. Whatever he asks...

COMPANIONS OF EGUCHI

...we shall not say anything, we shall not hear anything...

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

...because it is complicated.

(kami no ei - Incongruent)

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI AND COMPANIONS

Chant facing the audience.

The forceful autumn water

sweeps our boat downstream.

The moon shines

we ply our poles and

sing boating songs.

(uta - Congruent)

CHORUS

Courtesan of Eguchi calls her companions' attention.

Sing, oh, sing

like foam on the water

our deep yearning for the old days.
Even now, courtesans sail for pleasure.

A song to go through the world,\textsuperscript{28} let's chant and dance.

In Zeami's time, all remained seated in the boat until they stood up to chant "\textit{akikaze}..." (the autumn wind...) and stepped out when they chanted "\textit{aru toki}..." (one day...) in the \textit{kuse} section. At present they step out from the boat at this point.

10.

(\textit{kuri} - Incongruent)

\textbf{CHORUS}

All remain seated.

The circle of transmigration of the Twelve karma,\textsuperscript{29} is as a wheeled vehicle going round in a circle in a yard...

\textbf{COURTESAN OF EGUCHI}

...and as birds play around in the woods.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{CHORUS}

There were more previous lives before previous lives,

\textbf{COURTESAN OF EGUCHI}

so the beginning of our lives is beyond our knowledge.

\textbf{CHORUS}

There will be more future lives after future lives...

\textbf{COURTESAN OF EGUCHI}

...so the end of our lives is beyond our knowledge.

During this \textit{kuri} section, a stage assistant (\textit{kōken}) removes the boat from the stage.

(\textit{sashi} - Incongruent)
COURTESAN OF EGUCHI
Chants quietly while still seated.
Even though some are fortunate to be born in the human world or in heaven...

CHORUS
they take a wrong path, get lost, and end up unable to plant the seeds of salvation.

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI
Or others fall into the Evil Realm of the Three Paths and the Eight Impediments...\textsuperscript{31}

CHORUS
...and they have lost the opportunity to have a religious awakening because of these sufferings.

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI
Although we happened to receive human bodies, which is extremely rare...\textsuperscript{32}

CHORUS
...we were born as sinners\textsuperscript{33} and rarer still became women drifters like floating bamboo,\textsuperscript{34}

Painful indeed to think our present state is what we get for past lives

Courtesan of Eguchi Holds back tears.
it is pitiful to be concerned.

\textit{(kuse - Congruent )}

**CHORUS**

Courtesan of Eguchi rises and dances with gestures showing her emotion.

\begin{itemize}
  \item A spring morning of crimson blossoms,
  \item mountains of crimson brocade
  \item turned out so beautifully.
  \item Yet evening winds
  \item lure the blossoms down.
  \item An autumn evening of golden leaves,
  \item Looks around by following the point of her fan.
  \item a forest of golden tie-dyed fabric.
\end{itemize}

Performs the \textit{sayō} move.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{itemize}
  \item shows beautiful color.
  \item Yet it fades in morning frost.
\end{itemize}

Moves forward to the \textit{shōmensaki}.

\begin{itemize}
  \item As autumn winds blow
  \item and the moon shines on \textit{kazura} vines,
  \item honored guests converse.
\end{itemize}

Takes two steps showing deep emotion.

\begin{itemize}
  \item They are gone, too
  \item and never come back.
  \item In a scarlet bedroom with green veils,
\end{itemize}

Points to head with fan.
lovers lie with their pillows side by side.

They will be separated, too, someday.

Moves toward the *metsuke bashira*, turns around left in a big circle, and goes to the center (*shōnaka*).

Plants and trees that have no heart
and human beings that have feelings:

Performs *sayū* move and opens fan.

both of which cannot ever evade
the impermanence of the world.

Although we all know
that this is the way it is,...

**COURTESAN OF EGUCHI**

Performs the *ageōgi* move:³⁶.

..at times, as we give ourselves
up to physical beauty,
and our covetousness is
by no means shallow.

**CHORUS**

The courtesan of Eguchi moves toward the *shōmensaki* in a zigzag floor pattern.³⁷

Or at times, as we hear a beautiful voice
and our attachment to love’s desire
is extremely deep,

Our thoughts, our words,

The courtesan of Eguchi moves slightly to *shōmensaki,*
can become the cause of deluded attachment

Indeed, as all human beings wander lost

From the *shōmensaki*, she goes to the *jōza*,

in the realm of the Six Sources of Sin,\(^{38}\)

then moves to the *metsuke bashira*. There she holds her fan aloft,

they commit the sins of the Six Senses.\(^{39}\)

and then turns left in a big circle and goes to the front of the drummers (*daishōmac*) and performs *sayū* and dance.

That is because they are misguided

by what they see and what they hear.

11.

(*waka* - Incongruent)

**CHORUS**

How interesting!

Courtesan of Eguchi relaxes at the pillar in the corner where *hashigakari* and *jōza* meet

(*shite bashira*).

[*jo no mai*]

**COURTESAN OF EGUCHI**

Starts with foot movements congruent with the introductory (*jo*) music of the hand drums

and begins a very quiet dance with the music (*hayashi*).

(*waka*)

**COURTESAN OF EGUCHI**

- Incongruent

Performs the *ageōgi* movements at the *jōza* (standard music)

How interesting,
On the ocean of the Realm of True Enlightenment
the winds of the Five Sources of Sin⁴⁰ and the Six Desires
never blow...

CHORUS

ōnorī

Performs the sayū movements.

...yet, waves of Absolute Reality in the form of illusion rise each day,

Moves a little toward the metsuke bashira.

rise each day.

12.

(unnamed- segment; incongruent )

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

Turns around left to go to daishōmae while chanting.

And why is it that waves rise?⁴² Isn’t it because upon a temporary lodging,⁴³

(norii - ōnorī)

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

At daishōmae,

we set our hearts.

CHORUS

Moves to the shōnaka.

If we did not set our hearts, then there will be no floating world of misery,...
COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

Shows deep emotion while performing the hiraki movements.

    no loved one to long for,

CHORUS

Goes to the metsuke bashira and holds the fan aloft.

    ...no one to wait for in the evening,...

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

Looks up.

    ...and no sad road of parting like a storm blowing up.\(^44\)

CHORUS

Goes to the shōnaka by turning around left, and looks around left and right.

    To be enraptured by flowers, by autumn leaves,
    by the moon, snow, by old poetry,\(^45\)

Goes to the shōnaka by turning around right and claps hands.

    all is vain.

(\textit{uta} - Congruent)

COURTESAN OF EGUCHI

    Do not set your heart upon a temporary lodging,

CHORUS

The courtesan beats time with her feet several times.

    upon a temporary lodging

She points at the monk with her fan,

    the one who warned the monk,

and gazes at him.
it was I.

Her mood changes and goes to the shōmensaki.

with this I will leave you,

So she said and then,

With her fan, she indicates she is transformed.

she revealed herself as the bodhisattva Fugen.

She turns around pointing the fan low and moves to the metsuke bashira to turn around left in a big circle.

And now her boat is a white elephant,

emitting light, white like white cloth

Beats time with the feet as if climbing up the clouds, and goes to the jōza,

the clouds she mounts,

to rise into the sky westward.

Faces the front and performs the hiraki movements.

How wonderful it seems!

Looks toward the center of the right side (wakishōmen) and beats time with the feet for ending (tome byōshi).

How wonderful it seems!
The hidden meaning of this chant is: we are recluses whose only friends are the moon. The moon is, however, our old friend from before we had renounced this world, which means that we are not entirely away from this world. Then, what would it be like to be absolutely away from this world? Saigyō also composed a poem about having the moon as an old friend, which can be found in his private poetry collection, Sankashū (Poems of a Mountain Home).

A spot known for reeds in present Takatsuki city in Osaka. Chōin, or the repetition of the same sound /do/ with Yodo is used for sonic effect here.

"Being able to see the reeds dimly" is a translation of "honomieshi," which can also translate as "being able to see spikes of the reeds," depending on the parsing. This is because the word "ho" means spikes or heads while "hono" or "honoka" indicates "dimly or faintly." This technique of double entendre is often used in Nō texts. "Ashi," or reeds is linguistically associated with "ho."

Eguchi is where the Yodo River branches off and forms the Kanzaki River. During medieval times, Eguchi flourished as a port town and became known for its yūjo, as did Kanzaki at the lower reaches of the river.

"This (temporary) world" is a translation of "yo no naka," which can also mean "a love relationship."

Saigyō used double meaning here for the word "temporary lodging." The hidden meaning of this sentence is "you cling to this world, which is after all a temporary lodging." This poem is recorded in Shikokinshū, Sankashū, and Senjūshō.


"Poem” is a translation of “kotonoha,” which literally means "leaves of words." "Kotonoha" also functions by association to introduce "kusa," or "grass" in the following sentence.
"Under leaves" is a translation of "kusa no kage," which introduces "tuyu," or "dewdrops."

"A house of prostitutes" is a translation of "na ni ou irogonomi no, ie ni wa..." "Niou" itself can mean "be fragrant" and is related to "iro," or "sexual passion," "color" (a lodging) where oblivious and hidden things often happen" is a translation of "sashimo umoregi no hito shirezu koto nomi ooki yado ni..." These phrases are an allusion to a phrase from Kokinshū kanajo by Ki no Tsurayuki: "...irogonomi no ie ni umoregi no hito no shire nu koto to narite..." This is an excerpt of the section in which the development of waka poetry and the circumstances of poetry at that time were discussed. As this excerpt indicates, Ki no Tsurayuki criticizes the quality of poetry at that time, saying that more fluttering and sentimental poems came to be popular and those poems were exchanged between lovers to communicate with each other secretly. Like fossil wood buried under ground, poems are hidden. They are not composed in formal settings anymore. Kubota Akiho, trans., Kokin wakashū Shinkokin wakashū, Nihon koten bunko 12 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1976) 4.

"Evening waves" is a translation of "iunami," or "yūnami." This phrase puns on the homophonous "iu" (say) and "yu" (evening). The double meaning here is "what is said," or "what Saigyō said." "Nami," or "waves" introduces the word, "kaeranu," or "irrevocable" in the following sentence.

The village woman is admonishing the monk because the monk is also one who renounced the world, so he should not set his heart upon such a worldly tale. The poetic exchange between Priest Saigyō and the Lady of Eguchi is in the irrevocable past.

This sentence is a translation of "Eguchi no nagare no kimi to ya mien." The double meaning of this sentence is "Eguchi no nagare," which means "the drift of the river at Eguchi" and "nagare no kimi," which indicates "a prostitute."

The village woman is the spirit of the lady of Eguchi.

"You must have seen branches of the tall plum tree at my lodging because unexpectedly you have come," is a translation of "waga yado no umeno tachie ya mie-tsu-ran, omoi no hokani, kimi ga ki-ma-seru ya," which is an allusion to a poem by Taira no Kanemori compiled in the section of spring in Shūishū. The first
part “You must have seen branches of the tall plum tree” introduces the second part “tree because unexpectedly you have come.” “Ume,” or “a plum tree” is related to “ichiju,” or “a tree” in the following sentence.

16 This is a translation of “ichiju no kage niwa yadoriken, mata ichiga no nagare no mizu...,” which is a common phrase used in Nō texts.

17 In the original text, it literally goes: “we moor to tie the knot fleeting love pillowing on waves like rapids in a river meet each other.”

18 These three sentences are a translation of “kawabune o tomete oose no namimakura, ukiyo no yume o minarashino, odorokanu mi no hakanasa yo.” Se (rapid in a river), kawa (a river), nami (waves), uki (floating, fickle, or miserable), makura (a pillow), yume (a dream), and odoroku (awaken) are all related words.

19 “Sayo” puns on the ending of the previous sentence; “...hakanasa yo.” Lady Sayo (Matsuura Sayo-hime) is a legendary beauty mentioned in several poems recorded in Man’yōshū (The Anthology of Thousand Leaves), the first great collection of Japanese poetry compiled in the late 8th century. The legend goes: Sayo-hime pledged her love to Ōtomo no Satchiko. When from Matsuura shore, he sailed for Korea on an official mission. Abhorred at being parted from him, she climbed up the mountain to wave to him. As she wept, she waved her hire (a long scarf) until the figure of his boat disappeared over the water’s horizon. That is why the mountain was named Mt. Hirefuri (Waving a long scarf). A poem by Yamanoue no Ōkura explaining why the mountain was named “Hirefuri” is also found in Manyōshū.

20 “Cathay” is a translation of “morokoshi,” which is an old name for China. “Moro” as in “morokoshi” also means “(tears) pour down,” which is related to “namida” (tears).

21 “Kata” as in Matsuura kata (Matsuura shore) puns on “kata shiku...” (spread her sleeve). “Kata” as in “kata shiku” literally means “one (of the sleeves).”
This is an allusion to a poem listed in *Kokinshū* (Collection of Old and New Japanese poetry), the first imperial anthology compiled ca. 905:

"Samushiro ni koromo katashiki koyoi mo ya
Ware o matsu ramu Uji no hashihime" (Section of Love, No. 4, anonymous)

On her straw mat
will the Lady of Uji Bridge
once again tonight spread out
a half of her garment
and wait for me

One theory says that the Lady of Uji Bridge was a guardian deity of Uji Bridge, while another says that in fact she was a *yūjo* (courtesan), or a *miko* (a shrine maiden) around Uji. It is interesting that the Courtesan of Eguchi compares her life with the Lady of Uji Bridge.

This is a translation of "yoshi ya yoshi," which means "be that as it may." "Yoshi" puns on the place name, Yoshino, south of Nara, which is known for its beautiful cherry blossoms and scenery of snow and introduces those words in the following sentence.

"Transient" is a translation of "aware..." which puns on "awa" (foam). "Awa" also puns on the beginning of the word in the following sentence, "awaba ya" (could meet).

This sentence is a translation of "tsuki ni kawarame ya," which is an allusion to a poem by the celebrated poet, Ariwara Narihira (825-80) listed in *Kokinshū*. This translation is Earl Miner's:

*Tsuki ya aranu*
*Haru ya mukashi no*
*Haru nara nu*
*Waga mi hitotsu wa*
*Moto no mi ni shite* (Section of Love, No. 5)

This is not that moon
And it cannot be this is the spring
Such as the spring I knew;
I am myself the single thing
Remaining as it ever was

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There are two interpretations of the particle “ya:” one is to take it as a rhetorical question as seen in the translation above and the other is to take it as a question. In the case of Eguchi, the former interpretation of “ya” as in “tsuki ni kawarama ya,” is adopted.

26 “The moon shines” is a translation of “tsuki mo kage sasu.” “Kage sasu” is related to “sao sasu” (ply one’s pole).

27 “Foam on the water” is a translation of “utakatano,” which is a pillow-word (makura kotoba) of “aware” (deeply, or heartily) as in “aware mukashi no koishisa o...” (our deep yearning for the old days) in the following phrase. A pillow - word is “a conventional attribute for a word, usually occupying a short 5 syllable line and modifying a word, usually the first in the next line. Pillow-words are often unclear or ambiguous in meaning, and usually carry some imagistic or rhetorically amplifying potential.” Earl Miner 163. “Utakata” puns on “uta” as in “uta e ya uta e” in the previous phrase.

28 “A song to go through the world” is a translation of “yo o wataru hitofushi o.” “Wataru” (go through) and “hitofushi” (a song) are both related to “fune” (a boat).

29 Twelve karma (jūni innen) indicates twelve categories of karma (cause and effect) which cause us beings to be involved in the circle of transmigration in the Six Paths over the three life spans: previous, present, and future lives.

Six Paths (rokudō): the six realms of transmigration: Hell (jigoku), the inferno of starvation (gaki), the realm of Beasts (chikushō), the realm of carnage (shura), the world of humans (ningen), and Heaven (ten).

30 This passage is taken from Rokudō kōshiki (Hymn of the Six Paths).

31 The human world and Heaven are the realms of the Six Paths where there is the least suffering. The Three Paths (sanzu), Hell (jigoku), the inferno of starvation (gaki), and the realm of Beasts (chikushō) contain the most suffering. The Eight Impediments (hachinan) hinder us from seeing the Buddha and listening to the Buddhist doctrine.
This is a translation of "ukegataki jinshin o uketari," which is commonly used in Buddhist writings such as Rakudō kōshiki. This phrase is also often used in Nō texts such as Sotoba Komachi, Sanemori, and Ashikari.

Being born a women was considered sinful in Buddhism.

This is a translation of "kawachiku no nagare (a drift of riverside bamboo), a metaphor for the erratic life style of courtesans or prostitutes.

Take two steps, turn right raising arms to the level, and then turn left lowering the right hand and extending the left in front of the chest. Take two more steps and turn toward raising the right hand and lowering the left hand.

Place the fan in front of the face and raise and then lower it to the right side.

Take three steps forward, turn right raising arms to the level, then turn left lowering the right hand and extending the left in front of the chest. Take five or seven steps and turn right raising the right hand and lower the left hand.

The Six Sources of Sin: "the six objects of cognition corresponding to the six sense organs. They are color and shape (rūpa), sound (Sabda), odor (gandha), taste (rasa), tangibility (sprastvya), and elements (dharma)." Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1965) 237. Here, "elements" indicate the ultimate law of all things and individual right conduct in conformity to dharma.

The six sense-organs that grasp the corresponding six objects and produce the corresponding six consciousnesses. They are the sense of vision, the sense of audition, the sense of smell, the sense of taste, the sense of touch, and the faculty of the intellect." Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary 237.

The Five sources of sin: the same as the Six objects of cognition excluding dharma, or the ultimate law of all things.

The Six Desires: desires are products of the Six senses of sin.
“Waves rise” indicates “kokoro no mayoi” (illusion).

“A temporary lodging” indicates “this world.”

“no sadness of separation” is a translation of “wakareji mo araji.” “Araji” puns on “arashi,” as in “arashi fuku” (a storm blowing up), which introduces the following word “hana” (flowers).

“The old poetry” is a translation of “furukoto.” “Furu” (old) puns on ”furu” (falling) as in “yuki no furu” (falling snow) in the previous phrase. It also refers to the poetic exchange with the Priest Saigyō.
Selected Bibliography


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