

Creating Kabuki Plays

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Creating Kabuki Plays

Context for *Kezairoku*,
“Valuable Notes on Playwriting”

By

Katherine Saltzman-Li



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Caption accompanying cover illustration:

When playwrights have prepared a new play they gather the top actors, beginning with the troupe leader, for discussion. They explain the plot ideas for the play and discuss every aspect. After settling all points, the various roles are written down and given out, lines are learned, and stage action is worked out. Then, the night before the first day of the production, the whole troupe enacts the play in a full run-through. Under the direction of the backstage manager, the stage properties are touched up for each scene, the playwrights' script is written out, and the discrepancies in lines are amended. Top actors in the troupe give succinct instructions in stage action. With kabuki, in variously imitating the manners of rich and poor, old and young, there can be no success without great ingenuity.

Illustration and caption from *Kokon yakusha taizen* (1750) in Geinōshi kenkyūkai, ed. *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Volume 6. Tokyo: San-ichi Shobō, 1973. 59.

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
I. Playmaking and Playwriting: Early Play Creation for Kabuki	14
II. An Ordered System:	
The Later Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries	43
III. <i>Kezairoku</i> : Legitimacy and Methodology	
for the “Way” of the Playwright	75
IV. Kabuki Playwriting: The Literary Connection	109
V. Kabuki Playwriting: The Oral Connection	144
Epilogue	164
Appendices	
Appendix I: Translation of <i>Sakusha Shikihō: Kezairoku</i>	168
Appendix II: Role Types in <i>Kezairoku</i>	227
Appendix III: Glossary of Transliterated Terms	229
Bibliography	248
Index	255

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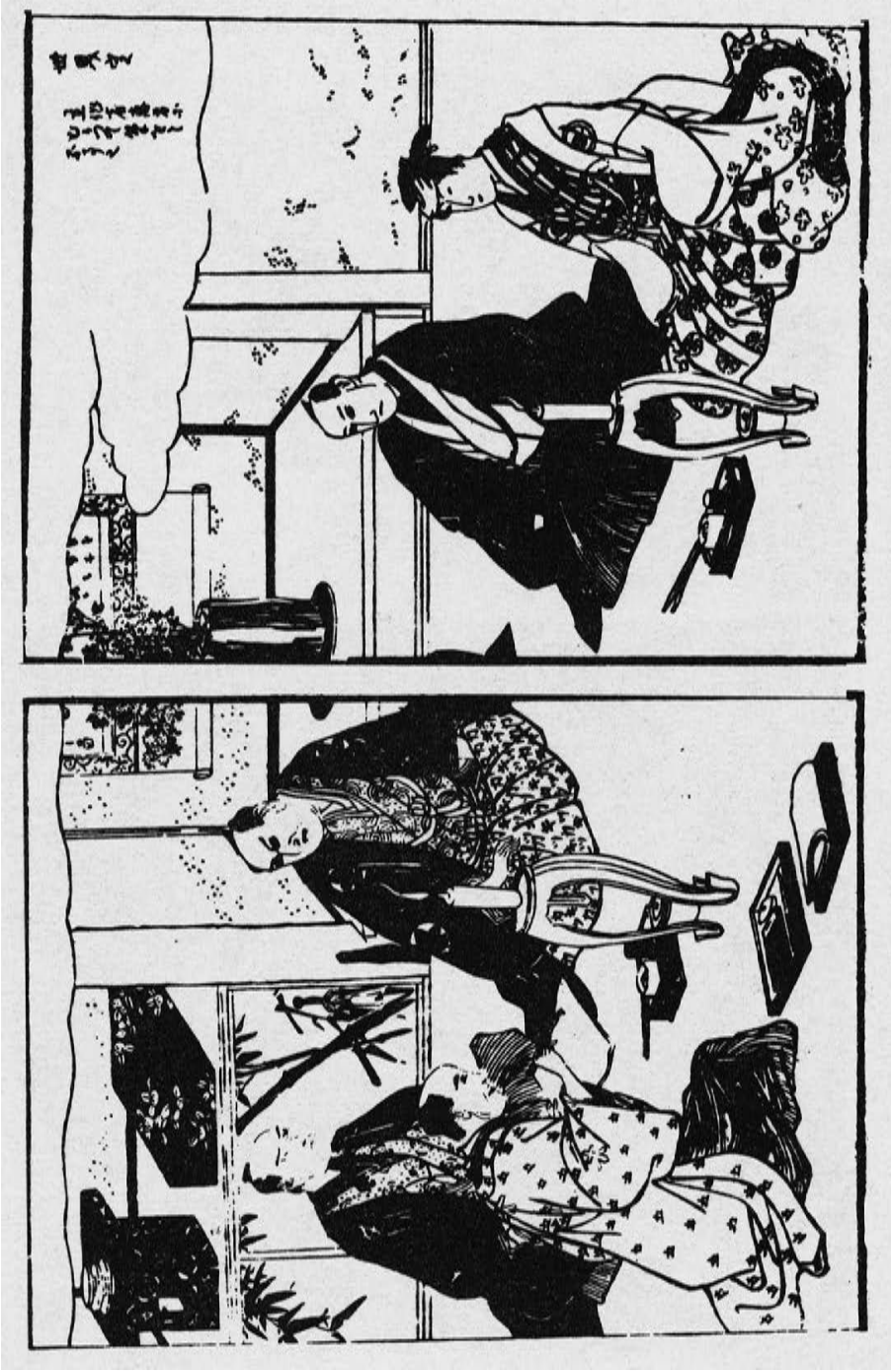
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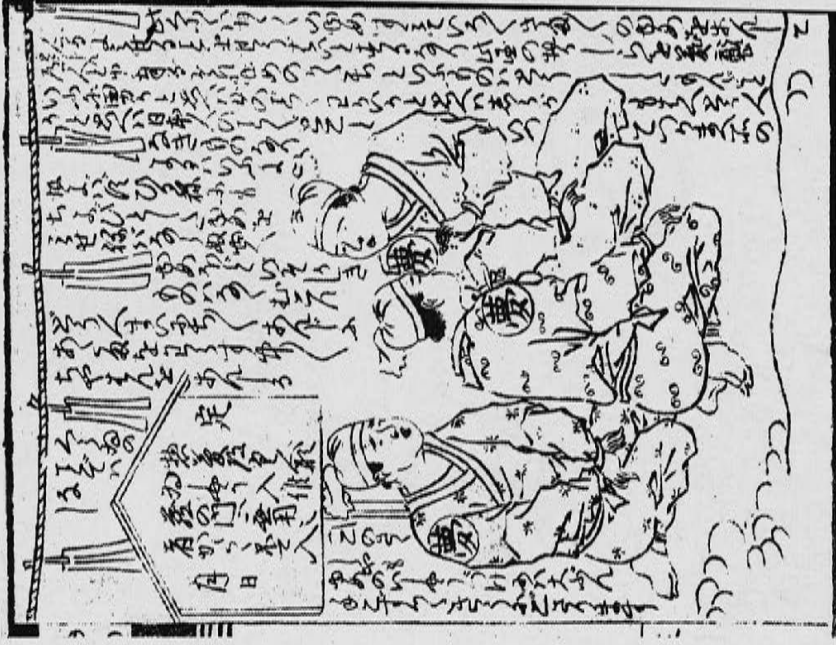
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Sekai sadame, 1803. Illustration from Hattori Yukio, et.al., ed. *Kabuki jiten*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983. 243. See Chapter 2, pp. 63-64, for a discussion of this illustration and the *sekai sadame*.



Master Dream (right) and the Dreamworkers (left) from *Final Preparation for Rosei's Dream* (*Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu*). Illustration from *Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu* in Mizuno Minoru, et al., ed. *Samtō Kyōden zenshū*, Vol. 2. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1993. 413. See Chapter 4, pp. 122-124, for a discussion of *Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu*.