

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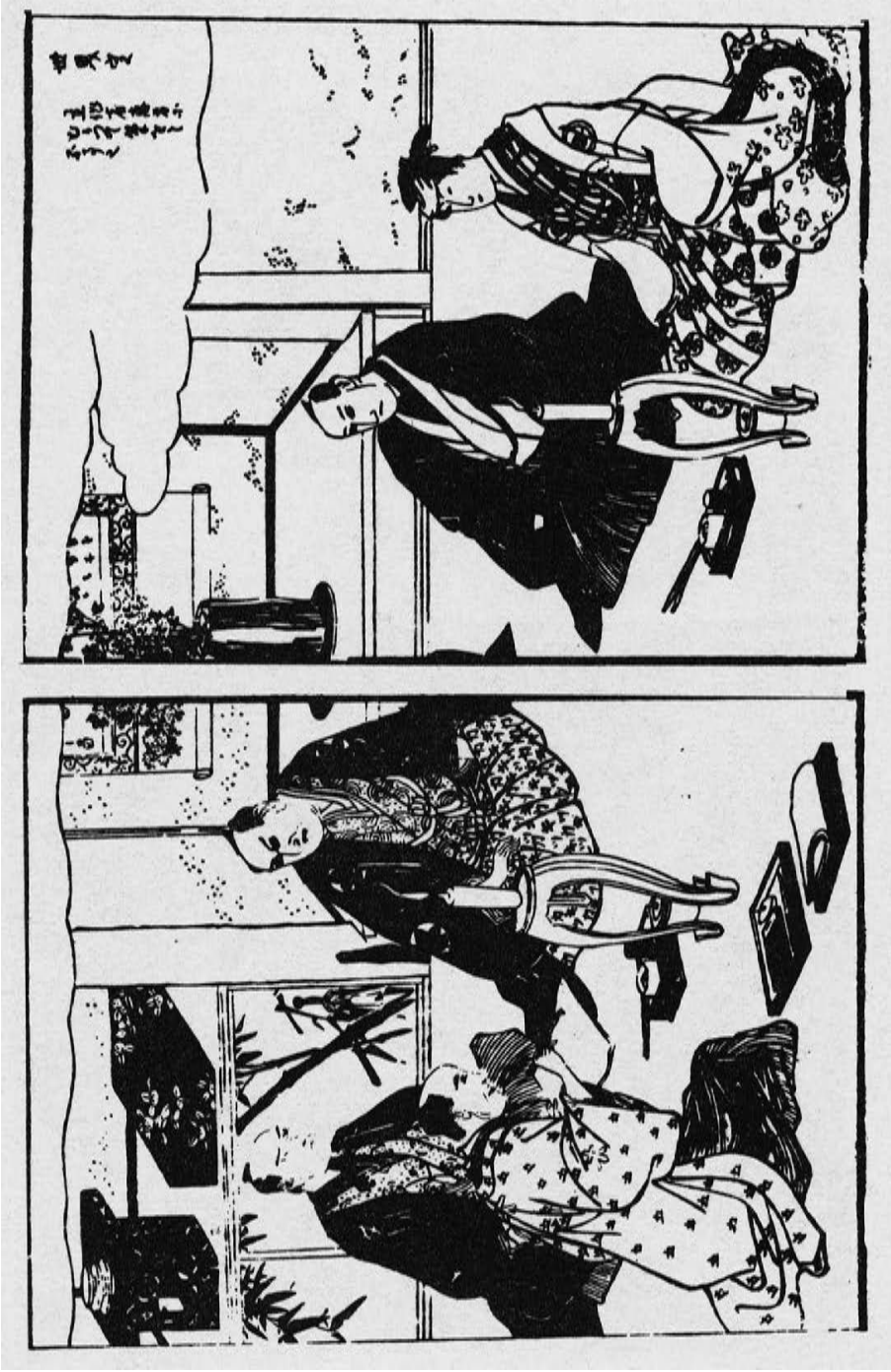
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Sekai sadame, 1803. Illustration from Hattori Yukio, et.al., ed. *Kabuki jiten*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983. 243. See Chapter 2, pp. 63-64, for a discussion of this illustration and the *sekai sadame*.



Master Dream (right) and the Dreamworkers 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*.

INTRODUCTION

We hear that writing for the theatre is inferior to other types of writing. However, in the five-act jôruri plays and the six-act kabuki plays, which are based on the moral purpose of rewarding good and punishing evil, feelings of joy, anger, grief and pleasure are directed immediately before us. As their meaning is rapidly communicated to all, irrespective of wealth, age or gender, and even to a total dunce, these plays attain their aims. While we know that the portrayal of feelings involves a fabrication, we brace ourselves as tears flow to our laps, and this is certainly due to the faithfulness with which theatrical writing cuts to the hearts of the audience. (*Kezairoku*)¹

Two hundred years after the earliest kabuki performances and less than half that again after playwrights had become an active force in kabuki troupes, this short passage expresses an apologia for kabuki as an artistic practice and kabuki playwriting as a valuable endeavor. The passage responds to ever-present official criticism concerning the moral effect of the theatrical experience and to doubts as to the literary, or we might say, artistic or verbal value of kabuki plays. Kabuki faced both complaints early in its development. Following humble beginnings at the very start of the seventeenth century and tremendous artistic development in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, kabuki came to dominate the popular stage during the eighteenth century, establishing its prominence among competing traditions, especially the jôruri, narrative puppet performances.

An earlier standard view of the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868) set into two parts, early and late, has for some time given way to a tripartite division, with the better part of the eighteenth century forming the middle period. The tripartite division eliminates the interpretation of the eighteenth century as a mere transitional period covering the shift of dominating cultural forces from the Kyoto/Osaka area to Edo. Rather, the three-part division allows us to see the culture of the eighteenth century as a unique high point in the

¹ Gunji Masakatsu, et. al., eds. *Kinsei geidôron*. Nihon shisô taikai 61. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972. 496.

two and one half centuries of Tokugawa shogunal rule. It was a period of great flourishing in the arts, including kabuki, and one in which quintessential aspects of the Tokugawa Period were crystallized. It was also a time of tremendous intellectual exploration and change, described by Tetsuo Najita in terms of political thinking as an era “particularly decisive in the metamorphosis of Tokugawa thought, which transformed itself into new forms of criticism and explanation that rejected as obsolete much of the earlier vision of political and social well-being.”² No matter which aspect of Tokugawa political, cultural or intellectual thought we study, the eighteenth century stands out as central to the period’s achievements and development.

Kabuki became the most popular form of theatre during this period, and it did much more: it also took its place as one of the most central and significant forms of Tokugawa-period cultural expression in both social and artistic terms. Socially, it was interconnected through its practitioners with top literary and visual artists as well as with important political leaders and intellectuals. It also provided an outlet for reactions to and explorations of social issues and concerns. Artistically, it was at the center of an extensive network of crossborrowing among artistic practices and displayed many of the salient characteristics of the arts of the period: interconnectedness, visuality, wit, and novelty.

The quotation heading this “Introduction,” hints at the battle that was fought for kabuki’s prominence. Arguing against the idea that kabuki (and kabuki plays) were inferior to more textually-derived forms of theatre (and their written products), the rhetoric of both politics and literature is employed to defend kabuki: the officially-stated moral purpose at the foundation of all literary creation, *kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡 (“rewarding good and punishing evil”) is offered as a shared basis of kabuki, thus declaring kabuki by association as a worthy artistic endeavor. Kabuki is found eminently capable of formulating and conveying the moral message, due especially to the embodied and immediate way it is delivered. Furthermore, the centuries-old literary discussion concerning the relationship between falsehood or “fabrication” (*uso* 嘘) and

² Najita, Tetsuo and Scheiner, Irwin. *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period, 1600-1868, Methods and Metaphors*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. 22.

“faithfulness” or reality (*jitsu* 実), as a central concern in the evaluation of any literary project is incorporated and co-opted skillfully into kabuki’s cause.³

While the quoted passage offers discussion of kabuki plays as a form of writing, several questions must be explored concerning their status as written artifacts. A discussion of their problematic status as literature is approachable through an historical examination of the process and participants in their composition, together with both an understanding of how they were transformed into theatrical experiences and the ways in which they were received outside the theatre. These issues will take up much of Chapters One and Two.

Two processes are evident in theatrical creation: playmaking and playwriting. In the pre-playwright period, plays were not written, but made through discussion, rehearsal, and performance, a process of pure “playmaking.” However, when discussing kabuki from the Genroku Period (1688-1704), after playwrights had entered the picture, “playmaking” will be used in this book to refer to the play-planning process and to the considerations and modifications made to plays primarily by actors (but also by others, including playwrights), as opposed to the playwriting work primarily carried out by top-level playwrights. There is little doubt that playmaking, in its various forms, remained at the basis of all play creation throughout Tokugawa kabuki history, before and after playwrights began to contribute to play creation. (It should be pointed out that the term playwright is somewhat problematic when used as a translation for *sakusha* 作者 or *kyōgen sakusha* 狂言作者, the usual terms used to refer to the men responsible for play creation. For simple convenience, I use “playwright” here in advance of defining its meaning and limitations later in this “Introduction”.)

Gekisho

The quoted passage on theatrical writing is taken from *Sakusha shikihō: kezairoku* 作者式法：戲財録, (Valuable notes on playwriting: a methodology for playwrights, 1801, referred to hereafter as *Kezairoku*), a Kamigata *gekisho* 劇書 (theatre treatise) concerned with kabuki playwriting of the latter half of the eighteenth century. *Kezairoku* will be examined in detail further in this book, but we

³ For more on *uso* and *jitsu* see Chapter Three.

should begin here with an understanding of the *gekisho* context into which it is placed. *Gekisho* can be defined as manuscripts written during the Tokugawa Period about any aspect of kabuki. The term is a recent one,⁴ coined for convenience by scholars, and it covers a wide range of materials. The broad definition above includes around five hundred items, with a more restricted definition excluding *yakusha hyôbanki* 役者評判記 (actors' evaluation booklets), leaving from one to two hundred manuscripts.⁵ *Yakusha hyôbanki*, published throughout most of the Tokugawa Period, are actor critique booklets which also occasionally comment on playwrights. They combined rankings and evaluations of actors with fictional pieces (often by significant contemporary writers) and also offered illustrations of scenes from the production under review. *Yakusha hyôbanki* were published for a popular audience; *gekisho* of the narrower group, on the other hand, were written often by and for professionals.

Individual examples of *gekisho* (further discussion is limited to the narrower group) are often categorized as *zuihitsu* 隨筆, or "essay" and aim at serious description and analysis of aspects of kabuki. They can be broadly divided in two ways. The first distinguishes between newly-written works and revised pre-existing works. The second contrasts those which were passed around, mostly in manuscript form and only among professionals ("secret manuscripts"), with those published for public consumption. Of course, these two methods of categorization are not mutually exclusive. To place any particular work reference must be made to both, leading to four possibilities of production as follows:

Preparation Publication	Secret Manuscripts	Published
Newly-written	A	B
Revised	C	D

⁴ In the Edo Period, these books were referred to as *gekijô sho* 劇場書, or "theatre books."

⁵ Akama Ryô gives the narrow definition as excluding *yakusha hyôbanki*, scripts, and chronologies. Akama Ryô. *Edo no engekisho: kabuki hen*. Tokyo: Waseda University Theatre Museum, 1991.

B and D were written to encourage the interest of spectators, as guidebooks for the audience as opposed to manuals for theatre practitioners. A and C were secret manuals in the tradition of Zeami's *nô* treatises: they were for the instruction of professionals by professionals and often had a guarded readership as protection from outside competition. An example of A is *Sakusha nenjû gyôji* 作者年中行事 (Annual duties of playwrights), written by Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治 (1784-1856) in 1848. It details Edo playwrights' duties month by month. It was never published, but was copied, read, and borrowed within the theatre; the author tells us it was written for the sole use of contemporary playwrights.⁶ An example of C, discussed later in this book, is *Sekai kômoku* 世界綱目 (Handbook of *sekai*), an explanatory list of story and character material (*sekai*) available to playwrights in commencing play creation.⁷ While we do not have information regarding the original compiler of *Sekai kômoku*, its significance comes from the constant use made of it by generations of playwrights who kept it continually useful by revising and updating its information.

Akama Ryô categorizes *gekisho* similarly in his work on *engekisho* 演劇書, his equivalent term for the broader category of *gekisho*. Akama charts the relationship between production and the various categories of *engekisho*, dividing all types into either insider (幕内 *makuuchi*) materials, that is, materials which are prepared by practitioners to aid production, or promotional (幕外 *makusoto*) materials which may be prepared by practitioners or commercial publishers.

All insider materials emanate from the script. Included are scripts (those prepared before rehearsals, and those with rehearsal and performance notes), part booklets or "sides" (*kakinuki* 書抜), billboards (*kanban* 看板), rough sketches for programs, and working notebooks for stage properties, music, costumes, finances, and others. Promotional materials are divided into those which promote particular plays or actors -- Akama labels this group with *miru* 見る, to look into or examine -- and those which promote kabuki more generally -- this is labeled with *hiromeru* 広める, to popularize. *Miru* materials include illustrated reading versions of plays (for example,

⁶ Geinôshi Kenkyûkai, ed. *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6. Tokyo: San-ichi Shobô, 1973. 671.

⁷ Of course, any C example originally fit into the A category.

e-iri nehon 絵入根本), play synopses (*sujigaki* 筋書), monologue collections (for example, *serifu shû* せりふ集), programs (*banzuke* 番付), music selections and others. Note that full scripts were not published during the Tokugawa Period, not in fact until the late nineteenth century (and then by commercial publishers, not theatres.) Competition among theatres -- which would happily use each other's successful material, thanks to the absence of copyright laws -- explains this circumstance.

Hiomeru materials include encyclopedias, chronologies (*nendaiki* 年代記) and books explaining backstage work (*makuuchi shôkaihon* 幕内紹介本), in other words, general and broad treatments of kabuki as opposed to the play-based *miru* group. *Yakusha hyôbanki* are the only material Akama places at the intersection of *miru* and *hiomeru*, because they could serve to support long-running productions and current actors (in such activities as salary negotiations) as well as a wider interest in kabuki.⁸

Of particular interest in the *hiomeru* category are the books explaining backstage work. From the 1780's to the end of the 1820's, kabuki was immensely popular and aficionados were interested in learning the particulars of production. Books detailing such information were continually published during this time. Akama refers to the "backstage-introduction book boom" at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹ Many of these books claim important contemporary writers and artists as authors and illustrators, and many also came with an appended work of fiction (*gesaku* 戯作) by the likes of such literary luminaries as Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776-1822) or Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848.) The abundant production of such books coincided with kabuki's heyday. Audiences wanted more than just the theatre experience: they wanted to get backstage, behind the scenes, to learn everything they could about production and practitioners. During this period, kabuki invaded every realm of personal pleasure, including outside and home entertainment (via theatre visits or the perusal of promotional materials at home), fashion, leisure pursuits, social gatherings and more. The publishing industry worked to keep up with the demands that kabuki engendered and profited handsomely.¹⁰

⁸ *Edo no engekisho: kabuki hen*, See chart on page 12.

⁹ *Edo no engekisho: kabuki hen*, 122.

¹⁰ The desire to get behind the scenes was also satisfied by new types of

The typical *gekisho* includes a table of contents and chapters (*maki* 巻) which might include a general history of kabuki (sometimes with theoretical discussion), discussion of plays, description of the stage and stage properties, information on actors, or less frequently, playwrights, all with varying degrees of emphasis. As an example, we might look at the division into chapters of *Shibai noriai banashi* 芝居乗合話 (Joint discussions on the theatre) from around 1800.¹¹ Although the table of contents is not always followed in the texts of *gekisho* (particularly in the case of works by Mimasuya Nisôji, to whom this work is most likely attributable), the organization of this example is typical of many: Chapter One: kabuki history; Chapter Two: the stage; Chapter Three: theatre personnel; Chapter Four: playwrights' duties; Chapter Five: actors.

The *gekisho* category also includes *geidan* 芸談 (practitioners' personal reminiscences and teachings.) *Geidan* were the compiled teachings of particular actors, and they were usually written down by the artist himself or by his disciples. Virtually none of them were written with the general reader in mind, but rather their purpose was to transmit a family art to one's successors. Many masters never committed their advice to paper. For example, Edo actor Ichikawa Danjûrô IV 市川團十郎 (1711-1778) gave training lectures to his disciples which were never directly recorded, although they are referred to in other *geidan*, notably that of Danjûrô V.¹² There were no *geidan* published at all for about one hundred and thirty years from after the publication of *Yakusha rongo* 役者論語 (Teachings from actors; a compilation of Genroku-period Kamigata artistic treatises published in 1776¹³) until the Meiji Period.¹⁴ Secrecy and protection from successful imitation were necessary in the highly competitive world of commercial theatre.

pictorial publications. With the pioneering 1770 *Ehon butai ôgi* 絵本舞台扇 (Portraits of actors framed by fans), series of actor portraits in everyday or backstage guise (as opposed to costumed stage-role portraits) began to be produced. See *Edo no engekisho: kabuki hen*, 130.

¹¹ The complete text is found in *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6, 265-291.

¹² Geinôshi Kenkyûkai. *Kabuki*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971. 246.

¹³ Translated by Dunn, Charles and Torigoe Bunzô as *The Actors' Analects*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1969.

¹⁴ *Kabuki*, 244.

Kezairoku

Kezairoku is an A category *gekisho*, transmitted in manuscript form until 1908 when it was first published. It is the work of Nyûgatei Ganyû 入我亭我入, a palindromic pen name, most probably for kabuki playwright Namiki Shôzô II 並木正三 (?-1807).¹⁵ Its 1801 date of composition is significant as coming at the end of a fertile period of kabuki playwriting by playwrights such as Namiki Shôzô I (1730-1773) and Nagawa Kamesuke 奈河亀輔 (?-1790) in the Kyoto/Osaka region, and slightly later, Sakurada Jisuke I 桜田治助 (1734-1806) and Namiki Gohei I 並木五瓶 (1747-1808) in Edo. *Kezairoku*'s place of composition is also significant. Its discussions center on Kyoto/Osaka practices. "The area which showed the most brilliant development of plays in this period was the Kyoto/Osaka region . . . where there were many able playwrights."¹⁶ *Kezairoku* can be seen as a compendium of practices, wisdom, and hopes of Kyoto/Osaka kabuki playwrights based on their successes.

Kezairoku shares with other artistic treatises -- for example, certain of Zeami's nô treatises -- a push to help its practitioners towards a sense of legitimation and security in the cultural/artistic sphere.¹⁷ Comparable to compilers of other artistic treatises on traditional Japanese arts, the author of *Kezairoku* aimed to pass on important knowledge of the art through a written manuscript, which required accompanying oral instruction for full comprehension. Such treatises provide a collection of teachings treated by practitioners as part revered wisdom, part working notes. *Kezairoku* is unique, however, in what it seeks to impart: it is the only treatise in the three hundred years of kabuki history devoted solely to the work of playwrights. Many other treatises have sections or specific comments addressing this subject, but only *Kezairoku* is solely concerned with it. *Kezairoku* stands out because it does not attempt a comprehensive

¹⁵ The contents include entries on practices of several playwrights, including several important ones of Shôzô II's day and earlier. Although *Kezairoku* is in some sense a compilation of received teachings, it was nonetheless a new offering put together as a comprehensive presentation of knowledge on its subject. Thus, it falls under the A category of *gekisho* rather than C.

¹⁶ Kawatake Shigetoshi. *Nihon gikyokushi*. Tokyo: Ôfûsha, 1964. 386. The "period" which Kawatake refers to covers the years 1750-1790, the time of the practices described in *Kezairoku* and close to *Kezairoku*'s 1801 date.

¹⁷ See Chapter Three for a discussion of this issue.

treatment of kabuki (as does the typical kabuki *gekisho* described earlier) but instead, sets forth information that had not been offered in kabuki *gekisho* before: the connections of kabuki playwrights to other kinds of writers and writing practices, discussions of the structural principles of play creation (including the paired concepts of *sekai* 世界 and *shukô* 趣向 which played an important role in many creative practices of the Tokugawa Period), and a more detailed delineation of playwright hierarchies and tasks than is to be found elsewhere.

I hope that this book offers convincing argument to bring its readers into agreement with the statement of pioneering kabuki scholar, Kawatake Shigetoshi, that “*Kezairoku* is a treatise on plays and playwriting which can fairly be compared in value to the nô treatises.”¹⁸ Zenchiku, and especially Zeami’s nô treatises, have been broadly discussed, interpreted, and valued by scholars and theatre practitioners, while *Kezairoku* and other kabuki *gekisho* have received comparatively little full attention. Japanese kabuki scholars have long relied on *Kezairoku* and many other *gekisho* in partial support of their arguments: because of the miscellaneous nature of their contents, many *gekisho* have been utilized in sections, applying appropriate passages to particular analyses. *Kezairoku*, however, is useful in its entirety: the complete presentation of *Kezairoku* not only helps us understand play creation in kabuki, but it also reveals, through its contents as well as its organization and rhetoric, much other information about what kabuki was, how its practitioners worked, and how kabuki connected to other Tokugawa-period arts.

Sakusha

The earliest publically-declared “playwright” identified himself as a *kyôgen tsukuri* 狂言作り, or “playmaker,”¹⁹ rather than the terms most often found in Tokugawa-period contemporary records, *kyôgen sakusha* or just *sakusha*. Had the term *tsukuri* been retained, there might be less confusion as to what the import of these men’s work was. *Sakusha*, so easily considered with its meaning of “writer” leads to the idea of “playwright.” This translation has severe limitations when employed in the kabuki context, because *sakusha* concerned

¹⁸ *Nihon gikyokushi*, 407.

¹⁹ See discussion regarding Tominaga Heibei in Chapter One.

themselves with much more than just writing. Writing, in fact, could be counted as only one of their many group tasks. However, as a hierarchy of *sakusha* developed in the eighteenth century, the more prominent the member, the more his duties included work on the writing of plays. Thus, writing stands out as a significant occupation of such men, although no *sakusha* worked only as a writer of plays.

Given both the circumstances of group authorship and the multiple duties carried out by *sakusha*, we might replace “playwright” with a different translation for *sakusha*, more appropriately, “playmaker.” As explained, any term containing “writer” (or a related word) leads easily to misunderstanding by overemphasizing one of many duties carried out by these men. It also brings us to notions of authorship, or the maker as author, as a person with a significant individual relationship to a text. Foucault writes: “The coming into being of the notion of ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences.”²⁰ Such a moment did not exist for Tokugawa-period kabuki (until perhaps the nineteenth century,) and we run risks in using terminology that in any way suggests that it did.

Foucault explains that the “author-function” does not affect all discourses similarly: the status of some is “guaranteed” by the identity of an author while for others, “their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them, stood as their guarantee.”²¹ While we may speak of stylistic and/or thematic preoccupations in the plays associated with certain significant kabuki playwrights, the construction of an author-person was always hindered by the plural voices contributing to the process of play creation. The status of individual plays in the kabuki repertoire is more certainly “guaranteed” by factors other than an author-person; kabuki plays have writers but not necessarily authors. This is what Mimasuya Nisôji must have meant by his otherwise enigmatic statement, “*Kyôgen sakusha* are men of letters, and yet they are not.”²²

²⁰ Foucault, Michael. “What Is an Author?” In Harari, Josue V., ed. *Textual Strategies, Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979. 141.

²¹ “What Is an Author?”, 149.

²² 狂言作者は文人で文人にあらず *kyôgen sakusha wa bunjin de, bunjin ni*

Neither were kabuki plays anonymous discourses of literature or of scientific discovery which could be guaranteed respectively by their “ancientness” or by their relation to “an established or always redemonstrable truth.”²³ Rather, they carry multiple associated names, many still identifiable -- groups of “playwrights,” actors, managers, audiences and censors -- where a cooperative wrestling with cultural preoccupations and traditions “created” a play and guaranteed its validity. Gestural and vocal possibilities of the actors set the parameters for the expression of these preoccupations and traditions: actors did not interpret a text, rather the text itself, as embodied by the actors for whose skills it was created, offered a meta-cultural interpretation with a group voice. As kabuki playwrights came to have a permanent presence in kabuki production, they transmitted that voice, but they held no ownership rights. “Membership in a systematic ensemble” of considerable complexity grounds most kabuki plays, rather than the names of certain primary individuals who worked to create them.

One of Foucault’s defining characteristics of the author is his/her being subjectable to punishment:

Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, “sacralized” and “sacralizing” figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive. In our culture (and doubtless in many others), discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods; it was essentially an act - an act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous. Historically, it was a gesture fraught with risks before becoming goods caught up in a circuit of ownership.²⁴

Punishment in the kabuki context was meted out to the full crowd. Censorship “punished” each of the contributing groups mentioned: practitioners by denying them their livelihood and sometimes personal freedom, audiences by the suspension or cessation of a central source of pleasure and significance in their lives, and even the censors themselves, whose actions often resulted in renewed efforts

arazu. From *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* in *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 674.

²³ “What Is an Author?”, 149.

²⁴ “What Is an Author?”, 148.

by kabuki troupe members to thwart them. Attempts at outwitting the censors lessened censorship's effectiveness and the power of the principles its enforcers sought to uphold, but such attempts were also "fraught with risks" as the history of official closings of plays and theatres shows us. Plays could not be protected from censors nor thieving competitors, save through dodging and secrecy. They were not owned goods or under copyright, but communal acts which registered boundaries and expressed a shared world view.

Escaping from the term "playwright" safeguards against inappropriate notions of authorship and overly-restricting conceptions of the range of work of the men known as *sakusha*. Nevertheless, the term "playmaker" is so broad as to render it potentially ineffective in setting aside the work and place of these men. Therefore, with these warnings on its limitations, and because of its convenience, I will retain the term "playwright" as the translation for *sakusha*. As I will often be discussing the playwriting duties of these men, the term also seems the best choice, but I certainly do not mean to restrict our view of the fuller context of *sakusha* work to imply that other duties were not also significant.

The dual aim of this book is to make *Kezairoku* available to new readers and to promote recognition of play creation as a central activity in Tokugawa kabuki practice. To effect this aim, I begin with an historical and descriptive overview of the development of playwriting practices (Chapters One and Two). In this discussion, I draw not only on *Kezairoku*, but also on other *gekisho*, including the aforementioned *Sakusha nenjû gyôji* and several others. Discussions of, first, the development from playwriting as an important auxiliary activity of leading actors to a separate responsibility within the theatre, and second, the relationships playwrights came to maintain with actors, are explored in these chapters. I do not limit my discussion to the Kamigata practices of *Kezairoku*, but consider the Edo situation as well. Next, I offer an analysis of *Kezairoku* as a whole and in some of its individual aspects (Chapter Three). Comments on playwriting such as those in *Kezairoku* exist nowhere else in such concentration. They are invaluable to us as a corrective to the depiction of playwrights in the kabuki theatre as men who were little other than lackeys to the actors, a depiction which

attributes to actors alone skill and artistic intent. Finally, I set the historical development and methods of kabuki play creation into a broader context by examining the networks of other creative artists and practices with whom kabuki professionals were interconnected (Chapters Four and Five).

CHAPTER ONE

PLAYMAKING AND PLAYWRITING: EARLY PLAY CREATION FOR KABUKI

In earlier times, playwriting did not exist as a profession. Important actors would assemble to establish the plot. Lines would first be uttered at rehearsal on a trial basis and then fixed, so there was nothing like what we know as the script. With the day's play in sections, the six-part construction like we have today was internalized by the actors. Later, actors' memories weakened and they would record in memos the performances of earlier leading actors in order to remember them. Between then and now, practices changed little by little, and the changes were added to those memos. The manuscripts thus produced were the earliest scripts. Plays became increasingly detailed, and playwriting was recognized as a separate profession. To sum up, plots were created little by little with the actors, these plots were then developed by playwrights, and many actors wrote plays. (*Kezairoku*)¹

With the restrictions dealt kabuki over the first half of the seventeenth century, it began its change from an erotic sideshow to a dramatic art. During the ensuing decades, the improvements in the physical theatre, the effect of the change from single-act plays to multiple-act plays beginning in 1664, and later the increasingly developed storylines (due in part to the influence of *jôruri* on kabuki) necessitated written efforts by actors and later by troupe members specializing in creating plays. Early kabuki plays after the ban in 1652 on *wakashû kabuki* 若衆かぶき (youths' kabuki) derived from *nô* and *kyôgen* or shared plots with earlier puppet plays, and thus the need for professional "playwrights" had not existed. This need arose as plays developed into increasingly complex entities. With the growing emphasis on the art of kabuki, plays required more attention. The production of good plays became a major contributing factor to the success of a theatre, and playwrights came to take a necessary and valued place of importance in the creation and performance preparation of kabuki plays.

¹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 502.

In his *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyū* (a study of kabuki playwrights) Kawatake Shigetoshi offers the following three-part periodization of kabuki plays and the work of playwrights:

- 1.) Infancy (*yōranki* 揺籃期); literally “the cradle period”); from kabuki’s beginnings until the Kanbun Period (1661-1673), sixty to seventy years;
- 2.) Growth (*hattatsuki* 発達期); from Kanbun until Hōreki (1751-1763), seventy to eighty years;
- 3.) Greatness (*taiseiki* 大成期); from Hōreki until Taishō (1912-1926), somewhere under two hundred years²

During the first period, the position of playwright did not exist as a separate function in kabuki troupes. Nor can we speak of script writing. This is the period of improvisation (*kuchidate* 口立), in which one-scene plays (*hanare kyōgen* 放れ狂言) were created through the manipulation of individual skills and pre-existing plot material. Such material included folk dances, current popular songs - often with unaltered lyrics - and borrowed material from other dramatic forms such as *nō* and *kyōgen*. Skits were comprised of simple, often humorous incidents with few characters. Top actors would sketch out a storyline idea, and individual lines would be improvised and determined by the actors. Much like Commedia dell’Arte, or certain other world dramatic forms, actors worked with types in plot, character and actions and their roles were defined by set actions and gestures. Actor/playmakers’ talent showed in how they adapted, arranged and brought together chosen material. This improvisational method meant that performances of the same program might vary; audience desires and mood were the first criteria to be considered in preparation and during each performance.

As play preparation moved through different historical stages of practice, some of the features of this early method remained significant. Individual skills and pre-existing material remained the building blocks of play creation, and audience reaction was always paramount in determining not only the run of a play, but also day-to-day alterations and nuances in acting and performance.

² Kawatake Shigetoshi, *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyū*. Tokyo Tokyodō, 1940. 2.

Kawatake defines the Period of Growth - what we will call Genroku kabuki - as that in which the Way of the playwright (*sakusha michi* 作者道) was established, that is, when playwrights began to take over and carry out some of the work originally conducted by actors, and the Period of Greatness as that in which the playscript (*kyakuhon* 脚本) attained its form and function as integral to kabuki production. With Genroku kabuki, “there was a decline in performances in which popular songs accompanied dances, and dramatic material greatly increased. Two-act and three-act plays began.”³ During the period of Genroku kabuki, scripts were not published nor do any stage scripts remain. There are only plot retellings - in the form of illustrated playbooks (*e-iri kyôgenbon* 絵入り狂言本) or as excerpts from *gekisho* - to tell us of the kinds of performed plays before the Hôreki Period (1751-1764). I would like to consider Kawatake’s first period as that of pure playmaking as I will define it, and the second and third periods as those in which playmaking and playwriting were combined in various degrees. Kawatake’s first two periods are examined in the present chapter. His Period of Greatness will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Play Creation: Pre-Genroku

The separate professional title of playwright in the Japanese performing arts is a Tokugawa-period phenomenon. As *Kezairoku* tells us, playwriting did not always exist as a profession.⁴ This was true not only of kabuki: in pre-Tokugawa performing arts, there was no position in performing groups for anyone resembling an independent playwright. Material came from “tradition,” that is, from the crafting over time of performance stories through the creative efforts of chief reciters or performers. These men were best positioned to prepare plays which matched their own abilities, as well as those of any co-performers, and which gave voice to the messages of their arts. The *heikyoku* 平曲 tradition of accompanied recitation concerning the Genpei wars of the late twelfth century is an example of oral narration created in this way: it developed and changed over time through the succession of

³ *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyû*, 6. For more regarding the beginning of multiple-act plays, see the section in this chapter entitled “*Play Creation: Genroku*.”

⁴ See quote at the head of this chapter.

performers and performances through which it was transmitted. In terms of the acting arts, *nô* comes to mind first as an art in which playwrights were actors and where the finest performers have come down to us also as the finest playwrights. Moliere and Shakespeare, who both wrote to perform as well as to keep their troupes in business, find a Japanese counterpart in Zeami, not only as fellow performer/playwright/troupe manager, but also as an actor/playwright who employed similar creative methods: taking pre-existing plot material and adjusting it to the language and interests of contemporary audiences.

In the case of early kabuki plays, those roughly of Kawatake's Period of Infancy, pre-existing material used as a basis for improvisation was visual, gestural and simple in plot, and thus earliest kabuki had little need of verbal fashioners. Actor/playmakers of this period are rather known to us for their crystallization of defining performance methods and kinds of preferred plot material. Narration and dialogue were mostly borrowed or conventional and inserted on the spot. Concerning plot material for example, Tominaga Heibei (富永平兵衛, active in the latter seventeenth century, exact dates unknown), kabuki's self-proclaimed first professional playwright, records three pre-Genroku play stories in *Gei kagami* 芸鑑 (Mirror on the art),⁵ one of the seven short treatises that together make up *Yakusha rongo*. The first play story consists of an encounter of reunion between a *ronin*, Ben'emon, and his former master, Uneme. The second relates a small incident of love and jealousy, offering a context for the incorporation of dance and contemporary song. The third describes a scene of meeting between a high-level courtesan and her lover, ending in a dance performed by the courtesan. Heibei notes at the end of his description of the third play (the statement which also closes *Gei kagami*): "There are many plays such as I have described above but I have not included any more because they are so many and all alike."⁶

The stories recorded by Heibei are very rudimentary as plots. Each of his entries combines a narrative of stage action with dialogue. The entries are short, but they seem to suffice as both description and "script." Consider the following from the first play description:

⁵ Translated as "Mirror for Actors" in *The Actors' Analects*.

⁶ *The Actors' Analects*, 47.

Uneme says “Wait a moment. As you have said, today I am my lord’s representative. I will offer you the sake cup as a sign that shortly you will be relieved of your disgrace and will be re-established in your domain.” The other exclaims in gratitude and once more prostrates himself. Uneme opens his fan, and uses it as a token cup for the moment, since he is on a journey on horseback. He commands his page to pour out the wine, and he too uses his fan as a wine-jar and mimes the pouring. Uneme makes a show of tasting. Then he extends it to Ben’emon and bids him drink. Ben’emon says “This is a sign of the depth of your kind feelings. Usually I do not drink, but let me partake in good measure.” He mimes receiving the cup three times and drinking therefrom. “Time passes,” he says, and as he rises to his feet, as if intoxicated by the wine his lord has given him, he staggers as he sings a song, stammering out the praises of his native province and his thanks to his lord. Uneme sits on his horse, his face wet with tears, and leaves him: “Farewell, farewell.”⁷

One can well imagine actors staging the enactment of the play with only this sketch to work from. The dialogue is given as a record of performed words interspersed in the narrative, leaving room for other performers to adjust or adapt the lines according to new performance situations. The display of vocal and mime skills amid the concentrated energy of a significant meeting ties this play, as well as the other two recorded in *Gei kagami*, to a heritage of performance practices, including *nô* and *kyôgen*, popular dances, and songs. This first description (of which the above quote is the final section) suggests a direct descendance from *nô* in its concentration on an emotional meeting occurring mid-journey with potentially altering significance. The use of props in this scene, and the mimed actions that they help to represent, also connect to antecedent practices associated with *nô* and *kyôgen*.

In looking back from a time of relatively complex demands regarding play creation – a situation that his own printed declaration as playwright heralded⁸ – Heibei comments (with specific reference to the second scene he narrates,) “Thinking of it now, it seems stupid that such a piece was a great success, but the audiences at the time thought that such plays were amusing, and the actors took a great deal of trouble over learning and playing in them.”⁹ In pre-Genroku

⁷ *The Actors’ Analects*, 40.

⁸ For Heibei’s declaration see quote on p. 25.

⁹ *The Actors’ Analects*, 43.

kabuki, the preparation of the material of enactment proceeded on very different lines from later kabuki practice. Pre-Genroku playmaking began with the combination of a basic scene idea and the possibilities of character portrayal and acting technique embodied in available actors. It continued in rehearsal and performance as scene elements were brought together and then performed against audience reaction. As Heibei tells us, much work went into play preparation, but there were no specialists devoted solely to such work and little idea of the play as separate from its enactors.

Playmaking and Playwriting

With the advent of the playwright, playmaking remained a crucial part of play creation. However, there were two methods at work after the playwright became a troupe fixture, playmaking and playwriting. While in the pre-playwright period, playmaking was the primary method of play creation, playwriting became an additional and complimentary method after playwrights entered the picture at around the beginning of the Genroku Period. As we shall see, plots and play structure became increasingly complicated during Genroku, opening the way for playwriting as a significant activity in the preparation of new productions. After this development occurred, playmaking came to signify two processes. The first was a schedule of play planning, to be examined in the next chapter. The second was the considerations and modifications rendered plays, primarily by actors, after and between playwriting efforts. Tominaga Heibei's play descriptions summarized above give an idea of how plays were "made" in the early period. Then from the Genroku Period, playmaking functioned in conjunction with playwriting in the creation of play material. Delving into Genroku and later documents, we can get an idea of how playmaking continued to function once this change occurred.

Gekisho, and in particular *geidan*, are full of statements that show how performance continued to shape play material. These statements include explanations of the origin of scene-specific acting. For example, Ichikawa Danjûrô II (1688-1758) recounts how he came to make a "strong impression" in the play *Shibaraku* 暫 (originated by his father Danjûrô I, 1660-1704) by delaying his importance entrance in reaction to another actor's on-stage defiance:

When I first came from the Yamamura Theatre to settle in at the Nakamura Theatre after my coming of age, the play “Shibaraku” was to be performed. Yamanaka Heikurô I, who used to appear in plays with my father, Danjûrô, despised being paired with me because of my youth. I was supposed to call out “Shibaraku!” at the point when Heikurô touches the ledger, but he wouldn’t do it. Because of this, I remained silently waiting behind the curtain. People came from the dressing room four or five times, but it would have appeared weak to proceed, and after a little while, the play began to drag. Finally, realizing that he had no choice, Heikurô reached up to his forehead, at which point I entered with “Shibaraku!” This made a strong impression. Actors succeed by strong perseverance; even removing your costume and going home may be a necessary response to the circumstances.¹⁰

Such passages are very important because they describe how many popular scenes and significant moments were created. When an unplanned moment in acting was received favorably by an audience, it often became the way in which a scene was performed thereafter. Such scenes were not only written but also “made” in reaction to performance conditions and audience response. This is one form of playmaking that remained significant throughout kabuki history.

Many other entries in *Yakusha rongo*, and other *gekisho* recording Genroku practices show playmaking at work. Actors’ skills and performance specialities continued to form the basis of program planning and play creation. Consider the following entries from *Kokon yakusha rongo sakigake* 古今役者論語 (Pioneering Analects from Past and Present Actors; hereafter *Kokon*) a 1772 Edo-based counterpart and successor to *Yakusha rongo*¹¹:

The Late Ichikawa Sôsaburô said, “True villains are evil to the extent that they are acted with civility. There should be no humor.”¹²

“The cause of enchantment in love scenes performed in the bravado style should not be personal looks. Rather, performing with an

¹⁰ From *Kokon yakusha rongo sakigake* in *Kinsei geidôron*, 486.

¹¹ *Kokon* is also the source for the previous quote regarding *Shibaraku*.

¹² *Kinsei geidôron*, 482.

atmosphere in which the character is captivated by superior quality or simple innocence is best.”¹³

Matsushima Moheiji said, “The lower front part of a fool’s kimono should hang low. When tall people wear vertically-striped garments and short people wear horizontally-striped garments, they appear foolish.”¹⁴

“If you turn your body directly stage front, your performance will make a weak impression, but if you get there by dancing a triangular course, it will make a strong impression. Generally, with bravado-style acting, you should thrust your feet outward.”¹⁵

These actor statements address acting, costume and staging concerns. They provide a kind of actors’ manual, but they also offer useful advice for effective playwriting. They form a starting point for playmaking and playwriting and the basis of playwright and actor collaboration in play creation.

A few statements from *Kokon*, by actor Ichikawa Danjûrô II, more directly relate to the writing of plays by addressing diction. For example:

“Warriors say, ‘Very well, sir’ in a literary style when the play is based on classical tales.”¹⁶

“Samurai say, ‘Very well, sir’ with the words of actual speech.”¹⁷

“You can only stutter over the syllables sa-shi-su-se-so and ka-ki-ku-ke-ko. You cannot stutter over a-wi-u-we-wo, ha-hi-fu-he-ho, ra-ri-ru-re-ro, ma-mi-mu-me-mo or ta-chi-tsu-te-to. If you use other syllables for stuttering, the dialogue won’t be audible, only visible. . .”¹⁸

¹³ *Kinsei geidôron*, 484. This statement is attributed to Ichikawa Danjûrô II. “Bravado style” is translated from *aragoto* 荒事, a brash and large-gestured style of acting first developed by the Ichikawa Danjûrô acting line.

¹⁴ *Kinsei geidôron*, 482.

¹⁵ *Kinsei geidôron*, 483. Attributed to Ichikawa Danjûrô II.

¹⁶ *Kinsei geidôron*, 485.

¹⁷ *Kinsei geidôron*, 485.

¹⁸ *Kinsei geidôron*, 488.

Such statements point to shared concerns of actors and playwrights, as actors' verbal possibilities had to be supported by the dialogue prepared for them. Even as playwrights began to take over important aspects of play preparation, top actors mostly retained charge of their lines and speeches. Some went even further in their playwriting activities. Actors like Danjûrô II or the Kamigata actor Kaneko Kichizaemon devoted ample energy to playwriting itself, usually in collaboration with other playwrights and actors. Danjûrô II was the premier Edo actor of his day, and like his father, he also put much of his creative energy into playwriting. Thus, it is not surprising to find his recorded comments addressing "the cause of enchantment," or the portrayal of "true villains," or especially the very specifics of language itself, the playwright's foremost tool.

From the Genroku Period, kabuki plays were created through the give and take of playmaking and playwriting efforts. A balance was maintained even after playwriting became a significant activity in the second half of the eighteenth century. With the increased importance placed on writing, as part of the creative process, came a counterbalancing increase in codified acting techniques, role types and acceptable sources for plots, the available material with which plays were initially constructed. Creativity in playwriting was determined by these preconditions, but in turn, they were dependent on written efforts to give them context, flow and renewed appeal. Playmaking and playwriting were not independent activities: in Genroku and after, one did not exist without the other.

Play Creation: Genroku

In pre-Genroku kabuki, reusable play settings and stories offered recognizable situations and character types, leading to an economy in the vocabulary of expression and reception. Like Shakespeare's fools and clowns, these types were "steeped in a tradition that is not primarily one of character but of social and dramatic functions."¹⁹ The audience related to these functions through the reality of its everyday experience and through the accepted conventions of dramatic practice. The early improvisational method of play creation (*kuchidate*) relied on both the actor's and audience's active

¹⁹ Weimann, Robert. *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. 12.

consciousness of a distilled social view as filtered through dramatic conventions.

In Genroku practice, new conventions came into existence. Many of the defining characteristics of kabuki, as it is known today, were codified: the centrality and development of patterns of acting and production (*kata*) and of fixed scene and dance formulas (*koto* 事); the increase in number of role types (*yakugara* 役柄); the importance of family acting lines (*ie* 家) and acting traditions (*ie no gei* 家の芸) that differed according to lineage and region; and for our purposes, the new place held by the playwright as a member of the troupe. In general, the period is characterized by a shift of focus - on the part of actors and others involved with kabuki - from concern with the physical attributes of the actor to concern with skill in acting. This shift is reflected in documents from the time, particularly *yakusha hyōbanki*, which began to evaluate and rank actors on ability rather than appearance.

Basic acting and character types, first growing out of inherited performance traditions and the practice of improvisation, were developed and enhanced during the Genroku Period. So, for example, the Genroku Kamigata actor Sakata Tōjūrō 坂田藤十郎 (1647-1709) developed a kind of realistic, “stationary acting” (*i-kyōgen* 居狂言) in courtesan-hiring plays (*keiseigai* 傾城買) in which he perfected his soft-style acting (*yawarakagoto* 柔らかごと, later called *wagoto* 和事, gentle-style acting.²⁰) These scenes appealed to the refined tastes of Kamigata audiences and their interest in contemporary interactions between courtesans and their customers in the pleasure districts. Similarly, the Genroku Edo actor Ichikawa Danjūrō I displayed his bravado-style acting in fantastic pieces which greatly appealed to the taste of his Edo audiences.

Multi-act plays became standard by Genroku. It is evident from Heibei's play examples that connected, continuous plots were not an early development in kabuki. Then in 1664, twelve years after the prohibition on *wakashū kabuki*, a revolution occurred in Osaka and Edo at the same time when the first two-act plays were produced. *Hinin no katakiuchi* 非人の敵討 (the outlaw's revenge; also called *Hinin no adauchi* 非人の仇討) was performed at the Osaka theatre of

²⁰ The term *wagoto* was not used until the 1720's, after which it replaced the previously-used term, *yawarakagoto*. (See Torigoe Bunzō, *Genroku Kabuki Kō*. Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1991. 321-322 and *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 178.)

Araki Yojibei I 荒木与次兵衛 (1637-1700) with Araki Yojibei in the title role.²¹ In the same year, *Imagawa shinobiguruma* 今川忍び車 (the hidden cart of Imagawa) was performed in the Edo theatre of Miyako Dennai I 都伝内 (seventeenth century, exact dates unknown).²² Two-act plays were soon followed by three and four-act plays. Multi-act plays quickly became standard, a development audiences were prepared for by their experiences in the competing jōruri theatre, which had long featured multi-act plays. With the increasing length and complexity of kabuki plays, a place was opened up for men specializing in their creation.

While the history of playwriting within kabuki troupes points to the development of play creation from an adjunct duty of actors to a duty shared by members of an elaborate hierarchy of collaborating playwrights, writing as a separate function within the troupe had an inauspicious beginning:

On the First Appearance of the Author's Name on the Program

Tominaga Heibei was a writer who came after Yagozaemon, and his was the first instance of a writer's name appearing, as it does now, along with the list of actors in the program of the first performance of the year. This was at the *kaomise* late in 1680, and on that occasion it brought him a good deal of enmity from all sides²³

The enmity which greeted Tominaga Heibei's proclamation indicates the resistance non-actor playwrights must have encountered in early kabuki. It was a daring act to claim independence for an occupation

²¹ For a description of aspects of this play, see *Sadoshima nikki*, Item VIII in *The Actors' Analects*, 145-147.

²² Araki Yojibei I was one of the leading actors and troupe leaders of the Kamigata region in the latter part of the 17th century. He was active from the late 1640's until his death, particularly from the Tenpō Era (1673-1681). He was famous for dancing the *roppō* 六方/法, as recorded in *Sadoshima nikki* (*The Actors' Analects*, 138.) Miyako Dennai I was active from the mid-1620's until the mid-1660's, first as an actor in Kyoto and then as a theatre manager in Edo. He founded Edo's *Miyako-za* 都座.

²³ *The Actors' Analects*, 95. Dunn and Torigoe use "writer" as their translation for *sakusha*. The *kaomise* 顔見世 was the first production of the kabuki calendar year. For more on *kaomise*, see Chapter Two.

previously undifferentiated, especially as it potentially challenged the creative authority of those most central to kabuki, the actors. However, Heibei was one of the many who began to take such steps and leave their printed names to prove it.

Genroku evidence of playwright efforts has come down to us in the form of play retellings printed in the illustrated playbooks (*e-iri kyôgenbon*.) Other evidence includes the earliest records on the process of play creation and the work of the playwright in *gekisho* and diaries (*Yakusha rongo*'s seven treatises and the diary of Kaneko Kichizaemon comprising the outstanding early examples where such information can be found.) We can compare two descriptions of the beginnings of kabuki playwriting, one from *Kezairoku* (see the quoted passage that begins this chapter) and a second from a Genroku-period source, *Soku nijinshû* 続耳塵集 (Sequel to "Dust in the Ears") included in *Yakusha rongo*. *Soku nijinshû* was written near the time of the practices it records, while *Kezairoku*'s brief historical description of playwriting summarizes after the fact. However, both documents give generally similar accounts. The *Kezairoku* quote tells us that playwriting was born from the need to remember performances of earlier great actors and that the need to record both changes in practices and increasing detail in plays led to the recognition of playwriting "as a separate profession." Entry XXI of *Soku nijinshû* reads as follows:

The normal way of working was that after the discussion of a new play and a decision upon it, the construction of each scene was worked out. Then the actors in a scene were called together, placed in a circle, and taught the speeches orally. They stood there until they made their exit, and then either rehearsed it again in what was termed the *kokaeshi*, "little going over," or the authors worked out the speeches for the next section, and got them fixed by repetition. The action in scenes in which a distinguished member of the company appeared was worked out by this member himself. With the revival of *kabuki* the plots of plays become more difficult, and then actors were told to take their writing brushes and write down the headings; they used to write about a line of the beginning of each speech which had been allotted to them. The complete writing down of what are called *kyôgen-bon* started with Kaneko Ikkô.²⁴

²⁴ *The Actors' Analects*, 118. Kaneko Ikkô 金子一高 is another name for Kaneko Kichizaemon 金子吉左衛門 (died 1728.)

This description of the advent of playwriting accords with the *Kezairoku* quote. We learn from *Soku nijinshû* that “the discussion of a new play and a decision upon it” (*Kezairoku*: “Important actors would assemble to establish the plot.”) was followed by rehearsals during which lines were worked out and “fixed by repetition.” Playwriting was then said to enter the picture when plots (*shukô* 趣向²⁵) became more complicated, so that it became necessary to write down the beginning of speeches to keep the play flowing during rehearsal. *Kezairoku* presents playwriting as the creation of memorandums which aided long-term collective memory of performance practices, while *Soku nijinshû* suggests a need for writing as an aid to performance preparation. In effect, these accounts are the same: writing became necessary to remember and develop plots and to aid actors in learning their parts.

Three types of men became active as playwrights during the Genroku Period. The first were top actors who were also playwrights, for example, Ichikawa Danjûrô I. The second were independent playwrights who had first been actors, for example Tominaga Heibei. The third type of playwright included men who trained and worked only as such, Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653-1724) being the outstanding early example, as well as the sole example in Genroku. The appearance of the Chikamatsu-type playwright came later in Edo than in Kamigata. The strength of the jôruri tradition in Kamigata led to a relative emphasis on word crafting, and this partly accounts for the earlier debut there of the specialized playwright.

The first type stands out as the most typical and most productive of the Genroku Period. Although there are no extant scripts, Ichikawa Danjûrô I produced many excellent plays. Danjûrô (as a playwright he was known as Mimasuya Hyôgo 三升屋兵庫) stands out as the leading Edo playwright of his time, about whom Kawatake Shigetoshi wrote, “Like Kanami and Zeami of the nô, he was both a great actor and a great playwright.”²⁶ He wrote or co-wrote over fifty plays, which were primarily tailored to his own developing artistic style of *aragoto* acting and which catered to Edo theatre-goers’ interest in supernatural characters and events.²⁷ Danjûrô was

²⁵ See Chapters Three and Four for more on this term.

²⁶ *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyû*, 53-54.

²⁷ For English-language synopses and interpretations of Danjûrô’s plays, see Lee, William James. “Genroku Kabuki: Cultural Production and Ideology In Early

admired for his learning, which was seen as a contributing factor to the success of his plays. According to a Jōkyō Era (1684-1687) description: “He was superior in learning, and there was nothing he could not effect in (play) composition.”²⁸ His “superior” learning included a strong interest in the very popular poetic form of *haikai*. He was the first actor to assume a *haimyō* 俳名, a name taken in one’s capacity, professional or amateur, as a *haikai* poet. Following Danjūrō I’s example, many actors took *haikai* names.

Danjūrō I provides a good example of the actor/playwright of an early period when plays were mostly produced by the actors themselves. According to Suwa Haruo, there was no distinction in importance in Danjūrō I’s mind between himself as actor and as playwright, and Suwa views his lengthy discussion on Danjūrō I as playwright as providing “a key to an attempt at an explanation of the essential nature of Genroku-period Edo kabuki.”²⁹ It is clear from Danjūrō’s diary (kept from 1690-1696) that he saw acting and playwriting as two separate activities, and that he saw both as critical to the creation of a successful play. He knew that he had little company in the high value he placed on playwriting. It was certainly not mirrored in the thinking of play producers, as Laurence Kominz makes clear in his discussion of Danjūrō’s comments regarding playwright salaries:

[Danjūrō] was very concerned with the writer-actor relationship and its effect on the success of a performance. Danjūrō wrote that play texts were important and that writers deserved much higher salaries. Actor-writers like himself were well paid, but only because of their acting. Playwright specialists started at 15 ryō a year (about \$10,000), and most made only double that at the peak of their careers. The top playwright in Edo made just 65 ryō a year. Danjūrō wrote that quality playwriting and acting were both essential, “like the two wheels on a cart” or like samurai who, in order to succeed, needed equal levels of skill in the military and literary arts.³⁰

Modern Japan.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 1996. Chapter 6 and Appendix D, Part Three.

²⁸ As quoted in *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyū*, 40.

²⁹ Suwa Haruo, *Genroku kabuki no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Ryūkan Shoin, 1967. 112.

³⁰ Kominz, Laurence, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1997. 59.

By comparison, Danjûrô's salary for the same 1694-1695 season was 300 *ryô*,³¹ and it increased the following year. As we shall see, Danjûrô's rare concern for playwrights was shared by the great Tôjûrô. It is significant that the two most fabulously successful actors of the time, Danjûrô and Tôjûrô, both valued playwriting so highly.

Suwa's assertion, that an early seminal actor in the tradition, Danjûrô I, viewed playwriting as a major part of his creative activities, helps us understand how Genroku was a crucial formative period for kabuki: great practitioners appeared who offered skills in both the creation and performance of material, setting certain patterns and conventions that were to remain throughout kabuki history. Danjûrô I was a uniquely powerful figure in Genroku kabuki. In Edo he was both the most important playwright and the most important actor, described as actor in typically superlative fashion in a 1701 *yakusha hyôbanki* as "the number one star of the theatre."³² In the Kamigata area it took two people to carry out the same functions, the actor Sakata Tôjûrô and Chikamatsu Monzaemon, the playwright who helped write some of the most successful Genroku kabuki plays between periods of work in the puppet theatre.

As the number of playwrights increased, so, too, do we find evidence of increasing expectations of playwright contributions to the commercial success of theatres. In 1697, the actor Nakamura Shichisaburô (中村七三郎, 1662-1708³³) went from Edo to Kyoto to perform for a rival company to that of Sakata Tôjûrô. After a highly successful performance by Shichisaburô, Tôjûrô's troupe found itself needing to win back audience. The playwright Azuma Sanpachi 吾妻 (東) 三八 (died around 1735) records Tôjûrô's reaction, as recollected by the actor Somekawa Jûrôbei (染川十郎兵衛 d. 1708 or 1711):

Tôjûrô secretly summoned Kaneko Kichizaemon to him without telling the others and gave him the following confidential injunction. "As I predicted during the *kaomise*, we have a great competitor called Shocho with us this year and so all the actors will obviously have to do their best, but above all, we shall have to work hard on our material

³¹ *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 57.

³² Kabuki Hyôbanki Kenkyûkai. *Kabuki hyôbanki shûsei*, Vol. 3. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973. 145.

³³ Along with Danjûrô I, Shichisaburô was one of the two greatest actors in Genroku-period Edo kabuki. He was a *wagoto* specialist. His *haimyô* was Shôchô 小長.

for if there is no thought put into new plays, the theater will suffer. I emphasize this because our superiority in the *kaomise* might make the authors relax their efforts.”³⁴

Tôjûrô has come down to us through recorded quotations as a strong advocate for playwrights and what they could offer towards successful productions. The above passage was penned by a playwright and bias may be evident, still, it leaves no doubt that playwrights had become significant contributors to Genroku-period kabuki. Tôjûrô suggests that the work of the playwright can save the theatre at critical times of competition, and that vigilant playwrights should exert themselves to keep the troupe successfully in step with audience interests. Tôjûrô’s secret summoning of Kaneko Kichizaemon strongly reinforces the message: secrecy is intimately connected to the deepest, most important truths in traditional Japanese creative practices.

Of the three types of Genroku playwrights described earlier, a documented example exists of collaboration between a first-category actor/playwright and the third-category playwright, Chikamatsu Monzaemon. The former is none other than the Kaneko Kichizaemon to whom Tôjûrô secretly confided above. Kaneko Kichizaemon was an acclaimed Genroku actor of comic roles who was also an important playwright. As we have seen, Kaneko is said to be the first to have written down scripts. In the above quoted passage, Tôjûrô clearly attaches great importance to him as a playwright. This impression is strengthened if we add back a section of the original that is missing from the above translated quote published in *The Actors’ Analects*. The missing section reads: “I am telling you this [about the need to work hard on material] because you compose plays. There must be no carelessness, and you have by far the most influence of anyone in the troupe.”³⁵

The collaboration between Kaneko Kichizaemon and Chikamatsu had long been known from various references. For example, Kaneko begins one entry of his *Nijinshû* (耳塵集, Dust in the Ears) from *The Actors’ Analects* by writing, “At one time when Chikamatsu and I

³⁴ *The Actors’ Analects*, 134.

³⁵ Translation mine, from *The Actors’ Analects*, Japanese text, 217. This passage, which was left out of Dunn and Torigoe’s translation, comes just after “...we shall have to work hard on our material...”

were working together on a new play...”³⁶ An understanding of the extent of their collaboration, however, became clearer in 1992 with the discovery of a portion of a diary by Kaneko covering most of the year 1698. It was found on the back of a scenario of a Genroku kabuki play. This important contemporary document gives us vital information concerning Chikamatsu’s activities as a kabuki playwright. Chikamatsu (who is referred to by his given name, Nobumori 信盛) is mentioned in the diary about one hundred and forty times. The diary covers collaboration between Kaneko and Chikamatsu on ten different plays and possibly on two others.³⁷ The following are some typical entries:

Nobumori came. We discussed the play.³⁸

Nobumori went to Osaka on the twelfth. He returned today. I went and heard all about Osaka plays. Then we discussed the play. I returned home late at night.³⁹

I then went to Nobumori’s. He read “The Tale of Osaka” to me. We had sake and I went back late at night.⁴⁰

While Nobumori was sick, a letter came saying that he would be unable to come for discussions. I replied saying that I could prepare the play alone.⁴¹

I went to get the *Soga Monogatari* from Nobumori. He let me have twelve volumes.⁴²

³⁶ *The Actors’ Analects*, 98. For other references to their working together, see Suwa Haruo, “‘Kaneko Ikkō nikki’ ni miru Chikamatsu to Kaneko Kichizaemon no kankei.” *Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no. 11, 1993. 36. For one of many examples in Ihara Toshiro’s *Kabuki nenpyō* referring to their collaboration, in this case in 1701, see, *Kabuki nenpyō*, Vol. 1. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956. 273.

³⁷ *Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no. 11, 37.

³⁸ Torigoe Bunzō. *Kabuki no kyōgen: gengo hyōgen no tsuikyū*. Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1992. 412.

³⁹ *Kabuki no kyōgen*, 412.

⁴⁰ *Kabuki no kyōgen*, 419.

⁴¹ *Kabuki no kyōgen*, 436.

⁴² *Kabuki no kyōgen*, 441. *Soga monogatari*, a Muromachi-period narrative about two brothers and their quest for revenge for their father’s death, was an important source for kabuki plots.

Nobumori came very early. He came to show me the rough sketch he was carrying of the drawings for the main title of the *bon* play.⁴³

The two words used again and again to describe how the two men interacted with each other are *sôdan* 相談 and *dangô* 談合. Both of these have the sense of discussion involving the mutual conferring of the parties involved, and can be taken to mean “working together” in a consultative way. Other entries show these *sôdan* to have included other actors or record Kaneko and Chikamatsu visiting actors to discuss their progress, as in the following entry for the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month: “Nobumori came. We finished the main play in the evening. Then Nobumori went to discuss it with Tôjûrô, and I went to discuss it with [the actors] Yamatoya Jinbei and Mizuki Tatsunosuke”⁴⁴ We can see from this entry that playwrights (or playwright/actors) worked actively with top actors to prepare material. Only two to three actors were involved in this consultation process. In the Kamigata region, for example, only the *zamoto* (managing actor, perhaps closest to today’s artistic director, but also a *tachiyaku* 立役, an actor of lead male roles), lead *onnagata* (female role specialist) and perhaps one other actor participated in playwriting activities. These were the actors to whom the audience paid most attention, and the success of their roles was most important to the success of the production. If these leads fared poorly, the play failed; if they did well, it was a hit. The above example is illustrative: the three actors whom Kaneko and Chikamatsu visited on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month were Tôjûrô, *zamoto* and most important *tachiyaku*; Yamatoya Jinbei, another important *tachiyaku* and sometime *zamoto* instead of Tôjûrô; and finally, Mizuki Tatsunosuke, the leading *onnagata* who partnered all the great *tachiyaku* (and who was a nephew of Yamatoya Jinbei.)

Kaneko and Chikamatsu shared not only professional activities, but also interaction that supported those activities. The diary shows that they discussed experiences, borrowed books from each other, and shared information and opinions on other theatre forms and literature that were generally significant to their efforts at play

⁴³ *Kabuki no kyôgen*, 441. As later explained, writing play titles and preparing billboards were the jobs of playwright. See Chapter Two for more on these duties.

⁴⁴ *Kabuki, kenkyû to hihyô*, no. 11, 30.

preparation.⁴⁵ They also sometimes went together to visit practitioners of other theatre forms, for example, the famous jōruri chanter Uji Kaganojō 宇治加賀. Other entries hint at the personal relationship and trust that must have grown out of professional interaction, as for example, when we find them borrowing money from each other.⁴⁶ The number of entries that refer to their meetings in this period of less than a year is striking. They must have been able to work well together or they would not have done so with such frequency. Indeed, the entry for Kaneko in *Yakusha hyōban iro jamisen* 役者評判色三味線, the Kyoto/Osaka *yakusha hyōbanki* printed in the first month of Genroku 16 (1703), states that no two people were better matched.⁴⁷

In questioning which of the two took the lead in this professional relationship, Suwa Haruo concludes that Kaneko, in his capacity as playwright, was the lead member of this pair. Rather than an expected arrangement of a part-time playwright (Kaneko) working under a full-time playwright (Chikamatsu), evidence gathered by Suwa shows Kaneko in the stronger position: Chikamatsu is called to Kaneko's house for *sōdan* thirty-eight times in the diary, while Kaneko visits Chikamatsu only twice (with four *sōdan* at other places). Furthermore, five plays in the diary were planned alone by Kaneko and two plays were planned by him with collaborators other than Chikamatsu.⁴⁸ Of course, the diary is the work of Kaneko and cannot be expected to give a complete picture of Chikamatsu's activities at that time. Still, the tradition of the actor/playwright remained strong in Genroku. Even with Chikamatsu's success as a remarkable pioneering independent playwright, kabuki actors kept a strong hand in play creation and had not yet come to rely on

⁴⁵ They even discuss jōruri together at a time when Chikamatsu was writing jōruri for Osaka's Takemotoza. On the twenty-first day of the fourth month, Kaneko records the following: "...Nobumori came. We discussed Osaka Gidayū jōruri." (*Kabuki no kyōgen*, 421.) Tsuchida Mamori expresses amazement at this entry, particularly that Chikamatsu would have been consulting with a kabuki actor on jōruri he was writing. (*Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no.11, 47.) Still, the nature of the *sōdan* in this case is unclear. Was Chikamatsu in fact relying on Kaneko for help in writing jōruri or were they just talking about it in a more general way?

⁴⁶ See the entries in *Kabuki no kyōgen* for the following dates: 1/26, 11/30 and 12/3.

⁴⁷ *Kabuki hyōbanki shūsei*, Vol. 3, 356.

⁴⁸ *Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no. 11, 42.

playwrights to the extent that they would in the later eighteenth century and after. Nor would kabuki playwrights ever hold the nearer-full control over play creation that jōruri playwrights did.

If, as the diary might indicate, Kaneko was the senior partner in the pair, Suwa asks why his name didn't appear on the *e-iri kyōgenbon* renditions of plays produced by the Chikamatsu/Kaneko collaboration. In response, Suwa comes up with three possible reasons. The first is salary: an actor brought in a greater salary than a playwright, thus it was to Kaneko's advantage to be known as an actor rather than as a playwright and to Chikamatsu's financial advantage to add to his income through the rewriting activities that led to the *e-iri kyōgenbon*. The second is that an actor had a higher social status than a playwright, and again the advantages to Kaneko are clear. The third is the suggestion that Kaneko was trusting in Chikamatsu's special prestige and name recognition in the publishing world to make the *e-iri kyōgenbon* a commercial success.⁴⁹ A final reason, suggested by Laurence Kominz, is that a significant amount of time was required to rewrite plays into *e-iri kyōgenbon*. While Kaneko was on stage acting many hours a day, Chikamatsu had time to devote to such work.⁵⁰ For our purposes, we note therefore that the lack of plays or printed play renditions bearing Kaneko's name, is not likely to reflect accurately the extent of the efforts he put into play creation.

Many days of consultations and revisions, together with hours of rehearsing in preparation for plays, led to the opening of a new program. According to Imao Tetsuya's research on the diary, planning for the next program would begin from three to twenty days after the current one had begun.⁵¹ Suwa Haruo details the process followed by Chikamatsu and Kaneko as recorded in the diary for the play *Isshin niga byakudō* (一心二河白道, Determination on the byways to paradise). Work on the play lasted for about one month, and included the following in order of their notation in the diary: *an* 案, initial planning; *sōdan* 相談, the concrete realization of the initial

⁴⁹ *Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no. 11, 43-44.

⁵⁰ *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 124-125.

⁵¹ *Kabuki, kenkyū to hihyō*, no. 11, 32. It is unclear why there were such big differences in timing for the commencement of planning new plays. Perhaps it depended on initial successes or problems with the current production, or perhaps it depended on expected complexity of the next production.

planning through consultation with senior actors and others, for example, financial backers; *hanasu* 咄, the explanation of the plot to assembled actors, with or without dialogue; *keiko* 稽古, rehearsals; *furitsuke* 振付, choreography of dance movements; *shikumi* 仕組, general staging, including swordfight choreography, dialogue work, etc. Rehearsals were an especially important and busy time for playwrights. Two kinds of rehearsals took place, “seated” rehearsals, which were reading rehearsals (*i-keiko* 居稽古), and “standing” rehearsals, which included acting (*tachigeiko* 立稽古). Playwrights were required to help actors with their lines, prepare part booklets or “sides” (*kakinuki* 書抜き) and carry out a myriad of other duties.⁵² Preparation of billboards as well as sets and props were also important playwright duties. Although such work is not noted in Kaneko’s entries regarding the play under discussion, references are included in entries in the diary discussing other plays.

The diary offers a clear view of the activities and nature of Genroku play creation, which involved both individual and collaborative efforts. The recognition of the playwright as a specialized occupation began in Genroku. While the most important playwrights of this period were also important actors (Danjūrō I and II and Kaneko Kichizaemon are the chief examples we have discussed), their efforts as playwrights were relatively differentiated from their acting, as compared with the pre-Genroku situation. The work they did as playwrights began to have its own process and methods, later leading to the ascendance of the Chikamatsu-type playwright specialist. The actor-playwright-manager in the Zeami tradition of Japanese theatre arts yielded to a separation of the playwright function. This change in professional circumstances paralleled changes in the context within which playwrights worked, where plays came to be regarded as significant contributions to artistic and commercial success.

⁵² We do not know if Kaneko was occupied in copying sides or scripts. In the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, after a hierarchy of playwrights was in place, lower-level playwrights had as an important duty copying out sides and scripts. In the early playwright periods, however, it is not always clear by whom or how this duty was carried out. Certainly, one would not expect someone of Kaneko’s importance to busy himself in this way.

The New Context

In Kaneko's *Nijinshû* 耳塵集 (Dust in the Ears) we find important reflections of changes in expectations from pre-Genroku. For example, in Item XXXIII, after we are told of the first appearance of the multiple-act play in 1664, we find:

Yagozaemon said that among actors accounted skillful today there were many who made a habit of relaxing while other actors were speaking their lines. This is surely bad! In the first place the play loses its pace, and then the body of the actor who is doing it is deprived of life. At all events, one should watch closely the face of the actor speaking the words, or at least listen carefully to them.⁵³

The advice that the actor should stay in character, even when not delivering lines, provides evidence that the focus on important moments for individual actors would no longer fully suffice to carry the performance. Rather, a more concentrated group attention to all aspects of performance would be required. The development of individual scenes into multi-act plays meant that connections between scenes and overall play structure needed attention. It is no surprise then that playwrights began to take a more central position in play preparation.

Nijinshû gives a picture not only of the playwrighting responsibilities of the Genroku playwright, but more significantly of his developing relationship with actors, as in the following from Item XLI:

When Kyôemon⁵⁴ listened to the plot of a play, regardless of whether it was good or bad, he would first praise the play, and turning to the author he would say, "Now please get on with the words." If there was a play that did not please him, he would call the author in without telling any one else, and listen to the plot again, talking over with him

⁵³ *The Actors' Analects*, 94-95. Although not translated in *The Actors' Analects* as such, this is a direct quote.

⁵⁴ Yamashita Kyôemon 山下京衛門 (1652(1650?)-1717.) The leading player of lead male roles in Kyoto before Sakata Tôjûrô. Also a great *zamoto* who staged many famous plays.

its merits and defects, and redoing it. Not for a moment, during the account of the action, would he say that it was bad.⁵⁵

And from the preceding Item XL Kaneko writes:

At that period Tōjūrō was the *zamoto*, but he made no comments on the merits or defects of the play [written by Chikamatsu and Kaneko] and so there could be no comments from any other quarter... Rehearsals started from the next day... Tōjūrō said that he would like to hear again what we had to say about the play, and this we did. He still did not comment on its merits.... [He got ready to begin rehearsing, and then] he told us to put in the words. The play was rehearsed once right through, with Chikamatsu and me doing so, as usual. Tōjūrō said, “Yes indeed, truly a good play, is it not! When I first heard you talking about the play, and again when I heard you just now, I thought it was a bad play. But since it was obvious that you authors sincerely thought that it was a good play, I had the actors meet and discuss it... The heart of the actor and the heart of the author are quite different from one another, and so, when I thought to have the words put in just now, I assembled my clogs, staff and umbrella, and made it a dress rehearsal right from the start. My intention was to test the whole of it. But from the words supplied by the authors just now, I realized that it was certainly a good play. I see from what happened to me just now that it would be a good thing to have dress rehearsals right from the start.”⁵⁶

We learn from these excerpts that playwrights first devised the plot, and that it then needed to be approved by the *zamoto*, in this case Tōjūrō. If the *zamoto* (or the other one or two top actors) did not like something about the plot, he worked with the playwrights to change it. Only then was the dialogue added in. As with the preparation methods of earlier decades, actors of Tōjūrō’s level would still develop their own lines in rehearsal (although they might be aided by a playwright), while lines of lesser actors were worked out by playwrights. Tōjūrō’s discovery was that the true merits of the play could only be appreciated once rehearsals⁵⁷ had begun, that is, once actors had begun to enact the characters with the dialogue.

⁵⁵ *The Actors’ Analects*, 100.

⁵⁶ *The Actors’ Analects*, 98-99.

⁵⁷ The translation “dress rehearsal” in Tōjūrō’s last statement of the quote is misleading: the original merely has *keiko*, or “rehearsal.”

Clearly, in the Genroku Period, the responsibility for play preparation was no longer just in the hands of chief actors. Although playwrights were subordinate to actors in that the *zamoto* had the ultimate say in what would be produced, the above quotations show that *zamoto* held playwrights, their work, and their opinions in cautious, yet certain, respect. Tōjūrō affirms this importance in the following two items from *Yakusha rongo*:

Tōjūrō said, “If one is poor and wants money, one can get some by stealing. Or there may be some dropped in the street. On the other hand, if one thinks of stealing a play, or of picking one up, it is absolutely impossible to do so. An actor who does not realize this is a stupid ignoramus.”⁵⁸

Someone said to (Tōjūrō), “Your plays are entertaining and popular, but the one thing that is to be regretted about them is the small number of your parts in them.” Tōjūrō burst out laughing. “As long as my plays are good, please excuse my absence from the stage. The audiences know of old the qualities and defects of Tōjūrō’s acting. The purpose of my theater is not at all to present myself, but to present plays,” he said.⁵⁹

The latter quote, in particular, is astonishing, considering that almost no contemporary would have agreed with Tōjūrō: audience and practitioners alike had long been interested primarily in the presentation of the actor and his acting, and not in the unfolding of plot. The recorded Tōjūrō goes very far in his advocacy of plays. He shows respect for the playwrights who helped create them, as is clear from Item XL quoted earlier. We must reserve some doubt as to the authenticity of such statements as direct quotes. Kaneko, in his capacity as playwright, would have appreciated, and thus perhaps embellished or augmented, such favorable anecdotes and comments. However, we can at least take them as evidence of a new consciousness towards playwrights on the part of practitioners. The new context, beginning by the 1680’s, was one in which the preparation of plays held greater significance in the effort toward successful productions. This change led to new ways of preparing and objectifying plays as entities separate from the collective bodies

⁵⁸ *The Actors’ Analects*, 100.

⁵⁹ *The Actors’ Analects*, 101.

of performing actors. When Kaneko's diary reports on Chikamatsu's visit to Osaka to steal play material, an objective status for plays is undeniable.⁶⁰

How common might Tōjūrō's attitude have been? As a *zamoto*, it may not have been uncommon, as at least one other actor in a lead troupe position is recorded as showing respect for playwrights and their work. The great Kyoto *zamoto*, Yamashita Kyōemon, would

⁶⁰ As the eighteenth century progressed, there came to be a variety of ways in which the enjoyment of kabuki was enhanced and encouraged outside of the theatre, which naturally depended on just such an independent status for plays. Heibei's summary descriptions of pre-Genroku plays discussed previously are both a record of practices and a rudimentary kind of script. Their format seems well matched to the simple play types that they record. With the publication of *Gei kagami*, Heibei's synopses, which were written down to record bygone practices, became available as reading material. The more elaborate, illustrated play versions, the *e-iri kyōgenbon*, were published for a reading audience in the Genroku Period. They were rewritten from playscripts into narrative form, but also frequently contained long passages of performed dialogue, especially of scenes that were well received in the theatre. (A complete, successful 1998 revival of Tōjūrō's biggest hit, *Keisei Mibu Dainenbutsu*, used an *e-iri kyōgenbon* text as the source for its script, with the dialogue virtually unaltered. [Laurence Kominz, personal communication.]) The difference between Heibei's early synopses and the extent to which the liveliness of the dialogue of later Genroku plays was found to be worthy of exact recording and repeating in *e-iri kyōgenbon* is evidence of the turn from *kuchidate* improvisation to the careful attention given to creating plays.

The first extant scripts of complete plays date from Hōreki to Tenmei (1781-1789). Earlier scripts were kept as manuscripts for use within the theatre only and were never published in any form. When scripts did become available, the *kashihonya daichō* 貸本屋台帳, or lending scripts, were copied from theatre scripts (台帳) and circulated by book lenders. They were greatly popular, particularly in the Kamigata area. Later, "illustrated scripts" (*e-iri nehon* 絵入り根本) with the original dialogue were also produced in the Kamigata region.

As the Tokugawa Period progressed, the theatrical experience was also transformed for personal perusal outside the theatre, for pleasure or study, in Edo and Kamigata, through programs, woodblock prints of actors and stage scenes, various genres of fiction, selections of monologues or musical excerpts, and *yakusha hyōbanki*. Throughout the Tokugawa Period, these materials provided a bridge between the theatrical experience and one's life outside of the theatre. In the broadest way, they promoted the art of kabuki by providing written and visual renditions, reworkings, critiques, and souvenirs of performed plays and performable parts of plays, making the practice and practitioners of kabuki widely available. Together with the later chronologies, encyclopedias and backstage primers, fans could understand kabuki on all levels - history, production, and performance - and keep kabuki a vibrant part of their lives inside and outside of the theatre.

“(n)ot for a moment, during the [playwright’s] account of the action...say that it was bad.”⁶¹ And again, of Tōjūrō as *zamoto*, it is said that, “(w)henever (he) heard a play being discussed, regardless of the size of his part, he listened carefully to its plot.”⁶²

Ordinary actors, however, may have had a much more difficult time accepting the new place being taken by playwrights and appreciating the value of their work. Their various responses are described by Kaneko:

At one time when Chikamatsu and I were working together on a new play, we called the actors into the dressing room and told them about it. Usually those who have good parts praise a new play; those with bad parts make no comment on its merits. Those who do not know whether it is good or not seem all the time to be looking at the faces of others, and following the crowd. And then there are some who are ignorant, with no feeling for plays, who get angry during the first act, grumble at my [Kaneko’s] servants, and go away out of temper without bidding anyone farewell.⁶³

This passage could describe professional theatre settings other than that of kabuki during the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here, it offers a highly significant indication of changes taking place in kabuki practice. The merits of the play are described as being judged by actors entirely in terms of whether or not one’s individual part is good. The quote indicates that players of less important roles did not consider the play as a whole, as an entity. They did not value the playwright’s job of planning the parts and the relation of the parts, but instead were concerned only with their own opportunities. Perhaps ego was the simple culprit, but historically, the reasons for this situation are also clear: kabuki plays had been scene-oriented and actor-centered, and continuous multi-part plays were new.

Part of the dislike of the new work being carried out by playwrights was a bias against the “invented scenes”⁶⁴ of playwrights, as we can understand from the following Item XXXI of *Nijinshū*:

⁶¹ *The Actors’ Analects*, 100.

⁶² *The Actors’ Analects*, 100.

⁶³ *The Actors’ Analects*, 98-99.

⁶⁴ *The Actors’ Analects*, 93.

The late Arashi San'emon gathered together at his house the actors who were to play with him in a piece which he was preparing, with love scenes, lovers' quarrels and so on in it. He had always been fond of sake and he immediately brought out the wine-cups, and although there was in the assembly a boy with whom he was on affectionate terms, he did not even look at him. Instead he went and whispered and murmured to another boy, at times stroking his cheeks and having him drink from his cup. Later he became intoxicated and no longer in control of himself. The first boy had long been of a jealous disposition and he was uttering insults of all sorts when the second boy and a *tachiyaku* calmed him down and got him to drink a cup of reconciliation. On this occasion there were also in the party Tôjûrô's father, Sakata Ichizaemon, and also Manoya Kanzaemon, the *zamoto*. So, when Tôjûrô came in he laughed out loud and exclaimed: "Ho ho, what a scene of disorder! The opening day is getting nearer. It's not the moment for quarrels with boyfriends, come on, come on; rehearse, rehearse!" San'emon replied: "That is what I thought too, so I've been rehearsing for some time already. From the moment when I handed out the first wine-cup up to the cup of reconciliation that we have witnessed, including the jealous boy and the people who calmed him down, I have remembered it all. This is the rehearsal for the next play." And in fact that is how he devised it. Ask any actor and he will say that invented scenes are bad, and truth is good. Because he believed in the correctness of this, he had the wine-cups brought out, even though normally sake is not served at a place where a rehearsal is taking place, in order to assist in the writing of words for the next play, and his motive for provoking a situation in which the boy could not but be jealous was the same. He said that all should do it in the same way on the stage. This was really an excellent device. It is an indication of the amount of trouble that men were prepared to take in the old days.⁶⁵

"Invented scenes" are considered ineffective ("invented scenes are bad" *tsukuritaru koto wa waroshi*, 作りたる事ハわるし) while scenes directly worked out of actual situations are valued ("truth is good" *makoto yoshi*, 実よし.) We find here evidence of the continuing method of creating plays through improvisation, together with an implied criticism of playwrights (作者) who invent (作) scenes. Underlying the grumblings recorded above was a preference for practices formed early in kabuki history, practices which hindered

⁶⁵ *The Actors' Analecets*, 92-93. "... in order to assist in the writing of words for the next play" is translated from 此度は替り狂言のせりふ付のため. The writing of "words" actually refers to dialogue only.

the acceptance of the newly-positioned playwright and his work by all but top actors (such as Tōjūrō, Kyōemon, and Danjūrō, as we have found.)

With the exception of the chief playwright (*tate sakusha* 立作者) of later kabuki, the lead man at the head of a theatre's staff of playwrights, playwrights remained in a subordinate troupe position throughout the Tokugawa Period. However, we find their growing importance within kabuki troupes reflected in several sources, including *yakusha hyōbanki*, where comments on playwrights are first found early in the eighteenth century. The tendency for independent references to them in these booklets increases from the Genbun Period (1736-1741).⁶⁶ They are also listed with greater frequency and in greater numbers on *banzuke* (番付, programs⁶⁷), as well as discussed more often and in more detail in various *gekisho* on kabuki published from the second half of the eighteenth century. Considering these facts, it is clear that they came to figure as increasingly prominent contributors to kabuki production.

Part II of *Kokon* begins with a section entitled, "Oral Traditions of Former Playwrights." The first entry in this section quotes the playwright Tsuuchi Jihei I 津打治兵衛 (active latter half of the seventeenth century, exact dates unknown.) After admonishing playwrights to keep the strong points of the *zamoto* (who was also the lead actor) in mind, he continues:

When your play is rejected by the actors, don't take offense. Playwriting involves writing to please. Without making any excuses, if your play is rejected, set it aside and keep in mind that in some later year it might be useful, proving a great success. Even if it is rejected, a play isn't something that will fall apart or rot away.⁶⁸

The entry following the above quote advises that playwrights "(p)ay attention to those [actors] who command high salaries," because "(l)ead actors of male roles are adored and admired."⁶⁹ These passages offer advice from a time when the playwright held a less

⁶⁶ For more on the inclusion of playwrights in the *yakusha hyōbanki*, see Mizuda Kayano. "Kyōgen sakusha no tōjō" in *Kabuki no kyōgen*, 73-91.

⁶⁷ See the next section of this chapter regarding *banzuke*.

⁶⁸ *Kinsei geidōron*, 479.

⁶⁹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 479.

secure position, but the point they make, that playwrights should write with important actors in mind, is continually restated in Kamigata and Edo *gekisho* that address the work of the playwright. Playwriting always involved “writing to please,” but as playwrights gradually came to hold more recognized and valued positions within kabuki troupes, they helped create and define what “pleasing” could be.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ORDERED SYSTEM: THE LATER EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

It used to be that a playwright prepared the entire play singlehandedly, from the first act to the finale. This changed in the Period of Resurgence with the appearance of assistant playwrights, or second and third-ranked playwrights. Scenes were divided up, and the play was written by three or four people. Generally, the lead playwright devised the plot, which was then fully developed by other playwrights. After a preliminary perusal, changes were made, and then the play was read to the actors during the *hon'yomi*. Nowadays, however, everyone contributes in adding new twists to the plot; they no longer simply follow the directions of the lead playwright as he provides the plot and its new twists. This is due to a decline in our Way. (*Kezairoku*)¹

In this chapter we move into Kawatake Shigetoshi's Period of Greatness for kabuki playwriting. This period saw many changes, both chronologically and regionally. Following a gradual move towards more emphasis on playwriting, as opposed to just playmaking, we can understand Kawatake's general summary of the period as a time when the script attained its form and function as integral to kabuki production. The growing presence of playwrights and the diversification of their work was evident in both Kamigata and Edo. An annual production schedule developed under a hierarchy of playwrights, with each member carrying out specialized duties. The preparation of plays became a many-stepped, all-troupe process of planning, writing, consultation and rewriting, before and after the rehearsal period.

The Tenmei Period (1781-1789), launched the creative burst of Kawatake's Period of Greatness. It was the second period, following Genroku, of tremendous creative development in kabuki. While Tenmei itself covered only the short decade of the 1780's, it lends its name to a broader cultural development, roughly the last third of the eighteenth century (much as the Genroku Period (1688-1704) also refers to a cultural period up to the 1740's.) The innovations and

¹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 517. Period of Resurgence refers to the period from Genroku (beginning in 1688) to Hōreki (1751-1764).

efforts toward commercial success in the years since Genroku had led to improved acting techniques, new inventions for the stage, and many other changes, thus setting the stage for Tenmei kabuki.

What makes Genroku and Tenmei look different to the modern eye is partly the difference in amount of extant contemporary records, which makes the latter more describable and thus more imaginable. Combing through these records as well as plays, we note salient points that distinguish Tenmei practices in kabuki history. Among them is the accelerated importation into kabuki of jōruri plays and techniques, a consequential influence on kabuki that helped lead the way to the greatness of Tenmei kabuki. Kabuki borrowings from jōruri date back at least to the 1660's, but they increase substantially at this time. Jōruri developed from a narrating tradition -- *katarimono* 語り物 -- and the focus on the story and its recitation was maintained in the union with puppetry, the puppets functioning as illustrations, in a sense, to the story. With the story primary, and its development on paper the method of play creation, logical plots and beautiful words were understandably central to the jōruri tradition. Kabuki, on the other hand, began with short, ribald skits; the story did not matter so much as the showing of it. As kabuki practitioners increasingly paid attention to the plots of plays, they looked to jōruri for how to create them. They borrowed aspects of structure and language, often by adapting plays wholesale. In the case of Edo kabuki, increased efforts at play composition were also supported by importing Kamigata playwrights who had experience in creating plays of relative complexity and coherence.

Also important among the differences between Genroku and Tenmei kabuki were the playwright, his greater relative importance in the troupe, and a new respect for what he might contribute. As Hattori Yukio points out, from the Genroku Period we begin to find a distinction in *yakusha hyōbanki* critiques between *yakusha atari* (役者当たり), a hit actor, and *kyōgen atari* (狂言当たり), a hit play, indicating a new appreciation for the play apart from the actors who delivered it.² This new consciousness grows over the eighteenth century and naturally leads to a greater appreciation of playwrights as well. As earlier stated, an important reason for the bigger foothold secured by playwrights from this time was the increased attention paid to plays as a crucial aspect of production, with the

² Hattori Yukio. *Edo Kabuki*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993. 241.

understanding that better plays contributed to more successful productions. Another influential reason for the growing position taken by playwrights and the greater consideration given playwriting was the value attached to proliferating new forms of writing produced in the townsmen's society of urban Tokugawa Japan. That the Tokugawa Period was the first to provide Japanese literary history with non-acting playwrights, that is, the first independent playwrights, seems less remarkable when we consider the wider cultural context. A variety of artists -- literary and visual, amateur and professional -- met socially in groups devoted to, for example, the new poetic forms of *haikai* or *kyōka*. Their activities contributed to a vibrant environment open to new creative developments in writing and other arts. As we shall see in Chapter Four, many kabuki practitioners were intimately connected to such salon activity, and reciprocal relations between the worlds of kabuki and popular literature were strong.

Playwrights: The Hierarchy

Once playwrights came to figure independently in kabuki, their importance gradually grew. A hierarchy of playwrights came into place over the second half of the eighteenth century, and playwrights performed a large number of duties, with specific tasks assigned according to rank. For example, concerning practices at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, *Kezairoku* has the following:

During the *ninokawari* [first-month program], the relative rankings and values of the year's playwrights become evident. That being said, in looking at current practice in assigning work to playwrights, the second act and domestic scene come from the lead playwright, the first and third acts are from the second-ranked playwright, and the entr'actes are assigned to the third-ranked playwright. The finale is often written by the lead playwright, but in less significant cases, he might have the second-ranked playwright write half. The first act of the *sannokawari* [third-month program], the *bonkawari* [seventh or eighth-month program], and the *kugatsukawari* [ninth-month program], are all the duty of the second-ranked playwright. The rest is written under the direction of lead actors. Still, when playwrights of

similar status are employed at the same theatre, they compromise with one another in determining what they will write.³

This section deals with the top three levels of playwrights -- the lead playwright (立作者 *tate sakusha*), the second-ranked playwright (二枚目 *nimaime*), and the third-ranked playwright (三枚目 *sanmaime*)⁴ -- who worked on the actual writing of plays. Particular scenes or acts were designated for a certain level of playwright, with the importance of the act corresponding to the importance of the playwright. The above *Kezairoku* quote details this division of labor in Kyoto and Osaka. In Edo, a similar system was in operation. For example, third-ranked playwrights were responsible for writing the openings of the first and second parts of the program; second-ranked playwrights wrote the *jōruri* passages (narrative portions of the play) for Part One, Act Two of the program, as well as the individual act titles (小名題 *konadai*). Full play titles (*ōnadai* 大名題) were reserved for the lead playwright's ingenuity. He was also responsible for devising the overall plot and writing the most important scenes. He prepared drafts of billboards and programs, and oversaw production and rehearsals.

Below these top three levels of playwrights came the *kyōgen kata* 狂言方, literally, the “play person,” a low-ranking member of the hierarchy who is described in the late nineteenth century as being a fourth or fifth-ranked playwright⁵. Finally, below the *kyōgen kata* came the apprentices (見習い *minarai*.) Apprentices performed their duties with the hope of advancement into the playwright ranks. They were responsible for a variety of jobs, including errands and general support work for the playwrights and actors. For example, apprentices would prepare tea, clean both the lead playwright's home and the dedicated room for playwrights in the theatre (*sakushabeya* 作者部屋), run errands and assist playwrights in any other required ways. Performing these tasks exposed them to the work of their superiors, work such as play preparation, play reading, script copying

³ *Kinsei geidōron*, 517-518.

⁴ Literally, the “second-board” playwright and the “third-board” playwright, so named because they were listed on the second and third announcement billboards, respectively.

⁵ *Kawatake Mokuami shū (Meiji bungaku zenshū #9)*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966. 373-374.

and *hyōshigi* technique (拍子木, wooden clappers used to accompany curtain openings and closings and to highlight important scenic moments.) Carrying out their own responsibilities and observing those of others prepared them for the position of *kyōgen kata*.

Kyōgen kata were responsible for helping with rehearsals, striking the *hyōshigi* at required junctures, helping actors with their lines and copying out the script, sides, or other related information necessary for the smooth preparation of the production. We learn from *Kezairoku* details concerning the important duty of copying out and distributing information. With the exception of the sides booklets, copying, preparation and delivery carried out by *kyōgen kata* is explained in the section entitled “Playwright Duties” 作者支配之事:

The set notebook is given to the chief stagehand.

The rough drawings for the illustrated billboard are given to the billboard artist.

The costume notebook is given to the costumer.

The prop notebook is given to the propman.

The accessories notebook is given to the purchaser.

The rough draft of the cast program is given to the bursar.

The rough draft of the illustrated program is given to the main teahouse.

The music notebook is given to the musicians.

Although we entrust all of this to an assistant [*kyōgen kata*], the rough drawings for the illustrated billboard and the rough draft of the illustrated program are given directly by a playwright. He should also give instructions concerning the set notebook or write them out himself. Because the accessories, props, music, costume notes and set properties all appear in the script, it is up to an assistant to write them down, even without being told to do so.⁶

These are the only sections in *Kezairoku* that specifically address the division of labor of playwrights according to rank. The hierarchy is clearly delineated in one other section, however. In “Program Placement for Playwrights” 作者番附居所⁷, we learn how the hierarchy was to be indicated on programs. This section diagrams exactly where the names for each level of playwright should be

⁶ *Kinsei geidōron*, 524-525.

⁷ *Kinsei geidōron*, 525-526.

written according to Kamigata practice. The following two sections -- “Crest Programs of Edo” 江戸紋番附之事 and “Illustrated Billboards of Osaka” 大阪絵看板之事⁸ -- illustrate some of the pictorial methods of actor status denotation in Edo and Osaka. As with the placement of actors on various types of programs, both pictorial and written, the playwright hierarchy could be “read” from program layout.

Kezairoku makes it clear that approximately one hundred years after Tominaga Heibei bravely announced himself as playwright (*kyōgen tsukuri*) on a program, many men had similarly found a permanent place for themselves in the world of kabuki production. By the end of the eighteenth century, the system of the playwright hierarchy was securely in place. Kawatake Mokuami 河竹黙阿弥 (1816-1893) explains the late development and operation of this system in his memorandum, *Kyōgen sakusha kokoroesho* 狂言作者心得書 (“Instructions to Playwrights”, late nineteenth century; hereafter referred to as “Instructions”⁹.) “Instructions” shows that a similar system as that discussed in *Kezairoku* also existed in Edo.

According to Mokuami’s “Instructions,” playwrights were responsible for organizing most aspects of a production other than the specifics of what an individual actor did, or the financial and other management of the troupe. The lead playwright at the top end of the group, worked in consultation with the *zagashira* (座頭 managing actor.¹⁰) to determine the play’s subject matter. Then he set the plot for each act and scene and distributed the scenes to the men responsible for writing them. Later, it was his job to coordinate these scenes and eliminate repetition of lines or other elements arising from group authorship. He constantly consulted with the actors, as did his assistants, the second and third-ranked playwrights.

In Mokuami’s description, the second and third-ranked playwrights did pretty much what the lead playwright did but in a supporting role. The scenes they wrote were decreasingly highlighted in the full-day program, and their auxiliary duties, increasingly numerous. These extra duties are not spelled out at length in

⁸ *Kinsei geidōron*, 529-530.

⁹ Mokuami gave no title to these notes. The title given here is from *Kawatake Mokuami shū*, 373.

¹⁰ The Edo *zagashira* was similar to the Kamigata *zamoto*, except that the *zagashira* did not share in the theatre’s profits as the *zamoto* did.

“Instructions.” Mokuami mostly describes the work of the lead playwright and the lowest-level members of the hierarchy. However, Mokuami tells us that second-ranked playwrights “in consultation with the lead playwright, busily undertake a myriad of responsibilities” and that “third-ranked playwrights take care of many things, like the second-ranked playwrights.”¹¹ Together, these three ranks of playwrights were responsible for writing the play and preparing items related to its production (for example, billboards and programs.) The lead playwright was more than the most important writer among the playwrights: he also planned and coordinated the play as a whole, and he functioned in close cooperation with other chief troupe members, as the description of planning meetings will show.

The *kyôgen kata*, writes Mokuami, “are responsible for rehearsals.” They performed such duties as helping actors learn their lines, copying out sides, and acting as liaison between the actors and playwrights during rehearsal. In running rehearsals, they were the mouthpiece of the playwrights and needed to know the script thoroughly, as explained in Mokuami’s section on *kyôgen kata*:

The one who runs the rehearsal should listen to the script at the playwright’s side during the *hon’yomi* and learn the plots well for the whole program. Then, before the rehearsal of his scenes, he should read through the script. If there is anything he does not understand, he should learn about it thoroughly from the playwright. It would be a disgrace to be asked something by an actor and be unable to respond.¹²

Mokuami also lists specialized duties of *kyôgen kata* during performance, including prompting and striking the *hyôshigi*.

Finally, Mokuami addresses apprentices, who assisted the *kyôgen kata* with their various duties and who also worked like servants in the home of the lead playwright. The more enthusiastically, diligently and carefully they performed their various duties, the more likely they were to advance into the ranks of the playwrights.

¹¹ Kawatake Mokuami *shû*, 373-374.

¹² Kawatake Mokuami *shû*, 374. For *hon’yomi*, see the section in this chapter on planning meetings.

Annual Theatre Events I: Production Calendar

Playwrights' work was carried out in a series of meetings and in rehearsals. The meetings had their start in Genroku or earlier, as described in *The Actors' Analects*, excerpts from the diary of Kaneko Kichizaemon, and elsewhere. From Genroku on, these meetings and rehearsals were central to the process of creating plays, as well as to preparing productions.

Along with these planning meetings, a production schedule was developed. From early experiments in Genroku, the traditional production calendar took on fixed form in the eighteenth century¹³. An outline of the production calendar, as well as a description of the annual planning meetings, will show the framework within which playwrights worked. This investigation should provide a good part of the explanation of the meaning of playwright in the kabuki context. The calendrical cycle of the ceremonial year and the passage of the seasons provided the annual framework for kabuki productions. Once systematized, the traditional theatre calendar, *shibai nenjū gyōji* 芝居年中行事, also consisted of important set dates for planning and commencing new productions. As we shall investigate in the next section, planning for the first production began in the ninth month, and the production itself commenced in the eleventh month.

The annual productions were: the Opening Production, *kaomise* 顔見世 (literally, face-showing; the first day of the eleventh month to around the tenth day of the twelfth month¹⁴); the New Year or Spring Production, *hatsuharu kyōgen* 初春狂言 in Edo, *ninokawari* 二の替り in Kamigata (from the first month, in Edo from the second day of the first month to the middle of the second month); the Third-month Production, *yayoi* 弥生 in Edo, *sannokawari* 三の替わり in Kamigata (third day of the third month to the middle of the fourth month); the Fifth-month Production, *satsuki* 皐月 in Edo (fifth day of the fifth month to the twenty-fifth of the fifth month); summer

¹³ For information on early experiments with the production calendar, particularly as it related to Soga plays, see Kominz, Larry. *Avatars of Vengeance: Japanese Drama and the Soga Literary Tradition*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995. Also see, Lee, William. "Genroku Kabuki: Cultural Production and Ideology In Early Modern Japan." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: McGill University, 1996.

¹⁴ From the Hōreki Period, the *kaomise* in Kyoto and Osaka was performed in the twelfth month.

break, *doyô yasumi* 土用休み (sixth month) during which summer plays, *natsu shibai* 夏芝居, were performed; Bon Production *bon kyôgen* 盆狂言 or in Kamigata, *bonkawari* 盆かわり (commonly starting on the seventh day of the seventh month, though sometimes the start was delayed into the eighth month); and the Ninth-month Production, *kikuzuki kyôgen* 菊月狂言, *onagori kyôgen* お名残狂言 in Edo¹⁵, or *kugatsukawari* 九月かわり in Kamigata (ninth day of the ninth month to around the fifteenth day of the tenth month.)¹⁶ Productions lasted from a standard forty-two days to as many as one hundred and fifty days. Opening day (*shonichi* 初日) for each production was accompanied by special customs. For example, in Edo it began with a congratulatory speech at the home of the *zagashira* 座頭 and ended with food and wine for his students in the evening.

The most important productions were the *kaomise*, particularly in Edo, the Spring (or New Year's) Production, and the final Ninth-month Production. In Edo, the third-month and fifth-month productions also took on special significance after plays with the character Sukeroku became standard in the third month and plays about the Soga Brothers became associated with the fifth-month celebration of the Soga Festival on the twenty-eighth of the month, as explained below. The Spring Production, particularly in Kamigata, can be viewed as one long run, beginning in the first month and going through the fifth month. Depending on its popularity as given in the first month, the amount of change incorporated in the third and fifth months could range from near complete to minor adjustments; in the latter case, where a production was having an excellent run, it was revised only to incorporate references to seasonal change or current festivals.

According to *Kezairoku*, there are several significant seasonal and psychological considerations a playwright must bear in mind when creating a play. For example, the length of the play and a correct

¹⁵ As the final production of the kabuki calendar year, this was the time when visiting actors on one-year contracts performed for the last time before returning to their home theatres. Thus, the name *onagori kyôgen*, or farewell plays.

¹⁶ Both the *bon kyôgen* and the *kikuzuki kyôgen* also can be referred to as *aki kyôgen* 秋狂言, or Fall Production. For example, in one *gekisho* in the section on the seventh month, we find "Fall plays (*aki kyôgen*) are called *bon kyôgen*." *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6, 681.

admixture of dialogue and stage action is brought up in the section entitled “Methods for Plot Construction”:

The number of pages for each seasonal production should be informed by the amount of daylight. The day’s program for the *ninokawari* has nine sections, and takes up four hundred pages. For the *sannokawari*, there are three hundred and seventy or eighty pages, for the *bonkawari*, there are three hundred and forty or fifty pages, and for the *kugatsukawari*, there are upwards of three hundred pages. These lengths are just right. If a play is longer, it is called “a lengthy play”; if it is shorter, it is called “insufficient.”

When there is an over-abundance of stage directions, a play will become thick with action and cannot succeed. A play with few stage directions, but which is crammed full of words, will be lacking in action...¹⁷

Another necessity is an understanding of seasonal effects on audience mood. In “Seasonal Differences in Human Feelings,” the psychological effects of each of the four seasons are discussed, and advice is given on how to create successful plays by bearing these effects in mind. In winter, for example, to combat the gloom of confinement indoors, “gaiety and renewal” are emphasized; in summer, short acts and light costumes are necessary to counter the lassitude brought on by the heat.

A third general consideration taken up in *Kezairoku* is regional preferences. Thus Kyotoites are “gentle,” Edoites are “rough” and “Osaka people care about consistency.” Each of these characteristics leads to preferred plot material and play style which *Kezairoku*’s author addresses in “Differences Among Plays of The Three Cities.” However, he adds that, “Nowadays, playwrights have become increasingly skilled, and the characteristic methods of the three cities have intermixed.”¹⁸

In the following, I will detail play requirements, production by production, using information from *Kezairoku* and two other *gekisho*: *Shibai nenjū gyōji* 芝居年中行事 “Annual Theatre Calendar” (1777; written by Matsushita Dōbajō¹⁹ 松下堂波静; records Edo practices of the three theatres; alternate title, *Edo ōshibai sanza nenjū gyōji* 江戸

¹⁷ *Kinsei geidōron*, 515.

¹⁸ *Kinsei geidōron*, 511.

¹⁹ Probable pronunciation.

大芝居三座年中行事 “Annual Calendar for the Three Major Edo Theatres”²⁰); and *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* 作者年中行事 “Annual Calendar for Playwrights” (1848; written by Mimasuya Nisōji; primarily records Edo playwright practices of the mid-nineteenth century.²¹) These latter two sources are arranged by calendar month, beginning with the first month and ending with the twelfth. I have arranged descriptions instead by order of events with reference to the kabuki calendar year, that is, the production year that begins in the eleventh month. Where possible, I have differentiated Edo and Kamigata practices.²²

Opening Production

Kaomise

Actors signed one-year contracts which began in the eleventh month and ran through the following tenth month. As the year-opener, the *kaomise* play had to be written to show off the varied skills of the star actors who had been contracted for the year. Highlighting the stars served to promote the theatre and its coming productions. The lead playwright was required to choose a *sekai* 世界, or background story, to match these goals. *Sekai*, literally meaning “world,” refers to the source material from which plot and characters are taken as a basis for developing and writing a play. Most *sekai* came from celebrated and well-known stories, developed from other literary or theatre sources, or were based on actual incidents. The events, characters and themes of the *sekai* were familiar to the theatre-going public and thus provided playwrights with excellent starting points for play composition.

Kezairoku advises that *kaomise* plays should amuse and entertain lightly: “All in all, plays without much plot coherence are to be favored for the *kaomise* because of their buoyancy. If a play falls off

²⁰ Kokuritsu gekijō geinō chōsashitsu, ed. *Kabuki no bunken*, #6. Tokyo: Kokuritsu gekijō, 1974. 85-96. The alternate title is found on the inside front cover.

²¹ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, vol. 6, 669-715.

²² For a study in English on the calendar and play structure in Edo, see Thornbury, Barbara. *Sukeroku's Double Identity: The Dramatic Structure of Edo Kabuki*. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982. 3-28. Thornbury offers a general overview of the calendar. In contrast, this study focuses on playwrights and their work with respect to the calendar, relying on *gekisho* that particularly address playwrights.

even a little, the mood will be down, and the audience will enter a more critical frame of mind and sour on the play.”²³ The *kaomise* was the production closest to mid-winter, hence the need for buoyancy to counteract the heavy seasonal mood. Overall, the challenge for playwrights was to keep the mood upbeat and to leave the audience with a sense of excitement about the possibilities for the upcoming season.

An important choice for the *kaomise* production was the one-act, spectacular *Shibaraku*, which was performed in Edo from the Genroku Period. *Shibaraku* has many roles and many opportunities for the display of individual skills and ensemble presentation. A *danmari* scene was also customary. *Danmari* are pantomimes in which several actors appear silently on stage in a tableau, and then engage in a struggle for a particular object. The physical nature of the struggle is highly stylized and dancelike. The reason for the struggle and the particular object never offer the significance of this scene: the real purpose was to offer the many actors for the coming year the opportunity to show themselves, en masse, announcing the theatre’s talent for the year to come.

In “The Assignment of Parts to Actors” *Kezairoku*’s author discusses how to assign roles with the intention of presenting the actors to advantage. In particular, while he acknowledges the practice of assigning roles according to seniority and ability, he emphasizes that casting for the *kaomise* is a special case, where the aim is to show off the new actors:

First of all, although it is said that role assignment in the *kaomise* performance should be according to importance within the theatre, it is best to assign roles to new troupe members that are better than they merit by rank. Continuing troupe members, including lead male-role actors, should yield to newcomers. This is a fundamental principle in the assignment of parts.²⁴

The section begins by outlining which actors should be cast in the different parts of the *kaomise* and continues by discussing choice of actors by role type. Playwrights were responsible for choosing or arranging appropriate material to fit an imposed play structure and to

²³ *Kinsei geidōron*, 513.

²⁴ *Kinsei geidōron*, 518.

suit individual actors. While the *kaomise* was especially significant to theatre success, given the auspicious and inaugural nature of the program, playwrights carried these same responsibilities in the preparation of all productions.

New Year Production

Edo: *hatsuharu kyôgen*

On the first day of the first month, all actors lined up on stage, and the troupe leader announced the play title and act titles for the forthcoming *hatsuharu kyôgen* (or simply *haru kyôgen* 春狂言) and introduced the actors. This was known as the “beginning” (*shizome* 仕初 or 仕始).²⁵ The production itself originally began on the second day of the first month, but later it began on the fifteenth day.

As with the *kaomise*, the day-long program had a two-part structure, the *ichibanme* 一番目 (part one) and the *nibanme* 二番目 (part two), terminology descended from the latter part of the seventeenth century when one-act plays, *hanare kyôgen* 放狂言, developed into multiple-act plays, *yonban tsuzuki* 四番続. Beginning in the 1720’s, *ichibanme* and *nibanme* no longer referred to the first two acts of a multiple-act play, but came to refer instead to the two parts of a connected program, the first being a *jidaimono* 時代物, a period play, and the second a *sewamono* 世話物, a play about contemporary townsmen.

From before the 1720’s, the *sekai* for the *ichibanme* of the *hatsuharu kyôgen* in Edo was always that of the Soga Brothers, a vendetta story of two historical brothers avenging the death of their father.²⁶ The Soga *sekai* was popular in large part because of the possibilities it offered for *aragoto* acting, the specialty of the most prominent Edo actors of the Ichikawa family. In the classic case, Ichikawa Danjûrô, the *aragoto* specialist par excellence, played the role of Soga Gorô, the more hot-headed of the two brothers. Playwrights heeded custom in setting and content for individual acts.

²⁵ Hattori Yukio, et al, ed. *Kabuki jiten*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983. 192.

²⁶ In Genroku-period Kamigata, *sogamono* 曾我物, or Soga plays, had been popular in summer. They were referred to as *Bon Soga* 盆曾我 and were performed in the seventh month in connection with the O-bon festival for the dead. For more on this subject, see *Avatars of Vengeance*. Also see *Sukeroku’s Double Identity* for the Soga *sekai* and Edo plays.

For example, the opening of the *ichibanme* was usually set at a temple or shrine (often Tsurugaoka Hachimangu), and it always concluded with the *tainen* 対面 scene, the confrontation of the two brothers with their sworn enemy. The *sewamono* of the *nibanme* also developed an aspect of the Soga *sekai*, and the play title, which united the two parts, always had “Soga” in it. Through this shared *sekai*, connections could be made by playwrights between the *ichibanme* and the *nibanme*, although different substories and characters would often be explored.

In some cases, a connection between the two parts was made by having a disguised character in the *ichibanme* reveal himself later to be “in reality” (*jitsu wa* 実は) someone else. This was a typical Edo method of structuring plays. The “in reality” device was common before the 1780’s, at which time playwright Sakurada Jisuke I 桜田治助 (1734-1806) initiated the change to making the two parts of the program independent.²⁷ When the Kamigata playwright Namiki Gohei I 並木五瓶 (1747-1808) moved to Edo in the 1790’s, he effected a clear division of the two parts of the day’s program, giving the *nibanme* its own title and often departing from custom by basing it on a non-Soga *sekai*. Thereafter, many plays, though not all, followed this example. While the Soga *sekai* remained important for *hatsuharu* plays well after *Kezairoku* was written, in the nineteenth century it was often mixed with other *sekai* through the technique known as *naimaze* 綱交ぜ. With this method of construction, two or more *sekai* were combined to create the plot for a single play.

Kamigata: *ninokawari*

The *ninokawari* of Kyoto and Osaka, also known as the *ôkawari* 大替り, was considered the most important production of the year for Kamigata playwrights and all troupe members. *Ninokawari* plays had highly dramatic content and placed great demands on playwrights’ abilities. Contrary to custom in Edo for *hatsuharu* plays, *jidaimono* and *sewamono* were intermixed. Playwrights arranged the story according to established patterns, with the play being divided into five sections, *jomaku* 序幕 or *kuchiake* 口明, *futatsume* 二つ目,

²⁷ The *nibanme* of Sakurada Jisuke’s *Kabuki no hana bandai Soga* 戲場花万代曾我 (The playful spirit of kabuki and the eternal Soga Brothers) of the first month of 1781 was unrelated to the Soga *sekai* of the *ichibanme*.

mitsume 三つ目, *yotsume* 四つ目, and *kimimaku* 切幕. *Oiesôdô* お家騒動 plays were a common choice. In these plays, conflicts over power and succession within important families -- typically created by the loss or theft of precious heirlooms or certificates -- give rise to the action. *Ninokawari* plays customarily have a brothel scene, and the word *keisei* (けいせい or 傾城), meaning “courtesan,” was invariably in the title. These aspects of *ninokawari* plays were in place by the 1680’s and remained important in the eighteenth century.

The great effort that Kamigata playwrights put into the *ninokawari* is clear from *Kezairoku*. In “Methods for Plot Construction” the author discusses the content, objective, and placement of actors by rank for each act. For example:

In a day’s viewing, the second act is of great importance. The play should be densely written from the start, but while the overall plot is undertaken in the first act, there should be no subplots and a sense of complete clarity. An understanding of the meaning of the play’s title should become clear with this act. Do not try to display the acting of insignificant actors, just move them around together en masse. Limit this to eighty or ninety pages. It would not be bad if it were only sixty or seventy pages, but this will depend on the actors.²⁸

The discussion of each act is preceded by overall considerations of this same sort, including advice on page allotment: “If there are one hundred pages, the plot and roles should be developed within seventy of them. The remaining thirty pages should be given to the beginning, which should be well developed.”²⁹ Planning overall play structure, presented here in terms of page count, was one of the playwright’s important contributions, as was monitoring the overall mood of the play: “Keep the play upbeat with an expansive feeling, and plan it so that it is not overly constrained.”³⁰

As with the *kaomise*, role assignment was central to the early stages of play creation. Seniority was always to be considered, but the *ninokawari* could provide lower-ranked actors with important opportunities: “When the year’s rankings are a sham, this is where

²⁸ *Kinsei geidôron*, 514.

²⁹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 514.

³⁰ *Kinsei geidôron*, 513.

one sees the actors' abilities and role possibilities."³¹ It was the playwright's job to facilitate the actors' opportunities to shine. Once again, this was effected by beginning with a concentration on the actor over the role: "The parts for *onnagata* who appear in plays with "*keisei*" in the title are created for the skills of the actors who play them, thus it is difficult to determine generally where they will appear."³² Both the *kaomise* and the *ninokawari* productions were centered on actors and their abilities, but *Kezairoku* entries show that playwrights also considered plot and structure very carefully for the *ninokawari*.

Third-month Production

Edo: *yayoi kyôgen*

For much of the eighteenth century, the long *hatsuharu* Soga production ran until the end of the fifth month. From the 1790's, however, the two-part *hatsuharu* program was changed in the third month and a new production, known as *yayoi kyôgen*, was offered. Previously, changes had been made in the third month to replace unsuccessful scenes,³³ with a possible new addition called the *sanbanme*.³⁴ An example of a third-month addition is "Sukeroku," which was customarily performed from the early eighteenth century in Edo.³⁵ It began on the festival date, the third day of the month.³⁶

The connection between Soga *hatsuharu* plays and third-month Sukeroku scenes was made most commonly in the person of the actor Ichikawa Danjûrô who played both one of the Soga Brothers and Sukeroku in the day's program. Danjûrô II was the first Danjûrô to play the role of Sukeroku. It remained an important signature role for each generation in the Danjûrô line. The first Sukeroku play

³¹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 518.

³² *Kinsei geidôron*, 518-519.

³³ According to *Shibai nenjû gyôji*, a new play could be added for the *nibanme* in the second month. *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 88.

³⁴ Terminology descended from the days of *yonban tsuzuki*. At certain times, there was also the practice of performing the *ichibanme* in the first month and the *nibanme* in the second month.

³⁵ For more on "Sukeroku," see *Sukeroku's Double Identity*.

³⁶ The traditional annual festival dates in Japan were 1/1, 3/3, 5/5, 7/7 and 9/9. The major kabuki productions corresponded with these dates, with the significant exceptions of the *kaomise* and the summer plays of the sixth month.

performed in Edo was the 1713 “Kind Treatment in the Splendid Cherry Mansion” (花館愛護桜 *hanayakata aigo no sakura*), and the first Sukeroku play performed in conjunction with the Soga *sekai* of the *hatsuharu* production was the 1716 “The Soga Brothers and the Illustrative Peace” (式例和曾我 *Shikirei yawaragi Soga*), both created under Tsuuchi Jihei II 津打治兵衛 (1683-1760) as lead playwright. Playwrights most often connected “Sukeroku” to the Soga *sekai* by having Danjûrô’s appearance as Sukeroku function as a disguise for his later-revealed, “in reality” (*jitsu wa*) role as the Soga brother Gorô.

Kamigata: *sannokawari*

In Kyoto and Osaka, a change of production in the third month had been common before the custom took hold in 1790’s Edo. Material used for the *sannokawari* -- performed generally from the third month -- was to be relatively light as compared to that of the *ninokawari*, though of similar “plan.” As the author of *Kezairoku* states,

The plan [for the *sannokawari*] is the same as for the *ninokawari*. However, the first act is briefer and less complicated and should be kept to seventy or eighty pages. You should develop it decidedly in around forty pages. The third act is also not as long as that of the *ninokawari*. It is not independent like the third act of the *ninokawari*, and depending on the play, its themes may relate to those used at the climax of the *ninokawari*. As a rule, the placement of domestic and teahouse scenes is not fixed. Generally, the number of acts should extend to seven or eight, however, you should also, of course, include some entr’actes.³⁷

This is *Kezairoku*’s entire entry on the *sannokawari*. Its relative brevity relies on the long *ninokawari* entry, but it also reflects the lesser importance of this production. In spite of the earlier and clearer demarcation between first and third-month productions in Kamigata, as opposed to Edo, thematic continuity between the *ninokawari* and the *sannokawari* was still a consideration for playwrights, where “depending on the play, [third-act] themes may relate to those used at

³⁷ *Kinsei geidôron*, 515.

the climax of the *ninokawari*.” The practice of a long first-month through fifth-month run, with varying possibilities for change in the third month, held in both regions.

Fifth-month Production

Edo: *Satsuki*

The fifth month was the end of the *hatsuharu* production. As already noted, if the *hatsuharu kyôgen* had not been a success, a new play would be prepared at this time to open on the annual festival date on the fifth. If it had been a success, only small alterations -- mostly with reference to seasonal changes and festivals -- were incorporated into the continuing production.

In Edo, the fifth month became significant because of the Soga Festival, an annual event at Edo theatres on the twenty-eighth of the month, the anniversary date of the Soga brothers' attack to avenge their father's death. At the lead playwright's house, offerings were made before a hanging scroll depicting the Soga brothers, whose spirits were worshipped as protective deities of the theatre. All playwrights were invited for wine and food. The festival was also celebrated backstage at the theatre, and from the middle of the eighteenth century into the 1820's, festival observations came to be incorporated into stage action at all three major Edo theatres.³⁸

Kezairoku does not give special attention to a fifth-month Kamigata production. There are no special entries for it in “Methods for Plot Construction” or “The Assignment of Parts to Actors” or elsewhere. As in Edo, the fifth month was the wrap-up time of the long run from the first-month and was followed by summer break and *bon kyôgen*.

Summer Productions

Edo: *Natsu shibai* and *Bon kyôgen*; Kamigata: *Bonkawari*

According to *Shibai nenjû gyôji*, the *bon kyôgen* was originally performed from the Tanabata Festival (the seventh of the seventh month), but by the late 1770's (the time of the publication of *Shibai*

³⁸ The example was set in the 1753 New Year's production at the Nakamura Theatre with the hit play *Otokodate hatsugai Soga* 男伊達初買曾我 (First courtesan of the new year and the Soga Brothers) by Fujimoto Tobun.

nenjū gyōji), it opened on the fifteenth of the seventh month, with the preceding month as *doyō yasumi* 土用休み, or summer vacation.³⁹ Sometimes the opening of the *bon kyōgen* was delayed into the eighth month due to heat.

Summer plays -- *natsu shibai* or *doyō shibai* (土用芝居, *doyō* meaning midsummer) -- took place in the sixth month of the lunar-based calendar, the hottest time of the year. After the example set by Ichikawa Danjūrō II, top stars left the hot, muggy cities during the sixth month for breezier locations. Low-ranking actors and playwrights remained, and plays were prepared and performed by them. These productions offered younger troupe members the opportunity to improve their skills in larger roles. Young actors took lead roles, and second and third-ranked playwrights took on greater responsibilities than usual. Ticket prices were lowered to encourage audience attendance, and true aficionados came to watch up-and-coming stars and encourage them in their progress. Thus, summer-vacation productions were also known as “training theatre” (勉強芝居 *benkyō shibai*.)

In the early nineteenth century, top stars began to stay in town and perform. Lead playwrights, such as Edo’s Tsuruya Namboku IV, also remained to prepare plays. Genres specific to summer were developed, their point being to combat the heat by offering a chill: ghost plays, plays using water, and quick costume changing scenes (*hayagawari* 早替り), in which characters make thrilling multiple costume and identity changes on stage, became popular.

In *Kezairoku*, the *bonkawari* is discussed in terms of the season. Simple plots, the importance of summer-appropriate costumes and a swift pace are all emphasized in terms of their suitability to the season’s effects on the audience.

Ninth-month Production

Edo: *Kikuzuki kyōgen*, *Onagori kyōgen*; Kamigata: *Kugatsukawari*

This final production began on the annual festival date, the ninth of the ninth month, or later. The general understanding for this production, as expressed in *Kezairoku*, was that the audience was at its most alert, and thus the plot should follow a more logical course

³⁹ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 90.

than was the case with other productions (*maruhonmono* 丸本物, kabuki adaptations of *jōruri* plays with relative plot consistency, were commonly chosen for this production.) *Kezairoku*'s explanation about autumn productions (from the section entitled "Seasonal Differences in Human Feelings") is as follows:

In autumn, people are controlled and alert, so that in developing the plot, emphasize the difficulties involved in a reasoned course. Focus on realistic occurrences, grab the audience's attention, and try to astound them. The play will not hold if the spectators are not moved to think to themselves, "Well done! That's just as it should be!" As opposed to the method used in the *ninokawari*, the *sekai* should be circumscribed. In the case of period plays when the *ninokawari* is set in a Lord's residence, the autumn production should then be set at the residence of a chief retainer. Everything must be well thought out.⁴⁰

Later in the *kugatsukawari* section of "Methods for Plot Construction" we find, "... the play should start pulling together right from the first act. A story of revenge would make a good choice. You should add in dialogue where every word counts and that, just as in *jōruri*, is literary and musical when uttered."⁴¹ There was apparently no room for sloppiness in the effort to garner an autumn audience's attention.

*Annual Theatre Events II: Planning Meetings*⁴²

The most significant annual planning meetings on the playwrights' calendar occurred between the middle of the ninth month and the beginning of the eleventh month. They were the *sekai sadame* (世界定め), the *nai'yomi* (内読み), the *hon'yomi* (本読み), and the *yorizome* (寄初め) (or *hanashizome* 嘶し初め.) Taken in order, they organized and punctuated the planning process for the season-opening production, the *kaomise*. The final goal to be achieved through them was an opening production that would highlight the new line-up of actors and leave the audience excited to return for later productions.

⁴⁰ *Kinsei geidōron*, 512-513.

⁴¹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 515.

⁴² For an illustration of backstage planning activity, see this book's cover illustration. Its accompanying explanation is translated on page iv.

The meetings themselves contributed a significant formal framework to later Tokugawa-period kabuki; in fact, these meetings became so central that Kawatake Shigetoshi could write: “At the same time that traditional formalities such as the *sekai sadame* and the *yorizome* were disappearing [with the end of the Edo Period], the essence of kabuki itself was necessarily undergoing a transition.”⁴³ We will examine each of these components of the production schedule, as well as the *kaomise*, for what they meant to playwrights. *Kezairoku* offers little specific information. Most of the sources of information are Edo-based, most likely because of the larger production of Edo *gekisho* from the end of the eighteenth century. As we learn from these sources, these meetings functioned from the 1780’s into the nineteenth century, during which they either ceased to function or were greatly altered in significance.

Sekai sadame

The *sekai sadame* was the meeting held at each theatre to choose the *sekai* for the *kaomise* play. The meeting took place on the evening of the twelfth of the ninth month.⁴⁴ The *sekai sadame* was first held at the home of the lead playwright, then at the home of the *zamoto*, and later at the theatre or a theatre teahouse. The theatre district was decorated with hanging lanterns to honor the importance of the day. Participants to the meeting dressed formally and followed a prescribed order in seating and actions. An 1803 picture shows lead playwright Namiki Gohei I facing the troupe leader, Ichimura Uzaemon XI, with the other participants on either side. The caption states, “The lead playwright facing a lucky direction and holding his writing brush.”⁴⁵ A sense of ritual formality is evident from this pictorial description of the event.⁴⁶

The number of participants was small, originally just the *zamoto*, lead playwright, and manager, but later adding the lead *onnagata* and perhaps others, so that there were typically five to seven men. Interaction was kept secret to guard against leaks of play material

⁴³ *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyū*, 418.

⁴⁴ As described here, the meeting was an annual feature of the kabuki calendar until the end of the Tenpō Period (1830-1843.) *Kabuki sakusha no kenkyū*, 414.

⁴⁵ *Kabuki jiten*, 243.

⁴⁶ This picture is reproduced on page ix.

that might benefit competing theatres. The meeting itself involved the official announcement and acceptance of plans made to that point. The lead playwright announced the *sekai* and the main roles with the actors' names for each part. He presented a specially-prepared sheet of paper with this information⁴⁷ and performed various ceremonial gestures. *Shibai nenjū gyōji* has the following description:

The *sekai* is written down and raised up to the family shrine, and a wine offering is made. The participants are given dishes of food by the troupe leader while celebratory toasts are made with wine. Sometimes there is clapping and congratulatory speeches.⁴⁸

Although much consultation preceded it, the *sekai sadame* formally initiated the process of creating the play. With the formal approval represented by the conclusion of the event, work began in earnest on play preparation. As we find in *Shibai nenjū gyōji*, “When you get to [the tenth] month the days get increasingly busy,”⁴⁹ as much work and certain central events paved the way for the opening of the *kaomise*.

nai'yomi and *hon'yomi*

The *nai'yomi*, an event that was guarded from others so that no hint of the play in planning would reach the ears of outsiders, was the meeting at which the lead playwright first read the draft of the new play to the *zamoto* and other chief actors in order to solicit comments, ideas, and approval. An Edo-based description from the end of the nineteenth century has the following:

The lead playwright is accompanied by the second-ranked playwright for the play's *nai'yomi* at the troupe leader's residence. The troupe leader hears about all the parts, and discusses the roles so that they will have no deficiencies. After the lead playwright has made corrections, there is the *hon'yomi*, where the play is read formally to

⁴⁷ The methods of preparing this sheet and passing it around during the *sekai sadame* are illustrated and discussed in *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* in *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 684.

⁴⁸ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 91.

⁴⁹ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 687.

the entire troupe on the theatre's third floor.⁵⁰

During the *hon'yomi*, playwrights first presented the play to all of the actors in the troupe. This was a very important moment for playwrights. They were judged on their ability to read well, to bring the script and its possibilities alive for the actors and thus to gain troupe enthusiasm and support for the play. In Mimasuya Nisôji's *Shibai hidenshû* 芝居秘伝集 (Secrets of the theatre), we find the following:

Kiyomizu Shôshichi, a disciple of Sakurada Jisuke, was a master at reading at the *hon'yomi*. Shôshichi's reading of the script was always accomplished to everyone's satisfaction. At low points in the script, he knew how to use his voice and read with verve. He brought out the high points of the play through thoughtful attention to all of its details. Actors were thereby enchanted, and Shôshichi's intoning of the script at the *hon'yomi* gave them visible pleasure. In order to clinch their approval, he would read with ever greater color, making the play more and more appealing. Because he was so famous at the *hon'yomi*, other playwrights would request that Shôshichi read for them, rather than reading themselves, and they were always pleased with the result.

Some playwrights are skilled at the *hon'yomi* while others are not. To read the script just as it is written is to stifle and misread it; thus Shôshichi always said, "You should bring out supporting nuances⁵¹ through a well-intoned reading."⁵²

The playwright was required to bring life to each part with only his voice in order to inspire the actors and show them the possibilities for their own performances. To "read" (*yomi*) the script was to enact it vocally, and playwrights with excellent reading skills were admired and in demand.

Directly after the *hon'yomi*, playwrights returned to the room in the theatre reserved for their use for *kakinuki no hi* 書抜の日, the day on which they began writing out sides (*kakinuki*, or *serifugaki* せりふがき in Kamigata.) Each actor's lines were written out, with a separate booklet prepared for each scene. Booklets were also made

⁵⁰ Kawatake Mokuami *shû*, 373.

⁵¹ The Japanese word here is *uso* 嘘, literally meaning falsehood.

⁵² *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6, 720.

listing the costumes and props required for each act. As the actors began the work of learning and developing their parts, playwrights aided them in rehearsals while also continuing to carry out their auxiliary tasks.

yorizome (hanashizome)

The sixteenth day of the tenth month was the last performance of the production year. On this day, all actors came to the theatre in *kamishimo* (上下 formal attire.) Troupe changes for the coming year were announced, with wishes expressed for prosperity in the year ahead.

The following day, the seventeenth, was the day of the *yorizome* or *hanashizome*. Although the two terms can be used interchangeably, strictly speaking, *hanashizome* refers to the ceremony itself, while *yorizome* refers to the day on which it occurs. In Edo, the event took place on the third floor of the theatre or at a theatre teahouse. Lanterns decorated the buildings of the theatre district. Actors newly contracted from other Edo theatres were welcomed by *okurimukae* (送り迎): “For example, actors currently performing at the Morita Theatre, but who are to appear at the Nakamura Theatre beginning with the *kaomise*, are escorted on this day from the Morita Theatre and welcomed by a dispatch from the Nakamura Theatre.”⁵³ Careful distinctions were observed between the newly-contracted actors from other theatres and rehired, continuing actors already in the theatre. Toasts were made, first to the newly-contracted actors, and then in order of importance to the rehired actors. This was another occasion for formal dress: current actors of the theatre wore *haori* and *hakama* (羽織 and 袴, jacket and divided skirt) and newly-contracted actors wore hemp *kamishimo*.

At the *hanashizome*, the playwrights read titles and roles for the *kaomise* play, which was now ready for rehearsals, to the entire troupe.⁵⁴ When the *hanashizome* first began, the plot would be read as well. The practice changed by the time *Shibai nenjū gyōji*, was written, where it states that rather than reading the plot to the entire troupe, playwrights would instead go to each lead actor for separate

⁵³ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 92.

⁵⁴ Detailed descriptions of the formalities of the *yorizome* are given in *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* in *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 687ff.

consultation (*sôdan* 相談.)⁵⁵ Again, reading the script was an important duty of the playwrights: “Among playwrights, there are experts and there are the inept at reading at the *yorizome*. The earlier Sakurada⁵⁶ had a low voice, but was supposed to have been good. Now, there are no longer playwrights who know how to read.”⁵⁷ In spite of the fact that the art of reading aloud seems to have been in decline, playwrights continued in the mid-nineteenth century to be judged on this ability.

Following the *yorizome*, the rest of the tenth month was devoted to rehearsals and other preparation for the *kaomise*. *Shibai nenjû gyôji* describes the activities in Edo of these days as follows:

From around the twentieth, five or six actors at a time will gather backstage. They rehearse act by act, or on some days, they rehearse two or three acts in a row. Then as the *kaomise* approaches, they rehearse more intensely in increasingly extended rehearsals.⁵⁸

On the twentieth, the crest billboards (*mon kanban* 紋看板)⁵⁹ are hung outside. They list both actors and playwrights, but only those visiting from other theatres. The custom is that regular members of the theatre do not appear on the billboards.

From around the twenty-fifth, the title billboards (*nadai kanban* 名題看板) are hung. Depending on the playwright, they might be hung sooner, or with an eye to the actions of neighboring theatres, they might be out a day or two late deliberately. Therefore, there is no agreed-upon day between the three theatres. There are different strategies according to the playwright's judgement.

Around the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth, actors coming from the Kamigata area arrive. An assistant to the manager or acquaintances among the actors go out to meet them. The theatre staff gathers and claps all together, saying, “The time has come, the time has come!” The street is crowded with conveyances going to the theatre. Everyone

⁵⁵ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 92.

⁵⁶ Sakurada Jisuke. “Earlier” could refer to the first or the second Sakurada Jisuke (1734-1806 and 1768-1829, respectively.) From the context however, it must refer to the first who was the most famous of the four generations carrying the name, known in his time as “Sakurada, the flower of Edo.”

⁵⁷ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6, 687.

⁵⁸ “In increasingly extended rehearsals” is a loose translation for *chûzarai* (中ざらい) and *sôzarai* (惣ざらい), the former probably referring to partial run-throughs, (I have not found another reference for *chûzarai*), and the latter referring to full run-throughs.

⁵⁹ These are billboards displaying the crests of the actors, and as here, playwrights.

goes out to welcome the arriving actors, and there is much revelry and excitement. Some of the old customs have become abbreviated, yet they might partially remain.

By the last day of the month, all billboards are out.⁶⁰

The mounting sense of excitement and activity is evident in the preparations leading to the eleventh-month, opening production. From the *sekai sadame* up until and including the first week of the show, approximately a month and a half of meetings and rehearsals, together with a wide variety of other preparations carried out by playwrights, brought the company in readiness to the *kaomise*.

Kaomise and Planning for Later Productions

The *kaomise* was a great celebration for each theatre and for the community. The theatre and theatre teahouses were decorated with lanterns, billboards and banners. A description of the Edo *kaomise* has: “Gifts from fan groups are piled up in front of the theatre. All of the teahouses are decorated. The atmosphere is bustling from the evening of the last day of the month. This is truly the flower of Edo, the *kaomise*, to which nothing can be compared.”⁶¹

The program began on the first of the month and ended somewhere around the tenth of the twelfth month. *Shibai nenjū gyōji* tells us, “On the last day of the *kaomise* program, the whole troupe gathers at the theatre. All actors are on stage, formally attired in hemp. The troupe leader reads the titles and roles for the upcoming spring plays. If the play has not yet been finalized, an approximation is given. Customarily, the manager does the dance for the final performance in formal attire.”⁶² Also, on the final day of the *kaomise* in Edo, the *sosori kyōgen* (そそり狂言⁶³) was added, in which the company performed a variety of extra entertainments, especially where members of the cast would switch roles (for example, *onnagata* and *tachiyaku* or major stars and lesser actors would trade parts.)

In Kamigata, the *kaomise* became a twelfth-month production

⁶⁰ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 93-94.

⁶¹ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 94.

⁶² *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 95.

⁶³ Literally, the “arousing play” (a play to arouse or excite.)

from the mid-eighteenth century. There were different practices in Osaka and Kyoto, but a central feature was the *zatsuki hikiawase* 座付引合せ, where members of the company -- the troupe leader, child actors, *wakashū* actors, *onnagata* and *tachiyaku*, in that order -- were introduced to the audience. In the nineteenth century, due to a decline in the number of available actors, the *kaomise* became primarily a Kyoto production, with the *ninokawari* centered in Osaka.

Both *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* and *Shibai nenjū gyōji* refer to a *sekai sadame* on the twelfth day of the eleventh month for the *hatsuharu* play. “It is an abbreviated version of the meeting on the twelfth of the ninth month [i.e., the *kaomise sekai sadame* described above].”⁶⁴ From the very beginning of the *kaomise* performances, plans were underway for the next production. Shortened versions of the meetings detailed in this section occurred for other productions, although none were so formalized or important as those for the *kaomise*.

The Work of the PlayMAKER and the Work of the PlayWRIGHT

The work calendar outlined above allows us an understanding of the meaning of the term “playwright” in the kabuki context. The hard work of helping to prepare plays and run rehearsals and productions, punctuated by formal meetings, filled the months of these men whatever their rank. By making distinctions among the various levels of the hierarchy, and noting the respective duties, it becomes clear why we must avoid adopting a composite view of playwrights. The lead playwright became a senior-ranking member of kabuki troupes over the course of the eighteenth century. His importance can be detected, for example, from his inclusion in exclusive planning meetings (for example, the *sekai sadame* or the *naiyomi*.) Lower-ranking members of the hierarchy were occupied with less conspicuous and less central tasks, and yet the wide range of their work was vital to the smooth preparation and mounting of

⁶⁴ *Kabuki no bunken*, #6, 95. See also, *Sakusha nenjū gyōji* (in *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6), 698, which includes an example of how the announcement sheet for the Spring *sekai sadame* was arranged. This eleventh-month *sekai sadame* refers to Edo practice. I have not found a reference to an equivalent Kamigata meeting in the *gekisho* I have read.

productions.

An important image *Kezairoku* gives us for the functioning of playwrights within kabuki troupes is that of strategist. Towards the beginning of *Kezairoku* we find the quote that heads Chapter Three, in which the financial backer and manager are generals, the actors are soldiers, the audience is the enemy,⁶⁵ and the playwright is the strategist for the play-battle. In *Sakusha nenjū gyōji*, a diary is quoted expressing the same idea: “Because the playwright is the strategist for the play, his orders are not disobeyed.”⁶⁶ Thinking of the lead playwright in particular as strategist makes sense: the overall plan for the play and the responsibility for ensuring that it was carried out in all its particulars belonged to him. When it came to writing the play, it was his job to parcel out scenes and to coordinate them once he and his subordinate playwrights had finished their drafts. As explained in the late nineteenth century, the lead playwright wrote “down the plot for each scene, passing the scenes out to the second-ranked and third-ranked playwrights according to their specialties. When the scenes had been joined together and written out he . . . read them through, finding and eliminating or changing repetitions in lines.”⁶⁷ Prior to opening day, playwrights knew the full play, but most actors did not. At the *hon’yomi* the full plot was presented, but actors were later given sides with only the lines for their individual roles. While the actors had heard the whole play, a complete written script was not handed around; only the playwrights, together with the troupe leader, had the full knowledge of the play’s parts and the ways in which they were connected. Thus, the strategist’s orders could not be disobeyed or the play might not hold together.

When we consider the historical development towards increasingly complicated plots and increasingly shared playwriting efforts -- that is, from actor/playwrights to actors collaborating with playwrights to actors collaborating with many playwrights who performed a widening number of tasks -- we can also understand

⁶⁵ The idea of the audience as enemy significantly represents a playwright’s perspective. As Laurence Kominz has pointed out in personal communication, Ichikawa Danjūrō I also loved to use samurai metaphors of warfare to describe his theatre work. However, he saw rival theatres, not audiences, as the “enemy.”

⁶⁶ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 706.

⁶⁷ *Kawatake Mokuami shū*, 373.

how the need for a “strategist” developed and see the aptness of *Kezairoku*’s metaphor. With so much playmaking to be taken care of, a coordinator/leader was essential. While the lead playwright worked with the troupe manager and other senior troupe members, the large and complicated burden of managing the details of creating the play and bringing it to production lay largely on his shoulders.

What part of that burden engaged the playwright as a writer? In *Sakusha meimoku* 作者名目 (1844), a *gekisho* which addresses Edo practices in particular, the author Mimasuya Nisōji writes⁶⁸:

There is a saying that the work of the kabuki *sakusha* is like a farm. Plows and hoes are the pen and ink, and fields are the paper. If you read the character *saku* (作) as *tsukuru*, then *tsukuri* is the occupation of cultivation⁶⁹, thus the term *sakusha*, or cultivator. In particular, earlier *sakusha* were certainly cultivators. The initial kernels of play creation came from the *sakusha*’s own inspiration, but the work of sowing them had to be learned. *Sakusha* were called by respectful terms.⁷⁰

For the playwright as writer, there were four important areas of cultivation: devising *shukō*, writing *jōruri* passages, writing *serifu* (せりふ dialogue) and writing play titles. The talent one had for contriving *shukō*, the “initial kernels of play creation”, was of utmost importance in effectively carrying out the tasks of writing the play. *Shukō*, discussed in more detail in the next two chapters, can be broadly conceived as meaning “plot.” Specifically, it is the changes and additions rendered to the pre-existing storylines, or “worlds” (*sekai*), chosen as the starting points for the creation of new plays. For example, as we have seen, the Edo *hatsuharu* production came to be based on the Soga *sekai*. The renewal each year of the Soga vendetta into a new play meant the incorporation of new twists of

⁶⁸ Within the quote, I retain the transliterated term *sakusha* (rather than the translation “playwright”) due to the etymological discussion.

⁶⁹ *Saku* is a Chinese reading and *tsukuru* and *tsukuri* are Japanese readings for the character 作.

⁷⁰ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 611. The last sentence reads, 作者を御作者、御作さんといふ。It is unclear whether or not the respectful terms *o-sakusha* and *o-tsukurisan* are reported as being currently in use, but from the context I have guessed that Nisōji is saying that they were in use particularly for earlier playwrights.

plot, *shukô*, into the Soga *sekai* as it had come to develop up to that point.⁷¹ Matsuzaki Hitoshi has written that, “what kabuki playwrights most sought was the ingenuity to come up with new *shukô*.”⁷² Hattori Yukio writes of the playwright as the person whose main job was to devise *shukô*, and always according to actors’ talents and current audience preferences.⁷³ The constraints imposed by the need to consider both the “soldiers” and the “enemy” channeled creative efforts in this work.

Writing the *jôruri* passages, lyrical sections of narrative accompanied by samisen, was an especially important area where the playwright had some independence and where he was appreciated for his ability to create beauty through language. Composing dialogue of a credible, authentic and sometimes lyrical nature was another significant area of literary endeavor for playwrights. In early kabuki, actors had prepared their own lines, often through rehearsal rather than by writing. As playwrights gradually took on this task, the process of dialogue creation became increasingly indebted to written efforts, and dialogue could be appreciated for its literary qualities, that is, for more than the simple communication it was meant to convey.

A final significant literary task of the lead playwright was writing play titles (*ônadai*) (individual act titles (*konadai*) were also composed by playwrights.) Hattori discusses play titles as a literary genre.⁷⁴ Their adherence to traditional poetic syllabic counts of five or seven, and the depth imparted through poetic techniques of punning and allusion, justify Hattori’s thinking. The significance of names and naming as an announcement for both divine favor and mundane patronage offers one explanation for why titles were treated with such importance.⁷⁵ Further reasons relate to the fact that only the title remained intact to represent the play after its performance

⁷¹ *Sekai* were not static. As we shall further discuss, they were subject to change over time.

⁷² Matsuzaki Hitoshi, “Kabuki sakusha no seikatsu to shisô.” *Kokubungaku, kaishaku to kyôzai no kenkyû*. Vol. 10, no. 1. January, 1965. 123.

⁷³ *Edo kabuki*, 221-222.

⁷⁴ *Edo kabuki*, 229.

⁷⁵ See *Edo kabuki*, 236, for more on this subject. Saltzman-Li, Katherine. “The *Tsurane* of *Shibaraku*: Communicating the Power of Identity” (in Leiter, Samuel, ed. *A Kabuki Reader*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 253-268) explores various aspects of the significance of names and naming in kabuki, as well.

(the combination of the acting, script, music, costumes, and other aspects of a specific performance cannot be preserved) and the fact that, in the absence of published texts, the title alone represented the playwright as writer to the community. Playwrights were clearly appreciated and judged for their ability in title composition, by audiences and fellow playwrights as well. A picture in one *gekisho* of people mingling outside a theatre looking at the title billboards for a *kaomise* production is captioned, “On the day when the new title billboards were hung outside the theatres, the playwrights would all go to see them.”⁷⁶ In another relevant passage, we read in *Kezairoku* that Namiki Shōzō could astonish “with his ability to come up with play titles quickly.”⁷⁷

Playwrights also had opportunities to appreciate the relative literary skills of their fellows in play composition, and *Kezairoku* records received professional opinions on the specific talents of those considered great. However, audience members would not necessarily be aware of authorship specifics in the plays they saw. Unlike titles, attribution of play scenes is a very difficult issue. While in some cases we can know who should have been writing a particular scene, according to knowledge regarding the professional affiliations of particular men at particular times, we can rarely be sure of which lines were written by whom: collaboration and frequent lack of recorded attribution will always leave doubt. The custom has been to attach the name of the lead playwright to plays, given his leadership position as chief writer. Not only was it his responsibility to assign scenes to his subordinates, but as we have seen, he also wrote important scenes and went over all scenes to ensure consistency and lack of repetition. Thus, the final version owed much to his writing and editing skills, as well as style. However, it is only play titles that come down to us as certainly the work of particular men.

We note that lead playwrights might be lacking in one or more of the literary talents required of their profession and yet still be highly esteemed. For example, the nineteenth-century lead playwright Tsuruya Nanboku IV reportedly wrote poorly, often miswriting *kanji* and lacking skill at important aspects of literary composition. Kawatake Mokuami tells us: “It should be that the lead playwright is the one to write the titles and *jōruri*, but because the great Nanboku

⁷⁶ *Sakushatana oroshi in Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 234.

⁷⁷ *Kinsei geidōron*, 506.

IV was poor at writing *jôruri*, he always had a second-ranked playwright do the writing.”⁷⁸ In spite of what seem to be obvious deficiencies, Nanboku was considered a first-class playwright by Mokuami and the likes of Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一方 (1802-1852) and innumerable others, in large part because of his great talent at thinking up *shukô*. In other words, he was a plot man, and as we have seen, devising *shukô* was one of the most important jobs of the lead playwright. Mokuami, on the other hand, was appreciated in all areas of literary creativity that we have discussed. Furthermore, his interest in and knowledge of many forms of literature led him to turn the fiction (*yomihon* 読本 and *sôshi* 草子) of Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848) into plays. He is also celebrated for his lyrical *shichigo chô* 七五調 dialogue, with its lines in poetic syllable counts of five and seven.

With an understanding of both the literary work and what we have called the playmaking work of playwrights, we are now prepared to turn to *Kezairoku*. *Kezairoku* offers the most concentrated information on the making and writing of kabuki plays as practiced by the turn of the nineteenth century and after. *Kezairoku*'s author equates the play with a battle, a contested encounter during which generals and soldiers meet their enemy. Bringing about a desired outcome required every possible engagement. The ingenuity and talent of the strategist, as both maker and writer, was imperative for the battle to result in victory. *Kezairoku* itself was written as an aid to such victory, and we will see that it offers both morale-boosting rhetoric and practical advice.

⁷⁸ Kawatake Mokuami *shû*, 373.

CHAPTER THREE

KEZAIROKU: LEGITIMACY AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE “WAY” OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

While playwriting is a marvelous kind of composition, its teaching method is unrefined, with no book on methodology. Since there are no patriarchs to worship, we have only the transmitted sayings of former master playwrights to listen to in order to understand this Way. . . . When we do not learn any methodology as transmitted from master to pupil, we are insulted by being considered the same as servants to the actors . . .

The theatre is our castle, the financial backer and the manager are the generals, the actors are the brave soldiers, and the playwrights are the strategists. If the strategist does not have authority, the soldiers do not follow orders, and then the preparations for the various battle arrays that we call the play become disordered. Because of this the enemy -- the audience -- is unbeatable, and in the end, sadly, we will be as the rank and file, mere fillers for the ditches. Let us make the teachings of earlier master playwrights into our method, and let us mobilize our well-worn brushes in an effort to record the practices of previous playwrights. And if there be later additions to this Way's methodology, solicit future playwrights to add them in. (*Kezairoku*)¹

Kezairoku was written with two related aims expressed above. The first is the professionalization of playwriting encouraged through the recording of standards and a methodology. The second is the elevation of the playwright's position, promoted by setting up the “Way” of the playwright (*sakusha michi* 作者道.)² *Kezairoku*

¹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 496-497.

² Kawatake Shigetoshi highlights three points about *Kezairoku*. The first is that it expresses the beliefs and principles of playwrights. The second is that it contains secret transmissions on the methodology of playwriting, and the third is that it discusses issues relating to regional and seasonal concerns. The second and third of Kawatake's points correspond to my first (the recording of standards and a methodology towards the professionalization of playwriting.) Kawatake's first point is related to my second concerning the elevation of the playwright's position through the promotion of a “Way.” See Kawatake Shigetoshi. *Nihon gikyokushi*. Tokyo:

explains the methods of Kamigata playwrights, and we assume the work to be based on practices from around the Hôreki Period (1751-1763.) As the only treatise devoted solely to kabuki play creation, it is an invaluable source of information as to what playwrights did once the hierarchy of playwrights was in place. The title tells us that it is a record of valuable information on playwriting, but the title also contains a pun: “*Kezairoku*” can be spelled alternately with the characters 毛才六, which means a greenhorn or stripling, a word used as a term of self-mockery by Kamigata men. This hidden meaning hints not only at the newly-established position in which kabuki playwrights as professionals had earlier found themselves, but also perhaps at the fact that Kamigata practices were being set down at a time when Edo had come to dominate the kabuki world.

“*Heaven*”

The subordinate troupe position of kabuki playwrights had always been assumed and was reflected in their rather late historical appearance as well as their relative status and low salaries as compared to actors. As we have seen, playwrights in the early period were in a subordinate position to any important actors in their troupes. *Kezairoku* was written with the intention of proclaiming and advocating the “Way” of the playwright in an attempt to consolidate and push playwright contributions to productions. With *Kezairoku*, we find that at the turn of the nineteenth century at least some playwrights felt in a position to be able to promote themselves as central to a troupe’s efforts and successes. This situation would have been unthinkable in the earlier part of the eighteenth century for all but a very few (such as Kaneko Kichizaemon and Chikamatsu, kabuki’s first specialist playwright³.)

As an expression of superiority of playwrights over actors, a military metaphor is twice used in *Kezairoku* to position the playwright favorably among theatre participants. The first statement of this idea, quoted above, is found in the “Heaven” section of the treatise. (*Kezairoku* is divided into three sections: Part I is called

Ofuſha, 1964. 402-405.

³ As early as the 1680’s. Chikamatsu’s name was placed on the billboards put up on the front of the theatre.

“Heaven,” Part II is called “Earth,” and Part III is called “Man.”⁴) The second statement, found in the “Earth” section, reads as follows:

As a rule, when at your desk, think of the world as your own, proceed as though no enemy confronts you and handle the actors as if they belonged to you. If you do not act in this way, you will recoil from your brush, hesitation alone will assail you, and you will be unable to move the audience. Usually, after establishing the plot, you will need to make changes in accordance with the actors’ abilities. Generally, think of your choice of theme as a tactical decision and the brush as the baton that leads the soldiers. As you confront your enemy -- the audience -- use that which is currently popular to crush their spirit, and the victory song of critical acclaim will be heard. Even if the brave warrior-actors are talented, if the tactician-playwright’s play has not been well prepared for battle, it will be difficult to achieve an outstanding victory.⁵

Here the playwright is depicted as the tactician who maneuvers the actors and brings them into battle-readiness in the engagement to beat the audience. Whereas actors aimed at enlisting the support of the audience and creating fans, the author of *Kezairoku* encourages playwrights to see the audience as the enemy. The opinion that only the playwright can “beat” the audience is found both times: “If the strategist does not have authority . . . the enemy -- the audience -- is unbeatable” and “even if the brave warrior-actors are talented, if the tactician-playwright’s play has not been well prepared for battle, it will be difficult to achieve an outstanding victory.” Among the various “battle” participants, the tactician-playwright is shown to lead the troupe to victory. Most striking is the advice that the playwright should think of “the brush as the baton that leads the soldiers.” It is particularly what he does with the brush -- writing -- which gives him the power to lead. In other words, in the preparation of plays, it is specifically his writing that is emphasized as the vehicle towards the victory of production success.

Rather than implying superiority over actors, this rhetoric must

⁴ There are precedents for this organizing device both in China (where its use goes back to the *I Ching*) and Japan. In Chinese it is known as 三才. In Japan, it was commonly employed in *zuihitsu* (随筆 essay-style literature) and other works of the Edo Period.

⁵ *Kinsei geidōron*, 516-517.

have been aimed simply at showing playwrights as holding some position of importance among the various participants in a kabuki troupe. Emphasis on connections to established traditions (which we will discuss shortly) undoubtedly was meant to help create this view. So too, the sections which comprise the “Heaven” part of the work. As the first part of the complete tripartite work, the entries for “Heaven” are given pride of place in the entire treatise. The next two parts, “Earth” and “Man,” take up the main considerations and details of the actual work of the playwright, but the important, political job of establishing and validating the profession is given prominence by its placement in the first and most exalted part of the heaven-earth-man typological ordering system.

“Heaven” contains the “Preface,” a diagram titled “The Five Deities of Ability,” the “Table of Contents,” the first four sections of *Kezairoku* (“What Playwrights Should Know,” “Writers of Fiction,” “Jōruri Playwrights” and “Kabuki Playwrights”) and a final diagram titled “The Five Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting.” Let us look at each of these for their specific meaning and contribution towards the overall message of this section.

The first sections of “Heaven” are devoted to the important purpose of establishing kabuki playwriting as a worthy profession. The way in which this effort is promoted finds precedence in Zeami’s treatises for the *nō* as well as in the writings of *jōruri* practitioners. All of these works employ the time-honored method of empowering through association with an established, unquestionably authorized tradition. Zeami tied his art back to both continental traditions and to the “age of the gods” in Japan, specifically to the reign of Empress Suiko, as follows:

In searching for the origins of *sarugaku* and *ennen*, some say they came from India, and some say they have been handed down since the age of the gods The origin of the *nō*, which all enjoy today, goes back to the reign of the Empress Suiko, when Prince Shōtoku commanded Hata no Kōkatsu (some say for the sake of peace in the country, some say to entertain the people) to create sixty-six public entertainments, which were named *sarugaku*.⁶

⁶ Rimer, J. Thomas and Yamazaki Masakazu. *On the Art of the Nō Drama*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. 3.

Uji Kaganojô and Takemoto Gidayû, the two important early jôruri chanters, also placed their performance practice in relation to an established antecedent, nô. From Uji Kaganojô we have:

In Jôruri, there are no teachers. However, one should understand that its parent is the Nô.⁷

And Takemoto Gidayû wrote:

It has been said that Jôruri should consider the Nô its parent, and so one should learn Nô chanting first, and only then begin to practice Jôruri. My reply is that, although such an idea has its apparent merits, the artists who follow my style regard the former masters of Jôruri as father and mother, while considering Nô, Kôwaka-mai, and other traditional music as foster-parents.⁸

Gidayû was not as willing as Kaganojô to acknowledge the paternity of nô. His notion that his own relatively new art was sufficient unto itself strikes us as revolutionary. However, he was not wholly able to let go of lineage either, and he allows nô a nurturing relationship, that of foster-parent. Where bloodlines are paramount, the secondary importance of nô is underscored, but it is honored nevertheless with a place of indisputable influence.

The necessity of tying one's endeavors to a heritage of undeniable legitimacy occurs throughout Japanese literary and artistic practices and not just with these performance traditions. In literature, the two prefaces to the *Kokin Wakashû* 古今和歌集 (the first imperially-sponsored anthology of poetry [905]) attest to an early preoccupation in this regard, which continued throughout Japanese literary history.⁹ Following Zeami and the jôruri chanters, the author

⁷ Gerstle, C. Andrew. *Circles of Fantasy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986. 183.

⁸ *Circles of Fantasy*, 191.

⁹ In the *kana* (Japanese-language) preface, we find: "Our poetry appeared at the dawn of creation. But that which survives goes back to Shitateruhime in the eternal heavens and to Susanoo-no-mikoto on the ore-rich earth . . . When the human era began, Susanoo-no-mikoto introduced the thirty-one-syllable poem. Thenceforth, conceptions and words became multifold and diverse as poets praised blossoms,

of *Kezaroku* also felt compelled to position his art vis-a-vis established and honored traditions, presumably with the idea of promoting the work of kabuki playwrights as a serious profession.

The first statement of *Kezairoku*'s preface gives the *raison d'être* of the entire work: "It is said that those without the Way are beasts, but those with the Way are human beings." Suggesting that playwrights must follow a "Way" (*michi* 道), the preface brings in Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist notions as it offers an explanatory introduction to the diagram of the "five deities" which follows. Buddhism, appears in the reference to the "Way" of beasts versus the "Way" of human beings, that is, in the message that following the Way improves one's cosmic position; Confucianism in the notion of "the teachings of the sages" and the notions of virtue and heaven's will; and Taoism in the idea of the Way itself. Numerology -- the "four kinds," the "five instruments," the "five deities" -- in both the preface and the diagram of "The Five Deities of Ability" lends the paragraph a Chinese, dignified tone. Elevated by the employment of a full range of contemporary intellectual orientations, the work is initiated with an air of authority and seriousness of purpose, ready to promote kabuki playwriting as an estimable practice.

Beginning immediately after the "Table of Contents," we find an overt effort to give kabuki playwriting an explicitly important position among various kinds of writing. This is done by tying it to highly validated types of writing, as in the first paragraph of "What Playwrights Should Know." There we are told that kabuki playwrights not only study different literary arts in order "to have an effect on people," but also that the kabuki playwriting "profession has been widely developed out of those old writings," that is to say, the origins of the profession are found in accepted "high" literature. Other efforts at placing kabuki playwriting as a worthy art are made by affirming the moral purpose it shares with other valued forms of writing and by explaining its previous lack of validation as "bad

admired birds, felt emotion at the sight of haze, and grieved over dew. As a long journey begins with an initial step and continues for months or years, or as a high mountain grows from the dust and mud at its base to tower where heavenly clouds trail, so too must it have been with poetry." (McCullough, Helen Craig, tr. *Kokin Wakashū, The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. 3.) Poetry, the most august of literary arts, is tied to the sacred past, with man's practice of poetry a gift from the gods. Poetry is described as being so ancient that its origins are lost in pre-history, stored only in divine memory.

conduct” on the part of playwrights who have neglected to tie themselves to their own playwriting tradition.

In creating plays, kabuki playwrights needed to pay attention to government expectations for play content if they wanted to avoid possible censorship and its consequences. An argument for the possible beneficial effect of theatrical writing was a critical one at a time when all literary endeavors were potentially subject to official evaluation in terms of their intention and ability to convey a moral message. As we have seen, the author of *Kezairoku* addresses the general charge of immorality leveled against kabuki as a performing art. He states that kabuki is based on proper moral purpose, and that it may even have a greater power to deliver its message than other types of writing: feelings “are directed immediately before us” and “their meaning is rapidly communicated to all,” that is, to anyone, no matter gender, position, or level of intelligence. *Kezairoku*’s author argues, in other words, that the physical presence of actors facilitates the communication of moral as well as other messages and that such messages can be transmitted through kabuki performance with maximum effect. He further validates the interweaving of fabrication (*uso*) and reality (*jitsu*) in the creation of theatrical writing (a subject to which we will return) as an effective technique towards a possible didactic end: “While we know that the portrayal of feelings involves a fabrication, we brace ourselves as tears flow to our laps, and this is certainly due to the faithfulness with which theatrical writing cuts to the hearts of the audience.”¹⁰

The overall argument continues with the observation that “while playwriting is a marvelous kind of composition,” it partly suffers in esteem from the bad name given it by hack writers and from an acknowledged lack of a refined teaching method. Behind this concern is the idea that a respectable art requires a proper method of transmission. In fact, transmission constitutes the backbone of the traditional visual and literary arts. The concept of the Way refers simultaneously to the art itself and to the lifelong process of its acquisition by practitioners. Without a method, there is no Way: as *Kezairoku* explains, when playwrights “do not learn any methodology as transmitted from master to pupil,” they write “without knowing the principles of the art.” Vanity, resting on the desire for recognition without the hard work that earns it, is offered

¹⁰ *Kinsei geidōron*, 496.

as a reason for the low position of playwrights within the troupe hierarchy (who are “considered the same as servants to the actors.”) Such vanity “makes [the] Way [of playwriting] disordered and causes it to lose authority.” The author claims a history for the Way of kabuki playwriting, but finds that this Way is currently in a state of disorder and suffers from a lack of authority.

At this point in the text, the author’s two purposes in producing *Kezairoku* – to elevate playwrights within troupes and to delineate a methodology to secure the status of playwriting as a proper Way -- have been stated. The battle metaphor which ties together the various participants involved in kabuki performance is the main rhetorical weapon in the advocacy of playwright elevation, and we have seen that it gives the most prominent place for successful survival of a troupe to the playwrights (the strategists.) The call for the establishment of a proper methodology based on and validated through the transmission of teachings helps bring the section “What Playwrights Should Know” to a conclusion: “Let us make the teachings of earlier master playwrights into our method, and let us mobilize our well-worn brushes in an effort to record the practices of previous playwrights.”

Each of the next three sections, “Writers of Fiction,” “Jôruri Playwrights” and “Kabuki Playwrights” offers a partially-annotated list of writers for its respective art form. What are we to make of these compilations in light of the overall purposes of the work? Most significantly, we need to consider the important role that genealogies take in establishing legitimacy. The very act of placing practitioners in genealogical descent from established predecessors establishes them as a group with an identity worthy of our attention. By placing kabuki playwrights in line with writers of acknowledged classics of literature, playwrights are given an undeniable position of significance. This fact explains the inclusion of the section “Writers of Fiction” in which the most well-known early examples of *monogatari* (物語, narrative), *nikki* (日記, memoir), and *zuihitsu* (隨筆, essay) literature are listed. Titles are given first, followed by their authors, unlike in the next two sections where the same information is offered in reverse order. With the prominence of the works themselves over their authors,¹¹ the point is made clearer that kabuki playwriting connects itself to important writing traditions.

¹¹ Author attributions are also frequently erroneous.

The section on jôruri playwrights would have been of direct interest to kabuki playwrights. While this section serves some of the legitimizing function addressed above, it also gives information of current import to practicing kabuki playwrights who were accustomed to borrowing successful techniques and material from their jôruri counterparts. As for the legitimizing force of this section, although jôruri itself needed to fight for acceptance, being another relative newcomer on the cultural scene, it could make a more plausible claim to literary legitimacy. Its direct connection to the *monogatari* tradition and the care with which texts were necessarily prepared for a theatre needing to bring life to inanimate puppets put jôruri playwrights more clearly into the literary sphere. The reverence accorded the text as the lifeblood of the puppet theatre need not be reemphasized here; as a text-centered theatrical tradition, jôruri had much to offer kabuki playwrights.

At the time of *Kezairoku*'s writing, jôruri's popularity had lost out to that of kabuki. It had done so only after decades of cross-borrowing in every aspect, including methods of playwriting. Throughout the eighteenth century, these mutual influences continued, spurring on the competition that acted as a major creative force in both traditions. Although jôruri at the end of the eighteenth century was on the wane in popularity, its playwrights and playwriting techniques would still have been of vital interest to playwrights of kabuki, as they had been since at least the time of Chikamatsu Monzaemon.

Chikamatsu's move from jôruri to kabuki and then back again to jôruri set patterns in both performing art traditions that enhanced their mutual development. When Chikamatsu switched to writing primarily for the kabuki theatre, he brought the techniques he developed for jôruri writing with him. These techniques were critical in shaping kabuki plays of the Genroku Period, the period in which playwriting first came to figure importantly. Later, when Chikamatsu moved back to the Takemoto Theatre to write jôruri for Gidayû and his successor, he returned with polished skills developed in a theatre for live actors, for example, in such areas as dialogue writing. His subsequent jôruri reflect those changes. The courtesan-visiting kabuki scenes, which he wrote for the actor Sakata Tôjûrô as part of longer family succession plays (*oiemono*), led to the development of the separate *sewamono* category of plays that he wrote for Tôjûrô and

then for the puppet theatre once he was writing jôruri again.

It is certainly no accident that *Kezairoku*'s "Jôruri Playwrights" section begins with Chikamatsu, although important chanter before him made playwriting contributions to the puppet theatre. His significance lies in the fact that he was the first man to work solely as a playwright (and not also as a chanter, or in kabuki, as an actor) and that his talent and influence were immense, both in jôruri and kabuki. Yet when we look at the short history given of his life and work (which is by far the longest entry of the list, where most jôruri writers receive only a line of description or none at all,) we find much praise and little explanation of the workings of his talent. Embedded in the short biography is praise for his ability to enlighten and reveal through strong powers of observation. We are told that "his work was different from the fiction that had been written until his time," but the only real reason given for this difference is his particular didactic orientation: "Chikamatsu wrote primarily from a sense of inner purpose, intending to teach the masses, and because of this, his work was different from the fiction that had been written until his time." The only technical explanation for the superiority of his work is a brief reference to his "strengthening the use of unelevated, common language."¹²

The lack of interest in discussing technique and style can be comprehended in light of the overall purpose of these sections, where concerns with lineage and literary connections are paramount. The Chikamatsu entry in this section is illustrative of the biographical technique employed throughout Part I of *Kezairoku*. This technique involves placing each man within both profession and family, with the possible inclusion of a telling anecdote or two and/or a summary reference to his abilities. Significantly, the individual portrait requires the group context for completion. In this regard, these entries partake of the general nature of biography in the pre-modern tradition, in which individuals of related profession or background are presented in chronological succession such that a composite view of a type emerges. Each individual is associated with the group within which he was formed. Lineage offers the rationale for individual inclusion and creates a web of connections, thus strengthening the effectiveness of seeing the individual for the group and the group in

¹² *Kinsei geidôron*, 499.

the individual.¹³ In the case of someone as unique in his contributions as Chikamatsu, there is the further purpose of showing that a playwright in the popular theatre is capable of favorable comparison with any writer. Thus we read that Chikamatsu was “a splendid literary man of the highest order among all those past and present. When you read through the hundreds of Chikamatsu’s jôruri, your enlightenment in the Ways of the Three Religions becomes clear without study.”¹⁴

It is interesting to note the variety in backgrounds of the jôruri playwrights: among them are doctors (Shichi Saishi), doctors’ sons (Shunsôdô), scholars’ sons (Chikamatsu Hanji), priests (Hasegawa Senshi), teahouse men (Sakai Zenpei), famed literary men (Fukuchi Kigai, also known as Hiraga Gennai, one of the great *gesaku* [戯作, popular fiction] writers of Edo literature), and closer to home, puppet manipulators (Wakatake Fuemi.) One must imagine that men went into jôruri playwriting in large part due to an interest in writing, thus the frequent possibility of a man from outside the theatre joining the writers’ ranks within. After joining the profession, these men became founders or heirs to its traditions, as is frequently evident in the jôruri biography section.

By contrast the list of kabuki playwrights shows them to be mostly men of the theatre, sometimes having started as actors, and sometimes, once the playwriting system was in place, having been born specifically into a playwriting family. This makes sense from what we know about the development of the profession from an adjunct duty of principal actors to a separate responsibility within the troupe. While some famous men of letters did try their hands at kabuki playwriting (for example, Santô Kyôden 山東京伝 (1761-1816) and others¹⁵), we do not find the same variety in backgrounds in the *Kezairoku* list of kabuki playwrights as we do in its list of jôruri playwrights.¹⁶ As we have seen, kabuki playwrights

¹³ See Marcus, Marvin. *Paragons of the Ordinary, The Biographical Literature of Mori Ôgai*. Honolulu: School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii, 1993. 16.

¹⁴ *Kinsei geidôron*, 499.

¹⁵ See Chapter Four for more on Santô Kyôden and other *gesaku* writers.

¹⁶ Namiki Shôzô I is a notable exception. He was the son of a teahouse man of Osaka’s Dôtonbori, but this at least places him in the theatrical world where teahouses directly served theatres and vice versa. The only playwright listed who originally followed a profession unrelated to the theatre is Namiki Sôji who was a

as a group were much more than writers, and early training within the theatre undoubtedly became necessary for mastering the many required tasks.

The “Kabuki Playwrights” section is much longer and more detailed than the previous lists of writers, and it is given more weight by its own introductory paragraph and a chronological categorization. There is some misordering and repetition in the chronology (the An’ei Period heading is found three different times.) However, this does not negate the attempt to impose a meaningful structure on the large number of Kamigata and Edo men listed, a structure that helps promote playwrights in general as men of significance, while also defining individual contributions. We cannot read the entries too specifically in terms of relative importance of men listed. Only Tsuchi Jihei and Namiki Shôzô I, Edo and Kamigata playwrights respectively, receive long entries.¹⁷ While they were seminal articulators of the profession, others of equal significance receive little discussion, for example, Edo actor/playwright Ichikawa Danjûrô I, Kamigata playwright Nagawa Kamesuke, Kamigata and then Edo playwright Namiki Gohei I, and Edo playwright Sakurada Jisuke I. The point does not seem to have been a focus on outstanding playwrights, so much as to help establish the profession itself as one of substance and importance.

It is worthy of note that there is no section on nô playwrights. Nô held an official place of superiority among the stage arts during the Edo period, and the great importance accorded the texts of nô, as well as the great attention given to text creation, might lead us to expect the lineage aims expressed in *Kezairoku* to benefit from association with nô and its poetic texts. The line of thinking that may explain this omission is found in the Chikamatsu entry of “Jôruri Playwrights,” in which jôruri as a literary art is presented as developing out of prose forms rather than poetry. Chikamatsu’s work is described as being “different from the *fiction*”¹⁸ that had been

doctor. However, he had married into an actor’s family: we are told that he was the husband of Arashi Shichigorô II’s younger sister (*Kinsei geidôron*, 507.)

¹⁷ Tsuchi Jihei is the earliest playwright about whom many anecdotes exist, especially concerning his advocacy and promotion of the profession. If Namiki Shôzô II is the author of *Kezairoku*, as is currently assumed, the long entry for Namiki Shôzô I is also understandable.

¹⁸ Emphasis mine. “Fiction” is translated from *sôshimono* 草子物. Jôruri can be referred to as *sôshi* in critical discussions. For example, Chikamatsu, as recorded in

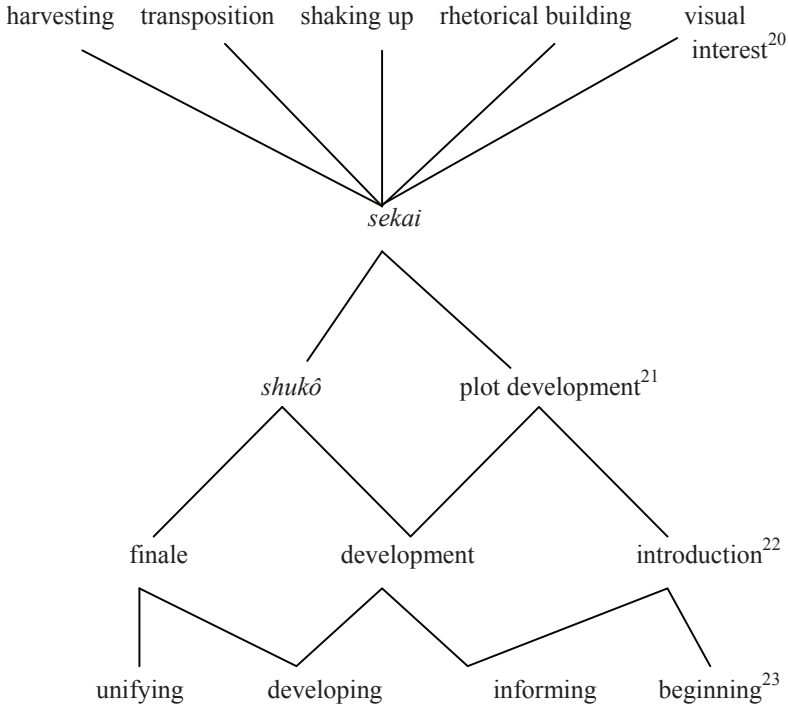
written until his time,” that is, it stands out as a special example of the prose-based literary tradition. This line of thinking also explains the inclusion of only *monogatari* and *sôshi* (草子, tale literature) in the first section on literary writers (“Writers of Fiction”), with the obvious omission of poetry. *Jôruri* is characterized as a popular type of writing, in which Chikamatsu “strengthen(ed) the use of unelevated, common language.” Again, *jôruri* is set apart from *nô*, which highlighted the use of elevated, elegant language. By being allied with classical fiction and *jôruri*, kabuki is set up as the latest development in the non-poetic tradition of Japanese literature (although poetry obviously figures in some of the works cited in the *Kezairoku* section on “Writers of Fiction.”) Although prose literature was previously less valued in relation to poetry, it was becoming a favored medium in eighteenth-century Japan.

At the end of the “Heaven” part of *Kezairoku*, methodology, or the Way, is introduced through a diagram entitled, “The Five Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting.” The diagram is as follows:

Naniwa miyage, uses the term *sôshi* (for which, see Chikamatsu Monzaemon. *Naniwa miyage. Nihon koten bungaku taikai*, Vol. 50. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959.)

作者心得之事 五花十葉ノ伝

The Five Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting¹⁹



¹⁹ Gunji guesses that “Five Flowers” refers to the top row of the diagram and that “Ten Leaves” refers to the ten remaining terms from *sekai* on down.

²⁰ These five, beginning with “visual interest” and moving to the left, are: 景様 (*keiyō*), 頂上 (*yama*), 揺 (*yusuri*), 大曲 (*ōkuruwa*), and 鎌入 (*kamaire*). They delineate the five-part structure of plays. *Keiyō* points to the first act’s concern with visual display. *Yama* indicates a gradual building-up of the story to a climax, which necessitates the third act’s *yusuri*. *Yusuri* is the central focus of the play, expressed here as “shaking up.” *Ōkuruwa* indicates that a change occurs. *Kamaire* points to a resolution that brings everything together but is not final, much as a harvest leads into the next season of planting.

²¹ “Plot development” is from 仕組 (*shikumi*).

²² 序破急. The pacing principle of many arts, such as the performing arts of *gagaku*, then *nō*, then *jōruri* and as indicated here, later of kabuki.

²³ From “beginning” and moving to the left, these are: 起 (*ki*), 承 (*shō*), 転 (*ten*), 合 (*gō*). They might also be translated as establishing, receiving, changing and summing up. They are borrowed from Chinese poetic theory for regulated verse.

This diagram serves two important functions. First, it proclaims by its existence that a carefully considered Way exists. It thereby prepares readers for Parts II and III of *Kezairoku* (“Earth” and “Man”) which detail aspects of this Way. Secondly, by tying together various literary principles of varying antecedents, kabuki playwriting is again presented as a serious pursuit among types of writing.

The very nature of the diagram ties *Kezairoku* to illustrious predecessors, including medieval artistic treatises and intellectual traditions. For example, the significance of the syncretist mode of exposition employed by Zenchiku in his *nô* treatises has been explained as follows:

. . . to the extent that the various value systems can be shown to correspond, through their mutual application to Zenchiku’s seven categories, a deeper level of principle, or truth, is established. The harmonious correspondences among the various creeds and principles ultimately serve to enhance each individual component; no favorites emerge. By impartially transmitting all of these viewpoints, Zenchiku endeavors to enhance the prestige and profundity of his art.²⁴

Something similar has been attempted through the *Kezairoku* diagram. Both the creation of the diagram in a version of a syncretist mode, as well as the establishment in the diagram of correspondences between various artistic systems, reinforce the purposes of the treatise. Understanding this point, we know that the inclusion of the Chinese content of the bottom line of the diagram -- *ki* 起, *shô* 承, *ten* 転, *gô* 合 (“beginning, informing, developing, unifying”) -- with its terminology borrowed from Chinese regulated poetry, is not merely a superficial addition to satisfy the Tokugawa intellectual penchant for Chinese learning. It is also significant in terms of the legitimizing function we have discussed as so much of the purpose of the “Heaven” part of *Kezairoku*. (What could lend more legitimacy than classical Chinese literary correspondences?)

This legitimizing purpose is also served by the *jo-ha-kyû* 序破急 (“introduction, development, finale”) pacing principle of line four of the diagram. This principle was borrowed from continental practice with the importation from China of the *bugaku* 舞楽 dance drama in

²⁴ Thornhill, Arthur. *Six Circles, One Dewdrop, The Religio-Aesthetic World of Komparu Zenchiku*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. 178-179.

the eighth century. It was of great importance thereafter in developing the structure of various Japanese literary and performing arts (for example, *renga* 連歌 poetry, *nô* and *jôruri*.) The diagram offers a graphic instruction of the application of *jo-ha-kyû* to four and five-act plays, and Kawatake considers the *jo-ha-kyû* line to be the foundation of the diagram. On the top, he ties the upper line to *jo-ha-kyû* and five-act plays as follows: “visual interest” corresponds with *jo*, or the first act of a five-act play; “rhetorical building,” “shaking up” and “transposition” correspond with the three acts of *ha*; “harvesting” corresponds with *kyû*, or the last act of the five-act play. In the lower part of the diagram, he ties the bottom line to four-act plays. He discusses how its four elements (“beginning, informing, developing, unifying”) correlate with the four moods that formed the respective tonal foundations of the acts of a four-act play, as applied by playwright Nagawa Kamesuke.²⁵ These four elements are also explicitly connected in the diagram to *jo-ha-kyû*.

Kabuki playwriting is most specially represented in the diagram by *sekai* of line two, and “plot development” (*shikumi* 仕組み) and *shukô*, both of line three. If we examine the diagram with *sekai* as our starting point, we find that it offers a teaching on the correlation between chosen material and play structure. The material, *sekai*, as it is first amended and augmented (*shukô*) and then developed (*shikumi*), is tied to both a prescribed five-act structuring (“visual interest, rhetorical building, shaking up, transposition, harvesting”), and through the governing pacing principle of *jo-ha-kyû*, to the four-act scheme of the bottom line (“beginning, informing, developing, unifying.”) Absent is any line concerned with the actual words of a play, the language in which it is written. In general, this mirrors *Kezairoku* as a whole: the treatise offers little advice on the crafting of words, style, or diction. Written teachings generally stopped short of such topics, which were learned primarily through apprenticeship and practice. Comprehensive written treatment of a “methodology for playwrights” had noteworthy limitations.

“Earth” and “Man”

Parts II and III of *Kezairoku* incorporate a summation of information and advice available to playwrights through selected oral teachings.

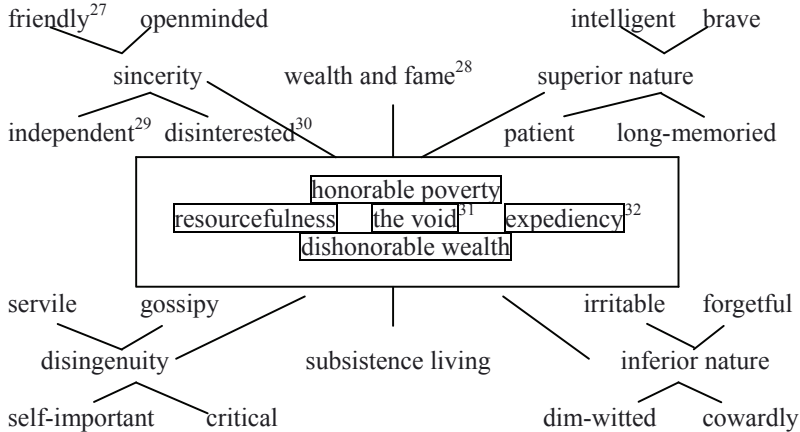
²⁵ *Nihon gikyokushi*, 404.

Except for the last section on “overnight plays” (*ichiyazuke* 一夜附 literally, “one-night pickles”), Part III, “Man,” is mostly concerned with the details of program and billboard making. It explains actor or playwright placement on programs and billboards in exact detail. We might see this part of *Kezairoku* as the least significant of the whole, the least connected to the main purposes of legitimacy and the establishment of a “Way.” These concrete methods of program and billboard composition are placed in the least lofty section of the three parts of the heaven-earth-man organization of *Kezairoku*, showing this information to be least in need of protection as core to a competitive art. Programs and billboards are available for all to see; while precise explanations of their construction reveal specifics of significant playwright tasks, they do not expose or suggest secret aspects of the art.

Part II, “Earth,” forms the center of the work and also contains some of the most interesting and informative sections of *Kezairoku*. In many of these sections, we find salient aspects of the “Way” of the playwright addressed. “Earth” begins with another diagram, “The Two Paths and Four Branches,” a schematization of opposite qualities in human nature.

二道四別之伝

The Two Paths and Four Branches²⁶



The purpose of the diagram is left obscure. Perhaps it required oral instruction for clarity. It may have been meant to elucidate human psychology for use in character development. Whatever its purpose, it suggests that playwriting may be approached analytically, but will never fully reveal itself as a practice in charts and manuals.

²⁶ Gunji surmises that the “Two Paths” are “wealth and fame” and “subsistence.” The “Four Branches” are “superior nature,” “inferior nature,” “sincerity” and “disingenuity.” This diagram seems to offer a way of schematizing human nature and thus of the natures of characters in plays. Each entry is paired with its antithesis, which I have tried to convey as well as possible in the translations.

²⁷ 付合. This carries the idea of being sociable, as opposed to the self-absorption of its paired “self-important” (自慢) below.

²⁸ 名利. Gunji thinks that this may be a mistake for 冥利, meaning luck, fate, divine favor.

²⁹ 不誠. In contrast to “servile” (追従) below, I take this to mean one who does not follow the commands of others, thus “independent.”

³⁰ 不識. This conveys the idea of one who minds his own business versus the “gossipy” nature (中言) contrasted below.

³¹ 空心. A Buddhist term.

³² 臨機, here translated as “expediency,” literally, the idea of meeting the occasion. This is paired with “resourcefulness” (応変), meaning to respond to the unusual or to respond to change. These do not form a strong antithesis, although 臨機 conveys the idea of meeting an occasion as it already exists, while 応変 emphasizes responding to change in a given situation.

One of the most significant sections of “Earth” called “Teachings From the Playwrights,”³³ offers advice on achieving success in play creation. The section begins, “Someone asked, ‘At what does one aim in writing plays?’ The answer was simply: ‘With plays, your goal should be the *shiroururi* of *Tsurezuregusa*.’³⁴ Plays are said to issue out of “playwright confidence and *shiroururi*.” The playwright needs knowledge (which is the foundation for his confidence) and a high level of creativity or imagination (*shiroururi*.) One’s aim as a playwright is “the *shiroururi* of *Tsurezuregusa*,” that is, creativity applied to knowledge is the key to successful playwriting. *Shiroururi* in the *Tsurezuregusa* refers to both the highest attainment and the total freedom accorded a true master who has reached this level of attainment. As we learn of the abbot in *Tsurezuregusa*, on whose accomplishments and behavior the definition of *shiroururi* rests, “His behavior was unconventional, but people, far from disliking him, allowed him everything. Might it have been because his virtue had attained the highest degree?”³⁵ True mastery of this kind is the greater part of the goal advocated in the *Kezairoku* quote.

The word *shiroururi* breaks down into *shiro* (white) and *ururi* (a

³³ *Kinsei geidōron*, 516-517.

³⁴ *Kinsei geidōron*, 516. The elusive definition of *shiroururi* in *Tsurezuregusa* (a thirteenth-century work in the essay style [*zuihitsu*] by Yoshida Kenkō) is as follows: “Once, when this abbot saw a certain priest, he dubbed him the *Shiroururi*. Someone asked what a *shiroururi* was. He replied, ‘I have no idea, but if such a thing existed, I am sure it would look like that priest’s face.’ This abbot was handsome, robustly built, a great eater, and better than anyone at calligraphy, Buddhist scholarship, and rhetoric. He was highly regarded within his temple as a beacon of the sect, but, being an eccentric who cared nothing for society and acted exactly as he pleased in everything, he refused ever to conform to the others. Even when he sat down to a collation after performing a service, he would never wait until the others were served, but began eating by himself as soon as the food was put before him. Then, the moment he felt like leaving he would stand up from the table and go off by himself. He did not eat even collations in his temple at the regular times with the others, but whenever he felt like eating, whether in the middle of the night or at the break of day. When he felt like sleeping, he shut himself in his room, even in broad daylight, and refused to listen when people addressed him, no matter how urgent their business might be. Once he awakened, he might then spend several nights without sleeping, going about serenely, whistling as he went. His behavior was unconventional, but people, far from disliking him, allowed him everything. Might it have been because his virtue had attained the highest degree?” Keene, Donald. *Essays in Idleness*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967. 55-56.

³⁵ *Essays in Idleness*, 56.

kind of shrimp.) It also suggests the word *tsururi* (slippery, sliding, smooth.) Thus, *shiroururi* slips away from us materially and cannot be clearly defined. In particular, *tsururi*, which as a lexical item is not fully present, functions as a metaphor for kabuki playwriting, an activity which itself is not fully present as an object of explication: *Kezairoku* and other *gekisho* can only offer partial explanation as to the workings of this “Way.” The rest must be gained through practice rather than written teachings.

The remainder of “Teachings From the Playwrights” includes one of the battle-metaphor statements, advice on competition (“You shouldn’t be overawed by a major troupe, nor should you be contemptuous of minor troupes”), and an admonition to avoid favoritism in dealing with actors. The *shiroururi* discussion revolves around creative aims; these latter issues all relate to the goal of professional promotion. Taken together, they suggest an effective consciousness for playwrights in the fulfillment of their professional duties.

The content of other sections of “Earth” is considered in discussions that follow. Generally, these sections foster the idea that playwrights should approach writing plays with the audience and actors firmly in mind. Sections with this message include: “Differences Among Plays of The Three Cities,” “Seasonal Differences in Human Feelings,” “Methods for Plot Construction,” “The Assignment of Parts to Actors,” and “Fine Points Concerning The Assignment of Parts.” These sections also allow us to consider the kind of instruction *Kezairoku* offers, its nature, purposes, and limitations.

The Nature of Kezairoku and Kabuki Gekisho

Training methods of actors and other troupe members were similar to those of many other traditional performing arts with their emphasis on lineage, secrecy, and oral transmission. In traditional arts, knowledge is an inherited right, but its possession must be earned. Without being born or adopted into the right family, access is denied; when available, it still requires perseverance, patience, diligence, and skill to be mastered. In pre-modern Japan, where written treatises of teachings existed, they were kept mostly for the family/lineage that developed them. Their frequently abstruse language meant that

reading and studying them alone was not the key to the knowledge they contained: oral explanation and practice were required to make them intelligible. In the case of kabuki, while some treatises were written to interest a viewing public, there were also secret works for the use of practitioners only. Even so, Kabuki relied little on written transmissions for training. Instead, learning was effected as in purely oral cultures: through exposure over time, imitation, and a willingness to endure rigors. The combination of these methods led to the incremental attainment of one's art through lifelong dedication and ultimately to a reliance on oneself rather than a teacher.

Kezairoku announces by its title an intention to lay out a methodology for playwrights. However, we learn almost nothing about how a playwright trains or disciplines himself into the profession,³⁶ and we see that *Kezairoku* is far from comprehensive in other areas as well. What *Kezairoku* does offer, like many of the other kabuki *gekisho*, is instruction of two varieties. The first offers highly detailed information about subjects less central to the actual craft of writing, the exact how-to's, for example, of the composition of billboards or number of pages to be devoted to certain sections of a play. With few exceptions, such as the section on "overnight plays," each time we find ourselves getting close to practical advice on play composition itself, we encounter the second variety of instruction, a metaphorical treatment of the issues. The example of the skin-bones-flesh metaphor to discuss play structure and crafting technique is illustrative of this metaphorical expository practice:

The plot is the bones, its particulars [*shikumi*] are the flesh, and the dialogue is the skin. If you successively unite these three -- the bones, the flesh, and the skin -- you will have a masterpiece. Period plays should be thick-boned, family-quarrel plays should be of ample flesh, and domestic plays should be of delicate skin. For all scenes, a lack of proper investigation into first the bones, then the flesh, and then the skin will result in a lack of credibility in the portrayals of individual men and women of beauty. You should examine successful plays that have already been produced to understand this.³⁷

³⁶ This information is offered, however sparingly, in Mokuami's "Instructions," but "Instructions" was not meant for publication nor intended as a full treatise on the subject.

³⁷ *Kinsei geidōron*, 511.

The previously-discussed explanation of *shiroururi* as a metaphor for one's objective as a playwright can be understood similarly. Here is the full passage on *shiroururi* from *Kezairoku*:

Someone asked, "At what does one aim in writing plays?" The answer was simply: "With plays, your goal should be the *shiroururi* of *Tsurezuregusa*." The person who had asked was impressed. A writer is one who can surmise what *shiroururi* would be if it existed. Not having observed the movements of the Emperor or the Shogun, nor having had contact with beggars or thieves, one is nevertheless able to write by imagining human nature, thinking, "It's probably this kind of thing." That is *shiroururi*. Much of what is verbally and visually passed down in this world comes from plays, having issued out of playwright confidence and *shiroururi*.³⁸

Shiroururi is a term of mystery and force in *Tsurezuregusa*, and it is borrowed in both these aspects to hint at the essence of the craft. Yet it is also made more explicit in meaning: it is used to refer to the writer's imaginative power and the power gained through a potent imagination. The passage suggests that success as a playwright is largely founded on practice and experience (the source of "playwright confidence") that are enlivened through intuition (*shiroururi*.)

Kezairoku is composed of alternating treatments of its material. For the most part, the metaphoric approach is employed in relation to central concerns of craft and training, while the more clear-cut and precise discussions are employed for relatively mechanical aspects of composition and other playwright activities. In comparison to medieval artistic treatises, *Kezairoku* and other kabuki treatises seem to offer something more immediately serviceable. *Kezairoku*, for example, reads as practical with all its specificity, but the pieces of information and advice that particularly fill Parts II and III do not build into a fully-realized method. They are not sufficiently interconnected or contextualized to allow for the construction of a comprehensive methodology. Nor do they seem to aim for such a grand goal, in spite of the treatise's subtitle, "A Writers' Methodology."

If we compare *Kezairoku* to Zeami's treatises, its particular nature,

³⁸ *Kinsei geidōron*, 516.

as well as that of other kabuki treatises, seems more apparent. Three points stand out. The first is that Zeami works out highly organized, structured discussions, as opposed to the anecdotal emphasis in kabuki treatises. “*Fūshikaden*” 風姿花伝 (“Teaching on Style and the Flower”) and “*Sandō*” 三道 (“The Three Elements in Composing a Play”)³⁹ are examples of Zeami’s tendency. Emphasis in medieval treatises on typologies, or groupings of styles or principles that typify excellence and embody the inner essence of an art,⁴⁰ seems to have been exchanged in kabuki *gekisho* for something more casual, with less apparent effort towards systematic exposition.⁴¹

The second point is that Zeami’s treatises are imbued with a religious-philosophical nature that gives them an impressive aura of authority and weight of argument when considered in full. Here, we can point to the foundation of medieval treatises in esoteric Buddhism and to the emphasis on a hierarchy of experiential states in artistic theories thus grounded. The concept of the “Way,” entered the arts before the medieval period. In its medieval form, the emphasis is on the soteriological value implicit in artistic accomplishment, the sense of progression through a hierarchy of stages where one’s goals of supreme artistic accomplishment and personal salvation are ideally accomplished together.⁴² In the Tokugawa Period, as found in *Kezairoku*, there is no longer the emphasis on personal salvation, but rather artistic accomplishment stands alone as a goal. Buddhist-inspired aims are replaced with those that address more mundane demands and that respond to desires for success in this world more than movement towards the next.

Finally, Zeami also uses metaphoric language, especially at points of highest importance, showing that authors of kabuki treatises share with him a belief in metaphor as the most effective tool to suggest the truth of serious, central teachings. His treatise *Kyū-i* 九位, for example, is fully metaphoric in its explanation of the stages of attainment in the actor’s art.⁴³ While practitioners of many

³⁹ The translated titles are from Rimer and Yamazaki’s *On the Art of the Nō Drama*.

⁴⁰ *Six Circles, One Dewdrop*, 7.

⁴¹ This exchange was not conscious of course, but it reflects changes in intellectual approaches between the two periods.

⁴² For further discussion of this issue, see *Six Circles, One Dewdrop*, 9. The goal of personal salvation comes out most strongly in the nō treatises of Zenchiku.

⁴³ For a translation of *Kyū-i*, see *On the Art of the Nō Drama*.

performing arts would agree that direct explanations can never fully convey the essence of their art, this ultimate reliance on indirect instruction in written treatises has other fundamental as well as practical reasons. Fundamentally, written manuals are of secondary importance to oral transmission, the preferred method of artistic training. On the practical level, there is the importance of secrecy in the transmission of art to protect a troupe's livelihood where competing troupes might steal successful techniques or ideas. Written documents present more hazards to the preservation of secrets, although writing can preserve teachings from loss. Both medieval and Tokugawa-period treatises share these underlying reservations regarding written teachings -- the preference for oral transmission and the need to guard the secrets of the art -- no matter what the differences in philosophical underpinnings, methods of presentation, or scope of intended audience.

Jitsu and Uso, The Key to Nagusami

Earlier critical works lay a foundation for discussing later Tokugawa-period treatises. Following critical issues through successive earlier discussions sheds light on the importance of certain fundamental concepts in the traditional performing arts and also allows for a deeper understanding of their treatments in the kabuki treatises. As an example, let us look at the use of the paired terms *uso*, falsehood or the "unreal," and *jitsu*, reality or the "real," in order to understand how they were theorized towards the creation of successful plays. One measure of the success of a play was the degree to which these elements achieved a desired balance. Another related measure was the degree to which the play was "entertaining." We will look at how entertaining, or giving pleasure, *nagusamu* 慰む, (or as a noun, *nagusami*) is treated as a central concern by the various practitioner/theorists under discussion.

The most famous of Chikamatsu's statements on the performing arts is: "Art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal."⁴⁴ Chikamatsu went on to develop what he meant in the following:

⁴⁴ Keene, Donald. *Anthology of Japanese Literature*. New York: Grove Press, 1955. 389.

Of course it seems desirable, in view of the current taste for realism, to have the retainer in the play copy the gestures and speech of a real retainer, but in that case should a real retainer put rouge and powder on his face like an actor? Or would it prove entertaining if an actor, on the grounds that real retainers do not make up their faces, were to appear on the stage and perform with his beard growing wild and his head shaven? This is what I mean by the slender margin between the real and the unreal. It is unreal, and yet it is not unreal; it is real, and yet it is not real. Entertainment lies between the two.⁴⁵

The translation's "slender margin" is literally a "membrane." Across this permeable divide the artist uses the real and the unreal to mutually enhance one another and thus to reach and please the audience.

A fundamental purpose of writing jôruri is to bring life to puppets and to invest them with a measure of believability. According to Chikamatsu, what we appreciate in a work of art is that, while it offers resemblance to what it aims to portray, there is freedom in imitation. Paradoxically, by not following the original too exactly, the artist attempts to reach a more faithful rendering of the object of imitation. Consider the following words from Chikamatsu:

In writing Jôruri, one attempts first to describe facts as they really are, but in so doing one writes things which are not true, in the interest of art. In recent plays many things have been said by female characters which real women could not utter. Such things fall under the heading of art; it is because they say what could not come from a real woman's lips that their true emotions are disclosed. If in such cases the author were to model his character on the ways of a real woman and conceal her feelings, such realism, far from being admired, would permit no pleasure in the work.⁴⁶

Chikamatsu claims that on stage we can understand a female character better by showing the inner workings of the woman she represents. With later echoes in *Kezairoku's* opening argument (that the portrayal of feelings involves falsehood, but that theatrical writing faithfully cuts to the heart), Chikamatsu believed that, in art, the "unreal" aids in understanding the reality of inner, unexpressed

⁴⁵ *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, 389.

⁴⁶ *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, 388.

existence. Furthermore, Chikamatsu suggests that the success of language in animating the puppets, and the balance achieved between the real and the unreal, are what lead to pleasure in a performance, or *nagusami*. *Nagusami* is the desired effect of a performance on the audience, when the skill, talent and experience of the artist are met by an audience's ability to appreciate them. From this definition, we can understand why Shuzui Kenji considers *nagusami* as the descendent of Zeami's *hana* 花, perfection in the art as embodied in an actor in a given performance.⁴⁷

For Chikamatsu, the possibility for *nagusami* in *jôruri* arises when the real and the unreal meet at a near vanishing point, the thin membrane that gives each its distinct qualities while allowing them to blend. Chikamatsu's real and unreal represent all the dualities of constructed existence: appearance, or the real, and what can be imagined from appearance, or the unreal. Reason and emotion, intellectuality and spirituality, duty and desire are some of the dualities that seek unification in the membrane of *nagusami*.⁴⁸ If the membrane is where *nagusami* becomes possible, it is clear that art is made where dualities merge. Chikamatsu is therefore advocating a lack of duality in the place -- the membrane -- where paradoxically, the dialectic between the real and the unreal (and all other associated dualities) is most active, on the one hand, and least consciously apprehended, on the other. His very spatial image readily moves itself into the three-dimensional world of *jôruri*, and then kabuki, where the real and the unreal constantly and cautiously interact.

At the very end of the *Kezairoku* section entitled "Methods for

⁴⁷ In his treatise *Fûshikaden*, Zeami tells us, "The Flower [*hana*] represents the principle that lies at the deepest recesses of our art. To know the meaning of the Flower is the most important element in understanding the *nô*, and its greatest secret." (*On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 29.) Later in the treatise he states, "The Flower represents a mastery of technique and thorough practice, achieved in order to create a feeling of novelty." (*On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 53.) Finally, he states, "When there are secrets, the Flower exists; without secrets, the Flower does not exist." (*On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 60.) Considering these three quotes together, we find that, like *nagusami*, Zeami's concept of *hana* represents the audience's experience of an actor's mastery in performance; that the creation of *hana* depends on secrecy, that is, the actor's mastery should be greater than his audience's comprehension of it; and that the effect of *hana* on the audience should be one of novelty.

⁴⁸ See further discussion in Shuzui Kenji. *Shuzui Kenji chosakushû*, Vol. II. Tokyo: 1977. 76.

Plot Construction,” there is an interesting addition to the ongoing discussions concerning the real and the unreal in the performing arts. Responding to a statement in *The Actors' Analects* (“The realism of a play springs from fiction; if a comic play is not based on real life, it is unnatural”⁴⁹), *Kezairoku* has:

A teaching from long ago has the adage, “While there are fabrications that seem true, do not speak of truths that seem false.” Plays clearly express a fiction, causing people to cry and to laugh, and you must create this fiction not only through persuasion, but also by considering shifts in popular taste. You must understand that the creation of realistic fiction is the hidden aim of the playwright.⁵⁰

As Chikamatsu previously claimed, art is made by the interaction of opposites. Enjoyment and significance are derived from the relation between what is created and the reality of the perceivers’ or viewers’ existence. Because aspects of existence can change, the writer must consider “shifts in popular taste” in the effort to maintain a correct balance between what is currently “real” and the fabrication of art.

As we have seen, the primary concern behind all of these statements is the need to channel artistic creative decisions towards the aim of attracting and holding an audience’s attention. As Takamoto Gidayû explains:

When asked to perform at a private residence, one must tailor the performance to the desires of the patron. The ability to entertain without boring one’s audience should be considered the secret tradition of the art of Jôruri. Those who achieve this skill should be considered masters. Although Jôruri is not as great an art as Nô, what is the rhythm of the steps of the god in the Nô play “Takasago” for? Is not its purpose to entertain [*nagusamu*] the hearts of the audience!⁵¹

We find that *nagusami* -- the ability to move and bring pleasure to an audience -- is considered the secret tradition, the skill, and the key to fame in jôruri. References to nô are twofold in this passage. First, Gidayû ties jôruri to other performing arts through the example of

⁴⁹ *The Actors' Analects*, 33.

⁵⁰ *Kinsei geidôron*, 516.

⁵¹ *Circles of Fantasy*, 191-192.

this most elevated member, *nô*. In so doing, he emphasizes what they have in common: the purpose of entertaining the audience. *Nagusami* is shown to be the central consideration for these arts and artists.

Secondly, both Gidayû and Zeami discuss the necessity of creating performance relative to the particulars of the day -- audience composition, audience mood and other special circumstances -- which the practitioners of all performing arts must take into consideration in the creation of effective art. The need to “tailor the performance to the desires of the patron” echoes Zeami’s treatises and his concerns over the poetic suitability of characters: he did not consider the depiction of certain “real” persons appropriate in *nô* except to the extent to which they were “traditionally [found] congenial as poetic subjects.”⁵² Therefore, he argues for modification of characters whose actual language or appearance could destroy the desired mood in performance:

In general, men of lowly occupation should not be imitated in any meticulous fashion, nor shown to men of refined taste. Should they see such things, they will merely find them vulgar, and the performance will hold no attraction for them. The need for prudence in this matter can be fully understood. Thus the degree of imitation must vary, depending on the kind of role being performed.⁵³

According to Zeami, men of high station could only be expected to experience the play meaningfully and pleasurably if the presentation of rustics or other “men of lowly occupation” had been modified to accord with the behavior expected of the well-positioned men themselves.

Kezairoku was written well after Gidayû’s 1687 preface and Chikamatsu’s attributed theoretical statements (which were written down by Hozumi Ikan in 1738 after Chikamatsu’s death.) Yet it shares a similar aim with them and with Zeami’s treatises: to explain how to create art effective in attracting and keeping an audience’s attention. Some of the major sections of *Kezairoku* seem to have been written with just this *nagusami* element in mind. In the section entitled “Differences Among Plays of the Three Cities,” characterizations are given of the typical audiences of each of the

⁵² *On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 10.

⁵³ *On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 10.

three main urban centers -- Edo, Kyoto and Osaka -- along with advice on the kind of plays appropriate to each. Thus, plays about love which are “extremely calm and lacking in vigor” should be written “in conformity with [the] nature” of Kyoto people; “grand period plays, rough and carefree. . . [that] are rigidly constructed and masculine in their appeal” are appropriate for the “rough” nature of Edo audiences; and “logically constructed” plots should be used for Osaka people who “care about consistency.”⁵⁴

The section entitled, “Seasonal Differences in Human Feelings” gives advice on how to respond to the differing moods evoked in the audience by seasonal changes: how to entice people out to the theatre from their “gloomy state” at home in winter, how to keep an audience in the theatre when the beauty of spring beckons outdoors, how to counteract the heat of summer when the interior of “the theatre is hard to endure” and how to take advantage of the alert mood of audience members in the fall.⁵⁵

The section entitled “Methods for Plot Construction” details the requirements for the day’s program for each calendrical production (for example, the *kaomise*, the *ninokawari*, etc.) It enumerates the number of pages to be allotted, as well as the content, for each section of the full-day program, always keeping the audience’s interest level in mind. For example, in the *kaomise* entry, there is:

In the middle part of the *kaomise* program, when the audience is interested in watching the actors, concentrate only on the actors’ interesting techniques. In the last part, as it grows late and the audience is getting tired, plan to invigorate them with samisen music as the play smoothly proceeds with visual interest at the fore.⁵⁶

Later, after the *kugatsukawari* entry, there is advice on the kind of music that should accompany different scenes. The author states that the playwright “should choose music that accords with the plot,”⁵⁷ that is, the music should not go against the mood or setting of the scene, or the audience will feel the incongruity. Such incongruity will affect their engagement and the possibility for pleasure.

⁵⁴ *Kinsei geidōron*, 511.

⁵⁵ *Kinsei geidōron*, 511-513.

⁵⁶ *Kinsei geidōron*, 513.

⁵⁷ *Kinsei geidōron*, 515.

The author of *Kezairoku* often addresses issues with a history of attention from earlier artists. As the quoted examples show, he joins discussions of central concern in the performing arts, advancing the points of most importance for kabuki and kabuki playwrights. His statements can only be understood fully in this larger context.

“Overnight Plays” and the Conclusion of Kezairoku

The final section of *Kezairoku* gives some of the most explicit advice in the treatise on the how-to’s of playwriting. The section addresses the method of preparing “overnight plays,” that is, plays prepared quickly in response to recent sensational events.⁵⁸ Interestingly, the section is found at the end of the “Man” part of *Kezairoku* which is mostly taken up with non-playwriting duties. However, it provides a fitting conclusion not only to the treatise, but to this discussion as well, because many of the central issues we have covered are raised again.

First, we find reference to the combined need for the real and the unreal in the creation of these plays:

If you combine the false reports from people’s gossip with the true account of the facts, you will be able to come up with a rough outline for your play quickly. It is a secret of our art to use both kinds of accounts. When only a true account is given, it seems too much like a government report, and it will not appeal to audiences who were far from the actual event. False accounts meet with a favorable response because they have gradually come to be widely known through hearsay.⁵⁹

The combination of “false reports from people’s gossip” and a “true account of the facts” echoes earlier requirements for the interweaving of the real and the unreal. Using “both kinds of accounts” is a secret

⁵⁸ Kawatake writes that the information given in this section of *Kezairoku* is generalized from the “overnight plays” of Namiki Shōzō, Nagawa Kamesuke and others. (*Nihon Gikyokushi*, 405.) Overnight plays were often *shinjūmono* (心中物), that is, plays climaxing in double suicides by ill-fated lovers. Early jōruri masterpieces, such as the 1703 *Sonezaki shinjū* (曾根崎心中 The love suicides at Sonezaki) by Chikamatsu were created as overnight plays: the events dramatized in *Sonezaki shinjū* occurred one month before the play’s opening.

⁵⁹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 530.

of the art with a long history. Each renders the other effective and believable. Reality becomes performable only as it is filtered through “false reports,” since alone, true accounts are dull, lifeless, “like a government report.” On the other hand, falsehood has taken on a life of its own: it is so much a part of what people require to make reality interesting that it is generated naturally through the gossip that inevitably surrounds momentous events. Falsehood first occurs without playwright mediation, and the playwright’s initial job is its collection -- that is, the collection of hearsay -- together with the investigation into the truth of an incident. If he plays the good detective, the playwright will be rewarded by being “able to come up with a rough outline for [his] play quickly.”

Second, we find reference to the superior stance taken by the playwright as he sets about his work:

Choose the actors for the male and female leads of the double love suicide, and then look for someone for the supporting role to play the character who introduces trouble, the one who disrupts the other two. Explain only the circumstances and role types to these three actors. Then, when at your desk, discard your usual point of view, and regard those in the theatre as puppets under your command. This is an oral tradition. If you operate under the usual conditions, you will be bound by constraint and the dictates of normal play creation, and you will not be able to write at all. Only when the male and female actors are in place should you consider the foil.⁶⁰

Perhaps the reason that the “Overnight Plays” section offers relatively detailed advice is due to the haste with which such plays were required to be produced. Thus, a playwright was not expected to “operate under the usual conditions” where he would be “bound by constraint and the dictates of normal play creation.” Speed was more important than following the usual procedures of conducting lengthy and repeated consultations and enlisting actor approval at the many stages of play preparation. With overnight plays, the playwright is admonished to take control of the “puppets under [his] command.”

Third, we find the same focus as earlier in *Kezairoku* on entertaining the audience (“With entertaining the audience as your

⁶⁰ *Kinsei geidōron*, 530.

central concern . . .”⁶¹), but the process followed by the playwright towards that goal is heightened and more concentrated. Not only must he carefully consider method (beginning with the combining of false reports and true accounts), he must also carefully choose the actual language his characters speak. Thus while the double love suicide plays “always used the same general plot outline,” this plot was made appealing when the writer “emphasize(d) catchy dialogue with current idiomatic language.”⁶² Together with the excitement of presenting the unfolding of a recent, known event, diction became the key to giving vitality to the performance. Along with dialogue, the playwright is also admonished to “exhaust [his] writing skills on the climactic passage in which the lovers travel to their death, as this is the essence of these plays.”⁶³ Words, with their ability to convey beauty and pathos, take center stage, and a high premium is placed on the playwright’s skill at writing.

Finally, the operations of *sekai* and *shukō* are further addressed. In the few paragraphs devoted to them, we get some of the most concrete information as to their application and their usefulness to playwrights in composing plays. The choice of *sekai* is specifically restricted (“either at the workplace of the male partner or at the residence of the female partner”⁶⁴) with advice on how to make the selection. The *shukō* should relate to “old plays that share similarities with your double love suicide story,”⁶⁵ because this allows the playwright to develop his play quickly, and in a way that is pleasing and easily communicated to the audience. Speed becomes possible not only by relying on this usual technique of play creation, the interweaving of *sekai* and *shukō*, but especially by restricting the possible choices for each.

We find, therefore, that “Overnight Plays” refers to several important issues taken up in *Kezairoku*: the interconnection between the real and the unreal; the superior stance that playwrights should adopt in order to be effective troupe members, advocated innumerable times in *Kezairoku*; the important contribution of words

⁶¹ *Kinsei geidōron*, 531. “Entertaining” is not from *nagusamu* in this case, but instead the Japanese reads おかしみを第一として (*okashimi o daiichi toshite*.)

⁶² *Kinsei geidōron*, 531.

⁶³ *Kinsei geidōron*, 531. This statement refers to the *jōruri* passages in these scenes, always a central writing concern for kabuki playwrights.

⁶⁴ *Kinsei geidōron*, 531.

⁶⁵ *Kinsei geidōron*, 531.

and writing to play success; and the use of *sekai* and *shukô* in play composition. Other issues in *Kezairoku* also resurface. One is the *jo-ha-kyû*-like progression that is recommended for play structure, especially for quick play preparation:

Number One: Visual interest at the curtain opening
 Number Two: Heightening to avoid loss of interest
 Number Three: Events closing in on the man and woman

You should start off with the above three modulations in mind.⁶⁶

These “modulations” suggest pacing and content much like those advocated earlier in the treatise.

A second resurfacing issue is found in references to *nô* that bring us full circle to one of the primary purposes of the work, as set out in “Heaven”: legitimizing kabuki playwriting as a profession by tying it to illustrious antecedents. The analogy drawn between *nô* roles and the organization of roles in “overnight plays” serves this function and is remarkable for its concreteness and explanatory power:

If we make a general analogy to *nô* actors we find, in principle, that the plot is arranged around three people, with the *shite* corresponding to the male and female partners of the double love suicide and the *waki* taken by a single person. The rest of the actors are in assisting positions, much like musicians and chanters. Do not worry about whether you have too many or too few roles or it will be difficult to complete your work.⁶⁷

This advice brings the central legitimizing effort of *Kezairoku* together with practical information on methodology. The existence of

⁶⁶ *Kinsei geidôron*, 531.

⁶⁷ *Kinsei geidôron*, 531. The last statement of this quote suggests a radical departure from the usual work of playwrights, who were required to write parts in the main play for all actors in the troupe. Creating roles for every actor was such an obvious requirement of the playwright’s work that it does not need to be, and never is, clearly stated in *Kezairoku*. The point of the quote seems to be that since the “overnight play” is offered in addition to the main play, the playwright need not worry about the number of roles. These plays had to be produced quickly, and fewer roles meant less time and complication in preparing them. In this sense, the analogy with *nô* is largely offered as a device to aid with the speed of creating the plays.

a “Way” is thereby reinforced and effectively transmitted. It is in this manner that “Overnight Plays” serves an appropriate concluding function in *Kezairoku*.

While lineage has been established and a Way has been revealed, the final sentence of the treatise advocates a freedom necessary to creative practice. *Kezairoku*'s author concludes, “while each lineage has its own methods, I will give instructions in the teachings I prefer.”⁶⁸ The license to pick and choose was first issued in print by Takemoto Gidayû.⁶⁹ Nyûgatei Ganyû, the author of *Kezairoku*, suggests that playwrights follow the “teachings [they] prefer” and thus continue to exercise the creative authority first articulated by Gidayû.

⁶⁸ *Kinsei geidôron*, 531.

⁶⁹ See *Circles of Fantasy*, Appendix B.

CHAPTER FOUR

KABUKI PLAYWRITING: THE LITERARY CONNECTION

Over time there have been many literary writers, pursuing different avenues within the profession. If a writer does not study each of the forms of Japanese fiction written in syllabary, Chinese and Japanese poetry, linked verse and *haikai*, military tales and chronicles, then his understanding will be inadequate, and it will be difficult for him to have an effect on people. While there are several hundred *nô* plays, their style is very particular and cannot move those of humble station. Fiction written in syllabary are mostly the compositions of lords and officials and are difficult to understand if one has not studied the elegant classical diction in which they were written. They are composed only with words recollected from old literature. The successive generations of sages, through their long investigations, have discovered numerous writings, and our profession has been widely developed out of those old writings. (*Kezairoku*)¹

In Tenmei kabuki, referring roughly to kabuki of the second half of the eighteenth century (actually covering four eras -- Meiwa, An'ei, Tenmei and Kansei -- and extending from 1764 to the turn of the nineteenth century) playwriting, acting and production of kabuki all reached high attainment. New artistic levels were achieved with the aid of new inventions for the stage, improved acting techniques and the influence of *jôri*. Improvements also came from increased professional attention given to playwriting, with the awareness that better plays led to a competitive edge in the fight for success.

Where Kansai had been the cultural center of Japan, Edo ascendancy corresponded with a general burgeoning of cultural activities carried out by Edo townsmen. Especially during Tenmei (in its extended meaning as a cultural period,) there was a new interest in previously less-valued forms of writing, that is, playful, parodic prose and poetry. The nature of Tokugawa literary production involved a kind of dialogue in which certain themes and ways of

¹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 496.

expressing them were exchanged and developed across and within genres and among practitioners. Various popular literary arts, such as the *gesaku* 戯作 fiction forms of *sharebon* 洒落本 and *kibyōshi* 黄表紙, for example, or the verse forms of *haikai* 俳諧 and *kyōka* 狂歌 provided a cultural locus for artists of all kinds. Themes and events memorialized by professional *gesaku* and verse writers were borrowed and reworked freely among various genres and subgenres, all around the prevalent cultural ideal of *tsū* 通, connoisseurship and savoir faire in the arts and in the art of living. As declared in various statements, kabuki shared the broad official didactic purpose of Tokugawa literature, *kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡 or rewarding good and punishing evil. However, it is in themes, techniques and style where we find kabuki most connected to the wide range of Tokugawa literature.

Edo-period literary creation often occurred within a context of group activities. Kabuki actors, as well as other kabuki practitioners, became involved with literary endeavors outside the kabuki sphere. In Edo, group literary meetings with a cross-professional membership acted as breeding grounds for ideas and techniques of verbal creation that were shared across genres. In creating plays, playwrights worked with many of the same themes found in other newly-valued literary forms, themes that found their way to and from kabuki. This meant that kabuki playwriting was connected to the mainstream of the cultural and literary arts of the period. Cultural acceptance of emerging, non-traditional forms of writing, and kabuki practitioners' participation in coteries dedicated to their production, were important influences in the creation of kabuki plays, especially from Tenmei. While *Kezairoku* tells us that kabuki playwriting was developed out of "old writings," in fact, kabuki plays came to be much more indebted to contemporary literary forms. The dense way in which contemporary literary, pictorial and theatrical arts were interrelated, and within which kabuki was centrally placed, can perhaps best be summed up with the following:

Kabuki had entered the world of popular literature as well. Poets composing light verse (*haikai*, *kyōka*, and *senryū*) often referred to kabuki actors and kabuki events and plays in their poetry, and *gesaku* fiction writers frequently borrowed plots and characters from kabuki plays. Even in stories with no ostensible connection to the theater, illustrators often turned characters' faces into likenesses of top kabuki

actors, in a practice known as *mitate*. *Mitate* pictures created new associations between fictional stories and characters, and actors' personalities and stage plays. Sometimes fiction writers even featured popular actors as the heroes of fictional tales.²

It would be no exaggeration to say that in the realm of popular Edo culture all roads led to Rome, and Rome was kabuki. Let us explore the details of this assertion.

Cross Connections: *Haikai*

- HARD DRINKER: Ever been to the baths at Mikawashima?
 KIZAEMON: Yeh, I went only the other day.
 DRINKER: Any *haikai*?
 KIZAEMON: In the evening I called a tea-house girl over and made one about her. 'An amateur girl I took, and make a real professional of her.' That's how it went. What do you think of it, eh?
 DRINKER: Yeh, I like the style. It'd get you good marks, likely enough.³

An exchange such as this, found in a 1791 *sharebon* 洒落本 - a witty and satirical form of fiction focusing on interactions in the licensed quarters – indicates how prevalent the practice of *haikai* had become by the second half of the Tokugawa Period. *Haikai* became popular at all levels of society, and it affected nearly every significant artistic practice. The fiction of the period was strongly connected to *haikai*. In looking at the early Tokugawa Period, we find that the fiction of Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642-1693) grew out of his *haikai*, and the development of the *gesaku* fiction of later Tokugawa Japan owed a tremendous amount to artistic circles in mid-eighteenth century Edo devoted to *haikai* composition.⁴ As pointed out, strong

² Laurence, Kominz. "Ichikawa Danjūrō V and Kabuki's Golden Age" in Jenkins, Donald. *The Floating World Revisited*. Honolulu: Portland Art Museum and University of Hawaii Press, 1993. 66-67.

³ Kornicki, Peter. "Nishiki no Ura: An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a Sharebon." *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1977. 183.

⁴ For more on this subject, see Iwasaki, Haruko. "Writing in Circles: Cultural Networks of Edo Gesaku Literature, 1760-1790." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation.

cross-fertilization was a hallmark of the flourishing literary and other arts of the period, and *haikai* was a nexus for literary exchange and culture sharing, linking men of various professions.

Relationships between *haikai* poets and kabuki practitioners were mutually significant. *Haikai* poets from various walks of life were fervent patrons of kabuki, and there was frequent exchange between professional *haikai* poets and kabuki practitioners. In the seventeenth century, Saikaku wrote and taught *haikai* in groups that included actors as well as doctors, jōruri chanters and others. He included some actors' verses in collections he compiled of *haikai no renga* 俳諧の連歌 (*haikai* sequences).⁵ Actors took *haimyō* or *haikai* names and considered the study of *haikai* important to their general education and cultural participation. We are told in the beginning of the section called “*Haimyō*” from Book Three of the *gekisho* entitled *Yakusha zensho* 役者全書 (Comprehensive Treatise on Actors, published in 1774,⁶) that “the first time a *haikai* name was used for an actor was when Danjūrō [I] was called Kakuekoji.”⁷ Succeeding generations, not only of the Ichikawa Danjūrō line but of many other acting families as well, continued the practice of taking *haikai* names. Many kabuki professionals referred to each other using *haimyō*, and fans used *haimyō* along with *yagō* 屋号, or house names⁸, as the preferred way of addressing favorite actors. *Gekisho* authors also quite often used *haimyō* in referring to actors. Furthermore, written on the cover of the sides booklets handed out to individual actors was the name of the actor playing the role: while for lesser actors family names were used, *haimyō* were used on the booklet covers of lead actors, evidence of the important connection between the worlds of *haikai* and kabuki.

Haikai was an art that came to emphasize wit and speed,

Harvard University, 1991.

⁵ Schalow, Paul Gordon, tr. *The Great Mirror of Male Love*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990. 36.

⁶ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 199-241.

⁷ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryō shūsei*, Vol. 6, 218.

⁸ Since actors were not officially allowed the use of surnames, *yagō* (so called because they always ended with the character 屋 [*ya*]) were used by fans to address and praise actors. They have various individual origins.

...ideals [that replaced] the pedantic wordplay and labored allusions to classical literature that had previously characterized *haikai*. Gone was the expectation that the work would necessarily endure. It was a playful composition, intended to give delight beyond literary circles, a popular entertainment for the moment.⁹

Kabuki was also a “literature” of and for the present with a chief intention to entertain “for the moment.” The wit required of the *haikai* poet and his ability to grasp the delicacies of interaction between known and new were skills that kabuki playwrights needed if they were to succeed. Playwrights were also indebted to *haikai* and literature more broadly for the ways in which discontinuous parts of plays were linked and the ways in which structural elements other than plot (such as the *jo-ha-kyū* pacing principle) were used to unify a play’s scenes and acts. Kabuki playwrights, like poets of *haikai* sequences, found ways of bringing coherence to often indirectly-related units (from the thematic point of view) through methods such as temporal progression or digression.

The important Genroku actor Kataoka Nizaemon 片岡仁左衛門 (1656-1715) was remembered as having the following to say concerning *haikai*:

Kataoka Nizaemon recommended actors to learn how to write *haikai*, for it was this above all that would help their art and be useful in all sorts of connections, be it the gods, Buddha, or love, and would ensure that they were not ignorant either in their thoughts or their words.¹⁰

To keep connected culturally and to help develop their skills (so as not to be “ignorant either in their thoughts or their words”), many actors devoted themselves to the practice of *haikai*, which Nizaemon advocated as necessary to the art. Both Danjūrō I and Sakata Tōjūrō interacted with major artists of their day via *haikai*, and they influenced less important fellow actors through such activities. Likewise in the next generation, with Danjūrō II and his contemporary, the great actor Sawamura Sōjūrō I 沢村宗十郎 (1685-1756), otherwise known by their respective *haimyō* as Hakuen

⁹ Danly, Robert Lyons. *In the Shade of Spring Leaves*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981. 114.

¹⁰ *The Actors' Analects*, 117.

栢 蕙 and Tosshi 訥子. In the preface to one *geidan* treatise concerning these two actors, we read that Tosshi was “fond of *haikai*,”¹¹ information which seems to have been considered important enough to state at the outset. In addition, Danjûrô II kept a diary entitled *Oi no tanoshimi shô* 老いのたのしみ抄 (Notes of An Old Man’s Pleasures) from 1734 to 1747.¹² Much of the diary is devoted to recording *haikai* activities shared with his contemporaries, including men from various professions. The following comment concerning Danjûrô II’s time indicates the extent of actor involvement with *haikai* in this period: “Nowadays, each and every actor in each of the three major cities is writing *haikai*.”¹³

Playwrights were also writing *haikai*. Their close collaboration with top actors, whose literary activities are elaborated above, formed one important connection. However, we have ample evidence of their own direct involvement, as well. Poetry is advocated as necessary to playwright training by nineteenth-century kabuki playwright Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳 (1801-1852) who wrote voluminously about kabuki as it existed in the 1840’s. In his treatise *Denki sakusho* 伝奇作書 (Writing Plays) written between 1843 and 1851, we find the following:

Like actors, kabuki playwrights should become accomplished in *haikai*. The late playwright Sakurayama Shôzaemon memorized more than three thousand *waka* as an aid for writing dialogue. His *haimyô* was Yosan.¹⁴

Much as Kataoka Nizaemon had promoted the practice of *haikai* to actors,¹⁵ the study of poetry in general and *haikai* in particular was

¹¹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 464. The treatise is *Kokon yakusha rongo sakigake*. Appears in full in *Kinsei geidôron*, 463-492.

¹² *Kinsei geidôron*, 439-462.

¹³ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei*, Vol. 6, 219.

¹⁴ Kokusho Kankôkai, ed. *Shin gunsho ruijû*, Vol. 1. Tokyo: Daiichi Shobô, 1876. 102. Sakurayama Shôzaemon is written as 桜山庄右衛門 but should be 桜山庄左衛門. Shôzaemon I (1665-?) was a kabuki actor. Shôzaemon II (dates unknown) was an actor and was also active as a playwright from the mid 1750’s under the playwright name of Sakura Tobun 佐倉戸文作. Confusion between the two seems to have occurred here, because it was Shôzaemon I who had the *haikai* name Yosan 鶯山, while the *haikai* name of Shôzaemon II was Nanga 南雅.

¹⁵ See quote earlier in this chapter.

seen by Ippô as a requirement for training in playwriting. Elsewhere in *Denki sakusho*, Nishizawa states: “If one becomes a master of *haikai* with a foundation in *waka*, one should certainly be able to master playwriting.”¹⁶ There are many examples of men who pursued what Nishizawa advocates. At an early period, we recall that Danjûrô I was both actor and playwright. He is noted as the first actor to take a *haikai* name, but he could have been listed as perhaps the first kabuki playwright to do so, as well. Moving into the later eighteenth century and after, we find that *gekisho* references to playwrights - as with actors - often give *haimyô*, as for example, in the “Kabuki Playwrights” 歌舞伎作者之部 section of *Kezairoku*.¹⁷

Further connections between *haikai* and kabuki playwrights are not difficult to discover. The playwright Namiki Ôsuke 並木翁輔 (dates unknown¹⁸) is identified in *Kezairoku* as a *haikai* critic as well as a playwright.¹⁹ The important playwright Namiki Gohei 並木五瓶 (1747-1808) who wrote for the kabuki theatre in both Osaka and Edo, was very interested in *haikai*, particularly in his later years. He produced a *haikai* dictionary in 1807 entitled *Haikai tsûgen* 俳諧通言 (Must-Know *Haikai* Terms.) Specifically, it is a dictionary of words used in *haikai* (although not limited to *haikai*) that relate to the world of prostitution and the pleasure quarters.²⁰

Many other playwrights similarly concerned themselves with the necessary artistic accomplishment of *haikai*. It offered training in writing technique and an entree into what was most current socially, culturally and artistically. Nishizawa’s strongest statement explaining the value of *haikai* follows:

No matter what the degree of commitment, those who like the theatre and would like to write plays should carefully study jôruri plays and practice *haikai* in their spare time. *Haikai* takes one through the range of human conditions and offers access to worldly ways. It is just the thing for someone who wants to educate himself quickly. Just about

¹⁶ *Shin gunsho ruijû*, Vol. 1, 8.

¹⁷ For example, see entries for Tsuuchi Jihei and Sakurada Jisuke in *Kinsei geidôron*, pages 503 and 504, respectively.

¹⁸ According to the *Kezairoku* entry, he was active during the 1750’s through the 1780’s.

¹⁹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 507. Ôsuke has also been suggested as the author of *Kezairoku*.

²⁰ Ijichi Tetsuo, et. al., ed. *Haikai daijiten*. Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1967. 575-576.

everyone who has ever enjoyed writing plays has done *haikai* . . .
Indeed, kabuki plays are like a variation on *haikai*.²¹

Haikai practice and study are urged as a crucial foundation for success in kabuki playwriting. Practicing *haikai* broadened social interactions, and the wide knowledge of everyday customs and sentiments available from *haikai* familiarity and practitioners was also necessary to men writing for audiences interested in exploring their contemporary world in all its variety. Ippô's statement that "kabuki plays are like a variation on *haikai*" connects kabuki with the heart of literary creation of the time. It further implies that kabuki shared major goals with *haikai*, both aiming to "(take) one through the range of human conditions and (offer) access to worldly ways."

Cross Connections: *Kyôka*

By the middle of the eighteenth century and after, we find much other evidence of mixed-occupation artistic activities. The courtesans of the Yoshiwara pleasure district and important members of the theatre world were involved with group gatherings devoted to the composition of the popular comic verse form *kyôka*. Ichikawa Danjûrô V (1741-1806) and Ôta Nanpô 太田南畝 (1749-1823), one of the most important figures in Edo *gesaku* activities, composed *kyôka* together and thereby mutually enhanced each other's primary professional activities. Hino Tatsuo has called Danjûrô "the spiritual support of the Tenmei *kyôka* movement."²² Danjûrô's star status in Edo leant Edo *kyôka* circles glamour and centrality in the cultural activities of the time. Simultaneously, Nanpô and his followers added an important support group to Danjûrô's entourage. The cementing of the relationship between these two is affirmed in the miniature *kyôka* anthology compiled by Nanpô and his circle as a gift to congratulate Danjûrô V on his five-year-old son's assumption of the stage name Ebizô 海老蔵. The anthology, entitled {*Ichikawa hiiki*} *Edo no hanaebi* {市川ひいき}江戸の花海老 ({All for the Ichikawas:} Flowery Lobster of Edo), includes *kyôka* of the Nanpô group embedded in a fairy tale frame about the Dragon King's palace, replete with motifs of both sea and theatre in punning references to Danjûrô and his

²¹ *Shin gunsho ruijû*, Vol. 1, 8.

²² Hino Tatsuo. *Edojin to yûtopia*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004. 64.

son.²³

Danjûrô V was a serious poet, so dedicated that he retired early from a life of great fame as an actor to pursue poetry quietly and intently.²⁴ He published an anthology of poetry by his predecessor, Danjûrô II, the man he called grandfather.²⁵ The example of Danjûrô II, “an eminent and gentlemanly actor-poet”²⁶ was a major influence on Danjûrô V, who trained to be an actor under this illustrious predecessor. In choosing a double devotion, Danjûrô V followed in the footsteps of his “grandfather” more than in those of his own father, Danjûrô IV (1711-1778), who was single-mindedly devoted to the theatre. In the mid-1780’s, Danjûrô V had his own literary society, the *Mimasuren* 三升連, and he published collections containing the poetry of its members, as well as his own. After he retired from the stage, he was called back to acting due to the insistence of both fans and theatre colleagues, especially because of the early death of his son Danjûrô VI (1778-1799) at age 22. However, he remained a prolific poet for the duration of his life.

The general atmosphere surrounding the kabuki world towards the end of the eighteenth century has been described as follows:

...by the end of Tenmei 2 (1782), an informal federation had been formed among the diverse groups of men, who were then to carry out the broad cultural interactions of the Tenmei era. This alliance consisted of kyôka and gesaku writers, ukiyoe artists, publishers, members of the theater and Yoshiwara, as well as certain financial magnates and high-ranking officers of the government.²⁷

An illustrative example of the workings of this “federation” can be gleaned from Danjûrô II’s diary. This diary survives today as it was copied out by Santô Kyôden several generations later. Santô Kyôden was one of the most prominent and significant Edo *gesaku* fiction writers, and under the name Kitao Masanobu 北尾政演, he was a

²³ “Writing in Circles,” 224-233.

²⁴ For more on this subject, see *The Floating World Revisited*, 63-83.

²⁵ It is possible that Danjûrô IV was the illegitimate son of Danjûrô II, but officially he was unrelated to Danjûrô II. Whether or not a blood relationship existed, Danjûrô V -- the son of Danjûrô IV-- grew up under the strong influence of Danjûrô II.

²⁶ *The Floating World Revisited*, 72.

²⁷ “Writing in Circles,” 233.

leading *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 woodblock print artist as well. His friendship and interactions with Danjûrô V and interest in Danjûrô II's diary position kabuki practitioners in the literary and artistic spheres of eighteenth-century cultural activities, and for our purposes, particularly from the latter part of the eighteenth century. The preface to Danjûrô II's diary reads as follows:

Notes on an Old Man's Pleasures

The three volumes of *An Old Man's Pleasures* are the diary written by the former actor Ichikawa Hakuen himself.²⁸ It was passed down and cherished by Danjûrô V, and then on the twentieth day of the Ninth Month of 1801, it was turned over to Kinjirô of the Tamakiya (Danjûrô V's grandson).²⁹ The *Kyôka* Reception Room Master³⁰ got in on loan and had it shown to me. Then I copied it out, limiting it to one volume.

The headnotes written in red characters are my thoughts.

The sixteenth day of the Seventh Month, 1802

House Master Santô³¹

Among Danjûrô II, Danjûrô V, Shikatsube no Magao (the “*Kyôka* Reception Room Master”) and Santô Kyôden (also known as Kitao Masanobu), the worlds of kabuki, *gesaku* fiction, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and *kyôka* poetry are interconnected across several generations of eighteenth-century artists.

Throughout the eighteenth century, literary activities were a potent force in the cultivation, education and socialization of actors, and although the recorded evidence is somewhat slimmer, playwrights as well. Kabuki practitioners participated with various groups of artists, temporarily stepping out from the narrow circle of troupe members with whom most of their time was spent. One of the great literary figures of mid-Tokugawa society, Utei Enba 烏亭焉馬 (1743-1822)

²⁸ “Former” (古) distinguishes Danjûrô II from the contemporary, Danjûrô V.

²⁹ 玉木屋金次郎. The Tamakiya was a theatre teahouse. Kinjirô (1791-1859) was the son of Danjûrô V's daughter, Omiwa, who married into the Tamakiya teahouse family. Kinjirô became Danjûrô VII at age 10 after the early death at age 22 of Danjûrô VI in 1799.

³⁰ This refers to Kitagawa no Magao 北川真顔, better known as Shikatsube no Magao 鹿都部真顔 (1753-1829), an important *kyôka* poet and *kibyôshi* fiction writer of the merchant class.

³¹ *Kinsei geidôron*, 440.

was a great kabuki aficionado. As one of Danjûrô V's most fervent patrons, he founded and led the *Mimasuren*, which partially functioned as a Danjûrô V patronage group. The group met to write *kyôka* and *haikai* and to enjoy each other's company, and Enba (whom we will discuss further) edited seven volumes of *kyôka* and *haikai* written by its members. The number of contributors was staggering both in quantity and in quality: participants included leading kabuki men and poets such as Ôta Nanpô, Santô Kyôden, Shikitei Sanba, Ichikawa Masamochi, Shikatsube no Magao and others. Such interaction between artists served to broaden the world of kabuki practitioners, and what they learned through participation in outside artistic endeavors could be drawn into their activities within the theatre. Conversely, such interaction also led to the enrichment of literary genres through the influence of kabuki performance and performers, together with kabuki play techniques, style and content.

Cross Connections: *Gesaku*

Kabuki was also connected to various genres of fiction through the cross-borrowing of themes, language and techniques. Again, links are found as early as Saikaku's time and can be found between his *ukiyozôshi* and both *yakusha hyôbanki* and kabuki plays. Examining *yakusha hyôbanki*, Kawai Masumi has painstakingly documented the large quantity of direct quotations taken from Saikaku's work and incorporated into various *yakusha hyôbanki* from 1699 to 1736.³² This interchange continued after Saikaku's death, when his *ukiyozôshi* remained common source material for *yakusha hyôbanki*. Conversely, *ukiyozôshi* authors also borrowed from *yakusha hyôbanki*, for example, in the use of similar format.³³ Much of this interconnection was due to the publishing house of Hachimonjiya 八文字屋 where writers such as Ejima Kiseki 江島其磧 (1666-1735) were employed to write both *ukiyozôshi* and *yakusha hyôbanki*.

Moving now from the *yakusha hyôbanki* directly to kabuki plays, we also find that cross-borrowings with fiction began early, again with Saikaku. Many scholars have addressed Saikaku's adoption of

³² Kawai Masumi. "Yakusha hyôbanki ni mirareru Saikaku sakuin no riyô." Six-part article in *Aibun*, No.s 21-26 (July 1985 to January 1991.)

³³ Suwa Haruo. *Edo, sono geinô to bungaku*. Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1976. 192.

plot elements from the plays of various theatre traditions. With respect to plot devices (*shukô*) borrowed from kabuki, Noma Kôshin writes:

Saikaku's adoption of *shukô* from *kabuki*... is already found in his early works such as *Kôshoku Ichidai-otoko* and *Kôshoku Nidai-otoko*, but it becomes more frequent and conspicuous after 1685, when he had established himself as a writer and was publishing works in rapid succession.³⁴

After Saikaku's death in 1693, the audience for kabuki and the readership for *ukiyozôshi* 浮世草子 both increased considerably. Interchanges between the two art forms were striking: kabuki play titles were borrowed to name pieces of fiction and the contents of such works would often be modeled on play content as well. The adaptation of theatrical material became so thorough, in fact, that *ukiyozôshi* eventually lost its distinctiveness as a genre.³⁵ However, other forms of fiction that developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century maintained various interconnections with the world of kabuki and its plays.

Sharebon, a genre that reached its height in the 1770's and 1780's, addressed, almost exclusively, life in the pleasure quarters, mainly in Edo. The subject matter was the customs of the pleasure quarters and the interactions between their inhabitants and guests. *Sharebon* read like play texts: conversation is often carried through colloquial dialogues structured with the speaker's name preceding his or her "speech," and connecting descriptive narrative sometimes appears much like stage directions.³⁶ Santô Kyôden wrote eighteen *sharebon*, many of which focus on evening and nighttime activities. In his *Nishiki no ura* 錦の裏 of 1791, he offers a different perspective from this usual one by depicting instead a typical day at a courtesan house.

³⁴ Noma Kôshin. "Saikaku's Adoption of *Shukô* from *Kabuki* and *Jôruri*." *Acta Asiatica, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture*, No. 28, March 1975. 68. Kôshin also discusses some of the previous scholarly attention to this topic in this same article.

³⁵ *Edo, sono geinô to bungaku*, 193.

³⁶ For other connections between kabuki and *sharebon*, see J. Scott Miller. "The Hybrid Narrative of Kyôden's *Sharebon*." *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Summer 1988. 133-152, especially pages 141-143 regarding "mimetic drama" as a technique of narration in *sharebon*.

“Short scenes almost totally in dialogue”³⁷ and a plot centered on the characters Yûgiri and Izaemon (two lovers whose story formed popular subject matter in both jôruri and kabuki from the time of Tôjûrô’s 1678 hit play *Yûgiri nagori no shôgatsu* 夕霧名残の正月 [Yûgiri’s farewell New Year]) are two elements of *Nishiki no ura* that indicate the close relationship between *sharebon* and kabuki. The last sections of this *sharebon* are written in a jôruri-like narrative, highlighting final events in the same way as jôruri narrative sections bring focus to significant moments in kabuki plots. Peter Kornicki points out in the introduction to his translation of *Nishiki no ura* how “(t)he original editions of *Nishiki no Ura* and indeed of all *sharebon* were laid out in a format very similar to that of contemporary play-books, with the narrative compressed into double columns just like the stage directions The names of the characters are printed in small capitals to represent the boxes in which they are enclosed in the original . . .”³⁸ In examining a reproduced page of the original manuscript, these shared techniques of format between *sharebon* and kabuki playtexts become apparent.³⁹

As with the *sharebon*, the themes shared back and forth between the theatre and writers of other fiction often related to the pleasure quarters and particularly to the stories of courtesans and their (mostly) merchant customers. Innumerable works of fiction told stories of elegant courtesans, highlighting their physical and artistic appeal, as well as social engagements. Many kabuki plays had similar content. Fiction depicting ill-fated love affairs with tragic endings found a counterpart in *sewamono* plays, particularly the double suicide love plays (*shinjû mono* 心中物). As the Edo Period progressed, connections between the theatre and fiction intensified. Such connections were very strong between kabuki and *kibyôshi*, a genre of illustrated satires from the last quarter of the eighteenth and the very start of the nineteenth centuries.⁴⁰ Not only thematic content, but also creative techniques, use of dialogue and narrative,

³⁷ “*Nishiki no Ura*,” 166.

³⁸ “*Nishiki no Ura*,” 166.

³⁹ A reproduction appears in “*Nishiki no Ura*,” 177.

⁴⁰ For a recent study in English on *kibyôshi* see, Adam Kern. *Manga From the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyôshi of Edo Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006. Other citations on *kibyôshi* may be found in the bibliography.

visual-verbal interplay, topical references, and much more crossed between kabuki and *kibyōshi*. Let us look at an example to get a sense of how closely *kibyōshi* and kabuki interconnected.

In 1791 (the same year in which *Nishiki no ura* appeared) Santō Kyōden wrote a very interesting and inventive *kibyōshi* entitled *Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu* 廬生夢魂其前日 (Final Preparation for Rosei's Dream⁴¹), in which the backstage world of kabuki is turned into a workshop for the manufacture of dreams. As a late example in *kibyōshi*'s period of popularity, as the work of a master, and in its focus on the backstage kabuki world, it offers an excellent view of the ways in which writing techniques and the theatre could intermingle in *gesaku* fiction. Kyōden's preface addresses *shukō*. Kyōden writes, "the novelty of *shukō* is writing something new while inquiring into the old."⁴² His choice of theme is *yume* 夢, dream, but he questions whether it is the old or the new – the *sekai* or the *shukō* – of his work. Following this rhetorical inquiry, he adds, "Is the floating world a dream? Are dreams the floating world?"⁴³ These echoes of the Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu add to the collapse of distinctions between known and new, reality and dream with which Kyōden leads us into his story, and the age-old literary inquiry into reality continues throughout this *kibyōshi* in parodic guise.

Towards the beginning of *Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu*, we are introduced to the head of the dream workshop, Master Dream (夢魂道人.) He is sitting in front of a menu of dreams available from his shop and complaining of the difficulties of producing cheap dreams.⁴⁴ On the next page are some of the dreamworkers, uniformly attired for work with sleeping caps, as well as clothing with the character for

⁴¹ For more on the underlying theme, the legend of the Chinese Lu-Sheng (Japanese: Rosei), see Araki, James. "The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction, 1772-81." *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 25, No.s 1-2, 1970. 43-105. The story of Rosei "who dreamed of a lifetime of splendor as he lay napping with his head on a magical pillow," ("The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction," 47) has been subject to innumerable creative revisions in both China (since at least the Tang Dynasty) and Japan (popular in Tokugawa-period fiction.)

⁴² Mizuno Minoru, et.al., ed. *Santō Kyōden zenshū*, Vol.2. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1993. 411.

⁴³ *Santō Kyōden zenshū*, Vol. 2, 411.

⁴⁴ An earlier *kibyōshi* (*Miru ga toku: issui no yume*, 1781) that employs the idea of selling dreams, with the price of the dream varying according to quality, is discussed and translated in "The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction," 78-97.

“dream” printed as the crest. Next to them Kyôden writes, “The author had a lot of difficulty in figuring out how to clothe the dreams.”⁴⁵ Much of *kibyôshi*’s appeal was the inside glimpse it offered of worlds usually unobservable. In *Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu*, Kyôden invites the reader to share in two inside worlds: that of the *kibyôshi* writer (through such self-reflexive comments as the one just quoted) and that of the backstage of the kabuki theatre.

Master Dream comes up with ideas and parcels out jobs much as the lead playwright would do to those working under him. Kyôden has created diverse underlings for the master, from dreammakers down to errand boys, paralleling the ranks of kabuki playwrights with their various responsibilities and varying degrees of status. Kabuki terminology is used throughout: *kyôgen* (play) for the dream, *kakinuki* (sides), *serifu* (dialogue), *kodogu* (props), *kinnushi* (sponsor), *tatemono* (立者 star actor) for the *yaku* (role) of *Rosei*, *daichô* (script), *keiko* and *sôzarai* (rehearsal and run-through, respectively) and even the onomatopoeic word for the sound of kabuki drums announcing the start of a play. These are just some of the terms that can be found. Furthermore, sets are prepared, wigs are coiffed, assistants strike the *hyôshigi* clappers (used in kabuki to mark scene changes, to enhance atmosphere and to signify important moments,) other assistants hold out candles on poles to light the “scene” (as kabuki lighting was done at the time) and so much more: the dream shop is kabuki’s *gakuya* 楽屋 or backstage, and the dream is the play. Kyôden runs readers through rehearsal and brings them right to the dream’s beginning as “the curtain opens” for the sleeping *Rosei*.

Rosei ga yume sono senjitsu is filled with comments on *gesaku* (the first illustration shows a Chinese man “who always searches out the latest fiction to arrive from Japan.”⁴⁶) It exposes both its own context and the backstage world of kabuki play creation and preparation. It strongly indicates the commercial pressures imposed on both kabuki and *gesaku* authors and the commercial environment that shaped creative output. As with other *kibyôshi*, it assumes a readership completely familiar with kabuki. In many *kibyôshi*, this assumption is obvious from the frequent use of topical references to

⁴⁵ *Santô Kyôden zenshû*, Vol. 2, 413. The pictures of Master Dream and the Dreamworkers are reproduced on page x.

⁴⁶ *Santô Kyôden zenshû*, Vol. 2, 412.

kabuki, incorporating, for example, names of contemporary actors or playwrights, references to actual productions, or references to amateur pursuit of kabuki-related arts or full-scale amateur kabuki productions.⁴⁷

Another genre of fiction important to an examination of kabuki is the nineteenth-century illustrated *gōkan* 合巻, a genre that developed from *kibyōshi* and often centered on adaptations of kabuki plays. Connections between the theatre and *gōkan* were strong, especially as the cultural influence of kabuki became far-reaching and the popularity of *gōkan* grew. Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776-1822) was a prolific writer of both *kibyōshi* and *gōkan*. In his full-length study of Sanba, Robert Leutner calculates that over forty percent of Sanba's *gōkan* are based closely on kabuki or jōruri plays. Leutner points out that these *gōkan* "usually amount to little more than heavily illustrated plot summaries or simplified retellings of highlights of popular plays and [their] publication seems often to have been timed to coincide with the openings of new plays or new mountings of old favorites."⁴⁸ These illustrated, printed recreations of the theatrical experience include versions of particular plays⁴⁹, works in which story action takes place on a stage, stories that use kabuki metaphors as structuring devices and *gekisho*-formatted parodic works on kabuki (either on specific aspects, such as the audience, or on issues of a more general nature.)⁵⁰ At the same time as these works derived much of their marketability from their close kabuki connections, they also fed into kabuki's ever-increasing popularity.

Sanba and other writers' estimation of their own *gōkan* even borrowed basic critical criteria from the world of kabuki. Leutner points out that Sanba's critical judgements focus "on how well [works] were received by the reading public. Then again, even Takizawa Bakin, the most thoughtful contemporary critic of *gesaku*

⁴⁷ For examples of all of these, see "The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction."

⁴⁸ Leutner, Robert. *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition in Edo Fiction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1985. 45.

⁴⁹ See *Manga From the Floating World*, 255-256, which addresses and complicates the idea of the playscript format of *kibyōshi*, especially with regard to translation decisions.

⁵⁰ See *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition in Edo Fiction*, 29, 72, 81, 28 & 76, 34-35 respectively for examples of each of these possibilities.

fiction, seems to have been inclined to judge a book in terms more of its popularity than of its quality as a work of art; his ultimate criterion was still popular acceptance rather than artistic integrity.”⁵¹ Sanba also called his best-selling works *ôatari* 大当り⁵², terminology used to describe soldout, hit plays in kabuki. Kabuki clearly worked its way into much more than just the plots of *gôkan* and other forms of *gesaku* fiction.

Other *gesaku* genres closely related to kabuki include *shôhon jitate* 正本製, “works that revived the kabuki stage [experience] on paper”,⁵³ and the *shôhon utsushi* 正本写, works that gave accounts of real performances or ones actually planned.⁵⁴ The course of *gôkan* sub-genre development also led to a group of works known as *yakusha meigi gôkan* 役者名義合巻. Produced from the end of the Bunka Era until Tempô, there are around eighty of these known today.⁵⁵ The genre’s name is explained by the fact that authorship was attributed to actors, while in fact most of the writing was done by ghostwriters. The skilled writing of *gesaku* authors was thus marketed under the names of famous actors. The identity of the ghostwriter was commonly indicated by recording his name as the author of the preface, or by acknowledging him as proofreader,⁵⁶ or through hints given pictorially.⁵⁷ Often, later editions no longer gave the actor as author. Instead, they might be printed under the

⁵¹ *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition in Edo Fiction*, 46.

⁵² *Shikitei Sanba and the Comic Tradition in Edo Fiction*, 46.

⁵³ Satô Satoru. *Yakusha gôkanshû*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1990. 417. “The guiding principle throughout *shôhon-jitate* is that life must imitate art: dialogue is not true to life, but true to the diction of the stage; clothing must suggest costumes; scenes in illustrations are rather sets, the stagier the better. A fence in an illustration is made to appear as two-dimensional and prop-like as possible.” (Markus, Andrew Lawrence. *The Willow in Autumn: Ryûtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842*. Cambridge Mass.: Council of East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1992. 75.) Ryûtei Tanehiko’s *shôhon jitate* also have “clear ‘stage directions’ in playbook jargon to enhance the theatrical illusion . . .” (*The Willow in Autumn*, 76.)

⁵⁴ See *Yakusha gôkanshû*, pages 439 and 445, for examples. For an interesting discussion on both *shôhon jitate* and *shôhon utsushi*, see Satô Yukiko. *Edo no eiri shôsetsu, gôkan no sekai*. Tokyo: Perikansha, 2001. 145-170.

⁵⁵ *Yakusha gôkanshû*, 418. Satô also points out that there were other *yakusha meigi* publications; for example, *yakusha meigi ninjôbon* 人情本 (see *Yakusha gôkanshû*, pages 443-444 for examples.)

⁵⁶ *Yakusha gôkanshû*, 418.

⁵⁷ *Yakusha gôkanshû*, 429.

ghostwriter's own name,⁵⁸ no doubt because a work worthy of reprinting could stand on its own, enabling successful sales of a second edition without a star name for promotion. Even in such cases, however, the actors remain very much present: *yakusha meigi gōkan* are typically accompanied by illustrations in which the characters in the stories are represented through portraits of real actors. That is, portraits of recognizable actors served as illustrations of characters in the *gōkan* stories. Aside from characteristic features and identifiable crests, sometimes the actors in the portraits were also made recognizable through the inclusion of accompanying *hokku* 発句 (haiku) they were known to have written.⁵⁹

The greatest number of *yakusha meigi gōkan* were written under the names of Danjūrō VII (1791-1859) and Onoe Kikugorō III (1784-1849), the big kabuki stars of the genre's period of popularity. Clearly, writers and publishers used the extreme popularity of certain actors for purposes of profit. For their part, the actors benefited by spreading their names into yet another domain, and thereby further increasing their fame. This strategy remained successful until the Tenpō Era when *yakusha meigi gōkan* lost their popularity due to the publication of too many other competing theatre-related works. In other words, new kinds of publications pushed them out of production.⁶⁰

Highlighting some of the literary luminaries who had close connections to the world of kabuki during the second half of the Tokugawa Period, we return to Utei Enba and Ryūtei Tanehiko. Tanehiko, an early nineteenth-century writer of *gōkan*, had a youthful interest in the theatre, and his diaries often make reference to reading plays. Although references to attendance at plays are not as frequent, his involvement with other types of performance is often noted.⁶¹ Noticable among them are *rakugo* (落語 comic storytelling) and amateur theatricals, in which he often imitated the great kabuki star Bandō Mitsugorō III (坂東三津五郎 1775-1831) whom he physically resembled. One of Tanehiko's *gōkan*, *E-ayatsuri nimen kagami* 画操二面鏡 (The Two-sided Mirror of Picture Handling, 1820) illustrated

⁵⁸ Satō gives an example in *Yakusha gōkanshū*, page 438, involving Danjūrō and his ghostwriter, 五柳亭徳升.

⁵⁹ *Yakusha gōkanshū*, 431.

⁶⁰ *Yakusha gōkanshū*, 421.

⁶¹ *The Willow in Autumn*, 36-38.

by Utagawa Kunisada, offers one of many possible examples of the connections between Edo illustrated fiction and kabuki. Kabuki influence is seen in the illustrations, which expand the meaning of the text by depicting the characters in the story with portraits of contemporary actors, a practice we have noted in connection with *yakusha meigi gōkan*. The choice of actor for an illustration was made according to correspondences between the relative status and age of characters and actors, such that a higher-ranked actor's portrait would be used for a more important character of an approximate age. The actors' crests and identifying features or associated objects might be included as an aid to identification for readers who took pleasure in recognizing these references. Connections between *gesaku* and kabuki were thus directly and personally made through the woodblock-print illustrations.

Tanehiko drew on the performing arts through literary structure, as well. *E-ayatsuri*, for example, has the six-part structure of a jōruri play. However, for *Tanehiko*, *gōkan* structure was perhaps more closely and deeply allied with kabuki plays in the ways in which plays were created through the interweaving of *sekai* and *shukō*.⁶² Tanehiko makes this relationship clear through a subtitle (*tsunogaki* 角書) that states, "The *shukō* is jōruri, the *sekai* is kabuki."⁶³ This statement signifies that the broad foundation of his *gōkan*, its *sekai*, is kabuki, while jōruri elements offer innovation and difference, *shukō*. Regardless of the content of *E-ayatsuri*, this playful subtitle indicates that *E-ayatsuri* and other *gōkan* not only employed the concepts of *sekai* and *shukō* much as they functioned in kabuki play creation, but that kabuki (represented here as the *sekai* of *E-ayatsuri*) was perhaps the most significant underpinning of contemporary fiction. All in all, connections between kabuki and *gōkan* are found in *E-ayatsuri* on both pictorial and literary bases, as with numerous other examples of illustrated Edo fiction.

Even in his youth, Tanehiko seems to have been well connected with both literary and performing artists of Edo society. Among many such acquaintances was Utei Enba, one of the great figures in Edo comic story telling. As a perusal of Nobuhiro Shinji's

⁶² *Yakusha gōkanshū*, 219, particularly regarding the blending of Edo *jidaimono* and *sewamono*. See the next section of this chapter for more on *sekai* and *shukō*.

⁶³ See *Yakusha gōkanshū*, page 211 and following for a discussion of this phrase.

chronology of Enba's life shows,⁶⁴ Enba was interested and took part in many kinds of literary and performance practices, including comic storytelling (*hanashi* 咄), amateur theatricals (*chaban* 茶番 and *misemono* 見世物), poetry (*kyōka* and *haikai*), playwriting (jōruri and kabuki) and various genres of *gesaku*. He was one of the great aesthetes, or *tsū*, of his age and a pivotal figure in the cultural activities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Under his leadership, a magnet for various kinds of artists was the *Hanashi no kai* 咄の会, a coterie that began to meet in the fourth month of 1786 with Enba as founder and convenor.⁶⁵ The comic storytellers of the *Hanashi no kai* were joined by literary leaders of the day, including Tanehiko, Shikitei Sanba and Santō Kyōden. Through professional and personal interests and activities, Enba facilitated connections between poets, *gesaku* authors, actors, kabuki playwrights and others.

Other than comic storytelling, Enba's other great passion, as mentioned, was kabuki. He not only produced *Kabuki nendaiki* 歌舞伎年代記 (1811-1815), a chronological history of Edo kabuki that gives special attention to the Danjūrō line, but he also taught himself playwriting and made some few efforts at it (including a *kaomise* play at the Kawarazaki Theatre in 1804.⁶⁶) Furthermore, he was one of Danjūrō V's greatest patrons, as well as the source of support that saw Danjūrō VII to adulthood and professional maturity after the death of his grandfather Danjūrō V. Along with more concrete forms of financial patronage, Enba devoted himself to Danjūrō and kabuki through literary means. His leadership of the *Mimasuren* patronage and poetry group has already been noted, and he also acted as a ghostwriter of poetry attributed to actors.⁶⁷ Most importantly, the variously-affiliated men who attended the *Hanashi no kai* came together under Enba, with the result that kabuki through Danjūrō -- the most popular Edo actor, the embodiment and spirit of Edo kabuki -- was connected to comic storytellers and the *gesaku* authors who participated in the meetings.

Nobuhiro Shinji has charted the participation and literary

⁶⁴ Nobuhiro Shinji. *Utei Enba nenpu*, No.s 1-3.

⁶⁵ *Utei Enba nenpu*, #3, 202.

⁶⁶ *Utei Enba nenpu*, #2, 120.

⁶⁷ *Utei Enba nenpu*, #2, 120.

production of members of both the *Hanashi no kai* and the *Mimasuren*. One of his investigations examines men whose work was included in volumes produced by the *Hanashi no kai* (containing collections of *hanashi*) as well as in *kyōka/haikai* collections coming out of the *Mimasuren*. In another inquiry, he charts various other possibilities of combination, such as men with poems in *Mimasuren* publications who also attended Enba's *Hanashi no kai*, but who do not have *hanashi* in its publications (Danjūrō is included here), or men who attended the *Hanashi no kai* but are not included in the *Mimasuren* collections.

What is apparent from Nobuhiro's detailed and extremely valuable research is the broad spectrum of arts represented in these coteries, in the persons of poets, *gesaku* authors, performing artists, woodblock print artists and others, and the extent to which men of varying primary professional affiliations intermingled. As we have seen, such intermingling led not only to mutual appreciation, but also to shared techniques and material across many artistic practices. Knowledge of certain literary forms clearly contributed to play creation in the view of many playwrights, evident from quoted statements and recorded activities. Without doubt, involvement with writers and various practices of writing strengthened the process and practice of play creation.

Compositional Method: *Sekai* and *Shukō*

With the most usual source for new plays being old ones, an important answer to the question of how plays were created lies in the notions of *sekai* and *shukō*. *Sekai* is the basic background story of a play, a story that a playwright could expect his audience to know. *Shukō* are the innovative twists of plot introduced into the *sekai* in order to make the play into a new creation. As we have seen, planning for new plays began with choosing the *sekai*. While this compositional method for play preparation did not represent a new process in the performing arts, its codification in kabuki occurred after the importation of jōruri plays into the kabuki repertoire led to the use of jōruri methods of composition and an increase in number of available *sekai*.

The *sekai/shukō* concept and method had its foundation in *waka* poetry composition, in the technique of poetic allusion termed *honkadori* 本歌取り - literally, taking from an original poem - in

which an existing poem is used as a source of concept and diction for a new one. In the performing arts, this idea was formulated first by Zeami. His treatise *Sandô* 三道, in which he discusses play composition, offers the idea of the “seed” 種 (*shu*), the story or poem taken as the basis of play development and the starting point of composition. In both cases, *honkadori* and Zeami’s “seed,” the borrowed poem or story is the inspiration and the source for the conception and composition of a new work. While *honkadori* refers to the incorporation of ideas or words of one poem into another for the sake of deepening or adding reverberations of meaning, Zeami’s “seed” brings us close to the idea of *sekai* in its contribution to play development. As Zeami tells us in *Sandô*, “The seed refers to the choice of a subject based on appropriate traditional sources, the actions of which are both appropriate for theatrical expression and especially effective in terms of the Two Arts of dance and chant. This is, of course, because these Two Arts form the fundamental basis of our whole art.”⁶⁸ As will be further discussed, similar considerations of appropriateness and effectiveness went into the choice of *sekai* for kabuki plays.

Also among Zeami’s critical formulations is the term *honsetsu* 本説 (also pronounced *honzetsu* in Zeami’s time) that points to a more concrete concept than “seed.” As applied to *nô* and various literary arts (*waka*, *renga*, etc.), *honsetsu* refers to the text used as source material for a new creation. Suwa Haruo states that *sekai* is the Tokugawa-period version (近世化, literally, the Tokugawa-ization) of Zeami’s use of the term *honsetsu*.⁶⁹ *Sekai* in Tokugawa literary and performing arts functioned much as *honsetsu* in *nô*: it provided a starting point for both artists and readers/audience in creation and appreciation, respectively.

Setting the *sekai* became a first important step in creating a new kabuki play. In the case of the *kaomise*, the choice was made carefully and then solemnized by the ritual aspects of the *sekai sadame*. Because it had implications for immediate as well as for the full year’s success, various considerations went into the choice of *sekai*. It was especially important to consider the actors contracted for the year and their particular specialities and strengths. Also important was variety, that is, altering the *sekai* chosen from year to

⁶⁸ *On the Art of the Nô Drama*, 148.

⁶⁹ Suwa Haruo. *Kabuki no denshō*. Tokyo: Senninsha, 1979. 162-163.

year. Urayama Masao has charted out the *sekai* used by playwright Sakurada Jisuke I (桜田治助 1734-1806) in the thirty-four *kaomise* plays he worked on. All except one play are based on *jidai sekai* (the one exception is an *o-ie sôdô*, family quarrel play), but Jisuke never used the same *sekai* two years in a row. On the other hand, Jisuke chose some *sekai* more often than others,⁷⁰ showing that certain *sekai* were more attractive to audiences. In this regard, the most commonly used *sekai* came from *Gikeiki* (義経記), *Soga monogatari* (曾我物語; from 1709, the *sekai* of Spring plays was always taken from *Soga monogatari*) and *Heike monogatari* (平家物語), three of the most important medieval (*chûsei* 中世) tales of samurai valor and Buddhist lessons. These tales circulated both orally and in written form, and their long pre-Tokugawa currency and widespread familiarity made them well-suited as starting points for treatment in Tokugawa performing arts. They served the purpose of providing well-known characters and incidents that could be re-presented repeatedly in order to address both continuing and new cultural concerns. Over time, many subplots from these tales developed into their own *sekai*, and in turn spawned new ones.

Having set the *sekai*, plays were created through the incorporation and development of *shukô*. This term and its use came to actors and playwrights from *haikai*. *Shukô* refers to the new elements woven into the old. Chikamatsu had the following to say regarding *shukô*:

Shukô works this way too: while resembling the original, a new work should also have sections that only roughly follow the original. This after all, is what art is and what people find enjoyable.⁷¹

As Chikamatsu indicates, the *sekai/shukô* method points to a creative process that allowed for rejuvenation and innovation in the reuse of

⁷⁰ Urayama Masao. "Naimaze to sekai." *Geinô no kagaku*, #5, *geinô ronko II*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1974. 113-114.

⁷¹ *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, Vol. 50, 359. ("Naniwa Miyage" 難波みやげ gives Chikamatsu's ideas as recorded by Hozumi Ikan 穂積以貫.) Keene translates this passage as, "The same is true of literary composition. While bearing resemblance to the original, it should have stylization; this makes art, and is what delights men's minds." (*Anthology of Japanese Literature*, 390) Keene translates *shukô* as "literary composition," which for present purposes is not specific enough.

material, rather than just repeated treatments of hackneyed themes.⁷²

In an expanded meaning, a *sharebon* of 1779 has *shukô* written with the usual Chinese characters (趣向) but with *iki* written alongside in *kana* syllabary (いき) where the pronunciation is typically indicated, thus defining *shukô* with *iki*. As a central notion in Tokugawa-period aesthetics, *iki* - with the general meaning of stylish, chic, or a kind of sophisticated cool - contributes an immediate and powerful contemporary definition of *shukô*: *shukô* were meant to reflect and respond to immediate concerns, interests and fashions by reinvigorating old stories and making them newly attractive, and by adding an au courant aspect to the tried and true. On many levels, kabuki was about style and chic. That plays were created with a technique meant to ensure their topicality and timely allure makes sense.

In kabuki, *shukô* can be variously translated as “new twists” or even simply “plot,” the storyline created when playwrights made a new play out of a known story or play. *Shukô* worked on both large and small levels in plays; that is, changes on the larger level of overall plot or on smaller levels through the introduction of minor scenes or incidents both involved altering an existing *sekai*. These changes could include the introduction of new characters, new subplots, new motivations, new complications or other new plot elements. The idea of *shukô* also applied to innovations introduced into the techniques (*kata*) and performance traditions (*ie no gei*) of kabuki actors. Thus, as first adopted in the Tokugawa Period by *haikai* poets and later used by practitioners of other literary and performing arts such as kabuki, it operated as the chief innovating principle.

Shukô is central to the entire meaning of kabuki with its emphasis on rebuilding or renewing the past through the present. Along with the choice of a *sekai* that is based in past stories or events, the introduction of *shukô* into *sekai*, that is the present into the past, was the codified method to re-create in kabuki and other Tokugawa performing arts. Building, rebuilding and renewal were central concepts in kabuki plays. Structurally, plays were constructed, *tateru* 立てる, and the different parts were referred to in ordinals of

⁷² For a related discussion, see Matisoff, Susan. “Nô as Transformed by Chikamatsu.” *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, Vol. 11, No.s 2-3, May and September 1976. 201-216.

construction: for example, *nitateme* 二立目 “the second construction,” or *santateme* 三立目 “the third construction,” referred to the successive acts of a play. In terms of plot, many plays focus on characters who must redirect themselves out of crisis towards a renewal of stability. For example, Genroku *o-ie sôdô* plays are about the rebuilding of families back to a state of former glory. The “quarrel” in which the family is embroiled at the start of a play is necessary for the enactment of the rebuilding and renewal of social and familial order.⁷³

One of the briefest and most interesting sections in *Kezairoku*, “The Warp and Woof of Plot Creation,” (*Tatesuji yokosuji no koto* 堅筋横筋の事) addresses the *sekai/shukô* principle:

Sekai serve to establish storyline, but if you use a *sekai* simply as it already exists, it will not help you create a good play. Therefore, we speak of the vertical storyline -- the warp -- and the horizontal storyline -- the woof -- in the construction of plot... The warp is the *sekai* while the woof is the *shukô*.⁷⁴

The vertical plot, *tatesuji* 堅筋, is equated with *sekai*, and the horizontal plot, *yokosuji* 横筋, is equated with *shukô*. The warp is established first, providing ground for embellishment. The author of *Kezairoku* states that a play will not be appealing if based only on the familiar (*sekai*) and that by weaving in the horizontal (*shukô*) the play offers something new and fresh. Gunji relates the *tate* (vertical) and *yoko* (horizontal) of *Kezairoku*'s discussion to the vertical and horizontal relationships of Japanese society.⁷⁵ The vertical offers stability and a foundation for all relationships and “plots,” while the horizontal brings interest and pleasure to both social and aesthetic pursuits.

The practice of combining old, well-received elements with newly-created ones was set firmly in place early in kabuki history. As early as Okuni Kabuki, set dance numbers were combined with improvised skits. A mid-eighteenth century record shows the creative practice of mixing old and new still strongly at work: when Danjûrô

⁷³ See *Gunji Masakatsu santeishû, daini maki: kabuki no katachi*. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1991. 18ff.

⁷⁴ *Kinsei geidôron*, 139.

⁷⁵ *Gunji Masakatsu santeishû, daini maki*, 10.

II (referred to as Hakuen in the following quote) went to Osaka for the 1741-1742 season (culturally, the very end point of Genroku), Sadoshima Chôgorô 佐渡嶋長五郎 (1700-1757) described what occurred:

Then when the dressing-room and the front got round to discussing the third program, and what should be in it, all sorts of things were suggested, but we came to no conclusion. At this point Hakuen suggested that we put on Narukami next. I said that if we did this play, there would be no need for a plot to be thought up. I joined the old play on to an introduction. In the fourth act, there is a point where a servant kills the hermit Narukami and for the conclusion I thought up the part where the ghost of Narukami attaches itself to the Princess Kumo-no-taema, and there follows the dance of the skeleton.⁷⁶

The *sekai* is *Narukami*, a story with a long history. *Shukô* include the added introduction and the ghost attachment. This is an excellent example of the interweaving of a well-known story with new elements and the method of play creation that such interweaving represents.

By Hôreki, the number of *sekai* began to increase dramatically. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were enough *sekai* to make a categorized list for playwrights as an aid to planning new plays. This list was compiled under the title *Sekai kômoku* 世界綱目 (*Sekai* Essentials).⁷⁷ The extant copy, dated 1834, belonged to Sakurada Jisuke III (1802-1877.) It is believed to be based on a version compiled before the 1790s. Its original author is unknown, although it is currently most often attributed to Sakurada Jisuke II (1768-1829.) Since *Sekai kômoku* was borrowed, copied, amended and transmitted as a secret document among kabuki playwrights (as its postscript makes clear,⁷⁸) it is most likely a work of composite

⁷⁶ *The Actors' Analects*, 155.

⁷⁷ *Kabuki no bunken*, No. 6, 7-84.

⁷⁸ The postscript has, "I understand that the above *Sekai kômoku* is copied from the time of Sakurada Jisuke II [1768-1829] and Natsushima Hanji. I borrowed it from the current Sakurada III and copied it at the home of Nagatani Kawamachi in the tenth month of 1834. This volume was borrowed in the fifth month of 1791 from Kawatake Shinshichi and . . . copied. Furthermore, the above, as copied personally by Tsuruya Nanboku and Mimasuya Nisôji, . . . was borrowed and copied." (*Kabuki no bunken*, No. 6, 84.)

authorship that was put together in its final form by Sakurada Jisuke II.⁷⁹ It gives the role names for one hundred and forty two *sekai*. They are categorized under either *jidaimono* or *sewamono* headings, or under a few other miscellaneous sections. Other information, such as actors who performed chief roles, reference works and related jōruri material, is also offered.⁸⁰

Over time the number of *sekai* proliferated in a process of division and growth, resulting from the need for novelty in creating new material for presentation. Shuzui Kenji offers three ways in which new *sekai* came into being. The first occurred when *shukō* elements in newly-generated plays took on a life of their own and evolved into independent *sekai*. In the second case, an existing *sekai* in combination with *shukō* became a new *sekai* of what Shuzui calls a “higher order.” Finally, the third possibility involved the combination of two *sekai* of a “lower order” into a new *sekai* of a “higher order.” These three processes of formation are outlined by Shuzui as follows:

1.) *shukō* = *sekai*

2.) *sekai* (lower order) + *shukō* = *sekai* (higher order)

3.) *sekai* (lower order) + *sekai* (lower order) = *sekai* (higher order)⁸¹

The third possibility is most often associated with the nineteenth-century plays of Tsuruya Nanboku (1796-1852) in which a new play was created by mixing two or more *sekai* rather than by introducing alterations (*shukō*) to a single *sekai*.⁸² This technique of

⁷⁹ One of three extant copies, that held at Tsukuba University, records Kanai Sanshō as its author. See “Naimaze to sekai,” 111-112, for further discussion concerning its date of composition.

⁸⁰ For more information about this work, see Nishiyama Matsunosuke. *Edo kabuki kenkyū*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1987. 206. I was only able to examine the copy in the library of the Waseda University Theatre Museum.

⁸¹ Shuzui Kenji. *Shuzui Kenji chosakushū*, Vol. I. Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1976. 49.

⁸² The individual *sekai* used in combination could also be altered by *shukō*, such that it would be possible to have [*sekai* + *shukō*] or [*sekai* + *shukō*] + [*sekai* + *shukō*], etc. (See “Naimaze to sekai,” 107-108.)

combining *sekai* was known as *naimaze* 緋い交ぜ (“twist and blend.”)⁸³

The structure of eighteenth-century Edo plays was such that the *jidaimono* of the *ichibanme* (the first part of the program) and the *sewamono* of the *nibanme* (the second part of the program) were connected by one *sekai* through the technique of disguise (*yatsushi* やつし) and then revelation (*jitsu wa* 実は) of characters appearing in both parts. A character who would appear as himself later in the play was in a disguise role in the first part. While in the Kansai region the two parts of the day’s program had always been kept distinct, it was not until 1796, when the playwright Namiki Gohei moved from Kansai to Edo, that the separation occurred in Edo kabuki.⁸⁴ Following the replacement of the old Edo-style structure by the Kansai method of separate *sekai* for the *ichibanme* and the *nibanme*, the nineteenth century saw new treatments in the development of *sekai*, as in Nanboku’s characteristic *naimaze* technique. Use of *naimaze* reached its peak in the Bunka-Bunsei Era, when we can find Nanboku plays with as many as six *sekai* combined in the formation of one play.⁸⁵

The proliferation of *sekai* is reflected in a publication that appeared around ninety years after the preparation of the extant manuscript of *Sekai kômoku*. This twentieth-century publication is entitled *Kabuki saiken* 歌舞伎細見 (Guidebook to Kabuki) by Iizuka Tomoichirô.⁸⁶ This book contains descriptions of two hundred and seventy five *sekai*. Where *Sekai kômoku* gives only role names and some brief related material, *Kabuki saiken* gives lengthy narrative descriptions of each *sekai*, its history and the plays based on it. To compare the respective contents of these two compilations, we can examine the entries concerning the priest Shunkan.

Shunkan was an historic figure who lived in the later twelfth century, when the Heian Period was coming to an end with the precipitous fall of the Heike clan. His fame comes from the fact that

⁸³ The use of *naimaze* began in the An’ei Period (1772-1780.)

⁸⁴ In 1796, the *ichibanme* was “Soga daifukuchô” 曾我大福帳 and the *nibanme* was “Sumida no haru geisha katagi” 隅田春女容性.

⁸⁵ See “Naimaze to sekai” for a fuller discussion of this issue.

⁸⁶ Tokyo: Daiichi Shobô, 1926. This book was originally published in 1919 as *Kabuki kyôgen saiken* 歌舞伎狂言細見 (guidebook to kabuki plays), but was enlarged and republished in 1926 under the new title. The 1926 edition was used for this study.

he was sent into permanent exile following an abortive coup attempt against the head of the Heike clan. His story provided an important subplot of *Heike monogatari*, offering an illustrative example of *Heike monogatari*'s overall Buddhist theme of the instability and unreliability of the phenomenal world. Shunkan is the focus of a fourth-category nô play, entitled simply, "Shunkan." In 1719, with the nô play as a starting point, Chikamatsu wrote a five-act *jidaimono* for the puppet theatre entitled *Heike nyôgo ga shima* 平家女護島 (Heike and the Isle of Women.) The second act, "Kikai ga shima" 鬼界ヶ島 (Devils's Island), tells the story of Shunkan. As is often the case with *jidaimono*, this act can and does stand independently of the rest of the play. As such, it was later adapted for performance in kabuki. Chikamatsu's version of the Shunkan story delivers a perfect example of his earlier-quoted definition of *shukô*: "...while resembling the original, a new work should also have sections that only roughly follow the original." Following the transformations of the Shunkan story from *Heike monogatari* through later kabuki versions shows Chikamatsu's definition at work, and comparing the entries for Shunkan in *Sekai kômoku* and *Kabuki saiken* highlights the different contents and purposes of these two works.⁸⁷

In *Sekai kômoku*, Shunkan is found under the *Heike monogatari sekai*. The entry on this *sekai* is divided into three sections: role names, reference works and *gidayû* (jôruri) plays based on *Heike monogatari*. Shunkan's name is given in the list of role names, and *Heike nyôgo ga shima* is listed, but without description, under the section on relevant jôruri plays. This is all we find concerning Shunkan. In *Kabuki saiken*, on the other hand, when we look for Shunkan under the *Heike monogatari sekai*, we are told to "look at the separate entry."⁸⁸ Under the several-page Shunkan entry⁸⁹, we find full descriptions of plays centering on Shunkan, including the nô play, "Shunkan" and the jôruri play, *Heike nyôgo ga shima*. There is also a section listing reference works, as in *Sekai kômoku*.

⁸⁷ My purpose here is to compare *Sekai kômoku* and *Kabuki saiken*. For specifics on transformations in the treatment of Shunkan's life, see Saltzman-Li, Katherine. "Kabuki Playwriting: Process, Traditions and Conventions." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Stanford University. 1994. 227-230.

⁸⁸ *Kabuki saiken*, 71.

⁸⁹ *Kabuki saiken*, 76-80.

Sekai kômoku is skeletal in its information when compared to the more detailed and descriptive *Kabuki saiken*. The differences between these two works may be largely attributed to their different purposes: *Sekai kômoku* was a handbook for playwrights, a reference work listing details useful for choosing and planning *sekai* for new plays. In contrast, the greater descriptive nature of the later *Kabuki saiken* served an audience interested in kabuki at a time when it was dying out as a dynamic tradition. *Kabuki saiken* was aimed at scholars and aficionados, rather than men working in a creative capacity in the theatre. However, it is also significant to us as a record of the very real phenomenon that had been occurring over time, the gradual increase in the number of *sekai*.

As noted, *haikai* and *gesaku* authors similarly relied on the creative method of establishing the warp of *sekai* and working in the woof of *shukô*.⁹⁰ The interweaving of the two in the structure and content of Tokugawa literary and performing arts responded to a basic understanding of the world, in which the new does not exist except in relation to the old and the old cannot teach or appeal without renewal through current interests and energy. The notion of *sekai* itself was the latest conceptualization of a long-practiced technique, a descendant of poetic allusion and the “Tokugawa-ization” of earlier methods of literary and play creation.

Like A Picture

The theatre offers a natural site for blending the verbal and visual -- that is, (oral) text and image -- but literary texts in Japanese culture also have a long history of the co-existence of the verbal and pictorial. Where Western art historians have conceived of the relationship between words and pictures as a “struggle for territory”⁹¹ or at best have set up textuality “as a foil to imagery, a ‘significant other’ or rival mode of representation,”⁹² Japanese have treated them as integrated arts. W.J.T. Mitchell discusses an “illustrated history of

⁹⁰ For example, James Araki’s article, “The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction” makes it clear that the Rosei/dream pillow theme functioned as a *sekai* that was marvelously recreated through *shukô* again and again in Tokugawa-period fiction.

⁹¹ Mitchell, W.J.T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 43.

⁹² *Iconology*, 3.

the development of systems of writing” in Western cultures in which he diagrams a progression from picture to pictogram to ideogram and finally to phonetic sign.⁹³ The movement from one kind of sign to the next is seen as a progression, and the two basic kinds of signs, images and words, as antithetical modes of expression, “natural” and “conventional,” respectively. In spite of centuries of criticism devoted to detailing their differences, Mitchell states that there are no “essential” differences between painting and poetry, the sister arts of Western cultures, but rather, there are “a number of differences in effect in a culture . . . which are riddled with all the antithetical values the culture wants to embrace or repudiate.”⁹⁴

Western arguments concerning whether or not pictographs are closer to image or text are somewhat irrelevant in the Japanese case. In Tokugawa literary arts, the four kinds of signs -- picture, pictogram, ideogram and phonetic sign -- coexisted comfortably and fruitfully in mixtures of pictures, Chinese characters (pictograms and ideograms) and syllabary (phonetic signs.) Tokugawa literary and pictorial artists carried on a long tradition in which the pictorial beauty of writing (developed in the art of calligraphy) and a “conventional” textual use of images blended in single works of art. Writing never fully reached the purely “conventional” stage that Western critics discuss, and images -- without the Western movement towards perspectival “realism” -- were not confused with what they pointed to in nature.⁹⁵ Perhaps the blend in Japanese writing of Chinese characters and syllabary paved the way for (or reflected) a porous relationship between imagistic and written signs. Writing had a long history of pictorial use, where expert calligraphers effected a transformation of text into the pictorial. Images also had a history as a form of text, either by the conventional manner in which certain character types were depicted (indicating aspects of character and social standing that did not need to be fully described in the text: the broad face and snub nose of the plebian, or the hook nose and high forehead of the aristocratic lady), or by the use of images for telling

⁹³ *Iconology*, 27.

⁹⁴ *Iconology*, 49.

⁹⁵ See Snyder, Joel. “Picturing Vision” in Mitchell, W.J.T., ed. *The Language of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. 219-246. See especially pages 234 ff for a full discussion of the relationship between pictures and understandings of the science of vision in Western art history.

parts of the story not necessarily written in the text,⁹⁶ or yet in the way images could enhance textual meaning. An example of the latter, we have discovered, is the accompanying illustrations of characters in certain *gesaku* which are in fact portraits of contemporary actors. For those who could “read” such portraits accurately, the text and its meanings were broadened significantly.

Earlier Japanese literary practice lay the foundation for “reading” pictures. From the illustrated scrolls of the elite of the Heian and Kamakura Periods to the more widespread *e-toki* 絵説き, “picture explaining” traditions of medieval Japan, pictures had long been used to tell stories with the aid of narration, written or oral. In the Tokugawa Period, the interplay of written text and illustration in *gesaku* was akin to the blend of verbal and visual in kabuki acting. For example, actors worked static, arrested poses, *mie* 見得, into the flow of the story’s enactment. *Mie* functioned like the pictures in Tokugawa fiction, as the equivalent of one of the contributing media through which the story was told. With both fiction and kabuki, a fluid relationship was achieved between the pictorial – for example, prints, book illustrations, kabuki poses -- and the verbal -- written text, narration, dialogue, among others.

There are three kinds of Tokugawa-period woodblock prints related to kabuki (*shibai-e* 芝居絵.) They are pictures of the inside and outside of the theatre, pictures of play scenes, and pictures of actors. By far the greatest number produced were of actors,⁹⁷ a fact that makes it clear that the central interest of kabuki for Tokugawa audiences was the actors. The relationship between these prints and the theatre worked in two directions: while producing prints of popular actors made commercial sense for artists and publishers, these prints also served to increase support for the actors depicted. Thus, regarding the great number of prints made of a *kaomise* play of 1795 in which the star actor Kataoka Nizaemon appeared, Hattori Yukio writes, “the making and selling of prints that depicted [Nizaemon in this play], conveys the high contemporary value that Nizaemon’s power of performance had achieved. [The printing and selling of such prints] was possible because he was an actor of such

⁹⁶ This was a very common practice in *kibyōshi*.

⁹⁷ Actor prints are called *yakusha-e*. For an excellent study on *shibai-e*, see Hattori Yukio. *Edo no shibai-e o yomu*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993.

talent.”⁹⁸ These prints sold due to Nizaemon’s popularity and simultaneously enhanced the admiration he received.

It was not just the actor’s extreme popularity that allowed for the dual success created out of this mutual dependency. The particular point of contact between kabuki acting and the content of prints reinforced the effects each had on the other: many actor prints depicted the *mie* poses that were held at moments of climax in action and emotion in the plays. *Mie* derived power from the concrete realization (in the body of the actor) of pictorial aesthetics and meaning -- the importance of the beauty of form and the admiration and worship of images⁹⁹ -- and actor prints, in showing actors at their most important stage moments, drew on the drama and intensity of enacted stories.¹⁰⁰ Thus, behind *mie* were pictures and behind pictures were actors on stage. Admired pictures were “as though alive,”¹⁰¹ and *mie* offered the embodiment of the beauty and power of the arrested moments of prints. Actors were praised when they were “beautiful in the manner of pictures,” “became like pictures” or “had the appearance of a picture,”¹⁰² and prints took their appeal from their ability to capture fine acting and dramatic moments. Parallel developments in preferred acting and woodblock print styles offer fascinating evidence of this interchange: Gunji notes that, in the Kansei Era, a tendency towards a kind of “realism” developed in both kabuki plays and the prints of Sharaku 写楽.¹⁰³

To further this discussion of the pictorial in kabuki, consider the following from the section entitled, “Oral Traditions of Former Playwrights” in *Kokon yakusha rongo sakigake* 古今役者論語魁, a *gekisho* of 1772:

Nakamura Denshichi said, “It is best to create plays like pictures; if they are created with too much emphasis on the words, women and

⁹⁸ *Edo no shibai-e o yomu*, 136.

⁹⁹ *Mie* originated in Edo *aragoto* acting and the imitation of statues of the fierce deity Fudō, who was worshipped by the Edo-based Ichikawa line of actors. In other words, *mie* originally developed out of the form and aesthetics of Buddhist statuary.

¹⁰⁰ See *Edo no shibai-e o yomu*, 10-11, for a related discussion.

¹⁰¹ *Edo kabuki*, 222.

¹⁰² *Edo no shibai-e o yomu*, 10.

¹⁰³ *Gunji Masakatsu santeishū, daigo maki: kabuki no katachi, gisei no bun*. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1991. 267-269.

children will not be able to read them. People come to the theatre in order to forget their troubles.”¹⁰⁴

Denshichi was an Edo playwright of the 1710's through the mid-1730's. His concern in the above quote was not particularly with the less-literate of society, but instead, with the purposes of plays and the possibilities for their reception by all audience members. If a necessary balance between words and the pictorial was upset, in essence, plays became “unreadable.” Playwrights needed to allow for acting that was “beautiful in the manner of pictures,” that aesthetically united visual and verbal according to long-held practices in literature and the arts. It is through an understanding of this relationship between visual and verbal that a playwright could help “create plays like pictures” so that people might “come to the theatre in order to forget their troubles.” When we remember that kabuki scripts were not published in the Tokugawa Period, we understand that kabuki could not be enjoyed through words alone. There was no market for scripts unless they were prepared in a form with accompanying illustrations of characters/actors in their parts. The combination of words and pictures was a requirement.

The wide range of connections between Tokugawa literary, theatrical and pictorial artists points to the understanding that none of these forms of expression existed in isolation, but were rather bound inextricably. They were united by shared themes, purposes and techniques (*sekai* and *shukô* also applied to the work of woodblock print artists.) These interconnections brought the literary, and its relationship with the pictorial, into kabuki and vice versa. From early forays into the world of *haikai* to later kabuki practitioner inclusion in literary *kyôka* and *gesaku* circles, kabuki playwrights and plays were increasingly about writing. While the Way, or the professionalization, of playwriting advocated and described in *Kezairoku* continued to engage practitioners in a variety of duties, writing had become one of the most significant by the time of *Kezairoku*'s publication, especially at the higher levels in the playwright ranks. At the same time, kabuki plays -- their content and performance -- came to be appreciated in numerous forms: in the

¹⁰⁴ *Kinsei geidôron*, 479. “Created with too much emphasis on the words” reads in the original as: 文字のように作りては.

theatre, in illustrated script or narrative renditions, in *gesaku* and in amateur study and performance. Kabuki could not be called a literary art, but at least by the latter half of the eighteenth century, it had become central to the literary arts and had thereby propelled its internal development into new territory.

CHAPTER FIVE

KABUKI PLAYWRITING: THE ORAL CONNECTION

We ought to take a fresh look at tradition, considered not as the inert acceptance of a fossilized corpus of themes and convention, but as an organic habit of re-creating what has been received and is handed on. It may be that we ought to re-examine the concept of originality, which is relatively modern as a shibboleth of criticism; there may be other and better ways of being original than that concern for the writer's own individuality which characterizes so much of our self-conscious fiction. We may even come to believe that, great as some authors have been, their greatness is finally surpassed by that of the craft they have served; hence, whenever we reckon their contributions, we should also remember their obligations; no credit need be lost if some of it is shared anonymously with others trained in the same techniques and imparting the same mythology.¹

The organic re-creating of the received, the overshadowing of individuals by their craft, and the chain of contributions and obligations that construct the playwright as a function of the kabuki theatre, all indicate kabuki's grounding in the oral domain of the verbal arts. Both its creative processes and conventions, and the kinds of relationships developed between troupe members, troupe and audience, and audience and society, favored the repeating and reworking of certain stories and ideas, where past material was selected and adapted according to contemporary criteria and current social relevance.

Minzoku geinô 民俗芸能 refers to folk performing traditions. These traditions develop in specific communities, and like all oral culture, their content reflects the relationship between the community's heritage and issues of current concern. Performers are members of the community who practice their tradition within a set festival calendar. *Minzoku geinô* formed the basis of the professional stage arts of nô, kyôgen, jôruri and kabuki. While folk performers,

¹ Lord, Albert. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960. Page 1 of the "Preface" (unpaginated) by Harry Levin.

like professional stage artists, often exhibited a high level of skill gained through years of practice, kabuki artists may be contrasted with folk performers most significantly by the fact that they were full-time specialists who performed throughout the year in commercial theatre. It is useful to see the professional stage arts at one end of a performing arts continuum that also included *minzoku geinô*. If folk performers often maintained high levels of skill, like their professional counterparts, kabuki, for example, showed its folk-performance origins clearly in its adherence to a calendrical cycle of productions, its festival-like atmosphere, its actor-audience relationships and in many specific practices.²

Folk performing arts have been defined as maintaining a high “degree of personal interrelationship between performer and audience.”³ By the same definition, when the interpersonal approach is lost but the attempt to entertain the populace at large with public values remains, we have popular art, and when the audience is somehow restricted and the values of an educated group are adopted, we come to so-called high art.⁴ In considering kabuki in its heyday, we must remember that rather than the high art it has come to be today, it was a popular dramatic form that remained close to folk origins, in which the relationships between actors and audience members, on and off stage, assured it an extraordinary degree of the personal interrelationship between communicating partners that most directly characterizes folk dramatic art, but which may also be maintained in popular art forms: Edo-period kabuki never lost the interpersonal approach. The interpersonal approach remained strong until the Meiji Period, when it gradually attenuated for a variety of social and political reasons. In some ways, Meiji kabuki comes closest to kabuki as a purely popular form: the relationship between actor and audience was greatly depersonalized and a conscious attempt to enact “public values” was undertaken.⁵

² For a full discussion of folk drama, see Tillis, Steve. *Rethinking Folk Drama*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999.

³ Abrahams, Roger. “The Complex Relations of Simple Forms” in Ben-Amos, Dan, ed. *Folklore Genres*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976. 212.

⁴ *Folklore Genres*, 212-213.

⁵ For a recent study on post-Meiji kabuki that reveals how kabuki playwrights and performers continued to develop many new plays and productions into the 1940s, see Brandon, James. *Kabuki's Forgotten War: 1931-1945*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008. The period described in Brandon's book offers evidence of

In terms of story content, a combination of adapted stories from “national literature”⁶ and folklore, together with stories inspired by contemporary life, characterized kabuki material from its beginnings and throughout the Edo Period. The development of stories in kabuki plays, like the long unfolding of a scroll, constituted an ongoing dialogue with no real beginning (the stories upon which plays were based were originally those of other literary genres and other performing arts.) The mechanics of the creative process involved the balancing of the stable, *sekai*, and the new, *shukō*. Successive performances (for example, of Shunkan plays as they developed over time) maintained this balance, even as plot and thematic emphases altered and unfolded. Such alterations punctuated the “text” of the continuing dialogue, which in constant interaction with society and its concerns, always kept kabuki extremely responsive, on the edge, a physical and psychological manifestation of what was current. Variation, so central to the concept of folk art and folk performing arts, in which no two versions or performances of the same material are ever the same, is also a central defining aspect of kabuki performance. Dialogue, action and enactment could vary from performance to performance, directed largely by audience/performer interaction and unfixed beyond the authority of the living traditions preserved through acting lines and the living memory of performance practices.

Constituent Texts and Their Interrelationships

Walter Ong has discussed differences between the literate, or vision-centered world, and the non-literate, or sound-centered world. In his presentation, the non-literate world is permeated by the power of sound, by the living force of language. According to Ong, this sound-governed world emphasizes harmony and unification. A vision-centered world, on the other hand, emphasizes clarity and distinctness.⁷ Vision-centeredness develops with the move from

another “conscious attempt to enact ‘public values.’” In spite of some clear differences, kabuki of the Meiji and the war periods can thus be compared, although in Meiji the conscious attempt was towards modernization, and in the 30s and 40s, it came under the nationalist and imperial aims of the government.

⁶ For a definition of this term, see Ruch, Barbara. “Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature” in Hall, John Whitney, ed. *Japan in the Muromachi Age*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1977. 279-309.

⁷ Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy*. London: Methuen, 1982. 72.

orality to chirographic culture and particularly when the latter is in the typographic stage. Communication comes not through the auditory sense but through the visual dependency on words as units transcribed on paper: as the visual sense develops and takes over the others, even oral communication is affected by the habit to visualize words, a habit that is developed from the use of print.

Manuscript culture provides in some ways an intermediary stage: “. . . manuscript culture is intensely audile-tactile compared to print culture; and that means that detached habits of observation are quite uncongenial to manuscript cultures, whether ancient Egyptian, Greek, or Chinese or medieval. In place of cool visual detachment the manuscript world puts empathy and participation of all the senses.”⁸ This is effected for Ong, for example, by the lack of the use of punctuation marks and by the fact that manuscripts (both early Western as well as Chinese and Japanese) tend to run words together instead of separating them.⁹

While acknowledging that in a given context these distinctions are rarely clear-cut, we find that in the Tokugawa-period arts we are examining, we come very close to the idea of manuscript culture. Jôruri was born when an oral storytelling tradition joined together with puppet entertainment. Gerstle has noted how jôruri texts, having been printed almost since the creation of jôruri, were first printed in moveable type, but soon, along with most publishing of the time changed to the woodblock print method. “Perhaps McLuhan, who noted that the divorce of poetry and music followed the development from cursive to standard type would have said that the woodblock script, with its printed but cursive style, is still closely attuned to the aural aspects of the language In McLuhan’s term [the strokes of the calligraphic style of jôruri books] are ‘tactile’ and closer to manuscript than to modern print, which is standard and squarish.”¹⁰ While the text remained central to jôruri, it was a text for reading aloud, for narrating, for bringing alive. The inclusion of musical notation (at first considered a secret of the chanters, but later added due to audience/reader demand¹¹) make it clear that jôruri texts were

⁸ McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962. 28.

⁹ *Orality and Literacy*, 61.

¹⁰ *Circles of Fantasy*, 15.

¹¹ *Circles of Fantasy*, 16.

produced for the benefit of auditory experience, to help re-create an auditory experience. This combined with the significant fact that texts were not printed in movable type (the advent of movable type has been discussed as a critical move in the direction of vision-centeredness,¹²) kept jôruri in the audio-tactile world of orality, in spite of the early production of texts.

Kabuki fit even more fully in such a sound-centered world. The script was never printed, until recently. Our earliest renditions of plays are the *e-iri kyôgenbon* of the Genroku Period, printed from woodblocks. These use a cursive style, mostly in *kana*, and are interspersed with pictures. They relate to performed plays by being suggestive of the event theatregoers had experienced in the theatre, through description and the recording of stage lines. Jôruri texts were used by amateur chanters; *e-iri kyôgenbon* were not intended for amateur recreation. They functioned both as play souvenir and as creative products in their own right. They were meant to be appreciated for story and illustrations, but not as scripts, in spite of the inclusion of dialogue. Early *kyôgenbon* that resembled scripts were commercially unsuccessful, and therefore, publications in full script format failed to develop.¹³

As we have seen, full scripts were not made available within the theatre either, other than for the playwrights. Why did kabuki resist partnership with the textual world (by which I mean a world in which written texts carry authority as methods of expression and transmission)? The simple answer is that texts were anathema to much of what kabuki was: an active, unifying, sound-centered world which in both its creation and performance emphasized and thrived on personal contact of the sort that supports the creative endeavors of oral societies. The power of words permeated kabuki and also underlay the resistance to making full play scripts available. Published scripts would have deprived kabuki of its special vitality (and also made troupes more vulnerable to their competitors.) The Genroku *e-iri kyôgenbon* in their manuscript style did not deprive the stage art of kabuki of its oral essence; rather, they entertained on their own terms while hinting at the possibilities available in the theatre.

¹² By Ong and McLuhan, among others.

¹³ Kamakura Yasuko. "E-iri kyôgenbon no buntai ni tsuite." *Kinsei Bungei*, No. 33, 1980. 15-26. It should be noted that while full scripts were not published, famous speeches were published from the early eighteenth century.

The *e-iri kyôgenbon* were largely composed of transcribed speeches. As Naoki Sakai points out, the common lack of quotation marks and grammatical markers left the source of speech and opinion often indistinguishable, frequently making it difficult to identify the viewpoints of a narrator, the actors and the spectators.¹⁴ In performance, the source of speech was always clear, but the “multiplicity of voices” from the *e-iri kyôgenbon* did find their counterpart in the theatre, in for example, the interaction between actors and audience.

Orality has been defined by Sakai as that mode which renders meaningless the importance of “the originary act of utterance by an author” and which “annihilates the distance between ‘them’ and ‘us,’ the past and the present, and the addressee and the addresser.”¹⁵ These annihilations have certain implications for the constitution of audience types: the audience for verbal arts in an oral mode is not passive but active. It is therefore not really an audience in the sense of a passive group of listeners and observers, but is rather one of the communities actively participating in and bringing about the event of the dramatic performance. In kabuki, the audience reacted verbally (calls of praise or criticism) and physically (cushion throwing for bad performances). Other practices also contributed to keeping actors and audience intimately engaged, for example, direct address to audience members by actors, or audience members giving actors presents and praise from the stage. We can see the audience as one text on an equal footing with the others that make up kabuki, that “intertextual coordination of various texts.”¹⁶ Powerful patronage by individuals (*hiiki* 鼻眞) and groups of patrons (*renjû* 連中) “who came to have a direct say in theatre management and repertory selection”¹⁷ led to participation “so extensive that it reached the level of a well-structured art which accompanied and took part in the

¹⁴ Sakai, Naoki. *Voices of the Past*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. 140. This is not to say that all *e-iri kyôgenbon* lacked grammatical markers and punctuation. Some *kyôgenbon*, especially those influenced by jôruri texts made use of them to indicate entrances of important characters or changes of scene. *Tokoro e* 所へ and *tokoro ni* 所に are examples of such markers, and the addition of a period after them could increase the sense of separation of scenes. (“*E-iri kyôgenbon no buntai ni tsuite*,” 15-19.)

¹⁵ *Voices of the Past*, 124.

¹⁶ *Voices of the Past*, 148.

¹⁷ Raz, Jacob. *Audience and Actors*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983. 167.

performance on stage. *Renjū* members dictated the rhythm of the play and the atmosphere of the auditorium... As time passed these *renjū* became so powerful that mounting a production without taking them into account was unthinkable.”¹⁸

While Masao Miyoshi has suggested that textuality in Japanese literature is defined in terms of interrelation rather than autonomy,¹⁹ Sakai has gone one step further: in referring to the “intertextual coordination of various texts,” he offers two models for interaction between verbal and pictorial texts. In the representational model, verbal and pictorial texts remain autonomous such that each text “can signify or designate without the aid of another,” whereas in the gestalt model, texts are “mutually dependent.”²⁰ Sakai’s discussion concerns *e-iri kyōgenbon* and *gesaku*, but it can apply as well to the theatre if we allow for additional texts, especially gestural text. Dramaturgical performance is “visual, verbal and gestural at the same time,” and “the linear temporality inherent in narration and the nonlinear presentation of a pictorial text are superimposed on each other in the text of drama.”²¹ The dramaturgical text is never the theatrical script, rather the theatrical script is one of what we will call the constituent texts of the dramaturgical text.

If all dramaturgical texts can be discussed at least partially in this way, we can take Sakai’s description further to categorize different forms or genres of dramaturgical texts according to how they integrate their constituent texts. Sakai’s “representational-type” and “gestalt-type” integration models are useful in this effort, although they were developed for the integration of only pictorial and verbal texts. With the addition of the gestural text and others, there is the potential for some constituent texts within the same dramaturgical text to interact in a representational mode while others interact in a gestalt mode.

With kabuki, we find that the text of “linear temporality inherent in narration” as it functions in kabuki is interfered with in significant ways. Plots are rarely followed in any direct course; various

¹⁸ *Audience and Actors*, 191.

¹⁹ Miyoshi, Masao. “Against the Native Grain: The Japanese Novel and the ‘Postmodern’ West.” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 87, No. 3, Summer 1988. 547

²⁰ *Voices of the Past*, 173.

²¹ *Voices of the Past*, 138.

conventions of structure work against the linear progression of storyline and break up the unfolding and development of unilinear plot. For example, when the entire community of troupe members and audience share the knowledge of the basic stories that form the background of the plays, the desire for unity in storyline is less than the desire for presentation of action of subsidiary characters and events that fill in parts of the story previously undeveloped or developed along different lines. The mostly post-1900 practice in kabuki productions of presenting only part of a play, that is of enacting only one act or one scene from a longer piece, was possible because of this same shared knowledge on the part of the audience.

Another example of how the direct progression of storyline is often hindered concerns the community voice behind the plays as it affects requirements for play closure. A play's background story itself is "closed" in the minds of the audience from their previous knowledge of it. In a theatre based on the use of known stories (*sekai*), plays tend to offer the strongest sense of closure through their structure, a structure that has little to do with plot, but rather more to do with a prescribed formal sense of progression in the mood and tempo of the presentation. Thus plays typically begin in an elevated (congratulatory or aristocratic) setting and end on an auspicious note with various complications leading from order to disorder and back to order as the story unfolds. It is the auspicious ending that brings a satisfactory closure to performance, no matter what unbelievable distortion of events may be needed to bring it about, and in spite of the degree of closure the plot may also convey.²²

A further significant interference in linear narrative strategies is found in techniques of line delivery. We find that kabuki confounds even Sakai's categories of dramaturgical monologue and dialogue, which he distinguishes by the way they introduce spatialization into the text: ". . . dialogue could be identified as that form of text in which voices are uttered from different loci. The factors that

²² The foregoing applies particularly to *jidaimono* (as for example, in *The Battles of Coxinga*, where famously, the play's conclusion brings a restoration of China's Ming Dynasty after its collapse, contrary of course to historical fact.) *Sewamono*, which often took their source material from actual incidents, can be treated either as a structural part of a *jidaimono* or as forming a discrete unit. On their own, they generally follow a fairly tight plotline and offer a sense of closure based on story events, although formal considerations of closure also function.

determine those loci are human bodies.”²³ It would seem hard to find fault with this definition, but what do we make of the common speech device in kabuki known as *watarizerifu* 渡りせりふ or “divided delivery?”²⁴ In this technique a single speech is delivered in alternation by two or more characters (human bodies in different loci) crescendoing to a final line delivered in unison by all participants. As an example, consider the following from the play *Shibaraku*:

[The following four men have just come on stage, formally attired and each bearing the two swords of the samurai.]

HEIDA: Today, after many trials, our lord, Kiyohara no Takehira . . .
 UNHACHI: Comes here to the Tsurugaoka Shrine to obtain imperial appointment as leader of the land.
 TONAI: From today, we four will fulfill our wishes for success.
 HEIJI: Every honor reflected in our feathered lances. What an auspicious entrance!
 HEIDA: This is truly . . .
 ALL FOUR: A joyous occasion!²⁵

Is this a group monologue or an economical way of delivering a dialogue of shared sentiments? The answer may vary with the case with this often-employed technique, but this example raises the point that the categories of single articulation as monologue and articulation “from different loci” as dialogue are not absolutely distinguishable in kabuki.

An effect of this “divided delivery” is an infiltration of “the nonlinear presentation of [the] pictorial text” into the linear temporality of the narration. The breaking up and sharing of lines of a dia/mono-logue allows something else to fit into the spaces of division. That something else includes pictorial text. Brought to the

²³ *Voices of the Past*, 138.

²⁴ *Watarizerifu* is translated by James Brandon as “passed-along dialogue” (*Kabuki*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975. 369), but as its status as dialogue is in question here, a different translation is used.

²⁵ Hattori Yukio, ed. *Kabuki onsuteeji*, #10. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1985. 78. For a full translation of *Shibaraku* with other examples of *watarizerifu*, see Katherine Saltzman-Li, tr. “Just a Minute! *Shibaraku*” in Brandon and Leiter, eds. *Kabuki Plays On Stage, Vol. 1: Brilliance and Bravado, 1697-1766*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. 42-65.

fore by the staccato articulations of the divided lines are the physical presence of the actors and the physicality of the voices delivering those lines. Through the magnificently and often symbolically-costumed actors (costuming being one of kabuki's significant constituent texts) the pictorial interjects itself along with the gestural and the vocal.

As the example of *watarizerifu* shows, the infiltration of textual categories into one another de-emphasizes both separation and hierarchy among the various constituent texts of kabuki. These constituent texts, therefore, do not stand well independently, but need the support of one another in the "mutually dependent" mode of interaction which Sakai designates "gestalt." While it can be argued that all forms of dramaturgical text must integrate their various constituent texts, those that do so based on superimposition or the "representational" model offer us scripts that can bring some sort of aesthetic satisfaction (or complete experience) on their own. Thus, for example, while a full enactment of an Ibsen play brings about a dramaturgical text in which visual, verbal and gestural constituent texts interact, the verbal, that is, the script of the play, can stand independently as a literary product to be appreciated in its complexity and beauty. I would argue that dramaturgical texts that follow the gestalt model rarely offer scripts that "can signify or designate without the aid of another," that is, without another of the constituent texts such as the gestural or pictorial or others. Furthermore, it is no accident that the appearance of full scripts was late for kabuki: the *e-iri kyôgenbon* form, as well as later fictional versions of kabuki plays, match gestalt-model verbal/pictorial text with gestalt-model dramaturgical text. (Representational-model scripts necessarily include the grammatical markers as well as stage directions missing from *e-iri kyôgenbon*: representational-model scripts correspond to representational-model dramaturgical texts in the ways in which constituent texts are interconnected.) It is only at the point when new plays gradually stopped being created according to Tokugawa methods and when the relationships of support changed between troupe members, on the one hand, and between audience and troupe on the other, that written kabuki scripts began to be published. With the trend towards classicism, kabuki magazines, and the historical and scholarly studies that were carried out from the later Meiji Period, treated the scripts primarily as objects of study,

often aimed at a nationalist project of presenting kabuki favorably to modernizing eyes as a form of drama.

One of the important constituent texts of kabuki is music. The incompleteness of libretti as representations of European opera provides a useful comparison to introduce the inadequacy of a play script of only verbal statements to fully convey the experience of a theatrical form in which music is indispensable.²⁶ With its many significant non-verbal constituent texts, we must ask how the performance of kabuki can ever feed into written product. Just as written folktales transform the essence of the tales as oral verbal art to either literary product or scholarly product (depending on the writer's intentions) the kabuki experience can never be represented in any simple, accurate way on paper. Nevertheless, illustrated written renditions of the stories of the plays and the theatrical experience were numerous, beginning with the *e-iri kyôgenbon*. Written accounts seem to have partaken of the high degree of generic mutability that characterized Tokugawa fiction, as indicated by the multiplicity of ways in which people chose to enjoy (parts of) the theatrical experience as fiction. As we have explored, kabuki plays found their way into various forms of *gesaku* as well as written genres that were closer to actual scripts.²⁷ While all historical notions of genre are subject to both internal change as they develop and external change due to shifting relations with other genres, the Tokugawa Period was one in which concepts of genre were in constant and accelerated flux. This phenomenon is all the more striking when we remember that it followed centuries of relative conservatism in genre formation. The multiple printed genres into which kabuki plays and performances worked themselves not only reflected the nature of the Tokugawa literary scene, but also offered –

²⁶ This is not to suggest that music is as central to kabuki as it is to European opera. However, it is to stress that it is a necessary constituent of kabuki productions and the effects that troupe members seek to create.

²⁷ For example, in the Kamigata area, there were the *nehon* 根本, or the *e-iri nehon* 絵入り根本. These were first published in the An'ei and Tenmei Periods (1772-1789) but were most popular in the Bunka, Bunsei and Tenpô Periods (first half of the nineteenth century.) Although they are often referred to as *kyakuhon*, or scripts, they were primarily composed of abridged versions of scripts with illustrations in the style of the *yomihon*, a fictional genre popular during the second half of the Tokugawa Period. There were also a wide variety of materials available for amateur practice and productions.

taken together and in their very multiplicity - the best way to get at the multi-textual and multi-dimensional kabuki experience in two-dimensional space.

As previously-stated, in pre-Meiji kabuki the audience was one of the active constituent texts of the kabuki dramaturgical text, and one important reason concerned the nature of play content and the compositional method of interweaving *sekai* with *shukō*. In other words, audiences engaged with the plot according to their knowledge of its *sekai* and its previous treatments.

Another important way in which the audience functioned as one of kabuki's active constituent texts has to do with the audience's double interest in the characters of the play being enacted and in the actors doing the enacting. Audiences followed both closely. We touched earlier on audience interest in actors' careers in relation to patronage by individuals and groups (*hiiki* and *renjū*.) Jacob Raz observes that the individual member of a *renjū*

...is a transfiguration of the minzoku *geinō* spectator [in the following features]: 1. The personal, intimate relationship with the actor, which is not limited to the performance, but extends to the shibai-jaya and private residence, in the form of parties and other kinds of encounter. 2. The link between financial and other types of support. 3. The kinship among the *renjū* members themselves; they were often connected by ties other than theatre-going. They were often members of the same profession, or from the same city neighbourhood (which sometimes meant the same thing). 4. Their contribution to the performance itself in terms of production props, cheers, *kakegoe*, applause, and so on. 5. Their participation in the decisions of the theatre management (as noted above, sometimes resulting in a feeling of lordship over the theatre). 6. Their feeling that the theatre is a second home.

These features very closely resemble the relationship known in *minzoku geinō*. They formed a theatre that, in many respects, was a kind of community theatre, with its informal relationships, its loose distinction between audience and players, and its link with the party-mood of the folk *geinō*.²⁸

Raz later notes that "Edo kabuki was probably one of the best ways of creating a community-type theatre in an urban environment."²⁹

²⁸ *Audience and Actors*, 206.

²⁹ *Audience and Actors*, 207. He also points out, however, that Edo kabuki "went farther than any previous *geinō* in dividing functions between players and

The constant actor/audience interaction, and particularly actor/*renjū* interaction, led to conditions in which audiences shared in an actor's development as an artist. They found interest in the actor-as-person immediately before them, as well as the actor as he represented a stage of development in his full career and in the continuation of his acting line. When a group offered its patronage to a favorite actor, full support in the various ways delineated above was the result. This situation was altered drastically during and after the Meiji Period. New plays were less and less often created, and audience members became decreasingly engaged in kabuki and its performances as a vital part of the festival-based annual cycle in their lives.³⁰

Training

Interest in the actor as person and as representative of acting traditions bigger than himself leads us to another aspect of kabuki's oral connection, the training of troupe members. Kabuki as an art form resisted partnership with the textual world, both in scripting plays and in training and transmission methods. Training methods of actors and other troupe members were similar to those of many of the traditional performing arts with their emphasis on lineage, secrecy and oral transmission. The secret transmission of knowledge has an ancient history in Japan. Although it seems to have predated the introduction of Buddhism,³¹ it later borrowed its terminology from esoteric Buddhism, such that during the medieval period "lineage and secrecy became the overwhelming characteristic of the transmission of knowledge"³² for religious teachings and for the arts as well. Knowledge was both an inherited right and something that had to be earned. Without being born or adopted into its possessing families, one was denied access. But when available, it still required perseverance, patience, diligence and skill to be mastered. Where written treatises of teachings existed they were kept only for the family/lineage that created them. Their highly difficult language

audience." (*Audience and Actors*, 208.)

³⁰ For example, "As for the homekotoba on the hanamichi – the ceremony in which spectators lined up on the bridgeway or on the stage for praising, it is said that the last such ceremony took place in 1896 at Tōkyō's Kabuki-za." (*Audience and Actors*, 187.)

³¹ Grapard, Allan G. "The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo." *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 47, No.1, Spring 1992. 37.

³² "The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo," 36.

meant that reading and studying them alone was not the key to the knowledge they contained; years of oral instruction and practice were required before they could be usefully approached and made intelligible.

Secret transmissions of teachings were important to religious lineages, and they were also significant in the performing arts: *nô* had Zeami's treatises, and kabuki, of course, later developed written treatises also. Some like *Kezairoku* were the kind of secret works we have been discussing, for use only among practitioners. However, as we have seen, kabuki also offered the first large-scale production of treatises written to interest a viewing public, works that did not figure into the professional training process, but rather served to promote kabuki's commercial viability.

In general, kabuki relied little on written transmissions for training. Its training methods can be compared to the apprenticeship system of trading houses in Tokugawa Japan.³³ Apprenticeship training was a means of carrying on the family business. Property and business belonged to the ancestors and to the family, not to any individual. Similarly in kabuki, *ie no gei* 家の芸 refers to the fact that the various elements that comprise the skills of a particular actor's repertoire belong to his "house," to his family and not to the individual. The new names taken at different points of apprenticeship in commercial enterprises had a counterpart in the new names taken by actors at different points in their careers. In both cases, as well as with playwrights, the first years of training were taken up with menial tasks, after which one was expected to gradually gain skill through observation and practice. Training was never separated from practice. The development of abilities came through the exercise of professional duties. Where teachers took an active role beyond the example they set through performance and other professional engagement, there was an overwhelming emphasis placed on oral transmission, or in the case of the existence of writings, the need for verbal explanation and interpretation. In general, learning was effected as in purely oral cultures: through exposure over time, imitation, and a willingness to endure rigors, all leading to the incremental attainment of one's art through lifelong dedication and an ultimate reliance on oneself rather than one's teacher. As one

³³ See Irie Hiroshi. "Apprenticeship Training in Tokugawa Japan" (translated by Rolf W. Giebel.) *Acta Asiatica*, No. 54, 1988. 1-23.

might appreciate the development and maturity of a fine storyteller apart from the stories he tells, Tokugawa audiences followed the maturation of actors' skills, demanding, but with a great sense of expectation and a great reserve of encouragement and potential reverence. This important aspect of the audience/actor relationship in Tokugawa kabuki supported actors' efforts in the lifelong process of acquiring skills and developing their art.

Practices and Formulae of Creation

If we compare plays originally created for the kabuki theatre (*jun kabuki* 純歌舞伎, pure kabuki) with derived plays, or those adapted from *jôruri* (*gidayû kyôgen* 義太夫狂言 or *maruhonmono* 丸本物) we find that the *jun kabuki* display less in the way of literary style and plot consistency than the *gidayû kyôgen*. Of the estimated ten thousand-plus plays enacted from kabuki's beginnings, many of those that have endured until today, around two hundred,³⁴ fit in the *gidayû kyôgen* category. One implication of this fact is that by the time kabuki plays began to be published, there was growing appreciation for plays that benefited from the kind of careful construction possible through writing. However, throughout much of kabuki's history, plays, especially those original to kabuki, were primarily constructed through a cycle of practices (as carried out from the *sekai sadame* to a production's opening day) that began well before brush was set to paper to create a script.

The "emergent quality" of folk storytelling - that is, the emergence of the precise text of a story at its actual telling - together with the stability that allows tale types to exist through years of narration and alteration, are defining characteristics of folklore. Variation is brought to the basic frame of a story, the type, by interweaving it with set and newly evolving catalogues of motifs, thereby adapting the past for present needs. Creativity in oral societies comes in altering traditional materials so that they speak to present concerns, engage different emotions, or open up new perspectives. In a purely oral society, the verbal artist creates by means of arranging learned formulae. Stories, told or enacted, are developed by working with these formulae. The artist brings the tradition alive for the audience, keeping current what is still relevant and helping to form the

³⁴ Leiter, Samuel. *New Kabuki Encyclopedia, A Revised Adaptation of Kabuki Jiten*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. 528.

consensus of concerns and delights. He projects what others look for, not what matters to him alone. An oral tale teller “effects, not a transfer of his own intentions, but a conventional realization of traditional thought for his listeners, including himself,”³⁵ and his audience’s responses to his efforts make clear his successes or failures. We speak of the empathetic involvement of the oral audience as opposed to the (relatively) silent, isolated audience of the typographic world. This involved, empathetic audience was an integral part of the functioning of all pre-Meiji kabuki, as indicated in Jacob Raz’s description of the Japanese audience as “professional spectators and patient directors.”³⁶

In general, rather than treasured texts, the kabuki theatre created and bequeathed creative practices in the use of traditional material: the *ie no gei* of the various acting families, comprising certain role types, roles and acting styles that were at the base of play creation.³⁷ These intangibles were handed down by personal contact, as one generation learned its roles from another, not through written documents to be studied and memorized.³⁸ Once a *sekai* was chosen, the formulae used in the creation of kabuki plays were the *koto* (fixed scene and dance formulas), *kata* (patterns of acting and production) and *yakugara* 役柄 (role types.) The playwright’s job was to arrange these formulae according to troupe actors’ skills and the chosen story. While old story complexes (*sekai*) were easily subject to innovative treatment (*shukō*), most *koto* and *kata*, once developed, had fairly fixed usages. In either case, it was with their manipulation that playwrights labored. Thus we find that while these formulaic building blocks of kabuki performance were the basis of training and expression for actors, they were also the set patterns and characterizations allowed the playwright.

³⁵ *Orality and Literacy*, 145.

³⁶ *Audience and Actors*, 255.

³⁷ Of course, something comparable exists for both *nō* and *jōruri*; I am only pointing out here that in the absence of texts as aesthetic object, the *ie no gei* was the central focus in the art of kabuki.

³⁸ Not surprisingly from what we have discussed, Gunji lamented that the study of kabuki would lead to unalterable change. He wrote, “*Geinō* are learned through *kata*: voice *kata* are based in rhythm, and dance *kata* are based in physical movement. They cannot be learned through analysis. With the modern effort of trying to understand *kata* [analytically], *kata* will be destroyed.” (*Gunji Masakatsu santeishū, daini maki*, 29.)

Kabuki's *yakugara* people the stage with the sort of characters we are used to from oral verbal arts, such as epic, folktale and legend. Fixed types serve "both to organize the story line itself and to manage the non-narrative elements that occur in narrative,"³⁹ such as the attributes of wisdom or stupidity or kindness that accrue to them. In these terms, the character Benkei, for example, is a vehicle for the introduction of the concept of loyalty into a play. Fixed types also facilitate play creation and the actor's ability to remember and perfect roles as well as to take on new ones: types, and particularly heroic, 'heavy' or bizarre figures, help to "organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form. Colorless personalities cannot survive oral mnemonics."⁴⁰

Kabuki, which was never controlled by writing (in the Edo Period), not surprisingly offers us little of E. M. Forster's "round character." In particular, many of the principal characters of *jun kabuki* are of the "flat" variety. We should not be surprised to find the relatively deeper psychological probings of *nô* and *jôruri* characters, whose inner workings were explored and created on paper. As Ong explains, the oral narrator's protagonist is a man of external exploits where his typographic counterpart is distinguished by interior consciousness.⁴¹ It is undeniable that the tragic characters of many *sewamono* plays of *jôruri* or the worldly-attached *shite* of the *nô* are more psychologically, interiorly charged: interiority comes to these characters in large part from careful and precise portrayals made possible by writing and from the relative isolation of the act of writing from moments of delivery.

Verbal products of oral cultures have "no experience of a lengthy,

³⁹ *Orality and Literacy*, 151.

⁴⁰ *Orality and Literacy*, 70.

⁴¹ *Orality and Literacy*, 150. The texts of *jôruri* developed from a tradition of oral narration. My purpose here is not to develop a full comparison between *nô*, *jôruri* and kabuki, but to make some general observations towards an understanding of kabuki in particular. Still, there are overlaps between the different forms, and *jôruri*'s oral origins, for example, resulted in many of the same kinds of oral protagonists that I discuss here in relation to kabuki, surely one reason that *jôruri* plays were so adaptable for kabuki. Furthermore, I do not mean to imply that *nô* texts were created in isolation from considerations of the audience. Zeami's audience was far from being just an "imagined fiction." However, comparatively speaking, *nô* plays are products of writing. While many other factors explain the nature of *nô shite*, an important one relates to the written mode employed in their creation, which largely grew out of the literary tradition.

epic-size or novel-size climactic linear plot.”⁴² Instead, narratives are usually composed of a string of episodes related, often loosely, around a particular major event, character or group of characters. Narratives can be extremely long and complex in their totality, but they are rarely presented in full at one time. Rather, individual sections narrating a sub-story or the experience of one character or a group of characters, are excerpted to become the focus of a performance. Kabuki plays were constructed similarly. The story of the chosen *sekai* was not fully presented, but only parts of it were developed, with independent yet related episodes strung together as successive acts and scenes.

While studies on Western oral storytelling show that a storyteller will typically substitute one episode for another in developing his or her own version of a particular narrative,⁴³ a different possibility exists and seems to be a feature of Japanese storytelling and kabuki emplotting. A dissertation done on a Japanese storyteller⁴⁴ found that rather than episodic substitution in the creation of new versions, elaboration of small details was the favored method of creative practice. This is mirrored in kabuki play creation, where it is more common for new plays to be created by taking a known story and elaborating parts of it through the introduction of new characters and subplots, than it is to create a new play by substituting one possible episode for another. That is, suppose we have episodes A and B where one can choose A or B at a given point in a story. Instead, one of the two, let’s say A, is developed into A1, which cannot be substituted for B and which may contradict aspects of A or B. The transformations wrought on the Shunkan story in successive dramatic treatments illustrate this point. For example, a lover who marries one of Shunkan’s two fellow exiles was a new creation for the jôruri version of the Shunkan story (that is, Chikamatsu’s aforementioned play *Heike nyogo ga shima*.) Her introduction required changes in the story as it was originally narrated, resulting in some very different actions and consequences, yet all leading to the same concluding solitude of the luckless Shunkan.

We see then that in place of a linear, climactic narrative, it is other

⁴² *Orality and Literacy*, 143.

⁴³ For example, see *The Singer of Tales*.

⁴⁴ Adams, Robert. “Social Identity of a Japanese Storyteller,” Vols. 1 & 2. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Indiana University, 1972.

structural elements such as the five-act and *jo-ha-kyū* progressions that give full-day kabuki plays their formal shape and consistency. Naturally, individual episodes carry their own sense of development and completion, but overall thematic coherence is provided by the composite of stories about a certain subject that a viewer has in mind during any one treatment. This is analogous to the knowledge and expectations that listeners bring to individual sessions of folktale or epic narration.

In sum, like oral verbal arts, Edo-period kabuki functioned in a sound-centered world, resisted the production and use of written texts and maintained close interaction between performers and audience. These and other factors affected the authorial voice of kabuki plays, diffusing the pinpointing significance of attribution to a particular person or persons. Even an author so celebrated and so relatively individuated as Chikamatsu Monzaemon, whose voice seems so dominant in the puppet theatre plays he wrote, functioned in a less distinct way when he wrote as part of a team for kabuki (which is one reason he may have preferred writing for the former, where he was, for a considerable period, the senior playwright for Gidayū's theatre.)⁴⁵ As discussed, the process of play creation in many ways functioned like the process of oral storytelling. Stories were narrated and developed by certain individuals who helped shape and reformulate them through their own particular talents and through interaction with the audience to whom they spoke. In kabuki,

⁴⁵ Post-Tokugawa discussions of Chikamatsu and his plays have been central to the confusion regarding the roles and duties of kabuki playwrights. In particular, see Lee, William. "Chikamatsu and Dramatic Literature in the Meiji Period" (in Shirane and Suzuki, eds. *Inventing the Classics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 179-198) for how the efforts of Meiji-period reformers contributed to the problematic view we have inherited of Tokugawa plays as literature and playwrights as literary authors. Note also that some Meiji reformers made the argument that the source of Chikamatsu's power to raise *jōruri* to great artistic heights was based as follows: "As for the source of this power, the authors [of an 1890 history of Japanese literature] make clear that it is to be located in Chikamatsu's command of language. The highest praise is given to his 'literary style' (*bunshō*) and 'choice of words' (*jiku*), which are said to allow the reader or audience to see clearly the minutest details and envision the characters as if they were before their very eyes." ("Chikamatsu and Dramatic Literature in the Meiji Period," 194.) Might we assume that these authors had Chikamatsu's biographical entry from *Kezairoku* on hand, and that *Kezairoku*'s judgment was useful to the Meiji *kokubungaku* (study of national literature) scholarly-nationalist aims?

those responsible for composing plays also acted as spokesmen and articulators for a community, much like reciters of folktales. The list of playwrights in *Kezairoku* is significant for the unbroken chain of spokesmen and contributors it represents. Few men are recorded with more than their name and perhaps a passing comment tying them in some way to the others. Such comments tell us with whom they studied or worked or to whom (in the theatre world) they may have been related. The significance of those few men with longer entries is measured by how well they articulated the tradition as they received it or by the ways in which they contributed to the possibilities of its future articulations.

EPILOGUE

Regarding *Kezairoku*, one scholar has written,

...it provides us with an interesting glimpse of the theatrical world. We learn, for example, that even half a century after Kabuki had regained its former position of prominence, the functions of the playwright had not really substantially altered. The conspicuous absence of any discussion concerning the playwright's position within the hierarchy except for suggestions as to the means of dispensing of pressing responsibilities indicated that he had no actual power to make important policy decisions regarding the theater.¹

This statement seems to miss the point of the consensual and shared effort that went into the creation and performance of kabuki plays. The existence of hierarchies within the troupe does not negate the mutual dependency of all involved, and as we have seen the lead playwright worked at the top end of both the playwright and the full troupe hierarchies. As one might expect from a theatrical art form in which constituent texts interact in interdependency, we find that playwrights were indispensable members of the group of men required to create kabuki performance. *Kezairoku*'s battle metaphor clarifies troupe relationships for us. It is really a moot point as to whether the soldiers or the strategists are more critical to win the battle: without the strategists, a battle can take place, but once they enter the picture, war is greatly transformed from what preceded it.

By placing *Kezairoku* -- the only treatise solely devoted to play creation -- at the center of my discussion, I have worked to give an accurate, historically-considered understanding of the work of play creation and the place of playwriting in that work, offering the notion that both playwriting and playmaking, as defined in the book, were complimentary and evolving practices throughout the Tokugawa Period. A contention of this book is that we must understand the ways in which playmaking functioned in conjunction with

¹ Takaya, Ted. "An Inquiry into the Role of the Traditional Kabuki Playwright." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Columbia University, 1969. 50-51.

playwriting in the creation of play material in order to better understand the nature of kabuki plays and kabuki play creation. To that end, an historical overview of play creation practices has been offered in order to describe the process that led to the mounting of productions. From the early days of pure playmaking to the end of the nineteenth century in which playmaking and playwriting were well-integrated practices in play creation, this book has attempted to give kabuki play creation its due as a central effort in Tokugawa kabuki. Filling out the context surrounding play creation led to explorations of reciprocal relations between kabuki and literary genres of poetry and fiction. It also led to a discussion of the folk nature of kabuki practices. In both cases we become aware of the multiplicity of creative authorities: the many members of a troupe who function in various primary capacities, and the manifold contacts these men maintained with practices and practitioners of arts other than their own.

The book has also offered reasons why the term “playwright” is limiting and misleading as a translation for *sakusha* in the kabuki context. To say that playwrights were merely “technician[s] who helped in setting up reasonable plots based on the patterns of acting”² is to ignore their full significance in kabuki troupes. As we have seen, playwriting was just one of many playwright activities. However, playwriting became the central focus of these activities as the Tokugawa Period progressed and as play material came under greater scrutiny from increasingly-sophisticated audiences. Still, we can never fully attribute the creative product: it is impossible to assign responsibility when a multitude of contributions led to performed plays. Even knowing the group of contributors, attribution often becomes an effort at reconstruction, a kind of game that is impossible to win. How can we know exactly who penned each line, and really, why should it matter? Rather, we must think of a blending and accumulation of shared and perhaps contradictory claims and contributions, especially over time, as new performances of the same material evolved into altered versions, refashioned by new creators, performers, audiences and conditions.

Not only is playwriting attribution so often undeterminable, but exact playwriting technique is also difficult to pin down, as we found

² *Audience and Actors*, 193.

from *Kezairoku*. The slippery metaphor suggested by *shiroururi* reminds us not only of the impossibility expressed, consciously or unconsciously, in *Kezairoku* of ever fully explaining kabuki playwriting, but also of the ultimately indefinable falsehood that playwrights from Zeami on considered a crucial aspect in the depiction of reality in plays.

By way of conclusion, we might reconsider why kabuki scripts do not stand up well as autonomous texts. Several reasons were explored earlier, including the fact that, for most plays, the structure and a sense of closure are not based so much on rational plotlines, as on, for example, progression in mood and tempo. Also, the through-line of the linear text is constantly broken with non-linear texts that have no meaning whatsoever unless seen or heard as part of the play. *Nô* and *jôruri* are just as much dramatic syntheses as is kabuki, but as we have seen, kabuki's constituent texts are mutually dependent and do not stand independently as well as those of *nô* or *jôruri* "texts."

Most important, kabuki playwrights primarily served actors, and both together served the audience. As a theatre form centered on virtuosity, play texts were written to create performance possibilities. Kabuki audiences looked for great acting, and the playwright had to provide the opportunities. Collectively, audience members came to the theatre to watch and support a large number of actors, thus playwrights needed to provide appropriate roles for each of them. It was not always possible to integrate scenes smoothly in terms of plotlines, but the variety of moods, skills and talents displayed brought a satisfying theatrical experience that offered great excitement and a sense of unity developed out of the variety of stage acting and display. Kabuki plays were created out of complicated requirements that did not concern *nô* or *jôruri* playwrights: a large number of supernumeraries to take care of and many digressions into insignificant scenes (from a plot point of view) that needed to be created primarily as vehicles for acting. The nature of *jun kabuki* play texts, as well as the alterations found in kabuki adaptations of *jôruri* and *nô* plays, are best understood by remembering these requirements placed on playwrights.

The kabuki playwright worked as an integral member of a troupe. His creativity came from combining the knowledge he derived from observation and his ability to work with the conventions in which he had been trained. The best playwrights were naturally those who

combined a high level of imaginative power with long training and experience, men who came to be highly valued over the course of the eighteenth century. An Osaka *yakusha hyôbanki* of Genroku 16 (1703) has the following: “Laboring tirelessly without showing one’s face, that is the playwright (*kyôgen tsukuri*.) He is as the hind legs of the horse.”³ Over the eighteenth century, the faces of high-end members of the hierarchy of playwrights became “showable,” and augmented obligations brought playwrights to the front legs of responsibility. By examining how playwrights functioned in troupes, we are in a better position to understand the art of kabuki in its heyday, and on its own terms. We also make available an example of theatrical creation and creators that might help us accurately approach and conceive of a vast array of pre-modern world dramatic practices that so richly present themselves for both study and pleasure.

³ *Kabuki hyôbanki shûsei*, First Set, Vol. 3, 458.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Translation of *Sakusha Shikihô: Kezairoku*

式作
法者

戲

財

録

VALUABLE NOTES ON PLAYWRITING: METHODOLOGY FOR PLAYWRIGHTS¹

¹ 戲 (to play or sport) from 戲作(*gesaku*, the fiction or playful writing of the Edo Period) does not exactly mean “playwriting,” but it is translated as such based on content. 戲 is probably used to connect playwriting with other literary forms of the period. We would expect it to be pronounced “ge” but it is “ke” here with its hidden reference to a self-deprecating name taken by Kamigata men, 毛才六, a term also pronounced “kezairoku”, meaning a greenhorn or stripling.

VALUABLE NOTES ON PLAYWRITING:
METHODOLOGY FOR PLAYWRIGHTS
HEAVEN

作者式法戲財錄之序

Preface to Valuable Notes on Playwriting: Methodology for Playwrights

It is said that those without the Way are beasts, but those with the Way are human beings. The teachings of the sages are transmitted in the spirit of all things. Among them, writing is the master. The brush, inkstone, paper and ink are its retainers, and in becoming its Four Kings, are the treasures assisting the Way. The Five Instruments between heaven and earth are used by all. The creators of these instruments are revered especially by writers, who respond to their virtues and revere them, thereby naturally conforming to heaven's will. Realizing that literary fame has endured through time and that the will to write arose here in Japan as well, we call the five creators The Five Deities of Ability. They are as follows:

五能神The Five Dieties of Ability²

FIRE

SETSUSHOKU³

Creator of ink

METAL

MÔTEN⁴

Creator of the brush

EARTH

SÔKITSU⁵

Creator of writing

WOOD

SAIRIN⁶

Creator of paper

WATER

YÔYÛ⁷

Creator of the inkstone

² The source for the five-element analogy is the Chinese classic, *Shujing* (書經).

³ Setsushoku lived from 649 to 713 and was known for his calligraphy. Fire is used to produce inksticks, thus the connection of fire with ink.

⁴ Môtên was a general under the first Emperor of Chin and was the first to make a writing brush. Gunji Masakatsu (the annotator of the *Kezairoku* text on which this translation is based and to whose annotations many of the footnotes in this translation refer) guesses that the connection between the brush and metal came from equating the brush with a sword.

⁵ A minister of Huangdi, who after seeing bird tracks, was the first to invent writing. The earth held the imprinted bird tracks.

⁶ A eunuch of the Latter Han who revered writing and was the first to make paper from tree bark.

⁷ A confucian philosopher of Szechuan of the Former Han Dynasty. Water is used with the inkstone to make ink.

部分

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三都狂言替有る事	<u>Differences Among Plays of the Three Cities</u>
狂言豎横の筋ある事	<u>The Warp and Woof of Plots</u>
四季見物人情差別之事□	<u>Seasonal Differences in Audience Mood</u>

⁸ There is a big difference at times between the listings here and the headings as they appear in the text. I am, therefore, giving the Japanese and its translation in the "Table of Contents" for purposes of comparison.

⁹ Taken together, this title and the following two describe the content of "Instructions Regarding Billboards" (看板之心得) in the text.

狂言場行工合之事	<u>Methods for Plot Construction</u>
古人上手作者金言之事	<u>Teachings from Great Former Playwrights</u>
作者請取役場心得之事	<u>The Assignment of Scenes to Playwrights</u>
役者出工合役場心得之事	<u>The Assignment of Scenes According to Actor Ability</u> ¹⁰
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芸題絵看板書様之事	<u>How to Write An Illustrated Title Billboard</u> ¹²
一夜付狂言書様之事 ¹³	<u>How to Write an "Overnight Play"</u>

¹⁰ The corresponding text section is 役場甲乙之事 (“Fine Points Concerning The Assignment of Parts.”)

¹¹ The corresponding text section is 江戸紋番附之事, “Crest Programs of Edo,” which does not address a “great increase.”

¹² This title corresponds with 大阪絵看板之事 (“Illustrated Billboards of Osaka”) in the text.

¹³ 一夜付. This term was used to refer to plays that used sensational real incidents as their source material (mostly double love suicides and murders.) They were composed as quickly as possible after the incident in order to feed audience

役者甲乙納様口伝之事 Oral Tradition on Managing
Actors' Good and Bad Points¹⁴

作者出勤仕様口伝之事 Oral Tradition on The Work
Habits of Playwrights¹⁵

作者差別之事

What Playwrights Should Know

Over time there have been many literary writers, pursuing different avenues within the profession. If a writer does not study each of the forms of Japanese fiction written in syllabary, Chinese and Japanese poetry, linked verse and *haikai*,¹⁶ military tales and chronicles, then his understanding will be inadequate, and it will be difficult for him to have an effect on people. While there are several hundred *nô* plays, their style is very particular and cannot move those of humble station. Fiction written in syllabary are mostly the compositions of lords and officials and are difficult to understand if one has not studied the elegant classical diction in which they were written. They are composed only with words recollected from old literature. The successive generations of sages, through their long investigations, have discovered numerous writings, and our profession has been widely developed out of those old writings.

We hear that writing for the theatre is inferior to other types of writing. However, in the five-act *jôruri* plays and the six-act kabuki plays, which are based on the moral purpose of rewarding good and punishing evil, feelings of joy, anger, grief and pleasure are directed immediately before us. As their meaning is rapidly communicated to all, irrespective of wealth, age or gender, and even to a total dunce, these plays attain their aims. While we know that the portrayal of

interest in current social events and gossip. The term 一夜付 comes from the similarly-pronounced term 一夜漬 which refers to pickles prepared quickly by salting overnight.

¹⁴ Gunji equates this with 役納る之事 (“Settling on Duties”) in the text. We have only titles in both cases. The two translations reflect the differences in the Japanese, but there is no text to make clear their exact meaning.

¹⁵ The corresponding title in the text is 作者出勤之事, “Playwrights at Work,” but there is no text.

¹⁶ The Edo-period term for what we now call haiku.

feelings involves a fabrication, we brace ourselves as tears flow to our laps, and this is certainly due to the faithfulness with which theatrical writing cuts to the hearts of the audience.

Through observation you will discover your preferences among various viewpoints and favor those which are interesting and current. While playwriting is a marvelous kind of composition, its teaching method is unrefined, with no book on methodology. Since there are no patriarchs to worship, we have only the transmitted sayings of former master playwrights to listen to in order to understand this Way. Thus the art of playwriting has gradually declined, and even men without merit are called playwrights. They choose a theme just as they please without knowing the principles of the art. Without being able to adapt to circumstances through sensitivities to both the seasons and the ups and downs of actors' careers,¹⁷ there are playwrights who take old plays and after changing only the title, issue them deceptively as new plays. Sometimes when an actor acts really well, makes a hit, and receives a good review in the play, the playwright faces everyone with, "It is due to me that we have a great play." His boasting startles those not in the know. If a playwright speaks of a play as his personal conception, his rampant vanity – which discourages fellow playwrights and treats actors as mere dependents -- makes our Way disordered and causes it to lose authority. When we do not learn any methodology as transmitted from master to pupil, we are insulted by being considered the same as servants to the actors, but this situation arises out of our own bad conduct.

The theatre is our castle, the financial backer and the manager are the generals, the actors are the brave soldiers, and the playwrights are the strategists. If the strategist does not have authority, the soldiers do not follow orders, and then the preparations for the various battle arrays¹⁸ that we call the play become disordered. Because of this the enemy -- the audience -- is unbeatable, and in the end, sadly, we will be as the rank and file, mere fillers for the ditches.¹⁹ Let us make the

¹⁷ 役者の盛衰 refers to the vicissitudes of actors' careers, the ways in which they are received by audiences overtime.

¹⁸ 魚鱗鶴翼. *Gyorin* (fish scales) and *kakuyoku* (stork wings) are both names for specific battle formations.

¹⁹ 堀のうめ草にならんこと, literally, "filling up the ditches and turning into grass."

teachings of earlier master playwrights into our method, and let us mobilize our well-worn brushes in an effort to record the practices of previous playwrights. And if there be later additions to this Way's methodology, solicit future playwrights to add them in.

草紙物語作者連名

Writers of Fiction

Utsubo monogatari: Written by the poet Minamoto no Shitago²⁰

Taketori monogatari: Same author²¹

Genji monogatari: The author was first called Fujishikibu. After she wrote this tale, she changed her name to Murasaki Shikibu. She was a lady-in-waiting for Jôtômon'in and later married Uemonnosuke Nobutaka.

Eiga monogatari: Written by Akazome Emon²²

Sagoromo monogatari: Written by Daini no Sanmi {Shikibu's daughter}²³

Ise monogatari: Written by the poet Ise²⁴

Tsurezuregusa: Written by the Buddhist priest Yoshida Kaneyoshi²⁵

Makura no sôshi: Written by Sei Shônagon

*Fukurozôshi*²⁶: Written by the courtier Kiyosuke²⁷

²⁰ Authorship disputed.

²¹ Authorship unknown, but this is the popular attribution.

²² Also a popular attribution, but the authorship is uncertain.

²³ Now considered to be by Saiin Rokujû no Senji.

²⁴ Another popular attribution, but the authorship is uncertain.

²⁵ Also known as Kenkô.

²⁶ A poetry treatise.

<i>Tosa nikki</i> :	Written by Ki no Tsurayuki
<i>Kagerô nikki</i> :	Written by the mother of Udaishô Michitsuna ²⁸
<i>Konjaku monogatari</i> :	Written by Uji Dainagon Takakuni ²⁹
<i>Uji shûi</i> :	Same author ³⁰
<i>Shokugenshô</i> :	Written by Imperial Associate Kitabatake Chikafusa
<i>Yamato monogatari</i> :	Written by Kazan-in ³¹
<i>Heike monogatari</i> :	Written by Shinano Zenshi Yukinaga ³²
<i>Taiheiki</i> :	Written by the Buddhist priest Gen'e ³³
<i>Jôsuiki</i> ³⁴ :	Written by Hamuro Dainagon ³⁵

²⁷ Fujiwara Kiyosuke, 1104-1177.

²⁸ That is, the mother of Fujiwara no Michitsuna.

²⁹ Minamoto no Takakuni, 1004-1077. Another popular attribution. Takakuni is written as 高国 but should be 隆国.

³⁰ Popular attribution, but the authorship is uncertain.

³¹ Authorship is uncertain.

³² This is the attribution given in *Tsurezuregusa*.

³³ 玄惠法印. *Hôin*: the highest rank in the Buddhist priesthood, Buddhist mountain ascetic. *Taiheiki* is usually attributed to Priest Kojima 小島法師. He was perhaps the person responsible for completing its final version after the preceding contributions of many others.

³⁴ The full title is 源平盛衰記 *Genpei jôsuiki*. Also commonly read as *Genpei seisuiki*.

³⁵ Authorship is uncertain, but it was probably composed by a series of priests.

浄瑠璃作者連名

Jōruri Playwrights³⁶

Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Styled Heiandō³⁷

Chikamatsu came from the Chikamatsu Zen Temple of Karatsu in Hizen Province³⁸ and was called Kokan as a young priest. Due to his great knowledge, he became head priest, changing his name to Gimon. He had many disciples, but then he came to the realization that becoming temple head was of little effect in leading the masses to salvation, so he set off as an itinerant monk. His younger relative, the great Confucian scholar and doctor Okamoto Ippō,³⁹ lived in Kyoto and he lodged there with him. He left the priesthood, and for the following period, we have a general understanding of his employment. He wrote for the Kyoto jōruri theatre, writing jōruri for Uji Kaganōjō, Inoue Harimanojō, Okamoto Bunya, Yamamoto Kakudayū, and others. In the third year of Jōkyō [1686], he was employed by Takemoto Gidayū's theatre in Osaka and wrote a new play entitled "Kagekiyo Victorious."⁴⁰ From then on he wrote Takemoto's new works. He wrote several hundred new works during his career and became famous in Japan.⁴¹ He was the first to print his name as author on billboards and in printed books. Chikamatsu wrote primarily from a sense of inner purpose, intending to teach the masses, and because of this, his work was different from the fiction⁴² that had been written until his time. By strengthening the use of unelevated, common language, he was able to reveal human nature

³⁶ An asterisk next to a name in the "Jōruri Playwrights" and "Kabuki Playwrights" sections indicates that the pronunciation of the name is probable, but was unverifiable.

³⁷ 1653-1724.

³⁸ Modern Saga and Nagasaki Prefectures. Not all scholars agree with the theory that Chikamatsu was a priest of Chikamatsu Temple. Chikamatsu has also been associated with other temples, for which see, Matisoff, Susan. *The Legend of Seminaru*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. 125-130.

³⁹ Also known as Sugimori Tametake, a mid-Edo doctor.

⁴⁰ 出世景清, *Shusse Kagekiyo*.

⁴¹ Although Chikamatsu worked for a while in the kabuki theatre, writing some twenty-odd kabuki plays, that period of his career is not specifically discussed here. This omission is presumably due to the fact that this entry is found in the "Jōruri Playwrights" section.

⁴² 草子物, *sōshimono*.

for those caught in the darkness of knowing and not knowing. He could even reveal to the full the deepest significances of the Japanese gods, Confucianism and Buddhism. He is certainly one of the most famous writers of popular works of all time, a splendid literary man of the highest order among all those past and present. When you read through the hundreds of Chikamatsu's jōruri, your enlightenment in the Ways of the Three Religions⁴³ becomes clear without study. From the Emperor down to the common people, Chikamatsu penetrated human nature, and of all the things that exist in this universe, there was nothing he could not understand. We can surely call him a dragon among men. He died on the twenty-second day of the eleventh month of the ninth year of the Kyōhō Period.⁴⁴

Posthumous Buddhist Name: Anokuin Bokushi Nichi Ichigusoku Koji⁴⁵ (preserved in the death registry of Myōken Kōsaiji Temple in Kukuchi.⁴⁶)

Deathbed Poem:

Sore jisei	My final words:
satemo sono nochi	“Well then . . . Afterwards . . .
saruhodoni	In the meanwhile . . .”
nokoru sakura no	If only the remaining cherry
hana shi niowaba	blossoms keep their fragrance. ⁴⁷

⁴³ 神儒仏.

⁴⁴ 1724.

⁴⁵ For this name, see Nakatsuka, Eijirō, ed. *Nihon zuihitsu zenshū*, Vol. 2. Tokyo: Kokumin Toshō Kabushiki Kaisha, 1956. 532.

⁴⁶ This is one of many temples in Japan that claims to hold Chikamatsu's remains.

⁴⁷ それ辞世扱も其後去る程に残るさくらの花し匂はば。 *Satemo, sononochi* and *saruhodoni* are all typical of jōruri rhetoric. Susan Matisoff has suggested (in personal communication) that the *sakura* may refer to the cherry woodblocks on which play texts were carved, thus expressing Chikamatsu's wish that, although he must leave the world, his literary accomplishments will remain. For a slightly different version of this poem and Keene's explanation of its meaning, see Keene, Donald. *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961. 26.

Ki no Kaion⁴⁸

Ki no Kaion ranks with Chikamatsu as a literary man. He was the son of the sweet-shop proprietor, Yamato no Jô Teiin. The father, Teiin, was a man with skill in linked verse, and among his sons was the talented *kyôka* judge, the famous Yuensai Teiryû.⁴⁹ Thus Kaion became Teiryû's pupil. He also became a disciple of the Japanese literary scholar Keichu,⁵⁰ at which time he was called Kaiondô Teiga. He wrote Ki no Kaion on his jôruri, and later was called Buddhist Priest Keiin.⁵¹

Bunkodô⁵²

He was first known as Matsuda Wakichi. He was a disciple of Senzengen.⁵³ He was Tonchi's leading disciple.

Senryû⁵⁴

Senryû was known as Namiki Sôsuke⁵⁵ and was the founder of the Namiki lineage. After him, the surname Namiki was often used by playwrights.

The above four men are known as "Playwriting's Big Four."⁵⁶

Nishiki Bunryû*

He was a man of Saikaku's time.

⁴⁸ 1663-1742, Chikamatsu's rival, a playwright for the Toyotake Theatre.

⁴⁹ 1654-1734. Written as 由縁齋貞柳, but should be 油煙齋貞柳. Important *kyôka* poet.

⁵⁰ 1640-1701.

⁵¹ 法橋契因. *Hôkyô* is two ranks below the highest rank in the Buddhist priesthood. Ki no Kaion's investiture took place when he was seventy-four, in 1736.

⁵² Dates unknown. He was a playwright for the Takemoto Theatre during the Kyôhō Period (1716-1736).

⁵³ A playwriting penname of Takeda Izumo. Gunji speculates that Takeda Izumo's absence in this section is perhaps due to his being recognized here not as a playwright, but as a manager for the Takemoto Theatre.

⁵⁴ His name as a playwright when working at the Takemoto Theatre.

⁵⁵ 宗助. Usually written 宗輔, his name as a playwright when working at the Toyotake Theatre.

⁵⁶ 狂言作者四天王. According to Gunji, this refers to Ki no Kaion, Takeda Izumo, Bunkodô and Senryû.

Sakurazuka Saigin

A *haikai* poet of Sesshu Ikeda.

Nishizawa Ippû⁵⁷

He had a book shop and was known as Kuemon, The Playbook Dealer.

Although the above three men did not produce striking new ideas⁵⁸ or plots, they are regarded as the Three Ancient Literary Men of Excellence.

Takeda Koizumo

The son of Senzengen.

Yoshida Kanshi

Known as the puppet manipulator Yoshida Bunzaburô. His son, Bunzaburô II, is a famous master.

Miyoshi Shôroku

Of the Kitashinbori Teahouse.

Takemoto Saburôbei

Son of Takemoto Chikugonojô.

Namiki Jôsuke

A medical doctor.

Tamenaga Tarôhei

First known as Takeda Shôzô.

Chikamatsu Hanji

Son of the great Confucian scholar Hozumi Issuke.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ 西沢一風. Grandfather of Nishizawa Ippû 西沢一鳳.

⁵⁸ *Shukô*.

⁵⁹ 以助, but should be 以實, Ikkan. Hozumi Ikkan is the compiler of “Naniwa Miyage” (“A Souvenir of Naniwa”) in which now-famous comments attributed to Chikamatsu are recorded.

Hasegawa Senshi

A priest of Hasedera in the province of Yamato. He rose to the post of *nôke*,⁶⁰ but then left the priesthood and became a playwright.

Shunsôdô

A doctor's son. At first called Toyotake Mitsudayû.

Yasuda Abun

The young lover of Arima Genba no Kami.

Suga Sensuke

A doctor's son. He started out as a doctor, too.

Chikamatsu Tônan

Known as Tônan Isuke. In old age he became a monk and changed his name to Ryôshi Harima. He revised dance pieces⁶¹ and *michiyuki* and was known for his *samisen* playing.

Asada Itchô

He lived in Kyoto's Sakaimachi and was known as Morino Chôsaburô. He was a master of *nô* chant.

Nakamura Akei

At first called Nakamura Junsuke.

Wakatake Fuemi

The puppet manipulator Wakatake Tôkurô who later became a playwright. He was Fuejûrô's pupil.

Yatami Heishichi

Son of Tarôbei of the Ôsakaya in Sakamachi.

Fukuchi Kigai

A man of Edo who was known as Hiraga Gennai. He had great erudition and was a weaver of asbestos cloth.⁶²

⁶⁰ A teaching elder.

⁶¹ 景事. Gunji thinks that this could mean 景事 (*keigoto*, dance pieces), sections in *jôruri* and *kabuki* in which music and visual splendor are most important.

⁶² 火洗布; literally, fire-washed cloth, one of Gennai's many inventions. It was a

Ki no Jôtârô

His real name was Mitsui Jiemon.⁶³ He is known as Senka Teikaritsu*. He was a money changer for the government. At first he was called Gorô.⁶⁴

Kokuzôsu

Matsuda Baku

The *haikai* master Okamoto Ranta. Later called Kirin.

Kawashirô*

Of the Fundô Kawachiya Inn in Osaka's Chômachi. Known as Shirôbei.

Namiki Wasuke

Ume no Shitakaze*

Nantokusai

Takemoto Sakidayû, also known as Kaiji.

Asada Kakei

Sakai Zenpei

Teahouse man of Osaka's Dotonbori.⁶⁵

Yasuda Ankei*

Chikamatsu Keiri

Toyotake Ôritsu

{Son of a theatre owner, known as Jinzô.}

cloth woven with asbestos in order to prevent burning. Among many occupations and pursuits, Hiraga Gennai (1729-1779) was one of the great figures of Edo fiction writing.

⁶³ The fourth head of the southern branch of the Mitsui family.

⁶⁴ Other sources give 長次郎 (Chôjirô) or 八五郎 (Hachigorô).

⁶⁵ 道頓堀いろは茶や. The *iroha jaya* (いろは茶屋) were forty-seven teahouses connected with the theatres. They were built along the riverbank in Osaka in 1692 and revived again in 1732. During and between a day's performances, audience members used them as places to rest, eat and entertain both friends and actors.

Toyotake Yahei

Terada Heizô*

Kitawaki Sojin*

Nihoken

Kosuiken

Iwase Samon

Tajima Senkaku*

Toda Gobun

Matsuda Saiji

Ogawa Hanpei

Matsuoka Sensuke

Kitamado Goichi

Azuma* Yusuke

Togawa Furin

Shichi Saishi*

Known as Okanojô. A doctor at the castle.

Chibaken

Fuemi II

Sakiya Jihei. Son of Yakukino.⁶⁶ His real name was Isuke.

⁶⁶ 役木之. Gunji wonders if this might be a mistake for 役木戸, *yakukido*. The term *kido* (木戸) was used until mid-Meiji for the audience's place of entry into the theatre. It was a low "door" which required stooping in order to pass through. *Yakukido*, or theatre doorman, was the man in charge of letting people through. Thus,

Wakatake Yûsuke

Chikamatsu Yanagi

At first, he was Namiki Yanagi. Later he was Ryûtarô.

Takeda Izu

Tajimi Yashirô

Shiba Shisô

Son of Dokushôan*

Toyo Shunsuke*

Nakamura Gyogan

Of the Nakamura Teashop in the Naniwa pleasure quarters.

歌舞伎作者之部

Kabuki Playwrights

In earlier times, playwriting did not exist as a profession. Important actors would assemble to establish the plot. Lines would first be uttered at rehearsal on a trial basis and then fixed, so there was nothing like what we know as the script. With the day's play in sections, the six-part construction like we have today was internalized by the actors. Later, actors' memories weakened and they would record in memos the performances of earlier leading actors in order to remember them. Between then and now, practices changed little by little, and the changes were added to those memos. The manuscripts thus produced were the earliest scripts. Plays became increasingly detailed, and playwriting was recognized as a separate profession.⁶⁷ To sum up, plots were created little by little with the actors, these plots were then developed by playwrights, and many actors wrote plays.

Fuemi II might have been the "son of a theatre doorman."

⁶⁷ This beginning is usually dated from when Tominaga Heibei (富永平兵衛) announced himself as a playwright in 1680.

中興役者の作意有分 ⁶⁸Creative Characteristics of Actors of The Period of Resurgence⁶⁹

Amegawa Shinshirô

Famous lead actor in *sewamono*.

Ichikawa Danjûrô I

Originator of Edo *aragoto* acting. His *haikai* name was Saigyû.

Ichiyama Sukegorô

Star *wagoto* actor. His *haikai* name was Shizan.

Nakamura Shichisaburô I

Famous in *yatsushi*⁷⁰ roles. His *haikai* name was Shôchô.

Matsushima Heitarô

Lead *onnagata*. His *haikai* name was Hyakka. He became a playwright.

Fujikawa Hanzaburô

A lead actor skilled in villain roles. His *haikai* name was Sakoku. Later, he became a playwright.

Ichiyama Bokuhei*

Villain roles. Pupil of Nakamichi Shizan*. Later he became a playwright.

Tatsuoka Hisagiku⁷¹

Mid-ranked *onnagata*. Skilled at old women's roles. He became a playwright known as Tenma Yakyûshichi. Father of Hôsaku.

⁶⁸ This section gets its own heading, even though it works as a subsection of "Kabuki Playwrights."

⁶⁹ Period of Resurgence refers to the period from Genroku (beginning in 1688) to Hôreki (1751-1764).

⁷⁰ Roles of disguised (and later revealed) heroes.

⁷¹ A player of young *onnagata* roles in Kyoto and Osaka in the Hôreki Period (1751-1764).

Nakayama Raisuke

Lead *sabakiyaku*⁷² actor. Shinkurô II. His *haikai* name was Sharyû.

Onoe Shinshichi

A lead *wagoto* actor. Later known as Koisaburô. His *haikai* name was Fujaku.

Tsuuchi Jihei

Posthumous Buddhist Name: Yûkenin Eishi Nichiyû*.

Tsuuchi Jihei was an Edo playwright who initiated the Period of Resurgence. He was the first to unite Soga plays with *sewamono*.⁷³ An actor of Osaka, he was the son of Tsuyama Jihei, a player of old men's roles. He changed his name when he became a playwright. There's a story about him that he and a certain lead actor were at odds with each other. Jihei's play was rejected by the actor six times as he continued to rewrite it, even changing the plot and background story.⁷⁴ The seventh time, he took his original play, and changing only the title, he read it aloud. The actor, who had also run out of patience, accepted it, and this gave Jihei a laugh. Those who were unaware of the true situation believed that they had come together in their thinking and had been reconciled. What admirable character! He should be known as a great man among lead playwrights.

At that time, painted on a votive picture plaque offered at Edo's Zôshigayatsu no Kishibojin, were the scales of hell. Tsuuchi Jihei was placed on one side and all the actors of his theatre on the other. Tsuuchi's side was shown to be heavier.

Tsuuchi Jihei was active from the end of the Genroku Period. His *haikai* name was Eishi, and his crest was a pattern of three commas.

⁷² 捌き役. Mature male roles characterized by wisdom. These characters are put in difficult circumstances from which they are patiently able to lead the way out. Yuranosuke of *Chûshingura* is an example.

⁷³ As Gunji points out, he lay the foundation for the Edo-style program structure in which *jidaïmono* and *sewamono* were intermixed.

⁷⁴ *Sekai*.

Deathbed Poem:

Tama no o no	Having exhaustively described
aritake uso o	The many fabrications strung on
kakitsukushi	The cord of life, ⁷⁵
ima zo meido no	Only now will I construct the road
michi tsukuri nari	To the world of the dead.

Higuchi Hanzaemon

The first to use stage traps. He put the musicians outside the draw curtain and was the first to make use of the on-stage orchestra.

Fujimoto Tobun⁷⁶

In the Period of Resurgence, he was the first to append various unusual elements to play titles. He was famous for plot development. He was also known as Sawamura Tobun.⁷⁷

Horikoshi Saiyô⁷⁸

He started out as Nisôji.

Kanai Sanshō⁷⁹

The house manager⁸⁰ Izutsuya Hankurô. He became a playwright and was known for his talent. He was a writer with influence. After

⁷⁵ 玉の緒, *tama no o*, means “life.” In the Edo Period, it was also a term used for Buddhist rosaries, so the first three lines of the poem can also mean something like, “Having completely cleared away (*kakitsukushi*) all illusions with my rosary...” *Tama no o no* is a *makura kotoba*, a conventional phrase in classical poetry that is associated with a particular word which it modifies.

⁷⁶ Died in 1757 or 1758.

⁷⁷ The name he took at the end of the Kyôhō Period when he switched from being an actor to being a playwright.

⁷⁸ Saiyô was a *haikai* name he used at the end of his life. He died around the An’ei Period (1772-1781). Gunji states that he was the first to require dance pieces and jôruri as parts of a full day’s program. In another source (作者名目, *Sakusha meimoku*, 1844, by Mimasuya Nisôji), he is credited as the playwright who intermixed *jidaimono* with *sewamono*.

⁷⁹ Died in 1797. He is considered, along with Saiyô, as one of the two great playwrights of Edo. His specialty was *sewamono*. For more on him, see Furuido, Hideo. “Kyôgen sakusha Kanai Sanchô no tōjō to sono igi.” *Kinsei bungei kenkyū to hyōron* (Waseda University Literature Department) #8, May 1975. 136-158.

⁸⁰ 帳本 (usually written 帳元). He was the house manager of Edo’s Nakamura Theatre.

becoming a monk he changed his name to Gosei.⁸¹

Sakurada Jisuke⁸²

Known as Akitsumura⁸³ Jisuke. His family name⁸⁴ was Naritaya, and his *haikai* name was Sakô.

Nakamura Jûsuke⁸⁵

His *haikai* name was Koichi.

Around the Kyôhô Period:

Murase Genzaburô

Eda Yaichi

Takeshima Jinsuke

Murayama Tôheiji*

Tsuuchi Kuheiji

Nakamura Seizaburô

Hôreki to An'ei:

Namiki Ryôsuke

Nakamura Tarôzaemon

⁸¹ 五盛. Should be Tosei 土盛. This is the name he took when he left the theatre to become a monk in 1792.

⁸² Died in 1806. Pupil of Saiyô and patriarch of Edo playwrights of the Period of Resurgence. Famous for *shosagoto*.

⁸³ 秋津村. Gunji suggests that 秋 might be a mistake. He was first 田川 (Tagawa) and then 津村 (Tsumura), and then in 1758, he changed his name to Sakurada.

⁸⁴ 家名. This, I believe, is the equivalent of his *yago* (屋号.) *Yago* were the names by which actors -- who were not allowed the use of surnames -- were known. These names were often originally taken from the name of the birthplace or a shop owned by the actor. They were passed down from one generation to the next.

⁸⁵ Nakamura Jûsuke II. Pupil of Saiyô who, along with Sakurada Jisuke, was active in the Kansei Period (1789-1801). Died in 1803.

Tsuuchi Saburôhachi*

Kadota Sôrôbei

Around The An'ei Period:

Nasuyama Kinpachi

Mano Bako*

Tamamatsu Kosaburô

Tsuuchi Hanzaemon

Kôjima* Tarôzaemon

Bandô Tasuke*

Tsuuchi Gozaemon

Hayakawa Denshirô

Tsuuchi Kanken*

Tsuuchi Enji*

Hata Bunsuke

Dontsu Yosobei

Tokiwa Kidô*

Saigawa Basetsu

Originally, he was Segawa Shûsuke*.

Kawatake Shinshichi⁸⁶

Advanced skill.

⁸⁶ Kawatake Shinshichi I, 1746-1795.

Naka Kihei

Kimura Yaichi*

Sawai Jûzô*

Yagi* Kôsuke*

Segawa Jokô

Kasanui Sensuke

Also known as Kitomi.

Kaneko Kichizaemon⁸⁷

Osaka playwright.

Hagi Umadai*

Umeda Risuke

Nakamura Torahachi*

Yamada Hanza*

Sei Shûzô*

Matsui Yûsuke⁸⁸

Sankô*

Nakamura Richû*

Matsuya Raisuke

The father⁸⁹ of the first Nakayama Bunshichi.

⁸⁷ A Genroku player of comic roles and a playwright. Also, the author of “Dust in the Ears”, one of the treatises in *Yakusha rongo*.

⁸⁸ 勇助, but should be 由輔 (Yûsuke). Later, he was known as 金井由輔 (Kanai Yûsuke). He was the third son of Kanai Sanshō.

⁸⁹ 実親.

Higashi Sanpachi*

He was excellent at *onnagata* dialogue and talented at play development for *wagoto* pieces.

Fujikawa Sanpachi

The father⁹⁰ of the *onnagata* Fujikawa Sango. He was talented at play development for *onnagata* roles in love scenes.

Nakata Idô

Another name for him was Koemon.

Namiki Shôzô

Posthumous Buddhist Name: Tôyo Shôzô Koji.

Son of Shôroku of the Izumiya Teahouse in Osaka's Dotonbori. His childhood name was Kyûtarô. Preferring the profession of writing, in the second year of Kan'en [1749] he took the name of Izumiya Shôzô and became a playwright working in kabuki. After that he worked under Namiki Sôsuke/Senryû⁹¹ in the puppet theatre. He always preferred kabuki playwriting. While working for kabuki, he took away the side pillars that were originally stage left and stage right at the front of the stage,⁹² as well as the pillar placed in the center of the audience's seating area, so as to give the audience an unobstructed view of the stage. He was the first to devise numerous stage apparatus, such as traps, the revolving stage, the *mie* platform,⁹³

⁹⁰ 親.

⁹¹ The text has 並木宗輔千柳 which I have rendered as Namiki Sôsuke/Senryû. Senryû was another name for Sôsuke. Shôzô worked under Sôsuke at the Toyotake Theatre.

⁹² 大黒柱 (*Daikoku bashira*). Gunji believes that this is probably a mistake for 大 臣柱 (*daishinbashira*). Early kabuki stages followed the gabled construction of the nô stage. The *daishinbashira* were placed at the front to hold up the gabled roof. After Kansei (1789-1801), the gabled construction fell out of use for kabuki stages and only these pillars remained. Then, as the main stage gradually widened, only the names remained as a way of referring to the places where the pillars had been. As the Kansei Period lasted from 1789 to 1801 and Namiki Shôzô lived from 1730 to 1773, it seems impossible that he deserves the credit for removing these pillars. Therefore, either *daishinbashira* in the text does not refer to these pillars, or we have a possible example of the ways in which wrongly-assigned attributes and accomplishments accrue around people of talent and fame.

⁹³ 三段 (*sandan*, three-step). A platform used in *jidaimono* and dance piece

and the scene-changing mechanism allowed by the revolution of the stage.⁹⁴ He was also the first to use ghosts in the opening scene of the *kaomise* program in order to grab the audience's attention. He began the practice where playwrights put out billboards announcing special performances of actors.⁹⁵ He would take unsuccessful plays and train actors in them, and he would astonish the audience with his ability to come up with play titles quickly. The authority he wielded was unique; he could address even the troupe leader informally.⁹⁶ Truly, he should be recognized as a paragon⁹⁷ among kabuki playwrights.

Even aside from the big hits of his career, he still always managed to bring in a crowd. His name has resounded throughout Japan where everyone knows of him. For particulars, there is the booklet *The Life of Namiki Shôzô*,⁹⁸ so I will omit mention of them here. He is referred to on a stone inscription at Dôtonbori's Hôzenji in Osaka. The inscription was written by Uchiyama Shihei*, a man famous for his elegance.

According to the word of the times, for composition there was Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Namiki Shôzô, and for wit, there was Sakurada Sôan, Takeda Ômi and Namiki Shôzô. For this reason, people commented that Osaka was a formidable place. Because of his great talent Shôzô became Namiki Senryû's protégé and entered the main branch of the Namiki clan. He died on the seventeenth day of the second month of the second year of An'ei [1773] at the age of forty-four. His remains were brought to Hôzenji in the Nakadera District. His crest had a cursive form of the character for *shô*, and a substitute crest he used showed a pattern of nine wooden pestles.⁹⁹

finales for the *mie* of important actors. *Onnagata* use a two-level (二段, *nidan*) apparatus.

⁹⁴ がんばろう (*gandô*), lantern or sconce. *Gandô gaeshi* is an apparatus for changing stage scenes by turning one over backward to introduce another.

⁹⁵ まねきの前看板 (*maneki no mae kanban*; 庵看板 *iori kanban*, in Edo). This billboard was used to announce special actor appearances.

⁹⁶ That is, without due respect.

⁹⁷ 鏡 (*kagami*) meaning mirror. The meaning here is closer to the homophonous 艦, also meaning mirror, but with the idea, too, of a model or a paragon.

⁹⁸ 並木正三一代話 (*Namiki Shôzô ichidai banashi*.) Published in the eleventh month of 1785 to mark the thirteenth anniversary of Shôzô's death. Probably written by Namiki Senryû II.

⁹⁹ 正, from his name, 正三 (Shôzô). For these crest patterns, see *Kinseidôron*,

Namiki Eisuke¹⁰⁰

Known as Wataya Jiemon. He also wrote for the puppet theatre around Shôzô's time.

Takeda Jizô

Known as Sannukiya Jizô. Elder brother of the puppet manipulator Yoshida Uzô. His talent rivaled Shôzô's.

Fukuda Chôshôken

Known as Takasagoya Heizaemon. He grew old in the Tônaishôemon District. He had a sweet shop. He emerged from around the middle of Shôzô's time.

An'ei to The End of Tenmei:

Nagawa Kamesuke¹⁰¹

A literary talent, he became Shôzô's disciple. He took a different surname¹⁰² and later was called Eichôdô. He initiated practices of kabuki storytelling¹⁰³ and the display of utensils from China. He possessed many Chinese objects, and in his will, he stipulated that his funeral service was to be conducted with Chinese implements. He was an eccentric person.

Namiki Gohei¹⁰⁴

The son of the theatre doorman Izumiya. At first he had a tobacco shop called Gohachi, but later he ran a *sake* shop at Imamiya. He went to Edo with three hundred *ryô*¹⁰⁵ and wrote many successful plays.

506.

¹⁰⁰ Dates unclear, but possibly died in 1771. Pupil of Namiki Sôsuke. Collaborated with Chikamatsu Hanji, Asada Itchô and others on jôruri plays.

¹⁰¹ Exact dates unknown.

¹⁰² Nagawa (instead of Namiki as one might have expected given that he was Shôzô's pupil.)

¹⁰³ The text has 本読講釈 (*hon'yomi, kôshaku*) which I have translated as "practices of kabuki storytelling". *Hon'yomi* originated in Kamigata as a practice of reading kabuki scripts in the *yose*, or storyteller's hall. *Kôshaku* might be the same as *hon'yomi* or it may be that Kamesuke also originated a practice of dramatized storytelling.

¹⁰⁴ 1747-1808. He went to Edo in 1794.

¹⁰⁵ Monetary unit of the Edo Period.

Tatsuoka Mansaku¹⁰⁶

Son of Tatsuoka Hisagiku. While he lived in Kyoto, he also occasionally came to Osaka, but from the fourth year of the Kansei Period [1792], he moved his home to Osaka.

Chikamatsu Tokuzô¹⁰⁷

Of the Ômasuya brothel in Sakamachi.¹⁰⁸ Grandson of the original Issuian, Ono Shôren.¹⁰⁹

Kan'en to Kansei:

Namiki Ôsuke¹¹⁰

He wandered about Edo and Osaka selling his *haikai* very reasonably and writing plaques. He became a *haikai* critic and later, being Master Shôzô's forefather, he changed his name to Senryû.¹¹¹ Later again, he led a quiet life at Imamiya.

Namiki Jusuke¹¹²

He was first known as Yakichi. His handwriting was extraordinary, and he could even write with his left hand. The swiftness with which he wrote was unparalleled. He was also known by a different name, Bojû.

Shôzô Era:

Namiki Sôji¹¹³

The medical doctor Nakai Sôji, a man of erudition. The husband of Arashi Shichigorô II's younger sister.

¹⁰⁶ 1742-1809. A Kyoto playwright of the Tenmei Period (1781-1789), of equal status to Namiki Gohei.

¹⁰⁷ 1751-1810. Pupil of Chikamatsu Hanji. In the text Tokuzô is written as 徳三, but it was apparently written at first as 徳蔵 or 徳叟.

¹⁰⁸ Sakamachi, the Fushimizaka district of Osaka.

¹⁰⁹ Ono Shôren was a *haikai* master.

¹¹⁰ Exact dates unknown. A student of Namiki Jôsuke, who was Namiki Sôsuke's pupil.

¹¹¹ He was Namiki Senryû II.

¹¹² Exact dates unclear, but he was an An'ei-period playwright who was a pupil of Namiki Eisuke. Jusuke is written as 寿輔, but it can also be written as 十輔 or 十助 and then be pronounced Jûsuke.

¹¹³ A triangle appears in the text above each of the six names from Namiki Sôji through Takemoto Saburôbei.

Tamegawa Sôsuke¹¹⁴

He lodged with Shôzô for a long time, and after Shôzô died,¹¹⁵ he led a quiet life at Kishû.

The An'ei Period:

Nagawa Shimesuke¹¹⁶

A pupil of Kamesuke. He was the son of the owner of Dôtônbori's Fukushin Teahouse. His earlier name was Shinjirô. Later, he had an inn called Suekichiya at Mitsuboshi in Nihonbashi.

Shôzô Era:

Namiki Jisuke

After Shôzô died, he went to Edo, but nothing else is known of his life or death.

The Tenmei Period:

Tsutsui Sanchô

Son of Kanai Sanshô. Elder brother of Matsui Yûsuke. Died in Kyoto.

Takemoto Saburôbei

Known as Tomita Ichiemon. He was the illegitimate child of the master of the Tônai Teahouse. He was from a different branch of the family than the original Saburôbei.

Haruki Gensuke*

He wrote many plays for the little theatres of Osaka.¹¹⁷

Kawazu Buntai*

Arashi Sanshô

Arashi Mitsugorô, an actor who played villain roles in shrine

¹¹⁴ Playwright of the Meiwa Period (1764-1772), but exact dates unclear.

¹¹⁵ Shôzô died in 1773.

¹¹⁶ 1754-1814. Shimesuke is written as 七五三輔, but Gunji gives it as 七五三助.

¹¹⁷ 浜芝居. The term for the smaller, less important theatres of Osaka. The term originated from the fact that these theatres lined the river bank (浜 *hama*, shore) in Dôtônbori, and it later came to be used as a general designation.

plays.¹¹⁸ A different name he used was Messô.

Fukuyama Matabei

A star in Kyoto {in Teramachi.} Also known as Tsugawa Daikichi.

Yamatoyama Sensuke*

A lead actor in Kyoto theatres.

Tenshichi

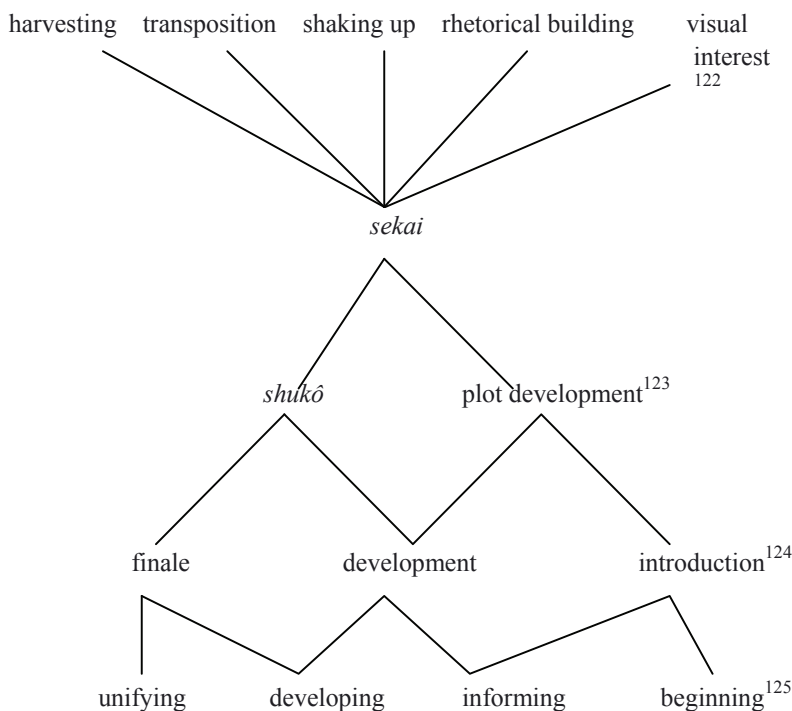
The son of a doorman for an Osaka little theatre. He was responsible for distributing charcoal for the braziers used in the audience.¹¹⁹ Related to the new star¹²⁰ Kyûgorô.

¹¹⁸ 宮芝居. More fully known as 宮地芝居 (*miya jishibai*) plays that were presented within the precincts of temples and shrines.

¹¹⁹ Probable meaning for 切炭置也.

¹²⁰ “New star” is probable for 新人.

作者心得之事 五花十葉ノ伝

The Five Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting¹²¹

¹²¹ Gunji guesses that “Five Flowers” refers to the top row of the diagram and that “Ten Leaves” refers to the ten remaining terms from *seikai* on down.

¹²² These five, beginning with “visual interest” and moving to the left, are : 景様 (*keiyô*), 頂上 (*yama*), 揺 (*yusuri*), 大曲 (*ôkuruwa*), and 鎌入 (*kamaire*). They delineate the five-part structure of plays. *Keiyô* points to the first act’s concern with visual display. *Yama* indicates a gradual building-up of the story to a climax, which necessitates the third act’s *yusuri*. *Yusuri* is the central focus of the play, expressed here as “shaking up.” *Ôkuruwa* indicates that a change occurs. *Kamaire* points to a resolution that brings everything together but is not final, much as a harvest leads into the next season of planting.

¹²³ “Plot development” is from 仕組 (*shikumi*).

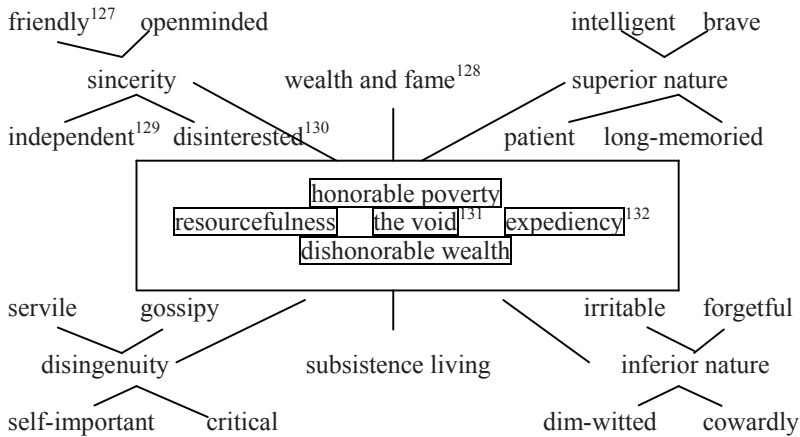
¹²⁴ 序破急. The pacing principle of many arts, such as the performing arts of *gagaku*, then *nô*, then *jôruri* and as indicated here, later of kabuki.

¹²⁵ From “beginning” and moving to the left, these are: 起 (*ki*), 承 (*shô*), 転 (*ten*), 合 (*gô*). They might also be translated as establishing, receiving, changing and summing up. They are borrowed from Chinese poetic theory for regulated verse.

VALUABLE NOTES ON PLAYWRITING:
METHODOLOGY FOR PLAYWRIGHTS
EARTH

二道四別之伝

The Two Paths and Four Branches¹²⁶



¹²⁶ Gunji surmises that the “Two Paths” are “wealth and fame” and “subsistence.” The “Four Branches” are “superior nature,” “inferior nature,” “sincerity” and “disingenuity.” This diagram seems to offer a way of schematizing human nature and thus of the natures of characters in plays. Each entry is paired with its antithesis, which I have tried to convey as well as possible in the translations.

¹²⁷ 付合. This carries the idea of being sociable, as opposed to the self-absorption of its paired “self-important” (自慢) below.

¹²⁸ 名利. Gunji thinks that this may be a mistake for 冥利, meaning luck, fate, divine favor.

¹²⁹ 不誠. In contrast to “servile” (追従) below, I take this to mean one who does not follow the commands of others, thus “independent.”

¹³⁰ 不識. This conveys the idea of one who minds his own business versus the “gossipy” nature (中言) contrasted below.

¹³¹ 空心. A Buddhist term.

¹³² 臨機, here translated as “expediency”, literally, the idea of meeting the occasion. This is paired with “resourcefulness” (応変), meaning to respond to the unusual or to respond to change. These do not form a strong antithesis, although 臨機 conveys the idea of meeting an occasion as it already exists, while 応変 emphasizes responding to change in a given situation.

看板之心得

Instructions Regarding Billboards

The mid-point in an odd number of items is positive and indicates things taking form. A long string of an even number of items is negative and indicates things that have taken form. For the characters we use to write play titles, those without left-side radicals are positive, while those with left-side radicals are negative.¹³³ You should use a character with a left-side radical for the final character of a title, because it adds both a sense of conclusion and stability. Use an odd number of characters for full play titles. Previously, when an even number of characters was used, didn't it turn out that the plays flopped?¹³⁴ When somehow you end up with an even number of characters, you must change to an odd number with a made-up character or a pairing of characters.¹³⁵ For example, in the title *San jikkoku yofune no hajimari*,¹³⁶ the character for “yofune” was created by combination.¹³⁷ In the title *Imoseyama onna teikin*,¹³⁸ “onna” was lengthened into two characters from the usual one.¹³⁹ Odd numbers operate through origins and the positive. This is a truth to be focused upon. I comply with it myself.

These couplings of roles from plays are examples of what we call “two-lined supertitles”¹⁴⁰:

¹³³ 扁なきは陽、扁あるは陰 (扁 is the same as 偏, a left-side radical in a character.) The “positive” and “negative” of my translation are the “yang” and “yin” of the yin/yang principle.

¹³⁴ According to Gunji, there was no concern with this use of odd and even numbers of characters in Genroku kabuki.

¹³⁵ This is why the Chinese characters in play titles are often impossible to find in a dictionary.

¹³⁶ 三拾石よふね始, by Namiki Shōzō, premiered in 1758.

¹³⁷ “Yofune” would usually be written with the two characters 夜舟, but in this title it is written with one character that combines 舟 (*fune*) on the left and 登 (*tō*) on the right, creating a non-standard character (thus written in *kana* in the preceding footnote.) In other words, if “yofune” had been written with the usual two characters, there would have been a six-character (even-numbered) title.

¹³⁸ 妹背山婦女庭訓, written by Chikamatsu Hanji and others, premiered in 1771.

¹³⁹ That is, 婦女 rather than the usual 女.

¹⁴⁰ 角芸題 (*tsunogeidai*). Called 角書 (*tsunogaki*) in Edo.

Genpachi Wataru Heita Nami¹⁴¹
 Nuregami Chôgorô Hanaregoma Chôkichi¹⁴²

When arranged as follows, we use the term “divided titles”¹⁴³:

Aoe Shitasaka of distant rumors
 A large reception room of murder and O-Bon festivities¹⁴⁴

Low-class prostitutes clamouring in the mansions
 Houses for court concubines before the Great Buddha¹⁴⁵

In addition:

(1) Remaining in the twenty-four flourishings of the Heike, (2) the loyal subjects of the bats spread their wings; (3) We have struck, we have struck at the good fortune of our friends of Kamakura Mountain, (4) our objective the sun battle formation.

And to line up against the above:

(1) Surpassing the sixteen horsemen of the Genji, (2) the faithful women of the goblins loosen their sashes; (3) We have met, we have met the revenging opponents at the remains of Ôuchi, (4) our sword the famous Kanemaru.

You should pair both sides, such that you do not separate words with related meaning.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ *Tsunogedai for San jikkoku yofune no hajimari*. The characters used to write “wataru” and “nami” here are different from those used in the actual script.

¹⁴² *Tsunogedai for Futatsu chôchô kuruwa nikki* (双蝶々曲輪日記, by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shôroku and Namiki Senryû; premiered in the seventh month of 1749.) Actual playbook has *tsunogedai* as follows: “Nuregami the *sekitori* (Sumô wrestler)” and “Hanaregoma the *natori* (an accredited master of an art).”

¹⁴³ 割外題 (*warigedai*).

¹⁴⁴ *Warigedai for Ise ondo koi no netaba* (伊勢音頭恋寝刃, by Chikamatsu Tokuzô, premiered in the seventh month of 1796.) “Aoe Shitasaka” is from the inscription on a famous sword. “Murder and O-Bon festivities” is 十人切子 which includes two meanings: the murder of ten people (十人斬り) and faceted O-Bon lanterns (切子燈籠).

¹⁴⁵ Possibly the *warigedai* for *Kinmon gosan no kiri* (金門五三桐, by Namiki Gohei, premiered in 1778.)

¹⁴⁶ Note the clear parallels between these two passages, both in diction and in grammar. In the Japanese, there are eight numbered phrases for each, but the

三都狂言替り有事Differences Among Plays of The Three Cities

The people of Kyoto are gentle and in conformity with their nature, about sixty percent of their plots have always been about love affairs. On the whole, these plays are extremely calm and lacking in vigor. They carry the aura of a beautiful woman, and if we were to liken them to a part of the human body, it would be the skin.

Edoites are rough and in conformity with their nature, seventy percent of their plots have been grand period plays,¹⁴⁷ rough and carefree. They are rigidly constructed and masculine in their appeal. They carry the aura of the samurai and can be likened to bones.

Osaka people care about consistency¹⁴⁸ and in conformity with their nature, eighty percent of their plots have been logically constructed. Because their plots are often tortured, they can be boring. They carry the aura of the gallant man and can be likened to flesh.

Nowadays, playwrights have become increasingly skilled, and the characteristic methods of the three cities have intermixed. However, they do not depart from their original nature. The plot¹⁴⁹ is the bones, its particulars are the flesh, and the dialogue¹⁵⁰ is the skin. If you successively unite these three -- the bones, the flesh and the skin -- you will have a masterpiece. Period plays should be thick-boned, family-quarrel plays should be of ample flesh, and domestic plays should be of delicate skin.¹⁵¹ For all scenes, a lack of proper investigation into first the bones, then the flesh, and then the skin will result in a lack of credibility in the portrayals of individual men and women of beauty. You should examine successful plays that have already been produced to understand this.

translation into English works better in four. The original has an exact match in diction, grammar and number of characters and kana used.

¹⁴⁷ 大時代. Gunji notes that this term refers to plays presented in an old style.

¹⁴⁸ 利屈. I am following Gunji in supposing that the probable meaning here is 理屈, which I have translated as "consistency."

¹⁴⁹ 筋, *suji*.

¹⁵⁰ 台詞, *serifu*.

¹⁵¹ 皮薄き. Another text has 皮うつくしき (beautiful skin), but it obviously does not fit with the metaphor developed here.

豎筋横筋之事The Warp and Woof of Plot Creation

Sekai serve to establish storyline, but if you use a *sekai* simply as it already exists, it will not help you create a good play. Therefore, we speak of the vertical storyline -- the warp -- and the horizontal storyline -- the woof -- in the construction of plot. For example, we can insert Ishikawa Goemon as woof into the warp of Taikôki.¹⁵² Also, characters such as Kashiwade, Kiminari, Sakurako, Katsurako and Keyamura Rokusuke all function as woof. The warp is the *sekai* while the woof is the *shukô*. While the warp unites the plot from the first act to the finale, it does not enliven the play.¹⁵³ Even if the woof is brought to the fore only from about the midpoint, the play is made to seem new. This is of utmost importance.

四季人情差別之事Seasonal Differences in Human Feelings

In winter people fall into a gloomy state in which they are confined by cold weather and do not like to go out. Therefore, we work to impress the audience by engaging new actors and splendidly adorning the front of the theatre for the *kaomise*¹⁵⁴ with large lanterns and piles of gifts,¹⁵⁵ emphasizing gaiety and renewal. Plays should not seem too logical, and lead actors should take on roles such as spooks, playing them with a certain ease. Most important is to amuse with insider talk¹⁵⁶ and the celebration of good fortune. Be happy if you are able to relax your audience, and in so doing to engage them actively in the theatre.

¹⁵² An example of a play in which the thief Ishikawa Goemon was used as *shukô* in the *sekai* of Taikôki is *Kinmon gosan no kiri* (see footnote 145).

¹⁵³ 働なし. A different text has 動き.

¹⁵⁴ 顔見世. The eleventh-month program in which the entire troupe of actors for the new theatrical year were presented.

¹⁵⁵ Gifts received from patrons for actors.

¹⁵⁶ 楽屋の事 (“pertaining to the greenroom”). Matters understandable only to theatre insiders. I have taken this phrase to mean: to amuse by relating or exposing inside theatre talk.

Spring is a time of gaiety and the time of year when people really want to go outside. It is the time of the *ninokawari*, the central focus of the kabuki calendar,¹⁵⁷ which is of great importance to playwrights. In general, family quarrel pieces¹⁵⁸ should be chosen. Give great care to the *shukô* aspect of the play and make of it a big showy affair. If the plot of the first act is taken up in the second, and if that of the third is taken up in the fourth, the play should remain popular. Since it is the season of flower viewing,¹⁵⁹ it is critical that you write the play with a fully-blossoming appeal.

Summer is the season when people are lax and suffer from the heat. Therefore, the theatre is hard to endure, especially when the house is full. It is best to make each act short enough so that none require stiflingly-long viewing. Low-life domestic plays¹⁶⁰ and plays in which water is used¹⁶¹ make a good choice. For the *jôruri*, choose a period play. In the afternoon, you must turn to costuming the actors in light garments.¹⁶² In a day-long domestic play, actors should perform in ordinary costumes¹⁶³ from the first act until the third. Then from midday on, costume them in light garments, or the play will not proceed comfortably as the hours and days decrease. Consider very carefully and make use of what has been said here about summer costumes.

In autumn, people are controlled and alert, so that in developing the plot, emphasize the difficulties involved in a reasoned course. Focus on realistic occurrences, grab the audience's attention, and try to astound them. The play will not hold¹⁶⁴ if the spectators are not

¹⁵⁷ That is, especially in the Kamigata region where practices described in *Kezairoku* were centered.

¹⁵⁸ 御家狂言 (*oie kyôgen*). This is the same as 御家騒動物 (*oiesôdômono*). As *Kezairoku* is primarily expounding the methodology of the Kamigata region, *oie kyôgen* refers to plays with *keisei* (courtesan) in the title.

¹⁵⁹ They continue until the third month.

¹⁶⁰ A translation taken with some liberty for *kizewa* (生世話, also *kizewamono*, 生世話物.) Nineteenth-century sub-group of *sewamono* plays, usually about gangsters and other rough types.

¹⁶¹ “[P]lays in which water is used” (水物, *suimono*) were offered to give a refreshing feeling to those in the hot summer theatre.

¹⁶² 帷子物 (*katabiramono*). For example, garments of hemp or single-layer garments.

¹⁶³ 衣裳物 (*ishômono*). These costumes contrast with the light garments just discussed.

¹⁶⁴ 狂言すか付. Gunji gives the meaning of “not be firm” or “not be tight” for

moved to think to themselves, “Well done! That’s just as it should be!” As opposed to the method used in the *ninokawari*, the *sekai* should be circumscribed. In the case of period plays, when the *ninokawari* is set in a Lord’s residence, the autumn production should then be set at the residence of a chief retainer. Everything must be well thought out.

狂言場行工合之事

Methods for Plot Construction

Kaomise. The first part¹⁶⁵ of the *kaomise* program is always the *sanbasô*.¹⁶⁶ When the audience loses interest somewhat during the *sansha*¹⁶⁷ and “Clapping Stage Presentation”,¹⁶⁸ concentrate on amusing them. If you can get them to laugh, then even plays without much merit or that are too wordy will not be a trial to watch. If the main role is a ghost or goblin, then change to a human in the next scene. For example, there is a love piece in which an orangutan comes as the shogun’s envoy with his mermaid wife following in pursuit. When the mermaid’s oil is drunk by the villain, the widow and father immediately turn into children. It is most important to use foolish fabrications to give your plays a new twist.¹⁶⁹

In the middle part of the *kaomise* program, when the audience is interested in watching the actors, concentrate only on the actors’ interesting techniques. In the last part, as it grows late and the audience is getting tired, plan to invigorate them with samisen music¹⁷⁰ as the play smoothly proceeds with visual interest¹⁷¹ at the

すか付。

¹⁶⁵ 上の巻. Kamigata plays were divided into three sections labeled 上・中・下.

¹⁶⁶ A special congratulatory play that developed from the *Okina* play of nô and that started the day for important programs such as the *kaomise* or the *shizome* (a special program for the New Year in Edo.) The three roles of the *Sanbasô* were taken by the most important members of the troupe.

¹⁶⁷ 三社. A different text has only 三. Gunji guesses that this may refer to the three characters of the *Sanbasô*: Okina, Senzai and Sanbasô.

¹⁶⁸ 座附手打 (*zatsuke teuchi*), a clapping ceremony performed by troupe members lined up along the stage.

¹⁶⁹ *Shukô*.

¹⁷⁰ 鳴物合方 (*narimono aikata*). Samisen music without singing.

¹⁷¹ 景様. Note that this is the same term used in the chart entitled, “The Five

fore. If you temper the amusing with the logical, lead roles such as the lead female and lead male will be well-received. All in all, plays without much plot coherence are to be favored for the *kaomise* because of their buoyancy. If a play falls off even a little, the mood will be down, and the audience will enter a more critical frame of mind and sour on the play. Pay attention to this.

Ninokawari. Visual interest should be primary in the first act, with a flowing and broadly-constructed plot that does not have an overabundance of new twists. If the overall plot for the day's program begins in the first act, do not focus only on the first act, but write the second with liveliness as well. Keep the play upbeat with an expansive feeling, and plan it so that it is not overly constrained. Keep it to about one hundred pages. It is not good if it is too short but worse if it becomes too long. If you are thinking of writing as many as one hundred and ten pages, then give around twenty to twenty-five pages to laying the groundwork for the remaining seventy or eighty pages of the following acts. In general, if lower-ranked actors and *onnagata*¹⁷² are not seen at the opening of the first act, then the day's performance will not go well and your whole effort will be wasted. If there are one hundred pages, the plot and roles should be developed within seventy of them. The remaining thirty pages should be given to the beginning, which should be well developed.

In a day's viewing, the second act is of great importance.¹⁷³ The play should be densely written from the start, but while the overall plot is undertaken in the first act, there should be no subplots and a sense of complete clarity. An understanding of the meaning of the play's title should become clear with this act. Do not try to display the acting of insignificant actors, just move them around together en masse. Limit this to eighty or ninety pages. It would not be bad if it were only sixty or seventy pages, but this will depend on the actors.

While the third act used to be considered a minor one, nowadays, it is kept to forty or fifty pages and is a place where less-skilled, middle-ranked actors are seen. It is an independent act that does not connect to the main plot being developed, and thus it must be well

Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting" at the end of the "Heaven" section of *Kezairoku*.

¹⁷² 情外 (*segai*). The probable meaning of *segai* is *onnagata* ranked from the middle and below.

¹⁷³ This is where the main story of the full-day's program gets started.

planned. It must be stressed that the third act should not resemble the second act or the domestic scene.

The fourth act is short, thirty-four or thirty-five pages, and it is important here to amuse the audience. It should take up the flow of the second act and introduce the characters for the domestic scene. Leave aside issues of morality, and refrain from something overly wordy.

The fifth act is the domestic scene.¹⁷⁴ Here the fetters of duty¹⁷⁵ are well secured. Gently amuse the audience at the start, and develop the piece so that when it is seventy percent through, it hits the depths and tightens up.¹⁷⁶ After reaching the climax, the rest should follow quickly, so that the end is reached in about ten pages.

While the sixth act is dance-like, since the *michiyuki* connects to the play's plot, the sixth-act dance piece should be separate from the play, even if it has its own plot. The dance added to the grand finale, the opening of the *michiyuki* and the plot recap should be kept at two or three pages or, if you absolutely must, four or five pages.

The plot of the grand finale, the seventh act, has been carried through from the first act, and its length is not fixed. If it includes some new twist, it is sometimes completed in six or seven pages (there are also examples where it is finished in three or four pages.) Because this is the end of the day's program, it is most important to put a stop to plot and character development. No matter what, you must understand that the intention with this part should be to check the villain's hold and display the detailed attractions of lead actors.

Sannokawari.¹⁷⁷ The plan is the same as for the *ninokawari*. However, the first act is briefer and less complicated and should be kept to seventy or eighty pages. You should develop it decidedly in around forty pages. The third act is also not as long as that of the *ninokawari*. It is not independent like the third act of the *ninokawari*,

¹⁷⁴ The placement of the domestic scene was different in Edo.

¹⁷⁵ "Duty" is translated from 義理, *giri*.

¹⁷⁵ "Duty" is translated from 義理, *giri*.

¹⁷⁶ The themes lightly introduced at the beginning are taken up more seriously, as the move from visual elements to story content is strengthened.

¹⁷⁷ This production was planned to have a lighter feel overall than the *ninokawari*.

and depending on the play, its themes may relate to those used at the climax of the *ninokawari*. As a rule, the placement of domestic and teahouse scenes is not fixed. Generally, the number of acts should extend to seven or eight, however, you should also, of course, include some entr'actes.

Because the *bonkawari*¹⁷⁸ came up previously in the summer season section, I will shorten my comments here. Intricate plot development will stifle the audience and thus is bad. The essence of the third act is light costuming, and you should develop it with great care. A dance, unrelated to the play, is added at the end of the grand finale. In contrast to family quarrel and period plays, the dialogue of the domestic scene should flow. Because the play is swift-paced, the acts will all become like entr'actes if they are too short and will not be worth watching. Remember this. Everything must be entertaining in an uncomplicated way.

Kugatsukawari.¹⁷⁹ As related in the autumn section, the play should start pulling together right from the first act. A story of revenge would make a good choice. You should add in dialogue where every word counts and that, just as in *jôruri*, is literary and musical when uttered.

The number of pages for each seasonal production should be informed by the amount of daylight. The day's program for the *ninokawari* has nine sections,¹⁸⁰ and takes up four hundred pages. For the *sannokawari*, there are three hundred and seventy or eighty pages; for the *bonkawari*, there are three hundred and forty or fifty pages; and for the *kugatsukawari*, there are upwards of three hundred pages. These lengths are just right. If a play is longer, it is called "a lengthy play"; if it is shorter, it is called "insufficient".

When there is an over-abundance of stage directions, a play will become thick with action and cannot succeed. A play with few stage directions, but which is crammed full of words, will be lacking in action, so do not use too many entrance and exit songs. Beginning

¹⁷⁸ 盆替り, the seventh-month program, so named because it took place at the time of O-Bon.

¹⁷⁹ 九月替り, the ninth-month program, the last program before the annual kabuki performance calendar began again with a new *kaomise*.

¹⁸⁰ 九行, which I have rendered as "nine sections".

with unusual instrumentation and samisen music, and depending on the requirements of the scene, you should choose music that accords with the plot, such as nō chanting, music for acrobatics¹⁸¹ and teahouse-scene and domestic-scene music. Lively music¹⁸² used in a temple scene, elegant music¹⁸³ used in a domestic scene, or songs of merriment¹⁸⁴ used in a field scene, will all stand out badly, so set up your plays with music that connects to the plot. When a young lord out on a spree turns a temple into a brothel, lively music is appropriate. It makes sense in a domestic scene, in which a noble lady is sheltered in the interior of her home, to hear elegant music or songs of merriment being played by way of entertainment. If the scene takes place in a field in the vicinity of a teahouse, songs of merriment are appropriate. In this manner, we find the means to make music relevant.

A teaching from long ago has the adage, “While there are fabrications that seem true, do not speak of truths that seem false.” Plays clearly express a fiction, causing people to cry and to laugh, and you must create this fiction not only through persuasion, but also by considering shifts in popular taste. You must understand that the creation of realistic fiction is the hidden aim of the playwright.¹⁸⁵

作者金言の事

Teachings from The Playwrights

Someone asked, “At what does one aim in writing plays?” The answer was simply: “With plays, your goal should be the *shiroururi* of *Tsurezuregusa*.”¹⁸⁶ The person who had asked was impressed. A

¹⁸¹ 軽業 (*karuwaza*, acrobatics.) According to Gunji, this refers to the music used to accompany acrobatics.

¹⁸² 踊り三味せん. Dance accompaniment.

¹⁸³ 琴歌.

¹⁸⁴ 騒ぎうた (also, sometimes shortened to 騒ぎ), used for example, in brothel scenes of *sewamono*.

¹⁸⁵ See the discussion in Chapter Three regarding this adage. The original of the version translated here is 誠らしき啞ありとも、啞らしき誠はいふべからず.

¹⁸⁶ Item #60 of Yoshida Kenkō's *Tsurezuregusa* (1330-1331), which was very influential in the Edo Period, has, “Once, when this abbot saw a certain priest, he dubbed him the *shiroururi*. Someone asked what a *shiroururi* was. He replied, ‘I have no idea, but if such a thing existed, I am sure it would look like that priest’s

writer is one who can surmise what *shiroururi* would be if it existed. Not having observed the movements of the Emperor or the Shogun, nor having had contact with beggars or thieves, one is nevertheless able to write by imagining human nature, thinking, "It's probably this kind of thing." That is *shiroururi*. Much of what is verbally and visually passed down in this world comes from plays, having issued out of playwright confidence and *shiroururi*. With this understanding, when developing the many aspects of a play, resolve it¹⁸⁷ and costume it in order to engage the audience, even if the plot twists¹⁸⁸ have been used before. In this way, you will be able to create a {new} play.

As a rule, when at your desk, think of the world¹⁸⁹ as your own, proceed as though no enemy confronts you and handle the actors as if they belonged to you. If you do not act in this way, you will recoil from your brush, hesitation alone will assail you, and you will be unable to move the audience. Usually, after establishing the plot, you will need to make changes in accordance with the actors' abilities. Generally, think of your choice of theme as a tactical decision and the brush as the baton that leads the soldiers. As you confront your enemy -- the audience -- use that which is currently popular to crush their spirit, and the victory song of critical acclaim will be heard. Even if the brave warrior-actors are talented, if the tactician-playwright's play has not been well prepared for battle, it will be difficult to achieve an outstanding victory.

You shouldn't be overawed by a major troupe, nor should you be contemptuous of minor troupes.¹⁹⁰ There are many lead actors in a

face.' This abbot was handsome, robustly built, a great eater, and better than anyone at calligraphy, Buddhist scholarship, and rhetoric. He was highly regarded within his temple as a beacon of the sect, but, being an eccentric who cared nothing for society and acted exactly as he pleased in everything, he refused ever to conform to the others . . . His behavior was unconventional, but people, far from disliking him, allowed him everything. Might it have been because his virtue had attained the highest degree?" (Keene, Donald, tr. *Essays in Idleness, The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967. 55-56.)

¹⁸⁷ 鎌を入れ. This is the same term as that used on the top line of the diagram that ends the "Heaven" section of *Kezairoku*.

¹⁸⁸ *Shukō*.

¹⁸⁹ 三千世界, a Buddhist term.

¹⁹⁰ This contrasts 大座 with 不座. 大座 refers to a large company united under a major actor; I take 不座 to mean a group of actors that is not headed by a major

major troupe. Each one will strive to be in the advanced guard, and there will be power struggles among them. In a minor troupe, there are few brave warrior lead actors, and so there is no discord. Everyone, even down to those playing the smallest parts, puts their energies together. Because they put up a valiant fight against losing out to a major troupe from another theatre, it is often the case that their play continues to gather momentum, and working vigorously, they succeed in beating out the major troupe.

You should not disturb the ranking of actors by inserting your own will through favoritism and patronage, but should instead consider the roles according to the actors' abilities. If gentlemen were not valued, there would be no ranks.¹⁹¹ Be careful with the soldiers by behaving well and not revealing personal concerns. In this way, confined¹⁹² to the theatre, you can devise your play.

作者役場心得之事

Information on The Assignment of Scenes to Playwrights

It used to be that a playwright prepared the entire play singlehandedly, from the first act to the finale.¹⁹³ This changed in the Period of Resurgence with the appearance of assistant playwrights,¹⁹⁴ or second and third-ranked playwrights.¹⁹⁵ Scenes were divided up, and the play was written by three or four people. Generally, the lead playwright devised the plot, which was then fully developed by other playwrights. After a preliminary perusal, changes were made, and then the play was read to the actors during the *hon'yomi*. Nowadays, however, everyone contributes in adding new twists to the plot; they no longer simply follow the directions of the lead playwright as he provides the plot and its new twists. This is due to a decline in our Way.

star.

¹⁹¹ Probably a quote from one of the Confucian classics.

¹⁹² 籠城 (*rōjō*). *Rōjō* means “to confine (oneself) to” or “to seclude (oneself).” It also furthers the military analogy here in its meaning of “to be besieged.”

¹⁹³ This was the case in the Genroku Period.

¹⁹⁴ 門弟

¹⁹⁵ 二枚目 *nimaimé* and 三枚目 *sanmaimé*.

During the *ninokawari*, the relative rankings and values of the year's playwrights become evident. That being said, in looking at current practice¹⁹⁶ in assigning work to playwrights, the second act and domestic scene come from the lead playwright, the first and third acts are from the second-ranked playwright, and the entr'actes are assigned to the third-ranked playwright. The finale is often written by the lead playwright, but in less significant cases, he might have the second-ranked playwright write half. The first act of the *sannokawari*, the *bonkawari* and the *kugatsukawari*, are all the duty of the second-ranked playwright. The rest is written under the direction of lead actors. Still, when playwrights of similar status are employed at the same theatre, they compromise with one another in determining what they will write.

役者役場之事

The Assignment of Parts to Actors¹⁹⁷

First of all, although it is said that role assignment in the *kaomise* performance should be according to importance within the theatre, it is best to assign roles to new troupe members that are better than they merit by rank. Continuing troupe members, including lead male-role actors, should yield to newcomers. This is a fundamental principle in the assignment of parts.

The first section. Use continuing troupe members who are young and vivacious.

The middle section. You should include continuing troupe members - both lead male-role actors and *onnagata* - in such roles as those depicting old persons. If there are recently-engaged Edo actors or new stars, then the troupe's leading actor should appear here.

The final section. Use here, for example, actors who have been out on tour, newly-joined stars, or sexy *onnagata*. If among the new members there are no lead actors but only middle-ranked ones, then the troupe leader should appear here to enliven the performance of the new members.

¹⁹⁶ This means the Kansei Period when *Kezairoku* was written.

¹⁹⁷ 役場 (*yakuba*) which was translated as "the assignment of acts" in the previous section is here translated as "the assignment of parts." This is because the former is concerned with playwrights and this section is concerned with actors.

Ninokawari. When the year's rankings are a sham, this is where one sees the actors' abilities and role possibilities.¹⁹⁸

True Villain.¹⁹⁹ While these roles are given out according to the actors' abilities, generally, only those parts in the first and second acts are assigned. The rest can be decided later.

Wise Male Lead. This role is assigned according to ability. If previously, in the finale, a villain was apprehended, then this character is the one to restore matters to what they were.

Patient Male Lead.²⁰⁰ The one being sheltered in domestic scenes, or a role in which a character holds himself responsible for something. These can be assigned later.

Master of Love.²⁰¹ In the first act, a high-living character who gets the *onnagata* and becomes her lover. In any scene, the character who gets the sexy *onnagata* and acts the romantic sections. The *michiyuki* is the high point.²⁰² When paired with an *onnagata* chosen not for ability but because of rank, make the role seem natural.

Sexy Onnagata.²⁰³ Generally, the same as the lover.²⁰⁴ However, there are oral traditions about the performances of even such great actors as Keishi*²⁰⁵ and Koinaga*²⁰⁶ playing *onnagata* in long-sleeved kimono. There is no climactic scene for *onnagata*. The parts for *onnagata* who appear in plays with “*keisei*”²⁰⁷ in the title are created for the skills of the actors who play them, thus it is difficult to determine generally where they will appear. As dictated by womanly affection, *onnagata* follow their men, the various lead male-role actors. Thus, they never reveal their own desires, but go around attached to particular male leads. For example, the earlier

¹⁹⁸ 職分, (one's) role or the part assigned; here as “role possibilities.”

¹⁹⁹ 実悪, *jitsu aku*.

²⁰⁰ 辛抱立役, *shinbō tachiyaku*. A role of quiet endurance.

²⁰¹ 色事師, *irogoto shi*. Sexy male lead in gentle-style (*wagoto*) pieces.

²⁰² The idea is that the *michiyuki* is the scene in which we come to understand this character and his motivations.

²⁰³ 色女形, *iro onnagata*. The *onnagata* paired with the Master of Love (*irogoto shi*).

²⁰⁴ 色事仕, *irogoto shi*. A lover. Distinct from “Master of Love,” 色事師 (also pronounced *irogoto shi*).

²⁰⁵ 慶子. *Haikai* name of Nakamura Tomijûrô II.

²⁰⁶ 鯉長. *Haikai* name of Nakamura Kumetarô I.

²⁰⁷ 傾城, courtesan, used in titles for *Kamigata* New Year's plays.

Bunshichi²⁰⁸ went with Ippô Ayame,²⁰⁹ the earlier Sangorô²¹⁰ with Kunitarô,²¹¹ and Bunshichi II with Iroha.²¹² All of these male stars had accompanying *onnagata* based on their role type. It is right that a woman comply with her man in his good and bad points.

True Scoundrel.²¹³ Originating in the bad uncle roles.²¹⁴ Whereas the true villain acts through to the finale, the true scoundrel should be done away with around the second act. Afterwards, the actor appears in other roles.

Scoundrels²¹⁵ have no fixed placements. Those who also play comic roles should be seen in entr'actes.

Middle-ranked *onnagata*.²¹⁶ Courtesans and chambermaids appear in ensemble at the opening of the first act. Others are distinguished according to ability.

Show courtesy to the sons of lead actors, whether it be in altering the staging²¹⁷ when they are working together with others or in setting their roles apart. Dialogue is parceled out according to ability for those below the mid-level of *onnagata*. When there are not many roles, child, catamite or young men's roles performed by actors connected with the troupe leader,²¹⁸ may all be cut and seen instead in other scenes.

In the middle ranks, there are those who are allowed crests and those who are not, and while they play the same role types, those who are allowed crests can appear in two scenes under one role name. Characters appearing under a role name connected to the plot are a different matter.

²⁰⁸ 文七. Nakamura Bunshichi I.

²⁰⁹ 一鳳あやめ. *Haikai* name of Yoshizawa Ayame V. Yoshizawa Iroha I.

²¹⁰ 三五郎. Arashi Sangorô II.

²¹¹ 国太郎. Sawamura Kunitarô I.

²¹² いろは. Yoshizawa Iroha II.

²¹³ 実敵, *jitsu kataki*. A type of villain; not as formidable as the *jitsu aku* (true villain).

²¹⁴ *Oji kataki* (伯父敵), characters who often appeared in Genroku family quarrel plays.

²¹⁵ 敵役, *kataki yaku*.

²¹⁶ 情外中女形. See footnote 172.

²¹⁷ かた (usually written with the character 型.) Set patterns of acting, blocking, costuming, hairstyling, etc.

²¹⁸ 座元役者

役場甲乙之事Fine Points Concerning The Assignment of Parts

When two top actors appear together, you should assign the roles with the understanding that one plays the lead character and one a supporting character.²¹⁹ Because the lead character is the pillar upon whom the scene depends, you should write the scene with the plot clearly developed to point up the centrality of that actor. The supporting actor acts in an assisting position in the scene. Thus, even if he has highlighted moments, the play should be written to draw attention to the lead actor in the end. In cases of disagreement, it would be best to hold a meeting with only lead actors -- leaving out those playing the supporting roles -- in order to distinguish between characters who will carry the basic story of the play²²⁰ and those who will introduce the audience to new elements of the known story.²²¹ For example, where Tenjiku Tokubei carries the basic story, Fuchiberokurô introduces something new.²²² In the sixth act of *Chûshingura*, Kanpei carries the basic story, and the mother introduces something new.²²³ In the second act of *Sugawara*, Kakuju introduces something new in a lead role,²²⁴ while Sugawara is a supporting role who carries the basic story. Plan this out very carefully and employ actors who meet the needs of the troupe.

²¹⁹ Nô terminology is borrowed here in the use of *shite* (仕手) for “lead character” and *wakishi* (脇仕) for “supporting character.”

²²⁰ 世界持, *sekaimochi*.

²²¹ 狂言持, *kyôgenmochi*.

²²² These are characters from the play *Tenjiku Tokubei kikigaki ôrai* (天竺徳兵衛聞書往来, premiered in 1757) by Namiki Shôzô.

²²³ Kanpei, the protagonist of this scene, kills himself as a result of mistakenly believing that he has killed the father of his lover O-Karu. O-Kaya is O-Karu’s mother (the mother referred to in this *Kezairoku* passage.) She and Kanpei share most of the scene.

²²⁴ Kakuju is Sugawara’s aunt.

the program from 1795 is due to its long service as an example and because it does not belong to any particular theatre.

表八枚看板の事

The Eight-Board Billboard Hung at the Front²²⁶

lead male ²²⁷ ---	a star ²²⁸		
lead male -----	a lover ²²⁹		
lead male -----	a minor role ²³⁰		
lead male -----	the central role ²³¹		
scoundrel			
true scoundrel			
true villain	young <i>onnagata</i> #4		young <i>onnagata</i> #2
lead male	young <i>onnagata</i> #3		young <i>onnagata</i> #1

As we see in the above, the number of lead roles used to be fixed at eight and those of the *onnagata* at four, thus we now use the term “actors of the eight boards.” It is good that they were included with the *onnagata* of the four boards. Otherwise, there are the middle-ranked eight, who act as understudies when the actors of the eight boards are ill. The understudies are assigned for the year, and the roles must be memorized before opening day. However, it is possible to exchange an old man’s role for an old woman’s role, to play both an old man and a scoundrel, or to exchange a male lover role for a comic role. While this is confusing, there are no other such exceptions.

The number of middle-ranked *onnagata* is not fixed. They are all called *segai*²³² and are promoted by the *onnagata* of the four boards into substitute positions and into young girl’s roles or as attendants to

²²⁶ An unillustrated eight-faced billboard hung in front of the theatre. It listed the lead actors on eight boards.

²²⁷ 立役 (*tachiyaku*.) “Lead male” here means player of lead male roles.

²²⁸ 花形. Gunji notes that this would be the most popular actor in the troupe.

²²⁹ 色事仕. Because this role type always appeared on the second board, it was commonly called the *nimame* (“second board”).

²³⁰ つまし. The meaning of this is not clear, but Gunji notes that it possibly means 端仕, “minor role,” as I am translating it here.

²³¹ 中づく. A talented actor who is placed in the center of the program.

²³² See footnote 172.

virile young male characters.²³³ Those of the third-floor room,²³⁴ of whom there are twelve, are called “the little crowd.”²³⁵ These days, the number of actors has increased, and there are now ten or twelve actors of the eight boards. Also, there are six or eight *onnagata* of the four boards, but the different levels of *onnagata* have become disordered. Middle-ranked actors of the eight boards, and of course the lead male-role actors, are all now allowed the use of crests.²³⁶

lead male: a star; crest pattern does not matter.

lead male: sexy lead or player of lover’s role

lead male: to be arranged²³⁷

lead male: a minor role;²³⁸ the final one is here.²³⁹

lead male } In this space are the central roles.

true villain } The troupe leader might also be here. Distinctions

lead male } can be made according to ability.

true scoundrel: one who has fallen behind; whether a man of
experience or one past his prime

scoundrel: to be arranged

true scoundrel: chief position for true scoundrels

true villain: place for a particular actor

lead male: troupe leader. Even though the position is central,
this spot can be occupied by a man from a branch
theatre.

²³³ 丹前の若衆方. Roles portraying vigorous young men who walk in the *tanzen* (丹前) manner. This walk dates from the early Edo Period when young men would strut in front of bathhouses to attract the attention of bathhouse girl attendants. It was incorporated into kabuki for important entrances and features stomping feet and widely gesturing arms.

²³⁴ Greenroom on the third floor for low-ranking actors.

²³⁵ 小詰. This means low-ranking actors. It is a Kamigata term.

²³⁶ See the end of “The Assignment of Parts to Actors” in the “Earth” part of *Kezairoku* regarding actors’ use of crests.

²³⁷ Presumably, this role is “to be arranged” according to the particular play being presented.

²³⁸ 小さまつまし. The meaning of 小さま is not clear. For つまし see footnote 230.

²³⁹ Possible for 愛をくくりと云.

- While occasionally second-board *onnagata* are placed here, both sides should be written in small characters
- Young *onnagata* -- #5
 - Young *onnagata*
 - Young *onnagata* -- #6
 - Young *onnagata*
 - Young *onnagata* -- #4

-
- Place²⁴⁰ for second-board *onnagata* in lovers' roles and for youths. In courtesan plays, this is for the second-board roles.
- Young *onnagata* -- #3

Young *onnagata* -- #2

- Young *onnagata* -- #1
- This is the place for an *onnagata* who is troupe leader. However, when the other *onnagata* under him are also mature actors, write the leader in the middle in large characters and the others in slightly smaller characters to either side. This is generally the place for *onnagata* who play older women's roles.

作者支配之事

Playwright Duties

The set notebook is given to the chief stagehand.

The rough drawings for the illustrated billboard are given to the billboard artist.

The costume notebook is given to the costumer.

The prop notebook is given to the propman.

The accessories²⁴¹ notebook is given to the purchaser.

The rough draft of the cast program is given to the bursar.

The rough draft of the illustrated program is given to the main teahouse.

²⁴⁰ 筋. A different text has 所, from which I have translated "place."

²⁴¹ 小切物. This includes a mix of costume and prop items, such as *tenugui* (small towels), *tabi* ("socks") and in Kamigata practice, armour, swords and fans.

The music notebook is given to the musicians.

Although we entrust all of this to an assistant,²⁴² the rough drawings for the illustrated billboard and the rough draft of the illustrated program are given directly by a playwright. He should also give instructions concerning the set notebook or write them out himself. Because the accessories, props, music, costume notes and set properties all appear in the script,²⁴³ it is up to an assistant to write them down, even without being told to do so.

There are two methods for costuming *onnagata*, either by having the player of lead male roles costume himself to accommodate the *onnagata*'s choice, or by having the *onnagata* costume himself to accommodate the lead male-role actor. While actors keep their own costumes, several kinds of items specific to particular plots -- such as kimono, sashes, jackets, outer garments, specially-devised garments,²⁴⁴ blood-stained garments, sandy or muddy garments, or necessary costume items used for playing young men's roles -- are kept in the manager's storehouse. Therefore, the costume notebook is copied out separately and presented to the bursar.

作者番附居所

Program Placement for Playwrights

playwright²⁴⁵ -- second-ranked
 playwright -- assistant #2
 playwright -- {same} #4
 playwright -- third-ranked
 playwright -- {assistant} #3
 playwright -- {same} #1

²⁴² 狂言方 (*kyōgen kata*). In the hierarchy of playwrights, these were the lowest-ranking members.

²⁴³ 根本 (*nehon*), playbooks produced for Kyoto and Osaka theatre fans from around 1780 through the first half of the Nineteenth Century. They presented abridged, illustrated versions of the plays being performed.

²⁴⁴ 細工物の衣裳. Gunji explains this phrase to mean a kimono with some sort of mechanism or device.

²⁴⁵ The term used in this section for playwright is *kyōgen sakusha*.

playwright – lead playwright

┌──────────{assistant}
playwright #4 playwright -- right center²⁴⁶

playwright #3

Playwright This is the lead playwright. Write it in this way when there is no difference between the second and third-ranked playwrights. However, consider the left side a little luckier.

playwright #2

playwright #1 playwright -- lucky left

playwright

┌────────── playwright -- second-ranked

┌────────── playwright -- assistant

┌────────── playwright -- same

┌────────── playwright – lead playwright

└── If an important playwright²⁴⁷ temporarily joins the troupe, he is written in here in a guest position. This is the method in both Kyoto and Osaka. Edo programs are different. They are written in another way. This is dealt with in detail in the Edo program section.²⁴⁸

playwright -- ditto²⁴⁹

playwright -- {assistant}

playwright -- one who writes

bits of the play, like the assistant

²⁴⁶ “Right center” and “lucky left” are for the vertical layout of the programs.

²⁴⁷ スケ. This term was used on programs and billboards near the names of playwrights and actors who temporarily joined a troupe, but who usually worked for a different one. Such playwrights were of equal or greater status to the resident lead playwright. Similarly, actors with this designation would also be of high status. Reasons for the appearance of such men at a rival theatre might include the temporary closing of their home theatre (due to a fire, for example,) or in the case of actors, the need of the host troupe for someone of stature in a particular role type not strongly represented in the troupe.

²⁴⁸ See the following section.

²⁴⁹ 同断. Gunji notes that this refers to what is written two lines down: “one who writes bits of the play, like the assistant.”

playwright – lead playwright playwright -- {assistant}
 playwright -- When there is no
 second-ranked playwright, this
 spot is for the third-ranked one.

江戸紋番附之事

Crest Programs of Edo²⁵⁰

These programs have both crests and names.²⁵¹ In some instances, names like that of the young master Nakamura Jûzô²⁵² have been written in the spaces provided for medium-ranked actors, middle-level *onnagata* and the manager of The Kiri Theatre.²⁵³ Others are covered with marked-off sections for actors' names only. If we match these up with the Osaka eight boards, we get the following:

<u>EDO</u>	<u>OSAKA</u>
First man	True villain
Fifth man	True scoundrel
Troupe leader	Final position ²⁵⁴
Third man	Beginning ²⁵⁵
Fourth man	Central position ²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ *Mon banzuke* were programs covered with actors' crests and names. They were produced only in Edo and are the counterpart to the *yakuwari banzuke* of Kyoto and Osaka (see footnote 225.)

²⁵¹ The text has "as shown below" and the paragraph ends with "for example" (neither of which are in this translation.) Both refer to a hand-written diagram of a sample crest program, followed by a hand-written diagram of a sample *kaomise* illustrated handbill. For these diagrams, see *Kinseigeidôron*, 527-528.

²⁵² 十蔵. A different text has 十義 (Jûgi.)

²⁵³ 桐長桐. Each of the three main theatres of Edo had a fixed reserve theatre to be used when, for whatever reason, productions could not take place at the main theatre. (For example, in 1734, members of the Morita Theatre moved to their reserve theatre, the Kawarasaki Theatre, because of debt problems.) The Kiri Theatre was the reserve theatre used by the Ichimura Theatre.

²⁵⁴ 留筆. This means the final position on the *banzuke*. The same term is used again three further down in this column.

²⁵⁵ 一筆. The same term is used again three further down in the column.

²⁵⁶ 中ぢく. The same term (written as 中軸) is used again three further down in the column.

First woman	Final position
Second woman	Beginning
Third woman	Central position
Fourth woman	Sexy <i>onnagata</i>

You must follow the above.

Placements for *onnagata*, players of lead male roles and playwrights are not fixed. The relative width of an enclosure box is an indication of the actor's rank. Only the troupe leader's space is fixed for a player of lead male roles. The placement of *onnagata* below the tower-shaped area reserved for the manager is different. Determine the space allotted for illustrations of actors according to their respective virtues, making sure that at least a little of each actor's body is shown.²⁵⁷

大坂絵看板之事

Illustrated Billboards of Osaka

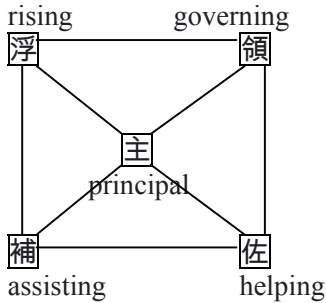
Heaven
Earth Man

Generally, there are three main figures.²⁵⁸ The first two are fixed, one with a player of lead male roles at the beginning and one with a player of lead male roles in the final position. For the other, we might see an *onnagata* placed either at the end or at the beginning. This is the format of a title billboard.²⁵⁹ As to placement, it would be good to see heaven, earth and man set off against one another. You must use your judgment.

²⁵⁷ The troupe leader was shown in full and the others were shown only partially. The amount shown in each case reflected the actor's status.

²⁵⁸ The words "main figures" have no counterpart in the original, but are implied by what follows in the text.

²⁵⁹ 芸題看板, *geidai kanban*.



When there are many players of lead male roles, for example five, the troupe leader is placed in the “principal” space, and it is very important that the five should be arranged such that the two in the “assisting” and “helping” positions are seen as more closely connected to the “principal” than are those in the “governing” and “rising” positions. When as many as seven figures appear, two should be clustered away from the others or seen in distant view. If there are six, add some sort of living creature such as an insect, bird, {fish}, ox or horse to bring it to an odd number.²⁶⁰ When there are extra boards, there is nothing wrong with having nine or even eleven figures.

一夜附之事

Overnight Plays²⁶¹

役納る之事

Settling on Duties²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Even numbers were avoided. See “Instructions Regarding Billboards” in the “Earth” part of *Kezairoku* for more on this issue.

²⁶¹ See footnote 13 for an explanation of this term.

²⁶² Here we find only a title and no text with which to verify its meaning. See footnote 14 concerning its related title in “The Table of Contents.”

作者出勤之事

Playwrights at Work²⁶³

It is difficult to complete a play using the usual techniques, even with ten or twenty days, but it is impossible to write an overnight play unless you pay some attention to the oral teachings.

In order to write an overnight play on the subject of a double love suicide, you must go yourself to the scene of the incident, and while listening to what the other onlookers are saying, you should start up conversations and listen to the discussions. Also, you should listen for both evidence and influencing factors. If you combine the false reports from people's gossip with the true account of the facts, you will be able to come up with a rough outline for your play quickly. It is a secret of our art to use both kinds of accounts. When only a true account is given, it seems too much like a government report, and it will not appeal to audiences who were far from the actual event. False accounts meet with a favorable response because they have gradually come to be widely known through hearsay.

There are only three reasons a townsman will kill himself: when he is financially ruined, when he is unable to meet obligations²⁶⁴ or when some mishap has occurred. These should be woven in as subplots. Choose the actors for the male and female leads of the double love suicide, and then look for someone for the supporting role to play the character who introduces trouble,²⁶⁵ the one who disrupts the other two.²⁶⁶ Explain only the circumstances and role types to these three actors. Then, when at your desk, discard your usual point of view, and regard those in the theatre as puppets under your command.²⁶⁷ This is an oral tradition. If you operate under the

²⁶³ Again, there is no text. The text that follows goes with the first of the three titles just listed, "Overnight Plays."

²⁶⁴ *Giri*.

²⁶⁵ *Kyôgenmochi*. Translated previously as the character "who will introduce the audience to new elements of the known story." (See "Fine Points Concerning the Assignment of Parts" at the end of the "Earth" part of *Kezairoku*.)

²⁶⁶ This third character is typically a villain whose actions help seal the fate of the couple.

²⁶⁷ While "under your command" is not explicitly in the original, the idea here must be that the playwright should regard the actors as manipulatable, under his command, rather than thinking of them with the usual solicitude.

usual conditions, you will be bound by constraint and the dictates of normal play creation,²⁶⁸ and you will not be able to write at all. Only when the male and female actors are in place should you consider the foil.

The *sekai* is set either at the workplace of the male partner or at the residence of the female partner; the choice depends upon the reputations of the two and on the genesis of the situation. In either case, we try to use the *sekai* of old plays.

Whatever *shukô* you use, you should focus on elements from old plays that share similarities with your double love suicide story. That way -- even if an old man role is replaced with an *onnagata* role, or a comic role is replaced with a minor role, or a period play is changed into a domestic play -- you will be able both naturally and within a reasonable amount of time to develop new twists that surprise the audience.

You will develop your plot appealingly if you emphasize catchy dialogue with current idiomatic language. Although the category of double love suicide plays has always used the same general plot outline, with differences found only in names, locales and characters, we clothe them in dialogue made popular by current idiomatic language.

If we make a general analogy to *nô* actors we find, in principle, that the plot is arranged around three people, with the *shite*²⁶⁹ corresponding to the male and female partners of the double love suicide and the *waki*²⁷⁰ taken by a single person. The rest of the actors are in assisting positions, much like musicians and chanters. Do not worry about whether you have too many or too few roles or it will be difficult to complete your work. With entertaining²⁷¹ the audience as your central concern, you should exhaust your writing skills on the climactic²⁷² passage in which the lovers travel to their death, as this is the essence of these plays. This means developing the

²⁶⁸ 狂言の欲

²⁶⁹ The principal role in a *nô* play.

²⁷⁰ The secondary role in a *nô* play.

²⁷¹ おかしみを第一として. Here the sense of おかしみ is more “to entertain” than “to amuse.”

²⁷² 頂上. This is the same term used in the diagram entitled “The Five Flowers and Ten Leaves of Playwriting” at the end of the “Heaven” part of *Kezairoku*. It is translated as “rhetorical building” in the diagram (top line, second from right.)

play through dialogue and the unraveling of the plot. If you do not understand these points, you will not be able to prepare an overnight play quickly.

- Number One: Visual interest at the curtain opening
- Number Two: Heightening to avoid loss of interest
- Number Three: Events closing in on the man and woman

You should start off with the above three modulations²⁷³ in mind. They offer an oral teaching on preparing plays quickly. Otherwise, while each lineage has its own methods, I will give instructions in the teachings I prefer.

An auspicious day at the beginning of Fall, 1801

Nyûgatei Ganyû²⁷⁴

End of Valuable Notes on Playwriting: Methodology for Playwrights

²⁷³ メリハリ. *Merihari* means voice modulation, referring to techniques of voice projection used in kabuki. Its extended meaning in the translation is partially indicated by the use of *katakana*.

²⁷⁴ *Kezairoku* has been variously attributed: Nishizawa Ippô wrote that it was by Namiki Gohei I, and *The Life of Namiki Shôzô* (*Namiki Shôzô ichidai banashi*) gives Namiki Senryû II as its author (Kawatake Shigetoshi, ed. *Engeki hyakka daijiten*, Vol. 2. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960. 394.) However, current theory accords with what we find in Kyokutei Bakin's *An Evening Talk in The Hall of Literature* (*Chôsakudô issekiwa*, 著作堂一夕話) where the authorship of *Kezairoku* is attributed to Namiki Shôzô II, otherwise known as Nyûgatei Ganyû (See Nakatsuka Eijirô, ed. *Nihon zuihitsu zenshû*, Vol. 2. Tokyo: Kokumin Tosho Kabushiki Kaisha, 1956. 532.)

APPENDIX II: Role Types in *Kezairoku*

The following gives the Japanese and the translations used for all role types mentioned in *Kezairoku*. They are arranged by alphabetical order of the transliterated names. The terms are used to designate both the role type and the actor who specializes in that role.

<i>dôkegata</i>	道外方	comic role
<i>iro aku</i>	色悪	villainous lover
<i>irogoto shi</i>	色事仕	lover
<i>irogoto shi</i>	色事師	master of love
<i>iro onnagata</i>	色女形	sexy female
<i>jitsu aku</i>	実悪	true villain
<i>jitsu kataki</i>	実敵	true enemy
<i>kashagata</i>	花車方	old woman
<i>kataki yaku</i>	敵役	enemy
<i>kuge aku</i>	公家悪	court noble villain
<i>kyôkaku</i>	侠客	gallant man
<i>oji kataki</i>	伯父敵	bad uncle
<i>onnagata</i>	女形	female role
<i>otokodate</i>	男伊達	champion

<i>oyajigata</i>	親仁方	old man
<i>sabakiyaku</i>	捌き役	wise lead male
<i>shinbô tachiyaku</i>	辛抱立役	patient lead male
<i>tachiyaku</i>	立役	lead male
<i>waka onnagata</i>	若女形	young woman
<i>wakashûgata</i>	若衆方	young male
<i>yatsushi</i>	やつし	disguise role
<i>yatsushigoto aku</i>	やつし事悪	villain in disguise

APPENDIX III: Glossary of Transliterated Terms

The following gives the Japanese and definitions for terms appearing in transliterated form in this book. These terms are also glossed where they first appear. They are arranged here by alphabetical order of the transliterations.

<i>an</i>	案 term used to refer to the initial planning in play creation
<i>aragoto</i>	荒事 rough-style acting; a bravado style first fully developed by the Edo actor Ichikawa Danjūrō I
<i>banzuke</i>	番付 advertising flyers, pamphlets, or programs
<i>benkyō shibai</i>	勉強芝居 “training theatre”: summer productions in which younger actors were given the opportunity to play more important roles than they normally were allowed
<i>bonkawari</i>	盆替り summer production of the kabuki calendar year, follows the spring production
<i>bon kyōgen</i>	盆狂言 see <i>bonkawari</i>
<i>bugaku</i>	舞楽 dance drama imported into Japan from China in the eighth century

- chaban* 茶番
type of performance practice originally developed by off-stage actors in the green room, comprised of a mix of tea serving, gift giving, mimicry and acting
- daichô* 台帳
script used for performance preparation (called *nehon* in the Kamigata region)
- dangô* 談合
term used by Kaneko Kichizaemon in his diary to refer to the consultation carried out between actors and playwrights during the process of play creation (also *sôdan*)
- danmari* だんまり
kabuki pantomime scene, often used to introduce newly-contracted actors in the *kaomise* production
- doyô yasumi* 土用休み
summer break during which *natsu shibai* were performed
- e-iri kyôgenbon* 絵入り狂言本
illustrated narrative versions of plays from the Genroku Period
- e-iri nehon* 絵入根本
Kamigata illustrated versions of plays from the Genroku Period
- engekisho* 演劇書
see *gekisho*
- etoki* 絵説き
“picture explaining” performances of medieval Japan in which stories are narrated with the aid of illustrations held by the storyteller

- furitsuke* 振付
choreography of dance and group movement
- futatsume* 二つ目
second section of the *ninokawari*
- gakuya* 楽屋
green room
- geidan* 芸談
compiled comments, reminiscences, and teachings of an actor
- gekisho* 劇書
Tokugawa-period treatises about kabuki
- gesaku* 戯作
fiction of the Tokugawa Period
- gidayû kyôgen* 義太夫狂言
plays adapted from *jôruri* (also called *maruhon mono*)
- gôkan* 合巻
genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period
- haikai* 俳諧
genre of poetry in the Tokugawa Period (now called *haiku*)
- haikai no renga* 俳諧の連歌
variation on *renga* in which nonstandard topics are allowed
- haimyô* 俳名
name used for one's activities as a *haikai* poet

- hakama* 袴
divided skirt; part of the attire worn by actors for costumes or for on-stage announcements
- hana* 花
concept of perfection in nô acting as embodied in an actor in a given performance; discussed in the treatises of Zeami
- hanamichi* 花道
raised walkway connecting the back of the kabuki auditorium to the stage, used for important entrances, exits, and certain other highlighted moments of acting
- hanare kyôgen* 放れ狂言
one-scene plays of the early Genroku Period
- hanashizome* 嘶し初
troupe gathering for the formal announcement of the plays and cast for the upcoming production (also called *yorizome*)
- hanasu* 咄
explanation of a play's plot to assembled actors by playwrights in the Genroku Period
- haori* 羽織
jacket; part of the attire worn by actors for costumes or for on-stage announcements
- hatsuharu kyôgen* 初春狂言
Spring or New Year production: Edo name for the second production of the kabuki calendar year, also called *haru kyôgen* (for Kamigata nomenclature, see *ninokawari*)
- hayagawari* 早替り
on-stage costume-changing scenes

<i>heikyoku</i>	平曲 lute-accompanied recitation of tales concerning the Genpei Wars of the late twelfth century
<i>hiromeru</i>	広める see <i>makusoto</i>
<i>hokku</i>	発句 opening verse of a <i>renga</i> or <i>haikai no renga</i> sequence
<i>honkadori</i>	本歌取り poetry technique whereby a part of one poem is incorporated into another
<i>honsetsu</i>	本説 use of one text as source material in the creation of another
<i>hon'yomi</i>	本読 troupe meeting prior to the beginning of rehearsals at which the script was first read to the entire cast
<i>hyôshigi</i>	拍子木 wooden clappers used in kabuki to mark important junctures and changes of scene
<i>ichi banme</i>	一番目 first of the two parts of the day-long Edo kabuki program (see <i>ni banme</i>)
<i>ichiyazuke</i>	一夜附 “overnight” plays: quickly-prepared plays based on sensational recent incidents
<i>ie</i>	家 acting lineages

<i>ie no gei</i>	家の芸 acting styles, roles and methods that belong to or are practiced within a particular lineage of actors
<i>i-keiko</i>	居稽古 “seated” reading rehearsal (see <i>tachigeiko</i>)
<i>jidaimono</i>	時代物 five-act plays, typically set in the grand events of an earlier historical period, (often translated as “history plays” or “period plays”)
<i>jitsu</i>	実 reality, play elements that reflect reality (contrasts with <i>uso</i>)
<i>jitsu wa</i>	実は revelation of a character’s true identity after having been in disguise (see <i>yatsushi</i>)
<i>jo-ha-kyū</i>	序破急 introduction, development, finale: pacing principle used in many traditional Japanese performing arts
<i>jomaku</i>	序幕 first section of the <i>ninokawari</i>
<i>jun kabuki</i>	純歌舞伎 “pure” kabuki, plays originally created for kabuki (as opposed to plays adapted from other performing arts, such as <i>jōruri</i> or <i>nō</i> ; contrast with <i>gidayū kyōgen</i>)
<i>kakinuki</i>	書抜 sides: booklets containing the lines for a single role (called <i>serifugaki</i> in Kamigata)
<i>kakinuki no hi</i>	書抜の日 day on which the preparation of <i>kakinuki</i> began

- kamishimo* 上下
formal attire for costumes or for on-stage announcements
- kanban* 看板
billboards announcing plays
- kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡
“rewarding good and punishing evil”: stated moral purpose of certain Tokugawa-period literature and arts (including kabuki, according to *Kezairoku*)
- kaomise* 顔見世
opening, “face-showing” production of the kabuki calendar year
- kaomise yorizome* 顔見世寄初
troupe gathering to begin preparations for the *kaomise*; it took place just before the commencement of rehearsals; occurred on the seventeenth day of the tenth month
- kashihonya daichō* 貸本屋台帳
scripts available on loan from commercial book-lending establishments
- kata* 形
fixed techniques or patterns of acting and production
- katarimono* 語り物
narrated tales based on historical or fictional material
- keiko* 稽古
general term for rehearsals
- keisei* けいせい／傾城
high-ranking courtesans

- keiseigai* 傾城買
plays in which high-ranking courtesans are hired and visited by customers
- kibyōshi* 黄表紙
genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period
- kikuzuki kyōgen* 菊月狂言
Chrysanthemum Production: ninth-month (and final) production of the kabuki calendar year (also called *kugatsukawari*, *onagori kyōgen*)
- kinshu* 金主
production sponsor or backer
- kirimaku* 切幕
fifth and final section of the *ninokawari*
- kizewamono* 生世話物
nineteenth-century offshoot of *sewamono* (often translated as “raw domestic plays”)
- kodōgu* 小道具
props
- konadai* 小名題
titles of individual acts
- koto* 事
fixed scene and dance formulas
- kuchiake* 口明
see *jomaku*
- kuchidate* 口立
improvisational method of play creation during kabuki’s earliest period

- kugatsukawari* 九月替り
Ninth-month Production (see *kikuzuki kyôgen*)
- kyakuhon* 脚本
script
- kyôgen* 狂言
play
- kyôgen atari* 狂言当たり
hit play
- kyôgenbon* 狂言本
narrative versions of plays
- kyôgen kata* 狂言方
low-ranking member of the playwright hierarchy
- kyôgen sakusha* 狂言作者
men in troupes responsible for various aspects of play preparation, including playwriting (herein translated as “playwrights”)
- kyôgen tsukuri* 狂言作り
earliest term for those in troupes responsible for play preparation, literally a “playmaker” (its currency preceded that of *kyôgen sakusha*)
- kyôka* 狂歌
Tokugawa-period variation on *waka* in which nonstandard topics are allowed
- maki* 卷
section or chapter of a book
- maku* 幕
act or scene

- makusoto* 幕外
scholarly designation for promotional materials on kabuki: divided into *hiomeru* (materials that promote kabuki generally) and *miru* (materials that promote specific plays or actors); compare *makuuchi*
- makuuchi* 幕内
scholarly designation for insider materials on kabuki: written materials prepared by practitioners to aid production; compare *makusoto*
- makuuchi shōkaihon* 幕内紹介本
scholarly designation for promotional books that addressed backstage activity for kabuki fans; one kind of *makusoto* material
- maruhon mono* 丸本物
see *gidayū kyōgen*
- michi* 道
“Way,” the practice and methodology of an art
- michiyuki* 道行
travel scenes found in several performing arts that are often highlighted by poetic text and/or dance movement
- mie* 見得
poses held by chief characters or groups of characters at important points in a kabuki play
- minarai* 見習ひ
apprentice: the lowest-ranking member of the playwright hierarchy
- minzoku geinō* 民俗芸能
folk performing arts

<i>miru</i>	見る see <i>makusoto</i>
<i>mitate</i>	見立 technique of visual or literary metaphor, often used in the Tokugawa Period for purposes of parody
<i>mitsume</i>	三つ目 third section of the <i>ninokawari</i>
<i>mon kanban</i>	紋看板 billboards with the actors' crests
<i>monogatari</i>	物語 stories, narration
<i>nadai kanban</i>	名題看板 billboards with play and act titles
<i>nagusami</i>	慰み “entertainment,” discussed here as a central aim of kabuki practitioners (verb: <i>nagusamu</i> : to entertain)
<i>naimaze</i>	絢交ぜ play creation technique in which two or more <i>sekai</i> are intermixed
<i>nai'yomi</i>	内読 first reading aloud of the script of a new play, attended by theatre management only
<i>natsu shibai</i>	夏芝居 summer plays
<i>nehon</i>	根本 see <i>daichô</i>

<i>nendaiki</i>	年代記 chronologies
<i>nenjū gyōji</i>	年中行事 annual sequence of events that form a fixed calendar
<i>ni banme</i>	二番目 second of the two parts of the day-long Edo kabuki program (see <i>ichi banme</i>)
<i>nikki</i>	日記 journal or memoir
<i>nimaime sakusha</i>	二枚目作者 second-ranked member of the playwright hierarchy
<i>ninokawari</i>	二の替り Kamigata name for the second production of the kabuki calendar year, also called <i>ô-kawari</i> (for Edo nomenclature, see <i>hatsuharu kyōgen</i>)
<i>nitateme</i>	二立目 second act of a play (see <i>tateru</i>)
<i>ô-atari</i>	大当り hit production
<i>oiemono</i>	お家物 family-quarrel plays; play category of the Genroku Period (also called <i>oie sôdô</i>)
<i>oie sôdô</i>	お家騒動 see <i>oiemono</i>
<i>ô-kawari</i>	大替り see <i>ninokawari</i>

- okuni kabuki* おくに歌舞伎
earliest period of kabuki history, ending in 1629, in which shows were primarily performed by women; named for the performer Okuni (also called *onna kabuki*)
- okurimukae* 送り迎
ceremony at the beginning of the kabuki calendar year for welcoming newly-contracted actors
- onagori kyôgen* お名残り狂言
Farewell Production (see *kikuzuki kyôgen*)
- onnagata* 女形
male actors who play female roles; also, female roles
- onna kabuki* 女歌舞伎
“women’s kabuki” (for a full explanation, see *okuni kabuki*)
- renga* 連歌
genre of poetry that began in the medieval period in which a sequence of linked verses are typically composed by a group of poets
- sakusha* 作者
see *kyôgen sakusha*
- sakushabeya* 作者部屋
backstage room at the theatre reserved for playwrights
- sanmaime sakusha* 三枚目作者
third-ranked member of the playwright hierarchy
- sannokawari* 三の替り
Kamigata name for the third production of the kabuki calendar year (see *yayoi kyôgen*)

- santateme* 三立目
third act of a play (see *tateru*)
- satsuki kyôgen* 臯月狂言
fifth-month production of the kabuki calendar year
- sekai* 世界
“world,” a pre-existing and well-known story used by playwrights as source material for creating a new play
- sekai sadame* 世界定め
meeting at which the *sekai* for a new production was chosen
- senryû* 川柳
witty genre of poetry of the Tokugawa Period
- serifu* せりふ
monologues
- serifugaki* せりふがき
Kamigata term for *kakinuki*
- serifu shû* せりふ集
monologue collections
- setsuwa* 説話
short narratives of the Heian and medieval periods, told to entertain and/or with didactic intent
- sewamono* 世話物
one-act, three-scene plays, set in contemporary times and performed between acts of a *jidaimono* (often translated as “domestic plays”)
- sharebon* 洒落本
genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period

- shibai-e* 芝居絵
woodblock prints with kabuki-related subject matter
- shibai nenjū gyōji* 芝居年中行事
nenjū gyōji composed of important kabuki-related dates, including play-planning meetings and the production calendar
- shikumi* 仕組み
plot development: the working out of individual scenes to make a play, often carried out through rehearsals
- shinjū mono* 心中物
plays in which lovers commit suicide together (“double suicide plays”)
- shiroururi* しろうるり
term borrowed from the literary work *Tsurezuregusa* into *Kezairoku* as a metaphor for one’s objective as a playwright
- shizome* 仕初／仕始
stage announcement on New Year’s Day introducing the upcoming *hatsuharu kyōgen* and its cast
- shōhon jitate* 正本製
genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period
- shōhon utsushi* 正本写
genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period
- shonichi* 初日
opening day of a production, often functioning closer to a dress rehearsal

<i>shu</i>	種 “seed”: Zeami’s term for a story or poem taken as the basis of play development
<i>shukô</i>	趣向 characters and plot elements introduced into a <i>sekai</i> in order to create a new play
<i>sôdan</i>	相談 see <i>dangô</i>
<i>sosori kyôgen</i>	そそり狂言 last performance of the <i>kaomise</i> , during which extra entertainment was performed, especially where members of the cast would switch roles
<i>sôzarai</i>	総ざらい last rehearsal held before the opening of a production
<i>suji</i>	筋 plot
<i>sujigaki</i>	筋書 play synopses
<i>tachigeiko</i>	立稽古 acted rehearsal (see <i>i-keiko</i>)
<i>tachiyaku</i>	立役 actors who play lead male roles; also, lead male roles
<i>taimen</i>	対面 scene of confrontation between enemies
<i>tatemono</i>	立者 star actor

<i>tateru</i>	立てる verb meaning to build, construct or create; with ordinals, it designates acts of a play (see <i>nitateme</i> , <i>santateme</i>)
<i>tate sakusha</i>	立作者 chief playwright
<i>tatesuji</i>	豎筋 a term found in <i>Kezairoku</i> : “vertical plot,” equated with <i>sekai</i> (see also <i>yokosuji</i>)
<i>tsû</i>	通 cultural ideal of Edo townsmen: connoisseurship and savoir faire in the arts and in the art of living
<i>tsunogaki</i>	角書 couplets written above the play titles on billboards to describe play content
<i>ukiyo-e</i>	浮世絵 woodblock prints of the Tokugawa Period
<i>ukiyo-zôshi</i>	浮世草子 genre of fiction in the Tokugawa Period
<i>uso</i>	嘘 falsehood, play elements that come from the playwright’s imagination (contrasts with <i>jitsu</i>)
<i>wagoto</i>	和事 gentle-style acting; a style for playing male lovers first fully developed by the Kyoto/Osaka actor Sakata Tôjûrô
<i>waka</i>	和歌 classical 31-syllable form of Japanese poetry (also called <i>tanka</i>)

- wakashû* 若衆
youths who acted in early kabuki
- wakashû kabuki* 若衆歌舞伎
youths' kabuki: the period in kabuki history between *okuni kabuki* (or *onna kabuki*) and *yarô kabuki*; performed with boy actors in all leading roles
- watarizerifu* 渡りぜりふ
“divided delivery”: a single speech delivered in alternation by two or more characters with the final line delivered in unison
- yagô* 屋号
special names used by fans in addressing or praising actors (always ending in *ya*, “house”)
- yaku* 役
role
- yakugara* 役柄
role types
- yakusha atari* 役者当たり
hit actor
- yakusha hyôbanki* 役者評判記
Tokugawa-period booklets that ranked and critiqued actors from a fictional audience's point of view
- yarô kabuki* 野郎歌舞伎
men's kabuki: kabuki from the 1650's (starting after the ban on *wakashû kabuki* in 1652); performed with adult male actors in all leading roles
- yatsushi* やつし
disguise role (see *jitsu wa*)

- yayoi kyôgen* 弥生狂言
Edo name for the third production of the kabuki calendar year (see *sannokawari*)
- yokosuji* 横筋
term found in *Kezairoku*: “horizontal plot,” equated with *shukô* (see also *tatesuji*)
- yonban tsuzuki* 四番続き
four-act plays of the later 17th century
- yorizome* 寄初め
see *hanashizome*
- yotsume* 四つ目
fourth section of the *ninokawari*
- zamoto* 座元
in Edo, the theatre manager, the person granted the authority to produce plays; in Kamigata, the troupe manager, the top *tachiyaku* star of the troupe
- zatsuki hikiawase* 座付引合せ
stage announcement during the *kaomise* in Kamigata, in which the actors were introduced to the audience
- zuihitsu* 随筆
essay-style literary genre

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