

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THEATRICAL ELEMENTS IN GREEK AND  
JAPANESE THEATRE AND DRAMA

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BY

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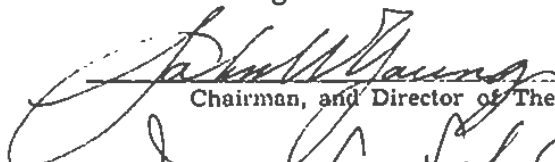

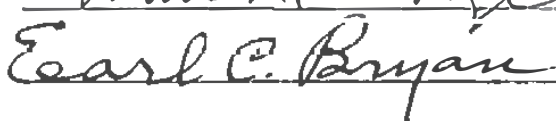
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Down through the years, out of an ancient civilization have come contributions which influenced the thoughts of philosophers and mathematicians, the research of scientists and archeologists, the compositions of musicians and poets, the designs of architects and artists, and the writings of scholars and dramatists. Indeed, so influential were these contributions that investigations have been made on nearly all phases of the Greek civilization, including extensive studies of the theatre and the drama.

On the other hand, in the Orient is a civilization whose drama has been virtually ignored until very recent years. Writers in the field of drama have usually relegated Japanese drama to a position of unimportance, including it seemingly as an afterthought; however, today students of international drama are devoting more and more attention to this little explored field of Japanese drama.<sup>1</sup>

This paper is designed as a comparison between the theatres and dramas of ancient Greece and Japan. Such a study, so far as the writer of this thesis is aware, has never

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<sup>1</sup>Frank Alanson Lombard, An Outline History of the Japanese Drama (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 13.

been approached previously. Due to the broad aspects of this investigation, the author has had to limit the investigation to origins of the dramas, physical aspects of the theatre, dramatic theories and structures, and certain constituent elements as the chorus, the actor, costumes, music, and dance. Although the primary aim has been to accomplish a comparative study of the Greek and Japanese theatres, it is hoped that through this study more interest in the field of Japanese drama may be stimulated among students of the drama.

Since Greek writings have for some time been available, standard spellings for special terminology have, in general, been established; such is not true in the spelling of Japanese words. For example, the Romanized word for one of the oldest forms of Japanese drama is alternately seen as Noh and as No with the full form of the word being no-gaku or Nogaku. In part, this difference in spelling may be accounted for by the Japanese Government's adoption of a new system of spelling; therefore, the newer spelling is given here with the old spelling in brackets:

si (shi)

ti (chi) tu (tsu)

hu (fu)

zi (ji)

sya (sha) syu (shu) syo (sho)

tya (cha)    tyu (chu)    tyo (cho)  
zya (ja)    zyu (ju)    zyo (jo)<sup>1</sup>

The writer of this paper has tried to be consistent in the use of the new forms of spelling which will account for any variations of the words found in certain quotations.

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<sup>1</sup>Syutarō Miyake, Tourist Library, Vol. XXIII, Kabuki Drama (Japan: Japanese Government Railways, 1938), p. 6.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN OF GREEK AND JAPANESE DRAMA

Wherever the student of drama turns, he finds laurels for the Greek drama: Freedley and Reeves refer to Greek drama as "the greatest drama the world has ever known."<sup>1</sup> In The Theatre by Cheney, this statement is found, "In the progress of human kind in the Western world during twenty-four centuries since, there has been no rival to Greek civilization."<sup>2</sup> From Flickinger's The Greek Theatre and its Drama, comes this statement, ". . . as the ultimate source of all other dramatic art, the Greeks' contribution, whether in precept or example, must ever occupy a unique position."<sup>3</sup>

There can be no doubt that the contributions of the Greeks to drama have been indeed invaluable; but too frequently the student is led to believe, through implication, that the drama of other nations could not have existed without the "ultimate source of all other dramatic art," the Greek drama.

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<sup>1</sup>George Freedley and John A. Reeves, A History of the Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, 1941), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1945), p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Roy C. Flickinger, The Greek Theatre and its Drama (3rd ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), Preface, p. ix.

After investigation it is the opinion of the writer of this paper that distinct origins of drama of various peoples of the world is plausible. Along this line of thought Professor Frank Alonson Lombard, in his book, An Outline History of the Japanese Drama, explains,

The origins of speech are probably to be found in emotional exclamations and the imitative sounds which accompany imitative action. The inner urge to self-expression joined with capacity for mimicry, not only led to language, but also we may be confident, made natural the union of song and dance in which we have the primal elements of the drama. The expressive moments of primitive life were essentially dramatic; and the primal elements of the drama may be found wherever ethnic societies have had their beginnings, . . . . Thus we may find not one but many distinct origins of the drama as a form of human expression; and need feel no surprise at the discovery of marked similarities in development of the drama among widely scattered peoples, . . . . Such similarities are but reaction to similar conditions, whether in India, Greece, or Japan.<sup>1</sup>

From the preceding quotation it may be seen that similarities in the origin and development of Greek and Japanese drama may be expected.

A discussion of the origin of the Greek drama is complicated by the problem of finding a point of agreement among the various authorities. Although there is still much disagreement and debate, most historians now accept, in general, that Greek drama grew out of religious ceremonies, particularly those celebrations in honor of Dionysus, or Bacchus, the god of wine and fertility. More specifically, Aristotle, the first great

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Alonson Lombard, An Outline History of the Japanese Drama (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 17.

dramatic authority, tells us both tragedy and comedy originated in improvisation with tragedy evolving from the leaders of the dithyramb and comedy from leaders of the phallic songs.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, fairly conclusive evidence is available to show that these Greek religious rituals were greatly influenced by similar Egyptian ceremonies.<sup>2</sup>

The dithyramb,<sup>3</sup> an improvisational song and dance in honor of Dionysus, was performed by a group of men wearing goatlike horns, ears, hoofs, tails, and goatskins who represented the attendant sprites of Dionysus; and the Greek word for goats, tragoi, was sometime applied to the choreutae.<sup>4</sup> When the dithyramb became quasi-literary and dramatic elements were added, its name changed to satyric drama; still later, it was called tragoida.<sup>5</sup>

Since Aristotle attributes to the leaders of the dithyramb the origin of tragedy, it is only fitting to mention the

<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, Poetics, trans. S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts (4th ed.; London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1932), 1449a12, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Freedley and Reeves give an adequate explanation of the connection between Greek and Egyptian drama, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>The dithyramb was a song in celebration of the birth of Dionysus.

<sup>4</sup>Members of the chorus.

<sup>5</sup>Many authorities disagree on some phases of this theory, particularly as to whether the satyr play is an antecedent of tragedy or if the two forms had separate origins. See Flickinger, op. cit., p. 23.



most famous of all chorus leaders, Thespis. To what extent Thespis was responsible for the decrease in improvisation and the innovation of the actor is questionable; however, authorities on Greek drama, almost without exception, concede that Thespis invented an actor and began the practice of using a mask for various roles.

There is one innovation, the wagon, credited to Thespis which is often overlooked, but the writer of this paper feels it should be mentioned here for a more complete comparison of Greek and Japanese drama. As to the nature and use of the wagon little evidence can be found; however, Ridgeway in "Origin of Tragedy" states ". . . and taking his company with him on wagons gave his performances on his extemporised stage when and where he could find an audience."<sup>1</sup> Flickinger offers further support when he tells of several Attic vases, dating from the close of the sixth century B. C., which depict the "wagon-ship" of Dionysus.<sup>2</sup> Just what the relationship was between the "wagon-ships" and Thespis' wagons, one can only conjecture.

Cheney points out still another influence on the beginnings of drama when he tells of minstrels who had made popular

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<sup>1</sup>William Ridgeway, "Origin of Tragedy," The Quarterly Review, Vol. 209 (Oct., 1908), p. 520.

<sup>2</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., p. 20.



the recitations of epic poetry,<sup>1</sup> How close to acting these declaimer came can not be determined. The beautiful choral odes of the drama can be traced back to the melic poetry which had been in existence for hundreds of years,<sup>2</sup> From all evidence, credit for the material later used in tragic drama should go to the epic poetry of an earlier time.

Turning to another form of Greek drama, comedy, the writer was confronted with lack of accurate information as to its early stages of development, because, as Aristotle points out, comedy "was not as yet taken up in a serious way."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the origin of comedy is clear since Aristotle stated that comedy evolved from the leaders of the phallic songs.<sup>4</sup>

An understanding of the Greeks' worship of Dionysus is particularly essential when one turns to the origin of comedy. Dionysus himself is always represented as being followed by a group of reveling beings, Satyrs, Nymphs, and Maenades, who perform such miracles as making fountains of milk or wine spring up from the ground. These followers were strong enough to tear

<sup>1</sup>Cheney, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup>James Turney Allen, Stage Antiquities of the Greeks and Romans and Their Influence (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., 1449 a 35, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Aristotle, op. cit.

goats, bulls, and human beings into pieces with their bare hands; fire and weapons could do them no harm; and despite their violence to various animals, they had a very deep sympathy for them. Although most frequently associated with the wine, Dionysus was also considered the god of fertility, fertility of the field and of the body. His worshippers tried to become as one with their god. Nietzsche has expressed this as follows:

In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak; he is about to take a dancing flight into the air. His very gestures bespeak enchantment. Just as the animals now talk, just as the earth yields milk and honey, so from him emanate supernatural sounds. He feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like to the gods whom he saw walking about in his dreams.<sup>1</sup>

From these celebrations grew the phallic songs, and from the leaders of the phallic songs came comedy.

Etymologically, too, the word "comedy" can be traced to the phallic ceremonies. The New Century Dictionary shows comedy as being derived from the Greek words for "revel" and for "song."<sup>2</sup> In Aristophanes' Acharnians<sup>3</sup> one finds that in Dicaeopolis festival of Dionysus there is a procession to the place of sacrifice with the phallic symbol<sup>4</sup> on a pole carried by two slaves,

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<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo and the Birth of Tragedy, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: The Modern Library, 1927), p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster (eds.), The New Century Dictionary (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), Vol. 1, p. 288.

<sup>3</sup>The earliest extant Greek comedy by Aristophanes.

<sup>4</sup>The phallus was a representation of the membrum virile.

the sacrifice itself, and the phallic song or *comos*, Flickinger also points out that *comos* denotes both a revel and the band of masqueraders participating, and he concludes that "the *comos* was the particular type of phallic ceremony from which comedy developed."<sup>1</sup>

Each year at Athens there were four Dionysiac festivals, and it was during the first of these festivals, the rural Dionysia, that the celebration of the phallus occurred. According to Freedley and Reeves:

These rites were like those of all early peoples, the American Indian, the African, the South Sea Islander, and still persist today in the remote portions of New Guinea and in certain regions of Australia.<sup>2</sup>

The second festival was the Lenaea; and in this celebration, comedy was emphasized. Coming at the end of January when navigation was not yet considered entirely safe, the participants consisted mainly of the Athenians with only a few visitors. Flickinger indicates the celebration was on a smaller scale than the City Dionysia. For example, at the Lenaea there were no dithyrambic contests, and there is no evidence for the presentation of old plays or even of satyric dramas.<sup>3</sup>

The third celebration, dealing with the opening of the

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Freedley and Reeves, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., p. 204.

wine casks, the setting out of pots of food for the souls of the dead, and a children's festival, had little of theatrical interest.

Most important of all the festivals, so far as tragedy is concerned, was the final City Dionysia, celebrated by all city and state officials, for here was held a contest in tragedy. In memory of the god a procession took place before the contest. The statue of Dionysus was carried from its temple by the priests and choregus to a place south of the Acropolis. From there the procession retraced its steps at night to the city. The statue was seated in a festival car drawn by two men dressed as the attendant sprites of Dionysus; sitting on either side of the statue were two men playing on flutes. The sacrificial bull with a citizen on either side was preceded by two youths bearing branches, another a basket, another a censer to perfume the air, and still another at the beginning of the procession who was doubtless a trumpeteer.<sup>1</sup>

All of the first day of the festival was spent in religious rites and festivities; the day following the procession was spent in lyrical contests which sometimes extended into the third day.<sup>2</sup> The exact arrangements are not known, but the last days of the festival seem to have been given over to the dramatic performances. Concerning the arrangement at the City Dionysia,

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<sup>1</sup>These details may be found from studies of Greek vases.

<sup>2</sup>Freeley and Reeves, op. cit., p. 10.

the most authentic fact is that three tragic poets presented three tragedies and one satyric drama. Official or state recognition of tragedy and comedy at the City Dionysia and the Lenaea can be accurately stated:

At the City Dionysia tragedy dated from 534 B. C., while comedy was not given official recognition there until 486 B. C. Though The Lenaea was the older festival, its dramatic features were later, comedy being added about 442 B. C. and tragedy about 433 B. C.<sup>1</sup>

At both the City Dionysia and the Lenaea, however, there had been given volunteer and unofficial performances of the comus previous to the dates given by Flickinger.

In the history of Greek comedy, three divisions appear: (1) Old Comedy with Aristophanes as the chief representative, 448-388 B. C.; (2) Middle Comedy which includes some plays by Aristophanes, 375-325 B. C.; (3) New Comedy with Menander as the foremost writer, 342-291 B. C. Bawdiness and primitive humor were characteristic of Old Comedy, and its subject matter consisted mainly of politics and contemporary people. Renouncing the political and personal themes, Middle Comedy turned to literary criticisms, parodies, and burlesques of mythology. With the coming of New Comedy, the subjects of Middle Comedy were rejected and motives drawn from everyday life were used.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Flickinger, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Other aspects of the development of comedy are discussed in Chapter IV of this paper under Aristotle's theories.

In tracing the origin of Japanese drama, the student is faced with several problems: First, there are three primary types of drama in Japan;<sup>1</sup> the Noh, the Ayatsuri, and the Kabuki. Through necessity the origin of these three major types will be treated individually in this chapter. Second, a written language was not introduced into Japan until 405 A. D.<sup>2</sup> Third, the study of this national drama necessarily entails as in the Greek drama, the understanding of the religion which is complex as it involves ancestral as well as cosmic explanations.<sup>3</sup>

There is one point on which all authorities on Japanese drama are in accordance: the origin of this national drama is credited to the sacred dance which was performed before the heavenly cave where Ama-terashu-ono-mi-kami, the Ancestral Goddess, hid during the mythological age of the gods. The following legend is Basil Hall Chamberlain's translation as found in Lombard's An Outline History of Japanese Drama:

Then the whole Plain of High Heaven was obscured and all the Central Land of Reed-Plains darkened. Owing to this, eternal night prevailed. Hereupon the voices of the myriad deities were like unto the flies in the fifth moon as they swarmed, and a myriad portents of woe all arose. Therefore did the eight hundred myriad deities assemble in a divine assembly in the bed of the Tranquil River of Heaven, and bid the deity Thought-Includer, child of the High-August-Producing-Wondrous Deity, think of a plan, assembling the long-singing birds of eternal night and making them sing, taking the

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<sup>1</sup>Noh dramas are the early classical dramas usually regarded as the drama of the aristocratic Japanese. Ayatsuri is the name applied to the puppet theatres. Kabuki is considered the drama of the people.

<sup>2</sup>G. B. Sansom, Japan A Short Cultural History (rev. ed.; New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1943), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 22.



hard rocks of Heaven from the river-bed of the Tranquil River of Heaven, and taking iron from the Heavenly Metal-Mountains, calling in the smith Ama-tsu-ma-ra, charging Her Augustness I-shi-ko-ri-do-me to make a mirror, and charging His Augustness Jewel-Ancestor to make an augustly complete (string) of curved jewels eight feet (long), of five hundred jewels, and summoning His Augustness Heavenly-Beckoning-Ancestor-Lord and His Augustness Great-Jewel, and causing them to pull out with a complete pulling the shoulder (blade) of a true stag from the Heavenly Mount Kagu, and take cherrybark from the Heavenly Mount Kagu, and perform divination, and pulling up by the roots a true clevera japonica with five hundred (branches) from the Heavenly Mount Kagu, and taking and putting upon its upper branches the augustly complete (string) of curved jewels eight feet (long), of five hundred jewels, and taking and tying to the middle branches the mirror eight feet (long), and taking and hanging upon its lower branches the white pacificatory offerings and the blue pacificatory offerings, His Augustness Grand-Jewel taking these divers things and holding them together with the grand august offerings, and His Augustness Heavenly-Beckoning-Ancestor-Lord prayerfully reciting grand liturgies, and the Heavenly-Hand-Strength-Male-Deity standing hidden beside the door, and Her Augustness Heavenly-Alarming-Female hanging (round her) the heavenly clubmoss from the Heavenly Mount Kagu as a sash, and making the heavenly spindle-tree her headdress, and binding the leaves of the bamboo-grass of the Heavenly Mount Kagu in a posy for her hands, and laying a sounding-board before the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling, and stamping till she made it resound, and doing as if possessed by a deity, and pulling out the nipples of her breasts, pushing down her skirt-string usque ad privates partes. Then the Plain of High Heaven shook, and the eight hundred myriad deities laughed together. Hereupon the Heaven-Shining-Great August-Deity was amazed, and, slightly opening the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling, spoke thus from the inside: "Methought that owing to my retirement the Plain of Heaven would be dark, and likewise the Central Land of Reed-Plains would all be dark; how, then, is it that the Heavenly-Alarming-Female makes merry, and that likewise the eight hundred myriad deities all laugh?" Then the Heavenly-Alarming-Female spoke saying: "We rejoice and are glad because there is a deity more illustrious than Thine Augustness." While she was thus speaking His Augustness Heavenly-Beckoning-Ancestor-Lord and His Augustness Grand-Jewel pushed forward the mirror and respectfully showed it to the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity, whereupon the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity, more and more astonished,

gradually came forth from the door and gazed upon it, where-upon the Heavenly-Hand-Strength-Male-Deity, who was standing hidden, took her august hand and drew her out, and then His Augustness Grand-Jewel drew the bottom-tied rope along at her august back, and spoke, saying: "Thou must not go back farther in than this!" So when the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity had come forth, both the Plain of High Heaven and the Central-Land-of-Reed-Plains, of course, again became light.<sup>1</sup>

In this legend we have what is called by the Japanese the first Kagura or Kami-asobi.<sup>2</sup> Asataro Miyamori, in the introduction to Masterpieces of Chikamatsu, states; "There can be no doubt that the kagura or sacred dance, still performed during festivals in Shinto temples, is the progenitor of all forms of Japanese drama."<sup>3</sup>

Lombard tells of a Kagura held at Kasuga in 1920 which was of special interest because a great effort was made to reproduce ancient forms of performance and stage. Previous to the formal opening of offerings and prayers, the people had been entertained by processions and dancing upon the avenue throughout the day. After the concluding prayers of the priests, wrestlers and horsemen presented an entertainment of sports until it began growing dark. Then large, white paper lanterns and six iron net-braziers were lighted and the stage was covered with straw mats. To the accompaniment of flute and harp, a group of

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<sup>1</sup>Lombard, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup>Lombard defines Kagura as "god-music," op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Asataro Miyamori, Masterpieces of Chikamatsu, rev. Robert Nichols (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926), p. 10.



young maiko danced a series of Kagura; following this was another series of Kagura performed by a number of older women. Popular forms were then presented which included Denkagu and Sarugaku.<sup>1</sup>

Honoring the deities with processions called Matsuri is as common to Japan as the Dionysiac processions were to Greece. One of the most significant to this study is the Matsuri of the Gion shrine in Kyoto which is said to have originated in 869 A. D. In that year a plague was raging in the city; and Urebe-no-hinomaru, in an effort to check the plague, presented to the Gion shrine one halberd for each of the sixty-six provinces of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> The city youths and nearby farmers then carried the sacred palanquins in honor through the streets; and with the plague's being successfully averted, a memorial ceremony was established.<sup>3</sup> Presented to the shrine in 999 A. D. was a float on wheels to be used as a stage for a Dengaku performance in the procession; gradually, floats for musicians, for the dancing of Kuse mae and the primitive Sarugaku were added.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these floats there were halberd-crowned cars

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<sup>1</sup>Early songs and dances. Dengaku was performed by priests; Sarugaku, by other Shinto shrine officers.

<sup>2</sup>The halberd is a modified phallus recognized in Shinto as prophylactic and having the ability to avert disease.

<sup>3</sup>A conveyance, sometime enclosed, shaped like a mammoth on poles and borne on shoulders.

<sup>4</sup>Early Japanese dance forms.

called hoko in which dolls or human actors enacted scenes and events familiar to the people.

Not one but two processions are necessary for the festival at Gion. The first occurs in the morning and is a welcome to the deities; in the afternoon the sacred palanquins are carried from the shrine to a central part of the city where they remain a week and are then returned to the shrine with a similar ceremony.

Japanese religion being cosmic, the numerous gods played a vital part in the lives of the people; and as with most early people, these Japanese gods were closely associated with growth and fertility. If one considers the various traditions which are associated with the rice-god, Inari, a comparison of the forms of worship for Inari and Dionysus might make an interesting study. Sansom even tells of finding in remote villages stones of phallic shape at the edge of rice fields inscribed with such words as "God of the Rice".<sup>1</sup> At this time, however, Lombard's description of a rice-planting celebration based on a free translation of Ege Monogatari will have to suffice. After describing the appearance of the participants, Lombard tells the reader:

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<sup>1</sup>Sansom, op. cit., p. 55.

They . . . . seemed slightly drunken, their drums beating gobo, gobo, quite unlike ordinary drums.

The farmers, busily engaged in planting the rice, grew warm, and began to shout aloud. The musicians and dancers of Dengaku also, though they had been very orderly in coming in, let themselves go, and shouted and yelled as they pleased, . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Doubtless, more and more examples of similarities in the religion could be given, but now let us turn to the established forms of Japanese drama.

The first of the three major forms of Japanese drama to become established was the Noh or Nō drama. As to the origin of the word Nō, there has been considerable discussion. Asataro Miyamori declares, "Etymologically the word is an abbreviation of sarugaku-nō-nō, sarugaku being a corruption of sangaku or "scattered music", that is "popular music".<sup>2</sup>

Beatrice Lane Suzuki tell us some authorities credit the derivation to the Buddhist phrase "Nō sho funi", unity of mind and form, and still other scholars assert that "as the Chinese character which is used for Nō is talent, it signifies a performance of talent".<sup>3</sup> Lombard is more in agreement with this

<sup>1</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Beatrice Lane Suzuki, Nōgaku, Japanese Nō Plays (1st. ed.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1932), p. 14.

last statement when he says No means accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> Lombard further points out that Seami<sup>2</sup> in referring to Noh as "Sarugaku no Noh" rejected the character signifying "monkey" and substituted the character for deity found in the word for Kagura to which Seami credited the origin of Noh.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Shigeyoshi Obata argues the question thus:

Both the No and the Kiogen plays originated in an older form of entertainment called the Sarugaku, which flourished in the Kamakura period (A. D. 1200-1330). It was performed at various Shinto shrines on festival days. Sarugaku means "monkey play". Scholars tell that the word is a corruption of the Chinese phrase, San-gaku, meaning merely folk music in contrast with the court music. But the phonetic perversion carries with it something of literal appropriateness; for the Saru-gaku contained beside its music and dance a great deal of simian antics and verbal travesties that delighted the holiday crowds.<sup>4</sup>

Although various elements of Noh were found in the early days, it was not until about 780 A. D., the Heian Period,<sup>5</sup> that the final dramatic form of Noh became clarified. The

<sup>1</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Seami (1363-1444), actor, composer, and literary critic, whose works were largely responsible for the final form of the Noh dramas.

<sup>3</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>4</sup>Shigeyoshi Obata, "Notes on the Melon Thief," Drama, Vol. 10 (Dec., 1919), p. 103.

<sup>5</sup>The Japan Year Book for 1946-1948 sets down the following literary periods: Yamato, ending in 781 A. D.; Early Heian period, 781-834 A. D.; Middle Heian, 835-980 A. D.; Mature Heian, 981-1064 A. D.; Last Heian, 1065-1182 A. D.; Kamakura, 1182-1334 A. D.; Muromachi, 1335-1603 A. D.; and Yedo, 1603-1886 A. D. The Yedo period is further divided into four divisions: Period of

primary contributing forms to Noh are; Ennen, Dengaku, and Sarugaku.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the Nara Period (A. D. 710-793) and the beginning of the Heian definitely written musical notes with words were used for sacred ceremonies at the Imperial Court. Two men, Kiyotugu-nami and his son, Motokiyo Seami, in the early part of the fifteenth century revolutionized the Sarugaku, building on the best in their own Darugaku and drawing freely from Dengaku. Leaving all the lighter elements to develop into Kyogen, Seami emphasized the serious elements.

Evolving simultaneously with the Noh and springing from a common source, Kyogen took that part of Sarugaku which the Noh discarded and ignored; namely, comedy. Literally, Kyogen means "mad words" or "wild, excited, or foolish words". Referring again to Lombard's book, the writer found this paragraph which gives a more complete understanding of Kyogen:

When, in ancient times, Kagura was performed at the Imperial Palace, impromptu comical plays were given by a wit of clown (sai-no-o); and, in entertainments of Court dancing, the stately and beautiful Chinese dances were frequently interspersed with light and comic dances from Korea. Dengaku, even under Shinto patronage, as played by Kwanami, was full full of rude pranks; and Sarugaku only gradually threw off its original monkey nature.<sup>2</sup>

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Enlightenment, 1603-1608; Period of Development, 1681-1741; Period of Eastward Advancement of Literature, 1741-1791; Period of Maturity, 1791-1836. The last literary period has been given the name of Meiji-Taisho Period, 1886-1926. (Japan: The Foreign Affairs Association of Japan, 1948), pp. 533-538.

<sup>1</sup>Ennen, as Dengaku and Sarugaku, is a performance connected with religious rituals.

<sup>2</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 161.



The element of humor being conspicuous in the popular amusements from which developed Noh, it was never entirely excluded; however, as the Buddhist priests held an almost complete monopoly of the knowledge of writing and as they were hesitant to give the dignity of letters to any except the serious and stately productions, none of the early humorous plays are extant. Serious-minded writers too, especially Seami, attempted to eliminate all elements of comedy. Although these efforts to purge the comic element from the drama were rather effective, human nature demanded its retention. Today these one-act comic interludes are used as episodic scenes to relax that strain on the nerves of the audience which is produced by the Noh dramas.

The early literature of Japan was not limited to ceremonial lyrics, for the Japanese emperors had kataribe or reciters whose duty was to recite legends and stories at court. Naturally the kataribe had their counterpart among the common people; these were blind men called zato who sang their ballads and accompanied themselves by scratching the ribs of their fans to mark the rhythms. These blind men frequented the shrines and temples, or street corners. Sometime they were invited to help in the entertainment at feasts; generally they wandered from inn to inn securing food and lodging for singing to the guests. In this early period were to be found also strolling puppet players who wore boxes forming a miniature stage

suspended by cords around their necks.<sup>1</sup> With the introduction of the use of the samisen these two forms of entertainment united.

The origin of the term Joruri, the first name given puppet drama, has been credited to two different sources. Zoe Kincaid says:

With the greatly improved rhythms of the samisen at their command, minstrels sprang up in all directions, the new style of music being called Joruri, since the first ballads to be composed to the strains of the samisen concerned the love adventures of Joruri-hime, or Princess Joruri.<sup>2</sup>

Asataro Miyamori agrees with Kincaid when he states:

. . . there appeared a story in twelve short parts entitled The Story of Lady Joruri, which was a great favorite among the story reciters. Tradition avers that its author was Ono-no-Otsū, maid of honor to the famous General Nobunaga, although authority for this belief is lacking. The story treats of the love of the famous warrior Yoshitsune and a fictitious heroine of supreme beauty named Joruri. . . . Henceforward this style of recitation came to be known as Joruri, while compositions used by the professional reciters were called joruri-bon, and the reciters themselves joruri-katari. . . .<sup>3</sup>

This explanation seems to be the more popular and authentic origin of the term, and Lombard too admits the preceding story as plausible.<sup>4</sup> Lombard, however, has included another

<sup>1</sup>Dolls have evidently been prominent in the Japanese life. For an earlier use note use in previous discussion of Matsuri.

<sup>2</sup>Zoe Kincaid, Kabuki the Popular Stage of Japan (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1925), p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 185.

possibility of the origin which the writer will include here not because of any authoritative value but as an additional example of the Japanese love of a story.

A reciter of Heike Monogatari in the ore of Bunan (1444-1448), Uda by name, was blind. For this he grieved greatly and prayed for years to the Yakuski Nyorai (Healing Buddha) that his eyes might be opened. Upon one occasion, after having prayed with great lamentation for twenty-one nights, he looked up at dawn and saw the pale moon above the western mountains. His prayers had been answered. In joyful thanksgiving he composed a story, Yasuda Monogatari, divided into twelve parts in imitation of the divisions in the classic Heike Monogatari, or, it may have been, in tribute to the twelve forms of the Healing Buddha. As the Healing Buddha dwelt in Joruri land, the Land of Bright Purity, he called his story Joruri.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the origin of the name Joruri may have been, authorities do give credit to Menukiya Chosaburo<sup>2</sup> with the establishment of the first doll theatre. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Chosaburo had engaged the services of a man named Hitta who knew how to make puppets; and this marvelous innovation gained immediate popularity. With the introduction of puppets, the name Joruri began to be applied to the libretto while the new form of entertainment was called Ayatsuri, or manipulation. In more recent times it has been called Ningyo Shibai, doll theatres.

The age of the puppet drama in the Kyoto-Osaka region lasted nearly one hundred years, somewhere between 1685 and 1785, and may be divided into three periods: the first thirty

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>This is sometime spelled Menukiya Chogoro.



years was its infancy; the next thirty, its golden age; the last years, its period of decay. In its golden age, Ayatsuri completely overshadowed the third type of drama which had developed but gradually the situation was reversed.

The origin of the third and the final major type of Japanese drama, the Kabuki, is appealing to the Western world's sense of romance as influenced by the cinema. The beginning of Kabuki may be set toward the end of the sixteenth century in the city of Kyoto. Considering the charges made against the Kabuki theatre in later years, it seems most strange that a young miko, or sacred dancer, should have founded this theatre of the people.

According to records and tradition, Okuni was on a pilgrimage performing her dance for contributions to the Shinto shrine at Izumo. For some reason, and varied and elaborate assumptions have been given, Okuni decided to remain in Kyoto. She gave her simple performances wearing a black silk priest's robe and a small metal Buddhist gong suspended from her neck which she struck with a mallet while dancing and chanting a Buddhist sutra.

Even with her renowned beauty, if Okuni's dancing had remained simple and semi-religious it is doubtful that her success would have been so great. One of the young samurai, Nagoya Sansaburo, however, became attracted by Okuni and joined her in her public performances gaining popularity and prestige

for himself as an actor. Recognizing Okuni's performances as not being sufficiently interesting, Sansaburo introduced elements of the Kyogen and decreased the religious emphasis by teaching her popular songs and composing new pieces for her. It was not until Okuni assumed the costume of a male, covering her head with a peculiar head-piece and thrusting two swords through her belt, that a great amount of popularity came to her. Sansaburo, being of a military family and having been associated with the feudal lords, was acquainted with the best in literature and art, and he gradually added more and more of the elements of Noh.

According to the Syūtarō Miyake, the etymology of the word, Kabuki, shows it to be a type of acting based on the arts of singing and dancing.<sup>1</sup> Kincaid credits Sansaburo with the naming of these performances saying that the word was no new invention for it had been used for some time to signify something comic.<sup>2</sup>

The original Okuni, although addressing herself primarily to the people, received the patronage of the aristocrats too. Both Okuni and Sansaburo died while Kabuki was at its peak of popularity. It was sometime after Okuni's day that moral laxity among the imitators incurred the enmity of the shoguns.

<sup>1</sup>Miyake, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Kincaid, op. cit. ., p. 53.

Naturally, in Kabuki, as in all things which achieve popularity, imitators sprang up with rapidity. At first these companies of actors were either entirely male or female, but soon the companies included both male and female members who indiscriminately played roles of the opposite sex. Kincaid points out:

Had the women companies remained exemplary in conduct and kept their ranks free from the other sex, the history of the Japanese theater might have been quite different. But the leading actresses were prostitutes; their art was a means to an end, and they abused their privileges as entertainers. No permanent and self-respecting theater could have continued to exist on such an immoral foundation. The degradation of the Onna Kabuki was due in no small degree, however, to the playing of men and women together.<sup>1</sup>

In 1608 the Shogun's Government issued a proclamation limiting the Onna Kabuki<sup>2</sup> to the outskirts of the city. Then, after much disturbance, in 1629 the Government of the third Shogun issued an order strictly forbidding female performances of any kind.<sup>3</sup> With the last days of the shogunate many strict moral measures were lessened, but the prominence of women in the theatre world of Japan has not been great since 1629.

About 1617, a Japanese who had organized companies of women from the pleasure quarter of Kyoto, established a theatre where the companies consisted entirely of men. As these young men had played female roles, the suppression of the Onna Kabuki

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Women's Stage

<sup>3</sup>Even the women of the Joruri were forbidden to perform in public under this proclamation.

Gave them an excellent opportunity for a complete monopoly.

In these companies the chief players were youths; thus, the

name Wakashu Kabuki, or Youth's Stage, was given to this form

of entertainment. These theatres increased in rapid succession

in Osaka, Yedo, and Kyoto and even spread to the provinces. It

is to be expected that many changes arose in this new theatre,

and these will be seen in later chapters of this paper.

On charges of immorality, in 1644 the Wakashu Kabuki

was prohibited by the government even as Onna Kabuki had formerly

been suppressed. In order to punish the young actors for their

immoral behavior, the government had ordered the front hair of

the Wakashu actors to be shaved. No longer presenting an

attractive appearance, these actors were useless. With the closing

of the Onna Kabuki first and then the Wakashu Kabuki, this form

of entertainment seemed doomed from existence. This was not

the case, however, for there soon rose Yaro Kabuki, or the

Men's Stage.

It was in the Yaro Kabuki that this form of entertain-

ment reached its final design. Borrowing freely from all pre-

vious dramatic forms, particularly from Ayatsuri, Yaro Kabuki

gradually raised the moral and social level of its stage until

today it can truly be called the popular drama of the people and

for the people.

In summation it should be pointed out that due

to the difference in the time element of the two national

dramas,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to assume that the Greek influence was felt by the Japanese drama. However, no authority, as far as this writer can find, has shown any such proof or even offered such an hypothesis. The influence of the Osiris festivals of Egypt upon the Greek drama has been noted in this chapter, and in subsequent chapters the influence of Chinese and Indian and Korean culture upon the Japanese drama will be more clearly seen. To reemphasize Lombard's explanation of distinct origins would not be amiss at this point:

Thus we may find not one but many distinct origins of the drama as a form of human expression; and need feel no surprise at the discovery of marked similarities in development of the drama among widely scattered peoples . . . . Such similarities are but evidence of the oneness of human nature in its reaction to similar conditions. . . .<sup>2</sup>

This "oneness of human nature in its reaction to similar conditions" is exemplified through the origin of both Greek and Japanese drama from religious ceremonies. The influence of religion upon the drama of both countries cannot be overly emphasized, and several comparative features are to be found in these religious rituals.<sup>3</sup>

Another obvious point of similarity is the method of expression, combining music, song, and dance, used in these early

<sup>1</sup>The Golden Age of Greece is usually considered the fifth century B. C.; the Golden Age of Japan, around the seventeenth century A. D.

<sup>2</sup>Lombard, . op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Note discussions on Dionysiac and Inari rituals.

rituals: these three elements, in turn, were maintained by the playwrights and actors of Greece and Japan in all future dramatic forms. For material for their plays, the Greek and Japanese turned to the old stories which had been preserved by wandering minstrels.

Of course, it is disappointing to the lover of the Japanese culture that, due to lack of national unity, the country had no Homer as did Greece. Another disappointment to the student of Japanese drama is the Government's suppression of the drama of the common people while the Greek drama received full recognition and encouragement by both the government and the populace. In Greece the government and the people were practically synonymous while in Japan the class distinctions went to the opposite extreme; this can well account for the different treatments afforded these national dramas.

Earlier in this chapter, the writer pointed out that the most authentic fact concerning the arrangement of the program at the City Dionysia was the presentation of three tragedies followed by a satyr play. This arrangement affords a comparison between the use of the Kyogen and the use of the satyr play; for just as the Kyogen is used as comic relief between the serious Noh dramas, Flickinger informs us it "was Aeschylus' frequent practice to have . . . the levity of the concluding piece counterbalancing somewhat the



seriousness of the three tragedies."<sup>1</sup> In comparing Kyogen with the Greek comedy, one finds both forms are described as bawdy and filled with travesties.

Other similarities and differences between the Greek and Japanese drama may already be apparent in this chapter, but these will be discussed more fully in later chapters of this paper. In conclusion, therefore, the writer would like to point out one unique contribution of the Japanese theatre which finds no counterpart in the Greek theatre--Ayatsuri. The gifts which Ayatsuri has given to Japanese culture and in particular to the popular theatre of Japan, Kabuki, will not permit the puppet drama to be forgotten.

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<sup>1</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., p. 198.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

An ideal theatre should be successful in meeting the requirements of the performance and of the spectators; this the theatre of ancient Greece accomplished. It did not appear suddenly in its complete form, but evolved from a simple and temporary place to the magnificent structures that were equal to the other glories of Greece.

In Chapter II the writer traced the origin of Greek dramas to the dithyrambs performed in honor of Dionysus. For these rituals no permanent theatre was either needed or used; instead, the chorus performed around a thymele or altar, and the spectators naturally formed a circle around the participants. Even in this simple form may be found the basic parts of the first permanent Greek theatres: the orchestra, the thymele, and a place for the spectators.

Another pertinent factor which influenced the construction of the Greek theatre should be introduced here: the drama of Greece was a popular and democratic as well as a religious activity.<sup>1</sup> When the permanent theatres came to be built, therefore, there was a necessity for ample room for

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<sup>1</sup>The state even provides admission fees for those who were not financially able to attend. Lauchlan MacLean Watt, Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1908), p. 26.



observing. For this reason, if for no other, the Greek theatre was built on a large scale.<sup>1</sup>

A third influential factor in the building of these theatres is the importance of the chorus. As Greek drama had its origin in the dithyrambs and phallic songs which were choral in form, the chorus played an important role in the early dramatic writings. Upon realizing the importance of the chorus, one cannot wonder that the Greeks gave special consideration to allow adequate space for the action of this group.

The influence of these factors may be seen in the structure of the first permanent theatres of Greece. A hill-slope near the temple of Dionysus in Athens was selected as the site of the most famous of these theatres, and at the bottom of the slope a circle or orchestra was marked out with a thymele in the center. Thus, we find the physical structure of the earliest Greek theatres ideally meeting the necessities by providing a good place for dancing, an orchestra from orcheistrai; a place for seeing, a theatre from theasthai; and a place for hearing, an auditorium from audire.

Authorities on the Greek theatre recognize three distinct types: (1) Classic Athenian, fifth century B. C.; (2) Hellenistic, fourth century B. C.; (3) Graeco-Roman,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Haigh the seating capacity was 17,000. A. E. Haigh, The Attic Theatre, rev. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge (3rd ed.; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press), 1907, p. 100.

second century B. C. Belonging to the fifth century B. C., the classical Athenian theatre holds the greatest interest from a literary standpoint because of its association with the master writers of Greek drama. The second type of theatre is called Hellenic, although erected in territories outside of Greece, due to the great influence of Greek or Hellenic culture. Near the end of the Greek civilization, the spreading Roman ideas were incorporated with those of Greece to bring about the Graeco-Roman theatre.

Many and varied are the opinions of authorities concerning the dates of additions to the theatre and even as to the nature of these additions.<sup>1</sup> The investigator will not bring out these points of debate, but will try to give a clear picture of the different additions and developments which have met with the most general acceptance among the authorities.

One of the first additions to the basic Greek theatre was the skene, a hut used as a dressing room by the actor. As plays began to appear about 465 B. C. which required a palace or temple for the setting, it is plausible to set the date of appearance for the skene prior to that year. Gradually the skene evolved from an essential to a decorative structure. Approximately in the year 425 B. C. a more ornate building was planned and built, a two story building with a firm stone basis.

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<sup>1</sup>For further information concerning the different viewpoints, see Naigh's Attic Theatre, Flickenger's The Greek Theatre and Its Drama, or Margarete Bieber, The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre (1st ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1933).

This building consisted of a long front wall interrupted by the paraskenia, projecting wings at each side. Space between these projecting wings and the seats for the spectators formed two entrances called the parodoi which were used by the chorus during a performance. Stepping upon treacherous ground the writer will stand in agreement with those authorities who believe that there existed a stage, a very low stage called a logeion, between these projecting wings. Behind this stage was a row of columns, sometime called the proskenion, placed in front of the skene, and most authorities will accept the statement that three doors were set into the skene.<sup>1</sup> The second story of this wooden structure was called the episkenion and usually represented a palace roof.

Before going into a discussion of scenery, the writer will list briefly first the characteristics of the Hellenistic theatres then the main features of the Graeco-Roman theatres.

Hellenistic theatre:

- (1) A circular orchestra, or an orchestra capable of being extended in a circular form.
- (2) An auditorium slightly larger than a semicircle.
- (3) A rectangular skene usually divided into various rooms, and with one to three doorways in the front wall of the second story.

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<sup>1</sup>Evidence of three doors in the classic Athenian theatre is not too strong; yet, it is fairly conclusive from the statements of Pollux, that there were three doors in the back wall and one in each of the paraskene in the Hellenistic theatre.

- (4) A series of pillars with panels set between, situated some eight to ten feet in front of the skene.
- (5) A resultant stage normally nine feet high and about eight to ten feet deep, stretching the entire length of the skene.
- (6) An episkenion or proskenion usually pierced by three doors, which, as will be seen later, had definite significance.

In the Graeco-Roman Theatres:

- (1) The auditorium for the most part still retained its old form, stretching beyond the regular semicircle.
- (2) The orchestra, which had been completely circular, was encroached on by the scene-buildings, but it always remained more than a semicircle.<sup>1</sup>
- (3) The lowest row of seats usually abutted directly on the orchestra, although this is by no means an invariable rule.
- (4) The stage-front was changed and the background elaborated.

The first scenery was the skene which was used to represent a palace or temple; previous to that time the playwrights had laid the action in some open region. If we accept the

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<sup>1</sup>In many of these theatres the orchestra if carried round in a complete circle would touch with its circumference the front of the scene-building proper, the stage jutting forward for about half its radius.

words of Aristotle, Sophocles was the first to introduce scene-painting; however, it was the scene which Aeschylus commissioned the painter Agatharchus to paint which started the discussions by Democritus and Anaxagoras on perspective painting. As to the various types, Haigh points out that Vitruvius is rather accurate, according to extant plays, when he divides scenery into three general classes; tragic, comic, and satyric. In speaking of the writings of Vitruvius, Haigh states:

. . . the salient features in a tragic scene were columns, pediments, statues, and other signs of regal magnificence. In comedy the scene represented a private house, with projecting balconies, and windows looking out upon the stage. The scenery in the satyric drama consisted of a rustic region with trees, caverns, mountains, and other objects of the same kind.<sup>1</sup>

The art of scenic painting did not remain static; rather, as the importance of the chorus decreased, the scenery became more realistic and elaborate. There was special use made of pinakes, units of painted curtains or boards, which were attached to the skene or placed on a periaktoi, a triangular prism which revolved allowing the scenes to change when needed.

One of the most unusual, and some observers might say most useless, mechanical contrivances of the Greek theatre was the ekkyklona, a small wooden platform on wheels. However unrealistic, and the Greeks did not stress realism to any great extent, the ekkyklona had its practical side. The action of Greek plays always being laid in the open air, there would

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh, op. cit., p. 182.



have been no way to show an effective interior scene had not the oktyklens been used.

Of greater importance and more frequently associated with the Greek theatre was the mechane, a crane and pulley. Example after example may be given from the extant Greek plays of the use of the machane to raise or lower a supernatural character from and to the stage.<sup>1</sup> The gods of the Greek plays have become so closely connected with this mechanical device they are frequently referred to as the deus ex machina, god of the machine. One other apparatus connected with the gods was the theologeion. The place of the theologeion in the Greek theatre and how it was manipulated cannot be agreed upon by the authorities: one can be safe in saying, however, that the theologeion was a space designated for the appearance of a god.

For the sake of being complete, the following, but not well-known, devices should be mentioned:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Enaploema - Naigh says this was probably a common trap door.
- (2) Phonoteron - A device for imitating the sound of thunder.
- (3) Perkunoepkepeion - Used for imitating lightning.
- (4) Strophelion - A revolving machine used to exhibit dead heroes in heaven or deaths at sea or in a battle were shown.

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<sup>1</sup>Naigh mentions these plays; Peace, and Clouds, pp. cit. pp. 115-116; Naigh cites these examples; Prometheus, Andromache, Electra, and Helen, pp. cit., pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup>All of these devices are discussed by Naigh, op. cit., pp. 117-118.



- (5) Kemikyklion - Semicircular in shape and gave a distant view of a city, or a person swimming in the sea.

In the way of smaller stage decorations, the Greeks used statues of gods, altars, tombs, benches, and even a rocky ledge. One piece of realism which the Greeks were not averse to was the use of horses and chariots. Due to the vast size of the Greek theatre, the use of horses and chariots was particularly suited. Primarily, the horse and chariot was used only for the arrival of a character who had travelled a great distance.

Since there is no evidence to the contrary, one may conclude curtains were entirely foreign to the Greek theatre. Entrances were effected either by the parodoi, doors, or by some mechanical device. Certain conventions are attached to the use of the paradoi and doors. For example, in Athens the paradoi on the east indicated a character was arriving by land from some distant place, and an entrance from the west told the audience the character had just come from the city or had arrived by sea. As for the doors, the center door was reserved for the principal character; the one to the right, for secondary characters, and the door to the left, for the lesser characters.<sup>1</sup>

Depending entirely upon sunlight for illumination, the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 190-194.

theatres were open-air theatres with no roof and used no unnatural forms of lighting. Playwrights occasionally took advantage of this natural illumination by having the action of the play correspond to the time of day at which the performance would occur. In Euripides' Iphigenia at Aulis the setting starts with last darkness before dawn and sometime later the dawn begins to break. The rest of the action takes place in the broad light of day. With the performance starting early in the day this synchronization of setting and actual physical phenomena would be entirely possible.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of Japanese drama being Kagura, the writer will begin with the stage used by this form. Kagura was originally an entertainment of music and dancing in the presence of some shinto diety. As for the site of the performances, the ground or a temporary platform in the open air served as the stage for these performances. Lombard in telling of the attempt in 1920 to reproduce ancient forms of Kagura gives us a fair idea of the primitive Kagura stage:

At a distance from the permanent shrine had been erected a temporary shrine of primitive construction, with unhewn posts and uncolored mud walls. Its overhanging roof of thatch was supported in front by two tree-trunk pillars, from between which straw-covered steps led to the altar. The structure, resting directly upon the ground, which had been built up about six feet, was about eight feet by ten, exclusive of the steps and overhanging roof. In front of the steps, to the west, an inclined, grass-turfed descent led to a turfed square about thirty

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<sup>1</sup> Flickinger, op. cit., pp. 224-26.

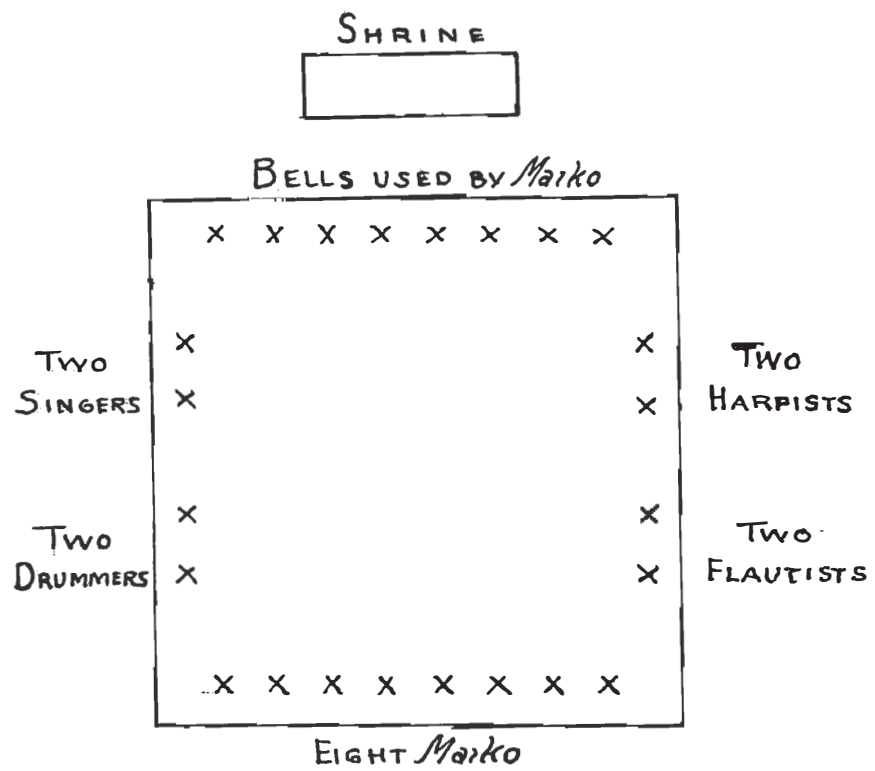


Fig. 1.--Groundplan of Kagura stage

feet on a side, which in turn had been built up some three feet from the ground-level. From this square a second incline led to the ground-level on the west. Surrounding the elevated square on three sides was what might be called the pit, some thirty feet wide; and outside of this, on the north and south, were crude roofed shelters for participants and guests of honour. On a line with the back of these shelters, and extending a little to the west, the entire ground was enclosed by a bamboo fence, which permitted free observation without entrance.<sup>1</sup>

For the presentation of Kagura at Shinto shrines today there is a platform or stage which is a permanent part of the shrine. These Kagura stages face the shrine, for one must remember the performance is primarily for a deity; however, the curtains enclosing the rear and sides of the stage are drawn so as to allow the spectators to observe. Lombard has printed a diagram shown on opposite page showing the arrangement of the Kagura stage based upon information found in a closed canon of official Wakamiya Kagura.

Just as Noh and Kyogen are indebted to Kagura for their origin, so are these two dramatic forms indebted to Kagura for the beginnings of their stage. Since Kyogen is used only as interludes between the Noh plays, in the following discussion the investigator will refer to this stage used by both Kyogen and Noh as the Noh stage.

The Noh stage is erected on a platform of highly polished cypress wood six metres square and one metre high which is covered by its own roof supported by four pillars; this is

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<sup>1</sup>Lombard, op. cit., p. 60.

the acting area. The four pillars supporting the roof have special names and functions: The pillar nearest the bridge is called the Shite-bashira, First Actor's Pillar, for it is here that the first actor begins his performance. The one in front of the Shite-bashira towards the audience is called the Metsuke-bashira, Mark Pillar, as it is used as a mark for the actor while performing. Diagonal to the First Actor's Pillar is the Waki-bashira or Second Actor's Pillar where the Second Actor stands or sits upon finishing his part. The fourth pillar is known as the Fue-bashira or the Flute Player's Pillar because the flute player sits beside it.

The back stage, half the size of the acting stage, is in full view of the audience, and here sit the musicians and prompters. On stage left projects a small porch or verandah a metre wide which is called the Chorus Verandah. A small door at the rear of the Verandah called the Kiri-do, or "hurry-door" is the entrance and exit for the chorus and any actor who is suppose to have been killed.

On stage right, at nearly a right angle to the back stage, is a corridor about sixteen metres long and three metres wide with a railing on both sides; this is the passage called the hashigakari by which the actors and musicians enter and leave the stage. Under the stage and the hashigakari are buried large earthenware pots which give resonance to the dance. At the far end of the bridge hangs a curtain of five



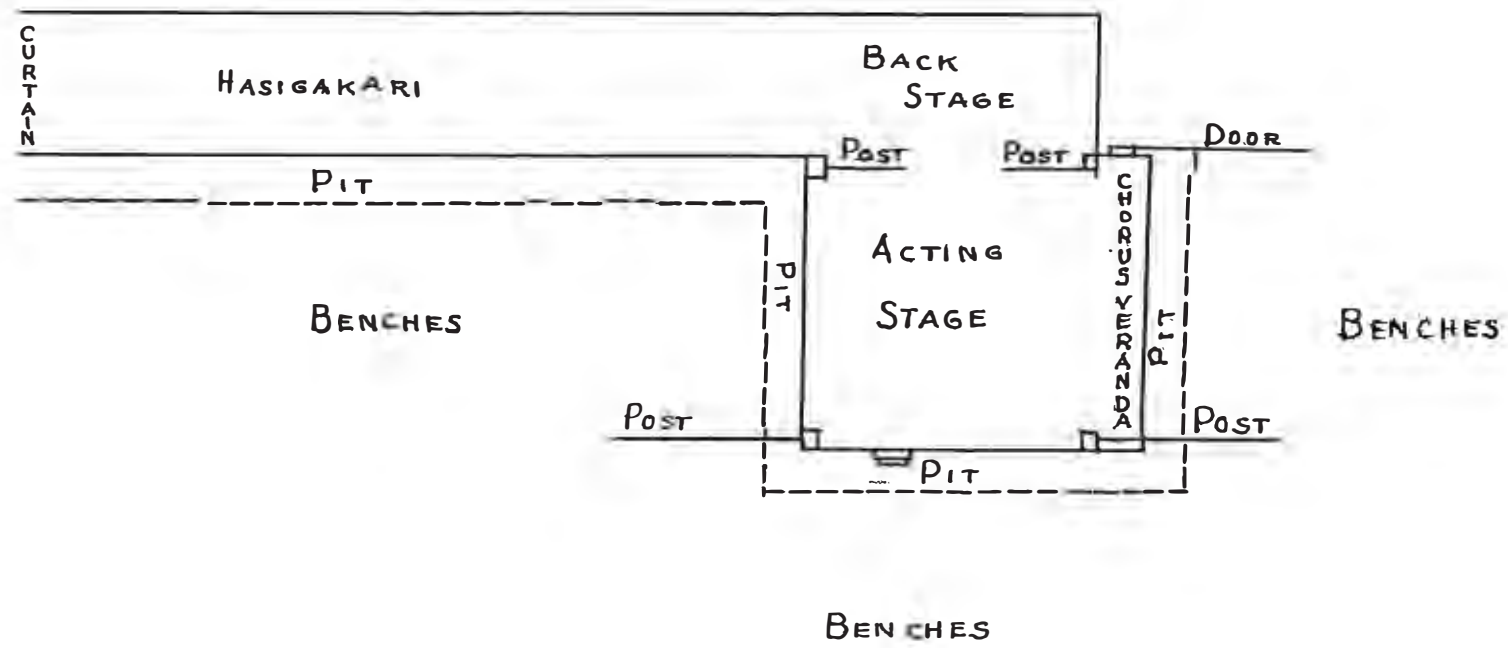


Fig. 2. Groundplan of Noh theatre



colours which is lifted by two bamboo-sticks to allow the actor to enter the hashigakari from the dressing rooms.<sup>1</sup>

From the ground plan on the opposite page one can readily see that the stage is so constructed as to project into the audience and allows spectators to sit on at least two sides to view the performance. The pit, a space covered with pebbles, prevents the stage and audience from becoming one. Three pine trees placed in the pit beside the bridge are used to help the actor mark his place as well as being symbols for heaven, earth, and humanity. The staircase descending from the stage into this pebbled space has not been used since the feudal days of the Shogunate. The box facing the staircase is the seat of honor and through its bamboo screen the Emperor and Empress watch the command performances just as did their predecessors in the feudal times.

Except for the painted board of the back wall the Noh theatre uses no scenery. Occasionally a framework may be used to represent a boat, or four posts covered by a roof may represent a house. In this symbolic drama a fan is used as a knife, a dipper, or a brush; a few branches may become a forest.

The influence of Ayatsuri on the Kabuki theatre is very obvious. It seems unjust that the offspring, Kabuki, should

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<sup>1</sup>This is the only curtain found in the Noh theatre.

consume its parent, but this is figuratively what Kabuki did to the Doll-theatres. Kincaid tells us:

Not only the plays, but the acting, stage furniture, and costumes of the Doll-theatre influenced Kabuki.

\* \* \* The decline of the Doll-theatre was due to the fact that Kabuki took everything the dolls had to offer, and made such a poor return the doll-stage began to starve.<sup>1</sup>

From this one may correctly deduce that it would be repetitious to discuss the theatre and stage of Ayatsuri and then Kabuki; therefore, the writer of this thesis will take the liberty of referring in this chapter only to the theatre of Kabuki.

In the days of O-Kuni, performances were given at the dry river beds of Kyote on a roughly constructed platform in the open-air. Evidently the theatre used by O-Kuni was enclosed by a bamboo fence and had a drum tower built in front. This drum tower called yagura was a small square platform which supposedly resembles a castle tower with a battle drum. There was no roof for protection from the weather, and the pit being of beaten earth made it almost a necessity for the audience to have individual straw mats. These early performances required no permanent structure, and it was not unusual for O-Kuni to perform upon a temporary stage erected for the use of Noh players.

With the growth of Kabuki, the need for a permanent theatrical structure was seen, and about 1620 the local au-

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

thorities of Kyoto gave permission for seven yagura to be built. In Ōsaka there were several fairly large theatres, and in 1624 Kanzaburo Nakamura opened the Nakamura Theatre in Edo which is now Tokyo. Other similar structures such as the Miyako-za and the Murayama-za followed.

Because of a play within a play a faithful preservation of the early Murayama-za may still be seen. Resembling the Noh theatre in almost every respect, the stage is square with the musicians kneeling at the back and the temple-like roof over the stage supported by the traditional four pillars. A long bridge, the hashigakari of the Noh theatre, joins the stage at a right angle. Boxes hung with fine bamboo curtains, used by the aristocracy, look down on the stage from left and right. Kincaid says this early theatre "was in all essentials like that of Ō-Kuni Kabuki except that it was of a more permanent construction."<sup>1</sup>

In the early part of the eighteenth century, an affair between a fair court member and an actor at the Yamamura-za, caused the authorities to place strict regulations upon not only the actors but costumes, properties and theatrical construction as well. The theatres were changed from two-story to one-story structures thus eliminating the suspended galleries formerly used by the high-class playgoers. Even the material used for building the theatre was less substantial than before;

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., p. 216.

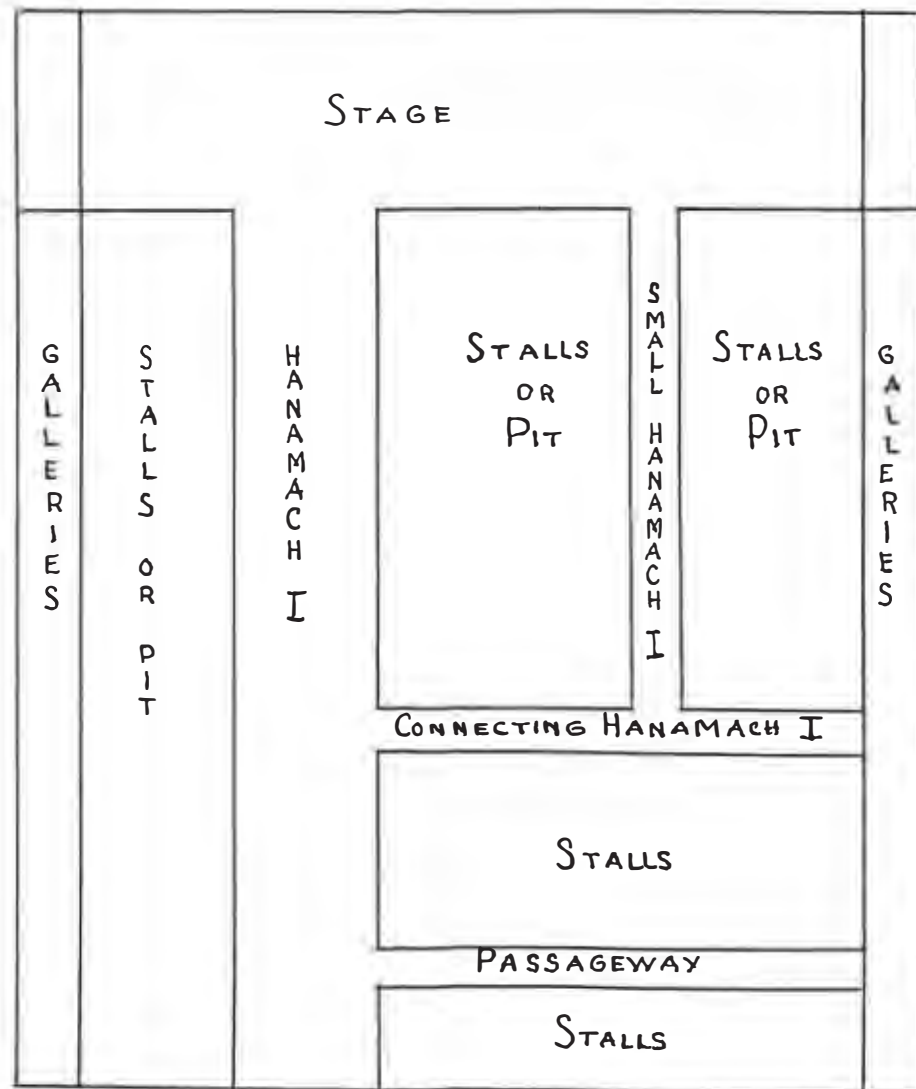


Fig. 3.--Groundplan of Kabuki theatre

however, as compensation many changes came about. Drop curtains as well as drawn ones came into use, the hasigakari gave way to the hanamichi or flower way,<sup>1</sup> and large stage furniture began to be used for the first time.

One of the most noticable changes which took place towards the middle of the eighteenth century was the change in the stage itself. Due to the need for more space, the two front pillars were eliminated which necessarily brought a change in the stage roof. Not wishing to eliminate the roof completely because of the religious symbolism connected with it, the theatre people had the roof represented in relief projecting over the proscenium. This being done, no further use was found for the back pillars, and the stage took on a new form.

Some color prints done in 1771 show that the Kabuki theatre had lost all resemblance to its square origin; the stage had become long and ran parallel to the audience. The pictures also show two hanamichi, one large and the other small, rising above the heads of the audience which is characteristic of the Kabuki theatre today.

What caused this increase of spaciousness on the stage? It was the Doll-theatres, for in the Ayatsuri ample room was needed for the complicated movements of the marionettes, the doll-handlers, and for the property men and scene-shifters.

One of the most unusual mechanical devices borrowed by

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<sup>1</sup>Similar to the Noh hasigakari except for its position in relation to the audience.



Kabuki from the Doll-theatres was the revolving stage which allowed for varied and rapid changes of scenery.<sup>1</sup> This stage allows for three, sometimes four, sets of scenes. Turned only a quarter it provides an extension of the scene; turned half-way, an entirely different scene is revealed. This apparatus is a credit to the Japanese theatre not only because it is largely responsible for the beauty of Kabuki settings but also because it was in use in the Orient a hundred years before its appearance in the West.

As in the Greek theatre, the Japanese Kabuki made excellent use of trap doors for entrances and exits. To a man named Hasegawa Kampei goes the credit for the invention of these contrivances which caused buildings to rise in the air and trap door disappearances. There are even means for providing for shunori, air-riding feats, when a character suspended in mid-air moves across the stage.

Near 1800 there was a period when the stage settings became very realistic and elaborate. In one instance the interior of one of the great halls of the Imperial Palace at Kyoto was reproduced on the stage; however, the authorities protested and placed restrictions at that time upon the extravagance of the theatres. Henceforth, only the essentials were used, and it is this simplicity, taste, and style which has become characteristic of the Kabuki settings. Kincaid gives a clear picture of this

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<sup>1</sup>All changing of scenery is done by the kurombo, a man clothed entirely in black, in full view of the audience. The curtain is never closed after the performance begins until the last piece is finished.



statement when she writes:

It is doubtful if on any other stage in the world can be viewed more charming effects achieved by such simple means. A red lacquered bridge over an iris pond, and the characters in picturesque combinations of colours; the soft greys and whites of a snowy scene, and in the centre an ancient cherry tree in full bloom; the lonely campfire of a beggar in the mountains, a castle moat in the moonlight; a single fantastic pine, by the seashore, are some of the familiar Kabuki scenes.<sup>1</sup>

Frequently the Kabuki stage is almost plain and for the most part, symbolic. In the play named "Suzugamori" when the curtain is drawn back there is a kuromaku, a black curtain, which symbolizes the dark night. At the right and left a two-fold screen called yabudatami made of bamboo and bamboo twigs represent a bamboo grove. The namita, a board on which are painted waves, symbolizes a sea. At times in place of the namita a white curtain painted with blue waves is suspended from the gallery.

No restrictions are placed upon the decorations of the Kabuki stage today. Varying from the simple to the ornate, from the single room in the small cottage of a farmer to picturesque interior of a mansion, the Kabuki has come to recognize no limits as may be seen in Kincaid's elaboration:

The producer has taken the main room of a Japanese dwelling for his model -- a straw-matted room, sliding screens for background, a severely plain apartment; for its sole decoration, an alcove containing a hanging picture, before which stands a vase of flowers or object of art. It has not been necessary for him to knock out one side of the house in order to allow the audience a view of what is passing within. The Japanese room being open to the outside, forms an admirable setting for the action of the plays.

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., p. 29.

To this room, which is in reality a platform for the players, he has added adjoining apartments, corridors, bridge-passages, verandahs, and the sloping roof is always present, either in part or as a whole. Completing the picture are gardens and rustic gates, stone water-basins, stepping-stones, wells, bridges, ponds, fences, and stone lanterns, and he has surrounded his buildings with the favourite flowers of Kabuki, lotus, chrysanthemum, peony, iris, and azalea. With a true love of nature he has placed in his scenes cherry and plum trees in full bloom, and has used pine trees and scarlet maples, drooping willows and feathery bamboo.

: : : the Kabuki carpenters have created types for all classes of dwellings the plays require. The background for a room in a great mansion will show a series of sliding panels on which are painted Chinese castles and pagodas, golden clouds, and green misty hills. Silver screens may be decorated with black waves in motion, or blue water, lotus leaves and flowers. The structures to be represented vary from an elaborately constructed mansion in cream wood to the realistic interior of the middle-class home in which the white-papered windows and doors form a pleasing feature. Temples, a hermitage in the midst of a forest, the thatched cottage of a farmer, are all variations of the one theme, which gives the widest latitude for invention and decoration.<sup>1</sup>

The hanamichi, being an extension of the stage, is never overlooked in preparing the scenery; indeed when the hanamichi is used one of the most important characteristics of Kabuki is being utilized. Tall autumn grasses may be placed on each side of the hanamichi when a hero playing on his flute walks through the moonlight with an assassin creeping behind him. If the action takes place in the winter, snow drifts cover the hanamichi, and blue and white cotton can transform this walk into a stream of water.

Not because of any lack of initiative are most Kabuki scenes kept symbolistic. Ability is not lacking in the realistic

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., pp. 31-2.

depicting of earthquakes and a mansion collapsing under the repeated shocks. The building sinks down, and the hero crawls through the roof surrounded by ruin and desolation. Even in creating violent snowstorms, typhoons, and fires, Kabuki holds its own.

As for the small properties of Kabuki, imitations will not do: true arts and crafts of Japan are used. On the stage are the lanterns in all shapes and sizes, oil-paper umbrellas, vases, hanging pictures, tall candle-sticks in brass or lacquer, chests, cups, swords, helmets, lacquered tables, and Buddhist images.

Seem ngly out of place in this discussion may be this mention of the Kabuki horse; however, the stage horse is so much a convention of the Kabuki theatre that it may be considered under stage properties. This horse for several reasons is not the actual animal, but two well-trained men in a realistic costume. Earlier in this chapter the writer made mention of the Greek's use of real horses and chariots. Not only because of the small size of the Japanese theatre<sup>1</sup> but because of dramatic action assigned to the Kabuki horse would it be unwise to use a live animal. The danger of a real horse upon the hanamichi in the midst of little boxes crammed with spectators is obvious. The following action from the music play, "Omori Hikoshichi", illustrates the dramatic ation performed by the Kabuki horse:

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<sup>1</sup>Even today the largest Kabuki theatre has a seating capacity of only 2,200.



The hero, Omori, while assisting a young woman to cross the ford of a river is suddenly attacked by her. He finds that she is trying to recover her father's sword, and having it with him, he generously gives it up. To hide his act from his men, he pretends to be overcome by uncanny influences, but this excuse does not satisfy the retainers, and when Omori jumps upon his horse, they pull the bridle this way and that, the restive animal rearing and plunging to the strains of the samisen.<sup>1</sup>

Lighting for the indoor Kabuki theatres was furnished by candles set in tall, wooden candlesticks along the front of the stage, but on dark and gloomy days these lights had to be supplemented by candles held close to the performers by stage-hands clothed in black. This use of candles is still practiced in some theatres for to many Kabuki lovers the electric lights seem harsh and displeasing when used for this delicate art.

More differences than similarities appear in a comparison between the physical theatres of Greece and Japan. The basic forms of the stages follow radically different patterns: the stage of ancient Greece was circular; and the Japanese stage is square, or, as in later Kabuki, rectangular. Whereas the Greek theatre of a community was built to hold the entire populace, the theatres of Japan were built for certain classes; the Noh, for the aristocrats and the Kabuki, for the commoners. Naturally, the Greek theatres were much larger in size than the theatres of Japan.

Although both theatres began as open-air structures, in the course of time first the stage was covered by a roof and

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., p. 23.

then the entire theatrical structure was roofed by the Japanese. Rising one after the other, the seats provided for the Greek audience were stone benches built on a hillside with the first row some time touching upon the orchestra. Earliest theatres of Japan provided individual grass mats which were spread upon the ground; and later, although the Noh theatre came to provide benches, the Kabuki and Avatsuri still make use of mats within the little stalls. Always the audience is separated from the stage by a small designated space usually covered with pebbles.

Where in the Greek theatre can one find a counterpart for the hasigakari of the Noh and the hanamichi of the Kabuki theatre? The use of curtains was unknown in the Greek theatre, but in Japan all but the earliest theatres make use of curtains. In even the earliest days of Japanese drama, ceremonial rituals held at twilight or later had lighted lanterns and fires to illuminate the stage; and today in some of the Kabuki theatres the ancient practice of using candles is preferred to electricity.

True, some similarities do exist, and these should not be slighted. The relation of the audience to the stage prove interesting in that both theatres had spectators seated on more than one side of the stage as found in the conventional theatres of the Western world. In the Greek theatres the auditorium was always a semi-circle and in some instances extended somewhat past a semi-circle. Although the basic patterns of the Japanese

theatre was square, spectators were afforded a view of the stage from two and possibly three sides.

Scenery in the Greek theatres was slight and simple as is true of the scenery of the Noh theatres; on the other hand Ayatsuri and Kabuki scenery varies from the simple to the extremely elaborate. The machinery of the Greeks for use in dramatic performances was not only equaled but surpassed by the inventions of the Japanese craftsmen. Particular attention should be given to the use of the mechane among the Greeks and of the shunori among the Japanese. Lastly, one must note the Japanese innovation of a revolving stage was not only absent in the theatres of ancient Greece, but its possibilities had been overlooked by the theatres of the Occident a hundred years after its initial use in Japan.



## CHAPTER IV

### DRAMATIC THEORIES AND STRUCTURES

Any complete discussion of Greek dramatic structure must, through necessity, include the theories of Aristotle, the first great dramatic critic, as set forth in his Ars Poetica. Based upon a study of the previous dramatic writings of Greek playwrights, Aristotle's theory encompasses the main ideals sought after by the Greek playwrights.<sup>1</sup>

Tragedy . . . . is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.<sup>2</sup>

From this definition of tragedy by Aristotle, one sees that the plot should be serious, complete, and of a certain length; the language should be artistic and appropriate; the form should be dramatic; pity and fear are the proper emotions to incite in the audience.

In meeting the requirement of serious action, Greek playwrights turned to mythology, legends, and history for their plots. Though not condemning this practice, Aristotle points out that familiar plots are not essential; and he further

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<sup>1</sup>This does not necessarily mean the early Greek playwrights followed all of these standards.

<sup>2</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., 1149b 24, p. 23.

advises that the poet "should be a maker of plots rather than of verses",<sup>1</sup>

Unity of action is needed to make a plot complete, and this unity may be achieved only when the poet leaves out all unnecessary material.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, of the two types of plot, simple and complex, Aristotle accords more artistic merit to the complex. This complex plot involves either reversal or recognition or both which "should arise from the internal structure of the plot, so that what follows should be the necessary or probable result of the preceding action."<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the magnitude or length of the tragedy, Aristotle makes no rigid limitations. True, the plot should not be so long that the memory is unable to retain it; but mainly the length should be governed by the nature of the drama allowing for a change of fortune from good to bad through a natural sequence of events.

In further explaining the term "embellished language" found in the definition of tragedy, Aristotle asserts, "I mean language into which rhythm, 'harmony', and song enter";<sup>4</sup> that is, poetry. Aristotle's preference for the use of iambic

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1451b 25, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>The theory of unity is referred to frequently as the theory of the three unities and has had great influence upon the dramas of the classic playwrights of France and Italy.

<sup>3</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., 1452 a 15, p. 39. Aristotle further clarifies the meaning of reversal to mean a verse in the action and of recognition to mean a change from ignorance to knowledge.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 1149b 25, p. 23.

meter over trochaic tetrameter is indicated when he first speaks of the "grotesque diction of the earlier satyric form and the stately manner of Tragedy" and then points out that the iambic had replaced the trochaic tetrameter of the satyric order.<sup>1</sup> At a later point in his discussion, Aristotle does admit the need for trochaic tetrameter when he states:

. . . . the iambic and the trochaic tetrameter are stirring measures, the latter being akin to dancing, the former expressive of action.<sup>2</sup>

Many references to diction, the metrical arrangement of words, are found in the Poetics. According to Aristotle's theory perfection of style is reached through the use of not only current or 'common' words but of metaphors also. The current words make for clearness, and the metaphors give dignity; thus, perfection of style is described by this critic as being a clear and dignified style.

Originating in simple choral odes in honor of Dionysus, Greek tragedy developed into an elaborate dramatic form, "presenting all . . . . character as living and moving before us."<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, listing the parts of tragedy, specifies the following five divisions; (1) Prologue, (2) Parode, (3) Episode,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1149 a 20, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1459 b 35, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1448 a 20, p. 13.

(4) Exode, and (5) Stasimon.<sup>1</sup> Further explanations by Aristotle indicate that the Prologue includes all of the play preceding the Parode which, in turn, is explained as being the first undivided choric part; the Episode consists of the parts between choric songs; the Exode is the part of tragedy which is not followed by a choric ode; the Stasimon is a choric ode not written in anapests or trochaic tetrameters. Most Greek tragedies are divisible into these five parts.<sup>2</sup>

The last part of Aristotle's definition of tragedy which deals with the "purgation" of pity and fear has frequently been referred to as the theory of katharsis.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, Aristotle tells us, "pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves."<sup>4</sup> Apparently contradictory is Aristotle's statement, found in another part of the Poetics, in which he declares that tragedy must represent men as better than they really are.<sup>5</sup> The following explanation by Butcher brings these two seemingly incongruous statements into accord:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1452 b 12, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Exceptions are cited by Flickinger, op. cit., p. 298.

<sup>3</sup>S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts (4th ed.; London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1932), pp. 242-58.

<sup>4</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., 1453 a 5, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1448 a 16, p. 13.



... we arrive at the result that the tragic hero is a man of noble nature, like ourselves in elemental feelings and emotions; idealised, indeed, but with so large a share of our common humanity as to enlist our eager interest and sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

Further limitation of character is set by Aristotle when he assures the student that pity and fear may be aroused only when the tragic hero is "a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty."<sup>2</sup>

There is one quality which Aristotle considers the deciding element in bringing a story from the realm of history into the realm of poetry -- universality. This quality is explained in Aristotle's own words:

By the universal I mean how a person of a certain type will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity . . .<sup>3</sup>

So important has this quality become that today it is considered as a basic requirement for great art; and in the following statement by Butcher, one finds the opinion of many authorities expressed.

All great poetry and art fulfil this law of universality, but none perhaps so perfectly as the poetry and art of the Greeks.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Butcher, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., 1452 b 30, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1451 b 5, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Butcher, op. cit., p. 339.

Such, then, are the general standards for Greek tragedies as set forth by Aristotle in Ars Poetica.

Earlier in the discussion of Aristotle's theories, mention was made of the use of myths, legends, and history as sources of material for Greek playwrights. If the story of Phrynichus is authentic, the use of contemporary history, unless adequately disguised, was definitely discouraged.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, only one example can be given of a tragedy based entirely on fictitious incidents and characters.<sup>2</sup>

Most Greek playwrights restricted their subject matter to the stories of only a few families.<sup>3</sup> Variation, therefore, had to be secured through the interpretation of these stories and through the intermixture of different dramatic techniques. This practice may best be illustrated by excerpts from Watt's discussion of the three major Greek tragedy writers, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides:

Aeschylus had dealt with the big questions of the heroes and gods, and the relation of man to these. . . . Sophocles dealt with humanity, its outlook, and its remedies. . . .<sup>4</sup> He (Euripides) seems to create a dramatic situation of overmastering difficulties, shows a soul entangled in the wiles of the gods; and then, in a half-petulant mood, and with a dash of scorn, drags in the gods to pull apart the difficulties which themselves have made.<sup>5</sup>

Watt also attributes to Aeschylus the initial use of a tragic

<sup>1</sup>A heavy fine was said to have been placed upon Phrynichus because of his play, Capture of Miletus, and the play was prohibited by law. Haigh, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Agathon's Antheus.

<sup>3</sup>Flickinger mentions Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, and Thyestes; op. cit., p. 124. Aristotle has included Alcmaeon Telepus; op. cit., 1453 a 20, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Watt, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 82.



style diction, rich and heavy, which was used by other Greek writers until the time of Euripides; to Sophocles Watt gives credit for writing dramas of one individual interest not dependent upon trilogy sequences; and to Euripides credit is given for a new speech filled with idiomatic dialogue as well as many archaic phrases.<sup>1</sup>

Considering that the best of the extant Greek dramas were based upon the same stories, the writer is not surprised to find the same general motives appearing in the writings of the various Greek playwrights. Listed here are a few of the general motives and conventions found in certain Greek plays:

- (1) The Vendetta law or revenge by blood kin -- Aeschylus' The Choephora,
- (2) Revenge by the gods -- Aeschylus' The Choephora,
- (3) Influence of the dead -- Aeschylus' The Choephora,
- (4) Mother love -- Aeschylus' Agamemnon,
- (5) Atonement for sin possible through suffering -- Aeschylus' Agamemnon,
- (6) Insanity -- Aeschylus' Agamemnon,
- (7) Hospitality as a virtue -- Aeschylus' The Suppliants,
- (8) Sins against parents punishable in the lower world -- Aeschylus' The Eumenides,
- (9) Pollution by blood demands purification -- Aeschylus' The Eumenides,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

- (10) Gods on side of justice -- Sophocles' Electra,
- (11) Infidelity of a wife -- Sophocles' Electra,
- (12) Burial for the dead -- Sophocles' Antigone,
- (13) Infidelity of a husband -- Euripides' Electra,
- (14) Love of country -- Euripides' Iphigeneia at Aulis,
- (15) Sacrifice of loved one for country -- Euripides' Iphigeneia at Aulis,
- (16) Self-sacrifice for love of country -- Euripides' Iphigeneia at Aulis,
- (17) The ennoblement of a common man -- Euripides' Electra.<sup>1</sup>

When the works of a poet were presented at the City Dionysia four plays were included; three tragedies and one satyric drama. If the four plays were written on different aspects of the same general theme, the term tetralogy was applied to them; however, if the satyric drama was based on a different topic than the tragedies, the tragedies were referred to as a trilogy. Only one trilogy is extant and no tetralogy.<sup>2</sup>

Comedy is not discussed as thoroughly by Aristotle in the Poetics as is tragedy; however, many of the principles set up for tragedy may also be applied to comedy and other principles of comedy may be implied in Aristotle's statements.<sup>3</sup> Attri-

<sup>1</sup>Based on discussion of Greek tragedies by Watt, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>A lengthy discussion has been done by Lane Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922).

buting the origin of comedy to the leaders of the phallic songs, Aristotle credits with being the first Athenian writer to abandon the lampooning form and turn to the generalizing of themes and plots.<sup>1</sup> To Homer, Aristotle gives recognition for "dramatizing the ludicrous instead of writing personal satire."<sup>2</sup>

It is a relatively simple matter to list the distinguishing features assigned directly to comedy in the Poetics:

- (1) The ludicrous consists of "some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive."<sup>3</sup> The comic mask is representative of this statement in that the mask is distorted but no pain is indicated.

- (2) The plot with a double ending is best for comedy with the fortune changing from bad to good.

- (3) Comedy represents men as worse than they are in actual life.
- (4) Comedy, like tragedy, should be universal in the respect that it should deal with people of certain types rather than with individual personages.

- (5) The aim of comedy should be to give pleasure or incite laughter.

- (6) Inappropriate use of words is ludicrous.

Aristotle, *op. cit.*, 1449 b 5, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 1448 b 30, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 1449 a 30, p. 21.

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By studying the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes, authorities have discovered the following seven parts of comedy:

(1) Prologue: Spoken by the actors and acts as exposition and begins the action of the play,

(2) Parados: Entrance song of the chorus,

(3) Agon: A dramatized debate between two actors with each supported by a semi-chorus,

(4) Parabasis: An agon between the choruses in which the views of the poet were expressed on various subjects,

(5) Episodes: Usually showed the results of the victory in the agon,

(6) Choral odes: Interspersed among the episodes,

(7) Exodus: The recessional song of the chorus.<sup>1</sup>

Greek comedy was treated with less interest than tragedy. Recognition of comedy at the City Dionysia was not given by the state until almost fifty years after the recognition of tragedy (534 B. C.), and nothing has been recorded as to the techniques of the comic actors.<sup>2</sup> In view of these facts it is not surprising that tragedy exerted much influence upon the structure of comedy in the course of its development; thus, in the early part of the fourth century, the use of the agon and the parabasis was discontinued.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., pp. 40-42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 193.



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In a study of the Japanese dramatic structure, it is discouraging to find that the works of Seami have not been translated into English. According to all authorities on the subject, Seami's Sixteen Treatises is comparable to Aristotle's Ars Poetica; yet, only brief interpretations of Seami's works are found in the English language. The following discussion is based upon such references as have been discovered by the author.<sup>1</sup>

From the theory advanced by Seami one finds that theoretically the Noh plays should possess three elements: (1) Shu, adequate material; (2) Shaku, harmony between musical compositions and plot; (3) Sho, suitable expression of word in keeping with the atmosphere of the play.<sup>2</sup> Due to the influence of the Zen sect of Buddhism, these plays are characterized by brevity and quietness. Furthermore, according to Miyamori, Seami believed that the aim of the Noh play should be "to beguile all people, high and low."<sup>3</sup>

Deeply influenced by the Zen sect of Buddhism, Seami turned to Zen not only for suggestions in his compositions but for much of his terminology; therefore, most of his theory may seem vague, contradictory, and symbolic to the unfamiliar person. An example of this is the word yūgen used in his philos-

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<sup>1</sup>These references consist of Nōgaku, Japanese No Plays and Masterpieces of Chikamatsu.

<sup>2</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., p. 16.

ophy of art. Miyamori tells us Seami's philosophy of art may be expressed in two words, "mimicry" and yūgen or "graceful". In a footnote Miyamori quotes from A New History of Japanese Literature by Professor Tsutomu Igarashi:

Yūgen nowadays signifies "abstruseness" or "mystic"; but from his use of the word in his treatises it is evident that Se-ami intends by it "graceful" or "beautiful".<sup>1</sup>

Turning to another source of information, Suzuki's Nōgaku, Japanese Nō Plays, one finds that in the days of Seami yūgen meant refined taste in general but later took on a deeper meaning. In acting yūgen has come to mean "identification of thought and action"; that is, complete identification of the actor with the role he is playing.<sup>2</sup> Later in this same writing Suzuki gives still another explanation of yūgen: "Yūgen is the spirit which makes its complete expression in beauty."<sup>3</sup> This last statement closely parallels the interpretation of yūgen given by Professor Tsutomu Igarashi.

Closely related to yūgen is yūkyō which "makes us blind to all illogicalities"<sup>4</sup> of the Noh plays. A third term used by Seami is kurai which the investigator interprets to mean a unity of mood since Suzuki refers to kurai as "an

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 34.



emotional quality or atmosphere".<sup>1</sup> Still another term credited to Seami is ran-i or "free expression of spirit".<sup>2</sup>

Returning to Seami's philosophy of art, one finds this further explanation:

Art consists, according to him (Seami), in the harmonization of the imitation of nature with graceful taste, or, in other words, in a harmonious combination of realism and idealism.<sup>3</sup>

Seami was not alone in his theory of what constitutes art, for another Japanese writer, Chikamatsu, of whom more will be said later, is quoted by Miyamori:

Art lies in the shadowy frontiers between reality and unreality. . . . Painting and sculpture are arts because, while they aim at depicting real things, they contain something unreal. . . . The same is true of drama; while aiming at reality it nevertheless contains something contrary to the nature of reality.<sup>4</sup>

Noh plays are short one-act plays usually consisting of two scenes and combining music, dancing, and poetry into harmonious unity. Based upon their appeal to the senses these orthodox Noh plays of two scenes may be divided into two groups: (1) those concentrating on sight, (2) those concentrating on hearing. In this first group the dance performed by the First Actor is placed in the second scene, and it becomes the central

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35

<sup>3</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

interest. If, on the other hand, the chorus singing receives the emphasis, the plays would fall in the second classification. Upon further investigation one finds two forms of chorus singing; Mai-guse and I-guse. Although dancing is performed in the Mai-guse, it is not the center of interest; and in the I-guse the Actor sits in the middle of the stage without stirring during the chorus singing.

There are some Noh plays written in one scene; primarily these are the plays termed the Earthly Pieces.<sup>1</sup> Treating the theme dramatically and having the dialogue occupy an important part, these scenes make little use of the dance using it only to add interest to the action.

The same general plan is followed in each play: there is a narration of the misfortunes of some historical or fictitious hero or heroine, and this is followed by a sermon filled with religious teachings. According to the various subjects dealt with, the Noh dramas are divided into six groups: (1) The God Piece which has something to do with the <sup>S</sup>hinto gods; (2) The Battle Piece where the spirit of a dead warrior generally appears; (3) The Woman Piece in which a woman is naturally the chief character and the motive is generally love and more specifically, mother; (4) The Lunatic Piece where the chief character is insane; (5) The Earthly Piece which depicts customs and manners; and (6) The Last Piece in which demons and animals play a prominent part.

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<sup>1</sup>For further information see p. 18 of this chapter.

For material, the authors of these plays turned to Japanese history, myths, and folklore. Naturally, when one recalls that the Noh developed under the patronage of the religions, it is not surprising to find the plays saturated with Buddhist and Shinto teachings as well as mythology. Shinto influence is seen in the emphasis placed on the shrines and visits to the shrine as well as the practice of having gods take the form of a man. Predominate in the Noh plays are the following Buddhist beliefs: (1) the interpenetration of the two worlds; that is, a person who has died can return; (2) the consoling of the dead by reading a sutra, prayer, and thus enabling him to achieve Buddhahood; (3) all may attain Buddhahood, even plants, trees, and animals, including evil beings such as demons; (4) the oneness of all living beings and Buddha; (5) the belief in the Pure Land and the high virtue in reciting the Nembutsu; (6) the mercy of Avalokitesvara, popularly called Kwannon, and other Bodhisattvas.<sup>1</sup>

Written partly in prose and partly in verse, the Noh plays have dialogue, monologue, and many beautiful descriptive passages. Historical references and Buddhist quotation have permeated the prose and poetry, and it is not unusual to find entire passages from earlier writings inserted in the Noh play. Beatrice Lane Suzuki has given rather idealized analysis of the language of Noh:

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<sup>1</sup>This list is based on the discussion by Suzuki, op. cit., pp. 39-45.

Japanese poetry is a kind of blank verse in an alternation of phrases made up of five and seven syllables each. The rhythm is that of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, making 31 syllables in all. The Nō wording is made up of a mixture of poems in this form with prose, kotoba, but the kotoba of the Japanese Nō is not like ordinary prose, for it has a chant of its own. The poetic part of the Nō composition has irregularity, and it is this very irregularity which gives it life and vitality. The repetition of an entire line is frequently done, and this, prolonging the emotion of the hearer, is often very effective.<sup>1</sup>

Frequently lost in translation is the characteristic of a clever play on words. Most of the Noh plays are written in the colloquial language of the Kamakura Period (1186-1332), but occasionally the dialogue and monologue become representative of the lyric and epic poetry of the latter half of the Heian period (794-1186).<sup>2</sup>

In general the program for a Noh performance will consist of five Noh plays alternating with three Kyogen. There is no set rule for the number of plays, but their arrangement is governed by a theory known as Jo, Ha, and Kyu.<sup>3</sup> Jo stands for the initial part of the program and theory proclaims it must consist of a solemn and powerful piece; Ha is the middle and longest part of the program and must be executed finely and delicately; Kyu, the final part, must be brief and rapid. A closer look at this theory will show that it is not without

<sup>1</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., p. 22, n.

<sup>2</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup>T. Nogami, Tourist Library, Vol. II, Japanese Noh Plays, (Japan: Japanese Government Railways, 1934), pp. 41-43.



logic. The God Piece and the Battle Piece make up the Jo which is by nature solemn and powerful. During the Ha part of the program may be seen the Woman Piece, the Lunatic Piece or the Revenge Piece, and the Earthly Piece. The Woman Piece usually requires an aesthetic dance to be performed which is the central interest of this play. In the Lunatic Piece delicacy and restraint are obviously needed. As for the Earthly Piece, being more realistic than the others, it is treated in a comparatively dramatic way while the other groups are either epic or lyrical. After such an interminable performance the audience's attention will still be rapt if Kyu is executed properly; and as the last piece deals with demons and animals, it can easily reach a more rapid tempo. The alternating of the Kyogen with the Noh plays is not only customary, but acts to relieve the emotional strain of the Noh.

In abrupt contrast to the Noh dramas are the Kyogen, one-act comic interludes. For material the authors use fairy tales, common happenings of everyday life, or write a witty satire on human failings and social evils. On the whole, the Kyogen consists of burlesque action and verbal travesties. Completely devoid of narrative, epic, and lyrical elements, the Kyogen is written in dialogue and monologue in the colloquial language of the Muromachi Period.<sup>1</sup>

The following contrast of Noh and Kyogen should leave no doubt as to the differences between these two dramatic forms:

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<sup>1</sup>Miyamori, op. cit., p. 18.

In the No the theme is selected for its beauty, heroism, romance, or pathos; the characters are usually renowned princes, court ladies, and warriors; it stands for esthetic delight, moral elevation, and religious contemplation. The Kiogen is always worldly, and frivolous; its principal aim is to incite a mighty laughter over trivial things. It chooses for its characters a daimio who is preposterously foolish, a quack doctor, a swaggering samurai, or a priest whose prayer never brings results; it does not hesitate to use a god of fortune or a devil, or even mosquitoes, and make them talk and quarrel like people; it is especially successful in depicting, though in caricature, the life of the commonalty, the peasants and the town folk.<sup>1</sup>

To attempt a discussion of the drama fo the Ayatsuri without incorporating a discussion of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, the Japanese Shakespeare, would be impossible; for as Chikamatsu developed his writing powers, so did the puppet dramas grow. Beginning as a writer in the Kabuki theatre, Chikamatsu, with other sakushas, was no more than a slave for the actors who dominated the theatrical world of Kabuki. At the age of fifty-one, however, Chikamatsu left the Kabuki theatre and devoted his talent to Ayatsuri or Joruri.

The first attempts by Chikamatsu hardly deserve the name of drama, for these were either awkward adaptations of the Noh plays or tales with scarcely any dramatic construction written in imitation of the old Joruri. In the year 1686, however, Chikamatsu's historical drama, The Successful Kagekiyo, was performed; and it was this play which brought about a complete change in the old style Joruri. Diminishing the musical elements and proportionately increasing the dialogue, Chikamatsu caused the dialogue and action of the characters

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<sup>1</sup>Obata, op. cit., p. 103.



and the development of plot to become of equal importance with the lyrical elements.

The second step in the development of the Ayatsuri drama came in 1700 with the appearance of Chikamatsu's first domestic play, The Woman's Harakiri at Long Street. Just three years later appeared The Love Suicide at Sonezaki, a play dealing with the double-suicide of young lovers. Thus, within the space of three years, Chikamatsu instigated the use of two new themes for the Ayatsuri drama; the domestic play representing the joys and sorrows of middle-class people, and the shinjū-mono, a play of love suicide.

The audiences of Chikamatsu's day considered his histories to be better than his domestic plays. Giving him excellent opportunity to utilize his ample knowledge of Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and of the Chinese and Japanese classics, these histories embody a wide variety of subjects such as, Japanese myths, the great personages and important events of Japanese history, ghost stories, and numerous Chinese personages of history. Laying the stress upon unexpected developments, Chikamatsu had a tendency to subordinate his characters to plot which resulted in their being unreal and superhuman in their abilities.

In regard to the domestic plays, though the events are common and the characters taken from everyday life, individual personality is sometime absent. Miyamori, however, points out that these domestic plays "are in general charac-

terized by unity of action and often even by unity of time and place, and above all by just delineation of fundamental human traits."<sup>1</sup>

Due to the careful consideration which Chikamatsu gave to the importance of music in the theatre, a reading of his plays fails to give a complete understanding unless one is familiar with the performance. Evaluating the style of Chikamatsu, Miyamori has this to say concerning his use of language:

His rhetoric, which matures to its finest point every element of melody and variety inherent in the Japanese tongue, is amazing. His sentences, although for the most part in verse, are a highly skillful union of classical and colloquial styles. Alliteration, metaphor, simile, personification, an imperceptible modulation of the last word or words of a dialogue into song, frequent use of related words, pivot words and pillow words, nay of all the varieties of word-play, a delightfully easy introduction of classical songs, poems, and Chinese couplets, Confucianist sayings, Buddhist hymns, lovely passages from Nô plays, folk-songs, maxims, and proverbs -- all these graces combine to make his sentences perfect gems of expression.<sup>1</sup>

Although his plays were for the most part written in verse, they were quite understandable to even the uncultured. Not overlooking the faults of Chikamatsu's writings, Miyamori continues his evaluation by pointing out a frequent sacrifice of sense over sound to secure euphony; and though praising the playwright's wit and humor, Miyamori accuses Chikamatsu of abuse when an illusion is broken in a pathetic passage by some humorous vulgarity.

Not only did Chikamatsu have profound influence upon

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

Ayatsuri, but the Kabuki theatre, in borrowing from the puppet drama, took possession of most of the playwright's works,

From the simple dancing of a young maiko reciting a Buddhist sutra, Kabuki has developed into an artistic play in which a classic story is enhanced by singing and dancing. Not until the suppression of the female stage was effected did the Kabuki drama make the radical change of including the presentation of a story.

All Kabuki plays may be classified into one of the following types; (1) Aragoto, (2) Zidaimono, (3) Sewamono, and (4) Sogogoto. The Aragoto plays are of Kabuki origin consisting of one act dealing mainly with a spirit of hero-worship, and characterized by exaggeration with no plot and giving the actor a chance to display great skill in dancing. Zidaimono is the name applied to Kabuki historical plays, and most of these plays have their origin in Ayatsuri. One restriction should be pointed out at this point: all historical dramas were forbidden by the government to represent actual events of history but they could use famous persons. Although these plays in the original had as many as eleven acts, when performed in the Kabuki theatres usually only one to three acts are presented. Sewamono are also mainly adaptations from the puppet plays and are characterized by themes of love and every-day life. Embodying slight plot, very plain dialogue, vivid dances, symbolic movement, and singing by the chorus, the Sogogoto plays may adequately be termed music-posture dramas. For the

inspiration of its music, plot, and style of presentation, the plays of Sosogoto form are deeply indebted to Noh.

As most Kabuki plays are either adaptations from the Noh or from the Ayatsuri, little can be said concerning the language and styles that has not been said previously in this chapter. Kabuki plays as Kabuki theatre have become an artistic mixture of all forms of Japanese drama.

In Japan as in Greece one finds the same general motives pervading the various plays. The religious emphasis of the Noh plays has been discussed earlier in this chapter; some general motives found in the puppet-dramas and the Kabuki dramas are listed here:

- (1) The Vendetta law -- revenge for a wrong done one's leader or relative -- Ohushingura
- (2) Return of the dead or ghosts -- Bontan Doro
- (3) Loyalty to one's master or lord -- Terakoya
- (4) Self-sacrifice -- Terakoya
- (5) Sacrifice of loved one -- Terakoya
- (6) Beheading of victims -- Oni Genji
- (7) Harakiri or suicide -- Oni Genji
- (8) Love -- Miuransuke and Toki-hime
- (9) The faithfulness of a wife -- Sakura Sogoro
- (10) Mates chosen by parents -- Nozaki-mura
- (11) Valour and strength -- Kagekiyo

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(12) Dissatisfaction with government -- Banzuin Chobei,<sup>1</sup>

Although in the earlier days the arrangement of the program was unchangeable, today the rules are not so rigid. In general the program follows this order:

- (1) Ichibanme: Three acts from a historical drama,
- (2) Naka-maku: Either a short shosagoto or a one-act ragoto,
- (3) Nibanme: A sewamono,
- (4) Hane-maku: A light gay dance.

Incomplete as are the excerpts from Seami, a complete comparison of the Sixteen Treatises to Aristotle's Ars Poetica is impossible in this paper. No matter how great the differences of opinion between these two writers, as a standard for the dramas of their respective countries, Seami's Sixteen Treatises and Aristotle's Ars Poetica may be considered comparable.

Differing with the Japanese practice of having separate dramas for the various classes, Seami proclaimed that the drama should be for all classes; and in the writings of Chikamatsu this theory found expression, for his plays may be understood by all classes of a Japanese audience. Although Aristotle does not contribute a definite statement concerning this idea, it would not be too presumptuous to assume his acceptance of the

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<sup>1</sup>Based on discussion of Kabuki plays by Kincaid, op. cit., pp. 253-309.



idea since the dramatic festivals of Greece were for all members of that democratic society. Furthermore, Seami's theory of shu, shaku, and sho does not seem to deviate far from Aristotle's beliefs.

Terminology is a point of difference between the two writings: Seami's work is characterized by symbolism; whereas Aristotle's Poetics may be considered quite factual. Beauty to Seami seems of supreme importance; yet, Aristotle places no emphasis upon this quality. The spirit yuko which "makes us blind to all illogicalities"<sup>1</sup> would appear to be highly objectionable to Aristotle in view of Aristotle's belief that plots must be developed through a sequence of events in relation to the law of probability.

That the playwrights of Greece and Japan drew upon the resources of myths, legends and history has been shown. In addition the Japanese resorted to such Chinese poetry and history as were available to them.

Different as were the two societies of these countries, it is indeed striking to find the following motives appearing in the Noh plays and the Greek tragedies:

- (1) Influence of the gods
- (2) Influence of the dead
- (3) Mother love
- (4) Insanity

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<sup>1</sup>Suzuki, op. cit., p. 34.

Still other motives similar to those found in the Greek tragedies are found in the Ayatsuri and Kabuki plays:

- (1) The Vendetta law
- (2) Loyalty to rulers and love of country
- (3) Self-sacrifice
- (4) Sacrifice of loved one

Although dialogue and monologue are found in Japanese drama, a larger portion of the plays was written, as were the Greek dramas, in verse form. Miyamori's evaluation of Chikamatsu shows it to be in accord with Aristotle's theory of tragic language in that metaphors and colloquial language are united. Further comparison of the language and style is rendered impossible since the writer of this paper cannot read the dramas in the original and authorities agree that much is lost through the translations.

The comedy of Greece and the Kyogen of Japan make an interesting comparison. Both of these dramatic forms deal with common, ordinary happenings and are extreme in action and language in order to achieve the common aim of inciting laughter. For character both comic forms choose people of a baser type than those of the tragic forms; and Kyogen characters are, as was the Greek comic chorus, presented as animals imbued with the power of speech.

Differences between Greek comedy and Japanese Kyogen are in evidence also: (1) Kyogen makes no use of the chorus as

did the comedies of Greece. (2) Kyogen plays are always short interludes; whereas Greek comedies are much longer in length. (3) Kyogen ignores music and dance, but in Greece these elements were utilized, especially in the comic choruses. (4) Kyogen is devoid of epic and lyric qualities; the choral odes of Greek comedy were predominately lyrical.

## CHAPTER V

### COMPONENTS OF THE DRAMA

This chapter is designed to bring into closer comparison certain essentials of the Greek and Japanese drama; namely, the actor, the chorus, the costumes, the dance, and the music. Due to a lack of authentic material or to the author's inadequate background along certain technical lines, some discussions in this chapter will not be as lengthy as others. This is especially true of the section on music, for here the special terminology and unfamiliarity tend to cause confusion even for the student of music.

#### The Actor

Etymologically the meaning of the original Greek word for actor, 'hypokrites', is "one who answers;" and until the time of Aeschylus and the innovation of a second actor, all dialogue consisted of questions and answers between the chorus and the actor. With the appearance of a second actor, the chorus became less important; and when Sophocles added still another actor, the lyrical element of the chorus was pushed still further into the background.

Even in comedy and satyric drama there is no evidence of more than three actors; furthermore, these actors were classified according to their importance as protagonist,

deuteragonist, and tritagonist. The protagonist played the most important role in the play and was publicly appointed to the position by the state. The selection of the other two actors was left to the protagonist, and these subordinate players were not allowed to attempt to outshine the protagonist.

Obviously, the principal function of the actors was to deliver the dialogue and further the action of the play. As these Greek plays generally had more than three speaking characters, it was necessary for the actors to play more than one role. While this convention created numerous problems for the playwrights, the actors with a change of costume and mask could reappear as a different character in a very short time.

If an old play was being reproduced, the assignment of parts was left to the protagonist; if the play was a new one, the poet usually distributed the roles among the three actors. As mentioned earlier, the most important role was portrayed by the protagonist; yet, he had to take his share of the minor parts whenever possible. In modern drama the roles taken by the tritagonist of Greek drama might be termed the 'heavy' roles, which consisted mainly of gloomy tyrants. Those roles which fell, in point of interest, between the leading characters and the heavy parts were assigned to the deuteragonist.

As in England where outstanding actors followed a period of great dramatic works,<sup>1</sup> in Greece the fourth century

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<sup>1</sup>Reference is made here to the numerous actors who made themselves famous by acting the works of Shakespeare.



B, C, saw the acting profession among the ancients brought to its greatest perfection. Among the most outstanding of these actors were Polus of Aegina and Theodorus: Polus is frequently referred to by later writers as the greatest actor of his time, and Theodorus was noted for his exceedingly natural tone of delivery.

In addition to the actors and chorus, extra performers were often needed in the Greek plays. Mute personages were used for attendants, body-guards, crowds of people, and as "stand-ins". An example of a "stand-in" may be found in the final scene of Orestes where most of the prominent characters appear on the stage at one time; yet, only three of these characters can speak while Helen, Hermione, Electra, and Pylades remain silent. The roles of children found in Sophocles' Ajax and Euripides' Medea were also played by extras. Whenever the occasion arose, extra performers were used for the minor characters with only a few words to say; this is particularly true when young boys were given lines, for the adult actors were hardly suited physically for these parts. The extra choruses which the plays sometime required will be discussed in the section on chorus in this chapter.

Never in the history of Greek drama was the acting profession considered anything but honorable: Haigh tells us, "Actors at the head of their profession occupied a very dis-

tinguished position."<sup>1</sup> In the dramatic contests it is true that at first only the poets were given recognition for their ability, but toward the middle of the fifth century B. C. actors' names began to appear in the official lists of winners.

With the formation of an actors' guild in the fourth century B. C., the position of the actor became more clearly defined. Called "The Artists of Dionysus," the members included the musicians and other members of the theatrical profession. These members were accorded such privileges as traveling unmolested through foreign and hostile states, being exempt from military service, and being free from arrest except for non-payment of debts.

The Greek actor had to be proficient in both speaking and singing: the lines written in iambs were nearly always declaimed, and the lyrical portions were sung with musical accompaniment.<sup>2</sup> In The Attic Theatre a third type of delivery is listed, parakataloge, which consisted of the actor's chanting the words to a musical background.<sup>3</sup>

The physical structure of the Greek theatre definitely influenced the style of Greek acting in voice as well as the

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

movements of the body. When the size of the open air theatres of Greece is recalled, the need for volume in an actor's voice becomes apparent. The mask, though aiding the actor in volume by acting as a small megaphone, created still another problem for the voice: the absence of facial expressions had to be counterbalanced by the expression of the voice. Another influencing factor on the actor's voice was the absence of actresses in the Greek theatre; thus, the actors had to play both male and female roles, often having to appear alternately as male and female in one play. Lucian declares, "Indeed, in them (the plays) the female parts outnumber the male!"<sup>1</sup>

Although much emphasis has been placed on voice in this discussion, the use of appropriate gestures cannot be ignored. In comedy the movement was free and unrestrained as will be noted by studying the pictures found on Greek vases; however, tragedy displayed a dignified and restrained manner of gesticulation. Not only was the costume of the actor confining enough to prevent a realistic performance, but the nature of the Greek drama was completely foreign to realism. Tragedy dealt with the ideal world of heroes, demigods, and gods; therefore, a realistic portrayal of physical violence and human passions had no place. Seldom was physical violence even seen upon the stage; instead the action took place off-stage and was related

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<sup>1</sup>Lucian, "The Dance", The Loeb Classical Library, Vol. V, Lucian, trans. A. M. Harmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 241.

later in the presence of the audience.

Greece had its Thespis, but Japan, developed under the patronage of religion, the Noh dramas were acted by priests at the various shrines. A Japanese Noh performance is primarily based upon one actor, the shite, who portrays the main character of a play; however, a second actor, the waki, is often used in support of the first actor. Each of these actors may be accompanied by attendants or supporters, tsure.

As this drama is primarily a music-dance drama, the actors must be highly skilled in the arts of singing and dancing. Tradition has prescribed every movement and gesture and every intonation of the voice. Learning to sing the utai takes years of special study and training.<sup>1</sup> There are no actresses in any of the three traditional theatres of Japan, and actors frequently are required to portray a female character. Furthermore, the actor may be called upon to portray two very different roles in one play such as an ordinary man and a Japanese god. The two forementioned character portrayals do not place any serious limitations upon the actors for there is little distinction made in a male and female voice in Noh acting. Masks and costumes aid the actor in disguising his true identity and creating the illusion of character.

The wearing of masks in this aristocratic theatre

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<sup>1</sup>The utai is the name for the Noh libretto which consists of nine different forms. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 24.

naturally caused the same limitations upon facial expressions that were found in the Greek theatre; therefore, the movements of the body have to be full of meaning. Through the years a wide vocabulary of gestures has grown up in this theatre, and these are demonstrated in highly stylized acting and rhythmical movements which have become characteristic of the actor's technique.

The Kyogen actors, found in the same theatre with the Noh actors, ignore singing and use only spoken dialogue. Not limited by masks, these actors make full use of exaggerated facial expressions to incite laughter. The movements are often awkward and "monkey-like" in appearance, and skill in acrobatics, juggling, and similar antics is displayed.

The acting profession in Kabuki is hereditary, and long lines of actors are found today which may be traced back almost to the beginning of Kabuki. Each actor directs the training of his son, or, if he has no son, his adopted son. At the age of seven or younger the boy begins his training which includes not only the guidance of his father but special instructions under singing and dancing teachers.

After years of rigid training the boy reaches the ranks of an actor. Traditionally, there is a system of ranking the actors; for example, three of the terms used to signify top-ranking actors are: (1) Miranda, head-of-all-acting; (2) Murui, without rival, and (3) Joji-kichi, best-best-good.



Kincaid selects Sakata Tojuro and Ichikawa Danjuro as being the first two Kabuki actors of exceptional talent. Familiar with the art of Noh, Tojuro developed a school of romantic and naturalistic acting. Dajuro, in contrast, influenced by the puppets of Ayatsuri, developed a technique of exaggeration and grotesqueness placing the emphasis on the unreal, and picturesque. Both schools of acting are still followed in Kabuki today.

A specialty in Kabuki is the playing of the onnagata, a woman's role. This practice arose because ancient proclamations had forbidden the appearance of women in the theatre. Little is known of the early onnagata, but it was through the efforts of Kansaburo that the government granted permission for the portraying of onnagata. Actors of the onnagata roles have perfected this art in keeping with the symbolism found in all Japanese drama.

The Kabuki theatres have never, until recent years, been approved by the government, and the actors were considered disreputable. From the history of Japanese drama, proclamations may be found which relegated the actors to the lowest strata of society. An excerpt from an article by a Japanese writer may lend emphasis to this situation:

We had never looked upon actors as equals. They were not permitted to be buried in the same graveyard with other people. We denounced their lax morality without any slightest proof. We condemned them as toys of

women of the lowest order. . . . Even a beggar had more advantages socially.<sup>1</sup>

In the life of the Occidental actor, many roles are played; in one day of the Kabuki actor, many roles are played. Following is a list of the roles divided into very broad classes: (1) heroes, (2) villains, (3) old men, (4) elderly females, (5) comedians, (6) younger women, (7) children.<sup>2</sup> Complicating still further the art of Kabuki actors is the combining of techniques from the Noh and Ayatsuri with the traditions handed down through the years from the earlier actors. Versatility, therefore, may be said to be one of the prime requisites for perfection as a Kabuki actor.

#### The Chorus

For the most part, early tragedy and comedy were choral just as the dithyrambs and comus had been entirely choral; and it is only natural that the later dramatic forms maintained certain characteristics of their progenitors. Dithyrambic choruses had consisted of fifty dancers, and in Aeschylus' Suppliants the chorus is made up of the fifty daughters of Danaus. Later the size of the chorus was reduced to twelve; and still later, increased to fifteen.<sup>3</sup> In the plays of Euripides the chorus' functions had been reduced to choral odes

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<sup>1</sup>Y. Noguchi, "The Evolution of the Japanese Stage," New England Magazine, Vol. 31 (Oct., 1904), p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

<sup>3</sup>Flickinger, op. cit., p. 133.

and dancing which had practically no connection with the action of the plays.

Unlike tragedy, the chorus of early comedy had no fixed number, but Flickinger assures the student that toward the end of the fifth century there were twenty-four chorus members, adding that this number was probably set when comedy received official recognition from the state in 486 B. C.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that as the functions of the comic chorus were reduced, their number also decreased. In the last comedies of Aristophanes in place of a formal ode, a Greek word is found which indicated that the chorus was to perform such singing and dancing as it desired.<sup>2</sup> This may be considered as indicative of the lessening emphasis placed on the chorus.

Generally, the chorus entered the orchestra singing the Parados and was preceded by a flute player; however, exceptions to this rule show the chorus entering in silence or entering singly or in small groups of an irregular number.<sup>3</sup> That the chorus did not remain static is an accepted fact, but an accurate description of its positions is impossible due to lack of authentic information. The leader of the chorus, Coryphaeus, was especially important: he led the chanting,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-5.

<sup>2</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, The Development of the Theatre (3rd ed.; London: George E. Harrap and Company Ltd., 1948), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Laigh cites Sophocles' Electra and Euripides' Orestes as examples of silent entrances; op. cit., p. 102.

singing, and dancing: he frequently had solos of recitative or engaged in dialogue with the actors. At the end of the play the chorus marched out again preceded by the flute player.

Considering the functions of the chorus, one finds that the history and tradition of the Greek theatre required a chorus to appear in each drama and to deliver several songs at intervals throughout the play. Such being the case, the Greek playwrights were frequently faced with two difficult problems: (1) The nature of the chorus had to be such as would make it an integral part of the drama. (2) Choral odes had to be composed to correspond not only with the character of the chorus, but they must be closely related to the theme of the play.

Aristotle tells us, "the Chorus should be regarded as one of the actors" and "be an integral part of the whole".<sup>1</sup> In the early tragedies, as the chorus was the central interest, this problem was not so difficult; but as the actor became more predominate, the playwright had to create a bond between the chorus and the actor. Two techniques were used by these playwrights: (1) The chorus was of the same sex and age as the principal character; thus the bond of sympathy between them was strengthened. (2) The chorus, at other times, differs extremely from the principal character and intensifies the feeling of isolation as in Sophocles' Antigone or emphasizes the hero's indomitable strength and will-power as in Aeschylus'

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, op. cit., p. 69.

Prometheus Bound. The nature of the earliest Greek comedy chorus allowed them to assume animal disguises which were popular in the earlier comus--wasps, birds, frogs, snakes, bees, fishes, and ants. A gradual change took place, and by the time of New Comedy the chorus was insignificant usually taking the form of ordinary ludicrous men participating in a carousal.

Appropriate choral odes, closely related to the theme, were not always successfully written by the playwrights; Flickinger cites as examples the choruses in Euripides' Electra, Phoenician Maids, Hippolytus, and Iphigenia at Aulis. The Electra chorus consists of virgins from the Argive countryside who give an elaborate description of Achilles' armor. In the Phoenician Maids the chorus of girls from Tyre are all too familiar with the History of Thebes. In both Hippolytus and Iphigenia at Aulis the chorus of women wisely discourse on faith and reality and on mythological tradition which was not in keeping with women of their status. Attempting to justify these irrelevancies, Euripides has the Electra chorus explain they had heard of Achilles' shield in the nearby harbor of Nauplia from a person from Troy, and the chorus in Phoenician Maids says they have learned of the history of Thebes at their home in an alien tongue.

In Euripides' Hippolytus the author found it necessary to introduce a second chorus when the hero's comrades in the



chase appear and sing an ode before the regular chorus makes its entrance. Although the play, Frogs, takes its name from the frog chorus, Aristophanes has this frog chorus sing off stage and then uses a different chorus on stage. In New Comedy, the chorus sometime did not appear in the action at all, but appeared only as irrelevant interludes between acts.<sup>1</sup>

Three forms of delivery were used by the Greek chorus; song, speech, and recitative which was a combination of singing and speaking. Investigations have been made to discover the technique used in various portions of the plays, but opinions are too divided for a definite statement by the author.<sup>2</sup> In general, the performance was reserved and dignified in the case of tragedy and suggestive of an intoxicated state in comedy.<sup>3</sup>

Of all the points of comparison between the Greek and Japanese theatres, the use of the chorus, particularly in the Noh dramas, is the one most frequently alluded to by authorities. The number of participants in the chorus evidently varies, for some authorities mention only six members; others, eight, ten and even twelve. This statement concerning the number of chorus members applies only to the Noh dramas: Kyogen makes no use of the chorus: pictures of the Ayatsuri performances show sometime one, two, and even five chorus members: Kabuki frequently uses the orchestra in the capacity of the chorus.

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<sup>1</sup>Allen, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

<sup>2</sup>Haigh lists some of these studies; op. cit., p. 306.

<sup>3</sup>Allen, op. cit., pp. 119-129.

Unlike the Greek chorus, the chorus of the Japanese Noh theatre is seated motionless throughout the play, taking no active part in the action of the play; thus, the Japanese writers were not confronted with such problems as were mentioned earlier in this chapter that had to be considered by Greek playwrights.

In Chapter III of this paper the writer pointed out that one section of the Noh stage was designated as the Chorus Verandah at the rear of which was a Kiri-do or "Hurry-door" for the entrances and exits of the Chorus. After entering through the Kiri-do, the chorus takes its positions on the stage. The men in the front row, after repeating the opening song of the actor who enters first, sit quietly until the chorus again begins its singing at which time those men on the back row join them in the chanting. The chorus leader is seated in the middle of the back row. Whenever the dancing of the protagonist interferes with his delivery of his lines, the chorus takes up the chant. All of the narrative part is left to the chorus; and, on occasions, the chorus, like the Greek chorus, serve as direct interpreters of the action. At the end of the performance, as the actors return to the Mirror-room, the chorus retires through the Kiri-do followed by the musicians.

Accompanied by the music of the samisen, the chorus of the Ayatsuri theatre chant all of the poetic and narrative passages; and often, portions of the dialogue are sung by them.

Other speeches of the puppets are declaimed by the chorus. The position of the chorus in the puppet theatre is a platform on stage left overlooking the stage.

In Kabuki theatres, where puppet plays are frequently acted, the actors deliver most of the dialogue and act and dance to the choric recitation of the poetic parts. The shosagoto, being adaptations of the Noh dramas, utilizes the chorus fully while even in the domestic plays, the most realistic of classic Japanese drama, soft songs are heard off-stage throughout half of the performances.

Miyamori tells us the "chanting is done in "cloudy" and subdued voices, and the difference between the voices of male and female characters is hardly noticable save to a specialist".<sup>1</sup> It should be noted here that the main difference in the chorus of the Noh and those of Ayatsuri and Kabuki is that while Noh is restrained and quiet, the Ayatsuri and Kabuki use exaggerated expressiveness. Since life and animation need to be given to the puppets, the necessity for this exaggeration and expressiveness may be seen easily: the Kabuki plays were largely adopted from the puppet performances, and this characteristic style was carried over to Kabuki performances.

#### The Costume

As the tragic actors portrayed Greek gods and mythologi-

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<sup>1</sup>Op. cit., p. 13.

cal heroes, elaborate costumes were used. Padded uniformly to increase his bulk and wearing shoes with huge wooden soles, cothurnus,<sup>1</sup> for greater height, dressed in garments dyed brilliant colors,<sup>2</sup> the Greek tragic actor was impressive. The undergarment consisted of a tunic which touched the feet and was fastened by a girdle. The sleeves were long and flowing, sometimes extending to the waist. Overgarments were either a long mantle, the himation, draped over the right shoulder and concealing most of the body, or a short cloak, the chalmys, worn over the left shoulder. Ranging from yellow, grey, and black to green, gold, and purple, the colors of the garments differed widely. Certain characters such as shepherds, soothsayers, gods, and goddesses wore costumes that deviated from this standard type of tragic costume.

Actors in comedy also made use of padding but only to acquire a grotesque appearance. Being participants in a drama which was a direct descendent of the phallic rituals, the comic actors wore a phallus. Other garments, though similar to ordinary dress, were apparently shortened in length. By

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh tells of another shoe called the Krepis which was used by the chorus; op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>2</sup>These garments were adorned with stripes, flowers, and other ornaments, and a purple tunic was worn by queens. Ibid., p. 250.

the time of New Comedy the phallus had been discarded and costumes resembled more closely the ordinary apparel of the Greeks. Color was important in these costumes because it helped to distinguish the various types of characters: white was worn by slaves, old men, young women, and priestesses; green or light blue was used for old women. Other details which aided in designating character were staffs for the old men, leather tunics for country people, and fringe for heiresses.

Costumes of the chorus varied with the role and style of the play. In the early satyr plays the chorus naturally wore a costume representative of the attendant sprites of Dionysus; in Old Comedy the costume was representative of various animals and inanimate objects. When the character of the chorus was a human being dress similar to that of the comic actors was worn. Tragedy, apparently utilized the tunic and mantle of ordinary dress for the chorus except in such instances as Aeschylus' Suppliants and Eumenides.<sup>1</sup>

Masks were an essential part of the costumes of all Greek actors, both comic and tragic. True, even before the days of the dramatic contests, the mask had been worn in primitive rituals honoring the gods; yet, for its introduction into dramatic performances, credit has been given to Thespis.

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<sup>1</sup>The chorus in the Suppliants being Egyptian had to be dressed as foreigners. The ~~Furies~~ in the Eumenides were a fearful sight in black dresses, distorted features and snakes in their hair. Haigh, op. cit., p. 291.



Thespis, evidently through the necessity of playing more than one role, utilized the mask; and in the later Greek plays when the actors were limited, this practice continued. Particularly was the mask an aid in portraying female roles. Still another reason for using the mask may be traced to the physical structures of the theatres which were so large that ordinary facial expressions would have been indistinguishable and the human voice would not have been heard by all of the audience.

Bogdanoff, in speaking of the Greek masks, states:

The mask with its simple construction, its broad planes was visible from any point in the audience. Too, the mask gave the actor and the playwright the opportunity for emphasis which the features did not. Any exaggeration could be more easily and more clearly expressed through this medium.<sup>1</sup>

Benda explains how the masks aided the voices of the actors: "The ancient Greek masks were large and had a funnel-shaped tube leading from the mouth of the player to the mouth of the mask which resembled our modern megaphone."<sup>2</sup>

Just as the rest of the costume had to be appropriate for the role and the play, the characteristics of the mask had to be suitable to the over-all impression also; therefore, the tragic mask was imbued with heroic grandeur and a super-human dignity while the comic mask was marked by a ludicrous

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<sup>1</sup>R. Bogdanoff, "Masks, Their Uses, Past and Present", Drama, Vol. XXII (May, 1931), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>W. T. Benda, "Masks on the Stage and Off", Ladies Home Journal, Vol. XXXVIII (Jan., 1921), p. 42.

"defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive",<sup>1</sup>  
 Designed with open eyes and open mouths, the masks were  
 constructed from linen, wood, and cork.

In Japan the costumes of the Noh plays are adapted to  
 promote the special world of beauty which is the aim of each  
Noh play. Realism is disregarded: the soldier does not  
 necessarily wear armor: a beggar need not wear rags: a  
 woodcutter may be attired in finery. Following, in general,  
 the styles of the Court of the Middle Ages, the costumes are  
 so constructed as to give greater size to the characters for  
 an illusion of grandeur. Many of the special effects of the  
 movements are due mainly to the large flowing sleeves of the  
 costumes. Material varies from the heavy silks and brocades  
 to the light, waving textures. The use of color is given  
 full sway, and designs of flowers or of objects related to  
 the play are included.

For those who have eyes to read the symbols, the story  
 of the play is retold in the costumes: the color of the  
 fabrics reveal the age, sex, and rank of the weavers;  
 the patterns suggest the nature of the roles: clouds  
 and pine trees may be woven into the cloak of a  
 mysterious character who deals in magic, or wavy lines,  
 indicative of water wrought into the transparent kimono  
 of one who succumbed to death by drowning.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, Pop. cit., 1449 a 30, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>W. C. Handy, "No Drama of Japan", Yale Review, Vol. 20  
 (Dec., 1930), p. 329.

If no other example were cited, the use of the mask in the Noh dramas would be sufficient to illustrate the Japanese characteristic of following and preserving tradition. Bogdanoff says, "In Japan masks are used today exactly as they were four centuries ago".<sup>1</sup> Another writer states;

The actors of the present day use the old masks from their own family treasures, which have fortunately escaped the boorish hand of ruin.<sup>2</sup>

Even as in the theatre of ancient Greece, masks are used by the Japanese actors for the portrayal of female roles. Here the similarity ends; for unlike the Greek performances all Noh actors do not wear the mask. Only the main actor and his attendants appear in a mask; the second actor never wears a mask, for he is considered a representative of the audience. The Noh masks may be divided roughly into the following classes: (1) old man, (2) old woman, (3) middle-aged man, (4) middle-aged woman, (5) young man, (6) young woman, (7) child, (8) blind man, (9) gentle god, (10) powerful god, (11) formidable god, (12) fairy, (13) supernatural being, (14) monster, (15) wild animal.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. Bogdanoff, "Masks, Their Uses, Past and Present," Drama, Vol. XXI (May, 1931), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Y. Noguchi, "No Mask", International Studio, Vol. XXXVI (June, 1912), p. 337.

<sup>3</sup>Nogami, op. cit., p. 27.

A complete study of each of these types would be beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, mention will be made of only one mask which has received much comment, the Kowomote mask used for the role of the angel in Hagoromo.

Noguchi tells how this mask affected him:

I always wondered, while witnessing the No performance here with the female impersonator on the stage wearing the "kowomote", to see that the player always in the same mask, now smiling and now crying, a most ghostly marvel.<sup>1</sup>

Noguchi's statement reenforces the description usually applied to the Noh mask -- expressionless expression. Carved from paulownia wood and lacquered, these masks are constructed with open mouths to enable the actor to speak through them comfortably.

As for the comic interludes of the Noh theatre, the costumes are simple, plain, and adapted to the brisk action of the Kyogen. No use of the mask is made in the performances.

Sometime in the early part of the period extending from 1624 to 1643 doll costuming became very elaborate in Ayatsuri. There is a story that Bunsaburo, one of the foremost doll manipulators, designed a costume for the puppet representing Michizane, the patron saint of Japanese literature,

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<sup>1</sup>Y. Noguchi, "No Mask", International Studio, Vol. 46 (June, 1912), p. 336.

The costume was embroidered in plum blossoms and young bamboo while Michizane's three faithful servants wore kimonos lined with scarlet and decorated with large yellow horizontal stripes. From that time, whenever these characters are used in the Kabuki theatres the costumes exactly like those designed by Bunsaburo.<sup>1</sup> As the Kabuki theatres appropriated even the costumes of Ayatsuri, separate discussions of the costumes of the two theatres would be repetitious; therefore, further discussion will be limited to the costumes of the Kabuki.

The Kabuki costumes are characterized by elaborateness: there are priests in stiff brocades, courtesans arrayed in a blaze of colors, the taiyu of Old Yedo in glittering robes of gold brightly embroidered and wearing high footgear called geta, and warriors clad in brilliant armor astride a velvet horse. In 1668, however, a blow was struck which temporarily did away with this free use of color and design: a proclamation was made that stage costumes of both the Kabuki and Ayatsuri must be as modest as possible. Only cottons and silks of an inferior quality

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., p. 72.



could be used, and red and purple dyes were strictly forbidden. The actors frequently resorted to trickery in order to continue the use of beautiful costumes. Some actors spent many hours embroidering their own costumes and sewing a piece of plain material over the decorations in order to pass the inspection of the officials. At last these restrictions were removed, and the beauty of the costumes returned to its place in the theatre.

So varied are the Kabuki costumes that to designate a standard type is impossible; yet, all of these costumes may be considered standard in so far as they are used today as tradition has decreed. For example, Kincaid relates the following story of Kansaburo, an actor, who was invited to perform at the Imperial Court:

Just as he was about to begin he found that he had forgotten to bring an obi required for his costume, and the Court noble who had introduced him took a red cord and tassel attached to a thin bamboo curtain near the Mikado, and gave it to the performer who wore it during the play. As it was far too long and dragged upon the floor, Kansaburo was obliged to put one end around his neck. Ever after he wore the cord and tassel rather than an obi when he performed in this piece, and passed it on to his successors so that it became part of the conventional Saruwaka costume.<sup>1</sup>

Seldom is the mask used in the Kabuki, but the make-up used is not realistic and gives the face a mask-like appearance.

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., p. 69.

Some conventional forms of make-up are listed here:

- (1) Samurai or persons of high degree - white base, broad black eyebrows, touches of red to eyes and mouth,
- (2) Defeated brave men - broad red lines around eyes, nose, and chin, red forks over forehead shaded into pink,
- (3) Angry hero - chin of grey, red lips outlined in white, upward red strokes from eyes and cheeks, bristling eyebrows and hair,
- (4) Villain - black on lower part of face, beard of black and white design, purple veins on upper portion of face, dark blue eyebrows, or thick black elevated eyebrows, red face, pink nose and mouth,
- (5) Ghost - blue veins, red mouth bordered by black, red and black eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The costume of the chorus in the Japanese theatre is seldom noticed. All members of the Kabuki and Ayatsuri chorus are dressed alike in apparel similar to that worn by actors for stage ceremonials. The skirts are stiff, and wide shoulder straps are worn over the kimono. In the Noh theatres the chorus are dressed in extreme simplicity wearing a plain kimono. Masks are never worn by the chorus.

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<sup>1</sup>Kincaid, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

## The Dance

No, those historians of dancing who are the most veracious can tell you that Dance came into being contemporaneously with the primal origin of the universe, making her appearance together with Love -- the love that is age-old.<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation is part of Lycinus' defense of the dance when speaking to Crato in Lucian's chapter on The Dance. Continuing, Lycinus says:

In the beginning, they say, Rhea, charmed with the art, ordered dances to be performed not only in Phrygia by the Corybantes but in Crete by the Curetes, from whose skill she derived uncommon benefit, since they saved Zeus for her by dancing about him . . . .<sup>2</sup>

According to Greek mythology Rhea, the mother of Zeus, in order to save her child from being destroyed by his father, Kronos, had to hide him in a cave at Lyktos. Fed by the goat Amaltheia and honey from the bees, his cries drowned by the noisy war dance of the Kuretes, Zeus grew and reached maturity. The lives of the early Greeks were so steeped in mythology, it is small wonder that the earliest references to dance are found in Greek myths.

Curt Sachs has said the Greeks probably brought a particular type of round dance from their original home, but it is the Cretans who gave the dance distinction.<sup>3</sup> Particularly

<sup>1</sup>Reference is made here to Eros, elder brother of the Titans. Lucian, op. cit., p. 221.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance, trans. Bessie Schonberg (1st ed.; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), p. 238.

did the Cretan weapon dance, referred to as the dance of the Kuretes in the Zeus myth, have a great influence upon the early dance, for it is considered the origin of the latter Pyrrhic dances.

Cultivated with zeal by the Spartans, the Pyrrhic dances became a basic part of the training of youths. At the early age of five boys began to learn this dance which is supposed to represent the various stages of a battle -- the beat of marching feet and the din of clashing arms.

In addition to the Pyrrhic dances, three other choral dances were said to be introduced by a Cretan named Thaletas: (1) the pians to Apollo which were originally magic dances to prevent death; (2) the hyporchemata, a dance of gestures and rhythm also dedicated to Apollo; (3) the gymnopaiai, based on the motions of wrestling and performed by naked boys. Sachs declares that all of "these dances encroach on the field of the emmelia",<sup>1</sup> a round dance of a devout nature performed in honor of the gods. The emmelia developed into the dignified and stately form of dithyrambs and then into the tragic form of the dance in the theatre. One change is noticeable upon the emmelia's entrance into the theatre; instead of remaining "a circular dithyrambic choros, . . . it was rectangular in form".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>Lincoln Kirstein, Dance (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), p. 35.

Sharply contrasting with the emmelia was the cordax or Kordax referred to by Lucian as the dance of comedy,<sup>1</sup> In the Kordax dancing was less important and buffoonery was emphasized. After the transition of the Kordax into comedy, Kirstein describes it as follows;

The Parados or entrance-dance was frequently in the agitated trochaic beat; no steady processional, but in the 'Acharnians', a race; in the 'Knights' a battle-charge; in the 'Birds', a succession of daft pirouettes; in 'Lysistrata', a mock combat. The Exodos of comedies was not brief and perfunctory as in the tragedies, but almost always a rout or buffoon's game. Aristophanes had a tendency to make his exodos a separate amusing or facetious piece with grotesque dances, almost in the nature of a terminal ballet, without vocal accompaniment.<sup>2</sup>

Greek dance being so intricately related to the drama, it may be said to have reached the zenith of expression at the corresponding date of drama, the fifth century B. C. To substantiate this statement, Domini Crosfield may be quoted:

\* \* \* the apogee of dancing was reached in the Classical Age, when over two hundred religious, athletic, dramatic and popular dances were performed in the theatre, the stadium and the temple. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Ginner has classified these Hellenic dances as follows:

- (1) Pyrrhic and Gymnopaedic Dances,
- (2) Ritual Dances of Worship and Dedication,

<sup>1</sup>Lucian, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>2</sup>Kirstein, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Domini Crosfield, Dances of Greece (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1948), p. 8.



- (3) Funeral Dances;
- (4) Choric Dances, tragic and comic;
- (5) Bacchic Dances of Ecstasy;
- (6) Rustic Dances at Springtime, Harvest, Vintage, etc.,
- (7) Social Dances at Weddings and other Festivities.<sup>1</sup>

Before continuing the study of Greek dance, the modern student must recognize a difference between our word for dance and the Greek interpretation of the same word. The English word dance comes from the Old-High-German dason, to draw, to stretch out, and its definition is to leap, skip, hop, or glide with measured movements of the body. Being much wider in scope, the Greek word orchesis includes the sense embodied in dason, which is nearer to the Greek word gumanzo, but adds the trait which is called mimetic.<sup>2</sup> Frequently, in the writings of the ancient Greeks, the importance of gymnastics may be seen, but M. A. Hincks assures us:

That great importance was attached to gymnastics and that a thorough mastery over the limbs which can only come from the most rigorous training was required of professional dancers, there can be no question; but there can also be no doubt that this was practiced only as an aid to the mimetic dance.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, one can see that, as in all great art, the Greeks made use of mechanical means in their dancing only as a means

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<sup>1</sup>Ruby Ginner, The Revived Greek Dance (3rd ed.; London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1944), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>M. A. Hincks, "Dance in Ancient Greece", Nineteenth Century, Vol. L (March, 1906), pp. 447-57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 449.

to an end; that is, to assist in carrying out the artists' inspiration. Greek dance then may be described as the imitation of words by gestures, the bodily expression of an emotion, comprising every variety of action, dealing with every subject and embracing all human emotions.

For most of the early Greek dances there was no set number of participants; however, in the discussion of the chorus in the chapter the number of chorus members was set finally as fifteen in tragedy and twenty-four in comedy. The participation of both men and women in dancing is apparent from the writings of the early Greek writers, but in the dramatic performances only men took part.

Always the dance took its character according to the god in whose honor it was performed. Fundamentally the lines, steps, and movements of the various forms of Greek dance were the same; any difference of expression was due to change of thought and the great variation of force, both physical and emotional.

Particular positions and movements were always associated with certain forms. Angular poses were frequently found in the Dionysiac dances and the flow of the draperies indicates swift, turning movements necessitating great flexibility of the body; angular lines of arms were also found in the Pyrrhic dance with more strength and muscular resistance indicated. Frenzied movements of the body and head in an

abandon of wild joy were found in the Dionysiac ecstasies; restraint of an erect and dignified pose with the head bending forward or backward in grief, reverence, or despair were seen in the ritual and tragic dances. Due to the vast space for dancing, large gestures and broad, simple steps had to be used.

In Japan as in Greece, first came the dance, then the drama. The writer has shown that the Japanese had little authentic history before the fifth century A. D.<sup>1</sup> Through necessity, therefore, the student must accept the Japanese mythological explanation of the beginning of dance, music, drama, and race. Justification for the acceptance of legend for fact is easier when one realizes that at least fables and legends reflect the thoughts and feelings, manners and customs of the people of the age from which stems the legend.

From the legend appearing in Chapter Two of this writing<sup>2</sup> comes the "authentic" origin of the first dance when Ameno-Uzume danced before the Heavenly-Rock-Dwelling in which Amaterasu had hidden. In this and similar stories, one may see that the barbaric ancestors of the Japanese loved to dance; in fact, never forgetting that the dance had been the

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<sup>1</sup>This was the time that Wani, a Chinese scholar, brought about the official adoption of the Chinese written language. There is a difference of opinion as to the exact date, but the time was either the last part of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A. D.

<sup>2</sup>Chapter Two, p. 9.

means of restoring the Sun-Goddess to Japan, the people, from time immemorial, have honored the dance as a religious ceremony and practised it as a fine art throughout the land. Brinkley tells us;

Virgins danced before the shrine of the Sun Goddess at the beginning of the nation, and from the highest noble to the meanest churl everyone loved the music of motion,<sup>1</sup>

Since dancing in Japan is synonymous with drama, there is no necessity for repeating the history found in Chapter Two of this thesis.<sup>2</sup> Let it suffice to say that it was during the Heian epoch when not only dancing, but singing and music, made remarkable progress in Japan; for everyone from princes, and ministers of state to office-clerks and house-stewards studied singing, dancing, and the art of composing verses. Not only a clearer picture of the extent of development but a basic understanding of the Japanese dancing may be gathered from the following paragraph by Brinkley:

It would be an interminable task to attempt any exhaustive description of the dances in vogue during the Heian epoch. Only eight varieties of genuine old Japanese dance existed, but these were supplemented by twenty-five Chinese, twelve of Indian origin transmitted by China, eighteen Korean, and eleven Japanese adaptations. When seventy-four varieties of dance are thus indicated, it must not be understood that there were a corresponding number of salient differences of style. It is true that the movements in every case were carefully trained, and that each combination constituting a particular dance could be distinguished by practised observers. But the main feature of variety

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<sup>1</sup>F. Brinkley, Oriental Series, Vol. I, Japan and China (Boston: J. B. Millet Company, 1901), p. 65.

had to be sought in the pantomime. Nearly all dances performed in Japan were pantomimic. The Japanese seem to have possessed, from the dawn of their national existence, a profound appreciation of the beauty and grace of cadence and emphasis in modulated muscular efforts, but the great majority of their dances had some mimetic import, and were not suggested solely by the pleasure of rhythmic and measured movement.<sup>1</sup>

From the Tourist Library series, two main forms of dancing are pointed out from the standpoint of characteristic movements: (1) Mai, a quieter type of dancing whose interest lies chiefly in the movement of the hands, and (2) Odori, the dance characterized by swift movements of the feet.<sup>2</sup> The table of Japanese dance forms below is also found in the Tourist Library.<sup>3</sup>

Dance of Gagaku	Ancient forms of Mai	Kagura Kume Mai Yamato Mai Azumo Asobi
	Bugaku	Left-side Dance Right-side Dance
Religious Dances	Shinto Dances	Kagura Dance among the People Lion-mask Dance (Deer-mask Dance) Ta Mai Horse Dance Cock Dance
	Buddhist Dances	Ennen Mai Dengaku Nenbutu Dance Kuya Nenbutu Rokusai Nenbutu

<sup>1</sup>Brinkley, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Kasyo Matida, Tourist Library, Vol. 22, Odori, Japanese Dance (Japan: Japanese Government Railways, 1938), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-1. A discussion of each of these forms, their origins and variations, is found in this volume.



Noh and Kyogen

Kabuki Dance

Rural Amusement  
Dances

Bon Dance  
Harvest Dance  
Great Catch-fish Dance  
Banquet Dances, accompanied with songs

New Dance Forms

New Kabuki Dances  
Western Style Dances

As in ancient Greece, the Japanese conception of the term "dance" is totally different from that of the Occidental world; for instead of rhythmical gymnastics, the Japanese dance is entirely of a pantomimic nature and strives through gesture to represent a historical incident, a mythical legend, or a scene from folk-lore. The Western form of dancing would be classified in Japan with Ju-jutsu or the ancient and primitive "Dengaku"<sup>1</sup>.

Unlike the Greek art, Japanese dancing still exists in its original form with little modification; thus, it is only natural that dancing, as well as other forms of art, has become conventionalized and formal and an extensive "vocabulary" has evolved. Weeping is conveyed by arching the hand over the eyes; thinking of something in a far away country, by extending the arms and looking eagerly in the direction indicated by the hand; meditation, by crossing the arms on the chest and dropping

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<sup>1</sup>An early form of entertainment consisting of juggling, acrobatics, and similar feats.

the head. From these examples the reader may falsely think of the Japanese dance as simple and easily understood by anyone; however, such is not the case, for more complicated movements and the movement of the long sleeves and the fan manipulation constitute such an important part of the dance that only the most ardent students fully understand the dance.

Accompanying chants for Kagura were recorded in writing toward the end of the tenth century. Being almost entirely devoid of poetic inspiration, the verses depend on rhythm and cadence of syllabic pulsations of five and seven beats. Naturally, the dance follows these same beats. Examples of Kagura verse found in Brinkley's Oriental Series, Volume I follow:<sup>1</sup>

## I

Deeply dipping deep  
In the rain-fed river's tide,  
Robe and stole we dye,  
Rain it raineth, yet,  
Rain it raineth, yet,  
Rain it raineth, yet,  
Dies the colour never-more;  
Never fades the deep-dyed hue.

## II

Sacred offerings pure,  
Not for mortal beings spread,  
But for her, sky-throned,  
Majestic Toyooka,  
Offerings for the Gods divine,  
Offerings for the Gods.

Brinkley also tells us the motions of the dance for the first example would be such as suggest the dipping of cloth

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<sup>1</sup>Brinkley, p.67.

in dye, the dropping of rain, and immutability; and for the second, the motions would indicate adoration, humility, and reverent presentation. Speaking of Kagura dances in general, Brinkley states:

\* \* \* all the Kagura dances may be described as solemn hand-wavings and body-swayings, without any movement of the feet except such as is necessary to preserve equilibrium, and without the least approach to strong emotional activity suggesting religious exaltation.<sup>1</sup>

From these simple Kagura dances developed the stately dramatic dances called Noh. In the Noh plays the essential part is the dancing, and it is always placed in the most important moment of the play, the climax. Performed by a series of gliding steps, accompanied with graceful gestures and occasional stamps of the foot, the Noh steps are usually in series of three, five, and seven. According to one observer, Beatrice Lane Suzuki, much of the charm of the Noh dance is due to its peculiar walk: the toes are raised, the foot pushed along, and the toes again laid upon the floor. The dances are static in movement at times when a pose is struck and held for some time. All of the movements are slow, dignified, and restrained. Relating her experience at the Imperial Theatre, Alice Schalek says:

In spite of the shortness of the runway, (ten metres) the entrance of the three dancers took more than half

an hour -- every step an eternity. Slow movements are the very soul of such dances, and even after they have reached the stage itself the dancers maintain the leisureness of their steps, which is regarded as a great art.<sup>1</sup>

Although Dengaku never rose to the level of a definite combination of graceful movements, due mainly to the interference of the Buddhist priests who refused to record anything frivolous, it nevertheless deserves the name of dance because the movements were measured and there was musical accompaniment. In actuality, Dengaku consisted of a display of muscular activity such as pole-balancing, stilt-walking, and a kind of sword-and-ball exercise by men mounted on high clogs. In the comic interludes of the Noh theatre, the Kiogen, the influence of Dengaku is still seen.

Even among the peasants the natural grace of the Japanese dance is evident. According to Shinto beliefs the spirits of departed ancestors are supposed to revisit the earth; and in August of each year Bon dances are held, each province having its own special form. The main features of the dance usually remain the same, and M. A. Hincks has given a picturesque and appreciative account of the Bon dance in her article, "The Art of Dancing in Japan":

The peasants form a great circle, a living wheel, which revolves now slowly, now swiftly, whilst they posture

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<sup>1</sup>Alice Schalek, "In a Japanese Theatre", Living Age, Vol. 321. (May 31, 1924), p. 1059.



and express their feelings by means of sleeve-wavings and conventional gestures. . . . Little fairy-like figures glide about in the white ghostly moonlight, their long soft sleeves waving like wings; their rhythmical and precise paces are silent and muffled, their gestures are mysterious and expressive of worship, and their song mingles with occasional soft hand-clapping.<sup>1</sup>

Incorporating all desired techniques from the Kagura, Noh, and even Dengaku, and utilizing particularly the movements of the puppets in Ayatsuri, the Kabuki drama has become the popular theatre of the Japanese people. The early structure of the Kabuki drama was based on the conventions of the puppet theatre with little dialogue; the actors played in pantomime while the story was recited or chanted by the chorus. The influence of the puppet theatre also caused the emphasis in Kabuki to be placed on a gesture which symbolized an emotion rather than on facial expression. There is one convention in the Kabuki which apparently was taken from the Noh theatre — the mie. The mie is an impressive pose in which the actor becomes statue-like with his eyes wide open, and it is used to heighten the esthetic appeal at the climax of the drama. In the article, "Theatre of the Passing World", Hall tell us: "The predominate characteristic of Japanese acting is restraint and a stylization which adds greatly to dramatic intensity".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marcelle Azra Hincks, "The Art of Dancing in Japan", Fortnightly Review, Vol. 86, (July 2, 1906), p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>A. Hall, "Theatre of the Passing World", Theatre Arts Monthly, Vol. X, (April, 1926), p. 275.



Even murder and sword fighting tend to be conventional and picturesque and unreal in the Kabuki theatre: when korosi, or murder, is committed it is made as artistic as possible by dancing and music, and when the Samurai cuts an opponent of low rank in a sword fight the victim turns a somersault. Above all, artistic perfection is necessary and essential, for even the slightest imperfection in performance is humiliating to the Kabuki actor and dancer and repugnant to the Kabuki audience.

### The Music

Choral singing is the most striking trait of Greek music, and its history may be said to parrellel the history of Greek dance. In Crete the Dorian had found not only group dancing but choral singing also: in Sparta choral singing was highly used in all kinds of official celebrations; in Athens tragedy developed from the choral songs of the Dionysiac rituals.

Actually, there are three periods in the history of Greek music; the primeval, the classical, and the post-classical.<sup>1</sup> In the primeval period the songs of the Grecian tribes were blended with those of the Asiatic, Thracian, and Cretan tribes. The classical period beginning in the seventh

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<sup>1</sup>Curt Sachs, The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West (1st ed.; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1943), pp. 200-1.

century B. C. was characterized by a national music, and the postclassical period saw the development of the revolutionary art of Phrynis of Mytilene and Timotheos of Miletos,<sup>1</sup>

After beginning with a notation of the similarities between the music of Greece and East Asiatic music, Curt Sachs expresses the belief that a common source of influence existed between Greece and China and Japan.

Both Greek and East Asiatic music are strictly established on a melodic basis and organized in genera, keys and modal systems; consonances are used as spices to a certain degree, without interfering with the exclusive orientation toward melody. Stringed instruments are pentatonically tuned in both these areas, while vocal melodies evolve to heptatonic forms. Both racial groups indulge in cosmological connotations and general ideas concerning the influence of music on man, politics, and education.

I need hardly emphasize that this does not mean deriving Greek from Japanese or Chinese music. Both reach down, rather, into one Asiatic mother civilization . . .<sup>2</sup>

The comments applied to China may be considered applicable to Japan for, as will be seen later, the earliest Japanese musical forms were imported from China.

Greek music was written in various modes which took their names from their geographical origins. Haigh lists the following modes:

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh says the music of Timotheos was characterized by softness, variety, and flexibility in contrast to the severe and simple music of the Aeschylean period, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Curt Sachs, The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West, p. 209.

- (1) Dorian -- majestic and dignified in style, used in the solemn and profound choral odes,
- (2) Mixolydian -- pathetic in style, used where deep emotion had to be expressed,
- (3) Ionic -- severe and sober, favored by Aeschylus,
- (4) Phrygian -- passionate and enthusiastic, used by Sophocles,
- (5) Hypodorian and Hypophrygian -- used only by the actors.<sup>1</sup>

Generally used for accompaniment, instrumental music was sometimes inserted to introduce a choral song or to point up the speech of the chief actors. These instruments, in the theatre, consisted mainly of the flute and the lyre. The flutes were of two types: (1) the 'Panpipes' which consisted of a series of hollow reeds bound together in graduated lengths, and (2) the auloi, a double flute each having a vibrant reed at the mouth. During the fifth century the cross-flute was created. Originally, the lyre was constructed of two animal horns inserted into a tortoise-shell sounding box, and four or seven strings were pegged to the horns. Held in the left hand, the lyre was played with a plectrum held by the musician in his right hand.<sup>2</sup>

As in most forms of Japanese art, the earliest musical forms in Japan had their beginnings in China. Although these

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

<sup>2</sup>Information on instrumental music is gathered from Kirstein, op. cit., p. 37.

forms have long since ceased to exist in China, the tradition-steeped Japanese have preserved, with little modification, the music from those ancient days.

Among the earliest music imported from China is the form known as Gagaku, Court music, which has two distinct forms: one is used for sacred performances and called Kagura; the other is used for such occasions as banquets and entertainments and is referred to as Bugaku when played as accompaniment for a dance. The instruments used in this form consist of three kinds of woodwind, Oteki, Hichiriki, and Sho, two kinds of stringed, Biwa and Koto, and two types of percussion, Kakko and san-no-tsuzumi, and Shoko and Taiko.

Being a recitative type of vocal music accompanied by instruments whose purpose is not tone but the accentuation of rhythm, the music of Noh, viewed from the standpoint of musical form, is inferior to Gagaku music. Only one flute is used in Noh, and its tone has no relation to the song except to mark the rhythm of the drums by its tonal placement. Three drums are also used in the Noh performances: the smallest is called ko-tsuzumi; the next, o-tsuzumi, and the largest, taiko.

In Chapter Two, the author has noted that with the introduction of the samisen music, the Kataribe and the strolling puppet players united their arts. Among the many elements which Kabuki purloined from the puppet drama, the samisen is outstanding. An excellent description of the samisen

and the technique used in the playing is found in a book entitled Japanese Music:

The samisen is a plucking instrument of three strings, with a long neck, whose square box is stretched with cat skin above and below . . . . The neck of the instrument has neither fingerboard nor fret. The player strikes it with a large plectrum held in his right hand. The plectrum is broad and thin at the striking end, but the part held in the hand is narrow and thick. The player also sometimes strikes the strings with the fingers of his left hand.<sup>1</sup>

Special use is made of the samisen to denote a variety of action in the Kabuki performance. Irregular notes accompany conversation or may be used to denote the appearance of an insane character, and there are special rhythms for people walking or for indicating a lonely farm house. In a harakiri scene the soft ripples of the samisen in a high tone is combined with the piercing flute. Other instruments used for special effects are the drums, cymbals, gongs, horse-bells, and the conch shell.

In conclusion is a description of musical instruments which have been mentioned earlier in this discussion:

Oteki: a simple transverse flute, having no keys as in a western model,

Hichiriki: an oboe without keys but with a double reed, and capable of giving a very shrill tone,

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<sup>1</sup>Katumi Sunaga, Tourist Library, Vol. XV, Japanese Music (Japan: Japanese Government Railways, 1938), p. 48.



- Sho: seventeen slender bamboo pipes arranged in a semi-circle, rising above an air box, each pipe having a reed and a small hole at the base of each pipe,
- Biwa: similar to the Arabian lute of the Middle Ages, flat with four stings struck by a plectrum,
- Koto: a long, slender wooden case, curved somewhat like some wooden bridges in Japan, with wilken strings stretched and tuned which are played upon with plectra upon the fingers of the right hand,<sup>1</sup>
- Kakko and san-no-tsuzumi: drums constructed so they are smallled around the middle thus resembling an hourglass. The Kakko is struck on both ends by small sticks, but the san-no-tsuzumi is struck on only one end,
- Shoko and Taiko: The shoko is a small drum and the Taiko are large drums varying from one and five tenths feet six and five tenths feet in diameter and maybe reaching a height of more than twenty-three feet.
- Ko-tsuzumi and o-tsuzumi: quite similar, shaped as a hourglass, made of wood with both ends of leather, tightened or loosened by strings which allows for some change in tone. The ko-tsuzumi is soft and rich

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<sup>1</sup>There are two types of Koto: the wa-gon which has six strings, and the so-no-koto which has thirteen strings.

in the variety of its tone, and the o-tsuzumi is shrill and high-pitched,

Taiko: a flat drum whose tone is adjusted by strings and is played with a stick in each hand.

With musical forms and musical instruments so completely foreign to the musical form and instruments of the Occident, is it any wonder that Japanese music is difficult to understand and appreciate?

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Inherent in the nature of mankind is the tendency toward imitative action and a latent instinct for harmony and rhythm. Give to mankind a story or experience to relate, and it will become drama; for drama is, after all, merely imitative action expressed through various modes into a dramatic unity.

Stirred by a curiosity concerning the world about him, early mankind had to find an explanation. In Greece and Japan there arose, therefore, a new world of superlative gods and goddesses, sprites, demons, furies, muses, goblins, and fairies. Any unknown phenomena could be attributed to these unknown deities or their attendants, and gradually there developed rituals to honor these gods, to pacificate them, to entreat them.

Talented poets told in verse the stories of the gods and demi-gods, the heroes of the country, and these were retold by wandering minstrels. Skilled dancers, and in Japan even puppets, interpreted the myths and folk-lore through pantomimic action which appealed to the visual sense of the spectators. Then came the last step when music, dance, and the spoken word combined in various forms to develop a drama suitable to the society. From democratic Greece came a drama for all; from aristocratic Japan came a drama for the aristocrats and another for the masses.

As the popularity of the drama grew, the need for appropriate structures, a theatre, was felt. In Greece, because

of the democratic society, a theatre was designed to meet the needs of the populace and the performers. Aristocratic Japan, on the other hand, had to design not one but two main types of theatres; the Noh for the ruling class, and the Kabuki for the people. Differences in the size of the Greek and Japanese open-air auditoriums may be accounted for on this basis.

The second distinction seen between the two theatres is that of basic structure: the Greek orchestra was large and circular in form; the Japanese stage was small, and either square or rectangular. Although in the last period of Greek drama the importance of the chorus was practically nil, in the beginning the chorus was of primary importance; therefore, the orchestra had to allow sufficient room for the performances of the large chorus. Assigned the role of complimenting the action and performance of the actor, the Japanese chorus required only a place to sit.

In the field of theatrical machinery, both the Greeks and the Japanese made remarkable innovations. True, the scenery, except in Kabuki, was sparse and simple, but spectacular effects were created with the various stage devices such as trap doors, the mechane and shunori, and the Japanese revolving stage.

Literary criticism usually appears with the advancement of artistic productivity. Representative of this field in Greece is Aristotle's Ars Poetica; and in Japan, Seami's Sixteen Dramatic Treatises. Since no complete English trans-

lation of Seami's work has been done, the investigator was compelled to slight this phase of the comparison. Such a comparison would indeed be invaluable to a better understanding of Japanese drama, and it is the hope of the author that such a study will be made in the near future.

More than a trace of the religious origins of the Greek and Japanese dramas was evident throughout its growth and development. Turning to the writings of earlier poets, the Greek and Japanese playwrights treated dramatically the age-old stories of gods and heroes and inculcated the ethical beliefs of their respective countries. In Japan the playwright, Chikamatsu, introduced characters of ordinary life into his plays; yet, even these characters were imbued with traits reminiscent of the god-like characters of the earlier plays. Maintaining a stateliness and dignity in the language, the playwrights of both countries combined colloquial language with classical references and metaphors into verse form. True, the plays of Japan also contain monologue and dialogue, but the major portion is written in verse.

Evolving simultaneously with the stately form of drama, generally called tragedy, was a dramatic form in complete contrast, called comedy in Greece and Kyogen in Japan. In place of beauty, the ludicrous was emphasized; in place of grace, the grotesque received the emphasis; in place of restraint, there was exaggeration; in place of nobility, vul-



garity was dominate. Although ignored by writers and religion for many years, this comic form struck a harmonious note in the nature of man. With the two forms, tragedy and comedy, Noh and Kyogen, supplanting one another, the emotional appeal to man was complete. Realizing the need of forms for a complete emotional appeal, Kabuki incorporated tragic and comic elements into its drama placing them within one dramatic structure.

Stateliness and dignity was reflected not only in the language but in the performances of the drama as well. Clothed in striking costumes, moving with pantomimic rhythm, the Grecian and Japanese actors developed a stylized manner of acting which was appropriate to the theatre, the society, the drama, and the religion. The earliest dramatic performances in these two countries were presented by only one actor, and the number of actors never surpassed three in Greece nor two in Japan. In Greece the increase in the number of actors resulted in a proportionate decrease in the importance of the chorus; and in the last period of Greek drama, the chorus received even less attention than had the Japanese chorus from its beginning.

Today Japan is feeling the influence of the Western World: women are entering the acting profession: new realistic techniques are being introduced: European plays are being produced. Will Japan preserve her priceless national heritage,

Noh, Ayatsuri, and Kabuki, or will the old theatres disappear until they become one with the fate of the theatres of ancient Greece -- a bundle of old, incomplete manuscripts and a few pictures upon fragmentary works of art?

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