

KABUKI



AN OUTLINE OF KABUKI

Among the three great classical theatre genres of Japan—*Noh*, *Bunraku*, and Kabuki—the youngest and the most enthusiastically supported of these in present-day Japan is Kabuki. The most important reason for this is that the art called Kabuki was developed as a people's art and has received the support of the general public since its inception. Kabuki is said to have originated around the beginning of the 17th century by a song and dance group centered around a woman named *Okuni*.

Okuni was originally a priestess at *Izumo Shrine*, which is located in the present *Shimane Prefecture*. She organized this song and dance troupe to raise funds for the shrine. She took her troupe to *Kyoto*, the center of culture at that time, where she gave performances and gained the hearty support of the populace.

The songs and dances *Okuni* performed with her troupe were derived from all the various performing arts that had been popular throughout the country at the end of the 16th century. The end of the 16th century was a time when the people of Japan had just attained release from a life of great uneasiness, of strife and battle, due to the endless political civil wars of the feudalistic warrior class, that had ravished the whole country for a very long period of time. The totally insecure life during these wars resulted in the birth of a simple religion in which salvation was guaranteed by simply repeating the name of *Buddha*. This gave rise to a very plain and simple performing art in which groups of believers beat small brass gongs that were suspended from a cord around their necks and danced as they chanted the name of the *Buddha*. This was known as the *Nenbutsu Odori* (*Buddha* chant dance).

There were also very liberated dances that were performed by the crowds attending festivals. They would dance alongside brilliantly decorated floats, all dressed

up in gorgeous costumes. This dance was known as the *Furyu*.

At this time there was already in existence the stage art, that had come into being some time before Kabuki, known as the *Noh* (or *Nogaku*). Within the *Noh* there is a comic dialogue theatre style that takes as its subject matter satire on the social life of the time, that is called *Kyogen*.

Okuni and her song and dance troupe brought the *Nenbutsu Odori*, the *Furyu*, and the humor of *Kyogen* together, made the humor more in line with the general public tastes, and thus created a revue type show.

The word "kabuki" originally meant something 'strange' or 'far out,' and it was used to refer to *Okuni* and her troupe of strangely dressed girls and their unusual dances and songs. Thus, because of the strangeness of these shows, they came to be called Kabuki Dances.

Stimulated by *Okuni's* popularity, many other groups began to appear, some of girls and some of young boys, all presenting the popular Kabuki Dance shows. In those days, all public performances were presented in the riverbed of the *Kamo River*, that runs through the heart of the city of *Kyoto*. This was a very bustling entertainment area where not only Kabuki Dances, but sideshows, puppet plays, jugglers, and *sumo* wrestling were presented as well.

The customs of the day and scenes of these various types of performances have been brought down to us today through paintings that were commissioned by the more affluent citizens. These paintings tell us that Kabuki Dance shows were presented in a simple enclosure, on a stage that looked very much like a *Noh* stage (a square thrust stage, covered by a roof, that is connected to the dressing room by means of a corridor that leads off at an angle from the left hand side of the stage and connects with the stage proper at a right angle in the up stage corner. There is only a single wooden wall, across the back of the stage, leaving the other three sides open. Also there is no curtain on the stage). There is an entrance at the front of the theatre, above which is seen a cupola

type structure with a curtain around it, called a *yagura*. The audience sits on the ground, and there is no roof over the seating area. In later periods, a roof was provided along the left and right sides of the seating area to cover the special high priced seats in the gallery.

Thus Kabuki Dance troupes, mainly made up of pretty girls, spread from *Kyoto*, all over the country. Their popularity was so great that there were command performances given for the *Shogun* and even for the *Emperor*.

However, while these troupes were ostensibly in business to entertain on the stage, the performers also sold their favors off stage as well. The government soon banned the activities of the women's troupes to protect public morals. This took place about 30 years after *Okuni* made her first appearance in *Kyoto*.

After the women were refused the right to appear on the stage, their place was taken by troupes of beautiful young boys, known as *Wakashu* Kabuki. However, they proved to be as much a corrupting force as the women had been. The rivalry over their charms was even more violent than it had been in the case of the women, and in about 20 years, they were also banned from the stage.

By this time, there were already comic dialogues and magic acrobatic and juggling shows that had been popular for some time among the people. *Kanzaburo Saruwaka* and *Dennai Miyako* were two performers who had gained great popularity in these styles of theatre.

After *Wakashu* Kabuki was banned from the stage, a movement was begun for a revival of Kabuki. This movement resulted in a reformed style of theatre that was only allowed under the conditions that it give up its concentration on the physical charms of the performers and place emphasis on artistic technique and dramatic content. Thus Kabuki appeared on the boards once again. Since the subject matter was more dramatic, it, of course, became necessary to present both male and female roles in a realistic manner in order to be convincing to the audience. Government regulations still insisted that only men

could appear on the stage, so it became necessary for male actors to develop techniques to perform the female roles. This necessity brought about the birth of actors who specialized in the portrayal of women. These female impersonators came to be known as *onnagata*.

The art of the *onnagata* developed during the 1670s, and since that time, the female impersonator has become the most unique characteristic of the art of Kabuki.

As dramatic content developed, scripts became necessary. In the early stages of development, the head of the troupe would give the whole cast a brief verbal rundown of the plot, but as these plots became increasingly complicated, the need for specialized script writers arose, and by the end of the 1600s, script writers had established themselves as independent craftsmen.

Along with the changes in dramatic content, the stage itself began to change to fit the special needs of Kabuki. The stage proper grew gradually larger in area, and became something quite distinct from the *Noh* stage, from which it was originally derived. It was about this time that the multiple scene structure of the plays also brought about the development of the stage curtain.

After the long period of internicine wars, the government was taken over by the *Tokugawa Shogunate*. This warrior government set up a tightly knit feudalistic establishment (*Bakufu*), with *Edo* (present *Tokyo*) as its capital. But the *Emperor* remained in *Kyoto* where the old culture and traditions remained intact and in effect. Also *Osaka*, as the center of commerce, gave birth to its own unique merchant culture. In contrast with the *Kyoto* culture, founded upon tradition, and the *Osaka* culture based on utility and profit, *Edo* was a new consumer city centered around the warrior class, and its culture was very rough and bold in nature. The two contrasting cultures reached perfection in style approximately 100 years after peace had been established, around the end of the 17th century. This same time also marked the end of the first period of development and refinement in theatre.

The brash bravado style of *Edo* and the realistic and ideological style of the *Kyoto-Osaka* area both reached perfection at this time. Edoites found a heroic, striking style, which came to be known as *aragoto*, stimulating, while *Kyoto-Osaka* area people found detailed tales of love, known as *wagoto*, more in harmony with their tastes. The most representative actors of the day were *Danjuro Ichikawa* of *Edo* and *Tojuro Sakata* and *Ayame Yoshizawa* of the *Kyoto-Osaka* area. *Ayame Yoshizawa* is especially important in the history of Kabuki as the perfecter of the female impersonation techniques of the *onnagata*.

When we reach the middle of the 18th century, we find that these famous actors had passed on, and one of the *Edo* theatres had been put out of business, and Kabuki had gone into a state of decline. It was around this time that *Bunraku* (puppet theatre), which had developed somewhat earlier than Kabuki, completely overpowered Kabuki. The old narrative *joruri* chanted music was wedded to the *shamisen* when it was imported from *Okinawa*, and this was added to a highly technical style of puppet theatre that was already very active around the end of the 16th century, to create *Ningyo* (puppet) *Joruri*, which is known today as *Bunraku*.

Bunraku saw great development alongside of Kabuki around the end of the 17th century. Two genius artists—the playwright *Monzaemon Chikamatsu* and the composer *Gidayu Takemoto*—were responsible for this development.

One of *Chikamatsu's* hit *Bunraku* plays "*The Battles of Kokusenya*" (*Kokusenya Kassen*) was adapted for the Kabuki stage, and served to inject new life into the genre. This took place in 1716. The now world famous "*The Forty-Seven Loyal Ronin*" (*Kanadehon Chushingura*) was also an adaptation for Kabuki from a puppet theatre script. Thus scripts from *Bunraku* were introduced into the Kabuki repertoire one after the other, until they came to make up a very large percentage of that repertoire. This resulted in Kabuki's becoming a more musically oriented theatre and greatly enriched its dramatic content.

By this time, the theatres were no longer temporary structures. A roof had been added to cover the

seating area, and a raised passageway had been devised which runs through the seating area to the edge of the stage, known as the *hanamichi*. Also such innovations had been made in stage effects as the revolving stage, which allows for the quick change of as many as three separate scenes by means of a partial revolution for each scene.

As a result of the introduction of scripts and techniques from the puppet theatre, which was developed in the logical climate of the *Kyoto-Osaka* area, the Kabuki of *Edo* became more complex, the culture of *Edo* attained a higher level of refinement, and *Edo* became the main center of Kabuki activity.

It was during the early and middle part of the 19th century that all aspects of culture had achieved full development, and the desire for change had become apparent. Sensational scenes of murder and ghosts were made possible by the highly refined staging machinery and techniques, and began to appear in profusion. Also a new tendency to depict the miserable lives of common citizens in a detailed realistic style gave a feeling of freshness and variety to the audiences of this period. The famous horror play titled "*Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan*" has scenes depicting a whole galaxy of shocking scenes including cruel murder, the lifestyle of a common prostitute, as well as that of a poverty stricken low class *samurai*, plus beggars and ghosts in generous numbers. The popularity of such pieces as these means that they fulfilled the desire for change that was so very strong in the public of that day.

Even when depicting the above types of cruelty, evil, and murder, Kabuki embellishes them with music, color, and the stylized performing techniques, even to the extent that it has succeeded in expressing an aesthetic of cruelty, an aesthetic of evil, and an aesthetic of decadence. The fact that the plays that depicted the mutual suicide of two lovers who could devise no means of being together in this life increased the occurrence of such incidents among the young people of the day was quite definitely due to the beauty with which the scenes of their death was depicted upon the stage.

By the middle part of the 19th century, the culture

of *Japan* had developed to its ultimate possibilities, the actual political power was in the hands of the warrior class, and the financial power was tightly held by the merchants. This strange situation gave rise to unscrupulous practices within the warrior class due to vast differences in the extent of their wealth, and within the lower classes due to the strict restrictions that were enforced by the government in all aspects of daily life.

Attempts were made many times during the *Edo Period* at revolution against the government, the most violent of which was carried out in 1841. This was an attempt to restore order in society and to regain the political position for the warrior class. The change that took place at this time that had the strongest effect on the social life of those involved in Kabuki was the edict that demanded that the theatres be moved to an area outside the center of the city and restricted the activities of theatre people to the same very limited area.

Kabuki as the people's art, became the voice of the people by presenting in its plays the complaints of the people against the ruling class and exposals of the evils perpetuated by that same ruling class. The edicts issued at this time tried to utilize this didacticism of Kabuki by putting restrictions on its scripts that insisted on the expression of the moral ideal that evil always fails and good triumphs in the end. Playwright *Mokuami Kawatake* was active from this time until the 1920s.

The foundation of the long establish closed-door policy *Tokugawa* government began to give away under the pressure of modern influences from abroad, and finally the rule of the warrior class was brought to an end and the new *Meiji* government was established in 1868.

Great effort was expended on bringing all laws and culture up to date, to bridge the gap between *Japanese* society and the society of modern western nations.

Kabuki also began to introduce the literature of the new age into its repertoire. However, there were no immediate signs of revolt or change in its style of dramaturgy. In 1870 a movement began to renovate

Kabuki, and by 1878 when the new theatre called the *Shintomi-za* was built, changes in both dramaturgy and directing techniques had been accomplished. Plays began to be presented that were written by not only the traditional playwright attached to the theatre, but those by famous novelists as well. The first of these new plays that was of any true worth was *Shoyo Tsubouchi's "A Single Paulownia Leaf" (Kiri Hitoha)*.

Around the turn of the century, Kabuki began to show the strong influence of modern western style theatre, and this gave birth to a whole new repertoire and style of presentation that came to be called *Shin* (new) Kabuki. This mutual influencing of Kabuki and modern theatre continued up until the first half of the 1940s.

Then *Japan* started the Pacific War and Kabuki became distorted by the government policy of insisting on a war consciousness on the stage, and after *Japan's* defeat in that war, it was feared at one point that Kabuki would become completely extinct. However, since 1960, it has experienced a brilliant post-war renaissance. The older performers who were active in pre-war days gradually died off, but the *Japanese* respect for tradition prevailed with its famous persistence and brought about the renaissance of not only Kabuki, but of the whole spectrum of *Japan's* classical theatre arts. And even today, Kabuki maintains its importance as the mainstem of *Japanese* classical performing arts, and lives on as a superior traditional art form.

Kabuki is often said to be like a beast with the head of a lion, the body of a goat and the tail of a dragon. As mentioned earlier, Kabuki originated as a song and dance revue type show, and later introduced many aspects from the older theatre forms, particularly *Noh* and *Kyogen*. Even later in its history, it was strongly influenced by the puppet theatre style we know today as *Bunraku*, to the extent that a great deal of its repertoire is made up of scripts borrowed directly from *Bunraku*. And its further development into the complex, highly refined art we know today was embellished by the introduction of a whole galaxy of popular entertainment styles as well as the tastes and fads of the common people who were its most enthusiastic patrons throughout the history of its develop-

ment. All of this has gone into the making of Kabuki.

We will continue our explanation by taking the reader on an imaginary tour of a performance. First we enter the theatre, take our seats, and open our programs. The first piece on the program for today is to be a single act that tells the tragic story of a warrior who finds it necessary to sacrifice his own child in order to save the life of his lord. This is one of those script that was borrowed from the *Bunraku* puppet theatre. The period represented here is during the rule of the warrior class, and the hero is a member of that class. The second play is a dance-drama that tells of a great general who hides his identity in order to pass through a barrier gate with his retainers. This play was adapted from a *Noh* drama. Here we find that it is accompanied by *Nagauta* singing and the *shamisen*. The third part of today's show is a drama about a gangster who dresses as a young girl and goes to a dry goods shop to carry out a clever swindle plan. Thus the scene is the merchant's place of business and home. The characters in this play are all commoners and merchants. This is the only piece on our program today that was originally written for Kabuki. It was created around the middle of the 19th century.

Thus each of the pieces on this triple program are from a different source, and they represent three different styles of Kabuki.

As we look up from our programs, we see that there is a raised passageway of about 160 centimeters in width running from the back of the theatre, through the main floor seating area, and meeting the edge of the stage at the left hand side. It is known as the *hanamichi*. This staging device is used so much and so effectively in Kabuki that it almost seems as though Kabuki could not be presented without it. In any case, it is safe to state that since the *hanamichi* is not used in any other type of drama, if the show you see has a *hanamichi*, it is quite certain to be Kabuki.

Another aspect of the stage that immediately attracts the eye is the draw curtain which is dyed in vertical stripes of black, green, and brown. It is called the *joshiki maku*, and is one more of those things that are unique to Kabuki.

Lively drums begin to beat a rhythm to let us know that it is almost time for the show to begin, and when it ends, there are two sharp clacks of the *hyoshigi* to tell us that the time has come to open the curtain. The *hyoshigi* is a simple instrument consisting of two short sticks of oak wood, and it plays a very important role in Kabuki as a signal for all points of climax and progress in the plays.

And now it is curtain time! The *hyoshigi* beats very slowly and then progressively faster as the draw curtain is pulled back from left to right to reveal the set for the first piece on today's program. The first thing we notice is the *Gidayu-bushi* narrator and his *shamisen* accompanist seated on their small platform on the right hand side of the stage. These musicians comment on the emotional state of the characters and the scene taking place, between the lines of dialogue delivered by the actors. The music they perform is a type of *Joruri* known as *Gidayu-bushi*. These musicians are always present in plays, such as this one, that have been borrowed from the *Bunraku* puppet theatre.

On the opposite side of the stage, at the point where the *hanamichi* meets the main stage, hidden behind a piece of scenery, is another group of musicians who use an extremely large variety of musical instruments to add to the atmosphere of the plays. Here also they use the *shamisen*, as well as flutes and many kinds of drums. This sound effect music is known as the *geza*.

Thus we see that Kabuki is an extremely musically oriented theatre, with its *Gidayu-bushi*, its *geza*, and its *hyoshigi*. This great variety of sound is the point upon which the general opinion that Kabuki is pure musical theatre is based. Another aspect that adds to the impression of total musicality in Kabuki is the rhythmical, almost chanted, stylized delivery of dialogue by the actors.

Now we move on to the second piece on our program. When the curtain opens, we see a single large pine tree painted on the backdrop. Also we see a low platform of unfinished wood spread all across the stage. This platform is always used in dance-dramas to help the feet of the dancers slide smoothly

and to resound with a pleasant sound when they stamp their feet to accent their dancing. In front of the backdrop with the pine tree painted on it is a long narrow platform covered with red felt, with the *nagauta* musicians sitting on top in a single row. Those on the left half of the platform are singers and those on the right half are *shamisen* players. They vary in numbers from piece to piece, but sometimes there are as many as twenty musicians. On the floor in front of these musicians, also in a single row, are seated the drummers and flute players.

In contrast to the narrative nature of the *Gidayu-bushi* of the first piece we saw today, the *Nagauta* style of music is very lyrical and impressionistic in content. This poetic nature of *Nagauta* music is the reason it is widely used to accompany Kabuki dance-dramas. There are also, however, dance-dramas that are accompanied by *Kiyomoto*, *Tokiwazu*, and *Gidayu-bushi*, and some that use a combination of two or more of these styles of music in an antiphonal style.

The major characters enter the stage from the *hanamichi*. This *hanamichi* is not merely a passageway for entrances and exits, but an extension of the acting area. Thus whenever a character enters on the *hanamichi*, he stops at a set position near the stage to perform a small scene before he enters the main stage. In this play, we see the hero and his retainers come down the *hanamichi* in single file on their way to the barrier gate. As they walk along their way, they discuss how they are going to go about getting safely through the barrier gate. This takes place on the *hanamichi*.

This dance-drama is based on a *Noh* drama. The simple set with the single pine tree painted on the backdrop is an imitation of the *Noh* stage. The platform for the *Nagauta* orchestra and chorus is the only piece of furniture on the stage. The whole piece is based on the conventions of the *Noh* drama from which it was derived.

The last play on our program is an original drama that was written for Kabuki. There is no platform here for an orchestra as we saw in the first two pieces today. As the curtain opens, we find an extremely realistic scene in progress of an *Edo Period*

dry goods shop, its customers and clerks carrying on their normal business. If we listen carefully we can hear atmospheric music from the geza enclosure, underscoring the scene and adding to the feeling of a bustling part of old *Edo*.

Finally a young lady (actually a gangster dressed in female garments) comes down the *hanamichi* accompanied by two male companions. Of course, we are already aware that all female roles in Kabuki are played by male actors.

Actors who specialize in the performance of female roles in Kabuki are called *onnagata*. We have already discussed the origin of the art of these female impersonators, but let us stop here for a moment to consider a few more interesting facets of this art. The techniques of female impersonation were quite completely perfected by the time the dramatic content of the plays of Kabuki had reached its full development, around the beginning of the 18th century. There are many documents passed down to us today that tell of the difficult lives led by the *onnagata* of the *Edo Period* who attempted to perfect their stagecraft by living like women even in their daily lives off stage. The aesthetics of femininity thus attained were particularly stressed on the stage, making these actors appear even more graceful and charming than real women. This gave rise to the peculiar phenomenon in which the Kabuki *onnagata* took the lead in setting the styles and fads in women's clothing, makeup and accessory fashions. Thus the *onnagata* became one of Kabuki's greatest crowd-drawing powers and one of its most important aesthetic factors.

But back to our play. . . Suddenly the young lady, who had come to the shop ostensibly to buy *kimono* material, reveals that she is really a young man, and not only a man, but a gangster come to extort money from the owner of the shop. The gangster introduces himself to the shocked merchant in a pompous declamatory manner. This speech is very rhythmical and florid. Speeches of this kind are found in almost all Kabuki plays, and they provide an opportunity to display the actor's virtuosity. For instance, in the first piece on our program, the hero explains his painful decision to sacrifice his own child in place of his lord in a speech of this type.

Kabuki is often spoken of as a stylized theatre genre. Since it developed in a period when social status was rigidly delineated, part of the stylization is due to the placement of characters on the stage in any given scene, which is always decided in accordance with strict rules of social protocol. Also, all stage conventions are securely fixed and variations are never allowed. For example, just before the curtain is closed at the end of a scene or act, all activity is stopped, and everyone strikes a pose, presenting a still picture or tableau effect. The poses of the various actors in this picture must be executed in such a manner that they contribute to the compositional balance of the whole. Thus, through a very long period of experimentation, the position and pose of each character in these scenes has been fixed. In Kabuki these poses and positions are called *kata*.

In present day Kabuki, these *kata* are absolutely immovable, and there is no room for the creation of new *kata*. This gives rise to the problem of just how much meaning these old *kata* have to audiences today. The *kata* include not only the poses and positions mentioned above, but also the costumes, wigs, delivery of lines, and the music that accompanies and embellishes all these aspects of every moment of every role. All these factors relate to each other to create the fixed expressiveness of the whole.

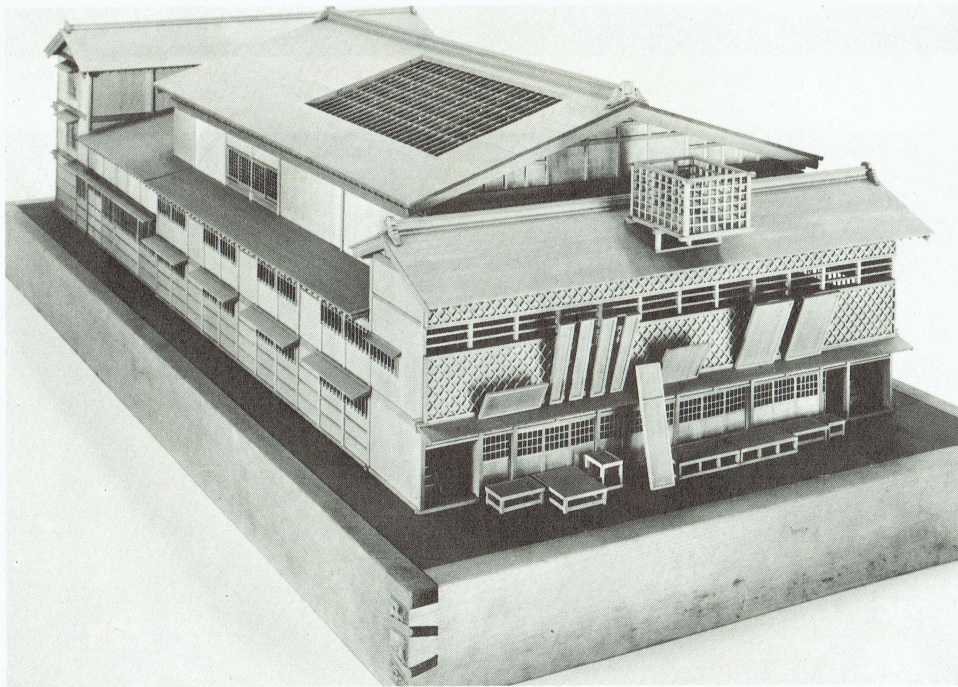
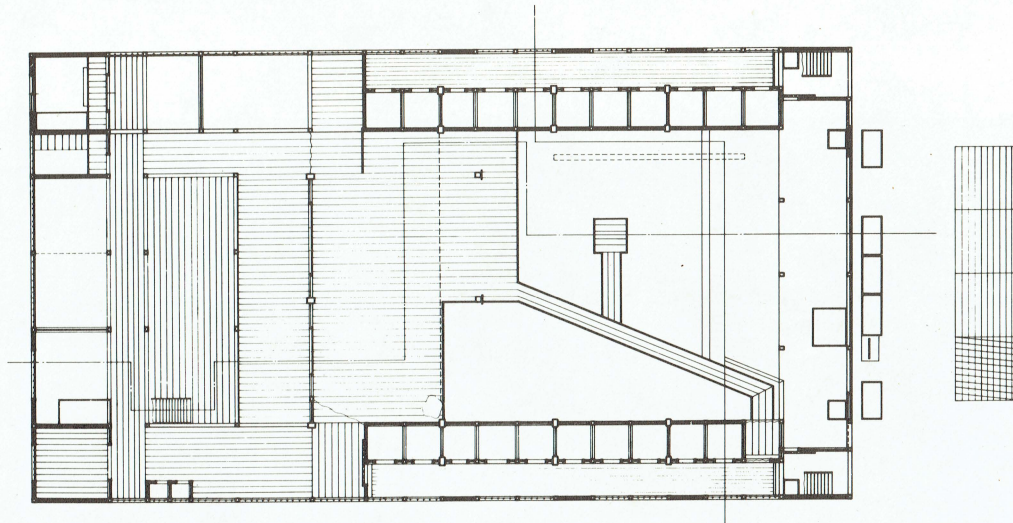
Thus the acting techniques, which began in a realistic style, have become set in accordance with these rules of Kabuki and forced into a stylized framework. For example, even the wigs were fashioned after the hair styles of the people of the *Edo Period*, but they have been beautifully re-styled in Kabuki to fit and contribute to the expression of the character that is to wear it. This is also true in the expression of such sounds of nature as rain, wind, waves, as well as the evocation of such emotional atmospheric feelings as fear and uncanniness, which are all produced on the large drum called the *odaiko*.

Further, it must not be forgotten that one more aspect of the stylized beauty of Kabuki is the careful harmonization and variation of color. This careful matching and combination of colors is particularly evident in the design of the costumes. Variations are brought about by the putting on and taking off

of cloaks and other outer garments, and these variations are carefully harmonized mutually among all characters on the stage. Also the color balance between the costumes and the set they appear in has been carefully plotted as well.

Kabuki is a complexly stylized classical theatre genre that is made gorgeous and opulent by the refinement and harmony of its three aesthetic aspects of form, sound, and color, and owes the depth and meaningfulness of its dramatic content to the inclusion and assimilation of a myriad different performing arts, over a period of several centuries.





Kabuki theatre of the mid-18th century

Around the beginning of the 18th century, a roof was built over the entire theatre. The raised passageway known as the *hanamichi* which seems to have been originally built for the purpose of allowing the actors to receive gifts from their patrons, appeared about this time, and soon became an important acting area. In this way, theatre equipment specially appropriate to Kabuki was developed, and the structure of the theatre

was perfected. This drawing is a hypothetical reconstruction of a theatre of the 1740s. Here we see an additional square platform added to the *hanamichi* called the 'name announcing platform' (*nanori-dai*).



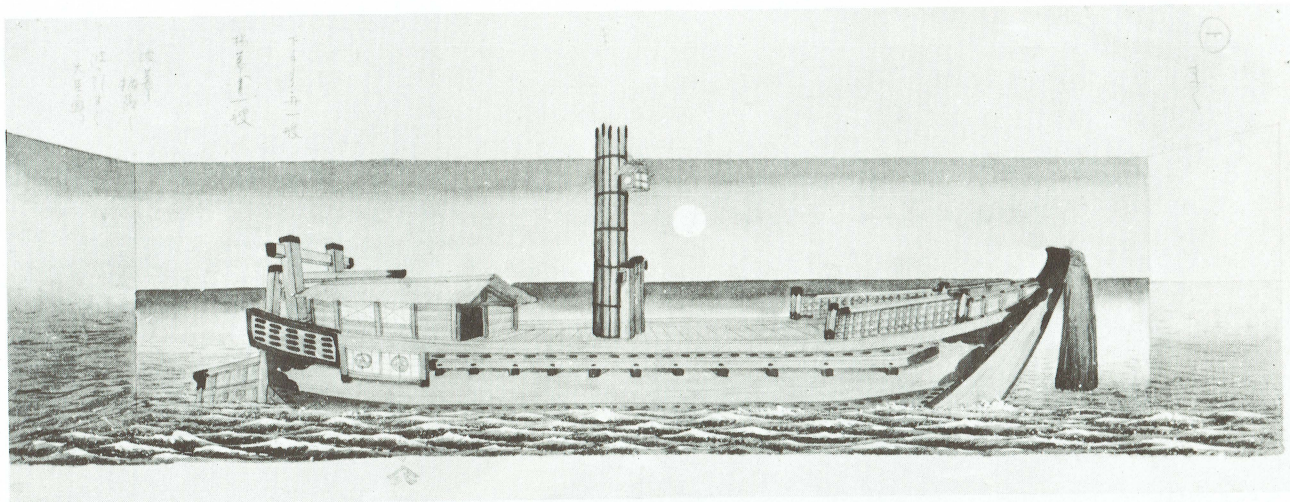
**'Face Showing' presentation program
(*kao-mise banzuke*)**

In the past a Kabuki theatre hired actors on single years contracts that began in November. The November performance was to introduce the cast for that year, and was considered an especially gala occasion. Here we see the list of all the actors appearing, with pictures of their faces below. In the center is the crest of the theatre, and the producer's name is printed below. This program was printed in November 1747. The pictures were painted by the *Torii* family of artists.



Woodblock print of the dance-drama "Narukami"

This print was made by *Toyokuni Utagawa 3rd* (1786-1864). It was published simultaneously with the performance of this play at the *Ichimura-za* in *Edo* (present *Tokyo*). *Toyokuni* made the largest number of Kabuki prints of any woodblock print artist. His prints are valuable today both as works of art and as pieces of historical reference material.



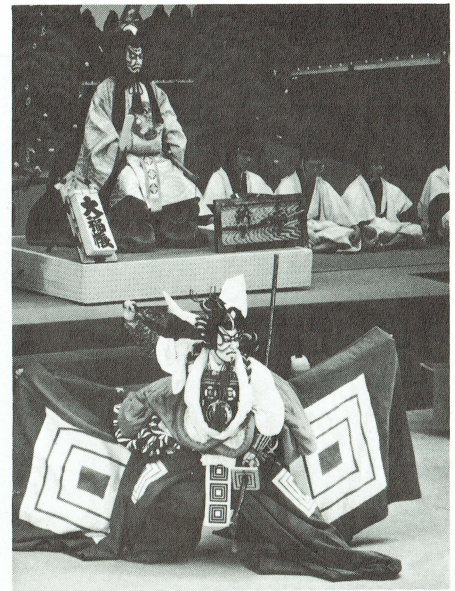
Kabuki stage set

The upper picture is a drawing of the set and the lower one is of a performance using that set. This is a set of ships floating on the sea—one of Kabuki's large scale set designs. It is designed in such a way that the stage can be revolved so that the ship on the right will have its prow out over the audience. Blue cloth is spread all over the floor of the stage to give the illusion of being far out at sea.



Kabuki costumes No. 1

As the costumes of Kabuki are designed to stress the personality of the character wearing them, they are quite different from clothing used in everyday life. This is the costume for an extremely strong brave man. The crest on the sleeves is the family crest of *Danjuro Ichikawa* who was the actor responsible for premiering the play it is used for.



This is a scene from the play in which the costume is used. The character wearing it has bright red makeup on his face and he carries a two meter long sword in his belt. He has just taken a pose to demonstrate his strength and bravery to the badmen on the stage. Stage assistants hold out his huge sleeves to further stress the large appearance of the character.



Kabuki costumes No. 2

This costume is for a male role, and it is equipped with a special device. The front of the cloth is white, and the back is decorated with a pattern of clouds and flames. It is basted across the top of the shoulders, and little balls are attached to the end of the thread. When the threads are pulled out, the outer material drops down in front and back and hangs down over the hips. Thus the costume which was white is now



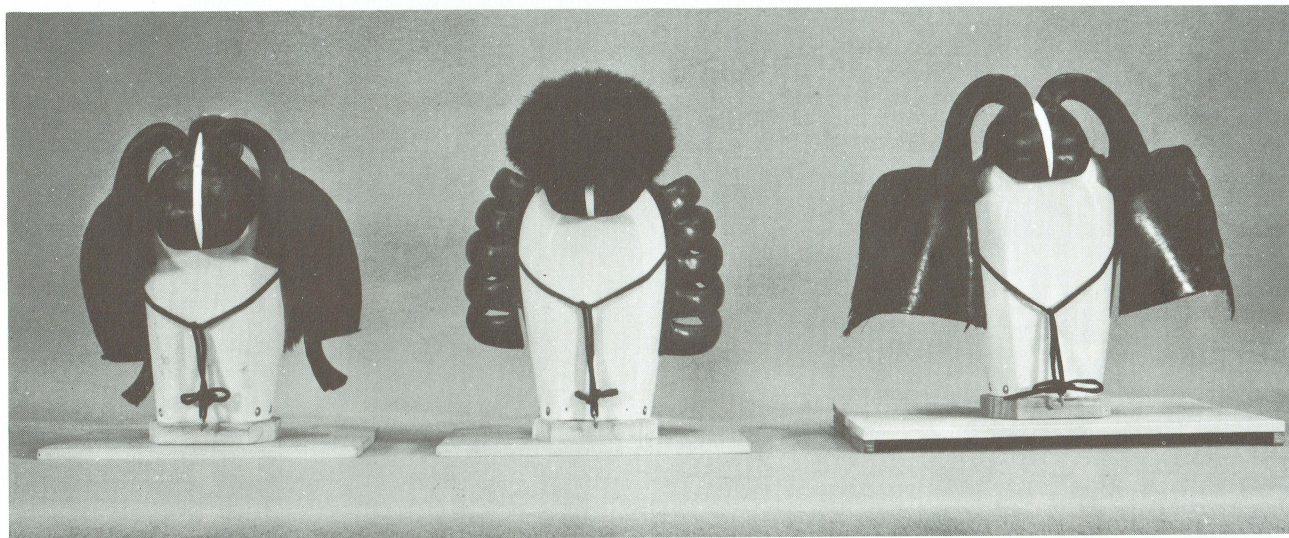
decorated in a pattern of clouds and flames. This device is known as *bukkaeri*, and is used on the stage to express the sudden change of personality in a character, making him almost an entirely different person. A similar device allows the upper garment to be pulled completely off to reveal another costume beneath it, and is called *hikinuki*.

This picture shows a character who had been very quiet until this instant when he is suddenly filled with rage.



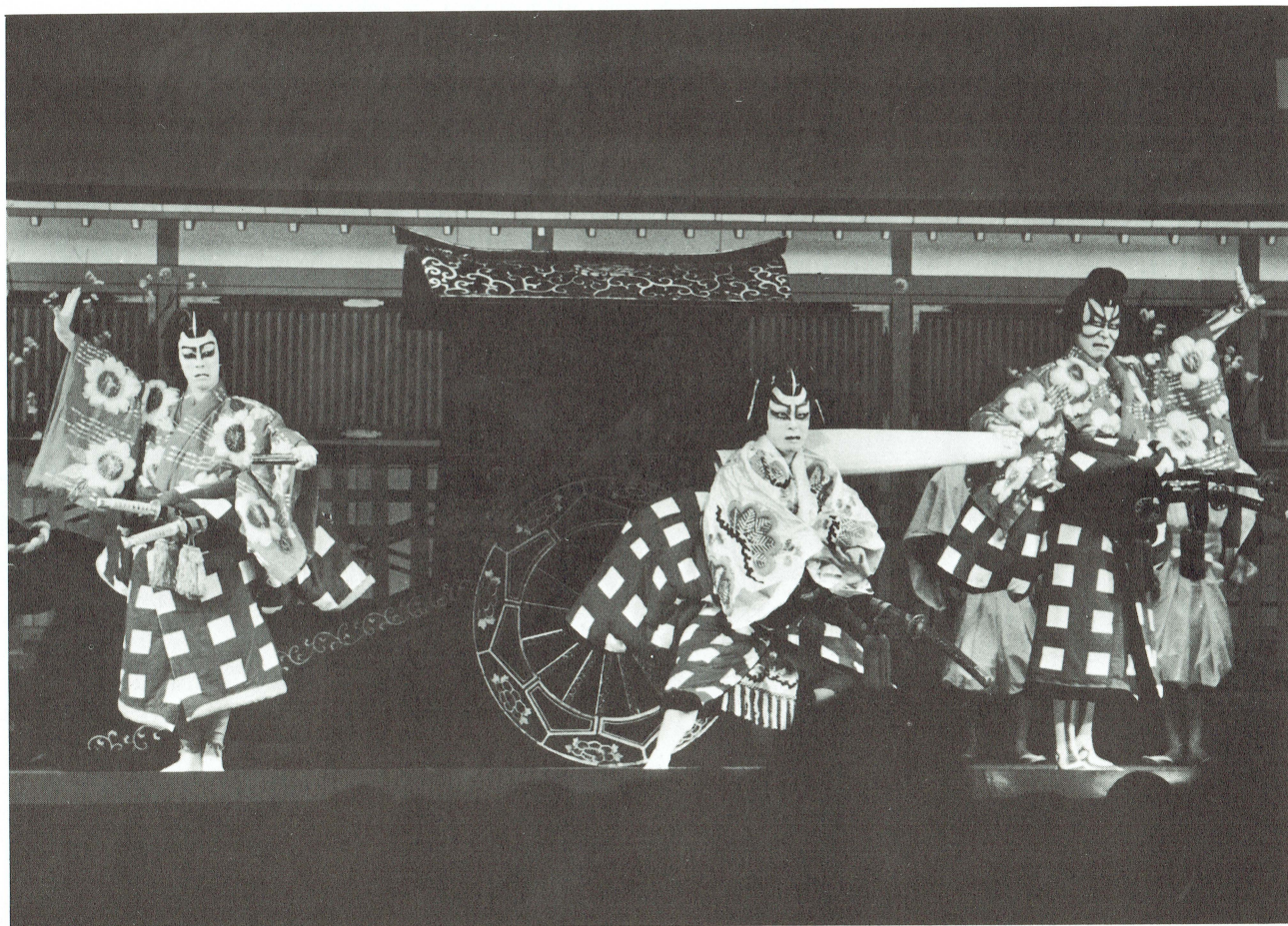
Kabuki costumes No. 3

This is the outer garment for a female role. It is a very gorgeous garment with chrysanthemums embroidered in a variety colors on a black background. This type of garment is used for characters of very high social rank. This costume was actually used by *Baiko Onoe 6th* (1870-1934).



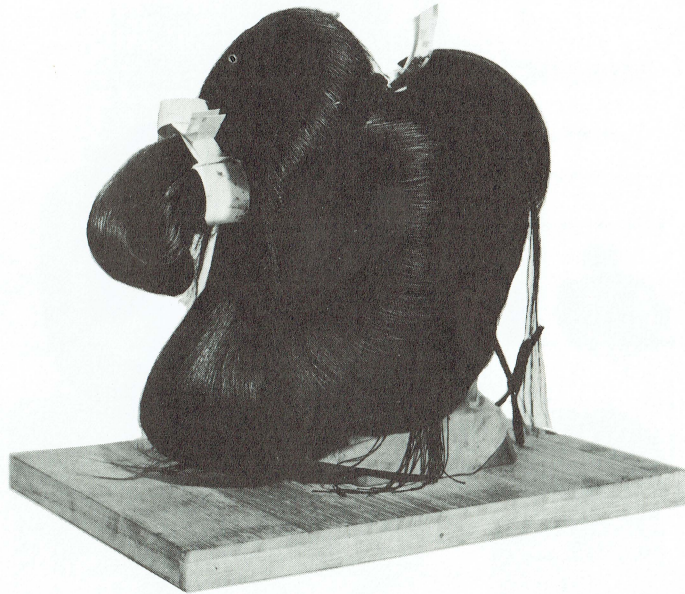
Wigs

Kabuki wigs are constructed by fitting the metal frame to the actor's head, then covering the frame with paper. Finally the hairpiece, made of woven hair or hair embedded a hair at a time into a silk base, is attached to that base, and given a final dressing with oil. These three wigs are for the three brothers in the cart pulling scene. They are devised specially to stress the youth and handsomeness of these brave young men. They are for the roles *Matsuo*, *Umeo*, and *Sakuramaru* (right to left).



Cart Pulling scene on stage

This shows the scene of the cart pulling done by *Umeo*, *Matsuo*, and *Sakuramaru* (right to left) using the wigs seen in the previous plate. This is a scene of strife. The three young men are wearing the special *kumadori* makeup on their faces.



Kabuki wigs

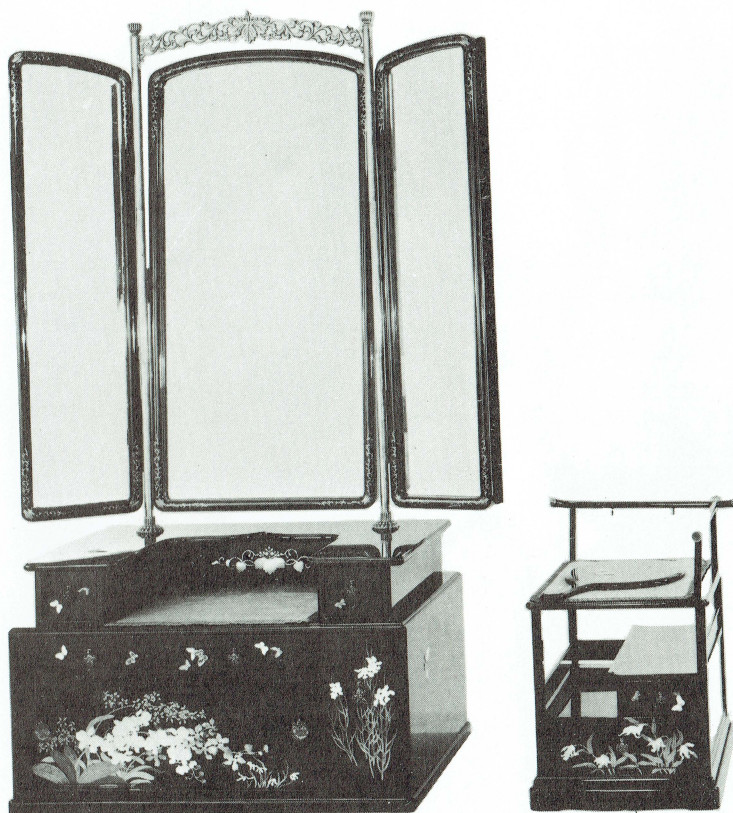
These wigs are for female roles. The hair arrangements vary for female roles depending on their age and social status. They are much more complicated than those for male roles and they form very beautiful shapes. This is one of the aspects that makes up the aesthetics of Kabuki.



Wig making tools and process

To the left and above is the metal frame. It is rounded to fit over the head of the actor who is to use it. To the right of the frame is a completely prepared base. The one on top is for a woman's wig and that below for a man's. The top picture is the wooden frame for weaving the hair and below it is the frame for planting hairs in silk cloth. Woven hair is called *mino* and that planted in silk cloth *habutae*. This hair is

then attached to the base. The far upper left one is for a woman and the third one from top on the second row up to the left is for a man. In the case of a man's wig, a sheaf of hair is attached to the base after it has been hardened with oil. This is called a *mage*. The one on the lower right is a finished man's wig and the one of the left a woman's. A woman's wig is further arranged to fit the rank and status of the role to be played.



Dressing table

This is a dressing table used by Kabuki actors for applying their makeup. One of the special characteristics of Kabuki is that all female roles are played by male actors. These actors are called *onnagata*. In the past, *onnagata* actors dressed as women even in their everyday lives. Thus the dressing table of an *onnagata* is more feminine and beautiful than that of an actor who plays male roles. This dressing table

was used by *Tokizo Nakamura 3rd* (1895-1959). *It can be also appreciated as a beautiful piece of art. It is made of wood, and decorated with inlaid shells, and then finished with a special lacquer found only in *Japanese* handicraft art. This lacquer is also used on eating utensils and other types of household furniture.

This dressing table is collapsible for ease in transport from theatre to theatre.



***Kumadori* makeup**

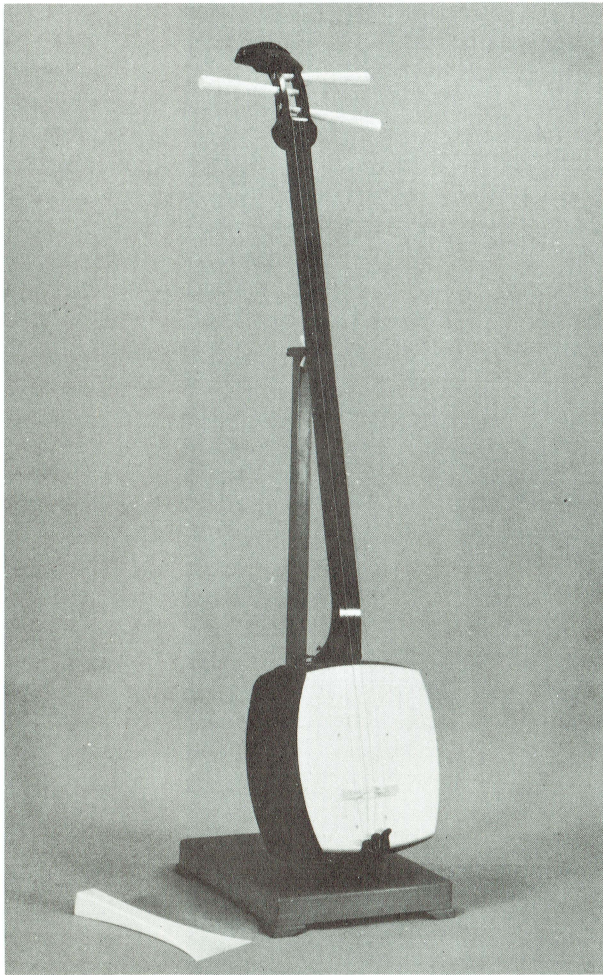
This is a special makeup style of Kabuki in which the natural lines and muscles of the face are stressed to express extreme tension due to great anger. Thus it is never used in a realistic role. Rather, it is used in *aragoto* style plays in which the hero is a very brave hero or a super-human spirit or demon. The use of colors is set according to the character of a role—red expresses justice, blue evil, and brown and

and purple super-human spirits, ghosts, and demons. Some comic roles also wear a special type of *kumadori*.



Print of a *kumadori* (*oshi-kuma*)

This print is made by pressing a piece of silk or paper against the face of an actor wearing a *kumadori*. It is either kept by the actor as a keepsake, or presented to special fans. The characters in the lower left corner are the autograph of the actor who wore this *kumadori*.



Shamisen

The *shamisen* is one of *Japan's* most common traditional musical instruments. It is the main accompanying instrument in both *Kabuki* and *Bunraku*. It was imported into *Japan* from *China* and *Okinawa* during the last half of the 16th century. It was originally covered with snake skin and was known as the *jabisen*, but it was adapted for *Japanese* requirements and improved. It is now *Japan's* most widely used stringed instrument. There are three types of *shamisen* in use—the *Gidayu shamisen* (used in *Bunraku*) is the largest and lowest in pitch and the *Nagauta shamisen* is the smallest and highest in pitch, and the type used for *Tokiwazu* and *Kiyomoto* is between these two in size and pitch.

Musical instruments of Kabuki

Music is widely utilized in *Kabuki* to build emotional climaxes and to evoke atmosphere in all types of situations, including the entrance and exit of characters as well as interwoven with their dialogue and movements. This sound effect music is performed in a hidden enclosure behind the set on the far down stage corner of the left hand side of the stage, and is called *geza* music. The main instruments used are such drums as the *taiko*, the *otsuzumi* and the *kotsuzumi*, the *shamisen* and flutes, but there are also some 30 other instruments, many of which were originally used in temples, used here.

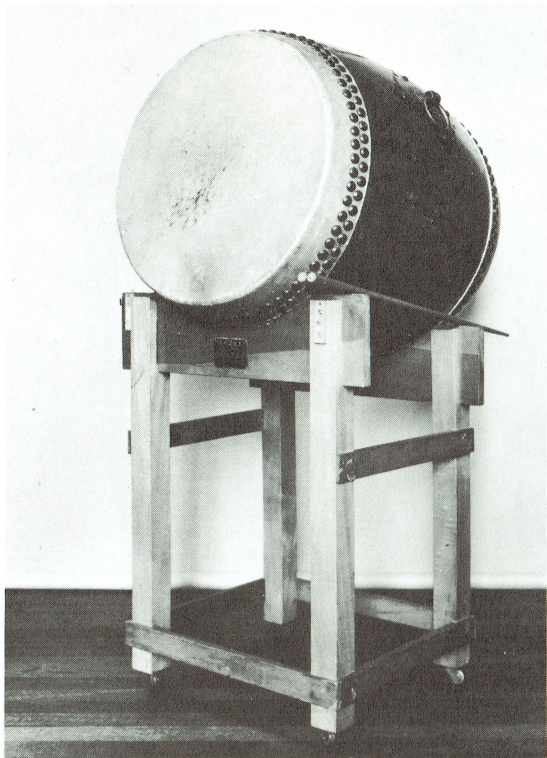
1—*Odaiko*: This large drum is used both in music and to make the sound of wind, water and falling snow.

2—*Mokugyo* and *Kin*: Both of these are *Buddhist* instruments. They are used here to evoke a lonely atmosphere in cementaries, etc. and to create atmosphere in a temple or monastery scene.

3—*Hon-tsuri*: This instrument is used to indicate the passing of time as well as scenes of conflict in temples.

4—*Tsuzumi*: One of *Japan's* oldest musical instruments and one of the most important in *Kabuki* music.

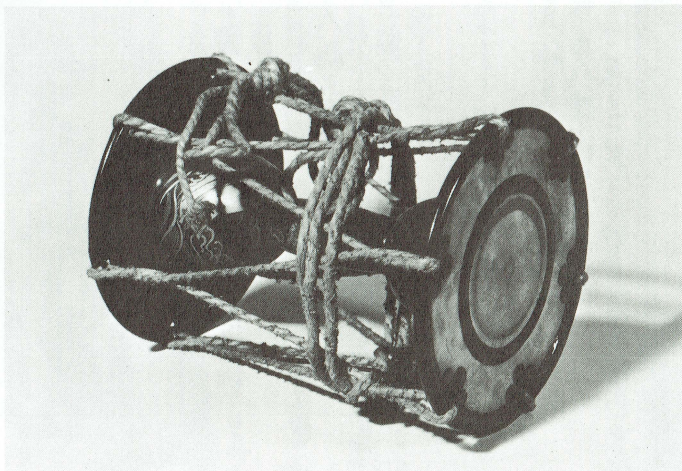
5—*Chappa*, *Suzumushi*, *Rei*, *Surigane*. Metal instruments.



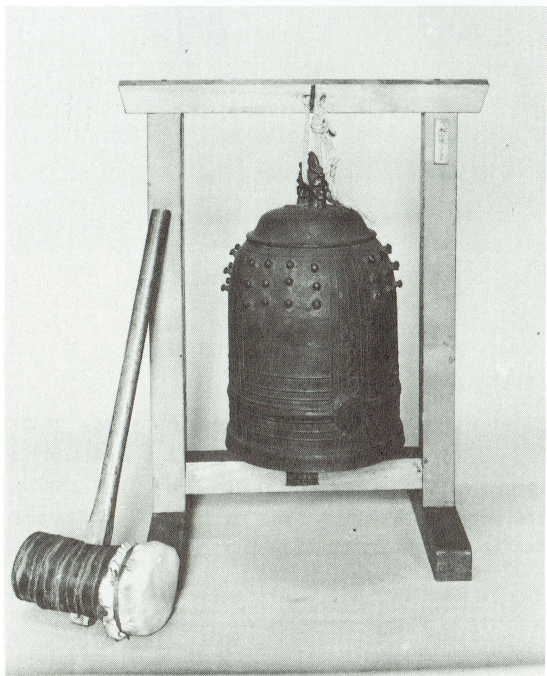
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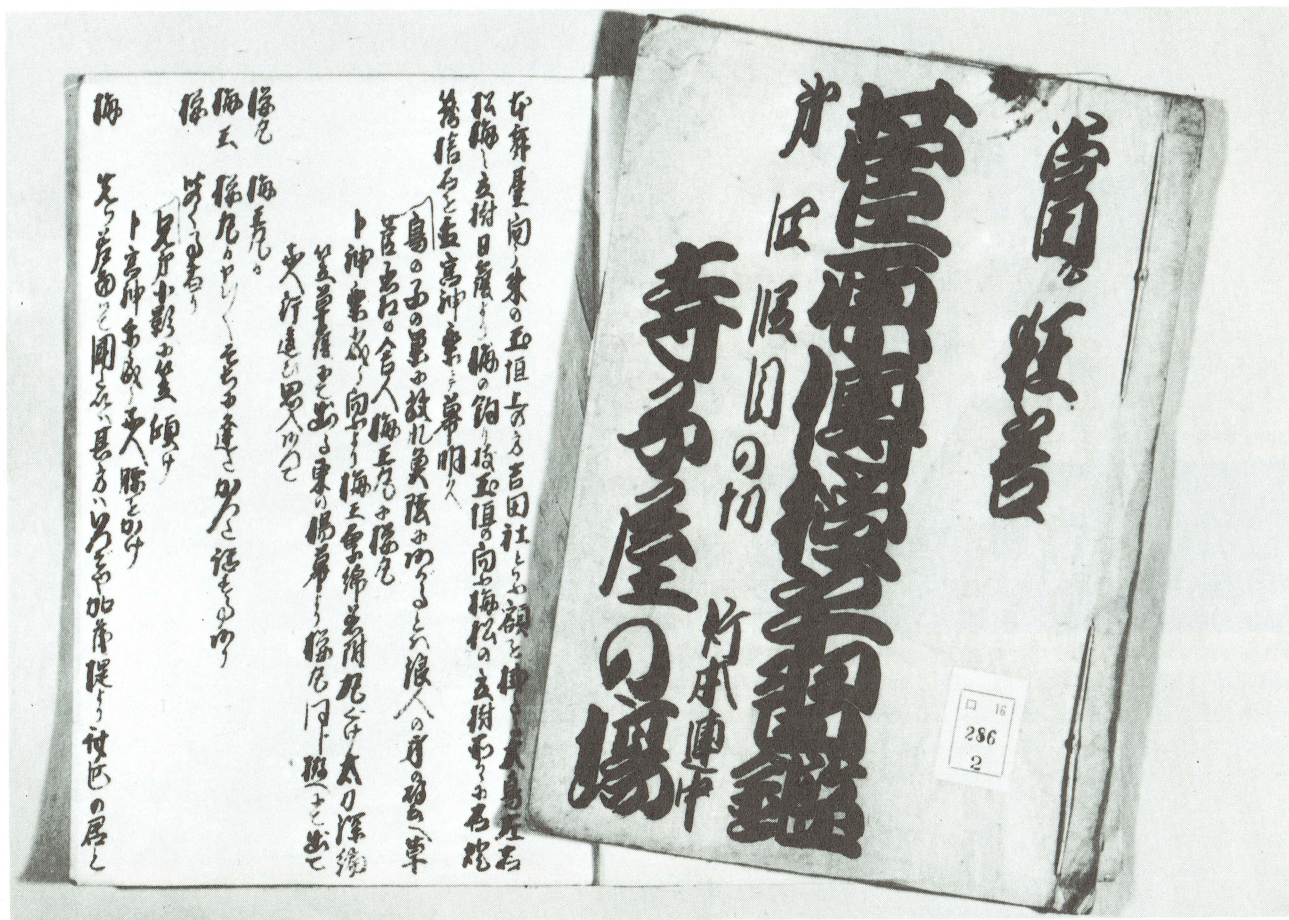
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Kabuki texts

This is a script for a Kabuki play written by the playwright himself. In the past, this was used as the main text, and the dialogue for each role was copied out in sides (*kakinuki*) in order that the actors would be able to memorize their lines. Thus the actors only knew what their own lines in a new play would be. The playwright himself was the only one who had a complete text, and no one else was allowed to read

it. Around the end of the 18th century these texts began to be printed, but originally there was only a single copy of the complete script. For this reason, there are few complete scripts of the early plays in existence today.

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