SAKATA TÔJÛRÔ, NAKAMURA SHICHISABURÔ AND THE CREATION OF
WAGOTO KABUKI IN THE GENROKU ERA

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By

Holly A. Blumner

Dissertation Committee:
James R. Brandon, Chair
Robert Huey
Tamara Hunt Montgomery
Julie A. Iezzi
Kirstin Pauka
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Abstract

Wagoto or soft style kabuki acting developed in Kyoto-Osaka during the Genroku Era (1688-1703). In this dissertation, I trace the evolution of wagoto kabuki through its creators, Sakata Tōjūrō and Nakamura Shichisaburō. I begin by examining the teahouse scenes staged by Izumo no Okuni in 1603 and discuss their progression in wakashu kabuki and yarō kabuki. These simple skits developed into longer, more complex prostitute-buying scenes (keiseikai). Keiseikai scenes were incorporated into full-length plays in the 1660s.

Sakata Tōjūrō and Nakamura Shichisaburō developed unique acting techniques to perform contemporary plays. Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō portrayed young, spoiled down-on-their-luck young men and this role type became the basis of the wagoto acting style. Structural elements in these plays included a disguise scene, a lover's quarrel and a love scene.

In chapter two, I examine the teahouse scene and the roots of the keiseikai play. Chapter three analyzes the elements of a keiseikai play and its relationship characteristics of the wagoto acting style. In chapter four, I describe Sakata Tōjūrō's theories on acting, his performances, and his contributions to wagoto acting. In
chapter 5, I discuss Edo actor Nakamura Shichisaburō's stay in Kyoto, and the contributions he made to wagoto acting.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the long term contributions of both actors to kabuki, popular wagoto acting roles, and wagoto acting today.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION

Purpose

This dissertation examines the wagoto acting style as created by Sakata Tōjūrō I (1647-1709) and Nakamura Shichisaburō I (1662-1708) in the Genroku era (1688-1703). This study provides a comprehensive look at the development of Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō’s acting styles by analyzing historical, social and cultural factors that influenced their creative decisions. By examining the structure of existing play types, play texts, and accounts of actors’ performances, I show how Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō created an acting style incorporating comic eroticism, physical humor, and situational wit that has evolved into a complex acting style still popular onstage today.

Much attention has been given to two major types of kabuki acting: aragoto, the rough, bravura style that originated in Edo; and wagoto, a “soft-style” of acting, which grew popular in the Kyoto-Osaka area of Japan during the Genroku era. Ichikawa Danjūrō I (1660-1704) is famed for creating the aragoto acting style in the Genroku era. However, at the same time, Sakata Tōjūrō was
performing a softer acting style by playing a handsome young lover interacting with a courtesan (keiseigoto) or engaged in a courtesan-buying scene (keiseikai). This style of acting was identified by many names in the Genroku era among them keiseikai or love scene acting (nuregoto) based on the type of play an actor was performing. This form was later identified as "gentle acting" (yawarakagoto), and became known as the wagoto style.

Though wagoto and aragoto acting were developing at the same time, their legacies have proved very different. Aragoto plays and the aragoto acting style have been celebrated and performed continuously by the Ichikawa Danjūrō family for three hundred years. In comparison, the plays once made popular by Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō are no longer performed, yet the essence of the soft "wagoto" character type they created is an integral part of many popular kabuki plays. Today wagoto acting is usually performed by a nimaime actor, and the wagoto acting style is based on a set of codified acting

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1 Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter (Kuruwa Bunshō) is one exception. In this dance play, many of the original Genroku keiseikai elements are still performed.
criteria such as gentle, seemingly effeminate movements, a high range of voice, and a put-upon demeanor.

In the Genroku era, this gentle character was originally defined by the structural elements of a courtesan-buying scene (keiseikai), including several playwriting conventions such as the disguise scene (yatsushi), the lover's quarrel (kuzetsu), and the love scene (nureba). It is my intent to show, however, that while the wagoto character was created from several structural playwriting elements, it reached its pinnacle as an art when combined with the comedic skills of Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō. This interwoven study of performance structure and performance technique is important because it provides a historical context for acting form, and allows us to see how individual actors participated in the creation of a new, vibrant theatrical genre.

One of the biggest challenges in this study has been distinguishing this style of acting from its playwriting framework. In writings from the Genroku era, such as the Collection of Kabuki Actor Critiques, commonly called the Kabuki Hyōbanki, actors were identified by the roles they played. Tōjūrō is often described as a keiseikai master (keiseikai meijin), who performs a style of acting known
as (keiseigoto). When he performed a love scene, he was called a player of love scenes (nuregotoshi), and his acting was often referred to as love-scene acting (nuregoto or nuregotoba). Thus it can be difficult to separate the actor from the role.

It is important, however, to draw a distinction between wagoto plays and the wagoto acting style. For the purposes of this dissertation, I choose to define a wagoto play as a play with specific playwriting elements, including the yatsushi, nuregoto, and kuzetsugoto scenes, usually followed by a special Buddha-viewing scene at a temple (kaichō). Wagoto acting, in turn, I define as an actor playing a role incorporating at least three of the following elements: comedy (okashimi); yatsushi; nuregoto; flirtation; sexual banter; or show of anger toward a courtesan; and a long comic monologue or series of long comic monologues by one actor within a play. I have chosen a combination of three elements because each of these characteristics is a standard acting technique in kabuki. Several of them performed together identify the wagoto style. Distinguishing between wagoto plays and wagoto acting allows us to separate the structural framework of the play from an acting performance. Any
actor can portray a wagoto style character in a play. However, the actor must successfully incorporate a combination of wagoto acting elements to give a convincing performance.

Wagoto acting has changed and grown continuously in its four hundred year evolution, and attempting to document all of the changes for the purposes of this dissertation would not do them justice. This dissertation is limited to the Genroku era when the most rapid development of wagoto as an art form occurred.

The Genroku Era

The Genroku era was a flourishing time for the arts in Japan. Matsuo Bashō (1644-94) was composing haiku, seventeen syllable poems; Ihara Saikaku (d.1693) was writing novels; and kabuki was beginning to blossom. Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) wrote plays for both kabuki and bunraku. Kawatake Shigetoshi sums up scholarly opinion when he calls this period “The Golden Age of Kabuki.” In both Edo and Kyoto-Osaka, variations in performance styles, as well as the actors’ heightened

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skills as performers, began an unprecedented period of growth and creativity in the plebian art.

In the Genroku period, plays began to feature elaborate parts and actors became skilled in disciplines such as swordfighting, dancing, and varied styles of acting. Actors began to specialize in male, female, and villain roles, and different classifications of actors were made. By the fifth year of Genroku (1692), eight different role types were identified: leading male roles (tachiyaku), villains (katakiyaku), young women (wakaonnagata), young men (wakashugata), comic actors (dokegata), half comic actors (handokegata), older women (kashagata), and older men (oyakata). Of these character types, the tachiyaku were the highest ranked. At the height of Genroku kabuki, the most popular actors were revered and regarded as local celebrities, and they were watched and gossiped about by townspeople. Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō to a lesser extent were two such actors.

Two distinct styles were formed: one in Edo (the traditional name for Tokyo), and one in the western region, including Kyoto and Osaka, known as Kamigata. The distance between Tokyo and Kyoto was great by 17th century

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standards, and the economic and political environments were vastly different.

In Edo, Ichikawa Danjûrô I was making a name for himself by impersonating the god Fudô and a super man-child Kinpira, popularized in puppet plays with musical accompaniment (kimpira ningyô jôruri). Imitating temple statues, Danjûrô became known for his fierce facial expressions, large movements, and was a favorite performer of those people living in Edo.

Kyoto was a city known for its culture and its refined courtiers. Osaka was a bustling port town and the center of trade, which created a generation of merchants with newly found wealth. A quiet, refined style evolved in Kyoto and Osaka that appealed to the commerce minded citizens of the western region. In Kyoto and Osaka, people looked forward to seeing plays featuring ordinary life, and preferred plays featuring characters such as samurai or merchants in domestic settings.

In Kamigata the feudal house play (oiesôdô mono) was popular. According to Gunji Masakatsu, the oiesôdô was

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the most important drama in Genroku kabuki. In this style of play, the young male character was the son of a samurai or wealthy merchant (wakadanna). The character has spent much of his young adult life irresponsibly squandering the family fortune, often on sake or women in the licensed quarter. Usually, he has fallen in love with a courtesan and has gone into debt trying to woo her and keep up appearances in the quarter. Typically, he has been disowned by his family and is no longer able to afford the extravagant ways of his past.

He goes into hiding by disguising himself (yatsushi) as a palanquin bearer, minstrel, or old woman. He continues to try to meet his lover in secret and suffers until his family has a change of heart and redeems him in the end, restoring his honor. The role of the romantic young merchant described here was the specialty of tachiyaku actors in Kyoto and Osaka. This role provided the basis for actors to create a soft, suitable style for acting that came to be called wagoto.

Many popular tachiyaku actors, including Yamashita Hanzaemon (1650?-1717), Yamatoya Jinbei (1650-1704), and Arashi Sanemon I (1635-1790), graced the stage in early

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Genroku and played wagoto roles. In *A Mirror for Actors (Yakusha Okagami)* fifty-three actors are listed as tachiyaku.\(^6\) One of these high-ranking tachiyaku was Sakata Tôjûrô. He vaulted into the spotlight with his portrayal of Fujiya Izaemon in *Yûgiri’s Last New Year (Yûgiri Nagori no Shogatsu)*. The play was such a success that it was rewritten and produced again the following year. Fujiya Izaemon became Tôjûrô’s most successful role and he played the character in thirty-two separate productions over the next thirty years.\(^7\) In this role, Tôjûrô created and repeated a series of acting patterns including *yatsushi*, *nuregoto*, and *kuzetsu*, that became the wagoto acting style.

As Tôjûrô began playing Fujiya Izaemon, Tôjûrô gained fame as a wakadanna, and the great playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon wrote kabuki plays almost exclusively for Tôjûrô. Both playwright and actor paid attention to what audiences enjoyed, and the two honed a style of drama that catered to Tôjûrô’s strengths as an actor. Although Tôjûrô was not strong in several of the

tachiyaku arts such as swordfighting or dancing, he had a natural gift for words and playing to an audience. In a selection from "Dust in the Ears" (Ninjinshū), in The Actor's Analects (Yakusha Rongo) playwright and actor Kaneko Kichiemon (d.1728) recounts that on a night of a particular performance of The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain (Keisei Hotoke no Hara), he and Tōjūrō had a discussion of Tōjūrō's portrayal of the lead, Umenaga Bunzō. Kaneko recounts Tōjūrō explaining his portrayal of Bunzō:

The action brings in various devices to prolong the interview so that Bunzō can discover exactly what Ōshū is really feeling. I finally got round to thinking that the correct thing was to act the play in this spirit, and today, when I played the part with the amount of dialogue increased the audience, just as I hoped, shouted 'Longer, longer' and applauded.⁸

This quotation demonstrates the awareness that Tōjūrō had of his audience and of his performance while

⁸ Dunn and Torigoe, 81-83.
it was in progress. He regularly scrutinized his performance and that of his peers.  

Tōjūrō’s gift for improvising dialogue (kuchidate) in performance, as well as his eloquence on stage during long speeches (nagaserifu), were popular with audiences and continuously incorporated into his plays. In addition, the popular courtesan-buying scene (keiseikai) was enjoyed so thoroughly by theatregoers that they became longer within the oiesōdō mono and were performed more elaborately each time Tōjūrō debuted in a new play.

Tōjūrō developed a reputation for his skills in playing the young lover’s roles such as Fujiya Izaemon and Umenaga Bunzō. His reputation for his acting in the nureba, in conjunction with the disguise scene (yatsushi), elevated him to the tachiyaku’s highest ranks.

As Tōjūrō and his plays increased in reputation and popularity, other theatres followed the developing trend and began offering Yūgiri-Izaemon plays and keiseikai of their own. Tōjūrō frequently went to see these plays, and just as actors incorporated the highlights (geifū) of Tōjūrō’s performances, Tōjūrō “borrowed” from others.

9 See Dunn and Torigoe, regarding Tōjūrō’s critiques of actors and performances.
Nakamura Shichisaburō, Tōjūrō’s contemporary and rival, ultimately held the greatest influence on Tōjūrō’s acting style. After Shichisaburō’s arrival in Kyoto in 1698, he mastered the wagoto acting style and performed in *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama* (*Keisei Asagamatake*), one of the most successful plays in the Genroku era. Tōjūrō and Chikamatsu borrowed several stage conventions from Shichisaburō and incorporated them into Tōjūrō’s most well known works, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plane* and *The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple* (*Keisei Mibu Dainenbutsu*). Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō’s wakadanna characters in *keiseikai* scenes began to have a determined set of characteristics. These characteristics were later codified into the wagoto or soft style acting that we recognize on *kabuki* stages today.

Chapter Outline

In chapter two, I provide a history of early *kabuki* and the beginnings of the teahouse play (*chaya asobi*), which evolved into the *keiseikai*, or courtesan-buying scene, a scene that made Tōjūrō one of the best-known actors in Japan’s three great cities. In chapter three, I
discuss elements of *keiseikai* plays and feudal house plays of early Genroku *kabuki* that became the *wagoto* acting style. Chapter four contains a chronology of Tôjûrô's life, his theories on acting, and an analysis of his performance style. In chapter five, I examine Nakamura Shichisaburô and his hit play, *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, which influenced *wagoto* and Tôjûrô's performance style. In the summary chapter, I discuss the contributions Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô made to *wagoto* acting, and suggest areas for future research. Chapter seven is an epilogue that addresses contemporary *wagoto* kabuki and actors.

**Methods**

This dissertation is the culmination of five years of study in Japan. While on a Japanese Ministry of Education Scholarship during 1991-1993, I spent six months at the Naka Theatre in Osaka, and Minami Theatre in Kyoto, observing performances eight to ten hours each day. Going to the theater every day and observing the same productions from the initial rehearsals to the final day of performance allowed me to develop a detailed view of each play and note how performances changed from day
to day, depending on the desire of the actor. Over a period of six months I observed different actors performing in the same plays, and I was able to compare one actor's performance to another's.

I returned to Tokyo between 1995-1997 on a scholarship from the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation, where I studied under the guidance of Professor Torigoe Bunzō at Waseda University. My research was divided into three parts: reading Genroku period criticism and plays, as well as modern-day criticism of these plays; conducting interviews with kabuki scholars and kabuki actors who specialize in wagoto kabuki; and seeing wagoto style performances in several different theatres around Japan. I studied playscripts by Chikamatsu Monzaemon and other Genroku era playwrights, and read criticism written about the Genroku era performances and Kamigata actors. The majority of sources I utilized were in the Waseda Library Theatre Museum (Waseda Engeki Hakubutsukan), the National Theatre of Japan Library, the Shochiku Theatre and Library, and Kyoto Prefectural library.

There is an excellent group of primary resources written about actors and particular performances during
the Genroku period: The Complete Collection of Chikamatsu’s Plays (Chikamatsu Zenshū); Collection of Kabuki Critiques (Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei); and The Actor’s Analects (Yakusha Rongo), a collection of writings of Genroku actors and writers about performances written during the Genroku era. I also read and translated several illustrated play books (e-irikyōgenbon) that featured popular wagoto style plays.

In addition to the primary sources that account for the majority of my research, I also utilized secondary sources, books and articles by kabuki scholars, including the Kabuki Chronology (Kabuki Nenpyō). I conducted interviews with distinguished kabuki actors who perform the wagoto acting style today.

During this two-year period in Tokyo, I did English commentary at the Kabuki Theatre and the National Kabuki Theatre for Asahi Kaisetsu’s English Earphone Guide Service. I translated The Love Suicides at Toribe Mountain (Toribeiyama Shinjū) and The Love Suicides at Amijima (Shinjū Tennō Amijima), classic wagoto plays by Chikamatsu, and I watched them several times during their month-long performance runs. I also traveled to see
wagoto style plays at the Shochiku Theatre in Osaka, Minami Theatre in Kyoto, and the Naka Theatre in Osaka.

During the summer of 2002, I returned to Japan for eight weeks to pursue research about Okuni kabuki and the relationship among nó, kyōgen and early kabuki. To complement my observations of performance, throughout my time in Japan I participated in actor training to gain practical experience and a closer appreciation of the classical theater forms. While in Kyoto, I studied kabuki dance (Nihon buyō) under the former Fujima Kansome (now known as Yamashita Michiko) both in private study and in the intensive summer classes she provided at the Traditional Theatre Training (TTT) Program in Kyoto.

I returned to the TTT workshop during the summer of 2002 to study kyōgen acting with actors Shigeyama Akira and Maruishi Yatsushi. Through this training, I was able to gain a greater appreciation for vocal rhythms and patterns that are believed to be similar to those of early kabuki. The chanting I studied in the kyōgen lessons is said to resemble the nembutsu odori of Okuni’s early performances.

In Tokyo, 1995-1997, I studied nagauta singing under the tutelage of Kineya Eitoshihiro. Studying a
traditional performance art such as nihon buyō provided an understanding of how an actor moves and physically expresses himself based on different roles types. Nagauta singing provided an appreciation of how speech (serifu) and music work together to create a unified performance. Performing in several public recitals in kabuki makeup, costume, and wig gave me an understanding of the makeup and costume requirements important in wagoto acting.

Sources of Research
Genroku Era References

Sakata Tōjūrō has been the subject of articles as far back as the Genroku era. Three important Genroku era sources include the Collection of Kabuki Critiques (Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei) published by Hachimonjiya, illustrated playbooks (e-irikyōgenbon), and the The Actor’s Analects (Yakusha Rongo). The Kabuki Hyōbanki contains reviews of Tōjūrō and other actors that performed during the Genroku era. Each review is prefaced by a standard rating of which the highest level to be obtained was excellent-excellent-outstanding (jō-jō-kichi). Tōjūrō was excellent-excellent-outstanding in the
year 1699. The Collection of Kabuki Critiques provide extensive records of actors' art and their lifestyles. In many cases, these reviews provide the only descriptions that exist for specific plays. For example, The Actor's Verbal Shamisen (Yakusha Kuchi Jamisen) states that Tōjūrō did a fine job of playing Fujiya Izaemon in Yūgiri's Last New Year and predicted he would become a top actor based on his performance, yet there is no extant script for the play. The Collection of Kabuki Critiques also relates subjective anecdotes that reveal information about a character. Torigoe Bunzō provides an accounting of various Genroku actors and the number of times they are listed in the critique. He claims that the publisher favored some actors over others.

The Actor's Analects (Yakusha Rongo), translated by Dunn and Torigoe, consists of eight writings about actors Sakata Tōjūrō, Kaneko Kichizaemon, Yoshizawa Ayame (1673-1721), and other major actors. Of the writings in The Actor's Analects, both “Dust in the Ears” and the “Kengai

Collection” are primarily about acting anecdotes attributed to Sakata Tôjûrô. “The Words of Ayame” features thoughts and theories about onnagata acting, and also contains comments about Tôjûrô, who was one of Ayame’s favorite actors. These anecdotes have no specific dates associated with them, although “Dust in the Ears” is attributed to Kaneko Kichizaemon, and his death is recorded as 1728. One can assume his musings on Sakata Tôjûrô were probably recorded within twenty years of Tôjûrô’s death. These subjective writings are a valuable resource because they provide personal, first-hand accounts of actors and their lives. “Dust in the Ears,” in particular, discusses Tôjûrô’s views about acting.

E-irikyôgenbon, or illustrated playbooks, describe the plot of an individual play, and include play text and illustrated scenes of popular performances. By examining the dialogue, and looking at the pictures interspersed with text, one can gain a general understanding of the structure of a popular performance even though the actual performance script does not exist. An extremely valuable resource is the forty extant e-irikyôgenbon that Tôjûrô reportedly acted in. Torigoe notes that of the extant e-irikyôgen bon, Kamigata has two hundred and thirty-three,
Edo has sixty-six. One hundred and thirty one of those were written when Tōjūrō was alive; he is listed as an actor in forty of them.\textsuperscript{13} 

Many of the original e-irikyōgenbon have been transcribed by Waseda theatre scholars into printed text \textit{(katsuji)}, making them accessible to researchers. The books provide an excellent primary resource for play plots and texts: the different dialects used by characters distinguish character types; songs are included; sometimes stage directions and actions appear as well. By examining both the hyōbanki and e-irikyōgenbon side by side, one can begin to interpret an actor’s particular strengths.

For example, \textit{The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain} and \textit{The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple} both mention the main character appearing in a yatsushi scene. In acting critiques for these plays, Tōjūrō’s strength at performing yatsushi is described. Nakamura Shichisaburō’s comedy and lover’s quarrel are included in the \textit{e-irikyogenbon} of his play \textit{The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama}. His comedy is also praised in several of the entries in the \textit{Collection of Kabuki}

\textsuperscript{13} Torigoe, 310.
Critiques. E-iri kyôgenbon texts of The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain, The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, and The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple, in addition to several others, were used in completing this research and are listed individually in the bibliography of this dissertation.

Folding Screens

Folding screens and illustrations also provide a first-hand account of Okuni, wakashu, and Genroku period kabuki. By examining screens or illustrations of actors and performances, we can make generalizations about how actors looked, dressed, and—to some extent—performed. I have included analysis of several screens and actor illustrations in this dissertation.

Japanese References

Ihara Toshirô's Kabuki Chronology (Kabuki Nenpyô) contains entries for many performances. His book, Theatre History of Japan (Nihon Engekishi), remains a comprehensive source of information about early kabuki and includes relevant quotations from early historical sources such as the Kokinshû and Tôdaiki. Ihara Toshirô's
Theatre History of Japan, Kawatake Shigetoshi's Complete History of Japanese Theatre (Nihon Engeki Zenshi), and Gunji Masakatsu's The Conception of Kabuki (Kabuki no Hassō) are the classic Japanese accounts of the history of Japanese theatre. Each book contains a comprehensive chapter about Genroku kabuki.

Perhaps the most comprehensive source about Tōjūrō, Nakamura Shichisaburō, and Kamigata arts is Torigoe Bunzō's Thoughts on Genroku Kabuki (Genroku Kabuki Kō). Torigoe has compiled a valuable account of several popular Genroku period plays and the actors who performed them. His book features major plays performed in both Edo and Kamigata, with a commentary about each performance gathered from the Collection of Kabuki Critiques, e-irikyōgenbon, and other sources. He writes in great detail about Tōjūrō's performance of The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain and Shichisaburō's The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama.

Tsuchida Mamoru's A Historical Study of Genroku Kabuki: Style and Development (Kōshō Genroku Kabuki Yōshiki to Minkan) features articles about Genroku plays, the Collection of Kabuki Critiques, and kabuki playwright Kaneko Kichizaemon. Suwa Haruo has written many important
books and articles about Genroku kabuki. His book, *Study of Genroku Kabuki (Genroku Kabuki no Kenkyū)* is a valuable resource about Genroku kabuki in both Edo and Kamigata. He has written extensively about Sakata Tōjūrō and the Yūgiri Izaemon plays. Yamaguchi Hirokazu has written a chapter about *keiseikai* in his book, *Kabuki West and East (Nishi to Higashi no Kabuki)*. Tsuchiya Keiichirō’s book, *Genroku Actor Biographies (Genroku Haiyū Den)*, features chapters on both Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō; much of this information is based on anecdotes from *The Actor’s Analects*. It is also important to mention that Chikamatsu Monzaemon has inspired an entire genre of scholarship in which Sakata Tōjūrō is included.

There is no single volume devoted to Tōjūrō, Shichisaburō, or their early acting styles. This dissertation supplies that want, providing a comprehensive account of Genroku era kabuki in Kyoto and Osaka and the major actors that elevated it to the historical, entertaining art that preserves Sakata Tōjūrō’s legacy today.
English Sources

In English, Tōjūrō and wagoto are discussed in most books on kabuki. Zoe Kincaid provides cursory information about Okuni, wakashu kabuki, and Sakata Tōjūrō in her book Kabuki.¹⁴ A.C. Scott describes the paper kimono (kamiko) that is worn during a yatsushi scene, and mentions Sakata Tōjūrō when referring to Genroku onnagata Yoshizawa Ayame. He writes, "the term 'nimai me wagoto' is often used to describe the acting in such parts meaning in direct contrast to the aragoto style of bold acting."¹⁵


The most extensive discussion of Tōjūrō and wagoto is in Laurence Kominz's book, The Stars Who Created

The book provides a lively description of Tōjūrō's life using information culled from the Collection of Kabuki Critiques, playscripts, and The Actor's Analects. He writes of the competition between Yamashita Hanzaemon, Sakata Tōjūrō, and Nakamura Shichisaburō, who were contemporary tachiyaku. His recent article in Asian Theatre Journal provides a look at wagoto kabuki through the eyes of Living National Treasure Nakamura Ganjirō III (1931-), one of the two leading wagoto actors today. Nakamura Ganjirō recently re-mounted Chikamatsu Monzaemon's The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple, expressly written for Sakata Tōjūrō. In his article, Kominz details the research Ganjirō undertook to provide authenticity in his performance.¹⁷

Little information is available in English about Nakamura Shichisaburō. Nearly everything written about him focuses on his rivalry with Tōjūrō. Shichisaburō is listed only once in Dunn and Torigoe's The Actor's Analects, and the anecdote is about his relationship to

Tōjūrō. In comparison, Tōjūrō is listed twelve times. Leiter provides a brief entry about Shichisaburō in *New Kabuki Encyclopedia.* Laurence Kominz describes his performance of *The Keisei and the Peak of Mt. Asama* in great detail in his book, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki.* I recently published an article, "Nakamura Shichisaburō I and the Creation of Edo-style wagoto" in *A Kabuki Reader.* This dissertation continues the project of my article, restoring Shichisaburō to his proper place as a foundational figure in wagoto-style kabuki alongside Tōjūrō.

Notes On the Text

Japanese terms appear in italics throughout this manuscript. After introducing a Japanese term in English, the Japanese term will be referred to in subsequent discussion. The terms *keiseikai* can be used to indicate either the scene or the style of acting; *keseigoto* refers to the acting style. For purposes of clarification, I

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18 Dunn and Torigoe, 133-136.  
will use *keiseikai* in reference to the scene only, terms with the 
*-goto* suffix will be used in reference to acting style.

All Japanese names are given in the Japanese order, with family names preceding personal names. Dates of an actor's birth and death are given in parentheses the first time the name is mentioned. After introducing a play title in Japanese for the first time, successive use of the play titles will be in English. Any translations within this dissertation that are not credited in a footnote are my own.
CHAPTER II
FROM OKUNI’S TEAHOUSE SCENES TO WAKASHU SHIMABARA PLAYS

Izumo no Okuni (dates unknown) popularized a movement and an innovative performance style that inspired an entirely new tradition of theatre for the masses. Dozens of pictures remain of her bawdy, provocative performances; vestiges of her vaudeville-like skits were gradually incorporated into the slightly more sophisticated themes of Genroku kabuki. This chapter traces the development of Okuni kabuki, and introduces Okuni’s legacy: teahouse scenes (chaya asobi), comedy (okashimi), and the appearance of a spirit, a tradition borrowed from the no theatre.

Izumo no Okuni

Most scholars credit Izumo no Okuni with the origins of kabuki. Scholars date the time that Okuni danced on the bed of Kamo River in Kyoto as 1603, but there is evidence that someone called Okuni was performing with a troupe as early as 1581.²² Okuni is thought to have been a

²² According to Hattori Yukio’s book, Kabuki no Seiritsu no Kenkyū (Tokyo: Kazama Shobo, 1968), 69, Okuni could be found dancing in Nara in 1582. Kawatake’s Nihon Engeki
temple dancer (shirabyōshi) or a shamaness (miko) at
Izumo Shrine. Okuni and others performed dances and short
skits that became popular with the commoners of the
Kamigata region.

According to Ihara’s Kabuki Nempyō, a ten-year-old
child (probably Okuni) reportedly danced (children’s
dance) (yayako odori) at the Kasuga Shrine in Nara in
1582.23 It is nearly impossible to determine if this child
is the same Okuni that danced on the bank of the Kamo
River twenty-one years later, but scholars speculate that
it might have been the same woman.

Okuni’s chaya asobi

Kawatake Shigetoshi suggests that Okuni’s
performances resembled yayako odori and nembutsu odori,
both of which were being performed by traveling
performers at the time that Okuni is credited with
performing kabuki.24 At some point in her performances,
Okuni began reinterpreting these dances and adding
unusual and outrageous elements, including a unique

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23 Ihara Toshiro, Kabuki Nempyō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten,
1956), vol.1, 14.
24 Kawatake, 250.
costume. Akemi Horie Webber translates a portion of the
Tōdaiki (c. 1610-1612) that recounts an early
performance of Okuni's kabuki:

Lately there is a thing called kabuki odori
(kabuki dance). A miko (shamaness) from Izumi
province, named O-kuni, came to Kyōto and initiated
it. For example, she imitated a man of ifū-na
(unusual) appearance, carrying a sword and wearing
distinctly isō-na (exotic) costume. This man
mimicked the gestures of flirtation with a woman of
the chaya (teahouses or brothel). There was no one
in the whole of Kyōto, high and low, who did not
rave about her performance. She often went up to
Fushimi castle and danced there. Soon, there
sprouted numerous kabuki troupes that imitated this,
and many of them traveled the provinces.25

25The Tōdaiki, generally credited as one of the earliest
reliable records of the period, is believed to have been
written by Matsudaira Tadaaki (1583-1664). See Akemi
Horie Webber, "The Essence of Kabuki: A Study of Folk
Religious Ritual Elements in the Early Kabuki Theatre"
(Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1981),
63.
Horie Webber translates another contemporary account in *Keichō Hibunshū* (c. 1610) that describes Okuni:

Kuni set up a stage at the end of the Gōjō bridge or at times used a stage at the east end of the Kitano shrine and performed so-called Okuni kabuki or nembutsu odori (Buddhist prayer dance) or yayako odori (children’s dance). The people flocked to see her performance. She wore a nerigasa (a black cypress bark hat), a scarlet hip-cloth and a string of rosary beads around her neck, and as she beat a bell in her hand, she danced to the rhythm of flute and drum. . . She was a woman of 26 or 27, well built and handsome.26

It is not known how or when Okuni began to break from the traditional Buddhist dance (*nembutsu odori*); these short passages, however, illustrate several lasting, important contributions to kabuki made by Okuni. She performed in a relatively new and defiant performance style; her performances consisted of various styles of

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26According to Horie Webber, the *Keichō Hibunshū* was written by samurai Hata Hyōgo about 1610. Hattori Yukio dates the document as later than 1658. Ibid., 64.
dance; and she performed *chaya asobi* scenes featuring life in the brothel district.

A *chaya*, literally "teahouse," was in fact a type of brothel. In the skit translated by Horie Webber, Okuni dressed as a swaggering samurai. Her costume consisted of Portuguese pants, a Christian rosary with a cross around her neck, and two swords. Okuni portrayed a man buying a courtesan. Another female actor would play the courtesan being bought, and a third actor would play the owner of the teahouse. The actor playing the courtesan would cover her head in a colorful headscarf and act in a comical manner. Illustrations show the character kneeling on the ground and hiding her face behind a fan. Sometimes the scene would include a dance accompanied by *no* instruments such as the hip, shoulder, and *taiko* drums.

Okuni's teahouse scene was popular with audiences and several troupes of imitators sprung up as a result of her popularity. Her greatest legacy was the "shock value" aspect (*kabuku*) of her performances. The word "*kabuki*" comes from "*kabuku,*" literally "to tilt" or "slant." The *kabuki* people (*kabuki mono*) were a group of men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who opposed the

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27*Kawatake, 243.*
Tokugawa government and rebelled against society by disobeying laws, wearing outlandish hairstyles, and carrying highly decorated swords. Some of them committed acts of violence. The government considered them outlaws, and they became legends in their own time. Okuni was a product of this time period, and her crossdressing, costume, and erotic performances—including the teahouse scenes—reflected the rebellion displayed by the kabuki mono.

Scenes from Okuni kabuki are painted on dozens of folding screens and in several picture books about early kabuki; these illustrations are similar to the written description in the Tōdaiki.

One of the most recognizable illustrations is on the Okuni Kabuki illustration folding screen (Okuni Kabuki-zu). The screen features a performance on the grounds of the Kitano Temple in Kyoto. People are entering and taking seats on the ground around the outdoor stage. The stage resembles a no stage, with a square playing space and the four pillars reminiscent of the no theatre. Okuni is pictured on stage wearing a kimono and short jacket (haori); her hair is long and flowing around her

28 Ibid.
shoulders. She waves a sword in the air. To her side is
the courtesan character, played by another female actor.
The courtesan is kneeling; she looks away from Okuni.
Her left hand shields her eyes and she covers her face
with a fan; she appears to be acting coquettishly.
Upstage of Okuni is the brothel owner. The character is
dressed in shabby clothes and from the character’s face
and pose, we can assume this is a comic (saruwaka)
character. This illustration appears to show a courtesan-
buying scene. Okuni’s character is trying to procure the
woman in the veil. (Refer to Illustration 1, p. 36 and
Illustration II, p. 37).
In another series of illustrations from the picture
book, Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni’s Kabuki (Kunijo
Kabuki Ekotoba), a woman (presumably Okuni) stands with
her legs spread slightly apart, a sword in her hand and
one at her waist. A veil covers her nose and lips. Next
to the pillar designated for the secondary actor (waki)
in a nô play sits a young woman character with a sleeve
hiding her face. She is the courtesan character. Upstage
left sits a female character wearing shabby clothes. She
appears to be the brothel owner. To the other side of
Okuni is an actor portraying Nagoya Sanzaburō (?-1603)\textsuperscript{29}, a character who often appeared in Okuni’s plays. Nagoya’s character is dressed in a kimono, wears a black rain hat, and also has a veil across his face. He appears to be hitting a small gong while the onstage musicians look on. Based on the characters on stage, this illustration also appears to be a courtesan-buying scene. (See Illustration III, p. 38.)

\textsuperscript{29}Nagoya Sanzaburō (1575?-1604) was born into a samurai family. Later he became a masterless samurai and spent several years as a kabuki mono. He was believed to be a ladies’ man and was reputed to be involved with Okuni herself. He died a year after Okuni began receiving recognition for her kabuki performances. Ibid., 102-103.
Illustration I

Okuni Performing a Chaya Asobi Scene

*Okuni Kabuki-zu*, painting on screen, seventeenth century, Kyoto National Museum, Kyoto.
Illustration II
Close up of Okuni

Close up of Okuni in Okuni Kabuki-zu painting on screen, seventeenth century, Kyoto National Museum, Kyoto.
Illustration III
Okuni Performing a *Chaya Asobi Scene* with Nagoya

Okuni is holding the large sword. The character Nagoya Sanzaburō beats a small gong with a mallet while the courtesan character and brothel owner look on.

A *chaya asobi* scene from *Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba*, (dates unknown), Kyoto University Museum, Kyoto, available from http://www.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/exhibit/okuni/eng/okubk09e.html; Internet.
Though the *chaya asobi* scenes were extremely popular, they were not the only scenes that commanded attention in Okuni's performances. In a separate picture in the *Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni's Kabuki*, we see Okuni holding a small gong and a mallet while the actor playing Nagoya Sanzaburō looks on. This illustration shows Okuni doing a version of *nembutsu odori*, but she also subverts the dance by wearing a *haori* type garment over bloused Portugese pants. If she were performing a regular *nembutsu odori*, she would be dressed in conventional Japanese costume (See Illustration IV, page 40).
Illustration IV

Okuni Ringing a Gong with Nagoya Looking On

Okuni beats a small mallet as the character Nagoya Sanzaburō, portraying a ghost, stands at the side of the stage.
From Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba, (dates unknown), Kyoto University Museum, Kyoto, available from http://www.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/exhibit/okuni/eng/okubk07e.html; Internet.
Okuni kabuki and the chaya asobi scene illustrations appear on folding screens and books. Illustrations I and II are vignettes from a folding screen. Illustrations III and IV appear in a mid-seventeenth century book.\textsuperscript{30} The Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni's Kabuki is an e-Narabon about Okuni, a small book with painted illustrations and narrative, estimated to be published between 1614 and 1643.\textsuperscript{31} In the thirty-one-page book, fourteen illustrations of Okuni and other figures are interspersed with verse about Okuni's performances. The verse describes not only her performances but also her travel. For example, on page four, Okuni sings:

To Nagato, to Ohno, far away from Izumo, To Hiroshima to Akashi in a spring day, To Naniwa, to Fukushima, and to Osaka, Soon we'll be at Kyoto.

As we have seen, Kyoto was where Okuni is said to have created kabuki. Page nine of the Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni's Kabuki mentions the nembutsu odori:

\textsuperscript{30}The Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba is dated about 1643 according to Hattori. Scholars vary on the validity of the work. Horie Webber claims another e-Narabon featuring Okuni, Kabuki Zoshi, was written during the wakashu era. See: Horie Webber, 91. The translations of the above and the following passages were written by Horie Webber.
\textsuperscript{31}Hattori, 174.
It’s the 25th of January, Kitano Festival day, isn’t it! I shall go and dance in front of the visitors there. Starting with Nembutsu Dance. Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, life is such a pitiful thing. Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida, light is in the Amida spirit.

On page eight, the text mentions kabuki for the first time:

"Let’s do a Kabuki dance!"

As Okuni dances she sings:

What a hard world we live in. A waterwheel is turning in the rapids of the River Yodo; Is it waiting for someone? If you want to marry a teastall girl, you’ve got to pay seven visits to Ise Shrine, Thirteen to Kumano: and once a month to Atago.\(^{32}\)

Each of these passages provides information about Okuni and her performances. Okuni performed nembutsu odori, or a version of it, at the Kitano shrine; she performed what is specifically named "kabuki dance" (kabuki odori) although the text does not designate what type of dance this "kabuki" might be, and a verse is

\(^{32}\)Horie Webber, 96.
included about a tea-stall girl, which is a reference to *chaya asobi*.

Horie Webber translates this verse:

> Make love seven times to a woman of the *chaya*:
> Well, one or two times might be spent in love-quarrels, but the remaining five will be all for love.\(^{33}\)

This verse shows the sexuality in Okuni's performance and also reveals that the lovemaking will be followed by a love quarrel. As we will see, the love scenes with a courtesan, including love quarrels, became an essential part of *wagoto kabuki*.

These words and paintings are significant because they show Okuni performing the unique aspects of her dance. *Chaya asobi* is perhaps the longest lasting contribution to *kabuki* made by Okuni.

Takei Kyôzô has stated that *kyôgen* performers participated in and influenced *Okuni kabuki*.\(^{34}\) Kawatake Shigetoshi suggests that a *kyôgen* actor named Sanjûrô or Sankûrô might have helped Okuni with her performance, but

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\(^{33}\) Ibid.

notes there is little evidence to support this claim.\textsuperscript{35} One can theorize that because \textit{nō}, \textit{kyōgen}, and \textit{kabuki} were popular forms of entertainment performed at the same time, it was possible that each form influenced the other. I will show that early \textit{kabuki} did take much of its structure from \textit{nō} and \textit{kyōgen}.\textsuperscript{36}

My first evidence is the \textit{Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni's Kabuki}, an illustrated storybook that includes dialogue from one of Okuni's skits in which the performance resembles the structure of a \textit{nō} spirit play (\textit{mugen nō}, also called phantasmal \textit{nō}).\textsuperscript{37} The play begins with an actor appearing in the secondary role (\textit{waki}) as Okuni's father, speaking like a priest. He says:

\begin{quote}

\textbf{Illustrated Manuscript of Kuni's Kabuki}

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\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35}Kawatake, 242.


\textsuperscript{37} Some critics have commented that the \textit{Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba} is not a series of scenes from Okuni's performance, but an illustrated storybook for entertainment purposes only. Others have argued that the author was illustrating Okuni's performance in a form similar to \textit{nō}. Horie Webber, 92. Although this is not a true transcription of one of Okuni performances, it does provide a detailed description of Okuni's \textit{nembutsu odori}, and includes some original elements of Okuni performance within a framework of \textit{nō} performance.

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Spring flowers are blooming in the capital, spring flowers are blooming in the capital. Let everyone come out for kabuki odori.

I am a priest, serving at the Great Shrine of Izumo province. I have a miko daughter called Okuni and have had her learn kabuki odori. Since this is peace time, I would like her to travel to the capital and dance.

This section is similar to the waki part in a no performance. In no, the waki enters and introduces himself (nanori). Okuni enters the stage for her first appearance. We can speculate that she circles the stage, showing travel. She then continues with a short speech and says, "I should like to perform kabuki dance (odori), I shall begin with nembutsu odori." The text contains a short song (kouta), ending with standard stanzas from nembutsu odori, "Praise to Amida Buddha. Praise to Amida" (Namu amida butsu, Namu amida).

The illustrations accompanying the text at this point depict Okuni wearing black pants and a black round hat (nerigasa) on her head. In her hands she holds a small gong and a mallet, her torso is covered in what appears to be a priest's robe.
Okuni also appears in a waki role. She draws out the shite character, whom she refers to as Nagoya (Sanza) who is shown dressed like a samurai with a cloth covering the lower part of his face. (Illustration IV, p. 34)

Kuni and Sanza engage in a dialogue (mondo):

Kuni: Not now, you are an apparition of the deceased then!

Sanza: Can you not recall, not even by the whispering leaves of the pine tree of Iwashiro, by Ukon of Kitano of many sleeves, nor by the dew drops of the evening flowers?

Kuni: From your words, now I remember: you are the kabuki mono of old times, Nagoya-dono are you not? (Nagoya reveals he is a spirit and shares how he dies).

Sanza: But for now, I will put aside all that: let us sing the old tunes of the gold old days and let us kabuku, let us kabuku. 38

The chaya asobi scene would immediately follow the previous scene.

38 Horie Webber, 96. Note: although I have chosen to use Horie Webber’s translations, these verses also appear in Hattori Yukio’s Kabuki Seiritsu no Kenkyû, (Tokyo: Kazama Shobô, 1968) and a copy of the illustrated storybook, Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba.
This text is extremely valuable because it shows the order of a particular performance and illustrates the similarity of Okuni’s performance to no structure. Okuni acts on a no stage, and incorporates many aspects of no drama, but the skit introduces kabuki elements at the same time.

Okuni’s plays were an attempt to entertain and titillate her viewers. Most phantasmal no plays that are extant today, in contrast, are somber and spiritual and deal with a restless spirit. Clearly, the scene presented above is influenced by the ghosts that appear in phantasmal no, and as in many no stories, the character playing Nagoya reveals the circumstances of his death. It does not appear that Nagoya’s character was meant to inspire fear, however, but was a device to add entertainment to the story. Part of this entertainment value derived from the offstage relationship of Okuni and Nagoya: Nagoya was both a masterless samurai and kabuki mono rumored to be Okuni’s lover. Audiences were titillated to see him appear as a ghost and dance with Okuni.

The spirit of Sanza that appears was a great deal more earthly than a shite character in no. Nagoya and
Okuni make blatant allusions to sex and chaya asobi. In a typical spirit nó play the main character is on a spiritual journey. Once the spirit and his or her circumstances are revealed, the secondary character tries to find peace or a resolution for the primary character.

But here in Okuni's courtesan-buying scene, the kouta lyrics are decidedly un-nó like. Nagoya's character does not appear to be on a spiritual quest to find inner peace. Instead, he engages in earthly, bawdy pleasures. In addition, Okuni's costume was effective in shocking her audience. Okuni dressed in Portugese pants, wore a large cross around her neck and imitated the swaggering kabuki mono that were often in the audience.

Katherine Mezur suggests:
Okuni exploited nó as a high-culture icon for profit and pleasure. That is, when she dressed up in outrageous finery and performed a scene in a brothel using the nó stage, musical instruments and some of the dramatic characters, she knew her audience recognized the forms and enjoyed her comic and even risqué adaptations. Perhaps, by playing sensually with nó's lofty spiritual concepts, Okuni disengaged their sacred social status while enlivening the nó
forms with erotic appeal. The results may have been exciting for her popular audiences, yet transgressive to the emerging social hierarchy of the new bakufu. 

I believe that Okuni’s chaya asobi and the irreverence of the ghost character in her play clearly illustrates the kabuku aspects of her performance. Certainly Okuni’s exciting performances were attractive to the kabuki mono and the common classes who came to watch.

I suggest that Okuni’s main motivations were to entertain and be provocative by crossdressing and performing suggestive scenes. She did this through three means, two of which have been mentioned. She played a swaggering male samurai seeking out a courtesan, and she used the traditional no structure of a spirit play.

Comedy (Okashimi)

The third element of Okuni’s performance was comedy (okashimi). This can be seen in various ways. From her appearance as a man in pants with a cross around her neck

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to her supposed scenes on stage with an actor playing ghost Nagoya Sanzaburō in a style reminiscent of phantasmal no, Okuni provided much playful entertainment for her audiences. A woman, posing as a man, going to buy a courtesan would appear to be so outlandish it could not be taken seriously by her audience. Although the participation of kyōgen actors in Okuni kabuki cannot be proven, some scholars suggest that short slapstick skits in early kabuki were reminiscent of kyōgen. Further, the spoken speech and song lyrics in Genroku kabuki resemble kyōgen speech. The comic saruwaka character type that appears alongside Okuni in the teahouse scene maybe derived from the Tarō Kaja comic roles in kyōgen. The role seems to have metamorphosed into the clown character (doke) that also appears in Genroku kabuki.

Onna Kabuki

Okuni disappears from records in approximately 1607. Women’s kabuki (onna kabuki) developed shortly after Okuni kabuki began. Pictures of women’s kabuki show the same cross-dressed samurai buying a courtesan. Their skits and dances included a bathhouse scene in which a man visiting the brothel emerges from a bathhouse and
talks to the bathhouse attendants. These scenes were filled with sexual innuendo. Women’s kabuki troupes also performed the *chaya asobi* scenes accompanied by women playing *nō* instruments and the three-stringed *shamisen*.\(^{40}\)

*Onna kabuki* became a display of groups of courtesan dancers in order to solicit the patronage of spectators following their stage performance. Women’s *kabuki* was outlawed in 1629 due to the fights breaking out between audience members who wanted the women to perform sexual favors.

*Wakashu kabuki*

Young boys’ *kabuki* (*wakashu kabuki*) which developed alongside *onna kabuki*, gained its notoriety after *onna kabuki* was prohibited in 1629. When a *wakashu* actor was trying to attract sexual customers, it was important for him to look beautiful and dance, showing off his physique. During the *wakashu* performances, the boys displayed their acting in short skits similar to Okuni’s. But because it was important to attract clients, suggestive dancing was perhaps the most important part of their acting.

\(^{40}\) Kawatake, 245.
Wakashu performances consisted of juggling, acrobatics, short skits, dances, and erotic songs. Young men often danced on the stage using fans or bells as props. Like Okuni kabuki, short skits influenced by nó and kyōgen were performed.\(^{41}\) Just as onna kabuki was prohibited due to what the government deemed lewd and lascivious behavior, wakashu kabuki was prohibited in 1652 for the same reasons. Following the Tokugawa government's division of the classes, performers could be actors or courtesans, but not both. Although wakashu kabuki was outlawed by the Tokugawa government in 1652, it was an additional four years before wakashu kabuki officially ceased.

Yarō kabuki

After onna kabuki and wakashu kabuki were banned, men were allowed to perform kabuki, albeit with several restrictions for actors. One notable restriction was a mandatory shaved pate, a response to the fact that much of the wakashu actors' erotic appeal lay in their long front forelocks. Before 1652, most wakashu actors had to cease acting at the age of fifteen, at which time they

\(^{41}\) Takei, 12-14.
underwent a mandatory coming-of-age ceremony in which they were required to shave their front hair. The new regulations required that every actor must shave his head regardless of age, a development that now increased the acting lives of performers.

When men began playing women in skits, they used scarves and pieces of cloth to cover their shaved heads. As late as 1662, ten years after wakashu kabuki was officially banned, an account from the Edo Meishoki described the allure of the young actors:

[A wakashu] adjusted his hair style, applied a light coat of makeup, slipped on a kimono without a crest [mon], sang a short song (kouta), walked down the stage bridgeway, and tried to look as attractive as possible to solicit customers. In the front he left little for the imagination, his backside was revealed, and those in the special seats [sajiki] watched with saliva dropping from their mouths.⁴²

Early keiseikai plays
As yarō kabuki evolved after 1653, the chaya asobi skits developed by Okuni evolved into a type of play known as

⁴² Ibid., 10.
Shimabara plays, named after one of the major districts for licensed prostitution in Kyoto. The courtesan play performed by the yarō actors is different from the Shimabara or keiseikai plays that followed in the Genroku era. Tominaga Heibei describes the yarō Shimabara version:

First there would be a kōjō or on-stage announcement. A prologue [possibly the troupe manager] appears on the stage and announces that the visit to the keisei [courtesan] is about to begin. The tachiyaku, Muramatsu Hachirobei, is the client and his costume is white Kaga-silk with an all-over silver decoration of a wasp stinging a deer's antlers. He wears a one foot seven inch short sword with its scabbard almost falling out in front. His left hand is on his hip and from his right dangles a fan which he holds by the rivet. He comes slowly out from the hashigakari, and standing in the center of the stage he utters the following speech: "By Hachiman, I am going to my girl."

As he speaks, he strikes the hilt of his sword with his fan. The whole audience exclaims in admiration that this is a really fine actor for such
a role, and the buzz of voices goes on for some while. In time there appears from the small exit left, the landlord of an ageya [brothel], wearing an old pale blue *hakama* [trousers], waggling his behind, a cloth tucked into his belt, and holding a shell-ladle. “What, Master, have you arrived?” he says. At this the audience all laugh and say, “Ah, the landlord’s appeared. Just look at his face. How comical.” So loud are the guffaws that he cannot carry on with the next speech. After a while the laughter subsides and Hachirobei says. “What, hasn’t the *Tayū* come yet?” “She’s already on her way,” says the landlord and appears along the *hashigakari*. “He’s just said he’ll soon be here; that means that the *keisei* is going to appear.” The audience all sit as upright as they can, and now gaze in silence at the curtained entrance to the *hashigakari*. Then out comes the courtesan, clad in a fantastic costume. It is gold brocade. At that time, *onnagata* only occasionally wore wigs; usually they tied paper up

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43A *tayū* is a high-ranking courtesan.
into a hyogo-wagae [hairstyle]. She comes out alone and says "So you have come big spender," and he greets her with joy. She and her rich client take each other by the hand, and laugh further. They give an accurate performance of all the actions of greetings in the parlor and for this they are cheered mightily. Now the landlord circulates the sake cups and as he utters his speech, "Madam, we beg, please, a dance from you to go with the drinks," some musicians immediately arrange themselves on the stage, and the keisei performs her dance.

This scene is significant because it is one of the few written accounts that describes the structure of an early keiseikai play performed by adult men. It appears to be more detailed than Okuni's chaya asobi skits, though Okuni's influence is obvious. Okuni's chaya asobi scenes had three essential characters—the customer,

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44 A hyōgo-wage was a popular hairstyle for courtesans of the seventeenth century. It consisted of two side lobes and hair worn up in the back.
45 This is featured in both Takei's Wakashu no Kenkyū, and the Actor's Analects. I have chosen to use Dunn and Torigoe's translation for consistency. Dunn and Torigoe, 46-47.
brothel owner, and courtesan—whereas in this example, four characters appear.

The short skit is introduced with an announcement by the troupe manager. Two male characters, the master (teishu) and the lover-hero, are intrigued by charms of the courtesan (played by a male actor), who enters the stage and then does a short dance. The master is a comic character (dokeyaku), similar to the master of the brothel in the Yugiri-Izaemon plays in the later Genroku era in which Tōjūrō acted. He is also similar to the saruwaka character of the chaya asobi scenes.

From the account described above, much of the humor occurs in the beginning of the play while the lover-hero is waiting for his courtesan to arrive. There is posturing and comic dialogue between the lover-hero and the brothel owner.

The account also describes the anticipation of the audience while waiting for the courtesan, who appears in an elaborate costume. After the courtesan makes a grand entrance on the hashigakari, she and the main actor share a humorous scene in the teahouse. It appears that the lover-hero has an established relationship with the courtesan that is evident in their teahouse dialogue.
This dialogue scene is followed by a dance by a courtesan. This play structure retains features of the *chaya asobi* scene, and also introduces elements that are evident in the Genroku *keiseikai*.

Conclusion

The characteristics of early *kabuki* developed in three distinct periods: *Okuni kabuki*, *onna kabuki* and *wakashu kabuki*. *Okuni kabuki* developed from earlier *nembutsu odori* and *nō*. She performed the *chaya asobi* scenes as a crossdressing samurai, thus staging scenes from daily life of the era. Okuni performed a ghost play, in which the spirit of a character named Nagoya’s spirit came to visit Okuni. This skit drew on the structure of a phantasmal *nō* play to create a new, sensual style of theatre.

Performances of *onna kabuki* and *wakashu kabuki* continued skits similar to Okuni’s *chaya asobi* scene. Skits and dances were performed by courtesans of both sexes to attract customers, and this was done primarily through dances where the actor’s physique could be displayed.

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In performances by adult males, playwrights and actors created the full-length play (*monomane kyōgen zukeishi*), which will be described in chapter three.

Restrictions on *yarō kabuki* created a need for stock character styles, and the *onnagata, tachiyaku, wakashuugata, katakiyaku* and *dokeyaku* became regular character types. With the addition of these new role types, *yarō kabuki* developed its own version of the courtesan play (*Shimabara kyōgen*). The following chapter examines developments in the courtesan-buying play during the early years of the Genroku era.
In this chapter, I address major characteristics of the wagoto character type that developed as a consequence of kabuki's structural changes after 1652. Wagoto acting, with its comedy, gentleness, and eroticism, was grounded in certain types of dramatic structures and scene types that developed from early kabuki. This chapter examines the play types and performance elements that evolved together with wagoto acting styles. First, I give a brief explanation of each scene type, and describe its characteristic. I then explain how the performance of these scene characteristics formed the wagoto acting style.

I describe the structural aspects of the keiseikai or courtesan-buying scene, which included a disguise scene (yatsushi), love scene (nureba), and a lovers' quarrel (kuzetsu). The keiseikai scene was incorporated into the feudal house play (oiesōdō mono), which usually included a scene at a temple (kaichō). Performative elements that I define include acting in the keiseigoto, kuzetsu, nuregoto,
yatsushi, the feudal house play (oiesōdō mono), visiting a temple scene (kaichō mono), nimaime acting, and okashimi.

A Note on the Term Wagoto

According to Torigoe Bunzō, the word "wagoto" was first used to identify the soft-style, emotional genre of acting in the 1750s. In Kamigata, the actor who performed the soft style of acting often acted in keiseikai scenes performing nuregoto, kuzetsugoto, or yatsushi. All of this symbolized the soft style of acting that became known as wagoto. The word yawarakagoto or "soft acting," another term that preceded wagoto, was never used to describe Tōjūrō's acting. It was used only once, to describe the acting of Tōjūrō's contemporary, Yamatoya Jinbei. The Collection of Kabuki Critiques praised him as, "Today's master of nuregoto and yawarakagoto."46 By 1718, the word yawarakoto was used interchangeably in the actor critiques with wagoto to describe the soft style of acting performed by Tōjūrō's successors. The evolution of the term "yawarakagoto" to "wagoto" involved a derivation in the transcription of characters. "Yawarakagoto," originally written in hiragana, was transcribed as "wagoto." The hiragana syllable for "wa"

46 Torigoe, 321-322.
was later replaced by the kanji character for "wa," usually symbolizing harmony. The two terms were often used to convey the same meaning up until 1772. By the 1750s, the term wagoto was used as a standard term for yawarakagoto acting.

The term wagoto began to be used consistently in regard to actor Sawamura Sōjūrō II's (1713-1770) art. In an acting critique of Sōjūrō, his art was compared to Tōjūrō's.47 In 1771, sixty years after Tōjūrō's death, Tōjūrō was called a master of wagoto in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques. In the 1770s, "wagoto" was increasingly used to describe Tōjūrō's acting style.48 The term "wagoto" is used most frequently to describe this soft-style acting today.

Evolution of Wagoto Acting

Wagoto acting developed with the evolution of men's kabuki (`yarō kabuki 1653-1687`). As I stated previously, wakashu kabuki was banned in 1652 due to the government's insistence that acting and prostitution must remain separate vocations. Though the government prohibited young boys from advertising themselves in a form thinly disguised as kabuki, the government did allow older men to perform, beginning in 1653, with several restrictions. In order for the actors to

47 Torigoe, 321-322.
48 Ibid.
continue to entice their audiences, gradual changes in \textit{kabuki} were made, among them the creation of elaborate plot structures and more complex characters, and greater differentiation among character types. Below is a discussion of the way \textit{wagoto} acting conventions were incorporated into the new style of drama now known as men’s \textit{kabuki} (yarō \textit{kabuki}) as it was performed in the Kyoto-Osaka region.

In addition to the physical changes actors had to conform to in order to continue performing, \textit{kabuki} also received a new name: fully enacted plays (\textit{monomane kyōgen zukushi}), plays that showed off the actor’s mimesis (\textit{monomane}) skills. "\textit{Monomane}" means "imitation" or "mimicry," and is often used to describe nō acting. \textit{Kyōgen} means "play," as in a performance or a performance text. "\textit{Zukushi}" refers to a full-length play. With the advent of \textit{monomane kyōgen zukushi}, actors performed a full-length spoken drama with a narrative plot. This was different than \textit{Okuni kabuki} and \textit{wakashu kabuki}, in which performances were a series of short skits and dances. According to \textit{Kabuki Jiten}, the ruling government wanted to abandon the name
kabuki and refer to this new acting style as kyōgen zukushi; the word monomane was not attached until 1687.\textsuperscript{49}

As kabuki (or kyōgen zukushi) developed from a lewd and bawdy type of entertainment to one dependent on a complex story structure, new character types developed as a result of the need to accurately perform a story. Early yarō kabuki featured simple male heroic characters (tachiyaku), villains, (katakiyaku), and old men (yarō). Men had been playing women's roles as early as 1629, yet the complex story lines of monomane kyōgen zukushi called for greater variation in male and female role types. Men who played female roles (onnagata) began to further specialize in roles such as the high-ranking courtesan or prostitute (keisei), young daughter (musumegata), young woman (wakaonnagata), and older woman (kashagata). Men's roles also became more diverse, with the development of older male characters, new villains, and variations in acting style by leading male actors. Actors who played leading male roles were called tachiyaku, and these actors were expected to perform a wide range of male roles.

\textsuperscript{49} Hattori, Yukio, et. al., Kabuki Jiten (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983), 385.
The Nimaime Actor and Comedy

In the Genroku era, much of a wagoto actor’s popularity was due to his sense of play and humorous acting (okashimi). Humorous acting included word play such as double entendre or punning (kakekotoba), ad-libbing (kuchidate), physical comedy, and skillful playwriting. Actors varied greatly in their comedic playing styles.

The Actor’s Analects includes an anecdote that a nimaime actor must have the heart of a sanmaime (comic actor). In other words, the romantic actor must have the heart of a comic actor. The romantic actor must appear poignant, comical, and sometimes indignant at the same time. Although the dokeyaku were considered the clown characters in early kabuki plays, at times the nimaime walked a thin line between “leading actor” and “clown.”

Episodic Elements of Wagoto Kabuki:

Courtesan-buying scene (Keiseikai/Keiseigoto)

Here I describe chief elements of emerging wagoto style plays in the decades after 1652: the keiseikai scene, and its components: yatsushi, kuzetsu, and nuregoto.

Okuni kabuki and wakashu kabuki style were still evident during the 1660s. Dance, a central part of Okuni
kabuki, was incorporated into plays both as independent dances and in short scenes. A chaya asobi, originated by Okuni and continued through women's kabuki, was often performed. Chaya asobi gradually assumed the form of the Shimabara kyōgen or keiseikai, as mentioned, an identifiable structural sequence in the new full-length plays (monomane kyōgen zukushi). In early kabuki, these had been performed as independent pieces. The keiseikai scene was similar to Okuni's teahouse scene, and stood alone as a short scene amongst other short scenes or dances.

Keiseikai refers to the specific act of a male character arranging to buy and then meet a courtesan. The term expanded to refer to a type of play with a courtesan, and it could also mean the technique and style used in acting in a keiseikai scene. Plays with such scenes were also known as the Shimabara kyōgen because Shimabara was one of Kyoto's original red light districts.

The origins of the Shimabara kyōgen or keiseikai play can be traced to onna kabuki. The keiseikai became known as a Shimabara play after the Shimabara prostitute district was established in 1640. Young wakashu actors playing the courtesan characters within the plays made reference to their willingness to sell themselves off the stage. In 1655
and again in 1664, the government banned the Shimabara kyōgen for this reason. However, even though the government forbade the performance of such Shimabara plays, they continued virtually unchanged, with only the title of the play being altered. Since the plays were usually set in the Shimabara licensed quarter, they were called shimabara kyōgen, and Shimabara was often used in the play titles: for example, *Ise Shimabara*.

By 1680, the prostitute-buying scene was a regular feature of the full-length yarō kabuki play. As the keiseikai became more popular, the scenes developed greater complexity. Scenes began to incorporate a *yatsushi* and a *kuzetsugoto*, followed by the *nuregoto*.50 Some scenes featured the *yatsushi*, *kuzetsugoto*, and *nuregoto*, but omitted the actual buying of the prostitute.

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50 It is important to note that there are two types of Shimabara plays. In the first instance, Shimabara refers to the pleasure quarter or brothel district of Kyoto, established in 1640, formerly the prostitute quarters of Roku Jo or Sixth Street. “Shimabara play” originally referred to short kabuki performances done by the prostitutes of Shimabara to attract customers. Between 1655-72 the term began to refer to a short play performed by men about buying a prostitute. There was an entire genre of such Shimabara plays, with titles such as *Ise Shimabara* or *Oni Shimabara*. Eventually, the term became interchangeable with keiseikai.
Disguise scene (Yatsushi)

The disguise scene in a *keiseikai* play was one of the most important parts for a *wagoto* actor. This is where the actor would first demonstrate his character’s vulnerability. The actor had to convincingly portray his character’s fall from grace and his desire to enter the brothel to see his lover.

As a verb, the word *yatsushi* means “to disguise oneself.” Originally in the Genroku era, the term *yatsushi* indicated a character who had been of high status (a samurai or son of a young merchant) but who has disgraced the family in some way and has been disowned. Visually, the character’s fall in status is usually shown through a costume change. In earlier scenes, he wears elegant clothing. His newfound poverty is symbolized by his wearing of a ripped kimono or broken sandals.

*Yatsushi* is first found in Japanese mythology when the gods disguised themselves and came down to earth. *The Kabuki Jiten* mentions the god Susanō no Mikoto, a young man of refinement who was forced to leave his home and wander

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around until the spring, when he regained his former status.\footnote{Ibid.}

In 1690, yatsushi was further classified into nurenoyatsushi, and tedateyatushi. Disguises for love (nureyatsushi or yatsushi) are scenes where a young man has been disinherited for spending time in the licensed quarters. Scenes not affiliated with the keiseikai scene, but of ordinary men losing their wealth, or working with their hands as laborers or craftsman and not affiliated with wealth are called tedateyatsushi. Taguchi Akiko refers to another type of yatushi, the shinokojonoyatsushi. In this form of yatsushi, a samurai or nobleman is disinherited from his home and is forced to endure hardship as a laborer.\footnote{Taguchi, Akiko, "Yatsushi ni Naritate. Kojüruri to no Kankei ni Tsuite," Kabuki Kenkyû to Hihyô, 11 (1993), 137-146.}

Yatsushi is similar to mitate, a convention where characters disguise themselves and inhabit different worlds (sekai). For example, in the play Sukeroku Flower of Edo, Sukeroku, the title character, is posing as a dandy, while his true identity is Sogo no Gorô. Audiences enjoyed the revelation of true character in the "I'm really so-and-so in disguise" (jitsu wa) convention, when a character's true identity is revealed.
The first disguise specialist (yatsushi meijin) was Arashi Sanemon I. Sanemon, whose acting career preceded Tōjūrō's, gained notoriety in a yatsushi scene playing a tobacco seller who was down on his luck. The Collection of Kabuki Critiques includes information about Sanemon: "Arashi Sanemon appeared as a tobacco seller with a straw rain hat. This was the first yatsushi."\(^5\) In 1677, he was praised for a yatsushi role as a palanquin carrier. Arashi's act grew to include the trademark paper kimono (kamiko) that signified a character's fall in status. Yamatoya Jinbei was praised for his yatsushi scenes in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques between 1681-1683.\(^5\) After Sanemon's yatsushi scenes became popular, many Kamigata actors performed similar yatsushi scenes in the Genroku era.

Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter (Kuruwa Bunshō) contains the best-known yatsushi scene performed on stage today.\(^5\) The curtain opens on a snowy January day. When the action begins, people are pounding mochi outside of the entrance of the brothel. Soon Fujiya Izaemon, a yatsushi character wearing a thin paper kimono and a straw hat,

\(^5\) Ibid., 139.
\(^5\) Ibid., 139.
\(^5\) This play has been translated by James R. Brandon and is published in James Brandon, Kabuki: Five Classic Plays (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1975).
enters on the hanamichi. His dress shows how ill-prepared he is against the wind and snow. His hat is pushed down low, covering his face, to avoid recognition from those in the quarter. His hands are tucked in his kimono sleeves, his bare feet protected only by cheap, thin sandals. This costume, still worn today, follows the style Sakata Tōjūrō wore when performing Izaemon three hundred years earlier: a kimono of silk designed to resemble paper, covered with Japanese characters to represent love letters from Izaemon's beloved courtesan.

It is important to note that yatsushi were not performed regularly as part of a keiseikai play until Tōjūrō began playing the role of Fujiya Izaemon. His yatsushi style became so popular, audiences began to expect a yatsushi scene as a standard feature of the keiseikai. I will discuss this in more detail in chapter four.

Lovers' Quarrel (Kuzetsu)

A lovers' quarrel (kuzetsu) was a standard convention of the keiseikai plays. Often, the young male character (wakadanna) inspires or provokes a fight with the woman he loves, or with another courtesan. Audiences enjoyed the scene, in which the young male character would accuse his
lover of being unfaithful. The courtesan character, in turn, would upbraid her lover for flirting with several of her co-workers.

An example of this is a scene in Tōjūrō’s play, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*. In this scene, the wagoto character Bunzō is in Imagawa’s House, and he captures the attention of two women. He promises one that he will sleep with her later that evening, but the other woman, Kozatusma, will not take “no” for an answer, and demands his attention. Kozatsuma throws herself at Bunzō, just as Imagawa, a courtesan he has a child with, enters the room. Bunzō sees her and tries to wriggle away from Kozatsuma.

Bunzō: Listen, woman, don’t get carried away.
Kozatusuma: Your face is so handsome when you are angry. (*She leans in against him.*)
Imagawa: Kozatsu, let me help you here with your man.
(*Imagawa pulls the futon on top of Kozatsuma, pulls Bunzō out from under it, and begins yelling at Bunzō. While she yells, she kicks Kozatsuma, who hides under the futon. Suddenly, Kozatsuma emerges from the futon.*)
Kozatsuma: What happened?
Bunzō: Finally, Imagawa, we have time to spend together.
Imagawa: I have no desire for that anymore.
Kozatsuma: Imagawa, now you can meet with your secret lover.
Bunzō: What? She has a lover? (Bunzō suddenly accuses Imagawa of being unfaithful and she begs for a chance to explain. The quarrel ends when Imagawa breaks down in tears. Bunzō tries to apologize.)

Bunzö: You are a bodhisattva. I apologize.

Please forgive me.

(Bunzō begs her forgiveness.)

Imagawa: Please put your arms around me.

(They embrace. Their bond is deep.)

Lovers fought for different reasons, but one of the most common grounds was jealousy. Often the wakadanna character accused his courtesan lover of infidelity. Commonly, after the bickering in the lovers' quarrel was resolved, the lovers made up and a love scene (nureba) followed.

These scenes captured the essence of the wagoto character. Often the quarrel was humorous. In the lovers' quarrel described above, Bunzō is already under the futon when his lover Imagawa spies him lying next to another woman. Imagawa pulls a defenseless Bunzō out from under the covers, and steps on Kozatsuma, who has lured Bunzō into bed.

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In another humorous lovers' quarrel scene from The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, the wagoto character, Tomenojo, plays a game of go\textsuperscript{58} on his jacket while fighting with his lover, Ōshū. This is discussed in detail in chapter five. Much of the humor was dependent on his line delivery and pace. A skillful wagoto actor had enough charisma to insult his courtesan or fiancée and still keep the audience entertained. At the same time, the wagoto actor needed to demonstrate a certain vulnerability and elicit some degree of pity when he was being upbraided by his lover.

Love Scene (Nureba)

One of the most important characteristics of wagoto kabuki is the acting during a love scene (nureba). This is where the actor often showed his skill as the young, romantic hero, acting in the nuregoto style. "Nure" (moist or wet) and "goto" (thing), means an erotic encounter. The scene itself is called the nureba. Kamigata plays with nureba are typically keiseikai scenes. In a wagoto play, a nureba is almost without exception a love sequence between a professional prostitute or courtesan and the man who is in love with her. Often, these scenes showcase the strength of

\textsuperscript{58} Go is a strategic board game.

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the female character, in contrast to the indecisiveness of the wagoto character.

Love scenes in Okuni kabuki were known for their bawdiness. However, love scenes as played by Tôjûrô and other actors in the Genroku era were fairly chaste. Some episodes within nureba were sensual and suggestive, such as kamisuki. In kamisuki, the female character will comb her lover’s hair. This was considered an erotic scene.

Speeches were often filled with double entendre. In the play The Keisei on the Buddha Plain, Ôshû and Bunzô are being intimate with each other. Ôshû is wearing a nightshirt, and she makes a reference to water. The water in the speech signifies the moisture of sexual intercourse. During the discussion, Bunzô takes a sake flask and pours sake over the two of them in an erotic moment. In this instance, water represents the liquid people drink, but it also represents the “nure” or the “moistness” of the act of intimacy.

Nureba appear in keiseikai scenes, but love scenes also occur independently of keiseikai plays. In aragoto kabuki, developing at the same time as wagoto, scenes suggesting a sex act were present in plays. For example, in the play

Narukami the Thunder God, Lady Taema travels to Narukami's residence and seduces the priest. After Narukami feels her breasts and stomach, Narukami leads Taema into his hut, and he draws the curtain, so the audience is left to imagine how the rest of the scene will play out in the characters' world.

In the keiseikai scene, the act of sexual intimacy is directly discussed but not shown. I have provided examples from The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain in which the main character, Bunzō, is in bed with two different women in different scenes in the play. Physical intimacy was implied but not graphically shown on stage.

In onna kabuki and wakashu kabuki, the love scenes were short in length and often bawdy and lewd. Actors were trying to reveal their bodies and procure customers for sexual relations. In contrast, the love scene of Genroku kabuki was part of a full-length play. For the wagoto actor, the nureba was a scene where he could demonstrate his sex appeal and often his humor to an audience.

To summarize, the structure of a keiseikai play is as follows:
1) Yatsushi (nurenoyatsushi): The young master character heads toward the licensed quarter in a paper kimono and straw rain hat.

2) Kuzetsu: The young master character and his courtesan have a lovers' quarrel, often due to the jealousy of both partners.

3) Nureba: The lovers' quarrel is resolved and the two engage in a love scene, suggested but not graphically shown.

House Struggle Plays (Oiesôdô mono)

The keiseikai scene began to appear in the second act of the new, innovative drama, the house struggle play (oiesôdô mono). The house play originated in the 1650s, and by 1674 had gained great popularity. In Kamigata, an oiesôdô mono was performed at the face viewing (kaomise) performance (alternatively called ichinokawari) or as a second seasonal offering (ni no kawari).

Many of the oiesôdô plays followed a set formula of three parts: ĵô, chû, and ge. The first scene (ĵô) was a historical scene (jidaimono). The middle (chû) act was a two part contemporary scene (sewamono). Most sewamono scenes featured a keiseikai, or a lovers' quarrel with a wife or

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60 Hattori, Yukio, et. al., Geinoishi, 237.
courtesan. Several plays did not feature a courtesan-buying scene, but did feature a scene with a wagoto character interacting with a courtesan. The ending (ge) was one act, where everyone would go to a temple, usually followed by a dance (kaichō).

In a typical Kamigata kaomise play, the first act might take place at a princess's residence. In a second seasonal offering production (ni no kawari), the play would open in a samurai residence and show a young man thrown out of his home, ostensibly for disgracing the family.61 The sewamono scenes, in particular, appealed to the merchant class in Kyoto and Osaka. The sewamono scene was representative of everyday society of the merchant class, and the people seemed to identify with the main character, often a young merchant.

In many oiesōdō mono, the main male character was the young son of a samurai or a merchant disinherited from his family and forced to survive on his own because he had been accused of stealing family heirlooms or he has spent so much

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61 Often, the villain was an old woman, such as an evil stepmother in an updated version of the "abusing the stepchild story" from the Muromachi Era. See Hattori, et. al., Geinōshi, 135.
money in the licensed quarter that his family has disinherited him.

In the early Genroku-period oiesōdō plays, the performances often featured a happy ending. Either the precious heirloom was recovered or the young lovers’ debts were paid, allowing the young man to redeem his prostitute in the licensed quarter. In such Genroku-period plays, the implication was that the redeemed young gentleman and his ransomed courtesan lived happily ever after. In many of the plays, the final scene would take place at a special Buddhaviewing festival (kaichō). An example of the structure of an oiesōdō play and several oiesōdō play summaries are provided on page 82.

Kaichō mono

A kaichō scene could be part of an oiesōdō play and was a special viewing of treasures of a particular temple when a temple was trying to raise funds. It often included a statue of a "secret Buddha" that was displayed at certain times of the year or for religious festivals or celebrations. A kaichō mono was a play featuring a scene at a temple or in which the main characters are going to view the secret Buddha at the temple. If a play was scheduled to open at the
same time a temple was holding a Buddha-viewing, both the play and the temple would attract the same audience. This was economically advantageous to both parties. In 1699, The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain was performed at the same time as the kaichō at Gesō Temple, near Higashiyama in Kyoto, to their mutual benefit.

Kaichō mono played an important role in Japanese society. Kamigata audiences enjoyed seeing plays that mirrored their own lives. Not only could an audience see the glamorous life in the licensed quarter and pretend that they, too, inhabited that world, the audience could readily identify with the kaichō, an important religious and social event in the community.

A kaichō scene followed one of two basic patterns. The scene could function dramatically by tying up the story, which had begun with the hero's yatsushi or lovers' quarrel, with a happy love scene. In The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple, the secret Buddhas take an active role in the play. The statue of Jizō miraculously saves the life of a young child attendant (kamuro) of the courtesan. The play ends at Mibu temple where the Jizō statue is displayed. This is a highly dramatic scene that provides a strong climax.
Alternately, plays could focus on celebrating a happy scene through dance. In the play *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*, the *kaichō* scene that concludes the play is a celebratory group dance. The action has been resolved before the *kaichō* scene begins, and the *kaichō* serves to provide a lively, colorful ending for the audience.

The scenes in the early *oiesōdō mono* plays were formulaic, but in Kamigata, the formula became a structure to showcase the *wagoto* character type and the actor's *wagoto* acting skills. Both the *sewamono* scene and the *kaichō* scene allowed actors to play the soft, romantic character that the Kyoto-Osaka audiences preferred.
Oiesōdō mono Structure

Act I (jō):
Genre: History
Type of scene: feudal house scene.

Act II (chū):
Genre: Contemporary
Type of scene: keisei scene.

Keiseikai scene will consist minimally of a lovers' quarrel and love scene with a courtesan. Tōjūrō usually began his keiseikai scenes with a yatsushi scene.

Act III (ge):
Resolution Scene, often at a kaichō.

Example I:
The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain (Keisei Hotoke no Hara, 1699)

Act I (jō):
Umenaga Bunzō is the elder son of a feudal lord (daimyō). He has fallen in love with the courtesan Imagawa and has a child by her. His younger brother has conspired to have Bunzō disinherited.

Act II (chū):
Bunzō is dressed in a paper kimono (yatsushi) and arrives at a daimyo's mansion on the way to Gesō Temple. He recounts a story about a prostitute named Ōshū to one of the court ladies in waiting (kuruwa banashi). Bunzō is surprised to learn that Ōshū now lives at the daimyō's residence. They are happily reunited (nureba) until Princess Take, Bunzō's fiancee, arrives and a lovers' quarrel between Take and Bunzō (kuzetsu) ensues. This scene does not have the customary buying the prostitute element, but the yatsushi, kuzetsu and nuregoto are consistent with keiseikai play structure.

Act III: (ge):
Imagawa's father is actually Bunzō's enemy, Sukedayu. Sukedayu repents and kills Bunzō's younger brother, who was
scheming to harm Bunzō. They all go to Gesō Temple and the play ends with an auspicious dance. 62

Example II:
The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama (Keisei Asamagatake, 1698)

Act I (jō):
The widow of feudal lord Suya Dayo plans to take control of Princess Otowa no Mae’s residence with her stepson by killing the princess, the legitimate heir to the house.

Act II (chū):
Kozasa Tomenojō was engaged to Princess Otowa no Mae and leaves her for the courtesan Ōshū. As a result, he is disinherited and becomes a palanquin bearer. He is confronted both by Otowa no Mae and by the jealous spirit of Ōshū, who has appeared from a fire to scold her lover. Otowa no Mae recognizes the love Ōshū feels for Tomenojō and encourages him to ransom Ōshū. Ōshū’s attendant (kamuro), Osan, is killed by the enemy.

Act III (ge):
Otowa no Mae and Ōshū are praying for the slain Osan at the temple of twenty-five bodhisattvas. Osan is been rescued and brought back to life by Fugen Bosatsu. Peace is restored to the house and Otowa no Mae and Tomenojō are married. 63

Conclusion

By the middle of the Genroku era, most theaters had a schedule of seasonal plays, including the second seasonal offering, the ni no kawari. Usually, the ni no kawari play was an oiesōdō play featuring a three act structure. The keiseikai scene was in the second act of the oiesōdō mono and was a favorite with audiences. Wagoto actors Sakata Tōjūrō and Nakamura Shichisaburō were known as masters of the keiseikai play.
Illustration V

The Fight Between Courtesans in *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*

In the lower half of the illustration, Imagawa steps on Kozatsuma after finding her in bed with Bunzô. Bunzô, disguised as a priest, looks on.

CHAPTER IV

SAKATA TÔJÛRÔ AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO KAMIGATA WAGOTO

This chapter provides a chronology of Tôjûrô’s life and discusses specific examples of his performance art that contributed to defining wagoto acting. First, I will give a brief history of Tôjûrô’s childhood and early performance training, his rise to acting prominence, and his mature years. Second, I will focus on several of his performance techniques and explain how these contributed to the wagoto acting style.

Childhood and Early Performance Training (1647-1677)

Frustratingly little is known about Tôjûrô’s early years. Tôjûrô was born in 1647. We know that his family was originally from Echigo, modern-day Niigata, and his father was a Kyoto theatre producer (zamoto), Sakata Ichiemon (dates unknown.) Sakata Ichiemon is not mentioned in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques.64

In his youth, Tôjûrô studied nô drumming with nô musician Honeya Shôemon (dates unknown). Later, in his

kabuki performances, Tōjūrō played the small nó drum (kotsuzumi) in several plays and critics praised his drumming skills. Tōjūrō remained close to Shōemon and continued to visit and learn from him throughout his life. In fact, it was Shōemon who taught Tōjūrō one of his life lessons.

One day when Tōjūrō was a young actor, he went to see his teacher perform the music in a nó play. It was the opening day of the performance and Tōjūrō was very disappointed in the audiences' lack of response to Shōemon's playing. He went back to talk to is teacher about it. Shōemon assured him that the audiences' reception would be better the next day. An anecdote in The Actor's Analects recounts the second day of the nó performance and Shōemon's response to Tōjūrō's concerns:

From the second day he [Shōemon] was praised as the most skillful in the whole of Japan. Tōjūrō went to see him again and told him that the favorable reports on that day's performance were really exceptional and asked him what he had in his mind when he played his drum. Shōemon replied, "On the first day I was very concerned with what I was

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65 Kabuki Hyōbanki Shûsei, vol.1, 416.
doing, and just like you with your acting, put aside thoughts of being praised, and concentrated on the technique of playing. Today, with the first day safely over, I thought about getting some applause, and showed off my skill a little . . . It is easy enough to play on my drum so as to get applause, but difficult to do so in a way that satisfies my conscience.

Kaneko Kichizaemon, who recorded the above anecdote, added his own thoughts about Shôemon’s words:

I was in the theatre at the time and heard this conversation, and could not help but agree, and have ever since kept in my mind that the great man’s art resided in doing what he thinks is right, not caring whether the audience likes it or not.  

These passages are significant for several reasons. First, Tôjûrô was very adept with his shoulder drum, and continued to play it in performances throughout his career. Perhaps most noticeably in The Seventh Anniversary

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Dunn and Torigoe, 74.
of Yūgiri’s Death (Yūgiri Shichinenki), Tōjūrō’s Izaemon played the shoulder drum. The author of one of the Collection of Kabuki Critiques also praised his playing, saying, “His drumming is good and there is nothing to criticize about his speeches.”

Undoubtedly, learning to play the drum and its rhythms helped Tōjūrō acquire timing and rhythm, both skills that were praised during his career. But perhaps a model for Tōjūrō’s life was the advice Kichizaemon succinctly recorded, “the great man’s art resided in doing what he thinks is right, not caring what the audience thinks or not.” This is how Tōjūrō directed his professional career. Tōjūrō followed his intuition in performance.

Tōjūrō recognized his strengths and limitations as an actor. He knew that his tachiyaku acting skills such as sword fighting and swaggering off-stage exit (roppō) did not measure up to his fellow actors’, yet he was confident of his speaking skills. As he became more renowned as an actor, he showcased his speeches.

When Tōjūrō was in his twenties, he studied with the kabuki actor of old women’s roles, Sugi Kuhē (dates

unknown). An account in The Actor's Analects states that Kuhē told Tōjūrō he should study with a tachiyaku actor. Kuhē thought Tōjūrō would be better off learning from other tachiyaku actors rather than from an actor of women's roles. 68 No records exist to suggest how long Tōjūrō studied with Kuhē, or what he studied, nor is there evidence to suggest that Tōjūrō formally studied with any other kabuki actors. It is likely that after studying with Shōemon and Kuhē, Tōjūrō learned by performing and watching others but without any more formal teacher-student relationships.

Tōjūrō was thirty when he was first mentioned in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques in 1676. He was a "one style actor," whose acting was likened to "an older brother." The lines in the critique are brief and it is not clear from the review what role he was playing to receive this description. 69 Eight more years would pass before he became famous playing the role of Izaemon, yet "one style actor" was a description that would be repeated throughout Tōjūrō's career.

In the eleventh month of the same year (1676), Tōjūrō acted with his colleague and rival Yamashita

68 Dunn and Torigoe, p. 104.
69 Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei, vol. 1, 143.
Hanzaemon (1650?-1717) at the Nawate Theatre in Kyoto. The play, *The Top of the Waterfall* (*Takiguchi*) was originally a *jōruri* play. The two were called "a couple of dazzling young men."\(^{70}\)

Yamashita Hanzaemon was a lifelong rival of Tōjurō. He was eight years younger than Tōjurō, but he was consistently ranked higher than Tōjurō in acting reviews until 1689.\(^{71}\) Like Tōjurō, Yamashita Hanzaemon specialized in *yatsushi*, realistic acting (*jitsugoto*)\(^{72}\), and was also known for playing melancholy (*ureigoto*) roles. In many of the acting critiques, Hanzaemon was praised for his realistic samurai acting, while Tōjurō was praised for his *yatsushi*.

**Sakata Izaemon: Tōjurō's Rise to Prominence (1678–1692)**

In 1678, Tōjurō premiered the role that would define his career. Yūgiri, a well-known courtesan of the Osaka Shinmachi licensed district, died of an illness at the age of twenty-seven, on the sixth day of the first month in 1678. In Kamigata, plays were quickly produced from events

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\(^{70}\) Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyō*, vol. 1, 126.

\(^{71}\) *Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei*, vol. 2, 302.

\(^{72}\) *Jitsugoto* is often given the name "realistic" acting. It featured portrayals of strong male characters and martial acting.
happening in city life. Items from the news that were
dramatized on stage within a matter of days or weeks were
known as "overnight pickles" (ichiyazuke). Yūgiri's death
was quickly immortalized in the play Yūgiri's Last New
Year (Yūgiri Nagori no Shogatsu), at Osaka's Araki Yojibei
Theatre barely three weeks after her death. Tōjūrō played
the role of Fujiya Izaemon, Yūgiri's lover. Onnagata
Kirinami Senju played courtesan Yūgiri. 73

Tōjūrō and the play were tremendously popular. Tōjūrō
revived the role three more times the same year in the
sixth, tenth, and twelfth months. 74 To play the same
character in four productions in one year is surely a
record in kabuki. Tōjūrō was thirty-two years old the year
he first played Izaemon. Between 1678 and 1709, the year
he died, he would play the role of Izaemon eighteen times
in his life. He received the nickname "Sakata Izaemon" due
to his enormous popularity in the role.

Scholars differ in their opinions about the date of
the first Yūgiri-Izaemon production and the play's plot. 75

73 Ihara, Kabuki Nempyō, vol 1, 132.
74 Dunn and Torigoe, 101-103.
75 Takano Tatsuyuki suggests the premiere of The First
Anniversary of Yūgiri's Death was at the Araki Yojibei
Theatre in 1678 and that Yūgiri was played by Kirinami
Senju. Ihara Toshiro lists the Araki Theatre performance
the following year, in 1679.
However, most scholars agree that the play featured Tōjūrō as Izaemon in a yatsuši scene, followed by a nureba and kuzetsu. Tōjūrō was in high demand to play the role of Izaemon in Yūgiri sequels (Yūgirimo). He became famous in both Kyoto and Osaka for the role. In the first month of 1679, he played Izaemon in The First Anniversary of Yūgiri's Death (Yūgiri Isshūki). The following year, he played Izaemon in the Third Anniversary of Yūgiri's Death (Yūgiri Sannenki). In 1682, according to a program from the Osaka Kaneko Rokuen-za, he was the second ranking

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76 Scholars of Genroku kabuki including Tsuchiya Keiichirō and Suwa Haruo suggest that the first act of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's Yūgiri Awa no Naruto, is actually a revised version of The First Anniversary of Yūgiri's Death. In this scene, Izaemon is a young master, in love with Yūgiri a courtesan in the brothel. They have a child together. Izaemon has been disinherited by his family for spending too much money in the pleasure quarters and is forced to wear a paper kimono, in the harsh, cold winter. He owes 700 cho [the amount of his debt] to the brothel and he is not permitted back until he has paid off his debt. Yūgiri is heartsick at not seeing Izaemon and does not want to meet any customers. Izaemon has heard Yūgiri is ill and has come to pay her a visit on New Year's Day. The kindly master of the brothel Yoshidaya lets Izaemon in to meet Yūgiri, but she is in fact, entertaining a customer. Izaemon becomes angry and they have a lovers' quarrel. The keiseikai scene was a huge hit with audiences, and the stage, decorated with festive New Year's ornaments, reflected the New Year season at which this play was taking place. This is the general story as performed in Kabuki today as Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter.
tachiyaku actor, second only to Yamashita Hanzaemon. In 1684, Tôjûrô played the role of Izaemon in The Seventh Anniversary of Yugiri's Death. His popularity in this role assured him the best roles at Kyoto's Iwamoto Theatre in 1686.

Tôjûrô played the Izaemon role to great acclaim for eight years. His name appears for the second time in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques in 1687. In that year, Tôjûrô was receiving the top roles at Kyoto's Iwamoto Theatre, but his ranking in the Critiques was in the middle (chû). His mentor, Arashi Sanemon was listed first with the highest rating, "excellent, excellent, outstanding" (jô-jô-kichi), and his rival, Yamashita was also ranked above Tôjûrô. Despite Tôjûrô's popularity with audiences, Sanemon and Yamashita were regarded to have stronger acting skills. It would be another twelve years before Tôjûrô would surpass Yamashita's ranking in the Critiques.

Between 1687 and 1692, Tôjûrô acted in both Osaka and Kyoto. He played at the Miyako Mandayu Theatre, Kyoto, perhaps for the first time, in 1688. The play was greatly praised for its keiseikai scene. This is Tôjûrô's first

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77 Ihara, Kabuki Nempyô, vol. 1, 144-145
78 Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei, vol. 1, 247.
documented instance of appearing at the Mandayu Theatre. Comic actor (dokegata) Kaneko Kichizaemon was at the Mandayu Theatre during the same year. Both would later have long and prosperous associations with this theatre. 79

In 1690, Tōjūrō reprised the role of Izaemon in The Thirteenth Anniversary of Yūgiri's Death (Yūgiri Jūshichinenki). In 1691 he starred in The Great Temple Ceremony at Sakai (Sakai no Ōdera Kaichō) at the Ichimura Heimon Theatre in Osaka and played the role of the legendary samurai Soga Gorō. The following year he starred in another successful keiseikai role at Kyoto's Murayama Theatre with Iwai Hanshirō I (1652-1699). Of the eleven documented roles Tōjūrō played between 1678 and 1692, ten of them were in keiseikai plays, and nine were as Izaemon. 80 Tōjūrō had created his reputation on the basis of his Izaemon and keiseikai roles.

The Tōjūrō, Kichizaemon, and Chikamatsu years (1693-1702) Tōjūrō's return to the Mandayu Theatre to star in The Temple of Maya (Butsumo Mayasan Kaichō) in 1693 marked the first known collaboration with playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon and with playwright and comic actor (dokegata)

79 Ihara, Kabuki Nempyō 169-183.
80 Takano, 367-374
Kaneko Kichizemon. Temple of Maya was a play timed to coincide with a kaichō opening at the Maya Temple near Osaka. The play's opening and closing scenes were set at Maya Temple. This oiesōdō mono play featured a yatsushi scene and a keiseikai scene. Chikamatsu later used this formula for his best known kabuki plays, The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain and The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple. This was a heady time for Tōjūrō. Tōjūrō earned huge success in The Temple of Maya. His rival, Yamashita Hanzaemon, was the troupe leader (zamoto) and manager of the Mandayu Theater and yet he gave Tōjūrō the lead role in the production and took a secondary role for himself. At about this time, Tōjūrō and Hanzaemon were receiving very close rankings in The Great Mirror of Actors. Hanzaemon was praised for his realistic acting (jitsukata) and his yatsushi acting, "His level of realistic acting is high, and so is his yatsushi. . . His yatsushi is enjoyable and his nuregoto has great style." Tōjūrō was praised for his performance in keiseikai:

He is a master of the keiseikai scene as is Yamashita Hanzaemon. . . Much of his acting resembles that of

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81 Takano, 367-374
the late Arashi Sanemon...in his rain hat, standing at the bridge of the stage, he looks like the late Arashi... His melancholy acting is well done, but it’s evident this man’s skill is the *keiseikai* scene...His best acting is done when talking to the courtesan, showing his jealousy.  

While both actors were praised for their *keiseikai* scenes, Hanzaemon’s critique also mentioned his skills at performing different types of acting. “The ability to do many things well is what makes Hanzaemon top ranked.”

The difference in skills was a common area of comparison between Tōjūrō and Hanzaemon throughout their lives. While Tōjūrō gained experience in *keiseikai* acting, Hanzaemon illustrated his versatility in several different performance styles.

The following year, 1694, there is no record of any collaboration between Tōjūrō, Kichizaemon, and Chikamatsu. In 1695, they worked together again at Kyoto’s Hayakuma Theatre and cooperated on four plays: a new year’s play, *Contemporary Genji’s Sixtieth Scroll (Ima Genji Rokuzyuchô)*; a spring play, *The Courtesan and the Awa Whirlpool (Keisei Awa no Naruto)*; a late summer (obón)
play, *The Soga Revelry with Courtesans (Soga Tayû Zome)* in which Tôjûrô played the samurai Soga Jûrô; and a fall play, *Mizuki Tatsunosuke's Grace (Mizuki Tatsunosuke Tachifurumai)*. Tôjûrô did not play Izaemon that year. Between 1695 and 1701, the partnership between Tôjûrô, Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon blossomed, and they worked together at Kyoto's Mandayu Theatre.

In 1698, while Tôjûrô was working at the Mandayu Theatre, Nakamura Shichisaburô, a young actor from Edo, came to Kyoto and worked with Yamashita Hanzaemon at Kyoto's Hayakumo Theatre. Shichisaburô's performance of Kozasa Tomoenjo in the play *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama* was so popular it ran for an unprecedented one hundred and twenty days. Shichisaburô and his hit play inspired Tôjûrô, Chikamatsu, and Kichizaemon to achieve even greater success, and the three collaborated on *The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain* (1699). The play was a favorite among audiences and was immediately followed by two sequels: *The Sequel to Hotoke no Hara, The Dragon River Pool (Hotoke no Hara Gonichi Ryûjo ga Fuchi, 1699)*
and The Three Story Storehouse on Tsuruga Bay
(Tsuruganotsu Sankaigura, 1699). 84

The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain finally put Tôjûrô ahead of Hanzaemon in the actor's rankings and Tôjûrô was consistently rated higher than Yamashita until Tôjûrô's death in 1709. Tôjûrô performed at the Hayakumo Theatre in 1701 and then moved back to the Mandayu Theatre where Tôjûrô, Hanzaemon and Kichizaemon worked together for another three years. 85 The trio's next big success, The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service Buddha at Mibu Temple, was produced in 1702. This play also had two consecutive sequels, The Prostitute and the Temple Pillar (Jorô Raiga Bashira, 1702) and The Autumn Ceremony at Mibu (Mibu Aki no Nembutsu, 1702). 86 1703 was the last year that Tôjûrô, Chikamatsu, and Kichizaemon collaborated at the same theatre.

Of the twenty-nine extant kabuki scripts published as e-irikyôgenbon that are attributed to Chikamatsu, Tôjûrô had roles in sixteen and Kichizaemon played a

84 Dunn and Torigoe, 103.
86 Dunn and Torigoe, 103-104.
comic role in twenty-four. Of those twenty-nine plays, ten were kaichō mono. This is significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the successful collaboration between Tōjūrō, Chikamatsu, and Kichizemon. Kichizaemon helped Chikamatsu write his scripts and he performed in the comic role with Tōjūrō in most of them. Second, more than half of Chikamatsu's extant play scripts were written for Tōjūrō and a third of them contained a happy ending with a kaichō scene. This again demonstrates a winning theatrical formula that worked for actors, playwrights and audiences.

Tōjūrō's Mature Years (1703-1709)

Tōjūrō's health began failing soon after his success with the third production of The Courtesan and the Great Buddha at Mibu. In 1703, he moved back to the Mandayu Theatre and played the role of a fox possessed man in the play, The Feliticious New Year (Toshi Toku Kami).

According to an account in the Kabuki Nempyō, Tōjūrō's character was bullied by a fox spirit that forced Tōjūrō's character to speak gibberish. It has been

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88 Gunji, Kabuki no Hassō, 195.
suggested that Tōjūrō suffered a stroke and had trouble speaking. The fox spirit was a plot device to allow Tōjūrō to continue performing on stage.\textsuperscript{89} Tōjūrō acted in a spring play with Kichizaemon after \textit{The Felicitous New Year} closed.

During the next three years, Tōjūrō acted twice in \textit{A New Year’s Remembrance of Yūgiri} and in other \textit{keiseikai} plays. Tōjūrō was still praised for his acting skills yet the acting critiques also noted his slurred speech and the fact he was not as agile as he once was: “Sakata has recently has been ill. His movement is good, but compared to earlier days he appears weak.”\textsuperscript{90} In 1708, he played the role of Izaemon for the eighteenth and final time. He died on the first day of the eleventh month in 1709. Tōjūrō was elaborately eulogized at the time of his death. People flocked to his memorial services. He continued to be written about in the \textit{Collection of Kabuki Critiques} long after his death.

\textbf{Tōjūrō the Actor}

Tōjūrō’s acting artistry is well described both by those who enjoyed a performance and those who found a

\textsuperscript{89} Ihara, \textit{Kabuki Nempyō}, vol. 1, 303.
\textsuperscript{90} Ihara, \textit{Kabuki Nempyō}, vol. 2, 342.
performance lacking. In the first acting critique written in 1687, Tōjūrō was given a middle ranking in the *Young Actor’s Great Mirror for the Stage*. The review mentioned several points that seemed consistent throughout Tōjūrō’s career:

Judging from his art, he appears not to be illiterate when acting. His love scenes (nureba) and yatsushi are performed as well as those of Hanzaemon . . .

This entry is significant for several reasons. It begins by stating that Tōjūrō appears to be a literate, intelligent actor, and his word play (mentioned later in the critique) attests to that statement. According to Kichizaemon, many of the Genroku actors could not read. Tōjūrō was reputed to use literary allusions, poetry, and pillow words (*makura kotoba*) in his speeches on stage.

The review continues:

While performing in Osaka, the troupe manager (zamoto) Kaneko Rokuemon made an on-stage speech (kōjō) that in this year alone, the theatre made so much money, at least two or three years worth of profits that he [the theatre manager] would be taking

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91 *Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei*, vol.1, 246.
92 Dunn and Torigoe, 98-100.
a vacation and not producing any plays in the next year.

This suggests that Tōjūrō, who had by 1687 played the role of Izaemon seven times⁹³, and was being compared to his mentor, Sanemon, and his continual rival, Hanzaemon, provided his troupe manager, Kaneko Rokuemon enough money to take a vacation, even though Tōjūrō was only given a chū ranking by the critics.⁹⁴

Tōjūrō’s yatsushi is played lightly and comically, but he talks too much. His timing [pauses, ma] are well performed and he appears natural. His yatsushi is very good and seems effortless...his mannerisms and timing are excellent, therefore the plays are well performed and alive. His prostitute buying scenes resemble those of Arashi [Sanemon].

Tōjūrō’s yatsushi acting became a hallmark of his performances. Tōjūrō is also compared to one of his predecessors, Arashi Sanemon. Tōjūrō began using Sanemon’s trademark paper kimono in his performances and made the convention his own. In this acting critique, and for the

⁹³ A New Year’s Remembrance of Yugiri, four times (1678), The First Anniversary of Yugiri’s Death (1679), The Third Anniversary of Yugiri’s Death (1680), and The Seventh Anniversary of Yugiri’s Death (1684). See Dunn and Torigoe, 102-103.
rest of his life, Tōjūrō’s yatsushi scenes were compared to and rivaled those of Sanemon.

The lines near the end of the critique were both a criticism and a prediction:

There are too many pillow words [makura kotoba] and too much dialogue. It is like eating yellowtail [at that time a fish eaten seasonally in the summer] in the spring. It is said that he [Tōjūrō] is stubborn.

Some critics already considered Tōjūrō long-winded and loquacious by some critics. Audiences either appreciated or castigated his long speeches. His monologues were compared to eating fish out of season, meaning that one could listen to Tōjūrō and leave feeling uncomfortably full or with an aftertaste in the mouth.

Perhaps Sakata will climb the ranks [of actors] with (his portrayal) of Izaemon.

The words at the end of the critique proved to be true: Tōjūrō’s reputation and fame were built on his portrayal of Izaemon. Tōjūrō came to prominence as an actor near the second half of his life; he played the first Izaemon role at the age of thirty-two. Another ten years passed before he was regularly published in the Collection of Kabuki Critiques. He created and honed his own style of
acting during a twenty-year period and was so successful at this early wagoto acting style that he was the standard that all actors were held to when speaking of yatsushi and nuregoto.

When Tōjūrō began acting, there were specific performance elements (kata) that actors were expected to perform such as sword fighting, elocution, and bravado acting. Torigoe examines the acting style of four of Tōjūrō’s senior contemporaries. Sanemon is praised for his roppō; Araki Yojibe (1637-1700) is praised for his sword fighting, Suzuki Heimon (dates unknown) is commended for his body movement; Fujita Koheiji (d. 1700) is praised for his movement.95 All of these skills were included in a category of active movement plays (hataraki kyōgen) that demanded physical exertion. Yatsushi, keiseikai and nuregoto involved less movement and outright physical exertion. Consequently, Tōjūrō, who specialized in these types of scenes, was often criticized for not being able to perform standard tachiyaku fare. A critique from the Sumo Wrestling Actors

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95 Torigoe, 314.
(Yarō Seki Zumō) summed it up by saying, "his long sword skills, wounded acting, dance, and roppō are terrible"96.

The *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* often use the same words and phrases to describe Tōjūrō's inferior work. It has been suggested that as Tōjūrō became immersed in the softer, less physical acting style of wagoto, he could not cross over and play stronger characters and thus did not develop these active body (hataraki) skills. He believed it might compromise his yatsushi style. I argue that in fact, Tōjūrō recognized his weaknesses in acting yet capitalized on this. As Tōjūrō himself said, "The audiences know of old the qualities and defects of Tōjūrō's acting."97 Tōjūrō chose to focus on his strengths: realistic acting, dialogue, yatsushi, and nuregoto.

**Tōjūrō and His Contemporaries**

In his book, *Genroku Kabuki Kō*, Torigoe compiled a chart of performance skills for three major Genroku Kamigata actors. I have used the information from his chart, as

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96 "Yarō Seki Zumō" in *Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei*, vol. 1, 549.
97 Dunn and Torigoe, 101.
well as some additional information from the Collection of Kabuki Critiques to illustrate the range of skills by Tōjūrō, Shichisaburō, and his contemporaries. Performances elements are given in the left hand column of the chart. A "Y" means there is a written record of an actor performing this performance element. An "N" means there is no written record of the actor performing the style.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Element</th>
<th>Hanzaemon</th>
<th>Jinbei</th>
<th>Shichisaburō</th>
<th>Tōjūrō</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtesan Buying Keiseikai</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesan Acting Keiseigoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting in a Lover’s Quarrel Kuzetsugoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle Acting Yawarakagoto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting in Disguise Yatsushigoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting in a Love Scene Nuregoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Serifu</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melancholy Acting Ureigoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Monologue Ikyōgen</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentation Shūtangoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Acting Sewagoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remonstrance Acting Ikengoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erotic Acting Irogoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Acting Jitsugoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Plays ji-kyōgen</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

98 See Torigoe, 323, for the original chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Element</th>
<th>Hanzaemon</th>
<th>Jinbei</th>
<th>Shichisaburô</th>
<th>Tôjûrô</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance Shosagoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapstick Roles Odokegoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erotic Acting Irogoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobleman Acting Daijingoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samurai Acting Samuraigoto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Sword Tachigoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded Acting Teoigoto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Topic Acting Honmagoto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Acting Hyôshigoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samurai Matters Bûdôgôto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Gestures Furidashi</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bravera Acting Aragoto</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit in Six Directions Roppô</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techique for Walking Tanzen</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within these twenty-eight categories, twenty-six can be classified as acting elements that actors perform on stage. As represented in this diagram, keiseikai appears to represent a structural element of a play or a style of acting.

Of these twenty-eight performance elements, at least seven can be characterized as pure wagoto acting style: keiseigoto, kuzetsu, yawakaragoto, yatsushigoto, nuregoto, speaking, and stylized movement.99 Each of the four actors performed in four of the seven categories classified here as wagoto. As mentioned in chapter three, Jinbei was the only actor of his generation to be described performing yawarakagoto, and he is the only one who does not perform melancholy acting. Even though an actor might perform a style, the skill with which he performed that style is not noted. In addition to the wagoto acting elements, all four actors also performed jitsugoto.

Tôjûrô and Jinbei perform the ikyôgen or long monologues that will be discussed later in this chapter.

99 From analyzing this chart, one might consider melancholy acting as a wagoto acting element. It is an important part of an actor's repertoire, but is often performed in conjunction with another acting characteristic such as kuzetsugoto or nuregoto.
Tojūrō’s roles did not perform comic roles, nor did he play swaggering samurai roles.\(^{100}\)

In several different acting critiques, Tojūrō was ranked on eighteen different acting kata. (These consist of the eighteen listed in the previous diagram.) Tojūrō performed well at eight, and each of these kata (with the exception of *ikyōgen*) are an essential part of the *keiseikai* play. In comparison to Tojūrō, Nakamura Shichisaburō performed sixteen acting skills. He performed well in most, but received the highest praise for *nuregoto* acting.\(^{101}\)

**Tojūrō’s Views on Acting**

Tojūrō was a one-style actor. He had very definite views about how *wagoto* acting should be portrayed. In comparison to the broad, bold style of acting of his contemporaries, Tojūrō’s acting was quieter, subtle, and closer to realistic.\(^{102}\) Tojūrō believed that the *nimai*me

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\(^{100}\) This is different than *būdōgoto* or samurai matters including swordfighting and wounded acting. Tojūrō did both, but not skillfully.  
\(^{101}\) Torigoe, 331-332.  
\(^{102}\) It would be difficult to find a consensus of people who think that Tojūrō’s acting style would be realistic, however, one could argue that the style is less bombastic and physical than *aragoto* acting. Dunn and Torigoe argue that realism derived from the Bunraku puppets and
should play the straight man, and the humor of the nimaike came from the earnestness in which he portrayed his character. Tôjûrô said:

It is realism that is comic. This is because one performs something that happens ordinarily. When one sees present day actors playing a serious part, they are always slapping their scabbards at each other, sticking their noses in each other’s face, confronting each other with sword-drawing postures; this is not the sort of thing a samurai would do. When writing speeches the same considerations should be borne in mind. Can one call this sort of thing serious acting? 103

Tôjûrô believed that leading male actors should act as naturally as possible. One should not impersonate a samurai with extravagant or inaccurate gesticulation. At the same time, speeches should also be written with regard to character.

On the same subject, Hanzaemon was reported to say:

puppeteers who tried to make actions as realistic as possible. This is not persuasive because the puppets being referred to were one-person puppets. The three-person puppets on stage today were first introduced on stage in the mid eighteenth century. 103 Dunn and Torigoe, 72.
It did not amount to praise to have it said that one is good in serious parts. Since it is only a matter of saying what is written in the play, even a novice does not make too much of a fool of himself. That a skillful actor can do it goes without saying. What everyone is unable to do is the comic part. Naturally enough, one can cause laughter by saying some preposterous thing like "taking off an ear to blow your nose with" but there is no actor like Tôjûrô for saying something serious and making people laugh at it. ¹⁰⁴

Tôjûrô was successful at making people laugh, but his humor came from portraying his character. In The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple, audiences thought Tôjûrô was hilarious when his character stood a sake flask on its head and pretended it was a courtesan.

Though the nimai me was expected to be humorous like a dokeyaku (often referred to as a sanmaime), a skillful nimai me would take a serious line, and make an audience laugh with the delivery. Tôjûrô believed it was the job of the dokeyaku to provide broad, physical comedy. Saying

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
something out of character was not considered part of the nimaime's skill.

Hanzaemon did not always perform with the earnestness of Tōjūrō. He was known for breaking out of character and joking about himself or a situation in the plays. He often told off-color jokes.105 Kichizaemon claimed that Tōjūrō was reluctant to use vulgar expressions in his performances, and instead would allude to it through metaphor or insinuation. Hanzaemon, on the other hand, was known for being graphic in his speech.106

Though Tōjūrō and Hanzaemon had different approaches to acting, audiences considered both actors to be the top in their field. Tōjūrō was compared to the delicate taste of Asakusa seaweed (nori), and Hanzaemon was compared to a tasty, filling bean cake (manju) roasted over pieces of cedar.107

Tōjūrō devoted himself to his craft both on and off the stage:

He was a man who did not consider anything as of no importance. In a street to the south of the crossing of the Fourth Avenue and Kawara Street there was a

106 Dunn and Torigoe, 238.
107 Ibid.
long-established tofu shop. One day he noticed that inside this shop they were preparing tofu, and he stood at the entrance without going in and sitting down. He asked searching questions to inquire information about the process of preparing tofu for eating, and then he left expressing his admiration.\textsuperscript{108}

Incidents such as the one above provided Tōjūrō with a reputation for meticulous detail. Tōjūrō strove to achieve accuracy in acting whenever possible. No job or event was too menial to be studied. Tōjūrō knew at some point in his career, he might be asked to portray a tofu seller and his knowledge of the trade might aid his portrayal of the character. His many roles included a stuttering man, a monkey-trainer, the legendary warrior Soga Jūrō, Izaemon, and several Izaemon-like characters.

At the same time, Tōjūrō believed that “playing a beggar accurately even to his facial appearance is not good. It is unpleasant to have to look at such a sight and not entertaining at all.”\textsuperscript{109} Though Tōjūrō strove for realism in acting, it was a heightened realism. Tōjūrō strived for authenticity in his roles, and he was also

\textsuperscript{108} Dunn and Torigoe, 129.
\textsuperscript{109} Dunn and Torigoe, 128-129.
aware of the importance of keeping the audience’s attention.\textsuperscript{110}

Tōjūrō’s Contribution to Yatsushi Acting

Chapter three details the significance of the yatsushi scene and its importance in the keiseikai play. In the early Genroku era, not all keiseikai plays followed the formula described. Many keiseikai plays consisted of a lovers’ quarrel and a love scene. Tōjūrō’s yatsushi acting became a regular feature in the keiseikai play during.

All tachiyaku actors were expected to perform yatsushi. Sanemon gained notoriety in a yatsushi performance as a tobacco seller because he was the actor who first performed in a paper kimono. Hanzaemon was also praised for his yatsushi scenes. In the Collection of Kabuki Critiques, the entry for Hanzaemon begins, “Yamashita’s [Hanzaemon] realistic acting (jitsugoto) is first class, as is his yatsushi.”\textsuperscript{111} He often played a

\textsuperscript{110}This is similar to Zeami Motokiyo’s advice to actors who play working class characters such as salt briners in nō. Zeami said if noble men saw such things, “they will merely find them vulgar, and the performance will hold no attraction to them.” Rimer, J. Thomas and Yamazaki, Masakazu, Translators., On the Art of Nō Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1984), 10.

\textsuperscript{111}Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei, vol.1, 316.
samurai who lost his status and was redeemed at the end of the play.

Hanzaemon's *yatsushi* scenes were considered realistic acting. Hanzaemon's and Jinbei's *yatsushi* scenes were not followed by a scene in the brothel as often as Tōjūrō's. Tōjūrō was considered to be Sanemon's permanent successor: he inherited both the reputation for performing *yatsushi* and the paper kimono that Sanemon wore to signify the banishment from society.

Tōjūro's first documented *yatsushi* scene was the one that elevated him to celebrity status as Izaemon in *Yūgiri's Last New Year* in 1678. The scene had both a *yatsushi* sequence and a lovers' quarrel. The *yatsushi* scene of a young man, suddenly poor, sneaking into a brothel to see his lover, and the ensuing love scene would become the standard audiences would come to expect from Tōjūrō and all other Kamigata actors performing *keiseikai*. The drawings in the *e-irikyōgen bon* for both *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain* and *The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple* show a character in a kimono and wearing a straw rain hat pulled down low over his face. This was Tōjūrō's typical *yatsushi* costume. (See Illustration VI, p. 121.)
Though Tōjūrō became known primarily for his young lover characters who were trying to enter the brothel, he sometimes played characters similar to Hanzaemon’s, men who had suffered personal hardship and were not romanticized. In 1698, he played the role of a samurai’s retainer who works on a farm out of necessity. In another play, he assumed the role of a monkey trainer and did not wear his trademark paper kimono.

Until Tōjūrō began performing keiseikai plays, the yatsushi was a distinct performance element that could be used interchangeably in a number of scenes. A character could be disinherited, wear shabby clothes, and not be affiliated with a prostitute or brothel. As Tōjūrō’s fame grew, the majority of his yatsushi characters were young romantic men dressed in a straw hat and paper kimono. As a result of Tōjūrō’s tenaciousness and audience expectations the yatsushi scene became permanently affiliated with the keiseikai scene.

Tōjūrō was an expert at making audiences feel sympathy for his suffering, even though he looked romantic and serene in his paper kimono and rain hat or

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113 Takano, Engeki-shi Kenkyū, 371.
cloth covering his head. The Collection of Kabuki Critiques praised Tōjūrō’s “yatsushi” in 1700. Tōjūrō was known as a specialist of disguised young lover roles (yatsushi meijin). The Collection of Kabuki Critiques named him a master of the style in 1702.

Of the keiseikai scene, Tōjūrō once said:

Some people [audiences] even object to plays including visits to keisei, being performed on stage, but I cannot see how they can be avoided...speeches which might bring forth objections have been gradually getting more frequent and recently there have been not a few plays in which people have gone to bed together on the stage. Writers who make up plots such as this ignore the teachings of men of old. And those actors who accept all that the authors write, no matter what it is, and perform it, are guilty of the same crime.

This idea is significant because Tōjūrō’s popularity was built on his ability to perform keiseikai scenes. He is referring to the deterioration of acting standards.

115 Takano, Engeki-shi Kenkyū, 371.
117 Dunn and Torigoe, 136.
This comment infers that Tōjūrō imposed strict standards on what he was willing to do and say on stage. Yet, in the play *The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain* there are two instances in which Tōjūrō appears to be beneath the covers about to engage in acts of intimacy, each with a different woman. Tōjūrō's words appear to be at odds with his actions.

It is important to remember that the *keiseikai* originated as a bawdy, lewd play. Although plots and characters were more elaborate in the Genroku era than in early *Okuni kabuki* and *wakashu kabuki*, the *wagoto* actor still depended on sexual innuendo in his performances. Tōjūrō complained about the deterioration of acting yet the scenes with a sexual nature were what the audiences enjoyed.
Illustration VI
Sakata Tōjūrō Dressed for a Yatsushi Scene

Dunn and Torigoe, 304.
Illustration VII

Kaneko Kichizaemon Dressed for a Comic Acting Role

Dunn and Torigoe, 179.

122
Tōjūrō's Verbal Acting

Tōjūrō sustained his popularity through the strength of his verbal skills including adlibbing, speech, verbal and physical humor, and stationary acting (ikyōgen). In this section, I will discuss each of the elements of Tōjūrō's verbal acting style.

Genroku kabuki followed Okuni kabuki by fifty years, yet the language of nō, kyōgen, waka poetry, and ballad storytelling (kojoruri), permeated kabuki speech. Many actors and audience members were familiar with the language being spoken on stage. Using the poetic language of the Heian era was similar to using Shakespeare or Edwardian phrases in modern-day English conversation. Those actors who were skilled with language had little difficulty acting onstage with Tōjūrō, but for those who were not as literate, or as comfortable on stage, it created tension in the theatre. Many audience members found Tōjūrō too loquacious for their taste.¹¹⁸

Tōjūrō was not the only actor who incorporated poetry and poetic references in his lines. Other actors, including Sakurayama Shozemon and Kataoka Nizaemon, studied poetry like Tōjūrō to help them improve their

vocabularies.\textsuperscript{119} Tōjūrō chose not to go the way of his contemporaries. He elevated speaking to an art form and excelled at plays where he could demonstrate character through long speeches.

Tōjūrō was not an easy actor to perform on stage with. In the \textit{Collection of Kabuki Critiques}, Tōjūrō receives mixed praise. “You could easily hear the clarity of his voice.” The critique continues that Tōjūrō uses many old words in his \textit{yatsushi} scenes, and his language was difficult to understand. “It is a nuisance for his fellow actors.”\textsuperscript{120}

\textbf{Ad-libbing}

Tōjūrō was notorious for his ad-libbing. One of Tōjūrō’s great skills was finding the balance between making a character believable and finding the character’s sense of

\textsuperscript{119} Dunn and Torigoe, 117. There are two anecdotes in “Sequel to Dust in the Ears” that illustrate actors studying poetry. Item XVIII: Sakurayama Shōzaemon learned by heart over three thousand old poems, because, he said, if you knew many old poems. It was very useful when you were composing words. For this reason, he was very skillful at writing speeches and other actors used his services to a considerable extent. His \textit{haiyō} was Ozan, “Warbler Mountain.” Item XIX: Kataoka Nizaemon recommended that actors learn how to write \textit{haikai}, for it was this above all that would help their art and be useful in all sorts of connections, be it the gods, Buddha, or love, and would ensure that they were not ignorant either in their thoughts or actions.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Kabuki Hyōbanki Shûsei}, vol. 1, 417.
play. Complex language and long speeches were one avenue Tôjûrô followed to make his acting realistic and funny.

In early kabukî, before formal scripts were written down, actors were free to ad-lib, often changing the script from night to night. In The Actor’s Analects, Kichizaemon recalled a scene in one of Tôjûrô’s plays that was not working. Kichizaemon, was joint author of the play with Chikamatsu, and he wanted to cut the scene. Instead, Tôjûrô said that he would be able to fix the problem. Kichizaemon was astonished when he went to see the play again and realized Tôjûrô had changed the scene. Kichizaemon recounts his viewing of the performance and his discussion with Tôjûrô:

The various ways in which he [Tôjûrô] tried unobtrusively to waste time were very comic and done with many actions. On the opening day, the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the audiences were bored with this by-play, and there were shouts of "Get on with it," "Pack it in," and this act finished in confusion. However, when the performance came to an end, I went to express my thanks to Tôjûrô and said, "In that comic bit you do, Chikamatsu and I wrote the words between us, but the audience does not
understand it. There's nothing else for it, but for you to cut out half the lines." On the sixteenth I went to see him play again. There were many more people in the audience than I had expected and they were greatly amused by the comic passage. There were many shouts of, "Tôjûrô, keep it going, don't stop yet." . . . I said, "What a difference from yesterday! After all, you added more words, and spun it out even more, and yet they wanted more . . . it is very difficult to find out what they [the audience] wants." "No, you must not blame the audience. It was because they realized that it was Tôjûrô who was trying to be funny. The action brings in various devices to prolong the interview so that Bunzô can discover exactly what Ôshû is really feeling. I finally got round to thinking that the correct thing was to act the play in this spirit, and today, when I played the part with the amount of dialogue increased, the audience, just as I had hoped, shouted, "Longer, longer; and applauded..." From this statement one can surmise that generally, when Tôjûrô was "on" or performing well, he could gauge

121 Dunn and Torigoe, 81-83.
his audience and play accordingly. Secondly, it tells us that major actors had the freedom to manipulate their lines as they pleased. Tōjūrō was skillful at manipulating his dialogue and tailoring it to fit either his mood or the audience.

Dialogue and Physical Comedy

Part of Tōjūrō’s success was built on his skill at blending dialogue and physical comedy. As stated previously, Tōjūrō had an aversion to broad physical comedy that was designed just to earn a laugh. Tōjūrō was a master at making his audience laugh without stepping beyond the bounds of his character.

One of Tōjūrō’s most famous comic scenes involves very little speaking and some simple, but carefully choreographed movements. In Act II, of The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain, Bunzō enters a daimyo’s garden wearing a rain hat and carrying a short sword. He is on his way to Gesō Temple:

He hears the sound of a shamisen and a kouta song drifts along the breeze. He recognizes the melody as his lover, Ōshū’s, from Mikuni Brothel. Bunzō decides to rest and listen to the music. He sits down. Just at that moment, one of the ladies-in-waiting emerges from the mansion, carrying a small wooden stand for an offering.
She places the kagami mochi, special mochi for the moon festival, on the stand, and goes back inside the mansion.

Bunzö: Ah! An offering of mochi for the moon. I think I'll help myself! (He takes the mochi just as the lady-in-waiting reemerges with a flask of sake in her hand.) The lady-in-waiting looks at the stand and notices the mochi is missing.)

Lady: How strange! I’ll leave the stand on the water basin. (She puts the bottle of sake on the water basin and begins to look for the mochi. She spies Bunzö’s head in the dark and mistakes it for the water basin. She sets the mochi stand on Bunzö’s head and puts the bottle of sake on top. Bunzö is happy to discover the wooden stand on his head. He reaches up, takes the bottle and begins to drink the sake.)

Bunzö: Ah! That’s good!

(Tsubone comes out to call the lady-in-waiting. She decides to use the water basin.)

Tsubone: I’d like to wash my hands.

Lady: Certainly. But let me remove the mochi stand from the basin first. (She tries to pick up the mochi stand, and Bunzö’s head moves from side to side in the stand.) Oh, there’s no water.

Tsubone: It’s cold. The water must be frozen. We’ll crack it. (She leaves and comes back with a small mallet to break the ice.) Here. We’ll just break the ice with this. (She raises the mallet)
Bunzō: Hey! What are you doing? *(He sees the raised mallet, quickly removes the wooden stand from his head and runs away.)*

Lady: What was that? *(She looks off after him in the distance.)*

Tōjūrō speaks very little in this scene, but the image of Bunzō dressed in a paper kimono, with a wooden stand on his head and a sake flask in his mouth resonated with audiences.122 *(See Illustration VIII, page 130.)* The scene is immediately followed with one of Tōjūrō's long monologues lamenting his yatsushi status and his love for two women.

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122 Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Keisei Hotoke no Hara, 276-277.
Illustration VIII
Bunzō Obliviously Sits in the Garden Sipping Sake, with the Mochi Stand on his Head

Chikamatsu, Keisei Hotoke no Hara, 281.
The following year, Tōjūrō performed another comic scene centering on sake. Dialogue accompanied by movement made the scene successful. In the play, *The Courtesan and the Great Statute of Buddha at Mibu*, Tōjūrō manipulates a sake bottle like a doll and through a series of allusions to the brothel district, indicates the doll is a courtesan. Tōjūrō plays the character Takatō Tamiya in a *yatsushi* disguise as a sake lees peddler. (Lees were the dregs of sake, and were often used in cooking.)

Tamiya spent too much time squandering family money in the pleasure quarters and has been thrown out of his household. He is dressed in shabby clothes and carries a pole across his shoulders, with a basket attached to each end. In Act I, Tamiya approaches the house of Princess Katsu, his fiancée, who he has not yet met:

*Tamiya approaches the door of the mansion, weaving unsteadily due to drinking too much sake. He wears an old straw hat (amegasa) and a tired kimono falling off his shoulders."

Tamiya: Sake lees. Excuse me, Miss, do you want any lees? (He continues to weave. He stands before a mansion, and hears the sound of the three stringed shamisen and singing (kouta.)

Tamiya: Will you buy the dregs of a song? Will you buy the dregs of a Princess’ perfume? (He
continues to stagger about. Shintaro's younger sister comes to the gate and opens it. She stumbles over a rope.)

Tamiya: I caught one. I caught one. I caught a mountain. (He helps her regain her balance and she goes back inside the mansion. Princess Katsu accompanied by several ladies-in-waiting come outside.)

Princess Katsu: Why do we see so many drunks around here? (Princess Katsu examines Tamiya who removes his straw hat. Tamiya pulls out a sake flask from one of his baskets and addresses it.)

Tamiya: It's a courtesan. It's a courtesan. If the illustrious courtesan feels sick to her stomach, just drink this. (Tamiya fills a rice bowl with sake and drinks it all.)

Tamiya: Madam Courtesan, you have just drunk eighty percent of a bowl of sake. (He turns the bottle over and with his hand, makes the bottle appear to walk.)

Tamiya: Well! A courtesan procession! (He imitates the walk of a courtesan with the bottle.) It's the provocative walk of the courtesan. We're entering the brothel. We'll, let's spread out the futon. (He puts down his hat and lays the flask inside.)

Well, well, the courtesan just went down. Go to sleep. (Tamiya holds the bottle and lies down. He strokes the bottle.) Madam Courtesan, you're ears are so long. Isn't that interesting? There is a hole in the bottom. It must be the
same hole as always. (Tamiya holds the bottle and falls asleep, completely inebriated.)

This simple scene was very popular with audiences. Tōjūrō continued to play a drunken sake peddler, imitating a courtesan with a sake bottle in two sequels to the original play. It was Tōjūrō's delivery of several lengthy monologues within the play as well as his shabby costume that made the play a success.

In The Courtesan of the Sagano Plain (1701), Tōjūrō played a monkey trainer and was praised highly for his comic lovers' quarrel with his monkey. As these examples indicate, much of the humor in Tōjūrō's plays came from both verbal humor and sight gags. Tōjūrō's speaking the lines was humorous, he performed in the style of the nimaime and did not resort to wielding swords, or saying lines out of character to get a laugh. As mentioned earlier, these plays are clear examples of the view that Tōjūrō displayed the heart of a comic actor (sanmaime) while performing as a nimaime actor.

Tōjūrō and the Ikyōgen

As established earlier, Tōjūrō's skills were stationary, he did not perform active movement plays

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123 Chikamatsu, Keisei Mibu Dainenbutsu, 102-103.
(hataraki kyōgen) in the style of his contemporaries. Tôjûrô was a master of wordplay, and during the time he worked with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon, speeches for his characters became more elaborate. We especially find humor and pillow words (makura kotoba) in his long monologues. By 1701, these speeches were given the name, ikyôgen or stationary plays.\(^{125}\)

It is important to note that Danjûrô also performed long monologues known as tsurane in Edo. This term was based on long speeches, usually performed on the 7-3 point of the hanamichi. An example of tsurane performed on stage today is the speech by Gongorô in Shibaraku. A modern comparison to an ikyôgen play is rakugo, a storytelling art. The seated actor/storyteller uses props, fans, and gestures to tell a story, but no stage movements. The focus of an audiences' attention is the story itself.

Most of the speeches in Tôjûrô's ikyôgen were incorporated into fully developed scenes of the play. A stationary play featured a very long monologue, or a series of long monologues. Kawatake claims one speech in

\(^{125}\) Torigoe, 315.
this style was six or seven minutes long. Several plays featuring *ikyōgen* are extant. *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain, The Courtesan and the Great Service at Mibu Temple, "The Stutterer Domori" from *Today’s Nō Kyōgen* and *Mizuki Tatsunosuke’s Grace* are all plays considered to be representative of the *ikyōgen*.127

Bunjō’s monologue to no one in particular after hiding under the sake stand in *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain* is a stellar example of Tōjūrō’s *ikyōgen* style. One of the remaining scripts of *The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain* has Bunzō reciting a speech of three hundred and fifty characters. Torigoe states that a different version of the same play contains a speech delivered by Bunzō with three thousand characters.128

Tōjūrō’s reputation as a “stationary actor” grew after the *Courtesan and the Buddha Plain*. In 1701, he took part in a performance of five short plays, *Today’s Nō and Kyōgen*. The play featured adaptations of five *nō* and *kyōgen* plays: *Senjimono, Chidori, Hanako, Domori*, and *Tsuri Kitsune* featuring the actors Yamatoya Tokichi, Tazaki Hanbei, Mizuki Tatsunosuke, Sakata Tōjūrō, and

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126 Kawatake, 333.
127 Torigoe, 313.
128 Torigoe, 312-313.
Yamatoya Jinbei. Tōjūrō starred in Domori, a play about a stuttering man. Of the five plays, four are hataraki plays that involve large movements. Only Tōjūrō's performance was a stationary play.

Tōjūrō received strong reviews for his performance. In The Actor's Analect's, Kichizaemon recalls that playing the part of a stutterer was a new challenge for Tōjūrō. It took a few days of performance before he could convincingly master the art of playing someone with a stutter.\(^{129}\) When Tōjūrō performed his ikyōgen speeches, actor Otowa Jirōsaburō said:

Sakata Tojuruo had a habit when speaking his lines of repeating phrases in the following way: How charming, how charming. It is I, it is I.\(^{130}\)

This was to make himself clearly heard at times when he was performing for a large audience and he also relied upon the rhythm of the utterance. Depending on what was being said, the words could sound quite funny, but in addition to the humor of repetition, rhythm was very important.

\(^{129}\) Dunn and Torigoe, 91-92.
\(^{130}\) Dunn and Torigoe, 110.
In contemporary kabuki, scenes of dialogue and movement are both underscored by off-stage nagauta music. However, nagauta music was not a prominent part of kabuki until the early eighteenth century. Nakamura Ganjirō III, who has researched early kabuki, states that during Tōjūrō's time, kouta, and place songs (jiuta) were incorporated into performance, but not as a consistent part. He suggests that actors spoke in a rhythm similar to that of kyōgen or kojōruri.131

Tōjūrō's Extravagant Lifestyle

As Tōjūrō grew as an actor, his personal life began to resemble the young, high-living young master character audiences loved to see him play. One account in The Actor's Analects describes Tōjūrō when he was performing in Osaka. He had water carried to him in barrels from Kyoto, and every grain of his rice inspected. He defended his actions by saying that he ordered the water from Kyoto because he had been drinking Kyoto water all his life. If Osaka water did not agree with him and he suddenly became ill, he would be doing a disservice to his manager.

131 Kominz, "Kabuki's "Lost" Masterpiece," 70.
He claimed that if he did not have his rice inspected grain by grain and he damaged his teeth by biting into a stone, he would not be able to enunciate his words properly on stage.\textsuperscript{132} For Tôjûrô, whose reputation was based on speaking, his justification for inspecting the rice seems valid.

Tôjûrô was equally considerate to his fellow actors when entertaining in his own home. The \textit{Actors' Analects} mentions that Tôjûrô would often have actors over to his home in the morning to rehearsal and discuss the play.

Every day he used to look after the onnagata playing opposite to him and would have him accompanied home afterwards. Every day during these rehearsals, he had dishes served according to the taste of each in a way that would have made them easily eaten by a real woman, and the way in which he treated the onnagata was such that he talked to them and so on as if they were real women. He showed them great kindness and courtesy.\textsuperscript{133}

Tôjûrô treated the onnagata he was acting with as if they were women, exercising his penchant for realistic

\textsuperscript{132} Dunn and Torigoe, 126.
\textsuperscript{133} Dunn and Torigoe, 125
acting both on and off the stage. Many onnagata lived their public lives as women and played a feminine role with their fellow actors. Yoshizawa Ayame relates a similar rule of choosing not to eat foods that were seemingly unladylike or would make noise in front of a leading actor. Doing so, he claimed, would draw attention to one’s more masculine attributes.\textsuperscript{134}

These stories about Tōjūrō reveal that he took his art seriously both on and off the stage. He was not unlike the young master character he played by insisting on the finest quality money could buy. In order to perform to the best of his ability, he chose foods and a lifestyle he felt would keep him healthy. In this regard, Tōjūrō treated his contemporaries in the same way. He did his best to ensure they were comfortable with him as a person and an actor. He chose not to compromise his lifestyle.

Conclusion

Tōjūrō came to acting relatively late in life, but used the words of his nō drum teacher as a life lesson. Tōjūrō was not as skilled as others in standard tachiyaku acting, but he gained notice for his keiseikai scenes. He

\textsuperscript{134}Dunn and Torigoe, 51.
played to his "weakness" and developed expertise in scenes that allowed him to perform a softer acting style. His collaborations with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon brought him the best material and performances of his career.

He was highly skilled in comedy, *yatsushi*, and speaking. His greatest skill was his long speeches that included ad-libbing, literary allusions and contemporary references. His willingness to observe and learn from others such as Nakamura Shichisaburō enhanced his own acting. Finally, he stayed true to himself on and off the stage.
CHAPTER V

NAKAMURA SHICHISABURÔ: WAGOTO'S CREATIVE REVOLUTIONARY

Sakata TÔjûrô is considered to be the greatest innovator of and contributor to early wagoto kabuki. Yet there is another wagoto actor, not so often credited, who also left an indelible mark on wagoto kabuki. Nakamura Shichisaburô, a colleague and rival of both Sakata TÔjûrô in Kyoto and Ichikawa Danjûrô I in Edo, is perhaps the only actor of the Genroku era to have bridged the regional biases of performance that existed (and still exist) between Kyoto and Edo, competing for and winning the public’s affection in those two great cities.

While TÔjûrô was performing his own style of theatre to great acclaim in Kyoto (and Osaka), Shichisaburô was creating a similar style of acting in Edo. In addition to TÔjûrô, it was Shichisaburô’s contributions to wagoto kabuki that changed the standard of the nimamae,

135 This chapter is an earlier version of a published article titled “The Creation of Edo-style Wagoto” in Samuel L. Leiter, ed., A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002, 60-75. I would like to acknowledge Samuel L. Leiter for his editorial suggestions and Rokuo Tanaka for his assistance with some Japanese texts.
influencing both Tōjūrō and Danjūrō I and propelling the wagoto genre forward.

Shichisaburō’s Early Years

Shichisaburō was born into a kabuki family in 1662 and grew up in the theatre, unlike Tōjūrō, who did not begin to perform on stage until his early thirties. Shichisaburō’s father was the tachiyaku actor Amatsu Shichirōemon (dates unknown), and Shichisaburō married the eldest daughter of the famous actor and troupe owner Nakamura Kanzaburō II (1647-1675). Shichisaburō became a student of Kanzaburō II, and performed under the surname Nakamura for his entire career on stage.¹³⁶

At a young age, Shichisaburō made his acting debut as a wakashu actor, and in his late teens became a waka onnagata playing roles of daughters and young women (musume). The Collection of Kabuki Critiques described him as “superior,” and said he had “too much erotic appeal to be playing a young woman.” The review predicted that he would make a name for himself as he grew older.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Kawatake, Nihon Engeki Zenshi, 362.
¹³⁷ Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei, vol. 1, 192.
Creative Decisions

In 1682, Shichisaburō made a creative decision that would change his life and alter the path of kabuki permanently. In the second month of 1682, Shichisaburō played the role of Soga Jūrō in the play The Five Women of Lusty Kamakura (Kōshoku Kamakura Gonin Onna). Soga Jūrō and Soga Gorō were two twelfth-century warriors of legendary proportions that Edo audiences loved to see onstage. Although the situations featuring the two characters varied according to the play being presented, the characters of Jūrō and Gorō were constant from play to play. Both brothers were considered "sons of Edo" and older brother Jūrō and younger brother Gorō were typically played in the strong aragoto style.

In this particular performance, however, Shichisaburō decided to play the older brother, Jūrō, in the wagoto, or soft and more natural style. He was paired with Ichikawa Danjūrō I, who played Jūrō's younger brother Gorō. For the New Year's performance of 1676, he and Danjūrō played the Soga brothers in the "Confrontation" scene of Soga's Two Shrines of Honor

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138 Ihara, Kabuki Nempyō, vol. 1, 144.
139 Shichisaburō had played Jūrō in 1676, but in the old aragoto style.
(Soga Ryōsha no Tamono) at the Kanzaburō Theatre. His characterization was popular with audiences and Shichisaburō was written up in the Record of Edo Plays:

Until now, the Soga Brothers have both been played in the strong aragoto style. This time, Nakamura Shichisaburō with a genpuku hairstyle played Jūrō in a gentle way that was excellently performed. From that time forward, Jūrō has been played in the wagoto style.

After the 1682 production of The Five Women of Lusty Kamakura, whenever Shichisaburō played Soga Jūrō, he portrayed the elder brother in the soft wagoto style. Other actors have adopted and continued the tradition, and when a Soga play is presented on the kabuki stage today, three hundred years later, elder brother Jūrō continues to be played in the wagoto style.

Wagoto became Shichisaburō’s trademark style of acting. He was reputed to have been so handsome he was nicknamed “Today’s Narihira” after the famous Heian period poet Ariwara no Narihira (825-860), the object of desire in many pieces of literature and theatre. Though

140 Ihara, Kabuki Nempyo, vol. 1, 126.
141 This quote first appeared in Edo Shibai Nendaiki. It appears in Kawatake, 362.
142 Kawatake, 362.
143 Shinmura, Izuru. Kōjien, 90.
short in physical stature, Shichisaburō was an uncommonly beautiful-looking man, with cool clear eyes, charm, and an aura of elegance about him. With his natural acting style and his skills in dance, it was said that he was innately suited to be a nimaime actor.\textsuperscript{144}

In 1686, he was featured in the dance piece \textit{Tanzen Figure Mirror (Tanzen Sugata Kagami)}, where he won acclaim for his \textit{Tanzen odori}, an exaggeratedly masculine type of dance. The play was a great success with audiences, and this performance elevated his status.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{144} Kawatake, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Ihara, \textit{Kabuki Nempyō}, vol.1, 157.
Illustration IX

Nakamura Shichisaburō as a Samurai

From Dunn and Torigoe, 184.
Shichisaburō Performs in Kyoto

In the autumn of his thirty-fifth year, Shichisaburō was invited to perform with Yamashita Hanzaemon's theatre company in Kyoto. Despite his earlier success in Edo, his Kyoto career got off to a rocky start. In his Kyoto kaomise debut of 1698, he performed in The Wife's Letter and Lucky Direction to Kyoto in the Bride's Letter (Kyoto Miyako no Edō Yome Iribunshō), and it was considered a dismal failure. At the nearby Mandayu Theatre, Mizuki Tatsunosuke had recently returned from his trip to Edo and was performing with Tōjūrō. The dance play at the Madayu Theatre, Seven Spirits (Nanabake), written by Chikamatsu and first performed in Edo, was a big hit in Kyoto. By comparison, Shichisaburō, performing with Hanzaemon, received poor reviews and small audiences.¹⁴⁶ He earned the nickname "Shichisa the Boar" or "Shichisa buta" because his performance was supposedly so bad.¹⁴⁷

The following year, for the New Year performances, Nakamura Shichisaburō reprised the role of Koroku in one of his popular Edo plays, Today's Figure of Kantō's Koroku (Kantō Koroku Imayō Sugata), which featured the famous onnagata Yoshizawa Ayame in the role of the

¹⁴⁶ Torigoe, 333.
¹⁴⁷ Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei, vol. 4, 556.
sister, Kane no Mae. Shichisaburō reportedly brought in audiences of only two or three hundred. "Koroku is a hovering blowfly" was included in one review.\textsuperscript{148} There was also a kyōka poem making the rounds about Shichisaburō:

"Hanzaemon wanted to see Shichisaburō's beautiful eyelashes, so he went round to view the rear legs of the horse."\textsuperscript{149} In the kabuki theatre, a minor actor played the hind legs of a two man "horse." The poem thus poked fun at Shichisaburō, suggesting that he was no better than a horse's ass. Meanwhile, at the Mandayu Theatre, Tatsunosuke continued to draw large crowds with his play, \textit{Ode to the Women's Pleasure Quarters (Onnayuriwaka)}. While local audiences were not impressed with Shichisaburō, Tōjūrō saw a performance and recognized an outstanding performer:

What stupidity! Kyoto audiences are thoroughly ignorant! Above all, Shichisaburō is one of the greatest actors of recent times: at the moment there is not one single one who stands higher than he does. If we exert ourselves, our art will be a little better during the year because he has come to Kyoto. Because we have done better than he has in

\textsuperscript{148} Ihara, \textit{Kabuki Nempyō}, vol. 1, 212.
\textsuperscript{149} This quotation appears in Japanese in Torigoe, 333. I have used Laurence R. Kominz's English translation from \textit{The Stars Who Created Kabuki, Their Lives, Loves, and Legacies}, 136.
the kaomise, he will be a far tougher opponent in the second program.\textsuperscript{150}

Tôjûrô's prediction proved correct. On the twenty-second day of the first month of 1698, Hanzaemon's company performed the play \textit{The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama}, starring Shichisaburô as the wagoto character, Tomoenôjô. The play featured four well-respected actors in prominent roles. In addition to Shichisaburô as Tomoenôjô, the troupe leader, Hanzaemon, played the loyal retainer Wataemon; revered onnagata actor Yoshizawa Ayame played Courtesan Miura; and Iwai Sagenta was Courtesan Ôshû. The play's overwhelming popularity left Tôjûrô and rival Mandayu Theatre scrambling unsuccessfully to pull in audiences.\textsuperscript{151}

Much of the success of this oiesôdô mono, or feudal house play, was due to its intriguing plot. This play was staged to coincide with a kaichô, the unveiling of the Buddhist icon Shinshû Asama Myôjin from Higashi mountain in Kyoto.\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{150} Dunn and Torigoe, 133-135.
\textsuperscript{152} "Keisei Asagamatake" in \textit{Genroku Kabuki Meisaku Kenkyû}, 413-415.
The play begins at the House of Suwa in Kyoto's Higashi mountain district. The widow of the deceased lord has succeeded her husband as the head of the household, but she is not the rightful heir. As the play opens, the deceased lord's son, Tonegorō, is enamored with the courtesan Miura, but has bound her up with rope because she refuses to give in to his desires. The lord's faithful retainer, Wataemon, enters the residence and hears Tonegorō's accusations.

Unbeknownst to Tonegorō, Miura and Wataemon are in love and have a daughter together. Wataemon is working to ransom Miura from her brothel contract. He overhears Tonegorō's plot to usurp the family residence and murder Princess Otowa no Mae, the legal heir to the residence. He rescues Miura, and the two flee the residence.

Kozasa Tomoenojō, Otowa no Mae's fiancé, has broken their engagement because he is in love with the courtesan Ôshū. He has brought disgrace on his family and has been disinherited. Cut off from family support, he takes a job as a palanquin bearer, using the name Shichibei, and works to carry tourists up Mt. Asama to see the kaichō. Wataemon also becomes a palanquin bearer, going by the name of Sakubei, and the two become friends.
One day, a child attendant to a courtesan (kamuró) comes to ascend the mountain to the kaichō. After talking to Wataemon and Tomoenojō, she sings a song. Otowa no Mae, in a palanquin herself, overhears the song and is touched by its beauty. Otowa no Mae is unaware that the nearby palanquin bearer Shichibei, is actually Tomoenojō, her fallen fiancé.

The courtesan's procession makes its way up the mountain. The kamuro holds a kimono of the courtesan she serves. The kimono has the same crest as Tomoenojō's love, Ōshū. She is, in fact, Ōshū's kamuro. Suddenly, Otowa no Mae realizes that Shichibei is actually her former fiancé, Tomoenojō, and reminds him of the pledge that they made to each other. Confronted by Otowa no Mae, he agrees and decides he no longer needs the pledge and amulet given to him by Ōshū.

In one of the most dynamic scenes in the play, Tomoenojō flings the amulet into a nearby brazier, where it immediately burns. Suddenly, a cloud of smoke rises from the brazier and the apparition of Ōshū appears. The apparition stands in the brazier, surrounded by flames, an expression of reproach on her face.
The princess, her attendant, and kamuro all see Ōshû: How frightening! They fall down into a deep sleep.

Tomoenojô: What is this? *(He looks behind him. When he sees Ōshû, he is beside himself with surprise. He reaches for his long sword.)* Who are you?

Ōshû *(A small song [kouta] narrates Ōshû’s thoughts while she moves in response to the words):* You ask me and I am pleased. You ask and I am shy. Your replace me scandously, and I stand by you. Darling sir, my true love. I want to give you all that’s in my heart.

Tomoenojô: Oh! Is that you Ōshû? What are you doing appearing around here?

Ōshû: My darling, I longed for you, yearned for you, to see you, to talk with you, that is why I came. *(This all seems like a dream to Tomoenjô.)* What a pitiful figure. *(He tries to take her in his arms, but she mysteriously disappears, though her costume remains. Tomoenjô stands in place looking at the spot where she has vanished, thoroughly amazed.)*

Ōshû *(The apparition appears again, as the song continues):* No resentment or love remains, I wonder if you have changed your heart? Why did you burn my vows of love? How spiteful. My heart blazes for you three times in the night, I long for you three times a day. Compare this smoke with Asama Mountain\(^\text{153}\) Go look closely at Asama Mountain. The evil demon of lust tortures me. I can see my love at the top of the mountain of swords. Joyfully, I try to climb the

\(^{153}\) Asama Mountain is actually a volcano.
mountain. My longing for you crushes my heart, how horrible it is. The figure of the flower gets weaker, weaker, weaker. I try to reach beyond, here I disappear. Like a misty moonlit night in spring, the apparition becomes vague, and slips away.

Tomoenojō (after Ōshū has disappeared): Well, that must be the pledge of a determined soul. (He rouses the three women.) Hey, - Hey. A woman must not be obsessive like that!

Princess Otowa no Mae: Listen, Listen. That courtesan had such a strong longing for you that her spirit came forth to speak with you. If she has such feelings, you should redeem her contract and let her serve you at your side.

Tomoenojō: If you feel that way, I will ransom her. But first, I must take care of this child. Then, let us go pay a visit to the Lady of the House of Suwa.

Everyone exits the stage.154

Watemon learns that Tomoenojō owes a small fortune to the brothel for entertaining Ōshū, and is trying to ransom her from her contract. Watamon decides to help his young master by selling his sword to raise money to pay for Tomoenojō’s debts, but villainous Nikaidō Hyōsuke steals the money received for the sword. Osan, Watamon and Miura’s thirteen-year-old daughter, is a witness to

154 “Keisei Asagamatake,” in Genroku Meisaku Kenkyū, 413-415.
the crime. When she questions Hyōsuke, he stabs her to death.

Tomoenojō, feeling responsible for Osan’s death, is devastated and vows to commit ritual suicide. He is dissuaded by Wataemon. Meanwhile, Miura has decided to work extra diligently at the brothel to relieve Tomoenojō of his debts.

Tomoenojō pays a visit to the brothel to see Miura and is dismayed to run into Ōshū, who is physically ill because of Tomoenojō’s long absence. Reluctantly, Tomoenojō enters the room to speak to Ōshū, who has already learned he is there to visit Miura. She is furious and throws a teacup full of medicine at him. They have a lovers’ quarrel, and throughout the scene, Tomoenojō uses phrases that have a double meaning. While he is arguing (or trying to avoid an argument) with Ōshū, nearly everything he says relates to a strategy in the game of go.155

In the final act of the play, Otowa no Mae, Ōshū, and Miura are going to the temple to pay their respects. They bring a few locks of Osan’s hair as an offering. They are surprised to see a young girl close to Osan in

155 Go is a game similar in appearance to checkers, but is closer in strategy to chess.
age and appearance. It is Osan, who has been saved by the prayers of Fugen Bosatsu. Tomoenojō and Otowa no Mae are married, and the House of Suwa is restored to its original glory.\textsuperscript{156}

Audiences loved the plot of \textit{The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama}, and Shichisaburō’s acting reaped great praise:

The last review [of Shichisaburō] stated ten of his virtues, but that was hardly adequate. If you observe his performance, there are ten thousand things to praise. This time, the beginning of the play was so outstanding, no comment is needed. The middle of the play was miraculous. When Ōshū appears in a cloud of smoke, it is completely unexpected. The acting is so wonderful that there are no words to describe it. He has an innate ability for dance. When he begins to play go, even since ancient times, there has not been a scene like this one. There has not been a lover’s quarrel scene like this before, and there are no words to praise it highly enough. He really put his heart into it. At the pivotal point, the spectators were nodding their heads in amazement.

Next was the scene where he professes his love for Miura. No one could see what might happen next.

\textsuperscript{156} Part of this synopsis for \textit{The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama} is from Tsuchiya Keiichirō's \textit{Genroku Haiyūden}, 80-87. Concise summaries are also available in English in Samuel L. Leiter's \textit{New Kabuki Encyclopedia}, 309-310, and in Japanese in \textit{Engeki Hyakka Daijiten}, vol.3, 362-363.
This man never speaks with long phrases, an advantage in the tachigoto acting style. He understands the heart of Kyoto style. This is a splendid actor.\textsuperscript{157}

The reference to speaking concisely was a direct reference to Tōjūrō. Many critics complained that Tōjūrō’s speeches were lengthy, laden with too many quotations from waka poetry. Shichisaburō’s dialogue was succinct and to the point. Yet, as evident in the “go” scene with Ôshû, Shichisaburō could be direct and still use double entendres.

\textit{The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama} featured all of the characteristics of a wagoto play that the Kyoto audiences loved. There was a typical down-on-his-luck Shichibei. After Ôshû emerged from the brazier, Ôshû and Tomoenojō performed dance movements and physical gestures during the song sequences.

Audiences were charmed by the lovers’ quarrel because of the unprecedented “go” scene that added a greater level to the play. During the lovers’ quarrel

\textsuperscript{157} This review appears handwritten on an illustration in Tatsuyuki and Kanzo’s \textit{Genroku Kabuki Kessakushū ge}, 393. It was transcribed into regular characters (katsuji) by Ikawa Mayuko.
between Tomoenojō and Ōshū, as the scene progresses, Tomoenojō addresses their relationship while speaking in game terminology:

(Ōshū is sleeping by herself on a futon as Tomoenojō enters.)

Tomoenojō (talking to himself): Miura, what are you bringing me here to this large room by myself? (He looks around the room.) Oh! It’s a sleeping courtesan. It looks like her guest has gone home. She must be worn out. (He realizes who it is.) Oh! That’s Ōshū. (He fumbles with her bedding, but she is oblivious to him and continues to sleep soundly.) Poor thing, she is thinner. It looks like her illness hasn’t gone away.

Ōshu (mumbling in her sleep to her child attendant): Mojino, please bring me some water.

Tomoenojō (hears her mumbling and looks around): If I mix some medicine in her medicine pot, she’ll probably drink it. (He pours the herb solution in a teacup, mixes it with water, and says a prayer to the Hotoke of Healing.) Please make her well, Physician of Souls. Amen. (As he holds out the teacup, Ōshū wakens and her eyes widen in surprise. Resentful and angry, she throws the teacup. The medicine flies through the air and the teacup shatters into pieces. She settles back down under the bedclothes.)

Tomoenojō: What was that? A lovers’ quarrel? Don’t do this. What a hassle! I don’t know my way around here very well, and I don’t have anything else to do. I
don’t really want to have an argument. Well, perhaps they’ll bring me a glass of sake. I’m lonesome and I want to amuse myself somehow. There was no need to do that to the teacup! Actually, these broken bits resemble go stones. I want to play a game of go. Courtesan, won’t you play with me?

Tomoenojō: It’s been so long since we’ve seen each other. If you are upset with me, it would be best to say something. Silence is no good. (He goes to her side and she gestures with her foot for him to get away.) This is no good either. (He tries to stick his face in the bedclothes and is struck in the eye by the angry Ōshu.) Oh! That hurts! My eye is on fire! You smashed my eye! I don’t care if you push me away, I’m going to play a game of go. Luckily my haori jacket, has a pattern like a go board. (He removes his haori jacket, which resembles a checkered go board on the back and lays it out across his knees. He begins to use the pieces of the broken teacup as the go board and sets up the pieces. A nō song is heard in the distance.) I didn’t even come here to see you, and you’ve gone and smashed my eye! While I was nearly blinded, you thought you’d kill me. Whatever you think of me, I’ve achieved what I came for\(^{158}\) and I won’t die. You’re a strong player and you can’t stand a poor player like me. Recently I’ve heard you have someone who plays better than me. You’ve been ill, and I’ve heard you have been calling him to the Izutsuya for over three hundred and sixty days to cure your illness. After hearing

\(^{158}\) He came to pay his debts at the brothel.
that, I asked you if our relationship was over and you agreed. But I kept you in good health, and when I stumbled upon you by accident today, you made a strong play. Even though you tried to kill me, I have a winning strategy. I won’t be beaten to death. I would like to play with you, but I don’t have a strong position on the board and I’ve already lost. At any rate, I’m going home now. See you later. (He stands up to leave, and Ōshu who has remained silent runs to him, trying to detain him by holding on to the back of his obi from behind.)

Ōshu: Here is the back gate, but if you have business, come around to the front.

Tomoenjō: What is it now? (He tries to pull away from her.) Are you propositioning me? There was a time when your own Nishi no Tōin 159 was the pleasure quarter, but it’s not trendy now.

Ōshu: Why are you being so rude? (She grabs hold of Tomoenjō’s leg and bites it.)

Tomoenjō: Ow! That hurt! Do you think my thigh is your pheasant dinner? If you’re hungry, go eat some tea on boiled rice. Biting was trendy a long time ago, now it’s old. If you want to say something, say it.

Ōshu: How long have you been keeping company with Miura?

Tomoenjō: At the most, maybe sixty days.

Ōshū: You’re not even hiding it! I have been physically sick because of you, and you’re off secretly meeting Miura.

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159 Nishi no Tōin was the name of a licensed brothel district that was no longer considered fashionable.
Tomoenojō: What? Oh that? Miura is a courtesan and she’s here because of you. Now you listen and listen well. I still owe two wan and eight hundred me at the brothel for meeting you. I came to pay some debts today, so I would be spared the humiliation of wearing the bucket in public. Miura is the wife of a loyal retainer. When this trouble came about, she agreed to work as a courtesan to help with my debts. Now, don’t you agree, you’re the reason for all of this? It’s the truth. You’d probably want the three of us to talk about this, but there is no need. You’ve heard it directly and there is nothing that can be done. Praise her, but don’t cry, crying is old. Do you have something to say?

(Ôshû listens but does not immediately respond.)

Ôshû: You don’t let me say anything. (She climbs back into the bedclothes.) Well, are you joining me?

Tomoenojō: Well, since you’re asking, that sounds good to me.

(The two become intimate in the bedding.)

(See Illustration X, p. 161.)
Illustration X

Tomoenojō from The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama
Plays Go on His Jacket

Tatsuyuki and Kanzo, Genroku Kabuki Kessakushū ge, 393.
The humor in the previous scene, as well as the plot and acting of the entire play, catapulted Shichisaburō into direct competition with Tōjūrō. In another review of the same period, the Collection of Kabuki Critiques said of Shichisaburō: "Though a small man, he fills the stage. He is an Edo actor, and his mannerisms are funny... His keiseikai are as well done as Tōjūrō's."160

Shichisaburō had to share acclaim for this exciting new play with four highly accomplished actors. Unlike many of the oiesodo mono that tended to highlight one leading character, giving everyone else a small role, this play featured several main characters and each character had a prominent role in the drama.

Following the play's great success, a new genre of plays known as Asama play (Asama mono) were created. The play had a great influence on both Chikamatsu and Tōjūrō. In the twelfth month of 1699, Tōjūrō had one of the highlights of his career playing Umenaga Bunzō in The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain. This oiremono also coincided with a kaichō on Hotoke no Hara mountain, in Higashiyama in Kyoto.

The same month that Tōjūrō was performing *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*, Shichisaburō performed with Hanzaemon's company in the play *The Courtesan and the Floral Raft (Keisei Hanaikada)*, where he played younger brother Monosuke to Hanzaemon's chief retainer. He was praised highly for his performance. Later, at the same theatre, he performed the role of Nagoya Sanza in the play of the same name about a samurai dandy, a role he originated in Edo.\(^{161}\)

Each time a new play was introduced, Tōjūrō would observe it and praise Shichisaburō highly. In turn, Shichisaburō went to see Tōjūrō's performances and praised him equally. While Shichisaburō was in Kyoto, he and Tōjūrō met several times and became friends, although they never performed on stage together.\(^{162}\)

**Shichisaburō Returns Home**

Shichisaburō performed with Yamashita Hanzaemon and his company for two years before he and his wife returned to Edo in 1699.\(^{163}\) Before Shichisaburō left Kyoto, he gave

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\(^{161}\) Ihara, vol.1, 228

\(^{162}\) See Suwa Haruo's article, "Keisei Asamatake no Shūhen," Torigoe Bunzō's *Genroku Kabuki Kō*, or Tsuchida Keiichirō's *Genroku Haiyūden*.

\(^{163}\) Ihara, vol.1, 240.
Tōjūrō a parting gift. Tōjūrō wanted to give Shichisaburō a gift in return, but wished to give Shichisaburō a gift that was meaningful; he did not want to present a gift for the sake of returning a present. So he did nothing and Shichisaburō returned to Edo.

Later, at the end of the year, six men appeared at Shichisaburō's house in Edo with a large gift and a letter. Tōjūrō had sent water from the Kamo river in Kyoto in a special container and bid Shichisaburō use it for his New Year's tea. Shichisaburō was overwhelmed by the thought that went into the gift. He is reported to have said, "After my meetings in Kyoto with Tōjūrō, I thought I had got to know him thoroughly, but I obviously had not. This present shows a sentiment that would be hard to measure."¹⁶⁴

After Shichisaburō returned to Edo, the effects of his wildly popular play lingered in Kyoto. There were several new productions of The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, and plays that incorporated elements of The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama into new keiseigai plays including Tōjūrō's The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist

¹⁶⁴ Dunn and Torigoe, 133-35.
Service at Mibu Temple and The Courtesan and the Hangon Incense (Keisei Hangonkô).

Once back in Edo, Shichisaburô appeared at the Yamamura Theatre. Though he no longer acted on the same stage as Danjûrō I, they continued their rivalry. Shichisaburô's two years away were a tremendous success. He returned to expectant Edo audiences and did not disappoint. One of his most outstanding performances was in a new version of The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, in 1700. This was a different version of the Kyoto play: the new five-act play had the same title, but featured the Soga brothers. Shichisaburô played the role of Soga Jûrô.

It was a Soga Brothers style of play with the stock characters in the Soga repertoire, and it also featured a spirit manifesting herself in smoke. Instead of Tomoenojô's Ōshû, this time Soga Jûrô's lover Courtesan Ôiso no Tora, suddenly appeared in the midst of a brazier's flames. The scene using a jacket (haori) as a go board was also reprised. Shichisaburô continued to delight audiences with his completely unpredictable comic interludes.
He performed yet another version of the play in 1702, titled *The Courtesan Asama Soga* (*Keisei Asama Soga*). A few moments of Shichisaburō’s performance are described:\(^{165}\)

Shichisaburō portrayed Soga Jūrō. Returning from a ceremony at Lord Hōjō’s residence, he appears on the *hanamichi*, drunk on sake [rice wine]. His paper lantern dangles from the hilt of his sword, hands tucked in his *kimono*, and he walks unsteadily. He is very good.

As he walks, he sees some *zeni* [coins] and a red silk loincloth along the road, carried to protect a man from the evil of his forty-second year. He takes the *zeni* and puts it in to his under *kimono*. He holds up the red loincloth. A range of expressions cross his face as well as physical gestures. There is no one else in Japan who performs like this. When he discovers what the loincloth is, he makes a face showing disgust. He throws it on the ground and walks away. But he wants it. He walks back and picks it up again. It is funny even without words. The third time he says, “It’s probably new,” and sticks it in his *kimono*. The same scene with a few words added is amusing.

A vehicle appears and a forty-two-year-old man from Chichibu emerges...He invites the man who recovered his amulet back to his residence where he has forty-two women waiting. Because Soga Jūrō has

\(^{165}\) *Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei*, vol. 3, 224.

166
absorbed the evil spirits by handling the loincloth, the man suggests that he choose a woman from home, have her wear the loincloth, sleep with her, and that will release the evil spirits that have attached themselves to him.

When the man suggests they leave, a look of great annoyance emerges on Shichisaburō’s face and it is extremely funny. The man prepares to leave and the drunken Shichisaburō finally says, “Please forgive me, ladies.” It was so funny [our] insides hurt.166

Once Shichisaburō returned to Edo, audiences constantly compared Shichisaburō and Danjūrō, trying to determine the better actor. Shichisaburō was praised for excelling in the Kyoto style, while Danjūrō’s acting had been considered “coarse.”167

While Danjūrō excelled at the aragoto acting style, he was not as skilled in the gentler wagoto style, a style essential to the nimaime.

Tōjūrō, on the other hand, was superior in those skills of the nimaime – nuregoto, yatsushi, keiseigoto – but could not do much else. Shichisaburō showed a mastery of a wider range of acting skills that both Danjūrō I and

166 Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei, vol.3, 224.
Tojūrō. He was skilled in samurai acting, dance, movement, and wagoto acting. Shichisaburō was an actor who competed with the top two actors of two distinct regions and successfully held his own with each. No other actor in the Genroku era was able to accomplish this feat.

Shichisaburō died at a fairly young age and was still widely popular at the time of his death. There are differing accounts of his death. According to Kawatake Shigetoshi, Shichisaburō was reprising his role as Soga Jūrō in the play The Courtesan and the Soga Storm (Keisei Arashi Soga) in 1709. While onstage, Shichisaburō’s mood turned sour. Shichisaburō complained of dizziness, and the theatre immediately announced the conclusion of the play to the audience and closed the curtain. He returned to the dressing room and entered a deep sleep from which he never woke up, something a doctor today might diagnose as a cerebral hemorrhage. He was forty-seven. Torigoe Bunzō claims that on that same date, during the performance of a play by the same name, Shichisaburō collapsed and died from an excess of alcohol.

168 Torigoe, 331-32.
169 Kawatake, 366.
Unfortunately, a review for his last performance has never been discovered. 170

Conclusion

Shichisaburō’s three most famous roles in kabuki were Nagoya Sanza, Tomoenojō, and Soga Jûrō. All three were played in the soft style. Before performing in Kyoto, Nagoya Sanza was the role he played most frequently. When he returned to Edo, he performed the Soga plays with the greatest regularity. Although The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama is no longer performed today, it is considered one of the most innovative plays of the Genroku era and influenced a new genre of plays. Shichisaburō’s masterwork provided inspiration for many of Chikamatsu’s later plays. Still, Shichisaburō’s most enduring legacy is his creation of the wagoto Soga Jûrō. Rarely is a Soga play performed today without the character of elder brother Jûrō portrayed in the soft style.

170 Torigoe, 331-332.
Origins of the Keiseikai Scene

Izumi no Okuni, the woman credited with creating kabuki, performed a series of dances and skits at temples and along the Kamo river in Kyoto. One of Okuni’s skits was a courtesan-buying scene, also known as a teahouse scene (chaya asobi). In this scene, Okuni played the role of a kabuki mono (male character) sporting Portuguese pants, a long crucifix around her neck and two decorated swords. She flirted with a woman of the teahouse, a prostitute. The scene was bawdy and erotic. Okuni’s performance, known as kabuki, was considered eccentric and offbeat.

Sometimes Okuni would be joined by her partner and perform a play in which a spirit, the character Nagoya Sanzaburō, came to dance with Okuni. Okuni was representative of the kabuki mono, a group of rebellious former samurai in Kyoto, whose appearance and political beliefs illustrated their discontent with the Tokugawa Government.
After Okuni and other women's kabuki troupes were outlawed by the government in 1629, the young boys of wakashu kabuki performed a similar chaya asobi scene. Young boys played all roles in the chaya asobi scene that was designed to display their physical allure. In 1652, wakashu kabuki was banned and a year later, in 1653, older men were allowed to perform yarō kabuki. Plays changed from short skits and dances to substantial full-length plays (monomane kyōgen zukushi).

The development of these longer plays featured an expansion of character types, including the creation of several new role types for the onnagata.

In the 1660s, Shimabara plays, or plays set in the pleasure quarters, were popular in both Kyoto and Osaka. Shimabara plays featured men trying to buy an evening with a courtesan. These plays, derived from chaya asobi, were also known as keiseikai.

In the following Genroku period, keiseikai scenes consisted of a yatsushi scene in which a character has been disinherited for disgracing his family. Once the young character entered the brothel to see his beloved courtesan, the young man usually provoked a quarrel.
(kuzetsu). The two lovers make up and share intimacy (nureba).

When feudal house plays (oiesōdō mono) began to be performed in the Genroku period, the keiseikai became a scene inserted into the second act. The oiesōdō mono was generally a three act play beginning with a history (jidaimono) scene, followed by a contemporary (sewamono) scene which included the male lover interacting with a courtesan.

The final scene of an oiesōdō mono was often a kaichō scene, in which the major characters would go to a temple to see a special statue of Buddha on display. During the kaichō scene, the major conflict would be resolved, and the oiesōdō mono ended on a happy, auspicious note.

Tōjūrō’s Contribution to Wagoto Kabuki

Tōjūrō revolutionized the keiseikai scene. Inspired by performances by his predecessor, Arashi Sanemon, Tōjūrō donned a paper kimono and a straw rain hat making him appear downtrodden and performed the keisiekai scene with charisma and energy.
Sakata Tōjūrō, a Genroku tachiyaku actor, serendipitously took the role of Fujiya Izaemon in an “overnight pickles” play about the popular courtesan Yūgiri. In his performance he performed a new style of kabuki that is now known as wagoto. Tōjūrō’s portrayal of the self absorbed but loving young male character earned him strong notice and a reputation for playing keiseikai scenes. He played the role of Izaemon a total of eighteen times in his life, forever associating him with the keiseikai play. In his middle age, he teamed up with Kaneko Kichizaemon and Chikamatsu Monzaemon and starred in a series of plays that codified the wagoto acting style. His portrayal of Fujiya Izaemon earned him names such as “Sakata Izaemon” and “Outstanding keiseikai performer in three cities (Kyoto, Osaka and Edo).”

Soon Tōjūrō’s talent and popularity began to rival leading actor Yamashita Hanzaemon. Hanzaemon was an actor skilled in roles that required a great deal of movement (hataraki kyōgen) and the keiseikai. Tōjūrō’s single greatest skill was the keisiekai and he devoted his life.

171 Yakusha Dankō Zuku, 384.
to honing his art. One of the ways he did this was through his skills as an orator. He incorporated poems, literary references, adlibbing, and double entendre in his monologues.

In 1693, Tōjūrō collaborated with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon on the play *The Temple of Maya*. Tōjūrō continued to work with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon for the next six years and his best work emerged while working at the Mandayu Theatre.

Tōjūrō inspired a new type of play, the *ikyōgen* or stationary play. Within the stationary play was a series of long speeches in which Tōjūrō incorporated adlibbing, poetry, historical, and contemporary references.

Nakamura Shichisaburō’s Contribution to Wagoto

Nakamura Shichisaburō, an established actor from Edo, came to Kyoto and began to perform *keiseikai* plays in 1697. His performance in the play, *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, was so popular, it play ran for 120 consecutive performances. Tōjūrō and Chikamatsu borrowed structural and comedic elements from Shichisaburō’s play to create two of the biggest hits of Tōjūrō’s career, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*, and *The Courtesan and The*
Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple. Shichisaburō was invited to perform with Hanzaemon's troupe in Kyoto in 1697. His first performance at the Hyakumo Theatre was so disastrous, people sang a song about his disgrace. He was given the name, "Shichisaburō the Boar." Shichisaburō, though humiliated, refused to give up. After his acting fiasco, he starred in the oiesōdō play, The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, that contained all of the elements of Tōjūrō's successful plays, but Shichisaburō's play was more humorous and had a stronger plot. The lover's quarrel between Shichisaburō's character, Tomoenojō, and his lover Ōshū, while Tomoenojō played a game of go on a jacket, set a new standard for humor in the keiseikai plays. When Shichisaburō returned to Edo, he continued to act in the wagoto style, in particular, he applied wagoto acting style to the role of elder brother Soga Jūrō in the Soga plays that were popular with Edo audiences.

Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō's Lasting Effects on Wagoto Kabuki

Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō both used numerous techniques of the Genroku era tachiyaku actor and created their own style and standard of acting through their energy, talent and charisma. Tōjūrō's trademark paper
kimono became permanently identified with the yatsushi character.

Tōjūrō’s lasting contribution to wagoto kabuki was the acting techniques in a keiseikai play and the portrayal of the young male character (wakadanna) that has been disgraced and disinherited from his family. This play structure is most fully represented in today’s repertoire by Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter. Tōjūrō’s ikyōgen, stationary plays composed of long monologues, stopped being performed after he died.

The wagoto character type developed by Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō is still present on stage today. The play, Sukeroku, Flower of Edo, features the character of Soga Jūrō played in the comic wagoto style that Shichisaburō established. Yoshitsune, in The Subscription List (Kanjinchō), is also portrayed as a noble wagoto style character. Chikamatsu’s love suicide puppet plays featured a darkness and despair not evident in his early kabuki plays with Tōjūrō. When Chikamatsu’s puppet plays were adapted for kabuki, actors portrayed these young male shop owners in wagoto style.

It is important to note that while the inspiration, creativity, and willingness to succeed were traits of
both individuals, Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô would not have
excelled as they did without help. Tôjûrô had strong
scriptwriters in Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon. Shichisaburô
was inspired when he observed Tôjûrô's art.

Both of these men had determination, stamina, and a
strong sense of self. Their dedication to their art and
their willingness to take risks on stage by not following
the expectations of the day, created a new style of
acting with a sincerity and depth that enhanced the
kabuki world.
CHAPTER VII
EPILOGUE

The wagoto acting style, as it is performed onstage today is different from the wagoto of Tōjūrō’s and Shichisaburō’s time. Just a few short years after Tōjūrō’s death, the form and the character type began to change. Those changes had three major causes: there was no strong successor to continue Tōjūrō’s style of wagoto acting; Chikamatsu stopped writing for kabuki and began writing full time for the puppet theatre; and the oiesōdō play began to lose its popularity in the Kyoto-Osaka region.

Although Tōjūrō had successors, none were able to successfully continue the wagoto acting style he created. This might have been due to the unique strength of the Chikamatsu-Kichizaemon-Tōjūrō collaborations. Both playwrights and Tōjūrō honed their skills to present plays that showcased Tōjūrō at his best. Other actors such as Hanzaemon and Jinbei performed well at keiseikai, but did not share Tōjūrō’s skill in elocution or the strong formulaic structure of his successful plays.
Unlike Edo kabuki in which actors were taught to imitate the voice and steps of their fathers and grandfathers, Tōjūrō believed that an actor needed to develop his own style of acting and should not try to imitate the work of other actors. Tōjūrō had a distinctive style that worked well for him. None of his successors seemed to develop a wagoto style with an equal amount of success.

Chikamatsu began writing for the puppet theatre full time shortly after Tōjūrō’s death. There is speculation that Chikamatsu no longer wanted to write for actors because they took liberties with his words. Puppet plays presented Chikamatsu’s words and ideas just as they were written.

In addition, the social climate in Kyoto-Osaka was changing. Audiences were growing tired of the formulaic, happy oiesōdō plays and were looking for something different.\textsuperscript{172}

Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō’s Successors

Tōjūrō had two biological sons, Sakata Tōkurō

\textsuperscript{172} Torigoe, 317.
(1668–?) and Sakata Heishichirō (dates unknown), neither of whom assumed his name nor achieved his success as kabuki actors. Kuwanaya Chōzaemon (1669–1724) was originally an apprentice of Tōjūrō I. He took the name Tōjūrō II in 1711. He was known as Fushima Tōjūrō, nicknamed for the rural area where he used to perform. Yamatoya Jinbei was considered Tōjūrō's true successor. He performed yatsushi scenes in a paper kimono and excelled at keiseikai scenes.

Nakamura Shichisaburō adopted a son, Nakamura Kiyokichi (1703–1774), as his successor. Kiyokichi took the name Nakamura Shichisaburō II in 1711. He began his career playing young male roles and later became a successful wagoto actor in Edo. Shichisaburō's grandson used the name Nakamura Shichinosuke (1765–85) before assuming the name Shichisaburō III in 1770. He married the daughter of Kanzaburō VIII in 1777 and became a troupe manager the following year.

174 Ibid., 270.
175 Hattori, et. al., Kabuki Jiten, 304.
A Darker Wagoto

In the years after Tōjūrō’s death in 1709, Chikamatsu had tremendous success writing for the puppets. His new plays were detailed and complicated. Now he had freedom to write for puppets that were not about to change his words or manipulate his speeches. In the early eighteenth century, crossover and borrowing between kabuki and bunraku inspired new plays and new playing styles for both forms.

A new wagoto character type, darker and more complex evolved. Yatsushi, nuregoto, and kuzetsugoto were characteristics that continued from Tōjūrō’s wagoto style, but Chikamatsu wrote a score of love suicide plays (shinjū mono) in which prostitutes were no longer glamorous and high ranking. Koharu, from Chikamatsu’s Love Suicides at Amijima (Shinjū Tenno Amijima), written eleven years after Tōjūrō died, is a low class prostitute with a kind and honorable heart but her status cannot compare with the courtesan Yūgiri. Chikamatsu portrays the wagoto hero, Kamiya Jihei, as a man who abandons his wife and children to live in poverty and tries to bear the townspeoples’ scorn.
Ultimately, Koharu and Jihei chose suicide over their families' and societal objections, choosing to be reborn on the same lotus blossom, according to the teachings of Amida Buddha. Though the characters in the suicide plays were reunited after death, the plays did not have the traditional Genroku happy endings with a felicitous dance at the end of the play. The plays of Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō did not show the harshness of life in such as realistic matter as Chikamatsu's new works.

New Musical Accompaniment Brings About Changes in Speech

New musical styles worked to change wagoto kabuki. The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain, and The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama, both featured singing of short, popular (kouta) songs. Long, lyrical songs to shamisen accompaniment (nagauta) were introduced to kabuki near the end of the Genroku era. In addition, as more puppet style plays were introduced to kabuki, the chanting and singing style of puppet performances (gidayū) accompanied these kabuki performances. Performing styles began to change as actors tried to accommodate the chanter and
melodies of gidayū style music. As a result, kabuki actors' began to develop new rhythm and speech patterns. Nakamura Ganjirō III has compared Tōjūrō’s long monologues to kyōgen speech. When new musical styles were introduced to kabuki, a change in actor’s speech patterns was inevitable. Tōjūrō’s long rhythmic speeches were gradually replaced by monologues with underlying music or singing. Kumagai’s recitation (monogatari) in Kumagai’s Battle Camp (“Kumagai Jinya” from Ichinotani Futaba Gunki) is an excellent example of “riding the strings” (nori), a type of recitation to shamisen accompaniment in kabuki plays adapted from the puppet theatre.

New Wagoto Character Types

As the carefree wagoto character shaped by Tōjūrō and Shichisaburō began to change, two new wagoto character types were introduced: the pintokona and the tsukkorobashi. The pintokona is a tough character type, often a former samurai, down on his luck and seemingly arrogant. He is tougher and darker than Tōjūrō’s wagoto characters. An example of the character is Kamiya Jihei

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176 See Kominz, ”Ganjirō III and Chikamatsu’s Lost Kabuki Masterpiece” in Asian Theatre Journal, 62.
in Chikamatsu’s *Love Suicides at Amijima*. The term *pintokona* was used during the Genroku era to describe strong female characters. It is thought that the word *pintokona* derives from this meaning.

The pushover (*tsukkorobashi*) is a direct opposite of the *pintokona*. Often, the character appears high-strung, completely helpless, and stymied by circumstances. An example of this character is Yôgoro from *Futatsu Chôchô Kuruwa Nikki*. Both of these character types developed after Chikamatsu began writing for the puppets full time and are often portrayed on stage today.

**Wagoto Today: Tôjûrô’s Twenty-First Century Successors**

*Love Letter From the Licensed Quarter*, the Yugiri-Izaemon play based on *Yûgiri and the Awa Whirlpool*, is the single important example of a play that remains largely in the early Tôjûrô wagoto style. Other wagoto masterpieces performed today are *gidayû* plays written for the puppets by Chikamatsu. Love suicide plays such as *The Love Suicides at Amijima*, *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, and *The Love Suicides at Toribe Mountain* are all accompanied by *nagauta* or *gidayû* music.
Most professional kabuki is run by one company, Shōchiku Kabushiki Gaisha (Shōchiku), and most kabuki actors have their primary residence in Tokyo. Actors are scheduled to perform in major cities and Shōchiku Theatres in Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya, and Tokyo, through the year. Although it can be argued that wagoto plays are performed more often in Kamigata than Tokyo, both jidaimono and sewamono plays are performed in all theatres. Depending on the month and the theatre program, even a Tokyo actor specializing in aragoto plays will occasionally perform a wagoto style play.

Currently, two families specialize in Kamigata kabuki, the Kataoka Nizaemon family and the Nakamura Ganjirō family. Kataoka Nizaemon is the most illustrious acting name in the Kataoka family of actors. The first Kataoka Nizaemon (1656-1715) was a contemporary of Tōjūrō and one of the earliest players of villain (katakiyaku) role types. After 1709, he became a tachiyaku playing realistic acting roles (jitsugoto) and received high praise for his martial style. The current Nizaemon XV (1944-) assumed his family's name in 1997. Like his father Kataoka Nizaemon XIII (1903-1994), the current Nizaemon plays a wide range of roles and is one of the
most versatile actors on the kabuki stage today. He is equally comfortable playing aragoto roles such as Sukeroku in Sukeroku: Flower of Edo, and Matsuomaru in the “Pulling the Carriage Apart” scene from Sugawara’s Secrets of Calligraphy (Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami). Wagoto specialties include Izaemon in Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter and Yohei from The Woman Killer and the Hell of Oil (Onna Goroshi Abura no Jigoku). His son, Kataoka Takataro (1968-) specializes in female roles.

Living National Treasure Nakamura Ganjirō III, has made great contributions to promoting, preserving, and reviving wagoto kabuki and early Chikamatsu plays. Ganjirō III plays both wagoto and onnagata roles. He does perform aragoto roles, but he is clearly more comfortable in the Kamigata wagoto roles and prefers them. Ganjirō III’s great roles include Fujiya Izaemon, Jihei in The Love Suicides at Amijima, and Chubei in The Courier of Hell (Meido no Hiyaku Yamato Orai).

Nakamura Ganjirō III is a scholar and takes a similar scholarly approach to roles as Sakata Tōjūrō did. He speaks with kabuki historians such as Torigoe Bunzō to prepare to act in a role as close to the original production as possible. He is a master of ji-uta mai, a
Kyoto style of dance traditionally performed by the geisha of Kyoto on a small tatami mat.

Ganjirō III created his own theatre company called the Chikamatsu-za in 1981 that produces famous Chikamatsu works. In the last fifteen years, he has revived two of Chikamatsu's original kabuki plays, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain* (1987) and *The Courtesan and the Great Ceremony at Mibu Temple* (1988). A great amount of research has gone into the revival of these early Chikamatsu-Tôjûrô plays.¹⁷⁷

Ganjirō III feels such an affinity with Tôjûrô that he is reviving the name and will change his name from Nakamura Ganjirō III to Sakata Tôjûrô in a special name taking ceremony (*shûmei kôjô*) in 2005.

Both the current Nizaemon and Ganjirō III, specialize in traditional wagoto roles and both are similar to Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô in different ways. Ganjirō concentrates on learning the history around a play and portraying a character as close to Tôjûrô's wagoto as possible. Like both Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô, he skillfully delivers long monologues and has a strong comic sense. Nizaemon is similar to Shichisaburô with his

¹⁷⁷ See Kominz, "Ganjirō III and Chikamatsu's "Lost" Kabuki Masterpiece."
ability to perform several different acting styles with skill. Nizaemon is disciplined about his work and takes rehearsals and all performances extremely seriously. When his father was alive, he studied with him, and read his family’s written acting commentaries (geidan) before he approached a new role. Like Tōjūrō, he is handsome, with a deep voice that can be commanding as Yuranosuke in Chushingūra, and petulant as Fujiya Izaemon. He is charismatic and has been praised for his comic timing in the tradition Tōjūrō established. Nizaemon has constantly been paired with the onnagata Bando Tamasaburō V, and their acting skills combined with their physical beauty created one of the most famous pairings in kabuki history. This pairing in similar to Tōjūrō’s acting with onnagata actors Yoshizawa Ayame and Kirinami Senju.

Areas of Further Research

There are many areas of Genroku kabuki with a need for further study. Chikamatsu has twenty-nine extant kabuki plays from the period he was writing for kabuki, before writing full time for the puppet theatre. At least sixteen of them were plays performed by Sakata Tōjūrō. Andrew Gerstle has written extensively about Chikamatsu’s
late puppet plays. A study of Chikamatsu’s early kabuki plays would be beneficial to both kabuki and bunraku scholars.

Kaneko Kichizaemon worked closely with Chikamatsu as a playwright and on stage as an actor. In addition to his commentary in The Actor’s Analects, he kept a diary that describes a detailed rehearsal process for actors. This information would be invaluable to those studying playwriting as well as acting during the Genroku era. Several other Kamigata actors who made contributions to Genroku kabuki have not yet been the subject of study, most notably, Kataoka Nizaemon I, who was one of the first actors to play villainous roles.

The acting families of Nakamura Ganjirō, and Kataoka Nizaemon, worked extensively in the twenty-first century to promote wagoto kabuki. Their attempts to preserve and promote wagoto kabuki warrant further study.

Nakamura Ganjirō III’s study and productions replicating Genroku kabuki would be a worthwhile study of Tōjūrō’s art performed by a contemporary master of wagoto kabuki.
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