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

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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 Tôjûrô and Nakamura Shichisaburô. I begin by examining the teahouse scenes staged by Izumo no Okuni in 1603 and discuss their progression in *wakashu kabuki* and *yarô 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 Tôjûrô and Nakamura Shichisaburô developed unique acting techniques to perform contemporary plays. Tojûrô and Shichisaburô 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 Tôjûrô's theories on acting, his performances, and his contributions to *wagoto* acting. In

chapter 5, I discuss Edo actor Nakamura Shichisaburô'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 Tôjûrô I (1647-1709) and Nakamura Shichisaburô I (1662-1708) in the Genroku era (1688-1703). This study provides a comprehensive look at the development of Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô'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 Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô 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 Danjûrô I (1660-1704) is famed for creating the *aragoto* acting style in the Genroku era. However, at the same time, Sakata Tôjûrô 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 Danjûrô family for three hundred years. In comparison, the plays once made popular by Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô are no longer performed,[1] 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

[1] *Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter* (*Kuruwa Bunshô*) 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 Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô. 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 Hyôbanki*, actors were identified by the roles they played. Tôjûrô 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 (*kaichô*). *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 Bashô (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*."[2] In both Edo and Kyoto-Osaka, variations in performance styles, as well as the actors' heightened

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[2] Shigetoshi Kawatake, *Nihon Engeki Zenshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1959), 325.

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*).[3] 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. Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô 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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[3] *Yakusha Ôkagami* (1692) in *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei* vol 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), 316-378.

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*).[4] 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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[4] For a greater discussion of Danjûrô I and *kimpira*, see Laurence Kominz's *Avatars of Vengeance: Japanese Drama and the Soga Literary Tradition* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1995).

the most important drama in Genroku *kabuki*.[5] 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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[5] Masakatsu Gunji, *Kabuki no Hassô* (Tokyo: Nishisawa Shoten, 1978), 186.

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

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[6] "Yakusha Ôkagami" (1692) in *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), 316-336.
[7] Charles Dunn and Torigoe Bunzô, trans., *The Actor's Analects* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1969), 101-103.

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" (*Ninjinshû*), 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 Tôjûrô had a discussion of Tôjûrô's portrayal of the lead, Umenaga Bunzô. Kaneko recounts Tôjûrô explaining his portrayal of Bunzô:

> 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 hoped, shouted 'Longer, longer' and applauded.[8]

This quotation demonstrates the awareness that Tôjûrô 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.[9]

Tôjûrô'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 *oiesôdô mono* and were performed more elaborately each time Tôjûrô debuted in a new play.

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

As Tôjûrô and his plays increased in reputation and popularity, other theatres followed the developing trend and began offering Yûgiri-Izaemon plays and *keiseikai* of their own. Tôjûrô frequently went to see these plays, and just as actors incorporated the highlights (*geifû*) of Tôjûrô's performances, Tôjûrô "borrowed" from others.

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[9] See Dunn and Torigoe, regarding Tôjûrô's critiques of actors and performances.

Nakamura Shichisaburô, Tôjûrô's contemporary and rival, ultimately held the greatest influence on Tôjûrô's acting style. After Shichisaburô'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. Tôjûrô and Chikamatsu borrowed several stage conventions from Shichisaburô and incorporated them into Tôjûrô'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*). Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô's *wakadanna* characters in *keisekai* 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 Tôjûrô 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 Bunzô 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 Zenshû*); *Collection of Kabuki Critiques (Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*); 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-irikyôgenbon*) 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 Nenpyô).* 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 Toribei Mountain (Toribeiyama Shinjû)* and *The Love Suicides at Amijima (Shinjû Tennô 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 *nô*, *kyôgen* 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 buyô*) 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 *kyôgen* 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 *kyôgen* 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 buyô* 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 Tôjûrô 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 Hyôbanki Shûsei*) published by Hachimonjiya, illustrated playbooks (*e-irikyôgenbon*), and the *The Actor's Analects* (*Yakusha Rongo*). The *Kabuki Hyôbanki* contains reviews of Tôjûrô 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 (*jô-jô-kichi*). Tôjûrô was excellent-excellent-outstanding in the

year 1699.[10] 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 Tôjûrô did a fine job of playing Fujiya Izaemon in *Yûgiri'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.[11] The *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* also relates subjective anecdotes that reveal information about a character. Torigoe Bunzô 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.[12]

The Actor's Analects (*Yakusha Rongo*), translated by Dunn and Torigoe, consists of eight writings about actors Sakata Tôjûrô, 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

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[10] "Yakusha Kuchi Jamisen" (1699) in *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol 2 (Tokyo: Iwamani Shoten, 1972), 182.
[11] The review states, "Perhaps Tôjûrô's talent will climb based on Yûgiri." See "Yarô Tachiyaku Butai Kagami"*(1687) in Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972) 246.
[12] Torigoe Bunzô, *Genroku Kabuki Kô* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1991), 321.

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 Tôjûrô was alive; he is listed as an actor in forty of them.[13]

Many of the original *e-irikyôgenbon* have been transcribed by Waseda theatre scholars into printed text (*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 *hyôbanki* and *e-irikyôgenbon* side by side, one can begin to interpret an actor's particular strengths.

For example, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain* and *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, Tôjûrô's strength at performing *yatsushi* is described. Nakamura Shichisaburô's comedy and lover's quarrel are included in the *e-irikyogenbon* of his play *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*. His comedy is also praised in several of the entries in the *Collection of Kabuki*

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[13] Torigoe, 310.

Critiques. *E-irikyôgenbon* 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 Hassô*) 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 Tôjûrô, Nakamura Shichisaburô, and Kamigata arts is Torigoe Bunzô's *Thoughts on Genroku Kabuki* (*Genroku Kabuki Kô*). 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-irikyôgenbon*, and other sources. He writes in great detail about Tôjûrô's performance of *The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain* and Shichisaburô's *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*.

Tsuchida Mamoru's *A Historical Study of Genroku Kabuki: Style and Development* (*Kôshô Genroku Kabuki Yôshiki 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 Kenkyû*) is a valuable resource about Genroku *kabuki* in both Edo and Kamigata. He has written extensively about Sakata Tôjûrô and the Yûgiri Izaemon plays. Yamaguchi Hirokazu has written a chapter about *keiseikai* in his book, *Kabuki West and East* (*Nishi to Higashi no Kabuki*). Tsuchiya Keiichirô's book, *Genroku Actor Biographies* (*Genroku Haiyû Den*), features chapters on both Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô; 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 Tôjûrô is included.

There is no single volume devoted to Tôjûrô, Shichisaburô, 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 Tôjûrô's legacy today.

English Sources

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

James R. Brandon writes about *wagoto* acting in his section on *kata* in *Studies in Kabuki* and the introduction to his translation of *Love Letter from the Licensed Quarter (Kuruwa Bunshô)* in his book, *Kabuki: Five Kabuki Plays*. Samuel Leiter gives concise definitions for Tôjûrô, *wagoto*, and *wagoto* terminology in *Kabuki Encyclopedia*. As noted, *The Actor's Analects* have been translated into English by Torigoe Bunzô and Charles Dunn (1969).

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

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[14] Zoe Kincaid, *Kabuki* (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1965), 88-90.
[15] A. C. Scott, *The Kabuki Theatre of Japan* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 168.

Kabuki.[16] The book provides a lively description of Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô, and Nakamura Shichisaburô, 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 Ganjirô III (1931-), one of the two leading *wagoto* actors today. Nakamura Ganjirô recently re-mounted Chikamatsu Monzaemon's *The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple*, expressly written for Sakata Tôjûrô. In his article, Kominz details the research Ganjirô undertook to provide authenticity in his performance.[17]

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

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[16] Laurence Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki: Their Lives, Loves, and Legacy* (Japan: Kodansha International Press, 1997), 108-180.
[17] Laurence Kominz, "Ganjirô III and Chikamatsu's 'Lost' *Kabuki* Masterpiece," *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 17, no.1 (Spring 2000): 51-7.

Tôjûrô.[18] In comparison, Tôjûrô is listed twelve times. Leiter provides a brief entry about Shichisaburô in *New Kabuki Encyclopedia*.[19] 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*.[20] I recently published an article, "Nakamura Shichisaburô I and the Creation of Edo-style *wagoto*" in *A Kabuki Reader*.[21] This dissertation continues the project of my article, restoring Shichisaburô to his proper place as a foundational figure in *wagoto*-style kabuki alongside Tôjûrô.

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.
[19] See Samuel L. Leiter, *New Kabuki Encyclopedia: A Revised Adaptation of Kabuki Jiten.* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 446.
[20] Laurence Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 134-140.
[21] Holly A. Blumner, "The Creation of Edo-Style *Wagoto*" in Samuel L. Leiter, ed., *A Kabuki Reader, History and Performance* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 60-74.

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 *nô* 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 Kenkyû* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobo, 1968), 69, Okuni could be found dancing in Nara in 1582. Kawatake's *Nihon Engeki*

temple dancer (*shirabyôshi)* 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 Nempyô*, 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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Zenshi mentions the appearance of Izumi Okuni, a female shamaness, in 1588, 236. These may have been different women using the name "Okuni."

[23] Ihara Toshirô, *Kabuki Nempyô* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956), vol.1, 14.

[24]Kawatake, 250.

costume. Akemi Horie Webber translates a portion of the *Tôdaiki* (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 Kyôto and initiated it. For example, she imitated a man of *ifû-na* (unusual) appearance, carrying a sword and wearing distinctly *isô-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 Kyôto, 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]

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[25]The *Tôdaiki*, 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 *Keichô Hibunshû* (c. 1610) that describes Okuni:

> Kuni set up a stage at the end of the Gôjô 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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[26]According to Horie Webber, the *Keichô Hibunshû* was written by samurai Hata Hyôgo 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 Portugese 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 *nô* 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."[27] The *kabuki* people (*kabuki mono*) were a group of men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who opposed the

[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.[28] 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 *Tôdaiki*.

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 *nô* stage, with a square playing space and the four pillars reminiscent of the *nô* theatre. Okuni is pictured on stage wearing a kimono and short jacket *(haori)*; her hair is long and flowing around her

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[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 Sanzaburô (?-1603)[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.)

[29]Nagoya Sanzaburô (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.

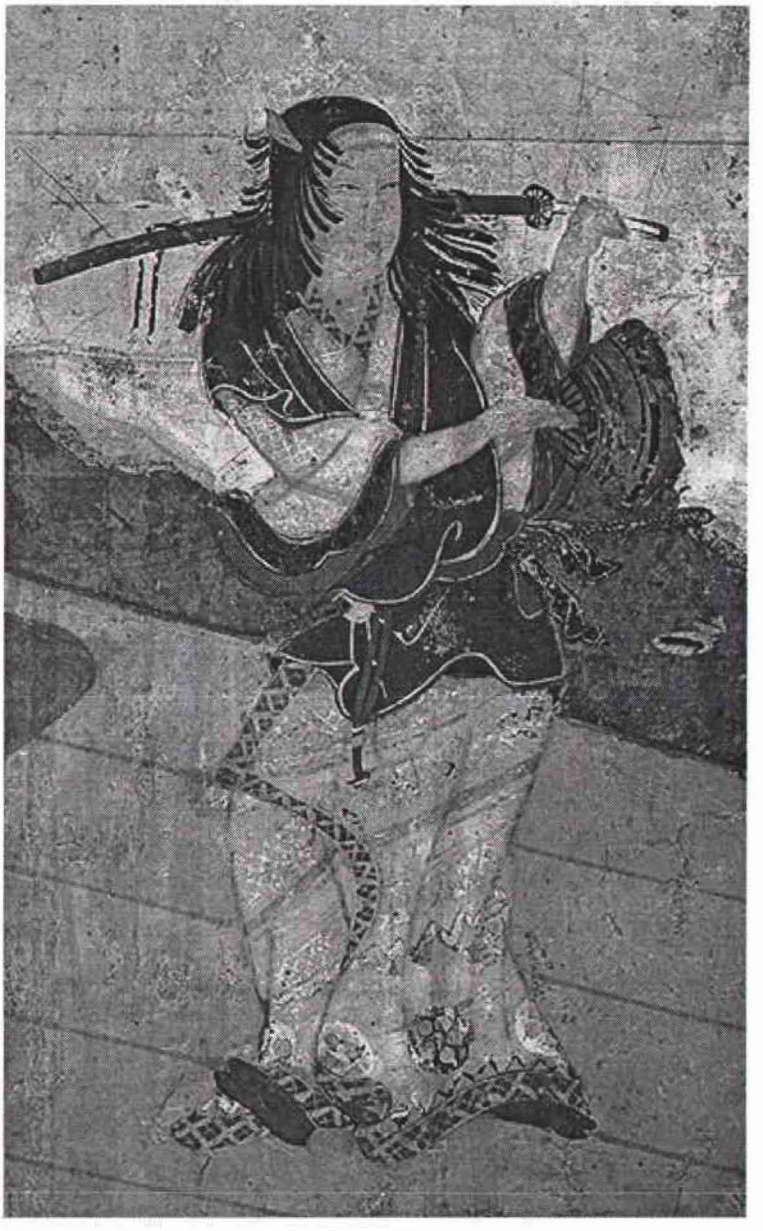
Illustration I

Okuni Performing a *Chaya Asobi* Scene

Okuni Kabuki-zu, painting on screen, seventeenth century, Kyoto National Museum, Kyoto.

Illustration II

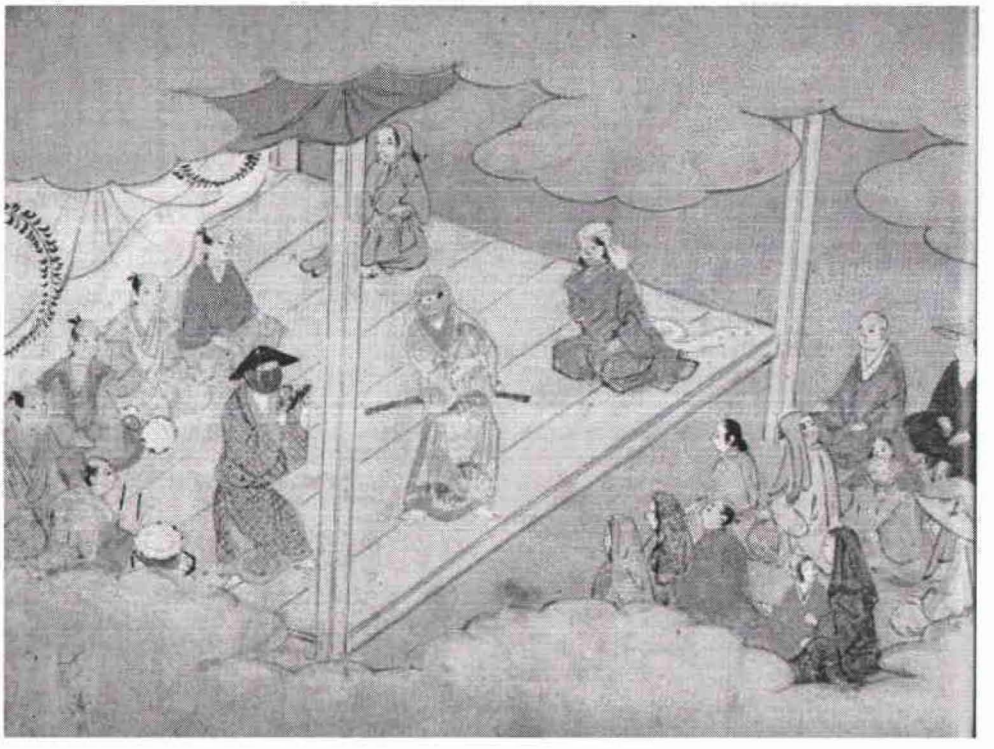
Close up of Okuni



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 Sanzaburô beats a small gong with a mallet while the courtesan character and brothel owner look on.

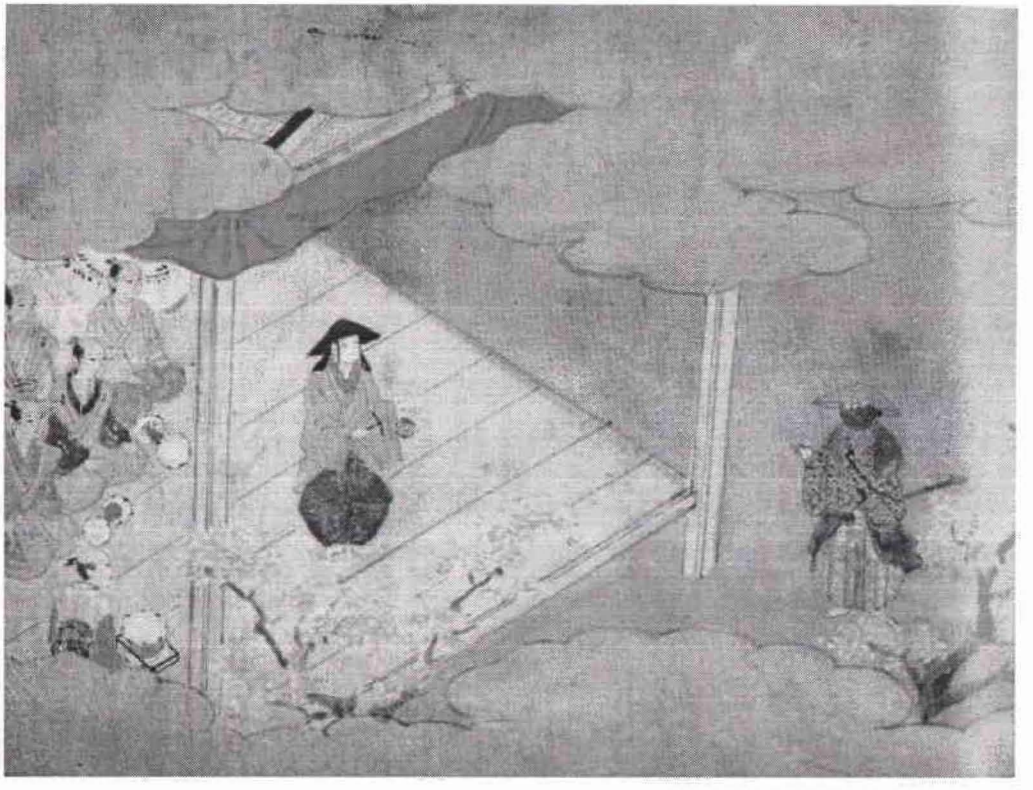


A *chaya asobi* scene from *Kunijo Kabuki Ekotoba*, (dates unknown), Kyoto University Museum, Kyoto, available from http://www.kulib.kyotou.ac.jp/exhibit/okuni/eng/okubk09e.html; Internet.

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 Sanzaburô 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 Sanzaburô, 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-seventeeth century book.[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.[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*:

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[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.
[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 *Nembustsu* 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 tea-stall 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

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[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.
[34] Takei Kyôzô, *Wakashu Kabuki: Yarô Kabuki no Kenkyû* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2000), 6.

notes there is little evidence to support this claim.[35] One can theorize that because *nô*, *kyôgen,* and *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 *kabuki* did take much of its structure from *nô* and *kyôgen*.[36]

My first evidence is the *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 *nô* spirit play (*mugen nô,* also called phantasmal *nô).*[37] The play begins with an actor appearing in the secondary role (*waki*) as Okuni's father, speaking like a priest. He says:

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[35]Kawatake, 242.

[36] See Gunji, *Kabuki Yôshiki to Denshô* (Tokyo: Nara Shobo: 1954), 181.

[37] Some critics have commented that the *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 *nô.* Horie Webber, 92. Although this is not a true transcription of one of Okuni performances, it does provide a detailed description of Okuni's *nembutsu odori*, and includes some original elements of Okuni performance within a framework of *nô* performance.

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 *nô* performance. In *nô*, 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)

(O)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.

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[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 *nô* structure. Okuni acts on a *nô* stage, and incorporates many aspects of *nô* drama, but the skit introduces *kabuku* elements at the same time.

Okuni's plays were an attempt to entertain and titillate her viewers. Most phantasmal *nô* 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 *nô*, and as in many *nô* 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 *nô*. Nagoya and

Okuni make blatant allusions to sex and *chaya asobi*. In a typical spirit *nô* 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-*nô* 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 *nô* 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 *nô* 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 *nô*'s lofty spiritual concepts, Okuni disengaged their sacred social status while enlivening the *nô*

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*.[39]

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 *nô* 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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[39]Katherine Mezur, "The Kabuki Onnagata: A Feminist Analysis of the Onnagata Fiction of Female Likeness" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai'i, 1988), 75.

to her supposed scenes on stage with an actor playing ghost Nagoya Sanzaburô in a style reminiscent of phantasmal *nô*, 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 *kyôgen* actors in Okuni *kabuki* cannot be proven, some scholars suggest that short slapstick skits in early *kabuki* were reminiscent of *kyôgen*. Further, the spoken speech and song lyrics in Genroku *kabuki* resemble *kyôgen* speech. The comic *saruwaka* character type that appears alongside Okuni in the teahouse scene maybe derived from the Tarô Kaja comic roles in *kyôgen*. The role seems to have metamorphased 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 bathouse attendants. These scenes were filled with sexual innuendo. Women's kabuki troupes also performed the *chaya asobi* scenes accompanied by women playing *nô* 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.

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[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 *nô* and *kyôgen* were performed.[41] Just as *onna kabuki* was prohibited due to what the goverment 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.

Yarô 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 *yarô kabuki* evolved after 1653, the *chaya asobi* skits developed by Okuni evolved into a type of play known as

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[42] Ibid., 10.

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

> First there would be a *kôjô* 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 *Tayû*[43] 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

[43]A *tayû* is a high-ranking courtesan.

into a *hyogo-wagae* [hairstyle].[44] 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.[45]

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 *hyôgo-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 Kenkyû*, 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 Tôjûrô 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 *nô*. 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 *nô* 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.

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

Restrictions on *yarô 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, *yarô kabuki* developed its own version of the courtesan play (Shimabara *kyôgen)*. The following chapter examines developments in the courtesan-buying play during the early years of the Genroku era.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF *WAGOTO* PERFORMANCE: FROM *YARÔ KABUKI* TO EARLY *GENROKU WAGOTO KABUKI* 1653-1699

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 (*oiesôdô mono*), which usually included a scene at a temple (*kaichô*). Performative elements that I define include acting in the *keiseigoto, kuzetsu, nuregoto,*

yatsushi, the feudal house play *(oiesôdô mono)*, visiting a temple scene (*kaichô mono)*, *nimaime* acting, and *okashimi*.

A Note on the Term *Wagoto*

According to Torigoe Bunzô, 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 Tôjûrô's acting. It was used only once, to describe the acting of Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô'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"*

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[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 Sôjûrô II's (1713-1770) art. In an acting critique of Sôjûrô, his art was compared to Tôjûrô's.[47] In 1771, sixty years after Tôjûrô's death, Tôjûrô was called a master of *wagoto* in the *Collection of Kabuki Critiques*. In the 1770s, "*wagoto*" was increasingly used to describe Tôjûrô'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* (*yarô 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

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[47] Torigoe, 321-322.
[48] Ibid.

continue to entice their audiences, gradual changes in *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 *wagoto* acting conventions were incorporated into the new style of drama now known as men's *kabuki* (*yarô 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, *kabuki* also received a new name: fully enacted plays (*monomane kyôgen zukushi*), plays that showed off the actor's mimesis (*monomane*) skills. "*Monomane*" means "imitation" or "mimicry," and is often used to describe *nô* acting. *Kyôgen* means "play," as in a performance or a performance text. "*Zukushi*" refers to a full-length play. With the advent of *monomane kyôgen zukushi*, actors performed a full-length spoken drama with a narrative plot. This was different than *Okuni kabuki* and *wakashu kabuki*, in which performances were a series of short skits and dances. According to *Kabuki Jiten*, the ruling government wanted to abandon the name

kabuki and refer to this new acting style as *kyôgen zukushi*; the word *monomane* was not attached until 1687.[49]

As *kabuki* (or *kyôgen 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 *yarô kabuki* featured simple male heroic characters (*tachiyaku*), villains, (*katakiyaku*), and old men (*yarô*). Men had been playing women's roles as early as 1629, yet the complex story lines of *monomane kyôgen 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.

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[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 kyôgen* or *keiseikai*, as mentioned, an identifiable structural sequence in the new full-length plays (*monomane kyôgen 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 kyôgen* because Shimabara was one of Kyoto's original red light districts.

The origins of the *Shimabara kyôgen 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 kyôgen* 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 kyôgen*, 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 *yarô 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."[51] 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 Susanô no Mikoto, a young man of refinement who was forced to leave his home and wander

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[51]Hattori, *Kabuki Jiten*, 392.

around until the spring, when he regained his former status.[52]

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.[53]

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.

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Taguchi, Akiko, "Yatsushi ni Naritate. Kojôruri to no Kankei ni Tsuite," *Kabuki Kenkyû to Hihyô*, 11 (1993), 137-146.

The first disguise specialist (*yatsushi meijin*) was Arashi Sanemon I. Sanemon, whose acting career preceded Tôjûrô'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*."[54] 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.[55] 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 Bunshô) contains the best-known *yatsushi* scene performed on stage today.[56] 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,

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[54] Ibid., 139.
[55] Ibid., 139.
[56] 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 Tôjûrô 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 Tojûrô 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 Tôjûrô's play, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*. In this scene, the *wagoto* character Bunzô 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 Bunzô, just as Imagawa, a courtesan he has a child with, enters the room. Bunzô sees her and tries to wriggle away from Kozatsuma.

Bunzô: 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 Bunzô out from under it, and begins yelling at Bunzô. While she yells, she kicks Kozatsuma, who hides under the futon. Suddenly, Kozatsuma emerges from the futon.*)

Kozatsuma: What happened?

Bunzô: 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.

Bunzô: What? She has a lover? (*Bunzô suddenly accuses Imagawa of being unfaithful and she begs for a chance to explain. The quarrel ends when Imagawa breaks down in tears. Bunzô tries to apologize.*)

Bunzô: You are a *bodhitsattva*. I apologize.
Please forgive me.

(*Bunzô begs her forgiveness.*)

Imagawa: Please put your arms around me.

(*They embrace. Their bond is deep.*)[57]

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, Bunzô is already under the futon when his lover Imagawa spies him lying next to another woman. Imagawa pulls a defenseless Bunzô out from under the covers, and steps on Kozatsuma, who has lured Bunzô into bed.

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[57] Chikamatsu Monzaemon, "Keisei Hotoke no Hara," in *Chikamatsu Zenshû*, vol 15 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), 84-85.

In another humorous lovers' quarrel scene from *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, the *wagoto* character, Tomenojo, plays a game of *go*[58] on his jacket while fighting with his lover, Ôshû. 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

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[58] *Go* is a strategic board game.

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.[59] 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

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[59] Matsuzaki Hitoshi, *Kabuki-Jôruri no Kotoba*. (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1994), 103.

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, Bunzô, 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.[60] 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: *jô*, *chû*, and *ge*. The first scene (*jô*) 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., *Geinôshi*, 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 (*kaichô*).

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 *oiesôdô 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., *Geinôshi*, 135.

money in the licensed quarter that his family has disinherited him.

In the early Genroku-period *oisesôdô* 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 (*kaichô*). An example of the structure of an *oiesôdô* play and several *oiesôdô* play summaries are provided on page 82.

Kaichô mono

A *kaichô* scene could be part of an *oiesôdô* 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 *kaichô 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 *kaichô* at Gesô Temple, near Higashiyama in Kyoto, to their mutual benefit.

Kaichô 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 *kaichô*, an important religious and social event in the community.

A *kaichô* 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 Jizô miraculously saves the life of a young child attendant (*kamuro*) of the courtesan. The play ends at Mibu temple where the Jizô 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 *kaichô* scene that concludes the play is a celebratory group dance. The action has been resolved before the *kaichô* scene begins, and the *kaichô* serves to provide a lively, colorful ending for the audience.

The scenes in the early *oiesôdô 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 *kaichô* scene allowed actors to play the soft, romantic character that the Kyoto-Osaka audiences preferred.

Oiesôdô mono Structure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Act II (*chû*):
Bunzô is dressed in a paper kimono (*yatsushi*) and arrives at a daimyo's mansion on the way to Gesô Temple. He recounts a story about a prostitute named Ôshû to one of the court ladies in waiting (*kuruwa banashi*). Bunzô is surprised to learn that Ôshû now lives at the *daimyô's* residence. They are happily reunited (*nureba*) until Princess Take, Bunzô's fiancee, arrives and a lovers' quarrel between Take and Bunzô (*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 Bunzô's enemy, Sukedayu. Sukedayu repents and kills Bunzô's younger brother, who was

scheming to harm Bunzô. They all go to Gesô Temple and the play ends with an auspicious dance.[62]

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

Act I (*jô*):
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 (*chû*):
Kozasa Tomenojô was engaged to Princess Otowa no Mae and leaves her for the courtesan Ôshû. 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 Ôshû, who has appeared from a fire to scold her lover. Otowa no Mae recognizes the love Ôshû feels for Tomenojo and encourages him to ransom Ôshû. Ôshû's attendant (*kamuro*), Osan, is killed by the enemy.

Act III (ge):
Otowa no Mae and Ôshû 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 Tomoenojô are married.[63]

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[62] Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *Keisei Hotoke no Hara* in *Chikamatsu Zenshû*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: Iwamani Shoten, 1989) 260-289.
[63] Takano Tatsuyuki and Kuroki Kanzô, ed., *Keisei Asamagatake* in *Genroku Kabuki Kessaku-Shû,* (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1925), 390.

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 *oiesôdô* play featuring a three act structure. The *keiseikai* scene was in the second act of the *oiesôdô mono* and was a favorite with audiences. *Wagoto* actors Sakata Tôjûrô and Nakamura Shichisaburô 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.

Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *Keisei Hotoke no Hara*, 286.

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

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[64] Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, ed., *Engeki Hyakka Daijiten*, vol 3 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983) 557.

kabuki performances, Tôjûrô played the small *nô* drum (*kotsuzumi*) in several plays and critics praised his drumming skills.[65] Tôjûrô remained close to Shôemon and continued to visit and learn from him throughout his life. In fact, it was Shôemon who taught Tôjûrô one of his life lessons.

One day when Tôjûrô was a young actor, he went to see his teacher perform the music in a *nô* play. It was the opening day of the performance and Tôjûrô was very disappointed in the audiences' lack of response to Shôemon's playing. He went back to talk to is teacher about it. Shôemon 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 *nô* performance and Shôemon's response to Tôjûrô's concerns:

> From the second day he [Shôemon] was praised as the most skillful in the whole of Japan. Tôjûrô 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. Shôemon replied, "On the first day I was very concerned with what I was

[65] *Kabuki Hyôbanki 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.[66]

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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[66] Dunn and Torigoe, 74.

of Yûgiri's Death (Yûgiri Shichinenki), Tôjûrô'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."[67]

Undoubtedly, learning to play the drum and its rhythms helped Tôjûrô acquire timing and rhythm, both skills that were praised during his career. But perhaps a model for Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô directed his professional career. Tôjûrô followed his intuition in performance.

Tôjûrô recognized his strengths and limitations as an actor. He knew that his *tachiyaku* acting skills such as sword fighting and swaggering off-stage exit (*roppô*) 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 Tôjûrô was in his twenties, he studied with the *kabuki* actor of old women's roles, Sugi Kuhê (dates

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[67] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1, p. 549.

unknown). An account in T*he Actor's Analects* states that Kuhê told Tôjûrô he should study with a *tachiyaku* actor. Kuhê thought Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô studied with Kuhê, or what he studied, nor is there evidence to suggest that Tôjûrô formally studied with any other *kabuki* actors. It is likely that after studying with Shôemon and Kuhê, Tôjûrô learned by performing and watching others but without any more formal teacher-student relationships.

Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô's career.

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

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[68] Dunn and Torigoe, p. 104.
[69] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1, 143.

Hanzaemon (1650?-1717) at the Nawate Theatre in Kyoto. The play, *The Top of the Waterfall* (*Takiguchi*) was originally a *jôruri* play. The two were called "a couple of dazzling young men."[70]

Yamashita Hanzaemon was a lifelong rival of Tôjûrô. He was eight years younger than Tôjûrô, but he was consistently ranked higher than Tôjûrô in acting reviews until 1689.[71] Like Tôjûrô, 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 Tôjûrô was praised for his *yatsushi*.

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

In 1678, Tôjûrô premiered the role that would define his career. Yûgiri, 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 Nempyô*, vol. 1, 126.
[71] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, 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)*. Yûgiri's death was quickly immortalized in the play *Yûgiri's Last New Year* (*Yûgiri Nagori no Shogatsu*), at Osaka's Araki Yojibei Theatre barely three weeks after her death. Tôjûrô played the role of Fujiya Izaemon, Yûgiri's lover. Onnagata Kirinami Senju played courtesan Yûgiri.[73]

Tôjûrô and the play were tremendously popular. Tôjûrô 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*. Tôjûrô 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 Yûgiri-Izaemon production and the play's plot.[75]

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[73] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol 1, 132.
[74] Dunn and Torigoe, 101-103.
[75] Takano Tatsuyuki suggests the premiere of The *First Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death* was at the Araki Yojibei Theatre in 1678 and that *Yûgiri 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 Tôjûrô as Izaemon in a *yatsushi* scene, followed by a *nureba* and *kuzetsu*.[76] Tôjûrô was in high demand to play the role of Izaemon in *Yûgiri* sequels (*Yûgirimono*). 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 Yûgiri's Death* (*Yûgiri Isshûki*). The following year, he played Izaemon in the *Third Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death* (*Yûgiri Sannenki*). In 1682, according to a program from the Osaka Kaneko Rokuemon-za, he was the second ranking

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[76] Scholars of Genroku *kabuki* including Tsuchiya Keiichirô and Suwa Haruo suggest that the first act of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's *Yûgiri Awa no Naruto*, is actually a revised version of *The First Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death*. In this scene, Izaemon is a young master, in love with Yûgiri 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. Yûgiri is heartsick at not seeing Izaemon and does not want to meet any customers. Izaemon has heard Yûgiri 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 Yûgiri, 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.[77] In 1684, Tôjûrô played the role of Izaemon in *The Seventh Anniversary of Yûgiri'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.[78] 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, Tôjûrô reprised the role of Izaemon in *The Thirteenth Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death (Yûgiri Jûshichinenki).* In 1691 he starred *in The Great Temple Ceremony at Sakai* (*Sakai no Ôdera Kaichô*) at the Ichimura Heimon Theatre in Osaka and played the role of the legendary samurai Soga Gorô. The following year he starred in another successful *keiseikai* role at Kyoto's Murayama Theatre with Iwai Hanshirô I (1652-1699). Of the eleven documented roles Tôjûrô played between 1678 and 1692, ten of them were in *keiseikai* plays, and nine were as Izaemon.[80] Tôjûrô had created his reputation on the basis of his Izaemon and *keiseikai* roles.

The Tôjûrô, Kichizaemon, and Chikamatsu years (1693-1702)

Tôjûrô's return to the Mandayu Theatre to star in *The Temple of Maya* (*Butsumo Mayasan Kaichô*) in 1693 marked the first known collaboration with playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon and with playwright and comic actor (*dokegata)*

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[79] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô* 169-183.
[80] Takano, 367-374

Kaneko Kichizemon.[81] *Temple of Maya* was a play timed to coincide with a *kaichô* opening at the Maya Temple near Osaka. The play's opening and closing scenes were set at Maya Temple. This *oiesôdô 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 Tôjûrô. Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô the lead role in the production and took a secondary role for himself. At about this time, Tôjûrô 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.[82]

Tôjûrô 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

[82] "Yakusha Okagami" in *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol.1, 316-317.

> 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.[83]

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 Tôjûrô and Hanzaemon throughout their lives. While Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô, 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 (*obôn*)

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[83]Ibid.

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 Tomoenojô 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

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[84] Dunn and Torigoe, 103.
[85] Suwa Haruo, "Kaneko Ikkô ni miru Chikamatsu Kichiemon no Kankei," in *Kabuki Kenkyû to Hihyô*, (11, 1993) 35.
[86] Dunn and Torigoe, 103-104.

comic role in twenty-four.[87] Of those twenty-nine plays, ten were *kaichô mono*.[88] This is significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the successful collaboration between Tôjûrô, Chikamatsu, and Kichizemon. Kichizaemon helped Chikamatsu write his scripts and he performed in the comic role with Tôjûrô in most of them. Second, more than half of Chikamatsu's extant play scripts were written for Tôjûrô and a third of them contained a happy ending with a *kaichô* scene. This again demonstrates a winning theatrical formula that worked for actors, playwrights and audiences.

Tôjûrô's Mature Years (1703-1709)

Tôjûrô'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 Nempyô*, Tôjûrô's character was bullied by a fox spirit that forced Tôjûrô's character to speak gibberish. It has been

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[87] Suwa Haruo, "Kaneko Ikkô ni Miru Chikamatsu Kichiemon no Kankei" in *Kabuki Kenkyû to Hihyô*, (11, 1993) p. 37.
[88] Gunji, *Kabuki no Hassô*, 195.

suggested that Tôjûrô suffered a stroke and had trouble speaking. The fox spirit was a plot device to allow Tôjûrô to continue performing on stage.[89] Tôjûrô acted in a spring play with Kichizaemon after *The Felicitous New Year* closed.

During the next three years, Tôjûrô acted twice in *A New Year's Remembrance of Yûgiri* and in other *keiseikai* plays. Tôjûrô 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."[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. Tôjûrô was elaborately eulogized at the time of his death. People flocked to his memorial services. He continued to be written about in the *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* long after his death.

Tôjûrô the Actor

Tôjûrô's acting artistry is well described both by those who enjoyed a performance and those who found a

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[89] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol. 1, 303.
[90] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol. 2, 342.

performance lacking. In the first acting critique written in 1687, Tôjûrô was given a middle ranking in the *Young Actor's Great Mirror for the Stage.*[91] The review mentioned several points that seemed consistent throughout Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô 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.[92] Tôjûrô 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 (*kôjô*) 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 Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol.1, 246.
[92] Dunn and Torigoe, 98-100.

a vacation and not producing any plays in the next year.

This suggests that Tôjûrô, who had by 1687 played the role of Izaemon seven times[93], 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 Tojûrô was only given a chû ranking by the critics.[94]

> Tôjûrô'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].

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

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[93] *A New Year's Remembrance of Yûgiri*, four times (1678), *The First Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death* (1679), *The Third Anniversay of Yûgiri's Death*(1680), and *The Seventh Anniversary of Yûgiri's Death* (1684).
See Dunn and Torigoe, 102-103.
[94] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol. 1, 132-133.

rest of his life, Tôjûrô'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 [Tôjûrô] is stubborn.

Some critics already considered Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô 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: Tôjûrô's reputation and fame were built on his portrayal of Izaemon. Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô's senior contemporaries. Sanemon is praised for his *roppô*; 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 kyôgen)* that demanded physical exertion. *Yatsushi, keiseikai* and *nuregoto* involved less movement and outright physical exertion. Consequently, Tôjûrô, 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*

[95] Torigoe, 314.

(*Yarô Seki Zumô*) summed it up by saying, "his long sword skills, wounded acting, dance, and *roppô* are terrible"[96].

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

Tôjûrô and His Contemporaries

In his book, *Genroku Kabuki Kô*, 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] "Yarô Seki Zumô" in *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, 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 Tôjûrô, Shichisaburô, 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 OF ACTING TRAITS FOR FOUR MAJOR GENROKU ACTORS[98]

Performance Element	Hanzaemon	Jinbei	Shichisaburô	Tôjûrô
Courtesan Buying *Keiseikai*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Courtesan Acting *Keiseigoto*	Y	N	Y	Y
Acting in a Lover's Quarrel *Kuzetsugoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gentle Acting *Yawarakagoto*	N	Y	N	N
Acting in Disguise *Yatsushigoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Acting in a Love Scene *Nuregoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Speech *Serifu*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Melancholy Acting *Ureigoto*	Y	N	Y	Y
Long Monologue *Ikyôgen*	N	N	Y	Y
Lamentation *Shûtangoto*	Y	N	N	N
Domestic Acting *Sewagoto*	Y	N	N	N
Remonstrance Acting *Ikengoto*	Y	N	N	N
Erotic Acting *Irogoto*	Y	N	N	N
Realistic Acting *Jitsugoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Local Plays *ji-kyôgen*	N	N	N	Y

[98] See Torigoe, 323, for the original chart.

Performance Element	**Hanzaemon**	**Jinbei**	**Shichisaburô**	**Tôjûrô**
Dance *Shosagoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Slapstick Roles *Odokegoto*	Y	Y	N	N
Erotic Acting *Irogoto*	Y	N	N	N
Nobleman Acting *Daijingoto*	Y	N	N	N
Samurai Acting *Samuraigoto*	N	Y	Y	N
Long Sword *Tachigoto*	Y	N	Y	Y
Wounded Acting *Teoigoto*	N	N	N	Y
Contemporary Topic Acting *Honmagoto*	N	Y	Y	N
Rhythmic Acting *Hyôshigoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Samurai Matters *Bûdôgoto*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stage Gestures *Furidashi*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bravera Acting *Aragoto*	Y	N	Y	N
Exit in Six Directions *Roppô*	N	N	Y	N
Techique for Walking *Tanzen*	N	N	Y	N

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.

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[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*.

Tôjûrô's roles did not perform comic roles, nor did he play swaggering samurai roles.[100]

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

Tôjûrô's Views on Acting

Tôjûrô 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, Tôjûrô's acting was quieter, subtle, and closer to realistic.[102] Tôjûrô believed that the *nimaime*

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[100] This is different than *bûdôgoto* or samurai matters including swordfighting and wounded acting. Tôjûrô did both, but not skillfully.
[101] Torigoe, 331-332.
[102] It would be difficult to find a consensus of people who think that Tôjûrô'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 *nimaime* 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:

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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 *nimaime* was expected to be humorous like a *dokeyaku* (often referred to as a *sanmaime*), a skillful *nimaime* 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

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[104] Ibid.

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

Hanzaemon did not always perform with the earnestness of Tôjûrô. 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 Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô and Hanzaemon had different approaches to acting, audiences considered both actors to be the top in their field. Tôjûrô 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]

Tôjûrô 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

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[105] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1, 108.
[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.[108]

Incidents such as the one above provided Tôjûrô with a reputation for meticulous detail. Tôjûrô strove to achieve accuracy in acting whenever possible. No job or event was too menial to be studied. Tôjûrô 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 Jûrô, Izaemon, and several Izaemon-like characters.

At the same time, Tôjûrô 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."[109] Though Tôjûrô strove for realism in acting, it was a heightened realism. Tôjûrô strived for authenticity in his roles, and he was also

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[108] Dunn and Torigoe, 129.
[109] Dunn and Torigoe, 128-129.

aware of the importance of keeping the audience's attention.[110]

Tôjûrô'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. Tôjûrô'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*."[111] He often played a

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[110] This is similar to Zeami Motokiyo's advice to actors who play working class characters such as salt briners in *nô*. 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 Nô Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami* (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1984), 10.
[111] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, 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 Tôjûrô's. Tôjûrô 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.

Tojûro's first documented *yatsushi* scene was the one that elevated him to celebrity status as Izaemon in *Yûgiri'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 Tôjûrô and all other Kamigata actors performing *keiseikai*. The drawings in the *e-irikyôgen 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 Tôjûrô's typical *yatsushi* costume. (See Illustration VI, p. 121.)

Though Tôjûrô 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.[112] In another play, he assumed the role of a monkey trainer and did not wear his trademark paper kimono.[113]

Until Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô's tenaciousness and audience expectations the *yatsushi* scene became permanently affiliated with the *keiseikai* scene.

Tôjûrô 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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[112] Taguchi, Akiko. "Yatsushi ni Naritate. Kojôruri to no Kankei ni Tsuite," *Kabuki Kenkyû to Hihyô*. 11 (1993)38,137-146.
[113] Takano, *Engeki-shi Kenkyû*, 371.

cloth covering his head. [114]The *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* praised Tôjûrô's "*yatushi*" in 1700.[115] Tôjûrô was known as a specialist of disquised young lover roles (*yatsushi meijin*). The *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* named him a master of the style in 1702.[116]

Of the *keiseikai* scene, Tôjûrô 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.[117]

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

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[114] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 3, 20.
[115] Takano, *Engeki-shi Kenkyû*, 371.
[116] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol 2, 384.
[117] Dunn and Torigoe, 136.

This comment infers that Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô appears to be beneath the covers about to engage in acts of intimacy, each with a different woman. Tôjûrô'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. Tôjûrô complained about the deterioration of acting yet the scenes with a sexual nature were what the audiences enjoyed.

Illustration VI

Sakata Tôjûrô Dressed for a *Yatsushi* Scene

Dunn and Torigoe, 304.

Illustration VII

Kaneko Kichizaemon Dressed for a Comic Acting Role

Dunn and Torigoe, 179.

Tôjûrô's Verbal Acting

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

Genroku *kabuki* followed *Okuni kabuki* by fifty years, yet the language of *nô*, *kyôgen*, *waka* poetry, and ballad storytelling (*kojôruri*), 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 Tôjûrô, but for those who were not as literate, or as comfortable on stage, it created tension in the theatre. Many audience members found Tôjûrô too loquacious for their taste.[118]

Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô to help them improve their

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[118]*Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol.3, 184-185.

vocabularies.[119] Tôjûrô 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.

Tôjûrô was not an easy actor to perform on stage with. In the *Collection of Kabuki Critiques*, Tôjûrô receives mixed praise. "You could easily hear the clarity of his voice." The critique continues that Tôjûrô uses many old words in his *yatsushi* scenes, and his language was difficult to understand. "It is a nuisance for his fellow actors."[120]

Ad-libbing

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

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[119] Dunn and Torigoe, 117. There are two anecdotes in "Sequel to Dust in the Ears" that illustrate actors studying poetry. Item XVIII: Sakurayama Shôzaemon 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 extend. His *haimyô* was Ozan, "Warbler Mountain." Item XIX: Kataoka Nizaemon recommended that actors learn how to write *haikai*, for it was this above all that would help their art and be useful in all sorts of connections, be it the gods, Buddha, or love, and would ensure that they were not ignorant either in their thoughts or actions.

[120] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1, 417.

play. Complex language and long speeches were one avenue Tôjûrô followed to make his acting realistic and funny.

In early *kabuki*, 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...[121]

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. Tôjûrô was skillful at manipulating his dialogue and tailoring it to fit either his mood or the audience.

Dialogue and Physical Comedy

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

One of Tôjûrô'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*, Bunzô enters a *daimyo*'s garden wearing a rain hat and carrying a short sword. He is on his way to Gesô Temple:

> *He hears the sound of a shamisen and a kouta song drifts along the breeze. He recognizes the melody as his lover, Ôshû's, from Mikuni Brothel. Bunzô 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.*

Bunzô: 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 Bunzô's head in the dark and mistakes it for the water basin. She sets the* mochi *stand on Bunzô's head and puts the bottle of* sake *on top. Bunzô is happy to discover the wooden stand on his head. He reaches up, takes the bottle and begins to drink the* sake.*)*

Bunzô: 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 Bunzô'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)*

Bunzô: 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.)*

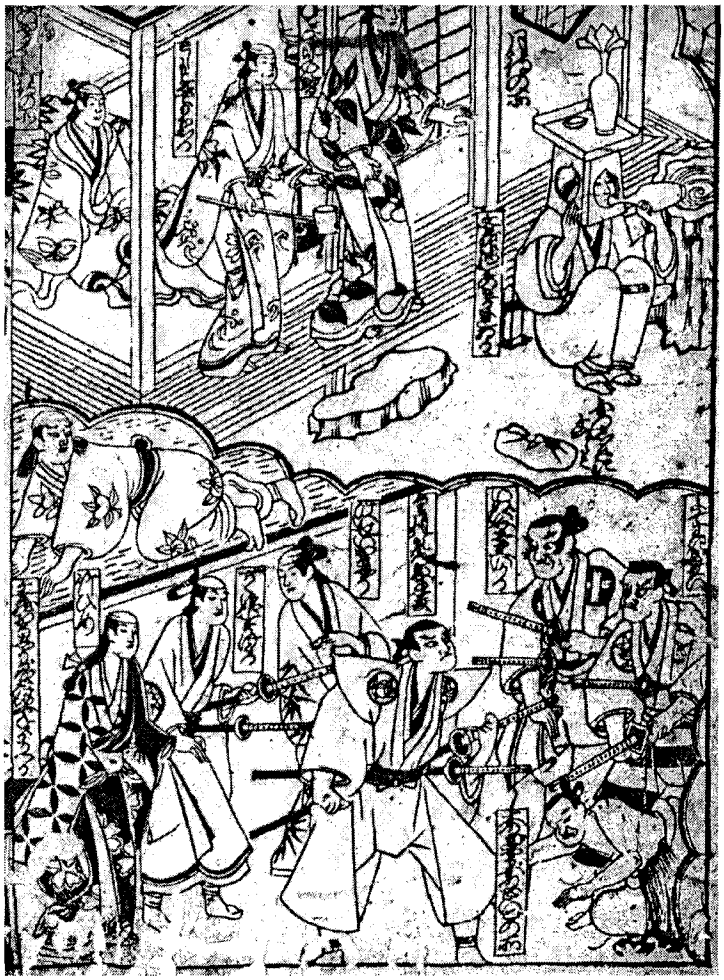
Tôjûrô speaks very little in this scene, but the image of Bunzô dressed in a paper kimono, with a wooden stand on his head and a *sake* flask in his mouth resonated with audiences.[122] (See Illustration VIII, page 130.) The scene is immediately followed with one of Tôjûrô's long monologues lamenting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

[122] Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *Keisei Hotoke no Hara,* 276-277.

Illustration VIII

Bunzô Obliviously Sits in the Garden Sipping *Sake*,

with the *Mochi* Stand on his Head



Chikamatsu, *Keisei Hotoke no Hara*, 281.

The following year, Tôjûrô 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,* Tôjûrô manipulates a sake bottle like a doll and through a series of allusions to the brothel district, indicates the doll is a courtesan. Tôjûrô plays the character Takatô 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 provacative 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.*) [123]

This simple scene was very popular with audiences. Tôjûrô continued to play a drunken sake peddler, imitating a courtesan with a sake bottle in two sequels to the original play. It was Tôjûrô'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), *Tôjûrô* played a monkey trainer and was praised highly for his comic lovers' quarrel with his monkey.[124] As these examples indicate, much of the humor in Tôjûrô's plays came from both verbal humor and sight gags. Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô displayed the heart of a comic actor (*sanmaime*) while performing as a *nimaime* actor.

Tôjûrô and the *Ikyôgen*

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

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[123] Chikamatsu, *Keisei Mibu Dainenbutsu*, 102-103.
[124] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 3, 20-21.

(*hataraki kyôgen*) 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 movments. 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

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[125] Torigoe, 315.

this style was six or seven minutes long.[126] Several plays featuring *ikyôgen* are extant. *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain*, The *Courtesan and the Great Service at Mibu Temple*, "The Stutterer Domori" from *Today's Nô Kyôgen* and *Mizuki Tatsunosuke's Grace* are all plays considered to be representative of the *ikyôgen*.[127]

Bunzô'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 Tôjûrô's *ikyôgen* style. One of the remaining scripts of *The Courtesan and the Buddha Plain* has Bunzô reciting a speech of three hundred and fifty characters. Torigoe states that a different version of the same play contains a speech delivered by Bunzô with three thousand characters.[128]

Tôjûrô'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 Nô and Kyôgen*. The play featured adaptations of five *nô* and *kyôgen* plays: *Senjimono*, *Chidori*, *Hanako*, *Domori*, and *Tsuri Kitsune* featuring the actors Yamatoya Tokichi, Tazaki Hanbei, Mizuki Tatsunosuke, Sakata Tôjûrô, and

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[126] Kawatake, 333.
[127] Torigoe, 313.
[128] Torigoe, 312-313.

Yamatoya Jinbei. Tôjûrô starred in *Domori*, a play about a stuttering man. Of the five plays, four are *hataraki* plays that involve large movements. Only Tôjûrô's performance was a stationary play.

Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô. It took a few days of performance before he could convincingly master the art of playing someone with a stutter.[129] When *Tôjûrô* performed his *ikyôgen* speeches, actor Otowa Jirôsaburô 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.

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[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 Ganjirô III, who has researched early *kabuki*, states that during Tôjûrô'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 *kyôgen* or *kojôruri*.[131]

Tôjûrô's Extravagant Lifestyle

As Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô 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.

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[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.[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 *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.[133]

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

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[132] Dunn and Torigoe, 126.
[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.[134]

These stories about Tôjûrô 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, Tôjûrô 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

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

[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 Shichisaburô enhanced his own acting. Finally, he stayed true to himself on and off the stage.

CHAPTER V

NAKAMURA SHICHISABURÔ: WAGOTO'S CREATIVE REVOLUTIONARY[135]

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*,

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[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 Tôjûrô and Danjûrô I and propelling the *wagoto* genre forward.

Shichisaburô's Early Years

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

At a young age, Shichisaburô 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]

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[136] Kawatake, *Nihon Engeki Zenshi*, 362.
[137] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 1, 192.

Creative Decisions

In 1682, Shichisaburô made a creative decision that would change his life and alter the path of *kabuki* permanently. In the second month of 1682, Shichisaburô played the role of Soga Jûrô in the play *The Five Women of Lusty Kamakura* (*Kôshoku Kamakura Gonnin Onna*).[138] Soga Jûrô and Soga Gorô 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 Jûrô and Gorô were constant from play to play. Both brothers were considered "sons of Edo" and older brother Jûrô and younger brother Gorô were typically played in the strong *aragoto* style.

In this particular performance, however, Shichisaburô decided to play the older brother, Jûrô, in the *wagoto*, or soft and more natural style. He was paired with Ichikawa Danjûrô I, who played Jûrô's younger brother Gorô.[139] For the New Year's performance of 1676, he and Danjûrô played the Soga brothers in the "Confrontation" scene of *Soga's Two Shrines of Honor*

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[138] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol. 1, 144.
[139] Shichisaburô had played Jûrô in 1676, but in the old *aragoto* style.

(*Soga Ryôsha no Tamono)* at the Kanzaburô Theatre.[140] His characterization was popular with audiences and Shichisaburô 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 Shichisaburô with a *genpuku* hairstyle played Jûrô in a gentle way that was excellently performed. From that time forward, Jûrô has been played in the *wagoto* style.[141]

After the 1682 production of *The Five Women of Lusty Kamakura*, whenever Shichisaburô played Soga Jûrô, 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 Jûrô continues to be played in the *wagoto* style.

Wagoto became Shichisaburô's trademark style of acting. He was reputed to have been so handsome he was nicknamed "Today's Narihira"[142] after the famous *Heian* period poet Ariwara no Narihira (825-860), the object of desire in many pieces of literature and theatre.[143] Though

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[140] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol. 1, 126.
[141] This quote first appeared in *Edo Shibai Nendaiki*. It appears in Kawatake, 362.
[142] Kawatake, 362.
[143] Shinmura, Izuru. *Kôjien*, 90.

short in physical stature, Shichisaburô 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.[144]

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

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[144] Kawatake, Ibid.
[145]Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô*, vol.1, 157.

Illustration IX

Nakamura Shichisaburô as a *Samurai*

From Dunn and Torigoe, 184.

Shichisaburô Performs in Kyoto

In the autumn of his thirty-fifth year, Shichisaburô 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 Edô Yome Iribunshô),* 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 Tôjûrô. 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, Shichisaburô, 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 Shichisaburô reprised the role of Koroku in one of his popular Edo plays, *Today's Figure of Kantô's Koroku (Kantô Koroku Imayô Sugata*), which featured the famous *onnagata* Yoshizawa Ayame in the role of the

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[146] Torigoe, 333.
[147] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol. 4, 556.

sister, Kane no Mae. Shichisaburô reportedly brought in audiences of only two or three hundred. "Koroku is a hovering blowfly" was included in one review.[148] There was also a *kyôka* poem making the rounds about Shichisaburô: "Hanzaemon wanted to see Shichisaburô's beautiful eyelashes, so he went round to view the rear legs of the horse."[149] In the *kabuki* theatre, a minor actor played the hind legs of a two man "horse." The poem thus poked fun at Shichisaburô, 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, *Ode to the Women's Pleasure Quarters* (*Onnayuriwaka*).

While local audiences were not impressed with Shichisaburô, Tôjûrô saw a performance and recognized an outstanding performer:

> What stupidity! Kyoto audiences are thoroughly ignorant! Above all, Shichisaburô 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

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[148] Ihara, *Kabuki Nempyô,* vol. 1, 212.
[149] This quotation appears in Japanese in Torigoe, 333. I have used Laurence R. Kominz's English translation from *The Stars Who Created Kabuki, Their Lives, Loves, and Legacies*, 136.

the *kaomise*, he will be a far tougher opponent in the second program.[150]

Tôjûrô's prediction proved correct. On the twenty-second day of the first month of 1698, Hanzaemon's company performed the play *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, starring Shichisaburô as the *wagoto* character, Tomoenojô. The play featured four well-respected actors in prominent roles. In addition to Shichisaburô as Tomoenojô, 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.[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.[152]

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[150] Dunn and Torigoe, 133-135.
[151] Ihara, vol. .1, 215-217.
[152] "Keisei Asagamatake" in *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, Tonegorô, 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 Tonegorô's accusations.

Unbeknownst to Tonegorô, Miura and Wataemon are in love and have a daughter together. Wataemon is working to ransom Miura from her brothel contract. He overhears Tonegorô'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 Tomoenojô, Otowa no Mae's fiancé, has broken their engagement because he is in love with the courtesan Ôshû. 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 *kaichô*. 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 (*kamurô*) comes to ascend the mountain to the *kaichô*. After talking to Wataemon and Tomoenojô, 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 Tomoenojô, 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 Tomoenojô's love, Ôshû. She is, in fact, Ôshû's *kamuro*. Suddenly, Otowa no Mae realizes that Shichibei is actually her former fiancé, Tomoenojô, 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 Ôshû.

In one of the most dynamic scenes in the play, Tomoenojô flings the amulet into a nearby brazier, where it immediately burns. Suddenly, a cloud of smoke rises from the brazier and the apparition of Ôshû 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 Ôshû: How frightening! They fall down into a deep sleep.

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

Ôshû (*A small song* [*kouta*] *narrates Ôshû'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 Ôshû? What are you doing appearing around here?

Ôshû: 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 Tomoenojô.)* What a pitiful figure. *(He tries to take her in his arms, but she mysteriously disappears, though her costume remains. Tomoenojô stands in place looking at the spot where she has vanished, thoroughly amazed.)*

Ôshû*(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[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.

Tomoenojô (*after Ôshû 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.

Tomoenojô: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 Tomoenojô owes a small fortune to the brothel for entertaining Ôshû, and is trying to ransom her from her contract. Wataemon decides to help his young master by selling his sword to raise money to pay for Tomoenojô's debts, but villainous Nikaidô Hyôsuke steals the money received for the sword. Osan, Wataemon and Miura's thirteen-year-old daughter, is a witness to

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[154] "Keisei Asagamatake," in *Genroku Meisaku Kenkyû*, 413-415.

the crime. When she questions Hyôsuke, he stabs her to death.

Tomoenojô, 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 Tomoenojô of his debts.

Tomoenojô pays a visit to the brothel to see Miura and is dismayed to run into Ôshû, who is physically ill because of Tomoenojô's long absence. Reluctantly, Tomoenojô enters the room to speak to Ôshû, 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, Tomoenojô uses phrases that have a double meaning. While he is arguing (or trying to avoid an argument) with Ôshû, nearly everything he says relates to a strategy in the game of *go*.[155]

In the final act of the play, Otowa no Mae, Ôshû, 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

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[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. Tomoenojô and Otowa no Mae are married, and the House of Suwa is restored to its original glory.[156]

Audiences loved the plot of *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, and Shichisaburô's acting reaped great praise:

> The last review [of Shichisaburô] 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 Ôshû 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.
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> Next was the scene where he professes his love for Miura. No one could see what might happen next.

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[156] Part of this synopsis for *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama* is from Tsuchiya Keiichirô's *Genroku Haiyûden,* 80-87. Concise summaries are also available in English in Samuel L. Leiter's *New Kabuki Encyclopedia*, 309-310, and in Japanese in *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.[157]

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

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 Tomoenojô 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

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[157] This review appears handwritten on an illustration in Tatsuyuki and Kanzo's *Genroku Kabuki Kessakushû ge*, 393. It was transcribed into regular characters (*katsuji*) by Ikawa Mayuko.

between Tomoenojô and Ôshû, as the scene progresses, Tomoenojô addresses their relationship while speaking in game terminology:

> *(Ôshû is sleeping by herself on a futon as Tomoenojô enters.)*

Tomoenojô (*talking to himself*): Miura, what are you bring 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 Oshû. (*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.

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

Tomoenojô (*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, Ôshu 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.*)

Tomoenojô: 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?

Tomoenojô: 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 Ôshu.*) 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* nô *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 Ôshu who has remained silent runs to him, trying to detain him by holding on to the back of his obi from behind.*)

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

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

Ôshu: Why are you being so rude? (*She grabs hold of Tomoenojô's leg and bites it.*)

Tomoenojô: 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.

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

Tomoenojô: At the most, maybe sixty days.

Ôshû: 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 Tôin was the name of a licensed brothel district that was no longer considered fashionable.

Tomoenojô: 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?

Tomoenojô: Well, since you're asking, that sounds good to me.

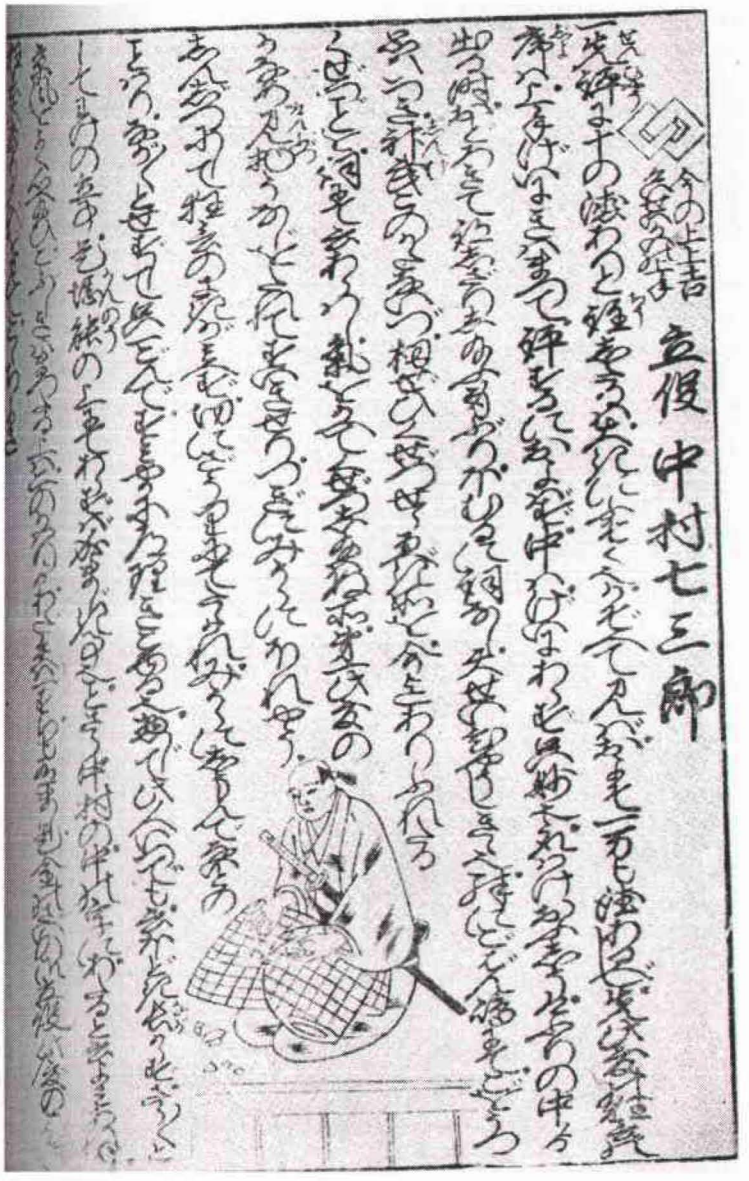
(The two become intimate in the bedding.)

(See Illustration X, p. 161.)

Illustration X

Tomoenojô from *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*

Plays *Go* on His Jacket



Tatsuyuki and Kanzo, *Genroku Kabuki Kessakushû ge*, 393.

The humor in the previous scene, as well as the plot and acting of the entire play, catapulted Shichisaburô into direct competition with Tôjûrô. In another review of the same period, the *Collection of Kabuki Critiques* said of Shichisaburô: "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 Tôjûrô's."[160]

Shichisaburô 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 Tôjûrô. In the twelfth month of 1699, Tôjûrô had one of the highlights of his career playing Umenaga Bunzô in *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain.* This *oiemono* also coincided with a *kaichô* on Hotoke no Hara mountain, in Higashiyama in Kyoto.

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[160] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei,* vol.2, 134.

The same month that Tôjûrô was performing *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain,* Shichisaburô 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, Tôjûrô would observe it and praise Shichisaburô highly. In turn, Shichisaburô went to see Tôjûrô's performances and praised him equally. While Shichisaburô was in Kyoto, he and Tôjûrô met several times and became friends, although they never performed on stage together.[162]

Shichisaburô Returns Home

Shichisaburô performed with Yamashita Hanzaemon and his company for two years before he and his wife returned to Edo in 1699.[163] Before Shichisaburô left Kyoto, he gave

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[161] Ihara, vol.1, 228
[162] See Suwa Haruo's article, "Keisei Asamatake no Shûhen," Torigoe Bunzô's *Genroku Kabuki Kô,* or Tsuchida Keiichirô's *Genroku Haiyûden.*
[163] Ihara, vol.1, 240.

Tôjûrô a parting gift. Tôjûrô wanted to give Shichisaburô a gift in return, but wished to give Shichisaburô 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 Shichisaburô returned to Edo.

Later, at the end of the year, six men appeared at Shichisaburô's house in Edo with a large gift and a letter. Tôjûrô had sent water from the Kamo river in Kyoto in a special container and bid Shichisaburô use it for his New Year's tea. Shichisaburô was overwhelmed by the thought that went into the gift. He is reported to have said, "After my meetings in Kyoto with Tôjûrô, 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 Shichisaburô 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 Tôjûrô's *The Courtesan and the Great Buddhist*

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[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 Danjûrô 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 Ôshû, 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 Shichisaburô's performance are described:[165]

> Shichisaburô portrayed Soga Jûrô. Returning from a ceremony at Lord Hôjô'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.
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> 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 Jûrô has

[165] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei,* vol.3, 224.

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 Shichisaburô's face and it is extremely funny. The man prepares to leave and the drunken Shichisaburô finally says, "Please forgive me, ladies." It was so funny [our] insides hurt.[166]

Once Shichisaburô returned to Edo, audiences constantly compared Shichisaburô and Danjûrô, trying to determine the better actor. Shichisaburô was praised for excelling in the Kyoto style, while Danjûrô's acting had been considered "coarse."[167]

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

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

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[166] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol.3, 224.
[167] *Kabuki Hyôbanki Shûsei*, vol.2, 418.

Tôjûrô.[168] He was skilled in samurai acting, dance, movement, and wagoto acting. Shichisaburô 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.

Shichisaburô 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, Shichisaburô was reprising his role as Soga Jûrô in the play *The Courtesan and the Soga Storm (Keisei Arashi Soga)* in 1709. While onstage, Shichisaburô's mood turned sour. Shichisaburô 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.[169] Torigoe Bunzô claims that on that same date, during the performance of a play by the same name, Shichisaburô collapsed and died from an excess of alcohol.

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[168] Torigoe, 331-32.
[169] Kawatake, 366.

Unfortunately, a review for his last performance has never been discovered. [170]

Conclusion

Shichisaburô's three most famous roles in *kabuki* were Nagoya Sanza, Tomoenojô, and Soga Jûrô. 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. Shichisaburô's masterwork provided inspiration for many of Chikamatsu's later plays. Still, Shichisaburô's most enduring legacy is his creation of the *wagoto* Soga Jûrô. Rarely is a Soga play performed today without the character of elder brother Jûrô portrayed in the soft style.

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[170] Torigoe, 331-332.

CHAPTER VI

THE CREATION OF *WAGOTO KABUKI*

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 Portugese 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 Sanzaburô, 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 *yarô kabuki*. Plays changed from short skits and dances to substantial full-length plays (*monomane kyôgen 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, k*eiseikai* 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 (*oiesôdô mono)* began to be performed in the Genroku period, the *keiseikai* became a scene inserted into the second act. The *oiesôdô 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 *oiesôdô mono* was often a *kaichô* scene, in which the major characters would go to a temple to see a special statue of Buddha on display. During the *kaichô* scene, the major conflict would be resolved, and the *oiesôdô* mono ended on a happy, auspicious note.

Tôjûrô's Contribution to *Wagoto Kabuki*

Tôjûrô revolutionized the *keiseikai* scene. Inspired by performances by his predecessor, Arashi Sanemon, Tôjûrô donned a paper *kimono* and a straw rain hat making him appear downtrodden and performed the *keisiekai* scene with charisma and energy.

Sakata Tôjûrô, a Genroku *tachiyaku* actor, serendipitously took the role of Fujiya Izaemon in an "overnight pickles" play about the popular courtesan Yûgiri. In his performance he performed a new style of *kabuki* that is now known as *wagoto*. Tôjûrô'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)."[171] He was famous in Edo for his *keisei* performances, though he had never performed there.

Soon Tôjûrô'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 kyôgen*) and the *keiseikai*. Tôjûrô's single greatest skill was the *keisiekai* and he devoted his life

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[171] *Yakusha Dankô 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, Tôjûrô collaborated with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon on the play *The Temple of Maya.* Tôjûrô continued to work with Chikamatsu and Kichizaemon for the next six years and his best work emerged while working at the Mandayu Theatre.

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

Nakamura Shichisaburô's Contribution to *Wagoto*

Nakamura Shichisaburô, 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. Tôjûrô and Chikamatsu borrowed structural and comedic elements from Shichisaburô's play to create two of the biggest hits of Tôjûrô's career, *The Courtesan on the Buddha Plain, and The Courtesan* and *The*

Great Buddhist Service at Mibu Temple. Shichisaburô 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, "Shichisaburô the Boar." Shichisaburô, though humiliated, refused to give up. After his acting fiasco, he starred in the *oiesôdô* play, *The Courtesan and the Peak of Asama*, that contained all of the elements of Tôjûrô's successful plays, but Shichisaburô's play was more humorous and had a stronger plot. The lover's quarrel between Shichisaburô's character, Tomoenojô, and his lover Ôshû, while Tomoenojô played a game of *go* on a jacket, set a new standard for humor in the *keiseikai* plays. When Shichisaburô 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 Jûrô in the Soga plays that were popular with Edo audiences.

Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô's Lasting Effects on *Wagoto Kabuki*

Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô 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. Tôjûrô's trademark paper

kimono became permanently identified with the *yatsushi* character.

Tôjûrô'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.* Tôjûrô's *ikyôgen*, stationary plays composed of long monologues, stopped being performed after he died.

The *wagoto* character type developed by Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô is still present on stage today. The play, *Sukeroku, Flower of Edo*, features the character of Soga Jûrô played in the comic *wagoto* style that Shichisaburô established. Yoshitsune, in *The Subscription List (Kanjinchô),* 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 Tôjûrô. 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 Tôjûrô's and Shichisaburô's time. Just a few short years after Tôjûrô's death, the form and the character type began to change. Those changes had three major causes: there was no strong successor to continue Tôjûrô's style of *wagoto* acting; Chikamatsu stopped writing for *kabuki* and began writing full time for the puppet theatre; and the *oiesôdô* play began to lose its popularity in the Kyoto-Osaka region.

Although Tôjûrô 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-Tôjûrô collaborations. Both playwrights and Tôjûrô honed their skills to present plays that showcased Tôjûrô at his best. Other actors such as Hanzaemon and Jinbei performed well at *keiseikai*, but did not share Tôjûrô'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, Tôjûrô believed that an actor needed to develop his own style of acting and should not try to imitate the work of other actors. Tôjûrô 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 Tôjûrô'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 *oiesôdô* plays and were looking for something different.[172]

Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô's Successors

Tôjûrô had two biological sons, Sakata Tôkurô

[172] Torigoe, 317.

(1668-?) and Sakata Heishichirô (dates unknown), neither of whom assumed his name nor achieved his success as *kabuki* actors.[173] Kuwanaya Chôzaemon (1669-1724) was originally an apprentice of Tôjûrô I. He took the name Tôjûrô II in 1711. He was known as Fushima Tôjûrô, nicknamed for the rural area where he used to perform.[174] Yamatoya Jinbei was considered Tôjûrô's true successor. He performed *yatsushi* scenes in a paper kimono and excelled at *keiseikai* scenes.

Nakamura Shichisaburô adopted a son, Nakamura Kiyokichi (1703-1774), as his successor. Kiyokichi took the name Nakamura Shichisaburô II in 1711. He began his career playing young male roles and later became a successful *wagoto* actor in Edo. Shichisaburô's grandson used the name Nakamura Shichinosuke (1765-85) before assuming the name Shichisaburô III in 1770. He married the daughter of Kanzaburô VIII in 1777 and became a troupe manager the following year.[175]

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[173] Nojima, Jusaburo. *Kabuk Jimei Jiten*, (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 1998), 269-272.
[174] Ibid., 270.
[175] Hattori, et. al., *Kabuki Jiten*, 304.

A Darker *Wagoto*

In the years after Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô's *wagoto* style, but Chikamatsu wrote a score of love suicide plays (*shinjû mono*) in which prostitutes were no longer glamorous and high ranking. Koharu, from Chikamatsu's Love Suicides at Amijima (*Shinjû Tenno Amijima*), written eleven years after Tôjûrô died, is a low class prostitute with a kind and honorable heart but her status cannot compare with the courtesan Yûgiri. 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 Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô 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 (*gidayû*) accompanied these *kabuki* performances. Performing styles began to change as actors tried to accommodate the chanter and

melodies of *gidayû* style music. As a result, *kabuki* actors' began to develop new rhythm and speech patterns.

Nakamura Ganjirô III has compared Tôjûrô's long monologues to *kyôgen* speech.[176] When new musical styles were introduced to *kabuki*, a change in actor's speech patterns was inevitable. Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô and Shichisaburô 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 Tôjûrô's *wagoto* characters. An example of the character is Kamiya Jihei

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[176] See Kominz, "Ganjirô 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 Yûgiri-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, Shôchiku Kabushiki Gaisha (Shôchiku), and most *kabuki* actors have their primary residence in Tokyo. Actors are scheduled to perform in major cities and Shôchiku 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 Ganjirô 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 Tôjûrô 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 Ganjirô III, has made great contributions to promoting, preserving, and reviving *wagoto kabuki* and early Chikamatsu plays. Ganjirô 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. Ganjirô 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 Ganjirô III is a scholar and takes a similar scholarly approach to roles as Sakata Tôjûrô did. He speaks with *kabuki* historians such as Torigoe Bunzô 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.

Ganjirô 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]

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

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

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[177] See Kominz, "Ganjirô 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 Tôjûrô, he is handsome, with a deep voice that can be commanding as Yuranosuke in *Chushingura*, and petulant as Fujiya Izaemon. He is charismatic and has been praised for his comic timing in the tradition Tôjûrô established. Nizaemon has constantly been paired with the *onnagata* Bando Tamasaburô 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 Tôjûrô'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 Tôjûrô. 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 Ganjirô, 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 Ganjirô III's study and productions replicating Genroku *kabuki* would be a worthwhile study of Tôjûrô's art performed by a contemporary master of *wagoto kabuki*.

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