

# Japanese Traditional Performing Arts (Spring 2019)

Diego Pellecchia and Galia Todorova Petkova

This class looks at different forms of Japanese performing arts. The first half of the term will focus on the study of *nōgaku*, Japan's performing art combining dance, drama, poetry, mask and costumes through literary and performance analysis. After spring break, the course will shift its focus to *kabuki* and *bunraku*. The course is led by Diego Pellecchia (noh scholar and practitioner) and Galia Todorova Petkova (specialist in Japanese performing arts and gender).

Students will learn about the history and aesthetic conventions of traditional performing arts, presented as living traditions in the context of contemporary Japanese society, using a combination of textual and audiovisual materials. The course will provide ample opportunities to attend performances, visit artisans' laboratories, and participate in workshops with renown Japanese artists, to complement a solid academic background about the arts with a more direct, hands-on approach to the topics covered.



Noh: *Ikkaku sennin*



Kabuki: *Narukami*

Performances often take place during the weekend: students are encouraged to check the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and keep those dates open. Outings are regarded as compulsory activities: presence will be counted toward the final grade. Students are expected to prepare readings in advance. Preparation will be tested with quizzes and short tests. As part of the final assignments, students will choose a topic for further individual research and present the results at the end of the semester. Presentation formats may include academic papers, translations, or creative works based on research. After the final presentation, students will write a 2500-3000-words essays and further elaborate on the same topic. Readings and other handouts will be provided by the lecturers in advance.

**Outings: This semester we will attend performances on January 27<sup>th</sup>, February 24<sup>th</sup>, March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup>. In addition, we will visit the atelier of a noh mask maker on February 7<sup>th</sup>.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Jan 15 Introduction to Japanese theatre

#### Read before class

- Brazell, Karen. "Japanese Theater, a Living Tradition" in *Traditional Japanese Theater*. Columbia University Press, 1999. Pp. 3-46.

### Jan 17 Introduction to noh

Overview of the history of noh from its origins until today.

#### Read before class

- Shinko Kagaya and Miura Hiroko. "Noh and Muromachi culture" in Salz, Jonah (ed.) *A History of Japanese Theatre*. Cambridge U.P. 2016. Pp. 24-59 ('spotlights' and 'focuses' are optional).
- Brazell, K. "Atsumori" in *Traditional Japanese Theater*. p. 126-142.

#### Further reading

- "The Death of Atsumori" in *The Tale of the Heike*, Book 9 section 16. Royall Tyler tr. Viking Press, 2012. Pp. 504-509.
- "Suma Bay" in Brazell, K. TJT, pp. 442-455. [This is a kabuki version reinterpreting the Atsumori story]

### Jan 22 Noh play focus: TBA

Readings TBA depending on the plays that will be scheduled for Jan 27. (Typical readings for this kind of focus class are: a full translation of a noh play, with introduction and notes; an article related to the background of the subject matter of the play.)

#### Read before class

- Bethe, Monica and Karen Brazell. "The Practice of Noh Theatre" in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*. Cambridge UP, 1990. Pp. 167-193

### Jan 24 Noh play focus: TBA

Readings TBA depending on the plays that will be scheduled for Jan 27. (Typical readings for this kind of focus class are: a full translation of a noh play, with introduction and notes; an article related to the background of the subject matter of the play.)

### Jan 27 Noh performance observation: noh and kyogen

We will attend the performance of two noh plays (analyzed in class) and of one kyogen play (analyzed at home) at a Noh theatre in Kyoto.

### Jan 29 Post-performance discussion

During this kind of meeting we will go through the notes we took during the

performance, exchange opinions, ask questions, and investigate further the plays we attended. In this session we may also create content to populate a digital database on noh theatre.

**Jan 31**      **Nenbutsu kyogen**

In this class we will look at various forms of nenbutsu kyōgen, a type of masked pantomime performed on the occasion of Buddhist rituals.

Read before class

- Mibu-dera (ed.) *Handī kanshō gaido: Mibu Kyogen*. Tankōsha, 2000. Pp. TBA depending on plays to be staged on February 2.
- <http://www.mibudera.com/kyougen.htm>

**Feb 5**      **Noh and kyogen masks**

This class examines noh and kyogen masks within the history of Japanese performing arts. The class will also cover aspects of mask making in preparation to the 2/7 field trip.

Read before class

- Pellecchia, Diego. "Masks in Traditional Asian Theatre - Japan" in *Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre*, 2015. Pp. 161-164
- Tanabe, Saburōsuke. "The Birth and Evolution of Noh Masks" in *Miracles and Mischief: Noh and Kyogen Theatre of Japan*. LACMA 2002. Pp. 43-69.

Further reading

- Nomura, Manzō. "Mask Making" in Teele, R. (ed.) *Mime Journal: Nō/Kyōgen Masks and Performance*, 1984. Pp. 171-176.

**Feb 7**      **Visit to a Noh mask carver's laboratory**

To do before the field trip

- Based on readings and class activities, prepare questions to ask the mask carver.

**Feb 12**      **NO CLASS**

**Feb 14**      **Noh play focus: TBA**

Readings TBA depending on the plays that will be scheduled for Feb 24. (Typical readings for this kind of focus class are: a full translation of a noh play, with introduction and notes; an article related to the background of the subject matter of the play.)

**Feb 19**      **NO CLASS**

**Feb 21**      **Noh play focus: TBA**

Readings TBA depending on the plays that will be scheduled for Feb 24. (Typical readings for this kind of focus class are: a full translation of a noh play, with

introduction and notes; an article related to the background of the subject matter of the play.)

- Feb 24**     **Noh performance observation: noh and kyogen**  
We will attend the performance of two noh plays (analyzed in class) and of one Kyogen play (analyzed at home) at a Noh theatre in Kyoto.
- Feb 26**     **Post-performance discussion**  
During this kind of meeting we will go through the notes we took during the performance, exchange opinions, ask questions, and investigate further the plays we attended. In this session we may also create content to populate a digital database on noh theatre.
- Feb 28**     **NO CLASS**
- Mar 5**     **SPRING BREAK**
- Mar 7**     **SPRING BREAK**
- Mar 12**     **Edo-period performing arts**  
We will look at the various genres performed during the Edo period and their social context.  
Read before class:
- Shively, Donald. H. "The Social Environment of Tokugawa Kabuki." In James Brandon, William Malm and Donald Shively. *Studies in Kabuki: Its Acting, Music, and Historical Context*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978: 1-61.
- Mar 14**     **Introduction to kabuki: origins and history**  
Overview of the thriving performance culture in the late sixteenth century, which brought to the birth of kabuki, and of kabuki's development afterwards.  
Read before class:
- Tsubaki, Andrew. "The Performing Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan: A Prelude to Kabuki." In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2002. Pp. 3-15.
  - Kominz, Laurence. "Origins of Kabuki Acting in Medieval Japanese Drama." In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, 2002. Pp. 16-32.
  - Shively, Donald. "Bakufu versus Kabuki." In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, 2002. Pp. 33-59.
- Mar 15**     **Field trip to Seiryō-ji temple: 17.00 – 20.00/21.00**  
On March 15th temples commemorate the Buddha's death, or passing into Nirvana

(*nehan* 涅槃). We will visit Seiryō-ji in Saga (Arashiyama) to observe the ceremony and a Saga nenbutsu kyogen performance (17.00-20.00). The students can also stay for the main event – the fire festival *Taimatsu* 松明 (20.00–21.00).

Read before the field trip: the story of the play *Tsuchi-gumo* (“The Ground Spider”).

<http://www.sagakyogen.info/program.html>

### **Mar 19 The kabuki actor**

We will examine kabuki as an actor’s theatre, the close relationship between actors and spectators, and its influence on the stage construction and conventions.

Video: TBA

Read before class:

- Thornbury, Barbara E. “Actor, Role, and Character: Their Multiple Interrelationships in Kabuki.” In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, 2002. Pp. 230-237.
- Pronko, Leonard. “Kabuki: Signs, Symbols, and the Hieroglyphic Actor.” In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*. Pp. 238-252.

Further reading:

- Raz, Jacob. “Kabuki in the Edo period and its Audiences.” In Jacob Raz, *Audience and Actors: A Study of Their Interaction in the Japanese Traditional Theatre*, Leiden: Brill Archive, 1983. Pp. 137-213.

### **Mar 21 NO CLASS (National Holiday)**

### **Mar 24 Performance observation: kabuki**

We will attend the Special Kabuki Performance by Bandō Tamasaburō, the most prominent *onnagata* (female role specialist), at the recently renovated Minami-za kabuki theatre in Kyoto. Doors open at 13.30, performance starts at 14.00, ends around 18.00.

Read before the field trip: readings will be provided – summaries of the plays or translations, if available. Students are encouraged to use the English earphone guide at Minami-za (cost 1,000 yen).

### **Mar 26 Performance of gender in kabuki: masculinities**

We will look at the ways in which gender and the body have been presented on the stage: role types and acting patterns, focusing on the *aragoto* and *wagoto* styles of masculinity.

Video: excerpts from the plays *Shibaraku* (Wait a Minute!) and *Kuruwa Bunshō* (Tales of the Licensed Quarter).

Read before class:

- Brandon, Japan. “Form in Kabuki Acting.” In James Brandon, William Malm and Donald Shively. *Studies in Kabuki: Its Acting, Music, and Historical Context*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978. Pp. 63-132.
- Blummer, Holly. “Nakamura Shichisaburō I and the Creation of Edo-Style

Wagoto.” In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*. Pp. 60-75.

**Mar 28 Kabuki: the making of onnagata**

We will explore the female impersonation in kabuki: history, acting techniques, body construction, role types, prominent *onnagata*.

Video: TBA

Read before class:

- Leiter, Samuel. “From Gay to *Gei*: The *Onnagata* and the Creation of *Kabuki*’s Female Characters.” In Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*. Pp. 211-229.
- Isaka Maki. “Images of *Onnagata*: Complicating the Binarisms, Unravelling the Labyrinth.” In Ayelet Zohar (ed.). *PostGender: Gender, Sexuality and Performativity in Japanese Culture*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009: 22-38.

Further reading:

- Isaka, Maki. *Onnagata: A Labyrinth of Gendering in Kabuki Theater*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016.

**Apr 2 Bunraku puppet theatre: history and performance**

Overview of the development of bunraku and the elements of performance: puppets, puppeteers, music accompaniment and chanted narration, stage conventions and effects.

Read before class:

- Brazell, Karen. “The Puppet and Kabuki Theatres.” In *Traditional Japanese Theater*. Columbia University Press, 1999. Pp.303-313.
- Goto, Shizuo. “Bunraku: Puppet Theatre.” In Jonah Salz (ed.) *A History of Japanese Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. 155-183.

**Apr 4 NO CLASS**

**Apr 7 Performance observation: bunraku**

We will attend the April Bunraku Performance [Part 1] at the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka: *Kanadehon Chushingura* (“The Vendetta by 47 Ronin”), Acts 1-4. Doors open at 10.30, performance starts at 11.00, scheduled to end at 15:10. Students are encouraged to use the English earphone guide (cost 1,000 yen).

Read before class:

- Keene, Donald (trans.). *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*. New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1971.

Further reading:

- Smith, Henri. “The Capacity of *Chûshingura*.” In *Monumenta Nipponica*, 58:1, Spring 2003: 1-42.

**Apr 9 Bunraku puppet theatre: the texts**

Battles and love suicides.

Read before class:

- Gerstle, C. Andrew. *Circles of Fantasy: Convention in the Plays of Chikamatsu*. Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986. Pp.1-37.

Further reading:

- Gerstle, C. Andrew (translation and annotation). *Chikamatsu: 5 Late Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Pp.1-35.

**Apr 11 Influence of kabuki and bunraku**

This class will look at the influence of kabuki and bunraku on other genres of traditional performance and Japanese film.

Read before class:

- Thornbury, Barbara. *The Folk Performing Arts: Traditional Culture in Contemporary Japan*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. Pp.1-39.
- MacDonalds, Keiko. *Traditional Theater and the Film in Japan*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994. Pp. 9-49.

**Apr 16 Student presentations 1**

Students will present their final projects. Students will receive feedback from peers and from the instructors, which they will be expected to include in their final paper.

**Apr 18 Student presentations 2 (Hand in final assignments)**

Students will present their final projects. Students will receive feedback from peers and from the instructor, which they will be expected to include in their final paper.

**Textbooks (copies of selected sections will be provided).**

Karen Brazell. *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays*. (Columbia University press, 1998)

Salz, Jonah (ed.) *A History of Japanese Theatre*. Cambridge U.P. 2016

Samuel Leiter (ed.). *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002

**Recommended**

Royall Tyler. *Japanese Noh Dramas*. (Penguin Classics. 1992)

Translations

Bethe, Monica and Richard Emmert. *Noh Performance Guides: Matsukaze, Fujito, Tenko, Atsumori, Aoinoue, Miidera, Ema*. (National Noh Theater)

Brazell, Karen, ed. *Twelve Plays of the Noh and Kyôgen Theaters*. (Cornell East Asia Series, Ithaca, N.Y. 1988)

Brandon, James and Samuel Leiter (eds.). *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Brilliance and Bravado, 1697-1766, Vol. 1*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2002.

Brandon, James and Samuel Leiter (eds.). *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Villainy and Vengeance, 1773-1799, Vol. 2*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2002.

Brandon, James and Samuel Leiter (eds.). *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Darkness and Desire, 1804-1864, Vol. 3*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2002.

Brandon, James and Samuel Leiter (eds.). *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Restoration and Reform, 1872-1905*, Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2003

Keene, Donald. *Twenty Noh Plays*. (New York. 1955)

Keene, Donald. tr. *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu*. (Columbia paperback, 1961)

Kenny, Don. *The Kyôgen Book: An Anthology of Japanese Classical Comedies*. The Japan Times. (Tokyo, 1989)

Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, trans. *Japanese Noh Drama*. (3 vols. Tokyo 1955, '59, '60: Vol 1 reprinted as *The Noh Drama*. Tokyo and Rutland. LCC 60-11007

Shimazaki Chifumi. *The Noh. God Noh, Warrior Noh, Woman Noh I,II,III*. Hinoki Shoten,( Tokyo, Japan. 1973, 76, 77, 80,87). *Warrior Ghost Plays from the Japanese Noh Theater. Restless*



*Spirits from Japanese Noh Plays of the Fourth Group* (Cornell East Asia Series, Cornell East Asia Program 1993 & 1995)

Tyler, Royall. *Japanese Nô Dramas*. (Penguin classics, 1992) *A Cycle of Noh Plays, Pining Wind*. (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978.) *A Cycle of Noh plays, Granny Mountains*. (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978.) *To Hallow Genji: A tribute to Noh*, Self-published, 2013

Waley, Arthur. *The Nô Plays of Japan*. (New York. 1957.)

### Noh Performance commentary

Atkins, Paul. *Revealed Identity: The Noh Plays of Komparu Zenchiku*. (Center for Japanese Studies, U. of Michigan, 2006)

Bethe and Brazell. *Nô as Performance: An Analysis of the Kuse Scene of Yamamba*. (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978)

Bethe and Brazell. *Dance in the Nô Theater*. (Ithaca, N.Y. 1982)

Brandon, James R, ed. *Nô and Kyôgen in the Contemporary World* (University of Hawaii, 1997)

Keene, Donald. *Nô: The Classical Theater of Japan*. (Tokyo, 1966, 1973)

Komparu, Kunio. *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*. (Tokyo. 1983)

Hoff and Flindt. *Life Structure of Nô. An English Version of Yokomichi Mario's Analysis of the Structure of Nô*. Reprint from *Concerned Theatre Japan*, Vol. 2, no. 3,4. (Asia Pub., 1973)

Lim Beng Choo. *Another Stage: Knze Nobumitsu and the Late Muromachi Noh Theater*. (Cornell East Asia Series, 2012).

Terasaki Etsuko, *Figures of Desire; Wordplay, Spirit Possession, Fantasy, Madness, and Mourning in Japanese Noh Plays*. (Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002)

### Theory and secret writings

Hare, Thomas. *Zeami's Style: The Noh Plays of Zeami Motokiyo*. (Stanford. 1986)

Hare, Tomas. *Zeami Performance Notes*. (Columbia University Press, 2008)

Nearman, Mark. translations of Zeami's *Kyu'i, Kyakuraika, and Kakyo* in *Monumenta Nipponica* (Autumn 1978, Summer 1980, Autumn, Winter 1982, Spring 1983)

Rimer and Yamazaki, tr. *On the Art of the Nô Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami*. (Princeton.

1984)

Michiko Yusa, "Riken no Ken: Seami's Theory of Acting and Theatrical Appreciation" *MN* Vol. 42, no. 3, (Autumn 1987)

Thornhill, Arthur H. *Six Circles, One Dewdrop: The Religio-Aesthetic World of Komparu Zenchiku* (Princeton University Press, 1993)

Rath, Eric C. *The Ethos of Noh; Actors and Their Art*. (Harvard University Asia Center, 2004)

Quinn, Shelley Fenno. *Developing Zeami: The Noh Actor's Attunement in Practice*. (University of Hawaii Press, 2005)

Pinnington, Noel. *Traces in the Way: Michi and the Writings of Komparu Zenchiku*. (Cornell East Asia Series, 2006)

### Kyôgen

Haynes, Carolyn. "Parody in Kyogen: Makura monogurui and Tako" *Monumenta Nipponica* 39 (1984)

Haynes, Carolyn. "Comic Inversion in Kyôgen: Ghosts and the Nether World," *Journal of Association of Teachers of Japanese*. (1988)

Kenny, Don. *The Kyôgen Book. An Anthology of Japanese Classical Comedies*. The Japan Times, Tokyo, 1989

Morley, Carolyn. *Transformation, Miracles, and Mischief; The Mountain Priest Plays of Kyôgen* (Cornell East Asia Series, East Asia Program, 1993)

### General Japanese Theater and other Japanese Theatrical Arts

Adachi, Barbara. *Backstage at Bunraku* (Weatherhill, 1985)

Brandon, James. *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays* (Harvard University Press, 1975, University of Hawaii Press, 1992)

Keene, Donald. *Nô and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre*. (Columbia University Press, 1990)

*Japanese Theater in the World* (Japan Society, 1997)

Parker, Helen S. E. *Progressive Traditions: An Illustrated Study of Plot Repetition in Traditional Japanese Theater* (Brill, 2006)

### Costumes and Masks

*likei no nô shôzoku no haykusugata.* Heibonsha. (Tokyo 1984)

*likei no nô men no hyakusugata.* Heibonsha. (Tokyo 1983)

*The World of Noh Costumes,* Yamaguchi Orimono, Inc. (Kyoto, 1989)

*Patterns and Poetry: Nô Robes from the Lucy Truman Aldrich Collection.* (Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design, 1992)

Takeda, Sharon Sadako & Monica Bethe. *Miracles and Mischief; Noh and Kyôgen Theater in Japan.* (Los Angeles County Museum, 2002).

Teele, Rebecca, ed. *Nô Kyôgen Masks and Performance.* *Mime Journal* 1984. (Claremont, Ca. 1986.)

*The Tokugawa Collection of Noh Costumes and Masks.* (Japan Society. New York, 1976.)

Trinh Khanh, ed. *Theater of Dreams, Theater of Play: Nô and Kyôgen in Japan.* (Art Gallery New South Wales, 2014).

#### Background (classics)

Anthology of Japanese Literature to the 19<sup>th</sup> C. Penguin Classics.

McCullough, Helen (tr.). *Tales of Ise: Lyrical Episodes from Tenth Century Japan.*(Tokyo 1968/1978.) UTP 3093-87052-5149.

McCullough, Helen (tr.). *The Tales of the Heike.*

Philippi, Donald (tr.). *Kojiki.* (Tokyo. 1968.)

Rodd, L.R./ Henkenius, M.C. (tr.) *Kokinshû: a Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern.* (Princeton 1984.)

Sato Hiroaki and Burton Watson *An Anthology of Japanese Poetry From the Country of Eight Islands.* (Anchor Books, 1981).

Tyler, Royall. *The Tale of Genji.* (Penguin books, 2001).

Tyler, Royall. *The Tale of the Heike.* (Viking Press, 2012).

#### Background (historical and cultural)

Araki, James. *The Ballad-drama of Medieval Japan.* (Berkeley, 1964).

Blacker, Carmen. *The Catalpa Bow. A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan.* (The

Devonshire Press,GB. 1975.)

Goff, Janet. *Noh Drama and The Tale of Genji. The Art of Allusion in Fifteen Classical Plays.* (Princeton Library of Asian Translations. 1991).

Hall, J.W./Takeshi, T. (ed) *Japan in the Muromachi Age.* (Berkeley, 1977.)

Hisamatsu, Sen'ichi. *The Vocabulary of Japanese Literary Aesthetics.* (Tokyo. 1963/1978.)

Izutsu, T&T. *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan.* (The Hague. 1981.)

Lafleur, William. *The Karma of Words.* (University of California Press, 1983)

Matisoff, Susan. *The Legend of Semimaru, Blind Musician of Japan.* (N.Y. 1978)

O'Neil, G.P. *Early Noh Drama.* (London and Bradford, 1958)

Ortolani, Benito. *The Japanese Theatre from Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism.* (Leiden, N.Y. etc.; E.J.Brill; 1990) (also in paperback)

#### Bunraku and Kabuki

Brandon, James, *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays,* (Harvard University Press, 1975, pb 1992).

Brandon, James, *Chūshingura: Studies in Kabuki and the Puppet Theater.* (University of Hawaii Press, 1982).

Brandon, James, William Malm, Donald Shively. *Studies in Kabuki: Its Acting, Music and Historical Context.* A Cultural Learning Institute Monograph. (U. of Hawaii East-West Center and U. of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies).

Brandon, James, tr. With Miwa Tamako. *Kabuki Plays: Kanjinchō and the Zen Substitute.* (New York. Samuel French, 1966).

Gerstle, Andrew, Kiyoshi Inobe, William Malm, *Theater as Music: The Bunraku Play "Mt. Imo and Mt. Se; An Exemplary Tale of Womanly Virtue,* Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan, 1990.

Gerstle, Andrew, *Circles of Fantasy; Convention in the Plays of Chikamatsu,* (Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1986).

Keene, Donald, tr. *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu.* (Columbia Paperback, 1961).

Parker, Helen, *Progressive Traditions; An Illustrated Study of Plot Repetition in Traditional Japanese Theatre.* (Brill, 2006).