

Kan'ami Kiyotsugu

Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (1333–1384) was one of the principal performers of *sarugaku-no* and the leader of a prominent company. When he appeared before the *shogun* Yoshimitsu Ashikaga in 1374, the *shogun* was so impressed with the company that he retained them as his players. Kan'ami is generally credited with refining and systematizing the Noh for his aristocratic audience and with writing many of the plays that became part of the standard Noh repertoire. Kan'ami's son, Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1444), succeeded his father as the leader of the company and had a massive influence on the development of the Noh. Zeami both reworked older plays and wrote many new plays of his own; of the 241 plays in the Noh repertoire, more than 100 are connected to Zeami. Zeami influenced the development of Noh in other respects as well, mainly in writing sixteen essays on Noh esthetics. These essays cover a range of topics, including the training of actors, the proper style of dramatic writing, and the goals of performance. Although Zeami enjoyed the favor of Yoshimitsu until the *shogun's* death in 1408, he fared less well under the rule of Yoshimitsu's son, Yoshimochi (1386–1428) and was banished to the remote island of Sado in 1434 when Yoshimochi's younger brother Yoshinori (1394–1441) became *shogun*. The reasons for Yoshinori's hostility to Zeami are not clear but may involve Yoshinori's preference for another playwright, On'ami. Zeami did succeed in passing his essays on to his son-in-law, Komparu Zenchiku (1405–1468), who became an important Noh playwright and theoretician. Not much is known about the end of Zeami's life; legend has it that he was able to return to the mainland after Yoshinori was assassinated in 1441.

Matsukaze was originally written by Kan'ami and extensively reworked by Zeami; it has remained in the Noh repertoire since the fifteenth century and is performed by all Noh companies.

This elegant drama, like most Noh plays, takes place in a setting familiar from the classic literature of Japan, the Bay of Suma. Suma is principally associated with the famous poet, courtier, and scholar Ariwaka no Yukihira (818–893), whose exile at Suma was recounted in his own poetry and formed the basis for many stories and legends. It also inspired the narrative of Genji's exile at Suma in the Japanese epic *Tale of Genji*. The narrative of the play, though, seems to have been invented by Kan'ami. The play opens when the *waki*—playing a priest—enters the stage, singing a traveling song about his arrival at Suma. He asks the *kyogen* (playing a villager) about the significance of the pine tree, and he is informed that it memorializes two fisher girls, Murasame and Matsukaze, who have long since died. Shortly thereafter, Murasame—played by the *tsure*—enters, followed by the *shite*, Matsukaze. The two girls elaborately mime dipping brine into their cart with their fans, and in speeches that quote from Yukihira and from other poets, they describe their desolation. Their language here is rich with imagery, particularly of the changing sea, the hard lives of the fishermen, and of the moon, a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment. As is typical of the Noh, many of their lines are spoken by the Chorus.

Although the *shite* and his *tsure* do not leave the stage, they retire to the *shitebashira*, where they mime sitting in their small hut. The *waki*—who has observed them throughout the first scene—approaches the hut and asks for shelter, quoting one of Yukihira's poems in passing. The girls then reveal that they are the ghosts of Matsukaze and Murasame, still “steeped in longing” for the exiled poet, even in death. They had fallen in love with Yukihira during his exile at Suma, and he had given them their names, “Wind in the Pines” (*matsukaze*) and “Autumn Rain” (*murasame*), names redolent of the imagery of classical Japanese poetry. The girls were not able to follow Yukihira when he returned to court after

Matsukaze



The classic Noh play *Matsukaze* (The Pining Wind), was performed by UH students in English, directed by Noh Master Artist Nomura Shiro, and produced by Kennedy Theatre, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1989. Photographer: James Giles.

This production of Kan'ami's *Matsukaze* emphasizes the traditional spatial, costume, and performance elements of Noh theater.

his exile; all they have in his memory is his hunting cloak and court hat. Driven nearly to madness with her eternal grief, *Matsukaze* puts on Yukihiro's cloak and hat for her final dance.

Matsukaze is an evocative example of the way Noh theater attempts to capture a particular mood through the collaborative interplay between each of its highly wrought arts. The beauty of the language, the delicacy of characterization, the succinct action, the music of the flute and drums, the chanting of the Chorus, and the refinement of the acting combine to capture the subtle intensity of feeling for which Noh theater is famous.

Matsukaze

Kan'ami Kiyotsugu

TRANSLATED BY ROYALL TYLER

CHARACTERS

AN ITINERANT PRIEST (*waki*)
A VILLAGER (*kyōgen*)

MATSUKAZE (*shite*)
MURASAME (*tsure*)

PLACE: *Suma Bay in Settsu Province*
TIME: *Autumn, the Ninth Month*

(The stage assistant places a stand with a pine sapling set into it at the front of the stage. The PRIEST enters and stands at the naming-place. He carries a rosary.)

PRIEST: I am a priest who travels from province to province. Lately I have been in the Capital. I visited the famous sites and ancient ruins, not missing a one. Now I intend to make a pilgrimage to the western provinces. (He faces forward.) I have hurried, and here I am already at the Bay of Suma in Settsu Province. (His attention is caught by the pine tree.) How strange! That pine on the beach has a curious look. There must be a story connected with it. I'll ask someone in the neighborhood. (He faces the bridgeway.) Do you live in Suma?

(The VILLAGER comes down the bridgeway to the first pine. He wears a short sword.)

VILLAGER: Perhaps I am from Suma; but first tell me what you want.

PRIEST: I am a priest and I travel through the provinces. Here on the beach I see a solitary pine tree with a wooden tablet fixed to it, and a poem slip hanging from the tablet. Is there a story connected with the tree? Please tell me what you know.

VILLAGER: The pine is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. Please say a prayer for them as you pass.

PRIEST: Thank you. I know nothing about them, but I will stop at the tree and say a prayer for them before I move on.

VILLAGER: If I can be of further service, don't hesitate to ask.

PRIEST: Thank you for your kindness.

VILLAGER: At your command, sir.

(The VILLAGER exits. The PRIEST goes to stage center and turns toward the pine tree.)

PRIEST: So, this pine tree is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. It is sad! Though their bodies are buried in the ground, their names linger on. This lonely pine tree lingers on also, ever green and untouched by autumn, their only memorial. Ah! While I have been chanting sutras and invoking Amida Buddha for their repose, the sun, as always on autumn days, has quickly set. That village at the foot of the mountain is a long way. Perhaps I can spend the night in this fisherman's salt shed.

(He kneels at the waki-position. The stage assistant brings out the prop, a cart for carrying pails of brine, and sets it by the gazing-pillar. He places a pail on the cart.)

(MURASAME enters and comes down the bridgeway as far as the first pine. She wears the *tsure* mask. MATSUKAZE follows her and stops at the third pine. She wears the *wakaonna* mask. Each carries a water pail. They face each other.)

MATSUKAZE AND MURASAME: A brine cart wheeled along the beach

Provides a meager livelihood:
The sad world rolls
Life by quickly and in misery!

MURASAME: Here at Suma Bay
The waves shatter at our feet,
And even the moonlight wets our sleeves
With its tears of loneliness.

(MURASAME goes to stage center while MATSUKAZE moves to the *shite* position.)

MATSUKAZE: The autumn winds are sad.
When the Middle Counselor Yukihiro
Lived here back a little from the sea,
They inspired his poem,
"Salt winds blowing from the mountain pass. . ."
On the beach, night after night,
Waves thunder at our door;
And on our long walks to the village
We've no companion but the moon.
Our toil, like all of life, is dreary,
But none could be more bleak than ours.
A skiff cannot cross the sea,
Nor we this dream world.
Do we exist, even?
Like foam on the salt sea,
We draw a cart, friendless and alone,

48 "Salt . . . pass" from the poem by Yukihiro, No. 876 in the *Shinkokinshū*: "The sleeves of the traveler have turned cold; the wind from Suma Bay blows through the pass." 52 We've . . . moon a modified quotation from the poem by Hōkyō Chūmei, No. 187 in the *Kin'yōshū*: "Pillow of grass—as I sleep on my journey I realize I have no companion but the moon." 58-59 salt sea the words "salt sea," which can also be translated "brine," lead to mention of the brine cart even though the cart does not logically belong in the context

Poor fisher girls whose sleeves are wet
With endless spray, and tears
From our hearts' unanswered longing.

CHORUS: Our life is so hard to bear
That we envy the pure moon
Now rising with the tide.
But come, let us dip brine,
Dip brine from the rising tide!
Our reflections seem to shame us!

(They look down as if catching a glimpse of their reflections in the water. The movement of their heads "clouds" the expression on their masks, making it seem sad.)

Yes, they shame us!
Here, where we shrink from men's eyes,
Drawing our timorous cart;
The withdrawing tide
Leaves stranded pools behind.
How long do they remain?
If we were the dew on grassy fields,
We would vanish with the sun.
But we are sea tangle,
Washed up on the shore,
Raked into heaps by the fishermen,
Fated to be discarded, useless,
Withered and rotting,
Like our trailing sleeves,
Like our trailing sleeves.

They look down again.)

Endlessly familiar, still how lovely
The twilight at Suma!
The fishermen call out in muffled voices;
At sea, the small boats loom dimly.
Across the faintly glowing face of the moon
Flights of wild geese streak,
And plovers flock below along the shore.
Fall gales and stiff sea winds:
These are things, in such a place,
That truly belong to autumn.
But oh, the terrible, lonely nights!

They hide their faces.)

MATSUKAZE: Come, dip the brine.

MURASAME: Where the seas flood and fall,
Let us tie our sleeves back to our shoulders.

MATSUKAZE: Think only, "Dip the brine."

MURASAME: We ready ourselves for the task,

MATSUKAZE: But for women, this cart is too hard.

CHORUS: While the rough breakers surge and fall,

MURASAME moves upstage to stand beside MATSUKAZE.)

... moon from the poem by Fujiwara Takamitsu, No. 435 in *Manyōshū*: "In this world which seems difficult to pass through, how pure the moon!" 85 **The twilight** the following description is fully inspired by the "Exile at Suma" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*

While the rough breakers surge and fall,
And cranes among the reeds
Fly up with sharp cries.
The four winds add their wailing.
How shall we pass the cold night?

(They look up.)

The late moon is so brilliant—
What we dip is its reflection!
Smoke from the salt fires
May cloud the moon—take care!
Are we always to spend only
The sad autumns of fishermen?
At Ojima in Matsushima

(MATSUKAZE half-kneels by the brine cart and mimes dipping with her fan.)

The fisherfolk, like us,
Delight less in the moon
Than in the dipping of its reflection;
There they take delight in dipping
Reflections of the moon.

(MATSUKAZE returns to the shite position.)

We haul our brine from afar,
As in far-famed Michinoku
And at the salt kilns of Chika—
Chika, whose name means "close by."
MATSUKAZE: Humble folk hauled wood for salt fires
At the ebb tide on Akogi Shore.
CHORUS: On Ise Bay there's Twice-See Beach—
Oh, could I live my life again!

(MATSUKAZE looks off into the distance.)

MATSUKAZE: On days when pine groves stand hazy,
And the sea lanes draw back
From the coast at Narumi—
CHORUS: You speak of Narumi; this is Naruo,
Where pines cut off the moonlight
From the reed-thatched roofs of Ashinoya.

113 **Ojima** is one of the islands at Matsushima, a place renowned for its scenic beauty. Both names are conventionally associated in poetry with *ama*, fisherwomen 120 **As in far-famed** the following passage is a *tsukushi*, or "exhaustive enumeration," of place-names associated with the sea, including allusions and plays on words. This passage was apparently borrowed from an older work, a play called *Tōei* that was set by Ashinoya Bay. Michinoku is a general name for the northern end of the island of Honshu. Chika was another name for Shiogama ("Salt Kiln"), and sounds like the word meaning "near" 124 **Akogi** the name of a stretch of shore on Ise Bay. The pulling in of the nets and the hauling of the wood for the salt kilns at Akogi were frequently mentioned in poetry 125 **Twice-See Beach** (*Futami-ga-ura*) is a word evocative of Ise and often used in poetry for the meaning of its name 129 **Narumi** often mentioned in poetry because of its dry flats that appeared at low tide 132 **Ashinoya** (modern Ashiya) and Naruo are two places near Suma. Ashinoya means literally "reed house"

MATSUKAZE: Who is to tell of our unhappiness
Dipping brine at Nada?
135 With boxwood combs set in our hair,
From rushing seas we draw the brine,
105 Oh look! I have the moon in my pail!

(MURASAME *kneels before the brine cart and places her pail on it.*
MATSUKAZE, *still standing, looks into her pail.*)

MATSUKAZE: In my pail too I hold the moon!
CHORUS: How lovely! A moon here too!

(MURASAME *picks up the rope tied to the cart and gives it to MATSUKAZE, then moves to the shite position.* MATSUKAZE *looks up.*)

140 MATSUKAZE: The moon above is one;
Below it has two, no, three reflections

(*She looks into both pails.*)

115 Which shine in the flood tide tonight,

(*She pulls the cart to a spot before the musicians.*)

And on our cart we load the moon!
No, life is not all misery
145 Here by the sea lanes.

(*She drops the rope. The stage assistant removes the cart.*
MATSUKAZE *sits on a low stool and MURASAME kneels beside her,*
a sign that the two women are resting inside their hut. The PRIEST
rites.)

125 PRIEST: The owner of the salt shed has returned. I shall ask for
a night's lodging. (TO MATSUKAZE and MURASAME.) I beg
your pardon. Might I come inside?

MURASAME: (Standing and coming forward a little.) Who might
130 you be?

PRIEST: A traveler, overtaken by night on my journey. I should
like to ask lodging for the night.

MURASAME: Wait here. I must ask the owner. (*She kneels before*
135 *MATSUKAZE.*) A traveler outside asks to come in and spend
the night.

MATSUKAZE: That is little enough, but our hut is so wretched we
cannot ask him in. Please tell him so.

MURASAME: (Standing, to the PRIEST.) I have spoken to the owner.
She says the house is too wretched to put anyone up.

140 PRIEST: I understand those feelings

Perfectly, but poverty makes
No difference at all to me.
I am only a priest. Please
Say I beg her to let
145 Me spend the night.

130 Dipping . . . Nada derived from the poem in the eighty-seventh
episode of the *Ise Monogatari*: "At Nada by Ashinoya, I have no respite
from boiling brine for salt; I have come without even putting a boxwood
comb in my hair." 135 With boxwood the line recalls the poem quoted
in the previous note, but it is used because of the pivot-word *tsuge no*, "of
boxwood," and *tsuge*, "to inform." Similarly, *kushi sashi*, "Setting a comb
in the hair," leads into *sashi-kuru nami*, "in-rushing waves"

MURASAME: No, we really cannot put you up.

MATSUKAZE: (To MURASAME.) Wait!

I see in the moonlight
One who has renounced the world.
He will not mind a fisherman's hut,
170 With its rough pine pillars and bamboo fence;
I believe it is very cold tonight,
So let him come in and warm himself
At our sad fire of rushes.

You may tell him that. 175

MURASAME: Please come in.

PRIEST: Thank you very much. Forgive me for intruding.

(*He takes a few steps forward and kneels. MURASAME goes back*
beside MATSUKAZE.)

MATSUKAZE: I wished from the beginning to invite you in,
but this place is so poor I felt I must refuse.

PRIEST: You are very kind. I am a priest and a traveler, and
180 never stay anywhere very long. Why prefer one lodging to
another? In any case, what sensitive person would not
prefer to live here at Suma, in the quiet solitude. Yukihiro
wrote,

"If ever anyone 185

Chances to ask for me,
Say I live alone,
Soaked by the dripping seaweed
On the shore of Suma Bay."

(*He looks at the pine tree.*) A while ago I asked someone
190 the meaning of that solitary pine on the beach. I was told it
grows there in memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and
Murasame. There is no connection between them and me,
but I went to the pine anyway and said a prayer for them.

(MATSUKAZE and MURASAME weep. The PRIEST stares at
195 *them.*) This is strange! They seem distressed at the mention
of Matsukaze and Murasame. Why?

MATSUKAZE AND MURASAME: Truly, when a grief is hidden,
Still, signs of it will show.

His poem, "If ever anyone
200 Chances to ask for me,"

Filled us with memories which are far too fond.
Tears of attachment to the world
Wet our sleeves once again.

PRIEST: Tears of attachment to the world? You speak as though
205 you are no longer of the world. Yukihiro's poem overcame you
with memories. More and more bewildering! Please, both of
you, tell me who you are.

MATSUKAZE AND MURASAME: We would tell you our names,
210 But we are too ashamed!

No one, ever,
Has chanced to ask for us,
Long dead as we are,
And so steeped in longing
215 For the world by Suma Bay
That pain has taught us nothing.
Ah, the sting of regret!
But having said this,
Why should we hide our names any longer?
At twilight you said a prayer
220 By a mossy grave under the pine

185-189 "If ever . . . Bay" poem No. 962 in the *Kokinshū*

For two fisher girls,
 Matsukaze and Murasame.
 We are their ghosts, come to you.
 225 When Yukihiro was here he whiled away
 Three years of weary exile
 Aboard his pleasure boat,
 His heart refreshed
 By the moon of Suma Bay.
 230 There were, among the fisher girls
 Who hauled brine each evening,
 Two sisters whom he chose for his favors.
 "Names to fit the season!"
 He said, calling us
 235 Pine Wind and Autumn Rain.
 We had been Suma fisher girls,
 Accustomed to the moon,
 But he changed our salt makers' clothing
 To damask robes,
 240 Burnt with the scent of faint perfumes.
 MATSUKAZE: Then, three years later, Yukihiro
 Returned to the Capital.
 MURASAME: Soon, we heard he had died, oh so young!
 MATSUKAZE: How we both loved him!
 245 Now the message we pined for
 Would never, never come.
 CHORUS: Pine Wind and Autumn Rain
 Both drenched their sleeves with the tears
 Of hopeless love beyond their station,
 250 Fisher girls of Suma.
 Our sin is deep, O priest.
 Pray for us, we beg of you!

(They press their palms together in supplication.)

Our love grew rank as wild grasses;
 Tears and love ran wild.
 255 It was madness that touched us.
 Despite spring purification,
 Performed in our old robes,
 Despite prayers inscribed on paper streamers,
 The gods refused us their help.
 260 We were left to melt away
 Like foam on the waves,
 And, in misery, we died.

(MATSUKAZE looks down, shading her mask.)

Alas! How the past evokes our longing!
 Yukihiro, the Middle Counselor,

(The stage assistant puts a man's cloak and court hat in
 MATSUKAZE's left hand.)

240 **Burnt** . . . derived from a poem by Fujiwara Tameuji, No. 361 in the *Shingo-senshū*: "The fishermen of Suma are accustomed to the moon, spending the autumn in clothes wet with waves blown by the salt wind." 258 **Despite prayers** . . . literally, "purification on the day of the serpent." The ceremony was performed on the first day of the serpent in the third month. Genji had the ceremony performed while he was at Suma. The streamers were conventional Shinto offerings

Lived three years here by Suma Bay.
 Before he returned to the Capital,
 He left us these keepsakes of his stay:
 A court hat and a hunting cloak.
 Each time we see them,

(She looks at the cloak.)

Our love grows again,
 And gathers like dew
 On the tip of a leaf
 So that there's no forgetting,
 Not for an instant.
 Oh endless misery!

(She places the cloak in her lap.)

"This keepsake
 Is my enemy now;
 For without it

(She lifts the cloak.)

I might forget."

(She stares at the cloak.)

The poem says that
 And it's true:
 My anguish only deepens.

(She weeps.)

MATSUKAZE: "Each night before I go to sleep,
 I take off the hunting cloak
 CHORUS: And hang it up . . ."

(The keepsakes in her hand, she stands and, as in a trance, takes a
 few steps toward the gazing-pillar.)

I hung all my hopes
 On living in the same world with him,
 But being here makes no sense at all
 And these keepsakes are nothing.

(She starts to drop the cloak, only to cradle it in her arms and press
 it to her.)

I drop it, but I cannot let it lie;
 So I take it up again
 To see his face before me yet once more.

(She turns to her right and goes toward the naming-place, then
 stares down the bridgeway as though something were coming
 after her.)

276-279 "**This keepsake . . . forget**" a slightly modified quotation of the anonymous poem, No. 746 in the *Kokinshū*. It is also quoted in *Lush Han* 283-285 "**Each night . . . up**" the first part of a poem by Ki no Tomomori, No. 593 in the *Kokinshū*. The last two lines run: "When I wear it there is no instant when I do not long for him."

295 "Awake or asleep,
From my pillow, from the foot of my bed,
Love rushes in upon me."
Helplessly I sink down,
Weeping in agony.

(She sits at the shite position, weeping. The stage assistant helps her take off her outer robe and replace it with the cloak. He also helps tie on the court hat.)

MATSUKAZE: The River of Three Fords
Has gloomy shallows
Of never-ending tears;
I found, even there,
An abyss of wildest love.
Oh joy! Look! Over there!
Yukihira has returned!

(She rises, staring at the pine tree.)

305 He calls me by my name, Pine Wind!
I am coming!

(She goes to the tree. MURASAME hurriedly rises and follows. She catches MATSUKAZE's sleeve.)

MURASAME: For shame! For such thoughts as these
You are lost in the sin of passion.
All the delusions that held you in life—
None forgotten!

(Both step back from the tree.)

That is a pine tree.
And Yukihira is not here.

MATSUKAZE: You are talking nonsense!

(She looks at the pine tree.)

This pine is Yukihira!
"Though we may part for a time,
If I hear you are pining for me,
I'll hurry back."
Have you forgotten those words he wrote?

MURASAME: Yes, I had forgotten!
He said, "Though we may part for a time,
If you pine, I will return to you."

MATSUKAZE: I have not forgotten.
And I wait for the pine wind
To whisper word of his coming.

MURASAME: If that word should ever come,
My sleeves for a while
Would be wet with autumn rain.

295-296 "Awake . . . me" the first part of an anonymous poem, No. 1023 in the *Kokinshū*. The last part runs: "Helpless, I stay in the middle of the bed." 298 **River of Three Fords** the river of the afterworld 305-307 "Though . . . back" paraphrase of the poem by Yukihira, No. 365 in the *Kokinshū*. Another paraphrase is given in the following speech by Murasame, and the poem is given in its correct form below. In Japanese *matsu* means both "pine tree" and "to wait."

MATSUKAZE: So we await him. He will come,

Constant ever, green as a pine.

MURASAME: Yes, we can trust

MATSUKAZE: his poem:

CHORUS: "I have gone away

(MURASAME, weeping, kneels before the flute player. MATSUKAZE goes to the first pine on the bridgeway, then returns to the stage and dances.)

MATSUKAZE: Into the mountains of Inaba,
Covered with pines,
But if I hear you pine,
I shall come back at once."
Those are the mountain pines
Of distant Inaba,

(She looks up the bridgeway.)

And these are the pines
On the curving Suma shore.
Here our dear prince once lived.
If Yukihira comes again,
I shall go stand under the tree

(She approaches the tree.)

Bent by the sea-wind,
And, tenderly, tell him

(She stands next to the tree.)

I love him still!

(She steps back a little and weeps. Then she circles the tree, her dancing suggesting madness.)

CHORUS: Madly the gale howls through the pines,
And breakers crash in Suma Bay;
Through the frenzied night
We have come to you
In a dream of deluded passion.
Pray for us! Pray for our rest!

(At stage center, MATSUKAZE presses her palms together in supplication.)

Now we take our leave. The retreating waves
Hiss far away, and a wind sweeps down
From the mountain to Suma Bay.
The cocks are crowing on the barrier road.
Your dream is over. Day has come.
Last night you heard the autumn rain;
This morning all that is left
Is the wind in the pines,
The wind in the pines.

336 "I . . . once" the poem by Yukihira mentioned in the previous note

CRITICAL CONTEXTS

ZEAMI MOTOKIYO (1363–1444)

from “A Mirror Held to the Flower” (1424)

Translated by J. THOMAS RIMER and YAMAZAKI MASAKAZU

Although Zeami's treatises describe the practical and esthetic foundations of the Noh (Nō) theater, they were not well known until the twentieth century. Since the Noh was organized around prominent families of actors, Zeami's texts were passed on in private and shown only to those who had been properly initiated. The first definitive edition of the treatises was published in 1940.

In “A Mirror Held to the Flower,” Zeami discusses the training of Noh performers, emphasizing the interplay between physical training, spiritual development, and acting style in the production of the “flower”—beauty—in Noh performance. In this translation, the central term *yugen* has been translated as “Grace.” Although Zeami's language can seem remote to modern students, it is important to pay attention to the ways his understanding of acting relates to the process of Noh drama. How would you relate the kind of skills and attention that Zeami describes here to the demands of Noh drama?

An actor must not only rehearse thoroughly with his teachers but he must learn through practice to imitate their peerless performances. Indeed, it is precisely because the art of these great performers has been brought to the highest levels of training that they can present in their acting an appearance of total mastery and ease, thus fascinating their audiences. If a beginner wishes merely to imitate this level of accomplishment, he may seem to achieve its semblance, yet there will be nothing moving in his performance. A truly great artist has for many years succeeded in training both his body and his spirit; he can hold back much of his potential in reserve and perform in an easy fashion, so that only seven-tenths of his art is visible. If a beginner tries to perform in this fashion, without the proper practice, he will only imitate what he can observe, and so his spirit and his performance can not reach beyond that seven-tenths he can grasp. What is more, his own progress will be blocked.

Therefore, when a student is learning his craft, the teacher should show not his own high level of ability [in which there is a reserve of artistry], but, as he did when he too was a beginner, indicate to his pupils how to use fully both their minds and bodies. After such lessons have been absorbed the students will gradually reach a level of mastery and attain a level of ease in their own performances, understand how to hold in reserve a certain amount of their own physical energy, and grasp of themselves the principle that “what is felt by the heart is ten, what appears in movement seven.”

Understanding the Proper Meaning of Learning Our Art

In general, a performance of Perfect Fluency cannot be imitated. And if an actor makes an attempt to imitate it, the very effort involved in the attempt will produce

a tension that cannot be a part of Perfect Fluency. Only something that is meant to appear difficult can actually be imitated. “The truth and what looks like it are two different things,”¹ it is said. Thus, could there be any way to imitate the truth of the master actor's easy performance? Indeed, ease and difficulty are two aspects of the same thing. There is a separate teaching on this matter. The means by which a student learns from a teacher are well known, and so no special comment is needed here. However, the teacher's official certification of the student must be based on a thorough examination of his capacities and devotion; otherwise, certification should not be given. If the student's basic abilities are insufficient, no certification is possible. Should certification be given when talent is lacking, a level of accomplishment is suggested that cannot actually be matched. The certification will be fraudulent and the results meaningless; therefore, it should not be given. In the *Book of Changes* it is written that “if suitable teachings are given to those who are not suitable, the hatred of Heaven will be aroused.”² In order that such a suitable person can be created, three conditions must be present. First, he must possess himself the requisite talent. Secondly, he must adore his art and show a total dedication to the path of Nō. Thirdly, he must have a teacher capable of showing him the proper way. If these three conditions cannot be met, the candidate will not be suitable. A suitable person is one who has the capacity to achieve the highest reaches of his art, to be recognized himself as a teacher.

¹A popular saying found in many texts circulated in this period.

²The quotation as recorded here does not appear in the *Book of Changes* (*I ching*).

When I observe the artistic abilities of young performers now, it appears that "skipping"³ has become commonplace. This situation comes about because they imitate without study. An actor must begin by studying the Two Basic Arts and the Three Role Types, continue to practice all that is appropriate for his age, and carry on his studies in the proper sequence, so that he will reach a stage of mastery in all the arts of the *Nō* that can permit him to perform in any artistic style. To learn only by imitation and so only manage a temporary resolution seems indeed to represent a kind of "skipping." For example, when studying the Two Basic Arts, one must not study the Three Role Types. When the time comes to study the Three Role Types, one must put off for a certain time the study of military roles [as they demand intense physical effort]. When an actor does come to study the military roles, then the demon roles in both the Delicacy within Strength and Rough styles of movement should be put off for a certain time, since there is an appropriate moment to learn them as well. To attempt to learn all these roles at once—what a terribly difficult thing it would be. And the degree of difficulty would be unexpectedly high. Therefore, even if by "skipping" a young performer manages to fool the public into thinking that he is a master, he will achieve a momentary Flower. And as such an artist grows older, his art will decline. And even should his art not decline, it would be impossible for him to achieve true renown. This point must be firmly kept in mind.

Concerning "skipping," there is another matter to consider. If an actor is inordinately fond of new plays, and should he come step by step to abandon the older repertory he performed in the past, he can never master the art of *Nō* and will only be "skipping." Rather, the actor must fix a repertory of standard plays at which he excels and then mix new plays in with them. If he plays only fresh pieces and neglects the plays to which he is accustomed, the results, in terms of the art of the *Nō*, will be a disgraceful "skipping" indeed. Besides, if only unusual pieces are performed, then that procedure of itself loses its novelty. If a mixture of old and new is achieved, then both the old and the new alike will seem novel. Such becomes the undying flower. As Confucius said, "He who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher."⁴

Having a Real Understanding of Skill

If an actor has become fully proficient at music and dance, he may be called skillful. If he has not become fully

accomplished, there will be no denying his shortcomings. On the other hand, there is a kind of real skill based on still different considerations. For example, there are actors whose abilities in dance and chant show no shortcomings, yet who have not achieved a high reputation. Then again, there are actors whose voices are not attractive and whose mastery of dancing and singing show defects, yet who are widely thought of as accomplished performers. The reason for this is that both dancing and gesture are external skills. The essentials of our art lie in the spirit. They represent a true enlightenment established through art. Thus, if an actor knows how to create interest and can perform from an understanding of this spirit, he will gain a reputation as a fine actor even if he has not mastered every aspect of his craft. Such being the case, if an actor really wants to become a master, he cannot simply depend on his skill in dance and gesture. Rather, mastery seems to depend on the actor's own state of self-understanding and the sense of style with which he has been blessed. Real discernment of the nature of the differences between external skill and interior understanding forms the basis of true mastery. Thus it is that an actor who has merely perfected his technique will have little of interest to show. Other actors, from the beginning of their careers, can fascinate their audiences. So it is that an actor, from the time he is young until he masters seven-tenths, eight-tenths, even all of his technique and reaches the level of a master, will continue to interest others for quite separate considerations.

Still higher than the level of interest, there is a level of skill that will simply make the audience gasp, without reflection, in surprise and pleasure. This level will be termed one of a pure Feeling that Transcends Cognition. The response to such a performance is such that there is no occasion for reflection, no time for a spectator to realize how well the performance is contrived. Such a state might be referred to as "purity unmixed."⁵ In the *Book of Changes*, when the Chinese character for "feeling" (*kan*) is written, the element that stands for "mind" (*kokoro*) is eliminated [and the character is written as] in order to illustrate the fact that when true feeling is involved, there is no room in the concept for reflection as a function of the mind.⁶

Thus it is that the actor comes to possess various levels of artistic skill. If a beginning actor continues on through all the various stages of his training, he will be called a good actor, but not necessarily anything more. Yet there is still a higher level where real mastery is possible. If

³"Skipping" (*tendoku*) was a term originally used to mean "turning the actors," chanting the first few lines and then skipping the rest to save time, as a kind of devotional exercise. Zeami of course uses the term ironically.

⁴See Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, Book II, No. 11, page 90.

⁵A term sometimes used to indicate the high level of excellence in *waka* poetry. The term is probably of Zen origin.

⁶For a translation into English of this section of the *I ching*, see Richard Wilhelm, tr., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, pages 122–125. The interpretation of the passage is evidently Zeami's.

the spectators are truly fascinated with an actor's performance, he can be said to have reached the level of a master. If, in addition, he possesses the ability to create for his audience an intensity of pure feeling that goes beyond the workings of the mind, he will have achieved the level of greatest reputation. Thus an actor should pursue his study of *Nō* through these various levels, develop his skills, and through his own spiritual understanding, bring his art to the highest possible level of fulfillment.

Shallow and Deep

Concerning *Nō* performance, there is one matter that must be given particularly serious consideration. If a performance is given without sufficient attention to detail, it will be without interest. On the other hand, if too much attention is given by the performer to details, the whole performance risks to shrink in scale. Then again, if the actor thinks to play his part as liberally as possible, the opportunities for the audience to witness his skill will be fewer, and there will be a tendency for his performance to become slow and monotonous. An understanding of this distinction is of the greatest importance. An actor might, on first reflection, think that the parts of the play requiring intricate skills should be played in as complex a fashion as possible, while those moments requiring a more general approach should be played as broadly as possible. Yet in fact this kind of distinction cannot be made unless an actor knows the art of *Nō* very well indeed. A student must question his teacher closely on such matters, so that these distinctions become clear. There is, however, one general principle that can be kept in mind. For the chant, the dance, and the various sorts of gestures that will be employed, the actor's spirit should be as delicately attuned as possible, but, at the same time, his physical stance should be as relaxed and broad as possible. An actor must comprehend these principles and stick to them.

In general, it can be said that, in the case of the *Nō*, an art that is based on general and flexible principles can be made subtle and detailed. But a *Nō* that is merely meticulous in conception cannot easily develop on a large and relaxed scale. After all, the small can be contained in the large, but not the large in the small. A great deal of skill needs to be given over to this matter. A *Nō* that possesses both these qualities will truly be full and rich. Indeed, when ice formed during the deep cold melts, the ice formed during a brief chilly spell will melt as well.

Entering the Realm of Grace

The aesthetic quality of Grace is considered the highest ideal of perfection in many arts. Particularly in the *Nō*, Grace can be regarded as the highest principle. However, although the quality of Grace is manifested in performance

and audiences give it high appreciation, there are very few actors who in fact possess that quality. This is because they have never had a taste of the real Grace themselves. So it is that few actors have entered this world.

What kind of realm is represented by what is termed Grace? For example, if we take the general appearance of the world and observe the various sorts of people who live there, it might be said that Grace is best represented in the character of the nobility, whose deportment is of such a high quality and who receive the affection and respect not given to others in society. If such is the case, then their dignified and mild appearance represents the essence of Grace. Therefore, the stage appearance of Grace is best indicated by their refined and elegant carriage. If an actor examines closely the nobility's beautiful way of speaking and studies the words and habitual means of expression that such elevated persons use, even to observing their tasteful choice of language when saying the smallest things, such can be taken to represent the Grace of speech. In the case of the chant, when the melody flows smoothly and naturally on the ear and sounds suitably mild and calm, this quality can be said to represent the Grace of music. In the case of the dance, if the actor studies until he is truly fluent, so that his appearance on stage will be sympathetic and his carriage both unostentatious and moving to those who observe him, he will surely manifest the Grace of the dance. When he is acting a part, if he makes his appearance beautiful in the Three Role Types, he will have achieved Grace in his performance. Again, when presenting a role of fearsome appearance, a demon's role for example, even should the actor use a rough manner to a certain extent, he must not forget to preserve a graceful appearance, and he must remember the principles of "what is felt in the heart is ten," and "violent body movements, gentle foot movements," so that his stage appearance will remain elegant. Thus he may manifest the Grace of a demon's role.

An actor must come to grasp those various types of Grace and absorb them within himself; for no matter what kind of role he may assume, he must never separate himself from the virtue of Grace. No matter what the role—whether the character be of high or low rank, a man, a woman, a priest or lay person, a farmer or country person, even a beggar or an outcast—it should seem as though each were holding a branch of flowers in his hand. In this one respect they exhibit the same appeal, despite whatever differences they may show in their social positions. This Flower represents the beauty of their stance in the *nō*, and the ability to reveal this kind of stance in performance represents, of course, its spirit. In order to study the Grace of words, the actor must study the art of composing poetry; and to study the Grace of physical

appearance, he must study the aesthetic qualities of elegant costume, so that, in every aspect of his art, no matter how the role may change that the actor is playing, he will always maintain one aspect in his performance that shows Grace. Such it is to know the seed of Grace.

However, it may well happen that an actor will put such an importance on his impersonation of the particulars of his role, regarding this aspect of his performance as the highest of his art, that he will neglect to maintain the beauty of the stance he has properly assumed. Thus he will fail to enter the world of Grace. And if he does not enter into the world of Grace, he cannot approach the level of Highest Fruition. And unless he reaches this highest level of accomplishment, he will never be recognized as a great actor. There are indeed few masters who have attained those heights. Thus an actor must rehearse with the utmost diligence on this critical point of the representation of Grace.

This Highest Fruition of an actor represents precisely the appearance of this deeply beautiful posture. I cannot repeat too often that an actor must rehearse with the need for the proper preparation of his body always in mind. Thus it is of crucial importance that, beginning with the Two Basic Arts down to the specifics of any role that may be played, the stance of the actor be attractive so as to represent this Highest Fruition in every circumstance. If the actor's posture is unattractive, his art will invariably appear vulgar. In any case, whatever gestures may be seen or music may be heard, however great the variety, the fact that the actor's stance is beautifully assumed represents the true attainment of Grace. An actor may be said to have entered the world of Grace when he has of his own accord studied these principles and made himself master of them. If an actor does not work to fulfill them and thinks that, without mastering every aspect of his art, he can still try to attain this Grace, he will, in fact, never know it during his entire lifetime.

Paying Heed to the Accumulation of Skills

Studying the art of the *Nō*, having the reputation of a superior actor, and rising in merit as the years pass by depends on a proper accumulation of skills. Yet the nature of such an accumulation will differ depending on where the actor lives and performs. Even if he earns a reputation as a fine actor, if the praise he earns is not from those who live in the capital, it can have little significance for him. Even an actor who has earned genuine praise in the capital, should he return to his native place and continue to perform in the countryside, will merely expend his energies in attempting not to forget those means of expression that he learned in the capital, and because of his false sense that he still remembers how to perform properly, he

will little by little slacken in his persistence in maintaining his beauty of performance. The result will be an accumulation of bad experiences. Such a stagnation of experience must be shunned.

In the capital, on the other hand, the actor will be performing before discerning spectators so that, should he become careless concerning any element in his art and so fail to progress, he will soon notice a response from his audience; then too, as criticism and comment come to him, he will eventually disregard the unsatisfactory elements in his art, accumulate only positive artistic experiences, and discover that his art has become polished. Of its own accord his skill will become as burnished as a jewel. There is a saying that "sagebrush, which has the ability to bend, even should it grow up among flax plants, will come out straight, without correction, while white sand, when mixed with earth, will become black like the rest."⁷ Thus by living in the capital, an actor is in the proper environment, and the insufficiencies in his art will naturally disappear. This gradual lessening of error is in itself the accumulation of good experience. There is no way that an artist can simply set out to pile up these experiences of his own accord. Rather, let me repeat again and again a warning that, if an actor does not take cognizance of his good experiences, they will stagnate and turn into an accumulation of bad experiences.

So it is that even a skilled performer as he grows older will come to depend on his increasingly old-fashioned art, which has become so through an accumulation caused by his own stagnation. Although audiences may dislike his performances, he thinks only that he has been recognized as an artist of great merit for a long time. Thus he does not recognize the real feelings of his audiences. He therefore loses the chance to make his final appearances on the stage successful—such an important opportunity in an actor's career.

All of this is the result of piling up of such bad experiences. The greatest caution must be taken against this.

Connecting All the Arts Through One Intensity of Mind

It is often commented on by audiences that "many times a performance is effective when the actor does nothing." Such an accomplishment results from the actor's greatest, most secret skill. From the techniques involved in the Two Basic Arts down to all the gestures and the various kinds of Role Playing, all such skills are based on the abilities found in the actor's body. Thus to speak of an actor "doing

⁷An expression widely circulated during the medieval period in various forms, probably originating in the writings of Tseng Ts'an, one of the most important disciples of Confucius.

nothing" actually signifies that interval which exists between two physical actions. When one examines why this interval "when nothing happens" may seem so fascinating, it is surely because of the fact that, at the bottom, the artist never relaxes his inner tension. At the moment when the dance has stopped, or the chant has ceased, or indeed at any of those intervals that can occur during the performance of a role, or, indeed, during any pause or interval, the actor must never abandon his concentration but must keep his consciousness of that inner tension. It is this sense of inner concentration that manifests itself to the audience and makes the moment enjoyable.

However, it is wrong to allow an audience to observe the actor's inner state of control directly. If the spectators manage to witness this, such concentration will merely become another ordinary skill or action, and the feeling in the audience that "nothing is happening" will disappear.

The actor must rise to a selfless level of art, imbued with a concentration that transcends his own consciousness, so that he can bind together the moments before and after that instant when "nothing happens." Such a process constitutes that inner force that can be termed "connecting all the arts through one intensity of mind."

"Indeed, when we come to face death, our life might be likened to a puppet on a cart (decorated for a great festival). As soon as one string is cut, the creature crumbles and fades."⁸ Such is the image given of the existence of man, caught in the perpetual flow of life and death. This constructed puppet, on a cart, shows various aspects of himself but cannot come to life of itself. It represents a deed performed by moving strings. At the moment when the strings are cut, the figure falls and crumbles. *Sarugaku* too is an art that makes use of just such artifice. What supports these illusions and gives them life is the intensity of mind of the actor. Yet the existence of this intensity must not be shown directly to the audience. Should they see it, it would be as though they could see the strings of a puppet. Let me repeat again: the actor must make his spirit the strings, and without letting his audience become aware of them, he will draw together the forces of his art. In that way, true life will reside in his *Nō*.

In general, such attitudes need not be limited to the moments involved in actual performance. Morning and night alike, and in all the activities of daily life, an actor must never abandon his concentration, and he must retain his resolve. Thus, if without ever slackening, he manages to increase his skills, his art of the *Nō* will grow ever greater. This particular point represents one of the most secret of all the teachings concerning our art. However, in

⁸A saying attributed to a priest of the Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan, Gettan Sowkow (1316?-1389).

actual rehearsal, there must be within this concentration some variations of tension and relaxation.

The Moment of Peerless Charm

The character *myō* in the term *myōsho* [Peerless Charm] means "exquisite" or "delicate." But it also has the meaning of an appearance that transcends any specific form. Such a transcendence of form represents an expression of this Peerless Charm.

When one speaks of such moments in terms of the *Nō*, this Charm should exist in every aspect of our art, from the Two Basic Arts to gesture. Yet precisely where can it be located? It seems to be found nowhere. If an actor can possess this arresting power, he must be a performer of surpassing skill. However, if an actor is truly blessed with great talent, he will show from his beginnings some shadow of this Charm. The actor will not himself be conscious of it, but spectators of discernment will always find this quality within him. Ordinary spectators, on the other hand, will merely find that his performances are enjoyable in some mysterious fashion. And indeed even in the case of an actor of the highest skill, he will at best have come only to the realization that he somehow does possess this skill. Still, he will have no consciousness that he is practicing it at any given moment. An actor will possess this quality precisely because he does not recognize it; if such a moment could in any way be put into words, this Charm could no longer exist.

When one ponders carefully the substance of this Peerless Charm, can it not be said that an artist may approach it when he has truly learned his craft and attained Perfect Fluency, when he has transcended all stages of his art to the point where he performs everything with ease and exhibits every skill without care, thus achieving a selfless art that rises above any artifice? When an actor manages to ascend to the aesthetic level of Grace, will he indeed not be somewhat closer to this power of beauty? These matters must be pondered deeply.

Judging the *Nō*

When it comes to making crucial judgments concerning the *Nō*, people invariably have different ideas. It is difficult indeed for any particular *Nō* to match the tastes of everyone. Thus the basis of judgment should be made on the strength of the performances of accomplished actors who enjoy a wide reputation.

First of all, one should look and listen with great care during actual performances so as to understand why some plays succeed and why others do not. Plays that succeed possess three qualities: Sight, Sound, and Heart.

As for the *Nō* that succeeds through Sight, the stage atmosphere will be colorful from the beginning, the

dancing and music will have an attractive air, the spectators, noblemen and commoners alike, will be spontaneous in their praise, the atmosphere brilliant. Such is the *Nō* that is effective to the eye. It goes without saying that such a performance will please the discriminating; even those who know nothing of the *Nō* will find such a performance enjoyable. However, concerning such performances, there is one point that an actor must keep in mind. If the performance passes by altogether too well and with too much appeal, and if every aspect seems enjoyable, then the feelings of the audience will tend to become over-stimulated, and their sensibilities in appreciating the details of the acting will be coarsened. For this part, an actor may be impetuous and, since he wants to exhaust every aspect of his art, will make no allowance for a slackening of pace, either for himself or for the audience. In an attempt to make every aspect of the performance successful, a surface brilliance is achieved, but the end results may be unsatisfactory. This kind of abuse arises when the play goes too well. On such an occasion, the play should be performed in a more restrained manner, all the artistic appearances made more moderate, and the eyes and ears of the spectators given some surcease, so that they can have an occasion to rest and breathe easily and the audience can be given the quiet necessary to observe the really skillful elements in the performance. Then, if the results are successful, the plays that follow will seem stronger, so that, whatever the number of plays that may be staged, their fascination for the audience will never be exhausted. So it is that an effective *Nō* performance can be said to succeed through the art of Sight.

Nō that can be said to succeed through Sound shows from the very beginning a serious atmosphere. The music and text are chosen in accord with the season [and the time of day], thus creating a gentle, relaxed, and enjoyable effect. Above all, it is the chant that should create the main impression. Only a peerless artist of highest experience can achieve this effect during a performance. However, the kind of sober flavor engendered by such a performance cannot be understood by country audiences and the like.

This kind of *Nō*, when performed by a peerless actor, can give rise through his spiritual resources to various aesthetic qualities that make the play become more and more enjoyable as it goes along. In the case of an artist of the second rank, however, whose art has not fully matured, he will cause the day's performance to lag if he decides to follow such a presentation by a famous actor with one of his own in a *Nō* that is also of this particular variety. When such a player follows the kind of performance that has successfully created a cool and quiet atmosphere, as he continues on he will only create a gloomy mood in

the succeeding plays. An actor must be aware of this difficulty and put his energies into his performance in order to begin to increase the number of stimulating moments in the play, so as to bring an element of surprise to his audience. Of course, as a truly peerless player has naturally a wide repertory and is highly trained in body and mind, his art will be effectively manifested in his dance and chant, so that his performance will naturally progress in an enjoyable manner. A player of the second rank, however, must take great care so that, as the performance continues, the atmosphere does not go dead. Concerning this point, when thinking to keep up the atmosphere of his performance, the actor must not reveal his methods to the audience. The spectators must merely feel that the performance is enjoyable. Such is the actor's secret, based on long-mastered precedents as to how to perform successfully. All I have written above can explain how a *Nō* can succeed through Sound.

When it comes to the *Nō* that succeeds through the Heart, a truly gifted actor of *sarugaku*, after he has mastered the whole repertory, will have the ability even when performing a play of no particular distinction in terms of chant, dance, gesture, or plot, to create even in the midst of a certain dullness a particular poetic quality that can move the hearts of his audience. This level of attainment is not usually grasped even by connoisseurs; how much more beyond any imaginings of a country audience must be such an art. Indeed, such a quality must seem to represent the propitious manifestation of an actor of the highest abilities. Such a performance can be termed a *Nō* that succeeds through the Heart, a *Nō* that surpasses technique, a *Nō* that transcends outward manifestation.

An actor must learn to discriminate between the kinds of artistic qualities that display those various differences. There are spectators of discernment who do not really understand the art of the *Nō*. On the other hand, there are those spectators who possess a true grasp of the essential nature of the *Nō* but who cannot observe subtle differences. Those who have both a practical and a theoretical understanding of *Nō* represent the highest level of spectator. For example, there are occasions when a fine performance does not meet with success, and times when an unskilled performance pleases, but no one must use these exceptions as a basis for one's general judgments. For example, truly gifted players customarily have success with outdoor and other large-scale performances, while lesser actors perform profitably at smaller playing areas at country fairs or on other such occasions.

An actor who understands how to make his performance attractive to his audience brings good fortune to the *Nō*. Then too, a spectator who understands the heart of the actor as he watches a performance is a gifted

spectator. The following might be said concerning making judgments: forget the specifics of a performance and examine the whole. Then forget the performance and examine the actor. Then forget the actor and examine his inner spirit. Then, forget that spirit, and you will grasp the nature of the *Nō*.

The Matter of Mastering the Chant

There are two aspects to the study of the chant. The person who composes the text should know the principles of music and how to make the words flow together in a euphonious fashion. For his part, the performer who sings must know how to fit the melody to the words and to chant the syllables and words in a clear and correct manner. Since the beauty of the chant derives from the syllables and the words performed, the melodies must be composed in such a way that the pronunciation is always correctly represented, and the linking between the phrases smooth and flexible. When the chant is performed, if the singer has mastered these principles and really knows them well, both the composition and the performance will reinforce each other and produce an enjoyable effect. As this is true, a standard should be established by which the melody is attached to the chant. The flow of the phrases must be attractive, and the sound characteristics of the text must be in harmony with the melody, so that the results will of themselves be musical. That is, the melody provides the basic frame for the musical composition, and the artistic effect derives from the spirit of the performer, who shades the melody in terms of the flow of the phrases. Thus an actor has various elements of music that he must master—the physical problems of using the breath, the development of his own emotional concentration in order to direct it properly, and the understanding of the melody, as well as the music that lies behind the melody. In terms of practicing the musical aspects of *Nō*, the following should be taken to heart: forget the voice and understand the shading of the melody. Forget the melody and understand the pitch. Forget the pitch and understand the rhythm.

In learning the art of musical performance, there is a proper order to be followed: first, the words of the text must be learned thoroughly; then the melody must be mastered; then the actor must learn how to color the melody; finally, he must learn how to apply the proper pitch accent. After all these steps are taken, the actor must concentrate on how to bring his performances to flower. At every stage, an emphasis must be placed on the rhythm. When practicing the voice, miss no occasion to obtain this kind of training, so beneficial to personal development.

Then there is the matter of accent in musical performance. In the case of auxiliary words or particles, the problem is not a serious one. However, mistaken accents

on such substantive words as nouns, verbs, and adjectives⁹ are harmful. Understanding the importance of this distinction is crucial. Serious study must be given to this point. When speaking of mistaken accents on these substantive words, I refer to pronunciations with improper pitch accent, which affect the meaning of the words. In the case of particles and auxiliary words, the problem has to do with the voicing of such sounds as *te*, *ni*, *ha*, and the like. Concerning correct pronunciation for these sounds, when the flow of words in the course of the singing moves effectively, even if the pronunciation becomes altered to some extent, so long as the rhythm is correct, the problem is not a serious one. It is said that words that make a heavy or a light effect, that are clear or complex in sound, depend on the forward flow of the text. In addition, there are various customs and rules concerning sound changes when words are juxtaposed together. Study the transmitted teachings carefully on this matter. As concerns particles that come at the end of phrases, such as *ha*, *ni*, *no*, *o*, *ka*, *te*, *mo*, *shi*, and so forth, even if there should be some deviation in their pronunciation, there will be nothing disagreeable in the sound as long as the melody is tasteful. In other words, the movement of the melody should be supported by these various particles. In the chanting, every syllable must not simply be pronounced in a flat manner, with an equal length and emphasis given to all of them. Those sounds which represent substantive words should be pronounced briskly, so that their meaning remains clear, while the sound of the auxiliary syllables can be rather freely regulated—slow or fast—in order to make the melody more colorful.

[Remember that] the principle of using four basic tones is used [in Chinese].¹⁰

In *The History of the Former Han* by Pan Ku,¹¹ it is written [concerning the legendary origin of the melody] that “as for the origins of the twelve-pitch gamut, a man [named Ling Lun] climbed Mount Kun-lun and, hearing the voice of the male and female phoenix, created the six *ryo* pitches and six *ritsu* pitches of the twelve-pitch

⁹That is, independent, uninflected words usually written with Chinese characters.

¹⁰Zeami doubtless wished to stress the importance of proper pitch accent for substantive words in Japanese, usually written in Chinese characters, by this reference to the Chinese language. For a concise description of the function of tones in classical Chinese, see James J.Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, pages 21–22.

¹¹Pan Ku's history was the first of the so-called dynastic histories of China. For a general description of the text and its subject matter, see Burton Watson, *Early Chinese Literature*, pages 103–109. Zeami's quotation contains minor errors. For an explanation of the significance of the passage in the history of Chinese music, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, pages 59–61.

gamut." *Ritsu*, since it is derived from the voice of the male phoenix, represents the principle of *yang*. *Ryo*, which imitates the voice of the female phoenix, represents *yin*. *Ritsu* represents the kind of sound that goes from high to low, and the breath is inhaled. *Ryo* represents a sound that goes from low to high, and the breath is exhaled. Breathing appropriate to *ritsu* is produced through a state of tension; *ryo* is produced in a state of ease. Then too, *ritsu* can be considered as appropriate to Non-Being, *ryo* appropriate to Being. Thus, a thin, high voice [a "vertical" voice] is appropriate for *ritsu*, while a thick, low voice [a "horizontal" voice] is appropriate for *ryo*.

In the *Analects*,¹² it is written that "the hides of the bear, the tiger, and the panther are used as targets [for the hunter's] arrow. The tiger is the prince's target, the panther the nobleman's target, and the bear the target of the officers of state." If this sequence is followed, it would doubtless be correct to write "tiger, panther, bear." But for the sake of euphony, the order is changed to "bear, tiger, and panther."

The Ultimate Keys of Our Art

The contents of this work have now all been set forth. There is nothing to learn in addition to what has been set down here. Indeed, there is nothing else involved but to "understand the *Nō*" with one's very being. If this fundamental principle is not observed, the various matters discussed here will serve no purpose. If an actor really wishes to master the *Nō*, he must set aside all other pursuits and truly give his whole soul to our art; then, as his learning increases and his experience grows, he will gradually of himself reach a level of awareness and so come to understand the *Nō*.

First of all, an actor must deeply believe what his teacher tells him and take those instructions to heart. The numerous teachings involved are contained in the various points discussed in this book, but the actor must truly master them and engrave them on his heart, so that, when he is actually in a performance, he can try out in practice the various things that he has learned. Then, as a result, he will value those principles, and, as he comes to revere the art of *Nō*, he will as time passes come to understand the real secret of success in our art. In whatever artistic pursuit, one studies and then understands, so that he will know how to carry out his art in actual practice. In *surugaku* as well, one must study and learn, so that these various principles can be put into practice.

¹²No such passage appears in the *Analects*, but a somewhat similar one does appear in the *Chou li* or *Rites of Chou*. Both this passage and the preceding section on *The History of the Former Han* were added to *Chōmei's* text in the form of notes, and may not be by his hand.

All these secret teachings can be summed up by saying that an actor must continually earn mastery through constant practice, from his apprenticeship through his old age. When I speak of studying through old age, I refer to the fact that from the time of an actor's apprenticeship until the peak of his maturity there are various arts that must be mastered. It is only from the time that an actor passes forty that he can slowly begin to make use of restraint in his physical performance. In other words, he must learn the means of artistic expression appropriate for an actor of his age. When the actor passes fifty, then he can begin to use the technique of "doing nothing." This represents a crucial stage in an actor's career. The first thing to learn at this point is the necessity to limit the kinds of plays in the actor's repertory. His musical performance now becomes the center of his style of performance, his acting style becomes simpler, and his dancing and gestures grow more restrained. He should only give a hint of his former colorful appearance. In fact, the art of music remains the one area in which an actor at this age can excel. This is true because an older voice will have exhausted its natural and untrained qualities, and the voice that remains will be highly polished, in whatever style of vocal production the actor may wish to use; thus whatever music is chanted, the results will always be enjoyable. This is a sure means to achieve a successful performance. Thus an older actor should learn carefully to make his age serve his own artistic purposes and work all the harder to train himself appropriately.

Concerning roles that can be played by older actors, old men and women are doubtless the most appropriate. However, depending on the strong points of a particular actor, he may not necessarily be limited to these two. Still, an actor who wishes to create an atmosphere of serenity in his performance will find the roles of older characters best suited to him. If his special strength lies in roles demanding energetic movement, however, those will not be suitable for the aesthetic qualities appropriate to the art of older actors. In any case, within these limits, he should perform his dances and gestures while limiting himself to six-tenths or seven-tenths of "what is felt by the heart is ten," so as to perform in a manner appropriate to his age. Such is the means to master the art suitable for the older actor.

In our Kanze school, there is one phrase that is of infinite value concerning the fundamentals of any artistic accomplishment: an actor must never forget the experiences he has undergone as a beginning artist. In the transmitted teaching, there are three explanations provided for this. Accordingly:

—He must never forget the fresh experiences he first went through as a young performer.

—At each level of accomplishment, there are new levels of fresh experience that the actor must encounter for the first time, as though he were a beginner, and then never forget.

—After the actor becomes older, there are still new stages of fresh experience that must never be forgotten.

Here are the teachings contained in these maxims in more detail.

Concerning the maxim that “he must never forget the fresh experiences he first went through as a young performer,” it can be said that, if the actor retains the feelings he had at that time, he will profit from them in many ways as he grows older. As the expression has it, “an understanding of errors in the past will turn them into advantages in the future.” Or, “seeing the cart in front turn over serves as a warning to the cart that follows.” Forgetting the arts one has learned as a beginner amounts in fact to forgetting the skills an actor may possess at a later point in his career. The fact that his art has been perfected and his reputation has been made can only be the result of the development of his own skill. But if he does not take cognizance of how his skills have improved, he will unknowingly revert to the level he possessed as a beginner. Such a reversal means that his art is actually degenerating. His ability to maintain a sense of his present level of accomplishment shows that he has not forgotten the skills learned as a young performer. I cannot stress this principle too strongly: if an actor loses his memory of his unmastered skills, he will be forced to revert to them. On the other hand, if he does not forget them, his later accomplishments will be genuine. And, if they are genuine, his abilities, as they increase, will insure that his art can never regress. Thus, this truth can serve as a distinction between truth and error.

Young actors must therefore take cognizance of the current level of their accomplishment, realize that they are still only beginners, and understand that they must not lose sight of their own skills that still remain to be developed. In this way, they can truly work to lift the level of their art. To lose consciousness of the level of one’s ability is to forget how to advance in the art; under such circumstances, an artist’s skill will not increase. Therefore, young artists must never lose their perceptions of their actual level of ability.

Secondly, there is the principle that “at each level of accomplishment, there are new levels of fresh experience that the actor must encounter for the first time, as though he were a beginner, and then never forget.” This means that, for the actor, from his beginnings through the height of his career and into his old age, there are always various suitable means of expression he must practice and learn. On all these occasions he can be seen as a beginner. Therefore, if at each stage he abandons and forgets what

has come before, he will only possess the artistic ability that matches what he is doing at that particular moment in his career. If, on the other hand, he has managed to maintain in himself all the skills that he has previously mastered, so that he can still make use of them, then he can perform in an ever-increasing variety of styles. These “new skills” refer to those he has learned for the first time at every successive stage in his career. Maintaining them all and combining them together at one time means that he has forgotten none of them. It is just through such efforts that a *shite* becomes an artist of wide-ranging abilities. Thus one must never forget what he has learned at each stage of his career.

Finally, “after the actor becomes older, there are still new stages of fresh experience that must never be forgotten.” Truly, although there are limits on a human life, the *Nō* never comes to an end. If an actor has mastered every technique appropriate to each stage in his career, then when it comes time to learn what is correct for an older actor, he will still be able to enjoy a new experience even at this late stage in his career. If an actor still possesses this attitude when he reaches this high level, his art will still contain everything about the *Nō* that he has managed to learn before. When he passes the age of fifty, as I have said, an actor need have no other plan than to “do nothing special.” To face the challenge of having no other technique than to “do nothing special”—is the art of an older actor really so different than that of a beginner?

So it is that if an actor manages to live his whole life without forgetting how and what he has learned at any one time in his career, the level of his art will steadily increase during his last years, and his abilities will never degenerate. To live one’s life without ever exhausting the depths of the *Nō* represents the most profound principle of our school, a principle that must be passed on from child to grandchild, generation to generation as a secret teaching of our house. Passing on the importance of these attitudes I have described above will serve as a means to develop the artistry of all generations to come. On the other hand, if an actor forgets this “experience of a beginner,” he will surely not be able to pass the conception along to others in later generations. An artist must not forget this “experience of a beginner,” but must convey it to those who follow, for countless generations.

In addition to what I have written here, another who studies the *Nō* may, depending on his own abilities and discernment, be able to discover still other truths.

All of the *Teachings on Style and the Flower* (Zeami’s treatise on *Nō* theater), beginning with the chapter called “The Practice of the *Nō* in Relation to the Age of the Actor” down to the “Separate Secret Teaching,” is a secret document that makes clear the *Nō* by using the metaphor of the flower. That text represents an account

of various elements in the art of my father Kan'ami, set down twenty years after his death, and serves as a record of what I learned from him. The present treatise, on the other hand, represents discoveries that have occurred to me from time to time concerning the *Nō* over a period of forty years, down to the time of my own advanced age. Summing them up, I have written out my observations in six sections and twenty parts,¹³ which I leave behind as a memento of my art.

Ōe 31 [1424], 1st day of the 6th month
Zeami

This teaching was passed on by Zeami himself for the succeeding generations of his house and should not be shown to actors from other troupes. Luckily, thanks to the Will of Heaven, which knows that my heart reveres the art of the *Nō*, this manuscript has come into my hands. This secret teaching forms the very core of the art of our school, and it has been written down to guide the art of our family. It is a text of fearsome power. Thus it must not be shown carelessly to others.

Eikyō 9 [1437], 8th month, 8th day
Komparu Zenchiku¹⁴

¹³The indication of twenty parts suggests that the manuscript was originally arranged in some different fashion.

¹⁴Komparu's signature is an attribution; the identity of the writer is not altogether certain.