



## **Zeami on the Art of Training**

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## ZEAMI ON THE ART OF TRAINING

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[AUTHOR'S NOTE—I wish to thank my colleague, Professor Marius B. JANSEN, for his many helpful suggestions. This paper was derived in part from my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Zeami on the Nō: A Study of 15th Century Japanese Dramatic Criticism*, Harvard University, 1951. I wish to express my deep appreciation to Professor Edwin O. REISCHAUER for his inestimable assistance in the course of its preparation. My sincere thanks are also due Professors Serge ELISSÉEFF and James R. HIGHTOWER for their valuable comments and criticism.]

Zeami Motokiyo<sup>1</sup> 世阿彌元清 (1363-1443) is one of the most important figures in the history of the *Nō*. As the eldest son of Kannami Kiyotsugu 觀阿彌清次 (1333-1384), a brilliant performer whose innovations revolutionized Japanese drama,<sup>2</sup> Zeami grew up within the very heart of the *Nō* in its most creative and

<sup>1</sup>Zeami's childhood name was Fujiwakamaru 藤若丸, but he was later called YŪSAKI Saburō Motokiyo 結崎三郎元清. The name Zeami, by which he is best known, was apparently chosen by his patron, the third Ashikaga Shōgun, Yoshimitsu, about 1402 after Zeami was formally included among Yoshimitsu's "coterie of artists," the *dōbōshū* 同朋衆 who were customarily given names ending in -ami. See KOBAYASHI Shizuo 小林靜雄, *Zeami* (Tōkyō, 1943) 25, 42; *Zeshi rokujū igo sarugaku dangi* 世子六十以後申樂談儀, commonly called *Sarugaku dangi* (NOSE, Asaji 能勢朝次, *Zeami jūrokubushū hyōshaku* 世阿彌十六部集評釋 [Tōkyō, 1940, 1944] 2.571, hereafter referred to as *JH*).

Zeami has been generally known as Seami by Western scholars and even by Japanese scholars until quite recently. But KOBAYASHI and NOGAMI Toyochirō 野上豊一郎, among others, suggest on the basis of contemporary records that he was called Zeami. Both the *Manzai jūgō nikki* 滿濟准后日記 (*Zoku gunsho ruijū* 續羣書類從, Scroll 870B.336 [supplement, *hoi* 補遺, Scroll 870A.6-870B.660]) and the *Ōuchi mondō* 大内問答 (*Gunsho ruijū*, Scroll 411.472 [Vol. 14.453-472]) refer to Zeami by the character 是 *ze*. In addition, in a much later work, the *Zoku honchō tsugan* 續本朝通鑑, Scroll 156.4288 (Vol. 12 of *Honchō tsugan*, *Kokusho kanōkai* 國書刊行會, Series 7 [Tōkyō, 1918-1920]) the reading of Zeami's name is specifically indicated by the *kana* character せ. See NOGAMI, *Zeami Motokiyo* (Tōkyō, 1942) 64-65, note 1, and KOBAYASHI, *Yōkyoku sakusha no kenkyū* 謡曲作者の研究 (Tōkyō, 1942) 108, note 4.

<sup>2</sup>Kannami, himself the son of an actor, was called Kanze during his childhood, and later YŪSAKI Saburō Kiyotsugu. A well-rounded performer, equally at ease in a

experimental period. His father's troupe, the Kanze-za 觀世座,<sup>3</sup> was a relative newcomer among the many groups<sup>4</sup> already estab-

feminine role or in the character of a demon (*Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 324), he had the special gift of being able to give a performance which would appeal to the artistic tastes of different types of audience (See *Fūshi kaden*, *JH* 1.159; SHIDEHARA Michitaro and Wilfred WHITEHOUSE, "Seami Jūroku Bushū," *MN* 5.2.192. The *Fūshi kaden* 風姿花傳 is more commonly known as the *Kadensho* 書, and my subsequent references to it will be given as *Kadensho*). No other single figure is responsible for such great changes as Kannami instituted in the *Nō*. In particular, two of his innovations, closely linked, may be called revolutionary in their effect on the Japanese drama. He adapted the *kusemai* 曲舞 to *Nō* performances and emphasized rhythm in *Nō* music. The so-called *kuse* section became the crucial part of a play, and the traditionally melodic chant became much more rhythmic. (See *Ongyoku kowadashi kuden* 音曲聲出口傳, *JH* 2.25; *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.399-400.) The *kusemai*, which is also written 久世舞, consisted of a "dance" and chant and was quite popular in the fourteenth century. Possibly a further development of the *shirabyōshi* 白拍子 dances of the Heian period, its chief characteristic was its emphasis on rhythm. Kannami apparently studied *kusemai* under a woman performer, a certain Otozuru 乙鶴 (*Goon* 五音, *JH* 2.233). Although there remain only a few texts of the *kusemai* in their original form, the *kuse* sections of the *Nō* (TAKANO Tatsuyuki 高野辰之, ed., *Nihon kayōshūsei* 日本歌謠集成 5 [Tōkyō, 1928-1929] 243-282), and the relevant materials in Zeami's essays provide much valuable data. For a list of the major studies on this subject, see page 83 of my dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> Kannami first organized his group at Obata 小波多 in the province of Iga (*Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.561), but later moved to Yūsaki in the province of Yamato. He called his group the Yūsaki-za 結崎座 but it was better known as the Kanze-za, after his childhood name, Kanze. The *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.613-620 includes the regulations of the Yūsaki-za (the character 魚 is used instead of 結). These, along with the regulations regarding the Emai-za (IRENOUCHI Nobuyoshi, ed., *Nōgaku koten zenchiku shū* 能樂古典禪竹集 [Tōkyō, 1915] 162-65), constitute the two basic sources for the study of the guild organizations of actors. For the relations between the guilds and the temples, shrines, and military aristocracy see NOSE, *op. cit.* 1183-1224.

<sup>4</sup> NOSE, in his *Nōgaku genryūkō* 源流考 (Tōkyō, 1941), makes an exhaustive and well-documented study of the numerous groups of performers. They appeared in widely scattered areas at different religious festivals, and at times gave special fund-raising performances or *Kanjin Nō* 勧進能, under the auspices of religious institutions. The *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.135 mentions three groups in addition to Kannami's in the province of Yamato, which participated in the festivals of the Kasuga shrine in Nara, and three groups in the province of Ōmi which performed at the Hie shrine. Several other groups are mentioned in the *Kadensho* and *Sarugaku dangi*. The *dengaku* and Ōmi groups produced a number of great performers, and some of them, although little known except for brief references in Zeami's writings, influenced both Kannami and Zeami. Kannami was reported to have based his style on that of Itchū 一忠, of the *dengaku* group (*Kadensho*, *JH* 1.147) while Zeami cites Kiami 龜阿彌, also of the *dengaku* group, and Iuuō 犬王 of the Ōmi group.

lished in his time and it was chiefly Kannami's virtuosity that won popular acclaim for it, and later, high recognition from the Shōgun's court.<sup>5</sup> Zeami drew inspiration from his father;<sup>6</sup> Kannami's skill, especially his extraordinary versatility, deeply impressed his son, and Zeami gained from him many of his basic ideas about the *Nō*.<sup>7</sup> Building upon Kannami's tradition he

together with his father, as the "forefathers of this profession" (*ibid.*). See Arthur WALEY, *The Nō Plays of Japan* (second impression, London, 1950) 23-24 for translations of some of the scattered references to these performers in Zeami's works. Itchū, whose presentations Zeami had never seen (*Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.298), apparently was one of the chief players in the *Kanjin Nō* which was given in Kyōto in 1349 before a huge crowd of spectators, including the Ashikaga Shōgun Takauji 尊氏 (1305-1358). This event is vividly described in the *Taiheiki* 太平記 (Scroll 27.115-19 in Vol. 18 of *Kōchū Nihon bungaku taikai* 校註日本文學大系 [Tōkyō, 1928]) and is mentioned by Sir George SANSOM in his *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (revised edition, New York, 1943) 385-86.

<sup>5</sup> In 1374 the third Ashikaga Shōgun Yoshimitsu saw a performance by Kannami for the first time, at Imagumano 今熊野 in Kyōto (*Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.555). One contemporary record states that Kannami's reputation had grown in the capital as a result of a performance he gave at the Daigoji 醍醐寺 which NOSE dates a few years prior to 1374 (NOSE, *Nōgaku genryūkō* 697-99). KOBAYASHI suggests that EBINA Naomi 海老名南阿彌, one of Yoshimitsu's coterie of artists, may have played a part in bringing Kannami to Yoshimitsu's attention (KOBAYASHI, *Yōkyoku sakusha no kenkyū* 14; *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.503). Besides appreciating Kannami's artistry, Yoshimitsu was also drawn to the handsome boy, Zeami, who participated in the performance at Imagumano at the age of twelve (KOBAYASHI, *op. cit.* 100-102). This occasion was the turning point of the fortunes of Kannami and his troupe and a close and profitable relationship between Yoshimitsu and the Kanze-za existed throughout the Shōgun's life.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.323, Zeami stated, "Only my father was capable of rising with great ease to the highest level of the top three aesthetic categories, to the highest level of the middle, and even to descend to the three lowest levels." These categories, which he elucidated in the *Kui* 九位, also known as the *Kui no shidai* 九位次第 (*JH* 1.545-583), were established on the basis of the degree of aesthetic grace, *yūgen*, which is present in the different kinds of *Nō* plays. In the *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.324, he also remarked that in Kannami's performances could be found every one of the ten different styles which he himself had formulated by combining those of all his predecessors. For a German translation of the *Kui*, see Hermann BOHNER, "Seami: Der Neun Stufen Folge," *MDGNVO* 34 (1943) C.

<sup>7</sup> The *Kadensho*, the earliest of Zeami's theoretical essays, was motivated by a desire to preserve for posterity the instructions he had received from his father (*JH* 1.120; SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 239; *Hana no kagami* 花鏡, *JH* 1.429). It is, therefore, an important source for the understanding of Kannami's ideas about the *Nō* as well as the expression of Zeami's own ideas at this stage of his career.

molded the *Nō* play into a thoroughly sophisticated form of art which remains today one of the greatest literary expressions of Japanese drama.<sup>8</sup>

Like his father, Zeami was an outstanding performer. But he was also a prolific and successful playwright and a penetrating critic. Endowed with great natural ability, even as a youth he shared honors with Kannami on the stage.<sup>9</sup> He must have started his training when he was very young for he tells us that "the training in this art usually begins at the age of seven."<sup>10</sup> His own accounts of the training of performers at different age levels<sup>11</sup> testify to the careful instructions he must have received from his father, and his later comments on a performance he had attended as a youth indicate that even at an early age he possessed unusual artistic sensibilities and a critical eye.<sup>12</sup> As he grew in artistic

<sup>8</sup> *Nō* performances today differ in many respects from those of Zeami's time. Stylizations in posturing and in movements about the stage are much more rigidly set; costuming and masks receive much greater attention, and the production as a whole moves at a considerably slower tempo. On the basis of Zeami's remarks, performances in his day were much less formalized than today and seem even improvisational by contrast. These differences are an inevitable consequence of the process of refinement which has continued since Zeami's time, but the crystallization of this process in its present form was perhaps hastened and in part conditioned by the fact that the *Nō*, besides its function as an entertainment for its patrons, was made an integral part of the ceremonial functions of the Shōgun and the Daimyō in the Tokugawa era. See IKENOUCHI Nobuyoshi, *Nōgaku seisuiiki* 盛衰記, Vol. 1 (Tōkyō, 1915). The basic approach to the *Nō*, however, is still the same today as it was when Zeami first formalized it over five hundred years ago. For a succinct account of the differences, see SAKAMOTO Setchō, 坂本雪鳥, "Gendai no *Nō* yori mitaru Zeami" 現代の能より見たる世阿彌 in his *Nōgaku hitsujin* 筆陣 (Tōkyō, 1953) 1-53; on stylizations, see a thorough study by TODA Shōsaburō 戸田松三郎 entitled "Nōgaku ni okeru monomane no henshen" 能樂に於ける物真似の變遷, *Engkishishi kenkyū* 演劇史研究 1 (Tōkyō, 1932-1933) 109-139. On tempo in a *Nō* performance, see NONOMURA Kaizō 野野村戒三 "Muromachi jidai no ennō jikan" 室町時代の演能時間 in his *Nōen nishsho* 能苑日涉 (Tōkyō, 1930) 185-88, and Nose, "Nō to Muromachi jidai" 能と室町時代, *Nō* 能 3 (1949) 8.1-6.

<sup>9</sup> Besides participating in the historic performance of 1374, Zeami is said to have performed "with skill equal to his father" at the Daigoji in Kyōto a few years earlier. See note 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 1.11-34. SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 210-17.

<sup>12</sup> When he was twelve years old he observed the performance of Kiami of the *dengaku* group, a man renowned for his excellence in music, whom Zeami later called

stature he was described as having absorbed the best in the styles of the outstanding performers of his time,<sup>13</sup> and his subtle and graceful presentations won him poetic characterizations like "the moon veiled in a fragrant haze of flowers."<sup>14</sup>

Zeami's qualifications as a playwright are more clearly definable than his qualities as a performer. His plays, which comprise nearly half of the current repertoire of the *Nō* drama,<sup>15</sup> represent the high point of artistic expression in the genre and are models for the technique of playwriting which he expounded in his theoretical essays.<sup>16</sup> As a critic, he combined a keen sensitivity

"the forefather of the aspect of music" in the *Nō*. He was deeply moved by the straightforward way Kiami chanted his lines, and remarked, "the more I thought of it afterwards, the more I appreciated the quality of its charm" (*Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.301-302).

<sup>13</sup> The *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.332 cites the comments of Zōami 増阿彌 on Zeami's performances. He compared a certain style of his performance to Inuō and others to Kiami and Kannami. Zōami, who was Zeami's contemporary, particularly distinguished himself in the chant, and Zeami had the highest regard for him (*ibid.* 2.307-308). A special favorite of the fourth Shōgun, Yoshimochi 義持 (1386-1428), he seems to have played a dominant role at least in Kyōto between 1413 and 1422 (KOBAYASHI, *Nōgakushi kenkyū* 史研究 (Tōkyō, 1945) 143.

<sup>14</sup> *Kabuzinōki* 歌舞髓腦記 (*Nōgaku koten Zenchikushū* 42-43). The *Zenchikushū* contains the theoretical essays of KOMPARI Zenchiku 金春禪竹, known also as Ujinobu 氏信 (1405-1459~1471) who was Zeami's son-in-law and protégé. For a study of Zenchiku and his theoretical essays, see NOSE, *Nōgaku kenkyū* 研究 (Tōkyō, 1940) 215-295; KOBAYASHI, *Yōkyoku sakusha no kenkyū* 137-159; and NOSE, "Rokurin ichiro" 六輪一露, *Nōgaku zensho* 全書 1 (Tōkyō, 1943) 433-466.

<sup>15</sup> NOGAMI, *Zeami Motokiyo* 71 assigns as many as 124 plays to Zeami. The question of establishing definite authorship is not an easy one. Modern scholars, however, by careful correlation of early catalogues of *Nō* plays with relevant material in Zeami's essays, have established with considerable certainty the authorship of most of Zeami's plays. On the basis of his research, KOBAYASHI (*Nōgakushi kenkyū* 175-77) arrives at the figure of 98 plays definitely attributable to Zeami. (He excludes from this reckoning plays which are not preserved in their entirety and those of which Zeami was not the original author.) See also NOSE, *Nōgaku genryūkō* 1351-1406. For a list of plays in the early catalogues and brief comments on the reliability of these catalogues, see *ibid.* 1321-351; a critical study can be found in KOBAYASHI, *Yōkyoku sakusha no kenkyū* 254-294.

<sup>16</sup> The major work in which Zeami discussed the problems of playwriting is the *Nōsakusho* 能作書 (*JH* 1.590-672), written in 1423. In this work he analyzed in detail the three elements which he considered essential to playwriting: *shu* 種, or subject; *saku*, or structure; and *sho*, or composition. He discussed the forms appro-

to art with a complete understanding of the problems of the *Nō*, and was probably the first to formalize its theories in writing. He organized the teachings derived from his father, augmenting and elaborating them as he acquired a deeper and more critical understanding through his long personal experience as master performer and teacher. His essays serve as a key to an understanding and evaluation of Zeami as an artist, and are fundamental to the appreciation of the *Nō* as a stage art.

Zeami was certainly placed in most favorable circumstances for his lifework of bringing the *Nō* to perfection. From his early youth he was established in the patronage of the third Ashikaga Shōgun, Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), who seems to have had a keen appreciation of the arts. Yoshimitsu was every inch the court aristocrat: his poetry was excellent, he played musical instruments, and he lent his support and encouragement to all the cultured diversions popular at the Emperor's court.<sup>17</sup> The military aris-

prate for *Nō* pieces dealing with different types of character roles. In addition, he listed the plays which "were considered exceptionally good," and recommended that they be made models for new plays (*JH* 1.657). A few excerpts from the *Nōsakusho* have been translated by WALEY, *op. cit.* 35-36. Remarks on playwriting can also be found in Zeami's other theoretical essays, notably the *Sarugaku dangi*. In the *Nō*, playwriting is intimately related to the aspect of music and many of Zeami's works, particularly the *Fushizuke sho* 曲附書 (*JH* 2.43-96) and *Fūkyokushū* 風曲集 (*JH* 2.99-127), shed much light on this subject.

<sup>17</sup> For more on this subject, see NOGAMI, "Chūsei engeki—*Nō* to kyōgen" 中世演劇—能と狂言, *Nihon engeki shichō* 日本演劇思潮 (*Engekiron* 演劇論 2 [Tōkyō, 1942].77); TSUDA Sōkichi 津田左右吉 *Bungaku ni arawaretaru kokumin shisō no kenkyū* 文學に現はれたる國民思想の研究 (Tōkyō, 1920) 172. Yoshimitsu's attempts to conduct himself as a courtier, particularly his modishness in attire, are vividly described in the *Rokuon'in den Itsukushima mode no ki* 鹿苑院殿嚴島詣記 (*Gunsho ruijū* 11 [1897, Scroll 333].1199-1209) which was written by IMAGAWA Sadayo 今川貞世 (1335?-1420?), a warrior-poet known also as Ryōshun 了俊. For a study of Ryōshun, see KOYAMA Keiichi 兒山敬一, *Imagawa Ryōshun* (Tōkyō, 1944). That a careful reading of such Heian classics as the *Genji monogatari* and *Makura no sōshi* was considered indispensable to a cultured person is well illustrated in the *Chikubashō* 竹馬抄, attributed to SHIBA Yoshimasa 斯波義將 (1350-1410). See *Gunsho ruijū*, 18 (Scroll 475).191). Yoshimitsu's great skill in the *renga* 十問最秘抄, a theoretical work on poetry. See NOSE, "Rengaron to Nōgakuron ni arawaretaru jidai geijutsu ishiki" 連歌論と能楽論にあらはれたる時代藝術意識 *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 國文學解釋と鑑賞 9 (1944).9.39. The *Jūmon saihishō*, discovered within the last few decades, has been reproduced in a

toocracy which the Shōgun represented admired the graceful elegance and delicate emotional nuances embodied in the literature of the Heian period. Growing up in intimate association with Yoshimitsu, Zeami shared with him the aesthetic ideals of those times, undoubtedly deriving from this contact much of the knowledge of literary, philosophical, and Buddhist sources which he wove so effectively into his writings. The playwright found in the literature of the early ages inspiration for his restatement of their standards.

For Zeami, *Nō* was not a frivolous entertainment but a great art which called for a dedicated life. He was gravely disturbed over the lack of seriousness with which some of his fellow performers approached their calling, particularly their attitude of smug content with their own successes and achievements, giving no thought to the problems of training others and building an artistic tradition. He found the key to his whole concept of his profession in training: "One will most certainly acquire the secrets of the art," he wrote, "provided he gives himself wholeheartedly to training, with deep respect for the art."<sup>18</sup> He was convinced that only through a correct adherence to an established procedure of training could one hope to keep alive an artistic tradition from generation to generation. In the *Sarugaku dangi* he said, "Even though one is by nature an outstanding performer, if he does not give careful consideration to the procedures of training, his artistic tradition will not be carried on. He will be the only one who will remain outstanding. Thus, it very frequently happens that the artistic tradition of outstanding performers does not last."<sup>19</sup>

Zeami wrote his theoretical essays specifically for his disciples who were qualified to carry on those standards of greatness which

periodical called *Maisō* 味爽 (No. 4), which was not available to me for consultation. See EBARA Taizō 顥原退藏 *Haikaishi ronkō* 俳諧史論考 (Kyōto, 1936) 494-98 for further comments on this work.

<sup>18</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.142. Zeami repeatedly cautioned his disciples against engaging themselves in other activities. The study of poetry, however, was considered essential for playwrighting as well as the cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility.

<sup>19</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.607.



he and his father had established.<sup>20</sup> Through these studies he passed on not only technical instruction in his profession, but the whole philosophy of his art, which for him was bound up in the details of its practice. His own self-consciousness as an artist, and his complete awareness of the problems of the *Nō* are revealed most clearly in the essays. His comments on the performances and training of members of other groups of players show that he believed his and his father's approach to be the only proper one,<sup>21</sup> and he was firmly confident that his artistic judgments would stand the test of time.<sup>22</sup> In his formulation of principles for the posterity of his craft, he was not only the acknowledged spokesman for his own troupe of performers but he was setting himself up as spokesman for the whole profession as well.

In addition to his passion for carrying on his and his father's high standards, Zeami seems to have felt that a formal written tradition would give the *Nō* greater prestige. His basic thesis was that "in this art, one inherits the style of one's predeces-

<sup>20</sup> Zeami's essays on the *Nō* were written in the form of secret traditions, or *hiden* 秘傳, a practice well established in a variety of literary and artistic professions as a means to preserve traditions within a family or school. His essays were for those with the ability both to appreciate and utilize them. He underscored this passage when he wrote, "In the *Lun-yü*, it is said, 'Not to talk to one who could be talked to is to waste a man. To talk to those who cannot be talked to is to waste one's words.' In the *I-ching* it is said, 'To transmit the writings to one who is not properly qualified is something of which Heaven disapproves'" (*Shikadō*, *JH* 1.477). For the quotation from *Lun-yü* see WALEY, *Analects of Confucius* (London, 1938) 194. The original passage is quoted accurately except for the transposition of one character (1816 edition of *Shih-san ching chu-shu*, *Lun yü* 15 (*ts'e* 71).2a.8. The passage attributed to the *I-ching* does not appear anywhere in that work. On *hiden* see SASAKI Hachiro 佐佐木八郎, *Geidō no kōsei 藝道の構成* (Tōkyō, 1947) 214-220; KOMIYA Toyotaka 小宮豊隆 "Nō to hiden" 能と秘傳, *Nōgaku zensho* 1.275-315; and NOSE, "Chūsei ni hiden, kaden no umareta no wa naze ka" 中世に秘傳. 家傳の生れたのは何故か *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kansho* 17 (1952) 8.13-16.

<sup>21</sup> *Shikadō*, *JH* 1.439, 461-62. For example, he stated that since performers in general do not observe the kind of training he had formulated, "their style of performance lacks a solid and secure base, and their performance is weak and inferior."

<sup>22</sup> *Nōsakusho*, *JH* 1.665. "It would seem to me that the performances of those whose high level of artistry is founded upon the principle of *yūgen* (see p. 220) will command equal popularity regardless of the changing times."

sors.”<sup>23</sup> This emphasis on artistic tradition and family line was unquestionably strengthened by his close contact with aristocratic circles, where a long literary tradition and an ancient heritage of family skill were regarded as fundamental accoutrements of a respectable art. Thus, Zeami was clearly seeking to raise the art of *Nō* from the common level and give it the essentials of respectability.

Zeami himself ascribed his preoccupation with training to a rise in contemporary standards. He wrote in the *Shikadō* 至花道,<sup>24</sup>

Formerly, there existed no such detailed instructions with regard to training. . . . In those days, noble personages noticed only the good points and gave them high praise, while the bad points were unnoticed in their criticism. But, nowadays, since their honorable eyes have become so keen, they are critical even of the least defect. Hence, only a masterpiece that is as pearls many times polished or flowers choicely culled will satisfy the wishes of the noble personages.

The essays, written over a thirty-year span,<sup>25</sup> cover a wide

<sup>23</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.142. That Zeami attached importance to the act of inheriting an artistic tradition can be seen from his definition of the term *hompū* 本風 or authentic style as one “whose history and artistic tradition have been handed down” and for which “definite proof” exists (*Kyakuraika* 却來華, also known as *Shichijū igo kuden* 七十以後口傳, *JH* 2.675).

<sup>24</sup> *Shikadō*, *JH* 1.473. Mr. WALEY erroneously translates the final part of this section as “. . . even a masterpiece that is as pearls many times polished or flowers choicely culled will not win the applause of our gentlemen to-day” (*op. cit.* 42). I have used a portion of his phraseology in my translation. For a translation of this work, known also as *Shikadōsho*, into German, see BOHNER, “Seami: Buch von Der höchsten Blume Weg,” *MDGNVO* 34 (Tōkyō, 1943) B.

<sup>25</sup> Zeami's writings can be divided into three fairly distinct time periods. The first is represented by only one work, the *Kadensho*, which was probably completed between 1400 and 1402 (see note 7). The second period covers roughly the ten years from 1418 to 1428, during which time most of his essays were written. It is during this time that Zeami's own ideas about the *Nō* were fully developed and given concrete expression. The most substantial and comprehensive of his essays is the *Hana no kagami*, completed in 1424. (A preliminary version, *Kashū* 花習 was prepared in 1418.) His other essays of this period, although equally important, deal primarily with particular phases of his inquiry into the *Nō*. The third and final period can perhaps be represented by the *Kyakuraika* which was written in 1453. The final period is the least fruitful in terms of Zeami's ideas, and his essays contain few new thoughts. For the nature and content of his essays, cf. my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Zeami on the Nō: A Study of 15th Century Dramatic Criticism* (Harvard University, 1951) 92-142.

variety of subjects touching upon virtually every phase of the *Nō*. Since Zeami, while distinguishing himself as an author and critic, was basically a *Nō* player, he focused much of his attention on the problems of an effective performance,<sup>26</sup> analyzing in great detail and from all angles the qualities he considered essential to the actor's successful presentation. Technical skill represented only one facet of Zeami's program of training. He also stressed, with an almost religious intensity, a mental or spiritual training whereby the performer might acquire a full understanding of the nature of *Nō*. This was an exacting discipline of mind and soul in a search for the means to realize maximum effectiveness in technical skills. It required constant reflection and introspection in order that the performer might view himself dispassionately and objectively, fully aware of the fact that "there might be shortcomings in his performances which elude his own critical eye."<sup>27</sup> A deep knowledge of the essence of the *Nō* was one of the prime conditions for a great performer, and Zeami asserted that all his detailed instructions would be to no avail if the performer failed to grasp the full significance of his art.<sup>28</sup>

Zeami's program of training sought to realize what he considered the three major requisites for an ideal performer. These were (1) technical mastery of an exhaustive repertoire, (2) cultivation of the aesthetic quality of *yūgen* 幽玄, or gracefulness, and (3) the acquisition of a certain intuitive perceptiveness about the *Nō*.

In his first demand of a great performer, versatility and flexibility in his presentations, Zeami expressed his consciousness of

<sup>26</sup> Zeami used the term *hana*, or flower to denote all the possible meanings of an effective performance. Of the many articles written on *hana*, one of Zeami's central concepts, NOGAMI's "Nō no hana," *Nō no yūgen to hana* (Tōkyō, 1943) 37-61 and FUJII Kazuyoshi 藤井和義, "Zeami no hana," *Bungaku* 10 (1942) .1.22-34; 2.30-44, are very informative. A brief analysis of the main aspects of *hana* can be found in my "The *Nō* and Zeami," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 11 (1952) .3.355-361.

<sup>27</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken* 遊樂習道風見, *JH* 1.523. NOSE refers to this work as *Yūgaku shūdō kempūsho*. Expressions such as *kufū* 工夫 "to search for means," *kōan* 考案, "deep reflection," and *antoku* 案得, "to grasp fully, through reflection," which recur throughout his writings point to the importance he attached to the processes of mental training.

<sup>28</sup> *Hana no kagami*, *JH* 1.411.

the vital role the audience plays in the success of a performance.<sup>29</sup> He recognized that different groups in an audience have differing tastes and that success depends on an appeal to each without violation of the harmony of the play.<sup>30</sup> The *Nō* was destined to become an art form primarily for the cultured and sophisticated, even to assume certain ceremonial functions for the military aristocracy,<sup>31</sup> but in Zeami's time it was still a popular form of art, firmly rooted in the broader society from which it had emerged. Zeami, himself a past master at pleasing his patron and anticipating his desires,<sup>32</sup> naturally addressed himself first of all to the problems of playing for the elite society whose aesthetic tastes he shared. A desire for continued patronage and a genuine acceptance of the *Nō* by this society made such a course inevitable. It was essential that a player win high acclaim from the discerning audience of the capital district if he ever hoped to attain the highest level of achievement,<sup>33</sup> but a truly great artist should have flexibility enough to vary his performance so as to appeal to a less sophisticated country audience as well.<sup>34</sup> By varying the presentation, Zeami was able to evoke in the audience a sense of novelty and freshness, or *mezurashiki* 珍しき, which he felt

<sup>29</sup> Zeami's views on the audience have been studied by FURUKAWA Hisashi 古川久 in his "Zeami no kankyakusetsu" 世阿彌の観客説, *Bunka* 3(1936) 5.65-81.

<sup>30</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.195. Zeami wrote, "As in this art the audience is inevitably the first consideration, you should deign to conform to present custom and when playing before an audience who have a fancy for grace (*yūgen*), you should incline the strong side of your performance towards grace, even if by that you deviate a little from the miming (*monomane*)." See SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 206.

<sup>31</sup> See note 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.601. Zeami's ability to do the right thing at the right time was compared to a certain Lady Takahashi, who apparently was widely known to be Yoshimitsu's favorite. The specific passage has been translated by WALEY, *op. cit.* 20. The original text, however, does not support Mr. WALEY's rendering of the last sentence as "After this lady's death every one recommended Seami as one particularly qualified for such a situation." It should read simply "Everyone had high praise for Zeami for being particularly adept in these matters."

<sup>33</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.369-370. The type of severe criticism that would be given a performance in the capital districts he regarded indispensable if the performer were to eliminate the deficiencies in his performance completely.

<sup>34</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.151; *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.293.

was necessary for success.<sup>35</sup> A secure mastery of a large variety of *Nō* pieces, and the cultivation of a sensitivity to the mood and tastes of the audience were the two essentials enabling the performer to possess "the seeds of the flowers of the four seasons, to create at all times a fresh and charming effect."<sup>36</sup>

The aesthetic criterion for a great performer was the quality of *yūgen*, or noble grace and refinement. According to Zeami, *yūgen* represented the highest artistic achievement for all tasteful accomplishments, but especially for the *Nō*,<sup>37</sup> and he stated that all those performers of old who had received universal acclaim possessed this quality.<sup>38</sup> *Yūgen*, according to Zeami, had its basis in "beauty and gentleness,"<sup>39</sup> a certain innate *gentillesse* which manifests itself in the graceful manners and refined speech of the nobility, or in the well-modulated flow of music.<sup>40</sup>

In his earliest treatise Zeami made a distinction between *yūgen* and *tsuyoki* 強き, or "forcefulness," stating that the projection of the quality of *yūgen*, or that of *tsuyoki*, depended upon the type of *Nō* play presented, and upon the truth of the performer's mimicry in his depiction of a role.<sup>41</sup> In his later essays, however, he modified his views and made *yūgen* the core concept which had to be applied to all types of character roles.<sup>42</sup> It was no longer sufficient for the performer to be true to the art of mimicry. Rather he had to take into full consideration the aesthetic effect which it projected, and modify his portrayal in accordance with *yūgen*. Zeami believed that whether in the role of "court ladies, high or low, commoners, men or women, monks, rustics, beggars or even outcasts," it was essential to create an impression of beauty "as though every one of them held a spray of beautiful flowers."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.213; *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.340.

<sup>36</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.216.

<sup>37</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.358.

<sup>38</sup> *Nōsakusho*, JH 1.665-66; *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.290.

<sup>39</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.358.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.192-97. See SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 199. A failure to adhere closely to the art of mimicry in the presentation of the plays resulted in a performance which Zeami called *yowaki* 弱き, "weak," or *araki* 荒き, "coarse."

<sup>42</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.362.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Through systematic training and by nurturing an artistic sensitivity he tried to develop within the performer the capacity to infuse a certain quality of grace into even the most violent character roles.

The cultivation of perception or intuitive insight into the nature of the *Nō* was the most important element in achieving artistic perfection for Zeami. "The dance and the art of mimicry," he wrote, "are technical skills. What is most needed is alertness of mind (*kokoro* 心), a fully enlightened understanding (*shōi shin* 正位心). Therefore, a performer is called skilled who gives a presentation with an intuitive knowledge of the means by which to create a charming effect, although he may lack technical versatility."<sup>44</sup>

This quality of intuitive perception, or *kan* 感, does not lend itself easily to definition. It is this talent which enables the artist to become the master of his particular medium, and through it, to give his personal impress to a performance. For example, Zeami compared an actor's posture, based on technical skills, to a marionette. He felt that just as a marionette requires strings to bring it to life, a *Nō* performer needs perception and understanding as invisible "strings" to give life to his posture.<sup>45</sup> It was through these perceptive powers, Zeami asserted, that the player could acquire precise timing, and so establish rapport with his audience.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 1.347. See notes 46 and 48 for *kokoro* and *shōi shin* respectively.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 1.378.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 1.313: "First of all, upon coming out from the back stage, one should pause on the *hashigakari* (i.e., a passageway, or 'bridge,' in plain sight of the audience, which connects the greenroom and the stage proper), sense the mood of the audience, and 'sing out' at the very moment the whole audience in rapt attention awaits you to commence your chant. . . . If you are even slightly behind in your timing, the attention of the audience will begin to waver, and your chant which follows will be out of harmony with the response of the audience. The precise moment lies wholly in the mental readiness of the audience, and is something you know by intuition. This is the very moment when you draw upon yourself the complete attention of the audience, a crucial moment for your performance of the day." Zeami uses the word *kan* in his essays in several ways but the most significant use of the term is as "intuition," referred to also as *mushin* 無心, "a state of mind which transcends consciousness" (*op. cit.* 348). KOMIYA suggests that Zeami was perhaps the first to apply this concept to a genre of literature. See his *Bashō, Zeami, Hiden*, *Kan* 芭蕉, 世阿彌, 祕傳, 勘 (Tōkyō, 1947) 253. NISHIO Minoru 西尾實 in "Kan

Through these faculties also, the performer could acquire a capacity for alertness and concentration which would create a feeling of unity and continuity during periods of temporary inaction on the stage.<sup>47</sup> The ideal that Zeami was seeking both for himself and others was what he called a state of “full enlightenment,”<sup>48</sup> and he saw in ceaseless application and reflection the means by which ultimately to attain this level.

Zeami stated unequivocally that “the *Nō* is something to which one must apply himself continuously from youth to old age.”<sup>49</sup> One of the reasons he emphasized persistence in training was to keep the performer from becoming complacent about his artistic development. He was alive to the fact that success and popularity could become enemies of the artist by giving him an unwarranted sense of his own achievement,<sup>50</sup> and repeatedly warned his followers of the dangers of overestimating their own capacity.<sup>51</sup> A youthful performer might at times receive greater acclaim than one who had more experience. But Zeami regarded these occasions merely as transitory or precocious triumphs which were derived more from external factors than from the intrinsic merit of the presentation. The audience might be captivated by the attractive

to kan—Zeami no densho ni okeru ‘Kan’ no kōsatsu” 勘と感—世阿彌の傳書に於ける「感」の考察 *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 16 (1939) 4.128-137, gives an excellent analysis of the ramifications of the word *kan* in Zeami’s essays. *Kan*, used as “intuition” stands in opposition to *kokoro*, “mental alertness and understanding,” both of which demand a conscious exercise of a performer’s mental faculties. For a good analysis of *kokoro*, an all-important concept for Zeami in regard to the process of a performer’s artistic development, see NOSE, “Zeami ni okeru kokoro no shomondai” 世阿彌に於ける心の諸問題, *Nōgaku kenkyū* 166-198, and KOBAYASHI Noriaki 小林智昭, “Zeami kenkyū—Kokoro no ronri” 世阿彌研究・心の論理. *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 29 (1952) 5.17-27.

<sup>47</sup> *Hana no kagami*, *JH* 1.376.

<sup>48</sup> One of the terms which Zeami used to express this level of understanding was *shōi* 正位 (*ibid.* 1.347), a Buddhist term which refers to the level of spiritual enlightenment, or the acquisition of “*adhigama*” (*shō* 證). “*Adhigama*” means to comprehend truth through the observance of the correct laws. “This level of enlightenment can be understood only through personal experience, and cannot be described by words.” NOSE, *JH* 1.350; МОЧИЗУКИ Shinkō 望月信亨, *Bukkyō daijiten* 3 (Tōkyō, 1931-1936) 2541.

<sup>49</sup> *Hana no kagami*, *JH* 1.413.

<sup>50</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.413.

<sup>51</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, *JH* 1.527; *Shikadō*, *JH* 1.453.

voice and the natural grace of a youthful player, but these qualities cannot be retained for long. He may combine a surprising mastery of a variety of *Nō* pieces which could delude a less discerning audience into regarding him as an accomplished artist, but this quality will no longer be unusual when he grows into an adult, and will no longer be an object of praise.<sup>52</sup> "Even when people applaud him and even if he defeats a master, he should perceive that it is because of the passing flower of glory and . . . should be the more enthusiastic in pursuing his training."<sup>53</sup>

Zeami's concern over complacency applied equally to those performers who had already established themselves as masters. He felt that if they relied upon the styles which had gained them glory, the artistic qualities of their presentations would decline, become old fashioned, and even be surpassed by less experienced performers.<sup>54</sup>

Zeami's ideal was to live out his artistic career without ever losing resourcefulness.<sup>55</sup> Ceaseless training and application could eliminate the deficiencies in a performance<sup>56</sup> and enable the performer in his fading years to rise above the physical limitations which age inevitably places upon his technical versatility. The entire career of an artist must be one of continuous growth in which he constantly strives for a higher level of perfection. He cautioned against what he called *jūkō* 住劫 or "stagnation," whether in the choice or presentation of plays,<sup>57</sup> and urged that the performer take stock of his progress at every stage of his

<sup>52</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, JH 1.516-17.

<sup>53</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.20; SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 215.

<sup>54</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.370; *Kadensho*, JH 1.89, 91-92.

<sup>55</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.424.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 1.370.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 1.367. The word *kō* 劫 (*kalpa* in Sanskrit) is a Buddhist term which signifies an extremely long period of time. This term in its popular usage came to mean "to gain experience and training over a long period." *Jū* 住 means "to become static" or "to stay or remain in a given place or level," and in Buddhism signifies an attachment, a serious impediment to the attainment of purity and enlightenment. Zeami also make use of a variant expression, *mushojū* 無所住, to emphasize the need for a mastery of a variety of *Nō* pieces, indispensable to a performer's continued success (*Kadensho*, JH 1.213). See ODA Ryōsuke 小田良弼 "Jūkō to mekikazu" 住劫と目利かず, *Kokugo kokubun* 18 (1949) 2.1-18, and Nose, *Nōgaku kenkyū* 200-214.



development in order that each achievement could serve as a stepping-stone to a still higher level of art.<sup>58</sup> It was essential for every stage of training to be thoroughly mastered before proceeding to the next. "Skimming" might serve a temporary purpose but was not the way to establish a lasting foundation for outstanding performances.<sup>59</sup>

The basic procedure of training best suited for a dynamic development of a performer, Zeami called the *nikyoku santai* 二曲三體. By *nikyoku* he meant the chant and dance, and by *santai* the three basic character roles: an older person (*rōtai* 老體), a woman (*nyotai* 女體), and a warrior (*guntai* 軍體). He felt that a thorough mastery of the *nikyoku santai* alone would be enough to enable a performer to attain a high level of artistic excellence.<sup>60</sup>

Zeami stated that training in the technical skills must begin with the chant and dance, pointing out that these two elements are present in all kinds of performances, and are not restricted to particular types of *Nō* plays as are different character roles.<sup>61</sup> He went to great lengths to stress the primacy of these two skills over mimicry or *monomane* 物真似. Paradoxically, the group of performers which Kannami and Zeami led had a reputation for giving close attention to mimicry,<sup>62</sup> a factor which may well have had some bearing on the troupe's ascendancy over its rivals. Mimicry was fundamental to the *Nō* because it dealt with the aspects of costuming, physical bearing and mimetic action of the many character roles but Zeami felt that proficiency in the chant and dance constituted the artistic foundation upon which all

<sup>58</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.414 ff.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 1.340. The term *tendoku* 點讀 which I have translated "skimming" is used in connection with the reading of Buddhist scriptures. In order to get through a large Buddhist work, a special method of reading was devised whereby only a few lines would be read from each of the first, middle and last sections of the work. Sometimes just the different subheads would be read. A full or true reading of the scriptures is called *shindoku* 真讀. *Tendoku* is mentioned by Sir Charles ELIOT in his *Japanese Buddhism* (London, 1935) 217.

<sup>60</sup> *Shikadō*, JH 1.439.

<sup>61</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, JH 1.517.

<sup>62</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.145.

later accomplishments were built.<sup>63</sup> “How can one call a performer graceful,” he wrote, “if he is deficient in the dance and chant!”<sup>64</sup>

With reference to the chant, Zeami discussed the problem of “attack”<sup>65</sup> and the pronunciation of certain syllables;<sup>66</sup> he distinguished the different modes of expression, and emphasized the importance of differentiating them.<sup>67</sup> He also stated that the performer should first find out the quality of his voice.<sup>68</sup> Then he was to learn the words, become thoroughly familiar with the tune, and learn proper phrasing, intonation and accent in order to convey the emotive intent of the passages in the play. Last of all he should acquire a perceptiveness through which alone he can project overtones and nuances.<sup>69</sup>

In training for the chant the performer was expected to show the same concentration which Zeami demanded of all training related to the *Nō*: he should approach a rehearsal with the same degree of seriousness and alertness as for a full-dress performance before “noble personages.” Such an attitude would provide the

<sup>64</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.290.

<sup>65</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, JH 1.513.

<sup>66</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.278. The performer should first of all listen carefully to the pitch, then firmly retain it in his mind and get fully prepared—“close your eyes and draw in your breath”—to begin the chant.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 1.406-407, repeated in *Ongyoku kowadashi kuden*, JH 2.13-14; *Ongyoku no uchi ni roku no daiji* 音曲の内に六の大事, KAWASE Kazuma 川瀬一馬, *Tōchū Zeami nijūsambushū* 頭註世阿彌二十三部集 (Tōkyō, 1945) 220-21. KAWASE's edition is the most complete printing of Zeami's works, and includes a valuable introduction and marginal notes.

<sup>68</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.386. Zeami established the *goon* 五音 or five modes of expression “to serve as a guide for training in chanting” (*Goon*, JH 2.193). These modes were called *shūgen* 祝言 “expression of joy and happiness,” *yūgen* 幽言, “expression of refinement,” *rembo* 戀慕, “expression of love and attachment,” *aishō* 哀傷, “expression of sadness and lament,” *rangyoku* 闌曲, “expression of the sublime.” Mr. WALEY gives the translations “prayer” and “mystery” for *shūgen* and *yūgen* (*op. cit.* 36), but they seem inappropriate in the light of Zeami's writings. On the mode of expression called *aishō*, Zeami stated: “Since the expression of joy and happiness (i.e., *shūgen*) is considered the most important nowadays, one should refrain from expressing too deeply the feeling of sadness or lament” (*Goongyoku jōjō* 五音曲條條, JH 2.140).

<sup>69</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.386.

<sup>70</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.403; *Ongyoku kowadashi kuden* 2.9.

right atmosphere for the performer to carry out his practice with precision and exactitude, and would also give him the capacity to perform before any audience without confusion or nervousness.<sup>70</sup>

The focal point in Zeami's discussion on the dance was the aesthetic quality which a dancer creates through a co-ordination between the movements of his arms and body. He felt that a harmonious balance and interweaving of these two elements created a beautiful and satisfying effect.<sup>71</sup> The movements of the arms are expressive of a certain forcefulness and even masculinity; the plastic movements of the body have gracefulness and a certain feminine quality which he compared to "a bird in flight, which with outspread wings lightly coasts with the wind."<sup>72</sup> From the movements of the body a more subtle aesthetic nuance is derived than from the movements of the arms, which Zeami felt were more readily adapted to making an immediate visual impact.<sup>73</sup>

The preservation of a basic harmony between these two kinds of movement, Zeami considered essential in the execution of any dance. The variation in the aesthetic effect of a given dance was regulated by the degree of emphasis given each kind of motion. The character type portrayed was the ultimate determination of the style of the dance and hence the kind of aesthetic quality sought for in a given dance.<sup>74</sup>

Because it was essential that an element of gracefulness be present in a *Nō* performance, Zeami gave special attention to the problems in the execution of those dance forms which evolve out of the supple movements of the body. He specifically advised that the performer give thought to the aspect of the dance from the back: "When the performer is fully cognizant of his own form he is able to observe it from all sides. But if he observes his form of dance only through his own naked eye, he can see but the front view, and the left and right, and is unable to know how his form looks from the back. Consequently he cannot find out wherein his form may be lacking in gracefulness."<sup>75</sup> Through the cultivation

<sup>70</sup> *Fūkyokushū*, JH 2.114-15.

<sup>71</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.303.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

of perceptiveness Zeami sought to enable the performer to view with his mind's eye his dance form as would the audience, so as to achieve maximum grace.<sup>76</sup>

Zeami advised that while the young performer still had a boyish figure he should refrain from studying the three principle character roles in detail. He felt that the natural grace of a child, a quality which he identified with *yūgen*, could best be retained in later performances by an emphasis on the chant and dance.<sup>77</sup> "The reason why the quality of charm in a child is retained in the *santai* is because while a child, he has mastered the *nikyoku*, and has reached the level of competence where his manner of performance is of lasting quality."

His injunction against any detailed instruction in the character roles to a young performer was also based on certain technical difficulties in representing these roles in the *Nō*. The basic problem is to learn the fundamentals of posturing, acquiring the stylized features based on the physical characteristics of the different roles. Zeami felt that these patterns were conditioned by the training at a given time. Hence, if the performer were to learn these norms in detail before his physical development had become stabilized (i. e., before twenty-four or twenty-five),<sup>78</sup> they would become crystallized in the forms best adapted to a performer in his youth and consequently, "as a mimetic art for an adult his acting will be wanting, and his artistic technique, deficient."<sup>79</sup> Since the physical characteristics of a performer will have changed by the time he has become an adult, the models which he had mastered as a youth would no longer be adequate, and the effect which his earlier poses had created would be destroyed.<sup>80</sup> By receiving minute training in the character roles at an early age, the performer would be unable to develop the flexibility necessary for mastery of a wide range of character roles, and "the development of his skills will stop at that stage and no further progress will be made."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 1.306.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Nikyoku santai ezu*, *JH* 1.487.

<sup>78</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.20.

<sup>79</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, *JH* 1.517.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Zeami wrote that the performer should first of all learn to adapt himself completely to the norms of posturing best suited for the representation of the different character roles, a process which he called "becoming the part."<sup>82</sup> These stylized patterns were fundamental to Zeami's concept of characterization, and he found in the three basic roles their most fundamental forms.

Zeami established the *santai* in an effort to systematize or to reduce to fundamentals the different character parts present in the *Nō* plays.<sup>83</sup> The major roles of older person, woman, and warrior, he regarded as the basic "personality" types, and all others, "applied styles" which developed out of each of these three in accordance with the performer's artistic sensitivity.<sup>84</sup> The feminine role, according to Zeami, should be studied first, partly because it was best suited for a young performer,<sup>85</sup> but more

<sup>82</sup> *Hana no kagami*, *JH* 1.294. Closely related to this problem are Zeami's remarks on *mushufū* 無主風, "unmastered style" and *ushufū* 有主風, "mastered style" (*Shikadō*, *JH* 1.444-45). While a performer is in the process of consciously seeking to reproduce the stylized patterns, his performance lacks authority and conviction, however successful the reproduction. Such a style of performance Zeami defined as *mushufū*. He stated that "while such stylizations may give the semblance [of being genuine], they fail to evoke in the audience a sense of charm" (*Hana no kagami*, *JH* 1.334). On the other hand, when the performer has thoroughly mastered these stylizations and has "made them his very being" (*ibid.* 1.443); when he can "regulate" them instead of being "confined" by them, and through them is able to communicate successfully the aesthetic nuances which he envisages, he has what Zeami called a "mastered style." It is the latter which Zeami meant by the expression "becoming the part." Some authorities have interpreted this expression to mean "an identification by the performer with the role he portrays" (NOGAMI, *Nō no saisei* 20 ff. and YOKOI Haruno 横井春野, *Zeami no shōgai* 世阿彌の生涯 [Tōkyō, 1943] 232-33). This interpretation, although attractive, is contrary to Zeami's stated views concerning basic problems of acting. For a more detailed analysis of this point see NOSE, *Nōgaku kenkyū* 166-198, especially 166-174.

<sup>83</sup> In the *Kadensho* (*JH* 1.35-66), Zeami discussed the character roles in the following order: women, old men, unmasked roles, mad parts, monks, warriors, deities, demons, and roles pertaining to Chinese (SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 218-226). Whether Zeami had any definite scheme in mind, as NARUSE suggests, when he arranged them in the above sequence cannot be easily determined. At any rate, Zeami's ideas about the *santai* took concrete form for the first time in the *Shikadō* some twenty years after he wrote the *Kadensho*. See NARUSE Ichizō 成瀬一三, "Kadensho, monomane nintai no junjo ni tsuite" 花傳書.物真似人體の順序に就いて, *Nihon engekishi ronsō* 日本演劇史論叢 (Tōkyō, 1937) 101-12.

<sup>84</sup> *Shikadō*, *JH* 1.439.

<sup>85</sup> *Kadensho*, *JH* 1.38.

especially because it constituted the basic style through which to project the quality of *yūgen*.<sup>86</sup> The warrior on the other hand was the last to be learned, because it had the least possibility of a graceful presentation. And even after the performer learned the warrior role, Zeami advised that he postpone study of the character roles of demons, the applied styles of the warrior role.<sup>87</sup>

He paid greater attention to the representation of the female, not simply because he found exemplified in it his aesthetic ideals, but because the female role is enacted by a male performer in the *Nō*, and is thus perhaps more difficult to present convincingly. The actor should represent the female through a suggestiveness which derives from the artistic faculties within himself.<sup>88</sup> Since suppleness rather than strength was essential, the performer should make every effort to eliminate any suggestion of force, whether in his physical bearing or in his action. Hips and knees should be held fairly erect, but his body should be pliant. Even in holding an object in his hands, the performer should create an impression of only the lightest touch, with no suggestion of firmness.<sup>89</sup> While Zeami emphasized the importance of costuming in general, he particularly stressed its importance for the female role.<sup>90</sup> The performer could improve his representation of the female character by being attentive to the problems of costuming, and creating a visual effect of flowing elegance. Thus, for example, the robes should be long enough to hide the feet, and the sleeves long enough to hide the hands.<sup>91</sup>

The main object in presenting the role of an older person was to give an impression of age without destroying the total effect of gracefulness. With back bent and suggesting an unsteadiness of arms and legs, the performer should bring to bear upon his posture and movements a certain quality of calm and serenity, an inner quality which Zeami summarized in the expression

<sup>86</sup> *Nikyoku santai ezu*, JH 1.491.

<sup>87</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.340.

<sup>88</sup> *Nikyoku santai ezu*, JH 1.491. Zeami used the expression *taishinshariki* 體心捨力.

<sup>89</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.38.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* 1.39.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

*kanshin emmoku* 閑心遠目, "a spiritual calm and a far-away look."<sup>92</sup>

The representation of the warrior was naturally based upon forcefulness, a quality which was at variance with Zeami's concept of aesthetics. While taking exception to certain types, he found the warrior to be generally lacking in charm even when executed with skill.<sup>93</sup> "If the quality of gracefulness is projected in this role," he stated, "it is due to the lingering fragrance of the flowers which blossomed through the dance and chant of a young performer in his youthful appearance."<sup>94</sup> He felt that the actor should emphasize the element of force indispensable to the warrior role, but, at the same time, he should keep it from becoming too severe or coarse.<sup>95</sup>

Zeami's observations on "action" centered in the problems of detailed imitation in its relation to his basic aesthetic ideals. Detailed imitation may seem strangely alien to a *Nō* performance today in which the finely polished stylizations and high symbolism seem to be part of subtly wrought patterns of dance rather than real action. But in Zeami's day such stylizations, inevitable in a composite dramatic art which emphasizes the element of music, were performed with greater latitude in gestures and movements.

Zeami believed that a detailed execution of the action of the various character roles was essential to an effective performance. But he felt that these motions should be proportional to the aesthetic effect they could create.<sup>96</sup> The performer should strive to render in detail the gestures and movements which, as in the female role, could contribute to grace. But where such movements would detract from the total effect, the performer should modify his presentation of a character. In the more forceful roles such as the warrior or demon, the powerful movements of the body

<sup>92</sup> *Nikyoku santai ezu*, JH 1.490.

<sup>93</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.57. The *Heike monogatari*, celebrating the warriors of the Taira and Minamoto clans, was considered particularly appropriate for dramatization whenever the incidents lent themselves to poetic embellishment.

<sup>94</sup> *Nikyoku santai ezu*, JH 1.492.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.354; *Kadensho*, JH 1.35.

should be tempered by a gentle tread, or if the step were heavy, it should be countered by gentle movements of the body.<sup>97</sup>

Zeami was aware of the problems involved in the application of his ideas about imitation to the stylized art of the *Nō*. He wrote, "If the performer is too intent upon representing the detailed aspects of mimicry, his art form will tend to appear small and compressed. Or again, if he concentrates on being sparing in his acting, his art form will have little to recommend itself and is likely to give the impression of being nothing more than an empty shell."<sup>98</sup> A performer cannot hope to create a vital effect in the art of imitation by relying upon concrete patterns of representation. A graceful gesture or a bold movement cannot be measured as if it were only a conventionalized form. The total effect is derived from the performer's inner attentiveness and artistic sensitivity which have brought to bear on the stylized form. Outwardly the performer should be sparing in his representation, but inwardly he should be attentive to details.<sup>99</sup> In this way Zeami felt the artist could project the variety of nuances of mimicry through a stylized medium.

Zeami also concerned himself with the problems of interrelationship of the elements of dance, chant, and mimicry. He emphasized these interrelations because the *Nō* is a composite art form and depends on harmony between its component parts. He found in the subtle union of aural and visual, a source of the deep beauty and abiding effect of the *Nō*. The dance flows out of the chant and loses itself again in the rising tide of music;<sup>100</sup> mimetic gestures create an effect of beauty when they respond to the chanted passages that call for them.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> *Kadensho*, JH 1.244-45; *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.288-89.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 1.354.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* Elsewhere in the *Hana no kagami* (JH 1.285-86) he stated that the "activation" of the mind and body in a performance should be in the proportion of ten to seven. The seven represented a considered restraint or a deliberate understatement in the representation of physical movements. Such an understatement cannot be rendered effectively unless the performer has first mastered in his training the art of full representation (*ibid.* 1.334).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 1.298.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 1.291. This particular procedure is no longer followed today. If anything the action precedes the words. See Nose's comment in JH 1.294.



Through persistent training and constant reflection Zeami sought the means which would enable the performer to come to a full realization of the specific problems of the *Nō*. But more important, he found in them the means to enable the performer to acquire the capacity to apply this knowledge to his presentations, the true measure of an outstanding performer.

Zeami established four major grades within the area of competence which he broadly designated as *jōzu* 上手, or skilled. These were determined by the technical proficiency of the performer and his understanding of the *Nō*. In the two lower levels were those players who had a good technical command of a wide variety of *Nō* pieces, together with those who, lacking a broad command, still had a certain inherent understanding of the *Nō* which could compensate for the limitations in their mastery of the technical skills.<sup>102</sup> Performers in these two lower levels were deficient either in technical versatility or in understanding of the art. In the two higher levels were those who combined these two essential qualifications, and could give presentations according to their own artistic judgments, with secureness and ease.<sup>103</sup> Their performances were "alive" and had certain individual charms which cannot be copied.<sup>104</sup> Using calligraphy as an illustration Zeami stated, "One cannot fully reproduce the handwriting of a famous calligrapher effortlessly done in cursive style. This ease or freedom is achieved only after long years of training which began with writing in the square style."<sup>105</sup>

These performers who have attained the two higher levels Zeami designated *makoto no jōzu*, truly great performers. But he placed one level higher than the other on the basis of the artist's approach to the *Nō*. A master performer, or *meijin* 名人,

<sup>102</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.347.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 1.334. Zeami referred to the secure level of competence as *an'i* 安位 or *yasuki kurai* 安き位. A performer who has attained this level is capable of presenting a restrained performance effectively (see note 99). See NISHIO, "Zeami no nōgakuron ni okeru 'kurai' no mondai" 世阿彌の能楽論に於ける「位」の問題, *Nihon bungaku ronkō* 日本文學論叢 183-197, especially 189-194 (Kaito sensei kanreki kinenkaï: 垣内先生還曆記念會 ed., Tōkyō, 1938).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*; *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.445.

<sup>105</sup> *Sarugaku dangi*, JH 2.379.

the lower of the two, had the capacity to express fully his "inner artistic vision" through the technical skills at his command. But, according to Zeami, such a performer is still very conscious of what he is trying to do, and must still seek for ways and means by which to create a beautiful performance.<sup>106</sup>

An actor who has won universal acclaim, or *tenka no meibō* 天下の名望, however, can perform through his own intuition. He is in a position where he no longer needs to concern himself with what is good and what is not good. Such an actor, Zeami stated, can give a performance so subtle and yet so compelling that the audience is virtually carried away without the artist's having "even to think about the qualities of charm."<sup>107</sup>

To Zeami this represented the highest level of achievement, and the artistic quality of such a performance he designated as *myō* 妙, or exquisiteness. "In this art," he wrote, "when a performer of consummate ability can bring before the audience a performance full of nuance so deep and subtle as to defy any amount of praise, a performance which leaves a deep impression with the audience for which he can give no explanation, a performance which is the embodiment of a level of proficiency that cannot be defined—such a quality of performance can be called *myō*."<sup>108</sup> This highest level of competence refers to the ability of a performer to convey naturally, although using technical skills, the depth and overtones in the plays. Zeami felt that a performer who has attained this level is aware only that he possesses these qualities and is unable to point out specifically wherein these qualities lie in his performances.<sup>109</sup>

As a practical person, Zeami was fully aware of the severity of his artistic standards. But this highest level of competence was

<sup>106</sup> *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, JH 1.527.

<sup>107</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.348; see *Yūgaku shūdō fūken*, JH 1.527 for a restatement of this idea.

<sup>108</sup> *Kui*, JH 1.547. He also used the expressions *mufū* 無風, or "a style which transcends all" and *ran'i* 闕位, "the sublime level" to suggest the realm in which *myō* 妙 is to be found. On Zeami's concept of *mu*, see FUJII, "Zeami no mu no kurai" 世阿彌の無の位, *Bungaku* 8 (1939) 3.22-47; on *ran'i*, see NISHIO, *op. cit.* 192-94, and NOGAMI, *Nō kenkyū to hakken* 能研究と發見 (Tōkyō, 1930) 155-180.

<sup>109</sup> *Hana no kagami*, JH 1.384.

still the ultimate aim he set for his disciples as much as for himself.<sup>110</sup> His minute and painstaking analyses of the problems of training show his penetrating insights into the technique of the *Nō*. But above all, they reveal his relentless pursuit for artistic perfection which gives to his writings a distinctly personal quality and a vibrant force.

<sup>110</sup> In the *Sarugaku dangi*, *JH* 2.379 Zeami states that a critic is being unduly harsh when he criticizes a performance for lacking the quality of *mukuyagi*, or a subtle beauty which lies beneath the surface. The quality *mukuyagi*, he feels, is ineffable, like the fragrance of a flower (*Shikadō*, *JH* 1.467). "As long as a performance contains the flower of novelty and charm," he writes, "it is not essential that it have the quality of *mukuyagi* in addition." From his writings, however, it is quite apparent that he was not content to rest his case there. In fact he discusses, although not fully, this sophisticated level of aesthetic nuance as early as his first work, the *Kadensho* (*JH* 1.116; SHIDEHARA, WHITEHOUSE, *op. cit.* 237-38).

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### [Footnotes]

<sup>26</sup> **The No and Zeami**

Richard N. McKinnon

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