

Noh drama miscellaneous

Timeline:

- 12th c. — *Okina* is probably performed
- 1374 — the *sarugaku* performers Kan'ami (1333-1384) and his son **Zeami** (1363-1443) are seen by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (then age 17) and he begins to support their theater, establishing Noh in its more refined form
- 15th c. — Noh reaches its full aesthetic development under the influence of Zeami
- 16th c. — the advent of *kabuki* and *bunraku* theaters, which appeal more widely to theater-goers

Keywords: *nô* 能 (“talent”); *yûgen* 幽玄 (“mysterious beauty”); *omote* 面 (“front” “mask”, made of *hinoki* 檜, Jse cypress)

<p>JO – HA – KYÛ</p> <p>basic organizing structure seen in plays, music, dance and some stories (each Noh play will have this structure)</p>	<p>the five categories of plays of the Noh repertoire (which totals 230 plays), further categorized with respect to the basic JO – HA – KYÛ structure (in the earlier days of Noh performances, a play from every category was performed, in order, thus giving the day of theater a <i>jo-ha-kyû</i> structure as well ... some performances also began with <i>Okina</i> and nearly all included <i>kyôgen</i> interludes)</p>	<p>As an example, <i>Takasago</i>, split into the JO – HA – KYÛ system (page numbers refer to Tyler, <i>Japanese Nô Dramas</i>)</p>
<p>JO 序</p> <p>literally “preface” a slow-paced, measured, restrained mood</p>	<p><i>waki nô</i> / <i>kami nô</i> 脇能・神能</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebratory, auspicious plays about divinities • nearly actionless 	<p>JO: from opening lines (281) to “Let us pause here a while and inform ourselves about the place.” (281)</p>
<p>HA 破</p> <p>literally “to break or tear open” to leave the preface, to leave the pace of the preface, to develop the story or enter the main part of the dance or establish a more rhythmical or melodic portion of a musical piece</p>	<p><i>shura-mono</i> 修羅物</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plays about heroes involved in the <i>Gempei</i> wars, discussing their suffering or refinement • emphasis not on violent action, but more dramatic than the above plays about divinities 	<p>first part of HA: begins with entrance song (<i>issei</i>) of old man and woman (282); ends when they encounter the <i>waki</i> (Tomonari) (283)</p>
	<p><i>kazura-mono</i> 鬘物</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plays about women and beauty • core of repertoire (most “noh” of Noh plays) 	<p>second part of HA: begins with the <i>waki</i> (Tomonari) noticing the couple and asking them a question (283); ends with “of His Blessing, O the precious gifts!” (285)</p>
	<p><i>yonbanme-mono</i> 四番目物</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misc. plays • plays about mad characters, contemporary subjects, etc. • largest and most dramatic group of plays 	<p>main part of HA: begins with <i>waki</i> (Tomonari) asking to hear more about the <i>Takasago Pine</i> (285); ends with the long poem’s final line “far, far away across the sea” (287)</p>
<p>KYÛ 急</p> <p>literally “quick” a quicker pace that leads towards the resolution or end</p>	<p><i>kiri nô</i> 切能</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about supernatural beings • plays with some speed to them 	<p>KYÛ: begins with appearance of god <i>Sumiyoshi</i> (290) to end of play</p>