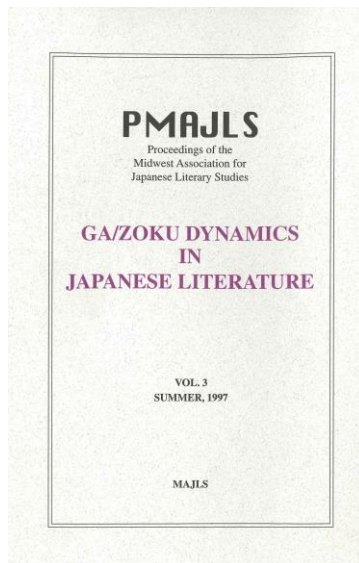


“Komachi at the Crossroads: Elements of Popular
Female Performance in Two Nō Plays”

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Komachi at the Crossroads: Elements of Popular Female Performance in Two Nō Plays

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Thanks to a growing body of research on Muromachi culture, the understanding that Nō theater was not born an elite art form, but, rather, became one under the transforming pressures of Ashikaga patronage has gained wide acceptance. Barbara Ruch has noted that this reconfiguring of Nō involved a transition from an audience-based repertory art form in which the primary aim was to elicit an emotional response from the viewers, to a practitioner-oriented canonical art in which conformance to stated aesthetic principles was the standard of success (Ruch 1977: 284-85). Undoubtedly the codification of the aesthetic principles of Nō performing art at the hands of Zeami Motokiyo (1358-1408) and others, as well as the importation of courtly, hence aristocratic, poetic language into the texts of the plays, worked to refine this originally popular (*zoku*) art in ways that enhanced the prestige of its non-aristocratic but politically powerful military patrons.

The refining, *ga*-ification as it were, of this popular art form also involved a process of obscuring, while not entirely obliterating, the art's origins in specific performance traditions within medieval outcaste culture. As Sarugaku Nō performers, the founders of the Nō theater were members of a large and diverse group that Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney has referred to as special status people (1987: 75ff). This heterogeneous social group can be broadly defined by the fact that its members were not obliged to pay taxes and were involved in occupations that

were deemed to be of an unclean or polluting nature. The list of marked occupations pursued by the special status groups included among other things public performance, handling of the dead and care of graves, soothsaying and dramatic representation of the supernatural (Amino 1994: 11; Ohnuki-Tierney 1987: 82). Michele Marra has argued that the changes wrought by the Sarugaku Nō performers, changes that included a deliberate act of obfuscation regarding the theater's origins in backstage Sarugaku, were intended, not to erase, but to refine and aestheticized the "power of the marginalized other" possessed by the special status groups, thus allowing Nō's influential patrons to add the theater's involvement with the supernatural to their horde of cultural capital (Marra 1993: 55-61).

With few accounts of pre-aestheticized Sarugaku Nō productions surviving, it is undoubtedly useless to speculate on what was lost and what perhaps gained during Nō's seachange from low to high, *zoku* to *ga* status. But by recognizing that this change *did* take place and by acknowledging also that the Muromachi Nō libretti that survive today are not the independent expression of a single accomplished practitioner's sensibilities but are, rather, the product of a process of collective creation that involved the accrued contributions of anonymous popular performers, we can restore to our reception of these texts some of the diversity of culture and class ownership that is properly theirs.

The male Sarugaku Nō performers who eventually came under shogunal patronage were certainly not the only special status people engaged in performance in medieval Japan. We know that there were a number of traveling females, acting as individuals or as small groups, who entertained patrons or the public at large with their songs and dances. While these women generally lacked the official institutional support of temples,

they were frequently acknowledged to have some sacred status (Amino 1994: 191). Female performers such as *aruki-miko*, *kugutsu* performers of popular songs, *shirabyōshi*, etc. were all active and in some cases highly successful during the Muromachi period (Ruch 1990: 525-531). It is clear that the performance art of female members of the special status populations made a significant contribution to medieval Nō. Barbara Ruch notes that Zeami's woman plays should be regarded as a natural evolution of the *shirabyōshi* art. And she goes on to point out that the *kusemai*, a musical and dance form that became central to the Nō performance, was originally developed by *shirabyōshi* performers (Ruch 1990: 525). Many years before Ruch, the well-known folklorist, Yanagita Kunio had made a related observation that women entertainers in male attire performed dramatic dances as mad women (*monogurui*) even before that genre was taken up and incorporated into the Nō theater (1962: 391, 395).

As I noted above, the special status people as a group were diverse. While they shared a common element of marginalization and association with pollution, their experience within society ran the gamut from wealth and recognition to utter poverty and obscurity. At the bottom of the social rung within the special status people were the outcaste dwellers of the unclaimed slopes and river-banks, the *sakamono* and *kawaramono*. Perceived as literally non-human (*hi'nin*), the outcastes held no official professional status. Their means of making a living were limited, but certainly included begging. The begging could involve forms of street performance done in return for alms. It is important to note that the crazy dance (*monogurui*) that was incorporated into the Nō theater appears to have been a form of street performance used by beggars as a means of attracting a crowd and making a plea for alms. The *monogurui* dance

frequently occurred within the context of begging in Muromachi culture. Yanagita, for example, makes the interesting observation that in the Nō play “Sumidagawa,” when the ferryman commands the protagonist to “rave and entertain us” (*kuruute mise*), insisting that otherwise he will not let her aboard (Yokomichi and Omote 1960: 388; Tyler 1992: 257), he is in fact, in terms of contemporary social convention, offering the penniless and itinerant woman a practical means of paying for her fare (Yanagita 1962: 391).

Recent literary scholarship on the Muromachi seems curiously reluctant to take up the challenge offered by folklorists and cultural historians to explore the contribution of Muromachi female performers to medieval Nō. In making her important, and eminently defensible, statement, on the contribution of female *shirabyōshi* performers to Zeami’s Nō, Barbara Ruch quietly observes that her views on this subject are not “customary” (Ruch 1990: 252). In a recent special edition of Kaishaku to Kanshō devoted to literary representations of Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu, Yanagita’s work is criticized for being scattered and involving us in female lines of transmission that are in historical terms “invisible” (Koyama 1995: 136). While there are clear and obvious difficulties involved in the study of pre-modern performance traditions that left no written record, the need to reevaluate familiar existing texts in light of what we do know and can say about those traditions seems obvious and pressing. In the case of women’s experience, it promises to allow us recover the contribution of medieval women to the Nō both as participants in the process of artistic formulation and, in many instances, as the subject matter of the plays themselves. Since the Muromachi is a period often bemoaned for its relative silence from women in literature, the potential rewards are great.

In this study I propose to undertake a small portion of the task I have defined by looking at Muromachi Nō portrayals of the figure of the elite ninth century poet Ono no Komachi in her appearance as a beggar. As is well-known, popular legend saw Komachi as a talented poet who was very beautiful in her youth, having many suitors whom she coolly rejected, but who became ugly and indigent in old-age. My study will focus on two plays, “Ōmu Komachi” (Komachi and the parrot-answer poem) and “Sotoba Komachi” (Komachi on the stupa), in which Komachi’s character is presented explicitly as that of a beggar. It will also involve two stories from the collection of Muromachi narratives, “Komachi monogatari” (The tale of Komachi) and “Kamiyo Komachi” (Komachi the divine deputy), that draw heavily on the material from the plays, in places quoting them verbatim. I will seek to show how the portrayal of the supposedly elite Heian poet in these plays actually involves representations of a contemporary social type of the female outcaste. I will also indicate ways in which elements of popular performance genre of *monogurui* were incorporated into the plays.

Ōmu Komachi

The play “Ōmu Komachi,” traditionally attributed to Zeami, depicts an imagined event in the legendary Komachi’s advanced old age when she is living as a beggar at Sekidera (the Barrier Temple), close by the pass of Ausaka near present day Ōtsu City.¹ In the play the *waki* role is taken, not by an itinerant monk as is so often the case, but by an aristocratic courtier, the Dainagon Yuki’ie, who arrives at Sekidera in the capacity of an imperial emissary bringing a poem that the Emperor Yōzei has

¹ A modern annotated edition of the play is available in Nogami (1964: 451-461). The play has been translated into English by the Teeles (1993: 171-180).

addressed to the *shite*, Komachi. Komachi's response to the Emperor is not a new poem, but an *ōmu-gaeshi* or parrot response in which she "parrots back" the original poem, altering but a single critical syllable. With this seemingly slight change she is able to turn the Emperor's solicitous poetic inquiry into a sigh of nostalgic remembrance. The simple plot of the play is one that permits the playwright(s) to import wholesale into the text the legitimizing language of the aristocratic tradition of poetic criticism. The fact that the original poem comes from the Emperor himself, and has a content touching on Komachi's former presence at court, contributes further to the enhancing, legitimizing qualities of the play.

The presence of contemporary *hi'nin* culture is not, however, as removed from this text as it might, at first blush, seem. Amino Yoshihiko among many others has pointed out that the medieval outcaste populations tended to gather near the traditionally sacred areas around passes (1994: 12). The sacred status of the pass afforded opportunities for supernatural resonance that the special status people could tap. In addition, the inevitable heavy flow of traffic meant that entertainers among the group would not lack for an audience for whom they could perform and from whom they could solicit alms. Susan Matisoff, in her work on the legends of the blind musician Semimaru, has noted that there was "a long-standing tradition of performance of some kind of music at Ausaka by poor musicians" (1978: 13-14). It seems likely that the performance arts practiced around the pass were not confined to music but included such things as dance, soothsaying and magic ritual as well.² It is important to note that not only "Ōmu Komachi," but

² For example, Yanagita, referring to the homonymic relationship between the word for pass (*seki*) and cough (*seki*) has argued that Sekidera was the site of a cult of a popular *dōsojin*, an old granny god

many other Muromachi texts depicting the aged Komachi-- "Sekidera Komachi," "Komachi` monogatari," "Kamiyo Komachi," "Komachi-zōshi," "Aro monogatari," etc.-- link her to the culturally charged area around Ausaka pass.

While it does so in a poetic language dense with *kakekotoba*, the text of "Ōmu Komachi" is explicit about Komachi's activity as a beggar:

And when I feel homesick for the capital,
 since here in my brushwood hut
 I have no friends who might tarry with me awhile,
 leaning on my unsteady pearwoodstaff
 I go out to the road to the capital and beg.
 When begging proves fruitless
 I stifle my tears and return to Sekidera.

(Nogami 1964: 455-456)

The text is also insistent on Komachi's status as a crazy woman, stating in three separate instances that she is like one who has lost her mind. While in "Ōmu Komachi" descriptions of Komachi's decrepitude in old age tend to be literarily based and bring into play allusions to earlier sources in Chinese that must have been difficult for an audience to follow,³ the descriptions of Komachi as a mad woman are much more immediate. Despite the use of one *kakekotoba* pivot, a medieval audience would surely have had no difficulty grasping the basic thrust of the statement the *shite* makes about her condition in the following passage:

who cured coughs. This cult, he argues, preceded that of aged Komachi (Yanagita 1977: 17).

³ In "Ōmu Komachi" and elsewhere in the Nō plays the most frequently alluded to literary source for Komachi's old age was "Tamazukuri Komachi sōsui sho," a poem written in Chinese and traditionally attributed to Kūkai (See Yamauchi et al. 1981 and Katagiri 1975: 33-56).

Resenting others and bemoaning my fate,
 I cry and laugh by turns, and act so unsteady
 that people call me a crazy woman (*monogurui*).
 (Nogami: 454)

It is important to note that the term *monogurui* translated as “crazy person” here can, as indicated earlier, also refer to the frantic circling motions of one who, on account of possession or, for some other reason, is acting crazed. Thus, *monogurui* as a word can refer to a pathological state and its victim, as well as to a performance act and its performer. While medieval audiences might have taken the surface meaning of the final line of this passage to be as I have translated it, as people familiar with both the general street culture of Muromachi Japan and the specific performance culture of the Pass of Ausaka, they might also at the same time have interpreted this line to mean in some very literal sense, “people call me a performer of the frenzied *monogururi* dance.” Members of the audience taking up this second, pragmatic interpretation of the line would have found their reception confirmed by Komachi’s actions in the final section of the play when she dons male clothing and a male courtier’s *kazaori eboshi* hat, both items being typical of a female performer of *monogurui* (Yanagita 1962: 391, 395). The understanding that Komachi in some very literal sense performs madness, rather than being mad, would help to account for the otherwise sane nature of her conversation with the *waki*.⁴

⁴ Note the Teeles’ comment in the introduction to their English translation of the play that although Komachi “refers to herself as being mad, neither her speech nor her actions reflect this” (1993: 167).

Kamiyo Komachi

While the Muromachi tale, “Kamiyo Komachi”⁵ has a more developed plot, a feature typical of its genre, the text of the tale is clearly related to that of “Ōmu Komachi” and there are places where the two texts follow the same wording. In describing Komachi as an aged crazy woman, “Kamiyo Komachi” uses much of the same language as “Ōmu Komachi,” but the picture is more detailed and, thus, worth our noting. In the story of “Kamiyo Komachi ” this description of Komachi as a crazy woman occurs just before, rather than after, her move from the capital to Sekidera.

In the end she became an old crone of a hundred years. Her voice shook and it was difficult to hear what she said. Her feet were limp and powerless and her step unsteady. She wandered the roads and paused beneath the eaves of houses, bemoaning her fate and resenting others. Since hers had been an extraordinary destiny, passers-by stopped and jostled one another for a look, declaring her to be a crazy person (*monogurui*). (Yokoyama and Matsumoto 1975: 467)

Komachi as a character does not actively seek out attention here, but her appearance and behavior, coupled with the audience’s knowledge of who she is, in other words, their knowledge of the core Komachi narrative, make her figure an irresistible public spectacle; they naturally declare her to be a *monogurui*.

Sotoba Komachi

“Sotoba Komachi ” is a venerable play within the Nō repertoire. Thanks to a reference in the Sarugaku dangi , we can attribute it, or, rather a former, longer version of it, to Zeami’s

⁵ There are printed but unannotated editions of the work in Fujii (1967: 92-112) and Yokoyama and Matsumoto (1975: 463-479).

father, Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384). The play is performed by all five schools of Nō. The *waki* and companion *waki-tsure* are, as is typical of Nō, two itinerant monks. In this case they are from the holy mountain of Kōya in today's Wakayama Prefecture and are on a journey to the capital when they pause to rest at a place called Abeno no Matsubara in Tsu. The monks encounter the *shite* Komachi as an old woman resting on a sacred Buddhist stupa (*sotoba*). While stupas are ordinarily earthen mounds enshrining relics of the Buddha and are found in temples, the fact that this one is mistaken for a "rotting log" (*kuchiki*) suggests that it is wood, not earth. Royall Tyler, who, we should note, translates the title of the play, not "Komachi on the Stupa" but "Komachi on the Gravepost" states that Komachi is sitting, not on a mound, but a plank that is a toppled-over wooden grave marker (1978: 106).⁶ We can assume, then, that the monks encounter Komachi not in a temple, but in the polluted, appropriately outcaste setting of a graveyard. There they engage her in a religious debate from which she emerges victorious. Afterwards they ask her name and she reveals her identity as the once beautiful, highly desired and privileged Komachi. In the final section of the play, Komachi is possessed by the vengeful spirit of her former suitor, the Captain Fukakusa (Fukakusa no Shi'i no Shōshō) and, donning his clothes and cap, moves in a circular dance that is at one and the same time a *monogurui* and a reenactment of Fukakusa's frustrated courtship and the ninety-nine circuits he made to Komachi's door.

There is some ambiguity as to the place in which this play is set. While the monks appear to stop at Abeno no Matsubara

⁶ His interpretation is borne out by the illustration of the same scene from the "Komachi monogatari" in which the "stupa" is represented as a log or perhaps wooden gravepost that has toppled. Other wooden graveposts stand in the foreground.

in what today is the southern area of the city of Osaka, Komachi's *michiyuki* near the opening of the play seems to take her no further than lover's mound of Toba and the banks of the Katsura River, a site south of modern-day Kyoto. Both sites, Abeno and the Katsura River banks, suggest links with the special status culture of Muromachi Japan. We know that a major highway ran through Abe no Matsubara. The highway also served as a pilgrimage route to Kumano. Another, smaller road to Mount Kōya ran nearby. Akegawa Tadao states that Abeno no Matsubara was a natural gathering place for the medieval special status Kōya holymen (*Kōya hijiri*) and Kumano nuns (*Kumano bikuni*) whose preaching was also a form of entertainment performed in return for alms (1987: 105-107). Concerning the other site along the banks of the Katsura River, we know that the government had already in 795 established that area, as well as the banks of the Kamo River, as an official burial ground (Marra 1993: 63). Both sites were frequented by the outcaste *kawaramono*.

The basic Komachi legend of privilege and fall naturally held within its compass the valorizing, enhancing aspects of association with the court. In the words that accompany the *shite's* opening *sashi* before the *michiyuki*, Komachi recalls her past of beauty and privilege, a past whose setting was the capital with its implied presence of the court and Emperor. In the present time of the play, however, all this is behind Komachi and she is, in the words of the text, "seen as unclean even by women of the basest level of the citizenry" (Koyama, Satō and Satō 1975: 74). Since women as a whole were considered unclean in Muromachi times, and those of meaner estate more unclean than those of higher, the *shite's* statement implies an extreme degree of impurity. She is in fact so defiled as to be no longer human; a later passage in the text identifies her as a

hi'nin, a member of the lowest special status statum (Koyama, Satō and Satō 1975: 78). Having made the transition from her idealized, courtly past to the painful defilement of her present state, it is only natural that Komachi should move from the capital to a liminal area of pollution. Whether we say that the fallen gravepost on which Komachi sits is in Abeno no Matsubara or the banks of the Katsura, we must acknowledge that the setting of the graveyard is in and of itself a setting of extreme pollution. It is there that Komachi engages the monks in debate.

It is important to note that the terms of Komachi's debate with the monks, while consistent with well-established tenets of orthodox Buddhism, are ones that are also ideologically favorable to the oppressed caste to which she now belongs. Essentially, the tactic she uses to defeat the monks is that of the confounding of opposites. If "the ignorance of Handoku" is also "the wisdom of Manjusri," if "evil" is also "good" and the "obscuring passions" also "enlightenment" (Koyama, Satō and Satō 1975: 77), then it can only be that what is base is also high and what is impure, pure. It certainly did not hurt the *hi'nin* cause to posit an epistemological view that privileged the transcendence of all distinction. Actual practical recognition of the principles Komachi puts forth in her argument would have helped in a very concrete way the special status people who were marginalized by Muromachi society. Perhaps this is why we find similar arguments of the confounding of opposites being made so often in Muromachi Nō texts.

The text of "Sotoba Komachi" is very clear about Komachi's present status as a beggar. She is termed both a *kotsujiki* and a *kotsugainin* (Koyama, Satō and Satō 1975: 75); she is someone who must beg for food to stay alive. In the second half of the play this beggar's state becomes utterly vivid

and immediate. Komachi is not simply described as a beggar, or recognized as being one, she quite literally is one. The moment comes just after the chorus has described her frustrated solicitation of alms. Thrusting out her hat in anger towards the monks, she commands in a bold vernacular voice that bears no trace of aristocratic or literary embellishment:

Nō mono tabe. Nō, ozō!

Hey, give me something. Hey, you monks!

This is Komachi's ground zero, her most literal, most fictionless self. It is at this point that we as an audience are permitted to see, not the legendary single Komachi of the past whose story is told and retold, but a representative of the many Komachi's of the present who must tell Komachi's story and assume her identity in order to live. It is from this bald and unadorned base that representative Komachi of the present--the beggar by the roadside--must weave the many stories that promise to make her something other than what she is. Within seconds of this outburst, a new story begins. We are given to understand that Komachi is possessed of the spirit of her frustrated former suitor, Fukakusa no Shōshō.⁷ The possession explains and in a sense excuses the *monogurui* that Komachi performs as a stratagem for soliciting alms. The fact that she is possessed lends to her figure the thrill and excitement of involvement with the supernatural. As we noted above, this ability to engage the supernatural was part of the stock in trade of the special status performers. At the same time, the story of Fukakusa's courtship and his identify as a courtier, allow the beggar-woman Komachi to enhance her figure through an appeal to an aristocratic past.

⁷ For an account of the development of the legend of Fukakusa's courtship of Komachi see Strong 1994: 391-412.

Komachi monogatari

“Komachi monogatari” is a Muromachi tale that bears the same relationship to “Sotoba Komachi” that “Kamiyo Komachi” bears to the play “*Ōmu Komachi*”; the plot is parallel, but more developed and there is, in some places, direct correspondence in phrasing. The greater narrative space of “Komachi monogatari” allows Komachi (who, incidentally, narrates this tale about herself, not as a beggar but as a weather-exposed skull in a charnel yard) to develop a stronger and more dramatic rationale for her possession.

Essentially Komachi the narrator enhances our sense of the forcefulness and inevitability of her possession through an appeal to unbelievably large, inflated numbers. After relating in some detail the story of the Captain Fukakusa’s ill-fated courtship of her and how he “was so in love he could not stand it, and with but a single night lacking to make one hundred, passed away,” she goes on to state, “the Captain was but my first love victim. I believe that the total number of men who gave their hearts to me and died of love came to about 18,099” (Yokoyama and Matsumoto 1977: 235). The use of ninety-nine here apparently recalls the number of fruitless visits the Captain Fukakusa made to Komachi’s door, but the 18,000 is clearly used for shock value. While this exaggeratedly large number of suitor-victims might be seen as implying a certain guilt on Komachi’s part for being so irresistibly attractive in the first place, its purpose here seems to be more that of intensifying the degree of force behind the desire for retribution, thereby making the possession that follows all the more extreme.

So grieved were the wives, children and kinsfolk of the men who had died of love for Komachi that they all went out to the riverbank near Gojō and blocked the river’s flow. Beating the water to a froth they said, “Truly our husbands

died on account of Komachi. O ye gods and buddhas, if you be, hear our prayer that the grief of the wives, children and kinsfolk of the 18,099 men be visited upon Komachi alone. Above there is Brahma and Indra, below there is the earth god. O ye many gods of the three-thousand worlds, hurry, pile upon Komachi's person and show us retribution."

(Yokoyama and Matsumoto 1977: 235-6)

This is a strong curse indeed and we can hear within, I believe, the powerful diction of those who manipulated the supernatural as an art and means of livelihood. While the form the retribution takes is Komachi's possession by the resentful spirit of the Captain Fukakusa alone, the audience of the story must have thrilled to the enormous and inescapable force of the collective passion for vengeance that, they are given to understand, powers that possession.

It must have been a consequence of that retribution for in spring, when we dispute the superior beauty of the moon or the blossoms, I was suddenly possessed and ran crazed out of the imperial palace. From Ichijō at the head of the streets, towards Muromachi, Nijō, Oshikoji, Bōmon, Rokkakudō, around Sanjō, Shijō and Aya no Kōji. At the bridge over the river at Gojō I begged from passers-by. This was the work of the burning resentment of the Captain Fukakusa who had loved me so dearly....Bending my fingers, I counted the number of times I went mad--one, two, three, four, five. When I had counted to ninety-nine I gave a great shout, lifting my face to heaven and earth. Such was my state as I received in my person the emotions of the Captain. (Yokoyama and Matsumoto 1977: 236)

In this one passage Komachi appears to move from her idealized past at court southward through the city to a painful present on Gojō Bridge, a site favored by beggars in medieval Japan. To an extent, she is able to carry her past with her. As a

character, she appears doubly layered; she is at one and the same time the single Komachi of the legend--a fallen beauty whose possession by the Captain is taken literally--and also a representative of the contemporary social type of the Komachi performer, one of the many women from the special status population who chose to perform this legend.

That audiences and/or readers of "Komachi monogatari" saw the character in this two-fold way is suggested by the illustration that accompanies this portion of the tale in the earliest surviving woodblock edition.⁸ The illustration clearly represents Komachi not as a literal crazy woman but as a performer of the crazy dance (*monogurui*). While she does not wear a man's *kazaori eboshi* hat, she is dressed in male clothing and she holds in her hand a branch of *sasa* which she uses as a *torimono* in the manner of a *miko* or female shamanic performer. The Chinese character "ko," the first character in Komachi's name, appears on her jacket, presumably as a reminder to the audience within the picture of the role being played. Her left heel and both her arms are raised as though frozen in a moment of dance. As a performer she appears to be successful, for a crowd of children have already gathered at the bridgehead and are shown clapping in delight at the spectacle.

Returning to the play "Sotoba Komachi," I would like to suggest that this layered vision of the audience on the bridgehead as they contemplated the character of the possessed and crazed Komachi, was shared by Muromachi audiences of the Nō. As the male actor in the female role donned the male courtier's *kazaori eboshi* hat in "Sotoba Komachi" and began Komachi's mad, circling dance of possession, members of the

⁸ The surviving manuscripts are all related to the same woodblock edition that was made during the Genroku or Hōei periods (1688-1711). The edition consulted here is housed in the Tenri library.

audience surely saw in the actor's persona both the single, legendary woman poet of the elite courtly tradition and the generic type of the female popular street performer of their day. The reception of both "Sotoba Komachi" and "Ōmu Komachi" was, I would argue, conducted neither entirely within elite cultural terms, nor entirely within the context of popular modes. It seems likely that the case of these two plays is representative of a larger phenomenon in the history of the Nō theater. It is worth our while to take up the challenge of determining the lineaments of the *zoku* within the *ga* of the Nō, to try to recover the work and contribution of anonymous special status artists, both male and female, and to attempt to establish a more inclusive mode of reception of and appreciation for this important dramatic form.

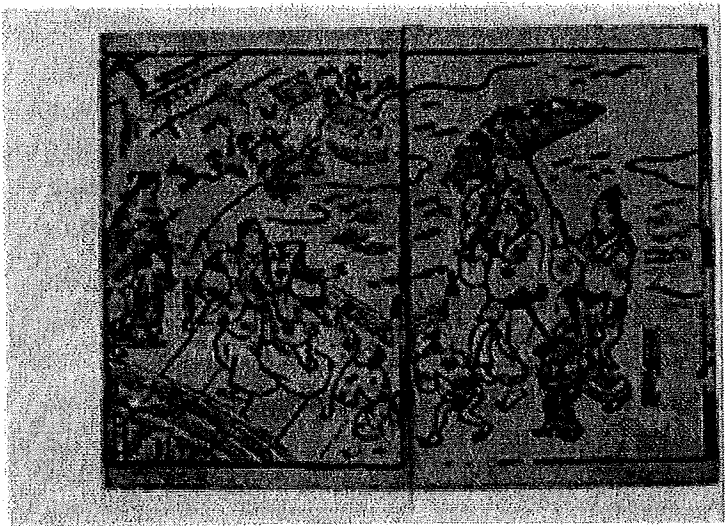


Figure 1. Komachi monogatari, woodblock edition, Tenri University Library

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