

NONOMIYA

Monica Bethe

The Nō play *Nonomiya*, a masterpiece of tightly interwoven poetry and fluid imagery, is also outstanding for its almost paradigmatically standard form. A well-defined structure underlies every aspect of the literature and performance of Nō. The expectations set up by predetermined patterns create an underlying rhythm, while the particular use of patterns, turn of phrase, flow of cadence lends each play its special atmosphere and poignance.

The explication of *Nonomiya* is given here with a view of showing how the literary fabric is woven into the structural skeleton. The concentration is on literary elements: the unfolding and interlacing of images, the effect of poetic devices, the influence of background, and the patterns of style. Where music strongly colors the text, or action creates images that go beyond the text, it has been necessary to indicate their effect.

I have given the text in *kanji*, and *romaji* with English equivalents of key words underneath. At the right I have listed pertinent images as they occur, to facilitate tracing their interlacing and progressions. I have not given a full translation, because I hope my readers will take the time to puzzle out the original with the aids provided. Translations always involve interpretation; something must be sacrificed. For consultation, a good translation of *Nonomiya* by Paul Varley can be found in *Twenty Plays of the Noh Theater*, edited by Donald Keene, Columbia University Press. A comparison between that and the metaphor here should give some indication of the discrepancy which always emerges when working with such intricate and ambiguous texts as Nō, and between two such disparate languages as English and Japanese.

Nonomiya is a typical third-category—woman's—play, concentrated on evoking an atmosphere of *yūgen*, or elegance. Third-category plays are the most static and poetic plays in the Nō repertory. Dramatic

interaction is kept at a minimum; movement is more than usually constrained and withheld. The singing is in the more melodic *yowagin* style, and sung with a floating roundness to the inflections. The drums and flute blend into the fabric and rarely take precedence over the text.

The two acts of *Nonomiya* follow the basic five *dan* (scene) sequence and standard progression of *jo-ha-kyū*, introduction, development, release.

ACT I

jo……dan 1: *waki* (secondary actor), a priest sets off to visit Nonomiya Shrine

ha …dan 2: *shite* (main actor), a girl monologizes on the end of autumn and dying love

dan 3: *waki* and *shite*; dialogue exposes the *shite*'s purpose: to conduct a purification rite in memory of Genji's visit that on same day years ago.

dan 4: *shite*, ear-opening section, performed seated. It describes Miyasudokoro and gives details about Genji's last visit and its aftermath.

dan 5: *shite*, exit; disclosing that she is the ghost of Miyasudokoro, *shite* disappears into the scenery of autumn.

ACT II

dan 1: *waki*, waits, praying for Miyasudokoro's soul

dan 2: *shite*, enters announcing she, too, has gone back to the past

dan 3: *waki* and *shite*: repartee in which she relives the Kamo festival, battle of the carriages

dan 4: *shite* dance, *jo-no-mai* (eye opening section)

kyū …dan 5: *shite*'s exit dance, *kiri*, a composite of all the elements.

The *shodan* (little *dan*), or units of integrated literary and musical style which compose the *dan*, follow a progression which has been described as *jo-ka*, *joshō*, and *Hon-ka* (introductory song, recitative and main song).¹

In simpler terms, each *dan* progresses from prose or free verse—

to metered verse; from speech (*Kotoba*) or unmeasured rhythm (*hyoshi awazu*)—to rhythm adjusted to the 8-beat underlying measure (*hyoshi au*)²; from simpler more direct forms of expression—to more complex poetic styles. The alternation of simple and complex provides a series of peaks, highlighted by contrast to the more mundane sections before them.

Nonomiya begins with a *nanori* (naming *shodan*). The *waki* explains that he is a priest who has travelled far and is now on his way to Saga in Kyoto to enjoy its autumnal splendor. As in most *Nō*, this naming passage sets the place and season.

[名ノリ笛] [名ノリ]

(*Nanori* flute)

Nanori (speech)

waki:

ワキこれは諸國一見の僧にて候、

Kore wa shokoku ikken no, so nite sōrō

I many countries visit monk am

我この程は都に候ひて、

Ware kono hodo wa, miyako ni sōraite

I am now in capital

洛陽の名所舊跡残りなく一見仕りて候、

Rakuyō no meisho kyūseki nokori naku ikken, tatematsurite sōrō

Kyoto famous old sites remain none to see

また秋も末になり候へば、

mata aki mo, sue ni nari soraeba

autumn

again autumn end approaching

嵯峨野の方ゆかしく候ふ間、

Sagano no kata, yukashiku sōrō aida

to Saga while lovely

立ち越え一見せばやと思ひ候。

tachikoe ikken sebaya to, omoi sōrō

go directly, take a look, I think

これなる森を人に尋ねて候へば、

Kore naru mori o hito ni, tazunete sōraeba

woods

this woods, of someone, ask about

野の宮の舊跡とかや申し候ふ程に，
Nonomiya no kyuseki to ka ya, moshi sōrō hodo ni
Nonomiya old site it is called

逆縁ながら一見せばやと思ひ候
Gyakuen nagara ikken sebaya to, omoi sōrō
As passerby one look take, I think
irony of fate

sashi (free)

waki:

ワキ我この森に来て見れば，
Ware kono mori ni kite mireba woods
I to this woods come and see

黒木の鳥居小柴垣，
kurogi no torii koshibagaki torii
dark-wood torii brushwood fence fence

昔に変はらぬ有様なり，
mukashi ni kawaranu arisama nari past
since long ago unchanged appearance permanence

こはそも何と云ひたる事やらん，
kowa somo nani to iitaru koto yaran
this, well, why so ?

よしよしかかる時節に
yoshi yoshi kakaru jisetsu ni
very good season

参り会ひて，
mairi aite
I came

拝み申すぞありがたき
ogami mōsu zo arigataki
(I say) prayers of gratefulness

During this recitation, the waki sets out for, approaches, and arrives at Nonomiya Shrine, where he finds an old torii of black wood bordered by a small brushwood fence. Both appear as if they had not changed since long ago. Skeletal facsimiles of these stand in center-front stage. The torii and the fence grow in symbolic weight as the play progresses. The torii, the entrance to a Shinto shrine, is a frame

without a door, the gateway between the sacred and the profane, a demarkation and a portal. To justify a Buddhist monk's visit to a shinto shrine, the *waki* remarks that the gods of Ise (the place to which the heroine of the play is bound) fence out no one. The brushwood fence becomes associated with the god fence and with fencing in and out. This reoccurs at the very end of the play.

[哥]

sageuta (fixed)

waki:

ワキ伊勢の神垣隔てなく

Ise no kamigaki hedate naku fence

Ise's divine fence excludes none

法の教への道直に

nori no oshie no michi sugu ni

Law's holy teaching's path is straight

此處に尋ねて宮所

koko ni tazunete miyadokoro

here, visit palace site

心も澄める夕べかな

kokoro mo sumeru yūbe ka na (moon)

heart clearing evening!

心も澄める夕べかな。

kokoro mo sumeru yūbe ka na

heart clear evening!

In the first dan, the *nanori* is in prose, the *sashi* in free-metered poetry, and the *sageuta* in regular lines of 7 and 5 syllables. In content, the *nanori* and *sashi* are rather straightforward, while the *sageuta* is more abstract, more suggestive. It employs such poetic techniques as pivot words (*kakekotoba*): “*koko ni tazunete mi(ru) + miyadokoro*,” assonance: “*miyadokoro kokoro mo*,” and allusion: “a clear evening” refers to the autumn moon, though it does not mention it explicitly. The growing complexity of style leads up to the highly intricate poetry which follows.

The *shite*'s monologue, *dan 2*, also progresses from freer to stricter

form, except that it begins with a short introductory song in strict-metered poetry adjusted to the musical beat (*jo-ka*). This song, the *shidai*, always has 7-5, 7-5, 7-4 syllables, of which the second line is a repetition of the first. The melody is likewise almost predictable. A *shidai* can appear only as an introductory song. The first words of the *shite*, particularly when they are a monologue, set the mood of the play, introducing the major thematic concerns; this begins of the development section. In *Nonomiya*, the *shite*, dressed as a woman, advances along the *hashigakari* (bridge) carrying a *sakaki* branch³ and singing about the loneliness of autumn and of grief. By convention, she is not seen or heard by the *waki* till after she has finished singing.

[次第] [次第]

(*shidai* music)

shidai (fixed)

shite:

シテ花に馴れ来し野の宮乃,

Hana ni nare koshi
flowers in abundance

Nonomiya no
Nonomiya

plants

花に馴れ来し野の宮乃,
hana ni narekoshi
flowers in abundance

Nonomiya no
Nonomiya

秋より後は如何ならん。
aki yori nochi wa
fall after
love's aftermath

ika naran
what become
what

autumn

[サン]

sashi (free)

shite:

シテ折しもあれ

Orishimo are
broken
departed

dying

物の淋しき秋暮れて
mono no samishiki
very sad

aki kurete
autumn evening

loneliness
autumn

なほ菱りゆく袖の露
nao shiori yuku sode no tsuyu garment
drooping sleeves of dew dew (tears)
dripping tears

身を砕くなる夕まぐれ
mi o kudaku naru yū magure
torn asunder dusk
body, suffering

心の色は自づから
kokoro no iro wa onozukara iro
heart's color naturally
passion

千種の花にうつろひて
chigusa no hana ni utsuroite plant
to thousand flowers (girls) shifted
in autumn flowers reflected

衰ふる身の慣らひかな。
otorōru mi no narai ka na dying
weakening body lesson
declining love

[下ゲ哥]

sageuta (fixed)

shite:

シテ人こそ知らね今日毎に
hito koso shirane kyō goto ni date
no one knows today each year past

昔乃跡に立ち帰り。
mukashi no ato ni tachi kaeri past
to past site I return return

[上ゲ哥]

ageuta (fixed)

shite:

シテ野の宮の,
Nonomiya no
Nonomiya's

森の木枯らし秋更けて		
<i>mori no kogarashi aki fukete</i>		woods
forest cold storm	in autumn blows	autumn
森の木枯らし秋更けて		
<i>mori no kogarashi aki fukete</i>		wind
forest cold storm	in autumn blows	
身にしむ色の消えかへり		
<i>mi ni shimu iro no kie kaeri</i>		
body soaked color	fades back	<i>iro</i>
pierce love	sorrow-stricken	dying
思へば古を		
<i>omoeba inishie o</i>		past
to thoughts of past		
何と忍乃草衣。		
<i>nani to shinobu no kusa-goromo</i>		garment
what endured		
remembered		
fern	grass cloak	
来てしもあらぬ假の世に		
<i>kite shimo aranu kari no yo ni</i>		
comes indeed to nothing	temporary world	transience
wear	cut	garment
	goose	
行き帰るこそ恨みなれ		
<i>yuki kaeru koso urami nare</i>		back/forth
leave only to return	regretful	
migrate	lining	garment
行き帰るこそ恨みなれ。		
<i>yuki kaeru koso urami nare</i>		melancholy
leave only to return	regretful	

Poetically, this passage is highly complex. Filled with ambiguities, it depends on devices which allow it to be read on two levels at once. Autumn, the dying flowers, the whistling wind which pierces the body (all conventional symbols of the death of love) stand out as major images in their own right, but also emphasize the pain of attachment to fading desire. Autumn and inner distress seem inseparable. One does not symbolize the other ; rather they coincide completely and are felt as the same.

In the poetry this coincidence grows out of double and triple layers of meaning.

The inner workings of a complex poetic passage in Nō are too intricate to treat exhaustively in a paper of this length. Image intertwines with image, word associations sprout new implications and connections. Series of pictures superimposed on each other are still bound by the grammatical thread. The poetry is easier felt than understood.

A simple example of double meaning is the opening *shidai*. The main sense is clearly descriptive: "What will become of the Shrine of Nonomiya, once overgrown with flowers, after the autumn?" When, however, the "*aki*" is read as "*akiru*"—"to grow tired of" or waning love, the meaning of the last line becomes: "What is to become of me after his love dies?" By extension, then, the first two lines imply the brilliant, gay, flowery life when love was there.⁴

The *sashi* has a running strain of overlapping images, as listed in the metaphrase. To give only an indication of their interlacing: "*shiori yuku sode*" are "drooping sleeves"; "*sode no tsuyu*" is "dew of sleeves", a conventional phrase implying tears. *Shiori* read with *tsuyu* means "dripping dew". "*Tsuyu no mi*" is the "body of dew". "*kudaku*" means to tear, thus related to the sleeves, but "*mi o kudaku*" (to tear the body) means to suffer. To heighten the contrast between the desolation of the first line and the desperation of the second, the consonants of the first are prolonged and wet, while the consonants of the second are predominantly explosives.

The end of the *ageuta* has a different type of image. complex They don't point as directly to the same center as do those before them. While the main meaning of the last few lines might be read something like: "What I endured of the past amounts to nothing. Coming and going, to and from this temporary world, brings only pain," word associations evoke many other images.

shinobu (fern) \implies *kusagoromo* (grass-patterned cloak)
goromo (cloak) \implies *kite* (wear) ; *kari* (cut) ; *ura* (lining)

kari (goose) \implies *yukikaeru* (migration)

Once one element of a category such as garments or plants is mentioned in a play, there is an attempt to mention as many members of the same category wherever possible.

In *dan 2* the only section which stands out for straightforward simplicity is the short *sageuta*. These few lines introduce the controlling theme of return to the past, which will dominate the next *dan* and become symbolized in the image of the cart in the second act.

The language in the dialogue between the *shite* and *waki*, *dan 3*, returns to prose. The date, the memories attached to it, and the purification rite emerge as motifs. This scene ends with the *shite* placing the *sakaki* branch she has been holding gently inside the torii as a commemoration of Genji's act on his last visit to Rokujo Miyasudokoro.

Early in his career, Genji had had an affair with Miyasudokoro, who was several years his senior and newly widowed. While he was much enamored of her in the beginning, gradually the frequency of his visits fell off. She, still much in love, found it impossible to endure his negligence. A number of incidents where she suffered great mortification, including the battle of the carriages depicted in the second act of *Nonomiya*, convinced her to decide to accompany her daughter to Ise as an excuse for leaving Kyoto. In preparation for going to Ise, where her daughter had been chosen to be the virgin to represent the Emperor, they retired to the temporary shrine of Nonomiya. Even while they were there, Miyasudokoro had a faint hope that Genji might come, but time proved this to be in vain. Then, just before their departure for Ise, he did come.

He began trying to explain why it was that for so many months on end he had not been able to visit her; but he soon got into a tangle, and feeling suddenly embarrassed, he plucked a spray from the Sacred Tree which grew outside her room and handing it to her through her blinds-of-state he said: 'Take this evergreen bough in token that my love can never change. Were it not so, why should I have set foot within the boundaries of this hallowed

plot? You use me very ill.' But she answered with the verse:
 'Thought you perchance that the Holy Tree from whose bough
 you plucked a spray was as "the cedar by the gate"?⁵ To this he
 replied: 'Well knew I what priestess dwelt in this shrine and for
 her sake came to pluck this offering of fragrant leaves.'⁶

After all, he had proved his heartlessness many times over; giving in
 now would only lead to regret and further pain. Still, what stays
 most tenderly with her as the symbol of his unchanging love is his
 slipping the sakaki branch to her. She memorializes this every year
 on the seventh of the ninth month in ritual ceremony.

[問答] (speech)

waki:

ワキ我この森の蔭に居て古を思ひ、
Ware kono mori no kage ni ite, inishie o omoi woods
 I in this forest's shade sit of past think shade
 past

心を澄ます折節
kokoro o, sumasu orifushi
 heart clear at present

いと艶めける女性一人忽然と来り給ふは
ito namamekeru nyoshō ichinin kotsuzen to, kitari tamō wa
 very charming lady suddenly comes

如何なる人にてましますぞ
ikanaru hito nite, mashimasu zo
 what person are you?

speech

shite:

シテ如何なる者ぞと問はせ給ふ、
Ikanaru mono zo to, towase tamō
 what person you ask

其方をこそ問ひまゐらすべけれ
Sonata o koso, toimairasu bekere
 you rather should be asked

これは古斎宮に立たせ給ひし人の
kore wa inishie saikū ni, tatase tamaishi hito no past
 this place was long ago for high priestess built who

假に移ります野の宮なり、
kari ni utsurimasu, Nonomiya nari transience
temporarily moved to Nonomiya

然れどもその後はこの事絶えぬれども、
Shikaredomo sono nochi wa kono koto, taenuredomo die
however, after that time the custom died off

長月七日乃今日は又、
nagatsuki nanuka no, kyō wa mata date
long month 7th day today again

昔を思ふ年々に。
mukashi o omō, toshidoshi ni past
past recall year in year out

kakaru (free)

shite:

人こそ知らね宮所を清め、
Hito koso shiranu miyadokoro o kiyome purification
no-one-knows-place site purify

御神事を爲す處に
Gojinji o nasu tokoro ni
divine service conduct (time)

行方も知らぬ御事なるが、
yukue mo shiranu onkoto naru ga
As situation not-acquainted person your

来り給ふは憚りあり、
kitari tamō wa habakari ari in/out
coming is unwanted

とくとく帰り給へとよ。
toku toku kaeri tamae to yo
quickly leave please

[掛ヶ合] (speech)

waki:

ワキいやいやこれは苦しからぬ、
Iya iya kore wa, kurushikaranu
no no don't take offence

身の行末も定めなき、
mi no yukusue mo, sadame naki death
my travel's end set not

世を捨人の数なるべし
yo o sute bito no, kazu naru beshi
world-renouncing person counted among

さてさて此處は古りにし跡を今日毎に
Sate sate koko wa furinishi ato o, kyō goto ni date
so, so this old site today each year

昔を思ひ給ふ
mukashi o, omoi tamō past
past think

kakaru (free)

waki:

謂はれハ如何なる事やらん
iware wa ikanaru koto yaran
your statement, why could this be?

speech-

shite:

ツテ光源氏この所に詣で給ひしは、
Hikaru Genji kono tokoro ni, mōde tamaishi wa
Shining Genji this place visited

長月七日乃日けふに当たれり、
Nagazuki nanuka no hi, kyō ni atareri date
on long month, 7th day, today exactly

その時いささか持ち給ひし榊の枝を、
Sono toki isasaka mochi tamaishi, sakaki no eda o permanence
at that time, a little waited, then sakaki branch

忌垣の内に挿し置き給へば
igaki no uchi ni, sashi oki tamaeba fence
taboo fence inside slipped

御息所とりあへず、
Miyasudokoro, toriaezu
Miyasudokoro took, without change
immediately

free-

shite:

神垣ハ、
kamigaki wa fence
“god fence

しるしの杉もなきものを
shirushi no sugi mo naki mono o
sign-cedar even there is not

speech

shite:

如何にまがへて折れる賢木ぞと、
ikani magaete, oreru sakaki zo to
yet why bent and broke off sakaki!"

詠み給ひしも今日ぞかし
yomi tamai shi mo, kyō zo ka shi
composition today it was

date

kakaru (free)

waki:

ワキげに面白き言の葉乃、
ge ni omoshiroki koto no ha no
what interesting words leaf

(leaf—*sakaki*)

今持ち給ふ賢木の枝も、
ima mochi tamō sakaki no eda mo
now holding *sakaki* branch

昔に変わらぬ色よなう
mukashi ni kawaranu iro yo nō
since past unchanged color
love

past
permanence
iro

speech

shite:

シテ昔に変わらぬ色ぞとは、
mukashi ni kawaranu, iro zo to wa
since past unchanging color

past
permanence
iro

賢木のみこそ常磐の蔭の、
sakaki nomi koso, tokiwa no kage no
sakaki alone (is) evergreen's shade
(or: not only the *sakaki*, but:)

kakaru (free)

waki:

ワキ森の下道秋暮れて、
mori no shita michi aki kurete
forest path autumn's end
love's growing dark

woods
autumn
dying

shite:

シテ紅葉かつ散り
momiji katsu chiri
maple turning and falling

waki:

ワキ浅茅が原も
asaji-ga-hara mo
Asajigahara also

[上ゲ哥]

ageuta (fixed)

chorus:

地末枯れの,
Uragare no dying
dying twigs plants

草葉に荒るる野の宮乃,
kusaba ni aruru nonomiya no plant
grass dried Nonomiya dying

草葉に荒るる野の宮乃,
kusaba ni aruru Nonomiya no
grass leaves dried Nonomiya

跡懐かしき此處にしも,
ato natsukashiki koko ni shimo nostalgia
marks of nostalgia here even
after

その長月の七日乃日も
sono nagatsuki no nanuka no hi mo date
that long month 7th day

けふに巡り来にけり
kyō ni meguri ki ni keru cycle
today comes round again

ものはかなしや小柴垣
mono hakanashi ya koshibagaki transience
very fleeting brushwood fence fence

いと假初の御住居
ito karisome no onsumai transience
very transient abode

今も火焚屋の幽かなる
ima mo hitakiya no kasuka naru fire
now fireplace's gentle

光はわが思ひ
hikari wa waga omoi in/out
glow my thoughts

内にある

uchi ni aru

inside (encapsuled)

色や外に見えつらん

iro ya hoka ni mietsu ran

color to outside transparent

passion (probably may be seen)

あら淋し宮所

ara samishi miyadokoro

so sad a palace site

あら淋しこの宮所

ara samishi kono miyadokoro

so sad this palace site

The theme of cyclical return to the past alternates here with that of constancy. The repeated reference to the date, with its strong alliteration of *n*'s (*nagatsuki no nanuka*) in such phrases as "today it is again that *nagatuki no nanuka*" or "today *nagatsuki nanuka* has come round again" creates an impetus of revolution, of returning again and again, which will be carried through the play as a thematic image binding disparate elements. The preponderance of dark vowels, *o*'s and some *a*'s, cast their shadow over the passage, and indeed over much of the play.

The *ageuta* which finishes this scene contains echoes of the passages that precede it. Beginning with a rephrasing of the *shite*'s monologue, it then repeats the date (*dan* 3) and next the small brushwood fence (*dan* 1). It ends by suggesting the dilemma Miyasudokoro is facing: "Like the light of the small fire that glows gently in the hearth now, can the color of my inner thoughts be seen from without?"

The light here refers to Genji, and also acts as a pivot word. The repetition of the sound "*hi*" in "*hitaki*," "*hikari*," and "*omo-hi*" intensifies the image of fire (*hi*). Both meanings of "*iro*"—color and passion—refer to the fire. Thus the line could be read as: "can it be that Genji reads the color of my inner thoughts from without?" (a desire that he does), or as "Genji is on my thoughts; perhaps that passion within me is seen from without?" (a fear that her inner secret

is betrayed).

After this introduction, the fourth *dan* fills in the details about who Miyasudokoro is, how she grew to know Genji, and what happened on the seventh day of the ninth month.

The format of the fourth *dan* is typical of many *Nō*: *kuri*, *sashi*, *kuse*, progressing from free verse to metered verse. However, unlike the previous examples of metered verse (*shidai*, *ageuta* and *sageuta*), the meter in the *kuse* is often broken by lines of irregular syllable count. Although the terms *sageuta* and *ageuta* are still applied to the parts of the *kuse*, the poetic form of the *kuse* is less rigid than most *uta*, yet not as flexible as free verse. Dance accompanies many *kuse*, visualizing the poetry in movement; in *Nonomiya*, however, the *shite* sits the whole time in the center stage, turning only once to look at the *waki*. With no visual distraction, all the weight of expression and interpretation falls on the chorus singing the melody, which is delicately adjusted to the mood.

speech

waki:

なほなほ御息所の謂はれ懇に

Nao nao Miyasudokoro no iware nengoro ni,
now, Miyasudokoro's story, please

御物語り候へ

onmonogatari sōrae
relate to me

kuri (free) [クリ]

chorus:

そもそもこの御息所と申すハ、

Somo somo kono Miyasudokoro to mōsu wa
well this Miyasudokoro is (the wife of)

桐壺の帝乃御弟、

Kiritsubo no Mikado no onotōto
Kiritsubo⁷ Emperor's brother

前坊と申し奉りしが、

senbō to mōshi tatematsuri shi ga
senbo called, was known for

時めく花の色香まで
tokimeku hana no iroka made iro
magnificent, flowery style of life

妹背の心浅からざりしに。
imose no kokoro asakarazuri shi ni constancy
coupled heart inseparable

sashi (free) [サン]

shite:

會者定離の慣らひ元よりも、
Eshajōri no narai moto yori mo transience
“all must part” dictum and yet

chorus:

驚くべしや夢の世と、
odoroku beshi ya yume no yo to dream world
startled nightmarish
awakening dream

程なく遅れ給ひけり、
hodo-naku okure tamai keri dying
for long time delayed (death)

shite:

さてしもあらぬ身の露乃、
sateshimo aranu mi no tsuyu no dew
and then extraordinary body of dew (tears frailty)
indeed in vain

chorus:

光源氏のわりなくも、
Hikaru Genji no wari-naku mo constancy
shining Genji unbroken

忍び忍びに行き通ふ
shinobi shinobi ni yuki kayō
stealthily come to visit

shite:

心の末乃などやらん、
Kokoro no sue no nado ya ran dying
heart's end perhaps?

chorus :

また絶えだえの仲なりしに。

mata tae-dae no nakanari shi ni
again, less and less, he disappears

dying

kuse (fixed) [クセ]

chorus:

Sageuta

つらきものには

Tsuraki mono ni wa

heartless: 8

さすがに思ひ果て給はず

sasuga ni omoi hate tamawazu
still thoughts have not ceased

cease

遙けき野の宮に

harukeki Nonomiya ni

(so at) distant Nonomiya

分け入り給ふ御心

wakeiri tamō onkokoro

brushes aside heart

enters

plant

いとものはれなりけりや

ito mono-aware nari keru ya

so nostalgic!

melancholy

秋の花みな衰へて

aki no hana mina otoroete

autumn flowers fade

plant

dying

虫の聲もかれれがれに

mushi no koe mo karegare ni

insects voices crackling

insect's

voices

松吹く風の響きまでも

matsu fuku kaze no hibiki made mo

pine blowing breeze echoing

wait

pine breeze

淋しき道すがら

samishiki michi sugara

lonely the path throughout

loneliness

秋の悲しみも果てなし。
aki no kanashimi mo hate nashi autumn
autumn's pain unceasing
love's waning's torture

かくて君ここに
kakute kimi koko ni
thus you, here

詣でさせ給ひつつ
mōde sase tamai tsutsu
paying a visit

情をかけて様々の
nasake o kakete samazama no
compassion-filled myriad

言葉の露も色々の
kotoba no tsuyu mo iroiro no dew/iro
of words leaves like dew varied
colors

御心乃中ぞあはれなる。
on-kokoro no uchi zo aware naru melancholy
heart's core melancholic

The bittersweet excitement of Genji's approach as he separates the grass and penetrates the forest of Nonomiya impregnates the scene. This is taken almost verbatim from the original *Tale of Genji*.

The autumn flowers were fading; along the reeds by the river the shrill voices of many insects blended with the mournful fluting of the wind in the pines.⁹

In the Nō text the delicate tenderness of the melodic rendering lends these lines even deeper pathos.

The division of the *kuse* into *sageuta* and *ageuta* often involves a shift of content or mood and always a quickening of pace. In *Nonomiya* the *sageuta* centers around Genji's visit, while the *ageuta* describes Miyasudokoro's ceremonial preparation for, and actual departure from Nonomiya. Overlapping poetic devices help to express the multi-layered emotions going through her mind. While the original text describes this scene from Genji's standpoint, the Nō concentrates on *her* emotions,

subtly integrating into the flow of imagery a quote from her reply to Genji's letter. The Nō text encapsules in a few lines what takes pages to describe in the original; like the workings of memory, a single word serves to evoke an entire experience; months and years collapse into a single moment.

ageuta (fixed) [上ヶ哥]

shite:

その後桂の御祓ひ、		
<i>Sono nochi katsura no</i>	<i>onharai</i>	purification
soon after, the Katsura	purification rite	

chorus:

白木綿かけて川波乃		
<i>Shirayu¹⁰ kakete</i>	<i>kawa nami no</i>	river-water
white offering thrown	on river waves of	(dew)

身ハ浮草の寄辺なき		
<i>mi wa ukikusa no</i>	<i>yorube naki</i>	plants
body floating reeds	unsupported	
	helpless	

心の水に誘はれて		
<i>kokoro no mizu ni</i>	<i>sasowarete</i>	transience
heart's flow	drifting (lured)	

行方も鈴鹿川	
<i>yukue mo</i>	"suzukagawa
towards	"Suzukagawa

八十瀬の波に濡れ濡れず		
<i>yasose no nami ni</i>	<i>nure nurezu</i>	tears
by Yasose waves	dampened, or not?	

伊勢まで誰か思はん乃	
<i>Ise made tare ka</i>	<i>omowan no¹¹</i>
As far as Ise who	might think (of me)?"

言の葉ハ添ひ行く事も		
<i>koto no ha wa soi</i>	<i>yuku koto mo</i>	
poem mother, who	accompanies,	her going also
word leaf		

例なきものを親と子乃		
<i>tameshi naki mono o</i>	<i>oya to ko no</i>	plant
without precedent	mother and child	(take-no-ko=bamboo)

多氣の都路に赴きし
take no miyakoji ni omomukishi
to Take on Capital road turned

心こそ恨みなりけれ。
kokoro koso urami nari kere melancholy
heart regret filled

The first act ends with the revelation that the *shite* is in fact the ghost of Miyasudokoro. The *shite* and the chorus, which at first speaks for the *waki*, alternate lines. Tension builds between the quick, free singing of the chorus and the hesitating, restrained lines of the *shite*. She is reluctant to expose herself openly. It is not she but the chorus that actually mentions the name of Miyasudokoro.

Then, shifting to a descriptive mode, the chorus details the scenery of the autumn night. The wind sighs, the half moon peeps through the trees of Nonomiya forest, casting its gentle shadow on the ground. Miyasudokoro disappears into the darkness beyond the pillars of the black wood torii.

rongi (free)

chorus:

げにや謂はれを聞くからに
Ge ni ya iware o kikukara ni
well story hear

常人ならぬ御気色
tadabito naranu onkeshiki
ordinary person do not appear

その名を名のり給へや
sono na o nanori tamae ya
your name tell please

shite:

名のりてもかひなき身とて恥かしの
Nanoritemo kainaki mi to te hazukashi no (hazukashi mori=
even telling as worthless person embarrass forest near
not-body Kyoto
you

漏りてや外に知られまし
morite ya yoso ni shirare mashi
leak to outside might get known
forest

よしさらばその名もなき身ぞと
yoshi saraba so no na mo naki mi zo to anonymous
if it's O. K., that name anonymous
not living

弔はせ給へや
towase tamae ya purification
please pray

chorus:

亡き身と聞けば不思議やな
Naki mi to kikeba fushigi ya na
when "not with body" hear, very strange
さてはこの世をはかなくも
sate wa kono yo o hakanakumo transience
well, this life fleeting

shite:

去りて久しき跡の名乃
sarite hisashiki ato no na no past
left long ago vestige of name

chorus:

御息所は
Miyasudokoro wa
Miyasudokoro

shite:

我なりと、
ware nari to
is I

chorus:

夕暮れの秋乃風、
yūgure no aki no kaze evening wind
evening fall breeze
say

森の木の間の夕月夜,
mori no ko no ma no yūzuku yo moon
 forest here evening moon night
 among trees

影幽かなる木の下
kage kasuka naru ko no shita no shade
 shade faint tree beneath

黒木乃鳥居の二柱に
kurogi no torii no futa bashira ni torii
 dark wood torii's two poles

立ち隠れて失せにけり
tachi kakurete use ni keru
 get up to go, fading disappears

跡立ち隠れ失せにけり。
ato tachi kakure use ni keru
 trace, stand, hide away

In between acts the *kyogen* player¹² retells the story of Miyasudokoro. This allows time for the *shite* to change costume.

The second act begins again with a description of the scene. The priest settles down on the mossy ground to pray for the soul of Miyasudokoro.

Machi utai (fixed) [待謡]

waki:

片戦くや
Katashiku ya
 partly spread out

森の木蔭乃苔衣
mori no kokage no koke goromo woods, shade
 wood's shade moss cloak

森の木蔭の苔衣
mori no kokage no koke goromo
 wood's shade moss cloak

同じ色なる草蓆
onaji iro naru kusa mushiro iro
 same color becomes straw mat (mat also unfolds)

思ひを述べて夜もすがら
omoi o nobete yo mo sugara
 thoughts unfold all night long

かの御跡を弔ふとかや、
kano on ato o tō to ka ya
for that deceased let me pray
relic

かの御跡を弔ふとかや。
kano on ato o tō to ka ya
for that deceased let me pray

Soon the ghost of Miyasudokoro reappears. This time she wears large flowing robes: *oguchi* (divided skirts) and *chōken*. She begins with a song in fixed poetic meter, but free rhythm called *isei*. Her song recalls her opening speech of act one. It combines the images of dying grass and flowers with cyclical return to the past in the word “*hanaguruma*” (flower coach), the revolution of the wheels of the coach correlating to the return of her soul to the past.

isei (flute) (free) [一声]

shite:

野の宮の
Nonomiya no
Nonomiya's

秋の干草の花車
aki no chigusa no hanaguruma autumn flowers
autumn flowers flower coach coach
(wa=circle)

我も昔に廻り来にけり。
ware mo mukashi ni meguri ki ni keri past
I also to the past return cycle
circle revolve

The waki begins the third *dan* of the second act by solidifying the identification between the image of the coach and of cyclical revolution by using the word “dim” (*kasuka*) to refer both to the light of the moon (Genji, monthly revolution) and to the sound of the approaching coach: “Strangely the light of the moon is dim the sound of a coach approaching.” The repetition of the word “*meguru*” (to revolve), which until now has built up a complex of implications relating to Miyasudokoro’s inner struggle, in this passage refers to the wheels of a small

ox cart, again echoing the super imposition of one theme on another. Through these techniques, the carriage becomes a concrete symbol of cyclical return, of the inability to escape from attachment, of inextricable binds to the wheel of life.

Without this consistency in imagery, the content of this scene might appear a little unrelated to the rest of the play. It is, of course, one cause of Miyasudokoro's retreat from the world. Psychologically it reflects the workings of a perturbed mind obsessed with failure and humiliation, but still it does not have strict ties to the plot.

Kakaru (free)

waki:

不思議やな月の光も幽かなる
Fushigi ya na tsuki no hikari mo kasuka naru moon

how strange, moon's rays also faint

車の音乃近づく方を

kuruma no oto no chikazuku kata o coach

coach sounds approach / people

見れば網代の下簾,

mireba ajiro no shita-sudare

see wicker *sudare*

思ひかけざる有様なり

omoi kakezaru arisama nari

thoughts suspended at sight

hang

いかさま疑ふ所もなく

ikasama utagō tokoro mo naku

who? doubt-place none

御息所にてましますか

Miyasudokoro nite mashi masu ka

Miyasudokoro it must be

さもあれ如何なる車やらん

samo are ikanaru kuruma ya ran

what kind of coach could it be?

coach

speech

shite:

如何なる車と問はせ給へば

Ikanaru kuruma to, towase tamaeba

what cart when ask

思ひ出でたりその昔,
omoi ide tari, sono mukashi past
reminded of the past

kakaru (free)

shite:

賀茂乃祭の車争ひ
kamo no matsuri no kuruma arasoï
Kamo festival coach battle:

主は誰とも白露の
nushi wa tare tomo shiratsuyu no dew (tears)
owner is who? not known
white dew

waki:

所狭きまで立て並ぶる
tokoro semaki made tate naraburu
packed seats line up
spot

shite:

物見車の様々に
monomi guruma no samazama ni viewing
festival viewing coaches of all kinds coach

殊に時めく葵の上乃
koto ni tokimeku Aoinoue no
especially magnificent is Aoinoue's

waki:

御車とて人を払ひ
Onkuruma to te hito o harai coach
coach (it is said), people push away

立ち騒ぎたるその中に
tachi sawagitaru sono naka ni
stand and raise clamor amidst

shite:

身は小車の遣る方も、なしと
mi wa oguruma no yaru kata mo nashi to small cart
I (and) small coach alternative none

答へて立て置きたる
kotaete tate oki taru
answer: get up and leave

waki:

車の前後に
kuruma no zengo ni coach
coaches front and back

shite:

ぱっと寄りて
batto yorite
suddenly approach

chorus:

人々轆に取りつきつゝ
hitobito nagae ni toritsuki tsutsu
people shift grabbing

人だまひの奥に
hito damai no oku ni
servant's behind

押しやられて物見車の
oshiyararete monomi guruma no coach
is pushed (my) viewing coach

力もなき身の程ぞ
chikara mo naki mi no hodo zo
powerless status

思ひ知られたる。
omoi shirare taru
recognized

よしや思へば何事も
yoshi ya omoeba nanigoto mo
well reconsidered, everything

報ひの罪によも漏れじ
mukui no tsumi ni yo mo moreji
retribution for crime in world, inescapable
guilt

身はなほ牛乃小車の
mi wa nao ushi no oguruma no cart
body miserable small cart

ox

廻り廻り来て何時までぞ
meguri meguri kite itsu made zo cycle
turning and turning forever

妄勢を晴らし給へや
mōshiū o harashi tamae ya purification
delusion sweep out please

妄執を晴らし給へや。
mōshiū o harashi tamae ya
delusion sweep out please

The fourth *dan* of the second act centers on a dance and has only a few introductory lines to set the mood. The images return to those of the first act. The dance is the most solemn and slow *jo-no-mai*, performed here with particular restraint.

Isei (free) [イセイ]

shite:

昔を思ふ花の袖。
Mukashi o omou hana no sode past
past memories flower sleeves plant
garment

chorus:

月にと返す気色かな。
tsuki ni to kaesu keshiki ka na moon
to moon turn appearance turn

Jo-No-Mai (dance)

The *Nō* ends with a recapitulation of all the major images, drawing together threads from the entire play. Beginning with a *waka* poem, not unlike the concluding lines of the first act, it proceeds to pile one image on the next in rather loose grammatical relation and broken poetic meter. The description of autumn, repeated now for the fifth time, increases in symbolic realism heightened by onomatopoeia. Dance underlines the poetry, often clarifying obscurities and bringing ambiguities into sharp focus. Some sections are acted, others mimed, others only indicated abstractly. Movement flows into movement, image into image, till we, too, mount into the coach that leads away

from the burning house.

Waka [ワカ]

shite:

野の宮乃

Nonomiya no

Nonomiya

月も昔や思ふらん。

tsuki mo mukashi ya omōran

moon also of past think (perhaps)

moon
past

chorus:

影さみしくも森の下露

kage samishiku mo mori no shitatsuyu

shade lonely too forest ground-dew

light drip

shade
woods
dew
lonely

森乃下露。

mori no shitatsuyu

forest ground dew

drip

(*kiri*) or (*noriji*) fixed

shite:

身の置き所もあはれ昔の、

mi no okidokoro mo aware mukashi no

person's resting place appears

sad past

past

chorus:

庭のたゞずまひ、

niwa¹³ no tatazumai

garden's form

plants

shite:

外にぞ変はる

yoso ni zo kawaru

outside changing

in/out

chorus:

気色も假なる

keshiki mo kari naru

(but) appearance also temporary

transient

shite:

小柴垣
koshibagaki fence
brushwood fence

chorus:

露うち払ひ
tsuyu uchi harai (transience)
dew brush off dew
purify purification

訪はれし我も、その人も
towareshi ware mo sono hito mo
visit I also he too

たゞ夢の世と、経りゆく
tada yume no yo to furiyuku dream world
only dream world fading dying

跡なるに誰 松虫の音ハ
ato naru ni tare matsu mushi no ne wa insect voices
after which who wait pine cricket's voice
traces

りんりんとして風茫々たる
rin rin to shite kaze bōbō taru wind
rin-rin chirps wind wu-wu wails

野の宮乃、夜すがら、
Nonomiya no yo sugara (moon)
Nonomiya all night

懐かしや。
natsukashi ya nostalgia
nostalgic

Ha-No-Mai (dance)

此處は元より、忝なくも
Koko wa moto yori katajikenaku mo
here is surely grateful

神風や
kamikaze ya wind
god wind

伊勢の内外乃 鳥居に出で入る
Ise no uchi to no¹⁴ torii ni ide iru torii
Ise's inner and outer torii step in and out in/out

姿は生死の道を
sugata wa shōji no michi o (migration)
body life and death path

神は受けずや思ふらんと
kami wa ukezu ya¹⁵ omōran to
“gods will not receive probably”...think

また車にうち乗りて
mata kuruma ni uchi norite coach
again in coach enter

火宅の門をや出でぬらん
kataku no kado o ya ide nu ran fire
burning house gate probably not escapable

火宅の門。
kataku no kado
burning house gate

The burning house is a Buddhist symbol of life consumed by the flames of vain desires. The conjectural case of the last sentence leaves it unclear whether the coach she enters takes her away from the burning house, or merely sets her again on another revolution of the wheel of life. This ambiguity is stated in Shinto terms in her fear that the gods may not accept her, and by her stepping in and out of the torii at Ise.

Migration between life and death, between here and there, already appeared in the *shite's* opening passage (*dan 2*). Miyasudokoro's withdrawal from court life to the Ise sanctuary, as dramatized in the *kuse*, is her initial departure down the rapids to death in life. The theme of coming and going develops into cyclical return to the past, which becomes symbolized in the wheel of the cart and implied in the waxing and waning cycles of the moon and the evaporation / condensation cycles of dew. Indeed the three times the stage setting—the black wood torii and brushwood fence—is used all highlight this theme. The first time the *shite* tenderly slips the *sakaki* branch through the torii as a symbol of constancy. The second time, she brushes off the dew from the fence, waving her fan over it much like a priest does when he purifies an area with a talisman stick. This act is at once a purification (*uchiharai*)

a wiping away of her tears (*tsuyu*), and most important, a reminder of the transience of dew, of life, of love. The third time the *shite* advances to the torii, and on the words “*ideiru*” (step in and out), she lifts her right foot and places it inside the torii, and then withdraws it—a mime of her constant migration in and out of recluse, in and out of life and death, in and out of attachment, back and forth between permanence and transience.

NOTES

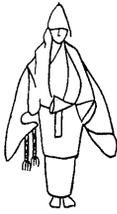
These terms are Yokomichi mariols.

1. For detailed description see Hoff and Flindt; *The Life Structure of the Noh*, pages 241-244.
2. I have indicated the rhythmic mode next to the name of the *shodan* in the text. “free” stands for *hyoshiawazu*, “fixed” for *hyōshi-au*. Poetic form should be clear from the distribution of the words in the line. All regular verse is given with 7 and 5 syllable phrases separated by a space.
3. The *sakaki* tree, an evergreen tree with fleshy leaves, is considered sacred. A branch of *sakaki* is used in Shinto rituals for purification. The book of the *Tale of Genji* called the “sacred tree” in English gets its name from the *sakaki* tree, as it begins with the story around which this play centers.
4. In his translation, Paul Varley gives yet another rendition of this line. As Miyasudokoro has not lived at Nonomiya for all that long, the interjection of the personal pronoun slants the original sense and carries overtones of her imminent departure for Ise.
5. Her poem refers to poem 982 in the *Kokinshū*: “My hut is at the foot of Mt. Miwa. If you love me come and visit me; my gate is the one with the cedar by it” (tr. by Varley).
6. Arthur Waley’s translation of *Tale of Genji*, Tuttle ; 1970, Volume 1, page 198.
7. Kiritsubo = Father of Genji
8. This next passage is given from Genji’s point of view.
9. *Tale of Genji*, page 192.
10. *Shiraiu* are *sakaki* branches tied with white strips and then thrown into the Katsura river as a purification ceremony for Saiku.
11. The original poem reads “... Ise made tare ka omoi okosen”
12. *Kyōgen* actors play minor roles in *Nō*, among which is to give an interlude between acts which usually summarizes the story.
13. From *Tale of Genji*, “Sacred Tree” (Page 194), “a garden so enchanting that the troop’s young courtiers, ... used to linger there regretfully, and on this night seemed consciously to be deploying all its charm.”
14. This refers to the inner and outer shrines of Ise : Natgu and geku
15. From a poem in the *Ise Monogatari*: “Mitarashigawa ni/seshi misogi/kami wa ukezu mo/nari ni keru ka na” to the effect that gods do not accept a wish to be freed from love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

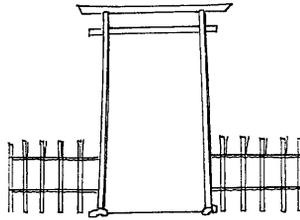
The writer wishes to express thanks to Mae Smethurst whose interest and encouragement are partly responsible for this article.

The pictures illustrating stage action on the opposite page originally accompanied the text. Due to shortage of space on the printed page, we have found it necessary to gather them in one spot and give page and line references.



Waki

p. 239



torii and brushwood fence

p. 240



shite

p. 242



kite shimo aranu
kari no yo ni

p. 244



“Shikaredomo sono nochi wa
kono koto taenuredomo”

p. 248



“Nagazuki nanuka no hi
kyo ni atareri”

p. 251



kwaba kusa ba ni aruru
Nonomiya no

p. 251



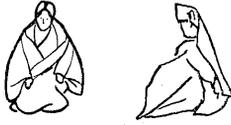
“mono hakanashi
ya”

p. 251



“ima mo hitaki ya no
kasuka naru hikari”

p. 251



kuse

p. 255



“yūgure no aki
no kaze

p. 259



“tachi kakure
use ni kerī”

p. 260



“ware mo mukashi ni
meguri ki ni kerī”

p. 261



“ikanaru kuruma to
towase tamaeba...”

p. 262



batto yorite

p. 264



“hito damai no oku ni
oshi yararete”

p. 264



“chikara mo naki mi
no hodo zo omoi
shirare taru

p. 264



“mōshū o harashi
tamae ya”

p. 265



koshibagaki

p. 267



tsuyu uchiharai

p. 267



“Matsumushi no ne wa
rin-rin to shite”

p. 267



“torii ni ide iru”

p. 267



“mata kuruma ni
uchi norite”

p. 268