

The Parent-Child Image in Noh Plays

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Introduction

This study on “The Parent-Child Image in Noh Plays” aims at making new findings on the hidden value of Noh plays for the present globalized society. The study presents the image of an ideal child, father and mother, as well as old family values seen in Noh plays which when applied may help mitigate the present family problems to a certain degree.

Research Scope

The study has found that there are plays other than “*oyakomono*” (parent-child pieces) that are relevant to the study of parent-child image. Many plays that have been put under other categories, such as lord-vassals, revenges, shrines and temples etc, also portray parent-child relationships. This research covers “any plays written in the Muromachi period, both in and outside the current repertoire, that portray the image of the father, or the mother, or the child/children, or the relationship between them, no matter whether such character appears as the main or minor character, or is simply referred to in the plays, no matter whether parent-child relationships is the main theme or story-line or not.”¹

From among the 223 plays in the current repertoire, and 248 plays outside the current repertoire, all written in the Muromachi period,² the study designates the following

1 Maruoka 1990 categorizes 832 current and non-current plays into 10 categories with sub-categories. (The book was first written by Maruoka and published in 1919. Later, Nishino edited and reprinted it.) The book includes current and non-current plays written at any period. Under the sub-category parent-child, 5 current plays and 21 non-current plays are listed. All of them are included in my research except for 3 non-current plays as they are not Muromachi plays. Most of these plays have the separation-reunion motif. There is also a sub-category called filial children, under which 9 non-current plays are listed. My research covers 3 of these 9 plays as they are Muromachi plays. In Nishino 1992 and 1993, he added more categories and sub-categories as well as more plays to the list in Maruoka 1990. The number of plays Nishino dealt with is approximately as many as 2,700 including plays that were newly found or written. In Nishino 1992 and 1993, under the sub-category of parent-child, 76 plays are listed, out of which 37 were written in the Muromachi period and thus are included in my research. As for the sub-category called filial children, the list now has 35 plays, all outside the current repertoire.

2 Takemoto 1995 provides a list of non-current plays that have strong evidence as written in the Muromachi period, and all the current plays written in the Muromachi period and other periods up to the present. This research strictly adheres to only the plays designated as Muromachi plays by this authoritative book, which includes the period up to around the year 1600 as the Muromachi period.

57 current and 76 non-current plays as plays presenting parent-child image, as shown in table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Muromachi Parent-Child Image Noh Plays in the Current Repertoire³

1. Aisomegawa	2. Ama	3. Asukagawa	4. Chōbuku Soga
5. Daibutsukuyō	6. Danpū	7. Dōjōji	8. Fujidaiko
9. Fujito	10. Funabashi	11. Genbuku Soga	12. Gendayū
13. Hibariyama	14. Hōkazō	15. Hyakuman	16. Ikuta Atsumori
17. Jinenkoji	18. Kagekiyo	19. Kagetsu	20. Kashiwazaki
21. Kosode Soga	22. Kōya monogurui	23. Manjū	24. Matsuyama kagami
25. Miidera	26. Minase	27. Mochizuki	28. Nishikido
29. Oharagokō	30. Orochi	31. Sakuragawa	32. Semimaru
33. Settai	34. Shichikiochi	35. Shōjō	36. Shōkun
37. Shun'ei	38. Sumidagawa	39. Taihei shōjō	40. Takenoyuki
41. Tanikō	42. Tenko	43. Tōei	44. Tokusa
45. Tomoakira	46. Tomonaga	47. Torioibune	48. Tōsen
49. Tsuchiguruma	50. Utaura	51. Utō	52. Yorimasa
53. Yōrō	54. Yoroboshi	55. Yōchi Soga	56. Yuya
57. Zenji Soga			

Table 2. The Muromachi Parent-Child Image Noh Plays outside the Current Repertoire⁴

1. Amimochi	2. Asahina	3. Basōten	4. Chichibu (a)	5. Chichibu (b)
6. Chikatō	7. Chōkōji	8. Ennemasu no Yoichi	9. Fue monogurui	10. Fushiki Soga
11. Futari miko	12. Hamagawa	13. Hamanarashi	14. Hanganokō	15. Haruchika
16. Hikkiri Soga	17. Hitsuji	18. Ikenie	19. Inabune	20. Isomatsu
21. Jūbangiri (a)	22. Kamata (b)	23. Kanemaki	24. Karukaya	25. Katana (no shō)
26. Kibitsu no miya	27. Kikuchi	28. Kin'ya	29. Kitano monogurui	30. Kibiki (Zenkōji)
31. Koremori	32. Kōya sankei	33. Kowata	34. Kumano mairi	35. Kusunoki
36. Kyōkakudō	37. Mekurazata	38. Mitsusue	39. Miuri	40. Mongaku
41. Murayama	42. Nagara (no hashi)	43. Nidonokake	44. Nureginu	45. Odamaki
46. Okinoin	47. Onbō Soga	48. Onnazata	49. Ōsaka monogurui	50. Rō Giō
51. Rōshakuhachi	52. Sanada	53. Senjuji	54. Senningiri	55. Shigehira
56. Shigemori	57. Shikiji monogurui	58. Shishiō	59. Shōgiseishu	60. Sumiyoshi monogurui

3 Some plays have variant titles. The titles used here follow the main entries in the authoritative book Takemoto 1995.

4 In general, non-current plays have more variant titles than current plays. Some of them also have different readings of the same title written in the same Chinese characters. The titles used here follow the main entries in Takemoto 1995.

61. Suzuki	62. Tadatsu (no Saemon)	63. Tango monogurui	64. Tatara Shigehira	65. Tomo
66. Tsuginobu	67. Tsunemori	68. Tsurujirō	69. Tsuruwaka	70. Urakami
71. Yakamochi	72. Yasuinu	73. Yorube no mizu	74. Yōka	75. Yuki Yoritomo
76. Zashikiron				

A Continuum

The above 2 tables list the titles of 57 Muromachi Parent-Child Image Noh Plays in the current repertoire, and 76 Muromachi Parent-Child Image Noh Plays outside the current repertoire. So the total number of the plays in this research is 133. Within this large volume of plays, there certainly exists a gap between the plays that are clearly parent-child in almost all aspects, and the plays that while showing some kind of parent-child image, other elements seem to be more outstanding. In fact, there is a continuum. On the one end of this continuum, there are the traditionally so-called *oyakomono* (parent-child pieces).⁵ After these plays, come those which have been classified under other groups but the parent-child elements cannot be denied. They actually are useful and must be included if one aims at grasping a comprehensive and overall image of the parent-child in Noh plays.⁶ Then, at the other end of this continuum, there are plays that show relatively insignificant parent-child image.⁷

Methodology

As is generally known, Noh plays have different versions according to the time that particular text was copied and handed down. There are also variances, both major and minor, among the five performing schools of Noh. This research justifiably does not attempt to cover all these versions. It is not possible to find different versions of all the plays. So it will not be academically sound to study only different versions of the plays that are available. In the case of the plays in the current repertoire, this study uses the

5 Good examples of *oyakomono* are plays like the 5 well-known current plays (*Hyakuman*, *Midera*, *Sakuragawa*, *Sumidagawa*, *Yoroboshi*), and 21 non-current plays listed under the sub-category parent-child in Maruoka 1990.

6 For example, the play *Kagekiyo*, which will be dealt with in detail later, is usually presented as a play about the famous historical character Kagekiyo in his old age and in exile narrating his past glory. But the part of the play about his relationship with his daughter presents a significant positive image of both the father and daughter.

7 For example, the current plays *Dōjōji*, and *Tōei* have the characteristics that fit the definition of Parent-Child Image Noh Plays given above but they do not present either a positive or negative image of the child, or father in the plays, or a picture of family bond while almost all of the plays in this research do. In fact, the famous current play *Dōjōji* presents a remarkably interesting father-daughter relationship not found in any other plays of this study. The father in this play, appearing only as a character referred to in only one line, is described as fondly teasing his daughter. This one lines shows an intimate and warm daughter-father relationship in sharp contrast with many plays that feature a negative image of the father, particularly those narrating how the father cause threat to life or actual death of the daughter.

texts collected in Sanari Kentarō, *Yōkyoku taikan*, as this is the only collection at present that includes all the plays in the current repertoire. As for the plays outside the current repertoire, this study mainly uses the texts collected in the three collections by Tanaka Makoto, an authority on plays outside the current repertoire, namely: *Bangai yōkyoku, sei, zoku*; *Mikan yōkyokushū*, vol.1–31; and *Mikan yōkyoku shū, zoku*, vol.1–14.

This research looks at the above 133 Noh plays as stories isolated from the other components such as music and literary beauty. It focuses on the image of the child, father, and mother only as a child, father, and mother, and not as a person playing any other role in society.

In finding a workable framework and methodology in analyzing the image of the father, mother and child in both the current and non-current plays of a large size covering 133 plays of various themes and “plots,” one significant issue which can be applied to almost every single play is the give and take element between the child/children and the parent/s, and on the other hand, the harm done to the other party, either on purpose or not. The result is the positive and negative image of each character studied, as well as the overall image of the parent-child relationship.

The distinction between a positive and negative image is convenient for the readers to quickly grasp the image. On the part of the researcher this is accomplished through close reading of the whole text of each play, a thorough analysis of all the images present within one play, and a very careful comparison with all the other plays in the scope of the research. For example, if a particular action of the child is categorized as a filial image under the category of life sacrificing, a similar deed found in other plays will also be categorized as such. In this research, a child has a positive image, or is filial, when the text of the play tells how he intends to or has done something for the sake of the father or mother or both. A positive impact may or may not be felt or happened on the part of the recipient. There are also times when a good intention turns into the opposite result. In these cases a positive image would naturally still be perceived but with some reservation. By contrast, a father has a minus image if what he does is going to or has caused some form of harm to the child, either psychologically or physically, either on purpose or not.

However, it is impossible to judge every image as merely positive or negative using the above criteria. Parents and children are naturally bonded to each other. They care for each other. So there are many situations in the play that represent this bond, affection and caring, but without further portrayal of any concrete benefit to the other party.

For example, the current play *Kashiwazaki*. Traditionally, *Kashiwazaki* is grouped together with *Asukagawa*, *Hyakuman*, *Miidera*, *Sakuragawa*, and *Sumidagawa* as the 6 plays that feature an insane mother in search of her son. But in this research, it is more appropriate to distinguish between an image of motherly sacrifice, that is a positive image in all these plays except for *Kashiwazaki*, and motherly bond in the play *Kashiwazaki*. The child in all these plays except for *Kashiwazaki* is abducted or taken elsewhere from the mother. The child's well being is a great concern for the mother. The motherly love and anxiety about the child's safety leads to her derangement. She endures the hardship of a long journey which, except for *Sumidagawa*, finally brings the son back to the comfort of living at home with the mother. However, in *Kashiwazaki*, the son leaves the mother at

his own accord to become a monk. Moreover, the play focuses more on the sorrow of the mother as a wife who has lost her husband in death.

In one single play, a multiple layer of images may be perceived. One character may have both a positive and negative image according to his or her thoughts and deeds at a particular part in the play. The play *Kagekiyo* will be discussed here in detail as an example.

There are 3 images present in the play *Kagekiyo*. In this play, the father deserts his child from birth simply because the child is a girl. The first image is thus a negative image of the father. When grown up, this daughter travels a long and hard journey to visit the father she has never known. Now he is an aged, blind and defeated warrior in exile living in destitute at the kindness of some villagers. The visit is certainly an act of filial piety. She also brings much comfort to the wretched and resigned father now that he knows there will be a filial child praying for him after death. But it is not that only the daughter has a positive and the father only the negative image. When the daughter is first brought to the father's hut, the father feigns ignorance for fear that an association and blood relations to a defeated warrior in exile like him would mar the honor of his daughter. Here we see a positive image of the father. He finally gives in to his daughter but all he does is relate his past glory in battle and ask the daughter to pray for his soul in the after world. Then he bids farewell to her.

In this research, *Kagekiyo* is thus listed under three groups: the minus image of the father, the filial image of the child, and the positive image of the father. Cross references are made for each play in the list of each group. In other research, *Kagekiyo* is not considered a parent-child play.⁸ The focus is on the father as the protagonist reminiscing his past glory and his feeling of humiliation.

So each play is analyzed in this nature but the analysis is not shown in this paper. The analysis is used to form the overall picture of the image of the child, father and mother and their relationship.

Results

In sum, the study has the following findings:

1. The most salient parent-child image in the Noh plays of the Muromachi period is the positive image of the child, that is filial piety. This is followed by the positive image of the parents, parental sacrifice. This finding can be used to relate Noh research to the present globalized world faced with deteriorating family problems.
2. There is a significant difference of the parent-child image between the current and non-current plays. There are similar points but there are also many different issues worth looking at closely. The most striking example is the image of the father. The foremost image of the father in the current plays is a negative one, but it is not so in the non-current plays. Moreover, we see as many as 6 non-current plays that narrate the father's sacrifice of life and revenge for the child, and 3

8 In Nishino 1992, p. 76, *Kagekiyo* is grouped under the category of military men.

non-current plays depicting a deranged father traveling to look for his lost child. However, there is not a single current play that features a father in these situations. This difference shows the importance of the study of non-current plays which hitherto have been neglected even by Japanese researchers.⁹

3. There is a significant gender discrepancy between the doer and recipient of filial piety, parental sacrifice, and harm done to the other family member. For example, whereas the daughter is featured much less than the son, she is not less filial. Moreover, her negative image is almost absent while the son also has a negative image besides his filial image. But the daughter suffers the harm done by the father much more than the son who enjoys parental sacrifice much more than the daughter. The sacrifice and beneficiary the son receives is mostly from the mother. This study can thus make a contribution to gender studies.¹⁰

To relate the findings of this research to the issue of globalization and its aftermath of problems in child rearing and family bond in the present world, the rest of this paper will focus on only finding 1, the child's filial piety and the parents' sacrifice.

The Most Salient Parent-Child Image

The 133 plays can be divided into 3 groups according to the type of the parent-child image found in the play. The child's and parents' positive image is seen in 93 plays; a negative image in 37 plays; portrayal of parent-child bond without a positive or negative image in 25 plays.¹¹ So the majority of the parent-child plays feature a positive image/s. The number of plays which contain positive image/s (93) more than double the number of plays with negative parent-child image/s (37). When we add the number of the parent-child bond plays (25) to those of positive image/s, we can see that plays with negative image/s are much less. Moreover, there are only 15 plays that contain only a negative image. The other 22 plays have both the positive and negative images in the same play.

The 93 positive image plays can be grouped as 69 plays depicting filial piety, and 51 plays that portray parental sacrifice.¹² The 69 and 51 plays account for 51.9% and 38.4% of the total 133 plays respectively. So the most salient image in all the 133 plays is that of filial piety, followed by parental sacrifice.

Filial Piety

Filial piety in this research includes both the child's intentions and actual deeds. The stepfather and stepmother are included only in the cases of plays which also feature the father or mother. Filial piety even for one's stepfather or stepmother underscores the child's

9 Most of the plays outside the current repertoire lack sufficient bibliographical and typographical study. They have little annotation. So reading and interpreting them is a difficult and time-consuming task. See details about the differences in the parent-child image between the current and non-current plays in Saowalak 2004.

10 See Saowalak 2005 and 2006.

11 The total sum is 155 because there are 22 plays that have more than one kind of image.

12 There are 27 plays that belong to both groups.

positive image. To present the overall picture of filial piety in the 69 plays, the filial piety is categorized. In each category, the degree or nature of the intention and deed may vary. For example, under the category of life sacrificing, two levels may be discerned. On the first level, the child volunteers to die for his or her parent/s without any outside force or circumstances calling for his or her filial action, as in the plays *Manjū*, *Yakamochi* etc. On the second level, the child does not initiate the action but when put into that situation he or she chooses to and is willing to die or risk his or her life, as in the plays *Katana* (*no shō*), *Senjuji* etc. Even when finally the child does not die but if he or she is initially willing to sacrifice his or her life, as in *Shichikiochi*, *Yakamochi*, or sell herself, as in *Jinenkoji*, the play is put under that category according to the child's filial intention. The category of revenging is very close to life sacrificing as the act of revenge is equal to putting the child's life at stake. All the plays under this category tell of the success, while some of them, for example, *Yōchi Soga*, *Zenji Soga* narrate how the child is executed or captured as punishment after the successful revenge. As there are many revenge plays, they form a distinct category even if revenging is almost identical to life sacrificing. In one play, there may be more than one filial intention or action. In such cases, the same play will be put under more than one category.

Categories of Filial Piety in Noh Plays

The following is the list of the 69 plays in 11 categories of filial piety.

1. Life sacrificing in 18 plays:

for the father in 4 current plays: 1) *Manjū* 2) *Nishikido* (f*) 3) *Shichikiochi*
4) *Tomoakira*

for the father in 7 non-current plays: 1) *Chikatō* 2) *Kikuchi* 3) *Mitsusue*
4) *Onnazata* 5) *Rō Giō* (d) 6) *Tomo* 7) *Yuki Yoritomo*

for the mother in 1 current play: *Tanikō*

for the mother in 2 non-current plays: 1) *Kowata* (d) 2) *Shishiō*

for the stepmother in 1 non-current play: *Katana* (*no shō*)

for the parents in 3 non-current plays: 1) *Amimochi* (f, m*) (d) 2) *Senjuji* (p*) (d)
3) *Yakamochi* (d)

2. Revenging for the deceased in 16 plays:

for the father in 9 current plays: 1) *Chōbuku Soga* 2) *Danpū* 3) *Genbuku Soga*
4) *Hōkazō* 5) *Kosode Soga* 6) *Mochizuki* 7) *Settai* 8) *Yōchi Soga* 9) *Zenji Soga*

for the father in 7 non-current plays: 1) *Fushiki Soga* 2) *Futarimiko* 3) *Hikkiri Soga*
4) *Jūbangiri* 5) *Shōgiseishu* 6) *Senningiri* 7) *Yasuinu*

3. Selling oneself in 4 plays:

for the mother in 1 current play: *Sakuragawa*

for the parents in 1 current play: *Jinenkoji* (p*) (d)

for the parents in 2 non-current plays: 1) *Miuri* (p*) 2) *Senjuji* (p*) (d)

4. Rescuing in 2 plays:

for the father in 1 current play: *Tōsen*

for the parents in 1 non-current play: Hitsuji

5. Paying a visit in 4 plays:

for the father in 2 current plays: 1) Danpū 2) Kagekiyo (d)

for the mother in 2 current plays: 1) Daibutsukuyō 2) Yuya (d)

6. Making merit for the deceased in 14 plays:

for the father in 3 current plays: 1) Ikuta Atsumori 2) Kagekiyo 3) Tomoakira (s*)

for the father in 3 non-current plays: 1) Koremori 2) Kusunoki 3) Tsuginobu

for the mother in 4 current plays: 1) Aisomegawa 2) Ama 3) Matsuyama kagami (d)

4) Minase (s & d)

for the mother in 3 non-current plays: 1) Basōten (s&d) 2) Kin'ya (d)

3) Kōya sankei

for the parents in 1 current play: 1) Kōya monogurui

7. Taking Good Care in 5 plays:

for the father in 1 non-current play: Yorube no mizu

for the parents in 3 current plays: 1) Shōjō 2) Taihei shōjō 3) Yōrō

for the stepfather in 1 non-current play: Inabune

for the stepmother in 1 non-current play: Yorube no mizu

8. Willing to take over the sufferings in 1 play:

for the father in 1 non-current play: Nagara (no hashi) (f*) (d*)

9. Being obedient in 7 plays:

for the father in 5 non-current plays : 1) Haruchika 2) Nidonokake 3) Shigehira

4) Tatara Shigehira 5) Yōka

for the mother in 2 non-current plays: 1) Mekurazata 2) Tsuruwaka

for the stepmother in 1 non-current play: Mekurazata

10. Continuing to love the stepfather in 2 plays:

in 2 non-current plays: 1) Inabune 2) Onbō Soga

11. Being called a filial child by the father in 1 play:

in 1 non-current play: Hangonkō (d)

NB 1. In the above categorization of filial deeds, *Danpū*, *Kagekiyo*, *Tomoakira*, *Senjuji*, and *Inabune* are put under 2 categories. In *Mekurazata*, and *Yorube no mizu* there are separate filial deeds for different beneficiaries. So the total cases of filial piety is 76 in 69 plays.

2. The symbol * after the recipient or giver indicates that the person has passed away.

3. The initial in the brackets immediately after some play title gives further clarification regarding the recipient/s of the filial deed. (f) stands for father, (m) mother, (p) parents. (Except for (s*) after *Tomoakira* which indicates that at the time of his filial deed the son has already passed away.)

4. Almost all the plays depict a filial son except for those with (d) which depict a filial daughter, and (s & d) which depict both a filial son and daughter.

Categories of Parental Sacrifice in Noh Plays

The following is the list of the 51 plays in 6 categories of parental sacrifice.

1. Life sacrificing in 11 plays:

father : in 4 non-current plays: 1) Chikatō (s-f) 2) Mitsusue (s-f) 3) Nidonokake (s-f) 4) Zashikiron

mother: in 3 current plays: 1) Aisomegawa (s-m*) 2) Ama (s-m*) 3) Mochizuki (s-f*)

mother: in 4 non-current plays: 1) Futari miko (s-f*) 2) Murayama 3) Shōgiseishu (s-f*) 4) Yasuinu (s-f*)

2. Revenging for the deceased in 3 plays:

father: in 2 non-current plays: 1) Chichibu (a) 2) Chichibu (b)¹³

mother: in 1 non-current play: Kibitsu no miya

3. Selling oneself in 1 play:

mother: in 1 non-current play: Kibiki (Zenkōji)

4. Protecting in 21 plays:

father: in 3 current plays: 1) Danpū (s-f, f*) 2) Kagekiyo (d) (d-f, f*) 3) Semimaru

father: in 2 non-current plays: 1) Hitsuji (s-p) 2) Tomo (s-f)

mother: in 7 current plays: 1) Fujito (s*) 2) Genbuku Soga (s-f*) 3) Kosode Soga (s-f*) 4) Minase (s & d) (s&d-m*) 5) Settai (s-f*) 6) Torioibune 7) Zenji Soga (s-f*)

mother : in 7 non-current plays: 1) Basōten (s & d) (s & d-m*) 2) Isomatsu 3) Kamata (b)¹⁴ 4) Kikuchi (s-f) 5) Onnazata (s-f) 6) Shishiō (s-m) 7) Urakami

parents : in 2 non-current plays: 1) Tsurujirō 2) Tsuruwaka (s-m)

5. Searching as an insane in 8 plays:

mother: in 5 current plays: 1) Asukagawa 2) Hyakuman 3) Miidera

4) Sakuragawa(s-m) 5) Sumidagawa

parents: in 3 non-current plays: 1) Fue monogurui 2) Sumiyoshi monogurui 3) Tango monogurui

6. Searching in 4 plays:

father: in 2 non-current plays : 1) Inabune (s-sf) 2) Ōsaka monogurui

parents: in 2 non-current plays : 1) Hamanarashi 2) Tsunemori

7. Making merit for the deceased in 3 plays:

mother: in 1 current play: 1) Oharagokō

mother: in 2 non-current plays: 1) Amimochi (d*) (d-f, m*) 2) Kowata (d*) (d-m)

NB 1. The initial and symbol * are used in the same way as above.

2. The recipient of parental sacrifice is almost exclusively the son except for 5 plays

13 The play *Chichibu* has two versions with some significant differences. They are treated as two different plays in Takemoto 1995 and are called here Chichibu (a) and Chichibu (b) to distinguish between them.

14 The play *Kamata* has two versions with some significant differences. They are treated as two different plays in Takemoto 1995.

which are followed by (d), or (s & d) indicating that the recipient/s in that play is the daughter, or son and daughter respectively.

3. Those plays which also feature filial piety are followed by the doer and recipient in the brackets (in the second brackets in the case of the 5 plays mentioned in NB 2). For example, (s-m) indicates that the play also features the son's filial piety for the mother.

Significance of the study

Bringing the Past to Serve the Present : Noh Plays and the Globalized Society

The findings of this research on the parent-child image in Noh plays may make some contribution to the academic world in the field of Noh studies particularly the not so much studied plays outside the current repertoire, as well as the field of gender studies. But probably more importantly, the findings may give a message to the layman that Noh plays have value to the globalized society even though they are an archaic and boring form of dramatic literature. Noh plays give us a vivid picture of the ideal child and the loving parents in the turbulent society of the Muromachi period. They can inspire people in the present age.

As evident from the above study of the image of the child, father and mother, most Noh plays written in the Muromachi period, of both in and outside the current repertoire, depict the parent-child relationship as a harmonious one. The child is mostly filial.

Moreover, there are as many as 38 plays, more than half of the total 69 plays of filial piety, that tell stories of life sacrificing, selling oneself, and revenging for the sake of the parent/s. That is to say, they portray the image of high filial piety deserving much admiration. The child's filial piety continues after the parents are no longer living. The recipient/s of the filial deeds are dead parent/s in 35 plays, about half of the total.

It is also worth noticing that even in death the child is still filial. The filial son in the current play *Tomoakira* continues his filial piety even after he has already sacrificed his life for the father, and the father has also passed away. *Nagara (no hashi)* and *Yakamochi* are its counterpart in the non-current plays. In *Nagara (no hashi)*, the spirit of the daughter tells the priest that she wishes to take over the sufferings of her dead father in hell. The daughter in *Yakamochi* also sacrifices her life for the mother just like the son in *Tomoakira* does for his father. She is definitely ready to die for her mother. Moreover, when her soul is just about to depart to the after world she is reluctant to leave her mother behind. This filial daughter also cares for her mother even when the daughter is no longer a human. This act of filial piety touches the heart of the messenger from the other world so much that he does not take her with him. (So she comes back to life and brings prosperity to herself and her parents.)

The mother is loving and dedicated to the child. The father also has the same kind of a positive image as the mother.¹⁵ There is give and take in the family. There is mutual love, respect, sacrifice and strong family bond within the family. There is an image of

15 The father also has a negative image particularly in the non-current plays (see Saowalak 2004). But, as shown before, the dominant parent-child image in the Noh plays of the Muromachi period is a positive one.

reciprocal love and sacrifice between the father and son presented within the same situation in *Chikatō*, *Mitsusue*, and *Tomo*. For example, in *Chikatō*, when the son's life is demanded by the enemy who threatens to destroy the father priest's temple, the father would not turn the son in to the enemy. Instead, the father wants the enemy to take his life on the son's behalf. But the son is willing to die for the cause of his father. Eventually, with the help of his men and children, the father risks his life to fight and successfully subdues the enemy.¹⁶ All these moving stories particularly when telling about the reward for filial piety and parental dedication may give some inspiration to the people nowadays.

Certainly, it would be too far-reaching to claim that this finding itself can make this kind of contribution. A little more work still has to be done. The stories of touching filial piety and parental sacrifice that end with reward to the filial child or the family must first be presented in such a way that it is appealing to the audience. Here I am suggesting the separation of the stories of filial piety and parental sacrifice in Noh plays from their presentation in the present form of Noh drama. Ever since the time of Zeami Motokiyo (1363?–1443?), the greatest figure in the history of Noh, the stylized beauty of the texts as well as their performance, has been given priority in such a way that the moving stories of parent-child relationship cannot readily be appreciated especially by the unfamiliar audience in the present age.¹⁷ In the case of non-current plays, they are no longer performed, except for some revived plays. So new media such as cartoons and animation would be more out-reaching and appealing, though may not be commercially successful. A revival of the study of some Noh plays in school education would also be recommended.

Even if presented in a new form, I am not claiming that all the plays of filial piety and parental sacrifice studied in this research would be appealing to the audience of the 21st century. And among those that are appealing, certainly their degree of appeal is in no way equal. Categories of filial piety and parental sacrifice such as life sacrificing and selling oneself would sound too demanding, peculiar to some cultures, and out-of-date; whereas taking good care of one's parents, and paying them a visit would be more practicable by the children and appreciated by the parents.

The famous current play *Yuya* can be cited as one good example for inspiration. In this play, the protagonist Yuya has repeatedly asked Taira no Munemori, her lord and husband, for permission to return to her home in the countryside to attend to her sick mother. She is now made even more anxious by another letter from her mother. But her plea is

16 The play *Nidonokake* does not exactly narrate this kind of reciprocal love and sacrifice between the father and son. The sign (s-f) is put after the play title because there are two sets of father-son relationship in this same play. This play actually has two parts that narrate two different events involving two fathers and two sons. In the first part, a filial child obeys his father's words. In the second part, the other father risks his life to save his son. The second part of *Nidonokake* narrates the same event as *Zashikiron* about how the father saves his son's life. But *Nidonokake* does not have the part about the minus image of the son.

17 Even for the audience familiar with Noh performances the parent-child theme in many performances may also go unappreciated. Sanari 1995 points out in his comment on each play that one common drawback among many parent-child plays, particularly separation-reunion plays, is that they focus more on other elements, such as the spectacular musical performance as a scene in the play, and thus distract the audience's mind from the parent-child theme.

again brushed aside. She is ordered to accompany Munemori to view the cherry blossoms at the *Kiyomizu* temple. There Yuya prays to the deity *Kannon Bosatsu* to save her mother. Finally her moving poem about her anxiety for her mother makes him change his mind.

The daughter in this play is undoubtedly a filial child endeavoring to comfort and take care of her sick mother against the strict and demanding order of her husband/lord. Even people of the present days are moved by her torment, her longing to be with the sick mother, her courage to dare ask for leave from the powerful lord, her devout belief in the deity *Kannon Bosatsu*, her wit in composing the right poem to move the lord at the right moment, and the final relief as a reward for her filial piety and steadfastness. She is the symbol of filial piety eternalized by this beautiful, famous and ever popular play.

Even though set in a definite historical time, the twelfth century, with a real historical person, Taira no Munemori, the play is not out-of-date. The situation is not unfamiliar in the present society, be it Japan, Thailand or any modern world. A working woman in the capital is tied up by and put in a dilemma between her demanding work under an ego-centric boss and her sick mother left in the countryside. The message is clear and thankful. Through sincere love and care for one's beloved mother, steadfast negotiation, as well as some use of the brain, a dilemma could be broken.

Inspiration may be found even in the vengeance plays that may seem old-fashioned. The Soga plays, such as *Genbuku Soga*, *Hikkiri Soga*, *Yōchi Soga* etc., narrate the historical vendetta of the Soga brothers. They also depict warm relationship of brothers and mutual love of mother-child. *Danpū*, *Futari miko*, *Mochizuki*, etc. present young boys who successfully revenge the death of their father showing no sign of faltering in their resolve.

It is likely that most people are no longer taught from childhood to revenge their father or mother's death, as were the characters in these plays. So these plays may seem out-of-date. But children of today should be taught to care for the family's name and to have the wish to restore it if damaged. These plays when looked at more deeply do actually convey this meaningful message. We do hear news of people who go to court or appeal to the public in protection and restoration of their family's name. They are not much different from the Soga brothers and other characters in the vengeance plays.

Finally, while the idea of life sacrificing and selling oneself for the sake of the parents or the child may not be easily comprehended and served as models, it could be argued that it may serve as a reminder to the people, particularly the Japanese, in this globalized world, how people thought and acted in the past, and how people in this 21st century have become more self-centered, vulnerable to temptations due to the ever progressing materialism, individualism, and consumerism etc. Those stories in the remote ages may push the present youngsters to be a little more filial, caring and thoughtful children to their parents.

Stories about the love and sacrifice of the parents in the remote past would to a certain degree reassure the youths of the globalized age of their parents's love for them. While the youngsters nowadays are overwhelmed by science fictions, atrocious films, news of child abuse, murdering of one's parents etc, touching stories of tender and pure parental love should find a way into their hearts.

How about the parents? What lessons can the father and mother of the present age learn from these parent-child Noh plays besides being inspired to be a better parent by sacrificing more or giving more protection? Two examples may be cited. In the non-current play *Hangan-kō*, a merchant has been away on his business leaving his daughter behind for too long. The business costs him the life of his dear daughter as she sets out to go look for him but dies on the way. In the current play *Torioibune*, when the father has been away in the capital for more than ten years to win a lawsuit, his wife and child are left at the mercy of his own man who forces them to work for him.

How are these two plays related to the present world particularly Japan? A typical image of a Japanese father in today's world is a busy working father with too little time left for his wife and children. A father assigned to work in a distant prefecture leaving his family behind, or *tanshin funin* in Japanese, has also been a familiar image. It is only very recently that this manner of working has been questioned. Nowadays more fathers opt not to accept this kind of assignment even at the risk of losing their jobs or demotion.

The present deteriorating family relationship in many societies is causing a growing sense of alarm. How the findings of this study may have implications for this pressing problem remains to be seen. However, at least the study will not be just another pure research read by only some Noh specialists. Further work should be worth carried out.

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