

The “Masters of Sacred Dance” in Eastern Japan during the Edo Period

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During the Edo period (1600–1868) some of the most important performances of sacred dance and music staged at shrines in eastern Japan were controlled by the association of “combinatory Shintō” under the direction of Tamura Hachidayū. Tamura served as the head priest of the Sanja Gongen (the tutelary shrine of Sensōji, the most popular temple-shrine complex of Edo), and oversaw several hundred houses of “masters of sacred dance” (*shinjinmai dayū*) who performed *kagura* and related genres at shrines in the Kantō area and environs. This paper analyzes the historical and functional relations of the religious institutions and arts performed to the organization that oversaw their production.

Keywords: Tamura Hachidayū 田村八太夫, *shinjinmai dayū* 神事舞大夫, *kagura* 神楽, Sanja Gongen 三社権現, Sensōji 浅草寺, Mito Tōshōgū 水戸東照宮, Kanasayama Daigongen 金砂山大権現, Chiba Myōken 千葉妙見, Rokusho Daimyōjin 六所大明神

Anyone studying Japanese sacred dance and music known as *kagura* 神楽 is likely to be informed that a certain piece is transmitted by this or that shrine. But what does such a statement actually mean? In the postwar era, auxiliary associations such as “preservation societies” or groups of parishioners dedicated to supporting a style of *kagura* or related art have come to play an important role in maintaining sacred dances and music.¹ It would be easy to assume that in the past, too, religious institutions relied on similar crews of performers solidly under their control to transmit the repertory that was maintained. Things were, however, rarely so simple. Many performers of *kagura* and similar genres enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy from the institution where they exhibited their skills. Such independence was strengthened when dancers performed at more than one shrine or formed their own bakufu-approved occupational associations.

In this study I shall focus on one such collective of performers in the Edo period. This was the confederation of “masters of sacred dance” (*shinjinmai dayū* 神事舞大夫), which saw to the performance of religious dances at a number of Kantō area shrines large and small. To

1 Fujie 1986, for example, has analyzed “supporting organizations” for *matsuri bayashi* 祭りばやし (flute and percussion festival music) in modern Tokyo.

understand the relationship of this organization to the shrines at which performances took place and to the arts exhibited, one must examine in some detail the specific shrines, occasions, and arts in question. As a result, the following discussion will contain a considerable amount of historical and ethnographic material largely descriptive in nature. An analysis of such material, however, allows one to discern not just who exhibited which dance, but also the variety of relationships that tied performers and their arts to sacred institutions. As we shall see, “control” by the head of an organization of performers did not necessarily extend to the substance of what was performed. This did not imply, on the other hand, that performers were simply free to do as they pleased.

Tamura Hachidayū and the Arts of the “Masters of Sacred Dance”

From around Hōei 5 (1708) the “masters of sacred dance” in the eight provinces of eastern Japan and in parts of Kai, Shinano and Aizu (Yamanashi, Nagano and Fukushima prefectures respectively) came under the jurisdiction of Tamura Hachidayū 田村八太夫. This name was passed down through some fourteen generations. Tamura in all his incarnations served as the head priest of the Sanja Gongen 三社権現, the tutelary shrine of Sensōji 浅草寺 in the Asakusa district of Edo. He and his subordinates adhered to a religion they referred to as “combinatory Shintō” (*shūgō shintō* 習合神道). Such Shintō, the roots of which some commentators dated back to the days of Prince Shōtoku (574–622), combined elements of Shintō with Buddhism and Confucianism. Edo period writers at times associated the ritualistic dance “Okina” 翁 (literally “old man”), one of the central dances of the *kagura* repertory and a dance that Tamura or his men performed as well, with such “combinatory Shintō.”² Little is known about Tamura’s variant of combinatory Shintō, but evidently it placed much weight on a version of the well-known “Nakatomi purification” (Nakatomi no harae 中臣の祓). Since many masters enjoyed stipends or property granted by Tendai 天台 and Shingon 真言 sect temples or by *honzan shugen* 本山修験 institutions, it seems likely that Tamura’s religion was an eclectic, largely orthopractical mixture of rites and arts deriving from diverse sources.³ If nothing else, it allowed Tamura to insist that he did not fall under the control of the powerful Yoshida 吉田 house of Shintō or the Tsuchimikado 土御門 house of yin yang diviners, either of which might have benefited from absorbing Tamura’s association into their own.

The masters had already begun to organize themselves under the umbrella of combinatory Shintō during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Tamura’s rise to power is a long and complex story I shall recount elsewhere, but his position and function as the head of a broadly based, hierarchical organization were part and parcel of the bakufu’s continuing effort to control, regulate, and oversee religionists of all sorts during the late seventeenth century.⁴ As was typical of the Tokugawa regime, once organizational structures and rules

2 See *Sarugaku denki* 猿樂伝記, p. 110 (compiled mid-eighteenth century). For a brief discussion of Tamura’s “Okina” and an illustration of the mask used, see Groemer 2010, pp. 279–81. “Okina” was later incorporated into the repertory of the noh drama.

3 Matsudaira 1942, p. 615. That Tamura’s “combinatory Shintō” took its tenets from “Tendai, Shingon, and Honzan *shugen*” is already suggested by the document included in *Bunden sōsho* 聞伝叢書, p. 582 (Hōreki 6 [1756]/3) and again in many later sources (“shikaru ni shahō no gi wa tendai shingon shake, narabini honzan shugen tō no miyamiya ni junji, ōko yori sharei o aitsutome mōshi sōrō” 然に社法の儀者天台真言社家、並本山修験等之宮々に順往古より社礼を相勤申候).

4 On Tamura’s emergence, see Groemer forthcoming.

had been duly approved, members of religious associations were accorded considerable latitude in governing themselves and regulating their own affairs. By Kansei 2 (1790) the alliance of the masters of sacred dance had grown to embrace no fewer than 601 houses.⁵ Moreover, after Shōtoku 3 (1713), Tamura Hachidayū was also granted the authority to oversee female shamans (*miko* 神子 or 巫女) at whose séances the voices of the dead and departed were transmitted.⁶ Some of these women were the wives and daughters of mountain ascetics (*yamabushi* 山伏) or of masters stationed at small rural shrines.

Masters and shamans who registered with Tamura were expected to forward an annual fee to the association and to abide by its rules.⁷ A document from Takasaki (Gunma prefecture) drafted in Ansei 3 (1856) but recording far older practices notes that 600 copiers were disbursed each spring and fall to Tamura’s Edo office by the masters and female shamans in town.⁸ In Ansei 2 (1855), a hamlet in Kai province budgeted 300 *mon* from village coffers for Tamura’s organization, apparently to be later repaid by the individual who benefited from this advance.⁹ Other fees were payable when someone was licensed and no doubt on other occasions as well. Another community in Kai province contributed one *shu* 朱 in gold on Ansei 4 (1857)/9/21 as a five year donation. Tamura Hachidayū seems to have arrived in the area to collect it in person, for he is noted as having spent the night there, at village expense.¹⁰ In addition, Tamura was supported by some Kantō villages that, for reasons not entirely clear, supported his cause.

In return for their payments, masters of Tamura’s organization gained the right to serve in the capacity of dancers at local shrines, a position that reaped financial rewards for those so authorized. Masters turned to their association to supply them with certificates proving status and affiliation, and called on Tamura to intercede when disputes arose over rights to perform or other business matters. That the bakufu identified the masters as a recognized occupational group becomes evident in laws targeting religious figures during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In such edicts, masters of sacred dance are often listed alongside better known groups such as Shintō priests, yin yang diviners, and *yamabushi*.¹¹ Having been accorded their “proper” position in Edo period society, masters of sacred dance could rest assured that they would not be required to forward licensing fees to other religious institutions, abide by the rules of other organizations, or worst of all, be treated as outcasts by domain or bakufu officials.

Most importantly, however, Tamura’s masters staked a claim in a monopoly over certain arts. Their most important exclusive right was the performance of dances associated with combinatory Shintō. In fact, the definition of such dances was very vague. In Meiwa 6 (1769)/3 the association of masters of sacred dance declared that “shrine priests (*shajin* 社人) of all provinces under our control serve [as performers of] a special style of ‘dances

5 For the Kansei 2 (1790) listing, see Hayashi 2003, pp. 64–65. In the late seventeenth century, some 808 dance masters had evidently been controlled by one Kandayū 勘太夫, Tamura’s predecessor. See the Jōkyō 1(1684)/11 document in *Shinjinmai dayū tomo yuisho utsushi* 神事舞太夫共由緒写.

6 On Tamura’s control of shamans, see Groemer 2007.

7 For a discussion of what measures of control actually existed in Shinano province, see Nakano 2008, p. 308.

8 Gunma ken Shi Hensan Iinkai 1978, p. 258.

9 Fuji Yoshida shi Shi Hensan Iinkai 1994, p.189.

10 “Nyūyō busen chō 入用夫銭帳.” The name listed is 田村八夫 of “Edo Asakusa machi,” but I take 八夫 to be an error for Hachidayū 八大 (太?) 夫.

11 Countless examples could be cited. For an instance from the period of Tenpō reforms, see *Shichū torishimari ruishū* 市中取締類集, vol. 16, pp. 11, 13.

with a Shintō wand' [*hōhei mai* 奉幣舞], a 'sword dance' [*tsurugi mai* 劔舞], a 'yin dragon and a yang dragon dance' [*inryū yōryū no mai* 陰龍陽龍之舞], a 'dance of a female heron' [*mesagi no mai* 雌鷺之舞], and other dances of 'internal and external traditions.'¹² This is hardly informative. Far more concrete descriptions of the dances and the occasions on which they were performed are set down in registers submitted to, or drawn up by, bakufu administrators in Kansei 7 (1795), Bunka 12 (1815), Bunsei 13 (1830), and Tenpō 13 (1842). These rosters differ in details and were no doubt drafted chiefly for the sake of fortifying the dance masters' authority over the performances and other rites listed. But since the performances mentioned frequently reappear in unrelated documentation and are furthermore described by independent eye-witnesses, the explanations were plainly no empty fabrication. Various listings are readily combined to produce the following inventory, based chiefly on the Kansei 7 (1795) register and supplemented by items found in the Bunka 12(1815) record.¹³ I have placed nearly identical later nineteenth century accounts in curly brackets { }, my own comments in square brackets [], and the original Japanese in parentheses ().

1. In Mito of Hitachi province [Ibaraki prefecture], at the sacred festival of Tōshōgū [i.e., Tokugawa Ieyasu] staged annually from 4/16 to 4/17, we deign to offer {[dances for] eternal peace (*tenka taihei* 天下泰平) and everlasting military power (*gobuun chōkyū* 御武勇長久)} [Meiwa 6 (1769): sacred rituals], prayers, *kagura*, *kagura* with a Shintō wand (*hōhei kagura* 奉幣神樂, perhaps "*kagura* as an offering to the gods") for fortifying the land (*shihō gatame* 四方堅; {*kunigatame* 国堅}), "lion dances" (*shishi mai* 獅子舞), dances of eight maidens (*yaotome odori* 八乙女躍), and other pieces. For all these performances, the masters of sacred dance serve and wear costumes with a formal court hat (*eboshi* 烏帽子).

2. In Hitachi province, at the Kanasayama Daigongen 金砂山大権現, we serve at the "minor festival" held once every seventh year and at the "major festival" held every seventy third year.¹⁴ This ancient practice dates from a bountiful harvest festival held during the era of emperor Heizei [r. 806–9] and was first called a "major festival" during the era of emperor Montoku [r. 850–8]. Thereafter, such ceremonies and *kagura* performances have continued without interruption. On Shōtoku 5 (1715)/3/1, we served at such a "major festival," held every seventy third year. At each festival, which takes place within the Mito domain, fifty two of our men wear attire with formal court hats and serve at these occasions. {One of them, named Suzuki

12 This is according to the unpublished document "Edo Asakusa Sanja Gongen shajin gashira shidaigaki" 江戸浅草三社権現社人頭次第書 in the private possession of the Yoda 依田 family in Saku county Hidai village (today Saku shi) of Nagano prefecture. I thank Nakano Yōhei 中野洋平 for providing me with the relevant portions of this important document. The masters also asserted, probably largely in vain, that they possessed sole rights over the sale of certain sacred talismans or amulets, the execution of hearth exorcisms, and the presentation of prayers at moonrise vigils. See Matsudaira 1942, p. 617.

13 *Shisō zasshiki* 祠曹雜識, fascicle 36 (vol. 8), pp. 837–38 (Kansei 7 [1795]/4); *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō* 江戸町方書上、浅草 (上), pp. 323–24 (Bunka 12 [1815]); "Shinjinmai dayū yurai" 神事舞太夫由来 (in *Shinjinmai dayū yuishogaki* 神事舞太夫由緒書) (Bunsei 13 [1830]), and "Shinjinmai dayū yuisho" 神事舞太夫由緒 (in *Shichū torishimari ruishū*, vol. 16, pp. 55–59 (Tenpō 13 [1842])). For listings from Kansei 12 (1800), see also Matsudaira 1942, pp. 615–16; and *Kasukabe shi shi* 春日部市史, vol. 3, *Kinsei shiryō hen* 近世史料編5, pp. 768–69, both of which lack sections 4–6 above. The undated "Shinjinmai dayū yurai" 神事舞太夫由来 (in *Shinjinmai dayū tomo yuisho utsushi* 神事舞太夫共由緒写, almost certainly from the nineteenth century) also contains much of the same information and includes sections 4–6. The Meiwa 6 [1769] document is the one cited in note 12 above.

14 By western count this is every six years and seventy two years respectively.

Tango 鈴木丹後, functions as the head administrator of sacred shrine affairs (*shinji shayaku gashira* 神事社役頭); the other fifty-odd members obey him and serve at the sacred ceremony. In addition, other priests, *yamabushi*, and shrine officials from other areas assemble and participate.}

3. Here in Edo, I serve at the Asakusa Sanja Gongen festival held on 3/18 every other year. [On this occasion the masters] wear a costume and a folded courtier's hat (*ori eboshi* 折り烏帽子), a scarlet outfit, and a silk gossamer (*sha* 紗) formal over-robe (*kariginu* 狩衣). Shrine officials also serve. They [too] don such traditional outfits every year on 1/5 for the ceremonial equestrian archery exhibit (*yabusame* 流鏑馬) and during the sixth month for sacred dancing (*shinji mai*). Naturally, they also serve in accordance with shrine precedent at ceremonies for the gods.

{Here in Edo, I serve as the hereditary shrine head (*daidai kannushi* 代々神主) of the Asakusa Sanja Daigongen. Shrine officials serve every year on 1/5 at a ceremonial equestrian archery exhibit and at three [ritual dance] performances: “fortifying the land”; “female shamans” (*onna miko* 女神子); and Saruta *kagura*.¹⁵

In alternate years, on 3/17, they serve at the shrine festival, wearing a tall courtier's hat (*tate eboshi* 立烏帽子) and a silk gossamer over-robe. In addition, shrine officials wear formal courtier's hats and over-robos (*kariginu*) when they serve at the portable shrines (*mikoshi* 神輿). Moreover, since ancient times [every year] on 6/15 shrine officials under the control of [the head of] Sanja *kagura* have worn outfits with courtier's hats and served at sacred rites (*shinji* 神事) and *kagura* of Uzume 鈿女 and Okina 翁.

4. (Meiwa 6 [1769]: At the Chiba Myōken shrine 千葉妙見 in Shimōsa every year from 7/20 to 7/22 we perform various *kagura* pieces, a dance with a Shintō wand [*hōbei no mai* 奉幣舞], and a “crow's dance” [*karasu mai* 烏舞] and “fawn dance” [*shishi mai* 鹿子舞] on the *kagura* stages on board the “Chiba boat” and “Yūki boat” [floats]) {At the Chiba Myōken in Shimōsa province at the annual festival from 7/21 to 7/22 the “masters of sacred dance” perform *kagura* while wearing costumes with formal court hats.}

5. At the annual festival on 5/5 at the Rokusho Daimyōjin shrine 六所大明神 in Kokufu 国府 of Sagami province [today the Rokusho jinja in Kokufu-shinshuku, Ōiso machi] [*mikoshi* from] the five great shrines of Sagami {Ichinomiya, Ninomiya, Sannomiya} assemble at Kamisoroiyama 神揃山. On this occasion various *kagura* performances take place {prayer and *kagura* for eternal peace and everlasting military power are performed by “masters of sacred dance”}. In addition, monthly *kagura* is offered to the gods. The masters of sacred dance offer *kagura* performances of five pieces, seven pieces, or twelve pieces. {Moreover, they also serve at ceremonies on various occasions dedicated to local deities in nearby rural areas. They function at the above-mentioned *kagura* events and have been authorized by the bakufu. Eight masters of sacred dance have been granted tax-exempt property and offer sacred services every year without fail.}

6. {My subordinates also serve at annual *kagura* performances for the festival of

15 In a document from 1800, the three dances performed are named as “dance with a Shintō wand” (*hei no mai* 幣の舞), “dance of Uzume no mikoto” (鈿女命の舞), and “dance of Sarutahiko” (Sarutahiko no mai 猿田彦の舞). See Matsudaira 1942, p. 372.

the Koma [or Kōrai] Daigongen 高麗大権現 in Sagami province.¹⁶

In addition, [the masters of sacred dance] function at various other shrines and use assorted religious implements, small spherical bells attached to a handle (*suzu* 鈴), Shintō wands (*heihaku* 幣帛), and the like. Since olden times, conforming to shrine traditions, they have provided the dance and music of *kagura*. The masters of sacred dance under my control also walk before the procession of *mikoshi* [to purify the way] and serve at festivals of the “ox-headed heavenly king” [i.e., Gozu tennō] and the festival of the market goddess [*ichigami* 市神]].¹⁷

Each of the religious institutions mentioned in the above listing was in fact heir to *kagura* traditions, “lion dances,” and other arts predating the appearance of the Edo based “combinatory Shintō” organization with its masters. To understand better the nature of the relation of Tamura’s association to the relevant shrines and performances, we must look at institutions, festivals, and arts on an individual basis.

Ceremonies and Arts at the Mito Tōshōgū

The Mito Tōshōgū 東照宮, like other Tōshōgū throughout the land, enshrined the spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542–1616). Its construction occurred in Genna 7 (1621), three years after Ieyasu had been deified in Nikkō as the “shining avatar of the east.” The Mito shrine was funded by the first lord of the domain, Tokugawa Yorifusa 徳川頼房 (1603–61), Ieyasu’s eleventh son and a staunch ally of the bakufu. From the late seventeenth century the Mito domain distinguished itself by an anti-Buddhist, pro-Shintō stance backed with particular enthusiasm by domain heads such as Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701) and Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–60). The bakufu, which from an early age was bent on tightening its control over Buddhism, espied certain advantages in backing Shintō and funded the erection of a Tōshōgū within Edo castle (at Momijiyama 紅葉山, usually staffed by Sensōji priests), on the grounds of Sensōji, within the precincts of Kan’eiji 寛永寺, and of course at Nikkō. Domain lords and others followed suit, vying with one another in demonstrating their unwavering support of the socio-political order Ieyasu had founded.¹⁸ Since a Tōshōgū, no matter where it stood, sanctified the great progenitor himself, ceremonies performed there were as weighty and solemn as any that Japanese feudal society could muster. In Mito, the annual fourth month commemoration of Ieyasu’s death centered on dignified performances of lion dances, *dengaku* 田楽 (literally “field music,” a medieval art of dance originally linked to agricultural concerns), dances of eight maidens, and several other auspicious genres. These arts closely resembled both the dances staged by Tamura’s men at Sensōji and the genres rural dance masters exhibited at countless minor Kantō shrines.¹⁹

In particular, the Mito rites and performances bore a close relation to what took place at Sensōji. During the first decades of the Edo period, Sensōji served as the designated prayer

16 Today the shrine is in Ōiso machi and is also known as Takaku Jinja 高来神社.

17 The festival of the market goddess, held in many provinces, was usually dedicated to the goddess Ichikishima hime no mikoto 市杵島姫命.

18 For a listing and discussion of Tōshōgū around Edo, see Nakano 1994.

19 For a description and illustration of the Mito case see *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei* 日本庶民生活史料集成, n. 21 vol. 22, pp. 402–3 (from the Bunsei 8 [1825] *Nikkōzan shi* 日光山志 [On the shrine at Nikkō]. Plutschow 1996, pp. 169–80 presents much information on *dengaku* throughout Japan.

hall of the Tokugawa family. Its Tōshōgū stood behind the main temple hall, west of the Sanja Gongen, until a disastrous fire in Kan’ei 19 (1642).²⁰ After the blaze it was merged with the Sanja Gongen, over which Tamura Hachidayū would eventually preside. Since Ieyasu had died on Genna 2 (1616)/4/17, a ceremony in his honor was held at the Sanja Gongen on the 17th day of each month. Before the conflagration of 1642, daimyō and banner men appear to have made their way to the shrine each month to pay their respects to the hallowed originator of the realm.²¹ Records from Meiwa 6 (1769) to Bunsei 9 (1826) reveal that a ceremony in his memory was still regularly held at the Sanja Gongen, especially on 4/17.²² On Meiwa 5 (1768)/2/17, for instance, the priests of Sensōji assembled at the shrine at around ten o’clock in the morning. After various sutra readings and orisons, holy potations were consumed by the participants.²³ Two months later, on 4/17–18, *kagura* was presented, no doubt under Tamura’s direction.²⁴ The 4/17 performances were sometimes attended by ward heads such as Saitō Gesshin.²⁵ As late as 1860, Sensōji officials were still reporting that everyone at the temple took part in the annual ceremony, and that even the general public came to worship.²⁶

The relation of Sensōji to Ieyasu, embodied in the link of the Sanja Gongen to the Sensōji Tōshōgū, no doubt enabled Tamura or his predecessors to argue that in Mito, too, masters of sacred dance ought to be placed in charge of performances there, or alternately that dancers who had long served in this capacity should become bona fide members of the organization headquartered at the Sanja Gongen. When this occurred is not known, but *dengaku* had been performed at the Mito Tōshōgū since Kan’ei 14 (1637), the year after such a show was put on at the newly rebuilt Nikkō Tōshōgū.²⁷ One of Tamura’s men active in what is now Nagano prefecture noted in Meiwa 6 (1769) that the masters of sacred dance had for ages assisted in the “sacred rituals” (*shinji*) of the Mito Tōshōgū,²⁸ and in Kansei 2 (1790) some forty eight houses of masters were operating in Hitachi province.²⁹ A source entitled *Dengaku koji* 田楽古事, probably dating from the late Edo period, also specifies that these men exhibited *dengaku* in Mito annually on 4/16, the day before the main Mito Tōshōgū festival.³⁰ It thus

20 *Ochibo shū* 落穂集, p. 24; *Sensōji nikki* 浅草寺日記, vol. 2, appendix; *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 22, p. 49.

21 *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 22, p. 49.

22 See for example, *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 4, pp. 220, 423, 538; vol. 5, pp. 218, 330, 399–400, 505. The last entry I have been able to locate, from Bunsei 9 (1826), is found in vol. 16, pp. 397–98. A census from the 1820s states that since olden times a ceremony at the Sanja Gongen Tōshōgū took place every year on 4/17 (*Tōkyō shi shikō, shūkyō hen*, vol. 3, p. 230).

23 *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 3, p. 315. After Meiwa 8 (1771) (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 3, p. 553), however, one reads no more of a 2/17 ceremony in the Sensōji diaries.

24 *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 5, p. 330.

25 *Saitō Gesshin nikki*, vol. 1, p. 138. See also *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 19 (Tenpō 7 [1836]/4/17).

26 *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 29, p. 638 (Man’en 1 [1860]/10).

27 *Takaashi rikishi no men* 高足力士之面; see also Honda 1996, p. 332.

28 “Edo Asakusa Sanja Gongen shajin gashira shidaigaki.”

29 Hayashi 2003, pp. 64–66.

30 The volume Honda refers to as *Dengaku koji* is in fact a shortened title of one of two separate books bound together, the full title of which is *Kanasayama Daigongen Mito Tōshōgū dengaku koji, jōyō meisho zatsuroku* 金砂山大権現水戸東照宮田楽古事・常陽名所雜録. A copy can be found in the Waseda University Library. The volume is undated but mentions that the fourteenth major festival at Kanasayama took place in Tenmei 7 (1787). Since it does not mention the fifteenth festival of 1859, it was probably penned before that date. An important section is reproduced in Honda 1996, pp. 332–33. *Takaashi rikishi no men* seems to be an abbreviated version of a section of *Dengaku koji*. For more information on the *Dengaku koji*, for its illustrations, including several of *dengaku* at Kanasayama, see Watanabe 1990. *Dengaku* was also performed at Nikkō, e.g., on the hundredth anniversary of Ieyasu’s death in 1715 (see *Dengaku hōshi yurai no ki* 田楽法師由来之記 cited in *Koji ruien: Gakumu bu*, p. 710).

seems likely that by the eighteenth century the Mito masters were solidly bound to the association centering on the Sanja Gongen in Edo. According to the *Dengaku koji*, the events of 4/16 began with an intonation of the “Nakatomi purification” of combinatory Shintō, described as “a deep secret not resembling anything of other houses.” Such an emphasis on uniqueness hints that the masters wished to avoid any intimation that they were not fully independent, or that they ought to be brought under the rule of the Yoshida house. The second item in the program was a *kagura* piece in which the dancer wore a mask of the god Sarutahiko (Figure 1), wielded a Shintō wand and saluted the four directions.³¹

This dance must have been the one “fortifying the four directions” mentioned in Tamura’s listing. Third came a “lion dance” designed to drive out insects and ensure a bountiful harvest. *Sakaki* 榊 branches supported a sacred sword, while the “lion” cavorted together with Takurao 田蔵男 (the god Ōkuninushi no mikoto 大国主命), who lifted up the “lion’s” tail (for the masks used, see Figure 2). Then the “lion” took the sword in its mouth and retreated. All this occurred to the accompaniment of a “*kagura* rhythm not resembling that of other houses.” This piece was followed by a fourth dance, doubtless one featuring gestures of sowing seeds to ensure the production of abundant grain. For this dance, scrapers (*sasara* ささら) and possibly wooden clappers (*shakushi* 簀子) were sounded, again supposedly “not resembling anything of other houses.” The fifth dance was one in which a performer donning the mask of the god Takemikazuchi no mikoto 武甕槌命 (or 建御雷之男神) (Figure 3), a “rough spirit” (*aramitama* 荒御霊) of martial arts, worshiped especially at the Kashima Shrine in Hitachi province, climbed onto a stilt resembling a pogo stick and saluted the four directions with a fan stuck to the end of a long pole.³² This too was a common *dengaku* piece and had been performed at other shrines since time immemorial.³³ Yet Tamura insisted on labeling all the dances his men exhibited at Mito as *kagura*, a ploy that can only have reflected his desire to cement a relationship of this art to his brand of combinatory Shintō.

On 4/17 Tamura’s men and others assembled for the glorious Mito Tōshōgū festival. This extravaganza included a huge parade with two “lion” masks and a cortege of many floats and other attractions provided by the citizenry.³⁴ Here the masters probably played the “lions” and purified the way of the parade, two important roles in any religious pageant.



Figure 1. Mask of Sarutahiko used at the Mito Tōshōgū. Height: 19.5 cm; width: 13.5 cm. From *Takaashi rikishi no men* 高足力士之面.

31 For photographs of extant masks see *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku* 金砂山の磯出と田楽, pp. 78–79.

32 Honda 1996, p. 332.

33 See for example the illustration from the early fourteenth century Kyoto hand scroll *Urashima Myōjin engi emaki* 浦島明神縁起絵巻 reproduced in Raz 1985, p. 298. The same acrobatics were also seen in the *dengaku* performed every year at Nikkō. See *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, vol. 22, p. 402 (from the Bunsei 8 [1825] *Nikkōzan shi*).

34 *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, pp. 992–93 gives a listing of parade participants in Hōreki 2 (1752). An undated Edo period print detailing the parade can be found in *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, p. 65.

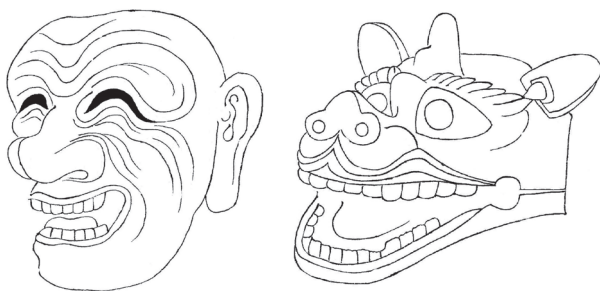


Figure 2. Masks of Takurao and the “lion” (*shishi*) used in the dances at the Mito Tōshōgū. Height: 16.5 cm, width: 18 cm. From *Takaashi rikishi no men*.



Figure 3. Mask of Takemikazuchi no mikoto used at the Mito Tōshōgū. From *Takaashi rikishi no men*.

Ceremonies and Arts at Kanasayama

Although the relation of Tamura and his masters to the Mito Tōshōgū appears to have been grounded on the relation of Tokugawa Ieyasu to the Sanja Gongen at the Sensōji, the *dengaku* performed at the Mito Tōshōgū festival derived chiefly from arts transmitted by the eastern and western shrines of Kanasayama, which stood in the Mito domain on mountains some four hundred meters high. Before indigenous *kami* were separated from Buddhist gods during the early Meiji period the entire site, some twenty kilometers north of Mito, was known as Kanasayama Daigongen (金砂山大権現; Great Avatar of Mt. Kanasa).³⁵ This holy region had long been associated with *yamabushi* (*shugen*) practices and beliefs, but from an early age had additionally embraced Sannō Shintō (the shrines were branches of the Hie Jinja at Hieizan) and Tendai Buddhism. This amalgamation of various creeds and practices was linked both historically and doctrinally to the religion eventually backed by the Tokugawa bakufu, though Sannō Shintō was transformed by the priest Tenkai 天海 (1536–1643) into Sannō ichijitsu Shintō in order to downplay the relation to Kyoto. It also supplied the spiritual underpinnings of both the Tōshōgū shrine at Nikkō and the Sannō shrine in Edo (the tutelary shrine of the shōgun’s castle). No doubt it resembled the combinatory Shintō promoted by Tamura.

The Kanasayama arts over which men affiliated with Tamura’s organization presided during the second half of the Edo period supposedly had archaic roots. The undated *Kanasayama ryaku engi* (金砂山略縁起) explains that the festivals to which Tamura refers in his listing were initiated in Daidō 1 (806) to ensure good harvests.³⁶ Other sources stipulate that the “minor” festival held began in Kōnin 1 (810), while the *dengaku* of “major festivals” first took place in Ninju 1 (851).³⁷ Already during the Edo period, however, historians were

35 The western one is today in Ibaraki ken, Hitachi Ōta shi, Kamimiya Kawauchi chō 茨城県常陸太田市上宮河内町; the eastern one is in Ibaraki ken, Hitachi Ōta shi, Kegano chō 天下野町.

36 Honda 1996, pp. 318–19. A similar document is reproduced in *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, pp. 1006–7. The document cited in part by Honda is in the possession of the eastern Kanasayama shrine. A photograph of what is perhaps the same document is provided in *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, p. 36.

37 See Honda 1996, p. 320; *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 1, p. 1097; *Suifu shiryō* (compiled Bunka 4 [1807]), p. 306.

doubting the veracity of such legends and speculating that the festivities in question dated only from Muromachi period (1392–1573). Perhaps, some mused, they were contrived to appease crop-destroying winds and the wind god Shinatobe no mikoto 級長戸辺命.³⁸ “Major festivals” or “festivals of going to the seashore” (*isode sai* 磯出祭) climaxed in a splendid promenade that took the sacred portable shrines on a ten day, fifty kilometer journey through what is today Hitachi Ōta shi, all the way to the ocean at Mizuki village (水木村, today Hitachi shi), stopping at various spots along the way.³⁹ It was at this shore, according to legend, that the god of the shrine—who assumed the form of an abalone—had first appeared.⁴⁰

Like the Mito festival, the Kanasayama celebrations centered on *dengaku*. The “Abbreviated Legends” state that *dengaku* was performed at the “minor festivals” of Kōhei 4 (1061)/3/1 (eastern shrine) and Kōhei 4 (1061)/3/3 (western shrine), supposedly on the behest of the eleventh century general Minamoto no Yoriyoshi 源頼義.⁴¹ Again, these dates and events cannot be taken as fact, but during the Edo period a *dengaku* stage did exist at Yokokawa near Nakazome village 中染村. Residents arrived here to set up reviewing stands and watch the performances.⁴² Because of unexplained difficulties, “minor festivals” were broken off for some time in Keian 2 (1649), but *dengaku* was later revived. By Tenmei 7 (1787), sources were referring to a total of over 170 “minor festivals” as having been staged throughout the ages.⁴³

After the eighteenth century, when historical records become somewhat more reliable, the *dengaku* pieces exhibited at both the eastern and western shrines seem to have duplicated much of what Tamura’s masters presented at the Mito Tōshōgū, but in a more lavish style. The “minor festival” produced by the western shrine in An’ei 10 (1781), for example, included thirty five administrators, fifty four official footmen, ten lower officials, six guards, thirty eight horses, twenty five flutists and drummers, and fourteen sentinels. These participants marched in a festive convoy carrying the “lion” heads and other masks.⁴⁴ During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries *dengaku* arts with the following names and descriptions graced the festivals.⁴⁵ Some of the arts in question were also at times classified as *kagura*, but Edo period distinctions on such matters were far from clear.

1. “Dance of eight maidens” (*chihaya yaotome* 千早八乙女). Four young dancers each wielding *suzu* and playing flutes, and drums.

38 Also Shinatsu hiko no kami 級長津彦神. See *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, p. 1007. For an attempt to reconstruct the events surrounding the early era of the festivals, see Shida 2001.

39 The parade from the western shrine precedes the one from the eastern shrine by three days. The most recent (seventeenth) “major festival” took place on 22–31 March, 2003 (See Ōmori 2005, for details). This festival included the usual masked dances of “fortifying the four directions,” “lion dances,” a dance of “sowing seeds,” a *miko* (female shaman) dance, and others, performed at five locations along the parade route. For the “minor *dengaku* festivals” held once every six years, the *mikoshi* are only taken to Hitachi Ōta shi, Baba chō.

40 *Suifu shiryō*, p. 336; *Nezame no hanashi*, reproduced in *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, pp. 48–49.

41 Honda 1996, p. 318.

42 *Suifu shiryō*, p. 302.

43 Honda 1996, p. 319; *Takaashi rikishi no men*.

44 *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, pp. 1027–30.

45 *Kanasayama dengaku ki*, in *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, pp. 1025–27. Today both the eastern and western shrines transmit only four dances apiece. Dances 2 and 4 below are shared, but performances at the eastern shrine continue with a *miko* dance and end with a dance of three demons entitled *ranjō* (乱声). Performances at the western shrine, however, continue with a dance of “sowing seeds” (*ranemaki* 種蒔) and end with a performance on stilts (no. 6 below). See Honda 1996, p. 324; Ōmori 2005, pp. 3–11.

2. “Prayers for the four directions” (*shihō kaji* 四方加持) or “Fortifying the four directions” (*shihō gatame*). The dance features the god Sarutahiko and was accompanied by flutes and drums.⁴⁶

3. Magical incantation (*jumon* 呪文). After the reading, drums and flutes provide exit music.

4. “Lion dance” (*shishi mai*). Two dancers, accompanied by flutes and drums.

5. “Lotus leaf dance” (*hasu no ha odori* 蓮葉躍). Seven dancers, accompanied by flutes, drums, scrapers (*sasara*), and threaded clappers (*binzasara* びんざさら).⁴⁷

6. “Strong man (or men) on stilts” (*takaashi rikishi* 高足力士). Acrobatics accompanied by flutes and drums.

7. *Shimeshi* しめし. Apparently a ceremony to dispatch the gods, in which the celebrant salutes the four directions.

Illustrations of the proceedings depict a parcel of seven dancers cavorting in the middle of two groups of performers sitting in single rows to the left and right.⁴⁸ Instrumentation was sumptuous. The left row includes two flutists, and several drummers: two shoulder drums (*kotsuzumi* 小鼓), one hourglass drum placed horizontally on the floor before the player (*kakko* 鞆鼓), one drum placed vertically into a stand (*taiko* 太鼓), and one large barrel drum (*ōdaiko* 大太鼓); the right row features two additional shoulder drum players. The dancers themselves include two players of scrapers (*sasara*), two of clappers strung together (*binzasara*), and three wielders of sacred spears.⁴⁹

That Kanasayama music and dance was already accounted divine and noteworthy during the Edo period can be surmised from a document from Tenmei 7 (1787) that notes that “*dengaku* has died out and is no longer transmitted today except to the shrine priests (*shin-shokukata* 神職方) of Kanasayama. Because it is so sacred, it is not passed on to anyone else.”⁵⁰ This was no doubt also true of the “rite of eight maidens” (*yaotome no gyōji* 八乙女の行事)—probably a dance modeled on the movements of rice planting, maybe identical or similar to the *yaotome odori* performed in Mito—that was apparently seen only at major festivals.⁵¹ Most other dances, however, were presented at “minor festivals” and at the Mito Tōshōgū, allowing performers to brush up on their skills and pass on dances and music to juniors.

46 Note that the headgear worn at Kanasayama by those performing the dance “fortifying the four directions” is of a pheasant (see Honda 1996, p. 325), a bird closely associated with the Sensōji, whose parishioners refused to eat it.

47 A *binzasara* consists of a series thin wooden clappers strung together. The *binzasara* of the western Kanasa shrine contains forty such clappers. The instrument is typically used in *dengaku* performances. Ōmori 2005, p. 4 identifies the “lotus leaf dance” with the dance of “sowing seeds” performed as the *dengaku* of the western Kanasa shrine. In western Japan, the eight leaves of the lotus plant were associated with the eight maidens of the *yaotome* dance from at least the thirteenth century (see Lancashire 2001/2002, p. 33). In some cases men performed the dance of “maidens.”

48 See *Kanasayama dengaku zu* 金砂山田楽図. This is an undated set of four illustrations inserted into an envelope and distributed to what was apparently a wide public. See *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, p. 70 and Honda 1996, p. 325.

49 The instrument is photographed in *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, p. 76. A description of instruments used is given in *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, p. 1025. It mentions two players of an ancient drum known as *keirōko* 鶏婁鼓, once used in court music but rare in the Edo period.

50 *Nezame no hanashi* 衾覺譚, in the possession of the National Diet Library. The relevant pages are photographed in *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, pp. 48–49.

51 Honda 1996, p. 332.

Without a doubt, the Kanasayama performances antedated the formation of Tamura's organization. Indeed, from Kan'ei 20 (1643) until the Meiji period, *dengaku* at "major festivals" was led by a "*dengaku* master" (*dengaku tayū* 田楽太夫) who assumed the surname Furukawa 古川 and in 1643 used the given name Jirōbee 次郎兵衛. Furukawa asserted that his ancestors had arrived in the area along with eighty priestly accessories from Sakamoto 坂本 in Ōmi province (today Ōtsu shi in Shiga prefecture), the site of the Hie shrine.⁵² In 1781, he lived at Nishizome village 西染村 along the Kanasayama festival parade route.⁵³ In all probability it was the Furukawa family that was referred to in Tamura's register of Kansei 2 (1790) as a house of subordinates in Nishizome village.⁵⁴ *Dengaku koji* also mentions the "*dengaku* master" Furukawa Yamashiro 古川山城 who performed the combinatory Shintō version of the Nakatomi purification at the Mito Tōshōgū and was thus certainly linked to Tamura's organization.⁵⁵

Suzuki Tango, whom Tamura names in the 1815 document cited earlier, must also have served as a local *dengaku* master and most likely functioned as a go-between for Kanasayama and Edo. The fifty two combinatory Shintō associates of whom Tamura brags may have worn formal attire and served at major and minor festivals, but local ways and old traditions were respected even after Tamura's association had been firmly established in the capital. In other words, Tamura or his Edo-based underlings do not seem to have made any attempt to export their arts to Kanasayama. The peasant Ichirōbei 市郎平, for example, still always cut down the holy bamboo that became the vessel for fetching sea water from the seashore at Mizuki village.⁵⁶ Tamura did not send one of his men to Kanasayama to perform this holy function. The "control" that Tamura maintained over Kanasayama dancers and musicians was thus at best indirect. Dancers or ritualists probably paid their yearly dues and became nominal members of Tamura's bakufu-approved association in order to fend off any possible challenge to their legitimacy. Yet such affiliation was of little consequence in shaping the arts performed or the roles they played in a festival.

Ceremonies and Arts at the Sanja Gongen in Edo

Tamura's sway over artistic matters and staffing was far more direct in Edo, where in Kansei 2 (1790) the association of combinatory Shintō numbered over twenty-one houses.⁵⁷ Tamura's first function of the year occurred on 1/5, when he and his subordinates engaged in an equestrian archery exhibit that drove out demons from the holy precincts of Sensōji.⁵⁸ Three *kagura* dances, accompanied on flutes and drums, were performed in conjunction with this archery event: a dance for "Solidifying the four directions"; an auspicious dance of the goddess Uzume no mikoto 鈿女命; and a dance of the god Sarutahiko.

52 Kikuchi 1992, pp. 18–19. Kikuchi relies on the volume *Hitachi no kuni Kita gun ritei kansū* 常陸国北郡里程間数 in the possession of the National Diet Library. He also presents a transcription of an unpublished document dating from 1714 outlining conflict regarding the scheduling of the 1643 parade.

53 For a document mentioning Furukawa see *Shinpen Hitachi no kuni shi*, vol. 2, pp. 1027–30. See also *Kanasayama no isode to dengaku*, p. 71. In earlier years Furukawa apparently lived at Hanagiyama.

54 See Hayashi 2003, p. 64.

55 Honda 1996, p. 332.

56 *Suifu shiryō*, p. 303.

57 Hayashi 2003, p. 65.

58 Matsudaira 1942, p. 372. For a detailed discussion of Sensōji performances, see Groemer 2010.

Some three months later, on 3/17–18, came the Sanja festival, the major Sanja Gongen celebration, one that honored the three mythical founders of Sensōji, the two fishermen and brothers Hinokuma Hamanari 檜前浜成 and Hinokuma Takenari 檜前竹成 and their headman Haji no Mahito Nakatomo 土師真人中知. During the seventeenth century, this festival was staged biennially, although a “minor festival” limited to temple grounds was produced in alternate years. From the late eighteenth century the festival was plagued by incessant cancellations and postponements. Whether a grand fête actually took place or not, on 3/17 Tamura and his men performed *kagura* and *dengaku* (here known as *binzasara* after the percussion instrument that accompanied it). The day’s program began with three “lion dances” and then moved to four *binzasara* dances. The two “lions,” one male and one female, saluted the four directions within the Sanja shrine hall, thereby “fortifying the land” (Figure 4), while the entire performance was designed to ensure good harvests, protect all from evil and disease, and charm the ears and eyes of spectators, divine and human.⁵⁹ Here again Tamura avoided mentioning *dengaku* in his roster of arts, in favor of a *kagura* style he claimed to monopolize.



Figure 4. The “lions” and drummer of the “Sanja festival” parade. From Matsudaira 1942, pp. 386–88.

On 6/15 Tamura and his associates again exhibited *binzasara* dances, this time in a program that featured several masked *kagura* pieces.⁶⁰ These dances and the music that accompanied them were once more based on traditions antecedent to the appearance of the association of masters of sacred dance.

The relation of the Sanja Gongen to the masters was thus as direct as could be imagined, since Tamura functioned as both as the chief priest of the shrine and the head of the masters. As a result, he and his assistants must have enjoyed considerable freedom in preserving or revising the arts exhibited to conform to their aesthetic tastes, religious sensibilities, and economic interests.

⁵⁹ Matsudaira 1942, pp. 383–84.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 408.

Ceremonies and Arts at the Chiba Myōken

The fourth set of performances that Tamura lists in many of his official registers took place in Chiba. The Chiba Myōken, long supported by the ruling Chiba family, was also called Myōkenji 妙見寺, Myōken Hongū 妙見本宮 or Chiba Daimyōken 千葉大妙見.⁶¹ It was a Shingon sect temple-shrine complex that took Myōken Bosatsu 妙見菩薩 as its main object of worship. This Bodhisattva was considered an incarnation of the North Star and, as the first god to appear in the heavens after creation, anchored the universe. Myōken Bosatsu was invoked for various apotropaic purposes. Since the name meant “heavenly sight,” this deity was said to be particularly efficacious for healing eye diseases.

The festival at which *kagura* was performed was known as “Myōken taisai” (妙見大祭; Grand Myōken Festival), though some called it “Ichigon Myōken” (一言妙見; One word Myōken), in reference to the belief that a mere one-word appeal to the Bodhisattva sufficed to have one’s prayer answered. The first festival supposedly occurred in Daiji 2 (1127), but such a dating must be taken with a large measure of salt. Later it was traditionally produced annually in the week of 7/16–22 (today from 16–22 August).⁶² In the distant past, the celebrations were said to have been performed by eight male *kagura* dancers, eight Shintō priests, and four (sic) “planting maidens” (*yaotome*), presumably *miko*. From Tenpuku 1 (1233), a parade including a boat-like float allegedly moved from the shrine to the ocean, much like the Kanasayama “festival of going to the seashore,” though in Chiba the coast lay nearby. In the early sixteenth century, the festival also included races with some 300 horses, and performances of *ennen no sarugaku* (延年の猿楽), dances offered by professional players probably as prayers for long life.

Whatever may have been true in the remote past, during the Edo period dancing and music were performed on two ship-like floats. In Enkyō 3 (1746), each vessel measured over seven meters long and four meters wide. An illustration from Kanbun 2 (1662) portrays one float known as the “Chiba boat” 千葉船 dragged by the townspeople, followed by two decorative spear-wielding Shintō priests, the *mikoshi* and more priests, two mounted warriors, and two more portable decorations on poles carried by groups of porters. The family of Narushima Shōemon 成島庄右衛門 (the name was hereditary) from the town of Chiba was appointed as festival dancers on the “Chiba boat.” In the late Edo period, this house received over two *hyō* (俵) of rice, one *bu* (分) in gold, and one hundred coppers (*mon* 文) annually from the shrine for its services. From the early eighteenth century, these funds were contributed by the Sakura 佐倉 domain, in which the shrine stood.⁶³ The “Chiba boat” and its procession was followed by another ship-float this one known as the “Yūki boat” 結城船. The Yūki boat was sponsored and paid for by the parishioners of the nearby Samukawa shrine.⁶⁴ One man led each ship-float and on the first vessel two dancers wielded a crane-like prop, accompanied by four players of flutes and drums. The Yūki boat also sported two dancers and four men wearing court garb.

In Kansei 2 (1790), Tamura recorded that he controlled sixty one houses in Shimōsa province.⁶⁵ Certainly some of these families participated in the staging of the festival. As

61 In the Meiji period, it was rebaptized Chiba Jinja. It is located in Chiba shi (Chūō ku, Innai).

62 For information on the festival, I have relied on Ozawa 2000.

63 Nakano 2009, pp. 208–11.

64 See Ozawa 2000, p. 7.

65 Hayashi 2003, p. 65.

mentioned in the earlier cited document of 1769, Chiba dance masters performed *kagura* pieces, a dance with a Shintō wand, a crow dance, and a fawn dance on the two ship-floats. In fact, programs of dances performed on the boats by dance masters from the mid eighteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries record programs of four or five pieces. The first dance was either one of fortifying the four directions or a lion dance; the latter spotlighted the auspicious crane and tortoise. In between came dances of a *kirin* (a mythical hooved creature), a dragon, a mythical lion, or the Buddhist king Udenno (or Utenno) 宇天王, who elsewhere often functioned as an appeaser and leader of a festival lion at the head of a parade.⁶⁶ These dances, performed by one or two men each, were accompanied by one flute and one drum. Sometimes the masters who danced doubled as accompanists.

The fortification of four directions, the lion dances, and the association of Udenno with lions suggest parallels with the dances performed by Tamura and his men at the Sanja Gongen, while the appearance of other creatures hint at possible links to dances performed in Sagami (see below). In any case, the archaic function of the Chiba masters as purifiers of the road over which parades advanced, something already mentioned in relation to the parade in Mito, was associated with the common appearance of “lions” at the head of processions. “Lions,” as everyone knew, frightened off all evil spirits that dared lie in the way.⁶⁷ Some of the other dances at Chiba Myōken may have derived from an older genre known as *tsuku mai* つく舞, a successor of tightrope acrobatics known as *kumo mai* 蜘蛛舞 (spider dances) popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁸ In any case, these genres again predated the appearance of Tamura’s association of dance masters.

Thus neither the dancers nor the drummers in the festival were part of the shrine’s permanent staff, but were hired for the occasion. Apparently the relation of individual masters to the shrine was merely that of a service provider. Such a position easily became a traditional vested right, but programs of the performances from different years suggest considerable fluidity in the staffing. The arts performed, however, constituted local versions of traditions extending far beyond the purview of either the Chiba Myōken or Tamura’s organization.

Ceremonies and Arts at Shrines in Sagami Province

In Sagami province (Kanagawa prefecture), by contrast, the relation of Tamura to local masters was far closer than in Chiba. Tamura’s ancestors apparently arrived in Edo from Sagami province, probably from Tamura village. Tamura retained personal connections to Sagami dance masters until the Meiji period, when the association of the masters of sacred dance was abolished. In particular, he cultivated relations with the Sagami Hagiwara 萩原 family and this family ended up bailing his association out of its financial difficulties in return for high rank within the organization.⁶⁹ In 1790, Tamura reported that ninety

66 More correctly 優填王, Skt. Udayana-rajā, a king of Kausambi, the first to have a statue of Buddha made before his death.

67 On this function, see Nakano 2009, pp. 215–18. Tamura Sawanosuke 田村沢之助, a master in Edo, also maintained in his official history that the masters provided “purification of the ways and sacred dances for large and small shrines in the Kantō area” (“Shiba machikata kakiage” 芝町方書上 4; *ibid.*, 6), or served as “purifiers of the way” in festivals of the Rokusho Myōjin and Koma Gongen (*ibid.*, 6).

68 See Nakano 2009, pp. 228–29.

69 On this issue, see Groemer forthcoming.

Sagami families residing in forty seven Sagami villages were registered members of his organization.⁷⁰ Even during the nineteenth century at least twenty four Sagami families, some of whom continue to be active as *kagura* dancers today, engaged in performances of various genres of sacred dance.⁷¹

The most imposing Sagami festival at which *kagura* was seen was the one listed by Tamura as taking place annually during the fifth month. On 5/5 eight masters of sacred dance living in Kokufu Hongō village 国府本郷村 on property granted by the Rokusho Myōjin shrine, as well as other masters in surrounding areas officiated at a sacred ceremony known as the “Tango festival.”⁷² This event, like most festivals and *kagura* performances, functioned as an appeal to the gods for good harvests and peace. It was abandoned in 1873 but revived in 1924.⁷³ The Rokusho Myōjin shrine was considered the “general” or “aggregate” shrine (*sōja* 総社) of Sagami province, but five other shrines likewise participated in this impressive event, “the grandest festival of the province.”⁷⁴ The five shrines in question were often designated by number: Ichinomiya (Samukawa shrine),⁷⁵ Ninomiya (Kawawa shrine),⁷⁶ Sannomiya (Hibita shrine),⁷⁷ Yonnomiya (Sakitori shrine),⁷⁸ and Gonomiya (Hiratsuka Hachiman shrine).⁷⁹ On the day of the festival, *mikoshi* from these five institutions were lugged up Kamisoroi yama (today in Ninomiya machi), a hill forty meters high. Here appropriate rituals took place, followed by an extravagant procession. In the earlier

70 Hayashi 2003, p. 64.

71 Hayashi 1998, p. 291 provides a listing of these families. See also Hashimoto 2004.

72 *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 304. *Tango matsuri* 端午祭 or *Tango sai*; also *Fuchū sairei* 府中祭礼 and especially after the Meiji period *Kōnomachi* 国府祭, both of which mean “festival of the provincial capital.” On this subject, see Nagata 1987, pp. 706–7.

73 Nagata 1987, p. 719.

74 *Edo machikata kakiage*, Asakusa, jō, p. 324. On the “major” or “general” shrine see *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 301; for an explanation of the term, see Nagata 1987, pp. 710–11.

75 More fully, Ichinomiya Myōjin 一之宮明神. This shrine, listed as located in Miyayama village 宮山村, Kōza county 高座郡 (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 301), is today known as the Samukawa Jinja 寒川神社 of Samukawa machi. It was evidently headed by two houses of dance masters in Tamura village, who also received income from the Rokusho Myōjin (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 347). See also *Meiji shoki no goyōdome*, p. 98 for a mention of Tamura village in Meiji 4(1871)/4 in a prefectural order abolishing the occupation of female shaman’s under Tamura’s control.

76 More fully, Ninomiya no Myōjin 二宮之明神, today known as the Kawawa Jinja 川勾神社. It was located in Ninomiya village in Yuruki county 洵綾郡 see above (today Ninomiya machi). One house of dance masters that held a position at the Rokusho Myōjin existed in Ninomiya village (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō* vol. 2, p. 290).

77 The Sannomiya Jinja 三之宮神社 (Hibita Jinja 比々多神社), was located in Sannomiya village of Ōsumi county 大住郡 (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 301), today Isehara shi. The records are confusing, but the shrine was perhaps officiated by two houses under Tamura’s control in Kamikasuya village 上糟屋村 (today Isehara shi), who officiated at the Rokusho Myōjin Festival, though a Hibita shrine also stood in Kamikasuya village itself (see *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 372). These two houses were granted income from property at the Rokusho Myōjin. It is also possible that the Hibita shrine was related to two dance masters from Shirane village 白根村 who are also listed as officiating at the Rokusho festival and received income from Rokusho shrine (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 3, p. 94).

78 The Yonnomiya Jinja 四之宮神社, today known as the Sakitori Jinja 前鳥神社, in Hiratsuka shi, was originally in Yonnomiya village of Ōsumi county (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 301). Performances were overseen by two houses of dance masters in Hiratsuka village (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 3, p. 55; Tsuruwaka Magotōji 鶴若孫藤次 and Furuya Ichidayū 古家市太夫). On Yonnomiya, see also *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō* vol. 2, p. 348.

79 The Gonomiya Jinja 五之宮神社 was in Hiratsuka Shinshuku 平塚新宿 (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, p. 301). It was also known as the Hiratsuka Hachimangū 平塚八幡宮 (now Hachiman Jinja 八幡神社), and was located in what is today Hiratsuka shi. Two dance masters under Tamura lived in Hiratsuka Shinshuku and presumably were associated with the shrine (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 3, p. 58).

mentioned document of 1769, one of Tamura’s men wrote that the masters of sacred dance had since the olden days performed on both the lower stage and the upper stage of this festival. According to a Bunka 14 (1817) document, on this day “dancers offer entertainment, an ‘inner lion dance’ (*naijishi no mai*, 内師子ノ舞) and an ‘outer lion dance’ (*gejishi no mai*, 外師子ノ舞).”⁸⁰ Today performers continue to exhibit dances of a heron, a dragon, and a “lion,” all of which are collectively known as “heron dances,” perhaps analogous to some of the arts once performed at the Chiba Myōken.⁸¹ In recent years, the dancers of the festival have been trained by the Ōhashi 大橋 and Kasadaka 笠高 houses, both of which were once Sagami-based masters of sacred dance.⁸²

On various other occasions throughout the year, the Rokusho Myōjin dance masters, in tandem with Buddhist priests attached to the shrine, also presented programs of sacred arts. On New Year’s day, Buddhist priests first prayed and chanted (*hōraku* 法樂); the dance masters then performed “twelve *kagura* pieces” (*jūniza no kagura* 十二座之神樂). On 1/17 the dance masters again exhibited *kagura* at a ceremonial archery demonstration. Then on 5/5, came the grand festivities mentioned above, in which *kagura* was performed on a boat-shaped stage and for which the dancers were awarded one *bu* of gold and 300 coppers. *Kagura* was also produced on the first day of every month, in the manner of the New Year’s performances.⁸³

The Koma Daigongen (in Ōiso of Sagami province) mentioned by Tamura in his rosters had already become a significant Kantō area shrine by the medieval period.⁸⁴ In Tenshō 19 (1591), it was granted an income of 120 *koku* of rice by Tokugawa Ieyasu, far more than the fifty *koku* allotted to the nearby Samukawa and Kawawa shrines. The shrine’s intendant temple (*bettō* 別当) was the Kōraiiji 高麗寺, a Tendai sect institution and branch of the Edo Kan’eiji 寛永寺, the Tokugawa family’s prayer hall (*kitōsho* 祈禱所) and ancestral temple (*bodaiji* 菩提寺). Once again, the provincial temple-shrine complex contained a Tōshōgū honoring Tokugawa Ieyasu.⁸⁵ Moreover, legends of the origin of Kōraiiji closely paralleled those of Sensōji, and the temple was also surrounded by three shrines known as Sanja Gongen. Whereas the Sensōji traced its beginnings to a legendary event in 628 in which fishermen pulled a tiny golden Kannon statue out of the Sumida River in Edo, the Kōraiiji located its origins in the appearance of mysterious light that gradually approached the seashore near Ōiso—again on 3/18. Once more a fisherman discovered a Kannon statue tangled up in his nets, this one of white wood. And just as in the case of Sensōji, the abode that he and the astounded villagers built became an important temple, the Kōraiiji.⁸⁶ These correspondences could hardly have been accidental. They point to ancient links between Sensōji and Kōraiiji or at the very least founding legends common to both.

Much like Sensōji, Kōraiiji sponsored two major annual festivals, one on 3/17–19 and

80 *Rokusho Myōjin no engi* 六所明神之縁起, in Nagata 1987, p. 717. The writer of this text uses the ideographs 師子 to mean what is usually written 獅子.

81 For a description of the rituals and events today and an attempt to relate them to ancient practices, see Murai 2000, pp. 207–22.

82 See Hayashi 1998, p. 284; Nagata 1987, p. 338.

83 See the Ansei 6 (1859) document included in *Ōiso machi shi*, pp. 711–12.

84 In an entry for Kenkyū 3 (1192)/5/8, the *Azuma kagami* lists three priests from the Kōraiiji and three from the Sensōji (out of a total of 105) as attending a memorial service for the deceased Goshirakawa emperor. An entry for 1192/8/9 lists the Kōraiiji among the fifteen important temples of Sagami.

85 *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, pp. 324–25.

86 For the legend of the Kōraiiji, see Imai 1961, p. 53.

another on 6/18 (today on the Sunday closest to 7/18). Each of these festivals was enacted by ten Shintō priests, probably Sagami-based members of Tamura's organization. The second celebration was known as a boat festival in which *mikoshi* were taken to the seashore at Ōiso (where the Buddha statue had supposedly been found) and loaded onto two ships.⁸⁷ Accordingly, the Kōrai-ji celebrations resembled the 3/18 Edo Sanja Festival, which likewise featured *mikoshi* loaded onto boats for a short river journey, the medieval Chiba Myōken Festival in which a boat-float was dragged from the shrine to the ocean, and the Kanasayama festivals in which *mikoshi* were hauled to the beach.

It is thus clear that the shrines of Sagami province where Tamura's men served were tethered to the Asakusa Sanja Gongen by ancient myths, historical links, family ties, and traditions of performing arts. The combination of these factors must have allowed Tamura to project his legitimacy in the area, albeit one that was mediated by powerful local families.

Conclusion

The example of the masters of sacred dance indicates that at least two levels of analysis are necessary for understanding how sacred performing arts were transmitted and maintained by Edo period religious institutions. On the one hand, specific dances, rituals, music, and other traditions must be grasped in relation to the temples or shrines that sponsored them or that supplied the occasion, venue, and religious context. On the other hand, such arts must simultaneously be examined in relation to the occupational organizations that governed the performers. These two analytical dimensions are inevitably interrelated, but the relationships may be complex, overdetermined, even contradictory.

Tamura Hachidayū's association of masters of sacred dance demonstrates that religious institutions and the performers they controlled were bound to one another on the basis of a historically shifting ensemble of forces that included family ties, historical precedent, economic connections between "buyers" and "sellers" of performances, ideological and religious factors, teacher-pupil bonds, and much else. During the Edo period, such relational elements were rarely separable. In his register of arts and holy practices, Tamura presents a portrait of his association as one in which the religious, artistic, and occupational affiliations of performers were more or less the same thing. Over the centuries he no doubt succeeded in convincing many a bakufu official and much of the public that he was in full charge of his men and the performances they gave, and that his group was firmly unified through shared religious tenets, historical precedent, and institutional structures. The bakufu must have had its own reasons for allowing him to keep asserting such a view, but it ought not to be reproduced uncritically in historical or ethnographic writing.

87 *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki kō*, vol. 2, pp. 322–23.

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