From 27 February toward the end of March, 1903, Ernest F. Fenollosa (1853-1908) was in Washington, D.C. to give a course of seven lectures on the Art and Poetry of the Far East. His draft of the fifth lecture "No," read on 12 March, with Ezra Pound’s editorial markings, became a printer’s copy for “Fenollosa on the Noh” in ‘Noh’ or Accomplishment: a Study of the Classic Stage of Japan (1916). The outline of Fenollosa’s first four lectures is introduced at the beginning of his fifth lecture (see the transcript which follows) and his sixth, “Landscape Poetry and Painting in Medieval China,” read on 17 March, has also survived in manuscript form. The pencilscripts of both lectures, together with other Fenollosa MSS., entrusted to the poet by Ernest’s widow, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, are now preserved at the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Pound changed Fenollosa’s original spelling “No” into “Noh,” presumably at the suggestion of Mary Fenollosa. In editing “Fenollosa on the Noh,” Pound took the lecture out of its serial context of oral presentation. He divided the text into five sections, omitting all the references to some sixty slides which the art historian often used as visual aids for his audience. We may well remember that Fenollosa’s “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry,” originally, was also a slide lecture, the first of the series on
the Japanese and Chinese Poetry, given at Columbia University in 1901. Fenollosa's draft, with Pound's editorial markings, was again used as a printer's copy for the famous essay.

At the end of the introductory section, Pound omitted a long paragraph in which Fenollosa praised the successful production of Long and Belasco's "The Darling of the Gods," a new drama of Japanese life, he had just seen in New York. Fenollosa apparently intended to initiate his discussion of Japan's old, lyric drama by reference to the contemporary theatrical topic. Unlike Fenollosa, who always had a keen eye to the real scenes of his time, Pound's editorial policy seems to lack concern for a socio-historical perspective, as seen in his deletion of contemporary development in the introductory section of "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry."

While ignoring some of Fenollosa's enthusiastic passages ("If, in some obscure corner of the Hellenic mountains, there lingered still a legitimate descendant of the Art of Thespis, how we should flock to study it, . . . . But how few visitors to Japan avail themselves of an opportunity to study the living analogue of Greek drama in Japan, the No."), Pound inserts his own critical comments in the very text he is supposed to be editing ("It is absurd to say that the Noh is an offshoot of Greek drama as it would be to say that Shakespeare is such an offshoot."). Some of Pound's footnotes are misleading: where Fenollosa is referring to his preceding lectures, Pound cites the author's posthumous publication.

Pound's editorial confusion is most conspicuous in the first half of Section II. Misplaced paragraphs are due partly to Fenollosa's manipulation of his earlier lecture notes: he reincorporated them into
the present draft so that some of his note papers bear three different page numbers on the same sheet. Pound had to rewrite some disorganized passages and paraphrase others which included technical details beyond his comprehension.

Pound did not bother to transcribe Fenollosa's pencilscript as a whole, but loading it with his editorial markings, insertions and deletions, left it to the printer to make out what he can. If we may give credit to the poor printer whose misreadings are limited to a dozen or so, under the circumstances, can we condone the editorial dereliction for dating the article "(? about 1906)" at the end, when the exact date is given by the author in the title itself at the very outset?

In the following transcript of Fenollosa's pencilscript, the slide captions, written in on the left margin of his notebook, are incorporated into the appropriate sections of the text. The words and passages erased or cancelled by the author himself, though sometimes it is hard to distinguish Pound's editorial deletions from Fenollosa's own, are reproduced between double vertical bars. The permission to reproduce the transcript is granted by the courtesy of Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and Mr. James Laughlin of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

NOTES

2) Folders No. 42b and No. 351.
3) Letter from Mary McNeil Fenollosa to Ezra Pound, 24 November, [1913?], Beinecke
48 Ezra Pound ed. “Fenollosa on the Noh” as It was

Library.


Lecture V. No. Washington, March 12th 1903.

Notes for Introduction

In my first lecture, I showed the Japanese people as an artistic and a poetic race, who have loved nature so passionately that they have interwoven her life, and their own, into one continuous drama of the Art of pure living.

In the second lecture I showed you something of the Five Acts\(^1\) into which this Life-drama falls, particularly as it reveals itself in the several forms of their visual arts.

In the third and fourth lectures, I went on to exhibit the universal value of this special art-life, and to explain how the inflowing of such an oriental stream has helped to revitalize Western Art, and must go on to assist in the solution of our practical educational problems.

It is now time to go back to that other key to the blossoming of Japanese genius, which I mentioned in the first lectures, under my account of the flower festivals;—namely, the National Poetry, and its rise, through the enriching of four successive periods, to a vital dramatic form in the 15th century.

Surely literature may be as delicate an exponent of a national soul, as is Art, and, as I am going to show you, there are several phases of oriental poetry, both Japanese and Chinese, which have practical significance and even inspiration for us, in this weak, transitional period of our Western poetic life.

We cannot escape, in the coming centuries, even if we would, a stronger and stronger modification of our established standards by
the pungent subtlety of oriental thought, and the condensed power of oriental form. The value will lie, partly, in relief from the deadening boundaries of our own conventions. This is no new thing. It can be shown that the freedom of the Elizabethan mind, and its power to range over all planes of human experience, as in Shakespeare, was, in part, an aftermath of a first oriental contact—in the crusades, in an intimacy with the Mongols such as of Marco Polo, in the discovery of a double sea-passage to Persia and India, and in the first gleanings of the Jesuit missions to Asia. Still more clearly can it be shown that the romantic movement in English poetry, in the later 18th century and the early 19th, was influenced and enriched, though often in a subtle and hidden way, by the beginnings of scholarly study and translation in the sphere of oriental literature. The celebrated Bishop Percy, who afterwards revived our knowledge of the medieval ballad, published early in the 1760's a first appreciative account in English of Chinese Poetry. Poets like Moore, Byron, Shelley and Coleridge became influenced by the spirit, and often by the very subject, of Persian translations; and Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" verges on the very Hindoo doctrine of Reincarnation. In these later days India powerfully reacts upon our imagination through the intimate knowledge of such a forceful writer as Mr. Kipling; and Chinese and Japanese subjects are slowly pushing their way toward the forefront of our modern fiction.

The direct influence of oriental drama upon our Western practice, if slower, has been quite as real. In the 1760's Bishop Hurd of Worcester wrote an essay on the Chinese theatre, seriously comparing it with the early Greek. A few years later Voltaire published his first Chinese tragedy, modified from a Jesuit translation, and an
independent English arrangement held the London stage down to 1824. In our present American age of a sickly melodrama and frank buffoonery, we have had many a travesty of oriental motive, as in "The Mikado"; but on last Saturday evening I saw in New York, Long's new drama of Japanese life, "The Darling of the Gods," which amazed me by its emotional truth and power. In spite of the fact that it involves a double dilution of the old Japanese Lyric Drama, first in the vulgarization of this latter into the modern popular theatre of Yedo, and second, in all sorts of anachronisms and absurdities in adapting the Japanese drama itself to American conditions;—still the earnest seriousness with which a true Japanese motive was enacted, in spite of all defects, lifted the audience quite off their feet, into depths of pure emotion which our modern plays never reach, and which led an average New York audience from the hall a hushed and spell-bound crowd, speaking in low whispers only as it descended the stairs. This was not due to any special genius on the part of Mr. John Luther Long, or of Mr. David Belasco, but to the intrinsic condensation and force of the very oriental motive which asserted itself under every hindrance of travesty. Moreover, at the close, the Japanese device of bringing upon the stage the reunited spirits of two lovers, self-slain,—a device not of the popular Yedo theatre, but only of the operatic No,—was even intensified in power by our modern mastery over electrical effect, that exhibited in pantomime the flight of restless spirits in truly Dantesque imagery, across the dimly illuminated boundaries of some formless world, and finally outlined the spirits of the reunited lovers, leaving toward each other, in white luminosity, from the depths of infinite spaces of cloud. This taste of the supernatural, done in all seriousness and dignity, which
would become travesty in any Western drama short of a miracle play, imported the very core of the old Japanese spirit-drama into modern New York, and inspired the audience as only Wagner's Valkyrie has the power to inspire.

This opens, I think, a new era in the possibilities of elevating our Western theatre through a vital incorporation of the best elements in oriental Drama; and now, I hope, you will perceive that this study of tonight is to embody no mere vague antiquarian research, but to familiarize you with a living power which is at the very point of practically inspiring and uplifting us. //How I shall use slides to-night//

Notes on the Lyric Drama of Japan, the No

Isn't it wonderful that a form of Drama, as primitive, as intense, and almost as beautiful as the ancient Greek Drama at Athens, exists yet in the world? Yet few care for it, or see it.  (*Slide 1. Greek theatre at [________]*)

In the fifth century before Christ, the Greek Drama arose out of the religious rites practised in the festivals of the God of wine. In the fifteenth century after Christ, the Japanese Drama arose out of religious rites practised in the festivals of the Shinto Gods, chiefly the Shinto God of Kasuga temple at Nara.  (*Slide 21. Ancient stage at Nara; 22. Old woman Kagura dancer*)

Both began by a sacred dance, and both soon added a sacred chorus sung by priests. The transition from mere dance and chorus to drama proper consisted for both, in evolving a solo part, whose words should alternate in dialogue with the chorus.
In both, the final form of the drama consisted of a few short scenes, in which two or three soloists acted a main theme, whose deeper meaning was interrupted by the poetical comment of the chorus. In both, the text was metrical, and involved a clear organic structure of separate lyrical units. (Slide 3. Color print; blue figure coming from green room)

In both music played an important part, both orchestral and vocal. In both action was a modification of the dance. In both, rich costumes were worn; in both, masks. The form and tradition of the Athenian drama passed over into the tradition of the ancient Roman, and died away in the early middle ages fourteen centuries ago. It is dead, and we can study it from scanty records only. (Slide 4. Greek tragic mask)

But the Japanese poetic drama is alive today, having been transmitted almost unchanged from its perfected form reached at Kioto in the fifteenth century. If, in some obscure corner of the Hellenic mountains, there lingered still a legitimate descendant of the Art of Thespis, how we should flock to study it, as we do the miracle play of Oberammergau! But how few visitors to Japan avail themselves of an opportunity to study the living analogue of Greek drama in Japan, the No.

It has been said that all later drama has been influenced by the Greek; that the strolling jugglers and contortionists that wandered in troupes over Europe in the middle ages, constitute an unbroken link between the degenerate Roman actors and the miracle plays of the church which grew into the Shakespearean drama. So also, these critics assert, just as Greek conquest gave rise to a Greco-Buddhist art in sculpture on the borders of India and China, did
Greek dramatic influence enter into the Hindoo and Chinese drama, and eventually into the No of Japan.

There is, then, beside the deeper analogy of the Japanese No with Greek plays, an interesting secondary analogy with the origin of Shakespeare's art. All three, indeed, had an independent growth out of miracle plays—the first, the plays of the worship of Bacchus, the second the plays of the worship of Christ, the third the plays of the worship of the Shinto deities and of Buddha. (Slide 51. ten old Buddhist masks; 52. Alaskan bird mask play)

The plays that preceded Shakespeare's in England were acted in fields adjoining the churches, and later in the courtyards of nobles. The plays that preceded No, and even the No themselves, were enacted in the gardens of temples, or on the dry river beds adjoining the temples, and later in the courtyards of the daimio. But the Shakespearean drama today is practically dead with us. Occasional revivals have to borrow scenery and other conditions unknown to the Elizabethan stage, and almost all continuity of 'professional' tradition has been broken. (Slide 53. Zen temple courtyard)

With the Japanese No, on the other hand, though it arose one hundred years before Shakespeare, the continuity has never been broken, and we have the same plays today enacted in the same manner as then; and even the leading actors of today are blood descendants of the very men who created this drama 450 years ago. (Slide 6. Takeyo as Kanehira, print) //Imagine having a descendant of Shakespeare today leading the primitive Shakespearean drama in a cycloramic theatre on Bankside!//

This ancient Lyric Drama is not to be confounded with the
modern realistic drama of Tokio, such as Danjuro’s.12) (Slide 7.
Danjuro) This vulgar drama is quite like ours, with elaborate stage
and scenery, almost complete absence of music and chorus, no masks,
nothing in short but realistic dramatic action.

This modern drama arose in Yedo some 200 years ago, the fifth
period in short, an amusement designed by the common people for
themselves, and was written and acted by themselves. It therefore
corresponds to Ukiyo-e in painting, and especially to the color prints;
indeed a large number of these prints reproduce characters and scenes
from the people’s theatre. (Slide 8. Kiyonobu, Tanye13), Shunyei
actor or Japanese theatre)

Thus, just as the pictorial Art of the fifth period was divisible
into two parts—that of the nobility in their castles, namely the art of
Kano and Korin, and that of the common people in printed illustra-
tion,—so the drama of the last 200 years has been twofold, that of the
lyric No, preserved pure in the yashikis of the rich, and that of the
populace, running to realism and extravagance in the street theatres.

Today, in spite of the shock and revolution of 1868, the former,
the severe and poetic drama, has been revived, and is enthusiastically
studied by cultured Japanese. The daimyos’ palaces, with their No
stages, had been destroyed, the court troupes of actors had been
dispersed. For three years after 1868 performances entirely ceased.
But Mr. Umewaka Minoru,14) who had been one of the soloists in
the Shogun’s central troupe, remembered it all in his heart and had
many stage directions and texts in MSS. (Slide 9. Minoru as
Kagekiyo, print) In 1871 he bought for a song an ex-daimio’s stage,
set it up by the Bankside of Sumida River in Tokio, and began to
train his sons; pupils and old actors flocked to him; the public began
to patronize; he bought up collections of costumes and masks as degenerate sons of lords sold off their family inheritance; and now his theatre is so thronged that boxes have to be engaged a week before, and five other theatres have been built in Tokio. Today, for the first time in 500 years, the lyric drama has been put under private ownership and on a basis of public support.

For the last twenty years I have been studying No, under the personal tuition of Mr. Umewaka and his sons, learning by actual practice the method of the singing and something of the acting; I have taken down from Mr. Umewaka's lips invaluable oral traditions of the stage as it was before 1868; and have prepared, with his assistance and that of native scholars, translations of some fifty of the texts. (Slide 10. Minoru questioned)

The purest Japanese element of the drama was the sacred dance in the Shinto temples. This was a kind of pantomime. It repeated the action of a local god on his first appearance to men. The first dance, therefore, was a God dance; the God himself danced with his face concealed in a mask. (Slide 11. Old man, Matsuri dance)

And here comes out the first difference from the Greek line of growth. There it was the chorus that danced, the god was represented by an altar. But in Japan, the dance was the solo dance of the God himself. (Slide 12. Greek chorus)

This art of dance has played a richer part in Chinese and Japanese life, as it has not in European. From prehistoric days, when men or women were strongly moved, they got up and danced. It was as natural a form of self-expression as improvised verse or song, and often conjoined with both. (Slide 13. Young girl dancing or Chinese lady dancing, Gen)
But the decorum of a growing society tended to relegate this dancing to occasions of special inspiration and to professional dancers. These occasions were roughly of two sorts—formal entertainments at Court and religious ceremonial. (Slide 141. Sanraku, Court musicians, Chinese; 142. Bugaku at Nikko) The former, which survives today in the Mikado's palace, represented the action of historic heroes, frequently warriors posturing with sword and spear, accompanied by the instrumental music of a full orchestra. The religious ceremonial was of two sorts—the Buddhist miracle plays in the early temples and the God dances at the Shinto; both as old as the first period.

The miracle plays represented scenes from the life of saints and the intervention of Buddha and Bodhisattwa in human affairs. Like the very earliest forms of the European, these were pantomimic, with no special dramatic text, except possibly the reading of appropriate scripture, and they were danced with masks. The temples of Nara are still full of these masks, which date from the eighth century. (Slide 151. Nara, 6 Buddhist masks; 152. 2 comic masks) It is clear, too, that many popular and humorous types must have been represented. And it is barely possible that these were remotely derived, through Greco-Buddhist channels, from Greek low comedy. //Account of play at Tayemadera18)\// (Slide 16. Yeishin, descent of Bosatsu, or Keion, Chiujohime)

The other occasion, religious ceremonial proper, was of two sorts: a purely Japanese root used in the Shinto worship, and a modification of Indian and Chinese used in Buddhist. The ancient Shinto dance, or pantomime, was probably, at first, a story enacted by the local spirit, as a soloist—a repetition, as it were, of the original manifestation. Shintoism is spiritism, mild, nature-loving, much like the
Greek. A local spirit appeared to men in some dramatic phase; on the spot a Shinto temple was built; and yearly or monthly rites, including pantomime, perpetuated the memory of the event. Such things happened all over the country; and thus thousands of different stories were perpetuated in the dances. Hence the wealth of primitive material. The thing can be seen today in every local matsuri. Even in great cities like Tokio, every district maintains its primitive village spirit worship, of some tutelary worthy, who enacts the old story once a year on a specially made platform raised in the street, about which the people of the locality gather. There are hundreds in Tokio alone. Every traveller in Japan has seen these local matsuri. (Slide 171. Matsuri stage or 2 old Shinto masks; 172. col. Empty matsuri stage)

//Here the god is the chief actor, sometimes accompanied by a human companion. The god always wears a mask. Thus the solo part is already established. This is different from the Greek. There the original rite was either a group of priests, or in comic sort, of goats or fauns. Out of this double choric dance to Dionysus, had to grow up the solo part, in a gradual evolution of chief chorister. But in the Japanese Shinto dance, the soloist has no chorus. His is the religious act of a spirit, though often enough turned into rude comedy.//

//But the god dance of the Shinto deity is something peculiarly Japanese, and seems to be quite untainted with Buddhist thought. It represents the action of simple nature spirits, ghosts of trees, of mountains, of rivers; ghosts that appeared to men in the forms of ancient hunters or pilgrims, and haunted certain sacred localities, something like the local hero gods of ancient Greece.//
This Shinto dance, the root of the Japanese drama, takes the form of a dignified pantomime, not an abstract kicking or whirling, not a mere dervish frenzy, but full of meaning, representing divine situations and emotions, but artistically with restraint and much chastening of conventional beauty, making every posture of the whole body—head, trunk, hands, and feet—harmonious as line to the eye, and all the transitions from posture to posture, harmonious and graceful in time. A flashlight glimpse across such a dance is akin to sculpture. But the motion itself, like a moving picture in colors, is more like the art of music. (Slide 18. col. print. blue figure dancing before Suzuki) An orchestral accompaniment of flutes, drums, and cymbals, slow, fast, low, passionate, or accented, furnishes a natural background. Akin to these are the moving street pageants, which are like early European, or today in Catholic countries. (Slide 191. Kamo dashi; 192. Spanish Christian procession)

Such primitive Shinto dances are to be seen today in every Japanese village and in every ward of the cities. It is generally pantomime without text.

Another ancient form of the dance was practised in the Buddhist temples. This became a kind of miracle play in pantomime, the subjects being taken from scriptures, or the lives of the saints. Masks were worn here, too. This was like the Christian miracle play of the middle ages, only without texts. //Account of Tayemadera play//

Thus the three dance roots, all belonging to the first period, are, in the order of their influence, (1) the Shinto god dance, (2) the warrior court dance, (3) the Buddhist sacred pantomime.

The next stage of evolution was to add a text for chorus to be sung during the Shinto sacred dance and this arose through the
universal love of the Japanese for poetry, as I showed you in the first lecture. This was often sung to accompaniment of the lute. *(Slide 20. Oji maples or girl with samisen)*

In the first of the five periods, Japanese lyric poetry reached its height. It was quite different from Chinese, the language being polysyllabic, the sentences long and smooth, and the thought not strong and terse, but gently contemplative.  //I want to give you some examples from Manyoshu—by the great poet Hitomaro. It is a short stanza of 5 lines—the number of syllables in each being 5—7—5—7—7—No rhyme, but rich in sound—Describe character of Manyoshu verse.//

As the old Chinese court dances became modified in the aristocratic life of the second period, it was natural that lovers of such poetry should begin to add poetical comment to the entertainment.

//Now, about the year 900, end of 9th century, when the capital had been removed to Kioto, this long, endless, stronger form of poetry had come to [---] and a terse stanza became almost universal probably from the influence of condensed Chinese poetry. This corresponds to the second period in Art. Here the syllabication is 7—5—7—5—7—5—7—7, in which the last forms a kind of unifying conclusion. In no case is there rhyme, another great difference from Chinese. It is all blank verse. But in rendering into English, our ear demands rhyme—several examples of Tanka—.//

Now in this same 9th C., the passion for recomposing and reciting this Japanese poetry became so powerful with all the educated classes, especially the cultured aristocracy of the Fujiwara nobles at Kioto, men and women meeting on equal terms, that the old court entertainments of dance and music had to be modified to admit the
use of these poetic texts. (Slide 21. Nobuzane group or temple gallery or Kasuga Takachika, ladies)

At first, the nobles themselves, at their feasts, or at court ceremonies, sang these songs in unison, which they came to compose in harmony with the occasion. It was only in step to compose songs which were appropriate to the dances, and another for the chorus of nobles to pass over to a trained chorus of court musicians. (Slide 22. Kiuhaku, Chinese ladies) Thus by the 9th C. there was a music department in the court, with a minister at the head which had two divisions: to compose the texts and to compose the music and dances. In such a stage the old Chinese subjects fell into the background, and new, live subjects, of Japanese historical interest, or of more national and lyric nature, were substituted.

Thus arose the combined court entertainment called Saibara, which ceased to be practised after the 12th C., probably, and most details of it are hopelessly lost, but fortunately a few texts still remain from a manuscript collection compiled about the year 900. The music and dance are utterly lost, except in so far as we can discern a trace of what they must have been, in the later developed practices of the Nō. For it is interesting to know that the very names of some of the pieces in Saibara are identical with those five centuries later in Nō.

These Saibara pieces are very short, much like the lyric poems of the day, and they are often so lyrical, or so personal, as hardly to suggest how they may have been danced. It is also unknown whether these brief texts were repeated over and over, or at intervals, during the long dance, or whether they were a mere introduction to the dance, which greatly elaborated their thought.

Examples
Though the River of the Swamp-field be so shallow as to have the sleeve just touch it;—*hare*!—though it be so shallow, yet the lord in the Capital of our country is making a high bridge cross over it, —there—*aware*?—there! Well! Ya! *aware*!—he is making a high bridge cross over it. (*Slide 23. Kunisada, poet, iris, and bridge*)

1. Takasago no
   Sai-sa-go no
   Takasago no,
2. O-no-ye ni tateru
   Shiratama-tsubaki
   Tama-yanagi!
3. Sore mo ga to,
   San(u) mashi mo gato,
   Mashī mo gato,—
4. Neri wo sami wo no
   Miso-kake ni sen(u)
   Tama-yanagi!
5. Nani-shi ka mo,
   San(u) nani-shi kamo,
   Nani-shi kamo,—
6. Kokoro mo mada-i
   Kenu, yuri bana no,
7. Kesa sa(yi) tarū
   Hatsu bana ni
   Awamashi mono wo,
   Sayi-yuri bana no.

O you white-gemmed camellia!
O you jewel willow!
Who stand together on the Point of Takasago's laughing sand
This one, since I want to get her for mine,
That one, too, since I want to get her for mine,—
O you jewel willow!
I will make you a thing to hang my cloak on,
With its tied-up strings, with its deep-dyed strings.
Ah! what I have done?
There, what is this I am doing?
O What am I to do?
Perhaps it may be that even my soul has been lost!
O that I might have met
Of the lily flower,
The first flower which blossomed this morning,
Have met
of the Lily flower,
That little lily flower
The Lily flower! (*Slide 25. 2 girls hiding in iris*)
But this new combination of song and dance soon spread from
the court ceremonies to the very religious rites of the God dances in
the Shinto temples, but not to the Buddhist, which were too much
under the influence of Hindu and Chinese thought to care for Japa-
nese verse. But in Shinto, the subject was already pure Japanese and
fit for Japanese texts; and by the end of the 9th century these too
were composed. They were called Kagura. Now it was not long
before, in some of the thousand Shinto matsuris, God-dances, going
on all over the land, the thought come to the priests to sing a
poem concerning the subject of the dance. By the ninth century,
the second period, this custom had become common in the great
Shinto festivals, in the Mikado's private chapel, and at Kasuga.
(Slide 26. Kagura House, Nikko, or Kasuga stage)

The texts were sung by a trained chorus; and here is a second
difference from the line of Greek advance. There the chorus which
sang also danced. Here the chorus did not dance or act, but was
merely contemplative, sitting at the side. (Slide 27. Shinto Kagura
priestesses or on Fuji or Greek chorus kneeling)

A few examples of these ancient Shinto texts, called Kagura,
have come down to us. They are not exactly prayers; they are often
lovely poems of nature; for, after all, these Shinto gods, like the Greek
deities, were a harmless kind of nature spirit, clinging to grottoes,
rivers, trees, and mountains. These texts are group of
lines of syllables. But a peculiarity is that they are
always double, like the Greek strophe and antistrophe. They were
probably sung by a double chorus, and this is doubtless the basis of
alternation or chorus dialogue.

Kagura, sung by priestess/chorus of her wand:
As for this mitengura,
As for this mitengura,
It is not mine at all;
It is the mitengura of a god,
Called the Princess Toyooka,
Who lives in heaven,
The mitengura of a god,
The mitengura of a god. (*Slide 28. Kagura priestess*)

O how I wish in vain that I could turn myself into a
mitengura,
That I might be taken into the hand of the Mother of the
gods,
That I might come close to the heart of a god,
close to the heart of a god!\(^{19}\)

We have now come to the point where we can deal with this mass of playwriting as literature. Its finest parts are in verse; ordinary conversations often lapse into prose. The chorus is always verse. In the verse there is practically no variety of metre, except irregularities. It is all still 7 and 5, making up a line of 12 syllables, or 14 musical beats. This is therefore a kind of running blank verses which can keep on for indefinite passages. Monotony is varied by occasionally interchanging the 7 and 5 stress, as the first part of the line. Occasionally we find a line of 2 sevens, but this only fills out the musical measure of 7 bars of double time.

It thus appears that the first period of Japanese civilization supplied the chance element for the later *No*, and that the second period supplied the beginning of the literary texts. (*Slide 29. time chart*)

The third period, at the end of the twelfth century came in with the rise of the military classes, supplied naturally a new range of dramatic motives. The land became full of wild achievement, of knight-errantry, of a passionate love for individuality, however hum-
ble. (Slide 30. Keion flight\textsuperscript{20} enlarged; or col. photo of warriors)

The old court customs and dances of the supplanted nobles were kept up solely in the peaceful enclosures of the Shinto temples. New forms of entertainment arose. Buddhism threw away scholarship and mystery, and aimed only at personal salvation. Itinerant monks scoured the country, as in contemporary Europe, carrying inspiration from house to house. (Slide 31. begging priests)

Thus arose a semi-epic literature, in which the deeds of martial heroes were compressed into several great cycles of legend, like the Carolingian and the Arthurian in Europe. Such were the Heike epic, the Soga cycle, and a dozen others. Episodes from these were sung by individual minstrels to the accompaniment of a lute. (Slide 32. col. photo, great warriors)

Now one of the most important effects of this new epic balladry was largely to widen the scope of motives fit for plays. (Slide 33. col. photo from scene)

Another movement, on the side of comedy, was a growing up in the country of farmers' festivals, on the spring sowing of the rice, and the autumn reaping. These were at first mere buffoon entertainments, or gymnastic feats got up by the villagers to amuse themselves. It was called Dengaku, or rice-field music. I saw this in Kioto in 1896.\textsuperscript{21} //We have an amusing account in an ancient novel of how an imperial prince saw one of these shows by chance. It is worth translating. It happened in the year//

After this, professional troupes of Dengaku jugglers and acrobats were kept by the lords in their palaces, and eventually by the Buddhist and Shinto temples, in order to attract crowds to their periodic festivals. Such professional troupes began to add to their stock of enter-
tainments, rude country farces, at first bits of coarse impromptu repartee. They consisted of tricks played by rustics upon each other, and they were probably not out of harmony with some of the Shinto dances, grotesque and comic. (Slide 34. Nobuzane, priests expositulating; 34\textsuperscript{2}. bufoon actor) Somewhere about the 12th and 13th C, these two elements of comedy—the rustic and the sacred—combined at the Shinto temples, and actors were trained as a permanent troupe. Such farces are Kiogen. (Slide 35. 6 Jizo.) It was only a step to unite for this Dengaku troupes of Shinto dancers to advance to the incorporation of more tragic subjects, selected from the episodes of the balladry. This took place in the later 14th century, towards the end of the third period. The God dancer now sometimes became a human, the hero of a dramatic crisis—sometimes a woman even, interchanging texts in dialogue with the chorus, just as the two ancient Shinto choruses in the Kagura had done with each other. (Slide 36. col. print. girl standing before 2)

But it was not till the fourth period of Japanese culture, when in the early fifteenth century, a new Buddhist civilization, based on contemplation and poetic insight into nature had arisen, that the incipient Japanese drama, growing up in the Shinto temples, could take on a moral purpose and a psychologic breadth that should expand it into a vital drama of character. (Slide 37. time chart or serious Buddhist thought as of Jasoku Shaka or Sesshiiu’s Jurojin) In this new form, the best of old Japanese tradition and form, culled from the 3 earlier periods, was preserved and purified: the Shinto God-dance, the lyric form of court poetry, the country farces, and a full range of epic incident.

The change came in this way. The Zen priests summoned up
to Kioto the Dengaku troupe from Nara, and made it play before the Shogun. The head actor of this Nara troupe took the new solo parts, and greatly enlarged the whole scope of the music and of the acting. During the lifetime of his son and grandson, the creation of hundreds of new plays went on, quite rivalling the sudden growth of the Elizabethan drama from Sackville, through Nash and Green, to Marlowe and Shakespeare. (Slide 38. view of Kioto)

It is a question how far these three men, Kwan, Zei, and On, were the creators of the texts of the new dramas, and how far the Zen priests. The lives of the former are even more obscure than Shakespeare's. (Slide 39. Kanzei standing as iris)

No full account exists of their work. We have only glimpses from contemporary notebooks of the great excitement caused by their irregular performances. A great temporary circus was erected on the dry bed of the Kamo river, with its stories divided into boxes for each noble family, from the Emperor and Shogun downward. (Slide 40. dry bed of Kamo) Great priests managed the show, and used the funds collected for building temples. The stage was a raised open circle in the centre, reached by a long bridge from a dressing-room outside the circus. (Slide 41. circus audience about wrestlers)

We can now see why, even in the full lyric drama, the God dance remains its central feature. All the slow and beautiful postures of the early dramatic portion invariably lead up to the climax of the hero's dance just as the Greek dramas had to be planned for the chorus and dances. This often comes only at the end of the second act, but sometimes also in the first. Most plays have two acts. During the closing dance the chorus sings its finest passages, though it will have been already engaged many times in dialogue with the
Ezra Pound ed. “Fenollosa on the Noh” as It was

soloists. (*Slide 42. white hair god with fan*) Its function is poetical comment, and it carries the mind beyond what the action exhibits, to the core of the spiritual meaning. The music is simple melody, hardly more than a chant, accompanied by drums and flute. There is thus a delicate adjustment of half a dozen conventions, appealing to the eye, ear, and mind, which produces an intensity of feeling such as belongs to no mere realistic drama. (*Slide 43. col. print, red fan dancing before 5*) The audience sits spellbound before the tragedy, bathed in tears; but the effect is never one of realistic horror, rather of a purified and elevated passion which sees divine purpose under all violence. (*Slide 44. 3 gods dancing before cherry*)

The Beauty and Power of *Noh* is its concentration. Every element—costume, motion, verse, and music—unite to produce a single clarified impression. Each drama embodies some primary human relation or emotion, and the poetic sweetness or poignancy of this is carried to its highest degree by carefully excluding all such obtrusive elements as realism and vulgar sensation demand. The emotion is always fixed upon idea, not upon personality. (*Slide 45. col. print, woman and blue spirit at corner*) The solo parts express great types of human character, derived from Japanese history. Now it is brotherly love, now love to a parent, now loyalty to a master, loyalty to avenge a dead master, love of husband and wife, of mother for a dead child, or of jealousy, or anger, of self-mastery in battle, of the battle passion itself, of the clinging of a ghost to the scene of its sin, of the infinite compassion of a Buddha, of the sorrow of unrequited love. Some one of these intense emotions is chosen for a piece, and, in it, elevated to the plane of universality by the intensity and purity of its treatment. Thus it became a storehouse of history, and a great moral
force for the whole social order of the Samurai. *(Slide 46<sup>1</sup>. Kagekiyo standing; Slide 46<sup>2</sup>. col. print, 2 spirits standing)*

After all, the most striking thing about these plays is their marvellously full grasp of spiritual beings. More heroes are ghosts in some sorts than men in the flesh. The creators of these were great psychologists. In no other drama does the supernatural play such a great and such a natural part. What types of ghosts we see, and what ways in which character operating through conditions of the spirit life has changed them! Bodhisattwa, deva, elementals, animal spirits, hungry spirits or preta, devils of cunning, malice or rage, dragon kings from the water world, spirits of the moonlight, the souls of flowers and trees, essences that live in wine and fire, the semi-embodiment of a thought; all these come and move before us in dramatic types. *(Slide 47. Manzaburo<sup>22</sup> as devil woman)*

These types of character are rendered particularly vivid to us by the sculptured masks. Spirits, women, and old men wear masks; other humans do not. For the 200 plays now extant, nearly 300 separate masks are necessary in a complete list of properties. Such variety goes far ahead of the Greek types. *(Slides 48<sup>1</sup> and 48<sup>2</sup>. 6 masks, devil; 12 masks)* Immense vitality is given to a good mask by a great actor. He acts up to it till it seems alive. Such a mask seems to show a dozen turns of emotion. *(Slide 49. Kanze as woman spinning)*

The costumes are less carefully individualized. For the hero parts, especially for spirits, they are very rich, of wonderful gold brocades and soft floss-silk weaving, or of Chinese tapestry stitch, and are very costly. In Tokugawa days every rich daimio had his own stage, and complete collection of properties. *(Slide 50. print,
2 figures with fans)

The dancing is wonderful—a succession of beautiful poses which make a rich music of lines. The whole body acts together, but with dignity. Great play is given to the sleeve, which is often tossed back and forth, or raised above the head. The fan also plays a great part, serving for cup, paper, pen, sword, and a dozen other imaginary stage properties. *(Slide 51. print, Yugao with sleeve)*

The discipline of the actor is a moral one. He is trained to revere his profession, to make it a sacred act thus to impersonate a hero. He yields himself up to possession by the character. He acts as if he knew himself to be a God. After a performance he is generally quite exhausted. //Look at beauty of face, my teacher and great actor of present day.// *(Slide 52. Takeyo)*

In “Dojoji” a girl is in love with a priest, who flees from her and takes shelter under a great bronze temple bell, which falls over him. Her very force of desire turns her into a dragon, she bites the top of the bell, twists herself about the bell seven times, spits flame from her mouth, and lashes the bronze with her tail. Then the bell melts away under her into liquid bronze, and the priest she loves dies in the molten mass. *(Slide 53. print, red-haired, looking from under cloth)*

In “Kumasaka”, the future warrior, Yoshitsune, fights a nest of fifteen giant robbers in the dark. They fight with each other also. One by one, and two by two, they are all killed. At one time all are dancing in double combats across stage and bridge. The *Nō* fencing with spear and sword is superb in line. In the conventional *Nō* fall, two robbers, facing, who have killed each other with simultaneous blows, stand for a moment erect and stiff, then slowly fall over backward, away from each other, as stiff as logs, touching the stage at the
same moment with head and heel. (*Slide 54. print, many Yamabushi*)

An interesting ghost, taken from the Epic cycle of the “Yoritomo” wars, is the play of “Atsumori”.23) Atsumori was a young noble of the Heike family who was killed in one of Yoshitsune’s decisive battles. But let the priest who opens the first scene tell the story: (*Slide 55. 2 prints, red and green*)

“I am one who serves the great Bishop Honen Shonin in Kurodani temple. And that little one over there is the child of Atsumori, who was killed at Ichinotani. Once when the Shonin was going down to the Kamo river, he found a baby about two years old in a rattan basket under a pine tree. He felt great pity for the child, took it home with him, and cared for it tenderly. When the boy had grown to be ten years old and was complaining the fact that he had no parents, the Shonin spoke about the matter to an audience which came to his preaching. Then a young woman came up, and cried excitedly, “This must be my child.” Thus on further enquiry he found it was indeed the child of the famous Atsumori. Now the child, having heard of all this, is most desirous to see the image of his father, even in a dream, and he has been praying devoutly to this effect at the shrine of Kamo Miojin for seven days. Today the term is up for the fulfilment of his vow, so I am taking him down to Kamo Miojin for his last prayer—Here we are at Kamo. Now, boy! Pray well!” (*Slide 56. photo, scenery*)

During his prayer the boy hears a voice which tells him to go to the forest of Ikuta; and thither the priest and the boy journey. Arriving, they look about at the beauty of the place, till sudden nightfall surprises them. (*Slide 57. Scenery of huts in valley*)

“Look here, boy, the sun has set! What, is that a light yonder?
Perhaps it may be a house? We will go and take lodging there.”

All this time a straw hut has been set at the centre of the back of the stage. The curtain in front of it is now withdrawn, and the figure of a very young warrior is disclosed, in mask, and a blue, white, and gold dress. (Slide 58. Takeyo in costume)

He begins to speak to himself:

“Gowun! Gowun! The five possessions of man—are all hollow. Why do we love this queer thing—a body? The soul which dwells in agony flies about like a bat under the moon. The poor bewildered ghost that has lost its body whistles in the autumn wind.”

They think him a man, but he tells them he has had a half-hour’s respite from Hell. He looks at the boy, who rushes to seize him, wistfully, and cries. “Flower-child of mine, left behind like a pet pink in the world, how pitiful to see you in those old black sleeves!”

Then the spirit gets up and dances with restraint, while the chorus chants the martial scene of his former death.

“Rushing like two clouds together they were scattered in a whirlwind.”

Suddenly he stops, looks off stage, and stamps! shouting:

“Who is that over there? A messenger from Hell?”

“Yes, why do you stay so late? King Emma is angry.” (Slide 59. warrior dancing with spear)

Then the grim warriors from Hell rush across the stage like Valkyrie, and Atsumori is forced to fight in a tremendous mystic dance with a spear against them. (Slide 60. Nobusane, battle in hell) This is a vision transferred to earth of his torment. Exhausted and bleeding he falls, and the hell fires vanish, and crying out, “O how shameful that you should see me thus,” he melts away
from the frantic clutches of the weeping boy.

Nishikigi

But the most weird and delicately poetic piece is "Nishikigi", of which the hero and heroine are the ghosts of two lovers who had died a hundred years before, without meeting, and now are brought together in a hillside grave by the power of a priest. Action, words, and music are vague and ghostly, made up of shadows. The lover, as a young man, had stood before the girl's door every night for 3 years, and she had refused to see him. Then he died from exhaustion, and she, repenting of her harshness to him, died too, and was buried in the same tomb.

The play opens with the entrance of a travelling priest, who has wandered to the ancient village of Kefu in the far north of the island. There coming down the old street appear this pair of what he takes for villagers in antiquated dress. They sing together, as if muttering to themselves:

"We are being tangled up—whose fault is it, dear?—tangled up as the grass patterns are tangled in this coarse cloth, or that insect which chooses to live and chirrup in dried seaweed. We do not know where to dry our tears in the undergrowth of this eternal wilderness. We neither wake nor sleep, and passing our nights in a struggle, which after all is only a vision, what are these scenes of spring to us? This thinking in sleep of some one who has no thought for you, is it more than a dream? But this is, doubtless, the natural way of love. In our hearts there is much, in our bodies nothing. We do nothing at all. Only the waters of the river of tears flow quickly."
Then the priest says:

"Strange! Seeing these town people here. I might suppose them a married pair, and what the lady gives herself the trouble of carrying might be a piece of cloth woven from birds' feathers, and what the male has is a painted stick. What queer merchandise!"

Then gradually he gets from them the story of the ancient pair who once lived in this village; one who offered the stick 1,000 nights, and the other kept on weaving. Such articles have become products of the village.

On further pressing, they tell him of an old grave among the hills, where the man and his sticks were buried. The priest says he must see it, and they offer to guide him.

Then the chorus for the first time sings:

"The couple passing in front and the stranger behind, having spent the whole day until dusk, pushing aside the rank grass from the narrow paths about Kefu—Where, indeed, for them is that Love-grave? O, you man there, cutting grass upon the hill, please tell me clearly how I am to get on further. In this frosty night, of whom shall we ask about the dews on the wayside grass?"

Then the hero, the man's ghost, breaks in for a moment.

"O, how cold it is in these evening dusks of autumn!"

And the chorus resumes:

"Storms, fallen leaves, patches of the autumn showers, clogging the feet, the eternal shadow of the long-sloped mountain; and, crying among the ivies on the pine tree, an owl!

(Now literal)

And, as for the love-grave, dyed like the leaves of maple and like the orchids and chrysanthemums which hide the mouth of a
fox's hole, leaving behind them the saying that this is just it, they have slipped into the inside of the cave; there the couple have vanished into the Love-grave."

After an interval, for the changing of the spirits' costumes, the second act begins. The priest cannot sleep in the frost, and thinks he had better pass the night in prayer.

Then the spirits in masks steal out, and in mystic language, which he does not hear, thank him for his prayer, and say that the love promise of incarnations long gone is now just realized, even in dream.

The priest: "How strange! That place, which seemed like an old grave, is now lighted up inside; and in the midst it is like a human dwelling, where persons are talking and setting up looms and painted sticks. It is like a house-furnishing of old times—it must be an illusion!"

Then follows a wonderful loom song and chorus, comparing the sound to the clicking of crickets, and a vision comes of the old story, and the chorus sings that "their tears had become a color."

"But now they shall see the secret bride-room."

The hero: "And we shall drink the cup of marriage this evening."

Chorus: "O how glorious the sleeves of the marriage dance which sweep in snow whirls. . . . .

But now the wine cup of the night-play is reflecting in shame the first hint of dawn. Perhaps we shall feel awkward when it becomes really morning. And like a dream which is just about to break, the stick and the cloth are all breaking up, and the whole place has turned into a deserted grave on a hill, where morning
winds are blowing through the pines.”

NOTES


4) “Even Wordsworth, our seer, could recall it as but a dim, formless glory. [He could not see that it is this very life of today which is immortal!”

“A poem by Wordsworth is no less delicate a flower than the daffodil it immortalizes.”


5) Richard Hurd (1720–1808), The Epistle of Horace to Augustus, with an English
Commentary and Notes "to which is added, a Discourse concerning poetical Imitation," 1751. Murakata, REL, op. cit., pp. 131–3.


8) A romantic, two-hour- and-half long melodrama, set in ancient Japan. It was produced first at Washington, 17 November, 1902, Blanche Bates and George Arliss playing the leads, and was brought to the Belasco Theater, New York, 3 December, running for 168 performances, and a revival in 1914.


10) The traditional passion play given at the Upper Bavarian village every ten years since 1634.

11) Umewaka Takeyo (Rokuro), later Minoru II (1878–1959). The second son of Umewaka Minoru (see n. 14) who taught Fenollosa utai (*No* singing).

12) Ichikawa Danjuro IX (1838–1903). Fenollosa saw the famous Kabuki actor, visiting him at the green room in April, 1897.

13) The type of early *ukiyo-e* prints in which orange and other light colors are added by hand on the monochrome-printed foundation.


15) Fenollosa had weekly lessons from Umewaka Minoru and his pupils for four months from 13 February, 1883. He resumed the study of *No* in the fall of 1898, after his return to Tokyo, regularly attending Umewaka's monthly performances and taking lessons from Minoru and Takeyo.


17) Nineteen full translations (Matsukaze, Hajitomi, Kinuta, Nishikigi, Yoro, Senju, Semimaru, Youchi Soga, Ikuta Atsumori, Yugio Yanagi, Kanchira, Kakitsubata, Ashikari, Hatoromo, Kagekiyo, Adachigahara, Chiorio, Genjo, and Awoi no Uye), fourteen outlines (Shunkan, Koi no Omoni, Aoi no Uye, Funa Benkei, Tsuchigumo, Hashi Benkei, Kinuta, Hanagatami, Makura Jido, Kanawa, Shunyei, Hajitomi, Kusui no Tsuyu, and Shari) and two kyogen (Fumon Zato and Kazumo) are extant among the Fenollosa Papers at the Beinecke Library.

18) Fenollosa apparently saw the annual festival procession, enacting the Descent of Amitabha and Twenty-five Bodhisattvas to welcome the Princess Chiuojohime into the
Western Paradise, at Tayema-dera temple, Nara, during his visits to the area in the 1880s.

19) Fenollosa took the samples of Saibara and Kagura from Imai Kakuzan, Kagura Saibara Tsukai (1900) ("No Notebook, No. 2," Beinecke Library).

20) "Flight of the Court," scene of the burning of the Sanjo Palace, Heiji Monogatari Emaki, attrib. to Keion (actually Keinin), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

21) On the Jizo Bon Festival, 23 August, 1896, Fenollosa saw acrobatic lion dance and other comic dances with drums and painted sticks at Kozan-ji temple, Kyoto (Mary Fenollosa's diary).

22) (1868-1946). Eldest son of Umewaka Minoru and leading No actor of his age.

23) Actually, "Ikuta Atsumori".