

歌舞伎の女形

上方から江戸へ

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平成15年1月3日から9日まで、本科学研究費補助金による研究の一環として、ロンドンに調査研究のための出張を実施した。ロンドン大学のアンドリュー・ガーストル教授の指示のもとに、同大学のアラン・カミングス講師と面談、欧米の日本演劇研究者の最新の研究成果について情報提供を受けるとともに、標記の共同研究を4日間にわたって行った。次ページ以下の論文は、その成果である。

本稿は平成7年9月、ロンドン大学SOASで開催された「関西研究集会」で武井が行った研究発表の、日本語の発表原稿をもとにしている。今回の共同研究では、その英訳を完成することを目的とした。

武井が日本語で執筆した発表原稿を、アラン・カミングスがあらかじめ英訳。それをもとに歌舞伎の専門用語をどのように訳すべきかについて、研究と討議を重ねた。本稿では「茶屋のかか」を「tea house madam」、「役者評判記」を「actor critique」と訳している。日本語の現代文のみでなく、古語で書かれた引用資料の文章も英訳したため、作業は難行した。とくに引用の資料のタイトルを英訳すべきだというカミングスの主張があり、資料タイトルをローマ字で表記した後に、その意味を英訳して付すことにした。そのためタイトルの意味を明らかにするという作業を行う必要が生じた。『昔々物語』を「Tales of long long ago」と訳すのは妥当だろうが、『役者友吟味』を「Friendly investigations into actors」、『役者箱伝授』を「Treasure chest of actors' secret arts」と訳すのは苦しい。もっと苦しい訳もあるが、それは本稿で見ていただきたい。

英語圏の日本文学研究者にとっては、タイトルが単にローマ字で表記されているだけでは、内容が見当もつかない。われわれ日本人はタイトルに書かれた漢字から、その内容の情報をまず、無意識のうちに得ているのである。たとえびたりと収まる訳語が見つからなくとも、多少なりともタイトルの含意を提供することは必要と考えて、本稿では英訳の提供を試みている。

アラン・カミングスによる、この資料タイトル英訳の作業の提唱は、日本人研究者武井の盲点をつくものであった。普段われわれは資料の表題の意味を、自明のこととして深く考えないことがある。しかし漱石の「坊っちゃん」が、乳母の「清」の言葉だということに気がつけば、作品の読み方に新しい側面が開けるのである。タイトルの意味は、内容に深くかかわっている。この認識を新たにすることを、今回の国際コラボレーションの第一の成果として、報告しておきたい。

なお、本稿では執筆者を武井協三、翻訳者をアラン・カミングスとして末尾に記しているが、英文の本稿は、両者の共同執筆ともいふべきものであることをお断りしておく。

The Onnagata in Kabuki: from Kamigata to Edo

Takei Kyôzô

As you are aware, there are no actresses in Kabuki. All female parts are played by the female role specialists known as *onnagata*. Why did Kabuki come to adopt this seemingly unnatural form, instead of using actresses? The usual explanation is as follows. In 1629, the Tokugawa Bakufu barred women from appearing on the stage, on the grounds that they were having a deleterious effect upon public morality. From that time on, male actors also had to play female roles, and thus the *onnagata* system developed.

This explanation may be partly correct, in as far as it applies to just Kabuki. However, a moment's thought will reveal that actresses are also absent in the medieval performing arts of Noh and Kyogen. The female roles are played by men. This situation had already developed long before the Bakufu issued its proclamation barring women from the stage. In short, *onnagata* exist in Noh and Kyogen totally independently of any proclamation by the Tokugawa Bakufu.

If we return our thoughts to Kabuki we will recall the famous fact that Izumo no Okuni, who is known as its founder, appeared on stage dressed in men's clothing. In this case we have a woman impersonating a man. But that is not all - in the Kabuki of Okuni's time, men also appeared in women's clothes.

An early commentary on Kabuki, the Baigyoku-bon edition of *Kabuki no Sôshi* (Storybook of Kabuki) states that,

Now in this strange world of ours, women ape men, and men dress as women and as tea-house madams, smirking coquettishly.¹

The *Razan Sensei Monjû* records that,

Men dress in women's clothing, and women dress in men's clothing.²

Both of these texts date from before the Bakufu proclamation of 1629, and describe Kabuki in its very earliest days. In other words, Kabuki male actors dressed as women even before the Bakufu proclamation. Thus, saying that *onnagata* appeared after actresses had been barred from the stage, does not fully explain the reasons for the development of the *onnagata*.

I myself do not yet have an adequate explanation as to why the *onnagata* appeared in Kabuki. However we can be sure that it was not solely because of any particular Bakufu proclamation. I believe that this is a question that needs to be considered through the whole of Japanese, indeed world, theatrical history. Torigoe Bunzo, the curator of the Theatre Museum at Waseda University offers the following view to explain why performers had to be male,

As a rule in the performing arts in Japan, men are the actors. This is also reflected in the *onnagata* of Kabuki. In Japan, the gods were perceived as being male, and they were summoned to appear during religious rituals by female *miko* (priestesses / mediums). The god would then possess and reside in the body of the *miko*, in other words the woman, who had summoned him. Then it would be the turn of a male performer to summon up the god from the body of the *miko* during the dramatic performances associated with the ritual. In other words, a male deity is summoned by a woman, and after possessing the woman's body is again summoned up by a man.

¹ *Kabuki Sôshi* (Storybook of Kabuki), manuscript in Shôchiku Otani Tôshokan, Tokyo, no modern print edition.

² In *Razan Sensei Monjû* (Collection of Hayashi Razan's works), vol. 2, p217.

I do not know whether this theory is correct or not. However, I would like to take this opportunity to point out that, if we wish to understand the question of the *onnagata*, then, at the very least, we must also look at it from these kinds of folklore, or psychological / sociological standpoints.

I would now like to move on to my main theme, that of the movement of *onnagata* actors from the Kamigata area to Edo.

During the Edo Period, Kabuki was performed very extensively throughout Japan. It goes without saying that it reached its zenith in Kyoto and Osaka, ie Kamigata, and in Edo. However, it has long been said that Edo gave birth to extremely few *onnagata* actors. Most *onnagata* were based in the Kamigata area, and especially during the early years of the Edo period there were hardly any born-and-bred Edo *onnagata*. Edo theatres principally depended on imported *onnagata* from Kamigata for their star performers. The following works from the period refer to this dearth of Edo *onnagata* actors. As the *Genroku Taiheiki* (Genroku Chronicle of Great Peace, 1702) points out,

All the Edo *onnagata* who are lauded for their skill have come down from Kamigata.³

Likewise, the author of *Saru Genji Iro Shibai* (The Erotic Play of Saru Genji, 1718) proclaims that,

An *onnagata* has only to say that he is from Kamigata to ensure his fame and fortune.⁴

All the most skilled *onnagata* were from Kamigata, and an actor had merely to proclaim his roots to guarantee his fame in Edo. Post-Meiji scholars of Kabuki such as Ihara Seiseien and Mitamura Engyo also wrote that that there were no good *onnagata* from Edo, and that Edo usually looked to Kamigata to fill this need.

³ *Genroku Taiheiki* (Genroku Chronicle of Great Peace, 1702) in *Edo Jidai Bungei Shiryô* (Collection of sources on Edo literature), vol. 5, p63.

⁴ *Saru Genji Iro Shibai* (The Erotic Play of Saru Genji, 1718) in *Edo Jidai Bungei Shiryô*, vol. 2, p487.

Pure born-and-bred Edo actors were known as *neoi*. True *neoi* Edo *onnagata* only began to appear after the middle of the Edo period. Most notable is Segawa Kikunojō II, who was active in the Horeki and Meiwa eras (1751 - 1771). It is said that the famous Iwai Hanshiro IV, active in the 1780s and 1790s, carried on Kikunojō's tradition. My aim in this essay will not be to dispute this theory. Rather I hope to reconfirm the theory through various sources, and to use these sources to provide a detailed examination the situation.

First I would like to look at three actors of early Kabuki who have been dubbed the founders of the *onnagata*'s art. To begin with I would like to try to identify the region of origin of Ukon Genzaemon, who was a prominent actor in the Keian and Kanbun eras (1648 - 1672), and who has been called the founder of the *onnagata*. The quotation below from *Mitsubo Kikigaki* (Three pots of verbatim notes, compiled 1704- 1708) is the earliest source in which we can accurately confirm his name. This source was compiled several decades after the events it describes, however the entry for 1650 can be thought of as being based upon a contemporary source.

Second day of the first month, 1650 As a new Kabuki was being planned for the Hikosaku Kabuki-za in Sakai-chō, a troupe of interesting performers came down from Kamigata at the end of last year The performances began, and their costumes were in the latest fashion and most interesting. Within the troupe there was a man of around thirty called Genzaemon, who appeared dressed as a woman.⁵

It is unclear where exactly Genzaemon was born and brought up, but according to the above source written when he was “around thirty”, he had come down to Edo from Kamigata. Prior to this, there is another source, a diary called *Kakumeiki* (1636 - 1668), which mentions a Genzaemon, although there is some doubt as to whether it refers to the same actor. In the entry for the twenty-sixth day of the eleventh month 1648, two years before the *Mitsubo Kikigaki* reference, the writer mentions seeing Genzaemon, “flipping

⁵ *Mitsubo Kikigaki* (Three pots of verbatim notes, compiled 1704- 1708), manuscript in the Kanazawa City Library, no modern print edition.

over his sleeves while dancing” . As the author of this diary was a monk at the Kinkakuji Temple in Kyoto, we may surmise that Genzaemon was in Kyoto at this time.

The following source, *Mukashi Mukashi Monogatari* (Tales of long long ago, 1732) was written seventy or eighty years later, however its contents are thought to be comparatively reliable.

A youth called Ukon Genzaemon came down from Kyoto with a shamisen player and an accompanying *ji-uta* singer.⁶

This reference confirms that Ukon Genzaemon was an actor who came down to Edo from Kyoto. Taking all the above sources together, I believe that there is a very high possibility that the so-called first *onnagata*, Ukon Genzaemon, was brought up in Kamigata and acquired his art there, before coming down to Edo.

The second founder of the *onnagata*'s art whom I would like to look at is Tamagawa Sennojô. In 1661, around ten years after the sources referring to Ukon Genzaemon, Kabuki performances were temporarily banned in Kyoto. Unemployed actors travelled to Edo, Ise and other cities in search of work. Those who came down to Edo were recorded in the diary written in Edo by Lord Matsudaira, Yamato-no-kami, a *daimyô* who was obsessed with the theatre. In an entry dated the eleventh day of the twelfth month 1661, this diary contains a reference to Tamagawa Sennojô.

Tamagawa Sennojô came down from Kamigata. His beauty is more than my brush can express.⁷

We can well imagine how the beauty of this *onnagata* from the cultural capital of Japan, Kamigata, could well be ” more than my brush can express”, especially to Lord Matsudaira, who spent most of his time travelling between Edo and his country fief in present-day Niigata. Prior to meeting Sennojô, the Lord of Yamato had delighted in the

⁶ *Mukashi Mukashi Monogatari* (Tales of long long ago, 1732), in *Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei* (Collection of Japanese essays, hereafter NZT), second series, vol. 4, p138.

⁷ *Yamato no kami nikki* (Diary of Lord Matsudaira, Yamato-no-kami, 1661), manuscript in the collection of the Hoppô Culture Museum, Niigata. The first and second Wakatsuki manuscripts were also consulted.

charms of young actors such as Yamamoto Ruinosuke and Takahashi Kamon, who are thought to have been Edo-born. However, subsequent diary entries are principally concerned with Sennojô and other Kamigata actors who came down to Edo at the same time.

From the fact that Lord Matsudaira's diary states that Sennojô "came down from Kamigata", and also from the fact that his name appears on the first page of a *yakusha hyôbanki* (actor critique) published in Kyoto prior to the diary entry, I think that it is firmly established that he was a Kamigata actor. He came down to Edo only after training and winning fame as an *onnagata* in Kamigata.

The third actor on whom I would like to focus is Itô Kodayû, who was active from 1673 to 1689, and who was known as *Oyama no Kaisan* (the founding father of the *onnagata*). In his case also, the existing documents identify him as being born and bred in Kamigata. He was in Kyoto for eight years from 1674, then he spent a year working in Osaka, before finally appearing in Edo in the eleventh month of 1682. From then until his death in 1689 he was employed at the Ichimura-za in Edo.

There is a novel called *Itô Ganoko* (1689), which features Itô Kodayû as its hero. According to the novel he was born in Kyoto, into a house which "had sometime fallen onto hard times", and became an actor because of an oracle from the *Inari Myôjin*. He was known as *Shijô no Oyama* (the *Shijô Onnagata*, referring to a district in Kyoto), and became a popular star. The novel records how he finally came down to Edo, where he became the top *onnagata* in the city. While this novel is fictional, some of it does seem to be based on fact, especially the parts about him coming down to Edo, and can be backed up with evidence from other *yakusha hyôbanki*.

This is the relevant section from the novel that mentions Kodayû coming down to Edo.

After that he went down to Edo and gained sole top billing at the theatres,
where his fans called him *Shijô no Oyama*.⁸

⁸ *Itô Ganoko* (1689), in *Engeki Kenkyûkai Kaihô* (Bulletin of Theatre Research Society), no.12, p67.

In other words, he had also been born and raised in Kamigata, and served his apprenticeship there before coming down to Edo.

I believe that the above sources confirm that all three of the early *onnagata* who have been referred to as founders of the art, were originally Kamigata residents. Thus, Edo did not give birth to any leading *onnagata* actors during Kabuki's earliest period. If we look at the next stage in Kabuki's development, the Genroku era (1681 to 1710), we will find that there has not been much change in this situation. I would now like to look at some sources to confirm this assertion.

The four most famous *onnagata* of the Genroku era were known collectively as the *shitenô*, the Four Stars. They were Ogino Sawanojô, Mizuki Tatsunosuke, Sodezaki Karyu, and Yoshizawa Ayame.

Ogino Sawanojô came down to Edo in 1692, Mizuki Tatsunosuke and Sodezaki Karyu in 1695, and Yoshizawa Ayame in 1714. They had all previously been popular stars in Kamigata. In other words, all four of these famous *onnagata* were from Kamigata too. Of course there were other *onnagata* who were born and bred in other places, but I believe that it is fair to say that almost all of the most popular Genroku *onnagata* were originally from Kamigata.

From around the first half of the eighteenth century the situation began to change slightly, and Edo *neoi onnagata* began to appear. If we examine the actor critiques written in the twenty years of the Kyôhô era from 1716 to 1735, we will find that twenty-five *onnagata* from the three cities (Kyoto, Osaka, Edo) are awarded the ultimate ranking of "exceedingly good". Out of these twenty-five, there are six actors who were mainly based in Edo - Asao Jûjirô, Fujimura Handayû, Hayakawa Hatsuse, Nakamura Gentarô, Tamasawa Rinya, and Sanjô Kantarô. These six actors trod the Edo boards for many years, however three of them were originally from Kamigata. I would like to look at these three first.

Asao Jûjirô came down to Edo in 1709, at the age of 22. He had already made a name for himself as an *onnagata* in Kyoto and Osaka, as one source which states, "his skill was proclaimed in Naniwa (Osaka)", attests. Fujimura Handayû made his debut in

Kyoto, and came down to Edo after earning the “*tayū*” appellation, which is used to refer to the leading *onnagata* in a company. Hayakawa Hatsuse arrived in Edo in 1700, and it is known that he had spent the preceding ten years training in Kyoto and Osaka.

That leaves us with Nakamura Gentarō, Tamasawa Rinya, and Sanjō Kantarō as Edo born-and-bred *neoi*, without that Kamigata style. Apart from the six actors mentioned above, other “exceedingly good” actors from Kyoto and Osaka occasionally played a season or two in Edo, but of course there are none of them whom we could call Edo *neoi*. To sum up, out of the twenty-five top-ranking *onnagata* in this period, a mere three were from Edo. Even these three were rarely given top-billing on the first page of the section on Edo *onnagata* in the actor critiques. That honour was usually given to Asao Jūjirō or Fujimura Handayū, or else to one of the visiting Kamigata *onnagata*. The appraisals of the Edo *onnagata* were given second-place. It is still worth pointing out though that popular Edo *neoi* actors began to appear in the Kyōhō era. I would now like to look at some sources pertaining to these three Edo *onnagata*.

I included Nakamura Gentarō in the list of Edo *neoi* actors, but the truth of the matter is that he too was born in Kamigata. However because he came down to Edo in 1703 while still a child, he gained the support of Edo audiences who treated him as one of their own, and refused to recognise any hint of Kamigata in his acting. The actor critiques have the following to say about him,

Genta-sama, the favourite of Edo.⁹

He rose from playing *ko-musume* roles to *waka-onna* roles acclaimed by all of Edo.¹⁰

There's no one who can play Edo *date fūryū musume* (sexy, stylish Edo girl) roles like him.¹¹

⁹ *Yakusha Tomoginmi* (Friendly investigations into actors, 1707) in *Kabuki Hyōbanki Shūsei* (Collection of Kabuki critiques, hereafter KHS), first series, vol. 4, p184.

¹⁰ *Yakusha Daifukuchō* (The Great Register of actors, 1711) in KHS, first series, vol. 4, p555.

¹¹ *Yakusha Hako Denjū* (Treasure chest of actors' secret arts, 1712) in KHS, first series, vol. 5, p74.

Ah, the skill of your acting in love scenes. Live long and never leave Edo!
Everyone copies your portrayals of Edo *date fūryu musume*. . . . Gen-sama,
the favourite of Edo, we'll never turn from you The very, very best
iroko in all Edo.¹²

One thing to note from these examples is the repeated emphasis of the word “Edo”, and the way it links the actor to Edo. This kind of usage recurs throughout the actor critiques.

These critiques tell us that Nakamura Gentarō's technique in love scenes was especially impressive, but we are unable to infer directly just what the Edo style of acting may have consisted of. However, the references to “*date fūryu musume*” roles give us a hint that it may have had something to do with the portrayal of the unique customs of young Edo women. The references to “*ko-musume*” roles and to “*iroko*” are more puzzling though.

Although the four sources given above slightly pre-date the Kyōhō era, we can observe that the idea of supporting Edo born-and-bred *onnagata* had already taken root.

Next I would like to look at Tamasawa Rinya. Rinya spent his whole career as a *waka-onnagata* (actor of young woman's roles) on the stages of Edo, and it is thought that he was the first *onnagata* to have the term *neoi* applied to him. The *Yakusha Mitsudomoe* (Three Friends talk on actors) of 1724 refers to him as, “a young woman *neoi*”. The word *neoi* first seems to appear in critiques from around this year. From this we may surmise that Edo audiences gradually began to hunger for Edo born-and-bred *onnagata*.

At the same time, there are references in the critiques that display a growing rivalry towards Kamigata. For example, the *Yakusha Gei Shinasadame* (Appraisals of the actor's art) of 1722 states,

¹² *Yakusha Iro Keizu* (Actors and erotic landscapes, 1714) in KHS, first series, vol. 5, p424.

He's the only one of our actors we could show to the Kamigata audiences, certain that no one could resist falling in love with him.¹³

It seems that Tamasawa Rinya, in common with Nakamura Gentarô, specialised in love scenes. The critiques also often describe Rinya as “*bottori mono*” (a lush and enchanting creature). By way of example, the *Yakusha sanbuku tsui* (Actors and the three gods of luck, 1718) comments,

The founder of contemporary Edo *iroko* love scenes the beauty of Tamasawa-san's lush, enchanting figure exceeds even that of the resplendent blossoms.¹⁴

This text again refers to “contemporary Edo *iroko*” - could there possibly be a connection with the “*date fûryu musume*” roles mentioned above? The word “*iroko*” was also used above to refer to Nakamura Gentarô.

Moving on to the third of the three Edo *onnagata* - Sanjô Kantarô. He had worked his way up from the small theatre in the precincts of the Shiba Shinmei shrine, so he could truly be called an Edo *neoi*. At the age of fifteen he switched role-types to become an *onnagata*. Often instead of being called a *neoi*, the critiques refer to him as a *jibae*, a local lad.¹⁵

An Edo-born *onnagata* who's popular even in the outlying villages.¹⁶

A local Edo *onnagata*, who never leaves the city and who hasn't fall foul of this fever for touring the provinces. He has worked for many years in Edo.¹⁷

¹³ *Yakusha Gei Shinasadame* (Appraisals of the actor's art, 1722) in KHS, first series, vol. 8, p229.

¹⁴ *Yakusha sanbuku tsui* (Actors and the paired three gods of luck, 1718) in KHS, first series, vol. 6, p571.

¹⁵ There seems to be very little difference between the two terms. If forced to make a distinction, *jibae* probably means that an actor has actually been born in Edo, whereas *neoi* could refer to someone who had moved to Edo as a child but who had trained and worked for many years in the city. However, the two terms are not really precise enough to make a firm distinction.

¹⁶ *Yakusha Toshi Otoko* (Actors and successful men of fortune, 1729) in KHS, first series, vol. 9, p538.

¹⁷ *Yakusha Mitsunomono* (Actors and the three treasures, 1734) in KHS, first series, vol. 10, p522.

The critiques also display an awareness of and rivalry towards Kamigata when writing about this actor. For example, the *Yakusha Miyasuzume* (Actors and beautiful field sparrows, 1725) has the following to say,

We'd like to send him up to the Kyoto and Osaka theatres to show them.¹⁸

Once again, the words *musume* and *iroko* which appeared in the appraisals of Nakamura Gentarô and Tamasawa Rinya, reappear when describing Sanjô Kantarô. A critique published in 1720, the *Yakusha Sangaigasa* (The actor's three-tier straw hat) states,

It is said that he excels in playing *musume* roles. (The audience shouts out)

You trendy *iroko*! You charmer!¹⁹

The word *iroko* in Kabuki normally refers to the young, novice actors who appear on stage as groups of maidservants or pages, and so on. Normally the actor critiques would just list their names without giving any additional comment. However, in the sources that I have cited so far, it would appear that the *iroko* role goes beyond these bit parts. In that sense it is difficult to grasp just what the role may actually have involved.

In the section where the accomplishments of *onnagata* actors are discussed, the *Yakusha Meibutsu Sode Nikki* (Diary of famous actors' sleeves, 1771) critique has the following comment to make,

You should try hard to avoid such hamming from the time you play *iroko* and *musume-gata* roles.²⁰

In other words, from the time they play *iroko* and *musume* roles, young *onnagata* should be aware of and try to avoid falling into the dangers of certain types of acting. Thus,

¹⁸ *Yakusha Miyasuzume* (Actors and beautiful field sparrows, 1725) in KHS, first series, vol. 9, p52.

¹⁹ *Yakusha Sangaigasa* (The actor's three-tier straw hat, 1720) in KHS, first series, vol. 7, p484.

²⁰ *Yakusha Meibutsu Sode Nikki* (Diary of famous actors' sleeves, 1771) in *Nihon Shômin Bunka Shiryô Shusei*, vol. 6, p258

before an *onnagata* is able to stand alone as a fully-fledged actor, there is a period when he plays these *iroko* and *musume-gata* roles.

From around the time of the *Yakusha Mikaichô* (Unveiling of the holy actor's image, 1770), the category of *musume* roles begins to appear as a separate section in the Edo critiques, long before it does so in the Osaka and Kyoto critiques. The quotation above from the *Yakusha Meibutsu Sode Nikki* is from around the same time. If we look at earlier critiques from the Kyôho era, the *musume* role does not yet appear as a separate category, and we may surmise that *musume* roles were played by the most promising *iroko* actors.

Iroko played roles such as “*musume*”, “*ko-musume*” and “*date fûryû musume*”, and by increasing the number of scenes in which they appeared they began to play love scenes too. I believe that this is why some *onnagata* come to be referred to as founders of the art. This increasing importance of the *musume* role, as in the play *Yaoya Oshichi* (Oshichi, the greengrocer's daughter) probably eventually gave rise to the role category of *musume-gata*.

The origins of the play *Yaoya Oshichi* are said to date back to a performance at the Arashi-za in Osaka in 1705. The part of Oshichi in this performance was played by an actor called Arashi Kiyosaburô, who portrayed her as a *ko-musume* in a love-scene style. As this actor was working in Kamigata we may assume that this part was not an Edo innovation.

However, we should note that whenever the critiques refer to “*sexy, stylish musume* roles”, or “*iroko*”, or “the founder of *iroko* love scenes”, they always prefix the phrase with the words “Edo” or “contemporary”. I am very tempted to sense behind these words an actor adopting the latest Edo fashions and customs and thus creating a link between himself and the fashionable young girls of Edo.

Sanjô Kantarô played the representative *musume* role of Oshichi in 1718, aged seventeen. He was the greatest success in that part since Arashi Kiyosaburô, thirteen years previously, and he became an instant star. The *Yakusha Kingeshô* (Actor's gold make-up, 1719) comments thus,

This past spring his portrayal of Yaoya Oshichi was especially the best in the three cities. It was a great hit for half the season. His conception of the role was wonderful - he played her as a proper *ko-musume*, her hair loose over her forehead.²¹

The previously mentioned *Yakusha Mitsudomoe* says,

Yaoya Oshichi in the Year of the Dog. It ran from the first month to the seventh month - a great hit. He was lithe and smart with willowy hips. His deportment was not the best, but he was still very beautiful. The fame of his beauty spread even as far as the countryside.²²

It is unclear whether “*ko-musume*” here has any other meaning beyond the usual one of an adolescent girl, however Kantarô is known as “the founder of the *ko-musume*” roles.²³ Another possibility is that *ko-musume* refers to any girl who wears “her hair loose over her forehead”.

It is also valuable to take note of the reference to “willowy hips” in the above critique. Tamasawa Rinya was being called “the founder of *iroko* love scenes” in 1718, and he was already a fully-fledged *onnagata*. The critiques often refer to his “lush, enchanting figure”. In the same year, the younger Sanjô Kantarô played Oshichi for the first time, and he was praised for the beauty of his slim figure. It would seem that a unique Edo standard for beauty was being born at this time. Further research into *ukiyoe* pictures of contemporary beauties is perhaps called for.

Some of these keywords I have mentioned above - “sexy, stylish *musume*”, “*iroko*”, “Yaoya Oshichi”, “*ko-musume*”, “willowy hips” - come to play an important role in the next era of Kabuki’s history, the period from 1751 to 1771. The famous *onnagata*, Segawa Kikunojô II, who is often described as being the first of the Edo *neoi onnagata*, was active in this period. Many of these keywords crop up again in the critique appraisals of this Kikunojô.

²¹ *Yakusha Kingeshô* (Actor’s gold make-up, 1719) in KHS, first series, vol. 7, p168.

²² *Yakusha Mitsudomoe* (Three friends talk on actors, 1724) in KHS, first series, vol. 8, p586.

²³ KHS, first series, vol. 7, p335.

The following passage from the *Yakusha Dango Hiza* (Tête-à-tête on actors,1759) extolls him as a born-and-bred Edo *onnagata*.

His adopted father Rôko faithfully worshipped the gods at Uga in Oji, and they told him to adopt a child. As a result he (Kikunojô II) looked upon the Inari Myôjin as his guardian spirit, and he was much loved by the crowds. “Hey, Kikunojô! Look at him. Ah, the purity of his acting in love scenes. He looks and acts just like us.” Thus the women shout out their love for him - there’s no one quite like him.²⁴

The *Yakusha Kokinshû* (1771) states that he is,

An Edo born-and-bred young *onnagata*.²⁵

There were rumours about the circumstances of his birth. The first Segawa Kikunojô worshipped at the Inari shrine in the village of Oji, and he took a child from that village to be his adopted son. That child became Segawa Kikunojô II. The truth seems to have been more prosaic, however. It seems that Kikunojô I had an affair with a maid who was working as his seamstress; she became pregnant and he sent her back to her home village of Oji to give birth, finally adopting the child.

We can thus be certain that Kikunojô II’s birthplace was the village of Oji, on the outskirts of Edo. For that reason he was often referred to as “Oji Rokô”. Rokô was the pseudonym under which his father wrote *haikai* poetry. Since even his nickname contains a reference to a place in Edo, Japanese theatre history has taken this *onnagata* to be the first Edo *neoi onnagata*.

Of course, Kikunojô II didn’t just suddenly appear from nowhere and become a popular *neoi onnagata*. We now know that his popularity greatly exceeded that of the three *neoi onnagata* from the early eighteenth century whom I examined above. In contrast to them, Kikunojô was often listed at the head of the Edo *onnagata* in the

²⁴ *Yakusha Dango Hiza* (Tête-à-tête on actors,1759) in KHS, second series, vol. 6, p447.

²⁵ *Yakusha Kokinshû* (1771) in KHS, second series, vol.10, p164.

critiques. There's no doubt that his popularity as a *neoi onnagata* defined an era in Kabuki history.

However, both his father Kikunojô I and his uncle Kikujirô were originally Kamigata actors. Furthermore, Kikujirô's wife Omatsu who looked after the young Kikunojô II and probably had a great influence upon him, was also from Kamigata. As a result we can surmise that the foundations of his art had a deep Kamigata tinge to them.

The *Hannichi Kanwa* (Idle Chatter) has the following to say,

About Segawa Kikunojô II. Born in 1741. Dai-Rokô (Kikunojô I) died when he was nine years old. Through the intercession of Sengyô (Segawa Kikujirô) and through the pains of his wife Ofuku (Omatsu), who was from Kamigata, he was taught to become an *onnagata*. She seems to have been a natural-born teacher of *onnagata*. She was the daughter of Iwai Hanshirô. . . . The present Iwai Hanshiro and others have praised Ofuku's teaching of him.²⁶

In other words, it seems that Segawa Kikunojô II was trained as an *onnagata* by Ofuku, who was originally from Kamigata. In addition, as I have already stated, Kikunojô II was not the first Edo *neoi onnagata*.

As regards his actual stage accomplishments, the *Yakusha Danbashigo* (Rungs on the Actors' Ladder, 1760) has this to say,

Next he was a great hit as Oshichi, a great hit. His looks are good, and he moves like a virgin *irumusume* (sexy young girl). His figure is slender and svelte with willowy hips. I can barely control myself!²⁷

Kikunojô would appear to have inherited Sanjô Kantarô's willowy hips. I believe that the word *irumusume* refers to the playing of *ko-musume* love scenes. It was through playing "Yaoya Oshichi" in this style that Kikunojô became famous. In this respect he is no different from the *neoi onnagata* of the previous generation.

²⁶ Ota Nampo *Hannichi Kanwa* (A half day's idle chat) in NZT, first series, Vol.4.

²⁷ *Yakusha Danbashigo* (Rungs on the Actors' Ladder, 1760) in KHS, second series, vol. 7, p48.

Above I touched upon the first performance of “Yaoya Oshichi” (a first performance that was a raging success), and I mentioned then that this play did not debut in Edo. Arashi Kiyosaburô starred in the this first production in Osaka, and his portrayal of Oshichi in the *ko-musume* love scene style was a great hit. Sanjô Kantarô and Kikunojô II continued this performance tradition, but exactly how was their portrayal of Oshichi different from Kiyosaburô’s?

One obvious difference is that the critiques refer to the later two actors’ figures as being “lithe” or “slender”. The next, and I believe, the greatest difference is that their Oshichis are described as being “contemporary” and “Edo-style”. The quotation above from the *Yakusha Dango Hiza* shows the young daughters of Edo exclaiming about Kikunojô, “He looks and acts just like us.” I believe that this is a crucial piece of evidence.

Looked at in this way, one is drawn to the conclusion that there was essentially not that much difference between Segawa Kikunojô II and the *neoi onnagata* of the previous generation. The only possible innovation that he may have made was to use his knowledge of Kamigata acting techniques in constructing his interpretation of contemporary Edo *musume*. However, further analysis of this hypothesis will have to wait for another occasion.

In summary, born-and-bred Edo *onnagata* finally began to appear around the beginning of the Kyôho era, in the early eighteenth century. Around the mid-1720s these *onnagata* then began to portray a new type of Edo beauty upon the stage. By introducing the fashions and customs of the contemporary Edo *musume* in to existing plays and acting techniques, these Edo *neoi onnagata* added a new figure to the stage and assured their own fame. This process was finally firmly established by Segawa Kikunojô II.

(translated by Alan Cummings)

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