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

During the Edo period (1600–1868) many genres of *kagura* and related arts were performed at shrines and temples in eastern Japan by men under the direction of Tamura Hachidayū, whose position and name was hereditary. Tamura served as the head priest of the Sanja Gongen, the tutelary shrine of Sensōji. Although Tamura maintained that his lineage and rights of control over sacred dancers dated to the medieval period and was indisputable, a closer look at relevant documents reveals that his rise to an elevated position in the Edo-period religious hierarchy took place against a backdrop of political machinations and legal altercations. This article explores the rise and fall of Tamura and his organization and seeks to contextualize the vicissitudes of his organization in the broader political history of the Edo and Meiji periods.

KEYWORDS: Edo-period religion—Tamura Hachidayū—Sanja Gongen—Sensōji—*kagura*—*kōwaka-mai*—*shinji mai-dayū*—masters of sacred dance

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JAPANESE RELIGION, whether indigenous or mixed with elements imported from abroad, has always derived much of its power from performances of sacred music and dance. Ritualistic performances were particularly significant in the realm of popular religion, for its theology, in so far as it was formalized at all, often boiled down to a handful of simple hopes and wishes readily symbolized or represented in an artistic fashion: bountiful harvests, good health, fecundity, peace, and prosperity. From time immemorial hardly a village, no matter how diminutive or remote, did not boast of at least one genre of sacred dance or holy song that it could call its own. Whether incorporated into festivals or staged as independent performances, blessed dances and godly melodies enabled believers to petition or thank the deities while enjoying a transitory respite from daily drudgery.

The Edo-period (1600–1868) efflorescence of religious performing arts did not go unnoticed by the Tokugawa *bakufu*, which wished to coerce the gods, spirits, and their custodians to conform to its own interests. The enduring effort to steer hyperphysical forces and the emotions that accompanied them in a politically expedient direction was in part motivated by the knowledge that novel or unorthodox deployments of religious sentiments could lead to administrative headaches. Religious performing arts, which were far more likely than learned theological treatises or erudite lectures to inspire disruptive passions, stood in need of careful regulation. Yet with countless local shrines promoting thousands of holy events throughout a vast geographical expanse, top-down micro-management of sacred practices was doomed to failure. Instead of attempting to regulate ritual, dance, and music directly, functionaries on all administrative levels encouraged the creation of hierarchical institutions in which designated heads, sub-heads, local leaders, and commonplace performers were set about working together for the sake of orthodoxy, law, and order.

Such exertions took place against a backdrop of regional customs, habits, and institutions that had emerged unsystematically over decades or centuries. Extant organizations and networks permitted temples and shrines, occupational groups, and individual performers or ritualists to cope with potentially conflicting economic and political interests. Every move by higher authorities to revise precedent, to mandate new organizational structures, to implement tighter forms of licensing, or to alter conventional modes of behavior was prone to meet resistance by those who stood to lose from any transformation of the status quo. Any autocratic transmission of edicts and prescriptions from on high was tanta-

mount to poking the end of a scepter into a hornet's nest. Such an act inevitably aroused hostilities between regal supporters of the old and new, pitted the sacred against the secular, and stirred up resentment among conservatives who benefited from vested interests. Conflicts could drag on for generations and were usually resolved, if resolved they were, with unstable compromises that fostered subterfuge, deception, and renewed litigation.

From the early eighteenth century to the Meiji period (1868–1912), many Kanto area sacred dancers, ritualists, shrine heads, and their accessories had developed an organization overseen by Tamura Hachidayū 田村八大夫 (below I shall refer to the entire lineage of some fourteen generations as a single individual). Around 1708 Tamura was duly anointed as the “head of masters of sacred dance of combinatory Shinto” (*shūgō shintō shinji mai-dayū* [kashira] 習合神道神事舞太夫[頭]) of the Kanto area.<sup>1</sup> This impressive title allowed him to oversee “dance masters” (*mai-dayū*) in Edo, at rural shrines throughout the eight Kanto provinces, parts of Kai and Shinano (today Yamanashi and Nagano prefectures), and the Aizu area of what is today Fukushima prefecture.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Tamura was placed in charge of female shamans (*azusa miko* 梓神子 or *kuchiyose miko* 口寄せ巫女) living within his jurisdiction. These women offered séances in which they transmitted the voices of the dead and departed, healed disease, or exorcised evil spirits.<sup>3</sup> Tamura also served as the chief priest of the Sanja Gongen 三社権現, the tutelary shrine of the most popular religious complex in Edo, Sensōji 浅草寺 in Asakusa.<sup>4</sup>

From where did Tamura stem and how did he ascend to his elevated position? How did he and his subordinates maintain power and how did they function within the *bakufu*-approved religious hierarchy of their day? What occupations

1. In later years the man who seems to be Tamura Hachidayū appears under other names. These include Nobuchika 信親 (1773, *Shisō zasshiki*, fascicle 36, [vol. 8] 839), Koremasa 惟雄 (1800, MATSUDAIRA 1942, 618), Hannosuke 伴之助 or Sawanosuke 沢之助 (1825, *Edo machikata kakiage*, Asakusa, jō, 237, 318, 322); and Kennojō 健之丞 (1842, *Shichū torishimari ruishū*, *shukke shajin no bu*, 59; *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 24, 64 names him as the grandson of Tamura, though still young and evidently the nominal leader of the house).

2. It is important to note, however, that not all men who were “masters of sacred dance” actually danced or performed *kagura*. Some made money by providing prayer services or distributing talismans, while others toured with female shamans who invoked the spirits of the dead (see HASHIMOTO 2004, 32).

3. *Azusa miko* (often translated as “catalpa-bow shamans,” even though the bows were in fact usually made of a Japanese birch-cherry) and *kuchiyose miko* (shamans transmitting the voices of the deceased or departed) during the Edo period must be kept distinct from “shrine maidens” who danced *kagura* or helped out in shrine ceremonies. No such “shrine maidens” served under Tamura at the Sanja Gongen (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 151). For a detailed discussion of Tamura's *miko*, see GROEMER 2007.

4. Other “masters of sacred dance” served at smaller shrines such as the Fuji Sengen shrine within Sensōji. See *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 19, 313–14.

and activities did he and his organization administer? How far did his control extend and how long did it last? Answers to these questions can provide some insight into the social dynamics governing popular religion and its organizations during the Edo period.

*The Rise of Tamura Hachidayū*

Little is known of Tamura's professed creed of "combinatory" or "syncretic" Shinto. Sometimes referred to as *Ryōbu shūgō no shintō* 両部習合の神道 (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 151), it was probably largely orthopractical in nature and seems to have relied on a combination of rituals and tenets taken over from indigenous religion, Tendai and Shingon-sect Buddhism, and Honzan *shugen*.<sup>5</sup> Tamura's subordinates in Edo, at least some of whom had inherited their position from their fathers, repeatedly asserted that they did not possess any holy wooden sculpture or painting (thereby indicating they were not running illegal pseudo-temples) and only celebrated their rituals with a Shinto wand.<sup>6</sup> Since at least one generation of Tamura Hachidayū hired the Confucian heavyweight Narushima Dōchiku 成嶋道筑 (1689–1760) as his preceptor, "combinatory Shinto" perhaps also contained elements of Confucianism.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest benefit that "combinatory Shinto" bestowed on Tamura and his organization, however, was not so much its theology as its political function in circumventing the supervision of the far more powerful Yoshida and Shirakawa houses of Shinto. It was no accident that the "combinatory Shinto" of Tamura's occupational ancestors appears in documents at roughly the same time that the Tokugawa *bakufu* issued its "regulations for the control of shrines and priests" (*Shosha negi kannushi hatto*, 1665), which fortified the control of the Yoshida house. Moreover, by alleging adherence to "combinatory Shinto" Tamura's "masters of sacred dance" could set themselves apart from yin-yang diviners and other religious practitioners and performers who vied for power in the Edo-period spiritual marketplace and who were likewise increasingly subject to *bakufu* control from the late seventeenth century. Finally, official recognition as head of an independent association allowed Tamura to rebuff any declarations

5. A nineteenth-century record explains that the name "combinatory Shinto" derived from the fact that it combined the "ways" of Sōgen 宗源, Myōgen 妙源, and Reikei or Ryōkei 靈景, but I have not been able to identify the content of such "ways" (*Edo machikata kakiage*, Asakusa, jō, 319). I follow *Bunden sōsho*, 582–83 from 1756/3.

6. *Shiba machikata kakiage*, 2, 4. For the oft-repeated prohibitions on running illicit rooms for prayer and ritual see *Edo machibure shūsei*, vol. 1, 136 (no. 363, 1662/9/18), 172–73 (no. 476, 1665/10/23).

7. MATSURA 1978, 286. Narushima was in the service of shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune.

by Danzaemon, the head of outcasts in Edo and the Kanto area, that “masters of sacred dance” properly came under the latter’s sway.<sup>8</sup>

Once Tamura’s forebears had succeeded in gaining credentials as a Shinto sect not subject to the whims or strictures of any other organization, Tamura was finally able to assume headship, fortify the institutional structures of his approved, self-governing hierarchical organization, and take charge over the performance of sacred dance current in the Kanto provinces and at the Sanja Gongen.<sup>9</sup> That the ride on the road to power had been a rocky one is suggested in several short personal histories Tamura submitted on various occasions to *bakufu* authorities who evidently wished to know why he assumed a position of prominence within the Edo-period ecclesiastical hierarchy. One version, recorded in 1800, reads as follows:

The inception of the establishment of a position of a head [*shihai-gashira* 支配頭] [of the organization that Tamura would later control] in the Kanto region date from the age of Lord [Minamoto no] Yoritomo [1147–1199], when a person named Tsuruwaka Magotōji 鶴若孫藤次 served in this capacity. He had an official document and still today [his descendants] live on tax-exempt property. He has hereditarily come under my control.

During the time of the Odawara Hōjō lords [that is, sixteenth century rulers of Sagami province], a man named Iwamoto Tenjūrō 岩本天十郎, who possessed an official license from the Hōjō clan, served as the head. He resided on untaxed property that would hereditarily come under my control. Already during the era mentioned he was not subject to the Kyoto-based houses of Shinto [that is, the Yoshida and Shirakawa houses]. He belonged to the warrior class and established a kind of sacred occupation. He established this sacred occupation even before the era in question and his subordinates who live in Omigawa Village of Shimōsa Province [today Katori-shi in Chiba prefecture] possess an official document from lord Hachiman Tarō Yoshiie [that is, Minamoto no Yoshiie, 1039–1106] and continue to reside on tax-exempt property today. In addition, his subordinates who live in Yoze Village in Nasu [County] Shimotsuke Province [present-day Ōtawara-shi in Tochigi prefecture] offered prayers when the white fox was exorcised from the “death stone,” and continue to live on tax-exempt property today.<sup>10</sup>

8. In listings of occupations rightfully under his control, Danzaemon often listed “mimai” (literally “dance dancers”), the historical predecessors of the “masters of sacred dance.”

9. Tamura’s house was apparently not tied to a family (*shissōke* 執奏家) that could intercede at court, but although this must have weakened his position, it does not seem to have caused him major problems.

10. The “death stone” (*sesshōseki* 殺生石) is in an area near Yoze Village. The beautiful and wise young woman Tamamo-no-mae, a favorite of the Konoe emperor (1139–1156), was revealed by astrologers to be an evil white fox. After being killed by a warrior hired by the emperor, she

Kōmatsu Kanemon's 幸松勘右衛門 headship [*kashira-yaku* 頭役] dates from the time he arrived here [in Edo] from Mikawa Province, accompanying Tokugawa Ieyasu to the [Kanto] area. He was ordered to serve as the head of the “masters of sacred dance of combinatory Shinto” and is said to have been granted a stipend of five hundred *koku* of rice.

Kōmatsu Kanemon's son Kandayū 勘太夫 [and his descendants] succeeded him for several generations. But Kōmatsu Kandayū committed an indiscretion and in 1695/11 was banished by [the magistrate of temples and shrines] Toda Noto-no-kami.

Thereafter, in 1698/4, Kikuchi Kudayū 菊池久太夫 appealed to [the magistrate of temples and shrines] Matsudaira Shima-no-kami to become Kandayū's successor [*atome* 跡目]. He was granted headship on 1698/5/9 at a meeting [of the magistrates of temples and shrines] with [magistrate] Nagai Iga-no-kami in attendance. Later Kikuchi Kudayū changed his name to Kōmatsu Kandayū and passed his position down to his descendants.

Then, however, Kōmatsu Kandayū committed an indiscretion regarding the rights of Yin-yang diviners and on 1707/12/18 was relieved of his post by [magistrate of temples and shrines] Honda Danjō-shōhitsu. On that occasion Kandayū absconded with all of the documents regarding our origins.

On 1708/3/18 my ancestor [*Shisō zasshiki*: great-grandfather] Tamura Hachidayū was ordered to become the head and has continued to serve as such ever since. (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 614–15)<sup>11</sup>

This document can hardly be read as a disinterested narrative concerning the changes and transformations undergone by an ancient religious organization. Instead, it is a *yuishogaki* 由緒書, a record of legends of origins designed to reinforce current forms of authority by appealing to real or spurious past events. In seeking to ground Tamura's rights and privileges, this *yuishogaki* took for granted the sociopolitical norm that precedent constituted *prima facie* evidence of present legitimacy. As a result, Tamura, like so many authors of *yuishogaki*, combined myth and historical fact in a manner that permitted origins to be pushed back into an impossibly inscrutable past, while more recent events were detailed in more plausible ways. Tamura's invocation of the legend of the “death stone” would have tested the credulity of any Edo-period magistrate of temples and

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turned into a stone that brought misfortune or death to anyone who touched it. Later the Buddhist priest Gen'nō (1329–1400) supposedly hit the stone with his cane, splitting it in two and releasing the spirit locked up inside. Gen'nō convinced the spirit to achieve Buddhist salvation, thus rendering it harmless. The tale is recounted in a famous Noh play and many other theatrical and musical genres.

11. For other versions see *Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki* (for a translation of an excerpt see GROEMER 2007, 32–33); *Shisō zasshiki*, fascicle 36, 836–37 (1795/4); *Kasukabe-shi shi*, vol. 3, *Kinsei shiryō-hen* 5, 767–68 (1800); *Edo machikata kakiage*, Asakusa, jō, 322–23 (1815).

shrines, under whose rule Tamura fell, but thanks to the utterly archaic nature of this event no evidence was likely to prove the story false either. References to the Odawara and the Hōjō clan, by contrast, were more easily read and tested in the context of known historical information and records.

Tamura's *yuishogaki* contains yet another, more important fissure. Whereas the first two paragraphs cited above revolve mainly around sacred dancers active in Sagami province, much of the subsequent material centers on fundamentally secular *kōwaka* 幸若 performers who had arrived in Edo from Mikawa province. The *yuishogaki* simply juxtaposes these two types of dancers without any explanation. How they were related cannot be definitively decided, but a closer look at the historical background of the situation brings into focus some intriguing possibilities.

### *The Sagami Dance Masters*

The ancestors of Tamura Hachidayū had probably arrived in Edo from Sagami province (Kanagawa prefecture), which in the sixteenth century stood under Hōjō control. They even appear to have taken their surname from the village where they had lived: Tamura village, near the Samukawa shrine.<sup>12</sup> Connections to Sagami are also intimated by Tamura's reference to Tsuruwaka Magotōji, the head of a family or clan in the nearby town of Hiratsuka. Whatever may have been the case during the Kamakura period, in 1538/9/3 the Hōjō clan had indeed permitted one Magotōji to collect two coppers from every household in the region in order to stage a "lion dance" (*shishi-mai* 獅子舞). This dance was performed at the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū, the most important shrine of Sagami province, if not all of eastern Japan.<sup>13</sup> Magotōji's house, probably one of local "dance masters" (*maidayū* 舞太夫 or *maimai* 舞々), continued to receive an annual stipend of three *koku* of wheat from the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū well into the nineteenth century.

The existence of Iwamoto Tenjūrō is also backed by independent historical documentation.<sup>14</sup> Like Magotōji, Tenjūrō evidently stemmed from a house of

12. In a document from 1869 Tamura wrote that he originally stemmed from Mikawa (the ancestral home of the Tokugawa) but during a period of battle took refuge in Tamura Village in Sagami province (NAKAYAMA 1969, 615).

13. On Magotōji here and below I have relied on *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 3, 55. "Shūgō shintō shinji mai-dayū yuisho" (undated, in *Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho*) also mentions that he and his descendants lived in Hiratsuka and worked for the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū. See also *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 318–19, 322–23; MATSURA 1980, 198; NAKAYAMA 1969, 620; HASHIMOTO 1996, 20. A useful discussion and relevant documents can be found in FUJISAWA 1999, 107–108. The term *shishi* is in fact far broader than "lion" and covers a large variety of four-legged beasts, mostly mythical. For convenience sake, I have rendered it as "lion" below.

14. In the nineteenth century MATSURA 1980, 197, and "Shiba machikata kakiage, 6" name this man Tenno (Amano?) Jūrō 天野十郎 and assert that he was the "head" (*kashira*) during the time of Hōjō rule.

dancers in the Sagami area. Even if he was hardly a sixteenth-century “head of combinatory Shinto” of the eight Kanto provinces, he appears to have served as a “dance master” and shrine priest of the Hōjō Inari shrine 北条稲荷社 at Ko-shinshiku-chō 古新宿町 in Odawara of Sagami province (present-day Odawara-shi Hamachō; see *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 2, 25). Tenjūrō proudly owned a license from 1528 stating that he had been granted a residence in Yokka-machi (in Izu province; present-day Izunokuni-shi in Shizuoka prefecture) and that he maintained the right of taxing *mimai* dancers, *itaka* (移他家, diviners or ritualists), and yin-yang diviners in the area. This license may have been spurious, but when Tenjūrō moved to Ko-shinshiku-chō, it was conveniently recognized as legitimate by the Hōjō family. In 1555 Tenjūrō was once more granted rights to control and levy fees on *itaka* and *shōmonji* (声聞師, outcast ritualists and actors), as well as yin-yang diviners in the territory under Hōjō control. Though his kinsmen apparently engaged mainly in transportation or courier services, Tenjūrō functioned as a dancer who performed for guests invited by the Hōjō family.<sup>15</sup> After the Hōjō were defeated in 1590, Tenjūrō must have lost an important backer, but a man named Sukejūrō 助十郎, the father of the Tenjūrō alive in 1686, was still granted a formal dance costume (*hitatare*) from the new lord of Odawara castle, Ōkubo Tadachika 大久保忠隣 (1553–1628) (KANAGAWA-KEN 1974, 211). Hence it appears that the new rulers reconfirmed established practices.

Such fragmentary evidence suggests that Tamura’s house may also have started out as that of a local Sagami “dance master” much like the houses of Magotōji and Tenjūrō. Yet somehow Tamura eventually succeeded in gaining dominance over his peers. Why or when Tamura, his family, or his underlings moved from Sagami to Asakusa remains unclear, but the relocation of at least some performers from Sagami to Edo may have occurred fairly early and links between the two areas can be traced to before the Edo period. The Hōjō clan had already shown its support of Sensōji by funding its reconstruction after a fire in 1535 (AMINO 1982, 180–83). Legend had it that while Ieyasu was still encamped in Sagami at the siege of Odawara, the Tendai priest Tenkai 天海 (1536–1643), who would come to play a major role in the Tokugawa family’s religious affairs, was beckoned to the battle camp and queried whether an appropriate Tendai-sect prayer hall existed in Edo. Tenkai informed Ieyasu that the ancient Sensōji stood in a propitious direction from the castle (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 22, 47; MATSUDAIRA 1939, 482). Other tales of those days recount that Chūgō 忠豪, the intendant of Sensōji was summoned to the Odawara battle theater and ordered to pro-

15. For the license of 1555 and other documents and information see *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 2, 25–27 and *Shisō zasshiki*, fascicle 36 (vol. 8), 840; GOTŌ 1959, 168–72; FUJISAWA 1999, 103–107. See also HAYASHI (1998, 288) for a convenient chart listing Tenjūrō’s history.



mulgate an edict ordaining law and order within temple precincts (*Ochiboshū*, 43–44). Whatever may have transpired during these years, Sensōji, which had fallen on hard times, was eventually designated as the Tokugawa family's prayer hall (*kiganjo* 祈願所). When Ieyasu and his administration moved from Sagami to Edo, some of the dancers who had thrived in the Hōjō family's domain may well have tagged along to seek their fortunes in the new capital.

### *The Kōwaka Masters*

If the links of Tamura and the sacred dancers of Sagami are not difficult to imagine, his relation to *kōwaka* performers from Mikawa outlined in the *yuishogaki* remains far more puzzling. Kōmatsu Kan'emon, the first man mentioned in Tamura's document, does not seem to have left significant traces in other historical records.<sup>16</sup> Starting from 1580, however, a Kōwaka Kandyū 幸若勘太夫 is repeatedly named as a dancer (*maimai*) in the diary of Matsudaira Ietada 松平家忠, a vassal of Tokugawa Ieyasu who had served as the lord of Fukōzu castle in what is now the city of Okazaki (Mikawa province).<sup>17</sup> On the eleventh day of 1591/11, for instance, Kandyū had arrived “from Edo” to entertain Ietada at his castle of the Oshi domain in Musashi province.<sup>18</sup> Since on 1582/2/10 he was still labeled an “Okazaki dancer” (*Okazaki maimai* 岡崎舞々), he, and perhaps his father Kan'emon, seem to have moved to the Kanto area after the Tokugawa arrived there in 1590. Other *kōwaka-mai* performers, including some who had performed at Okazaki castle for Ieyasu himself, likewise settled in Edo during the same era (*Meiryō tairoku*, 104–5).

According to a document penned in 1684, Kōmatsu Kandyū, who probably called himself Kōwaka Kandyū when he wished to emphasize his link to *kōwaka* dancing, supposedly received some kind of deed—supposedly a “vermillion-seal

16. In the early nineteenth century, however, Matsura Seizan writes that Kōwaka Kan'emon (whom he records as 幸岩勘右衛門, probably an error for 幸若勘右衛門) was granted headship of female shamans (*azusa*), changed his name to Kōmatsu 幸松, and lived around Otamagaikē (present-day Tōkyō-to, Chiyoda-ku, Iwamoto-chō) (MATSURA 1980, 197). His official headship over such shamans seems highly unlikely, since Tamura did not succeed in obtaining such a mandate until 1713 (see GROEMER 2007, 34–35).

17. *Kōwaka-mai* apparently branched off from the older genre of *kusemai* (曲舞 or 久世舞) often performed by *maimai* in the Kansai area who derived from or were linked to groups of ritualist-performers known as *shōmonji* 声聞師. On the origins and distribution of medieval *maimai* see YAMAJI 1998.

18. *Ietada nikki*, 409. Kandyū is also mentioned as performing for Ietada on 1580/8/8 (80), 1581/ 4/13 (99), 1582/2/10 (122), 1583/4/15 (157), 1586/4/19 (242), 1587/6/29 (278), and 1587/7/1 (279). A garbled nineteenth-century document suggests that Kandyū may have followed the Ōgusa-Matsudaira clan from their home in Mikawa to the Kanto area when the latter battled the Takeda clan in the late sixteenth century (*Edo machikata kakiage*, *Asakusa*, jō, 319).

certificate”—from none other than Tokugawa Ieyasu himself.<sup>19</sup> Since this permit was bestowed in 1618/6, some two years after Ieyasu’s death, it can only have been a forgery. Similarly, the stipend of five hundred *koku* of rice mentioned in Tamura’s *yuishogaki* was little more than wishful thinking, since this amount of grain was in fact the *bakufu*’s annual grant to the entire Sensōji complex.<sup>20</sup> Nor can the assertion that Kanemon became a “head” (*kashira yaku* 頭役) when he came to the Kanto area be taken at face value, for neither the “masters of sacred dance” nor the *kōwaka* dancers in the Kanto provinces had yet established any centralized, hierarchical organization for Kanemon to rule. At best, Kanemon was invested with the right to begin to create such an organization.

### *Links of the Sagami Dancers to the Mikawa Kōwaka Masters*

No historical record alludes to “masters of sacred dance” before around 1712, a few years after Tamura’s assumption of the headship of the Sanja Gongen. In earlier ages the favored term was simply “dance masters” (*mai-dayū*), suggesting that until the eighteenth century the religious nature of such dancers was not emphasized. Kōmatsu Kandayū seems to have been in charge of many types of dancers in the Kanto region, not necessarily of a religious nature. Moreover, as one nineteenth-century source indicates, until Tamura’s day the Sanja Gongen had no shrine priests (*shajin* 社人) or shrine maidens (*miko* 巫女) attached to it at all (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 151).

A *yuishogaki* submitted to the government in 1712 provides further evidence that Kandayū’s relation to regional groups of “masters of sacred dance” was none too solid:

In the past, Kōwaka [=Kōmatsu?] Kandayū did not penetrate the meaning of the house rules of “combinatory Shinto” and issued occupational licenses, without, of course, consulting the officials and group heads [*yakunin kumigashira* 役人組頭] of the “masters of sacred dance.” He thereby made it very

19. *Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho utsushi*. Relating to the subject of Kōwaka vs. Kōmatsu, *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 1, 242, records that the Inari shrine of Nobezawa village had a master of sacred dance named Saitō Namie 齋藤浪江. Records in his possession include one from 1571/8/15 (see FUJISAWA 1999, 108) of a land grant addressed to Kōmatsu Kihei. This suggests that the Saitō family was once called Kōmatsu (see also GOTŌ 1959, 179). MATSUDAIRA 1942, 614–15 continues to refer to Kōmatsu Kandayū until the early eighteenth century. Indeed, several Kandayū, no doubt a hereditary name, seem to have existed in various areas. SUZUKI 1995 presents a document from 1714 which names Muramatsu Kandayū as a master of sacred dance from the Odawara domain who controlled some eight shrines in the area. This man, however, was perhaps under control of the Yoshida house.

20. These funds were provided by wards controlled by the temple; see MATSUDAIRA 1939, 515. The document of the original deed of the Sensōji, dated 1614/2/18, can be found in *Nihon zaisei keizai shiryō*, vol. 2, 537–38.

difficult for provincial subordinates to [uphold?] the old laws of “combinatory Shinto.”  
*(Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki)*<sup>21</sup>

These sentences bear record that during the late seventeenth century the *kōwaka* performers of Edo were seeking to instate new measures of control over Kanto “dance masters,” who no doubt had their own local organizations, one of which was headquartered in Sagami. During the seventeenth century, Kandyū, perhaps sensing that the support for *kōwaka* dancing was on the decline, had apparently managed to build up something of an association of dancers with religious pretensions. In 1684 he could assert that in the past 808 individuals had been placed under his control (*Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho utsushi*). His tireless attempts to consolidate power during this era may be discerned from the lawsuits in which he was involved. In 1667 (and again in 1702) he was embroiled in altercations with “Ebisu petitioners” (*Ebisu gannin* 恵比寿願人) over the vending or distribution of talismans of the gods Ebisu 恵比寿 and Daikoku 大黒. A lawsuit of 1672 brought him into conflict with *yamabushi*, whose activities—perhaps exorcism or the selling of magic amulets—must have infringed what he considered his proper rights. Cases from the 1690s concerning yin-yang diviners and the control of female shamans reveal that he was also seeking to establish some control over (or independence from) the occupations of such prognosticators and mediums.

Kandyū may have continued his activities as a *kōwaka* dancer for the time being, but he seems to have spread his net widely. A document from 1690 lists him as the head of several *senzu manzai* 千寿万歳 dancers in Shimōsa (Chiba prefecture) (*Atsugi-shi shi, kinsei shiryō-hen*, vol. 1, 221–22), indicating both that the range of his dominion extended to the southern Kanto area and that those under his control performed a variety of genres. If he had truly served as the undisputed head of a strong and solid organization, he would surely have understood the “house rules” he ended up transgressing. His effort to break with venerable local habits in the provinces by suddenly issuing new licenses, no doubt much to his own benefit, seems to have been resisted by rural “dance masters.” The latter must have sensed that such a licensing requirement enfeebled more traditional institutional structures that worked in their favor. Moreover, he proved no match for yin-yang diviners, who enjoyed stronger political backing than he, especially that of the aristocratic Tsuchimikado house. Kandyū was probably relieved of his post on account of a political miscalculation. By seeking to assert more direct control over subordinates and by failing to prevail in lawsuits against yin-yang diviners, he had unwittingly set off a quiet

21. The *Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki* cited here and below is a collection of documents. The specific document to which I refer (*Osorenagara kakitsuke o motte negai tatematsuri sōrō*) was drafted by Tamura on 1712/10.

rebellion and fostered the sort of “disorder” that the *bakufu* and its confederates so intensely detested. He had not taken into account the strength of older local ways, even within the general trend toward centralization of approved religious institutions.

Kandayū’s failure to convince others of his rightful control led to his banishment in 1695/11; then on 1696/5/18 the magistrates of temples and shrines ordered Tamura Hachidayū to recall the occupational licenses that had peremptorily been issued.<sup>22</sup> Kandayū’s dismissal seems to have occasioned something of a succession crisis. A document from 1697/8 suggests that he was replaced by a woman named “San,” perhaps related to his family and in any case placed in charge of female shamans. “San” did not assume the title of “head” but rather only the more modest one of Kandayū’s “successor” (*atome*) and Tamura is listed as her assistant (*tedai*) (see the document reproduced in HAYASHI 2003, 61). In any case, in 1698/4 Kikuchi Kudayū 菊池久太夫, perhaps the banished Kandayū’s son, who soon thereafter changed his name to Kandayū, appealed to become the “successor” or “the single head,” a wish that was granted by *bakufu* officials on 1698/5/9 (*Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki*; MATSUDAIRA 1942, 615).

Why then would *kōwaka* dancers seek to link themselves to more sacred traditions? In fact, *kōwaka* performers had danced at shrines from the very start. Already on 1387/6/16 a performer named Kōwaka is recorded as having presented “three dances” at a festival at the Tennō shrine near his home village in Echizen province (today the Yasaka Shrine in Fukui-ken, Echizen-chō, Tanaka). At this celebration other dancers offered “lion dances” (*shishi-mai* 獅子舞) while young Buddhist priests exhibited a dance of “eight maidens” (*yaotome*) and low-ranking monkish figures (*hōshi* 法師) presented *dengaku* 田楽 (FUKUI-KEN 1985, 312).<sup>23</sup> Late medieval records leave no doubt that *kōwaka* performers were often related to *maimai* of other sorts, often to performers of outcast status or with religious affiliations (see YAMAJI 1998, 290–91). The Ōhashi house of Sagami “masters of sacred dance” also included members who had arrived in this province only after having studied in Echizen province with Kōwaka Kohachirō, one of the three founding families of the *kōwaka* genre (*Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 2, 196 (fascicle 33)). They supposedly even served the Hōjō family in the capacity of resident *kōwaka* dancers (*Odawara-shi shi, shiryō-hen, kinsei*, vol. 3, 542–45). The earlier-mentioned Magotōji and Tenjūrō of Sagami, who

22. HAYASHI 2003, 62. For a document relating the circumstances of Kandayū’s dismissal see *Atsugi-shi shi, kinsei shiryō-hen*, vol. 1, 223–24.

23. *Dengaku*, literally “field music,” was probably originally music and dance related to the planting of rice seedlings or celebrations after agricultural labor was completed. Such arts were transformed into a wildly popular, largely secular genre by the medieval era, often in the form of festivals with much dancing, music, acrobatics, and theatricals. See also PLUTSCHOW 1996, 169–80, for a discussion of the genre throughout Japan.

oversaw the sacred dancing at the shrines they controlled, may well have danced *kōwaka* genres when entertaining the military elite and probably offered such dances to the gods on shrine stages where commoner audiences were permitted to watch.

A hint regarding the relation of secular and sacred arts in the late medieval and early Edo periods is provided by the *Ochiboshū* from 1728, which recounts a migration to Edo by Sagami stage-players of the Hōshō school of Noh a century or so earlier. The Hōjō clan of Odawara had long taken lessons from Hōshō-school Noh masters (*tayū* 太夫), but

in 1590, when the Hōjō clan fell, [Noh] actors in the employ of Hōjō Ujinao [1562–1591] as well as actors who performed Noh dance [*ranbu* 乱舞] in town all came to Edo to make a living. Among them the earlier-mentioned Kurematsu *tayū* also went to Edo. When “holy Noh” [*shinji-noh* 神事能] [at the Kanda Myōjin shrine] began to be staged, actors who had fled Odawara performed, and Kurematsu *tayū*, who had supported the Hōshō *tayū*, later took over these performances. I do not know how much truth this tale contains, but I heard it from an old man when I was a child [that is, mid-seventeenth century]. The descendants of Kurematsu today head the performers of *daidai kagura* 太々神楽. (*Ochiboshū*, 47)

Perhaps like Kōmatsu Kanemon and other secular dancers who had turned up in Edo, Kurematsu had sallied forth to Edo in the hopes of earning the support from the warrior elite. Not scoring much of a success, and with the Noh drama no longer enjoying the support it had once received from the military class, he and his compeers were eventually forced to explore more lucrative sources of support. Edo shrines functioned as a convenient alternative for staging performances sustained by more popular tastes. Kanemon and similar Mikawa *kōwaka* dancers, too, may have turned to religious institutions such as Sensōji, while Magotōji, Tenjūrō, and lesser *kagura* dancers of Sagami looked to the political connections of *kōwaka* artists.

At any rate, by the late seventeenth century several figures at Sensōji were busily occupying themselves with jockeying for political advantage. When Kandayū found himself banished in 1695, Tamura and his ancestors jumped in to fill the void, though at this juncture Tamura was still only a “helper in charge of the occupational regulations of the masters of sacred dance” (*shinji mai-dayū shokuhō kōken-yaku* 神事舞太夫職法後見役), probably a long-winded way of saying something like Kandayū’s “factotum” (*Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki*). As mentioned earlier, in 1697 Tamura appears as the “secretary” (*tedai* 手代) to “San”; in 1712 he again identifies his house as assistants (*kōken* 後見) of late seventeenth-century “masters of sacred dance” (HAYASHI 1993, 5). In the nineteenth century Matura Seizan, too, reports that the ancestors of the Tamura of

his day had served as “secretaries” of Kandyū (MATSURA 1980, 197). Moreover, Tamura’s daughter had apparently married Kikuchi Kudayū (that is, the future Kandyū), turning the latter into his son-in-law. Tamura may well have been the driving force behind the investiture of the presumably young Kudayū with sacerdotal and institutional authority. When the latter was exiled on 1707/12/18 after yet another dispute, this one with yin-yang diviners, Tamura appealed to the authorities to have a new head appointed. On 1708/3/18—the month and day of Sensōji’s legendary foundation—it was Tamura himself who was catapulted to the position of head of dance masters in the Kanto area, the provinces of Kai, Shinano, and the Aizu area. In addition, in 1713 he was granted control over female shamans in the region (*Shinji mai-dayū yuishogaki*), though this appears to have been merely a formalization of what had already been decided by the magistrates on 1698/5/9.<sup>24</sup>

Tamura’s subsequent endeavor to forge an administrative structure that placed him and the Sanja Gongen at the center of sacred dance in eastern Japan was supported by the *bakufu*, which was persisting with its campaign to cement organizational hierarchies for religious practitioners. Sensōji administrators, too, presumably tired of the endless wrangling that had preceded Tamura’s leadership, must also have breathed a sigh of relief when Tamura’s headship was acknowledged by higher officials. In any case, Tamura was granted a twelve-by-thirty-nine-meter dwelling known as the “shrine residence” (*jinja yashiki* 神社屋敷), located at the southern end of the second block of Tawara-machi, in close proximity to Sensōji and the Sanja Gongen. Even though this abode was located in the city proper, it was not subject to taxation since its occupant fell under the jurisdiction of the magistrate of temples and shrines.<sup>25</sup> Although often plagued with lawsuits, Tamura continued to advance his social position and elevate his image. He was allowed to use a surname (and grant surnames to rural associates) and after 1726 obtained the right swathe himself in official robes. After 1766 he even won the privilege of donning two swords. As the leader of an independent religious faction of properly titled and outfitted members, he was well placed to consolidate his control of sacred arts and rituals performed in the Kanto area.<sup>26</sup> What exactly “control” (*shihai* 支配) of performers and their arts and rituals meant in practice, however, was something of an open question. Most

24. See HAYASHI 2003, 62. On the legal and social background of this decision see NAKANO 2007, 9–13 and HAYASHI 2008, 211–14. The latter provides two important documents.

25. *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 315, 321–22; “Jisha kakiage, Sensōji kakiage” (from 1825) cited in *Tōkyō-shi shikō, shigai-hen*, vol. 5, 127. Dating from the mid-eighteenth century, MATSURA (1978, 286) gives the location as the first block, evidently in error. For a map see *Sensōji nikki*, vol. 28, 111.

26. For a document indicating that surnames were granted see *Takasaki shiryō shū, Han kiroku (Ōkōchi)* vol. 2, 94.

likely it implied that Tamura's subordinates were required to pay their organization a yearly licensing fee and that Tamura maintained the right to intervene in disputes and to expel or punish refractory members. The "masters," for their part, gained status as affiliates of an officially approved association. The backing of such an organization meant a good deal when members wished to submit petitions to local bureaucrats or *bakufu* magistrates or when "masters of sacred dance" drew up lawsuits against competitors challenging on established rights and privileges. With business proceeding as usual, however, regional "dance masters" probably saw and thought little of Tamura and the Sanja Gongen, both far away in Edo.

### *Occupations of the "Masters of Sacred Dance"*

Once Tamura was appointed head of "masters of sacred dance," he began to specify the occupations, arts, and practices that his underlings rightfully performed. This was accomplished by drawing up official lists of asserted monopolies. The following register, drafted in 1773 but reissued and revised in later years, can serve as an indication of the sorts of services for which Tamura sought to corner the market. What was listed no doubt encapsulated a constantly evolving set of activities supported by Kanto-area "dance masters."<sup>27</sup>

Occupations of the masters of sacred dance:

1. Distribution of images [像, talismans] of the god Daikoku 大黒.
2. Use of a mask of a "mythical lion" [*shishi* 獅子; 1789 version: use of five-colored *heihaku* 幣帛, a wand made of sacred strips of paper attached to a stick] for exorcising the Dokū [or Dokō, 土公] god of the hearth in various rural areas.<sup>28</sup>
3. Providing dance [*mai* 舞] and music [*ongyoku* 音曲] at shrine festivals.
4. At prayer times during "moonrise vigils" [*tsukimachi* 月待], "sunrise vigils" [*himachi* 日待], cutting out cloth or paper offerings to the gods [*heihaku* 幣帛], wielding prayer beads [*juzu* 数珠] and a sistrum [*shakujō* 錫杖] while performing prayers. Also, supplying sacred amulets [*fushu* 符守]. Serving at all "combinatory Shinto" occasions.

27. This listing is taken from *Shisō zasshiki*, fascicle 36 (vol. 8), 839, dated 1773; and MATSUDAIRA 1942, 617, dated 1789. The original roster is followed by the rights of female shamans (*azusa miko* or *kuchiyose miko*) under his control. For a discussion of the latter list see GROEMER 2007. It is important to note that Tamura's *miko* did not perform *kagura* or other rituals at the Sensōji, nor was Tamura in charge of licensing them as shrine-related performers or assistants in shrine rituals elsewhere.

28. Dokū was also known as Dokujin or Dokōjin 土公神, the god of the ground in yin-yang philosophy. He changed his location with the seasons, and was thought to inhabit the hearth in spring.

Much of this monopoly was more allegation than reality. Amulets or talismans dedicated to Daikoku, for example, were distributed by a variety of religious and quasi-religious figures, but Tamura insisted as late as 1825 that “distribution of such talismans by other houses is not permitted” (*Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 321). Though he sold wooden Daikoku tablets from a booth to the right of the Kannon chapel at the highly popular “year-end fair” (*toshi no ichi*) on the grounds of Sensōji on 12/17–18, elsewhere his monopoly rights over such activity appears to have been weak.<sup>29</sup> In 1832 “hardship” had caused him to cease distributing “Daikoku talismans” personally in what is today Fujimi-shi (Saitama prefecture), with the result that for several years no such items were available. Finally, people were ordered to come and pick them up at the home of the local intendant (*Ōsawa Seiichi-ke monjo*, 16). In 1838 Tamura was still petitioning the authorities to be granted the privilege of vending such talismans in the three provinces of Shimōsa, Awa, and perhaps Kazusa (the source erroneously give Shimōsa twice) for seven years to come (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 21, 522). Penury was cited as the reason. In 1859 he was yet again permitted to hawk talismans in the provinces of Musashi, Sagami, Shimōsa, and Hitachi, though he needed to make a formal request in order to obtain this prerogative.<sup>30</sup>

Other occupations were no more securely grounded. Low-ranking Buddhist priests, *yamabushi*, and blind men and women sometimes conducted hearth exorcisms, using a variety of staffs or other implements. Fire-prevention solemnities were commonly enacted by religionists including *gannin*, who likewise officiated at the “moonrise vigils” and “sunrise vigils” that could double as all-night parties (see GROEMER 1999, 286–88). And the act of “providing dance and music at shrine festivals” was at best limited to those shrines controlled by “masters of sacred dance” under Tamura. Indeed, the list of Tamura’s supposed monopolies seems to have been crafted so that the most dubious entitlements crowned the list while the most incontrovertible one, that of serving at all “combinatory Shinto” occasions, was remitted to the very end. It was these arts, especially the exhibition of a variety of *kagura* pieces that formed the core of activities supporting the “masters of sacred dance.” During the nineteenth century men at least nominally under Tamura’s control danced, played the flute and drums, and enacted holy rituals at Sensōji, Kanasayama in Hitachi, the Mito Tōshōgū, Chiba Myōken, and Rokusho Myōjin in Sagami, though by no means everything seen and heard there was related to “combinatory Shinto” (see the 1815 *Edo machikata*

29. MATSUDAIRA 1939, 152; *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 321. MATSUDAIRA 1942, 422 notes that he sold both Ebisu and Daikoku tablets.

30. See the document cited in HAYASHI 1998, 280. A related document indicating that Tamura transmitted the order to his fellows in Shimōsa can be found in *Ichikawa Kinsei-shi Kenkyūkai*, ed., 1991, 63–64.



*kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 323–24).<sup>31</sup> In addition, one important element of Tamura's control not listed at all, was the arts of female shamans.<sup>32</sup>

### *Tamura's Fall and the Arrival of Modern Times*

Tamura's organization appears to have reached its apogee of strength and scope during the middle of the eighteenth century. By the start of the nineteenth century hard times had arrived, with Tamura reporting in 1838 that since the 1720s some seven to eight hundred of his subordinates had been ruined. Now, he lamented, he controlled only some thirty men in the capital and the provinces (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 21, 522).<sup>33</sup> Since it was chiefly from these men (minus the ones who served as direct administrators of the Sanja Gongen) that he drew his benefice, he must have become as poor as a church mouse. His authority was greatly eroded as well. In the 1850s officials in Edo supposedly under his control were giving orders to his subordinates without even bothering to ask for the leader's approval.

With his institution in shambles and personally embroiled in a lawsuit for failing to pay his ward dues in 1857 (Sensōji stepped in and bailed him out with seven *ryō* after which the suit was withdrawn), he set about enacting a series of desperate institutional reforms. Ward dues continued to accrue and another court case loomed on the horizon, so in 1859/3 he petitioned to return to Sensōji the bulk of his property on the second block of Tawara-machi, the site of his venerable official residence. He would, he contritely promised, move to the rear of this lot and continue his time-honored trade, if only the temple would deign to cover his ward dues in perpetuity and grant him ten *ryō* for moving expenses. The real estate in question was then leased to his neighbor, who offered to pay ward dues in addition to handing over one *ryō* per year in rent to the temple (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 28, 109–12). These tactics seem not to have greatly relieved Tamura's plight, for in 1860/12 he petitioned to delay the repayment of that year's installment of a loan from Sensōji. He was grudgingly made to wait until 2/25 the following year (*Sensōji nikki*, vol. 29, 804–5). In desperation Tamura turned for help to the Hagiwara family of Aikō in Sagami, nominally his subordinates, from whom he succeeded in scrounging ten *ryō*.<sup>34</sup> In return, members of the Hagiwara family were appointed to high positions within his administration and became heir to a monopoly of talisman vending in Sagami. By the 1860s it was the Hagiwara family that was holding the reins of Tamura's association (HAYASHI

31. I have discussed Tamura's arts in some detail in GROEMER 2011a and 2011b.

32. On the arts of such shamans see GROEMER 2007.

33. Another record from the mid-nineteenth century puts that number at a mere twenty-eight individuals (*Mikikigusa*, vol. 14 [fascicle *zoku* 6/4], 124).

34. For documents see *Atsugi-shi shi, kinsei shiryō-hen*, vol. 1, 231–32.

1998, 277–81). Apparently the last Hachidayū even married a woman from Aikō, presumably of Hagiwara blood (NAKAYAMA 1969, 625). The fire that broke out at Tawara-machi on 1865/8/14 and destroyed a good part of Asakusa, including the Kaminari Gate (it was not rebuilt until 1960), could hardly have helped Tamura's fortunes (*Bukō nenpyō*, vol. 2, 201).

The collapse of Tamura's organization, though perhaps exaggerated in documents, probably resulted at least in part from the increasing perception among rural "dance masters" that little was to be gained by paying annual dues and maintain fealty to an institution of "combinatory Shinto." The rapid rise of market forces, even within the sacred performing arts, meant that "dance masters" were concerning themselves far more with competing for clients than with ancient loyalties and long-established allegiances. The profitability of performance rights was beginning to trump precedent. In 1843, for example, *kagura* masters of Aikō village (centering on the Hagiwara family, which was also associated with yin-yang diviners and transmitted "Aikō *kagura*" until the 1960s) were commissioned to perform at a ceremony held at the Akiba shrine in Ōiso. They blithely staged their show without bothering to consult their counterparts linked to the nearby Rokusho Myōjin shrine who customarily controlled the turf in which the performance took place. When the latter vociferously objected to this untoward intrusion, the Aikō *kagura* dancers backed down and issued an apology in which they solemnly swore they would never again perform at said shrine without prior approval and that they were prepared to indemnify the Rokusho Myōjin performers for any future performances taking place within the latter's traditional jurisdiction. Such quasi-contractual obligations were, however, difficult to enforce. The following year the same men brazenly performed anew without authorization, predictably leading to renewed remonstrations, countered once more by the usual earnest apologies. The offenders promised once more to cease staging illicit performances and to pay the Rokusho Myōjin five hundred coppers for saké (HASHIMOTO 2004, 30; HAYASHI 1998, 283–84). Although the Aikō usurpers stood on what appeared to be the losing side of the conflict both times, financial rewards reaped from *kagura* performance evidently rendered it worthwhile to engage in repeated wrongdoing and then pay off the injured party after the fact.

With the market in *kagura* booming, villages in Sagami now often summoned well-known touring groups to stage an assortment of entertaining theatrical genres for purportedly sacred functions (SAGAMIHARA-SHI KYŌIKU IINKAI SHAKAI KYŌIKU-BU 1989, 12–14). In such a competitive milieu, *kagura* dancers were well advised to innovate rather than to cling to musty old forms. This was not lost on the Hagiwara family, which went so far as to incorporate *kabuki* styles into their *kagura*. Wearing masks, their players reproduced the ever-popular plots of "Kanjinchō," "Ehon taikōki," or the tale of the desperado Kunisada Chūji

(1810–1850).<sup>35</sup> The Ōhashi house of “sacred dancers,” not to be outdone, also petitioned successfully in 1847 to produce *kabuki* theater in Sagami. According to a written appeal, this family had long maintained such rights, but had rudely been deprived of them in 1841 during the short-lived, ill-fated Tenpō reforms. Without this art, the petitioners maintained, their house was heading toward bankruptcy (*Odawara-shi shi, shiryō-hen, kinsei*, vol. 3, 542–44). The same trends toward commercialization were on the rise in Edo as well, where lively, comic, and even scurrilous *kagura* had long been in favor. In 1804 one Sōbee, for example, a vendor of broiled *tōfu* at Koishikawa, became famous for his “*kagura* farces” (*kyōgen kagura*). During the twelfth month of 1825 something sailing under the flag of “sacred dance” (*shinji mai*) was even presented on the boards of a showhouse at Ryōgoku, the center of Edo plebeian secular entertainment (*Fujiokaya nikki*, vol. 1, 11–12; *Kiki no manimani*, 121).

After the Meiji era, government bureaucrats and lawmakers were increasingly apt to deem such unorthodox practices as wicked, even blasphemous. On 1872/2/28 officials from Ashigara prefecture (which included a good part of Sagami) demanded that performers of “so-called traveling *kagura* and the like” cease erecting stages and selling tickets for crowd-pulling performances (ŌISO-MACHI KYŌIKU IINKAI 1976, 113). In 1874 even the Tokyo police warned that *kagura* was “giving our holy land a bad name.” What was performed, they judged, “is unbecoming to the precepts and duties of shrine priests and shrine officials” since it was being staged “just to draw crowds and make money.” And if perchance such embarrassing shows were spied by foreigners, this would surely “bring ridicule and shame upon our land” (KURATA 1988, 251). Shrines in Tokyo and elsewhere were thus obliged to pledge that they would not present anything vaguely “immoral” or “obscene.” Behind these values lurked the rise of state Shinto, which had little patience with popularized and secularized *kagura* and proved disastrous to Tamura’s claims of legitimacy based on archaic precedent and superannuated traditions. His carefully crafted strategies of disclosing or concealing past events, which had served him so well in the past, could not hope to withstand the onslaught of the religious orthodoxy of the Meiji state.

Soon enough Tamura was brought to understand this sad truth. Already in 1868 or 1869 he had been relieved of his title of “Head of masters of sacred dance” (*shinji mai dayū-kashira*). Shortly thereafter he was instructed to assume the more profane and far less imposing identity of “Head of dance masters” (*mai-dayū kashira*). Tamura and his minions were still permitted to continue to perform *kagura*, but they were directed to confine their activities to Tokyo,

35. An assortment of comic Edo *kagura* texts as performed by Maruichi Kosen 丸一小仙 and his troupe can be found in GEINŌSHI KENKYŪKAI 1974, 527–65 (“Edo daikagura kokkei kakeai daihon” 江戸大神楽滑稽掛合台本).

something erroneously described as “having been the case until today.” Tamura’s income must have been further diminished when he was debarred from distributing images of the god Ōkuninushi (perhaps an error for, or confusion with, Daikoku) and from engaging in hearth exorcism using a Shinto staff. He was dealt a further blow when he was forbidden to use such a staff in offering prayers at moonrise vigils (*tsukimachi*) and sunrise vigils (*himachi*) and in distributing talismans on such occasions. Finally, even the female shamans under his control found their wings clipped. The long-accepted name *azusa miko* (“*azusa* shaman”) was abolished in favor of the far less sacred sounding term *azusa-jo* or *azusa onna* (梓女, lit. “*azusa* woman”), which, though still seen in documents relating to Kandaiyū’s altercations in the mid 1690s (see HAYASHI 2003, 60, 62), had in the meantime completely fallen out of use. In an attempt to curb “superstition” and heterodoxy, Meiji bureaucrats sought to prevent such women from engaging in their usual séances, providing exorcism, and vending talismans (*Fuji ruisan* 府治類纂, cited in SATŌ 1998, 241).

In 1874/2 Tokyo *kagura* performers associated with the Yoshida house of Shinto remarked that on 1870/7 Tamura—whom they trivialized as merely the “head of female shamans” (*miko-gashira*)—had been deprived of all control over *kagura* in the Tokyo area. The breakdown of the old order, they maintained, had led to incessant infighting over territory. The source of this competition was the penchant of farmers, merchants, and artisans to abandon their occupations in favor of performing what they derisively labeled “minor *kagura*” (*shō-kagura* 小神楽) or “children’s entertainment *kagura*” (*dōgi kagura* 童戯神楽), long on theatrical flourishes and clever words, but dreadfully short on holy significances (KURATA 1988, 248–49). Such assertions by the Yoshida house harbored much unwarranted, jealous contempt, but Tamura and other Kanto “masters of dance” could not mount an effective defense against the depredations of the Meiji regime and its supporters. Some “masters” were absorbed into the Kyoto-based Shirakawa family of Shinto, which, however, did not allow female shamans to perform exorcism and other traditional functions (see NAKANO 2008, 317–18). Although the official separation of Shinto from Buddhism in 1868 meant that some of Tamura’s subordinates might fare better than defrocked rural Buddhist priests whom they at times replaced, the sun had set for the “combinatory Shinto” association of “masters of sacred dance.”<sup>36</sup>

36. For a petition in which a “sacred dance master” of Sagami sought to unseat the Buddhist priest for whose temple he once worked, see HARDACRE 2002, 150–51.

### Conclusion

In discussions of the history of Edo-period religious organizations one is often left with the impression that ecclesiastical hierarchies were routinely created by *bakufu* fiat or more gradually through approved extensions of medieval precedent. Tamura's situation, however, suggests that neither official directives from above nor traditional continuity necessarily played the leading role in developing the institutional structures of a recognized sacred association. Determinations of rank, status, and degrees of authority could be built up gradually through processes chiefly political in nature. Even the identity of the individual or family upon which such power devolved was more a product of political machinations than official edicts. *Bakufu* approval was far from irrelevant, but officialdom often simply approved what had been determined at a lower level. Even pedigree, on which the *bakufu* placed so much weight, could in a pinch be forged to suit the occasion. The real center of concern for those engaged in political maneuvering was thus how to make claims to authority and legitimacy stick among one's peers and underlings.

But if the process of building up an organizational pyramid through ad hoc, tactical, and essentially political means was fraught with insecurities and imponderables, dismantling the fragile resulting edifice proved relatively easy when the larger political landscape changed. The shortcomings of an organization founded on asserted archaic precedents and inviolable rights rather than economic viability became patently evident during the last few decades of the Edo period. With the upheaval brought on by the Meiji restoration, the house of cards the "masters" had propped up for nearly two centuries came tumbling down in an avalanche that none of them, individually or collectively, could hope to stem. What remained in the end was a heap of smoldering and sputtering *kagura*-related embers, which ironically proved themselves more lasting than the divine efficacies of the "combinatory Shinto" on which the "masters" had relied for so long.

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