

Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan

From Tradition to Modernity

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The Idea of *Tsukuri yama*

Reimagining Mountains through *Aragoto*,
the Style of Superhuman Strength in Kabuki

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Abstract This paper reports the most fundamental ideas of mountains in Japanese tradition from *aragoto* in Edo period Kabuki. Created and pioneered by Ichikawa Danjūrō I 初代市川團十郎 in the late seventeenth century, the rough style of Kabuki known as *aragoto* is characteristic of Kabuki in the Edo region (modern-day Tōkyō), contrasting the *wagoto* or soft style of the Kyōto-Ōsaka region. Many of the 18 best plays of the Ichikawa family are *aragoto* style performances and are still performed nowadays as specialities of the Ichikawa school. The style of *aragoto* during the Genroku era (1688-1704) – with its origin in performances of *oni*, or ogres, in local festival grounds – was mostly set in the mountainous areas where these ogres were believed to have dwelled. Setups for festivals, *yama*, which literally means ‘mountain’ in Japanese, or *tsukuri yama* つくり山 (reimagining mountains), serve as scenography representing the mountains. These *yama* have been created in various forms as places for Japanese *kami*, spirits or phenomena worshipped in folk beliefs, as far back as the tenth century. The stages for the ancient performing art called *kagura* and *yama* such as the Yamaboko float of the Kyōto Gion Festival and the Yamagasa float in Hakata are considered to be central to festivals. This paper aims to point out the folkloric mind-set behind *yama*, that is mountains as the manifestation of *kami*, using images of *aragoto*, *oni* and *yama*.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Staging of *aragoto*. – 3 Settings of *aragoto*. Typically in Mountains or with a Mountain as a Backdrop. – 4 Unruly Kinpira Dolls. Predecessors of *aragoto*. – 5 *Oni* in Festival Grounds. A Particular Focus on *oni* in *kagura*. – 6 *Yama*. Japanese Festival Floats at Festival Grounds. – 7 The Idea of *yama*. – 8 Conclusion.

Keywords Yama. Aragoto. Kinpira jōruri. Oni. Tsukuri yama. Kagura. Furyū. Mitate.



1 Introduction

The offer for this conference from Professor Ruperti instantly reminded me of mountains. Japan experienced a terrible disaster on 11th March 2011. In Fukushima, the whole population of many villages and towns had to be evacuated at that time, and 130,000 of them have yet to return. Mountains have become desolated at an alarming rate in those areas. Although mountains could be a cause of disaster, closely related to our daily lives, they have brought us blessings as well. Japan is a mountain-

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ous country. For instance, in Kōchi prefecture, where I live, mountains occupy nearly 90% of the land. This paper reports the most fundamental ideas of mountains in Japanese tradition from *aragoto* 荒事 in Kabuki of Edo period (1603-1867).¹

2 The Staging of *aragoto*

Aragoto 荒事 is an artistic performance to show prodigious strength or rough action. Satō (2002a) shows that generally there are two types of typical staging of *aragoto*. In the first type, an evil spirit is subjugated and peace is restored. In this case, the evil spirit represented as *oni* is driven away by *kami* or a demon who can overpower *oni*. In the second, an incarnated *kami* goes on a wild rampage and, when his wishes are realised after the rampage, he promises to restore peace. In this case, the *kami* is incarnated in the form of a thunderbolt or the god of thunder.

The following examples show the first type of evil spirits' emergence as *oni*. Figure 1 is from an illustrated Kabuki script and depicts a scene of *Onigajō onna yamairi* 鬼城女山入 (First performed in July 1702, at the Yamamura Theatre in Edo). *Fudō* 不動 and *Shuten dōji* 酒吞童子 are fighting for a temple bell by pulling it like a tug-of-war. The figure on the right at the centre labelled as “*Shuten dōji no reikon*” 酒吞童子の靈魂 (The Spirit of *Shuten Dōji*) is depicted as *oni* having horns on his head.

In Figure 2 from *Sankai Nagoya* 参会名護屋 (First performed in January 1697, at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo) the biggest figure on the left, *Shōki* 鍾馗 performed by *Danjūrō I*, is subjugating the *oni* under his feet, who has horns as symbols of evil and is labelled as “*Kusunoki Masashige no shūshin*” 楠木正成の執心 (The Spirit of *Kusunoki Masashige*).

Figure 3 is from *Dōjōji* 道成寺 and shows a scene in which a she-demon comes out from a temple bell and confronts with a role called *oshi modoshi* 押戻し (literally ‘pushing back’). “*Oshi modoshi*” is also a performance title among the 18 best plays by the Ichikawa family, the *Kabuki Jūhachiban* 歌舞伎十八番, in which play the starring role subjugates a demoness.

Figure 4 depicts the character of *oshi modoshi*, in its typical costume, wearing a straw lampshade hat and raincoat with a stalk of green bamboo with roots in one hand. Hat and coat mean *oni* or *kami* in disguise and the green bamboo is a symbol of unusual strength. *Oshi modoshi* is capable of subjugating a she-devil, which allows the interpretation that *Oshi modoshi* is a demon god.

1 All images described in the text are inserted in accordance with the number in the parentheses.



Figure 1 (Top). Onigajo onna yamairi. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 502-3

Figure 2 (Bottom left). Sankai Nagoya. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 52-3

Figure 3 (Bottom right). Dōjōji. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 52

The following examples are the second type of incarnated *kami*'s emergence as *oni*. Incarnated *kami* is realised as a god of thunder and appears as *oni* or *oni*-likened figure.

Figure 5 is from *Narukami* 鳴神, one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*. It is a scene called "Narukami ōare" 鳴神大荒れ (The Rampage of Narukami). He puts the Dragon God (or the Water God) under containment by curse, causing a drought as a result. A princess named "Kumo no taema hime" 雲の絶間姫 seduces him to solve the problem. When he finds that he is deceived by her, he is in such a rage that he makes the corporal transformation from human to the god of thunder during the furious rampage. *Genpei narukami denki* 源平雷伝記, (first performed in August 1698 at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo) created by Danjūrō I, is the oldest Narukami play ever known. In the script, the transformation scene is expressed as "Is he Narukami or an incarnated god?". Special makeup, standing hair, and flame patterns on the kimono prove that he is an incarnated god or a human transformed into thunder.

At the centre of Figure 6 is Tenjin sama 天神様 (the deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真), the predecessor of an incarnated god of thunder such as Narukami. In the scene from *Kitano tenjin engi emaki* 北野天神縁起絵巻 (1503), Michizane, who made a corporal transformation into a god of thunder, has just flown to the mansion of Fujiwara no Shihei 藤原時平 in Kyōto for vengeance. As seen in this case, the god of thunder appears as *oni*, which is red all over.

In brief, staging of *aragoto* is realised either in a form of weaker *oni* and stronger *oni* or in a demon god. Therefore, *oni* is a key word of *aragoto*.

3 Settings of *aragoto*. Typically in Mountains or with a Mountain as a Backdrop

When we focus on the setting of *aragoto*, it is notably in mountains or has a mountain as a backdrop as seen in the following examples.

Figure 7 is *Yanone* 矢の根, one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*, which was first created and performed by Danjūrō II 市川団十郎 (二世). The main character Soga no Gorō 曾我の五郎 is an incarnated god, venerated by people in Edo throughout the Edo period. Until the mid-nineteenth century, a Kabuki play on the Soga story had been staged every New Year. In this picture Soga no Gorō is sharpening a large arrowhead with Mount Fuji behind him.

Figure 8 is a scene from *Kusazuribiki* 草摺引き (tasset pulling). As previously shown in Figure 1 with a temple bell version, two people pulling an object from each side is one of *aragoto* stage effects: for example, *zō hiki* 象引き (elephant pulling) and *sotoba hiki* 卒塔婆引き (grave tablet pulling). In this picture, Soga no Gorō and Kobayashi no Asahina 小林の朝比奈 are performing an 'armor-tasset pulling' on a mobile stage representing *yama* with a Mount Fuji backdrop.



Figure 4 (Top). *Oshi modoshi*. Reproduced from *The National Diet Library Digital Collection*. URL <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1308780?tocOpen=1> (2017-06-12)

Figure 5 (Centre). *Narukami*. Reproduced from the *Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Digital Archives Collection*

Figure 6 (Bottom). *Kitano tenjin engi emaki*. Reproduced from *Izutsuya no bunka kigo*. URL <http://izucul.cocolog-nifty.com/balance/2009/08/vs-3a8a.html> (2017-06-12)



Figure 7 (Top). Yanone. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 16.



Figure 8 (Left). Kusazuribiki. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 69



Figure 9 (Right). Shoki. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 53

Setting in mountains is illustrated in the following examples.

Figure 9 is Shōki 鍾馗 whose *oni* subjugation is performed in a rocky mountain.

Figure 10 is from one of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*, *Fudō* 不動 (The God Of Fire). As usually seen in *Fudō* statues in temples, *Fudō* is expressed as a figure sitting on a rock in this scene. This rock throne is thought to represent the top of the mountain.

Figure 11 is from *Kagekiyo* 景清, another of the *Kabuki Jūhachiban*. Taira no Kagekiyo is imprisoned for having made an attempt on the life of Minamoto no Yoritomo but he breaks out of a sturdy prison. The prison is set in a cave in Mount Kamakura.

The setting of *Dōjōji* is in the mountains in the first place. In addition, going back to Figure 3, the picture of *oshi modoshi* scene from *Dōjōji* provides an example of *yamadai* 山台 (mountain platform), the high stage on which a demoness stands, representing *yama*.

Figure 12 is Gorō's rampage scene from a *Kabuki* script of *Tsuwamono kongen Soga* 兵根元曾我 (first performed in July 1697, at the Nakamura Theatre in Edo). Danjūrō I as Soga no Gorō has just transformed himself into a god after a three-week rigorous ascetic praying to become *oni* or *kami* to avenge on Kudō Suketsune 工藤祐経 for killing his father. He has broken an iron hoe and is now uprooting a large bamboo stalk.

Figure 13, *Take nuki Gorō* 竹拔五郎 (Bamboo-uprooting Gorō) by Torii Kiyomasu 鳥居清倍, is a coloured version of Gorō's rampage (fig. 12), and Gorō's body is all red. Danjūrō I played Gorō's role with his body painted all over. This red is also the colour of Michizane who turned into *oni*, the god of thunder, in Figure 6.

Figure 14 from *Tsuwamono kongen Soga* shows Gorō before turning into the incarnation of a *kami*. He is in his adolescence, looking charming in the costume of a young man and sitting face to face with his enemy Kudō. This shows that the rigorous mountain asceticism enabled him to transform from human into a *kami*.

Figure 15 is another example of mountain setting, a scene called "Narukami ōare" 鳴神大荒れ (The Rampage of Narukami). The setting is *Kitayama iwaya* 北山岩屋 (Kitayama mountain cave).

Figure 16 is a scene named "Tenpaizan" 天拝山 (Mount Tenpai) from the *Kabuki* play *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑. On the summit of a high mountain called Tenpaizan, Michizane undertakes a transformation from human into *kami*. He has just split a large pine tree in two with his power. This Tenpaizan scene stems from neither *Kabuki* nor *Jōruri*.

According to Kasai (1973), Michizane's story, namely the story of the foundation of Kitano Tenjin Shrine, came into existence between the late twelfth century and the thirteenth century and this Tenpaizan scene is in both the oldest book about Tenjin foundation, written in the Kenkyū 建久 era (1190-1198), and the oldest Tenjin foundation picture scroll painted in the Jōkyū 承久 era (1219-1222).

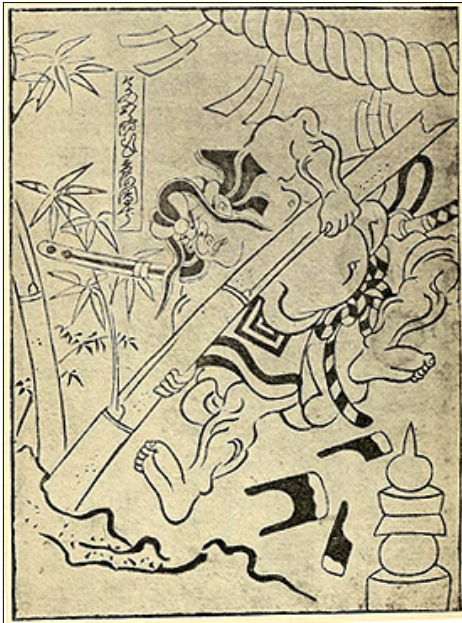


Figure 10 (Top-left). Fudō. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 29.

Figure 11 (Top-right). Kagekiyo. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 61.

Figure 12 (Bottom-left). Tsumamono kongen Soga. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1: 72.

Figure 13 (Bottom-right). Takenuki Gorō by Kiyomasu Torii . Reproduced from *Ichikawa Danjurō Edo kabuki jūichidai no keifu* (1978).



Figure 14 (Top). Tsumamono kongen Soga. Reproduced from *Genroku kabuki kessakushū* (1973). Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten , 1: 68-9.

Figure 15 (Bottom). Narukami. Reproduced from *Shashinshū kabuki jūhachiban* (1985). Tōkyō: Gyōsei, 60: 57.



Figure 16 (Right). Tenpaizan. Reproduced from *Kabuki aragoto* (1990). Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 78.



Figure 17 (Bottom). *Kitano tenjin engi emaki*. Reproduced from *Kyūshū Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan* website. URL <http://collection.kyuhaku.jp/advanced/2194.html> (2017-06-06).

Figure 17 is the picture scroll of the foundation of Kitano Tenjin from the early sixteenth century and depicts the scene in which Michizane, during his exile in Chikushi after praying seven days and seven nights, transforms into the Thunder God, Tenjin.

In Jōruri chant of the Kabuki, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑,² the words that describe the Tenpaizan scene are these: “On top of the mountain so high up, I make a vow to three great gods: Brahma, Sakra Devanam Indra and the Great Enma. I persevere to remain standing and practice rigorous austerity for three days and three nights. My spirit changes into thunder inside clouds”.³

In act 7 of stage direction of this Kabuki play, the Tenpaizan scene is explained as follows: “Clear the centre of the stage then lift up a paper-mache rock placed onto the stage by a stage elevator. The pine tree on top of the rock splits into two by a trick. Michizane strikes a pose holding a Japanese apricot branch in his hand”.⁴ As seen in the above examples, Michizane undergoes a process of asceticism just like Soga no Gorō did, which implies that he and the previously cited Gorō are similar beings.

To sum up, as the examples show, superhuman power emerges with mountains as a background and transformation is realised in or on top of the mountains, showing how *aragoto* requires *yama*. As a consequence, *oni* and *yama* are keywords in *aragoto*.

4 Unruly Kinpira Dolls. Predecessors of *aragoto*

Having seen features of *aragoto* so far, I will now examine how Kinpira dolls are realised in Kinpira jōruri 金平浄瑠璃 as the predecessors of *aragoto*. Kinpira dolls influenced *aragoto* created by Danjūrō and others (Watsuji 1971; Mizutani 1974).

The main character of Kinpira jōruri, Sakata no Kinpira 坂田金平, is the heir of Sakata no Kintoki 坂田金時. In other words, Kinpira is the second generation of Kintoki whose father is the god of thunder and mother is a mountain witch. In addition, Kinpira’s mother is in fact a serpent and he grows up in the mountains, exactly like his father, after having spent five years in his mother’s womb.

2 The author is unknown. The Jōruri play “Sugawara denju tenarai kagami” (co-written by Takeda Izumo, Takeda Koizumo, Miyoshi Shōraku and Namiki Senryū and first performed in 1746, at the Takemoto Theatre in Ōsaka) was so popular that the story was adapted for a Kabuki in the same year. Since then, “Sugawara denju tenarai kagami” has been repeatedly performed in both Jōruri and Kabuki in the Edo and Ōsaka regions.

3 See “Sugawara denju tenarai kagami”, *Meisaku kabuki zenshū* (1968). Tōkyō: Tōkyō Sōgen shinsha, 2: 211. Author’s translation.

4 See “Sugawara denju tenarai kagami”, *Meisaku kabuki zenshū* (1968). Tōkyō: Tōkyō Sōgen shinsha, 2: 211. Author’s translation.

How are these father and son represented in the art of Jōruri chant? When Jōruri words are examined to seek this answer, the two are described as “red all over”, “tall”, and like the demon called Yasharasetu 夜叉羅刹. In short, they are explained as though they were savage *oni*. Other expressions used for them are “rowdy”, “the son of *oni*”, “the grandson of *oni*”, “*oni* subjugator” (Satō 2002b). That is to say both Kintoki and Kinpira are deeply related to *oni* and *yama*.

Figures 18 and 19 are scenes from a Jōruri text, *Kinpira tanjōki* 公平たんじやうき (Kinpira’s Birth Story) published around the beginning of the Kanbun era (1661-1672). Figure 18 portrays the moment when Kinpira was born. Since he was in the womb for as long as five years, he already has plenty of hair and even fangs. Surprised to see his son, Kintoki abandons him in a mountain. However, as Figure 19 reveals, another surprise comes when later Kintoki finds Kinpira far from being dead, but safe and sound. Cherished by beasts, he has fully grown up and now is sitting stately in a mountain cave.

The father Kintoki, also known as Kintarō 金太郎, was an ideal figure of a healthy and strong child throughout early modern times. Figure 20 is one of the many examples by the eighteenth century artist Kitagawa Utamaro 喜多川歌麿 of the mother, a beautiful mountain witch, and her charming child, Kintoki. Kintoki is red painted all over. Figure 21 by the nineteenth century painter Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 shows a scene from Kintoki’s childhood, while he is playing the role of sumō wrestling referee with the *oni* as his underlings.

Figure 22, another Kintoki’s portrait by Kuniyoshi, is entitled “Kaidōmaru” 怪童丸, which is another childhood name of Kintoki. He is holding up an *oni* in one hand. This is *oni* subjugation by Kintoki.

The examples provided here show that Kinpira and Kintoki are represented as *oni* and their superhuman strength emerge with mountains as backgrounds. Therefore, in Kinpira dolls in Kinpira jōruri, again key words are *oni* and *yama*.

5 *Oni* in Festival Grounds. A Particular Focus on *oni* in *kagura*

Oni 鬼 has been a key word in this paper but what is *oni* in the first place?

According to Orikuchi (1975), in ancient times *oni* and *kami* had the same meaning. By early modern times around the Edo period, *oni* were represented by various images in theatrical performance and literature.

Baba (1988) categorised *oni* into five types. Among them she defined that the origin of the oldest prototype of *oni* in Japan were the spirits of ancestors and local regions that appeared to give blessing in folklore. *Oni* of this type remain in *kagura* and in many *oni*-related festivals such as Oni-oi 鬼追い (*oni* chasing) and Shushō-e 修正会.



Figure 18 (Top). Kinpira tanjōki. Reproduced from *Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū* (1966). Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1: 601.

Figure 19 (Bottom). Kinpira tanjōki. Reproduced from *Kinpira jōruri shōhonshū* (1966). Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1: 602.



Figure 20 (Top-left). *Yamauba to Kintoki* by Utamaro (1753-1806). Reproduced from *Wikipedia* at the voice “Yamauba”. URL <https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/山姥> (2017-06-12).



Figure 21 (Top-right). *Kintarō sumō no zu* by Kuniyoshi (1797-1861). Reproduced from *Ukiyo e no naka no kodomo tachi* (1993). Tōkyō: Kumon Shuppan, 146.



Figure 22 (Right). *Honchō musha kagami Kaidōmaru* by Kuniyoshi. URL <http://ameblo.jp/giantlimited/entry-11157393421.html> (2017-06-12).

Among examples of such prototypes, my analysis will focus on *oni* in *kagura*. *Kagura* is performed mostly at festivals all over Japan from Hokkaidō in the north to Kyūshū in the south. *Kagura* is sometimes explained as an ancient theatrical art, in which people politely welcome and entertain *kami* and also perform as *kami* to act out the promise that people will worship them in order to receive protection in return.

First, I will draw some examples from Kōchi prefecture. *Oni* called Yamanushi and Daiban appear in *kagura* in Tosa (Kōchi) performed in villages and towns mostly during the month of November.

Yamanushi 山主 (literally ‘mountain owner’) in Figure 23 dances with a big red cloth. Local people believe that Yamanushi is a *kami* or a Demon-God that lives nearby and rules the mountains. Yamanushi chants a spell to promise the locals peace then dances wildly.

Figures 24-27 are photographs of Daiban ダイバン and, as seen in 24 and 25, he wears a big red *oni* mask. Daiban is the most popular character in Tosa *kagura* and is playfully called “warikotoshi” わりことし (scam) by the people of the district. Daiban dances holding a baby and, if the baby cries during the dance, he or she is said to grow up healthy.

Daiban also has sumo bouts with the locals as shown in Figure 26 and always wins. Daiban has enormous physical strength and goes on rampages but, after being subjugated by *kami*, he hands seven treasures over, with the promise of peace to the people, which is depicted in Figure 27. Daiban’s performance is an easy version of Yamanushi.

The second example is the *oni* appearing during Hana Matsuri 花祭り held in mountainous villages in the boundary area called Sanshintō 三信遠 between Aichi, Nagano and Shizuoka prefectures in central Japan in December and January.

Among many *oni* appearing in Hana Matsuri, Yamamioni 山見鬼 and Sakakioni 榊鬼 are leader-like figures as they are thought to be the most powerful. Yamamioni (literally ‘mountain looking *oni*’) dances all in red with red attire and a red mask twice as big as Daiban’s, holding a broadaxe, like the one Kintarō has. Figure 28 shows Yamamioni who takes an action to split a caldron that represents *yama* during *kagura* performance.

Figure 29 represents Sakakioni (*Cleyera japonica oni*). He fights for a *sakaki* branch, which is considered to be holy in Shintō, with a Shintō priest. After he loses he hands his treasures over. The scenario is basically the same as the one of Daiban in Tosa. Both Yamamioni and Sakakioni dance, swinging a broadaxe high up in the air and stepping heavily on the ground. These movements are said to appease evil spirits.

Figure 30 is by the painter and folklorist Hayakawa Kōtarō, and portrays a *sakaki* branch being pulled, which is considered to be the origin of pulling stage performance of Kabuki such as *kane hiki* 鐘引き and *kusazuri biki* 草摺引き. Hayakawa has studied his hometown’s festival, Hana Matsuri, and made it widely known. His study enables us to interpret to some extent



Figure 23 (Top-right). *Yama nushi*.
Courtesy of Eri Sato

Figures 24-25 (Right and Top-left).
Daiban. Courtesy of Okuda Shono



Figures 26-27. *Daiban*.
Courtesy of Okuda Shono



the meaning of people's actions in the festival. The *sakaki* branch in the festival is a symbol of mountains that the God of the Mountain owns and rules. In short, a *sakaki* branch represents *yama*, thus to hand over the branch entails a promise of peace and blessing from mountains filled with mysterious power.

Oni in Hana Matsuri are called *onisama* 鬼さま, with the honorific title *sama*, and warmly cheered during the dance by local people. Similarly to the case of Daiban in Tosa, people feel close to *oni*. In folklore, *oni* in *kagura* such as Daiban and *oni* in Hana Matsuri are considered to represent spirits of mountains or unruly gods. Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, however, says that “*oni* originally have an auspicious nature”, citing an example of *oni* that hands over treasures in a *Kyōgen* farce, *Setsubun* 節分 (Orikuchi 1976, 141). Daiban and *oni* in Hana Matsuri have this nature as well. *Aragoto* in kabuki may also belong to this line of performing art.

6 *Yama*. Japanese Festival Floats at Festival Grounds

Finally, I will examine *tsukuri yama*, which is a stage or setting for *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura*. Representing mountains to reflect nature in the human world, *tsukuri yama* are a basic requirement for traditional festivals. There are two types of *tsukuri yama*, namely *yama* in *kagura* and *yama* in local festivals. They are usually collectively referred to as *furyū no yama* 風流の山 in research environment. This paper also deals with both as *furyū no yama*. There are quite a few examples referring to *kagura* dancing stages as *yama* but here I will specifically refer to two examples, Hana Matsuri and Ōmoto Kagura.

In Hana Matsuri, the stage where *kagura* is performed is *yama*. In an event called “*Yama tate*” 山立て (mountain setting up), a *sakaki* tree is placed upright at each corner of a square *kagura* stage. Hayakawa Kōtarō (1971, 111) claims that “this setting enables a stage to be assumed as a mountain”. In Figure 31 there is a *kagura* stage called *maido* 舞処, or *yama*, seen from above. This setting is made in an earthen floored room of a private house. A kitchen stove is placed at the centre of the room, above which a cubic object called *byakke* びゃっけ hung from the ceiling. Then, each corner of the *byakke* and the nearest *sakaki* tree at every corner are connected with a rope, making *kami michi* 神道, or roads for gods. Then, each *sakaki* tree is also connected to the next one with a sacred straw festoon, completing the setup of *yama* for *kagura*. Only after this *tsukuri yama* is prepared can *oni* appear on the stage.

Another example is Figure 32, representing *shira yama* 白山 (white mountain). In the area where Hana Matsuri is held, a large-scale festival called “*Kagura*” is performed every seven years. In the festival, a significant event named “*Umare Kiyomari*” 生まれ清まり (literally ‘reborn to be purified’) is carried out. *Shira yama* is a kind of *yama* especially made for this event. People retreat inside *shira yama* and they are revitalised when *oni* appears and cuts it through. Hayakawa

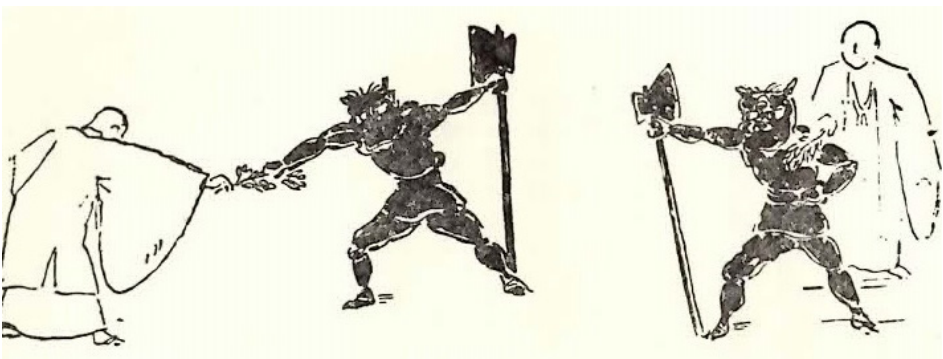


Figure 28 (Top-left). Hana Matsuri, *Yamamioni*. Reproduced from *Mikawa no yamazato dayori* website. URL http://hana.toyone.org/Windows-Live-Writer/2016_11D7B/DSC08469.jpg (2017-07-07)

Figure 29 (Top-right). Hana matsuri, *Sakakioni*. Reproduced from website. URL <http://folk-entertainment.sblo.jp/category/150064-1.html> (2017-06-12)

Figure 30 (Bottom). Sakakibiki. Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1971), vol. 1, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 215

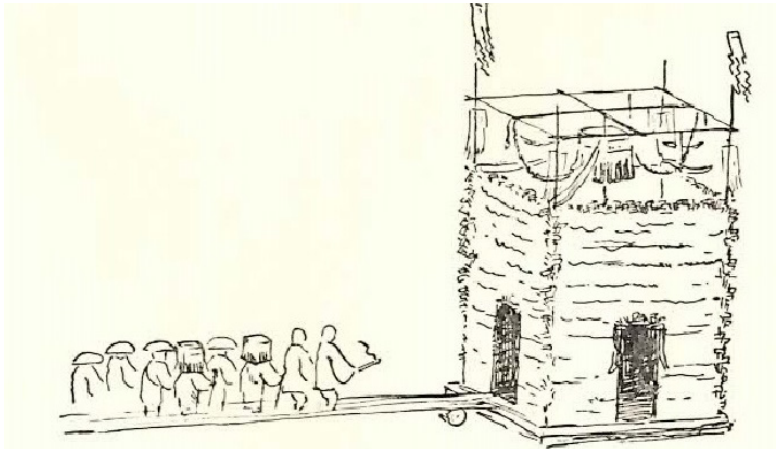


Figure 31 (Right). Yama(maido). Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1971), vol. 1, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 78.

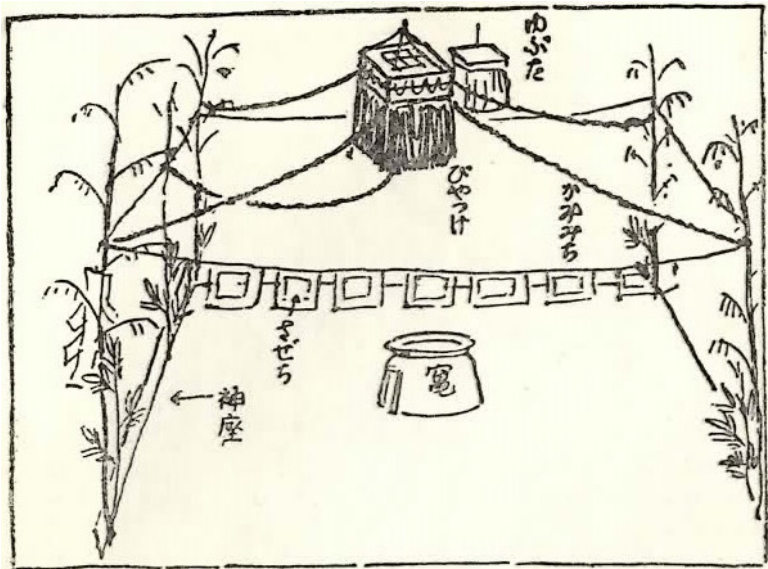


Figure 32 (Centre). Shirayama (a drawing based on supposition). Reproduced from *Hayakawa Kōtarō zenshū* (1972), vol. 2, *Hana Matsuri zenpen*. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 78.



Figure 33 (Top). Yama kanjō. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan.

Figure 34 (Centre-left). Motoyama. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan, 41.

Figure 35 (Centre-right). Tengai. Reproduced from *Ushio Michio chosakushū* (1985), vol. 1, *Kagura to kami gakari*. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan, 40.

(1972) argues that *shira yama* and *maidō kagura* stage are of the same kind since tradition and style are similar. They share some features, for instance, the size of the site (3.6m×3.6m and 5.4m high) and decorations with *byakke*, *hakuhei* 白弊 (bunches of sacred white paper strips) and green brush-wood walls.

In Ōmoto Kagura 大元神楽, which is held in a mountainous region including Ōchi-gun 邑智郡, Shimane Prefecture, *maidō kagura* stage is called *yama*. Held every six years to receive their Ancestor God, Ōmotogami 大元神, Ōmoto Kagura has a long tradition. A role called “Taku Tayū” performs a medium who listens to oracles from Ōmotogami and this divine spiritual possession is given the utmost importance.

Ushio Michio is a Shintō priest and a folklorist in this area, who has studied *kagura* deeply. In Figure 33 he is carrying out Yama Kanjō 山勧請 ritual. According to Ushio (1985) the ritual is explained as follows.

Figure 34 represents *moto yama*, a straw bag with many sacred staffs with plaited paper streamers, which is also referred to *yama no tawara* 山の俵 (straw bag of the mountain). It is the place to receive Ōmotogami and other *kami* are received at a place called *hayama* 端山. As names with ‘-yama’ indicate *yama* is a seat for *kami* and *maidō* stage as a whole. Without this *tsukuri yama*, Ōmotogami cannot appear in front of people.

In the ritual, many *tengai* 天蓋 (canopies) seen in Figure 35 are hanging and priests underneath shake them with hanging ropes attached to them. *Tengai* are places for *kami* to come to.

These *tengai* are also included in *yama*. Consequently, *yama* in Ōmoto Kagura is the same as *yama* in Hana Matsuri, which uses *byakke*. *Tengai* represents the firmament, linking *yama* and heaven.

The next examples are of *furyū no yama*. These *yama* appear in some 1,100 festivals all over Japan. They come in various forms, such as ornamental structures, festival floats, dancing cars, scaffolds and sacred palanquins. The following four points are characteristics of *yama*:

1. *Yama* is moved, carried or drawn along by many people;
2. *Yama* is the central feature and highlight of festivals;
3. *Yama* is a mobile seat for *kami* and a movable stage;
4. *Yama* is a place to decorate dolls and for people to dance and perform plays such as Kabuki. Interestingly, those dolls are usually mostly from stories of *aragoto* or heroic legends.

When we follow back the history of *furyū no yama*, the oldest *yama* seen in documents is the one in Daijōsai 大嘗祭, the Great Thanksgiving. This is the origin of *yamaboko* 山鉾 that took root in the Kyoto Gion Festival 祇園祭 in the late Kamakura period, in the early fourteenth century. Then, throughout the Edo period (1603-1867), various *yama* were developed in many places. The *yamaboko* float of Kyoto Gion Festival was used as a model.

An example is seen in Yamaage Matsuri 山あげ祭り, or Yakumo Shrine 八



Figure 36. Yamaage Matsuri. Reproduced from Dai 5 kai Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū. URL <http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf> (2017-06-12).

雲神社 Festival, held in July in Karasuyama 烏山, Tochigi Prefecture. In this festival, three *yama*, namely *maeyama* 前山, *nakayama* 中山 and *ōyama* 大山 are made by pasting paper on lattice frames, on which Kabuki is performed. Figure 36 shows local young men rushing to the performing site drawing along a platform car that carries parts for *yama*.

Arriving at the roadside site, they set up a ten-metre high *ōyama*, as in Figure 37. This work is expressed as '*yama wo ageru*', which means to raise a mountain.

In the same manner three *yama* are raised as in Figure 38, and Kabuki is performed with them as a background. Performances often shown are those with a demones in the mountains, such as *Modoribashi* 戻橋 and *Masakado* 将門.

The next example is from *Hitachi furyū mono* 日立風流物 in Hitachi Sakura Matsuri 日立さくらまつり held in April in Hitachi City, Ibaraki Prefecture. As in Figure 39, a gigantic festival float is proceeding along between rows of cherry trees in full bloom.

Figure 40 is a close-up of the festival float in Figure 39. With puppeteers and musicians inside, this huge festival float, 15-metre high and weigh-

Figure 37 (Right). *Yamaage Matsuri*. Reproduced from *Dai 5 kai Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū*. URL <http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf> (2017-06-12)

Figure 38 (Centre-right). *Yamaage Matsuri*. Reproduced from *Dai 5 kai Yamaage matsuri shashin kontesuto jushō sakuhinshū*. URL <http://park18.wakwak.com/~omotenashi/yamaage/fotokon2013.pdf> (2017-06-12)

Figure 39 (Bottom-right). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from *Hitachi Media Club* homepage. URL <http://www.maroon.dti.ne.jp/hmc/hakubutu.htm> (2017-06-12)



ing five tons, has a five-story castle back to back with a mountain and is drawn along the festival route by over 200 people. Similar to *yama* raising in Karasuyama, this is an outburst of extraordinary passion. The sight of this huge *yama* moving along leaves strong impression on people.

The castle side (front) and the mountain side (back) host different performances. It is customary to exhibit performances from war tales on the front stage and *oni* subjugation stories relating to mountains, for instance *Momotarō* 桃太郎 and *Tawara no Tōta mukade taiji* 俵藤太百足退治 on the back stage.

The next example is from Hakata Gion Yamagasa 博多祇園山笠 Festival, held in July at Kushida Shrine 櫛田神社, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City, in Fukuoka Prefecture. At the climax of the festival called *oiyama* 追い山, festival floats from seven towns appear and, as shown in Figure 41, people dash a distance of four kilometres shouldering festival floats, thus creating a feverish atmosphere.

These festival floats are newly created every year. Like the example in Figure 42, a doll mounted on a float is usually from a character of war tales or *aragoto* in Kabuki. The base is covered with green bush-wood following the traditional style, which is similar to *yama* in Ise Kagura.

Figure 43 is an example of *kazari yama* that stands 11-metre high. The idea for the design is taken from an *aragoto* performance, called *Shibaraku* 暫. Before electric power lines appeared on city streets, people used to run while pulling a festival float of this size. Here also we can see another demonstration of incredible passion.

Yama and *hoko* festival floats from the Kyoto Gion Festival are seen in Figure 44, which is from the picture scroll *Gion sairei emaki* 祇園祭礼絵巻 appeared in 1660. In this festival, as well as Hakata Yamagasa and *Hitachi furyū mono*, bamboo and a pine tree on a float are a symbol of a seat for *kami*. The plants play the same role as *sakaki* trees of *yama* in *maidō kagura* stage.

Figure 45, a reconstruction based on old documents, depicts a *hyō no yama* 標の山 made in the Imperial Court in ancient times. These two *yama* are mobile seats for *kami*. They were moved from Shinzen'en 神泉苑, a festival ground, to a courtyard of the Imperial Palace for Daijōsai, which is the first Thanksgiving Festival after the Enthronement of an Emperor. With a pine tree on top, the sun, the moon and hermit-like dolls are decorated, expressing idealised mountains. These *yama* were beautifully made to praise mountains.

7 The Idea of *yama*

Orikuchi Shinobu and Gunji Masakatsu 郡司正勝 were scholars who focused on *yama*, or *tsukuri yama* in their studies. Based on their major papers, Orikuchi's (1971) and Gunji's (1989) visions of *yama* were confirmed through examining *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura*, and are summarised as follows. *Yama* is a place to receive *kami*, a place to revitalise in seclusion and a place where spiritual transformation occurs. The life of a festival depends on how *yama* is realised.



Figure 40 (Top-left). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from website. URL <http://suriganenohibiki.web.fc2.com/kamine.html> (2017-06-12).

Figure 41 (Top-right). *Hitachi furyū mono*. Reproduced from website. URL <http://suriganenohibiki.web.fc2.com/kamine.html> (2017-06-12).

Figure 42 (Centre-right). *Hakata Gion Yamagasa, Kaki yama*. Reproduced from official site. URL <http://www.hakatayamakasa.com/62746.html> (2017-07-07).

Figure 43 (Centre-left). *Hakata Gion Yamagasa, Kazari yama*. Reproduced from website. URL <http://www.hakata-kasaya.co.jp/kotobuki/> (2017-06-12).

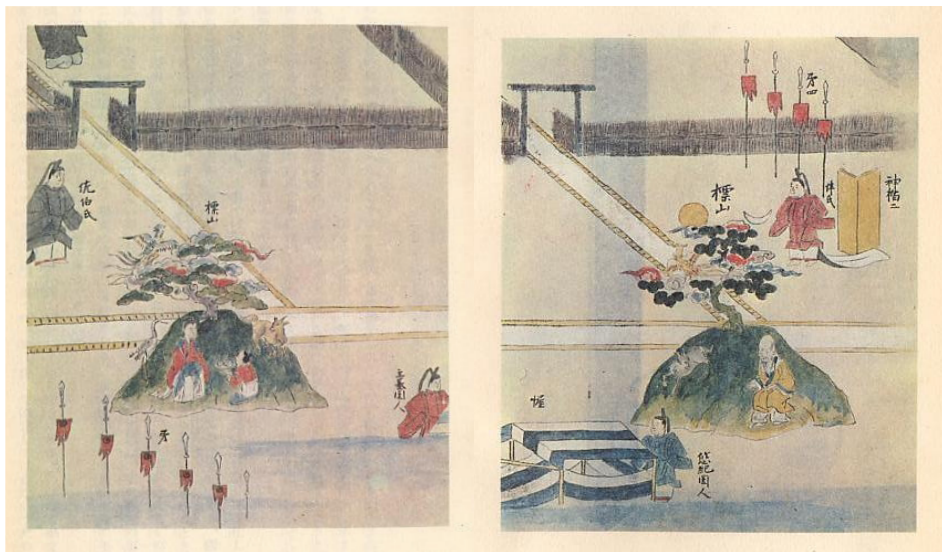


Figure 44 (Top). Gion sairei emaki. Reproduced from *Kinsei sairei: Tsukunami fūzoku emaki* (2005). Ōsaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 65.

Figure 45 (Bottom). Hyō no yama in ancient Imperial Court. Reproduced from *Daijōsai-zu* (appeared in 17th century). Honda Yasuji (1970), *Katarimono-furyū* 2. Tōkyō: Mokuji sha.

8 Conclusion

The *tsukuri yama* seen in this paper allow the interpretation that the idea of *yama* reflects people's fundamental notion towards mountains in Japan. That is to say mountains are the place where *kami*, *oni*, and supernatural beings live or come to. In other words, mountains create *kami*, *oni*, and supernatural beings in Japan. It can be said that the performance of *aragoto* and *oni* in *kagura* was determined by this notion. Mountains have power beyond human knowledge and are objects of awe. They are more similar to a sacred being than just to a natural creation. They are the manifestation of *kami*.

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