

2-23-2021

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Michael Watson
Meiji Gakuin University

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Recommended Citation

Watson, Michael (2021) "Mochizuki: History and Context," *Mime Journal*: Vol. 27, Article 5. DOI: 10.5642/mimejournal.20212701.05

Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal/vol27/iss1/5>

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Mochizuki: History and Context

Michael Watson

Mochizuki is a revenge play (*ada-uchi mono*) involving named characters in actual locations, one specified and one implied. Apart from the family name of the eponymous villain, the character names in *Mochizuki* seem to be fictional. The main characters all originally come from Shinano Province (modern Nagano Prefecture) where there was indeed a clan called Mochizuki, but no record has been found of either the villain's name "Mochizuki Akinaga" or of the avenged murder represented in this drama (Kongō n.p.). Mochizuki survives as a place-name (now Mochizuki-machi Kita-sakuma-gun Nakano-ken) in the area between Matsumoto City and Karuizawa. The Nakasendō or "Central Mountain Route" to and from eastern Japan and the capital Kyoto ran through that area of Shinano. The events of the plot itself take place some 330 km further east in Moriyama in Ōmi Province (Shiga Prefecture) on the eastern side of Lake Biwa. Moriyama was also on the Nakasendō, a post station where travelers would halt for the night. It is there that a certain samurai called Tomofusa has become the master of the inn called the Kabuto-ya ("Helmet Lodge").¹

The play opens with an opening speech by Tomofusa (*shite*). In the Kongō school version of the play translated by Rebecca Teele in this volume, Tomofusa explains explicitly why he took the occupation of innkeeper. He had been in service of Yasuda no Shōji Tomoharu, who was killed after an argument (*kōron*) with his cousin Mochizuki. At the time of his master's death, Tomofusa had been in the capital. He hurried back only to find that the enemy were waiting to ambush him. Unable to return to Shinano, he had taken refuge in Moriyama, becoming master of an inn much frequented by travelers.

Tomoyasu's speech has an almost identical wording in the versions of the Hōshō, Kongō, Komparu, and Kita schools.² The only notable difference is the addition in the *shimogakari* versions (Kongō, Komparu, and Kita) of a phrase to emphasize how he travelled even by night in his haste to return (Yokomichi and Omote 2: 397; Kongō 1 *recto-verso*, Nogami 4: 561; Kita 1 *recto*). By contrast, the Kanze school version begins with a *nanori* (naming speech) in which the *shite* does *not* name himself or identify himself beyond giving his province of origin (*hongoku*) and his present occupation as innkeeper in Moriyama. In a telling change, he makes only the most oblique reference for his reasons for coming to Moriyama (Sanari 5: 3040). This is the first of many changes in the Kanze school. Yamanaka's study of early libretti (*utaibon*) and other sources indicates that the Kanze versions were much closer to those of the other schools until the end of the eighteenth century (Kansei period, 1789–

1 The name "Kabuto-ya" appears in all nō texts but some scholars argue that this is a misreading for *hatago-ya*, which simply means "travelers' inn" (Taguchi 21).

2 The *shimogakari* schools were originally based in Nara while the *kamigakari* schools of Kanze and Hōshō were based in Kyoto. The conventional romanization is followed for "Komparu school."

1801), and only began to adopt major changes from the early nineteenth century (the Bunka period, 1804–1818). Yamanaka argues that these changes indicate innovations in performance practice (30). Here is Tomoyasu's opening speech translated from prewar text of *Yōkyoku Taikan*, the most reliable printed text of the Kanze version. This is essentially identical to the speech in modern Kanze *utaibon* or "libretto" (Kanze 1 *recto*):

I am the master of the Kabutoya lodge in Moriyama in the province of Ōmi. I originally come from Shinano Province, but for a certain reason (*saru shisai sōraite*) I became the master of the Kabutoya, making my living by giving lodging to travelers who come and go. If there are travelers today, I am sure they will ask to stay (Sanari 5: 3040).

The *shite* is silent about his name and the real reasons for his change of domicile and occupation. As Seida Hiroshi points out, versions where the *shite* reveals who he is in the first speech give the audience *rinjōkan* or "a sense of being there" (20). Is the Kanze version overly abbreviated, is it aiming at a delayed dramatic effect? Opinion is divided on the question (Seida 20; Taguchi 36). It is arguable that this omission is a deliberate choice to hold back information that can be revealed at a moment of heightened drama soon after. We must of course be aware that among many Japanese critics, effects that might be seen as *gekiteki* ("dramatic" or "theatrical") can be considered a flaw in a *nō* play, something more typical of plays of the sixteenth-century than those written in the classic fifteenth-century.

The Kanze speech translated above contains the expression *shisai*, which could also be translated as "matter," "details" or "circumstance(s)." It appears at least nineteen times in the corpus of 253 *nō* plays, three times in the collocation with *saru* meaning "a certain ~" or "a particular ~" (Ōtani 634). As the concordance cites two other instances of *shisai* from *Mochizuki* but overlooks this particular example, the results should be treated with some caution. Nonetheless, the examples listed for *saru shisai* are revealing. All occur in the opening naming-speeches and, like *Mochizuki*, they are all cases where the details need not or should not be spelled out. This may be because they do not require further explanation: in *Dōjōji*, the temple abbot has "a good reason" for reviving the tradition of the bell, while in the case of *Yōkihi*, the playwright can rely on at least some members of the audience to know what "certain events" in Tang China resulted in Yang Guifei meeting her death on the Plain of Mawei (Nonomura 363b; Keene 195; Nonomura 168b; Sesar 211). The case of *Sumidagawa* is closest to the usage in *Mochizuki*. In his opening speech, the ferryman (*waki*) mentions how the local people are conducting a Buddhist service (*dai-nenbutsu*) "for a certain reason" (Nonomura 280; Yokomichi and Omote 2: 386).³ The villagers are commemorating the anniversary of the death of the young boy, a key element in the plot that becomes clear during the course of the drama, but is more effectively disclosed at a later point. A desire to create mystery and a delayed revelation is surely one reason why the revised Kanze version of *Mochizuki* changed the inn-keeper's speech so that he does not refer directly to his master's death, for this can be revealed more dramatically during the following scenes.

An alternative explanation would be that the alteration avoids repetition of information that is given soon afterwards, first by the dead man's widow (*tsure*), who describes her husband's death at the hands of Mochizuki, and then by the inn-keeper himself, who names himself to the widow and her son. Repetition is not usually avoided in *nō*, however. Repetition has one obvious advantage: it gives the audience more than one opportunity to absorb crucial information.

In *Kasuga ryūjin* (The Kasuga Dragon God), the *waki* Myōe explains his reasons for visiting the shrine twice, once in the opening *nanori* and once in dialogue with the shrine priest (*mae-jite*) on his arrival at Kasuga, (Ito 1: 297, 298; Tyler 146, 148). The same phrase appears twice. This is the case also in *Kiyotsune* where the opening *nanori* by the retainer Awazu no Saburō includes his account of his

³ The religious service is not mentioned at this point in the versions of the Kita or Komparu school. Royall Tyler's translation of the play is based on the Kanze version, but he notes that he has chosen to base the *nanori* on the Zempō text, i.e. the Komparu version (254, 356).

master's suicide, information that he repeats with many of the same phrases when he addresses the widow (Yokomichi and Omote 1: 250, 251; Morley 199, 200). In the former case, Myōe's identity seems to be already known by the shrine priest, a hint that the "priest" is no ordinary mortal. In the case of *Kiyotsune*, however, the information is known to the audience, but new and unexpected to the addressee, Kiyotsune's wife (*tsure*): she is devastated to hear of her husband's death by his own hand.

Mochizuki is structured around the unexpected: unexpected actions and unexpected encounters. In the *shidai* introductory section found in all versions, the master's widow (*tsure*, secondary actor) and son (*kokata*, child actor) enter the stage. In the Kongō version, she uses the same phrase as did the retainer Tomoyasu in his opening speech, *aenaku utare*, a phrase translated as "treacherously killed" by Teele. The expression *aenaku* conveys a reaction to something that is sad, disappointing, cruel, or unbearable. It is most often paraphrased in dictionaries by modern Japanese expressions meaning "disappointing" or "unexpected" (*Sanseidō zenyaku dokkai kogojiten*, s.v. *ahenashi*). As we will see later, the term *aenaku* is used once more in the Kongō version, this time by the murderer himself, Mochizuki, in his opening speech of self-naming.

On her first appearance, the widow reveals that after her husband was killed, she could depend on no one. The family retainers were scattered here and there (*jurui mo mina chirijiri ni nari*). Unable to rely on anyone and fearing those connected with the enemy (*kataki no yuen*), she decided to hide her child Hanawaka (Kongō 2 *recto-verso*).

This passage revolves around two poetic devices, an *engo* or "associated" word and a *kakekotoba* or "pivot word." The segment *tanomu tayori mo nadeshiko no Hanawaka* consists of two ideas linked by a pivot: "There is no one to rely on" and "my dear child Hanawaka." The first syllable of *nadeshiko* suggests the negative verb form *naku* ("is not"). The whole word *nadeshiko* literally refers to a flower, the wild pink, but this same word is widely used in premodern Japanese to refer affectionately to a young child. As the name Hanawaka itself is composed of the words for "flower" and "young," there is an additional word-play through the associated terms *nadeshiko* and *hana*. The wording of the Kongō passage is identical to the Kita school version. The other three schools make use of the same poetic devices but express the idea of "place/person on which you can rely" not by *tanomu tayori* but by an alternative phrase, *tanomu kogage*, using a metaphor that literally means "shade under a tree."

The *tsure* and *kokata* then sing a *michiyuki* or travel song. The course of their journey is suggested by a reference to the Shinano Road that leads through the mountainous area of Central Japan and by mention of the smoke rising from Mount Asama, a live volcano now found on the borders of Gunma and Nagano prefectures. The passage again makes effective use of pivot words. The smoke seems to hesitate as it rises (*tachi mayou*), just as the mother herself rises, uncertain of where to go.⁴

This song and the following chanted passage of arrival (*tsuki-zerifu*) have essentially the same text in the versions by all schools, differing only in how they are sung. When the mother and child arrive at the inn, she calls out to ask for lodging. The inn-keeper (*shite*) himself responds, asking her where she has come from and where she is going. She replies that they have come "from Shinano to seek someone in the capital." By a happy coincidence, the person that they are seeking is Tomofusa himself, now making his living as an inn-keeper. As the audience learned in his opening speech, he was absent in the capital when Mochizuki killed her husband. The *shite* is surprised that such a high-born lady as herself (*nyoshō jōrō*) should be making such a long and difficult journey with a child without any attendants. Immediately after the *shite* invites them inside with the words "Come, come along this way" (*kō kō ontōri sōrae*) the *shite* reveals in a dramatic monologue that he recognizes the woman and her child. In the Kongō libretto, the words beginning *kano tabibito* ("that traveler") are marked on the left with the indication *ki o kae*. This indicates a change of tone to a slightly lower-pitched and more deliberate style of chanting (Kongō 4 *recto*).

⁴ The song contains two other pivots. The phrase *sadamenu tabi o Shinanoji ya* contains the words *tabi o shi* ("make a journey") as well as a reference to the Shinano Road. The song ends with a pivot on *mori*, part of the place-name *Moriyama* while at the same time suggesting the idea of "tears leaking" (*namida mori*).

None of the other libretti compared indicate this change specifically, however the Kanze libretto gives the indication *betsu ni* (“separately”) to indicate that there is pause for stage action before the *shite* continues.⁵ The most detailed stage directions for this play are available in the *Yōkyoku Taikan* and *Taikei* editions of the Kanze and Hōshō texts respectively. These indicate that the *tsure* and *kokata* move across the stage and sit in front of the chorus, while the *shite* leaves the stage for the bridgeway (*hashigakari*) going as far as the first pine, taking a close look at the *tsure* as he does so (Sanari 5: 3042; Yokomichi and Omote, vol 1, 398). He thus delivers his monologue from a position where it is clear that his words are not heard by the others. His realization is depicted as slower in some texts than others. In the Kongō version translated here, as in the Kita version, the *shite* first notices something “very familiar” (*nan to yaran on-natsukashū sōraite*) about the mother and child, but only recognizes them only after “looking very closely” (*yoku yoku mi-mōshite*).⁶ In two versions, the *shite* reveals his shock at recognizing the travelers by his first exclamation: *gongodōdan* (“How extraordinary!”) in the Komparu version, and *fushigi ya* (“How strange!”) in the Kanze version.

The *shite* resolves to reveal his name and to promise his help. He returns to the stage, kneels in the center before his master’s widow and child, and identifies himself as the family’s former retainer. In all versions, Tomofusa refers to the idea of *sanze no shukun* (“a master for three lives”), a reference to the proverbial belief that the relationship between master and retainer would last for three existences (*shujū wa sanze*). The bond between master and retainer was believed to last three lives (i.e. past, present, and future, over two reincarnations), whereas the bond between man and wife (*fūfu no en*) would last for two lives and that between parent and child (*oyako no en*) would last only for one.⁷

The Kongō libretto instructs the *shite* to mark the end of his speech by showing feeling in the voice, lowering the voice to chant the last words (*kobore-sōrō* “I weep”) with slow deliberation. The response of the *tsure* is high and fast, sung in melodic mode in off-beat rhythm (*tsuyogin, hyōshi awazu*). The widow calls him by his full name, prefacing it with the words *inishie no* (“...of the past”), or as one might translate, “Tomofusa of old.” With the exclamation *Ara natsukashi ya* (“Overwhelmed with nostalgia”), she recalls memories of the past and weeps. On the *nō* stage, the verbal description of weeping is essential. The emotion will not be shown on the expressionless face of the *shite* (performing without mask, *hitamen*) and cannot be shown directly by the *tsure*, who wears the Shakumi mask, except by indirect means, such as the hand gesture that indicates weeping. The action of weeping is otherwise conveyed by verbal description of tears and the way that words are delivered, here in both cases by a fall in speed and pitch.

The widow seems to recover her composure, vocally at least, returning to a normal speed and medium pitch, telling the retainer that they are indeed the “wife and child” of his former lord. The expression *ima wa nani o ka tsutsumubeki* (“What is there that I may hide?”) is an interesting one, for variations on it appear in many plays at the point where the identity of a phantom or divine being is revealed, but a concordance search does not reveal any instances like this in *genzaimono*, plays of human characters set in real time. It is also worthwhile noting how the child is now referred to, the “wild pink” (*nadeshiko*) is now called by the mother her “beloved child” (*aishi*). Only the Kanze version omits this part of the lady’s speech.

In all versions, the next character to react is the boy Hanawaka. The words are sung by the *kokata*, but describe his feelings in one phrase and actions in a second phrase. On the words *chichi ni aitaru kokochi shite* (“Wanting to be with his father”), the *kokata* rises to his feet, moving to the *shite* and placing his hands on his shoulder after the words *Hanawaka Kozawa ni toritsukeba*, “Hanawaka clings to

⁵ Kanze libretto also has an L-shaped mark indicating a pause after the phrase *konata e on-iri-sōrae* (“Please come in this way”). No special indication is given for the monologue in Kita and Hōshō libretti. In one text of the Komparu version, the editor has added a line break in the words of the *shite* after his invitation to enter and before his monologue (Nogami 4: 563).

⁶ The Hōshō has only a phrase corresponding to the latter.

⁷ An early example for this expression appears in the war tale *Hōgen monogatari* (Watson 91, n. 18).

Kozawa" (Tomofusa). Neither is a "first-person" spoken utterance in the normal sense, instead, by a common *nō* technique, they provide commentary on the character's feelings and actions in the "third-person" manner of a narrator.⁸ What is also striking here is how the boy reaches out to the former retainer not simply as someone who reminds him of his lost father, but as a someone who stands in for his father, as a comfort and (soon after) as guide. The same is true of the response of the *shite*, whose words give a narrative account of their physical contact: "Lord and retainer / grasp each other hand in hand" (*shujū te ni te o torikumite*). He grasps the hand of his lord's son, a surrogate for the father, recalled in memory (*omoi-iderarete*), while at the same time recognizing the boy as his new lord.

After a chorus, expressing their joy on reunion, the three actors go to the back of the stage, the *tsure* and *kokata* withdrawing behind the musicians and the *shite* to stage assistant's position. The *shidai* music marks the entrance of the *waki*, the murderer Mochizuki, accompanied by a *kyōgen* actor bearing a sword (Sanari 5: 3044). They stop on the bridgeway at the first pine, where the *waki* gives an opening *nanori*, naming himself and his reason for travel.

Mochizuki describes killing his cousin Tomoharu "for a certain reason" (*saru shisai sōraite aenaku utte sōrō*) (Kongō 6 *recto*). The Kita and Hōshō school versions have the exact same phrase at this point. We saw earlier how *aenaku* was used earlier in the Kongō version. Should we understand *aenaku* here to mean treacherously, cruelly, or unexpectedly? It is certainly a strange phrase for the murderer himself to utter, a man who is represented as showing no other sign of remorse.

We might expect for the wording in the Komparu version to be largely identical to that in the Kongō and Kita versions, for texts of these three schools (the so-called *shimogakari*) tend to resemble each other more closely than those of the other two, the Kanze and Hōshō (the so-called *kamigakari*). In this case, however, there are two changes, one minor, one major. The Komparu text includes a detail mentioned earlier about the two cousins having had a verbal dispute (*kōron*) while changing the expression modifying the verb meaning "kill" from *aenaku* to *nen nō*, i.e. *nen naku*, a term that means "unintentionally" or "accidentally" (Nogami 565). Mochizuki says he "had a quarrel with Tomoharu and accidentally killed him" (*Tomoharu to kōron shi, nen nō Tomoharu wo utte sōrō*). The Komparu version thus suggests an attempt at self-justification.

The Kanze version of the speech differs the most. In other versions, Mochizuki and Tomoharu are cousins (*itoko*). Here the relationship is left unclear, with Mochizuki calling him simply *dōkoku no chūnin*, "a resident of the same province" of Shinano (Sanari 5: 3045).⁹ In his *nanori*, Mochizuki states the facts of the murder straightforwardly with an expression unlike any we have seen before, "laid hands on and put to death" (*te ni kake shōgai sasete*), before going on immediately to the consequences it had for him personally.

I am Mochizuki Something-or-Other of the Province of Shinano. Now I laid hands on a man called Yasuda no Shōji Tomoharu, also of Shinano, and put him to death. And for this crime, I was [obliged to stay] in Kyoto for a period of thirteen years. But a judgement was handed down finding me innocent of the offence. I was granted a written surety, so that with great joy I am now making my way back to my home province of Shinano. (Sanari 5: 3045)

⁸ The terms for person must be used with some caution in discussions of classical Japanese, where the grammatical function of person (even in personal pronouns) is less frequently marked and often ambiguous. In terms of narrative modes, however, it is useful to distinguish between passages that must be translated as first or third person. Passages that translate as third-person may also involve reported speech, such as Tomofusa's interjection: *natsukashi ya to* ("How familiar!" he said/thought"). Examples from the *nō* plays *Ikuta Atsumori* and *Sumidagawa* are discussed by Lim (239, note 19). Similar shifts to third person and indirect speech are found in other forms of traditional Japanese drama up to the modern period (Poulton 15–16).

⁹ The Kanze text also writes the name Tomoharu as 友治, rather than 友春 as in other versions.

Thirteen years is a long time to wait for a legal decision. What is important, though, is that only the Kanze text is so precise about the length of time. Other versions do not make it clear whether the events of the play occur years or only months after the murder. The greater length of time is prepared for in the Kanze version by the retainer's inability to recognize the son, and the repeated use of the term *inishie* ("long ago") by both the retainer and wife, as Taguchi Kazuo has pointed out (22). Taguchi has made two other interesting suggestions: firstly, that Mochizuki must have achieved a favorable judgement by bribery, and secondly that the length of thirteen years is significant in Buddhist funeral practice, which marks the first, third, seventh, thirteenth, and seventeenth anniversaries of a death (22–23).

Two semi-legal terms appear in the passage translated above: *toga* 科 ("crime") and *kantai* 緩怠, tentatively translated "offence" but possibly suggestive of an even lesser mistake or slip. The term *ando* translated here as "surety" is an abbreviation of *honryō ando*, meaning that he was given an official document to assuring him the right to possess lands. Presumably this refers to his original land holdings, but it may also include lands that he had unlawfully taken from the dead man. Other versions lay greater emphasis on this, as we see for example in the Kongō text where Mochizuki explains *honryō kotogotoku meshi-hanasere sōrō* ("I was forced to give up my domains" in Teele's translation), a statement found in all texts but the Kanze version.

Mochizuki tries to hide his identity from the people at the inn by telling his servant not to mention his name. However, in typical *kyōgen* fashion, the servant is carried away, boasting that his master is famous in Shinano, letting slip of the name. He tries to recover, adding *de wa nai zo* ("he isn't, you know!") and clapping his hand on his mouth. The *shite* hides his astonishment, pretending not to have noticed, and welcomes the guests. As we discuss below, this scene has a close parallel in another play that may have inspired *Mochizuki*, the revenge play *Hōkazō* ("The Hōka Priests").¹⁰

All the characters and plot elements are now aligned for the dramatic confrontation. Mochizuki and his servant take their place, the *waki* in the witness place (*wakiza*) and the *kyōgen* behind him behind the chorus. The *shite* rises and goes on the bridgeway to the third pine, the most distant from the stage, where he delivers a dramatic monologue (Sanari 5: 3047). Astounded to learn that his lord's killer is staying that night at the inn, he resolves to tell the others. He does so when they approach, reaching the first pine, but must warn the boy to lower his voice as the enemy is nearby. The word he uses is *shibaraku*, "One moment!"—an expression he will need soon after to restrain another rash act by the boy. The *tsure* urges the retainer to suggest a plan of action against Mochizuki, whom she calls "that person" (*kano mono*). For the *shite*, this is a heaven-sent opportunity, but he warns them that Mochizuki is unusually cautious (*koto no hoka yōjin*). Again the *tsure* asks Tomofusa to think of a plan, to which he raises the idea of them pretending to be a blind entertainer (*mekura goze*), whom Hanawaka can lead by the hand into the enemy's rooms, where Tomofusa will ply Mochizuki with drink. The *tsure* joyfully agrees to appear as a blind person to achieve the plan. The chorus then takes up the story of the blind Semimaru, a figure of legend and the subject of a *nō* play by Zeami.¹¹

This exchange between *shite* and *tsure* is present in all versions except one. In the Kanze version, the *shite* presents the plan of action without prompting, going on to list the three forms of entertainment designed to lull the guest's attention: a song (*on-utai*) sung by the lady, a drum piece (*yatsubachi*) performed by the boy, and a lion dance (*shishimai*) performed by himself. By distracting Mochizuki in this way, they will be able to carry out their revenge (Sanari 5: 3047–48). Only in the Kanze version are details revealed at this point about the second and third forms of entertainment. There is a pause for the *tsure* to make an onstage costume change (*monogi*) and the *kokata* to be given a

¹⁰ For *Hōkazō*, see the editions of the Kanze and Hōshō versions (Sanari 3: 2435–3552; Yokomichi and Omote 2: 402–407) and the translation by Waley (205–216).

¹¹ See Susan Matisoff's translation of the play and study of the legend. As Harich-Schneider and Groemer have shown, the tradition of blind female performers survives today.

small waist drum (*kakko*). Then, as in other versions, the lady reacts with joy at the plan and expresses her willingness to pretend to be a blind performer. However, two more lines follow before the chorus sings:

kokata: *narawanu waza mo chichi no tame*
An unfamiliar performance for my father's sake

tsure: *take no hosozue tsuki tsurete*
Led in, leaning on a narrow bamboo cane... (Sanari 5: 3049)

Before the woman's performance, there is a revealing exchange between the *waki*, *ai* (the *kyōgen* actor), and *kokata*, with messages being relayed through the *ai*. In all versions but the Kanze, the *kokata* announces that the song deals with Ichiman and Hakoō who kill their father's killer.¹² As we soon hear, the song does not describe the accomplishment of the blood revenge by the two brothers—this lies long in the future—but rather describes how strongly the desire for revenge was felt by the brothers when just three and five years old. One would think that Mochizuki would be unhappy to hear a song on a subject like this. Readers familiar with Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (*Kumo no su jō*, 1957) may remember how the traitor Washizu angrily dismisses someone who performs a *nō* song mentioning treasonable acts.

However, when the *ai* passes this information to the *waki*, Mochizuki says he has no objection (*kurushikaranu koto*). The Kanze version makes this into an exchange between *waki*, *ai*, and *tsure*, so that it is the woman who explains about the song. The *ai* expresses surprise and concern at this unexpected suggestion (*iya iya omoi mo yoranu koto nite sōrō*), but as with other schools, the *waki* agrees to listen to the song (Sanari 5: 3050). Another version of the *kyōgen* text for Kanze performances has the *ai* say that there is an "objection" to the song (*sashiai ga aru*) and tell them to sing something else.¹³

Ichiman and Hakoō are the childhood names of Soga Jūrō Sukenari and his younger brother Soga Gorō Tokimune, the focus of many tales connected with a famous historical revenge. In 1193, the brothers succeeded in avenging themselves on the man who killed their father in 1176, when they were children. The killer was their father's cousin as is the case in *Mochizuki*. The childhood episode that is narrated in this play is not found in the existing tale (*Soga monogatari*, The Tale of the Soga [Brothers]) or in any of the many *nō* plays about two brothers. The tale narrated by the *tsure* is effective, building up sympathy for the plight of the two children before describing an incident that occurs in their private shrine (*jibutsudō*) where the three-year-old Hakoō hears the name of the principal image (*honzon*), a scowling figure with sword and rope, and thinks it is the same as father's killer, Kudō. The image is not of Kudō but rather Fudō, the divine "Immovable" Wisdom King (Fudō Myōō, Skt. Akala). Hakoō draws his sword and is about to behead the statue when his elder brother stops him. Sheathing his sword, he begs forgiveness of the holy figure. Ironically, the last words of the song, "Let us kill slay our enemy" (*kataki o utase tamae ya*), nearly precipitate disaster for those planning revenge on Mochizuki, for the young Hanawaka takes them prematurely as a cue to draw his sword.

¹² *Ichiman Hakuō ga oya o uttaru tokoro*.

¹³ Two texts are printed by Nonomiya and Ando. One has *Sore wa sashiai ga aru. Yo no koto o on-utai sōrae* (741) while the alternate version lacks the suggestion of singing something else (740). The word *sashiai* is also mentioned in the summary of the *kyōgen's* words in print edition of the Hōshō (Yokomichi and Omote 2: 401). The five libretti seen all omit the words spoken by *ai* in this section.

In structure, plot, and phrasing, the play *Mochizuki* resembles another revenge play, *Hōkazō* (The Hōka Priests). The parallels between the two plays are too close to be accidental. It is usually believed that *Hōkazō* preceded *Mochizuki* and inspired it, although it has been argued that *Mochizuki* is the superior of the two (Sanari 5: 3040).

Like *Mochizuki*, *Hōkazō* centers around a father who is “accidentally killed” after a verbal “dispute” (Waley 165, Sanari 3: 2436).¹⁴ Protected by supporters, the murderer (*waki*) has gone unpunished for some years. The play begins with the murdered man’s son Makino (*tsure*) persuading his older brother, a Zen priest (*shite*) to join with him in carrying out a revenge. They set off in disguise, in search of the murderer, Tone no Nobutoshi. Like *Mochizuki* Akinaga, this character is believed to have been invented.

Nobutoshi (*waki*) appears in the second half of the play, accompanied by a *kyōgen* bearing a sword like the *waki* in *Mochizuki*. His *nanori* makes no direct mention of murder, but there is an indirect suggestion: he is on pilgrimage because he has been “troubled by bad dreams” (Waley 167). In an exchange not translated by Waley, the *waki* tells his *kyōgen* servant not to mention his name when they are on the road (Sanari 3: 2441). Like *Mochizuki*’s servant, he lets slip his master’s name when directly asked for it by the *shite*, quickly adding a negative (*de wa orinai zo*) in an attempt to hide his mistake:

“Why, he comes from the land of Sagami, and Nobutoshi ... (here the SERVANT suddenly remembers that he is being indiscreet and stuffs his hand into his mouth) ... is not his name.”
(Waley 169)

The *shite* tells him that it does not matter who his master is, using exactly the same expression *kurishikarazu sōrō* (“that’s no matter”) as in *Mochizuki* (Sanari 3: 2444, cf. Sanari 5: 3046).

Disguised as *hōka* priests, the brothers are able to approach Nobutoshi, engaging him in a discussion of Buddhism. Just as in *Mochizuki*, the audience is kept in suspense, waiting for the brothers to take their revenge. Hearing his elder brother refer to a Zen expression literally meaning “Cut into three slices” (*kitte sandan to nasu*), Makino rushes forward with raised sword, only to be stopped by his brother’s cry of *shibaraku* or “Hold!” (Sanari 3: 2447, Waley 171–172). More literally meaning “One moment!” the order *shibaraku* occurs in *Mochizuki* at a similar premature moment. As we have seen, the song of the young Soga brothers ends with the words, “Let’s slay our enemy.” Thinking this is his cue, the boy rushes forward shouting “Now, I’ll strike” (*iza utō*), only to be held back by the *shite*’s cry of *shibaraku*. In both cases, the *shite* characters manage to explain away the “misunderstanding” by glossing the words in a more innocuous way, in *Hōkazō*, giving a religious explanation (“to carve a way to knowledge by the triple stroke”; Waley 172) while in *Mochizuki*, clarifying a homonym: not *utō* 討つ meaning “slay!” but *utō* 打つ meaning “strike the drum!”

A text known as *Kanze Taiyu Shojō* dated to Tenmei 3 (1783) records a story that a certain Tobi Daiyu, pupil of one Komparu Jūrō, was not given permission to perform the lion dance in the *nō* *Shakkyō*, so he introduced the same dance into *Mochizuki* (Taguchi 26). The part could only be performed with the permission of one’s teacher, a tradition that continues today, where performing *Shakkyō* still marks a significant stage in a *nō* performer’s career—as does an actor’s first performance in *Mochizuki*. The play *Shakkyō* (Stone Bridge) centers around a tenth-century Japanese monk in China called Jakushō (formerly Ōe no Sadamoto) who has a vision of the Boddhisatva Monju (Skt. *Mañjuśrī*). In one of the surviving *kyōgen* parts for the play (Nonomiya and Andō 741), the story of Jakushō’s vision of Monju and the lion dance is narrated at some length by the *kyōgen* actor during the *nakairi* interval when the *shite* was changing into the lion costumes. Lion dances are found throughout Asia. They had existed in Japan since Nara times, but the *nō* play was later to inspire the lion dance performed on the kabuki stage (Borgen 108).

¹⁴ The phrase *kōron shi nen-nō utarete* is the same as that used in the Komparu version of *Mochizuki*, as discussed above.

Mochizuki has been drinking as he watches the three performances: the song, the drum performance, and finally the lion dance. When the *shite* sees that Mochizuki has fallen into a drunken sleep, he takes off the lion head-dress and tells the boy “Strike the drum, strike the drum” (*yatsubachi o ute ya ute ya*). This is the cue for the boy to act. He exchanges glances with the boy, helps him to his feet, then moves in closer to the enemy and “traps the foe in his arms” (*kataki wo tegome ni shitarikeri*). In all variants but the Kanze, the lord’s son and retainer name themselves to the startled Mochizuki, who struggles to escape but is finally killed by the lord’s son and retainer. The final lines of the play announce the success of the revenge and the restoration of lands to the dead man’s descendants.

Notes in text editions refer to the *shimogakari* schools performing the killing in a more “realistic” (*shajitsuteki*) way than others (Nishio and Hata 148). Photographs, such as those on the GloPAD site, are useful to some extent, but it is frustratingly difficult to be more precise about stage business in the absence of video recordings or actual performances to compare. At some stage in the final struggle, differing somewhat between performance variants, the *waki* slips out of the stage by the rear door (*kirido*), leaving his wide-brimmed hat (*kasa*) on the stage. The hat stands in for the murderer in the final mime of stabbing. This is how the play *Hōkazō* ends too, more evidence for the relation between the two plays. There also the killer slips out the rear door leaving the brothers to avenge their father’s death by symbolically stabbing the murderer’s hat. In practical terms, this solution avoids the awkward problem of having a “corpse” on the stage at the end of the play. More importantly, though, it plays down the actual mechanics of killing so that the play can end on a happy, celebratory note.

Let us end by discussing what is known about the origins and early performance history of *Mochizuki*. The earliest recorded performance of *Mochizuki* was in 1537, followed by one in 1586 (Taguchi 26, Nose 1281). Other early performances are not recorded. As we have seen, *Mochizuki* draws on two earlier plays, both of which were performed more frequently. *Hōkazō* is recorded as being performed at least seven times, the first in 1464, one year before the first performance of *Shakkyō* (Nose 1262, 1311; Takemoto and Hashimoto 107, 83).

Standard reference works now list *Mochizuki* as by “author unknown” (Takemoto and Hashimoto 112; Hata and Nishino 148). *Mochizuki* appears twice in early lists of plays (*nayose*): the title alone in the *Iroha shakusha chūmon* and the title with the notation *Saami saku* (“by Saami”) in the early sixteenth-century *Jika denshō* (Nishio et al. 128, 146). In *Nihyakujuhūban utai mokuroku*, a late seventeenth-century catalogue of plays and authors, Saami is identified further by the lay name Hiyoshi Shirō Jirō Yasukiyo “who died at the age of 76 on the fourth day of the eighth month” of the year 1458 (Nishio et al. 161). The same catalogue attributes five plays to Saami: *Hashi Benkei* (Benkei on the Bridge), *Sesshōseki* (Killing Stone), *Fuji* (Wisteria) *Kōya monogurui* (The Madman of Kōya), and *Minazukibarai* (The Lustrations of the Early Fall).

Mochizuki fell out of the repertoire but it was revived, with major changes being made to the Kanze version around the year 1800 (Yamanaka). Today, *Mochizuki* is performed by all five schools of *nō* and regularly performed throughout Japan (*Nōgaku* [*nō kyōgen*] *kōen jōhō*). According to this online listing of *nō* performances, there were eleven separate performances of *Mochizuki* in 2019.

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