

**The appearance and utilities of a traditional set for the Kabuki  
performance of *Aoto Zōshi Hana no Niskiki-e* by Kawatake  
Mokuami.**

## **How would the appearance of a Kabuki set be utilized for a traditional performance of *Aoto Zōshi Hana no Niskiki-e* by Kawatake Mokuami?**

*The Glorious Picture Book Of Aoto's Exploits (Aoto Zōshi Hana no Niskiki-e)*, a traditional kabuki play from the *matsubamemono* category<sup>1</sup>, is a play that is famous under several names such as most commonly *Shiranami Gonin Otoko*, meaning *The Shiranami Five Thieves*. The play, referred to as The Picture Book in the following investigation can be staged in its whole, however it is common for theatre groups to take the most 'famous' scenes and perform them individually. Thus, this brings forward the requirement that any individual or theatre group that desires to stage this production, or specific acts of it, must be informed and aware of the stage elements unique to a Kabuki stage. Therefore, the research of Kabuki stage design, technological set instruments and the use of location of the elements, should be analyzed and examined in order to successfully apply them to a traditional performance of Kabuki's *Shiranami Gonin Otoko*.

This traditional Kabuki play known under several names, but most commonly *The Glorious Picture Book Of Aoto's Exploit*, consists of five act that can be performed together although it is common for productions to employ particular scenes such as the *Hamamatsuy-a* scene and *Inase River* scene, under the title *Benten Musume Meono no Shiranami*<sup>2</sup>. However, in scene five commonly known as *The Gokurakuji Temple*, the set takes an important role and it allows for a clear indication of the level of uniqueness of Kabuki theatre compared to other Japanese theatre styles, thus the investigation examines a combination of act three (*The hamamatsuy-a*), four (*The River Inase*) and five (*The Gokurakuji Temple*).

Each role within the theatre, including the director, actor and set designer, must be aware of the absolute stage and set requirement for a general and traditional Kabuki

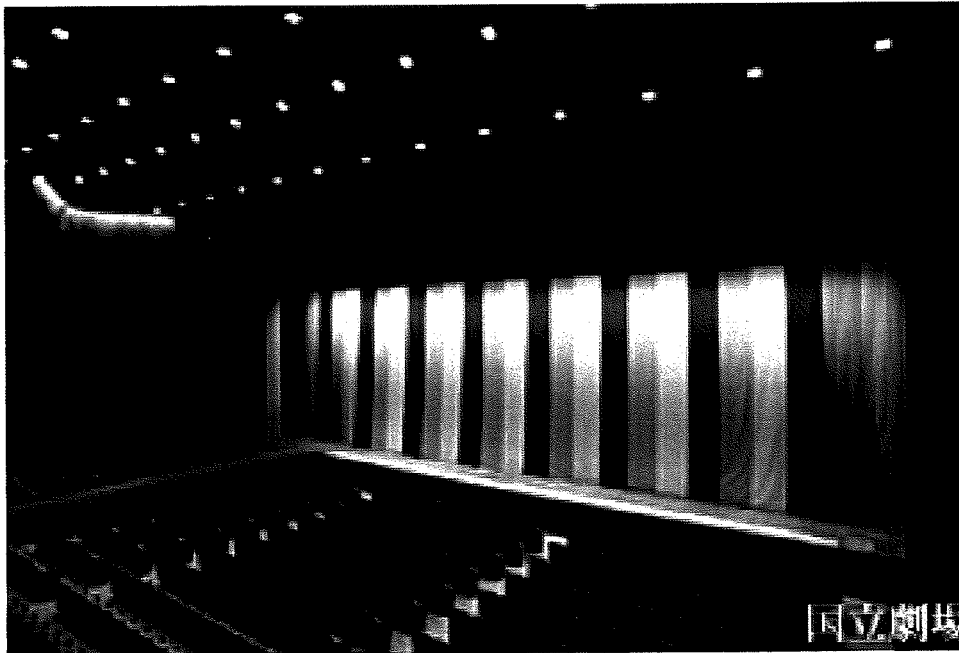
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<sup>1</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121

<sup>2</sup> "Shiranami Gonin Otoko." *Kabuki*. Web. 4 Jan. 2012. <[http://www.kabuki21.com/gonin\\_otoko.php](http://www.kabuki21.com/gonin_otoko.php)>.

play prior to examining requirements for the specific acts of *The Glorious Picture Book*.

The *hombutai* (main stage) should be “9 meters and the building should expand to 18 meters by 27 meters”<sup>3</sup> The main stage should then further be accompanied by *tsurieda* decorations, which are hanging branches, often “paper cherry blossoms, or, on occasion, with blossoming plum branches or pine branches”<sup>4</sup>, hanging from the two matte black pillars (*daijin-bashira*)<sup>5</sup> and “just within the top of the proscenium.”<sup>6</sup> However, is it important for the stage to not disguise the *daijin-bashira* when an interior is represented, as they then “much resemble the exposed roof supports of domestic Japanese architecture”<sup>7</sup> which I believe is a significant observation as Kabuki over the years of development has aimed to distinguish itself from other traditional Japanese styles and elements.



**Figure 1 – The Joshiki-maku curtain<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Mende, Kazuko. "Journal for Geometry and Graphics." *Concerning the Japanese Kabuki Stage*. Web. 19 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.heldermann-verlag.de/jgg/jgg06/jgg0615.pdf>>.

<sup>4</sup> Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print. p. 54

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, Kenneth. "Kabuki Stage Features." *EHow*. Demand Media, 25 July 2011. Web. 28 Dec. 2011. <[http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8787047\\_kabuki-stage-features.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8787047_kabuki-stage-features.html)>.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print. p. 54

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 54

<sup>8</sup> "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 7 Jan. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_03\\_10.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_03_10.html)>.

Further absolute stage requirements of the Kabuki stage include established features such as the curtain. Due to early history drought resulting in constant destruction of the “*Edo period rectangular theatres*”<sup>9</sup> and the “*imitated Noh stages*”<sup>10</sup> employed by Kabuki performances, stages started to transform in western style tiered theatres, such as the proscenium arch stage.

However, without a clear indication of specific appearance of the Kabuki stages, the stage does include a permanent feature vital to an established Kabuki theatre. This permanently established feature is known as a stage curtain (*maku*) called the *Joshiki-Maku (pre-determined form)*<sup>11</sup>, demonstrated in figure one. The *maku* is installed containing the three symbolic colors, Black, *Moegi* (dark green) and *Kaki-Iro* (Yellowish Brown) as these are the colors that were utilized in the traditional Kabuki theatres in the Edo period. This *maku* (curtain) created of “*thin, billowy material*”<sup>12</sup> utilizes colors that become symbolic of the curtains that were employed in the “*three great theatres of Edo: the Nakamura-za, the Morita-za and the Ichimura-za*”<sup>13</sup> (See appendix, figure eight). This *maku* should be utilized in such a way that it “*opens swiftly, pulled from left to right and is accompanied by accelerating beats of the wooden Ki clappers.*”<sup>14</sup>

Two additional principle and unchanging features that should always visible on the traditional Kabuki stage are the *Geza*, a black lattice concealing the small room of the *geza* and *gidayu* musicians, on the *kamite* (stage right) and the *Yuka*, a small revolving platform for the kneeled *gidayu* narrator and *shamisen* player, on the *shimote* (stage left).

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<sup>9</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 96

<sup>10</sup> "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_02.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_02.html)>.

<sup>11</sup> "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 7 Jan. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_03\\_10.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_03_10.html)>.

<sup>12</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 97

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 97

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p. 97

These unchanging elements are supported by another unchanging and unique element that has been established since early influences from Noh Theatre and that must be employed in a traditional performance of the chosen play; the *Hanamichi* (flower path). The *hanamichi* is “set at ninety degrees to the main stage”<sup>15</sup> and is “used for entrances and exits, a character’s self introduction or a dramatic *roppo* (six directions) exit where hands and feet are said to move north, south, east, west, to heaven and to earth.”<sup>16</sup> It is critical for the actors entering and exiting from the *hanamichi* in *The Glorious Picture Book*, to know the exact dimension of the *hanamichi* due to an important point located on the pathway that is explained by Kabuki practitioner, David Furumoto:

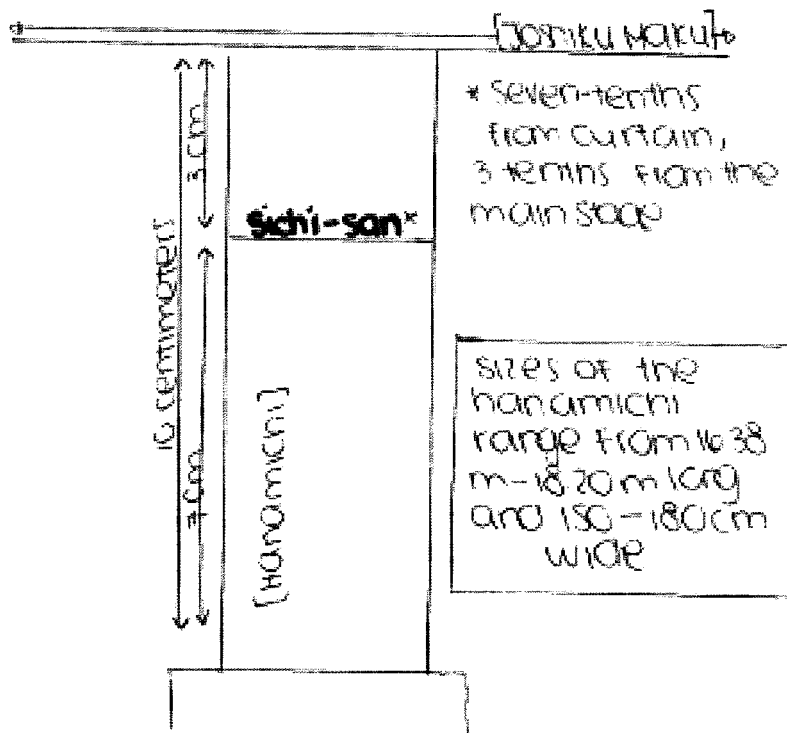
*“The hanamichi is often utilized in very close proximity in the Kabuki theatre in order to produce a real sense of interaction. One important thing that the actors must know about the hanamichi is the point on the ‘runway’ called the Sichi-San (seven-three), which is seven-tenths from the curtain (agemaku) at the hanamichi’s far end, and three-tenths from the main stage. Therefore, each actor making an entrance or exit from the hanamichi must memorize the dimensions of the stage so that they are aware of where exactly the sichi-san point is located during performance”*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 95

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 82

<sup>17</sup> Taken from an interview with David Furumoto, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2012.



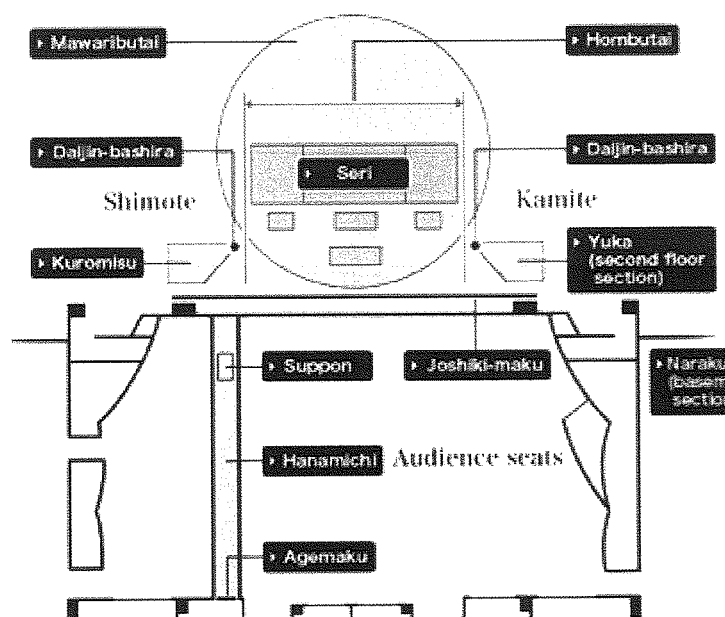
**Figure 2 – Dimensions of the Hanamichi and the Sichi-san**

This is vital to the actor performing the role of *Benten*, who makes an importance entrance in disguise as a woman in act three. This actor must be specifically aware of the set, demonstrated in both figure two and three, and especially aware of the *hanamichi* before rehearsing the character's entrance in order to know the amount of steps that must be taken to reach the *sichi-san* when his important monologue takes place in act three. The *sichi-san* is demonstrated in the self-created image in figure two illustrating the dimensions on the *hanamichi*<sup>18</sup>.

Meanwhile, the five thieves in act four must familiarize themselves with the *hanamichi* in a different manner due to the fact that they must spread themselves equally among the pathway as they recite their pass-along dialogue (*watarizerifu*). However, this entrance of the five heroes is an atypical use of the *hanamichi* due to the fact that in a traditional performance characters enter together on the *hanamichi* and then move towards the *sichi-san*. However, in this performance the *hanamichi* is

<sup>18</sup> Image is based on information provided from the interview

used differently due to the fact that each hero enters from the *agemaku*, taking on a *mie* (frozen pose), and moving forward when the next hero enters<sup>19</sup>, eventually creating a long line across the pathway. Therefore, it is possible to take on the traditional rule that most sources explore, however when looking at previous traditional performances of the play, I would deduce that it would be more traditionally correct to obey the atypical exploration due to its common use throughout the years for *The Glorious Picture Book*. Both characters must enter from the *agemaku* (lift-up curtain) that is hung at the far end of the *hanamichi* by metal rings that swish in order to “signal the audience that a character is entering along the *hanamichi*.”<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 3 - Traditional layout of a Kabuki stage design<sup>21</sup>.**

Performing or directing *The Glorious Picture* requires the mentioned set elements of the *maku* and *hanamichi* pathway, however the Kabuki stage has been able to distinguish itself from other Japanese theatre styles through technological elements, seen in figure three, and visual tricks known as *keren*. These elements are what

<sup>19</sup> Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print. p. 96-97

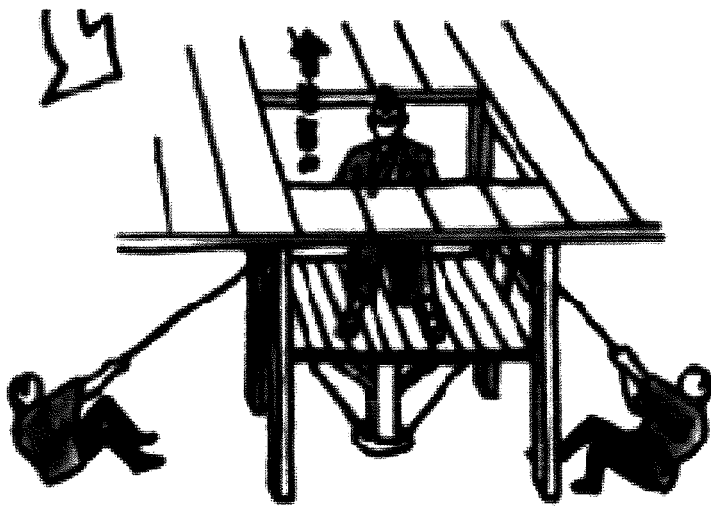
<sup>20</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 97

<sup>21</sup> "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012.  
<[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_02.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_02.html)>.

make the stage a spectacle to observe and allow for the interesting and quick scene stages that occur in full view of the audience.

The *hanamichi* extends from the main stage to a small room named *naraku* (literally meaning “hell”) where a full-time stagehand will pull the *Joshiki-Make*. Above the *hanamichi* and *agemaku* separating the *naraku* and *hanamichi*, is the *churoi*, “a flying exit by a means of harness and winch.”<sup>22</sup> The purpose of this flying exit is to portray that the character contains supernatural powers or animalistic attributes. Besides quick character appearances, additional quick set changes can be made through the use of a revolving stage known as the *mawaributai*. This can be employed in *The Glorious Picture Book* to create a quick set change from the shop in act three to the riverbank in act four.

The most important and visual impacting *keren* are the lifts located on both the *hanamichi* and the *hombutai*. The smallest lift, the *terrapin* (suppon), is situated on the *hanamichi* for quick appearances and disappearances of supernatural characters and used to be handled manually as seen in figure four.



**Figure 4 – Manually handling the Seru**

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<sup>22</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 84

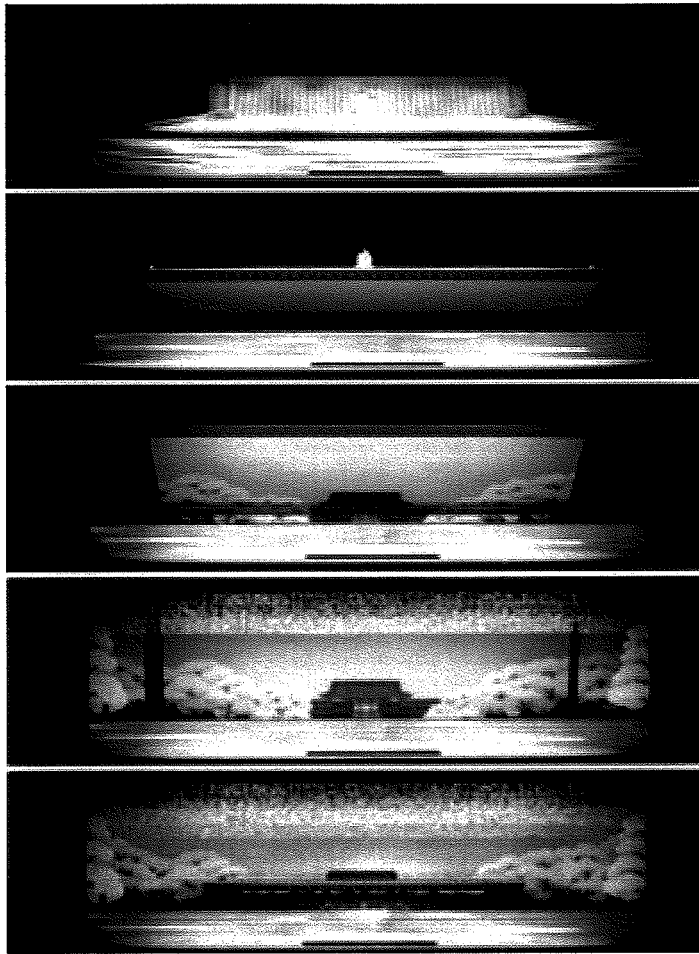


The traditional stage must include a *Seri* (main lift) on top of the *Mawaributai*. The *Seri* is utilized to lift entire set pieces and this becomes extremely significant for a traditional production of act five of *The Glorious Picture Book*. This scene, with its change from the roof of the *Gokurakuji temple* to the gate, in the business is called *gandō gaeshi* (overturning the set) and *ōzeri* (the great *seri*)<sup>23</sup>, both fundamental techniques for changing scenes in Kabuki plays. In the scene mentioned above there is heightened emotion and action occurring on stage as Benten “engages in a great fight scene against a group of policemen on top of the roof of Gokurakuji temple in Kamakura. The stage background and scenery is simple and naturalistic. Against a black back drop, simple patterns of white and black alternate.”<sup>24</sup> These actions and emotions are heightened with the two machineries mentioned above whereby the *gandō gaeshi* is firstly utilized to overturn the set at a ninety-degree angle and portray the *seppuku* (suicide) of Benten, illustrated in figure five.

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<sup>23</sup> "An Introduction to Kabuki Sets." *Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center*. Web. 29 Jan. 2012. <[http://www.glopad.org/jparc/?q=en/kabuki\\_sets/kanai\\_intro](http://www.glopad.org/jparc/?q=en/kabuki_sets/kanai_intro)>.

<sup>24</sup> "An Introduction to Kabuki Sets." *Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center*. Web. 29 Jan. 2012. <[http://www.glopad.org/jparc/?q=en/kabuki\\_sets/kanai\\_intro](http://www.glopad.org/jparc/?q=en/kabuki_sets/kanai_intro)>.

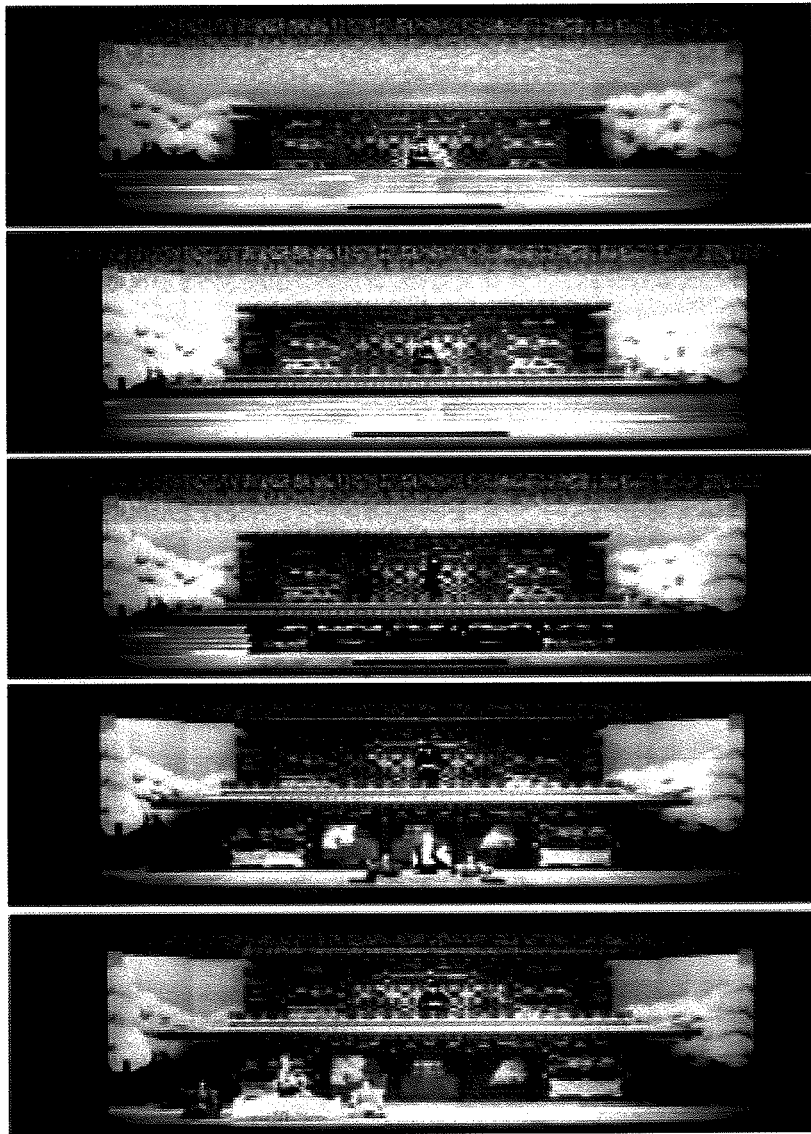


**Figure 5 – ‘Overturning the set’<sup>25</sup>**

The image demonstrates how vital the lift becomes as it is able to turn the set and backdrop ninety degrees in full view of the audience. This is effective because it allows for audience entertainment as they experience an extremely unique and interesting set change take place in the middle of a scene.

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<sup>25</sup> "Kabuki, Benten Kozō Overturning Set Scene Change." *Global Performing Arts Database*. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.glopad.org/pi/en/image/1005726>>.



***Figure 6 - The appearance of the first and second level of the temple.***

Figure 5 demonstrates the first step to the quick set while figure 6 portrays how the audience is then exposed to the second utility of the stage lift. The other type of *seri*, the *ōzeri*, continues the scene change as it is utilized to lift an entire temple gate onto the set, illustrated in figure six. This use of stage is vital for a traditional performance of *The Glorious Picture Book* and clearly depicts the technological advancements and utilities of a Kabuki set.

Quick set changes are vital in a traditional Kabuki performance, and are often famous for being made mid-scene. This process is done through the use of the *Hiki Dogu* (small wagon stage), besides of the use of the *seri* and the *mawaributai*, where actors or scenery is brought on stage by a wheeled platform.

However, more commonly is the use of “*stagehands (kurugo) rushing onto the stage adding and removing props, backdrops and other scenery.*”<sup>26</sup> These *kurugo* must be employed in a traditional performance regarding set, as they are vital for quick scene changes and also add on to the simultaneous quick costume changes used in Kabuki “*for symbolizing the revelation of a character’s true identity.*”<sup>27</sup> This type of on-stage costume change is known as the *bukkaeri*, illustrated in figure six, and can be apparent with Benten in act three.

In one of Kabuki’s most famous speech, Benten starts with “*If you don’t know me, then listen well*”<sup>28</sup> and starts to reveal his true identity. As this revelation occurs during a speech, it must occur quickly and thus the actor utilizes the *bukkaeri*. When having to establish a decision between the two options for *The Glorious Picture Book*, the stage hands should be employed rather than the wagon due to the fact that the large set pieces are already brought on my the *seris* and thus the wagon is not needed.

A traditional Kabuki performance must include the *kurugo* for quick set changes as, “*Both male and female role actors are often attended on stage by assistants known as Koken and kurugo*”<sup>29</sup> (see figure seven) which are usually the students (*deshi*) of the main actor.

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<sup>26</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 81

<sup>27</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 81

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p. 121

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, p. 64



**Figure 7 – The Bukkaeri with the help of the Kurugo**

The *koken* dress formally while the *Kurugo* dress based on the backdrop. In the previously mentioned scene with the temple gate, there is a black backdrop with simple patterns of white and black alternate. Although there is no defined backdrop for Kabuki theatre, it is significant for both the *deshi* and the costume designer to be aware of the backdrop before starting rehearsals because “*if the scene is of water or snow, they may also be dressed entirely in blue or white so as to blend in with the background.*”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, when performing act four, *The Inase River*, at the river bank, the backdrop of the set is going to be blue, thus it is significant to know that the *kurugo* must be dressed in entirely blue.

Besides knowing the stage elements and techniques vital to a traditional kabuki performance, it is significant to know how a typical Kabuki theatre is built and utilized. A traditional Kabuki theatre employs “*two stage floors whereby one permanent floor consists of thick unpainted boards about ten inches wide, nailed down at right angles to the front of the stage.*”<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the other stage is known as the *shosabutai* (dance stage) and this second stage is utilized for Kabuki scenes employing only dance. Besides knowing the sort of materials for the stage, it is also

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. 64

<sup>31</sup> Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print. p. 127

significant for actors and directors to be aware of the symbolism behind the different sides of the stage. First of all the stage left (*kamite*) is an area for socially important scenes with highly hierarchical ranked character.<sup>32</sup> Contrary, stage right is utilized for minor scenes and characters presenting low ranks in the societal hierarchy.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, entrances are also established by sides of the platforms due to the fact that in Kabuki plays characters “aspire towards a higher social position”<sup>34</sup> and thus the entrances of *Juzaburo* and the *chief maid* in *The Glorious Picture Book*, who do not enter from the *hanamichi*, make their appearance from stage right due to the fact that they are characters that aspire to be of higher social position, as their currently do not obtain this rank. This idea of societal ranking must then continued to be carried thought in the platforms of the Kabuki stage. This societal ranking can be demonstrated by the three heights that symbolize social standing where, “One-foot, three-inch ordinary legs supported the platforms homes of ordinary citizens; two-foot, one-inch legs, the homes of samurai; and two-foot, nine-inch legs, palaces and temples.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, when applying this to the traditional performance of *The Glorious Picture Book*, the temple in act five (*The Gokurakuji Temple*) and the shopkeeper’s shop in act three must demonstrate these heights in the platforms of their setting in order to employ the heights as a symbol to reference to the societal ranking of the setting. Meaning that the temple would be two-foot and nine-inch legs while the shop would demonstrate a platform of one-foot and three-inch ordinary legs.

Continuing on societal ranking as an important theme of the Kabuki theatre, audience also becomes a symbol by having the audience placed in either *Sajikiseki* (box seats) or other audience seats, according to income and wealth. This is as the audience is “divided into two sections, a railed wooden section of boxes on the sides of the auditorium for the merchants”<sup>36</sup> while the ‘pit’ in front of the stage is utilized for

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<sup>32</sup> Kuritz, Paul. *The Making of Theatre History*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988. Print. p. 114

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p. 114

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p. 114

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p. 114

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p. 115

the poor, uneducated servants and shop assistants. Additionally, “a large chandelier (shining insufficient light) is visible hanging from the ceiling above the audience seats”<sup>37</sup> while lamps (with sufficient light) are installed above the box seats. Thus it is significant that when performing a traditional Kabuki play that the audience seating must also be considered as the theme of societal ranking must be demonstrated throughout through the use of several elements.

Kabuki utilizes importance of appearance and wealth through even more set utilities such as the *Kanban* (boards). The *Kanban* are not a direct connection with set, however do demonstrate an additional tool that can be used to traditionally perform *The Glorious Picture Book* as they can be seen as a prop or a slight contribution to set. The *Kanban* are “boards displayed outside theatres to advertise the names of the actors.”<sup>38</sup> The second row, *Nimaiime*, is reserved for those playing the roles of handsome young men, while the third row, the *sanmaime*, is reserved for comic roles<sup>39</sup>. Thus the name of the actor playing *Nango Rikimaru* would appear on the third row for his comedic exit on the *hanamichi* (see appendix, figure 8).

In conclusion, any company desiring to put on a traditional kabuki performance of *Aoto Zōshi Hana no Niskiki-e* by *Kawatake Mokuami* must be informed of all the requirements and utilities of a traditional Kabuki theatre set and additionally must be aware of the Kabuki theatre design, stage elements, materials and even audience arrangement. Additionally, besides having general knowledge on the elements, it is significant to know the utilities of each and thus being able to apply them to the chosen play. The Kabuki set is unique as it has been able to advance itself technologically in order to distinguish itself from other Japanese theatre styles. Therefore, it is extremely important that one obeys the traditional kabuki set requirements when performing *Aoto Zōshi Hana no Niskiki-e*.

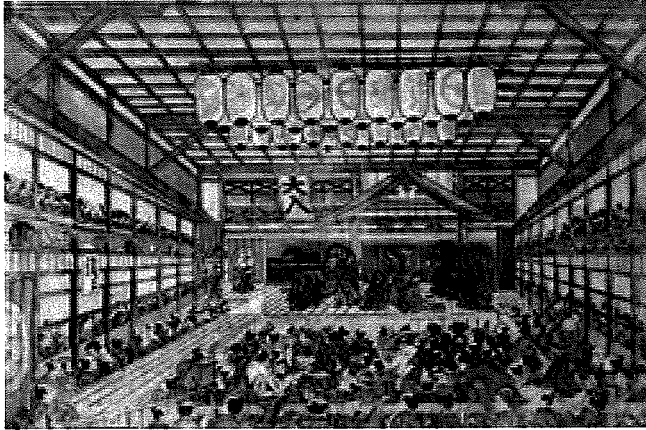
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<sup>37</sup> Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 121 p. 60

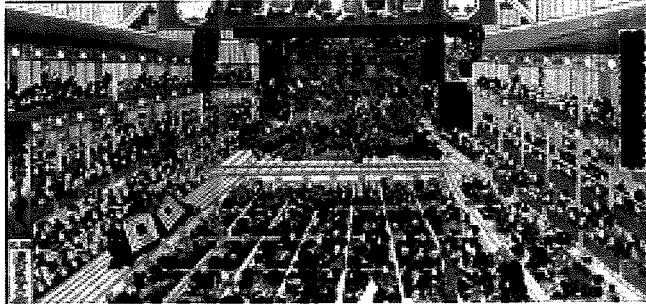
<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p. 60

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p. 60

## Appendix



*These two images, taken from two online sources, show typical Japanese woodblock prints (common for Kabuki and Noh Theatre) of the two great Edo Period theatres, morita-za and ichimura-za, respectively. From these images is already present the hanamichi, the divided seating of the audience and some of the mentioned stage elements. From these two theatres and the nakamura-za, derives all further Kabuki theatres.*



**Figure 8 – Two of the three great Edo Period Kabuki Theatres**



*The exit of Nango Rikimaru and Benten Kozo played by the late Nakamaru Kichiemon and the late Kikugoro VI. The exit is a humorous one, involving the blind man, on the left, whom the characters meet on the street. While this scene is played, the characters on stage are immobile, but continue the act after the extended exit on the hanamichi has been completed.*

**Figure 9 – The exit of Nango Rikimaru and Benten Kozo**



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## Interviews

1. Personal interview with **David Furumoto**, a Kabuki practitioner and Kabuki teacher at the University of Wisconsin. Interview completed through e-mailed personally created survey between 6<sup>th</sup> of March until the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012.

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## **Figure Images**

**Figure One:** "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 7 Jan. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_03\\_10.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_03_10.html)>.

**Figure Two:** Hand-drawn diagram of the sichi-san point based on information from the interview with David Furumoto.

**Figure Three:** "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_02.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_02.html)>.

**Figure Four:** "Kabuki, Benten Kozō Overturning Set Scene Change." *Global Performing Arts Database*. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.glopad.org/pi/en/image/1005726>>.

**Figure Five:** "Kabuki, Benten Kozō Overturning Set Scene Change, Part Two." *Global Performing Arts Database*. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.glopad.org/pi/en/image/1005727>>.

**Figure Six:** "Nihonbashi Nichome." *Nihonbashi*. Web. 1 Mar. 2012. <<http://archaeology.jp/sites/2005/nihonbashi.htm>>. and "Tokugawa Art." *Wikispaces*. Web. 23 Dec. 2011. <<http://valley-ss1-world-history.wikispaces.com/Tokugawa+Art>>.

**Figure Seven:** "KABUKI: HISTORY, THEMES, FAMOUS PLAYS AND MALE ACTORS IN FEMALE ROLES AND BARROOM FIGHTS." *Facts and Details*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://factsanddetails.com/japan.php?itemid=715>>.

**Figure Eight:** Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print. p. 81

**Figure Nine:** Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print. p. 68

# **Bibliography (Critique of Sources)**

## ***Literary Sources***

**1. Cavaye, Ronald, Paul Griffith, and Akihiko Senda. *A Guide to the Japanese Stage: From Traditional to Cutting Edge*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004. Print.**

Personally, this book was an extremely useful tool in taking on the role of a dramaturgy. The book provided me with all the traditional elements and not merely of the stage but also on all the characters and plot synopsis. Thanks to these descriptions I realized that I would not be able to look straight into set before understanding the entire concept of Kabuki theatre. Thus I read through this book in order to get a general yet detailed understanding of the theatre style. This book was in fact the most useful book or even source that I used for my research investigation due to the fact that it provided clear and detailed information of all technical elements of a Kabuki performance.

The authors Ronald Cavaye, a kabuki expert, Paul Griffith, Saitama University student, and Akihiko Senda, Shizouka University student and additionally the president of International Association Of Theatre Critics prove for this source to most accurate and reliable due to the level of their expertise. Although its reliability can be argued due to the fact that there is a lack of bibliography with their information, which could mean that they got the information from personal knowledge, and even though it may be accurate it is not possible to be sure.

I consider this my most useful and reliable source and it mostly helped me with understanding what type of play *The Picture Book* was and it additionally guided my knowledge of traditional set constructions and other stage tricks such as the keren. Additionally, in this source I found things I did not read in other sources such as the use of banners in a traditional theatre stage and the type of curtains.

**2. Leiter, Samuel L. *The Art of Kabuki: Five Famous Plays*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 1999. Print.**

This literary source was extremely beneficial in initiating my research investigation due to the fact that it contained a full synopsis of the chosen play. With reading this clear synopsis I was able to determine at what particular moments the hanamichi had to be utilized or additionally it was useful in creating more indications of when particular stage elements needed to be used when performing the traditional performance.

The following information was found about Samuel Leiter: *Editor of the Asian Theatre Journal*. His most recent books include *New Kabuki Encyclopedia: A Revised Adaptation of "Kabuki Jiten"* (Greenwood Press, 1997), *Zeami and the No Theatre in the World* (co-edited with Benito Ortolani, CASTA, 1998), his translation/adaptation

of *Faubion Bowers: The Man Who Saved Kabuki* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001), *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance* (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), and the four-volume *Kabuki Plays On Stage series* (co-edited with James R. Brandon, University of Hawaii Press, 2002-2003.) Thus this extensive research into Kabuki placed into several literary works must make him a reliable source.

### **3. Ernst, Earle. *The Kabuki Theatre*. Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1974. Print.**

This literary source by Early Ernst was beneficial to my research investigation in its description of literal stage elements, meaning the stage itself without the specific keren and technological elements. Upon reading this book I was able to discover how the floors on a Kabuki stage are made and which side of the stage is used for what purpose. Additionally, in much of the research I read a reference to cherry blossoms however research did not indicate any of this until I read this source that developed more on stage decorations such as cherry branches.

The author of *The Kabuki Theatre* is Earle Ernst and he is described to be an expert of the Kabuki Theatre style. Additionally, Early Ernst is said to be one of two most influential theatre censors in the Civil Censorship Detachment in Tokyo, where Earle Ernst is the Theatre Subsection Head. Therefore, I consider this source to be highly reliable due to his level of expertise and his recognition in the Kabuki or Japanese theatre community. Furthermore, in the ending of the source there is a note that indicates the author's reliability due to his A.B degree from Gettysburg College, a M.A. and Ph.D degrees from Cornell University and lastly he is professor emeritus of theatre at the university of Hawaii.

### **4. Kuritz, Paul. *The Making of Theatre History*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988. Print.**

I did not utilize this source to the largest extent however it was able to give me some more detailed insight on some importance of spaces on the set. Firstly, I thought the only significant point was the Sichi-San however thanks to this source I discovered that stage left and right have different meanings and entrances and exits are made based upon that symbolism or information.

However, it is still possible to then critique this source due to the fact that I still used some extensive data from the source in order to determine how a traditional performance would be done. First of all, the entire source is made up of several sources, for example some of the pages containing the desired information had around 10 footnotes. These different footnotes and bibliography made the information more reliable due to the fact that it came from other research. However, with this it is then also possible to argue that the novel may be merely based on other sources which also have to be examined in its accurateness.

Furthermore, the author, Paul Kuritz, is a professor of theatre at Bates College and has been since 1978. His expertise due to his profession would then allow me to think that the source is reliable and I believe the information to be accurate as he would not utilize incorrect sources for his footnotes.

## **Online Sources**

**5. "Shiranami Gonin Otoko." *Kabuki*. Web. 4 Jan. 2012. <[http://www.kabuki21.com/gonin\\_otoko.php](http://www.kabuki21.com/gonin_otoko.php)>.**

This website was further used to demonstrate a clear outline of the different acts and also allowed me to establish which acts can be separated in order to make their own performance. However, questioning the reliability of this source is extremely difficult. I believe that this source should not be considered very reliable due to the fact that there is no indication who wrote it or from what major website it comes from. There is a possibility to contact the website through email, however it is unclear who this email would be sent to, thus there is no indication of writer.

Furthermore, the spelling of the title of the play is incorrect or without the necessary accent marks, which seems to make it even less accurate as it seems more like a blog rather than an informational website. However, the plot synopsis and some of the other information matched the information read in other sources and due to the fact that it is the first link that comes up when I type in the title of the play, there is a level of accurateness and thus I decided to use it discretely in my research investigation.

**6. Mende, Kazuko. "Journal for Geometry and Graphics." *Concerning the Japanese Kabuki Stage*. Web. 19 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.heldermann-verlag.de/jgg/jgg06/jgg0615.pdf>>.**

This source is an online source represented in a PDF file and contains the following description:

Department of Science of Arts, Joshibi University of Art and Design  
1900 Asamizodai Sagamihara-shi, Kanagawa, 228-8538 Japan  
email: mende@joshi.ac.jp

Additionally it shows that it is taken from another file like either a literary source and thus it seems to be quite reliable. Additionally, the source contains several references at the end and thus it is possible to determine the validity of the information. However, the PDF file is not connected to any major website and thus it is not possible to exactly determine where the information completely comes from thus making it less invalid.

## ***Interview***

### **7. Personal interview with David Furumoto, a Kabuki practitioner and Kabuki teacher at the University of Wisconsin.**

The interview with Kabuki 'expert' David Furumoto was quite helpful to my investigation due to the fact that besides reinforcing some of the research I read before but was unsure about due to the validity of the sources, but moreover it was helpful as I received some additional personal information on how some parts of the stage should be used. The most significant thing I received from the interview was information about the sichi-san and specifically where it was located and what the purpose of it was.

Due to this personal insight of the kabuki practitioner I was able to receive more insight on the Kabuki stage and the chosen play due to the fact that I have personally never encountered a Kabuki specific stage or even a play. I believe the interview was extremely useful due to the fact that David Furumoto is known as a Kabuki expert whilst being the director of University Theatre at the Wisconsin University and additionally the associate professor of acting. Given his Japanese background, I believe the translated words I utilize in my investigation are accurate and valid. However, what makes this interview most valid is that he holds both a BA and MFA in theatre from the University of Hawaii with a specialization in Asian theatre and has received the Earle Earnst Award for excellence in Asian Theatre. However, what doubts the validity of certain information is that David Furumoto was unsure of the chosen play and thus gave me some information that he also got from online sources, thus those online sources should be critiqued.

## Critique of Image Sources

**Figure One:** "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 7 Jan. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_03\\_10.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_03_10.html)>.

**Figure Two:** Hand-drawn diagram of the sichi-san point based on information from the interview with David Furumoto.

**Figure Three:** "The Kabuki Stage." *Invitation to Kabuki Theatre*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <[http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3\\_02.html](http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/3/3_02.html)>.

**Figure Four:** "Kabuki, Benten Kozō Overturning Set Scene Change." *Global Performing Arts Database*. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.glopad.org/pi/en/image/1005726>>.

**Figure Six:** "Nihonbashi Nichome." *Nihonbashi*. Web. 1 Mar. 2012. <<http://archaeology.jp/sites/2005/nihonbashi.htm>>. and "Tokugawa Art." *Wikispaces*. Web. 23 Dec. 2011. <<http://valley-ss1-world-history.wikispaces.com/Tokugawa+Art>>.

**Figure Seven:** "KABUKI: HISTORY, THEMES, FAMOUS PLAYS AND MALE ACTORS IN FEMALE ROLES AND BARROOM FIGHTS." *Facts and Details*. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://factsanddetails.com/japan.php?itemid=715>>.

It is difficult to examine the validity of the image sources as most images were not directly linked in the websites and thus it becomes hard to critique the online images. However, some images were taken from the literary sources and those I critiqued in the appropriate section of literary sources. However, for the images the validity was not as extensive as the information as most of the images were utilized in order to demonstrate the point that I was making, and by being able to match the valid and accurate information to the image, the image must be correct as well.

Additionally, I decided to create my own images, which were based on some of the useful information obtained from the interview. I believe that image is extremely valid because it clearly demonstrates the point where the actors must have their important monologue. Thus the images taken from the literary sources to my opinion are very valid while the online images may be doubted, additionally I think the visual aid that is additionally create through self created images is extremely helpful in creating a traditional performance of the play as visual will give a clearer indication.