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Izumo *Kagura*, Iwami *Kagura*, and National Intersections

Ritual, Propaganda, Tourist Attraction

Izumo *kagura* 出雲神楽 (music for the gods/to make the gods happy) and Iwami *kagura* 石見神楽 in Shimane prefecture are characterized by a mixture of unmasked *torimono* 採物 (hand-held objects) dances and masked drama. The contrast between these two types has led *kagura* scholar Ishizuka Takatoshi 石塚尊俊 to question the historical usage of the term *kagura*. This article examines the content of the theatrical pieces and considers non-ritual roles for performance. In particular, attention is drawn to pieces such as *Sankan* 三韓 (Three Koreas), the mythical conquest of the three Korean Kingdoms. Although supposedly in decline, recent performances suggest that *Sankan* remains an integral part of the *kagura* repertoire. Given friction between Japan and Korea over Takeshima 竹島, the outmost extremity of Shimane prefecture, it is difficult to ignore the propaganda potential of performances in recent times and historically. Other factors that have impacted on performance function are shifts in the performers from shrine priests to secular bodies; here the role of *seinendan* 青年団, youth groups, which came to the fore at the beginning of the twentieth century, is examined. Other impacting intersections, the emergence of folklore academia, and the use of performances for tourism are also considered.

KEYWORDS: Izumo *kagura*—Iwami *kagura*—*shinnō*—Sankan—ritual—propaganda—tourism

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The elderly man standing next to me shouted "One more time! One more time!" "One more time," was the response from the stage. It was past two in the morning and the assembled audience had grown thin in number. But there was still enough of a gathering to urge on the protagonist as he slayed three demons. In the theatrical *kagura* 神楽 of western Japan, demon slaying is often the clichéd denouement. But these were no ordinary demons. They were the incarnated simulacrums of Baekje (Kudara) 百済, Silla (Shiragi) 新羅, and Goguryeo (Kōkuri) 高句麗—the three ancient kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. Here, they were being harried by a large, white-masked demon, an alternative incarnation of the hero-statesman Take no Uchi no Sukune 武内宿禰 at the behest of Jingū Kōgō 神功皇后, consort of the semi-mythical Japanese Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇. She too makes her appearance on the stage, standing in the background, bow and arrow drawn, ready should the Korean demons' resistance prove too great. But her assistance is not necessary as Take no Uchi battles each of the Korean kingdoms in turn. They have already been battled twice and, as they prostrate themselves on the stage, Take no Uchi has repeatedly demanded that they subjugate themselves to Japan. But the audience is not satisfied, and the battle is re-engaged for the third time before submission is achieved and the three kingdoms are ordered to pay tribute to their Japanese conqueror.

Sankan was just one of many dance/theatrical pieces that were performed by the Ōdochi *kagura* 大土地神楽 preservation society on the nights of the 26 and 27 October 2012 at the Ōdochi Kō *jinja* (shrine) 大土地荒神社, awkwardly located between the narrow streets of Taisha 大社 town, Izumo city, Shimane prefecture. According to a now defunct internet link for what was recorded as the Izumo kagura jōhō sentā 出雲神楽情報センター (Izumo Kagura Information Center)—a link that could be accessed at least up to October 2014), performances of *Sankan* were rare and in decline. A publication on Ōhara *shinshoku kagura* 大原神職神楽 (Ohara priests' *kagura*),[1] based in what was once Ōhara county, Unnan city, approximately twenty kilometers southeast of Izumo city, relates that, "in consideration of the content" performances of *Sankan* had ceased after World War II (Shimane ken kodai bunka sentā 2000, 29). In the early 1990s, when researching Iwami *kagura* in the neighboring western part of Shimane prefecture, a pamphlet providing brief descriptions of performances had clumsily deleted a reference to demons coming from the Korean peninsula in the equivalent piece, *Take no Uchi*

武の内, which takes its name from the protagonist. Clearly, post–World War II sensibilities prevailed, and in a climate of reconciliation in the 1990s, evidenced in the proclamation by former Korean president Kim Dae-Jung in 1998 to lift a ban restricting the import of "Japanese popular culture," references to past conflicts, semi-fictional or not, were inappropriate. Thus, in addition to noting that performances of *Sankan* were in decline, the Izumo Kagura Information Center website continued that, particularly after the War, when the piece *Sankan* was staged, it was performed in a strong atmosphere of restraint. However, the removal of this website description and performances by the Ōdochi *kagura* preservation society on both the 26 and 27 October 2012, suggest and demonstrate that the mood of "restraint" is now no longer pertinent. The baying of those gathered, and the response of the performers, made that all too apparent.[2]

To the east of Taisha town, separated by Shinji ko (lake) 宍道湖, is Sada 佐太 shrine, academically claimed by some to be the origins of the Izumo *kagura* tradition.[3] On the second day of the festival, held every year at Sada shrine on 25 September, modern time restrictions allow for the performance of only three theatrical pieces, the *shinnō* 神能 (sacred *nō* drama), out of a known repertoire of twelve. Yamatodake 日本武, the name of the protagonist in the piece, Yaegaki 八重垣 (The eight-fold fence), and Ōyashiro 大社 (The great shrine) make up the staple diet of performances, and this too is iterated in the explanation given of the *shinnō* provided by the shrine office. But, in 2012, Sada shrine too gave a performance of Sankan, all too evident for anyone to see on a YouTube upload (Hiro88641 2013). The restraint and decline in performances in the programme notes for Sankan provided by the Izumo Kagura Information Center seem to run counter to the reality of performances on the ground, or rather on the *kagura* stage.

But 2012 was not a usual year. Many celebratory performances of *kagura* in Shimane prefecture were planned for the 1,300-year anniversary of the completion of the ancient text, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Records of Ancient Matters), the source material for much of what appears on the theatrical *kagura* stage. This could explain a bumper performance of *kagura* pieces. But even with the anniversary of a classic text, it is difficult to ignore the extra-national geopolitics of the area.

Far out in the Japan Sea, or for the Koreans, the East Sea, lies that outmost extremity of Shimane prefecture, the island of Takeshima. The Koreans call it Dokdo and the dispute over territoriality has continued since the de facto control of the island was realized through the occupation by Korean forces in 1954, under the presidential direction of Syngman Rhee.

In a pre-election stunt to boost flagging popularity figures, a later President, Lee Myung-bak, flew to Takeshima/Dokdo in August 2012, exacerbating tensions between the two countries. Prior to this, in 2005, the local government in Shimane prefecture had designated 22 February as "Takeshima no hi" 竹島の日 ("Takeshima Day"), to heighten local awareness of Japan's claim of territorial sovereignty. According to a report for the US Congress , this and territorial disputes with China have, in part, seen a rise in Japanese nationalist sentiment, and that sentiment may be evidenced in the performances of *Sankan* in Izumo *kagura* (Chanlett-Avery et al. 2017, 8).

Certainly, a homepage describing the piece performed by the Ōhara *kannushi* 神主 (priest) (*shinshoku*) *kagura* preservation society, the very same *kagura* group noted above that purportedly had ceased to perform *Sankan* after World War II, clearly forges a connection between *Sankan* and the territorial rancor that has arisen between Japan and Korea over the disputed Takeshima/Dokdo. The homepage states: "… The piece *Sankan* is [where] Jingū Kōgō dispatches a military force to the Korean peninsula and defeats the three Korean [kingdoms] of Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo. The peninsula has surely gone mad. Shimane prefecture, which has established "Takeshima Day," is tremendously strong."[4] And the revival of *Sankan* by the Ōhara *kannushi* (*shinshoku*) *kagura* preservation society some time after the year 2000, when the report by the Shimane ken kodai bunka sentā 島根県古代文化センター (Shimane Prefectural Historical Cultural Center) had claimed a postwar cessation of performance, adds further weight to the argument.

The aim of this article is not, however, to focus on expressions of nationalism but to examine the status of *kagura* itself and its reflection of and adaptation to changing historical circumstances. If *Sankan* today can mirror national sentiments, or the sentiments of the people of Shimane prefecture, then *kagura* in the past too cannot be divorced from wider national concerns prevalent in earlier periods of formation and presentation. These concerns include nationalist expressions through the Edo period into the Meiji period; early twentieth-century appropriation of the performing arts in general, and *kagura* in particular, to galavanize Japanese youth; intersections with folklore academia, resulting, in modern times, in the exploitation of *kagura*; and following centralized policies on tourism, to stimulate regional economies.

To examine the status of *kagura*, I focus on two related traditions with which I am most familiar, Iwami *kagura* in western Shimane prefecture and Izumo *kagura* to the east. *Kagura* is, by definition, a ritual. And this is where the problem lies. In the most recent study of Iwami *kagura*, Yamaji Kōzō 山路興造 emphasizes the ritual, concluding that historically there were two major performance formats: unmasked *torimono* dances (dances with hand-held objects such as *suzu* 鈴 bells and fans), collectively known as *shichi za* 七座,[5] and grander displays of theatrical performance during which spirit possession could occur (Yamaji 2014, 52–53) . The *shichi za* were performed every year as part of a shrine's annual festival, *rei-sai* 例祭. *Kagura* with spirit possession entailed greater financial and human resources and were held once every five or seven years. This was the *shiki-nen no kagura* 式年の神楽 or, alternatively, Ōmoto *kagura* 大元神楽. Here, theatrical performances also took place. According to Yamaji, Ōmoto represented multiple deities of ancestors who could be consulted during a spirit possession ritual. Yamaji points to a survey by the nineteenth-century local Kokugaku 国学 (National Learning) scholar Fujii Muneo 藤井宗雄 (1823–1904) who, in his *Iwami no kuni jinja ki* 石見国神社記 [Iwami province shrine records], recorded that belief in Ōmoto was widespread in the Iwami area where, for each of the six counties that made up Iwami (Naka 那賀, Ōchi 邑智, Nima 仁摩, Ano 安濃, Mino 美濃, and Kanoashi 鹿足), Ōmoto deities could number well over a hundred (Yamaji 2014, 56; Yamazaki 2009).

Today, Ōmoto *kagura* survives only in the mountainous area of Ōchi county, having escaped the cultural purges of the Meiji restoration (Yamaji 2014, 49–71).

In an act of government intervention, performances of *kagura* by shrine priests were banned. In eastern Shimane prefecture, this was the *Shinshoku enbu kinshi rei* 神職演舞禁止令 (priests' dance performance prohibition order) issued by the Matsue Domain Civil Administration Offices for Shrine 松江藩民政局神祠懸 (Matsue han minsei kyoku shinshi gakari) in the eighth month of 1870. And in the first month of 1873, although aimed specifically at *miko* 巫女, shrine priestesses, spirit possession was also abolished.[6] These bans propelled the emergence of performances given by civilian groups, already beginning to make their presence felt toward the end of the Edo period (Lancashire 2006, 249).

In the eyes of some, the shift from performances by shrine priests to those by civilian groups also saw a detrimental shift from the ritual to the secular. Performances in concert halls and sports venues emphasized the intrinsic entertainment value of the *kagura*. This is particularly true for Iwami *kagura*. In 1941, local scholar Yadomi Kumaichirō wrote that Iwami *kagura* had entered an evil path (Yadomi 1941, 850). Other local scholars too were perturbed, lamenting that the *kagura* had been reduced to a mere spectacle (Ōba 1975, 45; Ishizuka 1979, 22). Others recalled a seeming golden age when early performers ignored those gathered and directed their attention to the center of the stage, beneath the suspended *kumo*[7] to which the deities had descended. The *kagura* was, after all, a ritual entertainment for the gods (Takeuchi 1990, 4). But, in the past, was that really so? Even with Yamaji Kōzō's emphasis on the historical, ritual nature of Iwami *kagura*, he too briefly notes the predominance of battle scenes in Iwami *kagura* portraying enemies coming from foreign lands. He suggests a possible residual fear following the failed invasion attempts by the Mongols in 1274 and 1281,[8] or the comparative proximity to the Korean peninsula, naming specifically the ancient kingdom of Goguryeo (Kōkuri) and presumably the Goguryeo–Yamato War of the late fourth century and early fifth century (Yamaji 2014, 67). Either way, the obviously political content of *Sankan* in particular, even if it portrays mythical/historical events in a very distant past, hints that the theatrical pieces possibly had an alternative agenda.

More importantly, one is inevitably led to the question, "is the theatrical *kagura* really *kagura*?" The question is by no means new. Ishizuka Takatoshi, renowned *kagura* scholar and expert on the *kagura* of western Japan, has, in a variety of publications, questioned the status of the theatrical *kagura* (Ishizuka 1979, 407, 443; 2005, 11–13, 41–42).

Today, at Sada Shrine, performances of unmasked *torimono* dances and theatrical performances, referred to respectively as *shichi za* and *shinnō*, sacred *nō*, take place on 24 and 25 September. For the *shichi za* today, the repertoire consists of seven pieces: *Kenmai* 剣舞 (sword dance), *Sangū* 散供 (scattered offerings), *Kiyome* 清目 (purification), *Goza* 御座 (The honorable seat), *Kanjō* 勧請 (summoning the deities), *Yaotome* 八乙女 (eight maidens), and *Takusa* 手草 (hand held grass). In reality, only six pieces are performed as *Yaotome*, what would have been the only female dance in the festival, ceased to be performed, according to the shrine offices, "in recent times" (personal communication from shrine office, March 8th 2013).

Goza is the raison d'etre for the festival, for the dances are performed as part of the central ritual, the *Goza-gae sai* 御座替祭 (Festival for Changing of the Seat). A mat, made of locally grown rush, is changed annually within the bodies of the three shrines that make up Sada in the belief that the "spiritual power" 霊威 (*reii*) of the gods will continue anew. Sada Shrine draws a parallel to the *shiki nen sengū* 式年遷宮, the rebuilding of Grand Shrines, which, for example at Ise Jingū, occurs every twenty years, and for Izumo Taisha, every sixty to seventy years (Sada-jinja 2005).

Historically, twelve dramatic pieces make up the repertoire of the *shinnō*. These are *Ōyashiro*, *Makirime* 真切女, *Ebisu* 恵比須, *Yawata* 八幡, *Yamatodake*, *Iwato* 磐戸 (The rock door), *Sankan*, *Sumiyoshi* 住吉, *Kōjin* 荒神, *Itsukushima* 厳島, *Take-mikazuchi* 武甕槌, and *Yaegaki*. Five of these pieces Kirime, Ebisu, Yawata, Take-mikazuchi, Kōjin take the names of deities and two, Sumiyoshi and Itsukushima, refer to major shrines.

A current pamphlet, issued by the adjacent Kashima rekishi minzoku shiryō kan 鹿島歴史民俗資料館 (Kashima History and Folklore Museum), notes that the pieces *Itsukushima*, *Takemikazuchi*, and *Kōjin* are no longer performed. *Sankan* is, however, on the list. According to oral tradition the *shinnō* were created by a shrine priest at Sada shrine, a certain Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki 宮川兵部少輔秀行, who travelled to Kyoto in the fifth month of 1608 to obtain a priest's license from the Yoshida family. He learnt *nō* and used the *nō* piece *Takasago* 高砂 (from Takasago bay), presumably as a template, to create the *shinnō*.[9]

The two performances types, unmasked *torimono* dances (*shichi za*) and theatrical pieces (*shinnō*), make up, in current terminology, Izumo *kagura*. They are also present in neighboring Iwami *kagura* though the same, specific nomenclature is not used.

Ishizuka's doubt about the *kagura* status of the *shinnō*, the theatrical pieces, rests on the simultaneous usage of both the words *kagura* and [*shin*]*nō* in early documentation. The *Kaikitsudan* 懐橘談 of 1653 records dramatic pieces corresponding to the repertoire of Sada Shrine, and these are simply referred to as *nō*. Separation of the terminology is evident in such statements as "…are ritual *mikagura* or otherwise *nō*…" ("…*shinji mikagura mata wa nō ari*,…" 神事御神楽又は能あり, 御神楽又は能あり) (Kurosawa and Taniguchi 1914, 65–66).

Ishizuka likewise draws attention to a diary, *Masayori nikki shō* 正仍日記抄 [Annotated diary of Masayori] , penned by a certain Hatagaki Masayori 幡垣正仍, which covers a period of sixty years from 1684 to 1744. Here, specifically mentioned are the terms *kitō kagura* 祈祷神楽 (prayer *kagura*), *yaotome kagura* 八乙女神楽, *dai kagura* 大神楽 (great *kagura*), *kagura*, and *mikagura* 御神楽 (honorable kagura). And, in the same document, for an entry dated the 18th day of the 3rd month, 1700, there is a separate reference, which is unconnected to *kagura*, to three pieces that match those in the *shinnō* repertoire (Ishizuka 1979, 408–10, 454).

Another document referenced is the *Un'yōshi* 雲陽誌 [Journal of Un'yo] of 1717, a geography of the domain of Matsue. What is significant in this document is, despite references to *kagura* rituals that incorporate the *shichi za* ritual, there is no reference to any form of theatrical performance corresponding to the *shinnō*. In the section on Sada Shrine, only the *Goza-gae sai*, the changing of the mat, is men-

tioned. After this, the priests perform "rituals for one day and one night" (Ashida 1971, 71). What these rituals entail is unclear. Nevertheless, what is of possible significance is that the rituals occur for only one night.

This contrasts with the first known descriptions of the *Goza-gae sai* festival in a document, the *Shichi jū yodo no matsuri no na o chiji* 七十余度之祭之名ヲ知事 [Knowledge of the names of over seventy festivals] of 1512, with *shichi za* on the first night and a performance form termed *hōraku* 法楽 (Buddhist music/to make Buddhist deities happy), possibly a precursor to the *shinnō*, on the second night.[10] This concurs with current performance practice today, with the same format of *shichi za* on the first night and the *shinnō* on the second. A possible interpretation is that, in the *Un'yōshi*, the *shinnō* were not deemed to be ritual and hence only one day and one night of ritual were noted. If this is true, then again the ritual status of the *shinnō*, let alone the *kagura* status, is brought into question.

Leaping forward into more recent times, the ban issued in 1870 by the Matsue Domain Civil Administration Offices for Shrines was the *Shinshoku enbu kinshi rei* 神職演舞禁止令 (Priests' dance performance prohibition order). Here, the characters clearly indicate that what was banned was *enbu* 演舞 (dance performance), not *kagura*. And what ceased to be performed was what is now understood today as Izumo *kagura*, namely theatrical *kagura*, in Sada Shrine, the *shinnō*. And even over fifty years after the ban, the same uncertainty over the status of the theatrical pieces was evidenced when "*kagura*" performance groups travelled around the country to demonstrate their performance skills. The *Yatsuka gun shi* 八束郡誌 [A history of Yatsuka county] of 1926 records for the previous year that a group from Ōchi county, today home of the nationally designated Ōmoto *kagura*, travelled to Kyoto and Osaka to perform. Here it is noted that the performances were simply titled *Shindai geki* 神代劇 [Theater of the age of the gods] (Okuhara 1973, 648).

In current performance practice, extant nomenclature still infers a distinction between the *kagura* dance and, simply put, all the rest. In Sada Shrine, when all the performances are over, the performers and shrine priests retire to a separate building within the grounds of the shrine and a performance of *Shin kagura* 真神楽 (true *kagura*) ensues. The dance is that of a *miko*, in reality a man dressed in women's garb, with an elaborately ornamental golden crown complementing the white, female mask that conveniently conceals the gender of the dancer.

In Iwami *kagura* too, a seemingly similar distinction can be made. Here, the only piece actually entitled "*Kagura*," the first piece listed in the repertoire, may be danced within the body of the shrine whilst the remaining, variously titled pieces are danced in an adjacent building.[11] Thus, both the pieces "*Kagura*" of Iwami *kagura*, and the "*Shin kagura*," the "true kagura" of Sada Shrine, stand in contrast to the nomenclature used for the remaining performance forms.

Ishizuka himself finally concludes that popular use of the term *kagura* for theatrical pieces such as the *shinnō*, at least in the western part of Japan today, is possibly the result of its mistaken usage in the mass media and, by implication, this usage has no real history (Ishizuka 1979, 407).

Theatrical *kagura*: propaganda tool?

The possibility that theatrical *kagura* may, in fact, not be *kagura*, and therefore not ritual, means that alternative functions are open to interpretation. As noted at the outset, with the performance of *Sankan*, the propaganda potential for theatrical pieces is clearly evident. And in the Muromachi and Edo periods, the visual display of stage performance could have served as a major form conveying the ideas of certain religious groups with invested interests in gaining popular support. Certainly, proselytizing through the performing arts is well documented. But with a piece like *Sankan*, there is undeniably a political dimension that surpasses a simple interpretation of good *kami* 神 (deities) conquering evil demons.

Documented proof of propaganda intent is, however, not available. What one can do is draw attention to the social and political environment of the time, which may have impacted on the formation and content of shrine theatre.

The oral tradition of the Sada Shrine priest, Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki, travelling to Kyoto in 1608 to obtain a priest's license from the Yoshida family is a starting point. Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼倶 (1435–1511), descendent of the Urabe 卜部 clan, vice-intendant of the Heian period *Jingikan* 神祇官 (Department of Divinities), put the Yoshida family on the religious map of Japan with the establishment of Yoshida Shintō. In a religious climate of Buddhist and Shinto syncretism, Kanetomo aimed to restore Shinto to its "original" state—Sōgen Shintō 宗源神道. In this, Japanese deities precede all. And to spread his doctrine, he taught the ancient classics of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicals of Japan) as well as the purification ritual *Nakatomi no harae* 中臣祓 (purification [rituals] of Nakatomi)[12] to a growing following of priests, monks, and social elite.[13] However, it was his licensing system that would ensure the influence of Yoshida Shinto in spreading his doctrines from the urban center to the rural periphery. By the time of Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki, the licensing system had been strengthened under Kanetomo's successor, Yoshida Kanemigi 吉田兼右 (1516–73). And, to further the influence of the Yoshida family, Kanemigi's sons, Kanemi 兼見 (1535–1610) and Bonshun 梵舜 (1553–1632), had affiliated themselves respectively with the great generals of Oda Nobunaga 織田信長, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉, and Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康.[14] In 1665, through the edict Shosha negi kannushi hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度 [Ordinances for Shrine Priests], all shrines were effectively placed under the control of the Yoshida family. Three years prior to this, in 1662, the extent of Yoshida control may already have determined the ban of Buddhist practice including the chanting of sutras in Izumo Grand Shrine as well as the removal of a pagoda, normally the provenance of Buddhist temples, from within the grounds of the shrine (Ishizuka 1979, 362).

But the earlier connection between the Yoshida family and Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu may also be significant. When Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki travelled to Kyoto in 1608, this was only ten years after the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the end of his military campaign on the Korean peninsula.

Hideyoshi's Korean campaign may be seen as the cumulative act following his unification of Japan, a united nation, for which he had proclaimed himself regent,

or *taikō* 太閤. The mobilization of an impressive number of daimyo (feudal lords) brought together to combat a foreign land, no doubt served as a means to end internal strife by directing potentially disruptive energies overseas (FUJIKI 2005, 313). And then there was the expanding Spanish empire, which could both threaten and rival Hideyoshi's newly established regime. All this served as a potential catalyst for the early stirrings of nationalist sentiment.

Against this background, pieces like *Sankan* would easily resonate with Toyotomi's campaign. Certainly connections had been made between Toyotomi and Jingū Kōgō, as is evident from the accounts of the campaign by the samurai Yoshino Jingozaemon 吉野甚五左衛門, who invoked the mythical conquest of Korea by Jingū Kōgō as a historial precedent for justifying the attack on the Korean peninsula (ELISONAS 1991, 265). Given the military background of some shrine priests, as noted by ISHIZUKA Takatoshi (2005, 46–47), it is not inconceivable that Miyagawa Hyōbu no shōyū Hideyuki, himself of samurai status,[15] participated in the Korean campaign. Certainly, his name in part harkens back to an earlier age of military aristocracy in the Nara/Heian periods where *shōyū* 少輔 designated a high rank in the *hyōbu* 兵部, which was the erstwhile, though then defunct, War Ministry established under the *ritsuryō* 律令 legal system in the eighth century. The inclusion of Hyōbu no shōyū was not uncommon in the names of military men during the Sengoku and Edo periods.

In more modern times, against an international background of nineteenth-century nation-state formation and imperial expansion, restoration of the Meiji emperor and the establishment of a new political order followed a pattern of state formation through both the overthrow of what was deemed a disfunctioning regime, the Tokugawa, as well as the subsequent emulation of foreign, more powerful nation states (WIMMER and FEINSTEIN 2010, 769 and 785). A new political order would also demand international recognition to further legitamize its status. This was the intent of the Meiji oligarchs, but the response from neighboring countries only elicited friction due to preexisting alliances and allegiances. The refusal by Korea to recognize an alternative Imperial institution other than that of China sparked off the *Seikanron* 征韓論 (debate on subjugation of Korea), in 1873. Here too the propaganda potential of *Sankan* could easily be reworked or even revived to reflect frustration at a perceived sleight against a newly formed Japanese political institution.

In a similar vein, a connection between the Korean attack by Jingū Kōgō and nineteenth-century justifications for an attack has been examined by Richard W. Anderson, who sees a correlation between these justifications and votive paintings or *ema* 絵馬 depicting Jingū Kōgō. These were particularly prevalent during the nineteenth century and up to the beginning of the twentieth century in Yamaguchi and Fukuoka prefectures (ANDERSON 2002, 247–70). Performances of *Sankan* in the nineteenth century too could also be an alternative popular expression reflecting such debates as well as events leading to the final annexation/colonization of Korea in 1910. In prewar Japan *Sankan* had the more explicit title of *Sankan Seibatsu* 三韓征伐 (The Conquest of the Three Koreas).

But, *Sankan* is just one of many pieces that make up the repertoire of shrine theatre in Izumo and Iwami. It is also not peculiar to the Shimane prefectural area and can be found in the repertoires of other shrine theatre across the country. Nevertheless, it is unique in that it is the only piece in the theatrical repertoire where a specified country is identified as an enemy. The timing of the formation of the *shinnō* may see a correlation with Toyotomi Hideyoshi's advances into the Korean peninsula.

Toyotomi's Korean expedition was the major international concern at the end of the sixteenth century. But it was not the only one. At the extreme western end of Shimane prefecture, adjacent to the border of Yamaguchi prefecture, is the small town of Tsuwano. Sometimes referred to as a "small Kyoto," today it is a popular tourist destination, particularly famed for the annual July folk performances of the Sagi bird dance, dance of the heron. Iwami *kagura* groups too make frequent trips to the town, cashing in on the tourist trade with abbreviated performances. On the eastern side of the main street of Tsuwano is the Catholic Church, and to the west of Tsuwano station, surrounded by dense vegetation, is the comparatively recent construction of Maria *seidō* 聖堂 (sanctuary). The latter building commemorates thirty-six "hidden Christians" who, among a total of 153 individuals, were sent at the beginning of the Meiji period from Nagasaki to Tsuwano and were persuaded to change their faith. The thirty-six refused, and were subsequently tortured and then martyred (Shimane ken kankō renmei n.d.). Their persecution tragically emulates the execution of the twenty-six Christians in Nagasaki in 1597.

Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki's journey from Sada Shrine to Kyoto not only follows ten years on from Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion of the Korean peninsula but also took place at a time when restraints on Christian activity were periodically enforced. A ban on Christian activity had already been proclaimed twice in 1587 and 1597, the second resulting in the execution of the twenty-six Christians in Nagasaki. Six years on from Miyagawa's Kyoto journey, an edict was issued in 1614 under Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠, calling for the expulsion of all missionaries from Japan. The claim was that Christians "contravene governmental regulations, traduce Shinto, calumniate the True Law, destroy regulations and corrupt goodness"[16] (Elisonas 1991, 367). But, in addition, reports of Spanish control of the Philippines and Mexico raised fears that this would be emulated on Japanese soil. Either way the policy of isolationism, finally coming into force in 1639, was a clear statement of Japan's perceived threat of the foreign.

It is during this time frame of government-sanctioned xenophobia that the first references to theatrical *kagura* in Shimane prefecture find their way onto the pages of local histories and geographies of the region. At what stage individual performance pieces were incorporated in the repertoire is unclear.

The list of eleven pieces in the *Kaikitsudan* of 1653 is comprehensive, though the piece *Sankan* is not recorded. Its absence does not necessarily mean, however, that it was not present in the repertoire of other shrines. The oldest surviving script, the *Wada hon* 和田本 (The book of Wada), includes *Sankan* but dates back only to 1844, making any assessment of historical depth inconclusive.[17] And if *Sankan* does not date back to the supposed origins of the Sada *shinnō* in the early

seventeenth century, its subsequent inclusion could reflect the sentiment of later generations, for *kagura* texts were always in a constant state of flux. The current text used in Iwami *kagura*, the *Kōtei Iwami kagura daihon* 校定石見神楽台本 [Corrected Iwami kagura script], for example, is a 1954 attempt to revamp a lost text, which, despite a ban on priest performances, was fabricated in the 1880s by the local, late nineteenth-century "national learning" *kokugaku* scholar, Fujii Muneo. He, in turn, incorporated songs from the *Tamahoko hyakushu* 玉鉾百首 (Hundred poems of an ancient road), penned by Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 in 1786.

A paucity of documentation of any historical depth means that in terms of content, the nature of the pieces can only be gleaned from extant texts, which, as in Iwami *kagura*, is perhaps a greater reflection of late nineteenth-century Meiji sentiment than that of preceding generations. Either way, adversity to the foreign, the isolationist policy of the Tokugawa *bakufu* 幕府 (government, literally tent government), including similar sentiments at the end of the Edo period, is a possible interpretation for the threat of demons hailing from other lands. In Iwami *kagura*, of a total of twenty theatrical pieces, within seven of these (*Yahata* 八幡, *Chigaeshi* 道返し (returning [the demon] back on the road), *Jinrin* 塵輪, *Shōki* 鍾馗, *Yamatotakeru no Mikoto* 日本武尊, *Kumaso* 熊襲, and *Take no uchi*), the recurring phrase is a variation of, for example, that in *Yahata*:[18]

> 今度異国より悪王飛び来り，わが国の人民を害す
> *Kondo ikoku yori aku ō tobikitari, waga kuni no jinmin o gaisu*
>
> Now, a bad king from a different country is flying in and is harming the people of our country (Shinohara 1972, 12)

And the response, after the inevitable victorious battle against the assailant, can be, as in *Chigaeshi*:

> 早や早や元つ国にと立ち帰るべし
> *Haya haya mototsu kuni ni to tachi kaeru beshi*
>
> "Quickly, quickly you must go back to your own country"
>
> (Shinohara 1972, 28)

In the two pieces *Kumaso* and *Yamatotakeru no Mikoto* the enemy is near, for here the mission of the warrior Yamatotakeru is to attack and pacify respectively the Kumaso folk of southern Kyushu to the west,[19] and following on from this, the Emishi (Ainu) to the east. Both peoples are again causing harm against the people of our country, the land of Yamato.

The remainder of the pieces can be didactic. *Gokoku tane moto* 五穀種元 (origins of the seeds of the five crops) shows how to grow crops and thank deities for them. And the piece *Gojin* (five deities) explains the concepts of *gogyō* 五行 (five phases) with particular reference to the five seasons, Spring, Summer, Doyō 土用 (dog days), Autumn, and Winter. *Kirime* too briefly highlights the importance of *gogyō*. Then there are the expositions of the myths in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in pieces like *Kashima* 鹿島, *Yasogami taiji* 八十神退治 (subjugation of the eighty deities), *Iwato*, *Ebisu*, *Orochi* 大蛇 (the great snake), and *Yachimata* 八衢 (eight divisions of the road). Included here too are the aforementioned *Chigaeshi*, *Yamatotakeru no*

Mikoto, *Kumaso*, and *Take no uchi*. Then there are theatrical pieces whose sole aim seems to be purely entertainment and which have corresponding versions in *nō* and/or *kabuki*. Pieces here include *Tenjin* 天神 (*kabuki*),[20] *Kurozuka* 黒塚 (black mound) (*nō*), *Kifune* 貴船 (*nō*), and *Yorimasa* 頼政 (*nō*). Recent additions to the repertoire have seemingly reinforced the entertainment value of performances.

This variety of pieces, whose functions can be variously interpreted and yet today all fall under the rubric of *kagura*, shows the degree to which the elasticity of this term has been stretched.

That the majority of pieces are sourced in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* could be directly correlated with the expanding influence of Yoshida Shinto. Some pieces warn of the external threat of the foreign. But Yoshida Shinto was also competing against alternative internal religious or thought systems within Japan, most obviously Buddhism and Confucianism, whose foreign derivation was denounced by Shinto scholars such as, for example, Masuho Zankō 増穂残口 (1655–1742) in his *Endōtsugan* 艶道通鑑 [A complete model of a beautiful way] of 1715 (Masuho 1996).

The preeminence of Shinto, however, would come to the fore with early Meiji policies that also saw a restructuring of the Shinto establishment, including a dismantling of existing shrine networks. In the third month of 1870, the Matsue *han minsei kyoku shinshi gakari* 松江藩民政局神祠懸 (Matsue Domain Civil Administration Offices for Shrines) abolished the titles of the hereditary *heitō* 幣頭, the heads of shrine families attached to neighboring shrines, which fell under the jurisdiction of Sada. This would mean the demise of the family networks that supported the performances of the *shichi za* and *shinnō* at Sada. And the ban on performances by priests issued in the same year would spell the end of the existing format of the Sada performances. The ban did not, however, finish the tradition of priests' performances. They still remained central to the transmission of the *shichi za* and *shinnō*, although that transmission would be to civilian groups, ordinary farmers, and laborers, who, in some cases prior to the ban, had already taken on the mantle of *kagura* performers (Ishizuka 1979, 6–7). Signficantly, Ishizuka claims that it was in this transition from priests to civilian groups that the qualitatively and functionally distinct performance formats of *shichi za* and theatrical drama were brought together to become collectively known as *kagura* (ibid., 455).

This is the state of *kagura* today, but the survival of folk performing arts in the early part of the twentieth century owes much to the emergence of a national movement to galvanize youth, namely the formalization of youth groups, the *seinendan*.

Kagura and seinendan

Youth groups in Japan can trace their histories back to the Edo period and beyond, where sodalities, known by such names as *waka renchū* 若連中 (young groups), ensured the continuation of both village tradition and industry. Preparation and participation in village festivals, with the shrine as the focus of those festivals, could also form a part of their duties—the carrying of *mikoshi* 神輿, portable shrines, being one example.

In the Meiji period these groups continued to perform their functions at the regional level without any central control. This changed, however, from the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.[21] In 1904, the then Home Office Minister, Yoshikawa Akimasa 芳川顯正, was ordered to survey the country and, during his travels, he met up with a certain Yamamoto Takinosuke 山本瀧之助, a school teacher in a village near Fukuyama city, Hiroshima prefecture. Yamamoto Ryunosuke had been inspirational in organizing youth groups toward the end of the nineteenth century, a time when there was much vocal concern about the sloven and careless nature of the young resulting from what was seen to be the poor results of "new era" education (Tazawa 1934, 34). In 1896, Yamamoto published a book, *Inaka Seinen* 田舎青年 (Rural youth), (Yamamoto 1896), and when Yoshikawa met up with Yamamoto, Yoshikawa was impressed by the contribution Yamamoto's youth groups had made to the war effort—not only to the Russo-Japanese war but also to the previous Sino-Japanese war of 1895. Recognizing that the potential of youth groups could be tapped for local projects in peace time, the report of the Home Office Minister instigated a series of policies that saw the centralized control of youth groups, resulting in the establishment of the *Seinendan chuō bu* 青年団中央部, The Centralized Youth Group Department, following the first National Meeting of Regional Seinendan (全国地方青年団中央機関設置の議 zenkoku chihō seinendan chūō kikan setchi no gi) in Aichi prefecture in 1909. In order to stimulate and encourage youth groups across the country, awards were issued by the Ministry of Education (Monbushō 文部省), to the best youth groups at the prefectural level. The first of these was awarded in 1910.

The formalization of *seinendan* and the stimulus of the award system had a particular impact on the Japanese folk performing arts. And rural theatre, like the *shinnō* in Sada Shrine, was no exception. *Seinendan* became bearers of the *shinnō* tradition in around 1914 following the official advocation for *seinendan* groups in the area, which was timed to coincide with the exact day of the promulgation of Japan's "annexation" of Korea on 29 August 1910 (Okuhara 1926, 96). The connection between *shinnō* and *seinendan* became almost synonymous, and for some groups participation and learning of the *kagura* was compulsory for all members of the *seinendan*. At least this is the known case for Mimiku *kagura* 見々久神楽, an Izumo *kagura* based in Izumo city, a situation that continued up to the Second World War (Shimane ken kodai bunka sentā 2001, 41).

Compulsory participation in the *kagura* by the *seinendan* points to yet a further alternative function of the *kagura*, namely as a tool for the moral and cultural education of the local youth. Even after the era of *seinendan* had come to an end, a history of Kashima town, where Sada Shrine is located, writes that "*seinendan* were the barometer of regional society and their "cultural education" (教養 *kyōyō*) and physical state could [determine] the rise and fall of rural society…" (Kashima chō hensan iinkai 1962, 254).

As part of that cultural education, in rural Shimane Izumo *kagura* would likely have played a central role, for in 1922–23 the youth group in Sada village was selected to receive the *seinendan* award by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Naimushō* 内務省) and the Ministry of Education. The award was for both their "cul-

tural" achievements and "self-improvement" (修養 *shūyō*) (ibid., 255). And here, "cultural" achievements in the small rural village of Sada could only point to performances of the *shinnō*.

The *shinnō* may have been valued for its capacity to educate culturally, but as shrine theatre—originally performed by shrine priests—its appropriation by the young meant a perceived debasement of performances. Priests, who had been actively involved in the transmission process, decried the vulgarization of the *kagura*, claiming that current performances were a farce. A contemporary document notes that priests boycotted their assistance in performance (Okuhara 1926, 648). Yet, despite the anguish of shrine priests, it was the performances by youth groups of the *shinnō* of Sada that impressed the Shinto scholar Miyaji Naokazu (宮地直一) (1886–1949). In 1924, Miyaji became head of the *Jinja kyoku kōshō ka* 神社局考証課 (Historical Investigation Bureau of Shinto Shrines) set up within the Home Office, and during his survey of shrines in Shimane prefecture he saw a performance of the Sada *shinnō* in 1925. Miyaji Naokazu was impressed and suggested that the *shinnō* be performed in Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo as part of the annual festivals there.

1925 also saw the opening of the first Nippon Seinenkan 日本青年館 (Japan Youth Building) in Tokyo and the subsequent presentation of national concerts of representative folk performing arts. Perhaps inspired by the support of Miyaji, representatives of Izumo *kagura* applied to perform in Tokyo, at the *Nippon Seinenkan*. They were successful and gave their first performances there in 1926. The organizers in Izumo were keen to make a good impression and examined two performance groups to decide which one should represent eastern Shimane prefecture. The result was the *shinnō* from Sada Shrine. The organizers were also careful to select performance pieces that would inspire and to avoid, in the words of one of the organizers, pieces that may be deemed vulgar (Shimane hyōron sha 1924, 57).

This careful selection could and would be the catalyst for the modification of performance practice, an ongoing process that still is determining the nature of performance practices, as adaptations to alternative performance settings and audience invite the inevitable anathema to tradition, change.

Performance of the Sada *shinnō* in the *Nippon Seinenkan* in 1926 would transect with what could be interpreted as yet another expression of nationalist sentiment, the establishment of folkloric studies.

Izumo *kagura* meets folklore academia

When Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875–1962) and Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953) were spearheading research into folkloric Japan, it was at a time of both social and cultural upheaval. If a concern with the "other" or the "foreign" could be a stimulus for the creation of some of the pieces that make up the repertoire of shrine theatre, this same stimulus could spark endeavors in the emergence of Japanese folkloric studies to seek and preserve the native in contradistinction to the imposition of the foreign. Yanagita was clearly concerned with change in folkloric customs, and although there are no clear statements to preserve folkloric

customs in the face of increasing Westernization, a sense of rivalry with the West both academically and nationalistically is clarified in such publications as *Shinpojiumu Yanagita Kunio* シンポジウム柳田國男 [A symposium on Yanagita Kunio] (Kamishima and Itō 1973). Certainly, an expression of that nationalism is all too evident in the erection of a stone monument in Takeuchi Shrine, Abiko city, Chiba prefecture, by Yanagita, his younger brother, and five others to commemorate victory in the Russo-Japanese War. And to emphasize the internationalist rivalry, the commemoration is written in English, "In Memory of the Conquest over the Russians." Conversely, for all Yanagita's extensive writings, he apparently showed little interest in neighboring China or Korea (Kamishima and Itō 1973, 54, 61).

More generally, within the process of Westernization, a struggle for cultural survival could become manifest in encounters with the folk, recording and researching the folk culture of "our country" (*waga kuni* 我が国) against the fear that the native would be lost and forgotten. In the early part of the twentieth century, *seinendan* would play a central role in ensuring the survival of many folk performing arts.

In 1926, when the *seinendan* of Izumo gave their debut performance of the *shinnō* in Tokyo, it was the young folklorist Kodera Yūkichi 小寺融吉 (1895–1945) who would be responsible for the organization of their performance at Tokyo's *Seinenkan*. Kodera Yūkichi and Yanagita Kunio were regular contributors to the journalistic arm of the *Seinenkan*, the magazine *Teikoku Seinen* 帝国青年 (Imperial Youth), subsequently retitled *Seinen* (Youth). Their contributions to the journal reveal not only the close relationship that had formed between folk performing arts, festivals, and youth groups but also the intentions of the governing body of the *seinendan* in educating Japanese youth.

Kodera Yūkichi was occasionally requested to express opinions on various aspects of youth education including, for example, for a section entitled "On the principles of modern youth and what they should do" (Kodera 1928, 31). But, it was Kodera's activities in organizing performances at the *Seinenkan* for which he is noted, and his first encounter with the *shinnō* of Sada at the *Seinenkan* in Tokyo would be instrumental in putting the *shinnō* in particular, and *kagura* in general, on the academic map. In 1929 Kodera published his research of *kagura* as an art form, which was the first comprehensive account of *kagura* (Kodera 1929). In it he regrets that up to his publication, *kagura* had been totally ignored by academics and explains that, in comparison to the *kagura* of the imperial court, that performed in regional areas was considered to be a vulgarized form of court *kagura* and therefore not worthy of study (ibid., preface, 1–2). Even with the performances of the Sada *shinnō* at the *Seinenkan* in 1926, it is clear from the various responses of Tokyo scholars and interested parties that many had not seen this form of *kagura* before and had difficulty in understanding what it was. Theatre critic and writer Ihara Seiseien (伊原青々園) (1870–1941) likened performances to Chinese theatre from Shanghai and speculated a Chinese influence on the *shinnō* (Ihara 1926, 41–42). Takano Tatsuyuki, a specialist in the history of Japanese theatre at Tokyo Imperial University, recognized the influence of *nō* drama and thought that the *kagura* may have preserved an older form of *nō*. Takano also commented on what

he perceived to be a similarity between the preceding unmasked dances in Izumo *kagura* with the *mikagura* of the imperial court—a possibly fateful comparison that may have influenced subsequent thinking postulating the erroneous speculation that the Sada *shinnō* was of great antiquity and central in the development of *kagura* across the country (Takano 1926, 45).

Yanagita Kunio was himself present and added his comments. He was circumspect when faced with the reality of the *shinnō* performance. He claimed that they were too long, should be shortened to fit in with the busy bustle of Tokyo, and that the standard of performance itself was no more than that of farm laborers taking time out during a lunch break to spend time performing *kagura* (Yanagita 1926, 44–45). Given Yanagita's lifetime work to introduce and promote folkloric Japan, faced with the reality of a performance his frank comments appear paradoxical. Yet, panel discussions held after some of the earliest Japanese folk performing arts performances given in the *Seinenkan* back in the 1920s elicited similar responses. In transcripts of the discussions published in the journal *Seinen*, Kodera, Yanagita, and Orikuchi Shinobu, amongst others, concluded that the performances in the 1929 concert were monotonous and boring. Orikuchi, who later produced his own book on Japanese folk performing arts, confessed at that time that he knew nothing about musical performance (Yanagita 1929, 29–43).

Given that Japanese folklorist Hashimoto Hiroyuki 橋本裕之 has suggested that early urbanite Japanese folklorists possibly romanticized rural Japan, these statements perhaps shed a different, and possibly more honest, light on the current thinking of folklorists (Hashimoto 2006). Or rather, the romantic image embraced was jolted by the reality of performances given. This too comes out in Hashimoto's publication in a discussion of the folklorist Ushio Michio 牛尾三千夫, whose romanticist publication *Utsukushi mura: minzoku saihōki* 美しい村—民俗採訪記 [Beautiful village: Fieldwork records] concealed his less congenial experiences of village life—one, for instance, being his brief arrest for spy activity during World War II.

Today with the support of government authorities, Izumo *kagura* survives, though with rural population decline, problems of sustaining traditions prevail. A rebuilt *Seinenkan* in Tokyo is still a venue for folk performing arts concerts as well as conferences held by the Society for Folkloric Performing Arts, but although Izumo city hall has a youth section in its offices, the staff claim that *seinendan* as such no longer exists, having seen a steady decline from the 1970s. The relationship between youth groups and performing arts in particular was prevalent in the prewar years. And, although *seinendan* may have continued or been revamped in a postwar setting, according to the *Kashima chō shi* 鹿島町誌 [History of Kashima town], where Sada is located, *seinendan*, like those in Kashima town were dissolved, at least in their original form, at the end of the War following the orders of General Douglas MacArthur (Kashima chō hensan iinkai 1962, 255).

Compulsory participation in *kagura* performances for *seinendan* members, at least for the Mimiku *kagura* in Izumo city before the Second World War, may have been the norm for members of other *seinendan* too. In this respect, a staff member in the Cultural Assets section of Izumo City Hall speculated that a prewar climate

and the fear of being chastised for un-Japanese activity possibly led to the compulsory participation by youth group members in certain Izumo *kagura* groups.[22]

In Shimane prefecture, and no doubt elsewhere, the moral education of Japanese youth in pre-World War II Japan seems to have been assisted by performances of shrine theatre. But along with this, there was also the recognized potential for performances to attract revenue into regions in general and shrines in particular and also to serve as advertisements for the local. In other words, the economic function of shrine theatre is yet a further dimension of performance and falls in the category of the Japanese folk performing arts and tourism, a much-discussed topic and particularly pertinent to Iwami *kagura*—arguably more so than Izumo *kagura* (Thornbury 1997, 67–74; Lancashire 2006; 2011).

Tourist intersections

The implementation of the Festival Law in 1992, which saw the publicizing of folk performing arts falling into the hands of local tourist offices, only put the seal on a trend that had been long established.

Yamaji Kōzō emphasized the ritual and solemnity of pre-Meiji Iwami *kagura*, reinforcing a tendency to see the use of *kagura* as tourist attractions to generate regional revenues as only a post-Meiji, or even later modern phenomenon. Yet despite the perceived modern-era secularization of performances, the use of *kagura* and other ritual performances for alternative agendas saw *kagura* groups in pre-Meiji Japan travelling beyond their customary boundaries of activities to promote their art, or perhaps more importantly, to supplement incomes.

In the year 1715, a priest by the name of Sasaki Chikugo 佐々木筑後 from the town of Kake to the south of Masuda city in the western part of Shimane prefecture, was invited to perform Iwato kagura in Kyoto. The priest took five performers with him and performed every day for three weeks before audiences of three to four hundred people (Kakechō yakuba henshū iinkai 1961, 705–706).

Likewise, in a publication penned by the essayist Kodera Gyokuchō 小寺玉晁 in 1824, which records spectacles of interest ranging from living freaks to displays of perversion, there is a reference to a performance at the *shugendō* temple of Seijuin 清寿院,[23] Nagoya, of what Ishizuka interprets to be *shinnō* (Kodera, Gunji, Sekiyama 1991, 48). The performances of *Shindai geki* in Kyoto and Osaka recorded in the 1920s, as noted above, are an example of this. And even the performances of the *shinnō* in the *Seinenkan* could similarly serve as a stimulus to attract tourism into the Shimane prefecture area.

The railway from Osaka to Izumo was opened in 1908, and this superseded the longer boat journey from Osaka via Shimonoseki to Maizuru set up by the merchant vessel, the Hankaku Maru 阪鶴丸. This vessel would anchor in the bay adjacent to Izumo grand shrine and let sightseers travel by smaller vessel into the town.

That performances of shrine theatre could serve to draw in additional revenue is clear, for example, in the decision made in the early Meiji period to introduce Iwami *kagura* into the northern reaches of Hiroshima prefecture. This decision was spurred on by a failure of prior attractions such as horse racing and children's

kyōgen 狂言to draw in people, and more importantly, make financial contributions to local shrines. The entertainment value of the *kagura* here was further enhanced in 1947–48 through the creation of a new style of dramatic dance, *shinmai* 新舞 (new dance), by a middle-school headmaster, a certain Sasaki Junzō 佐々木順三, in Takada county, northern Hiroshima (Rokugō 2004, 347). In more recent history, Expo '70 in Osaka would be an additional catalyst in transforming the nature of Iwami *kagura*, in particular in terms of performance format. Such venues, involving performances on large stages, would enhance the visual display but in some pieces sacrifice the content in terms of greatly reducing the exposition of the written text and the omission of the spoken word. That tourism has become an all-important factor determining the performance itinerary of many groups is evidenced today in the wide variety of performance venues, from hotel lobbies to concert halls. Here too, the multi-varied function of shrine theatre is again re-emphasized.

Conclusion

What today is understood as Izumo *kagura* and Iwami *kagura* emerged against a volatile history of late sixteenth-century nationalist expansionism; Toyotomi Hideyoshi's unification of Japan, consolidated by a Korean campaign with the original, ultimate aim of controlling China; a radically contrasting period of national isolationism during which, through Yoshida Shinto, an attempt was made to place greater influence on the native religion of Japan as opposed to the foreign; the rising specter of foreign intervention from the mid-nineteenth century; and the mobilization of Japanese youth, who would play a central role in ensuring the preservation of "traditional," rural culture.

Against this background of historical change, the role and function of shrine theatre has arguably shifted, adapting to and reflecting the historical circumstances in which it was and is embroiled. Although the *shinnō* and similar shrine theatre are usually understood as a ritual entertainment, as *kagura* performed for deities, Ishizuka Takatoshi has pointed to clear historical distinctions in the nomenclature where the terms *kagura*, *shichi za*, and *shinnō* are listed as separate performance items. In so doing, he has called into question the ritual status of theatrical drama and, more importantly, its status as *kagura*. Pieces like *Sankan* suggest an alternative agenda for shrine theatre, a form of political propaganda. This at least is the implication of the Izumo Kagura Information Center, which felt an expressed need to emphasize that today *Sankan* is performed in "a strong atmosphere of restraint." And if shrine theatre was, and may still be, an expression of various forms of nationalist sentiment, such as sixteenth-century national unification, nineteenth-century state formation, or twenty-first-century chauvinistic reactionism, the emerging discipline of folkloric studies, like the object of its study, was in itself reflecting a concern to preserve the native against the intrusion of the foreign, impacting within a rapid process of Westernization.

Shrine ritual, political propaganda, moral education for prewar Japanese youth, and tourist attraction—the varied, adapting functions, or arguably simultaneous multi-functionalism, of what is understood as *kagura* today have assisted as unwit-

ting survival strategies in the continued transmission of Izumo *kagura* and Iwami *kagura* into modern times. Thus, through the advocacy of various agencies like youth groups, the Home Office and Ministry of Education, folklorists, and tourist agencies, the final accolade of that survival strategy occurred on 27 November 2011 when continued advocacy saw the Sada *shinnō* finally achieving the ultimate accolade of United Nations-designated Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Notes

1. Ōhara *Shinshoku Kagura* is the title of a publication on this *kagura*. The Agency for Cultural Affairs uses the title *Ōhara Kannushi Kagura* 大原神主神楽. A rendition in English remains the same, *Ōhara Priests' Kagura*.

2. An observation of a performance of "Sankan" performed by the Ōhara Kannushi Kagura and recorded by the *Tottori Kōjin Kagura Kenkyū Kai & Kagura dan* 鳥取荒神神楽研究会＆神楽団 (The Tottori Kōjin Kagura research group and *kagura* group) reported that a battle with the Korean kings was repeated five times (Tottori Kōjin Kagura Kenkyū Kai & Kagura dan 2014); or one blogger was inspired to introduce his observations of *Sankan* with the heading, "The overwhelming victory of Shimane prefecture in its fight with Korea is tremendous" 「韓国と戦う島根県の圧勝っぷりがスゴイ！」(Junkworld n.d.). (http://matome.naver.jp/odai/2140370607532875701).

3. Claims for the origins of Izumo *kagura* in Sada stem from Honda Yasuji (1960, 12–14) and are repeated in encylopedias and dictionaries on Japan in general and folk performing arts in particular, e.g., Kodansha's edition of *Japan – An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (1993, 777). Doubts about origins in Sada have been been expressed by Ishizuka Takatoshi (1979, 449) and Lancashire (2006, 56–64).

4. http://matome.naver.jp/odai/2140370607532875701. 演目「三韓」は、神功皇后が朝鮮半島に出兵し、新羅、百済、高句麗の三韓を征伐するというもので、半島の方が見たら発狂することうけあいです。竹島の日を制定する島根県は、すさまじい強さです (Junkworld n.d.).This description of *Sankan* follows on from the blog title given in note 2.

5. *Shichi za* is a term more associated with Izumo *kagura* rather than Iwami *kagura*. Its usage here points to a number of unmasked dances, not necessarily seven, which usually precede the performance of theatrical pieces.

6. In Ōmoto *kagura*, individuals becoming spiritually possessed are men.

7. *Kumo* is an alternative name for *tengai* 天蓋, a square wooden lattice decorated primarily with sakaki branches and ornamental paper, and hung over the area of performance.

8. Yamaji simply states Mongolia. I have provided the years for the attempted Mongolian invasions as Yamaji can only be alluding to this threat.

9. Ishizuka Takatoshi obtained his information about Miyagawa Hyōbu no shō Hideyuki creating the *shinnō* from a document, *Shindai kagura sho* 神代神楽書 [Writing on the *kagura* of the age of the gods], by Izumo scholar Gotō Kurashirō 後藤藏四郎 (1865–1945). The *Yatsuka gun shi* 八束郡誌 [A history of Yatsuka county] of 1926 provides a similar account of the same events (Okuhara 1926, 644).

10. Honda Yasuji draws attention to the *hōraku* and postulates a connection to the later *shinnō* (1966, 42, 435).

11. This at least is the case for the *Tsuda kagura shachū* 津田神楽社中 (Tsuda kagura group) based to the east of Masuda City.

12. *Nakatomi no harae*, an abbreviation of *Nakatomi no harai kotoba* 中臣祓詞 was a ritual to expel sins and pollutants through the recitation of Shinto prayers, *norito* 祝詞.

13. Information obtained from the *Encyclopedia of Shinto* produced by Kokugakuin University (Itō 2006)

14. Yoshida Bonshun, in particular, had developed a personal relationship with Toyotomi Hideyoshi and was involved in establishing a shrine for the general, the Toyokuni Shrine 豊国神社 in Kyoto. Bonshun later gave personal instruction to Tokugawa Ieyasu on Shinto deities (Itō 2006).

15. Information obtained from a descendent of Miyagawa Yasuhide 宮川康秀 via Niwano Shōko 丹羽野輝子of the Kashima rekishi minzoku shiryōkan 鹿島歴史民俗資料館 Kashima history and folk materials building on 8 October 2014.

16. This is a translation by Elisonas of Ōkubo et al, eds., 1963, 124–25.

17. Earlier scripts exist but only include one or two pieces. The oldest script, titled *Kagura nō no sho* 神楽能の書 [A script of *kagura nō*], dating to 1715, was destroyed in a "recent fire" (Honda 1974, 51–52).

18 The titles of the following pieces are the names of deities, demons or semi-historical characters/peoples. Yahata (deity), Jinrin (demon), Shoki (Chinese scholar and deity), Yamatotakeru, Take uchi (semi-mythical warriors), Kumaso (an ancient tribe in southern Kyushu)

19. The identity of the Kumaso remains uncertain. A connection is postulated to another group of people, the Hayato. And an article by Kakubayashi Fumio has interestingly suggested that this group may have been of Austronesian origin (1998, 15–31).

20. The *kabuki* and *ningyō jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃 (puppet) version of *Tenjin* is *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑 [Sugawara's secrets of calligraphy].

21. The following account of the formation of *seinendan* at the national level is given in a number of publications, e.g., Kumagai Tatsujirō (1931, 28–40) and Tazawa Yoshiharu (1934, 34–40).

22. The "Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty" (韓国併合ニ関スル条約 Kankoku heigō ni kansuru jōyaku) was ratified on 22 August and officially proclaimed on 29 August.

23. The Seijuin temple was abolished following the Meiji restoration and was subsequently converted into Tsuruma *kōen* 鶴舞公園 (Tsuruma Park) in 1909.

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