

Shinsaku Noh Kawakatsu 河勝

(Prince Shôtoku's Advisor Hata no Kawakatsu)

Author: Umehara Takeshi (1925-).

Scene: The present Heisei era, Ôsake Shrine in Akô, Hyôgo prefecture.

Category: Fourth category miscellaneous or fifth category (demon) play, present-time (*genzai*) noh in two acts, *inori* (prayer) piece, with *taiko* stick drum.

Performance Practice: This new noh play (shinsaku noh) was written and first performed in 2009. The chant is composed by Kanze actor Ôtsuki Bunzô with direction jointly by Kanze actors Ôtsuki Bunzô and Umewaka Rokurô, and kyogen actor Shigeyama Sennojô.

CHARACTERS: (in order of appearance)

Ai/Ai-kyôgen (interlude actor): A man from Kyoto of the present Heisei era.

Maeshite (first half *shite* main actor): Man calling himself the shrine priest of the Ôsake Shrine, but in fact an incarnation of Hata no Kawakatsu.

Waki (secondary actor): The true head priest of Ôsake Shrine in Akô.

Kokata (child actors): Young performers for the Ôsake Shrine festival.

Nochishite (second half *shite*): The vengeful spirit of Hata no Kawakatsu.

Betsu shite (separate *shite*): The spirit of Prince Shôtoku.

SYNOPSIS: Scene-by-Scene

1. *Ai entrance:* A man of the present enters in silence and tells how he is a strange fellow from Kyoto who is very interested in vengeful spirits. He tells how Zeami wrote in his *Fushikaden* how Hata no Kawakatsu was a forefather of noh and minister of Prince Shôtoku whose lineage was suddenly cut off under the reign of Empress Kôgyoku. Under strange circumstances he ended up as a non-human vengeful being in Akô where the Ôsake Shrine to placate him. The man is now on his way to visit this shrine. He sings of taking the Shinkansen from Kyoto to Aioi station where he gets off and makes his way to the Ôsake Shrine in Akô. [*nanori, michiyuki, tsukizerifu*]

2. *Shite entrance, Shite/Ai dialogue:* A man announcing himself as the shrine priest calls out to the visitor from Kyoto. The latter asks about Kawakatsu and the many puzzling questions about his life. The priest relates how Kawakatsu had come by a boat carved out of tree trunk to Akô and died at the age of 86. The chorus sings of his grave mound and the tree trunk boat

which washed up on the shores of Sakon Island near Akô. [*mondô, kakeai, ageuta*]

3. *Shite/Ai dialogue, Shite exit*: The priest relates the many things that Kawakatsu did as the advisor to Prince Shôtoku and how he came from the Hata family descended from the Chinese Qin (Chin) dynasty. After the Prince's death, he was falsely blamed to be a part of the court machinations and was exiled by boat. Thereafter his anger caused him to become a vengeful spirit. The chorus sings for the priest and reveals that he is Kawakatsu and wants to rid himself of that anger, and describes how he suddenly disappears. [*mondô, kudoki, kuse*]

4. *Ai monologue*: The Kyoto visitor reflects on Kawakatsu's still being a vengeful spirit. [*dokuhaku*]

5. *Waki entrance*: The real shrine priest now appears and hears the Kyoto visitor's story. They realize that the person who had appeared to the visitor before was in fact the spirit of Kawakatsu himself. [*nanori, mondô*]

6. *Waki narration*: The shrine priest tells of the beginnings of the Ôsake Shrine and the story of Kawakatsu. [*katari*]

7. *Waki/Ai dialogue, Ai dance*: The priest tells how there is a rehearsal for the shrine festival and with the visitor go to observe the festival dance. [*mondô, kyôgen ranjo, sashi*]

8. *Waki/Ai dialogue*: Impressed by the dance, the Kyoto visitor gives them each some money relating it to the many legends about Kawakatsu. [*mondô*]

9. *Waki/Ai dialogue, Waki prayer*: The priest says prayers for Kawakatsu. [*mondô, shukushi*]

10. *Nochishite entrance*: The vengeful spirit of Kawakatsu enters and tells of his anger. He dances a *kakeri* anguish dance. [*issei, noriji, nanorizashi, mondô*]

11. *Waki/Ai dialogue*: The visitor, fearful of Kawakatsu's anger, requests the priest to invite Prince Shotoku's spirit. [*mondô*]

12. *Betsu shite entrance*: Prince Shotoku enters and addresses Kawakatsu. [*noriji*]

13. *Betsu shite/nochishite dialogue*: Shôtoku convinces Kawakatsu that he must rid himself of his anger and work for harmony in the world. [*mondô, uta, issei*]

14. *Betsu shite/nochishite/ai dance*: Shôtoku, Kawakatsu and the visitor dance as Okina, Shichi no Jo and Sanbasô. [*dan-uta*]

15. *Conclusion*: Shôtoku departs saying that harmony must spread throughout the world. Kawakatsu promises become a protector god and the visitor promises to write this down for future generations. [*noriji*]

[Richard Emmert]