Spirituality for the dancer-actor

in zeami's and zenchiku's writings on the no

Benito Ortolani

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 Zeami (1363-1443), the outstanding master of the No theatre of Japan, in his treatises about the secret tradition of the No out-lines a way of life for the performer of that art, the shoe who is dancer-singer-actor. Theatrical terms and constant reminders of dedicated training for technical excellence in performance are conspicuous in the foreground of his writings. Beyond the surface, however, a deeper texture soon becomes apparent. Zeami's claims of religious roots and purposes, his demands for intense Spiritual alertness and continuous attention to the inner life, his ascetic rules for a gradual growth toward enlightenment in spite of dangerous temptations, and his description of experiences similar to those found in the works of mystic authors—these emerge as a surprising System for attaining genuine spirituality, tailored to the needs of the dancer-actor.

 Zenchiku {1405-ca. 1470), Zeami's son-in-law and himself a famous No master, in his more speculative treatises on the cycle of artistic creation, elaborates on similar themes and enriches the spiritual perspective with new insights.

 A consideration of the shamanic component in the origins of the No adds further light to this unique concept of the highly demanding spirituality of the performer.1

**The Roots**

 Spiritualities are usually believed to originate from sacred roots. The connection of origin with supernatural powers adds divine authority to the demands for the strenuous, sustained efforts necessary to achieve the main purpose of every spirituality, i.e., the development of the inner self leading the individual toward personal perfection.2

 The personal perfection of the performer, and the rigorous demands of the way leading to the sublime heights of the art are central to Zeami's considerations in his treatises on the No. Hence his preoccupation with emphasizing the divine roots of the No as a tradition, thus strengthening with supernatural authority his harsh demands on the performer who wants to reach the highest degrees of the art.

 The sources Zeami draws upon in his writings when he establishes the supernatural connection are of different nature, some legendary and some philosophical. The former refer primarily to the story of the origin of Sarugaku—as Zeami calls the tradition of the performing art transmitted in his family, which has developed into what we know δs No—from the Shinto gods, the Buddha, and the divine or semidivine Hata no Kokatsu. The latter are considerations of a philosophical nature on the derivation of the No from the Buddha-nature.

 To the sacred roots Zeami and Zenchiku consider in their writings, we should add the important historical origin from shamanism, which is not treated explicitly in the theoretical writings on the No under consideration, but is nevertheless essential to the understanding of its formation.

 a) The Shinto gods. Zeami has no hesitation in accepting a tradition which establishes the first instance of the performance of Sarugaku in the age of the gods, from the legendary dance by the Goddess Uzume in front of the heavenly cave where the Sun Goddess had hidden herself (Omote and Kato 1974:38).

 b) Buddha. Further in the very same chapter, Zeami establishes an even more sacred root of the No in India. The Indian dances that evolved into Sarugaku are said to have been per-formed at the Suggestion of Gautama Buddha himself during his lifetime and, assisted by his powers, the dances resulted in pacifying a riot and in making possible the continuation of the Buddha's preaching (Omote and Kato 1974:38).

 c) Hata no Kokatsu. In Japan Sarugaku was originated by a divine being, Hata no Kokatsu. During the reign of Emperor Kimmei (540-571), Kokatsu, an infant of gentle features and "gem-like appearance," was found floating in a vase on the River Hatsuse. Kokatsu appeared in a dream to the Emperor, announcing his supernatural origin and his mission. During his life at the imperial court he reached the highest accomplishments in the art of Sarugaku. Eventually, his transformation into a divine being completed his process of deification as the sacred person who "handed over to his descendants this art of Sarugaku" (Omote and Kato1974:39).

 d) The ultimate root. For both Zeami and Zenchiku the No is ultimately rooted, not in the deceptive superficiality of the illusory world, but in the most sacred reality of the Buddha-nature. Without minimizing the importance of the various religious roots already mentioned, Zeami and Zenchiku, in the speculation of their later writings, emphasize the deeper, more phifosophical notion of the a priori pure essence, which is indicated in Zen terminology as sho or Buddha-nature {see Omote and Kato 1974:165-167 and 173-178 for Zearni, and Ito and Omote 1969:215 for Zenchiku; see Dumoulin 1979:102-124 about Buddha-nature).

 e) Shamanism. Special importance should be given to the actual way in which most people in Zeami's time would have had a glimpse of the supernatural world, i.e., in the shamanic rituals, one of the relevant sacred roots of the No. In Japan shamanistic trance primarily took the form of ecstatic possession, a very impressive and theatrical way for the gods to communicate their will to the faithful in spoken language. "Possession became a national religious practice at all levels of society and in official as well as in the folk religion" (Fairchild 1962:98).3 A host of shamans, including all levels of society from members of the imperial household and the high clergy to modest temple attendants, wandering miko (women in the service of a god) or yamabushi (mountain ascetics) in remote villages, kept alive popular beliefs in ghosts and supernatural powers. Shamanic possession did not exactly fit into the doctrines of the official Shintφ and Buddhist religions. It did, however, become a part of popular rituals in both cults, and eventually found its way into famous No plays. Some scholars believe that the No performers were originally professional exorcists (shokugyφleki na chinkonsha) because they performed at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in connection with ceremonies for the repose of the deceased (Umehara 1972:444). The episode related by Zeami as the first performance of Sarugaku, i.e., the above-mentioned dance by the Goddess Uzume at Amaterasu's heavenly cave, is nowadays usually interpreted as a probable projection into the mythical past of a shamanic dance practiced by miko during the eighth Century A.D.4 The form of shamanic ritual that left the most visible traces in the No is probably that practiced by the yamabushi, ascetics worshipping mountain gods, famous for their rugged lifestyle and extraordinary powers. They used a cooperative technique for achieving possession, with a medium as the receiver and one or several priests as conjurers of the trance. Honda (1943 and 1969) has examined the development of the role of the principal performer in No, the shite, from the receiver of possession who becomes in trance the god, the ghost, the spirit of a living being, human or subhuman. The secondary actor, the waki, meaningfully offen a monk, would seem to derive his role from the conjurer of the supernatural manifestation. Consequently, the waki does not change in the course of the play while the shite, usually in the second part of the play which consists mostly of the final dance, becomes a supernatural being.

 The roots of the performer's spirituality in the No tradition, enumerated above, can be divided into two main categories. The first, mythical-historical, stems from the Shinto gods, from the Buddha of myth and legend, and from the supernatural being Hata no Kokatsu, as they are intertwined with shamanic ritual practice. The second, metaphysical-essential, derives from the one sacred ultimate reality of the Buddha-nature.

**The Purposes**

 The main purposes assigned to the No by Zeami and Zenchiku, and those flowing from the shamanic inheritance, are as sacred as its origins and, in fact, appear to be strictly connected with the above-established roots of the performer's spirituality. Those purposes are to be aimed at by the shite as a kind of final cause; they specify his very reason for being. Corresponding to the two levels of origin, mythical-historical and metaphysical-essential, the purposes can also be divided into two broad categories.

 The first group of purposes includes such official goals as the fulfilment of definite duties of worship of the gods and the Buddha, and the achievement of important concrete benefits for the Community and for the individual: peace, happiness, freedom from evil influences, conversion to the orthodox faith (Zeami 1968:57-58). No performances often were, and sometimes still are, held in connection with rituals of worship at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. They were also considered in themselves as something that could be offered to the gods for the above-mentioned purposes. In many cases the No plays reflect in their content the process of mysterious communication with a wide range of spirits, which include ghosts of the deceased, guardian gods of shrines, spirits of plants, etc. Through the impressive per-formance of shamanic possession, as in the play "Sotoba Komachi" ("Komachi at the Stopa"; astopo js a Buddhist monument), and of rituals of conjuration with apparitions of evil spirits, as in the play "Aoi no Ue" ("Lady Hollyhock"), they fulfilled the purpose of communicating a thrilling religious experience.

 In the context of a study of the spirituality of the No performer, it is interesting to note that worldly rewards such as success, fame, prosperity, and longevity, are also mentioned by Zeami as a consequence of excellence in the art. These are not to be aimed at directly (Zeami 1968:65 and 67).

 Although the above-mentioned purposes of Sarugaku are stated as official reasons for the art, it soon becomes obvious to readers of Zeami and Zenchiku that the second category of purposes is the main concern for both. This concentrates upon interior depth where the real secret of greatness in the arts lies concealed. Long and rigorous training should eventually lead the highly talented artist to some true form of enlightenment (satori), the aim of Buddhist ascetidsm. The audience also somehow participates in this goal. In the "miraculous" performance by a great master, the audience perceives to some extent the indescribable experience of the emergence of the Sublime (myo, the mysterious, indicating an experience at the level of the Buddha-nature, beyond fallacious appearances). In the description of the highest rank of performing style, that of the flower of the miraculous, Zeami uses a riddle: "In Shinra, in the middle of the night, the sun is shining." Thus he indicates the different, sublime level of this Performance.5 Zeami speaks also about the impossibility of describing such a performance in words; he remarks upon the extinction of shingyo, the word used in Buddhist terminology for the distinction-making mind. Finally, he emphasizes the way the audience perceives this wonder as something beyond possible praise, as a feeling of mushin (here probably indicating the experience of the Sublime), as a stage beyond any describable rank (Omote and Kato1974:174).6

 Zenchiku echoes Zeami in the description of the supreme aim of the performer, especially in his comments upon the last stage of the cycle of becoming in the art of the No. This is the stage in which the great master verifies the Zen paradox, "Extreme enlightenment is equal to no enlightenment," presenting the idea of indescribable, ineffable ko (emptiness). There, in the realm of the pure spirit (in Zenchiku's words, in the realm of "the lofty principle ... unchangeable and immobile, the very principle of everything, the honorable Lord of heaven and earth, the Spirit which gives birth to all and everything"), the beauty of the essential is purified from every superfluous grain of dust. It appears to be nothing, but it opens the interior eye to enlightened insight. The sharp sword of the Spirit symbolizes this realization of the unity of what we would call efficient and final cause—beginning and end are one and the same Spirit (Ortolani 1976:22-23).

 In Christianity the supreme aim of spirituality is a union with God which is as profound as possible and at the highest possible level, one in which the practitioner becomes a special transparency of the divine presence on earth, besides being prepared for the eternal union, Similarly, in this Buddhist vision of the performer's spirituality, the supreme end seems to be the deepest possible unity with the Buddha-nature through the living experience of enlightenment. This will have as a consequence a sober, essential beauty to be found in the sublime performance of the great master, one which echoes as well in the audience which participates in a mysterious way in the awesome experience of the Sublime.

**Training/ Trials, and Achievements**

 These high purposes for the way of the No can be reached only if certain basic preconditions are realized. Moreover, impediments must be removed and rules prescribed by the master to accord with the true tradition must be precisely followed. There is a sequence of steps to be observed according to the age and proficiency of the candidate.

 a) The vocation. Zeami requires of the candidate a vocation, i.e., some objective conditions of capacity, and subjective dispositions of willingness.

Three conditions must be fulfilled if the disciple is to reach the rank of a great master. First, he must have a good disposition and the corresponding talent; second, he must be activated by the love of this art and a strong determination to dedicate himself completely to it; third, he needs a teacher who is capable of transmitting the important elements of the art. If these three conditions are not met, the disciple will not succeed, i.e., he will not reach the rank of a skilful, great master. (Omote and Kato 1974:94)

 The motivation of the candidate must be pure and unselfish, a complete dedication to the art: "If a player will study and practice the art, and have no personal motive in following it, there is no denying the fact that he will be a real master" (Zeami 1968:60).

 b) Exclusiveness of the commitment. Zeami states in the Kaaensho (The Book ofthe Transmission ofthe Flower) that the candidate must be exclusively committed to the way of the No. "One who intends to continue on this road to the end must, first of all, not touch any other kind of art" (Zeami 1968:16). In the Kakyo (The Mirror of the Fhwer) he insists again: "If you want to learn the No, give up all other arts and everything else; dedicate yourself definitely only to the No and persevere in your study to the end, following the established sequence.. . ." (Omote and Kato 1974:106). One exception is made by both Zeami and Zen-chiku. "Only the art of waka poetry should be studied earnestly as an embellishment to the art of Sarugaku" (Zeami 1968:16; a waka poem has five verses with 5-7-5-7-7 syllables). Zen-chiku elaborates on the importance of waka poetry as a means by which the performer can penetrate into the heart of a play, providing a further justification for the exception from his strictures of a sister art which has indeed the same deepest origin as the No in the Spirit (Ortolani 1976:3-4).

 c) For a lifetime. Zeami conceives that the candidate's commitment to the way of the No will be perpetual because "the No is something to which one must apply oneself continuously from youth to old age, as the secret tradition says" (omote and Kato 1974:106). Zeami writes also of "the three stages of development; the time of the bud, the time of maturity, and the time of the harvest correspond to the sequence of the beginning, middle and end in the exercises during the whole life" (Omote and Kato 1974:165).

 d) Important prohibitions. Zeami gives in his Kadensho basic commandments which had been drummed into his ears from his "earliest youth." These were considered a kind of necessary prerequisite for any progress on the way leading to perfection in the art. "The three important prohibitions are against: lasciviousness, gambling and drunkenness" (Zeami 1968:16).

 e) Imitation and guidance. Zeami always had in mind the example of his father Kan'ami, the only teacher he knew of who had attained mastery of all styles and had reached the supreme rank. Though Zeami insists upon the imitation of a great master, and wants the disciple to follow the steps indicated by the teacher, he warns the Student away from purely exterior imitation: "You should imitate the art of a great actor under the precise direction of this master. Do not, however, imitate only the exterior, without learning with diligence" (omote and Kato 1974:93). "Above all, trust completely the words of the master and keep them always in your heart" (Omote and Kato 1974:106). Only a master knows what advice is best for the disciple and when to give it. The master is supposed to adapt his teaching to the level of the disciple, corresponding to his own beginnings.

 When carried to extremes, the imitation of a great master is usually not successful, for beyond a common foundation of technique, each master creates something unique. Zeami seems to imply that each great master is a mixture of a common basic training and a unique personality, for he closes his thoughts on the subject with a dictum by Confucius: "Striving towards the old and grasping the new: this you should make into your highest rule!" (Omote and Kato 1974:94).

 f) Do not forget the beginningsl Zeami discusses in the Kakyo a tradition of No which Stresses the importance of not forgetting certain characteristics of a beginner: fervent enthusiasm, innocence, pure and natural openness, as well as clumsy mistakes and limitations which are usually a part of the beginner's art. For Zeami there is no standing still in the art; either one grows or one falls back again to unskilled beginnings. "Indeed fame is a consequence of the fact that you succeed in continuously increasing your skill. If you are not always conscious of your beginnings, you will not be aware when you have fallen back to the lack of maturity you had at the Start.... When you forget the beginnings, you go back to the beginnings" (Omote and Kato 1974:108; see also 107 and 109).

 g) The ages and the trials. For Zeami, only a wisely directed, carefully planned life schedule provides a chance of success on the way to becoming a great master. A mistake of the teacher in the beginning can discourage a promising child forever. Falling into the temptation of self-indulgence or complacency is considered enough to block access to the supreme stage for an already advanced and successful performer. Zeami's teachings on the subject can be read in the second chapter of the Kadensho. Here only a few of these passages can be commented upon.

 The attitude of the teacher toward the child who starts at about six years of age should be one of tolerance. The boy should be allowed to experiment in relative freedom, to play with singing, dancing, and acting. No specific roles should be prepared for performance. Strict criticism, severe or cruel treatment should be avoided. Zeami suggests an atmosphere that will help the child in developing a real love for the No and a commitment to it. Above all, the delicate, fragile will of the child should not be led to frustration. From the age of about eleven, when they are first taught roles for performance in plays, children can win a first taste of public success because of their natural charm. Zeami calls this success jibun no hana, literally meaning "flower of the time," the flower pertaining to a particular age and thus not lasting. Zeami warns that this flower is only a beginner's flower, not the real one. No judgment about the future of the young disciple can be made at this stage. Guidance becomes more imperative than ever, and the child "must do his exercise with care, with appropriate action, clear speech in singing, and strict form in dancing" (Zeami 1968:18).

 The disciple, at about sixteen years of age, usually goes through a crisis as his voice breaks and the performance style changes from the childish to the adult manner, Zeami warns against the great danger of discouragement which could lead to abandoning the way altogether. Here Zeami's warnings sound very much like the strong admonitions of the masters of religious spirituality against discouragement, fatigue, and temptations to abandon the ascetic life, found in every novice, usually after beginnings full of enthusiasm and joy. Because of the cracking of his voice, the young performer "will be greatly discouraged. Sensing that the audience considers his performance laughable, he will be ashamed of himself, and will be dejected by the least mishap." The remedy Zeami suggests is one of hard work and strengthening of the will:

 Not minding if people laugh, the exercise of this age should be nothing but training in vocalization, morning and evening, keeping within the range of his present voice and encouraging himself in his own heart, recognizing that this is the turning point of his life, and making up his mind to go through with it and not to abandon No. If he is so dejected that he gives up his exercises, his life as an actor will be ended forever. (Zeami 1968:19)

 The next great Spiritual danger is no longer discouragement, but success at the beginning of a more mature age, starting from about twenty-three. By that time the performer who has been practicing since childhood can already reap great success with the public and be led to the temptation of complacency and self-indulgence. Zeami warns strongly against believing that such success is already the real flower.7 "This flower is not the true flower. It is simply the charm of youth, an ephemeral flower which the audience is apt to mistake for the true flower, although a connoisseur can at once tell the difference." The young artist must meditate on the fact that such a flower will soon fade; he must continue diligently his exercises and keep his spirit of dependence on the master, since "... if he thinks himself more advanced than he is, he will lose even what he has already achieved." Partner, Zeami warns that ". . . it is shameful for the Student to think himself an accomplished artist, to make arbitrary Statements contrary to orthodox opinions, and to carry himself as if he were a master" (Zeami 1968:20}. In other words Zeami, like every Christian Spiritual master, recommends humility, i.e., the realistic sizing up of a first success, meditation on the ephemeral nature of the first positive results and easy fame, and a serious commitment to continuous, hard, humble exercise.

 The results of such practice should become evident by age thirty-three. "If at this time he is not accepted as a real genius, he will never be" (Zeami 1968:22). After forty-three begins a period of adjustment to the limitations imposed by age, and to the fading of the natural strength and charm of youth. Only the true genius can keep the genuine flower and grow in depth. What is lost in exterior glamor is gained in closeness to the essential,

 The division of the ages of training reflects the basic idea of continuous gradual growth through constant application to serious exercise and the overcoming of such pitfalls as frustration, discouragement, presumption, complacency and self-indulgence. The interior eye must always be open to the truth which, for Zeami, remains the key to an humble attitude, necessary at every step of development.

 h) Hierarchy of performance and the "heart. " The results of continuous growth materialize at different levels of achievement in a variety of performance styles, described by Zeami in his Kyui (The Nme Stages) and echoed by Zenchiku in his Rokurin Ichiro (Six Wheels and One Drop of Dew).3

 When a child begins to perform, his style is that of "shallowness and loveliness." After proper training and consequent mastering of the necessary skills, the novice naturally advances to the style of "Versatility and exactness." "Here is the dividing point from which one may go upward or downward" (Tsunoda et. al. 1958:294). Only after the "craft" is mastered can a further, decisive rank bereached: the style of the "flower of truth," when the true flower appears—still superficial perhaps, but real. This style is usually attainable through a combination of natural talent and much labor.

 The three highest styles, however, belong only to a special charisma, a kind of "state of grace" granted only to the great master. They communicate, in order, the astonishment occasioned by the first appearance of the Sublime, the unfathomable depth and the sweeping views of the landscape of the soul and universe, and finally the totally indescribable transparency, the austere beauty and the vital rhythms of the Source.

 Like the prose of Zen masters and Christian mystics, the language here is full of Symbols, similes, metaphors, in an attempt to convey the results of the first breaking through of the Sublime and its gradual taking over. In the style of the "flower of stillness," the soundless whiteness of the snow, its blameless purity in a silver bowl, seem to indicate the breathtaking astonishment in the soul caused by the first realization of the Sublime. Zenchiku uses a poem by Ariwara no Narihira to illustrate his feeling of the transformation of everything:

Tsuki ya aranu Is the moori no longer the same?

haru ya mukashi no Is spring different too

haru naranu from the spring of old?

wagami hitotsu wa I alone

moto no mi ni shite remain the same as before.'

 Zeami seems to describe the same feeling when he writes about the highest style of singing: "Sublime singing is the result of consummate artistry . . . this rank can be obtained only after the singer learns the ultimate of all other singings, transcends both the good and the evil music, and arrives at the kind of singing that is like others and yet is not" (Ueda 1967:65). This last sentence is very important; such singing resembles other performances, and yet the audience knows that it is different, The differentiating factors cannot be described except with similes, different for each rank of style: purity like the snow, depth like the invisible roots of nigh mountains and immensity like a landscape of a thousand peaks, numinous mystery like an inexplicable midnight sun. These are the comparisons proposed by Zeami in writing of the three supreme styles: the flower of "stillness," of "supreme profundity," and of the "miraculous."

 The secret behind this difference is kokoro, which we may briefly translate here as "the heart." Kokoro is used by Zeami to indicate both the ultimate foundation of the art of No and the source of the greatest impact upon an audience (Omote and Kato 1974:95-96).10

 The actor's "heart" is for Zeami the ultimate source of a genuine yugen (elegant and pro-found) performance, as well as of the different forms of the art of the No (Omote and Kato 1974:97-98).n The secret of the unique fascination of the moments of "no-action" is also concealed in the "heart." Zeami writes:

 The spectators sometimes remark: "The moments of no-action were specially fascinating." This effect is based in a sacred and important disposition in the heart of the shite. First, dance, song, all movements and performances belong to the action of the body. The no-action moments are the in-between moments. The reason for the fascinating effect in the moments of no-action lies in the root of the shite's heart, that ties together, without the least negligence, the heart [of the particular doings]. During the moments when the actor stops dancing, or when he stops singing, when he stops his recitative, or his monomane,12 etc., without abandoning the heart [of the particular doings], he uses the binding of his interior heart (naishin) that includes the yojin (the conscious, distinction-making mind). (Omote and Kato 1974:100)

 According to Pilgrim (1969:394), kokoro in Zeami's use "encompasses such things as feeling and emotion, soul and spirit, mind and the objective knowing process, consciousness and self, intent and will, a pure and non-conscious mind, and a spiritual state representing the deepest levels of the total self." Pilgrim finds four major levels of kokoro. The first is that of emotion and feeling, giving birth to yogen. The second is that of a self-conscious, knowing, object-centered distinction-making mind (yojin), which is aware of good and bad in the performance. The third is the heart of the unconscious, spontaneous, void: the performer is no longer aware of himself, of the good and the bad, of the art itself. The distinction-making, self-conscious mind (yojin) has disappeared; the art becomes mushin (literally, nothingness-heart). All division is overcome in the unity with the Source; the performance becomes myo, i.e., sublime, mysterious, numinous, indescribable. In this type of "heart" performance, the artist is not aware of performing myo. In the myo of the flower of the "miraculous," it is no longer the individual, self-conscious, distinction- and judgment-making mind, but the instinctual, spontaneous, free-flowing mind of the master actor that has reached unity with mu

(nothingness) and ko (emptiness).

 The fourth level of kokoro is the all-encompassing, deep and spiritual heart. This is the real kokoro, while the above-mentioned stratification in four levels is only a fiction of the mind, a Western device for clarification. Zeami sees only the totality. When he uses the term "heart" in one of the above partial meanings, he does not lose the perspective of the total kokoro which is the root of the ultimate art that "includes all the above and may be called the total involvement of the total self" (Pilgrim 1969:400}.

 The reality of the heart is therefore rooted in the true essence of all things, or the all-encompassing, unchanging, pure Buddha-nature. The various facets of the heart appear and work in the artist at different levels: emotional, rational, prerational-intuitive-spontaneous-sublime. The reality remains the same; it is the artist who passes through phases or stages of skills and realizations, eventually becoming one with the heart of everything, unconsciously and spontaneously following the rhythms of the One. The One is the whole process and includes everything, beginning and end. In a similar way, the art rooted in the heart includes everything too, from the emotional to the rational, to the prerational intuitiveness, yugen and non-yogen, sublime and non-sublime, to the comprehension of all and the insertion into the One-All.

 As the Christian saint, at the height of his mystic union with God, accepts spontaneously and almost unconsciously the divine guidance and becomes one with God's heart, revealing its wonders and touching in a miraculous way the heart of the faithful, so the great master, in synchrony with the heart of the Buddha-nature, in a real sense becomes its appearance on the stage, moving deeply in an indescribable way the heart of the audience. The heart is therefore the supreme secret, above all other secrets. No other secret has more consequence for the ultimate aim of the No tradition and its future perpetuation.

 Zeami uses the image of puppets and strings. Puppets are not self-moved; the strings do the trick. So it is for the supreme master. He is not self-moved; he is governed in each step by the invisible heart that holds all forms and techniques of the No together, and unites all powers both in his masterful performance, in his life, and in his audience (Omote and Kato 1974:100).

 Zeami's doctrine about the heart is a key for understanding Zenchiku's esoteric doctrine of the Six Wheels and One Drop of Dew.u The six wheels are the visualization of six phases of the cycle of birth and development of the art inside the heart, as it appears in the creative process of the artist. They are all unified by the one drop of dew visualized through the sword, i.e., the soul-force symbol of the One Spirit, the one Buddha-nature. The great master is the enlightened artist who has intuitively realized his unity with that source and who becomes so much one with it that everything (in the realm of phenomena) becomes mu (noth-ingness) and ko (emptiness). In other words, he goes back—in the last wheel of emptiness, korin—to the beginning, the wheel of life, jurin. Exhausting enlightenment, he makes true the dictum that supreme enlightenment is equal to no enlightenment at all. The supreme power of the moments of no-action on the stage provides a glimpse into this most essential art. At the same time they are the simplest, the most obvious, the most "naked," and also the most mysterious, the most difficult to perform.

 The return to emptiness also signifies the ending of an individual cycle: "In the end, the No art returns to its starting point.... Progress after progress both song and dance become altogether dry, dead, mysterious and childlike, ready to return to where they started from. ..." (Ortolani 1976:20). This is silence, austere exhaustion of the enlightenment, a mysterious and childlike disposition in an "humble and unassuming life" in this wheel that is completely empty, and which prepares the new cycle of the Spirit.

 Performance is transient, even as a miraculous transparency of Permanence. The wonder will appear again when a new master repeats the cycle. The definitive possession of unity with the One belongs to the sphere of religion.

**Notes**

1The nonspecialist may wish to read Ortolani 1972 and 1976 as introductions to Zeami and Zenchiku. For shamanism in relation to the No, see Kirby 1975 and Ortolani 1977. Portions of the texts by Zeami and Zenchiku appearing in this study were translated by

the author from Omote and Kato 1974.

2For example, the Jesuit spirituality is based on the mystic reveiations St. Ignatius of Loyola received from God during his contemplations in Manresa. See also Larkin 1967.

3About shamanism in Japan, especially in the present time, see Blacker 1975.

4 For an English translation of the episode and a short commentary, see Philippi

1969:84. Matsumura (1954-48:111, 75-91} gives a detailed Interpretation in Japanese.

5 "The Image appears in several Buddhist texts and is well known as a metaphor for the miraculous transcendence of opposites that arises from the experience of Enlightenment" (Nearman 1978:323). The style of this description recalls the koan, the nonsensical questions used by Zen masters in their training to induce enlightenment.

6In the Go-i (The Five Stages) Zeami uses terms from Tendai Buddhist speculation such as gongo dodan or "impossible to describe with words/' shingyo shometsu or "extinction of the distinction-making mind," and the more common terms fushigi and myo or "extraordi-nary, sublime" (Omote and Kato 1974:170).

7 "In Zeami's sense the Flower is an effect resulting from an excellent performance. When the audience is caught up in the actor's performance, we can say that there is a Flower" (Konishi 1960:24). About the concept of flower (hana) in Zeami, see Ortolani 1972:112-114.

8For a commentary in English on the Kyoi, see Ueda 1967:64-69, Nearman 1978, and Ortolani 1972:115-117.

9The poem appears in the Kokinsho (Collection of Ancient and Modern Times), an imperial anthology of poetry completed around 905 by Ki no Tsurayuki. This translation appeared in Ortolani 1976:19.

10For a discussion of kokoro, see Pilgrim 1969 and, in Japanese, Nose 1940:166-173 and Konishi 1961:127-144.

11 "If the term yogen is etymologically analyzed, it will be found that yomeans deep, dim, or difficult to see, and that gen, originally describing the dark, profound, tranquil color of the universe, refers to the Taoist concept of truth. Zeami's idea of yogen seems to combine its conventional meaning of elegant beauty with its original meaning of profound, mysterious truth of the universe." (Ueda 1967:60-61)

For the many meanings of yogen in different epochs, see Tsubaki 1971.

12"The real meaning of monomane is, generally speaking, to imitate anything realistically" (Zeami 1968:25). For an analysis of monomane, see Ortolani 1972:110-112.

13Descriptions in English of the six wheels are available in Ortolani 1976, Nobori 1966, and Kim 1971-72.

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