



Sacred Dance at Sensōji The Development of a Tradition

Sensōji, one of the best-loved temples of Edo-Tokyo, was once the site of varied and colorful performances of sacred music and dance. In the past, *kagura* accompanied a New Year's ritual archery exhibit, while "lion dances" and a genre known as *binzasara* were seen at the time of the third-month Sanja festival. During the sixth month, *binzasara* and masked *kagura* were staged again, and during the nineteenth century a ninth-month "pheasant dance" was added to the annual program. This paper examines the emergence of such arts, some of which continue to be performed today. A close look at historical sources and modern practices reveals, however, that the genres, performance practices, contexts, and dates of performance underwent much transformation over the centuries. What is today billed as "tradition" turns out to reproduce only a fraction of what was once a far richer, heterogeneous, and changing program of dance and music.

KEYWORDS: Sensōji—Sanja Gongen—Tamura Hachidayū—*binzasara*—*kagura*—Edo-period religion

ANYONE visiting Sensōji 浅草寺 on the third weekend of May is likely to witness portions of the Sanja festival. This grand, rambunctious celebration, taking place at what must still be the most popular temple/shrine complex in Tokyo, honors Sensōji's three founding deities, enshrined at the Sanja Gongen 三社権現 (today Asakusa Jinja), the tutelary shrine of Sensōji. On the Friday preceding the main festival, sightseers, pilgrims, and ethnologists who spy into the main hall of the shrine may catch a glimpse of a performance of "lion dances" (*shishi-mai* 獅子舞, dances of two mythical lion-like beasts) and elegant *binzasara* (びんざら, 編木, 鬢編木, 拍板) dances; half an hour later the *binzasara* dances receive an encore performance on an open *kagura* stage to the right of the shrine.

These arts were already considered unfathomably archaic during the Edo period (1600–1868). Explanations of their meanings today usually emphasize the primal divine impetus and religious functions responsible for their emergence, development, and maintenance. The lion dances, for instance, are said to "fortify the land," while the movements and titles of the *binzasara* dances unambiguously take their cue from the gestures of agricultural labor. Most spectators assume that the sacred dances of Sensōji represent a carefully preserved and jealously guarded tradition transmitted from the ancient or medieval period.

Such presumptions are not entirely false, for both the lion dances and the *binzasara* dances contain a number of elements that date back centuries. Yet such sacred dance and music underwent a good deal of transformation during the Edo period. That this should be so is hardly surprising, for in the space of a few decades after 1590 the city of Edo, which provided the social context for the performances, had mushroomed from a relatively insignificant rural settlement into an enormous, sprawling metropolis. The dramatic, unprecedented growth of the shogun's capital demanded the foundation, enlargement, and relocation of countless temples and shrines, many of which were suddenly called upon to offer performances of holy arts. *Kagura* 神楽, with its many offshoots and collateral genres, was now performed at more locations than ever before. Most commonly it was staged at hundreds of Inari shrines on the "day of the horse" during the second month (*Saiban zōho Edo sō-ganoko meisō taizen*, 433, pub. 1751). More grandiose annual exhibits of such dance included those offered to the public on 3/20 at the Kameido Tenjin (*Bukō yūkan shiryaku*, 298; pub. 1859), on 4/21 at

the Kanda Myōjin (*Zōho Edo nenjū gyōji*, 191; pub. 1803), on 8/28 at the Shiba Shinmei (*Zōho Edo nenjū gyōji*, 205), and on 9/16 at the Komagome Shinmei (*Tōto saijiki*, vol. 2, 263; pub. 1838).

Sensōji supplied yet another program of *kagura* for the enjoyment of the gods and the citizens of Edo. But precisely what types of *kagura* and related arts were witnessed at Sensōji? On what occasions were they staged? How did “lion dances” and “*binzasara* dances” fit into the *kagura* program? Who stood behind the production of the dance and music? Was innovation condoned or utterly rejected? Did popular taste or public support influence what was seen and heard? And what motives controlled the processes of selection and revision of what eventually became the tradition presented to onlookers today? These are some of the questions I shall seek to answer in the pages below.

SENSŌJI, THE SANJA GONGEN, AND TAMURA HACHIDAYŪ

Unlike most Japanese Buddhist religious institutions the main Sensōji temple derived no income from funerals.¹ Since the five-hundred *koku* stipend of rice authorized by the Tokugawa *bakufu* and supplied for the most part by the Sensōji’s three “founding wards” could not adequately support the many sub-temples and shrines that dotted the precincts, ecclesiastical officials tapped other sources of revenue: property rent extracted from shops and booths operating within Sensōji grounds; the sale of talismans and proceeds from temple fairs; and donations by faithful parishioners who came to the Asakusa area to pray and play. One attraction that infallibly drew crowds and reaped significant income for the temple was sacred dance and music. Several minor shrines within Sensōji precincts staged *kagura*, but by far the most renowned and best attended productions were those sponsored by the Sanja Gongen.²

From the early eighteenth century the Sanja Gongen was headed by a man of warrior-status with the hereditary name Tamura Hachidayū 田村八太夫. All generations of Tamura professed allegiance to “integrated” or “syncretic” Shinto (*shūgō shintō* 習合神道). Tamura left behind no documents explaining the theology of his sect nor did he author any books of prayers, directions for rituals, or other information that would help clarify the exact nature of his brand of Shinto. Judging from the dances and rituals he and his underlings performed, it appears to have resembled *ryōbu* Shinto, which interpreted the sun-deity Amaterasu as manifestation of the esoteric Dainichi Buddha (the central Buddha of Shingon), and identified the Japanese kami as manifestations of specific Buddhas or bodhisattvas. Tamura’s religion probably combined elements of Shingon and Tendai Buddhism, Honzan *shugen*, Yin-yang thought, and Confucianism. Whatever its tenets may have been, its chief effects were surely political. Because Tamura served as the head of an identifiable sect accepted by officialdom, he could argue that his organization was not subject to the control of other, more powerful houses of Shinto. Nor was his occupation related to those controlled by Danzaemon, the head of outcasts in Edo and the Kanto area.³

Besides heading the Sanja Gongen Tamura doubled as the supervisor of “masters of sacred dance” (*shinji mai-dayū* 神事舞太夫). These dancers served as *kagura* performers and religious practitioners at shrines throughout the Kanto provinces, parts of Kai (Yamanashi prefecture), Shinano (Nagano prefecture), and the Aizu area of what is today Fukushima prefecture. At its peak during the late eighteenth century Tamura’s organization incorporated some six hundred and one houses of “masters of sacred dance,” who performed at both small local shrines and at several major ones in the Kanto region.⁴ The largest constituency (one hundred and forty-seven houses) was scattered throughout Musashi province, the area in which Edo was located. The next largest group (ninety houses) centered on Sagami province (Kanagawa prefecture), Tamura’s ancestral home. While still in Sagami, Tamura’s forebears almost certainly participated in local shrine festivals, as did many other houses of provincial “dance masters.” In time, however, Tamura’s house succeeded in elevating itself over its peers, eventually attaining a relatively lofty position in the Edo-period religious hierarchy.⁵

When Tamura was instated as the head of the Sanja Gongen around 1708, this shrine employed no other sacerdotal figures; nor did the Sanja Gongen transmit *kagura* danced by “shrine maidens” (*miko* 神子) common to many other Edo religious institutions (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 151). Sensōji, had, however, inherited a sizeable repertory of arts from diverse sources. Some of these genres seem to have arrived from Tamura’s home province of Sagami and had made their way there from western Japan. In the process of transmission from the Kansai area and from Sagami to Asakusa the Kamakura Tsurugaoka Hachimangū 鶴岡八幡宮, the most formidable shrine of Sagami, must have played a major role. Early links of this venerable powerhouse to Edo can be traced to carpenters who had been brought in from Sensōji in 1181 for construction work. These artisans continued to brag of this connection for centuries.⁶ Later, during the Bunmei era (1469–87), when Ōta Dōkan, the daimyo who ruled Edo and the surrounding area, ordered a shrine constructed to protect his castle, this institution, too, was designated a branch of the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū.⁷ Tamura’s links to the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū were cemented through occupational predecessors such Tsuruwaka Magotōji, whose house was associated with that shrine and who still received a benefice from it during the nineteenth century (see *Shinpen Sagami no kuni fudoki-kō*, vol. 3, 55; *Gofunai bikō*, vol. 1, 313). As late as 1827 Tamura’s associates in Edo were reporting to city officials that they served as “purifiers of the way” (*sakibarai* 先祓) for processions at the Tsuruoka Hachimangū (*Shiba machikata kakiage*, 4, 6). During the early Edo period ritualists, dancers, or musicians serving at smaller shrines in Sagami likewise sometimes migrated to Edo. At least one Sagami temple, the Odawara Seiganji 誓願寺, was summarily relocated to Asakusa (*Edo suzume*, 227). Edo was a burgeoning city with boundless opportunities and rural inhabitants wishing to associate or ingratiate themselves with the new regime jumped on every opportunity to strengthen their ties to the capital.

NEW YEAR'S RITUAL ARCHERY EXHIBITS

For much of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Sanja Gongen commenced its year with a series of ceremonies featuring *kagura* and a sacred equestrian archery exhibit (*yabusame* 流鏑馬). These two events were normally presented on the fifth day of the New Year. *Yabusame* is not listed in rosters of Edo annual events in the 1690s, though note is taken of other Sensōji performances and rituals. Sacred archery does, however, appear in guides to the city from 1723 and 1735. These record that *yabusame* at the Sanja Gongen took place on 1/5. Perhaps Tamura and his administration instigated this event or at any rate boosted it to prominence (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 424; *Zoku Edo sunago*, 321 [fascicle 1 of the original]). Edo archery had been on the rise during this era. Around 1724 shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune commanded Ogasawara Sadamasa 小笠原貞政 (the twentieth head of the Ogasawara family, in charge of *bakufu* etiquette) to tutor the warrior class in proper forms of archery. *Yabusame* presented at the Ana-hachiman shrine at Takada-no-baba in Edo in 1728 featured equestrian archers dressed in Kamakura-period garb boldly galloping down a 250-meter course and seeking to hit a series of targets. On this occasion *yabusame* served as an appeal to the gods for the shogunal heir to recover from smallpox, but it was repeated again on many later occasions with no reference to such motives.⁸

By the mid-eighteenth century, Sanja Gongen *yabusame* had established itself as a well-known New Year's event in the capital. The archery presented was not, however, the sort displayed at Takada-no-baba in the city. Nor did it resemble that exhibited at the famous Suwa, Fushimi Inari, or Tsurugaoka Hachimangū shrines, where it was usually enacted with much fanfare during the eighth month. Sanja Gongen *yabusame* more closely resembled a ceremony accompanying the "first archery" of the year (*yumi-hajime shiki* 弓始式) staged at many shrines throughout the Kanto area. Indeed, it looked suspiciously like the archery exhibits (not all equestrian) taking place at Sagami shrines staffed and led by men related to Tamura's organization. Sagami *yabusame* was commonly displayed during the first week or two of the New Year (for a listing of venues see NAGATA 1987, 6–7). A late Edo-period report states that men at the Rokusho myōjin 六所明神, an influential Sagami shrine closely associated with "masters of sacred dance," produced *yabusame* annually on 1/17 (*Ōiso-machi shi, shiryō-hen, kinsei* 2, 711 [1859/9]). A similar ritual took place on 5/5 as part of the shrine's grand festival (*Edo meisshō zue*, vol. 2 [*kan* 3], 350). At the nearby Shirahige shrine 白髭神社 in Odawara, *yabusame* was also witnessed every year on 1/7, supposedly since the Kamakura period (NAGATA 1987, 10–11). A comparable spectacle was staged on 1/8 at the Samukawa shrine 寒川神社 near Tamura village, the hamlet of Tamura Hachidayū's ancestors. Here standing archers released arrows at a target emblazoned with a stylized ideograph for "demon" (鬼 *oni*). This mark was held in place by twelve (in leap years thirteen) bamboo poles (NAGATA 1987, 13). *Yabusame* at the Sanja Gongen also featured a cypress plaque with the character "demon," though it was elevated by only one shaft of bamboo (see FIGURE 1). The archer, donning a lacquered court

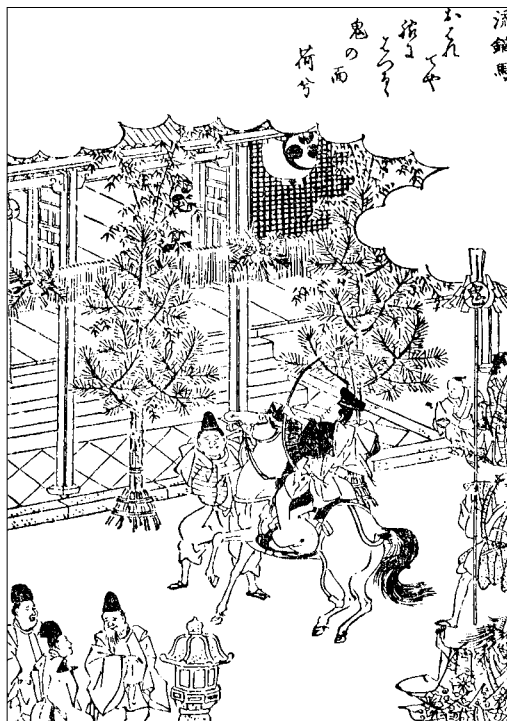


FIGURE 1. Demons being exorcised at the annual archery exhibit at the Sensōji. From *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 1, 55; pub. 1838.

hat and white attire, was mounted on horseback. Through his actions he drove out demons from shrine precincts. This sort of familiar rite was also frequently known as *oni-yarai* 鬼遣らい (“ousting demons”) or *tsuina* 追難 (“expelling calamity”).

The religious connotations of Sensōji *yabusame* were fortified by embedding it in a series of exorcistic events of differing provenance. 1/5 commenced with a solemn performance at around nine o’clock in the morning dedicated to Goō 牛王 (or Gozu tennō 牛頭天王), the heavenly “bull-headed king” traditionally linked to “mountain ascetics” (*yamabushi*) and the Kumano shrines. This divine “king” was believed to be efficacious in preventing disease and in warding off evil. The ceremony in his honor at the Sanja Gongen was carried out by seven Buddhist priests and two novitiates. After this event Buddhist music (*hōraku* 法楽) was intoned by six Buddhist priests and three acolytes from a subsidiary temple. During the period of Tamura’s headship the ceremonies then turned to noontime prayers and finally moved on to *kagura* and *yabusame*.⁹ A source from 1800 describes the sequence of events as follows:

For ritual archery four accessories bring the arrows required by Tamura Hachidayū to the Sanja Gongen building. The bow is made of green bamboo. On the top embroidered sacred paper strips are attached; white paper was once used for the arrows’ fletching.

The party enters the inner sanctuary and intones prayers of purification (Nakatomi-no-harae 中臣祓).¹⁰ Then the four men emerge from the shrine and perform *kagura* at the outer area of the shrine. This *kagura* is accompanied by [a transverse bamboo] flute (*fue*) and large and small drums. Three dances are performed. The first is the dance with “Shinto priests’ staffs” (幣の舞 *hei no mai*), known by shrine officials as “fortifying the four directions” [*shibō-gatame* 四方がため].¹¹ The second is “the dance of Uzume-no-mikoto” 細女命の舞, popularly known as “the dance of much luck” [*otafuku mai* おたふく舞, a pun on “dance of the woman with puffy cheeks,” often comic in nature], danced while wearing a *torikabuto* 鳥かぶと [a broad, elaborately decorated helmet symbolizing a bird].¹² The third is “the dance of the god Sarutahiko” [*Sarutahiko no mai*, 猿田彦の舞], danced while wielding a wooden spear. During the dance performance Tamura Hachidayū continues to read the prayer of purification within the inner sanctuary of the shrine.

When the *kagura* performance is over, Hachidayū lowers the bow and arrow from its position before the gods and hands it to a shrine official. This official mounts a horse which has been brought here earlier. Another official, wearing a figured costume with Chinese-style designs and a demon’s mask, takes the target and attaches it to a green bamboo pole about seven feet tall. Four assistants lead the demon by the hand, hold the target, and run before the horse for *yabusame*.

The archer from the shrine who performs the *yabusame* begins to shoot his arrows from the east, then proceeds through the *torii* [鳥居, sacred gate] of the Sanja Gongen, circles twice around the main temple hall from the west to the north, and returns to the Sanja Gongen, where he dismounts.¹³ It is said that picking up the fallen arrows brings good luck, so all the spectators clamor to obtain them. When the *yabusame* is over, the spectators fight to obtain the ceremonial rope that has been hung around the Sanja worship hall. In accordance with tradition, nobody stops them from doing so. (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 372)

In 1815 Tamura identified the three *kagura* pieces performed on this occasion as *kunigatame* (国堅, “fortifying the land”), *onna miko* (女神子, “shrine maidens”), and *Saruta kagura* 猿田神樂. He specifies that these pieces, including that of the “maidens,” were all danced by (male) shrine officials.¹⁴ After the show was over the performers and their ancillaries were treated to special refectations (SN II, 137).

References to *yabusame* continue to surface in Sensōji diaries until 1830, after which it disappears from sight. The Edo ward head Saitō Gesshin witnessed it on 1830/1/5, but though he continued to visit the temple on many later occasions he never mentions it again in his voluminous diaries (*Saitō Gesshin nikki*, vol. 1, 2). When the daimyo Matsura Seizan asked a Sensōji sentinel about it, probably in the 1830s, he was informed that archery was performed early in the morning on 1/5, but that hardly anyone came to view it anymore and that few even knew of its existence. Matsura notes that “because the archery is that of shrine priests, it is so feeble that one would have nothing to fear if one were struck by an arrow. It is archery in name only, a religious rite rather than something done in accordance with warrior ways” (MATSURA 1980, 199). No doubt the *kagura* accompanying

yabusame at New Year's also vanished during the mid or late nineteenth century. Today's visitor to Sensōji looks for it in vain.

THIRD-MONTH *BINZASARA* AND THE SANJA FESTIVAL

Perhaps the best-known music and dance presented by Tamura and his assistants was *binzasara*, the genre that remains the focus of performances at Sensōji today. *Binzasara* derived its name from an idiophone in which several dozen small, thin, flat, rectangular pieces of wood are strung together (see FIGURE 2).¹⁵ Grasped at both ends, the *binzasara* is sounded by a quick snapping motion of the wrists that causes the clappers to strike one another.

At Sensōji *binzasara* referred not just to the instrument itself but more broadly to dances otherwise labeled *binzasara-odori* (*binzasara* dance) or simply *kagura*. This genre was construed by contemporaries as a *dengaku* dance and was clearly related to medieval *dengaku* (literally “field music”), variants of which were transmitted from western Japan to other major Kanto religious institutions such as the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū or the shrines at Ōji (Tōkyō-to) and Kanasayama (Ibaraki prefecture).¹⁶ The *Azuma kagami* records, for instance, that *dengaku* was performed at the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū in conjunction with a Buddhist rite in which animals were set free on 1188/3/15; “shrine maiden *dengaku*” and *yabusame* took place on 1245/8/16, and a nighttime *dengaku* was staged on 1247/9/16. The same source also relates that on 1247/9/16 the Sagami public was gossiping about mysterious figures in *dengaku* attire appearing at night in nearby mountains, suggesting that *dengaku* was sufficiently common in the area for it to become the subject of popular lore. So numerous were the *dengaku* performers inhabiting the region that their settlement was known as “*dengaku* alley” (*dengaku zushi* 田樂辻子; see the entry from 1257/11/22).

Sensōji *binzasara* dancing and the “lion dances” that preceded it appear to have been staged at the temple long before Tamura's arrival. A two-man “lion,” drummer, and three *binzasara* players in a parade heading into Sensōji are already portrayed in the famous Idemitsu screen of the 1630s (see the illustration in NAITŌ 2003, 26). Yet after the eighteenth century, fantastic “lions” and the *binzasara* dancers attracted the greatest public attention not when they marched in such a festival cortege, but when they exhibited their arts on the day preceding the Sanja festival. Seventeenth-century sources explain that this splendid fête took place on 3/18 in odd-numbered years (by western count), but make no mention of *binzasara*.¹⁷ Half a century later, however, the 1735 *Zoku Edo sunago* reports that *binzasara* was produced on 3/17 in off years (*Zoku Edo sunago*, 326). This observation is seconded by the 1751 *Saihan zōho Edo sō-ganoko meisho taizen*, according to which a “*binzasara* holy rite” was witnessed on 3/17 as part of a “religious ceremony” (*hōe* 法会) in which the Sanja Gongen's sacred palanquins (*mikoshi* 神輿) were temporarily moved to the main Sensōji hall. This solemnity was apparently not performed in festival years (*Saihan zōho Edo sō-ganoko taizen*, 435).¹⁸

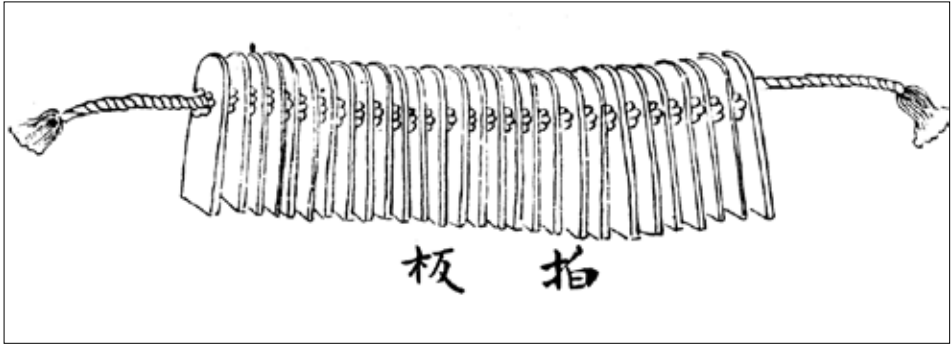


FIGURE 2. *Binzasara* used at Sensōji (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 401).



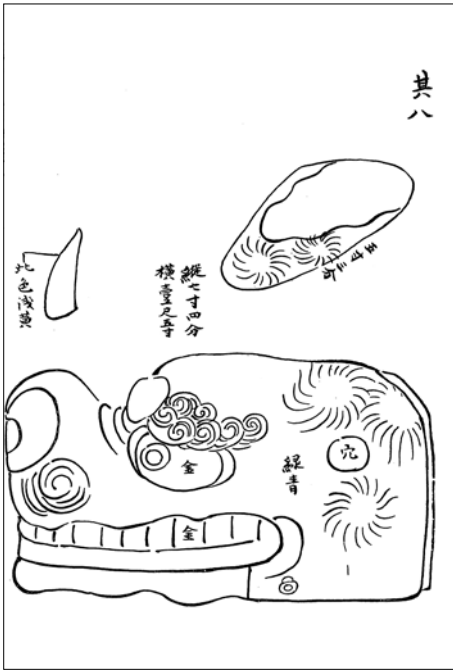
FIGURE 3. Procession of three *binzasara* players, two drummers, and one flutist during the nineteenth century (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 393).

After the mid-eighteenth century 3/17 *binzasara* performances were, however, also witnessed during festival years (see *Asakusa-shi*, 166). A 1761/3/17 entry in the Sensōji diary likewise reveals that *binzasara* was properly performed during that festival year (SN 2, 679–80) and later diary entries indicate that 3/17 “lion *binzasara*” was still staged in off years (see SN 1, 546 [1752]; SN 2, 29 [1754]). *Binzasara* had evidently become a regular annual event. In fact, after 1771, when a major fire, mounting expenses, and a host of other factors required the Sanja festival to be called off, only *binzasara* was left to remind everyone of the missing celebration.¹⁹ Such festival cancellations became the rule between the early 1780s and 1860 (only in 1823 did the festival take place), but 3/17 *binzasara* stubbornly resisted abandonment.²⁰

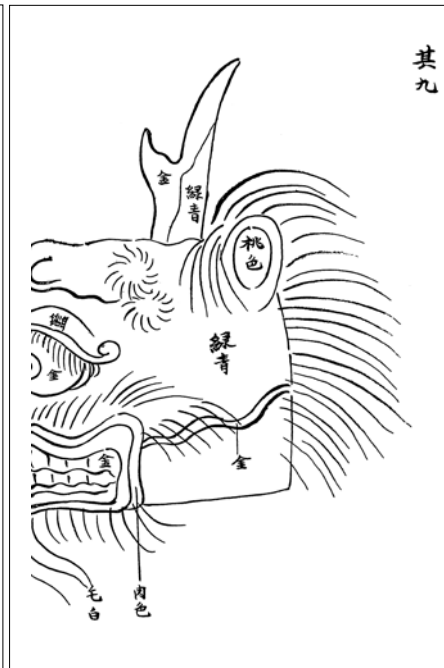
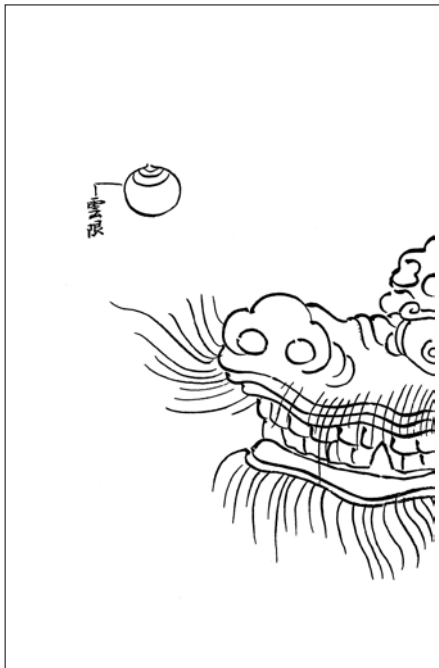
According to nineteenth-century records, the morning of 3/17 began with Buddhist chanting and a secret rite at the main hall of Sensōji and at the Sanja Gongen, followed by a holy ceremony in which the spirits were ushered into the *mikoshi* (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 382).²¹ Next the *mikoshi* were lugged to the main hall of Sensōji. The performers (see FIGURE 3) and accessories, who had earlier assembled at the Denbōin (伝法院, the administrative headquarters of Sensōji), then advanced onto a stage while brandishing lances and playing flutes and drums. Four men (two per lion) first danced three “lion dances” wearing body cloths and the masks seen in FIGURES 4a and 4b and several “*binzasara* dances” ensued (see MATSUDAIRA 1942, 383).

I shall leave a detailed description of the *binzasara* dances for a future occasion, but four *dengaku* dances, all of them closely related to agricultural activities, have been transmitted to the present day: 1. “sowing seeds” (*tanemaki* 種蒔), a dance inspired by the action of sowing; 2. “side-by-side” (*katazoroe* 肩揃), in which dancers vaguely mimic the action of planting rice seedlings; 3. “the beak of a thrush” (*chōmaguchi* 鳥馬口), referring to birds that eat crop-destroying insects; and 4. “kicking at each other” (*keai* 蹴合), in which the drummers and the *binzasara* players face each other in two rows and pantomime a harvest celebration by drawing near and far three times. When performed at Sensōji the main religious function of these dances was not so much to guarantee a good harvest as to entertain the three founding deities of the Sanja Gongen.

When the show was over, the dancers and musicians passed through the central Niō Gate, exited the precincts through the Kaminari Gate, and ended up around Yamanoshuku-machi immediately to the east of Sensōji (*Tōto saijiki*, vol. 1, 243). At this ward and at nearby Zaimoku-chō the *binzasara* performers staged an additional exhibit for ward headmen, who traditionally oversaw the production of the festival (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 384). A document from 1825/10 divides *binzasara* performers into three groups, each associated with one of the three “founding wards” of Sensōji: five of Yamanoshuku-machi, seven of Hanakawado-chō, and one performer and an assistant of Zaimoku-chō (see “Shishi *binzasara*-yaku”). Closer inspection reveals, however, that none of the men listed actually resided in the ward of their group, though most dwelled in proximity to Sensōji or on



FIGURES 4a (left) and 4b (figures below). Nineteenth-century illustrations of the two Sensōji “lion” masks (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 255–57).



property belonging to the temple or a sub-temple. Apparently certain houses, no matter where they were actually located, held hereditary rights to *binzasara* performance. Their activities were supported in part by a grant from the Denbōin of 900 *tsubo* (about 2970 square meters) of land behind the northern boundary of Sensōji precincts south of Tamachi, on which six families of “lion dancers” who served in the Sanja festival had built their houses (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 350).

Such customary rights have today disappeared. During the Meiji era ward leaders and old families such as the Matsuzaki 松崎 house located in wards associated with Sensōji continued to supply manpower for rituals and dances, but few records of the details have survived (AMINO 1982, 694). All the old costumes and props were lost in the air raids of 1945. Ten years later seven wards formed a *binzasara* group (*binzasara-kai*) to restore the music and dances. Finally in May of 1960 a performance with new outfits saw the light of day (AMINO 1982, 695). Today what remains of the music and dance is maintained by a group that calls itself the “holy *binzasara* group” (*shinji binzasara kai* 神事びんざさら会), whose members are recruited exclusively from eight wards around Sensōji and whose leader is a member of the Matsuzaki family. The “lion dances” and *binzasara* dances are still performed on the day before the Sanja festival proper and the outfits of the dancers as well as the dance and music carefully follow precedent in so far as it is known. Since revisions are interpreted as having been conservative, the Tokyo city government has granted *binzasara* dancing (now often called *binzasara-mai* びんざさら舞) the coveted status of an “intangible cultural property” (*mukei bunkazai* 無形文化財). This art has thereby established itself as a solid, legitimate tradition.

SI TH-MONTH *BINZASARA* AND *KAGURA* PERFORMANCES

Legend has it that masked *kagura* performances on 6/15 were revived by the Kamakura shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–99) (*Tōto saijiki*, vol. 2, 118). The combination of *binzasara* and masked *kagura* staged on 6/15 seems to have accompanied an annual “Asakusa Kannon pilgrimage” celebration predating Tamura’s arrival. After Tamura’s assumption of the headship of the Sanja Gongen, little more is heard of this “pilgrimage,” though music and dance continued to be performed on 6/15.

Much like the third-month show, 6/15 *binzasara* and *kagura* were preceded by a series of somber rites and consecrated events.²² Preparations were launched on 6/7, when Tamura reported to the office of Magistrate of Temples and Shrines and named the men who would participate in the following day’s activities. On 6/8 some fifteen subordinates assembled at Tamura’s residence to perform a *kagura* dance designed to “purify the practitioners” (*gyōnin-harae kagura* 行人祓神楽).²³ This accomplished, the team enacted a ritual known as “reinforcing austerities” (*shōjin-gatame* 精進堅メ) and forthwith entered a period of purificatory abstinence. This lasted until 6/15 (or 6/17), an occasion marked by a rite of “terminating austerities” (*shōjin-otoshi* 精進落). Rehearsals of the performances took place on 6/14 (*Seji hyakudan*, 16–17), and on 6/15 a cavalcade of fully purified men proudly

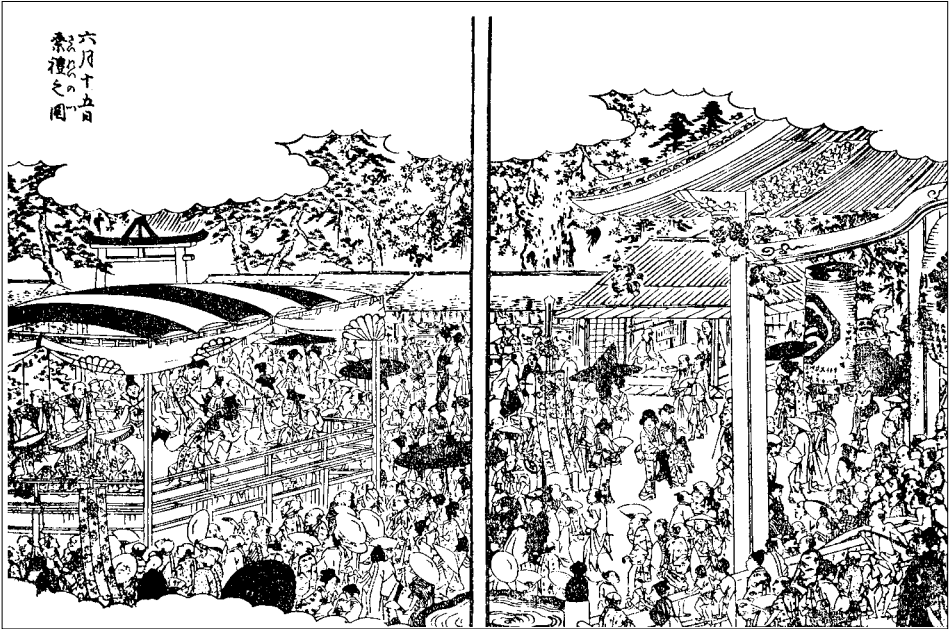
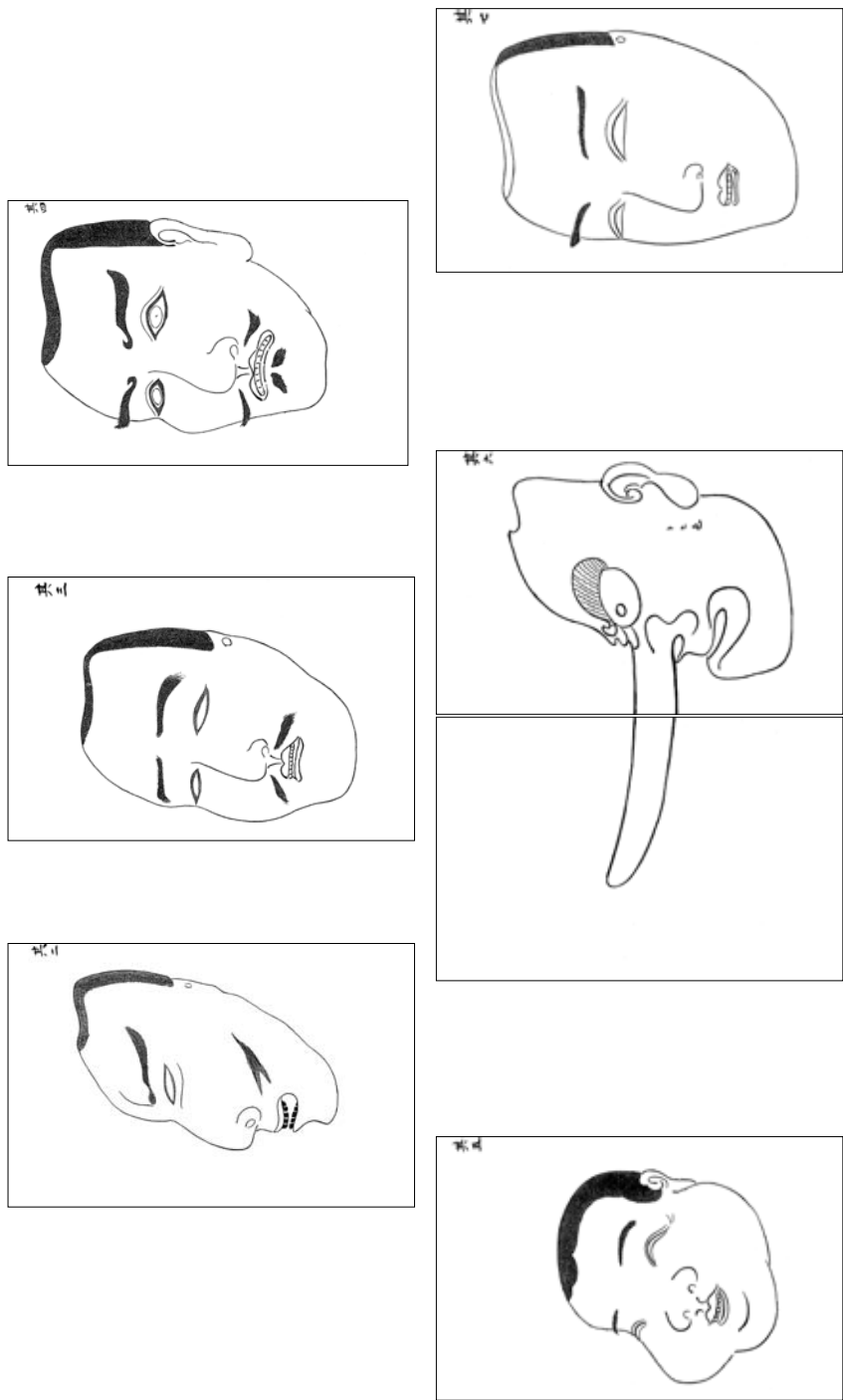


FIGURE 5. Masked *kagura* performance on 6/15 at Sensōji. Three *binzasara* players wearing their typical headgear are seated at the left of the stage while Tamura dances in the middle. From *Edo meisbo zue*, vol. 3 [kan 6], 394–95 (*Kaiyō no bu*, kan 6), pub. 1832–1834.

proceeded from Tamura’s residence to Sensōji grounds. On arrival they danced on a stage erected before the main Kannon Hall (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 384). Tamura emphasized that this was “a type of *kagura* with music and dance of ‘integrated Shinto,’ utterly unlike that of other houses” (*Gofunai bikō*, vol. 1, 312). With its all male cast, its emphasis on austerities and purificatory rites, it smacked strongly of the ways of *yamabushi*, who also performed *kagura*.

Entries in the Sensōji diary from 1753, 1770, 1771 bear record that in those years, and presumably in others as well, 6/15 “lion,” *binzasara* and *kagura*, or simply *binzasara* was first exhibited to a private audience of temple officials in the “Peony Room” (Botan-no-ma) presumably in the Denbōin. The dancers and their helpers were then treated to a festive meal, which in 1829 included rice, adzuki beans, yams, broiled tofu, burdock, 250 tiny eggplants, and saké, funded by the temple to the tune of several hundred coppers.²⁴ Only around noon, after the men had been properly regaled, did the ceremony collectively known as “Tenka taihei” 天下泰平 (“peace under heaven”) or as “Tengaten” (天下天, literally “heaven under heaven”) commence.²⁵ This extravaganza cost Sensōji a considerable sum. In 1795 and 1807 Tamura received 2000 coppers and his men an equal amount for their exertions and one silver piece or half a *bu* in gold was also awarded to the performers for the “upkeep of wigs.”²⁶ In 1754, when the performance was postponed two days on account of the arrival of an important visitor, *binzasara* performers were awarded an additional 1000 coppers (SN 2, 42–43). When the requisite headgear, spears, and sheaths needed repair in 1802, the temple contributed 4.5 *bu* of gold to

FIGURE 6. Six Sensōji *kagura* masks. Top: the “three masters.” Bottom left: “lucky woman;” bottom middle: “Sarutahiko (*tengu*);” bottom right: unknown (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 247–54).



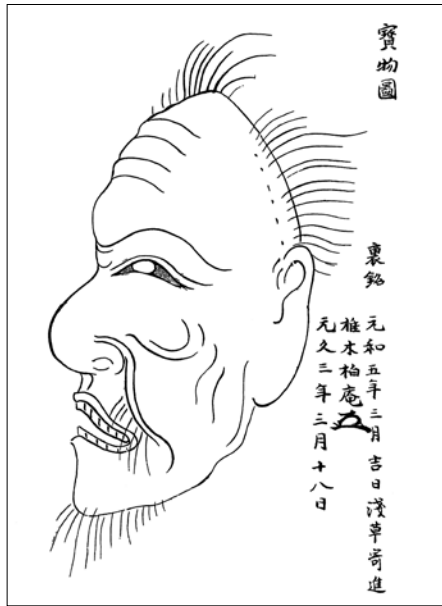


FIGURE 7. The Sensōji “Okina” mask (MATSUDAIRA 1939, 246).

this noble cause (SN 9: 744). Subsidies for the austerities and performances (2 *bu* in gold or 2000 coppers) and money for victuals were likewise offered to the heads of Namiki and Komagata wards of Asakusa, who advanced men for the event (SN 6: 404; SN 8: 184; SN 11: 184, 349; SN 16: 633; SN 17: 683; see also the document in AMINO 1982, 690). Probably for this reason the headmen of these two wards were honored with special performances at the Komagata shrine near the Sumida River, just as the ward headmen of Yamanoshuku-machi and Zaimoku-chō had been treated to private performances of music and dance on 3/17.

The masks used for the 6/15 *kagura* were of varying vintages. Yamazaki Yoshi-shige 山崎美成 (1796–1856), who visited Tamura in 1824, discovered a total of six masks as did Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴 around the same time.²⁷ The *Sensōji-shi* (compiled ca. 1813, MATSUDAIRA 1942) also pictures half dozen *kagura* masks (see FIGURE 6) along with the heads of the two “lions” already seen in FIGURES 4a and 4b above.²⁸

Three of these masks depict the “three masters” (*sannin-dayū* 三人太夫), the three founders of Sensōji enshrined at the Sanja Gongen. Another one portrayed the god Sarutahiko and yet another represented a “lucky woman” (*fukujo* 福女), probably the goddess Ama-no-uzume-no-mikoto. The last mentioned was dated 1205 in black ink (AMINO 1982, 726). The inside of the Sarutahiko mask also contained an inscription, this one in red lacquer, from the Genna period (1615–24) and was signed by the maker (*Seji hyakudan*, 16–17).²⁹ The other masks were undated. In addition, Sensōji jealously possessed a mask of the mysterious “old man” (Ō-dayū 翁太夫, that is, “Okina”) who so often figured in *kagura* and the *nō* drama. It was dated 1206/3/18 (see FIGURE 7) and donated to the temple in 1619/3.³⁰

The 6/15 performances were divided into four sections. The dancers and musicians, like those of 3/17 *binzasara*—no doubt most of them the same men—all stemmed from “old families.” They were supposedly related to the ten “grass-cutter boys” who had assembled a temporary abode for the tiny holy Kannon statue that had supposedly been fished out of the Sumida River in 628 by the founders of Sensōji and later enshrined at the temple.³¹ Slightly varying accounts of the sacred ceremonies and dances may be summed up as follows:³²

1. Entrance and prayers: At the hour of the horse (that is, around noon) five masked subordinates of Tamura Hachidayū, wearing courtier’s hats (*eboshi*) and traditional court garb (*hitatare*) advanced through the Niō Gate on horseback. They proceeded around the back of the main temple hall to the Sanja Gongen followed by Tamura, habited in a courtier’s hat and a formal “hunting dress” (*kariginu*) over-robe. He wielded a sacred Shinto staff and was accompanied by two subordinates. At the shrine Tamura intoned prayers (*norito*) or the sacred words of the “Nakatomi” purification.

2. *Binzasara*. After a short interval, six dancers (that is, three *binzasara* players, one flutist, and two drummers), all wearing silk headgear came into view.³³ Along with a performer of large drum (*ōdaiko*) they paraded from the main shrine building to the stage erected before the main hall of Sensōji. The *Sensōji-shi* notes that the large drum was not used for these dances (unlike the “lion dances”) and that on 6/15 “for the gesture of sowing, no confetti is scattered” (as was done on 3/17 in the dance of “sowing seeds”). After completing the *binzasara* dances, the performers clambered down the steps of the stage and retired to the Denbōin.

3. “Dance with a Shinto wand” (*hei no mai* 幣の舞), “dance with a *shakujō*” (*shakujō no mai* 錫杖の舞),³⁴ and “sword dance” (*tsurugi no mai* 剣の舞). Tamura Hachidayū and two assistants next mounted the stage and seated themselves to the east and west. Two masked dancers appeared. One danced with a Shinto wand and a *shakujō*; the other presented a sword dance. The names of the dances suggest a combination of Shinto, Buddhist, and *yamabushi* practices. No doubt the performance functioned as a purificatory ritual.³⁵

4. Dances of the “three masters.” The last set of dances was dedicated to the three founding demigods of Sensōji enshrined at the Sanja Gongen. Before the previous set of dances was completed, three of Tamura’s masked secondaries moved onto the stage and seated themselves in the northwest corner. After the performance in progress had ended and the dancers had cleared the stage, it was time for “three masters” to dance. Each “master” danced individually and then exited the stage. The first master held a Shinto wand, the second a *shakujō*, and the third a sword. For these three dances no flute was used.

In addition to the above pieces, *Tōto saijiki* notes that one of the dances performed on 6/15 made use of the mask of the “auspicious woman” (*otafuku-jo*, probably the Uzume-no-mikoto mentioned earlier). *Kagura* featuring Uzume-no-mikoto is also

reported by Edo town officials in 1815, who in addition mention that the “Okina” dance was performed on this day (*Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 324). Another undated, unpublished document likewise explains that Tamura and his men performed “Uzume kagura Okina” (鈿女神樂翁).³⁶ From such descriptions it would appear that at least some of the *kagura* seen on 6/15 may have resembled what was performed in the ceremonial archery exhibit. When all the dances were over, the sacred rope hung up around the stage was detached. This custom again bore the stamp of practices surrounding New Year’s *yabusame*, where the spectators were allowed to scramble for the rope, which was thought to harbor auspicious powers.

Although the above composite description probably captures the essence of the 6/15 performance, this production was no static affair with a program etched in stone. That masked dances had come and gone is suggested by a thorough inquiry of 1928 that located a total of no less than sixteen masks in addition to two “lion” heads (*Sensōji engi*, 137). Historical change is also suggested by the somewhat puzzling reference to the Uzume-no-mikoto *kagura*. Similarly, an entry in the Sensōji diary from 1753 specifies that “lion dances” were presented (SN I, 624), but no later source mentions such dances on 6/15. Today the 6/15 performances have been abandoned and masked *kagura* has disappeared entirely from the Sensōji.

“BOILING WATER KAGURA,” “TWELVE KAGURA PIECES,”
AND THE “PHEASANT DANCE”

That Tamura Hachidayū considered *kagura* performances not just a holy event, but a useful source of revenue is already suggested by a petition of 1746/5/12. In it Tamura importuned temple authorities to grant him the rights to stage *kagura* during a temple fair. He thereby aspired to recoup losses incurred in a conflagration that shortly before had reduced to ashes a good many buildings within Sensōji grounds (SN I, 156). Once more on 1752/7/2, Tamura petitioned superiors to sanction *kagura* at the Sanja Gongen on the ninth and tenth days of that month. This request was again not inspired by any sacred occasion, but rather by Tamura’s penury. Although officials noted that there was “no precedent” for such a production, they judged it to be unproblematic and granted him his wish (SN I, 567). Once more, on 1784/4/16–17, the days associated with the death of Tokugawa Ieyasu, a set of “twelve *kagura* pieces” (*jūni kagura* 十二神樂) was staged at the Sanja Gongen and reaped the shrine several gold pieces (SN 5, 151–52).

Not coincidentally from the last years of the eighteenth century the Sensōji diary begins to record an increasing number of benefit performances of “boiling water *kagura*” (*yudate* or *yudate kagura* 湯立神樂, sometimes also *yubana kagura* 湯花神樂), usually staged at the start of the year, commonly on 1/17. Such *kagura*, long connected to the holy rituals of *yamabushi* and to *kagura* of Ise, was also associated with the Maruyama Inari Shrine (part of the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū), the Goryō Shrine at Hase in Kamakura, and the Shirahata Shrine in nearby Fujisawa. Sagami traditions of the genre date back to the medieval period and references to *yudate kagura* at major Edo shrines appear in documents from the early

seventeenth century. At the Kanda Myōjin shrine, for example, a “water-boiling spot” (*oyudate-ba* 御湯立場) some 12 by 27 feet in size had already been constructed in 1617. By 1626 the Nezu Gongen had allotted twenty-four bales of rice for *yudate* (*kagura*), offered annually in the first, fifth, and ninth months. *Yudate kagura* was produced in 1689/1/28 at the Hakusan Gongen at the behest of Princess Tsuru (1677–1704), the eldest daughter of shogun Tsunayoshi (*Gofunai bikō zokuben, jinja-bu*, 236, 276, 282, 541). City residents could also view such *kagura* at the Shiba Shinmei, the Ichigaya Hachiman, and the Hikawa Myōjin, as well as at countless local Inari shrines, including the Miyatomori Inari in Asakusa, which protected Sensōji from fire, not always effectively, as we have seen (*Gofunai bikō zokuben, jinja-bu*, 379).³⁷ *Yudate kagura*, wherever it was performed, was commonly associated with spirits of the ground, water, and fire, and was believed to be efficacious in driving out disease and malevolent spirits. Water was boiled in a cauldron and *yamabushi*, shrine maidens (*miko*), or accessories exhibited dances and enacted rituals, sometimes brandishing a bow and arrows, swords, or other implements. The high point of the performance occurred when bundles of branches or bamboo-grass leaves (*sasa* 笹) attached to a handle were dipped into the hot water and sprinkled on both the performers and spectators. This act offered divine protection to those on whom it splashed thanks to the magical purificatory combination of water and fire.

Yudate kagura was so closely tied to Sagami province that it was occasionally labeled “Kamakura *kagura*” and sporadic benefit performances by Tamura and his men seem to have been of variants of this art. The first recorded performance of *yudate kagura* at the Sanja Gongen occurred on 1793/1/15 (SN 7, 117). Since the Sanja Gongen did not include women in its staff, *miko* were summoned from elsewhere, perhaps to dance and perform the holy aspersions. By 1806/1/17, a performance of “twelve pieces of boiling-water *kagura*” is recorded as taking place “as usual” at the Sanja Gongen, indicating that it had become something of a tradition (see SN 11, 140, 316, 515, 739). The “twelve *kagura* pieces” in question were perhaps related to genres transmitted by Washinomiya 鷲宮, an ancient shrine in what is today Saitama City of Saitama prefecture. Indeed Tamura pointed out this fact himself (see *Kairoku*, 294).³⁸ Since the other major *kagura* lineage, the “Sagami style,” likewise contained “twelve *kagura* pieces” including those performed at New Year’s by “masters of sacred dance” of the Sagami Rokusho Myōjin shrine (*Ōiso-machi shi, shiryō-ben, kinsei* 2, 711 [1859/9]), the “twelve pieces” presented by Tamura and his men at Sensōji probably combined elements of both the Washinomiya and Sagami styles.

In any case, on 1810/1/17 the “twelve pieces of *yudate kagura*” produced at the Sanja Gongen were billed as “regularly-performed *kagura*” (*jō-kagura* 常神樂, SN 12, 95). This show originated from a request in late 1809 by the shipping magnate and monopoly builder Sugimoto Mojūrō to fund “regular *kagura*” performances at the Sanja Gongen in order to ensure the prosperity of his enterprise (SN 11, 813). This petition was approved on 1809/11/21 (SN 12, 96) and the first presentation was seen on 1810/1/17. Sensōji officials noted that such *kagura* differed from vul-

gar spectacles produced by hawkers but were initially not quite sure whether it should be handled in a different manner from more secular exhibits (SN 12, 7). On 1811/1/17 *yudate kagura* at the Sanja Gongen took place once more, under the auspices of Hanakawado-chō (SN 12, 318), one of the three “founding wards.”³⁹ During the same year, perhaps to cover all his spiritual bases, Mojūrō also funded a 21-day esoteric *goma* 護摩 service—Buddhist prayers and the burning of pieces of sumac wood (SN 12, 343). *Kagura* performances were seen anew on 1828/1/17 and 1829/1/17 (SN 17, 728, SN 18, 145) and presumably in some or all of the years between 1811 and 1828. Thereafter one reads no more of Mojūrō’s sponsorship, for his fortunes had experienced a disastrous decline after 1819.⁴⁰

Kagura performed at the Sanja Gongen during this era was often referred to as *daikagura* (太神樂) or *daidai kagura* (大々神樂, 太々神樂), literally “great *kagura*” or more hyperbolically as “great great *kagura*.” *Daidai kagura* was in the main synonymous with the “twelve *kagura* pieces,” but some believed that it derived from sacred dances performed at the great shrines of Ise or Izumo. By the early eighteenth century at the latest, such *kagura* was being performed at Washinomiya and the surrounding areas. As one Edo-period commentator explained, *daidai* did not necessarily imply “large-scale *kagura*” but pointed to the fact that it was “unparalleled in appeasing the spirit of the gods and unexceeded in its greatness and profundity of meaning” (SAITAMA KENRITSU MINŌOKU BUNKA SENTŌ, ed., 2002, 15–16; *Washimiya-machi shi*, 95; GEINŌSHI KENKYŪKAI 1974, 346).

Unlike other forms of *kagura* which might contain overtly theatrical, even comic components, *daidai kagura* distinguished itself in its ritual formality and its function as a pious offering to the deities. In the early nineteenth century Tamura is noted as having served as the “head of *daikagura*” in the Kanto area.⁴¹ He and his minions performed *daikagura* or *daidai kagura* at countless locations in this region of the land. That he wished to emphasize his relation to the great shrine of Ise can be surmised from a petition he submitted to temple officials some time before 1781/intercalary 5/10 pleading for permission to add the word “Ise” to his name (SN 4, 583). This change was initially approved, but shortly thereafter a procedural problem was discovered and the attempt was apparently abandoned (SN 4, 605).

Despite this failure, *daidai kagura* continued to be staged on important occasions at the Sanja Gongen and was commonly associated with sacred rites on 4/17 and other days honoring Tokugawa Ieyasu (see SN 4, 581–82; SN 5, 151–52; SN 13, 167, 172, 501, 770). It was also produced on festive occasions relating to the Sanja Gongen (see SN 14, 411, 514). By 1818 Tamura’s men were performing *daidai kagura* on 9/17 “according to custom” and the following year the performances took place “as customary every year” (SN 14, 66, 155, 364). In the mid-1820s even city officials were recording the date of 9/17 as one of “regular *kagura* performances” at the Sanja Gongen (*Tōkyō-shi shikō, shūkyō-ben*, vol. 3, 230; *Tōkyō-shi shikō, shigai-ben*, vol. 5, 114). Tamura and his men must have been eager to draw crowds on a date that filled in the long gap between the 6/15 *kagura* and the 1/5 *yabusame*.

The “twelve *kagura* pieces,” *yudate kagura*, and *daidai kagura* were drawn from the stock-in-trade of Edo *kagura* as transmitted from Washinomiya and

shrines in Sagami, but from the 1820s Tamura and his men set about developing a new program of dances for 9/17. Matsura Seizan penned the following report of what he saw, probably in the late 1820s:

Last year I heard that an annual “pheasant dance” (*kiji-no-mai* 雉子の舞) was to take place at the Sanja (Gongen) within Sensōji. Spectators were permitted to attend this year and I was handed the following program:

1. “Circling the mountain” (*yama mawari* 山廻), one dancer.
 2. “Fortifying the land” (*kunigatame* 国堅), ditto.
 3. Shinto prayer (*norito* 祝詞), ditto.
 4. “A pair of mysterious old men” (*niko okina* 二個翁), two dancers.
 5. “Divine sword and lance” (*shinken oyari* 神劍御鏑), four dancers.
 6. “Opening the door of the [heavenly] cave” (*iwato-biraki* 岩戸開), two dancers.⁴²
 7. “Eight ugly women” (*shikome hachinin* 醜女八人), two dancers.
- Intermission
8. “Evidence by immersion in boiling water” (*yugishō* 湯起証), four dancers.⁴³
 9. “Pheasant dance” (*kiji-mai* 雉子舞), two dancers.
 10. “The mountain god” (*yamagami*, 山神), one dancer.

For the “pheasant dance” one dancer wears the headgear of a male pheasant, while a second one dons that of a female pheasant. The dancer of the male pheasant wears the mask of the “mysterious old man” [*okina*], a yellowish-green formal outfit [*kariginu*], white trousers [*bakama*], and wields two Shinto staffs [*hei*]. The dancer of the female pheasant wears a mask of the old man’s opposite [*jō* 尉], red formal outfit, white trousers with gold embroidery, and holds two fans. The two dance simultaneously and music is supplied by flutes and drums.

This dance is based on an event of olden times transmitted in an archaic six-volume record of origins [*koengi* 古縁記] in the possession of Sensōji. When the holy statue of Kannon was pulled out of the Sumida River, a pheasant appeared and shielded the sacred object with its wings. Long ago the parishioners of Asakusa assembled at the site of the “three avatars” [Sanjo Gongen 三所権現] and by imitating this action provided comfort to the hallowed Buddhist object [*bonzon*] and its Shinto manifestation [*suijaku*].⁴⁴

This dance was transmitted to the house of Jōon-bō 常音坊, a descendant of one of the three founders of Sensōji. Twelve years ago the [head of] this house and Hagino Nagashi 萩野長 sought to revive the dance. Since Tamura Hachidayū, who has long been associated with Sensōji—more on that later—and is the head of the “masters of sacred dance,” the two begged for his cooperation and planned a performance called the “*kagura* on the seventeenth day of the ninth month.” Old masks known as “pheasant masks” transmitted to Jōon-bō and Sentō-bō 専当坊—the latter is also an extant family of descendants of the Sanja Gongen—were procured and Hachidayū’s subordinates performed a dance that was created. They say that these dances were performed from the time of the ancient record of origins, but in fact they were created twelve years ago.

Thereafter, I too went to view this *kagura* performance, but the dances were of little interest and resemble today's familiar "twelve *kagura* pieces." No doubt this is because Hachidayū's subordinates created them. (MATSURA 1978, 285–86)

Hence Tamura's creative efforts during the early nineteenth century were thinly disguised as the revival of a long-forgotten tradition. In fact, both Matura's comments and the titles of the pieces indicate that much of the "pheasant dance" medley resembled nothing so much as the "twelve *kagura* pieces," "*yudate kagura*," and other pieces from the *kagura* repertory held in common by countless urban and rural shrines in the Kanto area. That the program begins and ends with references to "the mountain" hints at links to *yamabushi* and their forms of *kagura*. Hagino and the other proponents of the "pheasant dance" must have combined what they knew of such dances with elements of Shinto and with pieces of their own creation, cobbling together a program related to the founding of Sensōji.

The "pheasant dance," which appears in the Sensōji diary only under the name of *daidai kagura*, seems to have survived for little over a decade. Although the exhibit of 1820/9/17 included only half the usual number of performers (SN 14, 549), regular 9/17 *daidai kagura* took place in subsequent years (in 1825 the date was shifted a month because of a conflict).⁴⁵ After 1830, however, *kagura* on 9/17 vanishes from the pages of the Sensōji diary. Saitō Gesshin visited Asakusa on 1831/9/17, surely not by accident, but mentions nothing of it (*Saitō Gesshin nikki*, vol. I, 96). As late as 1851, however, published guides to Edo events continue to list it, probably anachronistically (*Tōto yūran nenjū gyōji*, 605). By this time the "pheasant dance" had become but a distant memory. It had become abundantly clear that this set of pieces would not establish itself as a viable component of the Sanja Gongen tradition.

CONCLUSION

Performances of sacred dances at Sensōji and the Sanja Gongen consisted of a shifting patchwork of arts and sacraments deriving from old and new sources staged on diverse and changing occasions. Presentations were normally legitimated by appealing to precedent, but changing holy occasions, financial contingencies, and even audience tastes played a large role in determining what was preserved and what was abandoned. Whereas *yabusame* and its attendant *kagura* fell on hard times and eventually faded from the scene, *binzasara* and "lion dances" played an important role in supporting the continuity of the Sanja festival, particularly after the latter was regularly canceled. A "pheasant dance" surfaced briefly during the nineteenth century and soon disappeared, but the masked *kagura* of 6/15 was not given up until the Meiji era.

The sacred dances of Sensōji and the Sanja Gongen would not congeal into their present form until after the fall of the *bakufu*, the abolition of Tamura's organization, and the postwar reduction of the annual roster of performances into a single gala occasion in May. The "lion dances" and "*binzasara* dances"

accompanying today's Sanja festival represent only a fragment of what was once a far more varied program of annual events and a vastly richer repertory of music and dance.

Change has not come to a halt in recent years. During the 1960s the celebration was still relatively subdued; today it has become a gaudy, boisterous, tourist-driven event. Even the *mikoshi*-bearers, recently including many women, no longer shout *wasshoi* but rather *seiya*. "Tradition" at the Sensōji has been a process of chaotic struggle, unruly competition, and unforeseen results. Countless deliberate choices at the individual or local level, usually inspired by narrow, short-lived interests, have led to an unpredictable trajectory whose effects will no doubt continue to surprise in the future.

NOTES

1. For a useful English-language study of Sensōji in general see HUR 2000.
2. One well-known source of performances on Sensōji grounds was Nishinomiya 西宮, which often presented *kagura* on the eighteenth day of the month (countless brief entries can be found throughout the *Sensōji nikki* [hereafter SN]).
3. In listings of occupations he controlled, Danzaemon often included *maimai* (literally "dance dancers"). These dancers are often viewed as the occupational predecessors of the "masters of sacred dance."
4. For a 1790 listing see HAYASHI 2003, 64–65. A 1684 document included in *Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho utsushi* presents the number of 808 individuals but this listing predates Tamura's rise to headship.
5. I have described Tamura's history and activities in GROEMER 2007 and GROEMER forthcoming (both 1 and 2).
6. See the 1181/7/3 entry in the *Azuma kagami*; *Gofunai bikō*, vol. 1, 314; *Tōkyō-shi shikō*, *shigai-hen*, vol. 5, 132–35.
7. *Gofunai bikō zokuben*, *jinja-bu*, 178, 188. A branch of the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū, which had been built at Ryūkei-chō in 1478 (it was moved to Ushigome in 1644), still existed during the late Edo period. *Gofunai bikō zokuben*, *jinja-bu*, 219.
8. It died out after Meiji, but was restored in 1964. For a description of recent reenactments see HONDA 1984, 667–68. A large number of historical records relating to *yabusame* are collected in *Koji ruien*, *bugi-bu*, 491–526.
9. For details on the Goō ritual and *hōraku* see *Zoku Edo sunago* 1735, 321; *Saihan zōho Edo sō-ganoko meissho taizen* 1751, 101; SN 3, 204 (1764/1/5); *Zōho Edo nenjū gyōji* 1803, 178; MATSUDAIRA 1942, 371, 424, 434, 436 (ca. 1813).
10. This was a Shinto purification ceremony designed to remove all pollution and misfortune. The words addressed to the gods (*norito*) are known as the *Ōbarae no kotoba* (大祓詞, "words of the great purification"). Since it was the traditional duty of the Nakatomi clan to recite these words on state occasions, they were also known as the "Nakatomi-no-harae." The text is recorded in the tenth-century *Engi-shiki*.
11. This dance, found in many versions of *kagura* throughout the land, prepares an arena for the gods to enter from high. It is sometimes known as *kami-mukae* 神迎え ("welcoming the gods"). Normally four dancers begin by standing in each of the corners of the stage while wearing a red, green, white, or black costume (colors deriving from directional symbolism in Yin-yang philosophy). They then perform a dance while wielding a priest's staff, a *shakujō* (see note 34 below), or a fan.

12. Uzume-no-mikoto, more fully Ama (or Ame)-no-uzume-no-mikoto 天鈿女命, is also referred to as “Otafuku.” She often regarded as the first “dancing girl” in Japanese history, the goddess of fertility, joy, and revelry who danced before the celestial cave to lure out the sun goddess when the latter had taken refuge there, bringing darkness upon the land. She also appeased (and later married) the fierce god (and leader of earthly gods) Sarutahiko (or Sarudahiko), who finally gives up his realm. The Otafuku mask is a common folk mask, with constantly smiling eyes. This mask is often paired with the male Hyottoko mask in comic dances during local harvest festivals.

13. Matura Seizan records that one arrow was fired toward the east, one in the direction of that year’s lucky god, and one to the northeast (the direction from which evil spirits entered) (MATSURA 1980, 199).

14. No mention of *kagura* is made in *Shisō zasshiki*, fascicle 36 (vol. 8), 838 (1795/4). The 1815 source is *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 324. The undated “Shinji mai-dayū yurai” (in *Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho utsushi*) names the three dances as *kunigatame* 国堅, *uzume miko* 鈿女神子, and *Saruta kagura* 猿田神樂.

15. The one in use at Sensōji in recent years has 108 clappers. For dimensions see TAKAYANAGI 1919, 38.

16. In particular the shrine at Ōji was known for its *dengaku*, but today’s version is a 1983 reconstruction (it had become extinct in 1944). On Ōji *dengaku* and its revival see HONDA 1996, 270–313. For an illustration of a performance during the Edo period, see *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 2, 163–65. On *dengaku* throughout Japan in the context of festivals see PLUTSCHOW, 1996, 169–80.

17. See the 1687 *Edo kanoko*, 63; the 1690 *Zōho Edo sō-ganoko meisho taizen*, book 2 (*Edo sōsho*, vol. 3, 44); and the 1697 *Kokka man’yō-shū* (23)

18. The location of the storehouse during the nineteenth century, behind and to the west of the main temple hall, can be seen in the *Edo meisho zue* (vol. 3, 388) and contemporaneous maps.

19. See SN 3, 716 (1772); SN 4, 33 (1773), 359 (1777), 416 (1778), 536 (1780).

20. For *binzasara* performances up to 1823, the year a grand festival was once again staged, see SN 5: 144 (1784), 5, 501 (1787); SN 6: 14–15 (1788), 384–85 (1790); SN 7: 262 (1794), 435 (1795), 632 (1796); SN 8: 155 (1797), 260, 410 (1798); SN 9: 24, 96, 196–97 (1800), 303, 402, 473–74 (1801); SN 10: 34, 210, 301 (1803), 353, 483 (1804), 557, 701 (1805/3/18, visit by the shogun); SN 11: 164–65 (1806), 664, 759 (1809); SN 12: 24, III (1810), 335–37 (1811), 641 (1814); SN 13: 348–49 (1816); SN 14: 23, 121 (1818), 321 (1819), 674 (1821).

21. Today this transfer of the spirits occurs in the morning of the Thursday preceding the festival.

22. The description below is based on SN 4: 736; SN 21: 522–23; MATSURA 1980, 198; *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 321; *Gofunai bikō*, vol. 1, 312.

23. MATSURA 1980, 198, gives this (with a gloss) as *gyōnyū harae kagura* 行入禊神樂 (*kagura* for purification on entering austerities).

24. See SN 1: 624; SN 3: 467, 607; SN 10: 232, 500; SN 18: 195, 350.

25. See *Edo machikata kakiage, Asakusa, jō*, 321; MATSURA 1980, 198. *Gofunai bikō*, vol. 1, 312 gives 天下乞 (“begging for [peace under] heaven”), but this may simply be a miscopying of the last ideograph.

26. SN 7: 466; SN 10: 232, 500; SN 11: 184, 349; SN 17: 683; SN 18: 195. In 1806 Tamura was awarded two *bu* in gold.

27. See Takizawa Bakin, *Tanki manroku* 耽奇漫録 (reprinted in *Zuibitsu jiten*, vol. 3, 207–208). According to *Kairoku*, 294 (fascicle 10), a work written from 1820 to 1837 by Yamazaki Yoshishige, “five masks were used for the sacred dances on 6/15, but two other old masks existed. AMINO 1982, 723–26, presents photographs of seven masks.

28. The *Sensōji-shi*, on the other hand, identifies five of the masks as a “younger brother mask” (*ototo-no-men* おととの面), a “laughing mask” (*warai-no-men* わらひの面), an “angry mask” (*haradachi-no-men* はらだちの面), an “old man’s mask” (*okina-no-men* 翁の面), and a “crying mask” (*naki-no-men* なきの面) (MATSUDAIRA 1942, 408).

29. The photograph in AMINO 1982 (724) indicates the words “Donated to Asakusa, Genna 5 [1619], 3rd month, lucky day; signed: Shiinoki Hakuan [榎木柏庵].” See also *Kairoku* 294 and *Sensōji engi*, 137. The latter record also mentions that another mask was inscribed with the date 1722/5/lucky day, which the photograph in AMINO 1982 (726) reveals to be that of a demon (*oni*), perhaps worn by the demon of the ceremonial archery exhibit (*yabusame*) described earlier. *Kairoku* (294) notes that the Sarutahiko mask was inscribed “Shōden-chō Kagoya Sanzaemon” (聖天町籠屋三左衛門) and was signed in black ink. Shōden-chō was a ward in the Asakusa area. This inscription is not visible in the photographs provided by Amino.

30. See also the illustration (1206/3/18) in *Tanki manroku* (reprinted in *Zuibitsu jiten*, vol. 3, 207–208, and *Seji hyakudan*, 18, by Yamazaki Yoshishige, pub. 1834). *Sensōji engi* (1928, 137) gives the inscription as “made in 1206” with no month or day mentioned. On Okina dances in relation to festivals (*matsuri*) see PLUTSCHOW 1996, 66–67, 155–63.

31. *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 2, 118; on the supposed descendants of these ten men see *Tōkyō-shi shikō, shigai-hen*, vol. 5, 141–42.

32. The following composite picture is based on *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 2, 118; MATSUDAIRA 1942, 408; *Seji hyakudan*, 17–18; *Tanki manroku*, reprinted in *Zuibitsu jiten*, vol. 3, 207–208.

33. The headgear, depicted in FIGURE 3, was a kind of *ichimegasa* 市女笠, originally worn by shamans in the medieval era. Its sides were folded down and with red and white tassels hanging from the brim. The flutist’s hat differed slightly from those of the others. See MATSUDAIRA 1942, 400.

34. The *shakujō* is a sistrum-like staff used both in Buddhist and *shugen* rituals. It contains metal rings that sound when shaken and thus functions both as a magical tool and as a musical instrument for marking rhythm.

35. On the use of the Shinto wand, the *shakujō*, and the sword in *kagura*, see AVERBUCH 1995, 23.

36. “Shūgō shintō shinji mai-dayū yuisho” in *Shinji mai-dayū tomo yuisho utsushi*.

37. On Edo “boiling water” *kagura* see for example *Gofunai bikō zokuchen, jinja-bu*, 333–34, 374, 401, 417. It was most commonly staged during the first, fifth, and ninth months, or on the first day of the horse during the second month. A detailed listing of historical documents regarding Edo *yudate kagura* in Edo can be found in HONDA 1994, 392–96. A beautiful and detailed color illustration of a *miko* performing this rite on a platform behind two cauldrons of boiling water within the grounds of a shrine can be found in the illustrated scroll “Ebisu monogatari” (234–35) dating from the late seventeenth century.

38. For a good history of Washinomiya *kagura* see SAITAMA KENRITSU MINŌKUKU BUNKA SENTŌ, ed. 2002, 12–39.

39. SN 12: 318 gives *kagura batate* (場立), but this may be a misreading of *yudate* (湯立).

40. On Sugimoto Mojūrō see HUR 2000, 128–29. The entry of SN II: 813 incorrectly gives his surname as Matsumoto.

41. MATSUDAIRA 1939, 151. For a listing of *daidai kagura* performed at shrines in Edo and the Kanto area see HONDA 1994, especially 396–405. It is unlikely that Tamura had much control of *daidai kagura* performed at other powerful shrines such as the Shiba Shinmei, which staged a particularly gala event in 1812 with forty-eight dances performed exclusively for parishioners (for a description see *Gaidan bunbun shūyō*, 251).

42. This refers to the myth of the sun goddess recorded in the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*. See AVERBUCH 1995, 9–14.

43. This title refers to what was originally an ancient form of trial by ordeal in which the accused inserted their hands in boiling water. By Tamura's days it could hardly have been more than some kind of symbolic action.

44. Parishioners of Sensōji refused to eat pheasant fearing divine punishment. See *Murasaki no hitomoto*, 297; *Gofunai bikō zokuben, jinja-bu*, 189; MATSUDAIRA 1939, 152; AMINO 1982, 696, 699.

45. For entries in the Sensōji diary regarding 9/17 *kagura* see SN 15: 225; SN 16: 331, 659; SN 17: 316, 358, 714, 771; SN 18: 387, 585.

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