

UNDER THE "MISTLETOE" OF FANTASY.

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"THE KISS."

This charming piece of decorative fantasy, which rather suggests the pale wraiths of the tragic lovers in Flecker's "Hassan" re-united in an eastern Paradise, is the work of that brilliant Russian artist, Paul Mak, of whose art several previous examples have appeared in our pages. He escaped from Russia at

the time of the Revolution and was at one time Court-painter to the Shah of Persia. An exhibition of Paul Mak's Persian studies was held in London, at the Leicester Galleries, two years ago. His sojourn in Persia evidently influenced his art and gave him a taste for the exuberant intricacies of oriental decoration.



THE REAL CHRISTMAS AS IT USED TO BE; WITH SNOWY STREETS AND A FROZEN THAMES: LONDON IN THE "GREAT FROST" OF 1683.

Many a time has the river Thames been fast locked in Winter's icy grip. In older days, when its bed was much wider, ice would form at the sides and, as the frost increased, would extend from bank to bank. There can be little doubt, too, that Old London the stalling, with its narrow arches and huge piers, contributed to this. The floating ice was massed against these piers and heaped up on record that frost trees and even oaks were split by the frosts; most of the hollies were killed and the Thames on this occasion was frozen over with ice seven inches thick. Evelyn, the diarist, describes how he crossed the river to Lambeth Palace, on the ice which had become thick enough to bear not only streets of booths in which meat was roasted, but to hold diverse shops of

wares, as in a town; and carts and horses passed over. Cuckles piled on the ice from Westminster to the Temple; while sleds sliding with rackets; ball-baiting, horse-and-cowh races, puppet plays and interludes, tipping shops and other lewd places, made the scene like a bacchanalian Triumph or a carnival on the ice. The accompanying discomforts were naturally numerous, one of the chief being the fact that, by the excessive cold of the air hindering the ascent of the smoke, London became so filled with fumes that one could hardly see across the streets, and lungs were so choked, that breathing was difficult. In this picture by Jan Griffier the Elder Westminster Abbey is on the left, without, of course, any House of Parliament between it and the water's edge; behind it as Whitehall, which was partly burnt down in 1691. On the right may be seen Lambeth Palace.

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF MESSRS. LEGGAT BROTHERS, 30, ST. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.1.



A JAPANESE PARALLEL TO THE SHREWS, KORMEDICH AND DEMON WOMEN IN A NO DANCE-DRAMA, "MOMIIGARI" ("THE MAPLE PICKING"). The Shrews (Kormedich) appear in the background, and the demon women (Momiigari) appear in the foreground. The Shrews are probably the children of a tree, and the demon women are the spirits of the tree. The Shrews are the children of a tree, and the demon women are the spirits of the tree. The women are really mountain demons forcing him to dance, but his successful god and a messenger to awaken him, and a magic sword, overcome the demons.

## A STAGE "LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE": JAPANESE NO PLAYS AND THEIR SYMBOLISM

By ZOE KINCAID. (See Illustrations on the opposite Page, and Pages 32 to 34).

**S**INCE the unmistakable modern tendency of art is toward simplicity and the concentration on essentials, the No stage of Japan, after waiting five centuries, has apparently arrived at the psychological moment when its contribution to the new movements of the West may be most welcome and timely. There it may be proved that there are things that have long been old in the East and yet are new to the West—but careful of the fitness of time to gain recognition, as to its etymology. One view is that it means talent or accomplishment, while another is that No was an old Buddhist term, referring to the unity of inner life brought about between the audience, players, musicians and chorus. The term *Nogaku*, or *Nomusic*, has come commonly and wrongly used by Occidentals. Neither *No-music* nor *No-dance* is appropriate to an art that unites drama, music, the dance and singing so closely; indeed, it is impossible to call the whole by one of its parts.

One actor of first importance dominates the No stage, and he is called the "shite." The secondary actor, the "waki," always remains an assistant and subordinate to the work of the chief player. They may be compared to the protagonist and the deuteragonist of the Greek stage, but any number of assistants to both the shite and waki, whose persons and faces are painted to suggest the nature of the performance, the chorus and musicians complete the stage personnel. Thus the chief actor becomes the pivot of the play. This makes for the unity and balance of a performance.

Simplicity is uppermost on the severely plain stage. At the four corners of the square platform are pillars supporting a heavy, temple-like roof. Adjoining the stage on the left is the *hashigaki* (bridge-to-post), a long bridge passage used for some of the most striking features of the performance—the entrances and exits, picturesque postures of fantastic dancers, and movements of a number of actors to suggest they

are on a journey, or other action the play demands. This passage is roofed over, and has a low balustrade on the side facing the audience. Along this are placed three small living pine trees, marking stations for the actors, who calculate with their feet, since they do not see when masked. At the end of the passage is a grey curtain. To the ends of this are attached bamboo poles, and boy attendants raise or lower the curtain for the strange creatures of the No to enter or depart.

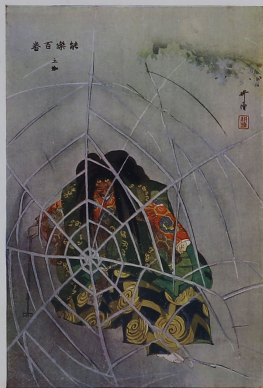
On the wooden wall of the background of the stage is painted an idealized pine tree, with wide-spreading branches, symbolic of the outdoor period of the No, when performances were given before a shrine or temple beneath the trees. Before the play begins the musicians take their place at the back centre of the stage. The flutist-player leads the procession, both on the appearance of the musicians and when leaving, which suggests a parallel with the Greek stage. The instruments of the No are three drums and a flute.

When the orchestra has taken up its position, the members of the chorus file in, not in the dignified fashion of the musicians, but unobtrusively through a small door to the right of the stage, and kneel in two rows to the right. On a stage that is so frankly and unconcerningly devoted to the exploitation of the unreal, there is no place whatever for the elaborate system of the painted scenery which has been brought into use in the Western theatre. At first it appears a strange conviction the entire lack of stage settings, yet with familiarity there is a sense of freedom and relief in an unencumbered stage.

Change of scene is effected by means of imaginative properties, symbols of real things. The property men carry in a small oblong platform, lightly raised above the stage. This may serve as a bridge, a throne, or a forge, as the action requires. Upon this platform are placed the buildings which suggest the scene. They are fashioned from bamboo and bound with cotton, and may have a roof of brocade or thatch, or be crowned with oak or willow branches, red maple leaves, or cherry blossoms. Thus a palace or a cottage, a hermitage, or an inn is furnished. When a boat, a well-head, or a palanquin is needed, no attempt is made to imitate the real article; merely the outline of the object serves the purpose.



WITH A RIMONO (ON GROUND) SYMBOLISING A SICK-BED.  
THE SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY IN THE NO PLAY, "AIBUNKE."  
The No play has features for its theme. The chief character, Aibunke, is a woman who has an extraordinary great jealousy. Her soul has, it is said, been locked in a cage of the spirit of a dead husband. The character who is Aibunke's servant, named the sufferer, but a crowd drives her away by prayers. The clash between evil and good, characteristic of the No drama, is shown in spectacular action.



"TSUGHEGOMO" "THE EARTH SPIDER"; THE MONSTER IN HIS PAPER WEB, A SPECTACULAR FEATURE OF THE PLAY.  
A warrior, metaphorically ill, is being poisoned by a monster spider, who spins him in detail of right in the game of a great. He attacks the monster, which retreats, instead, by the victim. The play ends with the spider slain, under a curtain, which is removed, revealing the spider's web. It breaks through the web, rights only the soldier, and is killed.



"KURAMA TENGU": A JAPANESE NO DANCE-DRAMA SOMEWHAT ANALOGOUS TO THE GREEK LEGEND OF CHIRON THE CENTAUR.  
The Tengu is a strange creature of Japanese folklore, composed of many magical qualities. In this play a youth named Yoshitsune meets a Tengu in the Kurama hills of Kyoto, and the unknown creature teaches him the secrets of the hidden art, and, by means of its power, allows him how to attack and how to defend. Yoshitsune later becomes the hero of many military exploits. In Greek legend, it will be recalled, many heroes were similarly instructed by the Centaur Chiron.



YOSHITSUNE MEETS A TENGU IN THE KURAMA HILLS OF KYOTO, AND THE UNKNOWN CREATURE TEACHES HIM THE SECRETS OF THE HIDDEN ART, AND, BY MEANS OF ITS POWER, ALLOWS HIM HOW TO ATTACK AND HOW TO DEFEND. YOSHITSUNE LATER BECOMES THE HERO OF MANY MILITARY EXPLOITS. IN GREEK LEGEND, IT WILL BE RECALLED, MANY HEROES WERE SIMILARLY INSTRUCTED BY THE CENTAUR CHIRON.



AN EXILED GENERAL AS A BLIND BEGGAR IN A HERMIT'S HUT. "KAGEKIYO."

Kagekiyo, a defeated general, was exiled to Kyushu, became a blind beggar, and had shaved, and dwelt in a hermit's hut. His daughter, adopted by such a general, secretly had to visit him, but on being discovered, she fled, leaving the mother, the father and children blind. The tale of Kagekiyo shows her, by acting and singing, how he lost the battle. Then his blind daughter, and they part in tears.



A STAGE "WELL" WITH TALL GRASS INDICATING AUTUMN AND SELECTED GARDENS. A SCENE IN "IZUMI."

"Izumi." The Well had five or six of these No drama scenes. A travelling great stone illuminated temple, where a shrub, autumn, pines and reeds are arranged, like the "Izumi," a famous country and well. There they stand by the well as indicated, and the scene is completed. The well and the pines are in the "Izumi." Tall grass beside the well and indicate autumn and the selected temple grounds.

"MAKE BELIEVE" IN JAPANESE NO PLAYS:

PICTURES SUPPLIED BY ZOE KINCAID



AN ARMOURER'S FORGE AND ANVIL CONVENTIONALLY REPRESENTED AND HUNG WITH SHINTO SYMBOLS.

"Kokaki" is a No drama of murder and dancing. A crime, unconsciously committed by the Emperor and his son, is the subject of conventionalized by the Emperor and his son, and together they forge the sinners of Yashima. The god comes to help him, and together they forge



HOW A RUSTIC COTTAGE IS REPRESENTED IN THE NO

Keian was a Court lady beloved by the Emperor, but, detested by one above her in rank, she ran away to a spring on the Araso hills. The Emperor, in grief, sent a messenger to search for her. Riding along one moonlight night

QUAINT SYMBOLISM OF STAGE "PROPERTIES"

(SEE HERE ARTICLES ON PAGE 31)



THE FONGDON IN "KENSAKI."

represented and hung with Shinto symbols: the weapon on the stand to drum beats in the orchestra. The god then performs a lively dance. The platform representing the forge is hung with the straw fuge and cut paper of Shinto, symbols of purity to ward off evil.



THE EMPEROR'S MESSENGER (LEFT) DISCOVERS A SCENE IN "KONOQ."

he heard her harp, and gave her a letter from the Emperor that comforted her heart. She ran away to a spring on the Araso hills. The Emperor, in grief, sent a messenger to search for her. Riding along one moonlight night



A "PROPERTY" PALANQUIN, OUTLINED IN BAMBOO AND RED COTTON. A JOURNEY IN "UYA."

Uya is the favorite of a Kyoto noble, who refused her permission to go home when her mother is ill, wishing to take Uya on an excursion to Kiyomizu. He offers a palanquin and a property, and Uya, in the end, to which the story describes the course of her journey. At the picnic the composer a poem alluding to her mother, which is placed the noble that she has her go.



A STAGE "SHIP": AN ENVIOUS CHINESE MERCHANT, BEHIND, RETURNING WITH HIS SON IN "TOSEN."

In "Tosen," the Chinese merchant, the chief character of a rich Chinese merchant kidnapped by pirates and sold as a slave in Japan. Years later, his son is a noble with a name. Although he has inherited a fortune, he is not yet a noble, so he is the Japanese man. The envious merchant is about to kill himself, when the merchant's father and some not even happily together.



A MASK "FLUSHED WITH WINE" IN A NO DANCE. "SHOOO"  
A MONKEY-LIKE CREATURE OF CHINESE ORIGIN.  
"Shooo" is described as a No dance of comparatively late origin, which is of Chinese origin, but the monkey-like mask is considered to be especially fond of this and other, so the monkey-like mask is usually worn. The face red nose, with the costume of red and gold brocade, make a brilliant stage figure. The dance is expressive of the joy of life.

The love for the imaginative goes still farther in the No, and when the simple properties can be done away with, the play relies entirely on an appeal to the imagination of the audience. The chorus chants of spring on the mountains and a mist of cherry-blossoms, and the players, as travellers, stand in two lines, facing each other, intoning a description of the scenery, which causes every detail of the landscape to be conjured up before the mind's eye. It is largely through mime that the unseen is brought vividly before the audience, not so much by words as by gestures, postures, or movements to create the necessary atmosphere.

Another principle of the stage of antiquity which is active in the No is the wearing of masks by the actors. The West is so unaccustomed to masks that their use is sometimes puzzling. It has been thought that the Greeks wore masks because they performed outdoors before a huge audience, and the changing expressions of the actors' faces could not be seen. But such a disguise is part and parcel of the realm of the unreal. In plays dealing with legendary heroes, gods, ghosts and demons, the mask is appropriate, since a real face would create disillusionment. Even in the plays of human nature, the No mask is worn, because of the complete concentration upon the single emotion of the play. Not all characters in the No plays are masked, as the assistant players are impersonal to a degree unknown to the West, and do not draw attention to themselves. Indeed, the mask contributes largely to the unity of the No, which is much more organic than Western opera. In the No all the theatre arts appear to collaborate and serve a purpose, the emphasis placed now on the singing, again on the acting. While the dance is the main interpretation, the chorus and drummers become observers like the audience. When the drummers and chorus are active, the actors may remain motionless.

Since stage-dressers are lacking, the aesthetic use of colour is seen in the No costumes, emphasising the characters in a way which acting or dialogue is unable to do. The polished floor of the stage reflects the silver or gold, purple or orange, of the robes worn by ghosts and warriors, and, as the plays are performed in the daylight, the fabrics are often touched by shafts of light which greatly enhance their beauty, for there is nothing garish about these sumptuous No costumes. An angel wears a loose overcoat of supple gold cloth, into which is woven a pattern of a phoenix with many drooping tail-feathers in rainbow hues that melt into the texture; gods are clad in gold brocades; young women are clad in crimson; old age is clothed in dun browns and greys. Godesses who dance are in bright red skirts and overdresses of soft purple and gold. Ancient wizards, or other grotesque characters, make metallic figures in their ample robes with stiff lines, suggesting statue.

Of the two hundred and fifty No plays which have been handed down and are performed to-day, the greater number deal with human nature. There is the familiar theme of filial piety, a virtue so prized in Asia, the love of a daughter for her mother, as in Yuya, who, as the mistress of a

Kyoto noble, was taken on a cherry-viewing excursion, and prevented from going to her mother, who was ill in the country. So deep is Yuya's affection for her mother that, in the midst of the festivity, she composes a poem expressing her feeling, and this so wins the admiration of the noble that she is given permission to depart, but first expresses her thankfulness in a dance. Again, it is the sacrifice of a servant for his master, the revenge of a woman upon the slayer of her husband, the love of a brother and sister of high degree fallen upon evil days, or the tragedy of the abbot of a Buddhist Temple in Kyoto exiled to a lonely island.

The mystic quality of the No plays is best shown in the divine No, or pieces having gods or goddesses as characters. These celestial beings are made known in human symbols, but carry the audience away to regions far removed from mundane affairs. Ghostly visitants to this world, spirits seeking their old haunts and pursuits, are also characteristic of the No plays, and their treatment is of unusual interest. These apparitions become visible to pious priests at midnight in lonely temples, when the candle-lights on the altar sputter and flicker in the breeze, but with the coming of dawn they disappear. Sometimes these ghosts are unhappy because of work unfinished in life, or harbour feelings of resentment at the injustice of fate. Invariably they are consoled by the prayers of the living.

In almost all No plays the characters give expression to their emotions by means of a dance, and when the drama element is not strong, the chief feature of a piece may be a dance. Short dances are generally chosen to end the No programmes, such as "Shooo," a strange creature from Chinese folklore, a species of baboon. The dance of the "Shooo" is the symbol of festivity and congratulation. The youthful mask is flushed with wine. The costume is a gay red-and-gold brocade, and the wig a long red mane which immediately conveys the impression that the character belongs to the half-human, half-animal world of the No. For the dancers may appear as ogres, fauns, or dragons, as dreamy ghosts, the spirits of mountains, iris flowers, willow-trees, or as the dancing images of warriors who describe how they fought on land or sea. Devil and demon plays in the No reveal the eternal clash of good and evil which has formed the material for drama throughout the ages, both in East and West, and in these the statuesque quality of the No is given full play, the stage being full of movement, the dancing and action of a lively nature.

About the base of the raised platform on which No plays are performed, there is a space set with pebbles, which are always neatly arranged and freshly washed. To the untrained they have not been placed there by accident, but signify the separation between the ideal and the real, the world of the audience and that of the imagination. The No belongs to the non-realistic stage, the sacred flame of which was lighted in Greece, India, and China, and its actors may yet become torch-bearers to rekindle the idealistic stage of the West.



A HEADRESS TO REPRESENT A BIRD IN A NO DANCE; THE NAME CHARACTER IN "SUI" ("THE HEROIN")

In this No dance, entitled "Sui," the most important is Sui, and by means of gesture, attitude, and dancing, she expresses her love, and by means of her headress, which is a bird, she expresses her love. The headress is decorated with a pattern of a phoenix, which is a bird which has been handed down from the days of the old No.

Illustrations supplied by Eric Kilham. (See other articles in Page and other Illustrations on Page 310-313.)