NOH DRAMA IS THE GREAT VEHICLE FOR SPREADING THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS MATTERS IN THE MEDIEVAL JAPAN

In Japan, one of the most ancient forms of theatre is called Noh, alias Nohgaku which is the oldest surviving form of Japanese Theatre. It includes music, dance and acting to communicate Buddhist messages. This classical lyric drama was created during the latter half of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and the early part of the Muromachi period (1336–1573).

Noh (literally, skill and ability) draws its material from many sources and its form from ritual and folk dances. It is essentially a poetic, quasi-religious musical drama, usually without dramatic conflict. A Noh drama portrays one all encompassing emotion dominating the main character, the shite whether jealousy, sorrow, hatred, or compassion, all music, gesture, dance and recitation are used to build the emotion to its final climax at the close of the play.

Aside from the main character, there are one or sometimes two secondary parts, the waki, usually they are priests attired in long dark robes. Like the audience, the waki is really there only to observe the tragedy enacted by the main character, shite. Usually a play starts with the priest or other secondary characters entrance. He explains the scene that he wants the audience to imagine. The scenes are all actual spots in Japan. The main character may then enter disguised as a local person. He reveals to the secondary character the significance of the site. He returns dressed as his true self with a mask and robes. From the time of his return to the stage, the waki generally remains seated to one side.

The first basic division of types of Noh plots is found in those which are set in the real world, and those that involve some forms of supernatural being. The real world plots can include plays where long-separate parents and children or brothers and sisters finally get to meet; the meeting brought about or aided by a priest or even a deity. Therefore Noh plays can be divided into two main types; Phantasmal Noh or Mugen Noh, Phenomenal Noh or Genzai Noh. Most of the plays are of the second type.
Buddhism in Japan

Buddhism is believed to have arrived in Japan around the middle of the 6th century. However, Buddhist teachings and practices have been prevalent throughout the country long before the arrival of Buddhism. Buddhism flourished in the period of the Nara period. During the Muromachi period (1336-1573) under the patronage of the powerful Ashikaga clan; particularly the third shogun. Although some Noh dramas were influenced by the Shintoism, the most of the Noh dramas had been influenced by Buddhism.

Amida or Amitabha Buddhism

Mahayanists were interested in identifying the universal source of the inspiration that awakened and produced Shakyamuni. And they identified it as the Dharma or universal Buddha hood. In order to show this spiritual basis of Shakyamuni in a more concrete human form, Mahayanists created the concepts of Amida-an ideal human being, a “humble and dynamic” human being who embodies the Dharma. Mahayanists described this ideal human being in Mahayana Texts such as the Sukhavati Vyuha-Sutra. The earliest version of this Sutra was composed in India in approximately the first century B.C. The larger Sutra conveys the story of a seeker by the name of Dharmakara (Storehouse of the Dharma). Dharmakara symbolizes the ‘Innermost Aspiration’. After performing many difficult practices, Dharmakara fulfills his “Innermost Aspiration” and becomes Amida Buddha.

Amida Buddhism

Amida Namaskara was known as a culmination of the life work of Dharmakara. Amida Namaskara is one of the Amida Sect’s primary chants, believed to have been developed by Amida himself during the period of the Nara period (7th century). Amida Namaskara is a form of devotion to Amida Buddha. It is a very popular practice in Japan and is performed in many Buddhist temples. The chant is believed to have the power to bring about rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida. The Pure Land is said to be located in the western paradise of Tathagata’s Pure Land.

The Pure Land is a concept in Mahayana Buddhism that emphasizes the idea of achieving enlightenment through faith in the Buddha Amida. The Pure Land is seen as a realm where one can attain enlightenment through faith and practice. The Pure Land is said to be a place where one can attain enlightenment more easily than in ordinary life.

The practice of Amida Namaskara is based on the idea that by chanting the name of Amida, one can attain enlightenment. The chant is believed to have the power to bring about rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida. The chant is performed in several different ways, with different variations becoming popular in different regions of Japan. The chant is usually performed in a group setting, with the participants repeating the chant together in unison.

The Pure Land is an important concept in Mahayana Buddhism, and Amida Namaskara is a popular practice in Japan. The chant is believed to have the power to bring about rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida, and is a way for people to achieve enlightenment. The Pure Land is a place of refuge and a way for people to attain enlightenment more easily. The practice of Amida Namaskara is a way for people to connect with Amida and achieve enlightenment through faith and practice.
Amitabha is the Buddha of the comprehensive love. He represented as a meditating Buddha, lives in the west. His most important enlightenment technique is the visualization of the surrounding world as a paradise. Amida is the centre of a number of charms (mantras) in Buddhist Vajrayana practices.23

In Shin (new) Buddhism, Amida’s name, Namu Amida Butsu is the most important thing. Namu Amida Butsu means ’Bow Amida Buddha’. It has other meanings such as ‘taking refuge in’, ‘worshiping’, and ‘revering’. This name expresses the ‘humble and dynamic spirit’, the essence of Buddha hood.24 It is better to examine the story of Dharmalankara in the larger Sutra. At the beginning, Dharmalankara meets his teacher and expresses his joy by praising his teacher. After receiving instructions from his teacher, Dharmalankara makes his vows and engages in a practice called ‘eternal practice’. And he eventually becomes a Buddha by the name of Namu Amida Buddha.

Although he takes up various practices, such as precept keeping and meditation, the most important practice Dharmalankara performs offerings (kuyo) (means, puja-in Sanskrit). Because of this kuyo practice, Dharmalankara becomes a Buddha by the name of Namu Amida Buddha. Although kuyo is usually translated as ‘making offerings to a Buddha’, it implies the whole process of learning. Kuyo basically means that a student visits a teacher and studies under him.25

Because of kuyo practice Dharmalankara has become a Buddha by the name of ’Bow Amida Buddha’ - a Buddha who bows his head before all existing things considering them Buddha’s. ’Bow Amida Buddha’ means that Dharmalankara has become a Buddha because of his ’Bowling’. Bowling and kuyo practices are synonymous.

”Bow ing” (Namu) is the most important part of the name. Thus we can say the most important thing in Amida Buddhism is not whiteness (i.e., things such as ideas, concepts, and theories) but bowness (i.e., ‘bowing’). In Amida Buddhism we are not moved by a person of whiteness but by a person of bowness.

Dr. Nobuo Haneda, on his article, what is Amida Buddha, has discussed on the concept of Amida. In that article he says like this; Amida is ”a personal symbol.” In other words, Amida is a fictional character like Hamlet or Macbeth. Let me explain this definition by first discussing what Amida is not. Since Amida is a fictional character, he is (1) not a god (or a divine being) and (2) not a historical person.

Next, let us discuss what “Amida” is, what he symbolizes. We can say that “Amida” symbolizes two things. (1) Shakyamuni, a historical person, and (2) the Dharma or universal Buddhahood.

First, ”Amida” symbolizes Shakyamuni, a historical person. ”Amida” can be considered a symbol of Shakyamuni, a historical person. We can say that “Amida” symbolizes the “humble and dynamic spirit” of Shakyamuni. As we have seen, Mahayanists created the concept of “Amida” in order to criticize the fossilized doctrines of Hinayanists and restore the vital spirit of Shakyamuni.26 Second, ”Amida” symbolizes the Dharma or universal Buddha hood. Mahayanists created the concepts not only to express the vital spirit of Shakyamuni, but also to show the spiritual basis of Shakyamuni and all human beings.

Zen Buddhism

Zen is a school of Mahayana Buddhism which is a mixture of Indian Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism.33 The word Zen is from the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word Chan which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit word dyana. It can be approximately translated as ‘meditation’ or ‘meditative state’. Zen emphasizes attainment of Enlightenment (satori) through sitting in meditation (zazen). The teachings of Zen include various sources of Mahayana thought including the Prajnaparamita literature, Madhyamaka, Yogakara and the Tathagatagarbha Sutras. The essence of Zen is attempting to understand the meaning of life directly, without being misled by logical thought or language.

Zen Buddhism was founded in the 6th or 7th century. As a matter of tradition, the establishment of Zen is credited to the south Indian Pallawa Prince turned-monk Bodhidharma. He came to China during the rise of Tamil Buddhism in Tamilakam to teach a special transmission outside scriptures, not founded on words or letters. Several scholars have suggested that Bodhidharma as a person never actually existed, but was a combination of various historical figures over several centuries.34

Some scholars have argued that Chan developed from the interaction between Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism, while others insist that Chan has roots in yogic practices. The origins of Zen Buddhism are ascribed to the Flower Sermon, the earliest source for which comes from the 18th century.

The first step is to control our minds through meditation and other techniques that involve mind and body; to give up logical thinking and avoid getting trapped in a spiders’ web of words.35

If you use mind to look for a Buddha, you won’t see the Buddha. As long as you look for a Buddha somewhere else, you will never see that your own mind is the Buddha. Don’t use a Buddha to worship a Buddha. And don’t use the mind to invoke a Buddha. Buddhas don’t recite Sutras. Buddha doesn’t keep precepts. And Buddha doesn’t break precepts. Buddha doesn’t keep or break anything. Buddha doesn’t do good or evil. To find a Buddha, you have to see your nature.36

Some schools of Zen work to achieve sudden moments of enlightenment, while others prefer a gradual. Zen tradition includes periods of intensive group meditation in a monastery. While the daily
routine in the monastery may require monks to meditate for several hours each day, during this intensive period they devote themselves almost exclusively to the practice of sitting meditation.36

The Impact of Zen Buddhism and Amida Buddhism on Noh Theatre

Cheryl Nafziger-Leis,39 The scholar, writing about the article on ‘The Influence of Zen Buddhism on Medieval Noh Drama’, says Noh is highly influenced by the Zen Buddhism.

The Zen-mi, or taste for Zen, of the court audience came to be reflected by the performance artists. Their art gradually incorporated many aspects of Zen aesthetics and developed into the subtle and graceful dance and music drama we know today as Noh. Thus, key to understanding Noh drama is an understanding of the religious tradition in whose context the art form evolved.

“While one school of thought supports the claim that Zen Buddhist influences are apparent in Noh, another school of thought disagrees. Paul Arnold, as one example of this latter school, insists that Noh has no connection to the Buddhist tradition whatsoever. Rather, states Arnold, Noh drama originated from a combination of pagan and Shinto sources; “It is a well known error in the west to consider the Noh as Zen art, The Noh is not even a Buddhist art; it is a form of theatre, which was formed from a profane art of performance and, it seems, developed first in or around Shinto shrines.”39

Cheryl tried to reject the one part of Paul’s statement, even though she agrees with Paul that Noh did evolve out of both the performance tradition of Japan and the Shinto religion. She disagrees with him regarding Noh’s ties to Zen.40

It would be difficult to define what Zen is necessarily about the aesthetics of Noh. However D. T. Suzuki left an overwhelming impression that the Buddhism of Noh is Zen through and through.

Both definitions of the Buddhism of Noh, as Amidaism and as Zen, refer to schools of Buddhism which are prominently active in modern times. According to Royall Tyler, Scholar said that most Buddhist statements and expressions scattered through the text of Noh support neither Amidaism nor Zen. Moreover there are two particular difficulties with these schools. The first is that while Shinto deities are not prominent in Noh, Zen nor the Amidaist sects are concerned with the Japanese Gods. The second difficulty is that while the content of Noh, whether religious or literary is conservative, Zen and the Amidaist sects were relatively recent in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the time when Noh was new. Royall Tyler said; Noh in those days was a widely popular art, not normally a vehicle for religious innovation. But when we peruse the contents of Noh, since fourteenth century, Noh has been a vehicle for

Shintoism, Amidaism and Zen. So after considering the arguments of the scholars, we can say that the Buddhism in Noh is simply Amida and Zen. When comparing Zen and Amida, Zen did have a significant influence on the medieval arts of the Japanese people. This does not deny, however, that other schools of Buddhism also influenced the Japanese arts to a certain degree. For example, Shingon Buddhism’s contribution to the graphic arts is important. Nevertheless, Zen’s impact was greater; Zen pervaded the whole Japanese culture.41

Ze’ami, in his treatises on the art of Noh stresses the divine roots of this art form. According to Ze’ami, Noh has both Shinto and Buddhist roots. Especially, at the beginning Noh was enacted in the episode of the celestial rocky cave in the age of the Gods.42 When we discuss about the origin of the Noh, we can understand that retelling the origin of Shintoism. So, it is clear that Noh is a vehicle of the popular religions; Shintoism and Buddhism.

At the beginning, Noh was highly influenced by the Shintoism, later Noh was developed gradually by the influence of Amida and Zen Buddhism. Nobody can deny this idea because Noh stories were centred on doctrines of Amida and Zen Buddhism.

The form of the art of Noh drama dramatically changed under the influence of court patronage. Just as Kariami had added the elements of the Kusemai to his performances to make them unique, he now added other elements to please his new audience in the court of Yoshimizu. Characteristic of court life of the period was a taste for Zen. More significantly, Yoshimizu himself was a great patron of Zen Buddhism. As a result, ‘it is natural that the production of Kan’ami and Ze’ami were influenced by Zen teachings.

In the Noh drama, prominent character, the Shite generally belongs to another world. Because the plot revolves around one main character, with the waki, the second character, as a mere support role or observer, there is no conflict between characters or incidents, as in the western tradition of drama.43

In brief, the structure of most Noh plots begins with the entrance of musicians and the chorus, who are followed by the waki. The waki, often portraying a monk, starts to tell the story. He establishes the local and the circumstances, of the main scene about to unfold. The waki then moves to the corner of the stage, where he sits and awaits the arrival of the shite. Dressed in elaborate costume, in contrast to all that surrounds him, the shite enters and sings and dances out his story. As his tale unfolds, one learns that the shite is not so much an actual being as the personification of a soul. In the second act, if there is one, the shite usually assumes his real identity.44

Cheryl Nafziger-Leis is very much fond of Noh theatre and Zen Buddhism; she fully paid her attention to prove Noh is highly influenced
by the doctrine of Zen. She tried to express her ideas, especially forwards the main characteristics of Noh, structure and its essence. But she did not clarify her ideas, discussing the stories and plots of Noh drama. If she did like that she had to express that Noh plots were similarly influenced by the mixture of Amida Buddhism and Zen Buddhism in the 14th and later centuries. In many Noh plays, the traveller has no link with the place or with the person. If such a play, presents a Shinto deity the traveller will normally be a Shinto priest, but in other plays, in the sort he will typically be a Buddhist monk. The monk has no name, and the scene of the play is not his destination. He is simply passing through.

The Buddhism of Noh is composed of devotion to Amida, of faith in the Lotus Sutra, and of elements of esoteric Buddhism.

Faith in the Lotus Sutra, like devotion to Amida, had been prominent in Japanese Buddhism for centuries. The Tendai School considered that its teaching was founded upon the Lotus, but the Lotus Sutra was not at all confined to Tendai. Reciting the Lotus was an essential practice for a great many ascetics. Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra near Rajgir in north India, the Bodhisattva Kanon (Avakolokesvara), is prominent in the Lotus Sutra. He was venerated at a great many sacred mound sites. The Bodhisattva Fagan (Samantabhadra) appears in the play Eguchi.

Mountains are the central element in the landscape of Noh. The other elements are the full moon, water, the water’s edge, and a pine tree. These appear in a great many plays.

The yearning for rebirth in paradise was essential to the religious life of most people, clerics or lay’ hope for salvation, so often expressed in Noh, is probably the main reason why the Buddhism of Noh has been defended as Amidaism.

**Amida Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and Noh Scripts**

The play Sumida Gawa-Sumida River written by Kanze Juro Motomasa, Zeami’s eldest son emphasizes on the concept of Amitabha Buddha. The writer has been clever enough to illustrate the eternal truth of Buddhism through his play.

A mad woman comes to the bank of Sumida River, looking for her son who has been kidnapped. She wants the boatman to take her to the opposite bank before the night falls. While crossing the river the boatman tells how a boy died one year earlier after having been left behind by slave traders. The woman realizes that the boy was her own son. The boatman takes her to the grave of the child. Then she begins to recite prayers to Amitabha Buddha for the soul of the lost child. As her prayers continue the ghost of the child appears in front of her and explains everything. By the morning she realizes that it is just a tomb and she overcomes of her sorrow and madness. She realizes the reality in human life.45

The writer has illustrated the ideas of Zen and Amida Buddhism through plot and the play Sumida Gawa in a very creative manner. At the beginning of the drama, the boatman who represents waki, does the self introduction and says that Nembutsu is to be held on the same day because of some reasons.

While the boatman takes the travelers across the river, the wakitsure asks why people are gathered around a Yanagi tree pointing to the other bank.

“There is going to be a recite of Nembutsu.” In the middle of the conversation the boatman tells how a boy was left to die. Asking the people to bury him by the road side, he recited Buddha’s name and died. His grave is on the river bank.

“There could be people from capital in this boat as well. Even though we have no direct relationship with this boy we should go and pray for him” says the boatman.46

Here Nembutsu means the prayers recited by worshippers for Amitabha Buddha. These prayers go as Namu Amida Butsu. This prayer is chanted sometimes with musical instruments and dancing and sometimes without. When the mother weeps for her child, the boatman says “now it is no use of crying.” Why don’t you chant Nembutsu for his soul.47 Life is a temporary matter. That is the reality. So there is not use repenting over some temporary matter. The poem playright uses, illustrates this truth.

Mother realizes this eternal truth about life and she consoles herself by chanting Nembutsu.48

On her way, across the river mother weeps about her child. Her feelings are wonderfully expressed in poetry. By hearing her excellent poetic language the wondering boatman questions her. She answers him using again poems.

The chorus lights her feelings with their singing.49

This way of revealing the broken heart of the helpless mother to a bird, relates to Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism can be considered as Dhyana Buddhism. According to some scholars this comes from the sermons of Lord Buddha. Emphasizing the self and the soul is a concept of Zen Buddhism. This philosophy aims to gain Buddha hood by exploring self. According to Huineng the pioneer of Zen Buddhism, Wisdom and dhyana refers to the same thing.50

The writer shows the feelings of the mother using the concepts in Zen Buddhism.

At the end of the play dramatist worships Amitabha Buddha and says that it is the only way to salvation.

One purpose of Noh drama is soothing the minds of the spectators, using the concepts of Buddhism.51

Women like the mother in Sumida Gawa are called ‘crazy women’, and the Noh dramas, whose protagonists are madwomen, are called...
Kyōjomonō (drama of mad women). The stories of mad women dramas usually have a happy ending.\(^5\) In most of the mad women stories, although a mother was torn away with her beloved, such as a child or a husband, for some reason and temporarily becomes distraught because of her increasing affection, the woman meets the loved one and regains her sanity at the end. However, in *Sumida Gawa*, the child is already dead and mother can only see his phantom and hear his voice.

According to tradition, Motomasa, playwright tried to complete this mother-son tragedy by comparing the gallant image that the mother has from her son’s living days and the appearance of the juvenile ghost who is in burial outfit with messy hair and wandering around because he cannot go to Buddhist Paradise.

*Dojoji* of Kanze Kōjirō Nobumitsu (1435-1510) is a play based on Buddhism.\(^6\) It shows how desire complicates the endless journey of life. This play is based on a story appeared in a Japanese Buddhist Anthology in 12th century.

A young and lustful widow who is desirable for a young priest asks him to satisfy her needs. The priest terrified by this strange request, flees from her promising to come at a later time. The broken promise fills her heart with hatred. She runs after him. She comes to a flooding river. The poison of hatred in her heart causes her to turn into a she-snakethat she saw at the river bank. This she-snakemoves in the river easily and comes to the temple where the priest is hiding. She looks for him all over the place. The terrified priest hides himself under the bell in the temple. The she-snakesees this fallen bell and she coils around it and strikes it. Her fury causes it to burn with the priest inside.\(^5\)

However there is a clear difference between the story and the play. According to the story, the woman is a young widow, but in the play, she is a dancer. This naive girl is attracted to the priest because of the frivolous talking of her father. The woman in the story was burning from fury; however the woman in the play is a pathetic character.\(^6\)

Women are not allowed at the ceremony of setting up the bell in the temple, though this beautiful dancer thinks of attending the ceremony. Her wish is to gain merit.\(^7\)

"I heard that there is a bell setting up ceremony in the nearby Dojoji Temple. I too must attend the ceremony to gain merit to across over this river of a circle of rebirths (Sanskara)." The dancer says.\(^8\)

She enters the temple and attends the ceremony.

As the play unfolds the chief priest relates the original story to the other priests. The shaken priests after hearing the story think of setting the bell up again. They pray for it. Here the strength of Buddhism and the serenity, it creates for man is beautifully demonstrated.

This drama shows how desire can lead to destruction, not only self destruction but also the destruction of everybody and everything. Here the dramatist has taken the she-snares as a symbol of craving and desire. She-snakewill be tamed by the power of Dharma.\(^9\)

*Dojoji* is one of the representative works of Noh dramas. One of the highlights of this drama is ranbyōshi, which is performed only by the shite and a small hand drum player for about fifteen minutes. In this scene, the small hand drum player draws up facing the shite to create a world keenly focussing on the performance of one other. The climax of this drama is the scene where the shite jumps underneat the falling bell.\(^6\)

The Noh play *Atsumori*, is based on "The Tale of the Heike" which recounts the struggle for power between the Taira family (Heike) and the Minamoto family (Genji).\(^6\) at the end of the twelfth century. This was written by veteran playwright, Zeami Motokiyo.\(^2\)

In the first scene, Priest Rensei is on his way to Ichi no Tani to pray for the salvation of the soul of Atsumori whom he killed sometime in the past during the war. Down trodden with grief, Rensei goes on his journey. On his way, he hears the sound of a flute giving sweet music in the air. Rensei stops in his tracks and waits for the flute player to pass. He then sees that it is a young reaper accompanied by his comrades. The young reaper is left alone by his friends. This leaves Rensei wondering. The priest inquires about the young reaper’s identity.\(^6\)

**Reaper:** How is it, you ask? I am seeking for a prayer in the voice of the evening waves. Perhaps you will pray the Ten Prayers for me?

**Priest:** I can easily pray the Ten Prayers for you, if you will tell me who you are.

**Reaper:** To tell you the truth-I am one of the family of Lord Atsumori.

**Priest:** One of Atsumori’s family? How glad I am. Then the priest joined his hands (he kneels down) and prayed.\(^8\)

Rensei kneels down and utters a prayer to Amida Buddha.

*Namu Amida* bu

Praise to Amida Buddha!

"If I attain to Buddhahood.

In the whole world and its ten spheres

Of all that dwell here none shall call on my name

And be rejected or cast aside."

*Atsumori* belongs to Kichikumono group of the Noh category which presents the shite as a ghost/spirit. It has two scenes. The first of which is when Priest Rensei meets the reaper, the young man who was playing the flute. The second scene reveals that the young reaper is, in fact, the soul of *Atsumori*. The shite role is that of *Atsumori*, while the waki role is portrayed by Priest Rensei.
The doctrine of Amida Buddhism is also highly reflected in ‘Atsumori’. Being a priest Rensei sings prayers to Amida Buddha.66

Kotoba Komachi also is the very good example for my argument that the Buddhist in Noh, is the vehicle of spreading religions. This was written by Kan’ami Kiyotsugu in the 14th century.67

In the disputation between Komachi and the priests, she upholds the doctrines of the Zen sect, which uses neither scriptures nor idols; the priests defend the doctrines of the Shingon sect, which promises salvation by the used of incantations and the worship of holy images.

The story of Komachi must have seemed to many pious people a Buddhist sermon on the vanity of human wishes and the ill effects of pride. As such, it doubtless appeared too simplistic to the author of this play, Kan’ami at any rate he gave the story a very different conclusion in accordance with the insights of the Zen sect to which he belonged.68

Noh is not an exclusively Buddhist art form since it contains ritual and spectacular elements that are more in keeping with Japan’s indigenous religion, Shinto. However, many of the subsequent conventions of Noh are consistent with, and sometimes directly from, Buddhist doctrines.

The reverberations of events long past within the shite’s consciousness are felt to be more important than the events themselves, as indeed is the case in Komachi. This is entirely in line with Buddhist teaching since Buddhism is above all a doctrine of salvation, and salvation is considered, if at all, not be stirring deeds but by an inner transformation.69

It is one of the most important tenants of Zen that although enlightenment may require perseverance, it cannot be achieved by effort but comes about, as it were, by accident.

There are two priests in the drama; one is a priest of the Koyasan; other is second priest. Conversation is prevailed between these two characters, and talking about the doctrine of Buddha.70

This is one of the oldest existing Noh dramas. This short piece describes attachment in the dialogue between Komachi and General Fukakusa.71 Although the original story of the one-hundred-night visitation describes the fate of a man who cannot complete his mission on the very last night, this Noh piece changes the ending so that he receives the providence of Buddha.72

The piece describing a man’s obsessive love is truly gloomy. However, the leading character of this drama, General Fukakusa, has an aristocratic well-bred character, a graceful sincerity. This creates an aura beyond gloominess, all the more reason to lead audience to the world of pity and sensitivity. D.T. Suzuki interpreted Zen not as a form of Buddhism but as a Japanese cultural value with universal relevance. His use of western theological and philosophical concepts to explain the Zen experience in modern ways influenced Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) and other members of the Kyoto school of Japanese Philosophy. In the early 20th century, many Japanese Intellectuals described Zen as the underlying essence of Japanese culture or as the unique form of Japanese spirituality. In 1938, Suzuki described Zen as “a religion of ‘will power’ and identified Zen training with Bushido (the code of conduct of the Japanese warrior class) and Japanese swordsmanship.

The play, Tamura also based on the Buddhist background, especially Amidism. One spring day, a monk from an eastern province who has come to Kyoto visits Kiyomizu temple. He meets a boy holding a broom. The boy answers why he serves Jishu gonen shrine. To the monk asking the history of Kiyomizu temple, the boy explains the origin of the temple established by Sakasane no Tamuramaru. While he further lists the scenic sights near the temple, the monk’s request, the sun sets. The time shift to a spring evening when the moon shines on the flowers. The boy and the monk recite the poem of “A moment of spring evening worth thousands of pieces of Gold”, and enjoy the view of the Cherry blossoms in the temple.

Appearing before the monk who is left behind is a man who lives in the town outside of the gate of Kiyomizu temple, He talks about the origin of that temple and assumes that the boy must be the ghost of Tamuramaru. When the monk has been followed the recommendation of the man, chants the Lotus Sutra to pray for the boy.

The play, Kakitsubata (Water Iris) also is based on Amida Buddhism. In this drama, a monk travelling around the provinces is enjoying the luxurious water irises in full bloom on the bank of a stream in the province of Mikawa, when a woman appears. She tells him that place, called Yatsushishi, is famous for water iris flowers. When the monk asks whether Yatsushishi had been written about in an ancient poem, the woman tells the old story of Ariwara no Narihira who composed the poem, ‘Just as a Karakonono comfortably fits my body after wearing it a long time, I comfortably fit my wife. The sun eventually sets. While apologizing for the simpleness of her residence the woman invites the monk to her hut for lodging overnight. Later she reveals that she is the spirit of the water iris.73

She tells that Narihira had appeared in this world as the incarnation of a Bodhisattva of song and dance; he offered the light of salvation to all living creatures in the world and the words of his poems have the power to save even consentient plants. While reciting Narihira’s story of love and poetry recorded in the Tale of Ise, the spirit dances mysteriously and elegantly. Eventually she receives the merit of the Buddha’s law that leads even flowers and trees to Buddha hood. She achieves enlightenment and disappears at dawn.

This drama, Kakitsubata has only two characters, the spirit of the water iris (shite) and the travelling monk (waki). It is a short and simple
story which is completed in one scene, something unusual to the style of musha Noh. The lady connects Naritha’s brilliant love with the merit of Buddha, cantonier on the story of Azumakudari in Ise monogatari.

In the drama of Kiyosune, Kiyotsune’s wife, who is handed her husband’s hair as a remembrance, bears resentment against him for breaking his promise to reunite and is smitten with sorrow? Then, she returns his hair to Usu Hachimangu shrine because holding the remembrance increases her grief. However, her love for her husband increases even more. When she hopes to see him at least in her dreams, the spirit of Kiyosune in armour appears in her dream, and the lovers who never are able to meet in this life meet in this way. Although they are happy upon their reunion, the wife blames her husband, who broke the promise of reunion, and the husband blames his wife’s heartlessness as she returns his hair to the shrine.

Another play, Toboku74 in early spring, a Buddhist monk attended by another monk travelled to, Kyoto from an eastern province. They arrive at Toboku in Temple, where a splendid plum tree blooms. As they watch the tree in wonder, they learn from a person who lives near the gate of the temple that the plum tree is named “Izumi Shikibu.” Then, a woman appears and corrects them; the tree should be named “Kobunkoku” or ‘Oshukubai’. She narrates the story that Lady Izumi Shikibu planted the plum tree. Although the monk and the woman exchange more words, she eventually hides behind the plum tree illuminated scarlet by the sunset glow. She then disappears.

The monk talks to the person living in the temple town again and hears about the history of the Toboku in temple and the story of Lady Izumi Shikibu. While the monk recites the Lotus Sutra to pray for the woman, the ghost of Izumi Shikibu appears. She reveals that she has already become a Bodhisattva of singing and dancing and talks about her memory associating her tie made by Buddha. After preaching the virtues of Japanese poetry and the preciousness and wonderfulness of Buddha’s doctrines, she dances.75

Although the storyline is neither dramatic nor remarkable, this play describes a deep philosophy which lauds the virtues of Japanese poetry and teaches the preciousness and wonderfulness of the Buddhism.

The play called Hata76 also based on Buddhist background, written by Zembo Motoyasus (1453-1532). Here the one of the characters is a priest who represents Atsumori’s child. Drama is begun, the statement of the great preacher.77

The drama called Kagetsu78 emphasizes the power of Buddha, father who later became a Buddhist monk, and son who was kidnapped by a long-nosed goblin, met each other at the Kiyomizu temple and celebrating the delightful moment of the reunion of them. Both of them understood the uncertainty of this world and set out together on a journey
to follow the Buddhist way. Tsukushi in Kyushu, there is a man who lives at the foot of Mount Hikosan. When his seven-year-old son went missing, he denounced the world and departed on a journey of Buddhist pilgrimage. After traveling around the provinces, the monk arrives in Kyoto and visits Kiyomizu temple for praying.

In this drama, main character Kagetsu sings a popular song, “Love is Trouble”, which is similar to Pematho Jayathi Soko (Love beget sadness) in Pali, is related the doctrines of Buddha.

The play, Anma79 also expresses the way of Buddha, to get rid of a circle of rebirths (samsara) for eternally, to get the consolation for whole life; and the out of this world. Its story can be summarized, according to the under mentioning.

Reading her letter, Fusazaki understand that in the underworld his mother desires salvation. In this drama, one of the characters Fusazaki performs her thirteen year memorial service at Shido temple and consoles his mother. There while reciting the Lotus Sutra, his mother, who is transformed into a Dragon Lady appears. She dances gaily and expresses her delight at attaining Buddha hood.

Hashitomi (Hajitomi)80 is also based on Buddhist background, express the power of Buddhism. Main character is the Buddhist monk. Everything in the play is happening in his dream.

A Buddhist monk living in Urin-Temple in Kitayama, Kyoto, prays to console the spirits of flowers offered to Buddha every day. At dusk a woman appears and offers a white flower. When the monk asks the name of the beautiful flower, the woman answers that it is a moon flower. Pressing on, he asks the woman name, she says that her identity will soon be revealed even she does not give her name. Further, the woman says, she comes from the shadow of this flower and lives somewhere near Gojo in Kyoto. Leaving these words, she disappears in the moonflower. After listening to the tale of the love affair between Hikaru Genji and Lady Yugao from a villager, the monk visits the Gojo area, following woman’s story when the monk visits this place, there is a lonely looking house just as in the past; with hinged half wall grilles entangled with blooming moonflowers. When the monk tries to console Lady Yugao’s soul, the one who appears by opening up the hinged half wall grill is the ghost of Lady Yugao. She narrates the memory of her love for Hikaru Genji and dances. Lady Yugao repeatedly begs the monk to console her soul and returns inside the hinged half wall grilled before the break of day. It was all a dream the monk had.

In this play, a lyrical dialogue follows full of poetical allusions, from which it is apparent that the madman is crying to Amida to save a child’s soul.

The Noh drama, named ‘Kosode-soga’,81 centre character, mother asks one of her sons to become a Buddhist priest, but as he refused that
request, mother angry with him and he is not welcomed as a son of her. Unlike many other Noh dramas, which emphasize subtleness and profundness? There is no waki-character in this play. It can be a unique of this drama.

Kurozuka (Black Mound) is one of the three female ogre stories, together with Dojoji (Dojoji Temple) and ‘Aoi no Ue’ (Lady Aoi). Therefore, nochi shite wears the mask Hannya. This mask embodies the resentment and fierce obsession of women; it’s horrible look gives us an impression. In this drama, main character, Ajari Yukei is a senior ranking Buddhist monk, who and his followers practice ascetic disciplines.

Ataka, which is an interesting drama; which allows the audience to enjoy not only the story but also the musical aspects of Noh dance, based on Buddhist background. This is a masterpiece of modern (genzai) Noh, in which the story evolves as time actually flows. A group of twelve people, including the master Yoshitsune and his followers, is disguised as mountain priests to escape from the capital and Benkei leads the group. Here, a group of mountain ascetic priests collecting donations for the reconstruction of Todo Temple.

The drama Aoi no Ue (Lady Aoi)’s main character, Lady Rokuyo’s spirit became peaceful and capable of becoming a Buddha. So, this also, one of Noh masterpieces, express the powerfulness of Buddhism.

Soon after this, Genji became reconciled with his wife Aoi, but continued to visit Rokuyo. One day, at the Kamo Festival, Aoi’s way was blocked by another carriage. She ordered her attendants to drag it aside. A scuffle ensued between her servants and those of Rokuyo in which Aoi’s side prevailed, Rokuyo’s carriage was broken and Aoi posed into the front place. After the festival was over Aoi returned to the Prime Minister’s house in high spirits. Soon afterwards she fell ill and it is at this point that the play begins.

After a bitter fight, the vengeful phantom of hades Rokuyo was overcome and calm down. Lady Rokuyo’s spirit became peaceful and capable of becoming a Buddha.

At the end of the drama, chorus sing and emphasize the importance of the way of Buddhahood.

Chorus
Fudo Immutable
Namah Samanta Basarada
Senda Makarosana
Sohataya Untaratakarnan.
“They that hear my name shall get Great Enlightenment:
They that see my body shall attain to Buddhahood.”

Ghost;
When she heard the sound of Scripture

The demon’s raging heart was stilled;
Shapes of Pity and Sufference,
The Bodhisats descend.
Her soul casts off its bonds,
She walks in Buddha’s Way.

The Noh drama Kuruma Tengu (Long nosed Goblin in Kuruma) describes the interesting story, which is related the Buddhism; some characters are the Buddhist monks who are involved in some activities. In spring, in Kyoto at Mr. Kuruma, a mountain priest overhears a party bless the cherry blossoms and he goes out to see the flowers. When the monks of Kuruma Temple with children enjoy the party of cherry blossoms, they notice that a mountain priest stays and shares the time with them. The monks, who seem out of place, leave the site.

In the play, Yamauba; the mountain crone appeared in her anomalous figure, she narrated her days living as a mountain crone in deep mountains and gorges. She preached the profound philosophy of the law of Buddha and performed a dance which showed how a genuine mountain crone rounds mountains. This drama includes, among other themes a profound discussion on Buddhist philosophy. All of these stylistic and philosophical elements are entwined with each other in this masterpiece.

Drama called Ukai; (Cormorant Fishing) also expressed the powerfulness of Buddhism. After hearing the tragic death of the Cormorant Fisherman from the villager, the monks write a verse of the Lotus Sutra on stones on the river bank and pray for the fisherman’s soul. At the end of the drama the character; Yama, Second priest emphasizes the way of Buddha for salvation.

“I am commanded to carry him quickly to Buddha’s palace.

The demon’s rage is stilled,
The fisher’s boat is changed
To the ship of Buddha’s vow,
Lifeboat of the Lotus Law.”

Further the entire piece emphasizes the wonderfulness of Buddhism and Lotus Sutra. We can glimpse aspects of ancient beliefs. It is also held that the travelling monk is saint nihiren himself. Lotus is the main Sutra of Amida Buddhism.

It was clear that Noh is the great vehicle for spreading the Buddhism, especially Amida Buddhism and Zen Buddhism during the period of 14th and 15th centuries. Although some dramas were based on the background of Shintoism, it also mixed with the Buddhism.

The influence of Amida Buddhism and Zen Buddhism in Noh is clearly seen from the plays as well as from the books written by Ze’mion
There are no images, no sacred books and no commandments. It was originally a way of thinking, a way of looking at life. As a religion it is concerned with a variety of gods—the spirits of trees, animals, and mountains, the principles of love, justice, and order, and the god-like ancestors, heroes, and Emperors. Shinto has no supreme God and heaven, and unlike Chinese beliefs, it is not divinity but the place where the gods (kami) live. Prayers are made to the kami on various occasions for rain, good crops, and the coronation of the Emperors etc. Shinto approves of the representation of God in the material. Having said that, in Shinto thought too there is an insistence that God is spiritual: the God (kami) is the power in the nature, such as mountains, the trees, the sun and not these objects themselves. Actually Shinto is a loose collection of faiths without any written commandments or creed. It is conveyed by ritual, practice, and behaviour rather than by word.

Today, the practice of Shinto does not imply any particular belief. The Japanese retain very little superstitious beliefs in the Gods (Kamis) and they do not seek any rational justification for Shinto.

Thousands of years ago, Shinto began as a religion centred about nature; and ever since it has been closely connected with the natural world. It was a combination of nature worship and animism, a belief that everything is inhabited by a soul. It gives life or activity to substances. The chief heavenly deity is Amaterasu Omikami, the sun goddess. The worship of the kamis (kami) is centred in private personal meditation as well as in the observance of ceremonies and festivals which are closely related to the community and national traditions. To have unity with the Gods (kami), a person must have a bright, pure correct heart. If a man does not have these qualities, he is in disfavour with the Gods (kami). Shinto is the fundamental connection between the power and beauty of nature (the land) and the Japanese people. It is the manifestation of a path to understanding the institution of divine power.

Shintoists love the sun; thus they worship the Sun Goddess. The Japanese sing, dance, laugh, and clap their hands at the sun to express their joy and gratitude. The sun provides light and warmth, and causes the rice to grow. Without the sun, all Shintoists believe they would die and go to the hell. The sun also signifies beauty, which is one of the main concepts of Shinto. Anything that has beauty beyond the power of man is considered to be the greatest kami.

Gods (Kami) are generally worshipped at shrines (jinja). Worshipers will pass under a sacred arch (torii) which helps demarcate the sacred area of the shrine. The ends of the upper crosspiece of the gate curve upward to signal communication with the gods. The torii always marks a sacred place. As a symbol, the torii marks off the earthly world from the kami world; the world of everyday life is separate from the spiritual world.
Shinto has no real founder, no written scriptures, no body of religious law, and only a very simply organized priesthood.  

Most Japanese people follow both Shintoism and Buddhism. The two religions share a basic optimism about human nature, and for the world. Within Shinto, the Buddha was viewed as another kami (nature deity). Amaterasu, for example, was identified with the cosmic Buddha Vairochana. Meanwhike; Buddhism in Japan regarded the kami as being manifestations of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.100

Ancestors are deeply revered and worshiped. All of humanity is regarded as kami’s child. Thus all of human life and human nature is sacred. Followers revere mushi, the kami’s creative and harmonizing powers.101

There are so many Shinto shrines; among them, some Noh scripts were based on Heian Jingū (Kyoto), The Ise Jingū, Izumo taisha, Kasuga shrine, Osaki Hachiman shrine, and Usa Hachiman shrine. They were very famous, when the Noh scripts were written.102

The Influence of Shintoism to Noh Theatre

Several Noh stories were composing, based on Shinto deities, and Shinto shrines. For example, Hanjo, which describes love affair, can be discussed; how far Shinto was affected to the theatre of Noh.103 In this story, hiyo, a woman, who is skilful at dance and music and entertains guest at parties. Her name was Hanago. One day she has met a man named Yoshida-no Shosho lodged at the inn on his way to the eastern provinces. He and Hanago fell in love and exchanged fans before his departure as the symbol of his promise for the future. Since then, Hanago has spent days only looking at the fan and thinking of Shosho. Since she stopped serving at banquets, the mistress of the inn at Nogami feels disgusted at Hanago who is now nicknamed Hanjo. Finally, Hanago is expelled from the inn.104

On his way back from the eastern provinces, Shosho visits the inn at Nogami again. He is disappointed upon knowing that Hanago does not live there anymore.105 Shosho with broken heart goes back to Kyoto and visits Shimogamo shrine to pray.106 At the shrine Hanago appears by accident.107 Though Hanago tries to prove the fan that she got from him, at the beginning Shosho did not believe. She shed tears in distress. Shosho was watching the dancing; Hanago pay attention to her fan and asks her to show it. Later, Shosho and Hanago see each other’s fans and recognize that they are the lovers they looked for. They are pleased by the reunion.108 This drama was written by prominent playwright Kanze Ze’ami Motokiyo.

Different from other stories of mad women, which describe the separation from a child or a spouse, this drama expresses sorrow, loneliness, a pure heart, and finally a joy of reunion of woman who has been distantly separated from her lover. Various emotions of woman in love are described. This is one of the highlights of Noh drama.

The Noh drama, Funabenkei (Benkei in a Boat) is also based on Shinto deities and prayers.109 But dramatist did not allow the images of Shinto, to be gone up. Here Benkei rubs his Buddhist prayer beads and devotedly prays to the five great fierce deities accept his prayer. Here the Women of the Heike clan are subdued and disappear below the horizon.

The drama entitled Chikubashima (Chikuba-shima Island) was composed by the playwright completely based on Shinto concepts; it is clear when we describe the contents of that drama in deep. A retainer of Emperor Daigo goes to Lake Biwa in order to pray at the shrine of Benzaiten (sarasvati) on Chiku-bashima Island. The retainer takes passage in the fishing boat of an old fisherman with a young woman whom he met on the show, sailing for the island in the lake. The old fisherman leads the retainer to the shrine. The retainer asks the fisherman whether the landing of women on the island is barred. The two then respond that this island does not prohibit women since it enshrines Benzaiten, who embodies feminists. They narrate the origin of the island for the retainer. At the end, the woman reveals that she is not a human and easily enters the shrine. The old man also reveals that he is the spirit of Lake Biwa and then disappears. During the time the retainer spends at the shrine, he is allowed see the treasure of the shrine by a Shinto priest, when the hall of the rumbles with the glowing vision of Benzaiten. Eventually, around the time when the moon serenely and clearly shines over the lake, a dragon deity appears from within the lake. The dragon deity offers precious gems to the retainer and forms the figure of blessing. She sometimes turns into a maiden from the celestial world to oblige the living creatures by making their wishes come true. Sometimes, he disguises as a dragon deity splashes himself in the waves of the lake and jumps into the Dragon King’s Palace. Benzaiten, alias, Sarasvati shrine had been established around the fifth century. Sarasvati a divinity closely related to water. This Noh drama was completely based on the concepts of Shintoism; it developed an invigorating divine story in the mild. Even Zeami also when he wrote some Noh dramas, he mixed doctrines of Buddhism and concepts of Shintoism together. It is clearly can be seen the drama, called Kiyotsune. In the drama, Kiyotsune’s wife returns her husband’s hair to Usa Hachimangu shrine because holding the remembrance increases her grief.

When she hopes to see him at least in her dreams, the spirit of Kiyotsune in armour appears in her dream, and the lovers who never are able to meet in this life meet in this way. Although they are happy upon their reunion, the wife blames her husband who broke the promise of reunion, and the husband blames his wife’s heartlessness as she returns his hair to the shrine.
Shinto concepts have been encountered to some Noh dramas; for example, *Kanawa* (Iron Trivet) \(^{110}\) could be mentioned one of them which belongs to the fourth category of Noh dramas. It has been attributed, rather doubtfully, to Ze'ami. \(^{111}\) It contents are cultivated, mainly based on Shinto doctrines. \(^{112}\) In addition, *Kazuraki, Takasago, Yomo, Kamo and Kokaji* are also composed mixing with the concepts and doctrines of Buddhism and Shintoism. According to the above explanations, it is clear that the Noh drama, medieval poetical theatre in Japan is the vehicle for especially spreading the Buddhism.

**References:**

5. Nogami, Toyoihiro: (1973), Ze'ami and his Theories on Noh, p.12, Published in Tokyo-Japan.
8. N.T.C.T. p.53
9. T.T.T.J. p.74
10. N.T.C.T. p.32-33
24. Hindi pronunciation
32. —do—
33. J.R. p.36
35. T.B.Z. p.28.
38. Cheryl Nafziger-Leis completed her Ph.D in Philosophy of Religion of the University of Toronto’s Centre for the study of Religion in 1997.
43. Toyoichiro, Nogami: (1935), Japanese Noh Plays, p.30, Board of Tourist Industry, Tokyo, Japan.
44. Hoover Tomas: (1977), Zen Culture, Random House, Tokyo, Japan.
47. J.N.S. p.10
48. J.N.S. pp.12,13,.
49. J.N.D p.152.
55. T.P.N.T. pp.238,239.
57. T.P.N.T. pp.242-244.
60. T.P.N.T. pp.248-249.
63. T.N.P.J. pp.3-5.
THE BASE LANGUAGE EFFECT
AND THE BILINGUAL

Dr. Chamindi Dilkushi Senaratne Wettewe

Theories on the base language effect demonstrate the influence of one language over the other in bilingual speech production. Just the notion of a base language indicates that the bilingual is always dominated by one language and the assumption that the mixed utterances may always reveal affiliation to one particular language used by the speaker. This paper analyses Grosjean’s (1982) theory which provides a psycholinguistic interpretation to bilingual speech production. Grosjean’s (1982) theory observes two language modes operating within the bilingual: the monolingual and the bilingual language mode. Each mode is characterized by specific bilingual language mixing strategies. In addition, a situational continuum is observed in bilingual interaction. Bilinguals are observed as speakers who are either at the two ends or somewhere in the intermediary levels of the continuum. This paper will provide an analysis of Grosjean’s theory in relation to Code-mixing, Code Switching and Borrowing which are language contact phenomena. It will also reveal the skilled performance of the bilingual when negotiating the base language indicating that language mixing patterns are strategies employed by the speaker to perform certain functions related to topic, situation and interlocutor.

1. Introduction

Bilingualism or multilingualism has been previously described as an ‘unskilled’ linguistic performance. Where some scholars argue that bilingualism resulting in language mixing is a skilled performance, others maintain that bilinguals are rarely fluent in their languages. Scholars point out that stable bilingualism exists in bilingual communities where the languages enjoy equal prestige. In these situations, the languages are international prestigious languages. In post-colonial bilingual societies where one language is always dominant over another, a different situation prevails. In these communities, the socially dominant language is usually the colonial language.

Previous views on the bilingual’s use of two languages were different to those that are held at present. Bilingualism, according to Weinreich (1953) occurs when a person uses two languages ‘alternatively’. In