

Ghosts and Spirits in Zaju and Noh

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Chinese Zaju 雜劇 (variety plays) and Japanese Noh 能 have long been an object for comparative study by scholars of Chinese and Japanese traditional drama, but most of their studies are concentrated on where, whether or to what extent Noh playwrights and performers were influenced by Zaju.¹ It is impossible for us to watch Zaju performance on stage today, but it is not impossible for us to imagine how Zaju was performed onstage in Yuan 元 (1271-1368) times thanks to the Zaju texts that have survived.² Noh demonstrates many points of similarity to Zaju in themes, structures, dramatic devices and theatrical elements. They share even more common features in the liberal use of *hashirimono* 走り者 (running dance) and the theatrical technique of *michiyuki* 道行き (travel scene/song) to realize tempo-spatial transference onstage, the use of speech or song at the entering of characters to introduce themselves (*nanori* 名乗り), and the technique of making characters appear out of settings, and the principle of acting out a story through singing, dancing, speaking, miming, and highly symbolic, stylized body movement.³ Both Noh and Zaju demonstrate themselves as a total theater, and because of these common features and centuries-long cultural exchanges between these two countries, it is difficult to deny that there have been any relations between these two genres of drama,⁴ but it is equally difficult to prove that Noh came about as influenced by Zaju arguably due to a lack of hard and direct evidence.

As to whether or to what extent they are related, it remains an issue for debate. In their discussion about the relation of Noh with Chinese drama, Yoshinobu Inoura and Toshio Kawatake point out, “Scholars of Chinese drama tend to exaggerate, and scholars of Japanese drama to belittle, the influence from China.”⁵ The author of this paper does not wish to join in the debate on Chinese influence on Japanese drama. Instead, this study has its aim set at a comparison and contrast of ghosts and spirits as presented and represented in Noh and Zaju, which remains largely an untouched area. Theater has been and continues to be a mirror of social life and popular beliefs. A cross-cultural comparison of Zaju with Noh in their presentation and representation of strange and supernatural beings will thus provide a better comprehension of Chinese

and Japanese conceptions of ghosts, souls and spirits and particularly their artistic manifestations on stage.

For this purpose, I will first conduct a quick survey of Noh and Zaju with respect to ghosts and spirits staged in these two dramatic traditions, then review briefly Chinese and Japanese (folk and religious) beliefs in ghosts and spirits, and finally compare and contrast Zaju and Noh with focus on theatrical role types, modes of presentation, types of characters in relation to types of ghosts and spirits, and their final disposition. The data for this comparative study will be respectively Zaju plays from the Yuan dynasty⁶ and Noh plays produced between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The reason for this is simple: short-lived as it was, the Yuan dynasty in China witnessed the growth and maturity of Zaju, and is therefore best remembered as a golden era of traditional Chinese drama, whereas in Japan during the *Muromachi* 室町 period (1336-1573), Noh developed from earlier forms of performing arts such as *gigaku* 伎楽, *gagaku* 雅楽, *sangaku* 散楽, *sarugaku* 猿楽, and *dengaku* 田楽 into its present form.

GHOST PLAYS IN ZAJU AND NOH: A SURVEY

Traditional Japanese theater, particularly Noh, abounds with ghosts and spirits. There are about 240 plays in the current repertoire of Noh, which are classified into two broad genres, *mugen* (phantasmal) Noh 夢幻能, and *genzai* (present time) Noh 現在能, with the former featuring in the role of *shite* 仕手, an “otherworldly” character, such as a god, a ghost, a demon, or the spirit of a plant appearing in a vision or dream, and the latter featuring in the *shite* a protagonist who is a living person and whose story is revealed as a series of real happenings in the world of the living.

In terms of the theme and the type of character casted into the role of the *shite*, Noh plays are conventionally divided into five categories: (1). *Kami mono* 神物, or *waki* Noh 脇能 (god plays), (2). *Ashura* Noh 阿修羅能, or *Shura* Noh 修羅能 (warrior plays), (3). *Kazura mono* 鬘物 (wig plays), or *Onna monos* 女物 (woman plays), (4). *Kyōran mono* 狂乱物 (madness plays), or *Zatsu* 雑能 (miscellaneous plays),⁷ and (5) *Kichiku mono* 鬼畜物 (demon plays), or *Kiri* Noh 切り能 (concluding plays), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Noh Categorization and Distribution⁸

Manner of Presentation	Mugen Noh			Genzai Noh	
Content and Character	God Plays	Warrior Plays	Woman Plays	Madness Plays (Miscellanies)	Demon Plays
No. of Pieces	39	16	38	94	53
Total No.	240				

In the surviving corpus of Noh drama, one can hardly find a piece of work entirely free from strange and supernatural elements. Even those which are categorized as belonging to the type of *genzai* Noh with the *shite* portraying a living person, such

as the *Sumidagawa* 隅田川 (Sumidagawa River), the *Miidera* 三井寺 (Miidera Temple), the *Funa Benkei* 船弁慶 (Benkei in a Boat), and the *Dōjō-ji* 道成寺 (Dōjō Temple),⁹ are fairly thick with supernatural elements. Little wonder that one would not think of Noh in Japan without associating it with ghosts and spirits.

When we look at Zaju, we find a similar situation, in which works that contain supernatural and strange elements make up the bulk of Yuan drama. The shape of a Zaju play is confined with some of the strictest bounds of convention known to literature. Around 160 Yuan Zaju plays survive in entirety,¹⁰ and they display a surprising uniformity of length and format.¹¹ The stories acted out in Yuan drama are very seldom original, but are taken from a variety of sources. These include dynastic histories, hagiographies of Buddhist and particularly Daoist saints, myths, legends, anecdotes, old tales in classical Chinese, vernacular and semi-vernacular plain tales (*pinghua* 平話) and storytellers' promptbooks (*huaben* 話本) of the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279).¹²

As compared with their Japanese counterpart, Yuan Zaju are, in general, much longer and more sophisticated in plot structure, and cover a broader scope of theme and subject matter, thus defying any simple or clear-cut classification. The subject matter of Yuan drama is colorfully and comprehensively, albeit somewhat controversially, described by the early Ming 明 (1368-1644) princely theater enthusiast and playwright Zhu Quan 朱權 (1379-1439), who attempted one of the earliest and most influential classifications of Zaju, as shown below in Table 2:¹³

Table 2: Twelve Types of Zaju

One may conclude from a quick look at the twelve types of Zaju that this genre of drama concerns more mortal beings and real happenings than supernatural beings and strange happenings. This is not true. All the differences between Noh and Zaju

Type No.	1	2	3	4
Type Name	<i>Shenxian daohua</i> 神仙道化 (gods, immortals and transfigurations)	<i>Yinju ledao</i> 隱居樂道 (withdrawal and enjoyment of the Way)	<i>Pipao binghu</i> 披袍秉笏 (wearing court robes and grasping scepters)	<i>Zhongchen lieshi</i> 忠臣烈士 (loyal officials and martyrs)
Type No.	5	6	7	8
Type Name	<i>Xiaoyi lianjie</i> 義孝廉節 (filial piety, righteousness, honesty, and moral integrity)	<i>Chijian machan</i> 叱奸罵諗 (rebuking treachery and slander)	<i>Zhuchen guzi</i> 逐臣孤子 (exiled officials and orphaned children)	<i>Badao ganbang</i> 鏖刀趕棒 (combat and chase)
Type No.	9	10	11	12
Type Name	<i>Fenghua xueyue</i> 風花雪月 (wind on flowers and the moon on snow)	<i>Beihuan lihe</i> 悲歡離合 (sorrowful partings and joyful reunions)	<i>Yanhua fendai</i> 煙花粉黛 (powder and eye shadow)	<i>Shentou guimian</i> 神頭鬼面 (masks of deity and ghosts)

aside, Yuan Zaju theater, as a whole, is packed with gods, ghosts and spirits as well. An examination of the surviving corpus of Yuan Zaju as contained in the *Yuanqu xuan* 元曲選 (A Selection of Yuan Plays, hereafter *YQX*)¹⁴ and the *Yuanqu xuan waibian*

元曲選外編 (A Supplementary Selection of Yuan Plays, hereafter *YQXWB*)¹⁵ shows that those that feature supernatural beings and happenings make up more than half of the current repertoire of Yuan drama. Among them are the well-known *Dou E yuan* 竇娥冤 (Injustice to Dou E), and *Qiannü lihun* 倩女離魂 (Qiannü's Soul Leaves Her Body), both of which are acclaimed masterpieces of Chinese literature.

As is the case with Zaju with the stories, songs, and stylized body movements drawn from a variety of sources, Noh draws heavily on rituals, folk and court dances, and originality is not accorded so much aesthetic value as familiarity with *waka* 和歌 (Japanese poem) and *monogatari* 物語 (prose narrative) literature from the periods of Nara 奈良 (710-794) and Heian 平安 (794-1185), as represented by the *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集 (The Ten Thousand Leaves) and the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (Tale of Genji). Allusions to ancient classics abound in Noh theater, and plots are for the most part based on a variety of earlier texts ranging from histories, folktales, myths, and particularly legendary accounts of historical figures and events in such collections of tales as the *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語 (*Tales of Ise*), the *Heike Monogatari* 平家物語 (Tale of the Heike) and the *Konjaku Monogatari* 今昔物語 (Tales of Present and Past).¹⁶ Ancient national themes of honor, revenge, love, death, and war that are drawn from the above-mentioned classics are treated, repeated, embellished, disguised, renewed, and refined in Noh and develop into some of the most enduring motifs in Japanese literature.

GHOSTS AND SPIRITS IN CHINESE AND JAPANESE CULTURE

Before I proceed to compare and contrast ghosts and spirits as staged in Zaju and Noh, I would like to make a brief enquiry into such key concepts as “ghost” (*guǐ* 鬼 /*yūrei* 幽霊),¹⁷ and “soul” or “spirit” (*hun/kon* 魂, or *linghun* 靈魂/*reikon* 靈魂) in Chinese and Japanese ghost culture.

Let us start with the Chinese concept of *guD*, or ghost. The belief in the existence of ghosts as “the soul or spirit of the dead” dates back as far as the Shang dynasty (ca.1554-ca.1045 BC) as shown in the character 𪚩 inscribed on the oracle bones. This pictographic character is composed of the pictogram “fu” 𠂔 (head of a ghost) on top and at the bottom the radical “ren” 亻 (human), thus giving the impression of a freak bearing a slight resemblance to a human being and suggesting its being used originally to denote “some strange anthropoid or simian creature,” or “a shaman performing exorcist rituals” with the pictogram “fu” on the top standing for “a mask,” and the radical “ren” at the bottom “a shaman wearing the mask.”¹⁸

In the bronzeware inscriptions of the Zhou 周 dynasty (ca.1045-256 BC), recently excavated ancient scripts of the Warring States 戰國 period (476-221 BC), and small seal scripts (*xiaozhuan* 小篆, the original form of the character *guǐ* is still clear.¹⁹ This character was later used more and more frequently in pre-Qin 秦 (221-206 BC) Confucian classics and Masters' writings to mean “ghost” or “the soul or spirit of the dead,” and, at the latest by the end of Warring States Period, had begun to be used to denote almost exclusively “the dead,” “the ghost” or “the soul of the dead.”²⁰

In the “Shixun” 釋訓 (Explaining Instructions) section of the *Erya* 爾雅 (Approaching the Correct), the earliest glossary dictionary compiled around the third century BC to elucidate terms appearing in earlier Confucian classics, *guǐ* is defined as “to return” or “that which returns” (*Guǐ zhi wei yan guǐ ye* 鬼之爲言歸也),²¹ and is further interpreted as “a dead person being a person who returns” (*Siren wei gui* 死人爲歸) by the Western Jin 西晉 (AD 266-316) scholar Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324), who cites the *Shizi* 尸子 in his explanatory note to the entry of *guǐ* in the *Erya*, but stops short of clarifying as to where the dead person returns.²² An oft-quoted reply to questions like this is found in the *Liezi* 列子, where we read: “When the spirit (*jingshen* 精神) separates from the body, it returns to its true [realm]. This is what is referred to as a ghost (*guǐ*). A ghost means ‘to return’ (*guǐ*), i.e., to return to its true home.”²³

A ghost is therefore understood as that which leaves the body for a realm alien to the real world of the living. Closely related to the Chinese conception of the ghost as the dead or the soul of the dead is the dualist conception of the soul (*hun po* 魂魄), which probably came about under the influence of the *yin-yang* principle in ancient Chinese cosmology.²⁴ The soul is considered as composed of the airy *hun* and the bodily *po*; the *hun* is ascribed to the *yang* part of the soul, which is active, positive, spiritual, heavenly, masculine, clear, bright, and light, whereas the *po* to the *yin* part of the soul, which is passive, negative, material, earthly, feminine, murky, dark, and heavy. The *hun* and *po* are opposed and complementary to each other so as to maintain a healthy balance in the body of a living person, but at the death of the person, the soul will leave the body and at the same time the *hun* will separate itself from the *po*, with the *yang* part of the soul rising up to heaven, and the *yin* part of the soul sinking down to earth. The dead person may be resurrected so long as the *hun*-soul is called back to reunite with the *po*-soul in the body.²⁵

A highly sophisticated ghost culture was also developed in ancient Japan, when the universe was thought of as inhabited by myriads of sprits—spirits of trees, streams, mountains, of thunder and rain, and of their dead. As noted by Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), who is better known in Japan as Koizumi Yakumo 小泉八雲, “[I]n Old Japan, the world of the living was everywhere ruled by the world of the dead—that the individual, at every moment of his existence, was under ghostly supervision,”²⁶ and “in all matters the dead, rather than the living, have been the rulers of the nation and—the shapers of its destinies.”²⁷ At the core of Japanese ghost culture is the ancestor or ghost worship, as is the case with Chinese religion. Ancestor worship originates from the belief in the existence of ghosts as the soul or spirit of the dead, but the concept of the soul of the dead is not native to Japan. According to Suwa Haruo, ancient Japanese regarded all spirits in nature, physically invisible to man, as ghosts, and the idea of the soul of the dead as a ghost was conceived under Chinese influence.²⁸

Of various Japanese words about ghosts and spirits, *yūrei* is the one that is closest to the Chinese conception of *guǐ*. Related to *yūrei* is the conception of *reikon* (soul). While *yūrei* overlaps heavily with *reikon* when denoting the soul or spirit, the

difference between them is obvious in that the former refers to the soul of the dead and the latter to the soul of a person, whether dead or alive, much as the two words are understood in Chinese language and culture. In Japanese folklore, *yūrei* is alternatively called *bōrei* 亡霊 (departed soul or spirit) or *shiryō* 死霊 (dead soul or spirit).

In Nara-Heian times when Buddhism, Daoism and other Chinese influences were at their height in Japanese history, beliefs in the existence of *reikon* and *yūrei* started to gain currency among Japanese people from all walks of life. According to this traditional belief, every human being has a soul called *reikon* residing in his or her body, and at death, the *reikon* will leave the body and enter a purgatory-like realm to wait for burial and memorial services. The primary purpose of these services is to appease and satisfy the *reikon* so that the *reikon* will turn into a peaceful spirit (*nigi mitama* 和御魂), and eventually become a quasi-god known as *kami* 神 to protect and bless the family from which it came. The *kami* resides far above the world of the living, and continues to receive sacrifices offered by his descendants who worship him as their *sorei* 祖霊 (ancestral spirit). However, if a person dies a violent or wronged death, the burial and memorial services are not properly conducted, or sacrifices are not offered regularly, the *reikon* will transform itself into a *yūrei*, or more accurately, an *onryō* 怨霊 (grudge-bearing spirit), to return to the physical world as a ghost to seek revenge.

Legendary accounts of vengeful ghosts and spirits dating from the Nara-Heian period abound in Japanese mythology and folklore. A case in point is the angered spirit of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903), also known as Kan Shōjō 菅丞相, bringing about one after another calamity and wreaking havoc on the country in revenge for his wronged death. To placate his angered spirit, a shrine was built over the grave of Kan Shōjō, and posthumous titles were awarded to honor his name. Later, he was even deified and became a Tenjin 天神 (heavenly god) of Literature. Legendary accounts of the avenging ghost of Sugawara no Michizane were adapted in the fourteenth century into a fifth-category Noh play—*Raiden* 雷電 (Thunder and Lightning), and later into Jōruri 浄瑠璃 and Kabuki 歌舞伎 as well.

Beliefs in the existence of gods, ghosts and spirits and ancestor-worshipping traditions, as we have seen, led to the establishment of various shrines and temples, and elaborate mortuary and memorial rites and rituals in the hope of purifying and placating the restless souls of the dead, and warding off evils and calling forth blessings from them, which, in turn, influenced in form and content traditional performing arts.²⁹

GHOSTS AND SPIRITS IN ZAJU AND NOH

Both Chinese and Japanese people in medieval times came under influence from many kinds of folk and religious beliefs in supernatural power, native or foreign, that were passed down to them from the preceding period. They believed in a great variety of strange and supernatural beings, whose presence was felt and feared. The beliefs mingled in varying proportions and amalgamated into popular forms of superstition, and found their artistic expressions in literature and performing arts.

Folklorists and historians of performing arts share much over their views of ghosts and spirits, but the differences between them are also obvious and various owing to their different research purposes and perspectives. It is not my aim to compare folklorists and historians of performing arts in their views of supernatural beings or to distinguish and classify ghosts and spirits from a folkloristic perspective. It would be a task beyond the goal set for this study. Nevertheless, for the sake of expediency, I would like to narrow my search for the supernatural beings down to ghosts and spirits as presented and represented in Zaju and Noh, with focus on the types of ghosts and spirits, the type of characters they represent, the manner of their appearing onstage, and their final disposition.

Types of Roles, Types of Characters and Modes of Presentation in Noh

As mentioned above, the belief in the existence of gods, ghosts, and spirits gives rise to the institution of mortuary rites and memorial services in ancient China and Japan. On such an occasion in Japan, there will be a medium, who appears first as an ordinary person and then enters a state of being possessed by the spirit of a dead person or *kami*. The *kami* makes no physical appearance except through the medium, who, upon the request of the audience (the community from which the dead person came), addresses the community in the name of the *kami*, while acting (speaking, singing and dancing) out a story or an episode of the previous life of the dead person to the accompaniment of *kagura* 神楽 (divine music). The ritual comes to an end with the revelation of the true identity of the *kami*, and not until at this moment does the medium regain his consciousness from the trance and return to his former state of being an ordinary person. The possessed medium is called *shite* for his role as the doer and performer in the ritual, and the person selected from the audience to represent the community is called *waki* 脇 for his role as a bystander or spectator.³⁰

The role types of *shite* and *waki* involved in the Shinto-Shamanistic rituals and their features and functions in these rituals are faithfully observed in Noh. In these rituals, as shown below in Table 3, the central figure is the possessed medium, or the *shite*. This is also true of a Noh play, the nature/category of which is determined by the main character cast in the role of the *shite*. In Noh, the *shite* plays a great variety of characters, who may be a supernatural being (god, ghost, spirit, or demon) and may also be a human being, male or female, old or young, of noble or humble birth. The *shite* character is not portrayed though his or her interactions and conflicts with other characters, but more often than not through the inner conflicts between desire and destiny without involving other characters. A typical Noh play is thus focused on one single character, that is, the *shite*, with the whole plot revolving around one single important episode or event in his or her life, hence a small cast of characters and a highly condensed and unified dramatic structure.

The *shite* in Noh plays may appear in various transformations, as shown below in Table 3.³¹

Table 3. Appearances and Transformations of the *Shite*

APPEARANCE	TITLE	SHITE	SUBJECT	WAKI
human	<i>Ataka</i>	Musashibō Benkei (warrior monk)	(madness)	Togashi
	<i>Yuya</i>	Yuya (consort of Taira no Munemori)	(woman)	Taira no Munemori
ghost	<i>Kiyotsune</i>	Taira no Kiyotsune (warrior)	(man)	Awazu no Saburō (retainer)
	<i>Matsukaze</i>	Matsukaze & Marasame, sisters (lovers of the poet Ariwara no Narihira)	(woman)	priest
human	<i>Hachi no Ki</i>	Sano no Genzaemon Tsuneyo (changes from civilian to warrior garb)	(madness)	Hōjō Tokiyori (regent) (disguised as priest)
	<i>Hanagatami</i>	Teruhimae→ same as madwoman	(madness)	retainer
human ghost	<i>Koi no Omoni</i>	old gardener	(madness)	aristocrat
	<i>Kinuta</i>	his angry ghost nameless wife→	(madness)	nameless her ghost husband
demon god	<i>Tanikō</i>	mother→ demon god	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
demoness	<i>Kanawa</i>	a certain woman→ demoness	(madness)	diviner
incarnation god	<i>Takasago</i>	old man→the god of Sumiyoshi	(god)	shrine priest
	<i>Kazuraki</i>	lowly woman→ the goddess of Kazuraki	(woman)	<i>yamabushi</i>
bodhisattva	<i>Taema</i>	nun→Chūjō-hime (Bodhisattva of song and dance)	(demon)	priest
ghost	<i>Michimori</i>	old fisherman→ Taira no Mchimori	(man)	priest
	<i>Izutsu</i>	country woman→ daughter of Ki no Arisune	(woman)	priest
<i>tengu</i>	<i>Dai-e</i>	mountain priest→ the <i>tengu</i> Tarōbō	(demon)	priest
demon god	<i>Nomori</i>	old man→demon god of hell	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
demoness	<i>Dōjō-ji</i>	dancing girl→demoness in body of snake	(madness)	priest
ghostly buddha	<i>Ama</i>	ghost of fisherwoman→ dragon goddess	(demon)	chief retainer

ghost	<i>Aoi no Ue</i>	Lady Rokujō→ demoness	(madness)	exorcist
demon	<i>Ukai</i>	cormorant fisherman→ demon of hell	(demon)	priest
transformation demoness	<i>Kuro-zuka</i>	solitary woman→ demoness	(demon)	<i>yamabushi</i>
angry	<i>Tsuchi-gumo</i>	body of priest→	(demon)	warrior
ghost		spirit of ground spider		
animal	<i>Sesshōseki</i>	country woman→ bewitching fox	(demon)	traveller
tree spirit	<i>Bashō</i>	young lady→ spirit of the plantain tree	(woman)	mountain priest
flower spirit	<i>Kakitsubata</i>	woman → spirit of water iris	(woman)	travelling monk
tree spirit	<i>Saigyōzakura</i>	old man→ spirit of cherry tree	(woman)	Saigyō (monk/poet)

This table provides a list of the type of characters that appear in each act of a play, together with an example of a play, the name of the main character (or *shite*), the subject category, and the “foil” character (or *waki*). Corresponding to the structural pattern of rituals and the type of characters as described above are three ways in which a ghost/spirit may appear in a Noh play:³²

- (1) as a ghost/spirit in both acts;
- (2) as a human in the first act, and a ghost/spirit in the second;
- (3) as an incarnation in the first act, and a ghost/spirit in the second.

Types of Roles, Types of Characters and Modes of Presentation in Zaju

Noh retains much of the ritualistic and religious form or function, which distinguishes it not only from other traditional Japanese performing arts but from Chinese Zaju as well. Whereas the belief in ghosts, spirits, and reincarnation is quite common in both Chinese and Japanese culture, “the ritual that has always played an important role as a connection between beliefs and their artistic/dramatic embodiments is highly developed in Japan.”³³ In China, the religious function and ritualistic form of drama seem to have been seriously confined to the Nuo drama,³⁴ the Mulian drama,³⁵ and the Banxian drama.³⁶ Having assimilated performing arts of earlier times, such as Tang 唐 (618-907) *canjunxi* 參軍戲 (adjutant play), Song *zaju* (variety show), Jin 金 (1115-1234) *yuanben* 院本 (court play), and Song-Jin *zhugongdiao* 諸宮調 (ballad singing in all keys and modes), and integrated with elements of Tang *yuewu* 樂舞 (music and dance, or *tōgaku* 唐樂 in Japanese), Yuan Zaju developed in the direction of secular entertainment,³⁷ and was performed mainly in urban entertainment districts known as *washe* 瓦舍 or *wazi* 瓦子 (tile markets) to cater for the tastes of urban dwellers, for whom “entertainments are at the heart of everything” in their city life.³⁸

The way of introducing and involving characters in a Zaju play is characteristic of and appropriate to drama with a view to invoking conflicts and creating tensions,

and the manner of ghosts and spirits appearing onstage is therefore more dramatic than ritualistic. Like Noh, Zaju also demonstrates a high level of uniformity in length and format. A standard Zaju play is composed of four acts (*zhe* 折) with each act consisting of a set of arias sung by a single character who is either the hero or the heroine in the play, and interspersed with spoken dialogue between the major and minor characters or between minor characters.³⁹ The dramatic plot, as Wilt L. Idema notes, develops alongside the exposition-conflict-climax-denouement sequence as commonly seen in a Western play.⁴⁰ Besides, a *xiezi* 楔子 (wedge) is often inserted in this four-act structure to serve as a prologue by providing background information if placed at the very beginning of the play or to serve as an interlude by explaining the dramatic situation through the dialogue and/or monologue of minor character(s), in a manner analogous to the monologue of the *waki* at the opening scene, or the dialogue between the *waki* and an *ai* actor in a Noh play.

In terms of rhythmic structure, Zaju is different from Noh which is composed on the ordering principle of *jo-ha-kyū* 序 - 破 - 急, which roughly means in English “beginning-break-rapid.” Adapted from the music and dance structure of the *daqu* 大曲 (grand music) imported to Japan from China during the Tang dynasty,⁴¹ the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* is demonstrated in the spacio-temporal structure of a Noh play as a the tripartite sequence of introduction, development and conclusion.⁴² A Noh play composed on the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* often comes to an end without reaching or passing through climax as usually seen in a Zaju play. The reason for this lies in the fact that Zaju is very much a drama of action with the storyline unfolding along the interaction and confrontation of characters. In contrast, Noh is “essentially a drama of soliloquy and reminiscence of the main character who in many plays begins as a reincarnation and then appears as a ghost,”⁴³ thus leaving no room for action but only the recollection of action.⁴⁴ For the same reason, the cast of a Zaju play is usually larger than that of a Noh play, which tends to focus on “just one cross section of, or one single event in, the life of one person.”⁴⁵

The role type system of Zaju is more complicated than that of Noh, which is usually distributed only between two characters with the protagonist played by the *shite* and the deuteragonist by the *waki*, who may be accompanied by companions or attendants called *wakizure*.⁴⁶ As seen in Table 4 above, the role of the *shite* in *mugen* Noh plays is assigned to supernatural beings such as ghosts, deities and spirits, whereas the *waki*, in most cases, acts as a religious person possessing some supernatural power, offering help to the *shite* character in his or her search for the fulfillment of wishes, revenge, love, peace, or spiritual enlightenment and salvation.

The role type system in Zaju may be described as composed of two major categories, the *zhengse* 正色 (lead role) and *waijiao* 外腳 (minor role).⁴⁷ Depending on whether the character portrayed by an actor or actress is female or male, the role type of the *zhengse* is further categorized into the *zhengdan* 正旦 (female lead) and the *zhengmo* 正末 (male lead). The character portrayed by the *zhengse*, if not always, is very often the protagonist, and the predominant role of the *zhengse* in a Zaju play is

justified and reinforced by the fact that the librettos are limited to this primary category of role type.⁴⁸ Similar to the dominant role of a *zhengse* character in Zaju is that of the *shite* in Noh who is the only masked character that dances and sings on stage, as contrasted with the auxiliary role of *waki* who does not sing or wear a mask, but just speaks in prose and verse. Actors who assume all the other role categories in Zaju are conventionally assigned spoken parts and actions only. Classified as belonging to the *waijiao* category are the *mo* 末 type (*fumo* 副末, *chongmo* 冲末, *waimo* 外末, *laomo* 老末, *xiaomo* 小末), the *dan* 旦 type (*fudan* 副旦, *tiedan* 貼旦, *waidan* 外旦, *dadan* 大旦, *laodan* 老旦, *sedan* 色旦, *chadan* 搽旦, and *hundun* 魂旦⁴⁹), and the *jing* 淨 type (*erjing* 二淨, *waijing* 外淨, and *fujing* 副淨), in addition to the *chou* 丑 and the *za* 雜, which includes *gu* 孤 (official), *bolao* 老 (old man), *bu're* 卜兒 (old woman), *lai'er* 孩兒 (child), etc.

As in a Noh play in which the *shite* plays the key role and determines the category of the drama, a Zaju play usually revolves around the *zhengse* character(s), and the theme and subject matter of the play is therefore determined to a great extent by what happens to the *zhengdan* and/or *zhengmo* character(s). The *zhengse* character may be a divine being; a human being, young or old, male or female, noble or plebeian, from all walks of life ranging from the king or queen and court ministers to warriors, magistrates, and scholars, and from a pretty girl of humble birth to a young lady of a big, eminent family; a supernatural or superhuman being; a wandering, disembodied soul; a restless revenant who returns to the world of the living in search for her lover; a vengeful spirit of a person who died a violent or wronged death and is released from Hades to prowl about to seek revenge in the world of the living. A *zhengse* character in a Zaju play is usually portrayed through his or her interaction and confrontation with other characters, and the dramatic conflict is therefore manifested more as coming from outside than from within, which is just contrary to Noh.

Table 4 below provides a list of fifteen Yuan Zaju plays that feature prominently ghosts and spirits, together with the name of the ghost/spirit character, the role type and the act they appear in the play, and the subject of the play.

Table 4. Appearances and Transformations of Ghost/Spirit Characters in Zaju

TITLE	GHOST/SPIRIT CHARACTER	ROLE TYPE	ACT NO	SUBJECT
<i>Xishu meng</i> ⁵⁰	Zhang Fei & Guang Yu (ghosts)	?		violent death; revenge; repose of souls
	Guan & Zhang (ghosts) ↓	?		
	Zhang Fei (vengeful ghost) →	<i>waijiao</i>	II	
	Zhang Fei (wandering soul)	<i>zhengmo</i>	III	
		<i>zhengmo</i>	IV	

<i>Dou E yuan</i> ⁵¹	Dou Duanyun (young girl, renamed Dou E)	<i>zhengdan</i>	wedge	wronged death; injustice;
(vengeful ghost)	Dou E (widow) → <i>hundun</i>	<i>zhengdan</i> IV	I-III trials	revenge; court trials
<i>Houting hua</i> ⁵²	Cuiluan (girl of humble birth) ↓ (revenant)	<i>dan</i> [absent] <i>hundun</i> [absent]	I II III IV	violent death; man-ghost love; revenge; court trials
<i>Yuanjia zhaizhu</i> ⁵³	Zhang Shanyou (Buddhist follower) → (living soul)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i>	wedge-III IV	retribution; enlightenment; Buddhist deliverance
<i>Shengjin 'ge</i> ⁵⁴	Guo Cheng (scholar) ↓ (headless ghost)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>waijiao</i>	wedge I II-IV	violent death; revenge; court trials
<i>Tieguai Li Yue</i> ⁵⁵	Yue Shou (official) (dead soul) → (revenant) → (possessing soul) → (reincarnation as Li Yue)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i>	I II wedge III IV	Daoist deliverance; revival and reincarnation retribution and salvation
<i>Dongchuang shifan</i> ⁵⁶	Yue Fei (warrior) → (underworld soul) Itinerant monk (incarnation of Ksitigarbha) Ksitigarbha Yue Fei (wronged soul) → (appeased soul)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i> <i>waijiao</i> <i>zhengmo</i>	wedge(1) I II wedge (2) III IV	injustice and retribution; repose of the heroic soul;
<i>Qiannü lihun</i> ⁵⁷	Qiannü (betrothed girl) → (disembodied soul) → Qiannü (lost soul) → (returned soul)	<i>zhengdan</i> <i>zhengdan</i> <i>hundun</i> <i>hundun</i>	wedge-I II III IV	love and romance; union of man with living soul; reunion of body and soul;
<i>Huo Guang gui jian</i> ⁵⁸	Huo Guang (court minister) → (restless ghost) → (revenant)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>zhengmo</i>	I-III IV	loyal officials and martyrs

<i>Haotian ta</i> ⁵⁹	Yang Liulang (living soul)	<i>chongmo</i>	I	violent death and
	Yang Linggong (restless soul) ↓	<i>zhengmo</i>	I	revenge; repose of the heroic souls;
	Yang Qilang (restless soul) ↓	<i>wai</i>	II-III	Buddhist deliverance
	Yang Linggong Yang Qilang (appeased souls)		IV	
<i>Bitao hua</i> ⁶⁰	Bitao (betrothed girl) (dead) → (ghost) → (possessing soul) → (wronged soul) → (returned soul)	<i>zhengdan</i> <i>zhengdan</i> <i>zhengdan</i> <i>zhengdan</i>	wedge I II III IV	love and romance between ghost and man; revival and reincarnation by borrowing a corpse
<i>Zhusha dan</i> ⁶¹	Wang Wenyong (son, peddler) → (wronged soul)	<i>zhengmo</i>	wedge-I	prognostic dream; violent death;
	Wang Congdao (father) (vengeful ghost)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>bolao</i>	II III	revenge; retribution
	Wang Wengyong (vengeful ghost)	<i>zhengmo</i>	IV	
<i>Pen'er gui</i> ⁶²	Yang Guoyong (peddler) → (wronged soul)	<i>zhengmo</i>	wedge	prognostic dream; violent death;
	God of Kiln (incarnation)	<i>zhengmo</i>	I	revenge;
	Yang Guoyong (spirit of pot)	<i>zhengmo</i> <i>hunzi</i>	II III & IV	court trials
<i>Shennu'er</i> ⁶³	Shennu'er (son)	<i>lai'er</i>	I-wedge	violent death;
	Li Deren (father) → (angered ghost)	<i>zhengmo</i>		revenge; court trials
	Shennu'er (wronged soul)	<i>lai'er</i> <i>hunzi</i>	II III-IV	
<i>Yueyang lou</i> ⁶⁴	Old Man (incarnation of Old Willow Tree Spirit → White Plum Tree Spirit	<i>wai</i>	I	Daoist deliverance
	Guo Ma'er (reincarnation of Old Willow Tree Spirit →	<i>wai</i>	II	
	He Namei (Guo's wife; reincarnation of White Plum Tree Spirit →	<i>dan</i>		

<i>Chengnan liu</i> ⁶⁵	Guo Ma'er (reincarnation) → (immortal)	<i>wai</i>	wedge III-IV	
	He Namei (reincarnation) → (immortal)	<i>dan</i> <i>wai</i>		
	Old Willow Tree (spirit)			wedge ⁶⁶ Daoist deliverance
	Peach Stone (spirit)			
	Peach Flower Spirit (incarnation)	<i>dan</i>	I	
	Willow Tree Spirit (incarnation)	<i>jing</i>		
	Lao Liu (reincarnation of Willow Tree Spirit) → (immortal)	<i>jing</i>	II-IV	
	Xiao Tao (Lao Liu's wife, reincarnation of Peach Flower Spirit → (immortal)	<i>dan</i>		
<i>Du Liu Cui</i> ⁶⁷	Liu Cui (prostitute; reincarnation of the willow branch in Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara's vase) → (willow branch enlightened)	<i>dan</i>	wedge-III IV	Buddhist deliverance

The way ghosts and spirits appear in a Noh play is determined by the mode of presentation of characters, or in Kunio Komparu's term, "production techniques." Komparu identifies two main production techniques in Noh: "the progress-in-the-present method" (*genzai-shinko-hō* 現在進行法), in which "the action moves in a flow of time that is natural and describable in terms of the laws of physics," and "the reflection-in-vision method" (*mugen-kaisō-hō* 夢幻回想法), in which "the flow of time within the play is reversed and takes place in a memory of dream."⁶⁸ He describes plays following "the progress-in-the-present method" as "Phenomenal (*genzai*) Noh," and those following "the reflection-in-vision method" as "Phantasmal (*mugen*) Noh."⁶⁹

In contrast, the production technique employed in a four-act ghost Zaju play is not confined to either "the progress-in-the-present method" or "the reflection-in-vision method," but more often than not manifested as a combination of them. In this kind of spacio-temporal framework, "the progress-in-the-present method" is in most cases adopted in the initial act or scene that deals with the world of the living and in the last one when wrongs are corrected, justice is done, and the restless soul of the dead pacified or revived through religious rituals, court trials or divine interferences. Inserted

in between is “the reflection-in-vision method,” which is often employed to deal with the ghost/spirit of the dead that appears in the dream of the living, acting out onstage the wrongs imposed on them when alive and/or the sufferings they experience in the afterlife. In the case of animistic spirits, “the-reflection-vision-method” is usually employed in the middle act(s) for their original state of being as a plant to be revealed to their reincarnations by their deliverer, and the “the progress-in-the-present method” in the beginning (Wedge or Act I) part of the play to present them either as a plant, or the incarnation or reincarnation of the plant, and in the last act to show their attainment of immortality or buddhahood.

In line with this mode of presentation in Zaju are five ways of ghosts and spirits making their appearance on stage:

- (1) first as a human, and then as a ghost;
- (2) first as a human, then as a ghost, and finally as a reincarnation;
- (3) first as a human, then as a living soul that splits from the body, and finally back to his or her former self;
- (4) first as an incarnation or reincarnation, and finally as an enlightened immortal or a heavenly being, and
- (5) as a ghost throughout the play.

Dreams play a key role in initiating ghosts and spirits into interaction with the world and humans. Of the fifteen Zaju plays given above as examples, twelve have the interactions and communications between humans and supernatural beings realized through the medium of dream. A Daoist immortal, an eminent Buddhist monk, or a shaman/ medium, who is often disguised as a shabby-looking person, will be involved to facilitate this process. They may exercise supernatural power (a kind of hypnosis as we understand today) to usher the soul of a living person down to the underworld and bring him into direct contact with ghosts and sprits there, as seen in the *Yuanjia zhaizhu*. The moment the dreamer awakes from the dream, the soul of the living person that was separated from the body will return from the underworld to reunite with the body, and he will find himself back in the world of the living as his former self.

The dream sequence in traditional Chinese theater is normally presented onstage in three ways:

- (1) verbal narration (singing and speaking);
- (2) gestural demonstration (dancing—highly stylized symbolic movement), and
- (3) the combination of verbal narration and gestural demonstration.

It is not uncommon to see a dream presented onstage through (1) or (2), but more often than not, they are combined to show the dream, as shown in Act IV of the *Dou E yuan*. In this act, the *hundun* (Dou E’s ghost) appears in the dream of the *chongmo* (Dou Tianzhang 竇天章, a high-raking official who turns out to be Dou E’s father), asking him to reexamine her case and put right the wrongs done to her. While the *hundun* is singing and dancing out the dream onstage, the *chongmo* plays falling into sleep, and the ghost and the man are thus engaged in interactions with each other in the dream. With the third-person (dreamer) narration suddenly shifted into the first

person (the ghost appearing in his dream), the nature of what is possible is thus transcended so that past and present are overlapped and fused into a whole that advances both at the same time yet in different dimensions on the stage. This dramatic manipulation of time and space is also frequently employed in *mugen* Noh.⁷⁰

Types of Ghosts and Spirits in Noh and Zaju

As mentioned above, very few pieces of Zaju and Noh are found entirely free from supernatural or strange elements. When people talk about supernatural beings on stage, they tend to think of all the different ghosts, goblins, specters, demons, monsters, and apparitions under the category of spirits. To treat all the supernatural beings simply as spirits without making proper distinctions between them will not help achieve a correct understanding of what is going on onstage. In China as well as Japan, numerous attempts have been made to classify and distinguish supernatural beings, and most of them have been conducted from a folkloristic perspective. The leading Japanese folklorist Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875-1962), for example, made a clear distinction between *yūrei* (ghosts) and *obake* お化け (apparitions) in his seminal *Yokai dangi* 妖怪談義 (Lectures on Monsters), claiming that “*Yūrei* haunted a particular person, whereas *obake* haunted a particular place, and that *yūrei* can appear to anyone, whereas *obake* must appear to a particular person in a particular place.”⁷¹ “This distinction,” as Kunio Komparu points out, “is appropriate for folklore but not necessarily for Noh, because in Noh the ghosts are not the one-eyed, long-necked spooks of popular ghost tales but rather apparitions of the dead or transfigurations of nonhuman beings into human form, and they always come with some purpose.”⁷²

Komparu identifies four types of ghosts and spirits staged in Noh theater in addition to demons and apparitions from the underworld and gods and goddesses from above. As shown below in Table 5, the four types of ghosts and spirits in Noh are animistic ghosts, ghosts of the dead, possessing ghosts, and vengeful ghosts, respectively.⁷³

Table 5. Types of Ghosts in Noh

↑↑
gods

Types of Ghosts	Noh Plays	Features and feelings		
animistic ghosts	<i>Taema</i>	(sentient)	dance to Buddha	
	<i>Yugyō Yanagi</i>	(non-sentient)		
ghosts of the dead	<i>Michimori</i>	ghost of dead showing agony of battle		
	<i>Izutsu</i>	ghosts of dead showing love, longing and dancing human life		
	<i>Ukai</i>	ghost of dead showing state of hell		
possessing ghosts	<i>Makiginu</i>	(god) sacred ghost possesses human		
	<i>Aoi no Ue</i>	(living) ghost of living person separates itself from body to possess another living person		
	<i>Sotoba Komachi</i>	(dead) ghost of dead possesses living		
vengeful ghosts	<i>Kanawa</i>	(living) malevolent ghost of living person attacks living person		
	<i>Funa Benkei</i>	(dead) malevolent ghost of dead attacks living person		

↓↓
demons

Compared with Yanagita's distinction of *yūrei* from *obake*, Komparu's classification is no doubt of more help to our understanding ghost/spirit characters in drama, and will thus be used here as a platform for a comparison with the types of ghosts and spirits in Zaju.

A closer examination of the fifteen Zaju plays reveals that ghosts and spirits in them bear a remarkable typological resemblance to their Japanese counterparts in Noh, as shown below in Table 8. In terms of deeds and needs, ghosts and spirits in Zaju may be divided into four general categories: avenging ghosts, love-seeking ghosts, revenants (souls of the dead brought back to life after being united with the corpse of the new dead), and spirits (of plants) to be delivered into buddhahood or immortality.

Table 6 shows the dominance of avenging ghosts over the other three types of ghosts and spirits in Zaju. Nine out of the fifteen Zaju pieces under discussion deal with ghosts of those who died a wronged or violent death and then appear either in the dream of a living person or make their presence and power felt in the world of the living to seek revenge and justice.

Table 6: Types of Ghosts and Spirits in Zaju

Types	Titles	Characters	Deeds and Needs
Avenging Ghosts	<i>Xishu meng</i>	Zheng Fei & Guan Yu	(Translucent) souls of dead showing frustration over loss of power and resentment over wronged death while wandering about in the world of the living and appearing in dream to seek revenge
	<i>Dou E yuan</i>	Dou E	Ghost of dead released from the underworld to seek revenge, appearing in dream and making itself physically felt at court trial
	<i>Haotian ta</i>	Yang Linggong & Yang Qilang	Ghosts of ead appearing in dream to complain about wronged death and ill-treatment of their remains
	<i>Houting hua</i>	Cuiluan	Soul of the dead separating itself from the dead body and appearing corporeal in search of love and revenge
	<i>Shengjin'ge</i>	Guo Cheng	Ghost of the dead appearing corporeal with head held in hand prowling about in search for revenge and justice
	<i>Dongchuang Shifan</i>	Yue Fei	Ghost of dead appearing in dream to complain about wronged death and seeking revenge and justice
	<i>Zhusha dan</i>	Wang Wenyong	Ghosts of dead appearing in dream to seek revenge and divine intervention
	<i>Pen'er gui</i>	Yang Guoyong	Ghost of dead, having been burned into ashes and moulded into a pot, making its presence felt when seeking revenge and justice
	<i>Shennu'er</i>	Shennu'er	Ghost of dead appearing in dream and then making its presence felt at court to seek revenge and justice
Love-seeking Ghosts	<i>Houting hua</i>	Cuiluan	See above
	<i>Qiannü lihun</i>	Zhang Xiaoqian	(Living) soul splitting from body to seek love and union with man
	<i>Bitao hua</i>	Bitao	Animated corpse coming from the underworld to pursue romantic love in the world of the living and rising from the dead through entering the body of the new dead
Revenants/ Possessing Ghosts	<i>Bitao hua</i>	Bitao	See above
	<i>Tieguai Li</i>	Yue Shou	Ghost of dead entering the corpse of the new dead to be reincarnated and delivered
Animistic Spirits	<i>Yueyang lou</i>	Guo Ma'er	Spirit of Willow Tree reincarnated as a male person before being delivered into immortality
		He Namei	Spirit of White Plum Tree reincarnated as a female person and arranged to be Guo's wife before being delivered into immortality
	<i>Chengnan liu</i>	Lao Liu	Spirit of Willow Tree reincarnated as a male person before being delivered into immortality
		Xiao Tao	Spirit of Peach Blossom reincarnated as a female person and arranged to be Lao Liu's wife before being delivered into immortality
	<i>Du Liu Cui</i>	Liu Cui	Banished to the world to be enlightened to the truth and delivered into Buddhahood

The belief in the soul of the dead continuing to exist as a separate entity in afterlife to seek fulfilment of wishes is also deeply rooted in Chinese ghost culture—where how one died in life could determine what kind of ghost/spirit he or she would become in the afterlife. The souls of those who died a violent or wronged death would often return to the world of the living for vengeance, as recorded in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo's Commentary on *Spring and Autumn Annals*) under the entry title of “Xianggong sanshinian” 襄公三十年 (the Thirtieth Year [543 BC] of Duke Xiang 襄公 [r. 573-542]), where it is reported that the State of Zheng 鄭 (806-375 BC) was plunged into turmoil by the avenging ghost of a nobleman Liangxiao 良霄 (aka. Boyou 伯有) hanging around his political enemies to seek revenge after he was murdered at a sheep market.⁷⁴ A more detailed account of this event is given in the entry of “the Seventh Year (543 BC) of Duke Zhao 昭公 (r. 542-510 BC)” of the *Zuozhuan*, in which Zichan 子產 (d. 522 BC), the Chief Councilor of the State of Zheng is quoted as saying when asked whether it is possible for Boyou to become a ghost:

That which is transformed into at the very beginning of one's life is called the *po*, which will give birth to its positive part called *yang*. If s/he is well fed, his or her *hun* and *po* will grow strong enough to attain luminescence and intelligence. Even the *hun* and *po* of an ordinary man or woman, after dying a violent death, are still able to keep hanging about men in the shape of an evil apparition; how much more might this be expected in the case of Liangxiao, a descendant of our former ruler Duke of Mu, the grandson of Ziliang, and the son of Zi'er, all ministers of our State, engaged in its government for three generations.”

人生始化曰魄，既生魄，陽曰魂，用物精多，則魂魄強，是以有精爽，至於神明。匹夫匹婦強死，其魂魄猶能馮依於人，以為淫厲。況良霄，我先君穆公之冑，子良之孫，子耳之子，敝邑之卿，從政三世矣。⁷⁵

Boyou's ghost made no more appearance after Zichan put his son Liangzhi 良止 in charge of the office formerly held by Boyou to appease his troubled soul. Later on when asked for an explanation of this strange happening, Zichan replied:

If a ghost has somewhere to return, it will not haunt people to cause trouble to them. I have provided a proper place for the ghost to return to.⁷⁶

鬼有所歸，乃不為厲，吾為之歸也。

Accounts and records about male avenging ghosts abound in Chinese ghostlore. As shown in the above table, seven out of the nine avenging ghost plays feature male avenging ghosts, and of these seven plays, three concern ghosts of warriors, such as Zhang Fei and Guan Yu in the *Xishu meng*, Yue Fei 岳飛 in the *Dongchuang shifan*, and Yang Linggong 楊令公 and his son Yang Qilang 楊七郎 in the *Haotian ta* 昊天塔 (Haotian Pagoda). The ghosts of these warriors cannot let their soul rest in peace because of the violent or wronged death they suffered in life. In contrast, it seems that male avenging ghosts are less common and less likely to be seeking revenge than female ones in Japanese ghost culture. A common type of male ghost found in Noh is

the warrior who was killed in battle. As a warrior, he bears no personal grudge against his enemy who killed him on the battlefield, as to lay down his life is part of his profession and a kind of honor, although he still finds it hard to pull himself away from the tragic event that led to his death. This type of *yūrei* figures often in Noh plays of the *Ashura* category, and he is often indistinguishable at first sight from a real person. He hangs around ancient battlefields or moss-covered temple precincts waiting for a kind person to come along to listen to his story of what took place there in the past. A record is thus set straight, a smeared reputation untarnished, and a name cleared. Such ghosts let out the secrets of history, and are bent only on letting the truth be known.

The second largest type of ghost plays in Zaju is almost exclusively devoted to stories about erotic female ghosts falling in love with men, as exemplified in the *Houting hua* 後庭花 (The Flower in the Rear Courtyard), the *Bitao hua*, and particularly in the *Qiannü lihun*. Love and romance between female ghosts and men is one of the most fascinating and enduring themes in Chinese ghost literature, where ghost women are usually portrayed as timid, lonely, and lovely, and talented, thus often arousing sympathy and admiration from men, as embodied in the above three ghost dramas by the female ghost protagonist Cuiluan 翠鸞, Bitao 碧桃, and Qiannü 倩女. In Yuan Zaju, a female ghost in love is often portrayed as having a corporeal existence, and dating and living with the man she loves and even bearing his children. The female ghost seems to show no fundamental difference from any living girl except that the ghost can only make her physical appearance after sunset and will have to return to the dark underworld before daybreak because sunlight will force them to show their true features as ghosts. It is widely believed that ghosts belong to the dark underworld, are earthbound and therefore filled with strong yin energy, which will pass on to men through sexual intercourse, breaking the yin-yang balance in their body and causing illness and even death, as seen in the *Bitao hua* which features a talented young scholar Zhang Daonan 張道南 falling ill as a result of his romantic union with the ghost of Bitao.

Female ghosts in love with men also figure prominently in Noh, but in Noh, this kind of love is usually presented as a historical event that happened in the past between men and women of ancient times rather than as a present continuous event, as often seen in Zaju between a female ghost and a male living person. It always turns out towards the end of the Noh drama that what has been presented and performed onstage about the love story is nothing but a dream or a reflection of illusion conjured up in the *waki*'s mind. The *waki* character is usually a Buddhist priest, to whom the ghost girl reveals its real identity as the heroine in the love story with the request for him to pray to console her restless soul. The role of the priest in such a play is passive, but essential and is not replaceable.⁷⁷ This is because many *yūrei* are female ghosts who suffered badly in life from the vagaries of love, and whose powerful emotions of jealousy, sorrow, regret, or spite at their time of death have brought them to seek revenge on whomever it was who caused their suffering, and because they could not find peace with themselves except through religious rituals and priests' prayers.

Ghosts staged in Noh theater are almost without exception historical figures. They act out their previous life onstage, and will walk back into history at the end of the drama. They are neither brought back to life in dream nor in reality, and what they wish for is to forget their previous life and to attain salvation before returning to where they belong with peace of mind. In contrast, the interactions of ghosts and spirits with humans are usually shown in Zaju to be real and present continuous happenings. On stage, a character may die and become a ghost, who may appear corporeal in the real world to fulfill its wish(es) and may even rise from the dead and come back to life. Whereas dreams in Noh serve as a window through which to see what happened to the *shite* character in the past, they are employed in Zaju as a medium through which to realize the interactions and communications between the living and the dead. It is therefore not uncommon with Zaju that while a living person is dreaming of a ghost appearing to give an instruction or to make a request, the ghost is shown onstage acting out the dream through singing, dancing, and speaking. With the dreamer in the reality and the ghost in the dream appearing onstage at the same time, yet playing his or her role independently from each other, the stage is divided into two dimensions, one belonging to the dreamer in the reality, and the other to the ghost in the dream.

The way of presenting and revealing dreams in Zaju is also commonly seen in Noh. A typical two-act *mugen* Noh play usually starts with an itinerant priest finding himself coming to stand at a site of historical interest, asking passers-by about a legend associated with the place, and then a local person (the *shite* in transformation) appears from nowhere, revealing its real identity as the ghost of the hero or heroine in the legend before walking offstage. In the second act, the ghost reappears, assuming its physical appearance it had in life, singing and dancing out its previous life, while the *waki* actor remains sitting onstage, playing sleeping and dreaming. The ghost disappears when the day dawns, and not until this moment does the *waki* wake up from his sleep and reveal to the audience that all shown onstage is actually taking place in his dream, thus manifesting the Buddhist view of the world as nothing but a dream, let alone the revival of the dead.

Revenants that feature in the two Zaju plays, the *Bitao hua* and the *Tieguai Li Yue*, are also possessing ghosts. For revenants, possession is very much a means to an end. This has its roots in the Chinese conception of "borrowing a corpse to revive the soul of the dead" (*jieshi huanhun* 借屍還魂), which originates from the belief in Chinese ghost culture that the death of a living person means the death of the body rather than the soul. The soul will split from the body upon death and makes its way to a place of a different dimension from the human world. To revive the dead person is to recall the soul and to have it enter or possess a living body or the body of a new dead which has not yet decomposed. In either case, the revived being will take up the physical appearance of the person whose body is "borrowed" or possessed by the soul but at the same time maintain the vitality and personality of the person whose soul is summoned to enter the body. It is the soul that gives life to a living person, and it is also the soul that determines his personality, or in the American anthropologist

Stevan Harrell’s words, “give his or her individuality.”⁷⁸ As shown in the *Tieguai Li Yue*, an official named Yue Shou 岳壽 died, and soon after his death, his body was burned to ashes as part of a burial ceremony. In order to bring him back to life, a well-preserved body has to be found for the summoned soul to enter, and the body found suitable for this purpose happens to be that of Li Yue, the crippled son of a butcher who died only a couple of days ago. With his soul entering the body of Li Yue, Yue Shou comes back to life, but the revived being insists that he is Yue Shou, although physically he appears to be no other than Li Yue when alive, thus giving rise to much confusion and comic effect.

As said before, the belief in “borrowing a corpse to revive the dead” is native and peculiar to Chinese ghostlore, but the idea of the splitting of soul from body is also found widespread in Japanese culture. In early and medieval times, both Chinese and Japanese believed that the soul would separate itself from the body upon death or at a time of emotional or mental crisis, as vividly manifested in the *Aoi no Ue* 葵の上 and the *Qiannü lihun*.

Aoi-no Ue, the formal wife of Hikaru Genji 光源氏, has been possessed by a phantom, which turns out to be the vengeful spirit of *Rokujo no Miyasudokoro* 六条御息所, the wife of a deceased crown prince and a lover of Genji, whose spirit bursts out of her body torn by jealousy to beat and humiliate Aoi and takes her soul out. It is interesting to note that whereas in the *Aoi no Ue*, the (living) soul of a female person separates itself from its body to possess another living person out of her irrepressible jealousy, in the *Qiannü lihun*, the living soul of a female person splits from the body out of her uncontrollable love.

Girls who come of age for love and marriage are usually depicted as shy, timid, quiet and reserved in traditional Chinese literature, but in this play, Qiannü, as her name suggests, is portrayed as a beautiful young lady (*jiaren* 佳人), an active, ardent pursuer of Wang Wenju 王文舉, a handsome young scholar (*caizi* 才子) to whom she had been betrothed before they were born (*zhifu weihun* 指腹為婚). In contrast, the *caizi* is presented as the passive object of her desire and passion.⁷⁹ For fear of her parents reneging on the antenatal betrothal, the *hun* soul splits from her body on the day when Wang is sent off on a distant journey to the capital to take the imperial examination, follows the scholar all the way, marries him and even bears children with him. With her *hun* soul gone, Qiannü, or more exactly, her body falls ill, becomes bedridden, and does not come back to her former self until her *hun* soul returns to be reunited with the body in three years.⁸⁰

In both Chinese and Japanese ghostlore, as manifested in the *Aoi no Ue* and *Qiannü lihun*, the splitting of the soul from the body does not necessarily lead to the death of the person, but will send him or her into an abnormal mental state of delirium, coma or dream when the body is similarly immobilised like a dead person; in the Chinese case, the disembodied soul may maintain the same corporeal form as its physical body, while living separately and independently from the physical body, and may even be able to bear children.

FINAL DISPOSITION OF GHOSTS IN NOH AND ZAJU

“In Noh there is poetic justice, a judgement against evil within the play,” as Komparu notes, “but it does not take the form of clear reward for good and punishment for evil because there are no characters that are innately evil.”⁸¹ He finds that the final disposition of ghosts in Noh usually takes the following four forms,⁸² as shown in Table 7:

Table 7. Final Disposition of Ghosts in Noh

Spirits of the dead	Prayers for salvation, buddhahood
Vengeful ghosts	Enlightenment, salvation
	Subjugation by power of Buddhist law
Ghostly demons	Combat; defeat
Apparitions	

“For the first two types,” Komparu continues, “it would perhaps be more appropriate to say the granting of forgiveness.”⁸³

It is clear that the final disposition of ghosts in Noh is conceived of under the strong influence of Buddhism with the possible exception of the type of non-human demons and apparitions, whose final disposition is not rendered as religious as is that of the other types of ghosts. The final disposition for the ghosts and spirits in Noh displays much in common with that in Zaju, which ends in most cases positively with the troubled soul reposed, and the dead person resurrected, the wrongs corrected, the wish to be husband and wife fulfilled, and the corrupted spirits enlightened to the truth and delivered into buddhahood or (Daoist) immortality, as shown in Table 10.

Table 8. Final Disposition of Ghosts in Zaju

Vengeful ghosts	Wandering soul haunting the world
	Return to earth with soul set at peace
Love-seeking ghosts	Resurrection and union/reunion with lover
	Return to earth with soul set at peace
Revenants/possessing ghosts	Resurrection as reincarnated
	Enlightenment and salvation
Spirits of plants	Attainment of immortality
	Attainment of buddhahood

However, it must be pointed out that Yuan playwrights, or more accurately, their Ming editors, positively arranged the final disposition of (ghost/spirit) characters by creating for Zaju the scene of “grand reunion” (*da tuanyuan* 大團圓) more out of their

wish to cater for the aesthetic and philosophic need of sophisticated literati for a tighter resolution and at the same time to meet the desire of the pleasure-seeking audience in urban entertainment districts for a happy ending than out of their religious concern.⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

To conclude this paper, I would like to sum up the major points discussed above with emphasis on the differences between Zaju and Noh in their presentation and representation of ghosts and spirits on stage.

In terms of form and format, Noh maintains a direct link between religious and folk beliefs and related rituals, and the distribution of role types, their characterization and performance, usually follow a fixed pattern similar to that of a Shinto-shamanistic ritual. There is not much action involved in a Noh play, and what is presented onstage is basically the recollection of action which culminates in a dance, as the primary interest of Noh is not to present dramatic conflicts or confrontations, but to represent a religious ritual in a most symbolic and abstract way.⁸⁵ As a symbolic art of representation, Noh has its focus on “one cross section of, or one single event in, the life of one person,”⁸⁶ but Zaju, as a drama of action, has its plot built primarily on the interactions and confrontations between characters.

The ontological differences between Zaju and Noh give rise to differences between them in the distribution of roles types, types of characters, and modes of their presentation. In terms of role types, the relationship and interaction between the *shite* and the *waki* in Noh is fixed and predicable with the former usually featuring a ghost and the latter a priest. Whether a ghost is played by a *zhengse* or *waijiao* actor/actress in a Zaju play is, however, determined by the role of this ghost in the overall structure of the story, which may change from act to act with the unfolding of dramatic plot, as typically shown in the *Xishu meng*.

In line with the differences between them in the assignment of role types, the cast of a Noh play is relatively small, usually restricted to the *shite* and the *waki*. In contrast, the number of characters that figure in a Zaju play is not fixed, either, and usually larger than that in a Noh play, because the dramatic plot in Zaju is seldom confined to one single event or one single person. Another noticeable difference between Noh and Zaju is that the former usually feature historical figures, or more exactly, the ghosts of historical figures, whereas the latter, more often than not, fictional or legendary figures.

Closely related to the assignment of role types and the type of ghost/spirit characters they play is the mode of their presentation. Two basic modes of presentation have been identified in Noh: the *genzai* mode and the *mugen* mode, which corresponds to the *genzai* Noh and *mugen* Noh, respectively. But in Zaju, these two modes are often found crisscrossed with each other, thus giving rise to a network structure in its spacio-temporal framework.

As far as types of ghosts are concerned, Zaju shows no significant differences from Noh except that there is no counterpart in Noh for ghosts of the dead revived by borrowing a corpse.

Note

- 1 See, e.g., Jūkei Shichiri 七里重惠, *Yōkyoku to Genkyoku* 謡曲と元曲 (Tokyo: Sekibunkan, 1926); Takemoto Mikio 竹本幹一, “Nō niokeru Kanshibun no juyou” 能における漢詩文の受容, in *Chūsei bungaku to Kan bungaku* 中世文学と漢文学, ed. Wa-Kan hikaku bungaku kai 和漢比較文学会 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1987), vol. 2, 263-82; Suwa Haruo 諏訪春雄, *Nicchū hikaku geinō shi* 日中比較芸能史 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa koubunkan, 1994); Oka Haruo 岡晴夫, “Lun Ri-Zhong chuantong xiju de yitong—yi ‘Neng’ he ‘Zaju’ wei zhongxin de bijiao” 論日中傳統戲劇的異同—以“能”和元雜劇、歌舞伎與京劇為中心的比較, *Zhonghua qiqu* 中華戲曲 1(1986): 68-80; Zhang Zhejun 張哲俊, *Zhong Ri gudian beiju de xingshi: San ‘ge muti yu shanbian de yanjiu* 中日古典悲劇的形式：三個母題與嬗變的研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), esp. Appendix 2, “Ribei nengyue de xingshi yu Song-Yuan xiqu” 日本能樂的形式與宋元戲曲, 216-31; Weng Minhua 翁敏華, *Zhong Ri Han xiju wenhua yinyuan yanjiu* 中日韓戲劇文化因緣研究 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2004), chap.7.
- 2 Oka Haruo, “Lun Ri-Zhong chuantong xiju de yitong,” 72.
- 3 For a brief description of stage performance of Noh drama in comparison with that of the Kun opera (*Kunqu* 崑曲)—the living fossil of traditional Chinese drama, see Akamatsu Norihiko 赤松紀彦, Komatsu Ken 小松謙, and Yamazaki Yoshiyuki 山崎福之, *Nōgaku to Konkyoku: Nihon to Chūgoku no koten engeki o tanoshimu* 能樂と昆曲：日本と中国の古典演劇をたのしむ (Tokyo: Kyuko shoin, 2009), chap. 3, esp. 41-61. For a detailed description of theatrical performance of Yuan Zaju, see J.I. Crump, *Chinese Theater in the Days of Kublai Khan* (Tucson, Arizona: The Univ. of Arizona Press, 1980), chap. 3, esp. 70-109.
- 4 These common features led the two influential Japanese scholars of the Edo Period 江戸 (1600-1868), Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725) and Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728), to believe that Noh had its roots in Yuan drama. For this note, see Komatsu Ken, “Hajime ni nōgaku to Chūgoku engeki no kankei wa” はじめに 能樂と中国演劇の關係は, in *Nōgaku to Konkyoku*, i-iii. The contemporary Japanese scholar of comparative (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) drama Suwa Haruo holds that Chinese Nuo drama (*Nuoxi*: 傩戲) and Mulian drama (*Mulianxi* 目連戲), among many other Chinese elements of music and performing arts, played a key role in the birth and growth of Japanese Noh. For his studies of Chinese influences on Noh, see Suwa Haruo, “Engeki: Kodai chūsei sangaku” 演劇 - 古代・中世散樂, “Kugutsu ki no seikai” 傀儡子記 ■ 世界, “Nagi to nō” 儺戲 ■ 能, and “Chūsei minkan kagura to na” 中世民間神楽 ■ 舞, in *Chūnichī bunka kouryū shi sousho* (roku) 中日文化交流史叢書(六), ed. Nakanishi Susumu 中西進 and Yan Shaodang 嚴紹盪 (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1995), 233-52, 253-61, 262-79, and 280-88, esp. 262-79, and also his *Riben de jisi yu yineng: Quzi Yazhou de jiaodu* 日本的祭祀與藝能：取自亞洲的角度, trans. Ling Yunfeng 凌雲鳳 (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002), 153-86.
- 5 Yoshinobu Inoura and Toshio Kawatake, *The Traditional Theater of Japan* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1981), 126.
- 6 It is important to note that there are hardly any Yuan playwrights whose years of birth and death are known for sure to us, not to mention the year when an individual Yuan

Zaju play was composed, published or performed, and that there is no hard (textual or contextual) evidence either by which to date an individual play from the late Yuan-early Ming era to the Yuan or the Ming dynasty without engendering any controversy. In view of this, Yuan drama in this study is to be understood in its broad sense to include Zaju plays produced during the late Yuan-early Ming period, as suggested by Zheng Qian 鄭騫, “Yuan zaju de jilu” 元雜劇的記錄, in *Jingwu congbian* (shangbian) 景午叢編(上編) (Taip ei: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 83.

- 7 In ancient Japan, madness was thought to be caused by spirit obsession or possession. Actually, when Zeami uses *kurui*, the noun form of the Japanese word *kyō* 狂 (mad), to refer to this type of Noh, he means a demon Noh. For this note, see Chifumi Shimazaki, *Restless Spirits from Japanese Noh Plays of the Fourth Group: Parallel Translations with Running Commentary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. East Asian Program, 1995), 40.
- 8 The table is adapted from Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theater: From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), 132-33. It is worth noting that the number of pieces given to each of the five categories in the table is an approximate one and may vary, albeit slightly, from one to another among the remaining five schools of Noh. For the categorization of two hundred thirty-five “Noh plays currently performed,” see Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, trans. Jane Corddry and Stephen Comee (New York: Weatherhill, 1983), Appendix 2, 351-52. For the synopsis, classification and authorship of all the plays in the current Noh repertoire, see Nishino Haruo 西野春雄 and Hata Hisashi 羽田昶, *Noh kyōgen jiten* 能・狂言事典 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987), 12-163.
- 9 Traditionally classified as a fourth-category Noh, *Dōjō-ji* is usually grouped into the fifth category in modern Japanese Noh scholarship because of the demonic nature of the main character. For this note, see Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 351.
- 10 No less than 1,000 Zaju plays were produced during the Yuan dynasty, and as many as 736 of them are still known to us by their titles, but only 150 or more are extant to date, accounting for only one-fifth of the known titles. For a complete list of the 736 titles of Yuan drama, see Liu Xiusheng 李愷生 et al. ed., *Yuanqu da cidian* 元曲大辭典 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2003), Appendix 1, 1-60.
- 11 It must be pointed out that few of them are exempt from being revised, expanded and rectified by their late Ming editors or collectors except for the thirty independent Yuan printings of Zaju that had been grouped together since the eighteenth century under the collective title of the *Yuankan zaju sanshi zhong* 元刊雜劇三十種. However, no one can tell now for sure how much the original state of the Yuan Zaju texts is preserved in the late Yuan editions. For textual criticism of the *Yuankan* editions as compared with Ming editions of Yuan drama, see Stephen H. West, “Text and Ideology: Ming Editors and Northern Drama,” in *Ming Qing xiqu guoji yantaohui lunwenji* (shang) 明清戲曲國際研討會論文集(上, ed. Hua Wei 華瑋 and Wang Ailing 王瓊玲 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubenchi, 1998), vol.1, 235-84; Wilt L. Idema, “Why You Never Have Read a Yuan Drama: The Transformation of Zaju at the Ming Court,” in *Studi in onore di Lanciello Lanciotti*, ed. S. M. Carletti et al. (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale), 765-91. See also Komatsu Ken and Kim

Moonkyong 金文京, “Shilun Yuankan zaju sanshi zhong de banben xingzhi” 試論元刊雜劇三十種的版本性質, trans. Huang Shizhong 黃仕忠, *Wenxue yichan* 2 (2008): 1-10.

- 12 For the source materials of Yuan Zaju, see Bottom of Form Tanaka Kenji 田中謙二, “Gen zatsugeki no daizai” 元雜劇の題材, in *Tanaka Kenji chosakushū dai 1 kan* 田中謙二著作集第1卷 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin. 2000), 95-128.
- 13 This table is adapted from Zhu Quan, “Zaju shi’er ke” 雜劇十二科, in *Taihe zhengyin pu jianping* 太和正音譜箋評, punct., collat., & comm. Yao Pinwen 姚品文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 38-39. The English translation of the twelve types of Zaju is based on J. Crump and Chunfan Fei, ed. & trans., *Chinese Theories of Theater and Performance from Confucius to the Present* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Univ. Press, 1995), 44.
- 14 Zang Maoxun 臧懋循 (1550-1620), ed. & comp., *Yuanqu xuan*, 4 vols. (1958; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979). Included in this collection are inety-fohem are from = Northern Drama) 100 plays with six of them (the *Ernü tuanyuan* 兒女團圓 [Reunion with Son and Daughter], the *Jin Anshou* 錦繡, also known as *Jintong yunü* 金安壽 [The Golden Lad and the Jade Maiden], the *Chengnan liu* 城南柳 [The Willow South of the City], the *Wuru taoyuan* 誤入桃園 [Entering the Peach Garden by Mistake], the *Dui yushu* 對玉梳 [The Jade Comb], and the *Xiao Shulan* 蕭淑蘭) identified as coming from the hand of late Yuan playwrights who survived the fall of the Mongol rule of China in 1368.
- 15 Sui Shusen 隋樹森 (1906-1989), ed. & comp., *Yuanqu xuan waibian*, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959). A total of 62 Yuan zaju plays were collected from other sources into this anthology as a supplement to the *Yuanqu xuan*.
- 16 For a brief account of the source materials of Noh, see Yamazaki Yoshiyuki, “Nohgaku no aramashi” 能楽のあらまし, in Akamatsu Norihiko et al., *Nohgaku to Konkyoku*, 3-11.
- 17 No tone markers are given to pinyin in this paper except for the character *guī* 鬼 so as to distinguish it from another Chinese character *guī* 歸 which means “to return” and is often used in early Chinese classics and dictionaries to define *guī*.
- 18 For a pioneering philological and palaeographical study of *guī*, see Shen Chien-shih, “An Essay on the Primitive Meaning of the Character 鬼,” trans. Ying Ch’ien-li, *Monumenta Serica* 2.1 (1936): 1-20, esp. 17-20.
- 19 Gao Ming 高明 and Tu Baikui 塗白奎, *Guwenzi leibian* 古文字類編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 1353.
- 20 For an excellent review of Pre-Qin Chinese conceptions of ghosts and spirits, see Qian Mu 錢穆, “Zhongguo sixiangshi zhong zhi guishen guan” 中國思想史中之鬼神觀, in *Linghun yu xin* 靈魂與心 (1975; rpt. Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2001), 61-114, esp. 61-74.
- 21 Guo Pu, annot., and Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010), comm., *Erya zhushu* 爾雅註疏, *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經註疏 edition (1815; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 4. 2592.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed., *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 1.20.
- 24 Ying-shih Yü, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China,” *HJAS* 47.2 (Dec. 1987): 374.

- 25 For a brief description of the ritual of “summoning the *hun*-soul” in ancient China as recorded in the Three Confucian Books of Rites (*San li* 三禮), namely the *Zhou li* 周禮, the *Yili* 儀禮, and the *Liji* 禮記, see Ying-shih Yü, “O Soul, Come Back!,” 365.
- 26 Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* (1904; rpt. Charleston, South Carolina: Forgotten Books, 2008), 72.
- 27 Ibid., 17.
- 28 For Suwa Haruo’s view of Chinese influence on Japanese conceptions of ghosts and spirits, see Min Tian, “Chinese *Nuo* and Japanese Noh: *Nuo*’s Role in the Origination and Formation of Noh,” *Comparative Drama* 37.3/4 (Fall/Winter 2003-4): 351.
- 29 See Zvika Serper, “Between Two Worlds: the Dybbuk and the Japanese Noh and Kabuki ghost plays,” *Comparative Drama* 35.34 (Fall/Winter 2001-2002): 348-49. For more about their implications on the performing styles, see H.H. Plutschow, *Chaos and Cosmos: Ritual in Early and Medieval Japanese Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 135-57.
- 30 For an inspiring discussion on the influence of religious rituals on traditional Japanese performing arts, see Jacob Raz, “*Chinkon*—From Folk Beliefs to Stage Conventions: Certain Recurring Folkloristic Elements in Japanese Theater,” *Maske und Kothurn* 27:1 (1981): 12-18. See also Serper, “Between Two Worlds,” 348-49.
- 31 Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 46 -47, to which I add the last three pieces that feature non-sentient animistic spirits.
- 32 Adapted from Komparu, 49-50. It is worth noting that Komparu’s observation here is incomplete in that he does not take into account one-act ghost/spirit Noh plays, such as *Kakitsubata* 杜若 (Water Iris).
- 33 Serper, “Between Two Worlds,” 345.
- 34 *Nuo* 傩 refers to an ancient Chinese rite of exorcism dating from Shang 商 (ca. 16th-11th century BC)-Zhou 周 (11th century-256 BC) times. *Nuo* was later developed into a highly ritualized drama known as Nuoxi performed by shamans who wore masks dancing and singing to exorcise ghosts and spirits and to evoke blessings from gods and deities. For a book-length study of the origins and development of Chinese *nuo* and its influence on Japanese *na* or *tsuina* 追儺 (rituals of exorcism), see Hirota Ritsuko 廣田律子, *Oni no kita michi: Chūgoku no kamen to matsuri* 鬼の来た道: 中国の仮面と祭り (Tokyo: Tamagawa daigaku shuppanbu, 1997), 29-42. For the most informative research in English on the influence of *Nuo* on Noh, see Min Tian, “Chinese *Nuo* and Japanese Noh,” 343-60.
- 35 The Mulianxi is a religious drama combining elements from Buddhism, Nuoxi, and other Chinese folk beliefs and religious rituals with its main story centering on Mahāmaudgalyāyana, or Mulian’s rescue of his mother from hell.
- 36 Lixi 例戲 (exemplary play), alternatively known as Jixiang xi 吉祥戲 (fortune play), Banxian xi 扮仙戲 (immortal play), or Kaichang xi 開場戲 (scene-opening play), refers to a genre of light ritualistic short drama that arose in late Ming and early Qing times and were usually performed as a prelude to the Zhengju 正劇 (serious drama). For a definition of this genre of drama, see Zhang Yuezhong, *Yangju yishi yu xinyang—Zhongguo chuantong lixi juben jijiao* 演劇、儀式與信仰——中國傳統例戲輯校 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 2011), 4.

- 37 It seems to have been widely accepted that Yuan drama derived its form from a variety of sources arising from a great complexity of origins since Wang Guo wei 王國維 (1877-1927) published his pioneering research on the history of Chinese drama, *Song-Yuan xiqu shi* 宋元戲曲史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1915), but recently in Japan, this multiple-source theory has been forcefully yet controversially challenged by Tanaka Issei 田仲一成, who argues that Yuan Zaju has its roots in the countryside and originates solely from religious and shamanistic rituals, particularly the burial and memorial services conducted to settle down and calm the spirit of the dead (*chinkon* 鎮魂), much as the classical Greek drama and Japanese Noh do. He even identifies traces of the *chinkon* rituals, and *family* festivals and *sacrificial* ceremonies in such Zaju plays as the *Xishu meng* 西蜀夢 (Dream of Western Shu), the *Huo Guang guijian* (The Ghost of Huo Guang Admonishes the Throne), the *Dongchuang shifan* 東窗事犯 (The Plot Under the Eastern Window Is Exposed), the *Tieguai Li Yue* 鐵拐李岳 (Iron Walking Stick Li Yue), the *Yuanjia zhaizhu* 冤家債主 (A Debtor and His Creditor), the *Dou E yuan*, etc. For more about his ethnographical studies of Yuan Zaju as “sacrificial drama” (*saishi engeki* 祭祀演劇), see Tanaka Issei, *Zhongguo jisi xiju yanjiu* 中國祭祀戲劇研究, trans. Bu He 布和 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2008), chap. 5, esp. 185-212, and 226-30; *Zhongguo xiju shi* 中國戲劇史, trans. Bu He 布和 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 119-43. For criticism and counter-criticism of his hypothesis, see, i.e., Tanaka Issei, “Xianyi yu yi minsuxue wei jinji de zuofeng—Jiu Zhongguo xiju de fasheng deng wenti da Xie Yufeng xiansheng” 獻疑於以民俗學為禁忌的作風——就中國戲劇的發生等問題答解王峰先生, *Xueshu yanjiu* 3 (2007): 142-46; Xie Yufeng, “Minsuxue dui Zhongguo xiju yanjiu de juxian—Jianda Tianzhong Yicheng xiansheng” 民俗學對中國戲劇研究的局限——兼答田仲一成先生, *Xueshu yanjiu* 9 (2007): 141-45, originally published in *Xishi bian* 戲史辨, ed. Hu 洛地 and Luo Di m0W (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 2004), ser. 4.
- 38 See Stephen H. West and Wilt L. Idema, ed., trans., & intro., *Monks, Bandits, Lovers and Immortals: Eleven Early Chinese Plays* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010), xi.
- 39 It is important to note that different from late Ming editions, the Yuan printings of the thirty Zaju plays show no marked form for the *zhe* division, which manifests itself in the musical structure of arias of the play.
- 40 Wilt L. Idema, *The Dramatic Oeuvre of Chu Yu-tun (1379-1439)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 28.
- 41 A typical structure of Tang *daqu* is made up of three sections: the *sanxu* 散序 (beginning random sequence facilitated by instrumental music), 歌 (singing), also called *zhongxu* 中序 (middle sequence), and 破 (fast exposition accelerated primarily by dancing). See Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, *Zhongguo gudai yinyue shigao* 中國古代音樂史稿 (Taipei: Dahong tushu youxian gongsi, 1997), vol.1, 2.31-33. For the influence of *daqu* on the structural principle of *jo-ha-kyū* in Noh, see Min Tian, “Chinese *Nuo* and Japanese Noh,” 343.
- 42 Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 27.
- 43 Serper, “Between Two Worlds,” 345.
- 44 It is interesting to note that for this very reason, the influential Japanese Noh researcher Nogami Toyochirō 野上豊一郎 (1883-1950) does not consider Noh to be a genre of

drama, which he defines as presenting onstage two or more than two contemporaries involving themselves in a series of conflicts of interest. See Nogami Toyoichirō, *Nō no yūgen to hana* 能の幽玄と花 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1943), 208.

- 45 Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 45.
- 46 Some plays have more than one *shite*-like figure, and in these cases, one is the *shite* and the others, defined as subordinate, are called *zure*. It is also worth noting that when we talk about role types in Noh, we should not ignore the role of chorus, which, although it has no identity of its own, often provides background information or fills the gaps of information through singing for the *shite*, and occasionally, for the *waki*, or singing lines that do not clearly belong to any figure on stage.
- 47 For a general description of the role categories of Yuan Zaju, see William Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1976), 60-61.
- 48 There are occasional exceptions to this—but not many in Yuan Zaju, as exemplified in the *Shengjin 'ge* 生金閣 (A Musical Box), where the *Zhengmo* plays Guo Cheng 郭成 the protagonist in the Wedge and Act I, and in Act II, the singing role is shifted to the *Zhengdan*, who plays an old woman servant (*momo* 嬷嬷), a minor character in this play, and in Act III shifted back to the *Zhengmo*, who plays Judge Bao 包公 trying the murdering case and bringing the villain Pan Yanei 龐衙內, or Master Pang to justice. This is also the case with the *Dongchuan shifan*, the *Shennu'er* 神奴兒, and the *Bitao hua* 碧桃花, (Emerald Peach Flower), in which the *Zhengse* is found playing a minor character in an act where the protagonist makes no physical appearance.
- 49 The term *hundun* is not seen in the Yuan printings of thirty Zaju plays. The earliest known use of *hundun* to refer to the female ghost role is found in the late Ming edition of Yuan drama, *Yuanqu xuan*, in which this word is used in the *Dou E yuan* to refer to the ghost of Dou E and in the *Qiannü lihun* to differentiate the heroine's disembodied soul from her immobilized body designated as the *zhengdan*. On other occasions when a ghost appears, terms such as *dan*, *danhun* 旦魂, or *dan hunzi* 旦魂子 are usually used to refer to a female ghost role, and *hunzi* 魂子 to a male ghost role in Yuan Zaju. For more about *hundun* as a sub-role type of *dan*, see Judith T. Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 134-36.
- 50 *YQXWB*, vol. 1, 1-7. This play fails to survive in its entirety. Extant to us are only its arias that have come down to us in the *Yuankan* collection, which gives no information regarding the role type of Zhang Fei 張飛 and Guan Yu 關羽.
- 51 *YQX*, vol. 4, 1499-517.
- 52 Ibid., vol. 3, 929-49.
- 53 Ibid., vol. 3, 1130-45.
- 54 Ibid., vol. 4, 1716-36.
- 55 Ibid., vol. 2, 490-511.

- 56 *YQXWB*, vol. 1, 405-15.
- 57 *YQX*, vol. 2, 705-19.
- 58 *YQXWB*, vol. 2, 581-89.
- 59 *YQX*, vol. 3, 827-41.
- 60 Ibid., vol. 4, 1684-1702.
- 61 Ibid., vol. 1, 386-403.
- 62 Ibid., vol. 4, 1389-409.
- 63 Ibid., vol. 2, 557-76.
- 64 Ibid., vol. 2, 614-31.
- 65 Ibid., vol. 3, 1187-99.
- 66 No role type is marked out in the Wedge for the (spirits of) Old Willow Tree and Peach Stone, as neither of them is involved in any dramatic action at this stage.
- 67 *YQX*, vol. 4, 1335-52.
- 68 Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 74-75.
- 69 Ibid., 75.
- 70 Ibid., 77.
- 71 Cited in Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 49.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 This table is drawn on the basis of Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 50.
- 74 Yang Bojun, ed. & annot., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, 4 vols. (1990; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), vol. 3, 1169, 1175-77.
- 75 Ibid., vol. 4, 1292. The translation is adapted from James Legge, trans., *The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen*, in *The Chinese Classics*, 5 vols. (1991; rpt. Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2000), vol. 5, 618.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 For a very insightful analysis of the crucial role the *waki* character plays in his relationship with the *shite*, see Royall Tyler, "The *Waki-Shite* Relationship in *Noh*," in *Noh and Kyōgen in the Contemporary World*, ed. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: The Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 65-90.
- 78 Stevan Harrell, "The Concept of Soul in Chinese Folk Religion," *JAS* 38.3 (May, 1979): 527.
- 79 For a book-length study of the stereotypical image of *caizi* portrayed as a handsome, yet somewhat fragile and womanish, young man in traditional Chinese "scholar-beauty" romances, see Geng Song, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 2004).
- 80 For more about the Chinese folk belief in the loss of soul resulting in many kinds of diseases and aberrations, see Stevan Harrell, *The Concept of Soul*, 519, 524-25.
- 81 Komparu, *The Noh Theater*, 50.

- 82 Ibid., 51.
- 83 Ibid., 50.
- 84 Wilt L. Idema, “The Many Shapes of Medieval Chinese Plays: How Texts Are Transformed to Meet the Needs of Actors, Spectators, Censors, and Readers,” *Oral Tradition* 20.2 (Oct., 2005): 330.
- 85 It is for this very reason that Nogami Toyochir 野上豊一郎 (1883-1950) did not regard Noh as drama. For this note, see Nogami ToyochirM, *NM no ykgen to hana* 能の幽玄と花 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten), 208.
- 86 Komparau, *The Noh Theater*, 45.

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