

The First Umewaka Minoru and Performances for Guests from Overseas¹

Shinko Kagaya

This essay summarizes what Umewaka Minoru's (1828–1909) diaries² tell us about his contribution to the survival of Noh³ during the Meiji period (1868–1912), particularly with respect to the performances given in honour of foreign dignitaries. Comparing his diary entries that recall those events against other contemporaneous accounts may reveal a clearer picture of the extent of his role in introducing Noh to the world outside Japan and escorting it along its historic trajectory: from an art largely though not exclusively of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, to a national, and, eventually, an international art.

The diary references to performances for foreign dignitaries strongly reinforce Minoru's stature as an essential guardian of Noh during one of its most fragile periods. He was acutely aware of the political exigencies that manifested internally as a result of the loss of the *bakufu* patronage and the financial realignments that ensued, and he proved himself adept not only as a performer, but as a flexible and creative impresario when the situation demanded it. History tells us that Minoru was a man of tremendous vision; his diaries reveal him to be a man of diligence, consistency, practicality and tact. Without ever leaving Japan, he became arguably the foremost ambassador of Noh to the outside world.

1 I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the First Umewaka Minoru Study Group, led by Seki Kobayashi, Professor Emeritus of the Musashino University. Thanks are also due to Professor Takemoto Mikio, Director of the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum at Waseda University, for introducing me to this group during the period I served as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

2 The publication of Umewaka Minoru's diary *Umewaka Minoru Nikki* in seven volumes was completed in 2003. Previously, its contents had been strictly forbidden outside of the Umewaka household. The diary covers 60 years, from 1849, through the late Edo period, to 1908, at the end of the Meiji period, missing only 17 days. Not only does it vividly depict the details of the first Minoru's daily life during the turbulent process of the transformation of the Noh world in the modern period, but it also offers a personal account of the modern history encompassing performing arts, popular entertainments, current events, the economy, the weather, among many other things. For example, the first Minoru makes the private remarks of a contemporaneous witness to the arrival of Commodore Mathew Perry, the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, the Sino-Japanese War, and Russo-Japanese War.

3 Noh and Nô, Kyogen and Kyôgen are variant spellings for the name of these art forms. The former are used in this essay, unless the original quotation has a different spelling.

Noh Performances for foreign dignitaries and Minoru's involvement

According to the various newspaper reports, magazines, and official documents gathered and edited by Kurata Yoshihiro,⁴ there were over twenty presentations of Noh during the Meiji period, specially arranged to mark the visits of foreign dignitaries. Of these, Minoru was a major player in all but a few. To understand the weight that these performances would take on during this period, it is important to consider them within their social and political context.

Early Meiji 1869–1878 (Meiji 2–11)

With the advent of the Meiji restoration, Noh professionals were cut off from the remuneration they had been receiving from the Tokugawa *bakufu* (1603–1867) for over two hundred and fifty years. This crisis not only stripped the performers of an immediate source of income, but also threatened the future of the art. No longer assured of patronage, no longer detached from the fiscal realities confronting them, many were forced to abandon the art altogether. This period of endurance and trials for Noh professionals coincides with the time of Japan's inception of modernization. Japan was caught between the need for modernization in attempting to catch up with the imperial Western powers and the need to preserve its own identity by proving itself as a country with a legitimate cultural heritage.

By the middle of the first decade of Meiji, Noh performers were struggling to survive. Newspapers reported the tragic news of Noh performers who committed suicide, drowned,⁵ or turned to desperate acts such as selling a daughter.⁶ It was against this tumultuous backdrop that Minoru, in his early forties, as the head of the Umewaka School, endeavoured to make his mark as a prominent Noh performer. Minoru was single-mindedly persistent. His conviction was such that, as he recalled later,

No matter what, I could not think of giving up Noh, so I kept singing even in the first year of Meiji, telling myself, 'Even if I die of starvation, I will not stop'.⁷

Having survived this period of profound instability, his unshaken determination would eventually find soil in which to take root.

In 1871 (M3) a delegation of representatives of the new government undertook a 632-day grand tour of advanced Western countries,⁸ led by Iwakura To-

4 KURATA (1994–1997).

5 As reported in the *Tokyo Nichinichi* newspaper on August 9, 1874 (Meiji 7). KURATA (1994), p.50.

6 As reported in the *Yokohama Mainichi* newspaper on June 26, 1875 (Meiji 8). KURATA (1994), pp.59–61.

7 IKENOUCI, p.5. The original is in *Nôgaku* (Meiji 40.1).

8 The delegation visited the United States, England, Scotland, France, Belgium, Holland, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland. They also docked at

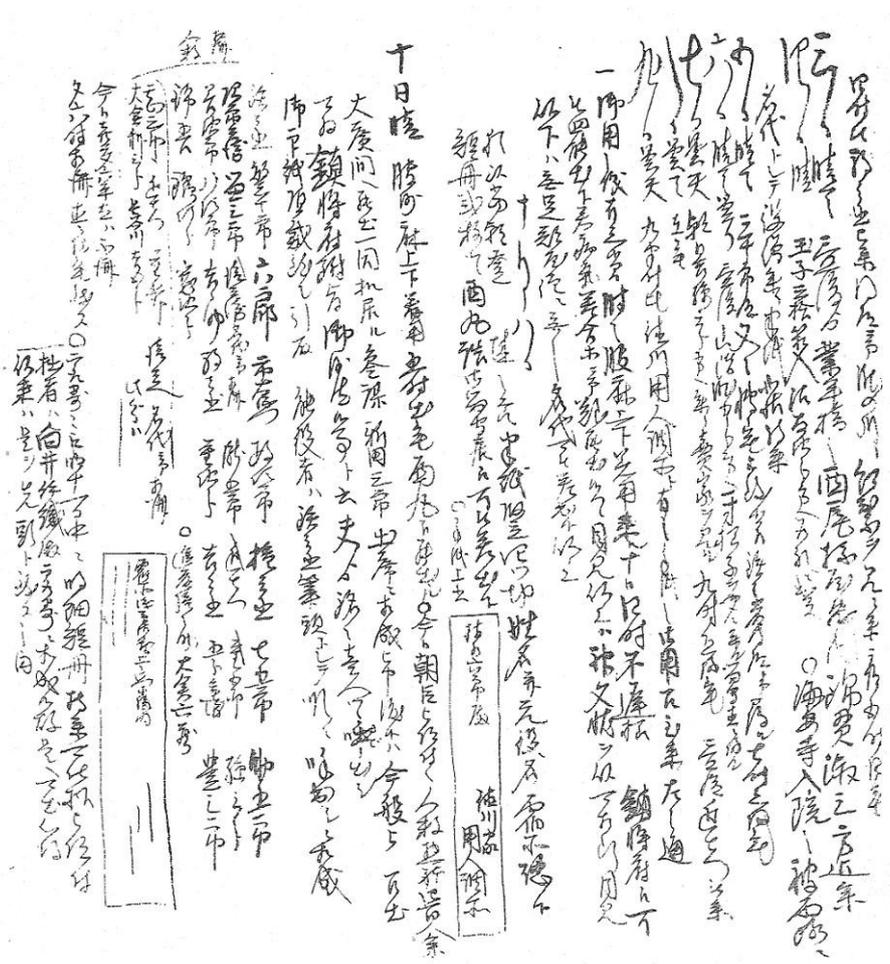


Abb. 1: Aus dem Tagebuch des Umewaka Minoru I: Aufzeichnungen vom 3.–10. Oktober 1868
『梅若実日記』1868 (明治元) 年10月3日~10日

momi (1825–1883), a court noble and influential politician who served as ambassador with plenipotentiary power. Their mission was to gather information on advancements in the West and to lay the groundwork for the renegotiation of unequal treaties that had been imposed on Japan by the foreign imperial powers during the closing days of the Tokugawa reign.⁹

several port cities, including Port Said, Aden, Ceylon, Singapore, Saigon, and Hong Kong, on their way back to Japan.

9 In 1858, Townsend Harris, the first American counsel, succeeded in negotiating with Japan to establish commercial ties. The resulting document promised extra-territorial rights for the United States. The treaty allowed administration of U.S. law in trials of its nationals for crimes committed on Japanese soil, free trade at several Japanese ports, and fixed tariffs for Japan, which could not be changed except with both parties' consent. Soon after, other West-

Iwakura's appreciation of Noh was greatly fuelled by his experiences in Europe, where Western operas were presented to mark official occasions. Kume Kunitake (1839–1931), the ambassador's Assistant Secretary for the Study of Foreign History,¹⁰ captured sentiments shared by members of the delegation upon witnessing Western opera when he wrote:

Seeing those grand opera houses in Europe, I acutely felt the need for a [Japanese] national entertainment ... but it had to be something firmly rooted in the heart of the national identity.¹¹

Before the delegation returned from abroad, back in Japan there were at least three Noh performances for foreign dignitaries during the early part of the Meiji period: these were given in honour of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (1834–1900) in 1869 (Meiji 2); the Russian Prince, Alexander Alexandrovich (1845–1894) in 1872 (Meiji 5); and Prince Duke of Genoa in 1873 (Meiji 6). Through his diary we learn that Minoru was present and was at least one of those performers who received the order but that he did not perform the role of the *shite* (lead performer). The first record of Minoru taking on a *shite* role in a performance for foreign guests is in 1875 (Meiji 8) when he performed *Tôru*, on a program with the 5th Kanze Tetsunojô (1843–1911) who performed *Hagoromo*, for a group of female Italian musicians at the Mitsui.¹²

The homecoming of Iwakura Tomomi's delegation from their 21-month tour of America and Europe, late in 1873 (Meiji 6) was, in retrospect, an important event for the *nôgaku*¹³ world. Upon his return, Iwakura and others of the political elite endeavoured to promote Noh as a national art, the Japanese equivalent of enduring cultural institutions of Europe. Some, including Iwakura, went so far as to take up the art as amateur practitioner.

Iwakura began organizing Noh performances at his residence, to which he invited members of the Imperial court, influential figures from the new government, and foreign guests. One of the first such major performances was held from April 3rd through 5th of 1876 (Meiji 9). Bôjô Toshitada (1826–1881), the head of the Ceremonial Department of the new government, commissioned Minoru to supervise this three-day event, which featured performers of several different Noh schools including *shite*, *waki* (secondary performers), Kyogen,

ern powers such as Britain, France, Holland, and Russia also secured almost identical diplomatic terms with Japan.

10 For Kume's complete writing on the delegation, see *The Iwakura Embassy 1871–1873* (2002).

11 IKENOUCHI Nobuyoshi. *Nôgaku seisui ki: Tokyo no nô* (The rise and fall of the noh drama : Noh in Tôkyô). Tôkyô, Shunjûsha, 1926, p.42. All the translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

12 It is recorded as two female musicians and five males in the diary. The detailed backgrounds are not known. The Mitsui refers to the Mitsui financial combine. Those presents for the performance included some bureaucrats and those from Tokyo National Museum. *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol. 3, pp. 112–113.

13 *Nôgaku* is the generic name for Noh and Kyogen. The term started to be used as an accepted name to include both Noh and Kyogen sometime around 1881 (Meiji 14).

and *hayashi-kata* (music ensemble), joined by influential aristocrats, including members of the Imperial household.¹⁴ According to his diary, on the first day, Minoru was summoned to the stage to receive a gratitude of 10,000-*hiki* for the event, a sum he later divided into equal shares of 55-*sen* 5-*rin* 5-*mô* to be distributed among the forty-five professional performers on duty that day.¹⁵

To demonstrate the significance of such events, consider the frequency of Meiji Noh performances for foreign visitors by decade, and note the cluster of performances in the decade following this three-day event [see Fig. 1].

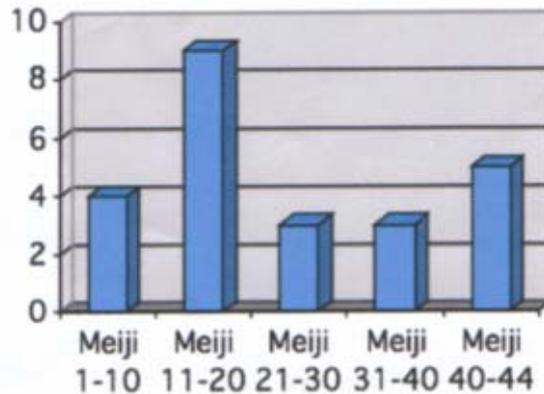


Fig. 1: Frequency of Meiji performances for foreign guests by decade

When a Noh stage was installed in the Aoyama Imperial palace in 1878 (Meiji 11), he was one of the five performers designated by the Imperial Household Agency to be in charge of Noh performances there. The other four included the heads of the Kanze, Hôshô and Kongô schools.¹⁶ Considering that the Umewaka family had long specialized in the *tsure* (supporting) roles for the Kanze School, Minoru's inclusion among this high-ranking group speaks to his gathering stature as a major player in Meiji Noh. Minoru's diary on June 14, 1878 (Meiji 11) the day of the appointment reads:

in the morning, (I) went to see Mr. Iwakura, and was somewhat confidentially told that the family rank — ... Nowadays talent is preferred.¹⁷

14 For example, the *shite* of the first play, *Kokaji*, presented on April 4, 1876, was Maeda Toshika, an aristocrat (the seventh son of the former feudal lord of Kaga-kanazawa clan), and the *waki* was the eighth head of the Hôshô school for *waki* performers, Hôshô Shinsaku (1836–1898), one of the most acclaimed *waki* performers of the time. Notables in attendance included the Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) on the first day, the Empress Dowager Eishô (1834–1897) and the Empress Shôken (1850–1914) the second day, and about 30 aristocratic guests consisting of mainly Imperial court nobility on the third day.

15 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.3, pp.132–134.

16 The other member was Miyake Shôichi, a Kyogen performer. The day of an official appointment was on June 14, 1878 (Meiji 11). *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.3, p.225.

17 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.3, p.225.

Thus by the end of the first decade of Meiji, Minoru's reputation appears to have been firmly established as an important guardian of Meiji Noh and an influential power-broker, backed by those close connections developed with central figures of the new government, such as Iwakura, and experiences he accumulated as Noh performer and impresario.

Mid Meiji 1879–1891 (Meiji 12–24)

Recently retired President Ulysses S. Grant's (1822–1885) attendance of an evening of Noh in July 1879 (Meiji 12) marks another turning point in the evolution of Noh for foreign viewing. According to Minoru's diary, the program took place at the house of Iwakura Tomomi on July 7.¹⁸ Grant seemed to be impressed by what he saw. He reportedly warned Iwakura of the current danger facing a traditional art form such as Noh: that its quality might deteriorate, and that it might run the risk of dying out. He therefore encouraged taking extreme care to insure its preservation.¹⁹

Curiously, and despite his established prominence in the world of Noh at the time and his direct involvement with the making of the program, Minoru danced only a single *shimai* (a short excerpted dance from a Noh play). Here the diaries before and after the event are most cryptic:²⁰

Before:

July 4 — “visited (Kanze) Kiyotaka (1837–1888, the 23rd head of the Kanze family) on the matter of the Noh to be held at the Iwakura residence”

July 5 — “went to visit Kiyotaka, he was angry about the Noh to be held at the Iwakura residence, because (Hôshô) Kurô (1837–1917, the 16th head of the Hôshô school) did not see to it well. On the matter to the right, went to visit Bôjô to discuss the issue; received a confidential sake”

July 7 — “in relation to the many matters brought up yesterday about the Noh to be held at Iwakura's, Tanimura's wife²¹ came on the issue of resumption”

And after:

July 9 — “went to visit Bôjô concerning an acknowledgment of my not having taken a major role for the past event, for which I thanked him”

July 13 — “Hôshô Kurô came, and I received a gift in connection with the Iwakura performance”

July 14 — “went to pay my respects to Iwakura, and to thank him”

July 15 — “went to see Hôshô Kurô to express appreciation for the Iwakura event”

18 *Umewaka Minoru Nikki* (The Diary of the First Umewaka Minoru), *Umewaka Minoru Nikki* Kankô-kai, ed. vol.3. Tôkyô, Yagi shoten, 2002. p.272.

19 IKENOUCI, p.57.

20 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.3., pp.272–273.

21 To whom Minoru refers here is unclear.

Based on this flurry of gifting and visitations, Minoru seems voluntarily to have accepted a modest assignment that day.

With rare exceptions, the performance for Grant ended up being the last time an event organized for the sake of foreign dignitaries did not feature Minoru or his sons in a major role. In fact, Minoru's name appears as the *shite* in every single performance for foreign dignitaries in his diary up until late Meiji 30s, when, in his late 70s, he resigned to appear as *kôken* (stage assistant) to the performances of his sons in the *shite* roles.

Newspaper reports on foreign attendance of Noh plays reflect the public sensitivity to the tension aroused by foreign presence during the Meiji period, as well as the importance that the Japanese public and authorities attributed to foreigners' expressed opinions of traditional art forms. Clearly, those foreign guests' reactions to what they saw drew attention. When a performance was given in honor of the Hawaiian King (from 1874 to 1891) David Kalakaua (1836–1891) in 1881 (Meiji 14), the *Tôkyô Nichinichi* newspaper reported on the banquet for the Hawaiian King, and referred to the Noh program as follows:

For the two Noh plays, *Momiji-gari* and *Shôjô* that the Umewaka Minoru party danced, an English summary had been already provided for the King's perusal. So even though the King did not understand the language sung, he understood what was happening. He paid constant attention to the performance, and was often very much moved, gushing that Noh possesses Japanese tradition in it, and the movements look noble. [...] He often remarked 'Interesting interesting,' and after each performance, applauded.²²

By contrast, Minoru's diary entries usually report succinct details of how the programs were run, though he seems indifferent to the significance of those events – preferring instead to catalogue the day's weather, the time the event started and ended, the entire program and performers, how much money he received, how the money was divided among the performers, etc. As the frequency of performances in honour of foreign dignitaries increased, Minoru would often make only casual references to the guests from abroad, such as “an American named Johnson”, “Koreans”, or simply “Foreigners”.

Such was the case with respect to the performance arranged for internationally renowned opera singer, then at the Royal Opera in Berlin, Minnie Hauk (1851–1929) and her husband, Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg (1854–1918), the world traveller and writer, on June 21, 1894 (Meiji 27).²³ The event was organized by the executive members of the *Nôgaku-dô*²⁴ association to be performed at the Shiba Noh stage, which the association had built in 1881 in support of the

22 The date of the report is March 16, 1881. KURATA (1994), p.163.

23 The details of this performance is in “Mini- Hôku shôtai nô no kiroku” (A record of Noh performance presented to Minnie Hauk) in Furukawa (1969), pp.198–223.

24 *Nôgaku-sha*, an association committed to the restoration and further development of Noh, was established in 1881, by an alliance of senior statesmen, members of the Imperial family, court nobles, and former feudal lords, etc. *Nôgaku-sha* was renamed as *Nôgaku-dô* in 1890 (Meiji 23).

continued development of Noh. Furukawa Hisashi, a pioneer scholar in Meiji Noh, mentions that this event marked the first time that Noh was enjoyed and received evaluation by a foreign music specialist.²⁵ The invitation was sent not only to them, but to dignitaries from Germany and Austria, such as envoys and lieutenant generals, residing in Japan, and to Mr. Braccialini, an officer of the Italian Embassy, who was to perform the title role in Charles Gounod's *Faust*, the first opera production at the Tōkyō Music School, scheduled later in the same year. Also invited were Japanese ministers, high officials, aristocrats, members of the Imperial house, including the contemporaneous premier, Itō Hirobumi. The invitation specified the dress-code:

in terms of clothing, for men either frock coat or *montsuki-haori-hakama* (formal crested kimono), and for women, evening dress or crested kimono with white collar.²⁶

Following the event, on July 22, 1894 (Meiji 27), the *Tōkyō Nichinichi* newspaper ran a letter of thanks sent to the *Nōgaku-kai*²⁷ by Minnie Hauk, and her husband, Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg. A part of the letter read as follows:

Your association maintains the ancient forms and traditions very well. [...] The fact that music, singing technique, etc., had developed earlier in Japan [than in Europe], this is nothing short of amazing.²⁸

By contrast, Minoru's record of the event reads simply:

After the performance, I met the foreign couple at the garden of Kōyōkan guest house. There was considerable praise. [...] Kurō and I separately received 3-yen each from Iida. Service fee for the day is 70-sen per person.²⁹

An exception to this pattern was the performance planned for the Russian Prince, Nikolai Alexandrovich (1868–1918) in 1891 (Meiji 24), for which Minoru kept a detailed record and wrote in more expressive terms. Together with Hōshō Kurō, he was asked on May 8, to organize the performance, but just three days later the Russian Prince became the victim of an assassination attempt by a Japanese policeman, in what has come to be known as the Ôtsu Incident. Minoru notes on May 12th that “a member of the security police named Tsuda Sanzō, a lunatic, slashed the side of the Prince's face, about 9 centimetres in length and nine tenths of a centimetre in depth, though it's been described as a light injury.”³⁰ Minoru records the Prince's evolving condition almost daily

25 FURUKAWA (1969), p.200.

26 FURUKAWA (1969), p.206.

27 *Nōgaku-kai*, Association of the art of Noh, (as a successor of the former *Nōgaku-sha* and *Nōgaku-dō*) was established in 1896 to promote the further development of the art of Noh.

28 KURATA (1995), pp.334–335.

29 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.5, p.239.

30 On May 13th, the performers, who met for “mōshiwase” (pre-performance meeting), were all greatly worried about the incident and sent Rokurō, Minoru's adopted son, to the Aoyama Imperial House, and received the message saying that the performance is postponed. *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.5, p.23.

quoting newspaper reports, until May 23, when he reported that the Prince's ship had returned home the previous day. The play he had planned, *Syakkyô*, went ahead, though without the intended guest from abroad, at the Umewaka resident monthly performance on June 7, as a testament that the Russian and Japanese relationship remained stable despite the sad incident. For this he assembled all the performers and the prepared stage props as originally planned. Minoru reports of "a packed audience not seen in recent years; not a seat was left, and (I) had to post an announcement to refuse further entrance by around noon."³¹

Late Meiji 1899–1908 (Meiji 32–41)

For the most part though, Minoru's record of these events is frank, as though his mind is thoroughly focused on the completion of his mission, not on the result or effect. His reports convey a pragmatic approach to solving problems and answering the needs of his sponsors, such as when he and his son were asked to perform two plays in under an hour for the benefit of German Prince Albert Wilhelm Heinrich (1862–1929) in 1899 (Meiji 32). They somehow finished the entire program of *Hashi-benkei* and a *han-nô* (performance of the second half of a noh play), *Shakkyô*, in 35 minutes. His diary reports "we started at 4:15 in the afternoon, and finished at 4:50." Then he adds: "today's banquet was Japanese food from Yaozen" (a time-honoured Japanese restaurant).³²

The last performance for foreign dignitaries recorded in his diary in which Minoru appeared as a *shite* took place on September 6, 1902 (Meiji 35). The guest of honour was to be Dai Zhen, a member of the Qing imperial family (1616–1912) of China. On August 28, a messenger from, in Minoru's words, "something called the diplomacy division of the Imperial Household Agency," came to ask if the event might be held at Minoru's residence. Privately Minoru expresses concern about hosting such an event in the summer heat, but resolves to accept the offer, and adds that after consulting with his sons, he will send the response, which he did within that day. He ends his diary entry with "The entire fee reported was 250 yen."

The following day, some members of the Agency came to take a look at his residence, and the date and program of the performance were decided. Minoru writes:

it is rare to have the celebratory Noh performance ordered by the Imperial Agency at my humble house. The day of the performance, everything will be taken care of by the Imperial House Agency, and all (we) need to do is to complete (our) roles (in the performance).

After that, the Umewaka residence became busy with daily visitations sent from the Imperial Agency: cleaning the house, the stage, even the gravel. A parade of gardeners was followed by several technicians and by an inspector

³¹ *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.5, pp.27–28.

³² *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.6, pp.196–197.

from the Police Department. Drapers hung red and white silk curtains from the stage to the *hashigakari* (the bridge between the stage and dressing room), as well as other dark blue and white hemp curtains on the stage right and left. Red carpeting was laid within, fresh gravel without, and on the appointed day policemen took their posts at the front gate to manage the curious throngs.

Minoru writes:

receiving this order from the Imperial Agency to our household is an unprecedented honour: To the ancestors, the honour of the Umewaka family, and its future prosperity.

Then he adds, “Today’s performance is reported in every newspaper.”³³

Between this celebratory performance at his home and his death on January 19, 1909, there were three performances for foreign dignitaries recorded in Minoru’s diary. In these he declined the role of *shite*, opting instead to serve as *kôken* for his sons.

These events included one in honor of Dr Robert Koch (1843–1910), the 1905 Noble Prize Winner in Medicine who first discovered the tuberculosis bacterium,³⁴ another, two months later, for Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry (1847–1911), Commander of the Great White Fleet sent around the world by the 26th U.S. President, Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919); and, a day later for a minister of the Qing government of China, Sheng Yihuai.

For the last of these events, Minoru was present as *kôken* for all three Noh plays (all *shite* were performed by his sons and son-in-law). His family members in attendance, including his wife, daughters, daughters-in-law, and granddaughters, were invited to a banquet of *yôshoku* (Western food). Minoru records what he heard from the Vice President of the Mail Steamer Company:

Admiral Sperry was very much impressed by the Noh presented yesterday, and was truly pleased for its sublimity, depth, and interest. [...] Though they also went to see plays at the Kabuki-za, they did not much care for the *kabuki*. Noh, being far more elegant, made a much bigger impression.³⁵

One of the last performances for foreign dignitaries in Meiji was given in honour of British military officer and statesman, Horatio Herbert Kitchener (1850–1916) in 1909 (M42), after Minoru’s death, in which both of the *shite* performers were Minoru’s sons. His last entry in the diary was on the last day of 1908 (Meiji 41):

Clear weather. Same [as yesterday, about 50 degrees]. A bit colder. It’s cold. This year too has passed safely and smoothly, truly auspicious.³⁶

He closed his life twenty days later.

33 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.6, pp.416–419.

34 <http://nobelprize.org/medicine/laureates/1905/koch-bio.html>

35 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.7, p.456.

36 *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru*, vol.7, p.465.

Concluding remarks

In December, 2004, the Japan Society, New York and the Nôgaku Kyôkai (Association of Noh and Kyogen Performers) jointly produced the six-city U.S. tour,³⁷ entitled “The First Noh & Kyogen Program Witnessed by Americans,” celebrating the 150th anniversary of U.S.-Japan relations since the signing of the Treaty of Friendship by the two countries in 1854. The tour repeated the identical program that Grant saw in 1879: a *han-nô* play *Mochizuki*, a Kyogen play, *Tsuri-gitsune* (*Trapping of the Fox*), and another full Noh play *Tsuchi-gumo* (*The Earth Spider*). It may be noted with some irony that although Minoru appears to have demurred on the important occasion of the performance for Grant, the recent reenactment featured Minoru’s great grandson, the 56th Umewaka Rokurô³⁸ in the role of the *shite* for both Noh plays.³⁹

Minoru’s professional career covered nearly the entire Meiji Period. In the last thirty years of his life he took lead roles or played *koken* to his sons in all but a few presentations for foreign dignitaries. The exceptions included two performances held in the Kansai region, in 1879 and 1881, and one *hayashi* ensemble presentation in the Rokumeikan⁴⁰ in 1889.

Among the twenty-odd performances presented for foreign consumption during the Meiji period, a few titles surface repeatedly. Although there are hundreds of plays in the standard repertoire, a foreign dignitary offered a taste of Noh in the Meiji period had about a 30% chance of being served either *Funa-benkei*, or *Tsuchi-gumo* or both.⁴¹ On whether or not such a selection continues

37 It toured Chicago, San Antonio, Boston, Atlanta, New Orleans, and New York.

38 “The First Noh & Kyogen Program Witnessed by Americans”, in: *Performing Arts Fall/Winter 2004–2005* (p.10). New York: Japan Society 2004.

39 The seriously charming presence of a *kokata* (child role) with the *shite*’s dynamic yet articulate lion dance in *Mochizuki*, was followed by a versatile Kyogen piece depicting a fox disguised as a human monk and his transformation into his original form. The last noh play, *Tsuchi-gumo*, ended with spectacular yet delicate throwing of countless paper webs by the *shite*, the spider, showering the entire stage and several rows of audience, as has been reported in other performances of *Tsuchi-gumo* overseas. With simultaneous English subtitles provided, the audience seemed to be enthralled by this program.

Thomas J. Rimer recalls the time when he witnessed one performance in Washington, D.C. in 1988, and the performers tried to adapt their performances to the audiences overseas as follows: “In the case of *The earth Spider* (*Tsuchi-gumo*), for example, the performer who took the role of the earth spider took as many occasions as possible to throw out his webs, represented by those wonderful showers of paper, at his hapless opponent. By the end of the performance, the stage was littered with mounds of this elegant debris, certainly not a sight I ever witnessed in Japan, where such hurling about would surely be seen as overstatement.” Quoted in “Contemporary Audiences and the Pilgrimage to Nô,” in Brandon (1997).

40 The Rokumeikan was built in 1883 (Meiji) for the express purpose of entertaining foreign dignitaries through dance parties and other entertainments.

41 According to the data gathered from *The Diary of Umewaka Minoru* and Kurata (1994–1997). *Momiji-gari* was second most frequently performed play. *Shôjô-ran* and *Youchi-soga* shared honours for third.

to be well-advised opinions may vary, but that program seems to have foretold the tendency of future Noh performances overseas, where these two plays have repeatedly surfaced.

Minoru lived his life in his art innocently, steadily executing his roles as a Noh performer regardless of the nature of the occasion, whether the performance was a portion of the monthly program held at his residence, a recital with his disciples, or a special event for nobility or foreign dignitaries. His diary itself testifies to this. He maintained a most diligent and calm attitude towards his art, even in the midst of the torrent of Japan's modernization and, concurrently, its budding relations with international society. Through his perseverance, he bore witness to the transformation of Noh from the brink of its demise to its establishment as a national art form, and guided it in its first baby steps towards the world outside Japan.

Selected Bibliography

- BRANDON, James R. (ed.): *Nô and Kyôgen in the Contemporary World*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1997.
- FURUKAWA Hisashi: *Meiji nôgakushi josetsu* (Introduction to the study of Noh during the Meiji period). Tôkyô: Wanya shoten 1969.
- IKENOUCHI Nobuyoshi. *Nôgaku seisui ki: Tôkyô no nô* (The rise and fall of the Noh drama: Noh in Tôkyô). Tôkyô: Shunjûsha 1926.
- The Iwakura Embassy 1871–1873: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe*. Vols. 1–5. Chiba, Japan: The Japan Documents / New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press / Surrey, UK: Curzon Press Ltd. 2002.
- KURATA Yoshihiro (ed.): *Meiji no nôgaku* 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Noh Theatre in the Meiji Period, vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4). Tokyo: Nihon Geijutsu Bunka Shinkôkai, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997.
- Umewaka Minoru Nikki* (The Diary of the First Umewaka Minoru), UMEWAKA MINORU NIKKI KANKÔ-KAI, ed. vols. 1–7. Tôkyô: Yagi shoten 2000–2003.