CHAPTER 4

ACTORS TRAINING IN NOH

‘A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BONE, FLESH AND SKIN’

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The treatises of Zeami provide enough evidence that Noh theatre was concerned with the importance of systematic training for an actor. The secret theories written by Zeami in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mainly point out to the principles of this particular art form and the functions of acting, music, and movement in Noh. These treatises are the foundation for Noh actor training and the ideas and philosophies that evolved by Zeami in the Noh world are still interesting and meaningful to theatre artists of all kinds. Training is in fact a lifelong dedication insofar as Noh is concerned, as Zeami believes that it is a journey through the bone, flesh and skin. Bone is an outstanding artistic quality that gifted actors naturally show in his performance because it is an inborn ability. Flesh is the elements visible in a performance that arise from the power of the skills of the actors. To obtain this power of skill, actors have to master the two basic art of chant and dance in Noh. Skin can be explained as a manner of ease and beauty in performance that can be obtained when the two other elements are thoroughly perfected.

As (Rath, 2006) remarks Noh school is the fundamental unit of institutional organizations in the world of Noh theatre in Japan. Ryu is a Japanese word that can be translated as ‘school’ and also be rendered as ‘artistic style’, and each school promotes a distinct performance style. Traditionally, there are five different schools that offer training for Noh actors. All the Noh schools are an extension of a family...
from wherein the name of the schools originated. Thus the traditions of the schools are basically inherited from the family. The family tree of Kanze, Hosho, Kongo and Komparu schools continue to exist since the age of Zeami and the fifth school called Kita, which is an offshoot of Kongo family, evolves and has been in vogue continuously since the seventeenth century A.D. Generally, almost all performers are specialize in one role type under one school and continue to perform only that on the stage. The types of schools are based on the role that a performer takes up in a performance and the categorization of performers also depends on their contribution towards the creation of performance on stage.

### 4.2 PERFORMERS AND THEIR ROLES

All those who appear in Noh are collectively known as performers. According to (Konparu, 1983) the performers are the creative staff that consist of professionals with the artistic training and ability to perform on stage. Today, these performers communally referred to as Nogaku-shi in Japanese which can be translated as ‘master of Nogaku’. But in the olden times they were all known as Noh Yakusha (Noh actor). The professional Noh actors are supposed to have a deep understanding of all the other elements of the performance and their art in which they are involved, though they will do only their part. Performers on stage are divided into five categories that depend on their activities on stage and they are Shite-Kata, Waki-Kata, Kyogen–Kata, Hayashi and Koken.
4.2.1 The Shite-Kata

Shite-kata is the group of actors who train and practice the leading roles in the Noh performance. There are several categories of roles inside the Shite-kata and that can be named as the Shite, Shite-zure (tsure), Tomo, Kokata, Jiutai (chorus).

- The actor who creates the main character in a Noh performance is known as the Shite. Usually, there will be only one Shite in each performance and the quality of the performance always depends on the skill of his transformation into the character that he portrays. Often, the Shite wears mask that intensify the symbolic nature of the character and also mediate to guide the flow of the consciousness of the audience as the symbolic image dominates the Noh space. The Shite who appears in the second half of the two-act play is known as Nochi-Shite.

- Shite-zure (tsure) is the subsidiary actors who are as important as the Shite and only appear in some special plays. They are also known as Moro-jite that literally means the twin-Shite and wear masks only when playing female roles. Tsure appears in the second half of the two act play and is known as Nochi tsure.

- Tomo is the word use to represent the minor actors who often appear in the performers. They also use masks only when they play the role of women.

- The word Kokata is used to indicate the child performers of Shite group who often portray the role of a child and occasionally the role of adult.

- The chorus and the choral music of the Noh are called Jiutai. Usually, the members in Jiutai are colleague actors to the Shite consequently from the Shite-kata of the same school. The major responsibilities of the chorus are to keep the story moving, setting the séance, describing the characters and action
and sometimes delivering the speech for Shite and Waki. Throughout the show the chorus will maintain a great relationship and mutual interaction with the Shite.

All five schools have their own Shite-kata with a slight difference in their melody and performance text, thus do not perform together.

### 4.2.2 The Waki-Kata

Waki-Kata is the second category of actors in the Noh performance. Waki, Waki-zure (tsure) and Tomo are the three groups among this category.

- **Waki** is the one who portrays the second important character in the performance. He may generally be regarded as the foil of the Shite since his task is to create the grounds for the Shite to appear and perform. Once he has drawn out the Shite, he seats himself, moves to the Waki-za, behind the Waki pillar out of sight of the audience, and stays there immobile except when necessary for the development of the play. All Waki appear as living men, they never play female characters or wear masks. There are three major types of Waki characters that is the official, the priest or the man. The most representative among these types is the traveling priest. The Waki is always passive, negative and dark, representing yin, in contrast to Shite who is active, positive, bright thus represent yang. Both Shite and Waki need to complement one another to harmonize in terms of performance (Konparu, 1983). The plays called Waki Noh are the ones that give more important to Waki characters.

- **Waki-zure (tsure)** is the one who portrays the character that accompanies the Waki. This character appears occasionally in some of the special plays and does not wear mask.
• The *Tomo* is a companion usually added only for dramatic interest, both in *Shite* and Waki group.

The schools for Waki actors are different from the *Shite* actors. Presently, Thakayasu, Fukuo and Hosho are three major schools that offer training for Waki actors in Japan.

**4.2.3 The Kyogen –Kata**

There are two major functions for the *Kyogen* actors. The first is performing the independent comedy called *Hon-Kyogen*, present between the Noh plays. The second one is performing the role type named *Ai-kyogen*, within the Noh play as a local person, servant or boatman. *Ai-Kyogen* asks questions to Waki by using simple local language. This is often done to add the story between the acts, while the *Shite* is offstage thus their account of the monologue provide enough time for *Shite* to change his costume for the second act. Explaining the play in colloquial language helps the common audience to understand the content of the text thus adding a new dimension to the drama. There are few more elaborate and extraordinary *Ai-kyogen*, who perform between acts of certain Noh, with more substantial stories and such characters as monkeys and even as seaweed and also occasionally use their masks. *Kyogen* players can easily be distinguished by their yellow colour *Tabi-socks*, since all the other performers wear the usual formal white. Okura and Izumi are the schools that provide training for the *Kyogen-kara*.

**4.2.4 The Hayashi-Kata**

*Hayashi-kata* is the combination of one flute, shoulder-drum, hip-drum, and stick drum. The musicians usually have to enter before all the other performers to provide the entrance music for the characters. During the play they create proper
timing and lead the chant and movements on the stage. As per the performance structure of Noh *Hayashi-kata* supposed to exit only in the end.

The three major schools that provide training for Noh flute is Isso, Morita and Fujita. There are four schools for the shoulder drum that is Ko, Kosei, Okura and Kanze. Kadono, Takayasu, Ishii, Okura and Kanze are the five important schools that train Hip drum while the training for stick drum is given by Kanze and Komparu schools.

### 4.2.5 The Koken Kata

*Koken* can be translated as attended and a nonperforming performer is in fact a very important part of the Noh play. There are always *Koken* for the *Shite–kata* who sits at the back of the stage right near the bridge from the time the *Shite* enters until his exit. Major objective of the Koken is to adjust the *Shite’s* garments, set out or remove a prop, or perform an on stage costume change. It is his responsibility to make sure that all the details of the performance proceed smoothly so that the main actor is entirely free of any worries and can concentrate on his role. However if the *Shite* forgets one line, the stage attendant serves him as a prompter, and at any cost if the *Shite* becomes incapacitated or unable to perform, the stage attendant steps in as understudy. The *Shite-kata Koken* thought be an experienced actor from the same schools of *Shite*. The *Koken* for the *hayashi-kata* who is not necessary for the same school, has to exchange instruments and assist the instrumentalist. As in the *Shite kata*, *Koken* in the Kyogen thought to be a senior Kyogen actor.

Noh actors’ normally meet in the dressing room on the day of the performance. Usually they don’t organize stage rehearsals unless the play is new, difficult or a rare performance. This is not because of their laziness but they are deeply clear about their part in all plays. The years of training from a very young age culture each actor to
harmonize his part spontaneously and quite unpredictably in the performance. It is also important for a *Shite-kata* actor to go through the training of all the categories of Noh. Thus he will be always ready to lead a total performance, group, a school or a family. The school head of the school or family known as *Iemoto* has the all right to select the students, licensed professionals and determine the contents of the repertoire and so on. Even though there are slight differences between the five families in Noh, each remains the particular family’s training method such that the philosophies fundamentally are very similar. The basic structure of tradition which a Noh actor is expected to follow is based firstly upon the hereditary aspect and secondly upon the age, talent and experience. A professional *Shite* can identify a good talented student from among the Noh trainees and recommend to him to become a member of that Noh family.

### 4.3 THE STAGES OF NOH ACTOR TRAINING

The concept of training in the school of Noh is entirely different from the impression about schools in the modern system. It is more as the *Gurukul* system of living and learning, where a pupil is supposed to devote himself to the particular art form. As the first step of the training the pupil becomes the member of that particular Noh family. The learning process has to be natural and constant till he stops practicing as a Noh actor. Once the student is accepted by his master, he starts his training with all sense of discipline and continues till he reaches in to the highest form of being a Noh actor. The fundamental concept of training in Noh is to lead the actor to find out his richest and most beautiful state called the real *Hana* (the development of the flower) which is the maximum possible consciousness of the physical, vocal and psychological technique, which is achieving the highest level of creativity.
4.3.1 Kokata Stage

As the tradition suggests, a Noh actor should start training in childhood the minute he becomes capable of walking and talking properly. From the age of seven onwards the child trainee receives his training in a household space. The training room that duplicates the surface and the scale of a Noh theatre is attached to the Masters’ house. The boy actor (Kokata) is taught to chant and dance by the master teacher Iemoto or by a seiner teacher with appropriate disciplinary codes. According to (Zeami, 1984), when a boy practices at this age, he will naturally show some elements of beauty in what he does. If, by chance, he should show some special skill in dance movements, or chanting, or in the kind of powerful gestures required for demon roles, he should be left free to perform them in his own manner, according to his own desires. The master teacher allows the child to shine on his own permitting him to dance, sing or even act out a particular role in his own natural way. Thus a beginner in Noh always is given the freedom to perform any kind of role as he and how he wishes retaining his natural and childlike appearance. Children of this age are not pressurized because they don’t are not self conscious. The student is never assessed as having done well or poorly nor admonished too much. Even though there are no referred books or scores to follow at this stage, the child actor begins learn the discipline of how to sit, stand, and move. The child actor simply positions himself in front of the teacher and learns the fundamentals of chanting and movement by using the copying and imitating methodology. In most of occasions, the teachers would be correcting the alignment of his body such as the position of his feet, arms, trunk, and head, till the basics are grasped by repeated practice. Once the student learns the basics of movement patterns, he gets a chance to portray one simple Kokata role with
his skill in a full length Noh performance. This which is the main objective of training at this stage promotes both enthusiasm and natural goodness of a child actor. Thus the student is allowed to follow his heart and perform at a time that is most appropriate for him. Through this performance the actor gets a chance to introduce himself and his skill as an actor before a sympathetic audience. He also gets an experience of facing the audience understands the preparations that occur backstage. When there is no preparation for the Kokata role in the play, the student learns shimai which are short dance sections of the major traditional Noh drama and gets a chance to perform it along with a complimentary chorus. Ultimately the body and the voice of the student actor are cultured simply by using it in rehearsals and performances. The Noh training offers more scope for self discipline to the student through a structured pattern of training. For example, the everyday class of the child actor starts with the traditional bowing and greeting in seiza which is the formal sitting on the floor. The teacher shows the pupil how to arrange and move his body and deliver his voice in a proper and gentle manner. The pupil has to imitate the teacher who shows him both the movement and chanting aspects gets to repeatedly do it till he understands and acquires mastery over the language, form and meaning of Noh. Showing how and training to cope with what has been shown is the method of Noh. Thus, lessons are conducted with adequate emphasis on separate elements of Noh (Griffiths, 1998). Even though there is no formal teaching in chorus and instrumental music, at this stage the child actor gets an idea of the rhythmic patterns through repeated practice of the Kata (movement patterns) and the Utai (the chant). After the initial introduction to the formalities of Noh training the actor has to slowly increase the length of his practice with the master-teacher and has to learn and explore the deeper aspects of Kokata role in relation to the different kinds of plays. Thus the child actor gets a
chance to discover further while acting spontaneously and naturally. Ideally the child actor is expected to take part in the act that consists mainly of dancing and singing. There are no formal examinations to measure the development of the child actor in Noh; however a constant and close observation is maintained by the master-teacher in order to observe the natural Yugen (grace). Majority of the training has been devoted to explore the spirit and grace of the child actor through a disciplined practice.

4.3.1 First Part of Uchideshi Stage

The meaning of Uchideshi is ‘inside student’ and traditionally in this stage the student has to reside fulltime in the master-teachers house and undertake a rigorous training of this art. Thus the important step in this stage is the acceptance in to the household of the Iemoto family. Unless the trainee is the son or nephew of Shite or the master’s family, the approval for entry into the Noh family will happen only based on the ability of the trainee. According to (Zeami, 1984) from the age of eleven or twelve onwards the voice begins to achieve its proper pitch. Therefore, this is the proper time to explain various aspects of Noh and the student actor begins to comprehend Noh as the second stage of his training. The melodious voice and the exquisite figure hide the week points and make his performance more graceful and charming. Generally, the master-teachers never give complicated parts and never teach any fine points concerning role playing to the student actor of this stage. The training in this age concentrates more on creating an authenticity in chanting and movement of the actor. Further the student actor gets a chance to learn various kinds of parts in acting; this would help him master the stylized forms of dancing, and also utter each word during chanting with perfect clarity also learn precision in characterization. The trainee will get both formal and informal individual as well as a group, as both participants and
viewers. The Master-teacher will spend time observing students taking up intent practice and pass judgment on their practice and also corrects them. At the same time, the student will spend time with Unideshi colleagues and learn the tunes of chanting and also the dance of Shite roles in different dramas. He also gets an opportunity to observe most of the experienced seniors practice and at times gets to be part of the chorus. Acquiring knowledge by watching and performing is the most important aspect of the Noh actor’s constant training. As (Griffiths, 1998) points out the student actor has to remember that there is always something new that emerges during practice, rehearsal, and performance and thereby one gets adequate time to absorb and learn these nuances while watching.

4.3.2 Second Part of Uchideshi Stage

This is the most complicated period in the life of a student actor. The main reason for this is the change in the student voice as he grows into adulthood and the related change in the physical and mental process affects his performance too. He has to carefully get his training to acquire a stable sound that would help him to gain a better opportunity to perform. As (Zeami, 1984) observes the majority of the physical alterations happens at this time, thus leading the audience to distinguish the actor as an adult and expect the quality of work too accordingly. However, the student actor will not be technically capable of delivering the performance and would face difficulty in delivering the performance according to the expectation of the audience. As it is a crucial period, the student has to go through a careful training during this time. He is recommended to practice a pitch comfortable to him by using appropriate techniques from morning to evening. Most important of all, he must vow to himself that, although he is now in a crucial period, he will truly stake his life for Noh and
never abandon it. Should any actor give up his training at this point, his skill can
never increase. Since this age is the most important for his entire career the student
actor has to understand how to handle the adolescent changes within him and train
himself more carefully without allowing too much strain. According to traditional
beliefs if the student actor of this stage, tries to regulate the pitch of his voice too
forcibly, it automatically leads to the damage of his voice.

Learning and mastering all of the backstage preparations and preliminaries are
as important as the training received for acting in this stage. Even though there is no
formal training for the back stage works and preparations, student actor usually
master it through observing the senior member of the school while assisting them at
the time of show. Through this the student becomes familiar with folding, packing
and maintenance of costumes, costumes necessary for an actor, property making,
transportation of set and property from one location to the other and also maintain
appropriate interaction with the other performers. In short, constant and careful
practice in this stage decides the future life of a student actor.

4.3.3 Third Part of Uchideshi Stage

The most difficult period of a student life comes to a close around twenty-
three or twenty-four and then the actor enters in the most important stage of his
professional life. In this stage the actor almost masters his art of singing and dancing
and even role playing. The training and the physical developments come together in
this stage and he gets ready to perform a young role. According to (Zeami, 1984) it is
at this stage that the level of artistry of the performer begins in order o become
established and the limits of the actor will be fixed by the amount of training and self-
discipline practiced. His voice becomes settled and body matures which are strong
points required for a Noh actor. Physical growth and the voice changes of the actor come to a close at this stage. At the same time (Zeami, 1984) advises the student actors that this achievement may be simply a type of luck and if the actor begins to think that he is a theatrical genius at this stage then he will lose all talents he has achieved thus far. Even if an actor in this stage is praised by his audience and he manages to win a competition over a famous performer, he must recognize the fact that this achievement is merely a temporary one. Therefore, he should begin at once to study role playing with utmost seriousness and inquisition into every detail of those who have already achieved a real reputation for their performances, so that he may rehearse them all the more diligently. Owing to his steady voice and mature figure he might be able perform better than an old expert in the competition. This is the time an actor has to look at himself from an objective point of view rather than watching himself from a subjective point of view. It is then that he might be able to perceive his earlier successes as a kind of coincidence and also realize that there is no guarantee that it will ever remain or continue. Thus instead of getting carried away far by this success a Noh actor must keep training in this stage and listen to the advice of the experienced actor in order to make his acting, well established and precise.

Once the actor reaches this stage they can also start teaching the Utai and Shimai to the amateur artist of Noh with the permission of Iemoto. While teaching they also can re-evaluate the technique and selected part of the play so that these classes also serve as self training programs for the Uchideshi. The Uchideshi stage would come to a close in the mid-twenties and the pupils enter the next stage known as Jun-Shokabon stage. The length of the Uchideshi stage depends upon the age, the time of training, personal, educational and domestic aspects and the rate of progress made during the training time.
4.3.4 Jun-Shokabun Stage

In this stage, the actor gains more autonomy in his training and practice. In *Jun-Shokabun* stage the actor has to take up more difficult roles and at the same time has to be careful not to lose the right contact with the essential training resource. As per traditions this stage is the richest period in a Noh actor’s career. This is the stage when the actor is enabled to realize the result of all training that he had received from his childhood. The actor has to concentrate more on the practice of performing with maximum artistic beauty. If he is not able to achieve the peak of his career in this stage, it will be very difficult for him to build up a career after his forty. Even though permission to perform is still in the hands of the Master the actor still might get more exciting and challenging roles at this stage. The actor in this stage also needs to be aware of how and where he can be cast in order to reach the next step and attain fame in future. The Noh theatre believes that if an actor can attain certain standard or recognition in his work in this stage, he will be prominent in the scenario of Noh theatre later.

According to (Zeami, 1984) the actor at thirty-four or thirty-five years of age represents the peak stage of perfection in his art form. If by then an actor grasps the various aspects of performance through hard training, and masters them, he will truly be acknowledged by the public and will achieve a reputation as a great actor. At this stage of his career, he can recall all that he has learned thus far; it is also the moment when he is able to plan up means to accomplish what he wishes to achieve in the future. If such things are not mastered at this age, then, it will be difficult for an actor to gain reputation among the audience later in his career; as the actor is only in the making till he is thirty-four or thirty-five, and begins to decline after forty. The reality that those who do not achieve a reputation at this stage of their career have not
actually mastered the art of Noh continues to remain an earnest fact. Therefore, it is in this period that the actor must perfect his self-discipline. If the actor still works as a second-grade actor in this stage it is impossible to change in the future.

When an actor reaches forty-five his physical skills will start to decline. If he has not acquired his techniques firm under his belt by thirty-five he will have very little to work with. The Noh actor is expected to ‘charm’ the audience at this age with the real and authentic expose. To the contrary, if the actor is unable to unearth the ‘charm’ of performance in this age then he should seriously reconsider his future very carefully. As Zeami (1984) advises there are only two ways in this situation. One is to concentrate on the practice with twice as much effort or give up the career as a professional Noh actor. After watching closely the performance of the pupil the master will then decide to grant him the status of being a full-fledged professional artist.

4.3.6 First Part of Shokabun Stage

An actor who reaches this stage is considered as a professional Noh actor. Reaching this particular stage depends on the outcome of a dedicated training period that the actor goes through in the previous stages. The actor gets appropriate focus on what exactly he has to say and do than merely demonstrate his skills before the audience. As (Zeami, 1984) remarks the actor must find new means of showing his skills. Even if he has achieved a fine reputation and has mastered the art of the Noh, he must in turn be able to have in his own troupe young actors who will eagerly follow him. He cannot depend merely on his physical beauty and external energy. And keeping this point in mind the actor should be able to change his ways of acting at this stage. The actor should choose roles that are congenial to him and that can be
played in a relaxed manner without physical strain. He should allow the younger actors to exhibit their own abilities, and he should play with them in a modest fashion, as an associate, even if he has no young successor of a suitable caliber. He alone as an actor should not perform any highly complicated and strenuous role himself all the time.

As Zeami emphasizes, in this stage the actor has to have more focus on internalizing his actions and also reduce the external expression. The actor by this stage acquires an extensive body control which comes by constant practice. As a result of the body control the actor reaches a point of ease that produces a sensitive stage of grace. Reaching this state of mind and producing the grace (yugen) is thought to be the ultimate symptom of a true path of an actor’s training in Noh.

4.3.7 Second Part of Shokabun Stage

In the early stages the actor can choose plays which has physical quickness with energetic and gymnastic dance sequence that also include fights with sticks and swords. At the same time when he reaches the height of his acting career he always prefers to perform those plays that involve lengthy series of delicate, slow pattern of movement and stillness. Even though actor is no longer dependent on his physical beauty at this stage the audience feels the delicate and moving senses that emanates from within the actor. If the actor is still able to create artistic beauty at this age it means that he has been able to reach far beyond the technique. According to (Zeami, 1984) from this point onwards, there is a lot more that can be done. However, an actor who has truly mastered the art, even though he has lost his ability to perform many of the roles, and although he may manifest less and less of his artistry in
performance, still will have something of the aesthetic sense (hana) and grace (yugen), even though he can no longer play a varied repertoire.

The actor has to analyse carefully what he can and cannot do at this stage and once he realizes his shortcomings he could put more of his time in the teaching of the art, thus spreading it. Both teaching and the self-analysis will help the actor to develop his career from this stage to the end of his life as an artist.

The above quoted discussions prove that the actor training in Noh has been designed and theorized since the fifteenth century. Even today Noh actors are more or less following the same discipline and structure of training in all respects. However, there are slight changes between the schools and individual master-teachers and everybody believes in this system of learning by stages to master the art of acting by way of imitating. The division of the training into stages based on the age and experience of the actor always provides him an opportunity to get trained in a quite natural way of life. (Brandon, 1997) notices that this idea of training in seven stages as one of the most wonderful and encouraging viewpoints on actor and actor training. This provides a positive image of a long life in theatre compared to how the television series and films give unusual opportunities for teenage performers to become stars overnight-and just as quickly as they appear to be replaced by younger faces. Zeami, on the other hand, describes how the Noh actor, by training continuously throughout his career, is always ready to accept new challenges that match with successive stages in life.

Noh actor develops a quality through his training that he should be humble enough to criticize his own performance because he is so aware of his own incompetence. He is always ready to learn his lesions and remember it any time.
4.4 THE FUNDAMENTAL MODES OF TRAINING

As a foundation for training, an actor has to go through the regimented, deep and constant practice in the two basic arts (*nikyoku*) song and dance. According to (Zeami, 1984) there are various important elements to be mastered in the art of acting. Among them, an actor who is beginning his training must not overlook the two basic arts and three role types. These provides the proper means for an actor achieve the correct style in acting. As Kathryan Whylie (Ortolani & Leiter, 1998)\(^1\) mentions, training involves acquisition of technique in carefully planned stages calibrated to the age of the student. Dance and chant provide a foundation to which role playing is added beginning at the age of seventeen. At the outset, dance and chant training involves meticulous copying of the movements of a master-teacher in order to acquire the correct forms and rhythmic sequencing of the *Kata* or movement patterns. The actors acquire a sense of accomplishment in the poetic aspect of acting and the flexibility of movement through this fundamental practice. Further as shelly Fenno Quinn (Ortolani & Leiter, 1998)\(^2\) tresses chanting and dancing were the modalities through which all language and stage businesses were expressed.

The second step towards the acting practice recommended by Zeami is learning the three styles (*santai*). These role types refer to three prototypical styles of representation in which all specific roles are subsumed. The three stages are the aged style (*rotai*), the feminine style (*nyotai*) and the martial style (*guntai*). This practice named role play helps an actor to stand up for the reality of the life directly and express it. In the study of the Three Roles the actor learns the correct norms of posturing for three broad styles of playing. This training is meant to embody the epic part of the life and aim for the articulation. Both methods are crucially opposite each
other and the fundamental task of the actor is the amalgamation of these methods into practice.

The above passages reveal that, the necessity of learning to dance and chant are the fundamental training for an actor’s individual development. Noh actor is expected to reach a balance between mimetic and musical as his first step in acting practice and then only he can move in to an unmediated representation of life. That is, those who do not begin their training with the Two Basic Arts and Three Role types will only succeed in committing themselves to the creation of mere scattered elements in their Role playing, and this seems to be like a tree with its leaves but without any trunk (Zeami, 1984). The mastery of the two basic arts and three role types will make an actor superior in his art and permit him to manifest his own vision in all kinds of characters and plays.

To master the basic elements the actor has to start by imitating his teacher and this should be combined with the will to judge himself and his art. Through repeated practice he absorbs the form into his body and mind thus acquires a chance to know deeper about the form of art and thereby gain fluency in presentation. At the same time (Zeami, 1984) points out that an actor may not be said to have achieved a fluent mastery at the stage when he is still imitating what he has learned from his teacher.

The imitation may be effective at the surface level, but he will not yet have assimilated the art in to himself, his artistic powers will be insufficient, and his real skill with regard to Noh will not have increased-such is the actor who remains at the level of externalization. An actor who adds strength to his natural abilities through constant practice and rehearsal, understands quickly, and puts himself totally in to the object of his role and such a one who can truly be said to have achieved internalization.
Through this passage Zeami emphasise that an actor who only imitates his teacher cannot be a true master in his field and Noh is expecting an actor who can internalise the art than externalise it. While training, the master-teacher supposes to concentrate on creating such actors who can transform into their characters while performing on the stage.

The accomplishment of a Noh actor training occurs through the equalisation of two different methods that are imitation and becoming. In the imitation method the actor copies all bodily expressions like gestures, posters, movement patterns and facial expressions realistically. Here the actor has to observe a human action, analyze it, and reproduce it in conscious detail. On the other hand, the method of becoming permits an actor to incorporate himself into the emotions of the character by distinguishing the human action as a stream of awareness. The constantly developing flow of awareness permits an actor to travel entirely beyond the division between his body and mind and to incorporate himself into the character. The unity of these two methods creates an ideal actor in the world of Noh theatre. It is also a harmony of the objective method and the subjective method, a consciousness of the outside and inside. To find out a balance between the two methods is a lifetime task and thus the entire actor training in Noh theatre is designed to reach equilibrium between the two.

4.5 VOICE OR CHANTING TRAINING

Noh tradition gives immense value for culturing and evolving an appropriate voice for the Noh actor. Since The speech in Noh theatre is between normal speech and singing and it more sounds like chanting the verses. The voice appropriation of the actor happens only with continuous chanting of the plays in repertoire, thus it is an essential outcome of the actors entire artistic life.
Certain amount of practice absolutely strengthens an actor’s voice and the voice in such case would easily carry well. A complete training in chanting alone takes an actor’s voice from week to high level of achievement. As per tradition, the actor should be taught tunes by his teacher and through gentle, continuous and repeated practice he will also become master of it. As (Zeami, 1984) mentions the actor must sit up properly and listen to the tune of a flute for the key note to start singing while he beats the rhythm with his fan. Since it is the most important occasion in an actor’s life he should never think that it is just mere practice. As (Oida & Marshall, 1997) points out, most actor when they are doing an exercise tend to think that it is just an exercise thus if he make a mistake it does not really matter. However, if anybody makes a mistake on the stage he has to keep going and make an attempt to cover the error. An actor cannot stop and try again. In fact, he really cannot afford to make mistakes at all. Whenever an actor practices, it is better that he imagines that he is doing exercises before an audience. It suddenly becomes important that he engages himself fully, and avoids sloppiness. In this way, the quality of his work improves, and training will be genuinely useful. If an actor thinks that he is ‘only doing an exercise’, the work will be of little value, irrespective of how well he performs it.

4.5.1 Wau and Shu (Horizontal and Vertical Voices)

Listening to the tune carefully permits an actor to understand the two different kinds of voices. As training with regard to an actor usually begins with the vertical or week voice and then reach the horizontal or strong one. Practice on these two different modes alone would mould an actor to become a perfect master art of chanting and finally he will be able to chant in a harmony of both horizontal and
vertical voices, which is most ideal for Noh.

The sincerity and responsibility which considered as the fundamental quality of a Noh actor should commence from the beginning of his training. The guidance that (Zeami, 1984) gives on the voice training is as follows:

- One should use one’s voice when one has a good chance of training it, and when one’s condition is good.
- One should take medicines for the throat after one has finished training. Then one can improve one’s voice.
- As for the method of training one’s voice, it is hardly possible to make general remarks about this, as each person has a different quality of voice and different strengths of breath.
- When one exercises the training of the voice in *wau*, the horizontal voice, he should use it economically. On the other hand, one should force one’s voice when using *shu*, the vertical voice. There are different types of voice; the one in which it is better in sing with force, the other better in letting the voice carry naturally.

As (Zeami, 1984) suggests the early morning time and the evening is the best time for voice practice. Actors are recommended to do chanting practice on different kinds of plays in the evening time, while morning time as an actor should save his voice it is better to practice gently and less. (Konparu, 1983) describes that Utai is a chanted or spoken music of Noh which is a kind of song or poem in the Classical literary style. The above cited views on voice training reveal that, there are two kind of voice for an actor to understand and develop throughout his training period. The training approaches for both horizontal and vertical voice are different from each other and the actor has to master both types of voice projections to become a
professional adult in acting. From the time of Zeami, voice culturing and training were done with care and coherence such as dividing the forceful training to the evening and the gentle training to early morning.

4.5.3 Pitch, Breath and Vocalization

The melody of singing for a Noh play comes out of shu, so Noh chanting starts with shu and then changes into the wau style and once again finishes with shu. Vocalisation in Noh is fully connected with the control of breath for which the actor has to have a deep understanding on how to manipulate his breath based on the pitch and type of voice projection. The actor makes use of the breath as it goes out at the time of chanting in wau voice, and in shu voice chanting he uses the breath as it comes in.

Both ways of breathing while singing create tunes which sometimes help the voice and at other times help to embellish it beautifully. Thus the training concentrates more on making the actor learn how to control the two ways of breathing so that they will suit the words and sentences and also the way in which words are accented in a play. As (Zeami, Komparu, Omote, & Kato, 1974) said in fukyokushu this is the life of Noh singing, the way of Noh singing is based on breathing because only through sustaining the proper breath one can produce the correct pitch. While receiving voice training the actor has to try to grasp these concepts as much as possible and incorporate them into his own technique. While listening carefully to the pitch of the accompanying instruments (flute) that precede him, the actor must align the increasing intensity of the pressure of air in his chest to this pitch, close his eyes, and draw in his breath, so that when he projects his voice, his first sounds will automatically be produced at the proper pitch. If he merely listens to the pitch but
does not align himself with it (that is preparing the proper amount of air in his chest), then when he produces his first sounds he will by no means find it easy to take on the proper level of pitch. (Zeami, 1984).

The above mentioned passage reveals the importance of pitch and also its connection between the strength and the pressure of the breath used to produce voice. It also shows that an actor has to be very careful as to produce proper sound with the correct pitch of the instrument. As the pitch depends upon the control and production of the breath, the actor has to properly get trained in the movement of his lips for producing the proper sound syllable by syllable. The training in chanting should lead the actor to reach a position in which he would be able to fit the melody to the words and chant the syllables and words in a clear and correct manner. The beauty of the chanting in the final outcome of syllables and words performed in a clear and correct manner. The actor should be able to understand and master this and he should be able to incorporate the composition and the performance. He should also be able to harmonise the melody and characteristics of sound in the text. There is a proper order to follow while learning the art of chanting. The first step in that is thorough learning of the text word by word. As the second step, the actor has to master the melody of each line, then he has to learn how to colour the melody depending on the meaning of the line. Finally the actor has to learn how to apply the proper pitch and accent on it. After all these steps are taken, the actor must concentrate on how to bring all these concepts together to create an aesthetic beauty and grace while it is performed. In Art, at every stage, an emphasis must be placed on the rhythm. When practicing the voice, the trainee should miss no occasion to obtain this kind of training, so beneficial to personal development (Zeami, 1984).
The above paragraph shows that the scientific order of the learning process not only properly moulds and conditions the Noh actors’ voice and quality of speech but also makes the actor to understand and interpret his text. Thus ultimately this systematic training acts as the back force of the ‘hana’ or the flower which is the aesthetic beauty he produces at the time of performance. It also highlights the importance of the natural rhythm an actor has to follow during both training and performance in his artistic life. The actor has to learn all other parts, such as adjusting the link of words with music, lengthening and shortening the lines according to the meaning and situation and chanting according to notes etc., in order to reach the final state named Kokorone. As (Zeami, 1984) observes Kokorone is the ideal state that an actor can reach when he sings using both vertical and horizontal voice, saving his voice and decorating the tune, all of this is based on the unchangeable method of the ideal use of breath. To reach the highest level of chanting the actor has to learn the play without bothering about its tune, learn the tune without bothering about the play; learn the tune without bothering about its tune (Zeami et al., 1974). Finally, the actor who reaches the highest levels of accomplishment can start practising the most difficult notes and accents like five-note scales and the four voiced accents as well as the mutual musical systems of different pitch like ritsu and ryu. Once an actor is able to understand these principles and become cognisant on the basic distinctions involved in choosing the appropriate voice and manner he can create a sense of felicity. In terms of practicing the musical aspects of Noh the flow should be taken to heart: forget the voice and understand the shade of the melody. Forget the melody and understand the pitch. Forget the pitch and understand the rhythm (Zeami, 1984). With regard to the right way to proceed in practice, an actor first of all comes to a firm understanding of the real nature of his vocal instrument; this understanding helps him
to determine the appropriate way to proceed. Only then will he be able of follow the proper path which allows him to reach the highest stage of perfect freedom in producing his voice.

4.6 MOVEMENT OR DANCE TRAINING

To enter a performance space, the first thing an actor has to know is the geography of his own body. Thus to start with training for Noh the student actor has to undergo three important and basic elements of physical training. These fundamental elements named *Kamae, Suriashi* and the *Kata* are the ones which any of the Noh actors has to continuously practice in his entire artistic life. Both *Suriashi* and *Kata* generate from *Kamae* which helps to overcome any of the imbalance in the basic posture that will reduce aesthetic effect. The whole training in Noh is designed in a way to help the child actor explore the possibilities of these three elements throughout his life to master the art and build a career.

4.6.1 *Kamae*

The basic body position of the Noh actor is called *kamae* where the feet of the actor is together and the body weight has been shifted slightly forward. The position of the upper trunk is straight and thrusting, the lower part of the spine being pulled in. The arms, extended between the shoulders and the wrist are slightly curved with the elbows out, and the hands are in front of the trunk. All movements develop and return to this energy-charged posture. The location of the *Kamae* is more earthbound than elevated, which is more associated with the natural laws of gravity. The mastery of this posture with its natural look is the lifetime preoccupation of the Noh actor. Through continuous practice of the basic standing posture the *Kamae*, actor learns
how to stand in the centre with a clear awareness of the big power that pulls up from the top and the strong gravity from the ground that helps maintain perfection. Moreover there is also the awareness of a pulling force from the front, rear left and right of his body.

4.6.2 Suriashi

_Suriashi_ is the movement of an actor in Noh with his sliding feet. The feet of a Noh actor always tries to keep contact with the floor and only the toes are lifted slightly at the end of the step. The mastery on his basic posture _Kamae_ and slightly bent knees allows an actor to make his art of sliding natural and effortless. When energy from the actor’s front get stronger than that from his rear, the breath of that moment brings his leg forward and that becomes the _hakobi_ the basic movement of walk in Noh. As the first step an actor has to learn the _hakobi_ because it is the root of all movements in Noh. As (Kanze, 1979) suggests, an actor in _hakobi_ should try to keep his walking body in a single line. When the more an actor forgets that his body is constructed with face, hands, backbone and so on, then the more he can walk as a single line. It provides more possibility to an actor to express his emotion physically. Keeping this as the major guideline the actor starts his training with the basic stance which is the arms describing a circle, the trunk tilted forward, the knees slightly bent, and the center of gravity located in the lower part of the abdomen. It is also important to keep in mind that such stance should be stable and natural while practicing. At the second stage the actor has to move to gliding walk while maintaining the basic stance. He moves horizontally on one level, without bobbing up and down, and the movement proceeds from the hip.
When the actor learns how to raise the right arm and bring it forward to the center of his body while moving a few steps forward a Kata called Sashikomi emerges. As (Kanze, 1979) explains while moving in Sashikomi the actor has to stretch his arm ahead concentrating gradually until the direction is entirely frontal. And when the forward movement stops and he is still, the power with which one is pulled both forward and backward, both left and right, has a tremendous strength that actually seems to pierce-with its transparency-in the space ahead. When the actor moves back stretching out both arms, three steps from the stillness a Kata named hiraki becomes visible. Both Sashikomi and hiraki are techniques that manage or control breathing itself.

4.6.3 Kata

According to etymological dictionaries the word kata derives from kami (god) and ta (paddy or hand). Thus ka-ta involves god, agriculture and the hand of man, and indeed the basic movement patterns of Noh are related to agricultural activities and sacred rituals. In Noh actor training kata originally is meant to formalize the body movement with a specific purpose and it is also the structures of the movement patterns which furnish the energy source and the shape of the actor in performance. Even though there are some special Kata designed for specific plays, majority of the Kata are used in all plays. Depending upon the nature of the play and the skill of the performer the same and familiar Kata can recur to imply a separate identity. To create this separate identity the Noh actor has to master the kata by repetitive practice.

Two Japanese words Kata and katachi are closely related. When, Kata corresponds to pattern or model it refers to a set of movements in martial arts and to
dance patterns in Noh, the word *katachi* symbolizes shape, form, or condition, as perceived by the senses. The chi of *kathachi* apparently is an indication of internal powers and often appears written with the character of soul or spirit. We see it in such words as *Orochi* (a mysterious mountain deity), *Tachi* (field deity), *Mazuchi* (water deity), and *Ikazuchi* (lightning deity). Chi is used here to indicate a kind of spirit or ghost developed from an elemental being.

Ancient Noh texts illustrate *kata* with sketches of the actor dressed only in a loincloth and it can be said that *kata* is quite unrelated to costume specially in terms of outward appearance of a certain performance but focuses more on the movements of the body. Through continuous practice the actor tries to reach ease and produce an internal energy with his external pattern of movement. In other words the actor begins with practicing of *Kata* as pattern and finally reaches *katachi* as form (Konparu, 2005). As in most eastern traditional art forms Noh actor also uses the system of standard patterns to express the heart of the character through giving a specific shape. *Kata* allows the actor to create or define the particular character that he portrays. Furthermore when he expresses the inner spirit of the character it becomes *katachi* and finally the audience responds to the form and understands the mind.

Steady concentration conveys both the stillness of the seated and standing postures and the action that results from the movement of the head, arms, torso, and legs. Actors acquire the ability to sit, stand, and move as prescribed through years of physical and mental training. The influence of Zen Buddhist thought is evident in this approach: each movement is reduced to its minimum, and therein lies the discovery of its perfection (Konparu, 1983). As acting consists of movements of the actor’s body, in relation to the mind of the character as well with the words and lines in the play, the actor has to go through all detailed training in its form and movement. The actor
has to know how to use his body, hands and feet according to the music and atmosphere. According to (Zeami, 1984) to have an a deep understanding of these movements, an actor has to master different kinds of skills in dancing.

1. The first one an actor has to understand is the skill of self-conscious movement, which involves establishing the technical form of the dance and movement. Its learning begins with the actor pressing his palms together as through in respect, placing various elements of the body into motion, moving the hands in appropriate gestures and so on. To sum it up when it comes to proper structure of jo, ha, kyu, the actor will be able to reach the mastery of all other principals involved.

2. Although the skill of self-conscious movement concerns the movements of the dance as well, in the second skill named movement beyond consciousness the handling of the actor’s hand and feet are not involved; rather, this skill is concerned with the creation of an appearance that can bring about the proper feeling inherent in the dance itself. It is the creation of an atmosphere central to that method of performance in which the appearance of the actor goes beyond mere techniques and concrete forms. Such a performance resembles a bird that opens its wings and casts itself to the movement of the winds.

3. The third one which is skill of mutuality in balance involves blending the skill of movement with the jo, ha, and kyu that result from the skill of control. This skill of control produces an art of design; the skill of movement produces an art beyond external pattern. When these two can be combined together in an art of mutuality, the results will reach a culmination of artistic skills. The spectators, for their part, will then find such a performance truly moving. When an actor performs with these two principles in mind, the term skill of
mutuality in balance can truly be applied to his performance.

4. The fourth is the principle of mutuality in self-conscious movement that arises after the skill of mutuality of balance is mastered. The skill of self-conscious movement is then made the basis for an artist’s conception. And the skill of movement beyond consciousness is made subordinate to it in a particular performance.

5. Finally mutuality in movement beyond consciousness, on the other hand, places the skill of movement beyond consciousness at the center. This makes the skill of self-conscious movement subordinate to it. This combination produces an art beyond any mere appearances.

The above passages confirm how a Noh actor attains the ultimate level of his skill through step by step practice. The actor has to understand the difference between each type of skill through practising his movements and forms. The first one gives more importance on self conscious movement which is the movement of an actor’s different body parts including his limbs. As a beginner the actor has to develop the skill of dance form self consciously which is known as Suchi in Japanese. The essential part of the second one Buchi is the static state of an actor’s body with full of internal consciousness, or it can also be defined as the movement beyond the consciousness. Through a continuous training in the first form the actor will able to acquire control of his entire limbs and body that allow him to move on the stage with a permanent flow. This also provides a balance of the dance with a blend of both control and structure of movement. Thus the movement appears as too effortless and natural in the third one. The fourth one is more internal and the training is more into making the movement a flow of the actors’ imagination and self awareness that in turn helps the actor to get in to a meditative condition. Once an actor reaches the
position of distinguishing the above referred movement forms of acting and also attains mastery of each type of acting through his training, then he would be able to make a perfect blend of both of these in order to create the fifth one which is the ideal one called sokoukuchi. The fundamental acting in Noh tradition is that an actor should be self conscious to articulate his movements on the internal consciousness and reach into mutuality. Through his training an actor has to reach a state where the flow of movements become really coordinated without his consciousness and control over it. And also at the same time acquire an ability to show the internalization of the character thus, ultimately transforming in to the very character that he portrays.

Noh tradition believes that if a child actor masters both dancing and chanting properly, then he will be able to perform a harmonious combination besides which in the future he can also be an expert who can present artistic performance with ease. This is because; the proper way of training would help him to keep his gentle beauty or yugen till the end of his artistic career. The proper mastery comes when an actor imitates his teacher’s will, shows discernment, assimilates his art, absorbs his art into his mind and body and thereby reaches a level of perfect fluency in the art of chanting and dancing. The actor has to surrender himself to his natural abilities through rehearsals and practices and render himself thoroughly into the object of his role which is indeed to achieve internalization of his character thus depicting real life when he performs.

4.7 THREE ROLE TYPES

Once an actor gets an authentic mastery on the fundamentals of the dance and chant right at the early stages of his training period, then he has to go through the process of impersonating the three basic characters. As the first step of understanding
the basic characters the actor has to imitate his master and his style and repeatedly
practice it until he is able to portray them autonomously. Traditional teachers of Noh
believe that once an actor gains the ability to portray these three characters through
repetitive practice, then he can easily apply these techniques to type of acting that
involves any character. The actor in this stage would start his training on the basic
role type keeping the elegance and gentleness gained through his training in voice and
dance.

As (Zeami, 1984) mentions even though an actor may perform a variety of
parts his successful beginning must lie in his study of the three role types to create an
acting style of the highest fruition. These three are the old person, the woman, and the
warrior. An actor must master the study of what is essentially required to imitate a
quiet and solemn old man, great elegant woman and the powerful warrior.
Furthermore the actor will be able to manifest a characterization of these depending
only on the artistic intentions of his performance.

4.7.1 The old Man and His Dance

Learning the old man and his dance is one of the crucial steps for an actor in
his career. Achieving the skills to appear as an old man is a basic model for portraying
characters like divine, solemn and quite. As this character requires a calm mind, the
training in its dance allows the actor to develop gentle pauses and tranquil movements.
Even though the actor has to portray an old man’s character, he is never allowed to
appear like an old man who bends their loins and hips, shrinking their bodies while
doing unattractive patterns of movements. Since this role is the summit of Noh it is
very easy for spectators to identify the real skill of an actor. Thus to reach mastery of
portraying an old man the actor has to practice for years and get into the peak of his
art. (Zeami, 1984) used the word *Kanshin-Enmoku* to describe the technique of matching the enactment of an old man’s character. The actor has to learn to imitate the body posture by observing the master teacher. And the basic drawings by Zeami thus, say that one has to become the character first and then look at the distance with a quite mind to depict the behavior of this particular character. To fulfill the creation of an old man the actor should not attempt merely to imitate the external characteristics of old persons. The actor should be a bit slow in responding to the sounds of the *taiko* or *tsutsumi* and chant while his gestures and movements will also follow only an instant after the music. Generally old man’s limbs are heavy and he is hard of hearing thus quite naturally his physical movements cannot keep pace. However all of them want to appear young. Keeping this principle in mind an actor has to play this role in a youthful manner such that every old person would wish to assume and show the desire, the old feel for the young. An old person no matter how youthfully he wishes to dance, will not, in principle, be able to keep up with the beat of the music. Finally the contrast of an old man dancing like a young one creates a novelty in the mind of the spectator. Once an actor appears as an old man of high rank with gestures involving no characteristic movements and stillness hopefully he can be a skillful master actor. An actor who learns and masters an old man’s character can use this same technique to portray characters like god, old woman, nun, etc…
4.7.2 A Woman and Her Dancing

The role type of woman is commonly suitable for young actors because he will be able to produce the fundamental elements of such a character. The most important thing an actor has to do here is to discard his masculine strength while learning to identify the woman character. The actor has to train to get the female gentleness, body flexibility and the feminine look in order to present this character. For example the actor should be able to keep his hips and knees straight with loose hands and a flexible body posture while concealing his steps with long costumes. The position of the head and neck is very important in doing a woman character because if the neck bends backward the face may appear vulgar at the same time if the actor looks down it will be inappropriate. Since a male actor is doing this character it is very much important to take care to dress in proper dress in order to make the character effective. An actor has to learn how to impress gentleness and delicate beauty through his dancing to convey the elegance of the woman character. The actor
should also learn to bear the heart of a female and perform it smoothly to create the ultimate beauty in the heart of the spectator.

4.7.3 A Warrior

This is the third basic character an actor has to go through. As it is difficult to learn all these characters at one and the same time, the actor should wait to reach the right stage to learn these role types. By learning the character of a Warrior the actor gets a chance to develop powerful movements in his artistic life. The fundamental characterization of the warrior is the strength of his body with the full use of his intelligence. The actor has to learn how to use the powerful movements by retaining the gentleness and beauty through studying the posture and the form carefully from his teacher. Once an actor learns the warrior character he can apply these techniques to portray even the mad person or the character of a demon.

Once an actor gets trained in playing the roles of the basic characters he will be able to naturally understand the other characters like Gods, Demon, Buddhist priests etc… Further the actor should get trained in all other styles of acting in order to manage all
styles of expression. Regular training and practice moulds an actor to create continuous impressions of novelty and he may be able to colour his characters while performing. At the same time, the actor has to carefully keep the same spirit of novelty in chanting, dancing, gesture and expressive movements. As (Zeami, 1984) believes an actor should develop the acting skills to the height of his ability, ready to dedicate his heart and soul in practicing it and also in being a good teacher.

4.8 UTAIBON (NOH ACTORS’ MANUAL)

The important progress in the training period of an actor is that he gets a chance to go through the family Utaibon, which is known as Noh actors’ manual or performance script. Each play has this highly complex and codified description that guides an actor to self-sufficiency or autonomy in his art. Generally, it contains the words for speech with the indication of rhythm of drumming, indicating the way of chanting and the miniature illustrations of the physical postures and actions and also the changes in particular movements etc… Through learning how to read and understanding the Utaibon, the actor reaches a position where he can prepare the
chant, dialogue and the physical movements all by himself and show his teacher. From then onwards the master teacher will only check and pass judgment on what has been developed by the student through his skills acquired over a long period of training. The teacher may even demand the student to prepare a new piece of chant or dance by merely consulting the *Utaibon* of a particular play. These significant situations would help the actor to realize himself as a full-fledged actor who has by then accomplished a solid establishment of oral and physical skills.

### 4.9 HIGH SKILL IN MUSIC OF NOH

Even though a professional actor is not expected to perform the instrumental music of the Noh, it is very important for him to get trained and reach the high standard of skills in playing drum and the flute. The *Shite* actor has to achieve total awareness on the rhythmic and notational structures of all the other elements of Noh performance; he will be trained on music alone along with a small group of actors who share the same stage of training.

### 4.10 GETTING IN TO MASK

The most important moment of a Noh actor in his life as an artist is to get a chance to wear the mask of a *Shite* role. Even though the actor might be an expert in handling the mask such as in removing and putting it back from the silk bags and carrying boxes, he never gets a chance to wear it before he plays his *Shite* role. As mask helps the actor to sustain stability and the style of performance, the entire body movements and the structures of the physical language in Noh are molded and developed based on masks. The interesting thing in mask training is that, mostly the actors wear the mask only when they get close to the performance, and usually do the
training without mask. Always the actor practices the dance and actions and choreographs merely imagining that they wear the mask. The only time they use the mirror to see the mask is at the moment before they are about to get to the stage. The time in the mirror room is sacred and mirror room exercise should be the most important part of the daily ritual before performance. After the dressing the actor carefully studies the mask and captivates the spirit of the mask into his body. As a result the audience becomes the mirror in the time of the performance and the actor externalises the character’s inner psyche and be entirely in the control of technical essentials that are communicated to the audience. The actor has to discover the way in which to animate his mask. There should be someone who can help the actor from outside to give life to his character. Usually, the Iemoto (master) or the senior actor is the one who helps the actor to recall the shape and angle of his dance with the mask to acquire proper accuracy. And as an end result the spirit of the mask and the performer start praising each other in totality.

Noh training demand that the actor has to follow natural and proper steps of learning from his teacher. He is not allowed to skip some steps and superficially imitate some experts without gaining the fundamental quality of acting. The actor has to keep to the responsibility of dealing with role types suitable for his age and skill to gain true ability in his career. The master teacher is responsible for judging the student and not let the student perform anything beyond his natural ability.

Accomplishment of an actor is deeply rooted in his continuous and repeated practice of his art till he becomes an expert in it. Therefore the whole training is considered in this particular way. This training provides time for thoroughly learning each and every part of an actor’s art that would help him maintain quality in performance till the end of his artistic life. Generally, actors start by making one or
two roles as their favorites and develop it through experience and practice till it becomes easy to perform. Further, he evolves new roles in his repertoire without forgetting all the roles played earlier. Thus the actor learns new things from the old roles and mixes the new roles into the existing ones. Thus even the old roles appear new to the audience. Finally, through training the actor is supposed to reach a point of appreciating the arts and natural beauty. As a result, the spirit or soul of an actor develops into a creative circumstance that the inner images and inner poetry of the play begin projecting while he performs.

4.11 AESTHETIC CONCEPTS BEHIND THE TRAINING

The process of actor training depends on what they aim through their performance on stage. The entire training is designed for molding an actor to reach the aesthetic concepts and thus fulfill the aim of the performance. Noh theatre keeps unique aesthetic concepts behind its training that originated and developed from the time of Zeami till day. The most important concept in Noh is Hana (the Flower). Flower is a symbol that Zeami uses to describe the true beauty created by an actor in different ways throughout his career. In his writings in Kadensho (treatises of transmission of flower) signifies the central concept of Hana. From the aesthetic concept of Hana, Zeami travels to the concept of Yugen that is considered as an ultimate stage of attainment in all areas for an actor. Thus Yugen can translate itself as the profound and mystical grace of an actor during his performance. Another important concept is keeping Jo.ha.kyu- the fundamental natural rhythm-in acting.
4.11.1 Hana (The Flower)

Noh theatre conceives the *Hana* as the ultimate aim of an entire performance. Even though the literary meaning of *Hana* is flower, the elements of this aesthetic concept are so versatile. The concept of *Hana* was introduced by Zeami while he was developing the system of acting and actor training in Noh to describe the seasonal effect of freshness and fascination. This freshness and fascination is the novelty that the audiences have never seen before and remain fresh in its creative power. As (Zeami, 1984) says all plants and trees flower at their appropriate season, and people appreciate their flowers because they are fresh and novel. Similarly in Noh an actor must try to strike an audience with the freshness of each play and each performance. All these flowers fall after a while; it is not in their nature to last for a long time. When they open at the appropriate seasons, they strike people’s eyes with their novelty and freshness. *Hana* in the Noh is the same freshness and novelty of an actor that attracts the audience and will vary according to his age and skill. The training in Noh emphasizes the need to have a capacity to play different roles depending upon the suitable times in the actor’s career.

The child actors naturally attract the audience with their elegance and gracefulness which make almost anything they do interesting to watch and it also masks the week points in their performance. At the age of twelve or thirteen the grace of an actor is stronger and produce the *jibun no hana*-the flower of that particular moment. Since it is the *Hana* for this particular moment it disappear when the child actor’s physical and vocal changes happens at the age of sixteen. It is very significant that at this stage the actor has to fully concentrate on developing this technique. Then the actors aged twenty-four can also attract the audience with their physical charms. Therefore, the actor in this age is being judged against a performer who is already
highly regarded. It may seem on the occasion of his performance that his flower is a new and fresh one, and, should he win a competition, others may praise him beyond his due, so that the actor himself comes to believe that he is already highly skilled. Since this *Hana* is mainly based on the visual effect of their youthful bodies it is considered as merely a superficial beauty. According to (Zeami, 1984) one who believes that this temporary flower is the real flower is one who has separated himself from the true way. And indeed, any performer can be taken in by this temporary flower and thereby fail to realize that he is losing the real one. Such is the situation of a young actor. If the actor has true ability to understand his own level of perfection in his acting then he can never lose the level of the flower. If an actor thinks he has attained a higher level of skill than he has reached, however, he will lose even the level that he has achieved. The truly new flower comes only through the actor’s age and experience, when his spectator is truly being surprised. Even at the age of thirty-five which is the peak of perfection in an actor’s career, he should recognize that he is not yet found the true flower. As this is the condition where the actor hasn’t reached the real *Hana* yet (*imada makoto no hana wo kiwamenu*). Thus an actor has to analyse his abilities from outside and objectively reach the technical mastery of his art to produce the real *Hana* in his career. At the age of forty-five if an actor can produce the novelty and freshness without depending on his physical beauty and skill then that is called the real Hana (*Makato no Hana*). Since *jibun no hana*, *koe no hana* and *yugen no hana* and so on are the flowers which come from the skill there is a time those flowers will wither. But as for *makato no hana*, the way of blooming and the way of withering are as the heart, that’s why they remain as it is. It means *jibun no hana* is the flower which arises from the performers physical condition and skill at the same time the *makato no hana* is the flower which arises by the movement of the heart.
More than learning the myriad styles of expression, an actor must not forget the flower that he has established at various phases of his career. These various flowers, past and future, make up the various elements of one’s acting style. By past and future it means that the various styles that an actor has naturally mastered at various times, such as his presence as a child actor, his art as a young adult, his elaborate skills as a mature actor, as well as technique as an older performer, should all form a part of his art. Again an actor must never forget the aspects of his art that he has learned from the beginning of his career as an actor, so that, in response to varying circumstances, he may make use of them (Zeami, 1984). The actor must learn to act as much role types he can so that he becomes somebody who keeps seeds of all various flowers. An actor has to have a large amount of repertoire to make an appeal to his audience without being stuck with a particular genre of plays or limiting himself to special kinds of characters or scenes alone. The actor who is always ready to create any flower which suits the contemporary circumstances is known as the master in the Noh theatre. However, it is a vague conceptual beauty that goes beyond the physical limits of an actor. Finally, in his old age the Noh actor reaches to the higher level of Hana that is known as Shiore (the drooping or withering of a flower). Only an actor who masters every aspect of Hana can attain the Shiore because it is the same as the flower which can wither only after blooming. This is possible only through expressing the will of an actor on stage that creates a sense of aesthetic pleasure.

4.11.2 Yugen (Grace)

The word Yugen originally represents the fundamental ideas of beauty found in poetic theory which means the elegance or grace. According to (Konparu, 1983) From the days of the poet Fujiwar no Shunzei (1114-1204), it was taken to mean the
beauty of yojo, lingering charm or suggestiveness, and was considered the ideal of beauty of the classical thirty one-syllable poems called wakas. It indicated a state of subtle, haunting beauty in the heart, and sentiment of song-poems. Later it was refined to become subi, the quiet, rustic beauty embodied in the fundamental aesthetic ideal of haiku. Then, we are told; it was cleansed of quietist shade and made artistic, and came to mean beauty that perfects.

Considering Noh acting, Yugen is a mysterious elegance or graceful performance that fills inside all characters. It is not limited to the good and beautiful. Thus it is much profound and complex with a sophisticated air about it. As Otomo Taishi Benito (Ortolani & Leiter, 1998) explains, it is the Zen concept of the Buddha-like nature of all things (Bhssho) inspired Zeami to give the metaphysical justification for the transference and application of Yugen. Thus the whole training of an actor should be to create Yugen in various types of atmosphere and all kinds of role types he performs. According to (Zeami, 1984) it is like seeing various characters such as court ladies of high and low rank, men woman, monks, ordinary people, peasants, barbarians, beggars, and non-humans (actually the equivalents of beggars) holding a branch of a flower. Even though the characters vary all of them carry such branches of flowers that symbolise the beauty of acting. It is the mental force that makes the acting graceful. It is a special spirit of a performance that exists or creates a state of subjectivity for the audience, beyond the simple visual level. Thus it is very difficult to apprehend it intellectually. Since Hana symbolises an exterior beauty or beauty that can be seen Yugen is a subconscious beauty which can be felt and responded to. Or in another way Hana is a beauty made to be seen and Yugen is made to be felt. Thus Noh is often called the art of Yugen and the most ultimate idea of an actor is to create the Yugen on the stage with any character and atmosphere. To create the Yugen, acting
in Noh theatre is considered as a stylized and symbolic representation of the essence and substance of the human experience realised through the use of dance and music. The training in dance and music in the earlier stages help an actor to create the true path of Yugen.

4.11.3 Jo, Ha, Kyu

Jo, Ha, Kyu can be considered as the most important aesthetic concept in Noh. The term originates from Chinese ancient court music and was imported to Japan through Gagaku. In Japan it was adapted as an arranging principle for poetry, tea ceremony, and flower arrangement and eventually to Noh. As (Konparu, 1983) observes ever since it was taken into the Japanese language the terms Jo, Ha, Kyu came to have much broader meaning, distinct from the original concept. From 14th century onwards Noh actors considered Jo, Ha, Kyu as the creative progression of every phenomenon in this universe- even the cry of a bird and the noise of an insect. These rhythmic structures are the result of an accurate observation of the natural patterns. Zeami alone is responsible for the elaborate theoretical refinement and codification of this concept; he adapted Jo, Ha, Kyu which originally controlled the tempo and mood within a piece of dance music, to every segment that was encompassed by the structure of Noh theatre. One cannot exaggerate and say that the whole universe of Noh consists of Jo, Ha, Kyu (Ishii, 1980). In Noh theatre each play keeps this dramatic structure, each scene, each single speech, and each gesture and movement has its own individual Jo, Ha, Kyu. Considering the rhythm of acting in Noh (Konparu, 1983) points out that it represents the natural rhythm of life; that all thought and verbal modulations proceed not at an even pace but with time on an incline, so to speak. The idea is that the most natural way of being and doing is to
begin slowly and gradually, build to a rapid climax, stop, and begin again. Thus the training of an actor is absolutely concentrated on making him define and embed all his movements into this particular rhythm. As (Oida & Marshall, 1997) points out, even a single gesture such as the raising of an arm will commence at a certain speed and end at a slightly faster rhythm. The degree of acceleration will vary; sometimes it is quite clear to the onlooker, sometimes the shift in tempo is so slight that it is not visible, but it is always there. The sense of onward progression is never absent. Sometimes the surface of the action slows down, or stops completely, and there is no visible Jo, Ha, Kyu; nevertheless, the development of Jo, Ha, Kyu still happens this time at an internal level. Since this rhythmic pattern is natural it also exists in the body of the spectator. They also experience the sense of organic suitability while the actor uses it while performing. Through his training the Noh actor recognizes that working in this real rhythmic pattern helps him to appear more organic and natural than focusing simply on training of imitating the superficial realism. This can create genuine feelings of fulfillment in the spectator that emerges spontaneously. As a result, the action becomes more truthful for both actor and spectator. The communication also becomes instinctive rather than intellectual. The training concentrates to bring the actor beyond his self consciousness and ego to gain the correct sense and recognize the principle of Jo, Ha, Kyu both in micro and macro level.

4.11.4 Tai and Yu

The origin of this concept is from Buddhist Philosophies that means the essence and its function. To define the importance of an actor’s creative mind, Noh tradition adapted this concept into the practice of acting. Tai is the cause of every action and depends on the mind of the performer while Yu is the effect. Therefore it
can be visually be made manifest. According to Zeami (1974) if Tai is flower, Yu is the scent and if Tai is moon Yu can be the moonlight. As (Oida & Marshall, 1997) describe, every actor should have a fundamental structure behind any of his action; otherwise the details of expression cannot rise in any kind of truth. At the same time, an actor also has to know how to let this deep structure be made visible to the audience. Thus an actor in Noh theatre should know that the necessity of Tai and Yu is equally important at the time of performance. While developing the character, all the outer manifestations that form a character are the result of the inner spirit and feelings. Tai, is not only this inner spirit of the character but also the total understanding of the art of Noh theatre. It is also the proper acquisition of the basic style and form of that art through constant use of discipline and training, Yu, which may contain certain elements unique to the performer; it visually comes out in Tai (Ishii, 1980). Generally Tai is something which is felt. Which is precisely that feeling of mind and Yu is the bodily function of that feeling. Thus the mature d performer has to realize that he should imitate Tai instead of imitating Yu. In another words once an actor copy Tai it normally grows as Yu in artistic context. This Psycho-Physical low of acting shows that through the all physical training an actor in Noh has to gain the great capacity condensing and focusing emotions and finally create an inner communication between an actor and the audience. When an actor reaches in to a state of artistically refined emotional energy he find out his mind as Shohin which can be connected as beginner’s mind or primary intention.

4.12 CONCLUSION

The above mentioned discussions clearly prove that a Noh actor has to dedicate all his life towards the art of Noh. According to the systems of training
created by Zeami it is a lifelong process for the actor who dedicates himself towards the Art of Noh and its practice. The actor has to understand the proper meaning of learning through having a real mastery of basic skills which allow him to enter into the realm of grace and finally connect all the arts through a concentrated intensity of the mind. To give more emphasis to the importance of the mind (Zeami, 1984) suggests that what is felt in the heart is ten; and what appears in movement seven, when an actor feels ten in his heart he should express only seven in his movements. When a beginner in Noh learns to gesture with his hands and to move his feet, he will first do as his teacher tells him and so will use all his energies to perform in the way in which he is instructed. Later, however, he will learn to move his arms to a lesser extent than his own emotions suggest, and he will be able to moderate his own intentions. The master actor of Noh never tries to show his skill but always tries to show the determination of the on stage. According to (Zeami, 1984) it is the actors will (Kokoro) that like an invisible strings animate a marionette on a procession cart. It shows that the actor overcomes duality of the mind and body through his training. Thus he is able to create a total fusion of emotion and expression in order to deliver the intensity of pure feelings upon the audience. Furthermore, the response from the spectator helps an actor to propose the hypotheses of what he learns. This vibrant circle of practice—that is training, stage performance, and spectator’s response decide the excellence of a performer.
Reference


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