

**TITLE:** *Scene From a Noh Play***ARTIST:** Tsukioka Kogyo**DATE:** 1898**SIZE:** 9 ¼ x 13 ¾ inches**MEDIUM:** Ukiyo-e woodblock print**ACQUISITION #:** 70.49**ADDITIONAL WORKS BY ARTIST IN COLLECTION:** YES X
NO 

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Tsukioka Kogyo was born as Hanyu Sadanosuke on April 18th, 1869; he died February 25, 1927 at the age of 57. Kogyo was a well-known Japanese ukiyo-e artist of the Meiji Period (1868-1912). As a teenager, he was a student and adopted son of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (his mother married Yoshitoshi) from whom he learned the fundamentals of painting. He took his stepfather's name Tsukioka. Later, Kogyo studied under Ogata Gekko, well known Japanese painter and printmaker; Gekko gave Tsukioka the name Kogyo. Kogyo became interested in Noh theatre from his stepfather who was also fascinated with Noh. In the 1890s Kogyo used his knowledge of print design to create three major series of prints related to the Noh theatre. Over the span of his life Kogyo produced over a dozen Noh paintings. He created five sets of prints inclusive of approximately 700 individual prints. He created other individual prints of Noh and Kyogen subjects, as well as over one hundred illustrations of Noh and Kyogen plays for Japan's first graphic magazine, *Fuzoku gaho*.

A Brief Analysis

Noh plays come in five categories concerned with gods, warriors, women, contemporary themes, and supernatural beings. Plays chosen by Kogyo often deal with the connections between spirits and humans. Originally, Noh drama was a very stylized type of dance-drama that was performed before nobility and their families. However, by the late 19th century the Meiji Restoration (1868-1889) allowed for the drama to become more accessible. Due to Noh being so closely associated with the overthrown shogunate (shogun, or warrior led government), the art form was almost lost forever. But a few determined actors kept it alive until it found public favor again. By looking at the prints, it can be seen that Kogyo played a role in keeping Noh a vibrant art form. Kurt Shaw, author of *Illustrated Noh* stated, "Kogyo is best known for his two series of old traditional Japanese Noh theater prints, *Nogaku zue -- One Hundred Noh Pictures* (1897-1902) and *Nogaku hyakuban -- One Hundred Noh Dramas* (1922-26)."

Death Rock

This print is a scene from the Noh play *Sesshoseki, Death Rock*, in which the fox spirit emerges from the "death rock." Genno, a priest came to a place called Nasuno, the location of a large rock. He witnessed a bird falling dead when it flew over the rock. He was warned by a local woman about going near the rock, known as "death rock," because it contained the evil spirit of a golden-haired fox that killed any living thing that came near. The woman told him the spirit was chased out of the palace for trying to kill the emperor, and hid itself in the "death rock." Genno prays for the spirit, the spirit exits the rock, confesses to all the killings he had done and promises to cease from killing.

Statement about the Artist: Kogyo's Daughter

Kogyo had a daughter named, Fumio who became known as the artist Tsukioka Gyokusei (1908-1994). She took over the Tsukioka school after Kogyo's death in 1927. She describes her father's work habits:

"I remember beginning at the age of fifteen going to the Kanze Noh stage at Omigari in Tokyo with my father. Before the play began, father would sketch the stage, beginning with the hashigakari. People around him were amazed at the speed and facility with which he drew.... When father was absorbed with a painting, he worked with a fierce look on his face, and I knew not to enter his studio."

References:

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 Serper, Zvika. "Japanese Noh and Kyogen Plays: Staging Dichotomy." *Comparative Drama*, vol. 39, no. 3/4, 2005, pp. 307-360., www.jstor.org/stable/41154287.
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Vocabulary

Japanese Noh: perfected during the Muromachi period (1336-1568), the term means "skill" or "ability." It is a lyrical, traditional Japanese theater that draws its materials from many sources and its form from rituals and folk dances.

Ukiyo-e: the term means "pictures of the floating world." It is a genre of art in Japan that focused on momentary pleasures and flourished from the 17th through 19th centuries.

Hashigakari: a bridgeway that connects the main stage to the mirror room.

Meiji Restoration: an event of change that restored practical imperial rule to Japan in 1868 under Emperor Meiji.

NŌH PLAY PICTURE BOOK

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: K-5

Session Activity: Tsukioka Kogyo did many Nōh play woodblock prints. Kogyo drew certain scenes from each play that he observed, bringing them to life in his prints. He gave little visual descriptions of what was taking place in the scenes, and when several scenes of one play came together they created a picture book of a play. Students will be told a Nōh play story and create illustrations for their own picture book of the play.

Materials: paper (8x10in), pencils, color pencils, markers, staples,
link to Nōh stories <http://www.the-noh.com/en/plays/index.html>,
link to Nōh performances <http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/noh/en/>,
link to prints of Nōh plays by Tsukioka Kogyo <https://www.artelino.com/articles/noh-plays.asp>

Activity Procedure: Explain to students what a Nōh play is and show them images of Kogyo's prints. Students will then listen to a summary of a Nōh play chosen by the teacher (2nd to 5th graders will receive their own copies in a format suitable for their grade levels). Students will then choose several scenes to illustrate. They will staple the papers together to create their picture book. The teacher can then decide to scan the images produced by the students (or photograph them), and put them into a powerpoint to retell the story using their images.

Objective: Students will understand that stories come to life by transitioning them from the mind to paper through illustration.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: K-5

Strand: Skills, Techniques, and Processes

Enduring Understanding: Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

Standard 3 #1: Use materials, tools, and processes to achieve an intended result in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.
(VA.3.S.3.1)

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: 9-12

Strand: Historical and Global Connections

Enduring Understanding: Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live(d).

Standard 1 #4: Apply background knowledge and personal interpretation to discuss cross-cultural connections among various artworks and the individuals, groups, cultures, events, and or traditions they reflect. (VA.912. H.1.4)

Connecting Cultures

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN 6-12

Session Activity: Nōh theater and literature is a big part of Japanese history and gives foreign audiences glimpses of Japanese culture and thought through actual performance as well as through woodblock prints. In the US, there are varieties of artworks and theatrical performances that give foreign audiences a glimpse of North American culture and thought. Students will research and create power-point presentations that compare and contrast Japanese culture with US culture, to show differences and similarities between the cultures and their thinking as well as the way they may have influenced each other.

Materials: Computer, power-point program,
link to Nōh Traditional Theater <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2091.html>
link to history of American Theater <http://www.stagebeauty.net/th-frames.html?http&&www.stagebeauty.net/th-ushist.html>

Activity Procedure: The teacher will give students brief information about Japanese Nōh plays and Japanese woodblock prints with Nōh subject matter and the role of these artforms in society during the Meiji Period. To guide students in their explorations, questions will be given that will further facilitate them in their power-point presentations. The presentations should focus on comparing and contrasting one Japanese play to one American production. Students will see the values taught and the ideas conveyed through the theatrical performances in both Japanese and American culture. Students will differentiate American and Japanese theater to see what draws tourists and viewers in general into their productions. Students will also see the way Japanese culture has affected American society and has become a big part of American entertainment. Example questions for the power-point might be:

- During what time period did the play debut? What was happening in society at that time?
- *The Teahouse of the August Moon* was an American production influenced by Japanese culture. Though today an analysis of the play shows the flaws in its depiction of Japanese culture.

Objectives:

- Students will analyze the way art can reflect and influence the structure or understanding of a society.
- Students will discover and discuss the way cultures are being represented through plays.



Nōh performance at the Sado Nōh Village