

An Evening of

Noh *and* Kyogen

Free online video streaming



❖ Noh

Kiyotsune

Kongo School Noh actor KONGO Hisanori



❖ Kyogen

The Snail

Okura School Kyogen actor SHIGEYAMA Sengoro

Friday,
December **24**, 2021,
from **2** p.m.

Japan Foundation Official YouTube Channel

https://youtu.be/qZYn_CSWYJY



Both productions will be presented with English synopsis

Free for a year



Organized by :

The Japan Foundation Kyoto Office

With the cooperation of :

The Kongo Noh Theatre Foundation

Shigeyama Kyogen Troupe

Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University

An Evening of Noh and Kyogen

Noh

Kiyotsune

Awazu no Saburo, a retainer to the warrior general Taira no Kiyotsune, returns to Kyoto, carrying a lock of Kiyotsune's hair, left behind as a keepsake. Suffering defeat after defeat in a series of battles and tormented by a sense of desperation at the fate of the Heike clan, Kiyotsune cast himself into the water, off the shore of Yanagi-ga-ura, Buzen Province (present-day Oita Prefecture). Informed of his passing, Kiyotsune's wife resents her husband's death, saying that she would have thought it inevitable if he had died in battle or of illness. "Since my pain grows even more unbearable whenever I see the hair, I will return it to its owner, who is now enshrined near the deity of Usa Hachimangu in Tsukushi." She recites this poem and returns her husband's memento to the shrine. When she hopes to see him at least in her dreams, his spirit appears to her. She blames her husband for throwing away his own life, and he reproaches his wife for spurning the lock of hair he had left behind. The loving couple who are tragically kept apart reunite this way, feeling full of reproach. To dispel his wife's resentment, Kiyotsune narrates what happened up to the time he chose to die. He tells of how the Heike clan was exiled to wander in a remote region, lamenting that even the deity of Usa had turned aside from them. Interweaving his beautiful imagery with the actual scenery, Kiyotsune recounts how his clan set forth in their small boats, now cast adrift like floating autumn leaves. He tells of how his heart trembled when he saw a flock of egrets, mistaking the birds for the white flags of the Genji. With the moon shining down on his boat, he played his flute and leapt overboard. The story of his demise is rich in poetic beauty, creating a sense of transience. Kiyotsune reenacts his suffering in the realm of Warrior Hell, where he was condemned to fight endless battles. However, he has found salvation, saved by the merit earned from invocation of the Buddha's name in his dying moment.

Kyogen

The Snail

A mountain priest is heading home to Mount Haguro in Dewa after finishing his ascetic training on the sacred training grounds of Mounts Omine and Kazuraki. However, feeling sleepy halfway through his trip, he steps inside a bamboo thicket beside the road to take a little nap. In a different scene, there is a man whose grandfather has reached a venerable age and who wants him to live even longer. He hears that snail is an elixir of longevity, so he sends off his servant Tarokaja to catch one. However, Tarokaja has never seen a snail before and has no idea of what one looks like. "A snail is a creature with a black head, a shell on its back, and tentacles that sometimes protrude from its head. Some are as big as humans," describes his master. Tarokaja sets out to the bamboo thicket just outside the village to find a snail, where he stumbles upon the sleeping mountain priest. Seeing his *token* (black hat worn on the forehead) and conch, Tarokaja mistakes him for the snail he is seeking and tries to bring him home.

Every year in autumn, The Japan Foundation Kyoto Office organizes an event called "An Evening of Noh and Kyogen" to give people an opportunity to experience traditional Japanese culture, inviting international students, Japan Foundation Fellows, and those enrolled at the Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai to join us. This year, however, the outbreak of COVID-19 has resulted in travel restrictions, making it difficult for students and Japanese Studies scholars abroad to come to Japan. To minimize the risk of virus transmission, we will take a new approach to this year's event. Performances will be filmed without an audience, and released for online video streaming, which will be made available to the public free of charge for a year.

Contact

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