

# Noh Charity Performance

Prayers from kyoto for Reconstruction of Japan's Disaster-affected Regions

**【Part 1】 at 10:30 am**

Noh "Yashima"

Kyogen "Kuchimane"

Noh "Hagoromo"

**Thursday ,  
August 22  
2024**

**【Part 2】 at 6:30 pm**

Noh "Kagetsu"

Kyogen "Fukuroh"

Noh "Toru"



"Hagoromo"

**Venue : ROHM Theatre Kyoto , Southhall**

13 , Okazaki Saishoji-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto City

Access : <https://rohmtheatrekyoto.jp/english/access/>

Organized by : Kyoto-based volunteer Noh performers

Co-organized by : The City of Kyoto , ROHM Theatre Kyoto(Kyoto City Music Arts and Culture Promotion Foundation)

The Japan Foundation Kyoto Office

Collaboration : Showa Printing Co.,Ltd. Kyotobutaibijutsuseisakusyo Co.,Ltd.

Play synopses will be presented  
in English.

**Admission tickets are ¥1,500** each for Part 1 and Part 2 (\* Open seating ; no refunds)

Kyoto Kanze Nohplay Theatre : Box office or telephone reservations 075-771-6114

ROHM Theatre Kyoto Ticket Counter : Box office or telephone reservations 075-746-3201

Kyoto Concert Hall Ticket Counter : Box office or telephone reservations 075-711-3231

Online purchase/reservation (WEB) <https://www.s2.e-get.jp/kyoto/pt>



## <Part 1 Commentary and Storylines>

### Noh Play: Yashima

During the late 12th century, Japan had two formidable samurai clans. Initially, the Taira clan wielded control but was eventually overthrown by the Minamoto clan. Notable among the numerous battles fought between these two clans is the Battle of Yashima, famed for the valor of Minamoto no Yoshitsune. The noh performance *Yashima* features Yoshitsune as the central character in the drama.

A traveling priest reaches Yashima and stays overnight at the dwelling of an elderly fisherman. In remarkable detail, the old man describes the heroic deeds performed by Minamoto no Yoshitsune during the battles. Struck by the vividness of the account, the priest inquires about the elder's identity. The aged man subtly suggests he is none other than Yoshitsune himself and then vanishes into thin air. That night, Yoshitsune materializes in the priest's dream, revealing his unyielding obsession with warfare and recounting his relentless battles that persist even in the depths of hell, long after his demise. As dawn begins to break, Yoshitsune's figure fades away into the emerging daylight.

Minamoto no Yoshitsune, celebrated for overthrowing the Taira clan, was a tragic hero who was ultimately killed by his own brother. He remains a beloved figure among many Japanese. In the medieval period, it was believed that warriors would descend into hell, where they were doomed to endure endless battles. Authored by Zeami Motokiyo, *Yashima* portrays Yoshitsune battling in hell, symbolizing the futility of war—a theme that resonates deeply with modern sensibilities.

### Kyogen play: Kuchi Mane (The Mimic)

A master, having been gifted some sake, orders his servant, Taro Kaja, to find a companion to drink with. Taro Kaja brings back an unwilling individual, who turns out to be notorious for his drunken rampages. The master, realizing the awkwardness of having brought the guest against his will, decides to send him away calmly and instructs Taro Kaja to follow his lead exactly. Misinterpreting the instructions, Taro Kaja believes he must mimic the master's every move. Enraged, the master strikes Taro Kaja, who in turn hits the guest, humorously illustrating Taro Kaja's misunderstanding as the central comedic element.

### Noh play: Hagoromo (The Feather Mantle)

This noh performance draws from the "Swan Maiden" legend, a tale woven into the fabric of many cultures around the world. It recounts the story of a celestial maiden who, having descended from the skies to bathe, has her celestial robe taken away by a man, rendering her unable to return to the heavens.

Upon finishing his fishing and returning to Miho Bay, the fisherman Hakuryo discovers a beautiful robe draped over a pine branch. Just as he is about to take the robe home, a celestial maiden appears and pleads, "Please return it to me." Hakuryo agrees but requests that she perform a dance in return. The celestial maiden responds, "Give me back the robe first." However, Hakuryo, wary of her promise, hesitates and says, "If I give you the robe first, you might leave without dancing." The celestial maiden counters, "Suspicion resides in humans; in the heavens, there is no deceit." Upon hearing these words, Hakuryo, feeling ashamed, returns the robe to her. Overjoyed, the celestial maiden wears the robe and performs a dance extolling the spring landscape of the pine woods of Miho. She then ascends back to the heavens, scattering treasures upon the earth and casting a gaze upon Mount Fuji.

## <Part 2 Commentary and Storylines>

### Noh play: Kagetsu

The main character of this noh performance is Kagetsu, a boy who was taken from his father at age seven and has since navigated a life filled with unpredictable, fateful twists.

In the province of Tsukushi in Kyushu, nestled at the foothills of Mount Hiko, lives a man whose seven-year-old son has vanished. The man decides to become a priest, renouncing his worldly life and embarking on a pilgrimage across various provinces. As spring unfurls, with cherry blossoms bursting into glorious bloom, he reaches Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto. There, a local resident near the temple tells the priest of a boy named Kagetsu. Soon, Kagetsu appears and sings, his voice intertwining with that of the local resident in a lyrical love song. He then shares the storied past of Kiyomizu Temple. As the priest watches the scene unfold, he becomes absolutely certain that Kagetsu is his long-lost son and identifies himself as the boy's father. Overjoyed by their reunion, Kagetsu dances while playing the *kakko* drum, vividly illustrating the journey he has endured since being abducted at age seven. They then embark on a path of Buddhist training together. The pinnacle of this piece is its rich showcase of medieval performances.

As you watch, let your thoughts drift back to ancient times with performances of *kouta* (short songs), *kusemai* (narrative dance), *kakko* (a two-headed drum), and *sasara* (a percussion instrument that produces a rattling sound).

### Kyogen play: Fukurou (The Owl)

The tale centers on two brothers. One day, the younger brother returns from the mountains and falls victim to a peculiar, unexplained illness. Desperate for a cure, the elder brother seeks help and requests prayers from his friend, a mountain priest. The mountain priest, upon learning that the younger brother had knocked down an owl's nest in the mountains, tells him that the illness is due to his being possessed by the owl's spirit. The mountain priest immediately starts a ritual. As the ritual progresses, the younger brother starts making bizarre sounds, culminating in incessant hooting: "Whooo!" Eventually, the older brother joins in with hooting. What unfolds next is for you to watch and find out! Can the mountain priest save the brothers? Sit back, laugh heartily, and enjoy the performance.

### Noh play: Toru - Shaku-no-mai

This noh play features Minamoto no Toru, a real-life nobleman who lived in the 9th century.

On the night of the autumn full moon, a traveling priest arrives at the villa of Rokujo Kawara in Kyoto. There, he meets an old man carrying pails of saltwater. The man tells the priest a story about the minister Minamoto no Toru, the one who established the villa. Toru, though a prince of Emperor Saga, did not ascend to the throne and instead embraced a life of cultural and artistic pursuits. Toru constructed the magnificent villa there and faithfully replicated in its garden the scenic landscape of Chika-no-Shiogama (Salt Kiln at Chika) from Michinoku. Each day, he would have people bring sea water from Osaka Bay to make salt, reveling in the sight of the purple smoke that rose during the process. As the two admire the moon, the old man demonstrates how to draw water with a pail and then vanishes.

Today, we will present the second part of the performance, starting after this scene.

As the priest drifts into sleep, the ghost of Toru emerges, appearing just as he did in life. Basking in the moonlight, he dances with grace, delighting in the beauty of the lunar night. As dawn breaks, he ascends to the capital of the moon, his visage evoking a lingering sense of loss and yearning. In this noh play, Minister Toru, who cherished elegance and refinement, is depicted in a fantastical, dreamlike form as an aristocrat dwelling in the moon's capital after his death. The vibrant melodies of the chants and music, along with the graceful dance, intricately weave a multi-layered world of beauty that captures the audience's imagination. Immerse yourself in an exquisite staging that transports you back in time to the Heian period.