

Kata of Noh

Kieran Burgess - ISTA TaPS 2017/18. Questions? Kieran@kpburgess.com

Noh Theatre uses *highly stylised* movements and gestures, called *kata*. Some kata involve the *ōgi* (the folding fan), some involve steps or stomps, and some use all three.

Kata string together different gestures or dance moves, and their meaning can change depending on the text used alongside. All will implement Jo Ha Kyu.

Here are just some examples - many more exist!

Shitai = Sitting

Actor kneels with one knee raised.

Hakobi = Walking

The actor glides/slides on his heels and curves back his toes, and then rests his whole foot on the floor.

Similar to the walk of Zen priests.

Agehaōgi = e.g. Looking into Distance; Taking off Cloak

The opened fan is held before the face and over the head as the actor takes 3 steps backwards, then lowers to the right.

Variable meaning depending on text.

Sayū (follows the Agehaōgi) = Concludes a Section

Step to the left with left arm outstretched

Then, stomp with left foot, then extends the right arm and takes a step to the right.

Kumo no ōgi = Looking at Clouds, Sky, Mountains

Holds his left hand forward and right hand over the fan

Then, draws both hands apart whilst looking up at the same time

Tsuki no ōgi = Looking at the Moon

Touching left shoulder with the opened fan and looking upwards and diagonally to the right.

Tsumami ōgi = e.g. Falling Blossom; Lowering Fishing Nets

Grasps opened fan by the first rib and then extends the fan forward

Makura no ōgi = Taking a Nap

Open fan held in left hand over the face; face is concealed

Yūken ōgi = Express Joy

Opened fan held to chest, then lifted to the right (often twice)

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Shiōri = Crying; Grief; Hiding Tears

Left or right hand raised to cover face, but the hand must be held a little bit in front of the face (no actual contact between palm and face).

Two hands means intense weeping.

Sorikaeri = Great Pain; Big Actions e.g. leaping into sea

Hands held in front, weight shifted to left leg

Then, actor spins round to the left with the body slightly arched forward

Right foot is lowered once turn is complete

Maneki ōgi = Affection; Beckoning another

Opened fan lifted above shoulder, then turned over in a fanning motion.

Usually repeated.

Kasumi no ōgi = e.g. Indicating mist; waterfall; could drifting down mountain

Opened fan is slowly lowered and turned over so that it is parallel to the floor.

Sashikomi & Hiraki = Authority; Dignity

Sashikomi: lifting and thrusting forward a closed fan

Hiraki: follows *sashikomi* and it is a spreading open of the arms