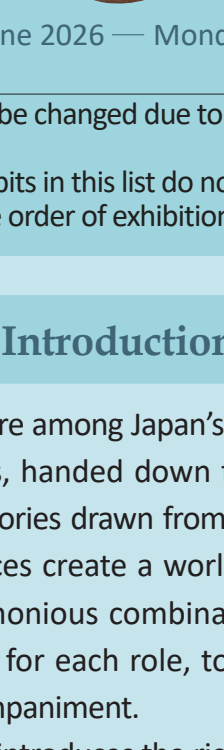


Getting to Know the World of Noh



Thursday, 25 June 2026 — Monday, 20 July 2026

Remarks:

*The exhibits may be changed due to various reasons without notice.

*The order of exhibits in this list do not necessarily correspond to the order of exhibition.

Introduction

Noh and Kyogen are among Japan's foremost performing arts traditions, handed down for more than 600 years. Based on stories drawn from classical literature, these performances create a world of subtle beauty through the harmonious combination of masks and costumes chosen for each role, together with chant and musical accompaniment.

This exhibition introduces the rich variety of expressions found in Noh costumes, masks, and stage properties through works preserved by the Owari Tokugawa family collection. We invite you to take your first step into the world of Noh.

Chapter 1

Noh Masks: *Omote*

Noh is a form of musical drama in which stories unfold through *utai* (chant and song) and *mai* (dance). Noh performers do not simply "act" a role; rather, they seek to embody the spirit of the character itself. Essential to this transformation is the *omote*, or Noh mask.

Masks are used for beings that transcend the human world, including deities, demons, spirits, and the souls of animals and plants. Performing without a mask is known as *hitamen* ("bare face") and is used for roles portraying living human characters.

Combining overwhelming stage presence with the refined beauty of sculptural art, Noh masks employ a wide range of artistic techniques to express the distinctive nature and emotions of each role.

1 Scene of The *Hōshōdayū's* Noh play (copy). Copied by Sakurai Seikō. Shōwa period, 1951.

2 Noh Mask, *Hakushikijō*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Inscription: "Tenkaichi Kawachi." Traditionally attributed to Genkyū Mitsufusa. Edo period, 18th c.

3 Noh Mask, *Chūjō*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Bicchū no Jō Iemasa. Edo period, 17th c.

4 Noh Mask, *Shakumi*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Ōmiya Yamato Sanemori. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

5 Noh Mask, *Han'nya*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Inscription: "Tenkaichi Zekan." By Zekan Yoshimitsu. Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.

6 Noh Mask, *Deikurohige*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Deme Yoshimitsu. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

7 Noh Mask, *Ko-omote*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Zekan Yoshimitsu. Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.

8 Noh Mask, *Waka-on'na*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Deme Yoshimitsu. Edo period, 17th c.

9 Noh Mask, *Mambi*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th c.

10 Noh Mask, *Fukai*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Kawachi Iseki. Edo period, 18th c.

11 Noh Mask, *Uba*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 17th c.

12 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, cherry-stem design in embroidery with gold leaf on silk. Edo period, 18th c.

13 *Ui-kanmuri* Crown for Noh play. Edo period, 19th c.

14 *Chūkei (Warawa-ōgi)* fan for Noh play, floral medallion design. Edo period, 19th c.

15 Noh Mask, *Dōji*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Deme Mitsunaga. Edo period, 18th c.

16 Noh Mask, *Imawaka*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th c.

17 Noh Mask, *Heida*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Tokuwaka. Edo period, 17th c.

18 Noh Mask, *Kojō*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 17th c.

19 Noh Mask, *Tenjin*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th c.

20 Noh Mask, *Ikazuchi*, painted Japanese cypress wood. By Deme Mitsunaga. Edo period, 17th c.

21 Noh Mask, *Deigan*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Inscription: "Tenkaichi Kawachi." By Kawachi-no-daijō Ieshige. Edo period, 17th c.

22 Noh Mask, *Namanari*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

23 Noh Mask, *Shinkaku (Sujiyakashi)*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Deme Yoshimitsu. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

24 Noh Mask, *Kotobide*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

25 Noh Mask, *Ōtobide*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

26 Noh Mask, *Shishiguchi*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Yoshinari Sekikaku Ittōsai. Momoyama period, 16th c.

Chapter 2

Noh Costumes

A character's appearance in Noh is completed through the combination of mask (*omote*) and costume (*noh shōzoku*). Luxurious textiles may signify demons or noble figures, while restrained colors are used for monks or elderly figures. Through differences in pattern, color, shape, and material, audiences can immediately recognize a character's identity and status.

One of the most iconic Noh costumes is the *karaori*, a women's costume woven with floral motifs in brightly colored silk threads. Graceful female characters and celestial beings wear flowing *chōken* robes with long, elegant sleeves, while heroic warriors and powerful demons appear in *karginu* jackets or *happi* coats with bold and dynamic patterns. Wigs (*kazura*), headbands (*kazuraobi*), crowns (*kanmuri*), and black caps (*token*) are also used to further define each character's identity.

27 Noh Costume, *Karaori* Outer Robe, flower-medallion and bamboo blind design, red and white rung-dyed silk. Edo period, 18th c.

28 Noh Costume, *Nuihaku* Inner Robe for child actor, fan and long-tailed bird design in embroidery and gold foil on white silk satin. Edo period, 17th c.

29 Noh Costume, *Sobatsugi* Jacket, *manji* swastika with scroll design, gold brocade on indigo blue silk. Edo period, 17th c.

30 Noh Costume, *Chōken* Jacket, cherry blossom and long-tailed bird design, yellow silk gauze. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

31 Noh Mask, *Zō*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Inscription: "Tenkaichi Ōmi." By Ōmi Mitsumasa. Edo period, 17th c.

32 *Tengan* Crown for Noh play. Edo period, 19th c.

33 *Chūkei* Fan for Noh play, pine and cherry blossom design. Edo period, 19th c.

34 Noh Costume, *Awase-Karginu* Jacket, design of wheel on undulating vertical line, gold brocade on light green silk. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

35 Noh Mask, *Ōbeshimi*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 17th c.

36 *Ha-uchiwa* Feather Fan for Noh play. Edo period, 19th c.

37 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, interlocking circle design, embroidered gilt silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

38 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, *mizu-aoi* with gold leaf design, embroidery on gilt silk. Edo period, 17th c.

39 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, bush clover, chrysanthemum and bellflower design, embroidery on gilt silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

40 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, paulownia scroll with gold leaf design, embroidery on gilt silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

41 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, pink design, embroidery on white silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

42 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, pine scroll design embroidery on brown silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

43 *Kazuraobi* Noh Headband, rice plant design, embroidery on gilt silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

44 *Koshiobi* Noh Sash Belt, checkers and chrysanthemum design on red silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

45 *Koshiobi* Noh Sash Belt, leaf on diamond lattice design, embroidery on indigo blue silk. Edo period, 19th c.

46 *Koshiobi* Noh Sash Belt, leaf on diamond lattice design, embroidery on indigo blue silk. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

47 *Chūkei* Fan for Noh play, dragon and cloud design. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

48 *Chūkei* Fan for Noh play, crane, tortoise, pine and bamboo design. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

49 *Chūkei* Fan for Noh play, reed and wild goose design. Edo period, 19th c.

50 *Shizume-ōgi* Fan for Noh play, cloud, plum flower and maple leaf design. Owned by the 14th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshikatsu. Edo period, 19th c.

51 *Chūkei* Fan for Noh play, phoenix and paulownia design. Edo period, 19th c.

52 Libretto for a Hundred Noh Plays. Book cover: gold leaf decoration on paper. Traditionally attributed to Kanze Kokusetsu. Edo period, 17th c. Inherited by the Hirado Matsura family. Donated by the Okaya family.

53 Libretto for a Hundred Noh Plays (Hōshō school version). Edo period, 18th-19th c. Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

Chapter 3

Noh Musical Instruments:
The *Shibyōshi* Ensemble
— Bringing the Story to Life —

In Noh theater, musical expression is created through *utai* (vocal chant) and *hayashi* (instrumental accompaniment). The *hayashi* ensemble consists of the flute (*fue*), hand-drums (*kotsuzumi* and *ōtsuzumi*), and drum (*taiko*). This is the same ensemble arrangement represented by the "five musicians" in traditional *Hinamatsuri* doll displays.

The instruments serve not only as accompaniment but also as sound effects that shape the distinctive atmosphere of Noh. Because rhythm plays a more central role than melody, the ensemble is collectively known as *shibyōshi* ("the four rhythmic instruments"). The flute is a transverse bamboo flute with a clear, high-pitched tone. The drums are constructed with lacquered wooden bodies decorated in *maki-e* gold designs, covered on both sides with leather and tightened with cords (*shirabe-ō*). Each drum produces a distinct sound, and each performer uses characteristic vocal calls during performance.

54 *Nohkan* Flute for Noh play. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

55 *Kotsuzumi-Dō* Hand-drum Body, turnip design, *maki-e* lacquer. Edo period, 18th c.

56 *Kotsuzumi-Dō* Hand-drum Body, evening glory design, *maki-e* lacquer. By Yazaemon. Edo period, 18th c.

57 *Ōtsuzumi-Dō* Hand-drum Body, vine design, *maki-e* lacquer. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

58 *Ōtsuzumi-Dō* Hand-drum Body, morning glory design, *maki-e* lacquer. Traditionally attributed to Yasuke. Edo period, 17th c.

59 *Taiko-Dō* Drum Body, morning glory and bamboo fence design, *maki-e* lacquer. Edo period, 19th c.

60 *Taiko-Dō* Drum Body, young pine and crane design, *maki-e* lacquer. Edo period, 19th.

Chapter 4

Kyogen Masks, Costumes, and Props
— Step into the World of Kyogen —

Kyogen developed alongside Noh as a companion performing art. If Noh may be compared to a "Japanese musical," Kyogen can be likened to comedy in the modern sense. Its stories are based on familiar situations from everyday life, and the dialogue is delivered in colloquial language.

Kyogen is characterized by lively emotional expressions and exaggerated gestures, making it easier to understand and more humorous than Noh.

Like Noh, Kyogen employs a variety of masks, costumes, and props. Supernatural and non-human characters wear masks together with costumes such as *kataginu* jackets, *kyōgen-bakama* trousers, *suō* jackets, and *monpa* (padded costume garments), each chosen to suit the character portrayed. Props such as hoods (*zukin*), false beards (*hige*), buckets (*oke*), and folding fans (*ōgi*) are used effectively to bring the vibrant world of Kyogen to life on stage.

61 Kyogen Mask, *Kentoku*, painted Japanese cypress wood. By Izumi. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

62 Kyogen Mask, *Usofuki*, painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th c.

63 Kyogen Mask, *Tobi* (Black Kite), painted Japanese cypress wood. Traditionally attributed to Izumibō. Edo period, 18th c.

64 Kyogen Mask, *Saru* (Monkey), painted Japanese cypress wood. Edo period, 18th-19th c.

65 Kyogen Mask, *Hakuzōsu*, painted Japanese cypress wood. By Deme Kazumitsu. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

66 Kyogen Mask, *Kitsune* (Fox), painted Japanese cypress wood. By Deme Kazumitsu. Edo period, 17th-18th c.

67 Folding Illustrated Albums of the Yamawaki Kyogen School. Edo period, 18th c.

68 *Tō-uchiwa* Fan for Noh play, dragon design. Edo period, 18th c.

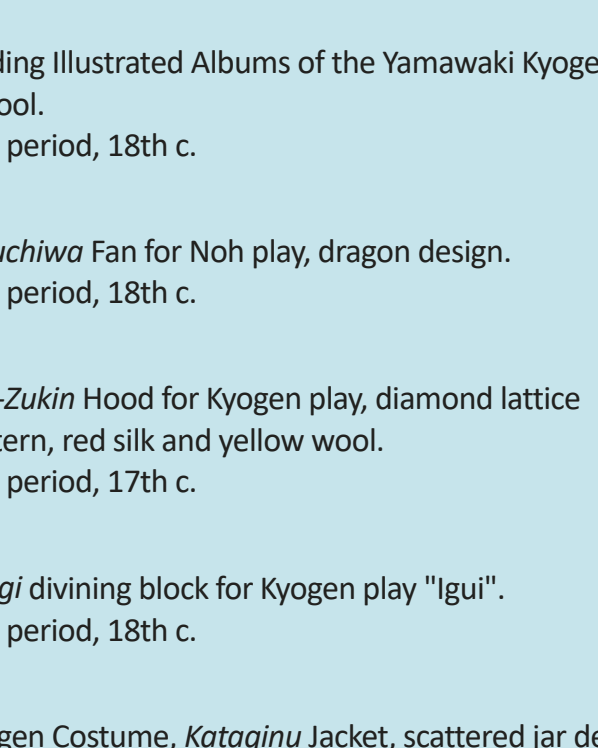
69 *Oni-Zukin* Hood for Kyogen play, diamond lattice pattern, red silk and yellow wool. Edo period, 17th c.

70 *Sangi* divining block for Kyogen play "Igui". Edo period, 18th c.

71 Kyogen Costume, *Kataginu* Jacket, scattered jar design, dyed hemp. Edo period, 19th c.

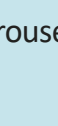
72 Noh Costume, *Naga-kamishimo* Jacket and Trousers, spinning wheel design on light green hemp. Edo period, 19th c.

73 Noh and Kyogen Costume, *Suō* Jacket and Trousers, cobweb, willow and swallow design, dyed hemp. Edo period, 18th-19th c.



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