

Ne-no-Kuni-Shiren

The person who performs the Kagura is called Kagura-shi. “ Shi” is in some way meant by a person who has special knowledge or special techniques.

Probably, people in general do not know the word of “Kagura-shi.” Many people appreciate the Kagura drama in shrines.

However, it is thought that few people have interest in the performers of the Kagura. The Kagura performers call themselves Kagura-shi (The Kagura performers intuitively think of themselves as Kagura-shi.)

We can imagine that Kagura-shi are particularly proud of performing the Kagura. Well, Kagura-shi do not only perform the Kagura dramas but also create new repertoires of the Kagura. They have rich creative faculty, compose new scenarios, and publicate attractive Kagura repertoires.

For today’s presentation, a new repertoire which has just been born is going to be released.

The repertoire’s title is “ Nenokuni-Shiren, ” or Trials in the Kingdom of the dead. Out of Kojiki(the Ancient Chronicle), they picked out the theme, dramatized it, and made it a Kagura drama.

In the meantime, there are many Kuni(province)in Japan. There is a Kuni called Takamaga Hara, or the Kingdom of Heaven. There lives a great deity called Amatsu-Kami. The Kuni on the earth is called Nakatsu-Kuni. This Kuni is where we make a living. A deity called Kunitsu-Kami lives with us on the earth.

Also, there is a Kuni, where generally the dead live. There is Ne-no-Kuni , which is the same as Yomi-no-Kuni where the dead live.

In addition, there is Watatsu-no-Kuni in the sea bottom. In there live deities. The new Kamisama deities’ story makes a subject matter about what happened to Ne-no-Kuni.

The introduction seems to be long. We will introduce the outline of today’s drama right away.

There was a young deity whose name was Ohnamuchi-no-Mikoto. The deity changed his name, and later became Ohkuninushi-no-Mikoto.

Ohnamuchi had all the time been attacked by his older brothers. He visited Ne-no-Kuni Province in order to evade brother’s aggression. In Ne-no-Kuni lived a great Kamisama who was Susanou-no-Mikoto.

Ohnamuchi arrived at Ne-no-Kuni. There , he met Suzeri-Hime Princess who was the daughter of Susanou-no-Mikoto.

He fell in love with Suzeri-Hime Princess at first sight, who was sagacious and beautiful. Suzeri-Hime’s father judged that Ohnamuchi was not really a brave man.

Accordingly, her father concluded that Ohnamuchi was not worthy of his daughter’s husband. Father decided on giving Ohnamuchi trials. Father prepared for rigid task. Thinking of whether Ohnamuchi was able to overcome or get frustrated.

Luckily, Ohnamuchi conquered the trials with help of Suzei-Hime's wits, and was able to get out of death by fire with support of rat's incarnate. Ohnamuchi challenged the trials prepared by Susanou-no-Mikoto, and finally became the victor. The two conquered a lot of ordeals. And were to hold the wedding ceremony.

Susanou-no-Mikoto, who come had become their father, celebrated the two's marriage, drank a lot of sake, got dead drunk, and fell asleep heavily.

Seeing Susanou-no-Mikoto fast asleep, Ohnamuchi and Suzeri-Hime took out the sword, bow and Koto-harp which their father had cherished, and the two ran away from Ne-no-Kuni. They ran heading for Izumo-no-Kuni.

Susanou-no-Mikoto at last noticed what the two had done, and got furious. However, father considered the two's future at which they were going to make efforts, and then preferred celebration to anger.

Then, Susanou-no-Mikoto presented Ohnamuchi a new name. The new name was Ohkuninushi. Ohkuni is meant by a great kingdom, Nushi is meant by a king. That is, father's message was that Ohkuninushi be the King who would govern the new Kindom. That was the new name which Susanoo gave his daughter's husband.

Probably, there are no Japanese who do not know the name of Ohkuninushi. This story is that a young Kami-sama was growing up to be a successful Kami.

The story tells that it is necessary to understand trials in order to grow up. We can also interpret that it is necessary that a plenty of people's cooperation including his wife's in order that that young Kamisama becomes an excellent Kamisama.