Noh Hagoromo 羽衣
("The Feather Robe")

This is one of the most popular plays in the noh repertory. A fisherman named Hakuryō finds a beautiful feathered robe (hagoromo) hanging on a pine tree by the seashore and decides to take it home and make it a treasured heirloom of his household. But as he picks it up, a celestial maiden, who has come down to earth to bathe, appears and claims the robe as hers. Hakuryō at first refuses to give it back, but eventually, moved by her pleas, agrees to return it if she will dance for him. With gratitude, the angel dances for mankind's joy, and then flies off and disappears in the distant skies.

Author: Unknown. Though commonly attributed to Zeami (1367-1443), recent scholarship points to a later author.

Scene: Spring, the pine woods at Hio in Suruga province, the present Shimizu city in Shizuoka prefecture.

Category: Third category woman (celestial maiden) play, present-time noh in one act, jo-no-mai dance piece, with taiko stick drum.

Performance practice: Performed by all five schools. In some variants, the robe is draped on the first pine along the bridge where Hakuryō finds it. Other variants tend to cut out much of scene 5 and thus emphasize the instrumental dance, or combine the two instrumental dances.

Characters (in order of appearance)
ё Wakizure (accompanying waki actors): two companion fishermen. Also carry a fishing pole.
ё Shite (main actor): a celestial maiden. Wears a celestial maiden (zō-onna) mask and an elaborate crown.

Synopsis: Scene by Scene

Stage assistants place a small pine tree on stage and drape a robe in its branches.

1. Waki and Wakizure entrance: Hakuryō and two companion fishermen enter to Issei music and sing of the fishing boats on the bay at Hio. Hakuryō introduces himself, then, with his companions, sings of the early morning peace and calm of spring, the waves washing upon the shore, the pine woods of Hio, the clouds merging with the distant waves, and the many fishermen in their boats.

2. Waki monologue: Hakuryō tells of walking into the pine woods along the shore and seeing falling blossoms, hearing glorious music, and smelling a wondrous fragrance. There he sees a beautiful robe on a pine tree of no ordinary color or scent, which he picks up saying

he will take it home and keep it as a family heirloom.

3. Shite entrance, Shite and Waki exchange: A celestial maiden appears and calls out to Hakuryō saying that the robe is an angel's robe which belongs to her. Hakuryō says he cannot return it because it is such a valuable treasure, but the angel pleads that without it she cannot return to heaven. They each describe their own condition: Hakuryō's stubbornness and the angel's helplessness. The chorus sings of her dewdrop tears, her crown of jewels, the wilting flowers in her hair, and the signs of an angel's approaching death. The chorus further describes her home in the sky and the birds flying freely about which remind her of her own loss of freedom.

4. Waki and Shite exchange: Moved by her pleas, Hakuryō agrees to return the robe if she will dance for him. With gratitude, she agrees and asks for the robe to dance in. Fearing that she may break her word and fly off without dancing, Hakuryō again refuses, but the angel replies that "only mortals doubt; in heaven their is no deceit." Ashamed, the fisherman hands over the robe which she dons as the monogi costume change music is played. Then Hakuryō and the angel describe her sleeves which flutter in the breeze.

5. Shite's narrative dance: The chorus and occasionally the angel sing describing her as an angel from the glittering moon palace who will here dance the Suruga dance from the East, describe the beautiful setting around Hio: the spring mists, the fragrant breezes, the clear moon, the snows on the peerless Fuji, and then wonder why the beautiful heaven and earth are not one. Continuing, they describe how an angel's robe rarely descends to brush the earth, the wondrous sounds that resound in the heavens, and the winds that scatter blossoms like swirling snow as the dancing sleeves swirl like pure white clouds.

6. Shite's dance: The angel declares her devotion to the allmighty moon lord Seishi and then dances the slow and elegant Jo-no-mai instrumental dance.

7. Conclusion: The angel and chorus sing in exchange describing this vision of the celestial maiden, the rustling of her robes, the flowers in her hair, and her feather sleeves. Then she dances a brief and quicker Ha-no-mai instrumental dance, a recapitulation of the earlier Jo-no-mai dance. The chorus then describes how the dances of the East continue as the angel's loveliness radiates in the heavens, how she showers riches upon the land, how times pass and the angel floats above the pine woods of Hio, above Fuji, and finally mingles with the mists and disappears into the heavens.

"Hagoromo" kiri

(practice segment 3 minutes)
羽衣

東遊の数々に
東遊の数々に
その名も月の色
人月夜の中の
空に又満願真如の影
となり

願国土成就
願葉満の
富士山頂にこられる 時移って 天の羽衣

浦風に舞い立つてびく 玉保の杉原

字島の雲の愛鷹山や富士の高嶺

行れても失せにけり。
"Hagoromo" kiri chanting

Lyrics  Translation

CHORUS

Azumaasobi no
kazukazu ni
Azumaasobi no
kazukazu ni
sono na mo tsuki no
miyabito wa
san-go yachū no
sora ni mata
mangan shinnyo no
kage to nari
go-gan enman
kokudo jōju
shippō jūman no
takara o furashi
kokudo ni kore o
hodokoshitamō
saruhodo ni
toki utsutte
ama no hagoromo
urakaze ni tanabiki
tanabiku

Amid Azuma measures
with many numbers,
amid Azuma measures
with many numbers,
as each is named, a maiden
of the moon appears,
shining in the skies again
on this three-fives night
in a form so full and perfect
with the light of truth,
for the Vows are all fulfilled,
the kingdom realized;
and letting all the seven treasures
fall and scatter like the rain
everywhere throughout the land,
they are graciously bestowed;
then, before too long,
the hour flies swiftly.
The heavenly robe of feathers
trails upon the blowing inlet breeze,
and as it trails

[M While the chorus sings, the dancing shite begins to move toward the bridge, gradually ascends it,
and finally, with the last words of the chorus, delivered very softly, disappears beyond the curtain.]

Note:
Only
during
actual
performance

Mio no matsubara
Ukishima ga kumo no
Ashitakayama ya
Fuji no takane
kasuka ni narite
amatsu mi-sora no
kasumi ni magirete
usenikeri.

over Mio’s grove of pines,
past cloud-skirted Floating Island,
above Mt. Ashitaka
to Fuji’s lofty peak
she flies and faintly distant
in the heavenly sky she grows,
and intermingling with the mists
vanishes away.
**HAGOROMO**  kata tsuke (how to dance)

Starting position: Kneel down *(right knee touching floor)*

**Open ougi**

Shite sings "Aazuuma aasobino, kazuka zu ni"

**Lyrics >>> Kata**

Azuma >>> stand up, tuck in right foot

sononamo >>> Sasikomi

irobito >>> Hiraki

sangoya >>> Kakeru right, move to ‘sumi corner’

soranimata >>> sumitori (reach sumi)

mangan >>> Nejiru left, move (big arc) to ‘daishou mae’, Kakeru left to face front

gogan >>> Sasikomi

kokiudo >>> Hiraki

jooju >>> preparation for Maneki Ougi

shiiopoo >>> Maneki Ougi, (at 2nd blow) foot move 5 steps forward (start and stop on right foot)

furashi >>> hold fan proper, Hiraki

kokudoni >>> preparation for Sakazuki Ougi

hodokoshi >>> Nejiru right to face front, Sakazuki Ougi, (as you lift ougi) foot move backward 3 steps (left, right, left) + left hand lift up ougi to flat level

saruhodoni >>> bring fan down to waist, Nejiru left, move (medium arc) to near ‘jouza corner’

amano >>> Kakeru left, preparation for Hane Ougi, Nejiru left to face between ‘wakiza corner’ and ‘shou saki’

hagoromo >>> Hane Ougi, (together with 3rd flap) foot move forward 6 steps (start on left foot, stop on right foot)

tanabiku >>> once reach near ‘shou saki’, left hand turn fan inside + Nejiru right to face ‘sumi corner’, foot move backward 3 steps (left, right, left) + head move side-way 3 times (right, left, right)

milono >>> right hand take over fan from left hand, fold out fan to normal width + foot move forward 4 steps (right, left, right, left) to ‘sumi corner’
ukishimaga >>> Nejiru left, move to 'wakiza corner', Kakeru left turn to 'jouza corner'

ashitaka >>> Sashi, move to 'jouza corner' (start and stop on right foot)

kasukani >>> Kazashi, Nejiru left, move (small arc) to 'daishou mae' (as you move, gradually bring ougi down, eventually you will grip ougi normally)

misorano >>> right foot stop at 'daishou mae' + ougi already lowered down to waist level

kasumini >>> Sayuu

useni >>> Uchikomi

**Kneel down (right knee touching floor)**

**Close ougi**

~ FINISH ~
Vocabulary for practice:

*Kakeru right* (big turn right) - slide left foot over right foot, so that body is tilted towards right, feeling slightly off balance (next step must be made by right foot to get back balance)

*Kareu left* (big turn right) - slide right foot over left foot, so that body is tilted towards left slightly off balance (next step must be made by left foot to get back balance)

*Nejiru right* (small turn right) - shift left heel outward so that it points towards right, quickly followed by shifting right heel inward so that it points towards right (balance is always maintained but next step will still be made by right foot)

*Nejiru left* (small turn left) - shift right heel outward so that it points towards left, quickly followed by shifting left heel inward so that it points towards left (balance is always maintained but next step will still be made by left foot)

*Sashikomi* - move foot forward 6 steps (start left, stop right) + slowly lift right hand to shoulder level

*Hiraki* - move foot backward 3 steps (left, right, left) + lift left hand to shoulder level, open both arms outward and then lower both hands down to waist level

*preparation for Maneki Ougi* - foot move backward 2 steps (left then right) + right hand release ogui, left hand release palm

*Maneki Ougi* - raise both hands above head level, ‘blow forward’ twice – ‘bestowing the treasures’

*preparation for Sakazuki Ougi* - to your left do Sashi hand action + foot move forward 2 steps (left then right), left hand fold in 2 ogui flaps, then left hand takes over ogui and bring it down to waist level + right hand also lower down to waist level

*Sakazuki Ougi* - lift up ogui to flat level – ‘making an offering’

*preparation for Hane Ougi* - to your right do Sashi hand action + foot move forward 2 steps (left then right), put ogui over right elbow

*Hane Ougi* - ‘fly’ ogui from right elbow to left over head level and then down to touch elbow, repeat 3 times – ‘fluttering and fluttering’

*Sashi* - foot move back left then right + both hands open wide, left hand lower back to waist level but right hand holding fan stay at shoulder level - ‘towards the high peak of sacred Mount Fuji’

*Kazashi* - release right hand’s grip and flip fan around – ‘flying higher and more mysterious’

*Sayuu* - Nejiru left + both hands raise up, towards your left, move forward 2 steps (left foot first, tuck in right foot) + left hand stay at shoulder level as right hand lower to waist level. Next, Nejiru right, towards your right, move forward 2 steps (right foot first, tuck in left foot) + right hand bring up to shoulder level as left hand lower down to waist level – ‘transcendental disappearance’

*Uchikomi* - Nejiru left + open hands wide, foot move backward 2 steps (left then right) + left hand bring back to waist level + right hand scoop in ogui, then lower ogui to waist level