Interpretation of Oh-no-Mai (King's Dance)

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The purpose of this paper is to investigate the mechanism and historical process of what the performer was expected to embody in a performance called Oh-no-Mai (King's Dance), which was discussed by me on several occasions in the past. In the paper, special attention is paid, in relation with Oh-no Mai to Sarutahiko, a deity with an extraordinary figure, and a performing action called Hohgatame, which represents ground-stamping to harden soil at four corners.

As regards Sarutahiko, Oh-no-Mai is perceived as the dramatization of Sarutahiko, and it can be pointed out that the performance was interpreted as representing "magical performance done for appeasing evil spirits along the way one proceeds." As for the discourses that regard Oh-no-Mai as the performing art of Hohgatame they are supposedly based on the local context that spins out conventional interpretations related with land cultivation or ground.

Besides the above two points concerned with Oh-no-Mai, this paper tries to prove a historical relationship between Hohgatame as a magical performance and Oh-no-Mai. Also, through defining the circumstances of the performer producing interpretations mentioned above, the paper attempts identification of a context in which interpretations are defined. The attempt might be called politics of the interpretation about Oh-no-Mai.

The above points are analyzed not in a completely satisfactory manner in this paper due to the limitation of historical materials that can be obtained. They should have been addressed as clues to perceive the performing action of Oh-no Mai at its beginning of the performance. As a result of analysis, "performing arts as violence," before they are embodied with any other interpretation, loom up as the original form to be described.