



A Bugaku Dancer Performing "Ayakiri"

Date

about 1819–1820

Primary Maker

Takashima Chiharu

Medium

woodblock print, surimono; ink, color and metallic pigments on paper

Description

The masked dancer performs to the ancient Japanese court music called gagaku. Ayakiri is a dance piece in bugaku. It is a quiet dance, hiramai, of the Right, u-no-mai, introduced from Korea (komagaku) and performed by four people dancing in unison, or by six aligned to form a hexagon. Although the origin of the dance is unclear, the 13c. treatise on bugaku, Kyokunsho, by Koma Chikazane (1177-1242), describes it as using a "female form with white masks." The dance seems to have gone out of fashion, and when revived switched genders. The costume is a standard layered costume, kasane shouzoku, with bird helmet, torikabuto. Even when danced by men, the choreography retains a softness and tranquility. Reference: Reading Surimono: The Interplay of Text and Images in Japanese Prints, edited by John Carpenter; p.

124 The bugaku is an ancient Japanese court dance. The dancer here depicted wears a court costume and a helmet with a bird crest. Three kyoka poems

Dimensions

shikishiban: 20.3 x 17.5 cm (8 x 6 7/8 in.)