

## MAKING THE MASKS FOR PAGODA



Noh masks are sculpted from a fragrant, light and strong wood known as Japanese cypress (hinoki), and painted with a whitewash made from oyster shell powder (gofun) and various natural mineral pigments. The masks made using these techniques have been passed down for generations and used by noh performers who employ various devices to create diverse expressions on stage.

As a noh mask-maker, the masks which I usually make follow the traditional mask types which have been passed down for centuries, although my own flavour somehow is added to the mix. Still, it is quite rare for mask-makers today to have the chance to create completely new masks. The four masks to be used for the new noh play *Pagoda* are all new masks and I have created them after discussing the play with the playwright and director as well as the performers. Having previously made new masks for Theatre Nohgaku, I have found that creating such new masks is a very exciting process and I am very happy to have been asked to be a part of this endeavor. I also look forward to seeing how European audiences react to this new English play performed in the very old noh style and I hope that my newly created masks will both reflect the ancient traditions of noh and the feeling of this new play, *Pagoda*.

**Hideta Kitazawa**



Above: Hideta Kitazawa at work

Below: Other masks carved by Hideta Kitazawa