Noh theater, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and cuisine are examples of what can be collectively described as national culture today, but these developed in the political context of the fifteenth century as entertainments for the elite, and so can be called arts of the state. The state referred to here is not meant to designate an institution or a discourse but rather the political order created from the competitive interaction between members of the warrior, clerical, and courtly elite. Culture played an important role in power relations among the members of the Muromachi state, as witnessed in the phenomenon of shogunal visitations (onari), events that offer a way of understanding how late medieval culture was given purpose. Shogunal visitations were a constant feature of political and social life in the high medieval period because in any given year in the early fifteenth century there would be hundreds of them, some at specific times of year and others on an ad hoc basis. To explore the phenomena of medieval visitations and the arts that occurred during them in specific, my paper examines The Record of the Visitation to the Ino’o Mansion (Ino’o taku onariki), an account of a visit of Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-1490), his wife Hino Tomiko (1440-1496), and their entourage to the mansion of Ino’o Yukitane (? -1473), a high-ranking bureaucrat in the administrative office (mandokoro) of the Muromachi shogunate in 1466.

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