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East Asian Festival : SUNY Brockport, Spring 1991 : Proceedings, Lecture Series Presented by Asian Studies Faculty.

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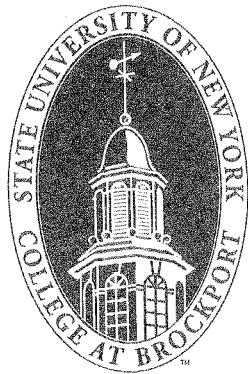
PROCEEDINGS

Lecture Series Presented by Asian Studies Faculty

East Asian Festival

**SUNY Brockport
Spring 1991**

The International Institute
Asian Studies Program
SUNY Brockport



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The 1991 Asian Studies Symposium was part of the East Asian Festival which took place at SUNY Brockport from February to April, 1991. The symposium featured Samuel Leiter, Professor of Theatre at Brooklyn College who delivered a keynote lecture on February 19. Following his lecture, over the period of three months, members of the Asian Studies Committee delivered lectures and made presentations on subjects of their expertise. The lectures were open to the public. One of the missions of the committee is to increase Asian awareness among the general public as well as the campus committee. The committee wishes to further extend this mission by publishing the texts of those lectures and making copies available to individuals who could not attend the symposium.

Kazumi Nakano, Director
Asian Studies

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Keynote Address

February 19, 1991

KABUKI: WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?

Samuel L. Leiter

Brooklyn College

What you have just been listening to is the type of music heard in a *kabuki* theatre just before the play begins. As the sound of the clappers grows ever faster, the great, billowing green, black, and persimmon-striped curtain is pulled across the stage by a stage assistant, revealing the scenery for the ensuing play. Soon, it is likely that a star actor will appear in the midst of the audience, walking down a raised runway on a level with the stage. He will come to a place seven-tenths of the distance from the back of the theatre, stop, and engage in a moment of mimic action revealing his emotional state. Because of his proximity to so many spectators on either side of him, the moment is charged with a special power and intimacy. After completing his piece of acting, he will proceed to the stage and participate with the other actors in the story being presented. This bridgeway, once unique to *kabuki*, but ultimately borrowed by American burlesque shows and now seen in such adapted forms as that used by Cher in her recent Las Vegas TV special, is called the *hanamichi* and is what first got me interested in Japan's *kabuki* theatre.

This happened when I was an undergraduate theatre student at Brooklyn College and my class was assigned to read a chapter in a recent book by Earle Ernst called *The Kabuki Theatre*. I had very little idea of what *kabuki* was

since it was then relatively unknown in the West. It would not make its first of many visits to America until a year later, in 1960. That initial trip was made possible because of the rapidly increasing interest in things Japanese that inevitably followed the end of the war and our seven-year occupation of the country. Prof. Ernst, in fact, had been one of General MacArthur's military censors. Before he learned to stop worrying and love *kabuki*, he thought it militaristic and feudalistic and almost wiped it out as a potentially dangerous political weapon.

Ernst's book taught me that the *hanamichi* is used for major exits and entrances and that it differs from the mere usage of the aisles for the same purposes in that it is on the same level as the stage and the seated orchestra spectators must look up to see the actor, whose ankles are at eye level. At the place where he stops on exiting and entering is a trap door with an elevator, which increases its entrance and exit possibilities, especially for ghosts and magical spirits who can rise or vanish mysteriously right in the heart of the audience. The bridge-way takes on whatever locale is required by the story, and can be covered with cloths to represent snow or water, and is usually considered an extension of the place depicted on the stage proper. Sometimes, another bridge-way, no longer a regular architectural feature of the theatre, is set up on the other side of the auditorium, and actors can address one another over the heads of the spectators. They might also make a long journey by walking down the temporary bridge-way, cutting across the rear of the auditorium, and then resuming their trip on the regular bridge-way until they arrive back on the stage. There are so many exciting uses for the bridge-way that I have often wondered why, unlike the revolving stage, which also got its start in *kabuki*, it has not become a more common feature of

Western theatres. I can easily imagine many plays, especially those by Shakespeare, which would benefit by using this stage extension.

The word *hanamichi* literally means "flower way." Ernst cautioned his readers that, despite the propensity for foreigners to use the expression "flower way," which gives the word a quaint Oriental flavor, he said, "the word *hanamichi* to a Japanese literally means what *cup board* does to the English speaking." Since reading that, I have never been able to see or hear the terms "flower way" or "flower path" without a slight shudder of dismay. That is not because I am perversely pedantic but rather because--influenced by Ernst's book--I left Brooklyn College in 1962 to go to graduate school at the University of Hawaii, where Ernst was the aloof and forbidding chairman of the theatre department. At Hawaii, I acted in Chinese and Indian plays, as well as Western ones, and had the chance to observe dancers and actors from Cambodia, Burma, Korea, Japan, and many other Asian nations. These taught me as no book could that the Western theatre to which I had been exposed, despite its wealth of brilliant plays and great stylistic diversity, represented only a limited number of tiles in the great mosaic of the theatre's possibilities. Obviously, many other tiles could be added to the mosaic by an appreciation of non-Western cultures. The cultures with which I was coming into contact had a mind-boggling number of indigenous dance and theatre forms, most of them remarkably different from the others. Japan alone was renowned for four unique forms of classical theatre, *no*, *kyogen*, *bunraku* (the puppet theatre), and *kabuki*. In Hawaii artistic multiculturalism became a way of life.

I soon discovered that, once one learns the vocabulary of a theatrical form, its aura of being "the other" disappears and its universal values are communicated. Despite cultural distinctions that alter the way people in

different societies behave from one another, universal human desires and needs underpin their existence. Greed and selflessness, love and hate, kindness and selfishness, fear and bravery, happiness and misery, war and peace, fidelity and infidelity, faith and skepticism, are the substance of all forms of theatrical expression. Once one accepts and understands the artistic means used to communicate these emotions and concerns, the theatre serves to bring all men together. This is especially true when--as is becoming ever more common--theatre artists from one culture embody the dramas of another culture in actual performance. Just as non-Westerners increasingly study the performing arts in the West, so do Westerners make the trek Eastwards and elsewhere to study with masters. For Japan alone, there has been in the last twenty years a steadily increasing number of Westerners studying all the forms of classical Japanese theatre, and in at least two cases I know of, Americans have been granted recognition of their mastery of so difficult an art as *no*, and been licensed to teach it. There is even a company of professional American theatre artists who perform authentic *kyogen* plays in English. I will return to this topic later in my talk. For now, however, I'd like to discuss some of the prominent elements of *kabuki* that I believe make it, for non-Japanese, one of the more immediately accessible forms of Asian theatre.

Kabuki's formal means may be extremely eclectic, ranging from relatively realistic dramas to atmospheric dance performances with only the slightest thread of narrative, but the bulk of *kabuki* performance deals with easily recognizable characters, situations, and emotions. What lifts these works above similar plays in Western dramaturgy is the clearly defined and brilliantly articulated traditions involved in their performance, traditions which extend to every aspect of performance, from makeup, costumes, and

props, to speech, gestures, and movement, to rhythm and music. Before referring to some of these, I'd like to fill in some historical background.

Kabuki is an actor's theatre before it is anything else, and the texts, important as they are, have little value if they do not offer the actors juicy possibilities. *Kabuki* was created by a performer, a renegade female temple dancer named Okuni, around the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Elizabethan theatre was in its heyday, and was at once accepted as the popular form of theatrical entertainment enjoyed by the average urban citizen. The population at large had been able to attend the medieval form of theatre called *no* until it became the official entertainment of the samurai class, but that was in a time when the society was largely agrarian and was not increasingly concentrated in large cities. Because a long period of chaos and war had come to an end around 1600 with the establishment of the military dictatorship known after its leading family as the Tokugawa shogunate, urbanization and mercantilism began to flourish. Apart from various forms of dancing, the city dwellers did not have a specific form of theatre at which they could congregate and see reflected their own lives, problems, and fantasies.

Kabuki did not immediately answer these needs, being at first more a kind of vaudeville show with sensual dances and dramatic sketches, most of them dealing comically with subjects such as how to go about picking up a prostitute. In addition, its early performances sometimes involved a type of shamanism in which the performer acted as an intermediary between human beings and the potentially threatening but unseen world of the spirits.

The new type of entertainment took its name from a sort of underground, anti-conformist culture referred to as *kabuki mono*, a term derived from a verb

meaning "to tilt" or "to incline," and which also bore an overtone of homosexuality. Cross-dressing was one of the daring elements of early *kabuki*, with men playing women and vice-versa. The *kabuki mono* have been compared to the "punk" subculture of recent years because of their flamboyant hairdos, clothing styles, and general demeanor. There was a political edge to their existence as well, since many *kabuki mono* were from samurai families and represented a threat to the autocratic regime imposed by the Tokugawas at the start of the seventeenth century. Because of their presumed anti-establishment behavior, the *kabuki mono* were often viewed as popular heroes by the folk mentality. So, from the start, the military government was extremely cautious about this new form of entertainment, which it associated with potential heresy and subversion.

To control the social order, the government instituted strict Confucian-originated codes of ethical behavior and strengthened those already in place. Society was divided into four distinct classes, the samurai, the peasants, the artisans, and, at the bottom, the merchants. Outside of these was 1) the imperial nobility surrounding the emperor, 2) the religious hierarchy, and 3) the outcastes, including actors and prostitutes. Actors did not achieve social respectability until the late nineteenth century. Despite *kabuki* stars being as popular with the masses as rock musicians and singers are today (some *kabuki* actors still are), and often living lives of great luxury, they were contemptuously referred to by terms such as riverbed beggars and had severe restrictions placed upon them.

By the mid-seventeenth century the early *kabuki* began to shed its more frivolous tendencies and to take itself seriously as an art form, while steering clear of overtly political subject matter. This was the result of

various run-ins with the power structure, which was upset not only about the often licentious and sacrilegious content of *kabuki* but also about the mingling of the social classes at performances, with samurai getting into brawls with one another and with common citizens over the after-hours favors of the performers, who were usually prostitutes as well as entertainers. Various regulations were passed to control it, one of them--in 1629--forbidding actresses and requiring that all roles be played by men. Actually, the successors to the women were boy actors whose sexual appeal was signaled by their wearing handsomely coiffed forelocks, the custom being that a boy celebrated his transition into manhood at age fifteen by shaving his crown. When the boys proved as much of a bother to the authorities as the actresses had, they were forced to shave their forelocks to reduce their physical appeal. This forced the actors to find alternative means of drawing a crowd, so playwriting--under the influence of actors from the *kyogen* theatre--became more technically mature, as did the art of acting. With the new regulations about all actors shaving their heads, the boys no longer had to quit acting at fifteen, and older actors began to appear as the boys aged and were able to continually refine their skills. It was also at this time that female impersonation began to make great strides as an artistic technique. In fact, to keep tabs on the actors, the officials encouraged an increasingly complex system of specialization in role-type classifications, the two most obvious being male and female roles, but each of these had many sub-classifications.

Growing up alongside the theatre were the pleasure quarters, where the increasingly wealthy merchants went to spend their tax-free earnings. (Only land was taxable.) Here, tea-houses, theatres, and brothels existed side by side, and represented an oasis of freedom from social distinctions in an

otherwise repressive society. Much of the exuberantly colorful culture we associate with Tokugawa Japan derives from the wood-block prints, novels, music, and theatre associated with the "floating world" of the pleasure quarters, which had their high point in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but continued to be artistically vital through much of the nineteenth century. Plays glorifying the brothels are extremely common in *kabuki* and some of the most beloved heroines are prostitutes.

The early playwrights were also actors, but soon specialization appeared. Before the end of the seventeenth century, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, who would be the most renowned classical play wright, had begun to make his mark both as a writer of plays for *kabuki* as well as for Japan's great puppet theatre. The puppet theatre, now popularly called *bunraku*, had grown up alongside *kabuki* and at one point even became so popular that *kabuki* was forced to adapt many of its plays for live actors in order to retrieve its straying audiences. A number of important production techniques familiar in *kabuki* actually originated in the puppet theatre.

Three principal acting traditions were established by the end of the seventeenth century. One was created in the city of Edo (now Tokyo) by an actor called Ichikawa Danjuro, and was called "rough business." It was wildly exaggerated and fantastical and its superhero characters captured the boisterous spirit of the samurai warriors who lived in the town, which was the home of the shogun. Its costumes, makeup, and props are the most striking and bizarre in *kabuki*. Recent research holds that this style of acting originated in folk superstitions and beliefs whereby the "rough business" performer was thought to be quelling evil spirits endangering the audience; Danjuro himself was considered possessed by a god and people threw money on the stage as

votive offerings but this religious aspect is ignored today. A principal component of the "rough business" style, and of other less dynamic types of *kabuki*, is the static pose called *mie*, taken at moments of intense emotion, and performed in a precise rhythm to the beating of wooden clappers. Such formalized posing is one of the characteristic features of *kabuki*, and can be seen at its most dynamic in "rough business" acting.

Another principal acting tradition, called "soft business," is more realistic and refined. It was popular in the cities of Kyoto and Osaka, where an actor named Sakata Tojuro founded it. "Soft business" characters were average young townsmen in the throes of tragic romantic entanglements, usually with courtesans. Because of the conflicts faced by the characters over their moral obligations and their emotional suffering, the lovers in these dramas often seek escape by committing suicide. The acting of the male roles in these plays was androgynous, which traditionally has been a more romantic image for the Japanese (and most other Asian cultures) than the John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart, Clint Eastwood machismo so popular in the West.

The third principal acting method was that of the female impersonator which is a tradition still going strong. In fact, the most popular actor in today's *kabuki* is a brilliant and beautiful female impersonator named Bando Tamasaburo. A similar tradition in China has been practically eliminated in favor of the actress, but *kabuki* retains its unique convention of female impersonators, some of them playing only female roles, and others both male and female roles. In the early eighteenth century a famous female impersonator wrote a book in which he codified the rules for acting as a woman, which goal was sought after with such dedication to realism that actors, even if they were heterosexual, were cautioned to live their offstage

lives as much like women as possible, and to conceal the fact of their marriage and parenthood.

For much of its history, *kabuki* was the prime source of feminine fashion trends in Japan. The art of acting like a woman had become so refined that women--especially the female entertainers called *geisha*--went to the theatre to ape the beautiful female mannerisms of the male actors and to borrow their ideas on hairdos and kimonos. Female impersonators were *kabuki*'s first dance specialists as well. There have been sporadic attempts to introduce actresses into *kabuki*, but they have failed to generate interest. Even when a woman appears in a *kabuki* role, she is forced to play it in the highly formalized manner of male actors, who, over a period of nearly four centuries, have established the conventions of what, in theatrical terms, constitutes the essence of femininity.

Kabuki flourished during the Edo period (1600-1868), for most of which Japan was politically isolated from the rest of the world. Plays were essentially of three types, history plays, domestic plays of everyday life, and dance plays. Some plays combine elements of all three forms. Terms like comedy, tragedy, and so forth, were not used, but most plays have a serious atmosphere, with occasional infusions of comedy or even farce. The average *kabuki* play most closely resembles melodrama, although some scholars, attempting to impose Western critical ideas on the plays, have argued that a few dramas approach being tragedies. When acted, these plays employed one or another of the acting styles I mentioned earlier. Female impersonation, of course, is found in any play with one or more female roles. "Rough business" is typically found in certain history plays, but most history plays employ a less exaggerated although considerably formalized style. Domestic plays are

generally acted in a fairly realistic style, but there is always a strong rhythmic back ground that keeps the acting from being untheatrical. Except in a few instances, the acting style generally relates to the specific role-types in the plays, each of which has a tradition regarding vocal manner, makeup, movement, and so on. Thus, a "rough business" character may appear in a play in which other characters are more or less realistic, and the same applies to "soft business" roles.

The plays consistently uphold the official morality and religious beliefs. Buddhism was the most widespread religious faith and many plays demonstrate behavior deriving from Buddhist practices and doctrines. On the simplest level, lovers finding life unbearable because of the circumstances in which they have become trapped, often elect to commit double suicide so that they will dwell together in peace in the Buddhist afterlife. Simultaneously, there is a potent Confucian-based substructure to the characters' behavior, especially as demonstrated by their adherence to the doctrine concerning the five basic human relationships, ruler and subject, father and child, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend, in that order. Thus, a father torn between love for his son and loyalty to his master must act in favor of the master, even if that means killing his child. Characters frequently kill themselves without regret when it is a matter of serving the interests of their lord. This morality provides a powerfully dramatic foundation for the conflicts in play after play. It is such situations in which the characters struggle between their sense of duty or obligation and their personal feelings that lead critics to consider certain plays tragic as opposed to merely pathetic.

Censorship made it impossible to express overt criticism of the government or samurai class or even to depict contemporary events concerning important samurai. Therefore, playwrights were fond of dramatizing recent events by placing them in some historical period with the names of the characters disguised, although usually recognizable. The most famous *kabuki* history play written according to this approach is known by several English titles, including *The Loyal Forty-seven Samurai*. It was written in 1748 and adapted from a puppet drama. It tells of a famous vendetta carried out in 1702 by a band of retainers attached to a young lord who had been provoked into attacking an official. For this crime, he had been forced to commit ritual suicide by disembowelment. The play, set far enough in the past to satisfy the restrictions about contemporary events, shows how the lord, called Enya Hangan, is evilly taunted by the bribe-seeking official into drawing his sword). The scene showing his *seppuku* suicide is one of the most solemn in *kabuki*. His chief retainer, Yuranosuke, secretly plans with the other retainers to carry out their revenge against the cruel official, but this requires them to bide their time and give the impression that they are neglecting their lord's memory. Eventually, Yuranosuke and his loyal band attack the official's mansion, kill his men, and slay the villain. Despite official sympathy for their daring deed, the faithful retainers are forced to commit ritual suicide, which was actually considered an honor; their vendetta became renowned as a symbol of fidelity and Japanese today still say prayers over their graves. It was such feudalistic faith in the act of revenge that made Occupation censors forbid the performance of plays like this and even threatened the very existence of postwar *kabuki*. *The Loyal Forty-seven Samurai* is one of the best-loved stories in Japan and has been the subject of

numerous movies and TV shows. The *kabuki* version has been produced in English and a recent production at the University of Hawaii was about as authentic as one can imagine. In addition, choreographer Maurice Bejart has staged a stunning ballet called *kabuki* and inspired by this classic revenge drama.

Domestic plays of everyday life concern contemporary events. A masterpiece of this genre is *The Love Suicides at Amijima*, originally written by Chikamatsu for the puppets in 1721, and based on an actual incident. Koharu is a courtesan and Jihei, who is married and has children, is her lover. The two have been considering killing themselves to escape from their earthly responsibilities. Despite every effort by their loved ones to prevent their suicide, the pair find themselves caught in a web from which there is no escape and double suicide is the outcome. Since in this case their decision has been made before the action begins, there is no suspense about whether they will do it and the audience waits tensely for the inevitable to take place.

Dance plays take a number of forms in *kabuki*, from the strongly dramatic to the essentially atmospheric. Dance scenes also often are inserted in otherwise straight dramas. If *Hamlet* were a *kabuki* play, Ophelia's mad scene would surely be a dance; the madness of abandoned lovers, in fact, is a common theme of *kabuki* dance plays.

The most popular dance-drama is the powerful *The Subscription List* (1840), based on a famous *no* play. In fact, while previous *kabuki* plays had been inspired by *no* stories, they were always produced in *kabuki's* more literal style. *No* is a highly abstract form of theatre, played on a bare stage with only a symbolic prop or two, masks for certain characters, and a pine tree painted on the upstage wall regardless of the play or locale. With

The Subscription List, the actor Danjuro VII decided to stage the play in a manner immediately reminiscent of the original *no* play, *Ataka*. *Kabuki* and *no* actors rarely came in contact with one another and for the popular to use techniques from the austere and dignified samurai-supported *no* was unheard of. But Danjuro managed to borrow authentic costumes from a *no* actor and to create a scenic background which, while employing the painted pine tree, was done so on a scale unknown in the much more intimate *no* theatre. Whereas the bridge-way in the *no* theatre runs on an oblique angle from the upstage right corner of the acting platform to the greenroom about nineteen feet away, running past the audience and not through it, *kabuki* plays taken from the *no* retain the *hanamichi* through the auditorium. These works also provide a much livelier interpretation of the action than the very stately *no*. Instead of the tiny drum and flute ensemble and chanting chorus of the *no* the *kabuki* version uses a large onstage orchestra and singing chorus using drums, flutes, and the shamisen. The shamisen first introduced in the puppet theatre, is a three-stringed instrument played with a plectrum, and typifies the sound of *kabuki* music. *The Subscription List* has also been given English-language productions, both by colleges and professionals.

The story of *The Subscription List* again expresses the importance of the conflict of the primacy of duty or obligation over emotion or personal feelings. In this masterpiece, which follows the original plot closely, the warlord Yoritomo, jealous of the military conquests of his brother Yoshitsune, orders his arrest. Yoshitsune and a small band of retainers seek to join their allies in the North, and disguise themselves as mountain priests going on a pilgrimage to effect their escape. Yoritomo has set up checkpoint barriers along the route to prevent their flight, and the action takes place

at one of these, manned by the noble samurai Togashi. Leading Yoshitsune's band is the bold and powerful Benkei, who has devoted his life to serving the young lord. Yoshitsune is disguised as a porter in the hope of deceiving the barrier guards. When questioned by the suspicious Togashi, who has been ordered to execute any priests trying to get through, Benkei tries to bluff his way past, declaring that the entourage is collecting funds for a temple's restoration, but will submit to death if need be. Togashi relents a bit and asks Benkei to read the contents of the subscription list he carries, which Benkei proceeds to do, boldly making up the extremely complex contents as he goes along, as his subscription list is actually blank. Togashi is so impressed by this brilliant deception that he backs off. As Benkei and his men move off, Yoshitsune is recognized by a guard, but Benkei again deceives the enemy by doing the unthinkable and beating his master as if he is a lazy slave. Togashi, astonished by this show of loyalty, restrains Benkei and allows the band to proceed. After Togashi leaves, Benkei begs forgiveness from his master and they lament their cruel fate. Togashi returns with an apology for his previous treatment, and he and Benkei drink sake as a farewell gesture. Benkei drinks gigantic draughts of sake and performs a heroic dance of longevity before shunting his men on their way to freedom. Togashi realizes that he will have to commit suicide for having betrayed his duty to Yoritomo. Benkei takes over the burden from Yoshitsune and, standing alone before the curtain after his men have gone on ahead, makes a spectacular bounding exit down the *hanamichi*.

I mentioned that the actor who conceived the idea for *The Subscription List* was called Danjuro VII. Let me explain why that was his name. To become a *kabuki* actor you have to be born into a *kabuki* actor's family or be adopted

by a *kabuki* actor when you are a child. Actors begin their professional careers with a childhood name and are eligible to inherit the name of their familial predecessor if and when they reach a high enough artistic status. Sometimes they never succeed to the name of their master or parent, but make a preliminary name powerful enough to be acknowledged on its own terms. Thus, there are some names that have achieved as high an ordinal number as the eighteenth in a line, and others where the actor is only the first or second to hold a name. If we had a similar system in the West we would have actors like Richard Burbage XVIII, David Garrick XII, Edmund Kean IX, Sara Bernhardt IV, and Laurence Olivier II. The best-known name in *kabuki* is that of Ichikawa Danjuro. The line began in the mid-seventeenth century and the present holder of the name, who received in 1985, is the twelfth. His first stage name was Ichikawa Natsuo, then he became Ichikawa Shinnosuke, then Ichikawa Ebizo, and finally, two decades after his father's death, Danjuro XII. What is remarkable is the number of Danjuros who have been true masters of *kabuki* acting. Thus, birth must usually be accompanied by exceptional ability if one is to accede to a major *kabuki* name. Recognition of this is accomplished by a special ceremony, performed for the audience daily between the pieces on a program, in which an actor accepts the honor and responsibilities associated with his new name.

The training required to master the vocal and physical techniques is arduous and requires many years. As with many other forms of Asian theatre training one normally learns by watching and copying, and there is very little discussion of theory when one is engaged in study. In the 1970s a school was established for non-hereditary actors under the auspices of the National Theatre, which feared for the continuation of the *kabuki* because of the

gradual attrition stemming from lucrative film and TV offers. These actors, who have included several Westerners, are usually relegated after graduation to secondary positions and none have ever become important players. *Kabuki* actors are extremely respectful of their teachers and perform their roles precisely as they have been trained. That is, they do until they have become sufficiently important as artists that they can add their own ideas. However, as with minor innovations in classical ballet or opera, only aficionados can appreciate the revisions. The changes, it should be stated, are not the work of a director but of the leading actor in the company.

Since most plays produced are part of a standard repertory, they are familiar to all the actors and are given often enough not to require extensive rehearsals. *Kabuki* programs, which consist of an assortment of different pieces, are produced monthly for about twenty-five days, with the other five days given over to preparations for the following month's selections. While recent years have seen modified full-length productions given at the National Theatre in Tokyo, it is more common for a program to consist of selections of famous acts taken from longer plays, mingled with dances and perhaps a work from the modern *kabuki* repertory, which really constitutes a genre unto itself. Since the acts are usually self-contained, and the stories are well-known or explained in the programs, the audience appreciates this approach.

A question often asked is precisely what an actor's revisions might entail. Certainly they wouldn't be the same as doing Mozart's Così Fan tutte as if it were set in a Westchester diner. Although there have been a few strikingly radicalized *kabuki* productions, such shows have been anomalies and the kind of innovations that *kabuki* fans enjoy are typically much more subtle.

A good idea of *kabuki* innovation might be gleaned from the play *Kumagai's Battle Camp*, a history drama dating from 1751. Its story, like those of many other history plays, hinges on a head inspection. In those pre-photography days, it was often necessary for the head of an enemy taken in battle or under other circumstances to be authenticated by having it viewed by someone familiar with the person from whose neck it had been removed. This situation is unusually dramatic, not merely because of the built-in chill that comes from seeing a human head displayed on stage (albeit in an obvious although realistic model), but because of the plot circumstance that leads to its having to be inspected.

In *Kumagai's Battle Camp* the scene is at a military camp under the command of General Kumagai, a powerful samurai. When the play begins he is returning to his camp, presumably having killed in battle the sixteen-year-old enemy prince, Atsumori, heir to the imperial throne. Atsumori is also the son of Lady Fuji to whom Kumagai and his wife owe a heavy debt of obligation, although circumstances have put them on opposing sides in the present war. He is downcast and distracted, and displeased shortly after to that his wife Sagami has come to the camp to learn of the fate of their own sixteen-year-old Kojiro. He makes up a story about Kojiro's heroism and declares that he killed Atsumori. He is immediately confronted by Lady Fuji Atsumori's mother, who has been hiding within and who wants to kill him in retaliation for his having killed her son. He then recounts the tale of the killing, making Atsumori seem a courageous warrior, and acting it out in a famous sequence of mime, using a fan to represent various things, of a horse and a sword. As he mimes the action, most of the narrative is recited by a chanter seated in full view of the audience at stage right and accompanied by a shamisen player. In

kabuki he only narrates selected passages, the rest being given to the actors themselves. Soon, Kumagai must reveal the head of Atsumori to his own superior, General Yoshitsune, the same Yoshitsune from *The Subscription List* but at an earlier time in his career. The head, however, is that of Kumagai's own son, Kojiro, whom he killed to satisfy the debt of loyalty to his former lord and lady. In making the substitution, he also was following a cryptic command of Yoshitsune to spare Atsumori and slay Kojiro instead. When he shows the war trophy he must portray his anguish at the presence of his child's head and his uncertainty concerning Yoshitsune's response. The revelation of the head leads to significant byplay with his wife and Lady Fuji, who realize the deception, and who struggle to keep their feelings to themselves. Sagami must conceal her grief at learning that her own child has been killed and Lady Fuji her joy that her son is not dead, while inwardly commiserating with Kumagai and his wife for the sacrifice they have made. Kumagai leaves and then returns dressed in armor. He discloses that his recent experiences have convinced him to abandon the brutal life of a warrior and to shave his head and become a monk, allowing him to pray for the souls of those killed in battle. He removes his armor, revealing his monk's garments and tonsured scalp.

With this sketchy outline as a background, I'd like to explain how *kabuki* tradition allows for limited interpretive variation. There are many places in this play that allow for contrasting one actor's approach with another's but I'll focus on only one part, which comes at the end.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the standard approach was to end the play with a company tableau. Kumagai and his wife, Sagami, would stand at stage right, both in white robes to signify his entering the

priesthood and her becoming a nun. Yoshitsune would be up center on the platform, and the other characters, including Lady Fuji, would be at stage left. As they stand there, each with his or her own emotional burden, the traveler curtain is pulled closed past them. This type of final curtain is considered in keeping with the traditional theatricalism of *kabuki*. But one of the actors in the Danjuro line, the great Danjuro IX, strongly influenced by the psychological realism of the West, which was slowly beginning to affect Japanese theatre, decided to alter the ending. Instead of the tableau effect, he elected to have Kumagai move alone down the *hanamichi* in order to set up a situation that would allow him to express the character's torment between leaving his life as a warrior and entering that of a monk. He progressed to the special acting position on the runway and turned to view the head being held forth by Yoshitsune. After some business in which he portrayed his sadness at the transience of life, and his feeling of inner weakness, he fell to the floor, pressing his large straw hat to the sides of his head to block his vision as the curtain closed behind him. The actor was now alone on the bridge-way amid the sea of spectators. A solitary shamisen player appeared on stage in front of the curtain to accompany the following business. Kumagai then performed a series of detailed actions designed to show his confusion and pain as he gradually realized that his decision to abandon secular life was irrevocable. As the tempo of the music accelerated, he pulled himself together and moved off quickly down the *hanamichi*. This approach, concentrating as it does on the multiple emotions pulling and tugging at the hero, has since become the most commonly used pattern for ending the play, and is now one of *kabuki's* most famous exits. However, on some occasions actors choose to revive the earlier tableau ending, and there have even been attempts

to adapt the ending to make an entirely different statement. In one example, the temporary *hanamichi* was installed for the play, and Kumagai left on the main runway with his wife, while Lady Fuji and another principal character departed on the other. In another, only the main *hanamichi* was employed, but with both Kumagai and Sagami using it. This was done by an actor who made numerous revisions elsewhere in the play to emphasize the close relationship between husband and wife, and to suggest the bereavement of both parents, not just the husband. Some Japanese critics tend to criticize Danjuro's exit as overly sentimental and inappropriate, because, among other reasons, by this time Kumagai should not be struggling between leaving his samurai life and becoming a monk, his decision having been taken before he made his first entrance.

This should make it clear that *kabuki* is by *no* means an inflexible museum art, but that interesting variations in the traditions are often being attempted. At the same time, there are those who caution that some of the innovations being attempted in contemporary *kabuki* are dangerous for the future of the form, especially those of the extremely popular and unusually versatile actor Ichikawa Ennosuke III. Ennosuke claims to be seeking a revival of the vigorous action and speedy tempo of *kabuki* when it was still a widely popular form and had not yet begun to fall into the trap of trying too hard to attain the kind of dignified artistic status accorded to the *no*. There can be no doubt about the popularity of his so-called "super-*kabuki*," which has captured the affection of many who might normally find *kabuki* too remote and antiquated. Ennosuke's productions are filled with glitter and special effects. They make frequent use of the Peter Pan-device of flying through the air, usually with the star ascending from the stage over the heads

of the audience into the balcony. Indeed, this was once a common feature of *kabuki*, although such crowd-pleasing techniques eventually were looked down on by the intelligentsia as claptrap. But Ennosuke's extensive use of follow spots and such literal devices as styrofoam balls to suggest hail when mere offstage sound effects used to create such meteorological phenomena have some critics seriously concerned that he has gone too far and that *kabuki's* future is thereby endangered.

Just as Danjuro IX was influenced by Western ideas in the psychological realism he introduced into *kabuki*, so too, to a considerable degree, is Ennosuke in his glitzy stagings, although, ironically, he intends by so doing to recapture the fun and excitement he believes once to have been an intrinsic part of *kabuki* productions. The interchange of artistic trends between the West and Japan has been going on for a long time and has been a two-way street, although thus far it is apparently more in evidence in Japan's considerable Westernization. Still, *kabuki* as well as other forms of classical Japanese theatre have impacted on Western theatre practitioners, sometimes in obvious and sometimes in less acknowledged ways.

The process of intercultural or transcultural borrowing and adaptation, of course, is practically as old as theatre itself. It has gone on continually and will continue to go on in the future. Roman theatre, for instance, borrowed heavily from the Greeks, just as Moliere took from the Italians. In such cases, the process led to a true transcendence of the original and the creation of a completely new and organically unified mode of expression. Today, however, there is much debate about the ethics of such interculturalism, because the process too often involves an attempt at fusing disparate materials without a satisfactory comprehension of the materials on

loan from the other culture. Many intercultural borrowings are superficial, borrowed simply to give a gloss of exoticism to otherwise conventional fare. As Carl Weber recently noted, "a great number of transcultural projects, trying to combine, fuse, blend--or whatever you'd like to call it--features of the indigenous with those of an alien culture, arrive at performances which use the alien component as a spicy sauce to make some old familiar gruel palatable again. . . . More than a few among the transcultural performances mounted in recent years remind me of Chop Suey." The implications of this topic are too complex and digressive to get into here, but I think it might be worthwhile to look briefly at some of the traffic to which I have alluded. Perhaps some of the examples I cite will remind you, too, of theatrical chop suey.

Apart from such obvious borrowings as the *hanamichi* and the revolving stage, we might look at how specific plays and productions have employed *kabuki* ideas. These can be organized into seven categories. First would be productions of Western classics, especially the Elizabethans, using *kabuki* conventions. Several significant productions in this manner have been done by Leonard Pronko at Pomona College, who used such Elizabethan texts as Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* and Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy* for his experiments. Other works in this provocative field have been productions at the University of Illinois and Chicago's Wisdom Bridge Theatre titled *Kabuki Macbeth* and *Kabuki Othello*. New York's Pan-Asian Repertory did a *kabuki*-influenced piece they called *Shogun Macbeth*. Internationally known are the Shakespeare stagings of Ariane Mnouchkine's Theatre du Soleil in France, especially her outstanding Richard II, which employed *kabuki* techniques alongside of those taken from *no*. Her production used four pathways suggestive of the *hanamichi*, each leading to

the main acting area from cubicles placed at the corners of the square space. The actors wore elaborate costumes mingling elements of Elizabethan and *kabuki* dress, such as collar ruffs placed atop kimono-like garments. And, using a relatively common device when borrowing from *kabuki*, there were stage assistants dressed in black. Faces were decorated in a variety of ways, from *kabuki*-esque white makeup to *no*-like masks. The acting employed highly formalistic means, with face-front projection, and sharply rhythmical movements accentuated by percussion.

From the Western play staged as if it were *kabuki* by non-Japanese theatres, we move to category number two, the Western play produced as *kabuki* by the Japanese. Although I know of many Japanese productions of Shakespeare starring major *kabuki* actors, including memorable performances of Lady Macbeth and Desdemona by the popular female impersonator Tamasaburo, none of them borrowed *kabuki* techniques for their staging. It was a non-*kabuki* director, Yukio Ninagawa, who decided to do his *Ninagawa Macbeth* using strong infusions of *kabuki* style. This production, which played recently in America, was especially notable in its use of *kabuki* makeup, movement, and vocalization for the three witches.

A third such intercultural manifestation would be an actual *kabuki* play staged by Westerners in translation but focusing on dramatic content, avoiding the classical conventions of the original form, and substituting for them contemporary Western methods. A good example is David Greenspan's recent staging of Chikamatsu's *Gonza the Lancer* in New York, where the characters wore a melange of Western clothes, performed in a practically bare space with a 1950s formica kitchen set, and used only the sparest reminders of the Japanese origins of the play, such as samurai swords.

A fourth manifestation might be Western plays concerned with Japanese subject matter and intended to be staged in *kabuki*-influenced style, such as the Stephen Sondheim musical *Pacific Overtures*, which actually built a *hanamichi* in Broadway's Winter Garden and employed black-garbed stage assistants.

Number five are Western plays dealing with Japanese subject matter that allow for presentation in conventional Western terms or that may be staged in a manner approximating *kabuki*. An example would be *Rashomon*, by American writers based on a Japanese movie, and often produced with *kabuki* techniques, although not in its original Broadway production.

A sixth category would be the authentic stagings of *kabuki* plays in other languages, sometimes directed by actual *kabuki* performers, sometimes by American experts. This practice is most frequently found on American campuses, although there have been a couple of small-scale professional attempts directed by visiting *kabuki* actors.

Finally, there is the seventh category, which breaks down into two sub-categories. One is the writing of actual *kabuki* plays in English, set in Tokugawa Japan, and using all the authentic conventions. James Brandon of the University of Hawaii has written two such plays, his recent *The Road to Tokyo*, having just made a tour to the West Coast. The other subcategory refers to plays, such as those written by Leonard Pronko at Pomona College, which are set in non-Japanese contexts but are written and produced according to strict *kabuki* conventions. His *Revenge on Spider Mountain* took place in the Wild West and involved cowboys and Indians.

My point in mentioning these categories and examples is to demonstrate the rich diversity of possibilities inherent in the interchange of ideas,

methods, and techniques between *kabuki* and the non-Japanese theatre and even with certain Japanese contexts. Similar borrowings and cross-fertilizations are going on between other non-Western indigenous theatres and those of the West. The language of theatre is constantly expanding through this process, although, as I have suggested, there is a possibility that the effect may ultimately be harmful to native theatres or that the borrowed techniques are irrelevant or extraneous when removed from their original contexts and transposed where, arguably, they were never intended and do not belong.

In this talk I have touched only on a few hopefully interesting areas, believing that you may wish to learn something more about this magnificent form of theatre by further investigation. The chances are that you will one day have an opportunity to see *kabuki*, here or in Japan. If you do, go prepared. Find out what plays are being done and see if they are in translation. Many of them are. Read the plays beforehand and learn what you can of their background. Rent a simultaneous translation headset; they now have them even at the theatre in Tokyo. Sit back and enjoy yourself and allow yourself to be taken back in time as you watch plays that, in their essentials, have not changed much since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With a little effort, you'll be surprised and delighted at what a wonderful time you'll have. In the time remaining, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Lecture

February 28, 1991

KOREAN MASK-DANCE THEATRE

Oh-Kon Cho

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Korea is a nation on a peninsula in far Eastern Asia, west of Japan and bordering on China and Russia to the north, with over 60 million people who speak a single language, Korean. Since 1948, the nation has been divided into two republics: Seoul is the capital of South Korea and P'yongyang the capital of North.

For the past several hundred years. Korea has had three major types of folk theatre: Mask-dance drama (*sandae-guk*), puppet theatre (*kkoktu kaksi*). and one-man operetta (*p'ansori*). Today, however, my lecture will concentrate on only one form of the Korean folk theatre, mask-dance drama.

The precise origins of the Korean mask-dance theatre is unknown. The beginning of this theatre may be traced back to a number of ceremonies, folk observances, and shamanistic rites. Some civic observances which were to have included incidental theatrical elements took Place more than 2,000 years ago. They were mainly performed for two purposes: for heaven worship and for appeasement of ancestral spirits. These rituals required the performers to sing and dance as well as wear masks.

During the 7th century, *kiak*, originally consisting of music and dance, was imported to Korea from China. This was performed as a simple mask-dance drama at the Buddhist temple for an audience. It is believed that *kiak* became the genesis of today's Korean mask-dance drama.

There are two types of Korean mask-dance theatre: *purakje* (village festival theatre) and *sandae-guk* (the theatre which was once controlled by the Choson court [1392-1910]).

Of the village festival theatres, the most well-known one is the Hahoe *pyolsin-gut*. But *Sandae-guk* embraces a much large number of mask-dance drama of several different regions: *pyolsandae* plays of Yangju and Songp'a; *t'alch'um* plays of Pongsan, Kangnyong, and Haeju; *ogwangdae* plays of T'ongyong, Kasan, and Kosong; *yaryu* plays of Tongnae and Suyong.

The performance of Hahoe *pyolsin-gut*, a village festival theatre, occurring every ten years as part of the village festival, took place on the 15th day of the first lunar month. Twelve masks were required for the production of this theatre. They are the most refined ones among the Korean masks remain today. When they were not in use, the masks were traditionally kept in the village shrine. The task of mask making in the village was supposedly related to the divinities; it is said that they were made only by a man instructed by divine message in a dream. Both the makers and the date of the masks are unknown today.

Being an orally transmitted play, no complete script of Hahoe *pyolsin-gut* remains. A knowledge of the characters and main actions of the play has been preserved by the villagers. In the play there is no single central plot which runs from the beginning to the end; instead, the play is made up of a number of independent scenes. But the play gives the impression of being held together by means of a common theme running through all the scenes: the corrupt monks guilty of transgression, the high-handed aristocrats, and the insensitive local officials.

Unlike the village festival theatre, the performance of the *sandae-guk*, the most prevalent form of Korean mask-dance drama, was generally under the supervision of the *sandae-togam*, an office of the court. Under the sponsorship of the government, this drama was performed for a number of purposes: to entertain the newly arrived Chinese envoys; to get rid of evil from the palace; and to welcome the newly appointed provincial governors. When official support was withdrawn with the abolition of the *sandae-togam* in 1634, this theatre gradually transformed into folk drama during the last half of the Chosun period. The repeal of government support also resulted in the branching out into a number of regional forms by the itinerant troupes from the capital. As a result, today, as it is pointed out earlier, there are several regional forms of Korean mask-dance drama. Among these some differences do exist, but there still remain many similarities.

The performance of all the Korean mask-dance drama requires dance, singing, music, pantomime, the exchange of witticism, and dialogue. Of these elements, the prime emphasis is placed on dancing, singing, and music. None of these outdoor theatrical performances necessitates the use of formal stage, curtain or stage setting. The visual elements of the production are achieved by the grotesque masks and colorful costumes. The additional spectacles can be accomplished with dance and pantomime. Furthermore, these can be vastly enhanced with the blazing torchlights at night.

The movement patterns of the dances employed in the mask-dance drama, which number more than a dozen, are complicated and difficult to decipher. In particular, the production of Yangju *pyolsandae* demands a wide variety of dance. Some of the frequently performed forms in the production are the *yodaji*-dance, the *kopsawi*-dance, and the *kkaeki*-dance. The *yodaji*-dance, for

example, requires a forward movements; the player places both hands on the upper front of his body and, extending them forward, pantomimes the opening of his chest while his feet kick forward.

The performance of all the mask-dance drama in Korea, with the exception of several roles, requires the players to wear masks. Unlike the masks of Hahoe *pyolsin-gut* which are made of wood, the masks of *sandae-guk* are constructed with either dried gourd or paper. Around the edge of the mask a dark cloth called *t'alpo* is attached to cover the back of the head; a pair of dark cloth strips are also used to tie the mask around the player's neck. Traditionally, the masks were burned at the end of the performance, tossing them into the blazing bonfire as the players made their prayers. As a result, no old masks which were once used for the performance have survived until today.

The performance of all the mask-dance dramas of Korea calls for musical accompaniment usually supplied by six instruments: one transverse flute (*chottae*), two fifes (*p'iri*), one two-stringed fiddle (*haegum*), one hourglass-shaped drum (*changgo*), and one barrel drum (*puk*). In addition, one small gong (*kkwaenngwari*) may be added. Three tunes are played most frequently: the *kutkori*, *t'aryong*, and *yombul*. The *kutkori* is a flowing tune of a twelve beat pattern, while the *t'aryong* has a twelve-beat pattern with an accent on the ninth beat. The *yombul* is a six-beat rhythmic pattern. The songs which are interlaced with dance and dialogue in the plays are mostly derived from popular songs and shamanistic ravings of the Choson period.

Being collaborative works and transmitted orally, not a single author of the Korean mask-dance plays has been identified. Only recently have they been recorded and published. Thus the performance of each play--relying on a

synopsis of the plot--depended on the spontaneous improvisations of the players. Like the puppet drama and village festival plays, all the plays are devoid of organic structure. Each scene deals with its own subject matter. Despite the fact that the plays lack organic structure, most scenes share common themes and overall meanings. In almost all the plays, four types of privileged people become major targets of satire: the corrupt local officials; the apostate bonze who engages in lascivious temperance with women; the aristocrat who blindly exercises his power; the tyrannical husband who mistreats his wife.

As far as performance was concerned, traditionally the production of Korean mask-dance drama took place at night. However, recently almost all the performances of this theatre have been held during the daytime. In addition, recently no masks have been burned at the end of performance.

Thank you very much!

Lecture

May 1, 1991

THE PERMEANCE OF CULTURE: LEADERSHIP IN EAST ASIA

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For the last ten years Americans have been engaged in the process of discovery and wonderment--even awe--of the economic success of Japan. Small wonder, isn't it, that we would become so eager to study the management practices of a country which

- . has become the leading technology adaptor
- . obtained the greatest advances in standard of living since World War II
- . captured in 1989 seventeen slots on the list of the world's top twenty five banks (American Banker)¹

Likewise, the Four Tigers of East Asia: South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have revolutionized the theory of economic development by

- . skipping much of the industrializing phase of development
- . moving from agrarian economics to turning out high technology computers
- . and growing at the rate of 7-10% annually.²

Perhaps rightly so then we look to the efficiency and growth of firms like SONY, Honda, Lucky and Formosa Plastic to learn what we can of their managerial and leadership practices.

¹Naisbitt, 1990, p. 186

²Naisbitt, 1990, p. 190

This afternoon what I would most like to do is share with you some of the social, cultural and causal factors for the phenomenal growth in East Asia--not absolutes, only suggestions. Though I believe there is great value in studying the organizational/leadership variance among cultures, for this first gives us a deeper

- . appreciation of the differentness of our systems, and a
- . range of options and alternatives we might incorporate--at least to develop the best corporate strategy in order to compete.

There is, however, some caution in attempting to apply quick fix remedies to American business without understanding the cultural roots and context in which those practices have attained fruition.

So today is "causal"-suggestive only...food for thought.

Let's start with what we know, using Japan as an example, from Theory Z, Megatrends and other sources. (Refer to listing "Comparison of American and Japanese Organizational Structures")

When we compare Japanese and American private enterprise systems one cannot help but be struck by Japan's emphasis upon "Nenko" or what is commonly referred to as lifetime employment.³ Actually, although only a few companies practice full lifetime employment, most Japanese firms have a way of making employees feel so secure and develop such strong employee loyalty that many employees feel that they are connected to the firm for life. Some companies like SONY even allow employees to return to their company after retirement, giving them offices and support services and allowing them to become consultants for their old firm.⁴

³Oh, T.K., 1976

⁴Morita, 1986

Another major difference among American and Japanese firms is typified by the overwhelming emphasis in Japan upon the value of/or wa intergroup harmony. This pervading standard for individuals to cooperate in firms translates to the collective responsibility felt for the firm's growth and the good of all.⁵ Consensual decision making, a holistic concern, for all is typified by an employee's strong identification with a company even to the point of deemphasizing the status held among owners, managers and employees. This is often exemplified with all employees eating in a common cafeteria, wearing company jackets, singing company songs.⁶ In fact, there is an ancient saying in Japan "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down."⁷ How sharply this contrasts to the American business spirit of entrepreneurship, self-reliance and being the master of one's own destiny.

Interestingly, however, one would assume in order to perpetuate this intergroup harmony, Japanese employment selection is highly centralized, often with the company president calling upon his old university mentor to recommend new recruits of a "certain persuasion." Thus an extended alumni circle widens.⁸ For more indoctrination most Japanese recruits spend their first two years in continuous training, moving from one functional unit within the company to another, learning multi-dimensions of the firm and the production of a particular product line.⁹ In the United States we know, of course, that most Americans develop specialized career paths, seeking opportunities in their chosen fields.

⁵Pascale and Athos, 1981

⁶Morita, 1986

⁷Nakane, 1970

⁸Dore, 1973

⁹Oh, T.K., class notes 1986

Most American firms have clear lines of authority with formal distinctions of authority. In Japan, however, control is much more implicit with multiple ways of considering alternatives, yet never saying "no" directly.¹⁰

Numerous authors have testified to the benefits of the Japanese "bottoms-up" style of decision making or proposal development. What is often not clarified, however, is the emphasis top management places upon clarifying the particular problems or issues directly.¹¹

What are managers in Japan prized for? Again emphasis upon resolving conflicts, promoting harmony among employees, shapes a manager who is more of a facilitator as opposed to the American manager who is prized for his specialty and decision making power.¹²

Quality control among Japanese firms, an incredible phenomenon for whose who remember after World War II when "Made in Japan" meant flimsy merchandise, exemplifies the individual employee's concern and loyalty to the firm. No better example exists of this achievement in excellence than that of Matsushita's takeover of Motorola in 1974. In 1974 it was determined that Motorola under its own management had approximately 150 defects per 100 television sets produced. However, seven years later with almost the identical same work force, only 3 defects could be found per 100 sets-- additionally, production had risen by 40!¹³

¹⁰Nanto, 1982

¹¹Fox 1977

¹²Nanto 1982

¹³Ibid.

Finally, as further demonstration of the overwhelming influence of maintaining wa, Japanese firms are renowned for thinking with a longer time horizon than most American firms. In other words, projecting further into the future and considering the long term effects of decisions upon the firms. This has produced a greater emphasis of profit orientation focused as market share as opposed to American quick sales and the return to stockholders.

In summary, we might say Japan has assimilated an array of private enterprises focused upon maintaining group loyalty and harmony through an elaborate system of implicit controls, seeking to build long-term relationships, emphasizing quality more than short term profit.

What then are the cultural underpinnings of this system and perhaps the rest of East Asia that has promoted this structure?

If we were to pick one single causal factor of this region, undoubtedly it would have to be the overwhelming influence of Confucianism.¹⁴ Although few historians would attest to one single doctrine of Confucianism, certain basic themes of the doctrine permeated the region. Most specifically Confucianism was based upon strict regulation of society and conformity by all social classes to a rigidly prescribed behavioral code. Of essence, benevolence, propriety and obedience to certain standards of behavior were required in order to become a "superior man" and produce a good society. And of major importance were the five prescribed social relationships (and appropriate interaction for each) "between father and son there should be affection; between ruler and minister there should be righteousness; between husband and wife there should be...separate functions; between older and younger brother there should be order; and between friends there should be trust." It is

¹⁴Oh, T.K.; Oh, M.D.; Kao, Richard H., 1983

important to note the hierarchical dimension of four of these relationships, denoting respect, as well as the familial context of three of these.¹⁵

In fact, Confucianism taught that the family was actually the bridge between the individual and society. Filial piety or love demonstrated to one's parents was the foundation that would carry over to the rest of the State. A well ordered society would resemble that of an extended family with the ruler treating his subjects similar to a father, acting with benevolence and devotion to this subjects. And to accomplish this society a system of civil service examinations were designed whereby officials would be admitted and promoted on the basis of their understanding of Confucian ideals.¹⁶

How then did Confucianism translate in Japan and the rest of East Asia? Confucianism was brought to Japan, through Korea, in the 7th Century, having a pervasive dominating effect upon Japanese customs and life. In fact, Confucianism became the dominant guiding force of Japan during the Tokugawa period.¹⁷ Likewise, it is important to know that even the Samurai code of ethics, Bushido, inculcated filial piety, translating the basic principles of Confucianism and extending the concepts to all social classes.¹⁸ Finally, it was through the promotion of Eiichi Shibusawa, one of Japan's primary business leaders in the Meiji Era, that the economic pursuits of business, previously thought contradictory to Confucian ideals, were viewed as consistent and supportive to the building of an industrialized Japan.¹⁹

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Oh, T.K.; Oh, M.D.; Kao, Richard H., 1983

¹⁹Yoshino 1968

Perhaps then it is easy to see how Japanese firms have tended to promote the Confucian ideal of correct behavior and specialized relationships among all employees. Doesn't the modern Japanese corporation appear to be an elaborate system of the benevolent ruler inculcating in his extended family many of the elements of respect and correct behavior of Confucianism? Perhaps one could even attribute the lifetime employment concept of many Japanese firms to this extension as well as private industry's special relationship to government.

Likewise, the role of the leader of a Japanese firm directly follows that of being a good Confucian ruler, minimizing conflict among employees and maintaining harmonious relationships, promoting wa. In fact, it is a time honored tradition in Japan for the leader of a company to bear the brunt of responsibility for any serious mistake made by his subordinates. A prime example of this can be seen in 1985 when the President of Japan Airlines resigned when a 747 plane crash killed over 500 passengers.²⁰

Finally, the Japanese concept of lifetime employment might also be viewed as an extension of Confucian ideals in which age and respect are equated with wisdom and filial piety becomes personalized in attachment to the corporation.

How did Confucianism become translated in the rest of East Asia? In Korea, Confucianism reached its peak during the Yi Dynasty and eventually become the state religion. Similar to Japanese companies in many respects, large Korean firms, choebels, are distinguished, however, in that many firms

²⁰Morita 1986

are run by the family founding member with key management positions filled by family members.²¹

In China and Taiwan large Chinese firms such as Formosa Plastics, President, and Cathay still operate under the leadership of the founder or close relatives. Usually key managerial positions are filled based on affiliation with the owner as opposed to possessing unique contributing abilities.²²

In conclusion we might suggest Japan, Korean and Chinese firms continue many elements of Confucian ideals. In particular correctness of behavior as observed by many firms typifying an extended family guided by a benevolent owner. Certainly this would seem to suggest a strong compatibility with the traditional values of Confucianism and make one wonder if these ideals have not helped to foster the success of East Asia.

²¹Oh, T.K.; Oh, M.D.; Kao, Richard H., 1983

²²Lin 1935

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COMPARISON OF AMERICAN AND JAPANESE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

AMERICAN

Short term employment.

Individualism: master of your own destiny.
* American ingenuity and entrepreneurship, self-reliance.

Recruitment based upon unique skills, specialized career paths.

Movement within the industry, among companies.
Compensation i.e. negotiation.

Direct control, formal distinctions of authority.

Decision making variance.

Managers as professional specialists, decision-makers.

Trade unions for group rights.

Inspection from consumer demand or government control.

Confrontational resolution of of conflicts; "Lay your cards on the table."
Short term profit - return to stockholders, known markets.

JAPANESE

Long term - lifetime employment.

Groupism: intergroup harmony (wa)
* collective responsibility
* consensual decision making
* holistic concern.

Selection centralized, based on proper education.

Job rotation, non-specialization, "continuous training."
Compensation based on seniority.

Implicit control, use of Ambiguity.

Ringisho - proposals generated bottom-up.

Managers as generalists, facilitator.

Union membership related to enterprise.

Quality Control.

Harmony within; Competition without Market Share. Long Time Horizon.

Adapted from Wm. Ouchi, Theory Z, 1982.

Lecture

February 20, 1991

LEARNING JAPANESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Relationship between the United States and Japan

The official relationship of the United States and Japan began in 1853 when Commodore Perry of the U.S. East India Fleet arrived at Uraga (a port) to deliver President Fillmore's message which was to request that Japan and the U.S. trade be opened. In the following year, a peace treaty (Kanagawa Treaty) was signed.

Japan, despite its geographical isolation, has been influenced by western cultures since the dawn of its history. The architecture of Horyuji Temple, which is known to be the oldest wooden structure existing today (built in 607), shows a definite trace of influence of the Greek architecture in the shape of columns which support the building. However, Japan's contact with western countries was indirect till 1543 when Portuguese landed on a small island, Tanegashima, off the southern coast of Japan. The incident was more than 50 years after Christopher Columbus discovered America. Marco Polo reported on the country beyond China where cities were paved with gold (ca. 1295) but he never reached there. During the following one hundred years, Portuguese and Dutch merchants came to Japan to trade. In 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first generation of the Tokugawa Shogunate, appointed William Adams, a pilot of Liefde (a Dutch-registered boat) who was stranded offshore near Bungo and saved by local villagers, to a position of consultant for trade

and diplomatic affairs. Tokugawa Ieyasu sent Kyoto merchants to Mexico (1610) and he also permitted England to trade with Japan (1612). Japanese delegates were in Europe from 1613 to 1620.

After the death of Ieyasu (1616), Japan started decreasing foreigners' access to the country:

limited trade ports to Hirado and Nagasaki (1616)

banned Spanish vessels (1624)

banned sailing of boats unless licensed to trade overseas (1633)

banned Japanese travelling abroad and rejected their returning to Japan (1635)

Japan completed the process of National Isolation in 1639 when Portuguese ships were denied their access to Japanese ports. That was about the time when Harvard University was founded (1638) and Descartes wrote "Les Discours de la Methode" (1637). The Dutch trading post in Hirado was moved to an isolated offshore location, Nagasaki-dejima (1641). During the next 213 years, Dutch were the only western foreigners permitted to trade with Japan through this secluded settlement.

From the late 18th century through the mid 19th century, ships from Europe attempted to approach Japan in hopes to engage in trade. The following is the chronology of such activities.

1792 Luksman, a Russian envoy came to the port of Nemuro, Hokkaido.

1803 A boat from the U.S. came to Nagasaki to request for the U.S./Japan trade. Was rejected.

- 1804 Rezanov, a Russian envoy came to Nagasaki to request for permission to trade. Was rejected.
- 1816 An English boat sailed to Ryuku and wanted to trade.
- 1818 Gordon from England came to Uraga to request for permission to trade. Was rejected.
- 1844 A French ship sailed to Ryuku to request for trading with Japan. A Dutch warship came to Nagasaki to deliver a message to the Shogunate from the Dutch Sovereign who recommended that Japan open the country for trade.
- 1846 An English boat and a French warship came to Ryuku. Commodore Biddol of the U.S. East India Fleet sailed to Uraga to request for trading.
- 1853 A Russian warship arrived at Shimoda.

Among those countries, it was the United States which succeeded first in signing a peace treaty with Japan when Commodore Perry made a return visit in 1854. Within one year, Japan signed similar treaties with England, Russia, France and Holland. Three ports, Hakodate in Hokkaido, Shimoda in Honshu and Nagasaki in Kyushu were opened to western countries for trade activities.

It is no exaggeration to say that there are no other two countries in the modern times as closely tied to each other as the United States and Japan. World War II, a conflict on the surface, contributed to a new phase of their close relationship. In the history of Japanese habitants, it was the first time to let the foreign military enter the country when Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered unconditionally. Japan let Douglas MacArthur exercise the power of authority to influence on virtually every

aspect of the country from the Peace Constitution to the elementary school curriculum. After 45 years since the almost total destruction of its economy, Japan is today the world's largest creditor (\$79,631 million in 1988) while the U.S. has the largest deficit (\$ -126,150 million in 1988). Japan's balance of trade was \$95,012 million while that of the U.S. was \$ -126,017 million in 1988. In 1987, Japan exported \$85,017 million-worth goods to the U.S. On the other hand, the total of the U.S. export to Japan was \$28,249 million. Japanese banks invest in the U.S. Government, properties and business. Automotive companies build their factories in the traditional rust belt of the continental U.S.A. David W. MacEachron, the President of the Japan Society wrote " The problems ahead and the need for new thinking and new ways of behaving go beyond anything humanity has experienced in its brief existence. Strong and effective cooperation between the United States and Japan is one of the crucial foundation stones for a new world order." (IHJ Bulletin, A Quarterly Publication of the International House of Japan, vol. 8, #4, 1988)

Needs and Opportunities for Learning the Japanese Language

Prior to World War II, learning the Japanese language was limited to a small group of people, from Portuguese missionaries during the 16th century to scholars and missionaries who came to Japan since the termination of the National Isolation in the mid 19th century. Most diplomats did not attempt to learn Japanese. As soon as World War II broke out, a national program of Japanese language teacher training began in the U.S. During the war, Japanese was the major language, of 27 foreign languages, in the Armed Services Training Program. The U.S. Navy offered the Japanese language program which

emphasized reading and writing. Both programs were extremely intensive. After the war, some graduates of those programs became scholars of Japanese studies and language education. During the 1950s and 60s, the demand for Japanese language programs at universities continued to increase as the level of interest in Japanese studies rose. The need for learning the Japanese language changed from an utilitarian point of view to a scholarly prerequisite.

Today the third boom for learning Japanese is noticed, which has not reached the peak yet. The scientific exchange of the U.S. and Japan in academia has been vigorous since the end of World War II. The communication is solely in English while a vast majority of works by Japanese scientists are published in Japanese. Most of the U.S. scientists don't have an immediate access to those publications. Particularly in the area related to technology, translation takes time and articles may be obsolete when they are finally translated. Japan's National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS) provides NSF an on-line access at no charge to the science data bases with Japan's Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. However, most of the data entries are in Japanese. The need for learning Japanese has been recognized among scientists. MIT has offered a summer session program on technical Japanese for computer scientists and engineers since 1988. The MIT press published a dictionary entitled "English-Japanese, Japanese-English Dictionary of Computers and Data-Processing Terms" (by Gene Ferber, 1989). NSF has just announced Japan Program which encourages the U.S. scientists and engineers to engage in several types of activities in Japan. The program includes Japanese language study.

I predict the forth boom must come. This will affect ordinary citizens of the U.S. Almost 3 million Japanese citizens travelled to the U.S. and Canada in 1988 while 458 thousand people from the U.S. visited Japan. Approximately 212 thousand Japanese citizens were long-term residents of the U.S. in 1988. When Japanese investment activities saturate among ordinary Japanese citizens and joint industrial ventures expand, more Japanese will move into communities of the U.S. as residential neighbors. They will communicate in English but they will retain the Japanese mentality and, with a few exceptions, never immigrate. Such a phenomenon would create a friction in communities, particularly outside of cosmopolitan cities, unless members of each community develop mutual understanding of the cultural difference. The experience of learning the language is the first step toward the understanding of people who speak the language.

Dynamic Process of Learning the Japanese Language

It is needless to say that learning a language is not limited to learning its syntax and semantics. From this point of view, the process is not analogous to learning a computer language. The former is a dynamic process in which concepts are transmitted, analyzed, synthesized and stored appropriately in the frame of mind of the learner. The process of learning a mother tongue (an excellent expression since learning pronunciation in English requires careful observations of movements of the tongue and exercises of using its muscles while such is not the case of the Japanese language) and that of intellectual development of the learning (i.e., the understanding of concepts) are parallel. New words are new concepts and vice versa. The process of learning a foreign language usually assumes the background of a

fully developed native language experience and it involves translation of the two languages. A piece of advice often given to learners of a foreign language is "Do not translate words. Instead, think of objects in the foreign language you are learning." It is a helpful advice, since it forces the learner to exercise oneself in developing cognitive skills associated with the new language, but should not be regarded as a recommendation to learn the language by following the way how a mother tongue was learned. When the learner is in the environment where a second language is necessary to communicate and survive, the effectiveness of the learning process must be optimized. A value of translation needs to be taken in account.

Attributes of the dynamics of learning a second language are societal, historical and natural backgrounds of the second language and their relationships to those of the native language. Learning about Japan must be an integrated part of the learning process of Japanese and the understanding of Japan must deepen as the learning process of the language progresses. It is a process of growing into a Japanese person while retaining the original identity of the learner. An accomplished bilingual person is mentally no longer an exclusive member of either one of the two countries but lives in the metaphysical world where the two countries have no boundaries. Some individuals consciously or unconsciously resist growing into such a person. For them, learning a second language is difficult. They may learn to pronounce words correctly and speak fluently. However, like a stage performer who completely memorized lines from the script but failed to move the audience, they will never be able to communicate effectively.

Characteristics of the Japanese Language

Japanese is an easy language to learn from a phonemics point of view. There are five vowels (a,e,i,o,u) and 13 consonants (p,b,t,d,k,g,h,s,z, c,r,m,n). Presently, 102 to 117 different sounds (on-setsu) are recognized in the standard Japanese language. The number was more and less through the history of Japan (from 88 before the end of the 8th century to 135 during the 14th century). The Japanese grammar is simple and not enforced strictly. Particularly, it is relaxed in the conversational Japanese language. For instance, omission of the subject of a sentence is common. Japanese words may be written, as they sound, using 66 different and 33 combined characters of the phonogram called "kana." However, Japanese sentences must be written using Chinese characters called "kanji" properly mixed with kana. In fact, kana is mostly used for connectives. Since the Japanese language is phonetically poor, there are a number of different words which cannot be distinguished by pronunciation. They must be expressed using kanji or, in the case of conversation, understood through the context. Each kanji represents one word and one concept. It is not difficult to trace the original object which the symbol represents in a simple-looking kanji. A complex-looking kanji is composed of two or more simple ones. The concept which such a kanji represents can be easily analyzed by looking at components. For instance, the kanji for tree consists of only four strokes and it reminds of the shape of a tree. A kanji which represents a concept related to tree (e.g., branch, root, leaf, wooded area, forest, a name of a tree, wooden objects) contains the character for tree as a component. Most of the Japanese words are written in one, two or three characters of kanji. Characters for verbs are generally simpler than those for nouns.

The use of kanji mixed with kana makes the Japanese language effective as a communication medium which conveys messages in a smaller space and enables readers to understand the context at a glance. However, learning kanji is a challenge for both the native Japanese and foreigners. There are 1,878 most commonly used characters of kanji (compulsory in the Japanese education system) and additional 92 characters used to create personal names. "Kanji Dictionary for Foreigners" published by the Ministry of Education contains 2,215 characters of kanji. Andrew N. Nelson's "The Modern Reader's Japanese- English Character Dictionary" (1962) contains about 5,000 characters of kanji. Learning kanji at a great expense of time and effort brings a reward. Kanji provides metaphor to connect abstract concepts and concrete objects. Learning kanji is an excellent exercise for analytic thinking and also for development of skills to synthesize fragments.

One of the difficulties of learning the Japanese language is its intricate nuance that reflects the Japanese societal structure and the ethos of Japanese people. The Japanese language may be defined as a "class-language." The language a person speaks is an identification of that person in the society of Japan. In a few minutes of conversation between two Japanese strangers introduced to each other, by the language spoken, a cultural hierarchy of the two is identified. Among Japanese people, expressions such as "know the language" or "speak a good Japanese language" are frequently used as a compliment or a gesture of respect. Learning the language is a life-long endeavor of many Japanese people. They don't expect foreigners to master the Japanese language. The expressions, the Japanese language and Japanese language education are exclusively used relative to foreigners. In school curricula of the Japan's education system, the subject

to teach Japanese is called "koku-go" which means "language of the Nation" instead of "Japanese."

Japanese people tend to use abstract and metaphorical expressions freely in daily conversation. This causes a difficulty for foreigners to communicate with Japanese people on equal bases. Quite frequently, what Japanese people say does not make any sense at all to English-speaking people. A conversation between two persons who are speaking essentially two or three different words such as "this," "that" and "do" and their variations is totally impossible to understand even after having learned the Japanese language for a while.

Steps toward Learning the Japanese Language

The first step is to decide on the purpose of learning the Japanese language. The more the purpose is specific, the easier it is to start and the better the result will be. It saves much frustration later if the learner understands which subset of the language must be learned and does not attempt to learn the entire language.

The second step is to find a program in which competent Japanese native instructors who are licensed to teach the Japanese language by the Japanese Government are teaching. The intensive program of ASTP during World War II was regarded effective and most programs inherited some aspects of that program here and in Japan. It is commonly acknowledged that a minimum of two years of semi-intensive training is necessary. When an appropriate program is not readily available, it may be a good idea to listen to taped materials so that sounds and tones of Japanese become familiar. It is imperative to use the materials endorsed for reputable programs. It may also be a good idea to start learning kanji, since it takes time to develop specific cognitive skills

to master kanji. If a Japanese person is available for correcting kanji strokes, it would speed up the progress. At the same time, learning about Japan (history, culture and society) from accurate sources of information should be a part of the process of learning the language. A problem here is to know which sources are accurate or not. Libraries usually include obsolete materials. Japanese Consulates and organizations such as the International House of Japan have most reliable sources of information or provide an access to them. The Publications Service Center of the Japanese Government is one of the most comprehensive resource centers of current information about Japan. Some publications are in English.

Languages are dynamic, particularly the Japanese language. Japanese literary works written in the 11th century is as foreign to native Japanese today as Latin is to English-speaking people. The history book written in the 8th century is impossible for any Japanese people to read outside the scholars on the subject. Words in novels written in the late 19th century sound awkward today. The influence of high-tech on conversational Japanese in the last ten years is quite obvious. The expression for making a telephone call used to be the expression of an action to dial or take a receiver off. Today many Japanese people use the same expression as they use to input information into computers. Once you start learning the Japanese language, it must become a perpetual process. Otherwise, you soon become obsolete.

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