

【研究報告】

The Localness and Asian-ness
in Ishin-ha's "Jan-Jan Opera"

Aisa Hayashi

以下に掲載するのは、2008年7月14日から18日にかけてソウルで開催された国際演劇学会（IFTR: International Federation for Theatre Research）の年次大会において、林愛沙さんが、大阪をベースとする演劇／パフォーマンス集団「維新派」について行った発表原稿の全文である。ただし実際の発表では参考資料として維新派のDVDの一部も上映したのだが、もちろんこれは紙面では再現することができない。IFTRのこの大会は、Re-Constructing Asian-ness(es) in the Global Age をテーマとし、約200件の発表が行われた。

当時林さんは、表現文化学専修前期博士課程（修士課程）2年だったのだが、IFTRで日本の大学院生が発表したのは林さんが初めてだったはずである。

林さんが発表したパネルは、テーマこそ日本演劇であったが、そこで発表したのはすべて（日本人からみた）外国人であり、その中に混じって、林さんは初めての国際学会で健闘したと思う。

特に司会を務めたキャサリン・ミーザーという、筆者と旧知の研究者が「発表後のディスカッションを充実させるために各自の発表時間を20分以内にする」と突然宣言した時にはどうなるかと思ったのだが（事前のリハーサルでは与えられた発表時間を25分とし、余裕を見て23分で終わらせるという想定だった）、林さんはその場で発表原稿の冒頭の一部を思いきって削除し、制限時間内に終わらせることができた。

発表の態度も落ちついて堂々としており、内容もたいへん好評であった。残念ながら、と言うべきかどうかはわからないが、林さんは修士課程を終えた段階で一般企業に就職する道を選んだ。ただ、こうした経験を積んだことが今後何かの役に立ってくれることを願っている。

また林さんに続いて、大学院の表現文化学専修で学ぶ学生が、今後どんどん国際学会で活躍することを期待している。（小田中章浩）

1.

The aim of the present study is to introduce the works of Ishin-ha in terms of "Asian-ness", that is, the ethnic diversity of Osaka, the second biggest city in Japan.

First of all, what is Ishin-ha ? It is the name of a theater company which means renovation band, founded in 1970 by a former art school student named Matsumoto Yukichi.

The modern Japanese theater scene from the late 60's to the mid 70's was, like in Western countries, in a turmoil of protest and revolution against the established theaters, as is seen in Waseda Shogeki-jo of Suzuki Tadashi or Tenjo Sajiki of Terayama Shuji. It is no doubt that the original idea of forming Ishin-ha derived from this counter-cultural movement as its name "renovation band" suggests.

Ishin-ha's activities from the 70's up to the mid 80's are less known. At that time the company was called Nihon Ishin-ha, (literally translated as Japan Renovation Band). According to Matsumoto, Nihon Ishin-ha was composed of artists of various backgrounds such as engraver, writer, and actors. Matsumoto himself, having majored in fine arts at Osaka University of Education, appeared on stage as a main actor, also taking charge of stage design.

During this early period the company was under the influence of various artists such as Kara Juro, famous for his Aka Tent (the Red tent theater company), Terayama and Hijikata Tatsumi (Ankoku Buto). However, it seems that Nihon Ishin-ha could not establish its own style, searching for extremely radical expressions. It is said that they even ate excrement or vomited on stage.

In 1986, Nihon Ishin-ha changed its name simply as Ishin-ha, and Matsumoto began to write scripts for the production. The play produced next year was entitled "Jugo Shonen Tanteidan: Doga-jaga Don-

don" (Fifteen Boy Detectives: Doga-jaga Don-don is a transcription of sound effect produced by Chindon-ya, Japanese street entertainers for advertisement whose existence was quite common around 1920's).

This play (or we should rather call it performance) could be seen as a prototype of later Ishin-ha's works known as Jan-Jan opera.

In the first place, it was a complete outdoor performance making use of stage settings as well as the surrounding environment. Secondly, it was a mixture of choreography, music, and scenography (stage design), each of the elements constituting the essential parts of the production. As for the world represented in the performance, there already exist several motifs or themes preferred in Matsumoto's scenarios: boys and girls, image of the lost town, and a nostalgia deriving from it.

This view could be confirmed simply by enumerating the titles of Jan-Jan opera produced in the following years: "Shonen Opera" (Boy's Opera) performed in 1988, Scrap Opera performed in 1989, and "Shonen-gai" (Boy's Town) performed in 1991.

In 1999, the band was invited to the Adelaide Festival of Arts in Australia, and performed "Mizumachi" (Water City). Since then they performed Ryusei (The Shooting Star) in Hamburg (Germany), Rubiera (Italy), and Belfast (the UK) in 2001. Natsu-no-Tobira (The Door of Summer) was performed in Guanajuato (Mexico) and Santos (Brazil) in 2007. Today Ishin-ha's performance has received fantastic reviews not only in Japan but worldwide.

2.

So far we have seen a brief history of Ishin-ha. Now I am going to analyze "A

sian-ness" of Ishin-ha taking only one performance, "Oukoku" (the Kingdom) produced in 1998, due to the limit of time. However, before discussing the production, we should also shed light on the location of Ishin-ha's activities, the city of Osaka.

As mentioned, Osaka is the second largest city in Japan. However, during the Edo Era, in other words, from the 17th to the mid 19th century, Osaka enjoyed the status of commercial as well as cultural center of the country, many merchants trading rice afforded to Bushi (samurai) as wage. It was in Osaka famous playwright Chikamatsu worked from the late 17th to the early 18th centuries.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the city transformed itself rapidly from a mercantile to capitalist town, producing problems such as poverty, discrimination, and social disorder.

Even now, Osaka, especially in the southern district of the city, is associated with the remains of the past; problems of Zainichi (Korean origin people), people of Buraku origin (a kind of pariah or untouchables discriminated in the Edo Era or even today for their profession of killing cattle) and the least paid day workers (their numbers are increasing due to the recent global capitalism).

It is precisely in these surroundings that the Jan-Jan opera of Ishin-ha was born, because Jan-Jan is the name of quarter near Tennoji, southern commercial center of Osaka.

The Jan-Jan district is found in the area where the name is announced as the place built by new-comers; Shinsekai (the New World). There is also a famous tourist attraction called the Tsutenkaku Tower (the Tower to Reach the Heaven). Around 1900, this area was conceived as a commercial center for entertainment in modernizing Osaka. In 1903, the 5th National Industrial Exhibition was held there, and it was a success.

After that, Shinsekai grew more, aspiring to become cities like Paris or Coney Island in the USA. As its symbol, an observatory was erected and people touted it as the Eiffel Tower of Japan. It was the first Tsutenkaku Tower built in 1912 (It was demolished during the World War II. The one we see today is the second tower rebuilt after the war). The Jan-Jan district and its surroundings thus bear a strong atmosphere of fake culture with make-believe pompousness.

Matsumoto says that unlike traditional European cities, Osaka, especially in the southern half, spreads out in chaotic disorder. He considers Osaka, connected to the sea, as a settlement where people reach after long journey and in which the notions of fluidity and wandering are born.

These images come from the fact that many people coming to Osaka migrated from their countries or the colonies at the time in the process of capitalist industrialization. Osaka was not a utopia. Matsumoto sees Osaka as a huge living organism called "city" sucking people up from countryside. Matsumoto himself was born in Kyusyu, the third biggest island in Japan surrounded by the East China Sea, and moved to Osaka at the age of eight. He says that he was overwhelmed when he saw industrialized Osaka for the first time. Osaka is not only a mixture of peoples and cultures of various origins just like many big cities in Asia, but also it is covered with superficial joy, cheapness as well as resentment against authorities. The Jan-Jan opera was conceived to give a form in this Matsumoto's view of the city and people living there. And one of his persisting motifs is the image of Chindon-ya, once popular street entertainers in Japan. Chindon-ya is referred in various ways in the performance of *Ishin-ha* and it reminds us that the city of Osaka with its high-tech skyscrapers, highways and business persons is not so much

modern as it seems to be, more chaotic, junky and frivolous, ethnically diverse and uprooted. It's a "floating world" if we borrow an expression from Saikaku, famous novelist in the end of 17th century Osaka.

We now see how this vision of the world was realized in the production of Ishi-ha, in the performance titled "Oukoku" (the Kingdom).

3.

"Oukoku" (the Kingdom) seems a kind of cheap space opera if we focus on the path of "supposed" main character; Takeru, orphan boy, is born in imaginary Osaka in the near future and lives in the fights. When Takeru robs Chinese, he stabs one of them with a knife and he is pursued. He barely escapes from the Chinese attack hiding him self in sewage (drain pipes) which cover underground Osaka like a web or plexus, and there he hears the voice of boys in the past. They appear following the water flow. Communication between Takeru and the boys begins and with them he drifts through the city. After their adventures, the boys disappear and Takeru is left alone. Their voices never come back again.

However, this rather sentimental story only serves as a outer framework for the audience to go into a multi-layered world represented by Ishin-ha; because as the play unfolds, it becomes clear that this world is constructed on the images of "flow"; water flow, clean or rotten, flow of blood, flow of people and the audience even see a flow of real cars passing through behind the open stage, as well as a flow of illumination of real buildings if you glance behind the theater space from left to right or right to left. I will show you the opening scene of "Oukoku" (the Kingdom); here you see not only the audience and the stage setting in front, but also cars and buildings of the real city of Osaka behind.

We add in passing that commercial activities in Osaka, from the 17th century on, have been supported by rivers and canals going through it. "Oukoku" (the Kingdom) is subtitled as "Go along a river" and if you go along a river in Osaka, you could reach Nanko-port where the performance took place.

For Matsumoto "flow" is so important an image as it was taken up in the next work "Mizu-machi" (Water Town), constituting a trilogy with another performance "Ryusei" (Shooting Star), all of which reflect the image of flow.

The performance is thus closely connected to the place where it was produced: Nanko-port. Nanko is a reclaimed land from the sea for commercial and industrial use, developed during a so-called "bubble" period in late the 80's to early 90's. When Ishin-ha first produced their work in Nanko-port practically there was nothing around as a result of the depression caused by the bubble economy. So it was a good place to introduce an imaginary Osaka in the near future.

On the stage the audience sees various images of Osaka, most of them being fragmentary or deformed, and there appears a miniature of ruined Osaka city in which even the Tsutenkau Tower is reproduced in a smaller scale. Here you have the image of this miniature of Osaka in ruins.

However, the most impressive aspect of the performance is found in the bands of boys and girls who, with their peculiar movements and songs, act like chorus in Greek tragedy. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the performance is supported by these bands of boys and girls who constitute each scene in cooperation with different stage setting. But the words they sing or chant are so decomposed on phonetic level that they are sometimes incomprehensible like incantation, while retaining a strong

accent of the Osaka region. As a whole, their songs remind us of Kecak of Bali Island.

As for their movements, technically speaking it is very "undeveloped": it seems that they abandon ambition to achieve any physical high standard. But their bodies are always swaying, as if to show that they stand on no solid ground.

This strange movement, accompanied with their voices which repeat simple phrases or fragments of words with Osaka intonation almost interminably, invites spectators to go into another world, a fake Osaka which belongs, whether in the future or in the past, to chimerical imagination of people living in this junk city.

Then I will show you another exert from "Oukoku" (the Kingdom) where the band of girls chant in the stage setting which evokes an atmosphere of downtown Osaka of old days:

In this scene the girls' chant repeats "Shobai-hanjo" which is roughly translated as "whole lotta deal", an expression typically found in Osaka merchants. And against this background, the festivities like those of Chindon-ya, Japanese street entertainers of old times, come up. So the audience, going through the performance, see the ruins of Osaka in the near future on the one hand and the past of the city evoked by the bands of boys and girls on the other, as well as the real city behind the stage.

The boys and girls, with their bodies swaying as much mechanically as childishly, give the audience an impression of drifting. They are the symbol of drifting people in this city who are destined to be restless and who look for their home place only by way of nostalgia. This is why the hero Takeru in "Oukoku" is homeless. He drifts in the city just like these boys and girls from the past are drifting.

4.

In conclusion we could say that "Asian-ness" of Ishin-ha's performance is found in Matsumo's image of drifting people in the city which affords no solid ground to live on. And this sense of homeless-ness is quite common not only in developing Asian big cities but in the city of Osaka which is torn apart with contradictions between modern and pre-modern or ethnic diversity and cultural identity.

Apart from "Oukoku", the performance of Ishin-ha is accompanied with a sense of cheapness; the world represented by Ishin-ha is full of junk images. Also the body movement and chant of players are far from refined. But it is clear that this approach of Matsumoto is strategic. Putting forward the cheapness of the performance, he protests against every authenticity, whatever cultural or political. And we must admit that this strategy of the Jan-Jan opera has been quite effective.