

## Speaking Shakespeare in Japanese: some contemporary exponents

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Since the late 1960s, responsibility for the popular interpretation of Shakespeare in Japan has been released from the hands of an academic clique that had dominated the field since Shakespeare's plays were first translated into Japanese in the Meiji Era (1868-1912). This is not to suggest that Shakespeare scholarship is a dying industry in Japan, rather that the boundaries between education and entertainment have become more marked, with Shakespeare scholars adopting more of an advisory than directorial role. Economic growth and internationalisation have fostered the emergence of such well-known directors as Ninagawa Yukio and Suzuki Tadashi, working in state-of-the-art facilities with actors who are more likely to be drawn from 'talent' schools than the university Shakespeare club. Commercialisation has generated new performance styles that have maintained and enhanced the popular appeal of Shakespeare's plays against competition from native and foreign genres.

While Shakespeare performance in Japan has come a long way since the 1950s, it can still be regarded as a continuation of existing traditions. Ninagawa's integrated readings of the text are typical of the *shingeki* (Japan's modern drama) in which Ninagawa initially trained, while Suzuki's rigorous discipline of the body owes a lot to classical *nō* drama. Although they may have realised the dreams of their own and previous generations of Shakespeareans, it seems that one area of possible neglect has been the actor's voice: as an aesthetic object and a vehicle of interpretation. Voice production is just as much a part of drama education in Japan as it is elsewhere, but when it comes to live production Ninagawa's actors must often shout to be heard against continual background music, and although Suzuki does have a technique for voice (derived partly from *nō* and *kabuki*), it is apparently subordinate to the often considerable demands placed on the actors' bodies. As Paul Allain explains,<sup>1</sup>

The voice is [...] considered primarily in terms of energy. There is no technical exploration of the voice as an organ of speech or the body as a site of resonators [...]. Rather than using the voice in a state of relaxation that is familiar to Western approaches, it is drawn out in positions of tension. The voice is added as you fight for balance when one leg is raised or when the stomach muscles are struggling to hold the upper torso off the floor.

Allain argues that, for Suzuki, ‘Words have a visceral, catalysing impact but little meaning.’<sup>2</sup> This is a departure from both the musical delivery of the *nō* and *kabuki* theatres and the many literal and literary translations of Shakespeare that are available, and it ignores one of the means by which drama (including Shakespeare) has been traditionally received in Japan.

Japanese translations of Shakespeare to the present day have been notable for their use of prosody. Translators have exploited the accentual patterns of colloquial Japanese and potential for phonological harmony, as well as drawing on native literary devices such as syllabic meter and word play; indeed, as Niki Hisae and others have attested,<sup>3</sup> prosody has been fundamental to the development of individual translating styles, since effective prosody not only helps the actor to articulate the lines but can also serve as a dynamic interpretation of the source. A classic example is Kinoshita Junji’s translation<sup>4</sup> of Macbeth’s soliloquy of despair (5.5.19-23):

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death.

Asu, mata asu, mata asu to, kokizami ni ichinichi ichinichi ga sugi satte yuki,  
Sadamerareta toki no saigo no ichigyō ni tadoritsuku.  
Kinō to iu hibi wa itsumo bakamonodomo ni,  
Chirihiji no shi e no michi wo terashite kita dake da.

The translation communicates a mood of resignation. The tone is set by the unusual elision of open vowels in the initial phrase, *Asu, mata asu, mata asu to* (‘To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow’), while the awkward sequence of closed vowels in the second half of the line communicates the metaphor of creeping (‘Creeps in this petty pace from day to day’). The second and third lines again contrast phonically harmonious phrases of time (e.g. *Kinō to iu hibi wa*, ‘all our yesterdays’) with accented expressions of despair (*bakamonodomo*, ‘fools’). In the fourth line, this pattern is reversed, as the concrete image (*Chirihiji no shi e no michi wo*, ‘The way to dusty death’) is placed before the tragically emollient closing phrase, *terashite kita dake da*

(‘have lighted’). If prosody is above all else a measure of time, then Kinoshita’s Macbeth has - as in Shakespeare’s play - become a prisoner of history, unable to turn the line to his advantage.

Other, more prolific translators, such as Odashima Yōshi, have achieved a comparable technique. Odashima was influenced stylistically at least by the Arechi (or ‘Wasteland’) group of poets, whose free verse looked to the modernism of T.S.Eliot for inspiration in the aftermath of 1945. By 1985, he had become only the second person to translate the Complete Works of Shakespeare into Japanese, adopting a rhythmical, euphonious style which appealed especially to younger audiences; he also refined the free verse translating style, discovering that a line of around twenty-five syllables was the most that an actor could utter in a single breath.<sup>5</sup> Odashima has been Ninagawa’s translator, and by far the most prominent translator in the Japanese theatre over the last thirty years. He has always distanced himself from the production process,<sup>6</sup> and so any loss of musicality is more likely to be a fault of performance rather than translation.

While Odashima translates for the stage, Kinoshita belongs to the majority of Shakespeare translators in Japan whose translations have been intended primarily for private reading. Odashima’s priority has been to bridge the gap between Shakespeare’s world and contemporary Japanese culture, whereas Kinoshita has been able to afford a more academic approach, one that listens intently to the sound that Shakespeare makes and seeks its echo in the traditional (as well as contemporary) culture. In addition to being one of Japan’s best known modern playwrights,<sup>7</sup> Kinoshita has taken an active interest in *rodoku*, the recitation (literally, ‘clear’ or ‘melodious reading’) of plays and other literary texts. His key text has been the medieval *Heike monogatari* (‘The Tale of Heike’), which was composed for accompaniment by *biwa* lute and - as a spoken text - remains one of the leading items in the *rodoku* canon. Kinoshita’s writings on Shakespeare show a particular interest in the rhetorical or declamatory effect of Shakespeare in Japanese,<sup>8</sup> and his Shakespeare translations have been well received.

Kinoshita is one of a narrow but significant stream of academic translators who have experimented with Shakespeare *rodoku*. The tradition begins with Tsubouchi Shōyō, who in 1928 became the first person to translate the Complete Works into Japanese. Shōyō would always read a handful of *kabuki* plays before embarking on a Shakespeare translation, and then read aloud each passage from the Shakespeare play before translating it. In 1891, he had founded a playreading circle at the Tokyo Senmon

Gakkō (later Waseda University) which read recent *kabuki* history plays,<sup>9</sup> and was the forerunner of the Bungei Kyōkai (the Literary Arts Society), initially founded in 1906 and the pioneer of Shakespeare production in Japan. The Society operated Japan's first modern drama school, importing Western methodology, including for voice. Its regime required students to master Shakespeare's plays in the original English before performing them in Shōryō's translations.<sup>10</sup> In short, the Bungei Kyōkai established a method of training and production that was influential through to the 1960s and in which voice was given equal weight to acting. In 1933, Shōryō had records cut of himself reciting from his translations of *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

The influence of Shōryō can be felt in the work of the man who has done more than anyone else to popularise Shakespeare through the medium of public recital, the scholar and actor Arai Yoshio.<sup>11</sup> Beginning in 1987 with a reading of Kinoshita's translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Arai recited each of the plays and poems of Shakespeare over the next five years, using whichever translation he felt was best suited to declamation - mainly Odashima for the comedies and histories and Kinoshita for classic plays such as *Hamlet*.<sup>12</sup> The recitals were held in central Tokyo at the Iwanami Ciné Salon, and thanks to sponsorship by the Iwanami publishing house and Asahi Shimbun newspaper, Arai was able to donate the proceeds to the campaign to raise money for the construction of the Globe Theatre in London; he was a friend of Sam Wanamaker and previously director of Tokyo's own replica of the Globe, opened in 1988.<sup>13</sup> Recitals attracted an average attendance of thirty, a mix of theatre professionals and the general public, although in June 1989 as many as sixty people attended Arai's recital of Kinoshita's translation of *King Lear*. They also attracted significant media coverage: NHK national radio produced a series of five documentary programmes on the recitals, and national daily newspapers such as the Asahi Shimbun and Nihon Keizai Shimbun ran several feature articles.

Arai's achievement can hardly be compared to the box office successes of a Ninagawa or Suzuki. He himself admits that his purpose was primarily educational, and that the recitals would not have been possible without sponsorship and the support of Wanamaker. Their importance lies more in their formative influences and implications for theatrical practice. For Arai goes somewhat further than either Kinoshita or Shōryō in drawing on the various styles of *katari* (narration) and *utai* (chanting) in the traditional drama. These styles help him to find a musical counterpoint to the surface meaning of the words. They open up the space in which the words are produced and

received, amplifying nuances and refining interpretation. Character emerges less as a result of semantic play and more from within the words themselves; the words make a sensory as well as cerebral impact. This acoustic dimension was essential to theatrical experience in Elizabethan times,<sup>14</sup> and (as Frey maintains)<sup>15</sup> its neglect risks depriving audiences of a rich source of meaning:

The concreteness of Shakespeare's language, its sensuous, synaesthetic quality, impels readers and audiences away from ordinary consciousness, grounds rational sense in physical sense, reshapes sexual identity, destabilises gender, and freshens the material world for reinterpretation.

There is, of course, nothing new about the application of traditional genres to Shakespearean drama in Japan. Many of the early performers of Shakespeare were *kabuki* actors, and there have been numerous Shakespeare adaptations in the main pre-modern genres of *nō*, *kyōgen*, *kabuki* and *jōruri*.<sup>16</sup> Arai's achievement is unique in the sense that, although he does use some gestures and also minimal props and lighting, his recitals tie him to the book, allowing for a purer experimentation in vocal technique. During the five years of his recitals, Arai received regular instruction in *kyōgen* delivery from the *kyōgen* master Izumi Motohide.<sup>17</sup> This training developed the strength and clarity of his voice, and it also provided a comic style for his characterisations of Bottom and Shylock. *Kyōgen* is a comic genre in which the pitch undulations of actors' speech tend to move in an opposite way to both standard colloquial Japanese and the stylised delivery of the other classical genres. In standard Japanese (as derived from Tokyo dialect), the pitch rises to a high tone around the middle of the phrase, whereas in *kyōgen* delivery the accent is placed as early as possible in the phrase: this creates a comic effect similar to trochaic rhythm in Shakespearean verse. Although *kyōgen* training undoubtedly broadened Arai's awareness of different accents and speech styles, a more pertinent parallel with his actual role might be drawn with *rakugo*, the art of comic storytelling. Similar to Arai at his lectern, the storyteller is responsible for a range of characters, each one subtly differentiated by the voice. Although *rakugo* is not a dramatic genre, it does share with the Odashima translations that Arai mainly used a lively undercurrent of word and soundplay. The *ochi* (or 'drop') in *rakugo* - the punning punchline - is a narrative device that might be relevant to the way in which a Shakespeare speech or scene might be delivered.

For tragic and historical roles, Arai does sometimes adopt the stylised *kōtei*

(‘high and low’) accentuation of classical *utai* as well as *kabuki* speech, which he claims is closest to colloquial Japanese in its mixture of *utai* and *kyōgen* delivery. He adds that he has learnt a lot in this regard from the Zenshinza, a company of professional *kabuki* actors which is unique in specialising in the performance of both classical and modern drama in *kabuki* style. Like Arai, they seek connections between tradition and modernity, and its members have also been active in *rōdoku* performance of pre-modern texts.<sup>18</sup> Yet even among *shingeki* actors, who do not necessarily have any experience of acting *kabuki*, the set speeches from the *kabuki jōhachiban* are commonly used as warm-up exercises. These are the eighteen plays selected in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Ichikawa Danjūrō VII for their superiority as performance texts, and mainly favour the rough, ‘manly’ style (*aragoto*) of the Danjūrō line. Arai used the *jōhachiban* in preparation for his Shakespeare recitals, adding to his range of voices a certain excitement lacking in the more formal *kyōgen* and *utai*.

The *aragoto* style is often heard in mainstream Shakespeare productions. At the least, it brings a classical lustre to the performance, helping to overcome cultural resistance to the plays themselves. Japanese audiences remain at ease with their classical past; it is the meanings of Shakespeare which are more intensely debated. They are equally attracted to the foreignness of Shakespeare, and for foreignness Arai finds his necessary ‘other’ in the actor Sir John Gielgud, late Honorary President of the Shakespeare Globe Trust. Arai’s association with Gielgud dates back to 1972, when he was awarded a scholarship by the Japanese government to visit England to study British theatre, and during that time received a single lesson from Gielgud in speaking Shakespearean verse. Gielgud was famous for his use of voice, and the lesson made a deep impression on Arai.<sup>19</sup> In the 1930s, Gielgud and Laurence Olivier had created a style of performing Shakespeare which remained influential until the late 1950s: Gielgud lyrical and cerebral, Olivier physical and realistic. Gielgud’s voice was naturally at a disadvantage among non-English speaking audiences, especially in Japan where Olivier became highly popular with the release of his Shakespeare films in the late 1940s, and it was sometimes a disadvantage on the English stage as well: he ‘could fall into a mannered delivery, a kind of ‘singing’ style which appeared to place sound above sense’.<sup>20</sup>

When Gielgud’s career faltered, one way in which he rebuilt it was by a Shakespeare recital entitled *Ages of Man* (with which he toured the world between 1957 and 1967). Arai was influenced by *Ages of Man* and Gielgud’s approach to public

recital, which Gielgud described as follows:<sup>21</sup>

When I devised the solo recital *Ages of Man*, I discovered that, in doing speeches out of their proper context, I had to remember that in every speech there was a rise, a climax and a fall, having in my mind where I was going to and where I was coming from, and then I could put any amount of variations in between (as musicians often do in playing Chopin, for instance) while keeping the essential architecture of each speech intact.

Gielgud was reciting isolated speeches and Arai whole plays, but the importance of structure was not lost on Arai. Structure introduces diversity, and it provides the necessary landmarks with which to sustain the flow of the speech; it creates a space for the actor to pause and breathe as well as speak.

As Allain notes,<sup>22</sup> the voice of the Suzuki actor may be ‘considered primarily in terms of energy’, and this is a tendency which can be observed in other contemporary productions, where the speech is uttered along a single horizontal plane without variations in energy.<sup>23</sup> That may be partly the fault of the translations, which are inevitably more verbose than the original,<sup>24</sup> offering less time for pauses. It may also be difficult for actors to master the logic of the Shakespearean line, not to mention all those rhetorical tropes, which (although literally translatable) are often quite foreign to colloquial Japanese. Although there are parallels with Shakespearean poetics (for example, in the use of assonance),<sup>25</sup> traditional Japanese poetics depend more on the metrical generation of space<sup>26</sup> and on what the 17<sup>th</sup> century *haiku* poet Matsuo Bashō termed *nioi* – ‘scent’ - the reverberations of the word or phrase.<sup>27</sup>

Gielgud’s experience suggests that by identifying structures, as opposed to loosely connected sequences of phrases, the actor might begin to make sense as well as sound. Arai’s experience suggests that the prosody of Japanese translations offers many clues as to where these structures lie, and that once identified can be realised in performance by the familiar techniques of Japanese theatre in much the same way that Gielgud used his celebrated voice. For the Japanese actor, it is above all a matter of identifying the sub-texts which give shape to the structures, and as a scholar as well as performer of Shakespeare Arai is in a privileged position to do just that. This is apparent in a recording which he made for me of the opening dialogue of Shōryō’s resonant translation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.<sup>28</sup> I subjected this recording to a computer programme detecting frequency and pitch traces, from which it was clear that Arai had

departed relatively little from the pitch accentuation one would expect in standard Japanese. The reading was clipped and fluid, the boundaries between each phrase carefully marked. This method brought out Shōyō's cadences but could well have become monotonous were it not for the other tonal qualities that Arai introduced, of which the most remarkable was the scale of height and depth.

Accented words, such as *mō* ('already'), set the upper end of the register. These were words in which pitch dominated, and were mainly to do with time. A contrastive set of words, that included *Yai* ('Go!') and *noroi* ('sluggish'), were also accented but preceded swoops in pitch frequency to deep growls of below 50 hertz, and were words in which timbre dominated. Arai's interpretation has a definite shape to it, describing the transition from anticipation to ennui to decision in this short dialogue between Theseus and Hippolyta. It figures the waxing and waning of the moon, which is the defining image of the play (and of numerous productions), and it can also be said to figure the relationship between reader and text. The recitation is itself a movement through time in which the changing moods of the text are shared between reader and audience; the reader takes the audience through each passage, predicting its likely response and making timely interventions with a necessary change of mood.

Arai's *rōdoku* manifests a painstaking approach to the problem of speaking Shakespeare in Japanese, but it would be wrong to suggest that the problem has been ignored in the mainstream theatre. Established companies such as Bungakuza and Haiyōza have their own drama schools, which teach voice production, and since 1993 the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) has organised a summer school for Japanese actors. As with Gielgud and Arai, 'RADA in Tokyo' can offer a particular incentive to Japanese actors to discover and project the sub-texts of Shakespeare and other Western playwrights.

Within the theatre, companies such as Shakespeare Theatre and groups experimenting with local dialect are conspicuous for their treatment of voice. These are dedicated groups in which awareness of the sounds of Shakespeare in Japanese is heightened and Shakespeare's meanings shared over several years (rather than for a single production); they have had to find a way of 'doing Shakespeare'. Since its inception in 1975, Shakespeare Theatre has specialised exclusively in Shakespeare production, staging the entire canon in the Odashima translations. Like Arai, they perform mainly in small venues in which the chief danger is of the Shakespearean



rhetoric losing its precision and the sheer verbosity of the translations overcoming the control of the actors. The founder and artistic director of Shakespeare Theatre, Deguchi Norio,<sup>29</sup> has developed a style of delivery which has been compared to ‘stroking a cat’. The lines are neither squeezed dry nor thrown away, but are treated with a mindful respect, half open and half closed. The impression given by a Shakespeare Theatre performance is of a classical balance of text and performance that allows the drama to progress at an unforced pace, with the rhetorical elements expected of production provided by the design and sound plot.

The premise for the Deguchi style is that Shakespeare’s plays contain an unusual power requiring careful treatment, more like a lion than a domestic cat. The extent to which this premise is fulfilled is evidenced by audience responses to the company’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*:<sup>30</sup>

‘This production made me feel powerful, and I felt that it was a power I had wanted!’

‘I was surprised by the fast pace of the production but impressed at the way all the actors spoke their lines. This was no wasted dream, not the kind of dream you would want to wake from.’

‘This was the first time for me to see a Shakespeare production that was so easy to follow.

The smooth delivery of the lines was excellent, and I was drawn along not just by the words but by the way the actors moved themselves.’

Arai and Shakespeare Theatre are both Tokyo-centric in the sense that they are based in Tokyo and belong to a trajectory to popularise rather than localise Shakespeare in Japan. The inevitable complaint of practitioners outside Tokyo is that Tokyo-centric performance presents itself as ‘Japanese Shakespeare’ when Tokyo is only one among many localities, although this view ignores the reality that Tokyo is a melting pot to which regional artists will tend to gravitate. In so far as it is possible to identify their audience, Arai speaks to an internationalised elite for whom Shakespeare is to be appreciated alongside their own classical drama, and Shakespeare Theatre has its roots in the ideologically committed theatre of the 1960s. Yet they both speak *hyōjungo*, the standardised language of government and the national media, derived from Tokyo dialect. Their styles serve more ‘to purify the dialect of the tribe’<sup>31</sup> than to challenge any central norms.

Productions in local dialect (*hōgen*) may well serve to purify the dialect of the locality as well, and certainly one of their roles must be to popularise Shakespeare. They

have flourished in regions with a prominent sense of local identity, such as Kansai, Okinawa and Tohoku, which all have historical reason to be wary of Tokyo.<sup>32</sup> *Hogen* productions are not necessarily subversive of Tokyocentric Shakespeare; it is just that they try to make Shakespeare more fully their own, reclaiming the spatial and temporal immediacy of local identity. The website of the Shakespeare Company Japan, based in Sendai (the largest city of the Tohoku region), declares that<sup>33</sup>

By incorporating the charm of dialects into the translation we hope to represent a deeper, broader interpretation of Shakespeare's world. Although there are words from many different regions in the original text, the standard Japanese into which all adaptations have been translated is thought of as somewhat distant and cold by the people of Tohoku. By making use of the abundant vitality which exists in the Japanese dialects as theatrical language, we aim to create a new slant on Shakespeare's plays in Japan.

Although this statement exaggerates the extent to which *hyōjungo* translations might be regarded as 'distant and cold by the people of Tohoku', it does deconstruct the myth of national identity, asserting that 'Japan' is to be found anywhere within the Japanese archipelago where any dialect of Japanese is spoken. The website also states that

As the Shakespeare Company Japan attaches great importance to the need for a sense of identification and unity with the audience, performances only take place in small theatres of about 100-200 seats.

Arai and Shakespeare Theatre would sympathise, since they too perform only in small venues and have specialised agendas which call for a unified response. All three types of performance create an intimate 'world of difference' that would challenge almost anything outside the theatre. All three rely on voice as a means of defining and energising that world.

Since founding the group in 1992, its director Shimodate Kasumi has adapted six of Shakespeare's plays for performance in Tohoku dialect. In 2000, they performed their version of *Macbeth* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and are planning to host the Asian Shakespeare Festival in Sendai in 2010. Shimodate has developed a production style he calls 'North Japanism', which combines Tohoku dialect with references to Tohoku culture in a deliberate reflection of Yeats' Abbey Theatre and (as noted) the more contemporary ideology of regionalism. A recent production of *As You Like It* drew

on Shimodate's childhood memories of the hot spring resort of Naruko. Recalling the special atmosphere of the place and how old and young took to the waters to be healed of the strains and stresses of the big city (Sendai), he was reminded of the Forest of Arden, and in fact one of the performances was staged at Naruko.

Shimodate set the Company's 1996 adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the island of Nonoshima, near Sendai. Oberon and Titania were cast as sea nymphs, Bottom as a fisherman, and Puck as a *kappa* (the notorious goblins of Tōhoku folklore). As with all the Company's productions, this was more adaptation than translation, making free and selective use of Shakespeare's text in an effort to create a soundscape that is enriched but not dominated by dialect. Like the standard translations, Shimodate's adaptation is a synthesis of sounds<sup>34</sup> that is tailored to the abilities of his actors and needs of each production. In Act III, scene i, for example (the entrancement of Titania for Bottom),<sup>35</sup> Bottom's birdsong (3.1.120-123, 'The ousel cock, so black of hue' etc.) is replaced by the yodelling word *Eny~dotto* from a traditional fishermen's song. The word is repeated throughout the scene by both Bottom (renamed 'Bon') and Titania ('Taita'), with obvious sexual undertones. The fruits which Titania orders her fairies to fetch for Bottom are replaced with popular Japanese dishes (e.g. *r~men* noodle soup) and *sake* rice wine.

In the adaptation, there are a few variations from standard Japanese such as the softening of *k* to *g* in such common words as *koto* (abstract 'thing') and *yoku* ('well'), but the rhythmic quality of the dialogue comes as much from the license of adaptation as the dialect itself, whose role is festive and sexual. As in Shakespeare's play, Taita loses all decorum in her rapture for Bon but the rapture is primarily for the sounds he makes. Dialectal inflections and words are underlined.<sup>36</sup>

} [glottal stop], kanjir@. Shibireru koe.

Watashi no koko irahen wo yusaburu w~. Guin, guin.

Yes, I feel it. That voice paralyses me.

I am shaken to the depth of my being (if you know what I mean). More, more!

The sexual undercurrent is brought out even more blatantly by Bon:

dare ga ki no kiita otoko ga naka ni haitte

Mame ni ittari kitari shite kurereba, naka yoku natte, jin de nai.

If only some smart guy could get inside and give it the old one-two, you'd feel  
allright in no time, I warrant you!

One of the reasons why a standard Japanese translation might seem 'cold' to a Tōhoku audience - even losing the humour altogether - is that the standard dialect has different rules of pitch accentuation. The standard dialect (as exemplified by the Arai recitals) is quite heavily accented so that accent can even have a rhythmic function, whereas Tōhoku dialect is hardly accented at all. There is a tendency for speech to rise and fall quite gradually in pitch and for accents to be inserted for the purpose of emphasis or to mark a change in mood. The eroticism of the dialogue between Bon and Taita is registered more as a lilting, melodious duet (with appropriate changes in volume) than through the rhythmical rhetoric of the standard translations. The problem of rhetorical equivalence (the fundamental problem of Shakespeare translation) is not confined to the relationship between Shakespeare's text and its Tokyo-based translators but is also a matter of how Shakespeare is translated and understood between the different localities.

The requirement to speak in local dialect is less straightforward than it seems, especially as about a third of the actors do not originate from the Tōhoku region. For example, the actor who played Bon (Izumori Isamu) is from Aomori Prefecture (in the northern part of Tōhoku); Aomori accentuation is closer to Tokyo than the southern Tōhoku dialect adopted by Shimodate,<sup>37</sup> so that for Izumori there is the challenge of adapting his voice to something other than the expected *hyōjungo*. Even those who have been brought up to speak in the local dialect (with all its familial associations) must learn to adapt it to their given role. In facilitating this process, which takes nine months of weekly rehearsals for a single production, Shimodate has drawn on the work of Cicely Berry, Voice Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, who states at the beginning of her standard work *The Actor and the Text* (1993) that<sup>38</sup>

whatever the style of the writing, the actor has to find the right energy for that particular text; if his energy becomes too inward and controlled the words become dull; if he presses too much energy out the words will be unfocussed and the thought will be generalised. Either way the result is that the speaking of text or dialogue is too often not as alive or remarkable as the imagination that is feeding it.

Shimodate has himself attended Berry's workshops in England, and uses her exercises in rehearsals. This combination of dialect and technique can create dynamic speech communities that enhance rather than confuse our understanding of Shakespeare, locals and outsiders alike. If the Shakespeare Company Japan, Arai and Kinoshita, and Deguchi's Shakespeare Theatre have any counterparts in other Asian theatres, it is at least with groups for whom Shakespeare's language has prompted an appreciation of their own.

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#### NOTES

1 Paul Allain, *The Art of Stillness: The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki* (London: Methuen, 2002), 113-114.

2 *Ibid.*, 128.

3 See Niki Hisae, *Shakespeare Translation in Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Kenseisha, 1984), Ch. 2 *passim*, Kawachi Yoshiko, *Shakespeare and Cultural Exchange* (Tokyo: Seibido, 1995), 92-97, and Daniel Gallimore, 'Sounding like Shakespeare: rhythm, rhyme and word play in Japanese translations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 2001.

4 Kinoshita Junji, tr., *Makubesu* (Macbeth) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 130.

5 Kadono Izumi, 'Odashima-yaku to Sheikusupia-juyō' (The Odashima translations and the reception of Shakespeare in Japan), in Anzai Tetsuo, ed., *Nihon no Sheikusupia hyakunen* (A hundred years of Shakespeare in Japan) (Tokyo: Aratake Shuppan, 1989), 152.

6 'Interview with Deguchi Norio,' in Minami Ryōta, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies, eds., *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001),

185.

7 See, for example, Kinoshita Junji, *'Requiem on the Great Meridian' and Selected Essays*, tr./ed. Brian Powell and Jason Daniel (Tokyo: Nan'undō, 2000).

8 See, for example, Kinoshita Junji, *Sheikusupia no sekai* (Shakespeare's world) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993).

9 Brian Powell, 'One man's *Hamlet* in 1911 Japan: The Bungei Kyokai production in the Imperial Theatre,' in Sasayama Takashi, J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, eds., *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40-42.

10 In her portrait of the Bungei Kyōkai's star actress, Matsui Sumako, Phyllis Birnbaum recounts that Matsui was almost expelled from the drama school because of her ignorance of English. *Modern Girls, Shining Stars, The Skies of Tokyo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 13.

11 Arai Yoshio is emeritus professor of English at Komazawa University in Tokyo. In the 1960s he acted with the *shingeki* company Kindai Gekijō, and between 1968 and 1972 was an English instructor on the English conversation programme on NHK national television.

12 For a play-by-play account of the recitals, see *Rōdoku Sheikusupia zenshō no sekai* (Reciting Shakespeare in Japanese), (Tokyo: Shinjusha, 1993).

13 See Arai's essay 'The Reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe and Japan,' in Anzai Tetsuo, Iwasaki Sōji, Holger Klein and Peter Milward, eds., *Shakespeare in Japan* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 174-186.

14 See Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

15 Charles H. Frey, *Making Sense of Shakespeare* (London: Associated University Presses), 31.

16 See the essays in Part I of *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*.

17 Arai has written two *kyōgen* adaptations of Shakespeare for the Izumi School, both based on the gulling of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, 'A Love Letter' and 'The Lovesick in Yellow'. These were written in English and performed at the National Noh Theatre in August 1991.

18 One of its members, Takase Seiichirō has recited the complete plays of the *kabuki* playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon, and formed a Chikamatsu reading group.

19 Gielgud said to Arai: 'Speaking verse is like swimming. If you stop, you'll be drowned.'

20 Roger Warren, 'Shakespeare on the twentieth-century stage,' in Stanley Wells, ed.,

*The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 259.

21 John Gielgud, *Acting Shakespeare* (London: Pan Books, 1997), 35.

22 Allain, *The Art of Stillness*, 113.

23 Where *kabuki* stylisation is adopted in Ninagawa productions, it is often noticeable that speech is sustained at a uniform level within the single gesture, in other words that speech is accommodated to the gesture rather than as a dynamic partner.

24 In a count I made of syllables in Act I, scene i of four translations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the numbers were significantly higher than in the source, although English does have more words containing syllables of three or more phonemes. The older translations contained more syllables.

25 Oxymoron and hyperbole are other common traits.

26 Traditional Japanese poetry is written in syllabic meter.

27 Bashō's *haiku* is also notable for its use of synaesthesia.

28 Tsubouchi Shōyō, tr., *Za Sheikusupia* (Complete works of Shakespeare) (Tokyo: Daisan Shokan, 1999), 80. The translation was first published in 1916.

29 See Suematsu Michiko, 'Innovation and continuity: two decades of Deguchi Norio's Shakespeare Theatre Company,' in *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*, 101-111.

30 Comments from audience survey conducted at May 1993 production at Aoyama Enkei Theatre, Tokyo. My translations.

31 T.S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding (1942)', in *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), 218, 'Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us / To purify the dialect of the tribe / And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight.'

32 In the case of Kansai, as the former cultural and economic centre of Japan; of Okinawa, as an independent kingdom until annexation by Japan in the Meiji Era; and of Tōhoku (the six prefectures in the north of the main island of Honshū), as an underdeveloped region.

33 Shakespeare Company website, <http://www.age.ne.jp/x/umi/inen/e-profile.htm>.

34 As its website states, the Shakespeare Company uses a range of 'dialects' rather any unified 'Tōhoku dialect', since there are considerable variations within this mountainous region, especially between north and south.

35 Copy of unpublished script kindly provided by the Shakespeare Company Japan.

36 My translations. The first excerpt corresponds with the line 'Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note' (3.1.133) but the second with nothing directly in the source.

37 The dialects of southern Tōhoku are linguistically close to Tokyo dialect, hence the relative lack of syntactic and lexical divergence in the examples quoted. It is the accent

which is so different.

38 Cecily Berry, *The Actor and the Text* (London: Virgin Publishing, 1993), 9.

39 Shimodate has attended Berry's workshops.