

Art and festival—the origin of art—

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This treatise is an attempt of art theory to explore the origin of art in magic and rituals since the late Paleolithic period, and to inquire the view of universe that surrounds it. Furthermore, this treatise clarifies the festive origins of Greek tragedy as well as Japanese Noh and Kabuki and discusses that the transformation to virtual space by art has the effect of catharsis.

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1 The beginning of art

Magic and ritual

The cave paintings discovered one after another in Europe, including Altamira's cave paintings found on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees in 1879 and Lascaux's cave paintings found in Montignac village in Southwestern France in 1940, are paintings produced in the late Paleolithic period. There, reindeer, horses, cows, deers, bison, goats, and so on, are painted vividly in black, red, brown and yellow, and when the light of a flashlight is hit, they look like alive and moving. In the darkness behind these deep caves, prehistoric people lit tallow on stone candlesticks and, under the shimmering light, painted animals on rugged stone walls. They were already excellent artistic activities, but where did these early human artistic activities come from?

Paleolithic people's greatest concern was the capture and breeding of wild animals to maintain their lives. To that end, the Paleolithic people painted animals on the cave walls and, by wishing on them, hoped for abundant animal capture and breeding. In other words, the vivid paintings in the caves were magic for the Paleolithic people to work on animals that their lives depended on. The magic was probably the sympathetic magic discussed by (James George) Frazer, especially, such as like produces like, or class calls class. The act of painting plump animals behind the deep cave or piercing them with spears was believed to ensure the capture and breeding of them.

The viewpoint that the Paleolithic cave paintings originate in hunting and breeding magic is derived from the following facts, namely most of the paintings are of animals for food, plump and pregnant animals and a pair of male and female animals, and furthermore the fact that animals shot with arrows and spears are frequently painted and those paintings of animals are painted in layers behind deep caves, etc. There, the act itself of painting animals and engravings them was a sympathetic magical ritual. Furthermore, by considering that images like traps and persons like magicians wearing animal fur are painted, it would be sure that the Paleolithic period's cave painting originated from those days' magic.

But those day's magic is not a mere magic. It was connected to the belief in the infinite life existing within animals. People's capturing animals and eating meat of them

meant that people are given the great vitality of them. It was believed that a magical power that unites people's life and animal life exists in the depiction of animals painted vividly deep in the cave in order to pray for the success of hunting. There was a resonance between animals' vitality and people's vitality, and there was an expectation for the large universal vitality to make it possible.

In fact, Paleolithic people have lived by hunting for millions of years. While continuing to pursue animals with stone spears and bows and arrows in order to live in meadow and ice soil as far as their eyes could see, the images of animals would soak into their mind and, as the result, they became able to catch even the most rapid movement of reindeer and wild bulls. Their daily fight with beasts made them develop direct knowledge of their targets. And the act of magic served as a mediator between this life and death battle of people and animals. It was the urgent act for people living in harsh nature. Because of these reasons, the Paleolithic people could capture the characteristics of animals well and paint their vivid images. There was their urgent desire and will to live. Art began with such a desire and will to live. Art is people's activity of life, desire for life, experience of life and act of life. Moreover, it is also **a retained experience** and act.

Therefore, Paleolithic cave paintings are not mere sketches. Certainly, running wild bulls and deers, bouncing horses and bison whipping their tails are painted there as the objects, but they are the images of animals that have been extracted through the act of hunting. They are certainly realistic, but nevertheless a kind of abstraction is there. Even in prehistoric times, painting is no longer a mere copy of things.

The most representative of such an abstraction is probably the description by 'twisted perspective'. In some Paleolithic animal mural paintings, animals' bodies are painted from the side, while the horns and hoofs are from the front. This is probably because in hunting, arrows or spears are stabbed into the animal's bellies, but when animals pounce on, they come up from the front, sticking their horns and hoofs. As the result, the painting must be by multi-perspective depiction, like cubism in modern times. However, it is not by the experimental method like cubism, but the result which comes from the act of hunting for life. Thus, Paleolithic paintings created their own artistic style by condensing and simplifying the forms of animals.

Then, it was the ritualized magic that played an important role for the

establishment of this artistic style. The magical act is gradually ritualized and becomes eventually a festival. In fact, it is said that adult ceremonies were held deep in the caves. The adult ceremony is the ceremony in which a boy becomes a grown-up man, in other words, which removes the child's spirit from the boy and puts into the adult spirit in him. Moreover, because the boy had to grow up an excellent hunter at that time, it was also necessary to breathe the spirit of animals into him. Only after such a process, the boy could become an adult. Animal paintings were painted for that purpose. The deep inside of cave is a sanctuary, a kind of altar. Maybe, magicians in beast fur, dancing the hunting dance, becoming an animal itself, would breathe the spirit of animals into the boys who become adults. It is thought that, in the sacred place deep inside of cave, magicians and participants were united and sacred rituals were held. And from such rituals, the ideas of the ancestors' spirits, holly spirits and so on were born, and also the totem belief that equates the ancestors with the animal spirits was born.

Originally, religion is a belief in what is holy and is a sense of unity with the great being. Further, art has also its origin in these religious magic and rituals. Dances and performing arts were born from the reproduction of hunting gestures in magical rituals, and similarly, the primitive music and paintings were also born from there. The excitement of magical rituals is just a kind of transcendence from daily life and a place where art has been born. If we try to investigate the primitive root of dance, drama, music, paintings, sculptures, poetry and so on, which are regarded as artistic acts today, we reach the primitive magic and rituals. On the contrary, today's art remains a kind of magical character. The history of art is as old as the history of mankind.

Universe in artworks

As history progresses from the Paleolithic through the Middle Stone Age to the Neolithic Age, artworks become more abstract. Certainly, abstraction has already appeared in the Paleolithic period, like symbols showing prayers for animal breeding, but it developed more from the Middle Stone Period to the Neolithic Period.

For example, the images of animals of Levant rock paintings in the eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula belonging to the Middle Stone Period were initially painted

relatively realistically, but as time goes on, the details begin to be omitted, and the paintings begin to be like silhouette. Moreover, the number of painted people increases, and their images gradually become stylized and expressive. The people's legs of the Levant paintings are extremely thick and long. That is probably because their attention was directed to not people but the act of hunting. Therefore, their legs were exaggerated and deformed. There, the battles between people and animals are also painted. They are like abstract paintings and show that composition and narrative are evolving there. In addition to hunting, the scenes of dance, battle, gathering and bleeding are painted in Levant rock paintings, which shows that, as the times progress, paintings are increasing the role of record (1).

The art of Jomon period in Japan, which belongs to the Neolithic period, for example, the pattern on Jomon earthen pottery, was also highly abstract. As shown in the flame-shaped earthen pottery excavated from the Toyama mountain site in Tokamachi City, Niigata Prefecture, the pattern made by sticking clay on the outside of the pottery tangles, undoes and overlaps and moves vertically and horizontally while turning. The raised imbalanced pattern creates a mysterious and strange atmosphere. Probably these potteries were not used for practice, but for fertility rituals. As this case shows, artworks have been already symbolized and had symbolic meanings in those days. The symbol leads to a mysterious power through its shape itself. The corrugated pattern, the swirl pattern and the cross pattern given on the Jomon earthen pottery express such a supernatural power. In this era, it seems that the religious belief that spiritual powers dwell in everything such as grass, trees, animals, rocks and mountains, has already been established. In our country, 'Chi' and 'Mi' in the most fundamental words from ancient times that represents the god of water and the god of mountain, 'Mizuchi' and 'Yamatsumi', represents this belief in the spiritual power.

Such a religious belief in spiritual powers and holy spirits was also at the background of the Dogu (clay figure) of the Jomon period in Japan. Therefore, many of Dogus of Jomon period don't have even their face as well as eyes, noses, and mouths. For example, the Dogu excavated from the Nishino-mae ruins in Funagata-machi, Yamagata Prefecture is so dignified but has no facial expression. This Dogu might express a holy spirit of anything. The Jomon people have not yet been able to express object's form

concretely. Moreover, in the Jomon period, a lot of Dogus are deliberately destroyed. This teaches us that those day's people destroyed Dogus, buried them in fields and prayed for the abundance of grains. Moreover, those Dogus might be used like a doll and have served for the prayer for healing disease as substitutes for the people. It is certain that there existed fertility rituals, funeral rituals, healing rituals and so on, behind Dogu.

Earthenware and Dogu in the Jomon period, which have become more figurative and symbolic, are curvy and full of powerful energy which could not be expressed without the awful feelings of universal power of life based on religious belief in spirit and its power.

Venus statues from the Paleolithic period to the Neolithic period, which are excavated in various areas of the Eurasian continent, are also plump female nudes with exaggerated chest, belly and buttock. Their deformation is very remarkable and beyond the practical use and decoration. They are based on the religious belief in women's fertility, then lead to the belief in the fertility of the earth and eventually grow into the mother goddess statues. There was lying religious believes in the earth and women's vitality. Probably, in those periods, rituals for praying for prolificacy and fertility would have been held enthusiastically. From there occurred also the notion that all things are born from the mother earth and return there. The earth is the great mother who creates and nurtures all living things and all living things must return there. Probably such a notion would have created those plump Venus statues.

The pottery that holds nuts and grains was also imaged as the womb of mother earth that nurtures all things. For example, the deep pottery with a face handle excavated from Hokuto City, Yamanashi Prefecture (Tsugane Goshomae ruins) is a ceremonial vessel shaped like a pregnant mother and shows a scene that a baby is born, and at the edges, a handle of goddess statue like the mother earth are attached. Probably, fertility rituals were held, nuts and grains as blessings of the earth were put in these vessels, and they were dedicated to the mother earth. Without the religious belief in the earth's fertility, this kind of molding would have been impossible.

The art of the Paleolithic and Neolithic era is not made without any reason. Dogu of the Jomon period had a great view of the universe behind it, and it could not have been created without it. People had their awe in the great beings that surpassed their human

power and their feeling of return there. Their artworks were created as their expression of those religious feelings.

For prehistoric people, the god of the sun to brighten the daytime on the earth and the god of the moon to illuminate the night live in the heaven, and they symbolized the sublime and its recognition. Thunder, lightning and rain connected the heaven and the earth and promised fertility on the earth. The underground was the place where the dead rested and was thought as the mother's womb. The cave was the entrance to the womb of this earth. And people were connected to the world of gods in the heaven and the underground through the sacred spaces on the earth, such as mountains and caves. There was a simple but grandeur view of the universe. Without it, any plastic art of those days would not have been created.

Also, about time, everything was thought to constantly return to the original chaos, form a new order again and repeat this process, and this process was reproduced by rituals. For example, when the sun's power became the weakest in the winter solstice and the sun has sunk under the west horizon to return to the underground death world, rituals with enthusiastic songs and dances to pray the sun's revival were held. From those rituals, dances, theater and poetry were born.

Prehistoric culture in Europe, for example, Neolithic megalithic structures, also had a universal significance. The arrangements of stones and stone holes of Stonehenge made of huge standing stones coincide with the direction of sunrise to sunset and moonrise to moonset on the summer solstice and the winter solstice. About this Stonehenge, it is supposed that what was originally the burial ground for the ancestors, would have gradually developed to be like shrine. Around these megaliths, rituals would be held with dances and songs every season. Whether menhill (standing stone) or dolmen (gravestone), megaliths meant the eternity of life and were deeply linked to the religious belief in the rebirth of both the sun and the moon.

Every prehistoric artwork had the symbolic meaning and represented the great view of the universe. Moreover, symbols had their special powers and were considered the direct paths to the life of the universe. Concentric circles and continuous spiral patterns found in Jomon art of Japan and in Neolithic culture of Europe also symbolize the eternal

return of life and express the view of the universe in prehistoric era. The plastic art of the Paleolithic and Neolithic era was the microcosm that symbolizes the great universe.

2 Greek tragedy

History of Greek tragedy

Sophocles' *Antigone* is well known as a masterpiece of Greek tragedy. Creon, who took the throne after the civil war, forbids the burial of the dead body of the former king's son, Polynices, for his rebel under the national law. However, his sister Antigone who couldn't abandon her family feelings, is against Creon's decision, decides to bury his only brother and prepares to die and confronts Creon. Creon changed his mind after listening to the Prophet Teiresias, but Antigone killed herself and the son of Creon in love with her also committed suicide.

This tragedy is of the conflict between 'family' and 'state', as Hegel interprets. Creon who severely punishes illegal persons by national laws, represents the national law, and Antigone who decides to bury his brother from the deep love of brother and sister, represents the blood principle of family. This confrontation between reason and emotion, human and nature, causes that tragedy which leads to the suffering and death of characters. The only thing that reconciles this contradiction is the destiny that God has determined (2). Creon represents human law and Antigone represents earth law, but their conflict can only be relieved by the heaven law of destiny. Because of those reasons, Sophocles assigned the man for the part of character representing human law and the woman for the part of character representing earth law, for men tend to be chiefly based on the human law, and women chiefly on the earth law.

The same Sophocles' *King Oedipus* is also another masterpiece of Greek tragedy. King Oedipus was a great king who solved the riddle of Sphinx and freed his country, Thebai, from the hardship, but plague attacked Thebai. Apollo's oracle to subdue this disaster, was to "exile the criminal who killed the former king". The tragedy of Oedipus, namely that Oedipus himself discovers that the criminal was Oedipus himself, is the point of *King Oedipus*. King Oedipus didn't believe in the oracle at first, but finally realized the truth from the testimonies that came out one after another on the way finding the

murderer of the former king. Moreover, King Oedipus was the son of the former king and had made the queen of the former king, namely his own mother, his queen.

“Oh, it seems everything became obvious. Oh, light, this is the last opportunity for me to watch you. I was born of the person from whom I should not be born, married the person whom I should never marry and shed the blood of a person whom I should not kill!”

Oedipus's lamenting words are heartrending. In the anguish, Oedipus gorges out his eyes and, after asking for deporting himself, goes on a journey of wandering.

This tragedy is a so-called tragedy of self-discovery that King Oedipus himself discovers that he himself killed his real father and got married to his real mother. However, King Oedipus did not intend to kill his real father and to get married with his real mother. It is a mistake and an error. However, this unintentionally committed crime was nothing but a terrible crime against human law. For the atonement for it, there was only a tragic solution to approve of his own crimes, to blame himself, and to exile himself from the community. No matter how great a hero Oedipus is, his committed crimes can only be made atonement with his own downfall. Sophocles' *King Oedipus* completely tells us about the glory and misery of the great hero and the horrible destiny that the great hero had to fall into.

As Sophocles' *Antigone* and *King Oedipus* show, the essence of Greek tragedy is to reveal the world of destiny that people must fall into by contradictions such as reason and emotion, ignorance and truth. Before the destiny determined by God, no matter how great the king is, he must receive falldown, and no matter how right he is, he must fall into the depth of despair. No matter how great or right he is, if so, still more, he falls into agony beyond description, and is thrown into the depth of suffering and endurance. The human beings thrown into this world without any reason are powerless before the irresistible destiny, and everyone must prostrate themselves before this truth of life. However, what many Greek tragedy say is that, in these ways, people must accept their destiny as their own share and live with them.

Greek tragedy reveals to the audience the harsh reality that people are dominated by merciless destiny through the tragedy of the characters. Moreover, the audience, along with the characters, is also drawn into this harsh destiny and knows the truth of life. With

Sophocles' *King Oedipus* in mind in his *Poetics*, Aristotle finds the essence of tragedy in a sublime person's crime and suffering and grasps the general structure of tragedy in his destiny's sudden change from happiness to unhappiness (3). This view of Aristotle goes well with the essence of Greek tragedy.

Greek tragedy began with festival

At the performance of Greek tragedy, it was Colos that declared the destiny that people must fall into and the vanity of human world. Colos is the basis of the Greek tragedy. There was only Colos at the beginning, and the form of play was born by inserting performances between choruses and dances of Colos. In the Sophocles era, the performance was given priority and the form of tragedy became composed by inserting the chorus and dance by Colos between performances, but Colos kept its important role also in this era. Colos was originally the storyteller of God, the embodiment of God and the transformer to God. Because of those origin, Colos declares the harsh reality of people who are dominated by the destiny of God. Indeed, the audience of tragedy rediscover themselves in the expressions of their chorus and dance, but they are not necessarily representative of the audience. Rather, Colos played the role of priest as well as ritualist to evocate the God

The works of Greek tragedy that remain today were originally scripts for their performances at the Great Dionysus Festival, the national festival of Athens. The Great Dionysus Festival was held at the end of March for celebrating the rebirth of new life in the spring. First at this festival, after the sacrificial ceremony was held prior to the performance, the statue of Dionysus was carried from the shrine into the theater by being protected by a long line illuminated by torches, and the libation to the God statue was served. Then, a few days of tragedy competition was held. In these performances of tragedy, Colos played its active role because their elements of music and dance were so important that they could not be ignored, for the performance of tragedy originated in the festival held in spring and celebrating the arrival of spring, so-called *Dyuram Boss* which originally means intense dancing. People celebrated the resurrection of God Dionysus by intense music, dance and euphoria.

God Dionysus was a foreign god for the Greek. Although he traveled for teaching them how to cultivate grapes and how to make wine, he was persecuted and killed everywhere he went, but he is said to have revived miraculously every time and continued his travel. This myth-based chorus and round dance gave the birth of performing arts. Why the characters of Greek tragedy died or wandered according to the destiny? It is because Greek tragedy was originally the reproduction of the story of God Dionysus.

Harrison (Jane Ellen) also says in her *Ancient Art and Ritual* that performing arts must originally pass through the stage of ritual festival without exception, and insists that Greek tragedy was born from Dithyrambs of Dionysus Festival. In Greek tragedy, Chorus sang songs and performed dances of Dithyrambs. They were said to be initially ordinary men or boys cultivating the field and to have danced between sowing and cultivating. In this early stage, there was no distinction between actors and audience and all people were actors and audience. However, as the plays based on the legend of heroes in Homer's period began to join in, the troupe, actors and audience began to be separated. The theatrical form of Greek tragedy is thought to have been established in this way (4).

Nietzsche also tells in his *The Birth of Tragedy*, that Greek tragedy originated in the songs and dances of the Dionysus Festival and was formed from Chorus (5). As is well known, Nietzsche thought that Greek tragedy was established on conflict of two Greek Gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus. According to his theory, Greek tragedy was established when, basing on Dionysian musical art, it was formed beautifully in Apollonian ideal. The Dionysian is a symbol of excessive richness of life beyond moderation and means a state of rapture that destroys itself within the pulsation of eternal life. The Apollonian, on the other hand, symbolizes the shining, moderation, limit, beauty and so on. The development of Greek art is based on the integration of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Particularly, Greek tragedy found the highest achievement in the Apollonian expression of this Dionysian impulse.

In other words, it means that Greek tragedy turns people's eyes to the Dionysian by revealing the terrible depths and tragic reality lying behind the beautifully shining Apollonian beauty. People face suffering and anguish, are torn apart by split and contradiction and are taken to the terrible abyss. It was Nietzsche's thought that the essence of Greek tragedy lies in people's gazing at such a truth straightly without false.

Certainly, as represented by Sophocles' *Antigone* and *King Oedipus*, Greek tragedy gazes at the fact that people are ruled by some ruthless destiny, are powerless before the power of destiny and must struggle in suffering and endurance. But in order for us to gaze at it and for our eyes to be opened to the world of destiny beyond us, we need to break the daily boring repetitive and frustrating world and, in a sense, to destroy ourselves into an excessive world beyond moderation and sanity. And further, we must be opened to a great world beyond us and return to it. The reason why generally classical performing arts originate in the festivals that celebrate the advent of Gods in the rapture of music and dance is because they were born from such a festive background.

Art originates from festival.

When the primitive people came home from hunting and fighting, they must have showed their brave hunting and fighting situations before his wife and children while burning bonfires. From those situations, hunting and fighting dances were born. Further, when these acts were formulated, they became rituals.

Also, when grains are dying because of drought, people in undeveloped societies would fill their large vessels with water, sprinkle it over the field, dance the rain dance and pray to the god of water. On the contrary, when they want sunshine, they dance the sun dance and pray to the god of sun. Rainy dances and sun dances must have been born from there.

Also, at the festival of Osiris in ancient Egypt, first, rituals of cultivating and sowing were performed, and then rituals that reproduce the suffering and resurrection of Osiris were performed as miracle dramas every year. Osiris was originally a cereal god that died and then revived, and the festival of Osiris was a celebration in advance to pray for the fertility of wheat. Also, here, Osiris myth was played as theatrical performances.

As Harrison says, performing arts are born from ritual festivals. According to her, the acts (gesture) at ritual festivals are called *dromenon*, and drama was born from this *dromenon* (6). As reproduction of act was formulated and repeated periodically, it became a ritual festival, from which performing arts were born. Everyone participates in those ritual festivals, where everyone is both the actor and the spectator. Besides, the dead ancestors

and gods also participate in these festivals. In the dances and performing arts at festivals, people dance, ancestors dance and gods also dance. Eventually, by the performer and the viewer's being separated, art such as performing art, music and painting and so on, is established. The dances in primitive festivals are reproductive, from which drama is born, too.

Art begins with ritual festivals that worships the gods and is born from festivals. In ancient and medieval periods, artworks themselves, such as paintings and sculptures, were also born from such ritual festivals, and these artworks themselves had had festive meanings as offerings to the gods. Performing arts are also born when acts are reproduced and ritualized. In that sense, both imitation and its repetition are a kind of creativity. Ritual formality is a mechanism to approach gods through physical act, which always has a theatrical structure. Access to the world of gods by theatrical acts is the essence of festivals.

The festival itself is an artwork celebrating gods' arrival in the intoxication of intense music and dance. In the festival, gods and spirits of ancestors are welcomed by performed dances and played music. There, those who perform dances are the incarnations of gods and ancestors, and the performers are possessed by gods and ancestors. Because of these reasons, the performers generally appear with masks. Afterwards, when the performer and the audience who sees it are separated, performing dance and singing begin to mean the performing arts dedicated to the invoked gods and spirits. Besides, vengeful spirits and demons also visit this sacred space of festival, and the dances to drive away these spirits begin to be performed. Festival is just the event to play enthusiastically with gods, spirits and demons that came from heaven, earth, other worlds and different worlds. The festive space is always connected to the other worlds inhabited by gods and demons. The performing arts were, in a word, established for revelations of these gods and demons.

For example, the Baron drama, a performing art performed with Gamelan music in front of the split gate of temple in Bali, Indonesia, is a masked play that depicts the battle between gods and devils. This drama has the heroic dance of men who exterminate the devils and the elegant dance of women who invite the gods, and in this drama, the good monster Baron and its companion monkey on one hand and the witch Randa and the

small devils as her minions on the other, fight the endless battler. It is a festival for gods, devils and people to interact by performing battles between great gods and evil spirits who bring calamity and hunger. Performing arts are formed from such a space.

The festival frees people from daily life. The festive space frees people from hard labor and leaves them from daily life. Consecrations, offerings, dances, plays, competitions and so on, are held there, and people are absorbed in this special sacred space with forgetting themselves. In this place of self-effacement, people are connected to the spirits of their ancestors and interact with the gods of heaven and earth.

Orgies which are often done with unlimited waste and racket during festivals, are reproductions of the Creation. In order to return to the primitive chaos and revive from there, the daily order of top and bottom, front and back, men and women and so on, must be reversed. At the same time, the racket of the festival makes it possible to restore the vitality of the whole society and recombine the power of community. In the performances and orgies dedicated to the gods, and in the people's excitement and rapture, the rhythm of the festival spreads into every corner of the community, and the people are united again and the community becomes one. Festival is created by community and festival creates community. If art comes from these festivals, art also should be said to have such a social meaning that enables to detach people from daily life and to unite them.

The community is supported by some mysterious being that transcends it because there is a big view of the universe in the festival. As seen in the festivals celebrating the arrival of spring, for example, they drive away the old year and welcome the new year. At the same time, the disaster of the old year is driven off and the power of the new year is restored. The festival is the return to the primitive through this update of time, and from there it calls for a new life of the universe. At the same time, then, people and their community also revive.

The community is supported by the earth from which people are born and in which people die. The festival held by community confirms its connection with the great being through the ritual symbolizing the revival of life. Whether dance or theatre, music, painting, sculpture, every artwork is nothing but symbolic expressions of it. Therefore, classical artworks are always supported by the great being beyond it. The greatness of

Greek tragedy that reveals the world of destiny of human beings who are dominated by it, has its reason in the great being existing in the festival. Unlike contemporary art, classical artworks are felt greater because they are originally surrounded by a festive space, and because it is open to a larger world beyond human beings.

3. Virtual space

Japanese performing arts and festive space

The recognition that art begins with festival is also true of Japanese performing art history.

The origin of Japanese medieval performing arts is said to be in ancient Kagura. The ancient festive dance that invited gods and was danced in front of them, became a basic model of medieval performing arts. In fact, one of Noh's origins, Sarugaku, was a performing art with humorous imitation, and its source was in Kagura. Kanami and Zeami who completed Noh, were originally from Yuki-za among the Sarugaku-yoza, who served the Shinto ritual of Kasuga Taisha Shrine in Yamato district. Zeami says in his *Kadensho* that Sarugaku was originally an art having been formed on the base of Kagura (7).

Another source of Noh, Dengaku was also one of the traditional Japanese Shinto rituals, Tarasobi being a kind of performing art in fields. Before the rice planting, the dance of Dengaku imitating the gestures of rice planting, was performed with powerful drum sounds, shouts and songs. The nature of Sarugaku and Dengaku was originally 'Shugen (celebrating wedding)' and 'Yoshuku (celebrating in advance)', and they were the events in order to pray to gods for rich harvests, peaceful world, diseaselessness, longevity, family safety and so on. People sang and danced in order to greet gods, dispel demons of the area and pray for the harvest of the year.

The original performing arts were the performances dedicated to gods in order to invite and delight them. There, both performers and audience were looking toward gods, and therefore, there was no distinction between them. As the audience and performers began to be separated, dramatic elements were added to the performances, which began to become entertained. As the rituals to gods and festivals became more and more

entertaining, the specialists in them appeared, and the performing arts performed by them gradually began to take theatrical styles. Performing arts were born from festivals and began with rituals to gods.

Medieval performing artists were socially alienated and inferior because these performers were strangers with extraordinary talents that transcended the daily society, welcomed gods and played gods. They were invited at the festival days, conveyed the blessings of gods and were engaged in mysterious events making people delight. While these performers were awed as magicians or guests from different worlds, they were afraid of and looked down. About this, there was no difference between Japan and the West.

The origin of Noh inheriting the divine elements of Sarugaku and Dengaku also lies in their rituals to gods. Noh was also often performed at Kagura halls in shrines or at worship halls in temples, and their forms of performance were deeply linked to religious beliefs. Zeami also says in *Kadensho*,

“First of all, the aim of performing arts is to relieve people's hearts and to give their minds sense of up and down, which should be the basis for life-long happiness and the method for longevity”.

The pine tree painted in the background of Noh stage is Yorisiro (object representative of divine spirit) and serves as a bridge between the world of gods and the human world.

Okina treated as one of the most special among many Noh programs, was also performed at the divine ritual, and the performance itself was a divine ritual. *Okina* is a festive drama that celebrates fertility and longevity, and it conveys so well the former style prior to the establishment of Noh. Before the performance of *Okina*, the performers strictly purify themselves by abstaining from eating meat, and just before the performance, they should hold an event to dedicate the Noh mask on the altar in Kagaminoma (a room behind the curtain of a Noh stage where the actors prepare for their performance) and drink a cup of sake. The okina appearing with wearing ‘Jomen (mask representing an old man)’ is not a mere old man but a god, and his words are decorated with poetic lines as if to convey the words of god.

Waki-Noh-Mono which is often performed at the beginning of the day's program among many Noh programs, is also the Noh of god, and it is a celebration Noh appropriate for the opening program. For example, *Takasago* is a program that praises the love and

longevity of couples who can communicate with each other even if they are separated like Takasago and Suminoe's pines. Nochi-jite appears as Sumiyoshi Myojin, talks about the wonders of Sumiyoshi's god, and performs celebratory dance freshly. Noh also originated from festivals and was established as the divine ritual to god.

The Shite that appears in Noh is often a visitor from another world, such as god, ghost, demon or spirit. For example, in Kirinoh-Mono, such as *Momijigari*, *Tsuchigumo*, *Kurozuka*, the Mae-jite appears in the secular form of a female demon, a Buddhist priest or an old woman, and the Nochi-jite showing his true nature appears as a demon while stepping on the stage roughly, and the stage rapidly develops with Ranbyoshi (mad rhythm). On the other hand, Waki such as a Buddhist priest who looks at each country plays the role of priest who calls a god or a spirit from another world and calms a demon. Waki is a mediator between the next world and this world, between Kensho (audience) and Site (god and spirit) and plays an important role in Noh.

Our Noh style, like Greek tragedy, could not be formed without festivals. The ancient divine ritual of our country which welcomes gods and ancestors and calms ghosts, is the archetype of Noh, and people's exchange with gods and spirits became possible in the form of performing arts in the festive space. The performing arts of our country are festivals that were established to bridge between the next world and this world, between the world before life is born and the world after death when life ends.

Noh is generally composed on the base of rhythms of Jo-ha-kyu which may also be attributed to festive rhythms. Zeami argues that Noh should be performed with the spirit of Jo-ha-kyu and tells that the soul of performing Noh is realized especially between ha and kyu, just then Noh is fulfilled, that is, completed. Besides, Zeami applied not only this rhythm of Jo-ha-kyu to the composition of a Noh work but also the total arrangement of the day's program. According to him, among programs of god, man, woman, madness and demon, one should be assigned to Jo, three to Ha and one to Kyu. Moreover, he says that all the phenomena in the universe have the order of this Jo-ha-kyu (9). This theory of Jo-ha-kyu is said to be derived from Gagaku's composition theory. But, going further, it would reach the sequence rhythm of festival, which begins with preparation of the festival, gradually creating a festive atmosphere, and ends with dance for joy in which gods and people are confused.

Aristotle also says that, with Greek tragedy in mind, its composition has the structure of beginning, middle and end, through which performances and events must be composed as a unified and complete whole 10). This may also come from the festive origin of Greek tragedy.

If it is true that the songs and dances of Colos indispensable for Greek tragedy began with songs and dances between farm works, Greek tragedy is also thought to have begun with something like Dengaku. The characters in Greek tragedy were originally only two, a protagonist and a supporting player like Noh and they used masks like Noh. Colos is equivalent to Jiuta (chorus in Noh). In Greek tragedy, this Colos exchanges 'ask and answer' with the actor or states the destiny that people must follow, and on the other hand, in Noh, Waki talks with Shite, talks about the plot and sings about human suffering. Probably these similarities between Greek tragedy and Noh come from the fact that their origins are in festivals and, after then, theatrical elements have been added to them

Virtual space and festival

Art generally shows something that is not in actuality, makes an imaginary world, and draws viewers away from the real world. The space created by art is a fictional space, a virtual space. Also, in the performing arts, a narrow stage can be a world of heaven or a world of hell. The running time is not equal to the reproduced time and it is extremely shortened. It is also possible that in just a few moments, decades have passed. Space and time created by performing arts are not bound by real time and space to create imaginary space and time.

The world depicted by Mugen-Noh (visionary dream Noh) which Zeami created is also an imaginary world. The space and time there are also imaginary space and time. A Buddhist priest who looks at each country comes to a place related to a story. A woman in the village appears there and talks about the past, and eventually she disappears after telling him that she is the heroine. The basic form of Zeami's fantasy is that a woman who appears in the dreams of a traveling priest, tells her memories, and dances with nostalgia from the past (11).

For example, in Zeami's *Izutsu*, on a fall evening, a woman appears before a

traveling priest who happened to stop at ruined Ariharaji Temple and tells him about her past. After then, she appears again in Narihira's costume, pushes away Japanese pampas grass covering the well and remembers her lover in the well's water mirror, with whom she used to compare heights there in childhood. The enchanting dance of beautiful woman in men's costume under the moon makes this work one of the masterpieces of Zeami's Yugen-Noh (12). In this work, the ruined Ariharaji Temple does not actually exist, and the beautiful woman in man costume under the moon is a ghost and does not actually exist. The space represented by *Izutsu* is an imaginary space. Moreover, time is also a completely imaginary because the dead person returns to this world and tells the story of past. Zeami created a reversal of the flow of time by making the dead person appear and made the past revive to the present. Both space and time change their phases.

However, such an imaginary space and time bring a sense of deep reality. Art creates an imaginary world, which is more real than it is. The unreal feels like the truly real, which is just the realism created by art. The virtual creates reality. In this regard, the space and time created by art is essentially the same as the space and time created by festivals.

Chikamatsu Monzaemon at the highest top of the Ningyo Joruri (Japanese puppet show) writers, also tells in his art theory called 'Kyojitsu-himaku' that the essence of art lies in the membrane between the real and the unreal, and further tells that the imaginary is not imaginary, the real is not real, on the contrary, there is the artistic consolation between the both(13). The consolation may be called catharsis (purification). What is important for Joruri's lines is to copy all the actual situations as they are. However, it is neither a simple copy nor representation, but it must be the representation of real feelings and facts that cannot be grasped by facts but by the unreal. This Chikamatsu's theory of 'kyojitsu-himaku' is very much to the point of art. Realism which copies the actual as it is, never become art. By telling the imaginary, art must represent the more real than the real.

4. Transformation

Festival and transformation

The essence of performing arts doesn't lie in simply copying or reproducing reality but expressing more than reality by representing what is not in the actual world. Therefore, actors must make full use of the art of transformation. The transformation of actor changes the world on the stage into a world of a different dimension and reveals a new virtual space.

The traditional performing arts of Japan, such as Noh, Ningyo Joruri and Kabuki, have also worked out transformation techniques in various ways. For example, Noh, especially Fukushiki Mugen-Noh (Dream-Noh composed of two parts), is a poetical drama in which the main character transforms himself between Mae-jite and Nochi-jite and changes the dimension of stage space completely. In *Takasago*, the Mae-jite having been Jo (old man) transforms into Sumiyoshi Myojin of Nochi-jite, the shirabyoshi (dancing girl) of Mae-jite in *Dojoji* turns into a snake of Nochi-jite, and in *Eguchi*, the prostitute playing on a boat of Mae-jite, changes herself into Fugen Bodhisattva of Nochi-jite and leaves to the western sky. In the Fukushiki Mugen-Noh, even an ordinary daughter or an old man in a countryside who appears as a Mae-jite can transform into a ghost of noble lady, a spirit, a demon or an asura of Nochi-jite. Such a transformation is made possible by the unique mask used in Noh.

On the other hand, Ningyo Joruri is a theatrical art in which puppets are used instead of Noh masks. The charm of Ningyo Joruri lies in the transformation where puppets turn into humans, gods and spirits. The plots of Ningyo Joruri are often set up so that low born brothers and sisters would become substitutes for the nobles and sacrificed. What it tells is the delight of transmigration of being reborn in the next world and being able to surpass the low born status in this world. 'Substitution' is also a kind of transformation.

Kabuki's Oyama (an actor playing a female role) is probably one of the most typical transformations. An actor becomes a woman by make-up and dress-up. This woman is a woman created by art and pattern. The woman's beauty created by this art expresses the reality that cannot be expressed by mere realism. Kabuki's Oyama looks more like a woman than an actual woman because Oyama abstracts the typical woman and expresses it as pattern. Male actor in Noh also express the beauty of woman, such as sadness, jealousy and resentment, by wearing a mask and playing the pattern. Besides, in

Shakespeare plays in Europe, boy actors play the role of women, also in Greek tragedies, all women's roles are played by men, and the same thing is true of China's Kyomai, too. From these cases, male actor's disguise of female is supposed to have been the standard for classical dramas.

Actors change their figures into something different from themselves. Transformation is the essence of actors. At this transformation, the actor's body is merely a tool, so to speak, and therefore, the actor uses this transformation to express what is not in reality. Actors convert their figures into aesthetic fiction. Dress-up and make-up are done for that end. Just the figure converted in this way creates another fictional space. It is the essence of theater that the fictional space expresses the more real than what is real.

Actors transform into other persons or spirits by dress-up and make-up. Therefore, at this moment, the actors must abandon their self-consciousness. Therefore, actors are said to be necessary to forget themselves and to become the role itself. The life of performing arts are uplifted when actors change from one figure to another, or, in other words, when they transform. The reality is in the film between fact and the virtual. In that sense, modern naturalistic and realistic drama has lost such an essence of drama.

The word 'actor' originally meant a person who assumed a certain role in a divine festival of shrine and participated in the ritual. They are just ordinary people in daily life, but by entering the ritual space, they leave daily life and play their roles. It is the actor who serves the role. If it is so, we should say that the spirit of the role possesses the actor. Therefore, acting a role is not an expression of the actor's inside, but rather a phenomenon that the spirit of the role possesses him from the outside. In that meaning, prehistoric shamans were the first actors in human history. The shaman was possessed by god, soul of animal and spirit, and practically transformed himself into such a different kind of thing and danced. Such a kind of magic survives in the skills of today's actors. Transformation also has a festive origin. Gender disguise is also thought to have a festive origin. In the orgy of festival, there was a racket where men are disguised in women's clothes and women in men's'. By such a reversal of order, people tried to bring out primitive chaos. A new order regenerates from this primitive chaos. That was just the function of festival.

The role of mask

If performing arts mean the creation of a different dimension space by the transformation of actors, the role of masks often used there cannot be ignored. Masks played their important roles in Greek tragedy that originated in the festival of Dionysus. Noh in Japan also developed its own unique masques to the high degree. Noh mask is the core of Noh. By wearing a mask, the performer can become a god, a ghost, an old man, a brave warrior or a graceful woman. The human emotional expression by actor is blocked by Noh mask, and on the contrary, Noh mask and acting crystallize the higher degree emotion on them.

Ningyo Joruri and Kabuki show these matters through puppets and make-up. Just like masks in Noh and puppets in Ningyo Joruri, Kabuki actors' make-up faces merely represent abstracted and typified persons and their emotions. They are not expressions of the actor's inside at all. Therefore, Kabuki actors do not treat their faces like actors in modern realistic drama but like masks and dolls.

Wearing a mask means transforming itself. Even if he is the same person, he can become another person by changing the mask. The mask is a tool to get out of self and the person who wears it is no longer himself. By wearing a mask, the actor becomes one with it and becomes it itself completely. Rather, the mask wearer should be said to be possessed by the god, the ghost or the spirit the mask represents. Mask has an immeasurable magical power.

The origin of these masques can go back to the Late Paleolithic Age. Probably the images of sorcerer painted in a late Paleolithic cave painting is of shamans who transformed the spirit of animal by wearing animal fur and the mask. Shaman wore an animal mask and prayed for the birth of animals that was nature's blessings. In the Neolithic era, for example, in the late Jomon period in Japan, many Dogus have strange faces, some of which wear masks of animal and woman. Probably, festivals were held to pray for the fertility of animals and plants which are the blessings from the earth.

In agricultural societies, dances with masks are often performed during festivals, and the masks often represent the spirits of dead ancestors. By wearing masks, the villagers became their ancestors themselves and encouraged the lives of the alive people. The villagers interacted with ancestral spirits from the other worlds and prayed for the

rich harvest of the year.

Equally in Europe, there were held often festivals where people danced with wearing masks and fancy costumes all night long at St. Nicolaus Day, the Winter Solstice, New Year's Eve, Carnival and so on. These events look like competitions of mask or disguise. These were originally Celtic or Germanic rituals, which, along with the introduction of Christianity, have been absorbed into the Christian calendar. In particular, the carnival held in winter in Europe corresponds to playing in the field during the Japanese New Year days of lunar calendar. This is a celebration praying for a good harvest for the year before the coming spring. Therefore, in the carnival, the winter god is driven away and the spring god's coming is celebrated. The winter god is performed by a villager with a scary mask and is exiled by the spring god with a bright mask. It was the festival in order to pray for good harvest and fertility by driving evil spirits away and welcoming good spirits that bring blessings to people. In these festivals, the masks of winter gods and spring gods, good spirits and evil spirits, and gods and devils, play big roles. By wearing these masks, people transformed themselves into good or evil spirits and created a festive space to celebrate the coming of spring.

Masks make people free. On the day of festival, people transcend into a different dimension space by wearing masks and dancing. At the same time, gods and spirits also visit this world and interact with people. The mask is a means for exchange between this world and the next world. The source of play is also here. Even in performing arts without masks, actors forget themselves, become the characters whom they play, transcend the space and time of this world and invite the audience to another world. Performing arts and festivals create such a dimension that transcends the daily world.

The meaning of imitation

Art is not mere imitation. However, if we understand art as a kind of festival, it contains many elements of imitation. Zeami, the great master of Noh in Japan, also finds the essence of Sarugaku-Noh in 'Monomane (imitation)' in his *Kadensho*. The better the actor imitates a woman, an old man, a madness, a demon, etc., the more interesting and naturally elegant his performing becomes. Imitating everything in every detail is the true

intention of Sarugaku-Noh. Once the actor has mastered 'Monomane' and has become the imitated one, he needs not desire to imitate any more. Therefore, Zeami says that the best imitation is 'not to imitate' (14). Imitation stated here is thought so called copy, but what it means is not mere copy but should be the representation of essence by 'reproduction'. Imitation is not simply copying or reproducing realistically but giving expression to things by reproducing them.

Reproduction includes 'resonance'. For example, in the Kabuki's Henge-Buyo (transforming dance), the actor regarded as a master, while watching a flower, is integrated with the flower, and all of his waist, shoulder and hands with fans move by themselves, expressing the feeling of cherry blossoms beautifully and finally becoming the spirit of flower itself. There the flower and the actor must be dominated by the same breath, synchronized and resonated each other. Imitation is sympathy and resonance. Only when and where they exist, the audience watching the actor's performance resonates with the movement of his body and falls into euphoria as if absorbed in. Just in this respect, there is a festivity of dance. Imitation has a deep meaning in it.

As Harrison said, in the primitive era, shamans disguised themselves with animals' furs and birds' feathers and danced imitating their movement and shout. Whether the dance is a reproduction of past hunting or fighting or a prayer for success in the future fighting or hunting, it has an element of imitation (15). Moreover, whether it is presented after the hunting or fighting or before, it has an appearance of reproduction. Imitation is to reproduce and to represent.

In general, people feel joy when they see what was imitated. The audience enjoys seeing what was skillfully imitated on stage. Also, in Japan's classic performing art, Ningyo Joruri, the audience is impressed when the puppets skillfully imitate human gestures. Nobody praise a real thing as such, but if somebody imitate a real thing like a real thing, he will be praised for it. To reproduce is to express the essence, in which there is so-called 'mono-no-aware'.

As Gadamer says, mimesis (imitation) has a function called re-recognition. When something that we know intimately is re-recognized and new light is cast on it, the essence of it emerges as if it were shining. And what was presented by mimesis comes into existence more essentially (16). Mimesis is the act of putting something in front of our eyes

and the act of making something appear there clearly. In other words, to give the essence of things its image is mimesis. Then, by mimesis we grasp and reaffirm the essence of things. Art is recognition by re-presentation. To imitate is to learn the truth.

In his *Poetica*, Aristotle also saw the essence of art in mimesis which had the meaning of essence-presentation. *Poetica* is an examination of the essence of art by Greek drama as the model, in which Aristotle regards mimesis of acts as the essence of play and says that imitation of acts becomes performing art. Further, he says that tragedy is to imitate better persons and comedy is to imitate worse persons (17). This means that mimesis is an essence-presentation.

Plato also found the source and essence of art in mimesis. In Plato's thought, the world of visible phenomena is the imitation of ideas and imitating and copying those imitations is art (18). Certainly, his thought seems to look down the status of art, but the truth is that artists imitate the higher existence by imitating the visible phenomenal world. From this, we can also read his thought that imitation is nothing but expression of essence. Indeed, Plato says that artists are interpreters for the gods (19). The persons who hears the words of gods that ordinary people cannot hear and reproduces them into human language are artists, and the object reproduced by them must be originally a divine thing. In that sense, artists are possessed by gods. Even today, artists see what ordinary people can't see, hear what they can't hear, and call such a thing out. Artists play the role of shrine maidens.

Insanity and play

In that meaning, there is a kind of insanity in art. Artists are possessed by divine feelings, forget themselves, create and express as if they were obsessed with something. Just the work created in such a way draws people into a state of ecstasy and gives a glimpse of eternity. There is a kind of insanity in an inspiring artwork.

Plato also says in his *Pydross* that the madness possessing poets is a gift of god and poets create by being possessed by muse (20). A masterpiece is created just when the artist has reached the state possessed by god and is deprived of himself by a divine spirit. What is called a masterpiece of art always gives an air of such a mysterious feeling.

The creative genius means a person who has reached such a state. The creative genius carries a kind of insanity. And the creative genius possessed by god creates new things and opens unknown horizons. The appearance of a genius changes the style of art, too. His art should be said to be the mysterious art beyond mere imitation.

In other words, art is to play in the gods' world and interact with the gods. There was Kagura in the beginning of Japan's performing arts, which was called 'Kam Asobi'. Playing with gods and letting gods play were the original form of song and dance.

As Hoijinga says, festivals are held as the holy with the high quality of mystery and seriousness, but they are always play. In festivals, the opposition of play and seriousness disappear (21). It is ritual and festival where the sacred and play are united in one. During the festival, the world has its place among gods, turning into a divine world. Daily things acquire their new meanings and are illuminated. In the festival space, people sing, dance, disguise and play crazily. And people escape into the unusual world and forget themselves. In this way, the festive space, the play space and the art space free people from the rationality of real life into another world and bring them back to true human beings.

It is a virtual space and a fictional world if seen from the viewpoint of daily actual life. However, people cannot live without such a virtual space and a fictional world. Human beings are animals that cannot live without illusions. Speaking further, it is the essence of art that such an illusion and fiction are more real than reality. The unreal represents the real.

5. Catharsis

Catharsis of performing arts

In Noh of Japan, along with the sound of Noh-kan (Noh flute) as if heard from another world, the incarnations of spirit, shura, ghost and demon transformed into an old man, a mad woman and a village woman appear on the stage through Hashigakari (passage way). The Noh stage is a sacred space where gods, ancestral spirits, and spirits of the dead appear from the next world to this world, dance and play. Then, the spirits manifest their nature in the Noji-jite, after having performed the dance of god and shura, ghost and demon, exit through the Hashigakari. The Hashigakari of Noh stage is, as it

were, a passage that connects this world to the next world, a travelling road from welcoming to god to sending. Spirits and ghosts come and go freely between the next world and this world. The Noh stage is a space where people interact with other worlds different from this world. Noh has its origins in ancient Tamamukae (welcome to spirits) and Tamaokuri (sending spirits), or Tamafuri (requiem). The Noh stage is not a mere space as it is, but it involves a larger space surrounding and transcending it. Such a view of the universe makes the world of Noh vast and infinitive.

Ningyo Joruri and Kabuki' stages make this Noh world closer to this world. The formation of early modern drama is based on such a stream. But, nevertheless, Ningyo Joruri and Kabuki's stages have the larger world beyond the actual space of stage.

For example, in Chikamatsu Monzaemon's Shinjumono (dramas dealing with love suicide), such as *Sonezaki Shinju* and *Shinju Tennoamijima*, a couple of man and woman who love each other, fall in an desperate state from human relationships in this world and decide their lover suicide. Then, the scene becomes Michiyuki (the scene of lovers' journey). In this scene of Michiyuki, the couple appear on Hanamichi in their best clothes to the next world and set out on journey to the next world along with beautiful lyrical narration and music. In Kabuki, Michiyuki, lovers' journey to the next world, is performed at Hanamichi. But Hanamichi is not a mere passage. It is the bridge from this world to the next world.

According to Donald Keene, a couple of man and woman who determined to commit love suicide in order to fulfil their love in the next world are too weak and miserable on the stage of this world, but they on Michiyuki become tragic and great persons (22). The miserable souls in this world are transformed into the glorious through the Michiyuki. Death is a salvation. The couple who decided their journey to the land of death complete their beautiful transformation by Michiyuki. Michiyuki carries their wish of reincarnation. Michiyuki is the journey to rebirth. Death is the last means of reincarnation.

“Remaining this world, remaining tonight, if telling us going to die, it is frost on the path to Adashigahara, disappearing step by step, dream in dream is sad”.

This narration at the scene of Michiyuki of *Sonezakishinju* represents one of the deepest essences of Japanese unique tragedy.

However, because the couple who became the model of main characters of Chikamatsu's *Sonezakishinju* or *Shinju Tennoamijima* are already dead, the act to dramatize its story and perform it on stage has a meaning that this drama was the welcomes of spirits of the dead and the requiem rituals for them. The couple who must decide on their love suicide on the stage, are, so to speak, the couple who came back from the next world to play their own stories. Therefore, from the moment they appeared on the stage, they must play with their states of mind that they are not already this world's persons. In fact, the main characters of *Sinjumono* appear on *Hanamichi* as if they were half-dreaming from the moment of program's opening.

Originally, *Michiyuki* was the journey way for the divine spirit to come to this world, manifest its spiritual power and return to the next world again. In *Ningyo Joruri* and *Kabuki*, *Michiyuki* becomes secular, and the alive people of this world play it. In *Ningyo Joruri*, *Michiyuki* is expressed by dance, and in *Kabuki*, by performances on *Hanamichi* or stage.

Originally, the stage of classic performing arts in Japan, whether *Noh* or *Ningyo Joruri*, *Kabuki*, was a festive space for *Kamimaneki* (inviting gods), *Tamafuri* and *Tamaokuri*. The stage is a small space, but once the performance starts, there appears a large virtual space and world that surrounds it. At least, classical performing arts have such a view of the universe both temporally and spatially.

In general, the origin of most performing arts is religious in Japan as well as in Europe. Performing arts were born from the ground of religious legends that preach the love and mercy of God and Buddha. *Ningyo Joruri* in Japan also originates from *Honij-Reigen-Mono* (miraculous efficacy). Stories based on the resurrection of God and Buddha or their substitutes were transformed into puppet shows, which were performed at shrine or temple' festivals.

What makes artworks beautiful, great, majestic, and sublime is the religious behind it. Those artworks always look at the great world beyond human beings in exchangement with God and Buddha and tell the triviality and sorrow of human beings under it. The universal infinity makes artworks great.

Artworks originate in festivals. Festival and art reproduce the universal events

and represent the invisible world into a visible world. The festive space surrounds artworks and the festive space is supported by a larger view of the universe. Any artwork is trivial if not supported by something greater than human beings. The great being gives its meaning to this world in which we live. Artworks are the symbol of the great being and its manifestation. We are connected to the great being through them and return to the great being through them. Artwork is a representation of the universal and must be a manifestation of the universal. Through it, we can be connected to the power of the universe creation and become one with the universe. Artwork is a microcosmos which reflects the macrocosmos.

Catharsis and art

Great classic artworks have their great functions to purify our hearts because they connote a bigger world than themselves.

For example, in *Fukushiki Mugen-Noh* completed by Zeami, a ghost who appeared as a villager before a Buddhist priest who looks each country, told a story and then revealed that he was the protagonist of the story. After that, a ghost appears in his lifetime's figure, and talks about his memories and conflicts related to the incidents at that time. What is told there are intense emotions, such as unremovable grudges and regrets, mortification and jealousy. However, the ghost's emotions are eventually purified by the priest's *Eko* (prayer for the peace of soul) and the ghost rests in peace and vanishes into the next world.

Indeed, also in *Sanemori*, one of *Shura-mono*, the spirit of old Sanemori who went to war with dying his white hair black and hiding his age, tells about his mortification that he lost the battle and died, and play and dance his state of losing way without resting in peace. However, the Sanemori's spirit rests in peace by a traveling priest's prayer. The audience is also struck by the feelings of transience of this world and sorrow in the tragedy of a warrior who died in a fateful battle. But they feel also saved when the spirit of Sanemori is saved and return to a peaceful world again. When the priest of Waki quietly put his palms together in prayer with a crystal rosary in his hands, the deep delusion and hesitation of the ghost are purified and it rest in peace, so the audience also deeply feel.

There exists catharsis (purification). Catharsis exists because the world on the stage is not a mere performed world but it connotes another dimension of world beyond it, such as the other world, the underworld and so on. The ghost of the dead appears from another dimension of silence of the universe and is rescued there. The silence of Noh before the performance begins is the silence before life is born, and the silence after the performance ended is the silence after death. The story performed on Noh stage is surrounded by this eternal silence. Noh itself is the art for prayer and the art for requiem.

In general, tragedy reveals the dark side of human beings and rescues them into the larger world beyond it. The requiem of the suffering soul is tragedy in which catharsis exists. Catharsis is the revival by death and the return to the universal life. The purification of emotion comes from it. Catharsis must be transmigration into eternal life and revival. Otherwise, life is too miserable. The moment people notice the eternal world for them to return, there is his salvation. Classic artworks have always their fresh meanings because they have the effect of catharsis linked to this human nature. Tragedy is a metaphor of life. Audience rediscover themselves in the tragic events performed on the stage and learn the universal meaning and truth of life. At that time, the audience feel saved. Without salvation, art dies.

Aristotle, in his *Poetica*, found the essence of Greek tragedy in that, while arousing the fear and sympathy in the audience, it purifies them. His insight points to the core of tragedy very well. Purification (catharsis) of feelings of fear and sorrow is the essence of tragedy (23). The audience sees the falldown of hero in his battle with destiny as in Sophocles' *King Oedipus* and sympathizes with the hero's suffering and sadness. At the same time, the audience also feels the fear that they also are dominated by the same destiny. However, at the same time, by watching the falling-down hero accept and obey his destiny after fierce suffering and struggle, the audience is also freed from suffering, sorrow and fear, and is purified. When people get a glimpse of the depth of life, they enter a large world beyond the human power. The great tragedy has such a view of the universe. Therefore, it brings catharsis.

Greek tragedy originated in the great Dionysus festival, a spring festival celebrating the death of the old year and the rebirth of the new year. The suffering and falldown of hero in the tragedy performed at this festival, and the silence visiting after

performing the tragedy, where is the prayer for the rebirth and revival of hero's soul. People also is saved through the act of watching tragedy.

Footnote

- 1 Shigenobu Kimura, *The Origin of Art*, Shinchosha, 1971, Chapter III, Second Section.
- 2 Hegel, *Phenomenologie des Geistes*, Ph.B.Felix meiner, 1952, S.318ff.
- 3 Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1453a
- 4 Harrison J.E, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, Bibliobazaar 2007
- 5 Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Kröner, 1964, S.76
- 6 Harrison J.E, *op.cit.* ch5
- 7 Zeami, *Hushikaden*, Chapter 4 in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 65*, Iwanamishoten, 1971, p370.
- 8 *Op.cit*, Chapter 5, p367
- 9 Zeami, *Syugyokutokka*, in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 65*, Iwanamishoten, 1971, pp461-463.
- 10 Aristotle, *op.cit.* 1450b
- 11 Shozo Masuda, *Invitation to Noh*, in *Nihon no Meicho 10*, Chuokoronsha, 1969, p426
- 12 *Op.cit*, p427
- 13 Ikan/Koretsura Hozumi, *Naniwa-miyage*, in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 50*, Iwanamishoten, 1971, pp357-359.
- 14 Zeami, *Hushikaden*, Chapter 2, 7 in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 65*, Iwanamishoten, 1971, p349, 390.
- 15 Harrison J.E, *op.cit.*
- 16 Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B.Mohr, 1972, S.108-110
- 17 Aristotle, *op.cit.* 1448b-1449b
- 18 Platon, *Politeia*, 596A-599E
- 19 Platon, *Ion*, 535A

2 0 Platon, *Phaidros*, 244A-244C

2 1 Huizinga J, *Homo Ludens*, Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1987

2 2 Donald Keene, *Noh · Bunraku · Kabuki*, Kodansha-gakujutsubunko, 2001, pp38
6-388

2 3 Aristotle, *op.cit*, 1449b

Author's note:

This treatise is picked out from *The Beginning of Art Theory, Chapter 1* in Michinori Kobayashi's *Philosophy of Life, Collection III*, Minervashobo, Kyoto, 2016 by author, and is translated into English with necessary revision and annotation.