

Participating Arts—Viewer's Perspective—

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Even if an artist made a work in his/her atelier, the work is not be established as an artwork. In order for it to be established as an artwork, it must be presented to the public, evaluated and interpreted by viewers. Artwork is an event that is generated historically. This treatise is an art theory that illuminates the role of interpretation and understanding in art, by taking Japanese play, Buddhist art and so on, as reference materials.

1. Participation of viewer

Participation of everything

When we compare ancient clear-shaped Greek statues with Japanese ink paintings depicting mountains with haze trailing, we can understand so well that the climate itself in which the artwork was produced, participated in it. The clarity of Greek art is unthinkable without the Mediterranean climate, such as the rocky mountains that can be clearly seen against the clear blue sea and sky, while the indistinctness of Japanese ink painting is unthinkable without the humid climate of Japan which has a lot of water vapor. Whether Greek or Japanese, plastic arts do not exist on their own, but have their accumulated climates behind them. Rather, when the unique local climate appears in an artwork, the power of the work increases. The formation of art is a part of the one of nature and, when all of earth, wind, water and fire (the four elements) participate in an artwork, it will be more excellent.

Naturally, materials are also deeply involved in a plastic art. For example, a beautiful landscape painting is also a kind of thing where pigments are painted on a canvas as material and on which a landscape appears. Therefore, unless the artist is familiar with materials such as canvas, pigment and so on, he/she cannot create his/her excellent works. Drawing and paper, woodcut and woodblock, wood carving and wood, pottery and soil are not separate but united. An excellent work cannot be accomplished unless the artist is united with materials, respects their nature and has a mind to follow them. Plastic art is the art in which an invisible image overlaps on visible materials that we can touch if we want to do. Just the form expressed by materials is art. Materials support and conceive the form.

Moreover, the place where the artwork is placed also participates in it. For example, “Sakuteiki”, a gardening theory in the middle Heian period, says that when making a garden, the gardener should devise a taste that is most suitable for each place depending on the topography and the shape of the pond and so on, and should install stones by imagining the appearance of mountains and water in the nature.⁽¹⁾

And Buddha statues also become the Buddhist statues first when they are placed in the space of Niomon (Dava gate), Hondo (main building), Hatto (lecture hall), Kondo (main hall) and so on, arranged according to the world view of Buddhism. And even a small mossy stone Buddha statue on a roadside without such a large cathedral is given its life by the surrounding nature. Therefore, if it is seen from another point of view, it will be a wonderful outdoor art. Artwork must be created and arranged depending on the place where it is placed. Artwork cannot be separated from its places.

In addition, the blank space also participates in the formation of artworks. For example, in Japanese ink painting, the blank has an important meaning. In Japanese ink painting, fog and water are not depicted directly, but are often represented by the blank. Therefore, in contrast, the huge rocks and mountains practically depicted on the screen show their presence vividly. At the same time, the depicted huge rocks and mountains imply not only fog and water in the undepicted blank but also even time and

season in the painting. The blank is a place where things appear from. Therefore, we must say that even the blank in which nothing is depicted, also participates in the painting.

Moreover, also the temporal blank participates in art. This proves that the time art requires a sense of “Ma (pause)”. For example, the sound of Tsuzumi (a Japanese small drum in Noh) has a function of dividing silence, which makes the flow of time alive. The true sound of Noh is in the silent part between each sound of Tuzumi. In addition, as Zeami said “Connecting Senuhima (vacant time to do nothing) by mind” ⁽²⁾, Shite (Protagonist in Noh) in acting must be conscious of the temporal blank after Mai (dance in Noh), Utai (Chant in Noh) or all the arts such as lines and acting were finished and keep his tention. “Senuhima” is the deepest part of the Shite’s heart that connects acting and acting without negligence. In that sense, for the Noh stage as a whole, both the silence before Hayashikata (Musicians in Noh), Jiutaikata (Performers of Chorus in Noh) and Shite enter the stage and the silence after all of them have left there, are also very important. The Noh stage does not end with the space and time of play on the stage. Here is an aesthetic of blank, too.

Artwork as event

Artwork is an event which occurs by the participation of many things, such as the natural conditions like climate, land and materials, the temporal and spatial conditions as season, time and place where it is placed and the cultural conditions like classical works before it and the regional culture from ancient to modern age and so on. In an artwork, the generating process of the world itself is summarized. An artwork does not exist by its own, but it is an event that occurs at the junction of all the various events that precede it or occur now. Expression means such an occurrence. It is not a semblance but just a reality that emerges among the connection of all things. In that sense, everything participates in artwork. What is created by everything being brought together

in one thing is artwork. Everything is reflected in the activity of a painter's painting, a sculptor's carving, a musician's playing or an actor's acting. What combines various events and expresses them in one work is art. The artistic genius brings such cosmic events together in himself/herself and expresses them.

Art production is to put the act of production into the process and flow of such cosmic, historical and social generation and participate there. The activity-in-the world that expresses what appears naturally from there is the act of expression. Existence is not possession but participation. Existence is generated by participation.

In other words, art production is an encounter. The event that arises from encountering materials, encountering subjects, encountering nature, encountering life and history, is art. Therefore, the creation of an artwork is just a one-time event. Even when it is possible to print or copy repeatedly or to act or perform repeatedly, every artwork is essentially a one-time event. Because such a reason, naturally accidental elements participate in art production. What kind of work will be completed depends on the relationship of every elements such as season, time, space and place, artist's mood and experience and so on. Accordingly, the work's creativity cannot be foreseen. Rather, artistic efforts are made to catch its own creativity in such accidents.

Participation of viewer

Viewers also participate in the formation of artworks. For example, music does not become a work only by a composer's composing it. Unless it is played and appreciated, it would not become a work. Moreover, the composed music receives various interpretations at the stage of playing and appreciating. In case of music, the work is completed not when the composer has finished composing it, but when it is played and appreciated practically. The same can be said of play.

In case of painting, even if a painter finished painting a work in his lonely atelier, the work does not become a completed one yet. It will be a work until it is shown at

exhibitions and taken into the horizon of viewer. The artwork is given life for the first time when both the act of artist's creation and the one of viewer's appreciation overlap.

The artwork is an event that arises from the correlation between artist and viewer. In that sense, artwork is not only created by artist, but also by viewer. Artwork is created by seeing and listening, too. Therefore, the value of artwork changes variously among viewers. The act of viewer's appreciation is a creative activity that creates new meaning. Appreciation is an act and an active participation in the work.

In the recognition of phenomenon, the relationship between the phenomenon and the percipient is included. Perception is not simply passive but active, and the percipient is always actively involved in the event. In modern physics, what is observed and the observer cannot be separated, and the observer himself/herself is included in what is observed. The act of observation is an act-in-the world, and the observer is deeply involved in what is observed. We are not simply spectators of the world but co-stars. Similarly, the observer in art, namely the viewer actively participates in the creation of artwork.

On the contrary, some plastic arts actively incorporate the movement of viewer. An example is Yakushi Sanson-zo (Yakushi triad) in Kakuenji temple in Kamakura. Here, both Shumidan (Buddhist altar) and Rendai (lotus pedestal) are taller than us. And, from the perspective of the normal human body balance, the seating height of Buddhist statues installed on them are lower, their torsos are shorter, and the heads are bigger. However, when we do Tochi-raihai (worship with playing one's head on the ground) and Gassho (joining one's palms for prayer) before these Buddhist statues and then, look up them while raising our bodies little by little, the heads, shoulders, chests, stomachs and knees of the Buddha statues begin to be visible gradually, and at last, it looks as if these Buddhist statures appeared from Rendai. In this way, these statues represent the belief that, through the Buddhists' action to the Buddha, the Buddha also appears from the world of Rengezo (the Lotus Matrix world) and responds to them. This is a work which takes account of the Buddhists' movement of body on worshipping and therefore, we can

say that it is a true realism. As shown in these Buddhist sculptures, viewers' movement actively participates in the formation of work. Depending on the potential horizon of perception, the work gets new meanings one after another.

Perspectivism of art

In music, a work can be played in various ways, and similarly in play, the same work can be performed in various ways. Playing music and performing play is not one and absolute but have many possibilities. Playing and performing are themselves creations based on new interpretations. The works are renewed by being performed and continues to live longer. The way of viewing is also diverse. Viewers have their own sensitivity and have different cultures and customs in their background. Therefore, even the same artwork will be understood differently depending on the difference of viewer's perspective. In that sense, no matter how great the work is, it is relative to the players, performers and viewers respectively. The interpretation of work must be pluralistic. Great works have their potentials for various interpretations, by which they preserve their own lives.

Even the same work appears in different phases depending on the various viewpoints of the players who play it, the performers who perform it or the viewers who see it. The works received by players, performers and viewers are works as far as they are projected from their respective viewpoints, and therefore the works appear in different ways depending on their perspectives. In addition, even if the recipient is limited to one person, the more he/she explores, the more the perspective changes, and the work shows various phases depending on it. When viewed from a myriad of different perspectives, one work has a myriad of appearances. Therefore, even if it is the same work, it seems as many works as different perspectives. One appears as many and is reflected by the many.

In other words, one work is in a state of superposition of various interpretations,

like Escher's polysemous figures. Artwork is multivalued. Therefore, there is not one and absolute interpretation, but every interpretation is complementary each other. It is impossible to say definitively that the work is like this, accordingly there is no single and absolute meaning of work. Rather, the symbol that enables various interpretations is artwork.

We can point out Noh in Japan as one of the arts which teaches the inseparability of one and many in art best. Noh is a play in which Shite (Protagonist in Noh) performs while projecting his expression on the screen of the viewers, and therefore, Noh is a play which enables the various appreciations by the viewer's imagination. At the same time, Noh is a play that focuses the viewer's diverse imagination only on Shite, just as the beauty of innumerable flowers is condensed into a single flower. For example, in the performance called "Iguse", Shite is sitting still without performing at one point of the stage. However, while Shite continues to endure the pressure of Jiuta (an explanatory chorus in Noh) and Hayashi (a musical accompaniment in Noh) to advance the story, he becomes the axis of dramatic expression only through the work of his heart. As a spinning top appears to be standing still, being still is the strongest expression here. In this way, Performance in Noh concentrates everything on one thing and transforms itself a symbol of many viewers' imagination. Expression is to reflect one in many, and to reflect many in one.

Structure of play

When we consider the theatrical space created by the empathy of actors and viewers, we can understand so well that artwork is not established without the viewers' participation in it.

For example, in classical Greek plays and Shakespeare plays which have no realistic stage or background, there are scenes where actors often speak monologues or asides directly to the viewers at the open stage surrounded by them. It seems actually

unnatural because the monologue and the aside are heard by the other next actors, but in the classical play, it is a promise that they are not heard. On such a basis of promise, the unrealistic direction that takes advantage of the direct relationship with the viewers is the monologue and the aside. In the classical play, the dynamism of play is directly extended from the stage to the viewers' seats by the direction that transcends realism and the viewers are absorbed in the play.

An excellent play has such a sympathy between actors and viewers. Play is a resonance between actors and viewers. For such a purpose, the excellent actor knows very well how to draw the viewers' breath into his performance, synchronize the viewers' bodies with it and transform the viewers into the participants of play. The feeling of presence in the theatrical space that could create a resonance with the viewers, cannot be conveyed by photographs and pictures taken from the outside.

The viewers are participants, and the way the actors perform will change depending on viewers' reaction. The viewers participate in the formation of play through their act of throwing themselves into the theatrical space and viewing the play. The acting of actors is realized as the focus of such participants' various eyes. The theater is a world, and the world is a theater. There, the viewers participate in the generation of play just as the observers participate in the generation of the world.

The Kabuki playhouse during the mature period of the Edo period was also the open stage like the Shakespeare theater, which was open to the viewers. And here too, monologues and asides were used actively, and the relationship with viewers has been regarded as important. And still in the today's Kabuki theater, the viewers' call shouting the actors' Yago (stage name) creates a sense of unity between the actors and the viewers. Certainly, the viewers are deeply absorbed in the play and dance performed on the stage, but then, they never forget which actor plays which role on stage. The pleasure of Kabuki lies in such a subtle intersection of the real and the unreal.

In addition, Kabuki's Hanamichi (passageway to stage) plays an important role in raising the viewers' feeling of participation. Thanks to Hanamichi and the actors'

performances there, the viewers get views of distant places that are not actually there, or events in the distant past or other worlds come close to them in an instant beyond the distance of time. In this way, Hanamichi has its important function of expanding the stage space and making it into three-dimensional beyond the regulated rational time and space of stage.

What is more, there is such a unique case as the scene of “Yoshinogawa” in “Imoseyama-onna-teikin”, where two Hanamichi compared to both banks of river are made in the viewers’ seats, and by such a setting, the viewers look the drama as if from the middle of river. Besides, in another unique case as the “Numazu” in “Igagoe-Dochu-Sugoroku”, “Ayumiita (The Stairs from stage to viewers’ seats) ” is set up. The actor comes down from the stage to viewers’ seats with it, passes through the viewers making friendly exchanges with them, and afterwards, appears from the main Hanamichi again. In this way, the viewers are drawn into the drama, and the whole theater becomes a place for the development of play. Hanamichi enables a dynamic approach to viewers in seats and creates a sympathy and a sense of unity between the viewers and the actors. Kabuki's Hanamichi clearly shows that the viewers are also participants in the play. It is an excellent direction that cannot be realized in the frame-style realistic play.

Kabuki is not a play to see a play alone, but a play that takes account into that, involving the viewers and the theater itself, a play is being played there. The viewers in Kabuki are not spectators only viewing the work performed on the stage, but co-stars participating in the progression of play.

Viewer and place

Noh in our country is a solemn and simple art and seems to be the exact opposite of Kabuki. However, its direction to intend is the same as Kabuki’s. For example, Zeami also emphasized communication with the viewers by the motto of “Shujin-Aigyō (being loved by everybody)”⁽³⁾ and peached the integration with the viewers as the acme of the

art. There is neither practitioner or theorist like Zeami who inquired deeply the relationship with Kenjo (viewer) in behalf of deepening the acting. The stage is established by being seen by the viewers' eyes. Zeami called the sense of unity with the viewers "Kenjo-doshin (being the same mind as viewer's)" ⁽⁴⁾ and, by this, emphasized that the stage and the viewers are fused and that the performers and the viewers are responded internally. It is the moment when Shite succeeded in drawing the viewers' attention into his expression alone, and the moment when the viewers' response occurred unconsciously. In the world of Noh which is a symphonic poem, the performers and the viewers resonate each other and are drawn into it. There is no room for discretion and an undivided state between subject and object is achieved. Zeami was devoted to creating such a state.

Therefore, Zeami's theory of acting is dominated by theory on viewer and theory on place. No matter how eagerly the performer practices and polish his/her skills, once he/she has stood on the stage, he/she may succeed, or not may so. This is because of depending on whether the performer understands the viewers' state of mind or not, or whether the performer is responding to the place or not. In Noh, there is a tune of time that dominates heaven and earth, and therefore Noh must be performed in accordance with various conditions, such as season, weather, time, atmosphere of the place and so on. Viewers are also various, such as rich and poor, many and small and so on, and further, the place to perform is also various, such as noble mansion, temple in mountain, countryside, remote country, grand festival of shrine and so on. Therefore, no matter where the place is, the performer must devise his performance so that it could accord with the place. There are good times for performance, while there are bad times. Accordingly, the performer must match Yo (yang+) to In (yin-) or In to Yo so that the both could harmonize.⁽⁵⁾ Noh play performed in earnest every time is Ichigoichie (the only chance in a lifetime), and therefore, how to perform is decided by chance and encounter. The performer must aim at his creative acting by keeping such a chance in mind.

In relation to this, Zeami's "Riken-no-ken (seeing oneself apart from oneself and with viewers' eyes)" was also of the mental attitude to enable such creative acting. The appearance of self that the performer is conscious of, is nothing more than Gaken (narrow and selfish view), and the performer can be united with the viewers when acting with Riken-no-ken, that is, the eyes of the viewers. In this way, if the performer can grasp and make sure of his appearance from any angle, his art is established. There, Shite is the focus of playing from any angle like a moving sculpture, and able to tie everything to one heart. Zeami's ideal act based on "Yasuki-kurai" which means nothing in the heart, is fulfilled in this way. ⁽⁶⁾

In the latter half of the 20th century, art theory, especially, theory on viewer/audience or on reader has become popular, but it was Zeami of 600 years ago who inquired for the problem of viewer's participation in expression to the utmost limits.

Subject and object cannot be separated.

In play, viewers are not spectators but participants. We experience the performed play directly by participating directly in it. The virtual images created by play are the images that the viewers feel through their bodies, in which the experience of viewers participates. What is seen always includes the person who sees it. The object is always participated in by the subject. Performer and viewer enter the virtual image created in play at the same time and become one. The subject and the object cannot be separated here. The virtual image of play is just an event that appears where the performer's direct experience and the viewer's match.

On the other hand, in modern Western naturalistic play, people who see and what is seen, Performer and viewer, and stage and viewers' seats are separated. There, the characters on stage are required to reproduce daily lives as they are, with little awareness of the viewers. In that way, they try to express the fragments of life realistically, and make the viewers think about "what is life" and "what is society". The

fatal weak point of such modern Western realistic plays is the lack of active participation of their viewers. There is no mutual relationship from the stage to the viewers and from the viewers to the stage, and therefore there is no spread of feeling of presence.

However, the essence of play is that it develops while performers and viewers are interacting dynamically. There, performers and viewers cannot be separated. The most desirable moment of play is the moment when the performers and the viewers resonate with each other and the whole theater is in a harmonious fusion. There, the boundary between oneself and the others is broken down, and a sense of unity with the others becomes possible. It is a reproduction of a festive sense in which God and people, people and people sympathize with each other and are caught up in a feverish excitement.

Not only in play but also, generally in artwork, it is impossible to separate what is seen from the person who sees it. Artwork is a mirror that reflects both artist and viewer. Artist and viewer project themselves in the mirror of work and know themselves. The mirror in which the person who sees and what is seen participate together and discover themselves each other, is just artwork. There lies the meaning of art.

2. Evaluation and interpretation

Evaluation and change of evaluation

Buddhist statues in cave temples in the cities of the Silk Road are unthinkable without the climate and religious atmosphere in which they are located. Originally, the plastic arts were associated with specific places such as temples, churches, shrines and palaces, and have played religious and social functions. However, if the Buddha statues of the cave temple are taken out from there and brought to the museum of today's Japan for exhibition, they are no longer objects of worship but just artworks or antiques. This is because the worship space in temple is lost and the viewers have been no longer

worshippers.

Artwork is given its meaning by the place where it is placed. If the place where it is placed is different, its meaning also becomes different and the viewers also become different in their nature. Topos (place) where the work is placed, should be considered. The value of work changes depending on topos, and the meaning and character of work also changes depending on topos.

Listeners, viewers and readers, in other words, appreciators also form topos. Artistic activity is to throw out the act of expression in a certain place. Therefore, the work must be presented and appreciated. In that sense, the viewer also participates in the formation of work. We must evaluate the positive role of viewer.

As Hans Robert Jauss, a pioneer of Aesthetic of Reception, says, enjoyment brings life to art and enables its existence. And, through the experiences of people who receive and judge works, art becomes a historical process. It is “horizon of expectation” that makes the work meaningful. However, because the horizon of expectation changes depending on the age, a new horizon of expectation is formed and the change of evaluation of work is caused. Because of this, the works that were not valued at the age of their birth may be valued later. The track of changes of horizon forms the history. If so, we must pay our attention to the active role of recipients, such as critics, viewers and so on, who receive, select, analyze, reflect and evaluate the works. The recipient actively participates in the formation of meaning of work, mediates the past art and the present one, and becomes the energy of formation of history. ⁽⁷⁾

Since the act of expression must be thrown into the field of mutual relation, its evaluation will be different from what the artist intended. The artwork having left the artist's hand, is left to the viewers' free interpretation and begins to have its own independent life. The artist does not know how much his/her intention was conveyed to the viewers. Reception is an event and just an event that generates meaning. Meaning is created by the encounter between work and viewer. Viewers do a kind of creation by their evaluation of work. Every work is open to viewers.

Therefore, every work is reflected in the viewers' perspective in different ways. Even in a single viewer, the understanding of work will deepen as the viewer's experience of life deepens and grows. The transformation of viewer brings the transformation of work. For that reason, each time we try to understand a work, it shows a different appearance. On the contrary, viewers have their own cultural and social context behind their reception of work, and therefore, viewers even find out what the artist did not intend. The meaning of work is constantly arranged and is refracted through viewers.

Artwork is a symbol, and the more excellent it is, the more variously it is understood. Especially, because classical works have survived a long history, a new understanding is possible each time being appreciated. The work itself is always an unfinished existence that allows a new interpretation. The work is handed down from viewer to viewer, and each time it arouses their understanding. Thus, the history of art is formed by the viewers' selection, evaluation and description. Art history is also a kind of theater in which viewers actively participate. Art is historical and formative, and its creation does not finish in appreciation, too.

Certainly, the greater an artwork is, the more it tends to transcend the age. Therefore it is often not understood at the age of birth. There is an irreparable conflict between a genius artist who is ahead of the age and the age. Van Gogh and Cézanne, for example, were geniuses ahead of their age, and they were not valued at their age. Van Gogh was completely ignored during his life and the evaluation of Cézanne arrived too much late. Van Gogh and Cézanne pursued "life" and "shape" respectively in their paintings in a manner almost like religion, but they were out of tune with their age. The discrepancy between the artwork and the age of its birth was too tremendous for these geniuses.

However, their works suddenly begin to be evaluated as the age changes. It may be caused by that the experience of the later age have finally caught up them. Or it may be by that the experience of the later age finally noticed what was overlooked previously and found that there were geniuses before their age who had already expressed such

overlooked things. Thus, works that have not been evaluated at the age of their birth often revive as original.

Works that have been paid no attention, are evaluated as the age changes, and revive. Pottery which were mere tools for daily life or festival instruments in the Jomon period, begin to be suddenly recognized as excellent arts in modern times. It is true that the magical world of the Jomon period is different from the modern context that lost it, but, because the age is different, they are evaluated as art. It is because topos has changed. If so, we can say that artworks are born by evaluation. Artworks are established only after critics and viewers evaluated them. Critics and viewers must be regarded as the power to form the work by interpreting and evaluating it. The lasting value and meaning of work are given by each age's evaluation and successive change of that evaluation.

A work has not meaning by itself, but it is understood by the context in which it is placed. When the context changes, the appearance of the work changes, and the meaning and evaluation of it appears differently. For example, Ukiyo-e which was nothing more than a secular and commercial pop art in Japan's Edo period, was afterwards evaluated as an advanced art in Europe and the United States. As this shows, when a work is placed in a different context, its meaning also changes even if the work is the same. A work is told from each context. An artwork survives beyond the context in which it was born because the evaluation of it continuously changes in successive later ages.

The meaning and value of a work is not determined by itself, but by the relationships in which it is placed, such as time, place, opportunity, viewer and so on. As the meaning and value of a work changes along with the change of topos, it cannot be unequivocally determined. How a work is evaluated depends on its encountering, and accordingly, it cannot avoid factors of chance. Whether an artwork succeeds or not, cannot be decided on the artist's subjective intention and belief. Rather, the place, the relationship, the context and the age where a work is placed, are the source of its

meaning and value.

Interpretation and understanding

As shown in the Paleolithic cave paintings, artwork is the expressions of experience, and expression is the fundamental function of life. However, in order to understand such an expression, there must be experience on our side. We understand by experiencing. Those who have deeper experience understand the deeper meaning of work. There must be also experience in the source of the imagination that Kant emphasized in “Critique of Judgement”.⁽⁸⁾ Moreover, in order to understand a work, there must be a common experience. For example, Japanese ink painting as well as Haiku is a symbol, and, in order to understand such a symbol, there must be a common experience rooted in the climate of Japan in the background.

But that alone is not enough to understand artwork. Especially, there is a time lag between past work and our present period, which often makes our understanding difficult. For example, the condition of people’s experience who made the Jomon pottery just at that time is quite different from the one of our modern people’s experience. It is not so easy to fill up the gap. There is an avoidable difference between the past experience and the present one and between what must be understood and those who try to understand it. It is also impossible to relive the experiences of past makers as they were. Here we cannot mention the universality of experience.

However, common experience and reliving experience are not necessary to be the same as the past one. Rather, understanding is requested because there are temporal distance and faults between both experiences. There must be some distance for understanding. Understanding is that someone’s experience and another’s experience resonate through expression. But artist’s experience and viewer’s experience cannot be the same. A gap lies between their experiences. Nevertheless, interpretations are born when their experiences resonate. For example, when a viewer encountered an excellent

work of art, the viewer may fall into silence unexpectedly. However, at this moment, although the experience of artist and the experience of viewer are different, they are competitive each other. After that, both experiences overlap each other, and when the viewer's experience of work and experience of oneself resonate, interpretation of work is born. And by such an interpretation being born, a deeper awareness of experience itself is brought about.

Viewer asks his/her question from his/her own experience. When an answer to his/her question is expressed in a work, the viewer interprets it from his/her own experience. At that time, the past work revives, and the past and the present are connected. It is also to illuminate the past from the present.

Artwork is a bridge from past artist to present viewer. For such a bridge to become a symbol of mutual understanding, there must be a reflecting-being reflected relationship between the past artist and the present viewer just like a mirror. From such an encounter between the past artist and the present viewer, the work is always understood newly and history of interpretation is formed. But its interpretation continues to change along with the change of experience of each age again and never complete.

Understanding is an encounter. Understanding is an encounter between viewer and artist and therefore, an event itself. At this moment, it becomes possible to understand both oneself and another. When I can understand a work better from my own experience, conversely, by this, I can understand myself better. By encountering a work, I encounter myself, too. I re-discover myself through the work. Self-understanding is understanding of another and understanding of another is self-understanding. Artworks exist for such a purpose.

Viewer is conditioned by his/her own historical climate. Therefore, viewer understand a work on such a background. Understanding is born at a point where the interpreter's historical and cultural perspective and the historical and cultural perspective in the background of the work overlap. Moreover, because interpreter's

perspective is diverse, the way of overlapping is also diverse.

Therefore, a work can be viewed from many perspectives and, because various interpretations are possible on those different perspectives, a certain unified agreement about the work cannot be established. Every work can be appreciated by infinite ways, and therefore, there is no absolute beauty. Understanding is an interpretation from a certain perspective, and when the perspective changes, the appearance of the work also changes. When the age changes, the perspective also changes and therefore, the interpretation of work also changes depending on the difference of perspective. Change of age brings change of perspective, which brings the change of interpretation. Just as a cracked piece becomes a magnificent tea utensil depending on the new way of appreciation, the change of perspective often gives birth to artwork.

As Gadamer says, to understand is to interpret from the horizon of oneself, and to understand is to fuse the horizon of work with the horizon of interpreter. The horizon is a field of view that encloses everything visible from a certain point, and such a field of view moves together with the interpreters. And, when the horizon moves, the interpretation of work also changes.⁽⁹⁾

The meaning and value of artwork is not implicit objectively in the work itself. To recognize the artist's intention inherent in the work is not to understand. The meaning and value of work is an event that arises from an encounter between the artist and the viewer and is neither subjective nor objective. Therefore, a work has various meanings and values. If a work only allows one interpretation, it is not great for that reason. Great works are polysemous. A work is reflected by many viewers, understood in various ways, and each time the interpretation is updated. Interpretation is a kind of translation and revival of work.

Playing music is also a kind of interpretation, and players always create their own Mozart, Beethoven and so on, with new playing. Performing play is also a kind of interpretation, and performers create their own Shakespeare, Chikamatsu and so on, by their acting. Without such playing and performing, music and play cannot become a

musical or performing work. The work is revived by playing and performing. Moreover, various playing and performing are also possible. Playing and performing are re-creative interpretations. The same applies to literature and painting, too. A literary work can be translated in various ways, and a painting can be criticized in various ways. Translation and criticism are their own interpretations and re-creations that translators and critics found in an original work.

The universal meaning of a work does not necessarily lie in the work itself. Unless players, performers, translators, critics and viewers derive new meanings from it, it could not be established as a work. Especially, classical works are recreated again and again. As the age changes, the tense relationship between the age and the classical works will be repaired by new understanding. To clarify the meaning of classical works towards the today's experience, a re-creative activity of interpretation and understanding is necessary. Artworks are always opened towards the succeeding age, and the succeeding people also participates in their formation. A new interpretation is also necessary to transfer artworks into the context of different cultures. Playing, performing, translations and criticisms are the activities to transfer artworks into such other ages and places. They are accompanied by changes of interpretation, conversions of meaning and re-creations.

Historically produced art

Art history is the history of appreciation and interpretation, and the appreciation and interpretation of artworks gives birth to art history. Particularly, classical works are added new understanding depending on the change of age and survive beyond the age. There is no history without interpretation.

For such establishment of art history, viewers play their important role. Art history does not mean the history of artists and works alone. Neither paintings, plays or music were created without the participation of audience and viewers. To appreciate is

to participate in and to make a history. A lot of literary works that were once popular, have often not been read as an ebb tide with the change of age, and instead, literary works that had been ignored until then, often begin to be evaluated. Here is the intervention of critics and viewers. Viewers are not bystanders of art history, but the persons concerned who participate in art history actively. Viewers of each age have their own perspectives each age, and form art history by various understanding of artworks depending on their own perspectives. The existence of viewers is also a driving power of art history. We should understand art history not only as the history of creation but also as the one of appreciation, too.

Art is an excellent social activity. Artworks cannot become artworks only by their being produced, but they must be presented to the public, exhibited, played, performed and appreciated by them. Art is social, both in its origin and in its function. Because such a reason, art expresses experience of its age and society. Art creates the image of its age and society and symbolizes it. Indeed, some artists, such as Van Gogh, were never understood and ignored in their age. However, they are evaluated later and, on the contrary, symbolize their age. A work becomes a symbol of the age and society beyond the artist's intention. Society involves a function of communication by symbols, which is just the role of art. For that purpose, art is requested.

The activity of 'asking' from the present continuously changes and new lights are projected on past works. Therefore, a meaning of work which even the artist was not aware of, may be revealed in later age. When we experience something new, the interpretation of work itself transforms. In this way, art history is created from the present. Art is the interaction of creation of work and its reception. From such an interaction, art history continues to produce the new content and meaning of work. Art is historical.

Art shows various change historically. Play is continuously modified, and music is also played repeatedly in different way. The taste of viewers also changes, the works of new style are created one after another, and those styles will also change soon. On the

contrary, some works, such as the cave temples of Ajanta and Ellora in India, the cathedrals of the Middle Ages in Europe and the Sagrada Familia church by Gaudi, took hundreds of years until their completion and, through such history, are handed over to the later generations. These are the works that presupposed the participation of people in later age in their creation.

In addition, there are cases where nature participates in the creation of art, as in Buddhist architecture which has its own indescribable taste by enduring wind and snow and wearing a look of age. Even the ruins caught up in the nature's harsh power and having been covered with trees are beautiful. Art was not originally personal. Art is open to the world. Every artwork is always, by nature, on the way of its formation and therefore, unfinished. Art is a continuous activity and symbolizes the continuously changing world. We should say that art is also amid its own continuous creation and change.

Footnote

1. Toshitsuna Tachibana-no, *Sakuteiki* in *Nihon Shiso Taikai 23: Kodai Chusei Geijuturon* edited with notes by Tatsusaburo Hayashiya, Iwanami Shoten, 1975, p224.
2. Zeami, *Kakyo* in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikai 65: Karonshu Nohgakuronshu* edited with notes by Minoru Nishio, Iwanami Shoten, 1971, pp427-428.
3. Zeami, *Fushikaden Chapter 5* in *op.cit.*, p376.
4. Zeami, *Kakyo* in *op.cit.*, p415.
5. Zeami, *Shugyokutokka* in *ibid*, pp454-456 and *Fushikaden Chapter 7* in *op.cit.*, pp395-397.
6. Zeami, *Kakyo* in *op.cit.*, pp414-415.
7. Hans Robert Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, I.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Ph.B., Felix Meiner, 1968, §9.
9. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B.Mohr, 1972, S.284-290.

Source: Michinori Kobayashi, *The Beginning of Art Studies: Chapter 4* in *Philosophy of Life Collection vol.3*, Minervashobo, Kyoto, 2016.