

The Appeal of the “Friction” born from the Difference in the Perception of the Everyday Life Atsushi TAKEDA

I found myself facing the question, “What makes Asian Performing Arts?” through closely observing the APAF collaboration works by the Asian directors and actors.

What are the works that we can empathize, not simply as human beings but as fellow Asians living in Asia? There were some works that used the physical expressions as the common language. I was left with the question, however, that if we do not communicate through the language, the work could be a collaboration with any other country, and not necessarily with Asian countries.

In that perspective, Mr. Shigeki NAKANO's International Collaboration performance *Waiting for Something* directly faced the difference in the perception of the everyday life as well as the language barrier among different Asian countries.

I was fortunate to have had an opportunity to observe the rehearsal prior to the dress rehearsal and the performance. What impressed me was the rehearsal for the scene where the Man, played by the Japanese actor Soichi MURAKAMI, confesses to his wife, played by the Korean actress CHO Na Ra, that he was married once in the past, and the wife then forgives him. Ms. CHO interrupted the rehearsal saying that “I do not know if it is me or the Korean sense in me, but this man is so arrogant that I cannot forgive him. It may be a cultural and sentimental difference, but I am not at all unconvinced.”

This led to a discussion between the director and all the actors, and there were opinions such as “It might be a difference between men and women or a personal difference in the notion of the marriage, rather than a cultural difference.”

In the end, the group reached a conclusion that “Not all actors need to adhere to the same values and ways of thinking as the director,” and the lines were drastically changed while keeping the original plot, thus allowing both values to coexist.

It was quite interesting to see the collision of the different perceptions of the everyday modern life, stemming from the difference in the environment that each person lives in. It was intriguing in the sense that it was more subtle than the cultural differences easier to understand, such as the difference between the traditional performing arts from different countries.

I thus empathized with Mr. HIROTA's words: “We need to discuss thoroughly and not go on under the false pretense of understanding each other.” For a collaboration work that brings together not only people from different countries but also people from completely different backgrounds, it is not enough for the actors to try to understand the director's vision and to express it through their performances on stage; there needs to be a dialogue, and a process where each participant's sense and opinion are respected.

Personally, I visited Taiwan in February 2013 for the first time, and for me that finally completed my APAF experience. Everything was different. The air, the color of the natural light, the food, the colorful billboards, numerous bikes filling up the roads in the city--everything was fresh, and I was shocked to discover such a different world. At the same time, though, I felt a nostalgia and a familiarity for the common Asian roots.

When I landed at Narita Airport, I felt that I “arrived in Japan” rather than that I “came home.” In other words, I rediscovered Japan through discovering Taiwan.

I was very fortunate to have been able to participate in this program. If there is any room for improvement, I found that the Lobby Talk was quite short, and I would have liked to have a little more time to have dialogues and exchanges with the artists. I also would have liked to attend more rehearsals; I can only imagine there were more frictions of various kinds to be observed.

I currently study modern theater directing at university, and I would like to engage myself in the future in a collaboration project with traditional instruments. Musical instruments can seamlessly merge into a foreign culture while absorbing the traditional culture. I personally studied Japanese traditional drums and the *shinobue* (bamboo flute) for three years in high school.

My plan is to start by exploring the organic relationship between the modern theater (dialogue drama) and the live performance, and eventually create a collaboration work between Asian musical instruments and Japanese instruments.

It would be a great accomplishment if I could sublimate the collaboration project into a performance piece that

transmits a sense of “friction,” just as I had discovered at the APAF.