

Asian Performing Arts Festival  
Participant Interview #07

Fumio KAKIYA / (“APAF ART CAMP” participant; a man in his 50's)

KAKIYA used to frequent the theater as an audience when he was a student. After leaving the financial institution for which he used to work for 25 years, KAKIYA went back to the academic field and pursued his research on peace education in graduate school, and rediscovered theater. He currently belongs to the Komaba Agora Theater School <Murinkan> in order to learn theater production hands-on. Based on his past overseas experiences, he decided to pursue the possibility of multilingual performing arts - for example, works which represent the scenes from the near-future Japanese society, where people from different countries speak in their own language, or where conversations in multiple languages take place simultaneously - and thus took part in the Asian Performing Arts Festival.

“I deepened my understanding on the fact that the countries with different cultural and economic backgrounds are facing the same urgent situation concerning the issue of 'how to balance the artistic quality and the public appeal.' On the other hand, I was startled to realize that there are strong regulations about speech in some countries.

It was particularly an eye-opening experience for me to hear that 'even though the role of the artists is to challenge and create cutting-edge expressions, the artists and the producers need to learn through the dialogues with the audience, so as not to fall into the pitfall of <art for art's sake>.’”

For KAKIYA, the “Workshop for International Collaboration,” of which he observed from the open rehearsals, and the performances were an opportunity to reconfirm such possibility of the theater.

“At the open rehearsals, I felt that the process of the creation itself was a place for multilingual dialogues. I was surprised that all the works evolved tremendously over a short time, and was impressed by the quality of the finished productions.

South Korean team's *My Mom* was particularly impressive. While showing both the cultural similarities and differences, the work showed that the respect for the ancestors and the homeland, and the thoughts for one's mother are universally common. My tears did not stop thinking of my own mother.”

KAKIYA also had a profound experience through attending the Lecture by CHONG Tze Chien (Singaporean team's director) the day before the performances, as well as the post-performance discussions where the directors talked about their works.

At the same time, those experiences made him think about the “necessity of international collaboration.”

“Using multinational actors naturally implies that multiple languages will be employed. From that point of view, I felt that *Illusion* with the motif of international marriage, and *The Ghost in Hanoi* about a Japanese traveling to Hanoi were both works that are appropriate for multilingual expressions.

There were other impressive works, too, such as a work which placed the common theme of 'Rice and Rice Plants: On the Similarities and the Differences of Food' alongside the universal theme of 'family,' while also sending a social message; and another work which skillfully employed dance and music expressions and entertained a full house.”

The qualities of the Special Performance and the Special Lecture also left a vivid impression on KAKIYA.

“Mikuni YANAIHARA's Special Performance of *Love poem by the whole experience* (a Japan-Taipei international collaboration production) was, in a sense, a role model for international collaboration. It

made perfect sense to be staged in multiple languages; the visual images helped the audience understand the work better, and we did not have to feel the strain of constantly looking at the subtitles.

The Special Lecture by <Legend Lin Dance Theatre> (Taipei) was amazing. It was perfect for the finale of the Festival. It was unfortunate that the performance space was limited; I would have liked for more people to have attended this Lecture.”

As a producer, KAKIYA would like to “support the young people's theater creation in the future.” He is eager to be involved in international collaboration in the field of multilingual performing arts. Looking back on the Festival, KAKIYA says that it was “an extremely meaningful opportunity” for him.

“Plays which are staged in multiple languages, or in languages or settings that are not familiar to the audience allow for a clear illustration of the differences and the conflict with the others. They also create a space and time which allow the audience to use their imagination to listen to the the voice of the others who are different from them.

Exploring various ways of dialogue, and allowing for dialogues rather than dichotomy – I believe that is the innate power of the theater.”