

APAF

Participant Interview #01

Ryunosuke Kimura / TC Team Assistant Director

Ryunosuke Kimura currently researches on Shakespeare at the Department of English Language and Literature of the University of Tokyo. He was Assistant to the renowned theater director Yukio Ninagawa before subsequently working in the Directing Department of Bungakuza Theater Company's Theater Research Institute for two years. His career also include acting with the Shakespeare Theatre Company for three and a half years. He started his own theater company Kakushinhan two years ago, and presents Shakespeare's works as its Writer and Director.

“How can modern non-western people stage the western classical dramas? I always felt that, in order to pursue modern expressions while keeping contact with one's daily life, one has to think more about 'who I am,' rather than relying on the pre-modern expressions such as Japanese traditional beauty of style.

Compared to the other team directors who put emphasis on their traditional cultures, I was drawn to TC which based its expressions on the western theater methodology.”

Having spent his childhood in Singapore, Kimura auditioned for the Assistant Director of TC. A discussion started immediately at the reception following the team selection.

“The fact that you have to create a work and present it to the public within a limited time, and that different teams are competing with each other. These call for an efficient use of time. TC rehearsals did not waste any time, and the directives were very clear and sophisticated. Since I am involved in the theater for the purpose of meeting other people, it was interesting to see that the conflicts arising at the production sites were eventually sublimated as expressions.”

Kimura taped all the episodes of the actors to make transcriptions and created a Japanese script, working with the Director and the Interpreter. The script was completed on the morning of the second day.

“Even though TC's expression technique is western, Japanese modern life is naturally reflected in

the process of extracting episodes. At the same time, the Asian sense that had been passed down from the ancient times cannot help but appear. The fact that he cited a novel by Haruki Murakami as an example became a point of contact that was easy to sympathize.”

Even though it seems that it was not the intention of the Director, the episodes told by the actors on the theme of “Rice and Rice-plants” expressed their anxieties for food due to the nuclear plant accident.

“3.11 became a momentum to start my own theater company. There are many serious things happening today, comparable to the world of Shakespeare. (TC's work) reflects the modern day Japan, and I am sure the audience felt many things.

I learned through this experience that we can share what we universally feel as human beings in our daily lives from a perspective other than the politics, even if our nationalities and backgrounds differ. I also felt with a renewed conviction the fun and the power of the theater where we can share the same story in the same place.”

This experience brought about a new point of view, “Asia,” to Kimura, who strives to continue to create works which rise above the hardships and the loss of modern Japanese people through Shakespeare's works, and vows to explore modern and Japanese perspectives in order to achieve this.

“I did not have much opportunity to look at Asia until now. It was a great discovery for me to find out that there are opportunities to reflect on myself within the context of watching contemporary Asian theater.

Perhaps the reason why I was so attracted to the works created by different countries is because they encompass similar difficulties and awareness against the frameworks of modern western theater expressions and theater facilities. 'Asia' may be possible to break through something that the Japanese cannot on their own. I hope that this kind of opportunity will increase ten-fold (laugh) in the future.”