

Metamorphosis of Female Impersonators into Strangers in Japanese Popular Theatre

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Abstract

Unexpectedly, the Kabuki-styled traveling popular theatre that is marginalized and stigmatized has gradually been receiving unprecedented popular recognition. Through the integration of traditional Kabuki style with modern fashion motifs, this theatre seeks to demonstrate the pleasure of acting in and viewing a theatrical performance. Not only does it cater to an audience that seeks enjoyment, but it also helps the audience perceive moving and inspiring truths about humanity. This theatre is denounced as being artistically unsophisticated, or is simply ignored by mainstream media and high-brow patrons of the arts alike.

But unlike mainstream Kabuki, this marginalized theatre makes efforts to develop its own acting style in order to engage the audience's aesthetic sense of beauty. Its talented performers, especially female impersonators, undergo a metamorphosis that involves a metaphysical joining of the performer and the "stranger". This enables the performers to transcend the everyday perception of humanity and frees them to express humanity crystallized in style. I will explore the metamorphosis in which the concept of the stranger plays a key role in the dynamics of this marginalized popular theatre from the past and to the present as well as medieval traditions on female impersonation in this marginalized theatre. In so doing, I will refer to the concept of "interbeing" that is situated in between what is same and different or inside and outside. This concept was developed by Richard Kearney who argues that the stranger always resides within every individual. It helps illumine how the stranger in the non-mainstream popular theatre is expressed and reaches out to the audience.

Key Words - Itinerant popular theatre; Female impersonators; Metamorphosis; Stranger; Interbeing

Introduction

Japanese classical theatre typically refers to Kabuki and Noh. Just as Noh can be divided into two types, authentic/mainstream and unsophisticated/nonmainstream, so too can Kabuki. For the general audience, Kabuki is more accessible than Noh because although Kabuki retains an academic atmosphere, the latter is perceived to be shrouded in both academic and aristocratic dignity. Yet, despite Kabuki's origins in the 17th century as a traditionally popular form of entertainment, in recent years the comparatively expensive admission price for even this traditional mainstream Kabuki has given it a more dignified air of authority than ever before. Unlike the more prestigious art forms of Kabuki and Noh, however, a much more popular, less formal version of Kabuki, presented by traveling troupes, has gained increasing popularity among a working-class, predominantly middle-aged and elderly female audience. This nonmainstream theatre is generically known as "popular theatre" as opposed to the so-called commercial theatre that is often supported by the media. Although it receives little media coverage, it makes a passionate appeal to a wider audience through the use of innovative themes and techniques.

This paper will discuss the ways in which this popular theatre ventures into the realm of a reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses. The primary focus of this discussion is on its female impersonators who play a key role in attaining this state of in-between-ness in which both female impersonators and the audience are placed.

1. Hospitality and hostility simultaneously extended to the stranger

Traditional Japanese folklore suggests that the stranger (the outsider) comes from the outside world and represents not only what the community perceives as a hostile environment, but also the world of the dead which commands awe and respect. Inspired by a special term denoting a visitor god in the literature of ancient Japan, poet, folklorist and scholar of ancient Japanese literature and culture, Shinobu Orikuchi (1887-1953), theorized about a certain kind of stranger who, he argued, was among the incarnated ancestral spirits of the Japanese people. In his theory, Orikuchi used the word "marebito," which is an archaic term for an uncommon visitor. He further explained that the divine stranger, in its seasonal visits, would bring blessings to rural communities. For the ancient Japanese, he argued, *marebito* referred to distinguished visitors, rather than to those who merely came on rare occasions. He defined the *marebito* as a "visiting god (or divine visitor)." He states:

Primarily, [the *marebito*] refers to ancient spiritual beings from the mythical Eternal Land (*Tokoyo*) across vast oceans who were believed to pay a visit to villages to make people there happy and then return to their own realm.¹

Thus, the *marebito* was believed to possess the power to rejuvenate and revitalize nature, human life and society.

Recent Japanese folkloric scholarship has expanded Orikuchi's interpretation of the *marebito* by focusing on the dual nature of this visitor deity. Among other scholars, Kazuhiko Komatsu and Norio Akasaka began to consider these *marebito*-like figures as strangers from an historical perspective. In Japanese folklore, the stranger was perceived by the community as ambiguous, as both threat and benefactor. They were believed to belong to the world of the dead, for which people felt a tangible sense of reverence and awe. They were also expected to bring comfort, hope, happiness and good fortune to agricultural communities. In other words, they were perceived as both benevolent and malevolent. Both Komatsu and Akasaka argue that this ambivalence tended to result in the mingling and intersecting of hospitality and hostility, with hospitality just as likely to be offered at any given moment as hostility.

Both Komatsu and Akasaka have chosen to name the stranger "ijin," literally meaning "foreigner" or "outsider." Perhaps this is because *marebito* primarily refers to those within the confines of ancient Japan, while the term *ijin* can be used to include various types of strangers, ancient or modern, and has become the preferred term which illustrates the continuity of this concept in the Japanese mind. In fact, the scope of their research covers not only historical, but also present-day, ghost and monster stories, scary tales, supernatural stories from traditional folklore, and urban legends.

Western Japanologists' scholarship has probed the idea of the *ijin* that Komatsu and Akasaka have conceptualized. Notably, British scholar of Japanese culture Carmen Blacker recognizes the key role played by the stranger in Japanese history and culture. She contends:

The folklore of Japan is full of references to the mysterious figure of a Stranger, who wanders into a village from an unknown 'outside' world. The word for a Stranger in Japanese, *ijin* or 'different person' has a wide connotation. An *ijin* can be a traveler, for example, whose way of life is wandering, in contrast to the static agricultural life of the village. He may be a wandering woodcarver or tinker, a traveling priest or strolling player. An *ijin* can also be a foreigner from another country 'outside' Japan, a Dutchman, Portuguese, Chinese or Englishman. And he can also be an avowedly supernatural being, outside the human race.²

Blacker also notes the dual nature of this stranger:

The person coming amongst us from this outside world, from which the known distinctions of life are obliterated, can never be of us. [...] Our instant reaction is to see him as a

threat, bringing perilous pollutions from his alien land, and to expel him from our midst. But a moment later we perceive that at the same time he possesses strange occult knowledge, magic or medicine, beyond our experience. We therefore refrain from expelling him, with curses and stones, and instead disarm him with hospitality; we treat him with all the ritual of a guest, which will elicit from him blessings rather than harmful enchantments.³

Thus in popular belief the visitor from the unknown world or the stranger brings about a transformation which results in a kind of spiritual rebirth for the host community.

More interestingly, among other types of traditional strangers (*ijin*), itinerant theatrical performers devoted to the popular entertainment of Kabuki-inspired, working-class theatre, still remain in existence today. Although ignored by mainstream theatre-goers and seeking more mainstream media coverage, some troupes make every effort to be so inventive as to create ever newer performance styles and techniques. Hence, it is a small wonder that itinerant troupes continue to be viewed as traditional strangers, meeting with a peculiar mixture of hospitality and (unvoiced and unconscious) hostility from their enthusiasts. While greeted with enthusiasm at theatres of their own kind that are smaller and more technically underequipped than their commercial counterparts, subconsciously their audience still treats them as dreadful and awe-inspiring strangers because of their unusual and miraculous expertise as entertainers. Their itinerant lifestyle also tends to encourage the bias it causes in their audience's perception of them.

2. The stranger's endless wandering as demonstrated by itinerant theatrical performers

In the mid-19th century, when the nascent Western-oriented Japanese central government began to westernize the entire country, most types of traveling entertainment that had enjoyed several centuries of popularity rapidly became extinct. This political Westernization and modernization sought to abandon traditional values, institutions, and customs and adopt those that prevailed in the West. As such the new government's centralized political control of the arts turned out to be much tighter than that of its pre-Meiji era predecessors. Despite this fact, nonmainstream Kabuki-inspired popular theatre maintained its traditions largely because the performers, who were mostly illiterate and otherwise unable to earn a living, had to rely on this type of acting for their survival. They were also excluded from the mainstream theatre business because they were considered illegitimate, unsophisticated and less professional. They could not help but keep traveling on. Thus, itinerancy remained a permanent aspect of this beleaguered theatre. Even today, approximately two hundred troupes are continually traveling, and while unrecognized and/or financially unsuccessful troupes tend to disband, new ones continually come into being.

These traveling performers remain strangers in the eyes of the Japanese people, at least psychologically. Since they are perceived as such, they are still greeted ambivalently with a mixture of hospitality and (unconscious) hostility in the tradition of the visitor god.

The nomadic lifestyle of these itinerant performers seems extremely unusual to the typical, more settled people who live in one place (i.e. their homes) for months or years at a time. Switching performance venues on a monthly basis, these performers present a series of live stage shows every day, having no more than a single day off until the second to last day of each month. Currently, a typical weekday program consists of a two-hour long morning show and a one-hour long evening show, though on weekends a two-hour long show is performed twice per day. The average ticket now costs about 18 USD. In the last few days of each month, the company begins packing up its costumes and stage properties, and on the night of the penultimate day of the month, they complete the moving process and drive to the next location. On the first day of the next month, they begin their monthly schedule again. As long as a contract is available, this monthly process continues; otherwise the company spends a month or months unpaid, and is likely to be disbanded.

Marilyn Ivy, an American anthropologist who focuses primarily on Japanese culture and politics vis-à-vis the question of modernity, illustrates the typical lifestyle of itinerant theatrical companies in the early 1990s. She states:

The life of a taishû engeki [i.e. popular theatre] troupe becomes all the more remarkable when one considers the special features of their art. They perform two different plays for their noon performance, which lasts until 3:30 P.M., and repeat these plays for the 5:00 P.M. show. The next day two completely different plays are performed.⁴

She thus notes the average long and busy day of the troupe, including the daily training practice that takes place after each evening show, ending as late as 2 o'clock the next morning. She continues:

This devotedly itinerant life, with its unending round of performances is everything that contemporary middle-class Japan—with its ideals of lifetime employment, affluence, and achievement—is not. What gives taishû engeki its current appeal is undoubtedly linked to the image of the itinerant. It is an image that has enduring appeal for many Japanese [...].⁵

Here, she brings to the fore the state of being itinerant that constitutes the very basis of the marginalized itinerant popular theatre. No doubt, for ordinary stay-at-homes, this mode of unusual and extraordinary itinerant living is beyond comprehension. More importantly, this endless itinerancy harkens back to

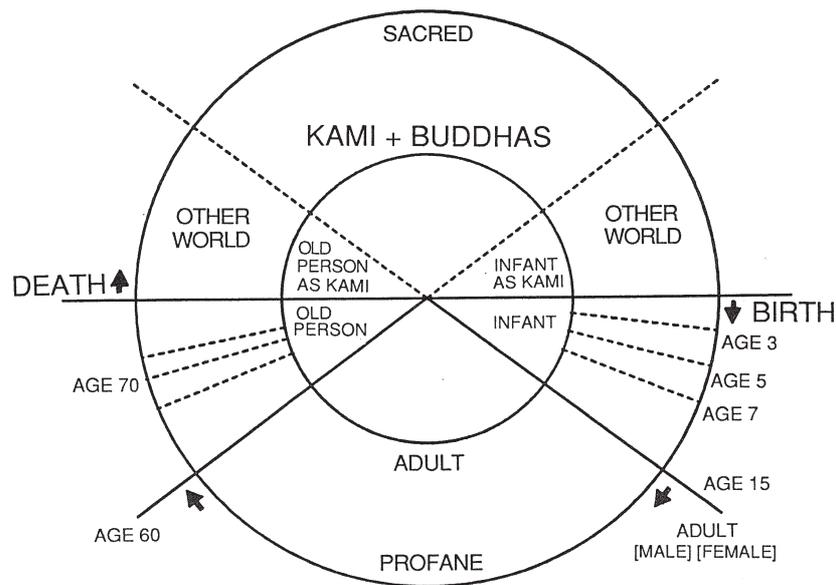
ancient ancestors who continuously wandered around Japan on foot and provided a variety of entertainment —acting and dancing included— to earn a living. It was this itinerancy that served to create an amalgam of awesome, bizarre and incredible beauty. Indeed, this rings true for today's itinerant theatre performers as well. In order to maintain the appealing mystery of the stranger, they need to keep wandering. If they settled on a home and used it as a base camp for their theatrical performances, they would be viciously exploited by mainstream entertainment promoters and surely lose their popularity. Although itinerancy has served as a source of their creative power in acting and dancing, it may dissipate the mysterious appeal that they traditionally hold for their settled audiences.

3. Historical conceptions of the stranger

Historically and traditionally Japanese society has included other sorts of stranger than Orikuchi's concept of the stranger, i.e. the seasonal visitor *marebito*. According to Japanese medieval—usually defined as the period from the mid-12th century to the late 16th century⁶—popular belief, children and elderly people were perceived as what is called “strangers” in the broad sense. These strangers, more accurately speaking, were popularly seen as being closer to divine beings like gods. In his exploration of medieval constructs of marginality (and in-betweenness) in social relationships and politicogeography, Hideo Kuroda has pointed out this social positioning of the very young and the elderly. These people were believed to partly belong to the sacred realm. It used to be said that children up until the age of seven belong to the family of gods.⁷ They were believed to play a much less significant role in the medieval society. Because of the high infant mortality rate in the medieval period and their very minor role in the workforce, children were considered as mere half humans or immature social actor. Their physical incompleteness and poor nutrition tended to stop them from leading a happy and healthy childhood.

Likewise, aged men and women were already prepared to leave this earthly world, whether conscious or not of their preparedness. Having closely examined pictorial hand-scrolls (*emaki*) that depict commoner's and nobility's physical and spiritual lives in medieval Japan. Children and old people, Kuroda argues that both the young and old were positioned on the social margin due to their physical and spiritual attributes which implied their close proximity to the Otherworld. Unlike infants placed at the beginning of the life cycle, aged persons are close to its end and thus approaching the sacred realm inhabited by divine being of popular belief derived from a mixture of Shinto, Buddhism and various indigenous beliefs. In addition, although without elaborating, Kuroda argues that because of their physical and psychological differences from men, women too were regarded as strangers.

The following diagram drawn by Kuroda illustrates this life cycle that was widely accepted by Japanese medieval society.⁸



With children, in particular, even today this tradition still persists on a subliminal level. It is clearly reflected in a Japanese children’s festival, called “shichi-go-san”. *Tradition and Tradition Theories: An International Discussion* explains this celebration:

Held on November 15, *shichi-go-san* means “seven-five-three”, and refers to the custom of taking children of those ages to shrines in a rite of passage. Generally boys who turn five years of age that year, and girls of the ages of three and seven are taken to their [local] tutelary shrine to express thanks for growth and health, and pray for divine protection in the future.⁹

In order to clarify the marginality represented by these strangers, he contends:

To understand why *kami* (deities) manifest themselves in corporeal form, that is, an old person, child, or woman, we must pay special attention to the similarity of social status shared by these three. In other words, none of them were treated as a “mature person” in medieval society, and thus none had a place there. ...they didn’t participate, or weren’t allowed to, in any rural community meeting or famine- or tax-victimized farmers’ rebellion. Evidently they all were positioned in the margins of the male-dominated medieval hierarchy. Thus I’ve come to the conclusion that specifically because of their shared marginalization within the framework of medieval caste system, they were considered as being semi-sacred.¹⁰

In premodern societies as well, elderly people, children and women were perceived and portrayed as being socially marginalized and thus represented groups of stigmatized people.

4. Female traveling entertainers of medieval and premodern Japan marked as strangers

Needless to say, traditional traveling entertainers consisted of both men and women. They were considered to be gifted with extraordinary or superhuman skills (and/or powers). Their unusual skills and talents were admired but at the same time awed by their contemporaries. Thus, they turned out to be socially constructed strangers. Their occasional appearances in many different areas of Japan served to reinforce the conception of the stranger. The cultural tradition of itinerant entertainment is thought to have originated in the Japanese medieval period; it has been argued that the first literary record of this tradition can be found in *Kairaishi-no-ki* (a.k.a. *Kugutsuki (Record on Puppeteers)*), written by the poet and scholar Ôe no Masafusa (1041-1111).¹¹

But Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962) who, though originally a scholar of agricultural administration, was better known as a cultural anthropologist, delved into the important role played by women in the long history of Japanese folk culture. His theory of *imo no chikara* (women's spiritual power) argues that women possess inborn magical and spiritual powers. He takes special note of "women's innate magical powers that astound and amaze men near them".¹² He states:

The vital portions of the religious actions of ritual and prayer all fell within the province of women. The shaman, among these people, was as a rule a woman [...]. The reason that women were thought especially suited to this duty must at first have been because they have an emotional nature that is easily moved. Thus, whenever some incident occurred, women were the first among these people to enter abnormal psychological states, and the first able to give voice to the mysterious. Sometimes gifted, sensitive children had an ability to see divinities and to declare oracles, but as they grew up, they quickly lost these special traits. Moreover, children like these were borne and raised by women, so women were constantly accorded esteem. The special physiology of women [deserves] a particular consideration, since it had a powerful influence on these kinds of mental states.¹³

According to this statement he was amazed by the reproductive powers of women. Prior to this in-depth folkloric probe, he hypothetically investigated how women's inborn powers express themselves at the intersection of shamanism and prostitution. His research suggests that there is a variety of myths and legends of women depicted as both shamans and prostitutes.¹⁴

In the mid-1980s, Japanese feminists who had seen as problematic his chauvinistic but perhaps subcon-

scious focus on the genetic and biological basis of gender difference, started to raise a critical voice mainly within the discourses of feminist studies and cultural anthropology. Many male and female feminist scholars strongly disapprove of and denounce his scholarship which, they argue, caters to and reinscribes a misogynistic ideology. They argue that he overemphasized and essentialized femininity which was deemed inferior to masculinity and thus sought to confine women to a subordinate status.

In a similar vein to Yanagita's *imo no chikara*, Yoshihiko Amino (1928-2004), a historian whose areas of specialty was medieval Japan, also puts a special emphasis on women's sacredness derived primarily from their genetic traits. This sacredness, he argues, was once embodied mainly by traveling prostitutes who reportedly engaged in not only less formal shamanic practices but also singing, dancing and puppeteering entertainment, to name a few, originating in ancient religious rituals and ceremonies. It is a traditional popular belief that these women can figuratively be identified as the lesser descendants of *Amaterasu*, the Goddess of the Sun deemed as the highest deity in Japanese *Shinto* mythology, and *Uzume*, the Goddess of Dawn, Mirth and Revelry, who is among other divinities subordinate to the Sun Goddess. These goddesses are verbally depicted in *Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters)* and *Nihon-shoki (The Chronicles of Japan)*, both dating from the early 8th century. Their mythological sanctity can in part be seen as a reflection of the biological /physiological and mental characteristics and peculiarities of women.

But these idiosyncrasies were, in turn, most likely derived from the traditionally male-centered perceptions and constructions of womanhood and femininity, more specifically their menstruation, reproductive power and strong natural tendency to become emotionally aroused. Aware of women's biological peculiarities and their possible association with shamanism, prostitution and traveling entertainment in the mid-1990s Amino began to postulate that in the ancient and medieval periods, so-called "outcasts" including female itinerant song-and-dance performers/sexual entertainers, were closely associated with the imperial court and thus contributed to the maintenance of the imperial power structure at its lowest level.¹⁵ Because of the highly hypothetical nature of this theory, it invited feminist academics to engage in lively, often heated debate on whether female entertainers as both performers and prostitutes helped maintain the emperor's hegemony in the ancient capital of Kyoto. This feminist criticism, it might seem, derives from these feminists' subconscious fear of being seen as covert accomplices. Although trying to provide historical evidence, the medieval historian Haruko Wakita provocatively repudiated Amino's argument about the close relationship between the Imperial court and the female traveling entertainers/prostitutes and characterized these women as "outcasts completely separated from the medieval imperial political power" and thus implied that these women were by no means involved in sustaining the imperial power structure.¹⁶

But despite such still ongoing feminist criticism of male chauvinistic views of femininity, especially

female sexuality, as sacred or at least otherworldly, this perceived linkage between femininity and sacredness/otherworldliness still persists in the Japanese popular mind at least. It has continued to influence a wide variety of popular culture. In the singing profession, for example, there are *uta-hime* (a young queen of singing or perhaps “diva”) to whom a certain kind of “sacredness” is attached. The term *uta-hime* still remains of crucial importance in Japanese pop culture today. Examples include the anime film *Makurosu Furontia: Itsuwari no Utahime* [*Macross Frontier: The Young Diva Gifted with a Beautiful Voice and Amazing Miracle Powers that are Beyond Human Comprehension*] (dir. Shôji Kawamori, 2009) adapted from a popular anime TV series that depicts the roles played by two young divas gifted with a beautiful and miraculous voices in a space war. On the other hand, although there are highly acclaimed male singers, usually they don’t have equivalent titles to clarify their privileged status. In the popular mind today, women are subliminally believed to be gifted with sacred spiritual powers. Although admitting that the conventional short-sighted celebration of the sacred feminine deserves criticism, Yanagita’s and Amino’s individual explorations, I would argue, can contribute to the consideration of female impersonation of non-mainstream popular theatre today. This style of impersonation that is being develop by successful young actors, while reflecting popular constructs of women’s gender identity in folk traditions, challenges these norms in order to demonstrate its own charm. These talented female impersonators portray idealized images of women gifted with supernatural, spiritual, sacred powers. Their performing styles imply a freedom from existing constructions of femininity, and thus these impersonators are able to offer new conceptions of femininity and the allure of artistic and sensual beauty derived from such new femininity. They present themselves as “strangers” who explore new perspectives on construction and representation of femininity in non-mainstream popular theatre today. In non-mainstream female impersonation discussed so far, Yanagita’s concept of *imo no chikara* that purports to form the underlying layer of the traditional Japanese mentality helps illumine the spiritual and sacred aspect of femininity and plays an important role in demonstrating the strength and fascination of this impersonation.

5. The stranger that resides within the performer, but at the same time remains interconnected with the reality beyond them

How do these strangers express themselves and where are they situated? It is true that the privileged position of today’s itinerant theatre’s wandering strangers, as argued above, plays a vital role in their popular acclaim among enthusiasts. However, this privilege does not necessarily guarantee the individual performer’s artistic maturity and success. In order to achieve this, each performer must try to perceive the stranger lurking within. Yet, whereas these performers are perceived as strangers by their audience, they tend to be unwilling to accept this position themselves because it conflicts with their general self-image

as human beings. In daily life, their self-image as that of a stranger is extremely hard to accept. But for the past few decades, the postmodernist discourses on the other, otherness, and alterity that are closely linked with the issue of the stranger have gained visibility. Consequently, an extensive critique of the self-other dichotomy has permeated postmodern scholarship in such fields as postcolonial studies and feminist studies. Yet, recently some critics have begun to problematize the ideology of modernism. They argue that by eulogizing the status of an “other,” this ideology disdainfully dismisses the notion of unity and self-identity (i.e. sameness as opposed to otherness) as being illusory. It is ironic that this critical reconsideration of the self-other dichotomy leads to a slighting of self-sameness or self-identity and to an extreme foregrounding of otherness. Kearney has recognized this plight, arguing that “[t]he threat to a genuine relation to others comes in fetishizing the Other as much as it does in glorifying the Ego”.¹⁷ In this vein, he argues, “The challenge now is to acknowledge a difference between self and other without separating them so schismatically that *no* relation at all is possible.”¹⁸ He emphasizes the importance of the attempt “to discover the other in our self and our self in the other—without abjuring either”.¹⁹ Put differently, “strangers are *within* us and *beyond* us,”²⁰ in which case the self and the other intermingle rather than exclude each other.

In a manner related to Kearney’s concept of the interconnectedness between self and other, a few acclaimed itinerant performers rise above their peers and transcend the so called self-other dichotomy. Without denigrating, or *othering*, themselves, they transform into “strangers” that are foreign to both the audience and themselves. It should be noted that their artistic perfection lies beyond the confines of ordinary reality. In other words, while on stage, the performer metaphorically undergoes metamorphosis and becomes a sort of divine being, albeit only temporarily. This metamorphosis can be developed through, in Kearney’s words, “dialogical interbeing between self and other.” According to Kearney, the word “interbeing” refers to “the way between”,²¹ which he borrowed from the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist and thinker-activist Thich Nhat Hanh. Concerning the principle of “interbeing,” Hanh himself states that “[t]here is no longer any discrimination between self and nonself”.²² The itinerant popular theatre today demonstrates this notion of interbeing in a way that depicts the vital poetry of life, which remains imperceptible and inaudible in daily reality. Thus, it continues to inherit the tradition of its ancestors by creatively revitalizing the audience’s perceptions of humanity rather than merely duplicating it.

Conclusion

The state of “interbeing” conceptualized by Thich and Kearney represents where the stranger emerges as the female impersonator in non-mainstream popular theatre. By choosing this state while on the stage, female impersonators separate themselves from the confines of real world gender norms, and thus purely artistic freedom and self-expression are encouraged. On the other hand, this choice urges them to give up

the vital protection provided when adhering to commonsensical gender norms, but this risk is worth taking. It is undeniable that female impersonators and their peers of itinerant popular theatre today are still influenced by their cultural ancestors. In appearance, they blindly maintain the traditions of their cultural forebears' lifestyle, but those who are successful performers are aware that unless they observe the principle of "interbeing," they won't be able to develop greater skill in their stage performances. They need to abandon the daily self but at the same time, seek the intermingling of self and the other at a deeper, and perhaps truer, level. That is where the female impersonator as the stranger should seek to explore.

Endnotes

- ¹ Shinobu Orikuchi, *Orikuchi Shinobu Zenshû* [*The Complete Works of Shinobu Orikuchi*], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chûôkôron Shinsha, 1975) 58 (translation mine).
- ² Carmen Blacker, 'The Folklore of the Stranger: A Consideration of a Disguised Wandering Saint'. *Folklore* vol.101-2, 1990: 162.
- ³ Blacker 162.
- ⁴ Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, (Chicago: U of Chicago Pr, 1995) 203.
- ⁵ Ivy 203.
- ⁶ The Japanese historian Katsurô Hara (1871-1924), while specializing in European and U.S. history, devotedly sought to reexamine the traditional understanding of Japanese history. In so doing, he, for the first time in Japanese scholarship, employed the western term "medieval" in *Nihon chûseiishi* [*The History of Medieval Japan*] (1906). This book was republished in 1969.
- ⁷ The anthropologist Yuki Ôtô notes this popular saying in *Koyarai* [*Sending One's Child into the World*](1944; Tokyo: Iwasaki Bijutsu shuppansha, 1968) 249.
- ⁸ Kuroda 228. This diagram's English translation was made by William LaFleur in *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 35.
- ⁹ *Tradition and Tradition Theories: An International Discussion*, eds. Thorsten Larbig and Siegfried Wiedenhofer (Münster: LIT Verlag) 58.
- ¹⁰ *Kyôkai no chûsei, shôchô no chûsei* [*The Symbolic Conceptions of the Demarcation of Boundary between Center and Margin*] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1986) 228 (translation mine).
- ¹¹ *Kodaishisô* in *Nihon shisôtaikei*, vol 8. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979) 158-159 in its modernized transcription and 308 in its original form.
- ¹² *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shu* [*The Standard Collection of the Works of Yanagita Kunio*], vol. 9 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1962) 13. Its English translation was made by Noriko Kawahashi (*A Companion to*

the Anthropology of Japan, ed. Jennifer Robertson [Hoboken, NJ: Wiley -Blackwell, 2005] 459-460).

¹³ Yanagita Kunio 14.

¹⁴ In “Imo no chikara” and “Fujo-kô [A treatise on female shamans]”, Yanagita intensively examined women’s dual identity as both shamans and prostitutes. These writings are included in *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shû*, vol. 9: 3-219 and 221-304.

¹⁵ See Amino, *Chûsei no hinin to yûjo* [Outcastes and prostitutes in the Medieval times’], 1994 (Tokyo” Kôdansha, 2005).

¹⁶ Haruko Wakita, “Chûsei ni okeru seibetu-yakuwari-bunntann to joseikan [The Division of Labor by Gender Role and Social Construction in the Medieval Period”, *Nihon-josei -shi*[*The History of Japanese Women*], vol. 2 *Chûsei* [The Medieval Period], ed. Josei -shi sôgô kenkyûkai [Comprehensive research organization on women’s history] (Tokyo: Tôdaishuppankai, 1982) 101. *Nihon-chûsei-josei-shi* (Tokyo: Tôdaishuppankai, 1992: 127. She created the term “kegai no tami [a kind of outcast or those excluded from the Imperial State]”, *Josei Geinô no Genryû* [The Origins of Entertainment/ Performing Arts by Women] (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2001) 87.

¹⁷ Rihard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 229.

¹⁸ Kearney 9.

¹⁹ Kearney 10.

²⁰ Kearney 229.

²¹ Kearney 46.

²² Hanh, Thich Nhat and Rachel Neumann, *Understanding Our Mind*. Parallax, Berkeley, 2001, p. 182.

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