

Chapter 6: Minorities in Japan and theatre

In this chapter, I discuss the Japanese attitude towards their own minorities. The chapter first deals with the significance of the idea that Japan is a culturally homogeneous nation in the Japanese attitude towards their own minorities, then with the question of how artistic expression by minorities in Japan has been developed and accepted.

As we saw in Chapter 5, discussions about Australian Aborigines in the Japanese academia has been developed mainly by anthropologists. Since the 1990s the range of these representations has expanded, but the role of anthropologists is still dominant. Besides, other Japanese scholars have also had a similar approach to Japanese anthropologists regarding the issue of 'authenticity'. I will argue that the nature of the representations of Australian Aborigines in Japan is closely related to the Japanese attitudes towards their own minorities including both those which are arguably regarded as indigenous and others. I will argue that Japanese audiences, who saw the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays, were reminded of Japan's own minorities due to the double function of 'honyakugeki'. Therefore, it is very important to clarify the Japanese attitude towards their own minorities, in order to understand the impact of the Aboriginal plays on the Japanese audience.

A homogenous or hybrid nation?

In Japan, the existence of minorities such as Ainu, Okinawan and Korean residents has been cleverly concealed. In the 1990s, the structure of this concealment began to be revealed by some scholars. This section investigates this structure of this concealment.

In Japan, there has been the deep-rooted understanding that Japan is a homogenous nation, Japanese politicians for instance often making this claim. Although such remarks are criticised by the mass media,¹ the claim is still repeated. When I asked students to compare the Australian national identity with the Japanese national identity in my class, quite a few students answered that it

¹ For example, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro made this kind of remark in 1986 and was criticised in the Diet.

was difficult to compare Australia, a multicultural nation, with Japan, a racially homogeneous nation. The fact that there are considerable numbers of university students who believe that Japan is a racially homogenous nation reflects that the myth of homogeneity is still deep-rooted in Japan.

Japanese postcolonial studies have recently begun to disclose the structure of the concealment of Japan's minorities. Consider Japanese scholar Komori Yôichi's *Posutokoroniaru* (Postcolonial),² one of the most influential works on Japanese academia, for example. By applying Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry, Komori argues that Japan has mimicked Western colonialism. Then, he explains the development of Japanese colonialism which severed East-Asian traditional relationships between China and Korea, China and Ryûkyu (Okinawa) and China and Taiwan. Japan incorporated these areas into Japan as colonies by taking advantage of the weakening of China in the middle of the 19th century and by mimicking Western Imperialism. Komori clarified the process of assimilation of the Ainu and Okinawans, who had lived respectively on the border between Japan and Russia, and between Japan and China.

Oguma Eiji's *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen* (The myth of the homogeneous nation)³ is one of the most influential works contesting the deep-rooted understanding that Japan is a homogeneous nation. According to Oguma, there were two kinds of understanding of the Japanese nation before World War II. One was the understanding that the Japanese were a homogenous 'race' represented by the pure blood of the Imperial Family. The other was the understanding that the Japanese are a hybrid of various people including Koreans, Chinese, Pacific islanders, and other indigenous peoples. This understanding was utilised as a theory to rationalise the Japanese colonisation of Korea, a part of China, and islands of the Pacific. Oguma's argument had an impact because his conclusion that the claim of Japanese racial homogeneity only became dominant after World War II was different from the common understanding (Many Japanese believed that the idea of Japanese racial homogeneity had been dominant before World War II). Oguma's work revealed Japan's post-war structure which makes minorities invisible by enforcing the myth of homogeneity after Japan had to abandon its desire to expand due to the loss of the war.

² Komori Yôichi, *Posutokoroniaru*. (Postcolonial) Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2001.

³ Oguma Eiji, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*. (The Myth of the Homogeneous

Especially in the latter half of the 1960s and the 1970s, a large number of books of a new genre *nihonjinron*, non-fictional discussions about the Japanese, were published and consumed by large sections of the Japanese public. These *nihonjinron* were based on the understanding that Japan is a homogenous nation. According to Harry Harootunian, the phenomenon of the *nihonjinron* reflects the fact that, after rejecting the form of the nation dominant in pre-war days, the state was trying to create a new form of the nation suitable to the post-war democracy. Moreover, he points out that rapid economic growth in the period encouraged the Japanese to locate the secret of Japan's industrial success in its unique premodern traditional culture, and to interpret 'Japaneseness' approvingly. It is argued that these developments provoked the rise of *nihonjinron* from the latter half of the 1960s.⁴ However, 'the Japanese people' discussed in the *nihonjinron* include neither Japanese indigenous people nor other minorities. Not only the *nihonjinron*, but also many other discourses about Japanese national identity exclude minorities. This structure of identity which has been dominant in post-war Japan has encouraged neglect of the existence of indigenous people in Japan.

Next let us turn to a discussion of the Ainu, the Japanese indigenous people. Australian scholar Tessa Morris-Suzuki showed a new perceptive on the Ainu in her book *Henkyô kara nagameru: ainu ga keikensuru kindai* (Gazing from the frontier: modern times experienced by the Ainu). Although there are studies on the history of the Ainu in Japan, these studies have been regarded as just local history and have never had a significant influence on studies of Japanese history as a whole. According to Morris-Suzuki, this is part of the conceptual structure which has served to conceal the existence of the Ainu from the Japanese people in general. Morris-Suzuki criticises this situation and claims that it becomes possible to describe accurately aspects of Japanese history only by taking the Ainu into account. She focuses on the period before 1868 when Japan started its modernisation. Morris-Suzuki reminds us of the fact that both Japan and Russia expanded their territories in the first half of the 19th century, frequently changing the border between them. Due to such changes of the border, the nationality of the Ainu, who lived on the border, became ambiguous. The existence of the Ainu, who were seen as part of Japan at some times and with Russia at others times,

Nation) Tokyo, Shinyôsha, 1995.

⁴ Harry Harootunian, "Kokumin no monogatari / bôrei no shutsugen: kindai nihon ni okeru kokuminteki shutai no keisei" (The story of a nation / the appearance of a ghost: the making of national subjectivity in modern Japan) *Nihon wa doko e ikunoka*. (Where Is Japan Going?) Tokyo, Kôdansha, 2003. pp.280-355.

confirms that Japan is not, historically, an ethnically homogeneous nation. Moreover, according to Morris-Suzuki, changes in Japanese education policy towards the Ainu have indicated how Japan tried at various times to differentiate or assimilate the Ainu according to circumstances. Before the Meiji restoration of 1868, the Ainu were ruled by the Matsumae Domain, and there was no education for the Ainu at all. This is because the Matsumae Domain tried to monopolise the right of trade with the Ainu by emphasising the differences between the Ainu and the Japanese and the difficulties of exchanging with such strangers.⁵ At the end of the 18th century, however, the Tokugawa shogunate, which was concerned about the southward advance of Russians, directly ruled Higashi Ezochi, eastern Hokkaido, and gave assimilation education to teach the Ainu the Japanese language and Japanese ways of life. This was not thorough education though, and was provided in order to claim that Ezochi was inhabited by 'the Japanese'. After the Meiji restoration, the Japanese government started assimilation education including compulsory learning of the Japanese language. Even after World War II, an education policy based on assimilation still continues in the respect that there is not any special educational program for the Ainu.

In conventional studies on the Ainu, their history has been investigated only through the history of mainstream Japan. Indeed, when describing Japanese colonialism, Komori writes that it was Japan as a modernised nation, which began the colonisation of the Ainu.⁶ The irony is that Komori's approach is similar to that of the Japanese theatre practitioners of the beginning of the 20th century, who conceptualised 'Japanese theatre' as an equivalent of 'Western theatre' as discussed in Chapter 2. Komori considers the Japanese Empire, which emerged in 1868, to be an equivalent of Western empires. Therefore, he thinks that the colonisation by Japan of the Ainu started with the emergence of the Japanese Empire of 1868. In contrast, Morris-Suzuki emphasises that colonisation of the Ainu had been started by the Matsumae Domain before Japan started its modernisation in the middle of the 19th century. This fact reveals that the Ainu have been colonised irrespective of whether Japan is a modernised nation or not. In other words, Morris-Suzuki's perspective concentrating on the frontier shows the limitation of the idea that the present form of the Japanese nation started from its modernisation in the middle of the 19th century. This difference in

⁵ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Henkyō kara nagameru: ainu ga keikensuru kindai*. (Gazing from the Frontier: Modern Times Experienced by the Ainu) Tokyo, Misuzu Shobō, 2000. p.41.

⁶ Komori, 2001.

approaches between Komori and Morris-Suzuki reminds us of the reality that the true history of the Ainu will not come to light as long as one sees it from the commonly accepted Japanese perspective. This indicates how the structure of making the Ainu invisible is deep-rooted in Japan.

Of course, there had been discussions on minorities in Japanese society before the 1990s too. I will focus on the movements for minorities' human rights and the Japanese government policies towards the minorities. The policies are important because they are responsible for both the concealment of the existence of the minorities and the enforcement of the myth of 'homogeneity'.

The Japanese government has refused to admit the existence of an 'ethnic minority' in Japan. In 1979, Japan ratified the International Covenants on Human Rights. In respect of the 27th article, which supports indigenous people's rights to their culture, religions, languages, however, Japan claimed that the Ainu are not indigenous people. According to the proceedings of the Diet in 1982, Japanese government's understanding can be represented by the following statement by a government delegate:

When we think of the Ainu as an ethnic minority, we should think about not only historical, social and cultural things but also political and social requirements under the present system. From this perspective, the Ainu are also covered by the same political and social system as usual. That is why there are no ethnic minorities in Japan.⁷

This remark claims that the Ainu are not an ethnic minority because the same political and social systems are applied to all Japanese citizens irrespective of their backgrounds. This government view refers only to the question of whether the Ainu are discriminated against, and it avoids the question of whether the ethnic identity of the Ainu is respected in the Japanese society.

The Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act of 1899 prohibited the Ainu from buying and selling their own land without the permission of the government. According to Morris-Suzuki, this act carries the assumption that it is not possible

⁷ "Proceedings of Committee on Judicial Affair, House of Representatives" in the 96th Diet. 23 April, 1982. Cited in Nakamura Mutsuo, "Ainu to Kyôiku ken" (The Ainu and educational rights) *Nihon Kyôikuhô Gakkai Nenpô* 23. March 1994. pp.142-152; quote from p.143.

for the Ainu to behave as proper citizens although they are officially Japanese citizens⁸. It was not until 1997 that this discriminatory law was abolished and the Ainu Shinpo Act was enacted which recognises the Ainu's history and culture and promises to establish systems to support the Ainu's cultural tradition.⁹

The Japanese government's position that there are no ethnic minorities in Japan related to the human rights movements of all Japanese minorities. Apart from minorities such as the Ainu, Okinawans and Korean residents, who were created in the process of Japanese modernisation, a minority group called Burakumin has existed in Japan since the pre-modern period. The Burakumin were the group at the bottom layer of the pre-modern class system in Japan. Even after abolishing the pre-modern class system, Burakumin were discriminated against and called 'Shinheimin' (new citizens). After World War II, this class system was officially abolished. Nevertheless, communities where they live are still called 'Buraku', and Burakumin face various forms of social discrimination even today. The movement to eradicate this discrimination against Burakumin and uphold their human rights is called 'Buraku kaihō' (Liberating Buraku). Activists of Buraku kaihō have also taken part in agitation over issues concerning the Ainu, Okinawan and Korean residents. This makes sense because the Japanese government's policies towards the Ainu were mostly copies of ones towards Burakumin.¹⁰

From around 1990 the issue of the Ainu as an indigenous people began to attract more attention from politicians. Before this, Ainu issues had been discussed in the same context as issues those affecting Burakumin. The movement for human rights for Burakumin became active by taking advantage of Japan's new start as a democratic state which began with the war defeat of 1945. This movement encouraged the Ainu, Okinawans and Korean residents to demand the improvement of their rights. However, such movements have their limits because Burakumin and other minorities cannot be adequately discussed in the same context. The movement to liberate Buraku adapted a catch phrase called 'Dōhō ichiwa' (all citizens should assimilate). This means the movement demands the

⁸ Morris-Suzuki, 2000, p.211.

⁹ This new law does not recognise land rights of Ainu, and denies rights to send Ainu delegates to the National Diet and district councils. That was because it could fall afoul of the Japanese constitution which prescribes that suffrages are granted equally, and that National Diet members are representations of the whole Japanese citizens. Moreover, the new law does not include any apologies for the past injustices towards Ainu. Therefore, it is said that this new law is still insufficient.

same rights for Burakumin that the rest of the Japanese have. However, when this approach is adopted to deal issues of other (ethnic) minorities, it risks making it difficult for ethnic minorities to make the government recognise not only their rights but also their cultural identity. Therefore, from the latter half of 1990s, there has emerged a movement to solve minorities' issues by following the example of Australian and Canadian policies towards their indigenous people.

Next, I move on to the subject of the Okinawans. Okinawa was originally a kingdom called Ryūkyū Ōoku and had vassal relationships with both China and the Satsuma Domain of Japan for three centuries. These vassal relationships were different from the concept of independence in modern times and were based on East Asian traditional relationships centered around ancient China. This is a system which allows a state to be independent in effect only if the state agrees to the vassal relationship with China. In 1871, Japan, which had already started its modernisation, neglected the perspective of Ryūkyū which wanted conventional vassal relationships with China and Japan, and forced it to become a domain (the basic unit of provincial government) of Japan. In 1871, Japan made Ryūkyū a Japanese prefecture called Okinawa. According to Oguma:

In Okinawa, which was absorbed into the Japanese Empire, Japan gave the Okinawans exhaustive Japanese national education. This was nothing but essentially a process meant to convert the Okinawans into the Japanese¹¹.

What makes Okinawa a special place still for Japan is its tragic experience in World War II. Okinawa was the only place in Japan where a ground battle took place involving civilians. About 160,000 people (one third of the residents of the Okinawa prefecture in those days) were killed in this battle. Among them were many civilians who were killed by the Japanese army accidentally. After the war, Okinawa was occupied by the US, and rule by the Americans lasted until 1972 when Okinawa was returned to Japan. Even after that, most US military bases stationed in Japan are still in Okinawa, and land which Okinawan landowners were dispossessed of is still occupied by the US. Besides, crimes by US soldiers such as rapes and burglaries occur frequently in Okinawa. During the American occupation of Okinawa from 1945 to 1971, there was an active movement both in Okinawa and Japan for returning Okinawa to the mother country. This mother

¹⁰ Nakamura, 1994, p.147.

¹¹ Oguma Eiji. *Nihonjin no kyōkai*. (Boundary of the Japanese) Tokyo, Shinyōsha,

country meant not Ryûkyû as it was, but Japan. The Okinawans embraced the contradiction that they had made a choice of assimilation with Japan to recover their rights.

There is an illusion that the issue of Buraku is being resolved by the reduction of poverty, but, as Ian Neary says, "discrimination is simply taking a new, less obvious form".¹² According to Neary, although the problem of poverty has already been resolved, for example, Burakumin still encounter difficulties when they get married with the mainstream Japanese; long-term absenteeism from school among Burakumin children is almost twice the mainstream average; and the number of Burakumin who are employed by large enterprises is far smaller than the national average. This less obvious form of discrimination has an influence on the whole issue of minorities in Japan. The movement for the recovery of human rights in Japan, in which Buraku activists have taken a leading role, unconsciously aimed towards the complete assimilation of a discriminated class into the Japanese nation, and unfortunately reinforced the myth that Japan is a homogeneous nation. That is because elimination of discrimination apparently means that the discriminated class is treated the same as the majority Japanese. This attitude has provided a backdrop to the Japanese government's policy which has neglected the identity of the Ainu as an indigenous people. Not only the government but also a large number of people have the illusion that the issues of the minorities have already been resolved.

I believe that since the 1990s, the existence of minorities has become inescapably relevant when we discuss the Japanese nation. However, it is dubious that this view is shared by the majority. I will discuss this by taking an example of indigenous people's intellectual property. The above-mentioned book by Tessa Morris-Suzuki's *Henkyô kara nagameru: ainu ga keikensuru kindai* (Gazing from the Frontier: Modern Times Experienced by the Ainu) surely had a considerable influence in Japan. Nevertheless, due to the publisher's neglect of the intellectual property rights of the indigenous people, a problem about the cover design of this book arose. Unexpectedly and ironically, this book itself embodied the depressed situation of indigenous people in Japan. For the cover design of the book, the publisher used a traditional paper-cut design, which has been handed down through many generations by the Wilts, a northern ethnic minority. A member of

1998.

¹² Ian Neary, "Burakumin in contemporary Japan", *Japan's Minorities: the*

staff, who was responsible for the cover design, tampered with it and changed it into a form the staff member believed would appeal more to readers of the book. Also, the explanation of the design on the book was quite obscure. The Northern Ethnic Minorities Museum Jakka Duxuni pointed out that the design used for the book cover belonged to the Wilta, that the design was altered without permission, and the authority for use of the design was not given properly. As a result of an argument between the museum and the publisher, it was decided that the publisher could use the design without any alteration for the new book cover, and attach to the book a note of apology and explanation about this issue. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, the author, contributed to the publisher's monthly journal an article discussing this issue. In this article, she wrote about two things about which she felt keenly, as follows; firstly, how difficult it is to protect and convey the knowledge and artistic traditions of a small indigenous society in the system of a modern nation and secondly how important it is to foster a dialogue about the usage of indigenous people's art and knowledge, and to foster a dialogue to see that a particular interest of an indigenous group is understood properly by scholars and research institutions, which are part of the dominant majority culture¹³.

What is important about this issue is that the actions of one of the leading academic publishers in Japan raised this problem. According to Morris-Suzuki, the book in which the design was originally published does not state that the design belongs to a particular artist. This was why the publisher thought that it was a traditional design of the Wilta, that the copyright did not belong to a particular artist and that it was not protected by copyright law. Morris-Suzuki explains that there is a copyright of groups as well as a copyright of individuals, quoting the example of a legal action concerning a design used for a ten-dollar note in Australia. She points out that this is a problem which cannot be treated by the conventional concept of intellectual property rights, where an artist is paid properly for his/her work. This issue is concerned with the significance for a group of people who identify themselves with the work. This is related to the fact that they want rights to speak about what kind of context their traditions and knowledge are used in.¹⁴

Illusion of Homogeneity. London and New York, Routledge, 1997. pp.50-78.

¹³ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Chiteki shoyû zaisan to senjûmin no kenri" (Intellectual property and indigenous rights) *Misuzu* 493. April, 2002. pp.2-11.

¹⁴ Morris-Suzuki, 2002.

This issue reminds us that the concept of copyright seems 'universal' because it is used in many countries, but it is not 'universal' as far as its capability to cover every form of culture and every accumulation of knowledge and tradition. We have to remember that it is equivalent to colonisation of knowledge and traditions if we try to adhere in such situations to the conventional idea of copyright. Today, knowledge and understanding are required to cope with any form of indigenous intellectual property, otherwise, we could make the same mistake as the publisher did. This example indicates that even if the unequal treatment of minority groups became less obvious, their identities are often neglected due to the lack of thoughtfulness towards their cultural properties.

We can also illustrate the Japanese attitude towards their own minorities by taking education for example. In Japanese schools too, there is still a severe problem concerning attitudes towards minorities. Schools attempt to give students knowledge about minorities in order to enlighten them, but it is true that they are also places where discrimination against minorities is practised. For example, in Okinawa, according to a Japanese policy in force in the 1890s, teachers introduced *hōgenfuda* (a 'dialect' tag) to forbid students to speak the Okinawan dialect in classrooms. The teachers caught any student who spoke the dialect, and forced him/her to dangle the *hōgenfuda* from the neck until the next offender was found. Coming to more recent times, Japanese scholar Shimizu Toshiyuki writes that, according to research from 1993, among Ainu people who have experience of being racially discriminated against, 42 percent said that they had the experience at schools.¹⁵

The representation of minorities in teaching materials for the mainstream Japanese is one of the most influential representations of minorities in Japan. One of the earliest descriptions of the Ainu can be found in a textbook of 1887. The description includes the fact that the Ainu receive a sufficient degree of protection from the Japanese government, while also emphasising the primitiveness of the Ainu. Surprisingly, according to Stuart Henry and Ueno Kakô¹⁶, descriptions of the

¹⁵ Shimizu Toshiyuki, "Hokkaido no shōgakkō shakaika fukudokuhon ni okeru ainu minzoku" (The Ainu people described in supplementary readers of social studies used in elementary schools of Hokkaido) *Hekichi Kyōiku Kenkyū* 50, 1996, pp.17-51.

¹⁶ Stuart Henry and Ueno Kakô, "Senjūmin wo meguru shakaika kyōkasho no kijutsu: nihon to kanada no hikakukenyū" (Comparative research of depictions of indigenous peoples in social studies textbooks in Japan and Canada) *Showa Women's University Institute of International Culture Bulletin* 6, 2000, pp.63-255.

Ainu in Japanese textbooks completely disappeared for sixty years from 1918 to 1978. Even in recent times, information about the Ainu in Japanese textbook is scarce and one-sided. Henry and Kakô write that research investigating twenty kinds of textbooks of Japanese history for high schools used in the first half of the 1990s showed that just 25 percent of textbooks included descriptions of the contemporary life of the Ainu, although 85 percent of textbooks included descriptions about the Ainu in the medieval and pre-modern periods. In textbooks published by the middle of the 1990s, the life of the Ainu in the pre-modern period is emphasised and there are few textbooks which clearly state the fact that the Ainu people still exist. According to Henry and Kakô, descriptions of the Ainu drastically increased in textbooks used in the second half of the 1990s, but the majority of those are still about the pre-modern period, and information about the Ainu's contemporary life is still insufficient. It is clear that this situation in Japanese textbooks enforces the Ainu's image of a dying race of primitives, and leads to racial discrimination.

It was Japanese anthropologists of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century who first established these images of the Ainu in Japan. According to Japanese scholar Tomiyama Ichirô¹⁷, after the start of the Japanese modernisation, Japan had to establish the category of 'the savage' within their nation, by which the Japanese could confirm that they belonged to 'civilization', in order to overcome their self-concept that the Japanese are uncivilized compared with 'civilized' Westerners. This process was an imitation of the Western concept of binarism of the savage and the civilized. Japanese anthropology, which started as an imitation of Western anthropology, concentrated on searching for evidence that the Ainu and the Okinawans were the ancestors of the Japanese race. Japanese anthropologists regarded the Ainu as the descendants of the first inhabitants of the Japanese islands. Ainu culture was described by the anthropologists as invaluable research material on the culture of the Stone-Age in Japan. Therefore, according to Tomiyama, the Japanese anthropologists of the time focused on finding resemblances between the Ainu and the Stone Age people by investigating whether the Ainu used earthenware and whether they had the habit of cannibalism. Tomiyama argues:

The Ainu have been represented as an Other, as the people who lost their own

¹⁷ Tomiyama Ichirô, "Kokumin no tanjô to nihon jinshu" (The emergence of the nation and 'the Japanese race') *Shisô* 845, November 1994, pp.37-56.

history and had to be 'uncivilized' forever. On the other hand, the Japanese have obtained the history of civilization.¹⁸

In the case of the Okinawans, the anthropologists of the time conducted almost the same research as that conducted about the Ainu. This attitude towards the Ainu is very similar to the attitude of the Japanese anthropologists who attempted to clarify the way of life of Japanese Jômon men by investigating Australian Aborigines (as discussed in Chapter 5).

This section has demonstrated that discussions recognising that the racial and cultural hybridity of the Japanese nation should not be neglected are becoming active in Japan. On the other hand, Japanese people's understanding and respect for minorities is still far from sufficient. This situation has been influenced by the deep-rooted Japanese attitude which makes discrimination against minorities invisible. In this way, the practices of talking about them and, some times, acknowledging even their existence has been considered as a taboo. In the next section, I move on to the subject of the relations between Japanese minorities and theatre.

Minorities and theatre in Japan

This section will discuss the involvement of minorities in theatre and the influence that the Japanese attitude towards minorities has had on the present state of Japanese theatre. I limit the discussion to 'theatre' in the narrow sense, where actors perform a play in front of audiences at a theatre, and not including other performing arts such as dance, story-telling, etc. First, I would like to point out that it is impossible to discuss the Ainu's relation with theatre and the Okinawans' relation with theatre in the same way. The Okinawans have had theatre for about three hundred years. On the other hand, the Ainu have traditional music and dance, but they do not have a form of expression which we can call theatre. The case of an ethnic group, which has their own theatre and which introduces Western or Japanese theatre in order to improve their theatre, is different from some other ethnic group which chooses to express themselves by means of Western or Japanese theatre. When there is not theatre in their tradition, they have to use another's forms of expression even if the content of the expression is theirs. The

¹⁸ Tomiyama, 1994, p.50.

meaning of theatre becomes different between groups which traditionally have theatre and those who do not. I will discuss this point later, taking the Okinawans as an example of 'a group who has theatre' and the Ainu as an example of 'a group who does not'. Secondly, I would like to point out that the Japanese attitude, which has created the Japanese minorities, has had a large influence on the relationship between minorities and theatre, irrespective of differences of history and cultural and artistic traditions between the Ainu and Okinawans.

As I discussed before, until recent times, Japanese anthropologists concentrated on seeking proof that the Okinawans and the Ainu were the original races of the Japanese. They believed that the Ainu and Okinawan languages and cultures preserve Stone Age and ancient forms of Japanese culture. This has enforced the Japanese attitude to consider these ethnic minorities as developing, imperfect 'Japanese'. This attitude had the same influence on theatre. There is a perspective which regards only the performing arts of the Ainu and Okinawans as origins of Japanese theatre. This perspective risks making Japanese theatre practitioners, critics and audiences neglect the diversity of contemporary Japanese theatre.

For example, from 1992 to 1997, an eight-volume academic book series called *Kôza nihon no engeki* (Studies in Japanese Theatre) was published, which covers the whole aspects of Japanese theatre including ancient performing arts, Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku, Shinpa, Shingeki and Shôgekijô. This series reflects the latest academic achievement of Japanese theatre in the 1990s. While other volumes chronologically discuss the history of Japanese theatre, the first volume only is entitled *Nihon engekishi no shiten* (Perspectives on Japanese Theatre History).¹⁹ It consists of discussions about performing arts which had an influence on the establishment of Japanese theatre such as folk entertainment, theatre in other Asian countries and Western theatre, which had influence on the Japanese modern theatre. There are chapters about the Ainu and Okinawan performing arts in this volume. The chapter about the Ainu describes their traditions of dancing and story-telling. The chapter about Okinawa describes Okinawan folk entertainment and its characteristic as the celebration of a good harvest. One of the aims of this volume is to investigate the origins of Japanese traditional performing arts, so it is natural that readers consider the Ainu and Okinawan performing arts to be the origins of Japanese traditional theatre. As I mentioned

¹⁹ Suwa Haruo and Sugai Yukio, ed. *Kôza nihon no engeki 1: nihon engekishi no shiten* (Studies in Japanese Theatre 1: Perspectives on Japanese Theatre History)

before, the Ainu did not have theatre historically, and, as I will discuss later, there is no Ainu theatre even today. Therefore, it is inevitable that a discussion about the Ainu's performing arts in this volume is limited to traditional folk entertainment. However, in the case of Okinawa, it is strange that this volume lacks Okinawan modern and contemporary theatre which I will discuss later. In this series, there are many volumes and chapters which should have included discussions about Okinawan modern and contemporary theatre. Nevertheless, only Okinawa ancient and traditional folk performances are included in the first volume. The fact that the series includes the Ainu and Okinawan history at all shows the progressive perception of the editors, compared with conventional studies on Japanese theatre history. However, it could be said that this perception is part of the same Japanese attitude which created Japanese minorities. As Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists consider the Ainu and Okinawans simply as origins of the Japanese, Japanese scholars of theatre studies regard the Ainu and Okinawan performing arts only as primitive forms of Japanese theatre. They emphasise ancient forms of the Ainu and Okinawan performing arts in this series. In this way, the contemporary theatre of the Okinawans is neglected, and Okinawan and Ainu culture are absorbed into the myth of the homogeneity of the Japanese nation. The content of the series clearly shows that, at least until the 1990s, studies of the Ainu and Okinawan performing arts had the same perspective as that of the Japanese anthropologists and ethnologists who had established the primitive image of the Ainu and Okinawans.

Next, I would like to argue that those Japanese attitudes, which have influenced the treatment of minorities since the end of World War II, had the same influence on the relation between minorities and theatre. Japanese minorities include the Ainu as an indigenous people, the Okinawans whose nation-state was absorbed into Japan, Korean residents who moved to Japan as a result of the Japanese colonisation of Korea, and Burakumin who have been discriminated against due to the Japanese traditional class system although they are Japanese. Each group has a completely different historical background. However, the treatment of the minorities in the post-war period was generally modelled on the treatment of Burakumin, whose aim was the recovery of their human rights by assimilating them into the Japanese nation. Especially in Okinawa, the movement for the recovery of their rights aimed for the return to Japan from the US occupation, that is, the assimilation to Japan. Therefore, although the minorities, except for

Burakumin, have their own ethnic identities, the Japanese policy has concentrated on increasing minorities' social status and living standards up to the same level as the mainstream Japanese, rather than recovering their ethnic identities. This seemingly adequate policy to abolish discrimination in Japanese society has made the minorities' ethnic identities invisible. I have mentioned discussions about how the minorities have become active in recent times. However, this kind of treatment of the minorities has been adopted so long that the existence of the minorities has very little influence on the Japanese national identity. Okinawan issues are regarded as just regional problems of the Okinawa prefecture, and the Ainu issues are regarded as regional problems of Hokkaido. Korean residents' issues are also regarded as problems of the Japan-Korea relation, and have had little influence on the national identity.

This kind of attitude has an influence on the status of the minorities' theatrical expressions in Japanese theatre as a whole. Theatre is one of activities which attempt to enlighten the Japanese about discrimination against Korean residents and Burakumin. Plays about discrimination against them are staged at schools as a program of human rights education, or at town halls as a part of festivals and events. These kinds of performances however are never regarded as works deserving to be discussed by theatre critics and researchers. This is because such theatre emphasises the educational role or advocacy of particular political groups rather than artistic quality. Therefore, their expressions are regarded as minor, regional issues, and excluded from mainstream theatre. Definitions of 'mainstream' in today's Japanese theatre vary with the individual. Some may regard a particular genre as the mainstream, such as Kabuki or Shingeki. Some may think the mainstream theatre is theatre which attracts massive audiences such as the Shiki Theatre Company specialising in presenting Broadway musicals with translated texts and some productions where popular TV and film stars appear. Others may think a criterion of mainstream is whether a play is presented at a prestigious playhouse which is situated in Tokyo or Osaka. But only a tiny percentage of productions are reviewed by critics in newspapers and theatre journals. This is because the number of reviews is incredibly few, compared with the huge numbers of plays produced in Japan every year. It is possible that plays which are chosen to be reviewed are vaguely regarded as mainstream theatre. Perhaps they qualify under the above mentioned criteria. Also, they may require a particular level of artistic quality. Ōshiro Tatsuhiko (1925-present), an Okinawan writer, says that there were often play competitions organised by local newspapers in Okinawa after World War II, and writes that however the insensitive mixture of

ambitious works and amateurish ones has prevented the development of Shingeki in Okinawa.²⁰ Ôshiro's view reflects how high level artistic quality is required even in community theatre.

Wada Yoshio, the director of Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, criticises the present state of Japanese theatre criticism in dealing with only mainstream theatre. He argues:

In other countries, both plays at large theatres and plays at small places, such as pubs, are talked about equally. It is a pity that there is not the same situation in Japan. Japanese theatre critics evaluate a play based only on whether it won a prize or not. I think it is more important to consider what kind of desire created the play and what kind of people love it.²¹

These statements tell us that it is difficult for minorities' theatre to be recognised nationally in Japan. Minorities' theatre has remained minor and regional. In contrast, in Australia, Aboriginal theatre is sometimes presented only for Aboriginal communities in remote areas, but it is not exceptional that Aboriginal theatre is presented at large theatres such as the Sydney Opera House, performed by leading theatre companies such as the Company B at the Belvoir Street Theatre and the Playbox Theatre Company. Many Aboriginal plays have been presented nationally and internationally. Because of this progress of Aboriginal theatre, Aboriginal issues are shared by non-Aboriginal playwrights too, and there is a movement among Australian playwrights such as Louis Nowra, Andrew Bovell, Katherine Thomson and Hannie Rayson to deal with Aboriginal issues more aggressively than ever.

In the case of Japan, the issue of minorities was dealt with by Japanese theatre during a certain period. However, this movement did not continue. Here, I will examine the situation from the 1960s to the present by comparing it with the history of Australian theatre. As discussed in Chapter 2, the first generation of Shôgekijô denied Shingeki which represented modern theatre, and quested for national identity. However, the definition of this 'national identity' or 'Japaneseness' remained ambiguous in Japanese theatre.

²⁰ Ôshiro Tatsuhiko, "Okinawa no sengo shingeki oboegaki" (A memorandum of post-war Shingeki in Okinawa) *Okinawa bungaku zenshû*. (Collected Works of Okinawan Literature) Vol.17. Tokyo, Kokusho Kankôkai, 1992, pp.224-261.

²¹ Wada Yoshio, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 18 December 2001.

In Australia, there was an investigation of the national identity which alternative theatre had quested for as early as in the 1980s. For example, Tom Burvill criticised the idea of 'popular theatre', which was advocated by Jack Hibberd in the 1970s. Hibberd advanced the creation of 'popular theatre' which includes local histories, legends, biographies, rituals and folkways (which all Australians seemingly shared). He imagined that the popular theatre would be able to involve people who usually do not come to theatre, and would become a 'national' theatre for all Australians. This idea of Hibberd's is reflected in *Les Darcy Show*, *One of Nature's Gentlemen*, and *A Toast to Melba* in *Three Popular Plays* published in 1976.²² Burvill pointed out that the past legendary figures and events Hibberd dealt with in his plays may be important only for working-class whites of a certain generation and of Irish descent, questioning how much icons like Les Darcy or Melba count in a multicultural Australia where a large part of the population was born overseas.²³ It is important that, as early as the 1980, there existed a theatre interested in the question of national identity and a study which questioned whether the national identity, which alternative theatre practitioners imagined, accorded with the reality of the Australian nation. In contrast, in Japan, there was no such discussion about the idea of 'popular theatre'. However, the leaders of Shôgekijô liberated theatre from the intellectuals' monopoly, and developed strategies to involve a wider range of people in their theatre. Although one of the strategies was the quest for national identity, the question of what the Japanese 'nation' is remained unexamined.

It was not until the latter half of the 1990s when this question started to be discussed in Japan. The year 1995 was the 50th celebration of the end of World War II, and became an opportunity to examine Japanese colonialism and the assimilation policy towards minorities. In this year, in the article discussing Tsuka Kôhei, the leading playwright/director of the second generation of Shôgekijô,²⁴ Japanese theatre critic Kan Takayuki points out that Tsuka's works made fun of the resentment and revolutionism of the first generation who plotted to overthrow Shingeki. Also, Kan writes:

²² Jack Hibberd, *Three Popular Plays*. Collingwood, Outback Press, 1976.

²³ Tom Burvill. "The politics of the popular in contemporary Australian theatre." *Australasian Drama Studies* Vol.1. No.2. 1982, pp.19-32.

²⁴ Kan Takayuki, "Sengo-engeki towa nandeattaka" (What was the post-war theatre?) *Teatoro* 630, June 1995, pp.28-34.

I recently realized that Tsuka's works had had a great intention to voice his objection to 'the avant-garde for the Japanese' from a Korean viewpoint.²⁵

Kan's comment comes late because Tsuka had not confessed that he was a Korean resident in Japan when he was active as the leader of the second generation of Shôgekijô. Even so, it is important that the awareness of the significance of ethnic identity shown in a comment like Kan's appeared at last in the middle of the 1990s.

In 1997, William Marotti criticised the idea of 'the Japanese body' which was advocated by Hijikata Tatsumi, the founder of Butoh.²⁶ Butoh has had a great impact on the West, and, as Hijikata insisted, it has been believed that Butoh can be performed only by 'the Japanese body'. However, Marotti points out this idea of 'the Japanese body' could lead to essentialism.²⁷ This criticism is also applicable to the national identity which the first generation of Shôgekijô quested for. Suzuki's discussion about the 'body' risks the same problem as this comment about Butoh. Moreover, 'a kind of ethnic reality' which Suzuki found in Kabuki scripts could also be questionable. That is because the 'ethnic reality' is based on the assumption that the Japanese nation is homogeneous, without any consideration of the existence of ethnic minorities in Japan.

Even if the national identities which Australian and Japanese alternative theatres quested for are criticised, it is true that their theatrical revolutions opened up a new dimension in both countries' theatres. For example, as Australia is an English speaking country, Australian theatre might have continued to present British and American plays exclusively. However, the alternative theatre's quest for Australianness made audiences and theatre practitioners confront the reality of Australia. In Australia, the theatre movement in the 1960s and 1970s proved the strength of the 'alternative'. Besides, this movement showed the significance of dealing with local issues in theatre, which affected the emergence of Aboriginal Theatre. In 1968, the first Aboriginal play *The Cherry Pickers* was written by Kevin Gilbert, and after several workshops in Sydney, it was performed by an all Aboriginal cast at Nindethana Theatre in Melbourne. Kevin Gilbert (1933-93) exercised his talent in various fields including playwriting, and he is perhaps best

²⁵ Kan, 1995, p.34.

²⁶ William Marotti, "Butoh no mondaisai to honshitsushugi no wana" (A question about Butoh and the trap of essentialism) *Theatre Arts* 8, 1997, pp.88-96.

²⁷ Ibid.

known as an activist who set up the Tent Embassy in front of the Parliament House in Canberra. In 1969, the Sydney Black Theatre Group was formed, and in 1970, Nindenthana Theatre was established in Melbourne. What is important about the relation with the 'white' alternative theatre movement in the early history of Aboriginal Theatre is that the APG performed Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Brumby Innes* in conjunction with the Nindenthana Theatre as early as in 1972.

In the case of Japan, Shingeki was presenting works dealing with the issues of labourers, the US military bases in Okinawa, the A bombs, and Burakumin, the traditionally discriminated class in the Japanese society. For example, Tokyo Geijutsuza Theatre Company presented a play dealing with Burakumin called *Hashi no Naikawa* (The River without a Bridge) in 1965. This play describes the resistance to the oppressions of the liberation movement of Burakumin in a village of Western Japan at the beginning of the 20th century. When this play was performed in Kyoto, where a number of Burakumin communities exist, the production met with strong opposition from activists of the liberation movement. According to Nonomura Kiyoshi,²⁸ a member of the theatre company, the activists accused this Shingeki company of knowing nothing about the anguish of the discriminated people, and of making money by claiming the liberation of Burakumin. After the argument between the activists and the theatre company, the company decided to continue presenting this play. This trouble probably happened because the company attempted to talk about the issue of Buraku without 'dialogue' with the people of Buraku.

Shingeki was active in the issue of Okinawa too. The works of Shingeki which deal with Okinawa includes Hino Shôhei's *Chigireta Nawa* (A Torn Rope) (1956), Satô Naotaka's *Okinawa: Deigo no hana saku hi made* (Okinawa: Until the Day Deigo Flowers) (1960), Uchimura Naoya's *Okinawa* (1960), and Kinoshita Junji's *Okinawa* (1960). However, there was not continuous work by Shingeki on the Okinawan issue after the 1960s. The strength of Japanese interests in the Okinawan issue also drastically reduced after Okinawa was reunited with Japan in 1972. Furthermore, because of the rise of Shôgekijô, Shingeki came to be regarded as old-fashioned theatre. Although Shingeki still keeps an interest in politics, the importance of Shingeki in the Japanese contemporary theatre is

²⁸ Nonomura Kiyoshi, *Shingeki undô kaisô*. (A Memorandum of the Shingeki Movement) Tokyo, Geidankyô Shuppanbu, 2001.

decreasing.

Shôgekijô was even less interested in the issue of minorities than Shingeki. The period when the first generation was active coincides with the period when the movement for the reversion of Okinawa reached its peak.²⁹ Nevertheless, the first generation did not involve itself in this issue, and Shôgekijô's quest for national identity neglected the Okinawan identity, let alone the Ainu identity. While Kara, Satô and Terayama dealt with the issue of Koreans, more familiar 'minorities' to them, Suzuki never even mentioned the issue. Furthermore, the Shôgekijô movement including the following generations had little contact with the cultural movements of minorities. Although it is possible to find an artistic influence of Shôgekijô on an Okinawan Shingeki company, the Shôgekijô movement did not show the possibility of 'alternative theatre' to the Ainu. Director Wada Yoshio points out that the first generation of Shôgekijô concentrated on struggling against the effects of Japanese modernisation and Westernisation, so that they were not able to focus on Japanese social issues including those of minorities.³⁰ As discussed in Chapter 2, the next generation of Shôgekijô focused on fantastic or aesthetic subjects, and kept a distance from politics. Wada explains that the reason he has a great interest in the issue of minorities in Japan is because the leaders of the first generation of Shôgekijô including Terayama did not deal with the Ainu issue at all, and because this is the issue which has been left behind by the Japanese contemporary theatre.³¹

Apart from Shingeki by the 1960s, Japanese contemporary theatre has been reluctant to deal with the issue of minorities. That is because there is a taboo on discussions of this issue in Japanese society. There was an incident symbolic of this taboo at Japan's National Playwrights' Conference which was held in Hokkaido in 1999. This conference included a panel discussion on the matter of voluntary restraint in Japanese theatre. The panel concluded that theatre practitioners should not put any restraint in their expressions so as to avoid trouble. After that, however, a panellist disclosed that the panel had voluntarily agreed that they avoid the Ainu issue before the panel discussion, although this

²⁹ After the Japanese defeat in World War II, Okinawa was occupied by the US military. Even after the Allied occupation of Japan ended in 1950, the US occupation of Okinawa continued. This situation provoked the movement for the reversion of Okinawa both in Okinawa and Japan. As a result, Okinawa was reunited with Japan in 1972.

³⁰ Wada Yoshio, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 20 November 2003.

³¹ Ibid.

issue' was particularly worth discussing given this conference was held in Hokkaido.³² This scandalous incident exposed how a taboo on talking about the Ainu is deep rooted in Japanese theatre, as in Japanese society generally. According to Wada, there are some Japanese theatre practitioners who say that as the Ainu have already assimilated with the Japanese, the issue has already been resolved.³³

In Japan, the involvement of minorities in theatre has been marginalised. Of course, there are some movements of minorities' theatre, whose progress varies with historical and political differences. Among the minorities in Japan, Korean residents have taken part in mainstream Japanese theatre, especially since the rise of the Shôgekijô movement. However, in many cases, such theatrical activities were practiced by them not as Korean residents but as Japanese at first, before they started emphasising Korean identity. For example, Kim Sujin (1954-present), a Korean resident, established his theatre company Shinjuku Ryôzanpaku as the successor of Jyôkyô Gekijô, one of the leading theatre companies in the Shôgekijô movement. Sujin says:

Shinjuku Ryôzanpaku is not a theatre company with the identity of Korean residents. It is just a Japanese theatre company whose leader is me, a Korean resident who would like to express myself under my real Korean name.³⁴

Like Kim Sujin, many theatre practitioners with the identity of Korean residents tend to belong to Japanese mainstream theatre companies rather than establish theatre companies for Korean residents.³⁵ Like Korean residents, there are the Ainu and Okinawans who come to Tokyo to participate in Japanese theatre companies. Apart from the case where minorities belong to Japanese theatre

³² Akagi Kunika, "Hokkaido butaijuku nihon gekisakka taikai 99" (Hokkaido Butaijuku and Japan Playwrights' Conference 99) *Hokkaido Shinbun*. Evening edition. 22 January 1999.

³³ Wada, 2003.

³⁴ Kim Sujin, "Aja wo fukinukeru kaze to natte: engeki soshite wan koria fesutibaru" (To be a breeze which blows through Asia: theatre an the One Korea Festival): 1994. [On-line] Available WWW: <http://hana.wwonekorea.com/hist/10th94/int-kimSujin.html>

³⁵ In the case of film, the circumstances are different. The identity of Korean residents is often emphasised not only in the content of their films but also in respect of who made them. Recently, since directors of Korean residents have made many good films, it is said that they lead the whole Japanese film industry. It is possible to say that films by Korean residents have been recognised as a definite genre in Japanese film.

companies, are there movements of minorities emphasising their ethnic identities? I will consider the Ainu and Okinawans instances in the next section.

According to Japanese researchers Oginaka Mie and Shindô Kimiko,³⁶ Ainu traditional performances can be classified into song, dance and story-telling. Yukar, a form of story-telling, consists of stories about gods and stories about human heroes. According to Oginaka and Shindô, in Yukar, both story-tellers and listeners beat time with wooden clappers by the fireside. Listeners take part in story-telling by inserting their voices. This kind of performance is different from theatre as previously defined. The Ainu are similar to Aborigines in the respect that historically they have not had theatre. While Aboriginal theatre was created by appropriating Western methods of expression which they did not have historically, the Ainu do not have an equivalent yet.³⁷

Wada Yoshio, who directed *Stolen*, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, and Canadian indigenous plays in Japan, explored the possibility of collaboration between his theatre and Japanese indigenous performing artists. When he requested of the Ainu council permission to use an Ainu puppeteer in his play, the Ainu chairman said, "Are you (the Japanese) going to expose us to ridicule again?"³⁸ Reflecting on this experience, Wada says, "If they (Ainu) stick only to the traditional forms of expression without showing that indigenous people exist as our contemporaries, the cultural expressions of indigenous people are likely to remain as only curiosities in Japanese society".³⁹ This remark by Wada shows how difficult collaboration between indigenous art and contemporary theatre is in Japan. There is another example showing the distance between the Ainu and theatre. Japanese theatre producer Aoki Michiko has produced Japanese performing arts at almost every Adelaide Festival since 1984, including traditional theatre such as Noh and Kyogen and contemporary theatre such as Kishida Jimusho & Rakutendan, Tenkei Gekijô, and Ishinha. She attempted to produce Ainu performing arts for the 2004 Adelaide Festival which will be directed by Stephen Page. According to Aoki, she could not find any professional Ainu theatre company in Japan. However, she

³⁶ Oginaka Mie and Shindô Kimiko, "Ainu no geinô" (Performing arts of the Ainu) Suwa Haruo and Sugai Yukio, ed. *Kôza nihon no engeki 1: nihon engekishi no shiten* (Studies in Japanese Theatre 1: Perspectives on Japanese Theatre History) Tokyo, Benseisha, 1992, pp.320-334.

³⁷ There exists a non-professional group which has presented plays in order to preserve and spread the Ainu language.

³⁸ Wada, 2001.

³⁹ Ibid.

was introduced (by Australian theatre producer Robin Archer) to an Ainu musician, named Oki. As a result, she has decided to produce a show involving Oki at the 2004 Adelaide Festival. This is the first time that Aoki has produced a musician, not a theatre or dance company, since 1984.⁴⁰

One of the reasons why collaboration between the Ainu traditional expression and the Japanese contemporary expression is difficult is that, from the viewpoint of the Ainu, the usage of Japanese forms of expression mean borrowing of the Other's expressions, which cannot be regarded as the Ainu's own expressions. Besides, as I have discussed, the Japanese attitude which regards the Ainu culture as primitive and the origin of the Japanese culture is still dominant. Therefore, the Ainu people are concerned that their traditional expressions might be exposed to ridicule.

Another reason is the attitudes of ordinary Japanese people. For example, when I showed a video of Aboriginal traditional performance in my classroom, one of my students criticised the video-maker for forcing Aborigines to wear their traditional costume and perform the traditional dance. This Japanese student failed to imagine that the Aborigines were performing their traditional dance to emphasise their cultural identity. Also, he thought that the abolition of legal discrimination meant that everyone enjoys a modernised life which is regarded as the peak of evolution in a Social Darwinist perspective, and that the Aborigines performing the traditional dance appeared to be rather in midstream of evolution. That is, he regarded the Aborigines' traditional performance as primitive, and thought that the video encouraged discrimination against Aborigines. The attitude of this student seems to symbolise the fact that the ethnic identity of the Ainu has been made invisible in Japan. While Aborigines have established Indigenous Theatre in Australia, the Ainu have not. This is because there is a situation which prevents the Ainu from doing the same thing as Aborigines in Japan.

In the case of music, collaboration between contemporary Japanese and traditional Ainu music is active. Also, this is not a regional activity only in Hokkaido, but is nationwide. For example, Oki is a player of Tonkori, a traditional instrument of the Ainu. He is highly praised for creating a new sound which mixes the tradition of Ainu music with contemporary sounds. The tradition of playing Tonkori had been neglected, so Oki had to learn how to play and make the instrument by himself. Today, he produces Andô Umeko, one of the leading

⁴⁰ Aoki Michiko, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 12 November, 2003.

proponents of Ainu culture and a leading musician both in Upopo (singing) and Mukkuri (jaw harp). Oki is the leader of OKI & the Far East Band which consists of Tonkori, guitar, drums, and percussion. His work is completely different from minorities' human rights activities as mentioned previously. With his identity as Ainu, he emphasises his individuality as an artist. Therefore, his activities link up with indigenous arts throughout the world. For example, Oki has expanded his networking with indigenous artists through art festivals in many countries and events through the United Nations, and has collaborated with various indigenous artists including the Australian Aboriginal band Waak Waak Jungi.⁴¹

So, what makes this difference between theatre and music? It seems possible that it is concerned with ideas of hybridity and authenticity. Traditional expression in music appears to be free to collaborate with other's expressions as a strategy of resistance. This practice can cross cultural borders. However, to cross cultural borders without losing cultural identity, and while keeping 'authenticity' in some way, is essential. In the case of music, the sound produced by a traditional instrument will not lose its authenticity even if it produces a different kind of melody. Apart from the example of Oki, in Japan, there are successful examples of collaborations between contemporary rock music and traditional instruments such as taiko, samisen, and shakuhachi (a Japanese bamboo flute). The audience who listen to the 'hybrid' performance regard it as a new aspect of 'traditional Japanese music'. This is the same as the case of the Aboriginal didgeridu. I have seen an Australian TV program which curiously reported that some Japanese came to the Northern Territory where they were taught how to play the didgeridu by Aborigines. The Japanese group formed a society called Japan Didgeridu Society, and not only played didgeridu but also held workshops to teach how to play and make didgeridu in Japan. Although the didgeridu played and made by the Japanese lacks 'authenticity', the sound produced by this 'Japanese' didgeridu is nothing but the sound of didgeridu. Similarly, when the Japanese played Western classic music, it is not Japanese music but Western music. The difference between Western instruments and the didgeridu is that, while Western instruments have spread all over the world as a universal thing, the didgeridu is owned by Aborigines as part of their important cultural heritage.⁴²

⁴¹ Chikar Studio, 2001-2003. [On-line] Available WWW: <http://www.tonkori.com>

⁴² Of course, the Japanese players of the didgeridu never forget their respect for Aborigines and hold exchange programs with Aborigines and invite Aboriginal didgeridu players to Japan.

In contrast with music, theatre has a difficulty in terms of keeping authenticity. In theatre, a performer identifies with a character in a play. If an Ainu actor performs a non-Ainu character or plays a universal story, the audience will not regard the play as Ainu. Besides, in theatre, a non-Ainu actor could perform a role of Ainu and tell a story of the Ainu. The difference between music and theatre is caused by the fact that a body is used for expression in theatre, compared with a musical instrument used in music. In Japan where assimilation is progressing effectively, there are some Ainu people who wish to conceal the fact that they are Ainu, and live as Japanese. Therefore, we must not force them to participate in theatrical collaborations as long as there is perception that theatre is not a vehicle for collaboration between Ainu and Japanese contemporary culture.

Next, I would like to investigate the relation between Japanese minorities and theatre, taking the Okinawans as an example of 'a group who has theatre'. If people such as the Ainu do not have theatre in their tradition, they have to adopt others' forms of expression to tell their own story. However, people such as the Okinawan who have theatre in their tradition, do not need to adopt others' forms of expressions as such, but to mix them with their own ways. Compared with the Ainu, who hesitate to use theatre to tell their own story, the Okinawans have little hesitation in mixing others' forms of expression with their own. This is the reason why various styles of Okinawan theatres have been created.

I will demonstrate the development of Japanese minority theatre by taking Okinawan theatre for example. In order to demonstrate this, I first deal with the history of Okinawan performing arts, then, investigate how the Okinawan theatre has appropriated other's expressions and created the hybrid with their own traditional theatre. Next, I examine a play *Jinruikan*, an achievement of the hybrid between tradition and contemporary theatre.

It is said that Okinawan theatre started in 1718 when Tamagusuku Chôkun established Kumiodori dance. However, some scholars point out that Ryûkyû (the former name of Okinawa) had had an exchange with Japanese theatre, and Noh and Kyogen had been introduced before Ryûkyû was invaded by the Satsuma Dominion of Japan.⁴³ As Ryûkyû historically had a vassal relationship with China, Kumiodori dance was important at receptions for Chinese missionaries who

⁴³ Ikenami Masaharu. "Kindai Okinawa engeki no ayumi" (The history of modern Okinawan theatre) *Okinawa bungaku zenshû* (Collected Works of Okinawan

visited there to recognise the enthronements of Ryûkû kings. Besides, to celebrate enthronements of Japanese shoguns and to report enthronements of Ryûkû kings, Ryûkû missionaries visited Satsuma and Edo (Tokyo) and performed Kumiodori dance. In this case, they performed Chinese theatre too which they learned in China.⁴⁴

Kumiodori is a dancing theatre whose stories include some repertoires of Japanese Noh and Kabuki. Apart from such court performing arts, there were folk dances featuring ordinary people's lives, and improvised comedies. Such performing arts, which still remain in Okinawa, attract Japanese scholars' interests because they seem to retain aspects of the origins of Japanese theatre such as the original shape of Kabuki which has otherwise disappeared. As I discussed before, this perspective strengthens an attitude which regards the Okinawan and their culture as ancient and primitive.

Apart from these forms, Okinawa has produced some distinctive forms of theatre even after Ryûkû was absorbed into the modern Japanese nation and became the Okinawa prefecture. One of these is Okinawa shibai (Okinawan plays). When the Ryûkû kingdom collapsed, court actors who had performed Kumiodori dance left the court and presented plays in front of ordinary people. Before long, the taste of the court was lost and more popularised plays, Okinawa shibai, were established at the end of the 19th century. At the same time, companies of Sôshi shibai (plays by political activists), the origin of Shingeki, visited Okinawa. Influenced by such a Japanese modern theatre, Okinawan theatre continued to seek a new style of theatre in the Okinawan dialect. As a result, two types of Okinawa shibai emerged: plays featuring dialogues and plays featuring songs and music. Plays featuring dialogues included comedy and moral plays. Plays featuring songs and music mainly dealt with tragic love stories.

About the situation of Okinawa being absorbed into Japan, Nakazato Yûgô, an Okinawan theatre practitioner, defines responses attempting to identify with mainland Japan as 'assimilation' and strategies attempting to resist Japanese influences as 'disassimilation'.⁴⁵ For example, although Okinawa shibai also produced shingeki plays and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays which were

Literature) Vol.10. Tokyo, Kokusho Kankôkai, 1995, pp.368-376.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Nakazato Yûgô, "Okinawa no engeki" (Theatre in Okinawa) *Chûô Kôron* 87(6) June 1972, pp.221-230.

popular in Japan in those days, they were performed in the Okinawan dialect. Nakazato calls this attitude 'disassimilation' and regards it highly. As Nakazato points out, Okinawan theatre practitioners retained their independence by producing plays in the Okinawan dialect.

Okinawa shibai replaced classic performing arts such as Kumiodori as mainstream theatre in Okinawa. However, in World War II, the assimilation policy towards the Okinawan was strengthened. As mentioned above, in schools, the Okinawan dialect was prohibited, and students were forced to speak in standard Japanese. Okinawa shibai was also declining because it was performed in the Okinawan dialect. Furthermore, towards the end of the war, the land battles against the US started, devastating the land and people. In August, 1945, the war ended, and Okinawa was occupied by the US. In August 1945, Okinawa Geinô Renmei (Okinawa Performing Arts Federation) was formed, and Okinawa shibai was recovered. The detail of the Federation's activities is unknown, but it is possible that they entertained people in camps, because they were living in camps in those days. In December of that year, the Okinawans were released from the camps. Next April, under supervision of the US headquarters, three public theatre companies were formed, and toured all over Okinawa. In 1947, the public theatre companies were privatized. Besides, many actors came back from their military service, so that Okinawa shibai regained vitality. In the latter half of the 1940s, there were more than thirty theatre companies in Okinawa which were recognized by the US authorities.⁴⁶ Ibaraki Tadashi, a Japanese theatre critic, writes, 'It was Okinawa shibai which brought theatrical recovery to post-war Okinawa'.⁴⁷ In the 1960s, however, the Okinawa shibai ran out of steam. One of the reasons was the spread of television. TV and radio broadcasting began during 1959 and 1960 in Okinawa. Radio and TV stations broadcast Okinawan songs and Okinawa shibai, which ended in the decline of live audiences for Okinawa shibai. Actors moved from theatres to TV and radio stations, and many theatre companies broke up.⁴⁸

While Okinawa shibai was declining, Shingeki was about to emerge in Okinawa.

⁴⁶ Kôki Yoshihide, "Sengo no okinawa engeki: sono ayumi to konnichi no genkyô" (Okinawan theatre in the post-war period: its development and the present situation) *Okinawa bungaku zenshû* (Collected Works of Okinawan Literature) Vol.11. Tokyo, Kokusho Kankôkai, 1994, pp.327-335.

⁴⁷ Ibaraki Tadashi, "Sengo okinawa no engeki: okinawa to yamato" (Post-war Okinawan theatre: Okinawa and Japan) *Higeki Kigeki* February 1988, pp.8-18; quote from p.10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

As mentioned above, in pre-war days, 'honyakugeki' and repertoires of Shingeki were performed in the Okinawan dialect, which were not successful. After the war, at the beginning of the 1950s when Okinawa shibai flourished, Okinawan intellectuals and school teachers (such as Nakaima Shin, a teacher, and Ôshiro Tatsuhiko, a novelist) established Okinawa Engeki Bunka Kenkyûjo (the Okinawan Theatrical Culture Research Institute), and tried to produce plays from the repertoires of Shingeki as they were staged in Japan. They insisted that non-vulgar theatre should be established in Okinawa, but failed to attract Okinawan audience who were enthusiastic about 'vulgar' Okinawa shibai in those days. Ôshiro explains that their attempt failed because the plays chosen were far removed from Okinawan ways of living.⁴⁹ Still, attempts continued to introduce Shingeki into Okinawan audience. One of the attempts was through the activities of the Shinshû Theatre Company established in 1958. The company produced John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and works of Miyoshi Jûrô, a leading playwright of Shingeki. Besides, at the beginning of the 1950s, theatre started to flourish at high schools, and many Western plays and texts produced in Shingeki repertoires were performed by high school students. These high school students entered the Ryûkû University, where they formed theatre groups. These groups were joined by teachers and intellectuals who had already practiced Shingeki. In 1961, a theatre company called Sôzô was established by graduates of the university. The Sôzô Theatre Company brought a unique modern theatre to Okinawa, and produced *Jinruikan*, a masterpiece of Okinawan modern theatre. Before discussing the Sôzô Theatre Company, I would like to compare the Okinawan Shingeki movement with the Japanese one.

Shingeki in Okinawa is often regarded as a localised version of Japanese Shingeki. However, it should be considered as existing separately from Japanese Shingeki. While the Japanese felt they had to learn the process of artistic modernisation from the West, the Okinawan had to learn from both the West and Japan. However there are not only differences but also similarities between Japanese Shingeki and the Okinawan equivalent. One similarity is that, unlike the Ainu and Australian Aborigines, both the Japanese and Okinawan had to work out the relationship between their own theatre and that of the Other. In 1901, Sôshi shibai (plays by political activists), one of the origins of Shingeki, toured to Okinawa, which made Japanese modern theatre popular in Okinawa. After that,

⁴⁹ Ôshiro Tatsuhiko, "Okinawa to engeki" (Okinawa and theatre) *Teatoro* 339 July 1971, pp.13-20.

Okinawan theatre practitioners became acutely aware of the necessity of the renovation of theatre and of performing new plays, and sent delegates to learn Japanese modern theatre. They absorbed Japanese modern theatre with avidity, and created Okinawa shibai which is different from traditional court theatres like Kumiodori dance. Although Okinawa shibai in those days were performed only in the Okinawan dialect, it is not because Okinawan theatre practitioners managed to claim their cultural identity, but because the audience in those days could understand only the Okinawan dialect. However, afterwards, Okinawa shibai came to deal with stories which expressed resistance against Japan (for example, in 1931, an Okinawa shibai denouncing Japanese absorption of Okinawa in the 19th century was produced). The fact that the Okinawans sought a model of new theatre in Japanese modern theatre is similar to the fact that Japanese theatre practitioners and kabuki actors went to Europe to learn Western theatre, and tried to create an equivalent modern theatre, Shingeki, or reform their own Kabuki theatre in the latter half of the 19th century.

After the war, Okinawan Shingeki concentrated on catching up with Japanese Shingeki. Plays to be produced were selected to raise the level of Okinawan theatre to the standard of Japanese Shingeki. Among Okinawan Shingeki practitioners, there was a sense of mission to educate the Okinawan people. Ôshiro points out that this reflects the Okinawan intellectuals' old intention to reform the vulgarity of Okinawa shibai.⁵⁰ Also, this sense of theatrical 'assimilation' to Japan reflects how the movement of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan was active in those days. At the same time, there were a few attempts to seek localised theatre. For example, as mentioned above, the Shinshû Theatre Company produced Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1959. This Irish play had inspired the possibility of local theatre into Japanese theatrical practitioners (a Japanese theatre company had translated its Irish dialect into northern Japanese dialect). The reason why the Shinshû Theatre Company selected the play was to investigate the possibility of adopting Okinawan localism into theatre. In other words, "after this experiment, they should have gained their own localised theatre".⁵¹ After all, however, this attempt failed to create new plays with Okinawan localism. This episode shows that there is a limit to the effectiveness of a borrowing from other culture's localism in questing for one's own

⁵⁰ Ôshiro Tatsuhiro, "Hôgengeki to shingeki no hazamade: watashi no sengo engeki taiken" (Between dialect plays and Shingeki: my experience of post-war theatre) *Higeki Kigeki* February 1988, pp.19-23.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.21.

cultural identity. When they saw Western theatre and Japanese modern theatre, the Okinawan theatre practitioners found themselves lacking a way of expressing their cultural identity in theatre, and adopted other culture's methodology for localism as an experiment. This practice is quite similar to Osanai Kaoru's attempt at creating 'Japanese theatre'. In a controversy between Japanese playwrights and Osanai Kaoru after his establishing Tsukiji Shôgekijô in Tokyo in 1924, Osanai declared that his company would produce only translated Western plays for two years. To create 'Japanese' theatre, Osanai did not seek the possibility of collaboration between Kabuki and modern theatre, but concentrated on producing Western plays. Similarly, to create localized theatre, Okinawan Shingeki practitioners did not seek the possibility of collaboration with Okinawa shibai, but tried to produce Western plays. After these failures, Okinawan Shingeki, discovered Okinawa shibai and the Okinawan dialect. Nakazato writes about the failures of post-war Shingeki in Okinawa as follows:

The failures were an inevitable process for theatrical practitioners who were destined to live in the period of Shingeki.⁵²

In other words, Okinawan Shingeki practitioners had been bound by the idea of regarding their tradition as primitive, and Western culture, or Westernised Japanese cultures as civilised. When they removed themselves from this idea, they 'discovered' the fact that their identity was in their tradition.

What Japanese and Okinawan theatre practitioners shared was an experience specific to those who had theatre in their tradition. As Japan was colonised by the West, and as Okinawa was colonised by Japan,⁵³ theatre, both in Japan and Okinawa bear the marks of colonialism. It was these marks which caused the process of trial and error in Shingeki movements in Japan and Okinawa. The marks prepared Okinawan and Japanese theatre to face the postcolonial moment. In Japan, as discussed in Chapter 2, eventually a movement based on repulsion of Western theatre, and new forms of cultural nationalism arose. In Okinawa, localism and tradition played an important role in establishing new Okinawan theatre.

In 1961, Kôki Yoshihide and Nakazato Yûgô, members of a theatre group at Ryûkû

⁵² Nakazato, 1972, p.227.

⁵³ See footnote 34, Chapter 5.

University, formed Sôzô Theatre Company in Koza, an Okinawan town which has a US military base. Since the company was born in Koza, the company was able to attract support from left-wing, anti-American activists groups. It was natural that the company became 'political'. Sôzô voiced its ant-war ideology through their stages. Although it had aimed to produce new plays of Okinawan playwrights, the company produced 'honyakugeki' and repertoires of Japanese Shingeki for a decade after it was established. Chinen Seishin, one of leaders of the company, explains the reasons: firstly, for the decade, there were the socially turbulent conditions caused by the movement demanding the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, which had so much impact that writing fiction could be banal; secondly, they could not find a methodology to make effective use of the Okinawan dialect.⁵⁴

The first play written by an Okinawan playwright for this company was *Jinruikan* (1976). The story of *Jinruikan* is partly based on the real affair of Jinruikan at the 5th National Industrial Exposition in Osaka in 1903. The word Jinruikan means 'the exhibition pavilion of human races' at the exposition, and the Ainu, Taiwanese aborigines, Okinawans, Koreans, Chinese, Indians, Africans, etc were 'exhibited' at Jinruikan. Facilities used for the exhibition were borrowed from the Department of Anthropology at Tokyo Imperial University, an anthropologist of the university asserting that exhibiting human races in this way was quite useful for education. This remark reflected the attitude of Japanese anthropologists in those days towards the idea of races. This exhibition stirred up controversy: because of protests from Chinese and Koreans, Chinese and Korean exhibitions were closed. Then, Okinawan newspapers started a campaign against the exhibition, so that the exhibition of Okinawans was closed too.

Jinruikan, the play, is a comedy for three actors. First there appear an Okinawan man and woman who are 'exhibited', together with an exhibition showman with a whip in his hand. The Jinruikan affair of 1903 is reproduced, where the showman exposes the Okinawan man and woman to public ridicule as a primitive race. Then, the timeline of the story freely moves within the modern history of Okinawa: from the exposition of 1903, through World War II, to the Okinawa Maritime Exposition of 1976. Three actors also transform their characters quickly. The scenes in the play include the episode of hōgenfuda as a symbol of the Japanese assimilation policy towards Okinawa, the Japanese Army who killed Okinawan civilians at the

⁵⁴ Chinen Seishin, "Shingekidan sôzô no 10 nenkan" (A decade for the Sôzô 'Shingeki' Theatre Company) *Teatoro* 339, July 1971, pp.36-41.

Battle of Okinawa, Okinawan people who killed themselves at the battle, and an Okinawan prostitute who was killed by an American soldier, a Vietnam veteran. Finally, the three characters become Okinawan civilians at the Battle of Okinawa, and appear to commit group suicide. However, the only one who dies turns out to be the showman. The 'exhibited' Okinawan man gladly takes the showman's whip, and exposes the body of the showman to public ridicule.

Before the foundation of the Sôzô Theatre Company, Chinen Seishin, the author of the play, was a student of the actors' school of the Seigeki Theatre Company, an innovative Shingeki theatre company in those days. Attending this school were also Satô Makoto and Kara Jûrô, leaders of the first generation of Shôgekijô. This may be the reason why *Jinruikan* seems to be influenced by contemporary Shôgekijô (See Chapter 2).

The impact of *Jinruikan* was very large from early on. In Okinawa, the play became an important part of the repertoire of the Sôzô Theatre Company, and was produced repeatedly. The production also toured to high schools in Okinawa. *Jinruikan* is almost the first Okinawan play which had a public response in mainland Japan. Firstly, the play was published in *Teatoro*, a leading Japanese theatre journal, in 1977. In the same year, the play was reproduced by a theatre company in Tokyo. The play was awarded the 22nd Kishida play prize, the most prestigious prize in Japan. Afterwards, the play was published again in *Shingeki*, a leading Japanese theatre journal in 1978. In 1978, *Jinruikan* by the Sôzô Theatre Company toured to Tokyo. This was not only the first tour to Tokyo but also the first tour to mainland Japan for Okinawan Shingeki theatre companies after the war. This production featured a female actor of Okinawa shibai unlike the original one.

As mentioned above, the Sôzô Theatre Company, whose aim was to pursue the possibility of plays by Okinawan playwrights, was not able to find out how to use the Okinawan dialect for a long time before the success of *Jinruikan*. This issue was shared by all Okinawan theatre practitioners of the time. Take the example of Ôshiro Tatsuhiko, one of the most famous Okinawan novelists and playwrights. According to his memoirs, Ôshiro started writing plays from about 1955.⁵⁵ He wrote plays in standard Japanese, which were translated into the Okinawan dialect and performed by Okinawan actors. When Ôshiro wrote a TV drama, it was

⁵⁵ Ôshiro. 1988.

translated and performed by Okinawan actors in the same way. Also, Ôshiro was commissioned to write an Okinawa shibai. Ôshiro writes that the play he wrote was devastating, but the principal of the Okinawa shibai troupe revised it to be a beautiful play. In Okinawa shibai, there is no script, and lines are orally conveyed from a director to actors. The principal of the troupe used this traditional method to revise Ôshiro's play. Ôshiro writes:

This event reminded me of the difference between Okinawa shibai and Shingeki (they are almost different media). This made me look at the cultural background of Okinawa shibai which has a great influence on actors and the audience. (Intellectuals have unsuccessfully tried to introduce Shingeki into the cultural background since the 1920s).⁵⁶

Since then, Ôshiro has tried to adopt the Okinawan dialect into his plays.

The Okinawa shibai troupe commissioned the play from Ôshiro in order to introduce innovation to conventional Okinawa shibai. However, the principal of the Okinawa shibai troupe found that it would be impossible to reproduce what the playwright intended in the play, because many Japanese words which could not be translated into the Okinawan dialect had to be deleted. The principal abandoned his ambition to innovate Okinawa shibai by collaboration with Shingeki, and, afterwards, became true to the tradition of Okinawa shibai.⁵⁷

As we have seen, there had been unsuccessful attempts by Okinawan theatre practitioners to create theatre utilising the Okinawan dialect before *Jinruikan* was premiered. *Jinruikan* is therefore a landmark in terms of using the Okinawan dialect in Okinawan theatre. The showman speaks standard Japanese, and curses the Okinawan dialect and Uchina-Yamatoguchi (a mixture of the Okinawan dialect and standard Japanese) spoken by the 'exhibited' Okinawan man and woman, for being dirty. He forces them to speak standard Japanese. However, an Okinawan accent and vocabulary is gradually revealed in the showman's language, and he is at last exposed as an Okinawan. It is possible that this is an allegory of Okinawan intellectuals and advocates of assimilation who have denied the Okinawan dialect and Okinawan localism. Near the end of the play, three

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.21.

⁵⁷ Makishi Yasutada, "Koganemori sozoroaruki; okinawa shibaishî no kaiso" (Memories of an Okinawan theatrical practitioner) *Higeki Kigeki* February 1988, pp.33-39.

characters suddenly start speaking in the Okinawan dialect. Unlike Uchina-Yamatoguchi (a mixture of the Okinawan dialect and standard Japanese) which the man and woman have spoken, it is completely impossible for Japanese audience to understand the language. This scene where characters speak only in the language lasts for eight minutes.

Because of this problem about the language, Kôki Yoshihide, the director, was pressured to translate lines of the Okinawan dialect into standard Japanese when the play was staged in Tokyo.⁵⁸ Even though he refused to do this, the production was highly praised in Tokyo. Senda Akihiko, a Japanese critic, saw the production, and wrote as follows:

I was not able to understand the details of the scene at all, but this 'discommunication' made it an unusually tense, beautiful, and dramatic scene.⁵⁹

Japanese researcher Shinjô Ikuo is also interested in the linguistic aspect of *Jinruikan*.⁶⁰ According to him, by not speaking only in standard Japanese, Uchina-Yamatoguchi or the Okinawan dialect, but by mixing and choosing a language according to the play's need, *Jinruikan* tries to break down the binarism of Japanese / Okinawan dialect, as language of the oppressor / language of the oppressed. Shinjô concludes that this will assist in liberating the Okinawans from the binarism of the Japanese / Okinawans division.

Kôki, the director of the play, writes about the social background of the 1976 Tokyo production of *Jinruikan*. Before the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972, Okinawans went to Japan to appeal against their oppression by the US, and to enlighten the Japanese about the Okinawan issues. However, after the reversion, the Japanese interest in Okinawan issues was rapidly fading despite the Okinawan issues in fact getting worse. The Okinawans became conscious that they had lost the language with which they could appeal to the Japanese. Kôki writes:

⁵⁸ Kôki Yoshihide, "Jinruikan tôkyô monorôgu" (A monologue about *Jinruikan* in Tokyo) *Teatoro* 429, November 1978, pp.64-67.

⁵⁹ Senda Akihiko, "Warau jinruikan" (Laughing *Jinruikan*) *Sekai* November 1978, pp.338-341.

⁶⁰ Shinjô Ikuo, "Gengoteki katto to shitenno okinawa: chinen seishin jinruikan no shatei" (Okinawa as a linguistic conflict: the intention of Chinen Seishin's *Jinruikan*) *Shôwa bungaku kenkyû* 40, March 2000, pp.102-115.

By identifying ourselves as the Okinawans who live in the period of the post-reversion, we have to restore a language for ourselves, and start having a dialogue with ourselves with the language.⁶¹

Chinen Seishin, the author of *Jinruikan*, writes:

[*Jinruikan* was] a very bitter creation for us, who fought for the movement of the reversion, and, as a result, lost sight of the mother country to which we should return.⁶²

Kôki and Chinen ceased regarding Japanese as a language spoken by the Okinawans who assimilated with the Japanese, or regarding the Okinawan dialect as a language spoken by Okinawans who protested against the assimilation to the Japanese. Rather, they made characters freely choose between the three languages spoken in contemporary Okinawa as languages to ponder over the Okinawan identity. *Jinruikan* was created when the Okinawans appeared in danger of losing sight of their identity due to the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, so that the languages in the play were used as a strategy to look for their lost identity (I will take up a newer, more strategic usage of the Okinawan dialect in theatre in the next chapter).

The Sôzô Theatre Company played an active role in the 1980s too. Their best-known activity was collaboration with Okinawa shibai, staged in Tokyo in 1976. The company “decided to create stages by using traditional Okinawan theatre as much as possible, avoiding Shingeki-like expressions”.⁶³ In other words, they created contemporary political theatre using traditional performing arts such as Kumiodori dance and Okinawa shibai. Since the latter half of the 1980s, Kôki and Ôshiro have formed the Okinawa Shibai Experimental Theatre, and are trying to revive Okinawa shibai in contemporary Okinawa. It took these many attempts for Okinawan theatre practitioners to find a strategy of using the Okinawan dialect to emphasise the Okinawan identity.

⁶¹ Kôki, 1978, p.64.

⁶² Chinen Seishin, “Okinawa no engeki undô: engeki shûdan sôzô no koto” (A theatrical movement in Okinawa: about the Sôzô Theatre Company) *Shin Nihon Bungaku* 373, September 1978, pp.70-71; quote from p.71.

⁶³ Kôki, 1994, p.331.

However, these developments within Okinawan theatre have had little influence on Japanese theatre. Okinawan modern and contemporary theatre is usually neglected in Japan. For example, the above mentioned academic book series *Kôza nihon no engeki* (Studies in Japanese Theatre) covering all aspects of Japanese theatre from the past to the present, does not refer to *Jinruikan*, the most important play in Okinawan theatre. The descriptions of Okinawa theatre history in the series end with the Edo period (1600-1868), and there is no reference even to Okinawa shibai and the Okinawan Shingeki movement. This series of the latest and most prestigious academic books on Japanese theatre virtually implies that there is no modern or contemporary Okinawan theatre in the history of Japanese theatre.

In 1997, when Tokyo's theatre company Rekuramu-sha reproduced *Jinruikan*, a theatre critic who was born in Okinawa, wrote a review of it for the theatre journal *Teatoro*. He confessed that he had kept his distance from the play for a long time because it is a play about discrimination against the Okinawans. The critic saw the play for the first time in order to write his review, and said:

The discrimination which the play criticises has already been overcome by Okinawa itself, so that the remaining issue in the play is just Japanese democracy. But the play is not strong about this issue.⁶⁴

The issue which *Jinruikan* highlights is not only that of discrimination. The issue of assimilation and ethnic identity still remains. Today, the Okinawan issue is regarded as a local issue, and is not generalised as an issue that all Japanese should share. Even the Okinawa-born theatre critic is not able to share it. The present situation in Japan makes the Okinawan issue invisible. The course of Okinawan contemporary theatre history, which is similar to the Okinawan history itself, remains invisible in the mainstream Japanese theatre.

Recently, there has been a movement in which Okinawan theatre practitioners and entertainers make their way into Japanese TV. In the 1990s, many Okinawan teenage girls debuted as pop singers and became TV stars, which made 'Okinawa' into a legendary place for Japanese pop music. At the same time, Taira Tomi, a female actor of Okinawa shibai, appeared in a successful Japanese film, and in a

⁶⁴ Urasaki Hirosane, "Kisetsu no dashimono, saien no igi" (Seasonable repertoires, significances of reproductions) *Teatoro* 660, October, 1997, pp.74-76; quote from

high rating TV drama which was set in Okinawa. She gained huge popularity not only in Okinawa but also across the whole country. By continuing to challenge new fields, Taira tries to revive Okinawa shibai, which has been regarded as an old-fashioned and dying performing art. There is criticism regarding the Okinawan entertainers' activities on Japanese TV, that it is only the exoticism of Okinawa which is being consumed by the Japanese.⁶⁵ However, this perspective risks making Okinawan culture return again to the previous treatment as something local. In her autobiography, Taira Tomi writes that she would like to challenge various roles --- not only the role of Okinawa shibai, but also the role in Shingeki plays as an 'authentic' Okinawan --- and through those activities, she would like to revive Okinawa shibai in the nationwide perspective.⁶⁶ She tries to communicate through Japan's mainstream theatre, film, and TV without losing her identity as an Okinawan. It is through this communication that the subjectivity of an Okinawan artist in Japan can be realised.

It is uncertain whether the activities of Okinawan performers such as Taira will end up a temporary Okinawan craze in Japan or not. It will depend on what kind of role the new National Theatre Okinawa plays in Japan. The National Theatre Okinawa, completed in 2004, is Japan's third national theatre. So far, the main purpose of the theatre seems to be preserving traditional Okinawan performing arts such as Kumiodori, which follows the conventional perspective limiting Okinawan theatre as a local and dying performing art. Will it be possible to break through this perspective? This will be a significant touchstone for Japanese theatre and minorities' theatre in Japan.

In this section, I have demonstrated Japanese minorities' involvement in theatre. The relation between the Ainu and theatre is completely different from the relation between the Okinawans and theatre. Australian Aborigines are similar to the Ainu in that neither have had theatre as part of their traditional culture. Due to the above-mentioned political and social circumstances around the Ainu, and Japanese contemporary theatre's tendency to avoid political issues, the Ainu have not yet found their own theatre as a medium for expressing their own cultural identity. Since the Ainu have not yet found an appropriate distance between their

p.76.

⁶⁵ Kan San-Jung, "Messeiji fukki 30 nen" (A message for the 30th anniversary of the reversion) *Okinawa Times* 21 November 2002.

⁶⁶ Taira Tomi, *Churashima, churagukuru*. (Beautiful Island, Beautiful Mind) Tokyo, Amuse Books, 2001. pp.176-77.

cultural authenticity and theatre, they have not gained their own theatre. This problem becomes clear when we compare the Ainu's situation with the history and the present state of Okinawan theatre. The relation between the Ainu and theatre, and the Japanese attitude which has encouraged this situation has something in common with the Japanese attitude towards Australian Aborigines and their artistic expressions. The Japanese translation and production of Aboriginal plays constituted a form of subversion of, or resistance to, this Japanese attitude towards minorities and indigenous people. I will discuss this point in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: The Japanese productions of translated Aboriginal plays

The Japanese versions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were presented in 2001 and 2002. In 2002, the original Playbox production of *Stolen* was presented in Japan. It is fair to think that the presentation of Aboriginal plays in the form of 'honyakugeki' is needless if the original is presented in Japan. However, at least in Japan, which has the history of 'honyakugeki' as discussed in Chapters 1 to 4, the presentation of Aboriginal plays in the form of 'honyakugeki' was not regarded as a secondary. This was why both the Playbox and Japanese productions of *Stolen* were presented together at the Tokyo International Arts Festival in 2002. So, why were the Aboriginal plays presented in the form of 'honyakugeki' in Japan? What kind of significance did the people involved try to find in the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays? I would like to investigate these questions in this chapter. Although *Stolen* was presented in some countries, Japan is the only country where the play was translated and performed by non-Aboriginal actors. Therefore, in order to understand the unparalleled position which these productions occupy, it is necessary to clarify why the people involved tried to translate and present the Aboriginal plays in Japan, and how they actually produced them.

The projects for presenting Aboriginal plays in Japan

In this section, I will explain how both the Japanese and the Australian productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were developed in 2001 and 2002. The 2001 project was realised when three independent projects (translations, productions, and the invitation of Wesley Enoch) fell in the same period by chance. Moreover, in 2002, Japanese audiences were able to see both the original production and the Japanese version of *Stolen* at almost the same time. In this history of 'honyakugeki', it is unusual that a translated Japanese production and the original production are presented in the same time. By investigating why this happened, we can understand the completely new significance of these productions which conventional 'honyakugeki' has not had.

I have been publishing the Japanese translations of Australian plays as the *Australian Drama Series* (Yokohama, Oceania Press) since 1992. In those days when I started the project, in Japan, no one, except for a few theatre critics who had visited Australia, even imagined the fact that Australian theatre existed there. To arouse an interest in Australian theatre, I chose *The Floating World* as the first

play I would translate because this is a play which is about the Australian-Japanese relationship, and which is one of the most important plays in Australian theatre history. Fortunately, the Japanese translation of *The Floating World* was staged, and the production aroused the interest of many Japanese theatre practitioners in Australian theatre. Director Wada Yoshio was one of them.

Wada Yoshio (1951-the present) formed the Rakutendan Theatre Company in 1977, and conducted collaborations with Kishida Rio (1950-2003), Japan's leading female playwright, for eleven years from 1982 to 1993. In 1992, The Rakutendan Theatre Company's *Itojigoku* (written by Kishida and directed by Wada) was staged at the Adelaide Festival and the Perth Festival, and the production was highly praised. In 1994, he dissolved the company and formed his new company, The Rakutendan Theatre Company. He studied Black Theatre in London for one year in 1995. From 1999, as a chair of the National Directors Association, he launched a series of "International Theatrical Exchange Seminars" and promoted cross-cultural seminars and workshops with theatre practitioners from more than twenty countries. From 2001, Wada was involved in collaborations with Canadian indigenous playwrights such as Thomson Highway. Wada has developed his interest in Australian theatre since he directed Kishida's *Itojigoku* at the Adelaide and Perth festivals. In 2000, he organised the "Australian theatre seminar" as part of the program of the International Theatrical Exchange Seminars series, inviting Joanna Murray-Smith and Aubrey Mellor.

After directing Canadian indigenous plays, Wada became interested in Australian indigenous theatre, and hoped to direct an Australian play. At the same time, I started a selection of plays as a fifth volume of *Australian Drama Series*. When I was in Sydney from 1995 to 1998, I saw a lot of Aboriginal performances such as Ningali Lawford's *Ningali* and Mudrooroo's *Aboriginal Protestors* and became aware of the rise of Aboriginal theatre in the Australian theatre scene. I was especially impressed by the fact that, after 2000, major theatre companies like the Playbox Theatre Company and the Belvoir Street Theatre Company added new Aboriginal works to their seasons. Since one of the aims of the *Australian Drama Series* was to introduce the present situation of Australian theatre to Japan, it was absolutely necessary to translate Aboriginal plays for the series. At the same time, due to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, a large number of journalistic books on Australia were published. By this means some knowledge of the Aborigines, not only their traditional life in the outback but also their history, was introduced to Japanese readers. Due to this expression of knowledge of the Aborigine in the

Japanese society and Wada's strong interest, I decided to translate two Aboriginal plays into Japanese, and published them in 2001.

When I translated *The Floating World* in 1992, I developed my translation independently and only after the translation was published, was the project of theatre production initiated and realised. However in the more recent times since Japanese and Australian theatre practitioners have become more interested in the presentations of Australian plays in Japan, it has been quite common for me to choose plays I will translate through discussions with theatre practitioners. When I selected a play from Aboriginal plays, I first suggested to Wada a play by Jack Davis, who passed away in 2000. However, Wada insisted that it was very important not only to present Aboriginal plays in Japan but also to prompt an exchange between Japanese and Australian indigenous theatre practitioners. That is because he thought it would be impossible for Japanese audiences and theatre practitioners, including himself, to understand and develop the productions of Aboriginal plays without the participation of Aboriginal theatre practitioners. Wada and I selected Jane Harrison's *Stolen* and Wesley Enoch & Debora Mailman's *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, and pursued the possibility of inviting Wesley Enoch, an up-and-coming director of Australian indigenous theatre. This choice was determined by the reason that these two Aboriginal artists, unlike the late Jack Davis, might be available to collaborate with us.

Stolen and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were presented at Nakano Akutore, Tokyo on the 6th and the 7th of November. Akutore, situated in the middle of Tokyo's residential suburbs, is a small theatre accommodating about 100 audience members. Both *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were presented twice. *Stolen* was performed by five Japanese actors who were all professional actors from Shôgekijô. *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was performed by two Japanese female actors.

At the same time as these production projects were being developed, the Australian Embassy in Tokyo was also developing a project to invite Wesley Enoch to Japan. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Australian Embassy in Tokyo has promoted the introduction of Australian culture into Japan and supported Australian artists who are interested in Japan, and in collaboration projects between Australia and Japan. Their main activities include organising regular lecture sessions, inviting Japanese producers and curators to undertake Australian exchange programs, and supporting already developed Australian-Japanese exchange programs. The Australian Embassy decided to invite Wesley

Enoch and organise a series of lectures to be given by him entitled *Indigenous Australia Lecture Tour 2001*.¹ The point is that the Australian Embassy in Japan thought that it was important to deepen the understanding of Aborigines in Japan by inviting an Aboriginal theatre practitioner to Japan. According to Wada, who had already directed Japanese productions of Canadian indigenous plays, the Australian Embassy took an active part in these Japanese productions of Australian Aboriginal plays, as compared with the Canadian Embassy's involvement in the Japanese productions of Canadian indigenous plays, which was minimal.²

Enoch stayed in Japan for two weeks in October, 2001. During the period, he gave a lecture entitled "The History of indigenous Theatre and its social function" at the Embassy, Waseda University, Keio University, and Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, and at the Centre for Australian Studies, Nanzan University in Nagoya. As mentioned in Chapter 5, some universities refused the offer even in instances where there were specialists of Aboriginal studies. At both the Embassy, and in conjunction with the lectures Enoch gave workshops on Aboriginal performance, in which University students who had listened to the lecture and actors who were to appear at the Rakutendan productions took part. In this workshop Enoch firstly gave a survey of Aboriginal history. Then he grouped participants and let them write stories about their families and discuss which story they would work on in each group. Next he helped participants create dances to express what they wanted to say. After they danced, he made them explain the meaning of each dance to the audience. In this way, Enoch made Japanese students and actors experience the essence of Aboriginal performance which characteristically expresses stories of their ancestors and families. Enoch also participated in the symposiums after the productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, and answered questions from the Japanese audiences.

It was quite by chance that the time when Japanese theatrical practitioners interested in Australian theatre decided to present Aboriginal plays, and the time when an Australian government institution decided to introduce a major Aboriginal theatre practitioner into Japan completely coincided. It means

¹ Machida Daisuke, "Zainichi gôshû taishikan bunkatantô kyasarin funyô shi ni kiku" (Interview with Australian Embassy cultural officer Kathryn Hunyor) *Bunkacho Geppo* (Cultural Affairs Agency Monthly Newsletter) 397, October 2001. pp.20-22.

² Wada Yoshio, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 18 December 2001.

arguably that the Australian Embassy in Tokyo considered Aboriginal theatre to be a valuable export to help form an image of Australian in the world. Here we can see the present status of Aboriginal theatre in Australia.

While the production project by Rakutendan and the invitation to Enoch were proceeding, another project to introduce Aboriginal theatre to Japan was being developed. An ex-Australian Embassy cultural officer was seeking a way to present the original Playbox production of *Stolen* in Japan. She had started in early 2001 to encourage an invitation for the production to come to the Tokyo International Arts Festival, which was to be held from September to December in 2002. The ex-officer also kept in close contact with Wada and me. Therefore, we knew that the original production might tour to Japan, but it did not make us pause in presenting the Japanese production of *Stolen*. Rather, we were excited by the fact that, if both productions were staged in Japan at the same time, the Japanese audience would be able to see the two completely different versions of *Stolen* and compare them. The Tokyo International Arts Festival (former Tokyo International Festival of Performing Arts) was where the Japanese version of *The Floating World* had been produced in 1996.

The Tokyo International Arts Festival did decide to invite the Playbox production of *Stolen*. For this production, I took charge of making a set of Japanese subtitles. This is the same type as the English subtitles used at Opera performances in Australia. It is common in Japan that such electric subtitles are used at performances in foreign languages by overseas companies. Playbox gave five performances from 12th to 15th December at the Small Hall 2 of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space. According to the official records of the Tokyo International Arts Festival, 172 seats were prepared in the theatre, and 72 percent of them were occupied on average through the five performances. The total audience attendance was 643.³

Wada, who had had a good response to the readings of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of*

³ According to the data provided by the Tokyo International Arts Festival, the detail of the numbers of the audience at each performance are as follows:

Date	Number of the audience
12 December	158
13 December	90
14 December	113
14 December	146
15 December	136

Grieving in 2001, received a grant from a Japanese publishing company, and planned a repeat production of the two plays with new direction. Rakutendan staged *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* under Wada's direction at Studio Akutore from 14th to 19th November 2002. Since the period when they would stage these productions was close to the period when Playbox would give their performances, Rakutendan's productions were added to the program of the Tokyo International Arts Festival. Also, before the productions at the Nakano Akutore, Rakutendan gave a special production of *Stolen* at the Australian Embassy on 11 November. During the 2002 production, Jane Harrison was invited to Japan. Harrison saw Rakutendan's production of *Stolen* at the Australian Embassy, and took part in the post-performance talk session (She was also invited to Keio University during her stay). Harrison also participated in the talk session after Rakutendan's performance at the Nakano Akutore. At this talk session Ikabe Futoshi, an Ainu musician specialising in a traditional Ainu musical instrument called Tonkori, and his brother Hoshino, an activist for Ainu rights, also participated and gave a performance of Tonkori.

This section has demonstrated that there were some attempts to change the stereotypical image of Aborigines in Japan, through the presentation of Aboriginal plays from 2001 to 2002. In the next section, I discuss the detail of the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*.

The Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*

In this section, I would like to discuss the direction of the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. As discussed in the Introduction, no matter how faithfully a director tries to reproduce the original play translation and production create inevitable differences from the original. These differences are in effect particular representations of Aborigines made by the Japanese director and company. I will make clear the intentions of the director by referring to the interview that I conducted with the director Wada Yoshio. As I have mentioned Wada had already directed the translated version of some Canadian indigenous plays in Japan, and he has a great interest in the expression of indigenous peoples. In fact, he is one of the few Japanese theatre practitioners who expect an emergence of 'Japanese' indigenous theatre.

Wada explains his motivation to produce indigenous plays from various countries in Japan as follows:

I think it is a problem that indigenous issues have been not only unsolved but also neglected in the modern and contemporary periods. Theatre should deal with minorities. I am also interested in indigenous theatre in various countries.⁴

Next, let us see what he emphasised in his directions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Wada points out that *Stolen* has an interesting structure in which people belonging to different periods appear altogether on the stage, but he also points out that directing this play was surprisingly easy for him because it goes straight to the point. He gives the following as important points in the work: firstly, complicated problems about the 'inside' of Aboriginal society are described using the metaphor of children. Secondly, *Stolen* is characterised by 'simplicity'. The simpler a drama is, the stronger the message it can send.

As for the first point, Wada says that an effect of using children as characters in drama is that members of an audience can enter the world of the drama remembering what they (the audience) were thinking in their childhood. Wada also says, "Children quarrel more often than adults". In other words, children do not leave unquestioned things adults resign themselves to. Children always ask questions about contradictions in this world. This attitude of children towards contradictions lets the audience rethink their society. Wada also points out that the scene in which children tease a child who was sexually harassed depicts not a simple representation of victimised Aborigines but a complicated relationship, a common human problem.

As for the second point, 'simplicity' as Wada says does not mean 'simplicity' in expression or style. Rather, it means focusing on conveying a play's politics to audience 'simply' or 'directly'. Wada in effect criticises Japanese contemporary theatre by applauding the 'simplicity' of *Stolen*. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the Shôgekijô since the latter half of the 1960s, theatre companies consist of one charismatic artist and his followers who reproduce his artistic world as performers. This characteristic of Japanese theatre companies was inherited by the next generations at some level. Wada describes this situation as "theatre which

⁴ Wada, 2001.

depends heavily on one individual's vision and charisma". Wada says, "*Stolen* reminded us that we have concentrated on developing technique too much".⁵ He defines theatre as a place where people gather, and places a high value on the fact that *Stolen* was completed through the use of workshops. A workshop is a way to create a work in a group, reflecting the voices of many people. The process of creating *Stolen* shows a commitment to widening an issue enough to be shared by the whole community. Wada argues that the work became the possession not of an individual artist but as a result of the workshop process included the voices of a large number of people who were involved in the issue. Wada comments as follows:

Wesley said, "We do not single out individuals but protect them as a group".

This remark impressed me.⁶

The reason Wada chose public reading may be that he needed an equivalent to the workshop. When the already completed play is translated and presented in Japan, it is impossible to use the process of the workshops that was effective for reflecting many voices in the work. Wada also thinks that it is simplicity that gives strength to depict an issue shared by the whole community.

Public reading is still rare in Japan. Many Japanese theatre practitioners think that public reading is a cheap replacement for a full production. Some say that public reading is not interesting because it sounds like a lecture. Wada criticises such an attitude, and says, "The reason why public reading is not established yet is that readers do not display a sufficient sense of connection between what is written and themselves".⁷ Wada feels that energy is important when readers read aloud in a public reading, and that public reading is a way to see what the work tries to tell us in the simplest form. In the case of *Stolen*, Wada held extensive discussions with actors to achieve this purpose. This process of public reading worked in a similar way to the process of workshops that created *Stolen*. Wada explains this process as follows:

Simplicity can include diversity. The most important thing is that we were able to share something through the reading. If we do a full production, a device will be needed to retain its simplicity. Together with the production crew, I would like to continue a procedure of discussing and sharing images in

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

the process of development.⁸

Wada also says that he wants to create a theatre where many people can meet casually for a reading. This remark shows that Wada wants to create a kind of 'community theatre' by continuing public readings. Indeed, Nakano Akutore where *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were presented is a small theatre with capacity of 80 people, making possible closeness between actors and audiences.

In the case of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in my interview with him, Wada firstly focused attention on contemporary Aboriginal people's complicated relationship with 'tradition' which is depicted in the work. In this Wada finds something in common with the contemporary Japanese, whose relation to Japanese tradition is quite ambiguous.

Secondly, Wada is interested in the authors' intention to clarify record and show the Aboriginal history. Wada talks about the way history is dealt with in this work as follows:

The work consists of both factual and poetic, metaphoric parts. The painful facts exist. But, to universalise it, the authors use a metaphoric way of expression. To direct the work is not difficult for me because there are the metaphorical parts in the work.⁹

In other words, if the play consisted only of reproduction of facts, it may be difficult for the Japanese, without the knowledge of Aboriginal history, to find something they can share with the characters in the play. Due to the metaphoric parts, the theme of the work can be universalised.

Australian scholar Helena Grehan makes a similar comment of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*:

...many other audience members and critics appeared eager for the work to be representative of the *true stories* of contemporary Aboriginality: they wanted to be convinced that the work was *authentic*. ...However, one of the key elements of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* is its use of ambiguity. The work is a synthesis of responses to concepts of grieving, loss and reconciliation,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

demonstrating the complexity of positions and interpretations possible by Aboriginal people(s) and arguing for the need to acknowledge the past. It is neither realist nor static; the characters called on through Deborah Mailman are metaphoric and not literally intended ...It is not a question of giving them surnames and locating them as representatives of *an* Aboriginal voice; it is about engaging in a fluid, non realist way with the ambiguity of Deborah Mailman's nomadic wanderings through places or sites of Aboriginality and it is about recognition of openness, not about delivering therapy in the guise of authenticity.¹⁰

To emphasise the ambiguity of the play which Grehan discusses here, Wada made an important change from the original work. He used two actors in the Japanese version although the original is a one woman play. Wada explains the reason as follows:

I was afraid that the production would depend on only one actor's skill if it was presented by one actor. To depict universal histories of women, more than one person should emerge. In the original work, the story is told by one person, but the person who is talked about is not one. Although the play talks about individual pain, it does not deal with only individual issues.¹¹

So, in the Japanese production, two actors were cast for the one role to give the work a universal characteristic. However, it is also possible to think that the original used one actor for the same reason. This reflects the difference between Australia and Japan. In Australia, many people can easily understand the complexity of Aborigines' experiences. For example, many audience members at the original production were aware that Deborah Mailman has parents of Aborigines and Maori descent. Therefore, the body of Mailman can embody the experiences of people who have diverse cultural backgrounds. In contrast, in Japan, since the understanding that Japan is a homogenous nation is still dominant as discussed in Chapter 6, the Japanese audience may be unable to read the experience of more than one person in one actor's body. Therefore, it was effective in the Japanese production that two actors expressed the experiences of numerous people. It is also significant that, in the 2002 production of *The 7 Stages*

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Helena Grehan, *Mapping Cultural Identity in Contemporary Australian Performance*. Bruxelles, P.I.E. –Peter Lang, 2001. pp.97-98.

¹¹ Wada, 2001.

of *Grieving*, one of the two actors was replaced by a Korean actor, Na Jamyon. To cast a Korean actor as one of the two actors who perform the work clarifies the director's intention to make the work not just the story of one 'authentic' Aboriginal woman but to make it contain the stories of many 'ambiguous' women. Moreover, to use a Korean actor makes a strong impression on the Japanese audience. It is significant that the Korean actor was not a native speaker of the Japanese language so that the language she spoke was not fluent. This awkwardness could not but attract the attention of the audience. They had to work to understand as she stumbled over her words, which made them think more deeply about what she managed to say. Wada clearly aimed for an alienation effect which would prevent the audience from receiving without thinking¹². In other words, this device prevents Japanese audience from being assimilated into white audience for whom the original play might be written, and makes them conscious of 'Japaneseness'. I will discuss this issue again in the Conclusion, referring to a theory on Intercultural theatre.

More importantly, Wada intended the audience to see the relationship between Japan and Korea through the casting.¹³ Although the scale of the production made it too small to be reviewed in newspapers and journals in Japan, *Chosun ilbo*, one of the largest newspapers in Korea, reported in a long article that Na Jamyon would appear in the Japanese production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*.¹⁴ This newspaper story has it that the Tokyo International Arts Festival invited her as a leading actor, that a Japanese theatre critic praised her for her 'world-class' powerful expression, and that the production she will appear in is a tragic story which describes racism and the grief which coloured people have experienced through the story of Aboriginal families.¹⁵ From a Japanese viewpoint, it is surprising that this small Japanese production was reported in this way although the actor is unknown even in Korea. If an unknown Japanese actor appeared in a small stage production in Korea, a Japanese newspaper would never report it in a major article. This episode clearly shows the Japanese colonialism against Korea, the present relation between two countries, and the gap between Korean sentiment towards Japan and Japanese sentiment towards Korea. This delicate relationship is reflected in, for example, the fact that despite Korea's strong anti-

¹² Wada Yoshio, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 20 November 2003.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "[Na Jamyon who will perform one-man play at the Tokyo International Arts Festival]" *Chosun ilbo*. (Internet edition) 23 October 2002.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Japanese sentiment, exchanges between Korea and Japan are very active, and the fact that, although the import of Japanese cultural products was prohibited in Korea until 1998, in fact they are very popular there. These examples indicate the delicate mentality of the Koreans who cannot avoid feeling interest in 'Japan' although they attempt to counteract Japanese colonial influence. Moreover, Japan's thoughtless attitudes to Korean sensitivities are reflected in alleged reasonable justifications for Japanese colonisation of Korea being propagated by some Japanese politicians and intellectuals.

If the actor was not a Korean living in the mother country but the second, third, or fourth generation of Korean residents in Japan who speak Japanese language with the same fluency as the Japanese, it would be difficult to impress the Japanese audience with her Korean identity without an additional explanation. Besides, Wada calculated that many Korean residents would come to see the production if a Korean actor was cast, and intended to show the relation between Japan and Korea highlighted by his direction to both those members of the audience who were Japanese and those who were Korean residents.¹⁶ By using a Korean actor in the story of colonised Aboriginal people, the production highlighted a very important Japanese issue involving not only the history of the Japanese colonialism towards Korea and the present Japan-Korea relation, but also the history of oppressed Korean residents as a minority in Japan.

Next, I will mention some details of the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Both plays were presented very simply. However, although presented as public readings, they had almost the same quality as full productions. The lighting design and music, especially, equalled those of a full production. Props used in both productions included simple office chairs and a trunk. Actors played with a script in their hand. This meant they did not completely identify themselves with Aboriginal characters.

In the case of *Stolen*, corrugated iron walls were placed at both sides of the stage to symbolise the homes of Aborigines. Sometimes photographs of Aboriginal children were projected on the walls. Office chairs were used as children's beds in the Playbox production: the actors sat on chairs to indicate that the characters had gone to bed, and mount their backrests to indicate that the characters were sitting on their beds. In *The 7 Stages of Grieving* the actors always talked to the audience

¹⁶ Wada, 2003.

and moved around the stage rather than sit and read their scripts. In Scene Three, the actors actually lit a wad of eucalypt leaves on stage and performed a ritual of purification. At the end of the purification ritual, the actors performed a brief Aboriginal ritual dance. (This was probably choreographed by Wesley Enoch who came to Tokyo and participated in rehearsals). In Scene 12 "Murri Gets a Dress"¹⁷, one actor closed her script, and performed a stand-up-comedy routine. In Scene 15 "March", the actors really marched on the stage to perform the protest march against police. In Scene 17 "Home Story", the actors put a piece of drawing paper on a blackboard, and told a story about Aboriginal families as if they were school teachers.

The use of slides was also effective: the images were chosen to help the Japanese audience understand the contemporary life of Aborigines. When an image of a group of Aborigines was projected, the actors stood up in front of the screen and showed their faces to the audience as if they were members of the group. In Scene "1788", an old painting which depicts the British settlement was projected in order to help the Japanese audience understand the significance of the year of '1788'. In Scene 14 "Mugshot", the photographs of Musgrave Park, where Aboriginal dancer Daniel Yocke was arrested by police, were projected.

A characteristic of the text of this play is that Aboriginal words are inserted in the English text. In the Japanese production, various strategies were adopted to deal with the inclusion of these words. In Scene 3 "Purification", one actor voiced the ritual speech in an Aboriginal language, while another actor voiced its Japanese translation at the same time. The Japanese audience was able to recognise that the language the first actor spoke was not English, and also to understand what the speech meant. Scene 9 "Black Skin Girl" was performed in the almost same way although one actor spoke the Japanese translation after another actor finished voicing the Aboriginal speech. As for Aboriginal words inserted in the text such as 'boogi' and 'sousou', the actors simply spoke the Japanese translations of these words.

There were no alterations made of the original text in the Japanese production, except for in Scene 6 "Story of a Father". In this scene, the individual names of certain Australians who are known for their harsh attitudes towards Aborigines

¹⁷ Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Revised 3rd edition. Brisbane, Playlab Press, 2002.

are listed. In the Japanese production, after listing these names, the actor said "They are people who discriminated against Aborigines" in order to help the Japanese audience understand what these names meant.

The music used in both *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, which consisted of percussion only, clearly avoided reference to the familiar forms of traditional Aboriginal music. This was part of Wada's intentional resistance against the established image of Aborigines in Japan. Wada commented as follows:

Contemporary Aboriginal music is diverse. But Japanese interest tends to centre on just the traditional musical instruments, and Japanese stick to their own idea about Aboriginal traditional culture. The Japanese media also emphasises the point. It is a kind of self-satisfied way of understanding other cultures. I saw the videos of the original productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. I don't see any point in imitating the original. Anyway, I wanted to deconstruct the fixed image of Aboriginal people in Japan. I suppose that some audience members who were interested in Aboriginal 'traditional' culture were shocked by the Japanese productions. They (the audiences) sentimentalise Aboriginal people by seeing only limited aspects of Aboriginal life such as drawing traditional paintings and coexisting with nature. They want to preserve their arbitrary image of Aboriginal people. I think such sentimentalism is a kind of violence against Aboriginal people. That is why I dared to offer an alternative. I was afraid that the story could no longer be about the contemporary Aboriginal life if I used a musical instrument with a fixed image.¹⁸

As discussed in Chapter 5, the dominant representations of Aborigines in Japan are one-dimensional. What Wada aimed at in his productions of Australian indigenous theatre is a resistance against this limited form of representation.

Wada also emphasised simplicity in the use of music,

We carefully discussed what kind of percussion we would use this time. We decided to use sounds we could hear in everyday life. In the scene where a child runs away, we used a sound made by beating a bucket. We sought for non-decorative sounds, or sounds we hear in our own lives too. By this means

¹⁸ Wada, 2001.

I intended the Japanese to receive the story as an issue we share.¹⁹

In this way, Wada tried to draw a universal aspect from the Aboriginal stories by using not so much traditional Aboriginal sounds as sounds found in contemporary daily life. Wesley Enoch commented on the use of music in Wada's production as follows:

I also believe in not using Aboriginal instruments because they refer to a cultural landscape which I want to get away from. The music is a rhythm and pace element, it picks up the ends of scenes and delivers the audience to the next emotional place - music and dance can do this much better than words. In this way I felt the use of sound and percussion was very much in keeping with what I was trying to achieve when we produced the shows in Australia.²⁰

Jane Harrison, the author of *Stolen*, commented on this aspect of the production as follows;

I thought it gave the production an ethereal air, it was haunting and added emotional depth to the work. ...I agree with Mr Wada's point about deconstructing a stereotype.²¹

Wada's direction as I have said emphasises simplicity. Japanese theatre has concentrated on developing skills and techniques, and neglected social issues including the issue of minorities in Japan. I would argue that the simplicity Wada emphasised in the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was the antithesis of the present trend of Japanese theatre. This means that a new element, which the original plays did not have, was added to the Japanese productions. However, Wada did not use the two Aboriginal plays only to present the antithesis of contemporary Japanese theatre. Rather, he discovered the elements which Japanese theatre lacked in the process of directing the Aboriginal plays. Wada's resistance was not only against Japanese theatre but also against the representation of Aborigines in Japan. He broke Japanese sentimentalism on Aborigines, and depicted them as ordinary contemporaries.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Wesley Enoch, Personal interview with author via e-mail, 21 December 2001.

²¹ Jane Harrison, Personal interview with author via e-mail, 23 January 2003.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated why the people involved tried to present *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in the form of 'honyakugeki' in Japan, and how they actually produced them. In the next chapter, I move on to the subject of what kind of impact these productions had on the Japanese audience as well as on Jane Harrison and Wesley Enoch.

Chapter 8: Significance of the productions of Aboriginal plays in Japan

The Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and the Australian production of *Stolen* presented new experiences for both Japanese theatre practitioners and audiences and for the Australian theatre practitioners involved. In this chapter I will demonstrate what kind of achievements and problems these experiences brought with them. In order to do this, this chapter deals in order with the difficulties of translation and contextualisation; the significance of the awareness of the risk of exploiting Aboriginal culture; the significance of dialogues between the Japanese and Aborigines; and the Japanese audiences' rediscovery of Japanese minorities through the productions of the Aboriginal plays.

Problems of Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*

This section investigates some issues which presented themselves when *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were translated and presented in Japan. These issues include the difficulty of translating various strategies which Aboriginal plays have, and the difficulty of contextualising Aboriginal historical and social experiences.

First, I will discuss the difficulty of translation. Most of the text of plays written by Aborigines is written in English, rather than in an Aboriginal language. This fact has provoked various discussions. Given the fact that colonisation has largely deprived Aborigines of their own languages, by resisting this situation the usage of the local languages could help to form a strong identity as Aborigines. However, particular Aboriginal languages, which are understood by members of limited communities, are probably unable to become languages of resistance for the whole of the oppressed Aboriginal people. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out:

Those critics and writers who appropriate ex-colonial languages to their own use argue that although language may create powerful emotive contexts through which local identities are formed, and whilst the use of non-indigenous language may, as a result, appear to such communities to be less authentic than texts in indigenous languages, such languages do not, in themselves, constitute an irrecoverably alien form, and they may be appropriated to render views that are just as powerful in constructing anti-

colonial texts.¹

Even if mostly written in English, texts of Aboriginal theatre do also use some Aboriginal words. It is arguable that, by freely switching between local languages and non-local languages the playwrights are able to construct highly resistant expressions. The use of Aboriginal words in an English text can also be seen in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* too. The text of this play includes some Aboriginal words such as "sousou", "boodgi", "nunna" and "bungies", and Aboriginal phrases such as "Murraba bullar du" and "Bului yuli mie". The insertion of these words and phrases into the English text seems to be based on a strategy to emphasise the identity of the creators of the work and seek community spirit.

We can see the same strategy used in Okinawan theatre as is used in Aboriginal theatre. It is a strategy which also makes translation impossible and allows only exclusive audiences to fully understand all the words in the plays. According to Ôta, Shôchiku Kagekidan, an Okinawan little theatre company which targets young audiences, has created various comic skits about languages spoken in Okinawa: standard Japanese, Uchinaguchi (an Okinawan dialect), and Uchina Yamatoguchi (a mixture between Okinawan dialects and the standard Japanese). They put these three languages into the same context, and draw laughter through the misinterpretations produced by them. Ôta gives an example of the comic skits called *Yasan*.

A gang passes on the street a man from mainland Japan. Bumped into the shoulder,
"My, my [akijomiyô]", says the gangster.
"You...are 'you a gangster' [otaku yasan]?" (This is an expression in standard Japanese).
"I am full. I've just finished eating a lot of sashimi [namasuba chakami watamisshon]".

While in colloquial expression, *yasan* means *yakuza* (street gang) in standard Japanese, the same sound also means hungry in the dialect. In the dialect, a street gang is called *ashiba*. In the case of an audience member who does not know the vernacular dialect, the point would be missed completely; on the

¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London & New York, Routledge, 1998. p.20.

other hand this is also the case for the audience member who is out of touch with colloquial Japanese expressions, perhaps someone who understands the dialect alone. The privileged one in this case...is the one who occupies the creolized linguistic position.²

The Okinawan dialect shares grammatical structures with standard Japanese, but has different vocabulary and pronunciation. As mentioned in Chapter 6, during the period of Japanese modernisation, as a program of assimilation, Okinawan people had been prohibited from speaking in the traditional Okinawan dialect (Uchinaguchi), and had been forced to speak in standard Japanese. Consequently, languages spoken in Japan include the Okinawan dialect (Uchinaguchi), standard Japanese, and a mixture of the dialect and standard Japanese (Uchina Yamatoguchi). Uchina Yamatoguchi is mainly spoken by younger people who are no longer able to speak the traditional dialect as a result of assimilation. The comic skit which Ota mentioned creates a laugh which can be understood only by someone who knows both the dialect and standard Japanese, and who knows the meanings of the mixed language spoken by the younger generation. In this way, the theatre company strategically utilises the depressed situation of Okinawa as food for laughter and in that sense as a form of cultural resistance. Apart from the comic skit of Yakuza, the company has various other comic skits in their repertoire. They grasp Okinawa's linguistically complex situation where the older generation prefer the Okinawan dialect, the young generation can hardly speak authentic Okinawan dialect, and people who speak the mixed language, live together. This is an attempt to illustrate the double identity of not only Okinawan people but also of the Japanese, instead of appealing through their tragic history as the oppressed. Also, this is "the strategy of survival"³ for the Okinawans who have been forced to live in this complex environment. At the same time, the creolised language used in their plays is a strategy for strengthening the sense of togetherness between the actors and the audiences. That is because the creolised language which they use is to distinguish them from older people who speak the authentic Okinawan language.

² Ôta Yoshinobu, "Appropriating media, resisting power: representations of hybrid identities in Okinawan popular culture" *Between Resistance and Revolution: Cultural Politics and Social Protest*, ed. By Richard G. Fox and Orin Starn. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1997. pp.145-170; quote from p.156.

³ Ôta Yoshinobu, *Minzokushiteki kindai eno kainyû: bunka wo kataru kenri wa dare ni arunoka*. (Refashioning Culture Under the Condition of Ethnographic Modernity: Who Owns a Right to Cultural Discourse?) Kyoto, Jinbunshoin, 2001. p.160.

This strategy reminds us of that which Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra discuss in the use of an Aboriginal word in Aboriginal texts. Hodge and Mishra discuss the idea of “anti-language” as a form of resistance through language.⁴ They argue that mixing English with Aboriginal words, in addition to the significance of expressing Aboriginal identity and its message, may create an anti-language with a calculated effect which distinguishes those who understand its meaning from those who do not. Hodge and Mishra discuss the complexities of this for instance in the case of Jack Davis’s *The Dreamers*. In this play, there is a song which a Nyungar dancer sings. Because the song is sung in the Nyungar language, those who understand its meaning and those who don’t are separated. Furthermore, the word “gnullarah” was firstly translated as “we”, and then it was translated as “my” by Jack Davis himself in the glossary of the published text. However, according to Hodge and Mishra, “Gnullarah” is the exclusive word, “a ‘we’ that links the speaker to others as a collective ego, but specially excludes the people spoken to from that identity”.⁵ Hodge and Mishra argued that this strategy is not only the simple distinction between colonised and coloniser. Even those who know the meaning of “gnullarah” and soon understand its meaning, are also put in the category of Other by the exclusiveness “gnullarah” implies. Hodge and Mishra argue that the reason why the strategy is applied to express very complicated circumstances concerning Aborigines in this way is that Aboriginal society is crossed by numerous interconnections, which are important to maintain their unique lifestyle. Although it is arguable whether Jack Davis really intended this, the example of Shôchiku Kagekidan indicates that emphasising the linguistic situation which is “crossed by numerous interconnections” could be an effective theatrical strategy.

Such an element of minorities’ theatre cannot be translated into other languages. Even Australian non-Aboriginal audiences who see an Aboriginal play or even Japanese non-Okinawan audiences who see an Okinawan play cannot understand the play’s profound meanings. Therefore, it is almost impossible to translate the whole meaning of a play such as *The 7 Stages of Grieving* into a different language, because it was written with the assumption that not all audiences even in the original setting would understand it. As mentioned in Chapter 7, in the Japanese production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, some

⁴ Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra. *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind*. Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1991. pp.206-208.

attempts were made to utilise the Aboriginal language. However, it is arguable whether they were effective because the Aboriginal language in the text only takes on its full meaning through the relationship with English.

In contrast, such a strategy is not used in Jane Harrison's *Stolen*. This play is written only in English, so it is not so difficult for an Australian audience to understand the play. However, when it is translated into Japanese, a translator has to face the problem of Aboriginal English. Many subtle nuances which Aboriginal English implies do not have an equivalent in the Japanese language. In the case of the translation of literature, it is possible to add notes to explain the nuances. However, in the case of theatre, such explanations added to a text will disturb the rhythm of the play. For example, "sis", a word used in *Stolen*, is an abbreviation of "sister" and means not only actual sister but also a woman, a girl, a female relative on the mother's side etc, and includes the connotation of female fellowship in a community. Contemporary Japanese does not have an equivalent vocabulary, and even if a translator makes a detailed explanation, it is difficult for the Japanese audiences to comprehend the word's subtle connotation.

As we have seen, it is almost impossible to translate some elements in Aboriginal plays into the Japanese language. Another key issue is the issue of the Japanese actors' distance from authenticity. After having seen Rakutendan's productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* in 2001, Wesley Enoch commented:

When watching the Japanese productions I was struck by the power of the emotional intensity and the clarity of the relationships, and the universality of the story was made clear to me but I was reminded that the performers are at least two steps removed from their understanding of the material.⁵

This distance from the original social and cultural context makes it difficult to recreate the 'world' of the play. Enoch explains one of "the two steps" as follows:

Firstly, they are not Aboriginal so they have no first hand experience of the prejudice and social realities for Aboriginal Australians (also this is an area

⁵ Ibid., p.207.

⁶ Wesley Enoch, Personal interview with author via e-mail, 21 December 2001.

where research and study cannot be seen as a viable alternative).⁷

I will investigate what Enoch meant by these "two steps". The first step involves the issue of translation into Japanese and its difficulties. The second step is this larger issue of the distance between Aboriginal situations and Japanese actors. Wesley Enoch incorporated his actors' authenticity as Aborigines into his original direction of *Stolen*. In his version, there was a scene after the main story was concluded where each actor recited a monologue extemporaneously. Telling personal stories by Aboriginal actors creates a strong impression as these are the actual voices of those who have been forced into silence. This is a directorial strategy which emphasises the authenticity of the Aborigines rather than the sophistication of the acting. As Enoch says the Japanese actors are not Aborigines so they have no first hand experience of the prejudice and social realities for Aboriginal Australians; this monologue cannot be reproduced by the Japanese. The scene where actors tell their true stories in the epilogue of *Stolen* should perhaps be regarded as injecting 'reality', 'truth' or 'testimony' into the play rather than simply 'authenticity'. Wesley Enoch strategically used the overwhelmingly persuasive power of the truth which the actors tell us about the Stolen Generations. He explains his attitude as follows:

I believe in the politics of truth.⁸

In this sense, the Japanese actors could not reach "the politics of truth" no matter how they studied Aboriginal history and no matter how enthusiastically they performed, as of course, this personal story-telling process could not be reproduced in the Japanese production of *Stolen*.

Another key issue that the Japanese production has is difficulty of contextualisation. This is a problem for both actors and audience. Wesley Enoch explains the second of the "two steps" as follows;

Secondly, they do not live in Australia so they haven't the complex everyday reference points we in this country have.⁹

For the general Japanese population, as I pointed out in the Introduction,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

knowledge not only about Aborigines but also about Australia is superficial and partial. Although there were sporadic reports about the tragedy of the "Stolen Generations", they only gained the attention of some Japanese who had a special interest in Australia. We can say with fair certainty that most Japanese do not know about the Stolen Generations.

For example, in a conversational review of the Playbox version of *Stolen* in Tokyo, Japanese theatre critics said as follows:

Koshimitsu Terufumi: I learned for the first time that the title of *Stolen* came from 'the Stolen Generations' and that indigenous people called 'Aborigines' were assimilated to the whites by taking away their children to detention centres. ...To my shame, I have never known that there was such a history.

Ichinose Kazuo: Less information about Australia is conveyed to Japan than we expect, let alone information about the indigenous people. Some information about Aborigines is conveyed, but I have never heard that such a tragedy happened under the country's policy. The fact that I learned it from the play reminded me of a significant role of theatre.¹⁰

In the questionnaires, many members of the audience wrote that they had never learned this kind of history of Aborigines although they had known of the existence of Aboriginal people. This response was common to Japanese audiences both at Playbox's original production and the Japanese production.

Their remarks indicate that, in Japan, people who are interested in theatre and people who are interested in Australia or Aborigines do not generally overlap. In contrast, knowledge about the Stolen Generations is accessible to all who live in Australia. Besides, Aboriginal performing arts can be seen in many theatres around Australia. It is easy to access the richness of the contemporary Aboriginal culture including rock music, films, and contemporary dance. Not only these positive aspects of Aborigines, but also information about their negative situation such as the high rate of Aboriginal deaths in custody, poverty, and short life expectancy, is accessible too. It is natural that an Aboriginal play which is presented in these circumstances and an equivalent which is presented in a place like Japan will have different meanings. Even the original Playbox production of

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ichinose Kazuo and Koshimitsu Terufumi, "Taidan engeki jihyō" (Theatre review

Stolen is likely to have different meanings between those in Australia and in Japan.

In this way, the difficulty of contextualisation could come up not only in the Japanese production but also in the original Australian production. Japanese audiences have no knowledge of the history of the Aboriginal involvement in performing arts. For example, Japanese audiences may be unable to comprehend the innovations reflected in the contemporary Aboriginal theatre. Especially from the 1990s, Aboriginal theatre became more multifaceted, and various styles and directions, such as musicals, were introduced into plays. Wesley Enoch, one of the leading directors of Aboriginal theatre since the 1990s, explains his production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* as follows:

Historically, Indigenous writers have focused on appropriating the western forms of theatre to create the drama, incorporating the elements of dance, advanced metaphor and use of language to highlight the writing's Aboriginality. An over-reliance on character and the denial of abstraction has often created a situation where the writing is perceived as unsophisticated and / or primarily issue-based, outside of artistic scrutiny.

The Seven Stages of Grieving wishes to challenge this history.¹¹

As Enoch writes, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* is not written in the way of realism at all. The play lacks consistent narrative, and consists of fragments of Aboriginal history and contemporary life and events, which are told by an unidentified Aboriginal woman. It is clear that the authors aim for artistic sophistication by incorporating abstraction into the play. We can see the play preserves a delicate balance between artistic sophistication and politics. Without explanations, it is difficult for the Japanese audiences to comprehend the fact that contemporary Aboriginal plays such as *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *Stolen* bear a delicate relationship with traditional expressions. Contemporary expressions such as the dance by the Bangarra Dance Theatre are related to traditional expressions more deeply than theatre. Even in these expressions, audiences are required to understand what kind of relationship the artists have developed with tradition in order to express their identities. Stephen Page says:

talk) *Higeki Kigeki* March 2003. pp.74-103.

¹¹ Wesley Enoch. "Why do we applaud?" *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Brisbane,

A lot of urban blacks are frightened of using traditional dance. There's been discussions and cultural meetings where they're worried about the contemporary world taking over the traditional and using traditional material in a bad way. ...we have to have an urban style, an urban identity as well.¹²

It is not easy for many Japanese audiences to understand this attitude of contemporary indigenous artists, because the existence of indigenous peoples has been invisible in Japan. There are Japanese equivalents of these Aboriginal artists. Oki, a musician specialising in the traditional Ainu instrument Tonkori, was born in the Tokyo metropolitan area, so that he grew up without a relationship with the Ainu community in Hokkaido. Oki says:

I am often told by Ainu people in Hokkaido that city-bred men like me will never understand the Ainu.¹³

Recently, however, Oki moved his base to Hokkaido, and started teaching how to play the Tonkori to the Ainu youngsters in Hokkaido. Thus, his relationship with the Ainu community in Hokkaido is changing gradually. Few people know this about Oki because Oki is not a mainstream artist, and more importantly, only 'authentic' Ainu culture has been recognised in Japan. Therefore, it is hard for Japanese audiences to understand the standpoint of Aboriginal contemporary artists.

Moreover, due to the lack of knowledge about the complicated and diverse experiences of Aborigines, there could have been some Japanese audiences who thought that all the elements of *Stolen* such as the story, the style, and the world were shared by all Aborigines. This kind of misunderstanding could arise because the play is presented in Japan. At the production of the Japanese version of *Stolen*, the only way to make up for this difficulty of contextualisation was to present a lecture about the history of Aborigines and Aboriginal theatre after performances.

Another major point of difference between effective production of indigenous theatre for Australian audiences compared to Japanese audiences may be related

Playlab Press, 1996.

¹² *Aboriginal Voices: Contemporary Aboriginal Artists, Writers and Performers*. Brookvale, Simon & Schuster Australia, 1990.

¹³ Oki cited from "Aidentitî wo sagasu tame ni jinsei ga aru wake ja nai" (My life does not exist only for looking for my identity) *Spa!* 23 July 2002. pp.132-135.

to the point Stephen Muecke has argued about what he refers to as Aboriginal culture as White 'redemption'.¹⁴ According to Muecke, today, there is no obstacle for Aborigines to tell their stories through art and literature. For example, if an Aborigine writes a literary work, a publisher will usually offer to publish it. Then, stories of the oppressed people included in the work will be consumed by white readers as a catharsis of redemption. In this situation, however, there is a danger of Aborigines' being confined in the category of 'the oppressed' which is perhaps constructed as part of a 'romantic' image of Aboriginality. Needless to say, Aborigines should not be categorised only as the oppressed. Consuming their cultural expressions as some kind of White catharsis risks the danger of neglecting various different kinds of stories Aborigines want to tell. Japanese audiences do not have a sense of needing redemption in respect of Aborigines because the Japanese have had few commitments to the history of repression against Aborigines. However, if they respond to the play mainly with pity, they will also be neglecting important aspects of the real voices of Aboriginal people.

In this section, I have discussed the issues which have arisen through the presentations in the form of 'honyakugeki', and the issues which are shared by the Japanese productions and the original Australian production in Japan. In order to resolve as many issues as possible, the Rakutendan Theatre Company invited Wesley Enoch and Jane Harrison and had talk sessions after the performances. Possibly, by having the talk sessions, the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* may have been able to convey important contextual aspects about the plays than the Playbox production of *Stolen* which did not have a discussion with the Japanese audiences.

The possibility of the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays

This section investigates significances which we were able to find only through the presentations of the Aboriginal plays in the form of 'honyakugeki'.

I would like to acknowledge that there is a risk of encroaching on Aboriginal cultural ownership when the Japanese perform Aboriginal plays. Wesley Enoch says about these productions;

¹⁴ Stephen Muecke, *Textual Spaces: Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*. Kensington, New South Wales University Press, 1992.

I was very curious about the readings in Japan and remain on alert about some of the issues surrounding the politics of non-Aboriginal people playing roles written for Aboriginal people. Ownership of the story is very important to me.¹⁵

On this topic, I asked a question of the director Wada as follows;

Non-Aborigines in Australia are careful about dealing with Aboriginal culture. For instance, they are never able to 'be Aborigines', and there is a risk of dispossessing the Aboriginal culture again if they do so. Given this fact what kind of problems and possibilities are there when the Japanese perform as Aborigines in the Aboriginal plays?

Wada answered in terms of a concept of universality;

When non-Aborigines perform as Aborigines in Australia, there will be the same problems as when the Japanese perform plays about the Ainu and Okinawans in Japan. However, should we think that cultural things should be fixed to a group of people who own them? Rather, I believe that there is something common between us. Races in the world are mixed up. Is a myth of indigenous people born in only one place? Even if so, there are common myths between various cultures. That is because mythical wisdom came from human relationships and their relations with the environment. Producing Aboriginal plays gives a hint for the Japanese. In the Western world and Japan, it is difficult to imagine what kind of societies we should create in the future. I believe that the Aboriginal plays may give us hints including those about indigenous issues in Japan. If we consider only visible things, someone may think it is impossible (for the Japanese to perform as Aborigines) because of these differences. But, if we consider something essential, I believe it is possible to overcome such differences. At first, the Japanese actors who performed the Aboriginal plays were troubled with their lack of knowledge about Aboriginal history. But, they were able to find common ground after studying relationships and reminding themselves of their own memories of the past. It is possible to call the common ground 'contemporaneusness'.¹⁶

¹⁵ Enoch, 2001.

¹⁶ Wada Yoshio, Personal interview with author. Tokyo, 18 December 2001.

This remark of Wada's "Producing Aboriginal plays will give a hint for the Japanese" about indigenous issues does not mean a romantic notion that Aboriginal culture could bring a completely new value to the modernised world. Nor does it mean that something primitive could give stimulation to the developed world. As discussed in Chapter 6, it is still taboo in Japan to speak about indigenous people, and Japanese artists are careful to deal very much with not only indigenous people but also minorities in general in their works. Wada is looking for a methodology to break through the ossified structure of the Japanese society by producing 'honyakugeki' of Australian and Canadian indigenous peoples.

As mentioned above, Wesley Enoch remains "on alert about some of the issues surrounding the politics of non-Aboriginal people playing roles written for Aboriginal people". However, he had a great interest in this attempt. Enoch says:

At first I was apprehensive, I could not imagine what a Japanese audience would make of the stories and the form of pieces. These two pieces of Theatre are so connected to their political context in Australia I wondered whether just translating the texts was enough,¹⁷

As mentioned in Chapter 5, Japanese anthropologists criticised the Japanese productions, saying:

If Wada directs the Aboriginal plays on the assumption that the Aborigines and the Japanese have something in common, his direction will dismiss the politics and appeal of Aborigines which the original plays might have. Don't you think it is impolite to the Aboriginal writers?

I asked Enoch about his opinion of this discussion. He replied:

I am excited that another director can find something in these stories which he believes is important to tell to a Japanese audience, and I will always respond to what the director sees, as opposed to the sensitivities of the anthropologists.¹⁸

¹⁷ Enoch, 2001.

¹⁸ Ibid.

I asked the same question of Jane Harrison. Harrison answered, "(I was) quite amazed, as I did wonder about the relevance to Japanese people but was flattered by the interest", and continued as follows;

Firstly, it is not impolite to me to make the assumption that the Japanese and Aboriginal people have something in common. As a writer I strive to communicate a universal message in my writing and find it humbling that people from such a vastly different cultural background are able to see the universal in the local story (and it is a local story, having been expressly written for the Victorian Koori community). As for politics, I am not interested so much in big 'P' politics, but rather more in showing the effect of the policies in the lives of the individual and the community. I wanted to create something that resonated on an emotional level with the audience and that did not divide an audience with political loyalties.

Also, something expressed by another culture can perhaps bring our own into sharper focus. I understand there are some parallels between our Aboriginal people and the experience of the Ainu people. Maybe it is less confronting to examine someone else's story than have to deal with one's own? But maybe such a beginning can lead to an examination or exploration of one's own history? We can all learn from each other.¹⁹

These remarks by Harrison point out that it is important to learn from each other, as the Japanese production attempted through *Stolen*, rather than to always avoid risk. The Japanese theatre faced a completely new paradigm with the Aboriginal texts. This meant that producing indigenous plays could raise problems. At the same time, however, this could be a very significant experience for the Japanese contemporary theatre. As we have seen in this thesis, it was the first time that the Japanese theatre had faced the risk of cultural appropriation through the productions of 'honyakugeki'. 'Honyakugeki' had always been regarded as resources from which Japanese theatre practitioners and intellectuals learnt about 'universal' and 'advanced' Western culture.

Both Wada and Harrison have, interestingly, invoked the notion of 'universality'. However, the idea of universality itself involves a risk. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue;

¹⁹ Jane Harrison, Personal interview with author. via e-mail, 23 January 2003.

Universalism offers a hegemonic view of existence by which the experiences, values and expectations of a dominant culture are held to be true for all humanity. ...its assumption ...of a common humanity...underlies the promulgation of imperial discourse for the 'advancement' or 'improvement' of the colonized, goals that thus mask the extensive and multi-faceted exploitation of the colony.²⁰

The assumption of a common humanity involves a risk of neglecting cultural differences. The most significant thing of which the attempt to present the Aboriginal plays in the form of 'honyakugeki' reminds us, is the fact that 'honyakugeki' in Japan has played the important role of enforcing the coloniser/colonised relationship between the West and Japan. We in Japan would probably have been happily unaware of the fact that the practice of relatively unreflective production of 'honyakugeki' involves the risk of neglecting cultural differences, exploiting other cultures and encroaching on their ownership as long as Japanese theatre presented only Western plays in the form of 'honyakugeki'. This risk, which was revealed through the Japanese presentations of the Aboriginal plays, will give a new perspective to the treatment of Japanese indigenous people in Japanese theatre. In other words, we cannot avoid facing the question of whether theatre should cross the cultural difference between Japanese indigenous people and the mainstream Japanese. The discovery of this risk is a distinctive feature of this project in Japan. *Stolen* was presented in London and Hong Kong too. However, in those cities, the original Playbox production was presented. Even in Hong Kong the original version was presented in English. That is why the issue that the Japanese production raises is a distinctive characteristic of not only this particular production, but also 'honyakugeki' in Japan. It is important that a Japanese viewpoint was added to the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor in this play.

Marc Maufort examines *Stolen* from the perspective of postcolonial criticism.²¹ Maufort writes that he found in *Stolen* the method of resorting "to mimicry/hybridity to unsettle the artistic domination of the Western canon"²² as Homi K Bhabha suggests. For example, he points out "*Stolen* relies both on

²⁰ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998, p.235.

²¹ Marc Maufort, "Jane Harrison's *Stolen* and the international postcolonial context", *Crucible of Cultures: Anglophone Drama at the Dawn of a New Millennium*. Bruxelles & New York, P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2002. pp.285-294.

²² Ibid., p.285.

Western and non-Western tradition".²³ According to Maufort, in *Stolen*, Jane Harrison uses Western methods such as "the Western tradition of poetic realism",²⁴ the techniques used by "European Expressionists at the beginning of the twentieth-century",²⁵ and "the novelistic stream-of-consciousness of modernists like Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield".²⁶ On the other hand, he points out that story-telling, a traditional means of expression for Aborigines, achieves the "most striking departure from the conventions of Western realism".²⁷ As for the effect produced from the hybridity between Western and non-Western (Aboriginal) methodologies, he explains as follows:

...a collage of various narratives ...enables Harrison to reconfigure Aboriginal history through a polyphonic story-telling design. ...his [Sandy, a story-teller] narratives allow the world of Aboriginal magic to invade the rationalism of white culture. ...Thus, the intrusion of the supernatural into the drabness of everyday reality reveals Harrison's desire to reshape Western realism...²⁸

As Maufort suggests, Harrison's strategy, which mimics Western literary and dramatic styles but also allows for the intrusion into them of Aboriginal traditions, was certainly effective for white audiences in Australian theatres. However, were the characteristics of *Stolen*, and Harrison's intention as Maufort points out, as effective when the play was translated and presented in Japan? The relationship between the West and the non-West, and the state of hybridity depending on that relationship are unable to be effective in Japan. Given these circumstances, was *Stolen* segmented and isolated by the Japanese production?

The Japanese productions of Aboriginal plays indicate that the circumstances around contemporary Aborigines, which used to consist of the West and the non-West is changing. The point is whether Aboriginal theatre, which utilises a hybridisation between the West and the non-West, appropriating Western forms of expressions, can achieve the aim of conveying Aboriginal voices even if it is presented outside Australia. Maufort predicts it will be possible as follows:

Harrison's *Stolen* should not be reserved to black audiences. Its historical

²³ Ibid., p.286.

²⁴ Ibid., p.289.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.290-291.

revisionism will undoubtedly strike responsive chords with mainstream audiences in Australia and abroad... It clearly gives expression to the voice of an oppressed minority, while articulating universal themes such as the human quest for home and identity. The emotional intensity of this work will enthrall Aboriginal and white audiences alike, not only throughout the postcolonial world ...but also beyond the margins of the Commonwealth.²⁹

Certainly, when *Stolen* was first performed in Australia, this play aimed to express the Aboriginal voices which have been oppressed by the colonialism. However, *Stolen* has been presented not only in Australia but, as Maufort predicted, has already gone "beyond the margins of the Commonwealth".³⁰ I would like to point out that the experience of Aborigines which consists of the relation between the whites and Aborigines is changing. The relations with immigrants from various countries for instance have affected the experience of Aborigines. There is indirect influence too. For example, Japanese electric power companies have stakes in a multinational company which is developing uranium mines in Kakadu. The development is accused of destroying the environment where Aboriginal communities live.³¹ Besides, the tourism industry that mainly targets the Japanese has various influences on the lives of the contemporary Aborigines.

This diversity of Aboriginal experience is reflected in theatre too. For example, at the 2002 Adelaide Festival, the theme of which was 'reconciliation', there were some productions that made the audience think about the relations between Aborigines and Japan, or Aborigines and Asia. William Yang's *Shadows* tells both a story about the period of suffering of German immigrant communities in South Australia, and a story about an Aboriginal community in a remote area, showing reconciliation among ethnic groups in Australia. In the Fringe Festival of the same year, there was a play by the Aboriginal actor Ningali and the Vietnamese performer Hang Lee called *Black & Tran*. *Shadows* and *Black & Tran* are not plays which emphasise the binarism of indigenous people versus whites, or which specialise in a particular ethnic group. Rather, they are examples which reflect the reality of contemporary Australia where various races including Aborigines and Asians coexist. Besides, they show that Asians have started intervening in and

²⁹ Ibid., p.293.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Itô Takashi, *Nihon ga hakaisuru sekai isan: nihon no genpatsu to ôsutoraria no uran saikutsu*. (The World Heritage Which Japan Is Destroying: Japan's Nuclear Power Plants and Uranium Mining in Australia) Tokyo, Fûbaisha, 2000.

talking about the process of 'reconciliation'.

Another play dealing with the relation between Aborigines and Asians is *The Career Highlights of the Mamu* presented by the Black Swan Theatre Company of Western Australia at the 2002 Adelaide Festival. The play tells a story about the tragedy of Aborigines, who were forced to move from their land because of atomic testing at Maralinga in the 1950s and 1960s. An Aboriginal community was reproduced on the stage, where various forms of expression were used including traditional story-telling, live music, video and recorded musical elements. In this play, the Japanese actor Izawa Asako played an important role. Her role was not only as an editor of the documentary film which recorded the play on the video and had interviews with the Aboriginal cast members, but also as a representative of the Japanese as A-bomb victims. Trevor Jamieson, the central character, also had an interview with a Hiroshima bomb survivor in the video shown on the stage. Then, while Izawa gave a reading of a survivor's poetry, an Aboriginal actor sang *Nagasaki no kane* (A Bell in Nagasaki), a Japanese popular song of the early 1950s, giving courage to people in Nagasaki. In this way, the play consists of two stories: the story about Maralinga and the story about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The two stories take different approaches to atomic bombs. While the story about Hiroshima and Nagasaki was told to reveal the horrors of war and the preciousness of peace, the story about Maralinga was told to reveal the sufferings of the oppressed people and the significance of reconciliation. However, it seems to be difficult to place the importance of the excessive number of deaths, and the issue of the dignity of human persons on the same level. To put it briefly, it is difficult to deal with Maralinga and Hiroshima / Nagasaki as equivalent issues, so because of this the play had unsatisfactory elements. Nevertheless, it is very important that Aborigines and the Japanese, who seemingly have nothing in common, were able to share the issue of nuclear weapons on the stage.

That the Japanese translated an Aboriginal play into Japanese and Japanese actors performed Aboriginal roles with help from Aboriginal artists means that the Japanese and Aborigines had 'a dialogue' with each other. Moreover, that does not allow the Japanese to pretend to be mere onlookers, or detached observers, as anthropologists used to be. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is important to talk 'about' Aborigines 'as' a Japanese. Theatre as theatre especially has the power to entice not only the actors but also the audience to be concerned with the world of a play, because people of flesh and blood are performing. As Japanese scholar Anzai Tetsuo argues, "Translation of plays provokes a question of language through the

body of a performer, a concrete reality, not simply at the level of text but at the level of performance. Furthermore, we cannot but be conscious of the cultural and social context through the society represented by the audience".³² Therefore, when the translated text of an Aboriginal play is performed in Japan, audiences of the production may respond to the work differently from readers of the translated playtext.

Wada Yoshio has directed Canadian and Australian plays dealing with minorities and indigenous people. About his basic attitude towards the above mentioned issues as a director, firstly, he says, "Artistic expressions only exist because artists believe all human beings have something in common". This is his basic premise about artistic expressions. He also says:

I hear it said often that theatre (or languages) cannot cross borders, but I believe theatre 'must' cross the borders.³³

Wada's conviction will not resolve all issues as discussed above. However, this conviction certainly urges 'a dialogue'. His conviction is based on his irritation about the present state of Japanese theatre, which places a taboo on the issue of the Ainu and avoids having 'a dialogue' with them as mentioned in Chapter 6, and on his will to change this. Wada criticises the idea that the Japanese understand each other perfectly, and that national borders and linguistic borders are the highest barriers. He says that, if writers write their works in the belief that there should be something in common among all human beings, directors also should be able to cross the barriers. He also says that, even if all the historical, social and geographical contexts of the works cannot be conveyed to audiences of a different culture, we only have to look for something in common. Wada says, "If you meet someone face to face, you can find whether he/she is happy or sad". In other words, he considers meeting face to face the most important element to crossing the borders. That is because Wada emphasises 'meeting face to face' through exchange programs accompanied with productions of foreign plays.

The significance of the Japanese productions seems to be recognised by Wesley

³² Anzai Tetsuo, "Honyakugeki no kanôsei to genkai: gikyoku no honyaku jôen wo chûshin ni" (The possibilities and limitations of 'honyakugeki': about the presentations of translated texts of plays) *Eigo Seinen* 127(9), December 1981. pp. 539-541; quote from p.539.

³³ Wada, 2001.

Enoch too. After seeing the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, Enoch said;

I found the whole experience to be a real eye opener. The emotional intensity with which the actors performed the material was incredible. In some ways because the actors didn't have that authenticity I was talking about earlier they had to rely on their skills as actors, which were incredible. I found myself crying during *Stolen* because I found it so engaging and heart wrenching. Because of the political vacuum that the pieces were performed in, I was reminded that they are pieces of art not just political comments on the state of Australia and our history.³⁴

Enoch was able to encounter *Stolen* in a different way when he saw the Japanese production. It is possible to say that he would never have been able to have this experience if it was only the Playbox production of *Stolen* which was produced in Japan. Interestingly, his reaction is similar to that of Helen Thomson who reviewed the Japanese production of *The Floating World* in Melbourne in 1995. Here we can find the significance and possibility of 'honyakugeki'.

Needless to say, everyone knows that the Japanese never have the right to talk about Aborigines 'as Aborigines'. What is important is the reason why the Japanese attempted to 'be' Aborigines in the Aboriginal plays. What happened when they 'became' Aborigines? How did the Japanese audience understand it? What did it feed back to the Aboriginal director and playwright who were able to see the productions and the audiences' reactions? These are questions that arise only after Aboriginal plays are translated into other languages and performed in other countries. Also, there are questions that arise only after the audiences commit to the issue the plays deal with, not as mere observers but as ones who are involved.

The questions I have asked in this chapter have no easy answers. Also, there is no convenient theory applicable for the production of a translated text of indigenous theatre. All who participated in the productions have to keep thinking about these questions. What is clear so far is that many people who saw the Aboriginal plays thought that Japanese theatre needed this kind of work. The Aboriginal plays brought Aboriginal and Australian issues to the Japanese attention. However,

³⁴ Enoch, 2001.

Stolen and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* not only brought knowledge about Aborigines to the Japanese, but also made them think about Japanese theatre and the minorities and indigenous people in Japan too.

I want to discuss a particular issue about the role of politics in Japanese theatre. Even if the size of audiences was smaller than the one for the Aboriginal art exhibition, reviews and audience questionnaires show that the productions conveyed many things to the Japanese audiences. In the review of the Playbox production of *Stolen*, Japanese critic Koshimitsu Terufumi described how the work conveyed the facts of the Stolen Generations to the Japanese audience, showing "an important role of theatre".³⁵ It is possible to say that the Playbox production of *Stolen* became one of the most important productions to come to Japan in Japanese contemporary theatre history. The visit of the Moscow Art Theatre in the 1950s showed a splendid artistic achievement, which made an impact on Japanese theatre practitioners. In contrast, *Stolen* made an impact on Japanese theatre practitioners and audiences by showing "an important social role for theatre". *Stolen* revealed a problem of Japanese contemporary theatre. Critic Ichinose Kazuo points out that a major problem for Japanese contemporary theatre is that "The sphere of interest of the audience, especially the young audience, is very narrow".³⁶

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the tendency of Japanese theatre to avoid political issues was pointed out in the symposium about the reading of *Diving for Pearls*. Besides, as mentioned in Chapter 7, Wada criticised Japanese theatre for avoiding social issues and concentrating only on techniques. Wada pointed out that, although Japanese playwrights also want to deal with social issues, they hesitate to do so because they assume that the audience wants entertainment. The playwrights have concentrated on techniques to meet the audience's demand for entertainment.³⁷ One audience member's comment was that the audience was able to smoothly understand what the play aimed to tell. The audience might discover that 'simplicity', which Wada also emphasises in his direction of the two Aboriginal plays, is an effective way to let the audience face social issues. One of the social issues which is the most difficult for Japanese theatre to deal with is the issue of minorities. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the issue of minorities has been almost

³⁵ Ichinose and Koshimitsu, 2003, p.86.

³⁶ Ibid., p.87.

³⁷ Besides, Wada points out that the structure of the highly developed consumer society has a great influence on Japanese theatre.

taboo in Japanese theatre, and it was necessary to be careful in dealing with this issue. *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* reminded the audience of the distance between Japanese theatre and minorities and the fact that the issue of minorities was not a concern in Japan. The plays gave a hint about the relation between theatre and minorities to Japanese theatre practitioners.

The review of the Playbox production of *Stolen* points out that Aboriginal theatre is an important genre of theatre, and that a mature audience, who can understand the important genre rather than seek only entertainment, is really needed in Japan.³⁸ Wada and other Japanese theatre practitioners must be convinced of the need to produce an equivalent of the Aboriginal plays in Japan. Here we have to remind ourselves of the double function of 'honyakugeki' which I have discussed in this thesis. In the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays, the Japanese audience found not only the story of Aborigines but also Japanese stories. I will give an interesting example: *Stolen* reminded some audience members of the issue of victims of abduction by North Korea.³⁹ Around the same time as the productions of *Stolen* in Tokyo, five out of hundreds of victims including a 13 year old school girl, who had been abducted from Japan by North Korean agents, returned to Japan after more than twenty years, and stunned the Japanese society. The story of separated parents and children in *Stolen* reminded some audiences of the tragedy of the victims and their families. More importantly, in the productions of the Aboriginal plays, some audience rediscovered the existence of minorities in Japan including the Ainu, Okinawan, Korean residents and Burakumin which have been made invisible in the Japanese society.⁴⁰ The situation and the history of each minority are different as discussed in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, the Japanese government adopted a strategy used to assimilate Burakumin towards other minorities too, so that those minorities have been commonly regarded as the same as Burakumin. Furthermore, this policy of assimilation made it difficult for the minorities to emphasise their differences from the Japanese, and made them 'invisible' in Japanese society. In fact, some Japanese audiences could not remember the Ainu as a Japanese equivalent of Aborigines. Some audience asked themselves questions such as "Are we doing the same thing (to minorities) in Japan, too?" In this way, the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays gave the

³⁸ Ichinose and Koshimitsu, 2003, pp.87-88.

³⁹ 6 in 37 audience members who responded to the questionnaire said that *Stolen* reminded them of the abduction victims by North Korea.

⁴⁰ 7 in 37 audience members who responded to the questionnaire said the production reminded them of the issues of Japanese minorities including the Ainu,

audience an opportunity to rethink if it was possible that they, as the majority, discriminated against or oppressed invisible minorities in Japan. This is the effect of the double function of 'honyakugeki'. The emergence of plays dealing with minorities, especially the Ainu is hoped for in Japan today. However, as mentioned in Chapter 6, it will take considerable time to collaborate with the Ainu, who fear being exposed to ridicule.

In Japan, a popular playwright usually writes three or four plays each year. To convey the voice of the Ainu to the mainstream Japanese society through theatre, the commitments of creators, audiences, the Ainu are required. Wada gives attention to the fact that it took six years to complete *Stolen* after several workshops, and two years for *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Wada points out that, in Japan, it will take considerable time just to negotiate with the Ainu about collaboration because there are various groups and ideologies among the Ainu. Wada says that Japanese practitioners should slowly and carefully develop works, audiences, and a mature theatrical environment, rather than mass-produce works depending on one playwright's talent, or we will not be able to see 'Ainu theatre' in Japan.⁴¹ However, it is impossible to achieve those things in the present system of Japanese theatre (including systems of theatre companies, public subsidies, and the social environment). Therefore, as the first step to develop the genre of minorities' theatre, indigenous theatre, the productions of Australian indigenous theatre as 'honyakugeki' have a great significance.

Playbox suggested that, when the translated version of *Stolen* was to be presented in Japan, Japanese indigenous people should be included in the cast.⁴² The reason for the suggestion is that Japanese actors lack the authenticity in Aboriginal roles and the production performed by the Japanese lacks the political background which Wesley Enoch emphasised in the original production. As mentioned in Chapter 7, Wada used a Korean actor in the 2002 production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. Also, Wada invited Ainu players of Tonkori, a traditional Ainu musical instrument, to the post-performance talk session, to which Jane Harrison was also invited. Wada could have used Korean residents as a minority in the Japanese society instead of the Korean actor. He could have used an Ainu actor for an Aboriginal role as Playbox suggested. However, Wada thought that it was possible to present the Aboriginal plays without Japanese minorities such as Ainu and

Okinawan, Korean residents and Burakumin.

⁴¹ Wada, 2001.

Korean residents. That is because, as mentioned above, Wada believes that the barriers of national borders, languages and cultures are never insurmountable obstacles, and he continues to explore a way of crossing those borders.

Wesley Enoch defines the roles of Aboriginal theatre as 'education' and 'celebration'.⁴³ To educate people through drama has been attempted by educational drama for correcting discrimination against Burakumin in Japan. However, the problem of this drama is that it has not been recognised as 'art'. Therefore, it fell into obscurity as peculiar drama dealing with only a highly localised issue, and it therefore failed to share a common issue with a wide range of people. If only seen as 'celebration', there is a risk that the indigenous theatre be seen as spectacular, only emphasising 'otherness'. The indigenous theatre can be established only when 'education' and 'celebration' are combined in the right balance. Of course, we must not forget that, as discussed in Chapter 5, Aboriginal theatre has been marginalised even in Australia because it is not 'traditional'. The reason contemporary Aboriginal theatre is attracting interest from many people in Australia is because Aboriginal issues have become politically 'high-profile' via the issue of the Stolen Generations which was clarified by the Royal Commission. The rise of Aboriginal theatre reflects the cultural movement of Aboriginal people and the changes in Australian society. Not only theatre practitioners but also audiences in Australia have matured.

In Japan, in contrast, the fact that there is no such thing as 'Ainu theatre' reflects immaturity in this field. Even if Wada cast Japanese minorities such as the Ainu in Aboriginal roles in the Aboriginal plays in this situation in Japanese theatre, it is clear that the productions would not bring a good result. As discussed in Chapter 6, assimilation into the mainstream Japanese as in the case of Burakumin has been regarded as an effective policy for dealing with ethnic minorities in Japan. Therefore, even in contemporary Japan, ethnic minorities might confront various difficulties if they refuse assimilation and express their cultural identity apart from exoticism for tourism attractions. That is why Wada chose the way of 'honyakugeki', whose methodology and audience have matured as a result of trial and error over one hundred years in Japan. This is the way to seek something in common positively, without worrying about the differences of race, culture and language, which bring a strategic ambiguity to 'honyakugeki'. The

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Wesley Enoch, Lecture and workshop at Waseda University, Tokyo. 10

double function of 'honyakugeki' can let the Japanese audiences understand not only that the play is about an Australian issue, but also remind them of an equivalent Japanese issue.

By speaking to the Japanese audience in Japanese, Wada attempted to change both the representation of Aborigines in Japan as discussed in Chapter 5, and the Japanese ideology towards minorities in Japan. Many audiences were able to understand Wada's intention.

If Japanese audiences need to learn about the Australian issue and criticise the history of oppressed Aborigines, seeing only the Playbox production of *Stolen* in Tokyo should be enough. However, is it really possible to say, "That much should be enough"? In Japan, there is a movement attempting to avoid criticism of Japanese colonialism by emphasising the cruelty of Western colonialism. If Japanese audiences see only the Playbox production of *Stolen*, they regard the content as just an Australian issue, so that they could be complicit in emphasising the cruelty of Western colonialism. By being presented by the Japanese in the Japanese language, it becomes possible for the imagination of the Japanese audience to pass between the Australian and Japanese histories. Also, it makes it easy for the audience to remember the history of oppressed indigenous people in Japan. This is the reason why many in the audience at the Japanese production of *Stolen* wrote in questionnaires that the play reminded them of Japanese minorities.

Wada hopes to be able to cast an Ainu actor when he directs an Australian Aboriginal play again.⁴⁴ This does not mean that he uses Japanese indigenous people to reproduce the atmosphere of Australian Aboriginal plays. Rather, by casting Japanese indigenous people, he wishes to aid in the maturation of theatrical circumstances by which he can appeal to the issue of Japanese indigenous people more strongly. The maturation of theatrical circumstance means that Ainu will be able to express themselves through theatre, and that the audiences will be able understand that is an important genre of theatre. The Japanese audience generally prefer entertainment and artistic sophistication to social and political issue drama such as Shingeki. Wada contemplates making Japanese audiences confront this kind of drama. To do so, he attempts to share a

November, 2003.

⁴⁴ Wada, 2001.

common issue with the audiences by holding post-performance talk sessions, which are rare at Shôgekijô in Japan.

Wada says, "The Aboriginal plays not only tell stories about Aboriginal people, but also created an opportunity for us to think about the meaning of living in a community".⁴⁵ As Wada says, the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays provide an opportunity for the Japanese to think about their own society and life. Enoch says:

Theatre is ...an adoption of a deep seated cultural urge to tell stories and connect as a community. The telling of stories documents our history, teaches us how to survive in our world and gives us strength to battle on.⁴⁶

When Enoch created *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, he may have thought of the significance of Aboriginal theatre for Aboriginal communities. However, as discussed in this chapter, the plays have had an influence on the possibility of indigenous theatre in Japan. Also, people who have a completely different cultural context have found something in common with those plays. Of his impression when Enoch saw the Japanese productions of *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and had exchanges with the Japanese audience and theatrical practitioners through his lectures and workshops, he says as follows:

I think that this trip gave me an outside perspective on what I am doing and how other people can appreciate what I'm doing. The isolation of being a writer and a director was shattered with this trip and I think I will take that confidence in myself and my work into the near future.⁴⁷

Enoch might have learned that the Aboriginal plays had larger strength to battle on and to expand universally than he had expected. This chapter has demonstrated the problems and possibilities of the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays in the form of 'honyakugeki'. We can conclude that there is no solution for the issues about the difficulties of translations and contextualisation. Also we are reminded by the Japanese presentations of the Aboriginal plays that the assumption of universalism on which 'honyakugeki' is based carries the risk of neglecting cultural differences and reproducing colonial exploitation. However, we

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Enoch, 2001.

should notice that Wada had 'a dialogue' with Aboriginal artists and clarified the relationship between the Japanese and Aborigines by inviting them to his productions, and that the double function of 'honyakugeki' made it possible for the Japanese audiences to rediscover the existence of Japanese minorities through the Aboriginal plays.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion

The presentation of the translated Japanese text of an Australian play is one way to represent Australia in Japan. While other cultural products about Australia are regarded as just the representations of Australia, 'honyakugeki' are regarded by receivers not only as the representations of Australia but also as the representations of Japan. I defined this function as the double function of 'honyakugeki'.

The representations of Australia in Japan are extremely superficial, emphasising Australian wildlife and its natural environment. These representations of Australia reflect Japanese attitudes towards Australia. As a translator, I have attempted to modify conventional representations of Australia in Japan by translating Australian plays. However, when the translations were performed on Japanese stages, they brought a new dimension which could not occur at the text level of translations. This thesis has examined what happened to the Japanese translations of the Australian plays which were performed by Japanese theatre companies.

In Part 1 (Chapters 1-4), I discussed 'honyakugeki' as an independent genre of the Japanese modern theatre. Very few attempts have been made at such investigations of 'honyakugeki' even in Japan, probably because their creativity was limited compared with new Japanese works, and because they symbolised the contradictions of Japanese modernisation. First, I discussed why the genre of 'honyakugeki' has been needed by the Japanese modern theatre since the latter half of the 19th century. Next, I investigated the drastic change of the meaning of 'honyakugeki' after the Shôgekijô movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and made clear how the double function of 'honyakugeki' became more important than ever. Finally, I examined the actual productions of Australian plays which I participated in as a translator. The Japanese productions of Australian plays from the middle of the 1990s were affected by this history of 'honyakugeki'. Furthermore, those productions revealed Japan's own issues such as the gap in understanding of the history between Australia and Japan, and the absence of politics in the Japanese contemporary theatre.

In Part 2 (Chapters 5-8), I examined the Japanese productions of Aboriginal plays. After surveying how Aborigines have been represented in Japan, I made clear the

Japanese attitudes towards minorities, behind the representations of Aborigines in Japan. To contribute to changing the conventional representations of Aborigines, and the Japanese attitudes towards minorities, *Stolen* and *The 7 Stages of Grieving* were translated and performed in Japan.

The problem of the Japanese productions of the Aboriginal plays reflected the one which 'honyakugeki' used to have. In Japan, there were numerous discussions questioning 'honyakugeki' throughout their long history. The Japanese modern theatre seemed to overcome the problem of 'honyakugeki' by introducing Japanese perspectives into them. However, the Japanese theatre practitioners who presented the Aboriginal plays confronted the problem again. That was because the Japanese production lacked both the political context and the authenticity of the original productions of the Aboriginal plays.

Is a 'translated play' inferior to the original production? When the original production comes to Japan, as with *Stolen*, is it really necessary to translate the play into the Japanese language and present it by Japanese actors? Today, personal exchanges between Japan and other countries are common and foreign artists' and companies' tours to Japan have drastically increased because of Japan's economic growth. Therefore, we cannot but question the significance of 'honyakugeki' because Japan can now see many original productions of these plays.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Japanese production of *The Floating World* was able to emphasise one of Romeril's original intentions just because Japanese actors performed the role of the Australian ex-POW of Japan. It is true that some Japanese cannot accept responsibility for the war without resistance, because the Japanese suffered from two atomic bombs and extreme hardship after the war. The presentation of *The Floating World* by 'honyakugeki' enabled the Japanese theatre practitioners to pose the unknown fact about Japanese war crimes to Japanese audience. In other words, the double function of 'honyakugeki' made this practice voluntary and not forced by any victorious countries. Moreover, when the Japanese production of *The Floating World* was presented in Australia, the message of Japanese apology to Australia for the war crimes was added to the play. This was realised just because the Japanese director and actors presented the play.

In the case of *Honour*, the Japanese productions added a particular meaning to the

original. As discussed in Chapter 4, Japanese audiences found awkwardness in the Japanese translations of the words 'love' and 'loyalty' which were voiced in reference to relationships between parents and a child and a wife and a husband. This awkwardness made them reconsider 'love' and 'loyalty' in their own lives. They might be embarrassed and forced to think about the words just because the words were voiced by Japanese actors in the Japanese language. The presentation of the texts as a 'translated play' made aspects of their lives visible and made the audiences think about the ideas they may have never thought about before. This process can also be found in the Japanese production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, as discussed in Chapter 7. In this production, a Korean actor spoke lines in awkward Japanese. The director Wada Yoshio used this effect to make the Japanese audience aware of some issues parallel to the Aboriginal history, including the Japanese colonisation of Korea. This was realised just because the play was translated into Japanese and performed by Japanese and Korean actors. In this way, we can confirm that the function of 'honyakugeki' can add a new meaning to the original in the Japanese productions of Australian plays.

It is true however that some strategies of the Aboriginal plays became meaningless when they were translated into another language and performed by non-Aborigines. In this respect, the original productions have far more strength than the Japanese productions. However, when the original productions are presented outside Australia, are they still as powerful as they were in Australia? When the original production of an Aboriginal play is presented in Japan, there is a risk that it may add different meanings. That is because the attitude of finding primitiveness in Aborigines and Ainu is still dominant in Japan. This problem is not solved by presenting the translated version of Aboriginal plays performed by Ainu actors, as the Playbox suggested for the Japanese productions of *Stolen* at the Tokyo International Arts Festival in 2002. The Ainu have a completely different historical and social background from Aborigines. To cast Ainu actors in Aboriginal roles only because they are 'indigenous people', involves a peculiar form of cultural essentialism risking cultural difference to both Aborigines and Ainu. Moreover, it is still difficult for Japanese playwrights to write new Japanese plays for the Ainu because the practice of dealing with the Ainu has been regarded as a taboo in Japanese society. The strategy of continuing the presentations of translated Aboriginal plays may be effective for developing circumstances in which the practice of dealing with Japanese minorities is not regarded as a taboo. Only after equality for the Ainu is established, Ainu performers will be able to choose to present translated Aboriginal plays if and when this is appropriate.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the meaning of 'honyakugeki' changed drastically after the Shôgekijô movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The Japanese theatre realised that 'honyakugeki' should explore what contemporary Japanese audiences can share, instead of attempting the impossible in being 'faithful' to the original. Until today, 'honyakugeki' has been presented even if they were not faithful reproductions of the originals. That is because there has been a constant intention to cross cultural borders in the Japanese theatre, as Wada argued about his productions. In Japan, 'honyakugeki' was traditionally developed to appropriate the Western theatre on the assumption that Western culture is universal. That such an assumption was always dubious became more obvious after the Shôgekijô movement, but the function of 'honyakugeki' as a device for crossing cultural borders remained. As discussed in Chapter 4, 'honyakugeki' still bear evidence of the fact that they were a device to appropriate Western theatre, on the assumption that it is 'universal'. However, this assumption includes the risks of neglecting cultural differences, exploiting other cultures and encroaching on their ownership. It is important that these risks emerged when the Aboriginal plays were translated into Japanese and performed by the Japanese. Wada showed a way to lessen the risks. He invited the Aboriginal playwright and director to his productions, and prepared opportunities during which the Japanese actors and audiences had 'dialogues' with them. Only after making these attempts, Wada was able to show the possibility that 'honyakugeki' could be a device for mutual exchanges.

In November 2003, in Tokyo, an Aboriginal play called *Up the Ladder* was presented as one of the programs of *Ancient Future - Australian Arts Festival 2003*. This play was written by Aboriginal playwright Roger Bennett and first performed at the Adelaide Fringe Festival in 1990.¹ The play tells a story about tent-boxing in the 1940s and 1950s and the life of an Aboriginal boxer. In the production of 2003, Japanese director Wada Yoshio reproduced the colourful world of a sideshow alley and tent-boxing where the young Aboriginal boxer Johnny grew up along with his friend and lover. All main characters were performed by Japanese actors. What is important is the fact that this is not a conventional 'translated play'. In the play, a spirit dancer often appears and dances in a way which keeps Johnny connected with 'the past'. An Aboriginal dancer/actor, Kirk Page, performed the spirit dancer in this production. This casting realised

¹ Roger Bennett, *Up the ladder*. Brisbane, Playlab Press, 1997.

collaboration between Japanese and Aboriginal performers in the Japanese production of the Aboriginal play. Furthermore, this production created new possibilities of collaboration between Wada Yoshio and Wesley Enoch. Wesley Enoch, who was the co-director of the 1997 production of *Up The Ladder*, visited Japan to join the talk session after the performance along with Kirk Page. In this session, Page said that he would encourage other Aboriginal performers to come to Japan to give performances, and Enoch said that this production would be 'the first step'.² Another collaboration project between Enoch and Wada is also about to start.³ In this way, the Japanese production of *Up the Ladder* showed the possibility of collaboration between the Japanese and Aboriginal theatre practitioners in the near future. Furthermore, in the music used in this production, there was a fusion of dijeridoo and the Ainu traditional musical instrument, the mukhuri, performed by Ainu musician Ikabe Futoshi. This fusion lets us expect the future participation by the Ainu in theatrical collaboration with Aborigines. In this way, the production suggested future theatrical and artistic exchanges among Aborigines, Ainu and Japanese. However, this is just 'the first step' as Enoch said. 'Honyakugeki', with the desire of knowing foreign theatre and culture, has been presented in Japan for more than one century. The history shows that 'honyakugeki' and theatrical exchanges will have successful results only when they are repeated over and over again with the strong desire of knowing each other's culture. It is clear that a new function for 'honyakugeki' is beginning to be developed out of the circumstances of production and reception of translations of Aboriginal texts in Japan.

As Lo & Gilbert, Pavis, and Bennett have argued,⁴ intercultural theatre becomes corroborative when it avoids appropriation and assimilation. However, since 'honyakugeki' is a device for the Japanese theatre to absorb foreign cultures, it involves the risk of being an appropriative and assimilationist theatre. In other words, it may appropriate the source culture only to meet the expectations of the

² Wesley Enoch, Kirk Page, Peter Eckersall and Sawada Keiji, Talk Session of *Up the Ladder. Ancient Future*. 2003 Australian Arts Festival. Tokyo, 15 November, 2003.

³ Wada Yoshio, Interview with author. Tokyo, 20 November, 2003.

⁴ Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, "Toward a topography of cross-cultural theatre praxis" *The Drama Review* 46,3, 2002, pp.31-53.

Patrice Pavis, "Introduction: Towards a theory of interculturalism and theatre" In *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. by Patrice Pavis. London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp.1-19.

Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Japanese audience and also urge the audience to assimilate the source culture. The presentations of Aboriginal plays in Japan added a new dimension to cultural exchanges through 'honyakugeki'. First, when an Aboriginal play is translated and presented in Japan, we cannot but be aware of its appropriative characteristic. I have already discussed this issue in Chapter 7. Second, the pattern of assimilation is different between a conventional 'honyakugeki' and the Japanese productions of Aboriginal plays: while the audiences are urged to assimilate into the Western characters and atmosphere in conventional 'honyakugeki', the audiences in the Japanese productions of Aboriginal plays may have some trouble while being assimilated into the Aboriginal characters. That is because, unlike Western plays, the Japanese audience are not familiar with Aboriginal theatre and the stereotype of Aborigines that emphasize primitiveness, is still dominant in Japan. Then, to what is the Japanese audience assimilated? The two Aboriginal plays, which have been presented in Japan originally emphasized negotiations with the white. When they were presented in Japan, the Japanese audience were to accept the message of negotiation, which the Aboriginal creators intended to the white. In other words, the Japanese audience are assimilated into the white audience. This happens similarly whether in the 'honyakugeki' production or in the original production---like the Playbox production of *Stolen in Tokyo*. The original production is to let the white audiences feel redemption, sympathy and anger against Western colonialism. On the other hand, the Japanese audience, like the white audience, feel sympathetic towards the Aborigines and anger against Western colonialism. However, those are nothing but something to meet the expectation of anti-Western sentiment felt by the Japanese. Referring to the example of *Notre: Sur*, a radio work for radio by Gomez-Pena and Fusco, Susan Bennett argues that the strategy of the work is to mark the assumptions and expectations of audiences, which the dominant culture produced to categorize ethnic identities.⁵ If this is the 'inter-cultural' experience for the audience, the above-mentioned attitude of the Japanese audience is far from such a sort of thing. Besides, Bennett mentions the example of the 'Inma --- Song and Dance Performance' by Aboriginal peoples of Central Australia, which was staged at the International Women Playwrights Festival in Adelaide. She argues that, by means of some devices, the performance succeeded in interrogating "whiteness" which the white audiences had not been conscious of. She explains this experience as follows:

...the audience travelled to the performance, both literally and figuratively,

⁵ Bennett, 1997. pp.191-193.

rather than the performance being imported to that site.⁶

...out of voices and languages...can emerge some skills in listening and seeing which refuse to move easily into received models of both production and reception. Audience expectations translate into an expectation without expectations, a spectral gaze unmoored from its anchors of knowingness.⁷

This is what Bennett defines as "intercultural performance."⁸ However, we must note that the complicated, hegemonic relationship between the West and the non-West in this discussion too. Bennett writes, "The audience for the event was diverse (both conference delegates and members of the public, both men and women, both Western and non-Western.)"⁹ Probably, the non-Western audience (and also non-Aborigines) felt the same thing as what Bennett felt and defined as "whiteness." In other words, the non-Western audience were assimilated into the white audience when they saw the traditional Aboriginal performance. The "anchors of knowingness," as Bennett writes, are nothing but what the West created and has been shared by the Westerners and the 'Westernised' non-Westerners. The same is true of the cases of Japanese audience seeing Aboriginal theatre and the Japanese anthropologists who were not able to establish the Japanese perspective. These cases mean that the Japanese understand Aborigines by standing the same point as that of the Westerners and suspending their Japanese identity.

The possibility of 'honyakugeki' lies in an ability to deal with this issue. As I discussed earlier, a Japanese actor and a Korean actor performed *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. As questionnaires show, the unnatural Japanese language the Korean actor spoke irritated some members of the Japanese audience. This means that the Japanese production of *The 7 Stages of Grieving* clearly succeeded in interrogating 'Japaneseness,' which the audience would not be conscious of if the play was performed in fluent Japanese. This 'Japaneseness' also reminds the audience of the responsibility for the Japanese colonization of Korea. More importantly, this device does not allow the Japanese audience to be assimilated into the white perspective. When an Aboriginal play is staged in Japan, there are two options: 'honyakugeki' and original productions. It is almost impossible for an

⁶ Ibid., p.195.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p.193.

original production to do something in order to resist the audience expectations and interrogate "Japaneseness." In contrast, 'honyakugeki' enables such effects depending on how it is directed. 'Honyakugeki' is expected to continue pursuing this possibility for truly 'corroborative' and not-appropriative/assimilationist intercultural perspectives.