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Studies in Honour of Guido Avezzù

Edited by Silvia Bigliuzzi, Francesco Lupi,
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Miyagi's *Antigones*

ADELE SCAFURO AND HIROSHI NOTSU

Abstract

Satoshi Miyagi, artistic director of the Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in Shizuoka, Japan since 2007, directed Sophocles *Antigone* in 2004 in Delphi, Tokyo and other Japanese cities; in July 2017 he adapted the play once again for performance at the Festival d'Avignon, choosing as his venue the grand and austere Cour d'Honneur du Palais des Papes. As a run-up to that production, he directed the play at the World Theater Festival at Shizuoka in early May 2017. Connections and similarities are definitely present between the earlier and later productions: the choruses of multiple Ismenes, Creons, Tiresias, and ghosts; the *obon* festival motif with the water glimmering with lanterns; the re-appearance of major actors playing the same roles in 2004 and 2017. Nonetheless, the productions are fundamentally different: the earlier one is political and enamored of the isolationists Antigone and Haemon as paradigms of independent thinking; the later one is religious, communal, joyous and full of dance. Buddhist elements permeate the 2017 production from beginning to end: the importance of becoming buddha and entering Nirvana is set out in the introductory 'prologue' skit; the ever present river Sanzu (like Acheron) separates the living from the hereafter; the dead and their return to earth during *bon* are celebrated throughout the play. While the finale's celebratory dance has been heralded as a show-piece in reviews of the play, yet dance movements and music of the *bon-odori* are not restricted to the ending; they are adumbrated during the play's opening and are present in full timbre during its major songs (*polla ta deina*, *Zeus*, and *Erös* odes). Equally important as the later production's more profound engagement with Buddhist ritual is the director's decision to split the roles of Antigone and Haemon into mover and speaker (in the 2004 production, Antigone and Haemon were each played by one actor who both spoke and moved). The division into speaker and mover is a well-known feature of Miyagi's productions since the 1990s when he directed the Ku Na' uka company. Miyagi, however, has gone a step further in 2017: he has also split the role of the movers in two, between themselves and their shadows. The result is a stunning choreography played out on the palace wall, rendering Greek tragedy into something larger than life and subverting the allegorical meaning of the shadows in Plato's cave for whom they represent a lesser and corrupt vision of what is real and what can only be seen by the light of the sun.

Three Productions: Tokyo 2004, SPAC May 2017, and Avignon July 2017*

The Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in Shizuoka, Japan has become an important showplace for drama over the last two decades and more. SPAC's facilities include the Shizuoka Arts

* The authors are pleased to dedicate this essay to Prof. Guido Avezzi, distinguished scholar of Greek drama in general and especially of Sophocles. They are grateful to the editors of this volume for the invitation to be a part of it, and for their kindness and diligence in prodding us along. Scafuro and Notsu began a collaborative study of the reception of Greek drama in Japan in spring 2017, in preparation for attending a May 2017 performance of Miyagi's *Antigone* at SPAC and for interviewing the director afterwards. Our collaboration continued. For this essay, we are grateful to many for assistance, and so give thanks in first place to Yoshiji Yokoyama, Dramaturge, SPAC-Shizuoka Performing Arts Center, for help along the way, showing us how to get access to this or that person, for replying to our questions swiftly and expertly, always with kindness, and for engaging in stimulating theatre conversation. We extend thanks also to Takako Oishi, also of SPAC, for supplying films and photos of the three productions. Notsu and Scafuro both thank Notsu's wife Aya, who attended the first two productions (Tokyo 2004 and SPAC 2017) and who participated in many discussions. We also thank friends who discussed the play with us and enlightened us with their knowledge of Sophocles, traditional Japanese theatre, music and history: especially Professor Yoshinori Sano (International Christian University), Kaoru Kobayashi (Toho University) and Shinya Ueno (Kyoritsu Women's University); also Professors Akiko Moroo of Chiba University of Commerce, Asako Kurihara of Osaka University, Akiko Kitamura of Shinshu University; and Yumi Uchikawa, graduate student of history at the U. of Tokyo. Scafuro thanks Profs. John Emigh, Spencer Golub, and Rebecca Schneider of the Theatre Arts and Performance Studies Dept. at Brown University for discussion of multiple characters playing the same role. She thanks Brown's Faculty Travel Fund and the Michael Putnam Fund (an internal fund of Brown's Classics Department) for assisting travel to Japan and Japanese language study in 2016-18. Notsu thanks JSPS for supporting "Reception and Diffusion of the Japanese Performance of Ancient Greek Drama" (<https://kak-en.nii.ac.jp/en/grant/KAKENHI-PROJECT-17Ko2590/>), a project of joint researchers from the University of Tokyo and Shinshu University. It should be noted that Japanese names are cited here and throughout this essay in Western style, first name followed by surname (but in 'Works Cited', family name followed by comma and then first name, as is usual in Western publications). Our rationale is that this is a western publication, and is the way Japanese names are presented, for example, in the Avignon Festival Archive and programme (but not in the Shizuoka programme published in Japan).

Theatre (capacity ca. 400) located near the Higashi Shizuoka Station, and the Shizuoka Performing Arts Park. The latter, in view of the ever awesome, ever inspirational Mt. Fuji, consists of the Open Air Theater (capacity ca. 400), an indoor theatre (capacity ca. 400), rehearsal studios, and residences. SPAC is a public institution, with an interest in educating the larger local community about the dramatic arts and in providing 'Theater as a Window to the World' (a catch phrase used by Yamaguchi 2012 *passim*), not only through the production of "world-class works" by its own resident acting company, but also by bringing the world to Shizuoka (Miyagi qtd. in Yamaguchi 2012: 1). Tadashi Suzuki was its first general artistic director, from 1997 through March 2007; and in April 2007, Satoshi Miyagi became its second. Having suspended the activity of Ku Na' uka, the company he had founded in 1990 and directed for eighteen years (his final production with the troupe was *Oshu Adachigahara* in February 2007), Miyagi brought to SPAC some of its actors and certainly its vision and methods (its immersion in music and dance, and its bunraku-like splitting of one acting role into two, a mover and speaker); vision and methods would now be broadened and provided with a larger stage for performance and educational dissemination. In 2010, the then new director changed the 'Shizuoka Spring Festival' into the 'World Theater Festival at Shizuoka under Mt. Fuji'. A global perspective and a profound respect for the power of nature are there from the start of the re-named festival.

As part of that festival in 2017 (28 April – 7 May), the programme included four plays from overseas: "Werther" directed by the German playwright Nicolas Stemann; "While I Was Waiting" by the exiled Syrian playwright Mohammad Al Attar and directed by Omar Abusaada; "The Ventriloquists Convention" by the novelist Dennis Cooper and directed by Gisèle Vienne; and "Tales of June" directed and performed by Pippo Delbono. There were three Japanese productions: "Moon" written and directed by Kuro Tanino; "1940 – Richard Strauss Villa" written by SPAC's Jun Ooka, directed by Miyagi, and with music arranged by Ichiro Nodaira; and Sophocles' "Antigone", also directed by Miyagi (figure 1). In an article in the English language paper *The Japan Times*, dated the day before the Festival's opening, the unnamed author, reporting that

his information came from “a recent news conference”, wrote that it was there that Miyagi “dropped a bombshell of his own with the news he had just been asked to stage a new version of the Greek mythology play ‘Antigone’ that he directed in 2004 in Delphi, its original setting, as the prestigious opening event of the Avignon Festival in France in July” (“All Shizuoka’s a stage”: 27 April 2017: 3).¹ And indeed, the play was performed six times (and ‘sold out’ on each occasion) beginning 6 July at la Cour d’ honneur du Palais des Papes (capacity: ca. 2,000), the premier performance of the 2017 festival in Avignon just eight weeks after the final Shizuoka performance on 7 May. La Cour d’ honneur, a vast courtyard enclosed on all sides by the buildings of the Palace neuf (begun by Pope Clement VI and finished by Pope Innocent VI in 1363) is the premiere venue for the festival’s programme (figures 2 and 3).



Figure 1. Outside the Open Air Theatre in Sumpujo Park at SPAC, Shizuoka, 3 May 2017. Photo by Adele Scafuro.

1 The news conference may perhaps have been held at the French Embassy in Tokyo on 21 April 2017: see the archives of the French Embassy in Japan, <https://jp.ambafrance.org/> for 21 April 2017.

The two authors of this essay, Adele Scafuro and Hiroshi Notsu, attended the Shizuoka production together on 6 May 2017 (performed in Japanese with English subtitles) and also the afternoon workshop led by Jun Ooka; they interviewed Miyagi directly after the performance. Scafuro also attended the Avignon performance on 8 July 2017 (performed in Japanese with French subtitles) and the workshop at the University of Avignon earlier that day, at which Miyagi with the assistance of his dramaturge Yoshiji Yokoyama, translating from Japanese to French and vice versa, fielded questions from the audience about the play. Notsu attended the 17 October 2004 production, performed in front of Tokyo's National Museum of Art in Ueno Park (8-20 October); the play had been performed slightly earlier at Kitakyushu Performing Arts Center (2-3 October) and had had its premiere earlier that same year at Delphi on 1 July (website of Ku Na' uka Theatre Company).² Notsu and Scafuro have watched, alone and together, films of the 2004 performance at the Tokyo Museum, and of the 2017 performances at Shizuoka and Avignon; and both have listened to the video of the 2017 workshop at the University of Avignon (website of the Festival Archives).³ Clearly watching DVDs cannot replace the viewing of an original performance, especially when (and if) the theatre spectator has a full view of the theatrical space – for a camera does not always capture the full extent of a stage: it pans in now here and zooms elsewhere next. This is particularly meaningful, as we shall see, in the case of the Avignon production, where the theatre space was so immense and where so much depended on the interaction not only of the characters on stage, but also on their interaction with the shadows they cast on the twenty-five metre high Palace wall.

Our major focus in this essay is on the Avignon production, but we look back to the 2004 Tokyo production for comparison, to suggest its different conception, and we look to the Shizuoka production in May 2017 as a stepping stone to the grand production

² www.kunauka.or.jp/en/home01.htm, see under 'News'.

³ The link <http://www.festival-avignon.com/en/thought-workshops/2017/dialogues-artists-audience-antigone> will bring one directly to the 'workshop interview'.

two months later in Avignon. It should be said at the outset that the 2017 productions are near but not identical dublettes: while the theatre space of Avignon's 'palace courtyard' called for changes in choreography (including the choreography of the shadows), there are also some changes in dramatic structure: e.g. the opening scene with Antigone and Ismene in Avignon is absent in Shizuoka; and there are also changes in 'performance strategy': e.g., the Zeus ode in Shizuoka is sung by a male and female soloist whereas only a female soloist appears in Avignon; the *Erōs* odes are performed entirely differently in each venue.

A New Production for 2017

We now know that the anonymous reporter for *The Japan Times* was wrong on one crucial point: Miyagi had not been invited to Avignon so recently; the groundwork had been laid in 2016, well ahead of the Shizuoka production, on a visit to the medieval city: it was then that the French festival organizers proposed that he should open the festival with a new production; after visiting a number of venues, Miyagi chose la Cour d' honneur du Palais des Papes and the play *Antigone* (Yokoyama, *per ep.*). The Shizuoka production, in a very real sense, then, was a preparatory step on the road to the masterpiece performance in Avignon. Even so, rehearsals sometimes took place in a huge warehouse at Shizuoka Harbor, "chosen to reproduce the size of the stage space in Avignon, as we have nothing so vast at SPAC" ("choisi pour pouvoir reproduire la taille de la scène d'Avignon car, au SPAC, nous n'avons rien d'aussi vaste", Yokoyama, cited by Mesmer, 3 and 6 July 2017: paragr. 3). Miyagi has, it seems, always been interested in the architectural and topographical venues of his productions so as to capture the energy and spirit of the particular place, as at Delphi in 2004 (unpublished 2017 interview with Scafuro and Notsu) and in Tokyo later that year (Smethurst 2011: 224 and 2014: 845). But this time, in Avignon, the particularities of the three-dimensional space rather than its sheer size would have a profoundly visual and metaphysical impact; as Miyagi put it: "because of the slope [sc. of the amphitheatre seats], more than half the audi-

ence faces the massive wall of the Palais des Papes rather than the stage . . ." (Miyagi, interviewed by Canelas 2017, trans. Schmidt-Cléach). Miyagi's solution we shall see below, was to create a shadow theatre on the wall. We shall return to the wall, the shadows, indeed, the shadow world, in the final segment of this essay. More needs to be said first about the earlier production.

Luckily, we are assisted in this endeavor by Smethurst's 2011 informative essay, "Are we all Creons and Ismenes? Antigone in Japan"; there she beautifully and amply describes the 2004 performance in Tokyo. Of particular note is her detailed discussion of political implications stemming from Miyagi's use of the National Museum of Art as the backdrop for the performance, a museum built "in the 1930s to create a monument to resurgent Japanese nationalism" (224). She also provides detailed discussion (*passim*) of the play's musical instrumentation and its origins, a blending of Asian (Japanese and Chinese) and African sounds, secular and religious, Buddhist and Shinto. And, as her title indicates, she gives great attention to the effects of using multiple Creons and multiple Ismenes.⁴ In the 2004 production, as also in 2017 (to leap ahead once again to the Shizuoka and Avignon performances), there were separate choruses of Ismenes, Creons, Tiresias, and ghosts, as well as blends of all the choruses together (25 choristers in all). A chorus sometimes repeats the speeches of Ismene, Creon, and Tiresias (the Ismenes repeating Ismene, the Creons repeating Creon; the Tiresias repeating Tiresias); or, simultaneously with those characters, a chorus may speak the same speeches; or sometimes it en-

4 The chorus members, by becoming Creons and Ismenes, multiply the number of actors playing the same role. It is difficult to supply theatre parallels for multiple choristers or actors playing the same role simultaneously as that of a lead actor; John Emigh points out (*per ep.*) how appropriate it is that Japanese theatre artists should have a particular interest in this practice: "it is implicit in the way the Noh chorus works to double and echo the lines spoken center stage." Emigh suggests this practice may have inspired Lee Breuer and Bob Telson to cast the 5 Blind Boys of Alabama jointly as 'Oedipus' in their *Gospel at Colonus*. The Breuer and Telson production premiered in NYC in 1983; there have been a number of revivals, and most recently one in Delacourt Theater in early September 2018. Clips of the play are available on youtube.

ters into dialogue with them; and occasionally a chorus will sing an ode on its own, as the chorus of ghosts do, in both 2004 and 2017 (though not at all in the same way). While some choruses do sing the 'original' Sophoclean odes (or some part or facsimile thereof), and while some odes (the fourth stasimon, 'Danae' and the *hyporchēma* at 1115-54) are entirely cut from all three productions, the part of the choruses is nevertheless far more extensive than in Sophocles' play, and more vibrant – dramatically, musically, and emotionally – than in most modern adaptations and re-makings (Mee and Foley 2011: 6-16 for discussion of 'translating', 'adapting', 'remaking', etc.). The choruses of ghosts speak, chant, sing, provide musical accompaniment, and, above all, they dance.

Major actors who appeared in the 2004 production re-appear in 2017: thus, e.g., Mikari is once again Antigone (speaker and mover in 2004, mover alone in 2017); Kazunori Abe is again Creon (speaker); Sōichirō Yoshiue is again Tiresias (speaker). As in the 2004 production, a chorus of ghosts is a feature of the 2017 play, and a rendering of the Japanese *Obon* festival and celebration of the dead as the finale of the 2004 production share features with the more spectacular ending of the later one. Here is Smethurst on the 2004 ending; after first depicting the Creon chorus as turning into a chorus of Tiresiases, and the rebuke of one Tiresias, that dead bodies ought not to be thrown to dogs, she continues:

Creon reacted, but never understood. There was no recognition that he had done wrong. Complete darkness fell upon the scene, accompanied by a shaker and *hichiriki* joining the drum and *yokobue*, here to signal the end of an event. Creon was left alone saying that the dead, wearing death photos of themselves, were moving towards him. There was no messenger who reported the death of Eurydice. Attention instead focused on the large pool in front of the museum. On top of the water floated illuminated lanterns that represented the souls of the dead, as in the Japanese *obon* festival. Then the actors, including Antigone, Ismene, and the Ismenes, no longer dressed as ghosts, and Polynices, Haemon, and the other ghosts came down the aisle and through the audience in a processional to the accompaniment of the Japanese flute and organ-like sound of the *shō*. Hanging by a chain in front of each was a funeral photograph of the face of the actor in contemporary

clothing. These photos are the mark of the dead at the Buddhist altars in Japanese homes, a detail no one in the audience could miss. All was darkness except for the floating lanterns and lit candles carried on the head of each actor to illuminate these photographs. The utterly defeated Creon lay collapsed on the ground, isolated by his failure to express remorse. (Smethurst 2011: 233-4)⁵

The Japanese *Obon* or *bon-matsuri*, or simply ‘*bon*’ (see Ortolani 1995: 9 and 23 for its origins) is a yearly three-day Buddhist festival that falls in July and August, depending on whether the old or new calendar is used. Families celebrate the return of their ancestors with dancing called the *Bon-Odori* (or ‘*bon* dance’) and other festive rituals. Singing and dancing will differ in different regions of Japan, and the songs may sound deeply religious or take on more popular melodies and rhythms known as *min’yō* folk songs or *ondo* without any Buddhist message (see Malm 2000: 76-8). The festival ends with the sending of paper lanterns (the *tōrō nagashi*) or small boats (the *shōrō nagashi*) downriver to celebrate the return of the dead to the afterlife.

The *Obon* suggested in the 2004 Tokyo production by the launch of illuminated lanterns becomes the overwhelming motif, from first to last, in 2017. The pool of water that sits before the museum provided the vehicle for that display in 2004 (see figures 4 and 5), but it did not appear at any earlier point (or so it seemed to us) to resonate with the ghosts in the play. Nonetheless, the pool links the play with the 2017 production, for which an artificial river runs across the stage as a visible symbol of the journey of the dead and a marker of the boundary between them and the living – and not least as a physical entity through which the

5 Miyagi again used the funeral motif of the photographs of the dead carried by live actors onstage, to much different effect (to suggest – and protest – the inferior status of women), in the 2005 *Ku Na’ uka* production of *Medea*; see Anan 2006. The musical instruments named here by Smethurst are Japanese woodwinds. The *yokobue* is a generic name for transverse flutes and includes the *kagurabue*, *ryūteke* and *komabue*. The *hichiriki* is a “short double-reed pipe of lacquered bamboo, with seven (front) and two (back) finger-holes and a comparatively large reed”; the *shō* is more complicated – it is “a free-reed mouth-organ with 17 bamboo pipes (two reedless) inserted into a wind chamber . . .” (Nelson 2008: 49).

movers and speakers must swoosh their wet way throughout the play (especially apparent in the staging of the double fratricide) to the amazement of the audience – it cannot have been easy. Connections and similarities, then, are definitely present – the choruses of Ismenes, Creons, Tiresias, and ghosts; the *obon* festival motif with the water glimmering with lanterns (see figure 6 for the finale of the Avignon production); the re-appearance of major actors playing the same roles in 2004 and 2017 – yet no one who has seen both the 2004 production and either of the 2017 productions will doubt that the later *Antigone* is an entirely new play. The difference between the one and the other is far greater, for example, than that between Mario Martone's production of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* in Naples' Teatro Nuovo in 1996 and 1997, and Marco Baliani's production twenty years later in the Greek theatre at Syracuse: the earlier production associates the siege of Thebes with that of Sarajevo and the later one associates it with sieges of Damascus and Mosul. The topical references, as Ugolini (2017: 165) points out, are different, but the fundamental stagings of the plays are not. Miyagi's *Antigones*, on the other hand, are fundamentally different: the earlier one is political and enamored of the isolationist – or at least renders the isolated Antigone and Haemon as paradigms of independent thinking; the later one is religious, communal, joyful (though not without piercingly sad moments), and full of dance.



Figure 4. The National Museum of Art (Ueno Park, Tokio), July 2018; this was one site of the 2004 production of *Antigone*. Photo by Yumi Uchikawa.



Figure 5. The finale of the October 2004 production: lit lanterns float in the pool in front of the Museum of Art, Ueno Park, Tokyo, October 2004. ©Takuma Uchida (2004 Ueno).



Figure 6. The finale of the Avignon production is the final ritual of the Bon festival, the sending of paper lanterns downriver (*tōrō nagashi*), to celebrate the return of the dead to the afterlife; the ghosts circle round in the final obon dance. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

The front side of the flyer for the Shizuoka production advertises in its upper margin the still-to-come Avignon production and on its reverse side bears at the top a photo of the 2004 production and in the middle, a smaller photo of the courtyard theatre of the Palace of the Popes, and the range of ticket prices at Shizuoka.

The front carries a large-sized portrait photo of the blonde-wigged Antigone of 2017 (see figure 7); across her spread arms, in blood red katakana letters, the play's title アンティゴネ (*Antigone*) appears and beneath that, a sub-title, 時を超える送り火 (*toki o koeru okuri bi*, "sending fire that transcends time", trans. Notsu); the same words reappear as the subtitle in the DVD of the play. The words refer once again to ritual phenomena at the beginning of the play where the ghosts carry candles and at its end when the lanterns are launched on the river, in both instances with fire that will return the dead to the underworld. Buddhist ritual rings the play.



Figure 7. Front side of flyer advertising the Shizuoka production: portrait photo of the blond wigged Antigone (Mikari). Across her spread arms, in blood red katakana letters, the play's title アンティゴネ (*Antigone*) appears and beneath that, a sub-title, 時を超える送り火 (*toki o koeru okuri bi*, "sending fire that transcends time", trans. Notsu). ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

A Buddhist Antigone in a Mugen Noh in the Courtyard of the Palace of the Popes

An interview conducted by Marion Canelas with Miyagi before the Avignon production and reproduced, both in the programme

and on the website of the Avignon Festival Archives, is most informative (though it comes at the risk of spoiling a potential viewer's opportunity to make his or her own sense of the play). Here Miyagi imagines the stage-set:

We'll cover the entire stage of the Cour d'honneur with shallow water, representing Acheron, the river that marks the border between this world and the hereafter. In Japan, we have the river Sanzu. We're transposing this metaphor to the stage without changing anything. People float on the water for a while, then they sink to the bottom of the river, in the hereafter. In Japan, the realm of the dead is called *yomi*, which means "Yellow Springs", and the hereafter is called *senka*, "What Is Below the Springs". The twenty-five beings that make up the chorus are the residents of this *senka*, that is, the souls of the dead. They are the ones who speak, and they play instruments. In *Antigone's* final scene, all the living depart for the realm of Hades, even Creon and Tiresias. No human being can escape death, and all become *hotoke*, "buddhas." We'll "celebrate" that event. The *Bon-Odori* is a ritual dance whose purpose is to help souls that have become "buddhas" enter the hereafter. In Japanese Buddhism, another ritual, the *Shōrō nagashi*, is performed by sending small candles that represent the souls of the dead out on a river. Those small flames drifting away will appear at the end of the show. That scene isn't part of the original play. We want to present this play not as tragic and sad, but as a celebration to appease the spirits of the dead. (Interview by Canelas 2017, trans. Schmidt-Cléach.)⁶

The presence of the river and its Buddhist and Shinto fullness of meaning signal the new *Weltanschauung*, evident from the start of the 2017 play, as sombre ghosts glide, single-file, onto the stage from two entrances, one at stage centre and the other on stage left – and they glide smoothly, even though ankle-deep in the river that forms the dance floor. Eventually they go round in multiple circles in stunning choreography, carrying small candles

6 The 'river of three crossings' (*Sanzu no kawa*) mentioned by Miyagi, divides this world from the next; it is mentioned by Nichiren (the founder of the Nichiren sect) in a letter to Lord Hakii (quoted by Walter 2008: 259 with n. 57 for references).

in glass 'singing' bowls which, when rubbed round and round the rim by their fingers, yield a high and eerie sound. Here and there in the water are larger and smaller rocks of different shapes – indeed, we have a veritable Buddhist rock garden; a tall rock formation with a stone slab at its top sits in the middle, representing, so it seems, the wooden scaffolding or high wooden stage (矢倉 or 櫓, やぐら or *yagura*, figure 8) around which the *bon* dance (or *bon-odori*) is performed during *Obon*. The stone slab/stage will become Antigone's seat and 'cave' throughout most of the play – but at play's beginning and ending, when it is empty, it is the *yagura* – and likewise during the dances.



Figure 8. A roofed *yagura*, beneath which bon dancers circle round during the Obon festival at the Jindaiji temple site. A large drum is placed on the platform and is struck throughout the dance. Mr. Kazuyuki Ishikawa supplied the photo, courtesy of the Jindaiji Housankai.

The 'ghosts' (for we may not be certain yet that they are ghosts) are dressed in long diaphanous kimono-like robes with wide sleeves covering silken white jackets and leggings with silver markings from top to bottom like the scales of a fish, suggestive, perhaps of their own skeletons. The costumes of some 'ghosts', however, are slightly different: the 'jackets' beneath their robes are frogged or draped fan-like across the chest, suggestive of the 'fish-scale' marking of the jackets of the other players, but perhaps redolent of a life still prominent and a reminder of a death to come: these are the movers, Antigone, Haemon, Creon, Tiresias, Ismene. Soon another set of ghost players with shorter outer kimono-ropes enters from stage left but walks on the rim of the stage rather than wades through the river; they carry large and small gongs – the large ones resembling drums called うちわだいこ (*uchiwa daiko*, drums with a fan-like shape, Malm 2000: 73, plate 22); they strike them with drumsticks called ばち (*bachi*). The men wear comically fragile helmets; the women in the Avignon performance, are 'unhatted', but 'wigged' in the Shizuoka one. These are comic characters and they are here to provide a summary, in the form of a skit, of the play's preliminary events, namely: the quarrel between Polynices and Eteocles over who should be ruler

of Thebes and the duel between them that ends in their slaying of one another; and then of its major action: Creon's burial of Eteocles and proclamation against the burial of Polynices; Antigone's resistance and burial of her brother against the warnings of Ismene; the support of Haemon, Antigone's fiancé, for her action against his father Creon; Antigone's punishment and the deaths of Antigone and Haemon (note the absence of Eurydice from the play!).

Three items, each having to do with the fratricide, are notable in the 'skit' – counting here as one and (almost) the same the Shizuoka skit performed in Japanese and the Avignon one in French (the 'play proper', of course, is performed in Japanese). First, the depiction of killing onstage (and the fratricides will be repeated subsequently in the 'play proper') transgresses the norms of Greek tragedy where the results, i.e., a corpse, may be shown onstage, but not the killing itself; likewise, the onstage killings transgress the norms of ai-Kyogen, the comic element often added to Noh, but not at all the norms of Kabuki. Secondly, the weapons used by the 'comic' Polynices and Eteocles to kill one another, the drumsticks (*bachi*) mentioned earlier, belong to a particular religious sect, 日蓮宗 (*にちれんしゅう*, *Nichirenshū*) which, incidentally, is particularly widespread in the Shizuoka prefecture (see n. 6). Thirdly and most importantly, the comic prelude introduces a key element for interpreting Miyagi's conception of the 2017 production: the term *jōbutsu* ('becoming buddha') is repeatedly used. The dead Eteocles, after his burial is announced by Creon, says "*jōbutsu shimashita!*" ('I have become buddha') while Polynices shows his dissatisfaction with a gesture. But Polynices will have his turn: he, too says "*jōbutsu shimashita!*" ('I have become buddha') after his burial by Antigone. In the Avignon production *jōbutsu shimashita!* is translated into French with *j'ai atteint le Nirvana*, which is pronounced by both brothers. Clearly in the 2017 productions, Miyagi has re-conceptualized the question of Polynices' burial as that of his *jōbutsu*, of his becoming Buddha and reaching Nirvana. And once again, it is distinctive of the play's *Weltanschauung*, that this should be so clearly articulated in a comic prelude!

The Buddhist element keeps to the fore as the dry-footed comic players scamper off stage while the river-walking 'ghosts' slowly realign themselves, some exiting, some circling, all playing the rims of their glass singing bowls. Now a Buddhist monk slowly sails in from

stage left, using a pole (a staff?) to direct his small craft. He hands long white wigs to select movers, one by one, taking their glass bowls in exchange; to Polynices and Eteocles, however, he gives each a long pole, similar to his own. What are these wigs and what are the poles? The latter, from a distance, have the look of 'staves' and one might think at first of the *yamabushi*, the wandering religious ascetics who carry staves with an origin in Buddhism that is described by a character (Benkei) in the well-known Kabuki play *Kanjincho* (based largely on the Noh *Ataka*): a staff like his own, he says, was originally owned by a certain ancient Indian saint named Arara-Sennin; subsequently, when Buddha trained under him, Arara-Sennin, impressed by Buddha's divinity, gave him his staff; thereafter, the founder of the *yamabushi*, En-no-Syokaku 役の小角 (えんのしょうかく), carried a similar type of staff wishing to share good luck with Buddha; and finally, other *yamabushi* also carried the same type of staff (Namiki III in Gunji 1965: 183). The *yamabushi*'s staff, however, while it could be used as a weapon, differs from the ones we see onstage: it had interlocking rings at one end and a metal ferrule at the other (Mol 2003: 197). Still, as the Buddhist priest actually hands the 'staves' to Polynices and Eteocles, it is hard not to see a religious significance – and a subversion of purpose when those staves are used as weapons of fratricide (see figure 9); indeed, the subversion mirrors that of the 'religious' drumsticks (*bachi*) used in the fratricides executed in the comic prelude.



Figure 9. The Buddhist priest, after passing out props (wigs and 'staves') from his small boat at the beginning of the play, sails away, over the artificial river that covers the stage; the photo catches him as he is nearly directly behind the 'yagura', the central platform which will serve as Antigone's perch throughout the play. Off to far stage left, Eteocles and Polynices kill one another with their staves. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

Now for the wigs: here we are helped by Miyagi himself, who, when asked about them at the workshop held at the University of Avignon on July 8 (see n. 3), replied as follows:

The actors standing in the water and wearing white clothes represent the dead. Here, a Buddhist priest comes. And this priest invites the dead people to try putting on a little play. Why does he invite them in such a manner? We leave the answer to the spectators' imagination. However, if we superimpose Noh's way of thinking on that, it will be interpreted as follows: in Noh, if anyone among the dead retains strongly in his or her mind an incident or event of his or her lifetime and is very sorry, I believe his or her soul is drifting near this world [i.e. that person has not reached Nirvana]. And, with this spirit who is dead and who has such a very disappointed feeling, the priest will have a dialogue that reminds him or her of the past. While having this dialogue, the dead spirit who died and left behind such a feeling of regret, remembers his or her lifetime and plays again the event that had been most painful for him or her. When he or she has finished playing the most painful event in his or her life, that spirit loses his or her resentment and becomes restful. He or she attains a state of peace. This is the structure of Noh. If I apply this structure to my *Antigone*, it follows that the priest discovers such a spirit, [that is], someone among the dead who has experienced painful experiences while living and invites him or her to try playing that painful event again. If he is giving a wig to him or her, it is his invitation to play a living person for a while. (Japanese transcription and translation by Notsu; square brackets added.)

Miyagi, when he speaks of "Noh's way of thinking" refers to plays of Mugen Noh, a category of dream plays in which the *shite* (protagonist) is often a dead person who meets a monk and disguises his or her true being (the fact of being dead) and then disappears in the first part; he or she reappears, usually in a dream of the monk, in the second part (often after an *ai Kyogen* interlude) and tells his or her story (for different sub-categories, see Ortolani 1995: 132-3).⁷ Miyagi's own interpretation of his work turns his

⁷ Two sub-categories described by Ortolani (133) may be relevant here: (i) *katsura mono* ('wig plays') featuring women in the *shite* role who disguise

Antigone not only into a dream Noh, but also into a 'play within a play' (a device not without allure to him – he directed *Hamlet* as his first Ku Na' uka production in 1990 and also as his first SPAC production in 2008). Miyagi is nothing less than playful (pun intended); he suggests that we might imagine the priest as proposing to the wig-recipients – Antigone, Ismene, Haemon, Creon, and Tiresias, that they should take part in a performance as living actors (see figure 10a). Their wandering ghosts, unhappy with their deaths, are now selected to re-live their most painful experience, one shared amongst them but experienced quite differently by each, and now to be orchestrated as one piece, hardly the stuff for harmonious composition: the aftermath of civil war and a double fratricide. The wigs, then, mark the beginning of the 'internal play' – and it will mark the end as well, when the wig-wearing live actors will remove their headpieces and re-join the dead. Indeed, the sailing-in entrance of the monk with wigs and other props at play's beginning and his sailing in again at play's end when the actors have removed their wigs provide not only a frame for the play, they also serve as mirror images, the first of many such (indeed, the skit itself is a mirror image of the 'play proper') and create, as it were, a non-stopping ring circle: the stone slab, stage left, on which Polynices dies at play's beginning is the very same slab on which Creon collapses, shrieking over Haemon's death at play's end. The simultaneous double fratricide at play's beginning mirrors the simultaneous double suicide near play's end. A wigged Antigone climbs up the platform or *yagura* early on in the play and then removes her wig at the end, slowly and peacefully, as if waking from a dream, and gracefully descends a ladder to re-

their true beings (the fact of their deaths) from a visiting monk (first act) but subsequently tell their stories and the cause of their deaths (second act); the Noh play *Tomoe* is an apposite example. (ii) *Shura mono*, in which a warrior (usually a famous samurai) killed in battle and now wandering restlessly, appears to a monk and asks him for prayers and rituals to assure his salvation (first act); he then reappears in the monk's dream (second act), clad in full samurai costume and recounts the heroic exploits that cost him his life. Miyagi's *Antigone* follows the basic pattern of either one of these, even though the 'invited players' are not warriors. A *shura mono* play might have been written for Eteocles and Polynices – but that is not the case here.

join the circling dead in a play in which circling round is so much a part of the troupe's movements (see figure 10b).



Figure 10a. The Buddhist priest hands Antigone (mover) her wig at the beginning of the play. The ghost troupe looks on. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).



Figure 10b. Antigone, with wig removed at the end of the 'play-within a play', stands on the platform, as if awakened from a dream and stares straight ahead. The troupe of ghosts, which she will soon join, circles round, in their final bon odori. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

Yet Miyagi had also suggested that spectators might want to use their own imaginations. Indeed, some viewers might consider the wigs as similar to the masks worn by tragic and comic ac-

tors in ancient Greek plays – though unlike the wigs in Miyagi's *Antigone*, the actors in Greek plays put on and remove their masks *offstage* (see the famous Pronomos Vase and Wyles 2010: 233-34). The wearing of the Greek mask is thought to have originated in religious ritual by which the wearer becomes imbued with the god whose mask he wears; by analogy, one might consider that, in the theater consecrated to Dionysus in which he, as the god of mask, is invoked with sacrifice and libation at the opening of the Great Dionysia (Csapo and Slater 1995: 107 and cat. 33 and 34), the *wearer* of the mask likewise becomes imbued with the god, hero, or other mythic character whose mask he is wearing (Wiles 2007, esp. 205-36; Calame 2010: 73; Csapo 2010: 113; Griffith 2010: 59; Segal 1995: 201-02; Foley 1980: 107 and n. 1). “The dead heroes”, as a Tokyo colleague suggests, “are revived when the [Greek] actors put on their masks so as to represent them . . . ; by having his actors put on and remove their wigs *onstage*, Miyagi visualizes the process of invoking Dionysus and of reviving the dead heroes” (Kaoru Kobayoshi, *per ep.*; italics added). Re-incarnation is as much a part of the ancient Greek stage as it is of Miyagi's Buddhist one.

A Buddhist Antigone? Once again we turn to the front side of the flyer for the Shizuoka production mentioned earlier (see figure 7). Alongside the image of Mikari, white lettering written vertically appears: “私は憎しみ合うようには生まれついておりません。愛し合うだけです” (“I am not born to engage in [their] mutual hating, but for [our] mutual loving” trans. Notsu). This is Yaginuma's translation of Soph. *Ant.* 523 (οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφου), towards the end of the second episode, after Antigone's burial of Polynices has been discovered and almost immediately before the *Erōs* ode is sung (Yaginuma: 1990). The verse is dense in any language; Jebb's exegetical translation (Sophocles 1900: *loc. cit.*), following the scholiast closely, provides Anglo-filling: “Even if my brothers hate each other still, my nature prompts me, not to join Eteocles in hating Polyneices, but to love each brother as he loves me”. Antigone will love both her brothers and inhabit a world in which they love her back. In the context of Miyagi's production, this is not the equivalent of the Christian gnome, ‘Love thy brother’; rather, this is a Buddhist levelling of the playing field: all are worthy of love and redemption, good and bad alike; it makes

no difference – even ‘bad souls’ can find their way to Nirvana – as the opening skit had demonstrated (see, e.g. Harvey 2013: 174).⁸ The Palace of the Popes has been infiltrated. Miyagi, after speaking of a Japanese custom of “calling all the dead, friends and foes alike, ‘*hotoke*,’ which means ‘buddhas’”, continues, “Sophocles’s Antigone wasn’t a Buddhist, but in her speeches, you’ll find ideas that echo today’s Japanese Buddhism, and particularly her desire to ‘love all human beings, without distinction’” (Miyagi, interviewed by Canelas 2017, trans. Schmidt-Cléach).

Song and Dance

Religious ritual and experience permeate the entire play; that is the most important shift from the more politically-centred 2004 production. A consequence of this permeation can be felt, heard, and seen in the presentation of the major Sophoclean odes: the famous ‘*polla ta deina* ode’, ‘the Zeus ode’, and ‘the *Erōs* ode’ (as mentioned earlier, the fourth ode has been cut from the play).⁹ A starting point for this discussion are Miyagi’s words, quoted earlier from his interview with Marion Canelas about the final scene when all the living and the dead depart for Hades. Miyagi there reminded us that “No human being can escape death, and all become *hotoke*, ‘buddhas’. We’ll ‘celebrate’ that event” (Cf. *Ant.* 360-1: ἄπορος ἐπ’ οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον· Ἄϊδα μόνον φεύξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται.). He then mentioned the means of celebration, the *bon-odori*, the “ritual dance whose purpose is to help souls that have become ‘buddhas’ enter the hereafter”. While the finale’s celebra-

8 Indeed, in Miyagi’s words, qtd. in Canelas’ interview, trans. Schmidt-Cléach: “There is good and evil in Buddhism, but it isn’t a permanent distinction . . . Japanese Buddhism doesn’t tell you that the wicked will go to Hell to suffer for all eternity. If someone behaves badly in this world, he might still go to Heaven, if his deeper nature reappears right after his death.”

9 While Miyagi, according to the French program, used the translation of Shigetake Yaginuma as the basis for the play, he used it, so far as we can tell, rather freely, making cuts as well as smaller changes here and there and rendering the odes anew, though with remnants from the original, as pointed out in the text above.

tory dance has been heralded in many reviews of the play, yet dance movements and music of the *bon-odori* are not restricted to the ending; they are adumbrated during the play's opening and are present in full timbre during the odes. In the following depiction of the first and later odes, we follow the movements of the figures on stage at Avignon; while the performance is much the same in Shizuoka, the greater extent of the stage in Avignon causes some necessary differences while aesthetic conceptions may have recommended others.

Directly after Creon has proclaimed that no one shall bury Polynices and has asked his chorus for obedience, the Creon ghosts file toward the back of the stage and join the Ismene ghosts; eventually they form one line across the back of the stage and perform a buddhistic ballet backdrop for the *polla ta deina* ode. The ode itself is displaced from its Sophoclean standing: in the Greek text, it comes after the Guard has announced that someone has buried Polynices and after the chorus has suggested it was perhaps an act of the gods; Creon vehemently denies this, and the chorus apparently tries to make amends by ascribing incredible feats of skill to human beings (see Sano 2014 for a survey of different views of the fit or misfit of the ode in the play). In the 2017 productions (and unlike the 2004 one in Tokyo), the ode is sung *before* Antigone has buried her brother. A male and female solo singer now step forward; the female singer (Fuyuko Moriyama) claps her hands joyfully and the male singer, Sōichirō Yoshiue, before uttering a Japanese rendition of the most famous words in the ode, “While there are many mysteries and wonders in the world, there are none so wonderful as man”,¹⁰ booms out, with interruptions by his singing partner:

さあさ このぼの みなさま方よ — あこりゃ あこりゃ —
 ちょいと出ました 歌い手は — あ どうした — おみみ汚し
 の音頭を ひとふし うなりやしょう — まってました

10 Notsu, translating his transcription of the verses from the Avignon production: 世の中に謎や不思議は数々あれど人間ほどに不思議なものはありません; this differs slightly from Yaginuma's translation; the meaning is essentially the same but the style is different.

[Come out this way, everyone this way! – *a korya a korya* – Here I am, the singer, coming, – *a doushita!* I shall roar a disgraceful *ondo* – we were awaiting it! (trans. Notsu)]¹¹

The words announce the singing of an *ondo* – a song (as already mentioned) that is closely integrated with the *Bon-Odori* dance ritual. Some words in the song are untranslatable: *a* (あ) before *doushita* (どうした) is an interjection and *doushita* itself (from *dou* ‘how’ and *shita* ‘have done’), while frequently used for the greeting ‘how are you doing’, is also a kind of ‘calling out’ or ‘shout’ or ‘cheer’. There are many such musical and rhymical shoutings in Japanese: *hai hai, essassā no yoi yoi yoi, yoisa, korase, wasshoi, yoisho, koryā, arayotto, dokkoisho*, etc. They are called ‘*hayashi kotoba*’ (‘cheering words’) and are inserted in the course of traditional popular songs (*minyō*) and *ondo* to make them more rhythmical. That analogous examples can readily be found in the lyric songs of Aristophanic Comedy suggests how efficaciously music has contributed to Miyagi’s aim of making “this play not tragic and sad, but a celebration to appease the spirits of the dead” (see figures 11a and b).

The ballet of ghosts (so unlike the ghoulish ghosts in the corresponding ode in 2004) offers another side of the *bon* festival, a sombre and elegant picture of the dead themselves. For behind the *ondo* singers, first in profile and then with backs to the audience, the combined chorus of ghosts perform a *bon* dance (see figure 12); here and elsewhere in the play, the particular dance is the *Kawachi Ondo Bon-Odori* that originated in pre-modern Osaka (Yokoyama, *per ep.* for the identification). In profile, facing stage left, their right arms outstretched as if they are archers holding imaginary bows and their left arms parallel but pulled back to release imaginary arrows, and then switching – with left arms extended and right arms pulled back – then (for we may as well give the instructions!) rock forward then backwards, turn with back to the audience, lower arms with back slightly bowed; then turn and face stage left again while raising both arms, then lower them, raise them, and repeat with slight change of movement: right arm extended as if holding the bow and

¹¹ The dashes represent a change of singer, the female soloist inserting an interjection and then the male singer taking up his song again, and so on.

left arm pulled back, step forward slowly, and so on. The slow motion, trance-like movement of the chorus of dancing Ismenes and Creons contrasts with the happy rhythm of the *ondo* singers of the ode: the two continue joyfully, the one clapping her hands, the other lifting now his left leg, now his right so happily he can't refrain from laughing: this is your *polla ta deina*: a combination of the common and the most solemn of movements: this is mankind, who can accomplish anything but cannot escape death (figure 12).



Figure 11a. A poster advertising the bon festival celebration at Jindaiji Temple, Chofu (near Tokyo) illustrates the joyful side of celebrating the dead. It says (beginning at the top): “Festival for the spirits (of the dead); grand festival of the bon-odori at Jindaiji; 7/23 (Mon.), 24 (Tues.) 6-9 p.m.; place: before Jinjado, the precincts of Jinja.” (*Beneath the two figures, the female is otahuku, the male is hyottoko*): “There will be souvenirs.” *Beneath the male figure*: “Everyone come!” (*At the bottom of the poster*): “Shusai: Jindaiji Housankai (Jindaiji Support Association)”. Ryotaro Baba designed the poster.

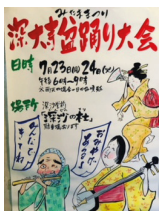


Figure 11b. A different version of the poster with the same message by the same designer. Here we see an obon dancer holding a fan in her right hand and extending her left arm; the man and woman beneath her accompany her dance with music and song. Mr. Kazuyuki Ishikawa supplied the photo, courtesy of the Jindaiji Housankai.



Figure 12. The famous *polla ta deina ode*; the soloists (here, only the male is visible) stand in front of a line of slow moving obon dancers; Antigone sits atop her platform; Ismene, barely visible, sits in profile beneath her. ©Ryota Atarashi (2017 Avignon).

What can they be celebrating? Surely it must be a prelude to the burial of Polynices – the dead, singers and dancers, are preparing for his reception. Indeed, the happy soloists against the backdrop of sombre ghosts make visible antipodal emotions: the happiness of welcome, the solemnity and fearfulness of dying, the ‘contradictory logics’ of Buddhist death rites (Stone and Walter 2008: 3; Horton 2008: 27; Williams 2008: 228). At the end of the song as the stage darkens and the chorus leaves in silence, we see Antigone perform a ritual burial (for Buddhist funeral practice: see Walter 2008: 247-92): she pours water from a hidden source over the edge of her platform, and then uses an elongated ritual ladle – the same as Creon had used to ‘purify’ Eteocles in the ‘prologue’ to the play – to reach another source of water beneath the platform on the far side (see figure 13). As she begins to pour the water, a Buddhist chant rises from the depths of the stage ‘OOOOOOOOO’; the chant is customary after burial and is imported from Tang China (声明 *shōmyō*, or, traditionally, 聲明: see Nakamura and Hunter 2009: 126-7; Hooker 1993: 220, 223; also, *inter alia*, the website for Jōdoshinshū Centre for Instruction of Ceremonies, 勤式指導所

Goshiki Shidōsho).¹² And then a loud おおさま! おおさま! (*ōsama! ōsama!* ‘King! King!’) is heard. The Guard has rushed onstage to announce the illicit burial of Polynices; he is phrenetic – his wild gestures convey intense emotion and also create a significant shadow play on the palace wall (see figures 14a and b). His speech takes on the linguistic traits of 落語 *rakugo*, a comic form of storytelling still performed today (see Sasaki and Heinze 1981: 417-59, esp. 426-8 and 444-54 for traditional *rakugo*).

We leave the ode behind; it ushers in contentious dialogue between Creon and Antigone; Ismene, too, joins the fray. It ends with Creon’s resolve to punish Antigone and with the latter’s piercing shriek, ‘Haemon!’. The Zeus Ode follows, in musical essence like *polla ta deina*, but with one soloist in Avignon (and not two as in Shizuoka), a swaggering and happy female singer who is occasionally interrupted by ‘call-outs’ (*yoisho hup-hup, hai hai, hup-hup-hup-hup, yoisho hup-hup-hup* from a male singer and *iyakorasē no dokkoisho* from female singers). The ghost choruses in the background are scattered on one side of the stage and the other, sometimes joining in a refrain (as with the syllables recorded just now), yet constantly performing movements similar to the *Kawachi Ondo Bon-Odori* we have described for the *polla ta deina* ode. Once again the joyful mood of the soloist contrasts with

12 That *shōmyō* chants are used in Buddhist funeral rites is not often mentioned in English language literature; it is common in Japanese material; thus, e.g., on the website for the Jōdoshinshū Centre, http://gonshiki.hongwanji.or.jp/html/example2_2.html, one finds on the first part of the page on terminology: 導師とは、法要に際し登礼盤をして調声（声明の句頭を始唱すること）する者、および葬儀のときに調声する者をいう（“調声する者をいう、導師 Dōshi (‘Leader’/Conductor) is someone who takes a 礼盤 Raiban (special seat for ceremonies) and attunes a chanting choir by singing the first part of a given *Shōmyō* for 法要 Hōyō (‘ceremonies’) and 葬儀 Sōgi (‘funerals’), trans. Shinya Ueno. Some Tendai *shōmyō* can be heard on the official site of 天台宗 Tendai-shū: <http://www.tendai.or.jp/shoumyou/> (scroll down to the youtube links). To hear *shōmyō* chants that sound much like the one during Antigone’s burial of her brother: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4J-violCiew> (Shingon *Shōmyō* Chant, publ. by Ungern Sternberg) and the Japanese *shōmyō* at <https://www.junkoueda.com/shomyo/>; both accessed last on August 18, 2019. Malm 2000: 70-74 sets out the musical instruments of traditional Buddhist ceremonies.

the rhythmic movements of the ghost dancers, impervious to the ephemeral.



Figure 13. Ritual ladles are still in use today—but their handles are shorter! Here, Professor Yoshinori Sano (ICU) pours purifying water with a ritual ladle from a well at the Jindaiji Temple site. Photo by Adele Scafuro (July 2018).

Figures 14a and b. The Guard, standing atop a stone platform on far stage right, reports Antigone’s burial of Polynices to Creon, standing on far stage left; his shadow hovers menacingly over Antigone (mover).



Figure 14a. “Soudain une tornade souleve des tourbillons de poussière”. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).



Figure 14b. “Cette fille?” ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

We turn now to the remarkable *Erōs* ode as performed in Avignon, much different in tone and performance strategy from the one performed in Shizuoka which is more akin to the preceding songs. In the interval between the Zeus Ode and this one, Haemon has entered the stage (speaker and mover); Haemon mover stands on a rock platform stage right, and Creon mover on a rock platform stage left – a surprising distance over which to carry on an agonistic debate but magically erased by the display of shadows on the palace wall – which locates the antagonists in more proximate positions and shows Creon towering over his son. The latter, we all know, presents the case for supporting Antigone’s burial of her brother; Creon is angered. Haemon darts from one side of the extensive stage to the other, sometimes turning his back to the audience, fluttering his outstretched arms like the wings of a bird, leaping (shaman-like?) from one stone platform to another. Creon meets him once halfway and the two nearly brawl. The chorus now and again intervenes in support of Haemon, but to no avail: Creon announces his decision to imprison Antigone; Haemon will not look upon his father again if that happens. The lights dim; the choruses swoosh through the river and realign themselves; a single percussion wood-en bar is struck, again and again.

When the lights come up, Haemon and Creon remain in the dark, stage right and left respectively, while two chorus lines are now illuminated, one to the right of the *yagura*, the other to its left. The voices of both chorus lines now begin to sing; the rattling of their shakers and the drums of the musicians at the rear of the stage provide vigorous accompaniment. The *ondo*-like singing and chanting continually change rhythm; now and again the male and female singers share the same words, but more often they sing different ones and different melodies, not inharmoniously, but alike in urgency. The linguistic style of the ode differs radically from the preceding ones. Here, the remnant of the original Sophoclean text (for the ‘translation’ as such is very loose) is densely interspersed with fragmentary or nonsense syllables so that the ode – cut down to a minimal strophe (corresponding to Soph. *Ant.* 787-90, insofar as it can be discerned at all through the mélange of simultaneously pronounced different sounds!) – acquires an artificially extended life. The ‘nonsense syllables’, however, subsequently become constitutive and recognizable elements of the Japanese ode: for example, the syllable *ha* is repeated over and over again – but *ha* is the first syllable of the word *hametsu*, (‘destruction’) – and *hametsu* becomes the final *literate* word of the ode (for it is followed by ‘call-out’ refrains, *yoiyasa no sa*, *yoiyasa no sa*); *hametsu* itself is difficult to construe, but perhaps is to be understood as in apposition to what precedes. Scattered amidst the syllabic noise, then, the verses can be made out: “Neither the gods who live eternally nor ephemeral human beings have any means to escape (it), the power of invincible love, Erōs, lust, making mad both human beings and the gods – destruction!”¹³

Unlike the choristers in the two previous odes, these do not dance. As the song begins, however, in front of the chorus line and positioned on stage right, Haemon (speaker) and Antigone (speaker), five meters apart, stand absolutely still, arms at their sides, not quite face to face, for twelve seconds; then, slowly, they raise their arms. It is an astonishing moment: the speakers have become movers, and throughout the song, their movements are similar to those of the chorus of the dead in the *polla ta deina* and Zeus odes, a bon odori: right arms outstretched

13とこしえに生きる神々も、はかなき命の人間も、逃れる術なし、無敵なる恋の力エロス、愛欲、人も神世も狂わせる、破滅。Transcription from the Avignon production by Aya and Hiroshi Notsu; translation by Hiroshi Notsu.

as if holding an imaginary bow, and left arm raised as if letting loose an imaginary arrow while stepping forward with the left foot; rocking backward, then bending to the right and dropping arms and now raising them, and then with right arm extended once again and right foot forward, and soon switching with left arm extended and left foot forward, they draw closer to one another, step by step (figure 15a). On the second repetition, their raised left arms are precisely parallel and their movements are in perfect synchrony, but on the third repetition, they have passed each other by (figure 15b). It is breathtakingly beautiful: the 'almost touching', the 'always missing' – the speakers who at this decisive moment in their 'lives' neither speak nor touch.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the song of the choruses drives onward. Once again, just as the ghost dancers of *polla ta deina* and the Zeus ode have done, Haemon and Antigone ('speakers', now mute) dance to a different tune, but this time, the dance is both a sombre and romantic bon-odori, an anticipation of imminent arrival among the dead and heralded by loss of voice. Love and death are conjoined: both are ineluctable.

At ode's end, the choruses disperse. Creon speaks from his perch on stage left: he will not save the girl's life but shall drag her away and shut her alive in a cave (the words correspond to Soph. *Ant.* 769 and 773-4, spoken *before* the ode; there is some displacement of verses here.) All is now in darkness, except for Antigone who is brilliantly illuminated in white standing atop the *yaguri*, and, with her shadow towering gloriously on the palace wall behind her, she speaks her farewell. The *kommos* has begun. It is a true lament, shared between the protagonist and the chorus of men and women who are eerily illuminated in blue light beneath Antigone. They respond in song, sometimes the men, sometimes the women, sometimes combined –

¹⁴ The French surtitle for figure 15a is: *tu attaques les demeures des riches* ("you attack the homes of the rich") does not correspond to the Sophoclean ode, which (at l. 786) mentions ἀγρονόμοι ἀύλαί ("homesteads in the wilds"). The surtitle for figure 15b is more interesting: *tu rends fous tous ceux qui te prennent dans leurs bras* ("you drive crazy all those who take you into their arms"); the verse corresponds to the Sophoclean text at 790, ὁ δ' ἔχων μέμηνεν ("and the one who embraces you goes mad") and to 狂わせる (*kuruwaseru*) 'making mad' human beings and gods" in the Japanese song sung at Avignon; there is no mention of 'arms' in the Greek or Japanese texts and it may be fortuitously ironic that at this moment, the two lovers have passed each other by without touching at all!

but as for their movements, these are performed individually, as if each ghost perceives the pain of Antigone's imminent departure from life in his or her own way, depicting it with the jerking movements of someone receiving an electric shock, using *butoh*-like dance gestures as they bend their arms or drop their heads and lean forward. The crescendo comes when Antigone raises both arms aloft, shrieking out "ah, my brothers, after dying yourselves, you destroy me also, who am alive!" (trans. Notsu: ああ、お兄様方、ご自分が亡くなって 生きている私までも滅ぼしておしまいとは; the words loosely correspond to Soph. *Ant.* 870-71). The apostrophe to a *plural* number of 'brothers' is significant – for it is the *singular* that appears in the text of Sophocles and in the Japanese translation by Yaginuma. Scholars have usually understood it as referring to Polynices alone, whose marriage to the daughter of Adrastus led to the latter's support of Polynices' armed fight for the throne in Thebes. But in the Avignon production, reference to Polynices' 'wretched marriage' is excised (869-70), and so too, reference to the incestuous marriage of Jocasta and Oedipus (863-65). The word used for the plural brothers, お兄様方 (*onīsamagata*) is not used elsewhere in the play and is here used as a vocative plural of *onīsama* (brother). The brothers alike are causing Antigone's death, not one without the other – a recognition of the painful consequence of togetherness.



Figure 15a. Erōs Ode: Antigone (speaker) and Haemon (speaker) dance in silence; arms outstretched, they approach one another.

"Tu attaques les demeures des riches". ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).



Figure 15b. Erōs Ode: Antigone (speaker) and Haemon (speaker) dance a bon odori in silence; arms outstretched, they have now passed each other by. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

“Tu rends fous tous ceux qui te prennent dans leurs bras”.

More lamentation follows; the chorus members make *butoh*-like movements, tortured with pain, until the singing comes to an end with the gruff voice of Creon, urging that Antigone be led to her death.

The Movers, the Shadows, the Wall, and the Shadow World

Another shift away from the 2004 production is perhaps as equally important as the later production's more profound engagement with Buddhist ritual. In 2004, Miyagi used multiple *Ismenes*, multiple *Creons*, and multiple *Tiresiases*; this appears to have been a great experiment – for he did not divide each individual role into speaker and mover as he had done in so many earlier productions and as had been a characteristic hallmark of his *Ku Na' uka* company. Moreover, apart from the multiple characters voicing the same role, quite exceptionally, Antigone and Haemon spoke their own parts. In an interview with Smethurst about that production, Miyagi expressed the view that the multiplicity of voiced actors allows the Japanese audi-

ence to generalize about the Ismenes and Creons – basically, it entices the audience to dislike them, and to embrace the individualism of Antigone and Haemon (Smethurst 2011). The use of one actor for Antigone and one actor for Haemon, voice and movement coalescing in each, focused that individualism and emphasized all the more their political isolation, however much the audience was expected to sympathize with it. In 2017, the choruses of multiple Ismenes and Creons are still present, but now the major roles are split between a speaker and a mover: thus there are two Antigones, two Ismenes, two Creons, two Guards, two Haemons, two Tiresiases.

Elsewhere (as in the case of *Medea*), Miyagi has said that splitting an acting role into speaker and mover is “suitable for pre-modern fantastic plays” because it allows the audience to see how fantastical and unreal the character is (Miyagi qtd. in Anan 2006); and subsequently he has said that such splitting is useful for going beyond language barriers (Eglinton 2011) – so that voice becomes music for the actor to dance to. There is no reason to think these views mutually exclusive – even though it may be that, on the global stage (e.g. in the courtyard of the Palace of the Popes in Avignon), the movement of the actors and musical messaging take primary place – indeed, a row of some dozen percussionists sometimes stands against the back wall of the palace setting the pace.

Not surprisingly, Miyagi has commented on his split actors and multiple choruses in the 2017 productions, comparing his choruses to those in Noh:

Each character – Antigone, Creon, Haemon, or Ismene – has a dedicated actor saying his or her lines. But sometimes, their lines are also said by a chorus made up of several actors. In Japanese *Noh*, you have what we call *jiutai*, which resembles the Greek chorus. It’s as if the words of the *shite*, the protagonist, slowly spread to the entire *jiutai* (which comprises about eight actors). We’re exploring a way to stage the “collective voice” of all the people who felt and thought the same thing but didn’t express it. It’s a way to adapt our methods to plays written before the advent of the modern ego. (Interview by Canelas 2017, trans. Schmidt-Cléach.)

The Noh ‘chorus’ that narrates the action often picks up the first-person speech of the (speaking) *shite* (while there are many

words expressing 'I' or 'moi' in Japanese – there is no simple and single 'first person pronoun' that is equivalent, for example, to 'I' in English or 'je' in French),¹⁵ so that not only the speech of *shite* and 'chorus' seem shared, but also the mind. The multiple choruses of the 2017 production, then, function in a way similar to the way they functioned in 2004 – but the splitting of the major acting roles into two, one for a speaker and the other for the mover, makes an immense difference in the 2017 productions.

Miyagi, however, has gone a step further: he has also split the role of the movers in two, between themselves and their shadows. Once again, he offers an explanation:

The part of the audience that's near the stage sees the actors as well as the shadows projected onto the wall, in the back. And those who see the stage from up high, who make up more than half of the audience, see the shadows first, but their eyes are also attracted by the actors who create those shadows. The goal is for them to pay attention to the human body through the abstraction of the body. When an actor plays with his facial expressions, ironically, the audience has trouble perceiving his body because, before they can focus on what's within the body, their gaze is absorbed by this superficial change. The actors who perform with their shadows don't speak. Their lines are said by the chorus that surrounds them. (Interview by Canelas 2017, trans. Schmidt-Cléach).¹⁶

Miyagi describes his grand shadow theatre as the solution to a practical problem: those whose seating prevents them from easily seeing the movers and speakers onstage are encouraged to engage with the motion of the human body as adumbrated by the shadowy activity on the palace wall; this in turn will direct their gaze to the moving figures of the actors beneath them and away

15 Haemon uses *watakushi* and Creon *washi* when they converse with each other; Antigone and Ismene use *watashi*; the Guard *washi*, Creon *yo*, and the *ondo* singers *watakushi*.

16 In the same interview, he compares a similar problem in *wayang kulit*, Indonesian shadow theatre, where "the audience will sometimes be not on the same side of the theatre where shadows are visible, but on the other one, the side of the torches". Another inversion of the allegory of the cave?

from the facial features that cannot reveal half so much. Miyagi accomplishes this magician's feat by rendering the correspondence between mover and shadow inextricable and yet making the movement of the shadow a more accurate conveyer of the ongoing dramatic action than the movers who produce it, and finally, by conveying, with the shadows, a grandeur that mere human figures onstage could hardly produce. In a way, the staging reverses the message of the 'shadows on the wall' in that Ur-text of Western literature, Plato's *Republic*; there, in book 7, 514a2 to 517a7, the shadows in the allegorical cave represent a lesser and corrupt vision of what is real and of what can only be seen by the light of the sun.

Examples in *Antigone* 2017 are easy to adduce. The Guard (mover) who announces the burial of Polynices to Creon stands on far stage right and Creon (mover) on far stage left – the gulf between them is vast; but the Guard's shadow extends more than halfway across the stage toward Creon and hovers threateningly over Antigone; the shadow itself 'acts out' the seizing of the young woman rather than the corporeal Guard who rages frenetically onstage (see figures 14a and b). The shadows of Antigone (mover) and Creon (mover) act out their quarrel on the palace wall and the distance between the two disappears. Similarly, Haemon (mover) and Creon (mover), as we have already mentioned, cast huge shadows on the palace wall during their grand agon; those shadows erase the distance and show Creon towering over Haemon, even though audience members will see Haemon (mover) dart across the expanse of stage to threaten his father. The shadow play of the wide sleeves of robes draped from arms that are held out straight on one side and the other (as in many shadow images of Antigone) or flapped up and down (as in shadow images of Haemon as he leaps from one stone to another) are dramatically effective conveyers of intense emotion. The shadow play of hands also can tell tales: Tiresias' prophetic hands provide the shadow play of a bird of prey about to seize its victim – indeed, it is destiny itself that is about to tear Creon apart.

But surely the most dramatic of all shadow plays is the one portraying the simultaneous deaths of Antigone and Creon. This is the show stealer. Creon, when the *kommos* had ended, ordered

Antigone to be led away. The stage is almost completely dark; all cast members appear in an eerie blue light, except for the white illuminated Antigone. Sitting atop her platform, her back to the audience and her shadow cast on the wall before her, she now gives her final speech in muted voice, an abbreviation of the farewell in Sophocles' play, corresponding to 925-8: "If the gods want it this way, after a great deal of suffering, I will realize my faults, but if these people are to blame, may their suffering be not so great as mine" (trans. Notsu).¹⁷ As she finishes, the ghostly troupe begins to leave the stage, and with the departure of Antigone (speaker), we know that the end is near. Antigone (mover) now bends and turns toward stage right, where Haemon, like Antigone, is now illuminated in bright light. Each stretches an arm across the expanse of stage. The shadows in motion tell a love story (see figures 16a and b) and bring closure to the narrative begun by the mute speakers (Haemon and Antigone) who had danced slowly past one another with arms outstretched, never touching, in the Erös ode. Now, still slowly but nevertheless surely, their hands, that is, the hands of the shadows, Haemon's reaching out for Antigone's, touch. It is poignant, beautifully romantic, and executed with incredible artistry. And once having touched, their arms drop slowly and the lovers die, shadows and movers as one. Tiresias leaps up and the final scene begins.

The *Kawachi Ondo Bon-Odori*: the actors will remove their wigs and join the dead; Antigone will descend from the platform (figure 10b); the ghosts, arms outstretched, right arm, then left arm, moving slowly, will circle round the *yagura* once again (figure 6).

17もし神さまがこれでよしとお思いならさんざん苦しんだはてに、私は私の過ちを 思い知りましょう。もしこの人たちに罪があるなら私以上にひどい目にはあいませんように。The text transcribed and translated from the Avignon performance departs slightly from Yaginuma's translation; it also departs from a strict translation of the Greek text, "But if these men are wrongdoing, may they suffer no more troubles than they inflict on me unjustly" (926-7: εἰ δ' οἶδ' ἄμαρτάνουσι, μὴ πλείω κακῶν πάθουεν ἢ καὶ δρώσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμέ). In the 'Avignon text', Antigone is more philanthropic, wishing her enemies better treatment than she has received.

The priest will return and launch the lanterns downstream (the *tōrō nagashi*, figure 6). We have seen that the *Bon Odori* is not just the finale of the play; the dead have been celebrated throughout; or rather, they have performed the celebration themselves, singing and dancing the bon dance during the three major songs (the *polla ta deina*, Zeus, and Erōs odes: figures 12, 15a and b), and while the living have suffered, they, too, have suffered in sympathy, expressing their grief individually but nevertheless as a group in *butoh*-like dance movements. The meticulous artistry of scenographer, choreographer, composer/arranger, musicians, lighting expert, costumers, dancers, singers, movers, and speakers has been orchestrated magisterially under the direction of Satoshi Miyagi: a Buddhist celebration in the courtyard of the Palace of the Popes in 2017 CE.

Figure 16a and b. Deaths of Antigone (mover) and Haemon (mover).



Figure 16a. The hands of the shadows of Antigone and Haemon reach out across the palace wall. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).



Figure 16b. Slowly, the hands of the shadows touch; and the corporeal Antigone and Haemon die. ©SPAC (2017 Shizuoka Sunpujo).

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