

# Dulaang UP's Replication of the Kabuki Play, *Kanjincho*

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## 概 要

本稿は、ドゥラアン UP（ディリマンのフィリピン大学における、スピーチコミュニケーションと舞台芸術部門によってできた劇団、以下 DUP）によって、「勧進帳」が公演されるまでの経緯を詳細に報告するものである。始めに、日本人以外の人たちによる諸外国での歌舞伎の演出と、いかにして歌舞伎の要素が西洋の技法と融合したかを歴史的に振り返る。次に、DUP の 27 回目の演劇祭にあたって歌舞伎の演出が取り入れられた経緯とその演出のコンセプトが「模写」である理由について述べる。そして最後には、「不可能な夢」を現実にしようと力を尽した人たちについても詳しく触れる。

また本稿は、26 年の歴史の中で DUP がまだフィリピンのものではない唯一のアジア演劇を演出してきたのであり、純粋な日本演劇を演出してきたことは一度もないという立場を取った私の今までの研究と関連している。

DUP は国際研究センター（CIS 東アジア日本支部）を中心として、フィリピン大学、日本基金、日本情報文化センター、そしてフィリピンの文化センターと連携しながら、これまでの誤った捉え方を修正し、「学生たちをあらゆる種類の演劇様式に触れさせる」という DUP の目的の一つに応えるために、27 回目の演劇祭でフィリピン人が日本語で「勧進帳」を模写し演じることに決定した。出演者のほとんどが日本語を話せないため、この公演にあたっては、私の指導教授である同志社大学の向井芳樹教授がくださったビデオと CD を参考にさせていただいた。

このフィリピン人による歌舞伎模写の計画にあたり、東京の長唄の師匠である望月滝之丞氏と大坂の舞踊の師匠である藤山豊広氏という二人の歌舞伎の師匠の実演の講義がもたれた。2003 年 2 月 28 日から 3 月 2 日の大学の舞台、そして 2003 年のフィリピンー日本フェスティバルの一環として 3 月 14 日から 16 日にかけて行われるフィリピン文化センターでの公演の時には、「勧進帳」の演技はすばらしいものに仕上がっているだろう。

この大きな試みと価値ある計画を通して、CIS と DUP は、歌舞伎における演技、人間の情熱や忠義というテーマを、大学で演劇を学ぶ学生、プロの俳優や伝統的な劇場を起こそうとする人、また一般大衆などの能力のある人々に紹介できることを期待した。

我々のたゆまぬ努力は、指導者がその一部始終をあらかじめ見て習得する時、そして短い期間で習得した人々の演技の質について講評する際に役立てられた。

日本の文部科学省に認められた UP のフィリピン人は、この計画を日本や日本の人々への恩返しと考えている。

今回の公演を共に指導しているマベサ教授と私は、別々にはあるが共に二十年間、偉大な指導者である中村又五郎先生に歌舞伎を習った。先生に今回の公演を捧げる。

最後に、DUP の「勸進帳」における私の仕事は、京都の同志社大学での八年の間、辛抱強く私を導かれ、信じ、そばにいてくださり、そして私と本国に帰ってからの私の仕事（今回の歌舞伎公演も含めて）を支え、他と比べるべくもない寛大さを示して下さい、歌舞伎と近松の研究者で私の指導教授である向井芳樹教授の退職にあたって、親愛の情をもって捧げられる。

## Introduction

Dulaang UP (DUP) is the production arm of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (DSCTA) at the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman. In its 26-year history, DUP has evolved into a formidable professional performing group for theatre in the Philippines. It has produced many well-respected theatre practitioners in the country today.

I was invited to join the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (DSCTA) of the University of the Philippines as an Associate Professor two months after being granted the Ph. D. in Japanese Literature at Doshisha University in March 2001. On top of the regular teaching load, I was offered the managing directorship of Dulaang UP. Being a junior scholar of Japanese Theatre and Literature, I was, similarly, invited to become a faculty affiliate of the Center for International Studies (CIS East-Asia Japan).

During the CIS East-Asia Japan conference on the state of studies of Japan in the Philippines sponsored by Japan Foundation Manila on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2001 in Bohol, Philippines, I, as a faculty affiliate of CIS and managing director of DUP, was asked to review the 25 seasons of play production by DUP. The outcome of my study <sup>①</sup> revealed that

in its 26-year history, DUP had produced only one Asian non-Filipino play and had never produced an original Japanese play.

The prominence of Euro-American plays in the theatre seasons of most theatre groups in the country today speaks of the kind of theatre training and exposure that theatre practitioners undergo. To me, the seeming lack of interest in Asian theatre is a cause for concern. In order to balance the scale, I felt there was a need to instill in the consciousness of Filipinos that the staging of Asian theatre is equally important in the teaching of world theatre. This, I believe, could be achieved by teaching Filipinos the different forms of Asian theatre and literature.

In my assessment of DUP for CIS, I mentioned that perhaps one reason why DUP has not produced a play from the traditional theatres of Japan could be traced to its lack of expertise in staging plays from the traditional theatres, the performance elements of which are so well defined, organized and structured. In my paper, I suggested that “the teaching of Japanese traditional theatre should be introduced into the DSCTA program to expand the theatrical skills of the students of theatre. A licensed master-teacher from the traditional theatre of Japan should be invited to teach for a whole semester, perhaps, with the understanding that a production of a Japanese play, in Filipino translation, would be mounted at the end of the semester.”<sup>②</sup>

The non-inclusion of Japanese plays in DUP's 26-year repertoire is a “gross oversight”. To rectify this “oversight”, two months after the CIS conference, in December 2001, Dr. Cynthia Zayas, Coordinator of the Center for International Studies' (CIS) East and South East Asian Studies (East Asia-Japan) asked me to consult with Mr. Uesugi Hiroaki, Deputy Director of Japan Foundation. I asked him about how CIS could avail of a Japan Foundation grant to invite a master-teacher from the traditional theatre. Uesugi briefed me about the Cultural Demonstration Tours Support Program that provides funds “to individual scholars, artists, and groups (up to ten persons) who apply in Japan for aid to carry out projects to introduce Japanese culture overseas on a short-term basis”.<sup>③</sup> The Cultural Demonstration Tours Support Program grant accepts application three months before a scheduled project. However, the identification of the person to be invited was going to be the sole responsibility of the inviting organization. Moreover, the invitee must be willing to go through the application and selection process. Since both Zayas and I have connections with Noh theatre scholars and practitioners, we thought of inviting a

Noh master-teacher. These fortuitous events marked the beginning of the attempt to create a project which many Japanese and Filipinos alike perceived to be crazy and impossible.

This paper aims to document and narrate the step-by-step process involved in the inclusion of the replication of *Kanjicho* in Dulaang UP's theatre season. First, it will provide a historical overview of the staging of kabuki in other countries by non-Japanese and how elements of kabuki are fused with western techniques. It will then describe how the inclusion of a kabuki play in DUP's 27<sup>th</sup> Theatre Season came about. It will also try to explain why the staging concept is a replication. Finally, it will try to identify the individuals and institutions that signified their willingness to assist in making this "impossible dream" a reality. Details about the rehearsal process, the kabuki *nagauta* and *buyo* workshops, the production and an assessment of the project will be discussed in a separate paper.

### Historical Overview of the Staging of Kabuki by Non-Japanese

Kabuki has been the object of study by western actors, directors and scholars since the 1870's. Western experiments on the staging of kabuki vary from an authentic restaging of a kabuki play in English to productions that fuse elements of kabuki and the western theatre.<sup>④</sup>

Experimentations on the traditional theatres of Asia, including that of the kabuki, were recorded by Leonard Pronko in his book *Theater East and West Perspectives Toward a Total Theater* and by Sang-Kyong Lee in his book *East Asia and America Encounters in Drama and Theatre*. Below is a summary of kabuki experimentations by non-Japanese theatre enthusiasts and practitioners.<sup>⑤</sup>

To practice the use of the English language, Japanese-American students in 1924 and in 1925 produced its first English production of John Masefield's *The Faithful*, an adaptation of the kabuki play *Kanadehon Chushingura*.

The first "authentic" kabuki training and performance by non-Japanese theatre practitioners, could be traced to the University of Hawaii's production of *The House of Sugawara* in 1951. Directed by Earl Ernst, this kabuki production was known for its efforts to strive for authenticity.<sup>⑥</sup> Other American schools followed with their own kabuki productions, many of which were made up of two plays. Other kabuki twin-bill productions

were *Gohiiki Kanjincho* and *Fishing for a Wife*, and *Tsuchigumo* and *Benten Kozo* in Pomona College in 1964. Tsubaki described Leonard Pronko's *Gohiiki Kanjincho* as "a hilarious comedy in a style, say 80% *kabuki* and 20% Pronko."<sup>⑦</sup>

In two of these authentic re-staging in the US, two Filipino graduate students at the University of Hawaii had the opportunity to train and appear in an English kabuki play in full costume and make-up.

In 1963, Amiel Leonardia, presently Chairman of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts at the University of the Philippines Diliman and Stage Design consultant for *Kanjincho*, had the privilege of studying kabuki acting with Onoe Kuroemon II, a professional kabuki master-teacher. He also worked with Earl Ernst, a pioneer and a great authority in the western study of kabuki who authored *The Kabuki Theater*. Leonardia was part of *Benten Kozo* (*Benten, The Thief*), (directed by Ernst and first performed in 1953) when it was re-staged in 1963 for the opening of East-West Center's John F. Kennedy Theatre at the University of Hawaii.

In 1973, Tony Mabesa, founder of Dulaang UP (and who was recently appointed Professor Emeritus) had the privilege of studying with James Brandon, another great authority on Asian Theatre. Brandon succeeded Earl Ernst at the University of Hawaii and is the foremost translator of kabuki plays in English. Mabesa trained with Nakamura Matagoro, a professional kabuki master-teacher, and acted in the play *Narukami* under the direction of James Brandon. *Narukami* is a favorite among the repertory of 15 kabuki plays regularly performed in American schools. It was staged by Onoe Baiko for IASTA in 1963-64 and Shozo Sato toured his *Narukami* production for the University of Illinois in Champaign.

*Kanjincho* (*The Subscription List*), translated and directed by James Brandon, was first performed at Michigan State University in 1963. It was double-billed with *Migarwari Zazen* (*The Zen Substitute*). In 1967-68, the Institute of Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts (IASTA) produced *Kanjincho* with Matsumoto Koshiro, a professional kabuki master-teacher as director. It has been performed at the University of Kansas and the University of Wisconsin since then.

In 1974, Brandon produced *Sakura-hime Azuma Bunsho* (*The Scarlet Princess of Edo*) at the annual theatre competition of the American College Theater Festival in Washington D. C. This was choreographed by Onoe Kikunobu, the kabuki mistress at

the Kennedy Theatre.

One of the earliest attempts to fuse elements of western theatre and kabuki was initiated by the Theater Guild, which was established in 1931 at the University of Hawaii to encourage the study of English. Before the outbreak of World War II, it produced a kabuki version of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*.

In an attempt to create total theatre, Pomona College experimented with the fusion of the literary theatre of the Elizabethan period and the highly theatrical kabuki, in its 1965 production of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*.

Stephen Sondheim's production of *Pacific Overtures* in 1976 combines western and eastern elements and was performed in kabuki style. The music made use of the pentatonic scale, the costumes were designed to allow fast costume changes and all the characters were portrayed by men.

Terence Knapp, a faculty member at the Department of Theater and Dance at the University of Hawaii directed Carol Sorgenfrei's *Medea* in 1980 and *Cordelia Victorious* in 1982. Both plays adapted the structure of noh but were performed using the combined styles of the noh and the kabuki.

In 1984, Robert Wilson the avant-garde director-designer borrowed the structure of kabuki using simultaneous actions and the picture-like presentation in *CIVIL warS* for the Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

In the fall of 1996, Brandon directed the University of Hawaii's version of *Kabuki Mikado* from Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, *The Mikado*. In this production, he used the *koken* to assist the actors with their props.

In March 1997, Carol Sorgenfrei's *Blood Wine and Blood Wedding*, an adaptation of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, Chikamatsu's *Sonezaki Shinju* (*Love Suicides at Sonezaki*), which incorporated the lives of both Lorca and Chikamatsu, kabuki and flamenco premiered at San Francisco's Cowell Theatre.

In Southeast Asia, the National University of Singapore, through the initiative and direction of Grant Guangren Shen, produced *Sukeroku*<sup>⑧</sup> "during an 11-month period from 1997 to 1998". Shen calls this production "the first *kabuki* play to be performed in English in Asia."<sup>⑨</sup> Like the earlier productions of Ernst and Brandon, Shen also aimed for an approximation of the original kabuki form.

DUP is known for its productions of non-Filipino plays in their original language as

well as in Filipino translation. This is why DUP produced *Kanjicho* in the original Nihongo language and in Filipino translation. It is perhaps the first attempt by non-Japanese to replicate a kabuki play in the original language and in translation.

This project, in so many different aspects, is the first of its kind in the country. It is possible that this is the first time Filipino actors will experience a kabuki training-rehearsal and performing in a kabuki play; the first time a kabuki play will be mounted by Fihpinos; and the first time Dulaang UP will produce an original Japanese play.

### The Inclusion of a Kabuki Play in DUP's 27<sup>th</sup> Theatre Season

At the beginning of the Academic Year (AY) of June 2001, DUP was given new management. The programs and policies of the last 26 years were up for review. During the March 2002 review of DUP's vision, mission and objectives, one of the resolutions decided was to ensure the inclusion of a representative Asian play and a Filipino play in DUP's annual season of plays starting with the 27<sup>th</sup> Theatre Season (AY 2002-2003). This change would immediately answer one of DUP's objectives, which is to "expose students to all types of theatrical styles".<sup>⑩</sup>

#### The First Choice, *Sukeroku*

Tony Mabesa returned to direct for DUP's 27<sup>th</sup> Theatre Season after a two-year hiatus. In early April, I asked him if he would like to direct an Asian play for the next season. He replied without batting an eyelash that he would like to direct the kabuki play *Sukeroku* if I would agree to be his co-director. It was indeed a great honor for me to be invited by no less than the director's director. However, not being a director at heart, I volunteered to produce it for him instead. He "threatened" that if I would not agree to his condition, he would not direct an Asian play. Not wanting to forego the chance of having an Asian play included in the 27<sup>th</sup> season but without completely understanding what I was getting into I agreed, hesitantly, to be his co-director. My first duty as a co-director was to secure a copy of the *Sukeroku* script. I searched for the book, *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays*, a present from a Japanese friend Masahiro Goto, during a short visit to Japan in November 2001. Who would ever thought that five months later I would be making full use of the book, which, luckily, contains the English translation of *Sukeroku*. Ten copies of the play

were photocopied for distribution to the artistic staff.

Among the members of the theatre faculty, only Mabesa, Leonardia, and myself, have had some training in kabuki. I shared the same master-teacher with Mabesa in the person of Nakamura Matagoro whom I trained with in 1993 at the National Kabuki Theatre in Tokyo.

Our little experience in kabuki training and performing did not make any of us a kabuki master-teacher. Our knowledge of the performance elements of the kabuki was limited, as it was more scholarly than performative. Because of this, I suggested that we use the text of the kabuki play as literature and to use performance elements from the theatrical tradition of the *Komedya* and other Filipino motifs such as the *arnis*, etc. in this production. It was my hope that through an intercultural production, Philippine traditional theatre would similarly be given the support that it badly needed.

Mabesa and Leonardia, who had lots of wonderful experiences training for and performing in kabuki plays wanted to impart a similar experience to theatre students and professional actors. Their suggestion was to faithfully replicate *Sukeroku*, for academic reasons. Mabesa, proposed that we build a *hanamichi* (a bridgeway translated as a flower path), use authentic costumes and invite a kabuki master-teacher who would be willing to come to the Philippines to teach the performance elements and techniques of *Sukeroku*.

Asian traditional theatres like the kabuki have their own distinct performance style, vocabulary, movement and form that are learned by the body when an actor subjects himself to actual physical training from a teacher, who is usually his father. Plays are memorized not by reading them but orally, by repeating the lines delivered by their teacher. Character analysis based on what is and what is not given in the text is not employed. Like any other Asian theatre forms, the heart of a kabuki performance is the actor and his skill in performance. It was hoped that this rare experience of approximating, rehearsing and appearing in a kabuki play would deepen the Filipino actor's understanding of the theatrical form and appreciation for theatrical stylization.

Perhaps, through an understanding and appreciation of the kabuki's presentational style of performance, which is similar to the theatrical stylization observed in the living traditional theatres of the Philippines such as ritual and mimetic dances, *Komedya*, *Sarswela* etc., it was hoped that this encounter with Japanese traditional theatre would en-



courage the preservation, conservation and revitalization of the living Filipino traditional theatres.

### From Guerrero Theatre to the University Theatre

DUP's replication of *Kanjicho* requires the construction of a *hanamichi*, a bridgeway that runs from the back of the hall to the stage. It will be difficult to build one at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theatre, where DUP productions are staged, because the audience area of this 250-seater small theatre is in a gentle slope. An alternative venue within the campus is the 2,000-seater University Theatre, a favorite venue for film festival awards nights. Since DUP does not have control over the schedule of the University Theatre, when I checked its availability in April 2002, I was able to reserve the only available dates in the last week of February 2003.

### The Search for the Kabuki Master-Teacher

The changes in DUP emboldened me to request Zayas to postpone CIS's plan to invite a noh master-teacher through a Japan Foundation grant and to support DUP's plan of inviting a kabuki master-teacher, instead. When she consented, I sent an e-mail request to my ever-supportive adviser at Doshisha University, Prof. Mukai Yoshiki, a highly respected kabuki and Chikamatsu scholar, and to my close friends in Japan. I asked for a video copy of *Sukeroku*, which we can use as our guide in our replication. I also asked to be introduced to a kabuki master-teacher who would be willing to come to the Philippines to teach. The support that I got from them was overwhelming. Tanaka Rika searched the libraries in Japan for a videotape of *Sukeroku*, but unfortunately, all her efforts were in vain. Kitani Makiko offered to approach a key person in Shochiku but by then Shochiku has already turned down our request coursed through the Japanese Centre of the International Theatre Institute.

### The Assistance of the Japanese Centre of the International Theatre Institute

Desperate to get introduced to a kabuki master-teacher, I called up ITI-Japan, the institution which sponsored the 1993 Kabuki Workshop I participated in. Although I was a

stranger to the present Secretary-General, Ms. Odagiri Yuko, she welcomed my request for assistance. Odagiri contacted Shochiku, in our behalf. She was informed that since *Sukeroku* is one of the 18 Best Plays of the Ichikawa family, it is only they who can teach it. Their actors, however, were fully booked for the next three years.

#### From *Sukeroku* to *Kanjincho*

This piece of “not so good” information I immediately communicated to Mabesa. Without a teacher and a video it would be impossible to replicate *Sukeroku*. Not one to give up easily, Mabesa searched his mind for the title of his next favorite kabuki play about *giri* (duty) and *ninjo* (human feelings). He vividly described to me the play about a certain retainer’s loyalty to his master. I suggested that he watch a video copy of another kabuki play, which was given to me by my adviser, Mukai *Sensei* before I left Doshisha in March 2001. When I gave him the video copy of *Kanjincho* (*The Subscription List*), he was overjoyed. I searched my room for the copy of the English translation of *Kanjincho* given to me in 1994 by Dr. Jonah Salz who is presently a Professor of Ryukoku University. Right then and there, Mabesa, Prof. Rogelio Juliano (Costume Consultant for *Kanjincho*), and myself viewed the tape as Prof. Ramona Flores (Assistant Professor for Speech) read the English script aloud, in tandem with the action on the video. After viewing it, Mabesa asked for a copy of the video and even offered to photocopy the script. A copy of the script was then given to Prof. Jerry Respeto of the Ateneo De Manila University’s Filipino Department for translation to Filipino.

Faithful to DUP’s practice of staging plays in the original language, Mabesa insisted on doing the play in Nihongo so I had to get hold of the *Kanjincho* script in Nihongo. I asked once again the assistance of Mukai *Sensei* who foresaw my need early on and bought me a script with an audio recording of the play in CD. He sent this to me by EMS together with a book containing the script of *Sukeroku*.

With the Nihongo script on hand, I was ready for my next duty as co-director, that is, to transcribe the Nihongo text to the English alphabet. My eight and a half years in Japan was not enough to prepare me for the challenge of reading many of the difficult *kanji* (Chinese characters) that appeared in the classical Nihongo script. Mrs. Ozeki Junko, wife of the Manila Japanese School principal, Mr. Ozeki Toshio, whose family I bef-

riended while still a student in Kyoto, came to my rescue. She transcribed most of the *kanji* to *hiragana*. The few *kanji*, which were quite difficult even for her to read, I transcribed with the aid of the CD recording.

### The Kabuki Master-Teacher and ITI

I informed ITI's Odagiri that there was a change in our choice of material from *Sukeroku* to *Kanjincho*. I reiterated my request for an introduction to a master-teacher who may not be part of the mainstream but who can be our consultant for this project. Recognizing how important it was for DUP to make a go of this production, ITI's Odagiri moved heaven and earth to find us a master-teacher.

In July, ITI's Odagiri came to the Philippines for a different project. I arranged a meeting between Odagiri, Zayas, Mabesa, Nadine de Claro (*Kanjincho*'s student production manager) and myself. Odagiri informed us that Mr. Bando Kotoji, a *buyo* master-teacher had agreed to come to the Philippines in early November and February and was willing to apply for a Cultural Demonstration Tours Support Program grant from Japan Foundation Tokyo. She also mentioned that through Mr Bando's connections, we would be able to rent authentic costumes, wigs and properties for the ten lead actors, at a discounted price of J¥100,000.00 (approx. Php 42,000,00 then) each. We rushed DUP and CIS's letter of invitation to Mr. Bando Kotoji (which is a requirement for his Japan Foundation grant application) and sent it by Federal Express. Because Bando is said to be a very busy person, Odagiri went out of her way to assist Bando and filled in most of the information needed in the application form.

### The Initial Search for Sponsors

Considering that this production was turning out to be not only an intercultural but an international project, it was getting a little too big for the meager resources of Dulaang UP. Cultural institutions such as Japan Foundation, the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Japan Information and Cultural Center were approached for assistance.

## Japan Foundation

DUP's newly appointed Artistic Director Jose Estrella was a recipient of Japan Foundation Manila's (JFM) production grant in the amount of Php 100,000.00 for the AY 2001-2002. The information about the grant, however, was received right after the line up of plays for the season had been decided. So she asked for a deferment of the grant for AY 2002-2003. Upon learning that Mabesa was interested in directing a kabuki, she offered to give up her production grant in favor of the kabuki. I consulted with Ms. Madeleine Nicolas, JFM Program Officer for Asia Center Program and Arts about this. She advised me to request this in a communication that I sent to Mr. Shimizu Motohisa, Director of Japan Foundation Manila in May 2002. I also proposed that this production be considered as the University of the Philippines' participation in the 2003 Philippine-Japan Festival.

## Cultural Center of the Philippines

While shooting a film, Mabesa mentioned to Fernando Josef, Artistic Director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) about DUP's kabuki project. Josef expressed interest in bringing the production to the CCP. Mabesa instructed me to write a letter to the CCP formally requesting for a Php 1,000,000.00 production grant to subsidize the cost of production and a venue grant or the free use of the 1,800-seater Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (Main Theatre), the only theatre in CCP that would meet the requirement of building a *hanamichi*.

Considering the financial difficulties faced by CCP, Josef advised me that they could only provide the venue. He mentioned that in a meeting he had with the directors of Japan Foundation Manila and the Embassy of Japan's Japan Information and Cultural Center (JICC), the *Kanjicho* production came up. Josef directed me to contact these cultural agencies, which appear to have some funds to support projects connected to the Philippine-Japan Festival.

## Japan Information and Cultural Center

I consulted with Ms. Yaguchi Yuko, then First Secretary of the Japan Information and Cultural Center (JICC) to request financial assistance for the project. She informed me that JICC could provide support only for the printing of marketing and publicity materials. Several months later, Yaguchi ended her tour of duty in the Philippines. A new set of Japanese officials arrived headed by Mr. Kimiya Kenichi, Director and Ms. Ochiai Kana, Second Secretary. They expressed their support for the project in a meeting that Zayas and I attended at the embassy. Through their invaluable assistance and the tireless coordination by Mr. Ishida Yasushi, the embassy was able to arrange for a Php 310,000.00 grant for the project.

### UP Supports *Kanjicho*

It was fortunate that the *Kanjicho* production enjoyed the support of the different units of the University of the Philippines that recognize the need to introduce aspects of Asian life and culture to the Filipinos.

### A Co-Production Venture Between DUP and CIS

Before I relinquished my position as DUP's Managing Director in May 2002, I approached CIS's Zayas to propose a co-production venture between these two institutions. Without CIS's initiative to review DUP's play production, the situation of the non-inclusion of Asian and Japanese plays in its theatre season may have continued.

Recognizing that this "oversight" needed to be rectified immediately, Zayas agreed to co-produce the creative path of introducing Japanese life and culture to the Filipinos by staging *Kanjicho* in the Nihonggo original and in Filipino translation as part of DUP's 27<sup>th</sup> Theatre Season.

CIS gave recognition to my assessment that staging a traditional theatre form like the kabuki was not an easy task. As in any traditional theatre forms, kabuki has its own performance language unfamiliar to the Filipino theatre practitioners and their audience. This had been identified as the major obstacle in producing Japanese plays.

Responding to my assessment that the "oversight" could be traced to the fact that DUP

is not equipped with adequate expertise in staging Japanese plays, CIS in cooperation with Dulaang UP considered the “oversight” as a challenge, and proposed to Japan Foundation two lecture-demonstrations to be conducted by Mr. Bando Kotoji and his assistant on the performance elements and techniques of the kabuki. This is with the end view of staging *Kanjincho* in February — March 2003 as part of the Philippine-Japan Festival. The project-proposal was presented to the CIS affiliates by Zayas. By mid-July 2002, the staging of *Kanjincho* as part of the Philippine-Japan Festival was finalized.

#### A Collaboration Among DSCTA, CIS and the College of Music

Kabuki musicians and sound-effects men, who play live from the *geza*, the music and sound effects room, are not seen by the audience. For noh-based plays like the *Kanjincho*, however, the chorus and musicians appear onstage and are called *debayashi*. They play *nagauta*, a kabuki dance music that incorporates the musical instruments of the noh such as the *kotsutsumi* (shoulder drum), *otsutsumi* (hip drum) and the *noh-kan* (flute) with the *shamisen* (three stringed instrument).

The original plan of the *Kanjincho* production was to use canned music. The problem was that the over-all design of this production requires a *debayashi*. Thus, the chorus and musicians must appear onstage. I requested Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes, an ethnomusicologist whom I met in a conference, to help us identify people in Manila who can play the *nagauta* instruments.

When Dr. Jojo Buenconsejo, Chairman of the Department of Music Research of the College of Music learned from Yoneno-Reyes. of our kabuki project, he signified interest in it. Unknown to us, the College of Music had 2 *shamisen*, 2 *kotsuzumi*, 2 *otsuzumi* and *noh-kan* at their Museum of Musical Instruments — untouched since they became part of the museum collection.

Upon learning that we would be inviting a *buyo* master-teacher, Buenconsejo brought up the idea of a collaboration between the College of Music and the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts. He wanted us to request the *buyo* master-teacher to teach their students at the College of Music how to play the instruments and the music of *Kanjincho*. In so doing, not canned, but live *nagauta* music would be used in the production. I forewarned Buenconsejo that it might be impossible for the *buyo*

master-teacher to teach *nagauta* music because Japanese traditional artists usually specialize only in one particular field of art.

At this time, Zayas became acquainted with the percussionist Toni Bernardo, who was in Japan for almost three months in 2001 to learn the *shamisen* and the *kotsuzumi* as a Bunka Cho scholar. We briefed her about the kabuki project. Bernardo was so excited to learn about it. She contacted her *nagauta* master-teacher, Mochizuki Takinojo to ask if he would be willing to come to the Philippines to teach kabuki music and the music of *Kanjincho*. We were overjoyed when Mochizuki signified his interest in the project.

In mid-July, a meeting was set up between Zayas, Buenconsejo and myself to discuss how to go about inviting Mochizuki to the university. Our suggestion was to invite Mochizuki to team-teach kabuki music as an intensive course during the second semester with CIS affiliates. At that time, we were hoping to consult with Mrs. Cecile Aquino, Program Officer for Education to request funding support from Japan Foundation. Buenconsejo informed us that kabuki music could be the course offering for MPC 159 or Asian Music Ensemble.

With Buenconsejo on field work, Yoneno-Reyes and I went to see Uesugi to consult with him about the College of Music's proposal to support the *Kanjincho* production by inviting Mochizuki through the Cultural Demonstration Tours Support Program of Japan Foundation Tokyo. Given the fact that CIS and Dulaang UP have pending proposals for the same program, Uesugi informed us that it would be possible to invite him but the decision will depend largely on the remaining budget of the Tokyo office. I prepared a letter of invitation for the College of Music, which was sent to Mochizuki in Tokyo by Federal Express.

To ensure that the instruments were in good condition before the intensive course, Bernardo checked the instruments at the College of Music. She sent pictures via e-mail to Mochizuki in Tokyo. From the pictures, Mochizuki advised her to send the 2 shells of the *shamisen* back to Tokyo for repair. The 2 *shamisen* shells were handcarried to Tokyo by Zayas's friend. The cost of repair was J¥30,000 each for a total of J¥60,000.

Buenconsejo organized a meeting at the Department of Music Research for all faculty members and students interested in the project. He also invited Mrs. Nishijima Wakaba, a *koto* master-teacher at the College of Music in the hope that she would agree to take on a three unit-teaching load to supervise the kabuki music course. During this meeting Buen-

consejo reiterated his request for the *Kanjincho* score.

Since Nishijima was going home to Japan for a short visit, she decided to meet Mochizuki in Tokyo. After the meeting, Mochizuki e-mailed us that it would be impossible for us to play the music of *Kanjincho* live. He said that it would take 10 years to learn it. He also said that he consented to come to the Philippines to teach kabuki music, not *Kanjincho* music. He suggested for us to use the traditional instruments of the Philippines in playing the music of *Kanjincho* live. Moreover, he said that he would not need 3 weeks to teach kabuki music. This most unexpected cross-cultural “miscommunication” led to the cancellation of the original plan to offer a three-week intensive course at the College of Music.

The cancellation of the College of Music’s intensive music course on the kabuki left us with no solution to the *debayashi* problem. With little support from the College of Music, the plan to use live music seemed impossible. Mabesa, Jethro Joaquin (Sound Designer) and myself agreed to revert back to the use of canned music. Joaquin was given the challenge to transcribe and replicate the music for recording. To achieve the look needed, we agreed to invite students willing to stand in as musicians who would be holding, not playing, the instruments.

In a meeting between Zayas, Bernardo and myself, Bernardo and I suggested that we go on with the plan of inviting Mochizuki not to conduct an intensive course but to conduct an introductory workshop on kabuki music. The optimistic in me tells me that at most the students could learn the basic skills on how to play the instruments. At the very least, the students could learn the proper way of handling and caring for the instruments. In this way, the College of Music would still entrust their instruments to us to be used as hand property only. Bernardo, on the other hand, believes that musicians from the College of Music could learn to play the instruments in an introductory workshop. Then, they could try to replicate the music of *Kanjincho* on their own. Although Mochizuki’s intensive kabuki music course at the College of Music was cancelled, a 9-day kabuki music workshop took place at the College of Music and at the College of Arts and Letters.



## The Support of the UP Administration

It was fortunate that this brainchild of DUP and CIS enjoyed the support of the University of the Philippines starting from the College level with the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Rose Torres-Yu hosting the welcome dinner for the *nagauta* master-teacher. Through the assistance of Dean Mauricia Borromeo and Dr. Jojo Buenconsejo of the College of Music, the Japanese instruments have been entrusted to us for the duration of this project.

Upon the request of CIS, Chancellor Emerlinda Roman released funds for the kabuki workshops and performances. Chancellor Roman even volunteered to house the visiting master-teachers at the guest room of the Balay Chancellor (Chancellor's House) inside the campus.

Upon the request of Dulaang UP, President Fidel Nemenzo, through the assistance of Vice-Presidents Martin Gregorio and Sergio Cao rallied behind *Kanjicho*. They released additional funds to pay for the kabuki workshop expenses such as venue rental and food. The Office of the President also provided the transportation in Manila used by the master-teachers.

Through the combined efforts and resources of the Office of the President, the Office of the Chancellor, Dulaang UP and CIS, one third of the production cost had been raised and through further assistance of the College of Arts and Letters, the College of Music and the University Theatre, *Kanjicho* successfully entered its production phase.

## The Project Proposal

A week before Bando's scheduled workshop (November 1-14, 2002), Odagiri informed me that Bando faced some personal problems in Japan, fell ill and backed out of the project. This piece of shocking news caused some people to doubt the coming of the *buyo* master-teacher. Knowing that Odagiri had invested so much of herself in this project, I trusted that she would look for Bando's replacement. In December, the workshop pushed through when the Kamigata Kabuki *buyo* master-teacher Fujima Toyohiro agreed to come to the Philippines despite a short notice from Odagiri.

Originally the project proposed was for two lecture-demonstrations on the perform-

ance elements and techniques of the kabuki. However, in the course of time it expanded to a three-part project as follows:

Part 1. An intensive two part two-week *Lecture Demonstration Workshop on the Performance Elements and Techniques of the Kabuki* to be conducted by Mr. Fujima Toyohiro. The two part series is divided as follows:

a. November 1-14, 2002

A Lecture Demonstration Workshop on the Performance Elements and Techniques of the Kabuki: Physical Training of the Actors in preparation for *Kanjincho*

b. February 23 — March 2, 2002

A Lecture Demonstration Workshop on the Performance Elements and Techniques of the Kabuki: Performing With Costumes, Properties etc. of *Kanjincho*

Part 2. An intensive two part two-week lecture demonstration workshop on the performance elements and techniques of *nagauta* to be conducted by Mr. Mochizuki Takinojo:

a. November 19-28, 2002

Workshop on *nagauta* fundamental techniques and styles of music accompanying kabuki

b. January 10-16, 2003

Continuation of the workshop on *nagauta*

Part 3. The workshops will culminate with the performance of *Kanjincho* as part of the Philippine-Japan Festival 2003.

a. University Theatre Feb 28, 2003 7: 00 pm Filipino

Mar 1, 2003 3: 00 pm Filipino

Mar 2, 2003 3: 00 pm Nihongo

b. Cultural Center of the Philippines'

Tanghalang NicanorAbelardo (Main Theatre)

Mar 14, 2003 8: 00 pm Nihongo

Mar 15, 2003 2: 30 pm Filipino

Mar 16, 2003 2: 30 pm Filipino

Through this ambitious and expensive project, it was the hope of DUP and CIS to introduce kabuki, its performance techniques and its theme of human passion and loyalty to university theatre students and faculty members ; professional actors and practitioners

of traditional and community theatres and the general public.

## Looking Back

As I write this paper with a little over a month before opening night, I can't help but look back and reflect on how this project evolved. Auditions commenced at the end of August 2002. Soon after, the 6:00 pm-9:00 pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday rehearsal started in September. Just before the arrival of the master-teachers in November and December, the cast, artistic and production staff worked so hard to replicate the play by listening to the CD and by carefully watching the video. Regular rehearsals ended at or after 10 pm. There were instances when an extra rehearsal was scheduled on the weekend.

Not everything that we planned for happened as scheduled. Of the three lecture-demonstration workshops we applied for under the Cultural Demonstration Tours Support Program of Japan Foundation Tokyo, only one workshop was granted financial assistance. When Bando backed out of the project, we lost our connection to the company willing to give a huge discount for costumes. At the moment, the rental of authentic kabuki costumes is yet uncertain, but arrangements are already being made with Kamigata Kabuki.

The greatest headache in this endeavor is fund-raising. *Kanjinchō* is the most expensive production to date in the history of Dulaang UP. The total production budget close to Php 5 million could actually pay for one theatre season of 5 productions. It was fortunate that DUP enjoyed the support of the University of the Philippines and its partner institutions such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Japan Foundation and Japan Information and Cultural Center. We are still hopeful that the members of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry will surprise us with the financial support to cover the rest of the production expense.

Be that as it may, four months after rehearsal commenced, the cast, artistic and production staff have remained solid and loyal to each other and to the production and are facing all the challenges head-on. Not one has succumbed to the pressure, criticism, frustration and misunderstanding brought about by an intercultural project. To me, the tireless effort of the company was given due recognition when the master-teachers previewed a run-

through, upon their arrival, and expressed how impressed they were with the quality of performance the company had achieved in a short span of time. They were similarly surprised to learn that the replication was based on a video and a CD recording of the play. They were even more surprised to find out that the performers were non-Nihongo speakers.

With regard to the music, Mochizuki was inspired by the effort and enthusiasm shown by DUP student-musicians in learning the instruments. He believes that what motivated them was a ray of hope that if they could learn how to play the instruments, they would have a chance to play the *Kanjincho* music live. On the other hand, since musicians from the College of Music have their own instruments, learning a new instrument is not their priority. On the last day of his November workshop, he started teaching DUP student-musicians the music of *Kanjincho* to my delight. He even came back for another week in January to teach them more music sequences. During the last run-through with Mochizuki on January 15<sup>th</sup>, the student-musicians displayed their prowess by playing practically almost all of the music live.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Kimiya Kenichi, Director of Japan Information and Cultural Center, Embassy of Japan tells us that DUP's *Kanjincho* is regarded as the "highlight" of the 2003 Philippine-Japan Festival. DUP has been invited to perform an excerpt from *Kanjincho* during the press conference for the festival on Jan 29<sup>th</sup>.

According to Mr. Julius Ceasar Flores, Director of the Asean Desk of the Department of Foreign Affairs, DUP's *Kanjincho* is considered to be the "representative" project of the Asean-Japan Exchange Year 2003 as it showcases Filipinos performing a Japanese play. DUP's *Kanjincho* has been, similarly, invited to grace the opening ceremony of the Asean-Japan Exchange Year 2003 on February 4, 2003, which will be graced by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Bias Ople.

The Department of Tourism (DOT), similarly, expressed interest in the project by inviting DUP to perform another excerpt of *Kanjincho* during the opening of DOT's Japan Month on February 13, 2003 at Intramuros, Manila.

Finally, the Cultural Center of the Philippines has expressed interest in inviting DUP to re-stage *Kanjincho* for the Asian Theatrical Heritage year in 2004.

Indeed, it could be said that DUP's renewed commitment to staging Asian theatre, in general, and Japanese theatre, in particular has triggered interest among Filipinos and

Japanese who are looking forward to this production.

## Afterword

With Filipinos at the helm of this “challenging” project, Dr. Zayas, other CIS affiliates for East-Asia-Japan, and myself, who have been recipients of a Japanese Ministry of Education Scholarship (Monbusho), regard this project as our *ongaeshi* (an act of gratitude literally translated as repayment for one’s kindness) to Japan and the Japanese people for their generosity in welcoming us, hosting us in their country, teaching us and making us embrace their distinguished culture not for us to become Japanese but for us to understand our Filipinoness better.

Although Prof. Mabesa and myself learned kabuki nearly twenty years apart, we learned it from the same great master-teacher whose expertise and dedication to his art made an indelible mark in our hearts. We respectfully dedicate DUP’s *Kanjincho* to Nakamura Matagoro *Sensei*.

Last but not the least for patiently guiding me, believing in me and for being there for me when I was faced with enormous challenges during my eight years of study at Doshisha University in Kyoto, for supporting me and my work (including this kabuki project) after coming home and for displaying his unparalleled generosity as a teacher, my work in DUP’s *Kanjincho* is lovingly dedicated to the kabuki and Chikamatsu scholar, my adviser, Prof. Mukai Yoshiki, on the eve of his retirement.

## 注

- ① Amparo Adelina C. Umali, III, *Glimpses of Japan and Japanese Theatre on Dulaang UP Stage*, Unpublished Paper Presented during the CIS East-Asia Japan Conference on the State of Studies of Japan in the Philippines Sponsored by Japan Foundation Manila in Bohol, Philippines on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 2001.
- ② Ibid, p. 12.
- ③ Japan Foundation. Program Guidelines. 2002.
- ④ Leonard Pronko, *Theater East and West Perspectives Towards a Total Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 155-169.
- ⑤ Most of the information provided was taken from Leonard Pronko, *Theater East and West Perspectives Toward a Total Theater* and Sang-Kyong Lee *East Asia and America Encounters in Drama and Theatre* (Sydney: Wild Peony Pty Ltd, 2000).
- ⑥ Ibid, p. 159-160.
- ⑦ Stanley Vincent Longman, ed. “The Symposium. A Panel Discussion on Crosscurrents in the

Drama : East and West” *Theatre Symposium*, 1998, p. 74.

⑧ Grant Guangren Shen, “Zaju and Kabuki in English : Directing in the Classical Styles” *The Drama Review*, 45, No. 3, Fall 2001, p. 1.

⑨ Ibid.

⑩ Amiel Y. Leonardia. “History and Growth of Theater Education in U. P.” *Masks and Voices*, 3, No. 1 (January-July 1995) p. 31.