

Matsumushi (Pinus Erectus) 松虫

Pretty Boys in the Noh (2004)

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いきている能としての‘松虫’

ケネス・リチャード

要 旨 : This paper addresses the issue of same-sex love as it is portrayed in early Noh drama of the Muromachi Period, and briefly analyzes how and why many of these plays were either lost, or forgotten in the ensuing centuries. I present a translation of one such play called *Matsumushi (Pine Cricket)*. Though sometimes performed, this play has never appeared in English translation.

キーワード : Noh text, same-sex love, pine cricket, Kanehira, Matsumushi, Muromachi drama, English translation, Yoshinaka, Noh actor, Zeami

要 旨 : この論文が二つの部分からなっている。一部に初期謡曲（世阿弥とその時代）を取り上げて、能役者と寺院の稚児との関係、同性愛をテーマにする曲、とそれぞれの後の時代に失われた伝統の行方と理由を分析します。二部には‘松虫’という謡曲のはじめての英訳を試みる。

キーワード : 謡曲, 同性愛, 松虫, 兼平, 室町時代の劇, 義仲, 能役者, 世阿弥

Introduction

‘Living Noh’ is the title given to a series of workshops held at the Nichibunken in Kyoto in 2001-02 that I was privileged to attend. As we read through plays both often performed as well as some that are not as well known or performed, I began to draft my own answer to the question of what constitutes an idea of ‘Living Noh.’ After all, the main characters in a Noh play are mostly returned from the dead. ‘Living Noh,’ as I discovered, is a dramaturgy that has been re-evaluated, restored to a more originally lucent spirit. That is when I became convinced that the variety of male responses to life and death was a theme central to the whole idea of Noh, and that this male response had been undervalued and truncated in the choice of plays performed for modern audiences.

Noh is filled with beautiful moments when memory is exalted, and the soul saved. The texts are central to the aesthetic beauty of the play, and actors and acting traditions throughout the four eras since the Noh was first performed seek to reinterpret, even reform, plays to their ideals. In the Muromachi era when Zeami and his followers were at the same time both actors and writers, the privileged classes of consumers of the art, the nobility and the military, patronized actors, encouraging them to write plays that would be well received, and often quite openly taking them into

their beds.

Actors in this era were an unprivileged class, part of the *hinin*, not belonging to any of the four officially sanctioned classes. Many of their plays give witness to men like themselves who were at home in the rowdy market streets where they drank sake and then went to make love in the surrounding fields. *Matsumushi* is an anonymous play but a good one, because it deals with men who may have been friends of actors, not their patrons. For the patrons, witnessing *Matsumushi* and enjoying the eternal love of two commoners, might have extolled the actors in the eyes of their audience. Because *Matsumushi* so obviously heightens the appeal of same sex relationships, actors easily became lovers to the samurai, even to the shogun. These actors were rewarded not only for their dramatic talent, but for their good looks and character. The stories of Zeami Motokiyo as shogunal lover to the Ashikaga are well known. For example, see Albery, Nobuko, 1986. *House of Kanze: A Novel*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

In the Edo Period, the second great era of purveyors and consumers of Noh, acting families developed distinct acting traditions with specific plays reserved for performance only in their house style. Noh took on a more specific canonical role as an entertainment for the shogunal and samurai class. It legitimized the neoclassical stance of the *kokugakusha*, the nativists, and others who touted Japanese classical literature over a newfound interest in continental Chinese writers. At the same time, theatrical performances by manipulated puppets in the *bunraku*, and then by professional actors in the *kabuki* took over the intimate exchange of art and sex that had once been the sole purvey of Zeami and his successors. Noh became 'high art.'

Whereas the actors and playwrights of the earlier Muromachi era set the precedence of moving up their outcaste social ladder, starting as waifs, continuing as *chigo*, boys who resided in temples for the sexual pleasure of priests, culminating as private troupes for the nobility and military authorities, the social agenda of the Edo era Noh schools was quite different. A play such as *Kanehira*, based on characters and incidents drawn from the 13th century *The Tale of the Heike*, helped to maintain an ideology of the honorability and purity of the warrior class, and, as such, might well have been a staple drama for the edification of, for example, the Edo shoguns. In the play, Yoshinaka and his comrade-in-arms Kanehira are (male) lovers who promise to die together on the battlefield. Because of the societal changes from the time of these active, battling, Minamoto warriors to the time of the inactive, idle, Edo era samurai class, such an ideal state of Bushido, a state of mind enacted, but kept as an emotional modus operandi when the sword was laid down, would certainly be a gratifying entertainment. *Kanehira* restores the ideal of the noble warrior, and reinforces the feeling of sympathy for a fallen hero so dear to Japanese audiences. Both Yoshinaka and Kanehira are from the victorious side of the war, but choose a kind of *liebestod*, a love death, rather than commit suicide in the face of the enemy. *Kanehira* continues to appeal in performance to this day, notwithstanding the same sex love vows the two men take before their deaths.

Noh performance in the Meiji and the modern era, the last of the four eras, is strongly bound to the responsibilities of the acting families to transmit the repertoire faithfully, to publish texts and annotations, to perform and introduce their art to audiences in Japan and throughout the world, and to live up to their official canonization as 'living treasures of Japan.' This has taken the role of purveyor and consumer a huge distance away from the role of patronage of individuals

and the sexual intimacies of the Muromachi era. Now Noh is traditional, and classical. Very few plays are being added to the regular repertoire, and very few actors adopted from completely outside the acting families ever make it to the stage. Gone are the connections between the Buddhist clergy, the temples, the *chigo*, to becoming an actor. There has always been a history of government interference and control in the activities and repertoire of Japanese dramatic arts, and, through official pressure or otherwise, many old plays considered somehow inappropriate for modern or for foreign audiences were dropped from the repertoire of all the acting families. Since the Meiji era, male-male love stories have been obvious victims. Iwata Jun'ichi's *Honcho nanshoku ko-nanshoku bunken shoshi* (*Thoughts on Same-Sex Male Relations in Japan—Bibliography of Homosexual Literature in Japan*) published privately from his writings in the 1930's (republished in 2002 in a one volume edition by the Hara shobo in Tokyo), lists many Noh plays dealing with same sex relations that have been abandoned, become *haikyoku* or lost repertoire. *Matsumushi* is on Iwata's list.

Matsumushi is a timeless play and seems to best represent the older animistic beliefs of legend. It seems to come from the earliest stages of the Noh repertoire. Though sometimes performed, it has not been seen in an English translation, though the title is mentioned as 'Pine Cricket' in Shimazaki, Chifumi. *Troubled Souls from Japanese Noh Plays of the Fourth Group*. Cornell, 1998. See <http://www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~pmjs/biblio/noh-trans.html> *Pinus Erectus* is the species of pine in which crickets called *matsumushi* live.

Translation *Pinus Erectus* (*Matsumushi*) (copyright Kenneth L. Richard 2004)

Type of Play: unclassified

Author unknown

Shite (1st half): male villager (apparition)

Shite (2nd half): the ghost of a man who died for love

Tsure (1st half): male villager (real)

Waki: Sake seller

Ai: male villager

NANORI

Waki

I make my home in Abeno, in the Province of Tsu.¹ One day, in my normal routine of selling sake at the Abeno market, a crowd of young men appeared out of nowhere and commenced to drink. As I left for home they seemed to be in the midst of a party. It all seemed strange, and so since they have appeared here again today, I mean to ask them who they are.

(The waki takes his seat. As the Shidai begins, the Shite and the Tsure enter)

SHIDAI

Shite and Tsure

Pine cricket calling back the autumn I knew Pine cricket calling back the autumn I
knew I yearn for you in their cries

SASHI

Shite

Autumn winds through the darkening night the long month of autumn on cold dawns
in the morning breeze sleeves fluttering together intimates on their way to market
marked by affection's dew upon the roadside grasses deep and devoted straight and tall
they go cloaked in rapture emblem to a rising sun going on the road to Abeno market

SAGEUTA

Shite and Waki

From distant Tozato through nearby Koya and Suminoe along the bay²

AGEUTA

Shite and Waki

Salt air breathing through autumn grasses on the shore meadow breathing on autumn
grasses on the shore meadow waves from the open sea sounding up through the pines
hear them together inviting intimates to the throng in the marketplace I will go he will
go drawn to the plain of Abeno drawn to the plain of Abeno

(The waki remains seated while the shite stands. The Kakeai section begins. As the chorus sings an ageuta, the shite does one turn around the stage, then stands in his usual spot.)

KAKEAI

Waki

As it is in poetry Po Chu-I³ made sonnets in praise of wine the three friends—wine, music,
poetry so I too bring memories here to my market stand barrels in a row cups aligned
I wait here for those who chance by

KAKEAI

Waki

Come in come in everyone have a cup of sake

Shite

This stall sells not men nor potions of long life but at any corner where men con-
gregate the songs of friends now gone are the same I exhort each man in his own way
to partake of the sweet elixir brew and be of good cheer

Waki

Will he come again today? Today I overflow with sake come amuse yourself with music
and dance sing the verses comfort your souls stay late

Shite

Why do you ask me not to leave early?

Waki

Best things happen when it grows late, very late never fail to keep a watch on the moon

Shite

You shall have it your way, but why need you ask? Why would I leave a band of drinking friends as the ancient verses say here beneath the blossoms?⁴

Waki

Forgetting to return

Shite

Is to poetize on a beautiful spot

Shite and waki

Beside the kegs to indulge in drunkenness 'spring breezes' make us do it

UTA

Chorus

In the autumn breeze we know the warmth sake brings to the body elixir beneath the chrysanthemums forgetting to go home Ah, how I love to love sake.

AGEUTA

Chorus

Though darkness falls though darkness falls we are companions of the night intimates whose familiar sleeves catch reflected moonlight in our cups fleeting fading flowers our faces redden with the prowess of the prime flower chrysanthemum through a thousand autumns the crying of the pine cricket shall never end and forever as vines twining up a wall our friendship will never end the best prize of all in the marketplace the best prize of all in the marketplace

(The waki begins to question while the shite moves to stage center and sits. The tsure is seated in front of the chorus)

Waki

Let me ask you, in the words you have spoken, can I interpret that you yearn for a lost friend in the cries of the pine cricket? Please explain.

Shite

As you say, there is a story here. I shall tell you.

Waki

Please do.

KATARI

Shite

Once, many years ago, there were two intimates who were passing through the pine forest of Abeno when one of the friends, enticed by the lovely crying of the pine crickets, went off in the direction of the insect sounds. The other friend waited for a very long time, but his friend did not return, and so lonely and worried, he went in search of him. He found him laying dead upon the frost bitten ground among the grasses. Why, he searched his mind, had this happened when they two had promised that if death came that they would die together? He

cried in anguish, but nothing was to bring him back.

UTA

Chorus

Bury him here in this ground among the trees and no one shall remember him, only the sad mourning cries of the pine cricket will tell the world forever how he yearned for his friend.

AGEUTA

Chorus

Even now pine crickets sing of lost friends pine crickets sing of lost friends drawn by the sounds, a townsman changes his form to a ghost who now comes forth as if reluctant to go farther. He mingles with the throngs in the marketplace at the end of the day, and makes his way toward Abeno makes his way toward Abeno.

(At this point, the *tsure* rises and exits the stage while the *shite* goes to the *ichi no matsu* (first pine) pillar nearest to the stage, on the *hashikakari*. From there he begins the *rongi*. At the words 'the soulless crying of insects', he makes a circle around the stage, then exits.)

RONGI

Chorus

How wonderful it is that in this world still there is some reminder of the dead and that friends gather to commemorate Let me stay for awhile among the friends here.

Shite

The time is the end of autumn when the pine crickets sing are they waiting for me ?

Chorus

The soulless crying of insects that wait for you ? Hardly possible, these words

Shite

Insect cries insect cries as a symbol of yearning for a lost friend ? Yes, there are words to that effect.

Chorus

Yes, yes, it is in an old poem 'on the autumn moor'⁵

Shite

He speaks with the voice of the pine cricket, a man yearning.

Chorus

Thinking that perhaps I have come have you resolved to pray for me ? Thank you, thank you, you are a true friend Indeed the pine crickets yearn Let the cries be your guide on your return let the cries lead you home.

MONDO-KATARI (The *Ai* appears on stage and begins a conversation with the *waki*. His words almost exactly repeat the *shite*'s early speeches. The next text is while waiting for the *shite* of the second part to appear.)

AGEUTA

Waki

Pine winds blow coldly over the field pine winds blow coldly over the field I shall have a brief sleep here among the grasses then shall I intone the Buddhist law and throughout the night pray over this site reverently pray over this site reverently.

(At the beginning of the musical ISSEI that follows, the *shite* reappears and then sings the SASHI.)

SASHI

Shite

I am so thankful for this invocation for when I hear the sadder cries of insects touched by autumn frost my soul seems to return to a more painful mortal autumn I stand before you a wizened ghost bereft and left to wither on this dry field What joy to have you pray for me!

(The *waki* remains seated while the *shite* stands for the next KAKEAI section. When the chorus begins the AGEUTA, the *shite* moves slightly.)

KAKEAI

Waki

Already the waning light sets deep shadows the dew settles heavily over the red blossomed grasses Is that a human form in the distance? Is that a man I am looking for who I see so dimly in the light?

Shite

Exactly as you see, yes I am here revealed as the voice of the crickets yearning still for a friend who is no more vested in the grasses who receive your prayer

Waki

By the Bay of Naniwa

Shite

Intimately, I indulge a merchant from the Abeno market

Waki

He who prays

Shite

And I who receive the prayer

Waki

Past has turned to present

Shite

And all is changed

AGEUTA

Chorus

The old home is the same we are one in the same citizens of Naniwa one in the same citizens of Naniwa where we know the same captains who burn the reeds share the same sort of merchant house where we pledged our undying love as hidden grasses yearning, bending toward one another one never forgets ones friend so precious to recall such thoughts now

(The *shite* now begins the Kuri, Sashi, and Kuse, moving into the set motions of his dance.)

KURI

Chorus

Oblivious, time passes and yet as waves splash on the shore I return to the past whatever became of Naniwa its good sedge and its bad reeds because there is nothing to keep friends apart

SASHI

Shite

In the morning we tread upon the fallen flowers walking together into the day;

Chorus

In the evening we follow the nesting birds going home together

Shite

It is as if we play among the flowers and sing among the birds at a sumptuous banquet

Chorus

Beckoned by my friend of the wind and the moon to the Spring mountainside and to the Autumn moor even unto the songs we hear of insects in the grasses—
to listen is to hear the friends of ones heart

KUSE

Chorus

We dwell in the shade of a single tree and know our destiny will live beyond this life we know when we cup the waters from a single stream that the depth of our affection is not shallow fresh clear water from the deep valleys of the deepest mountain though we cup our fill and cup again these waters shall never cease I would be the first to stop the wine cup with my hand were it to come floating to me in a winding water banquet⁶ In ancient times on Mt. Lu in China a poor monk sat in a cave with a promise never to come out and cross over a gorge but just because he broke the admonition did not mean that his determination had been weak at moments the dew of our jeweled water finds a way to spill out across the chasm, so the saying goes.⁷

Shite

Yes, in a past where wisdom prevailed

Chorus

where the world lived in a purer spirit those intimates who knew the way of men brought wealth and enrichment to many houses spreading the way, shall we say, far

and wide but now in our own muddied world helplessly we let our minds go astray
lost in fine wine or poorer grog until our world is fuddled so I too shall not be sober
just as all the trees of the world have their red faced sodden autumn so I will dance to
the single cry of a pine cricket singing a chant to his friend

(The *shite* continues to quicken his dance.)

EI

Shite

Wine cups

Chorus

Flower sleeves that make the snow swirl

WAKA

Shite

Wondrous! Thousands of insect voices in the grasses

Chorus

The sound of a weaving loom

(As if intoxicated by the insects' song, the *shite* moves extemporaneously with the music, then comes to rest.)

NORIJI

Shite

IN and OUT and IN

Chorus

IN and OUT and IN, and sew my seams again chiming crickets, grasshoppers all those
sensuous sounds I leave them all for the voice of my yearning pine cricket *Rin Rin Rin*
Ring into the quiet night darkness of no return

NORIJI

Chorus

Awake! to Naniwa the sound of the morning bells and it is morning so it must be with
you my friend, a goodbye our sleeves still entwined plumes of pampas grass beckoning
to us dimly there the figure vanishes thick with grasses on the morning meadow thick
with grasses on the morning meadow only the insect voices remain only the insect voices
remain.⁸

1 Abeno is in the southern section of the modern city of Osaka. Tsu refers to the Province of Settsu that, in modern times, also includes sections of Hyogo Pref.

2 Toozato 遠里 Koya 昆陽, and Suminoe 住吉 (sic.) are all poetic epithets for the

Province of Settsu, or simply Tsu, as is said at the outset of the play.

- 3 A major poet of the middle-T'ang Dynasty, known and read widely in Heian Japan—author of the famous 'Song of Everlasting Lament' that details the romance between Emperor Tsuan Tsang and his beautiful mistress Yang Kuei-fei. 722-846 a.d.
- 4 Borrowed from a poem by Po Chu-I included in the Japanese *Wakan Roeishu* on the subject of Spring: 'Under the blossoms, a beautiful landscape makes me forget to leave—Beside the kegs the Spring breeze invites me to browse my intoxication'
- 5 KKS IV: 202 by Otomo Yakamochi 'Aki no no ni, hito matsumushi no, koe sunari, ware ka to yukite, iza toburawan' 秋の野に人まつ虫の声すなり我かとゆきていざとぶらはむ
'On this autumn field, the cricket's cries seem to be yearning for someone; Could it be for me they wait? I shall go out to ask them.'
- 6 The winding water banquet was held in a specially constructed garden where contestants in a poetry reading contest, or a wine drinking contest as the case provided in the Chinese tradition of such elegant pursuits, sat at the edge of a small, directed stream of water on which were floated wine cups and/or poem strips. Politeness required that the person to whom such attention was directed, be the first to pick up the cup. The archeological remains of such winding water gardens can be found in several places in the old city of Nara, and in Kyoto. *Kyokusui no en* 曲水の宴, winding water banquets, were held in the Heian palaces on the first day of the Cock in the Third month. The custom originated in China.
- 7 The text here refers one of three stories surrounding the monk Eon (334-416 a.d.) of the Eastern Chin dynasty. He created the foundational texts for Chinese Buddhism. He later formed the White Lotus Society on Mt. Lu that was engaged in prayers (nenbutsu) to the Buddha of the Western Paradise. Eon spent some 30 years on Mt. Lu without ever leaving the precinct of his temple. As a topic of literary painting, the *Three Guffaws on the Gorge Bridge* (*Kokei sansho* 虎溪三笑) was a popular subject. Eon had taken a vow to stay in a cave on Mt. Lu, never to leave, never to cross the rope bridge over a chasm in front of his cave. But, when two literary giants, the greatest poets of their day, paid him a visit, he inadvertently bid them farewell by seeing them across the chasm bridge. Realizing his mistake, Eon burst into laughter. Even a great man has his weak moments. In paintings I have seen of this subject, all three men are in a very happy, enlightened state, seen smiling broadly from the rope bridge.
- 8 Translation based on the Japanese text contained in Yokomichi Mario, Omote Akira eds. 1963. *Yokyokushu Ge* in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* vol. 41. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, pp. 337-341, 441-42.