

2014/01/23

Redovisning  
Internationell kulturutbyte

Rumiko Otsuka (KN2013/7116)  
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During the period I have done:

- 1) a workshop to local dance school children over 3 days
- 2) a research with two audio/visual artists for my ongoing project 'Good Bye Campanella'

The workshop with children:



I had 2 classes a day. The younger group is aged from 8-10 years old, older group is aged from 11-16 years old. I gave a combination class focusing on technique and improvisation. Then I tried out my choreographic methods I used choreographing a solo as part of my research. The last day I prepared an interview session with children and talked about the theme of the piece I am working on.

My aim for the investigation for the piece 'Good Bye Campanella' is about tradition and modern society, past and future and comparing these themes between Japanese and Swedish culture. I asked different questions to children:

- Do they live with their grand parents?
- What do they feel about this tradition?
- Do they talk about tradition or past with their grand parents?
- What they feel towards elderly people?
- How is an elderly persons life-style compared to young people?

The answers:

Half of the total number of the participants live with their grandparents. It was less than I was imagined. But still the tradition that children take care of their parents exists in Japan.

Children respect and love their grand parents. They are willing to take care of them. They are aware of the deference of traditional and modern life styles. They think the relationship between people is disappearing in Japanese modern society.

It was very difficult to guide younger children (8-10years old) to get the answer I wanted to know. Their world is very narrow and focused on living their present life. They are still too young to answer the questions about tradition, past and future, it is a distant concept in their minds. This result convinced me to set the audience target for piece at a higher age than 10 years old.

## 2) Research with 2 audio/visual artists

Initially I was to work with only Kunihiro Matsuo. But Kunihiro brought in his colleague and friend, Junji Koyanagi to research this piece together.

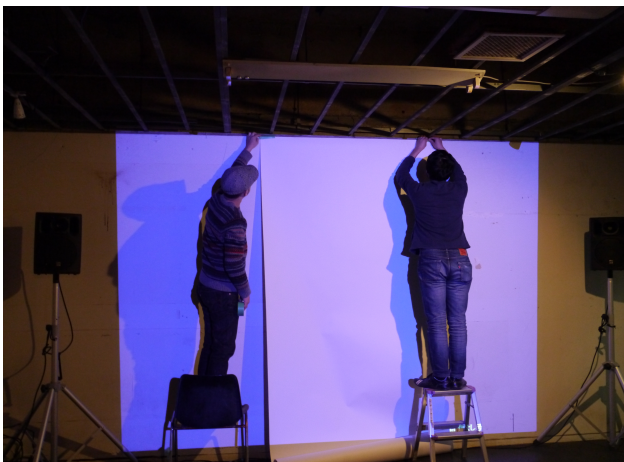
I didn't receive production money from other grants. But they could participate in this research after finishing work from their actual jobs; they also were free in the weekends. About 30hours together throughout the period we had a lot of discussions about the piece and what we wanted to show of the original story, and ended creating a 20minute result. For the showing we invited different artists and students of about 15 people, and received very useful feedback and comments.



The story and the author:

The original story 'Milky Way Railroad' is a very known fairy tale written by a Japanese author Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933). A lot of artists made art pieces and films through the years. We didn't want to just depict a beautiful dream-like world of this fairy tail. We did a research to deepen the knowledge about Kenji Miyazawa in order to find our own approach to the work.

Self-sacrifice:



We found interesting that his work reflects Buddhism and self-sacrifice. He was a person who always wanted to live his life for the true welfare of all. What does 'self-sacrifice' mean to people? It can be taken differently depending on culture, environment or world circumstances. In Japan in his time, the world and the Japanese government were heading quickly towards war. And his fairy tails were sadly used as propaganda to educate children in believing to fight for the Japanese emperor, that we should sacrifice our lives to win the war for our country. 'Self-sacrifice' is understood differently between Japan and Sweden. 'Self-sacrifice' is one of the highest valued virtues in Japanese culture, but how is it viewed in Sweden? I aim to look further into the differences of these cultural backgrounds.

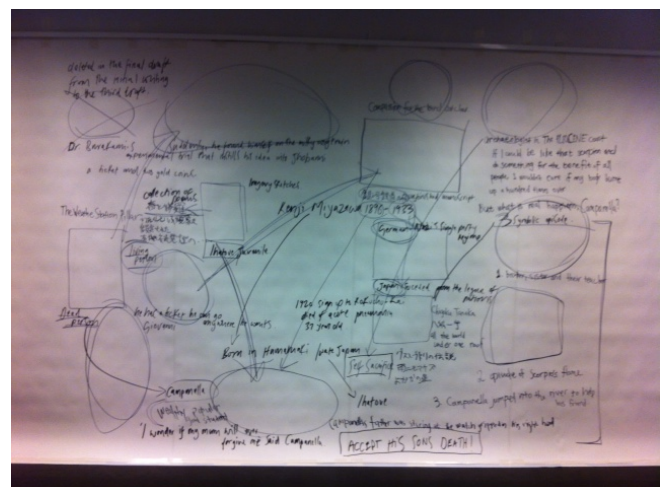


## A sharing of the research in Japan, Tokyo, at Bunmei



We had 16 guests for the showing. They were artists and art students from varying backgrounds. They were all very curious about what they saw, and gave feed back. The story is so popular and they were interested to see this interpretation. Each person had his or her own image and history in relation to what they experience. It was a pressure yet a welcome challenge for me to show the result. In general people enjoyed the showing and our approach. I got some useful feedback about the music, the images and the dance. The feedback clarified our tasks to work on in the future. But also confirmed that our approach is in a good direction. One of the most relevant feedback received was about how far we can challenge audiences by the use of and providing images that are not directly related to the visible text. It takes our attention to not necessarily be so literal. The story/text gives a certain image to people's minds without us having to support it in an obvious way. If the image is reflects thee text too much the audience are in danger of becoming complacent, and our aim to keep them active and their imagination engaged. We will to explore in the future images that may contradict or provoke in other ways.

## Showing in Sweden, Malmö at Danscentrum Syd



When I came back to Sweden we prepared a translation for the entire piece to English. I talked to Danscentrum Syd and they supported me for the showing. I got 2 days free studio time and simple lighting/sound possibilities, and a projector. We got 18 guests. In Japan I didn't have so many dance audience. But in Malmö, most of the guests were dance audiences, so I got a lot of response regarding my dancing. I could talk to every one after the showing and I got positive remarks. Everyone was happy and fascinated to hear about this Japanese fairy tale, and through it have a perspective on Japanese culture. I felt everybody was so curious to know about the piece and wanting to see more. We got feedback about the projected English sentences were too quick to read. In future I would like to translate to Swedish for the Swedish audience. I also got a feedback about how I have developed the piece a lot from my previous solo, which was the first step of this research. I now see clearly that my approach in the previous solo was too easy and predictable. By working with the scenographers I found more interesting ways to communicate and connect with audiences, for example playing with languages, tableaux, relating the body to the projection and text, writing the text live. Investigating more of the performative aspects rather than just choreographic.



What have I gain from this research and what I want to develop further:

This was my first involvement with the Japanese contemporary dance scene. I didn't have any contacts before and now feel I have a small network. I met with artists and people (visual artist, architecture, musician, animator and poet) and through them will look to generate further collaborations and possibly generate opportunities to show my completed piece in Japan.

By living so many years in Europe I feel that gradually my connection with Japan has lessened, I would go so far as to say that perhaps I do not belong there as I used to feel. When I met the

children through this research and talked about the theme of this piece and Japanese culture I felt it was a way into finding and re-connecting with Japanese heritage, and this is something I will definitely continue. I have become, even more, clear now that I want to look into my dual identities (European and Japanese). Unfortunately I was not able to meet and talk with the Japanese elderly, as I previously planned, because of the limited time. I also realize I may be slightly insecure about approaching this age group due to certain traditional etiquettes. In Japanese culture, we must talk in a certain way to elderly people and I feel that makes it difficult for me to approach them without properly thinking about how to go about it. I must investigate this more in order to find the right people to interview, without offending anyone. I am thinking that advertising for people who may be interested could be a good solution. With this short and intense period we put more weight on discussing the direction we may want to go, so we didn't manage to develop all our ideas; such as more complicated graphic images or explore the use of these images in a space. In the future we would like to challenge ourselves in finding ways to create a cohesive visual language that will help support both the choreography and also the theatrical dramaturgy.

I am very happy and satisfied with this research result. This was the very first step for this project. The research made the direction of the piece much clearer and got so many responses about keeping going and finishing it into a full-length show. For this I thank Konstnärsnämnden for giving me this great opportunity to learn and grow personally and professionally.

Please look at the YouTube link below to see the film clip from the showing in Japan. Unfortunately I couldn't manage to record in Malmö. But the pictures below are from the run-through in the studio of Danscentrum Syd.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sZJXjNNB2E>











