

Final Report

Title: Report on survey of the works of Shakespeare and the state of theater in Indonesia

1. Activity Overview

With a survey of the works of Shakespeare in Indonesia as my theme, I conducted interviews with people in various positions including Indonesian artists, producers, arts managers, and coordinators, and in addition to hearings about the works of Shakespeare, I sought to understand the state of theater arts in Indonesia, and examined the potential for building a network in Asia, including comparison with Japan and future international joint productions.



2. Activities of Tomomi Yokosuka

My collaborator Tomomi Yokosuka is a resident artist in Yogyakarta. She resided in Indonesia for one year with the Agency for Cultural Affairs Emerging Artists Dispatch System, then moved her base of operations to Yogyakarta from September 2011. In Indonesia she primarily participates in the productions of TEATER GARASI (a theater troupe), appearing in many works. She also actively conducts international exchange plans, such as inviting Indonesian artists to Japan.

3. Fellowship Activity Record

I arrived in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from Haneda Airport by airplane (via Jakarta) on April 13th, 2015. I met with my collaborator Tomomi Yokosuka the following day (April 14th, 2015), and discussed our upcoming schedule. I then contacted and held hearings with Papermoon Puppet Theatre (Iwan Effendi, Maria Tri Sulistyani), Andy Sri Wahyudi, Batri Kartika Sari, and Joned Suryatmoko in Yogyakarta.



On April 25th, 2015 I traveled from Yogyakarta to Batam Island by airplane. I took a taxi from the airport to the ferry pier, then rode a speed boat to Bintan Island. While living communally in lodgings of the company that commissioned this project, I conducted workshops and recorded video with local people.

From May 4th, 2015 onwards, I conducted surveys of various towns around Yogyakarta. With a rental car, I visited the city of Solo which is 2 hours from Yogyakarta. Eko Supriyanto, who was invited by TPAM in February 2015, lives in Solo and modern dance thrives in the area. It is also known as a good production region of the traditional craft batik. I visited arts universities, public halls, and dance halls.

On May 10th, 2015 I traveled to Bandung by train. At the Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Bandung, which is one of the host facilities for this research, I held hearings from the position of a researcher on transitions in Indonesian theater troupes and whether the works of Shakespeare would be staged in Indonesia from Fathul, Arthurt S Nalan, Benny Yohames, and Yani Mae.

On May 13th, 2015 I traveled by train from Bandung to Jakarta. In Jakarta, I visited the Japan Foundation, Jakarta, and asked about dance arts in Indonesia. Also at the Jakarta Arts Council I heard from Helly Minarti, and watched dances by Jecko Siempo and JKT48.

On May 24th, 2015 I traveled from Jakarta to Bali by airplane. At the Bali Art Center I witnessed the Globe Theater "Hamlet". This work was created at the Globe Theater in London and has toured the world. This work is very aware of the world tour, as it has a very simple set and the music is performed by the actors. It is planned for performance in Japan as well. After Bali I traveled to Ubud, where I watched "kecak" a traditional Balinese dance. While Bali is a part of Indonesia, the religion and many other aspects are different, and arts and culture have developed differently from Yogyakarta.

4. End of fellowship activities

I stayed in Indonesia from April 13th, 2015, and conducted surveys and research for nearly 2 months. Yet the more research I did, the more I felt not only the physical immensity of Indonesia, but also the depth of its arts, and nearly lost hope wondering how deep I could I could actually probe in just 2 months. Yet it would do me no good to get depressed, so I decided to do all that I possibly could, and plant the seeds for continued involvement in Indonesia.



First of all was the theme of this research “Survey on the works of Shakespeare in Indonesia”. I was shocked to hear from people involved in dance arts that they had no memory of Indonesian artists performing the works of Shakespeare except for some presentations by students in recent years. When I later interviewed various people in dance, they said that the last Shakespeare work staged was “Julius Caesar” some 20 years ago. At that point I realized that I wanted to consider the question “Why aren’t the works of Shakespeare staged in Indonesia?” In the process of searching for the cause of this, I would learn about the differences in the dance arts environment in Indonesia.



Dance arts in Indonesia (which due to the size of the country I have restricted to the vicinity of Yogyakarta and Jakarta for this trip) are very difficult to stage with income from ticket sales alone. Even at the Teater Koma which is the most commercially successful in Jakarta, actors have other jobs. For this reason, normal theater troupes receive sponsorship for their performances from corporate sponsors, as well as arts foundations both in Indonesia and abroad. Since the organization staging the performance customarily provides catering for the cast during rehearsals (including not only snacks and drinks, but boxed meals at night), the budget balloons as the cast grows larger, and there tend to be many works with a small cast performed. Due to this issue, the works of Shakespeare which tend to have large casts are avoided. In Japan and other countries where even with a large cast, one actor has several parts, in Indonesia these productions are said to be uncommon (it’s more common to produce works faithful to the script).



In the past in Indonesia, works with political assertions have been censored by the government and banned from performance. In response, works were created which were not based on a script, but communicated orally (with the director telling the lines to the actors directly during rehearsal), so actors have not developed the ability to read scripts. Therefore, there is not much emphasis on reading foreign scripts and creating works, and consequently the works of Shakespeare were not performed very often. There is also the problem of translation, and it is said that the poor accuracy of translation from English to Indonesian kept the appeal of the works of Shakespeare from reaching the audience. Furthermore, expression in Indonesia uses the language of the body, which includes both expression made with language used in normal dance arts and expression made with the body. Because of this characteristic, creation that emphasizes not the script but rather expression (by the director and the actors) has become mainstream (I have not yet made detailed research on expression with the language of the body, and I will delve deeper into this theme later on).



Also, according to a professor at the Indonesia College of Arts, Bandung, the universal themes of Shakespeare have commonality with the old folk tales on Indonesia, so rather than taking the trouble to perform Shakespeare, both artists and audiences prefer to rearrange Indonesian folk tales.

For these reasons, it seems that the works of Shakespeare are not often staged in Indonesia at present. Yet for the same reasons, there is hope that performing the works of Shakespeare will improve their techniques, and I believe that there is meaning in considering performances of the works of Shakespeare as a plan from outside the



country, rather than as a voluntary plan by Indonesian artists. Fortunately, I will be in charge of producing works of Shakespeare in Japan, Singapore, and Indonesia as international joint production projects with the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater in 2016. I hope to use this project as a starting point for planning future performance projects for the works of Shakespeare in Indonesia, and stay actively involved in such projects.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this investigative research in Indonesia was a starting point for me, and I believe that my future activities will become more important. In discussing dance arts and building networks in Asia, it is important not for us to understand and assert the good qualities of each other's regions, but to look at them objectively and understand the differences. Moving forward, I intend to validate the hypothesis that the works of Shakespeare, which have



matured over long years in the West, would be an effective tool for objective understanding. These will become long term activities, but I hope to continue them as one of my life works. Finally I must express my sincere gratitude to the Japan Foundation Asia Center which gave me this opportunity. I look forward to your continued guidance and encouragement in the future.

Picture 1: Japan Foundation, Jakarta

Picture 2: "Hamlet" by the London Globe Theater seen at Denpasar, Bali

Picture 3: Director and Actor Any SriWahyudi (left)

Picture 4: A drama class at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta

Picture 5: Rehearsals at Teater Garasi, which is based in Yogyakarta

Picture 6: Lecture on the history of Indonesia theater troupes at the Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Bandung

Picture 7: Helly Minarti of the Jakarta Arts Council (left)

Picture 8: Balinese dance at Ubud, Bali