



Asian Studies Notes

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO

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Website: wings.buffalo.edu/asian/asn

亞細亞學研究

Japanese *Noh* Comes to UB

The Drama Theater of the UB Center for the Arts will change character on the night of Sunday, February 1 and become the site of a performance of one of Zeami's classic dramas, *Aoi no Ue*. The 8:00 p.m. performance in the Drama Theater of the Center for the Arts will be the culmination of a week of noh-related activities at UB.

Aoi no Ue is a 15th-century work by the leading playwright in the noh tradition, and is firmly established in the classic repertoire. Noh does not unfold a story scene by scene. Rather, it is an aesthetic blend of words, music, and dance, embellished by the colors of gorgeous costumes and suggestive moods of masks. The "action," for lack of a better word, is slow-moving, deliberate, and highly symbolic. Actors, props, and backdrops are sparse; and a chorus, flutes, and drums provide most of the sound.

Three accomplished noh actors are coming from Japan to perform the play. Representing the Kanze School of acting, they are Hatta Tatsuya, Fukano Shinjiro, and Yasuda Noboru. Hatta and Fukano performed another noh classic, *Hagoromo*, to a rapt audience at UB in 1999. The actors will be assisted by UB students of the



Department of Theatre and Dance, who will study under the actors in master classes in the preceding week. At 7:00 prior to the performance, a noh orientation and robing demonstration by the actors, narrated by Dr. Takako Michii, will take place in the Screening Room of the Center for the Arts. Tickets for the performance at UB are available from the Center for the Arts Box Office at \$15 for the general public and \$6 for students. 645-ARTS.

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New Audio-Visual Materials

Housed in Computing and Information Technology, 24 Capen Hall:

◆ *Yesterday is Now: The War 55 Years after Japan's Surrender*. Video. 96 min. English and Japanese with English subtitles. Variant views in Japanese society about the legacy of Japan's wars and colonialism in the 20th century.

Housed in Asian Studies, 714 Clemens Hall:

- *A City of Cathay*. CD. Narrative based on famous scroll in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
- *Greeting the Lunar New Year on Taiwan*. DVD. 48 min.
- *Tea: Taiwan's Golden Treasure*. DVD. 25 min.

- *Taiwan's National Palace Museum in Transition*. DVD. 28 min.
- *An Index of Culture: The Museums of Taiwan*. DVD. 25 min.

Updated Study Abroad Website

The Study Abroad Office announces a totally new website. Check it the opportunities for study abroad in Asia at <http://www.buffalo.edu/studyabroad/>. The site features study abroad alumni and their reflections on their experiences abroad. Dr. Sandra Flash, Director, welcomes comments, to: studyabroad@buffalo.edu.

February 1, Center for the Arts

The Play *Aoi no Ue*

In the Japanese noh play, *Aoi no Ue*, which will be performed by Kanze noh actor from Japan Hatta Tatsuya with the help of Fukano Shinjiro and Yasuda Noboru, the title character Lady Aoi, from *The Tale of Genji*, is not present. Her ailing figure is represented only by a kimono placed center stage. The play chooses to focus instead on the sick spirit of Lady Rokujo, a scorned, jealous woman, whose heart full of hate threatens to destroy Aoi. The highlight of the play is the exorcism face-off between the main actor as Rokujo and the secondary actor as an ascetic, chanting incantations to fend off her malevolent spirit. There is high tension in both music and movement as Rokujo withdraws, coils, strikes, until in the end, the prayers win, her heart softens, and she is guided to salvation in Buddhahood.

What is striking about the play, which is part of the 600 year-old noh theater repertoire, is that much time is given to exploring Lady Rokujo's feelings. She is not just a jealous, evil woman. Rokujo is given emotional dimension as a woman of refinement who once lived a resplendent life in

Genji's favor, but who, after falling out of favor, now considers herself like a morning glory, "withered and waiting for the morning sun." In fact, some of the most beautiful lines of the play are spoken by her as she weeps, pathetically aware of her instability but still unable to help her-



self:

*When life lasts no longer than a lightning flash,
there is small reason to hate others
little reason to pity oneself
When did I lose sight of these truths?*

Rokujo's emotions are universal—betrayal, loss, jealousy, rage at the unfairness of life. Perhaps this is

why the main character in the noh theater wears a mask instead of revealing realistic human facial gestures.

Actor Hatta Tatsuya, who will perform the role of *shite*, or lead actor, describes noh's drama in terms of *in-yo*, 'light and dark.' "The *shite* is often a spirit or ghost, so he is a 'dark' being. That is why he wears such beautiful costumes. The *waki* (secondary actor) is bright, so he wears dark clothes. There is always this contrast in noh. Because I stand for thirty minutes without moving, I can dance fast. Sometimes in the audience, I see people sleeping. I don't mind. I just wait." He smiles. "Sooner or later, I move and they wake up."

This classic noh drama will be performed Sunday evening, February 1, 8:00 p.m. at the Center for the Arts Drama Theater. It will be preceded at 7:00 by a noh orientation and robing demonstration in the Screening Room. For tickets: CFA Box Office or 645-ARTS.

(Janet Pocarobba of Suffolk University in Boston contributed to this article)

JAPANESE NOH (Cont. from p. 1)

The actors will again perform *Aoi no Ue* at the Irish Classical Theater, 625 Main Street in Buffalo, on Monday, February 2, at 8:00 p.m. \$15. 853-4282.

Persons interested in an active learning experience about noh are invited to a Public Performance Workshop at the Drama Theater on UB's Amherst campus, 10:00-noon on Saturday, January 31. To pre-register, call the Department of Theatre and Dance at 645-6898, ext. 1332/1333.

The Noh Residency and performances are co-

sponsored by the Department of Theatre and Dance, the Asian Studies program, the Center for the Arts, the Irish Classical Theater, the College of Arts and Sciences, Buffalo/Niagara WorldConnect, Fujisawa Healthcare, the Butler Chair of English, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Department of Linguistics, the Office of International Education, the East Asian Studies Program of Cornell University, and friends of the Noh Residency. For information, call the Asian Studies program at 645-3474.

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Spring semester series opens January 30

Asia at Noon

Asia at Noon is a series of brown-bag lunch gatherings at the University at Buffalo, sponsored by the Asian Studies program. They meet roughly every other Friday at 12 noon, and dismiss promptly at 1:00. The presenter usually takes about 20 minutes, and the rest of the time is devoted to question and answer and discussion. The audience is comprised of undergraduates, graduate students, interested faculty, and folk from the Buffalo community. The meetings take place in 280 Park Hall.

On **January 30**, the first speaker for the semester is Dr. Robert Kane, Japanese historian at Niagara University since 2003. Kane did his Ph.D. work at the University of Pennsylvania, with a dissertation titled "Hammering Down Nails: Politics, Diplomacy, and the Quest for National Unity in Japan and America, 1912-1919." In the past, the history of Meiji and Taisho Japan has been presented from the viewpoint that Japan's post-Tokugawa leaders were preoccupied with the Western threat and the need to catch up with Europe and America industrially and militarily. Kane will explore a counter-view, that the past Tokugawa

system and power holders were the primary "Other" in the minds of Japanese leaders in Meiji and Taisho. This promises to be a stimulating session.

On **February 13**, Asia at Noon will feature Chih-Chieh Chou, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science. Chou, reared and educated in Taiwan, will deal with the impact of foreign influence and pressure in the process of democratization in Taiwan. The topic is significant in the current context of a presidential election campaign on the island. The election will take place March 20, and will be the subject of the Asia at Noon gathering on March 26.

The **February 27** Asia at Noon will focus on the development of Asian American studies at UB. Each semester several Asian American courses are taught through the Asian Studies program, and the Department of English expects to appoint a scholar of Asian American literature to its faculty beginning Fall '04. As Asian American studies grows at UB, what should be its curricular shape? Graduate students from the Interdisciplinary Group for Asian American Studies will lead the discussion in an open forum.

International Women's Film Festival "The Fourth Dimension" on Screen

Vietnamese-born US director Trinh T. Minh-ha will introduce her latest feature, "The Fourth Dimension", a cinematic cultural study of Japan, followed by discussion about the film. It is the inaugural event of the Gender Institute's 8th Annual International Women's Film Festival. For complete schedule, visit the following website www.womenandgender.buffalo.edu

"The Fourth Dimension" is an elegant meditation on time, travel, and ceremony in the form of a journey. The director deconstructs the role of ritual in mediating between the past and the present. She explains, "Shown in their widespread functions and manifestations, including more evident loci such as festivals, religious rite and theatrical performance, 'rituals' involve not only the regularity in the structure of everyday life, but also the dynamic agents in the world of meaning." With its lush imagery, Minh-ha's Japan is viewed through mobile frames, with door and windows sliding shut, revealing new vistas as it blocks out the old light.

Screening Date: 7 p.m. Thursday, February 5, 2004.

Place: Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre, 639 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14201. Length: 87 min. Format: DVCAM, Feature, Color. \$7.50 general, \$5.50 students.

Call for Papers

◆ Asian Pacific Americans In Higher Education (APAHE) Conference 2004. April 7-9, 2004 Radisson Miyako Hotel, San Francisco. "Exploring Intersections: Race, Culture & Leadership". **Deadline for proposals:** February 9, 2004.

www.stanford.edu/group/a3c/apahe.htm

◆ Asian Studies Graduate Conference, University of Texas at Austin. October 1-2, 2004. Submission **Deadline** for Abstracts: Monday, April 1st, 2004.

<http://asnic.utexas.edu/asnic/das/pages/utascon.html>



Asian Studies Calendar

January

- Jan. 30, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Robert Kane**, Assistant Professor of History, Niagara University. "Tokugawa as Primary Other in late Meiji-early Taisho Japan." Park 280.
- Jan. 31, Sat. 10:00-noon. **Noh Public Performance Workshop**. Drama Theater, Center for the Arts, North Campus.

February

- Feb. 1, Sun. 8:00 pm. Noh Drama: *Aoi no Ue*. Drama Theater, Center for the Arts, North Campus. Noh orientation and robbing demonstration at 7:00 pm.
- Feb. 5, Thu. 7:00 pm. International Women's Film Festival presents "**The Fourth Dimension**". Market Arcade Film & Arts Center, 639 Main St. Buffalo, NY.
- Feb. 13, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Chih-Chieh Chou**, Ph.D. candidate in Political Science. "Halting or Triggering? International Effects on Democratization in Taiwan." Park 280.

- Feb. 27, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. Open Forum on Asian American Studies Curriculum for UB. Interdisciplinary Group for Asian American Studies. Park 280.

March

- Mar. 4-7, Thu-Sun. Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, San Diego CA.
- Mar. 5, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Liang Zhanjun**, Professor of History, Capital Normal University, Beijing. "Crisis Management in the PRC: The Case of SARS (tentative)." Park 280.
- Mar. 26, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Lee Luo-jung**, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York. "On the March 20 Presidential Election in Taiwan." Park 280.

April

- Apr. 9, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Khenpo Sherab Ozer**, Tibetan Buddhist teacher. "Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life." Park 280.
- Apr. 23, Fri. 12:00 pm. *Asia at Noon*. **Jeongsub Nam**, Ph.D. candidate in English at UB. "Moving beyond Hollywood: American Popular Images of Korea." Park 280.



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