

A Study on Natsume Soseki's Haiku, Noh, and Hamlet

漱石の俳句と能と『ハムレット』

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Abstract: 漱石は明治44年(1911年)6月5日・6日の両日の『東京朝日新聞』(『大阪朝日新聞』には同年6月6日・7日)に「坪内博士と『ハムレット』」という劇評を載せている。「沙翁劇は其劇の根本性質として、日本語の翻訳を許さぬものである」「博士はたゞ忠実なる沙翁の翻訳者として任ずる代わりに、公演を断念するか、又は公演を遂行するために、不忠実なる沙翁の翻案者となるか、二つのうち一つを選ぶべきであつた」と漱石は厳しい批評を加えている。そして、漱石は「沙翁は詩人である、詩人の言葉は常識以上の天地を駆け回つてゐる」とし、「要するに沙翁劇のセリフは能とか謡とかの様な別格の音調によつて初めて、興味を支持されべきであると極めて懸らなければならない」と述べている。

漱石はこのように、『ハムレット』という詩的な戯曲は、音曲を伴った詩的な日本の戯曲、「能」や「謡」の音調に乗せて上演すれば上手く行くように考えた。当然、その中には七五調(七七調)のリズム感覚も含まれている。これは俳句にも通じている。五・七・五と言う極めて短い詩形の中には、瞬間の閃きと深みと広がりの世界がある。能や『ハムレット』にもそれらと通じる世界があるように思われる。

漱石の提案は今日、現実のものとなった。能と『ハムレット』の結びつきは日本文化とイギリス(ヨーロッパ)文化の調和(harmony)と合作(Collaboration)ともいえる。漱石がそのような考えに至ったのは、「外國文學杯を學んでゐても、矢張り現在の標準を標準とするより外ありません」と明治37年1月、雑誌『紫苑』で自身が語っているように、自己の中にある文学基準があったからではないだろうか。漱石はさらに「而かも其の俳句の趣味なるものが、文學の標準に資する所は、極めて大きいのであります」と述べている。このように漱石にとって、その文学基準に、俳句的要素や俳句的感覚(感性)が重要な位置にあったと考えられる。漱石はそのことを単なる知識だけではなく、実践者、体験者としても己の文学基準(基底)を形成させてきたと思われるのである。

Keywords: Soseki, Haiku, Noh, Hamlet, Rhythm, Moment, Flash, Harmony

漱石、俳句、能、『ハムレット』、リズム、瞬間、閃き、調和

On June 5 and 6, 1911, Soseki Natsume wrote a review in *The Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* titled “Dr. Tsubouchi and *Hamlet*”. It was a criticism of *Hamlet* played in Japanese translated by Shoyo Tsubouchi. Soseki delivered bitter criticism saying, “Shakespeare’s play should not be played in Japanese because of its basic characteristics. Shakespeare is a poet whose words fly beyond ordinary senses. Therefore, his play could be pleasing only when the lines are delivered in specific tones such as noh or utai (noh singing).”¹

His proposal that Shakespeare should be played in noh or utai was implemented by Kuniyoshi Ueda, Professor of Nihon University Graduate School. Prof. Ueda adapted *Noh-Hamlet in English* in 1980, and then in Japanese in 2004, 93 years after Soseki’s proposal. Partly different from the English version, *Noh-Hamlet in Japanese* made a deep impression on the audience. I believe it was because it roused a deep spirit through Noh’s stylistic beauty just like Soseki described, with “special tones” and mechanisms. Professor Ueda was careful and considerate in his adaptation of Shakespeare’s play.

Soseki used the expression “even just a simple haiku”² in his article in 1911. It means that even though it is very short, haiku is also a poem, so we have to consider what each word means both literally and emotionally. In the other words, Soseki had a sense of haiku. Seven years before he wrote the article, he was interviewed about “Haiku and Foreign Literature” which was published in *Shien*³. In that interview, he said that he placed haiku at the center of his literary foundation. Further more, he used haiku as the framework of his foreign literature research. “Haiku and Foreign Literature” by Soseki led to his argument written in the article “Dr. Tsubouchi and *Hamlet*”.

Soseki was familiar with noh and utai besides haiku. His later research of Shakespeare led to criticism about Tsubouchi’s translation of *Hamlet* and his suggestion about *Hamlet* in noh style. Soseki connected *Hamlet*, noh and haiku in five ways.

1. Soseki’s prose based on haiku

Soseki started his literary work as a haiku poet rather than as a novelist or a critic. Haiku was his foundation. He wrote 2,451 haikus⁴ in his life. When Youichi Komori read a prose “Mukashi(The Past)”⁵ written by Soseki, he commented, “Soseki’s memory might have been kept as words in haiku formation.” Mr. Komori was amazed by the exact descriptive words that Soseki used in his prose. Mr. Komori stated that once the poetical expression, melody and tone of the words, and rhythm and scale used in haiku

were engraved in one's mind, it wouldn't go away.⁶ This technique was used in his other prose as well. Therefore, Soseki's prose was supported by haiku technique.

2. From Junji Kinoshita's point of view; why Soseki suggested Shakespeare be performed in noh style

Mr. Kinoshita was also against translating Shakespeare. His concern was to the lines whose prerequisites were to be read aloud. His point was that in a Japanese translation, it was nearly impossible to deliver the lively feeling and energy which the series of each sound creates. *Hamlet* was written in poetic style and there is a lively energy in the lines. Therefore, he thought that it would be impossible to deliver the same impression in Japanese.⁷ This is exactly the same point that Soseki pointed out to Professor Tsubouchi. Unlike novels, noh and utai are symbolic expressions with sound. Haiku has the same power and its words have not only literal meanings, but also can deliver great energy.

3. Shakespeare and Soseki's haiku

“The skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once.” (*Hamlet* Act . Scene)

It is an important fact that Soseki was an English scholar.

骸骨を叩いて見たる董かな (*Gaikotsu wo tataite mi taru sumire kana*) 漱石(Soseki)⁸

This haiku was written inspired by *Hamlet* Act . Scene . Mr. Sukehiro Hirakawa commented that this haiku had Shakespeare's stylistic beauty, which underlaid comedy in tragedy.⁹ Hamlet was a master of wit. Witty words brought out nuances and made Shakespeare's play more interesting. Wit and humor are distinctive feature in haiku as well. Soseki saw this stylistic beauty in *Hamlet*, that's why he loved it.

4. Soseki on utai and haiku

Soseki had been interested in noh and utai (practice on the utai) since 1895, and he had even practiced utai throughout his life. It was noted by many researchers that this experience affected many of his works such as *Kusamakura* and *Gubijinsou*. Soseki wrote in *Bungakuron* that “Shakespeare is better than utai in satisfying my intellect, but utai is better than Shakespeare in fulfilling my emotions.¹⁰

浦の男に浅瀬問ひ居る臙かな (*Ura no o ni asase toi oru oboro kana*) 漱石(Soseki)¹¹

This haiku was written inspired by utai *Fujito* (『藤戸』).¹² This haiku was about the

harmony of nature and human activity, but also contained affection. This is a typical example of his work which showed his understanding of noh and utai. Soseki especially appreciated utai *Michimori* (『通盛』),¹³ and the story overlaps with the image of Ophelia. Soseki's haiku “Gaikotsu wo tataite mita ru sumire kana (骸骨を叩いて見たる菫かな)” also overlaps with the image of Ophelia. It is certain that Soseki treated *Hamlet*, haiku and noh equally and spirally.

5. Soseki and Ghosts

霧黄なる^{まち}市に動くや影法師

漱石 (Soseki) ¹⁴

(*Kiri ki naru machi ni ugoku ya Kageboushi*)

This haiku was written in London when he heard of Shiki's death. His personality and cordial friendship with Shiki is felt through this haiku. He wrote about shadow in several haiku, and liked to describe them as blurred and pale. He wrote an essay “About Ghosts in *Macbeth*” on January 10, 1904, in which, he stated that literature wasn't scientific.¹⁵ Mr. Akira Notani explained that Soseki warned us not to confuse scientific truth and literary fancy.¹⁶ Soseki left a note in his textbook about the king's ghost in *Hamlet* when he studied *Hamlet*. From these evidences, it is certain that Soseki was interested in fantasy such as ghosts and shadows. Fantasy-noh is also composed of dialogue with ghosts.

Conclusion

Soseki argued that we would not have a successful *Hamlet* in Japanese if we translated literally. He also stated that it was impossible to translate poetry because there are deep meanings in its words. Therefore, he thought that it could be more pleasing when the lines are delivered in tones such as noh or utai. Of course, there are characteristic seven - five and/or five - seven rhythms implied in them. Noh and utai could also express emotions as well as scene and word play. Soseki thoroughly knew the fact that there was a flash of inspiration and a deeply extended world in the short poetic form. Soseki's recommendation has been accomplished. We might say that the connection between noh and *Hamlet* is in the harmony and collaboration between Japanese and European cultures. From all of the above, I believe the reason why he reached this idea was that he had foundations in literature, especially deep understandings of haiku. He saw *Hamlet* through his literary foundation and saw similarities between haiku, noh, and

Hamlet such as in the appearance of ghosts, poetic expressions, voluble but simple lines and comical expressions .

Notes :

- 1 Natsume Soseki.夏目漱石, “ Tsubouchi Hakase to *Hamlet* ” (Dr.Tsubouchi and *Hamlet*) 「坪内博士と『ハムレット』」, *The Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* 『東京朝日新聞』, June 5 and 6, 1911, *The Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 『大阪朝日新聞』, June 6 and 7, 1911
- 2 ibid. 1
- 3 Natsume Soseki.夏目漱石, “ Haiku to Gaikoku Bungaku ” 「俳句と外国文学」, *Shien* 『紫苑』, January 31, 1904, *Soseki Zenshu Vol.18*. 『漱石全集第18巻』, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, September 20, 1985
- 4 Komuro Yoshihiro.小室善弘, *Soseki Haiku Hyo Shaku* 『漱石俳句評釈』, Meiji Shoin 明治書院, January, 1983, p.2
- 5 It was printed serially in both *The Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* and *The Osaka Asahi Shinbun*. 『東京朝日新聞』 『大阪朝日新聞』, from January to March, 1909
- 6 Komori Yoichi. 小森陽一, “ Haiku to Sanbun no Aida de - Shiki wo Ikiru Soseki ” 「俳句と散文の間で - 子規を生きる漱石」, *Soseki Kenkyu Vol.7*. 『漱石研究第7号』, Kanrin Shobo 翰林書房, 1996, pp.47-59
- 7 Kinoshita Junji. 木下順二, “ Kotoba no Energy ” 「ことばのエネルギー」, *Zuiso Shakespeare* 『随想シェイクスピア』, Chikuma Shobo 筑摩書房, 1969
- 8 Natsume Soseki.夏目漱石, “ Kohitsuji Monogatari ni Dai su Jukku ” 「小羊物語に題す十句」, Komatsu Takeji 小松武治, “ Introduction ” *Sao Mono Gatari Shu* 『沙翁物語集』序, May, 1904. *Soseki Zenshu Vol.12*. 『漱石全集第12巻』, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, September, 1985, pp.666-671
- 9 Hirakawa Sukehiro.平川祐弘, *Natsume Soseki -Hi Seiyou no Kuto* 『夏目漱石 非西洋の苦闘』, Kodansha 講談社, November 10, 1991, p.330
- 10 Natsume Soseki.夏目漱石, “ Chowa Ho ” 「調和法」, *Bungaku Ron* 『文学論』, Okura Shoten 大倉書店 May, 1907
- 11 A haiku of Soseki of 1910. It is considered that Soseki recalled a noh play *Fujito* when he composed the haiku.
- 12 Story of a grief and a grudge of a fisherman and his mother. The son was submerged in a sea by a military commander.
- 13 Story of regrets of a military commander of Heike, the last of Michimori and his wife who drowned herself after him.

- 14 Soseki, who had recognized death of Shiki, put this haiku in a letter addressed to Takahama Kyoshi. December 1, 1902
- 15 The article appeared in *Teikoku Bungaku* 『帝國文學』 on January 10, 1904. That is collected into *Soseki Zenshu Vol.12*. 『漱石全集第12巻』, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, September, 1985, p.251
- 16 Notani Akira. 野谷 士, “Cho Shizen no Bunso” 「超自然の文素」, *Soseki no Shakespeare* 『漱石のシェイクスピア』, Asahi Shuppansha 朝日出版社, March 20, 1974

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