

NOH HAMLET  
—An English Translation of the Japanese Version  
of *Noh Hamlet* 2004—

日本語『能・ハムレット』初演台本英訳

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**Abstract (要旨) :** 2004 年 12 月 2 日、「日本大学学術研究助成」公演として、御茶ノ水のカザルス・ホールで日本語『能・ハムレット』が初演された。ここに掲載するものは当日配布された初演台本の英訳である。上田邦義作。観世栄夫・梅若万三郎・上田邦義共同演出。出演・梅若研能会。囃子統括・大倉正之助。間狂言・野村万作。その他多くの協力により、明治 44 年 (1911)、夏目漱石が『朝日新聞』紙上にて提唱した『ハムレット』能翻案が実現した。「生死はもはや問うまでもなし」(To be or not to be, is *no longer* the question.)、「この世もあの世も本当の命。宇宙のいのちに繋がること」は上田の「即天去私」解釈で本曲のテーマ。なお、上演に用いられた日本語台本に関しては『融合文化研究』4 号・5 号・6 号を参照のこと。

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**Keywords:** Keywords: *Noh Hamlet*, English Noh, NATSUME Souseki,  
“Sokuten-kyoshi”, NOMURA Mansaku  
新作能、『能・ハムレット』、夏目漱石、則天去私、野村万作

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NOH HAMLET<sup>1</sup>

Presented as the world premiere at Nihon University Casals Hall, Tokyo

On 2nd December, 2004

Produced by NIHON UNIVERSITY (President: Yukiyasu SEZAI, MD)

## STAFF

**Script written by Kuniyoshi UEDA**

**Directed by Hideo KANZE, Manzaburo UMEWAKA, & Kuniyoshi UEDA**

**Orchestra music composed and directed by Shonosuke OKURA**

**Chorus music set by Tatsuya HATTA**

## CAST

Villager (1<sup>st</sup> scene): **Yoshiaki ITO** (Kanze school)

Hamlet (2<sup>nd</sup> scene): **Yoshiaki ITO**

Ophelia: **Haruhiko HASEGAWA** (Kanze school)

Horatio: **Shingo KATOH** (Kanze school)

**Grave Guard:** **Mansaku NOMURA** (Kyogen Izumi school)

Musicians: Satoshi TSUKITAKU (Noh Flute), Hiromi KOGA (Ko-tsuzumi drum)

Shonosuke OKURA (O-tsuzumi drum), Taku MISHIMA (Taiko stick drum)

Yasuko HARADA (Pipe Organ)

Ji-utai Chorus: Ichiro AOKI (Leader), Tatsuya HATTA, Yasushi UMEWAKA,

Tomoya KOMURO, Ken'ichi AOKI, Masahiro NAKAMURA

Kouken Assistants: Hiroshi NAKAMURA, Norinaga UMEWAKA

With the cooperation of:: Takao OGASAWARA, Saburo SATO, Takeshi SEKIYA, Tokuichi TANAKA, Shuhei FUJISAKI, Yuka MARUMO, Kenpei NUMATA (Stage arts), Keiji OKUBO (Lighting), Tamotsu YASUDA, Kyouko SUITA, Tomoko TOMURA (Poster design), NISHIGAI (Printing), Masato TAKEUCHI assisted by Hideo WATANABE (Filming), and The International Society for Harmony and Combination of Cultures (ISHCC).

**English Translation** by Kuniyoshi UEDA with Assistance of Marcus Grandon

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### ***NOH HAMLET--The Outline--***

**Scene1:** Horatio, traveling abroad to tell Hamlet's story, returns home and visits Ophelia's grave.

A villager appears, singing Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be", and argues that the violets growing there are Ophelia and that Hamlet's line "Go to the nunnery" meant "to live purely" as he might lose his life soon. Then he sings "To be or not to be, is no longer the question," and disappears.

**Ai-Kyogen: A talk between Two Scenes:** A cemetery superintendent (in place of the gravedigger in

*Hamlet*) sings: “Now I know the secrets of this life. Both this world and the world after death are real...”, and tells how he saw Hamlet or his spirit returning to Ophelia’s grave.

**Scene 2:** While Horatio is waiting to see the villager again, Ophelia’s ghost appears on the river and tells how happy she is to be united in spirit and love with Hamlet. Then Hamlet’s ghost appears and tells Horatio: “To be or not to be, is not the question, but the spiritual evolution of mankind is imperative in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so that all people in the world may enjoy their lives, harmoniously, not fighting”. Hamlet then ascends with Ophelia into the “world of light” while the song is heard: “Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.”

## NOH HAMLET

### 1st Scene

*[Enter Horatio.]*

**Horatio:** I am Horatio, who served Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark. After his death, following his will, I have been travelling abroad to recount his tragic tale. Even now I deeply regret that, as he felt ill at ease about his heart when he was challenged to a fencing match by Laertes, I could not stop him from accepting it, and he lost his life. So long have I been absent from Denmark that I am now returning home to pay a visit to Hamlet’s as well as Ophelia’s grave.

As I have hurried, I have already arrived at Ophelia’s grave. I will sit still and pray for her spirit.

Here in Northern Europe, spring has finally come. Blowing in the breeze, the violets, primroses, and buttercups are so lovely and wild that they remind me of Ophelia while she was alive. At her funeral, the queen offered flowers, saying, “Sweets to the sweet. Farewell.” It was here at this very spot.

I dearly remember Hamlet saying to me as his dying words: “If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, / Absent thee from felicity awhile, / And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, / To tell my story.”

*[A villager appears.]*

**Villager** To be or not to be, that is the question;

To be or not to be, that is the question;

Where is the light on earth to search?

Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, / And by opposing end them? To say we end / The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks /

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation / Devoutly to be wish'd.

To die, to sleep; / To sleep: perchance to dream, ay, there's the rub; / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come: / The undiscover'd country from whose bourn / No traveller returns, puzzles the will; / And thus we lose the name of action: / I wonder what is to be and what is not to be.

*Horatio:* 'Tis strange whosoever visits the grave of Ophelia. May I ask who you are?

*Villager:* I am a villager living in this neighbourhood. Since Ophelia died, I have often visited here to pray for her soul. Look, how beautifully the violets all around here are blooming! They are the reincarnation of the dead girl.

*Horatio:* They are really beautiful now in full bloom. How do you know they are the girl reincarnate?

*Villager:* For, in her funeral, her brother Laertes in grief told her to be violets hereafter. The language of violets is 'faithfulness'. Since then every spring has seen such a beautiful flowering of violets all over this cemetery.

*Chorus:* How piteous to remember her faithfulness and purity and now to see the splendor of violets in this field! Flowers to offer in the funeral! How sad unable to see her again!

*Villager:* To her love, Hamlet, life or death was first and foremost the greatest question. There his father's ghost appeared and told him to revenge his father's death. As he respected his father, he made up his mind. Yet he feared he might lose his life in the vengeance, and he told his love to go to a nunnery. Ophelia could not understand him, and in sadness, she went mad and walked lonely along the brook, and with her weedy trophies she fell in the weeping spring brook. Like a mermaid, floating awhile, she chanted snatches of old tunes; but long it could not be till her garments pulled her from her melodious lay to muddy death.

*Horatio:* How sad the story! Did Hamlet tell her to go to a nunnery? Did he change his mind?

*Villager:* No, he loved her truly. He thought he might be a criminal, and wished her to live purely in a nunnery.

*Horatio:* Back from an exile in England, never did he dream she had died and he would meet with her funeral.

*Villager:* So he flung himself into the grave to hold her once again in his arms, crying, "I loved Ophelia: Forty thousand brothers could not make up my sum."

*Chorus:* Thereupon his enemy cried ridiculously that he was in madness and should be separated from her body. Thus he was kept apart, and his grudge remained there

even after he left there and even after his death.

*[The villager sits, holding the kosode-kimono as dead Ophelia, and weeping, he cries. The chorus sings for him.]*

**Chorus:** Ophelia, you could not bear the loneliness and sadness and you killed yourself! Forgive me, Ophelia, O forgive me, Ophelia.

**Chorus:** On the surface gathers greenness of the water. Numberless flowers are floating above. Harmonious and mixing together, a new world is being created. Beautiful thoughts with beautiful words. With high and noble wishes, humans will evolve. May lives of all men brighten, all lives live together!

*[During the chorus, Ophelia's ghost appears, sees the man, praying, slowly approaches him, and extends her hand toward him as if to pardon and bless him, and disappears. The man is enlightened. He stands up and sings, dancing.]*

**Villager:** To be or not to be, is *no longer* the question.

**Chorus:** To be or not to be, is *no longer* the question.

If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now.

Under the cherry blossom, or on the eve of autumn moon.

There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

**Villager:** May we notice the sign of it!

**Chorus:** Past and future may be in the present; the readiness is all.

**Villager:** Our life could be focused in the present moment.

**Chorus:** Infinity resides in the finite. Dream and reality. The life before and after.

All may be present in this life. To be or not to be, is *not* the question. All are real.

The readiness is all.

*[Exit.]*

*[Enter Ai-kyogen, an old grave-guard.]*

**Grave-guard:** *[Sings]* While young, I loved;

Sweet, sweet love,

Melting love, I loved;

Now old, and yet young,

My mind is still flying o'er the green ocean;

Now I know the secrets of this life.

There is no co-incidence in this world,

Everything has cause and effect;

To live is to choose; connect your life

To the life of the Universe.

**This life and life-after are both real lives,  
Now I know the secrets of this life.**

I am a grave-guard living in this neighbourhood. I have long been working in this cemetery. I still remember that over thirty years ago, for Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, the King's Chamberlain, there was a very simple funeral to bury her. Now, I should tell you the truth: after the funeral, Prince Hamlet all by himself returned here; nobody except me knows that.

It was the day after the funeral. A figure that looked like Hamlet appeared in front of Ophelia's grave, sat there and meditated for some time. I noticed streams of tears filling his face. Thereupon out of nowhere, a ghost-like figure of Ophelia appeared. It approached him very slowly, extended her hand toward him from behind as if to pardon him and bless him. Then the apparition was gone, and the Hamlet-like figure also disappeared. It was such a long time ago, but I really observed it carefully and I cannot forget it. Incidentally, there was a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes on the following day, and both of them lost their lives.

*(Sings)* There is no co-incidence in this world;  
Everything has cause and effect;  
To live is to choose; connect your life

To the life of the Universe;  
This life and life-after are both real lives;  
Now I know the secrets of this life.

[ *Exit.* ]

## **2nd Scene.**

*Horatio:* The villager who appeared before me and talked with me must be the ghost of my master Hamlet. I will stay here tonight, I will stay here tonight and beckon him once again. I expect the moon will appear on this spring evening. I cannot wait to see him again, I cannot wait to see him again.

[*Noh music “deha” is played and Ophelia's ghost appears.*]

*Ophelia's Ghost:* I am Ophelia, who departed from this life, drowning myself in this river, despairing the insincerity of the man I loved. How thoughtless of me! The man returned to me and now I am convinced of his love.

*Chorus:* Unable to keep floating on the river, I sank, but now I float up for the spring moon.

**Horatio:** On the surface of the stream with the pure moon reflected, the figure must be the ghost of Ophelia!

How happy you must be now in the true love of Hamlet! I still repent that I could not stop the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes which led them to their deaths !

*[Hamlet's ghost appears.]*

**Hamlet:** That has all passed, Horatio. To be or not to be, is *no longer* the question. You do not have to pray for me, but save yourself.

**Horatio:** How is it possible “To be or not to be, is *no longer* the question”?

**Hamlet:** Ophelia forgave me, and I passed the boundary of life or death. And I glimpsed the world of Light. Now I know what true love is. Ask the question what true love is, and it is a sign of spiritual evolution.

**Chorus:** Now all human beings are citizens of the world, with wide vision and high consciousness.

*[ Iroe movement and Hayamai Dance by Ophelia and Hamlet.]*

**KIRI Ending:**

**Hamlet:** Know that happiness is most important. All people's--

**Chorus:** All people's happiness and longevity, we pray.

**Hamlet:** Speak your mind--

**Chorus:** Speak your mind, do what you say, and do not fight. There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.

**Hamlet:** The rest is silence--

**Chorus:** The rest is silence. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince. And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest; flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

**The End**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The texts of and comments on the two Japanese versions of *Noh Hamlet* are printed in the *ISHCC Bulletins* No. 4, No. 5, and No.6. See “REFERENCES”.

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