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## **Innovation of Nohgaku**

Nowadays, as globalization spreads, more and more aspects of Japanese culture are becoming known and practiced throughout the world. It could be argued, however, that some traditional arts such as Nohgaku, Kabuki, and Japanese Classical Dance, which I have been practicing since I was three, have not spread internationally to the same level. One reason for this may be flexibility. Indeed, sumo, judo, sake and green tea, which have been adopted in other countries, are already not only a Japanese culture, but continue changing steadily in each country. In order to internationalize Nohgaku, I think the key is to attempt to escape from the idea that Japanese folklore culture (unlike tradition) is Japanese-occupied property. In other words, we should extract only basic concepts from a certain thing and re-interpret and reconstruct it with a new paradigm. Japanese entertainment, which is said to be a classic, "tradition" and "weathered shell," are included together. It is surely important to break the shell from there, extract only the tradition, put it in some other paradigm, and rebuild it. Although some conservative people say that "it is absolutely not acceptable to change the tradition," its essence stands out only by breaking the shell and extracting essence, and that is what "preserving the tradition" means. I would like to suggest the innovation of Noh from three perspectives relating to contents of the program, stage, and education.

Firstly, doing a fusion with different cultures will greatly help to internationalize Noh. For example, in June this year, for the first time in 54 years, Mr. Hosho Kazuhisa performed the Christian program "Resurrection of Christ" at the Cancellaria Palace in Vatican City. This was a very innovative attempt, and necessary for people involved in traditional performing arts to explore such a way of performance that matches this era. Some people may claim that combining other religions into the program will harm Noh's essence. However, since Noh is a flexible traditional art inherently, it retains the possibility to create mutual understanding

beyond the framework of religion. Therefore, I believe that such an attempt will create people's understanding of diverse ideas.

Secondly, shaking ourselves free from the existing idea of what a Noh stage is will make Noh more flexible and enable more people to encounter it, both in Japan and overseas. For example, there is an outdoor Noh stage on the top of Mt. Uryu in Kyoto, in which only the pillars are built into the four corners of the stage. In other words, they have extracted the pure essence of the Noh stage, and this is why it stands out. In the same way, it is possible to play Noh in various places, and, in the extreme case, it can also be played in urban space. Some people say that we should emphasize and preserve the tradition of Noh theater. There is undeniably some truth in this, but the performance in such a new way and new environment would make people familiar with Noh and provide opportunities to experience appreciation more easily.

Finally, further development of Noh requires human resource skills and technological skills. In order to internationalize Japanese traditional arts, it is necessary not only to excel in languages, but also to have a lot of human resources who can deeply understand our culture and at the same time have the ability to create new ideas. That is to say development is not possible only with excellent performers. In order to adapt to the times it is necessary to spark innovations and create a new tradition. For instance, adopting technology to provide multilingual commentary at Kabuki-za has enabled thousands of foreigners to enjoy, understand and appreciate this traditional art. Embracing technological advances may also allow us to protect and share the traditions of Noh.

In conclusion, fusion with foreign culture, reconsidering our view of a Noh stage, and human resource cultivation arguably could greatly contribute to the globalization of Noh. Noh was kept frozen for 700 years centered on folklore, thus making it difficult for reinterpretation like Kabuki. Moreover, we need strong determination for internationalization. If Noh can be encouraged to be open and to be open to being modified, then, similar to Open Source software, innovative artists who want to participate in this revolution will also appear. I believe there is a difference between tradition and lore. Lore is just the shell, unable to change. True traditions are the essence adapted and able to withstand change. We must recognize Noh as our wonderful tradition, not our lore.