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Colloquy on the Connections between European and Japanese Narrative Music

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Colloquy on the Connections Between European and Japanese Narrative Music

Introduction

In this colloquy, Ogino Shizuo and Brooke McCorkle examine the different ways European narrative music including opera and ballet influenced the development and evolution of opera as an art form in Japan. The goal of the colloquy is to draw attention to Japan's rich operatic history, a history that has long been ignored in English-language scholarship.

In her article on Tsubouchi Shōyō and Yamada Kōsaku's one-act operatic collaboration *Ochitaru Tennyo,* McCorkle delves into the various difficulties Yamada faced in setting Tsubouchi's work. She concentrates on the musical aspect of the opera and the audience's reception when it was finally performed in 1929. While it was not a great success, it established Yamada as a leading figure in opera composition in Japan, a reputation cemented later by his first full-length opera, *Kurofune* from 1940. Together with Ogino, Tachi Arisa, and Ōnishi Yuki, they translate the script of *Ochitaru Tennyo* into English and provide an example of a chorus number performable in English translation.

Ogino concentrates on the shared affinity for drawing on legends and myths as source material in both European and Japanese music, focusing on *Ochitaru Tennyo* and *Yūzuru* written by Kinoshita Junji and composed by Dan Ikuma. Of particular note are the striking similarities between the types of legends and scenes that best lend themselves to dramatic musical settings; among these include myths of birds, magical transformations, and ideas of desire bringing about negative results. At the core of these myths from both European and Japanese traditions is a moral didacticism warning of temptation. There are also some key shared elements regarding nature; nature is a mystical force in these stories, and human interaction with these forces often leads to tragic results. Ogino points out the ways Japanese composers and authors, while taking

some inspiration from European ones, also managed to create works that were rooted in Japanese traditions and stories.

The Legend *Tsuru no On-gaeshi* (*The Grateful Crane*) and the Opera *Yūzuru*

Ogino Shizuo

Introduction

Several Japanese theatrical works from the twentieth century have their roots in traditional legends. As we have seen, this is the case for *Ochitaru Tennyo.* It is also true of Kinoshita Junji's play *Twilight Crane* which was later adapted into an opera by Dan Ikuma. In this essay I will first explain the origins of this story and the adaptation of it into an opera. Then, I outline how the dramatic themes of animal transformation and the prohibited gaze in the Japanese legend relates to European opera.

Kinoshita and *Twilight Crane*

Kinoshita Junji was born in 1914 in Tokyo and passed away there in 2006. He was playwright and critic. He was a storyteller of Japanese folktales, too and wrote several books about Japanese folktales and legends. Kinoshita, therefore, was well-versed in writing dramas based on Japanese old tales with historical materials. Besides his most famous play *Twilight Crane,* he is also well known for the play *The Japanese called Otto.* In this play, Kinoshita dramatized the activity of the Communist spy Richard Sorge, who infiltrated the Nazi party and worked in Japan in the years leading up to World War II. Kinoshita studied at University of Tokyo English literature, concentrating on the works of William Shakespeare. His translation of Shakespeare's works is well known still today and he served as an advisor to the Society of Japanese Playwrights. Kinoshita was very interested in Japanese language and its dialects in various provinces of Japan. He uses them in his folktale works along with the standard Japanese.

In fact, a Japanese dialect which farmers use in the country appears in the libretto of *Twilight Crane*.

Kinoshita wrote *Twilight Crane* based on the famous Japanese folktale *Tsuru no On-gaeshi* (*The Grateful Crane*). There are several versions of this tale. In one well-known version, an old man saves a crane from a trap. A young woman then visits him and his elderly wife and asks them to allow her to live with them. They welcome her. After she begins to live with them, she asks them to give her a room where she could weave textiles and threads. They gave her everything she asked for, but she forbade them to see her weaving in this secret room. The old couple promised not to see her in the room, where she secretly weaves in the night textiles with these threads, using her own feathers. The old couple cannot resist the temptation and sees how she weaves. The young woman gives the beautiful textiles on the next day to the old couple, but she tells them that she has to leave because they broke their promise and found out her secret. She turns back into the former crane and flies away while the old couple sees her off.

In another version, and a young poor man rescues the crane from either a trap or pulls an arrow out of its wounded body. The crane secretly turns into a human and asks him to marry her; the young man agrees to her proposal and becomes her husband. The other name of this folktale is, therefore, *Tsuru Nyōbō* (*Crane Wife*) and it exemplifies the theme of human-animal marriage common in Japanese legends.

Kinoshita used this version of the tale for the basis of *Twilight Crane*. In his play, the young man Yohyō pulls an arrow out of the crane’s body. Later, a young woman named Tsū appears and they marry. Tsū, in truth the crane, tells her husband Yohyō that she wants to weave textiles so that he could sell them and make money. But she forbids him from seeing her weaving. He agrees not to look. She weaves textiles from her own feathers in a secret room, while her

husband Yohyō sells them in the city at a high price. But Sōdo and Unzu, two bad characters of this play, encourage Yohyō to look at his wife while she works. Yohyō discovers that Tsū is actually a crane and was weaving textile out of her own feathers. In the next morning Tsū brings him the magnificent cloth she made, but she says that she must leave him now because he knows the truth that she is actually the crane he rescued.

Kinoshita was sympathetic to Japanese Communist Party and he embedded a critique of capitalism and greed in this play. The play teaches us that riches are not the most important thing in life. If the simple honesty, love and faithfulness were betrayed, then the most valuable person or thing could be lost. Thus Kinoshita managed to transform the traditional folktale of *The Grateful Crane* into a subtle Communist tale that resonated with the time of the play's premiere in Nara, Japan in 1949. The postwar era was very hard for Japanese. Many watched this play and were very moved by the pure and faithful soul of the crane wife. To this day it has always been one of the favorite plays of them. Yamamoto Yasue, a famous Japanese actress for whom the role of Tsū was created, starred in the play with her own company *Budō no Kai* (*Group of Grapes,* named for the Greek God Dionysus whom Nietzsche associates with theater) for thirty-seven years, realizing the role on stage over a thousand times.

Dan and *Yūzuru*

Soon after the play's premiere, the composer Dan Ikuma approached Kinoshita about adapting it into an opera. Kinoshita permitted it on the condition that he does not change a word of the play. The opera's libretto is therefore exactly the same as the text of the play by Kinoshita, a practice uncommon in most operatic adaptations of plays. The opera was completed in 1951 and its premier took place in 1952 in Osaka. *Twilight Crane*'s revised version was premiered in 1956 in Zürich, Switzerland with Fujiwara Opera Company under the baton of composer Dan

himself. Dan was born in 1924 in Tokyo and died in 2001 in Suzhou, China. He studied at Tokyo College of Music, known today as Tokyo University of the Arts. Yamada Kōsaku, a famous Japanese composer, whose works are well known not only in Japan, but also in Europe and United States of America, taught him off campus, too. Dan composed various genres of music, for example operas, symphonies, songs, film music, children's songs, broadcast music and so on. He was a member of Japan Art Academy. He was conservative in his political view while Kinoshita belonged to the left wing and was very critical towards the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Nevertheless, the two seemed to work well together on realizing an operatic version of *Twilight Crane,* known in Japanese as *Yūzuru.*

One aria sung by Tsū in the opera is particularly touching. Here Tsū worries about her husband, singing:

> Yohyō, my precious Yohyō, what has happened to you? You are changing little by little. You are becoming someone who belongs to different world from mine. You are becoming like those horrible people who shot arrows at me. What has become of you? What shall I do now? What shall I, I, do then? You saved my life and pulled out the arrow from my body without expecting anything in return. I was so delighted, so I came to you. You are different from others and belong to my world. Yet you are departing from me little by little and going away little by little. What has become of you? What shall I do? What shall I, I, do then?[1]

This moment encapsulates both the warnings of against an increasingly materialistic society and how it corrupts innocent souls. This corruption occurs in the play and opera just as the premiere's audiences must have identified a similar shift in Japanese society following the war. It is a moral lesson that remains relevant in the twenty-first century as well.

Animals, Transformations, and the Forbidden Gaze

[1] 木下順二 Kinoshita Junji『夕鶴・彦一ばなし　他二編』" Yūzuru, Hikoichibanashi, Hokanihen" 木下順二戯曲選Ⅱ *Kinoshita Junji Gikyokusen II*, Tokyo: 岩波文庫 Iwanami Bunko, 1998 年　44～45 ページ。Translation by Ogino Shizuo.

Several Japanese and European legends feature themes of human-animal romance as well as prohibited gaze and punishment. *Kitsune Nyōbō* (*Fox Wife*) *from* Yanagita Kunio's *Nihon no Mukashi-banashi* (*Japanese Old Tales*) exemplifies this.[2] Just like in *Twilight Crane*, an animal, in this case a fox, marries a young farmer, gives birth to two children, and even brings wealth to the family. But when the farmer discovers that his wife has a tail of fox, she has to leave both her husband and their children. She belongs to a different realm and was only able to live in the human world if her husband kept his promise. As soon as the promise is broken, she departs. The story of *Fox Wife,* then has much in common with *Crane* Wife; both feature and human-animal marriage which proceeds along pleasantly until the husband breaks his vow to not look upon his wife.

It is possible the source of this theme of the prohibited gaze is from a story in the *Kojiki,* a collection of myths about the creation of Japan and the stories of the gods associated with Shintoism. Early in the collection is a story of Izanagi and his sister-spouse Izanami. Together, they gave birth to the islands of Japan and several gods, but Izanami died in the process. Izanagi travelled to the underworld hoping to rescue his wife, but it was too late as she had already eaten the food of the underworld. In one last attempt, so that Izanami might be rescued Izanagi agreed that he would not look upon his wife. Yet he could not keep his promise and glimpsed her; Izanami was in wretched state, her body rotting. Ashamed, she tried to kill Izanagi who barely managed to escape from the Underworld.

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[2] 柳田国男著 Yanagita Kunio『日本の昔話』*Japan's Folktales,* Tokyo: 新潮文庫 Shinchōbunko, 1994.「狐女房」の話 (Kitsune Nyōbyō no Hanashi/ Fox Wife)：「むかし能登国の万行の三郎兵衛という人は、或晩便所へ行って帰って来て見ると、部屋に自分の女房が二人おりました。・・・そのうちに一人の方に、ほんの僅かな疑いがあったので、それを追い出してしまって今一人の方を家に置きました。それから家が繁盛して二人まで男の子が生まれました。その二人の子が少し大きくなって家で隠れんぼをして遊んでいて、ふと母親に尻尾のあることを見つけました。正体を見られたからにはもうおることが出来ない。実は私は狐であったと言って、二人の子を残して泣いて帰って行きました。」（同書 107 ページ）

This summary strongly resembles the ancient Greek and Roman legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus descends to the Underworld in order to bring back his dead wife Eurydice to the terrestrial world. Orpheus is finally permitted to bring Eurydice back on the condition that he does not look back at her until they both reach the world of the living. But, like Izanagi, he cannot help but look back at her just before their arrival. Eurydice returns to the underworld and Orpheus loses her forever.[3]

The revelation of a secret origin in *Crane Wife* is also strikingly similar to that of *Lohengrin,* an opera by Richard Wagner. In Wagner's opera, the roles are reversed though; the male lead, Lohengrin, must keep his origins a secret from everyone, including his wife Elsa. Her desire to learn the truth of his home destroys their relationship and Lohengrin must depart, led away by an enchanted swan later revealed to be Elsa's brother under a curse. Both *Twilight Crane* and *Lohengrin* have characters who is either a bird or is related to it and ends up by leaving the human world after revealing the secret. This taboo of looking, and by extension, knowing some hidden truth, is apparent in many of folktales in Japan or in Europe.

Summary

In his play *Twilight Crane,* Kinoshita both modified and re-created an old folktale. Legends, myths, and folktales constantly evolve based on the time and place in which they are told. A folktale cannot always be the same. It is possible for every storyteller to change it and re-create it in their own way. That way these tales can be passed down through many generations and continue to survive well into the future. Retelling means re-creating and re-interpreting. Kinoshita practices this in his own drama *Twilight Crane*, too. Given that the play premiered in a Japan recently ravaged by war, I believe Kinoshita intended to retell the old Japanese folktale

[3] This is the typical end of the myth, though in some versions, mostly famously Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera, Cupid intervenes and allows the couple to live happily ever after.

Grateful Crane as not only an anti-capitalist critique but also through it, a story of pacifism. The quest for money and power and even knowledge will always end in violence and tragedy. It is only by cultivating generous hearts, such as that of the crane, that humanity will achieve true peace.

***Ochitaru Tennyo* (*The Fallen Celestial Maiden*) and *L'Après-midi d'un faune*: A Comparison**

Ogino Shizuo

In my previous essay I discussed themes of human transformation, particularly in birds, and the idea of the prohibited gaze as common points in both European myths and Japanese ones. These myths have moreover provided valuable fodder for opera composers in both areas of the world. In this essay I will concentrate on the similarities between Tsubouchi Shōyō and Yamada Kōsaku's one-act opera *Ochitaru Tennyo,* hitherto referred to as *The Fallen Celestial Maiden,* and Stéphane Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune,* which was set first as a tone poem in 1894 by Claude Debussy and later transformed into a provocative ballet by Vaslav Nijinsky and the Ballet Russes.

Tsubouchi Shōyō is the author of the drama *Datennyo* which was later adapted by Yamada into the opera *The Fallen Celestial Maiden*. Tsubouchi was born in 1859 in Mino, the southern part of what is now known as Gifu prefecture. He is very famous in Japan as the translator of Shakespeare's complete works and the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Moreover, Tsubouchi himself was a novelist and playwright. He was very active in the modernization of Japanese theater. In addition to the libretto for *The Fallen Celestial Maiden,* he also wrote the script for the Japanese dance drama, *Shinkyoku Urashima* (*New Music Theater Urashima*),

which was published in 1904 and predates *The Fallen Celestial Maiden.* With this work, he intended to establish a new form of musical theater ("Shin Gakugeki") which he describes in an essay of the same name as a Wagnerian amalgamation of music, dance and drama. Tsubouchi aimed to renew Japanese theater by introducing elements from Western-style opera, and particularly Wagnerian aesthetics, to contemporary audiences.

Tsubouchi led not only the new theatrical movement, but also a new novel movement both in theory and praxis during the Meiji period. Influenced by Western novels, he promoted extensive changes and experiments in literature and drama. Thus he was a key figure in the Meiji era's movements for new literature and new theater. Furthermore, as a professor he taught English literature at Waseda University. After retiring from Waseda, Tsubouchi moved to Atami, a provincial city in Izu and passed away there in 1935.

While Tsubouchi was at the forefront of new theater and literature movements in Japan, Yamada Kōsaku was a leader in new music, especially *yōgaku,* or Western-style music. During the Meiji period, German culture, including literature, philosophy, and music influenced Japanese artists, authors, and composers. Part of this had to do with Germany's prominence in European culture and politics more broadly, a prominence that extended from its victory in the of Franco-Prussian War in 1871 until the outbreak of World War I. In the early 1900s, Yamada spent three years studying in Berlin during the Second German Reich. His early compositions are, as a result, strongly influenced by the German classical music circulating during this period, especially by Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss. During his stay in Berlin, Yamada began to compose some operas in Western style with Japanese librettos and even hoped to stage them

there. The music drama ("Gakugeki") *The Fallen Celestial Maiden* was one such work. Yamada's friend sent Tsubouchi's script of *Datennyo* to him and Yamada planned to set it to music for performance in Germany. Yamada managed to compose the music for the one-act opera in only twenty days. When Yamada showed it to his composition Professor Schmidt, Schmidt promised to stage it in Berlin.[4] Yamada, therefore, translated Tsubouchi's Japanese drama into German. The title of his translation was *Die Siebte* (*The Seventh*) because the seventh maiden is the one who remains at the end of the drama and goes to live with the old man to the village at the foot of mountain. Yet, because of the outbreak of World War I, the opera was not realized on the German stage.

After returning to Japan, Yamada composed Western-style songs in the manner of German Lieder, setting texts by famous Japanese poets like Kitahara Hakushū. Yamada also founded the first Japanese symphonic orchestra and went on to stage and conduct many European operas in Japan. He was a pioneer of modern Japanese music, albeit a pioneer under the influence of German Romantic culture.

The socio-historical background of Tsubouchi and Yamada's operatic collaboration is worth noting. The Japanese Taishō era, which lasted from 1912 to 1926, was a special period in the modern Japanese history. The opera *The Fallen Celestial Maiden* was completed during this period. In this Taishō era, Japan experienced cultural and social renewal under the influence of European culture. Many important political events occurred in this brief era. Minobe Tatsukichi, a professor of law at the Imperial University of Tokyo, offered a cogent reinterpretation of the

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[4] Yamada Kōsaku provides only the surname "Schmidt" in his autobiography 「若き日の狂詩曲」*Rhapsody From My Young Days*, Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1996.

Japanese constitution. In his theory, known as *Tennō Kikan-setsu*, the emperor Tennō is merely a functionary figure and not omnipotent Shinto god and absolute ruler of Japan. Out of Minobe's theory Taishō democracy, also called *Minpon-shugi*i (*People's Democracy*), came about. Professor Yoshino Sakuzō, also at the Imperial University of Tokyo argued for this *People's Democracy*. In addition, the laborers demonstrated on the streets, and strikes broke out for the first time in the Japanese history. Leftist social movements began to take root in this Taishō era.

Taishō liberalism and Taishō *Seimei-shugi* (vitalism) also characterize this Taishō period. Women in the cities were no longer the traditional good wives and mothers at home, but instead, they worked in the office. Young girls no longer wore kimonos in the big cities like Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka and Kobe. Instead they wore Western clothes for the first time (in the Meiji era men frequently sported suits while women generally wore traditional clothing). In summer, girls sunbathed in Western swimsuits. Feminism as a movement began to become more visible during this time of increased female emancipation. This freedom seems to have brought out the remarkable scene in the opera *The Fallen Celestial Maiden* such as the Seventh Maiden's nude scene on the stage. Its premier in Kabuki-za was in 1929 (the fourth year of Shōwa). Without such a social background of Taishō era, it would not have been possible.

Like Paris and Weimar Berlin, Tokyo saw an increasing embrace of freedom and even decadence both in culture and on stage. The connections between increasing sexual freedom and its open acknowledgement on the theatrical stage are apparent in both *The Fallen Celestial Maiden* and *L'après-midi d'un faune.* Tsubouchi adapted his libretto from the *Hagoromo Densetsu,* a Japanese folktale that features maidens from heaven bathing naked in a lake. A man

secretly observes them and steals one of the maiden's feathered robes. Without her robe this maiden could not return to heaven and she later marries the man. In Tsubouchi's drama, at night seven maidens descend from heaven to springs on the top of a mountain. They take off their robes and bathe naked under the full moon. An old man watches them from a hidden place and steals one robe. However, Tsubouchi adds the characters of a young man, revealed to be the old man's son, and a beautiful boy. The old man kills his son and the boy absconds with the precious robe. Without her robe the seventh maiden cannot return to heaven and must go down to a village at the foot of mountain with the old man. An image from the cover of *Datennyo* is notable for its similarities to both paintings depicting Tannhäuser in the Venusberg and the stage design for Ballet Russes's *L'après-midi d'un faune,* choreographed to Debussy's tone poem *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune.* premiered in Paris in 1912. (It is very regrettable that we can show below only the image from the cover of *Datennyo* because of the copyright). The *Datennyo* image, like the painting *Tannhäuser* by Henri Fantin-Latour in 1886, features attractive nymph-like women draped in flowing silks. Note that in the Fantin-Latour image, Tannhäuser gazes at the Venusbergians. The stage design for the Ballet Russes by Léon Bakst feature a flatness that mirrors both Japanese woodblock prints that is echoed in the *Datennyo* image and the images often painted on ancient Greek vases. In this way, the ballet stage design brought together Western antiquity and the Japonism fad that was popular in Europe at the time.

Above: Image from inner cover of *Datennyo*

Additionally, a similar scene featuring a surreptitious glimpse of bathing maidens occurs in the source material for Debussy’s 1894 tone poem-turned ballet. Stephane Mallarmés 1876 poem *L’Après-midi d’un faune* includes a passage where a shepherd watches two nymphs bathing in a lake. Both flee away picking up robes which lay on the shore, but one of them forgets her own robe in a hurry. The shepherd steals it and takes a nap. The storyline of this ballet is somewhat similar to that of *The Fallen Celestial Maiden.* In the ballet *L’Après-midi d’un faune,* seven nymphs bathe in a lake and a faun watches them, just as the seven maidens in the *The Fallen Celestial Maiden*. The ballet also captures the sexual energy and freedom present not just in Europe but also in Tokyo at the time. While Tsubouchi had already completed his

libretto by the time of the ballet's premiere, it is possible that the poem reached him in Japan and inspired him. Whatever the case, we know that Yamada watched the performance of *L'Après-midi dun faune* by Ballet Russes in Berlin in December 1912, as he recounts the experience in his autobiography *Rhapsody From My Young Days*.

All in all, both the Taishō era and corresponding periods in Europe saw an increase in liberalism and freedom both in politics and on the theatrical stage. The similarities in the narrative elements of both *The Fallen Celestial Maiden* and the ballet *L'Après-midi d'un faune* reveal this brief but brilliant moment in twentieth-century history.

Ochitaru Tennyo (*The Fallen Celestial Maiden*): History, Music, Translation

Brooke McCorkle

Introduction

Although Japan has a rich history of Western concert music (*yōgaku*) filled with composers, performers, conductors, and scholars, few are known to the English-speaking world.[5] The goal of this article is to acquaint Western scholars with Japanese music culture in the

[5] Among Japanese musicians recognized in the West, Takemitsu Toru and Ozawa Seiji standout. That both of these men had strong ties with composers and performance groups in the United States explains their recognition in part, and theorists such as Peter Burt and Timothy Koozin have embraced Takemitsu as worthy of analytical study. See Peter Burt, *The Music of Toru Takemitsu* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Timothy Koozin, "Traversing distances: pitch organization, gesture and imagery in the late works of Tōru Takemitsu," *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 21, no.4 (2004): 17-34. Other scholars such as Luciana Galliano, Judith Ann Herd, Noriko Manabe, David Pacun, and Bonnie Wade have all made headway in research shedding light on other Japanese composers and performers, but too often non-Western composers only briefly appear and then disappear from more Anglo-centric musicology discourse. See Luciano Galliano, *Yōgaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century,* trans. Martin Mayes (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002); Judith Ann Herd, "The Neonationalist Movement: Origins of Japanese Contemporary Music," *Perspectives on New Music* 27 (2) (1989): 118-163; Noriko Manabe, "Western Music in Japan: The Evolution of Styles in Children's Songs, Hip-Hop, and Other Genres" PhD. diss., City University of New York, 2009; David Pacun, "Nationalism and Musical Style in Interwar Y*ōgaku,*" *Asian Music* 43 (2) (2012): 3-46; Bonnie Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). With the advent of greater interest in both Asian popular music and concert music, perhaps more non-Western composers will be admitted into the broader English-language scholarship. The success of the Japan 33 ⅓ series by Bloomsbury, which features books by Rose Bridges and Kunio Hara writing on contemporary composers such as Yoko Kanno and Joe Hisaishi, seems indicative of this shift. See Rose Bridges, *Yoko Kanno's Cowboy Bebop Soundtrack* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017) and Kunio Hara, *Joe Hisaishi's Soundtrack for My Neighbor Totoro* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming).

twentieth century. One of the many challenges is of course language. Historians are typically trained in the European languages (Italian, French, and German) as those countries are still considered to be the birthplace of Western concert music. Another challenge has to do with divisions within the field of music scholarship in the United States. While ethnomusicologists have long been fascinated by Japanese music both traditional and popular, music historians have typically eschewed musical research of non-Western composers until relatively recently. The result is that neither ethnomusicologists nor music historians investigate the role of Western-style concert music beyond Europe and America. This article aims to ameliorate these issues by drawing attention to one of the most influential Japanese composers and conductors of the twentieth century: Yamada Kōsaku.

Yamada Kōsaku, while familiar to many Japanese for his art songs, is practically unknown in the United States, even to music scholars and Japanese historians. Yet, his work as a composer, conductor, and promoter was incredibly influential on the role Western concert music, and especially opera, plays in modern Japanese culture and politics. Yamada worked tirelessly to introduce Western concert music and its concomitant aesthetics and ideals to Japanese audiences in the early part of the twentieth century. In this article I examine a particular work, his early one-act opera *Ochitaru Tennyo,* and consider how this piece exemplified Yamada's goals and experiments in combining Western and Japanese aesthetic practices.

I first would like to provide a brief background on the primary source of inspiration for *Ochitaru Tennyo*, the *Hagoromo* legend. After that, I discuss about Tsubouchi Shōyō's artistic approach to writing his libretto. Then I consider how Yamada adapted the libretto to better suit to music. Here I concentrate on examples of changes made to the original text of the final duet between the Old Man and the Seventh Celestial Maiden. Next, I investigate how Yamada

harnessed the sounds and styles of late German Romanticism and early modernism and fused them with traditional Japanese theater. After a brief analysis of the music, I describe the opera's premiere and its reception in 1929. Finally, I explain Yamada's approach to setting the Japanese language to music and describe how a team of scholars (Ogino Shizuo, Onishi Yuki, Tachi Arisa, and myself) went about translating the text into English and for performance. In this case, I concentrate on the opera's opening number, "The Song of the Head Demon."

Source Material for *Ochitaru Tennyo*: *Hagoromo*

The source material for *Ochitaru Tennyo* belies a fusion of autochthonous with the foreign. The libretto *Datennyo,* which later became known as *Ochitaru Tennyo* was completed by the well-known theater scholar and Shakespeare translator Tsubouchi Shōyō in 1912. For this libretto, Tsubouchi adapted an ancient Japanese legend called *Hagoromo* (typically translated as *The Feathered Robe* or *Feather Mantle*). This legend has a long history in Japanese traditional theater, particularly Noh. While the play existed in multiple forms prior to the Zeami (1363-1443ca), a famous Noh performer, playwright and aesthetic philosopher who followed in the footsteps of his father Kan'ami, it is frequently attributed to him.[6] The play itself has been translated into English on several occasions, most notably in 1917 by the poet Ezra Pound in collaboration with Ernest Fenollosa.[7] Because it was already established in traditional Noh

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[6] See Arthur Waley, *The No Plays of Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1921), 217.
[7] Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, trans. *The Noh Theatre of Japan with Complete Texts of 15 Classic Plays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004); first published as *'Noh' or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917). Other translations include Royall Tyler, trans. *Pining Wind: A Cycle of Nō Plays* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Papers, 1978), 17-26; Arthur Waley, trans. *The Nō Plays of Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1921), 217-226. Many thanks to Onishi Yuki for bringing these translations to my attention.

theater, the *Hagoromo* was particularly suitable for adaptation into another theatrical form that features music, drama, and dance: opera.[8]

The story of the Noh incarnation of the *Hagoromo* is relatively straightforward. Heavenly beings (typically translated as angels or celestial maidens) have descended from heaven to either bathe or drink milk, depending on the telling. When they hear someone approach, all but one flees. The stranger, a fisherman, purloins the remaining maiden's feathered mantle/cloak/robe, which are also her wings. Without it, she cannot return home to her heavenly abode. She pleads with the fisherman to return the cloak, but he recognizes the importance of such a treasure. Finally he agrees to return the cloak if the maiden with teach him a heavenly dance associated with the waxing and waning of the moon. Thus, the play ends with the dance of the celestial maiden.[9]

This summary represents the story as seen in Zeami's collection of plays, yet in truth there are several different versions both before and after Zeami's lifetime. As Kenneth Yasuda points out, in an eighth-century telling of the tale in the *Fudoki,* the angel is forced to marry the fisherman and bear his children. Eventually, she regains her robe and flies to heaven, abandoning her earthly family.[10] In another, a couple takes pity on the angel and adopts her, only to later change their mind.[11] Yasuda notes that these versions emphasize the conflict between the mean human realm and divine one. Conversely, in the Noh version of the legend, the fisherman takes the robe because it is a miraculous treasure worthy of human admiration; after the angel begs him, he realizes the evil he has done to such a pure being and is ashamed when he doubts her promise to dance for him. In this, the Noh play by Zeami achieves a relatively happy ending in

[8] As such, Yamada and Tsubouchi's collaboration predates Benjamin Britten's famous use of the Noh play *Sumidagawa* as the inspiration for *Curlew River* (1964).
[9] Kenneth Yasuda, "The Structure of Hagoromo, a No Play," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* 33 (1973): 5, 11.
[10] Ibid., 16.
[11] Ibid.

which humankind is elevated thanks to divine generosity and the fisherman's sympathetic heart.[12]

The play maintained a beloved spot in the Noh repertory into the twentieth century. It was famously performed at the coronation of the Taishō emperor on December 8, 1915.[13] Yasuda cites the appropriateness of the selection of *Hagoromo* for this event. The play alludes to the divine origins of the imperial line, includes a line that is identical to the opening of the national anthem "Kimigayo," and joyously celebrates the beauty of Japan.[14]

These nationalistic qualities, in combination with a story going back to ancient Japan, along with an emphasis on the angel's dance also make the *Hagoromo* an attractive selection for operatic treatment. For his libretto, however, Tsubouchi melded elements from Zeami's play with the older, and more desperate instances of the tale. Qualities most obvious from the Noh source are reflected by the significance of dance and the use of a chorus in Tsubouchi's retelling. However, the story itself, with its additions and modifications reveal Tsubouchi's desire to create a drama that synthesized traditional elements with modern ones that reflected his desire to create a Japanese music drama that paralleled that of Richard Wagner's.

Tsubouchi's *Ochitaru Tennyo*

Tsubouchi's idea to adapt the *Hagoromo* to better suit modern musico-dramatic forms was not unique. As early as 1906, composers like Komatsu Kōsuke (1884-1966) were already setting portions of the story to Western style music.[15] Komatsu at the time had just graduated from the Tokyo Music School (which Yamada also attended) when he composed a setting of *Hagoromo* in the style of Western chorus and solo vocal music accompanied primarily by piano,

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[12] Ibid., 16.
[13] Ibid., 19.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Gotō Nobuko, "Kaisetsu." Program for *Ochitaru Tennyo* at Aichiken Geijutsu Gekijo Concert Hall, Nagoya, Japan, 11 November 1995, 2.

winds, and strings. The work was around thirty minutes long.[16] So while not a full-blown opera per se, the composition reflected a desire across the artistic intellectual community to adapt the legend to reflect contemporary musical and theatrical styles.

That Tsubouchi, who had never seen a Western-style opera, latched on to the idea of setting the legend as a modern music drama is not as peculiar as it may seem initially. Tsubouchi was already well-versed in Western theater, especially Shakespeare in addition to Japanese literature and drama. Moreover, in 1904 he wrote a libretto for another opera based on a traditional legend called *Shinkyoku Urashima.*[17] Thus, Tsubouchi had already displayed a proclivity for adapting foreign materials into local models and contexts, a technique that defined much of Meiji era culture.

With *Shinkyoku Urashima,* Tsubouchi had deeply considered Romanticism and especially Wagnerian drama. Prior to completing the libretto draft, Tsubouchi got caught up in the so-called "Wagner Boom."[18] While he, unlike many of his colleagues never studied abroad, Tsubouchi nevertheless devoted himself to the composer's work. He read the libretto for *Tannhäuser* as well as several English books about Wagner, including Ernest Newman's *A Study of Wagner* (1899) and *Studies in Wagnerian Opera* (1891) by Henry Kriehbiel.[19] In 1904, Tsubouchi published an essay summarizing his ideas for a Japanese music drama equal to that of Wagner's. In the essay, titled "Shingakugekiron" (Theory of New Musical Drama), Tsubouchi explained that Japanese myth could be a rich source of material for modern theater, drawing parallels between this notion and Wagner's incorporation of Teutonic mythology and history into

[16] Ibid.
[17] Daniel John Gallimore, *Tsubouchi Shōyō's* Shikyoku Urashima *and the Wagnerian Moment in Meiji Japan (With a Translation of* Shinkyoku Urashima*)* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2016), vi. Around this same time, another author, with whom Tsubouchi disputed, Mori Ogai, also wrote a libretto based on Urashima. See Gallimore, *Tsubouchi,* xii.
[18] Ibid., 16. For more on the Meiji Wagner Boom, see Takenaka Toru, *Meiji no Waguna bumu: Kindai nihon no ongaku iten* (Tokyo: Chuokoron-shinsha, Inc. 2016).
[19] Gallimore, *Tsubouchi,* 16, 69.

his works. In this way, Tsubouchi's new musical drama would tap into the heroic myths of his native Japan in combination with pre-established musical styles; it was to be a drama that could appeal to all classes, high and low; in essence, it was to be music for the Japanese *Volk*.[20] The ties between nation and music drama were of great importance to Tsubouchi, as evidenced by these lines from "Shingakugekiron":

> Any country that calls itself civilized must create for itself a national music and drama. This is to say that a nation that does not at any one time appeal to the ears and eyes of the majority of its citizens, and soothe and satisfy their hearts through music and drama, while at the same time providing the necessary training and facilities for those arts that entertain the masses and develop their sensitivities, is not a nation at all.[21]

In Wagner, Tsubouchi identified elements that could, he believed, help develop his own country during a time of rapid change. Unfortunately, this early attempt at a synthesis of Japanese and Western music drama resulted in a work that was too jarring in its cultural juxtapositions.[22] While the libretto was a Wagnerian-inspired adaptation of the *Urashima* legend infused with some allusions to *Tannhäuser*, the music was typical to kabuki and *joruri* (puppet) theater.[23] So, while Tsubouchi had longed to create a Japanese *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the result was a collection of discrete arts jumbled together. Tsubouchi was not deterred.

With *Ochitaru Tennyo* there was better luck, though it too contained similar challenges. His adaptation of the story into theatrical form is similar to *Urashima* in that it is based on a traditional legend. Tsubouchi could not ignore the Noh play, nor did he wish to replicate it. He turned to other sources, among them variations of the legend from Western Japan, chiefly "Tango no kuni" from the Kyoto area. In this version, the maiden, instead of rising to heaven in dance with her reclaimed robe/wings, is trapped on earth. She lives with an elderly couple at the

[20] Ibid., 21.
[21] Ibid., 61. See also Tsubouchi Shōyō, "Shingakugekiron," 505-6.
[22] Ibid., 9.
[23] Ibid., 15-16.

foot of the mountain and presents them with a curative sake. However, she is cast out of the house, and later collapses at Nagu shrine near Kyoto.[24] Tsubouchi was taken with the bitter ending of this version. To it, he added the characters of the boy playing the flute, the young man, and the flock of demons. The result is a unique twist on a tale known to most of his contemporaries; in this too, Tsubouchi manipulated myth with a Wagnerian dexterity. The final libretto reads like a classical tragedy, but one infused with Romantic gestures and, as I argue, Wagnerian correlations.

The opera is in one act with two scenes. It opens with a group of demons celebrating the dark night on the magical mountain. They serve as both chorus and dancers, laying out the scene. On this night, the celestial maidens bathe in a beautiful silver spring. If a human can glimpse a maiden without her realizing it, he will be granted a wish. The following plot revolves around this. First a beautiful boy comes up the mountain. He is a court musician and wears elegant clothes and carries a magic flute. The sound of the flute drives away the demons and the darkness. He comes up the mountain hoping to see the maidens' beauty. Following him comes a young man, desperately in love. His father has prohibited him from seeing his lover, and the young man wants to wish for a chance to love freely. However, not far behind him on the mountain comes his father, a greedy old man planning to wish for gold. The two meet halfway up the mountain and grapple. The old man accidentally murders his son, who stumbles off a cliff during the fight. The crazed old man continues climbing. The second scene opens with the celestial maidens joyfully bathing in the silver stream. Suddenly they hear the flute. Recognizing its meaning, all but one of them flee back to the heavens. The remaining celestial maiden is entranced by the beautiful melody, and she sits listening, as if a nude statue frozen by its spell. The old man meanwhile sneaks around and snatches her feathered robe (her wings to heaven).

[24] Gotō, "Kaisetsu," 2.

Finally the flute has stopped, the trance broken. The maiden demands the man return her robe. For a moment he is dumbstruck by her beauty. Finally, he replies that he wants to have his wish fulfilled. She asks him to first return the robe, and then she will grant his wish. He refuses again, accusing her of planning to flee without fulfilling the wish. She admonishes him. Yet the old man does not return the robe. He becomes lost in his visions of gold, then love, and then of his fallen son. He cannot decide what to wish for. Meanwhile, the boy appears and steals the robe away from the man. The Celestial Maiden is doomed to remain on the earth and the old man has lost his opportunity to achieve a wish. Dejected, they descend the mountain together, heading to the old man's home.

Tsubouchi's version, while based on the *Hagoromo* legend, also clearly diverts from it in some interesting ways. Most fascinating are its incorporation of choruses of demons and celestial maidens; both of these echo elements from romantic opera, and I would suggest, specifically the wild debauchery of the Venusburg in the case of the demons, and the playful water nymphs of Rheingold in the case of the bathing maidens, who, like Wagner's Rhinemaidens, are still calling from heard off stage later on in the work. These basic elements from Wagnerian plots would have been familiar to Tsubouchi. Less familiar, though, would have been the music.[25] For this, a composer with a deep understanding of Western music, and especially opera, was called for. The youthful Yamada Kōsaku fit the bill.

Yamada Kōsaku: Biography and Adapting Tsubouchi's Libretto

Yamada Kōsaku was born in Tokyo on June 9, 1886, in the midst of the Meiji era.. Around the time of Yamada's birth and throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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[25] As Galliano, Takenaka Toru, and I have pointed out, Wagner's operas rarely circulated in musical form prior to the Taishō era. See Galliano, *Yōgaku,* Takenaka, *Meiji no Waguna,* Brooke McCorkle, "Twilight of an Empire: Staging Wagner in Wartime Toyko" *Music Theater as Global Culture: Wagner's Legacy Today,* eds. Anno Mungen, Nicholas Vazsonyi, Julie Hubbert, Ivan Rentsch, Arne Stollberg: 51-64. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2017).

centuries, the cultures of Europe mingled with those of Japan as artists, philosophers, and politicians all sought a balance between the "modern" Western culture and technology and the values and culture of traditional Japan. Yamada's upbringing itself represents such a mixture, as he was born into a Christian family and exposed to European church music early on in his life.[26] In 1908 he graduated from the Tokyo Music School, where many of his teachers were German.[27] From there, he went on to study at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik from 1909-1913 and garnered attention for his symphonic and chamber music compositions.[28]

It was during this time that Yamada wrote *Ochitaru Tennyo.* According to Masakata Kanazawa, Yamada completed the opera in 1913.[29] The opera had been accepted for performance soon after its completion by the Schiller Theater in Berlin but WWI ceased the production preparations.[30] Around the same time, Yamada formed the first professional symphony orchestra in Japan in 1914-1915. Around this time, Yamada also came to participate in Japan's nascent modern dance movement which was in part inspired by the *Ballet Russes*.[31] He collaborated with the dancer Baku Ishii on developing a genre called "choreographic poetry" and Yamada went on to become good friends with the founder of butoh (modern Japanese dance), Ito Michio, who had also studied in Germany.[32] In 1918-1919 gave a highly anticipated tour in the United States.[33] Indeed, during this tour he conducted several concerts, including one at Carnegie Hall that featured his own compositions as well as those of Wagner.[34] In fact, his

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[26] David Pacun,"Thus We Cultivate Our Own World and Thus We Share It With Others": Koscak Yamada's Visit to the United States in 1918-1919," *American Music* vol. 24 (1) (Spring 2006):69.
[27] Masakata Kanazawa,"Yamada Kōsaku" Grove Online. Accessed July 8, 2018. Pacun,"Thus We Cultivate," 69-70.
[28] Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 69-70.
[29] Masakata Kanazawa, "Yamada Kōsaku."
[30] Kanazawa, "Yamada," and David Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 67.
[31] Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 70.
[32] Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 67, 70-2.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 68.

interpretations of Wagner's music were especially well-reviewed by American critics.[35] He went on form Japan's first professional orchestra and later tour the United States. Following his time in America, Yamada helped establish the Japanese Association of Music Drama (Nihon Gakugeki Kyōkai). In 1920, under its aegis he conducted Act 3, scene 2 of Wagner's *Tannhäuser,* the name song from *Lohengrin,* and the prize song from *Die Meistersinger* along with Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue.*[36] During the Second World War, Yamada composed his most well-known opera, *Kurofune,* which is based on the arrival of American battleships off the coast of Japan in the mid-19th century. While he was not as active a composer following the war, *Kurofune* earned a place in history as the first large-scale Western-style opera by a Japanese composer. As such it established the groundwork for future composers like Dan Ikuma, who completed Yamada's final opera, *Hsian Fei,* which tells the story of doomed love between a Chinese emperor and Turkish empress.[37] Yamada passed away in Tokyo on December 29, 1965.

Tsubouchi's libretto came to the attention of Yamada while he was studying abroad in Berlin. In his late twenties, he was deep in the thrall of both Wagner and Richard Strauss, and dreamt of creating some comparable work in Japanese.[38] Yet, despite setting the libretto to music during his time abroad, Yamada communicated with Tsubouchi very little. When Yamada decided to set the libretto, he wrote Tsubouchi a letter asking for his permission.[39] But beyond that, the two communicated very little about ideas of setting the text to music.[40] In her essay in the program of a 1995 production of *Ochitaru Tennyo* in Nagoya, Gotō Nobuko postulates a few reasons why discussion between the librettist and composer was so scanty. She surmises that part of it is the result of the difference in ages between the two, and part is due to location, with

[35] Ibid., 86.
[36] Masui Keiji, *Nihon opera shi-1952* (Tokyo: Suiyosha, 2003), 164.
[37] Ibid. and Kanazawa, "Yamada."
[38] Gotō, "Kaisetsu," 2-3.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

Yamada in Berlin and Tsubouchi in Tokyo.[41] In some ways, it is perhaps just as well that the two did not correspond. While it would have made for fruitful musicological fodder, it's hard to imagine the traditionally-minded Tsubouchi agreeing with some of Yamada's decisions regarding adjustments to the libretto, not to mention the music itself.

In setting of the text to music, Yamada left most of the script intact, hardly cutting anything. The few changes he did make can be categorized into four main types. First, in few cases Yamada reworks portions of the libretto, usually, in my estimate, to make the script clearer to contemporary audiences. Second, in some instances he reverses the order of the sentences to place greater emphasis on a work. Third, in other instances, he repeats a line from the libretto in order to endow the moment with greater musico-dramatic emphasis. Finally, in few situations, Yamada cuts a line completely. The Duet of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden, the opera's final major number, contains examples of all three of these script changes. Because of this it is an excellent moment to examine to get a sense of how the Yamada libretto and Tsubouchi libretto are similar and different.

The opening of the duet provides a case in point for the first type of edit Yamada made to the Tsubouchi script. Below is a comparison of the "entrance" aria moments for the seventh celestial maiden; Tsubouchi's opening appears first, followed by Yamada's. Yamada eliminates some of the more complicated language from the Tsubouchi script. In its stead he includes lines that convey a similar feeling, though with different word placement and emphasis. Notice that although he does this, he keeps the beginning and ending sentences of the phrase intact. Thus the overall sense of the phrase remains faithful to the original script.

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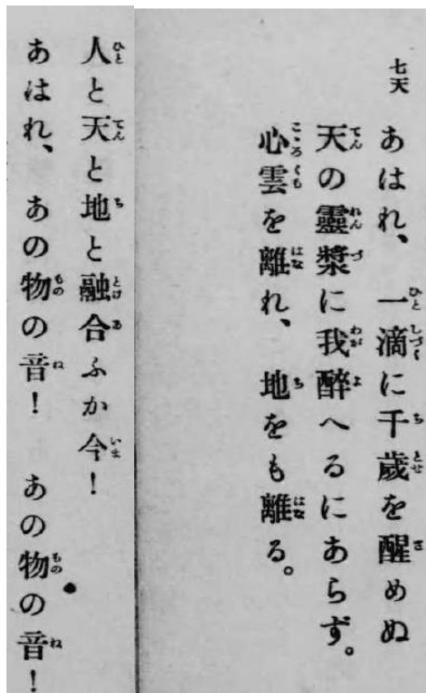
[41] Ibid.

You can see examples comparing the Type 1 edit to the original script in tables and figures on below.[42]

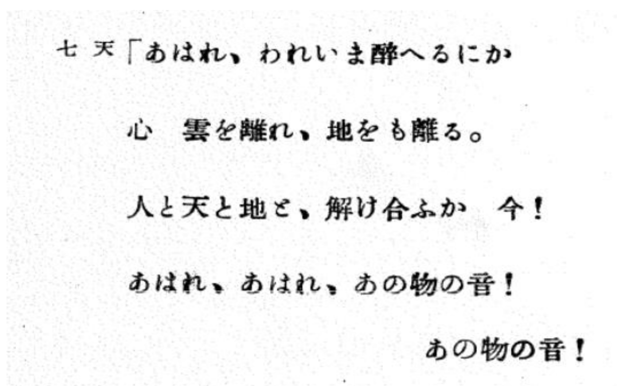
Type 1 Change: Simplifying the text in "The Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden"



七天　あはれ、一滴に千歳を醒めぬ
天の靈漿に我醉へるにあらず。
心雲を離れ、地をも離る。

人と天と地と融合ふか今！
あはれ、あの物の音！　あの物の音！

And here is the Yamada version.[43]

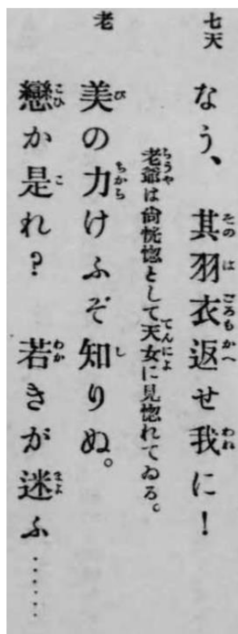


七 天「あはれ、われいま醉へるにか
心　雲を離れ、地をも離る。
人と天と地と、解け合ふか　今！
あはれ、あはれ、あの物の音！
あの物の音！

[42] Tsubouchi excerpt from Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Ochitaru Tennyo* (Tokyo: Kinkōdō, 1915), 33-4.
[43] Yamada Kōsaku and Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Ochitaru Tennyo Hassai Kyokushu* (Tokyo: Nihon Kōkyōgaku Kyōkai Shuppanbu, 1937), 32.

Second, there are several examples of Yamada reversing Tsubouchi's word order in the script, likely to help the words flow better when sung. An example of this occurs when the celestial maiden demands that the old man return her feathers. Instead of placing "Hagoromo" first, Yamada emphasizes the demand, "return to me." He continues this with the old man's initial response to the maiden. In the Tsubouchi, the lovestruck man says "The power of beauty I knew not until today" whereas in the Yamada he says, "Until today I did not know the power of beauty." The changes like this are subtle, but I believe they make the language a bit more like dialogue and less literary. You can see the Type 2 comparisons in the below.

Type 2 Change: Word order reversal in "The Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden"



七天　なう、其羽衣返せ我に！

老翁は恍惚として天女に見惚れてゐる。

老　美の力けふぞ知りぬ。

戀か是れ？　若きが迷ふ……

Above: Tsubouchi Type 2 edit[44]

Below: Yamada Type 2 edit.[45]

[44] Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 36.

[45] Yamada and Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 33.

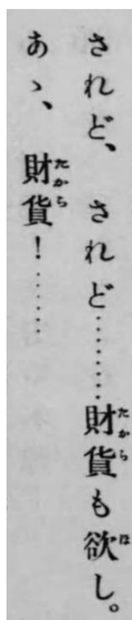
七天「やよ　返せ我れに、その羽衣

老翁はなほ恍惚として天女に見惚れてゐる。

老翁「けふぞ知りぬ、美の力。

In the third type of change Yamada makes to the Tsubouchi libretto, he adds a line previously intoned. I surmise he does this for dramatic emphasis, as historically in operatic texts the repetition of a line indicates an intensification of characters' emotions. For example, Yamada has the greedy old man repeat the line "Ah, riches" while he ponders what to wish for from the captured maiden. See the comparison of libretti texts in the handout.

Type 3 Change: Repeating words or phrases in "The Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden"



されど、されど……財貨も欲し。
あゝ、財貨！……

Above: Tsubouchi Type 3[46]

[46] Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 39.

Below: Yamada Type 3[47]

老翁「されど、されど……財貨も欲し。

あゝ、財貨！　あゝ、財貨！

Fourth and finally, in few situations, Yamada cuts a line completely. A rare example of this is the line he cuts delivered by the beautiful boy who steals away the feathered robe from both the old man and the celestial maiden. In Tsubouchi’s script, the boy interjects a line about acquiring the robe. Yamada eliminates it in order to maintain the flow of the duet. Instead, the boy’s actions remain present only in the stage directions.

Type 4 Change: Eliminate text completely in “The Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden”

Below: Tsubouchi Type 4[48]

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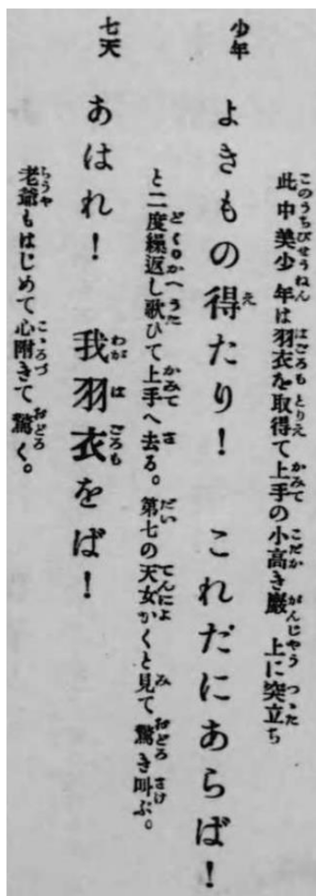
47 Yamada and Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 34.
48 Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 42.



此中美少年は羽衣を取得て上手の小高き巌上に突立ち

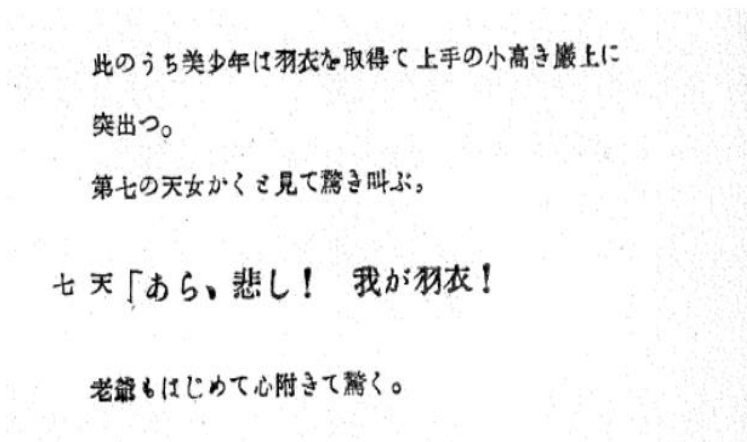
少年　よきもの得たり！　これだにあらば！

と二度繰返し歌ひて上手へ去る。第七の天女かくと見て驚き叫ぶ。

七天　あはれ！　我が羽衣をば！

老翁もはじめて心附きて驚く。

Below: Yamada Type 4[49]



此のうち美少年は羽衣を取得て上手の小高き巌上に

突出つ。

第七の天女かくと見て驚き叫ぶ。

七天「あら、悲し！　我が羽衣！

老翁もはじめて心附きて驚く。

In all, Yamada's adjustments to the Tsubouchi script were all in the service of the music; for him, like Wagner and Strauss, the words are not mistress to the music. Rather, he sought a greater

[49] Yamada and Tsubouchi, *Ochitaru Tennyo,* 34.

integration between music and text in which the tension between the two artistic forms provides greater dramatic potency.

If the changes Yamada made to the script seem minute, the music's effect on the words is jarring. As stated above, Tsubouchi's first attempt at a new music drama, *Shinkyoku Urashima,* utilized musical styles mainly drawn from kabuki and other local music forms. Yamada, as I have stated, opted for a Western-style symphonic setting of the text. Thus while the language has the flavor of traditional Japanese, the music is, at least for the time in early twentieth century, an utterly modern one. By drawing on the so-called grandfather (Wagner) and father (Strauss) of modern opera, Yamada imbues Tsubouchi's script with an aesthetic reflecting while also pressing against opera culture in the Taishō era.

The Taishō era, during which Yamada wrote the score, was still in many ways turned towards the West and to the modern art, culture, and technology that it could offer. Around this time, jazz and flapper fashions made their way to Japan, both native and foreign silent films flourished, and the freedoms of "Taishō Democracy" promised hope to an increasingly decadent contingent of artists and intellectuals. Western opera even flourished at this time too, alongside the movie theaters in the Asakusa district of Tokyo. While Asakusa opera, as it is known by, primarily featured light opera and operettas, some loftier works were much beloved by audiences. Most notable of this were Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Bizet's *Carmen*. Asakusa attracted rowdy young fans, who, like their Parisian brethren decades earlier, longed to meet chorus girls, cheer for their favorite stars, and in general have a rollicking good time.[50] Yamada's opera, on the other hand, offered a very different kind of fare. Here was a Japanese opera with the lofty aspirations of a Wagnerian music drama set to a native tale known to regular theatergoers. *Ochitaru Tennyo* was,

[50] Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo from Edo to Shōwa 1867-1989: The Emergence of the World's Greatest City* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2010). Ebook. No. 5076.

so to say, art rather than entertainment. An overview of the music for *Ochitaru Tennyo* and its 1929 premiere illustrates this assessment of Yamada's aspirations.

Yamada Kōsaku and Musical Hybridity

Throughout his career, Yamada faced the same challenge later non-Western composers of art music encountered; his music could not be easily categorized as either Japanese or as Western, thus causing consternation for Anglo-European-centric performers, audiences, and music scholars. This was of special concern for critics in the years prior to 1945, as outlined in great detail by David Pacun.[51] For some, Yamada was an authentic composer of *Japonism* style; for others, he was a modern art music composer. And for many critics both in the United States and Japan, Yamada's music was a bridge between two worlds.[52]

David Pacun observes that Yamada Kōsaku from early on in his career took a unique approach to composing. Pacun writes, "While Yamada drew upon common Romantic devices (short motives and well-placed harmonic effects) and well-established forms (Lied, piano miniature, and symphonic poem), he treated style idiosyncratically as a compositional device and deliberately contrasted styles within the same piece, a technique he later referred to as *taiihō* (stylistic counterpoint). As nascent examples of musical hybridity, these works grow from and directly reflect Japan's own early twentieth-century culture, with its remarkable play of traditional and modern, and Easter and Western forms."[53] *Taiihō,* or what I will call musical hybridity, especially characterizes *Ochitaru Tennyo. Ochitaru Tennyo* is an early work of Yamada's written during his so-called formative stage that speaks to Yamada's talent evident early on for identifying musical elements and techniques that he could incorporate into his own

[51] Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 67-94.
[52] Ibid., 73-5.
[53] Ibid., 68-9.

compositional palette. In the case of *Ochitaru Tennyo,* this is a unification of German Romantic music and traditional Japanese theater.

This much is clear by simply observing the manuscript score, which includes a title and cast of characters written in German. Moreover, much of the score includes performance instructions in German such as *Langsam, Sehr breit, Maessig, klagend, etwas eilend, Rasend, schwermuetig,* Overall, the music sounds straightforward but there are several hidden complications with unstable keys, rapid modulations, and metrical changes.

Overall Observations of Musical Hybridity Between German Romanticism and Traditional Japanese Music in *Ochitaru Tennyo*

The first number, "The Song of the Head Demon," establishes an eerie ambience. Its slow tempo and opening dissonant chords obfuscate the key and meter; as the vocal line enters, the meter and key become more apparent. In this the music acts as part of the mise-en-scène; it is as if musical mists are lifted from the mountain path, revealing the story about to be enacted. The large leap of first an octave and then down a sixth in the vocal line's opening gestures echoes Brunnhilde's famous entrance aria, "Hojotoho," from *Die Walküre*. Yet at other moments in the piece there are gestures to other Germanic music traditions, specifically four-part chorales reminiscent of Bach evident when the Demon chorus repeats the line "Ah kin no inabo" and at the number's conclusion, which features the four part chorus again and ends on a F major triad. The influence of Schubert Lieder is also plain in the piece, especially with the stanza "hi itzuurebawa ga yosemashi." The contour of the vocal line here is very similar to a portion of the famous Schubert song "Gretchen am Spinnrade" on the line "Ich finde, ich finde Sie nimmer und

nimmer mehr." Finally the setting of a demonic celebration on a mountain top alludes to the bastion of German Romanticism, Goethe and his poem "Die erste Walpurgisnacht."[54]

"The Song the Boy" is a peaceful tune, though it too features some modal mixing. Its opening chord implies E minor, but by the time the voice enters, the dominant D7 chord places us pretty clearly in the realm of G major, and Yamada alternates between G and its relative minor before transition to E major, though the tonal centers are murky. Interestingly, the vocal line in this number also begins with the opening gesture of an octave leap up. Although the song sounds in many ways like a straightforward Italian love aria, Yamada's music is remarkably complicated. The number is through-composed and lacks the typical recurring melodic hooks common to Italian opera. Yamada also changes meter quite a few times in the song; it begins in 9/8, and shifts through various metrical progressions: 3/4, 4/4, 3/4 , 4/4, 6/8, 7/8, 6/8, and concludes in 3/4. However, listening to the piece, the meter changes are very smooth; I imagine they are in service of setting the Japanese text. This piece shows the detail Yamada, even early in his career, put into setting the language to music. He could have easily kept the meter in 6/8 and marked specific bars as rubato, but instead chose to change the meter to the thorny 7/8.

"The Song of the Young Man" is equally complex. While the key signature is ostensibly A major, Yamada frequently includes non-harmonic tones, and at the Young Man's declaration that his impedes his love, the music lingers on a G dominant 7, then to G diminished 7. As he proceeds to sing about love, the music enters the stable and bright realm of A major. As his father approaches, the vocal line's successive attack activity appropriately increases. Yamada briefly modulates to F minor, to an unstable F major/D minor area, then A minor. The music takes on a more German Romantic quality, akin to the Wolf Glen Scene from Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, with the Demon Chorus echoing the Young Man's words. A creeping

[54] Ogino Shizuo kindly pointed this out to me.

oboe emphasizes a tritone from F to B while the strings punctuate its sustained note with a crunchy chord comprised of E, F, and A. The music here reinforces the young man's thoughts as he considers attacking his father.

"The Chorus of the Celestial Maidens" has a triumphant, dance-like lilt to it. The female voices singing together feels like something between the maidens' wreath song in *Der Freischütz* and the Rhine maidens of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Given that the characters are magical, pure beings, this kind of allusion makes perfect sense. It too prominently features octave leaps, though as conclusory rather than opening gestures.

The finale, "The Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden" is also noteworthy for its allusions to German Romanticism. When the maiden asks the man to return her robe for the first time, her vocal line descends by half steps from E to C#; a plaintive clarinet melody (D#-E-A-E-C) appears after her plea. The lush strings during the old man's portion and throughout the piece allude to *Tristan und Isolde*. The conclusion on a transparent B flat Major chord indicates a bittersweet happiness found in the fleeting love the old man feels for the maiden, who will soon die from her lack of wings.

Overall, Yamada Kōsaku's score for *Ochitaru Tennyo* makes references not only to Wagner, but to other earlier German Romantic traditions, as well as some French musical practices. For example, while the songs are through-composed, they are still discrete numbers. The play with modes and harmonic instability reflects not only a Wagnerian influence but also, more closely, the influence of Debussy. Yamada melds these various European styles while setting a text rooted in Japanese tradition.

Other operatic elements, such as set design and the choreography, also belie a German modern aesthetic mixed with a Japanese one. Yamada was familiar with the German

Expressionist movement, having been in Berlin at the moment of its birth and in the years following his return from Berlin, and he helped organize an exhibition of German Expressionist woodblock prints in Tokyo.[55] A clear line can be drawn from this knowledge to the set design for the premiere staging of *Ochitaru Tennyo.* His experience with modern dance, by this point fairly extensive, along with his understanding of the German repertoire enabled him to envision a production in 1929 that was fully thought out in terms of Japanese and German aesthetic hybridity. The fact that the opera brings together not only the artistic cultures of these two countries (primarily), but also combines singing, dancing, acting, musical accompaniment, and stage and set design belies a devotion to Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* that Tsubouchi himself had envisioned with this and his earlier new music drama libretti. The *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or total work of art is an idea Wagner espoused.

In addition to having conducted Wagner at numerous concerts by 1929, Yamada had also incorporated musical "Wagnerisms" in other works originating around the same time as *Ochitaru Tennyo.* For example, in 1917 *Cycle of Five Japanese Love Songs* (known in Japanese as *Chogetsu shu* or *Clear Moon Cycle*), Yamada includes musical allusions to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde.*[56] The song cycle was based on a collection of texts by Terasaki Etsuko. The chromatically-saturated second song opens with a reference to the *Liebestod* motif from *Tristan und Isolde.* It also features a Tristan chord, as Pacun points out in his article.[57] Pacun writes, "On a larger scale, style itself functions in the overall design as the modal and Wagnerian tensions of the early songs release into the impressionistic atmosphere of the last…"[58]

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[55] Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 70.
[56] Ibid., 81-2.
[57] Ibid, 82-3.
[58] Ibid, 82-3.

Given Yamada's compositional practices in his other works from around the same time, it makes perfect sense that the young composer incorporated elements from the works of Wagner and others of his ilk into his first opera. In sum, Yamada manages to meld these various European styles together in his works while remaining rooted in Japanese tradition. *Ochitaru Tennyo* provides an early instance at this practice, and thus reveals different ways the fusion failed and succeeded at its musico-dramatic aspirations.

Performance and Reception

As stated earlier, while Yamada had completed the music for *Ochitaru Tennyo* in 1913, the opera was not performed in its entirety until 1929. While Yamada was in Berlin, in addition to an affinity for Strauss and Wagner he also developed an admiration for Glinka and Weber, who had cultivated national opera in Russia and Germany respectively.[59] Yamada hoped to accomplish something similar with *Ochitaru Tennyo*. Initially, the opera was set to premiere in Berlin. Leopold Sachs, the showrunner for the Berlin Opera's summer season, offered to produce Yamada's work at his own theater in July of 1914. Yamada left for Japan soon after to acquire the necessary costumes and such. However, the outbreak of WWI prevented the production from taking place. In 1919, when Yamada was conducting a round of concerts at Carnegie Hall, Chicago Opera agreed to stage the opera. However, this contract too was broken.[60] As a result, it was not staged until Yamada was a much more seasoned composer and conductor.

On December 3rd, 1929 *Ochitaru Tennyo* premiered at the Kabukiza in Ginza, Tokyo. Its run was originally 20 days and was extended by three. The Kabukiza might seem a strange location for an opera, but for *Ochitaru Tennyo* it must have been ideal. The hybridic opera, with its allusions both to Western and Japanese music theater traditions, acquired an aura of prestige

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[59] Kurosu Satoshi, "Yamada Kōsaku to Nihon no Opera," liner notes to *Kosçak Yamada Works/Yamada Kōsaku no Isan,* Gekijoongakupen vol. 8, Nippon Columbia, 1996, 11.
[60] Ibid., 12.

from being staged alongside Kabuki theater, as opposed to the alternative option of staging it in Asakusa.[61] Through the *Hagoromo* story set to Western Romantic music Yamada hoped to win over Kabuki fans who were opera skeptics.[62]

Ochitaru Tennyo was performed everyday between the acts of the Kabuki show.[63] Unfortunately, the majority of the Kabukiza audience of course came to see the Kabuki play and only a few were interested in remained seated during intermission to watch Yamada's opera.[64] From the initial rehearsals, the performers faced many challenges. Yamada trained the singers for a month with piano/vocal score. Following that, Yamada rehearsed the orchestral score with his newly-founded orchestra. The show was not double cast, making the demands of daily shows especially challenging. Okuda Ryōzou, who played the part of the beautiful boy, had to carry an inhaler, and there were several costume malfunctions with the demons' tails. So despite the long run, the performers could never really settle into a comfortable groove.[65] The majority of the cast was young but dedicated performers fresh from their studies.

For example, Okuda Ryōzou, who, as I stated, played the role of the boy, had just returned from studying abroad in Europe, primarily Italy and Vienna.[66] *Ochitaru Tennyo* was the first time he performed in an opera, and wound up being the last as well. This is not to say he did not perform well; his bright eyes, baby face features, and gentle bel canto tenor suited the role perfectly. But as this was his first opera, he received several instructions and pointers about acting and body gestures from others and eventually got fed up.[67] Okuda sang Lieder as well, and thanks to his experience in *Ochitaru Tennyo,* added Japanese art songs to his repertoire. He went

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[61] Ibid., 12.
[62] Miyazawa Jūichi, "Ochitaru Tennyo no Omoide," liner notes to *Kosçak Yamada Works/Yamada Kōsaku no Isan,* Gekijoongakupen vol. 8, Nippon Columbia, 1996, 5.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 6.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

on to have a successful career in the music world serving as the president of Showa Music University and as president of Japan Italian Music Society. Despite his soft features, Okuda had a fair amount of grit; at 80, he added French art songs to his repertoire, and he continued to give yearly recitals up until his death at the age of 89.[68]

Seki Taneko, who starred as the seventh celestial maiden, faced some difficulties of a different sort. To begin with, in the libretto instructions the maidens bathe in the nude, and the seventh maiden, left without her robe, remains nude throughout the second scene. Of course, in 1929, to actually stage such a vision would have caused a scandal and quickly been shut down by the police. Nevertheless, according to Miyazawa it is not exactly clear how the production got around this issue. I imagine it took a bit of imagination on both the part of the producers and the audience. Seki, with her reputed good looks and beautiful soprano voice was an excellent coloratura. She had just graduated from Tokyo Music School in the summer of 1929. After *Ochitaru Tennyo*, she went on to have a full-fledged career in opera.[69] In the prewar era she performed in roles such as Michaela (*Carmen)*, Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Violetta (*La Traviata*). After the war, she added Mozart's Susannah (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) to her repertoire. She even sang in the Japanese premiere of Puccini's *Turandot.*[70]

Yotsuya Fumiko, who performed the role of the head demon, was the most determined of the three (she, Okuda, and Seki had become fast friends during the rehearsals).[71] She had from Tokyo Music School the previous year and was devoted to performing Japanese-language art songs.[72] At the time of *Ochitaru Tennyo*, few singers performed in Japanese. With Yamada, she studied techniques on how to sing in Japanese. She realized that if people heard songs, even

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 7.
[71] Ibid., 6.
[72] Ibid., 5.

foreign ones like Lieder, in their own language, the music would have a greater emotional impact. Thus she went on to make it her life's mission to promote Japanese language art song and today she is considered a pioneer in the field.[73]

Komori Yuzuru , the baritone who performed the role of the old man, was the brother of Yamada's best friend from his college years. Komori had studied at the Imperial Opera Theater. After *Ochitaru Tennyo*, he went on to study abroad in Paris and later joined the famed Fujiwara Opera Company. The role of the young man (the old man's lovesick son) was sung by Terui Eizou, but on the recording that remains today, Yamada sings the part. Terui was two classes ahead of Yamada at university and had won the prestigious Panzera prize. Sadly he passed away soon after the Second World War, in May of 1946.

A few documents remain detailing the opera's premiere run, though few offer critical assessment. The majority of documents remaining include promotional advertisements in newspapers as well as the Kabukiza poster. One article in the October 14, 1929 issue of the *Yomiuri Newspaper* reveals the names of the cast. A later issue towards the end of the run, from December 22, features a photograph of the seven (fully clothed) celestial maidens. The costuming is very traditional, and if we did not know the context one might guess the picture was for a traditional play performance.

[73] Ibid., 6.

Above: Image of the seven celestial maidens. *Yomiuri Shinbun,* 22 December 1929, Morning Edition, 10.

In 1996, Nippon Columbia released the 1929 and 1933 recordings on compact disc. Thanks to this, the public can easily access the recordings themselves as well as photographs of the production which were hitherto unavailable. The disc booklet also provides valuable essays by Japanese scholars on *Ochitaru Tennyo.*

Among the critical reception of the opera, a few reviews can be found in addition to Tsubouchi's own thoughts on the work. A review of the opera premiere appeared in a collection of essays called *Gakudan Zuisō* (Platform for Random Thoughts on Music) by music critic Nomura Kōichi (1895-1988) published in 1931.[74] Overall Nomura enjoyed the opera and thought the work a valuable one that sought to combine Japanese, German, and Italian music theater

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[74] Nomura Kōichi, *Gakudan Zuisō* (Tokyo: Victor Publishing, 1931),, 331.

traditions. However, he noted the primary problem with the work was the lack of dramatic tension. The climax fell short of his expectations. This critique makes one wonder if the opera might have worked better using a different text source, one that featured a fantastic celestial dance at the end, as is typical in the Noh version of the *Hagoromo*. Nomura suggests the lack of dramatic build up is a result of Yamada's experience as a composer of song rather than a composer for theater.[75] The choreography, costumes, and orchestra were all well done in his opinion. His other major complaint was about the inaudibility of the voices.[76] Part of this was due to the big stage of the Kabukiza; Nomura suggests a smaller venue. Despite these criticisms, he applauds Seki, Okuda, and Yotsuya for their performances. Komori, he wished, had a deeper voice. He identified Terui as the cast's most capable performer.[77]

A similar review appeared in a 1930-31 journal called *Ongaku Buyo nen Kagami* published by Tokyo university students in the music and dance club.[78] A Reinan University student concurs with Nomura that the Kabukiza was too large for the singers' voices. He also found the demons' dance to be too over the top. He found the orchestra to be superb, though he wished the flute solo had been brought out more. Based on these two reviews, limited as they are, we can postulate that the opera received a lukewarm reception. Indeed, to my knowledge it was not performed live again with orchestra until a 1995 production in Nagoya.

Translation Concerns

Why translate this opera instead of Yamada's more renowned work, *Kurofune,* from 1940, which features a Puccini-esque story of love between an American man and a Japanese woman.

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[75] Ibid., 331.
[76] Ibid., 332.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Anonymous, *Yearly Mirror on Music and Dance: Musicians' Free Diary*, Tokyo: Kōransha, 1931, 65-67.

First, I think that *Ochitaru Tennyo*, while not a rousing success, is fascinating precisely because of what it attempted, even if it fell short of its goals. Second, *Ochitaru Tennyo* is a more manageable work than *Kurofune.* It is shorter, and, as an early piece, and less fraught with complications regarding translation debates. Yet it is important to translate it and shed light on it in both Japan and the West. Sadly, in the West Yamada's music has long gone unknown and unperformed. Now, after of decades of discourse on post-modernism, nationalism, and post-colonialism in music, I believe the time is right to bring Yamada's music back to America, where it has gone little-performed since his tour to the country a hundred years ago. Thus I, along with my colleagues, translated the opera into English. The long-term goal of this project is to create an English-language libretto that will still convey Yamada's sense of text setting. There are many unanticipated challenges in taking on such a monumental task. First and foremost is the care and consideration Yamada put into his Japanese text settings.

As music scholar Noriko Manabe points out, there are a great number of difficulties Yamada faced in setting the Tsubouchi libretto. The Japanese language, she explains, "lacks stress accents, which mark strong beats and help define musical meter in Western music. Instead, it contains pitch accents, and the lyrics of songs can be misunderstood if the melody does not reflect them correctly."[79] While Yamada did not expound on his theories of music and text setting until after *Ochitaru Tennyo*, we can easily imagine that the early work represents in many ways a working out of his theories of music and language. Manabe relates, "On November 16, 1922, Yamada published his groundbreaking article, "Kayōkyoku sakkyoku-jou yori mitaru shi no akusento" (Textual Accents as Seen from the Composition of Song), in which he outlines his argument that composers should be mindful of Japanese-language pitch accents in setting

[79] Manabe, "Western Music in Japan," 243-4.

melodies."[80] In the essay, he says that "in his initial attempts to compose for Japanese texts, his melodies were not reflecting the nature of the Japanese language."[81] In addition to criticizing the text settings of other contemporary Japanese composers, Yamada outlines his own shortcomings in setting Miki Rōfū's "Furusato no" to music in 1913. Given that *Ochitaru Tennyo* was completed in 1914, one wonders if, by 1922, he felt the same about his one-act opera. Yamada focuses on pitch accent and melody, without, according to Manabe, "much consideration of the impact of rhythmic, metric, motivic, or harmonic effects…"[82] Keeping Yamada's emphasis on melody and pitch accent in mind, I have attempted to construct a performable English translation of "The Song of the Head Demon."

In his Grove Music Online article on translation, Arthur Jacobs outlines the thorny history of opera translations, and particularly the difficulty in translating operas into English.[83] Some of the greatest issues concern accents and the fact that few English words end in vowel sounds. Yet, like the poet and music scholar WH Auden, I believe that the music and words must reinforce each other while allowing for a certain flexibility. Jacobs cites Auden and his collaborator Chester Kallman:

> The goal of the translator, however unattainable, must be to make audiences believe that the words they are hearing are the words which the composer actually set, which means that a too-literal translation of the original text may sometimes prove a falsification … In doing an aria, for example, it is often better, once he has grasped its emotional mood and general tenor, to put the actual words out of his mind and concentrate upon writing as good an English lyric as possible.[84]

I agree.

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[80] Ibid., 255.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 269.
[83] Arthur Jacobs, "Translation." *Grove Music Online.* 2002. Accessed June 13, 2019.
[84] Ibid.

The primary goal of this translation is a synthesis between the music and the poetry evident in the original text. Second, I wanted to preserve the original meaning of the words as closely as possible. Third, I focus on rhythmic accents of words. Finally, I tried to maintain the flavor of the original text in the translated English. There are two general types of translations, literal and poetic. These differences are apparent in Table 1 below.

Translation Concerns: Original Text, Literal Translation, and Poetic Translation

Table 1

Original Japanese	**Literal English Translation**	**Poetic English Translation**
ああ、このいただきに	**Head Demon:** Ah, on this mountain top	**Head Demon:** Ah, upon this mountain top
そこしらぬふちなすいづみ	There is a pure spring with a bottomless abyss	There flows a pure and bottomless spring
あまつめらわがものとす	belonging to the celestial maidens,	Goddesses bathe, they bathe there
つきまろくひかるよごと	On nights when the full moon shines.	On nights when the round moon shines
ああ、ぎんのいづみ	Ah, the pure silver spring!	Ah, the pure silver spring
ああ、ぎんのいづみ	**Chorus of Demons:** Ah, the pure silver spring!!	**Chorus of Demons:** Ah, the silver spring

ああ、このやまもとに	**Head Demon:** Ah, at the foot of this mountain	**Head Demon:** Ah, at the base of the mountain
はてしらぬなみうついなぼ	The waving ears of rice go on without end,	Grow waving fields of rice without end
ひとのこらわがものとす	Belonging to the children of men,	Belonging to children, children of men
としどしにふえはびこり	Over the years they increase and thrive	As years pass by, they grow, they thrive
ああ、きんのいなぼ	Ah, the golden ears of rice!	Ah, the golden fields of rice
ああ、きんのいなぼ	**Chorus of Demons:** Ah, the golden ears of rice!!	**Chorus of Demons:** Ah, the golden fields of rice
そらたかくうみとほきも	**Head Demon:** The sky is high, the sea distant,	**Head Demon:** Skies so high, oceans so far
ひいづればわがよせまし	Our world shrinks when the sun rises.	Sunrise and our world dwindles
ひいづればわがよせまし	Our world shrinks when the sun rises.	Sunrise and our world dwindles

まへよをどれよ	Dance around, dance	Dance ‘round, dance
よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 よるぞいまは、 あわがよ	**Chorus of Demons:** Now it is night, ah, the world is ours!	**Chorus of Demons:** While it’s still night While it’s still night While it’s still night While it’s still night While it is night Night, night Now is night Night is our realm

From the literal translation, which would be suitable for supertitles, I sought to generate a poetic translation that could be appropriately set to the music. It is also worth noting that the musical realization of this number slightly diverges from the libretto text, in that Yamada layers and repeats the number’s final lines. You can observe the full setting with music and English text in the appendix to this article.

Some of the discrepancies between the literal and the poetic translation have to do with the vocal melody and its implied inflections. Other changes made are from my desire to incorporate elements of word painting into the number. For example, I decided to set “bottomless” to a rising gesture in the vocal line. Likewise the line “without end” concludes on a note of considerable duration comparatively speaking. And of course, on the line “skies so high” the word high occurs on the highest note in the phrase, the E above middle C. At other moments, I

sought to achieve a sense of alliteration common to opera. This can be detected in the aforementioned line “without end” and the conclusion of the next line “children of men.” Another example of this alliteration is the line “As years pass by, they grow, the thrive.”

Other decisions are doubtless the result of my own peccadillos and experiences with English-language opera, which has primarily been through the viewing of modern works by Benjamin Britten and John Adams. You will notice some words I have changed, such as “full” to “round” and the major change of “celestial maiden” to “goddess.” This latter decision is one I am still pondering. Ogino Shizuo and I had many discussions on translating the term *tennyo*; some possibilities we discussed were “angel,” “celestial maiden,” “heavenly maiden,” and “celestial nymph.” While I believe “celestial maiden” is the most accurate translation, in English it lacks the flow that the simpler terms such as “angel” and “goddess” possess. This is another issue I will be thinking deeply about as I proceed with the work of translating the entire opera.

While there are several drawbacks to translating the text into English (as there is no such thing as a perfect translation), I believe that it might be necessary initially to make Yamada’s music and Tsubouchi’s lyrics more easily accessible to non-Japanese audiences. Once a kind of understanding and acknowledgement of especially the composer’s accomplishment is achieved, I am sure audiences will be interested to hear it performed in its original language. Indeed, there is a long history of opera in translation in popular culture throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. As Arthur Jacobs relates in his Grove Article on translation, the most popular operas by Mozart, Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Verdi were translated and performed in multiple languages; indeed such vernacular performances were a sign of global success.[85] Wagner himself even translated his own libretto of *Tannhäuser* for the Parisian stage. It is only

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[85] Arthur Jacobs,“Translation.” *Grove Music Online.* 17 July 2018. http:////www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000003143.

relatively recently that the demand for opera performances in the original language rather than the vernacular has taken root. Moreover, historically opera in Japan was performed in translation; among these included prestigious works like Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and even Wagner's *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser.* Thus, while I acknowledge the damage an English translation enacts on Yamada's text setting, I believe that for now the translation is in service of the greater good of spreading Yamada's music beyond Japan's borders.

Conclusion

Throughout his career, Yamada encountered challenges to his music that did not fit Western notions of "Japanese-ness." He even described his chagrin at this experience during his American tour, writing:

> "One day I was asked by a famous composer…why I do not write Japanese music. Before venturing a reply, I asked him his nationality. He replied, "a Swiss." I then asked him if he wrote Swiss music. To that there was no reply. But this question has often been asked me during my sojourn in this country."[86]

Yamada's retort sheds some light on how he considered his music within the broader world of *yōgaku*. His compositions are neither Japanese nor European. Instead, they are his, and they are of their time. Yamada's hybridic approach influenced Japanese composers directly and indirectly; it established a foundation of style that can be identified in everything from the works of not only Takemitsu Tōru, but also Ifukube Akira, Hayasaka Fumio, and even later composers like Joe Hisaishi, Kanno Yōko, Sakamoto Ryuichi, and Uematsu Nobuo. All these artists' work can be characterized by the kind of "stylistic counterpoint" practiced and honed by Yamada. His obvious import to Japanese classical music is one that has gone unrecognized in the West. By analyzing and translating this early work into English for future performance, I hope to spur

[86] Cited in Pacun, "Thus We Cultivate," 86.

interest abroad in Yamada and his significant contributions not only to the Japanese music world, but the classical world writ large.

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Yamada Kōsaku. 堕ちたる天女�congratulations

***Ochitaru Tennyo* (*The Fallen Celestial Maiden*)**
translated by Ogino Shizuo and Brooke McCorkle

Scene 1:

Halfway up a mountain

All around is in complete darkness.
When the curtain rises, there are fairies doing a bizarre, grotesque dance.
The fairies curse all things beautiful.
When the mysterious sound of a flute can be heard, the clouds break and the moon comes out.
The fairies flee and depart in surprise.

A boy who has traveled many lands searching for the beautiful land (美国) plays a flute while he climbs the mountain. The boy aims to climb to the top of the mountain, hoping to catch a glimpse of the celestial maidens bathing without their knowing.
From four directions the fairies draw near, surprisingly coinciding with the mysterious power of the sound of the flute.

But at this same time, he (the boy) realizes someone else is coming up the mountain and he quickly hides.

A young man, greenish-blue in the face, quickly climbs up the mountain.

The young man laments his obstinate father. If, on this night, he is able to see the figures of the celestial maidens bathing on the mountain top without their knowing, he will attain his desire for love, which seems to burn within him.

All of a sudden, the young man looks down to the foot of the mountain and realizes his father is also coming up the mountain. He resolves to kill his own father.

He hides in the shadow of the trees and waits for his father to come.

The old man, burning with greed for gold, ascends, looking intensely as if hunting for something.

He knows his son has passed through here before him and he is enraged that his son might obstruct his own wish.

The young man secretly sneaks up behind his father. In his hand, he holds a thick tree branch.

The moon is hidden by clouds.

The young man attacks his father from below with murderous intent.

The father perceives this and the two meet in battle.

The fairies step out of the darkness and into the light, encircling the two, singing jeers and dancing madly.
The father takes the branch from the young man's hands by force. The branch breaks and his son falls into a deep ravine. The father stumbles to the ground.

He is distressed by the guilt of having unexpectedly murdered his son, yet, with the power of the greed that brought him to this point, he climbs toward the mountain top as if insane.

Scene 2:

It slowly becomes brighter.
The moon shines beautifully on this night.

We begin to be able to see the top of the mountain.

Presently, the seven celestial maidens that descended from heaven surround the peak's eternal spring. Amidst the golden crags, they quietly and nobly sing and dance.
The celestial maidens hang their feathered robes on the boulders. Naked, the scamper from the boulder and enter the spring.

The celestial maidens are truly enjoying themselves, singing while swimming. All of a sudden, they can hear the mysterious sound of the flute.

The celestial maidens strain their ears and listen intently to it. In particular, the seventh maiden forgets herself, having fallen in love with the sound.

At that moment, the celestial maidens are greatly excited, seeming to recognize what the sound is. They take their feathered robes hanging on the rocks and quickly depart. They tell the seventh maiden that an ugly old man approaches. With that, they continue to fly away. However, the seventh maiden just keeps listening, lost in the sound of the flute.

The old man is greatly elated and makes merry at having seen a celestial maiden. The old man discovers the feathered robe on the boulder and secretly snatches it.

The sound of the flute cuts off.

Up to this moment, the seventh maiden has been like a marble statue, not even quivering. (When the flute stops) she suddenly rises and stands on the mountain top. The naked celestial maiden stands on the peak and implores the old man to return the robe to her.

The old man is so struck by the celestial maiden's beauty that he is like a stone statue. Cowering and silent, he just stares at her figure. The seventh celestial maiden begs him to return the feathered robe to her. He replies that he wants his own wish granted first. The celestial maiden relates that first he must return the feathered robe. Upon doing so, his wish will be granted.

The old man wonders what to wish for and is now indecisive.

The old man considers his youth and love. He also thinks of his own son, who died for love. Heartrending remorse and pity brim within him. He wants to bring his only son back to life. But apart from that, he also desires gold.

While he is lost (in indecision), the boy from the previous scene steals the feathered robe from the old man's hand. He shrieks with grief as if his heart has been torn from his chest. At the loss, the old man becomes crazed and extremely distraught.

It is all too late.

The seventh celestial maiden falls to the ground in shock; she is in the mad throes of death.

At this moment, once again the mysterious sound of the flute can be heard. She stands up and for the first time her body looks like that of an earth-dweller. Moreover, she seems resolved to something (her plight).

The disappointed old man and the seventh celestial maiden hang their heads and hand in had quietly climb down the mountain.

Song of the Head Fairy

Head Fairy:

Ah, on this mountain top
There is a pure fountain with a bottomless abyss belonging to the celestial maiden,
On nights when the full moon shines.
Ah, the pure silver spring!

Chorus of Fairies:

Ah, the pure silver spring!!

Head Fairy:

Ah, at the foot of this mountain
The waving ears of rice go on without end,
Belonging to the children of men,
Over the years they increase and thrive
Ah, the golden ears of rice!

Chorus of Fairies:

Ah, the golden ears of rice!!

Head Fairy:

The sky is high, the sea distant,
Our world shrinks when the sun rises.
Our world shrinks when the sun rises.
Dance around, dance, while it is still night
Dance around, dance, while it is still night

Chorus of Fairies:
Now it is night, ah, our world!

Song of the Boy

Boy:

How mysterious, mysterious, at the sound of my flute,
Clouds break, the moon appears, it is very light here,
Indeed this mountain is strange!

(He looks around in four directions)

Since I wandered here,
Not a day goes by that I do not long for Kyoto.
I hear that on this mountain's summit,
There is a pure spring that is an eternal abyss,
And at night, in the shadow of the clear moonlight,
Celestial maidens descend to bathe,
If one is able to see,
their figure unnoticed
They will grant one wish, but with it a curse

(He looks at one end of the heavens, longing for something)

Ah, still the vision does not fade,
My nostalgic dream of Kyoto!
Lost in yearning I ascend,
Mysterious! The mood hides, the way is dark.
I must sit upon that crag, and blow my flute
How strange, I do not know why the moon appears, I can see the surroundings.
I can see the surroundings.

(He looks up)

This is the very summit! I am yearning to climb it.

(The boy takes the path up to the summit slowly, forcefully blowing his flute. He climbs to the mountain's summit, the sound of his flute dying away little by little)

Song of the Young Man

Young Man:

Oh joy! Without anyone knowing
On this night I came here climbing.
But my father, No, he himself is my sworn enemy,
His icy soul is full of greedy desire!
He is so malicious and impedes my love.

Ah, love! That sweet wine!
What to live for if not love? Ah my love, ah my love!
If I see the celestial maiden, that love shall be attained
I yearn to go and very soon see the maidens.

(Without aim he looks down at the bottom and gestures with surprise)

My father, my father, my father himself has come
What shall I do? If his eyes should capture me, even if I glimpse the maiden all is futile.

Ah, the sworn enemy of my love!

(The former ghostly music sounds again; the fairies spring forth from everywhere and sing in a chorus jumping around and behind the young man)

Fairy Chorus:

Indeed, indeed, the sworn enemy of his love!

Young Man:

Alas! On this night as well
he impedes my love.
Ah! My father? No he is my rival! Ah!

Fairy Chorus:

Indeed, indeed, not your father but your rival!

(The young man pretends to be in deep anguish)

Young Man:

Ah, ah, what shall I do?
If his eyes should capture me, even if I glimpse the maiden all is futile.
Ah, the sworn enemy of my love!

(The group of fairies spring around)

Fairy Chorus:

Look, look the sworn enemy of your love!

(The young man looks around him)

Young Man:

There is no one here, so if I secretly kill him…

(The fairies dance madly)

Fairy Chorus:

There is no one here, secretly kill him!! Ah!

(The melody of the music becomes bloodthirsty. The young man hides behind the trees with murderous intent. The fairies hide separately above and below him.)

Song of the Old Man and the Celestial Maiden

(Up to this point, the Seventh Celestial Maiden has not moved a bit, as if she was a naked a figure chiseled from stone. She rests in the midst of the shadow of a boulder, her back to the front, her upper half turned to face forward. When she hears the sound of the flute, she is enraptured. At this time, she finally raises her drooping head and sings alone)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

What a pity! Till now was I drunk,
My soul has left the clouds, and has even left the earth.
Human, heaven, earth, now fused together!
Alas, alas, the sound of that flute! The sound of that flute!

(The sound of the flute suddenly ceases, but the chirping melody of insects sounds loudly. The Old Man eyes the Robe of Feathers (*hagoromo*) suspiciously. He turns it over and over again. He is delighted, and with a broad smile he sings alone)

Old Man:

Happiness! Happiness! I saw the celestial maiden
Happiness! Happiness! I took her Robe of Feathers.
It will be fulfilled certainly, my wish
Happiness! Happiness! Swiftly, to home.

(With this, he climbs down towards the foot of the mountain. Celestial music is faintly audible in the distance, and from far above the six celestial maidens' voices sing)

Chorus:

Alas! How mean he was to have stolen the Robe of Feathers!!

(At this point the Seventh Celestial Maiden notices that he has taken her robe and rises, astonished)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Alas, misery, my Robe of Feathers
Stolen away! Stolen away!

Chorus:

Alas, how mean he was to have stolen the Robe of Feathers!!

(The Seventh Celestial Maiden stands on the mountain top and turns to the audience. She is not the least bit abashed by her naked body)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Alas, misery, without my Robe of Feathers
Oh, return to me the Robe of Feathers

(The Old Man sees the solemn figure of the seventh maiden and seems to forget himself. For a moment he is speechless. During this time, the celestial music faintly sounds)

Old Man:

Ah! ……
How dazzled I am by her splendid beauty
Her eyes shining like the stars, her beautiful skin like pearls
Until this day I did not know, the power of beauty,
I am so attracted to her

(He drops the Robe of Feathers and takes two or three steps in the Celestial Maiden's direction, drawing closer to her, as if he were attracted by a magnet)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Oh, return to me, that Robe of Feathers

(The Old Man remains in a trance, having fallen in love at the sight of the Celestial Maiden)

Old Man:

Until today, I did not know, the power of beauty.
Is this love!? Youth drove him mad
Ah, my child! The slave of love.
Ah, my child, no longer in this world!

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Oh, return to me, that Robe of Feathers!

(The Old Man pretends to have finally regained awareness)

Old Man:

No, no…
At my age, I feel a burning desire for you that I wish to fulfill!
This Robe of Feathers is my guarantee.
As long as my wish is unfulfilled, it shall not be returned.

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Very well, I shall grant this wish.
First, return the Robe of Feathers.

Old Man:

You are lying in order to flee

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

How despicable, this doubt!
A lie is common in the human world, but in the world of heaven never has it been.

Old Man:

Then first show me a miraculous sign

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Speak! Tell me that which you desire

(Hearing this the Old Man pretends to be unable to decide what to do)

Old Man:

Ah, that wish...that wish!
Just one wish will be granted!

(The Celestial Maiden nods)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Only one wish shall be granted!

(The Old Man continues pretending to be indecisive)

Old Man:

Ah!
I who have wanted only riches
I, who today know beauty and want more.
I am longing to see you in the spring and in the next spring.
There is no greater human joy than love…
Ah, the slave of love, my dead child

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Speak now that which you desire.

(The Old Man continues to pretend to be indecisive)

Old Man:

Even so, even so...I desire riches.
Ah, riches! Ah, riches!
With that I have the power to buy anything!
Even a name, glory, friends, the world!
Ah, riches, the source of power!

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Speak now, that which you desire

Old Man:

I am longing to see you in the spring and in the next spring
There is no greater human joy than spring

A light heart, beautiful arms and legs
Everything seen and heard is new
Forget all worries, fear nothing
Intoxicated with love and dream all day

(At this moment, the Beautiful Boy of the former act appears unnoticed. He peeps at them through a space between some rocks on stage right. With a long withered branch he tries to rake in the Robe of Feathers the Old Man dropped)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Speak now, that which you desire

(The Old Man still pretends to be indecisive)

Old Man:

Ah, blood of mine, my child that I brought into this world!
My own child I killed by wrong-doing
Ah, if only he had lived, even if I myself were dead
I, poor creature, without the most valuable treasure
Even so, even so…I desire riches!
Ah, riches! Ah, riches!

(Meanwhile, the Beautiful Boy takes the Robe of Feathers and hangs it on the top of a slightly elevated crag on stage right. The Seventh Celestial Maiden watches this and cries out in surprise)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Alas, sadness! My Robe of Feathers!

(The Old Man finally notices this and is astonished)

Old Man:

Alas, how regrettable! I could have won it!

(The Celestial Maiden falls to the ground, rolling around, weeping bitterly)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

What a pity! What a pity! Without my wings
Without my wings I cannot fly in the sky
I am not human and I cannot remain long here on earth.

Chorus:

Ah, how base the end of your existence is!!!

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Ah, how base the end of my existence is!!!

(In midair from stage right in back, the voices of the six celestial maidens can be heard; meanwhile, the Old Man ponders the situation)
Old Man:

I will coax her into coming home with me
In exchange for this Robe that was stolen

Chorus:

Ah, how base the end of your existence is!

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Ah, how base the end of my existence is!!!

(The Old Man comes beside her and kindly comforts the Celestial Maiden)

Old Man:

Let us descend from this mountaintop and go to the village together

(The Celestial Maiden does not heed this suggestion. She looks up at heaven and falls to the ground, rolling around as if in agony)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Oh, sadness! Until yesterday

With my eyes, I could have seen great distances of a thousand leagues
But now I cannot even see my own eyelashes.
No longer do I have the wings to go between earth and heaven
Because I am not earthborn child, but a child of heaven
I am inferior to humans
What a pity, I am equal to nothing
Both my heart and my body are under the control of the people of the world.

Old Man:

Let us descend from this mountaintop and go to the village together

(The Celestial Maiden stands up reluctantly. She takes the old man's hand and they depart on stage left)

Seventh Celestial Maiden:

Ah, sadness! How base I am!

(She descends singing and lamenting)

Colloquy Conclusory Observations

Ogino's work on *Yūzuru,* its source material, and its resonances with Wagnerism highlights the ways the earlier work by Yamada and Tsubouchi influenced a generation of modern Japanese musical theater. For example, Kinoshita, having studied Shakespeare, could not help but have been aware of Tsubouchi's pioneering translations and aesthetic approach. Likewise, Dan learned much about composition from his teacher, Yamada.

Moreover, while McCorkle identifies shared ground between Japanese opera and German opera, particularly Wagnerian opera, in terms of music, Ogino illuminates the connection between the two in terms of shared dramatic techniques such as animal-human transformations and the idea of the prohibited gaze. In both Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Dan and Kinoshita's *Yūzuru,*

the implications are similar; the desire for knowledge leads to the undoing of both Elsa and Yohyō.

In terms of composition, both Yamada in setting *Datennyo* and Kinoshita in his literary translations of Shakespeare were both very conscious of language and its peculiarities. Dan, too, must have encountered similar challenges in setting Kinoshita's words to music. Similarly, our own study group grappled with these very issues in our own translation work.