

The image features a dark, textured background. In the top right corner, there is a roll of white paper or tape, partially unrolled, showing some faint markings. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark, abstract, brush-like shape. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**ART
N.A.M.E.
GALLERY
BOOK 2**

PART II

Edited by Michiko Itatani

ARTISTS' WRITINGS

For my section of this book I asked ten artists to do writing pieces. It seemed to me that their attitude toward art, especially in relation to living, has something in common with mine. For me, to be an artist is an intellectual choice and a carefully chosen commitment. There is no intoxication.

This grouping is strictly from my side. Therefore, I take all the responsibility for this temporary gathering. I want to express my gratitude to the artists for their trust. I should also like to thank Victor Cassidy whose counsel on my translation (Satoh Boku by Kageyama Riyo) has been of inestimable value.

November 1, 1979

Michiko Itatani

SATOH BOKU

Kageyama Riyo

*This paper is a brief introduction to Satoh Boku(*1), an artist with whom I have become more and more fascinated while working as a staff member of the Anahara Research Group at Kobejo Gakuin University(*2). Interest in Boku has grown steadily over the past 15 years with the posthumous discovery, publication, and performance of his notebooks and scores. As Boku's ideas become more widely known, they will doubtless help musicians and other creative artists to clarify contemporary problems in esthetics.*

I

Satoh Boku was born in 1905 as the only son of the Noh Master Kyuma, the founder of Satoh Noh. Since Boku spent most of his life as a performer in the Noh theater, some understanding of the Noh theater's history, form and tradition is prerequisite to an appreciation of his philosophy and accomplishments.

In Japan, the traditional arts have been handed down and developed in master/disciple relationship. The Noh theater(*3), consisting of Utai (music) and Shimai (dance/performance) is one of the most firmly established master/disciple art systems in

*1 Japanese names are given in the Japanese order: that is, the surname precedes the personal name.

*2 Hyogo, Japan

*3 Noh theater presents the reality of human existence in a pure and abstract form. All aspects of the drama are severely simplified and refined to the highest possible degree, resulting in a single strongly concentrated effect. Noh can be performed with as few as two actors (SHITE and WAKI, see *8). The complete concentration of the SHITE role is the main characteristic of Noh theater. The WAKI exists for the purpose of calling the SHITE to the stage, questioning him, and providing an incentive for him to perform. Noh music consists of voices (actors and chorus), woodwind (flute) and percussion (drums). The Noh stage is undecorated and simple to the point of austerity, but the costumes, especially those of the SHITE are extremely decorative. Simple symbolic stage props (TSUKURIMONO) are used

existence today. Stemming from various performances of religious and secular origin, Noh theater gradually evolved through the efforts of many generations of performers. In the 14th century the Noh theater reached a high and stable level under the influence of the genius of two men, a father and his son. These were Kanami and Zeami of the Kitayama Bunka period(*4). FUSHIKADEN, their written esthetics, was guarded and read in secret by Noh masters for hundreds of years and did not become public until the 20th century.

Noh continued to mature to near perfection through the Edo era(*5) under the intimate association with the Shogunate government. FUSHIKADEN, which advocates rigid spiritual discipline and physical practice, has been followed through these years into the present with little change. In fact, change of any kind has been rigorously opposed as unnecessary and undesirable. (Kyuma's Satoh Noh is a recent rare exception.) Kanami's/Zeami's concept of HANA (*6) and the world of YUGEN(*7), as expressed in FUSHIKADEN, form the basis of all Noh esthetics today.

As the son of Kyuma, Boku began his training of Noh when he was six (as is instructed in FUSHIKADEN) and assumed the important position as SHITE (*8) in the theater before he was twenty years old. However, he also had interests and talents in other fields. He was strongly attracted to Western music theory and decided to study composition at the former Ueno Music University(*9). He became involved very deeply in composition and when he finished school, he abandoned Noh theater and devoted his full time to composing.

During and after his years at the university, Boku had many musician, writer, and artist friends. Members of his circle met regularly to talk about their work. According to Itoh Kiyoko, a writer who participated in these discussions, Boku liked to talk theory and welcomed the challenge of new ideas and knowledge. Boku's musical compositions during that time won the admiration of his colleagues such as Mayuzumi. Mayuzumi even stated that Boku's work was the beginning of the revolutionary change in musical concepts in Japan after World War II.

Soon after the war ended, Boku suddenly stopped all composition, returned to Noh, and devoted the rest of his life to it. He acted regularly and trained many Noh artists. Unlike his father who had been an innovator, Boku took a rather conservative and traditional attitude toward Noh. Some critics gave Boku greater credit than his father for his noble and deliberate performance:

When Boku died in 1964, he left a large number of notebooks and scores. Among these were the manuscripts of

which are constructed for each performance and then destroyed. Until recently, most performances were presented outdoors. Modern Noh theaters are built with the stage and the seats for the audience under the same roof, but, an artificial roof over the stage and white gravel separating the audience from the performance are still there in keeping with the tradition of Noh. Evening performances by the light of bonfires or candles in Shrine gardens are still held today.

*4 14th - 15th century The Kitayama Bunka is represented by Noh theater and Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion). Art flourished with the support and understanding of culturally sophisticated Shogunates: Yoshimitsu and Yoshimochi.

*5 17 - 19th century under Tokugawa Shogunates. Most peaceful period of national seclusion in Japanese history.

*6 esthetic term

*7 esthetic term

*8 the principal actor, who is usually masked. His ritual of receiving the mask after he is completely costumed, is said literally transform him into the character he is to portray. The mask, paradoxically, is both a barrier and vehicle to the actor's expression of his role. The actors have an almost worshipful respect in the presence of a mask. Traditionally, the Noh actor is trained as either a SHITE or WAKI (secondary actor) and he spends his life acting this role only.

*9 Tokyo, Japan



ICHIGO ICHIE, a vocal, instrumental, and dramatic work, and ZABOROKU, a book of esthetic investigations. (*10)

*10 Also, it is said that several very popular songs were composed by young Boku. These are still loved by people of all ages. Boku's daughter, Fumiko, a painter, remembered that Boku jokingly denied this rumor.

II

In 1967, Tanaka Umesuke (*11) and Mayuzumi Toshiro (*12) produced the first performance of ICHIGO ICHIE. They had arranged a version of this work from Boku's extant scores. The piece was not completed at the time of Boku's death. There are over a hundred different parts in the score for various instruments and voices. Every part has its independent development, and the music, as a whole, is complex and almost chaotic.

*11 a musician, Osaka Philharmonic, professor in Osaka Music University

*12 a composer

The Tanaka/Mayuzumi interpretation has played an introductory role to Boku's work. However, their production was later criticized severely by music critics for its oversimplification. This criticism came about after additional notes and manuscript materials of ICHIGO ICHIE were discovered.

To all appearances, ICHIGO ICHIE was a strictly personal work that was never intended for public performance. Many parts are beyond the human capacity to perform ordinarily, (for example, the eleven and twelve finger sections) and there is no record that Boku ever sought to have this work produced during his lifetime.

Boku's career as a musician and composer, which cannot be called successful in the ordinary sense, has come to symbolize the fate of the serious and courageous artist in the modern world. Though some of Boku's contemporaries have said that Boku lacked the passion to develop his talent in modern music, it was not for want of passion that Boku abandoned music to return to the Noh theater. His passion became the servant of his solitary intellect. It was perhaps more courageous for Boku to pursue his work alone rather than to seek the public support he could undoubtedly have received.

III

In 1973, ZABOROKU, a volume combining selections from Boku's notebooks and scores with biographical materials, was published by his widow Akiko and his disciple Honjo Ei. The book began to attract unusual attention from Japanese intellectuals, in particular the young. (It is as if the postwar generation, which has been brought up in the rush of material prosperity, has at last begun to satisfy a spiritual and mental



hunger.) Since the time of ZABOROKU's appearance, Boku's influence has grown. ICHIGO ICHIE has been rearranged and reperformed. Novels based on Boku's life have appeared(*13).

Only a small portion of Boku's manuscripts and notes were published in ZABOROKU. Most of the total (original) ZABOROKU consists of research into Japanese esthetic concepts.(*14) Boku started this work while he was a student under the guidance of Dr. Sasaki Minoru, and after Sasaki's death Boku continued it privately throughout his life. He was inspired by THE STRUCTURE OF IKI by Kuki Shuzo and agreed with Kuki that esthetic concepts can be investigated and analyzed effectively within language structure (syntax and semantics). He was interested in the cultural value systems which so strongly influence the minds and lives of people and he believed that the key to these systems was to be found in language. Each esthetic term (for example, WABI, SABI, AWAKE, MAKOTO, HADE, JIMI, IKI, YUGEN, etc.) has its own sphere which overlaps and interacts with the spheres of other terms while simultaneously maintaining its own independence (diagram 1). Boku started with Kuki's diagrammatic system (diagram 2) which visually demonstrates the relationship between eight basic terms in Japanese esthetics. He analyzed these words diachronically and synchronically, expanding Kuki's original diagram by adding terms. His studies took him into word definition, historical origin, change of meaning, and word relationships. He provided many detailed examples which employed visual, aural, literary, and anthropological materials. He was not satisfied with the linear art history of each discipline nor with Japanese academic esthetic theory. He wanted to find the living (but hidden) structure of the Japanese esthetic value system which goes back more than 2,000 years.

Boku exemplified the modern creative artist who struggles for a sense of direction both in life and in art. The role of the modern artist has been brought into question by political and social changes and by the development of new information systems. The relationship between the creative artist and his audience is constantly changing; both parties are caught up in the dilemma over the value of tradition and the value of change.

In ZABOROKU, there are long passages of dialogue concerning the uncertainty of criteria in art. This dialogue takes the form of debate in which Boku seems to be in the middle. While he desperately wanted universal rules for art and searched for them, Boku admitted that there are many different and valid value systems. He concluded that each individual must find his own system and work within it.

In ICHIGO ICHIE, Boku revealed his belief in the dialectical universe and his capacity to work logically within his own value

*13 Yamato-ji: Hori Shuji
Shimai: Honda Ayako

*14 esthetics in a broad sense, including philosophy, thinking patterns, life style, ethical values etc.

diagram *1

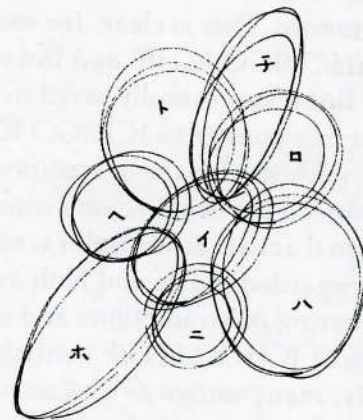
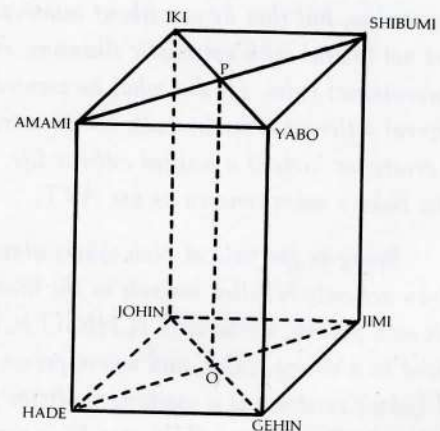


diagram *2



system. Using his study of Japanese esthetic terms as source material, he systematically tried to include all of his ideas in a single piece. Boku detached ICHIGO ICHIE from his audience completely and deliberately in order to avoid unnecessary confusion with other (the audience's, the critics') value systems. However, he related his work to the larger world by connecting the sphere of ICHIGO ICHIE to other more established spheres represented by Japanese esthetic terms (YUGEN, SABI, AWARE etc.). ICHIGO ICHIE was Boku's private universe. It was a model of his existence.

IV

Boku seemed to find the answer to the philosophical question of life and art in the balance of his several commitments. This is clear, for example, in the correlation between ICHIGO ICHIE and Boku's career as a Noh actor. Even though Boku successfully acted in the Noh theater, he devoted considerable energy to ICHIGO ICHIE. This brought him into conflict with the Japanese tradition which holds that only singleminded devotion to one concern can produce an exceptional artist. Since Boku was willing to violate tradition, he clearly regarded music and Noh as equally important. Rather than creating contradictions and conflicts within Boku, the creation of ICHIGO ICHIE contributed to his Noh performance. Actually, many critics as well as his father, Kyuma, who gave Boku a difficult time at his return to Satoh Noh theater, noticed a definite positive breakthrough in Boku's Noh performance after his return from his overt composing activities.

What strikes me about Boku personally is his soberness, not that he is passionless, but that he is without intoxication. He decided to be self-contained and not to deal with optimistic illusions, expectations from outside, or conventional rules. He did what he wanted without fear of unaccomplishment. Several different commitments, which were chosen so carefully, enabled Boku to create for himself a unified esthetic life. I believe this unified esthetic life was Boku's main concern as his ART.

Being in the field of Noh where almost stoic regularity of life is required, Boku not only fulfilled his role in the theater excellently, but also established his own private world with ICHIGO ICHIE and ZABOROKU and was loved as a strong, calm, and warm person by those who knew him. Knowledge of Boku's existence is a soothing medicine for me in a society where people tend to avoid taking responsibility for their own existence.

— translated by Itatani Michiko —