

**Chasing contagious comedy:
Henpecked Husband, the new kyogen, in bilingual, rhyming performance**

**喜劇を探る：
—新作狂言『濯ぎ川』の二カ国語、ライミング版—**

Tim MEDLOCK and Jonah SALZ

Abstract

In July 2011, a bilingual, rhymed version of Iizawa Tadasu's "new kyogen" *Susugigawa* (The Rinsing River) was performed at Kyoto's Oe Noh Theatre to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Noho Theatre Group. Here the production's director and leading actor, co-authors of the script, discuss the challenges they faced in first adapting the Japanese classical comedy to colloquial, rhyming English, and when staging this in a bilingual production. Performers' and spectators' responses will be analyzed, and an attempt made to prescribe potential pitfalls and possibilities.

Keywords : Kyogen, Theatre, Bilingual, Translation, Rhyme, Comedy

概 要

能法劇団の設立 30 周年記念として、2011 年 7 月 19 日に、バイリンガルで音韻（ライム）をととのえた、飯沢匡の新作狂言『濯ぎ川』が京都大江能楽堂で演じられた。今回、台本の共著者で主演を演じた、演出家が、この公演の際、はじめて日本の古典喜劇を翻案したむずかしさについて話す。具体的にはセリフを口語でしかも音韻の整った英語に変えること、さらにはこれをバイリンガルのプロダクションとして舞台にすること。演者と観客の反応を分析し、陥りやすいまちがいや可能性について指摘する。

キーワード：狂言、演劇、バイリンガル、翻訳、音韻

Washing cycle: a performance history of *Susugigawa* (濯ぎ川)

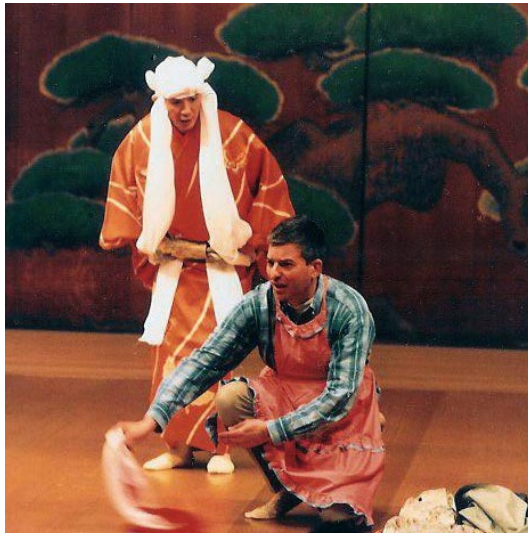
In July 2011, a bilingual, rhymed version of Iizawa Tadasu's "new kyogen" *Susugigawa* (The Rinsing River) was performed at Kyoto's Oe Noh Theatre to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Noho Theatre Group. Here Jonah Salz, the production's director and co-author of the playing script, and co-author and lead actor Timothy Medlock, discuss the challenges they faced. Adapting the Japanese classical comedy to colloquial, rhyming English, and further problems when staging this in a bilingual production will be explored, using their own experience and interviews with other actors. Both Japanese and foreign spectators' responses will be analyzed, and an attempt made to prescribe potential pitfalls and possibilities.

As the following chronology displays, this is a play "with legs," capable of various versions of a familiar family squabble:

- 15th c *Le Cuvier* (The Washtub), anonymous French farce
- 1952 adapted by Iizawa Tadasu, comic playwright, to quasi-kyogen style
- 1953 performed by modern theatre actors at Bungaku-za studio, with kyogen adviser
- 1953 Shigeyama Sennojo, Sensaku II re-write and re-direct it as a new kyogen, performed on noh stages in Kyoto and Tokyo to great acclaim; entered Okura school official repertoire
- 1986 translated by Dan Furst, Julie Iezzi, Deidre Lammers Onishi, and Salz, performed in English by the Noho Theatre Group
- 1997 performed bilingually by Noho, as an international marriage with Salz as Husband
- 2011 performed in rhymed, bilingual version by Noho, subtitled *Daughter in the Water*
- 2012 performed bilingually in his own translation by Shigeyama Dôji



Shigeyama Sennojo plays the Husband to Dan Furst's angry wife in *Susugigawa*.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)



Jonah Salz plays the put-upon Husband in
Henpecked Husband, berated by Shigeyama Akira.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

The play's success for half a millennium, and kyogen style experiments for the past half-century, can be attributed to the story, a familiar one from popular comedy:

A hapless and henpecked Husband is beset by a shrewish Wife and demanding Mother-in-law. Forgetting all the chores they load him with, he persuades them to write them down on a list, which they do in excruciating detail. But when the laundry falls in the river (tub in the original), and the Wife falls, flailing after it, the Husband refuses to save her: it's not on the list. The Mother-in-law agrees that he is Master of the house, and he saves the Wife; they trot along behind him respectfully (in the medieval original), or chase him offstage (in Japanese kyogen versions).

The story fits the character types of typical feuding couples in kyogen, with the transposition of the Wife's dignified father in such plays as *Moraimuko*, *Mizukake muko*, and *Futarimuko* to a feisty Mother-in-law. Shigeyama Sennojo, who acted in and co-directed the first production in 1953, says it caught the wave of popularity for strong-willed, big-mouthed women, the so-called "*wawashi onna*" genre of comedy, soon entering the regular repertoire of the Shigeyama family and eventually the entire Okura school.¹⁾

As a "new kyogen", it developed along with multiple performances starring different actors of the decades since its first productions in all-kyogen recitals off the noh stage. Shigeyama Shime's Husband holds his hands splayed uncharacteristically for kyogen, with a goofy gape; Akira's Wife is shrill compared to Dôji's. Sennojo added all sorts of business to the ending. When the Mother-in-law, having failed to mediate the argument, and without her stick, limps off the stage after the furious Wife and fleeing Husband. Sennojo wiggled his hips as though adjusting his pelvic bone into its socket, then on the bridgeway put on an unexpected show of energy with a *roppo* ("six-direction") spectacular kabuki exit. At the Avignon International Festival in 1996, he picked up the list and tore and balled it up, but instead of dropping it in resignation as in the original version, he tossed it into the audience, to laughter and applause.

Such individual variations on normal *kata* forms show this new piece to be developing continually,

making experimentation more acceptable, by teachers and spectators, than more codified traditional pieces. In 1986, the Noho Theatre Group, founded by Shigeyama Akira and Salz to utilize noh-kyogen techniques and spirit to perform Western texts, further adapted the play to English. Now the Husband was American, the wife and daughter Japanese, and another layer of humor added to the original through the anomaly of foreign actors speaking of modern chores (changing diapers, teaching English) yet performed in kyogen style and costumes from the middle ages. Later, the roles of the Wife and Mother-in-law were taken over by kyogen professionals in Japanese, while the Husband was performed in English, thus making an international marriage a bilingual battle, comprehensible to monolingual audiences of either Japanese and English. This too proved successful as an intercultural ice-breaker, performed at ladies' clubs, international conferences, and even Salz's wedding.

2011 production context

For Noho's 30th anniversary production, we decided to revive *Henpecked*, but this time in a new rhymed version, and with the hapless husband Salz replaced by newlywed Medlock, the American with a Brit. Medlock played against his teacher, Maruishi Yasushi, who had continued as the Mother-in-law since the beginning, and Dôji, Akira's son, a bilingual graduate of Kyoto's International School, who could occasionally throw in an effortlessly perfect English expression to startled guffaws, as the Wife. Yet it was ultimately the put-upon Husband, Medlock in jeans and an apron, who had to gain spectators' sympathies as a romantic fool, to spark the initial laughter. The play was given on a program including short plays by Samuel Beckett, with 500 spectators for two evenings in July 2011, celebrating Noho's 30th anniversary.

Language of kyogen

Translating kyogen, short and episodic, has been attempted for the last 150 years.²⁾ Adding to kyogen's rich texture is the improvisatory verve that resisted literary transfer for over two centuries. While manuscripts of cousin art noh can be found dating from the early 1400s, extant kyogen scripts only exist as summaries (1542) and texts (1660) from a later era. Moreover, Okura, Izumi, and Sagi stylistic schools, and even families within those schools, possess their own variant texts, many never published, still used today. Kyogen texts in Japanese are the result of secrecy, desire for flexibility, and continual absorption of popular songs and poems of the day.

Aside from choosing among variant texts, the difficulties for the translator of kyogen arise from the variety of languages used in a single play. Kyogen is an unusual classical Asian theatre form which traditionally relies on dialogue, rather than on chant or sung accompaniment. The banter between master and servant, thief or con man and victim, god or demon and mortal, is relatively straightforward.

However, there are, as with many Japanese spoken forms, plays on words; homonyms abound due to the language's simple syllabary, in which most words end on a vowel. Haikai and renga, the five-seven-line poetic form developed in the Muromachi period form, are employed in many plays, often in a call-and-response collaborative building of a single poem. The memorization (or forgetfulness) of poetry is the humorous center of *Hagi Daimyo* and *Tsukuzukushi*, while a marriage in *Mikazuki* is saved when the renga-party enamored husband discovers that his wife is also a skilful player. Poems from early popular anthologies are adapted into *kouta* "short songs," sung to danced accompaniment, often to cap a scene of drinking. Finally there are the *noh-gakari* parodies of noh plays, which feature chanting by a full chorus, such as *Pillow-crazy* (*Makura monogurui*). Kyogen players pride themselves on their clear enunciation and

masterful memorization of such long *katari* narrative sections, tongue-twisters, tricky-rhythm songs, and exacting poetry.

“Black Cheese” ferment

Medlock had had experience as a stage comedy writer before this collaboration, though in a very different medium. From 1996-2004 he was half of a bilingual sketch comedy duo, “Black Cheese” with fellow writer/actor Markus Lucas. Their skits parodied aspects of daily life in Japan, featuring a gallery of characters both foreign and Japanese reflecting the mix of modern Japanese society. They gave over a hundred shows during that eight-year period at nightclubs, cafes, charity events, school festivals, and even at pop-up events in public. Some skits were monolingual, though many used both languages. They hoped the bilingualism of the show would allow their mixed audiences of Japanese and foreigners to feel equally involved.

Yet they found that bilinguality alone was not enough to guarantee success with Japanese audiences comprised of beginner English students, who were easily discouraged by even partial incomprehension. Unlike the foreign audience members, who were accustomed to trying to piece meaning together from context and limited language knowledge in their daily interactions, and so were tolerant of occasional incomprehension, these Japanese audience members were uneasy with uncertainty. Not understanding partially seemed to lead easily to a feeling of not understanding totally.

Consequently they developed a number of principles to keep the show accessible and entertaining to as many as possible in their mixed audience:

1) Balance

- (i) The overall use of the two languages had to be even, or slightly weighted towards Japanese.
- (ii) The two languages within a bilingual skit should be balanced, so that monolingual or audience members with a weaker command of the other language might have a better chance of piecing together meaning from the half they understand. Line repetition was an effective strategy.

2) Sequencing

- (i) A show should never start with a lot of English. This would send a discouraging message to many Japanese audience members.
- (ii) Any monolingual skit should be followed by one that uses the other language heavily, so that monolingual audience members would not feel excluded for too long.

3) Simplifying

If something could be said simply, it should be.

4) Maintaining integrity

The process of simplifying could strip language of the very things that make it amusing in the first place: wit, pace, allusion, originality, any kind of sophistication. Consequently it could lose its vivacity, and so seem too much like English listening practice for Japanese, which would, in turn, alienate the foreign audience or even the Japanese ones who had come for something more sophisticated than the weak skits in English language education television broadcasts. The English shouldn’t sound simplified unless the context demanded it, such as with a character struggling with English.

5) Balanced mockery

As outsiders we had to be careful about how we portrayed the host nation. It wasn’t wise to portray a foreigner as victim of a Japanese, or a Japanese person as foolish, unless the negativity was balanced out somehow (such as the foreigner being equally foolish or the cause of conflict being a misunderstanding).

6) Physicality

Without resorting to slapstick or pantomime, Black Cheese tried to use strong physicality to support the language.

An extra factor that seemed to affect reception of the show by lower-level English speakers was whether the audience came to the show or the reverse. If someone came to see a show, regardless of their English ability, they were more likely to adopt a can-do attitude, as they had already “bought into” the concept of the bilingual show by choosing it. Many completely monolingual Japanese audience members asserted they could follow just fine. However, if Black Cheese were an invited act at an event or just performed in public, a proportion of the audience were likely to feel entitled to total comprehension and so switch off when they could not comprehend the English.

When Medlock came to collaborating with Salz on *Henpecked* he found that this background had formed his creative attitude profoundly, as we rewrote continuously, striving to make a simple yet rich text that could catch and keep the widest audience.

Happy incongruity: balancing old whines in new battles

Given the number and nature of the differing elements being combined (old and new, Japanese and foreign, traditional and original), a certain degree of incongruity would be inevitable. But if we could find an effective balance for these potentially jarring elements, then a new-style kyogen, entertaining and accessible to an intercultural audience, could result. In the rewriting process, then, a number of areas of concern emerged that would influence the outcome:

- (1) the balance of traditional and modern elements
- (2) the scope and nature of the bilingualism
- (3) comprehensibility
- (4) the scope and nature of the rhyme

Traditional and non-traditional elements

The Husband's modern dress of jeans and checked shirt covered with a pink apron established the setting as modern, though it immediately raised questions: why is a foreigner in Japan, why is he wearing a pink apron and why, in the modern era, is he doing laundry in the river by hand instead of using a washing machine? The answer was to create a parody of the Kyoto foreign resident, a foreigner overly enamored of old-fashioned and traditional Japanese ways, who came to Japan for a cultured and leisurely lifestyle. But his dream ends when he marries into an absurdly old-fashioned family, where washing is done by hand and a foreign son-in-law is on the bottom rung of the pecking order. In the original kyogen, the Husband is a “*yoshi*” (養子).³⁾ For our version we reimagined his lack of power by having him depend on his Wife's family for legal residence and explain to the audience,

Why not leave her?

She sponsors my visa!

The laziness and selfishness of his ambitions ensures little sympathy, and so avoids any perception of “Japan-bashing”, with a poor foreigner as victim of domineering Japanese. This is consistent with kyogen's characteristic of nobody being virtuous or heroic, everybody a figure of fun. It also seemed necessary to trace the arc of the foreigner's romantic expectations, his courtship and disappointment, with some details of his new put-upon existence and to mention his Mother-in-law, as in the original. This new expository

information would have to be included in a new *nanori* and *michiyuki*,⁴⁾ monologues that would be considerably longer than the original.

Further anachronisms and anomalies

Having transposed the setting to modern times to include an English-speaking foreigner, we wished to cement the setting and exploit the incongruity further with occasional references to modern Japan. So in the *nanori* we had the Husband complain that he should have married “a nice OL”⁵⁾ with whom he could live in a “mansion”,⁶⁾ go out drinking in Gion,⁷⁾ and make a modest living teaching part-time at Aeon⁸⁾. By throwing in Japanese terms, the British Husband shows familiarity with the language and culture appropriate to a long-term resident, although “vocal italics” of exaggerated pronunciation were needed to ensure audience members understood these as Japanese, not English, terms.

We hoped the instant comprehensibility of unexpected rhymes, and incongruity of references to such modern phenomena as apartment complexes and English teaching on a *Noh* stage, would strike a chord with Japanese and foreign audience members alike. Similarly, in the scene in which the Husband’s duties are compiled, we removed the old-fashioned chores of the original, such as making miso, soy and pickles and putting family offerings on the family altar. Instead were added bread to bake and blogs to update. As with the previous references to Aeon and Gion, two factors helped make the jokes viable. Firstly they were supported by rhyme: “Cut the logs, feed the hogs, update our blogs.” Secondly, the incongruous elements were surrounded by more predictable elements. The foreign Husband is also, bizarrely, charged with teaching the children kanji⁹⁾, a task so unlikely it would surely raise eyebrows. Yet, it also was consistent with the laziness of the Wife and Mother-in-law, and set up a simple but crowd-pleasing joke:

W Yes, mama’s eyes have grown weak, so help the kids with their kanji homework.
H Homework? With ease. But English, please!
W,ML *ここは日本じゃ！* [This is Japan!]: Japanese!

It was consistent with elements of displacement and reversal of expectation that we tried to weave throughout the script. We hoped the simplicity of the language, and ironic tone of such intrusions in a medieval kyogen, would be readily accepted by the audience, more so because they may seem credible behavior for the characters.

Vulgarity

A further change in the list-writing scene was the reintroduction of a bawdy element from the original French farce concerning the Husband’s conjugal duties. It had been dropped as unsuitably vulgar for the conventions of the *noh* stage, but NOHO, not being so strictly bound to such conventions, had reinserted it in a nod towards the play’s popular roots. Even so, if performing on a *Noh* stage, one cannot be completely oblivious of the space’s aesthetics and atmosphere, so some restraint would be essential. Consequently the 2011 version ran as follows (translated Japanese lines italicized):



The Wife demands frequent “marital service”—satisfied when it’s on the list.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

ML: *Oh and I’d like another grandchild, so keep at it, eh? (nods at Husband)*

W: Oh, yes, let’s jot, the you-know-what. *(smiles lasciviously)*

H: Oh that! Let’s not be crude.

Maybe once a year, if I’m in the mood.

W: At least three times a day! *(writing it down, coyly)*

H: Not three, not two, not one, no way! *(crosses arms over chest)*

W: You weakling!

ML: *Weakling!*

W: You wimp! *(pointing at him with fan, dangling it limply)*

H: Alright. *(bows)* But I’ll walk with a limp...

The exchange work could be easily understood, as there was bilingual repetition, employing numbers and gestures and body language to reinforce the meaning. We felt it had not crossed the line into unacceptable vulgarity, being allusive rather than explicitly obscene.

Kyogen’s archaic insults are reminiscent of such English terms as “scoundrel” and “shrew”. With the Wife shouting modern insults in English as well as archaic Japanese, and a resentful Husband complaining behind her back in English, we had the opportunity to add harsher language. We had to be mindful of the word’s strength, scarcity of use, timing and, also, comprehensibility, as most slang is beyond intermediate English speakers whose attention we were most concerned to retain. Consequently, slang from an earlier draft such as “Get a life” was cut, as was, “Did you phone, you old crone?” and “I’m a big dog on a short leash. What a jerk!” On the other hand, “You lazy jerk! Get to work!” was kept: it’s short, it rhymes with itself, and the line doesn’t even depend on understanding the word “jerk”. Equally, “I’m doing it now, you stupid cow!” was kept as a particularly British insult to a fat and lazy woman that anybody could grasp.



Once saved, the Wife forgets the promises.
(写真：村中 修／ Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

The strongest words were employed only at the very climax of the play, admittedly testing the bounds of noh propriety. At just the moment the Man pulled his drowning Wife from the water, confident that he has turned the tables on his tormentors and is now the master of the house, we had a brief pause while the Wife gathers herself. Just when one might expect humble thanks, she screams “You sonovabitch!”, the strongest curse word used up to that point but crucially justified by dramatic function. Whether it would work or not depended on timing. Comedy often depends on a reversal of expectation; re-turning of table-turning is the comic highlight of the play. The fact that as a curse it is also well known in Japan made it the perfect high-octane intercultural insult.

Movement, gestures, and facial expression

To enliven the play for non-bilingual audiences, we wished to add more movements than the kyogen version, which utilized minimal *kata* forms and a deadpan face. These would include additional gestures by the Husband in the prologue but also more animation in the scene in which the Wife assaults the Husband. We hoped the movement would reinforce meaning and provide a para-lingual element that would be immediately appealing. We were not just translating, but adapting kyogen, and a relatively malleable *shinsaku* “new kyogen” at that, so felt we had some freedom, though we could only go so far if we wanted to maintain the coherence and integrity of the piece. These changes would have to be worked out in rehearsal.

Balancing bilingual banter with brilliant barbs

A key concern when scripting bilingually, as Medlock knew from Black Cheese days, was maintaining a balance of languages. In NOHO’s earlier bilingual versions, one character spoke English while the other two spoke Japanese. But the two languages were balanced by the fact that the English-speaking Husband had the most lines, and was always on-stage, while the other two rushed in and out. Although each side seemed to understand the other perfectly, they stuck to their own language. It made no sense logically, but we hoped it would be accepted by audiences readily as both normal in intercultural marriages, as well as a

useful stage convention.

The 2011 production underwent a radical change with the addition of Dôji Shigeyama. Educated at international schools, he is a professional kyogen actor who speaks unaccented English, and so allowed us to have the Wife in a bilingual code-switching role between the other two mostly monolingual characters. Logically, then, the Wife might speak English with her husband and Japanese with her mother. However if we proceeded on that basis, we would have had whole blocks in English and Japanese, which would be opaque to monolingual audiences. The solution was to ensure that there was always some kind of mix of languages, usually sequential, which would allow monolinguals to piece together the partial information relayed in their own languages.

Repeating repartee regularly

Although a certain amount of repetition is common to most conversation, Japanese discourse regularly elides pronouns and lacks plurals, implicit from context, and generally features a greater amount of such clarifying repetition than English. Building on this natural tendency, kyogen often has characters repeat another's words, albeit in different registers and intonations, such as when the same orders are spoken in monologue, then delivered by a master to a servant. So we extended convention to fashion dialogue that would repeat in ways that monolinguals would appreciate:

W これは如何なこと。今日は蕎麦を打たねばならぬによって、早う濯ぎ物を終うて粉を引いて下されいと、あれ程申したでは御座らぬか。[Well, this is a problem. Didn't I say that today we're making noodles, so you have to finish the washing quickly and grind the flour?]

H It's not slipped my mind: there's flour to grind. I'll follow the plan as best I can.

Except for the rhyme, this doesn't differ from NOHO's previous use of alternating language bilinguality, yet Dôji's participation allowed us to attempt exchanges such as the following:

W や、其方はまだ濯ぎ物をしていさしますか。(Hey, darling, are you still doing the washing?!)

M No need to scold: I'm about to fold...

W

So just do as your told.

ノウ仏経や仏経や。わずかそればかりの物が、未だ終われぬということがあるもかいやい、あるものかいやい。(Oh that's annoying, that's annoying! It's ridiculous not to have finished such a small task?! Ridiculous?!)

H: (to himself) Wash, dry, fold, Wash, dry, fold, it's bloody cold!

Here the Wife, code-switching between English and Japanese, allows for more flexibility with the bilingual scripting, while also rhyming with the Husband's lines. Such code-switching, as both authors know from personal experience, is commonly employed strategically by international couples for different sentences in the same conversations, or even within a single sentence.

Such strategic bilinguality allowed us to improve a particular scene considerably: the listing of the Husband's daily chores. The original kyogen has the Husband sitting quietly while the Wife and Mother-in-law rapidly compile an exhaustive list of twenty tasks. In previous NOHO versions, the two Japanese actors stayed close to the kyogen script while the Husband nodded along, occasionally repeating the tasks in English *sotto voce*. A monolingual non-Japanese audience member could only comprehend the list

when recited by the Husband later. Now, we could have the Mother-in-law generate all the commands while the Wife wrote them down in English as she repeated them for the benefit of the Husband: perfect comprehension for all.



They agree to write everything down.
(写真：村中 修／ Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

Nor did we restrict language switching to the Wife. Both Mother-in-law and Husband occasionally joined in, the Mother-in-law to great comic effect. She is represented as old and traditional, and so surely monolingual, yet seems to understand both her son-in-law and her daughter's English. To expand on this absurdity, we had her occasionally and suddenly speak English with unnatural expressions such as "Ahoy, sonny boy" or mangle words with a strong Japanese accent, as in "*ai puromisu*" for "I promise" and "*I thinku notto...idiotto*" for "I think not...idiot". After being labeled an "*idiotto*" the Husband then attempts to mollify her with "*makoto de gozaru*" (I am sincere) and then assuring with "*ai puromisu*", declaimed with a strong Japanese accent, as though translating to *gairaigo* (foreign loan-words).

At the end of the aforementioned listing of chores, the Wife asks the Mother-in-law in English, "Is that everything mama?" to which the Mother replies in kyogen Japanese, "Yes, that's everything". It is absurd and practical in equal amounts: the Wife has no reason to talk to her mother in a foreign language, yet by absent-mindedly using English she allows monolinguals to understand.

We were consistent in our inconsistency. Actors spoke in standard British, modern slang, and heavily accented English, as well as medieval and modern Japanese, and even Osaka dialect. The consciously counter-intuitive nature of the dialogue thus kept the script switching between languages both for purposes of practical comprehension and comic absurdity.

Comprehensibility balance

A satisfactory level of comprehensibility was not necessarily achieved by merely balancing the amounts of Japanese and English and building in repetition. As with *Black Cheese*, we were aware that the majority of the audience was Japanese, of which a certain proportion would probably be uneasy with partial comprehension. After we had completed some initial drafts of the script, we realized that we needed to

make considerable changes. On July 1st Medlock sent the following e-mail to Salz:

My main concern is that some of our lines so far are fine for an English audience, but incomprehensible to the host nation. Ideally we would come up with an English script which is witty and fun but that Japanese with fair English might have a chance of keeping up with. From my Black Cheese days I remember trying to bend the English towards a Japanese audience but keeping it alive without sounding over-simplified and compromised.

From then on we tried to write towards that specification, though creatively we found that you cannot edit yourself or write to a simple level at the initial stage. You have to write, then select and adjust according to what works in rehearsal. Some lines which were discarded early included those that contained awkward rhymes, difficult English, or clever ornaments that did not move the narrative along:

- I know I can't dawdle, 'cos we have to make noodles.
- OK, but that's early, I don't mean to be dense,
- Japanese is so hard without pronouns and tense
- With both of you musing, I find it confusing.

Another aid to non-native speakers' understanding was the methodical pace and pronunciation of the dialogue. A characteristic of kyogen is its relatively slow, very careful delivery with frequent, small pauses. For modern Japanese audiences, this allows them extra time to decode kyogen's archaic features. If we adopted a similar approach for our English text, then it would be consistent with kyogen's style and afford an equal opportunity to the Japanese audience. Consequently, Medlock employed a style of delivery that was somewhat over-enunciated with frequent pauses, especially during the opening monologue. Any concern over this being too slow for foreign audience was allayed by confidence in the enjoyability of the rhymes, the pace whetting the appetites of those anticipations.

Evolution of bilingual dialogue

The following line trading between Salz and Medlock led to the evolution of the dialogue, as we fine-tuned the farce to a mixed audience of native and Japanese low-level speakers. As the Mother-in-law exits her first scene with the husband, she mutters that she wishes her daughter had married a nice Jodo Shinshu priest (this is an English teacher or brain surgeon, depending on the sponsoring organization). The Husband walks upstage to eavesdrop and talks to himself as he returns downstage to the washing. The original Noho script has the Husband say, "Oh how scary! How scary! They say if you put chopsticks in a man's nose, he is still a man. Oh there's no use replying to such a scolding. I'd better get back to Susugigawa" (lezzi 2007).¹⁰⁾ Our earliest version ran thus:

Listen how she badmouths me!
But I am too much a coward to flee.
There's nothing to be done, but get this washing done.

Later we decided that the Husband should shout after her and then turn downstage talking to himself with

an extra couplet:

If only she wasn't married to me?
For once, you old bag, I quite agree!

We then came up with alternative continuations:

Salz: Bossed by both of them, this way and that,
 Back to the washing before I get slapped.

Medlock: Bashed by the wife, smashed by the mother,
 It's always some trouble with one or the other.

In the end we decided to be more specific, and simple:

If only she wasn't married to me? (*confronting Mother-in-law*)
For once...old bag...I quite agree! (*shouting after her*)
Quick! Quick! I'd better finish soon. (*returning to the wash*)
My wife will be back here at noon!

Shouting after her proudly, and then rushing downstage to carry on with the demeaning work, poked fun at his empty boasts, while the English itself was relatively easy for everyone to follow.

Olde tyme rhymes

Although French classical poet-playwrights could express both epic tragedy and elegant comedies in the Alexandrine form, English dramatic verse was primarily used for comedy.

When English attempt to translate Moliere, their variety of approaches—faithful English Alexandrines, prose, or doggerel verse—shows the challenges involved.¹¹⁾ Because of its associations with singsong children's verse, popular song, and romantic poetry, rather than the elegant lyric tragedy of Racine or playful Moliere comedy of manners, few playwrights attempt entire plays in rhymed English. Shakespeare used it to set characters apart or to end a scene (and cue the next scene). Poetic drama fell out of fashion after the 18th century, despite a revival by poets Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and Christopher Fry. David Hirson's *La Bête* was enjoyed by Medlock and Salz in London in 2010 for its rapid-fire, convoluted tour de force of perfect rhymes in a consistent story—ironically denying the possibility of great art in times of commercial necessity.

Yet the strict rhythms that verse demands, its self-contained formality that nonetheless allows disruptions for comic effect, is precisely what drew us to attempt rhymed kyogen.¹²⁾ Salz had previous written doggerel versions of *Shibiri* (Cramps!), also performed bilingually, to mixed success. Rather than be troubled by the singsong rhyme of iambic tetrameter, we devised a jazz-rhythm delivery, even employing an accompanying trio for one performance:

I am a man who lives in Japan who owns some land.

I'm beginning to plan a soiree petite,
So need Taro, the servant to fetch some treats
From the market in town.
Hey Taro, are you around?
...You came with great speed
though there wasn't much need.
I'm planning a party, and to my surprise,
Discovered we're missing the needed supplies.
So you must dash into town and back
To fetch some sake and delectable snacks.

The Master's English and Servant's Japanese was accepted as a necessary convention, along with the English rhyme, without inherent meaning: they spoke different languages, and seemed to understand each other, although no reason was stated for this oddity. *Henpecked* was more complex: the foreign Husband engaging with Japanese wife and Mother-in-law was naturally a bilingual situation that could be exploited by occasional code-switching and anachronistic phrasing. English rhyme would provide a frame and rhythm that would provide the equivalent of *niji agari* (二字上がり), the wave-like rhythm of kyogen intonation noted above.

Parameters of poetic licence

We conducted our collaboration almost totally by e-mail, querying, and adjusting to each other's suggestions. The first thing needing resolution was the broad thrust of our approach. Medlock's initial reaction to Salz's first draft was confusion about the extreme inconsistency of the metrical schemes used. What was the framework within which we are working? What was the rhyming scheme? The draft contained lines as varied as:

- (i) Now it's tucked away neat and nice,
 You'll never have to ask me twice.
- (ii) Okay, I obey
- (iii) When you both attack, it's hard to keep track
- (iv) I didn't forget, my pet.
 It's not slipped my mind: we have flour to grind.
- (v) H: English, please.
 W: This is Nihon! Japanese!

If we were to subject the lines to strict metrical analysis we would find the following: the first is a trochaic tetrameter¹³⁾ with a strong end rhyme, the second an iambic dimeter¹⁴⁾. The third uses internal rhyme (in contrast to end rhyme) while the fourth example switches line lengths in one speech and within an internal rhyme: "I didn't forget" is the first half of a tetrameter, while "My pet" is the second half of a dimeter. The metrics of the fifth defy easy analysis, despite being easy to say and having a winning rhyme. Without a consistent structural foundation, it was difficult for Medlock to collaborate effectively, not knowing rules that he might inadvertently be breaking.

The opening monologue in Salz's draft version seemed to follow a slightly more consistent rhythm,

though with varying end and internal rhymes, as in this early draft:

I am a man who came to Japan with a grand master plan.
I'd marry for money, settle down with my honey,
On this peaceful island and live like a monk.
Haiku and gardens, old frogs going plonk!

Still, it seemed arbitrary that there were no rules other than placing rhyming words near each other in any metrical scheme. If so, Medlock was concerned that the irregularity may be jarring, as the pleasure of hearing rhyme is partly in the expectation of a familiar rhythm, partly in the delight of hearing an unexpected variation. But a degree of regularity is indispensable to create the anticipation that affords either pleasure. Medlock clearly preferred formal rhyme-schemes, while Salz was content with more careless one. A constantly morphing scheme, while clever and fun in parts, would ultimately be self-defeating. Eventually, we seemed to settle on three approaches for different parts of the play:

1. For the opening monologue and for the list-writing scene we employed a flexible but consistent trochaic tetrameter, whose rhyming couplets could also accommodate both internal and off-rhymes. Trochaic tetrameter may sound technical but it is known for its light feel and is familiar to us all as the natural rhythm of many nursery rhymes (“Little Miss Muffet sat down on a tuffet”) and also of many songs. And as with songs, any number of syllables may be fitted into a fixed rhythm, depending on personal preference and expression.
2. For the dialogue, although the tetrameter would be maintained as the base pattern, we would use any different rhythm or rhyme as long as it felt effective in the flow, as in “monk” and “plonk” above.
3. The Husband’s repetition of the list of chores was sung to the tune of the Beatles’ anthem, *Yellow Submarine*. By doing so we would be maintaining the kyogen tradition of the Husband singing the list while adopting a melody incongruous to the stage, but familiar to many of the audience. Kyogen similarly absorbed popular songs during its formative period, the 16th and 17th centuries. Hopefully, this incongruity, as with all the others (Japanese-English, traditional-modern) would gel and not jar.

We had agreed that a loose approach would serve well. Kyogen has its rhythm and characteristic high-pitched accents, but its line lengths vary, so a strictly rhyming metrical scheme would not have matched. A varied and flexible rhyme scheme would be closer to the spirit of the original and create more unexpected moments, built upon a fundamental rhythm, with occasional departures for effect.

Use of Japanese by an English speaker

We also agreed to attempt some rhymes in Japanese spoken by the Husband. As a rule, Japanese poetry has shunned rhyme as a poetic device for the main reason that the Japanese language rhymes so easily that it has little aesthetic appeal. Instead, alliteration and puns on “pivot words” abound. Nevertheless, considering the mixed nature of the piece, Salz wished to see if we could incorporate it into the Husband’s lines along with the English. Early on, we considered the following:

(a) Rhyming Japanese place names within the English rhyming scheme:

Why didn't I marry that tea teacher with the lovely hands?
Or that mamasan from *Pontocho*?
I could have lived like a daimyo in *Keihokucho*.

(b) Rhyming short Japanese expressions with English:

Kashimashii [noisy]: so noisy!

(c) Rhyming entire lines of Japanese with English:

With you both yelling at the same time
Atama no naka ga seiri dekinai n!
[I can't sort it in my head]

(d) Mixing Japanese and English in a single line:

Hurry and *tore* (get it)!

Paradoxically, the risk of inserting Japanese words into a flow of English is that they can fail to register with the very people to whom they should be familiar: expecting English, they would not hear the occasional Japanese phrases as Japanese. In our experiment even if the word's meaning were understood, rhyme is so unused as a poetic custom that it may also fail to register and, even if noticed, may be disdained as low-level wordplay. Nonetheless, we thought it worth trying until vetoed by the Japanese actors.

Having established through such groping trial and error a broad understanding of what we were attempting with rhythm and rhyme, a number of concerns and areas of interest emerged:

U.S. / U.K. differences over rhymes or scansion

As Salz is American and Medlock British, not all words rhymed equivalently to the two. Salz's proposed rhyme of "can" and "demand" could not rhyme as pronounced normally by Medlock. Equally "plonk" and "monk" are different but close in American pronunciation while rather different when spoken with a British accent.

Irregular rhymes

Although we were adopting varying rhyming schemes from line to line, we wrestled with the question of how much irregularity could be allowed. Such irregularity could be the metrical placing of a rhyme as in, "Rest assured, I'll do my best" where the beginning of the foot and second end foot rhyme. Or it could be with imperfect rhymes such as:

"The best way I've found is to write it all down" or
"Putting it on paper makes it easy to remember"

Such rhymes may seem acceptable when read on paper but their rhyme may be tenuous when voiced. This was to be a script for performing not reading, so the only test was to say it aloud many times. In general it seemed that Salz had a much higher tolerance for such off-rhymes than did Medlock—and it was Medlock the actor who would be having to memorize and make these awkward off-rhymes non-awful.

Scansion

As we conducted our collaboration by e-mail, we could not hear each other read the lines we were drafting to each other. Consequently, we frequently disagreed over the acceptable scansion of each other's suggestions, as with the following alternatives:

- But look at all this I've got from your daughter!
- But look at all this from your daughter!

It was often astonishing for Medlock to receive a rejection from Salz because a line “didn't scan”, though it clearly did for him, and then see it replaced with something which he, himself, found virtually unsayable.

Resolving disagreements

Unlike Black Cheese where, as an equal partnership, we had to have consensus to proceed, Salz was co-writer but also director, so had the final say. However, giving Medlock great latitude as the person delivering the lines, unless Salz disagreed vehemently, Medlock was allowed to choose his preference from among alternatives.

Rhyme and comprehensibility

Usually, poetic licence allows a writer irregular grammatical contrivances to sustain metre and rhyme. However, allowing the English to become more complicated would make it less comprehensible for our target intermediate speakers, so we were hesitant to write irregular English for scansion's sake, unless it could be rendered comprehensible by delivery. Consequently, a convoluted line such as, “So, of your mother-in-law you're more afraid than of your wife”, although aiding the rhyme-scheme, was cut. However, the following couplet was retained, despite being grammatically clunky, because its delivery could be justifiably emphatic. The tension of the moment (at the height of the Mother-in-law's pleas to the Husband to save her daughter) and the Husband's triumphant irony allowed it to be delivered slowly, strongly, and with pauses:

So...saving a drowning woman in fact
Is not written down...on this contract.” [Emphases added]

Moreover, sometimes, the only words which could be found to complete a rhyme would be ones difficult to comprehend to any but extremely proficient English speakers such as:

“Listen how she bad-mouths me?
But I am too much of a coward to flee.”

If so, we then reconsidered the initial line.

Proliferating couplets

Writing rhymes could occasionally incur another problematic tendency: one can be drawn into writing lines just to complete the rhyme rather than to advance the scene. If it is a rhyme for rhyme's sake, then the script expands in size without developing the drama. In such a case, the rhyme assumes a redundant, decorative quality. Critically for us, it also increased the amount of English in the play, thereby affecting the balance of languages. When we tested the opening monologue at the first rehearsal, this problem was apparent (see below).

Rehearsal revelations

Due to our busy schedules, only two rehearsals were possible, the 5th of July at Shigeyama Akira's home rehearsal space, the second on the 17th, the night before the production. While this would be impossibly few for a new play, or even for a play with a new cast member, much less one requiring bilingual repartee, it is standard practice in the conventionalized world of kyogen. Instead, traditionally actors memorize their lines and practice their roles on their own, rehearsing with others only once or not at all before a performance. However, our first rehearsal was rough at times.

First rehearsal: a very cold reading

The initial unhappy discovery was that we were not on the same page--literally. Instead of preparing a conventional script with each actor's lines following the other, we used the script used for preparation, a "contrast translation version" (対訳版) with facing pages entirely in English and Japanese. Salz' directorial aim was to make adjustments to the distribution of bilingualism during rehearsal. However this resulted in Japanese actors becoming confused over who was speaking and in what language. They began crossing out lines and adding arrows.

The atmosphere became somewhat tense and confrontational. This is perhaps inevitable when professional Japanese actors collaborate on their own "turf" with their semi-professional foreign students. Moreover, Maruishi, having played the role many times and now echoing the Mother-in-law's conservatism, wanted minimal change: show me what we had done before and finish as quickly as possible. Dôji was more adaptable but nervous about what could be achieved within the time constraints. If he had new lines to learn, he wanted them decided now, not tentative dialogue in a work in progress. On the other hand, for Medlock, it was all new. Although he was familiar with both the kyogen play and NOHO's previous adaptation, and also with kyogen's movement conventions, having studied for 16 years, Medlock still needed a lot of instruction and adjusting of form. Fortunately, Maruishi, being Medlock's long-time teacher, was well disposed to him despite being impatient with the situation—Medlock's looking bad with traditional kata would not only damage the performance as a whole, but reflect poorly on Medlock's teacher.

Another unanticipated problem was the opening monologue (*nanori*), in particular its length. Julie Iezzi's close translation of the original *nanori* amounts to just 81 words. It was inevitable that our new version would be longer, but we realized that it now stood at 271 words. When Medlock delivered it, moreover, fluent English speaker Dôji was not moved to even grin, while Maruishi (who can speak some English) just shrugged, "it's Greek to me". It appeared it was neither comprehensible, nor even amusing if comprehended. Since the play opened with this long, static monologue, we now appeared likely to divide much of the audience from the start and lose the very people we had been keeping in mind throughout our writing process.



The Wife, swept away in river, is ignored by the Husband.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

After this disastrous first reading, we realized that we had to simplify radically. One solution we considered was starting the play differently with a short exchange between the Husband and Wife, as this would engage both foreigners and Japanese at the start of the play and reassure Japanese audiences that more Japanese language was to come. However, we decided against this, as it would require extra rehearsal and more lines for Dôji, for which he had no time. The solution was for us to cut and simplify.

There was, however, one aspect of the rehearsal that reassured. Both Japanese actors had been nervous at the burden of the new lines but both could soon see that the rhythm and rhyme of the English made it easier to hear and remember cues. Maruishi, whose English is limited but whose ear is finely tuned, just noted the rhyming words and knew that the first part of the rhyme was like an amber light, the second green for go. In this he unconsciously repeated customs since Shakespeare's time, when actors, who were not given the entire script but only their own lines (parsimoniousness and protection from theft), would listen for the rhymed couplet which ended the previous scene to know their entrance cues.

Movement

Once the play had been read-through once, we could stand and begin acting. Rehearsal on adding movement to the play was more fruitful; we managed to make changes in the *nanori* and the quarrel between the Husband and Wife. Most kyogen begin with a *nanori* self-introductory prologue, which is delivered with no movement and very little expression. In *Susugigawa* the Husband quotes his wife ordering him to do the laundry. To improve the accessibility of the opening monologue, we developed some movement of the head from right to left while his voice impersonated the two, to recreate the episode being recounted more fully. Adding a couple of steps, a stamp and a raised arm as the Wife orders him to the river would be radical for a real kyogen but added something both readily comprehensible and visually dramatic for the audience.

When the Wife returned to find the Husband still doing the washing, we added slapstick violence. Usually, kyogen violence consists of throwing someone across the stage in a stylized fashion. In this case, we had the Wife grab the Husband and bang his head against a pillar, slap him repeatedly and then

finally throw him down kyogen-style, all in a very openly fake manner, with the Husband making stage slaps (striking his own chest) for sound-effects. At one point we let the Husband get carried away slapping himself while the Wife looks on bemused, even glancing at her “watch.” Such antics were antithetical to kyogen’s restrained aesthetic, to say the least, but are in tune with the farce’s European roots; we hoped it would make an amusing set piece that complemented the fusion, accessible to all. Indeed, we still maintained some sense of kyogen’s influence by keeping the movement characteristically economical, rhythmical, and frontal.

Last-minute tinkering: get thyself to a *nanori*

After the first rehearsal Salz’s initial priority was creating an integrated script for the actors with both English and Japanese words. Medlock’s task was to cut and simplify the *nanori* prologue. Although to show the editing process, we must go in perhaps overly pedantic detail for a text that, alas, is not Shakespeare, still we hope that discussing the challenges we faced, and their solutions, may demonstrate the tensions inherent in our endeavor, and serve as a road-map and compass for future attempts.

Below is the speech from the first rehearsal, clever but redundant and long.

1. I am a man who came to Japan
With a grand master plan.
I’d marry for money, settle down with my honey,
On this island kingdom and live like a monk.
5. Haiku and gardens, old frogs going plonk!
I would lead a life of elegant leisure
Enjoying traditional Japanese pleasures
Origami and shamisen, flowers and tea
And maybe a bit of Play Station 3.
10. So, I threw myself into the Kyoto world
And finally met an old-fashioned girl
I felt as lucky as a 4-leafed clover
14. And then I married her...game over.

Needing to get the play started with minimal prologue, there was no room for elaboration or decorative rhymes. Lines 3-9 contained various lines elaborating the previous one: line 5 elaborated the idea of his ideal life (as well as containing an imperfect rhyme Medlock did not favor), while lines 7-9 elaborated the “Japanese pleasures”. Lines 8-11 were then compressed into 2 lines, so the 11 original lines had now shrunk to six:

I am a man who came to Japan
With a very romantic plan.
To enter Kyoto’s traditional world
And find an old-fashioned Japanese girl
I tried nihonbuyo, ikebana then tea
Where I finally met the girl for me.

For a set-up to the bathetic punch line, “Then we got married-- (pause) disaster”, we then considered the following versions:

- I proposed to her, “OK sure” was her answer
- I told her “I love you”, “Me too” she answered

However, in the end we settled on a different couplet entirely:

I decided to marry. She said yes when I asked
her

Now we live with her mother...disaster.

The first half of the *nanori* was now shorter and simpler, but still metrically sound and with a good punch line. Other redundant or awkward lines were tweaked, with one couplet in particular becoming more dramatic than the original. Lines 28-9 were judged rather wordy and awkward to scan, so we looked for something simple and shortened line 28. We then considered developing the recollection of the Wife’s demands. Already we had her ordering him in line 26, the Husband’s request in 27-8 and her response in 29, a 3-part conversation. Now we thought of giving it 5 parts:

Why not a coin laundry or buy a machine?

(in Wife’s voice) “Dame!” (stamps and raises arm) /

(in pathetic Husband’s voice) “hai” /

(As wife again) “And bring them back clean!”

It would add some colour to the *nanori*. On reflection, however, we decided to limit the exchanges to 3, added an angry foot stamp and made the line simple and rhythmical so the couplet ran thus:

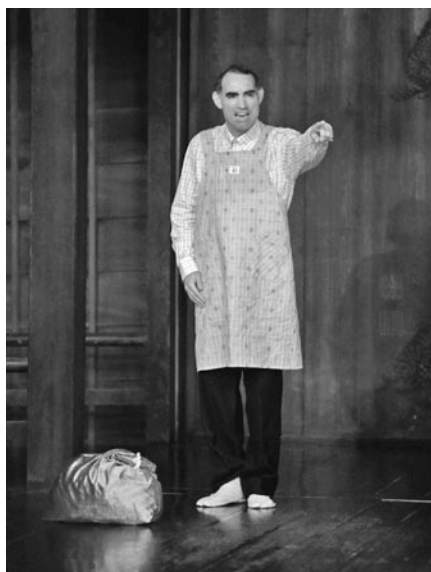
Why not a coin laundry or buy a machine?

(stamps and points offstage imperiously, impersonating Wife)

“Go to the river! And bring them back clean!”

We had shortened and simplified the speech from 271 words to 123, maintained the important plot points, sharpened the rhymes, and added a physical flourish that we expected to play well with monolingual spectators.

With the new script copied, the second rehearsal went quickly and well, with little time to polish any but the physical bits. Writer and director were now retired; it was now up to the performers.



The Husband recalls the Wife’s demands.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

Showtime!

The two performances on a holiday Monday had good crowds of 200 each despite a heavy downpour. As intended, *Henpecked Husband* was the comedic highlight of the program. From immediate responses of spectators, friends' spoken and emailed comments, and a few hundred student reports, we could gauge the success and failure quite minutely.

The prologue

We wanted the entire audience to be engaged by the *nanori*, despite it being in English, and had simplified it radically for that purpose. From the moment Medlock started speaking, he felt confident that the room was with him. Dressed in a pink apron, hair parted in the center like a beleaguered banker, his character seemed immediately transparent. Faced by a majority-Japanese audience, Medlock instinctively slowed his speech further, inserted more pauses and enunciated more clearly than in rehearsal. The first line provoked some titters as audiences perhaps adjusted to an English-language kyogen, then the line, "Now we live with her mother...disaster", drew the first big laugh. These quick chuckles, especially by native English speakers, were then joined by Japanese laughs with the entrance of the Wife. Each time, the characters, code-switched lines drew a spontaneous chuckle at the frisson, while the contradictory nature of the basic situation—clearly both foreigner and Japanese could understand each other even though they spoke primarily their own language—did not appear particularly absurd. As the show built towards climax, Medlock felt convinced that the potentially incongruous elements (traditional and modern, Japanese and foreign) had sustained an effective balance for surprise and amusement.

Rhyme

There was no way of knowing how the rhyme in general was being received unless it was an overtly comical rhyme, but most of the rhymes we expected to get laughs did so, including:

W: ...help the kids with their kanji homework.

H: English, please.

W: This is Nihon! (*with Mother-in-law*) Japanese!

Another strong rhyme was when the Husband, begged by the Mother-in-law to rescue the Wife, replies, "I must insist, I...check...the...list!" The combination of correct rhythm and comic rhyme, enunciated with emphasis at a dramatic high point, had a powerful synergistic effect.

Modern terms

As Medlock moved into the *michiyuki*, the modern rhymes with Hell and OL, Gion and Aeon provoked giggles and guffaws of recognition, as did the clever rhyme of "happy fellow" and "*Gaijin* cinderello". For the listing of the Husband's chores, "Feed the hogs, cut the logs, update our blogs" also received the loudest laugh. It seemed that, despite disrupting the medieval mood, these modern displacements were appreciated.

Mixing languages

An unanticipated reaction was that whenever the Husband spoke Japanese, it seemed to be met with laughter, even when Medlock repeated the Japanese onomatopoeia for washing clothes, “Gawa gawa”. Most of the audience had never seen *Susugigawa*, so were perhaps amused both by the verbal sound effect itself but also by the bizarreness of it being pronounced by a foreigner who had spoken only English up to that point. In fact, some of the most comically effective moments were when either the Mother-in-law or Medlock spoke each other’s languages, as when, early on, the displeased Mother-in-law mimicked the English with a strong Japanese accent and Medlock replied in equally heavily accented Japanese, followed by English with a Japanese accent. This back and forth between son-in-law and mother-in-law was repeated near the end with the outwitted old lady relenting, “Oh master *ja*, master *ja*” (*you’re master, you’re master*) and finally mangling Medlock’s first name, Timothy, as “Chimoshi” till Medlock dismissed her with “*eii wa*”, Osaka dialect for “That’s enough”. All these incongruities of a foreigner and Japanese switching and mangling each other’s languages and even their own proved to be a hit.

Fluently funny

Unlike the mishmash of languages above, Dôji, with his perfect pronunciation of both languages, did not get laughs from his switching. As with the anachronistic pink apron for the Husband, Dôji’s first English words, “Oh Tim, where are you dear?” drew some chuckles, but they soon subsided when he showed himself capable of switching effortlessly between languages. However, this bilingualism allowed for far greater comprehensibility, and created a neat bridging character between the mostly monolingual Husband and Mother-in-law, especially during the list-making scene.

The verdict

Comments in the questionnaire and personal feedback we received were mainly of two types, dealing with accessibility and unifying aspects:

Accessibility

It was easy to understand the classical comedies in slow, simple English. It was approachable, easy to follow, and friendly to the audience. One person even found it easier to follow than her native Japanese, while several Japanese members found the mixed linguistic nature of the script an enjoyable feature in itself. A foreign audience member commented that the approachability of the piece was “due to the quality of acting, and the ironic humor woven into the writing.” The rhythm and rhyme was fun, and created a light atmosphere, even in the midst of brutal squabbles. One Japanese audience member waxed lyrical: “As a rhythm continued, the rhythm swelled in my body and heart”, while others commented that regardless of whether they could catch the meaning of the rhymed words, they could hear that they rhymed, even occasionally anticipate the next rhyme, so that the English could be enjoyed for a purely sonic dimension regardless of meaning. As one person explained, “I received the sounds of words before I thought its meaning [sic].”

Inclusivity

The bilinguality’s inclusiveness led to “a sense of togetherness between players and passengers[sic],” the pleasure of laughing together. Medlock’s partner in Black Cheese praised it as “understandable to most

of the Japanese audience while simultaneously being funny to the native English speakers...effective in bringing both camps together.” Salz’ students wrote that they could enjoy laughing alongside foreigners at the same jokes, although they at first felt left out of the “insider” humor of the English-language prolog. They were proud to be able to share their Japanese culture, and also a little embarrassed not to know more about it.

Some commented on the show’s merit in introducing kyogen to a broader audience: one Japanese audience member said he was glad to see kyogen in a performance context for neither the financial or cultural elite, while a foreign audience member, “loved that it was a piece that gave non-natives the opportunity to experience the structure and traditions of kyogen along with feeling connected to the story, humor, and characterizations.” In a similar mode, another non-Japanese spectator appreciated the “universality of humor through cultural themes, such as henpecked husbands and styles of delivery like timing.”

However there was some criticism that the childishness of the singsong rhymes, vulgarity, and “cheap laughs” of modern terms broke the dignity and elegance of traditional kyogen, more British pantomime than classical comedy.

This did not bother Dôji, who has since attempted his own bilingual version of the play with himself as the English-speaking Husband. “It’s contemporary comedy—anything for laughs!” he opined. Dôji’s method is to choose words that his low-level English language learners will understand easily, even if they are not particularly elegant or even grammatical English sentences.¹⁵⁾

Conclusion

Rhyme was intrinsically entertaining for audiences, created tension and expectation at what would rhyme next, and amusement when anticipations were turned on their head, especially for unexpected words (eg. Gion and Aeon). Audience members commented that even if they couldn’t understand the meaning of words that rhymed, they could hear that the words rhymed, and so that created a para-lingual pleasure, an English equivalent of kyogen’s characteristic *niji agari*, the second-syllable (or cluster) stress, whose inflexions give form and appeal to kyogen’s words, whether one can understand a word or not. Also, critically, the rhyming schemes, though loose, created framework for the rhythm, which was just as important in giving structure and life to the lines. Most of the audience seemed to be carried along by the meter, laughing at the rhyming bumps in the road. The slow and careful vocal delivery was excused by kyogen’s own conventions and offset, for those proficient English speakers, by the amusement of the rhymes.

It was totally unexpected that the Japanese audiences would enjoy the rhymes for their own sonic value, whether they could be understood or not and, moreover, that the rhythmic, rhyming structure should be an aid to comprehension rather than an obstacle, but that is what some Japanese acquaintances (with mid-range English) assured us. What’s more, the use of modern references and the occasional vulgar element only heightened their entertainment value, creating something that was kyogen-like in its compressed simplicity but harking back to the play’s slightly rougher roots.

Intolerance of incomprehension is key. Such intolerance is heavily cultivated by Japanese language education, which tends to allow little place for vagueness and relies heavily on detailed explanation of the whole of texts. Nor is this attitude limited to foreign languages, as can be seen with the high level of subtitling (of Japanese!) that occurs on Japanese television, as well as the availability of rented earphone

guides at kabuki performances, so audience members can hear antiquated language translated into modern terms for 100 % comprehension, a technical aid undreamt of at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. Foreigners living in Kyoto, on the other hand, already know the frustrations of daily incomprehension and can tune in or out accordingly. They could participate in an authentic Japanese experience, aided with our careful bilingual mixing, clear speaking and strongly visual staging.

It is commonplace to observe that theatre is a public event which brings private people together in a shared moment. But when a bilingual piece manages to unite a linguistically diverse audience in common understanding and shared laughter, the feeling of bridges suddenly spanning distant people is stronger and allows for a deeper emotional dimension to an apparently light moment.

If the unity of actor and audience in *ittaikan* (一体感、togetherness) is often seen as the ultimate goal of good comedy in Japan, our more complex weaving of British, modern, and Japanese tradition meant spectators had various degrees of estrangement, alienation, and conversely familiar laughs. One might say the performance ideal of bilingual comedy is strange familiarity.

Notes

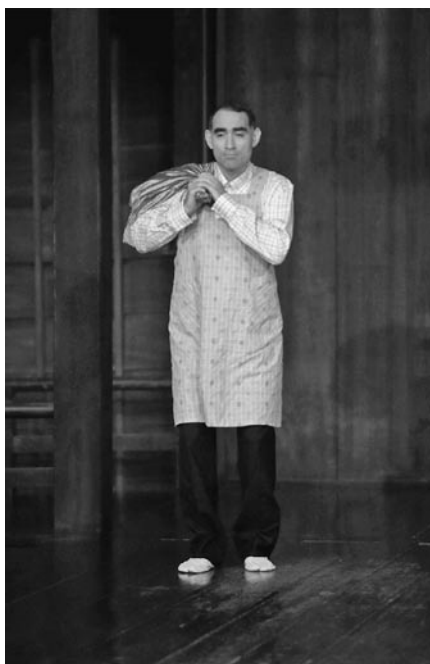
- 1) *Kyogen yakusha: Hinekure handaiki*. Iwanami Bunko, 1987: 124.
- 2) Julie Iezzi provides an overview in *Asian Theatre Journal* (2007) (24:1)
- 3) The *yoshi*, typically a second or younger son, gives up his family name and house when marrying into the bridal family, a normally weak feminine structural position, often the butt of society, and of kyogen, humor.
- 4) *Nanori*: an expository opening speech in which a character identifies himself and his purpose. *Michiyuki*: a fixed movement pattern in which a character walks from the upstage left pillar of the *noh* stage to the downstage one, along the front of the stage and then cuts across the middle of the stage back to the starting point, thus tracing a triangle and signifying a journey taken. Typically during the *michiyuki*, a character comments on their dilemma with throwaway grumbling lines.
- 5) OL is an abbreviation for Office Lady: a once popular term for female office worker.
- 6) Japanese loan word for condominium.
- 7) Historical entertainment district of Kyoto.
- 8) Nationwide chain of English schools that typically employ recently-arrived Anglophone foreigners.
- 9) Chinese characters used in combination with native phonetic syllabary.
- 10) In fact, the Japanese idiomatic expression is, “even if a man looks like a chopstick with eyes and nose stuck onto it, a man is still a man,” but this had somehow changed over the years of mistranslating, and we liked it that way.
- 11) Salz discusses the various pulls of authenticity to rhythm, meaning, tone, and, humor found in versions of Moliere’s *Tartuffe* in “Timing is everything: translating Japanese kyôgen for page and stage”, Nana Sato-Rossberg et.al., ed. *Multiple Translation Communities in Contemporary Japan*. St. Jerome’s, forthcoming.
- 12) Maintaining kyogen’s rhythms through translation to Shakespearean iambic pentameter is attempted and analyzed in Kamizawa Kazuaki’s “Research on Kyogen Performances in English-Translating and Acting Kyogen plays in English” (Nara National College of Technology Kenkyu Kiyo No.44 (2008): 73-83.
- 13) A trochee is a metrical foot of two syllables, the first being long, the second short. Tetrameter indicates a line consisting of four metrical units or feet.
- 14) An iamb is a metrical foot of two syllables, the first being short, the second long. Dimeter indicates a line consisting of two metrical units or feet.
- 15) Personal interview, Kyoto, July 24 2012

Henpecked Husband: Saving Daughter from the Water

Adapted from the French farce Le Cuvier by Iizawa Tadasu, adapted to kyogen Susugigawa by the Shigeyama Family, translated to rhymed text by Timothy Medlock and Jonah Salz.

(Husband [H] enters carrying a bag of washing, walks down hashigakari,¹⁾ then stops at name-saying place.)

1 H I am a man who came to Japan
with a very romantic plan:
to enter Kyoto's traditional world
and find an old-fashioned Japanese
girl.
I tried *nihon buyo*²⁾, *ikebana*³⁾, then
tea
where I found the perfect girl for me.
I decided to marry, she said yes when I
asked her.
Now we live together with her mother -
disaster
Now I'm bossed around all over town,
night and day, up and down.
Today I'm asked this awful task:
"Do the laundry, by hand!"
What? In this high-tech land?!
Why not a "coin laundry" or buy a machine?
(stamps and points offstage imperiously, impersonating Wife)
"Go to the river and bring them back clean!"
Oh dear, oh dear, what a mess I'm in—
but no use complaining, I'd better begin.
(starts anti-clockwise triangular walk around stage)
Oh, how did I get myself into this hell?
Why didn't I marry a nice OL?
We could live in a mansion, go drinking in Gion,⁴⁾
I could teach English part-time at Aeon.⁵⁾
Live a life that is modern, convenient and
not doing laundry outside by hand.
Oh, I dreamt of being a happy fellow.



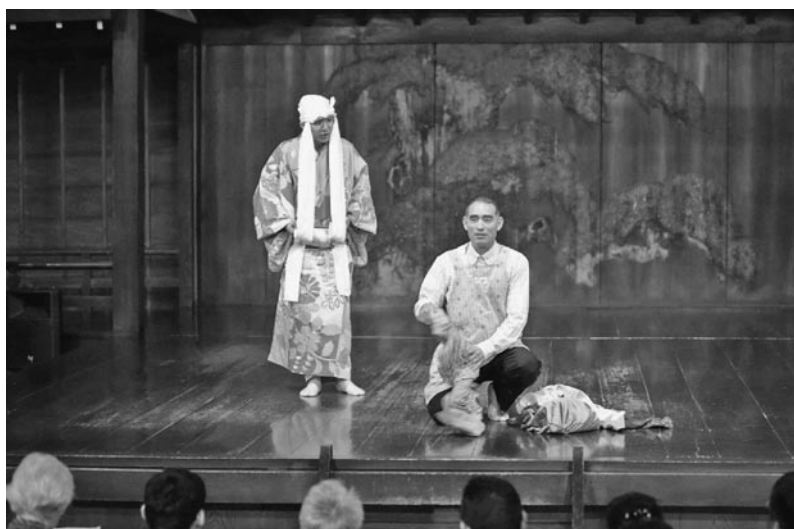
The henpecked Husband takes his laundry to the river, grumpily.

(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

-
- 1) Walkway from the curtain to the edge of the Noh stage
 - 2) Japanese traditional dance
 - 3) Art of flower arrangement
 - 4) Expensive geisha drinking area of Kyoto
 - 5) leading language school

Instead, I'm *gaijin*⁶⁾ Cinderello.
 Well, what do you know? I've reached the river.
 Just one look at that water makes me shiver.
 Oh my God, these clothes stink!
 How they got that way, I don't want to think.
 Well I'd better begin, no buts, ands, or ifs
(empties bag of laundry and starts miming dredging it in the river)
Gawa,
*gawa, goshi, goshi, zabuzabu.*⁷⁾
(looks at hands and blows on them)
 Ahh! My hands and feet are frozen stiff.
Gawa,
gawa, goshi, goshi, abuzabu
(Enter Wife (W))

- 2 W いや申し申しこれのう、これのうはどれに御座るぞ。いや申し申しこれのう、
 このうはどれに御座るぞ。Tim はどれにおります。
- 3 H Here's my wife. I should run for my life.
- 4 W いや申し申しこれのう、これのうはどこに御座るぞ。いや申し申しこれのう、これのう
 どれに御座るぞ。...Oh darling! Dear? Are you there?
- 5 H Yes, dear, over here.
- 6 W ヤ、其方はまだ濯ぎ物をしていさしますか。



The Wife checks that the Husband is doing his chores properly.
 (写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

- 7 H No need to scold, I'm about to fold...
- 8 W Just do as your told.

6) foreigner (lit. "outside person")

7) Onomatopoeic words for "wash, wring, rub"

ノウ仏経や仏経や。わずかそればかりの物が、未だ終われぬということがあるものかいや
い、あるものかいやい。

9 H *(to himself)* Wash, dry, fold, wash, dry, fold, it's bloody cold!

10 W これは如何なこと。今日は蕎麦を打たねばならぬによって、早う濯ぎ物を終うて粉をひいて
下されいと、あれ程申したでは御座らぬか。

11 H Yes, there's flour to grind. It's not slipped my mind.
I'm following the plan as best I can.

12 W 埒の明かぬ人じゃ。何をグジグジしていさしますぞ。さてさて早う洗わぬか、早う洗わぬ
か。

13 H Alright! I'll rush, I'll finish the wash!! *Gawagawagawa...*

14 W それならば、またじきに見回りにくるほどに、それまでに濯ぎ物をしもうて、蕎麦粉をひい
ておかしめや。Don't slack off: finish that stack before I get back.

ノウ腹立ちや、腹立ちや。腹立ちや、腹立ちや。

(Wife exits. Husband follows her to the edge of the stage and shouts after her)

15 H I'm finishing now! —You stupid cow. *(turns front)*

Why not leave her? She sponsors my visa.

Well, no time to waste, I'd better make haste,

To finish the stack or she'll come back to attack.

(returns downstage to washing)

Gawagawagawagoshi goshi zabu zabu zabu

(enter Mother-in-law (ML))

16 ML 婿殿。婿殿はどれに御座るぞ。いや申し婿殿。婿殿はどれに御座るぞ。……

Ahoy, ahoy, sonny boy! いや申し婿殿。婿殿はどれに御座るぞ。

17 H Oh no! This is unbearable! My wife is bad, but her mother's terrible!

18 ML Ahoy, ahoy, sonny boy!

19 H Yes, mother-in-law, did I hear you call?

20 ML 何じゃそれに居りゃったか。居るなら居ると早う言わぬか。

ヤァ、和御寮はまだその濯ぎ物をしていさしますか。

21 H Sorry, this pile will still take awhile.

22 ML これは如何なこと。昨日申し付けたを早お忘りゃったか。

23 H Something forgot? I think not.

24 ML “*I thinku notto*”?!—*idiotto!*

今は風呂を立つるによって水を汲うでおけとあれ程申したでは御座らぬか。

25 H Oh yes, of course, the bath water.

But look at all this from your daughter!

26 ML 和御寮は親に向こうて答えをするな。総別この間内より甘やかいておくによってのことじゃ。

今日は散々に鬬ってやりましょう。イヤー、イヤー。

(threatens with walking stick)

27 H I'm not talking back; I'll do the stack. *(cowering)*

28 ML それは誠か。

29 H 誠で御座る。

30 ML 真実か。

31 H I promise!



The Mother-in-Law doesn't permit backtalk.
(写真：村中 修／ Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

(the Husband continues washing while the Mother-in-law beats time increasingly fast with her stick, then turns and slowly walks offstage)

- 32 ML それならばまたじきに戻ってくる程にそれまでに終もうておかずば今夜の飯は抜きですぞ、世の中に男はたくさんいると言うになんであのような愚鈍なイギリス人を娘の婿に持たねばならぬことじゃ知らぬ。これと存じていたならば浄土真宗のイケメンでも婿に取ったものを近頃残念なことで御座る。ああ因果なことじゃ。仏様のお導きはどこへ行っただろうなあ。南無阿弥陀仏…

- 33 H You wish she wasn't married to me?
(follows Mother-in-law to the edge of the stage and shouts after her)
For once, old bag, I quite agree!
(turns to audience)
Bashed by my wife, smashed by the mother.
It's always some trouble from one or the other.
Still. My wife is coming back at high noon.
I'm doomed if I don't finish soon.
(hurries back downstage and continues washing)
Gawagawagawa, goshi goshi goshi
(Wife re-enters)

- 34 W 最前これの男にきっと申し付けて御座るによって、最早濯ぎ物を終うた時分で御座ろう。参ってこれを見ようと存ずる。いや申し申しこれのう、最早濯ぎ物は終われましたか。

- 35 H No, my pet. Not quite yet.

- 36 W 何じゃまだ終わぬ。己は憎いやつの。

(grabs him: slapstick routine follows ending with Husband thrown across stage)

最前あれ程言うておきながら、未だ終われぬということがあるものかいや、あるものかいやい。

- 37 H But wait, dear: your mother was just here—

- 38 W それが何とした。
- 39 H So which had priority:
do what she said to do, or what you told me?
- 40 W はて知れたこと、妾の用は先じゃ。
- 41 H But I didn't know which to do:
water for her? Flour for you?
(the Wife advances on the Husband who ducks and exchanges places with her)
- 42 W ハーハー、すれば其方は母様は怖い、妾は怖くないか。…
- 43 H No, you're scary, scary enough.
But she's really, really tough...
- 44 W それならば、なぜに妾の用を先にせぬのじゃ。*(the same action is repeated)*
- 45 H But if I do as you say, she'll beat me all day.
- 46 W 妾は怖うないかというに。母様は怖うて、妾は怖うないかというに。
- 47 H Etcetera, etcetera W などなど、などなど
(the same lines and action are repeated until the Mother-in-law re-enters)
- 48 ML これは如何なこと、あれに娘と婿が何やら諍こうている。これこれ、其方達は何をその様に
諍かうていさしますぞ。
- 49 W エイ母様。此方様はこれティムに何ぞ申し付けられましたか。
- 50 ML 中々。今日は風呂を立つるによって水を汲めと申し付けました。
- 51 W また妾は、蕎麦を打たねばならぬによって、早う濯ぎ物を終うて粉を引いて下されいして御
座れば、とやこう申して、え致しませぬ。
(the pair advance on the Husband with each exchange)
- 52 ML これは如何なこと、水を汲うだ後は、薪を割ってもらわねばなりませぬ。
- 53 W 粉を引いた後は、米を搗いてもらわねばなりませぬ。
- 54 ML 薪を割った後は、風呂炊きじゃ。
- 55 W 米を搗いた後は、拭き掃除でおりやる。
- 56 ML 風呂炊き後は…。
(the Husband rushes upstage through them and turns around)
- 57 H Wait, wait, wait! With both of you yelling at the same time
Atama no naka ga seiri dekinai n.
- 58 W Is it so much to ask a few tasks?
- 59 ML 己、僅かこればかりの事が、覚えられぬということが、…
- 60 W,ML あるものかいヤイ、あるものかいヤイ。
- 61 H May I suggest you just make a list?
- 62 W 何じゃ、紙に書きつけい。
- 63 H The best way, I've found, is to write it all down.
Listing it all makes it easy to recall.
- 64 ML うーん。いや、これはこれは日頃愚鈍な婿殿には似合わぬ、良い分別を思い付いたこじゃ。
幸いこれに、紙と筆とがある。おごうこれへ書きつけてやらしめ。
(the Mother-in-law sits down, takes a sheet of paper out of her kimono and hands it to the Wife who sits across stage and takes out a fan as a brush to mime writing the list)
- 65 W 心得ました。それならば、妾も思い出して書きましよう程に、母様も書き落としの無いよう
に、思い出して云うてくだされい。



The Mother-in-law and Wife pile on chores.
(写真：村中 修／ Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

- 66 ML お一書き落としの無いようにせねばならん。
- 67 W Well, when the cock crows, it's time you rose...
- 68 ML お一、一番鶏が鳴いたならば、早々に起きずばなるまい。
- 69 H Sorry to interrupt—but who's getting up?
- 70 W はて知れたこと、其方が起きるのじゃ。
- 71 H That's surely early!
- 72 ML 起きたならば、雨戸をくり、前裁へ水を打ってもらいましょう。
- 73 W After you wake, there's bread to bake, and beds to make.
- 74 H Haaaa.
- 75 ML 飯が炊けたならば、妾達を起こいて、その床を上げさしめ。
- 76 W Boil the rice, then slice and dice the veggies nice.
- 77 ML それより薪割り、衣濯ぎ。
- 78 W Cut the logs, feed the hogs, update our blogs.
- 79 ML 牛馬に、えさを飼い、にわとりにも餌をやってもらいましょうな。
- 80 W Sow the seeds, pull the weeds, trim the trees.
- 81 MW まだある、まだある。市場への買い出し、味噌醤油、漬け物の仕込み。
- 82 W Feed the cow and horse, of course
The children's laundry's all for you, And don't forget the diapers, too.
- 83 ML その上妾は年寄ったかして目が霞むによって、もう子供の読み書きは大事じゃ。孫の漢字の読み書きは、これは、婿殿にしてもらいましょうな。
- 84 W Yes, mama's eyes have grown weak, so help the children with their kanji homework.
- 85 H Homework? With ease. But English, please!
- 86 W,ML ここは日本じゃ！：Japanese!
- 87 H Hai!
- 88 W Well, mama. Is that all?
- 89 ML うーん。妾は一人の孫では寂しいな、後二人か三人の孫の顔が見たいものじゃな (giggles)

- 頼むぞや！ (*nods at Husband*)
- 90 W Oh yes, let's jot the you-know-what. (*smiles lasciviously*)
- 91 H ...
- Oh that! Let's not be crude.
- Maybe once a year, if I'm in the mood.
- 92 W No! No! Three times a day! (*writing it down, coyly*)
- 93 H Not three nor two not one—No way! (*crosses arms over chest*)
- 94 W You weakling!
- 95 ML 弱虫めが。
- 96 W You wimp...
- (*pointing at him with fan, then making a limp gesture with the dangled fan*)
- 97 H Alright. (*bows*) But I'll walk with a limp...
- (*the women giggle*)
- 98 W これもしてもらいましょう。さて、もう御座らぬか。
- 99 ML うーん。もう無さそうな。
- 100 W それならばこれにて留めておきまする。さあさあ、これへ書き付けて置きました。
- 101 H And you're certain now it's all written down?
- 102 W なかなか。書き落としはしない。
- 103 H But if a certain task is not written here,
- what happens then? Please make it clear.
- 104 W はて知れたこと、書いてない用事はせいでもようおりやる。
- 105 H If it's not there, no need to care.
- 106 W なかなか。
- 107 H Right. If that's the case, I know my place.
- I'll tuck it away, neat and nice,
- you'll never have to ask me twice.
- (*he takes the list and tucks it into his apron*)
- If it's on the list, I promise.
- 108 W さあさあ、早よう終わしめ。
- (*the Husband returns to the washing and continues the task cheerfully*)
- 109 ML それならば、妾達戻りましょうかな。
- 110 W 心得ました。
- 111 ML さあさあ、おりやれ、おりやれ。
- 112 W 参りまする、参りまする。
- (*the pair head upstage*)
- 113 ML これで妾達は一日なにもせいで、楽々と暮さるるというものじゃ。
- 114 W あの様な愚鈍な男は、藪を蹴ても五人や七人は蹴出しましょうが、心延えの素直なところだけが取柄で御座る。
- 115 ML その通りじゃ。
- (*they laugh till the Husband overhears and throws a kimono in the river*)
- 116 H Oh my god!!
- 117 W&ML 何とした、何とした。
- 118 H A kimono, I dropped it, it's floating, I can't stop it...



The Wife rushes to catch her kimono, floating away.
(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

- 119 W 何じゃ、小袖が流れた。あれは妾の大切な小袖じゃ。早う拾わぬか早う拾わぬか。とれ！
- 120 H Don't worry, I'll get it—
- 121 W Forget it—I'll get it myself.
- 122 ML これは如何なこと、気を付けさしめや、気を付けさしめや。
- 123 H Take care! Beware! Don't slip on those stairs...
(the Wife mimes stepping into the river, falling and being washed away)
- 124 W あー、悲しや、悲しや…。
- 125 H She goes with the flow...
(the Husband coolly returns to the washing and continues the task in a serene fashion. The Mother-in-law rushes to him)
- 126 ML これは如何なこと。やいやい婿殿、娘を助けてやらぬか、助けてやらぬか。
- 127 H What are you raving? A woman needs saving?
- 128 ML なかなか。
- 129 H Then I must insist, I check that list.
(takes out list and begins to sing to the tune of "Yellow Submarine")
Rise and shine when the rooster crows.
Make the beds, bake the bread, fix bentos.
Hull the rice, slice and dice, make the veggies very nice,
Boil them twice, that should suffice... *(the Mother-in-law futilely rushes to her daughter's aid, then back to the apparently oblivious Husband)*
- 130 ML これは如何なこと。やいやいおごう、今妾が助けてやりましょう。これへ取りつかしめこれ取りつかしめ。あー悲しやな、悲しやな。ヤイヤイ、早う助けて遣らぬか、助けて遣らぬか。
- 131 H 姦しい。Kashimashii! So noisy!
You made such a fuss I forgot where I was!



The Husband checks whether “saving a wife from drowning” is written on list of responsibilities.

(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

(continues singing)

Rise and shine, when the rooster crows.

Make the beds, bake the bread, fix bentos.

Hull the rice, slice and dice, make the veggies very nice.

Boil them twice. That should suffice.

Feed the hogs, then the hogs.

Don't forget to update the blogs.

(Mother-in-law again futilely tries to help her daughter, then returns to Husband)

132 ML これは如何なこと。やいやいおごう、今妾が助けてやりましょう。これへ取りつかし、これへ取りつかしめ。あー悲しやな、悲しやな。これこれ婿殿。今娘が川へ嵌まって流るるというに、文などを読むでいるということがあるものかいやい、あるものかいやい。

133 H I'm just checking to see if I oughter
save an underwater daughter.

134 ML その様な事は書いて無いやい。

135 H So, “rescuing a drowning woman”, in fact,
is not written down on this contract?

136 ML なかなか。

137 H What? Not there? Then, who cares?

If it's not on the list, *(throws it down)* I resist.

138 ML これは妾達が悪しかった。何卒堪忍をして、娘を助けてやっておくりゃれ、助けてやておくりゃれ。

139 H Hmm. Save the life of a drowning wife?

Then from now on not a peep about me being cheap.

140 ML 申しませぬ、申しませぬ。

141 H And from here on after I shall be Lord and Master!

- 142 ML ああ Master じゃ、Master じゃ (*bows down*) *ai puromisu*.
早う助けてやっておくりゃれ、助けてやっておくりゃれ。
- 143 H And finally, mama: it's Timothy-sama.
- 144 ML チモ……。ティモ… (*mispronounces name several ways*)
- 145 H *Maa. Eiiwa!*
Now I've revived my macho pride,
I shall leap to save my newfound bride.
Your hero's here just in the nick.
Darling, quick! Grab this stick!
Alley alley oop—
(*extends walking stick towards Wife which she seizes and is then slowly pulled centre stage*)



After assurances that he is now Lord and Master of the house, the Husband rescues his wife.

(写真：村中 修／Photo：Osamu Muranaka)

- 146 W エイエイ、ヤットナ。(*stamps and brandishes stick*) You sonovabitch!!
- 147 H Well that's a switch.
- 148 W 己は妾が河原にはまったにあの様なものを読んでいることがあるものかいいい、あるものかいいい！ (*Mother-in-law tries to pacify Wife*)
- 148 H Oi! Is that anyway to speak to your lord and master? (*gingerly stamps in her direction*)
- 149 W You bastard! Now let's see who's faster. (*tries to hit Husband but accidentally hits Mother-in-law and then chases Husband across and offstage*)
- 150 H I was acting funny. *Gomen ne*. [sorry]
- 151 W やるまいぞ、やるまいぞ、*You won't get away, you won't get away!*
(*chases Husband down hashigakari and offstage*)
- 152 H *Yurusareirarei*, (*turns to audience*) that sure is hard to say, *yurusarerarei...*
(*Mother-in-law picks up chore list, tears it up then scrunches it into a ball to toss before exiting*)
[Please forgive me]