

Puppet Faust in Japan in 1919–1949

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The puppet Faust that inspired Goethe was also staged in twentieth-century Japan. Of the several productions, this paper focuses on two versions made in 1919 and 1949. The staging of puppet Faust in Japan—and especially these two productions—reflects the major changes in theory and practice which German and Japanese puppet theaters underwent in the first half of 20th century. Since the modern history of Japanese puppet theater has received limited scholarly attention, and puppet Faust in Japan has never been discussed as a subject, this paper aims to present the facts about these productions and their context in the history of puppetry. Additionally, it will discuss the significance of the creation of Japanese puppet Faust in light of the circumstances around the country’s performing arts at that time.

1. Puppet Faust in Japan 1919

Puppet theater and the Bando POW in Tokushima

The earliest record of Faust performed as a puppet play in Japan is the one in the Bando POW (prisoner-of-war) camp in Tokushima on May 2 (and the following days), 1919 (Fig. 1)¹. During World War II, from September to November 1914, Japan and Germany fought in Qingdao, Qing China, and the Germans surrendered on November 06, 1914. Subsequently 4,791 soldiers were sent from Qingdao to POW camps all over Japan. Of the 12 camps throughout Japan (later consolidated into six), the Bando POW camp, in particular, was known as the “*Musterlager*,” where German soldiers could engage in cultural activities in a relatively humane environment that brought many new cultures and technologies to Japan.² It is known that the Japanese premiere of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was held there. Tokushima is now being promoted as the “Home of the Ninth,”³ and if we



Fig. 1 Front page of the brochure for the show “Das Puppenspiel vom Doktor Faust.”

- ¹ Schmidt, Hans-Joachim. „Tsingtau und Japan 1914 bis 1920. Historisch Biographisches Projekt. Kurzbiographien.“ Retrieved February 10, 2021, from <http://www.tsingtau.info/index.html?lager/ban-veranstaltungen1.htm>
- ² Rüfer, Helmut, und Wolf Rungas, *Handbuch der Kriegsgefangenenpost Tsingtau*. Poststempelgilde “Rhein-Donau” e.V., Düsseldorf 1964. p 37. Cf. Tomita, Hiroshi. *Bando furyo shuyo jo. Nichidoku senso to zainichi doitsu furyo*. [Bando POW Camp: German-Japanese War and German Prisoners of War in Japan], Hosei University Press, 1991.
- ³ Tokushima Prefecture Tourism Association, “Daiku no furusato Naruto” [Naruto, the Home of the Ninth.] Retrieved February 10, 2021, from <https://www.awanavi.jp/site/midokoro/daiku.html>

follow this example, we may consider Tokushima as the “Home of puppet Faust.”

The connection between Tokushima and Faust may seem outlandish, but the connection between Tokushima and puppetry is not. Along with Awaji and Osaka, Tokushima has always been the center of Japan’s traditional puppet theater, *ningyo-joruri*. At its peak in the early Meiji period (1860s–1870s), it had more than 60 puppet theaters⁴ and later produced puppeteers such as Oe Minosuke IV (1907–1997), who created most of the Bunraku heads that are still being used today. Moreover, the *Ningyo-joruri* Museum is now located only 10 km from the former camp site. Coincidentally, it was in this mecca of Japanese puppetry that puppet Faust was first performed by German prisoners of war.

What was the puppet Faust like in the camp, which was 9,000 kilometers away from Germany? A few documents that have survived reveal that the show, despite being in Japan and in the confined environment of a prison camp, strongly reflected the tendencies of the German puppet theater of the same period and became the earliest performance of European “artistic” puppetry in Japan.

Western puppetry as spectacle in Japan

Before the Bando POW camp, D’Arc from Dublin—the first Western puppet troupe to come to Japan⁵—performed in 1894 at the *Hanayashiki*, a popular amusement park in Asakusa, Tokyo. Their performances were so well received in Tokyo that some prominent poets and writers recall having seen the show as children,⁶ and a *kabuki* actor Kikugoro Onoe V dressed up as one of D’Arc’s puppets onstage.⁷

However, given the location of *Hanayashiki*, the performance was more of a spectacle than a puppet theater for the Japanese. *Bunraku* or any other regional forms of traditional *ningyo-joruri* had never been performed there, but only the traditional marionette theater *Youki-za* did around 1912, quitting after seven days and regretfully saying, “I don’t want to squeeze the animals out of their pay.”⁸ Unlike the Japanese puppet theaters of the time, D’Arc regarded itself not as a stage artist but as a showman or entertainer. Japanese newspapers at the time also advertised it as a kind of spectacle: “The magic of Turks, peculiar musical ensemble, dances by a group of beautiful women, tricks of an old Lilliput woman, and many other strange and wonderful things.”⁹

The puppet theater in Bando in 1919 had a different orientation than the D’Arc Theater in 1894 did. Instead of a spectacle, they aspired to a new trend in German puppet theater that had emerged

⁴ Nakanishi, Keijiro. “Atan no deko shibai” [Puppet Shows in Awa and Awaji]. *Awa no deko*, ed. Michio Nakanishi. Gallery Gohachi, 1971. p.18.

⁵ The name used in Europe was “D’Arc’s Marionettes and Waxworks.” Cf. Speaight, George. *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*. London: George Harrap, 1955; Illinois: Robert Hale/South Illinois University Press, 1990. pp. 250–252, 254, 257, 262; “D’Arc’s Marionette,” retrieved February 10, 2021, from <https://wepa.unima.org/en/darcs-marionettes/>; Cf. Kato, Akiko. *Nihon no ningyo geki 1867–2007* [Japanese Puppet Theater 1867–2007]. Hosei Univ. Press, 2007. pp. 27–39.

⁶ Hagiwara, Sakutarō. “*Daaku ayatsuri ningyo insho-ki*” [Impressions on D’Arc] *MARIONNETTE*, vol. 2, no. 2 Kyodo engeki kyokai, 1931, pp. 69–76; Akutagawa, Ryunosuke. *Shuju no kotoba*. Bungeishunju-sha, 1927. p. 181.

⁷ Yanai, Kenji. *Meiji Kiwamono Kabuki: Soratobu Godaime Kikugoro* [Kiwamono Kabuki in Meiji: The Flying Kikugoro V]. Hakusuisha, 2009, pp. 156–157.

⁸ Yuki, Magosaburo. *Itoyatsuri* [Marionette]. Seiabo, 1966. p. 45.

⁹ “Eikoku daaku ichiza ayatsuri ningyo kyokugei” [The British D’Arc Troupe’s Puppet Acrobatics]. *Tokyo Asahi*, May 18, 1894, p. 6.

since the twentieth century: artistic puppet theater.

German artistic puppet theater

As for German puppetry, the popular puppet theater before the nineteenth century, which influenced the creation of Goethe's *Faust*, is the best known; however, the history of German puppetry did not cease after Goethe. At the end of the nineteenth century, modern puppet theater emerged in Europe,¹⁰ for example, Henri Rivière's shadow play at the literary café Chat Noir in Paris from 1887 to 1897, or Maeterlinck's statement in 1890 that "we have to remove the live being from the stage" and the subsequently published puppet play scripts.¹¹ This reevaluation and recreation of puppet theater was also introduced in Germany. It seems that by the time Paul Legband's article, entitled "The Puppet Renaissance," appeared in *Das Literarische Echo* in 1906,¹² the rise of artistic puppetry in Germany was already widely acknowledged. Two years later, the April 1908 issue of *The Mask* included Craig's famous article on the *Über-Marionette*.

The puppet theater in Bando was not ignorant of the trend. In April 1918, the announcement of its first performance was made in the periodical issued in the camp, *Die Baracke*, describing the contemporary situation of puppet theater in Germany in detail. A Munich-born contributor, "Ldt," wrote, "For a long series of years we have found in Munich a puppet theater that stands at a significant artistic height and also opens its stage to serious play,"¹³ and he mentioned three puppet theaters, namely Schmidtsche Marionettentheater,¹⁴ Puppentheater Münchner Künstler,¹⁵ and Puppentheater von der Ostfront des II. Bayerisches Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiments.¹⁶ These three "artistic puppet theaters" were the role models of the puppet theater in Bando, which took over their repertoire, the

¹⁰ Stadtler, Edmund. "Puppentheater." *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*. Walter de Gruyter. 2001. pp. 289–315. See especially p. 309.

¹¹ Jurkowski, Henryk. *A history of European puppetry*. Vol. 2. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998. pp. 19–20.

¹² Legband, Paul, "Die Renaissance der Marionette." *Das Literarische Echo. Halbmonatsschrift für Literaturfreunde*. 9. Jahrgang: Heft 4. 15. November 1906. pp. 248–258.

¹³ *Die Baracke*, Bd. II, Nr. 4. 21. April 1918. pp. 98–100. The quotations below of *Die Baracke* are from the following edition: *Die Baracke. Zeitung für das Kriegsgefangenenlager Bando, Japan*. 2. neu transkribierte Ausgabe. (CD-ROM edition published by the Naruto-shi Doitsu-kan, 2006).

¹⁴ The first permanent puppet theater in Germany was established in 1858. It was intended for children and produced high-quality performances based on the excellent scripts by Franz von Pocci, who was also the music director at the Royal House of Bavaria. The theater gave orientation for an artistic reform of the puppet show after the twentieth century. Cf. Wegner, Manfred. "Künstlerisches Marionettenspiel im Anschluss an das 'J. Schmidtsche Marionettentheater' ('Münchner Marionettentheater') von Josef Leonhard Schmid." *Handbuch zum Künstlerischen Puppenspiel 1900–1945*. Hrsg. von Manfred Wegner. München: Utzverlag, 2019. pp. 83–91.

¹⁵ The theater, which made its debut in 1906, took over some of Schmidt's plays, further promoted the art of puppetry, employed artists from various genres, raised the standard of puppetry to create a "Gesamtkunstwerk" under the influence of Reinhardt, and became a representative of German artistic puppetry. Cf. Erbeling, Mascha. "Brann, Paul" *Handbuch zum Künstlerischen Puppenspiel 1900–1945*, pp. 21–33.

¹⁶ The company began performing on the Eastern Front in December 1917 and was so well received that it was sent on tour to Livonia, Estonia, and Courland, even receiving an audience with Leopold of Bavaria. The company's repertoire included literary works such as *Faust*, Hans Sachs's *Nine Carnival Plays*, and Hofmannsthal's *der Tor und der Tod* (1893). Cf. Boehn, Max von, *Puppenspiele*. München: F. Bruckmann AG 1929. pp. 241–245; Wegner, Manfred, "Künstlerisches Puppenspiel und Erster Weltkrieg," *Handbuch zum Künstlerischen Puppenspiel 1900–1945*, p. 114.

plays of Hans Sachs and Franz von Pocci, and the puppet *Faust*.

Puppet Faust in Bando

Bando hosted three shows in total: *Der Teufel nahm ein altes Weib* by Hans Sachs, *Kasperl unter den Wilden* by Franz von Pocci, and puppet *Faust*. On May 21, 1919, puppet *Faust* was played as their last performance before returning to Germany. Two of the captives, Carl Heinrich Geschke (1895–1981) and Curt Laetzsch (date of birth/ death unknown) were leading the puppet theater activities in Bando,¹⁷ and they spent three months preparing a new stage set and “the large number of 35–40-cm-tall figures” for *Faust*.¹⁸

The puppets used in Bando’s puppet *Faust* were included in the catalog of the exhibition “*Faust auf der Bühne. Faust in der bildenden Kunst*” held in Braunschweig in 1929 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the premiere of *Faust I*.¹⁹ However, the puppets are nowhere to be found, and only a few photographs (Fig. 2, 3)²⁰ and a review of the play by “S” in the May 1919 issue of *Die Baracke* (Fig. 4)²¹ recalling the event remain.

While “S” praises the “inventiveness and skill” of the sculpture of puppets and the “remarkable perfection” of manipulation, he also writes that many audiences who came expecting to see Goethe’s *Faust* would have been surprised and somewhat disappointed, wondering, “Ist das denn der Faust?” In 1919, a century after the first performance of the first part of Goethe’s *Faust* in 1819, neither popular nor puppet theater *Faust* but Goethe’s *Faust* was engraved in people’s minds, including “S.”



Fig. 2 Scene from “Das Puppenspiel vom Doktor Faust.”



Fig. 3 In the background, the puppet stage from Bando at the „Ausstellung für Bildkunst und Handfertigkeit“ in March 1918.

¹⁷ Schmidt, Hans-Joachim. “Tsingtau und Japan 1914 bis 1920. Historisch-Biographisches Projekt. Kurzbiographien.” Retrieved February 10, 2021, from <http://www.tsingtau.info/index.html?lager/ban-veranstaltungen1.htm>

¹⁸ *Die Baracke*, Bd. IV. Mai 1919. p. 97.

¹⁹ Niessen, Carl. *Katalog der Ausstellungen. Faust auf der Bühne. Faust in der bildenden Kunst. Zur Jahrhundertfeier der Uraufführung des ersten Teiles in Braunschweig veranstaltet von der Landeshauptstadt Braunschweig und der Goethe-Gesellschaft. Braunschweig 1929.* p. 114

²⁰ Virtuelle Ausstellung und Katalog der Bando--Sammlung des DIJ. “Aufführungen April-Juni 1919: Rezensionen.” Retrieved February 10, 2021, from https://bando.dijtokyo.org/?page=theme_detail.php&p_id=57 and https://bando.dijtokyo.org/?page=theme_detail.php&p_id=48.

²¹ *Die Baracke*, Bd. IV. Mai 1919. pp. 96–103.

However, it had an artistic meaning as they dared to use a puppet script instead of a Goethean one in the twentieth century. To clarify the context of Faust in Bando, let us turn our attention to the Faust plays in Germany at that time.

Faust in actors' theater and puppet theater

After the publication of Goethe's *Faust, Part I* (1808), it gradually came to overshadow the rich variants of popular theater. Specifically, in Berlin in 1819, there was a fragmentary "nicht-öffentlichen >Uraufführung<" of the first part of Goethe's *Faust*,²² using designs by Carl Friedrich Schinkel for the background art. Later, a public premiere directed by August Klingemann took place in Braunschweig in 1829, and after this, most of works on Faust written before Goethe's time gradually went unperformed.²³ It is noteworthy, however, that the artistic puppet theaters kept using the same pre-Goethean puppet scripts. The Puppentheater von der Ostfront des II. Bayerisches Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiments (Fig. 5)²⁴ and the Puppentheater Münchner Künstler (Fig. 6)—both of which were referred to by the puppet theater in Bando—also used the puppet theater version²⁵. We should not assume that most artistic puppet theaters chose puppet scripts instead of Goethe's for mere repetition of convention, considering that (1) artistic puppet theater was trying to upscale its scripts and compete with actors' theater using scripts by Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and Maeterlinck and (2) there were puppet theaters, such as the Ivo Puhonny's company in Baden-Baden, which performed Goethe's version of Faust.

For example, the Puppentheater Münchner Künstler never touched Goethe's Faust but devoted itself to puppet Faust, while working on the adaptation of literary scripts such as Schnitzler's *Der Tapfere Cassian* and Maeterlinck's *Der Tod des Tintagiles*. Paul Brann (1873–1955), the director of

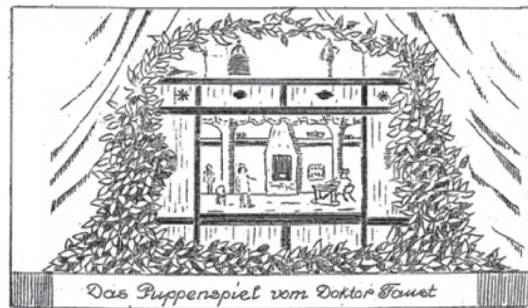


Fig. 4 Illustration from *Die Baracke* Bd. IV, May 1919.



Fig. 5. Scene from *Faust* of Puppentheater von der Ostfront des II. Bayerisches Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiments.

²² *Faust Handbuch. Konstellationen – Diskurse – Medien*. Hrsg. von Carsten Rohde, Thorsten Valk, Mathias Mayer. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2018. pp. 159–160, 284–287.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²⁴ Boehn, *op.cit.*, p. 198.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

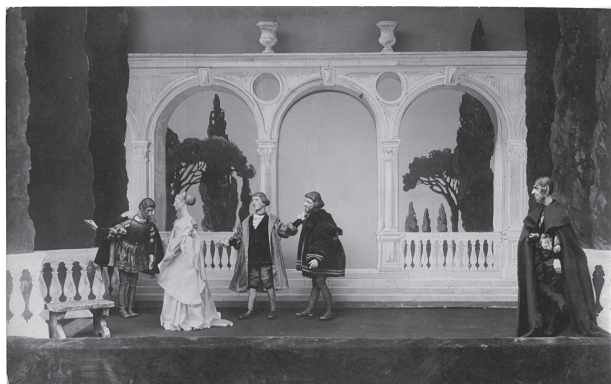


Fig. 6 Scene from “Das lastervolle Leben und erschreckliche Ende des weltberühmten, jedermannlich bekannten Erzzaubers Doktoris Johannis Fausti” by Marionetten-Theater Münchener Künstler. Münchner Stadtmuseum Collection.

theater, was strongly influenced by Max Reinhardt (1873–1943)²⁶, who aimed to create a “Gesamtkunstwerk” theater from poetry and music, sculpture, and painting and staged Goethe’s *Faust* several times from 1909 to 1933.²⁷ Brann’s *Faust* was also meant to be a synthetic theater art, involving artists of every genre. He appointed academic sculptors and designers of the time: Jakob Bradl (1864–1919), a professor of Academy of Fine Arts in Munich created puppets (Fig. 7), and Lucian Bernhard (1883–1972), a graphic designer, who later became professor of Academy of Arts in Berlin made playbills for the show (Fig. 8). Eduard Lassen (1830–1904) provided the music, which was originally created for a production of Goethe’s *Faust* directed by Otto Devrient (1838–1894) at the Hoftheater in Weimar in 1876.²⁸ Obviously, Brann did not aim to reproduce the traditional puppet show; nevertheless, Brann’s *Faust* script was “closest to the one that Goethe also saw as a puppet show” as stated in the playbill, having no major differences from the most widely spread Simrock version of puppet *Faust*.²⁹

Retention of the puppet *Faust* script

Why, as with the latest artistry of the time being flaunted in music and in design as in the contemporary staging of Goethe’s *Faust*, was the script of the pre-Goethean version of puppet theater kept? The possible reasons are twofold. The first is a negative one; at that time in Germany, the difference in status between puppet theater and actors’ theater was so obvious that the former could be condemned simply for staging Goethe. When Ivo Puhonny staged Goethe’s *Faust* as a puppet theater show (Fig. 9), it received a negative response from theater critics such as Legband (1906)³⁰ and Niessen (1927)³¹, although the latter was a great enthusiast of puppet theater. The gist of their argument was that puppetry should know its place as a “Hölzerne Komödianten.”

The other reason is a positive one, and here we find puppet theaters’ struggles to transform

²⁶ Cf. Erbelding, op.cit., pp. 21–33.

²⁷ *Faust Handbuch. Konstellationen – Diskurse – Medien*. pp. 286–287.

²⁸ At the bottom of the playbill (Fig. 7), it reads “Die Musik ist der Lassen’schen *Faust*-Musik entnommen.”

²⁹ *Das lastervolle Leben und erschreckliche Ende des weltberühmten, jedermannlich bekannten Erzzaubers Doktoris Johannis Fausti. Das älteste deutsche Faustspiel in 4 Akten nebst einem Vorspiel, bearbeitet von Paul Brann mit 4 Szenenbildern von der Aufführung des Marionetten-Theaters Münchener Künstler*. München Berlin: Marionetten-Theater Münchener Künstler, 1914.

³⁰ Legband, op. cit., p. 248.

³¹ Niessen, Carl. “Marionette.” *Velhagen&Klasings Wonatshefte*. 42. Jahrg. 1927/1928. 1.Bd, p. 448.



Fig. 7 Devil puppet of “Das lastervolle Leben und erschreckliche Ende des weltberühmten, jedermannlich bekannten Erzzaubers Doktoris Johannis Faustis” by Marionetten-Theater Münchener Künstler.. Münchner Stadtmuseum Collection.

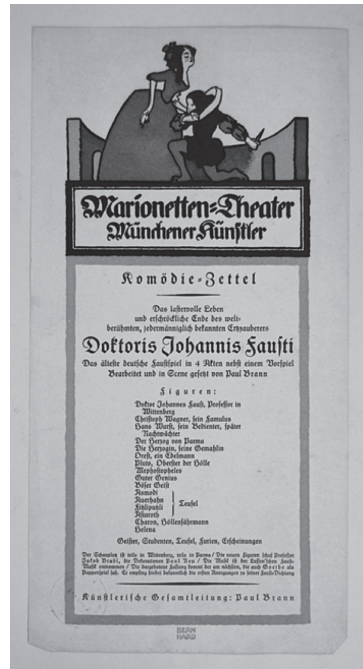


Fig.8. Playbill of “Das lastervolle Leben und erschreckliche Ende des weltberühmten, jedermannlich bekannten Erzzaubers Doktoris Johannis Faustis” by Marionetten-Theater Münchener Künstler. Dresden State Art Collections, Puppet Theatre Collection



Fig. 9. Scene from Puhonny’s “Das Puppenspiel vom Dr. Faust” Baden-Baden, 1912. Dresden State Art Collections, Puppet Theatre Collection.

themselves into art; artistic puppet theater needed to break away from the simplicity of traditional popular theater, and at the same time to demonstrate the unique qualities of puppetry that could not be reduced to the mere miniature of actors' theater. What they thought would fulfill this purpose was not Goethe's Faust but puppet Faust. Christian Morgenstern praised Brann, who did not stage Goethe's Faust as Reinhardt did but a puppet script; paradoxically, "no Reinhardtism has ever achieved such suggestive effects."³² This is a testimony to the rightness of the puppeteers' choice. The show in Bando also succeeded in demonstrating that puppet Faust was still appealing and actual in 1919: as the puppet Faust "sounded and hummed polyphonically" in Goethe, it did in the captives too. They found themselves presenting the tragicomic hero on the small stage.

Even in this form, Faust still is the German type with quite important characteristics for us, and occasionally one or another tone of the time we experience resonate so wonderfully in the scenes of the play: "If Faust continues to wrestle like this for another quarter of an hour, he is lost to us," says Pluto Wilson, as he sent his 14 conditions. "Do they make me happy?" asks Faust. "Yes, beyond all measure." - But when he goes to embrace them, he has a snake between his fingers...³³

Bando's Faust was not open to the Japanese outside the camp; however, coincidentally, there was a growing interest in German artistic puppet theater among Japanese young artists and writers. As will be discussed in the following sections, there appeared groups of artists from the 1920s who tried to create new Japanese puppetry under this strong influence.

2. Puppet Faust in Japan in 1949

The decline of Bunraku in the 1900s

After 1919, Japan's second earliest puppet Faust show was performed 30 years later, in 1949, in Tokyo. Before discussing this performance in detail, it is necessary to clarify the situation surrounding Japanese puppet theater at that time. While puppet theater was becoming an art form in Germany, it was also changing in Japan—but in a different direction.

Bunraku, which boasted a popularity and legitimacy that surpassed that of actors' theater during its golden age in the eighteenth century, was rapidly losing its audience after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). From 1906 onward, the number of visitors per day decreased by 100 per year, and the annual 122,660 visitors in 1906 became 58,164 in 1910—less than half of just four years before.³⁴ As external factors of the decline of Bunraku after 1906, Kurata (2013) pointed to changes in the landscape of performing arts in Japan. With the emergence of various new entertainment media such as films, there arose a tendency to regard puppet theater as old-fashioned and childish.

Puppetry is not a technique that should be practiced in today's world. Rather than finding it amusing or ludicrous, we cannot help feeling a kind of discomfort at seeing it. (Ichigoro. *Engei*

³² Krafft, Ludwig. *München und das Puppenspiel*. München: Akademie für das graphische Gewerbe, 1961, p. 68.

³³ *Die Baracke*, Bd. IV, Mai 1919, p. 102.

³⁴ Kurata, Yoshihiro. *Bunraku no rekishi* [A History of Bunraku]. Iwanami shoten, 2013, pp. 187–190.

Gaho, October 1909.)³⁵

In other words, in contrast to the German puppet theater of the early twentieth century, which was experiencing a “renaissance of marionette” and was establishing itself as a performing art form, the status of Japanese puppet theater, which had been the most legitimate in performing arts, came under threat. However, despite the practical slump, theoretically, a new momentum has emerged with the reevaluation of Bunraku as a puppet theater by Shoyo Tsubouchi and the introduction of Western puppet theater in Japan with Goethe studies.

A new perspective on puppet theater in the 1910s

Shoyo Tsubouchi (1859–1935), the leading theater theorist of his time who introduced Shakespeare to Japan, attached great importance to Chikamatsu Monzaemon, a playwright of *ningyo-joruri*, as a Japanese dramatist comparable to Shakespeare. However, more than 20 years later, in 1917, he wrote an article in which he raised the issue that the previous studies of Chikamatsu had been “biased toward literary interests, mere theoretic, and academic” and “impractical and almost neglected the study of the art as performance,” and he declared that we should start with “the study of the special performing art of puppet theater itself.” He also stated, “I have never heard of anyone studying puppetry as a major subject.” In two essays published in 1917, Shoyo shed light on the puppet theater aspect of Bunraku and compared it with puppet theater in other countries, thereby reevaluating Bunraku as a puppet theater as a “unique work of art” from a global perspective.³⁶

Another important event in the history of puppetry in Japan at that time was the start of Goethe studies in Japan: in 1904, Mori Ogai completely translated a part of *Faust*, and in 1913, Mori Ogai’s *Faust-kou* [Essays on Faust] and Tsuzumi Tsuneyoshi’s *Faust-hyoron* [Discussions on Faust] in the same year determined the first Goethe studies in Japan. The descriptions of popular puppet theater Faust in these Goethe studies were the first to introduce reliable knowledge of Western puppet theater to Japan. Before this, the journal *Kabuki* in the 1900s had made several introductions to Western puppet theater but they were fragmentary, equating German puppet theater with hand-operated Kasperltheater and not mentioning marionettes. Goethe studies in Japan provided not the latest at the time but correct information of German puppet theater to Japan.

The birth of the new puppet theater *ningyo-geki* in the 1920s

The introduction of Western puppet theater prompted the development of Japanese puppetry in two ways: by encouraging the reevaluation of Bunraku as a unique kind of puppet theater, as mentioned above, and by stimulating the birth of modern puppet theater.

The modernization of actors’ theater preceded that of the puppet one. The *shin-geki* (New Drama) Movement started in the late 1900s, which sought to create modern realist theater using

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 193–194.

³⁶ Tsubouchi, Shoyo. “Tokushu no gujin geki to shite no waga ayatsuri shibai no kenkyu.” [A Study of Our Manipulative Plays as a Special Kind of Puppet Theater] (first published in *Ningen Shakai*, No.1, August 1917) and “Gaikoku no ayatsuri shibai.” [Foreign Manipulative Plays] (first published in *Hogaku*, September 1917). *Shoyo Senshu*, Vol. 8. Shunyodo, 1926. pp. 779–797.

Western play scripts. *Ningyo-geki* (Puppet Drama), which employed Western play scripts and Western-style puppets, began about 15 years after *shin-geki* started. After 1923, when Koreya Senda (1904–1994) and Kisaku Ito (1899–1967), who would later become leading figures in *shin-geki*, staged a puppet play of Maeterlinck, many other young artists followed suit and engaged in *ningyo-geki*. One of the young artists later realized the first Japanese puppet Faust.

Puppet Theater PUK's *Dr. Faust*

The premiere of Goethe's *Faust* was earlier than puppet Faust in Japan. *Kindai-geki-kyokai* (Fig. 10) premiered *Faust I*, the text was translated by Ogai Mori. As for puppet Faust, after its first appearance in Bando in 1919, the Leipzig version by Wilhelm Hamm was translated into Japanese and staged in 1942 by a Japanese actors' theater,³⁷ and finally a Japanese puppet theater performed puppet *Dr. Faust* on May 30, 1949 (Fig. 11).

It was staged by the puppet theater PUK, which was the leading and the longest-running of the *ningyo-geki* theaters that emerged in the 1920s. The show was huge in scale, with a running time of four hours and more than 40 characters; it started at the Yomiuri Hall in Tokyo, which had a capacity of 1,225 people, and toured the Hokkaido, Kanto, Tokai, and Chugoku regions. It was repeatedly performed until 1989 with some small changes in direction. The director, Taiji Kawajiri (1914–1994), later testified that no other modern theater companies toured all over Japan just four years after the end of the war.³⁸ Recalling his tour of Japan in the early postwar period, Kawajiri said,



Fig.10 Scene from “Faust” performed by the Kindai-geki-kyokai. Waseda University, Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Collection: F70-08021.



Fig. 11 Scene from Puppet Theatre PUK's “Dr. Faust.” Puppet Theatre PUK Archive.

³⁷ According to puppet researcher Jiro Nanne, a theater company for children Gekidan Todo staged the Wilhelm Hamm version of the puppet Faust in his Japanese translation. Cf. Nanne, Jiro. *Fausuto to Panchi* [Faust and Punch]. Ikada-sha, 1972. pp. 45–46.

³⁸ Kawajiri, Taiji. *Gendai Ningyogeki Sozo no Hanseki* [The Half Century of Contemporary Puppet Theater Creation], Miraisha, 1984. p. 197.

Everywhere I go, there are many people who are seeing modern, authentic theater for the first time. ... At a performance in a fishing village, an old woman came up to me and asked, “Is *Dr. Faust* a story about an American scholar?”³⁹

Tomoyoshi Murayama (1901-1977), one of the leading avant-garde artists of the time, acknowledged that it was “an unprecedented performance in the history of Japanese puppet theater.”⁴⁰

Blended script and puppets

In the upper left corner of the poster for PUK’s *Dr. Faust* (Fig. 12) is written “200th Anniversary of Goethe’s Birth,” and at the center is Kasper on the Devil’s horse. As the poster shows, the script is a mixture of Goethe’s Faust and puppet Faust. According to the director, “this [Faust] performance established the two-handed puppet by combining *Guignol* from Europe with traditional Japanese puppetry techniques.”⁴¹ In other words, the puppets in “Dr. Faust” were not marionettes, as used in the German Faust puppet shows, but a new mixture of hand puppets such as the Kasper puppet and traditional Japanese hand puppets (Fig. 13, 14).

As for the script, the author explains: “we first translated the script of Marionettentheater Münchner Künstler. ... and we reworked it, corrected it, incorporated Lessing’s and Goethe’s spirit and emphasized what needed to be emphasized, and adapted it into three acts and eight scenes.”⁴² As he described it, it is a patchwork of the version of Marionettentheater Münchner Künstler and Goethe’s *Faust I* and *Faust II*, stitched together with the thoughts of proletarian theater of the time. The framework is the same as in the popular puppet version: Faust makes a pact with the Devil, causes troubles in Parma, and then returns to Wittenberg, where he tries to be penitent but ends up in Hell. The story of his love for Margarete, which is the first part of Goethe’s version, and the scene where Mephistopheles advises him to dig for gold in the basement, which is the second part of Goethe’s version, are inserted into the story. At the end, Margarethe survives and gives birth to Faust’s child, and Kasper, as the representative of proletariat workers, bravely jumps into Hell to



Fig. 12 Poster of Puppet Theatre PUK’s “Dr. Faust.”
Puppet Theatre PUK Archive.

³⁹ Kawajiri, op. cit., p. 197.

⁴⁰ Murayama, Tomoyoshi. “PUK no fausuto hakase” [Dr. Faust of PUK], *Minna to PUK*, Puppet Theatre PUK, June 20, 1959.

⁴¹ Takayama, Teisho. “Fausuto hakase no shin kyakushoku.” [A New Adaptation of Dr. Faust.] *PUK News*, Puppet Theatre PUK, May 1, 1949.

⁴² Ibid.



Fig. 13 Puppet of Faust of Puppet Theatre PUK. Puppet Theatre PUK Archive.



Fig. 14 Puppet of King of Parma and a puppeteer Gaishi Mizuta of Puppet Theatre PUK. Puppet Theatre PUK Archive.

conquer the Devil and rescue Faust.

Puppentheater Münchner Künstler and Japanese puppet theater

This chimerical script, however, is not the result of the author's arbitrary fancy but a clear reflection of the drastic change in puppetry in Japan and Germany in the first half of the twentieth century. The Puppentheater Münchner Künstler, which inspired the puppet theater in Bando in 1919, appears again in this work. Why did the Japanese puppet theater use its script?

Even though it had never visited Japan, it was the most known European artistic puppet theater in prewar Japan. Already in 1910, Kaoru Osanai (1881-1928), a leading figure in the actors' theater world at that time, published a stage photo of *Der Tapfere Cassian* of the Puppentheater Münchner Künstler (Fig. 15),⁴³ and a Japanese theater group performed the piece in 1912 with costumes based on the puppets (Fig. 16).⁴⁴ Several Japanese literary and theatrical magazines published articles of highly laudatory introduction to the theater.⁴⁵ A few magazines even carried reports of the play as

⁴³ "Mosa no butaimen" [The Stage of 'der Tapfere Cassian'], *Shin Shicho* (Second Edition), No. 2, October 1910, frontispiece.

⁴⁴ "Inatomi no Mosa." [Der Tapfere Cassian played by Inatomi], *Kabuki* No. 144, Kabuki Press, June 1912, Frontispiece. Cf. "Doyo gekijo no 'Mosa' wo miru" [Review on Saturday Theater's 'der Tapfere Cassian'], *Engeki-hyoron*, No. 2, Engeki-hyoron-sha, 1912, pp. 57-60.

⁴⁵ Shimamura, Tamizo. "Myunhen no ningyo shibai" [Puppet Play of Munich.] *Shibai*, April 1913, pp. 30-34; Toyokichi, Hata. "Myunhen no ningyo shibai" [Puppet Play of Munich.] *Waseda Bungaku*, vol.2, no.94, 1913, pp. 61-65; Wolf/Tamizo Shimamura, "Myunhen geijutuka no ningyo gekijo." [Puppet Theatre of Munich Artists.] *MARIONNETTE*, vol.1, no.2. Local Drama Society, 1931, pp. 34-40. Cf. Wolf, Georg Jacob, "Das Marionetten-Theater Münchner Künstler." *Die Kunst. Monatshefte für freie und angewandte Kunst. (Dekorative Kunst. XV. 10. Juli. 1912)* Jg.15, Bd. 2, München 1912, pp. 441-452.



Fig. 15 The stage photo of “der Tapfere Cassian,” which appeared in a magazine *Shin Shicho* in 1910.



Fig. 16 *Der tapfere Cassian* played by an actor Inatomi.

seen in Germany. However, the reporters did not give very favorable remarks:

I have not yet seen the Bunraku-za in Osaka, but judging from the puppet plays I have seen in the provinces, our puppets are not so childish, simple and careless.⁴⁶

In Germany, I saw two puppet plays in Munich....It [the puppet theater] declared that the plays should be artistic enough to be interesting for children as well as for adults. In the West, therefore, puppet plays are mainly for children.... I have never been able to see a puppet play in the West like in Japan, at least not for adults.⁴⁷

Although the Puppentheater Münchner Künstler was much more sophisticated than the traditional popular puppet theaters, it still seemed “childish, simple and careless” to those who were familiar with traditional Japanese puppet theaters such as *ningyo-joruri*. As it was in the midst of the *shin-geki* (New Drama) Movement in the field of actors’ theater, where Western theater served as the overwhelming model, it is no wonder that the German puppet theater, which appeared on the scene with the slogan “artistic puppet theater,” seemed to be disappointing for the Japanese. As mentioned above, the popularity of Bunraku was rapidly declining at that time due to the pressure of new artistic genres from the West, such as movies and *shin-geki*. However, some people who got to know the European puppet theater well rediscovered the beauty of the Japanese one. As is also mentioned above, this rediscovery was followed by Shoyo Tsubouchi’s reevaluation of Bunraku from the perspective of a puppet theater in 1917.

Although the actual reviews of the show by the Japanese were not good, the Puppentheater

⁴⁶ Hiromasa, Houten. “Doitsu no kairai-shibai” [Puppet Theater in Germany], *Waseda Bungaku*, No. 2, 1912, pp. 36–37.

⁴⁷ Komiya, Toyotaka. “Paris, Rome, Munich” *Ningyo-shibai* (Vol. 1, No. 2, 1933), p. 29.

Münchener Künstler was repeatedly mentioned in Japanese magazines and books as a representative of European artistic puppetry until the 1930s due to the tendency of the time to look up to Western theater. It was therefore natural that this script was also used for the show in 1949, given what the Japanese puppet theater had been learning and yearning for since the 1920s.

Puppet Faust in Japan

It is important to note that the Japanese puppet theater came to recognize itself as distinct and valuable as the understanding of Western puppet theater progressed. The latter encouraged the former to reevaluate its own traditions, and at the same time served as a point of reference for modernization. The puppet Faust in Japan, with the compound script of Puppentheater Münchener Künstler, Goethe, and PUK, using the original two-handed puppet created by combining European hand puppets with traditional Japanese puppetry techniques, was one of the results.

Although the puppet Faust in Japan 1949 may appear to be an incoherent mishmash, it is actually a product of the process of sincere reformation of puppet theater that occurred in Germany and Japan in the first half of twentieth century. A sincere creative process does not always produce an elegant and complete result. Perhaps when a culture grows, it always produces many such incomplete, confusing, and multifaceted works, and these become influential in the society and promote further development of the culture. Puppet theater PUK, once even wrote, “the influence of PUK’s Faust on the Japanese people was greater than that of Goethe’s Faust.” Whether this is the truth or not, it is probably true that there were many audiences all over Japan in the immediate postwar period whose first introduction to Faust was PUK’s puppet Faust. At least until 1949, this was the first and only puppet Faust that Japanese, including Germanist scholars who knew puppet Faust from literature, could see. It was certainly one of the cornerstones that shaped the modern Japanese puppet theater.

The recently published book on Faust stated that Faust adaptations configure themselves in a network of inter-medial exchange relations.⁴⁸ To borrow that expression, puppet theater itself is the media that has developed in the network of inter-medial and inter-cultural exchange relations as we have seen in this paper. In the field of puppet theater, which is the home of Faust, new works are still being produced all over the world, and it is no exaggeration to say that this is one of the genres in which the Faust creation is the most active. In this old cauldron called puppet theater, the magical ingredient Faust is still simmering today.

⁴⁸ *Faust Handbuch. Konstellationen – Diskurse – Medien.*, p. VII.