

Report on the Inaugural Conference Taipei, 15-18 May 2014

Workshops

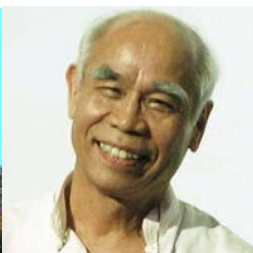
The first ASA conference started with three exciting workshops in the afternoon of 15 May: the Hakka Opera Workshop, the Igal Workshop, and the Workshop in the Sonnets. In the evening, *Shakespeare Must Die* was screened. In the Hakka Opera Workshop, delegates learned hand gestures and foot movement, and how to maneuver silk sleeve extensions. In Igal: Dance of the South Seas, Matthew Santamaria demonstrated various dance moves to the beat of live music. In the Workshop in the Sonnets, Dennis Kennedy inspired participants to read the sonnets dramatically.



Keynote Speeches

The ASA conference featured six keynote speeches over three days, showcasing the rich meanings of “Shakespearean Journeys,” the conference’s theme. Peter Holbrook spoke on Shakespeare and the idea of motion—fluidity, dynamism, passing. Lena Cowen Orlin reinvestigated Shakespeare’s marital bond and his journey from Stratford to London, challenging previous assumptions about the Bard’s personal

life. Dennis Kennedy exposed the inherent confusion and conflict of the magnanimous Globe-to-Globe Festival in London. Kawachi Yoshiko, Shen Lin, and Perng Ching-Hsi perused Shakespeare’s varied presence and transmutation—his afterlife and his new life—in Japan, China, and Taiwan, attesting to the Bard’s strong influence in Asia.



Plenary Sessions

The first plenary session, with Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, Judy Celine Ick, and Ted Motohashi, reflected upon the concepts of Asia and “Asian Shakespeare.” After his introductory remarks, Rustom Bharucha, chair of the session, was surprised with a cake with a question mark candle lit on top. The whole room joined the conference staff in singing happy birthday.

The second plenary session revolved around Ing K’s controversial feature film *Shakespeare Must Die* and the documentary *Censor Must Die*, both screened at the conference, generating heated discussion.



Seminars

In the afternoon of the second day, eight eighty-minute-long seminars were held on NTNU campus, covering a wide range of subjects. Seminar leaders started to work with seminar participants last year, forming paper groups and assigning respondents. Auditors were also welcome to join the discussion. For many local students, this experience to work closely with established scholars was truly invaluable.



Paper Sessions

On the third day of the conference, eight eighty-minute-long parallel paper sessions were held, with twenty papers exploring different aspects of the conference theme, from physical to psychological journeys, and to moral and spiritual ones as well.



In particular, Shakespeare's journey to Asia was a well-attended subject, with papers analyzing translation and transformation of the texts, and transnational, cross-cultural and cross-media adaptations, in China, India, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.



Live Performances

Three full-scale productions, in three languages, theatrical genres, and performance styles, with a total of five performances, were presented at the conference, showcasing the multiple faces of Asian Shakespeare. *Nomad Lear* by Korea's Nomad Theater with only two characters—King Lear and the Fool—was infused with Eastern philosophy. *Sintang Dalisay* (Pure Love) by Tanghalang Ateneo from the Philippines, a creative retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* employing

traditional music and dance from Southeast Asia, was full of energy and passion. *Betrayal*, a Hakka opera inspired by Stephen Greenblatt and Charles Mee's *Cardenio*, was elegant and spectacular. The directors, playwrights, and performing artists also held post-performance Q&A sessions. In addition, two Shakespearean sonnets set to operatic music were performed at the reception banquet.



Social Moments

Outside the lecture halls and conference rooms, over coffee, food, and wine and beer, delegates from nineteen countries warmly socialized, meeting old friends and making new ones.

The conference's finale took place in a night club, where delegates celebrated the success of the ASA's inaugural conference with drinking, dancing, and karaokeing.

