



**Asian Shakespeare Association**  
<http://AsianShakespeare.org>

# Asian Shakespeare Newsletter

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## Executive Committee

### Chair:

- ◆ Bi-qi Beatrice Lei  
*National Taiwan University*

### Vice Chairs:

- ◆ Judy Celine Ick  
*University of the Philippines  
Diliman*
- ◆ Yoshihara Yukari  
*University of Tsukuba*

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- ◆ Lee Hyon-u  
*Soon Chun Hyang University*
- ◆ Jason Eng Hun Lee  
*Hong Kong Baptist University*
- ◆ Ted Motohashi  
*Tokyo University of Economics*
- ◆ Poonam Trivedi  
*University of Delhi*
- ◆ Yong Li Lan  
*National University of  
Singapore*

## Conference Report: Shoreline Shakespeares

After its much celebrated third conference held in Manila, the ASA returned to the Philippines in December 2024 for its sixth biennial conference, “Shoreline Shakespeares,” the first fully in-person gathering since 2018. Nicknamed “City of Love,” Iloilo boasts gorgeous natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, gourmet food, and warmest hospitality. Iloilo’s island locale, as well as its history as a trading post before and during the Spanish and American colonial periods, makes it ideal for the conference theme of the shoreline. The conference was hosted by the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) on its Iloilo City campus, with the support from the University of the Philippines Diliman and West Visayas State University and sponsorship of UP High School in Iloilo, Japan Foundation Manila, Dinagyang Foundation, International Playwrights Forum, International Theatre Institute, and Women’s Playwrights International.

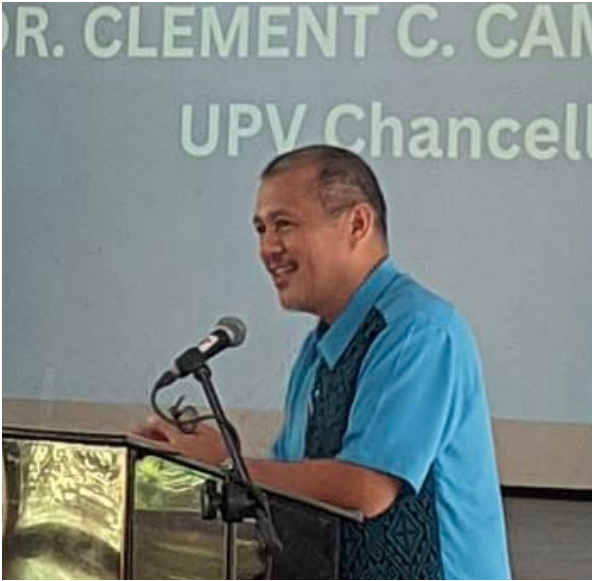


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## Day 1



The conference kicked off with a welcoming speech from Dr. Clement C. Camposano, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Visayas. Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, Chair of the ASA, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all the delegates for overcoming numerous challenges to gather in Iloilo. Reflecting on a world increasingly divided by ideological, social, political, and military conflicts, she envisioned the ASA as an intertidal zone—a unique space where differences, and even opposing forces, can converge, interact, and find common ground. Her metaphor highlighted the association's commitment to fostering dialogue, understanding, and connection amidst diversity, offering a hopeful vision for collaboration and mutual respect in the field of Shakespeare studies and beyond.



Karen Raber, Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Mississippi and Executive Director of the Shakespeare Association of America, delivered the keynote address titled “Against the Current: How We Read Shakespeare’s Animals.” In her thought-provoking talk, she explored how Shakespeare’s portrayal of nonhuman creatures challenges us to reconsider our engagement with the animal world. Drawing on examples such as Arcite’s spirited mount in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the Dauphin’s prized palfrey in *Henry V*, and Theseus’ hunting hounds in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Raber illuminated the ways these animals invite us to reflect on the complex relationships between humans and the natural world in Shakespeare’s works. Her insights offered a fresh perspective on the significance of animals in early modern literature and their enduring relevance today.



A special session was held in honor of Ricardo G. Abad, whose passing in 2023 is deeply mourned as a profound loss to the field of Asian Shakespeare studies and to the ASA. Affectionately known as “Ricky,” he was a distinguished sociologist, accomplished theatre artist, and an extraordinary teacher at Ateneo de Manila University. Judy Celine Ick, Matthew Santamaria, and Yong Li Lan shared heartfelt reflections on his lifelong commitment to decolonizing Asian Shakespeare and his transformative impact on the field. Ricky was not only a dedicated ASA board member but also the treasurer and co-convenor of the 2018 ASA conference in Manila. His legacy continues to inspire scholars, artists, and students alike.



After lunch, the afternoon sessions in parallel comprise of five panels, titled “Transadapting and Rewriting Shakespeare,” “Shakespearean Trespassing and Transgression,” “Shakespeare and Politics,” “Cross-Media and Interdisciplinary Shakespeare,” and “Teaching Shakespeare,” and a symposium “Intercultural, Interdisciplinary, and Intersectional Shakespeare.” The first day closed with a reception in the Little Theater.





## Day 2

The second day opened with the awards ceremony for the 5th Graphic Shakespeare Competition, honoring the most innovative reinterpretations of the Bard's works through visual storytelling. Yoshihara Yukari, serving as the event's curator, showcased the winning pieces, emphasizing the unique artistic vision and technical skill behind each submission.

The intellectual centerpiece of the day was a thought-provoking keynote by Ted Motohashi, Tokyo University of Economics. Titled "Between Technology and Ecology: Reflecting on the Trans-human in Gilgamesh, Suzuki, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," his lecture wove together threads of ancient myth, contemporary philosophy, and Shakespearean drama. His interdisciplinary approach sparked lively discussions among the delegates, bridging literary studies with futurist thought.

After lunch, attendees embarked on a guided cultural tour of Iloilo, led by Rei Hotanar. The journey began at the university museum, where rare artifacts and historical exhibits provided a glimpse into the region's rich academic and cultural legacy. The group then proceeded to Molo Plaza, a vibrant public space steeped in local history. Here, they marveled at two architectural gems: the Molo Church (Saint Anne Parish), renowned for its striking Gothic-inspired design and its rare collection of female saint statues, and the Molo Mansion, an elegant neoclassical landmark. As Rei shared stories of Iloilo's colonial past and its enduring artistic traditions, the tour offered a perfect blend of education and visual splendor, leaving participants with a deeper appreciation of the city's heritage.

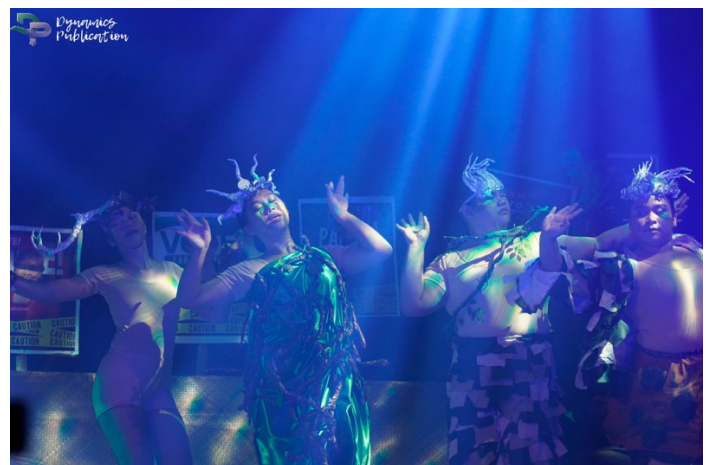
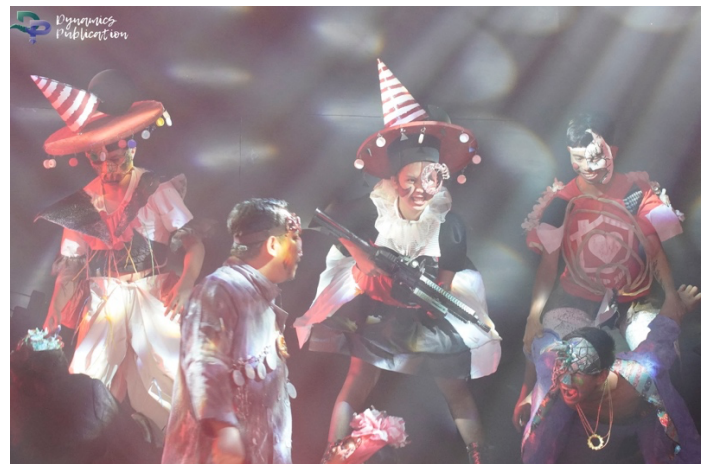




The second day culminated in a powerful performance of *Titus Tan* in Hiligaynon by Teatro Tayo, a dynamic ensemble of student-artists from West Visayas State University's College of Physical Education, Sports, Culture, Arts, and Recreation (PESCAR), co-directed by Anton Juan, Ryan L. Puljanan and Jemuel B. Garcia, Jr.

Shakespeare's most violent work is relocated within the Philippine and Ilonggo context of death squads, elections, POGOs, and authoritarian regimes. A once-exiled mayor, old Titus Tan returned to the city astride a motorcycle, received by the incumbent family. The production transformed the Roman play into a searing commentary on political dynasties, historical trauma, and the cyclical nature of violence in Philippine society, and the discerning Ilonggo audience understood what was mirrored onstage.

The result was a visceral, contemporary tragedy that interrogated power, vengeance, and cultural identity. With striking physicality, bold staging, stunning sounds, visual extravaganza, and "dinuguan" (classic Philippine blood stew) served to the audience, Teatro Tayo delivered a thought-provoking performance, leaving the audience in reflective silence before erupting into applause.





## Day 3



The third day opened with “Shakespeare from Shore to Shore,” a thought-provoking roundtable discussion chaired by Poonam Trivedi. It brought together five early-career scholars—all recent PhD recipients—who traced how their own transnational and transcultural experiences, whether as immigrants, children of diaspora communities, or students and researchers navigating institutional boundaries—had fundamentally reshaped their approach to Shakespearean texts. What made the discussion particularly resonant was its generational arc: several panelists reflected on their first ASA as nervous graduate students, contrasting them with their current work as published scholars. This trajectory offered a roadmap for early-career researchers in attendance.



The day continued with five panels “Division by Race and Class,” “Shakespeare, Gender and Women,” “Adapting Shakespeare,” “Colonial and Postcolonial Shakespeare,” and “Shakespeare and Artificial Intelligence,” and a symposium “Translation, Adaptation, and Hybrid Shakespeare.” Together, these sessions showcased the expansive reach of Shakespeare studies, bridging historical inquiry with urgent contemporary debates.





The day's highlight was an electrifying performance of the forum scene from *Caesar's Maze* by Taipei's Contemporary Legend Theatre—a daring multilingual and multicultural experiment that blurred boundaries between East and West, classical and contemporary. Anton Juan, director of the previous night's *Titus Tan*, took the role of Brutus, as Shakespeare's original English lines became tools of measured diplomacy, delivered with solemn gravitas to pacify the mob. In stunning contrast, Wu Hsing-kuo, the legendary *jingju* master, embodied Antony with fiery intensity, weaving Mandarin opera arias through Shakespeare's text to ignite rebellion. The crowd's chaotic response—shouted in a cacophony of English and Filipino vernaculars by five talented student actors from the UP High School in Iloilo—created a living tapestry of global Shakespeare. This was no mere adaptation, but a genuinely radical collision of languages, theatrical traditions, and generations, proving Shakespeare's enduring power to speak across cultures while being reinvented by them.

Following the performance, Chu Po-Cheng (affectionately known as “Howie”) dazzled the audience with an electrifying demonstration of *jingju* training techniques. His masterful execution of gravity-defying stunts and precise operatic movements earned thunderous applause, showcasing the breathtaking physical artistry of this traditional form.

The three-day conference drew to a memorable close with an energizing general assembly, after which attendees mingled at a delightful outdoor reception amidst the lush gardens and Spanish colonial architecture of the stunning Pison Residence. As golden hour light filtered through the palm trees, scholars exchanged final thoughts over cocktails and gourmet food, ending this intellectual journey on a note of both celebration and camaraderie.



## Hong Kong 2026

The ASA is thrilled to announce our 2026 conference in Hong Kong—a dazzling metropolis where East meets West, and where centuries of tradition intersect with cutting-edge innovation. This landmark event will be jointly hosted by Hong Kong Baptist University and City University of Hong Kong, with special collaboration from the Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival, presented by the acclaimed Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio. Together, we'll create an unforgettable program blending academic discourse with groundbreaking theatrical performances.

Conference co-convenors Jason Eng Hun Lee (HKBU) and Reto Thomas Edgar Winckler (CityUHK) are already hard at work crafting what promises to be our most exciting gathering yet. Watch for further announcements later this year detailing our conference theme, program schedule, call for papers, registration information, and accommodation options. The vibrant energy of Hong Kong awaits—we can't wait to welcome you to this extraordinary celebration of Shakespeare in Asia!





## The Third Executive Committee

The ASA conducted an online election to fill two vacancies on our Executive Committee. These vacancies have arisen due to the sad passing of our esteemed colleague, Richard G. Abad, and the well-deserved retirement of Minami Ryuta, both of whom made invaluable contributions to our association. We are deeply grateful for their dedication and service.

The anonymous election took place between 16 and 31 March. A subsequent election within the Third Executive Committee produced a Chair and two Vice-Chairs.

### Chair:

- ♦ Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, National Taiwan University

### Vice-Chairs:

- ♦ Judy Celine Ick, University of the Philippines Diliman
- ♦ Yoshihara Yukari, University of Tsukuba

### Members:

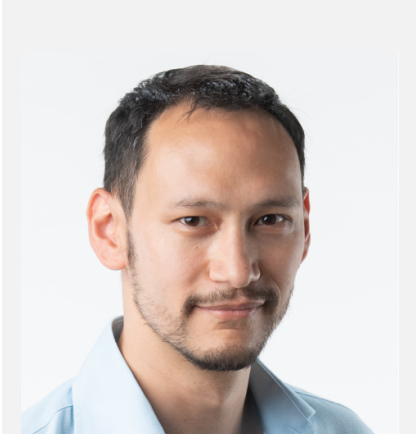
- ♦ Kim Kang, Honam University
- ♦ Lee Hyon-u, Soon Chun Hyang University
- ♦ Jason Eng Hun Lee, Hong Kong Baptist University
- ♦ Ted Motohashi, Tokyo University of Economics
- ♦ Poonam Trivedi, University of Delhi
- ♦ Yong Li Lan, National University of Singapore

## Meet the New Executive Committee Members

Ted Motohashi, a founding member of the ASA, is Professor of Cultural Studies at the Tokyo University of Economics. He received his D.Phil. in Literature from the University of York, UK in 1995. He is the incumbent president of the Japan Section of the International Association of Theatre Critics. His publications include several books on drama, cultural and postcolonial studies, and most recently “Our Perdita is found”: The Politics of Trust and Risk in *The Winter’s Tale* in *Shakespeare and the Political* edited by Rita Banerjee and Yilin Chen (Bloomsbury, 2024). He is a leading translator into Japanese of works by Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy, among others.



Jason Eng Hun Lee is a Senior Lecturer in the Academy of Language and Culture at Hong Kong Baptist University, which he joined in 2013 after completing a PhD from The University of Hong Kong. A scholar, creative writer, performer and community advocate, his research and practice fields encompass global Shakespeares, postcolonial and diasporic Asian writing, performance studies, and creative pedagogy. His articles have been published in *Shakespeare*, *Textual Practice*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing* and *Wasafiri*. His current research project locates the “techno-cultural mobility” of text, performance, film, games and other digital artifacts across Asian Shakespeares. As a creative writer/performer, he has featured internationally in festivals across the UK, Singapore and Hong Kong. He has authored the poetry collection *Beds in the East* (2019) and is the literary editor for *Postcolonial Text* and chief organizer for the OutLoud HK poetry collective. He regularly convenes seminars, panels and workshops for academic conferences as well as literary and arts festivals across the Asia-Pacific region. He joined the ASA in 2018.



## Latest Publications

### **“Shakespeare in Asian Currents,” Special Issue of *Shakespeare***

**Guest-Eds. Bi-qi Beatrice Lei and Judy Celine Ick**

**Forthcoming 2025**

There has not been an agreement on what constitutes Asia(n), Shakespeare(an), or Asian Shakespeare(s). At stake are not only aesthetics and ethics but also histories and ideologies. This special issue with works derived from the ASA's 2022 online conference hopes to engage scholars in continuous discovery, discussion, and debate. The research articles by Kumiko Hilberdink-Sakamoto, Judy Celine Ick, Im Yeeyon, Augusto Xavier Ledesma, Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, Shekufeh Owlia, and Poonam Trivedi offer new insights and fresh theoretical approaches to Asian Shakespeare. The issue also includes an introduction, a roundtable discussion, an account of the *Pericles* VR project by Emma Harper and Hannes Rall, and the original script of *Love Deadline (Desdemona)* written by Choi Ji Young and reviewed by Anne Nichole A. Alegre.



### ***Shakespeare's Original Stage Conditions and Their Afterlives across the Globe: From the Wooden O to the Yards of Seoul***

**Ko Yu Jun**

**Palgrave Macmillan, 2024**

This book brings together two separate fields by combining a study of Shakespeare's original stage conditions with an exploration of his plays in performance across the globe. The book contributes new insights into how early-modern stage conditions shaped the writing, production, and reception of Shakespeare's plays, but takes the further step of examining how original stage conditions re-emerge, not only in Globe replicas like the London Globe, but in unexpected and sometimes unconscious reconfigurations in adaptations and productions from around the world.



### ***Contemporary Readings in Global Performances of Shakespeare***

**Ed. Alexa Alice Joubin**

**Arden Shakespeare, 2024**

A concise guide to global performances of Shakespeare, this volume combines methodologies of dramaturgy, film and performance studies, critical race and gender studies and anthropological thick description. This companion guides students from critical methodologies through big pictures of global Shakespeare to case studies that employ these methodologies. It uses a site-specific lens to examine global performances of Shakespeare on stage, on radio and on screen.

