

■ *Yi-Hsin Hsu*
National Taiwan University, Taiwan

Performing Shakespeare in Colonial Taiwan: Early Japanese Settlers and the Bounds of Theatrical Imperialism, 1895-1916

*Built on archival research in Japan and Taiwan, this article constructs a comprehensive history of Shakespeare performances in colonial Taiwan. Unearthing underexplored and previously unknown production records of Shakespeare performances by Japanese settlers as well as travelling troupes, this article provides contextual readings of surviving theatre reviews and investigates their cultural and theatrical significance. It adds to current literature by presenting three findings: first, the scope and quantity of Shakespeare performances extend beyond received knowledge. Previously unknown records of *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *New Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and a proposed performance of *Romeo and Juliet* will be discussed alongside details of the known records of *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Second, Shakespeare performances were sites of artistic contacts and competition, where travelling troupes, local theatres, Japanese and Taiwanese audiences interacted together and contributed to a vibrant theatrical ecology. Third, this article foregrounds the bounds and limitations of theatrical imperialism. While theatre productions were utilised as tools of empire and supported by Japan's administrative apparatus to instruct and assimilate the colonised, in their actual reception they were viewed as popular entertainments which, as objects of criticism, must entertain and delight censorious audiences. The author, Yi-Hsin Hsu, is Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the National Taiwan University.*

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the Japanese Occupation of Taiwan, Kawakami Otojiro, Yamakishi Kayō, Dohi Shunsho, Government-General of Taiwan

On November 2, 1903, the first Japanese-led modern performance of *Hamuretto* (*Hamlet*) in Japan was staged in Tokyo Hongō Theatre by Kawakami Otojiro, founding father of Japan's *shimpa* movement, which attempted to westernise and thereby modernise Japanese theatre in a break from traditional kabuki.¹ Kawakami enlisted Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho to translate and adapt Shakespeare's text for his production. Yamakishi and Dohi, later figureheads of Japan's modern literature and admirers of Shakespeare, spent their salad days as students at Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (now Waseda University), where they studied several of Shakespeare's plays in 1894 and 1895 under Tsubouchi Shōyō—critic, playwright, and the pioneering translator of Shakespeare's entire oeuvre in Japan.² Yamakishi and Dohi were ideal people for Kawakami to turn to. Dohi accompanied Kawakami on his trip to Europe between 1901 and 1902, interpreting for Kawakami's troupe and occasionally corresponding for the Japanese press.³ Dohi would later play the role of Hamlet in Tsubouchi Shōyō's version staged by Bungē Kyokai (the Literary Society).⁴ Yamakishi, who held *Hamlet* in high esteem,⁵ had only recently translated *The Merchant of Venice* for Kawakami's production of the play earlier in June 1903. This production of *Hamlet* enjoyed a modest fifteen-day run in Tokyo, before it toured to Kyoto, Kōbe, Ōsaka, and Hakata.⁶

Kawakami's *Hamlet* has come down in the history of Japanese theatre as a seminal production. It was one of the first performances of *Hamlet* produced by a Japanese troupe, and the fifth Shakespearean play—after *Sakuradoki Zeni no Yononaka* (*The Merchant of Venice*), *Shiizarukidan* (*Julius Caesar*), *Yami to Hikari* (*King Lear*), and *Osero* (*Othello*)—to be adapted in Japan.⁷ Set in the Meiji Era, the production expressed the “genius of Westerners” in Japanese aesthetics while employing a western stage with props created by western artists.⁸ It has therefore been viewed as a defining example of Kawakami's *shimpa* movement and a key production at the juncture of “early modernity and modernity.”⁹

Yet one important fact about the afterlife of this production has been consigned to obscurity to date: it was the very version on which Korea's first Shakespeare performance and Taiwan's first production of *Hamlet* were based. In March 1905, Sēgitai Aizawa Troupe, a *shimpa* company led by Aizawa Tetsuo that was based in Taihoku Theatre (Taipei Theatre), staged a production of *Hamlet* based on this version. Archival research reveals that this very troupe traveled to Joseon four years later with the same repertoire. In July 1909, *Gyeongseong Sinbo* (*Keijō Newspaper*), the official newspaper of the Japanese Resident-General of Korea, reported a “highly recommendable” production of *Hamlet* held at Incheon Kabuki Theatre, in Incheon Leased Territory.¹⁰ According to the cast list, Aizawa reprised his role as Hamlet and Sakai played Gertrude, exactly as they had done in Taipei. Kawano, who played the maid in Taipei, took the role of Ophelia.¹¹

This hither-to unknown connection between Aizawa's Taipei production and the later Incheon revival points to the currently underexplored nature of early Shakespeare performances in Japan's (semi-)colonies. It exposes the potential limitations of tracing Shakespearean performance records from nationalist or regional perspectives. The fact that early performances in the colonies targeted Japanese settlers as their main audience and were performed entirely in Japanese

by a Japanese crew poses ideological, methodological, and political barriers for them to be included in the histories of Taiwanese or Korean Shakespeare performance. On the other hand, scholars attempting the inclusion of them in the reception history of Japanese Shakespeare risk duplicating the imperial gaze. Understandably, the authoritative and encyclopedic compilations of Japanese Shakespearean miscellanies by Sasaki Takashi or Kawado Michiaki left out records from Taiwan and Joseon.¹² The study of Shakespeare performances in Japan's colonies was fated to be an orphaned field.

This article attempts to provide a comprehensive account of Shakespeare performances in colonial Taiwan by envisaging a more embracing outlook of reception history that recognises the inherently border-crossing nature that was core to the transmissions of Shakespeare during the first half of the twentieth century. After all, Aizawa's example was not an isolated case: in 1914, Kamiyama Sōjin, founder of Kindaigekikyōkai (Modern Drama Association, Japan), travelled to Taiwan and staged Tsubouchi Shōyō's version of *Hamlet* after he and his troupe toured around Joseon, Manchuria, and Shanghai.¹³ This article highlights the movements of travelling troupes and the contexts of each production in order to restore a lost chapter of Shakespeare's reception.

In its account of Shakespeare performances in colonial Taiwan, this article adds to current scholarship by presenting the following findings. Firstly, the scope and quantity of records concerning Shakespeare performances extend beyond received knowledge and merit further investigation. In a research report written for the Ministry of Science and Technology, R.O.C. in 2012, Chen Yilin, Wu Pei-Chen, and Chen Yueh-Miao listed and commented on eleven entries of *Hamlet* and *Othello* performances in colonial Taiwan.¹⁴ Their seminal report was the first to alert scholarly attention to the untrodden field of Shakespeare and English education in colonial Taiwan. In 2014, Wu Pei-Chen further surveyed the records and audience reviews surrounding performances of *Othello* and elucidated their relationship with Japan's Theatre Reform Movement.¹⁵ This article complements their invaluable research by introducing previously unknown performance records of *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *New Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and a proposed performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, while also adding further details to the known ones of *Hamlet* and *Othello*. In addition, many production records list play titles and theatre companies only, without providing further information. This article cross-references available data from Japan and traces probable textual lineages underlying Shakespeare performances in Taiwan.

Secondly, this article presents Shakespeare performances as sites of intra-empire mobility and cultural contacts, since, according to the findings yielded from cross-referencing, all Shakespearean performances in colonial Taiwan involved intra-empire trafficking of texts or troupes. Such mobility and contacts were often recorded both by Japanese-oriented and Taiwanese-oriented newspapers. Indeed, in the early years of the Japanese Occupation, traditional Japanese popular entertainments—such as *rakugo* (a form of oral entertaining involving storytelling and hand gestures), *kōdan* (storytelling of historical or political subject matters), *jōruri* (recitatives with *shamisen* music accompaniment), and *naniwabushi* (narratives with *shamisen* music

accompaniment centering on stories of interpersonal relationships)—were viewed almost exclusively by Japanese settlers.¹⁶ *Shimpa* performances were later introduced to theatres where those traditional performances were held. Touring companies or local troupes began to thrive by catering to the demand for entertainment of Japanese settlers. On the other hand, the vibrant theatrical milieu in Taiwan had sustained a theatre-going public: an array of Chinese theatrical forms such as Peking opera, *sù-pîng-hì* (recitative drama popular in Southeast China), various forms of *beiguan* (a type of traditional music widespread in Taiwan), puppet play, *ko-kah-hì* (a type of Chinese opera), and shadow play were already long-established in Taiwan.¹⁷ At a time when Japanese had yet to become the language of communication, the colonisers and the colonised tended to their cultural entertainments separately. Yet, as will become clear later in this article, Taiwanese viewers were not entirely absent from Japanese productions and were even specifically taken into consideration. This article thus reevaluates those performances as sites of artistic contact and competition, where Japanese mainland troupes, local theatres, Japanese and Taiwanese audiences interacted in and contributed to a vibrant theatrical ecology.

Finally, this article foregrounds the bounds and limitations of theatrical imperialism that sought to utilise modern performances as means of cultural assimilation and instruments of racial discrimination. Japanese colonisers were keenly aware of the challenges involved in cultural assimilation, since “the customs and language of Taiwan are all different from those of homeland.”¹⁸ As *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* (the Taiwanese-oriented, independent counterpart of Chinese-written *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*) explicated, assimilation should be enabled through “the humble and familiar means” of theatre, so that “the emotions of Taiwan islanders can be stimulated.” Through theatre, Taiwanese could be guided and regulated “without even noticing.”¹⁹

Kawakami’s 1903 *Othello* bore witness to such an imperial design (Figure 1). Current literature pertaining to this production at the Tokyo Meiji Theatre, or its renditions in colonial Taiwan, has focused on the blatant imperial design of racial hierarchy deeply imbedded in its script penned by Emi Suiin. Kawakami’s version, which casts Othello as a countryside *samurai* who becomes the Governor General of Taiwan, has been viewed as one of the most pivotal and political productions in this age of Japan’s expansion into an empire, and has attracted substantial scholarly attention. Ikeuchi Yasuko contextualises Kawakami’s *Othello* in the turbulent years of the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, arguing that Japan had learned to construct its own imperialist point of view by mimicking the paradigms of Western empires.²⁰ Yoshihara Yukari argues that Japan acquired the centre position of geopolitics by absorbing Taiwan as a colony. As consolidated in Kawakami’s *Othello*, Japanese mainlanders occupied the top of a multitiered racial hierarchy, with Taiwanese islanders in the middle tier and Taiwanese aboriginals at the bottom.²¹ Robert Tierney illuminates the significance of this *Othello* as a “social phenomenon” by analysing how it performed Japan as “an emerging imperial power” and by expounding on its relationship with “the ethnographic showcase of indigenous people in world expositions.”²² Shih Wan-shun details the geographical survey done by Kawakami during his first trip to Taiwan and its subsequent representations on the Tokyo stage, exposing the

underlying intention of Kawakami's *Othello* to legitimise Japan's occupation of Taiwan.²³ The influential research of these scholars has unmasked the worldview of Kawakami's *Othello* as instrumental and conducive to imperial supremacy and colonial subordination. This article, on the other hand, shifts focus from productional intention to audience perception and theatre competition, showcasing the disparity between a top-down political agenda and public reception as seen in performance reviews. It considers performances of *Othello* not as tools of empire supported by Japan's administrative apparatus to instruct and assimilate the colonised, but as popular entertainments which must entertain and delight a cross-cultural, censorious set of audiences. In conclusion, theatrical imperialism confronted considerable challenges in front of Taiwanese theatre-goers whose long-cultivated theatrical flair was capable of subverting the power structure of the colonisers and the colonised in playhouses.



Figure 1. Acts of Kawakami and Emi's *Othello* (1903). Courtesy of Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Library.

Shakespeare's Early Brokers: Kawakami Otojiro and the Age of Imitation

Introduced to Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare's plays signified the achievements of the enlightened empire that was Britain, an imperial model Japan saw as a reference among other Western superpowers. The ability to translate the complete repertoire of Shakespeare's plays was viewed as an enabling signal of higher civilisation and a proof that Japan had entered the ranks and files of Western giants and harnessed a "privileged sector of cultural knowledge."²⁴ Adaptations of Shakespearean plays in the form of dialogue-based modern drama made their way to Japan's most auspicious theatres before they traversed across the sea to Taiwan. Between the years 1895 and 1916, seven productions of *Othello*, six productions of *Hamlet*, three of *The Merchant of Venice*, and one each of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Lear* were produced by Japanese settlers or travelling troupes in Taipei's theatres. Two figureheads were to dictate Taiwan's theatrical reception of Shakespeare: Kawakami Otojiro, whose productions of Japanized *Othello* and *Hamlet* would be

imitated eleven times before Taiwan-based audiences could view characters of these plays in their original names; and Takamatsu Toyojiro (1872-1952), leading broker and producer of films as well as builder and manager of theatres in colonial Taiwan.²⁵

Early Shakespeare performances in Taiwan shared a line of influence from Kawakami. Two years after Kawakami's 1903 *Othello* production, which was transadapted by Emi Suiin, *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* (*Taiwan Daily Newspaper*), a quasi-official newspaper funded by Taiwan's Governor-General, announced a much anticipated staging of Kawakami's version by Murata Masao in Sakae Theatre, then the most prominent venue in Taipei.²⁶ This rendition, which premiered on February 6, 1905, marked the second Shakespeare collaboration between Murata and Fukui Mōhē, who were leaders of Japan's second Theatre Reform Movement in Kyoto and professional acquaintances of Kawakami.²⁷ Their first Shakespearean production, a *King Lear* transadaptation by Kyoto University professor Takayasu Gekkō entitled *Yami to Hikari* (*Darkness and Light*), enjoyed several successful runs in Ōsaka, Kyoto, and Kōbe between 1902 and 1903. With the Emperor's relocation to Edo (Tokyo) after the Meiji Restoration, Japan's entertainment business gradually gravitated eastward towards Japan's new political centre. Yet before its decline in the 1930s, Kansai area remained the stronghold of Japanese performing arts and home to Japan's most refined kabuki productions.²⁸ Murata and Fukui would prove to be amongst the pioneering theatre practitioners who enjoyed successful career trajectories in Kansai before they travelled to Taiwan. That theatres in Taipei attracted producers and actors from the Kansai area was indicative of the level of artistic demand and refinement in Japan's first overseas colony, and Murata's imitation of Kawakami's *Othello*—the very first performance of a Shakespeare play in Taiwan—fulfilled the high expectations of the audience at Sakae Theatre with flying colors.

Sakae Theatre took this production seriously: it devoted considerable funds to renovating the stage and postponed the performance to avoid rain.²⁹ Four days after the premiere, a performance review penned by "Meji" reported the play's "most popular" reception, attributing the big box office turnout to the "refreshing play title," "beautiful stage," "passionate" actors, and their "skillful acting."³⁰ Meji praised the performances of Murata as Muro Washirō (*Othello*) and Kogami as Iya Gōzō (*Iago*), while complaining that Fukui's Tomone (*Desdemona*) appeared too old on Fukui's "long face." Despite its minor imperfections, Meji however recognised the production as "an achievement since the advent of Sōshigeki [an archetypical form of *shimpa*] in Taiwan."³¹

The success of Sakae Theatre's first foray into Shakespeare spurred immediate theatrical competition and alarmed the administrators of Taihoku Theatre, a venue with a longer history than Sakae Theatre. Taihoku Theatre had enjoyed a period of monopoly after its earlier rival, Jūji Theatre, fell out of public favour in the early 1900s. The establishment of Sakae Theatre (since 1902), which boasted a "grander and more embellished playhouse," awakened the survival instincts of actors working at Taihoku Theatre, who reportedly "only tended to their theatrical skills."³² Rivalry had long characterised the relationship between the two venues. Taihoku Theatre chose to stage Shakespeare one month after

Sakae's production, and the title on its playbill—one deemed great enough to eclipse *Othello*—was *Hamlet*.

This in-house production of *Hamlet* by Aizawa Tetsuo, a producer-actor who would later travel to Incheon, was an imitation of Kawakami's 1903 version, as specified in its news coverage in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*:

The *Hamlet* performed at Taihoku Theatre today is one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies, adapted by Dohi Shunsho and Yamakishi Kayō. This version was performed by Kawakami Otojorō in Hongō Theatre, Tokyo, 1903. Our version is an imitation of Kawakami's.³³

The production won critical acclaim. Taihoku Theatre scheduled a renovation for its stage three days after the play's premiere on March 28, 1905, and the payoff was such that *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* sang the praises of the production's technical advancements:

After one day's performance hiatus, the play resumed after all necessary preparations were in place. The stage was completely renovated and beautified, more so than that of *Othello* by Murata at Sakae Theatre. Ghost scenes, in particular, employed gas to mimic rays of light, creating an eerie atmosphere that was hard to fault. [The production team] utilised the hallway of a western-style mansion as the scenic stage to set up tall props. Those huge theatrical properties have seldom been seen in Taipei. The costumes, too, were surprisingly well-prepared.³⁴

The performances of the actors, *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* continued, were as satisfying, despite some noted flaws:

Sakemoto, who delivered the speech of the Duke [Claudius] with surprising aplomb, totally compelled admiration. Okamoto played Naonoshin [Polonius] realistically, but not without a tinge of humor. Aizawa's Hamlet, too, was well-performed and impressive. Now the point is to endeavor to eliminate the affected manner of his acting. Sakai's Gertrude, needless to say though, failed to present brilliant scenes. Fujita's Orieda [Ophelia] seemed better but did not exceed Fujita's usual standard of performance.³⁵

Hamlet's box-office success propelled Taihoku Theatre's next in-house production of Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, as part of its combination bills. On July 14, 1905, *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* reported that "Shakespeare's original comedy *The Ring* in three acts" will be staged as a follow-up performance to Taihoku Theatre's main program, *Justice or Violence*.³⁶ The details and circumstances surrounding this minor production were unreported, but a number of educated assumptions can be drawn from existing facts. In 1905, the only available Japanese translation of *The Merchant of Venice* in print was a partial rendition of the play's courtroom scene by none other than Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho, on whose transadaptation of *Hamlet* Taihoku Theatre's previous production was based.³⁷ Like their transadaptation of *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice* was commissioned by Kawakami for his production of the play in Tokyo

Meiji Theatre, where Kawakami's 1903 *Othello* first premiered. Given the availability of translated texts, Kawakami's popularity in Taiwan, and the practice of imitating Kawakami's productions by theatre producers in Taipei, it would have been very likely that Taihoku Theatre utilised Kayō and Shunshō's transadaptation. It is also noteworthy that Kawakami's production consists of three acts only, corresponding to the number of acts advertised in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. The "ring" in the title refers to Portia's ring, which Bassanio vows to keep but nevertheless surrenders to Balthazar/Portia at the end of the courtroom scene. The production's non-standard title was not unfamiliar in its time: since the first Japanese production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1885, the play had been variously known as *Sakuradoki Zeni no Yononaka* (*All that Matters is Money in the Time of Cherry Blossoms*),³⁸ *Momiji Jikō Zeni no Yononaka* (*All that Matters is Money in the Season of Maple Trees*), *Jinniku Shichiire Saiban* (*The Trial in which Human Flesh is Used as a Pawn*), *Jigoku no Saiban* (*The Trial of Hell*), *Māchanto obu Benisu: Hōtē no Ba* (*The Merchant of Venice: The Courtroom Scene*), *Muneniku no Kishō* (*The Strange Trial of the Flesh of Breast*),³⁹ and—most relevantly—*Yubiwa* (*The Ring*).⁴⁰ The specification of *The Ring* as "Shakespeare's original comedy" left little room for doubt as to the production's textual lineage.

Following Taihoku Theatre's two productions of Shakespeare, Sakae Theatre was to stage three Shakespearean productions in the ensuing two years. On September 13, 1906, a *shimpa* troupe led by Godō Ryōsuke arrived at Sakae Theatre from Japan with an ensemble of thirty actors.⁴¹ *Othello* "the famous play" was on its slate. Six days later, Godō's *Othello*, an intended replica of Kawakami's and Murata's productions, elicited as much censure as praise. The acting of the ensemble was deemed unexaggerated and adequate, but the loose flow of scenes significantly alienated the audience. At its premiere the first two scenes were cut and the drum beat signifying the play's denouement was sounded four scenes in advance.⁴² If not for a prologue delivered by Godō, the audience would not have understood the plot.⁴³ That the production's structural integrity was compromised may indicate some of the theatrical challenges and precariousness attending intra-empire travelling troupes. Unfamiliarity with performance venues, lack of adequate rehearsal time, and discrepancy between directorial intention and audience expectation could have all contributed to the production's critical fiasco.

From a cultural perspective, however, the production exhibited two important facts. First, Taiwanese audiences were not only present in Japanese-centred Shakespeare performances, but specifically taken into consideration. Critic "Nashiroo" warned that traveling troupes should not allow mediocre actors to perform sloppily like "a blind person performing frightening actions," because "Taiwanese people had seen far greater numbers of plays than Japanese [people]"⁴⁴ The maintenance of a travelling troupe's reputation, Nashiroo added, depended heavily on "their [the Taiwanese audience's] judgment of and attention for new actors."⁴⁵ The presence of Taiwanese audience at this production of *Othello* was not an isolated case. Although *shimpa* and *shingeki* performances were mainly attended by Japanese settlers,⁴⁶ the presence of Taiwanese islanders and their interest in *shimpa* performances is buttressed by numerous records.⁴⁷ For instance, when Takamatsu invited a famous actor, Ichikawa, from Tokyo for a

performance at the Asahi Theatre, *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* reported that “many Taiwanese went to see the performance in order to observe the level of skills of highly civilised actors.”⁴⁸ The editorial log also confirmed that Taiwanese people “want to see Asahi Theatre’s performance.”⁴⁹ Kawakami’s second trip to Taiwan, as will be discussed later, likewise stirred considerable excitement among Taiwanese theatre-goers.

Furthermore, theatrical localisation was practiced by sea-crossing troupes as a strategy for appealing to Taiwanese audiences. In Emi Suiin’s script for *Othello* (used by Godō), Manka (Bangka) referred to Taipei’s cultural and economic origin and was said to be “a place unbecoming officers and generals.”⁵⁰ In Godō’s production, this derogative reference was rephrased, along with other similar adjustments to the text. The fact that the production team kept local islanders in mind and was careful not to offend them, testifies to the presence of Taiwanese audiences in Japanese Shakespeare performances. Indirectly, such a practice also unsettled the rigid power hierarchy of the colonisers and the colonised; Taiwanese audiences at *shimpa* performances were recognised not merely as passive viewers whose opinion and judgement may have been slighted, but as active viewers and potential critics of theatre whose impressions and feelings towards Godō’s production weighed enough to warrant voluntary censorship on the part of the production team.

In June 1908, Sakae Theatre welcomed a new producer-actor from Japan, Kitamura Ikoma, whose five-month career in Taipei yielded two Shakespeare performances. *Othello*, again based on Kawakami’s 1903 version, premiered on October 4, 1908. The reception of Kitamura’s production was not documented but it is noteworthy that the arrival of Kitamura’s troupe received favourable coverage in *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. Kitamura’s new hires from Ōsaka, who joined the troupe for the Taiwan trip, were advertised as “famous actors”⁵¹ and *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* predicted that “the theatrical atmosphere ... would be totally renewed.”⁵² That Kitamura’s trip to Taichung was also reported in follow-up coverage indicated a level of interest in Kitamura’s productions among Taiwanese communities.⁵³

Kitamura’s next project, *Hamlet*, likewise based on Kawakami’s version translated by Yamakishi and Dohi, was however not expected to succeed due to several failures of the version’s other reincarnations elsewhere.⁵⁴ Writing for *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, “Migiwa” conceded that Kitamura’s production ended smoothly without mishaps, but *Hamlet* was “not handsome enough,” Gertrude was “too young,” Laertes and Polonius were “difficult to praise,” Horatio “needed to put in more effort,” and Ophelia, though excellent elsewhere, “was deficient in her expression of love for Hamlet.”⁵⁵ Kitamura’s productions marked the third repetition of Kawakami and Emi’s *Othello* and the second repetition of Kawakami’s *Hamlet* in colonial Taiwan. Producers could rely less and less on the reputation of Kawakami for favourable receptions. Theatres were now ready to explore alternative versions in a break from Kawakami’s monopoly of influence.

Shifting the Scene: Takamatsu Toyojiro and the Ascendancy of Popular Entertainment

In the wake of the emerging aesthetic ennui surrounding Emi's transadaptation of *Othello*, Taihoku Engējō (Taipei Playhouse, formerly Panorama Theatre)—a specialised venue for motion pictures built by Takamatsu Toyojiro—dazzled theatregoers in Taipei in 1909 with an original comedy, *New Othello*. The play, a derivation of Kawakami and Emi's 1903 *Othello* and a peculiar specimen in the Japanese Shakespeareana, was written by Masuda Tarō “the pioneer of nonsense comedy”⁵⁶ and produced by Kawakami in Japan a year earlier.⁵⁷ Its production was a welcomed addition to a predominantly tragedy-centred repertoire available in colonial Taiwan. It signaled the growing tendency to prioritise theatre's capacity to delight over its obligation to enlighten—a tendency that anticipated the advent of *kēkigeki* (light comedy) as a potent genre in Japanese theatrical history. The main purpose of *New Othello* was humour. Though it was a stand-alone work independent from Emi's version, Masuda adapted Emi's character names and infused them with funny slapsticks. The play is set in the aftermath of Washiro (*Othello*) and Tomone's (*Desdemona*'s) honeymoon. Washiro, a gentle and innocent man prior to wedlock, now suffers from so much jealousy that he gets angry even when Tomone pats her dog. Washiro suspects that Katsu Yoshio (*Cassio*), a fashionable beau who lives across the street, is in love with Tomone, who writes a letter to dissuade Yoshio from misplaced love. Yoshio visits the couple's mansion to declare his innocence and to complain how unfounded rumour is diminishing his prospect of marrying a rich widow. Hiding under a tiger-skin rug, Washiro eavesdrops and discovers Yoshio's innocence.⁵⁸ The play concludes as the protagonists reaffirm their love and trust. In addition to marital harmony, witty wordplay adds lustre to an already cheerful text that conveys little moral message. If Emi's version was partly a vehicle of Japan's imperial worldview imposed upon Taiwan, Masuda's version appealed to the universal predilection for comic relief and fun, traversing linguistic and cultural divides.

Additional events showcased alongside *New Othello* at Taihoku Engējō further point to Takamatsu Toyojiro's intention to diversify the venue's programming to attract a wider audience. From February 1909, Taihoku Engējō hosted an extremely popular daily magic show led by Shōkyokusai Tenichi—the most renowned magician of his time—as a preamble to whatever comedy was scheduled.⁵⁹ On the day *New Othello* was staged, Shōkyokusai Tenkatsu—a legendary female magician who made her name known across Europe and Asia—“rubbed multiple flowers into existence from calligraphy papers” and excited the enthusiasm of the crowd.⁶⁰ *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* sang the praises of Taihoku Engējō's theatrical spectacles, adding that the admission fees were “very cheap,” especially with discount coupons distributed by military band members in advance. The production was said to be a “visual and aural feast” and a “quality entertainment” that was “difficult to grow tired of.”⁶¹

Despite Takamatsu's well-documented manifesto to utilise theatre for “assimilation,”⁶² in practice he appears to have treated theatre first and foremost as a vehicle for popular entertainment, resonating with Masuda Tarō's advocacy

of comedy. In “Concerning Comedy,” Masuda lamented the absence of comedy on Japanese stages and observed that both “old and new drama” in Japan uniformly followed the poetic justice to reward virtue and punish evil. “Though so inclined,” he lamented, people bound by the notion of theatre’s obligation to instruct “do not dare to go to see a love story or a vulgar play.”⁶³ His *New Othello* filled the lacunae in Japan’s theatrical development the way Takamatsu contributed to Taipei’s popular culture.

Yet, some form of kindred spirit with Masuda might not sufficiently explain Takamatsu’s choice of *New Othello*; there was a geopolitical dimension to his selection. The Masuda family had strong ties with Taiwan’s sugar industry, then a central focus of Japan’s colonial project. Baron Masuda Takashi, father to Masuda Tarō and the first CEO of Mitsui & Co., Ltd., was one of the founders of Taiwan Sugar Co. Like his father, Masuda Tarō was well-educated in English and was appointed as the managing director of Taiwan Sugar Co. in 1908. Outside of his career as a colonial plutocrat, Masuda Tarō dabbled in theatrical criticism, acting, and playwriting under the penname “Tarō Kaja.”⁶⁴ Takamatsu’s choice of play was also a homage to a newly appointed colonial tycoon.

Two months after the refreshing success of Taihoku Engējō’s *New Othello*, Sakae Theatre hosted the Fujihara Troupe from Japan and recycled its old repertoire, Kawakami’s *Hamlet* and *Othello*.⁶⁵ Fujihara’s *Othello* was the most disastrous flop Taipei’s theatrical spheres had witnessed. *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* mocked the “shameless courage” with which Fujihara dared to stage a “script even Henry Irving could not deliver with perfection.”⁶⁶ This knowledge about Irving indicates the critic “Kyōka” was familiar with the theatrical milieu of mainland Japan. Irving was an acquaintance of Kawakami, whose touring performances in Boston Irving had attended.⁶⁷ Kawakami also saw Irving’s *The Merchant of Venice* to return the favour.⁶⁸ Irving was known to Japan’s theatre-going society via overseas reports written by Meiji travelers to the USA and the UK.⁶⁹ His acting style was known to be imitated by Shakespearean directors and actors such as Ichikawa Sadanji.⁷⁰ In early twentieth-century Japan, the names of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were synonymous with representative, modern Western actors, whose acting styles contrasted with those of *kabuki*.

Given Kyōka’s mention of Irving as a point of reference, it is not difficult to understand why Kyōka took issue with the Fujihara Troupe’s “*kabuki*-style dialogue,” “pretentious grandeur,” and “exaggerated gestures”—elements considered unbecoming a “modern play.”⁷¹ Indeed, an unfulfilled expectation of theatrical progress and aesthetic novelty seemed to underlie Kyōka’s frustration with Fujihara’s “outdated mind reeking with decade-old mold.” The actors’ interpretations of characters and sloppy preparation likewise sparked criticism: Hanamura’s *Hamlet* was merely a “fake lunatic” lacking the philosophical sophistication of the original. Fujihara’s *Othello* wore “thief-like makeup” and incorrect costume, which Kyōka deemed “a disgrace” and a “speechless insult to the audience.” Satomi’s *Iago* alienated the audience with “unpleasant gestures” and “mistake-ridden lines.”⁷² Having missed the opportunity to overturn a “long-term box-office recession,” the Fujihara Troupe was set to return to Japan on 15 October 1909, concluding a miserable one-month sojourn in colonial Taiwan.⁷³

On May 24, 1910, Kumagai Kiichirō's Yoshitaka Troupe traveled from Japan to Taipei. Sakae Theatre took the chance to recycle Kawakami and Emi's *Othello* once more and was met with tepid responses. Like Kyōka, "Tetsuwan," a critic writing for *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, took issue with the actors' performances and unsatisfactory preparation: though minor characters were adequate, Tamashiro's Desdemona "lacked emotion," Wakasa's Emilia "tried too hard," Iago "did not study his character," Cassio appeared "shallow," and the casting of Othello was "unsuitable."⁷⁴ The exaggerated and pretentious acting style, Tetsuwan continued, was "ridiculous" and "frightening." Kyōka's and Tetsuwan's criticism once again points to the theatrical ennui of Emi Suiin's *Othello* and a tenacious demand for novelty in Taipei's theatre-going public. Emi's version, whose birth bespoke Japan's ambition to preside over its imperial world order, continued to prove that, as popular entertainment, productions were most intuitively perceived according to their aesthetic qualities.

Perhaps mindful of its own failure in contrast to Taihoku Engējō's success with *New Othello*, Sakae Theatre, where only imitations of Kawakami's productions of Shakespeare had been staged, made a leap of faith and departed from its hither-to trodden path. On April 8, 1911, Sakae Theatre played host to the Kēhangōdō Troupe (Kyoto and Ōsaka Joint Troupe) and staged *New Hamlet* by Sadō Kōryoku.⁷⁵ For the first time since Shakespeare was introduced to colonial Taiwan, theatre-goers in Taipei were able to see a version of *Hamlet* that was not written by Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho nor an imitation of Kawakami's 1903 production. Originally produced by Takada Makoto and Fujisawa Asajirō, *New Hamlet* in five acts first premiered in Tokyo's Hongō theatre in 1907 before it was restaged at Kiraku Theatre in Yokohama (Figure 2)⁷⁶. This version enhanced the motives for characters' actions, introducing, for instance, a new character named Yukimaro who is the son of Nagayoshi (Claudius), thus further justifying Claudius's need to murder Sachimaro (Hamlet).⁷⁷ Taipei-based audiences would have recognised a number of localising elements—notably an earthquake that damaged the protagonists' ancestral home. The reception of the play was not reported by *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, but Yoshino Playhouse, a later rival of Sakae Theatre, found it sensible to stage its version of *New Hamlet* in 1915. This could perhaps rule out a catastrophic reception in 1911.

New Othello and *New Hamlet* bore witness to the resilience and versatility of Taiwan's theatrical industry in the face of repertoire exhaustion and symbiotic competition. Unhostile receptions of these subversive texts, to an extent at least, suggest a good level of tolerance to changes in theatre practices. Taiwan-based audiences were now ready for the next steps towards a diverse theatrical ecology: Kawakami's high-profile trip to Taiwan and the rise of more faithful translations as play scripts.



Figure 2. *New Hamlet* at Hongō theatre. Courtesy of Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Library.

From Transadaptation to Translation: Kawakami versus Tsubouchi Shōyō

New Hamlet was immediately followed by a landmark event in Taipei's theatrical milieu: Kawakami Otojirō's second trip to Taiwan per invitation from Takamatsu Toyojiro's film management organisation, Dōjin Society—a society dedicated to involving Taiwanese people who were “noble in the mind” in Japanese performances and to training them as actors.⁷⁸ The theatrical landscape in Taipei underwent considerable changes in the 1910s. Taihoku Theatre had faded from the scene; Asahi Theatre, renovated by Takamatsu as a multipurpose venue, succeeded Taihoku Theatre as Sakae Theatre's main rival.⁷⁹ The invitation to Kawakami was a key strategy in Asahi Theatre's ascension to popularity, and the payoffs were significant. Shih Wan-shun has excavated more than seventy news articles devoted to coverage of Kawakami's trip.⁸⁰ *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* urged Kawakami to redress the regret of not performing during his 1905 trip: “we must not allow this big fish to flee, even if we need to impawn Mount Jade.”⁸¹ *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, too, provided extensive coverage of all aspects of Kawakami's trip, including his arrival on the *Kasato-Maru*;⁸² his visit to the Hasegawa Kinsuke Statue;⁸³ the arrivals of Kawakami's wife and other female actors;⁸⁴ how a thousand viewers went to Asahi Theatre to see his play;⁸⁵ how people in Taichung lamented Kawakami did not visit the city;⁸⁶ and how Taiwan Sugar Company booked the whole Minami Theatre in Tainan for its five hundred employees and one hundred and fifty guests to see Kawakami.⁸⁷ Two classical poems in Chinese were composed to commemorate his arrival and departure.⁸⁸ Such unprecedented coverage signaled Kawakami's popularity among Taiwanese islanders. Last but not least, the classical poem, “His Eventual Departure,” provided undeniable evidence that Taiwanese viewers were present at

Kawakami's performances; in this poem are the words "Kawakami's drama came sweeping by before the eyes of the Taiwanese people."⁸⁹

Kawakami initially planned a three-installment, twelve-day repertoire, with *Juliet* on his slate. *Romeo and Juliet*, a new addition to Kawakami's oeuvre, was staged by Kawakami and Fukui Mōhē one month before Kawakami's trip to Taiwan, on March 16, 1911 at Ōsaka Tēkoku Theatre (Imperial Theatre). *Juliet*, a role no Japanese actress had ever played before, was first performed by Kawakami's wife, Sadayakko, on that very occasion.⁹⁰ Kawakami's initial plan to stage *Juliet* at Asahi Theatre would have enabled a demonstration of the historic achievement of his wife, who accompanied him to Taiwan. Asahi Theatre had modified its stage specifications according to those of Ōsaka Tēkoku Theatre, so that audiences in Taiwan "could enjoy exactly the same viewing experience."⁹¹ On April 22, when Kawakami finalised his program, however, *Juliet* was no longer offered. The circumstances of *Juliet's* cancellation were not specified, and, with Kawakami's death in November 1911, the prospect of having Kawakami— whose influence was seen in almost all Shakespeare performances in colonial Taiwan— produce Shakespeare for Taiwan-based audiences was forever consigned to impossibility.

To fill the emptiness in a period when "theatrical prosperity faded like cherry blossoms with Kawakami's departure,"⁹² Sakae Theatre and Asahi Theatre collaborated on a production of Kawakami and Emi's *Othello* in August 1911. Sakae Theatre further repeated the same title in 1912 with Kumagai Kiichirō, before it eventually added further variety to its Shakespeare repertoire with a presentation of *King Lear* by Shibui Troupe in 1916.⁹³ By that time, Kawakami's *shimpa* had lost its lustre as well as its leader, and *King Lear* became the last Shakespeare performance in colonial Taiwan hither-to found in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*.

After Kawakami's demise, theatres built by Takamatsu became the main venues for Shakespeare performances. Asahi Theatre and Yoshino Playhouse—a venue Takamatsu established in 1911⁹⁴ —continued to stage refreshing titles, sourced from other translations outside Kawakami's influence. On March 7, 1912, the Satonoya Imosuke Troupe, which had been performing successfully at Yoshino Playhouse since July 1911, staged an unspecified version of *The Merry Wives*.⁹⁵ "*The Merry Wives*" was the short title of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, used and translated by prolific critic Matsui Shōyō. This play was performed at Tēkoku Theatre a month before Satonoya's Taiwan performance. Matsui's translation was also the only available one of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1912.⁹⁶ Given the availability of text and Taipei producers' long-established practice of keeping pace with fashionable programs in mainland Japan, it is possible Satonoya used or was inspired by Matsui's production. Yet until further evidence emerges, the textual lineage of Satonoya's production remains a mystery.

Asahi Theatre's employment of Tsubouchi Shōyō's translations in its productions of *The Merchant of Venice* (1912 and 1914) and *Hamlet* (1914) is evidence of further departure from Kawakami's influence. The two productions in 1914 were produced by Kamiyama Sōjin, founder of the Modern Drama

Association, during his performance tours in Joseon, Manchuria, Shanghai, and Taipei.⁹⁷ The rise of Tsubouchi's influence marked a shift from Kawakami's transadaptation-based productions towards renditions based on faithful translations of Shakespeare's originals. *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, accordingly, praised Kamiyama for employing Renaissance costumes and the "classical" form of his production.⁹⁸ For the first time since *Hamlet* was introduced to Taiwan, characters appeared in their original names. Hamlet was no longer a Japanese noble of the Meiji Era but the Prince of Denmark. Tsubouchi Shōyō's faithful translation opened up a Shakespearean world that was so different from Kawakami and Emi's version that *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* provided a substantial summary of the play, as if introducing a new title Taiwan-based audiences had never known. Its reception, however, was not uniformly favourable. Two days after the play's premiere, a critic with *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* observed that although the choice of Renaissance costumes won praise, the colour of stage props, the prosaic form of dialogues, the lack of impact in Ophelia's floral tribute, and the omission of the graveyard scene were huge disappointments.⁹⁹

The Modern Drama Association's trip to Taiwan was the last highlight of Takamatsu's theatre-managing enterprise. By 1916, his career trajectory had gradually steered towards Japan due to problems with his personal finances, his ambition for public office, and the completion of theatrical infrastructure in Taiwan.¹⁰⁰ Takamatsu's ensuing withdrawal from Taiwan at the end of the 1910s marked the closure of Shakespeare performances in colonial Taiwan. According to available data, the fact that records of Shakespeare performances abruptly end in the late 1910s might stem from a myriad of reasons. First, the rough synchronisation of this closure with Kawakami's death and Takamatsu's withdrawal from Taiwan indicates that early Shakespearean reception predominantly depended on figurehead brokers and not on sustained public interest in the Bard. Second, discussing Takamatsu's decision to depart, Shih Wan-shun has pointed out that in the Taishō Period (1912-1926), Japan prioritised films over stage performances as legitimate vehicles for "general education through demotic means."¹⁰¹ Her findings also partially explain the decline of Shakespeare performances at the end of the 1910s. Third, in the following decades, the place for Shakespeare's reception shifted away from popular entertainment to formal education in Taihoku Kōdō Gakkō (Taipei High School), established in 1922, and Taihoku Tēkoku Daigaku (Taipei Imperial University), established in 1928. The short-lived popularity of Tsubouchi's translations emblematised the missed possibilities of the more authentic productions of Shakespeare that Taipei-based audiences could have seen.

Coda: Theatre and the Justification of Empire

In the early years of Japanese occupation of Taiwan, the establishment of popular entertainment infrastructures such as theatres and playhouses consistently served as a means of cultural assimilation and justification for racial hierarchy, often with administrative or financial support from the Taiwan Government-General. The role played by the colonial administrative apparatus in Kawakami's field trip to Taiwan for his 1903 *Othello* production has been documented by scholars such as Chen Yiju.¹⁰² Kawakami's demographic, cultural,

and geographical survey of Taiwanese aboriginals was enabled by the permission from the Governor of Penghu. His travel logs were extensively printed in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. From its inception, Kawakami's *Othello* was supported by the sinews of empire.

Takamatsu Toyojiro's career in Taiwan, too, embodied an imperial design. It was Itō Hirobumi, a signatory of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the first Resident-General of Korea and Japan's Prime Minister, who promised support and persuaded Takamatsu to go to Taiwan to "pacify colonial subjects and establish entertainment business."¹⁰³ Takamatsu's understanding of his mission clearly conformed with Itō's:

We mainlanders coming to our territory Taiwan should follow the policies of the Government-General, and, as noble and virtuous harbingers of colonial instruction and development, should aim to pacify and educate Taiwanese islanders.¹⁰⁴

To this end, Takamatsu planned to invite quality troupes from Japan and design programs that suited the tastes of the Japanese, the Taiwanese, or both. Theatre could be instructive because according to his observation, Taiwanese theatre was full of vice and immorality. "The themes of plays in Taiwan," he added, "were usually rebellions, regicides, insolent ministers, thieves, robbers, or adultery." It was therefore imperative for theatre luminaries to "correct" the corrupted custom and "nurture" the hearts and spirits of the Taiwanese people through theatre reform.¹⁰⁵ *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, the bellwether for trends of Government-General policies, shared the same opinion to "build theatrical infrastructures for Taiwanese islanders to steer them away from bad habits such as gambling and obscene extravagance."¹⁰⁶

In this context, the showing of Japanese transadaptations of Western plays in colonies could be regarded as a statement of Japan's cultural advancement and superiority. Early performances of Shakespeare could, theoretically, help showcase Japan as an enlightened superpower that harnessed the ability to translate and interpret the defining icon of Western civilisation that was Shakespeare. As mentioned above, Kawakami and Emi's *Othello*, especially, preached racial hierarchy and placed Japan at the centre of East Asian geopolitics.

Yet, as seen from the numerous theatre reviews quoted above, on the reception side those performances were not viewed as potent instruments of imperial education, but objects of harsh criticism and censure. Attentions were placed on the acting, stage properties, colour design, costumes, and preparation of any given play. For instance, Fujihara's *Othello* was "a speechless insult." Gotō's *Othello* was deemed "shameless," "foolish," and "arousing sympathy."¹⁰⁷ Kumagai's *Othello* was "frightening" because of the actors' extravagant acting styles.¹⁰⁸ The omission of scenes in Kamiyama's and Gotō's productions were huge "disappointments." "The reviewers were so harsh," an editorial commented, "that they can kill with their mouths."¹⁰⁹ *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* recorded the constant anxiety about whether troupes from Japan could live up to the expectations of Taiwan-based audiences or not.

Granted, *shimpa* performances served their expected colonial functions. They have been known to provide comfort to soldiers who pacified “the savage aboriginals.”¹¹⁰ They were social lubricants and stabilisers through which companies rewarded employees and theatres offered fundraising for disasters such as the great fire of Ōsaka, 1909.¹¹¹ Yet, imperial aims often ceded precedence to the exigencies of theatre – Takamatsu’s showing of *New Othello* was a salient case in point.

As the reviewer of Kamiyama Sōjin’s *Hamlet* observed, “we are interested in Shakespeare performances not because we focus on the ideology underlying the play or the personalities of characters. Instead, [we care about] how actors interpret scripts in modern styles.”¹¹² The reviews of *Othello* performances in colonial Taiwan forever bore witness to the bounds and limitations of theatrical imperialism.

Appendix: A List of Shakespeare Performances in Colonial Taiwan

1. **Othello**. Production by Murata Masao. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. February 6, 1905.
2. **Hamlet**. Production by Aizawa Tetsuo (later Aizawa Masayoshi). Transadaptation by Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho. Taihoku Theatre. March 28, 1905.
3. **The Ring, a Shakespearean Comedy [The Merchant of Venice]**. Taihoku Theatre in-house production. Transadaptation by Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho [?]. Taihoku Theatre. July 14, 1905.
4. **Othello**. Production by Gotō Ryōsuke. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. September 18, 1906.
5. **Othello**. Production by Kitamura Ikoma. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. October 4, 1908.
6. **Hamlet**. Production by Kitamura Ikoma. Transadaptation by Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho. Sakae Theatre. November 18, 1908.
7. **New Othello**. Producer unspecified. Script by Masuda Tarō. Taihoku Engējō. July 26 – August 14, 1909.
8. **Hamlet**. Production by Fujihara Troupe. Transadaptation by Yamakishi Kayō and Dohi Shunsho. Sakae Theatre. September 27 – October 3, 1909.
9. **Othello**. Production by Fujihara Troupe. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. October 2, 1909.
10. **Othello**. Production by Kumagai Kiichirō, Yoshitaka Troupe. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. June 19, 1910.
11. **New Hamlet**. Production by Kēhangōdō Troupe. Script by Sadō Kōryoku. Sakae Theatre. April 8, 1911.
12. Unfulfilled performance of **Juliet**. Production by Kawakami Otojirō. Asahi Theatre. Proposed April 14, 1911. Cancelled April 22, 1911.
13. **Othello**. Production unspecified. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. August 1, 1911.
14. **The Merry Wives of Windsor**. Production by Satonoya Imosuke. Influenced by Matsui Shōyō [?]. Yoshino Playhouse. March 7, 1912.

15. **Hamlet**. Production and version unspecified. Asahi Theatre. May 2, 1912.
16. **The Merchant of Venice**. Production unspecified. Translation by Tsubouchi Shōyō. Asahi Theatre. May 8, 1912.
17. **Othello**. Production by Kumagai Kiichirō, Yoshitaka Troupe. Transadaptation by Emi Suiin. Sakae Theatre. July 6, 1912.
18. **Hamlet**. Production by Kamiyama Sōjin of Kindaigekikyōkai. Translation by Tsubouchi Shōyō. Asahi Theatre. November 1, 1914.
19. **The Merchant of Venice**. Production by Kamiyama Sōjin of Kindaigekikyōkai. Asahi Theatre. November 3, 1914.
20. **New Hamlet**. Production and version unspecified. Script by Sadō Kōryoku. Yoshino Playhouse. May 30, 1915.
21. **King Lear**. Production by Shibui Troupe. Version unspecified. Sakae Theatre. August 19, 1916.

Throughout the main text, names in Japanese (according to Hepburn Romanization), Chinese, and Korean (according to the Revised Romanization of Korea, 2007) are given in their conventional order, with surnames coming first. This work was financially supported by the Young Scholar Fellowship Program, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Taiwan, R.O.C., under Grant MOST 108-2636-H-002-001, for which I am immensely grateful.

¹ Existing records show that five performances of *Hamlet* by foreign traveling troupes were staged in Kiito Kensajō (Silk Examination Office, now Yokohama No. 2 Joint Government Office Building) and Yokohama Public Hall before Kawakami's 1903 *Hamlet*. Those performances targeted foreign residents as their main audience. See Sasaki Takashi, *A Chronology of Japanese Shakespeare Performances (Revised Edition)* (Tokyo: Taikidō: 2016), 8; Ōzasa Yoshio, *A History of Japanese Modern Drama: Meiji and Taishō* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1985), 79.

² Kawatake Toshio, *Japan's Hamlet* (Tokyo: Nansōsha, 1972), 207.

³ Joseph L. Anderson, *Enter a Samurai: Kawakami Otojirō and Japanese Theatre in the West*. Vol. 1 (Tucson: Wheatmark, 2011), 499.

⁴ Hirokawa Osamu, "A Chronology of Shakespeare Performances," in *An Overview of Japanese Shakespeares*, ed. Sasaki Takashi (Tokyo: Erupisu, 1990), 584-85.

⁵ Yamakishi later commented in the preface to their own edition of the play, "God-like Shakespeare radiates timeless glory through one of his four great tragedies, *Hamlet*." See Dohi Shunsho and Yamakishi Kayō, *Shakespearean Tragedy Hamlet* (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1903), 7. Though Dohi was listed as a co-author, this adaptation was mainly penned by Yamakishi, as indicated in the preface.

⁶ Kawado Michiaki, *Shakespeare in the Meiji Era*, Vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Ōzorasha, 2004), 203.

⁷ Hirokawa, "A Chronology of Shakespeare Performances," 580.

⁸ Kawado, *Shakespeare in the Meiji Era*, 207-8.

⁹ Kawatake, *Japan's Hamlet*, 188.

¹⁰ "Aizawa Troupe Received Praise," *Gyeongseong Sinbo*, July 25, 1909, 3.

¹¹ Other details regarding the actors/actresses were not documented.

¹² See note 1 and note 6.

¹³ "Modern Drama Association Came," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, October 19, 1914.

¹⁴ Yilin Chen, Wu Pei-Chen and Chen Yueh-miao, "Shakespeare Studies in Taiwan under Japanese Rule and Their Roles in English Education (1895-1945)(I)" (Research Report for the Ministry of Science and Technology, Republic of China, August 31, 2012), .pdf file, 1-10.

¹⁵ Pei-Chen Wu, "Japanese Adaptation of *Othello* and Colonial Taiwan: Focusing on the Performance Records and Reviews in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*," in *Colony and City*, ed. Fang-Ming Chen (Taipei: National Chengchi University Press, 2014), 39-52.

¹⁶ Wan-shun Shih, "Takamatsu Toyozirou and the Inauguration of Modern Taiwanese Theater," *Journal of Theater Studies* 10 (July 2012): 44.

¹⁷ For further information, see Kun-liang Chiu, *New Drama and Old Drama: A Study on Taiwanese Drama under Japanese Rule. 1895-1945* (Taipei: Independence Evening Post Press, 1992), 131-223.

- 18 "Reforming the Theatrical Milieu," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, December 21, 1909.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ikeuchi Yasuko, "A Modern Japanese Adaptation of *Othello*: Mimicry and the Imperial Gaze," *Art Research* 3 (March 2003): 137-150.
- 21 Yoshihara Yukari, "*Othello* Transadapted by Emi Suiin and Produced by Kawakami Otojorō—Multitiered Peripheries," *Social Literature* 21 (2005): 19-30.
- 22 Robert Tierney, "*Othello* in Tokyo: Performing Race and Empire in 1903 Japan," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 516.
- 23 Shih Wan-shun, "Kawakami Otojoro's *Othello* and Taiwan Seigeki, the Field Survey for *Othello* and its Representation on Stage," *Taipei Theatre Journal* 8 (2008): 7-30.
- 24 J. R. Mulryne, "Introduction," in *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage*, eds. Takashi Sasayama, J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 4.
- 25 Shih, "Takamatsu Toyozirou and the Inauguration of Modern Taiwanese Theater," 35-68.
- 26 "Sakae Theatre's *Othello*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, January 27, 1905.
- 27 Wu, "Japanese Adaptation of *Othello* and Colonial Taiwan," 46.
- 28 Hosoi Naoko, "Ko-gyou as Japan's Exclusive Institution and Its Modernization by Shochiku," *Taipei Theatre Journal* 29 (2019): 81-82.
- 29 "Sakae Theatre's *Othello*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, February 5, 1905.
- 30 "Sakae Theatre's *Othello*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, February 10, 1905.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 "Requests Made towards Two Theatres," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, January 14, 1903.
- 33 "*Hamlet* of Taihoku Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, March 28, 1905.
- 34 "*Hamlet* at Taihoku Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, March 31, 1905.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 "Taihoku Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, July 14, 1905.
- 37 See Sasaki, *An Overview of Japanese Shakespeares*, 480-81.
- 38 Trans. Mitsuya Mori, "Introduction," in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Drama*, eds. J. Thomas Rimer, Mitsuya Mori and M. Cody Poulton (NY: Columbia UP, 2014), 8.
- 39 Kawado Michiaki and Sakakibara Takanori, eds., *The Anthology of Meiji Translational Literature: News and Magazines, Vol 1 (The Works of Shakespeare I)* (Tokyo: Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1996), 13.
- 40 Sasaki, *A Chronology of Japanese Shakespeare Performances (Revised Edition)*, 8-10.
- 41 "Miscellaneous News from Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, September 13, 1906.
- 42 "*Othello* at Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, September 18, 1906.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Lin, Ho-Yi, *A History of Taiwan Theatre* (Taipei: NTUP, 2015), 144-99; Hsu, Ya-Hsiang, *A Historiography of Taiwan Theatre during the Japanese Rule* (Taipei: Nan-Tien, 2006), 88-92.
- 47 Including but not limited to "A Performance to Welcome Cruiser Crew," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 17, 1911; "A Review on Seigeki," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, July 25, 1911.
- 48 "Famous Actors Came to Taiwan," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, January 19, 1910.
- 49 "The Editorial Log," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, January 19, 1910.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 "The Arrival of Famous Actors," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 4, 1908.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 "The Completion of Taichung Theatre," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, September 9, 1908.
- 54 "*Hamlet* at Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, November 18, 1908.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Takano Masao, "The Pioneer of Nonsense Comedy: Masuda Tarō Kaja," *Tragedy and Comedy* 47, no. 552 (April 1994): 10.
- 57 "The Popularity of Taihoku Engeijō," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, August 14, 1909. Previously, *New Othello* premiered in Japan on October 6, 1908 at Meiji Theatre and enjoyed several reruns at Kyoto Kabuki Theatre, Ōsaka Naga Theatre, and Asakusa Ryūsē Theatre. See Sasaki, *A Chronology of Japanese Shakespeare Performances*, 11.
- 58 Masuda Tarō Kaja, "New *Othello*," in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare Translational Literature*, Vol. 24, eds. Kawado Michiaki and Sakakibara Takanori (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1999), 1-125.
- 59 "Tenichi to Tenkatsu," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, February 11, 1909.

- 60 "The Popularity of Taihoku Engeijō," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, August 14, 1909.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 "My Aspirations for Providing Entertainment," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 16, 1909.
- 63 Masuda Tarō Kaja, "Concerning Comedy," *Kabuki* 71, no. 1 (March 1906): 94-95.
- 64 As a jargon in Japanese comic forms such as Kyōgen (a short comic play usually performed alongside Noh), "Tarō Kaja" refers to a stock character who is a lower court servant. Masuda's choice of penname was a playful pun on his own name as well as a gesture towards his ardent interest in comedy.
- 65 "Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, September 27, 1909.
- 66 "Shakespeare's Play at Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, October 3, 1909.
- 67 Anderson, *Enter a Samurai*, 190-204.
- 68 Ibid., 197.
- 69 Tesuo Kishi and Graham Bradshaw, *Shakespeare in Japan* (London: Continuum, 2006), 4.
- 70 Ibid., 22.
- 71 "Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, September 27, 1909.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 "Viewing *Othello*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 16, 1910.
- 75 "Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 8, 1911. *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* incorrectly attributed the play to Hirotzu Ryūrō.
- 76 Sasaki, *A Chronology of Japanese Shakespeare Performances*, 11.
- 77 See Sadō Kōryoku, *New Hamlet* (Tokyo: Hongō Theatre, 1907).
- 78 "Kawakami's Ideal Plays," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 14, 1911. The phrase "Dōjin" was meant to denote a "nondiscriminatory" spirit of audience inclusion; "Reforming the Theatrical Milieu," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, December 21, 1909.
- 79 Shih, "Takamatsu Toyozirou and the Inauguration of Modern Taiwanese Theater," 49.
- 80 Ibid., 53.
- 81 "Kawakami's Ideal Plays. *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 14, 1911." Mount Jade is the highest mountain in Taiwan and, per colonisation, the highest in the Japanese Empire.
- 82 "Kawakami Came to Taiwan," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 12, 1911; "Recent Updates on a Famous Actor," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 14, 1911.
- 83 "A Crowd of People," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 14, 1911.
- 84 "Shinano Telegram," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 1, 1911; "Kawakami Troupe's Arrival," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 3, 1911.
- 85 "Popularity," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 10, 1911.
- 86 "Preparation for New Drama," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 17, 1911.
- 87 "Kawakami's Play in Tainan," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 2, 1911.
- 88 "Kawakami," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 3, 1911; "His Eventual Departure," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 5, 1911.
- 89 "His Eventual Departure," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 5, 1911, line 6.
- 90 Yoshiko Kawachi, "Enter the First Shakespearean Actress on the Japanese Stage: Her Contribution to the Theatre World, Cultural Exchange and Feminism," in *English without Boundaries: Reading English from China to Canada*, eds. Jane Roberts and Trudi Darby (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 48.
- 91 "Kawakami's Ideal Plays," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, April 14, 1911.
- 92 "Recovering Prosperity," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, August 3, 1911.
- 93 "Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, August 19, 1916.
- 94 Lee Daw-Ming, "The First Chapter of Taiwanese Film History: 1905-1915," in *Bibliography and Selected Works of Taiwan Documentary Film Research*, eds. Lee Daw-Ming and Chang Chang-Yan (Taipei: Taiwan Film Institute, 2007), 22.
- 95 "Satonoya Comedy," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, March 7, 1912.
- 96 The first translation of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in print was by Tsubouchi Shōyō in 1926.
- 97 "Modern Drama Association's Fourth Performance," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, November 3, 1914.
- 98 "*Hamlet* from Tomorrow," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, October 31, 1914.
- 99 *Hamlet*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, November 3, 1914.
- 100 Shih, "Takamatsu Toyozirou and the Inauguration of Modern Taiwanese Theater," 54-55.
- 101 Ibid.

¹⁰² Chen Yiju, "The Stage Performance of a Contemporary Theatre and the National Drama during the Early Japanese Rule in Taiwan: A Study on Kawakami Otojiro and Takamatsu Toyojiro's Activities," *Intercultural Studies Review* 31, no. 86 (March 2018): 86-110.

¹⁰³ Matsumoto Katsuhē, *A History of Japanese Socialist Drama: Meiji and Taishō* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1975), 306.

¹⁰⁴ "My Aspirations for Providing Entertainment," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, May 16, 1909.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "Ten News in One," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, January 14, 1909.

¹⁰⁷ "Shakespeare's Play at Sakae Theatre," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, October 3, 1909.

¹⁰⁸ "Viewing *Othello*," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, June 16, 1910.

¹⁰⁹ "Ten News in One," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, March 1, 1910.

¹¹⁰ "The Delay of Tenichi," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, February 25, 1909; "Joint Performance," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, July 5, 1910; "Charity Performance," *Kanbun Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, July 8, 1910.

¹¹¹ "Sakae Theatre's Charity Performance," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, August 8, 1909.

¹¹² "Hamlet," *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*, November 3, 1914.