

Discovery of the Solid

— The meetings of artists Ishii Tsuruzō and Isamu Noguchi —

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Introduction

It was a unique moment in Japanese art history when two artists from East and West met twice in Tokyo in 1950. One was from the West, Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), the sculptor who represented modern sculpture in the 20th century, and the other was from the East, Ishii Tsuruzō, regarded as the most skillful sculptor in Japan. These were short meetings which were held first in March and second in July, set up by Sasamura Sōkajin, one of Ishii's disciples. It seemed that these meetings had almost slipped from their minds after that. Only a few disciples of Ishii noted this meeting and what Noguchi said to them. The word Cubism, said by Noguchi at the meeting in commenting on Ishii's representative wood work "Shimazaki Tōson" (Tōson-zō (1) 藤村像(1) 1950)ⁱ, made this moment remarkable to the modern Japanese sculpture history. From this meeting, through a comparison between the two artists we will be able to shed light on the workings of modern sculpture.

1. 1931

In 1931, Isamu Noguchi arrived in Japan after an 8-month sojourn in Beijing. He came to Beijing from Paris, by the Trans-Siberian Railway. Since this was his 2nd visit to Japan, he had already met many Japanese artists, including Takamura Kōtarō [Mitsutarō] 高村光太郎 (1883-1953), a sculptor introduced by Isamu's father, Yone Noguchi [Noguchi Yonejirō] 野口米次郎 (1875-1947). Aside from this, he met "a young sculptor, Sasamura".¹ At that time, Sasamura [Sasamura Sōkajin] 笹村草家人 (1909-1975) was 22 years-old, 5 years younger than Noguchi, and it seemed that he was not able to make a good impression on Noguchi. Sasamura attended Noguchi as a guide on his trip to Nara and Kyoto. Noguchi wrote about this trip with him as follows:

For this purpose I looked for somebody who could accompany me on a trip whereby I might learn more about the country. I was introduced to Sokajin Sasamura, a young student interested in sculpture.

ⁱ "Shimazaki Tōson" is wood carving statue of a famous novelist, Shimazaki Tōson 島崎藤村 (1872-1943) made by Ishii Tsuruzō. It is also referred to "Shimazaki Tōson sensei-zō" (島崎藤村先生像) or "Tōson-zō" (藤村像) There is no official name for this piece. In addition, two wooden statues of Tōson were made. To distinguish between these works, they are designated by numbers 1 and 2 (e.g., "Dai 1- saku" [第1作] or [1]) at the end of the title. For this paper, I only discuss "Tōson-zō (1)" For the sake of convenience, I refer to it as "Tōson-zō".

He would go with me to Nara and Kyoto and would leave me to my own devices. This was the classic route of instruction into Japan's past, where art and history are bound together. In the regulation garb of student black with brass buttons, Sasamura's speech was formal, limited by his vocabulary as I was by mine. We could communicate with difficulty, expecting through the shared experience of what we saw yet each could only see what he was prepared to see. Our backgrounds were so different. His was the more familiar one of verifying that which he already knew. For me at that time the trip was a deepening awareness of the role of China. Nara is where its heritage enters Japan.²

Noguchi might have wanted to stop their trip. He mentioned, "We ended our journey in Kyoto where I used Jiro Harada's letter of recommendation to the potter Uno with advantage".³ Noguchi wrote about his impression of Sasamura noting that, "Early each morning I could hear Sasamura prepare himself with meditation".⁴ Noguchi likely misunderstood what Sasamura was doing and what it was for. To be exact, it was not meditation but *Seiza* (正座), kneeling with the tops of the feet flat on the floor, which is distinguished from *Zazen* (座禪) in Zen meditation. *Zazen* places a great importance on attaining a perfect serenity of mind. On the contrary, *Seiza* prohibits spirituality, it is a training method for total physical and mental health. Sasamura talked about Noguchi's misunderstanding on the radio in 1972, "I heard that he said I was a *Zazen*-practicing sculpture".⁵ Despite these misunderstandings, this young sculptor Sasamura would play a great role in setting up the meetings between Isamu Noguchi and Ishii Tsuruzō 19 years later.

2. First impression

In September of 1931, there was a meaningful meeting between Noguchi and Sasamura in Tokyo though there are no records in Noguchi's documents. Sasamura, himself an excellent writer, wrote some memos in his analects.

Showa 6th [1931], Sōkajin [Sasamura] brought Isamu Noguchi to the exhibition "Inten" [the Japan Academy of Fine Arts Exhibition]. Even though Noguchi couldn't read the Japanese, he stopped in front of the piece of Ishii-sensei's wooden woman nude and said "This is a fine one. I would buy this piece if I had money. This sculptor is a Cezannist". Sōkajin said, "Far from it, he should be called a Nationalist. Arishima Ikuma, who takes care of you, is researching Cezanne". To that Noguchi replied, "Arishima doesn't understand Cezanne". Noguchi pointed at Ishii-sensei's piece, saying, "A person like this would understand Cezanne at a glance, so he isn't a Nationalist".⁶

According to another document by Sasamura, Noguchi regarded Ishii as a "cubist" at that time. The words from Noguchi deeply struck Sasamura's mind and always encouraged his conviction as a modern artist.

3. About Ishii Tsuruzō

Ishii Tsuruzō 石井鶴三 (1887-1973) is one of the greatest sculptors in 20th century Japan, and he was skilled overall in fields of art such as Japanese painting, woodblock printing, oil painting, illustration, caricature, etc. Furthermore, he was also regarded as a good writer and theoretician and left behind tens of thousands of writing samples including notebooks, sketch books, letters, memos and even receipts. These relics are now housed in several museums.

He called himself a successor of Ogihara Morie 荻原守衛 (1879-1910) who was influenced by Rodin [Auguste Rodin] (1840-1917) throughout his works, and he considered him an ideal modern sculptor. But even as Ishii praised Morie he was never overly fascinated with him or with Rodin. This means he was standing at a new stage of modern Japanese sculpture at that point. He was not comparable with any other sculptor in the same period with respect to his technical method. Actually, his method should be called Cubism.

Though Ishii had no concept of Cubism, he had a revolutionary experience in which he “realized his own sculpture” in sculpting a woman’s head in 1924.⁷ This explicit statement was recognized by disciples as his “discovery of the solid” in later years. Sasamura wrote to Noguchi about his master, “When he was thirty seven years-old he caught the essence of the cube. Certainly it was the discovery of cube”.^{8 ii}

This discovery determined the direction of Ishii’s mind that was set on modernity in sculpture and, at the same time, made him rediscover the primordial abstractness in ancient Japanese Buddhist statues. This discovery can also be described as a unification of modelling and carving. The method of modelling and carving are related to each other paradoxically in that one approaches from the inside and the other from the outside, respectively. The unification of “inside and outside” that he newly found is the cube.

In his conviction, every movement or emotion is oriented from the cube. He calls this *Rittaikandō* (立体感動) which expresses the notion that the solid itself is the source of all emotion. It was an essential idea that ran through the whole of Ishii’s life. So, the cube which Ishii discovered is the original concept of solid in his sculpting, independent from the Western art world. But, according to Noguchi’s opinion, it seemed to have the same appearance as cubism. Through this, Sasamura was encouraged about his position in the history of modern Japanese sculpture.

4. A letter from Sasamura

Sasamura, who was just an art student boy in 1931, became an associate professor belonging to professor Ishii Tsuruzō’s studio in Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校). There are two letters written by him addressed to Noguchi in 1950. One of these, dated June 10, 1950, is shown

ⁱⁱ Documentation that was originally written in English is presented without correction. Some grammatical and spelling errors are to be accepted.

below (Fig. 1). The original text has been provided for convenience.

Dear Mr. Isamu Noguchi

June 10 '50 Narai, Kiso Province

I received your letter to my school. You must be staying at Kyoto now. I am at Kiso province with professor Ishii now. Here is highest place to reach by train in the central district in Japan. In a great valley peasants are setting out rice plants in long rice field gotten wet in the rain with straw rain coats. It is rainy season now. At the mountain temple we staying, paper screen become green with the reflecting of wet leaves all day long. It is quiet. Professor is carving the wooden statue of Shimazaki Tōson, the novelist. Here is his native province.⁹

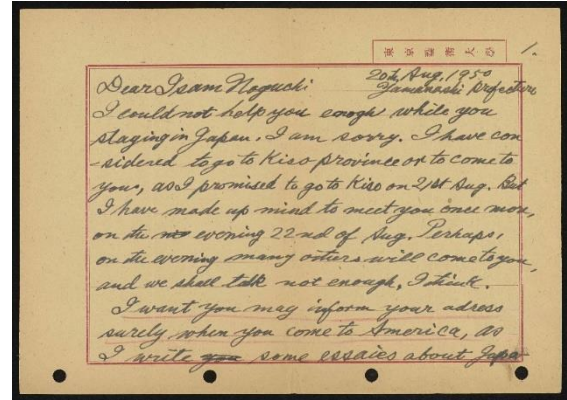


Fig. 1 Letter from Sasamura (page 1)

Sasamura wrote this letter while Noguchi was travelling in Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, and Ise. At that time, Sasamura was in the Kiso region in Nagano prefecture to support his master's artwork "Shimazaki Tōson". The statue gave a vivid impression and played a great role between Noguchi and Sasamura in relating their methods of modern sculpture.

Sasamura was convinced that the statue was the most representative wood carving piece of Ishii's and was taken by the truly modern sculptural method of *Kidori* (木取り).

Kidori is a traditional wood carving method of sawing away from a solid (Fig. 2). However, Ishii's method of *Kidori* redefined and revolutionized it into a basic modern method of sculpture. It made something awaken within Noguchi when he saw "Shimazaki Tōson" at the first meeting (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2 Ishii Tsuruzō(L) and Sasamura Sōkajin(R) at Kiso Zyōryū-ji 1951

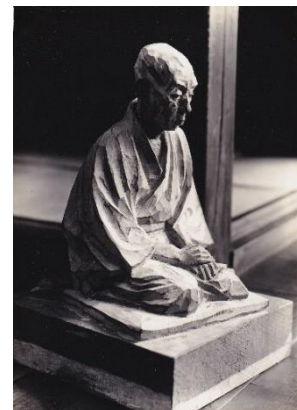


Fig. 3 "Shimazaki Tōson" around 1950

5. 14th May, 1950.

Motoi Shuntarō 基俊太郎 (1924-2005) who became a research associate in Ishii's studio in 1953, remembered this meeting, "Showa 25th [1950], Isamu Noguchi came to Japan for the first time after the war. He was an acquaintance of Sōkajin since before the war. He invited Mr. Noguchi to the studio right away".¹⁰ The main goal of Sasamura was to introduce Noguchi to his master Ishii, and to show him "Shimazaki Tōson". Sasamura noted Noguchi's admiration for Ishii's work at the studio "[Noguchi] took the Tōson wood work and pointed to the marks of chisel around its forehead and said Cezanne! It's Cezanne!".¹¹

Sasamura was encouraged by Noguchi's comparison of "Tōson-zo" to Cezanne, who preceded cubism, but his master was less excited about it. Ishii noted only in a short memo in his diary on 14th May 1950. "1 p.m. I went to the art laboratory and met Mr. Isamu Noguchi who was introduced by Sōkajin. He was a pleasant person and seemed have a good sense of sculpture".¹²

But for the associates of Ishii, that was an exciting meeting with him because his name was already very well-known in Japan. They wrote down everything that Noguchi said and did at that meeting. Motoi wrote about one particular exchange:

*Noguchi looked at Kita's small nude piece, that Ishii showed to him and said, it is a good one. Ishii bought that bronze piece from Kita to show it to students and it lay in his studio for long time.*¹³

Kita Takeshirō 喜多武四郎 (1897-1970) was one of Ishii's favorite young sculptors and belonged to the same fine art association as Ishii. For Ishii, showing Kita's piece to the others was a way of testing whether they had good sense. So, Noguchi passed this test. According to Sasamura, Noguchi said that the piece was also Cubism.

It is a curious thing that it seemed the meeting did not leave much of an impact on either Noguchi or Ishii, because neither of them recalled anything about it. In any case, it was decided that another meeting with Noguchi would be held in July for the students. At this visit to Japan, Noguchi had to attend an exhibition at Mitsukoshi Department Store in August.

6. 24th July, 1950

A young sculptor named Takei Takeshi 武井斌 (1924-1951), who belonged to Ishii's studio, went to meet Noguchi at Ueno Station close to Ueno Park in the evening. As they went across Ueno Park on their way to the art school, Noguchi saw many homeless laying down on the ground, and remarked "It's nice to see them enjoying themselves, isn't it?".¹⁴

The meeting was set up on the second floor of Masaki Memorial Hall (正木記念館) by Sasamura. Those concerned displayed their works to be shown to Noguchi. Noguchi walked through slowly in front of

their works on the floor of a big tatami room, looked at them, and gave them a comment one by one. This time Noguchi was at a loss when he looked at a huge head titled “Bust of Ishiguro Tadaatsu” (Ishigurosi-zō 石黒氏像 1950) that was made by Ishii. “I wonder if he disliked this model of the portrait”.¹⁵ Then he turned and looked at Motoi’s piece and said “whose work is this? I want to be able to do something like this, but I can’t. It is just like Giacometti”.¹⁶

Takei noted the significance of Noguchi’s opinion of his piece, saying “my armature designed by wood piece and the *Kidori* process showed by Ishii-sensei’s have something in common”.¹⁷ The meeting was continued until late at night. Takei sent Noguchi home noting that, “He climbed the stairs lightly”. Takei came back home at 1:00am midnight.¹⁸

7. “My present to Memory”

According to Sasamura, Noguchi wanted him to send some photos of Ishii’s piece “Shimazaki Tōson”, later. Sasamura (Fig. 4) made a booklet “My Present to Memory” (記念のために) which included an outline of the history of Japanese modern sculpture, his thoughts about Ishii Tsuruzō and his process of making “Shimazaki Tōson”, all three of these parts were written in English. In one of the main parts of this booklet “About the modern sculptors in Japan”, he described their standpoint as cubists according to Noguchi’s words.

Cubists (you said)

*When Russo Japan War was fighting in the beginning of this century two young Japanese were studying in Paris. One of them was Ogiwara Morie and other was Takamura Mitsutarō. At that time Rodin was in activity like a volcano, and they felt the fire of art from Rodin’s works, and came back to Japan. Then Japan had her twilight of modern sculpture, Ishii Tsuruzō and Nakahara Teijirō were awakened by this shock. Even now persons of this group are a few, they are not understood on their works ordinarily, as they removed literal idea, and esteemed the emotion for cube as the foundation of fine art. People want to find literal idea, skillful technique, resemblance for natural appearance, or poetic taste on sculpture works always. They can not understand the feeling upon the cube made of this group.*¹⁹



Fig. 4 Portrait in the booklet of Sasamura 1950

The text above was dated 14th May, 1950. It was the date of the first meeting between Noguchi with Tsuruzō Ishii in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. He was planning to hand Noguchi the two texts on that day. One was “About the modern sculptors in Japan” and the other was “About Ishii Tsuruzō”. These texts were

prepared in advance to make it in time for this meeting. Possibly, he was asked by Noguchi to give a detailed description of “Tōson-zō” at that meeting. So, after the meeting, he wrote, “The explanation for photograph series of Ishii Tsuruzō’s wood carving on the statue of Shimazaki Tōson”, with thirty pictures. And he added a message for Noguchi in Katakana characters at the end of the booklet. In his message entitled “My Words” (Watakushi no Kotoba ワタクシノコトバ), he showed his true colors, “I could do barely anything for you, what I only could do was to show the work of Ishii Tsuruzō”.²⁰

The work “Shimazaki Tōson” was said to be Cubism by Noguchi. Maybe it sounded strange to others in Japan. All of the features of the piece—its natural and figurative form, the traditional posture of “seiza”, the classical costume of “kimono”, and even the working site Kiso Valley—seemed to be discordant with the images of Cubism. But in spite of this disharmony between the outer features of the work with the Cubism art movement, Cubism is not a picturesque image of the surface, but a revolutionary consciousness of the cube itself. And what Cubism indicates is the cube after Cezanne. Then what is this new aspect of the cube? Only the sculptor’s method would answer it by producing a work of art. The reason is that sculpture, more so than aesthetics, is linked to the study of epistemology through the phenomenon of the solid. In this point, we can find the accordance between Noguchi and Ishii on the cube.

8. Sculptural method of Ishii Tsuruzō

Sasamura mentioned the method of his master in the booklet with a few pictures. Ishii had been doing traditional wood carving but it was more progressive than other westernized modern sculptures at that time in Japan.

The saw cut off, and the solid appeared with simple planes. The work by the saw is said “Kidori”. If the work is not exact the solid loses its beauty and cannot recover it again by any work of chisel or knife. Ishii Tsuruzō is only one almost who can use saw on such way, as Japanese sculptors forget it since compasses come from the west. Ishii Tsuruzō says that “any existence [existence] is controlled by several regular or irregular planes, how complicated it seemed at sight”.²¹

The first structure that appeared as a result of *Kidori* is named *Kihonkei* (the basic structure 基本形) that consists of an outer construction which defines the armature (Fig. 5). Because the outer simple planes that are created from cuts strictly define the armature within the solid. Sasamura wrote about this.



Fig. 5 *Kihonkei* of “Tōson-zō”
1949

He discovered them on the nature and made sure them on ancient sculptors in Japan after long studying. He says “the work by the saw on wood carving is most important as well as the making of armature (skelton) on sculp[t]ing”. Because on the sculpting, the clay adheres at the armature (skelton) as the center and expands out itself, if the position of armature (skelton) is uncertain, the clay becomes uncertain on adhering and lose it’s center on the form at last. He say “inside design rules solid from inside as central line on every part”. On the wood carving several regular or irregular plane rules solid, and soak into its center. He says “the outside design [external design]” against “inside design [internal design]”[.] If one makes a wood statue initiating a plastic statue by compasses, he gets weak form, because the plastic statue is weak on the outside design on its surface.²²

In this relation between *the outside design* [external design] and *the inside design* [internal design], they work by tightly combining with each other to produce the vital form. The outer simple planes of *Kihonkei* create a central axis through the wooden solid. And this axis maintains every element of the form throughout the process of creation in progress. It is like a backbone of the human body. To make an axis inside of the solid is to give an autonomous systematicity to it.

If Noguchi recognized Cubism on “Tōson-zo”, something must have struck him about this process of creation and its origin in the abstract simplicity of *Kihonkei*. And if we will be able to understand this process, we will come to the comprehension that the solid has a system to connect inside and outside. This system may be explained in a way similar to the structural systems of Buckminster Fuller, who happened to be a best friend of Noguchi’s throughout his life. He discovered the tetrahedron as a minimum system of the universe (Fig. 6). That is not just a tetrahedral form. And likewise *Kihonkei* is not just a pyramid-like trapezoid form but a system. At this point, the solid turned into Cubism. And Cubism is a discovery of the solid. Motoi said:

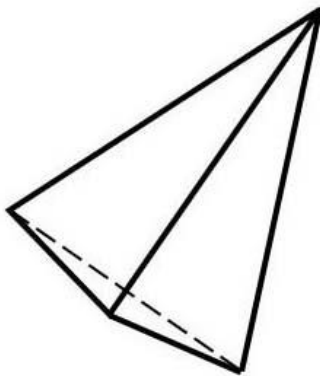


Fig. 6 Tetrahedron

After all, solidity itself became the object for emotional delight because of the arrival of the modernity. That is totally originated in Ishii Tsuruzō and different from the European Cubism movement. And beyond an opinion of Iishi Tsuruzō as an individual sculptor, it presents subject which has to be examined here after.²³

9. Lost Photos

About a month after the second meeting, Sasamura wrote a message to Noguchi, probably from his home in Yamanashi Prefecture.

20th, Aug. 1950

Yamanashi prefecture

Dear Isamu Noguchi

I could not help you enough while you staying in Japan. I am sorry. I have considered to go to Kiso province on to come to you, as I promised to go to Kiso on 21st Aug. But I have made up mind to meet you once more, on the evening 22nd of Aug. Perhaps, on the evening many others will come to you, and we shall talk not enough, I think.

I want you may inform your address surely when you come to America, as I write you some essays about Japanese civilization for you.

I wait to meet you again.

Your sincere

Sasamura Sokajin²⁴

There is no record of this meeting on August 22nd, or of whether they met again. But it seems as though this unique booklet was somehow handed to Noguchi directly or indirectly. We can only see the story of the booklet later from a few small articles in a local newspaper which mentioned it. “Isamu Noguchi is going to introduce the method toward the world and he took that photo series of the making process back to USA”.²⁵ The booklet is now in the Noguchi Museum in NY. There is no trace of him opening or reading it and all of the thirty photos slipped away from it just like all the memories that were lost.

At the time, Sasamura had divided these photos into seven groups in order of procedure or date. At the last group, he wrote about the Kiso Educational Society which had supported every phase of Ishii’s work.

The seventh group (No.30)

This picture shows the progress of work in July 1950 (Fig. 7). It began at the Kiso province, the native place of Shimazaki Tōson since August 1949. And it is continually at present in support of Kiso Educational Society .

×

These pictures are presented by Kiso Educational Society to you. If you make public [sic publish?] this [sic these] pictures on American magazine to explain Ishii Tsuruzō’s art, give me the magazine, as I may send it to Kiso Educational Society.²⁶

Original photo series of the making process of “Shimazaki Tōson” are in a handmade photo album, and that contains about eighty photos including

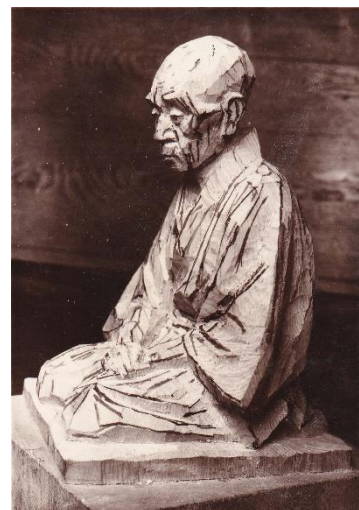


Fig. 7 One of a photo of “the seventh group”

thirty photos of “My present to Memory”. All of them were taken by Nakanishi Etsuo (an elementary school principal) of the Kiso Educational Society.

10. Kiso and Shimazaki Tōson

Kiso Educational Society is formally called *Kiso-kyouikukai* (木曾教育会) in Japanese and is the general incorporated association for education in Kiso Province. The association had fully supported Ishii to make an environment for Ishii to work on “Shimazaki Tōson.” One of the reasons for this is that one of the most famous novelists in Japan, Shimazaki Tōson, had a close connection with the Kiso Valley. “All of roads in Kiso are in the mountains”, is the well known beginning of “Before the Dawn” the most famous novel by Tōson (Fig. 8). Exactly as described in this sentence, the Kiso Educational Society House is in the deep center of Kiso Valley. That is a good, old and calm place where only the murmuring of streams can be heard.



Fig. 8 Kisoji Road at Fukushima-zyuku.



Fig. 9 Kiso-kyodokan



Fig. 10 Parts of related materials
We can see “Tōson-zō” in center of this photo.

The wood work “Tōson-zō” is now in an old storehouse, *Kiso-kyodokan* (木曾郷土館), built with thick earthen walls (Fig. 9). In there, there are other related materials to “Tōson-zō” such as a photo album of the process of making it, wood fragments which were cut off by a saw in the course of the carving process, letters, a diary of his working days etc. (Fig. 10). All these are far from a typical image of Cubism in the radical western-style art movement. How can we find any influences of Cezanne or Picasso in “Tōson-zō”? Likewise, how many people are there in Kiso province who know about Cubism? There is no one who knows that the wood piece of “Tōson-zō” was specified as Cubism by Isamu Noguchi about 70 years ago. Even neighbors living near the Society house through many generations don’t know anything about Ishii Tsuruzō. But it is positive fact that Tōson wooden statue was made through a new concept of the solid that was discovered by Ishii. And all of these are evidence that this discovery is a sort of phenomenon that corresponds to the theory of *autonomously functioning structural systems*.

11. Tetrahedron and *Kihonkei*

This situation is quite different in comparison with the worldwide splendid achievement of Noguchi. In his young days, he had studied under Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), who himself had rejected Rodin's invitation to be his assistant. Noguchi left from him only six months later, a moment which marked his starting over to the world. Thereafter, Noguchi got acquainted with so many contemporary artists, such as Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Arshile Gorky (1904-1948), Frida Callo (1907-1954), Kitaōji Rosanjin (北大路魯山人 1883-1959). But his character as a sculptor was created by his lifetime friendship with Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983). Surely, they shared a concept of the universal structural system of time and space. Fuller's concept of tetrahedron can be applied to some of Noguchi's art works. "Octetora" is a well-known example of this (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11 "Octetora" in Moerenuma Park

The minimal structure is the same as *Kihonkei* with respect to the conceptualization of the system, and, in turn, the system made solid as some sort of cubistic object. We can know that Cubism is a matter of the solid itself not as appearance of form or images from the stand point of Noguchi and Fuller. For Fuller, "there is no up and down in Universe!" and "Universe has two basic directions: in toward the center and radially out".²⁷ One aspect of the system is that the solid has no surface but only direction.

Sasamura wrote about Ishii's way of thinking, "Although he esteems realism but he removed the surface of [the] cube or the external form of nature".²⁸ In other words, to remove the surface from cube can be conceived of as discovery of the solid. Ishii himself, named this discovery *Rittaikandō*. And the solid has two directions, the same as the universe's basic direction: in and out.

12. Settlement

Inside design radiates out while outside design radiates toward the center direction. Noguchi's "Octetora" has outer form and inner space in which children are able to go in and out freely. Noguchi's play sculpture has the direction of playing. One day, in 1985, when Noguchi was trying his marble "Slide Mantra" for Venezia Biennale, the Japanese sculptor Yasuda Kan 安田侃 (1945-) was watching him sliding down, carving it a little more and sliding down again. Noguchi repeated this process many times. Yasuda recalled how Noguchi joked about his adjustments, "Art is something to be felt through a child's buttocks".²⁹ At this point, there is a recognition about sculpture that it isn't a pictorial matter but an experienceable facility. The same thing can be said about *Kihonkei*. Sasamura, in consideration of "Tōson-zō" wrote, "How even it is

complicated existence, it has a unification as far as it can be experienced”.³⁰ This recognition is said to be the shift from observation to experimentation. And at this phase, Noguchi, in recognizing Cubism in Ishii’s pieces, might have felt a sense of communion with him.

Sasamura introduced Noguchi to the significance of his master Ishii’s method of sculpting. Noguchi seems to be impressed by the wood carving method. It is a curious thing that none of the comments about this are left by Noguchi. The same is true of Ishii, he spoke of few recollections about Noguchi throughout his life. Did these two meetings in 1950 mean nothing at all? If I say it in an extreme instance, these were just a couple of meetings between these two artists. And this fact itself is the importance of these events. What and how we can learn from the contrast between Ishii and Noguchi, that is the question asked to us.ⁱⁱⁱ

For all of those gathered at the meeting, Cubism might mean an attitude of Post-Rodinism. And that attitude deems the solid as a system which has a function of relating inside with outside, and then the solid radiates the energy of life. This is the discovery of the Solid. Without this understanding, the words of Noguchi referring to “ ‘Slide Mantra’ as a new experience of sculpture” sound good for ears but echoes hollowly in the mind.³¹

ⁱⁱⁱ 1995, Motoi said, concerning Moerenuma Park designed by Noguchi, “It is your generation’s subject how to evaluate this” to his eldest son Atsushi the photographer.

NOTES

- IT “Ishii Tsuruzō Collected Works”, Rokuzan art museum, 1992.
- KK “Kisokyouiku”, Vol.42, Kiso-kyouikukai (General Incorporated Association for Education), september 1974.
- Letter 1 A letter of Sasamura Sōkajin for Noguchi. Archive of Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, New York. IDENTIFIER:MS_COR_042_001.
- Letter 2 A letter of Sasamura Sōkajin for Noguchi. Archive of Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, New York. IDENTIFIER:MS_COR_042_002.
- MPM A booklet “My present for Memory” Archive of Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, New York. IDENTIFIER: Sasamura_My_Present_to_Memory_1950.
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- Fig. 1 Letter 1
- Fig. 2 From photo series of the making process of “Shimazaki Tōson Sensei-zō” (No,1) of a handmade photo album in KI.
- Fig. 3 From photo series of the making process of “Shimazaki Tōson Sensei-zō”(No,1) of a handmade photo album in KI.
- Fig. 4 From photo in MPM.
- Fig. 5 From photo series of the making process of “Shimazaki Tōson Sensei-zō” (No,1) of a handmade photo album in KI.
- Fig. 6 Drawn by the author
- Fig. 7 From photo series of the making process of “Shimazaki Tōson Sensei-zō”(No,1) of a handmade photo album in KI.
- Fig. 8 Photographed by the author
- Fig. 9 Photographed by the author
- Fig. 10 Photographed by the author
- Fig. 11 Photographed by the author