

Tokyo, June 10, 2002

Dear Dominique,

Japanese are sleeping.

At the seam, pedestrian`s passage

At the zones of ebb tide, of the crowd, there where sometimes the nervous stream of displacements bring them immobile as in a shock, because in peace for some minutes, in a bus or on a train, Japanese are sleeping.

It has always appeared to me that they do more than rest, heads tipped by their own weight, heavy cheeks, disabused heroes of tiresome modernities. Propped on obstacles that serve as supports, it is really the drowsiness that surprises them, suspends them. Rocking with the swells of the finally accepted constraints. Pitching with the regular disillusion, by the rubbing of their intimacy with those of others, always numerous, they are sent to sleep, their spirits glossed, peaceful with their drowned faces.

The great Kabuki master Nakamura Tomijuro is supposed to have said "You should never reveal tiredness or effort, because the art of acting must be similar to the clothing of the celestial creators: with invisible seams."

The seams of modern Japan are visible, and its creators have only celestial reflection of the human condition`s infinite tragedy, daily and unnoticed as the beauty of a pool of water.

Another echo maybe of what they call here "monono aware" (the poignant beauty of things) and that Christine Buci-Glucksmann called "new Icarism" in her book "The Aesthetic of Time in Japan".

The time to sleep.

I think I am remembering that Merleau-Ponty sewed eroticism in a collar that yawns; in the same way I voluntarily admit finding immanence in the ringed-eye faces, the abused foreheads and the tired spines of this modern folk of Amaterasu.

In friendship,

Eric Van Hove