

# YASUNAO TONE

September 29, 1979 8:30 p.m.

The Kitchen Center, 484 Broome Street

VOICE AND PHENOMENA - A GRAMMATOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE PIECE (Two Parts)

Performers: Mimi Johnson, Yasunao Tone, Yoshiharu Suenobu

## PART I

The three poems are:

'Deng Jin Ling Feng Huan T'ai' by Li-Po

-translation 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"

-translation 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (Joseph J. Lee, translator)

'Jin Se' by Li Shan-yin

-translation 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"

-translation 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (James Y. Liu, translator)

'Gon Ci' by Po Chü-yi

-translation 1 from "Three Hundred Poems of the Tong Dynasty"

-translation 2 from "Sunflower Splendid" (Ronald Miao, translator)

## PART II

-from the Chinese Etymological Dictionary of 100 B.C.:

'Shuō Wen Jié Zi' by Xǔ Shèn

'Glas' by Jacque Derrida

NOTES: The film projections accompanying the poetry reading are made from visualizations of each Chinese character of the three poems, which are synchronized with the reading.

Since Chinese written words are called 'ideographic pictograms,' the correspondence between image and word seems obvious. But the relation between word meanings and the character's form is rather subtle and sometimes the differences between meanings and characters are so drastic that one can hardly perceive the relationship between them.

The formation of Chinese characters largely depends on punning (borrowing similar sound) and rebus (compounding two or more ideogram/pictogram) - you may recollect 'signifiers play.'

## INTERMISSION

### MUSIC AND GEOGRAPHY (1979)

Performers: Yasunao Tone, voice; David Tudor, piano; Martin Kalve, star-cloud instrument (Kalve's invention)

The Chinese text consists of excerpts from 1,000 Volumes Encyclopedia, "Tai Ping Yu-lan", published in 983 A.D. (Translation: Yasunao Tone with assistance from Judith Grossman)

NOTES: The core of "Geography and Music" is a collection of stories translated by Yasunao Tone from 8th century Chinese texts. For example, Tone made this excerpt:

On a frontier of Ri-Nan, a part of northern Vietnam, there lived the Rou-tou, or dropping head people, whose heads fly well. Among this race or species, one man is always sacrificed for prayers. These people were also known as Hui-puo, or insect dropping heads. However, this is obsolete now. Before their heads fly, their eyes vanish and their ears become wings. They return at dawn, landing on their bodies. In the Wu period, 3rd century AD, they were captured quite often.

While the stories are read, instrumentalists perform music that Tone derived from 8th century Chinese pipa (lute) music.

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