

## Thoughts on William Sibley

In the past three weeks, I have been in the process of semi-permanently moving back from North America to Japan. It was often emotionally draining but occasionally delightful to dig in and pack up my “archives” of memories scattered in file cabinets or in boxes in the basement. Then I remembered how my prolonged stay in North America began; I was sitting in Bill Sibley’s incredibly elegant apartment as a prospective grad student to meet with him and Norma Field. That meeting made me decide, perhaps a bit irrationally, to come to Chicago.

Talking about Bill for me tends to take the form of conditional past, I should have, would have.... I missed the opportunity to “really” work with him, but kept thinking that I would be able to meet him again. It was devastating to know that I forever lost that chance. I admired Bill’s turning down my request to work on the shinpa theater with me for my qualification exams. My topic was ill-defined, and, above all, I understood and deeply sympathized with his reason for not working on the topic. One must love the text in order to work on it. Now that I am located in Tokyo and more enlightened about Japanese theaters than ten years ago when I was only motivated by my academic interests, I am going to “re-do” my exam on Japanese theater with Bill in my mind by frequenting kabuki and bunraku.

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