

One of the central aspects of Tadashi Suzuki's theatre practice is the use of highly energised stillness or slow movement through "statues" (Loth). Characters' bodies may take an abstract shape or a regular position like standing, as long as they are in stillness or moving slowly while maintaining their stance. According to Suzuki Practitioner Ellen Lauren, to achieve this, actors are required to bring an intense focus to their physical presence on stage, and emphasise the connection between the body and the ground. This stillness provides a structure, a reference point for the unfolding events in the piece. She notes that "Suzuki likens the actor to a spinning top that appears most calm and still when going top speed" (Lauren), suggesting that stillness in Suzuki's theatrical work, despite its stasis, is always highly energised.

Suzuki's approach to body statues can be seen in performances like *The Trojan Women*. In this production, Jizo, a Buddhist deity, embodies both calm composure and the power of a god—see figures 1.1 and 1.2 (Chicago Tribune). The character barely moves for nearly the entire performance.



Figure 1.1. Jizo front-facing statue; SCOT Suzuki Company of Toga; "The Trojan Women"; Youtube

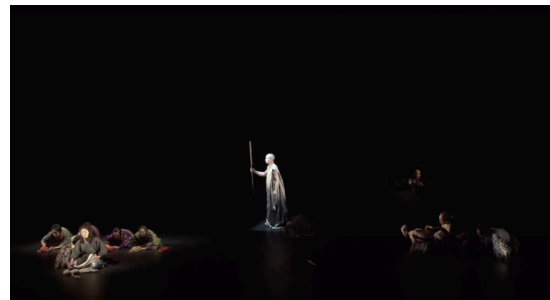


Figure 1.2. Jizo side-facing statue; SCOT Suzuki Company of Toga; "The Trojan Women"; Youtube

Stillness must thus be vitalised, not mere stasis, creating a powerful spacial impact known in Japanese performing arts as *ma* (Janisheski).