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(Citation)

表現文化研究, 6(1):117-125

(Issue Date)

2006-11-13

(Resource Type)

departmental bulletin paper

(Version)

Version of Record

(JaLDOI)

<https://doi.org/10.24546/81002873>

(URL)

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/81002873>



# Modern Dance in Japan: The Influence of the Western Culture and What Japan Created on its Own

日本のモダンダンス — 西洋文化から受けた影響と日本人が生み出したもの

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## INTRODUCTION

It is about 100 years since Western dance started in Japan. V.G. Rosi, a Cecchetti school ballet master of the Alhambra Theater in London was then invited to the Imperial Theater of Tokyo where he taught the classical ballet to the members of the Theater including ISHII Baku, KOMORI Toshi. And this is said to be the launching of Western dance in Japan.

In this article, I would like to take a brief look at the history of Japan's Western dance, which started with the coming of Rosi. Visitors such as Anna Pavlova, Denishawn Company, Martha Graham Company, and Japanese dancers who studied abroad or performed abroad are focused in order to review the settlement of modern dance and the birth of Japan's original dance.

## 1. THE OPERA DEPARTMENT OF THE IMPERIAL THEATER OF TOKYO AND GIOVANNI VITTORIO ROSI

At the end of the 19th century, Isadora Duncan (1878-1927), whose dancing was strongly influenced by Hellenic culture and music made a breakthrough in classical ballet by dancing in bare feet. And in 1912 when the ballet dancing was at its turning point, a seed of the Western dance was finally planted on the soil of Japan.

At the Imperial Theater of Tokyo, originally a venue of opera and Western play, the Opera Department was created in 1911. And in the following year 1912, an Italian ballet instructor Giovanni Vittorio Rosi (1867-?) was invited to teach at the Opera Department.

Rosi learned the ballet from renowned Maestro Enrico Cecchetti (1850-1928) who is well-known for his unique and stern teaching technique called Cecchetti Method. Before coming to Japan, Rosi was the ballet

master at the Alhambra Theater in London. ISHII Baku (1886-1962), KOMORI Toshi (1887-1951), TAKATA Masao (1895-1929), TAKATA Seiko (1895-1977) and ITO Michio (1893-1961) were among those who studied under Rosi and later became excellent dancers. Rosi's strict lesson in genuine classical ballet gave the third dimension to the students' two dimensional dance space characteristic to Japanese traditional dance. And through the vocal lesson, they elaborated on their musical sense.

However, not only the Japanese public in those days but also those students could not familiarize well with ballet dance. And having seen the dances of Duncan, Emile Jaques Dalcroze (1865-1950) and Ruth St.Denis (1879-1968), Rosi's students eventually moved on to modern dance and became the frontiers of Japan's modern dance. The first one to make this move was ITO. As he took class in ballet or vocal at the ITT, he started to question the ITT Opera Department's half-way attitude in showing plays. With a hope to become an Opera singer, ITO left Europe in the fall of 1912. He attended many Opera shows in Europe and found the singers' physical expression poor. It was just when he strongly felt the significance of physical training that he saw the ballet of Vaslav Nijinski (1890-1950) and the dance of Duncan. Their dancing intrigued ITO so much that he decided to be a dancer. He entered Dalcroze's school in Dresden and started to study Eurythmics.

In the meanwhile, ISHII also was not very content with the ITT. But because of this and that, he was unable to study abroad. He had no option but to remain at the ITT. Rosi was critical of the Japanese traditional dancing. Performed in a tight kimono, gesturing to the words of the song sung to the shamisen guitar, dancing about two-dimensionally on a small floor, it appeared to

Rosi as despicable. While ISHII agreed with his master in the point that dancing should not be supplemental to the lyrics, he appreciated the steady down-to-the-ground steps of Japanese traditional dance. This inner dispute made him all the more intent on creating a new Japanese dance. In addition to the doubt he harbored against the classic ballet taught by Rosi, the inspiration he got from the letters from ITO in Europe and the stories told by OSANAI Kaoru (playwriter, 1881-1928) and YAMADA Kosaku (composer, 1886-1965) who had just returned from Europe was going to change the course of his life. He ended up in confronting Rosi and in September, 1915, he was expelled from the ITT. He then began to work with OSANAI and ISHII.

The ITT Opera had little popularity and it was closed in summer of 1916. Rosi bought out "The Royal-Kan Theater" at his own expense and continued his shows with TAKATA Masao and Seiko and other ex-ITT dancers.

Unfortunately, he got into financial difficulties because of unpopularity of their stages. In 1917, Rosi left Japan for the States at last.

Nobody could then expect that the seed of ballet which was the fist of all the Western dances to be planted in Japan would sprout as modern dance. (though the term "modern dance" was not used in those days)

## 2. ISHII BAKU'S DANCE POEM CAMPAIGNE

ISHII Baku, after being expelled from the ITT, settled at a studio of the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra through the good offices of YAMADA. There he could take his time and work on the textbook of Eurythmics written by Dalcrose, which he had long wanted to study. YAMADA would help ISHII by telling him about Duncan's new dance and Dalcrose's Eurythmics which he saw with his own eyes in Europe. And he would also practice dancing with ISHII in tights.

ISHII determined that he would never be an actor any more, but that he would be concentrating on dancing. OSANAI, YAMADA and ISHII founded a dramatic company called "SHINGEKIJO" and made their first appearance on the stage at the ITT. with KOMORI Toshi, ISHII himself danced his original pieces "Nikki No Ichi Peiji 'A Page in the Diary' (Music: YAMADA

Kosaku" and "Monogatari 'A Legend' (M: F. Mendels-son)", and presented this new style of dancing as "Dance Poem". This show had a record thin house and was criticized bitterly in a magazine. Resented by the article, ISHII presented his counterargument in the same magazine. He wrote, "Unlike other dance which one's own philosophy and emotions are incorporated into previously prepared technique and form, our own philosophy and emotion are primary in our dance and they boil down, in other words 'ferment' and take certain technique and form".[1] The following stage of "Meian 'Bright and Dark' (M: K. YAMADA)" also was received unfavorably. But Dance Poem received some favorable reviews such as, "Unrestrained by the framework of ballet, it is a true inner description and we finally found the first genuine modern dance in Japan".[2] Nevertheless, "the New Theater" was went out of existence because of financial difficulty in July, 1916.

Though unpopular in Tokyo, Dance Poem gained tremendous popularity in their show in Osaka later in the same year, 1916. With rosy prospects, he got back to Tokyo, and was invited to work in the town of Asakusa, a mecca for opera lovers. When ISHII's "Tokyo Opera Theater" made its first appearance at the Asakusa Nihon-kan Theater in 1917, it won great admiration. He enthusiastically composed programs that would appeal to the masses, but fell ill from overwork in April, 1919. In his sick bed, he thought "As we try to please the audience of Asakusa, our works only got crude and end up in crippled pieces of art".[3] After his recovery, he left Asakusa.

Then he went on the road with his numbers and steadily turned out new Dance Poems as well. He had the resolution to get rid of the opera-like plays and to pursue "the genuine dance". He told his devoted wife, "I am going to Europe. It is not to study dancing, but to have my dance evaluated. I am taking (my sister in law) Konami".[4] He headed for Marseilles in a boat from the port of Yokohama on 4 November, 1922.

He arrived in Marseilles in January and visited his ex-colleague KOMORI Toshi in Paris. KOMORI, who had settled down in Paris and been actively staging his new dance works, said it would be difficult for ISHII to enter on a stage in Paris. This made ISHII to shift to

Berlin, where he made a great success in his shows of “Melancholy”, “Poem”, “Sabishiki Kage ‘Lonely Shadow’ (M: K. YAMADA)”. His dance was so highly valued that he could perform in some of Berlin's best concert halls. “Prisoner (M: S. Rakhmaninov)”, “Meian ‘Bright and Dark’ (M: K. YAMADA)” were loudly applauded. Newspapers such as *Der Tag* or *Deuche Argemeine* praised his performance in unison. One paper said, “Their dancing is totally Oriental in appearance, but it is comprehensible to all people since their message is conveyed in ‘a universal language’. We can take in the affliction and the ordeal of the East, and we feel compassion since it is the same affliction that we Westerners have”.[5]

For two years until 25 October, 1924, ISHII traveled around Europe with his own dance works. He won great admiration wherever he went.

In the meanwhile in Europe, Mary Wigman (1886-1973), a pupil of Dalcroze and R. Laban (1879-1958) had an indisputable position with her Expressionist Dance she introduced at her first recital in 1917. Wigman took up the human relationship and the relationship between man and his surroundings as her dance scheme. She argued that “There is no dance without a form.”[6] and she emphasized the form powerfully in her dance. Her dance was somewhat inward-looking and grim but full of vitality arising from some kind of chaos. The ballet is aesthetic and so-called heaven-oriented, and Wigman's dance was rather inaesthetic and ground-oriented with all her crouching, crawling and falling.

ISHII saw this already famous European modern dancer Wigman with great interest. He commented on her dance as “Dancing is placed above music by supplementing the music. The composition of group dance was excellent and the use of solely percussions was novel. But I found that there was more to dance than what Wigman had shown me. The exposure to Wigman's dance made me more conscious of the path. I should follow as a dancer of the East”.[7] After a stage in Paris, he went to New York in November, 1924. There he met his friend from the ITT, ITO Michio. After living in Germany, ITO had been working in his own studio at Carnegie Hall. Supported by ITO, ISHII

held a private recital at the Hall. The *Musical Courier* reviewed his show; “It rose high above the standard American dance. We perceived a glitter of genuine love for music through his perfect technique”. Popularity followed this review and to his stages in the west coast was American audience who had been indifferent to Japanese dancers attended in masses. After 5 years of his dancing journey abroad, he came back to Japan on 3 April, 1926. By the way the second generation American dancers were showing their promise and elaborating on their dance skills in those days. Among those were Martha Graham (1894-1991), Doris Humphrey (1895-1958) and Charles Weidman (1901-1975), all of who had studied at the Denishawn School founded in 1914 by Ruth St.Denis and Ted Shown (1891-1972).

The first appearance of ISHII Baku on the stage after his journey was made at the Tsukiji Sho Gekijo Theater. There was a tremendous applaud that welcomed “the world class dancer that Japan produced”. He opened ISHII Baku Dance Poem Institute which later turned out many excellent dancers.

In summery, ISHII Baku integrated classic ballet and Eurythmics into his dancing. And based on these Western dance, he materialized his new idea and named it “Dance Poem”. Of course this new style of dancing was stunningly different from the conventional ballet dance. EGUCHI Takaya (1900-1977) recollected the 1920's and said, “The dance of ISHII Company was more than innovative. For example, when the team lifted their legs to the side which people thought should have been to the back or back-side, they screamed as if they had seen something slimy ---- and cried, ‘Impossible!’ or ‘Slipshod!’”[8] The new spirit of dancing took on an extremely singular form.

### 3. DANCERS' STUDIES ABROAD

ITO, ISHII, KOMORI, Mr. and Mrs. TAKATA were the pioneers of Japan's modern dance. Not only did they spend their time together at the ITT studying under Rosi, though separately, they traveled to the West and felt a breath of new dance, sought evaluation of their original dances and established their own dancing styles.

As mentioned earlier, ITO spent little time with the ITT, then went west to Berlin to study Eurythmics and

later settled in New York and had his own studio. Based on the upper body training method he acquired while with Dalcroze, he devised a fundamental exercise featuring 10 kinds of arm movements. In creating this, he applied the principles and technique of Noh and Kabuki; Japanese traditional dances. Father of Dance Poem ITO believed that "The dance is principally a visualized form of music. And this visible form is 'the Poem', and is at the same time idea and movement". [9] For ITO, music was indispensable to dance, and he claimed that his dance was Western style because music and dance are united in it. ITO's dance was praised in the States because of the exotic aroma rising from the infusion of the Western sense of art and the Japanese technique. One could never expect this from an American dancer. Not surprisingly, he is one of the five "Founders of the Modern Dance in America", which includes Ruth St.Denis and Doris Humphrey. Pauline Koner, Lester Horton were ITO's pupils, and Graham danced ITO's choreograph, too. After World War II, he came back to Japan and taught dancing. From 1948, he served as the first president of the Japan Artists Association. In Japan, few dancers had the chance to learn from ITO in person.

After the Opera Department of the ITT was dissolved, KOMORI Toshi played an important role in the development of Japan's modern dance. He collaborated fully with ISHII and danced with ISHII in the Dance Poem performances. Through their efforts, the Dance Poem which had been quite unpopular in Japan finally received recognition. Seeing that, KOMORI started to work separately from ISHII and went to stay in the States where his younger brother Yuzuru was studying the baritone singing. After 4 years in the States, he went to Paris. KOMORI, who is an accredited master of the Japanese dance, taught it to Parisiennes. And he selected Oriental materials for the subjects of his dance works. He created "Nippon no Hanga 'the Japanese Prints'", "Kappore (a Japanese comic dance)" or "Bukkyo no Odori 'Dancing of Buddhism'" and was reviewed favorably in newspapers and magazines.[10]

"Ce qui surprend et ce qui charme dans son art, c'est la gesticulation reglee avec tout de subtilite.

Les bras ont toujours de jolis gestes arrondis, les mains fines et elegantes, mais fuyantes et glissandes, pareilles a des reptiles, semblant dessiner sans cesse et tracer dans l'espace, mais avec une precision et une exactitude extraordinaire. On pense immediatement aux dessins japonais executes au pinceau, mais tellement spirituels! tellement parfaits!"

What is suppressive and attractive in his art is the gestures carefully designed with total subtleness. The arms kept moving beautifully and mildly. His hands were moving elegantly but quickly twisting as if they had been reptiles. His dancing reminded me of the precisioness and sensational beauty in the Japanese brush painting.

(La Tribune de la Danse/Yvonne Crebessegues, Dec, 1935.)

"Toshi Komori ajoute a une excellente technique une force reelle d'expression et de verite dramatique. Ses males et sobres attitudes opposees a la grace juvenile de sa partenaire forment un contraste esthetique qui justifie cette association."

KOMORI Toshi combined excellent technique, forceful expression and dramatic reality. His sober attitude and his partner's juvenile grace make an aesthetic contrast which justifies their combination.

(Figaro, 30 Nov, 1932.)

"L'excellent danseur japonais Toshi Komori qui fait le point de jonction entre les pures danses de son pays et le gout europeen."

An excellent Japanese dancer KOMORI Toshi made a junction between the pure dance of his country and the gout europeen.

(Comedia/Fernand Divoire, 28 Feb, 1935.)

It is clear in these articles that KOMORI's dance really was one distinct breeze blowing separately from all the new breezes in Europe. Based on the ballet and the Japanese dance he learned in Japan, he blended in

what he absorbed in Europe and he achieved a truly original dance art. He came back to Japan in 1936. 21 years in Paris had taken him too far away from the current of Japan's dance circle, and he had to live a "Parnassian" life.

On the other hand, TAKATA Masao and Seiko were, so to speak, consistently working on ballet with Rosi until he left Japan. They made a 2-year journey in Europe and the States in 1922, during which they were taught by Ruth St.Denis. They were so greatly influenced by the new dance that after the journey, while giving the conventional ballet lesson, they created new style dance works and trained their disciples.

As you can see, each of the founders of Japan's modern dance strived to create his or her own dance style by studying abroad and seeking evaluation from Western artists and audience

In the 1920's, not a few foreign dancers visited Japan, and enlightened the Japanese dance circle which was still in its infancy. The most notable was Anna Pavlova's visit in 1922. Her dance gave sensation not only to those in the dance circle but to the Japanese public as a whole. She gave heavy impact on the course of Japan's dance. The Denishown Company, a first generation dance team of the USA, visited Japan. Ruth St.Denis was an ardent researcher of the Orient and she also had great interest in the Japanese dance. She added some Japanese taste to her stage in Japan and won appraisal from the public.

It is interesting that while Japanese dancers were applauded in the West, in Japan Western dancers presented the genuine ballet or the Western dance with some scent of Japanese and were also valued highly. It was certain that there was a two-way exchange, the Japanese dancers were influenced by the West, so were some Western dancers. And it was the age of innovation. New spirit of dance blossomed in Japan's dance circle. It was the times of "Taisho Democracy", modernization and internationalization during Taisho era (1912-1926). But as Showa era started, militarism took over. And Japan's dance circle came to a turning point: ISHII nearly lost his eyesight, KOMORI was still in France and TAKATA Masao passed away.

#### 4. EGUCHI TAKAYA AND THE NEUE TANZE

EGUCHI took the ballet lesson of TAKATA Masao and Seiko who were pupils of Rosi and Ruth St.Denis. In the summer of 1931, 2 years after the death of TAKATA Masao, he went to Germany with MIYA Misako. From many dance institutes in Berlin, he chose to study under Mary Wigman, since he was so intrigued by her stage. With Wigman, EGUCHI studied Neue Tanze. In October, 1933, He appeared on a stage with his own works "Shusaku 1 'Studie 1'", "Shujutsushitsu 'In an operating room'". One review was: "His effort to integrate Japanese elements into Western rhythm and technique is commendable, but none of his works was comprehensible".[11] EGUCHI came back in December, 1933. He was one of the dancers who introduced Neue Tanze into Japan. Based on the principles of Neue Tanze, he created numerous works such as "Toyo Shifu 'Fantasy of the East'" or "Sukaraza no Marisukai 'Jaggler of the Teatro alla Scalla'". In those days in the world of Japanese arts, it was widely presumed that when a disciple presented his work, it was the art passed on by his master. Unfortunately, the dance of EGUCHI's own making was thought to be that of his master Mary Wigman's. It took long time until people understood that "Mary Wigman taught fundamentals in movement and creation. It was each pupil that incorporated them into 'Mary Wigman's dance'".[12]

In the same year that EGUCHI gave his first recital, Neue Tanze artists including the Bordenwiesel Vienna Dance Group, Harald Kreutzberg (1902-1968) and Ruth Page (1905-1991) came to Japan. Instantly, German modern dance attracted people's admiration. Under these circumstances, while elaborating on his Neue Tanze, he devoted himself to educating his pupils, or admirers. In his lesson, composition of each dance was not taught, but his original lesson of fundamental movements and creation was given. He stressed that, "Through fundamental training in movement and creation, modern dance can be created on each student's own". During the war, EGUCHI was sent to the military bases abroad as a messenger of consolation. He resumed his dancing as soon as war ended and presented his work "Nippon no Taiko Series 'Resounding Drums

of Japan” (first staged in 1951). According to EGUCHI, “What I acquired in the West was fundamental methodology. I found it not worthwhile to imitate the Western dance. I had long wanted to do what the Westerners can never do”.[13] Referring to his creating process, he said, “I have been researching Shikaodori (Deer Dance), a Japanese folk dance. But I have never bothered to learn how to dance or to play the drums because I did not want to imitate it and I knew I could never manage to incorporate the countrified taste peculiar to this folk dance. -- What I do is to soak myself in this singular atmosphere and to get at the heart of Shikaodori”.[14] In fact, he did perceive correctly the peculiar atmosphere and the movement of the folk dance and created Japan's own modern dance based on the methodology of Wigman. 17 years had passed since EGUCHI and MIYA's work that infused Japanese element with European dance received little recognition. After years, EGUCHI seemed to have accomplished something. Thanks to EGUCHI's education method as mentioned earlier, his school produced so many dancers of so many different dance styles. Many of EGUCHI's pupils have become leaders of Japan's dancing circle, and active today are the pupils of EGUCHI's pupils.

## 5. THE FLOURISH OF BALLET AND THE IMPORT OF MODERN DANCE

In 1912, Rosi planted the seeds of the classical ballet, but it did not take root in the soil of Japan. But a different school of ballet was introduced in 1922 by Elena Pavlova (1899-1941), a Russian dancer. She devoted herself in educating ballet dancers and in giving ballet performances. It was E. Pavlova who made the ballet settle in Japan. Her pupils included HATTORI Chieko, SHIMADA Hiroshi, TACHIBANA Akiko, AZUMA Yusaku or KAITANI Yaoko who became the pioneers of Japan's ballet circle. Each of them established his or her own company and steadily carried out research activity as well as education and performances. After the death of Pavlova, the center for ballet education and performance moved to the Nichigeki Theater where O. Sapphire was teaching TANI Momoko, MATSUYAMA Mikiko or MATSUO Akemi.

The ballet had not been as popular as the modern

dance until the end of the war. It suddenly bloomed as if it wanted to clear people's mind of the despair. The ballet boom was started with the stage of “Swan Lake” by the Tokyo Ballet Company founded by SHIMADA Hiroshi and his friends. In establishing the Company, SHIMADA asked ASHIHARA Eiryo, a ballet critic for advice, then Shimada invited his colleague AZUMA, KAITANI, HATTORI and KOMORI Masahide. KOMORI who studied in Shanghai, China had the experience of dancing the whole version of “Swan Lake”. The Tokyo Ballet Company was established for the only purpose of staging “Swan Lake”, and the other dancers were hired from various companies. In August 1946, they made a 22-day performance, which ignited the nation-wide ballet boom. The ballet was the first Western dance to spread so widely in Japan that people would often call all kinds of Western dances “ballet”.

The Tokyo Ballet Company was dissolved in 1950 and each dancer started to work on his or her own performance. There were growing number of dancers who went to study abroad or became members of ballet companies abroad. Some even got prizes in the Lausanne International Ballet Concour. The growth of the Japanese ballet dancers were quite visible. The Tchaikovsky Memorial Tokyo Ballet Company asked Maurice Bejart to choreograph “The Kabuki” performance and other ballet companies also invited dance instructors or choreographers from abroad. Intrigued by the star ballet dancers such as MORISHITA Yoko, SAITO Yukari, KUSAKARI Tamiyo or KOJIMA Naoya as well as by the foreign ballet companies' stages, the population of the ballet dancers grew remarkably in the mid-80's for the second time after the first boom in the late 40's.

In the post-war period, the ballet was not the only Western dance in Japan. There was another development in Japan.

Neue Tanze is the one which was imported and spread among the Japanese public before World War II. After the war, American modern dance took its place, namely the Graham Method. Established in Tokyo in 1953, the American Culture Center played an important role in the import and the settlement of the American modern dance. The ACC invited modern dance in-

structors from the States to give lecture demonstrations or staged Jose Limon's "The Moore's Pavane". In the program of this show, instead of the translated term for modern dance; Gendai Buyo, or Kindai Buyo (written in ideographs), they called it "Modern Dance" and wrote with Japanese phonetic alphabets as Modan Dansu. This term would be used until today. From the April of the same year, a modern dance class was given to those selected in an audition. With the students of the class, the ACC held a modern dance performance. In October, 1955, Martha Graham made her first visit to Japan. Along with the demonstration with comments by Martha, her company captivated the young spectators' hearts. The terms "contraction" and "release" were repeatedly used as "key words" and the Japanese dancers were intent on applying such epochal technique. A Doris Humphrey technique was introduced at a lecture in the summer of 1958, the Alvin Aliy Company came in 1962, and Pauline Koner, as an exchange dancer through the Fulbright Culture Exchange Plan, came and gave an extensive and thorough training in technique such as Humphrey's fall-recovery-suspension. In the following year, Anna Sokolow visited Japan through the second Fulbright Plan. In her lecture, she stressed logical structuring of notation and strength in the context. In 1968 Ronny Gordon, a dance researcher of the Fulbright Plan gave a lecture on Limon's dance. As you can see, the import and the settlement of the American modern dance would have been difficult without the ACC. The ACC was closed in 1971. In the meanwhile, not satisfied with taking lectures in Japan, KANDA Akiko went to study with Martha Graham two years after the introduction of modern dance in Japan. SANJO Mariko, ASAKAWA Takako and KIMURA Yuriko followed KANDA and later became one of the best dancers of the Graham Company.

In the United States, with "Post Modern" as their key words, Yvonne Rainer (1934- ), Trisha Brown (1936- ) or Ann Halprin (1921- ) among other new generation dancers concentrated on the expression of the physical-self, while conventional dance attached importance to the expression of the inner-self. In the 1970's, more and more Japanese dancers went to the States to study not only with Graham but also with other dancers.

Some staged their own works and put their accomplishments to test. In Japan, young would-be dancers were many, and they were full of aspiration. There were many dance performances in many local halls. People no longer thought that the modern dance belonged only to the Western world, and each dancer strived to achieve his or her own dance.

In such conditions, in 1959 HIJIKATA Tatsumi (1928-1986) created "Ankoku Buto (Dance of the Darkness BUTOH)", a unique style of dance to be danced by Japanese dancers, who have shorter arms and legs than the Westerners. HIJIKATA who started dancing at the age of 19 said, "I decided to be a dancer in my adolescent years. I wanted to do something rigid, or tough. Just a presumption that German dance would be 'rigid' has made me take up German dance and made me what I am today".[15] As he looked up to OHNO Kazuo (1906- ), a pupil of EGUCHI, as his master, it can be said that there is German blood, not American blood, in his dancing.

BUTOH created by HIJIKATA has interchanged with other avant-garde arts since 1960's and achieved the style of BUTOH today. In 1970's BUTOH companies such as "TENSHI-KAN" (led by KASAI Akira), "DAIRAKUDA-KAN" (MARO Akijo) or "SANKAI-JUKU" and dancer OHNO Kazuo started their performances around the country. They also staged their BUTOH abroad from the late 70's. Currently, an elder OHNO Kazuo has been active in and outside the country. The second and third generation BUTOH dancers continue to elaborate on their own BUTOH and holding workshops for the youngsters.

It is strange that the BUTOH has not as much admiration or recognition in Japan as it does in other countries.

The word "Butoh" has become known to the world through the specific style of Butoh dance made famous by HIJIKATA. Even though Butoh is influenced by Western dance, it is the only modern dance style what is uniquely Japanese. HIJIKATA and other Japanese modern dancers have embraced many different styles while producing works in a wide variety of theatrical sizes.



## SUMMARY

The classical ballet, the first Western dance to be introduced in Japan did not get acclimated to Japan. In other words, the ballet, whose style had already been completed and established itself deeply in Western culture did not take root in Japan. But surely, it was Rosi's lesson in classical ballet that enlightened the young members of the Imperial Theater of Tokyo's Opera Department. Rosi's students later became the pioneers of modern dance in Japan.

Those who lived in the daybreak of Japan's modern dance successfully have gained the expansion of space of movement and the liberation from the strict interpretation of the lyrics of music through the experiences of the classical ballet. They studied the dance inside and outside the country. Some learned from Dalcroze who taught the relationship between movement and rhythm (and the relationship between dance and music). And some perceived a spirit of creating new dance, and movement unrestrained by the form through the lectures by Duncan. Based on the conception of physical and spiritual singularity, which they grasped through their study of Japanese Dance and Noh.

And at the same time, they worked on their original creation. Then they settled overseas to further enhance their creations. Their dances were valued highly as new styles of dances. Some of them influenced the dancers of the West and played an important role in the dance circle of Europe.

After those dancers in the infancy of Japan's modern dance arose EGUCHI Takaya. He studied the Neue Tanz in Germany under Mary Wigman. He took back with him the spirit of Mary Wigman's dance. That is, each dancer creates his or her own dance based on the fundamental movements and the basics in creation he or she has learned.

EGUCHI finally convinced the Japanese public that the art is something one creates and presents on his own. He produced many choreographers of great individuality. One of the dancers is OHONO Kazuo. He is a person respected as a master by HIJIKATA.

In the post-war period, the influence of the American modern dance, particularly the Graham Technique was prevalent. But as the modern dance boom gave an

impetus to creating new styles of dance, they departed from Graham and started to compete with one another. They went to study abroad, not because they wanted to import the Western style dance, but because the teachers they chose to study under had lived there.

HIJIKATA endures a process of self examination in the production of Butoh dance. He seeks to understand the foundations of what it means to be Japanese. Gradually, productions of Butoh have expanded overseas. Thus ballet and modern dance, imported from the West, have crystallized together with Butoh in a new style of modern dance through the Japanese body.

## Notes

- 1 Yamanobe Kimiko, *Odoru Baka*, Myyasaka Shuppan, Tokyo, 1962, p.103.
- 2 Kusaka Shiro, *Nihongendaibuyo no Nagare 1. Kaitakuki no Hitobito*, *The booklet accompanying the VTR: Nihongendaibuyo no Nagare*, Gendai Buyo Kyokai, Tokyo, 1988, p.74.
- 3 Yamanobe Kimiko, *Odoru Baka*, Myyasaka Shuppan, Tokyo, 1962, p.103.
- 4 *ibid*, p.135.
- 5 *ibid*, p.146.
- 6 Ishifuku Tuneo, *Buyo no Rekisi*, Kinokuniya Syoten, Tokyo, 1974, p.180.
- 7 Yamanobe Kimiko, *ibid*, p.148.
- 8 Nishinomiya Yasuitiro, *Eguchi Takaya to Geijyutugendai*, Tokyo Shimbun Shuppankyoku, Tokyo, 1989, p.775.
- 9 Helen Caldwell, *Ito Michio -The Dancer and His Dances-*, The Regents of the University of California, 1977, p.12.
- 10 Kusaka Shiro, *ibid*, pp.12-13.
- 11 *ibid*, p.126.
- 12 Nishinomiya Yasuitiro, *ibid*, p.778.
- 13 *ibid*, p.475.
- 14 *ibid*, p.440.
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## ■執筆について

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