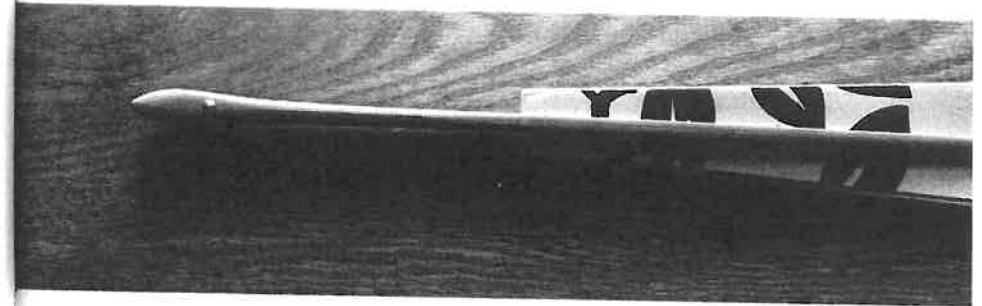

Tomie Hahn



Sensational Knowledge
embodying culture through japanese dance

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In memory of Tachibana Hiroyo.



*Dedicated to Tachibana Yoshie and
all who have shared their sensibilities
with me over these many years.*

contents

- list of illustrations* » ix
a note on names and media » xi
preface » xiii
acknowledgments » xv
1. introduction—sensual orientations » 1
 2. moving scenes—history and social structure » 23
 3. unfolding essence—energetic sensibilities and aesthetics » 41
 4. revealing lessons—modes of transmission: visual,
tactile, oral/aural, & media » 70
 5. transforming *sensu*—presence and orientation » 146
- notes* » 173
glossary » 179
references » 183
index » 195

preface

I remember my first dance lesson with Iemoto (Headmaster) Tachibana Yoshie in Tokyo. She took my elbow and led me across the studio, pointing at the impeccably clean wood floor. Nothing seemed unusual. "See these marks . . .," she said, kneeling down on the floor and still pointing here and there. As I bent down to sit by her side, minute water stains and nicks on the floor's surface came into focus. "Those stains are from all of our sweat and tears here together," she continued, sweeping her arm across the room toward the half dozen onlooking students. "All these marks are from our hard work together every day—dancing." I looked up from the floor to the students and down to the floor again. My eyes, now wide open, saw how speckled the floor was.

Throughout this book I refer to Tachibana Yoshie as "Iemoto" (the word for headmaster) and her mother, Tachibana Hiroyo, as "Soke" (previous headmaster) because this is how we refer to them in our dance school. Dancers affectionately call the Tachibana dance studio in downtown Tokyo "Hatchobori," the name of the subway stop across the street. Hatchobori often becomes a metaphor for our dance lives, relationships, obligations, and the Tachibana dance tradition. I have revisited early memories like the one above many times over the years, considering how Hatchobori embodies our dance, and how each of us contributes to the physical form of the studio. The surface nicks and stains, while insignificant in themselves, are a tangible result of meaningful physical exertion during lessons—generations of dancers' marks layered upon each other.

Hatchobori, witness to the daily transmission of moving art and embodied cultural knowledge, stands as both a symbolic and a very real structure of edification. In this lesson the message of Iemoto's work ethic was very clear. I realized with awe the magnitude of energy that

had been expended on this dance floor. When Iemoto's arm stretched out toward the students, Hatchobori became personified for me. Dancing bodies had inscribed these marks on the hard floor, contributing symbolically to the larger representation of the school body, and an instantiation of our strong bonds. The students observing my lesson were only a handful of the many generations of bodies that had created these patterns I was kneeling on. I felt included in the group, nervous, yet ready to dance. And so, Iemoto's illustration served a purpose.

Years later Iemoto again anthropomorphized Hatchobori. She said, "You have changed, in your walk, look, and manner at Hatchobori. These are things I have not taught you; Hatchobori taught you how to enter the *keikoba* [practice hall or dance studio], sit, bow, and behave with others. Because you have spent time here you have learned the feeling of Hatchobori. Learning quickly is not good—you cannot force your mind or body to remember properly. Living in Japan and being in the studio every day has taught you more of the lifestyle, people, and dance."

These lessons of the body deeply inspired my ethnographic pursuits. I have studied Japanese dance since the age of four. This book is my attempt to comprehend how my body has come to know this movement. It is, then, a more general exploration of how movement is transmitted and embodied, using Japanese dance as a case study. My own experience has both enriched and problematized my ethnographic process. My analysis of the learning process proved to be elusive; the art form and its transmission left no trace other than my growing proficiency; there was no "concrete" object to grasp. Ironically, the very "data" I sought were deeply entrenched in my very body—ready to be mined. However, as embodied knowledge, it became a puzzle for me to excavate. My field site eerily appeared and disappeared before me. My body became one of my primary field sites. I soon realized that, beyond Hatchobori, the dancers moving around me were in fact my field sites, and my own body a terrain to survey.¹

Performance
Disappearance
① KIS
all of a person's movements
structure of their experience
is consist of their movements
→ dance studios → performance
- performance

acknowledgments

If I could, I would kneel, gently place a closed fan before me, and bow deeply with gratitude. I have had the great fortune of receiving sensational knowledge from many people. I realize I will never be able to repay what I have been given, yet I feel fortunate to have the ability to express my sincere gratitude here. I thank the Asian Cultural Council, the American Association for University Women, Tufts University, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for their generous funding of my research. Thanks to Suzanna Tamminen and Eric Levy at Wesleyan University Press, who had faith in this text.

Learning embodied practices is a moving experience that has enriched my life. Transmission flows in time and resides in a living tradition. I am indebted to Iemoto Tachibana Yoshie and Soke Tachibana Hiroyo, who opened their hearts and the *keikoba* (dance studio) to me, passing down a lineage of movement that inspired this ethnography. As will be apparent in the pages to come, Iemoto's passion for dance and art expanded my awareness, now instilled in my everyday life. I owe her a depth of gratitude for the many years of inspiring lessons. To my childhood teacher in New York, Tachibana Sahomi, who will forever be a part of my dance, thank you. To all the Tachibana teachers and dancers in New York—Sahotoyo and Sahotae—and in Tokyo, where there are too many to list here, I send my utmost gratitude.

In my first semester in graduate school Kay Kaufman Shelemay's fascination with transmission systems was infectious, and through the years she has continued to inspire me in innumerable ways. Kay and Mark Slobin have been true mentors, encouraging my diverse interests, from Japanese dance to Monster Truck rallies to computer music. For years Cynthia Novack (Bull), now passed away, urged me to keep returning to the sensate body, the experiential essence of movement, to respect what the body knows, and to be determined to articulate

this knowledge in as many forms (text, dance, teaching) as possible. Thanks to Lori Anderson-Moseman and Sean Williams for urging me to experiment, be playful, and let my voice tell this story.

Foremost, to my husband Curtis Bahn I owe a truckload of thanks for his undying support that has kept me dancing, playing music, writing, and laughing. His voracious curiosity has been inspiring. My Hahn and Bahn families have provided me with a wealth of support—I could say that my father and mother initiated this ethnography, since they started my sister Kimiko's and my *nihon buyo* lessons in Tokyo when we were children. It was my father, Walter Hahn, who inspired my curiosity about teaching practices. His enthusiasm as a creative artist and teacher never ceases to amaze me.

There have been great losses during the process of researching and writing this book. The tragic loss of my mother during my graduate years was unbearable, yet somehow returning to the countless Japanese (and Japanese American) women around me eased my journey. Both of my husband's parents, who were such pillars of support, also passed on at this time. During the final edits of this manuscript Soke passed away, and I am saddened that she never held the book that she inspired.

sensational knowledge



introduction—sensual orientations

unfurled

I recall the initial struggle of opening my fan as a child.

Closed, the fan was stick-like and strong. It seemed unwilling to unfold.

My teacher's arms enclosed me and her hands guided mine into position.

She showed me how to push my right thumb against the outer "bone"

to pry the fan open,

unfurling each panel.

We repeated this over and over—

a dance we privately shared within the lesson.

Though I have witnessed many students' first fan lesson over the years, I know it is a

duet that will never be performed in public.

“Know with your body,” headmaster Tachibana Hiroyo said during my dance lesson, as she gently drew her hand to her chest. In this fleeting moment she succinctly imparted a cultural sensibility, a Japanese way of knowing, that moved beyond these few words and gesture. Curious about my own understanding of such moments, and the embodiment of such sensibilities conveyed during lessons, I was drawn to research how culture is passed down, or embodied, through dance.

This book is an ethnography that focuses on dance transmission and how cultural knowledge is embodied. I strongly believe that an observation of how dance is taught reveals a great deal about that culture as well as the individual dancers practicing the tradition. This ethnography is based on my fieldwork and experiences studying Japanese dance (*nihon buyo*) for over thirty years. I do not intend this book to be a comprehensive introduction to *nihon buyo* or its history, nor is it a record of specific dances. It is about process. I employ *nihon buyo* lessons at the Tachibana School in Tokyo as a case study to shed light on transmission and embodiment. For most performing arts traditions around the world, the general public sees only staged, or “finished,” performances. Rarely does one have a chance to witness behind-the-scenes activities such as lessons or rehearsals. Compared with *kabuki*, *noh*, and *bunraku*, the genre of *nihon buyo* remains relatively unknown outside Japan. Further, outside *nihon buyo* dance studios, it is rare to have the opportunity to observe the process of dance training, where culture flows.

framing sense

I find that an ethnographer's academic discipline often imposes a privileging of one sense—"blinding" (deafening, numbing, muting, etc.) the ethnographer's experience of the lush sensory environment. Our academic disciplines in the arts appear to be organized by the specialization of sensory mode (departments of art, dance, and music, for example), but at the expense of a holistic analytic and experiential perspective. What theoretical, metaphoric sieves do we carry when we go to the field? What slips through the sieve because we are screening for "answers" on a specific issue or our attention is keenly focused on a specific sensory/artistic practice?

For this very reason, and because dance transmission is a multi-sensory experience, I have drawn from a number of disciplines for theoretical and methodological guidance—most prominently, ethnomusicology, dance studies, anthropology, performance studies, and Asian philosophies of the body. Each offered a different approach for unfolding the complex process of dance transmission.

I use the word *transmission* in this book for several reasons. First, this word calls up the well-established scholarly history of transmission systems, such as oral/aural transmission in ethnomusicology, dance studies, and oral history. Second, I view transmission as a process that spans the practices of both teaching and learning. To study transmission is to view a process that instills theory and cultural concepts of embodiment. In this book, transmission concerns the information flow between teacher and student—the sender and receiver cycle—and embraces the personal relationships that evolve.

As is generally known, philosophically, theory and practice are not separated in Japan—the mind and body are not considered to be separate entities but are instead regarded as interdependent (see the work of Yuasa 1987, 1993; Nagatomo 1993b). Theory thus arises from practice. We embody the essence of theory when presence and thematic articulations of physical movements arise through practice. This approach contrasts with other methodologies in which theoretical concerns initiate the work and practice is a vehicle for "proving" certain theories. As dance scholars have long argued, the body does not intellectualize theory before it learns—rather, theory arises from engagement in body practices (Foster 1997; Bull 1997).

When I observed and experienced corporeal lessons during field-

work, the senses emerged as the vehicles of transmission and the connection to embodied cultural expression. The senses reside in a unique position as the interface between body, self, and the world. They are beautiful transmission devices, through which we take in information, comprehend the experience, assign meaning, and often react to the stimuli. Not only do the senses orient us in a very real, physical way; they enable us to construct parameters of existence—that which defines the body, self, social group, or world. Simply, we are situated by sensual orientations. In my eyes, transmission systems are valuable to observe as processes of embodiment, effectuated via the senses, that encode and convey cultural meaning to reveal a particular (sub)culture's sensual orientation in the world.

The work of Cynthia Bull (Novack) has been influential in my conceptualization of the socially, sensually situated body in dance. She concludes her article "Sense, Meaning, and Perception in Three Dance Cultures":

I am proposing that the particular characteristics of each dance form and its unique manner of transmission and performance encourage priorities of sensation that subtly affect the nature of perception itself. Dance finely tunes sensibilities, helping to shape the practices, behaviors, beliefs, and ideas of people's lives. (Bull 1997: 284–285)

Considering the senses as the vehicles of dance transmission, I began to ask: How does culture shape our attendance to various sensoria, and how does our interpretation of sensory information shape our individual realities? How are cultural systems of teaching bound to sensoria and the constructedness of awareness? Can some transmission practices incite transformative effects? Further, how does the culturally constructed process of transmission influence our sense of self?

My basic framework for how dance transmission processes orient the body/self stems from the research on the anthropology of the senses, particularly the collections of articles edited by David Howes, *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (2005) and *The Varieties of Sensual Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (1991), Constance Classen's (ed.) *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and across Cultures* (1993), and Anthony Synnott's *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society* (1993). These works propose fascinating models for the sensoria in culture, not only the idea of the cultural construction of the senses, but the existence of a hierarchy of the senses in each culture

SMART
CRITIQUE
OF
DISCIPLINES
OF
HUMANITIES

TRANS-
MISSION

THEORY
PRACTICE

Am
M/S

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that reflects their worldview, cosmology, or “world of sense.” Running with this basic premise, I propose that an investigation of how art is sensually transmitted within its cultural context can reveal how the senses shape our understanding of what exists outside the body (and its relationship to the interior body), and can foster the construction of sensible worlds of shared cultural meaning.

Performance studies provided one of the most diverse perspectives for performance analysis, and offered me a range of insights. For example, Richard Schechner wrote:

Performances are actions. As a discipline, performance studies takes actions very seriously in four ways. First, behavior is the “object of study” of performance studies. Although performance studies scholars use the “archive” extensively—what’s in books, photographs, the archaeological record, historical remains, etc.—their dedicated focus is on the “repertory”—namely, what people do in the activity of their doing it. Second, artistic practice is a big part of the performance studies project. A number of performance studies scholars are also practicing artists working in the avantgarde, in community-based performance, and elsewhere; others have mastered a variety of non-Western and Western traditional forms. The relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral. (Schechner 2003: 1)

For my work I would add “sound” to Schechner’s first two sentences above, to clarify that sound is a part of the “object of study,” although it is certainly clear in subsequent passages that he includes this sensory parameter. Schechner’s substantiation of the values of the practitioner-scholar relationship reinforces participant-observer methodologies long practiced in ethnomusicology and anthropology.

Transmission via the senses instills profound cultural beliefs in the body, and contexts of dance transmission are rich settings for observing culture in action, especially the shaping and orienting of the body/self for artistic expression. I believe performance provides a special metaphoric space often revealing how people make sense of their lives and community (Schechner 2003; Fine and Speer 1992). Through fieldwork we are offered a glimpse at a subculture’s performance practice and “techniques of the body” (Mauss 1979; Foster 1997) as shared cultural knowledge. Susan Leigh Foster underscores what observations of such techniques might uncover:

Any standardized regimen of bodily training, for example, embodies, in the very organization of its exercises, the metaphors used to instruct the body, and in the criteria specified for physical competence, a coherent (or not so coherent) set of principles that govern the action of that regimen. These principles, reticulated with aesthetic, political, and gendered connotations, cast the body who enacts them into larger arenas of meaning where it moves alongside bodies bearing related signage. (Foster 1995: 8)

As a window to embodied expression, fieldwork in music and dance can reveal how a community attends to the world and constructs its identity and art from shared sensibilities, shared sensual orientations.

⑦ Fieldwork can be a dance of disorientation. In the field ethnographers immerse themselves in another culture’s world as an attempt to comprehend how that culture constructs and makes sense of what’s “out there.” Fieldwork experiences often directly reveal contrasting constructs of reality that challenge our core sensibilities, changing the way we orient ourselves in the world.

In this book I hope to reveal how a culture’s transmission processes prioritize practitioners’ attendance to certain sensoria (even particular qualities of sensory experience), and how the transmission of sensory knowledge can shape dancers’ experiential orientation. Through practice, systems of transmission structure experience so that, within the social group, the world appears similarly constructed and members know how to interact within it. I will illustrate how the entire setting and ritual of dance lessons conveys a Japanese sensibility—from bowing, to where one stands during a lesson, to attire, interactions, voice, gaze, spatial negotiations, and even touching.

inscribing sense

I have been fascinated by the presence, or absence, of the body in dance scholarship. Curiously, in many texts the body has been left entirely off the page. Scholarship before the 1970s primarily focused on contextualizing the dancing body, dance history, theory, and on documenting choreography. But specific cultural references to, and analysis of, the body itself were few. I believe this is in part due to the difficulties of analyzing movement, as recording technologies for moving images

were not accessible or affordable for the general public to document dance in a format that enabled repeated viewings for detailed analysis. While film was available, it was costly. Video technology changed dance scholarship. Although several notation systems existed (such as Labanotation, developed by Rudolf Laban in the early twentieth century), dance has primarily been an art form passed from body to body, and not inscribed in a universally accepted standard notation system.

Since the 1970s scholars have written meticulously about the body, culture, and embodiment. The study of the body in society has received increased attention in such diverse theoretical disciplines as feminist theory, social psychology, cognitive psychology, anthropology, philosophy, performance studies, communication theory, medical anthropology, politics of the body, and aesthetics. This interdisciplinary interest, alongside rapidly advancing computer and video technologies, and developing dance and performance studies scholarship, fueled a diversity of exciting research on the body. Joann Kealiinohomoku's landmark article "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" (1969) spoke volumes, critiquing previous dance scholarship without a grounding in culture or the body. Then, in 1974, Allegra Fuller Snyder proposed dance as a "way of knowing"—a concept that significantly changed dance scholarship, specifically, notions of embodiment.

From the mid-1980s dance ethnologists took a momentous leap, presenting movement *as* culture (Novack [Bull] 1990; Cowan 1990; Ness 1992; Sklar 2002) and bringing the moving body to a central position in their critical analysis. *Sensational Knowledge* continues on this historical path. With its fleeting presence, the dancing body has turned out to be an elusive informant to research. I crave specificity and a semblance of physical presence in dance scholarship. Limbs. Breath. Shoulders. Muscles. Gaze. I notice that the body appears in text when particular aspects of dance are considered, such as detailed descriptions of movement, choreography, learning, and personal accounts. When I read passages narrating the dancing body, a kinesthetic sensation comes over me, even though my eyes alone are moving from line to line. For example, in *Samba*, Barbara Browning brings the reader to the body in motion. An excerpt from Browning's description of the Brazilian orixa (Yoruba god) Oxossi dance ushers forth the feeling of movement quality: "When the right foot is stepping, the body is directed crosswise on a left diagonal, and vice versa. On the lifting beat just before the change in direction, the dancer often spins around full circle,

to the back, such that her feet and the angle of her body are already in preparation for the next step" (Browning 1995: 62). Even though I am unfamiliar with this dance, the text provides a depth of kinesthetic information so that I can imagine the moving body, perhaps somewhat empathetically. Browning's theoretical offerings are only richer as a result, because the theory is embodied in the dances she describes. Dance scholars have found marvelously playful ways to push the boundaries of inscribing dance. Who can forget Julie Taylor's magical flipbook imagery in *Paper Tangos* (1998)? The moving body emerges in tiny photographs, her graphic tales of dancing in Buenos Aires, and passionate poetry.

Scholars of dance have chosen their themes, or conceptual frames, to stage dance in text. Sometimes the description of movement and embodiment of theory is not the primary concern. For example, in *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, Marta Savigliano ingeniously composed unusual text formats to narrate her multivoiced commentary on tango. Several sections are organized to resemble theatrical scripts, complete with stage directions. Dividing the page into two columns enables multiple voices to simultaneously speak to the reader. I found her text brilliantly creative, especially her challenge of paradigms for academic texts. However, with each page I turned I longed to read about the intimacies of moving bodies and the specificity of embodying tango. But this is not the point of her book. I am certain some readers will be frustrated at the conceptual frames that I have chosen to focus on—the embodiment of culture via sensual orientations and lived experiences of transmission, rather than historical or theoretical matters. Each writer, each dancer, is inclined to reveal the nature of dance from a particular perspective. My impulse is to contribute to dance scholarship by writing what I know, what I have embodied, inspired by ethnographic practices.

For me, theory unravels in moments of experience—in music, dance, and in fieldwork. In lived experience we find the essence of our humanity, of our varied cultures, and individual desires. I have been influenced by ethnographies that intimate the personal and transformative experiences of fieldwork (among them Shelemay 1991; Kisliuk 1998; Ness 1992; and Sklar 2001). I find that these works strategically expose the ethnographer, clarifying gaze and identity within lived moments. They also challenge ethnological discourse, including personal experience as a dialogical, and very real, part of the theoretical framework. They are bold works. For example, in *Seize the Dance!* Kisliuk

even included her personal poetry, offering us her creative writing from the field to expose emotions and a broader sensibility of the BaAka people. Similarly, in *A Song of Longing* Shelemay revealed her more personal, emotional ethnographic journey. Shelemay wrote:

I began working on *A Song of Longing* in 1986, at first planning to write a more accessible account of my controversial findings about the Falasha religious tradition. But almost as soon as I began to write, other issues began to surface. To speak honestly about my Falasha research, I realized, I had to explore the relationship between my personal and professional experience in the field and the manner in which the two were inseparable.

From the start I struggled with the fact that I wanted to write a book that would not fit into an established literary or scholarly category. The problem had implications for both publication prospects and my career. (1991: xii)

SB
RISKY
When ethnography is written from a reflexive voice, this type of experience can arise. I do not believe that writing reflexively is always appropriate, but for my aim of conveying dance transmission as physically close to the reader as possible, I knew I needed to narrate sensational knowledge.

COOL
sensu—unfolding site

Nihon buyo dancers spend countless hours moving with fans. This personal object has inspired the organization of this book. Let me explain. Splayed across the floor, my field notes, letters, and sketches appeared fanlike and moved me to employ its familiar structure. The word for the common dance fan is *sensu*. These fans are an extension of dancers' bodies and essential to our expressive art. "Dancers live through *sensu*," I heard Iemoto say to a new student as she held out an open fan. Snapping it closed, she continued, "As the *samurai* has a sword, this [fan] is our weapon." *Sensu* spring to life in dancers' hands. Through daily practice we learn to manipulate *sensu* to tell stories. Amusingly, *sensu*

is the word for dance fan and the loanword for "sense."³ Though the character for *sensu* is written differently to convey the different meanings, the coincidental wordplay offers a meaningful metaphor for this book's structure and how embodying dance is a gradual unfolding process. Also, the aesthetic of folding, or wrapping, has been a thematic thread in Japanese culture (see Joy Hendry's book *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation and Power* [1995] for insights into real and metaphorical wrapping in Japanese culture).

Fans have been a part of Japanese dance history for over four hundred years. While fans vary in shape, size, and material, there is a standard *sensu* that dancers are most familiar with—constructed of paper, bamboo, and metal.⁴ It is a simple object. Like two hands held together with fingers outspread, ten blond bamboo/hone (bones) radiate from an intersection to expand nineteen folds of paper facets. The paper is glued to the bones and, on the outermost bones, secured with thread. A metal finding fastens the bones tightly at their point of crossing—the *kaname* (pivot point)—and lead weights are discreetly tucked within the outer bones for balance. Often the paper folds display beautiful designs, ranging from abstract shapes to intricate depictions of scenes. Like the individual sections of a Japanese screen or scroll, panels or sections of the fan's artistic design can be appreciated as complete units when the fan is partly closed or, with the entire fan unfolded, can be viewed from the larger context of the nineteen-panel composition. Similarly, small vignettes on individual leaves of this book can be appreciated as a peek into a very personal scene—but when these vignettes are viewed in the context of the full panorama, the composition reveals social dynamics of the group. My hope is that this ethnography unfolds much like *sensu*, with vignettes drawn from my personal lessons and fieldwork to unfurl intimate panels that contribute to my analysis and the larger picture of embodied cultural knowledge in the context of the Tachibana community.

reflecting bodies

Because *nihon buyo* has been a part of my life since childhood, it was a clear candidate for a case study on the transmission of cultural sensibilities. I decided to write this ethnography with a reflexive voice because my body physically experiences and informs my perspective on transmission, and ignoring this embodied voice would have been

disingenuous. An author's voice always provides point of view. I believe each research project sits in a different location on the continuum of qualitative versus more objective research methodologies. Reflexivity will arise in varying degrees in our ethnographies, and I believe that each project calls for a unique approach, or methodology of reflexivity. If appropriate for the project, reflexive presentation, or display, of identity in ethnographic narrative can utilize the researcher's self, the complex process of comprehending the relationship of self to other, and the embodied knowledge of the participant-observer-researcher, as a resource within the research. But, as a practice, reflexive writing leaves us exposed and vulnerable. It can be difficult and often painful work. Each ethnographer has a different level of comfort with reflexive disclosure.

If we are able to reveal and monitor our vulnerabilities, the dynamics of power and control issues that play out in ethnographic practice can be incorporated as part of the work. In her book of essays *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*, Ruth Behar reveals the diversity of vulnerabilities encountered by anthropologists and writes:

Anthropology . . . is the most fascinating, bizarre, disturbing, and necessary form of witnessing left to us at the end of the twentieth century. As a mode of knowing that depends on the particular relationship formed by a particular anthropologist with a particular set of people in a particular time and place, anthropology has always been vexed about the question of vulnerability. (Behar 1996: 5)

In the ten pages following this quote Behar provides examples of vulnerable moments exposed by reflexivity, and then cautions, "Vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake" (15). There have been many vulnerable moments for me during fieldwork and in the writing of this ethnography, revealing a deeply physical, personal process of embodiment. I feel exposed in these pages, yet desire to convey the transmission process from this embodied place of understanding. That said, I hope that my reflexive presence in this ethnography sheds light on embodied transmission practices (for more on reflexivity see Hahn 2006a).

While my embodied field site inspired this research, it would also position obstacles before me to contend with. Several dualities run through my life—I am biracial (Eurasian); a performer and researcher; a dancer and musician. These dualities have influenced my perspective and relationship to my work. Nearly all ethnographers face issues of negotiating multiple identities in the field and at home that heighten their cross-cultural understanding and in turn affect their work. While the dualities in my pursuits exist by choice, the physical nature of my biracial identity poses an inextricably embodied duality that inherently shapes how I comprehend the world and how the world sees me.

I am perceived contextually by others—an identity situated by how I sound, my attire, actions, the surroundings, or the performance style I practice. These issues have surfaced through my ethnographic experiences and growing up biracial.

embodying fields

My parents, both visual artists, took my sister and me to live in Tokyo for a year in 1964. My father, a German American born in Milwaukee, studied Asian art, and produces Asian-influenced art. My mother was a Japanese American *nisei* (second generation) whose parents immigrated from Hiroshima to work on a Maui sugarcane plantation. Living in Japan was far from my mother's own desire. In the United States she strove to fit into American culture, which was difficult during the war. As she said to my father when we traveled to Japan, "You brought me back to everything [Japanese] I spent most of my life escaping from." In Tokyo my mother was faced with the duality of looking Japanese but being Japanese American. My sister, Kimiko, and I were placed in a public school in Setagaya-ku. We both studied *nihon buyo* each week for that year.⁵

I have vivid memories of our Tokyo experience—interesting sights, foods, smells, sounds, friends, and family. I also recall people pointing at me and calling out in boisterous voices, "gaijin!" (foreigner, or outsider). Sometimes small children would wander over and try to touch me or stroke my brown hair.

Upon returning to New York my parents placed us in Japanese school on Saturdays at the New York Buddhist Academy in New York City, where we studied calligraphy, Japanese language, and dance. We lived in Pleasantville, a town sixty miles north of the city, and attended

the public school there on the weekdays. In the sixties and seventies few people of color lived in Pleasantville. Kimiko and I were taunted with name-calling—"Jap," "Chink," "Nip," or "Ching Chang Chong," to name a few. Classes in school focused on Western history, literature, and sports and only occasionally ventured to the "exotic" East.

On Saturdays at Japanese school we were among Japanese and Japanese Americans who "looked" Japanese and who attended the Buddhist services on Sundays. Dance lessons were special weekly events. I felt a focused attention from my dance teacher Tachibana Sahomi, a sensibility so different from my public school week. It is difficult to nail down the exact essence of that sensibility—perhaps it was the way she sang the music while we danced, or how she would slightly adjust my fan position.

In hindsight I see that both communities were important to my well-being and understanding of my mixed-heritage identity. The survival tools I developed in my childhood included codeswitching abilities for smooth navigation between communities. Wearing tattered, embroidered, bell-bottom blue jeans and listening to rock and roll during the week contrasted with the *yukata* (cotton *kimono*) and *obi* (sash) I would wear while dancing to *nagauta* (music for *kabuki*-style dance) on Saturdays. However, these two sides of my life never intersected. The parsing of my week starkly juxtaposed my biracial halves. At that time I believe I appreciated this compartmentalization of my identity—the two halves were clear and separate.

I studied *nihon buyo* at the New York branch of the Tachibana School (at the New York Buddhist Academy). I met my teacher, Tachibana Sahomi, when I was nearly six. Each Saturday I danced by her side, imitating every gesture. I recall her saying—"When you're dancing you can be anyone." In context she meant that I needed to focus on embodying a particular character for the dance I was learning, but also hinted that dance could enable me to experience a variety of identities. Even within dance, abilities to switch between characters and styles were honed and honored. Shifting between identities was an activity I learned both in and outside the dance space.

My formal initiation into the Tachibana dance family in the late 1980s marked yet another level of symbolic duality. From the moment of my *natori* (stage title) ceremony, only my performance name—Tachibana Samie—would be known in the *nihon buyo* world. Acceptance into this dance family changed my life. However, because of the hierarchical (*iemoto*) guild system, it also excluded me from re-

searching and studying at other dance schools. In discussing ethnography, Clifford notes the problems and advantages of studying one's own culture: "Insiders studying their own cultures offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways" (Clifford 1986: 9). I found myself situated in an interesting, yet often frustrating, state of betweenness that offered multiple perspectives, advantages, and disadvantages.

I am an insider and outsider to Japanese culture and *nihon buyo* tradition—not "native" yet not a stranger. While this peripheral existence deeply influenced my ethnographic research, it also problematized the emic/etic research dichotomy. I found that, in order to convey embodiment in dance and the situated body in fieldwork, I would need to comprehend and voice my multiple "other" perspectives as scholar/dancer, musician/dancer and biracial woman (Motzafi-Haller 1997; Mendoza 2000). Yet the intimacy of my embodied field site often encumbered the research. When I wore the hat of dancer, the scholar's analysis interrupted the flow of movement. Conversely, as I analyzed dance transmission I was frustrated that my body "knew" a movement yet I could not articulate it in text. Much like investigating whether the light remains on when a refrigerator door is closed, stopping to examine my embodied data rudely disrupted the continuity of my realizations.⁶

I have seriously taken heed of Lila Abu-Lughod's reflections on ethnography, particularly since I am one of the "halfies" writing ethnography that she refers to, defining them as "people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage" (1991: 137). She notes the problematic nature of halfie and feminist ethnographic perspectives—"when they present the Other they are presenting themselves, they speak with a complex awareness of and investment in reception. Both halfie and feminist anthropologists are forced to confront squarely the politics and ethics of their representations. There are no easy solutions to their dilemmas" (142). Directly confronted by this predicament in writing, I realized that my challenge would be to actively disorient my very insider, outsider, and "different" perspective in order to articulate embodied, sensory knowledge. Abu-Lughod proposed strategies in which to purposely write "against culture," or disturb the problematic construct of anthropological discourse built on cultural difference—through creating "ethnographies of the particular." "By focusing closely on particular individuals and their changing relationships, one would necessarily subvert the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity,

coherence, and timelessness" (154). The backbone of this ethnography reclines upon a "particular," personal, approach—in hopes of avoiding those generalizations that breed stereotypes. Moving forward from Abu-Lughod's strategies on writing against culture, I have purposely written some text to disorient readers. I juxtapose different kinds of texts and voices to playfully suggest new ways to perceive relationships, similar to the way that uncommon juxtapositions chaotically appear in our daily lives and challenge our understanding of associations.

The works of Cynthia Novack (1990) and Zoila Mendoza (2000) provided insights into balanced involvements in dance, music, research, and writing—inviting me to draw from my sensory knowledge to inform the writing and, in turn, allowing the writing to inform my body. I found that this stance blurred my notions of interior/exterior, insider/outsider, ethnographer/dancer dualities, yet drew together personal experience, fieldwork, and analysis. Because of this complex dialect of particular bodies, field sites, and identity, I have chosen to write this book from multiple voices—from a body that knows several worlds and appears in the text in different roles to convey how we learn and sensually orient our bodies/selves at Hatchobori.⁷

fanning stereotypes

The vignettes appearing in this book are meant to resemble scenes on paper fans, revealing private moments at Hatchobori drawn from my field notes, conversations, and dance experiences. I find that the detailed minutiae of dancers' daily lives are held fast to the *sensu* "bones" supporting the structure—the transmission of dance.

Nihon buyo repertory is filled with dances in which the fan must, in the mind's eye, continuously transform into various objects or scenery throughout a performance—a *sake* (rice wine) cup, a pine tree, or a leaf in the wind. Fans also impart intangible aspects of dance, such as emotions or atmosphere. The prop can playfully obscure, highlight, and reveal images of the dance narrative and, literally, the dancer's body—covering a smile, partitioning off faces in conversation, or framing an exposed neck. Metaphorically I employ this same unfurling of the context, dancers' movements, and bodies to show how we embody dance at Hatchobori. I simultaneously wish to reclaim the trope of the fan as a lure—to reappropriate the exotic mystique of the "fan dance" stereotype of the demure "Oriental lady" who entices the onlooker's gaze

by revealing and concealing her body. Yes, the performing body commands attention with its presence, yet the fan trope I aim to present in practice reveals the tough, flexible reality of women practicing Japanese dance.

The recent flow of popular books on *geisha* (Yoshikawa Mako's *One Hundred and One Ways* and Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*, for example) has been astounding. Each text provokes discourse on the entire trend, particularly the depiction and exoticism of women performers. Feminist, Asian, and Asian American writers critiquing these books, as well as the fashions that they launched ("*geisha* glam," revealed by the popular use of chopstick hair ornaments and white makeup), have mourned the reinforcement of "exotic" and erotic stereotypes of Japanese women and have loudly questioned the authority of voice and character portrayed in text. *Geisha* stereotypes extend onto the big screen as well. Many Asian Americans and Asians living in America mobilize when films depicting Asians with Orientalist stereotypes debut. In an article titled "The Mystique of a Geisha Packaged, Available for Sale" in the October 21, 2005, issue of *The Pacific Citizen*, *The National Publication of the Japanese American Citizens League*, Lynda Lin writes, "Two months before the film version of 'Memoirs of a Geisha' is scheduled to open in theaters nationwide, studio executives and retailers are already making it possible to dress, look and even smell like a geisha" (Lin 2005: 1). Lin is referring to Sony Picture Entertainment's marketing deals with Fresh, Inc., for the product "Memoirs of a Geisha Eau de Parfum" and Banana Republic's "Memoirs of a Geisha" clothing line. Lin quotes John Tateishi, executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League: "What strikes me is a curiosity that the producers of these products seem to want to reflect admiration for Japanese culture and those things that exemplify its beauty and serenity . . . But in reality, what they've done is to bastardize those qualities by a kind of stereotyping that pretends to capture the essence of beauty in Japanese culture" (4).

Though this book is not solely about gender, one of my aims has been to reappropriate the fan, *kimono*, and hair ornaments to tell a very different story of Japanese performing women.⁸

arranging folds

My hope is that the text unfolds and enfolds an array of sensual elements—personal moments interspersed with analysis, orientations,

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and video documentation—displaying an expansion of embodiment grounded in the everyday experience of movement and sound. There are five chapters, fanning out as fingers. The first is here, in the opening of the outer ethnographic bone—“sensual orientations”—an introduction to the characters in the folds of stories to come. The second, “moving scenes,” supplies a basic overview of early *nihon buyo* history and the social structures supporting transmission. “Unfolding essence,” chapter 3, approaches the energetic qualities of dance, including Japanese concepts of the body/spirit and examples of aesthetics.

✓ Chapter 4, “revealing lessons,” occupies the largest amount of space and is itself composed of five sections, creating folds within folds. We begin at Hatchobori with an introduction to lessons, including a typical day and the modes of sensory transmission. Section two is focused on the primary mode of teaching—visual transmission. Next we move to tactile transmission in section three, and the impact of touch on learning. Oral/aural transmission is presented in section four, then section five turns to notation and video media as a means for transmission.

© | In these five sections of chapter 4, I showcase the minutiae of everyday transmission at Hatchobori with case studies (and DVD examples) to offer concrete examples of how dancers come to embody *nihon buyo*. Individual dancers and lessons appear in this section, providing a rich source of information to experience and analyze the practice of dance.

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1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

I must stress that the segmenting of the senses into discrete units in this section is for my analytic purposes only—within actual lessons the senses are not disjointed from one another in such an orderly and separate fashion but are wholly interrelated. However, through this analytic dissection I hope to reveal the complexity of one subculture’s multisensory transmission structure. Chapter 5, “transforming *sensu*,” draws the disconnected senses together again. This chapter explores presence in performance as an embodied sensibility that is transmitted. I also present transformative experiences in fieldwork as a means for comprehending varying perspectives of “knowing,” or situating, the body. In the outer bone of this book-as-fan I close as I began, with reflexive thoughts on my personal experiences studying *nihon buyo* and dancing fieldwork.

dis-Orient

It is through culture patterns, ordered clusters of significant symbols, that man makes sense of the events through which he lives. The study of culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is thus the study of

the machinery individuals and groups of individuals employ to orient themselves in a world otherwise opaque. (Geertz 1973: 363)

The irony of “flattening” embodied experiences of dance and fieldwork by transliterating lived experiences into text inspired me to consider ways to sensually outfit readers through inciting interactivity. If we were in the same room, talking about embodiment, dance transmission, and the ethnographic experience, I imagine the nature of our discussion would be quite active—passionate even. In fact, it would be much easier for me to show you a gesture, a video, or to sing a musical passage than to write a text about the practice of this lively, sensuous art and my ethnographic engagement. My aim is to playfully arouse understanding through activity—in the text and the DVD—to pose a sensual *dis-orientation* through presenting another subculture’s practice of sensual orientation.

The text and accompanying DVD might seem experimental at times. This is my attempt to see if there are ways within ethnography to convey the experiential, ineffable aspects of fieldwork by inciting interactivity. Throughout this book there are short sections titled “orientation” that are meant to stimulate activity and provide a “mindful,” visceral quality to the text.⁹ For example, at the close of this section you will find the first “orientation.” Here I invite active involvement to directly raise questions considering the situated body in performance and in text. Similarly, in “orientation—a virtual lesson” I encourage readers to take a lesson by following the video footage of headmaster Tachibana Yoshie teaching dance. Since the footage was shot from a student’s perspective (behind the teacher), this simulated gaze attempts to capture the feeling of participating in a lesson at Hatchobori. Although nothing compares to the lived experience of a dance class and a fully embodied engagement of the senses in a new experience, these orientations are meant to inform through practice, and to perhaps trigger active associations for the reader.

I consciously employ the word *orientation* to reference sense and embodiment but, simultaneously, to strategically reappropriate “Orient.” My reappropriation is in the spirit of Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s, play on Standard English “Signification” (1988). For some readers the word *orientation* may create an association with *Orientations: The Magazine for Collectors and Connoisseurs of Asian Art*. I hope to redirect any such association. If anything, this is another case of reappropriation, taking the word from its art-collecting and connoisseurship realm to one of comprehending the situated body within culture. James Clifford, citing

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), speaks to the power dynamic in the ethnographer's gaze: "This Orient, occulted and fragile, is brought lovingly to light, salvaged in the work of the outside scholar. The effect of domination in such spatial/temporal deployments . . . is that they confer on the other a discrete identity, while also providing the knowing observer with a standpoint from which to see without being seen, to read without interruption" (Clifford 1986: 12). The entire passage is interesting, as Clifford presents the Orient as a performance site:

The Orient functions as a theater, a stage on which a performance is repeated, to be seen from a privileged standpoint. (Barthes [1977] locates a similar "perspective" in the emerging bourgeois esthetics of Diderot.) For Said, the Orient is "textualized"; its multiple divergent stories and existential predicaments are coherently woven as a body of signs susceptible of virtuoso reading. This Orient, occulted and fragile, is brought lovingly to light, salvaged in the work of the outside scholar. The effect of domination in such spatial/temporal deployments (not limited, of course, to Orientalism proper) is that they confer on the other a discrete identity, while also providing the knowing observer with a standpoint from which to see without being seen, to read without interruption. (1986: 12)

My ever-present voice and body throughout the text and DVD aims to expose Clifford's "to see without being seen" dynamic. Said has directed us to acknowledge the domination of the Orient by the West. I embody both geographies. In this text I deploy my biraciality as an embodied subversion of fixed East-West boundaries, distinctions of "other," and to give voice to a reorientation of artistic expression.

Stories about learning, dance, fieldwork, the body, and dance narratives are folded into the text to connect vital narratives as they are superimposed on the everyday experience at Hatchobori. The disorienting sensibility of this organization is intentional. In a way, orientation is gained through a process of "making sense" of disorienting experiences. This kind of structure poses mindful "groundlessness" in everyday experience that is revealed "in knowing how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pre-given but that is continually shaped by the types of actions in which we engage" (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991: 144). I hope the juxtaposition of stories, voices, and senses encourages active orientation through disorientation, or the appearance of order within chaos.¹⁰



first orientation

the body in text

Imagine taking a drink of water from a glass as performance. I employ this engagement to locate a regularly repeated experience shared by readers to be utilized as a unit of observation. How can we convey the essence of movement, sound, and the lived experience of culture? How do we write the body into text?

Probably you raise the glass and drink "without thought"—without the need to consider or analyze each action methodologically. But if this ritual were a research project, those unconscious aspects held in your embodied knowledge would hopefully surface as your examination progressed and as you found empirical substance in the activity.

First, let's consider the unit of observation, or, define the edges of this ritual. In your eyes, when does the "performance" start and end? Does it begin when you enter the kitchen (if this is indeed where you perform "the act")? How often do you repeat this ritual? Is there a pragmatic aspect to this performance? When did you learn this behavior and from whom? What are other considerations? Finally, and my point behind this exercise, *how can you convey the enactment* of the ritual to an outsider of this tradition so that she can deeply comprehend it? If the outsider were standing next to you, wouldn't it be easier to take her to your special ritual area and show her? How about conveying the experience in text? Not as easy as demonstrating, right?

Imagine your water ritual as a deeply moving artistic "tradition" that you need to transmit through writing. How would you convey, not only the rudimentary steps of the ritual, but the context and embodied experience of the art? Consider the negotiations of turning on the faucet and filling the glass with water—how do you coordinate the movements? Can you describe *in detail* your grasp and coordination of the glass as you bring it to your mouth? Then, do your lips move in preparation as the glass approaches? Do your glands react in expectation? How do you draw the water into your mouth and then swallow? Can you describe the movement quality? How about the feeling of the glass in your hand and the water flowing into your mouth? Has the visual focus of the water now vanished, as the water travels to a hidden vessel? What takes over after vision? Is the water cold? Are there smells, tastes, or sounds assisting you to engineer this performance? How do you coordinate

your breathing with this flow of water in your body? There are countless minutiae to detail this “simple” performance. As an insider to this ritual, which aspects do *you* believe are *essential* to impart, in order to convey the vital core of the tradition?

Nearly every task we engage in is multisensory. The next time you take part in the water ritual, notice how your observation of this act has transformed simply because you are thoughtfully considering it. Also, the (self-) conscious “thinking through” of the process might change your ritual precisely because you are aware of the observation process. Participation informs and makes conscious concepts of performance, and, should you write a detailed description of the process, most likely many unconscious aspects would arise. Participation also reinforces the practice of the enactment within the body, solidifying the memory and embodiment of the act.

If you were to compare your ritual experience with that of a friend, undoubtedly the experiences would differ, partly because you drink water differently, but also because each of you experience the grand event differently, notice particular characteristics, or make contrasting assumptions regarding what is necessary to convey the essence of the ritual. Each person’s account depends on that person’s perspective, and is informed by past experiences, by enculturated sensual orientations.

A clear and detailed description of even a simple experience is endless. My point here is that conveying lived experience is challenging, particularly if it is a performance practice you “know” in your body but do not regularly transmit to someone else—either through demonstration or through writing. This has been one of my fascinations in writing about dance transmission. Originally, when I set out to conduct research, I asked dancers how they learned, or how they knew a particular movement. They rarely responded with more than a handful of words, such as—“I follow” (in lessons), “I watch,” “I listen,” or, taking my hand, said, “let me show you.” The truth is, *I* didn’t know how I embodied the art, which is why I stubbornly embraced the topic. Since I had danced for thirty years prior to considering this question, I needed to take the stance of an ethnographer, collect “data,” and traverse the analytical space between my embodied knowledge and collected field data to find the essence of the dance transmission.

Hopefully, this orientation reveals the challenges of ethnographic and artistic sensibilities. One of my concerns in the process of conducting fieldwork, analyzing the “data,” and writing has been to understand the essential elements that I believed needed to be imparted to convey concepts of trans-

mission and the embodiment of art. I have been fascinated by what sensory modes different people privilege in the transmission of their art or within their discipline of choice. Their/my sensual orientation influences the end product. Through fieldwork I came to understand that we inhabit very different worlds.



moving scenes—history and social structure

folded in

When I was ten Sahomi told me about Saho, her childhood teacher in Fukushima.

*I did not realize at that time that I would later bear the name Samie—
a name built on “Sa” that would tie me forever with both women.*

I would never meet Saho.

*Years later, dancers would say my movements bore certain tendencies,
certain qualities of Saho, passed down through Sahomi.*

*I wondered about inscriptions—not messages written and handed down—
but inscriptions folded into the body through experience.*

✓ *Artful moments, tucked into every leaf of the body, like bookmarks
placing experience and time.*

While introducing Japanese dance to a workshop audience in New York City, Iemoto explained, “*Kabuki* gave birth to *nihon buyo*”—she took hold of her abdomen and gracefully swept her hands downward, in a rather humorous pantomime of giving birth. In this swift gesture she told the tale of history. Because this ethnography focuses on transmission (and historical and technical considerations such as cos-
tuming, props, and scenery are widely available), I will not detail the history of the genre but rather point out several key transitions in history that have influenced *nihon buyo* transmission. Current scholarship on a number of contemporary Japanese “traditions” claims that their histories have been re-created to suit the contemporary reinvention of tradition and ties to a sacred mythic past (Yamazaki 2001). Similarly, dancer/scholar Ananya Chatterjee has noted the retrospective creation of Odissi’s history to attempt “to project a continuity of ‘tradition’ and establish a strict code of ‘classicism’” (Chatterjee 2004: 144). *Nihon buyo* does not escape such reinventions; in fact, the nostalgia behind *nihon buyo*’s origins reveals a great deal about the contemporary practice.

Japanese dance originates in colorful mythologic times. The *Kojiki* (A.D. 714) and *Nihon Shoki* (A.D. 720), Japan’s earliest known written documents, tell the famous tale of the Sun Goddess—Amaterasu-no-omikami. Insulted by the mischievous pranks of her brother Susanoo-no-omikoto (guardian of the underworld), Amaterasu hid herself within a cave. Darkness immediately fell upon the heavens. This greatly troubled the gods, and they summoned Ama-no-uzume-no-mikoto (a

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lesser goddess). Scantly dressed in only a few tree branches near the cave opening, Ama-no-uzume-no-mikoto performed a comical, erotic dance for the gods on an overturned tub. The gods' uproarious laughter soon aroused the Sun Goddess' curiosity. Amaterasu wondered what the commotion could be, peeked out, and instantly her brilliant rays spread out to the world. The gods had also placed a mirror at the mouth of the cave, and Amaterasu, seeing her own luminous beauty, was easily coaxed from hiding.

The history of Japanese dance through the ages metaphorically mirrors this myth of the Sun Goddess. Long periods of war starkly mark Japan's history. According to Nishikata Setsuko, after such dark, depressed periods of war, Japanese dance flourished (Nishikata 1988). There is a saying in Japanese, *odori agatte yorokobu* (to dance [jump] for joy)—expressing the human nature to dance and be exuberant during good times.

displaying time

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Japanese traditional dance is often classified into four categories—*kabuki odori* (*kabuki* dance), *goshugimono* (or *su odori*, dance with spiritual roots stemming from religious ceremonies), *kamigata mai* (pieces from the *geisha* tradition, most often including a fan), and *sosaku buyo* (pieces outside the three categories above, such as newly created choreography). The study of *nihon buyo* must include an awareness of the variety of influential genres such as *bunraku*, *kabuki*, *noh*, and folk dance. However, historically the roots of this genre are most strongly tied to *kabuki* and *furyu* (popular dances). The “birth” of *nihon buyo* from *kabuki* that Iemoto referred to lies in their common origin history—the famous story of the renowned seventeenth-century priestess of the Izumo Shrine named Okuni. Despite the lack of specific accounts of Okuni's life, she continues to be hailed as the originator of *kabuki* dance.

After the *Sengoku jidai* (the “One Hundred Years War” in the late sixteenth century) the Japanese people, tired of fighting, needed entertainment to express their joys. In the bustling city of Kyoto, street performers set up makeshift shops and small stages along the Kamo River between Shijo and Gionsha avenues. Here a *miko* (temple priestess) from Izumo named Okuni created a stir with her style of *nembutsu odori* (Buddhist dances). Apparently these performances were far from religious and often tended toward wild and erotic themes. Okuni donned

unusual costumes, carried a sword, and danced in a style foreign to the district. This drew crowds of onlookers, and her dance became widely known as *kabuki odori*. The word *kabuki* at this time meant “wild,” “avant-garde,” or “unusual” dance. In the late sixteenth century *kabuki* was an everyday word for things that were uncommon or that departed from the norm. Later in time the word *kabuki* was written with different *kanji* (Chinese characters adopted by the Japanese) breaking down to *ka* (song), *bu* (dance), and *ki* (skill).

The history of *kabuki* is traditionally broken down into periods. The early years are referred to as *onna kabuki* (women's *kabuki*). Apparently at this time the relationship between the theater and illicit activities (such as prostitution) was growing. There are numerous accounts of the questionable character of performers, who were treated as outcasts.¹ The popularity of *kabuki* dance grew rapidly, and performances soon spread to other metropolitan centers, such as Edo (Tokyo). The Tokugawa government was concerned with the developing trend, especially its associations with prostitution, and banned women from the *kabuki* stage in 1629. This closed the era of *onna kabuki*. Although women were forbidden from performing at this time, ironically the “birth” of dance is attributed to a female goddess and the origin of *kabuki* to a woman performer.

41
The style of *kabuki odori* that followed was called *wakashu kabuki*, or “youth” *kabuki* (also known as *yaro kabuki*). Young boys assumed the roles of women, and the audience became enamored of their portrayals. Perhaps too enamored. *Wakashu kabuki* also flourished but lasted only until 1652, when young boys were also prohibited from taking the stage. This time the government's reform attempted to halt homosexual prostitution. The government's seventeenth-century interventions in the practice of *kabuki* led to the establishment of an all-male theatrical genre and the development of the *onnagata* (female impersonator) tradition. In contemporary Japan, *kabuki* remains an all-male genre.

moving women

Despite the Tokugawa edict banning women from the stage, women had plenty of opportunities to continue to practice dance. The professional tradition of *geisha* performing dance and music never ceased. Geisha were not the only female performers, however, for women from the middle class also continued to study dance as part of basic etiquette,

310
Dance

training. The various “practice” or “rehearsal arts” (*okeikogoto*), from tea ceremony and flower arrangement to dance, were considered a means of developing a woman’s social graces. In a society that placed great value on deportment, women’s manners signaled rank and upbringing. In the mid-eighteenth century small neighborhood schools (*terakoya*) not only taught reading and writing but also dance and *shamisen* (a three-stringed lute) for etiquette. It was thought that if a woman’s manners were proper, then her family could arrange for her to marry into an affluent family. Her chances of gaining employment, moreover, would be far greater with suitable etiquette training.

It was during the Edo period that the merchant class became overwhelmingly powerful. Wealthy merchants, wanting to elevate their social status, enrolled their daughters in dance and music lessons. Since private dance and music performances were often presented at the homes of *samurai*, these merchants hoped that a powerful official would employ their daughters.

According to Nishikata, dance schools for women were particularly popular during the mid-nineteenth century. She cites one publication, *Kamikuzu kago* (The Waste Paper Basket), that mentions the popularity of women dancers in the Nakamura and Iwada schools.² Nishikata also reveals that while the legitimate (all-male) *kabuki* performances continued on the “surface” (*omote*) to be publicly quite visible, lesser-publicized performances by women were also to be found within a “hidden side” (*ura*) of society. Furthermore, she states that, by the Meiji period, women performers greatly influenced the *kabuki* world from this seemingly weak position (Nishikata 1988). Although women or men do not exclusively practice Japanese dance, women currently dominate the *nihon buyo* dance world, and *nihon buyo* performances are not as widely publicized as *kabuki*.

The difficulty of defining and categorizing *nihon buyo* generally gives way to extraordinary lists of influential genres and their techniques. The various arts in Japan are not as segregated from one another as in the West. Distinctions between theater, dance, and music are often blurred, and practitioners frequently have strong backgrounds in several disciplines. In addition, specific performance genres have intertwined; they have influenced one another so greatly over time that it is difficult to unravel and differentiate one from the other. These genres, such as *noh*, *kyogen*, *kabuki*, *bunraku*, *minzoku geino* (folk or popular arts), and *nihon buyo*, have a complex historical relationship, in which they have borrowed stylistic features, movement vocabulary, musical styles,

and story plots from one another. References can be as subtle as a gesture within a phrase, or as overt as the appropriation of full narratives. Quoting or referencing another genre reinforces stylistic borrowing between these genres, but further complicates the distinctions between them. For audience members and performers, however, this eclecticism is an exciting aspect of the performing arts.³

In general, the performing arts in Japan that include vocal lyrics are hinged on a narrative form. The centrality of storytelling is fundamental to understanding how these performance genres have deeply influenced each other through history. The vocal text is primary. Essential to all aspects of performance is the expression of the text, its nuances, puns, metaphors, and emotional content. It is at this narrative and thematic juncture that *nihon buyo* overlaps with other theatrical genres.

Early on, *kabuki* performances were in the form of rather short dances accompanied by *kouta* (or *hauta*) “short songs,” performed in a folk- or teahouse-style structure. Eventually, particularly during the Edo period, thematic material and compositions were extended and became known as *nagauta* or “long songs.” This latter vocal style was accompanied by *shamisen* (three-stringed lute), *taiko* (stick drum), *ko tsuzumi* (shoulder hand drum), *o tsuzumi* (side hand drum), and various types of flutes (such as *noh kan*, *takebue*, or *shinobue*).⁴ The Edo period is also the era when narrative theatrical forms developed and solidified in Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo. During this period makeshift stages gave way to licensed theater buildings that became increasingly permanent structures. *Bunraku* (puppet theater) was flourishing, and the influences between genres mentioned above were constant.

Prior to the introduction of foreign dance styles in the twentieth century, there was little need for a generic term for Japanese dance. Rather, dance pieces were distinguished by the basic terms *mai* and *odori*. *Mai* refers to a refined, reserved, expressive style of dance with few jumps or quick (folklike) movements. On the other hand, *odori* refers to a lively style, displaying some leaps and quick, energetic movements. Although aspects of both *mai* and *odori* are exhibited in dance from Tokyo and the Kansai (Kyoto–Osaka) regions, *mai* is more closely associated with Kansai and *odori* with Tokyo. The differences in the two styles reflect the character of the two areas in Japan—Kyoto has long been considered the seat of the reserved, older cultural traditions, while Tokyo is associated with an up-to-date, modern, and lively style. In present-day Japan this continues to be the distinct nature of the two regions’ aesthetic tastes.

3
kukuryu
The three dance elements of *nihon buyo* are considered to be *mai*, *odori*, and *furi* (the pantomime movements from *kabuki* dance). Combinations of each of these stylistic ingredients are what flavor particular genres and dances. Each genre may emphasize one of the three styles, but in general these are the basic elements that characterize Japanese dance. An important point is that, through *furi*, “the body can reveal its true inner self” (*katachi ni arawasu*).⁵ Interweaving the qualities of pantomime (*furi*), *mai*, and *odori*, *nihon buyo* has inherited a wide palette of physical vocabularies to express the narrative. The subtleties are endless.

15121
35
Pantomime
The history of stylistic borrowing between *kabuki*, *nihon buyo*, and other genres does not end in the Tokugawa period. Ever since the early twentieth century the influence of Western theatrical styles and dance, from ballroom dancing to ballet, modern dance, and folk dance, for example, has been a significant historical development. During the Meiji and Taisho eras a fascinating tension arose—a tension between Japan’s rush to modernize, on the one hand, coupled with a desire to uphold “traditions,” on the other hand, that prioritized particular aesthetic ideals and reinforced Japanese etiquette. Modernization, in the early 1900s, was equated with Westernization. Both Gunji (1970) and Yamazaki (2001) emphasize critic Tsubouchi Shoyo’s great influence on *nihon buyo*, particularly as a visionary for constructing a national theatrical genre bridging modern and traditional ideals that would appeal to the general public at the time. Yamazaki claims that it was Tsubouchi who, in 1907, first used the term *nihon buyo* (Yamazaki 2001: 186–187).

1507
Lambert
1810
Modernization and tradition did coexist, but as an interesting dance of selection and prioritization. The strict, hierarchical *iemoto* social structure provided for a highly selective transmission process for inclusion or exclusion of specific influences on dance within a particular school. This created myriad dance style nuances or an individual school taste with varying degrees of Western influences (Western is often synonymous with modern). A number of schools became well known for their spectacular modern styles. Western influences also created tensions among the dance community, as these new styles were seen as diluting the carefully transmitted Japanese dance tradition. Today there remains a wide variety of dance styles associated with different schools. Some have continued to perform the traditional repertoires in addition to creating new works that reflect contemporary society. The Tachibana School teaches traditional and contemporary choreography; however, the dance vocabulary of the contemporary pieces remains

within “traditional” *nihon buyo* vocabulary and consciously does not include Western dance vocabulary.

unfolding houses

A look at the historical roots of dance schools reveals that many stem directly from *kabuki* lineage, or have some close contacts with *kabuki* families. From the early eighteenth century actors and choreographers of the *kabuki* stage established schools of dance. Soon dancers from these schools established their own groups, branching out further from the *kabuki* stage. The Tachibana School descended from the *kabuki* tradition in this manner, and in this section I use the story of this school as a case study in dance history.

The founder of the Tachibana School, Tachibana Hoshu, was born in the Nihonbashi District of Tokyo in 1894. As the pupil of the famous actor Ichimura Utaemon (the fifteenth-generation headmaster of the Ichimura *kabuki* family) he took the name of Bando Utazo. He also studied with the sixth-generation headmaster of the Fujima *kabuki* dance family, Fujima Kanjiro, and attained the title Fujima Kansuke. He actively acted, danced, and choreographed for *kabuki* performances. With actor Nakamura Genzaimon he established the “Sakura kai” (cherry blossom performance group) at the Zenshinza theater company, performing its newly created style of *kabuki*.

Tachibana Hoshu established the Tachibana School in 1938, naming it after Tachibana Sakon, an expert in *komai* (short dances) in the Horeki era (mid-eighteenth century). Tachibana Hoshu’s skill as a choreographer was recognized as one of his strengths, drawing performers from other schools. To this day the Tachibana School is known for welcoming students from different schools (Mizuki and Azumaji students regularly take lessons at Hatchobori, for example).

Tachibana Hiroyo was born in Tokyo’s Fukugawa District in 1916. In her teens she joined a women’s singing and dancing group, the Shochiku shojo kageki dan, led by Fujima Kansuke (Tachibana Hoshu). She also performed with the famous actor Enomoto Kenichi’s Ichiza dance group. At nineteen Hiroyo became choreographic assistant to Tachibana Hoshu for the Shochiku women’s group and began choreographing for other dance groups as well.

In 1939, one year after the Tachibana group was founded, Tachibana Hoshu and Hiroyo married. The dance studio was located in Asakusa,

a lively district in Tokyo that was the center for performing arts at the time. Both husband and wife taught students and continued to choreograph. They had two daughters, Akiko and Yoshie. In 1946 the Tachibana School (and residence) relocated to Hatchobori in the Chuo District. The school expanded and grew as *nihon buyo* became more and more popular with the general public. In 1962 the headmaster position was passed to Hiroyo because of Hoshu's failing health, and one year later he passed away.

Tachibana Hoshu and Hiroyo's younger child, Yoshie (b. 1941), grew up among artists and performers. She studied dance with her parents from the age of five. During a conversation I had with Tachibana Yoshie she reminisced about her early years growing up in Asakusa: "*Geisha* would hold me in their arms and talk to me while they bounced me up and down on their knee . . . those kinds of experiences helped me to know the inner qualities of these women and a part of that lifestyle. I really like *geisha* and I go to visit them, to watch and learn" (Hahn field notes, November 30, 1993). In fact, *geisha* are among the students that study at the Tachibana School. Since she was brought up by dancers, Yoshie's everyday experiences fed the expression of her personal style of dance—what critics call "Yoshie's world." In 1979 the headmaster position was transferred to Tachibana Yoshie.

As mentioned earlier, the regional character associated with a school's dance style strongly colors that school's personality. The three generations of Tachibana headmasters were born in downtown Tokyo, or *shitamachi*. This area of the city was particularly famous during the Edo period as the heart of its artistic, creative community. Visitors to the city were attracted to the colorful area, where vendors and performers entertained customers on the streets. The character of the metropolis, including fashions, styles, etiquette, and behavior, became strongly associated with the downtown area. It is this Edo character that the Tachibana School maintains as the inspiration for its dance style, one that is both lively and reserved. This is reflected in distinct dance movements that are often quickly executed, then held in a posed position, and in rhythmic diversity. There is an elegance to the school's style, yet the choreography also reflects the lively character of the city life.

The Tachibana repertory primarily consists of *kabuki* dances, *suodori* (dances performed in a plain-style *kimono* rather than full *kabuki* attire and props), and *shinsaku buyo* (newly created choreography). Both Soke and Iemoto continue to choreograph new works. Iemoto has included contemporary as well as experimental performances in her current endeavors, such as sports-event programs, choreography and

performance for television, opera, and musical productions. Collaborations with a wide variety of artists from contrasting disciplines (theater, music, modern dance, and folk dance, for example) provide her with a vehicle to express the inner heart of contemporary Japanese people through movement.

Organizations for the arts, such as the Nihon Buyo Association, are very powerful in Japan. This membership solidifies a school's position within the larger dance community and provides a degree of status. The Nihon Buyo Association presents forums for dance performances and lectures that inherently shape relationships between various schools. Soke and Iemoto have been active for many years as advisers for the Nihon Buyo Association. Soke has been the district head for the Chuo District of the association. Both Soke and Iemoto's strong interest in traditional arts, including performance, fine arts, and folk arts, is reflected by their long-term involvement on committees to promote the traditional arts.

Nihon buyo is one of the many traditional (*okeikogoto*) or "practice arts," that provide physical training for amateurs in addition to professional practitioners. Other *okeikogoto* include tea ceremony, flower arrangement, archery, *koto* (a thirteen-string zither), and *noh*. In addition, there are a wide variety of modern practice arts that have been added to this category, such as piano, tango, and ballet. The majority of dancers who study with Iemoto are *nihon buyo* teachers and advanced students. On occasion intermediate and beginning students who have studied with their local branch teacher travel to Hatchobori to experience lessons with Soke and Iemoto.

The stereotype of *nihon buyo* held by Japanese who are not practitioners is that it is an art of the elite (housewives) who pay enormous sums of money to study and perform. To a degree this is changing, as the concern for the preservation of traditional performing arts is growing among Japanese artisans. In the public schools Western music and dance are regularly taught, while the traditional arts are given only a brief introduction at best. Also, there is great pressure on young people to advance in business, science, and technology. Iemoto, reflecting on this modern-day dilemma, said, "Life changes quickly. Today young people in Japan have no connection to the [older] Japanese traditions . . . they know *coffee!* not the way of tea, *kendo*, how to put on a *kimono*, wear their hair up, how to put on traditional makeup. Through dance we learn about many of these things" (Hahn field notes, October 9, 1993). I found that dancers come from diverse backgrounds, including college students, teachers, aerobics instructors, *geisha*, housewives,

and actresses. Conversations between classes can be fascinating, as these backgrounds intersect in casual chats on anything from the taste of seaweed from a particular region to health, television shows, and of course dance.

The main Tachibana School (now “Hatchobori”) remains in Tokyo but is located in the Chuo District. Branches in Japan located outside Tokyo include Fukushima, Akita, Tohoku, and Shikoku. There are also schools in Australia and the United States (in New York City and Portland, Oregon). The New York branch was established by my childhood teacher, Tachibana Sahomi, in 1966. Sahomi, a *nisei*, was born in California. Her parents were amateur *kabuki* actors who encouraged her to study the traditional arts, particularly *shamisen* and *nihon buyo*. In the 1930s young Sahomi was sent to live with her grandparents in Fukushima. Here she studied with Tachibana Saho and received her *natori* (attainment of a professional stage name). During this time the tension of war threatened non-Japanese residing in Japan. Sahomi was put on one of the last ships returning to the United States to join her family in California. In 1945 she was interned with her family at the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah for three years. During internment, Sahomi taught and put on performances in the camp with other Japanese and Japanese Americans, using makeshift stages, props, and costumes. After the war, Sahomi traveled to New York. Here she actively performed Japanese dance and studied a wide variety of dance styles. From 1966 to 1990 Sahomi led the school and dance group at the New York Buddhist Academy on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. In 1990 she moved to Portland, Oregon, and began a new branch of the Tachibana School. The New York Tachibana School now continues under Japanese American teachers Tachibana Sahotoyo and Sahotae. The focus of this ethnography is on transmission at Hatchobori, so I have not included examples from the Japanese American context. See the book by Barbara Sellers-Young, *Teaching Personality with Gracefulness: The Transmission of Japanese Cultural Values through Japanese Dance Theater* (1993), for an interesting account of *nihon buyo* transplanted and taught in Oregon.

structuring fans

A social structure referred to as the *iemoto* “headmaster” system governs many of the traditional arts in Japan, in which the headmaster has formative control of the definitive transmission of the genre. This

hierarchical structure both preserves and regulates the transmission of the art form within a school of practice. Strikingly, the *iemoto* system is prevalent throughout such diverse practices as tea ceremony, *nihon buyo*, musical genres, *noh*, horsemanship, flower arrangement, and martial arts. For a culture that values the continuity of its traditions, the *iemoto* structure provides a strict and reliable system to cautiously regulate the definitive practice of a tradition. Discipline is vital on several levels—on a microscopic level for the transmission of individual dance steps, choreography, costuming, music, and so forth; on a middle level for the negotiation of hierarchical designations of students and teachers within the school; and for the large-scale organization of a tradition’s continuity to future generations. The very existence and preservation of a school’s artistic tradition relies on such systems of transmission.

An examination of the etymological elements of the two *kanji* characters for *iemoto* yields insight into concepts embedded within the *iemoto* system. The word *iemoto* breaks down to *ie* (house, family, household) and *moto* (foundation, origin, beginning).⁶ *Iemoto* is both the name of the person who holds the “headmaster” title and the name of the pedagogical system. Only one *iemoto* leads a particular school at one time. The position is traditionally passed down through inheritance. However, when there is no successor, a top student is usually chosen and even legally adopted into the family to continue the artistic lineage.

The *iemoto* system is one of the many family social systems in Japan related by the concept of a household system (*ie*, which is the first *kanji* character with the term *iemoto*). Social anthropologist Nakane Chie points out the importance of the *ie* concept in Japan:

The essence of this firmly rooted, latent group consciousness in Japanese society is expressed in the tradition and ubiquitous concept of ‘ie,’ the household, a concept which penetrates every nook and cranny of Japanese society . . . In this ideological approach the ‘ie’ is regarded as being linked particularly with feudal moral precepts; its use as a fundamental unit of social structure has not been fully explored. (Nakane 1970: 4)

The efficient *iemoto* social structure was established in the Tokugawa period (1615–1868), when highly organized Chinese social systems were influencing Japanese society. During this period formal systems for organizing institutions, as well as strict social ethics based on Chinese Confucian teachings of loyalty, were impressed by the *bakufu*

(shogunate) on Japanese society. This Tokugawa regime was a strong militaristic, feudal, patrilineal society in which hierarchical structures provided a systematic form to support such loyalty. Within the context of government, effective and loyal transmission was essential, including the transmission of war strategies, plans for organizing society, and commerce for basic living necessities. The powerful *bakufu* government shaped the principles of virtually every facet of Japanese life—bonds of duty and obligation between a *samurai* (warrior) and his master, man and woman, husband and wife, parents and children, teacher and disciple. To this day the *iemoto* system relies on members' tenets of loyalty, obligation, and respect. Social bonds between members are the living thread of a tradition's prosperity, transmission, and continuity to future generations. Because artistic traditions are transmitted through lineages of artists primarily via oral transmission, qualified practitioners are highly esteemed as culture bearers within Japanese society.

The direction of transmission flow is clear within an *iemoto* system. The headmaster delegates all that concerns the school. This involves training teachers, distributing teaching licenses and *natori* (professional stage names), determining the repertory, the current artistic style of the school (for *nihon buyo*, the choreography), the authoritative interpretations of pieces, overseeing public performances, and selecting the school attire and other signifiers (such as *kimono*, fans, and crests). As the headmaster of the school, the *iemoto* is revered as the definitive expert of the tradition. Transmission, in the most general sense, is logistically controlled single-handedly by the *iemoto*. The organizational structure of the *iemoto* system may appear unbearably confining to non-Japanese; however, I hope to reveal the variety of realities in life within this family system.

In 1979 our *iemoto*, Tachibana Hiroyo, passed the headmaster position to her daughter, Tachibana Yoshie. Tachibana Hiroyo is now referred to as Soke, or "previous headmaster." This is an interesting shift of positions. Here the dynamics of mother-daughter and *soke-iemoto* are inextricably linked. Although Iemoto is effectively the headmaster of the school, Soke's presence is a manifestation of Tachibana continuity. At the time of my fieldwork Soke continued to teach and be quite involved in everyday activities at Hatchobori. Soke's interpretations of the repertory have been highly respected, and I noticed that Iemoto consulted her from time to time for various dance considerations, from choreography to costume and spiritual matters. *Nihon buyo* is not a static form, however—subtle choreographic changes do occur

between generation and generation, preventing stagnant artistic expression. With Soke attending lessons, dancers had an opportunity to compare the two masters' personal styles and dance spirits. It has been interesting to observe and experience the interpretations of a dance taught by Soke and to review this same dance years later with Iemoto's interpretations. The high respect of Soke's senior position is further illustrated in seating arrangement, program booklet order, and other representations of ranking. Soke is always presented first, then Iemoto, then senior teachers, *natori* students, and non-*natori* students.

The level below Soke and Iemoto at the Tachibana School includes board members/supervisors (*kanji*), directors (*riji*), and licensed teachers (*shihan*), who in turn train the various levels of students. The creation of a Tachibana board (to handle the treasury and various organizational duties and decision making) is a bit more democratic in structure than a traditional *iemoto* structure, altering the strict hierarchy dominated by a single headmaster.

The subtler ranking of teachers basically falls into levels of seniority and ability. The *iemoto* system thus provides an arrangement of interpersonal mentoring relationships centered on the transmission of a specific art. In this sense, the similarity of the group's social structure resembles that of a family unit, with ties of common interest (rather than strictly blood relations).

The sense of family is clearly embodied in the tradition of bestowing the family name, or *natori*, on qualified students. A *natori* is an artistic (stage) name presented to a student who has passed the school's qualifying examination. After initiation, the student enters the artistic family unit, receiving the surname and a newly created first name. This personal name is generally comprised of the *kanji* character(s) (or sounds of the characters) of the current *iemoto*'s first name and/or the student's teacher's name, as well as a personal *kanji* character for the particular student, reflecting a quality that the student embodies. When selecting a name for a student, teachers consider the student's history, personality, and talents.

As an example, my own *natori* name is Tachibana Samie. The *Sa* character derives from my childhood teacher's name, Sahomi; the *mi* is the sound of my mother's name, Miyako; and the *e* is from my Iemoto's first name, "Yoshie." Saho taught Sahomi, who in turn taught Sahotoyo and Sahotae and myself. Many names are composites of Soke's first name, Hiroyo, such as Michiyo and Yoshihiro. This latter name also derives from Iemoto's name, "Yoshie," as do the students' names

WASHI
KANJI

Yoshiaki and Mie. These examples illustrate how students of the same teacher(s) often share common *kanji* characters and similar-sounding names, uniting them in a familial manner. The names themselves link together, embodying the lineage of the school. The *natori* naming process marks dancers' entrance into the artistic family unit. Once given the *natori*, one's original (biological family) name is never used within the school. Often dancers know only each other's *natori* name.

A ritual of family lineage was enacted each time I met a Tachibana dancer at Hatchobori. I recall being introduced to Sato. We smiled at each other knowingly. Although we had never met before, the similarities of our two names—Sato and Samie—was no coincidence. We suspected that we, or our teachers, had shared a common teacher. Confirming this, Sato nodded at me and said, “Sa-to. *Sa* like Samie,” as she gracefully traced our identical “sa” *kanji* character on her palm with her finger. This type of endearing intimacy was not unusual. I recall kneeling in the dressing room at Hatchobori in 1993, folding my *yukata*, when Mie sat close and introduced herself: “My name is Mie, the ‘mi’ of Samie and Yoshie’s ‘e.’ We share two *kanji*.” These everyday rituals of lineage, packed with powerful emotions of bonding, further reinforced our embodied traditions.

Sharing the story of one's name in such a manner illustrates the Tachibana lineage and sisterhood/brotherhood embodied within the naming process—having Yoshie's “e” symbolizes that one has received a part of Iemoto's name and spirit. Relating the similarity between names when meeting for the first time breaks down barriers, instantly identifying one another as relations within the family. Each time this greeting and unfolding of names occurred, the extended Tachibana network became clearer to me, as well as the feeling of kindred bonding.

Several symbolic markers of a student's new life as a Tachibana arise during the *natori shiki* (name-taking ceremony). The student receives a document declaring his/her new name, and the Tachibana family *mon* (crest) from Iemoto and Soke (see figure 1). Family crests appear on items such as documents, formal school *kimono*, and fans. At the ceremony a *sake* cup is passed between Soke, Iemoto, and the student in a



FIGURE 1. Tachibana *mon* (crest), based on a citrus fruit design.

fashion similar to the passing of cups in a wedding ceremony (the cup, shaped like a wedding *sake* cup, is later given to the student). The ritual symbolically unites these new “family” members and marks the student's initiation into the artistic family.⁷

Accreditation rituals within various *iemoto* systems symbolize the agreement of mutual obligation between master and student. Hsu explains this “return value relationship” (*taika kankei*):

(a) The master will give his disciple professional protection and advertise him professionally. (b) The disciple must fulfill his duty of faithful service to his master. This is a highly personal relationship. He can not change masters. (Hsu 1975: 64)

Paramount to all the relationships within the group is the commitment to the *iemoto*, school, transmission, and art. As Hsu writes above, one never changes masters. Because practitioners embody a teacher's “house” of dance, correct transmission is vital. Fundamentally, transmission depends on mutual commitment. Because dance is learned primarily via oral and physical instruction, students must rely on the teacher for new dances, clarity of the form, and general direction.⁸ On the other hand, the teacher transmitting the dance extends the art to other locations and into the distant future, beyond his/her lifetime. In order to keep the school's tradition alive, a teacher's major commitment is the transmission of the art.

The structure of the *iemoto* system effectively provides each member with a clear concept of his/her place within the family. In general, all members of a group dedicate themselves to the *iemoto*, school, and transmission of the art. This dedication predominates over all else, such as personal matters and individual needs, or taste. Members subordinate and discipline themselves for the solidarity of the group. This can present conflicts for those members with spouses and children, pressuring members to prioritize time, engagements, and affiliations. Within the group, the structure of the *iemoto* system presents clarity of roles for each individual member. In many ways the group provides a known system for interaction that can be a comforting aspect of belonging to such a group. Hsu expresses this relationship further:

... the *iemoto*, large or small, is not merely an organization. It represents a way of life, a structure in which Japanese men and women see themselves and the world around them organized, a key to problem



PHOTO 1. Talking about dance. Tachibana Yoshie and author. PHOTO: WALTER HAHN

solution, and a map for dealing with internal dissension and external pressures. The *iemoto* tells us something about how the Japanese relate to each other and to the non-Japanese world at large. (Hsu 1975: x)

The master-disciple teaching system inherently transmits the deep value of experience and respect for elders. In Japanese traditional performance circles (unlike Western dance genres, such as ballet or modern dance), dancers continue dancing to advanced ages. A performer is considered to be at his/her prime from the age of thirty and, basically, continues dancing until he/she passes away or can no longer move. It is believed that, while youthful beauty can capture an audience even without refined technique, a mature dancer has experienced and embodied more of life and this essence can be imbued in her dance.

Respect for elders can be seen throughout Japan in many forms. Within the Tachibana School the seniority and mentoring structure within the *iemoto* system reinforces this reverence. Daily I witnessed great affection between young and old. For example, younger dancers gladly (and quickly) moved from comfortable sitting areas when an elder member entered the room. Younger dancers look to their elders with intent admiration and sit respectfully in a humble posture while they speak. Elders convey aspects of lived time that younger generations respect and, through shared lessons, can learn about—a time

prior to their birth. Further, all dancers can observe a wide age range of students throughout the day, encompassing generations of Tachibana family members. The *iemoto* system, then, becomes a way of life, a way of relating to one another and sharing *nihon buyo*.

notes

preface (page xiv)

1. Concerning the body as both the *subject* and *object* of culture in anthropology, see Csordas (1990).

1. introduction: sensual orientations (pages 1–22)

1. See Howes and Classen (1991: 257–285) for a “sensitive” approach to fieldwork and ethnography.

2. For further readings on the premise of the senses as a formative development of cultures’ “worldview” see Stoller (1989); Bull (1997); Classen (2005, 1991); Hahn (1997, 2000); Howes (2005, 1991); Synnott (1993).

3. *Sensu* and *kankaku* are both used for “sense.” The use of Euro-American words in Japan has fostered a fascinating syncretic vocabulary (also known as “Japanglish,” “Jenglish,” “Japanese English” or “Japlish”). In many cases words are only loosely tied to their English counterpart or do not correspond at all to the original meaning. A few I am particularly fond of: *skinship* for a close relationship with someone; *punk* for a flat tire; and *smart* for slender or thin. Contemporary language in Japan is mobile, and one need only look up “Japanglish” on an Internet search engine to find lists of borrowed words.

4. *Sensu* are the most common fans used in lessons, though other types such as *ogi* and *uchiwa* are also used. See Hutt and Alexander (1992) for more information on the history of Japanese fans.

5. Unfortunately, the information of which dance school (*ryu ha*) we studied in was lost.

6. In search for notions of the ethnographically situated body, I pursued research in contrasting field sites in order to jar my embodied perspective and to engage in fieldwork outside my previous experience. Research in interactive electronic music and Monster Truck rallies in the United States supplied me with dramatically contrasting, yet equally physically immersive, sites to survey and comprehend. Imagine the contrast—the delicate subtlety of hand

enfolded

Sensu close with the defined percussive snapping of bamboo and paper. Appressed together, the bones become one solid unit. When not in use we store the compact, quiescent fan close to our body—enfolded between layers of obi, under the left breast and below the heart.

Swordlike, they are ready to be drawn and enact a story.

and wrist movements in Japanese dance relative to the intensity of a Monster Truck rally, where ten-thousand-pound trucks flying into the air create deafening soundscapes; or an interactive electronic music studio, where gestural controllers are utilized to extend the capabilities of musical instruments and make bodies aural. The contrasting dynamics of the situated body in these three field sites magnified the rich and diverse sensibilities essential to each of these performance practices. I became fascinated by how performers talked about their artistic sensibilities and related the sensations of sound and motion they experienced while performing. The stories they told, combined with observations, presented me with multiple perspectives from which to comprehend embodiment and the senses relative to performance and the fieldwork experience. In a sense, the navigation between these diverse field sites offered me the opportunity to experience multiple sensual orientations not unlike the codeswitching in my everyday life or between characters in dance. As a number of ethnographers have noted, sometimes we need to go away to understand more about home. See Hahn (2006a, 2006b, 2000); Hahn and Bahn (2003); Bahn, Hahn, Trueman (2001).

7. Also of great influence are the essays contained in *The Anthropology of Experience* (Turner and Bruner 1986). The authors of these works focus on the lived experience of being in the field and strive to make sense of the varieties of human experiences in the world and, as ethnographers, the process of writing about fieldwork experiences.

8. See Allison (2000) and Traubitz (2000) for a variety of perspectives, as well as critiques, on books about *geisha*.

9. See Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1991) for Eastern and Western theories of embodiment and the practice of “mindfulness.”

10. For an interesting perspective of order and chaos reflected in American writing see Slethaug (2000). For creative ethnography see Herbst (1997).

2. moving scenes (pages 23–40)

1. See Gunji (1956, 1985).

2. See Nishikata (1988: 52).

3. See Tokumaru (1991) for background on the complexities and nuances of intertextuality in Japanese *shamisen* music.

4. For more extensive readings in English see Malm (1963).

5. Nishikata (1988: 80).

6. See Masuda (1987) numbers 513 and 1137.

7. Unlike a graduation ceremony in the United States, the student's parents do not participate in or even observe this ceremony, establishing a distinction between the student's nuclear family and her fictive family.

8. According to Nishiyama (1962: 67–68), this places the teacher in a superior position.

3. unfolding essence (pages 41–69)

1. I use the word *flow* to reference Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's groundbreaking body of works concerning a concept he terms “flow” regarding consciousness, states of awareness, and exceptional experiential moments. See Csikszentmihalyi (1991, 1996, 1997).

2. Poem and translation in Addiss (1992: 73).

3. Poem and translation in Tsuge (1983: 81).

4. revealing lessons (pages 70–145)

1. See Barry (1997) concerning issues of visual orientation and visual intelligence.

2. Concerning performers' manipulation of attention, see MacAloon (1984), who writes, “Whatever performers do, or are meant to do, they do by creating the conditions for, and by coercing the participants into, paying attention” (10).

3. See Hahn (1996).

4. A strike, or hit, is not uncommon when training the body; see Phim and Thompson (2001: 46–49).

5. This view behind Masako is hidden from the camera. However, since this kind of correction is so commonplace, and I have physically experienced it, I have included it in the description.

6. For ways of listening see Oliveros (1970, 1984, 2005) and Bamberger (1994). For a background on attention and parsing of auditory events see Jones and Yee (1993); Handel (1989).

7. Research in ethnomusicology on the cultural construction of music is extensive. See Seeger (1987) and Feld (1982, 1991) for examples of research on cultures that privilege sound. See McLean (1968) for the use of music as a system of cues.

8. For a variety of readings on oral transmission, vocables, and dance see Frisbie (1980); Halpern (1976); Furukawa (1972); Kineya (1932); Kikkawa (1989); Motegi (1984); Tokumaru (1991); Tokumaru, Yamaguchi, and Otani (1984); Yokomichi and Gamo (1978).

9. While basic *kata* do not change from dance school to dance school, each school cultivates subtleties, nuances, as well as some *kata* that are particular to the school. In this fashion, dancers become accustomed to (and indoctrinated in) a school's movement vocabulary, strengthening the sense of group feeling. For background on *nihon buyo* pedagogy see Kikkawa (1989); Nishikata (1980).

10. For research on *shyoga* and singing of dance music see Motegi (1984); Tokumaru, Yamaguchi, and Otani (1984); Yokomichi and Gamo (1978).