

four



*revealing lessons—modes of transmission:
visual, tactile, oral/aural, & media*

Japanese traditional dance training is an extremely personal learning process. It continues to be based on a master-disciple (one-on-one) transmission process in which the student follows the teacher through the movements and sounds of the dance. The nature of the teaching process is personal and touches on nearly every corporeal and emotional aspect of the individual in order to pass on the tradition. Through analysis I hope to elucidate this sensate, intimate quality of the transmission process.

Lessons are, for the most part, clearly defined units that are convenient to observe. They are repetitious. This includes recurrent patterns of the overall day, individual lessons, as well as methodical units of teaching. Lessons formally begin with a bow to the teacher followed by a review of the section of the dance a student is learning. The dance passage is repeated several times until the teacher is confident the student has a grasp of the movements introduced thus far and can proceed with the dance. At this time new material may be introduced and reviewed several times. If this is the case, then the teacher generally begins the dance from the opening of the dance and through the new section. The lesson closes as it began, with a bow to the teacher.

There is comfort in the regularity of this ritual lesson composition, as it meets students' and teachers' expectations of what constitutes a lesson and the relationships between individuals. The entire structure, including subtleties of manner, sequence, and use of space, become part of a dancer's lesson vocabulary. On a purely pragmatic level, the regu-

larity of systematic movement (and sound) patterns within a dance lesson helps students to embody the dance and musical structures. On an ethnographic level, the consistency of the repetitious teaching unit and method is conducive to analysis. Further, the abundance of similar data from lessons substantiates assumptions concerning the structures of the transmission process.

The following case study begins with a guided tour of my field site and the everyday events of transmission experienced there. It is written through my eyes in the present tense—constructed from my field notes, video footage, and memories—in order to provide a peek into our lives at Hatchobori. The symbolic nature of space arises throughout, as well as how dancers are enculturated in the ritual traditions of these spaces. Embedded in this narrative are the elements of transmission that are isolated and analyzed in more detail in upcoming sections.

entering Hatchobori

Like most students, I ride the subway to dance class. Just across the street from the Hatchobori Subway Station in central Tokyo stands the Tachibana dance studio and home. Dancers casually refer to this modern black building as “Hatchobori.” I carefully slide the opaque glass front door to the right. This motion instantly automates a familiar chime melody, announcing my arrival. I swiftly enter, as the ringing will not cease until the door is closed.

Three pairs of shoes are neatly arranged in lines to my right and left, indicating that several students have already arrived. I include my own in the row next to the lacquered wooden tub filled with fresh bitter-sweet flowers. In the small niche on the opposite wall sit several small objects—a wooden elephant memento from Iemoto’s dance trip to Thailand and a single flower floating in a miniature glass bowl. This simple vestibule reveals Soke and Iemoto’s great regard for the art of display, in this case the welcoming effect of arranged flowers in beautiful containers. The aesthetic of simplicity is reflected in the stark, clean line of the flower arrangement as well as the traditional architecture, which contrasts with that of the city street I left moments ago. I take two steps up from the tiled foyer to a smooth, natural wood floor. To my right is the dressing room, straight ahead are stairs to the Tachibana family home, and to my left is the *keikoba* (dance practice area). The

keikoba is the beehive of Hatchobori, socially organized, spatially defined, and buzzing with activity and the sounds of teaching. Soke and Iemoto are both in the studio, focused on a student dancing. I kneel and, during a pause in the lesson, bow to greet each of them.

This customary formal bow signals the first of many during a day of dance. No matter what time of day or night dancers arrive, “*Ohayoo gozaimasu*” (good morning) is the first greeting. This custom has historical roots. In the theater world, work hours often ran counter to the workday of the general public. Soon this greeting became customary between performers to mark the “morning” of their professional day.

Changing from street clothes to *yukata* (cotton *kimono* worn in the summer, around the house, and for dance practice) follows. Brushing through an indigo *noren* (a cloth doorway partition), I enter the small dressing room to the right of the foyer. *Tatami* (straw matting) covers the dressing room floor. A wall of wooden shelves brims with bundles of dance clothing wrapped in colorful *furoshiki* (wrapping cloth). Just to the left, twenty or more *yukata* hang, waiting to be worn. After lessons *yukata* are often damp, so instead of being folded, they hang here to dry. On the wall, a sheet of rice paper bearing Iemoto’s calligraphy displays the current schedule of lessons.

This room feels like a haven between two worlds. It embodies spatial and temporal liminality, a place neither in nor out. Two opaque windows face the bustling Tokyo street. City sounds: office workers shuffling by, high heels hitting pavement, the hollow pitch of *geta* (wooden clogs), the harsh blast of an occasional car horn, and the enthusiastic chatter of shopkeepers filter in. In contrast, from the dance studio drifts in traditional music from the cassette player, mixed with Soke’s or Iemoto’s voice singing the music, dancers’ conversations, and general household sounds. The combined sound is a mix of hundred-year-old music with the lessons of the day. I find this room an exciting spot to compose myself and make the transition from the hectic city landscape to my dance lesson/fieldwork site. Also, since all the dancers briefly stop in this room, away from the larger group in the dance studio, it serves as a location where I can enjoy casual conversation and inquire freely about dancers’ lives and their personal thoughts about dance. The dressing room can also be lively, bustling with dancers dressing, preparing for class, applying makeup, or changing back into street clothes.

Walking into the dance studio, I notice a lesson is about to begin, and I sit on the *tatami* floor at the front of the room. The entire room is

constructed in a traditional Japanese style—natural wood walls, floor, ceiling, and *tatami*. A large mirror hangs on the right wall, and along the left wall windows extend just above eye level. The dance area has a sprung wood floor, giving it bounce. Since *nihon buyo* requires dancers to stamp, this resilience is kinder to the body. But equally as important, stamping reverberates the floor and creates a distinct hollow percussive sound. The floor is smooth, allowing feet to slide smoothly in a movement called *suriashi*.

A wooden cabinet in the corner houses contemporary audio equipment. A small bamboo bench stands near the sound system against the wall. Iemoto pointed out that this bench had been added to the room because many of the elder dancers' knees and ankles troubled them, making it impossible for them to rise and take part in dance class. Most dancers choose to sit on their heels in the traditional *seiza* style, in front of this bench. A Western-style rosewood chair sits to the right of the room and is reserved for Soke, now in her eighties.

Michiyo is just beginning her lesson when I enter the studio. She kneels in the center of the studio floor, slides her practice *sensu* (fan) out from her *obi* (sash), and places it horizontally at arm's length in front of her on the floor. She fixes her gaze at a spot on the wall high above our heads where several large black-and-white photos of Tachibana Hoshu, the first Tachibana *iemoto*, are displayed on the wall. Michiyo places slightly cupped hands on the floor before her and bows respectfully to these images, then bows to Soke and then to Iemoto, who stands off to the right. Iemoto nods.

Michiyo rises and slides open her fan as she walks to the far corner of the studio with Iemoto and they both assume the opening dance position. From my seated perspective, Michiyo poses one step behind and to the left of Iemoto—the customary place for the student during lessons. Iemoto nods her head to the student operating the cassette player, and the music begins.

They move in graceful, synchronous steps. Michiyo clearly knows this section of the dance, yet it is obvious that she is fully aware of Iemoto's every move. Subtly gazing to her left, Michiyo catches Iemoto in her peripheral vision. She maintains her position relative to Iemoto as they dance. Iemoto sings the mnemonics and vocal lines to highlight the cues while they dance the opening passage. After ten minutes they stop at the end of a phrase and Iemoto turns to Michiyo saying, "We went to here?" Michiyo nods. They turn and walk back to begin the dance again.

After reviewing the opening passage three times Iemoto continues dancing, introducing a new section of the dance. Michiyo immediately drops to the floor; she kneels, bows, and stands again, then promptly resumes following Iemoto's movements. This bow symbolically thanks a teacher for proceeding to the next level. Michiyo's continuous sweep of action passes so swiftly that an observer might miss the ritual. In this gesture, Michiyo's quality of movement changed as she shifted out of a dance persona into a student's role, returned fully composed, and continued her lesson with ease.

Michiyo's body movements now reveal she is entering an unfamiliar section. While I am certain she has previously seen this dance at performances and during other students' lessons, her body reveals a quality of uncertainty, showing that she has not yet physically come to know the choreography in full. She concentrates on Iemoto's every move and attempts to imitate each step. Iemoto's movements now appear somewhat more distinct and punctuated, without the subtle nuances of the previous section. This shift in movement quality and interaction is not dramatic, however. Iemoto sings the mnemonics of the musical instruments and vocal line along with the taped music to cue the dance steps. She also interpolates between the mnemonic cues and emotive explanations, revealing a dancer's inner incentive to move—"Oh, how beautiful the snow is . . ." Iemoto holds out her hand to catch a snowflake, quickly drawing it back as she mimes a cold shiver within her body. The illusion convinces me, yet the temperature in the dance studio is a balmy eighty-seven degrees.

Suddenly the front door chime rings out. We hear the quiet shuffling of shoes and bags coming from the hallway. Iemoto, so deeply focused on Michiyo's lesson, is not distracted. Soon the visitor appears from around the corner, and we see that it is Hosen. She steps into the studio, kneels on the floor, bows to Soke and Iemoto, and then to the students sitting to the side. Iemoto smiles and bows her head in greeting yet does not break the continuity of Michiyo's lesson.

At a certain point Iemoto turns to Michiyo and says, "Let's stop here," marking the end of the new dance section she will introduce today. Michiyo smiles and nods. Iemoto then looks up at the ceiling, humming to herself. Catching the opening musical phrase of the new dance passage in her memory, she begins to sing and dance without the taped music. Michiyo follows carefully behind her. The new section walk-through serves as a demonstration. Iemoto dances each step with meticulous attention to clarify each movement. The step-by-step pro-

gression slows down or accelerates as Iemoto elastically modifies the time with her movements and singing. She gauges this time change according to Michiyo's response. If Michiyo seems to be picking up the steps with ease, then the phrase proceeds. In the spots where she appears to be struggling even a little, Iemoto accommodates by retarding the tempo subtly.

After walking through the new section, they run through it with the taped music. Iemoto continues to narrate phrases, including mnemonics and song. After two or three repeats Iemoto says, "From the beginning," and Michiyo walks back to the entrance position while the person cueing the music rewinds the tape. This time Iemoto stands in front of the dance floor and watches Michiyo perform the first section alone. Iemoto points to the upper right corner during one of Michiyo's poses, directing her gaze. A moment later she raises Michiyo's arm a few inches by gently tapping the underside of her wrist with her right hand. Then, just as the new passage begins, Iemoto joins Michiyo in the dance. At the close of this run-through the music is turned off and Iemoto says, "*hai*" (in this context, "that's all" or "that's fine"), signaling the close of the lesson. Michiyo closes her fan as she moves to the center of the floor, kneels, places her fan before her again, and bows. She exits the dance floor to the left and, kneeling on the *tatami*, bows to the student who ran the tape recorder for her lesson.

At this time everyone greets the newly arrived student, and they chat for a considerable time about the weather, family, recent trips, and health. Michiyo discreetly slips out a cotton handkerchief from inside her *yukata* and dabs the sweat from her face and neck. She turns to the cassette player and cues the tape for the following lesson. Meanwhile, the next student prepares a prop for her lesson and walks to the center of the dance floor. Kneeling down to bow, the cycle of a new lesson begins.

unfolding space

How we inhabit Hatchobori, or rather how we are enculturated in the ritual of orienting ourselves within this space, reveals a great deal. In this section I return to a dancer's passage between rooms to unfold the symbolic house. The space is typically Japanese—every square meter of space is efficiently utilized; the interior design is traditional yet blended with a modern, sophisticated style; and natural building materials such

as wood and stone are used. In addition, each room clearly demarcates boundaries of private versus public social space that are actively negotiated in a Japanese manner.

The vestibule symbolizes a distinct boundary between private versus public social space and is an area where transitions or exchanges between these social groups occur. Transitions come about in a literal sense, as visitors remove shoes and coats and prepare to be seen in the household, but also in an abstract, existential sense, as visitors transition into the Tachibana dance family social space.

The vestibule, while tiny, secludes visitors from the main areas of the building, such as the dressing room, *keikoba* (dance studio), or Tachibana family home, which is upstairs. Further, visitors must take off shoes and step up into the inner sanctum of the Tachibana dance household. This is also an area where greetings take place. Salutations and farewells are important social interactions in Japan. These moments offer marvelous opportunities to observe markers of Tachibana familial relationships, hierarchical boundaries, and even emotional outpourings. So the vestibule serves not only as a protective spatial buffer to the house but as a rich social space.

Social bounds and transitions take place in the vestibule on three basic levels. The first is the distinction between outsiders and those Tachibana members in the house, such as the arrival of a delivery person at the front door. The outsider is greeted at the front door or in the vestibule, and from this vantage point the outsider cannot see into the *keikoba* or living space. There is no transition for these individuals, just a perfunctory exchange of business, and then they depart. Another level of entry is when dancers arrive for their lessons. Students enter the Tachibana School with only a front door chime announcing their presence. They have a brief moment of transition to remove shoes and prepare to enter the household. If a lesson is already in progress, then there is the “dance” of announcing one’s arrival in the more populated *keikoba*—through bows and greetings. Only after one has shown her face in the *keikoba* can a student gracefully depart to the dressing room, a private sanctum in which to relax and perform yet another transition: putting on a *yukata* and preparing for a lesson. The third kind of transition is the one between dance students and the Tachibana living quarters on the floors above the ground floor. In order to traverse this boundary one must climb the stairs directly across from the vestibule. But at the top of these stairs one is in the Tachibana family kitchen

and dining room, a private living space. Members of the dance group are oriented within Hatchobori in this way, fully enculturated as to how to traverse private and public areas, while outsiders are kept at the boundary with limited access.

While the sanctity of the *keikoba* as a space of practice is symbolically represented in its physical structure, *how dancers behave within this room is particularly revealing*. It is a symbolic stage, where deeply intimate moments of practice, learning, and transmission are “staged.” The story in the preface about the sweat- and tear-stained dance floor is one example of our staged lessons in the *keikoba*. This room is oriented in a stagelike manner, although an outsider might not notice this at first glance. Dancers are enculturated to see, use, and respect this space as a stage, as a representation of our practice, and as a symbol of the Tachibana “household.” After ascending from the vestibule, turning left, you now need to descend several steps to enter the dance area, another boundary transition marked by a vertical shift. Your view into this room is from an audience member’s perspective. If Iemoto is dancing she will be facing you from the dance floor, but if she is observing a student dance she will be standing at the front of the wooden floor facing the student. The “stage” or dance floor area is smooth wood, but it ends at the front of the room, an audience area with a *tatami* floor.

Boundaries between being on and being off this stage in the *keikoba* are structurally demarcated. Entrance onto the wooden floor indicates a student’s intention to dance, whether it is her own lesson or she is sitting in on someone else’s. Students always enter the dance floor on the far left side of the room, traveling to the back and then center stage for the opening bow. This ritual of roundabout movement acknowledges the formality of the stage, and one’s respect for the practice with Iemoto that is about to begin. I witnessed a new student unaware of this custom. She wandered directly from the center of the *tatami* area to the dance floor. Iemoto intercepted and literally walked her back to the *tatami*, accompanying her along the far left wall and to center stage, where the student kneeled to bow. Later that afternoon a senior teacher chatted with me in the dressing room and marveled, “There are so many ways we move around [Hatchobori] that I don’t even notice anymore. When a new student arrives I can really see it, you know?” Our daily ritual patterns and interactions are a social dance through space; they help orient us in Hatchobori.

moving closer—modes of transmission

The repetitious nature of lessons enabled me to identify the larger spatial and temporal structures of classes and how these frameworks enabled transmission. My analytic challenge was to also identify patterns of transmission on a much smaller structural level, on a personal, somatic level. Analysis of my video documentation of lessons enabled me to focus on very small units of transmission and analyze the gradual embodiment of the artistic practice. From personal experience, I “knew” how Iemoto taught dance. My body had been through the methodical repetitions of movements. Curiously, kinesthetic sensations (the sense of motion and orientation) often fell over me when I observed the videotapes, and somehow guided me through the analysis. It seemed that the field tapes were reinforcing my physical understanding of movement/sound while my body also informed the analytical process. I analyzed over one hundred videotapes. Each tape captured from one to four lessons.

The transmission structures slowly rose from the mediated data—interactions between individuals varied according to the task at hand and the individual student. Transmission, executed via a variety of sensory modes, imparted movement, sound, timing, and beyond. Specifically, visual, tactile, and oral/aural modes of transmission conveyed dance from teacher to student. The following sections are an analysis of the teaching process, organized by sense. A complete unit is devoted to each sensory mode present in the transmission: visual, tactile, and oral/aural. Of course smell and taste are also present, though in *nihon buyo* practice they are not incorporated into the direct teaching methods. I consider media to be extensions of our senses and have included a description of how notation and video are incorporated in the contemporary pedagogical system.

Though my analytic methodology remained the same across different modes of transmission, I found that the various sensory data demanded different sets of questions. For example, vision, touch, and oral modes all presented (physical and social) relationships, yet the gaze/contact/resonance of each of these modes implied qualitatively different interactions and ways of orienting the body. As an approach to ground the analysis within the body, I have included an “orientation” at the close of each section. The aim is to foreground the similarities and differences between vision, touch, and oral/aural ex-

periences in the pursuit of comprehending how we learn expressive embodiment.

Fortunately, analysis did not remove the beauty or extraordinary qualities of dance for me. To the contrary, the body-to-body transfer of artistic expression was enchanting. As I analyzed the video footage I was often mesmerized by the complexity and fluidity of transmission and, luckily, could rewind the tape to revisit each moment in slow motion. The following section approaches analysis of transmission through the eyes.

masked

*Holding an open fan close to me face, my eyes are hidden from view.
From this private space I can still peer out
between the bones.*

appearing folds—visual transmission

When your eyes are closed, does sound move to the foreground? Are other awarenesses heightened—smell, touch, temperature, thought, taste? Then, as you slowly raise your eyelids, what appears in your field of vision? Does your gaze privilege particular visual qualities? People? Slow movements? Illuminated objects? Tall shapes? Bright or colorful objects? Then, what other qualities of visual information are subsumed by these priorities of the eyes?

We enlist sight every day constantly to assist us in a variety of activities such as navigating, organizing and coordinating objects/people, reading and writing, or enjoying art. Ironically, our dependence on vision is built on a constructed reality—deducing a three-dimensional reality by extrapolating information from light entering our eyes. Making sense of this data is a culturally constructed activity. We learn to see, to notice, to interpret what is in our visual plane, form images, and attempt to understand our relationship to what is “out there” (Forrester 2000). In a way, we sift through the rich visual data before us—the details of light, color, texture, movement, and positions of objects—to comprehend our environment. While we are oriented by sight, we also see what we want to see. James Elkins, professor of art history, theory, and criticism, provides a fascinating reflection on how we construct our world through vision:

My principal argument has been that vision is forever incomplete and uncontrollable because it is used to shape our sense of what we are. Objects molt and alter in accord with what we need them to be, and we change ourselves by the mere act of seeing. (Elkins 1996: 237)

If we see the world according to our needs and beliefs, then understanding the role of culture and transmission is crucial for comprehending how we construct the world through vision.

Though the flow of transmission between eye and object remains “invisible,” the course of vision commands attention. We have a heightened awareness of what/whom others fix their eyes on. This beacon of gaze powerfully sheds light on the dynamics of relationships between one who sees and the object of that person’s gaze (Foucault 1977; Gamman and Marshment 1989). It is a perspective that raises numerous complex questions, such as: Who is watching whom? Why? Is

gaze a controlling factor? How is gaze employed as a means for actively engaging with someone, or for orienting one's self in the world?¹

In the performing arts, the audience generally watches performers who have manufactured the scene and sight line precisely for the viewers' eyes. Their gaze is choreographed to attract their attendance to the prepossessions of the performer (or choreographer).² The constructedness of performance appearance is clearly apparent in many cases—in *nihon buyo*, each visual detail is meticulously staged for effect. Strict rules preside over how dancers (and musicians) display their artistry in performance: they must pay close attention to costuming, physical appearance, posture, behavior, and most importantly, choreographed dance movements.

As mentioned earlier, the hierarchical *iemoto* social structure prevails over the transmission of many of the arts in Japan. Regulation of the appearance of dance is hierarchically determined, including choreography, costuming, who steps onto the stage first, or the selection of the objects onstage. The *iemoto*'s decisions on such matters greatly influence the transmission of the school's tradition through maintaining (or instituting) visually idealized conventions for the audience and performers.

Each dance has a history; when an *iemoto* determines aspects of visual presentation, his/her decisions affect how that piece will look and be transmitted in the future. Over time, dramatic visual representations become codified traditions, marking the identity of specific pieces, the genre, and the style of a particular school. Idealized conventions of the showcased body establish a shared cultural vocabulary of images that convey meaning between choreographer, dancer, and audience. Details of attire, makeup, props, stage sets, lighting, and movement are among the countless visual cues that characterize particular dances for an audience, or signal nuances of stylistic difference between dance schools. Through lessons dancers learn and embody visual conventions and, by transmitting them to future generations, maintain the historical lineage of these visual patterns, or codes, of style.

In traditional Japanese dance and theater, a character's outward appearance and action is thought to embody the identity of that persona, including social status, age, livelihood, and inner spirit. The identity of each character appearing in a dance—for instance, an aged farmer, a young child, or a playboy—is visually codified for the audience. Although there is some leeway (particularly from school to school), *kimono*, wigs, makeup, fans, and other physical attributes of a

character are prescribed, along with specific actions such as body carriage, stage positions, gaze, and movement quality. For example, in the dance “Musume Dojoji” (The Maiden of Dojo Temple) the beautiful “maiden” often wears a *kimono* or *obi* with an abstract design representing reptile scales, indicating her true identity as a demonic serpent who has furtively transfigured into a maiden.

A change in a character’s spiritual or emotional state is often coordinated with a visual transformation of the character’s appearance—from subtle changes in movement quality or gaze to indicate moderate mood shifts, to dramatic costume changes informing the audience of a character’s enormous life transformation. The process of onstage character transformation is called *hengemono* (or just *henge*, transformation). An example of *henge* is a technique called *hikinuki*, a costume-changing technique that enables a performer (with the help of a *koken*, or stage assistant) to shed the outer layer of a *kimono* quickly via removable bast-ing stitches to reveal a contrasting *kimono* layer below.

One of the most famous examples of *hikinuki* occurs in “Musume Dojoji.” The true identity of the temple maiden is dramatically revealed right before the audience via impressively rapid costume changes, or *hikinuki*. The transfiguration from maiden to demonic serpent is climactic, and the audience cheers in response. Through *hikinuki*, character portrayal is marked by visual representations carefully crafted through dance techniques.

In the dance studio proper appearance is demonstrably *performed*, from movement, costume, facial expression, or gaze, and is a vital part of lessons. Students’ visual awareness becomes heightened over time—honed for a wide palette of visual vocabulary that prepares them for dance. Dancers actively learn to see and be seen. The primary mode of transmission in *nihon buyo* is through the art of following teachers—visually. As mentioned earlier, a student stands to the right and behind the teacher during a lesson (see photo 3, taken from the student’s perspective). At Hatchobori, we literally peer over Iemoto’s shoulder to envision and embody dance.

I often sense a feeling of dancing vicariously through Iemoto as I gaze from this angle—a projected colocation of sorts. I believe it is this particular view of Iemoto, while students are simultaneously moving, that infuses a vicarious sensation via kinesthetic empathy. The practice of learning through visual imitation, repetition, and close proximity to the teacher reinforces imprinting—a transference and fixing of dance information in a student’s physical memory. Then there is kinesthetic



PHOTO 3. A student's perspective. Tachibana Yoshie (*left*) and Tachibana Hiroyo "Soke" (*seated*).

empathy, an empathy rooted in the body that draws on kinesthesia—the sense that comprehends the body's weight, spatial orientation, and movement of muscles, tendons, and joints. Kinesthetic empathy is mediated via visual and tactile modes of transmission (Bakan 1999: 281–291; Sklar 2001; Smyth 1984). It plays an important role in movement transference, in which a dancer, experiencing and physically identifying closely with the movements of a teacher, sympathetically coordinates her muscles to resemble the teacher's dance. The alignment between bodies via kinesthesia imprints movement and reinforces kinesthetic empathy for future lessons.

At Hatchobori we learn how to look, how to see, and how to consume movement through sight. It is through the particular angle and process of seeing that we envision and embody movement. Students are instructed to visually attend to their teachers. The dynamic in this directed gaze follows desire and authority—because the teacher embodies a dance that a student desires to learn, her perspective must pragmatically be aimed at the teacher.

The student's gaze toward Iemoto metaphorically mirrors the hierarchical *iemoto* social structure as it reenacts the historical path of transmission through daily practice. The flow of information and rules of "house" structure is governed by those in higher positions relative to those below. In the photograph taken from the student's perspective, note Soke seated in her chair, observing the lesson. Her presence illuminates the historical stream of transmission in the present moment—Soke to Iemoto to student.

I believe that the focused manner of imitating what one sees is a symbolic performance of dancers' desire to learn dance. Transmission connects individuals and forms relationships; the teacher-student bonding manifests a mutual commitment to dance and a relationship of responsibility to teach/learn dance. Here learned artistic expression is intricately folded with social structures, personal desire, and the moving body.

An important feature of the teaching context is the position of a large mirror on a side wall. Because students stand diagonally behind Iemoto in lessons, it is nearly impossible to see every angle of her body. From a student's perspective, the mirror catches not only the left and front side of Iemoto's body but the student's own body as well. This mirrored view enables students to see their own image reflected back at them and to match their form to Iemoto's. In this eyeshot a dancer receives visual images from two perspectives—the natural view of Iemoto and the reflected image of her hidden side.

When dancing at Hatchobori there is a strong feeling of being watched—similar to being onstage. Classes are often observed by two to three generations of Tachibana teachers and students. There is one other Tachibana presence in the room "observing"—large black-and-white photographs of Tachibana Hoshu (the first Tachibana *iemoto*) face students taking class. I find that this display, a constant reminder of the Tachibana family descent, instills a positive sense of focus and commitment during lessons. The dance studio symbolically displays the hierarchical *iemoto* structure and the literal flow of dance transmission—the

ancestral photographs hang high on the wall at the front of the room; Soke sits before this wall; Iemoto, who is teaching, dances in the formal dance area; the student taking the lesson stands a few steps behind Iemoto; and finally, any other students “sitting in” on the lesson are at the very back of the dance floor. The structures of space mirror the social organization of the fictive family and the flow of information. While this spatial organization is not directly explained to students, it reveals the depth in which the *iemoto* system is embodied in dancers’ everyday practice at Hatchobori.

As I will detail in the case studies below, transmission is a profoundly personal involvement whereby seeing one’s teacher dance by one’s side each day imprints into visual memory images of how the dance needs to appear. The process of looking is inextricably bound to social structures and issues of desire. Teachers, as living (visual) archetypes of the art form, serve as models for students to follow and emulate. With this in mind, the next section focuses on the visual mode of transmission at Hatchobori, utilizing examples from my field notes and personal experience.

case study in visual transmission

expanded field notes

[Adjacent to the following passage are my sketches of sieves sifting stone and sand.]

I am struggling to learn a new dance now and today realized that I am only comprehending the big picture—as if I am sifting out large phrases, while the refined steps and subtle nuances escape through the sieve of my comprehension. Though I saw great detail in Iemoto’s dancing today, I know the delicate nuances and subtleties are non-existent qualities in my movements. As I watched the variety of students’ lessons, I realized that learning to follow (acquiring finer sieves) is a life-long challenge.

The art of following forms the foundation of *nihon buyo* transmission. Following is essential, as the rudiments of *nihon buyo* movement vocabulary are not introduced prior to learning a dance piece. At a student’s first lesson she is led through a phrase of dance. This differs from other dance traditions, such as a ballet or classical dance in Cambodia (Phim

and Thompson 2001), where several years are devoted to the acquisition of a movement vocabulary, core postures, and forming the body. Instead, new movement is acquired gradually in *nihon buyo* through the introduction of new pieces, similar to how children learn language contextually by listening and through conversation. In this way *nihon buyo* students are dependent on teachers for new dance information. The art of following involves gaining visual acuity, kinesthetic awareness, and the ability to transfer the complexity of visual information to coordinate one's own body movements.

I found comparing a beginner's lesson to those of more advanced students insightful for understanding the gradual process of learning dance through visual awareness. The footage in DVD examples 1–3 represents three levels of ability: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. In all three cases the footage depicts the student's first lesson of the same dance.

Example 1 presents a rare opportunity to examine a student's very first lesson at the Tachibana School. Just prior to Hideo's lesson the two of us chatted freely while preparing for class. He intimated that he had never studied dance before and wanted to learn *nihon buyo* as a hobby. From his comments, it was already apparent to me that Hideo was self-conscious of his (visual) appearance within this context. I wrote in my field notes:

I talked to Hideo in the dressing room. I am interested in why he's beginning dance, so I asked him questions while we were dressing. He's twenty-four. When I asked him, he told me his age and then said, "Did you think I was younger?—a teenager?"

I said, "Why?"

Hideo answered, "Because my hair is a little long now and it sticks straight up—Iemoto and Soke say I look like a boy! So, I'll be cutting my hair soon."

I asked, "Why are you taking dance . . . how did you find out about nihon buyo?"

Hideo answered, "My grandfather and father both like nihon buyo and kabuki. My father sings nagauta and took shamisen and nihon buyo lessons. We both like going to kabuki. So, I thought I'd try taking dance. My father doesn't sing now, though. He's a sarari-man [a salary man, a white-collar worker]."

I asked, "Do you have a job now?"

Hideo replied, "I have a part-time job at a big supermarket in Meguro—at-tending the parking lot cars and carts . . . it's exhausting work."

Soon after this conversation we entered the dance studio, and immediately Iemoto adjusted his *yukata* and *obi*, giving him pointers on how to dress properly. Watching Hideo move in his *yukata*, it seemed to me that he was not comfortable wearing traditional Japanese clothing. (This can be observed in DVD example 1: Hideo attends to his *yukata* during the lesson, straightening it, even breaking the continuity of his dance movements at times.) Familiarity with dance attire is one of the many dance customs that confronts a new student. This is particularly true for young people in Japan today, many of whom rarely wear traditional clothing.

a note on the DVD

The description in the following case study is not intended to be a detailed transcription of the dance. Instead, this narrative summarizes what arises in the video excerpt in order to highlight elements of the visual learning process. Movement directions provided are from the dancer's perspective: left knee, turning left, walking counterclockwise, and so forth.

It is important to note that the DVD footage included with this book is from my fieldwork at Hatchobori and is not staged. In my first week of fieldwork Iemoto directed me to come out from behind the camera and take lessons. Also, I found that students behaved differently if I held or even sat near the video camera while shooting. Therefore, I elected to leave the camera in one place and attended to it as little as possible. My video camera "lived" in a corner of the dance studio and captured hundreds of hours of footage during my fieldwork. This is why the camera footage remains stationary and, unfortunately, cuts off a portion of the dance space (and occasionally body parts).

The quality of Iemoto's movements during lessons is demonstrative in nature, contrasting to some degree with the expressive movement of her dance performances onstage. Since this book focuses on transmission, I have featured her teaching movement style.

Notice that Iemoto incorporates visual cues during the lessons to guide the students as they follow. These cues heighten students' visual awareness, aid their ability to follow, and draw attention to an aspect of dance that needs correction. In general, increased visual awareness helps students gain an understanding of important dance fundamentals such as the structural elements of movement, a kinesthetic sensibil-

ity, spatial awareness, the handling of props, and the custom of wearing and moving in traditional costume.

using the DVD

For each DVD example, I suggest reading the descriptive text, then watching the specified DVD example in its entirety, followed by shorter viewings of specific sections so that the details can be examined. Time stamps have been included to mark particular moments in the DVD example footage that are addressed in the text. Time stamps are yellow capital letters in parenthesis, such as (A), that appear in the lower left-hand side of the viewing window. Viewers can navigate to a time stamp chapter marker by selecting the forward/back button in the control panel or on their remote control.

DVD visual transmission example 1: November 17, 1993

The following passage is a description of Hideo's first run-through of the opening phrase of "Matsu no midori" (The Evergreen Pine), choreographed by Tachibana Hoshu. It is a piece from the *goshugimono nagauta* repertory (formal celebratory style accompanied by a *nagauta* musical ensemble). Considered to be one of the classic Tachibana pieces, "Matsu no midori" is customarily used as an examination dance within the school. Symbolically, this is an appropriate dance to introduce to a beginner, as pines are considered to be auspicious trees and are central metaphors in Japanese rituals, ceremonies, and performance. Because pine trees are always green, they are a symbol of long life. Their tendency to grow differently depending on climate, geographic context (on a rocky hillside or next to a river, for example), wind conditions, and rain demonstrates the tree's resilience. The environment, over time, shapes the contour of the tree much as experience shapes our bodies. The dancer narrates the life of a pine, anthropomorphizing it from childhood to old age, while the text plays with double meanings that reference the floating world. As a *goshugimono*, the dance wishes everyone long life and prosperity.

The quality of the movements is distinct and very precise, an embodiment of the strength and spirit of the pine as well as the formality and auspicious nature of the *goshugimono* style. Pragmatically, this clarity in movement quality introduces a beginner to many of the fun-

damental techniques of *nihon buyo*. Three dancers can be seen in the back of the dance space following the lesson; however, because it is Hideo's lesson, Iemoto generally does not address them.

Iemoto begins "Matsu no midori" with a formal, seated bow—hands palm down on the floor, fingers together, a closed *sensu* (fan) sitting at arm's length, and her torso is lowered. Pressing her hands into the floor, Iemoto raises up slowly with a straight back, hinging at the hips, until her arms extend completely. At the end of this movement her head continues to lift up slightly to continue the upward movement. This formal greeting to the audience manifests the strength and formality conveyed in the entire piece—embodied in a dancer's erect, broad back; strong arms; the simplicity and clarity of each movement; and focused gaze. Next, Iemoto grasps the bamboo end of the *sensu* in her right hand, turning it ninety degrees clockwise. Her body lifts up to a half-kneeling pose—left knee raised—so that her weight is distributed between her right knee on the ground and the balls of her right and left feet. Her heels are positioned directly below the pelvic sitting bones. At the same time, both arms circle gently counterclockwise until her right hand places the fan on her right thigh and her left hand, grasping the *yukata* (cotton *kimono*) sleeve opening, settles into a position extending forward with a slightly bent elbow. This last movement is rather complex—each limb moves independently as the body raises into the kneeling position.

Before proceeding to the next phrase, let's take a closer look at Hideo's lesson. In DVD example 1, notice how Hideo carefully observes Iemoto and attempts to imitate each move. During the curved, two-arm gesture, as the left knee shifts up to the half-kneeling position, Hideo appears to have difficulty keeping up and maintaining his balance. He raises up on his heels from the seated position and, observing Iemoto's lifted left knee, corrects his footing. His right arm coordinates with Iemoto's movement, yet the left arm falls to his lap. At this point Iemoto subtly jerks her left hand to draw attention to his incorrect arm position. Hideo catches the cue and repositions his arm. Without words Iemoto can draw a student's focus to a particular element of dance. This type of visual cueing is an important instruction and can be seen practiced often in lessons.

In DVD example 1, time stamp (A), Iemoto sweeps the *sensu* upward, leading the entire body into a standing position, while her left arm lowers to her side and she shifts to face left. Hideo fusses with his left *yukata* sleeve, and it seems he is unsure of how his left hand should

grasp the sleeve. Once Hideo has turned to face left, note that his left arm position is still unchanged since the seated pose. Iemoto pauses briefly. She cues Hideo again by gesturing her left arm. She then walks clockwise six steps until she is facing 180 degrees opposite the preceding pose, feet together. During this walk her right hand has slowly lowered to hold the fan at shoulder height. Her right foot slides forward, and the left foot shifts to turn out. Iemoto assumes a strong, firmly rooted stance that is held momentarily: both legs are turned out from the hips, her weight falls on her right leg, with right knee bent and her left leg straight for counterbalance. Her head turns left with a distinct gaze to the distant stately pine. She holds the pose.

In DVD example 1, time stamp (B), Iemoto draws her feet together, left foot to her right foot. She circles her fan clockwise, then extends it out—leading her body around the space in a counterclockwise walk. Hideo's quality of movement during this walk differs greatly from Iemoto's *suriashi* (sliding feet style of walking). His gait is no different from how he might walk when he crosses a street in Tokyo, and he looks from side to side, trying to keep Iemoto within eyeshot.

After this walk they pause, facing forward. Iemoto's right wrist and arm gently flip the *sensu* so the hand faces palm up, then draws a small counterclockwise circle with the tip of the fan and points to the left again. The point of Iemoto's fan again leads her body to turn right, and she faces backstage. They hold a pose similar to the last, right leg bent and left leg turned out and straight. Feet come together at this point, right foot to left, and they turn to the right to face stage front. Finally their arms swing in a gentle curve to the right, and they sit in the same half-kneeling position that opened the dance. Note that Hideo's gaze is continuously toward either Iemoto or one of the other students in order to follow during turns. He apparently notices that his final pose does not match Iemoto's and shifts several times to correct his knee position and balance. This concludes the first run of the opening passage, less than ninety seconds of the nine-minute dance.

In example 1 Hideo can be seen relying primarily on visual information in order to follow along. Even in this short passage it is clear that Hideo's new experience of watching Iemoto dance while coordinating his own movements is a challenging maneuver. He is honing his visual awareness skills and specific visual vocabulary. Not only is the new movement information complex; it is the process of watching and simultaneously transferring what he sees to his own body that is new as well.

DVD visual transmission example 2: November 17, 1993

For comparison, let us now view a more advanced student learning the same dance. Mariko lives in a northern province of Japan and cannot attend classes at Hatchobori regularly. Before her lesson Iemoto asked Mariko if she preferred to study "Matsu no midori" in female or male style. She decided on female, and her class began. While DVD examples 1–3 focus on the same dance, example 2 differs only in that it is performed in the female style. The choreography is fundamentally the same except the movements are stylistically gender-specific. Since an outline of the opening dance has been detailed in the previous example, only particular instances of the visual transmission process that signal a contrast to example 1 are highlighted. Several students join this lesson—Mariko is the student with the green *obi* (sash).

From the opening bow it appears that Mariko is familiar with the clothing, the dance style, and the process of following in lessons. In order to learn the new dance Hideo and Mariko both keep Iemoto within view. However, a comparison between Mariko's and Hideo's following abilities reveals aspects of Mariko's developed learning skills. Her angle of gaze is much less overt (relative to Hideo's gaze), and she apparently gleans a great deal of movement information through her peripheral vision. Her focus is clearly directed toward Iemoto. For example, in the opening bow, notice her directed gaze and careful attention to Iemoto's every action. Mariko subtly angles her body toward Iemoto for most of example 2. In several instances she checks her hand position—visibly looking over at Iemoto, then to her own hand location, and back to Iemoto. An example of this coordination is observable in DVD example 2, time stamp (A). Her movements during this lesson indicate that, despite the introduction of new dance information, she utilizes past dance experience to inform her present actions.

Mariko's body coordination is generally synchronized with Iemoto's throughout the lesson, and the quality of her movements, while deliberate, is generally fluid. Mariko appears to comprehend the basic movement vocabulary (*kata*) within the choreographic phrases, perhaps based on her previous dance experience, contrasting with Hideo's lesson. He follows Iemoto through the steps, yet because he has no previous association with any of the movements, the process of following is challenging.

Mariko's lesson provides a marvelous example of Soke observing lessons from her seat on the far right of the video. Although Soke remains still during a majority of the lesson, one can observe subtle cueing taking place at several points. In DVD example 2, time stamp (B), Soke's hands "dance" briefly, to cue Mariko. Here Soke indicates the specific hand positions and the nuance of the gesture to Mariko through visual cues. A sense of kinesthetic transmission can be noted here as well, since Soke's hands are not merely correcting the gesture, but the quality of her hand movements can be "felt" even from a distance.

Compared with the verdant quality of Hideo's movements, Mariko moves in a clearer and less tentative fashion. While Hideo's general physical coordination is undeveloped, Mariko is able to observe Iemoto's movements and gauge her own physical balance and distribution of body weight.

DVD visual transmission example 3: October 23, 1993

Finally, let us observe an advanced dancer's lesson. Etsuko is a *nihon buyo* teacher. While she has studied "Matsu no midori" at a different dance school, this is her first lesson of the Tachibana choreography. As a result of her many years of experience, she is familiar with the music, the stylistic features of the genre, and the particular dance. In example 3, two additional students follow in the back of the dance area. Etsuko is the student wearing the pink colored *obi* (sash) and dancing on the front left side of the dance floor.

A prominent aspect of Etsuko's lesson is her familiarity with the general conventions of dance lessons at Hatchobori. Considerations of the dance setting and process of learning that might overwhelm the newcomer do not appear to faze Etsuko, including physical comfort with the dance clothing; dexterity with props; rules of the social setting and physical space; acquaintance with the teacher and other students; the comfort (or discomfort) of being closely observed; physical understanding of the learning process (for example, following the teacher's movements and directions); and familiarity with the dance vocabulary.

From the opening bow we can observe Etsuko's clarity of movement. Although it is almost imperceptible in the example, Etsuko visually follows Iemoto with a sidelong gaze or her peripheral vision. Etsuko's movements match Iemoto's in carriage, phrasing, quality, and

spatial use so closely that her lesson appears effortless. In fact, she seems to intuit certain phrases as she follows, apparently drawing from her established dance vocabulary, previous experience with this dance, and her developed visual awareness skills. For the thirty-second passage, beginning at DVD example 3, time stamp (A), note how Etsuko coordinates her entire body to correspond with Iemoto's movements and phrasing. This contrasts with the less experienced dancers, who must prioritize coordinating general physical movements over subtle nuance to keep up with Iemoto's pace. During this section Etsuko can be seen using the mirror to follow Iemoto's movements.

Etsuko's advanced dance abilities and movement vocabulary enable her to easily coordinate the general dance movements, balance, and shifts of body weight. This permits her to extend her attention beyond these basic dance skills to a more refined awareness of the dance. For instance, in DVD example 3, time stamp (B), Etsuko turns her head subtly toward Iemoto, apparently to align the quality of her fan movement to Iemoto's upward sweep. Because she is an advanced dancer, Etsuko's head turn is so subtle it might go unnoticed.

Etsuko's handling of a *sensu* reflects her familiarity with and routine use of this prop. This is clear in the video excerpt, especially when viewed in contrast to the video example of Hideo's use of a fan. Specifically, when Etsuko points her *sensu* out to the stand of pine, her movement quality reveals that the *sensu* is an extension of her own body. The movement impulse originates from her torso (from her *hara*), ripples outward along her shoulder, arm, wrist, and flows to the very tip of the fan itself. The pointing *sensu* illuminates the spirit of the pine in the imagined landscape. With the extended presence of the fan, Etsuko initiates the movement of her body from the tip of her fan, around the room to view the pine. From an audience perspective, this pointing motion directs action away from the body and to the pine in the distance. Because Etsuko regularly practices with *sensu*, she has honed the ability to control this prop as an extension of her body and a part of her dance vocabulary. Similarly, Etsuko actively employs her *yukata* (the sleeves, for example) as an expressive aspect of the dance. Compare Etsuko's dexterity with a fan and use of her *yukata* with Hideo's case in example 1. Hideo's connection with the fan and *yukata* has not formed yet, as this was his first experience holding the prop and wearing a *yukata* in a lesson.

A comparison of the three lessons discussed above illuminates aspects of the visual learning process at different stages of develop-

ment. Because these students' dance experiences contrast greatly, their learning skills are dramatically apparent. What can a student grasp in the first few run-throughs of a new piece? Following a dance for the first time involves new physical experiences and awareness skills—each student's previous dance experience provides him/her with reference points for future associations. For a beginner, the dance context, movements, and music may be completely foreign. In an advanced dancer's case, individual steps might seem familiar (particularly *kata*, prescribed movement patterns), but their placement within the choreography of that particular dance positions the movements in an unfamiliar context.

Lessons provide a gradual development of awareness for students. Learning progresses in stages—from a broad overview of a phrase to a greater understanding of specific movements and a refining of subtle detail. What a beginner notices about Iemoto's movements during his/her lesson is qualitatively different from what an advanced dancer notices. Hideo, for example, seems to grasp only Iemoto's general movements (standing, sitting, turning right or left, for example) in order to keep up with her pace, but after dancing for several months he will most likely be able to make associations with certain steps and refine his own movements. Once large-scale information becomes habitual or "natural" to the student, his/her attention can turn to other aspects of the dance.

Experienced dancers, on the other hand, seem to learn new dances effortlessly. Their bodies, informed with many years of training, physically know a wide range of movements, compositional forms, the dance context, how to coordinate following Iemoto, and the conventions of dance lessons. This sensational knowledge allows these dancers to focus directly on the particular dance and its subtleties. Through this long process of acquiring skills there is also a gradual liberating process for students—as skills become habitual, a student's disorientations lessen, freeing him/her to follow Iemoto with increasing ease.

In *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, professor of psychology and education Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi points out the (physical) human limitations for processing activities:

Unfortunately, the nervous system has definite limits on how much information it can process at any given time. There are just so many "events" that can appear in consciousness and be recognized and handled appropriately before they begin to crowd each other out . . .

Simple functions [however] like adding a column of numbers or driving a car grow to be automated, leaving the mind free to deal with more data. (1991: 28–29)

The complex negotiation of mental and physical processing of information that a dancer attends to during lessons will be unfolded as we visit other sensory modes of transmission. I find lessons to be rehearsals of vision and visualization. To embody movement, we learn to exercise a particular way of seeing dance that is culturally constituted. What we see is not only a biological capacity for visual perception—we are trained to sort through the myriad of visual information before us to seek the vital elements needed for the task at hand or the aesthetic focus.

Finally, I'd like to add my personal experience of the transmission process to the mix. Within this section I have stressed that, to embody what one sees, acute visual awareness must be honed. Visual and kinesthetic transmission inherently produces a bonding relationship, evoked through gaze, between teacher and student. As I will point out in upcoming chapters, bonding is reinforced in every sensory mode of transmission. I believe that the relationship stems partly from the desire to dance as our teachers dance. The physical intensity and focus of repeatedly aligning one's movements to a teacher's way of dance creates an unspoken connection between student and teacher.

The visceral nature of dance transmission gestures to embodiment as a vehicle for observing qualities of cultural values. In the case of *nihon buyo* transmission, the distinct gaze in lessons manifests a particularly Japanese practice, permeated with traditions of lineage, hierarchy, spiritualism, and prescribed artistry, to name a few. The process of transmission via visualization of a sanctioned model transmits and reinforces continuity of a codified and specific practice of art. For me, the desire for dance embodiment that I have experienced all my life is enculturated. I have been trained to project my gaze a certain way, to visually attend in such an intense manner, and to follow, perhaps even to bond, for the sake of the art and group unity. The process of training the body has integrated with my personal desire to dance and to belong to such an organized group, magnifying the deeply connected relationship between modes of sensory practice, desire, and the body as self. In this sense, I see that the enculturated body becomes a sight and a site of cultural training (Leppert 1995) that is ritualized in the dance lesson.

Visual transmission forms a foundation for learning dance steps and establishing relationships, but also for how we see and envision ourselves. Continuing our examination of transmission and the orientation of the body, the following section introduces tactile transmission, a sensory mode closely related to kinesthesia.

stretched

The grasp of a fan is particular, though there are many different ways to hold it. The hand clutches the fan gently, yet securely—"as if holding an egg in the palm of your hand," I remember Iemoto telling us. The end, where the bones are hinged together, is cradled in the well of the palm, the thumb against the metal finding. As my fingers comfortably spread out along the bones and stretch to conjoin with them, the fan becomes a huge hand that extends my limb outward.

touching arrays—tactile transmission, kinesthesia, and body space

We've all had the experience—while you are walking along a street, someone comes up from behind and pulls your arm back, changing the momentum of your walk. The hold on your arm imparts a flurry of information depending on the nature of the touch: Was the grasp forceful? firm? gentle? Was there an active pulling backward of your arm, imposing a physical stretch and contrasting movement quality on your body? How about the texture of the person's hand: Was it soft? rough? gloved? Was the person's hand hot or cold? This interaction probably changed the timing and direction of your walk—did you instinctively look back in response to see who was governing your movement? This simple example of a tactile interaction demonstrates the complexity of the sense of touch; it can transmit a wide array of information that the body interprets within the particular social context (Howes 2005).

Touch is used at Hatchobori as an active, direct means of teaching dance. This section turns to the sense of touch to discuss its role as an agent of movement and social information, with some attention to the related topics of kinesthesia and spatial orientation. I include a brief introduction of general characteristics of touch that are important for transmitting dance, followed by case studies from Hatchobori and an orientation.

Though the eyes are the perceptual organ of visual data, there is no single organ for sensing tactile information. Instead, tactile sensing occurs throughout the body; the receptors are cutaneous and connect to a web of nerves and muscles throughout the body. Touch is fully integrated into the body—cutaneous and subcutaneously—so the entire body is an organ of touch. This full-bodied feature of the sense is ideal for dance transmission, where the entire (receptive) body can feel and mediate movement qualities. The teacher can sensitively “read” a student's body through touch while a student simultaneously can be directly guided into place by the teacher.

Touch is a complex sense. Through touch we simultaneously perceive movement/kinesthesia, airflow, the temperature, pressure, and texture of an object or a living being that comes in contact with our body. The sense of movement via touch is particularly valuable for dance transmission. In fact, touch rarely occurs without movement.

When someone/something contacts our body we can perceive its movement quality, such as the speed and direction of its action. For example, if someone takes your hand, swings, and releases it in an upward toss, you experience this arm gesture through touch. The energy, or force, of the tactile encounter imparted a speed and direction of motion to your body. If this had been a lesson, could you reproduce the quality of this arm movement? As I will detail later, active tactile manipulation of the body is employed in dance lessons at Hatchobori to provide qualities of movement such as timing, flow, direction, and speed.

Active touch along the surface of an object can also verify its textural qualities, from smooth to rough, hard to soft. Edward Hall points out that Japanese have a predilection for subtlety, particularly nuances of texture (Hall 1966: 59). My experience in the traditional arts support this to a degree—for example, in tea ceremony lessons teachers encouraged me to feel the texture of a bowl or utensil, or in dance class, to notice the sensitive mixing of fabric textures in costume preparations.

Perhaps more than any other sensory parameter, the incorporation of touch in lessons reveals corporeality.³ Tactile transmission exposes the union of dance and the corporeal body. Through embodiment, touch denies their separation—the body simultaneously exists as the art object for performance, as the direct transmitter of the art, and as an individual self. Touch is personal. The encounter negotiates the very boundaries of our physical self. During a tactile experience the boundaries of one body and another conjoin. Walter Ong framed touch as a gauge of what distinguishes us from other: “Touch, including kinesthesia, helps form concepts of exteriority and interiority. We feel ourselves inside our own bodies, and the world as outside” (Ong 1967: 119). Touch arouses and situates the body. Anthony Synnott stated, “Touching and the skin are therefore social and physical phenomenon, which cannot be separated: the physical is the social and vice versa” (Synnott 1993: 157). The skin not only contains the physical boundary of each individual; it locates the body *within* a context, *as* a context (a sense of the body’s interior versus exterior), and it can distinguish a variety of tactile qualities to help individuals derive meaning from the outside world.

Touch is social. Tactile experiences between self and other inherently raise a variety of social issues depending on the individuals involved, culture, and context of the experience. A gentle stroke across

the back, for instance, may be appropriate in one cultural context (between close friends or during a massage) yet completely inappropriate in others. Synnott pointed out, "Touching is instinctive, it is also culturally determined, with a wide variety of tactile interactive patterns in different societies and indeed in different families" (1993: 181). The socialized body physically holds, or embodies, knowledge concerning spatial coordination and "appropriate" contexts of touch. Through acculturation the body is socialized for sensitivities to touch in diverse contexts. The process of acculturation provides the body with a means for interpreting the tactile experience for that particular context.

Touch is polysemous. Contact signifies a range of intention, depending on the quality of touch, the emotional content, if any, and where on the body one is touched and by whom or what. It is no secret that, in general, Japanese respectfully allow ample personal space between themselves and acquaintances (Synnott 1993: 171; Hall and Hall 1987: 11–14). Of course, a variety of engagements of touch and allowances for personal space exist in Japan—from the Tokyo rush-hour subway, where strangers' bodies completely enter each other's personal body space; to a unisex hot spring where bathers are completely nude and actions of touch are select; to transmission processes in a dance studio. In these contrasting contexts the cultural codes for personal space accommodation have been socialized and are within peoples' embodied knowledge. How people navigate relative to others within a space are negotiations of personal body space gathered from past experiences and built on social norms.

Sukinshippu ("skinship") is a modern Japanese word created specifically to define the close physical/tactile mother-child relationship in Japan believed to develop well-being, security, and interdependence in a child (Caudill and Plath 1974; Hendry 1986: 98; Lebra 1976: 138). "Skinship" now circulates in everyday language to mean a "close relationship." The creation of this new term underscores the Japanese acknowledgment and use of touch as a means for acculturating individuals. Touch, or *skinship*, also pervades artistic traditions as a means for socializing the body, transmitting art and cultural values. The use of touch for dance transmission and such socialization of the body at Hatchobori will be a main focus of the following case study.

Touch is political. Tactile encounters signal actions of information flow and control. For example, in lessons at Hatchobori, touch is understood to be an appropriate and acceptable practice for teaching. I observed that touch often defined and reinforced the relationships of

the dancers within the group. Teachers, in a superior rank, approach and touch students during lessons. Out of respect, students rarely touch their teachers. The tactile code here is culturally constructed, reflecting and reinforcing the hierarchical *iemoto* social system. It also illuminates the flow of artistic information from teacher to student. I recognize this cultural tactile code as an embodied manifestation of the deep respect that exists between individuals in the group and for their dance tradition.

Countless stories circulate concerning the practice of hitting during training in the Japanese performing arts, Buddhism, and martial arts.⁴ In November 1993 Iemoto and Soke spoke freely to me about their disdain of hitting, revealing why I have not witnessed more than a tap during lessons at the Tachibana School. They expressed to me that hitting reflects the frustrations and impatience of a teacher rather than a sign of a student's inability. Iemoto mentioned that when she notices a student merely going through the moves with little concentration, then a tap on the arm might focus her/him to an alert state again.

Not all forms of dance in Japan (or around the world) incorporate touch as a means for teaching dance. I find it interesting to note when touch is incorporated into lessons as a transmission practice. At Hatchobori the interaction is common and reveals a number of fascinating qualities about teaching dance. Let's return to Hatchobori for two case study examples of touch used in transmitting movement.

case study in tactile transmission

I'm not sure which is more difficult, being the puppeteer or the puppet.

—Yamada Hisashi, Urasenke tea master

(Hahn field notes, 1992)

expanded field notes

Mid-way through my lesson today Iemoto ceased to guide me through the piece step by step. She darted from one side of me to the other as I danced—tapped me on the elbow; then a bit more firmly on my left shoulder; used her foot to push my left foot closer to my right during a pose; and then, suddenly disappeared from sight. I felt her completely envelop me from behind. She held onto



PHOTO 4. Tachibana Yoshie teaching through touch. PHOTO: WALTER HAHN

my hands and danced the next phrase herself. I experienced her dance through my own body, and I became a bunraku puppet. A jolt of realization spanned my limbs and torso. The immediacy of actually feeling her dance that phrase conveyed much more than watching her steps in time and space.

At a certain point in the learning process students are able to recall the movements, music, and choreography well enough to dance by them-

selves. Teachers are then freed from demonstrating dance and able to correct details through visual, tactile, and oral cues. At Hatchobori I experienced and observed tactile transmission employed as a direct approach for guiding movement, posture, and poses. As my field notes above intimate, the experience of guidance via touch introduces a dynamic to movement in space and time that conveys the fundamentals of movement, yet transcends the pragmatic to a deeper level of understanding dance. The immediacy of physical contact reveals a multidimensional field of body messages between the teacher and the student. Crossing the boundary of personal space, the intimate nature of touch forms relationships, connections, between teacher and student.

The examples in this section examine the employment of tactile transmission in two contexts: during static poses and while in motion. *Nihon buyo* choreography often features held poses, particularly at phrase endings. This distinctive element of the choreography presents a timely opportunity for a teacher to enter the dancer's space and adjust the body. The first example focuses on corrections made during this period of frozen time.

DVD tactile transmission example 5: December 1, 1993

A rather new student named Masako is learning the dance "Kishi no yanagi" (Willows along the Shore) in this example. Masako is standing on the left side of the video screen. She has studied this piece with Iemoto for several weeks at this point. Today they first reviewed the opening passage with taped music twice. Ten minutes into the lesson Iemoto walks through the dance with her, without the taped music. The quality of Iemoto's movements are now demonstrative in nature, emphasizing each step clearly within the phrase for Masako to follow easily. In the last phrase they stand motionless for a brief moment in a final pose.

In DVD example 5, time stamp (A), Iemoto looks over at Masako, turns, and, with her right arm extending toward Masako's fan, walks over to correct her pose. The quality of Iemoto's actions is no longer within the dance vocabulary but reflects her instructional manner. There is a sense of urgency in Iemoto's movements, as if she must catch Masako's pose at just the right instant. Often an incorrect pose or action is demonstrated for a student, in order to illustrate a clear contrast to the proper form. Iemoto first shifts the angle of Masako's fan and

remarks, "Not like this," as she repositions the fan into an exaggerated unsatisfactory position. "Like this . . . , " and she corrects the angle.

Iemoto takes hold of Masako's left hand, removing her grasp of the fan, and repositions it lower, at the paper edge. Iemoto reaches around Masako's right side and lowers her arm. From here Iemoto sweeps her right hand down Masako's left arm to her wrist. By flexing Masako's wrist in a puppetlike manner, Iemoto corrects the grasp and angle of her *sensu*. For a moment, Iemoto's hands steady Masako's hands in this reformed position.

At time stamp (B) Iemoto circles around to Masako's left side and gently pats her left shoulder to lower it. Standing at her side, Iemoto reaches her right arm around to Masako's back and places a flat hand between her shoulder blades to straighten her posture. Iemoto runs this hand down Masako's spine to the *obi* (sash), emphasizing the proper upright carriage.⁵ Standing in front of Masako, Iemoto again adjusts her hand position, then explains (and demonstrates) that if a dancer's arms are held up high in a pose, then her *kimono* sleeves will fall, revealing bare arms. Control of the costume is an important aspect of dance. Since it would be unladylike to expose one's arms, Iemoto instructs Masako to notice such details. Iemoto then guides Masako through the head movement by delicately gesturing her hand while singing "*hi fu mi*" (1-2-3) to conclude the phrase.

The passage detailed above lasts a brief two minutes. I have observed that beginners are taught through touch more often than advanced dancers. Since beginners are naturally less experienced and have a limited movement vocabulary, touch is employed pragmatically for both large-scale and subtle adjustments. Dancers come to apprehend the dance form directly by having their bodies directly moved into position by a teacher. A keener sensitivity to movement, space, and one's own body is gained through experiencing the repetition of tactile corrections. I have noticed that more experienced dancers draw on their previous dance vocabulary to learn new dances. They embody sensitivities to gentle touch, subtle cues, and nearly imperceptible prompting from a teacher standing across the dance floor.

In the above example Iemoto's corrections are typical for a beginner's lesson at Hatchobori but also common for a student at an early stage of learning a new piece. Several weeks later Masako would not need such large-scale adjustments. As a dancer becomes increasingly familiar with a particular piece, corrections become progressively refined, until she is ready to perform the dance.

The second example involves tactile transmission in midmotion, while a student continues to dance. Similar to a game of trading jump-rope partners, delivering tactile cues in midmotion requires a teacher to spring into the student's dance at the proper time, with the appropriate force and quality of touch. In order to grasp the constant physical interaction between teacher and student during an active passage, let us observe touch employed in another lesson at Hatchobori.

DVD tactile transmission example 6: September 17, 1993

At the beginning of Yuri's lesson Iemoto stood to one side, observing, as Yuri danced "Hokushū" (White Fan). Occasionally Iemoto cued Yuri—pointing across the room to direct her gaze, or singing a musical phrase. Several minutes into the lesson Iemoto interacted more physically, more demonstratively, yet she was not dancing full-out. Her movements suggested the bare minimum of the dance steps as an outline for Yuri to reference. At one point Iemoto's hands danced, curling in and out, to cue Yuri's timing. Later, just a subtle tilt of her head signaled a phrase ending. After the first eight minutes of the lesson, Iemoto's cues have become increasingly physical. The video footage begins at this point in the lesson.

In DVD example 6, time stamp (A), Iemoto points across the horizon with her right hand to direct Yuri's gaze into the distance. Simultaneously Iemoto strokes Yuri's middle back with her left hand to alter her posture. Yuri continues to dance. Iemoto gently places a hand on each of Yuri's shoulders and swings them from side to side, accentuating the shifting movement to coordinate with the timing of the music. Still kneeling, Yuri turns to her right, facing Iemoto, who releases her grasp. She continues dancing. Next, Iemoto bends down and nudges Yuri's right knee three to four inches back. Because most of Yuri's body weight leans on this knee, Iemoto's adjustment jogs Yuri's balance briefly, but the correction does change the angle of her kneeling position. The dance continues.

Several corrections via touch take place only a few steps later. At time stamp (B) Yuri spirals gently back and closes the phrase in a standing pose. As she settles into the position, Iemoto grasps each arm. She raises Yuri's right arm higher and draws her left elbow in to her waist. For a moment Iemoto holds Yuri in this position. Next Yuri circles to her left. Iemoto pushes her off into the turn by tossing Yuri's right arm

into the direction of the turn, imparting the speed and quality of the rotation. After this turn Yuri steps forward three times. For each step her right hand, holding her *sensu*, undulates—palm up, palm down, palm up. Iemoto stands to her right for this passage. She clasps Yuri's right wrist with her right hand and actually moves Yuri's limb gracefully into place in a puppetlike fashion for the first two steps. At the same time she reaches across Yuri and straightens the position of her left hand. Iemoto then releases her hold and Yuri completes the third step, solo. Another example of teaching through touch occurs at time stamp (C). Here Iemoto again straightens Yuri's posture with a touch to her back. Next Iemoto alters her *sensu* position. One of the most powerful instances of contact can be observed when Yuri, balancing only on her left leg, holds the *sensu* high above her head. Iemoto steps into Yuri's dance. She envelops Yuri's body, clasps both of her hands, and continues to dance the passage. We can observe that this takes considerable effort for both women. Iemoto exerts just enough pressure to guide Yuri's arms through the movements. Because Yuri is balancing on one leg, however, too much force would be precarious. No fewer than fifteen instances of touch took place during Yuri's thirty-minute lesson. The example discussed above is an excerpt illustrating the most common instances of tactile transmission.

I have observed that dancers accumulate a vocabulary of tactile teaching cues in stages, in much the same way that they gain a visual vocabulary. For example, the most prominent instance of teaching through touch is the adjustment of posture, which occurs in both examples above. A teacher can straighten a student's posture merely by placing a flat hand between his/her shoulder blades. But how do students come to know this? In a beginner's lesson Iemoto can be heard saying, "Tighten these muscles, here . . ." as she strokes his/her back and repositions the rounded shoulders to an aligned position. Soon she need not verbally narrate the correction but can cue the adjustment with a subtle touch at this point on the dancer's back. I have noticed that over time I have become so accustomed to Iemoto's tactile cues that my back muscles kinesthetically fall into place at her slightest touch, or even as she approaches me.

Through touch, Yuri had an opportunity to actually feel Iemoto's dance directly. In the course of the lesson described above, Yuri's stiffened movements softened, grew larger and more distinct, as Iemoto puppeted her movements into place. Iemoto's guiding touch kinesthetically transferred several aspects of "Hokushu," such as the sensitivity

to physical proportions, to depth and the use of space. Touch conveyed not only the basic movements but also the quality of her actions. Iemoto often physically urged Yuri forward, clarifying her timing by punctuating each step, yet maintaining a quality of movement that was soft and flowing. From personal experience I have come to understand the variety of Iemoto's tactile cues. The vocabulary is drawn from a wide palette of tactile instructions, including pressure sensitivity, touch (stroking, tapping, pulling), and enabling varying degrees of momentum. These multiple qualities of touch rarely exist separately from one another. Instead, they simultaneously transmit a dynamic range of movement, space, and timing to a student.

A fascinating aspect of the pedagogy is observing how a teacher decides when to make a correction and what kind of approach will be appropriate for that instance. For example, a teacher can observe a movement, realize a student's difficulties, and choose to verbalize the problem afterward. At this later point in time, however, the moment of the dance has passed. The teacher is faced with articulating what has physically transpired and also expressing what changes are necessary. For some types of movements or situations it is more appropriate to incorporate touch to guide the student just at the necessary moment. On the other hand, I observed that Iemoto often let a student continue a phrase without making corrections, then reviewed the passage later in a concentrated fashion to focus on detailed adjustments.

The use of touch in *nihon buyo* lessons involves two people; hence there exists a relationship of some sort. While I am moved through a dance by Iemoto, I find there is a strong sense of bonding. I realize that she is sharing her dance expression with me. Through attempting to feel and emulate the teacher's way of dancing there is also a sense of losing one's self. I recall what Iemoto said to me: "Do not to imitate me. That's boring. Learn the dance and then dance it with Samie's heart." Learning through touch starkly presents corporeal existence, but also self. Imitating a teacher challenges students to emulate her dance while also distinguishing themselves from her or the character portrayed, and finally to establish individual strength in their personal character.

resounded

Sight and sound intertwined today. A passage from “Komori” (The Babysitter) was the focus of my lesson. Moving by Iemoto’s side, I was keenly aware of the integration of her body with the music—percussive claps, a head movement coordinated in time, and her breathing through phrases. Vision became indistinguishable from sound indistinguishable from vision. Why did I sense this? How does the body express sound?

Several explanations come to mind. First, there is the notion of the body as musical instrument. Choreographed stamps and claps incorporate the body within the musical ensemble as a “player.” When Iemoto dances to taped music, her movement sounds coordinate to the tape, but in performance with live musicians her body clearly becomes an equal instrumental member of the ensemble. I have seen her visually articulate the music with her body. I sensed her firmly situated within the music, highlighting particular instrumental and vocal passages. Simultaneously these musical lines were highlighting her movements. It was as if each part of Iemoto’s body aligned in time with the music—sometimes her hands punctuated one instrumental line, her head nodded to a different line, while her feet fluidly swept her across the room, marking a larger level of the phrase. Her body, a moving visualization of the music, seemed to provide overlapping sensory information for me—a synesthesia of sight and sound. Body as sound as dance.

The lesson challenged my awareness, a dis-orientation and tangling of sensory information. My own body, immersed in this complex musical stream, was guided by her path through the sound. Conveyed in this guidance was the sensibility of the musically articulate body situated in a complex sound world. I found myself considering how bodies inhabit auditory scenes. In “Komori” each action coordinated with an instrumental phrase embedded in the nagauta ensemble. As we playfully tapped rhythms on the floor with long pole props, I felt as if Iemoto was leading me through the movements as sound—and our taps blended into the ensemble as percussion.

Iemoto sang “Ton-toko-ton.” We were not only traversing a musical landscape; we were enacting it. We did not dance to the music; we embodied the music.

I also experienced very subtle relationships between body and sound. Since it is the custom to dance close to Iemoto in lessons, I am often aware of her breathing. The intimacy of lessons allows for this attention to detail. The rhythms of her breath were barely audible, barely visible. But today I noticed how her breath subtly cued my musical timing and phrasing—as she drew in a fresh breath, the swell in her chest cavity initiated a movement that rose from her torso and inched across her shoulders. Visually I could see her obi become tight against her expanding rib cage, her yukata a taut sheath across her back. As she exhaled, this continuing movement of ki energy rippled down her right arm and extended through her hand and fingertips. Inhaling, exhaling—it was almost difficult not to kinesthetically harmonize with her breath as we danced together. Her body breathed the movements. If I am open and focused enough, I can breathe that same air.

uttering expanses—oral/aural transmission

Immersed in a diverse blend of sounds every day, how do you make sense of the complexity? With your eyes closed, do you become attuned to sounds entering your ears, their motion, direction, timbre, intensity, rhythm, and pitch? How do you attend to sound, or parse sound events from one another in your attention? Sound's ephemeral quality sets it apart from vision and touch—there is nothing tangible to grasp—yet sound enters our bodies and touches us in a very real way. Sound and vision, according to Walter Ong, have different orienting effects: "Sound situates man in the middle of actuality and in simultaneity, whereas vision situates man in the front of things and in sequentiality" (1967: 128).

We have the capacity to hear something vibrating that is beyond our grasp and out of sight. Sound waves travel around corners, through walls, and for great distances. Sound is intimate, invasive even. Since we don't have earlids, sound waves indiscriminately enter the interior of our body—our head. But the ears are not the only body part that perceives sound waves. The entire body "feels" sound waves. Sound informs us of an energetic vibration being produced in a location, and we orient ourselves depending on our associations with the sound: sirens alert, doorbells announce, and stomachs gurgle (informing us of interior conditions), but what about a whistle, a chant, or hand clapping? Our experiences and associations help us shape meaning. While some sounds summon more innate responses, others are learned cultural constructions that help us to orient ourselves in a more abstract, social way. We learn to attend to specific aspects of sound—quality, dynamics, intensity, and rhythms—to acquire meaning of our sonic, musical, environment.

When you move through a space, are you assisted by an array of vibrations that convey where you are and how you can maneuver through the space? Consider an organized sonic palette, a musical scene, as it stirs your body to move. I imagine your current experience of the music brings forward prior listenings, prior experience with similar sonic events. How our bodies move to the music, too, is hinged on enculturated knowledge of sound and movement correspondences. We practice making sense of the many layers of complexity, and even learn to mask out some sounds in our selective attention. Experience and our various learned practices of sound and motion supply us with

a field of sonic orientations, a vocabulary to draw on to connect sound and motion.⁶

Sound provides a dynamic, immersive “space” for dancers to orient themselves both within a physical space and within time. For example, the body can understand how large a room is, locate who or what is creating sound, and trace the order of events through time via the sounds within a room. Sound plays a major role in orienting dancers within a physical space as well as within a musical piece. Since dancers are masters of negotiating their bodies through space and time, it is important to understand how they are “trained” to tune in to sound for their specific artistic purpose.

The relationship between musical sounds and dance movement is culturally determined—for example, is the choreography based on precomposed music? Is the music composed to choreographic specifications? Are there cues for the musicians and/or for the dancer to coordinate? Is the dancer considered to be a member of the ensemble? Is there improvisation? Is there a direct correlation of sound to movement rhythmically? In pitch/movement content? In phrasing? Does music provide an accompaniment *for* dance? Does the music mark time for dancers with a regular pulse (such as a regular beat within the context of a phrase of four measures in 4/4 time)? How does music elicit a sonic setting for the dancer to move in? These are just some of the questions that reveal sight and sound relationships in dance and lend insight toward how to understand the moving body in a sonic setting.

practicing music

How music is transmitted in different cultures has long been a subject of ethnomusicological research. The focus on pedagogical practices has given us a wealth of cultural insights into how particular communities define and practice music, but also how music functions and orients individuals in their culture. Research on oral/aural transmission, notation systems, mnemonics, social structure, and teacher-student relationships has been a resource for understanding enculturation. Nearly every ethnomusicologist in the past three decades has taken on the task of learning an instrumental or vocal tradition as a participant-observer and, in the process, has learned what qualities are most important to becoming a musician in that culture. Analysis of transmission processes uncovers the essence of the tradition and the social networks

that support it. It also helps us understand how music functions within a community.

During fieldwork in Ghana John Chernoff studied drumming. In *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, he discusses how the sensibilities of the community are transmitted via musicking:

Music is essential to life in Africa because Africans use music to mediate their involvement within a community, and a good musical performance reveals their orientation toward this crucial concern. As a style of human conduct, participation in an African musical event characterizes a sensibility with which Africans relate to the world and commit themselves to its affairs. . . . The development of musical awareness in Africa constitutes a process of education: music's explicit purpose, in the various ways it might be defined by Africans, is, essentially, socialization. An individual learns the potentials and limitations of participation in a communal context dramatically arranged for the engagement, display, and critical examination of fundamental cultural values. (Chernoff 1979: 154)

Michael Bakan, in his ethnography *Music of Death and New Creation*, provides a case study of Balinese pedagogy for gamelan called *maguru panggul* in a chapter titled “Learning to Play: Balinese Experiences.” Bakan writes that the practice of *maguru panggul*, literally, “teaching with the mallet,” reveals the “role of the mallet as a transmitter of musical information.”

Maguru panggul is an oral/aural tradition approach. No musical notation is employed, and the effectiveness of teaching is almost exclusively dependent on a holistic demonstration-and-imitation mode of transmitting musical knowledge from teacher to student. (Bakan 1999: 282).

One case I found particularly fascinating—a student, Wayan, studying with his teacher Sukarata through imitation. Bakan describes Wayan’s intent visual focus on Sukarata’s mallet motion:

As “the music” is transported from Sukarata’s mind through his body, through his hands, and into his mallet, ultimately being brought to life by the kendang itself, it enters Wayan’s body and mind through an inverse process. As his mallet motion begins to approximate Sukarata’s,

first hands, then arms and body follow suit. Before Wayan can play anything that sounds even remotely like “the actual notes” of the music, he is in full command of a vocabulary of movement and a style of playing that capture the essence of the musical passage while lacking most of its structural and formal content (284–285).

When I read this passage I imagined a visual and kinesthetic dance of learning supporting the oral/aural transmission process. The immediacy of learning to orient oneself within the soundscape, within the learning system, and within the community, through imitation of a teacher, seemed just like dance lessons I have experienced.

dancing in sound

The compositional elements in Japanese dance music are not centered on chordal structures that vertically mark time and follow cultural expectations of pitch-based elements as in Western music. Instead, pitched and nonpitched elements of music mark a narrative, linear flow of time to privilege the story line text. Music is not largely improvisatory, but is composed. The various instrumental and vocal lines of a piece have horizontal relationships that are tied to the narrative text and provide a sonic landscape for the dancer to move in. This might be as specific as providing a segment of folk music during a narrative passage where a dance character comes upon an outdoor *matsuri* festival while strolling down a busy street. In Japanese music the sonic landscape can also be created by abstract aural cues such as the constant beat of a *taiko* (large barrel drum), a sonic metaphor that represents water or snow elements in the landscape (similar to a leitmotif). There are countless references to create sonic landscapes, each an instantiation of a particular environment within a dance. These sound references are woven into the music, and as a dancer “moves” a story, the musicians convey the narrative in sound and text. The visual and sonic elements complement each other to perform a rich, dramatic narrative.

How dancers become acquainted with music during lessons reveals a great deal about the sonically situated body. Music cues, much like visual cues, are sonic associations that dancers learn through regular practice and regular immersion in a variety of sonic environments.⁷ I have found that sound also provides a space to learn within. The sounds that orient a student during a lesson—from Hatchobori’s

front door chime to individual voices, vocables, and hand clapping in a lesson—immerse students in a familiar sonic space that is recognizable and conducive to learning. There is a complexity to the sounds at Hatchobori. In this section I provide a passage through the oral/aural sonic landscape of lessons.

case study in oral/aural transmission

expanded field notes

Early in my lesson today the taped music was turned off, and as we danced the passage again, Iemoto began to sing “toto hi fuya ton oi nao—ashi o yosete,” a mixture of song, mnemonics, and instructions. Her “song” greatly informed my path through the complex music. The relationship of the movements and the music became clearer, and I experienced a sensation of dancing from within the music, or riding its contours. More importantly, as I kinesthetically followed her movements while hearing these instructions, I felt her physical use of space and time.

Oral instructions during *nihon buyo* lessons impart a wide range of directions to a student, from general to specific: fundamental dance movements, choreography, narrative story line, emotional content, and music. I found that teachers' articulations in lessons form a metalanguage, a unique dance instructional language reflecting a varied and deeply complex matrix of information. This “dance speak” comprises a fragmented yet completely fluid combination of the musical vocal line, instrumental vocables, emotive exclamations, and instructive speech.⁸ A closer inspection of the oral transmission process reveals that the metalanguage created during lessons is spontaneously tailored for particular students' needs. In this section I parse the three basic categories of this metalanguage: movement instruction, emotive expression, and musical information. To convey how this dance speak informs dancers, I offer excerpted transcriptions of specific classes from my field video tapes (DVD examples 7–13).

moving sound

Teachers often verbally direct students' dance movements to state corrections or to introduce new material. These instructions are voiced

for practical improvements such as body position, posture, carriage, space, and timing. For instance, when a teacher observes that a student's feet need repositioning, she might simply remark, "Feet, closer together." This direct verbal guidance assists the transmission of correct body movement in a clear and pragmatic manner.

As mentioned in chapter 2, *nihon buyo* dance vocabulary consists of small movement units, called *kata*. These set units are small enough to break down larger phrases, yet large enough to reference during lessons. Each individual *kata* carries a name that can be called out just prior to its execution. This verbal cue is particularly helpful for students who are learning a new piece, because they cannot anticipate the next move. For example, a teacher might call out "*oridatami*," allowing the student to anticipate a rather complex series of graceful movements. Specific *kata* are not precisely the same for every dance, however (for example, an *oridatami* will vary from dance to dance). Several factors affect this variance, including the type of character portrayed, the context of the *kata* within the phrase, and the dance genre. In other words, students need to remain alert when following, even if they are quite familiar with the *kata* vocabulary.⁹

A teacher sometimes talks the student through the dance narrative while gestures are pantomimed. A verbal description of movements contextualizes the mimetic gestures—"Look far away . . ." (*tooku mite*), Iemoto called out to me as I studied the piece "*Seigaiha*," for instance. Because this dance reflects the different phases of the sea during the year, the dancer's physical expression through a gaze far to the distant horizon can vivify the spirit of the seaside. Moments later I stepped back while looking downward, as if to avoid the incoming waves. Here Iemoto supplied, "*Aa nami ga kimasu*" (Oh, here come the waves), animating the narrative further. This type of direction informs in a literal sense. Her words elucidate the actions and gestural connotations, contextualizing the physical dance expression within the dance narrative.

During lessons Iemoto often sings small sections of the musical vocal line to emphasize the relationship of the movements to the ongoing narrative. For example, in my lesson Iemoto sang the lyrics "the sea is calm" (*nami o shizukani*) as I passed through the gestures—with palms down, my outstretched arms drew a continuous, smooth motion outward as my torso subtly lifted to pantomime the tranquillity of the water's surface. I found that hearing Iemoto orally accentuate the vocal text while I moved through the phrase connected aural and kinesthetic

memories in my body—an essence of the sea's calmness embodied in action and sound.

storytelling

In many *nihon buyo* pieces, a single vocalist in the musical ensemble serves as a storyteller, singing the various characters' lines as well as the narrative. Although a tape recording of the music plays during dance lessons, Iemoto often vocally doubles the song, bringing the story to life.

In the opening scene of the dance "Komori" (The Babysitter) the dancer portrays a young babysitter chasing a bird flying off with her fried *tofu*. The babysitter, toting the infant on her back, takes a tumble and rubs her hurt knee. When I dropped to the floor and rubbed my knee (dancing the babysitter character) during my lesson, Iemoto sang with the tape-recorded vocal part, singing in the babysitter's voice—"Oh dear! What shall I do? . . . o-o-OUCH!" (*oya kana nanto shyo e . . . Aitatata!*) Iemoto's voice vivified the babysitter's exclamation as well as her boisterous character.

In late September of 1993, I watched Iemoto teach the dance "Mitsumen komori." In a very comical section of the dance narrative, the dancer assumes the role of a young girl who playacts several popular folk characters using masks. The dancer's challenge is to perform several contrasting characters while still portraying the main role (the young girl). During this animated lesson Iemoto interjected the comical folk characters' voices as they appeared in the dance:

"Nan da? Ha ha ha ha ha . . . [What's this? Ha ha ha ha ha]," Iemoto called out in a low, gruff voice, impersonating Ebisu (patron of hard work and one of the seven gods of good luck).

"Oya oya oya ureshiina [Oh, oh, oh, I'm so happy]." In very high-pitched, sweet voice, Iemoto cried out in Okame's voice (a woman who represents good fortune and happiness).

"Ano neisan to isshoni narimasu [I want to marry that nice woman]." Iemoto knelt and uttered this hopeful prayer as the character Hyottoko (protector of fire).

With the dancer's face concealed behind masks, a large portion of her emotive expression is withdrawn. Therefore, movements in this

piece must be distinct and particular to each (masked) character. Iemoto's dramatization of characters' voices enhances their presence, emphasizing the rapid role shifts for the student.

As illustrated by Iemoto's speaking each character in the example above, the quality of her voice is key to the emotive expression she imparts. Her high-pitched voice for the female character and low, gruff voice for the male character aurally project each character's identity, which a student must attempt to express in physical movement. Dancers are so conditioned to synchronize a sound and physical movement that I believe it would actually be difficult for a dancer to move in a feminine dance style while a male character's voice was portrayed, or as a farmer during a courtesan's exclamation. The quality of the voice embodies the inner spirit of the character as much as the dancing image. As a means for summoning movement qualities from a body culturally aware of movement vocabularies, sound invokes a physicalization of a character's identity during the transmission process.

Iemoto sometimes utters impromptu exclamations from the character's perspective (but not drawn from the musical vocal text) to personify the dance role a student is learning. In the process she creates an inspiration for the dancer's movements and reveals the emotional state of the character. I recall a lesson for the dance "Ame no shiki." Iemoto sat holding an open fan at arm's length before her. From the character's point of view she delighted, "Mmm looks tasty . . ." (*Aa oishisoo . . .*), and the fan transformed into a delicious watermelon slice. Her eyes and facial expression reflected the delight of seeing such a fruit. She bit off the tip and spit a seed to the side. To supply another example: during a lesson Iemoto and Soke were observing a student dance in a snow scene. Soke commented, "I don't see the snow." Running through the phrase again, Iemoto animated the character's inner voice—"Ah, snow . . . [is falling]"—fixing her gaze in the sky.

dancing music

Historically, most traditional Japanese instrumental music was transmitted orally. Each instrument has a separate set of mnemonics, or *shyoga*, that are incorporated into the transmission system.¹⁰ As part of their dance training *nihon buyo* dancers often learn a musical instrument (such as *shamisen* or *tsuzumi*, a lute and shoulder drum respectively). Learning an instrument familiarizes dancers with the musical

vocabulary, the compositional forms, as well as the mnemonic systems involved in the transmission. In dance lessons teachers primarily sing the *shamisen* mnemonics called *kuchijamisen* (*kuchi*, meaning “mouth” or “oral” *shamisen*) to supply a musical structure for the student when the recorded music is not playing.

Particular phrases or patterns in the music generally accompany certain choreographed movements or emotional gestures. These patterns and other verbal directions become students’ aural dance vocabulary. Hearing these musical phrases each day while coordinating dance moves links the music and movements within the body, the two becoming inseparable in one’s physical memory.¹¹ Tachibana Sahomi told me that, in the 1940s, Tachibana Saho (her childhood teacher in Fukushima) played the *shamisen* during her lessons. She recalled, “Saho used to play the *shamisen* and that’s how I learned to sing. She used to sing the songs and lyrics and then when we got to a certain point where we could do it [the dance] by ourselves then she would pick up the *shamisen*. But if we didn’t know the dance then she would only sing it. So this is why all of the songs are still stuck in my head” (interview, September 22, 1989). Soke and Iemoto both learned traditional instruments to prepare for their dance studies. Their knowledge of the music carries a depth that their dancing and teaching embody—movements that emanate from within the complex musical structures and exist as embodied cultural knowledge.

Today, dance teachers use recorded music for lessons, and musicians play live music for public performances. Several teachers have said that, with or without recorded music, they are aware of the vocal line and each of the instrumental lines as they dance. Further, this stream of musical lines in their memory enables them to clearly navigate within the musical soundscape.

Here I return to the topic of a teaching metalanguage for dance. During lessons teachers spontaneously sing a combination of instrumental mnemonics blended with fragments of the vocal line and verbal dance directions (instructional and emotive). The result is a unique dance language, a metalanguage patchwork of music and dance directions pieced together for the purpose of highlighting the salient cues within the music for the student. Though this language comprises parsed speech forms, teachers create a remarkably fluid line to maintain the time flow of the passage. Teachers supply this medley of verbal directions both with and without the taped music, although to varying degrees.

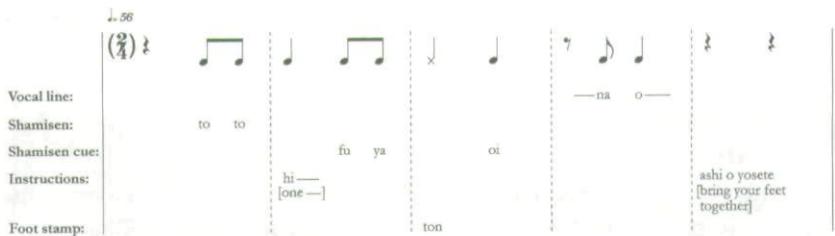


FIGURE 2. Transcription of teaching metalanguage. A lesson of “Matsu no midori.”

When taped music accompanies a lesson, teachers continue to sing the *kuchijamisen* (*shamisen* vocables), to emphasize the crucial dance cues within the complex musical composition. Select mnemonics combine with verbal dance instructions and sounds (such as stamps and claps) to create a verbal interpretation of the music for the student. In the short example in figure 2 (from “Matsu no midori”), the rapid succession from singing the *shamisen* vocalable “*to to*” is followed by a count “*hi*” (“one” implying “one-two-three-,” etc.); next “*fu ya*,” a vocal call used by *shamisen* players to cue the ensemble (here, a cue for a pickup to a downbeat); a foot stamp cue, “*ton*”; another *shamisen* cue, “*oi*"; one word of the vocal text, “*nao*”; and finally a verbal instruction for the student to keep her feet closer together, “*ashi o yosete*.” Iemoto’s single verbal line “*to to hi fu ya ton oi nao ashi o yosete*,” when parsed by category, illustrates the complexity of this verbal cueing system.

In order to further demonstrate the role that this metalanguage plays in everyday practice within the dance studio, the following section offers two typical instances from my field experience.

DVD oral transmission example 7: verbal cueing, “Echigojishi”

The first case study example represents a typical passage of verbal cueing. During Yasuo’s lesson Iemoto introduced a new section of the dance “Echigojishi.” Because the dance steps are lively, Iemoto reduced the speed of the recorded music considerably. At one point she turned off the recorded music and walked through the steps at a slower pace for Yasuo. She alternately sang the *kuchijamisen* and vocal lyrics to supply a musical framework, and inserted a quick dance instruction here and there.

A transcription of Iemoto’s verbal cues for this passage appears in



PHOTO 5. Tachibana Yoshie teaching "Echigojishi."

figure 3. This excerpt has been parsed by category in the transcription to include: (1) action sounds—nonverbal sounds that the dancers produce, such as hand claps and foot stamps; (2) vocal lyrics; (3) *kuchi-jamisen* and *shamisen*—calls for cueing the ensemble; and (4) dance directions—the verbal instructions specifically for Yasuo regarding his movements (see measure 21).

The transcription graphically illuminates Iemoto's flexible vocal shifting between categories of cues, particularly between the vocal lyrics and the *shamisen* line. She inferred the rhythm of the *shamisen* phrase occasionally, breaking down the (singer's) vocal passage into shorter rhythmic units during a sustained passage. For instance, the actual vocal text, from measure 11, follows: "*Botan wa motanudo Echigo no shishi wa . . .*" In the lesson however, Iemoto sang: "*Bota-a-n wa-a mo ta—a nu do-o-o Echi-i [g]o no-o shi shi-i wa.*" She emphasized the rhythm of the *shamisen* by drawing out and rearticulating syllables to accent the underlying *shamisen* rhythm. The most prominent case occurred in measure 14: "*do-o-o*." Here Iemoto emphatically marked the two eighth-notes ("*do-o*") and the downbeat of measure 15 ("*o*"). In a sense she overlayed the *shamisen* rhythm onto the vocal part, imparting the fluidity of the arching vocal phrase simultaneously with the percussive rhythmic structure of the *shamisen* part.

FIGURE 3. "Echigojishi" lesson transcription.

Iemoto's verbal patchwork of necessary musical elements and cues creates a structural musical setting for dancers to move in. In a sense, she can "hear" and reconstruct an entire dance and its music in her head—while teaching she selects from an ensemble of instruments (or voice) to highlight a path through the music. The complex music is pared to essentials. Each time a section is repeated during a lesson,

Iemoto creates a slightly different interpretation, stressing the vocal line in one instance, the *shamisen* in another, or dance cues in yet another. Perhaps we can liken her fluidity and complete awareness of the music and dance to that of a pianist who can brilliantly play a score reduction of a full orchestra by ear—consolidating the orchestral score to its bare essentials. In her verbal interpretation of the music Iemoto articulates the precise relationship of individual parts relative to the whole fabric of the ensemble. During one lesson a student might experience several of these varied interpretations—each a different musical and instructional pathway through the music. The next case study illustrates six of Iemoto's interpretations of a single passage that took place during one lesson.

DVD examples 8–13: verbal cueing, “Matsu no midori”

DVD examples 8–13 (transcribed in figure 4) are drawn from Kazue's first lesson of “Matsu no midori.” During the lesson Iemoto introduced the opening passage (approximately two and a half minutes in length), and they repeated it five times together. At one point Iemoto singled out a difficult phrase to concentrate on. The transcription focuses on Iemoto's verbal teaching for the six reviews of this passage with particular attention to her musical cues.

This example also reveals a common format of lessons. In general, lessons can be broken down into three sections: (1) a review of what was covered in the last dance lesson or an introduction of a new dance; (2) an introduction of the next section of the dance and a detailed focus on the new movements and cues; and (3) a run-through of the entire passage from the beginning.

When a teacher introduces a new passage, recorded music generally accompanies the dance, providing the student with a concept of the musical context of the piece. In Kazue's lesson taped-recorded music was played for the first two reviews of the new section. Iemoto kept her verbal cues to a minimum at this point of the learning stage. She included only an occasional preparatory phrase cue such as “*fu ya*” and “*yo i*,” which are similar to the pickup “and a—[one/downbeat]” (see figure 4, preparation to measure 1, and measure 5). These verbal cues are not mnemonics for pitches played on the *shamisen*, but preparatory cues (or calls) that players commonly employ to coordinate their timing with other ensemble members.

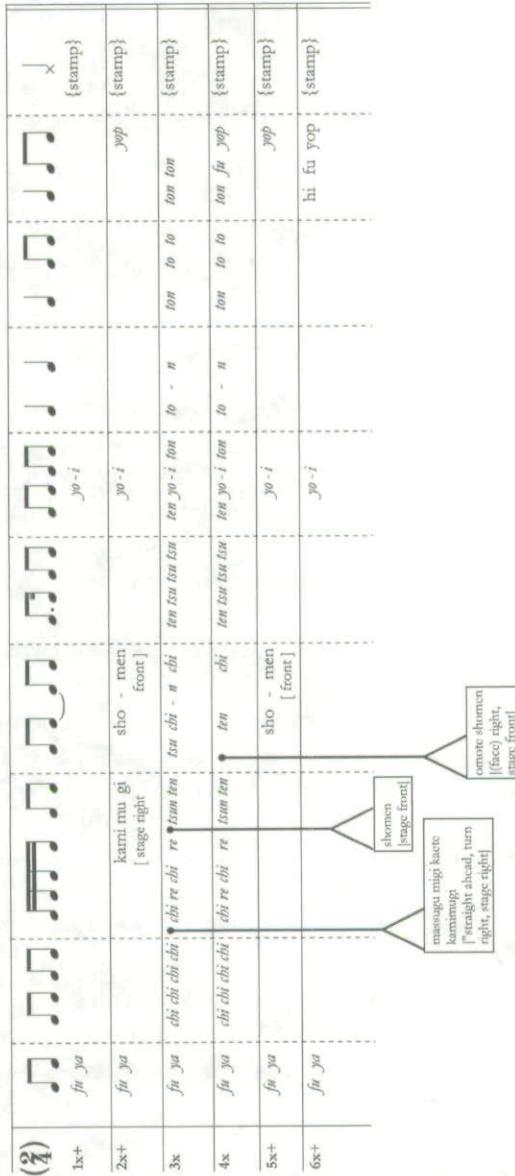


FIGURE 4. "Matsu no midori" lesson transcription.

Symbol key:

IX =
+ =

=

{ } =

Repetitions of phrases are represented by numbers in the far left corner.

Phrase repetition numbers (see above) followed by "+" indicate those repetitions danced with taped music (repetition numbers 1, 2, 5, and 6).

Time is momentarily suspended. Verbal instructions spoken during this time are inserted in a box below mnemonic text line.

kuchijamisen (shamisen mnemonics).

verbal instructions in Japanese (that are not mnemonics), translated in [] style brackets below Japanese text.

Text within these brackets indicate a sound that dancers make, such as a stamp or clap.

Iemoto stopped after the second run-through. Noticing less fluidity in Kazue's movements during the musical interlude, Iemoto reviewed only the difficult phrase. Without the taped music Iemoto verbally broke down the phrase carefully, singing the rhythms in detail and clarifying the direction of movements. Note on the transcription the detailed *kuchijamisen* Iemoto provided in the third and fourth review of the phrase, relative to other interpretations. Without the recorded music, she supplied a musical framework with *kuchijamisen* to reinforce how the dance movements coordinate with the music.

An important aspect of the oral transmission process lies in the teacher's control of time. Without the recorded music playing, Iemoto can manipulate the musical time—from a subtle nuance, a pause, to a momentary suspension of the music altogether. Adjustment of the musical time allows Iemoto to create a musical setting tailored to individual students' needs and abilities.

A case of time suspension occurs in figure 4, phrase repeat numbers 3 and 4, in the transcription (note: verbal directions spoken during time suspensions are enclosed in boxed areas). In the third repetition, on the third and fourth beats, Iemoto suspends the music for a moment to insert a lengthy dance direction, then smoothly reenters the music to continue the passage. On beat three of this example, Iemoto directs Kazue, "straight ahead, turn right, stage right" (*massugu. migi kaete. kamimugi*), suspending the time. Iemoto continues with the *kuchijamisen* mnemonics, "*chire chire*"; then, on beat four, she squeezes in the comment "[face] front stage" (*shomen*), followed by the remainder of the musical phrase sung in *kuchijamisen*.

Iemoto's varied vocal interpretations of a phrase offer another level of musical flexibility. When dancers perform onstage with live music, the rendition of the piece varies. Often the contemporary dancer's first experience with live music occurs during a dress rehearsal, and the rehearsal musicians might not be the same as those who play for the actual performance. Iemoto's changing vocal interpretations during class help students develop flexibility in their conception of the music. Students' insights regarding the music thus include variables beyond the confines of the set recorded music.

The vocal interpretations sung in lessons also serve the purpose of highlighting instrumental and vocal parts heard in the recorded music. The singing of various interpretations of the music without recorded music creates a highlighted musical structure. Later, when the recorded music is reintroduced, the specific cues from individual instruments within the ensemble stand out prominently.

Curiously, dance metalanguage sung in classes persists beyond specific lessons. One of my childhood teachers, Tachibana Sahomi, told me during a lesson in 1987, "Every time I dance this piece I can hear Saho [her own childhood teacher] sing the song and *kuchijamisen*." She smiled and looked off in the distance for a moment. I imagined she was fondly remembering her own dance lesson. Then, without another word, she turned and continued my lesson, singing the vocal line and mnemonics. All at once I realized that, while dancing, I hear Sahomi's voice in my mind. Because Sahomi learned the piece from Saho, it is in part Saho's voice I hear. In a way, dancers' aural memories capture a lineage of dances and music, transmitted through generations of dancers' voices. I find that a particular teacher's manner of "singing a dance" endures in my memory in tandem with the dance. The process of teaching, transmitted from generation to generation along with a dance, is as personal an expression as the dance itself.

propelled

Fans are electric machines. Conveyances. Plugged in. Somehow they have transfigured from a simple paper object for "fanning" to a mechanical device—though both propel currents of air. Can we still dance with this whirring and buzzing machinery? This new-age fan seems to move on its own. It is motored by an energy source beyond my limbs. What can these conveyances articulate? I might lift one someday to see what gestures it suggests.

mediating sense—notation and video

Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man—the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society, much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media.

—Marshall McLuhan (1964: 19)

Imagining life without media is difficult. Media have extended our sensorium and become fully integrated into our daily lives. Certainly media, as it mediates art and ideas, changes the way the performing arts are transmitted (see Williams 2001). With McLuhan's spirit, this chapter includes media as sensory devices for transmitting dance and examines the ways in which media are incorporated into teaching practices. Though the transmission of *nihon buyo* relies primarily on human interaction, some teachers find media useful, such as written notation, audio (including phonographs, tape cassettes, and compact discs), and video cassettes.

It is interesting to note the strong attitudes that teachers have regarding recording devices. Their opinions reveal a wariness of technology, largely because of the effects it might have on the traditions they practice. However, I find that the strength of many teachers' convictions—their misgivings about media—is conveyed so clearly to their students that it actually allows media to be utilized in innovative ways. For the most part, media are permitted within the pedagogical system primarily as a device for extending memory, as a memory aid.

dancing paper

Dance notation is not considered to be essential for transmitting *nihon buyo*. I have observed dance notation used by contemporary dancers in two situations: private notation created by individual dancers as a memory aid, and as a document of established choreography distributed to teachers within a school.

Japanese dance notation exists in a variety of styles. A dancer's objective for notating a piece greatly influences the notational system employed. For example, if the notation is to be used solely as a memory aid by an active dancer, then the notation must be easily read for

quick reference. The impracticality of holding a text while dancing, or pausing a phrase in order to refer to a stationary dance text, indicates the cumbersome nature of notated dance. Specifically, a notational style that demands prolonged visual observation interrupts the fluidity of dance. For that reason, notation written in a condensed style is not only practical but preferred by active dancers who notate dances to recall choreography. On the other hand, for researchers who aim to clearly "record" the dance in detail, the inscription of every nuance in the dance notation is crucial. Machida Kasho, in *Hyoju nihon buyo fu* (Standard Nihon Buyo Notations), points out this dichotomy in a paradox—the notation that is easily read is not precise or detailed, and notations that are detailed are not easily read (Machida 1967: 28).

The history of *nihon buyo* notation has not been documented well. This is in part due to the lack of published dances, a common system for notation, and the function of notation within the context of dance. Prior to the twentieth century, personal dance notations were more common than published documents. I surmise that, for teachers, dance notation might appear to undermine the strong teacher–pupil transmission system. Notation creates a paradox because it is a fixed object representing a living, changing art form that exists in space and time. The vivid qualities of the lived learning experience so vital to lessons cannot be translated to paper. However, notation need not become a rigid text that stands for the definitive, authoritative dance. Rather, I have noticed a flexible view of what notation represents within the transmission process for a school, a teacher, or a student.

I observed Iemoto refer to her father's notes during a lesson (although this was rather unusual). In this case the purpose of checking his notes was to reference the original choreography. The use of notation in this instance manifests the *iemoto* system, revealing the deep respect for Tachibana Hoshu's choreography. On a more pragmatic level, his notation served as a memory aid for his choreography, to extend the tradition beyond his lifetime.

Underlying the basic problems concerning *nihon buyo* transmission via notation is the fact that individual schools seldom intermingle (particularly prior to the establishment of the Nihon buyo Kyokai [Japanese Dance Association] in 1931). It is widely known that individual schools protect their secret artistic techniques and choreography, and caution dancers not to reveal the "tricks of the trade" via notated texts. The coherence of a particular school's style is greatly influenced by the strength of the school's interior social network, the *iemoto* struc-

ture, and student allegiance. Notations were (and currently still are in many cases) meant for individuals within the school only. For example, Nishikawa Koizaburo's *Nishikawa ryū hidensho* (Secret Notations of the Nishikawa School) of 1854 was an unpublished text circulated only within the Nishikawa School as a sort of "tricks of the trade" booklet.

This "secrecy" of schools' artistry and transmission is present in virtually every art tradition in Japan. It is one of the factors that strengthens the schools' transmission and social bonding, and shapes the distinct styles of individual schools. At the close of Zeami's *Kakyo*, an inscription (attributed to his student, Komparu Zenchiku) cautions the reader of the seriousness of the document:

This teaching was passed on by Zeami himself for the succeeding generations of this house and should not be shown to actors from other troupes. Luckily, thanks to the Will of Heaven, which knows that my heart reveres the art of no, this manuscript has come into my hands. This secret teaching forms the very core of the art of our school, and it is a text of fearsome power. Thus it must not be shown carelessly to others. (Rimer and Yamazaki 1984: 110)

No doubt both the writer and the owner of these printed objects were aware of the liabilities of permanent texts. The concern about who might read the texts reveals the serious attitude toward the transmission process and the allegiance of these artists to their craft and school.

After World War II many dance styles (including *nihon buyo*) gained popularity and prompted a practical means for notation for the public. The recording and publishing industries were now technically capable of providing interesting products for the masses. A boom in recorded dance music on 45 and 78 rpm records facilitated rapid transmission of dance music (and established musical standards of the dance repertory). Often records included dance steps on the dustcover, or as an insert.

In the 1940s, magazines (such as *Nihon buyo*) specifically catering to dance audiences were published. The magazines included photographs of performers, costumes, and props; articles; reviews; and interviews. These publications fed hungry dance-going crowds. Dance stars emerged. Amateur dancers flocked to dance halls and lessons, and bought up fashionable publications. This excitement in the general public created a demand for greater quantities of information on all facets of *nihon buyo*. The rekindled interest in dance, coupled with

growing media facilities (phonograph, film, and written publications), greatly influenced the notation of dance pieces. *Nihon buyo* magazine published dance instructions that included step-by-step, or rather frame-by-frame, photographs of dances, including dance directions and song lyrics.

A range of notational styles was published in Machida's brief collection of notational styles, from highly abstract symbolic systems to stick-figure styles. This variety of notation styles illuminates the diversity of notation practices as well as the pragmatic use of the notation. On the one hand, dancers (novice and professional) can easily comprehend the stick-figure style because it so closely represents the body engaged in motion. On the other hand, the less accessible and intuitive symbolic notation systems are capable of greater detail in their inscription of movements. Also, the latter notation style takes a commitment of time, requiring a dancer to learn a new vocabulary in order to notate and read it fluently. One senior Tachibana teacher pointed out to me that the stick-figure notation style can be read at a distance or handheld, a practical and very necessary feature for dance notation. Which style a dancer or school elects to employ ultimately must be based on its functional purpose and for whom the notations are geared.

One of the most comprehensive published works on *nihon buyo* notation is Hanayagi Chiyo's *Jitsu nihon buyo no kiso* (The Practical Skills of Basic Nihon Buyo Movement). She provides a valuable introduction to the Hanayagi style of dance and her own approach to notating the repertory (in a stick-figure style notation). The book illustrates *nihon buyo* extensively in photographs and illustrations and is a fine document of the *nihon buyo* vocabulary in text.

Within the Tachibana School dancers create notations for their personal reference. Several times I have stepped into the dressing room to find a dancer focused on notating a dance. Most everyone uses *ningyo* (stick-figure) notation style. When I asked about their notations, several students mentioned that they regularly make only a few quick notes directly after the lesson but fill them out on the subway ride home. Once they arrive home, they notate the passage with greater detail. I have not witnessed a student taking notes during his/her lesson or when observing another student's lesson.

Some dances are skillfully notated by a dancer within the school. A copy of the dance is issued to the teachers so that they may teach their students the Tachibana choreography. This notation is primarily *ningyo* (stick-figure) style, with added graphic symbols to impart the sense of

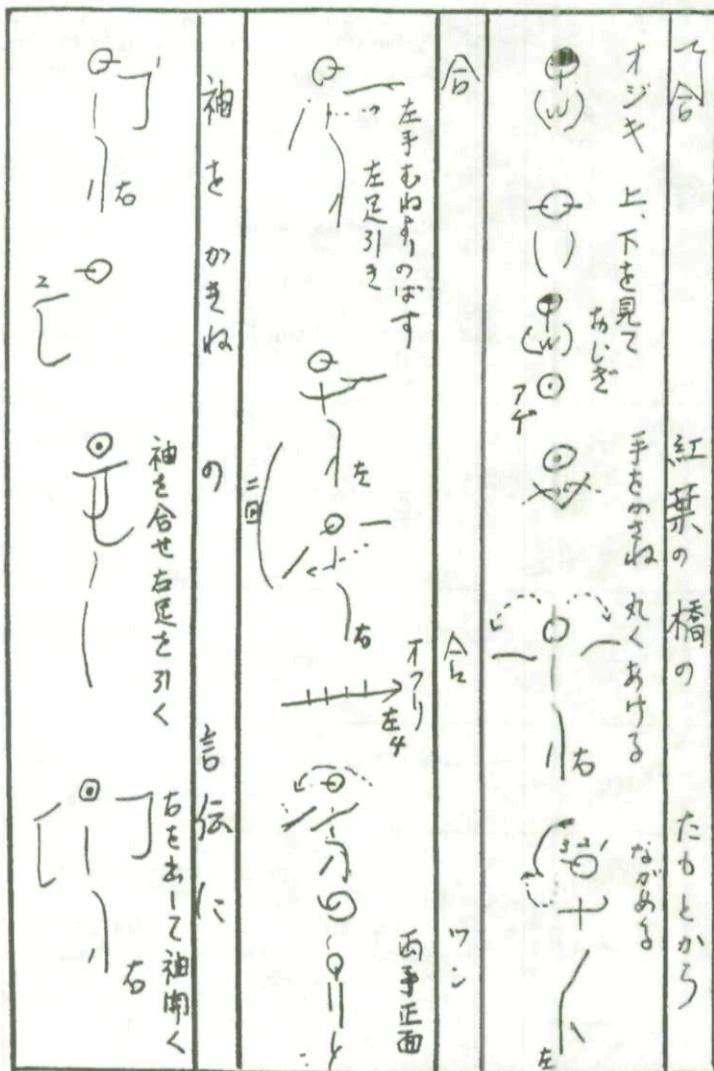
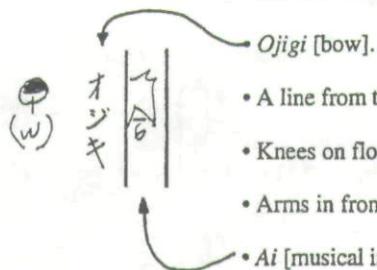


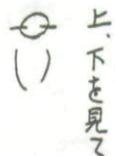
FIGURE 5. Tachibana notation, an excerpt of "Momiji no hashi."

motion. The vocal line and instrumental cues are also included so that the dancer can coordinate the movements with the music. An example of this notation is illustrated in figure 5. This figure represents one of the four pages of an unpublished Tachibana notation for the dance "Momiji no hashi" (Bridge of Maple Trees) choreographed by Tachibana Hiroyo, notated by Tachibana Hosen, March 11, 1995. A general explanation of the first line of this page may be seen in figure 6.

- The dance opens with a seated formal bow. Here the top of the dancer's head is shaded to represent hair and to illustrate that the head is bowed down.



- A line from the center indicates the nose.
- Knees on floor with feet tucked under hips.
- Arms in front of knees, hands on the floor.
- Ai* [musical interlude—here, a musical introduction]



- Torso and head raise, hands still on the floor.
- Straight lines indicate nose positions—coupled here with:



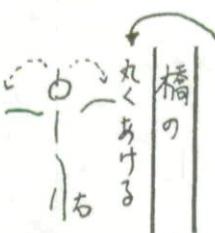
- Age* [the head raises]. Here the dot in the middle of the circle (head) depicts the nose facing forward.



- Arrows show direction of arm movement for:
- Te o kasane* [hands come together, one on top of the other]. This movement corresponds to the musical vocal text:
“Momiji no . . .”

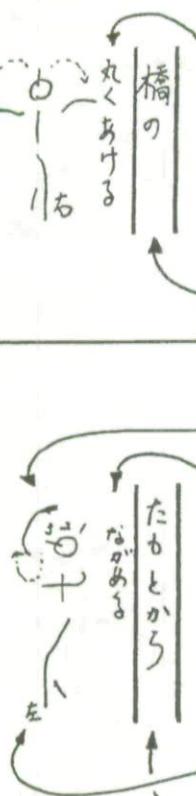
FIGURE 6. (*Above and opposite*) Tachibana notation example translated. Reprinted by permission.

- Stand (the full body is depicted).
- *migi* [right] written next to the foot marks that the right foot is forward.
- The head raises (note the nose is now up).
- *Maruku akeru* [open (arms) in circles]: The hands open from the previous position outward in a circular movement—note dotted lines indicating the direction of the arm movements.
- These movements correspond to the musical vocal text: "hashi no . . ."



- Body now faces right.
- Right hand curves down and then up to a position with the hand flat with fingers together, shading eyes. Note how the thumb position is included, showing that the hand is palm down.
- Left hand under right elbow (keeping sleeve back).
- *Nagameru* [look far away].
- 1 2 3: looking in the distance, the head moves from left to right in three moves.
- *hidari* [left] written next to the foot marks that the left foot is forward.
- These movements correspond to the musical vocal text: "tamoto kara."

While there is ample evidence of *nihon buyo* notation through history and in contemporary dance life, it is not considered to be a "true" means of transmission. It is not intended to be utilized as the sole method for learning dance. Virtually every dancer I spoke to strongly remarked that his/her personal notations were merely a memory aid. Further, teachers remark that notes are wonderful references but cannot possibly convey the essence of a dance. I have attempted to present a general background of *nihon buyo* notational styles, problems, and practices in this chapter; however, it is clear that these notations are documents of dance, lacking the embodied spirit so crucial to this genre.



dancing tape

We can not rely on machines to remember what our bodies should know, even if we do use tape recorders.

—*Noh* performer Mori Tsuneyoshi

(Hahn field notes, November 18, 1993)

The practice of employing videotape as a means of transmitting *nihon buyo* is uncommon. However, not to include a brief mention recounting its occasional use would neglect a fascinating aspect of contemporary Japanese society. Further, the strong attitudes and controversies concerning the use of modern recording technologies unmistakably demonstrate artists' enduring commitment to the lived experience for maintaining the art form.

One summer Iemoto visited New York for a week, and I had an opportunity to study the dance "Kyo no tsuki" with her. Several of the lessons were videotaped so that other dancers and I could review the dance in Iemoto's absence during the year. The following summer I traveled to Hatchobori to study dance. At my first lesson we reviewed "Kyo no tsuki." Soke and Iemoto seemed surprised that I recalled the dance after only a few dance lessons the previous year. I naively revealed, "I watched the videotapes." To this remark Soke promptly responded, **"You cannot get emotion from a videotape"** (Hahn field notes, August 1, 1991).

Soke's statement greatly influenced my thoughts about *nihon buyo* transmission. Despite the various methods of transmission—such as taking part in dance lessons, personal notations, or videotaping—the personal, one-on-one method of transmission continues to be the most vital. Further implied in this statement is that, for Soke, dance is not dance without presence—emotion, heart (*kokoro*). Successfully executing dance steps in the correct form and order does not necessarily produce good dance.

While videotapes supply visual images, personal contact provides emotion and individual nuance. Further, video has numerous limitations that clearly disembody dance from the lived experience. For example, video is a medium viewed on a screen that presents figures within a flat image, losing the spatial qualities of dance; and the medium is limited to visual and aural senses, while other sensate experiences (such as smell or touch) are not represented.

The use of a technology such as video or audio taping during lessons differs from teacher to teacher. All teachers in the Japanese performing arts whom I spoke to voiced strong opinions about the use of technology in the context of learning art. While observing *tsuzumi* (shoulder drum) lessons at Toshya Rosen's studio I noticed a tape recorder positioned next to the student. However, several times during the lesson Toshya Rosen instructed the student to turn the machine off, then would discuss the musical passage. Other times he would inquire, "Is the [tape] machine off?" In these lessons it was clear to me how conscious he was of the taping process and how sure he was about its proper use within the lesson. Uchikata Keizo, a performer of *noh kan* (the transverse flute played in *noh* ensembles) said he does not allow tape recorders in his lessons. He said, "Students who learn using a tape recorder sound like robots imitating the machine. For example, students who study *rakugo* (traditional comic storytelling) with a tape recorder—when they perform, no one in the audience laughs, because they sound like a machine!" (Hahn field notes, November 18, 1993).

Incorporating a recording medium within the pedagogical practice challenges the ways of tradition. Not one teacher with whom I spoke fully approved of using audio or videotapes for learning. However, acknowledgment of videotape as a valuable documentary medium is unquestioned. Performances are often videotaped professionally. Also, tapes of television interviews and performances by well-known artists and performers are considered valuable documents.

Nevertheless, videotapes provide a convenient visual and aural reference for those students living a great distance from a main Tachibana school. Over the years I have observed that this is the only circumstance in which videotapes are permitted for learning. Through videotapes, for example, the New York City Tachibana group has the opportunity to view current Tokyo choreography as well as newly created works. In such cases dances have been learned in person first so that the videotapes (usually of the lessons or performances) merely reinforce what physical knowledge has already been passed down. In subsequent lessons with Iemoto these dances will be reviewed and properly corrected. Transmission via videotape presents difficulties, however, as one Japanese American dancer pointed out: "What is problematic about learning dances from these tapes is that if performers in Japan have made mistakes during the performance, we have no way of knowing. We copy everything, maybe even their mistakes—until

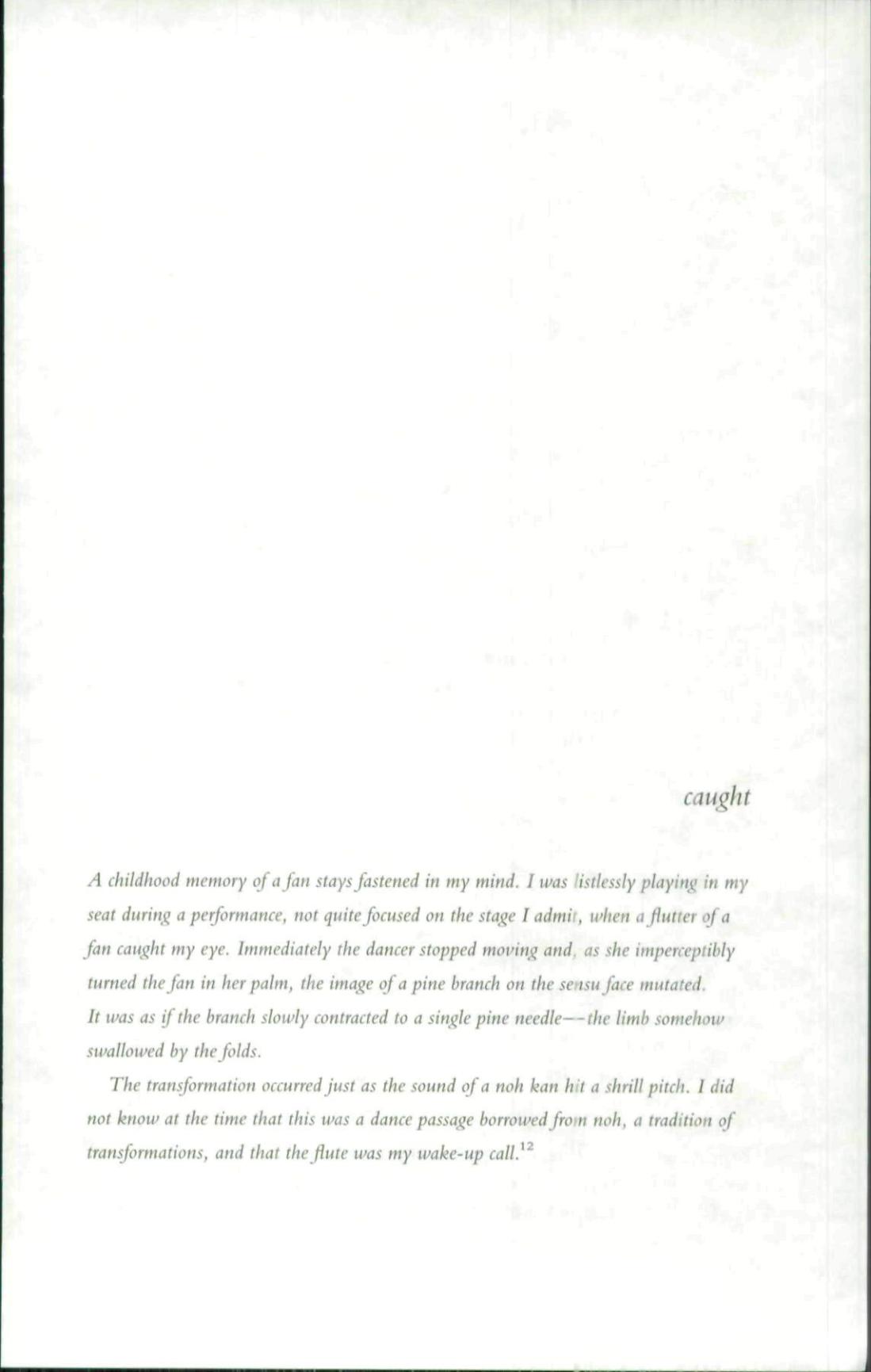
someone from Japan points out that we're doing it incorrectly" (Hahn field notes, May 12, 1990).

In October of 1995, while I was setting up my video camera for practice, Iemoto teased me and said jovially, "It used to be that dancers needed a fan to dance, now it seems we need a video camera!" (Hahn field notes, October 13, 1995). Through the years I have noticed dancers becoming accustomed to the presence of video cameras. Many manage themselves comfortably before a camera. During my field-work, dancers even spoke directly to the camera as if it were a living entity. Iemoto occasionally walked off the dance floor and spoke directly to my camera in the middle of my lesson.

When I was analyzing my videotapes in New York I was astounded when I came upon footage of Iemoto speaking to me in the future. Apparently I had left the video camera on record mode in the dance studio while I was changing in the dressing room and she had seized the opportunity to extend my lessons. Iemoto spoke directly into the camera, "Remember this [movement] when you're in New York," and later, holding up a stage prop, "See, this is how long the pole should be."

Walter Ong, a student of McLuhan, observed that the "sensorium becomes narrowed" as new media for communication are created and that "the movement through the sequence of media is of course not merely a matter of successive reorganizations of the sensorium. It involves a host of social, economic, psychological, and other factors" (Ong 1967: 53). I believe that *nihon buyo* teachers have the foresight to envision the complex repercussions that the inclusion of media technologies may bring to their traditions, hence their cautious incorporation of these devices within their daily practice. As teachers are attempting to open their students' awareness through sensoria, misuse of these media could possibly "narrow," or defeat, the practice.

While Soke and Iemoto both acknowledge the practical aspects of video technology, they are very clear, even passionate, about its limitations. The strength of *nihon buyo* transmission lies in human contact to convey the vitality of this very personal, physical, art form.



caught

A childhood memory of a fan stays fastened in my mind. I was listlessly playing in my seat during a performance, not quite focused on the stage I admit, when a flutter of a fan caught my eye. Immediately the dancer stopped moving and, as she imperceptibly turned the fan in her palm, the image of a pine branch on the sensu face mutated. It was as if the branch slowly contracted to a single pine needle—the limb somehow swallowed by the folds.

The transformation occurred just as the sound of a noh kan hit a shrill pitch. I did not know at the time that this was a dance passage borrowed from noh, a tradition of transformations, and that the flute was my wake-up call.¹²

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