

Takashi Morishita
HIJIKATA TATSUMI'S NOTATIONAL BUTOH.
AN INNOVATIONAL METHOD
FOR BUTOH CREATION
[excerpts]

PREFACE
TECHNIQUES OF BUTOH AND DISCOVERY OF METHODS

Introduction

Not Expressing

Hijikata Tatsumi often said that expressing was a base impulse. If Butoh became a means of expression, it would be «begging and prostrating itself» – an «adjusted form of Butoh» manifesting «obedience and jealousy»¹.

Hijikata often said that he had let his sister into his body². He stated that his sister, who was deceased, said to him: «Although you devote yourself to dancing to express something, what can be expressed emerges through something not expressed, does it not?»³?

According to Hijikata, his sister was his Butoh teacher.

It is not clear if the story was subjectively true for Hijikata, an experienced illusion, or something he fabricated with the intent to mystify. Moreover, it is difficult to understand his Butoh from such remarks.

¹ *Inu no joumyaku ni sitto suru koto kara* (From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein), in the monthly magazine «Bijutsu Techo», May 1969, p. 129.

² First known reference was in the program for the «Cross Talk Intermedia Festival» (February 1969).

³ *Kaza daruma* (Wind Daruma), in *Hijikata Tatsumi Zensyuu II* (Collected Works of Hijikata Tatsumi II), Tokyo, Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1998, pp. 110-122.

In any event, neither in words nor in dance did Hijikata «express» straightforwardly. There is no way for us to understand the creator or his Butoh but to read between his lines.

Onstage, he is nothing but expression. Butoh dancers studying under Hijikata endured teaching like a *koan* of *Zen*: they were told not to express when going onto the stage, the place to express; likewise, while they were on the stage, they were told not to express. But when Hijikata told them not to express, the nature of his Butoh must have been in those words. It may be that two ideas are suggested by the statement «Butoh is not expression».

One is that Butoh is not the expression of an idea using the body as a tool. Hijikata's Butoh, rather, is body art whose expression is a «convulsion of existence».

The other idea is that the method in Hijikata's Butoh is to «express without expressing», and this was accepted by the Butoh dancers who studied under him.

This Butoh cannot be deciphered through existing codes. But if one could simply say that this is why Hijikata's Butoh is an original body expression, it would be the end of the discussion. In this book⁴, we will attempt to reduce Hijikata's Butoh to simpler forms so that this body art, which cannot be described by the concepts or formats of conventional dance, can be understood.

We will also attempt to address whether Butoh can be handed down as artistic expression. Is Butoh a transitory expression? Is it an expression merely of one's individual experience? We will consider those questions, along with whether the method («express without expressing») and Hijikata's method of creation-Butoh Notation can be shared and handed down to following generations.

Handing Down Butoh

Dance on the stage is intrinsically fleeting, of which Hijikata com-

⁴ The author refers here to the book from which these excerpts are taken: Morishita Takashi, *Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh. An innovational method for butoh creation*, Tokyo, Keio University Art Center, 2015. The writings here published are the reprint (with some cuts) of the preface and the first chapter, pp. 7-32. [Ed.]

mented, «it will survive because it disappears»⁵. Although it disappears as a temporal occurrence, it can be retained in the viewer's memory. Indeed, because of the one-time-only nature of the experience, performing arts may impress themselves upon the viewer quite strongly. And it goes without saying that what a dancer's body has experienced and absorbed does not disappear easily. Still, how can a theatrical art be known by those who do not see it? How is it possible to convey what has disappeared?

No matter how much one is told of masterly performances in the classical arts, in time, they exist only in the imagination. [...]

Dance performances by Hijikata himself or performances that were directed/choreographed by him are in the recent past; many people have written about them or recorded images of these performances, and dancers who were taught directly by Hijikata can still describe them orally. In addition, Hijikata wrote and spoke a great deal, particularly for a dancer, and a complete collection of his writings has been compiled.

So it may indeed be possible to get to know Hijikata's Butoh by various methods. The question is how useful that will actually be.

For example, Hijikata's writings were poetic metaphors, full of self-concealment and distortions, rarely developed logically. In classical performing arts, no theories of drama were constructed as they are in modern and present theatrical art. Rather, there were *geidan*: talks by the masters on their art. The style and content of Hijikata's writings, given his lack of desire to theorize Butoh, are closer to *geidan*.

Accordingly, although his writings and remarks may be helpful in understanding the background for Hijikata's Butoh and his mental world, they are less helpful to a search for his method of dance creation or his techniques and skills; nor do they help us to divide forms into constituent parts that can be grasped conceptually.

Thus, putting aside whether Hijikata's writings should be called *geidan* or not, they may only be useful for gaining an understanding of a taste of his talent and the essence of Butoh. They should not be overlooked, but it certainly does not encompass the whole of understanding Butoh.

⁵ In this way Hijikata frequently used paradoxical expressions when he talked about his view of Butoh to his pupils.

How much, for example, can we see Hijikata's Butoh duplicated in the Butoh currently being performed? This may seem to be the most effective way to understand his Butoh – but, in fact, it is a dead end. Today's Butoh is diverse, and we are barely able to determine coordinate axes or a frame of reference on which to distribute it. Butoh itself has proliferated beyond logic. In these circumstances, the likelihood that Hijikata's Butoh has been faithfully passed on is close to nil.

Yet we should study the available materials and the comments of knowledgeable people; these exist in sufficient quantity to be useful. Indeed, solid discussions of Hijikata's work should be basic studies for more thorough investigations, but few have taken place in reality. Having such discussions is premised on the assumption that the methods and techniques of his Butoh can be clarified.

For that, there is no other way than to take steady steps forward, counting as we go. [...] we will sort out Hijikata's activities by time, dividing the history of his Butoh into six periods, confirm Butoh styles and methods historically, and extract issues to be discussed. [...]

1: Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh

Dawn of Butoh: Avant-garde Declaration

Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh is considered to have begun with the work «Forbidden Colors» (*Kinjiki*) first seen at a performance by new members of the All Japan Art Dance Association (*Zen nihon geijutu buyou kyokai*) in May 1959. At the time, a brief profile of Hijikata was released: «Studied under Ando Mitsuko, respects Ohno Kazuo like an older brother, and was strongly affected by Jean Genet»⁶. That very short comment was a first glimpse at the influences on Hijikata's body and mind when he was in his late 20s and into his 30s.

From 1959 until 1961, he was involved in three theatrical productions. Hijikata first organized 650 EXPERIENCE Society (*650 EXPERIENCE no kai*) and created the work «Six Avant Garde Artists» (*Rokunin*

⁶ Pamphlet for the sixth public performance by new dancers sponsored by the All Japan Art Dance Association (May 1959).

no avant-garde). Declaring it to be avant-garde, Hijikata released the work with five other artists in different genres. «Six Avant Garde Artists» was performed once in 1959 and once in 1960⁷.

He participated twice in performances «Women Avantgardists' Dance Recital» (*Joryuu avant-garde*), a dance recital by 20 female dancers studying under Tsuda Nobutoshi⁸.

In 1960 and 1961, he held his own recitals, «Hijikata Tatsumi DANCE EXPERIENCE Society» (*Hijikata Tatsumi DANCE EXPERIENCE no kai*). For both events, Ohno Kazuo and six or seven other dancers performed together.

When his work «Forbidden Colors», released in 1959, became, along with Wakamatsu Miki's «Situation» (*Joukyou*), the focus of criticism from the mainstream of All Japan Art Dance Association because of its radical themes and expressions, Hijikata joined in the activities of avant-garde dancer Tsuda Nobutoshi, who defended the works. It was after this experience that Hijikata held his first recital based in the Tsuda Dance Studio, later Asbestos Studio (*Asbestos kan*).

With this in mind, the time from 1959 to 1961 is obviously the first period of Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh, in which he declared his art to be avant-garde and took off in an experimental direction. During this time, as he struggled in the gap between denial and creation, hiding himself in his writings, he oscillated between the fact and the idea, demonstrating a part of the thought process behind the creation of Butoh.

In this period, owing in part to influences from European literature, including Jean Genet and Comte de Lautréamont, his dance forms must have been simple and easy to be understood, although his performances were often embellished.

⁷ Other avant-garde artists in the performances were Mayuzumi Toshiro, Moroi Makoto, Kanamori Kaoru, Wakamatsu Miki, and Donald Richie in the first performance; and Mayuzumi Toshiro, Tomatsu Shomei, Terayama Shuji, Kanamori Kaoru, and Miho Keitaro in the second performance.

⁸ There were approximately 20 new modern dancers, including many students of Eguchi Takaya and Miya Misako.

From Anti-Dance to Rebellious Body

In 1962, Hijikata took over the Tsuda Dance Studio from Tsuda Nobutoshi, renaming it Asbestos Studio. The period from 1962 – when he began operating at the studio – to 1966 is the second period in Hijikata’s creative life. In June 1962, he staged his first performance at Asbestos Studio, «The Inauguration of the Leda Association Secret Performance No.1» (*Leda no kai hossoku dai-ikkai kouen*), which he created and directed.

In August, he danced in «Lost War Banquet» (*Haisen kinen bansankai*) with neo-Dada artists, including Kazakura Sho and Akasegawa Genpei, and musicians of *Group Ongaku*, including Tone Yasunao and Kosugi Takehisa. It was an unusual – perhaps even far-out – event organized by avantgardists declaring themselves anti-art, anti-music, and anti-dance. In reality, it was «Art as Action»⁹.

In 1963, «Masseur: A Story of a Theater that Sustains Passion» (*Anma: aiyoku o sasaeru gekijou no hanasi*) reunited all the avant-garde artists who had performed in «Lost War Banquet». Hijikata also collaborated with avant-garde artists in «Rose-Colored Dance» (*Barairo dansu*) in 1965 and «Instructional Illustrations for the Study of Divine Favor in Sexual Love: Tomato» (*Seiai ontyougaku sinan zue: Tomato*) in 1966. Organized by Hijikata, these collaborations show that his activities had developed into an art movement, extending beyond the genre of dance.

From the existing pictures and images of «Masseur» and «Rose-Colored Dance», it is difficult to grasp the entirety of Hijikata’s expression, but these sources do tell us that Hijikata was absorbed in something both anti-art and anti-dance.

A third period of Hijikata’s creative life comprises just two years. In 1967 and 1968, he staged Butoh performances for his four pupils – Takai Tomiko, Ishii Mitsutaka, Nakajima Natsu, and Ashikawa Yoko – one by one. Hijikata himself directed, organized, and choreographed all of them, and danced in the performances for Takai and Ishii.

A solo performance, «Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Rebel-

⁹ There is no printed material for the event. There are records of verbal comments by Akasegawa Genpei, a participant, and the recollections of Kazakura Sho and Yoshida Yoshie.

lion of the Body» (*Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: Nikutai no hanran*), in October 1968, can be called a compilation of Hijikata's Butoh. It showed viewers the overwhelming power of Butoh and established its reputation as full of madness and violence and eroticism.

Notably, the second period was characterized by the Hijikata who *didn't* dance, whereas the third period was characterized by the Hijikata who *danced*.

New Butoh: Style and Method

After performing «Rebellion of the Body», Hijikata did not perform on the stage again until 1972, except to make a guest appearance. In 1970, however, he organized young Butoh dancers at Asbestos Studio, primarily Ashikawa Yoko and other female dancers, forming a group *Genjusha*, and continued a series of small performances over a considerable period. He revealed his own ideas on Butoh through a catchphrase «Sacrificing Great Paragone of Butoh (*Hangi dai tou kan*)» and started including it in the name of the performance.

The fourth period in Hijikata's creative life spans from the formation of *Genjusha* to when a major performance was staged in September 1972 to commemorate the formation of *Harupin-ha*. There emerged a new Butoh, characterized by the dancers' painting their entire bodies white and dancing in a bandy-legged manner.

Having waited until the time was ripe to return to active performance, in October 1972, Hijikata performed «Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons» (*Siki no tame no nijuu-nana ban*), a performance which has quite a long teaser «Sacrificing Great Paragone of Butoh: Performance to Commemorate the Second Unity of the Ankoku Butoh School (*Hangi dai tou kan: Ankoku Butoh ha kessoku kinen kouen*)».

The performance – five works performed over 27 consecutive nights – must have been the most important one in the history of Hijikata's Butoh. He took full personal charge of the performance, engaging not only in organization, direction, and choreography, but also stage setting, music, and costumes. He danced one dance completely without standing up – it was, as he described, a dance in which he could not stand up.

«Quiet House» (*Shizuka na ie*) in 1973 followed as an extension of

«Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons». Hijikata also performed as a guest dancer in «The Phallus Myth» (*Youbutu sintan*) by *Dairakudakan Temputenshiki* in October of the same year. This would turn out to be his final stage appearance.

This year, 1973, is categorized as the fifth period of Hijikata's Butoh, important because he created new dances never seen before, and performed them himself.

Artistic Achievement: The Period of Butoh Notation

In 1974, Hijikata formed another group at Asbestos Studio, *Hakutobo*, which consisted mainly of women, with Ashikawa Yoko as the central figure; his earlier group, *Genjusha*, was also female-dominated. Hijikata created (directed, organized, and choreographed) a series of 16 works for *Hakutobo* by the end of 1976.

These three years, 1974-1976 were the sixth period of Hijikata's Butoh. Created by Hijikata based on Butoh Notation and accepted by his dancers, in this period, the Butoh that had emerged in the fifth period was crystallized into dance reaching unprecedented heights of elaborateness, and which stands today as Hijikata's ultimate artistic achievement.

In 1977 and 1978, no longer operating at Asbestos Studio, Hijikata directed and choreographed works for his pupils and also participated twice in festivals overseas. After 1978, he receded from both work and public life, even disengaging with friends and acquaintances. In 1985, a year before his death, Hijikata resumed vigorous work. This paper, however, will stop in its explorations. Rather, in our search for the form of Butoh, we will look at the 18 years from 1959 through 1976, comprising six periods, as the history of Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh creation.

When considering the form of Hijikata's Butoh and how it might be handed down to following generations, we should not deal with Hijikata's Butoh inconsiderately. To achieve our aim, we will primarily look at Butoh in the fourth, fifth and sixth periods as outlined above. The reason for this will emerge naturally in the discussion hereafter.

2: Thoughts and Methods of Hijikata Tatsumi

[...]

Archetype of Butoh: the Extreme of Physical Expression

In the third period, Hijikata danced. As previously mentioned, a compilation of this activity was «Rebellion of the Body». Before the performance, he declared: «I will dance as much as I can at the Nippon-Seinenkan. I will risk my dancing»¹⁰. He also stated, «The time has come to clearly show Hijikata Tatsumi by Hijikata Tatsumi»¹¹.

This was not an experiment in artistic creation, but a performance – using his body to the maximum, risking himself – to make the existence of dancer Hijikata Tatsumi known to the world. Although reactions were mixed, the work had a strong impact on artists, performers, and intellectuals of the day, and established the reality of Ankoku Butoh.

Butoh as seen in «Rebellion of the Body» expressed the body itself. Hijikata reduced his body by fasting, appeared on stage with a body like a steel frame, and performed to the ultimate level of physical expression, neither seeking a theme outside the body nor any means of help outside the body. Violence and eroticism of the body, the convulsion of its existence, were shown together.

As a solo work of Hijikata, this was an integration of the dance history he had experienced, from Neuetanz and classical ballet to show dancing. The form of the Butoh in the recital is easy to understand as well.

Neither Ohno Kazuo nor Kasai Akira participated in the recital. Following the statement «show Hijikata Tatsumi by Hijikata Tatsumi», the performance manifested his individuality, and it could not be imitated by another dancer.

The original title of the recital is «Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese», but it is commonly known as «Rebellion of the Body», not something envisioned by Hijikata. Suggesting a declaration of intent

¹⁰ *Garumera syoukai* Hijikata Tatsumi, monthly magazine «Bijutsu Techo», April 1968, p. 37.

¹¹ *Nikutai no yami o musiru...* (Plucking Off the Darkness of the Body...), in the magazine «Tenbou», Chikumashobo, July 1968, p. 107.

by the body against the power outside the theater, and taking on the character of the time, it became a performance symbolizing the year 1968 – the «Seasons of Rebellion»¹².

It was the time of the body. In declaring his own theatrical concept, Kara Juro, a great leader of the underground theater, also advocated the «Privileged Body Theory (*Tokkenteki nikutai ron*)». Saying that «it starts with the existence of the body» and asserting that the «spirit of a dramatic player lifts the play», Kara declared himself to be a riverbed beggar (*Kawara kojiki*), a reference to the pariah status of pre-modern *Kabuki* performers, and asserted that he was himself a *Kabuki* player in a world across truth and fiction. As his master, Hijikata, had rejected modern dance, so Kara thoroughly criticized *Shingeki* (New Theater), which had descended into literature¹³.

In the period when the boom in underground theater – which rejected the idea that a player’s body was subordinate to the play and tried to overturn the formula of «player = body to the play = literature» – was approaching its peak, Hijikata’s «Rebellion of the Body» was an anthem praising the transcendence of the body.

In the 1960s, the words “body” and “emotions” were commonly used to refer to a pair of concepts. «Rebellion of the Body» was the expression of the body itself by the emotions of an individual (Hijikata). It [was] also the expression of the emotions by Hijikata’s body.

In the 1960s and 1970s, in the third and fourth periods of Hijikata’s Butoh, his comments often included the phrases «a tamed body», «to scrutinize their own bodies» and «to find the straying self that had lost its way within their own bodies»¹⁴. These words expressed the foundation of Hijikata’s view of the body, a presupposition for the rebelling body, and the starting point in the creation of a new Butoh thereafter. That is, they form the thought underlying Hijikata’s Butoh itself.

¹² The expression «Rebellion of the Body» was used by Tanemura Suehiro in his review of the photo exhibition *Kamaitachi* (Sickle Weasel), «Bijutsu Techo», June 1968, pp. 22-23.

¹³ *Tokkenteki nikutairon* (The Privileged Body Theory), in *Kosimaki Osen*, Tokyo, Gendai Shichousha, 1968, pp. 3-78.

¹⁴ *Otoko wa itido sinde haiagare* (Men Have to Climb Up after Dying Once), in the monthly magazine «Ushio» January 1973; *Nikutai no yami o musiru...* (Plucking Off the Darkness of the Body...), cit.; and *Ankoku no butai o odoru majin* (A Daemon Staging Ankoku), in «Mainichi Graph», February 1969. Others.

Hijikata Tatsumi's dancing around this time cemented the image of Ankoku Butoh and inspired many who decided to dance Butoh. Dances in the period were, however, never handed down just as they were. The image of «Butoh on the edge of crisis» made a strong impression as an archetype of Butoh, and then as a matrix of Butoh, along with the Butoh spirit of Hijikata Tatsumi.

Notational Butoh

In the 1960s, only Kasai Akira, who danced under the direction of and choreography by Hijikata until 1967, distanced himself as an independent Butoh dancer, removing himself from any further direct relationship with Hijikata. Kasai was then influential from the end of the '60s through the early '70s, and, with his critical ability which criticized even Hijikata's «Rebellion of the Body», his mystical view of Dance, and among other things, his talent of a born dancer.

Although we can compare the two men in various ways – noting, for example, that Hijikata's dance is terrestrial and Kasai's is celestial – this paper attends to the point that Kasai valued improvisation, whereas Hijikata rejected it in creating his Butoh. When a person of that time intended to become a dancer and had to decide which master to follow, this difference – with or without improvisation – was the critical factor.

In this respect, Hijikata's Butoh from the fourth and sixth periods had Butoh Notation (*Butoh-fu*) as the base and method of its creation (i.e., not improvisation), while Kasai took a negative view of Butoh Notation. In Hijikata's Butoh, images were sought through Butoh Notation, concrete images of dances were made, and technique and skill gave form to them.

The form of Hijikata's Butoh was greatly shaped by Butoh Notation found in this period. Studies on this will be increasingly called for hereafter, and will make clear whether Butoh could be handed down or not, as well as provide guidelines for evaluations of Butoh.

Butoh Notation in the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive

The Hijikata Tatsumi Archive contains Hijikata's Butoh Notation from Asbestos Studio, written on scrapbooks, B5-sized notebooks, and *Mozousi* (large-sized western paper), hereinafter called Butoh Notation A¹⁵. A road to studies on Hijikata's Butoh thus opened up when the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive was founded, allowing scholars to access these materials¹⁶.

In 1998, when the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive was founded in the Keio University Art Center, Butoh Notation was featured in art books and magazines, including *Collected Works of Hijikata Tatsumi (Hijikata Tatsumi Zensyuu)* and Tv programs. Obviously, though, the Butoh Notation closest to the actual words and movements transmitted by Hijikata is the full collection in the archive.

In that same year, the CD-ROM *Butoh Kaden* was edited and produced by Waguri Yukio, and thus Butoh Notation, with accompanying explanations, became accessible to the public. As a result, it became widely known that each of Hijikata's pupils possessed his or her own Butoh notebook, which could be called «Butoh Notation» (hereinafter called Butoh Notation B)¹⁷.

¹⁵ The Hijikata Tatsumi Archive took pictures of all pages of Hijikata's 14 scrapbooks, processed them into digital color images, and made them available to the public. Whether they are called «Butoh Notation» or not has been, and will be, an issue, but it is not one taken up here. In the chapter *Butoh seisei no source tositeno Butoh Notation* (Butoh Notation as a Source for Butoh Creation), in my book *Hijikata Tatsumi no Butoh: nikutai no surrealism, sintai no ontology* (Tatsumi Hijikata's Butoh: Surrealism of the Flesh – Ontology of the «Body»), Tokyo, Keio University Press, 2003, I offer my personal opinion that they do qualify as Butoh Notation.

¹⁶ *Utawa tositeno sintai: Hijikata Tatsumi – ankoku Butoh gihou eno approach* (The Body as a Vessel: An Approach to the Technique of Ankoku Butoh), by Mikami Kayo (Tokyo, ANZ-Do, 1993), was a pioneering work released prior to this time. It is highly respected particularly because the author undertook the difficult task of studying Butoh's techniques linking Hijikata's view of the body and «Butoh Notation» based on only a limited number of the latter.

¹⁷ At present, the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive comprises Butoh Notation privately compiled and published by Waguri Yukio, notes on Butoh by Tamano Koichi comprising three B5-sized notebooks, notes on Butoh comprising of 17 B5-sized notebooks held by Kobayashi Saga, and notes on Butoh by Yamamoto Moe comprising of a B5-sized notebook (photographed).

What matters here is the existence of Butoh notebook, rather than its content. At its simplest, the existence of Butoh Notation means that Butoh is regulated into a certain form, and such Butoh can be handed down.

Can the same thing be said about the Butoh Hijikata himself danced? We must conclude that it is difficult for Butoh to be handed down via Butoh Notation, insofar as we have found. In this discussion, I have briefly described the Butoh Notation A in the archive¹⁸. There is a group of materials that led Hijikata to images and creation, notes from which we, in turn, can get a glimpse of his method of creation. There is also a group of materials that Hijikata wrote as scripts for his works.

The Butoh Notation B of his pupils is a record of Hijikata's words and instructions on movements during practice sessions. Some clearly state sequences of positions and movements in specific Butoh works. Although we cannot derive all the details, Butoh Notation B is closer to notation than Butoh Notation A.

In any event, both Butoh Notation A and B are the best – and most essential – materials for understanding Hijikata's Butoh during the subject periods.

Butoh in the Age of Butoh Notation

There are many things that we must know to obtain a good understanding of Hijikata's performances from the fourth to sixth periods. Unfortunately, many will have to be omitted for space and time. Moreover, in this section, we dare to omit introduction of Hijikata's dance, and will talk instead about his pupils being given Butoh Notation, approaching in the process a cross-section of his Butoh.

Although Butoh Notation was assumed to exist in the '60s, we consider it to have arisen at Asbestos Studio in the '70s. Why, though, did it come into being? Obviously, the main reason was that Hijikata needed to teach Butoh to his pupils. It is important to note, however,

¹⁸ *Hijikata Tatsumi no Butoh souzou no houhou o megutte* (About Hijikata Tatsumi's Method of Creating Butoh), in *Genetic Archive Engine*, Tokyo, Keio University Art Center, 2000, pp. 57-80.

that Butoh Notation was born inevitably in the process of Hijikata's structuring of a new method of dance, the creation of Butoh techniques.

After «Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese» in 1968, Hijikata seemed to enter a long silence. During that time, he devoted himself to creating a new dance/Butoh – a dance that had never been seen. What is that resultant new Butoh? Of course, it cannot be described in a word. If I dare to define it according to the context of this paper, the dance can be described as being avant-garde, though with reminders of the classics; being an expression, it goes beyond expression.

This Butoh embodied Hijikata's isolated struggle for creation over seven years, from the fourth to the six periods.

Some felt awkward when confronted with Hijikata's new Butoh. For example, saying he had been acquainted with Ankoku Butoh School (*Ankoku Butoh ha*) dancers for a decade, Ito Morio was critical after seeing «Finback Whale» (*Nagasu kujira*) performed by the *Harupin-ha* in September 1972. «(Butoh) can exist purely with the body itself; that is, it can exist in unprecedented, privileged circumstance, the raw body under natural light. That precious body is now obsessed with how to enter a cozy stage framed by lights, sound, set, and props, and how to leave it»¹⁹.

Ito had thought that Hijikata and other Ankoku School (*Ankoku-ha*) dancers had significant influence on those who claimed themselves to be avant-garde from the '60s through the '70s. «As its name implied, Ankoku School was always in the shadow of a taboo and, exactly because of it, made people feel unimaginably eerie». Ito said that it then became like a «dance in a circle in the daylight»²⁰.

Whether we can say Hijikata's performances thereafter were «cozy» and his dance was «dance in a circle in the daylight» or not, it was certain, as Ito pointed out, that Hijikata's Butoh went in the direction of a «cozy stage framed by lights, sound, set, and props».

Did Hijikata's Butoh degenerate into fast-food expression? Did Hijikata shed the avant-garde, intending to become a conventionalized classic? Or did he convert to being a modernist who «was spurred on and went wild over *Noh* and *Kabuki* plays»²¹?

¹⁹ Ito Morio, «Bijutsu Techo», November 1972, p. 15.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Screen Stage*, in Hanada Kiyoteru, *Koten to Gendai*, Tokyo, Miraisha, 1967, p. 195.

Tohoku Kabuki and Classical Dance

Hijikata's performance of «Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons» in 1972 created a sensation; people were astonished and admired Hijikata's Butoh world, which emerged from the back of the banner reading Sacrificing Great Paragone of Butoh, and a drop curtain *Tohoku Kabuki*.

Kabuki scholar Gunji Masakatsu gave a series of highly spirited and profound comments in admiration of Butoh, saying that «on the solitary hell of his performance, he now stands certainly on one leg – although very slowly. If you don't call it a classic, what else can it be called»²²? His review, titled «A Classical Dance Called Death» (*Si to iu koten butoh*), was filled with excitement after he had witnessed performances that could not be described in the modern language of art and expression.

The performance «Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese» in 1968 would appear again here, but let us put this aside. In any case, did Hijikata accept that his Butoh was called a «classical dance»? It was Hijikata himself who prepared catchphrases seemed impertinent to those who had experienced his performances – *Tohoku Kabuki* – until that time. Gunji Masakatsu did not call this performance classical dance simply because of spectacular catchphrases or Japanese designs in the performances, but because he found classicality in Hijikata's dancing itself.

At the same time, people were doubtful about Hijikata's return to classical dance, or to «Japanese traditional performance», sometimes even causing them to suspect that something important was still being hidden.

Accordingly, it was quite natural for the following question to be asked: «What do you think of Japanese traditional performing arts? It seems to me that severe criticism and confrontation of the existing traditional performing arts is implied in your Butoh, as in plays by Suzuki-san»²³.

²² *Si to iu koten Butoh* (A Classical Dance Called Death), «Bijutsu Techo», February 1973, pp. 121-123.

²³ *Ketujo tositeno gengo = Sintai no kasetu* (Language as Absence = A Makeshift Setting of the Body), a talk with Suzuki Tadashi, in the monthly magazine «Gendaishi Techo», April 1977, pp. 108-126.

The question came from Senda Akihiko, the moderator of the talk session between Hijikata and Suzuki Tadashi, and Hijikata avoided answering it directly. Although Senda repeated the question, Hijikata's answers were consistently mystifying. Giving up, Senda then spoke to the other participant. Suzuki Tadashi talked about his own understanding, that it was «to logically clarify how to critically confront» tradition and all things Japanese.

It may be presumptuous for me now to speak on Hijikata's behalf, but he seemed neither to be critical of traditional performing arts, nor to be confronting them.

If Hijikata had answered such questions «logically», an outline or direction of the Butoh that he tried to develop in that period would be much clearer, which would be most helpful to our understanding of Butoh, but it is too late for that now. Even after this talk, Hijikata never did take it upon himself «to clarify logically», as Suzuki Tadashi did.

Techniques and Discovery of Methods

Putting aside what Hijikata thought of traditional performing arts, Suzuki Tadashi's directorial methodology and thoughts on the bodies of actors are certainly very similar to those of Hijikata. Suzuki was openly critical of current traditional performing arts: «So acting only exists when the actor/actress exists on the stage with reality. That is to say, it is beyond technocracy because a standard does not exist outside of the actor/actress. He or she cannot but go into the inside to thus become extraordinarily sensitive about how words strike the self, and the condition of the body»²⁴.

Let us also consider what Hijikata said: «Why not put a ladder on one's own body and go down inside it? I urge them to pluck off the darkness of the body and eat it. But they instead release the self to outside of the body, externally»²⁵.

²⁴ Nakamura Yujiro and Suzuki Tadashi, *Gekiteki gengo* (Theatre Language), Tokyo, Asahi Bunko, 1999, p. 130. First reference in *Energy taiwa* (Energy Talk), 1976.

²⁵ *Nikutai no yami o musiru...* (Plucking Off the Darkness of the Body...), cit., p. 105.

As did Kara Juro, Suzuki insists that the body of an actor/actress should not become just an instrument of words – a criticism of modern theater’s tendency to place too much importance on the play. Minimizing the importance of the performing techniques of the player, Suzuki demands the player’s bold presence. To avoid actors/actresses relying on conventionalization or conceptualization, he puts the body of his actors/actresses in a state of *dépaysement*, collages in surrealist contexts.

This view of Suzuki’s on theatrical performance and method of direction is strikingly similar to that of Hijikata on Butoh. Hijikata also rejected the idea of dances expressing themes conceptually. His skepticism about expression and wariness of conventionalization were fundamental to his Butoh creation.

In addition, regarding «theatrical performance as an unnatural act», Suzuki requires players «to use their bodies in contrived, difficult manners»²⁶. Practice sessions amounted to severe training for the players, to the point of inducing physiological pain. Although Suzuki was openly critical of the contemporary traditional performance arts, his training methods, from breathing to gesturing, were based on those of the traditional arts.

Butoh is more an «unnatural act» than a theatrical play. Hijikata’s training sessions at Asbestos Studio were also physically painful and caused mental stress, although training at Asbestos Studio did not reflect the ways of the traditional performing arts to the extent that Suzuki’s methods did.

Awareness of the classics, however, leads to awareness of the «method» of Butoh creation. If theatrical critic Gunji’s comments were accurate, regardless of whether Hijikata himself expressed such thoughts, Hijikata must have been well aware of method and technique in the traditional performing arts.

A comparison with Kara Juro in stage plays was often made when considering Hijikata’s Butoh in the 1960s. But in the 1970s, Hijikata was expected to speak out about Butoh, as the theorist Suzuki Tadashi was doing.

²⁶ *Jikan to kuukan* (Time and Space), (a conversation between Ota Shogo and Suzuki Tadashi), in the monthly magazine «Shingeki», October 1974, p. 42.

As previously mentioned, if the 1960s are associated with a hard age of «rebellion» and «the body», the 1970s were a soft age of «method» and «system». Changes in Hijikata's Butoh occurred in parallel with such changes in the paradigms of the times.

Hijikata, however, never tried to explain theoretically the philosophy behind the Butoh he was developing or the direction he intended. Nor, needless to say, did he ever clarify the methodology of Butoh creation or the actual performance techniques involved.

Nevertheless, it is strange that when Hijikata was vigorously engaged in performance, neither critics nor spectators ever asked him about the methods or techniques of Butoh.

For example, Nagao Kazuo, a scholar and critic of *Noh*, thoroughly examined Hijikata's Butoh in the time of *Hakutobo*. It was, however, only many years later that he spoke about techniques in Hijikata's Butoh. After watching lessons by Hijikata in August 1984, nearly 10 years after a series of performances were made by *Hakutobo* in the mid-1970s, Nagao commented with surprise: «I discovered very deeply that Butoh has its own techniques... I have tried to understand them by comparing them with “*Kurai*” (lofty tone) in *Noh* performances²⁷».

Recognizing that Butoh techniques were different from those of modern dance, classical ballet, and classical Japanese dance, Nagao understood that the techniques Hijikata advocated were «techniques to discover the self» and were «physical techniques as well as mental techniques».

This means the techniques of Hijikata's Butoh has to be discovered from the outside.

It took nearly another 10 years until Butoh Notation became available and former pupils began speaking out – namely, after the death of Hijikata in 1986 – for the methods of Hijikata's Butoh creation to be widely discussed at all.

In such circumstances, we will have to address the contents of Butoh Notation rather than its existence itself. We will look at each line of Butoh Notation until we unravel each piece. Regardless who does the work, it will be a long effort.

Finally, the Butoh Notation our study focuses on is beyond nor-

²⁷ «Nihon Dokusho Shimbun» of September 24, 1984.

mal dance notation. Nor it is just the material kept in the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive. A vast quantity of images, illustrations, icons, and words of Hijikata; body gestures of the dancers whom Hijikata taught; and images recording Hijikata's own dancing are included in this study.

We will begin our work by analyzing and clarifying those Butoh Notation to establish the form of Butoh whose methods and techniques can be brought to light and possibly handed down to generations hereafter.

CHAPTER I NOTATIONAL BUTOH WORDS, STRUCTURE AND THOUGHTS

[...]

Notational Butoh

As mentioned in the previous paper, study of Hijikata's Butoh progressed greatly after Butoh Notation was made known in various media after Hijikata's death²⁸. While he was alive, Hijikata barely talked to outsiders about his method, remaining silent on such subjects as techniques of Butoh creation, methods of choreography, or how to conduct practice sessions. It can easily be imagined how much of a shock learning of the existence and the contents of Butoh Notation was to those involved in research on Hijikata's Butoh.

²⁸ Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh Notation was never taken up while he was alive. After his death, Hijikata's pupils published his words, called «Butoh Notation» in the book *The Body as a Vessel: An Approach to the Technique of Ankoku Butoh*, by Mikami Kayo, and the CD-ROM *Butoh Kaden*, by Waguri Yukio. Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh Notation, left at the Asbestos Studio in the form of scrapbooks, is printed in monochrome in *Collected Works of Hijikata Tatsumi* (Tokyo, Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1998). Color images of the pictures and viewing materials are accessible electronically via the Hijikata Tatsumi Archive and online (limited access).

In his later years, whenever Hijikata held an open session of Butoh²⁹, it was attended by a range of participants – in addition to young people who desired to be Butoh dancers, veteran dancers who had already spent 10 or 20 years in the Butoh world were there. They obviously wanted to learn directly from him. These were also golden opportunities, they thought, to learn the secrets of Hijikata's method.

Critics who were present at those so-called open practice sessions were also astonished³⁰. In these sessions, a method of creating Hijikata's Butoh was shown that could not possibly have been grasped from simply watching a performance of the finished product on the stage; it was the first time the public had seen what went into making such a performance.

Notational Butoh, which is considered to have started in the 1970s, deepened over the years. The number of images Hijikata gathered and the quantity and type of words used to induce movements continually increased; in particular, he collected words helpful to imagine movements. With more words, the number of movements increased not just arithmetically, but geometrically in their variations.

In addition, with time, advancement in the skills of pupils made further precise movements possible. Not only did the number of words increase but also their phase-applications changed, from words to stimulate the human intellect and then sensitivity, to those to stimulate the nerves and create movement³¹.

Now, putting the historical aspects of Butoh Notation aside, the focus will be on two important elements of Butoh via Butoh Notation (Notational Butoh) that make it possible for Notational Butoh to be handed down. One of them is, of course, Butoh Notation itself: cause and effect, meaning media and result. The other is the relationship between master and pupil, for which Butoh Notation was the medium.

²⁹ From 1984 to 1985, a total of six open sessions were held, known as «Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh Seminars (*Hijikata Tatsumi Butoh kouza*)». The invitation flyers included phrases such as «an Open Class on Butoh Techniques» and «From a Collection of the Emaciated Body to Fusion of Forces: Measuring Distance in the Body».

³⁰ For example, comments by Nagao Kazuo in the «Nihon Dokusho Shimbun», September 24, 1984.

³¹ According to Ishide Takuya, a Hijikata's pupil of very late in his life, Hijikata was working at the time on how to express «materials», such as metal.

Requirements of Butoh Notation: Master and Pupil

First, we will examine the critical relationship between master and pupil. A piece of writing by Hijikata Tatsumi titled «Sensitivity from Which Ankoku Butoh Emerges» (*Ankoku Butoh no toujou kankaku*) describes the inside of Asbestos Studio and its residents: «Ashikawa Yoko's room is a tatami room on the right end of the second floor on the east side of the building; Kobayashi Saga's is also a tatami room on the left end of the second floor; Nimura Momoko's...»³². Hijikata didn't refer at all to dancing or practice sessions, but rather tried to depict Asbestos Studio, their communal living place, as if a video camera were moving around, and described the figures living there in metaphorical, indirect terms.

Asbestos Studio was a place for Hijikata to practice as well as to live. In addition, it became a special theater for him. There, master and pupils lived a sort of communal life. This communal element in which master and pupil existed side by side can then be considered a condition of the creation of Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh.

In contemporary art, unlike in classical performing art, the state of the relationship between master and pupil is rarely at the core of creation. At Asbestos Studio, however, there was a substantive link between the master-pupil relationship and creation of the art.

Regarding the master-pupil relationship, Uchida Tatsuru's mentor-student theory, based on studies by Jacques Lacan and Emmanuel Lévinas, should be noted³³. Lévinas talks about mentor and student in handing down the Talmud of Judaism and discusses the relationship between Huang Shigong and Zhang Liang, two military men, in conveying the secret of military tactics, a subject also taken up in *Noh*. Lacan introduces Chevalier Auguste Dupin and Minister D from Edgar Allan Poe's «The Purloined Letter». He also discusses the mentor-student of *Zen* priest, which Lacan referred to as a model for a good mentor-student relationship. The interesting nature of mentor-student relationships is revealed in such situations.

³² Hijikata Tatsumi, *Ankoku Butoh no toujou kankaku* (Sensitivity From Which Ankoku Butoh Emerges), in *Bibou no aozora* (Handsome Blue Sky), Tokyo, Chikumashobo, 1987, pp. 220-222.

³³ Uchida Tatsuru, *Tasya to sisyā* (Others and the Deceased), Tokyo, Kaichosha, 2004, pp. 47-61.

What Lévinas, who studied the Talmud with his teacher verbally, learned was “manners”. A student does not learn variable knowledge or information from his or her mentor. Rather, the student learns “manners” that help to extract unlimited wisdom from the sacred texts³⁴.

What a student learns from his mentor, then, is not finite interpretations or knowledge, but how to learn. According to Lacan, a teacher does not give answers; students must find the answers themselves³⁵.

As mentioned in the preface, *Noh* scholar Nagao Kazuo, who watched a series of Hijikata’s open lessons, was astonished: «Butoh techniques are sui generis». They were, he said, «techniques to find the self» or «mental techniques»³⁶. The mental component and emotional impact of Butoh indicates that it is a form of artistic expression that extends beyond mere dance.

How is such a mentor-and-student relationship established? According to Uchida Tatsuru, «one first becomes a student»³⁷. One does not become a student after the mentor provides someone with knowledge or skills; one becomes a student after becoming aware of complete defeat. “Mystery” has something to do with this. One becomes a student out of the desire to pursue the mystery cast by the mentor.

Hijikata, too, often asked the young people who visited Asbestos Studio a riddle. In his essay, Kara Juro said that, living under Hijikata Tatsumi, Hijikata often asked him a riddle³⁸. Hijikata was indeed a «mysterious person» as Matsuyama Shuntaro referred to him³⁹. He made his existence an enigma. An enigma is inherently attractive, and Hijikata’s creation of a personal and professional mystery must have ensured that many people entered Asbestos Studio in pursuit of the riddle.

³⁴ Idem, p. 52.

³⁵ Idem, p. 61.

³⁶ An article by Nagao Kazuo in the «Nihon Dokusho Shimibun», September 24, 1984.

³⁷ Uchida Tatsuru, *Tasya to sisya* (Others and the Deceased), cit., p. 60.

³⁸ Kara Juro, *Waga tomo Hijikata Tatsumi* (My Friend Hijikata Tatsumi), «Nihon Dokusho Shimibun», April 9, 1979.

³⁹ Matsuyama Shuntaro said, «What a totally mysterious person», in the pamphlet for the performance *Honegami touge hotoke kazura* (Corpse Vine on Ossa Famine Ridge), October 1970.

In the 1970s, many young people visited Asbestos Studio, desiring to be Butoh dancers or admiring the world of *Ankoku* (darkness). These youngsters who came to «first become pupils» have bound themselves to their master, Hijikata, by absolute obedience. In those days, Hijikata did not hesitate to publicly call male pupils hired workers (*sakuotoko*) and female pupils maidservants (*gejo*)⁴⁰.

The mentor-and-student relationships advocated by Lévinas and Lacan are very similar to the ones Hijikata established with his pupils.

This master-and-pupil relationship was essential for Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh. Or, rather, it can be said that Notational Butoh existed based on the master-and-pupil relationship.

Words of Butoh Notation

Next, we will address the idea of Butoh Notation intermediating between master and pupil – the Butoh method itself – rather than as a part of the method of Hijikata's Butoh.

Butoh Notation is a collection of words Hijikata Tatsumi gave to his pupils. They were not compiled by Hijikata himself. Hijikata spoke them during his lessons and his pupils wrote them down in their notebooks, which will be a form of Butoh Notation (*Butoh-fu*). Although the “-fu” in the *Butoh-fu* literally means “notation”, words in the notebooks are not meant to represent the movements of Butoh systematically or consistently. Nor did they encode movements by signs or diagrams so that others could reproduce the body's physical movements. In this respect, it cannot properly be said that Butoh Notation is literally notation as it is not a fixed, replicable encoding system. Moreover, Hijikata did not establish the Butoh Notation as a theory, which is why his pupil Waguri Yukio could edit it into Waguri/Butoh Notation.

⁴⁰ As commented by Hijikata, for example, in an interview with the «Asahi Shimbun», October 1972. This type of discriminative language was obviously antisocial and against the trend toward respecting human rights, and thus Hijikata may have spoken intentionally in this manner. Together with the fact that traditional performing arts – born from and involving discrimination – were employed in Hijikata's Butoh in the 1970s, this suggests there is much to be considered.

As the creation of Butoh Notation has been already outlined⁴¹, I will not repeat the explanation here. However, it is worth repeating that Butoh Notation was, in essence, a manner whereby a master conveyed words verbally to his pupils during practice sessions, and those words aroused physical movements.

Waguri/Butoh Notation was compiled systematically so as to recall physical movements according to the written work (*écriture*) of pupils who had taken down words spoken by their master (*parole*), in accordance with Hijikata Tatsumi's method.

Let us look at some examples of Waguri/Butoh Notation. In the contents, gestic items are numbered 1 to 60. These items include:

- 1) Redon's Darkness
- 2) Goya's Darkness
- 3) Bacon... and so on.

Each is named for a modern European painter, and images of their paintings immediately emerge. Another set of gestic items follows:

- 12) Swamp Space
- 13) Burnt Down Bridge
- 14) Auschwitz

These seem to try to express places, making you imagine a specific scene. Then we have:

- 17) Solomon's Palace
- 19) Turner Space
- 20) Front and Back of a Mirror

These seem to expand an image based on concrete personal names, and then enter abstract, extensive spaces. Next we see another grouping:

⁴¹ Morishita Takashi, *Hijikata's Method of Butoh Creation, Genetic Archive Engine: Hijikata Tatsumi Dancing in a Digital Forest*, Tokyo, Keio University Art Center, 2000, pp. 48-77.

- 31) Bull
- 32) Bird 1
- 39) Flower 1

These make us think of dance movements that express the concrete shapes of animals or plants. Next comes:

- 46) Republic of Nerves
- 47) Flower of Fretfulness
- 48) Henri Michaux

These remind us that dance requires movement through the reaction of nerves. Similar expressions of oversensitivity are:

- 50) Queer Figure
- 51) Neurotic
- 52) Psychiatric Ward

Finally we have:

- 68) Evaporation
- 70) Light

Did Hijikata also try to express natural events, not only objects? How did he relate them to the body?

I just listed some items from the contents of Waguri/Butoh Notation that can fully remind us of Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh Notation, but which go in search of more concrete images of movements – therefore, let us refer to these attempts to describe the form as Waguri/Butoh Notation. Here, it is difficult to decide which items would be best to illustrate Hijikata's Butoh movements. To look at it from a different perspective, however, this also means that it doesn't matter much which items we select – all are relevant to examining Hijikata's movements.

For example, when we open the page under «21. Strange Prince», we find items 1 to 4. Item 4 will be referred to hereafter as «A».

Item 21-4 [A]

A Three-layer Face is on Bellmer. A Bundle of Lights Runs from

the Cheeks. The Bottom of the Neck is Scoped out. Hair on the Back is Burning. Pomegranate Teeth. Face of a Bull and Wings on the Back. A Tail Grows and the Pelvis is Open. Putting a Cat on One's Bosom. The Neck is Stretched and the Wings on the Back. When Pushing the Cat Out, Bellmer is Higher and a Balloon on the Back. The Left Hand is on the Table and Steam at the Feet. A Man with a Pockmarked Face. Helpless Face. Evaporation of a Dog. Expression of Crayons. Shaking Bicycle. Dissection and Going Mad. 5 Iterations of Baby Moths; Repeat. Glider, Soaring Infinitely. Becomes Like a Stick, *Kinkato* Candy. Nijinsky.

Item «29. Whoopee» in the gestic contents of Waguri/Butoh Notation contains items 1-6; the fifth is «Chagall's Bird» (hereafter «B»).

Item 29-5 [B]

Chagall's Bird. Horse's Neck. Girl. Light in the Eyes. Sightline. Pollen. Person of Stone. Person of Michaux. Thundering. Wols. Monkey Jumping from a Shadow. Dead Tree. Maya's Thin Cubic. Girl Seeing a Rainbow. Crayon. Pockmarked. Thread at the Tip of a Finger. Lightning Bug's Flash. Shaking the Buttocks Backward. Table. Chick.

Deciphering Butoh Notation

In the filming of A, performances from «A Three-layer Face» to «Nijinsky» were filmed as a series of consecutive movements, whereas in B, a dancer performed each item as an individual movement, filmed accordingly.

Although there were differences in movements between A and B, the images we first envisioned when looking at the written characters (vocabulary and phrases) were almost identical between A and B. Even though the words were written down and structured by Waguri Yukio, a pupil of Hijikata's, they were certainly groups of words provided by the master – Hijikata himself. The word groups directed the movements (gestures).

Groups of words written down by Hijikata's pupils are certainly poetic and metaphorical. They should, however, be taken neither as arbitrary nor abstract. For Hijikata Tatsumi, each one of those words was

necessary for the body and, thus, can direct actual movements of the body. Put another way, it can be said that each movement of the body carefully weighs every word and phrase.

Still, those who have not directly studied under Hijikata can scarcely imagine the specific movements just by seeing a series of these words, as presented in the gestic forms noted down by Waguri or others. Yet insofar as they are words of Butoh Notation, they must be significant in directing movements; they act as signifier.

Butoh Notation is a text consisting of aggregate signifier. Butoh Notation meant the “expression” of Hijikata, which was handed down to his pupils through his oral directions. Waguri/Butoh Notation also can be considered to be a text. Vocabulary and phrases seen in A and B can be signs or morpheme comprising a text.

As mentioned previously, it was difficult for audiences in Hijikata’s time to decipher his theatrical performances. Now, however, we have been provided with Butoh Notation which certainly gives us clues. Until we have deciphered Butoh Notation we cannot decipher Hijikata Tatsumi’s Butoh.

If we can assume a signifier for each sign, the text may be deciphered. There are, however, obstacles in ascertaining the former.

First, we must identify what words in Waguri/ Butoh Notation indicate. In order to do that, we must understand the codes that Hijikata used when he spoke the words of Butoh Notation. Thus, we must start by identifying Hijikata’s interests, knowledge, and way of thinking.

Second, we must understand that the words are spoken for the sake of evoking movements (gestures). But we know Butoh Notation only through characters. There are almost no words by which we imagine the corresponding movements. In his lessons, Hijikata verbally conveyed words to pupils, accompanied by movements. It goes without saying that in order to decipher Butoh Notation accurately as text, we must know the words and associated movements taught by the master at a training place.

This is why we have filmed movements according to Waguri/Butoh Notation to build up a collection of images. As already mentioned, 180 items Waguri/Butoh Notation were filmed. The above and B are only two of these items. In these two items alone, there are 52 movements. Simple calculations would suggest the existence of some 4,500 movements within Waguri/Butoh Notation. There is actually some du-

plication, so the actual total is not that high, but can still be easily put at more than 3,000. The number of movements covers only those Hijikata gave to Waguri or that Waguri was able to apprehend. In fact, substantially more movements than this figure – likely beyond our ability to guess – were created by Hijikata⁴².

In his work, Hijikata created such an enormous movements (gestures) and his pupils were required to master them. Pupils had to immediately imagine movements just by hearing the words of the sign (the name of the movement) that had been given⁴³.

Structure of Butoh Notation

The number of movements shown in Butoh Notation undoubtedly vast, if not actually beyond counting. We must look now at the content. When simply reading A and B, the group of words can be classified assuming certain characteristics. Based on these characteristics, what each word means may be clarified and grouped together with movements (gestures). This paper, however, has no room to go deeper into that avenue of study. Instead, we will consider a structure for Butoh Notation.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty said: «Words are not merely signs of things or significations, but dwell in things, and need to be means to convey significations. So, for those who speak words, the words are not to translate thoughts already completed in a work, but to complete those thoughts»⁴⁴.

We are trying to review Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh by converting his words into signs. In his dance described by words, however, his words are not simply signs. Unlike words that serve to translate ex-

⁴² On an audio tape recording of Hijikata Tatsumi's voice choreographing his pupil Ashikawa Yoko, we can hear Hijikata saying to her: «There are dances for a two-ton truck. Why can't you do what is needed immediately?».

⁴³ After Hijikata has established his Notational Butoh, he gave each pupil the names of their schools and choreographed their performances if granting them licenses, and sent them out of Asbestos Studio: Yamamoto Moe's *Kanazawa Butoh-Kan*, Waguri Yukio's *Kohzensha*, and Nimura Momoko's *Asbestos Studio's Matsushiro Branch*.

⁴⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception: A Selection of Works*, translated by Nakayama Gen, Tokyo, Chikumashobo, 1999, p. 16.

isting movements, these direct new movements to be constructed in reality.

It is, of course, not individual motion that was created from Hijikata's words. In Butoh Notation, there should be methods to integrate movements and link them to each other. If there are any systematic methods that command the body, time, and space comprehensively and link movements together, then, we should clarify them.

Beyond that, linked or combined movements must link to other linked or combined movements, all of which combine together in a work of Butoh to form a comprehensive whole⁴⁵.

Hijikata Tatsumi performed intensively from 1974 to 1976. During this time, whenever his Butoh was created, the "movements" or movement catalog of Butoh increased and was eventually developed to an excessive extent through this continual creation.

In public performances during the period, Hijikata performed all-new creations, but his activities could be said to demonstrate processes for structuring new Butoh works, rather than displaying complete new works. Instead of «translating thoughts», he tried to «complete thoughts».

At the end of 1976, Hijikata Tatsumi discontinued the series of public performances, as if a state of maximum entropy had been reached.

[...], even if we try to understand the accumulation and combination of "movements" in engineering terms, such as cell > stack > module, the combinations are innumerable. In short, works can be structured in unlimited variations. Let us compare these movements and works to LEGO blocks. Industrially produced, LEGO blocks are standardized and available in a limited range of forms. Yet you can enjoy making an infinite number of things by using them in various combinations. Even if the movements created by Hijikata Tatsumi are standardized ones, there are thousands of them; the diversity of their combinations exceeds those of LEGO blocks, offering endless possibilities for recombination and creative expression⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ This structure may be understood as cells, stacks, and modules, as used in architectural and computing fields. The minimum unit is the cell; cells make stacks; and stacks make modules.

⁴⁶ Hijikata's Butoh is often called «Stylized Butoh», but that is too simple and easy a way to categorize or define it. It is not possible to squeeze Hijikata's Butoh into a framework of form consisting of a limited number of styles.

The following opinion of Jean Baudrillard seems consistent with Hijikata Tatsumi's Notational Butoh: «Whether we are dealing with prison cells, electronic cells, communist cells, or microbiological cells, we always search for the smallest, the indivisible, element, the organic synthesis of which will follow in accordance with the givens of the code. The code itself is nothing other than a genetic, generative cell in which the myriad intersections produce all the questions and all the possible solutions from which to select»⁴⁷.

Nevertheless, developing new movements continuously is the burden of creation. In order to create new movements, it is necessary to call for new signs and new codes to convey the meanings of the new signs. In the context of our investigation here, we will use a series of words and signs introduced from Waguri/Butoh Notation. Some examples are:

- a) Face of Bull or Neck of Horse
- b) Bellmer or Wols
- c) A Bundle of Lights Running from the Cheeks or Steam at the Feet

Item «a» movements includes movements expressing visible forms, and anyone can understand the codes for them. In item «b», these are movements associated with images that Hijikata presented together with his words, and the codes may be commonly understood based on that. In «c», they are movements born of feeling invisible things and it would be difficult for different individuals to perceive the same codes; they are extremely subjective.

Eventually, we will have to work on deciphering each word=sign that Hijikata Tatsumi presented. In doing so, we will have to interview his pupils and thoroughly study the books of paintings and collections of poems Hijikata possessed, referring in the process to the collection of images of movements that we are working on. In that way, we will be able to reach a consensus understanding of the codes by which movements created by Hijikata may be deciphered.

We may also, then, be able to understand Hijikata Tatsumi's knowledge and interests, but I wonder if we will ever be able to catch

⁴⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, translated by Imamura Hitoshi and Tsukahara Fumi, Tokyo, Chikumashobo, 1992, p. 138.

up with his thoughts. For example [...] what are the codes to express the motion of an “object” without any visible form?

Thought of Butoh Notation

Knowledge of the Talmud was originally passed on verbally from master to pupil, as described by Lévinas, and the process seemed always to have involved hot arguments. Uchida said: «Interpretation of “signs” in sacred texts, which disclose God’s wisdom, is left permanently open and permanently pending»⁴⁸. In other words, the purpose is not to settle disputes or give a final interpretation, but to open dialogue about the Torah and its teachings.

In Butoh Notation, signs specifically showing postures or movements are rarely found. There is, furthermore, no direction of time, which should be essential for theatrical art. Butoh Notation, in fact, may be the extreme of Hijikata Tatsumi’s thought – which is to say, «wisdom» itself. How did his pupils face that «wisdom»?

We have, thus, come back to the matter of the master-and-pupil relationship. We should refer to the thoughts of Hijikata’s pupils in Notational Butoh, but this will have to wait for some other time. For now, we will simply say that in Notational Butoh, pupils were deprived of their own subjectivity, their own self-consciousness. Only those who managed to suppress their egos could participate in Hijikata Tatsumi’s Butoh.

This fact is close to the essence of Hijikata Tatsumi’s Butoh. Although Butoh is regarded as existential, expressionistic dance, the method of Notational Butoh as considered in this paper seems to be based on denial of that type of Butoh.

After 1968, when he performed *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Rebellion of the Body*, Hijikata Tatsumi rebuilt his Butoh in the 1970s. We must clearly understand the ideological basis of this revision of his concepts and art. Here, two points are to be mentioned. One is an understanding of structuralism, which emerges upon denial of existential thought. J. M. Domenach stated:

⁴⁸ Uchida Tatsuru, *Tasya to sisya* (Others and the Deceased), cit., p. 50.

Claude Lévi-Strauss said similarly: «In order to reach reality, the real experience should be excluded». But this elementary point of epistemology is the metaphysical principle of an absolute system. It is cold, impersonal thought, detached from any sort subject – regardless of individual or group. It eventually completely denies the possibility of the subjective existence with the ability to express oneself and act independently⁴⁹.

Another point is the similarity between Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh and classical performing arts. In previous paper, I evaluated Hijikata's Butoh from viewpoints of classical performing arts by quoting Gunji Masakatsu's comments.

Here I will also cite Tanemura Suehiro, living at the same time as Hijikata, predicted the essence of Hijikata's Butoh: «It is expectation that the human body could be a privileged container to accept again as an operator the sacred thing that has been lost, by making body thoroughly a purposeless tool, a toy»⁵⁰.

Noting also that *Kabuki* imitated *Ningyō Jōrūrī* puppet theater to find the pure plastic art of style and excluded the concept of consciousness as a modern poison, Tanemura said: «In the brilliance of the body in a feral state, completely excluding spiritualism, there is certainly existence of support for the transcendent – a pure storehouse of spiritualism – and a operator above, outside or under it»⁵¹.

Nevertheless, when he was fully immersed in existential thought in the early stages of Butoh, Hijikata said: «A person not walking but made to walk; a person not living but made to live; a person not dead but made to be dead must, in spite of such total passivity, paradoxically expose the radical vitality of human nature»⁵².

There is no person other than a condemned prisoner who is deprived of subjectivity. Hijikata said he found the «original form of Butoh» in the walk of the prisoner.

[...]

⁴⁹ Jean-Marie Domenach, *Appearance of Structuralism, Structuralism*, translated by Ito Morio et al., Tokyo, Heibonsha, 2004, p. 22.

⁵⁰ Tanemura Suehiro, *Kigu tositeno nikutai* (The Body as an Instrument), «Umi», April 1970, p. 169.

⁵¹ Idem, p. 168.

⁵² Hijikata Tatsumi, *Keimusyo e* (To Prison), «Mita Bungaku», January 1961, p. 48.