Dancing and Ritualisation:
An Ethnographic Study of the Social Performances
in Southern Okinawa, Japan

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ABSTRACT

This research centres on the Okinawan dance tradition, a still-largely-neglected geographical as well as academic area for dance anthropologists in the late twentieth century. Limited knowledge about Okinawan dance in the Western world results from the political and cultural hegemony that has been imposed on this specific group of people, which is demonstrated in the status of Okinawa as a Japanese colony today. To unravel this situation, the author starts from a diachronical search and analysis of historical material on Okinawan dance. Primary research on Okinawan dance culture 'historically' reveals the significance of traditional dance in Okinawa as an institution and system of knowledge. This significance, which still manifests itself within different climates in contemporary society has gone through drastic institutional changes, and demands a fuller enquiry which an anthropological perspective can provide.

To progress this research, the author reviews literature on anthropological studies of dance. Frameworks such as ritual/performance are chosen considering the empirical phenomenon of dance as central to ritual in contemporary Okinawa. More emphasis is also given to the exploration of the dance from a discourse of ritual in anthropological literature. Their explanations not only represent the shifts in paradigms in anthropological discourse but also highlight the various conceptualisations of social agents. The recent issues posed in the discussion of ritual/performance have been favoured because they emphasise aspects of bodily practice and the attention of social actors as performers/audiences. These are highly relevant and critical to this research on how contemporary Okinawans, through dance practices, experience and negotiate between past and present, self and other. As far as dance is concerned, more substantial aspects such as movement are debated, and the author has chosen to focus on the indigenous interpretations of the concepts of time, space, and techniques of the body, in the hope to uncover the cultural philosophy of Okinawans that leads towards their theory of dance.
This research is conducted through ethnographic inquiry, centred on a conventional one-year’s fieldwork. In terms of ‘data collection,’ special attention is paid to resources such as written documents and visual materials owing to their implications in Okinawan society. To facilitate the recording and analysis of dance, the author uses videotapes and Labanotation as complementary tools. Current issues in dance ethnography, such as intersubjectivity and intertextuality, are noted not only for their methodological implications but also for consideration of dance ethnography as a special form of knowledge.

In conclusion, through ethnographic research on Okinawan cosmology and its contemporary dance practices, the author argues that this research can contribute to enhancing an overall knowledge of dance cultures and specifically theoretical debates such as ritual/performance in current anthropological discourse. The author also presents, through this research into Okinawan dance, the challenges of dance anthropology to the field of dance research, as a way of reflecting the dancing self through the understanding of the dancing other.
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'There are too many people to whom we need to thank, therefore we thank God'

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Notes on Translation and Transliteration

1. Chinese, Japanese and Okinawan names are presented in the fashion with family name preceding given names. However, in the bibliography, the Western convention is followed.

2. The Hepburn System is used for transliterating Japanese and Okinawan words, except with familiar names such as Tokyo. This system follows the common English reading, using diacritics to mark long vowels. For example, ‘ō’ is a long ‘o’.

3. Except for names of persons and places, Okinawan and Japanese terms are given in italics to be distinguished from other languages.
PART ONE

ENTERING THE FIELD:
Geographical, Theoretical and Methodological Overview
Figure 1.1 Okinawa Islands (Ryūkyū Islands) (Sakihara 1987:xi)
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CHAPTER ONE Okinawa and the Dance: Locating the Field

1.1 Introduction

In the early 1990s, a series of videos entitled The JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance was published by the Japan Victor Company, in collaboration with Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings. This series of videocassettes amounts to thirty in total and is organised into different geographical regions: East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas and Oceania, in which a global intention is clearly evident. Edited mainly by a group of leading ethnologists in Japan, the focus of this anthology is decidedly on music, with dance included because:

[through the use of the medium of video, the music of the world’s people can be more clearly understood, not just in terms of musical instruments and playing methods, but also with respect to the essence of the dances and performing arts to which music is so extricably conjoined (Fujii n.d.: xiii).

The presence of this anthology, claimed to be the first one of its kind, provoked different comments among scholars. Despite its positive educational contribution as a resourceful tool for surveying music and dance performances from many cultures, it has also been criticised as ‘a fascinating, self-proclaimed icon of Japanese ethnological inquiry,’ which ‘inevitably reflects, as many such collections would, the national agenda and geocultural perspective of its home institution and staff’ (Ness 1993:50).

Ness goes on to posit that the uneven allocation among different areas ‘vividly illustrates the practice of over- and under-representing various areas of the world that are claimed, encompassed and portrayed in “world” dance by whatever superpower of the moment happens to be capable of producing such extensive documentation’. Besides, the collection has been influenced by certain political factors. As the editor mentions, the inaccessibility of certain regions, caused by war (in the case of Afghanistan) or previous political control (pre-Soviet Union), made collection impossible or material was necessarily acquired through local governments (Fujii
n.d.:2). This process provokes questions of representation and makes the anthology selective, both in terms of cultural and political perspectives.

What is more intriguing is the fact that Japan itself is excluded from this anthology. An American ethnomusicologist, Anthony Seeger, mentions in the ‘Introduction’ that a whole series covering only Japanese material is in process of publication. Therefore the whole collection could be seen as how a group of Japanese specialists (the ethnomusicologists, media technicians and so on) try to build up a notion of the ‘Other’, extracted from the most flamboyant images of music and dance performances of different peoples.

Misled by its title, I searched for traditional dance in Okinawa, currently a province of Japan, in vain on the first occasion I used the above anthology. This experience was repeated several times when searching other books on World or Asian performances, written by both Japanese and Western scholars. An ethnological work on Asian dances may have revealed much about various traditions of main and minority groups, but nothing on Okinawan dance was found (Mlyao 1987). Western works on Japanese dance include mainly Nō and Kabuki (Fleshman 1986) but totally ignore Okinawan dance, even though it also has a classical genre. Apparently, Okinawa has not only become an area of under-representation, as Ness has noted, in Western literature, but has also been artificially excluded, or ‘decomposed’, a characteristic symptom of post-modern collection of ethnography and art, especially in those regions where hierarchical relationships of political power exist (Clifford 1988:132).

Compared with other regions such as Bali, Okinawan Dance is much less known by Western scholars, although from time to time Okinawans themselves describe their land as ‘Islands of Dances and Songs’ (Hughes 1980:99; 1981:22). Bearing in mind the contemporary political hegemony and cultural representation that are reflected in the videocassettes and books previously mentioned, my research aims to understand Okinawan dance in the hope to provide a fuller picture of this minor tradition.

In this chapter, I shall review and analyse literature on Okinawan people and their dance. Due to the fact that Okinawa lacks its own written language, the literature of
Okinawan dance has been produced through other ‘voices’ such as Japanese, Chinese, and Western languages. The early literature includes historical accounts written by Chinese, Japanese and Korean officers, and reports by Western travellers, expeditions and missionaries. Later academic works are closely related to the colonialism that Okinawa has been through after the late nineteenth century. Their writings on Okinawan people and dance are inevitably conditioned by the specific historical, political and cultural contexts as I shall show below.

Throughout this chapter, I shall follow a diachronical framework for two reasons. The first is to explicate how the formation of Okinawan dance, as in other societies (Ranger 1975:4), is closely related to the main historical events. Secondly, a diachronical review can provide more information on change as well as continuity of Okinawan dance, which then will become the base for further comparison with contemporary condition of Okinawan dance that is the focus of this research. Nonetheless, readers should be reminded that the perspective here is an anthropological rather than historical one (Gore 1994:59). That is, my intention is to present the culture of Okinawan dance historically (Ohnuki-Tierny 1990:3), rather than reconstruct its past.

1.2 Locating Okinawa: Different Representations of the People

Describing Okinawa and its people, an early twentieth-century historian writing at a time when Okinawa was literally called ‘Loochoo’ considered:

Happy is the nation that had no history. The plausible suggestion in this rather cynical saying can be applied to the records of the Loochoo islands, for, while the main facts of their somewhat uneventful story can be comprised within contracted limits, the Loochooans themselves are undoubtedly happy in general; if we think of happiness in a simple, placid vocal of domesticity in place of the strenuous life of the modern great nations of the world with its risk and excitement and its attendant greater comfort and power (Leavenworth 1905:13).

Leavenworth’s attitude toward these people reveals a dominant idea at that time: that is, he regards only written records as ‘history’. Without its own written form of
language, however, the past of the people of Okinawa is never an uneventful story, as I shall argue.

The first difficulty in locating Okinawa (fig. 1.1) for a literature review is that there are various names which have been used to refer to this specific region, hence records on this single people are dispersed. This inconsistency of names reflects largely how Okinawa has been represented in other cultures. Earlier written accounts of Okinawa have mainly been written in Chinese and Japanese. Although it is said that Okinawa might have had contact with the Chinese as early as the third century B.C (Kerr 1958:28), possibly the earliest written record on Okinawa was produced in 609 A.D based on the record of a Chinese expedition team in search of the 'immortal land lying in the Eastern sea' for the Emperor. The Chinese name, referring to Okinawa as Liuch’iu, literally meaning 'a dragon floating on the sea,' is first seen in Sui Shu (The History of the Sui Dynasty). A member of the team who was inspired by the outlook of the islands bestowed this name upon them.

In Sui Shu, the location, the geography, the chieftain, the outlook of the people, and their customs are briefly described. Descriptions of customs, such as using feathers as head decoration and so on, however, have convinced historians to develop different theories about the identification of Liuch’iu in Sui Shu, since some of the features are not likely to belong to the Okinawan people, but are more similar to those of the aborigines in Taiwan, which is geographically close to Okinawa. Chinese official historians, nevertheless, have transmitted the term Liuch’iu throughout different dynasties without much doubt. The term Liuch’iu as a representation of Okinawa finally became fixed in the late fourteenth century, when the Chinese Emperor asked the leaders in Liuch’iu to become subordinate to China.

On the other hand, the earliest Japanese historical records about Okinawa appeared later in the seventh century. Despite that, nothing further is known until the fourteenth century when the term Ryūkyū was formed following Chinese written forms of representation but different when pronounced in Japanese. For instance, the earliest account of Okinawan religion, Ryūkyū Shintō Ki (Accounts of the Ways of the Gods in Ryūkyū), which is dated 1609, was written by a Japanese priest, Dai-Chū
Ryō-Te. In both the Chinese and Japanese situations, fixing the terminology somehow reflects the increasing interest in these people. Geographically lying between China and Japan, Okinawa was constituted only of a series of small islands which could scarcely support its own people. The Okinawan authority, formed in the early fifteenth century as a kingdom, found the accepted demeanour to sustain its existence by humbly paying annual tributes and claiming subordination to both before the late nineteenth century, when finally the Japanese government annexed Okinawa and turned her into a province of Japan in 1879. As contacts among China, Japan, and Okinawa became more intense and regular after the fourteenth century, nevertheless, Okinawa could not help but depend upon these two countries for her resources as well as economic, political and cultural authorities.

Okinawa itself, however, displayed a dilemma between claiming its autonomy of representation and consideration of political reality. In 1650 and 1701, two official historical accounts were compiled, Chūzan Seiken (The History of Chūzan Kingdom) and Chūzan Seifu (The Genealogy of Chūzan Kingdom). ‘Chūzan’ is the self-generated name of the Okinawan kingdom unified in the early fifteenth century, which means ‘the Middle Mountain.’ The contents and the languages of these volumes, however, were specifically dedicated to Japan and China respectively. Except for these two historical books, the term Liuch’iu or Ryūkyū still prevailed in most writings before the twentieth century.

Even early Western accounts of Okinawa followed the term Liuch’iu or Ryūkyū using various forms of spelling. It is not until the sixteenth century that Western explorers reached this area, and mostly only passed Okinawa on their way towards other destinations perceived to be more interesting, such as China, Japan and Korea. After pioneering expeditions, the Portuguese and Dutch left maps of the northwest coast of the Pacific, in which Okinawa usually occupied only a corner. In the eighteenth century, one of the French Jesuit missionaries successfully set up a base on an island north of Okinawa. The earliest British ship to reach Okinawa was in 1618 for which a journal survives. The brief and ambiguous content, however, does not reveal much about these islands. But throughout the whole nineteenth century, British as well as American ship crews visited Okinawa at an increasing rate, partly because through
Okinawa, 'the only avenue to Japan,' they could reach 'the secluded and benighted empire' (Smith 1853:v). Bearing different interests in mind, these visitors, among them the navies, the missions, the natural historians and so on, issued accounts which demonstrate a surprising consistency as will be discussed below.

One of the British pioneers was Captain Broughton, whose ship was wrecked near an island in southern Okinawa on his way from China to Korea in 1796. Local inhabitants saved the crew, and after the first encounter with these people he wrote:

These people were different in some respect to Chinese and Japanese. Their hair was rolled up to the crown of the head, and fastened with two metal pins; and they were dressed in loose linen gowns and trousers. They saluted the officers by joining their hands and lifting them to their heads in a flow manner (Broughton 1804:192).

Broughton also noticed the species of products, the houses, people's dresses, some burial customs and their friendly manner.

These good people were fully acquainted with our misfortune, and naturally conceived our greatest wants were the article of life, which, such as the possessed, they parted with in a most friendly manner (p.205).

These friendly people who bore no harm but only good will, however, were extremely reluctant to let Captain Broughton and his crew land on their island for a detailed survey. The British ship later left for 'the Great Lieuchieux' (Okinawa proper). They were confronted with a similar situation there and therefore left in forty-eight hours without recovering further information about the people. Despite his brief stay, Broughton’s record has shed light on aspects of the life of people in southern Okinawa which other accounts disregarded.14

Broughton’s account, as well as the delicately drawn charts, have interested later explorers. A decade later, the British Captain, Basil Hall, and his crew visited Okinawa and stayed for six weeks. His voyage produced two accounts of Okinawa in considerable detail (Hall 1818; M’Leod 1818). Expedition teams who came later usually referred to his voyage as far as Okinawa was concerned (Guillemard 1886; Holloran 1856; Leavonworth 1905; Schwartz 1908; Smith 1853). Despite their short
stay in Okinawa, most of these writings produce a form of narrative to provide the following scene:

Upon the ships’ arrival, canoes or boats would be sent to greet these outsiders. Immediately, plenty of water and refreshments would be provided even without asking, but no reward or compensation for the supplies had ever been asked.15 There were usually male officers who dressed in a long robe and wore a special hat of different colours (according to the subject’s rank), that came and dealt with these strangers. (Some of them later became distinguished in a fashion like the ‘key informant’ in differentiation from others.) The request to visit the King or land upon the island had always been refused. Brief walking near the port (Napha, or Naha) under surveillance, however, was allowed, and whenever these Europeans or North Americans made their appearance, hundreds of Okinawans gathered. The hairstyle of the Okinawans, a knot on the crown of the head inserted with two pins, had received unexceptionally intense attention from every foreigner. Women were never seen. They would run away if they were accidentally confronted. Those who were lucky enough to meet Okinawan women who had not been frightened would have seen an interesting way in which they transported their luggage, even including pigs, on their heads. Tattooing had been witnessed, mainly among women on their hands. Men hardly worked, and only women occupied the markets. Okinawans had no religion or practices of it, although evidence of Buddhism temples and Shintō buildings had been seen. Their graves were of an Omega shape and finely built. They had a custom of burial in which the dead would be left to decompose. After one, three, or seven years, his female relatives would wash his bones using a kind of native liquor and put them into an urn. There were no policemen, and the Okinawans did not have or use weapons.16 The Okinawan people were ‘quiet’, ‘peaceful’, ‘docile’, ‘easily governed’, ‘shrewd’, ‘cunning’, ‘intelligence’, ‘genius’, ‘artistic’, ‘friendly’, ‘polite’, ‘obliging’, and so on. Most of the time, the ships sailed off in days or weeks, again with canoes, boats, and the natives on shore (still crowded) seeing them off, in a way both parties were satisfied.

The above episode is a reconstruction of the narratives that have repeatedly appeared in the Western works on Okinawa from the late eighteenth century to the early
twentieth century. Suffice it to say that most of the observations were superficial and revealed misunderstanding on occasion. Through continuous reviewing of the predecessors’ records of their own voyages (Guillemand 1886:27; Holloran 1856:22-23; M’Leod 1818:135-140), however, these accounts together have authorised a body of knowledge representing Okinawa people in Western society at that time. Besides, as most Westerners found Chinese and Japanese influences here and there in Okinawan architecture, customs and institutions, they also evaluated, revised and reinterpreted their ideas or images about these two countries, and the process reversed itself sometimes.

[The Liu-Kiuans] are a short race, probably even shorter than the Japanese, but much better proportioned, being without the long bodies and short legs of the latter people, and having extremely well-developed chests. The colour of the skin varies of course with the social position of the individual. Those who work in the fields, clad only in a waist-cloth, are nearly as dark as Malay, but the upper classes are much fairer, and are at the same time devoid of any of the yellow tint of the Chinaman (Guillemand 1886:36).

The Chinese language is learnt by a few, ...their native language, which is a dialect of the Japanese, and is rather soft and harmonious; and they have nothing of that hesitation in utterance, as appearance of choking, which is observed in the former, often requiring the action of the hands to assist the tongue (M’leod 1818:121-122).

Expressing its relation to the neighbour countries by saying that ‘China was their father and Japan was mother’ (Schwartz 1908:133), Okinawa had been struggling to seek a balance between these powers, and an identity for itself against its immediate ‘Others.’ Lack of its own written form of language, nevertheless, Okinawa, Liuch’iu, or Ryūkyū, may still have its autonomy, as Sakihara pointed out: ‘[in] the area of music and dance, in spite of the clearly discernible influence from both China and Japan, Ryūkyū remained most distinctly Ryūkyūan’ (Sakihara 1987:209). It is worth asking how, under a continuous political and cultural hegemony that had been imposed on the past of Okinawa, the dance and music maintained distinctiveness in their social and cultural milieu.

1.3 Okinawan Dances in Cultural Encounters: Literature on Okinawan Dance before the Twentieth Century
Although theories about the identity of Liuch’iu in the Chinese official history *Sui Shu* remain to be debated, historians of Okinawan dance sometimes use it for early evidence (Yano 1988:26). In *Sui Shu*, it is recorded that:

"Generally, at banquets, one waits and drinks only after his name is called. Those who pour the wine for the king also call out the king’s name. Then all join in drinking together, in exactly the same way as the T’u-chüeh [Turks]. In singing, they beat the time with their feet. One person sings the song, and then the others join in the chorus, with extremely plaintive voices. The women dance with arms held high and hands making motions"(Sakamaki 1963:69).

The description of ‘hands making motions’ in Sakamaki’s translation can also be articulated as ‘waving their hands’ since the verb ‘to wave’ is indicated in the Chinese historical book. The episode reveals the social occasion on which dancing and singing occurred. The picture, however, is hardly satisfactory in terms of the dance. It is not until the sixteenth century that Chinese materials had become more productive in describing Okinawan dances. The subordinate relationship of Okinawa to the Chinese continued for nearly five hundred years. From 1372 to 1866, whenever the kings in Okinawa passed away, messages were sent to China and sanctions of the new kings were required. There were in total twenty-two formal diplomatic occasions during the five centuries. It is on these occasions of entertaining Chinese ambassadors who came to Okinawa to crown its kings that the accounts of Okinawan classical dance, which originated from the court, are known: (The following quotations from Chinese documents are my translation.)

"Four barbarian children engaged in barbarian songs and barbarian dances. They put forward their wine container and bent their bodies... Four children beat the wooden sticks with hands and their feet turning around to dance (By Cheng Kang 1534, in Yano 1988: 51-52).

There were native performances. I was told the performers were all nobles and their children. They wore big hats and went on stage, with their faces covered and wearing colourful barbarian costumes. There were more than twenty of them. They bent their bodies and sang as they danced (By Hsia Tsu-Yang 1606, in Yano 1988:71).

Among the dancers, about ten are adults, all the others are children, from the age of eight to fourteen. They are all sons of the court officials. The folk people are not allowed (By Wong Ch’ih 1683, in Yano 1988:73).

Despite the discriminatory voice, such as the term ‘barbarian’, in these records, they depict a very different picture compared to the previous one. Certainly, there was a
clear notion of social classes. More information about the performers is known. Although nothing about the gender of the performers is indicated, since at that time only the male noble had access to court dances, it is more than likely that the children were boys. Feet and body movements have been recorded, although information is still limited. Props and costumes become prominent parts in dance performances. A fuller picture can be found in a later account written by a diligent Chinese ambassador who remarkably noted the process of the dance and music performance:

At first there were six musicians who sang in a Buddhist chant fashion, without music [accompaniment]. Then a person appeared with a mask and sang accordingly. He bowed three times, then scrubbed his hands and danced. The dance finished and he bowed three times again. Children ... about thirteen and fourteen, four of them, with black helmets, went on stage. They faced the musicians and sat down. The musician took off the helmets for them, tied the red strings into knots on the helmets, and returned them to the children. The children then rose, with the helmets in their hands and stepped their feet to dance. This is the first programme, the helmet dance (Hsu 1972: 65-66).

Hsu went on to record the performance for the Moon Festival banquet. There were eight programmes. Most of them were performed by children, only one by adults. They all dressed flamboyantly. Each piece of dance was identified with certain kinds of props, for instance, flower ropes, baskets, wooden pads, golden balls, rods, sticks, and so on. The numbers of performers ranged from two to six. The dances were accompanied by songs sung by the musicians or the dancers used their props to make sound. Apparently, Hsu was more interested in the formation of dance than the movements, therefore little about the movement has been recorded, except for moves such as ‘crossing hands’ and ‘stepping feet’. He also recorded performances on other occasions since he stayed in Okinawa for eight months from 1718 to 1719. According to his writings, the performance of dances was always structured into programmes accompanied by music as mentioned above.

Besides performances of dances, Hsu and his followers were also entertained with dramas and other forms of performances. The dramas as well as some of the dances were believed to have been created by the most important figure, Tamagusuku Chōkun, in the development of Okinawan classic performing arts. He was born into a noble family in 1684. Between 1660 and 1703 he stayed in the court of Satsuma, the
lord in Kyūshū, as an apprentice. He managed to learn Japanese culture, including the songs and dances of that time. After returning to Chūzan Kingdom, from 1709 to 1723 he went to Kyūshū and Tokyo frequently as both an interpreter and official performer for the Chūzan Kingdom. It is believed that during his stay in Japan proper he was influenced by Nō and Kabuki. He later created a special form of drama, *Kumi udui*, meaning 'dance suite,' which is a narrative performance consisting of literature, music and dance. He created five of them, and choreographed several classical dances. Both of these are considered to be the classics of Okinawan performing arts today. Hsu's account happened to record one his first official productions.¹⁹

Hsu's descriptions, as well as those of his predecessors', have formed the basis for reference to Okinawan dance in Chinese historical records. Historians of Okinawan dance, such as Yano, also pay much attention to these accounts, as well as other Japanese materials such as ancient scrolls or drawings. These materials have shed light on the formation of those court performances, to build a continuity of Okinawan classical dance which is still performed today. Generally speaking, accounts in Chinese and Japanese have depicted similar characteristics like the structured programmes, the grouping of dancers, the performances by the nobles and their children, their luxury dresses and so on. Since these documents were produced by people occupying a status as officials who spent time mainly in the palace, little information about the dance of ordinary people has been recorded.

Captain Hall documented an event in which he and his crew members first witnessed the performance of Okinawan dance:

> Before leaving the cabin, they shewed us a Loo-choo dance round the table: Madera placed himself at the head before Ookooma, [Madera and Ookooma were the Okinawan officers] while the others ranged themselves in a line behind him: he began by a song, the air of which was very pretty, and nearly at the same time commenced the dance, which constituted principally in throwing the body into a variety of postures, and twisting the hands about. Sometimes the hands were placed flat together, at others separate, but generally the former, the movements both of the body and hands were regular and of a waving description. The head was made to incline slowly from side to side, so as almost to touch the shoulders; the feet were moved with a slight shuffling motion, with an occasional long sweeping step to one side and then back again; but the perfection of dance appeared to be in the proper use of the hands and body. The words of the dance songs were “Sasa sangcoomah, sangcoomee ah!”
sangcoomee ah! kadee yooshee daw;” when they came to the last word they all joined in the chorus and clapped their bands... Mádera had a graceful carriage; and his dancing, though fantastic, was really elegant, his singing too was in good taste. The others [other lower Okinawan officials] danced clumsily, though in perfect good time, and joined with some spirit in the chorus.... The ship was illuminated, and the sailors were dancing on the upper deck. The chief was much pleased with this scene, which was lively enough. After watching the dance for a few minutes, Mádera,..., ran among the sailors, and seizing one of them by the shoulders, put him out of the dance, took his place, and kept up the reel with the same spirit, and exactly in the same style and step as the sailors. The other dances were left off, and the whole ship’s company assembling round Mádera, cheered and clapped him till the dance was done. The chiefs joined in the applause, seeming no less surprised than ourselves at Mádera’s skill, for his imitation of the sailors’ odd steps and gestures was as exact as if he had lived among seamen all his life. The officers then danced a country dance, after which the chiefs, unmasked and with a sort of intuitive politeness, which rendered every thing they did appropriate, instantly stepped forward and danced several times round the quarter-deck, to the infinite gratification of the sailors (Hall 1818:166-168).

Hall’s description not only has added more details about the movements, but also vividly illustrates a context for Okinawans to dance, which is, to a certain degree, very different from those formal diplomatic occasions. He also mentions the form of country dance, although nothing more besides that is known. Mádera, a main figure in Hall’s account who proved himself later to be an important official, certainly is a typical noble trained in dance as the Chinese ambassadors had recorded. His impromptu performance, which had surprised even his own chief, seems to be an activity common to Okinawans, as Kerr describes the life of the Kingdom time:

No occasion was overlooked which might provide an excuse for dancing. Festivals marked each change of seasons; every family gathering, happy or sad, became an occasion for impromptu performance (Kerr 1958:96).

The last court entertainment for a Chinese ambassador in Okinawa was held in 1866, shortly before Japan’s annexation of Okinawa. Westerners who came later seldom had the chance to see any of the dances during their visit. This is due to the reason that after Commodore Perry’s visit and his insistence on opening relation between America and the Kingdom, a treaty between American and Okinawa had been signed. This treatise worried the Japanese government so much that shortly regulations were issued such as ‘singing, dancing, and samisen playing were to be prohibited while foreign ships were in port’ (Kerr 1958:344).
Visiting Okinawa shortly after its being annexation, Guillemard recorded a scene as follows.

Passing the wooded islet at the harbour’s entrance on our return, we came upon a curious scene. A party of half a dozen natives had gathered on the bare summit, and facing towards the west, were occupied in some sort of festal or religious ceremonial. The sun was just setting, but the thick banks of cloud gathered above our heads portended a heavy storm. Bathed in a flood of hard light, a solitary figure stood out against the evening sky, slowly waving his arms and dancing an adieu to day. Behind him sat the others with snake-skin guitars, chanting the weird, yet not unpleasing, discords of some Liu-kiuan song. Presently the music ceased, and another stepped forward to take the dancer’s place. We floated slowly on, half unconsciously under the spell of the mournful music and the strangeness of the scene we were watching, until both had vanished in distance, and the piece was ended and the curtain had fallen, but among many scenes of travel vividly impressed upon my memory, I can recall few more so than the Liu-kiuan sunset dance in Napha-kiang harbour (Guillemard 1886:44).

A possible instance of when and how the original court performers sang and danced in a village has been captured by Guillemard who does not really acknowledge the changed political climate except for shedding his exoticism.

To summarise, the above literature on Okinawan dance which was recorded alongside Okinawans’ encounters with different peoples before the twentieth century, shows a well-developed court tradition which is elite in nature. The court dances did stand out as a feature of distinctiveness, because they not only had been highly formalised in an Okinawan way, but were also performed in the contexts in which different groups of people encountered. Besides, it is obvious that dance was not only institutionalised as a court performance but was also a major feature of social gatherings. The literature underlines the significance of dance in Okinawan society. What is still unclear is why dance has occupied such status in this culture. For more information I shall now turn to another literary genre.

1.4 Omoro Sōshi and the Standardisation of Okinawan Court Dance

Not only dance, but also many other aspects of early Okinawan life would have remained enigmatic if the study of Omoro Sōshi (The Anthology of Songs of Omoro,
compiled between 1532-1623) had not been brought to light. Thanks to Iha Fuyu, the Father of Okinawan Studies, his contemporaries and antecessors, we have better knowledge about this work of 'a reflection of the social, cultural, and historical events of its time' (Sakihara 1987:6-7). They had made enormous efforts to unravel this classic text which had become incomprehensible in the early twentieth century due to the change of the language. Before proceeding to the contents of Omoro Sōshi, however, it is necessary to make a brief sketch of the past of Okinawa, in which the text was produced.

Scholars nowadays tend to divide Okinawan history into several periods. Roughly speaking, they include: ancient society, the village society, early and late kingdoms, and the prefecture period. In the period of ancient times, dated to the second and third centuries, little is known. The people were mainly engaged with hunting and fishing for their subsistence. During the village society from the second or third century to the late twelfth century, based on the archaeological evidence of stone tools and houses, agriculture had become the main resource of production, and villages consisted of clan groups, the makyo. The paired leadership—the head of clan village as the nebito, the 'root man' in the political sphere, and his sister as the negami, the 'root deity', in the religious one—was formed. Both of these terms come from neya, meaning the 'root family.'

From the late twelfth to the late fifteenth century, Okinawa was divided and ruled by many chieftains, who were named aji. The elevation of the aji is believed to be a result of importing of iron and knowledge of how to use it. Iron not only caused a revolution in food production, but was also used to make weapons and hence set Okinawa into a period of internal wars among the aji for several hundred years. During this period, the nebito-negami relationship was even more institutionalised and became that of aji-noro (the latter means 'the priestess'). By the end of the fourteenth century, the three most powerful aji had built their own kingdoms on Okinawa proper (figure 2): the Kingdoms of Hokuzan (Northern Mountain), Chúzan (Middle Mountain) and Nanzan (Southern Mountain). One king of the Chúzan, Satto, started the relationship with the Ming Dynasty China in 1372. The other two followed later.
King Satto’s successor, Hashi, who sent the first envoy to China was not only given a rank in the Chinese court but also a Chinese name, Shō. He became so powerful that he unified the chieftains of Okinawa proper in the early fifteenth century and later those of the southern parts. This dynasty, the First Shō Dynasty as called by historians, continued for only fifty years (1429-1467), because of its total dependence on military power without further political achievement.

It is in the early stage of the Second Shō Dynasty that the Golden Age of Okinawa was achieved. In King Shō Shin’s time (1478-1526), political power had been centralised. The threatening lords were all forced to live near Shuri, where the royal castle was located, in order to be closely watched. Institutional influence from China and Buddhism by way of Japan both reinforced the authority of the government. The foreign trade enterprise, which started in the late fourteenth century and became largely a monopoly of the royal family, continued to flourish. The Okinawan trading ships had gone as far as Java, Sumatra, Siam, Malaya, Annam, Luzon and so on. Ships full of products such as silk, satin, ceramics, sulphur, sappanwood, and various fabrics, perfume and wine were gathered in Naha, the biggest port. Although the village people outside of Shuri and Naha led bitter lives due to the heavy tax system, Okinawa held a kind of ‘cosmopolitan’ status at that time. The Golden Age declined, however, because after the sixteenth century the foreign trading enterprise was gradually replaced by the Portuguese and Japanese ships that dominated the Southeast Asian and Eastern Asian waters respectively. In 1609, possibly largely due to the economic interest, the Shimazu of Satsuma in Kyūshū, south Japan, forcibly took the king to Japan and hence made him as well as the country a puppet, which put an end to the early Kingdom period.

*Omoro Sōshi* was first compiled in 1532, shortly after King Shō Shin’s reign. Sakihara has posited his theory, based on a synonymous analysis of the Japanese case, of the motivation:

*The myths and tales...are not representative of historical fact but rather were more or less constructed and embellished by the scribes or historians of royal court with the intention of supplying the magical power and logical basis for the position and authority of the ruler....* (1987:8).

17
He also has inferred a pattern through the stages of which the compilation of a text like *Omoro Sōshi* is achieved: the introduction of a writing system, the stimulation of Buddhism, political unity and peace being secured, and the legitimisation of the authority by historical writing. In this way, Sakihara intends to give *Omoro Sōshi* sanction as a formal history. Its contents, nevertheless, are far more intriguing because it 'fleshes and brings to life the dry bones of the more official annals and chronologies' (p. 7).

The *Omoro Sōshi* is a collection of *omoro*, the ancient songs and poems of the villages and islands of Okinawa and Amami, a group of islands north of Okinawa proper. Its compilation started in 1532, but most was done later in 1613 and 1623 respectively. The time depicted in the songs ranges from the late twelfth to the early seventeenth century, which is accordingly designated as the *omoro* period. There are twenty-two volumes, with 1544 songs (1248 except for repeated ones.) Except for a few, the authors of the songs are anonymous. Nowadays scholars tend to accept that the term *omoro* is transformed from *umui*, which means 'thoughts'. Moreover, *umui* is 'not within the human mind, but a thought of the gods spoken outward through a medium' (Ito 1988: 40). These songs of *omoro* are believed to be sung first by *noro*, the priestesses, on different ritualistic and ceremonial occasions. Later it became institutionalised in the palace, only the hereditary chief male royal singer, *nushidui*, knew how to sing these songs.

The contents of *Omoro Sōshi* can be divided into several categories; the provincial, the master, the priestess, the ceremonial, and so on. Noteworthy are the records on dances. There are three volumes dedicated to dances, Vol. 9, 12, and 14. Although Vol. 12 and 14 are entitled with two forms of dances, *asubi* and *esa*, they include only songs that are supposed to be sung to accompany dance performances. Among them Vol. 9, including thirty-five songs in total, is the most important in terms of movements. Alongside some of the verses of the song, are notes that have possibly been attached by one of the *nushidui* who sang the songs, which depict certain recurring movement patterns. The following examples (Ito 1988: 60, translation supplied) are two *omoro* that are attached with the notes on movements.
Vol. 9 No. 5
(Okinañan language)
Owamoriyageyo no kimi no Fushi
The Melody of Owamoriyageyo no kimi

Kimiyoshi Kimino

Kimiyoshi Priestesses,

Kimi Osoi Kimino

Governing as a god,

Kotobakigikagi: Newa

Footnote: The leader does

Mikiri Futate Ochie

Osute and Konerite twice to

Konet

the right, and does Konerite

to the left.

Mjirata meyor

Collecting beautiful colours [dancers].

Eriwa Hitari Futate

The group does Osute and

Ochie Konete Mikiri

Konerite twice to the left

Hitote Koneru

and does Konerite once to

The right.

**

Momosone Yachiyoku

A hundred village wives...

Manaso no Yachiyoku

Seventy [many] village wives...

(Repeat the refrain * to **) [The priestess is]

Momosoga Nakani

Surrounded by as many as

A hundred.

Momosoga Nakani

Surrounded by as many as

A hundred.

(Repeat the refrain * to **) [The priestess is]

Vol. 9, No. 9

Onisankoya Fushi

The melody of Onisankoya

Yoyosekimi no

If the Yoyosekimi Priestess comes

Orete Asubeba

down from the Heaven and dances,

*

Hyoshi Uchi Agereba

When the Drum is hit

Kotobakikigaki

Footnote: Clap hands, do

Oshiwachie Otake Ogamite,

clap hands up and down

Kimino Nayora

Priestess dances

Kotobakikigaki:

Footnote:

Futate Ochi

Do Osute and Konerite twice.

Futatekonero

**

Omoikimi no

If Omoikimi Priestess comes

Orete Asubeba

down from Heaven and dances.

(Repeat the refrain * to **)
Osute, 'pushing hands,’ Konerite ‘kneading hands,’ and Ogumite ‘praying hands’ are three basic patterns of hand movements which appear in Vol. 9 of Omoro Sōshi. Besides these hand movements, in song no. 9, the term nayore can mean 'to turn or bend one’s body as in dancing’ (Sakihara 1987:56), and its noun nayori indicates movements involving the whole body, whose ‘qualities are gentle, gradual up and down movements similar to the approach and ebb of ocean waves upon the seashore’ (Ito 1988:14,53). These movement styles remind us of similar features that appeared in the earlier historical accounts. Although questions still remain as to whether the terms represent the same movements as performed today since they were written down hundreds of years ago, scholars have traced the original or authentic prototype of Okinawan dance through the identification of movement patterns which appear in Omoro Sōshi. For instance, Ito (1988) has used Labanotation as her tool to illustrate that the omoro movement patterns can be found in contemporary ritualistic practices as well as presentational dances. Therefore the originality of Okinawan dance from an indigenous base, the priestesses’ movements, should not be questioned. Yano, inspired by the Omoro Sōshi and the reports of other folklore scholars, considers various patterns of hand movements practised by the priestesses as the prototype of Okinawan dance (Yano 1988:26-48).

Vol. 2, No. 34 (Dancing Priestess)

* Goeku Ayamiya ni
   * Kogane Gewa Uete
   Kogane Gega Shita
   Kimi no Aji no
   ** Shinoguri Yowaru Kiyora Ya
   Goeku Kusemiya
(Repeat the refrain * to **) Shinoguri Yowaru Kiyora Ya Dances the dance of Shinugu!

Vol. 2, No. 16 (Village Festival)

Yagi no Kana-mori Ni Dances the dance of Shinugu!

In the fair garden of Goeku
Are planted golden trees
Under the golden trees,
How beautifully our revered priestess
Dances the dance of Shinugu!

In the wonderous garden of Goeku
Dances the dance of Shinugu!

At Kana holy grove,
These two songs (Sakihara 1988:55-58, translation supplied) further indicate that the priestesses played a vital part in dancing in contexts different from the previous ones. The whole Omoro Sōshi is divided into two styles produced in two periods. In the earlier period, the priestesses performed both the songs and the dances. Sakihara has compared the Okinawan priestesses with storytellers in early Japan, who had shown excellent memories in keeping good repertoires of stories. Moreover, in the early omoro period, dance, music and literature were said to be incorporated in a single mode of expression. If so, then the priestesses were not only storytellers but also the controllers and transmitters of the knowledge. In 1470, however, during the reign of King Shō Shin, an organisation of nushuhu was founded, according to which only male royal singers could lead the omoro singing. The status was ascribed by the king at first, and then became an inheritance. At the same time, the king also organised the priestesses into a centralised system, in which the mother or sister of the king occupied the highest rank of the priestess, the Kikoe Īkimi. The designation of the priestesses of lower ranks was also manipulated by the kings afterwards. The status of the controllers of knowledge hence shifted, from the local priestesses to the court male singers, and ‘from the religious women to the political men,’ partly due to the importation of Buddhism and Confucianism that denigrated women’s status in general (Bell 1984:124-125; Kerr 1958:42).

From this angle, it is interesting to see why there are movement footnotes only in Vol. 9, which is apparently a collection of omoro sung in the palace: but not so in other accounts. As I shall argue, these footnotes, the standardisation of movements that only appeared in a later period, are the production of the centralised government who controlled and hence regulated expression such as dances and songs in such a way that loyalty to the palace could be secured.26
The importance of Omoro Sōshi as a precious source of material on Okinawan dance is self-evident. Its importance will be limited, however, if it functions only as a fossil, that is, as a record of the past. I shall argue that it is through the continuous production of the knowledge of Omoro Sōshi in general and omoro dance in particular, that we can say that the Omoro Sōshi has become a historical symbol through which contemporary Okinawans build their identity in terms of dance as well as other aspects of the culture.

1.5 Re-categorisation of Okinawan Dance in Literature after the Twentieth Century

The term ‘Okinawa’ was first seen in 753, upon the occasion of a shipwreck suffered by a Japanese mission sent to China from Nara, the capital of Japan at that time, in the reign of the Empress Koken. This term is believed to be transformed from uchina, the one Okinawans used to name themselves. In Japanese, Okinawa literally means ‘rope in the offing’. Before the representation of Ryūkyū emerged in the fourteenth century, Japan’s notion about this people is ‘the people of the southern islands,’ which is first seen in the Japanese historical record dating back to 616. Between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, Ryūkyū was used to refer to both the geographical and political regions. It is not until 1879 when finally the Japanese annexed the Ryūkyū kingdom and turned it into the prefecture of Okinawa that this representation became fixed to the present day.

During the years from 1879 to 1945, Okinawan people have experienced a series of drastic changes in their history. The kingdom and its hierarchical social class were abolished. Japanese officers were sent to govern from the north to the south of Okinawa. Schools were built, and it was the first time that the ordinary Okinawans could enjoy the right of being educated, but they also found they had to change their tongue. Public constructions were undertaken and most of the benefits favoured the colonist.
It is inevitable that the class of the noble and gentry were among those who suffered most as a result of this change since most of them were deprived of all the rights that had been attributed to them only because of their status, including economic ones. As a result, some of the nobles who had been trained as court performers in the palace could not help but perform the dances or *kumi udui* in public in exchange for rice and salt. The noble's 'street performances' were later banned again by Japanese authorities. The arts-embodied nobles then set up a forum where they could perform publicly near Naha port and inaugurated the earliest commercial theatre, the *Nakamo shibaya*.

At the beginning period of *Nakamo shibaya*, court dances and dramas were the main programmes, and the training process as well as the rigorous selection of dancers were no less than in the palace, since most of them were still related to the noble class. The situation changed, however, because the elaborate and sometimes almost motionless court dances were hardly interesting to the common people who constituted the current audience. A change which accordingly happened was the emergence of a new genre of dance called *zō udui*, 'the miscellaneous dance'. As a counterpart of court dances formed in the late nineteenth century, *zō udui* in short takes the folk style as its main feature: the use of folk songs, folk customs and even folk themes, including love affairs between ordinary people, the depiction of the working class, the brothel legends and so on. A programme of a formal performance in Okinawa has shown how the court dances, the dramas, and the *zō udui* were freely juxtaposed in the same context in the early twentieth century (Yano 1988:190-191).

Not only a new genre, but dances of a regional scale form another classification. The emergence of Yaeyama music and dance, a category which had been scarcely noticed before because of its distance from the elite tradition in the Kingdom period, was made possible by the gradually frequent contact between Japanese and Yaeyama people. For instance, a music scholar visited this area in 1923 and depicted the dance as follows:

The dance is totally free, turning around without any limitation. But it is still refined and with a good mood. It is not like the dance in Okinawa, which is trained to be watched. [The dance in Yaeyama] is danced happily from the
heart. This is the first time that I sense there is the existence of natural ethnic dance! (Tanabe, quoted in Yano 1988:175, my translation).

Another record comes from the tour of a Yaeyama music and dance group, organised by a local folklore researcher, Kishiaba Ejun, to Tokyo in 1928. Japanese critics, among them famous folklore scholar Yaganita Kunio, seemed impressed by the performance. One of them writes:

I had not expected this kind of happiness... It has been extinct in inner Japan. The various facets of ancient Japanese dances... are now seen left in Ishigaki [the capital of Yaeyama]. It hit the indescribable nostalgia (Yanagi and Kotera, quoted in Yano 1988:194, my translation).

This paragraph, similar to the previous one, is intriguing in some ways. First, it identifies Yaeyama dance as a part of Japanese dances, in which the notion of ‘cultural nationalism’ is explicit and worth noticing if we take the fact into consideration that the colonisation of Okinawa is largely a historical event. This notion can also be found in the cultural policy and scholars’ research in later stages (see below).

Secondly, the comments of ‘a happy but extinct Japan’ and ‘indescribable nostalgia’ have hence become a ‘label’ attached to Okinawa, especially in Yaeyama, the most far-off region lying along the Japanese boundary. This notion itself is reflected in most Japanese people’s images of the region. As a result, Yaeyama was and still is one of the most popular domestic tourist destinations. The influence of dance upon the image of Yaeyama will be further explored in a later chapter of this research (Chapter Seven).

The cruellest event which happened this century was the final battle between Japan and America in the last period of the Second World War, which occurred in Okinawa proper. This battle lasted only for weeks, but caused enormous disaster in terms of Okinawan lives. Twenty percent of Okinawans, among whom many were ‘persuaded’ by Japanese soldiers to end their own lives rather than surrender and be ‘humiliated’, disappeared during the battle. A great number of buildings were turned to ashes under the intense bombing focused on the central capital by the American air force, therefore many precious materials were lost. The battle has not only caused
unforgettable experiences, but also brought another period of foreign rule by the American government from 1945-1972. Although Okinawans, to a certain extent, were not strangers to this kind of situation, the American government imposed itself in a way different from the previous coloniser, such as Japan, in that no cultural and historical connections had been built, except for Commodore Perry's visit in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Bearing this situation in mind, the American government conducted a series of investigations on its newly attained mandatory territory, including those of Christian missions and scholars such as historians, anthropologists and geologists. Some of the results are fruitful. For instance, Lebra (1966) carried out quite thoughtful research on Okinawan indigenous religion in the 1960s. Everyone who is interested in Okinawan religion had to and still must refer to this book. Glacken (1955), working from the perspective of human geography, has provided various geographical as well as cultural information on Okinawa proper. Bull's account (1958) is aimed at provoking knowledge of the history and culture among young Okinawans. His intention is, however, better than the result, but there are still some detailed contents. One of the most admirable works is that of Kerr (1958) on Okinawan history. He pulled together resources in different languages and of various kinds. He is therefore able to narrate the past of Okinawan people in a way that has not been achieved by others, and the bibliography of Western resources about Okinawa is remarkable. The contribution and relevance of the book is reflected in the frequency of citation, both in this research and in others.

Since these books have mainly been produced in the post-war period, they have portrayed the drastic social changes which have occurred in Okinawan society. The most critical one is the decline of religious organisation, the hierarchical system of priestesses that had become solidified by the parallel political system in the Kingdom period. Like the nobles who suddenly lost all the rights that they used to claim, the priestesses, who had enjoyed similar economic and political benefits, were deprived of their important status. After the annexation, they retrieved their role as merely religious practitioners, which was further threatened by a search for materiality caused by technological and economic growth. Scholars have noticed, especially among the
young, a desire to pursue a stronger individuality, which had been underplayed in the traditional community, gained importance in post-war society (Lebra: 1966:20; Robinson 1969:90).

With respect to dance, the most remarkable change is the elevation of female performers, especially on the formal stage (Yano 1988:214-215). Glacken also noticed that young women and girls participated in the formal dances in processions and holidays (1955:241). Even after the end of the Ryūkyū kingdom, before World War II, professional performers were predominantly male. This change of gender preference, especially in dance performances, is remarkable. Nowadays almost all the dance practitioners are predominantly females, except for a few excellent masters.

In spite of the change of social structure and organisation, in rural Okinawa where the destruction brought by the war was relatively minimal, dance as a communal activity was still a usual part of Okinawan life, especially in various festivals. Glacken noted dancing on different occasions such as school sports day and harvest festivals. Bull also observed a case of Bon-Odori (Dance of Bon, the Buddhism festival for ancestors):

In rural Ryūkyū, the details vary from village to village. But, the general feature is that of a large circle or wheel of posturing peasants which revolves to the notes of a song sung accompanied by the flute and drum played by a few of their number in the centre. The dances of Ryūkyū are pretty and the native songs are close to the lives of the people (Bull 1958:161).

Bon-Odori is a kind of dancing held in a Buddhism festival which is a significant event among the Japanese. It is obvious that the Okinawan people have adopted this custom before 1972 when the American government gave this mandatory territory to Japan, which is called the ‘returning’ of Okinawa to Japan by the Japanese government. And yet Japanese cultural assimilation was even more prevalent after 1972. To reclaim the affinity with Okinawa, the Japanese started another wave of cultural nationalism, which continues to be contributed to by both the government and scholars. For instance, the Japanese government imposed its cultural policy of the designation of the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Treasure on Okinawan performing arts immediately after the ‘returning’ in 1972. Some Okinawan traditional
rituals, dramas, music, and their performers hence become the ‘National Treasures’ of Japan after Okinawa came under Japanese domination again. On the other hand, after 1972, Japanese scholars, among them Honda, Ikeda, and Misumi, turned their eyes to Okinawan dance and tried to match it to the classificatory schemes that have been developed in Japan proper (Honda 1988:41-44). These scholars are usually from the field of folk arts, and therefore set up a hierarchical relationship between Japanese and Okinawan dances covered by a broad nationalistic agenda.

Under the dominant influence of Japanese nationalism, however, researchers are keen on the issue of identity of Okinawan history in general (Sakamaki 1963; Sakihara 1987) and dance in particular (Ito 1988). The inquiry of Okinawan history and culture usually leads scholars, especially those who originate from Okinawa, to seek those ‘authentic’ Okinawan elements as proofs of their own historical and cultural autonomy. Under this premise, most writings of dance produced by Okinawan folklore scholars mainly focus on the origin of Okinawan dance and hence evoke the preservation of the ‘authenticity’ which is usually referred to as ritualistic and court dances. Iha is the pioneer of this trend, followed by more contemporary scholars such as Tōma and Yano. In their books or articles, they are more interested in tracing the origin of dance and recording the dances in detail.

Other Japanese scholars, on the other hand, consider Okinawan dance in close relation to the indigenous religion and the best site to study it is the festivals, matsuri. Since the 1970s, the study of dance in ritualistic or festival contexts has become a major phenomenon in Okinawa. Evidence of this are the enormous volumes and illustrated books on the subject of ‘matsuri and performing arts’. For instance, in his book entitled Okinawan Festivals and Performing Arts (1988), Honda classifies the religious dance as the first category of Okinawan dance, and similar schemes have been shared by other scholars. Throughout his book, he has recorded performances in various rituals and festivals in Okinawa. In general, the Japanese scholars are keen to trace the close relationship between ritual/festival and dance/performing arts. It largely implies the situation in Japan in which the traditional dance performances not only originate from religious rituals but still form a significant part in contemporary practices (Averbuch 1995).
This close relationship between Okinawan dance and ritual, however, is more than mere academic theory. It is also an overwhelming phenomenon in contemporary Okinawa. After the decline of social institutions such as aristocratic and religious systems, traditional rituals are still held, but the focus has been largely transformed into the part of dance and drama performances. As scholars have been critically reflecting on this development (Ōshilo 1992), none of the current research has focused on this direction. On the other hand, more and more dance practitioners are re-integrating the ritualistic elements and inspire debates on re-categorisation of traditional dance as ritual/performance.

Compared with Japanese works after the 1960s, Western literature is quite scarce as far as Okinawan dance is concerned. By now, except for a few graduate theses, not a single book which systematically analyses Okinawan dance is available in English. Among the current works, Yamanouchi’s (1963) is an English translation from Japanese of a brief introductory book to both the Okinawan traditional presentational dances and the creative Karate dance. Ito (1988), like many Okinawan scholars, is mainly concerned with the origin of dance and hence treats dance as a static system. Combs (1980), Nishiguchi (1985), Otani (1981) and Sutton (1980) are all inspired by a research project of Okinawan dance and music held in the University of Hawaii in the summer in 1976. Their works are oriented into different genres, such as classical dance, kumi udui, esa and so on. Their works focus more on movement-music relationships or syntactic rules of classical dance. As a whole, the above Western literature does not provide enough information about the social significance of Okinawan dance as a cultural system which is still a popular practice in contemporary Okinawan society. Nor has it shed light on the conceptualisation and re-categorisation of the Okinawan dance in the contemporary situation, the tasks upon which this research is concentrated.

In this chapter, I have used mainly a chronological framework to review literature on Okinawa and its dance tradition, as intrigued from my reflections on the representation of a regional tradition which is arbitrarily excluded under certain
politic agenda and which can still be found in operation in the construction of knowledge of dance in the late twentieth century. Firstly, similar to Ranger’s presentation in his diachronic analysis of Beni dance in Eastern Africa, I outlined the relationship, in a much briefer way, between the mode of dance and the great events in Okinawan history. Secondly, I presented the historical contexts from which the Okinawan dances, or the writings of Okinawan dances, were produced. Through this I hope to demonstrate that Okinawan dance is a well-developed tradition that has been interpreted by other voices for a long time, only because of the arbitrary political and cultural hegemonies that have been imposed on it. This chapter, however, is not intended to construct the history of Okinawan dance. Readers who are interested in this direction should refer to Yano’s work for a fuller picture.

The geographical metaphor of ‘Okinawa as the Crossroad’ and the term ‘synthesis but distinct’ have been widely used to describe Okinawa’s cultural composition. Moreover, without its own written form of language, the representations of Okinawa have been melded into different forms of narratives. Chinese, Japanese and Western literature have all contributed to produce their own knowledge respectively, in which Okinawa’s autonomy is hardly seen. It is in the expressive culture such as dance, as Sakihara has mentioned, that Okinawa shows its distinctiveness.

It has been demonstrated that, in the past, dance was a form of knowledge in Okinawan culture. The acquisition of this knowledge system was closely related to other forms of knowledge, such as literature and music. The noble in the Kingdom period is the best example. The knowledge of ritualistic and court dances largely symbolised the power, to which the priestesses and court performers such as the nushidui controlled access and transmission. This mechanism, nevertheless, was largely transformed and is even invalid due to the fact that the social structure of Okinawa went through drastic changes after the Japanese colonisation. Under the post-war colonised reality, in which the old institutions have declined and the new national and cultural agenda have been imposed, it is then worth questioning how Okinawans make meanings of the dance, a knowledge system which has been traditionally nurtured and embedded in ritual/performances, out of their contemporary experiences.
To pursue this line of enquiry, I shall focus on the dance practices of people on a small island, Taketom, in Yaeyama, southern Okinawa. The anthropological approach will be adopted in order to put the dance in its very own context and illuminate the emic interpretations yielded by the locals, a perspective which has not played a significant role in the above literature. As mentioned above, Yaeyama lies far off the centre of Okinawa, therefore it shows a very different historical experience from Okinawa proper. Several ethnographical accounts (Ouwenhand 1985; Ota 1987) have been produced based on research of this area, but none of them reveal anything about dance even though they deal with related issues such as ritual. At present, the dance repertoire of Yaeyama is a mixture of both court performance and regional variants, for which I shall provide more information later. In Taketomi Islet, this mixture is best seen in the biggest annual ritual, tanadui, which was designated as a National Intangible Cultural Treasure in 1975, for its ample performance consisting of dances and dramas. In spite of this ritual, the annual cycle of various ritualistic events, which is remarkably intense, has resulted in the experience and hence interpretations of Taketomian contemporary existence. This is one of the characteristics shared with other villages in Okinawa. The research based on this islet, therefore, can also serve as an understanding of Okinawan dance and society in general.
Notes

1 The original Japanese version of this anthology was published in 1988, with support from one of the most important academic institutions, the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, in Japan. With respect to the English version, the original series has been slightly revised and Smithsonian Folkways is its main collaborator.

2 For further details about the regions and the representing pieces, see the videocassettes and the nine introductory books edited by Fujii Tomoaki.

3 Although the editors clarify that, since Japan is an Asian country, more emphasis has been put on this region, still some areas such as Bali and India, which have continuously received intense interest and research, cover five cassettes in total, and only one tape of them covers countries in Western Europe, mainly the 'folk' genre of music and dance performance. As Ness points out, what is shown here is a hierarchical idea of classification about the non-High Arts as 'world dance', replacing the stigmatized 'ethnic dance', which has been treated by anthropologists with suspicion, such as Keali'nohomoku, since the late 1960s (Ness 1993:50).

4 There are more than sixty means of spellings referred to Okinawa (Bull 1958:3). 'Loochoo' is one of the forms spelt according to the Chinese characters.

5 The years given in this chapter are mainly A.D, unless otherwise indicated.

6 There are three main theories on this debate: Liuch'iu=Okinawa; Liuch'iu=Taiwan; and a compromise version which says that Liuch'iu may have meant either Okinawa or Taiwan on different occasions. For more details, see Sakamaki (1963:71-73).

7 At that time, Okinawa was divided into three main chieftains: Chûzan, Hokuzan and Nanzan.

8 Through research in archaeology and comparative linguistics, however, Japanese scholars nowadays extend the relationship between Japanese and Okinawa much closer and earlier, which may be dated back to the second and third century A.D (Nakahara and Hokama 1965:17-18).

9 The earliest Korean official record with respect to Okinawa, The Annals of Yi Dynasty that was written in Chinese, is dated in the late fourteenth century (Sakamaki 1963:86). But in comparison with China and Japan, Korea has played a much lesser role of influence.

10 Sakamaki 1963:34-39. The term Chûzan was not sanctioned by Japan until 1714. The first Chinese document using the term appears in Hsu's Chung Shan Ch'uan Hsin Lu (1972).

11 The island is called Ōshima. The Jesuit mission had converted hundreds of locals by the end of the nineteenth century. During the Second World War, however, the cathedral was destroyed and has declined since then.

12 The Journal, made by Edmund Sayers, is in the Oriental and Indian Office, British Library.
Japan is famous for her policy of strict exclusion from foreign contact from 1639 to the late nineteenth century. During this period of the exclusion, only the Netherlands and Dutch had limited access to the only opening port, Nagasaki, at that time.

One detailed record on southern Okinawa was also a result of shipwreck in which the Korean fishers lost their ship and three of them were saved by inhabitants in Yaeyama in 1477. They stayed in Yaeyama for eight months, touring around different islands, and were sent back to Korea. Their report is in the official history of Korea, *The Annals of Yi Dynasty*.

This demeanour, which was praised by the Western visitors, in fact, caused an extra burden on the ordinary Okinawans who had suffered from heavy tax. McCune (1975) is among the few Western writers who is reflective on the influence brought to Okinawans by the Westerners and the romanticism with which Westerners viewed to Okinawan people during the expedition period (pp.47-48).

Even Napoleon had been surprised by this race without weapons. On his way back to Europe, Captain Basil Hall landed upon St. Helena and informed the French Emperor about this people. The conversation can be referred to in Bull (1958:90).

For instance, Lebra (1966) has done thoughtful research on Okinawan indigenous religion that was still prevailing until the late 1970s.

In imperial China, the term ‘barbarians’, translated from ‘Yi’, referred to those groups not belonging to Han, the major group inhabiting China, who saw themselves as ‘the race of the centre land’. For a more detailed analysis on the notion of Han versus Yi, see Dikötter (1991).

For Tamagusuku Chôkun and his works, see Yano 1988:97-106.

For more details about the history of the compilation of *Omororo Sôshi*, its loss, recovery, and study, see Sakamaki (1963:9-21) and Sakihara (1987:219-228).

Kerr 1958; Nakahara and Hokama 1965; Sakihara 1987. The following paragraphs are mainly summarised from these books.

In 1187, the Japanese kana syllabi system was introduced in Okinawa. From 1392, Okinawa Kingdom started to send people to China to learn Chinese.

An Okinawan music scholar, Yamanouchi Seihin, recorded several omoro sung by the last nushidui, Aniya Makaru, in the early twentieth century. For the details and musical notations, see Ito 1988:68-79.

In Okinawan, *asobi* means ‘playing’ literally. It also bears the meaning of dance behaviours practised in different contexts and functions as a root word. For instance, *Kami asobi*, literally ‘god playing’, is the dance performed by the priestesses who have been empowered by gods (Nakahara and Hokama: 1965:23). Another form of asobi is *mōasobi*, ‘the wild playing,’ a free-form dance which happened during the gatherings of young women and men when there was less chance for them to engage social interaction. (Honda 1988:225-229). *Esa* is a kind of group dance accompanied by the
songs sung in an energetic way the sounds of eisa-eisa-sa-eisa-eisa (Nakahara and Hokama 1965:22).

25 Based on Iha Fuyu’s research, Sakihara mentions, ‘[the] dance of shimugu that the priestess dances (more likely “priestesses,” for generally, shimugu is a group dance, but we cannot be certain because the Okinawa language, like Japanese and Chinese, lacks plurals) in the omoro ... is often written in Chinese characters...which means ‘rich harvest festival dance’. And that is what it has been for at least the last two or three hundred years. The shimugu dance is one of a series of dances called usudeku, and it is danced entirely by females at the festival dance in the sixth and eighth lunar months. However, it is believed that shimugu dance was once a magical dance symbolic of sexual intercourse performed for the purpose of accelerating the propagation and growth of rice and other grains. Because of its sexual symbolism, it was banned about 2oo years ago by the ruling class, which embraced Confucian morality, Iha states that in the early form of the shimugu dance, performed at a secluded spot prohibited to men, a number of women led by the priestess danced totally nude, signifying before the kami [the gods] their purity’ (1987: 58).

26 An extreme case is the noble, Hiyane Anhitsu, who was exiled to Yaeyama. He was a well-trained performer and later founded his own branch of dance, Kinōryū, in which twenty-two hand gestures were created. They were, however, noted in rather literal Chinese vocabularies and the expressions of these terms are full of notions of loyalty (Miyara 1979:130-132).

27 Yano 1988:179. The current and following paragraphs were summarised from the same book.

28 The Cultural Treasure system is a policy that Japanese government operates to ‘preserve’ the traditional Japanese culture. There are two kinds of Cultural Treasures that are designated; the first is the Tangible Cultural Treasure, including the traditional buildings or artefacts. The performing arts, the techniques and the practitioners of certain arts are classified as the Intangible Cultural Treasure. This system is hierarchical because it operates at different levels such as the national and the county ones.

29 The three confusing terms: ritual, festival and ceremony in English can all be translated into Japanese as ‘matsuri’. Matsuri originally means religious rituals, and a suffix ‘sai’ is more like the term of festival, such as in Bungasai, the cultural festival (Okinawa Hakubutsukan no Yū Kai 1990:4). In contemporary writing, however, these two terms also are usually blurred, especially when used by laymen.
2.1 Introduction

In the literature review on Okinawa and its dance, I have sketched, in diachronical perspective, the institutionalised significance of Okinawan dance. Primary analysis of written resources of different languages endorses the significance of dance as both a distinctive cultural feature and knowledge system, which faced re-categorisation after Japanese colonialism. In terms of post-war research, which has been undertaken mainly by Japanese historians and folklorists, along with local intellectuals, the foci are usually descriptive details, historical continuity, and models of classification of the dance. On the other hand, western literature is relatively scarce and introductory. Existing texts written in English on Okinawan dance are mostly about the formation and structure of the movement aspect. They do not shed light on how Okinawans negotiate their experiences between past/present and Japan/Okinawa through contemporary dance practices. These are issues which have not been covered in these books but are those in which most anthropological research will be interested: that is, the intentions of those who produce, transmit and perform the knowledge and practice of dance.

This does not mean, however, that anthropological discourse has provided dance researchers with the necessary conceptual and methodological tools. Quite often the reverse situation is true, just as in other social research in dance (Thomas 1995:1-4). As noted by several scholars, the neglect of dance as an academic field has been due to both philosophical and methodological considerations (Gell 1985:186-187, Hanna 1979:17, Sparshott 1990:3-82). This general impediment has become even more complex in terms of anthropological studies of dance due to the ways in which researchers have approached their tasks. For instance, the works of Sachs (1963[1937]) and Kurath (1960) which have been related to 'the history of anthropological theory' (Kaeppler 1978:33, 1999:14), are criticised as not anthropological (Kaeppler 1978), or produced by scholars working with in certain theoretical frameworks (Youngerman
1974) that lack both the 'intellectual and institutional relevance' to anthropology (Williams 1986:174). It is also clear that the scholars who have contributed to the discussion of theoretical and methodological applications of anthropology to dance research do not always share the same ideas, partly due to the institutional and intellectual backgrounds in which they have been nurtured (Buckland 1999a; Spencer 1985).

It is not my intention, nevertheless, to say that these scholars lack consensus. Although scholars cultivated in the field of dance anthropology have developed different ideas according to their theoretical frameworks and the groups of peoples they study, their research has emphasised certain notions that are critical and should serve as basic requirements for any dance research that takes anthropology as its perspective. First, except for a few, most scholars have recommended the premise of abandoning the pursuit of a universal definition of 'dance'. That is, the collective term which has been categorised as dance in English-speaking societies should be noted for its ethno-centric implications (Gore 1994, 1999; Keali‘inohomoku 1983) and careful examination of the indigenous term and its relative 'ethnic-domain' (Grau 1983:32; Kaeppler 1972) are essential. Secondly, the application of an 'emic' approach to the conceptualisation of dance, first posed by American linguist Pike and used by anthropologists to refer to indigenous interpretations, is emphasised by most scholars.

Besides these two premises, although it is not my interest to define 'dance' in this specific context, several words need to be said about how to conceptualise 'dance' to proceed with this research. As mentioned above, most dance anthropologists tend to be cautious of the ethno-centric implications of the term 'dance' and hence its impediment in understanding this activity or phenomenon cross-culturally (Williams 1991:234-235). Still it is necessary to progress the debates on a shared consensus. Two resolutions are posited to solve this dilemma. The first notion is 'the dance', in which 'dance is understood as being essentially an institutionalised product of socio-cultural processes, and to distinguish this sort of conceptualisation of dance from other that is primarily concerned with individual dancers and their dancing experiences' (Ness 1996:267; also see Spencer 1985:2). This notion, however, inevitably causes a question of individual/society dichotomy in that individual
experiences cannot always be clearly separated from social-cultural conditioning. The other resolution, posited by Gore as ‘dance culture’, is to situate the products of human social activity as contextually constructed. ‘A dance culture’, she suggests, following Hastrup’s notion,

is not an ‘empirical entity’ but an ‘analytical implication’ [which] may include ‘Dance’, ‘a dance’, ‘dancing’ or ‘dance event’ for example, depending on who is doing the dancing, why, where and when, and who is talking about it (Gore 1999:210).

Williams is also against a universalistic definition of dance and considers dances as ‘human sociolinguistic phenomena’. She further argues that:

[d]ancing, “a” dance or “some” dances become more intelligible when they are viewed, not only in relation to other rituals, ceremonies, exercise techniques, games, and the like, but also in relation to other systems of manifest cultural belief... (1991:210).

Hence I shall use this notion of ‘dance culture’ as a conceptual tool for me to start this cross-cultural research of dance. Besides, I shall set out to examine ‘the relative ethnic domain’ in the hope that at the end a clearer emic concept of ‘the dance’ can be achieved. As mentioned in the last chapter, contemporary dance practices in Okinawa are closely related with various rituals and festivals, let alone the fact that some Japanese scholars have supported the theory that ritual movements are the prototype of the dance. In addition, most anthropological studies of dance have also paid attention to dances in ritualised contexts. Therefore, from both empirical and theoretical considerations, I shall start from examining various dance theories in anthropological discourse on ritual.

2.2 Dance and Ritual: Early Literature in Anthropology and Related Fields

Instead of building a universal definition, I choose an alternative starting point to examine dance in its related categories, following Royce’s statement that:
categorisation is a necessary adjunct to man’s life as a social animal, that most of the time it is an almost automatic process and one in which we operate fairly smoothly, and finally that difficulties arise when we move from the middle ground of categories to the borders. It has always been the boundaries, the fuzzy fringes, the dividing lines between phenomena that have created problems of definition and categorisation. And if you look at the development of any field of inquiry, you will find scholars drawn inexorably to those fringes, mesmerised like snakes by dancing mongooses. This is not totally without merit for it gives us the whetstone on which to sharpen our intellectual tools (Royce 1977:7).

One such conceptual category that has been closely related with dance and made scholars ‘mesmerised like snakes by dancing mongooses’ is that of ritual, especially in the field of anthropology. The deduction of the relationship between ritual and dance and the contextualization of dance in various rituals were and are still fashionable in related literature (e.g. Kaeppler 1995; Spencer et al 1985). This phenomenon, as I shall argue, has gone through classic paradigms such as evolutionism, functionalism and symbolism in terms of anthropological discourse with great popularity but little reflection among dance scholars who have adopted the above models. It is therefore necessary to examine various ‘ritualised’ discourses which theories of dance have emerged and even been conditioned.

In 1909, French linguist Van Gennep published Les Rites de Passage and established a model of ritual which he believed to be universal among what he called ‘rites of passage’, including rites of birth, puberty, marriage, death and so on (Van Gennep 1960[1909]). He found that all these rites of passage could be classified into three stages of separation, transition, and assimilation. He further expanded this notion of ‘rite of passage’ into other kinds of rites held in accordance with the transition of natural sequence of time, such as the seasons. In his analysis, he stressed that human beings also conceptualised the course of time and space in a serial fashion so that the rites of passages not only marked the individual transitions of status but also transitions of time in a natural sequence. Due to his overall interest in ritual as a separated sphere of human experience, his theory has been thought to have successfully separated the notion of ritual from the paradigm of magico-religious explanation dominant during his period (Kimball, in Van Gennep 1960:ix). That is, ritual is not only to serve religious goals. It is a basic mode of human behaviour. Van
Gennep’s theory has hence become a classic of ritual study and later scholars usually concentrate on his three-stage model rather than his sensitivity to the elements of time and space, which are explicit in later studies which I shall discuss.

The magico-religious paradigm is best reflected in Harrison’s book *Ancient Art and Ritual*, first published in 1913, in which she tries to explain the relationship between ritual and art in the case of the transformation of Greek dance from *dromenon*, the rite, or ‘things done’, to that in drama (Harrison 1969[1913]). In addition to the ritual dances and later the dance dramas in Greece, she also borrowed many cases from other societies from Sir J. Frazer’s famous accounts (*The Golden Bough*, 1912[1890]). She argues that, besides the Greeks, amongst many other peoples such as Egyptians and North American Indians, the relationship between ritual and art is very close. Ritual and art are both cut from ‘immediate action’, which was adopted from psychological explanations of the perception-reaction model of human beings. They also share what she called a ‘common emotional factor’. In terms of dance as a ritual, she thinks that this emotional element ‘is seen still more clearly in the dance fore-done for magical purpose’, in which one’s action is ‘mimetics, not of what you see done by another, but of what you desire to do yourself.’ She then continued,

> [t]he habit of this mimesis of the thing desired, is set up, and ritual begins. Ritual, then, does imitate, but for an emotional, not altogether practical end (p.44).

Harrison’s ideas on rite and ritual very much recall those of E.B Tylor and J. Frazer, that is, the most dominant anthropological paradigm of theory—the magico-religious one—of her time. Nevertheless, her notion of ritual is not always consistent, as in another paragraph she mentions:

> Ritual, we saw, was a re-presentation or a pre-presentation, a re-doing or pre-doing, a copy of imitation of life, but -and this is the important point- always with a practical end. Art is also a representation of life and the emotions of life, but cut loose from immediate action. Action may be and often is represented, but it is not that it may lead on to a practical further end. The end of art is in itself. Its value is not mediate but immediate. Thus ritual makes, as it were, a bridge between real life and art, a bridge over which in primitive times it would seem man must pass (p.141).
To say ritual is practical and art is not is confusing, compared with her other arguments as demonstrated above. Besides, considering art as non-practical and excluding dances with certain ‘aims’ as ritual but non-art is typical among aestheticians and western dance historians but worth questioning (Lange 1975:17). Hanna is also against the idea of seeing dance has possessed a purpose ‘transcending utility’, as defined by Kurath, as a characteristic of art by suggesting that ‘in numerous cultures, dance and aesthetics are instrumentally motivated and used’ (Hanna 1987:21). After all, the concept of ‘art’ is largely a westernised one and it is very possible that in many cultures, including the peoples to whom Harrison has heavily referred, this concept may not exist at all.4

Also clearly demonstrated in Harrison’s argument is an evolutionary scheme of dance, although a much briefer one compared with Sachs’ (1963[1937]), and ritual represents the universal stage of ‘primitiveness’. Williams has shown that at Harrison’s time, scholars used to categorise dance as either art or religion and then the dance ‘becomes the “unchanging monolith” of primordial beginnings’ (Williams 1991:109). In Harrison’s work, this primitiveness is further blurred with a kind of mysticism. As she has mentioned, even when the spirit of rite, i.e. the belief in its efficacy dies, the actual mould of rite persists and strikes scholars like her. ‘All these ritual forms haunt and shadow the play, whatever its plot, like ancient traditional ghosts; they underline and sway the movement and the speeches like some compelling rhythm’ (1969[1913]:143).

Harrison’s evolutionary model of dance as ‘from ritual to art,’ which was built upon limited secondary ethnographic data and the specific social and cultural history of ancient Greece is doomed to be ethno-centric and invalid. This evolutionary bias is best shown in the formation of the juxtaposition of ethnographic data. For instance, in the chapter on ‘Primitive Ritual’, various cases have been extracted from Egypt, North American Indian peoples and so on. But when clarifying the process of how dances became art, she then focuses on the situation in Hellenic Greece and ignores counterparts in other societies.
Harrison's notions of ritual, which she positions in opposition to art, inevitably reflect the academic ideologies at her time 'in which creation of classificatory categories was a major concern of scientific thinking' (Kimball, in Van Gennep 1960:v). The title of her book, however, did imply how dance has been ascribed and categorised in terms of academic discourse of human actions, that is, dance could only be either ritual or art, although the epistemology and ontology of dance were not clearly articulated in either of the categories, in Harrison's case. Her theory, however, is remarkably reminiscent of those posited by Japanese folklore scholars who placed Okinawan dance into categories and traced the prototype (a term similar to ‘primitiveness’) to ancient rituals.

In America, Boas stands as an important figure not only in moulding the discipline of cultural anthropology but specifically research into dance in this field. He also concentrated on the most elaborate and important dances among Kwakiutl Indians, which are those performed during social and religious ceremonies (Franz Boas 1972[1944]). In these ceremonials there are usually general rules of movement that indicate what the dancer is doing or make the orientation of the dancer predictable. What is characteristic, in Boas' depiction, is a blurring of activities which he describes as dance, the ‘prescribed motions’, and the ceremonials.

Still another dance represents the story of a boy who acquired supernatural power when scaling a mountain. He was given the ability to fly, and the dance represents how he arrives at his home. A long board is placed in the house slanting up to the roof with a small platform at the upper end. The dancer appears on the platform, dressed completely in hemlock branches. Then he runs down the slanting board with very short steps and dances on the floor of the house. Sinuous motions of the whole body indicate the movements of a bird. He dances around the fire and then with short rapid steps and constant movements of the body he runs up the plank, turns at the top and comes down again. This is repeated four times. When these dances are finished there is a long ceremony of purification of the dancers. Prescribed motions are important in this ceremony also. The most characteristic one is the purification of the body of the dancer by having him pass through a large ring of cedar bark in a prescribed way. First he has to put his right arm up through the ring which is then gradually lowered, rubbing his body all over, and when finally the ring reaches the floor, the dancer must step out with the right foot first, turn around completely, to take the left door out of the ring, and then, in a ceremonial way, sit down to be washed....[The dances] are performed in winter during the months from November to February, and the social life of the tribe during this period centres
entirely around the performance of the dances of this kind (Franz Boas 1972[1944]:8-9).

Similar situations occur in other ceremonial dances, such as war dances among Kwakistiul, in which there seems to be an ambiguity between what is danced and what is practised. Compared with Harrison, however, Boas provides more substantial information on dance movements, and it is in the movement aspect that his concepts of dance and ceremonial blur. In fact, Boas is concerned more about the essence of dance in that he tries to explore the inter-relationship among plastic art, music, literature and dance. In his other account (1955), he focuses on the rhythmic characteristic and the emotional effect of dance, among other art forms, which is reminiscent of Harrison and shared by other scholars such as Radcliffe-Brown and Langer.

Influenced largely by E. Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown is well known for his paradigm of structural-functionalism in the field of British social anthropology (e.g. Structure and Function in Primitive Society, 1952). In his famous ethnographic account The Andaman Islanders (1964[1922]) which was produced in the early period of his career, he provides a detailed description of the dance in a male’s initiation.

Early on the morning of the fourth day, soon after daybreak, the whole village is astir. One of the older men takes his stand by the sounding-board used for marking time at dances, and the women sit down near him. The youth comes out from his hut and stands in the middle of the dancing ground, and five or six men stand round him in a circle, each of them facing towards the youth. Each of the man, including the youth, holds in each hand a bundle of twigs of the Hibiscus tiliaceus or, if such be not obtainable, of the Myristica longifolia. The man at the sounding board sings a song, beating tone with his foot, in the usual way, on the sounding board, and at the chorus the women join in and mark the time by clapping their hands on the thighs. The song may be on any subject and is selected by the singer from his own repertory. A song referring to turtle-hunting is preferred. During the first song the dancers stand at their positions on the dancing ground, lifting up their bundles at short intervals and bringing them down against their knees. The singer then commences a new song or repeats the former one, and when the song comes to an end the youth and those with him begin the dance. Each dancer flexes his hips so that his back is nearly horizontal. He raises his hands to the back of his neck so that the two bundles of leaves in his hands rest on his back. With knees flexed he leaps from the ground with both feet, keeping time to the beating of the sounding-board, which is about 144 beats to the minute. At the end of every eight jumps or so, the dancer brings his hands
forwards, downwards and backwards, giving a vigorous sweep with the bundles of leaves, which scrape the ground at each side of his feet, and then brings back the bundles to their formal position. They dance thus for 15 or 30 seconds and then pause to rest. The dance is repeated several times, until the youth is tired out. As the dance is extremely fatiguing this does not take long (p.100).

Using botanical terminology and terms of musical tempi, Radcliffe-Brown’s detailed description is a reflection of ‘objectivity’ influenced by Comtian positivism. His account also characterises anthropological research into dance, as Boas’ does, in that there is an emphasis on the contextual aspects of the dance. Furthermore, the details given on the use of the body and the formation of movements are presented not only for the sake of description. With the emphasis on organic force produced by movements and the psychological idea of how body perception helps form self consciousness and hence social sentiment, Radcliffe-Brown tries to analyse how the rhythmic element of dance functions to strengthen self-regard as well as enhance social solidarity.

In the dance the individual submits to action upon him of the community; he is constrained, by the immediate effect of rhythm as well as custom, to join in, and he is required to conform in his own actions and movements to the needs of the common activity... As the dancer loses himself in the dance, as he becomes absorbed in the unified community, he reaches a state of elation in which he feels himself filled with energy or force immensely beyond his ordinary state, and so finds himself able to perform prodigies of exertion.....In this way the dance produces a condition in which the unity, harmony and concord of the community are at a maximum, and in which they are intensely felt by every member (pp.251-252).

It is through this mechanism that Radcliffe-Brown thinks the dance itself is ‘a form of social ceremonial’ (p.247), and therefore serves the same social function as other ceremonial customs of the Andaman Islanders to ‘maintain and to transmit from one generation to another the emotional dispositions on which the society (as it is constituted) depends for its existence’ (p.234). In general, the study of dance enjoyed a very different status under the paradigm of structural-functionalism. On the one hand, the bias caused by evolutionism is eliminated. On the other hand, dance is undifferentiated from other social behaviours or actions (Williams 1991:117-150), since in functionalism all institutions are treated as equivalent organic parts.
This paradigm, however, had been challenged by the 1960s. Long before functionalism has been considered invalid, anthropologist Evans-Pritchard had pointed to its vulnerability in his article on African dance (1928). His report of the beer dance among the Azande of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan is opposed to the functionalistic notion of society as a harmonious and stable organism which is against any theory of conflict or change. As he mentions, the only occasions when he came across this dance were those of religious ceremonies such as mourning and mortuary feasts. He agrees with Radcliffe-Brown that what has been said about the dances in Andaman ceremonials—the experiences of how muscular movements bring into the activities of sight and hearing which then produce a feeling of vanity in the performer—are heightened by their being expressed collectively. What he finds difficult to accept, however, is the notion of a social compulsion that requires the individual to surrender himself for the sake of the existence of society. He found that ‘the constraint exercised by rhythm and custom is not so much emphasised amongst the Azande,’ and ‘conformity to the actions of other dancers allows considerable latitude to the individual’ (p.459). His criticism then went directly to the point that:

Anyone who watched several beer dances would see quarrels and could not subscribe to the statement that the dance was always an activity of perfect concord in which individual vanity and passions were completely socialised by the constraining forces of the community. Radcliffe-Brown has not recognised the complexity of motives in the dance. (p.460)

The ‘complexity of motives in the dance’, according to him, is usually correlated with division of groups such as age. Although Evans-Pritchard is also concerned with the social function of dance, he does not apparently limit his notions with the paradigm of functionalism. On the contrary, his study of Zande witchcraft, oracles and magic, first published in the late 1920s, has provided foresight not only in the sphere of religion but also as the studies of micro-politics which illuminate ‘the relation of power and conflict in small face-to face societies’. His contribution was widely recognised among post-war anthropologists and has influenced fields such as anthropology, sociology of knowledge and history of ideas (Gillies, in Evans-Pritchard 1976: xxii-xxviii).

Evans-Pritchard’s anthropological contribution, however, finds no parallel in dance
The above-mentioned article is his sole condensed study on dance, with only seventeen pages of text, including two plates. He concludes that although dance is more boisterous and profane, it must not simply be thought of as a play of activity, ‘but as forming part of an important social undertaking associated with religious ceremonial’ (p.461), and ‘must be regarded as part of the whole ceremonial complex’ (p.462), a point he never articulates clearly how and why. In addition, Evans-Pritchard suggests that questions should be asked concerning ‘[on] what occasions dances are held and, if they form part of some ceremonial complex, what role, if any, do the dances take in the performances of the rites’ (p.460).

Dominated by the concern of social function, anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard reduced their interests in dance as art, and replaced it with interest in the functional significance of dance in ritual. Even so, scholars such as Radcliffe-Brown cannot reject some basic dilemmas of categorisation by posing questions as follows:

The dance at the end of mourning is clearly a ceremony, but can we say the same of the ordinary dance after a successful hunt? And if it be not ceremonial, shall we call it art or play?...Those elements of culture that we now differentiated and call by different names were, in primitive societies, undifferentiated and not clearly to be distinguished from one another, and a striving after too great a precision of definition in dealing with such a culture as that of the Andamans leads, I think, not to a clearer understanding, but to the opposite (1922:329).

Apparently Radcliffe-Brown is also bothered by a preoccupation with the ceremonial/art dichotomy. He should, however, be praised for his consideration of another alternative: that is, a clearer understanding of indigenous conceptions which the researcher should prepare to put down whatever conceptual preoccupations s/he is born with.

This approach is also useful in this research into Okinawan dance. Despite the fact that Japanese folklore scholars have categorised Okinawan dance into different genres, contemporary practitioners in Okinawa have tended to blur these genres. What, then, do dance practitioners in Okinawa think of what they are doing? Do they have similar concepts such as ‘art’? If they do, do they differ between dance as ritual or art? If so,
The philosopher, Langer, has provided an important insight into this ritual/art relationship which has conditioned later scholars’ debates on dance. Immersed in the influence of German philosophers of symbols such as Cassirer, and American semioticians such as Pierce, Langer defines symbolisation as a profound characteristic of the human mind (1970[1942]:144) and explores the use of symbols in many aspects of human life, including science, language, ritual and art (1970[1942]: 1953). Her treatise has had an overall influence on dance anthropology. Firstly, she continues the line of the emotional factor as explaining ritual and endorses this factor, what she calls ‘feeling’ with a more powerful concept of symbol which is logical rather than psychological in its sense (1970[1942]:152).

Ritual “expresses feeling” in the logical rather than the psychological sense. It may have what Aristotle called “cathartic” value, but it is not a simple emotion, but a complex, permanent attitude. This attitude, which is the worshiper’s response to the insight given by the sacred symbols, is an emotional pattern, which governs all individual lives. It cannot be recognised through any clearer medium than that of formalised gesture; yet in this cryptic form it is recognised, and yields a strong sense of tribal or congregational unity, of rightness and security. A rite regularly performed is the constant reiteration of sentiments toward “first and last things”; it is not a free expression of emotions, but a disciplined rehearsal of “right attitudes” (Langer 1970[1942]:153).

Langer’s exegesis is mostly welcomed by those anthropologists who somehow find the emotional factor the ‘hot potato’ while a necessary base to support the theory of ritual as a social control (Spencer 1985:7-8), even though it is noteworthy that her position as an expressionist has been criticised by another philosopher Best, who elaborately debates against the traditional view ‘to express’ (Best 1974). Langer’s formula of dance, which is based on western theatrical dance and forms part of her theory of art, is also rationalised in ritualistic discourse through the use of dance as the symbol that can effectively evoke emotion/sentiment. According to Langer, dance:

creates an illusion of emotions that are not really felt, but only imagined as in a novel or a play or a painting, and revealed through symbols. Rather than symptoms of real emotion expressed through spontaneous gesture, one has symbols of perceived emotion, of will, conveyed by the artist through contrived gestures as he creates a virtual world (Spencer 1985:8).
Although her ideas on other non-theatrical form of dances (which she calls 'pleasure
dance') is dissonant with anthropologists' readings (Spencer 1985:7), some
anthropologists find her theory useful especially in the issue of ritual and
emotion/sentiment (e.g. Kapferer 1991). The Langerian notion of symbol has had a
direct influence on anthropologists such as Geertz (1973). Her theory of dance as a
'virtual power' which is invisible has also had a profound influence on later
anthropologists which I shall discuss further.

Victor Turner, who set out to find how social institutions, such as ritual, 'function,'
found social conflict, inequalities and rivalries. He then posed the famous model of
structure/anti-structure or *communitas,* in which these two systems operate in a
complementary way within societies. Although Turner has never systematically
analysed dances in rituals, anthropologists (Spencer 1985:27-35) have considered his
model highly relevant to the studies of dance.

Turner's other theoretical influence, from the perspective of dance research, lies in his
analysis of symbol, which he further uses in a semiotic view, as 'the smallest unit of
ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour,...the ultimate unit
of specific structure in a ritual context' (1967:19). He treats relations among symbols
in ritual as semantically structured and the way to unravel the ritual symbolism is to
understand their rule, that is, their grammar and meaning.

Another symbolist is Geertz, whose notion of symbol is largely from Langer. He is
particularly famous among other contributors to anthropological theory for his notion
of the cultural text: 't]he culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves
ensembles, which the anthropologists strains to read over the shoulders of those to
whom they properly belong' (1973:452). His theory has directly influenced
approaches to ritual because 'rituals are "analogous to culturally produced texts" that
can be systematically read to endow "meaning upon experience"' (Marcus 1986:61;
Bell 1992:15). This idea has obviously impressed American dance ethnologists such
as Snyder (1974, 1984), who dedicated herself to the interpretation of symbolism in
dances, notably under a ritualistic framework. 'Meaning' becomes another keyword,
as ‘function’, for scholars to approach the dance. It seems that, through Turner’s model and Geertz’s theory, dance researchers have found another theoretical and interpretative fulcrum in post-functionalist anthropological discourse.

The above review shows that the shift of paradigms in anthropology is reflected in the discourse on ritual, from evolutionism, functionalism and symbolism. It is also clear that the explanations of dance have also been conditioned by researchers’ theories about ritual in particular and culture/society in general. Various exegeses, however, tend to present dance as an objectified entity: as the monolithic primordial beginning in an evolutionist scheme, social control in a functional one, and as a symbol in the Turnerian sense. This concept of dance as an objectified entity is inadequate since it cannot satisfy a broader pursuit of ‘dance culture’, which I set out in the beginning.

What is also clear is that, through the above review, scholars have presented different approaches to the categorisation of dance, ritual and art. This phenomenon is a result of individual interests as well as the dilemma rooted in westernised notions. Recently, scholars have reflected on this categorisation. As Kaeppler has pointed out, it might be ‘our lack of knowledge about movement... that relate them’ (1995:106). To clarify the relationship between ritual and dance, it is necessary to examine the aspect of movement knowledge of dance in order to explicate further why ritual and dance relate, not only in an Okinawan context but also in others. Therefore, I shall next focus on the movements.

2.3 The ‘Meanings’ of Dance: Language Analogies with Dance in Anthropology

Geertz has cited a famous case, from philosopher Ryle⁷, of how complex the meanings can be in terms of only a movement.

[T]wo boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend. The two movements are, as movements, identical; from an I-am-a-camera, ‘phenomenalistic’ observation of them alone, one could not tell which was twitch and which was wink. Yet the difference, however unphotographable,
between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had
the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed
communicating in a quite precise and special way.... Suppose... there is a third
boy, who, ‘to give malicious amusement to his cronies,’ parodies the first boy's
wink, as amateurish, clumsy, obvious, and so on. He, of course, does this in the
same way the second boy winked and the first twitched: by contracting his right
eyelids. Only this boy is neither winking nor twitching, he is parodying someone
else’s, as he takes it, laughable, attempt at winking. Here, too, a socially
established code exists... and also does a message (Geertz 1973:6).

This case alone explicates a generally held idea of context theory about where the
meaning of movements come from, which is articulated in Best’s argument based on
an analogy with language.

The meaning of a word is given by the various sentences in which it is used, and
those sentences derive their meaning from the whole activity of language of which
they form an independent part. The same is true of the meaning of movements.
Meaning requires a context. For example, the meaning of a particular action cannot
be explained by a narrow concentration upon the physical movement in isolation.
The meaning is given by the context of the action, or complex of actions, of which
it can be observed to form a part (Best 1978:220, italics supplied).

Context theory has its roots in social linguistics, but gains its popularity largely in
anthropological studies of dance (Hanna 1987:44; Royce 1977:208; see also Spencer
1985 as a whole.) Its counterpart is another conventional idea such as ‘form is the
meaning’ or ‘the medium is the message’ (Best 1978). Both theories, however, cannot
explain why dance stands as a special medium of communication: the question of
‘what is it about dance that prompts people to choose it in specific instances and for
specific purposes rather than some other medium of communication’ (Royce
1977:211) still remains.

Motivated by the question of how movement (or dance) communicates, language is
still the prevalent analogy employed by scholars. Three scholars are typical of this
trend: Hanna, Kaeppler, and Williams, although their perspectives and foci differ
from each other. Their research, usually based on well-built linguistic analogies to
various degrees, can then be seen overall as an academic endeavour to rationalise the
popular metaphor of dance as a language. Their interests in linguistic analogies are
not merely coincidental. Since de Saussure’s idea of signifier/signified, called
structural linguistics in general, was publicised (Course in General Linguistics, 1968), anthropological discourse had been immersed in this trend of structuralism, represented by scholars such as Levi-Strauss who strive to uncover the structure of human mentality. The field of dance anthropology was under the same theoretical paradigm and scholars were exposed to this ‘grand theory’ (Kaeppler 1978:43; Williams 1991).

Hanna’s intention to build a communication theory of dance is pursued in her book To Dance Is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication (1987). Her theory, however, is never clearly explained. She has pulled data together unsystematically and built up a huge framework called ‘dance semiotics’, which is based on ‘an imaginative creation of a segment of the real world: it summarises, in an interrelated set of propositions, what we can apprehend the senses or infer from sensory cues’ (pp.78-81). It seems only a scholar who can effectively handle psychology, biology, and anthropology in equal depth can really appreciate its mechanism. Its contribution, apart from her good reasoning of issues such as ‘What is dance’ (chapter II), is limited for dance scholars, both from anthropological and psychological backgrounds, and has failed to have an impact on subsequent dance scholars to a notable degree.

Except for the title of book, Hanna’s notion of nonverbal communication is never clarified, despite the fact that scholars have been keen to use the term of nonvocal rather than nonverbal as the suffix. For instance, Hanna mentions that it is useful to compare the design features of dance with those of verbal communication to understand the communication potential of dance-play, because

[Both forms of communication require the same underlying cortical faculty for conceptualisation, creativity, and memory. The comparison of verbal and nonverbal is clearer if one conceives of dance as more like poetry than prose....Productivity, it should be noted, involves grammars, which are theoretical statements of what performers know about the inherent structure of the communication form and of their competence in a linguistic/or dance movement. It is knowledge of the langue of movement (1987:86, italic original).

For Hanna, skipping between the concepts we call dance and language does not appear to be a problem. In addition to the ‘languagelike features of dance’, she goes
on to posit distinctions between dance and language: such as motor/visual kinaesthetic channel versus vocal/audio channel, three dimensional versus temporal, no feedback versus immediate feedback. She also states that a dancer can only fully engage in physical movements, whereas a speaker can talk and act at the same time. She believes that it is difficult to communicate ‘complex logical structures’ through dance (p.87-88). Except for what she calls ‘multisensory impact’, Hanna’s statements have doomed dance as an inferior medium of communication to verbal language. It is fair to say then that what she has presented is a varied juxtaposition of both scientific jargon and lay enthusiasm about dance and communication, including verbal and nonverbal. Hanna’s motivation for positing a communication model not only reflects the exposure of anthropological studies under the influence of linguistic theories or methodologies in mid-1960s America as mentioned above, but it is also possibly the result of her desire to claim dance research as a ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ field.\textsuperscript{10}

Kaeppler has also been exposed to this trend of linguistic analogy, influenced by Chomskian ideas such as ‘competence/performance’ and ‘deep structure’. Her structural analysis of Tongan dance is a typical case of how linguistic analysis can be analogously used in that of dance movement. Her philosophical premise for doing so comes from the ‘post-Bloomsfield linguistics’ that, ‘just as adequate grammar of a language may be considered a theory of that language, an adequate grammar of dance may be considered a theory of that dance tradition’ (1972:215). Her approach, however, also draws upon a Pikean notion of emic/etic division with the preference towards the former: that is, an emphasis upon indigenous ideas. Viewed from the methodological perspective, the well-structured linguistic categories, such as phoneme, morpheme, and motif, in Kaeppler’s analysis, can be transformed into a parallel set for analysing the movements. This methodology helps her set up classifications of movement genres and find out the structural relationship between Tongan poetry and dance in that the dance movements allude to the poetry which then allude to the themes. Therefore, ‘movements in Tongan dance are not named. But they can be brought to mind by words’ (1972:213).

Kaeppler, however, is not always consistent about what dance communicates. Elsewhere she tries to clarify the point of communication in the later period of her
Communication involves both structure and meaning-syntax and semantics-that are tied to specific cultural traditions. The movement dimensions of activities convey or communicate information in a symbolic medium that is quite different from spoken language and is a significant part of uniquely human social and cultural systems. Movement as a symbolic system which, like spoken language, operates through conventionalisation, creates meanings which can be undone or revised with relative ease and thereby can respond to changing contexts or circumstances (1992:156).

The movement dimension which is 'quite different from spoken language', however, is hard to appreciate through Kaeppler's structural studies due to her emphasis on the analogy with language. And yet even more confusing is that, without specific reference, it is difficult to imagine a species of spoken language in which the meanings can be undone or revised with relative ease. The main problem, as I shall argue, is Kaeppler's ambiguity, about what she really means about 'meaning'. This ambiguity becomes even more problematic when the analogy with language is used at the different levels of methodological, theoretical and even philosophical.

Williams has pursued her analysis using the analogy with language in a different direction. She makes further steps to clarify the different levels of 'meanings'. She takes Langer's idea of symptomatic and symbolic actions and gesture as the symbolic exposition of human feeling and experience (Langer 1970[1942]:152).

Philosophers tell us that we can say at least two things about symbols: we can say that a symbol, "x" means an object (concept or idea) TO a person or persons, or, that someone means an object (concept or idea) BY the symbol. In the first instance, meaning is created in a logical sense. In the second instance, meaning is created in a psychological sense. Many dances in western culture and elsewhere in the world use symbolic action and gesture only in first, and not in the second, sense... Both mediums of human expression, movement and language, share the function of meaning, for this is what any symbolic system is about, and in human realm, meaning is based on conditions that are logical, although it is also true to say that "meaning" has both logical and psychological aspects (Williams 1991:200, emphases supplied).

Williams goes on to note that the theory of 'semasiology' posed by her stresses the logical aspects merely because she wants to 'redress a balance of discourse that has
for a long time (in English-speaking societies, at least) only enjoyed interpretations that have stressed psychological aspects of meaning’ (1991:200). Her theory of semasiology, a transformed term derived from Greek which can be defined as ‘significance,’ in short, deals with the meaning of ‘body language’, which originates from the Saussurian notion of ‘la langue’ and has assumed ‘a solid reality’ rather than a ‘picturesque metaphor’ (1976a:125) or those ‘naive, dictionary-definitional interpretations of popularizers’ (1991:182). She emphasises the notion that body languages comprise systems of the same degree of logical and semantic complexity. Like language, there are rules (in Chomskian terms) for human movements, although they belong to different conceptual worlds from those of languages. Besides this analogy of rule, says Williams, the terminal symbols of a dance, either in performance or on a printed page, as in a Labanotation score, are expressed in gestures, poses, and movements phrases, just like the terminal symbols of speech are expressed in words, sentences or paragraphs (1991:201).

For Williams, the ‘terminal symbols’ express underlying conceptual linkage or structure and form various human action signs, ranging from gesture, dance, and game to ritual. In this respect, Kaeppler has shown a similar notion in her analysis of the relationship between ritual movement and dance by saying that ‘ritual movement sequences and dance are the surface manifestations of structured movement systems that exist as systems of knowledge’ (Kaeppler 1995: 117). Both of their theories, based on exploring structures of general and specialised movements such as dance, somehow explain the question left by Boas in the early section of this chapter and provide an ontological base for the relatedness between ritual movements and dance.

Marxist anthropologist Bloch has also formed a linguistic exegesis of ritual dance, but from a very different starting point. He is opposed to the Turnerian scheme of semiotic analysis, based on the idea that ‘symbols in ritual cannot be understood without a prior study of the nature of the communication medium of ritual in which they are embedded, in particular singing and dancing... ’ (1974:55). Bloch uses his own ethnographic case of the Merina of Madagascar and argues that, unlike everyday speech, the use of formalised speech and singing in ritual is following a proposition of ‘illocutionary force,’ a concept which he borrowed from J. L. Austin:
We can distinguish two kinds of meaning. One is the propositional force of language, the ability of language to corner reality by adapting communication to past perception and connecting with future perception. This is the power of language which linguists have been most concerned with (propositional force). This meaning potential of language is lost by formalisation, but there is also the aspect of meaning which we can refer to as 'illocutionary force', or perhaps 'performative force' - 'not to report facts but to influence people (Bloch 1974:67).

It is this illocutionary force that characterises 'the features of articulation,' as Bloch terms it, of ritual in which its units 'do not follow each other logically, but sequentially' (p.76). According to him, for those who use formalised speeches in ritual contexts, the choices of statements following the previous ones are limited, even to only one in extreme cases, if the consideration of authority persists. You can either accept what has been articulated or reject it, but you cannot argue with it. This rule can be used in singing, too. 'You cannot argue with a song,' as Bloch says (p.71). Neither you can with a dance.

As with speech, the formalisation of body movement implies over-growing control of choice of sequences of movement, and when this has occurred completely we have dance. We therefore find dance, as well as formalised body movements, typical of religion [an extreme form of authority]. The implications of this transformation from ordinary bodily control to dance are the same as they are for language: argument and bargaining with bodily movements be replaced by fixed, repeated, fused messages. The acceptance of this code implies compulsion. Communication has stopped being dialectic and has become a matter of repeating correctly (p.72).

In my opinion, Bloch has pushed his argument to an extreme edge that I wonder in which society an absolutely passive human agent, who can only follow what has been said, sung and danced, would be found, as Scheffelin has noted (1985:709). The discussion of 'ritual of rebellion', in which ideas and practices of different parties could have been negotiated without either rejecting or being rejected, has been a counter evidence to this extreme authority.

On the other hand, people do not argue with a song or a dance, even in non-ritualistic contexts. To argue is only a way of communication. To dance, as I shall
suggest, is not to achieve this kind of verbal performance. And yet this does not mean that dance cannot process dialectic communication even if it is only repeated in a ritual. That is, although Bloch is right to make the point that to interpret symbols without knowing the nature of the communication medium a priori is in vain, his analysis of dance, which depends on the deduction of one linguistic theory, closes rather than opens the possibilities for further exploration of the power of dance as a medium of communication, at least in the discourse of ritual.

In the above review, a central question is how dance is different from other human expressions and can make it a special medium which is frequently seen in rituals, as in contemporary Okinawa. The above review of the anthropological analyses of movement, no matter whether in rituals or in general contexts, however, cannot provide satisfactory insights. In my opinion, this is due to the analogies with linguistic theories or deductions, which makes dance only another system, if not an inferior one, of communication. Knowledge may be improved through the above analyses of movements which shown affinity between ritual movements and dance, ultimately, as Kaeppler and Williams both pointed out. It is the intentions of the movers that make differences or relate with each other among categories of actions (Kaeppler 1995:117, Williams 1982:167). Therefore Yeats’ famous poetic verse sounds a reasonable question here: How can we know the dancer from the dance? It is towards understanding ‘the dancer’ more effectively that I shall pursue another analytic framework: the performative approach to ritual.

2.4 The Performative Approach to Ritual and Dance

In 1979, Tambiah posited a performative approach to the study of ritual. He adopted the work of American socio-linguists, such as John Austin’s notion, and Searle’s revision, of the performative utterance. In this, the saying of the illocutionary speech act is ‘the doing of the action’ (Austin, quoted in Tambiah 1979:127) and subject to normative judgements of felicity or legitimacy and not to rational tests of truth and falsity. Then, ritual, as he concludes,
is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterised in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotype (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition). Ritual action in its constitutive features is performative in these three senses: in the Austinian sense of performative wherein saying something is also doing something as a conventional act; in the quite different sense of a staged performance that uses multiple media by which the participants experience the event intensively; and in the third sense of indexical values—I derive this concept from Pierce—being attached to and inferred by actors during the performance (1979:119).

Besides the Austinian notion of performative utterance, the play of convention in ritual also makes him choose the performative metaphor of ‘the discipline rehearsal of right attitudes’, using Langer’s terms as mentioned above, to talk about the articulation of feeling that is characteristic in ritual. He then demonstrates, using a case of a Sinhalese exorcism rite, why a medium such as ‘sensational dancing’ usually becomes the dominant medium of communication that even surpasses language, and contributes to what he calls ‘redundant patterns’ which fuse into one configurational totality, one cumulative experience, one superimposition of successive sequence: that is, the structure of ritual.

Because, to extend Radcliffe-Brown’s thesis further, dance is a superb vehicle for realising the sense of force and power through ‘ritual gesture,’ through physical motion that gives the illusion of the conquest of gravity, and through movements that create spatial tensions between the dancers. Thus humanly created and unleashed movements become the manifestation of forces outside and beyond the performers, and beget the illusion of emotions and wills in conflict (1979:146).

Tambiah’s exegesis of dance in this single rite is a mixture of Radcliffe-Brown’s emphasis on social sentiment (or control), the Langerian idea of illusion and even Turnerian (or Evans-Pritchard’s) conflict. That is, although he seemingly changes an angle to discuss ritual, nothing is really new and critical in his formula in terms of our understanding of dance. On the contrary, his view is a typical one that has been shared by his predecessors that dance, or the movement, is something that reflects, or makes the invisible visible. This view has been rejected by other scholars (Best 1978:221) for whom movement does not symbolise reality, but is itself the reality, a point to
which I shall return.

In spite of Tambiah’s model, the use of performance analogies and dramaturgical metaphors have become popular and stirred anthropological discourse, especially related to studies of ritual. This is possibly due to shifts in the positions of researchers, that is, from the position of an objective, scientific observer to that of a participatory audience (Bell 1992:39-40; Scheiffelin 1998:206). For instance, Geertz has presented an impressive account of the cockfight in Bali, which he claims is reminiscent of western tragedy (Geertz 1973:412-453; Hughes-Freeland 1998:3). Turner (1974) has made his ethnographic experience even more explicitly dramatic:

[The situation in an Ndembu village closely parallels that found in Greek drama where one witnesses the helplessness of the human individual before the Fates; but in this case (and also in the Icelandic one, as I have found) the Fates are the necessities of the social process. Conflict seems to bring the fundamental aspects of society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence (p.35).

From his Ndembu experience, Turner posits the idea of ‘social drama,’ which manifests itself in public episodes of tensional eruption and usually takes place in the ‘aharmonic’ phases of ongoing social process (p.33). This notion, nevertheless, is not inspired only by dramaturgical human condition reflected in social conflict, but also by an emphasis on the role of conscious agents or actors, as Turner has mentioned. This had been despised as ‘subjective’ by most of his predecessors (p. 32).

Scheiffelin pursues this idea of a social actor as conscious agent further. He opposes the notion that ritual is a ‘text’ that carries fixed meanings, which can be automatically understood by participants. Instead, he calls attention to the non-discursive dimensions of ritual and stresses that, through being enacted and performed, rituals gain their effectiveness (1985:709; 1998:194-195).

Among the Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea, Scheiffelin found that there is a lack of a well-defined social structure, but social relations operate in terms of highly evaluated principles of reciprocity. He emphasises the prevalence of performance rather than ritual by posing his theoretical framework of ‘cultural scenarios’ which is:
a series of events embodying a typical sequence of phases or episodes, which between its commencement and resolution effects a certain amount of social progress or change in the situation to which it pertains. The concept of cultural scenario differs from that of a ritual (which may, however, express or dramatise a cultural scenario) in that the cultural scenario is embodied in everyday, informal courses of action. It is empirically recognisable in the general procedure by which a people repeatedly approach and interpret diverse situations and carry them to similar types of resolution. The situations themselves need not be similar; it is the similar manner in which they are interpreted, carried forward, and resolved that is important (1976:3).

According to Scheiffelin, among the Kaluli, it is not groups that produce oppositions so much as oppositions that crystallise groups. People are inevitably confronted with war, revenge, death, and hence loss and sorrow in the course of life. Gisaro, a ritual ceremony, then, is a way to reconcile and retaliate through compensation and mutual sorrow. The provocation of this 'emotional arousal' and then its release is through songs and dancing. The contents of songs are critical to evoke participants' feeling since they usually name the dead or a sad event in the past. If the songs and dancing appropriately arouse the feeling, the participants (those who have suffered loss) weep and use the torch to burn the shoulders of the dancers, a demeanour tolerated because it symbolises that the performance is successfully achieved. After the performance, those who weep are given compensation for the emotional arousal.

Gisaro, for the dancer, is an extremely painful and wearing ordeal, and it is difficult for a Westerner to fathom why people would wish to do it. The Kaluli themselves are not very articulate on the matter. They never cite prestige, proof of manliness, or even duty to relatives or affines among their motivations. Sometimes a man will evoke an appeal to sentiment: 'My father intended to dance Gisaro at that longhouse before he died,' one man told me, 'but it was called off. Now (years later) I, the son, will do it.' Another man, whom I pressed hard to explain his motivation for dancing on one occasion, said doubtfully after considered thought, 'Well, those people of Wabisi were among the ones who danced Koluba here and made our old men cry a lot. So I thought I would Gisaro at Wabisi and make them cry just as much.' Most men simply say, 'They asked for Gisaro dancers, so I said to myself, "I'll be one."' Or as another man put it, 'I am hungry to Gisaro.' (Shortly afterward, when the ceremony was called off, this man immediately volunteered to dance in another.) The reason for this 'hunger to dance' becomes clear during the days immediately preceding the ceremony. The enthusiasm with which the performance is discussed and prepared for gives the impression that Kaluli thinks Gisaro to be one of the most wonderful things in the world. In the midst of it, the dancers will play the central
role, at once the figure of pathos and magnificence, sorrow and desire, which moves people to the bottom of their hearts. Such a tremendously exciting role, for all its cost in pain and compensation payments, has a compelling appeal (1976:165).

The central role, the figure of pathos and magnificence, sorrow and desire which moves people to the bottom of their hearts, all these are the aims that modern theatre workers are striving to achieve. The cost in pain exchanged for an exciting role is not at odds with some legendary stories of the ballerinas, only the degrees are different. Scheiffelin’s account is evaluated as ‘humane’ and recommended (Kaeppler 1978; Williams 1991:181). His focus on the dancers as social agents who have clear voices about their own intentions has provided valuable insight on how the Kaluli ‘ritualised’ their dance practices.

In addition to this ‘humane’ point of view, Scheiffelin points out that ‘performance as not real’ is largely a western idea. In the case of a Kaluli séance, ritual is enacted as a performance but in a ‘real’ sense that:

people reach fundamental symbolic understandings and arrive at solutions to their problems, not in a cognitive or intellectual way so much as in a participant one whose cognitive shape may not be well worked out for a given individual, but which is assumed to make sense because the realities it represents are so vivid. Once this séance reality is constructed, it may spill over into everyday life. The performance, in effect, becomes life, no less than life is reflected in the performance, and the vehicle for constructing social reality and personal conviction appears more as drama than rational thought (1985:721).

The cultural reality, in Scheiffelin’s words, emerges in the performance of the ritual. Performance then, is not merely social meta-commentary in Turnerian terms (Turner 1990:8): it is a dialogic, interactive process by which the participants construct their reality. This interactive process is achieved by a blurring, not a dichotomy, of the positions between performers and spectators. Kapferer poses a similar argument that ‘transitions and transformations in meaning and experience are communicated, received and engendered among ritual participants, through the dynamic properties of the major aesthetic modes [dance and music] of exorcism and by the way participant standpoint or perspective is ordered in ritual action’ (Kapferer 1991[1983]:245). Through the whole process of Sri Lankan exorcism, the relationship of
patient/audience changes in accordance with the stages of demonic presence, which are manifested in dance and drama performances. The practice of dance, which visualises the presence of demonic force in exorcism, according to Kapferer, is the concern of the culturally understood reality of the patient, who is under demonic control and unity. This reality is experienced because of the spatializing properties of dance, which encompass the audience and the patient in the space which dance creates (1991[1983]:267).

These spatial properties of dance will be discussed further in the next section. Suffice it to say here that both Scheiffelin's and Kapferer's accounts explicate the ambiguity as well as the potential of research into ritual/performance. Both the discourses of ritual and performance have become popular and hotly debated under the influence of Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bell 1992:69-93; Scheiffelin 1998:199). Both emphasise the aspect of action and bodily practice hence can be seen as a rebalance of the academic dichotomy between thought and action (Bell 1992). On the one hand, in spite of Goffman's works, performance study in anthropology has been largely based upon Turner's ritual theory and broadened by his collaboration with the theatre practitioner and performance theorist Schechner. This trend of research, however, has never transcended Turner's personal legacy and has inspired fewer in anthropological circles than in theatre (Hughes-Freeland 1998:3).

On the other hand, the discussion of ritual has gone through different stages of debate and scholars either reject the legitimisation of ritual as an analytical tool (Goody 1977) or broaden the connotation based on the 'heuristic and contingent' senses (Hughes-Freeland 1998:3). Under certain influences of recent thoughts derived from Marx, Derrida and so on (Bell 1992), the discourse of ritual has been expanded, so that the event which is conventionally called ritual is no more important than the concept of 'ritualisation,' which can merely means the 'attitude' (Rostas 1998). Bell has explained what ritualisation denotes:

When analysed as ritualisation, acting ritually emerges as a particular cultural strategy of differentiation linked to particular social effects and rooted in a distinctive interplay of a socialised body and the environment it structures (Bell 1992:7-8).
For Bell, the process of ‘ritualisation’ is always a strategic and contingent one full of negotiation of subjective and objective interpretations in terms of the social agents. A similar idea has been demonstrated by Tambiah when he posits the notion of the indexical symbol as a duplex structure which carries the semantic (traditional and conventional) and pragmatic (emerging and historical) meanings. (1979:153-160) This point of view, i.e. ritual is a process of contingency and negotiation of experience or meanings, is also held by Schieffelin in explicating the social theories of performance (1985, 1998). It is this common interest of interactive, dialogical, contingent and negotiating process through which post-structuralist notions have manifested themselves, that the ritual/performance framework may shed more light on this research. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Okinawans have gone through different stages of historical and cultural experiences: contemporary ritual/performances may become the best opportunities for them to interpret and act out their cultural construction of reality that requires negotiation among various interpretations of past/present and self/other.

Pitfalls, however, may also lurk behind this perspective, as Scheiffelin has cautioned us. His main argument is against using the western notion of ‘performance’ or ‘performativity’ without careful examination of indigenous ideas. He uses the Kaluli’s case again to explain that the physical as well as mental distance and distinction arbitrarily set between performers and audiences/spectator is a cultural product in the Western theatre. In the Kaluli Gisaro ritual/performance, it is just not the case (1998:200-205). Furthermore, newly formed terms such as ‘ritualisation’ and ‘performativity’ badly require ethnographic flesh. Scholars need to put them under scrutiny before choosing eclecticism. For instance, Rostas has endeavoured to bridge these two abstract notions. Her analysis of the Mexican Conchero dances using these two terms does not explicate the power of these ideas, but reversibly, leaves the impression of a pale interpretation of dancing ambiguously explained in terms of both notions (Rostas 1998:85-103).

Despite the dilemma and ambiguity of conceptualisation and definition, these two discourses of ritualisation and performativity do share certain similarities (or ‘connections’), which have recently inspired scholars to re-examine their usefulness
as research topics. Certain issues are posed: agency and intentionality in ritual (and) performance, creativity and constraint, spectatorship as participation, reality and illusion, and so on (Hughes-Freeland 1998:5-15). In a general sense, these issues, as I shall argue in the next section, are also relevant to dance studies.

2.5 Space, Time, and the Body: Towards an Etic Theory of Dance

Since the performative approach to ritual turned scholarly attention to action—that is the aspect of practice—a linguistic analogy becomes inadequate for a conceptualisation of dance. It is essential, as I shall argue, to focus on those elements through which dance can act out its full characteristics whenever needed. In this final section, discussion will be devoted to the characteristics of dance, which, as I shall argue, have their roots in the etic notion of space, time and the body.

As both theoretical and methodological referents, Williams has emphasised spatial factors as follows:

Human knowledge of the world comes to us through many channels and many mediums. Our first topographic knowledge of our many personalised worlds consists of a kind of spatial exploration of our own bodies of its limitations, then our immediate environment and its limitations. Gradually, we are introduced into the vernaculars of everyday body language and their conventions. We learn to define ourselves and others as much through the syntactical structures and "grammars" of events as we do through speech, beginning with "standing", "walking", "sitting", "crawling" and all the rest. At the same time that we learn these and a mind-boggling variety of other actions, locations, and spatial referents...we learn the local systems of relevance that are typical of our language and cultural setting: we learn the orientation metaphors that organise whole systems of actions with respect to one another—and most of these have to do with spatial orientation. We learn the obligations, freedoms, choices and constraints that constitute our moral and semantic spaces (1982:174-175, italics supplied).

Williams has echoed the notion of 'orientation metaphor' articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). According to the latter, 'the structure of spatial concepts emerges from our constant spatial experience, that is, our interaction with the physical
environment.’ The “direct physical experience,” however, ‘is never a matter of having a body of a certain sort; rather, every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions’ (1980:56-57, italics supplied). Metaphor is not merely rhetoric of language. It is pervasive in our everyday life, not just language, but in thought and action. It is a structure, rather than single statements, that connect different concepts. In short, Lakoff and Johnson are talking about metaphoric structure and metaphoric concepts rather than about metaphors per se. In their theory, the orientation metaphor is one of the basic conceptual structures based on the essentiality of our physical experiences. Concepts such up-down, front-back, in-out, near-far have been metaphorically reproduced in everyday discourse with little recognition that this is the case. This structure, to some extent, as argued by them, decides the concept of time in terms of English speakers. For example, time passes, time flies, the coming Sunday, the week ahead, next month, and so on are among those daily usage that sound so natural themselves.

Lakoff and Johnson’s theory of metaphor hence begs the attention of dance scholars because dancing has been recognised as an activity involving both space and time in an obvious way. How these two elements are constructed, literally and metaphorically, can be the main characteristics that distinguish one dance from another. As mentioned previously, Kapferer has provided an ethnographic case of how the spatial properties of movement strengthen the power of dance. His ideas are mainly inspired by those of Langer (Kapferer 1991[1983]:168). Langer sees dance as the play of virtual powers that manifests itself in the motions of illusory personages, whose passionate gestures fill the world they create—a remote, rationally indescribable world in which forces seem to become visible. She refers mainly to the character dance in ballets such as Giselle. She also pays attention to balletic movements on other occasions that produce the illusion of the conquest of gravity, i.e. freedom from the actual forces that are normally known and felt to control the dancer’s body (Langer 1953:194-195).

Therefore, for Langer,

[t]he recognition of a true artistic illusion, a realm of Powers, wherein purely imaginary beings from whom the vital force emanates shape a whole world of
dynamic form by their magnet-like, psycho-physical actions, lifts the concept of
Dance out of all its theoretical entanglements with music, painting, comedy and
carnival or serious drama, and lets one ask *what belongs to the dancing*, and
what does not (1953:184, emphasis supplied).

The power of dance, the illusionary force, the indescribable world that dance has
created, may be found in other cultures in the case as follows:

...... Japanese concern with the fleeting moment is often concern *about*, and
regret for, the passing show. Its fleeting aspect is regarded not only as especially
worthy of attention and as contributing to its beauty, but also as a cause for
sorrow. The acknowledgement of transience in Japanese poetry, for example, is
often accompanied by a sense of melancholy concerning the passing of seasons
and brevity of human and other life. Furthermore, the recognition of transience
should not be taken to imply the lack of desire for performance: one may at the
same time appreciate transient phenomena and yet wish to make them, or one’s
experience of them, last as long as possible. In the case of Japanese dance, the
fleeting moment may be extended to savour it at length. A brief episode may be
dwelt upon in the flow of slowly developing movements, or the moment may
even be frozen, as seen most obviously in the *mie* and less dramatically in the
poses struck where pauses intersperse Japanese forms, both classical and non-
classical. (Valentine 1998:266-267, italics supplied)

The pause, the *mie* in Kabuki (or *ma* in other occasions) literally means the space in
Japanese. To pause, hence does not mean to stay intact but to make a space for the
time. The flow of dancing then can be seen as combining the metaphorical concepts of
space and time in a way that the human being’s experience of moment-to-moment
existence is modified, in the above Japanese case at least, by manipulating the
performer’s presence against the normal scale of space and time and to meet the
cultural preference.

What makes the arguments of Langer, Kapferer and Valentine compatible here is that
they all recognise the effect that dancers have achieved despite their immediate
natural constraints: the flow of time, gravity, and so on. Langer and Valentine even
use the same metaphor—‘frozen’—to describe the moment when the effects have
been achieved, although they have depicted them in different terms. If we think
‘frozen’ in terms of time and space, it is clear that dancing goes against reality by
using those which are the most real: space, time, and the body.
Taking the body as a topic is a late fashion begun decades ago in social science, mainly due to the impact of mass media and feminism (Bell 1992:94; Polhemus 1975:14). Various debates and issues have led 'the body' into different theories of the natural symbol, social construction, locus of power, consumption, and fetishism, to name only a few. A thorough review of such theories would demand another dissertation and is beyond my interest in terms of this specific research. To sharpen my analysis, nevertheless, I shall concentrate on two concepts which I consider more relevant in terms of this research than others: 'the moving body' as conceptualised by Williams (1976b), Farnell (1994) and Mauss's 'techniques of the body' (1973[1935]).

According to Williams, the semasiological body is the 'self-activating mobile system of weight and levels in space and has the potentiality, the power, or capacity to arrange itself symbolically denotative and connotative forms' (1976b:158). Because it is semasiological, it requires translation. Put within a socio-cultural framework, then, Williams's notion of the body is not an entity which can be 'shared' cross-culturally as some anthropologists have claimed (Jackson 1983, and see Farnell 1994 for a further criticism). This notion of the semasiological body which needs to be translated can be proved, on a literal level, by other ethnographic examples of dance movements. For instance, Kaeppler has found that in Tongan dance, body movements concentrate on hands and movements in other parts of the body do not occur alone. The Tongans do not think that movements involving other parts of body are significant. These movements hence do not carry 'emic' meanings (Kaeppler 1972:199). Grau has demonstrated that among the Tiwi in north Australia, dance movements usually refer to different body parts that relate to the Tiwis' kinship system. To understand the body as a whole needs a compatible understanding of the kinship system. That is, we have to put the body into its culturally defined conceptual categories (Grau 1998).

Williams's 'semasiological body' emphasises self-activation and self-mobilisation, to some extent, to avoid the conventional dichotomy of the Cartesian notion of mind/body that has made the body an inferior and passive machine-like organism. The terms 'activate' and 'mobilise' also emphasise that the body is ever ready to move instead of being a static entity that is dominant among traditional anthropologists (Farnell 1994). This self-activating and self-mobilising body, nevertheless, is never
neutral as there are always social constraints which 'pre-prepare' our body and movements (Mauss 1973[1935]:86). The certainty of pre-prepared movements, according to Mauss, is ever ready to be transmitted to the social individual from the very moment of his or her birth. 'The techniques of body', the ways men know how to use their bodies from society to society, or the habitus, are transmitted through education (institutionalised or by every-day imitation) to meet social authority. They are social in nature.

Mauss admits the primary status of the body and consider it 'man's first and most natural technical object and at the same time technical means' (1973[1935]:75). He also recognises the need for what he called the 'instrumental techniques,' techniques for humans to meet the physical, mechanical or chemical aims. Before these instrumental techniques, however, he argues that there is the ensemble of techniques of the body that are assembled for the individual by all his or her education and the whole society to which s/he belongs. He further concludes that there are several factors to divide different techniques of the body within societies: sexuality, age, and efficiency.

Contemplation of the factor of education can be applied effectively in the case of Okinawa. In colonial Okinawa, schools have replaced previous institutions, such as the aristocratic system, in that they now play a role of body training. Following a Japanese ideology of body training, the impact of school education on contemporary Okinawans is enormous, which I believe can also be traced through dance practices (See Chapter Six for further discussion).

Mauss's notion of habitus demonstrates considerable foresight and profound influences, such as can be seen in Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977). Despite the fact that his review of dance is limited, his theory still remains useful for contemporary studies (Cowan 1990; Ness 1992). For example, Cowan has used the idea of habitus, as further developed by Bourdieu, in her analysis of Sohoian body politics in northern Greece. During various dance-events in which the Sohoians show off the different techniques of their bodies in a much more intensive way than everyday contexts, gender ideologies are evoked and magnified. These gender
ideologies, best seen in the showing-off in the dance events, however, as Cowan discusses, are inconsistent and heterogeneous (Cowan 1990:230). Her conclusion poses the central issues of creativity and constraint in terms of dance as techniques of the body, which is obviously beyond Mauss’s scope. In short, are those inconsistent and heterogeneous elements in dance or body presentation to be designated as deviations from conventions or are they the manifestations of the creativity of the ‘self-activating and self-mobilising body’, in Williams’ terms?

Reality/illusion, creativity/constraint, are similar key issues raised in the field of ritual/ performance study as mentioned in the last section. The above review reveals the potential contributions that dance study can make to the broader field. In conclusion, we need a further step that leads us from the body, the habitus and the movements toward what is called ‘dance’, under the consideration of indigenous concepts and practices. Although all the above elements are significant, nevertheless, dance requires more than all these elements. It is the ‘cultural philosophy’ of the people that makes the actions or activity observed into dance, as explicated by Kaeppler’s analysis of Tongan dance (1985). Hughes-Freeland also has shown in her presentation of Javanese dance theory: dance movements ‘become mechanically right only after a dancer’s rasa is right, when the process is one of control and engagement of the lair-batin’ (1997:60) Rasa, lair-batin, or fakateki in Tongan dance, kefi in Greece, all these are what makes dance appreciable in their own cultural milieux and anonymous for anyone who has not been embodied with them. It is only through a ‘thick description’ of these requirements, and the notions of time, space and the body of the dance practitioners, then that we can start to build a comprehensible dance theory.

Are dance and ritual related at all? Or ‘it is our lack of knowledge about movement, and problems of categorisation that relate them?’ (Kaeppler 1995:106). The central question of this research is the relationship between dance and ritual. In this chapter, I have reviewed the anthropological literature concerned with dance by using the categorisation of dance in/as ritual under both empirical and theoretical considerations. The results of the literature review have shown, from the epistemological
(categorisation of concepts) and the ontological (the affinity of movements) perspectives, that dance and ritual are closely related. In the above review, the cross usage of terms such as ritual, art and performance reveal the interests of the researchers which range from the origin and the essence of dance, to the relation of the dance participants. The review also has clearly shown the shifts of paradigms that, according to Williams, reflect the different conceptions of the social agents: from that of ‘role takers’ to ‘meaning makers’ and ‘conscious actors’ (Williams 1991).

Ritual discourse is also eminent in contemporary practices of Okinawan dance. Japanese and Okinawan scholars have attempted to set up categories that bind ritual and dance together for various reasons (p.28). Rituals and festivals have become substitutive institutions in which dance performances are usually the core part among other events (Ôshilo 1992). The same movement sequences are defined into dance and ritual according to different contexts and interpretations. From both the empirical and theoretical aspects, it is worth asking that, if human action is metaphorically structured (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), can the relationship between dance and ritual, which is not merely superficially connected as the above review has shown, shed more light on the metaphorical structure(s) of human conceptualisation and embodiment? Among various discursive practices, the post-structuralist framework in the discourse of ritual—the performative approach—is the most favourable to pursue a question like this. Despite its attention to action and bodily practice, a broader and heuristic notion of ritualisation with its implications in performative actions suits the situation in Okinawa, where rituals and performances are not always clearly separated.

With respect to the question of why dance is a special medium in most rituals, analogies with language cannot provide satisfactory insight despite the fact that scholars have pointed out the affinity of dance and ritual movement according to different theories. Dance, however, is powerful, as pointed out by scholars, and challenges physical reality or social constraints. Instead of pursuing the meaning, in the logical sense, of dance, I shall focus on key elements, such as space, time and the body which are essential to dance as a powerful medium and to our understanding of the cultural philosophy of the dance practitioners.
Notes

1 Currently, most books in English on the topic of Okinawan dance are written by Japanese or Okinawans.

2 Kurath’s relevance to the anthropological study of dance is best reflected in the journal where her pioneering article appeared, *Current Anthropology* (1960). The field she hence delineated, nevertheless, is called dance ethnology, which is theoretically and methodologically differentiated from the anthropological study of dance. On the difference between dance anthropology and dance ethnology, see Williams (1991, chapter VII) and Kaeppler (1991).

3 Hanna is the only scholar in this field who has tried to define dance ‘scientifically’ (1987:20-21). Her endeavour has resulted in criticism rather than praise (Williams 1991:231).

4 Anthropologist Maquet (1986) has demonstrated that the term ‘art’ is ‘a social constructed reality’ which is not ‘an independent entity, either in the world out there or in the realm of essences and ideas, but a mental construction agreed upon by a group of people’, and ‘its validity is based on the consensus of the total society or of one of its specialised groups’. Hence, ‘[w]e do not know if art phenomena are universal, and we do not a priori claim that they should be...’ (p.3-5) He then uses the case of living in Los Angeles to clarify that ‘our “home definition” of art is simply our reality and not a standard for others’ (p.10, italics provided). For debates specifically on whether ‘aesthetics’ should be a cross-cultural category, see Ingold (1996).

5 Nonetheless, Evans-Pritchard has stirred some later discussions in dance anthropology, including both theoretical and methodological ones (see Farnell 1994; Ness 1996; Williams 1999).

6 *Communitas* is a Latin word, which means ‘community’. In Turner’s model it is structurally complementary with the daily social structure where every one has a role and usually leads to conflict due to personal or group interest. Communitas is anti-structural in the sense that it provides a state where there is no status differentiation, no group rival, and everyone is the same. This state occurs in the ritual process when the society in question goes through the liminal stage, a notion which he modified from Van Gennep’s idea of the transitional stage in rites of passage. (Van Gennep 1960; Turner: 1977)


8 Some scholars have preferred to categorise de Saussure as a semiotician (Lechte 1994) rather than a structuralist due to his overall influence in most fields of human sciences. According to Lechte, de Saussure’s theory that the relation between the signifier/the signified is arbitrary has turned researchers’ attentions ‘away from documenting historical events, or recording the facts of human behaviour, and towards the notion of human action as a system of meaning.... [He] paved the way for a more rigorous and systematic approach to human sciences—an approach that would genuinely attempt to take seriously the privacy of the socio-cultural domain for human beings. Just as [he] had emphasised the importance of not studying speech acts in isolation from the system of conventions which gave them currency, so it was deemed inadequate to study social and cultural system which gave them currency.’ De Saussure’s influence has covered anthropology (Levi-Strauss), sociology (Bourdieu), psychoanalysis (Lacan), and literary criticism (R. Barthes) (Lechte 1994:151).
There are several reasons for this. One is that the term nonverbal is not 'semantically neutral' (William 1982:178); it also avoids the mind/body dichotomy that can be aroused by the verbal/nonverbal distinction (Farnell 1999).

Powers has criticised Hanna’s intention when reviewing her book and posited that her book should be entitled To Dance Is Science rather than To Dance is Human. Ness has used the term ‘rigorous anti-ethnocentric objectivism’ to describe the work of Hanna and Kaeppler (Ness 1996: 258).

Coincidentally, Lakoff and Johnson have used the example of ‘a dance is an argument’ as being illogical to explain conventional metaphors in English language (1980:5).

For Goffman’s distinction between performance and pefon-nativity, see Scheiffelin 1998 for a brief review.

I am fully aware that Kaeppler has also seen time and space as essential elements in dance when she defined it in these terms. But her usage is only limited to the literal sense and she never develops them as theoretical and methodological considerations.

Polhemus has given a critical review of why ‘the body’ became a topic in social science, as well as its application in anthropology, especially from the angles of communication theory and Neo-Durkheimist. (Polhemus 1975). Also see Bell 1992 (Chapter V), Shilling 1990, and B. Turner 1996.
CHAPTER THREE Dance Ethnography: Methodologies

3.1 Introduction

The previous literature review has delineated the geographical as well theoretical foci of this research. As mentioned previously, this research is not aimed at analysing Okinawan dance as an object, but the dance culture as social process. How can one approach social life? How can one produce knowledge of Okinawan dance culture? These are questions that need to be asked in terms of knowledge construction as far as this specific research is concerned.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the methodology of this research. As mentioned earlier, the research pursues an anthropological perspective. This perspective largely decides the methodology that is applied. As scholars have pointed out, compared with the theoretical discourse, the methodological one, ethnography, was lacking in articulation in anthropology until recently. Ethnography, practised by most anthropologists as the result of doing fieldwork, has recently been re-defined as 'simply diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture...' and 'a hybrid activity, thus appears as writing, as collecting, as modernist collage, as imperial power, as subversive critique' (Clifford 1988:9,13). This diverse way, or hybrid activity, of thinking and writing about culture, nevertheless, has yielded a special discourse of constructing knowledge which can be contemplated from both theoretical and methodological perspectives. In this chapter, I shall concentrate on the methodological level and examine some basic trends in ethnographic methodology in terms of the process of knowledge construction of this specific research. The process, and hence the discussion of the methodology, will be divided into several parts: how knowledge is gained, what sort of knowledge is collected and analysed, and how knowledge is presented.

Special consideration will be taken with respect to research in dance. That is, as a newly formed discourse in dance studies, dance ethnography has begun to arouse
scholars' discussions on methodological, theoretical as well as philosophical issues that are significant to the pursuit of knowledge on dance (Buckland 1999). These issues are highly relevant to the current research and will be further discussed in the following sections.

3.2 Fieldwork: From Empirical to Reflexive and Dialogical Approaches

The first critical aspect of anthropological methodology, which I see as the process of gaining anthropological knowledge, is doing fieldwork. Metaphorically attributed as the rite de passage of anthropologists, the practice of fieldwork, a way of 'pursuing culture' (Maanen 1988:13), as a basic requirement for anthropologists was set up mainly by one of the most prominent figures, Malinowski, in his own practice on an island, Trobriand, in the western Pacific. In this famous ethnographical work, he articulates his chart of doing fieldwork¹ as ethnological method (1922). His particular concern of methodology as an indispensable part of 'scientific' pursuit may partly be due to his background of being trained as a natural scientist before converting into an anthropologist², as well as the ideas of knowledge at that time.

No one would dream of making an experimental contribution to physical or chemical science, without giving a detailed account of all the arrangements of the experiments; an exact description of the apparatus used, of the manner in which the observations were conducted; of their number; of the length of time devoted to them, and of the degree of approximation with which each measurement was made. In less exact sciences, as in biology or geology, this cannot be done as rigorously, but every student will do his best to bring home to the reader all the conditions in which the experiment or the observations were made. In Ethnography, where a candid account of such data is perhaps even more necessary, it has unfortunately in the past not always been supplied with sufficient generosity, and many writes do not ply the full searchlight of methodic sincerity, as they move among their facts but produce them before us out of complete obscurity (Malinowski 1922:2-3).

Motivated by this scientific rigour, Malinowski then posits an empirical methodology, explained along with his own experience of doing fieldwork on the Trobriand Island. He is concerned primarily with under what conditions 'observations were made', and
how the line could be clearly drawn between ‘on the one hand, the results of direct observation and native statements and interpretations, and one the other hand, the inferences of the author, based on his common sense and psychological insight’ (1922:3). In Malinowski’s opinion, based on the premise that ethnographic sources should be able to serve as ‘unquestionable scientific value’, once the researcher was equipped with ‘good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest result’, he could be differentiated from other practitioners such as missionaries and travellers.

Malinowski then classifies the knowledge that ethnographers should acquire in the field into different types: ‘the organisation of the tribe, and the anatomy of its culture’, ‘the imponderabilia of actual life’ and ‘corpus inscriptionum’ (folk-lore, magic formula, and other natives’ narratives). He also suggested accordingly the strategies favoured, such as adopting a synoptic chart, concrete, statistical documentation, an ethnographic diary, and learning the indigenous language (pp.13-24). All the above strategies are ideally operated based on long-term fieldwork, during which the ethnographer should participate and observe natives’ life in an exhaustive way, although he may have specific interests and theoretical ground which Malinowski terms as ‘a mental chart’ (p.13). All of these, he says, are towards the goal ‘to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world’ (p.25).

Malinowski’s treatise clearly reflects the positivist tradition of social science of his time, which valued ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ knowledge the most. From the strategic aspect, most of his prescriptions have become the paradigm of fieldwork until today. For instance, a long-term fieldwork duration (from at least one year to several), knowledge of the indigenous language, and participant observation are mostly followed by ethnographers especially with anthropological interests. From the epistemological aspect, however, the scientific, objective nature of anthropological knowledge has become questionable, especially in post-colonial and post-modern contexts. Ironically, one critical counterwork to the objective nature of anthropological knowledge, which is gained largely through the process of doing fieldwork, is presented by Malinowski himself, but through another kind of ‘voice’.
In the diary posthumously published by his widow, Malinowski has revealed himself to an astonishingly honest degree. This diary, though a product during fieldwork, "does not dwell either on field methodology or on problems of anthropological theory", but convey keenly the reactions of a field anthropologist in an alien society. There he must live as recorder and analyst, but as such he cannot completely share the customs and values of the people, admire or dislike them as he may. The feeling of confinement, the obsessional longing to be back even if for the briefest while in one's own cultural surroundings, the dejection and doubts about the validity of what one is doing, the desire to escape into a fantasy world of novels or daydreams, the moral compulsion to drag oneself back to the task of field observation--many sensitive fieldworkers have experienced these feelings on occasions... (Firth 1967:xv-xvi).

Nothing is more inconsistent than Malinowski's notions toward the people he researched. In the Argonauts, the Trobrianders were 'the noble savage,' who 'subjected to a strict code of behaviour and good manners, to which in comparison the life at the court of Versailles or Escurial was free and easy' (p.10). In his diary, however, they were the savages 'in its strict sense of term'. Juxtaposition of the above accounts, or two forms of narrative, produced by the same anthropologist, is not to posit a scandal or accuse Malinowski's ethnographical writings on Trobriand culture of being ineffective, but to reflect critically on the nature of anthropological knowledge, as later scholars have emphasised (Clifford 1988; Geertz 1983; Marcus and Fischer 1986). Among various critical issues, one is the dilemma/dichotomy between subjective experience and objective knowledge. To solve this problem, Geertz has posited the notions of 'experience-near/experience-distant' instead.

'An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone--a patient, a subject, in our case an informant--might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience--distant concept is one that specialists of one sort or another--an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or ideologist--employ to forward their scientific, philosophical or practical aims.' (Geertz 1983:57)
Geertz goes on to emphasise that the ‘matter is one of degree, not polar opposition’. And the real question which he thinks demonstrated by Malinowski in his idea of ‘from the native’s point of view’ is not you have to be one to know one, but ‘is what roles the two sorts of concepts play in anthropological analysis. Or, more exactly, how, in each case, ought one to deploy them so as to produce and interpretation of the way a people lives...’ (p.57).

Most anthropologists now have begun to admit, more willingly, that the process of doing fieldwork is full of personal experiences and even the concrete and framed strategy such as participant observation is seen as ‘less a definition for a method than it is an amorphous representation of the researcher's situation’ in the field (Maanen 1988:3). In short, fieldwork is no more a scientific strategy to achieve the goal of objectivism.

In addition to this reflection, the whole political condition of post-colonialism and the rapid globalisation have caused profound influences in ethnographic research. On the one hand, the clash of Western imperialism and colonialism not only re-scrambled the world political order but also the relationship between the colonised and the ethnographers who used to work under the political shelter of the colonisers. That is, the relationship between the researchers and the researched has changed into structures of different natures, from an ethnic one into others such as that of gender. On the other hand, those once isolated, far-off, ‘uncontaminated’ tribes are disappearing and the naturalism/primitivism becomes even more questionable than ever. An ideal condition for doing fieldwork, as Malinowski depicted, without other ‘civilised’ (i.e. Westernised) intervention becomes less and less available. Parallel with this situation is that scholars have also found that they are facing a different group of informants who are not ‘ignorant peasants’ any more but fully aware of their social and ethnic identity, and sometimes have much interest in sharing and even controlling the ethnographer’s research (Clifford 1988:45; Giurchescu and Torp 1991:9). In short, the post-colonial period has put into question the invisible, objective researchers and their unquestionable authority of the representation of other peoples which are manifested in the classic ethnographies. That is, post-colonial
ethnographers are facing the ‘crisis of representation’ (Marcus and Fischer 1986:8). If ethnographical knowledge cannot promise objectivism, as Malinowski's diary has revealed, and it can not also serve as the authoritative representation of other peoples, what should we expect of ethnographical knowledge? And what are its implications in the process of doing fieldwork?

Such questions have made anthropologists contemplate on ethnography from another perspective, influenced by post-colonialism literary criticism (Said 1979), of constructing knowledge of the ‘other,’ and how anthropological knowledge can then serve as the cultural critique of the self (Marcus and Fischer 1986). From the perspective of methodology, emphasis has been put on re-examining ethnographers’ positioning, which evokes the reflexive approach and the dialogical/interactive one that allows the researcher to formulate her/his knowledge while constantly challenge the haunting dichotomy of subjectivity/objectivity.

As scholars have pointed out, despite the political and social conditions mentioned above, reflexive ethnography is closely related with the notion of interpretive anthropology (Abu-Lughod 1990:9; Marcus and Fischer 1986:29), in which anthropology is re-defined as ‘not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning’ (Geertz 1973:5). From a more general perspective of social science, adopting a reflexive approach means the increasing self-awareness that social researchers are part of the social world they study and ‘there is no way in which we can escape...in order to study it’ as positivist and naturalist social researchers have neglected to realise (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:16-17). Therefore, a reflexive ethnography foreshadows the influences and results that researchers may have caused on the group of peoples they study.

Nowadays, the reflexive approach is adopted by many ethnographers in fieldwork, including dance scholars⁵ (Ness 1992; Sklar 1991; Williams 1994) and other cognate disciplines such as ethnomusicology (Cooley 1997). At the same time, scholars remind to caution against the symptoms caused by an overdose or misuse of this approach, such as the overemphasised personal interpretations and confessional
anthropology (Cooley 1997:17; Grau 1999:164), as well as a blurring of reflexivity with subjectivity (Williams 1994:4). Williams has criticised the fact that scholars consider the term ‘reflexivity’ only ‘in realms of the emotional and psychological’. She advocates a clarified use of the term, following sociologist Valera’s formation.

Reflexivity is to be distinguished from reflection in the following way: to think about others is to be reflective, to think about one’s self is to be reflexive. To think about the self, one can focus on the psychological dimension, i.e. personality—the subjective. To think about the self, one may also focus on the sociological dimension, i.e. person—the objective. Reflexivity in the context of the work discussed here is a sociological activity concerning itself with the tacit commitment of a person to a framework of meaning which authorises claims to and achievements of knowledge. To be reflexive, then, is to think about one’s commitment critically and responsibly: an objective interest in the relation between the person and his or her role of knowledge (Valera 1994, quoted in Williams 1994:5, emphases supplied).

That is, reflexivity in terms of doing fieldwork should always be considered as a sincere, if not better, way to unveil the process of knowledge construction which is the ultimate goal of social research, no matter what kind of cultural, social, and political backgrounds into which the researcher is born. (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:17) Besides this approach which increases the ‘visibility’ of researchers themselves, the interactive and dialogical approach is another trend to emphasise the role of the researched in the process of doing fieldwork. As mentioned above, most scholars who set out to do fieldwork in the post-colonial period find their informants much more articulate than before. A positive reaction to this political as well as academic reality is to emphasise the dialogical and interactive approach (Marcus and Fischer 1986:29,34), which is delineated by Blacking:

The analysis of meaning can only be achieved first by a dialectic between informants and analysts, in which there is an exchange of two kinds of technical knowledge and experience and informants share in the intellectual process of analysis (Blacking 1984:16).

Blacking here addresses the aspect of ‘technical knowledge’ to highlight the specificity of dance research. In fact, since Kurath, ethnographic methodology has been advocated as a favourable technique to pursue the study of dance ethnology.
pioneered by her collaboration with other anthropologists in the 1960s (Kurath 1960). Although her primary concern is in defining the approach, objectives and scope of this field, she also points out a set of procedures that have been ‘used in choreographic analysis, such as observation, interviewing, consultation of secondary sources, and re-study, and shared with ethnologists’ (p.242). Beyond this, Kurath never clearly defines the ethnographical methodology of dance. Although she has had field experience, it is clearly that for her, the methodology is field work rather than fieldwork. That is, scholars go into field only to record and collect data. They then bring the recorded data back to the laboratory and analyse them, a fashion largely reminiscent of ethnomusicology in the early twentieth century (Cooley 1997:5-11). Nevertheless, she is aware of the advantage of a synthetic or co-operative approach undertaken not only among the academics of choreologists and ethnologists, but also ‘between scientists and laymen, the public, ...’ (Kurath 1960:250), which she terms as teamwork.

Kurath’s argument has some implications of different levels in terms of the methodology of dance ethnography, despite the fact that this term only appeared after the 1990s (Sklar 1991; Buckland et al 1999). First of all, compared with other subjects, anthropology has been attributed as more ‘humanistic’ (e.g. not scientific enough), partly due to the interest and insistence on cultural relativism. On the other hand, dance stands up as a genre of human activity that is somehow ‘irrational’ (Grau 1999:171). These two subjects can then be conceptualised and categorised as a humanistic field (Grau 1999:166; Sklar 1991) without too much doubt.

From another perspective, however, consolidation of these two fields needs far more than merely exchange of techniques or knowledge. As scholars have noticed, traditionally, anthropologists have relied heavily on the visual approach of doing fieldwork (Fabian 1983:122-123; Farnell 1994; Clifford 1988:31). Participant observation is a good example. This strategy alone largely depicts ethnographers’ missions: keeping a close eye on what is going on and jotting down what is seen while participating. This process has been criticised as causing a dichotomy, in terms of knowledge constructing, between the observer/the observed, the thinking or writing
researcher/ the doing informants. Besides this facet, drawing maps, tracing lineage and making family trees, all these traditional 'skills' transmitted through generations of anthropologists emphasises visual, or spatial preference of anthropological knowledge, partly due to the easily-transmittable textuality that favours the final written account of ethnography. Scholars have reflected, however, on the nature of anthropological knowledge produced by this sensory chauvinism. If human beings are experiencing the world through multiple sensory ways, anthropology as the study of peoples should not neglect this capacity. In other words, anthropology should favour human knowledge making of all kinds, and ethnographic methodology should be able to grapple with this process, including that of kinaesthetic experience.

In a position against language determinism which prevails in the social sciences, Hastrup and Hervik argue:

[I]t is no longer possible to claim that language mirrors reality and that language, consequently, is a privileged entry into any culture. It is one entry among others, and a wide open one, but we should not let ourselves be deceived by the broad alley of words into society. If it seems to lead right to the heart of culture, this is largely an optical illusion based on the folk model of Western logocentrism. Most social experience lies beyond words... (Hastrup and Hervik 1994:8).

This is exactly the point that, as I shall argue, to which dance ethnographers have been contributing since Kurath. By now most dance ethnographers have emphasised the centrality of dance/movement in their individual studies and strive to develop better ways, beyond observation, to help understand this aspect of social experience that have not been explored in other fields (Farnell 1994:964; Sklar 1991:6). Besides film, they have used tools such as notation systems or movement checklists (Keali'inohomoku 1972) to help analyse conceptions of dance/movement of specific groups of peoples. Besides this strategic level, recent dance researchers have shown a common interest on how researchers can achieve 'kinaesthetic empathy' to understand the kinaesthetic knowledge of the researched from 'the native's point of view' in the process of fieldwork (Sklar 1991; 2000).
Refinements in methodology have been made under similar consideration by ethnomusicologists who put more effort into participating in music-making with the researched rather than only watching or asking. (Cooley 1997:17) As Cooley has mentioned, later ethnomusicologists have been searching the meaning of music making and find it a rewarding way to learn from and perform with the indigenous peoples. This trend explicates the increasing interest in the social agents and their practices, and demand a better way to help gain the knowledge which can be better appreciated through participating and practising instead of merely visual observation and linguistic communication. Fabian (1990) also presents an example of a ‘new ethnography’ which is inspired by a traditional Zaire saying and completed through the process of the performance set up by a contemporary Zairian theatre. That is, what is needed is ‘participatory participant-observation’. Dance ethnography also shares an advantage from this perspective since it has long been a consensus among dance ethnographers that to learn how to move in another culture is as essential as to learn how to speak their language in terms of doing fieldwork, and the results are usually rewarding in terms of strategic as well as theoretical levels (Farnell 1994:964; Kaeppler 1999:21). Dance ethnography, then, can best advocate the dialogical/interactive facet of knowledge construction that post-modernist experimental anthropologists have pursued.

3.3 Personal Practice of Fieldwork—An Okinawan Case

The above discussion reviews several approaches to doing fieldwork which are moulded under different political as well as academic conditions. Among them, the dialogical/interactive approach is considered the most favourable to proceed the fieldwork, because it allows both the researcher and the researched to engage in a dynamic process of knowledge making, to an extent that the boundaries between experience-near/experience-distant or other/self are keeping shifting (Abu-Lughod 1991:27) and the hierarchical relationship between the observer/observed renegotiating (Buckland 1999a:7), rather than being firmly separated. As I shall argue,
the dialogical/interactive approach should promise a reflexive researcher who is well aware of her/his position as a knower and possible influence on the process or even the outcome of the research. This is also the approach that best evokes the ethnographical research of dance because it highlights the essentiality of physical interaction, that is, embodied knowledge is as critical as verbal or written form in human societies.

Doing fieldwork is, however, a personal process, in the sense that it is the researcher's personal encounters with individuals, institutions and even political apparatuses of another culture. It is a process full of power relations of different natures and levels, a relationship that is 'never one-way' and with 'always a dialogical control as no agent is ever totally powerless in a relationship,' as Grau has pointed out (1999:168, italic supplied). Therefore, in the following section, I shall present, using the experience of fieldwork in southern Okinawa as part of the current project, those critical issues such as identity, gender, access, and micro-politics. Issues such as how to define the field will also be discussed in terms of their implications for the fieldwork experience directly and the outcome of this research indirectly. The following section is to highlight the unavoidable personal nature of field experience and facilitate reflexivity.

As contemporary scholars have been keen to emphasise, the field is not a physical or empirical space, but a conceptual or metaphysical one (Cooley 1997; Gore 1999). '[T]he location and boundaries of which are ethnographically generated' (Gore 1999:210). In other words, the field is more than somewhere that can be pointed out on a map. It is the mental locus from which researchers 'distance' themselves. This distancing is a mental one rather than geographical, linguistic or even cultural one (Maanen 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986). That is, a field can be only one hundred miles away from home but is still mentally distant, or made distant, from the researcher. It is the Other that an anthropologist sets up to explore (Fabian 1983).

In my own case, I would have never known how near, geographically, Okinawa is from my own home if I had not done the fieldwork. In fact, it is the nearest foreign territory from Taiwan. Whenever I was asked which group of people I was studying, I
was always tempted to add more than merely answering Okinawa, and try to explain how near (geographically) and how far (culturally) it is at the same time. If the inquirer is someone who is not acquainted with Asian geography, I usually add ‘it is located in southern Japan/ south of Japan’ before any confusion is aroused, since I am convinced that most people know of Japan, even if not clear where it is. This is a geographical as well as political reality although, as I have shown in chapter one, it has complicated cultural implications. My primary knowledge about Okinawa, however, was that it is a popular tourist destination and the nearest part of Japan from my home country. This is another social reality which forms part of the representation of Okinawa in my own culture.

As far as this research is concerned, ‘Okinawa’ represents two connotations. On the one hand, it represents the geographical area in which I have mostly undertaken my research. On the other hand, from an ethnographical perspective, it represents the group of people with whom I have engaged. Both of these connotations, however, need to be further clarified. From the geographical perspective, as I mentioned before, I chose a small isle in southern Okinawa to undertake my fieldwork rather than cover the whole area which bears the name. This metonymic nature—to highlight a part to represent the whole—is a characteristic of anthropological knowledge and it reflects the micro- rather than macro-perspective of social research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). If this first connotation is confined, the second is never so. The identity of ‘Okinawan people’ is never an easy task under considerations of continuous and intense migrations (both in and out), intermarriages with, for example, Japanese and so on in contemporary Okinawan society. In fact, I did cross geographical and ethnic boundaries following the social network of locals during my fieldwork. Identity has been a critical issue in Okinawan society and it deserves a fuller discussion with the case of my informants later. Here suffice it to say that the ethnic boundary is never fixed and constantly formed in a dialogical process of social life, as has been critically demonstrated by anthropologists (F. Barth 1969). The same consideration is applicable during fieldwork.
To talk about when the fieldwork begins and ends seems no easier, although my physical presence in the field can be calculated through the entry and departure dates on my passport. Fabian has explored the temporal consciousness of the anthropological enterprise, including that in fieldwork:

Fieldwork, demanding personal presence and involving several learning processes, has a certain time-economy. The anthropological rule of thumb—one full cycle of seasons—may not be its exact measure but it recognises at least that a certain passage of time is a necessary prerequisite, not just an annoying expenditure. More time, often much more time, is necessary to analyse and interpret experience recorded in texts. In sum, doing anthropology needs distance, temporal and often also spatial (Fabian 1983:89).

Somehow, as I shall argue, this idea of ‘passage of time’ makes fieldwork itself like a ritual for anthropologists. As many manuals for students who prepare themselves for fieldwork have listed those items such as ‘how to prepare for the fieldwork’, ‘entering the field’, ‘building rapport’, ‘do and do not in the fieldwork’, ‘leaving the field’, and even food regulations (Myers 1992), we are reminded of the procedures that are usually found in the activities we call ritual, let alone the uncertain, mysterious and even sacrificial atmosphere and countless ‘field tales’ attached to this specific experience.

As a personal experience, my fieldwork also followed a one-year cycle. Besides the intention of living with my informants for a full cycle of time, this is also the maximum that my funding organisation allowed since it is difficult for them, as I believe also for other similar organisations, to realise why it takes so long to conduct my research without articulating specific schedules. The span of one year’s fieldwork was also decided because of the time economy considering my postgraduate study in a British institution, which is a three-year programme. As I found out in the field, nevertheless, this yearly scale of time has also a globalisation trend that the group of people with whom I was living cannot be exempted from, although they also run a parallel lunar calendar for traditional events.
In the sense of time passage, however, my fieldwork experience did mark a series of changes of status and identity. The process of entering the field was achieved, in my case, by a hierarchical evolution of my positioning. At the beginning, through a personal introduction, I was able to contact the Okinawa Prefecture University of Art, which only later did I realise is a sister institution of the University of Surrey. Japan is a society in which various social networks are preferable and even critical to process social mobility. Okinawa is largely influenced in this aspect. As a research student who has both personal and institutional connections with the above institution, I was then sanctioned as a co-operate researcher, which had less an academic significance than an administrative one since the status offered me the necessary document to be issued a long-term visa (one year) by the Japanese government.

From Naha international airport to my field site, the entrance took another form of self-positioning. Identified as a researcher, I was introduced to locals who are thought to be cultural specialists or have keen interests in dance and culture. Also because this fieldwork was a re-visit, followed by several short encounters in 1993, I took advantage of the old network through persons like hostel or shop owners. As a result, both these networks somehow decided my marginal position as an outcomer and researcher, at least in the beginning stage. On one early occasion when a sports day was held, which was conventionally a village-wide event, I was quite shocked by my 'invisibility' to the villagers. During the lunch break, the others went to the tent of their own villages and my 4-year-old daughter and I were left alone, although we had been settling down in one of the villages for three weeks. Before we were finally invited by a friend of my daughter's (he was sent by his parents), there was about fifteen minutes that was the most embarrassing span of time in my life. I had never had a dramatic chance to convert my informants' attitude and made myself suddenly visible, as Geertz had in Bali when he escaped with the locals by a chase of a police coup who showed themselves up in his observance of the banned cockfight (Geertz 1973:413-419). Neither had I been ‘adopted’ by any family, as many other anthropologists had (Grau 1999). The situation, as I believe, largely reflected my informants' idea about the ‘others’: that is, there are always economic or affinity ties between the villagers and outcomers although the presence is usually a short-term one.
I did find my positioning, however, similar to those young people who come from Japan proper and stay and work for quite a long period. Some of them share the cultural interest I have and strive to learn the dance, music or weaving. Ethnographers have tried to compare their fieldwork experiences with those of 'newcomers' of a society to highlight the issue of fieldworking 'selves' and how the early experience influences later knowledge (Kohn 1994:13-27). The issue also reminds me of my situation.

It was not long before I could figure out that, although I made name cards with clear translations of the status and the name of the institution that I came from, my informants were not really interested in remembering those. They always thought I was from Japan before my spoken Japanese told them the truth. Once informed that I am from Taiwan, my identity seldom went beyond that point. As mentioned before, Taiwan and Okinawa are the most immediate foreign countries from each other, let alone the truth that they even shared a common history of being colonised by Japan from 1895 to 1945 A.D. During that period of time, Okinawa and Taiwan belonged to the same political entity and were dominated under the same linguistic hegemony. At that time, many Okinawans, who are now in their seventies and eighties, went to Taiwan for education and jobs. I had numerous experiences that, although bearing questions such as dance experience in mind, the interviews would be converted into the Taiwanese experiences, especially if my informants happened to stay there. Besides my specific research interest, this aspect of information pouring had been extremely inspiring because by focusing on a common spatial referent, in this case Taiwan, it blurred the concepts of 'experience near'/'experience distant' and past/present, both for me and my informants.

If my identity as a Taiwanese was fixed and clear from the perspective of my informants, my status as a researcher was never so. For my informants, living in a popular tourist destination which has been promoted through tourists, researchers and media, outsiders are never strange. People visit there for different reasons, and the locals conceptualise and interact with them in an undifferentiated way. I clearly remembered during one of my earlier visits, in which I intended to participate in the
most important annual ritual, people were so surprised to see me still staying after the ritual finished and could not help but ask me: 'why are you still here?', a reasonable question since most of the other visitors, the relatives, returnees, tourists, and even other colleague had left. During this one-year fieldwork, I was drastically aware of the increasing popularity of this island not only as a tourist destination but also as a spot for research. I once heard an old lady teasing my landlord, who was among the most favourable informants, by saying that he talked about the same thing no matter who asked and whatever the questions were. Under this situation, as a researcher, it is the specific interest in dance that differentiated me from the others, at least in the villagers’ minds.

Another ambiguity caused by my identity as a researcher was partly due to the fact that I was married and had a dependent, which most Okinawans found difficult to reason out. As many ethnographers, especially females, have explained, their informants tend to interact with them or even evaluate their demeanour with the gender ideologies of that specific culture (Cowan 1990). The same situation happened during my fieldwork. Most of the time my informants would reflect on my situation and told me it was impossible for them even to think about keeping studying after getting married and having children, which I took as more a disagreement than flattery. Among these conflicting images of wife (especially without the husband around) and researcher, my identity as a mother somehow reduced my ‘potential danger’ as a single woman to the community. While having certain confinements, I had benefited much from this identity. Except for a few occasions such as funerals, I found that Okinawans’ attitude toward children is much more tolerant compared with my own experience both in Taiwan and Britain. It was never abnormal to see children running around and babies crying in formal social gatherings such as dance performances held in a modern theatre. More often my daughter would be given a snack and even a small amount of cash, a conventional expression of Okinawans affection to their children. Some anthropologists have pointed out how the family presence could become a constant resource of information and help (Jennings 1995:xxiv-xxv). My own experience also followed this example in two aspects. To have my daughter with me increased chances to get along with those young parents.
whom I would have never known better due to the lack of other access, and also from
whom I learned better social expectation toward young parents like them. Through
my daughter, who was attending kindergarten then, I also had the chance to observe
and participate in the local educational network and gained more clues about social
attitudes toward bodily training at a young age, which has become a precious resource
in my research.

Except for this access, as a female researcher, I have been able to take advantage of
my gender to process research on dance largely because of the fact that contemporary
Okinawan dance practitioners are dominantly females. Among the numerous
occasions of dance practices that I attended, I found my presence easily acceptable. If
I were not a woman researcher, it would be impossible to observe in some dance
practices when enthusiastic young mothers had to breast-feed their babies during the
practice intervals. In fact, it was during these dance practices that I gained most
valuable information on the discourses or discursive practices of dance, the body,
gender ideologies, the family, and almost everything in which Okinawan women were
interested. Besides these occasions, I also conducted interviews with the dance
practitioners and instructors of each village on the island. Most of them are married
women who could enjoy more freedom after their children grew up. Other than this
group, I also interviewed many old villagers because they were much more available
than those middle-aged who were always occupied. On the contrary, I had never been
able to build close relationships with those members of the political core, who were
usually males aged fifty or over, although some of them actively participated in local
performances. Regulations of avoidance between genders were still formally kept on
the island and it hence limited my access to this group of people.

Access to information is not only conditioned by my personal identities or informants’
availability: more critical was the local power relationships, the ‘micro-politics’,
among individuals as well as villages. As there are three villages on the island who
have kept a competitive spirit while being co-operative in most public affairs, it
demands a special caution to keep a balance among three groups of people. In one of
the biggest annual rituals, this competitive element is mostly performed through the
dances and dramas of individual village. These traditional dances and dramas are only learned and transmitted exclusively by members of the village. Although I was never able to be allowed to perform on this specific occasion because of my identity, I did participate in practices of three villages and performed with them on other informal occasions. Usually I would be exposed to the criticism of others’ dances or movements by one group while asked to respond or comment. It was always difficult to maintain a satisfactory balance which was essential to the whole fieldwork relationship.

At the same time, my relationship as an outsider opposed to the whole community was asymmetrical as imposed on most ethnographers, but in a very different, or even reverse, structure in terms of political and economic positioning. Despite the fact that Taiwan and Okinawa had shared a common experience of being colonised during a certain historical period, a politically hierarchical relationship had never been developed between these two regions. Under the shadow of Japanese colonialism, however, Okinawa has been able to enjoy certain privileges over Taiwan, which is still struggling to gain a clearer political identity. From the economic perspective, I had never been able to enjoy the promotion of status during fieldwork, as Levi-Strauss had when he found he suddenly became a rich man while entering Brazil in the first half of this century (Levi-Strauss 1975). On the contrary, due to the strong positioning of the Japanese economy in the global scale in the late twentieth century, even in Okinawa which has a comparatively fair living standard but benefits from considerable tourist industry, I had been kept aware of my poverty, in a quite literal sense. Substantial reciprocity hence had been achieved through other aspects. For instance, due to the increasing popularity of Okinawa as a tourist destination in Taiwan, I had served as a translator on several occasions. I had also been asked to teach Chinese by my informants although the plan was never fully practised due to their being busy. Being aware that I was always taking information from my informants by paying nothing except for small gifts, I had tried to provide everything that was required of me, which was imaginably scarce and proved my vulnerability as a research student. Exchange of knowledge did happen, however, when my informants turned their interests to me and counter-interviewed me during the
recorded interviews. Finally, before my departure, I was given a chance to talk about what I had been doing in a public lecture to the PTA (Parents Teachers Association) and the students of the local junior school. Besides referring to the relationship of Taiwan and Okinawa in terms of history of the performing arts, I talked about anthropological methodology, including Malinowski and participant-observation, and cultural comparison, a form of ‘gift-exchange of knowledge’ (Buckland 1999a:8).

In sum, my fieldwork is a personal experience based on my specific research interest, reflecting my personal identities which were less than settled, and conditioned by the historical and political—both regional and local—factors. The process, however, did highlight some practical issues, such as identities, other/self(ves), gender, access and power relationships, as well as the philosophical ones that have been discussed in anthropological discourse. Without setting myself into the old trap of subjective experience/objective knowledge, I shall argue that fieldwork is a process of boundaries shifting, boundaries between self/other, experience distant/experience near and so on. The end of this ‘open process’ is not to defend another kind of ‘scientism’ or ‘realism’ (Grau 1999:172), but, by revealing the limit of human knowledge construction, to appreciate its real value.

3.4 ‘Data Collection’—Process and Products

Although most ethnographers nowadays do not consider fieldwork as merely a way of collecting data, the aim of this methodology is nevertheless to produce texts of different forms that interweave themselves toward the final account. In this section, I shall discuss different resources that I have gained and examined in this research. Special emphases will be put on the written and filmed documents, that have not been considered essential for most anthropologists until recently (Crawford and Turton et al 1992; Ohnuki-Tierney 1990), but are highly relevant to this specific research in terms of the situation of Okinawa and the nature of dance research.
As mentioned above, I had adopted interviews as a method in my fieldwork. On most occasions, I was able to record the conversations after gaining the informants' consent. The interviews were exclusively conducted in Japanese which I had learned since 1992 on a discontinuous base and were usually semi-structured but mostly led by my informants. Although I set out to understand dance experience, it was not unusual that the conversations led to other aspects such as personal and inter-village relationships, historical and philosophical issues which had shed even more light on the epistemology of dance in this society. Although I had a list of preferred informants, in fact I had talked to those people who were willing to spend one or more afternoons with me. These interviews were transcribed into written form. Except for these interviews, more often I participated in non-interview conversations, ranging from personal greetings to chat-talk in informal social gatherings, including dance practices. The contents were selectively jotted down afterward, based on my research interest and capability of memory. Fieldnotes were constantly made while/after observing community events.

Besides these resources that are produced by traditional ethnographic procedures, I had paid extra attention to all sorts of written documents before and during the fieldwork. Until recently, ethnographical methodology has been closely related to the study of illiterate societies. The result is the impression of anthropologists' neglect of written documents in favour of oral tradition. Scholars have pointed out, however, as more and more research is undertaken in literate societies, from both epistemological as well methodological aspects, anthropologists should turn their attention, not only to written documents as a resource, but the activity of writing as a significant social production (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 165, 173). As Hammersley and Atkinson have mentioned, if writing has been recognised as a significant activity in Western society, there is no reason for the researcher to ignore its importance in other literate societies and become essentialist for oral tradition, as veiled by either naturalism or cultural relativism (1995: 175; also see Bohlman 1997: 151-152).

My interest in the written documents closely relates to my own background as an intellectual from a literate culture which largely appreciates the ability to read and
write. In terms of studying Okinawa, it is a reasonable and even indispensable consideration, as I shall argue, since traditionally, Okinawa has placed a high value on intellectuals (Lebra 1966:87), and contemporary Okinawans have also been immersed in and communicate with all sorts of written documents. Writing and reading is essential in this society, as speaking and performing is. During my research, I have been able to collect historical accounts, official reports, local newspaper and magazines, school newsletters, performance programmes, tourist leaflets and brochures, genealogical records, autobiography, accounts of tribal mythology and history, collection of folk songs and so on.

In spite of the general function of ‘furnishing information’, some sorts of written documents have shed much light on the progress of this research. They include the ‘insiders’ written accounts such as ‘mass observation’/collective autobiography (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:160). In Hammersley and Atkinson's words, ‘[i]t is a distinctive feature of social research that the ‘objects’ studied are in fact ‘subjects’, and ‘themselves produced accounts of their world’ (p.124), including written ones such as diaries, novels, autobiographies and ‘mass observation’. ‘Mass observation’ or collective autobiography is Sheridan’s idea, who has depicted the case in British tradition where ‘mass observation...rested on the ability of literate volunteers to produce "native" accounts of everyday life around them,’ (p.193) with which ‘[n]o special skills, knowledge or qualifications are required, only an enjoyment of writing and a willingness to put thoughts and experiences on paper in a discursive way’ (Sheridan 1993, quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:193).

Production of this kind of ‘mass observation’/collective autobiography is popular and ample in Okinawa. It has appeared in the forms of magazines with local-cultural appeal, auto/biographies of past life in a nostalgia fashion, private collections of folklore, personal memoirs and so on. As Hammersley and Atkinson have mentioned, although they are usually very useful resources, they beg close examination such as authorship, motivation and purpose, readership, forms of narrative and so on (p.173). Having paid attention to these questions, I did find out that analysing these written resources helps highlight cultural ‘themes, images and metaphors’ which become
sources of 'sensitising concept[s]', and suggest potential line of inquiry as well as 'foreshadowed problems' (pp.160-161). Besides the usefulness of these insiders' accounts as written resources, the implication of writing, including writing dance, as a social activity has also been a critical point in terms of my specific interest in exploring traditional dance as a system of knowledge. That is, the writing of dance cannot be separated from the convention of textualisation in Okinawan society. Because culturally codified movement systems are constituted in discursive practice. Word and action are two dynamic communicative knowledge's with which the ethnographer continually engages and which...may occur in the field simultaneously' (Buckland 1999a: 6-7).

Visual resources are another form of major documentation to which I have paid close attention in my fieldwork, partly due to the fact that mass media has become an overwhelming way of accessing contemporary life in Japan, and Okinawa cannot escape this phenomenon. Anthropologists' interest in the application of film as a research tool has only begun lately but is rapidly growing. Due to its globalisation potential and power to control information, however, more and more effort has been put into exploring its methodological as well as theoretical applications (Crawford and Turton et al. 1992; Hughes-Freeland 1999). From the methodological perspective, most scholars have concentrated on how to make ethnographical film rather than analyse films that are made by non-anthropologists and have ethnographical implications. Hughes-Freeland (1992) has presented a case in which she examined a documentary film made by Balinese people to promote their culture as well as the tourist industry. She highlights the issue of representation and suggests more caution with regard to questions such as authorship (in her case institutional rather than personal), purpose, rationale, and audience (p. 252), which are similar to those asked while examining written resources.

The analysis of visual resources is not limited to this analogy with the written one, however, as Hughes-Freeland has articulated. She tests J. Friedman’s notion that 'the constitution of cultural identity is determined by the ways in which cultures
appropriate modern technology' (1992:253) in the case of the Balinese, by showing how the topic and the form of documentary films favours the interpretive history which meets cultural appropriateness. This extension of Friedman's notion also has implications in Okinawan case. Firstly, among many films that focus on the island where I did my fieldwork, there exists a common cultural constitution which makes them somehow look similar even with different themes. They usually juxtapose images which become the representation of the island, including the healthy long-living old people with big smiles, women cleaning the street in the morning, children singing, villagers dancing and so on. I hence have browsed these films, made mainly by Japanese television companies including the national one, such as NHK (Nihon Hōsō Kyoku, the Japanese Broadcasting), as well as regional ones, to see how certain images of Okinawans are repeatedly highlighted as the objectification of 'the Other' that is different from the industrialised Japan.

Secondly, there are currently many programmes showing Okinawan dance performances. The content of the programmes, however, reveal many hierarchical notions. In a national channel such as NHK, usually only the classical genre of performances, such as No, Kabuki, Western Ballet and Classical Okinawan Kumi Udu are shown. It is only on the local channels such as Ryûkyû Broadcasting that more popular and often lively genres of Okinawan dance can be seen and have become a habitual programme watched by locals.

In spite of analysing films made as outsiders' accounts, I have also used filming as a way of documenting in my fieldwork. Considering the processual nature of most social activities, I videotaped many special occasions, such as village ceremonies, dance practices and performances as a supplementary tool, not as an aim itself, although the latter may also have its serendipity (Hughes-Freeland 1999). That is, these films mainly functioned as visual fieldnotes for further analysis. On most occasions, my informants found it not uncomfortable to be filmed, maybe because they have had plenty of experiences. Despite the fact that filming is always a framed perspective, the capability of catching the flow of social actions and using the film as a timeless text repeatedly make me consider filming as an indispensable research tool.
especially in terms of recording dance, from both the aspects of product and process. Therefore, I also use film as a part of the final presentation of this thesis to reveal the nuance of dancing in Taketomians’ social life. And it also highlights the point of objectification of dance/dancer. For instance, I had recorded my own process of learning a beginner’s piece with a master, which I was only able to do so by a formal introduction through the appropriate social network. The films that had been recorded not only function as a learning supplementary, they also objectify the dancers (the master and me) and dancing, which has made me contemplate more the question of intersubjectivity in the process of movement embodiment. Modern technology like filming certainly has played ‘the third player’ that facilitate researcher’s ‘moving through critical dialogue between self and other’ (Buckland 1999a:6).

Besides filming, notation systems have been used as another way to document movements, not specifically of dance though, by many scholars. The advantages of notation systems as recording and analytical tools have been discussed by many scholars7 despite the fact that it is a time-consuming device. This method, compared with filming, also emphasises the centrality of social actors (Farnell 1994:963), whose movements requires not only recording but also exegeses. The most positive aspect of adopting any notation system as an ethnographical methodology, as scholars have explicated (Farnell 1994; 1999), may lie in the process of transforming the physical phenomena into written scripts (Durr 1980), which largely parallels that of doing fieldwork and appreciates full inquiry of emic knowledge.

The use of a script like Labanotation enables the ethnographer to create a text of an event by working as closely as possible with the agents’ definitions. This differs from film or video, which can be said, instead, to create a record about an event (Farnell 1994:964).

This process demands that the researcher goes through stages of intersubjectivity: transforming the kinaesthetic experience of the object based on her/his kinaesthetic empathy, turning to the objective symbol representation but only making final decisions in terms of the subject interpretation of a movement. The positive aspect of this dialogical process may have experiential implications (Johnson-Jones 1999). It,
nevertheless, cannot be exempted from the issue of authorship and representation. That is, especially in terms of a traditional dance piece which is performed variously among members of a group, the decision to choose certain symbols rather than others may be dependent on personal interpretations and be purpose-oriented (Van Zile 1981-82). Despite my own short experience in the field as a notator, I found the performers seldom danced in the same manner, that is, the performances were never the same and usually performers showed personal deviance/creativity in the same piece. How exactly should the movements be written down as a definite symbol is culturally and even personally arbitrary. That is, whenever there was a question about the movements, I was suggested by the performers 'to ask the masters/instructors'.

In addition, equipped with merely superficial ability in Labanotation, I had only been able to use it as a tool on limited occasions, mostly during the practices of a piece with a speed not too fast. Besides, most of my informants see dance as a self-closing totality that to notate dance almost become a violating device in the field, it was very difficult to ask them to repeat a movement or a posture again and again only for the sake of notating it. These points are, however, less a disappointment than raising critical issues for me because it makes me reflect on a basic question: what is the Okinawans' conception of movement and dance? Do they see dance as continuous change of gestures or the flow of the body? These issues are also provoked by comparison between different scripts of notations. For instance, the notations produced by the Japanese Folk Dance Association (Suto 1988) have presented many differences from those by Labanotators (Ito 1988, Otani 1981).

Another realistic impediment in terms of notating is that since most dance practitioners I have been working with are non-professionals and are bounded by many other affairs, they usually participate in dance practices within a very tight time-economy. As a result, I have never been able to hire anyone to repeat the movements for me until I had made satisfactory records. This was only compensated by my own embodiment of a piece of traditional dance and its notations after my fieldwork. These factors did not, however, reduce the effect of the notations, in this case Labanotation, as a useful research tool in that the concepts of the system functioned as
the departure points for me to compare the ways of moving between myself and Okinawans. The other personal application is that the building up of the notation scale itself facilitates the compatible knowledge of music, which is highly relevant considering that most Okinawan presentational dances are accompanied by songs and to be acquainted with the music part is exactly how an Okinawan dancer starts. The process of notating, in this specific context, coincides with the process of learning dance culture.

To sum up, from my own experience, fieldwork is the methodology in context. This methodology demands researchers to be constantly reflexive and flexible. The same applies to dance ethnography (Buckland 1999a:6; Grau1999:167). As a way to construct human knowledge, it also needs to be designed, tested and revised, which makes it no inferior than other methodologies as I shall argue. With respect to this specific research, special attention has been paid to the balance between resources of oral tradition and written documents, as well as those produced by different technologies in the hope to achieve the final goal of intertextualisation of dance ethnography.
Notes

1 In Malinowski's account, he uses 'field research' rather than 'fieldwork' to refer the methodological aspect. Although later on 'fieldwork' became conventionally used, nowadays some ethnographers tend to reflect on the suffix of '-work' as somehow over-emphasized (Cooley 1997; Marcus & Fischer 1986; William 1999) and choose to reuse the term field research. In this chapter, however, I shall choose the term 'fieldwork' with caution regarding its connotations.

2 See 'Introduction' in Malinowski 1989[1967].

3 For a discussion of the evolution of ethnography under the paradigms of social science, see Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1-22).

4 The methodology of ethnography is not only adopted in anthropology, to which it is thought to be closely related (Clifford 1988:9). In terms of dance research, different practices can be seen among scholars with anthropological or ethnological perspectives. For further discussion of the differences, see Giurchescu 1999, p.52.

5 Among them, Williams has pioneered discussion on reflexivity and objectivity (Buckland 1999b:196).

6 I personally experienced this inequality of relationship during the process of applying for a visa, which is far from a reciprocal principle between Japanese and Taiwanese policies.

7 For reference to cross-cultural applications, see Van Zile 1999.
PART TWO

MOVING IN TAKETOMIAN COSMOLOGY:

Space, Time, and The Body
Fig. 4.1 Taketomian Map of villages and twenty-eight sites of on (the sacred groves) (Kamei 1988:32)
CHAPTER FOUR The Spatiality of Taketomi Cosmology: Religious and Social Organisations

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall concentrate on exploring Taketomian cosmology from a spatial perspective. As noticed by other researchers (Ouwenhand 1985), the marine ecology of Okinawa has brought the islanders specific conceptualisation about their own existence and the world around them. These notions are well reflected in Taketomian belief system as well as social organizations. At the beginning, I shall start from unraveling the complex belief system mixed with visiting gods from off the ocean, and the prevailing animism closely connected with sacred space. In addition, by adopting anthropologist Parkin’s notion of ‘spatiality’ (1992), I shall discuss how physical spatiality is transformed into religious and social ones, which Taketomians use as criteria to identify and orient themselves. Furthermore, by analyzing three rituals, yangai, pui, and ketsugaisai, I shall discuss how Taketomians constantly review these different leveling of spatiality through their concrete actions. At the end, focus will be put on how general principles of Taketomian spatiality becomes embedded in dancing in both conceptual and practical aspects.

4.2 The Origin of Taketomians: The Spatial Perspective

Viewed from the airplane, the islands located along the western coast of the Pacific Ocean between Japan and Taiwan look like a series of green paint scattered on the blue sea. Geographically called Ryūkyū Islands, these islands are further divided into four sub-groups: Amami, Okinawa, Miyako and Yaeyama, from the north to the south. Except for Amami Islands, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama Islands currently form a single administrative region, the Okinawa County, of Japan. The term Okinawa is transformed from uchina, the name Okinawans use to call themselves.

Among about one hundred and forty islands, thirty-six are inhabited at present. These
islands are usually rather small. The biggest one, Okinawa proper, is only 5 to 25 kilometres wide and 105 kilometres long approximately. Taketomi, an islet in Yaeyama area and the field site of the current study, is only 6.3 square kilometres big, and still not the smallest one. Taketomi is situated at 24°18'56", northern latitude, and 124°06'04", eastern longitude. It is a flat islet in a roughly round shape. An ancient song, shikitabun, calls attention to these characteristics of Taketomi Island:

Taketomi Island
The Island of Nakataki
A small Island
A small country
Although very poor
In front of the Omoto of the Great Ishigaki
Like a plate displayed in the front [of the guests]

Ishigaki is the name of the nearest island and the current capital of Yaeyama region. Omoto, located in Ishigaki, is the highest mountain in Yaeyama region. Taketomi has maintained a close relationship with Ishigaki. After regular ferries between these two islands began to run in the early 1960s, it only took ten minutes for Taketomians to reach Ishigaki which is only 7 miles away from Taketomi. Nowadays in only fifteen minutes, Taketomians can enjoy all kinds of social resources such as higher education and shopping that are not so available in Taketomi itself, by using the speedy ferries. From the view of the whole Yaeyama region, Taketomi benefited from its close distance to Ishigaki, which has made Taketomians enjoy modernized equipment, such as the connection of telephones, at a faster speed than the other more distant islands. A Taketomian myth, however, depicts the relationship between these islands in another way:

Once upon a time, the God of Ten ganashi [the god of heaven] sent two Gods, Shimin ganashi who makes the islands for men to live, and Omoto [or Umutotelasu Asoba] who makes the mountains, down to the earth. The God of Shimin landed on a small rock on the broad sea. The rock is called Akuripai: ashi. It is now in the center of the Island [Taketomi] ...... The Island made from the rock, the sand and earth nearby is Taketomi. Omoto made the mountain of Omoto and lives there. Shimin lives on the Island of Taketomi that he has made. Afterwards, Omoto thinks the Island they have made is too small. He then said to Shimin 'let’s make bigger islands together (Ueseto Tōru 1976: 6-7, my translation. Also see Kamei 1988:35).
According to this myth, the two Gods then made ‘the Great Ishigaki,’ and the other islands. Together they made eight islands. The name Yaeyama is transformed from *yaima*, which means ‘eight islands’.* This myth has raised the status of Taketomi by emphasizing its priority in a mythic way,* even though conventionally it has been disgraced for its smallness and lack of natural resources, which are deeply related to natural causes.

The whole Okinawa region is included in the semi-tropical weather zone. The weather is largely influenced by the Pacific Ocean. The Northern Pacific Ocean currents moderate the temperature into a yearly average of twenty degree Celsius. The seasonal wind also brings ample rain and forms humid weather that a rich tropical flora requires. In Taketomi, the periphery is fully covered with uncultivated dense wide-leaf trees and shrubs. Only the central portion is available for agriculture and habitation.

Except for the bigger islands such as Okinawa, Iliomote, Ishigaki and Miyako, most of the others are often somewhat infertile. In the case of Taketomi, it is a flat islet underlain with a broad extension of coral reef. Therefore both the water resource and fertile soil are scarce. Before 1975 A.D when the undersea water supply from Ishigaki Island started, the Taketomians relied heavily on rainfall and limited wells which were quite shallow. Hence before the trading of rice became possible in Yaeyama region, the main crops were those in need of less water, such as wheat, millet, beans and taro that were sometimes not adequate to feed the whole population. Economic crops such as sugarcane, tobacco and yellow beans were only imported after the twentieth century, but gradually abandoned due to the general decline of agriculture caused by the infertility of land and migration of population. On the other hand, the surrounding sea has provided plenty of dietary supplements including various seaweeds, shells and fish.

The Pacific Ocean, however, also brings natural disasters from time to time and causes huge damage to a paltry place such as Taketomi. One of these disasters is the typhoon that usually happens yearly between April and November. After the fierce winds of the typhoon, the high tide is even more destructive. The most terrible catastrophe in the
past was the high tide which happened in 1771, killing more than nine thousand people, almost one third of the whole population in Yaeyama region at that time. Although Taketomi was protected by the outskirt of the coral extension and hence not a single inhabitant on the Island was killed, the high tide brought a large amount of salt, which seriously damaged the fields and caused later famine.

Taking the overwhelming power of the sea and the tiny nature of the islands into account, the Okinawans' respectful and fearful attitude to the sea is reasonable. The sea not only dominates Okinawan ways of substance, but also decides the nature of their belief. One of the characteristics of Okinawan belief is the visiting deity called nilai kanai, who visits the islands from ‘the other side of the sea’. In Okinawan belief, nilai kanai comes from the far place called nilai which is believed to be the original place of all ancestor gods. (Hogama 1992: 29) Ni means ‘the root’, and lai is a spatial suffix in Okinawan. Therefore nilai is interpreted as ‘the country of root’.

The belief in nilai kanai is a general characteristic in Okinawan religion, although the deity is differently named in different islands. One point that has raised many debates is to where nilai, ‘the country of root’, refers. Nilai can represent the original place of ancestor gods, the fairyland where the souls of the dead go, or the origin of happiness, harvest and spiritual power (Hogama 1986: 154). Some Okinawans tend to identify this ‘country of root’ with a northern origin such as Japan (Ueseto Tôru 1976:3). Others suggest another theory that nilai is not a fixed spatial referent and it could be China in the past when Chinese ships brought goods as well as technical influences to Okinawa (Ishigaki 1976:82). No matter which kind of theory is preferable, the belief of nilai kanai stresses the supernatural world in the ‘horizontal orientation’ (Hogama 1992: 34).

As similar belief is also visible in Taketomi. In Taketomi, the deity is called nilan. On the west seashore, a rock has been erected to mark the spot where nilan has landed, and the rock is said to be the stop for the ship of nilan. (Hogama 1992:28; Ueseto Yoshinoli 1922:113) With respect to the place where nilan comes, however, the answer is not always coincident among different informants. In Taketomi, nilan is said to come from To (China), Dai Wa (Japan), or even Iliomote, another big island to the west.\(^5\) Nilan,
nevertheless, is the god who is believed to have brought the seeds of plants, an
indispensable condition for fertility, to the islanders. This attribution has made ndan
one of the most important deities for the communities reliant on agriculture as the main
way of life.

The notion of ‘visiting deities’ is a criterion to classify patterns of Okinawan religion
from a spatial perspective. The system of ‘visiting deities’ is, however, very complex in
Yaeyama. Scholars have noticed a similar belief in visiting deities in other areas of
Japan, called maribito, ‘the stranger gods’ (Beillevaire 1998:31). In Yaeyama, the
visiting deities are represented through several forms, which can be further divided as
visible and invisible deities. (Ueseto Yoshinoll 1992:99) In Taketomi, visiting deities
include miluku and angama. Miluku is a masked deity imported from a foreign culture.
It is said that in Ryūkyū Kingdom time, an official from Yaeyama was forced to land on
Vietnam because of the hurricane which happened during his trip to China. He stayed
there for months and witnessed miluku ritual and its power. He then brought the belief
back to Yaeyama.6 Miluku nowadays has become one of the most popular deities in
Yaeyama region. In most agricultural rituals related to harvest, the image of miluku,
usually in a long yellow robe wearing a smiling mask, is notable. The popularity of
miluku is also exemplified from the well-known song of miluku bushi, ‘the melody of
miluku’. Bushi is a specific song style developed in the time of Ryūkyū Kingdom. This
song was written by one official from Yaeyama, who praised the deity for its power and
blessings.

Miluku of the big country
Come to our Islands
Like a Great king
Govern our Islands
Because of the advent of Miluku Yu7
Play to your heart’s content
Dance to your great satisfaction
Because it has been allowed

Up to the present time, miluku bushi is always sung at the end of a performance,
accompanied by the audiences’ applause and voices. Sometimes the figure of miluku
shows itself on the stage to open or finish a performance, a point which will be
discussed further in chapter seven. With concrete materials, such as the mask, the song, and the figure, it is not difficult to understand why the image of miluku has somehow replaced the belief of nilan, which is quite abstract for the villagers. As a result, nilan and miluku have become mixed because of the spatial feature of 'coming from off the sea,' which they have shared in common from time to time, as in the Taketomian case.

In addition to nilai kanai and miluku, angama is another kind of visiting deity. Angama means 'the visitor who covers his face'. It is a masked deity who always comes dancing in the ritual of bon, the Buddhist festival of the dead souls, held from the thirteenth to the fifteenth day of the seventh month according to the lunar calendar. On the three nights of bon ritual, one or a couple of angama, played by the young, tour around the houses. They dress in exotic clothes and wear playful masks. In Taketomi, angama belief does not share the religious importance of nilan and similar popularity of miluku. Its character, however, has been transformed into a playful figure and its presence, a joyful performance made by younger generations in bon ritual (plate 4.1), will be discussed in the next chapter. No matter how Taketomians have rationalized nilan, miluku, and angama, the belief of visiting deities as a whole highlights the status of Taketomi as a receiver of imported influences. The advent of the visiting deities symbolizes the advent of foreign cultures (Ueseto Tōru 1982:102).

The origin of the Okinawans has also been a topic of debate among scholars. Japanese comparative linguists have traced the kindred relationship between Okinawa and ancient Japanese. These two languages are said to have split between the third and sixth centuries A.D (Hateruma 1992:40). In addition, Iha Fuyu, an indigenous Okinawan scholar and the Father of Okinawa Study, also agrees with the notion that Okinawans originated from Kyūshū of Japan, through the analysis of Okinawan mythology. In the original myth based on the oral tradition, it is said that two sibling gods, Shimerikyo and Amamikyo, were sent from heaven. These two heterosexual deities then gave birth to three children. The first son became the first king, the daughter became the first priestess and the youngest son became the first of the ordinary people. Iha mainly traces the name of the female deity, Amamikyo, to the northern island of Amami and ancient fishermen, amabe, from Kyūshū. His theory, nevertheless, extends a perspective which has been mainstream in Ryūkyū Kingdom, especially since the late nineteenth century.
The southern elements of Okinawan cultural traits, however, are not negligible. Archaeological evidence shows that Miyako and Yaeyama, together called Sakishima, ‘the forward islands’, presented different cultural facets from northern Okinawa and support the idea of influences from southern China. Japanese folklore scholar, Yanagita Kunio, has posited a famous theory of ‘the path on the sea’ and hypothesized that rice was imported from China, through Okinawa, to Japan. Especially in the southern area such as Yaeyama, the customs of tattoo, eating betel nuts and so on resemble those of Oceanic peoples. Therefore, scholars now tend to emphasize Okinawa as the recipient of multiple cultural influences as a result of its geographical location.

Taketomians, however, have a clearer northern origin according to their oral tradition. There is a legend about a Japanese soldier of the Hei family, who lost in the famous war and escaped to Okinawa in the late twelfth century. In Taketomi a clan is said to be the descendents of this soldier. What is generally believed, however, is that six chiefs migrated into Taketomi respectively about six hundred years ago. According to the oral traditions, the six chiefs all came from Okinawa and Amami regions. They brought in their clansmen and ancestor gods. They occupied different portions of the Island and founded their own villages. The six chiefs are also believed to have imported important skills such as agriculture and iron casting. The name Taketomi is transformed from one of the chiefs, Takanedono. Therefore they are deified and worshipped by their descendents until today, and can be seen as the cultural importers who have made the Island Okinawan.

4.3 The Belief of Utaki: Female Superiority and Animism

The chiefs also founded the parallel religious offices as seen in Okinawa under a general ideology of sister gods and the religious office system set up since the time of Ryūkyū Kingdom. Traditionally, females are believed to be religiously superior to males in Okinawa (Bell 1984; Lebra 1966). A man is protected by his sisters (bunarun) or aunts (bumaman), who are called onarigami, ‘sister gods’. In the past, if an
Okinawan needed to travel, he would collect part of his sister’s belongings, such as a handkerchief or some hair, to protect him from danger and for a safe journey. The priestess is an extreme example of females’ religious superiority. On the one hand, she is religiously superior because of her gender and is accessible as a tsukasa, ‘the one who gods use’. On the other hand, she can be seen as the onarigami of a group of people, such as a clan, a village, or even the whole country. Nevertheless, the inheritance of tsukasa still needs to follow a set of regulations and has specific modes of identification, which will be further discussed in chapter six.

From a physically spatial perspective, the religious superiority of females is reflected in one important system of Okinawan religion, utaki, which means ‘the sacred grove’. According to Lebra,

> [t]here is a plethora of spirit entities in the Okinawan universe: everything, in fact, has spirit. The major spirits are the kami [the gods]. Although they are discrete entities—animistic spirits—there is a vagueness regarding their specific identification and function. Thus, for example, there are kami called ‘bellows kami’ and ‘privy kami,’ but these are not titles or proper nouns in our sense; rather, the belief is that a spirit called kami dwells in the bellows or privy. Despite a certain consensus that the kami may once have been human beings, they are largely depersonalized ..., with little representation in myth or in art. (Lebra 1966:203)

Utaki, or on as it is called in Taketomi, is the shrine where the kami is worshipped and notified (plate 4.2). As Lebra has explained, there is no personified figure representing the kami in Okinawa, as seen in Hinduism or Taoism. In the past, most utaki did not even have an eminent building to mark its location. Nevertheless, there is usually a structural division of space regarding the cosmology of on. The outer part, the piden, is only visualized by one or several rocks which represent the spiritual entities. This part is an open space for all worshippers to gather and practise rituals. Ibe, the inner part of an on and surrounded by layered rocks, however, is treated as an extremely sacred space by Okinawans. Only the females, or on some occasions only the priestesses and her female assistant, can enter this space with cautious demeanors. In the centre of ibe there is a rock or a tree, which represents the entity/entities of the kami. Usually there are several incense stoves in the ibe, which includes those representing the immediate
predecessor(s) of current tsukasa. The natural materials, such as rocks and trees, in the
ibe are all considered sacred and not allowed to be changed artificially. Nowadays the
outlook of on has been greatly changed in Okinawa. Influenced by Japanese Shintoism,
most on now have a tori'ī (the gate) to mark its entrance. Because of modern
construction and urbanization in bigger cities such as Naha and Ishigaki, it is not
unusual to see an on surrounded by apartments. Sometimes the piden is transformed
into a playground with children's equipment. In Taketomi, the regulation of prohibition
is still strictly followed, although the outlook of some on has tended to be changed by
continuous re-construction.

There are in total twenty-eight on in Taketomi. Twelve of them have buildings, onya
‘the house of on’. Most on are taken care of by a group of specialists, including one or
several tsukasa, a male representative who inherits the role through a certain lineal rule,
several assistants and so on. In Taketomi, it is from the six mutuya, ‘the house of
origin,’ that the tsukasa have been chosen until today. The relationship between the six
legendary chiefs and the on they built has become clearer after the archaeological
excavation of some sites of earlier villages which have been abandoned. At the back of
current Kumāra and Hanakku on, which are located in the eastern part of the Island,
there are relics of walls of coral stone. According to scholars' analyses, the spatial
allocation is that the on is in the most inner centre. The mutuya is in front of the on and
then groups of houses is the outmost part. From a defensive point of view, the houses
are the outmost part seen from the sea and can be interpreted as protecting the mutuya,
which is backed up by its on. It is a religious as well as political consideration taking
into account the rivalry relationships among chiefs in early Yaeyama history
(Nakamori 1999).

The six groups themselves were also in a state of constant rivalry due to the scarcity of
resources such as water and land. At the end, they were merged into two large groups,
Hazama and Naji. The former occupies the northern part of the Island and the latter the
southern. About twenty years ago the Hazama village was further divided into two parts:
Ainota and Innota, to effect a balance of inter-village population. Other earlier villages
have long been abandoned during the long course of history, possibly because of
exhaustion of the wells. The above mutuya-on structure also became deconstructed,
since the traditional political-religious structure was aborted after the end of Ryūkyū Kingdom period. Nowadays, most Taketomian public affairs are operated on the three-village base. Every two years, Taketomians elect an Island leader called kominkancho, 'the chief of kominkan (citizen centre)’. In addition to the Island leader, the other two villages need to elect their village representatives, shūji, respectively. Together they form a triangular organization to process various public affairs.

Even today Taketomians are still divided into six groups of shishi, ‘children of the clan,’ immediately after birth. The principle by which to decide which clan one belongs to is mainly bilateral, but with deviations under certain situations. For instance, children usually automatically become the shishi of their parents’ on. If the parents belong to different on, the sons will attend the father’s on, and the daughters will follow their mother. Sometimes, except for the oldest daughter the other children inherit their father’s place. Other reasons, such as sickness, disaster etc, however, sometimes change the rule of belonging in the family (Yamashita 1992:187).

In addition to the above muyama, ‘the six mountains’ where the ancestor gods are worshipped, there are other kinds of on. For instance, with regard to the whole village there is the on to worship Shimin, the god who has created Taketomi as described previously. Yumuchi on is the place where the god of fire for the whole Island is worshipped, and it is an important location related to agricultural rituals. Nishito on is another one where Nishito, a heroic figure who made a great contribution to the Ryūkyū Kingdom, is buried and worshipped. Huina is the on built by Nishito to worship the god he had invited back from Shuri, the capital of Ryūkyū Kingdom. In addition, there is a temple built for miluku, the visiting deity as mentioned above. In the miluku temple, miluku’s mask and its objects such as the fan are kept. Muyama represent religious sub-groups between villages and family. Below muyama there are on of family or even personal levels. The year of birth decides the on one should serve, based on the principle of the Chinese zodiac system of twelve animals and their related symbolic directions. Some on have been served because they are specifically related to a certain family, such as having saved one family member’s life in the past. Every Taketomian has at least six on: two personal on according to his year of birth, one or several family on, one clan on (muyama) and one related to his special attribution (such as his
occupation) and so on. Some have seven or more.

This hierarchy of religious offices and the ritual practices which are held accordingly, from a national to personal level, are eminent features in Okinawan religion (Lebra 1966). The kami, ‘gods’, of the on are somehow functionalised despite Lebra’s statements. Every kami has a specific function, such as kami of protecting travellers, kami of agriculture, kami of sea, kami of fire, kami of illness escorting, kami of prosperity, kami of wisdom etc. Even the muyama, the six ancestor gods are bestowed with specific functions with respect to their specific characters. Together the on constitute a universe in which Taketomians are immersed and molded:

Those Taketomians who had migrated to Tokyo became Tokyolans and not like Taketomians anymore. Here, you have the on surrounding you and the gods protect you. If you live here, you are surrounded by the on and the Gods. Then you become Taketomians.

The locations of on are not arbitrarily decided (fig. 4.1). They largely magnify the notion of ‘sacred space’. Among the on in Taketomi, mutuya relates with the places of the original villages. Some on have legendary stories, which emphasize the happening at that specific spot. For instance, Nishito’s son was carried away by a hurricane, so Nishito’s wife prayed on her way to the seashore for her son’s safety everyday after his loss. He was finally reported to be safely alive in another island. The spot upon which she prayed then became the on of protecting the travellers. On ‘saves’ sacred experiences and collective memories of the Island. For Taketomians, then, on become their orientation and signify the nature of each event and the characters of each person, which are constantly changing under different contexts. For instance, the next day after Uchiyo won in the election of local senator, he prepared liquor and food, and toured thirteen on to give thanks to the kami with his wife. On a more practical level, the on also orients Taketomians’ actions in their daily lives. Osa, a male villager, always thanked the gods for giving daily food before taking meals. The way he did this is to turn to the direction of the nearest on, Nishito on, raise the drink awamori (a kind of Okinawan alcohol), and murmur the words of prayer.

In addition to on, Taketomians are in fact living in a universe surrounded by all kinds of
spirits. The animistic nature of Okinawan religion is reflected in the general ritualistic practice of avoidance. There is no distinction between good and bad spirits. There is only right or wrong behaviour regarding spirits’ reactions. For instance, even the gods can become the source of disaster if it is thought that they have been offended. Yozu has just recovered from a serious illness. He gave his thanks to the gods on the occasion of the third anniversary of the reconstruction of Mishiashi and Oyatomari on, of which he is a shishi. Some villagers guessed the reason of his illness to be that ‘he did not serve his on right’. When asked to what extent will the gods punish a man, a villager answered, ‘it is very scary. It could be until you die!’

In addition to kami, almost every natural material is thought to be the carrier of spirits in Okinawa. Together they form a universe with which Okinawans need to interact carefully in everyday life. By following correct acts Okinawans can protect themselves from evil and receive benefits. For instance, a remarkable characteristic is that there are various rocks, ishikanto, located on the point of a T-shape intersection of streets to avoid evil. This device was imported from southern China, but has been much more strictly followed in Okinawa until today. Similar is the custom of Mayokeshishi, ‘the evil-escorting lion’, which is usually put on the roofs to protect the houses. In addition, sickness and death are thought to be symptoms of the evil demeanour of spirits. To find out what has caused the disaster, a yuta, ‘the shaman,’ is usually consulted. Unlike the tsukasa who are mainly the medium to gods, yuta is able to make contact with various spirits. Most yuta are female. There is no yuta currently in Taketomi, but if there is the need to consult a yuta, a Taketomian will go for those famous ones, as far as to Naha.

Neya’s story well depicts how a Taketomian interacts with the supernatural world. She is a tiny but long-living lady. ‘It is because of the grace (megumi) of gods that I can live until now. A tiny body such as mine. It is completely the gods’ blessings.’ Neya sometimes sits in the front of her house and watches the passengers walking by her house. She always welcomes everyone who visits her house, without clearly understanding the intention of the latter due to her poor sensibilities of her age. ‘Until now I am still living to take care of the kamisama.’ Neya’s house is one of the mutuya. Her ancestor, Nehara Kanedono, is the most important founder among the chiefs.
About sixty years ago, there was a serious famine caused by insects in Taketomi. For several years continuously, there was no harvest at all. At the same time, Neya herself also experienced a serious of disasters. She was pregnant several times, but all aborted. She turned to a yuta in Ishigaki for help. ‘She knew everything before I told her.’ On seeing Neya, the yuta said ‘Come along, you kid of Gods.’ Neya had been assigned as a tsukasa since she was eight years old, but she has not inherited the post yet.

The yuta then told her about the reasons for her abortions and the famine of the Island. She said that her ancestor, the founder of Hazama village and Uria on, Nehara Kanedono who had been killed and buried in Yonaguni Island, wanted to return to Taketomi. He had tried several ways to convey his intention, such as causing the pine trees along the way to his on to wither. But nobody had paid any attention. That was the reason why Neya lost her children continuously. She was warned that if nothing was done, she would not be able to keep the one that she was conceiving either. ‘Nobody in Taketomi knew this thing [Nehara Kanedono’s intention] at that time.’ When Neya told the tsukasa and others about this message, the tsukasa of Uria on was not willing to do anything because of a feeling of terror. ‘The tsukasa died the next day, very suddenly.’ Then the Islanders knew that she had been punished by Nehara Kanedono’s spirit and began to make serious plan to go to Yonaguni Island. This was a difficult task, since Yonaguni is an isolated island at the most western tip of Yaeyama. Its dialect is believed to be the most difficult. The ocean that needed to be across to reach there is extremely dangerous. They then asked a Taketomian who had worked there to investigate, secretly, the site where Nehara Kanedono’s grave was.

Different versions of legends depict Nehara Kanedono’s trip to Yonaguni and his mythic death. It is said that Nehara conquered Yonaguni, and then lived there with a local woman. The people in Yonaguni wanted to kill him but did not have proper means, because Nehara Kanedono was an iron man, or covered fully by iron except for the centre of his head. People in Yonaguni then asked Nehara’s female companion to investigate how to kill him effectively. She found out his weak point and told the locals. One night, when Nehara Kanedono was fast asleep, they came and stabbed a knife into his head. He did not pass away immediately. He rose up and roared, and then ran out of his house holding his iron rod. Those who passed him on the way died immediately. He
ran up to a hill and kept standing for several days. Nobody dared to approach him. A week later, he finally lay down and died. When he did so, it sounded like the earthquake, and a great number of Yonaguni inhabitants died from hearing the sound. ‘That is his revenge.’

When the new tsukasa of Uria on (Neya’s immediate predecessor) inherited, all six priestesses and Taketomian villagers began to worship day and night. ‘The incense never stopped burning during that period.’ Finally the Taketomians decided to leave for Yonaguni before they knew where for certain to go. In the summer of 1941, Neya’s mother and husband, the village heads, and the newly inherited tsukasa of Uria on, five in total, took a ship to Yonaguni to welcome Nehara Kanedono back. The story and the site where Nehara had been buried in Yonaguni became an enigma about which no general Yonaguni people had any idea. They then consulted a powerful yuta in Yonaguni. She described a place with an old grave and a big incense stove but no worshippers, which coincided with the result of the secret investigation. On arriving at the possible spot, the tsukasa consulted kami to see if this was the right place. Five dragonflies flew over and lowered their heads as if bowing. The tsukasa also sensed unusual light from the incense. They then began to dig but could not find any remains due to the twining roots of trees. The tsukasa finally gained the permission of Nehara Kanedono to bring only the ash in the incense stove and the earth on the grave back to Taketomi.

It was sunny when Nehara Kanedono’s spirit was brought back to Taketomi. All the priestesses and villagers gathered at the port and held a ritual of ‘welcoming home’. They also worshipped at Uria on to report to the mitama, ‘the spirits’, for a peaceful reuniting with Nehara Kanedono. The tsukasa also reported the peaceful returning of Nehara Kanedono to other muyama, Mainu on, nilan rock, and Huina on. Finally Neya was able to give birth to her youngest child, a son after four daughters. Six years later, some final words from the yuta in Ishigaki conveyed that Nehara Kanedono had a last will: he wanted to give thanks to the shrines in Yonaguni, to the wells of the village where he used to live, and to the sea god who had made the trip to Yonaguni peaceful.

Now the incense stove of Nehara Kanedono is still in Neya’s house, located at the altar
of the gods. As in most Okinawan regions, traditional houses in Taketomi can be divided into several spaces that both the inhabitant and the spirits share: ‘in almost every corner of the building one encounters the deity or spirit; the house is a dwelling place for the supernatural as well as for humans’ (Ota 1987:92).

Ota describes the houses that he has seen in Kuroshima, Yaeyama:

[t]he exterior of every traditional house on the island looks almost exactly the same. The roof is covered with ‘red tiles’ ..., which had almost completely replaced the thatched roof by the time I began my fieldwork [October 1982]. The entrance is always facing south, and the entire houseyard is surrounded by coral stone walls. A few houses have a ‘stone wall’ (maegushiku) directly in front of their entrance...... (Ota 1987:93)

In Taketomi, most houses have walls surrounding them. ‘They are smaller castles’ (Mabuchi 1974: 427-428). The walls are simply piled with coral stones, and they are the first symbolic defense from evil spirits. Most houses are constructed higher than the ground to adapt to the wet seasons. The maegushiku is also often seen, but sometimes it is replaced by other natural materials, such as trees. Facing south is a preferable, but not absolute, choice of house direction in Taketomi. The only thatched house in Taketomi is not occupied and has become a spot for tourists to take photographs.

The inner structure of the main house building can be roughly divided into two parts. The back part is the private space for the family. It is usually divided into several rooms for the family members. The front part is further divided into three portions. In a house that is facing south, the most eastern part is the first parlour, ichibanza, where the divine altars are located. In the divine altar there are usually several incense stoves representing the family and personal gods. Ichibanza is also the space for the most important guests. Usually, there are various prizes hung on the wall to show the house owners’ merits. Nibanza, the second parlour which is at the centre of the front of the house, is located with the altar to worship the dead in the family. According to Okinawan custom, it is only after the ritual of thirty-three-years that a dead member of the family can be removed from the family altar (by removing and burning the wooden blade representing her/him) and become a member of the ancestor gods. Religiously and socially, nibanza is hierarchically lower than ichibanza and the former space has
less formality. *Sanbanza* is the least formal space. Usually it is only for informal gatherings, casual guests and relatives.

In the past, *tora*, the kitchen or and storage room was located in another smaller cabin next to the main house, with two or three hearths. Nowadays most houses have kitchens adjacent to *sanbanza*, to facilitate the preparation and offering of foods. It is noteworthy that the family altar for the fire god of the hearth, *hinukan*, represented by three small conically shaped rocks, is located at its corner. *Hinukan* is always daily served by the eldest woman in the family, with water or tea. During the changing period of years, *hinukan* takes days off to go to heaven, from which it has been sent. It reports the situation of the family it is in charge of when it is back in heaven. Therefore, Taketomian women used to bribe *hinukan* before it leaves for heaven by serving specific food. All these customs are extremely reminiscent of those found in southern China including Taiwan. (Kubo 1971:381-470)

If the rituals are held in the houses, the rule of space allocation is strictly followed. The most honorable guests are invited into *ichibanza*. Criteria such as gender and age are also considered. The younger male guests seldom occupy *ichibanza*, and female guests usually retreat automatically even further backward. In the kitchen, only the female family members and relatives are busy preparing all sorts of stuff, most probably food and drink. When there is a need for the participants to pay tribute to the altars, it is always first to the altar of gods in *ichibanza*, and then to the altar of the dead in *nibanza*.

In funerals, the application of space is similar, but with a slight difference. The mortuary rites are thought to be taboo and unclean. Therefore both the altars are covered. In some cases, the funeral can be only held in *nibanza* (Mabuchi 1974:428), even though, from the spatial perspective, Taketomians do not treat the world of the dead as an abstained forum. Most of the purifying practices, with respect to death, are based on Taoism or Buddhism ideology influenced by Chinese and Japanese customs respectively. There is no concept such as ‘ghosts’ in Okinawa. As a remarkable phenomenon in Okinawa, the graves are usually located in normal living spaces, such as by the streets or between buildings. In Taketomi, although the graves are located at the outskirt of the villages, the villagers do not see them as a resource of terror. On the
contrary, being surrounded by the graves is also thought to be 'protected by kamisama.'

Traditionally, most houses in Taketomi have their own ‘name of the house’. The inheritance of the house and its name is patrilineal. If there are several sons in a family, the eldest son inherits the house and its house name. It becomes the honke, ‘original house’. His younger brothers who split from honke built their own ‘branch houses’, bunke. In the past, bunke was conventionally near honke. The house name of bunke is related to honke but usually with a spatial prefix such as up-, down-, eastern, and so on. Now the situation has been largely changed by increasing immigration. An Islander said, ‘if a Taketomian has several sons, the first son usually stays with the parents, the second one goes to Ishigaki, the third one goes to Okinawa, and the youngest one goes to Tokyo.’

Moreover, traditional perceptions of social space have been largely changed in contemporary Taketomian society. Improvement of transportation is the most critical factor in the reformation of Taketomians’ perception of the world beyond the Island. Osa has witnessed advancement of transportation tools in his long course of life: ‘I took a ship to Tokyo when I was young, and it took me forty-four days to reach. Now from Tokyo you can arrive in Yaeyama in only four hours!’ The connection by air, started in the late 1980s, has re-constructed Taketomians’ notion of space at large. The field of social life has been enlarged and immigration has become more and more frequent. It has a direct impact on the social organization of Taketomi as the above comment has shown. This comment also reveals a contemporary perspective on orientation which most Taketomians and even Okinawans share. As early as the seventeenth century since when the Ryūkyū Kingdom started to pay tribute to the Japanese shogun, Okinawans have used the term noboli, ‘climbing upward’ to refer to their actions of going north. A piece of classical dance is named noboli kutuchi, in which the song depicts the scene of an official’s trip to Tokyo. Noboli and its opposite term sagali, ‘downward’ are then generalized as a spatial orientation. For instance, in Taketomi a dance bearing the same melody and name is also performed, but is interpreted as setting out from the Misashi on of Taketomi to Ryūkyū Kingdom.

The terms of noboli and sagali suggest the spatial relationship, geographically and
politically, which promotes the north, represented by Tokyo, as the centre. This notion is complemented by the name that has long been bestowed to Yaeyama as sakishima, ‘the forward islands’. Contrary to the notion of noboli and sagali is a set of newly invented terms. Among them ‘u-turn’ has been used to describe those who leave the home country and return. This term is popular in Japan, and it suggests a trend of reflection after dense immigration to cities from countryside due to industrialization and economic developments in the past decades. Currently, the ‘u-turn’ phenomenon is also eminent in Okinawa, which has suffered from population export and decrease. It reveals a starting point which centres on the original place of a person, instead of the political or economic capitals. Furthermore, ‘u-turn’ represents a cyclical view of immigration, rather than the hierarchical one endorsed by noboli:sagali.

In sum, the analyses of space allocation in Okinawan symbolism as an expression of cosmology have been much discussed (Mabuchi 1974, 1980; Newell 1980). Taking Mabuchi’s theory as an example, he uncovered an original myth in Miyako area in which the male is given the eastern field and the female the western one. After collecting the data from other Okinawan regions, he suggests, by ‘apposition’ and ‘combination’ among different aspects of social experiences, correspondent systems of duality between male-female, east-west, north-south, life-death, up-down and so on can be found in Okinawans’ cosmology. (Mabuchi 1974) Mabuchi’s perspective reflects the fermentation of structuralism. As also admitted by Mabuchi himself, the variations across contexts and villages challenge the schemes from time to time. To deal with the variations under different contexts, he posits a notion of ‘shifting dualism,’ which suggests the sets of oppositions are combined in various, but necessarily consistent, ways: “the sea may be combined either with the upper or with the lower according to the situation, while leading to a transposition of its partner, the land.” (See Ota 1987:30) These schemes, however, are criticized as problematic, since these oppositions are more the construction of scholars rather than articulated by the people under study.

The southern Ryukyus have never been known for their mythical tradition: Allen Smith... reported the paucity of myths in the village of Kabira on Ishigaki island. Lebra... concludes that Okinawan religion in general lacks metaphysical speculation on the “the origin of the universe or cosmos.” For Kuroshima culture such tradition, although not totally absent, is nonetheless weak... The culture is
simply not predisposed to symbolic elaboration of its cosmology and myth; therefore, to reconstruct a cosmology of the culture using features of the house as evidence is, if not impossible, at least very difficult without falling into the trap of accepting simple binary oppositions, which are too general to be meaningful, as the basic characteristics of the cosmology of the island culture. (Ota 1987:114)

Ota’s opposition to the generalization of Okinawans cosmology may be reasonable, but to say Okinawans do not tend to elaborate their cosmology because of the lack of verbal articulation, such as myth and religious dogma, is a conclusion too fast made and biased. In the following sections, I shall present several rituals in which spatial characteristics of Taketomian cosmology can be magnified. Choosing ‘spatiality’ as a main property of ritual practices and as the index of orientations of Taketomians social life, I follow anthropologist Parkin’s notion of ‘the formulaic spatiality,’ which suggests ‘the capacity to create and act through idioms of passage, movement, including change, journey, axis, concentricism, and up-and-down directions’. (Parkin 1992:18)

Parkin argues that,

......however much participants in a ritual may dispute and debate the significance, meaning, and propriety of ritual behaviour, using words to great effect in doing so, they can only demonstrate the saliency, success, and effectiveness of what they have to say through performative practice, and issues of spatial orientation and position are the only means at their disposal, being fundamentally constitutive of the ritual itself. (Parkin 1992:22)

In Parkin’s opinion, spatial usage is not only literal but also metaphorical. ‘It connotes social and cosmological as well as physical direction’ (1922:22). Parkin’s theory provides a framework to examine the spatial properties of Taketomian rituals, which are closely related with practices in other cultural facets, such as dance. Therefore, it is necessary to present those rituals in detail to see how Taketomians ‘move’. Three rituals are chosen: yungai, pui, and ketsugansai. They all signify the basic characteristics of Taketomian formulaic spatiality.

4.4 Yungai: Welcoming the Gods
The ritual of yungai is the most important occasion to worship the belief of nilan and/or miluku in Taketomi. Every year on the eighth day of the eighth month according to the lunar calendar, the ritual of yungai is started in front of the nilan rock located on the west shore. Yungai means ‘welcoming the yu (the harvest year)’. This ritual foreshows the most important annual ritual, tanadui, in Taketomi, which will be held forty-nine days later. (Chapter Eight will focus on tanadui.) It is, however, an independent event which carries much symbolic significance, especially seen from a cosmological perspective. In the early morning of this day, the tsukasa and the leaders of three villages arrive at the beach on the west seashore and gather in front of the nilan rock. The tsukasa wear their linen robes made specifically for worshipping. The other people wear traditional clothes, which they do not wear for their ordinary lives. All the tsukasa sit in the front row and the others in the back. In front of the nilan rock, a stove full of newly collected clean white sand is set and inserted with Okinawan incense. Facing the sea, the island Iliomote is clearly visible on sunny days. The priestesses light up the incense and offer rice, salt, and wine respectively. The tsukasa then pray:

The lord who advents the white beach, beautiful beach
Advent from the nilasukukanilasuku
From the islands of root, To and Dai Wa
Advents nilai kanai
Bring in the seeds
Bring in the harvest

The atmosphere is solemn and quiet. No other participants are allowed to attend. To invite and welcome nilan, together they sing the song of dunchiama, accompanied by a gong and a hand drum.

Coming from so far away, the ship
The ship of God
From big ocean, the ship
What does it bring, the ship
It brings the harvest of miluku
It brings the harvest of God
Arriving at Taketomi

Taketomians believe that the deity arrives while the incenses are burning. While singing the song, the participants all practise the movement of ‘welcoming hands’, to
welcome ‘the unseen ship of nilan’. They all kneel on the beach and stare far off at the front. With their palms upward and the elbows slightly bent, they move both their lower arms from the middle level toward the high level near their shoulders. They then lower their arms back with the palms still facing up. They keep repeating the hand movements until the song is finished. Similar pattern of movements can be seen in other cultures with respect to inviting gods. For instance, in the Paiwan ethnic group of Taiwan, the priestess practises a similar pattern of hand movements as ‘the welcoming hands’ to invite their ancestor god.

As mentioned previously, belief in nilan is mixed with, or objectified by the deity of miluku in Taketomi. Tsukasa’s prayers and words in dunchiama explicate this phenomenon. As also presented in the tsukasa’s prayer, Taketomians do not clarify the spatial referent of nilai. On the contrary, the prayer reveals a ‘syncretic’ view regarding where nilai could be, including both China and Japan. Compared with this ambiguity of symbolic directions, the movements of ‘welcoming hands’ present a visually objectified and fixed directionality. It is a practice to mark the distinction between Taketomians and ‘the god’: a clear ‘self’ versus an ambiguous ‘other,’ both of which are moving.

After the tsukasa and village leaders leave nilan rock, they follow the specific kamisuji, ‘the divine route’ to visit the other spot, the Kusukuba on. This place is located on a hill and believed to be the spot where the seeds were distributed to the islands of Yaeyama by two deities. Before climbing up the on, each of the tsukasa keeps a leaf in their mouth, in order not to have their breath heard by gods, a demeanour reflecting the sacredness of the on. Together they worship the gods by praying, incense burning and food/drink offerings. After this sacred visit, the processing representatives parade into the villages, the forum of the human. Coming from the western seashore, the procession hence moves eastward to where the villages are situated. This travelling, a rough west-east orientation is noted by scholars (Ishigaki 1976; Beillevaire 1998). In Tarama, an island of Miyako, Beillevaire recorded a similar ritual in which there is a procession ‘leading village representatives from west to east, and involving the participation of every ward and shire.’ Beillevaire concludes that, in Tarama, ‘the west side acts on behalf of all the villagers as a receiver or purveyor of the fertility and prosperity
annually bestowed by the deities from the outer world (usually the ‘far-away land’ to
the east’). Therefore the east-west axis is of the utmost importance for the annual
renewal of fertility’ (Beillevaire 1998:38).

In Taketomi, however, the location of the spot where nilan is thought to land is not only
an ideological preference. It is possibly a consideration seen from the geographical
perspective. The sea current on the eastern shore of Taketomi is very swift and strong.
On the west shore, it is comparatively steady and the slope of the coral reef is shallower
and suitable to port small boats. Therefore, traditionally Taketomians have used the
western beach to build their port. It was not until 1970 that the currently used east port,
which is exactly in the north-eastern corner of the Island, has replaced the western one
for bigger ferries. In addition, the other islands of Yaeyama are easily visible from the
west shore. Hence there is even a saying that the nilan comes from Iliomote. On the
contrary, viewed from the east shore, there is nothing to be seen except for the sea.

The east-west notion mainly originates from the course of the sun in Taketomi.
According to local dialect, ai means where the sun comes up. Ili, ‘enter,’ is the direction
where the sun enters the sea. The Hazama village is further divided into Ainota and
Innota. The former means houses of the east, the latter houses of the west. The
superiority of the east concluded by Bellevaire, Mabuchi, and Ouwenhand in their
respective research focusing on the house structures is not clear in Taketomi.
Furthermore, in the Taketomians’ notion, the west is not inferior to the east. For
instance, an inhabitant of Innota once emphasized that in not only means ‘entering,’ but
also means ‘good’. The east-west orientation, or more exactly, ai-ili orientation, is a
complementary and cyclical notion based on natural observance.

On the other hand, the south-north notion is not as dominant as the east-west one in
Taketomi. Ouwenhand has also observed similar situation in Hateruma, another island
in Yaeyama region (1985). For example, the village in the southern part is traditionally
called Naji, ‘the center of the island’ (Tamashilo n.d.:1). It was only until recently that
Naji was also referred to as the southern village. Nowadays the three villages have
formed a social structure according to which most public affairs operate. Although the
three villages have kept a balanced relationship, there is a latent notion which puts Naji
in a lesser position. If a woman from Hazama marries a man of Naji, ‘she will not develop’. The reason for this idea is never clarified by Taketomians.

Seen from the point of view of economic geography, however, this notion reflects the different adaptation these three villages have developed during the process of modernization and social change. The key to this situation is tourism. Traditionally, the ports have been located in the northern part of Taketomi. This fact made Hazama group more accessible to resources from out of Taketomi, including trading products and tourists. Nowadays, tourism has become the main economic input in Taketomi. There are twelve minshuku (guest house) in Taketomi, and all of them are located in Hazama. Most tourist attractions are centred there, too. Due to the lack of job opportunities, Naji villagers have been facing serious problems of emigration.

Even so, the duality of the social structure—Hazama vs. Naji—is apparent and magnifies itself in the procession of various rituals, including the later part of yungai ritual. After the worship in Kusukuba on, the tsukasa and village leaders enter into the villages, first Naji, then Hazama. To welcome this group who symbolically bring blessings from god, the villagers practise a series of movements called gali, which are as typical as can be seen whenever the ritual processes from on to villages, from the space of gods to that of humans. On hearing the sound of gong and drum, the villagers of Naji, who have been waiting, begin to practise hand movements of ‘welcoming hands,’ which are similar to those practised by the priestesses in front of ndan rock. On this occasion, however, both the representatives and the villagers have their palms facing down.

After these two groups of people, that is, the procession of representatives and the villagers, confront each other, they will practise the movement pattern of gali. Having separated themselves into two groups, they face each other as the gong and the drum start to play. They then approach each other in a spiritual way. They shout ‘hiya, hiya,’ and raise their hands high. Their wrists twist and turn in a specific way. On closely approaching each other, both groups retreat in a slightly slower hopping fashion. The same sequence (fig. 4.2) is repeated several times until the gong and the drum speed up to reach the final climax and finish the movements. The atmosphere is spiritual, relaxed.
and inspiring.

![Figure 4.2 Floor patterns of Gali (from the left to the right frame)]

After gali finishes, the villagers bow to the representatives and the latter formally enter the village. The same sequence happens when the representative procession enters Hazama village. After processing into Hazama village, the villagers gather in front of Nishito on, a symbol of unity and consolidation in Taketomian opinion, and practise gali again. Then the ritual yungai is finished. Therefore, in yungai, the practice of gali marks the point when two groups of people confront each other, such as between the tsukasa and the villagers. It also marks the final gathering of the whole villages in a given event, as a villager describes in the following way:

> When we do gali, it is like the sea wave. The people come forward as the way the wave approaches the seashore. We then retreat as the wave retreat. At the end of gali, it is not right to split apart. We should stay closely in the centre, not depart.

This mode of procession—composed of the representatives entering the Naji→gali (tsukasa v.s. villagers of Naji)→entering Hazama→gali (tsukasa v.s. villagers of Hazama)→ and final gali in front of Nishito on—is a typical procession in many rituals. In addition, gali is a preferable practice in many other social occasions. The principle of group division, between villages, male and female, young and old, may vary depending on the occasion.

To sum up, the spatial characteristics of ritual practices in yungai reveal important notions in Taketomians’ cosmology. From the point of view of an island, a sea-orienting merit is apparent, and can be best represented by the practices of ‘welcoming hands’ in the ritual of yungai. As debated previously, neither east nor west
is superior to the other, as shown in the concepts of local dialect. This point can be further clarified considering the spatial characteristics of local movement patterns such as gali. In gali, there is not a preferable indexical spatial preference regarding systems of directionality. The movement series starts once the people are divided into two facing groups no matter according to which principle of division is in operation. At the beginning the ritual practices in yungai seemingly reveal a basic duality between gods and humans, which is visualized by the concrete movements of welcoming hands. This dual opposition, objectified by the opposition of directions, is still manifested in gali of separation, but finally broken down in gali of consolidation.

4.5 Moving in the Taketomian Cosmos: Pui and Ketsugansai

To travel around the on, in fact, is another essential formulaic spatiality in most Taketomian rituals. As follows is the ritual of pui, ‘thanks for harvest,’ in which the on is the centre of the whole ritual. In Taketomi, pui lasts two days. It is held from the day of misunoe in the sixth month according to the lunar calendar. The first day is called on pui. The second day is called tunui pui. The event of on pui is centred on muyama, participated by the shishi in their own on respectively. The other events are practised by tsukasa, village heads and elders. Representing the whole villagers, they tour around on of village level\(^\text{17}\) to thank the gods for the passing harvest. To achieve this, they need to travel among specific on, while singing the song of pui, in which the last verse refers specifically the on that will be visited.

On the first afternoon of pui, the tsukasa and villagers, probably joined by the shishi from Ishigaki, attend their own on of muyama. They thank the gods for the harvest of the passing year. The tsukasa and the assistant females enter the ibe. They light the incense, sit around the ubu and murmur the words of thanksgiving, which are not accessible to other villagers, especially the males. The tsukasa then practises ninety-nine-bows—using the hands to tap on the ground thirty-three times and repeat the same movements three times in total. While doing this movement, the tsukasa is kneeling and leans her upper body forward. A tsukasa further explains this movement.
In the past, we used to bow to the gods thirty-three times, by sitting and standing praying continuously. It is called thirty-three-bow. Then the Japanese committed us to abort the custom of bowing. We then use our hands, instead of our heads, to bow to our gods. So now we tap on the ground thirty-three times.

The tsukasa usually practise thirty-three-bow on other ritualistic occasions. In pui the practice is triplicated because of the gratitude to the ancestor gods, the gods of agriculture and the gods of fire. The tsukasa then offers rice, soup made of seaweed and vegetables and a kind of specially made white wine (kamiminshi). Meanwhile, the males sit out of the ibe and follow the instructions from inside the ibe quietly. At last, they together practise nilei, composed of a bow, two claps and a bow, which is a Japanese custom of worshipping.

The tsukasa then raises the wine, rice and the prepared foods as offering to the gods and give them to the participants to share, the female assistants in the ibe first, and then the others outside in turn. After finishing the practices inside the ibe, the tsukasa goes out and kneels in front of the incense stove. She leads everyone to pray and bow again. She then lights up another bundle of incense. While the incense is burning, several males are asked to sing the song of pui, which is sung throughout the ritual. The song of pui needs to be sung during the incense burning.

On the pui of Uria on, which I was attending, the males were hesitating to sing because of their lack of familiarity with the tune. With a mixture of worry and encouragement, some younger males were asked to sing the song by the elders. The tsukasa was also pushing, ‘Hurry up, before the incense is burning out!’ ‘Don’t laugh at us if we sing it wrong.’ Modestly inviting the elder to lead the tune, three younger males then went to kneel in the front, facing the ubu and sang while watching closely the copies of words at hand. ‘The Gods of Uria on! ….. Please protect us. Please admit us.’ After they finished, it was the females’ turn. Tsukasa’s female assistant sang another rhythm, which sounded rather solemn.

‘Even for me it is the first time that I heard this tune,’ Yosa said. She has been married to Guma for more than twenty years. Now they live in Ishigaki. But they still come back from time to time to attend various social gatherings. For the women who are not native
Taketomians, entering the *ibe* to assist means quite a challenging experience. Before they have the chance to learn those secret words, they need to learn how to move and not move in the *ibe*. Even for the younger Taketomians, the occasion such as *pui* may offer a chance to review their understanding of local customs. On sharing *kamiminshi*, some younger Taketomians showed much interest in the way of making the wine. While the *tsukasa* and females were busying in the *ibe*, a male returnee from Ishigaki talked about the prohibition of males to enter *ibe*, and wondered if there had been any male priests.

After the ritual finishes, the *shishi* depart from each other and return to their homes, carrying with them the shared rice and foods in plastic bags. The representatives gather again. They tour around *muyama* together in a specific order. After finishing their thanks to *muyama*, they parade into the villages. The latter part of *pui* exactly repeats the procession in *yungai*, which has been previously described. *Pui* is also finished by practising *gali* in front of Nishito *on*. Nowadays the whole ritual ends by noon of the second day.

As a whole, this travelling among villages, following specific routes, forms an important part in most significant Taketomian rituals, such as *pui*, *yungai* and *tanadui*. Some scholars have noticed the priestess’ locomotion of travelling and its relationship to the elaborated style of travelling in classical Okinawan performances such as *kumiudui* (Ida 1999). While travelling in rituals has been minimized because of the advance of transportation vehicles, such as automobile cars, travelling has become a basic, articulated movement pattern in Okinawan classic dance performance. ‘The first thing to learn in dance is to learn how to walk,’ a dance master said while she was instructing a beginner. The way of walking is articulated. Structurally, it is the very first part of classical Okinawan dances. Every staged performance starts from the walking of dancer(s), from behind the curtains to the centre of the stage.

Another ritual featuring travelling among *on* in Taketomi is that of *ketsugansai*. *Ketsugansai* is the annual ritual in which Taketomians review their wishes to gods during a year. It has the implications of both ‘to end’ as well as ‘to tie’. (Kamei 1988:153) As seen in *pui*, this two-day ritual is also mobilized by *on*-travelling.
Together twenty-two places are worshipped. The gods are invited to gather in Mainu on after the tsukasa and village heads worship around. The ritual is finally centred in Mainu on. As an offering to the gods for the blessings of health, harvest and prosperity during one year, the villagers set up a performance composed of several programmes, since ‘the gods are as the same as humans. They like geino (performing arts).’

On the second afternoon of ketsugansai, the stage is set up in the plaza in front of Mainu on. It is oriented toward the direction of the shrine. The representatives and the eminent elders are seated in the piden and face the stage. The stage is composed of pieces of tatami. On the right is a back scene with delicate and colourful drawing of plants and birds. By the scene, there hangs the red-white strip curtain used for celebrations. Behind the beautiful scene and the curtain, the performers are preparing. They all dress up in the traditional costumes in Okinawan styles and have their faces made up by professional dancers. The mood is joyful. Some early comers take pictures of the performers. While they are standing by, the villagers and the tourists begin to gather. It is the villagers, however, who know how to occupy a better seat, in terms of the direction and perspective, to watch the performance.

Before the performance starts, an announcer asks everyone to pay tribute to the gods gathered in Mainu on by bowing to the direction of piden. Three villages schedule their own performance respectively. It is composed, however, of some conventional performances repeated every year. These regular programmes include an opening ceremonial, two pieces of solo dances and a drama. They are performed by male villagers of specific personnel, such as the chief of the youth association. The other part is composed of traditional Okinawan and Yaeyama dances, which are performed by the females grouped into three villages of Ainota, Innota and Naji. Between each programme, the announcer praises the finished show and introduces the next one. On most occasions when the announcer is present, he is usually very funny and good at raising laughter among the audiences.

For an outsider, the performance is visually delicate and enjoyable. The performance is mixed with seriousness and fun. In fact, to present the performance, villagers have rehearsed every night for weeks. They earn the audiences’ applause at the end. After the
performance is finished, the audiences leaves quickly, with discussions and comments on some pieces they have just seen. The performers change out of their costumes at the back of the curtain. Some villagers start to put away the scene and tatami. Tsukasa and the village heads gather in the piden. They turn to the direction facing gods and give their last prayer of thanks.

In the Okinawans' notion, the best way to entertain the gods is to share dancing with the gods. This is the reason why an ancient form of social dance is called kamiasobi, 'play of gods'. The relationship between gods and dance is also close in Taketomi. The earliest dancers are said to be the tsukasa who danced in front of gods (Ueseto Tōru 1979: 406). Although the original dance is not available at present, the reconstructed performance becomes a regular program in tanadui, which will be discussed in chapter eight. Traditionally, various rituals in Yaeyama have become the best nutrition for different genres of performing arts, including drama, dance and music. Even among the professional dance practitioners, the respect to gods may provide advantages, not obstacles, to their career. 'When I am creating dances, it is like I am offering the piece to kamisama with gratitude.'

Making the gods a spatial referent has also been a point that some informants emphasized, especially with respect to the regional style of Yaeyama dance. Asked about the difference between Yaeyama and Okinawan dances, which traditionally has been categorized as folk versus classical, a Taketomian answered:

Our [Yaeyama] dance is different from that of Okinawans. Our dance is for Gods. So we always face the front. The Okinawans used to dance for the kings. So they dance diagonally. It is different.

The gods are not only a spatial referent for Taketomians to decide their orientation in dance, they are sometimes the motivation for movements themselves. In a piece of dance called mudutarakuji, which is a classical work transmitted in Innota for generations, the female character was depicted as involved in an unacceptable love affair. In a scene where she expressed her faith to the Gods, the dancer's movements are depicted as 'moving forward (mailimasu) in front of the Gods,' a statement both with physical and metaphorical implications.
Therefore, the space between Taketomians and their gods is the forum that all kinds of patterned movements, such as welcoming, praying, travelling and moving forward, are practised. The space is metaphysical, but the movements are concrete and objectified. The orientation toward the gods is obvious in various Taketomian rituals as described above. To interact with visiting deities who are supposed to be coming from horizontal, far-off places, most ritualistic practices and movement patterns have a direct orientation toward the 'otherness'. This presentational style and the ideology of sharing between gods and humans are both keys to the transformation of ritualistic practices into the theatrical performances, as I shall argue. For instance, in many choreographed and presentational dances, the refined hand gestures from ritualistic practices are notable.

On the other hand, a religious figure such as miluku never disgraces itself by showing up in a stage performance. The space is an open forum, which does not separate gods and humans as such. It is a moving stage in which various practices formulate Taketomians' experiences. The rituals started by welcoming the deities in end without sending off anyone, even after the curtain is lowered.

To conclude, in this chapter, I have tried to analyze Taketomians' cosmology using spatial properties as the main framework. This approach is based on a geographical view with ecological dimensions, which I share with Ouwenhand's view in her research into Hateruma society (1985:282). In the first section, I have described Taketomian religious as well as social organizations, which are intertwined, based on their cosmological perceptions. Although study of Okinawan cosmology to unravel its social relationships has been popular among scholars, I later focus on spatiality and directionality, following Parkin's points, in ritualistic practices to highlight aspects of movements which have not been paid enough attention until now. Emphasizing the aspects of ritualistic practices, I have also myself deviated from an epistemological explanation of Okinawan religion, as typically exemplified by Lebra's work (1966), in which he presents Okinawan cosmology as a classification of spirits.

The choice of Parkin's approach as a theoretical framework is also favoured for its implications regarding current developments in Taketomian religion. As has clearly been shown in the above descriptions, religious knowledge, especially those with
verbal expressions in Taketomian dialect such prayers and songs, is a closed system only transmitted in a limited group, the *tsukasa* or local scholars. Ordinary villagers have little access to this system. They practise rituals, however, through their bodies and movements, which form resources of their religious and social experiences.

The first impression of movement directionality in Yaeyama and Taketomi dances is a certain degree of directedness, which is presented through much straight-line travelling: forward, backward and sideward floor patterns. On one occasion when I was trying to record a dance piece by practising it, however, I discovered that although there are only limited directions that can be chosen to decide where to turn, it is only after repeated practice that a dancer can step out ‘naturally’. A similar situation happens when the direction of social actions is needed to be decided, e.g. which *on* to attend, which gods to ask. Only those who are ‘inside the culture’ clearly know their orientations and do not go into the wrong path. The process of learning a dance is just as that of learning the culture. ‘You must know the direction before you turn.’ Only knowing the direction beforehand, a dancer can decide where s/he will put her/his ‘centre of gravity’ and allow the other foot to turn. Similarly, to acquire the knowledge and control the directionality skillfully, it is through ‘time’, that a Taketomian can well perform her/his part.
Notes

1 *Nakataki* is ‘the opposite term’ for Taketomi, which is a lyric style in Okinawan songs and used in many cases. There is, however, a mountain called Nakataki in Kohama Island, Yaeyama. The relationship between these is still unclear.

2 *Ganashi* is the respectable term used for gods and great kings in Okinawan.

3 At present there are, in total, twelve islands that are inhabited in Yaeyama. The ‘eight islands’ may represent those islands that were noted in earlier periods in Yaeyama, including Iliomote, Ishigaki Yonaguni, Hateruma, Kohama, Kuroshima, Taketomi, and Hatoma.

4 This myth is only transmitted in Taketomi and is not seen in the myths of other islands. Nevertheless, there is a saying in Yaeyama that ‘the islands start from Taketomi.’

5 On an informal occasion, Prof. Hateruma Nagayashi told me that *nilan* comes from Iliomote Island.

6 In Taketomi, another version tells how an islander picked up a mask of *miluku* on the seashore. He then found that this mask was very powerful and began to worship it. Ever since his family has been an eminent clan.

7 ‘Yu’ means ‘year of harvest,’ such as in the ritual *yungai,* ‘welcoming the *yu*’. It also means a span of time, such as in *yamato yu,* ‘years of yamato (Japanisation)’. It is a temporal term. *Miluku* is deeply related to the notion of harvest.

8 These oral traditions include the prayers of the priestesses, which are in the archaic form of dialect.

9 It is said that the first person who picked up the mask of *miluku* on the beach transmitted it to a powerful family. The mask of *miluku* was kept by this family until the middle of this century. Finally, based on a concern to protect the mask, the villagers decided to build a temple to preserve the highly tabooed mask and relevant objects. Nowadays, most of the time the temple is closed. Only on special occasions for worshipping and rituals is the gate open.

10 See Ouwenhand for a clear explanation of this zodiac system of directions (1985:8-9).

11 ‘*Sama*’ is the respectful form for addressing a person or a personified object in Japanese.


13 The legend depicting the relationship between Nehara and the technique of iron casting is discussed in Ueseto Tōru 1982 and Yamashita 1992.

14 She bathed in cold water for seven days continuously to purify herself to take the position in emergency.

15 In addition to my own observation, description of this ritual, especially the first part to which I do not have access, is based on the articles on yungai by Ishigaki (1976), Ueseto Yoshinoli (1992), and the videotape produced by Hōbonschia (1992). Rejection of my presence in that somehow-tabooed occasion is possibly due to the fact that I was not well acquainted with the core group of ritual specialists, in addition to my identity as an outsider. A similar rejection
happened again when I tried to observe in the event of *taneoroshi* in the annual ritual of *tanadzu*.

16 This is a point articulated to me by Mr. Ishigaki Hirotaka on an informal occasion.

17 The on need to be visited in a specific order, including Nishito on, Mainu on, Huina on, *nilan* rock and Kusukuba on.

18 Referring to fig. 4.1 (p. 97), the shrines are visited in the following order: 1 (Mishiaishi) → 14 (Oyatomari) → (temple of miluku, which is not listed as an on) → 3 (Yumuchi, two deities are worshipped at the same shrines) → 2 (Uria) → 16 (Māji) → 4 (Nishito, two deities are worshipped here) → 5 (Mainu, two deities are worshipped here) → 6 (Naji) → 7 (Kondui) → Kusukuba on (which is inside Naji on) → 8 (Huina, two deities are worshipped here) → 9 (Kumāra) → 10 (Hanakku) → 11 (Baiya) → 25 (Higashimishiaishi) → Nehara Konodono’s natal house (which is located in Innoda) → 12 (Nilan) → 19 (Nishimishiaishi) → 5 (back to Mainu).

19 Except for *bon*, which is a Japanese festival, there is usually not a final event such as ‘sending off the gods’ to finish a ritual in Taketomi.
CHAPTER FIVE  Taketomian Schemes of Time: Historicity and Temporality

5.1 Introduction

Varied from painting, music, or other expressive activities, dancing has been defined as the art of space and time. To advance the knowledge about how Taketomian dance in a culturally meaningful way from other peoples, in this chapter I shall explore Taketomians notions of time. Anthropologist Bloch has reminded us that what differs among groups of peoples is not time itself, but the ways they used to categorise this abstract concept (1989[1977]). It is worth asking how Taketomians categorise time in a specific way that makes their dancing different from others. There are two issues regarding how dancing explicates specific notions of time: how the dancer(s) embody temporality that is culturally meaningful/appropriate; and how the dance(s) mark out the very existence of the dancer in a continuous flow of time. For analytical purpose, I shall use two separate conceptions — historicity (collective consciousness about the past and the present) and temporality (temporal relationship connecting/disconnecting individuals) — to discuss Taketomian notion of time. At the end, it is intended that the practice of dancing, which is accompanied with patterned music (and songs) as in this specific case of Taketomi, can explicit these two facet of conceptualisations in the totality of presentation.

5.2 The Narratives of Songs and the Historicity of Taketomians

The enviable Akamma [red horse]  
How lucky it is with its four feet
Akamma is worth being born
Its four feet are valuable
Expected by the King of Ryūkyū Kingdom
What the king has expected
On this joyful day
In Yaeyama region, the dance of *Akamma Bushi* is usually the opening piece of performances on various occasions, such as wedding, birthday party, and communal celebration. It is also the first piece that a beginner needs to embody of Yaeyama dance. The song is based on a story about *Akamma*, a legendary horse which was born with red hair and fast feet. The King of Ryūkyū Kingdom had known of this horse, and asked for it to be sent to the Palace as a precious tribute. The horse, however, was used to its trainer only and became uncontrollable in the Palace. Finally the King decided to return the horse to its original owner. The above song depicts the joyful moment when the horse was sent back to Yaeyama and its owner.

The story of *Akamma* has several implications for the identity of Yaeyama. First of all, it highlights a regional difference between Okinawa (represented by the Ryūkyū King) and Yaeyama (represented by *Akamma*). The difference can be seen in many aspects. It is based on historical experiences caused by geographical separation as well as political structure. For instance, after the early fifteenth century, in Okinawa Island a united political entity, the Ryūkyū Kingdom, was formed while Miyako and Yaeyama were still divided into chiefdoms. Famous leaders included Nakasone in Miyako, Nagada and Nakama in Ishigaki, and Kerakedagusuku in Iliomote. The chiefs in Yaeyama maintained a neutrally balanced relationship of alliance. It was not until the early sixteenth century that the Ryūkyū Kingdom conquered Yaeyama using the excuse of the ‘rebellion’ of Oyakeakahachi.

Oyakeakahachi was a native Ishigaki. His ‘rebellion’ gave the Ryūkyū Kingdom an excuse to suppress the chiefdoms in Yaeyama region. With the aide of Nakasone in Miyako, the coup de force from Ryūkyū not only beat Oyakeakahachi but also was
finally able to control this area. This historical event, however, is differently interpreted from the perspective of Yaeyama people. Nowadays, the memorial of Oyakeakahachi is erected in Ishigaki and his heroic deeds recorded. The period of Ryūkyū Kingdom meant almost intolerable tyranny for the Yaeyama people. The Kingdom, for instance, had adopted a severe population tax system, which was calculated by the numbers of a family. All members from the age of sixteen to sixty-five in a family needed to fulfill the obligation. Agricultural crops and woven cloth were the main contents of this tax system. Yaeyama people, both men and women, were made to work without rest to feed the royal family and the noble. The situation was even worse after the Kingdom was subordinated to Satsuma in Kyushu in the early seventeenth century. To pay further tribute to Satsumo doubled the requirement of the tax. Hence, while the Kingdom was developing its international trading and enjoying luxurious goods from different parts of the world, or while the officials were offering generous supplements to foreigners without asking for return, people in Yaeyama were suffering from the crude natural environment and the inhumane policy.

Different exegeses of the same historical event or political power thus reflect the different perspectives of the dominator and the dominated; so too is the attitude of Yaeyama people to the colonialism of the Japanese and Americans. From 1879, Yaeyama experienced a new era of *yamatu yu*, 'the years of Japanisation'. Compared with the officials in Ryūkyū Kingdom who were full of uncertainty about their new political authority, this wave of Japanisation was welcomed by Yaeyama people. The Japanese government banned the bureaucratic system and the severe population tax. They also set up schools for ordinary people. On the other hand, local dialects were prohibited in schools. The office of Tēno (the Japanese emperor) replaced that of the Ryūkyū Kings. The Americans came after the Japanese lost in the Second World War. Unlike Okinawa proper, which was heavily damaged by one of the final battles in the Pacific Ocean, Yaeyama people did not suffer so directly from the battle as residents in Okinawa, although malaria also caused great loss of life. As a whole, for people in Okinawa, the Americans brought bombs. For Yaeyama people, they gave quinine and...
food supplies. Yaeyama historian Makino has sharply pointed out the different attitudes toward the same ‘other’—the Americans—between Okinawa and Yaeyama, and highlights his notion of an autonomous historicity of Yaeyama, which he defines as ‘a history of being suppressed’ (Makino 1972:3). That is, during the course of history, Yaeyama region has played an inferior part in the political structure, in which the powers-that-be is not always the same or a single object. This structural relation is still maintained after Okinawa was ‘returned’ to Japan in 1972.

The division between Okinawa and Yaeyama is not the only political one as represented by the dominator and the dominated. It is also very much a division between forms of culture: the royal/elite system versus a folk one, and the latter can be projected in the attributions of Akamma, which is wild and mythic in its nature. During the Kingdom period, many Yaeyama customs were thought of as barbarian and hence forbidden. For instance, a form of naked dance, uchihare asobi, was stopped because the Confucianist Palace thought it immoral. On the other hand, as the Ryūkyū Kingdom extended their political control to Yaeyama, it set up a bureaucratic system of zaiban, ‘in savage land,’ which was composed of a hierarchy of officials garrisoned on every island. The founding of the zaiban system also imported classical Ryūkyū dance, which was a bi-product of the aristocratic disciplines at large. To entertain officials and celebrate Kingdom festivals, Yaeyama people learned bushiuta, ‘the verse songs’, and the classical style of dance, which both were very different as compared with local genres, such as reflected in the tempi.

To take music as an example, according to the native Yaeyama scholar Kishiaba’s classification, traditional Yaeyama songs can be divided into two categories. The first is the peasant tradition of songs including ayo, yunta and jiraba. Among them, yunta means ‘song of reading’ (yomi uta). Its form is rather free and sometimes included improvised songs. Jiraba is transformed from yunta, but with a faster tempo. Ayo is usually sung in worship and rituals. All of them originated from the ordinary life of the peasants. In former days, these traditional forms of songs were solely sung
without instrumental accompaniment. The tempi are free and spread in a relative scale from the fastest ones, such as *jiraba*, to the slowest one, such as *ayo*.

The other system of traditional music is the *bushiuta*, 'verse song,' which was developed under the Okinawan influence. In the Kingdom period, *bushiuta*, accompanied with *samisen* playing, was the monopoly of the aristocratic class. Ordinary people were not allowed access to it. The era of Ryūkyū Kingdom, notwithstanding causing a period of severe life conditions for the ordinary Okinawans, left a legacy that is most obvious through music, and the dance that were choreographed to it. In Yaeyama, the system of classical Ryūkyūan dance was only 'imposed' as a bi-product of aristocracy: that is, on occasions of official celebrations or as entertainment to the *zaibans*. Yaeyama people strove to practise Ryūkyūan style of dances for political ends, such as to gain rewards or to achieve promotion for individuals or communities. It is not until the late nineteenth century that, because of the exile of Hiyane Anhitsu, the local style of classical dance in Yaeyama began to form. Hiyane was born in Shuri in 1821. At the age of eighteen, because of his talent in dance, he was promoted as a member of *uganshin udui*, the court dance specifically for entertaining the Chinese missions. When he was thirty-six, he became a master in the palace. His fast promotion, however, made him a target of jealousy. In 1896, he was slandered in one political contention and exiled to Hatoma Island in Yaeyama, at the age of only thirty-nine years. Knowing that it was hopeless to return to the Palace in his life time, Hiyane decided to teach music and dance to those youth who had respected his talent and fame. At first, Hiyane was invited to Iliomote to teach the young classical music, dance, and Chinese. Then islanders in Kuroshima heard of this situation. In order to invite Hiyane to their island and teach them dance, they assigned a woman as Hiyane's lady to look after his life at his age of seventy-two years. In Kuroshima, Hiyane met a talented young man called Moromisato and was very fond of him. Hiyane finally decided to transmit all his skills, including an ancient secret copy of dance notation, to Moromisato. This notation book recorded twenty-two basic hand gestures of the Kin’ō school of Ryūkyūan dance. In this secret copy, the hand
gestures were pictured and all named in difficult Chinese vocabularies, which implied loyalty to the King. This dance of loyalty, nevertheless, never had the chance to be revealed in front of any king, because of the annexation of Ryūkyū Kingdom by the Japanese in 1879.

It was during the early period of Japanisation, dated roughly from 1890-1920, that Hiyane and Moromisato created many dance works that were categorized as the Yaeyama style, and are still popular to this day. Famous works includes Akamma bushi, Hatoma bushi, Kunara bushi, Takana bushi, Kuroshima kuduki, and many others. The names of the dance works were given from the verse songs to which the dances are choreographed. These verse songs adopted the slower and ordered tempo of court music, which varies from the free and improvised tempi in local songs as mentioned above. In addition to the traditional verse song that originated from the Palace, new styles of music and dance were created in Yaeyama. For instance, kutuki, which means ‘the mouth speaking,’ is a style of song that is mixed with rhythmic verbal utterances. Unlike the classic style of dance, where the music and dance are performed by separate groups, the dancer in kutuki also sing the words while they are dancing. The words usually depict an island and praise its landscape and so on. Between verses, there are usually meaningless words, hayashi, which are expressions of energy. Nowadays most islands in Yaeyama develop their own variations of kutuki using the same rhythm. For instance, in addition to Kuroshima kutuki, which is the earliest version of kutuki dance, there is also Taketomi kutuki and so on.

The last verse of Taketomi kutuki is as follows:

The People of the past
Began Taketomi
Nishito of the past
Obey what he had taught closely
Then [the Island can last] until many yu [generations]
Together with the light of the Island, the Gods
It is written in the songs
Recite the kutuki
Dance with the present hayashi
When asked about the history of the Island, Taketomians usually trace it back to the six chiefs who are believed to be the founders of villages and common ancestors, although contemporary history books of Yaeyama may ignore these early chiefdoms in Taketomi (Makino 1972). Nishito is another important and indexical figure as far as the history of Taketomi is concerned. In the battle against Oyakeakahachi around 1500 A.D., Nishito was promoted by a Ryūkyūan official because of his intelligence. He was then brought to the Palace in Shuri and served as an official. He later built the official shrine of Sonohiya near the Palace, which was in the Chinese style and much complimented. After fifteen years of an official’s life in Shuri, Nishito was assigned the position of first Yaeyama minister and returned to his home island. At first he founded the first administrative office in Kuramodo, near the southern western shore of Taketomi. The office was then transferred to Ishigaki owing to the inconvenience of accessibility. Nishito and his achievements have been depicted in the second half of the Taketomian song shikitabun. In this song it is written that Taketomi Island has many ‘first’ records in Yaeyama: including the first minister and ministry, first ship-making, and so on.

For Taketomians, Nishito is an important figure who brought the Island from a legendary past into the historical era governed by Ryūkyū Kingdom. The promotion of Nishito also promoted the status of Taketomi at large, whose chiefdoms as a whole were less powerful compared with those on other bigger islands in Yaeyama. Nevertheless, Taketomi also experienced the hardship of life under the regime of Ryūkyū Kingdom. According to Taketomians, on some occasions, the islanders killed and buried their children to release their burdens of tax payment. Harvest became an even more critical condition. Paying the required amount of tax the peasants could mean the release for the peasants, as the song and dance of jicchu represents. In Taketomi, it is said that there was a farmer who, although he had ten children, fulfilled his obligation of paying the tax every year. The King knew of him and invited the farmer’s family to the palace. The farmer’s family together sang jicchu in front of the
king, while their bodies were covered with only one side of sleeve owing to their poverty (Zengoku Taketomi Bunka Kyōkai 1998).

The song of Mazakai offers another picture about how peasants strove for better living conditions in the Kingdom period:

Born in Taketomi  
Fed in Nakama  
Mazakai  
Why?  
For what reason?  
Left for Nakama  
It is because of the port in Uharada  
Because of Ufumashi and Nagamashi  
Because of the granular rice, the white rice

*Mazakai* is the name of a diligent farmer, who, in order to feed his family, left Taketomi for better soil. Nakama, Uharada, Ufumashi and Nagamashi were all names of places in Iliomote Island, where much bigger fields and more fertile lands were available. During the Kingdom period, Taketomians had been forced to leave their home Island for food or under policies of the Kingdom, such as population dispersal. The diaspora, nevertheless, was never put to an end even after the Kingdom was gone.

The song of *jicchu* and *mazakai* both have been choreographed into dances, by unanimous villagers in former days, and transmitted in Hazama village. Both have become regular performances in the annual ritual of *tanadui*. Songs such as *jicchu* and *mazakai*, which depict the life of peasants, form a large part of Yaeyama music. In addition to the peasantry motif, the separation of social classes also became a repeated topic in *bushiuta*. For instance, *Kunnara bushi* is a song about the love affair between an ordinary female and a male official. It is full of grief because the male official was about to leave his lover for another office. In one of the most famous songs from Taketomi, *Asatoya bushi*, the story describes the love affair between a beautiful Taketomian, Kuyama of the Asato house, and an official of the Kingdom. According to the song, Kuyama was pursued by an official. She, however, refused him, because
she would rather marry a local and stay in her own home Island.¹

Social separation of classes, departures between lovers, families, the struggle for food and the diaspora were not only seen in the Kingdom period. During the Second World War, Taketomians experienced a series of disasters. Although Yaeyama did not suffer so much as Okinawans directly from the bomb, what did cause great loss of life, however, was malaria and food shortage during the War period. According to statistics, around the time of the war, in Hateruma Island only, two thirds of the inhabitants died of malaria which spread among the islands in Yaeyama.

In Taketomi, the war also caused great loss of life and arduous circumstances. As the Japanese army was beaten, large numbers of returnees from other villages, the Japanese mainland, Taiwan and South East Asia came back to the Island. The population multiplied several times. The increase in population made the poor food supply in this infertile Island even worse. Most old Islanders experienced this period of upheaval. Haro, a ninety-year-old male villager, remembered:

My brother was working as a policeman in Taiwan. After the war, he returned to Taketomi. He had ten children to feed. There was nothing to eat. What could he do? He worked very hard, day and night. At last he died of fatigue, only in his middle age.’

Kuma, a female villager who was at her eighty, lived in Innota alone. Her husband died of a sudden malaria infection when he was only around thirty. Their first son was still little and the second one not even born. Kuma could not help but go back to her natal family. She then brought up her sons alone. This painful experience of early widowhood still haunted her after fifty years. Kuma was, nevertheless, not a single case. Kuma’s cousin Yochi remembered well how bitter life was during the period. Her father used to distribute the taros they planted to those who could not feed their own family.

In addition to the arduous material conditions, the returnees also became a cause of
turbulence during this post-war period. Under the same colonialism of Japan between 1898 and 1945, many Taketomian people chose to leave for Taiwan for jobs. Most of them could earn better money, or 'a luxury life' in Taiwan. It is not unusual to hear that an old Taketomian had lived in Taiwan for many decades and many middle-aged Taketomians were born in Pre-War Taiwan. In addition, to avoid the danger caused by the war, many Yaeyama people were forcibly sent to other islands. The failure of the Japanese in the Second War ended colonialism in Korea, Taiwan and other areas in South East Asia. Having lived on the Japan mainland or its previously colonized areas, the returnees brought in very different value systems and caused a crisis on the Island. As a result, many Taketomians moved out of the Island under various pressures.

5.3 Yu and the Notion of Time of Taketomians

The reasons for leaving the home Island may differ. The course of history, nevertheless, seems to repeat itself as seen in the narratives of songs. Furthermore, for Taketomians, they use the concept of yu to rationalize the repetition of Island history. Yu originally connotes harvest year or era and generation. In the Taketomians' concept, the past is a continuous transitions of different yu: from the Ryūkyūan yu, the Yamatu (Japanese) yu, to the American yu. In the only private museum in Taketomi, rolls of different currency that had been used in Taketomi were displayed. The present owner usually introduced it to groups of tourists: 'This is the ancient Chinese money. It was found in the storage room owned by the richest great man in this Island.' 'This is B yen [B note]. It was used while the Americans were still governing Okinawa.' The currencies memorize a series of yu that Taketomians have experienced.

The connotation of yu as a harvest year makes it not only refers to the dynastic past but also to the on-going present. Yu, therefore, is a key factor to understand Taketomian temporality. Here, the term 'temporality' refers to the perception of time in this context. Furthermore, the human yu comes and leaves, just as the natural yu
does. The present, for Taketomians, is a cyclic calendar that is mixed with various schemes of order. The traditional ritual cycle, based on the productive regime of agriculture, is formed of a series of religious as well as practical events, which centre on the ideology of harvest. There are about twenty agrarian rituals in Taketomi through the whole year (Appendix I). In the past, the number was double. As the economic modes of subsistence, such as tourism, replace agriculture and become the main resource of income in the Island, many ritualistic practices with respect to agriculture are abandoned. Even so, from those that still remain, agrarian rituals can be divided into several categories: rituals of field mending, planting, insect elimination (munun) and rain-making, growing and harvest. The agrarian rituals mark a process of transition from planting to harvest. In Taketomi, main crops included wheat, millet, green and yellow beans, and sesame. In former days, the villagers planted the seeds in autumn (except for green beans and sesame which were planted in early spring) and harvested in the season of uruzun—from late spring to early summer. The following table shows the schedule of crop growing and the annual agrarian rituals.

The choice of certain days rather than others as ritualistic is based on the Chinese lunar calendar, in which the hours, days and the years are categorised according to five elements, and the zodiac system, in addition to a monthly scheme that is a little later than the solar calendar. That is, this system owes its origin to the Chinese clock. According to this system, every year is endowed with a zodiac point, represented by a character and its correspondent animal (table 5.1). Twelve of them form a full cycle. This is paired with the five elements of gold, wood, water, fire and earth, and then a full cycle of combinations of elements which repeat themselves every sixty years. The same principle is used for the days. Every day is endowed with a zodiac character and an element as its attribution. Every sixty days form a cycle and there are always a group of days that share the same attributions. A day is also divided into twelve portions in this embracing scheme. The attributions of a certain day then decide whether it is an auspicious day for certain purposes, such as planting seed, building a
house, holding a funeral and so on. In the past, only the literate noble could calculate the days since they monopolized the right of learning Sinology. At present, this knowledge and responsibility for arranging auspicious days for special occasions are mainly limited to the religious specialists such as priestesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The zodiac point</th>
<th>Correspondent animal</th>
<th>Correspondent time during a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Rat</td>
<td>23:00-1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushi</td>
<td>Cow</td>
<td>1:00-3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tora</td>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>3:00-5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>5:00-7:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasu</td>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>7:00-9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>Serpent</td>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma</td>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>11:00-13:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitsuji</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>13:00-15:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saru</td>
<td>Monkey</td>
<td>15:00-17:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tori</td>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>17:00-19:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inu</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>19:00-21:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buta</td>
<td>Boar</td>
<td>21:00-23:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. The Chinese zodiac system

Even today, consultation and calculation of the auspicious days is still a convention for arrangements of ritual events. It is not only a device of intelligence. Taketomians believes that those ritual days are very special and blessed. Sunny days are believed to be one symptom of an auspicious day and with blessings of kami. For instance, on the day of the celebration for people who were born in the tatsu (dragon) year, that is 27th February, 2000, the day was sunny although the others were heavily rainy. The village head said, ‘The kamisama of Taketomi are great, aren’t they? Whenever there is a ritual, the day is always sunny.’

According to this lunar calendar, in Taketomi most agricultural production used to start in autumn after the cleaning of the earth, that is around the ninth month of the
lunar calendar. In addition, preventing events, such as rituals of insect elimination and 
tanadui form a major part of the Taketomian ritualistic cycle. What is noteworthy is 
that two events precede the planting. One is yungai, the ritual of ‘welcoming yu,’ 
which is thought to be brought in by nialn and/or miluku, and the other ketsugansai, 
‘to tie wish with kami,’ as described in the last chapter. These are purely religious acts 
and not a single agricultural practice would be performed in these rituals. These 
events, nevertheless, highlight the primary status of kami in Taketomi in that they 
transcend natural temporality. That is, the kami must arrive before any human effort is 
conducted. The order of the universe, composed of supernatural and natural beings, is 
a basic consideration seen in all practices related with harvest.

As a whole, annual agrarian rituals roughly coincide with the productive regime and 
mark a cyclic process from embryo to recipient stages. As far as human beings are 
concerned, rites of passage delineate a similar process of transition. Rites of passage 
can be divided into birth, celebration of specific age, wedding, and funeral. When a 
baby is still a foetus, the mother is led to the family shrine to worship the kami for the 
safe and smooth course of pregnancy and delivery. Conventionally, birth is called 
shira in Taketomi. Shira connotes the messy condition in the new mother’s room, 
which is full of the new born baby’s clothes, foods and so on (Ueseto Tôru 1976:118). 
The room of shira is treated as impure. Those who enter the room are strictly 
forbidden to visit the shrines.

In the past when the due date was near, a grass rope was made and hung in front of the 
house. A hearth, jiru, was built on the ground to prepare the hot water for the new 
born baby and the mother when the labour began. Also on the same hearth, the first 
meal was prepared for the mother after the baby’s birth. Afterwards in the post-
maternity period, the mother usually partook of liquor with a special kind of sugar to 
regain her energy. For the family member of the new born baby, it was not until the 
tenth day when the fire of jiru was eliminated that the baby and the mother are 
allowed to visit the shrines, and the mother reintegrated into her normal life. If the
baby was a boy, a pair of straw sandals were hung in the front of the house. If it was a girl, then a cover of the wok would be displayed. After the new born baby took its first bath using the water boiled with jiru and was wrapped within white clothes, a ritual of mumuchia was held. Mumuchia meant 'one hundred years old' in Taketomi dialect. The elder of the house used the middle finger scrubbing on the central one of the three rocks that represented hinukan in the kitchen, and made a black mark on the baby's front, while saying 'mumuchia, mumuchia' several times.

Usually on the tenth day after the baby’s birth, the name-giving ritual was held. Liquor, rice and soup was prepared and allocated in front of the altar of the ancestors to announce the name of the baby to the ancestor gods, the protecting god, and the god of fire, and ask for their blessings. On the same day, the baby’s face was washed with the water from the well of Naji. The well of Naji was treated as the most important one in Taketomi. The water of the same well was also used in the ritual of rejuvenation on the first day of the first month. It was not until the twentieth day after the birth that the baby was allowed to go out. It was firstly brought to the Nishito on and the on of both its male and female lines of ancestors to ask for their blessings on this new member of the community as well as the family. Unlike the Okinawans who used to have a clear lineage organisation called munchu, ‘the centre of the door’, in Yaeyama only the noble used family names in the Kingdom period. Ordinary people did not even have the right to use a family name except for using the name of house as a reference. In former days, the baby was named after its ancestors. For instance, the eldest boy was named after his father’s father, the eldest girl, father’s mother, the second boy, mother’s father, the third boy great grandfather and so on.

The former custom of naming is reminiscent of the conception of yu as discussed above, in that it highlights a notion of cyclic transition among generations in the level of family. The situation, however, is largely changed at present since the social structure has totally changed. Nowadays, Taketomians use names in the Japanese fashion for their children. Japanisation has also resulted in great changes in birth
customs as described above. For example, both the mother and the baby stay indoors longer than before, until on the thirtieth day when the celebration of birth and the naming ritual take place at the same time. A piece of paper written with the name of the baby is given to each guest who comes to bless the child. Money is a conventional gift from the guests and the family prepares foods, such as bento (meal in the box) and presents in return.

There is no initiation in Taketomi, which marks the transition of puberty. On the contrary, the process of life is marked every twelve years following the custom of the Chinese zodiac system. After every twelve year, the same birth year, tushibi, will repeat itself. Therefore, the celebration is focused on the birthday of every thirteenth year, which repeats the birth year of the subject. Preparing foods and liquor, under the consultancy of tsukasa, the person tours around her/his on and worships the kami, to offer thanks for the past round of twelve years, to ask for safety and peace during the year, and to pray for 'a peaceful life of another round of twelve years until next tushibi'.

In addition to this personal practice, tushibi is also an occasion for celebration. In every year, the villagers, who are at the ages of $12 \times N + 1$ (such as thirteen, twenty-five, thirty-seven, forty-nine and so on) and share the same element of the year symbolized by an animal, receive blessings from their family. In the past, only villagers aged over forty-nine invited their friends and relatives for a celebration due to a much shorter life expectancy. Conventionally, the celebration is held individually between the third day of the first lunar month and the thirteenth day of the second month. Nowadays, a united celebration, which gathers together all the villagers, is held on the first day that bears the same representation of animal with the year after the lunar New Year. The celebration is programmed into performances from each village, those of family members, and the age groups who are the celebrated. It is not unusual to see a programme which is performed by all the participant members of a family as a special gift to the individual.
If there is an elder who is ninety-seven years old, a special celebration, which is called kajimaya in Yaeyama and mandara in Taketomi, is held on the first half of the same day. Kajimaya means "the windmill," and mandara means "going around." Both terms connote circling, as an informant articulates:

*Mandara means mawaru (to circle). If an elder has his mandara, it means he has lived his life for many rounds, [Every twelve years form a round], just like the windmill going around and around.*

*Tushibi and yu are what Taketomians use to conceptualise their schemes of temporality, which is cyclic in nature. Anthropologists have discussed linear and cyclic time (Leach 1961). Based on ethnographic studies, some scholars tend to stress the cyclic aspect, and hence the relativity of human temporality, such as the famous case of the 'timeless' Balinese (Geertz 1973). Others strongly object to this notion and suggests that time is universally durational and it is either social structure (Bloch 1989) or cultural categories (Gell 1992; Sahlins 1985) which vary, but not time itself. Following this point of view, Gell posits an intermediate theory that the linear and cyclic models do not contradict human temporality since these two schemes are both processual. He explains as follows:

As processual schemes—not metaphysical dogmas about time, but general conceptions of natural and social processes—both kinds of model are equally possible and may indeed coexist......In order to make this clear, an analogy may help. The London underground system includes two kinds of lines. Most, like the Bakerloo Line, have two termini (Baker Street and the Elephant and Castle are the termini on the Bakerloo line) between which the trains run back and forth. However, one line (the Circle Line) has no terminus, but it does have two important stations, Victoria to the south and Edgeware to the north, where the train stops to be cleaned and take on fresh crew etc. (Gell 1992:92)

Gell uses this analogy to explain two models of temporality in Umeda and Muria, which are both, to a certain degree, cyclic. To extend this analogy, at the level of community, Taketomian rituals follow a cyclic temporality, which is always repeated every year. These rituals are run based on a premise of the continuity of community, which is the assembly of mortals. The natural course of individual life is contracted
with the perpetual existence of society. They are two kinds of existence. The Taketomian ritual complex demonstrates this view. And the different schemes of temporality are molded by cultural categories such as life and afterlife, individual and community.

5.4 Another Life, Another Time: The Posthumous Rituals in Taketomi

After mandara, which is certainly a goal expected by many old people in Taketomi, there is no eminent event related with the individual, until her/his final destination of life—death. Nevertheless, for Taketomians, death does not announce the end of an individual, at least metaphorically. A series of posthumous rituals extend the cosmology of time, which transcends the natural cycle of life.

After a person’s death, her/his family and relatives gather to arrange the funeral. The news, accompanied with a piece of sad music, is broadcast to inform all the villagers. In the past if there was a funeral, the villagers would gather together, offer practical as well as theoretical opinions and conduct all the necessary affairs. Nowadays although most of the practices are handled by professional funeral companies, the villagers are still keen to offer various forms of help. At the same time, a chosen member of the family, who bears the character of the month, goes to the well of tunaka (the well which is believed to have been dug by Tumiyagunchiku, the chief from Miyako) to bring water back and use it to wash the face and the body of the dead seven times. The body is laid towards the northern direction of ne. Then it is dressed with special clothes, made to pay respects to the direction of its birth god and, laid in the inner room with its head toward the west. A temporary altar is set up and the ipai, a wooden blade written with the name of the date and time of death, is put on the altar with the incense stove. The inner room where the body is put is fenced with curtains in black and white strips. The family and close relatives stay aside. Boiled rice and drink, such as liquor or tea is offered every morning by the women of the house. Not
only foods, but also other items which the dead had used are offered, giving an
impression that the life is transformed, but not finished.

Immediately after the death of the person, the Buddhist priestess in the Island is
summoned to chant by the black and white curtain. Nowadays in Taketomi, the
mortuary rites are mostly practised according to Buddhist custom, after a Buddhist
temple was established on the Island in 1949. According to the Buddhism tradition,
on the first, third, fifth, and seventh day and the first, third, fifth, seventh weeks,
rituals of shōko, ‘burning the incense,’ are held in which the priestess chants different
verses to help the soul of the dead travel to another world smoothly. On these days,
the family invites their close relatives and friends to remember and pray for the dead.
On the final ritual of ‘sever-seven,’ that is, seven weeks, the ipai will be place on the
family altar for thirty-three years.

On the funeral day, the villagers gather in the house. The first parlour where the kami
are worshipped is supposed to be covered. In the second parlour a temporary altar is
set up which is decorated with the picture of the dead and surrounded with flowers.
Fruits, the incense stove and liquor are put on the temporary altar. The ipai is put in
front of the photograph of the dead. The body, which is dressed in white clothes, is
laid into the coffin, along with items such as a rod, a hat, a pair of shoes, and bowls
etc, which are for her/his trip to the other world. There is usually an open memorial
ceremony for the relatives and friends to burn incense and pray to express their
courtesy. After the ceremony, the coffin is transported to the graveyard. On some
occasions when the dead, such as someone who has emigrated from the Island, is
cremated, the coffin is replaced by the jar of bone remains. The procession, composed
of family, close relatives and friends, is led by persons who hold baskets of flowers, a
pair of bamboo sticks tied with long white flags on which are written the name of the
dead, or a pair of white lanterns as in former days.

In front of the grave, the Buddhist priestess prays and chants again. The grave is in the
traditional shape of a tortoise shell. A small entrance is open for the coffin or jar of bones to be put in. On an occasion of a funeral of an old female villager, a male Taketomian described to me the shape of the grave as follows:

The shape of the grave resembles that of the lower body of a lying woman. The arch [holding the front of the grave] represents her legs which are flexing. The uplifting part is her belly. The entrance of the grave represents the vagina. Humans come out of the body of women and finally go back there again.

The leading flags are erected by the grave and at last burnt, with other funeral items, until the forty-ninth day after the death, when the itinerary from this world to the other world is thought to be finished. After the ritual of seven-seven and the funeral, the dead person becomes a member of the family ancestors, whose ipai are joined to the family altar. Sometimes there are more than one ipai on the ancestor altar. In this case, the left means the recent dead and the right the oldest. This membership of the ancestors, nevertheless, is not limitless. The dead ancestor goes through a series of rituals that achieve ‘growing deification’ (Mabuchi 1980:14). The living family members hold nenki, ‘yearly ritual,’ on the first, third, fifth, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth and thirty-third years after the person’s death. These rituals are thought of as the expression of filial piety and are treated as important. The family usually spends much money to prepare for these occasions, especially the ritual thirty-third year which is the last practice held for a dead ancestor. Close relatives and friends are sent invitations months before the events. Those who have moved from the Island come back from far away. The process is similar to those of shōko, in which the participants burn incense and pray for the dead. The male host of the family also expresses his gratitude to the guests for their long-term interaction with the family. After this ritual, the ipai of the dead ancestor is moved out of the family altar and brought to the grave for burning. The dead is then thought to be deified. The linear process of the afterlife is fully completed. So too is the obligation of the family. There used to be a custom that on the next day of the thirty-third nenki, the family members gathered to sing and dance to celebrate the deification of their ancestor.
Mabuchi concludes that these rituals are nothing but 'business-like' procedures by which 'to dispose of a distinction that was primarily gradual or relative' (1980:14). This distinction between the souls of the dead and the deified ancestor, according to his opinion, is never clear as shown in bon ritual. In addition to this series of nenki, which is specifically held for an individual Islander, the ritual of shōlo, 'spirits,' or the bon ritual as it is called in Japan, is an annual occasion for the living to celebrate with the dead. 'The bon is the New Year for the dead people,' explained a teacher to her students. This Buddhist ritual has been imported from Japan. On the Japanese mainland, it is an important ritual aimed to emphasise ancestor worship. A similar ritual is also seen in Chinese Buddhist belief, as manifested in Taiwan. In both Japan and Taiwan, the seventh month of the lunar calendar is thought to be the period when the dead and spirits are activated in the human world. The nature of this event, however, is very different in Japan and Taiwan on account of the object of the ritual that is, the dead, as noted by Mabuchi (1980). Following Japanise-influenced customs, shōlo in Yaeyama is a ritual of uniting the living and the dead and is full of a joyful, not a fearful, atmosphere. The ritual lasts for three days. The first day is for welcoming the spirits, the second day for entertaining, and the last day for sending them off.

Before the ritual, in the individual houses the villagers set up the altar of bon (plate 5.1), which is in front of the family altar and decorated with a special turning light, liquor and various bon cakes. The light, which is a contemporary device replacing the torch in the past, is used to lead the ancestors. During this occasion, sometimes relatives and friends visit the family of the acquainted to pay their respects to the dead. On three nights of the ritual, the villagers dress up in the traditional robe of kasubi, cover their faces with large handkerchiefs and put on hats. The intention is to dress up as angama, 'the dancers who cover their faces' and visit, as in the ritual of bon, mentioned in chapter four. The dancers, mostly females, tour the home of families who have invited them. They perform various dances facing the altar of the house and the elders of the village (usually males) who sit on the floor of the houses.
At first, the dance is processed in a circular formation, as is the case in Japan. The audiences, including villagers and tourists, are invited to join. The atmosphere is joyful and participatory. After this beginning bon dance, different programmes are performed. Except for some intentional arrangements, such as those performed by the members of the host house, most dances are decided on the spot. The villagers request certain individuals or programmes, which they have enjoyed very much. The purpose of dancing of angama is to comfort the soul of the dead. Despite this mission, sometimes it offers exciting moments to guess who the dancer is, especially if it is an unfamiliar returnee who has left the Island for a long time. Masked and exotic dances are performed by younger generations and always arouse great laughter.

At midnight on the third day, the ritual of sending off the spirits is held in individual families. All the members gather. The host of the house leads the members to thank the spirits that have joint them in obon and pray for blessings of the family. Food and drink is offered to the dead and then shared among family members. To send off the spirits, a pair of young sugarcane roots are necessary. In former days, the villagers went as far as to the graveyard to send off the spirits, a custom which is not usually seen currently. For Taketomians, ‘to entertain and send the ancestors off with great satisfactory’ is a critical factor of the ritual of bon. Mabuchi has concluded that ‘the ritual repeated every year would pave the way to a systemized memory of ancestors on the one hand and re-strengthen the ties interwoven among the kinsmen on the other’ (1980:15). His theory is somewhat functional, but he has paid attention to the timing of the rituals and their implications regarding the cosmological order.

By taking into account the beliefs ad customs still persisting among the people, we might postulate that the 6th, 7th, and the early 8th Month, ... were the season of welcoming the souls of the dead and the deities who came to partake of the newly harvested rice... Toward the end of this season after a series of rituals relevant to the harvest, the folk New Year’s day was celebrated to secure the fertility and prosperity for the coming year by appealing to the visiting deities and partially to the deified ancestors, rather than to the soul of the dead whom the people had more to appease. (pp.16-17)
That is, the adoption of \textit{bon} ritual, which is foreign to the local culture, is ‘charged with the task of control the traffic of such beings’ according to Mabuchi’s theory (p.17). The natural productive regime, the Chinese zodiac system, the Japanese Buddhist cosmology of time, are different cultural orders that Taketomians use to orient their time of social life. ‘Temporal orientation is, indeed, a function of social structure,’ as many anthropologists have noted (Gell 1992:82). In general, Mabuchi found that there has been a trend of ‘overmanipulation of [the] lunar calendar by the intellectuals’ in arranging annual rituals, taking into account inconsistent dates among the islands in Okinawa. To manipulate the date is to manipulate the natural as well as social order, as will be discussed shortly.

5.5 Time, Order and the Embodiment of Dancing

In Taketomi, the villagers are sensitive to manipulation of time and its connection with regimes of power, as shown in the case of \textit{tanadui}. The date of \textit{tanadui} is a result of negotiation among early chiefdoms. Nowadays in Taketomi, the ritual is held from the day of \textit{kinoe-saru} and lasts for nine days in the ninth month according to lunar calendar. The dates of the ritual, however, are not decided based on a purely cosmological consideration. It is decided in a competition among the early chiefs, a demonstration of the politics of time. According to oral tradition, when \textit{tanadui} was first held, the six chiefs practised their own rituals on different days. The most powerful chief, Nehara Konodono of Hazama village thought this situation was not good since it much wasted time and goods of villagers. He thought of integrating other villages to practise the event of \textit{taneoroshi}, ‘descending the seeds,’ of \textit{tanadui} on the same day of \textit{tsujinoe-ne} following his practice. At the end, only Kondui Karawa of Naji village refused his suggestion and still practised the ritual on different days. Nehara then thought of a plot. He married his sister to Kondui and asked her to do a trick in the wine, which was made specifically to worship the gods in \textit{tanadui}. On the day of \textit{tanadui}, when Kondui opened the jar of wine, he found the wine thin.
and not good. His wife, sister of Nehara then suggested to him that: ‘it must be the difference between days. My brother always practices *tanadui* on the day of *tsujinoene*. The wine he makes is always so tasty and thick, that even a chopstick would stand in the jar.’ Afterwards, Kondui was convinced and the day of ritual was changed to the same day as Hazama village from then onward.

The negotiation of dates of the ritual is actually that of regimes of power between Nehara Konodonono and Kondui Karawa, chiefs of Hazama and Naji respectively. Since then, *tanadui* in Taketomi has been held on the same days among villages. Nevertheless, the process of the ritual still reveals a competitive spirit between the villages of Hazama and Naji until today. *Tanadui* is a structured ritual complex. It can be divided into different parts: entering the ritual, preparing food, planting seeds, abstinence from certain foods and drinks on a certain day, performance and so on. The events are held on community, family and personal levels. For instance, preparation of ritualistic foods is mainly a family event. To express caution, avoidance of colourful drink and salt on a specific day is a personal regulation. Most events are still on a community level. If the practice is centered on a village, it is usually duplicated in another village. Therefore, for different villagers, the ritual is processed in different time schemes according to which they can arrange their own practices.

This is clearly the rule as far as the performances in the ritual are concerned. To offer performances to the gods does not contradict the aim to entertain themselves, at least so in the case of Taketomians. The villagers of Hazama and Naji, however, present their own performances during different spans, which are clearly separated.

You know how sharp the *shinkansen* [speedy train] in Japan used to be. The time of performance in *tanadui* is even more. In the past, when Hazama and Naji performed on the same day, people from these two villages would not give even a second to the other team. Before the last second of the set time, Hazama would not finish their turn. At the same time, villagers from Naji had begun to remind them of the time by making noise off stage. Once the set time was up, the Naji people would rush at the stage, change the screen and start their performance.
Nowadays, Hazama and Naji perform on the seventh and eighth days respectively. They still change their own screens and present their own programmes accompanied by their own musicians. From a morphological view, these two days of performances share the same aims—to entertain the Kami, so they can be seen as repeated events in time. For the specific village, however, the day of performance is unique and to make it unique in time is to present special performances. On the eighth day, that is, the day when Naji villagers present their performances, the schedule of the events is almost the same, except for a special ritual dance drama performed by Naji males on the stage for a limited audience, which is composed of the priestesses and male elders only. Performing shiduliani makes the day, not only the second day of honogeino, ‘the offered performances,’ but also a specific day for Naji villagers. It is a way to mark the day out of a ritual cycle whose time has been determined by a traditional opponent of Kondui, the symbolic chief of Naji village. Shiduliani is the ritual of time in tanadui, which tries to ‘rebel’ against the normal course of the ritual time. Since integration of ritual dates actually integrated villages in the past, so the competition of time means, to certain degree, competition between villages, as is clearly the atmosphere in tanadui.

The manipulation of time is not limited to the political sphere. It is a general characteristic of Taketomian social action. As far as the apprenticeship system of Okinawan classical dance is concerned, it is very much so. Both the traditional institutions of training of dance in Okinawa and Japan emphasize the role of the guru, sensei. The relationship between a guru and her/his pupils is similar to that between a father and his children or even between a king and his subjects. Loyalty and obedience are seen as proper demeanors toward the guru. In Japan, the systems of iemoto, ‘the origin of house,’ and natori, ‘getting the name,’ in traditional performing arts symbolize the relationship in the family. The pupils fulfill the obligations, both artistic and practical. Those who pass the examination required can be endowed with the ‘family name’ of the house. After modern Japanisation, the systems of iemoto and natori have been imported into Okinawa and applied overall in the schools of
Okinawan and Yaeyama dances.

Under this system, not only talent, but also time is a critical factor in deciding the hierarchy of the pupils. The guru usually assigns her/his long-term pupils as main assistants. Not everyone can receive the sensei’s guidance. The new pupils often find themselves learning a beginning piece for months. On some occasions, the time can be prolonged even longer. A lady expressed with a little anxiety that she had learned *Akamma bushi* for six months and her teacher still thought she needed to practise the piece many times.

The politics of maturity in terms of dancing is discussed by many scholars, including Spencer’s study (1996) on moranhood among Samburu people in Kenya of Eastern Africa. Moran means warrior and moranhood is a stage through which every Sambura males must pass. Only those who pass the moranhood can have wives. The boys who are near the age are especially eager to be initiated. Those who have been initiated, however, find themselves becoming a moran for as long as fourteen years, because the elders find moran threatening to their control of women, both unmarried and married.

The unfolding of events [dances of boys and moran] is geared to the rate at which boys mature and at which seasoned moran are prepared to settle down, which in turn is geared to the rate at which elders are prepared to relinquish their monopoly over marriage. There is no exact synchronisation of this process and no counting the years. The period of transition is one of adjustment to the inevitable in which the boys’ performance provides one of the more significant signals. (Spencer 1996:185)

Time becomes an asset. Those who are in the position of manipulating time have power. From this perspective, the Samburu and Okinawan people do not deviate from the Western culture of ‘time is money’ in that they all endow ‘time’ with a form of value. This is especially true as far as contemporary Taketomian social life is concerned. The calendar that orients the Taketomians’ clock of social life is not only based on the transition of natural seasons. It also reflects the social order, which is closely related to the structure of power. In addition to the traditional agrarian cycle
and political order of time, Taketomians nowadays also follow a Japanned and Westernized calendar. The Japanisation and Westernisation of time, however, bring in a new order of time, which manifests a new representation of power. A Taketomian now enjoys Christmas and takes a day off on the birthday of Japanese Empire (Tenno). Different orders of time are mixed and form a syncretic calendar according to which contemporary Taketomians schedule their social actions.

Moreover, the Japanese calendar features occasions such as the day for initiates, the day of young girls, the days of young boys, and the days for the old, which somehow compensates the lack of similar rites of passage in Okinawa. These days mark the transition of individuals at both personal and social levels. The contemporary Japanised calendar also highlights a new formation of seasons, as manifested in the tourism development in Taketomi. Since the main resource of tourists is Japanese, those Taketomians who are involved in the tourism business follow a schedule coincident with Japanese seasons. For these Taketomians, tourist seasons replace natural seasons. The days of a year are divided into two categories: *isogashii* and *hima*, which mean busy and slack seasons. The owner of a guest house says:

> It is during the winter, around January and February that most Japanese groups of tourists visit Taketomi. They are usually old people who head for the south to avoid the coldness in Japan. In summer, the tourists are usually young students. They come in individually to spend their summer vacation.

The 'Golden Week,' the first week of May, which is formed of a series of holidays and has become the most expected vacation by general workers in Japan is another peak season for those Taketomians who either run guest houses or restaurants. Women, who are in charge of the family and business at the same time can hardly be seen during this period. Involvement in tourism, therefore, requires Taketomians to accept a time scheme, which is sometimes contradictory with the others. Sume had run a restaurant for twenty years. She had experienced several stages of tourism in Taketomi and developed her own sociology of time as far as tourists are concerned.
Before the speedy ferries ran regularly, the business was prosperous. The tourists came and they need to have themselves fed. Taketomi is also popular as a destination for students’ trip. Sometimes I needed to provide hundreds of bento [lunch boxes] during a day. Now the connection is convenient. Tourists can either have their own order from Ishigaki, or they just stay for a morning and leave. The individual guests always flood in at noon. After four o’clock, nobody will need this service. Therefore between two and four o’clock I am much released.

Sume also mentioned that in former days, when the restaurant was in its peak condition and her children still young, it was very difficult to take care of them while serving food to the guests. She still felt sorry for her children. Many married women share the same situation, that is, they are running several levels of schedule at the same time, the ones of community, village and family. Most participating women can hardly have time to rest especially during the preparation for dance performance before tanadui. When asked why the preparation always started after eight o’clock at night, a female villager answered that it was only after finishing cleaning the dishes that women could dismiss themselves and attended the practice. Therefore life in Taketomi has been described isogashii (busy), especially for married women. For them, it is necessary to find out the economics of time that can make them fulfill their obligations. This skill of time control is something that is critical to the flow of movements in dance. In dancing, it is usually the married women who are required to master the skill of fulfilling a span of time with proper type of movements, while balancing between the outlet of energy and self-constraint.

On the occasion when Moto, the dance master in Innata, instructed a group of old females who were chosen to perform, as representing the association of the old, in an annual cultural festival in Okinawa, she found something was not quite so right in a piece of dance, taketomisotachi.

This dance is made for the younger people. You need to put more [energy] in it. The music is this long. But you danced like this way. [fig.5.1] You go here and stop too early. You have to prolong your movements to make it match with the music. [fig.5.2] This makes it like the dance.
fig. 5.1 the movement performed by the old in the dance of taketomisotachi

fig. 5.2 the ideal movement in the dance of taketomisotachi

Moto’s criticism clearly explains the rule of aesthetics of dance seen from its aspect of temporality. That is, the dance is not composed of movements which mark differences between body or limb positions. It is the flow of the whole dance that counts. Understanding this principle, then it becomes clearer with respect to the style of highly praised classical Okinawan dances, in which the movement is minimized, but the controlled energy is still visible. Similar skill of energy-control is also highly-evaluated in Javanian court performance (Hughes-Freeland 1997).
Therefore as far as the performance of most presentational dance is concerned, the role of accompanied music is critical since it largely delineates the flow of time. The process of embodiment of verse songs set the base for the temporality of dances. The advancement of dances and music highlight the different stages of training of temporality. For instance as mentioned previously, the beginners always learn Akamma bushi at first. The song is composed of two verses with the same rhythm. The tempo of this song throughout is very consistent and in a medium speed of about $\frac{1}{2} \ = 72$. The instrument of samisen offers stable beats that are easily countable for dancers.

Order and control, marked by stable beats of medium speed, are main characteristics shared by other wagashui such as Bashiituhi bushi and so on. This characteristic is one of the requirements to the dancers practicing these pieces, who are usually at a young stage from the perspective of both age and experience. Keeping dance in ordered time was not an eminent feature in the original style of Taketomian dance, which was produced in communal situation such as during social gatherings after agricultural labour, ritual and recreation. Take kachiashi as an example. This is a continuous sequence of hand movements of a certain type, which is in tempo rubato. The form of expression is free. It is still a popular practice for Okinawans on various social occasions. A Taiwanese who had lived in Ishigaki for fifty years described the scene of kachiashi dancing: ‘They look like they are crazy, these Yaeyama people. If people hear the sound of samisen on the street they will gather and start dancing immediately’.

Despite this criticism, trance was seldom seen and those yuta who performed trance were thought be not good shamans, according to Lebra (1966). On the other hand, Yaeyama people have been suffering from a stigma of lower time consciousness from the Japanese. In a tourist guidebook, the readers are suggested to be precautionary of the ‘Yaeyama time,’ which implies the inability to keep on time. The ordered music
and movements are clearly products of elite training in Okinawa culture. It is even more valued after Japanese colonism. Nowadays, most Yaeyama dances are accompanied by verses of songs. At the same time of adopting an ideology of order from both Okinawan and Japanese cultures, Taketomians adopt the value of ordered time at large and reflect it in their dance aesthetics. A similar argument has been mentioned by Buckland, following a Foucauldian notion of the constructed body, that through the spatio-temporal patterns of human movements, traces of social relations and the transformation effected by Western modernity are revealed (Buckland 1995). This point will be further discussed in the next chapter.

The advance of dance repertoire also advances the dancers’ skill of manipulating time in more versatile forms. Dances for males highlight a faster speed, the clear and strong beats usually marked by drummer. The temporality of male dances provide a sensual stimulus of energy and sharpness, which is not seen in wagashui. On the other hand, the classical dances of females are in slow tempo. The amount of movements in these dances is minimized and sometimes the transition between movements is hardly visible. Compared with the dances of males, female dances mean more demands on the dancers as far as the skill of self-constraint is concerned. It is usually in a later period that the dancers can manage to handle this kind of dances. For some islanders, being expert in a certain kind of dance rather than others may be due to individual physical features or characters. For instance, Niku is an old woman of nearly seventy. She used to be very good at performing male dances. She can sense the strong beat of music in sharp. Mako, another old woman of a similar age told me that she could only dance the male dance of faster tempo, while describing herself as wagamama, ‘self-willed’. In addition, the expertise in dance of slow speed is also decided by the dancers’ degree of maturity and accumulation of experiences at large.

The young cannot dance mututarakuji. They are not mature enough and they do not have enough experience. They cannot express the slowness, which is the expression of feeling from the heart.
The temporality of the dance, which is expressed through the flow of music, is not only a physical goal of time that a dancer needs to reach. According to my own experience of embodying Akamma bushi, music provides a temporal measurement but does not determine the speed of movements. Nobody counts beats. Certain amounts of movements and steps are practised toward an end. It is the dancers’ individual temporality which counts. Dancers in Taketomi, therefore, take training not only from dance classes, which they can seldom afford considering their various responsibilities and limited time. In dance practice, they refine their skill of time manipulation which is gained from their social experiences that are molded by different cultural orders and cultural categories.

When asked about the feature of fast speed in certain dances which depict the folk life of Taketomians and Yaeyama in general, a villager answered: ‘that’s because we used to be peasants (nomin)’. The peasantry is a historical symbol which connotes the regime of production, the political structure, the cosmology of time and the habitus. In this term is embedded a whole system of culture. Even though there are not many peasants in Taketomi, the songs and the dances still activate the peasant culture in contemporary performances. Many Okinawan classic songs have been transformed into a faster version and made into dance in Yaeyama. That is, music and dance has its own historicity and its own temporality. As shown in this chapter, the formation of traditional Taketomian dance was embedded in a historical process and hence arbitrary. This cultural system, carrying property of order that was favoured in the aristocratic past, is enhanced in contemporary Okinawa which is under another regime of power, Japan. In dancing, the villagers embody the notion of order and reproduce new experiences in which the boundary between the past and the present becomes obscure.
Notes

1 There are several different versions of *Asatoya bushi* among the islands in Yaeyama. Different versions of stories are also spread. For instance, in the Taketomian context, Kuyama, the beauty of Asatoya, refused the official of *Misashu* because she had been promised to a local official. In another version, Kuyama is said to refuse because she would rather marry a local and stay in her home island forever (Zengoku Taketomi Bunka Kyōkai 1998: 101). There is, however, another version of the story that Kuyama refused the official because 'she would wait for another official who was of higher rank', according to a conversation with a dance master in Ishigaki (See Chapter Seven for more details).

2 The Chinese zodiac system as described on page 12 of this chapter is itself a geomantic system. That is, the twelve characters divide the space into twelve directions. The direction of ne (rat) is N. For a clearer explanation of the geometric system, see Ouwenhand 1985:9.

3 The direction of the body was toward the north originally. It was changed into the west because of an imitation of the king of Ryukyu Kingdom. The custom, however, was not very popular among Taketomians in general (Kamei 1988:384-385).

4 There is only one Buddhist priestess in Taketomi, who inherited her father’s position about fifteen years ago.

5 For further explanation of this relationship between sensei and the pupils, and the apprenticeship systems of *iemoto* and *natori*, see Haven 1982 and Sellers-Young 1993.
CHAPTER SIX  The Dancing Bodies of Taketomians

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have tried to explore Taketomian conceptions of space and time, which explicates ideas on how the dancing is formed based on a specific cosmology. To formulate the Taketomian theory of dancing, nevertheless, another indispensable element, and the most primary one, is the body. There is no dancing without the body. As some scholars have noted, the concepts of body differ according to the approach selected (Shilling 1993). Nevertheless, instead of viewing the body as a natural symbol, I shall focus on the notion of 'the body in movement,' as Merleau-Ponty points out:

By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passive to space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplaceness of established situations (1962: 112).

In this chapter, 'the body' is apprehended as a self-activated physical and social existence than merely a static biological entity. Moreover, it is the body 'never fully finished,' following Bourdieu's notion: while the body is implicated in society, 'it is constantly affected by social, cultural and economic processes' (Shilling 1993:133). Examining of how this never-finished body is perceived and presented in the Taketomians' life therefore sheds light on the body that is performed, transformed, and negotiated in the process which Taketomians describe as dancing.

6.2 'Two Bodies' of Taketomians

As briefly introduced in the last chapter, Taketomians go through a series of rites de passage which reflect social awareness of transition between individual life stages. The transition of social status is usually expressed through symbolism of the body.
The transition of natural seasons is a main resource for the symbolisation of the human body in Taketomian society. ‘Flowers bloom in March or April, women bloom at [the age of] seventeen or eighteen,’ sings a local song. In opposition, winter is always thought to be connected with withering and death. ‘The old especially have a bad time in the winter. They are so nervous when the severe season comes. That’s why sometimes the old cannot pass the winter,’ commented a Taketomian.

The Taketomians also use the experiences they gain during the process of interaction with their natural environment as exegeses of their own bodily experiences. As mentioned in chapter four, the sea is an indexical element in Okinawan belief. It is also a rich symbol in terms of the Okinawan conception of the body. Okinawans believe the ocean is the origin of life, a notion that is repeatedly put into the public sphere, such as commercial advertisements on the TV. Most Okinawans use the term uminchu, ‘the people of the sea,’ to refer themselves. Nowadays, this term is also inscribed on the T-shirts worn by many youngsters as a fashion. In Taketomi, many people have described that they cannot live without the sea. ‘If there is one day I do not come to the beach, I will feel something is wrong and cannot sleep,’ or ‘I cannot leave the sea for more than a week. Every time I went to Tokyo, I only stayed there for no more than one week.’

Also in the Taketomian worldview, human life is closely related to the sea, especially through the female body. The sea is thought to represent the womb. On not only one occasion, informants have tried to explain this metaphor of the womb as the sea. ‘Women’s bata [the womb] is like the sea. We all come from the sea. The salty water of the sea is the just like the water surrounding the baby in the womb’. According to some older villagers, if a woman gives birth to a baby, the baby is always thought to be born when it is in high tide, and hence the image of ‘the ocean brings life’ is reinforced. The relationship between life and the sea is reflected in the importance of salt, not only as an indispensable daily supplement, but also as a significant ritualistic food on many occasions.

Furthermore, the sea is the place to rejuvenate oneself by rejuvenating one’s body, a concept which the following oral tradition explains. Once upon a time, a snake was
transformed into a handsome man and visited a girl every night. Not long afterwards, the girl found herself conceiving the child of the man whose name she had not even known. To find out the man’s identity, her aunt advised her to tie a string on the man’s hair when he slept. One night the girl did as her aunt said. The next day after the man left, she traced the string to a cave by the sea. She then astonishingly found that her mate had transformed into a huge snake and was boasting of his ‘achievement’ in front of the other snake. ‘Look how brilliant I am. I have made a human woman pregnant and carrying my descendent.’ ‘Don’t be too certain about that. Human beings are very intelligent. If they find out that you are not their species but a snake, the girl will just go to the sea and use the water to wash her body, then she will wash off your descendent.’ On hearing this, the girl went down to the shore and washed her body with the sea water.

The ritual of sangatsu sannichi, ‘the third day of the third month,’ is held based on this legend. Until today, on the third day of the third month according to the lunar calendar, females in Taketomi go to the seashore. They prepare foods and find company, either family, relatives or friends. They do not, however, wash their bodies in any practical sense. Most villagers now treat the day as another occasion for a family gathering, and especially for the activity of seaweed picking, since specifically on this day every year, the sea tide in southern Okinawa retreats to its lowest level. Many villagers go to the sea shore to pick up mozuku (Nemacystus decipiens, a seaweed of the family Spermatochnacene, which is highly ramified into fine filaments). Nowadays mozuku is famous among Okinawans and even the Japanese for its immunising effect.

The above folktale reveals the notion that females have vulnerable bodies. On the other hand, male bodies are related to characteristics such as strength and so on, which can be exemplified in the jūgoyasai, ‘the ritual of the fifteenth night’. This ritual is based on another legend. On one night of the fifteenth day, there were two men who walked home together. Suddenly, one man was struck to find that the shadow of his companion had disappeared. Without a single clue why this was the situation, the man without the shadow went back home. He was still confused by this phenomenon and managed to figure out what had happened to his shadow. Suddenly
he noticed that behind him there was another shadow, which was not his. There was another man standing behind him. He then was able to escape from the man who intended to kill him. The man without the shadow then fought with the killer, whom he killed in reverse. At the end he found that the killed man was committing adultery with his wife, and hence intended to murder him. If he had not been deprived of his shadow, he would not have noticed the murderer behind him and could have been killed. Then, the man knew that the moon had saved his life by warning him beforehand.

The shadow is a representation which exists as a sign of the normal body. The disappearance of the shadow implies the abnormality of the physical body as well as social relationships tied to social bodies. Based on this legend, the ritual of jūgoyusai is held every year. This event specifically focuses on masculinity: characters of erection, strength and endurance. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in each village, a tall pole which is nearly 3.5 metres long is presented. This pole is usually stored in the village house, kaigan. It is hung up and attached to the main pole of the roof in the kaigan which is built in the traditional style. On the top of this pole, the emblem of the village is attached. Three villages have different emblems: for Ainota it is the sun, because the village is in the direction where the sun comes up; for Innata it is the dragon, and for Naji, two springing fish. In each village, the emblem is only constructed on this day every year, and the relevant technique and knowledge is exclusively transmitted among the males. From the early morning, the males, usually elders, gather in the kaigan and start to construct the emblem. The younger males come during the intervals of their job, to learn how to construct the emblem. At the same time, the long pole is decorated with a colourful flag written with Chinese characters with auspicious meanings, such as glory, brightness, harvest, and so on.

The head of the citizen centre announces, through broadcasting equipment, the time when the procession begins. The ritual formally begins when the processions of three villages move toward the school. During the procession, the pole, attached with the constructed emblem, is erected by a man, who puts the pole on a hole of the knot of the belt specially tied around his waist. He then must manage to keep the pole as upright as possible, by lowering his centre of gravity and moving in a springing
fashion. The task is very difficult and tiring as the pole is made of thick bamboo and very heavy. The young males of the village gather around and take turns to carry the pole. When the three villages meet each other in front of the school, to show off their energy to each other, they still continue to erect their poles in a boastful manner, encouraged by the other villagers. Later on they enter the school and reach the playground. Then each pole is erected on the ground in a specific corner to mark the territory of each village.

Then the next practice starts. Male members of each village gather together and raise a wooden platform on their shoulders. The three villages present their own performances on the platform in turn. Afterwards, several female villagers who are in traditional Okinawan dress step on the platform and are transported on the platform lifted by the males between groups of villagers to serve them wine. All these demeanours highly celebrate the strength of males. At the end, the final practice is called sunahigi, ‘pulling the rope’. Two thick ropes, a male suna and a female suna, are closely intertwined. The villages compete with each other in pairs. In addition to the rich symbol of intertwined suna, this is definitely the best occasion to celebrate fertility, since the number of the group largely decides the result of the competition.

Male fertility has also been used as a symbol in other agricultural rituals, such as tanadui, ‘getting the seeds’. During several performances in the ritual, the villagers sing the song of harvest, to ‘make the buds erect upright’. Some local scholar suggest that the term uri, ‘to erect,’ is believed by some local scholars to be borrowed from the Chinese term u’li, which specifically means a male’s erection (see Gell 1975 for a similar example in Umeda, New Guinea). The term is often heard in the ritual while the planting of seed, which implies the semen, is symbolically practised.

Human bodies not only reflect the natural order, they are often the receptors of supernatural influences, according to Taketomian notions. Even now, most Taketomians believe that bodily symptoms are closely related to the supernatural world. For example, if a villager repeatedly stays in hospital for months without exactly knowing the causes, Taketomians usually speculate that ‘something must be wrong with the family’. Ota has recorded a ritual of healing in Kuroshima in a similar
situation (Ota 1984:1-6). Among others, the body of the tsukasa is thought to be especially sensitive to the intention of kami. Hani, who is currently a tsukasa, described her own experience.

When I was at the age of fourteen, I knew I was chosen as the inheriting tsukasa. Why did I know of it? Because suddenly I got some problems with my eyes. I could not focus and something obstructed my sight. My parents were nervous and they did not know anything about the reason. Then a yuta told me, it was because I was chosen as the tsukasa. I have not left the Island since then because of this duty. But I did not take the position immediately after my oba [senior women, in this context her predecessor] passed away. I told the kami that I still had my husband and the family to be taken care of. At last, I only took over the position after my husband died.

Himu shared a similar experience but in a different form of bodily disorder. Her grandmother was a tsukasa, but she knew nothing about being the successor of the position before her grandmother passed away. She was living in Yamatu (Japan proper), and for a long while she could feel something was wrong in her body that ‘I felt no energy for life. It was like I was going to die.’ Then a female relative came to her one day and told her the news that the kami needed her in Taketomi. ‘I then came back to the Island with my little son’. Himu, however, never articulates what happened to her husband.

The relationship between the bodily disorder (and even social order) of the tsukasa and their religious experience is a critical issue to the understanding of Taketomian cosmological symbolism, but a difficult topic to delve, partly because of the reluctance of the tsukasa in talking about their ‘secret’ experiences. For example, Himu was very articulate and humorous. Most of the time she was willing to teach people about the details of rituals and the kami. Whenever the topic turned to her own experiences, however, she refused to go into details.

On the contrary, in general, Taketomians never shied away from commenting on people’s or even their own bodies. Once I was struck by the sincerity of an old lady who shared with me one of the most private experiences of her body in the presence of another male guest whom she had only met for the first time. Sometimes physical properties serve as the reference to identify individuals at large. When I tried to ask
about Himu's son, I was answered: 'he probably has a Japanese father. Look at his skin. It is very white.' Bodily properties are not only biological phenomena; they are closely related to self- or social identity.

The Japanese women have very white skin, even the farmers. When they are working in the fields, they wrap every part of their faces, and leave only the eyes. But in Okinawa, we didn't cover anything except for the heads. So our skin was darker. But now most young women in Okinawa have paid attention to how to avoid the sunshine. Therefore their skin turns whiter.

This above comment expresses how bodily experiences can be moulded by social ones and vice versa, as articulated by Mary Douglas who pioneered the anthropological study of the body:

The social body constraints the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experiences so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The form it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in many-folded ways (1982:65).

6.3 Gendered Bodies and the Habitus of Taketomians

Among Taketomians, the primary category in terms of social division is that between genders, even across different age groups. The above legends and the practices reveal the basic gender ideology, which is rooted in the physical difference between men and women, and on which a society such as that of Taketomians operates. The ideology, as shown through various social demeanours, is hardly equal but is constantly reinforced by bodily practices.

Some research on spatial division between genders tends to classify males as outward and females as inward (Bourdieu 1977:122). In Taketomi, or in Okinawa generally, females have long been involved in the 'outward' side of the world, too. Historical documents record that, except for females in noble class, women were the main
characters in the markets and they were the ones who contributed to the family economy. At present, Okinawa women still have the highest percentage of female labour among Japanese provinces. In Taketomi, women still engage with the family economy since tourism has become the main business in the island. They run guesthouses, hotels, and restaurants, and even drive minibuses transporting tourists as the men do. During the day, the women do all the cleaning, food-preparation and related servicing, and after the evening, they have to take care of their own family members. Aprons, hence, are the most frequent dresses worn by females in Yaeyama, even when they are seen in banks or post offices. For those females who are not involved in the tourist business, they still have to take on domestic duties. On one occasion when I visited a male villager, we waited for nearly half an hour for his wife, who is a hairdresser and was busying working, to finish her job only to serve us tea. In the Taketomians’ view, it is not appropriate for men to walk into the kitchen or serve the guest food and drink. ‘We men only wait for the women to serve us.’

Among different categories, gender is clearly the primary criterion which is used to orient a person’s behaviour. There were several times when a male honourable guest visited my landlord’s house. As the only available female adult, I was ordered to prepare and serve drink and food, despite the fact that I was also a stranger to the house. Even the tsukasa are not exempt from this primary categorisation of gender which manifests itself in their practices of office. Most of the time, the tsukasa play the role of serving food to the kami. They are also the ones who keep detailed knowledge on which kind of food should be prepared during certain rituals. From this perspective, they play the role which has continuity, in terms of body practices, in other social spheres, and they are not superior to the males.

The superiority of male status and inferiority of female status is most clearly seen in the use of space and bodily posture in the public field. In a domestic ritual, women never sit in the front part, that is, the first and the second parlours, of the house. If the gathering is held in the village centre, men and women always sit separately, so do the married couples. In the case of village houses, kaigan, men always sit in the front, and women and children at the back. In the kaigan of which the floor is covered with tatami, whenever there is a formal speech, inaugurated by men, or worshipping,
inaugurated by the tsukasa, everyone pays attention by humbly kneeling. In terms of
postures, both men and women respectfully kneel when they are worshipping the kuni. After bowing to the altar and reception of food, wine, or salt, the men usually
discharge themselves from the respectful postures, while the women still keep the
humble postures until the males leave. On one occasion when I attended the rehearsal
of dances in the kaigan of Naji, several old female villagers were invited by the
instructors, as a convention, to watch and give marks to the younger generations.
They kept kneeling and only extended their legs after the male leader, who is much
younger than they are, left the venue. As a result of the constrained body posture,
many old women in Taketomi suffer from leg pain after a certain age.

The division of bodily practices gives an impression that in Taketomi society, females
are more controlled than the males. This is also true during the process of
socialisation of younger generations. For instance, on public occasions, mothers are
always attentive to their daughter’s posture to see if they place their legs appropriately.
At the same time, the boys are left alone no matter how they behave. In terms of the
training of dance, young girls also receive more severe training than the boys of
similar ages, a point which will be pursued further later. The reason is not that girls
are required for better performances but that they are thought more tolerant and
patient and hence accessible to be trained to be even more self-constrained or self-
controlled.

Gender division is also a main factor in terms of the division among performing arts
in Taketomi. Generally in Okinawa, males dominate the playing of samisen, the three-
string lute, and classical music. In Taketomi, dramas for men and dances for women
have become a rule. Nevertheless, this division is a recent development. Until 1879
A.D., when the island was still under sovereignty of the Kingdom and social
separation was even stronger, females were completely prohibited from dancing,
especially the female members of noble families (Miyagi 1972). The females, ‘could
only be tsukasa,’ said a village. It was only when the females gathered in the inner
part of the on, they could dance in the woods beside the shrine, but without spreading
a word about it in their daily lives. ‘Afterwards, when the males were deeply involved
in the world of drama, they found they could not manage to change clothes during the
intervals between programmes. Then the females started to perform dancing,’ explained a female villager.

Take the annual ritual, tanadui, as an example. Among two-day performances which are constituted of more than sixty programmes and presented by three villages and the returnees from Ishigaki, Okinawa and Tokyo, male villagers mainly perform dramas and female villagers perform dances. In the dance programmes, female villagers’ movements are always well practised and presented. The dances that have been presented always maintain the ideal gender premises that are well kept through movements and costumes, no matter that the character is a warrior, an official or a woman. The appreciation from the audience is always because of the perfect re-enactment of what is thought appropriate and correct. Sometimes the audiences just engage in their own conversation without paying attention to the dancer(s) on the stage. In the dance performance, in tanadui and other contexts, female performers have little room to create what is new and unusual. On the contrary, the males usually make fun of the gendered characters in the dramas which usually have conventional forms but full of possibilities for improvisation. Through both linguistic and body expressions, they make fun of different genders by using a male body to perform a clumsy female, or a male character with funny movements. The audiences also pay more attention whenever the drama is performed. Here then we have both the structure and anti-structure, taking Turner’s terms, performed on the same stage in the same ritual. The images of gender are both appropriated and mocked, through the gendered performances. As a whole, the male as the body who creates and evokes, and the female as the one who maintains is evident through many aspects of performances in Taketomi.

Gender ideology is not only reflected in the division of labour in the field of performances, it is also internalised in the gendered world of the dance. Okinawan presentational dance is exclusively the character dance. As a dancing body, the dancer always carries with her/himself the gendered property, including dressing, props, and movement vocabulary. The gendered features are manifested in the system of classification of traditional Okinawan dance as the dances of youth, males, females, and the old. This scheme gives a clear idea that the dance is role-oriented and the
means to express different roles are mainly through movements and costumes. From the perspective of movement, in Okinawan dances, gendered movements can be traced through the feet positions and the quality of the movements. For instance, in the male characters' dance, the dancers usually stand in an open position, that is, the legs open as wide as the shoulder and the feet turned out. In the female dance, this position is never seen. Instead, the feet are always positioned like a T-shape when a static posture is presented.

Even though the male and female dances share similar patterns of hand movements, the dance is differently expressed through the expression of gendered bodies. Take the performance of the Akamma bushi, which is performed by both males and females, as an example. In the ceremony of celebration for the junior high school of Taketomi, which recently won a national prize for its outstanding cultural curriculum which embraces the transmission of traditional performing arts, the head of the PTA (Parents’ and Teachers’ Association) and the school principal danced Akamma bushi together as the opening piece. From the perspective of movement quality, a division was clearly visible. The male PTA leader presented a position of arms which implied more quality of opening than the constraint seen in the female principal. The male leader also showed more punctuation on each movement, while the female principal kept the dance as stable and flowing as it could be.

Beyond the movements, the gendered difference in the dance must be sensed in an extremely subtle and abstract way. When asked what the difference between the male and female dances is, a teacher replied:

Well, the female dance is elegant. You must express the femininity (onarashisa). To be the character is to dance beautifully, because it is the female dance. Moreover, the sight of the dancer is not raised up. The sight must be lowered down a little bit. Even when it flows upward, keep it as gentle (yasashii) as possible. That is the difference. In the male dance, the male must be magnificent (dōdō). If not danced magnificently, the dance does not become the male dance.

Especially in the classical dance, the division between the female and the male bodies on the stage is manifested. It will be useful to clarify different genres of dances
practised in Taketomi, which have been formed under different historical and social conditions, and hence produced very different class habitus. In brief, two genres of dances are performed in Taketomi. The first genre is the presentational dance which includes traditional Okinawan and Yaeyama dances. The Okinawan classical dance, which has its root in the court tradition, is itself embedded with a specific habitual body. As elaborated in Chapters Two and Five, the presentational dance in Yaeyama was developed by some officials who had been immersed in aristocratic training in the Kingdom. The training of the aristocratic class was influenced by Chinese Confucianism, that is, to cover skills such as reading and writing literature, music, dancing, and so on. Among these skills, it was through training of the body that virtues such as obedience and self-control were achieved. The training of the body was apparently aimed at producing the virtue of loyalty, which was critical to the survival of the hierarchical structure formed in the Kingdom period. The extreme example is the twenty-two hand gestures of Kin'ō Ryū, ‘the Kin’ō School,’ in which the terminology emphasised the concept of ‘loyalty’ through different bodily gestures.

This genre of Okinawan dance was then imported and developed by some exiled officials and their pupils into the Yaeyama dance, in which the structure and formation were similar to those of Okinawan court dance. Nowadays it is still popularly practised among Taketomians. In fact, Taketomi has boasted of its maintenance of the ‘classic’ genre of both dance and drama performances. It is not difficult to find, in classical Okinawan dances, especially the female ones, that there is a great economy of movement. That is, the number of movements is as small as possible and much time is devoted to the presentation of the well-dressed dancer(s).

On the contrary, gendered differentiation is less manifested in the ‘folk’ genre of dance. Dances belonging to this category include gali, kachiashi, and kuichia. All these dances are group dances and there is no gendered division in terms of the movement or formation. These dances belong to the folk tradition which is closely related to the peasant past. In Taketomi, although real peasants have decreased, the villagers never hesitate to show their ‘peasantry habitus,’ especially in their repertoire of dance and drama performances. A specific habitus was moulded by the life style of the peasantry, such as the frequent use of hand labour to produce food. To emphasise
the movement motif of *konerite*, ‘the kneading hand’ in Okinawan dance, a villager explains:

*Koneri* [kneading] means *hataraki* [labour]... No matter what we are doing, to make rice balls, or to mix the flour, every labour is to do with the movement of kneading. Moreover, if you are kneading a hand towel, you also use the hand movement of *koneri*. Therefore every labour is related with the *konerite*.

The difference between the genres of classic and folk dances is also reflected in the speed of movement. Many Okinawan folk dances have a faster tempo as an eminent feature.

In the past, when most of the villagers were peasants, they needed to move quickly. For existence, you have to finish all your work before the moon comes out. That is why we can move so fast [in the dance].

That is, although the Taketomias do not use aesthetic vocabulary, the division between the classical and the folk genres of dance is the result based on certain principles of ‘distinction,’ in Bourdieu’s term (1984). It stores codes rooted in the habitual bodies of various social origins: between genders and social classes such as the nobles and the peasants. The division has both synchronical and diachronical facets of implication. It marks, on the one hand, the differences among groups that co-exist at the same period. On the other hand, different genres together form a totality of notions of the body that was inscribed on the bodies of the past but can only be memorised in the bodies of the present. The re-enactment of the dances that carry the specific habitual memory becomes the ‘commemorative ceremonial’ (Connerton 1989). At the same time the participants all appropriate or moderate their notions of the body, which bear the historical and social inscriptions that are different from those of their predecessors.

This task is somehow not easy as the Taketomians find themselves crossing various social boundaries to become embodied with the categories of movements, to which they do not originally belong. Daishin and Koichi were two boys at the ages of sixteen and fifteen respectively. They had been taught traditional dances for several years before they entered the junior high school. As most young boys in contemporary
Japanese society, both were quite obsessed with sports such as soccer. The boys on the Island usually gathered and played soccer or baseball together after school hour. Encouraged by their parents, Daishin and Koichi participated in most practices and formal performances. It was obvious, however, as they gained height and became big boys, that there was always conflict between themselves and the characters they played, sometimes female ones, in the dances. The conflict, as shown between the requirement of the close position of the arms and their free bodies which carried an open quality, was difficult to hide. On another occasion, the highly delicate hand gestures holding prop, such as fans, could become difficult as well for these boys who were never trained in similar fashion to the girls, and even their predecessor. This example explicates Mauss' idea (1973), which is further articulated in Bourdieu's book (1984), that different generations or social classes, who have undergone very different schemes of bodily discipline, may show correspondingly a different habitus. The conflict and negotiation between these habitus, as will be shown below, is embedded in the process of embodiment of dancing, in which the notion of 'the Taketomian body' is gradually formed.

6.4 Discipline of Dancing and Formation of the Taketomian Body

In Okinawa, a popular saying is that an Okinawan child learns to dance before s/he can walk. Most Okinawan children have plenty of opportunity in their daily lives to witness the practices of body expression in different forms. In the case of Taketomians, various social gatherings and rites de passage, such as annual religious rituals, weddings, birthday celebrations and so on, provide occasions for children to experience body practices in dances or dramas. Most Taketomian children are encouraged to perform. The culture they are embedded in provides an encouraging environment reminiscent of that depicted by Mead in Samoa Island (1928). Under the enculturation of daily life, the result is quite remarkable sometimes. One of the most impressive performances I have witnessed was a 'reconstruction' of a Japanese drama, Sōgō Kyōdai, 'the brothers of Sōgō,' which is performed every year during the ritual of tanadui, by three children while they were playing in the kindergarten. Three children—one six-year-old boy, two girls, one of six and one of five—gathered
together and performed an episode of the drama. They repeated what had been said, sung and played on the stage very eloquently. At the end, all the teachers gathered and appreciated this performance which had impressed everyone.

In addition, acculturation in the family also contributes to the embodiment of movements to a child, even from a very early age. Fumi, who is nearly three years old, is the first granddaughter of Zashin family in Naji village, which has actively participated in traditional performances. Fumi’s grandmother, Sachiyo, was the master of dance in Naji village, and her grandfather is a core member of the kyōn’in (drama) department in the same village. Fumi has stayed with her grandmother for most of the time since she was born. She has been able to do kachiashi well since the age of one. Every time when she hears the music of samisen playing, her wrists begin to twist as most adults do. Whenever Fumi performs her kachiashi, she gets much applause from the adults.

Kachiashi is the movement pattern with a loose form of wrist twisting accompanied by free foot stepping, which has become one of Okinawa’s characteristic performances. It is mostly performed as the finale of a group dance in different social gatherings. At the end of the group dance, the samisen musicians play a certain melody in a fast tempo. Then the dancers begin to twist their wrists in turn. Everyone has her/his own style of doing kachiashi. Some dancers even display ecstasy as the tempo speeds up toward the final climax. For Fumi, kachiashi was her first lesson in Okinawan movement. She was embodied with it before she could even walk. And she has been able to perform it in a ‘natural’ way, that is, whenever she hears the music she just raises her hands. In contrast, Reni, a Japanese girl who immigrated from Tokyo six years ago, expressed her hesitation at practising kachiashi. Although Reni has been learning samisen playing for several years and Yaeyama dance for several months, she thinks ‘kachiashi is the most difficult movement in Okinawan dance’ (plate 6.1).

The gap between Fumi’s mastery and Reni’s hesitation is scarcely due to personal talent, for on many other occasions the outcomers, mostly the married wives who are
not of Taketomian origin, share Reni’s experiences. Even those who are from Okinawa proper may never have seen similar performances before.

Because of the change of era, the population is declining, there are only a few Island people left. But there are many girls who married in from outside. They don’t know anything about the culture of the island. They haven’t heard the music before. They haven’t seen dance like this kind before. As adults, they have hard heads, it’s not easy to teach them. However, the second or third generations who are born here, they have listened to the music since birth, and their moving [ugoki] is the same as the island people. They are as the same as the island children. When they are taught to dance, they remember it by their bodies, not by heads.

These comments made by an instructor reveal her definition of ‘the Taketomian body’. Nevertheless, even the ‘legitimate’ Taketomian bodies cannot avoid the impact brought by contemporary influences on their habitus. Taketomians think, originally, it was not necessary to teach the children to dance. ‘When I was three, I started to dance, in the yard, while I was playing. Children always learned when they were playing.’ The best way to embody a dance is through bodily practice by repetition. A villager who used to teach the students dance said: ‘kids can learn very quickly, even with the music that they are not familiar with at all. The first, second time, maybe they ask ‘ah? ah?’ But the fourth time they can do it clearly’. Nevertheless, this ‘natural’ process of embodiment of dancing is largely changed:

You see, now the children always play with computers after school. They do not move anymore. Geino [performing arts] become specialised. It was never specialised in the past. In the past, every child played what it had seen of the adults doing. They stepped into dance easily. There was little to be taught. Now you have to teach them everything, from the very beginning!

A gap also appears in terms of attitudes towards authority—the dance teacher or instructors—between the older and younger generations. Almost all the teachers/instructors in villages reflect the difference in attitude towards learning dancing between their own experiences and those of the younger generation:

In the past, it was more difficult to be chosen as the dancer who could perform in the tanadui. Even to learn dance only was a big occasion. It was always through many efforts that a teacher would promise to teach you. We needed to
prepare a dish full of delicious foods and our parents led us to the front of the teacher and bowed very honourably to teacher. Nowadays the situation changed greatly. The younger generation do not appreciate your effort. It is like you’re not giving them something but begging them to learn. It is very different from the past.

What has caused a conflict here, then, is not a purely body matter of who has the appropriate body for dancing. In contemporary Okinawans’ point of view, to embody a dance, especially the classical dances, body training is only a part of it, but not complete. This is based on the philosophy of body and soul.

The body [karata] of a human being is as the same as the shape [katachi]. In it there is the soul [tamashii]. If there is no content [nakami] in it, then it’s empty [kara]. Therefore, when the human being is dead, the body becomes empty [kara ta].

Before delving into the philosophy of body articulated here, it is necessary to clarify several concepts related to the Taketomian view of what forms the body. Taketomians have a system of anatomical metonyms in terms of the parts of the body. The head (atama) is a locus which contains intelligence ability, such as memory. The heart (kokoro) is for affection and feeling, such as ‘we human beings speak different languages, but we have only one heart’. ‘With only one heart’ hence becomes a metaphor of co-operation and sharing, which is often heard in Taketomian statements. The limbs are thought to be the most eminent parts of the body. They are the first sign of the human beings’ existences. For instance, a villager said ‘when the baby is born, only after when its hands (te) and feet (ashi) are seen to be normal then the family will relax’. Hands and feet, as mentioned above, are also instrumental in carrying out various labours.

While dancing, the limbs are the primary measure of a dancer’s mastery. When the Taketomians pray to the kami before their performances, they always pray for ‘no mistake of hands and feet’. To see if the dancers co-operate with each other well, Taketomians use the expression such as ‘the hands are matching,’ or ‘the feet do not match’. The process of the embodiment of dancing, however, involves different parts of the body as a whole. The term ‘to embody’ in Japanese, minitsukeru, is always emphasised by the dance instructors. The process, which highlights the characteristics
of kinaesthetic experiences as multi-sensory, includes: seeing, listening, practising, and remembering, which cover the activities of different bodily parts. The final goal of this process is *minitsukeru*, an achievement which is expressed by Taketomians as ‘to make the dance my own’.

On the other hand, *tamashii*, the Japanese term, can be translated into ‘the soul’ or ‘the spirit’ in different contexts. It is a Japanese concept. The most remarkable application of this term happened during the Second World War when the Japanese suicidal air force proved their patriotism by destroying their bodies. Until today, many Japanese still believe the *tamashii* is transcendental and immortal while the body is apt to corrupt. *Tamashii* as the spirit, such as in ‘Taketomian *tamashii*’ is usually promoted whenever the villagers find the necessity to reinforce identity and unity, such as in various competitions. Based on this philosophy which certainly has strong Japanese influence, the bodily training of Okinawan traditional dance is never merely polishing of skills. In some extreme cases, the pupil has to undertake many services for their master before s/he is thought ready to start. The mastery of practices, such as serving tea, cleaning the floor, is the pre-requirement to the embodiment of dancing. This is to make the dancer’s body, as well as her/his soul, meet the highly valued aesthetic standards, such as justice and so on. The discipline to the body as a micro scheme of power machinery is mostly articulated in Foucault’s arguments.

Rather than seeing this soul as the reactivated remnants of an ideology, one would see it as the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body. It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those...one supervises, trains, and corrects, over...children at home and at school, the colonised...... This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. (1991[1977]:29)

According to Foucault, the non-corporal soul is not a substance, but a reality. A ‘soul’ inhabits a person and brings her/him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy, and ‘the prison of the body’ (1991[1977]:30).
Foucault’s notion is applicable to examining the body disciplines in Taketomians’ daily life in general, and in dancing specifically. As discussed above, the tradition of court dance in Okinawa was developed within a strict class separation in the Kingdom period. It is noteworthy that in the Kingdom there was no disciplinary mechanism such as an army. The Kingdom had been a vulnerable state, and to protect itself the best way was to give up any form of resistance in advance. Okinawans were well known among the Europeans as ‘the people without weapons’. The internal structure of the political state was, however, only centralised after ending the condition of chiefdoms, which was quite unstable at the beginning. The development of court dance reached its high peak in the early to middle eighteenth century when the Kingdom was internally centralised. The disciplinary of court dance, which was not only based on body training but also focused largely on the moulding of a loyal and obedient soul, then can be seen as a critical factor in the maintenance of political domination.

Surveillance on the body, and hence the soul, is one feature that is manifested in the process of embodiment of the court dances. It still functions, nevertheless, in contemporary Okinawan society, as reproducing and maintaining loyalty to new authorities, such as the government and the schools. In Okinawa, the schools have become a venue for regulating and constraining the citizen’s mind and body after the aristocratic system was abolished. In the case of Taketomi, since colonisation the school has functioned as a new machine of social control. And this machinery largely operated on the colonised bodies. The history of Taketomian Elementary School records a history of change of power technology over the body. In the late nineteenth century, when the school was inaugurated, all the pupils, at that time exclusively males, were forced to cut their long hair which was a fashion followed by the Chinese. Later on, to impose language assimilation, a specific technique of punishment was practised for those who spoke dialect in the school. This punishment was not only linguistic correction, but also on the body, such as hanging a wooden blade around the pupil’s neck until the next victim was found. During the Second World War, an event was held in the school to launch an eternal location for ‘the honourable authentic
shadow of the Japan Emperor,’ to which, as well as the Japanese national flag, every pupil in the school needed to bow every day.

Even in contemporary Taketomian society, the school is no less a venue to see how a ‘civilised body of the Japanese’ is trained. As early as in the kindergarten, children are told not to put their elbows on the table while taking food. The official guide of ‘how to use chopsticks properly’ is sent to the kindergarten as an instruction. The children also follow the way their sisters and brothers bow to the teachers at school. Specific artificial techniques, such as origami, ‘folding the paper,’ which is a popular artefact in Japan, and wool weaving, is practised to train the children’s hand skills, as well as their ‘patience’, although most of them, ranging from the age of two to six, are still too young to handle these delicate skills. Specific festivals, such as the Festival of the Girls in Japan, is also held in the kindergarten, in which the girls all dress up in Japanese clothes and serve a special drink and food to the boys, while the teachers articulate how the good girls should present themselves, including presenting their beauty and docility.

Less gendered division in terms of body training is seen in the elementary school, perhaps due to the favouring of the spirit of co-operation and the standardisation of courses such as Physical Education. There is, however, a clear emphasis on the ‘healthy and energetic body’ during this stage of school education. Promotion of various hygiene habits is put on posters on the notice board. Students are encouraged to show off their energetic and healthy bodies, especially on sports days. Except for the traditional rituals, the annual sports day which is launched by the school has become the most important occasion for Taketomians to present their physical skills and to celebrate the modernised conception of a healthy body and energy. The sports day is not only a school event. In Taketomi it is supposed to be attended by all the villagers. As usual, the villagers are organised into three villages and participate in the games, such as the relay race, which are structured into different age groups.

In addition to the school curriculum, the traditional performing arts are also a main resource in terms of training the body in the Taketomian school. Under the trend of cultural revitalisation as the agenda for the orientation of extra-curriculum in the
school, many songs and dance pieces have been chosen as those can represent the 'Taketomian' culture. Dance pieces such as umushunu, which is a male group performance featuring the prop of a horse head tied on the waist, and lively movements of stylised hopping, have been chosen purposefully to adapt to the lively and young bodies of the school pupils, both the boys and the girls.

The regular schedule of the ritualistic cycle makes the dance performances and their practice institutionalised events for the embodiment of the traditional performing arts. In terms of body training for the performances within traditional ritualistic contexts, however, the younger generation often find themselves going through a similar process of embodiment but with very different requirements. Nowadays, the pupils, as young as at the age of ten can present their first dance in tanadui. Also it can be found that boys are encouraged to learn and perform dances again, after the females have taken over the duty for a long time. Compromise of gender in the performance is easy to accomplish, since the males have performed drama and it was also a tradition for the males to dance. What is less compromised, however, is the negotiation between the boys' social bodies, treated as a free entity in most public fields, and their dancing bodies which must satisfy the aesthetic standards, or 'the souls,' required in the embodiment of traditional dances.

The training for the young starts even before the practice of dance is inaugurated. The boys and girls organise themselves well, and a leader, usually the senior member, is assigned. Every time before the practice starts, the group of youngsters forms a circle and kneels in front of the teacher or instructor. On the leader's order, they bow to the teacher and speak together 'Please' (Onegaishimasu) in a humble fashion. Similarly, when the practice is finished, the youngsters gather again to listen to the teacher's comments and encouragement. If there are any shortcomings, such as someone has overslept and been late for the practice, s/he will be named and symbolically punished in a slightly serious manner. At the end, the students bow to the teacher and say 'Thank you very much' together for her/his efforts.

Taketomians have boasted of the fact that there are no policemen on the Island. This, however, does not mean that there is less social control. School education has played
an important role in imposing a different power technology on the citizens’ bodies. The effective functioning of this technology over the body, of which the form is new but the nature old, lies on the very critical role that the teachers have played. Benefiting from the regular working hours and salary, school principals and teachers, especially the females, are more capable of offering to attend the dance practices and even extra dance classes in Ishigaki. After they have embodied the bodily surveillance through the training of traditional dance, many of them in turn become dance instructors and reproduce the technique of discipline in their teaching. Their supervision is hence empowered and doubled because they are both the teacher of the mind and that of the body. They become the best exegesis of the Foucauldian notion that: ‘[d]iscipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise’ (Foucault 1991[1977]:188).

In sum, through the examination of the process of embodiment, in daily lives and in dancing, the contemporary notions of ‘the Taketomian body’ are defined, formulated, highlighted and appropriated. Nevertheless, the body is not always the passive locus which only takes orders. To manage the bodies, especially in dance performances, is a negotiation between different natural and social experiences inscribed in the most immediate and powerful physical entity of each individual, as will be shown in the next session.

6.5 Dancing Beyond Bodily Limits: Negotiating Experiences of the Body

As a colony of Japan, contemporary Okinawan society has been greatly influenced by Japan, including the Japanese conception of the body which is reflected in their notions of health and longevity. The body becomes, not a natural entity that has its own cycle of growth and declining, but a ‘project’ (Shilling 1993:4-8) that can be worked on and managed by taking healthy food and following proper procedures. With the spread of modernised medical knowledge, the Japanese, mainly the married women, have been paying much attention to how to keep the bodies of the family healthy. By calculating calories in the meals and undertaking various foods which are
declared to be good for some reasons, the Japanese believe that their diet is one reason why the society is able to boast of its people's longevity among other industrialised countries.

The government's policy of public hygiene is also a field that promotes Japanese notions of health. For example, every year there is a specific week of 'healthy teeth,' during which the agenda of maintaining healthy teeth is put on, and for every child it is compulsory to be investigated by dentists. On the other hand, medical investigations are held from time to time in isolated and distant islands, such as Taketomi, to make sure that the old are under appropriate care. From the young to the old, the maintenance of health is carefully carried out. The health and longevity of every 'body' represents the health and longevity of the society.

Among Japanese provinces, Okinawa currently has the highest average age. Body health and longevity becomes a discourse that revitalises many traditional practices. For instance, through media communication, information can speedily reach Okinawa. Okinawan mothers, however, add traditional foods into the healthy recipes while learning how to cook healthy food for the families. Sometimes they are advertised on the tourist brochures. Mozuku, the seaweed which is related to the girls' rejuvenation rite as described at the beginning of this chapter, becomes a famous dish since the declamation of its potential to strengthening immunity against some epidemic which caused hundreds of children to die in Japan several years ago. Since the best time to pick up mozuku is on the day of sangatsu sannichi, which is originally the rite of rejuvenation based on a legend as discussed above, the rite is transformed into a contemporary practice empowered with the new concern and knowledge of the body. On this day, even people from outside come to pick the seed-weed for economic reasons.

Modern medical knowledge has begun to change Taketomian notions about the relationship between the body and nature/super-nature. The body as a religious scheme is supplemented by the body as a biological scheme. Nevertheless, some Taketomians tend to combine this knowledge with their traditional practice. A villager explained:
We used to practice the *kajinunigai* [worship to prevent flu] in the past. Now everybody knows *kaji* is caused by a virus. Still we have to practise the worship to get rid of the virus.

That is, without abandoning conventional practices, Taketomians combine updated knowledge of the body with practices which have been transmitted for generations. By negotiating between traditional and new knowledge, Taketomians strive to keep their body as healthy as it is represented in contemporary milieux. This negotiation of bodily knowledge and practices of different historical and social origins also manifests itself in the dancing body and provide insights to understanding of the Taketomians’ bodily philosophy of dancing.

Modern medical knowledge and improving of nutrition causes great impact on the notion such as ‘where is the limit of the body’ (Shilling 1993). A similar question can be posed in Taketomi as ‘when is the limit of the body’. Conventionally, in the island, the old who are over sixty-five years old are discharged of most of the public duty, including participation in performance. One main reason is the physicality of the body. ‘The most important factor in Okinawan dance is the dancer’s body posture’, an instructor explained. Even though the old can master the movement eloquently, their bodily posture can reveal the brutal fact that they are unfit for the duty anymore. More than once I heard the younger villagers criticise the older dancers as to how their postures do not fit because of their age. In fact, most old villagers, especially the females who had been given birth to many children, clearly have bent bodies, partly due to the poor condition of food and supplement and medical equipment, and the harshness of life during and after the war period.

Nevertheless, the younger generation (which can imply those who are sixty years old taking into account that the average age of the islanders) who had been brought up in a better material condition have very different bodily experiences and hence the formation of the bodies reveals less deficiency. Different modes of labour are also a main factor in the moulding of their bodily postures since seldom have they engaged with those jobs which require heavy bodily labour, such as working in the fields. Most villagers who are aged around sixty still have upright bodies and good postures. Their
physical reality hence challenges the limit that has been conventionally set to exclude the old by their bodies.

It is under this extension of the body limit, paralleled by the promotion of the image of old but healthy bodies, that an annual dance presentation for the old is put into the agenda. This event inspires many complex feelings among the old, since for some of them it has been a long time since their last presence on the stage. The old, who are organised under the Association of the Old of Taketomi, begin to schedule the time of practising and rehearsal, as they did when they were young. The programme is chosen and each character decided. It is not difficult to find the old who used to dance well always among the first listed. Costumes and props are also carefully arranged and prepared. Sometimes a long skirt is to put on someone 'whose legs can never catch up with the tempo'. Musicians who are usually much younger than the dancers, are invited to practise with the dancers to co-operate with each other. Nobody is late for either the practice or the rehearsal.

On the day of the presentation that I attended, which was the 2nd December of 1998, twenty-nine Taketomians presented a performance. Their age ranged from sixty-five to ninety-five. The programme they prepared was a dance drama composed of individual characters and allowed the individuals to process and show off for a little while. For many of them, this was a big occasion because it had been a long time since their last performance on stage. For villagers such as Osa, who had been obsessed with performance all his life, the chance was just too good to miss. He went up very early on the day and headed for a barber's shop at first to shave his face, 'in order to make the make-up easier'. The performance started in the afternoon, but the old decided to gather in the early morning. After they reached the venue, they began the final rehearsal and located themselves on the stage. Every detail was arranged as the professional performance. The Taketomian team is only one among fourteen. After the final rehearsal, the old dressed up in their individual costumes, which were mostly borrowed from their junior villagers. The costumes were all in flamboyant colours and styles, just as those shown in ritual performances. Either the children of the old or the dance teachers brought the cosmetic cases to make up the old, who lined up just like the children waiting for their turns. The procedures of making-up followed
the convention and were very complex. But the result was remarkable. The old looked
totally different after they all had their faces made up. They praised each other by
saying ‘You look really beautiful (kireii),’ or ‘You are so cute (kawaii).’ A group
photo was taken to commemorate this moment, when each of the old was rejuvenated.
This was their body ceremony.

The extension of body limits in dancing not only has an effect on the old. The other
group which is affected by this extension of body limits are the young girls and boys.
Especially for the girls, the rapid change of life style and improvement of nutrition
have influenced the timing of female maturation. Nowadays, as the same as the other
parts of the world, Taketomian girls have their fist menstruation at a younger stage.
From when the girls enter the junior high school, their mothers often find themselves
talking about their daughters’ bosoms, worrying if they keep a proper social division
from the boys and so on. In contrast, the younger girls welcome their early maturation,
largely due to the communication of mass media in which matured female bodies are
always celebrated.

Nowadays, girls or boys at the age of seventeen and eighteen are seldom seen in the
island, for most of them have to leave for opportunities of higher education and jobs.
Therefore, younger girls and even boys have to the performances of dance on formal
occasions such as tanadui, a chance their mothers could only have dreamed of when
they were young. In the past, especially when Taketomi was still densely populated,
there was severe competence among female villagers who wanted to be chosen as the
dancers. Sometimes the women only started to perform after they got married or even
when they finished their duty of reproduction. More often, those who had ‘unfit’
bodies, such as being too short or not beautiful enough, were excluded. The decline in
population is the main factor behind this change, since the villagers bear a pressure to
‘preserve the traditional culture.’ To sustain the community as a whole social body,
individual bodily deficiencies, no matter how they are defined, are neglected, and the
change of social limits, in this case reflected in the population, also changes the
definition of the dancer’s bodily limits.
The dances for the young are chosen from the repertoire of beginner’s pieces, always
in a group form rather than solo dances. Not only the performances, but also the
training of the young dancing bodies can mean a difficult task for both the youngsters
and their instructors. Although the advantage of a strong memory and reactivity have
made the youngsters able to embody the dances after only several occasions, their
bodies usually show much resistance to the constraint that is typical in traditional
Okinawan presentational dances. Early bodily maturation does not necessarily mean
compatible mental maturation. Very often the students who are tall enough are still
very naïve. The school curriculum does not provide them with the necessary
discipline required for the performance of traditional dancer, such as self-constraint
and a sustained spirit. The conflict between the social categorisation, which classifies
them as ‘the pupils’ or ‘the girls/boys,’ and the categorisation in the performance, in
which they are turned into ‘the women/men,’ can be exhausting. More concrete
challenges occur when the girls have to conquer their own upright and springing
bodies to submit to the deliberately lowered position of gravity only through which
can an Okinawan dance be initiated (This can be proved by the dance master’s
repeated shouting of ‘sink your waists!’ (Koshi o orosinasai!). It is always after a long
period of time that the youngsters, and the instructors, can manage to negotiate
between their own bodies and the dancing bodies. And those girls who have gone
through this process of bodily negotiation, usually show a different character of self-
control in their bodies, that was seldom recognisable previously.

On the stage, nevertheless, costumes and make-up enact another magical result on
these younger generations, even their bodies are still shy and their movements still
unrefined. The process of make-up always reveals the ‘brutal truth’ of the body.
Senior members of the villages who can dance perfectly cannot hide her/his wrinkles
while looking in the mirror. Sometimes, the older females cannot stop feeling sad
about the bad quality of their hair when the hair dresser complains that their hair is
‘hard to deal with’. On the contrary, the young always have smooth and shining skin
that is easy to be made-up. Their hair is always as soft as silk, and their faces look
even better after the make-up.
Costumes also play a significant role in Okinawan presentational dance. The body in its purist form, or as a raw material of representation on the stage, is an alien notion in Okinawans' concepts. It is always a dancing body, carrying properties such as gender and social class, that is represented. Compared with the relative simplicity of movements in dance, costume is a complex system. It reveals the character(s) in the dance and her/his social class. In many classical pieces of dance, the movement part is made as simple as possible to facilitate the complicated and heavy costume. Therefore, in Okinawan dance, the dancing body is never neutral in a real sense. It tells the gender, the age and social class of the character. Even if a person is not familiar with the movements, the costume is self-evident to reveal the characters of the dance. Costume is a highly coded and complex system in Okinawan dance and sometimes only the dance masters have the knowledge to pick out the right costume for the right character. So it is with the prop system including fans, sticks weapons, and instruments. The system of costumes and prop fossilise the costume code in the bureaucratic system of division between noble and ordinary classes and within the noble class itself. For instance, in the past, robes of different colours worn by the male noble implied the rank of the official, and only the nobles used the fans. The use of costumes and props in Okinawan dance makes the presentation of the dancing body itself a kind of 'commemorate ceremonial' as described by Connerton in the eighteenth century French court (Connerton 1985:6-13).

From the aspect of costumes, then, performing Okinawan dances can be seen as the alienation of the dancing body from her/his own actual, biological and social ones. For instance, when a female dancer performs a male character, she either performs it well, but alienates the dancing body from her own gendered body, or being faithful to her/his own gendered body, fails to present the character correctly. ‘For those who always perform the female dances, if they perform the male dance but cannot cut themselves [from the female character] to become [the male character] and repeatedly go back to the female character, the male dance will be dead,’ commented a dance teacher. Even under the situation that a female dancer performs a female character, she is alienated from the dancing body of herself because of the fossilised character, for it may be a noble lady or an official, that no longer exists in her contemporary life. That is, the real body is alienated to pursue a dancing body that was cast in the past.
Seen from the aspect of movement, the dancing body has no fewer challenges. Some of the movements, which are the habitus belonging to the other historical era or cultural system, can be undertaken in a totally meaningless way due to the change of the habitual body. For example, some senior villagers criticised on the hand movements practised by the school pupils in a dance which depicts the life of diligent farmers:

When you are cutting grass, you definitely will hold the grass tightly and you cut the grass UNDER the place you hold it. The students, they cut ABOVE the holding place. It is totally wrong! How can you cut the grass like this?! Also, they could have killed themselves by the way they manipulate the sickle. They pull the sickles toward their own body! Alas, this is because the young they no more cut the grass in the fields!

In Taketomian notions, failure to negotiate between the dancing body and that of one’s own is to fail the dancing. On the other hand, those who succeed in presenting and moving their bodies that are well cast in the characters and the dancers’ own properties always receive great applause. This task is no easier than those of ballerinas in point shoes, for whom the main task is to go against the gravity of the earth while keeping their bodies elegant, or to present a dying bird with a real, lively physical entity. Nevertheless, the dancing body is not a fabricated body. According to the above statement, there is still a sense of rationality to be carried by the dancing body. ‘Maybe we should start agricultural practice in the fields so that the students can perform this dance well,’ sighed out their teacher of the Society.

In sum, in this chapter I have presented how the body is perceived, categorised, appropriated, controlled, managed, presented and performed in Taketomian society. The above descriptions and analyses show a broad reference to the body that is not exhausted by a single theory, while most of the issues are covered by current social research on the body. Nevertheless, this chapter is specifically on the dancing body and how different bodily experiences, produced by different genders and social classes, are negotiated into this performed entity. Through the analyses of the Taketomian dancing body, much light has been shed on how dancing ‘as a cultural
practice that cultivates disciplined and creative bodies, [and] as a cultural endeavour through which cultural change is both registered and accomplished’ (Foster et al 1996:ix). It is clear, in the Taketomian case, that the dancing body has its own historicity, sociality and rationality, which are deeply rooted in, and cannot be separated from, the cultural life of the dancers. The dancing body is, nevertheless, different from the bodies perceived and presented in other cultural spheres. It is through formality and performativity (Connerton 1989:102), that is, its ritualistic significance, that the uniqueness of dancing is recognised.
Notes

1 A similar motif of the snake man has been seen in the folktales in China and Japan, but without anything similar to the second part of body washing in the sea. Bourdieu also records a story of Kabylia, Algeria, based on a girl and the snake, in which the snake implies 'a symbol of male principal, of semen, of the ancestor who must die in order to be reborn.' (Bourdieu 1977:114)

2 On the day of jūgoyasai in 1998 when I was conducting the fieldwork, the event outdoors was cancelled due to the heavy rain. I was not the only one who felt disappointed by this result. Some male villagers who were seldom seen on other occasions but were 'obsessed' with this event 'specific for males' could not hide their disappointment. The narratives of the event here are mainly based on Ishigaki's account (Ishigaki Sashio 1996).

3 I was 'warned' that there was a female Japanese researcher who did detailed research about the priestesses in the Miyako Island and published her research later. Unfortunately, this action never received positive reaction and afterwards she was rejected by the community, especially the priestesses.
PART THREE

PERFORMING TAKETOMIAN CULTURE:

Dancing and Ritualisation
7.1 Introduction

For Taketomians who reside in the island as their ancestor did, contemporary sociocultural condition brought new modes of cultural encounters, which their predecessors have not been through, and upon which Taketomians must define their own existence. For instance, Japanese colonism introduces new forms of political and economic relationship, to which Taketomians need to adapt. This new form of relationship, to a certain degree, is condensed in confrontation such as tourism, which has become the main economic activity in the island. Nevertheless, not only in tourism, constant contact with the Japanese society brings influences in nearly every facet of Taketomians' life. While Taketomians strive to catch up with modernisation, their traditional style of life is purposefully maintained to fulfill other's romantic imagination of their frequent-mentioned representations, such as traditional villages, the island of longevity, or people with bright smile. It is between this seemingly contradictory values and demeanours among Taketomians that I shall explore, to which extent it can be said that performantivity, i.e. the formal, expressive, manipulative, and contingent aspect of social actions, underlies Takeotmians interactions that are considered critical to their existence.

7.2 Tourism as Cultural Encounter and the Performance of Taketomians

It was eight o'clock in the morning. As usual, the same music was broadcast through the island to announce the time. Long before this playing of music, however, life in Taketomi had begun. Some female villagers had finished their daily job of sweeping the sand in front of their houses. Young mothers, after attending their children, were still busy serving breakfast to the visitors who stayed in their guesthouses. Older male
villagers, who were satisfied with their early meals, went to the fields to find things to work on. Most Taketomians had a small square of field attached to their yard, in which they could plant vegetables such as bitter melons, eggplants, carrots, and cabbage. Those who had a bigger space might choose to rear animals such as goats and chickens, which could become capital or a dish on the table later on. It was also not unusual that private yards were turned into gardens and made into attractions.

Transportation also started to be busy on the main roads in the island. There were only two roads that were covered with concrete: one passed through the centre and connected the villages, the other was around the rim of the island. Except for the two roads, others were mostly narrow sandy streets without any signs or traffic lights. The frequent minibuses, which started as early as seven o'clock in the morning, went around the villages to pick up those who headed for the port (zanbashi) for the ferries to Ishigaki. The ferries were scheduled every thirty minutes, and began the day's contact with the outside world by sending high-school students and workers out and bringing tourists in.

The tourists mainly came from mainland Japan, although occasionally foreigners were seen. A rough estimation implied that there were two hundred thousand tourists visiting Taketomi annually, who brought considerable wealth to the island with a population of only three hundred inhabitants. The owner of a hotel could earn more than one million Japanese Yen (currently, one British pound equals to one hundred and fifty Japanese yen approximately) a month during the peak season in summer. In addition to tourist accommodation, various package tours, in which the tourists were driven in minibuses or buffalo wagons (plate 7.1) to sight-see the attractions of the island in one and half an hours (occasionally including a trip to view the coral reef under the sea), were also a main interest for tourist groups.

As early as when the music was played, tourists flooded in. Those who chose to be carried by buffalo listened to the young guide explaining things about Taketomi, who
was more than usually a young Japanese who decided to stay in the island, at least for a while, after an initial trip. The wagon first passed the only post office on the island. The post office was newly built and followed the style of the traditional Okinawan house. In the post office, Reni, the Tokyolan girl, was busy working. Six years ago, she decided to live in Taketomi after several visits following the first one in which she was deeply attracted by the traditional outlook of the village. ‘It is very difficult to find a village like this now in Japan,’ Reni said.

In fact, since Taketomi was assigned as one of the ‘Traditional Villages of Japan’ in 1984, many old houses that had nearly been abandoned were rebuilt and maintained under government sponsorship to different degrees. In addition, every new house was required to be built in the traditional style and the villagers were compensated for a certain percentage of the construction fee, because it cost much more to hire workers who could build traditional houses and use traditional materials such as special tiles. Parallel with this was the effort in maintaining the white and sandy streets instead of modernised concrete roads. Taketomians, however, complained about the inconvenience of the sandy surface of streets because it became muddy for both drivers and pedestrians after raining. The proposal to cover them in concrete for the sake of convenient travel was never accepted, as one villager declaimed: ‘if the sandy streets are gone, there won’t be Taketomi anymore,’ a concern which mainly originated from the perspective of keeping tourist attractions.

The buffalo wagon kept going. The young guide was introducing the history, culture and even the inhabitants of Taketomi. ‘In this house lives an old man who has just had his 95th (sometimes 96th or 97th, depending on different ways of calculation) birthday.’ ‘Wow,’ the tourists responded. The guide then usually continued to impress the tourists by gently mocking either the abandoned automatic cigarettes machine, or the shop which sold items that had long expired, both of which belonged to Osa, the 95 (or 96 and 97) -year-old man. Almost every time the tourists laughed at the same point. Osa, partly due to his being nearly deaf, never turned his face away from these
outsiders even when they were laughing at his old shop. On the contrary, he always smiled and waved to the tourists, and willingly answered every question posed by the visitors, no matter what their motives were. In general, the old in Taketomi had an astonishingly relaxed attitude towards the tourists. Every time when they saw the tourists, no matter what they were engaged with, they just stopped and waved back to the tourists. Their demeanours inevitably reinforced the representation of ‘the island of longevity,’ for which Taketomi was famous. These older generations, who had lived through different eras, maintained an extremely moderate attitude towards every outsider. More than once I was struck by the humble language style used by my landlord or other old villagers, such as ‘Derarenindesuga? (an honorific expression of ‘Are you going out?’), that was addressed to me from time to time.

After the wagon passed by Osa’s house, it usually took the route which led to the Kindergarten. The young children were also very keen to wave to the tourists, who sometimes came to the door to watch the children with curiosity. Since the buffalo wagon passed the Kindergarten regularly, it had become a usual scene for the children. Both the children and the old were among favourite targets for professional and amateur photographers. In the flight magazines of Japanese Transasian Airlines, lively Yaeyama children, often seen climbing on trees and laughing in a lively manner, and the smiling old who looked joyful and healthy, were frequent images.

The buffalo wagon kept going. The tourists then reached the birth house of the famous beauty, Kuyama of the Asatoya (the house of Asato). The guide played the string lute of *samisen* and sang the famous folk song *Asatoya Yunta*, ‘the song of the Asato House’. The verse was sometimes changed into ‘Ah, Okinawa, What a good place to stay for once...’ This song, with various versions of lyric, had been chosen as one of one-hundred-Japanese-favourite-folksongs. It had become a representation, not only for Taketomi island, but also for the whole of Okinawa. It was one thing that tourists definitely had to know about Taketomi or Okinawa. The story of Kuyama could not be neglected, either. Among all other male stone figures scattered here and there on
the island, she was the only monumental female that held a status similar to the holy virgin of Christianity. According to the local oral tradition, she refused a garrisoned official’s pursuit of her and would rather wait for someone of her natal island.

On the north-western shore of the island, an archaic pile of rocks was believed to be the grave of Kuyama. On the path to this spot, a sign which was newly set and inscribed stated ‘the grave of the holy virgin Kuyama’. In front of the grave, a stove was set and incense burnt. It was taken care of by the descendants of the Asato family, who were said to be the eighth generation. The image of the ‘holy virgin’ of Kuyama, however, was not agreed by everyone. One dance master in Ishigaki revealed another ‘rationale’ why Kuyama had refused the love pursuit of the misashu (the title of the officer): ‘it was because she was expecting someone who had a higher rank’. Despite this speculation, Asatoya yunta was conventionally the final and most popular programme in the performances for tourists, which were usually scheduled on Friday nights. The programmes were mainly performed by students in each private dance institute, who were still not skilful and mature enough. The performances provided them with a chance to improve their skills in front of the audience, including both locals and outsiders.

The performance usually began with a piece of video tape projected on a huge screen on the stage to introduce the beautiful natural environment of Yaeyama region and its varied cultural representations, such as the traditional houses, the ample life of rituals, dance and music. The programme, including the most popular Yaeyama dances such as akamma bushi, asataya bushi, hamachitori bushi and so on, usually lasted for one hour. Although it was for the tourists and the front rows of seats were preserved for them, the relatives and friends of the dancers did come to support and encourage the dancers. When the music and dance had built up to the climax, the audience of local Yaeyama people whistled, sang together, clapped hands, and even stood up to dance with the dancers on the stage, which was a typical expression seen in most social gatherings in Yaeyama.
Sometimes, group tourists came and stayed on the island overnight. Dance performances for these guests might be arranged by request beforehand as a part of kengaku, 'seeing and learning,' which was a conventional practice in Japanese tourism. The performances were always chosen from traditional Taketomian dances, although the practice might not be as formal as in rituals in which these dances mostly rooted. For instance, instead of the native Taketomians, Reni and another Japanese girl working in Innota had performed on several occasions for tourists who were also from the Japan mainland. If the guests were to certain degrees connected with the island, such as guests from the aligned town or areas, a formal performance of dancing, in which three villages presented their own programmes, was definitely scheduled. Recently, as the biggest annual ritual of tanadid had been repetitively broadcast through the media, many out-comers chose to visit the island during the period of the ritual, when they could at least view the practices of dances. When the visitors came in during the practice, the masters usually politely explained the historical background, lyrics and costumes (if there were any), of which the visitors had little idea due to the cultural distance.

The presentation of culture was an overwhelming element in Yaeyama tourism. It inspired the tourists in multi-sensory ways, including food, music, and dancing. It also formed a discourse in which every host made her/his best effort to display the 'cultural knowledge' they bore. Himu, the priestess, worked part-time in a small tourist shop near to the only museum in the island. Seen from her appearance in the shop, it was very difficult to imagine anything 'sacred' about her. To arouse tourists' interest in the souvenirs, Himu sometimes tried to explain those 'exotic' items displayed on the rack.

This is a weaving style we call minsa. You see this motif here, and that there. If you fold the belt like this, they match, don’t they? The squares in the motifs. In the past, when a girl wanted to express her love to someone, she would give one of these belts to her lover. The matching of the motifs means that 'your heart and my heart match with each other'. These two lines here imply the roads: ‘Come to my place directly, don’t turn to other girls’ places!’
Himu used to work as a teacher in the kindergarten in her earlier career, before she left for mainland Japan. Many villagers still remembered that she was a good storyteller. Sometimes, Himu had to explain to the tourists who asked about the name of the island ‘Taketomi’. ‘I always tell them that this term is transformed from the kami Takindun. He was the first one who moved onto the island. Because he is the kami of my family, I cannot fabricate the story. It is necessary to let them know the correct answer’.

As a result, various cultural encounters, of which tourism is one type, become a dominant social aspect in contemporary Taketomian life, in which the islanders most radically perceive the division between the self (Taketomians/Okinawans) and the other (Japanese). During these cultural encounters, the Taketomians consciously present themselves in a collective and cultural sense so that their actions lead to the objectification of Goffman’s notion of ‘performance’, which can ‘refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers’ (1990[1959]:32).

The most valuable point of Goffman’s notion of ‘performance,’ which is further articulated by Schieffelin as ‘performativity’ (1998:195), is that it emphasises the strategic and manipulative aspect, or in Goffman’s own term, ‘the management of impression,’ in social interactions. As the above Taketomian cases have shown, it is clear that the islanders not only acknowledge the ‘manipulation, vulnerability,
knowledge and power’ of the performance (Schieffelin 1998:201), but also constantly apply the manipulative and hence the powerful aspect of performance, especially while facing a cultural other, to sustain a condition that is critical to their existence.

7.3 Performativity in Taketomian Social Interactions

Himu’s life was largely changed because her son, Ron, had returned from the Japanese mainland. Later Ron got a job as a minibus driver to transport and guide the tourists everyday. Many young generations of Taketomi had shared similar experiences. After working in Japan for a while, ‘they always come back at some point,’ commented a villager. There may be individual reasons for the ‘u-turn’ (a metaphor for coming back home). Many villagers, however, expressed the common feeling that they, as Okinawans, were discriminated against by the Japanese from time to time. A teacher who came from Okinawa and worked in the kindergarten said:

Now younger Okinawans think we are Japanese, but we are a little different. When I was in the high school [before 1972], if I needed to go to Japan, I would need to apply for a passport. I think, yes, we are somehow different from the Japanese.

Sometimes the villagers, such as Taku, returned in the later stages of their life. He returned to the island after he retired from his work in a post-office in central Tokyo. His wife Rina used to run a hair saloon in Tokyo and it was very successful. Therefore, when Taku decided to come back to Taketomi, Rina could not accept this proposal at first and a family revolution almost ensued. ‘We nearly divorced. What about my guests over there? It made them so confused!’ Nevertheless, Taku finally persuaded his wife and moved back. On the other hand, Rina finally settled down because she found that there was an ‘atmosphere of the metropolitan’ in this three-hundred-populated island, which was partly due to the flooding in of different tourists. Besides the original house of Taku, they rent a smaller house in order to enable Rina to continue her business. The original house, ‘is only for the Gods’ and Rina complained
that it was only because of this reason that the other family members did not sanction them to refurnish the house for Rina’s business.

Nevertheless, family ties were the most primary social network in Taketomi, and social relationships were especially intertwined because ‘all Taketomians are relatives’. The comment was exaggerated but to some extent explained the reality because most Taketomians did connect with each other in some ways, close or distant. Outsiders may find this social relationship extraordinary, as Reni revealed:

In Tokyo, if you want to visit a friend, you first make a call. Then you take trains to the meeting place and it takes, say, an hour. Here, everybody is so close to each other. At the last minute you say on the phone ‘I am coming over,’ and next minute you show up by the door. You only walk and you can meet your relatives or friends.

The social network was highly valued in Taketomian society and the way to sustain it was to maintain proper interactions. Despite the fact that many villagers complained that sometimes close interpersonal connection did cause much pressure, Taketomians were never hesitant to express their concern regarding the maintenance of reciprocal social relationships. The main venues for such expression were various social ceremonials, such as weddings, building new houses and rites of passage such as funerals and birthdays. By paying practical contributions, such as food, money, as well as making a personal presentation or even dancing, Taketomians strove to keep their social network as stable as possible, through which reciprocal behaviour was always expected. Sometimes, the maintenance of the social network in its material ways, that is, to contribute certain amounts of money, can mean a great burden to those Taketomians who have less economic support, such as a widow like Kushiyo, even though she was never absent from the contributors’ list.

As usual, music was broadcast again at five o’clock in the afternoon. But this time it was a piece of sad music. People began to guess who it was that had passed away. The obāsan (senior woman or grandmother) of the Moridake family had just breathed her
last breath at the age of ninety-two. Not long later, Kushiyo walked into Osa’s house with a dark face and complained, ‘It’s terrible. I just went for a hōji (death-related rite) this morning. I have run out of money!’

Kushiyo’s husband has been dead for nearly twenty years. She had four children who were all adults. Three of them worked on the Japanese mainland, and only her first daughter, who was married with three children, lived near to her and supported her life from time to time. Kushiyo did not have a settled job. She could only work part-time in the shrimp fields on the island. Even this job was seasonal and sometimes she did not have any cash income for weeks. Her daughter, Kamiho, was the cook for the students in the School. To support her own family, she had also taken the job which involved going round each house every Sunday to collect the garbage produced by the islanders. Sometimes Kushiyo were seen helping her.

Kushiyo, however, still attended the funeral that was held two days later, and presented herself as a proper mourner by dressing up in a black dress and remembering to bring a handkerchief. Constantly holding the handkerchief in the hand, especially for women, during funerals was an important Japanese behaviour code for those who attended a funeral. Even in the situation when the mourner was not well acquainted with the dead, to dress up properly with appropriate ‘props’ and articulate sentences of comfort expressively, the mourner could be thought to fulfil a performance that was culturally significant.

At another funeral of an obāsan who had migrated out from the island for a long time, the islanders, who mostly were not acquainted with the dead, reminded each other of the dress code. On the morning when the funeral was held, the male villagers busily decorated the house which was the main venue for the funeral. They set up the altar, the table and the tent. A male villager was so satisfied with his effort of completing the scene that he bet that I had not even seen similar decorations in my own culture. The female villagers also came to help with the preparation of foods, fruits and
Earlier on that morning, a rite was held with the assistance of Himu, the priestess, to ask the deity of Ryūgu (the Palace of King of Dragon) for a safe journey for the dead. Before the time of the scheduled ferry, many villagers also went to the port to welcome the ferry that brought back the jar containing the cremated bone ashes as a way of showing their deepest feeling. On seeing the picture of the dead, held by the eldest son, Himu could not help but burst into tears, although for many other younger generations, including the son of the dead, it was even difficult to identify each other after years of separation.

At one o’clock in the afternoon, the funeral started. The funeral progressed in a solemn mood. Almost every villager was invited. They first burnt the incense individually. Then formal incense burning was scheduled for representatives of various organisations. The Buddhist priestess chanted during the intervals. Finally, the eldest son, who wore a special robe made of linen as a representation of his role as the host of the funeral, read the speech of thanks he had prepared on paper.

The ritual lasted less than an hour. According to the Buddhist priestess, the whole ritual of incense burning seldom continued more than forty minutes. ‘My father [her predecessor] told me if the chanting went on more than an hour, the villagers would start to chat with each other and could not display any more patience and respect to the dead’. She also revealed that on some other occasions the time of chanting is reduced to only twenty minutes. On this specific occasion, moderation of traditional custom was also undertaken to favour negotiation between traditional values and contemporary life. Because the children of the dead all lived on the Japanese mainland, the funeral and the ritual of the seventh week were held together on the same day. Local Taketomians also found this negotiation of practice acceptable since they did not have to spend too much money in separate weeks. For the son of the dead, it was certainly a relief to have every essential finished on the same day so that he
could fulfil his obligation of *oyakōkō*, ‘the filial piety,’ without absence from his work for too long. After the whole event finished, the eldest son, who had performed the mourner’s role with a serious facial expression for the whole day, began to relax and even to talk to outsiders. On that night, the family, relatives and invited villagers who had offered great help gathered in the house and share food and drink. Loud laughter was occasionally heard.

Ritual as performance is not a new idea (Turner 1974; Tambiah 1978; Schieffelin 1976; 1985; Howe 2000). Nevertheless, it is not merely a metaphor. In Taketomi, it is noteworthy that every ritual is enacted as formally and performatively as possible. The ritual usually serves ‘the front’ (Goffman 1990[1959]) of social interactions, in which the social agents strive to orient themselves to meet social standards and expectations. Extending Goffman’ argument, Schieffelin maintains that:

> It is the expressivity (and hence performativity) inherent in any human activity in everyday life, which renders our actions communicative and effective to others in our situations whether we mean them to be or not. We are, in effect, more performative than we intend, and we are in good measure ‘submitted to’ our performativity as part of our active being-in-the-world (1998:197).

To say that social agents perform whenever they present themselves is not, however, to condemn their actions or behaviour as unreal, for Goffman has already argued that:

> ...in so far as the expressive bias of performances comes to be accepted as reality, then that which accepted at the moment as reality will have some of the characteristics of a celebration. To stay in one’s room away from the place where the party is given, or away from where the practitioner attends his client, is to stay away from where reality is being performed. The world, in truth, is a wedding. (Goffman 1990[1959]:45)

### 7.4 The Front and Back Stages of Social Ceremonials: Two Cases

Ron’s wedding party was held shortly after I arrived in Taketomi for my fieldwork. As an old acquaintance, I was soon invited by Himu to attend her son’s big occasion.
The wedding was quite unusual because, in addition to Ron and his wife, there were two other couples, of whom the bridegrooms were Ron’s cousins, joining in this ceremony. It became a big occasion since the bridegrooms were all from the Richimu family which was among the powerful families in Ainota. On the other hand, the three brides were all Japanese. Most coincidentally, all of them were former guests who had stayed in the guesthouse run by Ron’s uncle. The wedding was held in the traditional Okinawan fashion and the villagers could not hide their expectation since it was more than ten years ago that they had seen a similar occasion.

Both the brides and the grooms were dressed in the traditional style of dresses which followed the aristocratic fashion in being colourful and delicate as those could be seen in the Okinawan classic dramas or dances. Ron, wearing a black hat and the purple robe which resembled those worn by the officials, walked toward the *kaigan*, which replaced the bride’s natal home in Japan. In a careful fashion, Ron welcome his wife who shed tear while departing the *kaigan* where her parents stood watching their daughter leaving. On the way back to the Richimu’s original house, Ron carefully attended his wife, Zuyu, with an umbrella of old style, while Zuyu used both her fist holding the front of the robe in a stylised fashion as an Okinawan aristocratic lady. On their way to the Richimu’s house, the villagers gathered aside the streets and watched excitedly.

Families, relatives and honorable guests had been waiting for the couples. The brides’ parents were also seated. Other than being Ron’s mother, Himu played a significant role on the day. As the priestess for the whole clan she needed to pray to the Gods and the ancestors to recruit the members of the family, and transmit their blessings to the couples and the whole family. The brides were then formally introduced to the Gods and the ancestors, a symbolic threshold of the transformation of their status into the Taketomian wife.

After the formal wedding ceremony was finished, the couples were released for a
short break in preparation for the party of celebration at night. The original plan of celebrating the party by the most famous beach of Taketomi was cancelled and the stage pre-set was invalid because of the bad weather. The party was held in the School Hall instead. Due to the fact that the only senator of the island came from the Richimu family and it had been an influential family, the party became a communal event and hundreds of villagers and guests from other places participated.

The party was well organised by many sub-groups, especially the Youth Association of which Ron and Zuyu used to be members. Buffet foods and drinks (including beer and Okinawan liquor) were prepared. From six o'clock on, the villagers and guests started to come in. The guests were seated on the floor in clusters. The adults were sitting eating, drinking, chatting and the children were running around chasing each other. The joyful atmosphere prevailed.

The party was formally started after the couples entered the venue though a flower arch that was set up by their peers. Taking off the formal dresses worn in the wedding, the couples changed their clothes into informal suits which perfectly fitted the joyful mood. The couples were led to sit at the front of the Hall. An Announcer then pronounced a short introductory speech, followed by a series of dancing performances.

The first dance, as per convention, was guginbu, a traditional celebratory dance developed in the Kingdom period. (See attached videotape, second half of episode two for a child version.) To perform guginbu was an obligatory practice of the bridegroom's family. The guginbu presented by the Richimu family was certainly to be expected since the grandmother of the family used to be the dance master in Ainota and the members of the family had been active participants in the traditional performing arts. The performance was indeed impressive after the dancers, composed of three generations, appeared on the stage. They either dressed in the formal Japanese dress, wafuku, or the traditional Okinawan robe of kasubi. The performance of
guginbu, a conventional practice but with a very lively combination of dancers of various ages, ended with great applause.

Several programmes were contributed by other villages. The most noteworthy one among them, however, was the couple dance presented by the bride and groom. Two couples went on the stage, including Ron and Zuyu. They changed into the clothes of farmers, with a white handkerchief on each one's shoulder. The dance was apparently newly rehearsed and the movements of the brides revealed a certain extent of stiffness. Nevertheless, their performance earned great applause even though their movements were not skillful.

After the performance of dances finished, the couples received the blessings of the participants. The event processed in a free and innovative style. The children sang some Japanese popular love songs. Then flowers were offered, followed by emotional speeches and blessings from relatives, guest and peers. Some of the young girls even burst into tears. At the end, a contemporary Japanese pop song was sung by the guests altogether, while they were moved to wave hands in unity.

Then another section of performance started, in which a rock band composed of the young islanders played Westernised, Japanese, and Okinawan pop music. The Hall was turned into a concert immediately and people became more relaxed. The couples stood up, greeted and received greetings from the guests individually. More drink was consumed. At a certain point, the bridegrooms' uncle stood up in the crowd to dance the movement of kachiashi to the pop music. He then became the focus of the performance and the participants clapped rhythmically following the tempo of the music. Later on, a young male ran up to the stage. To build up the climax, he turned to the back and put off and on his pants quickly. The movement aroused great laughter among the audience. Nobody seemed to be offended by this bold action.

The whole party ended late. The crowd then departed from each other with great
satisfaction. After a long absence, it was a great wedding ceremony and party they had been through. An old female neighbour said to me after the party was finished, ‘Wasn’t it interesting?’ For the new couples, including Ron and Zuyu, the transformation of their status and hence lives ahead started when they stepped out of the Hall: Zuyu held Himu’s arm, whom she called ‘Mom’ (okăxan) immediately afterwards.

Ron’s wedding is an example of how performance, in both its wide and narrow senses, marks out the ‘big occasions’ of human beings, which are usually categorized as ‘rites of passage’. The performative approach to a ritual such as a wedding highlights the dimension of ‘uniqueness’ (Howe 2000: 66), through which the individuality of social members is mostly recognized, although it is always socially framed. Dancing in the ritual, as in Ron’s wedding, carries formality as well as expression. It marks the body in a specific natural and cultural framework of time and space while it connects the individuals (as performers, audience and so on) with their social composition (the bride, bridegroom, mother-in-law and so on) who together set up the performance in the process of a socially significant transition of states. This task can be as merry as challenging, as will be shown in the next section of Osa’s 97th old celebration of mandara, which reveals the contingent and risky aspect of performance.

Osa had been living alone for a long time. He married twice, but both of his wives died at an early age. He has eight children in total and seven of them were still alive. They all lived on other islands and seldom came home to visit Osa, although occasionally they called to ask whether their father was healthy and so on. Osa’s children actually invited him to live in a bigger city such as Naha, but Osa preferred to stay on the island where he could move around freely. Mandara, the celebration of the ninety-seventh birthday, was, however, a once-a-lifetime occasion and all the villagers waited to see how the children would express their filial piety. Osa’s children, who the islanders seldom saw, began to arrange the celebration months ahead. There were many preparations for a ceremony such as this in Taketomi. An invitation which
indicated the reason, the time, the venue, and written in formal style in Japanese was sent to each invitee. The house had to be cleaned, too, but this proved to be a difficult task. Osa’s house was always in a messy situation because he used to keep everything without putting it into order. ‘In the past we had scarce goods, and that is why the old always cherishes everything they have,’ explained a neighbour of Osa’s. He took care of his own food and sometimes the food went bad in the refrigerator because he forgot to eat it. He devoted little care to the shop that he had kept for decades. Only occasionally would the villagers visit his shop and most of the time he was the only customer. Sometimes Osa could consume a bottle of strong Okinawan rice wine in days. This was the reason why he once fell and wounded his head. The villagers sometimes could not hide their complicated dilemma between respecting and commenting on Osa. Among them, Kushiyo was among the few that regularly visited Osa. She often came to have dinner and drink together with Osa, behaviour that was criticised by other female villagers who thought that women should not drink too much liquor and accompany other males without proper reasons. In the practice of dancing for the celebration of Osa’s mandara, other female villagers teased Kushiyo by saying ‘it is the mandara of your ojisan [grandfather or senior male member], of course you have to dance’.

Although, as usual, villagers were summoned to help prepare for the mandara of Osa, it was finally a young couple from the Japanese mainland who were hired to clean the house. After the efforts of the young couple, which lasted for weeks, however, Osa’s house looked totally different. It was no more dark and wet. Osa’s close relatives in Ishigaki also newly furnished the kitchen. It was only two days before the ceremony, that Osa’s third son came back with his wife. The daughter-in-law brought many items for cleaning. The son also began to order necessary food, drink, and equipment for the ceremony from the shops in Ishigaki. Then they started to decorate the front of the house. They took out scrolls with words of celebration for this special occasion and hung them up in the most obvious place in the first parlour. The curtain with red and white strips, which was conventionally used for celebrations, was hung up, a
Japanese device intended to conceal the backstage where the food preparation and informal procedures were undertaken. The altars were decorated with flowers, wine, food—such as salt and seaweed—and windmills, which were called kajimaya in the local dialect and were the indispensable symbol of this celebration. All of them were in delicate containers. Actually these containers were offered by Osa's neighbour. The broadcast equipment provided by the village was also set ready. 'Space of] the house is so broad!' 'There are so many shōjō [certificates of merits]!' The villagers were indeed impressed by the scene.

While villagers came to share their concern at the preparation and greeted Osa's children, at the 'backstage,' however, some female villagers started to comment on the whole event. 'At first, we did not extend our hands [to help] because the children themselves did not even come back'. 'Where is Kushiyo? Why is she only here for drinking? Now it's time to help and she just disappears!' 'A ninety-seven-year-old man lives alone, this is very rare. The children should consider what they should do about this situation'.

The ritual, however, had to be practised. The family celebration was held one day before the mandara ceremony, which was an event of the community. On the day of the family celebration, Osa's house was full of family and guests. Most of Osa's children managed to come home, except for his first son who was in a bad state of health. Together he had nearly one hundred and fifty descendants, as written in the souvenir—including a big handkerchief, a cup and a bottle of liquor—for the guests. Many grand- and great grand children who had come back only met Osa for the first time. Osa's friends, including several Japanese reporters who had visited him before, also came for the celebration. Osa's younger sister, who was also over ninety years old, came back from Tokyo to attend this memorial occasion, and together with Osa they attracted the attention of all the guests on account of their longevity and health.

Osa was dressed up in a specially made robe and hat, in shining gold and black. In
fact he was so excited that he did not feel hungry and did not want to take meals as usual. After he was dressed up, the family and guests began to take photographs with him. The ceremony then began with all the family members paying their respect to Osa. They knelt in front of Osa to express their congratulations. Osa’s third son, as the representative of children, intended to speak the words of thanks but burst into tears. His daughters also wiped their eyes. The family of each child then gathered respectively. They bowed to Osa and received the wine. One of Osa’s daughters put the salt and seaweed on everyone’s palm to share.

We call this practice ayakari [sharing someone’s good luck]. Each of us comes to give our support to ojisan and put the energy into his life. Then each of us gets the feedback by receiving the blessing of his longevity.

The family event ended and then the villagers began to gather in the afternoon. Some guests were from other islands where Osa was well known when he was a construction worker. Every individual paid her/his respect and money of blessing to Osa, and received the wine, salt and seaweed. The head of Hazama village where Osa had been living played the part of the announcer. As at other formal domestic rituals, the villagers as guests automatically sit in different corners according to their gender and age. Food on a plate was sent to every guest. Representatives of various social organisations were invited to give their blessings publicly. They all prepared shōjō and envelopes of blessing money for Osa, who had actively participated in various social organisations throughout his life.

Then started the most exciting event—the dancing. Osa’s children, sons and daughters, all dressed in a formal Japanese style, performed the conventional opening piece of gujinbu, the classical Okinawan dance of celebration. Osa was considered a talented performer (he actually dreamed of organizing a troupe when he was young) and his children did not spoil his fame. His sons played samisen and drums well, and his daughters were mostly good at dancing. Villagers applauded them loudly and Osa was obviously very satisfied with it. The programmes which followed were specially
arranged by the family members, and included traditional Okinawan and Japanese dances. The younger generation, composed of Osa’s grandchildren and in-laws, performed a modern creation by putting on masks of Osa’s photograph and dancing disco to one Japanese pop song. All the guests laughed at this interesting innovation and they praised the performance as proof of inheriting Osa’s talent. Finally, the performance was finished with the kachiashi and the guests were invited to dance together, before they left home with the packed souvenirs.

On the early morning of next day, that is, the day of mandara, the family and guests gathered in front of Osa’s house. Female villagers of Ainota all dressed in the same short red robe for ceremonies and tied a white cloth around their heads, which was printed with ‘congratulations to Osa’s mandara’. The female villagers also held the colourful windmills in both hands, which were used as props for the dance of medetaibushi, ‘verse of celebration’. A buffalo wagon was specially decorated and would carry Osa and some of his family members (because there were too many of them) all the way around the villages. Even the buffalo was decorated with the typical Okinawan akabana, ‘the red flower’. Osa, who was dressed in his gown again, was helped by his children to get on the wagon and sit in the front seat. After he was seated, all the photographers who had been waiting rushed up to take pictures of him and the buffalo wagon.

The procession started with the dancing of female villagers from the Ainota as their blessings. Almost all the available female villagers participated, since the dance was not so complicated and well known by many of them and they had practised the piece for days. School children also joined the procession. Students from the Junior High School formed a brass band and played the Westernised, Japanese and Okinawan music throughout the procession. They were followed by the students in lower grades who performed the contemporary style of guard of honour with flags in their hands. In the front of the procession, the representatives of the family and relatives pulled up a big cloth screen written with Osa’s name and the occasion for this celebration. All the
other family members, relatives, villagers, and tourists formed the last part of the parade.

The procession went through three villages. Those who did not join the procession stood in front of the house and watch. They were the audience on the scene. Nera, who had her *mandara* last year, became the audience this time. She sat in the front of the house, watched the procession passing and waved to the participants. On approaching different points, such the entrance of a village, the female villagers from Ainota danced the *medetaibushi*. After the procession passed the highest point of the island, the Naji village became visible and its villagers waited for the procession. By the *kaigan* of Naji, two groups of dancers, one formed of villagers from Ainota and the other from Naji, danced together to the same music but different choreographies. This brought the event to its climax. Not only Osa, everybody was immersed in this joyful atmosphere produced by lively music and merry dancing.

The procession had to leave, however, because there were other events afterwards and the time had to be controlled. After leaving Naji the procession went back to the village of Hazama. Finally it reached the Nishito *on*, where the *medetaibushi* was performed for the last time, followed by the practice of *gāli* in which all the participants were invited to join. Chairs were then arranged in front of the Nishito *on* and group photographs were taken (plate 7.2). Then the personal *mandara* for Osa finished formally and the joint celebration for the villagers who shared the same birth year began.

Immediately after the ritual of *mandara* finished, most of Osa’s family members left the island for home. Osa’s children left without hesitation after finishing calculating the expense of goods and income of blessing money from the guests, and expressing their gratitude to the villagers who helped. Osa was not happy with his children because they did not share details about the finance with him. For his children, however, it was clear that Osa’s main and only task was to perform his role as the one
being celebrated while leaving other things for them as the 'backstage maneuvering'.
The next night after the *mandara*, the house returned to its usual and quiet state, with many presents but no people other than Osa, who was still expecting the performance to be continued: 'There will be some other guests coming tomorrow,' while the curtain of celebration had been lowered down.

Osa's *mandara* explicates well the contingent process of the performative aspect of most social actions. That is,

for the participants and their observers, a great deal of contingence resides in whether the performance itself is 'properly carried out', whether it 'works'. Everything (in ritual no less than theatre), from the observance of the correct procedures to the resonance of the symbolism, the heightening of emotion, the sense of transformation, all dependent on whether the performers can 'bring it off'. (Schieffelin 1997: 198).

To 'bring it off' usually means a great deal of negotiation 'at the back stage,' again in Goffman's usage, as shown through the case of Osa's *mandara*. The reality is that the social life is not always as celebratory and merry as a wedding. On many occasions, performance in even the most prescribed ritual, can involve a great deal of 'risk,' (Schieffelin 1998:198, Howe 2000) which is possibly due to the fragility of conventional values or interpersonal mutuality. As Rappaport has declaimed, however, 'the formal characteristics of ritual enhance the chance of success of the performatives they include' (Rappaport 1999:115). Seen from this perspective, dancing puts away the dissonance in the ritual. In the above Taketomian context, as a practice of formality, it largely manifests the effort of those who bear ritual obligation. As a result, dancing in the ritual is the performance which scarcely fails.

7.5 On Dualisms of Ritual: Recapturing the Performative Approach

In the above sections, I have mainly used Goffman's performative approach to analyse tourism and three rites of passage of Taketomians, because it highlights the
expressive and impression-managing aspects of social interactions between groups and individuals under specific conditions in which the social process is manifested. I shall argue that, as articulated by Schieffelin, performativity is a basic attribution of social interactions and especially an effective perspective in terms of the momentous cultural encounters and social transitions that formulates the 'once-a-life' experiences, that is, the specificity of social actions.

Nevertheless, there are other modes of ritual in Taketomi and they highlight other facets, such as the historical continuity, of the social process. Before broadening the application of the performative approach, it is worthwhile questioning if performance is constantly an effective analytical tool across varieties of ritualistic activities. As scholars have noted, while the performative approach to ritual has become popular, the notion of performance may differ according to the scholars (Howe 2000:77, endnote one). Inadequate articulation of the notion of ‘performance’ or ‘performative’ also results in the confusing distinction made by Humphrey and Laidlaw between performative and liturgical rituals, who consider that ‘the performative-centred “rituals” are commonly very weakly ritualised’ (1994:8), a viewpoint against which I shall later argue. Nevertheless, as Howe has mentioned, the factor of time, as manifested in the nearly universal element of repetitiveness in ritual, is seldom dealt with in the performative approach.

The performance approach tends to treat specific rituals in isolation from others, giving the impression that they are unconnected to previous performances. If the text tends to accentuate the generic nature of ritual, performance tends to exaggerate its uniqueness. But if what happens at one performance is linked to what has happened at others, then issues of creativity, spontaneity and uniqueness become relative, not absolute...A concentration on a single performance leaves out of account the way that the effects it generates have a bearing on future performances, and how they become part of the context in which future performances are situated (Howe 2000:66-67).

Howe is mainly concerned with the dualism set up between two seemingly opposed approaches, that is, ritual as text and ritual as performance. The former usually concentrates on static meaning and the latter the strategic practice. He argues that
these two approaches are not deviated from each other if the dimension of ‘inscription,’ which he defines as ‘fix of meaning’ is taken into account. Interestingly enough, resonance of Howe’s argument can be found in classical articulations of the performative approach, although ritual is conceptualised under a somehow different theoretical framework, mainly that of communication, in earlier times. In his famous article, Tambiah has used the notion of the ‘duplex structure’ of symbol, which carries both semantic and pragmatic meanings, as the main characteristic of performativity in ritual (1979). He first clarifies the usage of indexical symbols as having a duplex structure because ‘they are symbols which are associated with the represented object by a conventional semantic rule, and they are simultaneously also indexes in existential pragmatic relation with the objects they represent’. By extension, he then continues:

... an indexical icon also possesses two dimensions of meaning—by iconically representing an object according to a conventional semantic rule of likeness, and by being existentially linked to it as well. Thus the value of the concepts of indexical symbol and indexical icon for us is that they will enable us to appreciate how important parts of a ritual enactment have a symbolic or iconic meaning associated with the cosmological plane of content, and at the same time how those same parts are existentially or indexically related to participants in the ritual, creating, affirming, or legitimating their social positions and powers. The duality thus points in two directions at once, in the semantic direction of cultural presuppositions and conventional understandings and in the pragmatic direction of the social and interpersonal context of ritual action, the line-up of the participants and the process by which they establish or infer meanings (Tambiah 1979:154).

Tambiah’s notion of the indexicality of ritual is echoed by Rappaport. Influenced by the same school of communication theorists such as Burks and Jacobson (Rappaport 1999:58–68; Tambiah 1979:153-154), Rappaport suggests that two classes of information/message are transmitted in ritual: the self-referential and canonical messages. In brief, the self-referential message is concerned with the current state of the participants, which is often transmitted indexically rather than symbolically, while the canonical message is concerned with the enduring aspects of nature, society or cosmos, which is encoded in apparently invariant aspects of liturgical orders (1999:58). He further articulates that.
[whereas the referents of self-referential messages, i.e., the current physical, psychic or social states of individual participants, or of the body of participants as a whole, are confined to the here and now, the significata of the canonical are never so confined. They always include, in words and acts that have been spoken or performed before, orders, processes or entities, material, social, abstract, ideal or spiritual, the existence or putative existence of which transcends the present. The self-referential represents the immediate, the particular and the vital aspects of events; the canonical, in contrast, represents the general, enduring, or even eternal aspects of universal orders. Indeed, its quality of perdurance is perhaps signified iconically—its sense is surely conveyed—by the apparent invariance of its mode of transmission (Rappaport 1999:53).

Rappaport argues that these two classes of information ‘depend on each other in a complex way’. The interdependent relationships of these two categories of messages are also noted by Tambiah. To overcome the problem of dichotomisation caused by the duality of indexical symbol, Tambiah further poses a dialogical resolution, which he terms as the ‘emergent meanings in conditions of historical continuity’. That is, ‘emergent meanings ride on the already existing grids of symbolic and indexical meanings, while also displaying new resonances’ (Tambiah 1979:160). Along with Howe’s notion of ‘inscription’ (of not only meaning but also action), scholars’ compromising of different realities, in short a structural one and historical one or text and performance, is apparent. I shall argue that this awareness is not only based on the theoretical consideration, but also reflects the practical situation of doing fieldwork on ritual: the scholars are always engaged in merely a short section of ‘the long conversation’ (Bloch 1989[1977]), in which the seemingly uniqueness, creativity and the improvisation are overwhelming.

Bearing in mind this effort and necessity to conquer the dualisms rooted in the technique through which the anthropology of ritual gains its knowledge, the efficacy of the performative approach in terms of repetitive rituals needs to be resumed. Against Humphrey and Laidlaw’s statement that performance is weakly ritualized and should be distinct from liturgical rituals, I shall emphasise that, following Rappaport’s argument, there is no ritual without performance, which is almost a prevailing attribution in social actions and is never an isolated activity, as Goffman and Howe
both suggest. Anthropologist Sahlins poses an explanation to the profound condition with which most human beings need to come to term through their own performance:

Symbolic action is a duplex compound made up of an inescapable past and an irreducible present. An inescapable past because the concepts by which experience is organized and communicated proceed from the received cultural scheme. An irreducible present because of the world uniqueness of any action: the Heraclitean difference between the unique experience of the river (or fleuve) and its name. The difference lies in the irreducibility of specific actors and their empirical contexts, which are never precisely the same as other actors or other situations— one never steps the same river twice. As responsible for their own actions, people do become authors of their own concepts; that is, they take responsibility for whatever their culture might have made them. For if there is always a past in the present, an a priori system of interpretation, there is also a “life which desires itself (as Nietzsche says). This is what Roy Wagner (1975) must mean by “the invention of culture”: the particular empirical inflection of meaning that is given to cultural concepts when they as realized as personal projects (Sahlins 1985:151-152).

Under this premise, in the following chapter, I shall focus on how the dancers structure their ideas and behaviour in the most eminent annual ritual, tanadhu, and achieve the inscription that is meaningful in terms of their specific existences in the long historical course.
CHAPTER EIGHT   The Ritual Process of Tanadui

8.1 Introduction

Among various forms of performances, dancing in Taketomi certainly has a special position. In general, dancing is a criterion of the value standards based on which an Okinawan is estimated. As a symbolic form of action, dancing is also the main activity in ritual. In this chapter, I shall specify the preparation and presentation of the most eminent annual ritual, tanadui, to show how traditional values and forms of actions are comprehended to cope with individual situations or social breaches. This ritual complex is mixed with practices highlighting traditional religious ideology, divisions between social hierarchy (such as senior and junior, male and female), surface solidarity and hidden competition. Historically, the ritual itself is layered with ideologies produced under different political and social contexts. Together they are interwoven into a notion of ‘the past,’ ‘the tradition,’ and even ‘the Taketomian,’ against which their own existence is defined. The Taketomian Islanders, nevertheless, do not only passively follow the practices. They stage their own interpretations of the world that is around them.

8.2 The Preparation

Due to the fact that Osa was among the few villagers who still grew traditional crops such as millet and had actively participated in various traditional rituals and performances, he had a certain degree of popularity among scholars of various interests. He was also a senior member in the association of revitalisation, shinkōkai, in which the priestesses and the cultural authority of the Island met together once a month to revitalise traditional practices and customs. Villagers usually describe him as ‘the grandee who knows everything’. For instance, Lura, the owner of a nearby hotel, once ran for Osa’s help.
Lura: Ojisan, (for several times before Osa turns his head to her) how many years has the term utsugumi (local dialect for ‘co-operation’) been posed? The TV crew from the NHK would like to know this.
Osa: Well, the history of the Island is about six hundred years...
Lura: So it is six hundred years ago?
Osa: But the song of shikitabun [the first instance the term utsugumi is known] is said to be only recently composed...
Lura: Then how many years after all is the term?
Osa: It should be six hundred years.
Lura: Then I will go to tell the TV people it has been six hundred years. Thank you, Ojisan. Take care of yourself.

Utsugumi means co-operation. It is the most prominent slogan of ‘the Taketomian spirit’. Taketomians believe that it is only through utsugumi that an island a small as theirs has enjoyed a good reputation since the past. Nevertheless, as a villager has expressed, this spirit has become less and less prominent in Taketomian life. One ‘remedy’ to this contemporary phenomenon is the ritual, as an informant described:

If the rituals become simplified, or gradually become an observance, the connecting point among the hearts of human beings disappears, then conflict happens [in terms] of the personal relationship among Taketomians and it becomes unsettled, and the spirit of utsugumi becomes difficult, doesn’t it? Now anyhow there are still twenty-three occasions of worship during a year. Although not quite satisfied, I feel somehow the connection is still there.

Although Taketomian life is full of rituals of various kinds, for them, tanadui is certainly the most significant event. Tanadui, ‘to get the seed,’ is a nine-day ritual complex which is held on certain auspicious days of the ninth or tenth month according to the lunar calendar. It is rooted in the ideologies of harvest and continuity of a patriarchal and hierarchical society of the past. Although the ritual with the same name is seen overall in Okinawa, in Taketomi, the ritual is embedded in local history and micro-politics among villages and families. The most remarkable event in the ritual is the two-day performances composed of nearly seventy programmes of traditional drama and dances.

Every year, before the annual schedule of events is publicised, the priestesses and the village heads gather together and put down the events in order according to the lunar calendar. The dates of tanadui are usually decided through a process of negotiation. Since every sixty days form a cycle, and nowadays the Island does not really rely on
agriculture as the mode of substance, the religious and political leaders need to choose the dates for the ritual based on some other ‘practical’ reasons. For instance, for the *tanadui* of 1998, two dates matched the requirement, one in December and one in October. But at last it was decided that the ritual was held in October, because villagers thought it would be too cold in December and specifically in that year the performance would fall at the weekend if it were held in October. In 2000, the ritual was held in November because the other dates, which were in September, would be too hot and too close to other events such as *ketsugansai*.

Usually it is only until one month before the ritual that the dancers of the ritual performance are decided and the practice of dances starts. Nevertheless, Emi, who was the dance instructor in Ainota, had been worrying about the programmes long before the day.

‘This year [1999] is very bad. We have to perform fourteen or fifteen pieces of dance and soon I am retiring [from the position of dance instructor]. I am worried about the new instructors, and what should we perform after all? If the young have the *kimochi* [mood, willing to do something], maybe I will stand behind the scene and help’.

Since Ainota and Innota both belong to the village of Hazama and they only separated from each other two decades ago, they co-operate to set up the dance performances together but take turns as the major performing group every two years. For instance, in 1999, Innota was in charge of the dance programmes on the first day of the performance, therefore they were the major performing group, and Ainota only supplemented the dance on the second day and provided less programmes. The situation was reversed in 2000. On the other hand, the male villagers of Hazama do not separate themselves and perform in the dramas together. In addition, the negotiation of the programmes is done on a cross-island base, since the performance nowadays includes those offered by the emigrants in Ishigaki, Okinawa and Tokyo.

Most of the programme, including both drama and dances, are regular ones which are considered traditional and significant in the Taketomian view. Except for those programmes that are indispensable and are somehow treated as ‘ritualistic’ (a point
that will be covered in the next chapter), sometimes the villagers try to pull something out from the old repertoire. For instance, a musical drama that is arranged based on the story of Kuyama of Asatoya was performed nearly twenty-five years ago. Many villagers were impressed with this drama but it has not been performed for a long time. Suni, who was the only one who can sing the song, composed of twenty-three verses, said:

A villager once said, “Perform the drama of Asatoya! Show it to me when I am still alive”. But it is a long programme. In order to perform the drama, you have to cut out three or four pieces of dance. The village people they think the number of programmes is more important.

Another criterion for choosing the programme is the concept of ‘tradition’. Only those programmes which are thought to be classical and traditional Taketomian dances can be performed in the ritual of tanadui. While watching a newly composed piece of dance which was accompanied with the new style of music composed by a young Taketomian musician, a Taketomian commented that it was regrettable that this kind of dance could not be performed on the stage of tanadui although the song was popular and well known among Okinawans and the dance was enjoyable. Therefore, to agree on the programmes chosen is to agree on what can represent ‘Taketomian culture’. The performance in the ritual is a whole series of cultural displays.

Decisions on the programme may not be easy, but it is even more difficult to decide who should dance what. ‘You can almost know if the dance will succeed or fail once you know who the dancer is. Without the ability to arrange suitable dancers for each dance, an instructor cannot be called the shishō [master],’ said a master. Owing to the fact that the Islanders are seldom professional dancers, to arrange dancers for the performance in the ritual means prolonged negotiation concerning the ability and availability of individuals. Sometimes female villagers will hesitate to participate and give excuses such as ‘the business is too busy’. Mothers of young babies are especially excluded because of their duties. Even when the husband is considerable enough to sanction a wife to dance, the children themselves can become the pressures to extract the mother from her practising. Some other factors may further prevent
them from participation, such the death of a relative or family member, which prohibits people from being accessible for activities such as dance. 2

Single women without the burden of children are always among the first to be considered as a candidate. They include widows, female villagers who either never married or have divorced. Yani had lived in Tokyo for decades. She had three daughters who are all adults. She had recently divorced and returned, alone, to her natal family in Ainota, where only her mother was still living. She soon became a member of the females’ organisation and was invited to participate in dance practices. Homu had a similar story. She returned to the Island, with her children, after leaving her husband. She was then living with her mother. Since then, Homu had participated in various dance practices and had been chosen to perform shikitabun, which was usually performed by dancers who were skilled and mature enough. She was also responsible for several other programmes in the ketsugansai.

A crisis, however, happened to Homu individually and the community of Ainota as a whole. Just several days before the ketsugansai and weeks before the tanadui, a helicopter was summoned one morning to pick up an emergency patient. ‘At first we guessed it had to be one of the old villagers,’ a villager recalled. It turned out to be Homu that was transported to the hospital in Ishigaki. She was later diagnosed as having internal bleeding under the arachnoids in her brain.

A replacement for her role needed to be confirmed. But Shiyo, Homu’s partner in the dance of shikitabun, was not happy about the situation at all. Without Homu, the role may be replaced by a senior villager, Chizuko, who is very experienced and has performed shikitabun for many years. She is actually a senior and close relative of Shiyo. Shiyo was discontented with Chizuko because, apart from other reasons, Chizuko was always the star, and was usually late for practising. The senior member, Tsumoki, who used to dance this piece, just inherited the position of tsukasa after a fifteen-year suspension. As the tsukasa, she would be occupied in the office of priestess and not be able to dance in the tanadui anyway. For Shiyo, this first presence of shikitabun meant so much to her and she expected the least possibility to spoil it. On one night after Homu’s accident, Shiyo, out of everyone’s expectance, went
directly to Mati, who is another senior member. She kneeled down and asked for Mati’s agreement to dance *shikitabun* with her. The public was quiet. Mati was surprised by Shiyo’s behaviour. Shiyo’s requirement set her a difficult position, since, among other reasons, she had been troubled by high blood pressure recently. At a performance in August, she even quit at the final moment due to poor health. Finally, Mati decided not to take the role and after all it was Chizuko, as proposed by the instructor and agreed by most other villagers because of her ability and experience, who replaced Homu’s place in the dance of *shikitabun*.

The other villages also needed to come to terms with problems caused by dancers. In Naji, the decrease in population, especially in the young generation, has been the main problem. It becomes even more critical during the ritual period because Naji villagers have boasted of their dances as being the best on the Island. To find enough dancers to maintain the privilege always means a great challenge. It was an especially difficult task this year, because Zana, a mature female villager, would not attend the performance. Zana was nearly forty and was born in Taketomi. She was from Ainota but had been married to a villager from Naji for eighteen years. Her three children were old enough and she could be spared from young mother’s responsibility. She had been reintegrated into dance practices for a while until the middle of September, when Zana’s husband lost in the recent election of local senators. On the day when the result was revealed, Zana did not show up at the practice as usual. After that, she became absent from most of the dance performances.

The decrease in available dancers has caused tension for a long while in the performance in *tanadui*. A villager described how there were times that she had seven pieces to be performed in the same day, and in order to catch up with the time she needed to put on the costume of the next dance underneath when she were dancing the previous one. To recruit extra human resources, Taketomians have developed several strategies. First of all, they lower the age limit of the performers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, younger boys and girls are targeted as new members of the dance performers. Owing to the fact that the repertoire of traditional Okinawan presentational dance is hierarchical in the sense that it contains different dances for different stages or characters, it is not difficult to select suitable pieces for the young.
(See Appendix II for Typology of Dance Performance in Okinawa.) Nevertheless, availability is also limited by the school schedule. Students in junior high school are bound by many curriculum and extra activities. To adapt to their study, they are only asked to perform one or two pieces and the practice is always undertaken after school hours.

Emigrant villagers hence serve as another supplementary group to the performance in the ritual. Continuing emigration has brought the Island, a geographical independent area, into close affinity with ‘the other world,’ be it Ishigaki, Okinawa or Tokyo. In fact, emigrant villagers have been keeping close connection with nearly every facet of Taketomian life. The distinction between Taketomians and non-Taketomians becomes difficult to draw but constantly negotiated, as expressed through Umo’s case. Umo had participated actively in traditional dance dramas as well as in public affairs. Among the few youngsters, his performance was very eminent. It was only after a longer conversation, however, that I was struck by his revelation of the dilemma he felt towards ‘Taketomi identity’. He expressed his dissatisfaction about how ‘flexible’ the attitude of the Islanders was towards his identity.

My grandfather was a great figure on this Island. But I was not born from the family of his original wife. My family moved to Naha before I was born. The original family still lives here. When I was six, they summoned me back here because the number of students was not enough to open a class. I stayed here for a couple of years. I went to Japan after I left high school and met my wife there. Six years ago we discussed and decided to return and live in this Island. We have been trying very hard to be like Taketomians, but sometimes I still feel very confused. When the village people need your contribution, they include you as one of them. But when they do not need you, they change their attitude and say you don’t belong to them.

Even so, Umo, his wife and daughter have been considered legitimate members to participate in the ritual performances because of their affinity and state of residence. For those who have migrated out of the Island, the situation also can be very complicated especially in terms of traditional performing arts. All dance instructors on the Island expressed their concern about how the professional dance teachers, mainly in Ishigaki, rearranged the dances from the Island repertoire into stage performances. The dance instructors, who were amateur but had inherited knowledge and status in
the Island milieu, thought that they were ‘protecting the tradition’ which was at risk of change and mis-representation by the professional dance teachers, although most of them had a Taketomian origin Island. On one occasion, a villager complained that a dance teacher, who originates from her village, used some hand movements from the traditional repertoire in one contemporary dance work. Most often, the villagers insisted that the dances performed during the rituals should not be performed on the stage, even by Taketomians.

Nowadays, owing to the realistic situation that the Islanders are not enough to support the numerous performances in two days, emigrants and professional dance teachers of Taketomian origin are admitted as legitimate performers in tanadui. Their performances are allocated into different periods of time according to their villages of origin. But still the regular performances of drama and dance are only limited to the Islanders. Outsiders, that is, immigrants who are not of Taketomian origin, are another input that has, only recently, functioned as a supplement to the inadequacy of numbers of performers. In addition to those who are married to Taketomians and teachers who are transferred to the Taketomian School, more and more outsiders have been interested in Taketomian life and strive to stay as helpers in the guesthouses or tourist guides. Most of them also manage to learn traditional skills, such as weaving, samisen playing and dancing. The outsiders are usually welcome to participate in various social activities, and the Islanders find they can be very helpful, such as in serving food or anything which needs labour. After a long time of staying, these young outsiders are immersed in the daily lives of Taketomians and it becomes difficult to distinguish them from ‘the Taketomians’. Nevertheless, tanadui is a significant occasion which celebrates the authentic representations of Taketomians, and villagers may have different voices regarding the participation of outsiders. Some villagers insisted that only the Taketomians can learn the dances of tanadui, while others had different ideas. Nora, a dance instructor, thought as far as the young outsiders showed their interests,

Why not? If they can understand the Island, and really consider living on this Island forever, or not forever, for two or three years. If they have the mood of ‘I want to live in the Island,’ and they understand the things of the Island, and want to do everything with the Islanders.
Having had this ‘open-mind,’ however, it was not always easy to teach the outsiders traditional Taketomian dances. Nora had a difficult mission this year. The newly transferred music teacher of the School wanted to join in the performance. Then Nora decided to let her participate in mamidoma. Mamidoma is a group dance performed in the plaza in front of the shrine of Umuchi on. Its spiritual tempo and lively movements depicting the peasant labour with props such as hoes, sickles, and mouldboards makes it a popular performance. Although it is a regular performance in tanadui, it has also been performed in other contexts due to its popularity. Nora first asked the music teacher to practise with the music with everybody, a conventional way to learn a dance in Taketomi. The problem appeared when the music teacher manipulated the long hoe. Her movements were so large that she nearly hurt the other dancers beside her. She also did not know how to sink her waist (as the central gravity) properly, which was a basic posture in terms of the Okinawan dance. Nora had to instruct her individually and everyone else stopped to watch.

Conventionally, in Naji village, different villagers were in charge of instructing different pieces. Owing to the fact that the transmission of dance is mainly through embodied practising only during the pre-ritual time, and a villager may need to embody more than tens of pieces after years, ambiguous points in terms of movement accuracy do happen from time to time. Nora, however, was the only one who stayed in the village among her contemporaries. She usually consulted the senior members of the village whenever there was a question about a movement and even music. Modern equipment, such as video and audio recording, reduced this disadvantage of reliance solely on the masters since the younger generation could trace previous performances on the tape or practise with taped music without the presence of a musician.

New technology, however, may bring another dimension of conflict into the practising. Nora recalled one occasion on which another instructor had different ideas about a movement from her and decided to check the videotapes. Nora did not agree with this demeanour and said she would rather:
...ask those Islanders who have really been dancing since the past, in accord with the bodily situation, the song and its rhythm. If you think it is a little late to dance like this, then sing and listen with the ears. Then you remember it carefully. You remember the song, your body remembers the dance, and you can enter the dance. Some other people say 'here you must dance how many how many steps,' or 'no, you're wrong, let's check the video tape'. Eventually it turns out to be a quarrel.

Similar quarrels also happened when villagers had different interpretations of the originality of a certain piece of dance, such as who had filled in the words for a song or which village had the ownership. Suni, the previous instructor of Ainota, once revealed that she would never forgive the instructor of another village who had 'stolen' the authorship of the song made by her father-in-law and made it into the dance of their village, although she had decided not to say anything about it 'for the sake of the island'.

Despite these disagreements between individuals or groups, the effort of preserving Taketomian culture has been emphasised and more and more texts on Taketomian culture in general and ritual performance of tanadui specifically have been published (Tamashilo Kenbun n.d.; Ueseto Tôru 1976, 1979; Zengoku Taketomi Jima Bunka Kyôkai 1998). Although the books may cause disagreement at many points, they become a reference for contemporary ritual practices at large. A tsukasa revealed that, in addition to attending the shinkôkai (Association of Revitalisation), she used the book which records the prayers of tsukasa as the main source of reference. During the practice of dancing for tanadui, the book of ‘The Textbook of the Performance of Tanadui’ (Zengoku Taketomi Jima Bunka Kyôkai 1998) was often referred to, whenever there was a question such as the meaning or history of a dance or words of an archaic song, of which most young dancers had little clue.

Owing to the fact that, traditionally, the transmission of dancing is only through oral instruction and bodily practice, the status of the master becomes absolutely unquestionable. The masters are always closely connected with the powerful families in each village. Nevertheless, modern equipment and written texts have publicised the knowledge of drama and dance, which is conventionally controlled and transmitted through certain lines. It is fair to say that in the contemporary situation the authority
of dance and drama masters is de-centralised. The ritual of *tanadui* also becomes a dialectic process full of conflict in the sense that traditional authority seeks for its resumption, while its counterpart may try to set up the performance in its own ways.

### 8.3 The Prelude

As the ritual of *tanadui* approached, the atmosphere became gradually stirred up. There was, to a certain degree, a specific element in the air that revealed an unusual ambience from the daily life of Taketomians. First of all, the cleaning day was held in this pre-ritual period. Annually, there were two cleaning days for all villagers, in which the village heads, principals of the school and the post office went around every house to investigate if the environment was satisfactorily maintained. At the same time, the village heads carried out the annual investigation of the statistics of properties. The result was later announced through the broadcast. The statistics covered the Islanders, different kinds of transportation tools, and domestic animals. Both the physical and social composition of the Island was clarified to prepare for the ritual.

At the same time, ritual food was prepared. *Iyachi*, the millet cake made with rice, millet, and red beans, was conventionally partaken specifically during this period. Taketomian villagers believed the rice represents silver, and the millet gold. Some villagers used it as an invitation to relatives living on the other islands to invite them back for the ritual. Osa started to get excited as the ritual time approached because he was one of the few who still grew millet on the Island, and soon people would come and buy millet from him to make the *Iyachi*. Sometimes Osa sent the millet to his acquaintances or their children, since most of his contemporaries had passed away, as a gift to revitalise their network. Another ritual food was *tako*, ‘octopus’. In the Taketomians’ view, octopus was one of the favourite foods of the *kami*. Garlic, on the other hand, was believed to exorcise the evil spirit because of its smell. The ritual food, mixed with chopped octopus and garlic, was prepared as an offering to the *kami* during the *tanadui*. In the past, villagers competed with each in the taste of the food.
Nowadays, most of these materials were bought from the markets in Ishigaki rather than caught and collected by the Islanders themselves.

The Island became crowded as the days of performance approach. Several TV crews arrived just before the ritual formally started. Japanese researchers, university students and professional photographers all booked their rooms early, not to mention the tourists, while most emigrants only came back later for the two-day performances. The population of the Island multiplied in days. The owner of the hostel said excitedly, ‘On the days of performance, there will be hundreds of guests!’

Finally, it was the day of turukki. Turukki, according to different villagers, means ‘to enter,’ ‘to tie together,’ or something that is very important and worth preserving. Nowadays, the vocabulary is only used in this context. It is the first day of the multi-day ritual complex of tanadui. For some villagers, the day of turukki does not only mean the entry of the ritual in its temporal sense, it also marks a ‘threshold’ to another period of spiritual condition.

*Turukki* is a ritual. It raises the tension into what has to be done. After we do *turukki*, the energy increases in a week. You cannot bend your knees and be loose anymore. This is the psychological condition of human beings. Before the *turukki*, [the dancers] strive to reach the standard. After the *turukki*, I only pay attention to the spiritual promotion and say nothing about other things. After *turukki*, naturally you enter a spiritual condition. You connect your spiritual condition to the *kami*.

On the night of *turukki*, the village heads toured around the venues where the practices of dramas and dances were held. They first visit the house of Kunshia in Hazama, which inherited the traditional dramas and was the venue for the practice of dramas. Every year the practice of ritual dramas was only inaugurated after the drama players on the Island prayed for the sanction and blessing of the ancestor of the house, from whom the dramas were thought to be preserved or revitalised. The same tradition was followed in the Seimori family in Naji. Then the head villages toured around three *kaigan* where the dance practices were undertaken. In each of these venues, the village heads worshipped together with the villagers who participated in the performances this year. ‘Finally, it is the time of the *tanadui*, we worship the
kamisama to bless us with good weather, and everyone who will perform without mistake of their hands and feet,' proclaimed the village head after everybody shared the wine.

In the turukki, not only the performers, but also the elder villagers were present to encourage the performers. In Ainota, keeping a healthy bodily condition was especially emphasised by the village head, as a reflection on Homu's accident. In Innota, during the turukki, the students performed a piece of dance as a rehearsal in front of the village heads. A boy was, however, too nervous to hold his fan tight and the fan was dropped several times. The mood was tense. Some senior villagers were not happy. The village head of Innota immediately said: 'It's because the kaigan is too small, let's build another bigger one'. In Naji, Nora shared the wine with the dancers and encouraged them 'to tie together'. Then the wine was circulated among all the dancers who carried the heavy burden of preserving the traditional performing arts. Nevertheless, towards the end, Nora still could not manage to train the musical teacher into a good mamidoma dancer and the villagers were not persuaded by her skill, either.

On the fifth day of the ritual, except for the old, the male villagers had to gather in front of the Yumuchi on, which was the main venue of tanadui. The shrine was usually banned except for this period every year. The villagers were here to clean up the ground and set up the stage for the performance of the ritual. The males were arranged with different tasks. The shrine of Yumuchi on was disclosed and needed to be cleaned. The villagers refilled the incense stoves with newly collected white sand. Clean water, filled in the glass bottle, was also brought. The shrine was not only the place for the advent kami to dwell in the ritual period; it is also the place where the villagers' performance of ritual was held.

Some other males cut the trees which obstructed the audience's sight. A truck came to transport the rubbish away. Around the stage the ground was cleaned, and covered with weed mats on which the audience would sit. Tatami was put on the stage to facilitate the performance. Some villagers built a temporary house, using a special kind of grass, for storage of food and drink which was in great need during the ritual.
period. A huge canvas was extended as the dome for both the performers and the audience. Even the plaza was cleaned. White sand was transported and spread on the ground. The preparation of the stage started around five o’clock in the afternoon. By the evening, the stage, for the ritual and the performance, was set up.

After this night, dancers from different villages started to gather in front of the Yumuchi on and rehearse for their performances. They go on the stage and mark their position to avoid loss of orientation on the stage. ‘The stage of tanadui is terrible. The audience sits on three sides. There is not a second that your eyes can close to rest,’ a female villager described. The instructors and senior members sit in the front to remind the dancers of details of their positions on the stage. They always allocated their position with reference to the shrine, which they would face during the performance.

Also on the fifth day, an event, the ritual of ‘planting the seed,’ tane o oroshi, was held. This event mainly had its significance in the past since most families relied on agricultural production. Nowadays, however, the event was only practised as a symbolic action. It was most probably that only Tomie, who was among the few that were still familiar with the prayers and practices, performed this ritual as a representative. In his own field, Tomie first cleared a field of about two-metres wide and three-metres long. He then walked around the border of the field and threw the seeds into the field while speaking words of prayer. Finishing the seed planting, he then tied the grass into a special knot and thrust it on the field to exorcise evil spirits. With only symbolic implication, Tomie insisted that this event was prohibited to be publicised due to the belief that it was still a sacred practice with a certain efficacy. Nevertheless, TV crews, acquainted photographers and scholars who came every year always found their access to the event and recorded it. Usually not long later, the ritual of taneoroshi was seen on a TV channel.

Except for the ritual of planting the seed, many agrarian events had been abolished due to the change of productive mode, such as the convention of abstinence from wine, colourful drink, sauces and noise on the sixth day, since it could cause much inconvenience in terms of tourism. On other occasions, minor practices were
purposely omitted if the villagers could not find new meanings for the old practices even though they were originally rooted in some culturally significant ideologies. For instance, events such as iyachikami, ‘to receive the iyachi,’ was conventionally held on the sixth day to invite female relatives of the shūji, the assistant village heads and the main hosts of the tanadui, to share the iyachi and bring blessings to the families. The female villagers, who had been invited beforehand, gathered in the house of the shūji of a certain village, and gave blessing money to the house. Led by the tsukasa, they all paid respect to the altars of the kami and the ancestors. Then while the host spared his thanks for the blessing and presence of the female relatives, food was offered, with a specific kind of soup of shells. This event, which was rooted in the traditional belief of sister god, still had its necessity for those Taketomians who only acted as the shūji first time. It was, however, abbreviated if the shūji was someone who had performed the position of shūji before, a situation which happened more and more frequently due to the decrease in villagers. It was also partly due to the fact that in contemporary Okinawa where religious belief became versatile and transportation and mutual interaction between relatives were convenient and frequent, the event carried less efficacy than formally.

On the other hand, practices of various performances reached the final stage. The costumes were also prepared. Nowadays the costumes are of extravagant material made into various colours. Some villagers, however, still remembered the simplicity of costumes in the past. ‘In the past we didn’t have the kanbu [the wig]. We went on the stage with the original hair style, maybe tied with a towel around the front,’ described an old female villager. Osa also remembered in pre-war times how he used to perform a drama in which he put on the clothes brought back from Taiwan where better clothes could be purchased at that time. The advance of the costume into the delicate style was only after 1977, when the performance of tanadui was staged on the National Theatre in Tokyo not long after the ritual was assigned as one of the National Intangible Cultural Assets (see p.34, endnote twenty-nine). After the performance, many stylised costumes were designed. For instance, the one-sleeve robe worn during the performance of jacchu, according to some villagers, was stylised no earlier than thirty years ago. ‘We tried several clothes for jacchu and finally someone suggested to put on only one sleeve. Then it was put on like that since then.’
Final rehearsals were held for various performances. Osa returned from the rehearsal of miluku performance, which was held in the house of Yoshinobu. Yoshinobu's ancestor had been in charge of the sacred mask of miluku, and conventionally it was the eldest son in the family that would put on the mask and perform the miluku ritual, a ritualised dance-drama which was performed on the mornings of the seventh and eighth days. Since Yoshinobu would perform with the mask on his face and it was very difficult to see from behind the mask, the rehearsal was critical. Four villagers who would perform his guards had to work perfectly with him. Osa was from another powerful family which was related to the mask of miluku, and he knew many details about this ritual. It became a convention that he was always invited to check if everything was all right at the last stage. He could not hide his expectation for the next day coming while he was back from the rehearsal, 'Tomorrow I got to be early,' since he and Yoshinobu would open the gate of the miluku temple where the miluku mask was preserved, which was his exclusive and sacred task.

On this last night before the performance, the final dance rehearsals were carried out in the kaigan of each village respectively. After that, everyone checked the final details. The dancer instructors announced the time for making-up. As the major performers of the first day, it was five o'clock in the morning that villagers of Hazama had to gather. After a month of late-night gathering, for both practising and chatting, on this night the dancers were dismissed earlier. Although the night was quiet, the mood was not.

8.4 The Performance

At five o'clock on the morning of the seventh day, the sky was still dark. But many male villagers had gathered in front of the miluku temple. They were mainly elders who held a certain status on the Island. They were all dressed in the formal black robe, and maintained a solemn attitude. Except for the females who served food, this was a purely male domain which was scarcely seen in other rituals. Behind them, many media crews, scholars, students, and photographers were trying to lower the noise.
they made and find the best place to watch. At six o’clock, the ritual of opening the
gate of the miluku temple started. Yoshinobu and Osa, both wearing white gloves,
opened the gate and lit the candles. The mask of miluku was revealed and the moment
became solemn.6 Except for the sound of picture taking, everybody was silent. The
villagers then followed the usual practices of worshipping the miluku and shared salt,
food and wine. Then the group moved to the Yumuchi on, where the tsukasa had been
serving. The Yumuchi on and relevant shrines would be frequently attended after a
series of worship that was inaugurated at this time

At the same time, in the kaigan, dancers were gathering to be made-up. Students of
Innota were excited although the practice they had been through was very demanding.
They were the first arrivals. Some of them did not even fall asleep last night. Unlike
the miluku temple, here the mood was human: the light was on and villagers tried to
talk with each other. Breakfast was prepared but was hardly consumed. The dancers
were waiting to be transformed. Each one of them needed to go through the same
stages of tying up the hair, putting on a kind of white powder and then the colours. A
special hairpin was thrust from the back of the bun as the last procedure to identify
who the dancer was. (See attached video-tape, first half of episode one for the above
details.)

After the ritual in the miluku temple and worship in the Yumuchi on, the male elders
started to walk on the stage. Then a ritual called kanta7 was held. All the males then
went on the stage and sat around three sides of the stage except for the one near the
shrine. A special dried fish, the kanta, was prepared at the front of the stage. Then
kōminstanchō, the first village head, served the dried fish in front of the kami to each
of the eldest members of the villages. They then bowed to the kami in pairs. The event
proceeded in a highly stylised fashion. The female assistants, who were usually the
wives of the village heads, dressed up in traditional costumes and moved among the
male villagers to serve liquor with a similar gait to that which was no less formal than
in the traditional dramas.

The next event of sankei, ‘the visit [to an honourable object],’ started sharply at eight
o’clock as scheduled. Originally this event was to pay a visit to the houses of the
gentry's class. Nowadays the representatives, and only they were allowed, to visit the houses of two assistant village heads respectively on two mornings. The procession followed certain routes, which were considered 'the routes of the Gods' (kamisujii), to reach the house. They sang michiuta, 'song of the way,' in their procession. On entering the village, the villagers, who were dressed in the folk garb, were waiting to welcome the procession. Both the expecting and the expected knew what would come up next and behaved as their predecessors had, but still there was an atmosphere of excitement prevailing among the villagers. In order to cover the scarcity of population, sometimes the younger villagers ran for the next meeting point after the procession passed them.

After entering the front yard of the house of the shūji, the procession formed a circle and started to sing another song while clapping their hands. The song had to be finished before the procession could enter the house. Then gāli was practised as a finale. Only the representatives of the Island were allowed to enter the house then. Together they would worship the kami and the ancestors of the household, and share food, salt and wine. The event was followed by singing a series of ritual songs as blessings to the members of the house. The whole process of sankei was repeated in the other event, yukkui, that was held later on the seventh day. As a result of the archaic vernacular and the difficult melodies, most younger villagers could not sing the song completely. To complement this deficiency, several years ago the village centre printed the words of the song to distribute during the ritual. 8

The procession then left the house according to the scheduled time. Nowadays the ritual of tanadui is strictly scheduled in due time and any possible delay causes unhappy results. For instance, the village head was displeased with the speed of food preparation in kanta and pulled a long face saying 'time is running!' By ten o'clock in the morning, the procession returned to the Yumuchi on. Before they left earlier, the plaza was quiet and the sky dim. After the procession returned, it had turned to a bright scene full of spectators, including other villagers, returnees, tourists and businessmen who were selling food and drink. On reaching the plaza, a big circle was formed. A big gāli was held after the song finished.
The two-day performance soon started. The first part, composed of eight programmes, was performed in the plaza. Big crowd gathered on both sides of the pathway where the performance was held. At the one end of the pathway, the performers, including the villagers, students, teachers, and the returnees stood by in turns. These eight programmes, which were always the same every year, were mainly group dances with lively music and simple movements. During the performances, the distance between the performers and the audiences was so close that interactions between these two groups were intimate. The performers' facial expressions and their movements were clearly visible, and their shouting and singing inspiring. The mood was joyful. At the other end, all the tsukasa was seated in front of the shrine and watched the on-going performances when they were released. From now on they would stay here to enjoy the performances, along with the kami, until the end of the performance. Occasionally the villagers or returnees came to worship and the tsukasa practised their office for them. They were constantly in their roles as the performers and the audience.

The performances on the stage started after those in the plaza finished. The stage was decorated with a beautiful screen and covered with delicate tatami. Samisen players were seated behind the screen which was slightly transparent for them to observe the front stage. Modern audio equipment was set by the stage and music of tanadui was played. A table for donations was set by the seats of the male elders for those who came to pay their contribution of money. The name and the amount of money was then put down on a board by the end of the day, and during the performance which was composed of more than thirty programmes one day, food and drink would be served to the donors who had paid over a certain amount. The audience seats were allocated into hierarchical groups in advance: the male elders, the female elders, general audience and the media. The spectators tried to occupy better seats available to them and the mood was boisterous.

Backstage, the atmosphere was no less boiling. The performers, who wore delicate make-up and traditional hairstyle, put on their flamboyant dresses. The instructor was checking if the dresses and props were all right, while reminding the performers of some final details and trying to comfort the dancers. Sometimes the instructor stayed by the screen to help count the beats before the nervous dancers stepped out. More
often the standby dancers who still had plenty of time to wait were greeting their friends or taking pictures. Many photographers came to capture the images of dancers in traditional dresses. The children in traditional dresses were always among the favourite targets. To catch the ideal image, it was not unusual to hear the photographers or media crews quarrelling with each other.

The performance started with a prescribed order, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. Two programmes were especially significant, that is, the honjia, 'the elder,' and miluku. Both Hazama and Naji had their own houses of honjia who inherited the line of the traditional dramas. The host of these two families, therefore, held the symbolic duty to inaugurate the whole performance of tanadui every year. Honjia, who had a long white beard, held a fan and a long stick in his hands and was accompanied with the lively samisen playing behind the screen. He went to the central front of the stage and reported to the kami as a formal inauguration of the ritual performance. After this short inauguration, miluku was then presented himself, surrounded by young children who symbolised fertility. These two programmes were repeated on two days of performances every year. Only after these two programmes had finished did the performances of the villagers start.

As mentioned before, most of the programmes were regular and ritualised in the sense that they were all transmitted through generations and mostly pertained to themes such as harvest and the history of the Island. The performance as a whole celebrated the prosperity and continuity of the community. Nevertheless, individual characteristics were never neglected. For Himu, the tsukasa, who sometimes fell asleep during the performance because of the exhaustion of the activities which started from the early morning, this year was specially clear because her son Ron participated in the dramas. Rika, whose father was the shūjī this year, was sanctioned to perform a solo on the stage. She performed hatomabushi, a piece of high-tempo Yaeyama folk dance. She gained much praise not only for her skill but also for her beautiful face. Her mother, who was never obsessive about dancing, was so proud of her daughter's performance that she kept playing the video recording of her daughter's dancing after the ritual finished. Taketomians usually recalled that in the past only those dancers who were beautiful on the stage could perform. That is,
although the dance programmes were almost repeated every year, the performance still provided a good chance for them to identify individual dancers and review their ‘knowledge’ about other Islanders that weaved into the totality of the social photographs.

The villagers who had been watching the same performances every year, still enjoyed it very much. The reaction of the performers clearly distinguished the insiders and outsiders in terms of Taketomian experiences. For instance, most of the songs were not intelligible for the outsiders, but the villagers and some older returnees could catch up with the tunes eloquently. The vernacular used in the traditional dramas was strange to the Japanese and only those elder members who could understand laughed at the right points. Arousal of common experiences was not only based on words. Taketomian children, who were obsessed with the drama of ‘catching the monsters,’ always sat in the front roll in anticipation but sometimes could not help but burst out crying on seeing the monsters. Nevertheless, different reactions may be caused due to the content of performance. Kushiyo pulled a long face while watching the improvised drama performed by the villagers in Ishigaki, in which a figure of the garbage picker was travestied.

The performance of the first day ended at five o’clock in the evening. Without a break, the tsukasa and the representatives gathered in front of the Yumuchi on. A special kind of leaf was collected and distributed to everyone. The leaf was a contract that each of those who had received it needed to return to the temple on the next morning. Then the representatives headed for the house of Nehara Kondon, the chief who was believed to integrate the villages and set the dates of the ritual. The process was similar to the sankei which was held in the morning. The ritual of yukkui, ‘asking for the yu’ began after the visit to the house Nehara Kondon. From there, the villagers, led by the tsukasa, separated into three groups and carolled around the houses of their own villages. They sang the same series of songs as those sung in the sankei in the morning. A certain order was always followed in terms of the houses that were visited in each village, including the house which supported the Hazama on, the original house of tsukasa, the house of shuji and then other volunteers. At the end, the procession had return to the first house they had visited to end the event.
For the participants, including villagers, returnees, and even tourists, yukkui was the most exciting occasion. Without distinction of social ranks and so on, everyone was welcome to share wine, salt and food, which were prepared by the specific family. On some occasions the participants were numbered in hundreds and sometimes even the yard was full of people, but not a single guest was refused. After finishing the formal performance on the stage, villagers or returnees of Hazama demonstrated their creativity in this informal context. Finishing singing the ritual songs, villagers always presented performances voluntarily. The dance was mostly a short piece chosen from the repertoire of ritual performance, such as shizabudui, ‘the dance of four guards,’ in the performance of miluku. The villagers, however, performed it in a jocular way. Sometimes female villagers joined this dance, which was supposed to be exclusively performed by the males, or the adults sprang up to dance a piece that belonged to children. On other occasions, a piece of drama was reconstructed, but with formality replaced by travesty. The performance in the yukkui, which was never rehearsed and full of individual creativity, brought into the event a ‘carnivalesque spirit,’ in which bodily practice and formality was travestied (Bakhtin 1984). Unlike the well-structured and prescribed stage performance in the day time, the performance in yukkui, to a certain degree, reaches the state of communitas (Turner 1977), in which the boundary and formality that was built up in the daily social lives and the formal stage performances between groups of people, such as the performers and non-performers, the local and the emigrants, the islanders and the outsiders, disappeared.

Yukkui always lasted until three or four o’clock after midnight, after the house-carolling event finished. Many villagers claimed that it was impossible to sleep because the event of the eighth day started sharply at five o’clock again. On the morning of the eighth day, all the members who had received the leaves last night had to return to the house of Nehara Kondon as a contract. The formal and solemn spirit was resumed and most practices were repeated, except for the performance of shiduliani. The theatrical characteristic of the ritual was even more bluntly presented in the performance of shiduliani which was always performed on the morning of the eighth day after kanta. This drama, preserved and performed in Naji, revealed the characterisation between sacred and secular performance in the Taketomian view.
content of this dance-drama was about the oldest villager in Naji who heard of the gayness of the ritual of *tanadui*. He then summoned three other companions: ‘let’s worship with them together for the prosperity of our descendants’. Although the theme was traditional and the content was composed of scheduled lines, lyrics and patterned movements, the performers endowed the drama with a sense of ‘reality’ by speaking their real names in front of the *kami*. As a tradition, this dance-drama was performed in front of *kami* and the representatives as a sacred ritual by four males who only wore simpler dress within this context. Later on *shiduliani* was shown on the stage again. In front of the ordinary audience, the performers put on full costumes with white beards and long robes. The content of the performances under these two contexts was exactly the same, but the mood was totally different. After the solemn performance which was an offering to the *kami*, the human beings were also entertained.

For the performers, the stage was not only the forum where the *kami* and human beings were entertained, it was also the forum to blur the distinction between self and other, between new and old. On the day of performance, Chizuko as an experienced performer and Shiyo as a junior but very energetic one strove to co-operate with each other perfectly. Their movements matched, and so did their breath that was expressed through the flow of the dancing. The *shikitabun* had been practised on the stage again without failing. After the dance finished, the audience loudly applauded the pair of dancers who had shown the same ‘*kimochi*’ (feeling; mood). After the dancing, Chizuko and Shiyo actually were talking to each other intimately in the *kaigan*. In Innota, after the performance finished, the instructor gathered the students in their *kaigan* to thank them for their efforts. ‘Teaching you has made me learn much more,’ she articulated. As Emi, the instructor of Ainota commented, ‘dancing is always good for human relationships’.

Immediately after the two-day performance finished, the *tsukasa* and village heads gathered in front of the Yumuchi on to carry out the last worship and thanksgiving to the *kami*. The out-comers were transported by the minibuses to the port for the ferries which were specially scheduled until late to adapt to the time of performance. The villagers started to clean the ground and put away the *tatami*, the screen and the
canvas. After years of accumulation of experience, the job of cleaning was done in an amazingly fast and effective speed. Soon the Yumuchi on returned to its normal scene as usual.

On the next morning, tourists soon put the life of Taketomians back to their orbit again. Taketomians returned to their normal lives at a surprising speed. Everything was just the same as before the ritual. Only the village heads and relevant representatives gathered to review the ritual and undertake the financial accounts. The surplus was then distributed among the musicians and dancers as compensation for their efforts. At night, the quietness of the Island was resumed, except that occasionally samisen playing of Asatoya Yunta from the nearby youth hostel was heard.

8.5 The Aftermath

On Sunday morning, in a dance studio in Ishigaki, several young ladies were breast-feeding their babies after taking a break from their practice of dancing. By the mirror, a middle-aged lady stood watching. ‘How can these little girls look exactly the same as their fathers!’ The young mothers all laughed in a polite way that was typical of the Japanese ladies. Two of the baby girls were from the Richimu family and were cousins. They were born just around the time of tanadui which was held months ago.

The students all lived in Taketomi, although originally they were not Taketomians. Two of them were the new members of the Richimu’s family, including Ron’s wife, Zuyu. Chie, who was also married over from the other island, had a little boy slightly older than the girls. Mika came here with her husband who was teaching at the School. They had a little girl who was the same age. In this dance class, Reni was the only one who was single without any dependents. In fact, during last year, there were five newborn babies in Taketomi and everybody was pleased with this exciting increase of population although four of them were girls. ‘Now we have more dancers for tanadui!’
The formulation of this class was specific, since the students all shared similar experiences to a certain degree. The young ladies were not native Taketomians, but had chosen to live here for their lives ahead, or at least for a while. It was a class specific for these mothers in which they could bring over their little babies. Otherwise, it was difficult for them to attend in an ordinary dance practice with a child that was so young and still heavily counted on their attendance. Their practice was actually encouraged by the older grandmother of the Richimu family, who used to be the dance instructor. She wanted the daughters-in-law, who never learned the Taketomian dance before, to embody the dance beforehand and prepare for the future performances in tanadui.

Starting from the basic dance of akamma bushi, some of the young mothers had presented great potential and concentrated, as hard as they could, on the teacher’s instruction. The impression of dancing they got during the ritual of tanadui was still strong and motivating. Being a Taketomian wife with a different origin herself, the instructor kindly led her students through the repeated process of embodiment of the akamma bushi: ‘During the first time, you listen carefully. Then the second time you watch. Think over the movements the third time. Then the forth time you can do it.’ (See attached video-tape, the first half of episode two for details.)

In the above sections, I mainly follow a brief sequence of performance (Schechner and Appel 1990:5) to delineate the phases of the ritual process of tanadui. This arrangement, however, is taken in a symbolic and contextual way rather than delineating a set of universal principles which can cover the performance, no matter how it is defined, of various kinds across different cultures. As far as the Taketomians are concerned, this process highlights that tanadui is indeed the ‘ritual that embraces’ (Tambiah 1979). In this ritual complex, the social composition, ideologies of belief system, cosmological principles and political maneuverings are interwoven into a totality through which the processual and dynamic aspects of Taketomian social life is revealed. In short, the ritual of tanadui structures the Taketomians’ world-view and self-awareness, as well as orients their actions and interactions. The ritual provides the framework, and perhaps the most important one, for the Taketomians to come to
terms with events that occur and influence their existence. It is fair to say that Taketomians only become Taketomians through "tanadui. In "tanadui, the dancing is never an abstract form or a category that can be separated from the totality of social life. It condenses significant cultural practices as well as social discourses that the social process is based on. Through the above delineation, it is clear that dancing in Taketomi can adequately and effectively shed light on the understanding of the Taketomians' 'imponderabila of actual life' (Malinowski 1966[1922]:13), or the uniqueness of particular cultures (Turner 1990:1), which anthropologists have long striven to unravel.
Notes

1 There are eleven verses in the song. Based on the analyses of the style of songs, scholars suggest that the song is composed of verses made by different authors from different times, such as Nishito, the great hero of Taketomi, an official in the Kingdom and a village leader after the early twentieth century. The term utsugumi only appears in the last verse and it might be the latest production (Zengoku Taketomi Bunka Kyōkai 1998:96-97).

2 The rule is becoming flexible and context-determined. In the case of tanadui, it is strictly observed that a villager in mourning is not allowed to perform on the stage. On other occasions, however, a compromise may be possible and it is up to the individual to decide what to do. For instance, one of Kushiyo’s relatives died several months before the annual presentation for the old. She was still invited to perform but she refused. To persuade her, the organiser said ‘your relative loves dance herself. She will be considerate.’

3 According to Japanese official policy, the teachers and civil servants are transferred into different regions or positions every three years, to avoid bureaucratic corruption.

4 The daughter of one local author once complained that other villagers criticised her father’s book as ‘a lie’. Inconsistent points are also seen among books of the history of the Island and the performing arts.

5 The book is a recent project of National Taketomain Cultural Association, a non-governmental organisation sponsored by Taketomians as well as non-Taketomians all over Japan. The main editor is a native Taketomian scholar. In spite of reviewing previous literature, he interviewed many local islanders and emigrants for information about the history of the ritual, meaning of songs, meaning of dances and dramas, customs related to each event and so on. The book also includes maps and photographs indicating the site, route and various costumes and props. Interestingly enough, instruction such as which event is open to the public and which is not is carefully recorded. When I began my fieldwork, even scholars referred to this book as ‘everything you need to know is in it.’ As I interviewed several Taketomains, nevertheless, it seemed that what was recorded in the book was not completely agreed especially among specialists and it largely highlighted the dilemma of knowledge preservation and control.

6 In fact, in the whole tanadui ritual, miluku is the most sacred part. It is taboo to approach closely to the temple where the mask and robe of miluku are kept. Only male hosts of certain families can touch these sacred belongings and even they need to wear white gloves while doing so. In the event of ‘opening the gate of miluku temple,’ observers and photographers can only stand at he back of the villagers with a certain distance from the temple. In the ritual of 1994 when I did my primary investigation, photographing was prohibited while the elder put on the mask and the robe for the inheriting performer at the back stage in tanadui.

7 Different villagers have provided different exegeses of the term. Some say it is the name of the dried fish that is partaken in this ritual; others say it is synonymous with the word of ‘hospitality’.

8 In another ritual, pui, the song is also printed and handed out because of its length. In the pui of 1998, when a female villager read the printed version to sing while processing to a shrine, the village head interrupted her and hid the print because the TV crew was shooting.
CHAPTER NINE  Dancing and Ritualisation: Transformation and Metaphor in Movement

9.1 Introduction

As has been shown in Chapters Seven and Eight, the Taketomians structure their life according to various social performances, including liturgical rituals, social ceremonials, and daily interactions. Underlying various forms of social performance, there is a common feature of ritualisation. Many scholars may have varied definitions of ritualisation, but they all point to the differentiated aspect of it. For example, ritualisation can be defined as 'a qualitative departure from the normal intentional character of human action' (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:89), or

a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane,' and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the power of human actors (Bell 1992:74).

Both these definitions have emphasised the dimension 'to differentiate' and the qualitative distinction of actions. This notion of ritualisation hence provides a framework to explore the qualitative distinctive actions of which, in my opinion, dancing is one aspect, and a significant one in terms of the Taketomian context. Therefore, in this chapter, I shall borrow Humphrey and Laidlaw's notion of 'ritualisation of action' (1994:71) as an axiom to process the argument, but with a switch of focus from action to movement, despite the distinction which has been made by them. They have adopted philosopher C. Tyler's 'qualitative' view of action which cannot 'be reduced to a combination of ... entities such as a physical movement,' for actions are 'intrinsically directed' to ends and purposes (1994:4). Humphrey and Laidlaw's conceptualisation of actions as such is to resume the agent in action and pinpoint the difference between ritualised and unritualised action. Their distinction
between movements and actions, however, may be misleading since it brings in the old dichotomy of mind-body by reconciling the action and thoughts and leaving the movements entirely to the body. I shall argue that, ritualisation of actions cannot be achieved without the sense of movement, no matter if it is morphologically changed or not. Movement carries the process leading toward the form, such as the action of bowing to gods or a step in dance. It is primary to the social actions of which dancing is a specific kind.

9.2 The Logic of Movements

In general, the Taketomians use hand gestures, more often than other parts of the body, as a way of expression. For instance, on more than one occasion, my Taketomian informants used the gesture of pointing the little finger to imply someone’s ‘mistress,’ while the thumb referred to the male partner or someone’s husband. Once an informant bent his left elbow towards his upper arm and put his right hand near the joint of elbow to describe another male senior as ‘stingy’. In another conversation of which the issue was the future of the Island, a young male informant slightly swung his left hand to indicate the worry of oscillation. All these gestures are easily understood, even for a foreigner as I am, under well-situated contexts of conversation. As a whole, these gestures carry ‘lexical meanings’ or ‘locutionary meaning’ while applied during the conversation (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:90). That is, the above gestures can be interpreted by a word, ‘mistress,’ or a sentence ‘he is stingy’. Most significantly, during the conversation, they serve as a euphemism for my informants to avoid direct offence, although the subjects were usually not present. By using hand gestures instead of verbal language, the Taketomians usually intend to convey the message in a different fashion, a certain kind of privacy, which is not only semantically consistent but also contextually suitable. The hand gestures not only replace the verbal articulations but are also thought to be the better form that can express the indescribable.
Nevertheless, in Okinawa, hand gestures as such are not a systematic device, as in the story telling of the Plain Indians of North Americans, where hand gestures form a system of quasi-language (Farnell 1995, 1999); nor is there a consistent correspondence between movement and poetic meanings, as in Hula dancing in Hawaii (Kaeppler 1985). The limited and usually improvised usage of hand gestures does not reduce the critical significance of hand movement in the overall daily context.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, some hand movements are considered elemental practice for Taketomian living and the significant aspect of these hand movements lies in its practice rather than functioning as a system of discursive meanings. That is, certain movements are instrumentally and technically primary. Movements, such as grabbing a glass of water or twisting a towel (before mopping), are the way the self reacts to the outer world and transform the energy between the self and the outer environment.

What is most distinctive of ritual acts, as mentioned by Humphrey and Laidlaw, is the disconnection of purpose and form from their daily intentionality. They are also, to a certain extent, deprived of the lexical or locutionary meanings if there are any. As mentioned in Chapter Five, in Taketomi the priestesses practise the hand movement of tapping on the ground for thirty-three times as a replacement for real bowing in front of the Gods. Other conventional hand movements, such as rubbing hands, are a way of symbolising the sincerity of the priestesses without any semantic reference.

Other than these conventional practices in rituals, the ritual of tanadui consists of a series of transformation of movements that can explicate the process of ritualisation of actions. The local Okinawan scholars have classified these practices, mostly featured performative forms, into three genres of performing arts (geino): michi no geino, butai no geino, and yukkui no geino, which referred to dancing on the streets, the plaza and the stage, according to their contexts of happening (Kamei 1988). This classification is a convenient analytical tool, but, as will be shown later, it does not imply the
Taketomians clearly divide these genres as dance or non-dance. On most occasions, the boundaries between these genres of performances can be ambiguous in terms of the forms, contexts, and the agents’ personal experiences. The first genre, *michi no geino* (performing arts on the streets) of *tanadui*, contains a series of patterned movements that are first practised by the representatives of ritual (the priestesses and the political leaders) and then by groups of villagers. (See attached videotape, second half of episode one for details.) This series of movements is an important ‘archetype of ritual acts’ (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994). A simplified delineation of this series of movement can be further divided into three patterns: *mugaini te*, ‘the welcoming hand,’ *okuli te*, ‘the sending hand,’ and *gali*, ‘rite of worship’.

The movements of ‘the welcoming hand’ and ‘the sending hand’ are originally practices held in the ritual of *yungai* and specifically with reference to the God of *nilai kanai*, as discussed in Chapter Four. The priestesses and the political leaders first start to practise ‘the welcoming hand’ on the shore to invite the God to bring his blessing. Later on, after the representatives of the ritual come down to the villages, they practise ‘the sending hands’ to transmit the blessings they have received to the villagers. *Gali* (also see Chapter Four) then is practised after the two groups approach each other to be near. The whole series of movement patterns finishes after the end of *gali*.

These movements have a clear direction, toward the ‘others,’ including the God and the people whom they address. In addition, one common feature of these movement patterns is the simplicity of music accompaniment. All these movement sequences are accompanied only with voices or percussion instruments such as a drum and gong. The simplicity of music is reasonable since on most occasions these movement patterns are practised while in procession. Without a full band, the movements can be practised impromptu and freely.

Taketomians have very different perceptions towards these three movement patterns
which happened sequentially. Most Taketomians do not consider practising movement patterns such as ‘the welcoming hand’ and ‘the sending hand’ as dancing, although these hand gestures have been combined and transformed into a ‘motif’ of movement in the presentational dance as will be shown in the next section. Gali, however, is different. Gali literally means ‘the rite of worship’. It has been practised on various occasions other than tanadui. Although the Taketomians do not talk of gali as dancing, they do practise it in a familiar way that can be seen in the social dances of other cultures.

It is largely through the practice of gali that individual styles are clearly visible during the performance. The series of movements are practised on different occasions in tanadui, such as yungai, sankei, and yukkui. Together they serve as a kind of ritual of greeting, in the sense that it is practised between two events or two spaces marked by two groups of people. Although these patterned movements are all prescribed action, their styles change slightly when performed in different contexts. That is, as the collectivity of tanadui is gradually diluted into villages, families and individual levels, the way in which the movement patterns are performed changes and the styles become less formal, but nevertheless more versatile. The climax of gali is achieved in the event of yukkui, which is held in each village after the stage performances of the seventh day of tanadui. In the yukkui, the priestess(es) leads the procession to carol around the village and visit individual families to give them blessings. During the night, there might be ten families to visit and in the front yard of each family, gali is practised. It has become the most relaxed and creative moment when every participant moves their hands and feet, sometimes even the upper trunks of their bodies, in an improvised fashion. Many returnees who have come far enjoy practising this single movement sequence so much that they keep themselves awake until midnight.

Therefore, the process of tanadui, in which different forms of bodily practice connect individuals, groups and the community, is very much a ritualised process of decentralisation of the power of ritual. It is, more than other factors, achieved through
the transformation of ritual actions. During the first part of the ritual, roughly from the first to the sixth day, the patterned movement sequence has been conducted from a centralised group (composed of the priestesses and the political leaders) down to representatives from the villages and specific families. Individual villagers, who are categorised as one group or another, indulge themselves in the whole process of ritualisation through performing the movement sequence at certain points. The dilution of power corresponds with the individualisation of performing styles.

This Taketomian case hence provides a refutation of Bloch's theory of the continuum from daily movement to dance in ritual (1974), a scale which he develops from a linguistic analogy. He locates dancing in the extreme pole in terms of formality of movement when the authority is in operation. In Taketomi, the same movement patterns have been practised differently under different contexts. It is, however, within those contexts where centralised authority is less operative and formality required less that performing patterned movements becomes dancing. That is, dancing is not only about formality, it is about creativity as well.

The absurdity of Bloch's theory can be seen as the neglect of movement as an autonomous practice with its own 'logic'. Analysis of transformation from ritual actions to those as dancing may reveal specific features of movements, which are, if not impossible, difficult to articulate in language. Taking the movements of 'the welcoming hand' (fig. 9.1) and 'the sending hands' (fig. 9.2) as examples, seen from the facing directions of the palms, these two movements are contradictory in direction although they have the same pattern. In tanadui, as prescribed ritualistic practices which objectify the God and His blessings, these two movements are always performed separately, as two separate conceptions: to welcome (or receive) and to give out the blessing of Gods.

A combination of these two hand gestures, however, transforms the movements into the basic motif of dancing which carries no more lexical meanings but, nevertheless,
implies the 'logic' of ritual acts. As shown in figure 9.3, by using 'the kneading hand' to combine the first part of 'the welcoming hand' and the last part of 'the sending hand,' this sequence of movement condenses 'receiving' and 'sending' in an ordered sequence. The order, both in the symbolic (from Gods to humans) and the practical (receiving before giving) level is strictly reserved in the movement pattern. A movement sequence with a reverse order, that is, 'the sending hand' followed by 'the welcoming hand,' is never seen in Taketomian dancing.

Thus, transformation of ordinary movements into those as ritualistic or dancing does not evolve conditionally under outer forces. It may involve a complicated cultural consideration and the internal structure of the movements. Hence it can be said, in this specific case of Taketomian dancing, behind the transformation of ritual actions into dance lies a 'theological proposition meaning' (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:261). This 'theological proposition meaning,' as I shall argue, is largely rooted in the primary experience of human bodies, such as the spatiality and labour/energy transformation, as shown in the Taketomian case. The significance of physical experience, and its metaphorical reproduction in human conceptualisation is well argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Rappaport further specifies the privilege of bodily experience in ritual as follows:

The words of acceptance alone, although audible, might well seem to be ephemeral, or to be separate or separable from the speaker—something distinct from himself. In contrast, a movement or posture is directly and immediately sensible to the performer as something indispensable from his being. The knees he bends, the head he bows are not ephemeral and they are not dispensable. The use of the body in ritual posture or gesture defines for the performer especially (but the witness as well) the nature of the accepting self. The self defined by the body drawn into a ritual posture is not composed of ephemeral words fluttering away from the speaker's mouth to dissolve into silence, nor is it yet his elusive "heart" or "mind" or "soul." When he kneels it is his inseparable, indispensable and enduring body that he identifies with his subordination. The subordinated self is neither a creature of insubstantial words from which he may separate himself without loss of blood, nor some insubstantial essence that cannot be located in space or confined to time. To put all of this a little differently, the use of the body to transmit the message of acquiescence or subordination constitutes a non-discursive meta-message about the discursive message being transmitted... Such physical acts seem to be more than "mere talk." It is the visible, present, living substance—bone, blood, gut and muscle—that is being "put on the line," that is "standing up [or kneel down] to be counted," that is
“putting its money where its mouth is,” that constitutes the accepting agent (Rappaport 1999:146).

Many scholars have analysed movements in a way which is analogous to that of language, in the hope to highlight the fact that language and movement are both media that share the same rules of reference, to time and space and so on, to resume the biased status traditionally connected with the discourse of body. For instance, Farnell has analysed the Sign Language among American Plain Indians in which she seeks to embody the notion of deixis and so overcome the problematic Cartesian division between language viewed as a non-material product of mind separate from a moving body’ (Farnell 1995:82). Using the linguistic analogy to analyse human actions, however, is a reflexive approach on the mind/body dichotomy rooted in Westernised philosophy. It is noteworthy that linguistic analogy tends to conceptualise movements as a single unit that can be anatomised under careful analyses. As a result, this approach proves itself most advantageous to movement systems such as sign language, in which terms and concepts such as ‘meanings,’ ‘rules,’ ‘structures,’ that are developed from linguistic research can be transplanted without much doubt.

It is doubtful that, as a form of bodily practice, whether dancing bears the same process of conceptualisation and objectification of human thought as language does. An example can partly answer questions as such. In Innota, when the female villagers perform ‘the welcoming hands’, they always have the palms facing up, which is opposite to that performed by the priestesses and other villagers who have their palms facing down. The dance master of Innota theorised this as follows:

In the yungai, when the priestesses welcome the Gods on the seashore, their palms are facing up as a welcoming gesture. Later on, after the priestesses have received the blessings of Gods and approach the villages, they put their palms facing outward to give the blessings out to the villagers. Therefore, to receive the megumi [blessings] of Gods from the priestesses, we need to use the welcoming gesture [with palm facing inward].

This theory, which is certainly ‘meaningful’ based on the rule of spatiality or deixis, in Williams’ terms, was, however, objected to by other villagers. In fact, in the ritual
of *tanadui*, only villagers in Innota practised ‘the welcoming hand’ in this fashion. Other villagers always copied what the priestesses were doing while the procession was approaching. When asked about this difference, another master from Naji simply answered ‘I remembered the antecedents of Innota did the same things as we do today. The current instructor is wrong’. She further sought agreement for this statement from another female villager present from Ainota. That is, although the instructor from Innota can articulate a clear theory with respect to the movement sequence in the rituals, others are not really concerned with the movements in an ‘intellectual’ sense. What they were concerned about was the proper ‘form’.

In the analysis of ritual acts in Jainism in India, Humphrey and Laidlaw conclude:

... the apprehension of ritual acts need not take the intellectual form of ascribing theological prepositional meanings... there can be another direct psychological response to the act, an identification with certain archetypal actions, in which repetitive motility generates culturally patterned emotions. The existence of this largely visual-emotional response demonstrates that discursive meanings do not ‘underlie’ ritual acts (p. 261).

Humphrey and Laidlaw rightly point out the non-intellectual aspect of ritual (also see Sklar 2000: 71-72), as can be exemplified by Taketomians in general who do not see ritual acts as carrying discursive meanings, as demonstrated in the above case. It is ‘the conformity to form’ and the efficacy of action by its ‘repetitiveness’, both in Rappaport’s terms (1999: 46), which Taketomians privilege over the theological prepositional meanings of the ritual acts. This property of ‘confirmation to form,’ as I shall argue, is something that dancing features in terms of formulation of the culturally patterned emotions that are usually critical to the commitment of ritual.

**9.3 Okinawan Dances and The Culturally Patterned Emotions**

For Taketomians, as well as Okinawans, it is unusual to talk of dancing as an abstract conception or a collective term. It is more often that they focus on single dances as
specific activities. For instance, the Taketomians usually say 'Lets do gali!' or 'Come and join kachiashi together!' rather than 'dance gali' or 'dance kachiashi'. The same is applicable to presentational dances. The Taketomians are never obscure or generalising when they refer to their experiences of dancing. Although they do use the Japanese vocabularies such as odori, 'dance(s),' or odoru odorimasu, 'to dance,' they always point out the specific dances which they have watched, learned, or performed. Behind each name of the dance, there is a totality which embraces not only visible movements and audible music, but invisible social-cultural implications which the presentational dances carry.

To a certain extent, as far as Okinawan dance is concerned, it is fair to say that music dictates the form of the dances. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the presentational style of dancing is accompanied with songs with or without clear lyrics. Even the participatory dances, in which the movements are often loosely structured, depend on the music, simple or complex, to mark the beginnings, ends, and sections.

Seen from the aspect of movement, in both presentational and participatory dances, movements cover a variety which, in addition to the motif rooted in the ritual acts, include instrumental movements, such as walking, and technical movements such as rowing a boat. These movements are iconically or indexically related to the lyrics to which they are purposefully choreographed. They are not, however, transmitting messages or meanings. Besides, although single movements may carry indexical meanings, there is hardly any systematic rule of combination such as syntax that can be found as far as movement is concerned (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:90). The movements in Okinawan dance, however, are featured for their emotional arousal, which is clearly spelled out and never avoided. Humphrey and Laidlaw have specifically noted this dimension of ritual acts and they pose the notion of 'the emergent moods' which refers to a special (emotional) way of constituting an act as ritualised. Taking the Taketomian case as an example, in most participatory dances, such as gali and kachiashi as mentioned above, 'instead of giving discursive
meanings to the act, the celebrants……becomes absorbed in the act’ (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:227; Sklar 2000:71-73).

As far as Okinawan presentational dances are concerned, the emergent moods are never weak but are caused by other factors. The main factor which contributes to the emotional capacity of the presentational dance is its property as a kind of ‘character dance’. The characteristic of presentational dances lies in their ‘character,’ that is, it is always human being(s) or humanoid creature(s) who carry the movements and become the focus of the dances. According to different attributions of the characters, such as gender, age, and social class, the presentational dances can be further divided into sub-categories. It is noteworthy that to these groups of characters a repertoire of stereotyped and technical movements, such as rowing boats for the fisherman and martial arts for the soldier, are usually attached. In addition, the conventional standards of social values are usually imposed on the characters. For instance, the farmers are usually depicted, as evident both in the lyrics and the movements, as diligent and simple, while the officials or the nobles are grand or elegant. In these dances, technical movements are ‘disconnected from their daily intentionality and purposes,’ that is, there are no immediate results connected with these movements. They serve as a kind of index for the characters.

The movements hence go through a two-fold transformation. At the first level, they need to be deprived of functions within daily contexts, a transformation of action from the social to the symbolic. For the Okinawans, to embody the presentational dances of characters usually means to be socialised into the patterned roles. The process is usually achieved through both physical and mental training over a long term. The result is usually a dialogical process of physical embodiment and socialisation of emotions. On more than one occasion, my informants expressed their feelings towards specific characters, and their feelings then became a base to explain their movements. In this context, movements in the presentational dances are through another level of transformation by which an arbitrary system, composed of movements disconnected
from their original purposes, is transformed into a social form of character dances, and every individual connects their inner selves with an outer world by way of patterned movements. The second level of transformation is then achieved by turning the symbolic actions back to the social ones of a specific genre. Therefore, the process to embody presentational dances hence can be seen as a series of process of ritualisation, in which emotions, which used to be desperately avoided by academic scientism but cherished by lay Taketomians, are socially acknowledged and appropriated.

This emotional capacity of the Okinawan dances is not only meaningful for the performers, but also for the audience. Taking the Taketomian case as an example, owing to the fact that many traditional programmes are transmitted from generation to generation, part of the audience has gone through similar processes of embodying certain dances. During many conversations that I have had with the villagers who had various experiences of dancing, it was impressive how clearly the informants could remember the details of single dances, including the music, the lyrics, the way it was transmitted and so on. Their experiences then became the base according to which they judged the performances of their descendants. Hence, the transmission of these dance programmes also collectively transmits the emotions. Therefore, behind each name of the dances is stored various ‘enduring patterns of learned collective experiences’ (Ness 1992.231).

This does not mean, however, that the presentational dances always serve as rituals of communitas for the Taketomians to share with each other. On the contrary, the presentational dance is largely an exclusive field. As I shall argue below, unlike the movement patterns such as gali in which religious proposition is still magnified, hono geino, ‘the offertory performances’ which occurred on the seventh and the eighth day of ritual, has become the ritualised stage behind which strong political intention is often involved.

The exclusiveness of the Okinawan presentational dances is rooted in its history. In
the aristocratic past, to perform the presentational dances could mean an intensive play of power for people in Yaeyama. Originally, the Taketomians only started to get access to presentational dances at the end of the nineteenth century. Women were specially exempted from the stage. Many local legends that I have been told reveal that it was always through various manipulations that ordinary villagers or women could gain access to the presentational dance, which still circulated among the elites at that time. The competitive spirit between the villages of Hazama and Naji, nevertheless, made the situation even more complicated. As shown in previous chapters, the villages soon took the advantage of presentational dances and transformed their latent antagonism onto the stage. According to the oral tradition, both the villages of Naji and Hazama had been instructed by the same teacher. But they nowadays declare their own performances as the most traditional and characteristic. When asked if the movements are the same among the three groups, all dance masters argue that they are different although their repertoires have a similar structure, that is, composed of similar categories of dances. A record of an earlier programme, dated 1912 A.D, shows the stage performance in tanadui (Kishiaba Eijun 1976) and there is clear evidence of contest. The arrangement of programmes was in a similar fashion, although individual dances were all differently named. That is, although to a certain extent the dances of three groups share a set of common features from which the basic properties of Yaeyama dances can be identified, the villagers still consider their performances as specific and individual. To highlight the peculiarity, each group preserves the programmes which are thought to be most typical of itself over generations.

The performance of hono gemo hence provides the context where this exclusiveness of dances and dramas is ritualised. The competitive spirit exists not only among villages but also among families of the same village. In tanadui, historically, the process of choosing dancers for specific dances has been full of powerful play among families of reputation. In the past, the only chance for the ordinary Taketomians to access the presentational dance was tanadui. Many villagers may have dreamed of
performing certain popular characters in their traditional repertoire but still saw the opportunity taken by others year after year. Even today, latent hierarchies of families still exist in each village and they are reflected in the performances in the *tanadui*. Among the two-day performance, many programmes are regularly performed, and hence become a localised ‘classic tradition’ in the real sense. The more classic the dance is considered, the stricter the choices of performers become. These classic performances are either performed by a limited number of dancers who claim a certain kind of authority to the dance, such as choreography and composition of music etc, or by the villagers who occupy the top positions of social rank, such as age or wealth.

The competitive element of *hono geino* is not much recognised through the physical aspect (e.g. the movements) as through the dancers’ attribution, that is, her/his social position. This does not mean that the physical movements of a dancer can be freely separated from her/his social position. Specifically in Okinawan society, a higher social status usually means more freedom from daily labour and more chance to involve oneself in dancing. As will be shown later, the professionalisation of dancing provides another venue for the dancers in which the quality of movement can be changed so much that many features of traditional dancing are transformed. It becomes a trend that only those who have better economic ability can afford this activity. This also explains a saying and a phenomenon in Yaeyama that the presentational dances are endowed with a high social value and become a standard of personal judgement. The refinement of the quality of movements, which reveals specialisation rather than generalisation among social roles, become more and more noted by the villagers and is also well reflected in the performances in *tanadui*.

Hence, although the Island boasts of the spirit of cooperation as the main axis of *tanadui*, and the performances are dependent on inter-village integration, the presentational dancing, the form of which serves as a base for differentiation, very largely highlights the aspect of competition between families, villages and Islands (e.g.
the locals and the emigrants). The offering of dance to the Gods does not eliminate the 
competition of human beings, but ritualises it in a way that none of the groups can be 
easily judged as winning or losing. As in tanadui and many other occasions, the 
performances bring one climax after another, at which the villagers always 
satisfactorily applaud.

The emotional capacity of dancing and its functions of building climaxes or marks of 
competition between groups have been noted by scholars (Langer 1953; Spencer 1985; 
In this section I started from an alternative approach, following Rappaport’s 
anti-functional standpoint, to emphasise the ‘formal’, or the ‘physical efficacious’ 
dimension in his terms, of ritual (Rappaport 1999:46). The form of Okinawan dances, 
which is both an arbitrary and a historical one in the sense that it is rooted in the 
aristocratic past with a structure determined by music, is composed of a series of 
substantial movements which are transformed and become a specific social index of 
patterned emotions. Dancing with this form hence provides a path for the Taketomians 
to ritualise their cohesion as well as competition.

9.4 Intertextuality between Rituals and Dances

A Taketomian informant once described that dancing in rituals, along with flowers 
and foods, formed the triple set of offering to the kami. Dancing in the rituals, 
especially those harvest ones, is originally rooted in the Okinawan religious belief that 
the kami are fond of dancing and keen on dancing with human beings; this can be 
substantiated by an ancient form of free dancing called kamiasobi, ‘playing with the 
kami’. Except for records in ancient songs, this form of free dancing has been 
unavailable in Taketomi. Nevertheless, this notion is well preserved in the genre of 
hono geino, ‘the offering of performing arts’ in the ritual of tanadui.
The *hono geino* in *tanadui* is not only an occasion for presentation and offertory, but itself also carries many ritualistic properties. That is, although the Taketomians adopt the form of presentational dancing as the offering, it does not mean that in the villagers' conception the dances are of the same nature with performances in other non-ritualistic contexts. The Taketomians certainly have a very different perception toward these dances. First of all, most programmes are regularly performed in the *hono geino* and can only be performed during the ritual span. Secondly, the arrangement of the programmes, which is largely repetitive through every year, follows a strictly obeyed order between certain programmes. For instance, in addition to the dances on the ground which are exactly the same on two days every year, on the stage, the programmes are designed into a set order. A villager from Naji once emphasised that the dance of *tanolia*, 'the one who plants the seed,' can only be performed after the drama of 'planting the seed' is finished. This rule was not even breached when some of the *hono geino* were first shown on the stage in Tokyo in 1974. These performances, to a certain extent, are perceived as ritualistic events in that they are thought to be efficacious, and an internal logic of religious rationality is hidden in the order of practices.

At the beginning of the stage performance, a series of dramas sets the pre-requisites for the following performances. In some of these dramas, which are entitled 'the drama of convention,' archaic and formalised vernacular speech is used in a performative way. The dramas are a formal announcement, through verbal and non-verbal performances, of the commencement of the stage performance. They are the prescribed events on the stage. Only after these conventional dramas are offered, can the dances be begun.

The stage of *hono geino* is therefore a ritualistic stage. Some of the programmes especially have very significant implications, such as that of *miluku bushi*. Among the stage *hono geino*, *miluku bushi* is the only repetitive programme on both days. As one of the main deities in the ritual, *miluku* has enjoyed special attention. As mentioned
above, the legend related to this deity and its symbolism of harvest and fertility has endowed miluku with great power and popularity. Its exotic image also makes it stand out from the other religious figures in Taketomi or the whole Yaeyama. Above all, this particularity is achieved through the masked performances in the rituals.

The programme of miluku bushi in the tanadui is conventionally set up by villagers from Ainota, associated with the teachers and students from the Junior High School and children under six years old. The deity of miluku must be played by the male descendant of the Yoshinobu family who is the inheritor of the miluku-related rituals (see Chapter Four). The programme proceeds accompanied by the famous song of miluku bushi. Except for miluku, the performers, carrying flags, make offerings such as millet and so on and form a leading procession to travel around the stage. Then the miluku appears masked, dressed in a long yellow robe and accompanied by children on both sides, as a symbol of fertility. The scene is splendid and the audience always reacts to the scene with full hearts. Four males of Ainota play the guards of miluku. They are the lords of the East, the West, the South and the North. To represent miluku and his greetings to the Gods of fire, the four Guards then perform a dance piece, which is called shizabudui, ‘dance of the four guards’. After the end of the dance, miluku leaves the stage slowly, following the procession. He purposefully keeps his front facing the audience until he disappears behind the scenes totally.

The whole performance of miluku bushi has been treated as a ritual by Taketomians. This is supported by many prescriptive procedures and taboos related with this performance; the mask and robe of miluku are kept carefully in the locked temple beside the yumuchi on; only certain limited figures can have access to them, with their hands in white gloves, during the span of the ritual. In addition, outsiders are strictly prohibited from approaching the temple during the ritual. The performance of miluku bushi is endowed with a significant religious proposition because the figure of miluku objectifies nilan kanai, ‘the Visiting God,’ who by the time the performance starts is largely an abstract entity that can only be addressed by ritual movements such as ‘the
welcoming hand’ and ‘the sending hand’. Therefore, the dance drama of *miluku bushi* is ‘a text in action’ which magnifies the religious ideology of the ritual.

In addition to its religious significance, the *miluku bushi* is, in particular, a ritual before dancing. The overall significance of dancing in the process of ritualisation in Okinawan culture is magnified on this occasion. The lyric of *shizabudui* is composed of three verses. From the words it is clear that the song was originally dedicated to the officers from Shuri rather than to the specific God of fire, although currently the institution exists no more and the object of the song has been transformed. In every verse, the last sentences are the same: ‘[Let’s] play! [Let’s] dance!’ These lyrics hence explicate the clear ideology of dancing in the ritual and set up the base for the practice of *shizabudui*. The dance of *shizabudui* goes beyond a mere performance and is no less ritualistic in this context because it highlights the encounter between different universes—that of ‘in’ (represented by the God of fire) and ‘out’ (represented by *miluku*). It ritualises the stage and inaugurates a series of performances in which the effort of human beings is in full action.

*Shizabudui* is also performed, or more exactly ‘borrowed,’ on another occasion, *yukkui*, when the villagers perform it in a totally different fashion. The formality of dancing is replaced by an informal and creative mood. Four or more villagers, males or females from any groups, get up and perform *shizabudui* in the villager’s house where *yukkui* is held. The same movement sequence is practised in front of a group of similar audience—the villagers and returnees. The framework is, however, very different. It is a dance detached from the original religious proposition and the movements are appreciated with a very different attitude. For the villagers, *shizabudui* in *yukkui* is much more enjoyable but still a ritualistic device. Practising *shizabudui* in this context much resembles doing *gali*, which unites the participants in a formal way.

The performance of *shizabudui* in the *miluku bushi* on the stage and in the *yukkui* is a cross-contextual application based on the spirit of celebrity. Moreover, it is an
intertextuality between rituals of greetings—on the stage of *hono geino*, the greetings are dedicated to a supernatural object; in *yukkui*, where the focus is totally human, the greetings come from the community to the individual families. This common proposition of greeting or attendance makes the dancing of *shi: abudui* the most suitable practice, among others, in *yukkui*.

On other occasions, intertextuality of ritual acts occurs at the level of actions (Here the text specifically refers to ‘the text of actions’) as in the dance of *tanolia*. *Tanolia* means ‘the seed planter’ (*Zenkoku Taketomijima Bunga Kyōkai* 1998:213). This dance is transmitted in the village of Naji. It was choreographed based on the movements of planting the seeds. In the ritual complex of *tanadui*, however, there has already been a ritual of planting seed, *taneoroshi*, in which the villagers plant the seed in a ritualistic fashion. With a ritualistic intention, the movement of planting seed (fig. 9.4) in this ritual is iconic and easily recognisable, the movements of which do not deviate much from movements of planting seed in a normal context. Nowadays this ritual has become a symbolic act in the real sense because most villagers have been exempt from agricultural activities and one cultural specialist of Naji has become the only representative who still practises the event every year. In the ritual of *taneoroshi*, the villager first clears a field of square shape. He holds a small bowl full with the seed of the millet and prays before he spreads the seed on the field. At last, he ties a special knot with the weed and thrusts it on the field to escort the evil spirit, followed by a concluding prayer.

The movement of planting the seed is deliberately applied but transformed (fig. 9.5) in this dance of *tanolia*. Nevertheless, the dancers do not merely copy daily acts, they are transformed into a specific structure of time and space which is characterised by the dancers’ flow of movements. Two female dancers enter the stage in slow motion. They are dressed in elegant robes with a delicate hairstyle, which is hardly reminiscent of farmers. Throughout the dance they hold a small bowl, tied with a colourful strip, in a steady and controlled way so that the level of their hands hardly
changes. The dancers move slowly around an invisible central axiom of the stage. The characteristic of kinesthetic space of this dance is scarcely seen in other Okinawan dances, where the dancers mostly move along lines from front to back and on the diagonal.

In the ritual of taneoroshi, the efficacy of acts is supplemented by the words that the villager murmurs. In the dance of tanolia, the power of the whole dance is totally sensed through the movements by way of a de-characterisation—the female dancers do not have millet seeds in their hands. In fact, it is exactly because that movement stands out as the most prominent aspect in the dance of tanolia that it becomes one of the few pieces which gains professional notices and praise (Nihon Minsoku Buyō Kyōkai 1988: 75). Tanolia is in general commented on as one of the nicest and most elegant pieces in the hono geino of tanadui. (See attached videotape, episode three for details.)

Nevertheless, behind the aesthetisation of actions of tanolia lies a complicated micro-politics. The continuous flow and the controlling of the dancers' hand movements are thought to be difficult and advanced, so that it is only performed by experienced dancers from powerful families in the village of Naji. That is, compared with the secrecy due to the difficult and archaic prayer which is used in the ritual of taneoroshi, the secrecy in the dance of tanolia is no less. The power of the dance of tanolia is tied to its aesthetic dimensions of movements. The dance hence carries ritualistic significance in the sense that it differentiates the dancers from other members of the community through the socio-cultural standards other than a purely physical one.

As a whole, Tanolia can be seen as a metaphorical reproduction based on the common formal and structural features between two conceptual categories which we may call 'dance' and 'ritual'. It is made possible by the ritual acts which provide a base for the connection and transformation of movements. Through the progression of the
framework of ritual to that of dance, the power of the movements is not only sustained but also transformed into another nature, or the extremely ‘physical efficacy,’ which the Taketomians find no obstacle in apprehending. This does not mean that Taketomians have misconceptions or mis-categorise these two activities. For Taketomians, the combination of these two modes of activities usually means the doubling of efficacy. In many other events in tanadui, the villagers consciously acknowledge the differentiated dimensions between ‘dance’ and ‘ritual’ and manage to produce an intertextual performance in which the attributions and even power of different natures, of dance and ritual, are combined, as in the dance of sbudui.

Sbudui, ‘the totalising dance,’ is believed to have been originally performed by the priestesses in front of the shrines (Ueseto 1979:406). Nevertheless, except for the name, not much about the dance was known since there was no record with respect to this dance, nor a clear delineation of the aspect of its movements. Several decades ago, a local cultural specialist of Innota reconstructed the dance of sbudui based on what he had heard from the older generation and what he had seen from the priestesses’ practices. Since that time, it has been regularly performed as an offering to the Gods during tanadui.

In the dance, six females play the roles of the priestesses and perform the sequence of patterned movements which resemble that in tanadui. The dance is composed of three sections. In the first section, six performers enter the stage in a stylised fashion: that is, they perform the koneri te as they move to their individual positions. They form a line facing the shrine and kneel down. In the second section, they practise the ritualistic movements one by one. The movement sequence is not exactly the same as that of the priestesses in the ritual, but a combination of typical movements in the correct order, which includes bowing, picking up a leaf and thrusting it into the rolled towel tied on the priestess’ head, rubbing their own palms in a circular motion and bowing again. There is no musical accompaniment at all during this process. In the last section, after all six dancers have rehearsed their movements, the dancers stand up and form a circle
to dance. Accompanied with the ritual songs of *tanadui*, they line up and perform the movement of *koneri te* while leaving the stage. The number of six is not merely a format arrangement: it represents the six priestesses chosen from the six founding families which are said to have brought the earliest migrating groups and founded the earliest villages on the Island. Therefore, in addition to being relevant to the ritual practices that are still performed today, the reconstruction of *sbudui* is made into a meaningful narrative in which the past of the village is appropriated.

The reconstructed *sbudui* is partly 'mirroring' what is still performed by the priestesses simultaneously during various rituals. (See attached videotape, episode four for details.) In *tanadui*, while the performance is proceeding on the stage in front of the shrine, the real priestesses are sitting serving the Gods and watching the performance. The authenticity of *sbudui* is therefore reinforced by the existing priestess office. In addition, *sbudui* itself becomes a reality that re-creates the ritual: after years of performance of *sbudui*, the real priestesses begin to dress up like performers on the stage. The priestesses’ ritualistic practices and the reconstructed dance of *sbudui* are hence mutually interpretable and nurtured.

The Taketomians always describe how the stage of *hono geino* in *tanadui* makes the dancing very difficult: 'because the stage is open to three sides of audience,' which includes 'the others' of different natures: the Gods, the villagers of other groups, and even the tourists who come from another parts of the world. This variety of audience reduces the safety guaranteed by prescribed actions enacted as ritual practices and the 'risky' element increases as in a performance (Schieffelin 1998; Howe 2000). The intertextuality of acts between dance and ritual, or 'the manipulation of metaphor' in Rappaport's terms, provides a safer solution to the ambiguity caused by the open stage. On the stage, where the presence of the supernatural and human beings is magnified and different interests required to be satisfied, the intertextuality between ritualistic acts and dance movements explicate the mutually-referential power which evokes the 'religious efficacy' as well as 'physical efficacy' by way of mutual mirroring and
A few more words are needed at this point concerning the relationship between the movements of dancing and ritual acts with respect to the Taketomian context. It has been popular for scholars to delineate a continuum in which movements such as ritual acts and dancing are embraced (Bloch 1974; Williams 1982; Farnell 1995). As shown in the above argument, it is clear that although certain developmental line can be traced by the analysis of the transformation from ritual acts to movements in dancing, the difference between ritualistic acts and dancing does not follow the neat line of the continuum, both factually and conceptually. On the contrary, these two kinds of movements, if they can be clearly separated, are in a constantly changed, mutually-referential relationship. There is overlapping as well as deviation. What is most significant is that although the contingency of their relationship is arbitrary, it is nevertheless, manipulable, as explicated in other cultures (see also Kaeppler 1995).

9.5 Professionalisation of Dancing and the Technique of Self/Selves

In tanadui, or rituals of similar significance, there are many regular performances, which are thought to be sacred, or more exactly ‘classic,’ which can only be performed in the specific rituals. At the same time, the stage is amplified by other performances which are not thought of as ritualistic as such. These performances usually do not carry clear religious propositions or ritualistic implications. In Taketomi, as well as Okinawa, religious institutions and the agricultural economy have been declining and it is not unusual that dancing and other performative events have become the most magnificent moments in the rituals. In the tanadui, for example, whenever there is dancing, there is a congregation of people. The dancing itself has becomes a resource for ritual efficacy. Moreover, the overall significance of dancing in Okinawan culture is not only limited to the ritualistic context. After rituals finish, the dances continue.
Seen from structural and formal properties, the presentational dances performed in the rituals do not much differ from those performed in other contexts, such as the celebration for Mother’s Day or the 100th Anniversary of the Elementary School. It is, however, the process toward presenting the dances, which makes a great difference. For instance, the Taketomians practise for one month before the *hono geino* of *tanadui* is presented. On other occasions, the dancers only contribute several nights or even less time for practice. On the other hand, since the traditional aristocratic disciplinary system of dancing was replaced by modern private dance institutes, the professionalisation of dancing, which has become an institutionalised process, prolongs the practice into a part of wider social process, in which dancing as ‘the technique of self/selves’ (Hughes-Freeland 1998:3) is mostly magnified, as I shall shortly show.

When I first expressed an interest in Yaeyama dance to an unacquainted lady, she said ‘then you must learn *akama bushi*, *shimanutuli* and *kunara*.’ These three dances form a sort of initiation for dance students and they are thought ‘to contain all the basics of Yaeyama dances’. These basics objectify a set of procedures which prepare the dancers into ‘the world of Okinawan dances’ that demands much more time and concentration than non-professional dancers can afford. In the private dance institutes, a beginner usually starts from the practice of walking. The walking is in a specific fashion, which is called *oriashi*, ‘folding the feet’ (figure 9.6), a characteristic device of Japanese influence in the classic Okinawan dance. To facilitate this locomotion in a flowing fashion, which is favoured in Japanese classic dance and adopted by Okinawans, the dancer needs to sink her/his waist (the locus of the gravity in the Okinawan dance) steadily throughout the whole dance. In the upper body, the arms are kept as an arch in the front. This position is a prerequisite for the dancer. To embody this posture, the dancers usually start from prop dances, most often with fans. The training of the prop dances make the dancer used to the unusual position of the arms. All these positions are not ‘natural,’ as far as daily actions are concerned, and to
embody them demands from the dancers a long period of time and concentration on the dancer’s body. The folding feet, the waist-sinking and the slightly arched arms together form ‘the threshold’ of the presentational dancing which any distinctive dancer needs to embody.

My own experience of embodying the beginning piece of akama hushi showed that to achieve the ideal body posture and style of locomotion means a continuous reminding of self-control and self-constraint. The effort I used to change my own habitual body to adapt to the required posture was so great that in the first week of learning I suffered from acute backache. Once a Taketomian also revealed that she was not a good dancer because she could not sink her waist, which was tiring and even painful.

The process of embodying the basic body postures for professional purposes can be seen as a process of ritualisation in which social agents manipulate their bodies to interact with the outer environment in order to make differentiation which they consider significant. The dancers are usually with strong the ritual commitment in the sense that to enact a ritual means acceptance of the obligation and established convention (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994; Rappaport 1999). In the disciplinary system of professional Japanese dances, in particular, acceptance of obligation and commitment to the convention is a pre-requisite to dancing and in some extreme cases before the training starts, the students need to practise daily chores, such as cleaning and serving tea, for the master for a long time until s/he is considered ready (Sellers-Young 1993). Hughes-Freeland has presented an elaborated Javanese theory of dancing in which the socio-centric Javanese consciousness connects ‘movement, manners and identity’ and ‘[v]alues within performance are congruent with those applied to general social performance’ (1997:59). Therefore, dance movement ‘is not simply a stylisation of everyday movement but a “sample” of other movements, enacted at a number of removes from them’. Dancing movement is considered by the Javanese as a moral practice ‘leading to the possibility of socialisation into the proper Javanese way of behaving’ (p.57).
To a certain degree, these notions find resonance in Okinawan society. The Okinawans are also in favour of self-control for social interactions and hence can be defined as ‘sociocentric’. Okinawan society highly estimates those who are embodied with performing arts including dancing and music. To embody Okinawan dancing is to be socialized as the good Okinawan, an attitude which can be found in the aristocratic past, for dancing, as in the Javanese case, is a form of self-control which constitutes a sociologically particular Okinawan version of ‘the way of knowing oneself and others’ (Hughes-Freeland 1997:57). Once a dance master in Taketomi commented that dancing made her ‘connecting with others well’.

The Javanese theory of dancing is supported by an elaborated elite system of cultural philosophy, which, among the Okinawans, has no real equivalence. Nevertheless, from the process of embodiment of movements, the Okinawan technologies of self/selves are revealed. The process of learning dances for professional purposes, in fact, magnifies a transformation of perception of self-other relationship in the dancer’s physicality and mentality.

I shall again take the movements of *michi no geino* as an example. While practising movements of ‘the welcoming hand’ (fig.9.1) and ‘the sending hand,’ (fig.9.2) the performers usually have or pretend to have clear spatial references. When parts of these two movements are combined with the dance motif of ‘the kneading hand,’ the transition of movements goes through a process of other-self-other transformation in terms of the relationship between facing direction of the palms. Borrowing the Javanese notion, it becomes ‘effective dancing’ which ‘has no fixed referents and does not point to extraneous entities (Hughes-Freeland 1997:60-61). Furthermore, unlike those occasions of rituals, ceremonials and other social gatherings, the dancer does not dance for the Gods or Kings anymore. Before the mirrors in the studio, a dancer sees only her/himself. The movements are enacted based on a self-measurement of space rather than in relation to the distance of others. As a
Taketomian dance master has declaimed, for a perfect presence, the dancer needs to adjust her/his movements, as delicate as raising the eyesight, according to her/his own physicality. During the process of learning, which is constant and continuous, the selfness of the dancer is strongly perceived (also see Sellers-Young 1993 for a Japanese case).

Similar processes of advancing technologies of self/selves can be seen in the more classical style of Okinawan dance. As has been noted, the classical style of Okinawan dance features an economy of movements, that is, in some classical dances, the dancers move in an extremely inactive fashion so that sometimes it seems that they are not moving at all. These dances are based on the Japanese cultural aesthetics of ma, ‘space (in time)’ (Valentine 1998) to highlight the presence rather than moving of the body. This style of dancing, however, is considered extremely difficult so that only experienced and advanced dancers are sanctioned to perform it. This is because, in addition to skillful self-control, the dancer needs to maintain a balance between the energy of movement and her/his static presence. The beautiful presence of the dancer is achieved though a careful measuring of time and space by a confident self. Self-control, self-balancing and measuring of space and time are all critical social skills in Okinawan society. They are mostly learned, not by verbal transmission, but by the embodiment of the particular form of movement. In the process of embodying the movements, the technologies of self/selves advances, accompanied with the formulation of consciousness as ‘the aesthetic morality’ (Hughes-Freeland 1997:55).

In the above argument, I have heavily referred to Hughes-Freeland’s ethnographic research on the Javanese theory of dancing as a comparison to the Okinawan case. This is mainly due to many shared social and cultural attributions which are remarkable. Nevertheless, a critical difference needs to be articulated. That is, although there are many common features shared by these two cultures, in Okinawa a similar metaphysical elaboration of self and consciousness is, nevertheless, relatively weak. Lacking the metaphysical elaboration, however, the Okinawans’ consciousness
of ‘self’ is tied to the performed movements directly. The feature of Okinawan character-centred dance partly enhances this relationship between movement and formulation or elaboration of self-consciousness. Furthermore, without an equivalent metaphysical system, the Okinawans turn to ritual to find the root of aesthetic morality. This is especially obvious in the Yaeyama dancing, as seen in the case of umututakabi bushi.

Umututakabi bushi is a piece of dance choreographed by a professional dance master from Yaeyama in the 1990s. It is a contemporary creation in the sense that both the music and dance are newly composed, although the costumes and the structure of performance still follow the convention. (See attached videotape, episode five for details.) The name Umututakabi means ‘worshipping the Mount of Umutu’. The Mount of Umutu is the highest point on the island of Ishigaki, the capital island of Yaeyama. It is also a religious symbol with incomparable power. The dance is divided into three parts based on three songs which are composed and written by contemporary artists from Yaeyama. In the first section, the lyrics focus on the scene of the sun rising. Two dancers dressed in red, which characterizes the young, perform together to imply the brightness of the sun. Then the character of the priestess appears in the second section, the theme of which is a modest priestess who prays to the mighty God of Umutu. Finally, three dancers dance together, with the priestess in the centre, to celebrate the joyful harvest of the human world.

Structurally, following the convention of Okinawan presentational dance, Umututakabi bushi is, however, perceived differently. A Japanese dance critic wrote the following comment after he first watched the dance in a Pan-Okinawan competition of dance creation:

... It should be said that, rather than other things, the choreography of Mrs. Une [the choreographer], and the freshness of the dance which is full of devout praying, make the stage of that day calm and touching (Yano 1993:4, my translation).
Ms Une is a legal inheritor of a priestess office although she did not intend to take the place after years of absence of the inheritor. Taking the worship of the priestess as the theme, the dance of Umututakabi bushi, nevertheless, is not aimed at reconstructing the priestess’s movements, but a celebration of priestess authenticity at its spiritual level. The authentication of the priestess element is not through the exact presentation of original movements or the narration of collective memory, but through the aesthetic achievement of subaku, which means ‘undecorated purity’. In Umututakabi bushi, this property of undecorated purity is expressed through the sincerity of the priestess dancer’s movements. What supports the concept of subaku is the religious disposition with which Yaeyama people are thought to be born. For years, artists in Yaeyama have been concerned about the autonomous status and features of Yaeyama dance. As a regional tradition, Yaeyama dance has been influenced by Okinawan presentational dance and treated as a sub-genre under a broader category of Okinawan dance. Not convinced by this categorization, Yaeyama people believe their dance to be different and original. ‘We Yaeyama dance for the Gods, while they, Okinawans, dance for the Kings.’ To highlight the independent status of Yaeyama dance, Yaeyama dance practitioners and local intellectuals usually emphasize the ritual element, which is still very lively compared with Okinawa proper, in the dance. The theme of priestess worshipping, which perfectly exemplifies the unique religious disposition of Yaeyama people, hence authenticates the originality of its dance. In the dancing, movements become the metaphor for religious, political and aesthetic schemes, on which the Yaeyama people impose various exegeses which lead to the formulation of their identity.

To conclude, in this chapter my intention was to explore the relationship between dancing and ritualisation. I have analysed movement patterns of different extents of elaboration to unravel the characteristics of dancing and their use in various contexts. It should be noted that, although the analyses of movement patterns are in an evolutionary fashion, that is, from simple to complex ones and from concrete to abstract ones, I never intend to theorise these different genres of movement patterns.
into an evolutionary scheme or a single-lined continuum. These different movement patterns are all currently practised by Taketomians in accordance with different purposes. Various forms of dances in contemporary Okinawa, as I shall argue, should not be perceived as exclusive genres, but as elaboration or stylisation of movements to different extents which highlight the efficacy of human actions.

Ritual is a unique structure. It is a structure of action in the practical sense that actions are given a specific framework which differentiates them from daily life. The structure also endows a specific meaningful order between these actions. Taking ritual as a structure, rather than text, also allows us to better approach the transformation of ritual acts into a variety of modes of practices or actions, such as dancing, which is dynamic and constant in progress, as shown in the above Taketomian case. The on-going ritualisation of actions has cross-contextual significance in that actions, out of ritualistic movements, have been reproduced in the metaphorical level to endow exegesis or efficacy to other modes of practices.

Dancing is not merely ‘a decorum,’ ‘the pledge’ with indexical function (Rappaport 1999:57), or ‘an aesthetic frill’ (Leach 1954:12) of ritual. Through dancing, the individual can best feel the state of her/his own body and interact with the outer world in a conventionally recognised form of movements. Dancing as a single event can be seen as the condensed, but nevertheless collective, form of ritual. Because in dancing the body practices call for the full attention of the participants and various forms of power relations and social hierarchies are magnified. It also serves as a kind of interconnecting event which carries ritualistic efficacy: only through the completion of dancing can the ritual complex be progressed. As shown in the above discussions, dancing gradually prepares the agents, both their bodies and emotions, to fulfill the social obligation. Therefore, dancing achieves ritualisation.

As part of a wider social process, the contemporary professionalisation of dancing magnifies the process of embodiment in which the techniques of self/selves of the
dancers are privileged and advanced. It is in the process of embodiment of dancing that movement regains its autonomous power, and in turn becomes a new metaphor in which exegeses of religious, political, and aesthetic schemes all have their interpretations.
Notes

1 For instance, Cowan has described a social dance in the formal evening party in a community in Northern Greece, in which the members were stirred up to dance 'all together' (Cowan 1990: 164-167).

2 I was once questioned by a professor of anthropology in SOAS who was also interested in ritual dancing that as to how I could ever explore the dimension of emotions.

3 An 97-year-old male villager in Ainota recalled that it was a Mr. Nakayama who taught the villagers performing arts such as classic dances and dramas. This information was later confirmed (Morida 1999), also revealing that the same figure taught the villagers of Naji.

4 In 1993, when I first visited the island during the ritual, a priestess told me that the dancer always wore a silver hairpin at the back of the head but the priestesses did not because 'they do not dance'. When I returned in 1999, however, the priestesses all wore the same silver hairpins and their hair was tidily tied up as the dancers.

5 Ms. Une's predecessor was her older sister who took over the office from their mother but passed away several years ago. Ms. Une revealed that from her mother she once heard about the priestess dancing. ‘But regrettably, I never asked her about the details of the dance when she was still alive'.
fig. 9.1 the movement of 'welcoming hand'

fig. 9.2 the movement of 'sending hand'

fig. 9.3 the dance motif of 'kneading hand'
fig. 9.4 the movement of 'throwing the millet'

fig. 9.5 dance movement of throwing in *tanolia*

fig. 9.6 patterned walking in Okinawan dancing
CHAPTER TEN  Conclusion

In one of a series of videotapes entitled ‘Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach,’ the famous American cellist co-operated with another famous American modern dance choreographer, Mark Morris, in a project highlighting the multi-dimensions of artistic expression of Bach’s six suites for unaccompanied cello. During an interview, Ma (YM) asked Morris (MM):

YM: In all your programs, all your programs are dedicated, or thanks to Maxim and God...
MM: Hm... Well, cause Maxim is my mother, ... and the God thing is a giant sense of brightness, sort of absoluteness...
YM: Do you mean a certain kind of sacredness?
MM: Yes, a certain sort of seriousness and condition.
YM: Do you feel about, with all your theses, a spiritual condition that every piece... that you do strive toward that goal?
MM: Yes. There are different points of view, but yes, absolutely. (Ma, 1995)

To a certain degree, this thesis deals with a question of the same sort as the above. Ethnographic research such as this thesis shows that Mark Morris’s comment does not much differ from that of Taketomi dance practitioners: there is a spiritual orientation or goal underlining the physical form, although the notion of ‘sacredness’ and ‘absoluteness’ are differently elaborated in their respective cultural systems. In his recent work on ritual, religion and humanity, Rappaport posits a deconstructed view of religion that ‘the Holy’ is the integration of four conceptual and experiential constituents: the sacred, the numinous, the occult and the divine. They are ‘creations of ritual,’ or ‘entailments of the form which constitutes ritual’ (1999:3). He further argues that it is the property of practice or performance that makes the logic, which structures the ritual, ‘enacted and embodied,’ and hence ‘realised in unique ways’. In other words, in ritual, ideas such the ‘Holy’ are integrated and objectified into a form of practice and can best be realised through performing. Seen from this point of view, dancing is a ritual.
Differences between Mark Morris' dancing and that of Taketomians are rooted in the cultural systems, which embrace different cosmologies— notions of time, space and the body—and the conditions and realities within which the members of specific cultures exist. The cultural system decides the dancing in two respects. It creates the form which carries properties that are significant within a specific time and space. This notion can be explicated by Mauss' argument that dancing is technique of the body which is historically and socially formulated. In the second respect, different cultural systems endow dancing with different positions in specific societies. For many contemporary Taketomians and Okinawans, it is dancing, as part of performing arts and religious rituals, that marks their uniqueness from the Japanese, who have imposed a long period of cultural assimilation in language, education, and general customs.

Historically, dancing played a prominent part in the cultural encounters between the Okinawans and other groups of people. Contemporary Japanese colonisation and ethnic tourism makes the encounter with the other a constant aspect of social life, in which a certain degree of performativity prevails. Performativity in social interactions facilitates a conscious maneuvering for social agents to sustain the conditions which they consider critical to their existence. It also signifies the unexpected dimension, that is, 'the risk,' of social confrontation in even the most restricted and prescribed social performances, such as ritual. Performativity elaborates the formality which paves the way for the process of social life, as well as the uniqueness of social individuals that can only be captured by a differentiated presentation. As one manifestation of Taketomian social performances, dancing combines these two dimensions of performativity in the 'inscription' of movement. Unlike verbal performances in which meanings are usually fixed as in a text, the inscription of movement, based on metaphorical reproduction, open up room for new meanings. Versatile exegeses are hence formed, dialogically, between experiences of the past and the present.
Dancing also closely relates to ritualisation: the social agents react to the outer world that has conditioned the cultural environment which is constantly in transition, through their bodily practices. In Taketomi, dancing, among various practices, refines the technique of self of a social agent and makes her/him more aware of her/his being a Taketomian and relatedness to others. In the process of embodiment of dancing, Taketomians are constantly in the process of self-estimation and self-measurement, which cannot be achieved without a sensitive perception of the other, concrete or abstract.

The above observations and arguments result from the ethnographic methodology which is contextualised in this research on Okinawan dancing. Ethnography is a time-consuming enterprise but it largely reveals the complex cultural and social stratification in which dancing is embedded. Without a fixed definition of 'what is dance' beforehand, the exploration concentrates on categorisations of dance and related actions such as ritual instead. It hence sheds more light on the transformation and metaphor of movements into different but mutually referential genres of actions. Furthermore, the focus is on dancing as a cultural practice rather than on dance as a static physical form. That is, dancing is conceptualised as a totality, including the practice, the preparation, the performance, and the interpretation. It cannot be separated from the dance practitioners, either. This perspective helps us better to know not only how Okinawans dance, but also the Okinawans.

This thesis also explicates how dance ethnography can produce a peculiar form of knowledge. Seen cross-culturally, both in Okinawan and in Western countries, dancing is about devotion, creativity, and distinctiveness. What differs between them greatly lies in the way cultural members perceive and categorise those natural phenomena or entities, including time, space, and the body. That is, observations, posited by anthropologists at the beginning of last century, about how the social experience explains the natural ones, seems still effective. Nevertheless,
post-modern ethnography does not merely end at the description of the 'others;' it starts at reflecting on the 'self.' If this research of Okinawan dancing can stimulate further contemplation on those cultural prepositions, no matter what they stand for, in our own cultures, which not only influence the dancing but also the society, perhaps then we can say that, though the dance ethnography of Okinawa, knowledge about ourselves is advanced, even though only by a small step.
Plate 4.1 Dancing of Angama in Obon

Plate 4.2 Worship in on
plate 5.1 the altar of obon

plate 6.1 an old lady performing kachiashi
Plate 7.1 The buffalo wagon with tourists

Plate 7.2 A Scene of Mandara in Taketomi
### Appendix I—Annual Agrarian Ritual Cycle in Taketomi Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Purpose of ritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yungai</strong></td>
<td>The eighth day of the eighth month</td>
<td>Welcoming <em>nilan miluku</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Getvugansai</strong></td>
<td><em>Tsujinoesaru tori</em> of the eighth month</td>
<td>To tie wish with <em>kami</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chichinigai</strong></td>
<td><em>Tsujinoeto</em> of the eighth month (or early autumn)</td>
<td>Cleaning the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheat planting</strong></td>
<td>From the early to middle period of the ninth month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tanedui-turukki</strong></td>
<td><em>Kinoesaru</em> of the ninth or tenth month (forth-nine days after Yungai)</td>
<td>Entering tanedui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taneoroshi</strong></td>
<td><em>Tsujinoene</em> (the fifth day of Tanedui)</td>
<td>Plant the seed in the newly mended field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The great worship of the ninth month</strong></td>
<td><em>Kinoetora</em> of the ninth month</td>
<td>To worship the <em>kami</em> to protect the crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ritual of the tenth month</strong></td>
<td><em>Misunotohitsuji</em> of the tenth month</td>
<td>To prevent the island from the disaster of fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nakyo</strong></td>
<td><em>Kinoetatsu</em> of the eleventh month</td>
<td>To worship for the growth of crops in the following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Millet planting</strong></td>
<td>The eleventh month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planting of water rice</strong></td>
<td>From the middle to late period of the eleventh month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soybean planting</strong></td>
<td>From the middle to late period of the eleventh month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvest of wheat</strong></td>
<td>From the late period of the first month to the middle period of the third month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ritual of the second month</strong></td>
<td><em>Misunoesaru</em> of the second month</td>
<td>planting the seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sesame planting</strong></td>
<td>From the late period of the second month to the early period of the third month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planting of green bean</strong></td>
<td>The middle period of the third month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvest of millet</strong></td>
<td>From the late period of the third month to the middle period of the fifth month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Purpose of ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great worship of <em>Tsujinoetora u</em> of the fourth month</td>
<td></td>
<td>On the time of bursting of the first ear of millet, to prevent the bugs and toward a summer harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ritual of the fourth <em>misunoeuma</em> of the fourth month</td>
<td></td>
<td>For the all the crops in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest of soybean</td>
<td>The fourth month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest of water rice and green bean</td>
<td>From the middle to late period of the fifth month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest of sesame</td>
<td>From the late period of the fifth month to the early period of the sixth month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pui</em></td>
<td><em>Misunoeuma hituji</em> of the seventh month</td>
<td>Thanksgiving for harvest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

In former days, three minor rituals with respect to the growth of yam, wheat and insect elimination were also held during the second month. They have been abandoned, however, since 1949 because of the separation of the religious and political systems (Ueseto Tōru 1976:145).
Appendix II—Typology of Dance Performance in Okinawa

There are many ways of categorization of Okinawan performing arts in terms of different purposes and criteria. For instance, Japanese scholar Honda Asuji has classified Okinawan performing arts into five genres as follows:

1. ritualistic practices and religious dances,
2. Buddhist dances and drum dances that have been imported from Japan,
3. classic dance formed in the court,
4. dances with foreign, such as Chinese and Austranesian, influences,
5. ‘miscellaneous dances’ (zō odori) created after the beginning of the twentieth century (Honda 1988:44).

Another Japanese dance historian, Yano Akio, uses a diachronical scheme to classify Okinawan dances into:

1. dances in the Omoro period (ritualistic and religious),
2. uganshin dances, that is, the classic dance developed in Court period for diplomatic purpose,
3. dances created between 1879 and 1945 A.D.,
4. dances created after the end of the Second World War (Yano 1988).

In addition, in terms of Okinawan dance, a basic typology can be made between presentational and participatory dances. The former, which follows the classic style of Okinawan dance, is usually accompanied with bushi uta (versed songs) with clear triple structure and delicate highly choreographed movements. The latter is a group dance with much simpler music accompaniment, mainly percussion, and the movements are in simple and free style. As far as the presentational dance is concerned, it can be further divided into categories according to different characters: dance of the young, dance of the female, dance of the male, and dance of the old.

All the above classifications have its general application in most areas in Okinawan, but they are also somehow de-contextualised concerning different locality. In Yaeyama, a revised and combined scheme of Honda’s and Yano’s classifications is more reasonable:
1. ritual practices and religious dance,
2. Ryūmai (dance of Ryūkyū): including classical Okinawan dance developed in the court and created work in Okinawa,
3. dances with Japanese, Chinese and Austronesian influences,
4. Yaeyama dance: dances created after the late nineteenth century, specifically referring to the legacy of Hiyane and Moromisato,
5. contemporary Yaeyama dances created with Yaeyama style of music.

As far as Taketomi is concerned, the islanders sometimes mix different genres of dances and form hierarchical repertoires from which suitable dances are chosen for performance under various contexts. That is, the Taketomian scale of classification is very context-dependent and specific, as follows:

1. Performing Arts of tanadui, which includes:
   
   1a. michi no geino (performing arts on the road): constituted of a series of ritualistic movements, such as 'welcoming hand,' 'sending hand,' and gali.

   1b. niwa no geino (performing arts on the plaza): eight group dances (dancers ranged from ten to sixty), including bö (male dance of weapon, with Austronesian and Chinese influence), taigo (male drum dance, Japanese influence), mamidoma ('Diligent Peasant Girls,' female dance), jicchu (female dance, depicting diligent farmers), mazakai (female dance, praising the diligent farmer mazakai), iwaitanedori ('Celebrating the Harvest,' female dance), udibō ('Wrist Fight,' female dance of battle), and nmanushia ('Riding the Horse,' male dance with Japanese influence).

   1c. butai no geino (performing arts on the stage): containing more than sixty of individual dances and dramas belonged to different villages. Among the programmes, there are regular and sacred dances and dramas that must be and only can be performed on the stage of tanadui. Each of the three villages has its own repertoire of this sort. These dances and dramas are mostly local variation of Okinawan classic performances with historical significance. In addition to this exclusive group of programmes, butai no geino also embraces a number of Okinawan and Yaeyama style of dances created after the late nineteenth century.

2. Performing arts of ketsugansai: including a drama suite performed by males and
several presentational dances performed by females divided into three villages. The dance style is similar to those in tanadui, but with less delicacy.

3. Performing arts of obon: starting with a group circle dance in Japanese style, and followed by a series of individual presentation of local repertoire, depending on the host and dancer's characteristics, and a modernised and improvised performance of angama with sometimes newly-created esa (drum dance).

4. Dances for celebration: dances presented on other celebratory occasions such as wedding, school ceremony, communal birthday party and so on. Conventionally, the programmes inaugurate with gujinbu (Okinawa style) or akamma bushi (Yaeyama style), followed by a series of presentational dances chosen from both Yaeyama and Okinawan repertoires, and finally ended with group dance of participation such as kuichia and kachiashi.

5. Dances for other social gatherings: in general, Okinawan people can start dancing whenever they hear samisen playing. On these occasions, individual and improvised movements with a loose form usually prevail.

6. Dances for theatrical presentation: including presentations of private dance institutes and presentations set up for specific occasions, such as for Mother's day, for the old, or for tourists. Depending on the purposes, the programmes are usually composed of traditional or created presentational dances accompanied with Yaeyama bushi uta.
Glossary

akamma  the legendary red horse; a traditional Yaeyama song of verse
angama  ‘masked visitor,’ seen in Yaeyama, the figure who visits the villages and houses in *bon* ritual
ayo     ritualistic songs of Yaeyama folk tradition.
bata    the womb
bentō   the meal box
bon     the a Japanese ritual of the all soul
bushiudai ‘song of verse’
dunchiama the song sung in *yungai* to welcome *nilan*
gali    ‘the ceremony of worship’; a sequence of patterned movements
ganashi a respectful term addressing gods, kings or great persons
gujinbu the classical Okinawan dance of celebration.
hatarak labour, work
hōji    death-related rites
hinukan the fire god
ibe     the inner part of a shrine, usually prohibited from males
ichinbanza the first parlor in a house
iemono ‘the origin of the house,’ the heir of a art school
ipai    ‘tablet of status,’ the wooden blade representing the dead
ishikanto natural or sculpted rock placing on the intersection of roads to avoid evil
iyachi a kind of millet cake made with rice, millet, and red bean, which is conventionally partaken specifically during the period of *tanadui*
jiraba  a style of traditional Yaeyama folk song, usually with faster speed
kachiashi a form of dance of free form seen overall in Okinawa
kaigan  communal gathering house in each village
kaji    the wind
kami    god(s)
kanbu   the wig specifically for performing traditional arts in Okinawa
karada  the body
kasubi  traditional robe of Yaeyama
katach  the shape; the form
ketsugansai ritual of ‘tying the wish’
komikan citizen centre
konerite the hand of kneading, *koneru* means ‘to knead,’ *te* means ‘the hands’
Glossary

akamma  the legendary red horse; a traditional Yaeyama song of verse
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gujinbu  the classical Okinawan dance of celebration.
hatarak  labour, work
hōji  death-related rites
hinukan  the fire god
ibe  the inner part of a shrine, usually prohibited from males
ichinbanza  the first parlor in a house
memoto  ‘the origin of the house,’ the heir of a art school
ipai  ‘tablet of status,’ the wooden blade representing the dead
ishikanto  natural or sculpted rock placing on the intersection of roads to avoid evil
iyachi  a kind of millet cake made with rice, millet, and red bean, which is conventionally partaken specifically during the period of tanadui
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kaji  the wind
kami  god(s)
kanbu  the wig specifically for performing traditional arts in Okinawa
karada  the body
kasubi  traditional robe of Yaeyama
katach  the shape; the form
ketsugansai  ritual of ‘tying the wish’
kominkan  citizen centre
konerite  the hand of kneading, koneru means ‘to knead,’ te means ‘the hands’
kuichia ‘matching the voice and hands then dance’, kui means ‘voice’, and chia ‘the hands’ in the Taketomian dialect. This is a group dance in circle formation. The melody originates from the island of Miyako.

kutuki ‘mouth speaking,’ a specific style of Yaeyama music

kyon’in the traditional dramas

maegusuku ‘the front castle,’ defense in front of the entrance of a house

mandara ‘to circle,’ ritual of ninety-seven years old

mayokeshishiyaneshishi evil-escorting lions, sitting on the roof

medetaibushi the verse of congratulations

miluku A masked deity who is thought to bring harvest

minsa a special style of cloth-weaving in Taketomi and Yaeyama

mozuku a kind of sea weed

mumuchia ‘a hundred years old’ in the Taketomian dialect

munchu ‘the center of the door,’ the lineage organization of Okinawa

mutuya ‘original houses’

munun ‘thing avoidance,’ the ritual of bugs eliminating

muyama ‘six mountains,’ the six original houses of Taketomi

nakataki the ‘opposite term’ referring Taketomi in songs and ancient sayings

natori ‘getting the name,’ a ritual for the art apprentices to be tested and advance in the hierarchy of an art school

nenki ‘ritual of years’

nibanza the second parlour in a house

nilai ‘country of root’; original place of ancestor gods; fairy land; immortal land

nilai kanai ‘god of nilai’,

nilan nilai kanai in Taketomi

nilei a Japanese movements for worshipping, composed of a bow, two claps, and a bow.

noro the priestesses who served in the Palace

obasan grandmother or senior females of the same generation

ojisan grandfather or senior male members of the same generation

Omoto the highest mountain in Yaeyama, also the god who create this mountain

on utaki in Okinawa, the Yaeyama term for the sacred grove to worship the gods

onarigami sister gods

piden the outer part of a shrine
pu | ritual of harvest
sanbanza | the third parlour in a house
sankei | 'the visit,' a ritual in tanedui
sbuddi | 'the totalising dance' which is believed to be performed by the priestesses alone; the reconstructed version presented in the ritual of tanedui
shikitan | an ancient song of Taketomi, made by Nishito to praise the island
Shimin | the mythic god who creates Taketomi Island; the name of its shrine
shira | the rite of birth
shishi | 'children of the clan', the descendants
shishō | the master
shizabudui | the dance of four guards
shōjō | the certificate of merits
shōko | 'burning the incense,' a custom in funerals and relative events
shōlo | the spirits
shūji | assistant village heads who supplements the highest village heads in Taketomi Island
subaku | undecorated purity
suma | thick rope
sunahigi | pulling the rope
tako | octopus
tamashii | the soul; the spirit
tane | seed
tanedui | ritual of 'getting the seeds'
taneoroshi | ritual of 'planting the seed'
tanolia | dance of the seed planters
tatami | the Japanese style of weed mat
tsukasa | 'the one who gods use'; the priestesses
turukki | 'to enter,' 'to tie together'; the first day of the ritual of tanedui.
tushibi | the year that repeats the birth animal and zodiac element according to Chinese custom
ubu | the entity of gods, located in ibe, represented by rocks or trees
uchihare asobi | playing in the sunny days,' a form of naked dance which had long been abandoned in Yaeyama.
uchina | 'Okinawans' in Okinawan dialect
uganshin udui | 'dance of the honorable ship,' performed on diplomatic occasions to entertain the Chinese ambassadors in the Kingdom period
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ugoiki</td>
<td>moving; movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umashunu</td>
<td>‘riding on the horse,’ a folk dance of males, with the symbolic movements of riding on the horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uminchu</td>
<td>‘people of the sea,’ <em>umi</em> means the sea, <em>chu</em> is the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uruzun</td>
<td>the season of early summer in Yaeyama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utaki</td>
<td>‘sacred grove,’ the shrines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utsugumi</td>
<td>to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wagashu</td>
<td>‘dance of the youth,’ a category of traditional Okinwan dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yu</td>
<td>era; generation; harvest year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yungai</td>
<td>welcoming the harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yunta</td>
<td>‘song of reading,’ a style of Yaeyama folk song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zaiban</td>
<td>‘in savage,’ the institution of garrison in Yaeyama region in the period of Ryūkyū Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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[Video Materials]

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