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## **The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance**

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## **The Expanding Universe of Butoh**

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# THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE OF BUTOH

## The challenge of Bishop Yamada in Hoppo Butoh-ha and *Shiokubi* (1975)

*Kosuge Hayato*

Letting himself be seduced by the report of a performance by Bishop Yamada, the poet Yoshioka Minoru, “thoughtlessly” got on a train in Tokyo that was bound for Tsuruoka in the Shonai area on October 10, 1975. Only the critic Ichikawa Miyabi travelled with him on the train. However, when they reached their destination, many butoh admirers, including Amazawa Taijiro, Matsuyama Shuntaro, Nakanishi Natsuyuki, and Ikeda Tatsuo gathered in a large granary at the foot of Dewa Sanzan (a range of three mountains: Gassan, Haguro, and Yudono), which is considered one of Japan’s most sacred places, a place where the gods dwell. Their purpose was to watch the inaugural performance of the Hoppo Butoh-ha (Hoppo Butoh School) – a work entitled *Shiokubi*. The granary being used as an auditorium was full of enthusiasts from all over the country, as well as local people. Later, Yoshioka remembered:

I was fighting starvation and cold with rice balls made by the performance staff. But the party afterwards was charged with an atmosphere of excitement. A dancer was singing on a table where a young woman was kicking sake bottles and dishes. It was certainly a memorable night in the history of butoh. A turkey was huddled in the shadows, as if in a dreary washing place.

*Yoshioka 1987, 87*

Many young audience members slept bundled together after the performance and went home at day-break. The image of ill-prepared Tokyo artists and intellectuals enjoying a performance in rural Japan, but fighting off hunger and then huddling together to ward off the chill of a northern autumn night encapsulates so many of the tensions that were at work between urban and rural Japan (and at work in butoh itself) in the 1960s and 1970s. Using the performer Bishop Yamada and his group Hoppo Butoh-ha as a lens, the chapter will look at the tension between the urban and the rural in butoh.

### **Crises of the pastoral: Sanrizuka, Minamata, and Hansen disease**

Before turning to a close examination of Hoppo Butoh-ha, we must first consider its social background and especially the tension between urban and rural in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s. One feature of the relationship was the displacing of societal stress from urban to rural areas in

much the same way that Imperial Japan once displaced urban stress to colonized Asian countries (Kasai 2001, 25–27, 141). Three infamous examples are Sanrizuka, Minamata, and Hansen's disease. For example, using the principle of eminent domain, the central government seized the land of the local farmers of Sanrizuka, a district in the southeastern part of the city of Narita for the construction of a new international airport. The farmers were fiercely opposed to the land seizure, and like the Edo-period peasants' revolt (*Ikki*), were motivated by the need to defend their livelihood and families. The farmers – and even the women and older people – carried bamboo spears, spread human feces on the ground to deter riot squads, and chained themselves to the watchtowers. These events demonstrated the farmers' militancy and strong attachment to their land. As a consequence, construction work on the airport began in 1969, but its opening was delayed until 1978.

In addition, environmental pollution – at its worst between 1965 and 1975 – became a major issue. The most infamous water pollution case involved Minamata disease, named after Minamata City, in the far southwestern corner of Japan, on the beautiful Yatsushiro Sea. The disease was caused by ingestion of organo-mercury compounds discharged into the water as effluent by the Chisso Corporation, poisoning the local fish population, which was a major food source for the local populace. The pathology of this disease is characterized by the degeneration of nerve cells, including numbness in the extremities, clumsiness in minute movements, tremor, and ataxia. The patients were all rural victims of rapid industrialization, just like the farmers of Sanrizuka.

Thirdly, a campaign was waged against the powers-that-be to restore the dignity and humanity of the forgotten victims of Hansen's disease (leprosy). In this case, discrimination was blatant, and most institutions treating Hansen's disease were built in remote rural places. The patients there led miserable lives, ostracized in their villages and often forced to wander, homeless, before finally being compelled to live in sanatoriums, as if they were criminals.

### **Rural Japan in the 1970s**

After the success of the Osaka Expo in 1970 and the reversion of Okinawa in 1972 – and even though “double-digit economic growth ended abruptly in the fall of 1973” with the oil crisis (Gordon 2009, 285) – the general mood in Japan in 1975 was still optimistic. A few years earlier, in 1968, Japan had become the second largest economic power in the world, its GNP outstripping that of West Germany. Many Japanese companies introduced new technologies and plowed large investments into industrial plants and equipment. Given these circumstances, the proportion of the population living in rural areas fell rapidly, because so many people were moving from the countryside into cities and changing their lifestyles (Inoki 2000, 164).

Despite the very real incidences of the despoiling of rural locales mentioned above, or perhaps precisely because of them, institutions began campaigns to romanticize the rural as a place where urban individuals could and should find themselves and discover their own origins. In the mid-1970s, people could afford to travel back to the countryside (but not in the traditional sense of going out into the world [*risshin shusse*] and then being welcomed home with the red carpet), or on a sightseeing excursion. A National Railways tourism campaign entitled “Discover Japan” became widely popular through the mega hit song “*Ii Hi Tabidachi*” (Departure on a Fine Day), sung by Yamaguchi Momoe in 1978. As Marilyn Ivy has pointed out:

Discover Japan capitalized on personal dramas of encounter unfolded along classically narrativized points of separation, quest, encounter, and return. Rather than the rush

to view and photograph famous sights collectively . . . , Discover Japan advocated a solitary, small-scale form of travel, in which landscapes became settings for miniature dramas of national-cultural and subjective discovery.

Ivy 1995, 35

This trend drastically changed the image of rural Japan, from the place to escape from or nostalgic homeland, toward the place of origin or the destination for travel for “discovering myself” (Ivy 1995, 40).<sup>1</sup>

### Hijikata’s response to the urban rural divide

Although butoh was created in Tokyo, and shaped by the social and political urban culture of the 1950s and 1960s, Hijikata responded to the tension between the urban and the rural in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1972, Hijikata drew on his interpretation of the aesthetics of rural Tohoku in *Hosotan* (A Story of Smallpox), which was the first piece in the dance series, *Shiki no tame no nijūnana ban* (Twenty-seven Nights for Four Seasons). The performance begins with the sound of wind and the cawing of crows. The scene is apparently in the remote and impoverished northeast, where Hijikata was born, with songs by *Goze*, poor blind women who travelled the country singing and playing the samisen. The sixth scene in the performance is the climax of this dance piece, lasting twenty minutes. Supine throughout the scene, Hijikata appears to suffer from Hansen’s disease, although it is described as “smallpox” in the title.<sup>2</sup> He is half-naked with chafed, unhealthy skin; he never stands up and he moves his legs slightly in a feeble and sickly way, with quivering limbs also reminiscent of Minamata disease. This dance could be interpreted as Hijikata presenting a butoh version of anti-authoritarian aesthetics in rural scenes, such as the memory of a rustic prostitute, and a sufferer of Hansen’s disease. Hijikata’s artistic experimentation with violent body movements as well as the rediscovery of indigenous elements from the rural countryside attracted many young aspirants. This expansion might be derived from the fact that the essence of butoh could be found both in urbanity and locality/rurality, and the tension between them.

### Bishop Yamada in the Hijikata studio and Dairakudakan

Around 1968, suffering from free-floating anxiety in an unstable political and social setting, Bishop Yamada left a prestigious private high school in Tokyo halfway through the term, and went to work as a physical laborer. During this period, having recently seen *Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People*, he jumped at the chance to become an apprentice at Hijikata’s studio. Bishop described his feelings at that performance, as follows:

I was really excited at that time. Perhaps because I was very young, the sight sent chills of delight up my spine. It was my first experience. I was moved! I was struck all the more because I had been self-conscious about my own body while doing manual labor. Hijikata’s body was quite different from the naïve popular image of a hard, muscular laborer’s body. I felt as if I were being showered with powerful emotion.

Yamada 2016, personal interview; Kosuge 2017, 32

He worked for Hijikata in cabaret shows, and in many pornographic and B-grade films. Among the latter was *Kyofu kikei ningen* (*Horrors of Malformed Men*) directed by Ishii Teruo

and released in 1969, in which he appeared with Hijikata. The original story, written by Edogawa Rampo, the first modern mystery writer in Japan, tells the tale of a young medical student who travels from circus sideshows to a desolate island and discovers that his father is a web-fingered madman who is surgically remaking normal human beings into misshapen monsters in order to make a paradise for them, as an act of revenge on the society that has bullied and isolated him. Hijikata acted the part of the malformed father, with his disciples appearing as the victims. Bishop witnessed his master's dyed-in-the-wool realism in the depiction of malformed bodies in the film (Yamada 1992, 70). Well known as a Japanese cult movie, it demonstrates Hijikata's strong interest in different places and non-ordinary bodies and minds. A couple of years later, in 1972, Bishop left Hijikata's circle to participate in the new dance company Dairakudakan, run by Maro Akaji, who had come from Situation Theater.

Just as Yamada was leaving for Dairakudakan, Hijikata's butoh became strongly conscious of his northern birthplace, especially through the 1972 performance of *Hosotan*. Since then, butoh has been discussed in the context of this northern area; in other words, Hijikata has been regarded by critics as rediscovering the indigenous bodily movements of northern rural Tohoku as part of his anti-authoritarian practice. One prominent critic, Ichikawa Miyabi even went so far as to say that Hijikata's main concern was to oppose "urban idiot culture" (Ichikawa 2004, 149).<sup>3</sup> Influenced by that discursive environment and by Hijikata's words, it might be said that just as Bishop Yamada had not just thought about the working class, but had actually become a laborer, so also Yamada did not just talk about rural areas and movements, but was the first disciple to actually move to a rural place and put his master's idea into practice, reflecting the potential of butoh as a site-specific performance. See Figure 23.1

### Hoppo Butoh-ha in Tsuruoka

After "the long days of the phallus" (Yamada 1992, 220) ended, and overwhelmed by a terrible sense of emptiness and his own miserable physical condition, Bishop set off in the end of 1973 to the foot of Mt. Haguro in Tsuruoka, seeking resilience through the power of mountains. Tsuruoka is located in the Shonai region, in the western part of Tohoku, and is famous for its ethereal mountain atmosphere. The *Yamabushi* or ascetic mountain priests still practice austerities there, simulating the experience of death in order to acquire holy or magical powers from the mountain spirits.<sup>4</sup> In addition, a number of *sokushin-butsu*, the dead bodies of Buddhist monks who mummified themselves, primarily during the Edo Period, have been preserved in several temples in the area.<sup>5</sup> These ardent monks rejected food and water and gradually starved to death as they prayed. Their mummified bodies are still worshiped as emblems of a strong faith and as protecting deities.

In this lush, green part of northern (Hoppo) Japan, Bishop opened a studio for "Hoppo" Butoh-ha. In his own way, Bishop was responding to both the larger societal discourses of the rural as well as Hijikata's personal mythology about the north. By actually moving to Tsuruoka and opening a "northern" butoh school, he in effect enacted in real life what advertisements and performances only staged. He rented a large two-story granary in the Banden area of Inaiocho, where rice fields stretch as far as can be seen, in the direction of Mt. Gassan. He immediately started refurbishing the building and the Hoppo Butoh-ha studio was completed in September 1974. He held a big reception in October; Hijikata Tatsumi, Maro Akaji, Murobushi Kō, Amagatsu Ushio, Osuka Isamu, Tamura Tetsuro, and many other supporters came to join him and to perform themselves.

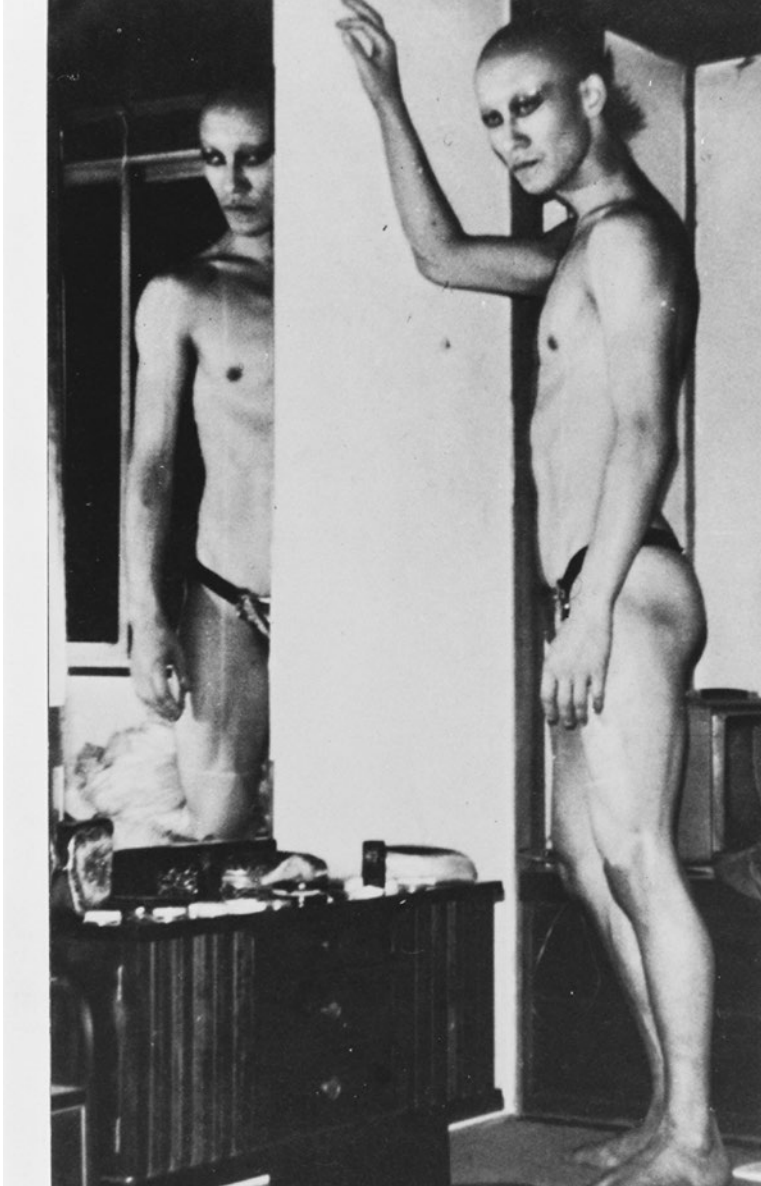


Figure 23.1 Bishop Yamada in the dressing room at the cabaret in Matsuyama in summer 1973, photographer unknown. Courtesy of Bishop Yamada.

### *Shiokubi* (1975)

Following *Batta-ou* (The King of the Grasshoppers), which toured the Tohoku area from April to July 1975, Bishop produced *Shiokubi* (Salted Heads, i.e., dead heads preserved with salt) for the formal inaugural performance of Hoppo Butoh-ha. (Figure 23.2) The performance was presented three times in three days, starting on October 10, 1975, at the Hoppo Butoh-ha studio in Banden. The running time was approximately 135 minutes. An audience totaling 1,800

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Figure 23.2 A promotional poster for *Shiokubi* (1975). Courtesy of Bishop Yamada.

people came from all over the country to see the performance. The performers, who were called “messengers from hell,” included Bishop Yamada and Hoppo Butoh-ha, Maro Akaji and Dairakudakan (Murobushi Kō, Amagatsu Ushio, Osuka Isamu, Tamura Tetsuro), Ashikawa Yoko from Hakutobo, Tamano Koichi and Harupin-ha, Mori Shigeya, and local dancers. Hijikata choreographed Ashikawa but did not perform himself. Although Bishop Yamada was the main director and choreographer, his job involved inserting each performer’s dance into the overall composition, because most of the dancers were independent and their own bosses (Yamada 1992, 250–251). His most important task, therefore, was to create a “vessel” and to determine the flow for the various contributions by the other dancers. His main concept for the “vessel” for the dancers was a large coffin and large round openings on a raised clay stage. Amazawa Taijiro, a poet, described the scenes in this performance:

At the back of the stage, silent heads appeared one by one until there were five, floating in the blue light. The heads were shaved, and their unmoving eyes were blazingly wide open with thick *kumadori* makeup [a style of Kabuki makeup that emphasizes emotion]. They came to the front of the stage and danced, but the reflections of their vibrant naked bodies and physical minds already seemed like an illusion. The essence of their existence was in the head or dead head or head preserved with salt. In the meantime, from a “hole” in the middle on the stage, the leading head gradually peaked out, and then rose until it fully appeared. These “holes” – openings with their edges secured by straw mats – were *hanamichi*, openings through which the dancers could enter and exit the stage. And of course signified the abyss that leads to hell. Dancers appeared there and disappeared; in other words, those holes represented the womb of all incarnations

of beauty and devilry, as well as the entrance gates of darkness. The success of *Shiokubi* lay in the centripetal force of these holes, and especially in the splendid and remarkable figures that appeared from them.

quoted in Yamada 1992, 247–248

The scene described by Amazawa was followed by a group dance by young members of Hoppo Butoh-ha, and then by solo dances performed by Mori, Tamano, Yuki, and Ashikawa. When the scenery changed, an unpainted coffin suddenly appeared in the dark. Maro and four dancers from Dairakudakan were crouching in the coffin; they danced with their backs to the audience for 15 minutes to the music from *Carmina Burana*. On their backs were painted Hokusai's wave-like patterns in blue and white, and they wore colorful painted antlers on their heads.

Why did Bishop create the *shio* (salted) *kubi* (heads), and what was their significance? Although *shio* (salt) has abundant cultural connotations, Bishop chose this word for its somatic sensations. He remembered finding every dish too salty when he first came to Tsuruoka, and wrote that this was his main reason for using “salt” in his first performance (Yamada 1992, 254). This somatic sensation also influenced Hijikata, who was born in Akita Prefecture. In a passage dedicated to Hoppo Butoh-ha, Hijikata mentioned sour salted eggplant to connect Tsuruoka with “sourness,” expecting Bishop to be a “sour Butohist” (Hijikata 1998, I: 348). The word *kubi* (head), when combined with *shio*, strongly suggests the head of a defeated soldier or executed criminal, as their heads were sometimes preserved in salt and shown to the public in premodern times. However, Bishop hit upon the word suddenly, without any connection that he was aware of (Yamada 1992, 254).

More importantly, what is the butoh body that Bishop discovered in the northern part of Japan? Perhaps as a reflection of and contribution to the discourse tying butoh to northern Japan, many contributors to the program thematized the “northernness” of the performance and the company. Among them Shibusawa, in the essay “Temptation of the North,” introduced Hijikata's remark that butoh preferred the northern part of Japan or “Hoppo” because the starting point for butoh was the posture of being huddled up with cold (Shibusawa 1975). Both Ichikawa Miyabi and Gunji Masakatsu said that northern areas covered with snow and ice symbolized “death” in “Dancers in the Northern Boundary” (Ichikawa 1975) and “Dead North Butoh” (*Shiseru Kita-no Butoh*, Gunji 1991b). We can say that Shibusawa, Ichikawa, and Gunji all took the essence of butoh to lie in the emaciated shriveled body shivering in the cold, and that they discovered the essence of butoh in rurality by taking this emaciated body as a characteristic of the Tohoku body on the basis of connecting that image to the idea of “death.”

Perhaps indicative of his position betwixt and between the rural and the urban perspectives, Hijikata contributed a beautiful but enigmatic essay, entitled “Give a Turkey to Hoppo Butoh-ha,” to the program. He wrote:

The piece of vacant land overgrown with weeds where you [Bishop Yamada] are living now is a strange and obscure choice, whether the land is yours or another's. In any case, you should keep a turkey on a field of sand. You should create a community frantically running about to escape from turkeys chasing them. The turkey in a full red costume will chase and peck the grain-like blood cells of excited dancers . . . It is my favorite childhood dream to keep a turkey on a field of sand in a rural area.

Hijikata 1998, I: 346–347<sup>6</sup>

Hijikata turned his words into deeds. He sent a turkey to Hoppo Butoh-ha and urged them to rise with the bird out of one of the openings on the stage. This did not happen for technical reasons, but the turkey was kept in the studio until the end.



The local people reportedly found these dancers and their dances strange and disturbing; some people thought they were ultra-left wing activists from *Rengo sekigun* (the United Red Army) or even more frightening monsters, such as cannibals (Yamada 1992, 233). In 1975, although the political student uprisings of the late 1960s were past, people still vividly remembered the Asama-Sanso Incident, in which five members of the URA holed themselves up with a hostage for ten days in a remote mountain-lodge in February 1972. Soon afterwards, it was revealed that this group encouraged such severe self-criticism that they had lynched and killed twelve members in the mountains of Gunma Prefecture. As the URA often conducted army training deep in the mountains, local residents easily connected Bishop and his disciples with extremist groups or the cannibals of popular mythology.

### Hoppo Butoh-ha in Hokkaido

The following year, in the spring of 1976, Bishop left Tsuruoka and moved further north to Otaru in Hokkaido. He rented a three-story red brick building, constructed in 1906, which became the model for Kobayashi Takiji's short novel, *Fuzai Jinushi* (An Absentee Landlord). It was refurbished as a tavern and studio called Umineko-ya (black-tailed gull tavern). He also opened a small theatre, Gyoran-kan (fish basket house), in the neighborhood. Hoppo Butoh-ha was active in Hokkaido for about seven years (1976–1983), together with the all-female butoh-company, Suzuran-toh (Lily of the Valley Party) directed by Yuki Yuko, who was a disciple of Hijikata's and the only woman among Dairakudakan's founders. In his memoirs, Bishop called it a very good start and described how it rapidly became famous; however, customer traffic decreased suddenly in October due to the anticipated severe winter, or "Hokkaido time."

His years in Tsuruoka and Hokkaido made Bishop Yamada assume that the roots of butoh lay in the indigenous northern region, as seen in *Shiokubi*. During their Hokkaido years, Bishop and Yuki presented many performances inspired by the climate, such as *Sakana-no Nioi-no suru Ojo* (Princess with the Smell of Fish, by Suzuran-toh, 1977), *Hokke-ko* (Study of Atka Mackerel, by Suzuran-toh, 1978), and *Gekka-no Une* (Ridges in a Field under Moonshine, by Bishop Yamada, 1982). These activities, however, seem to have represented a desperate struggle for Bishop. At the end of this experiment, he concluded that it was almost impossible to expand butoh outside urban areas. As a result, he left Hokkaido and returned to Tokyo around 1984. He recalled that this was mainly for financial reasons and because rural communities did not understand the value and cultural potential of butoh during this period. Thus, butoh incorporated into its expression the movements and body rooted in life in rural Japan, but was not interwoven into the popular lives and the history of Otaru, as was the case with folk arts. Perhaps Bishop's miscalculation lay in not taking fully into account the diversity within the rural areas. A dialogue between an Umineko-ya master and a stranger in Muramatsu Tomomi's novel *Umineko-ya-no Kyaku* (Guests of Umineko-ya) conveys the atmosphere:

GENTLEMAN: What is Hoppo-Butoh ha?

MASTER: Do you know the Dance of Darkness?

GENTLEMAN: I don't know . . .

MASTER: Well it is hard to explain. I cannot say, it's a kind of avant-garde dance, and it is hard to explain to amateurs.

GENTLEMAN: Amateurs . . .

MASTER: I mean there are people who have nothing to do with these kinds of dances. I cannot explain anything to those people.

GENTLEMAN: OK.

MASTER: Hijikata Tatsumi, Maro Akaji, Bishop Yamada . . . you probably never heard any of those names.

GENTLEMAN: Are they the Dance of Darkness?

MASTER: There are many schools in the Dance of Darkness and Bishop Yamada opened Hoppo Butoh-ha based on Otaru . . . But everybody has left and only one dancer remains.

*Muramatsu 1986, 17–18*

Returning to Tokyo, Bishop met Hijikata after an interval of ten years. Bishop and Yuki appeared in *Takazashiki* (Jumping Spider) choreographed by Hijikata in Sogetsu Hall in 1984, two years before Hijikata died. After this performance, Bishop sometimes staged shows in local cities and outside Japan, but gave up trying to build rural centers.

### Philosophical/urban and local/rural

Under the Meiji government (1868–1912), a primarily agricultural nation previously controlled by hundreds of semi-independent feudal lords was reconstructed as a highly centralized governmental system, creating a unipolar culture. This political and social trend continued up to the 1960s and proved so successful that the cultural norms of urban Tokyo are generally regarded as reflecting a “universal,” ubiquitous, and sophisticated standard connected to the Western culture that Japan imitated in its modernization, while rural cultures are assumed to be indigenous, particular, and uncivilized. This dichotomy seems to be rooted deeply in the minds of modern Japanese society.

Hijikata felt a powerful longing for urban western culture at the start of his career, to the extent that he was quite familiar with the works by western surrealist artists such as Henri Michaux, Willem De Kooning, and Francis Bacon, and he was also deeply interested in Jean Genet and Andre Breton. Such influence can be clearly seen in his *butoh-fu* (butoh notation).<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Hijikata incorporated indigenous Tohoku images as seen in *Hosotan* in 1972 and after. Thus, butoh has both “universality”/urbanity and locality/rurality as its essence.

The most likely explanation of this dual nature of butoh is due to the discrepancy between the philosophical purpose behind the creation of butoh and the artistic approach to the body. As previously mentioned, from the time of the Meiji Restoration, when Japan promoted “Civilization and Enlightenment,” it wanted, at least in theory, to incorporate Western culture and make it a norm for all of Japan. Tokyo, where the central government was located, took in Western culture immediately, and this resulted in the equation: Western = Universal = Metropolis (Tokyo). Inevitably, the corresponding equation was: Indigenous = Local = Rural (Tohoku). It is probably correct to say that even today, this is the fundamental understanding of Japanese people. The ambiguity of butoh lies in the fact that when one thinks of its essence, one’s understanding wavers between these two equations. It is probably safe to say that the “universality” that Japan has been striving for since the Meiji era is a fake, prejudiced, constructed, and standardized “universality,” but butoh certainly has a genuine universality and urbanity if we return to the sense of universality as that mentality that all people originally possess, or to the sense of urbane as that which arises from city culture. This genuinely universal and urbane nature of butoh probably derives from its purpose as the philosophical quest to discover what the body is and how it can be represented. Kasai Akira argued that butoh should not be categorized as dance but rather as an attitude or spirit of one’s own body. He called butoh the “art of the spirit,” as well as the art of the body, considering both classical ballet and traditional Japanese dance as forms of butoh (Kasai 2004, 62). Bruce Baird interpreted the universality of butoh as an opportunity to understand other types of suffering:

The universality of suffering offers the universal opportunity to try to understand the pain of another person. Butō . . . provides an opportunity to examine one's self, and to try to understand the world of (and particularly the suffering of) others.

*Baird 2014, 5*

Butoh's locality/rurality, on the other hand, is based on an artistic approach that finds style in unordinary, unconventional, and unexploited bodies and body movements, favoring an eccentric, unsophisticated, and premodern or personal local or rural location; for Hijikata, this was especially Tohoku.<sup>8</sup> However, this is not to say that Hijikata liked indigenous culture itself; rather, he preferred the non-city elements as something that could arouse a bodily consciousness that is usually forgotten. He set "domesticated" (*kainarasareta*) urban ordinary manners against rural everyday lives as he says:

Everyday life has butō-ness, you know. For example, when you are a kid and subject to your parent's anger, and you get beaten. You run away. They chase you. You run outside. When the people in the neighborhood are watching, you are conscious of yourself playing the role of a child actor, there is butō in that moment.

*Hijikata 1998, II: 16*

Hijikata here had found "butoh-ness" in the habitual and "domesticated" lives in Tohoku, as well as in personal and indigenous consciousness, as is shown in the childhood memory described in *Yameru maihime (La danseuse malade)*.

It should be noted, however, that, as Bishop Yamada realized from his Tohoku experiences, Hijikata's Tohoku as an artistic resource is not a real place, but was created and performed as a never-never land according to his butoh method. Bishop recalled his impression when he saw a collaboration between Hijikata and a Goze, Sugimoto Kikue, and he felt Hijikata seemed so shallow in comparison that he realized Hijikata's Tohoku is artistically created and therefore it is only a quasi-Tohoku:

In front of a real Goze woman, Hijikata is only a toy and plastic. Goze is the "real body" and Hijikata is a "kyo-tai" (performed body). Hijikata's is fake, but it is OK because butoh is how to create that performed body.

*Yamada 2016, personal interview; Kosuge 2017, 66–67*

Bishop and Hoppo Butoh-ha accepted the challenge of presenting their butoh as site-specific, rural performances. While one might consider his experiment in actualizing Hijikata's mythic northern butoh in the real world to ultimately have been a failure, as butoh has continued to spread throughout Japan and, indeed, all over the world, others have taken up the challenge of localizing butoh in rural areas. Today one can find butoh thriving in both urban environments and remote landscapes. The expansion of butoh reflects its ambivalent combination of urbanity and rurality – on the one hand, thematizing the Northern (Hoppo) area as the Urheimat of Hijikata's "darkness" and, on the other hand, emphasizing a ubiquitous, transnational, and nomadic nature detached from any cultural values. Butoh has remained amorphous and capable of expanding its cultural articulation. Gunji Masakatsu described his admiration for Hoppo Butoh-ha after a visit to Otaru in autumn 1980:

The aspiration of Hoppo Butoh-ha is the journey to hear the voice of butoh and to confirm the bodies of butoh. It flashes across my mind that I want to believe in the

young dancers' journey: that they went to meet the Sun in the North where it is dead because they couldn't wait for it to be born.

Gunji 1991b, 269

### Notes

- 1 In fact, perhaps anticipating this trend as early as 1969, Hijikata collaborated with Hosoe Eikoh to publish a photographic collection, *Kamaitachi*, in which they set out to capture invisible memories of their hometown using Hijikata's body and Hosoe's camera.
- 2 A sanatorium for people with Hansen's disease was once located in the place where Hijikata constructed his dance conservatory, Asbestos Studio (Motofuji 1990 40–41). The description of *Hosotan* refers to Kosuge (2013, 56–60).
- 3 Another example, among many, is Gunji Masakatsu writing in 1985 that the essence of Hijikata butoh is rooted in Tohoku climate (Gunji, 1991a, 264). In 2004, a special edition of *Butai Hyoron* entitled "Hijikata Tatsumi and Tohoku" contains articles and dialogues dealing with the relationship between Hijikata Tatsumi and Tohoku (Mori 2004).
- 4 Hijikata was interested in *Yamabushi* practices because he greatly aspired to create a style of dance in which the other self would watch his dying body, as Naito Masatoshi, a photographer, reports (Naito 1987, 134).
- 5 Hijikata refers to the coexistence of death and life in "Dance of the Mummy" in a program essay written for a performance of Murobushi Kō (Hijikata 1998, I: 349–352).
- 6 In fact, Hijikata quite often related his wild fancies and never took any concrete steps to realize them. Bishop Yamada is not sure Hijikata really had such dreams (Yamada, telephone interview, May 2, 2017).
- 7 As for images and analysis of *butoh-fu*, see, for example, Morishita 2015.
- 8 "Locality" naturally includes rural locality, suburban locality, and urban locality but all of these are associated with "rurality" in the sense of unsophistication and unfamiliarity with the manners of "Yamanote-Bunka (urbane high culture)." In Japanese terminology, *inaka-mono* (country bumpkin) sometimes can be used to refer to rustic people even if they are born in a big city.

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