The body formed through dancing – the aspect and process of the structure of the body –

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SUMMARY

The body is a medium, as well as an artist himself in dance as performing arts. Because of this characteristic, the issue of how the body should be viewed in dance is always being discussed. It is usually focused on how the body appears and moves. Although they make a point on the physical aspect of the body, they rarely shed light on the relationship between the inner being and the body. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the aspect of dancer’s body and its changes through the dancer’s perspective.

The research was based on the view of Eastern philosophy on the body to analyze dancer’s development from the viewpoint of transfiguration of the body. Yasuo YUASA, who discussed the body in terms of Shugyo of Eastern philosophy, states that bodily activity and psychological action are closely connected from the viewpoint of “mind-body unity (shinshin-ichinyo)” proposed by Eizai. It was considered that the body in dance also needs to be treated from the “mind-body unity” point of view, as Yuasa did in Shugyo.

Such a circumstance led to the investigation of the body in dance through a relationship between the physical body and the internal action of consciousness of dancer. Here, the dancer’s body established by some degree of dance experiences is defined as “the dancing body”. The aim of this study is to bring out the process of the structure of “the dancing body” and its aspects through literature review and interviews with dancers about their dance performance experiences.

An outline of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 deals with “the dancing body” as “mind-body unity”, and then we consider how it is evident in dance activity based on Eastern philosophy. It was suggested that the relationship of dancer’s mind and body will transform through training, and the dancer will experience “acting intuition (koiteki-chokkan)” on stage as s/he performs. In this condition, the mind-and-body state of dancer will correspond to no-mindedness (mushin) in Zeami’s treaties. Furthermore, the dancer may have a united view where subjective and objective viewpoints are integrated, and have a three-cornered consciousness.

Based on literature, Chapter 2 deals with the process of how “the dancing body” is constructed. This process is concerned with the theory of Shugyo, discussed by Yuasa, and
Parviainen’s concept of “practice of the self”. It was suggested that there are four stages to achieve the state of “the dancing body”.

Chapter 3 provides results of the interviews with five dancers using Personal Attitude Construct (PAC) Analysis method. From the results, four elements (expressiveness, technique, relationship, and identity) were extracted as the aspects of “the dancing body”. Furthermore, it was concluded that a dancer reaches “the dancing body” through the process of the imitation of form, the acquisition of model, the acquisition of the subjective viewpoint, and the three-cornered consciousness.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of “the dancing body” in dancer’s consciousness based on the suggestions made in chapters 1, 2, and 3. Dancers who were interviewed considered “the dancing body” as the ideal state of a dancer from their experiences of performance and appreciation of dance. The element of expressiveness was regarded as important by dancers, relating to acting intuition and comprehension of the field. Although it was captured that the acquisition of dance technique is related to the imitation of form, and is essential in dance training, dancers considered identity is required to achieve expression (expressiveness).

From the above, it was suggested that a dancer experiences acting intuition and the state of mind-body unity on stage. They achieve this situation not only from training but also from having the original view and specific opinion on dance when they are engaged in dance activity.

In this research, the characteristics of dancer’s body and the elements required in dance training were found. In the future, we expect to construct a more inclusive theory of “the dancing body” from the viewpoints of both dancer and audience by showing the bodily sense and structure of consciousness of a dancer. We hope to make clear the educational value of dance and to provide new knowledge on the field of dance education by further understanding the body made through dance from the viewpoint of dancer’s development.