1997

Reappraising the cultural identity of Chinese classical dance

Yi-Chun Wu
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Wu, Yi-Chun, "Reappraising the cultural identity of Chinese classical dance" (1997). *Master's Theses*. 1484.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.s4c9-a4vt>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/1484

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

**REAPPRAISING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY
OF CHINESE CLASSICAL DANCE**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Departement of Theater Arts
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirments for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Yi-Chun Wu

May 1997

UMI Number: 1384733

**Copyright 1997 by
Wu, Yi-Chun**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 1384733
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
**300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103**

Copyright 1997

Yi-Chun Wu

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATER ART

Janet Van Swoll

Dr. Karl Toepfer

Mina Garman

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

M. Lou Lewandowski

ABSTRACT

REAPPRAISING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CHINESE CLASSICAL DANCE

by Yi-Chun Wu

Performance analysis demonstrates that the significance of the feminine Chinese Classical Dance does not depend on cultural or historical analysis but on the analysis of performance qualities which allow the dance to communicate a complex, emancipatory representation of feminine identity across cultural and historical contexts.

Research on this subject starts by examining relations between dance, the aesthetic of Daoism, and Peking Opera. The intimate relation between these is the backbone from which the unique quality of Chinese Classical Dance can be tracked historically. Nevertheless, since historical discussion can not really explain the aesthetic value of the dance, a detailed analysis of performance elements and imagery is the more crucial evidence which justifies the preservation of Chinese Classical Dance. The thesis then reveals that without reference to philosophical content or enhancement of culturally defined costume and music, the qualities of the classical movements project a superior feminine attractive power which transcends cultural, historical or narrative contexts.

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been completed without the help of a number of people. First and foremost, my deepest appreciation is to my chief thesis advisor, Janet Van Swoll for her unwavering patience and expert assistance on the photography of the dance movements. I would also like to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Karl Toepfer and Mina Garman, whose understanding and support of my dance studies in San Jose State University made it possible for me to complete a project that for a long time seemed endless. Most of all, however, I would like to thank my parents in Taiwan and brother in New York for their love and continuous encouragement and support throughout my arduous task of writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures (ChapterII).....	vii
List of figures (Chapter III).....	viii
Chapter	
I Introduction.....	1
II Definitions.....	8
III Performance analysis.....	53
IV Conclusion.....	128
Bibliography.....	150

Figures **Chapter II**

Figure	Page
2.1 Sleeve movement in Peking Opera.....	32
2.2 Jade sculpture from Warrior State.....	33
2.3 Stone sculpture from North Wei dynasty.....	33
2.4 Wall painting from Tang dynasty.....	34
2.5 Ribbon dance in Peking Opera.....	34
2.6 Jin dance in the brick painting from Han dynasty..	35
2.7 Jin dance in the stone painting from Han dynasty..	35
2.8 Stone painting from North Wei dynasty.....	36
2.9 Wall painting from Tang dynasty.....	37
2.10 Tuo Yun.....	38
2.11-2.15 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi.....	39-43
2.16-2.21 The sequece of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi.....	44-49
2.22 Sculpture from Tang dynasty.....	50
2.23 Painting from Ming dynasty.....	51
2.24 Painting from Qing dynasty.....	51
2.25 Group dance with fans.....	52
2.26 Group dance with water sleeves.....	52

Figures
Chapter III

Figure	Page
3.1 Classical pose.....	110
3.2 Classical pose.....	111
3.3 Hand gesture.....	112
3.4 Hand gesture.....	112
3.5 Hand gesture.....	113
3.6 Die-Zi (butterfly form).....	114
3.7-3.10 The sequence of walking step.....	115-118
3.11 Classical pose with a ribbon.....	119
3.12 Classical pose with a ribbon	120
3.13-3.15 Classical pose with fans.....	121-123
3.16-3.18 Costume of the classical dance.....	124-126
3.19 Styles of classical wigs.....	127
3.20 Structure of the classical costume.....	127

Chapter I:

Introduction

Chinese Dance developed in a variety of styles for thousands of years. Each style of dance has its own unique quality. Feminine Classical Dance, one of the Chinese dance styles, embodies a sublime and modest spirit. However, beginning in the 1940's with the influence of Western dance, the aesthetic spirit of Chinese Classical Dance has gradually been lost.

Nowadays, most of the Classical dances performed by dance companies or schools in China blend a lot of ballet technique with the classical Chinese Dance. Unless traditional costumes are worn, the dances often can't be identified as Chinese. These performances convey an impression of Western classical ballet technique flavored with Chinese Classical Dance style. In Taiwan, most dance academies and studios are devoted to retaining the traditional style of Chinese Classical Dance in both the training of the dancers and in the choreography. Taiwanese dancers, however, generally spend considerably more time on studying ballet and modern dance techniques in comparison to the time spent studying Chinese dances. Therefore, the principles of the movements of Chinese Classical Dance have been imperceptibly Westernized, even though the shapes of movements remain in the traditional style.

Western dance styles have their own artistic values. This thesis has no intention to evaluate good or bad between the dances originating from two different parts of the world. However, besides the advantages of absorbing certain elements from Western dances, the tradition and spirit of Chinese Classical Dance should also be acknowledged and appreciated. It is common for scholars to agree that since Chinese Classical Dance is a part of Chinese traditional culture, this art should be preserved. This perspective has been advocated by many Chinese scholars, but, beyond historical origins and basic technique introduction, concrete reasons for the value of keeping the tradition are not given. In The Study of Kun Qu and Chinese Classical Dance, Jiang, Xiao-Qin stresses that the classical dance is the most important art for reviving Chinese traditional dances, and Kun Qu, one of the styles of Peking Opera, is the main source from which to establish a classical training system (2-3). The author contributes research on historical origin for the classical dance by discussing the dances in Peking Opera and one representative piece in Kun Qu, Mu Dan Ting. Nevertheless, the aesthetic value of the dance is not identified in this book. The content of the book suggests the value of the classical dance depends on the interpretation of the development and narrative of the traditional Chinese opera rather than

on the observation of the dance itself.

Li, Ying-Xiu and Gao, Yan, two dance scholars in Taiwan, also contribute research on Chinese dance. In the books they have written, they provide an understanding of the fundamental techniques and forms of the dance rather than a clarification of the aesthetic of the dance. In The Study of Ni Shang Yu Yi Wu (ribbon dance), Li, besides introducing the historical background in the first three chapters, focuses on the techniques of handling a ribbon, on the costume, and on the performance forms of the ribbon dance (55-118). Although she concludes that the importance of the dance is to present the traditional graceful and gentle Chinese femininity (119), the concrete aesthetic evidence is not provided by her detailed discussion of the origin and foundation of the dance. Moreover, the object in Gao, Yan's The Study of Chinese and Western Dance is to compare the dances from two different cultures by discussing cultural concepts, movement principles and performance forms. The Chinese Classical Dance is part of the analysis in this book, yet except for a few adjective words describing the general sensation of the movement, this section only provides an acknowledgement of the movement principles rather than the evidence for the soft and delicate deportement the author herself attributes to the dance (184-186). These three perspectives imply that the

value or significance of the classical dance derives from the cultural and historical origin of the dance rather than from the evidence of performance itself.

It is known that the style of Chinese Classical Dance was drawn specifically from the movement vocabulary of the Peking Opera, which is the sporadic compilation of devices and expressive techniques from a variety of ancient dance cultures. Contemporary dance artists, employing this resource, individually develop training systems and choreograph new pieces on the classical style. Detached from the movement functions in Peking Opera, which are mostly related to plots conveyed by singing and acting, the classical dance is considered as one of the independent arts representing Chinese culture. This art, which has detached itself from the operatic narrative context, needs a new perspective to define its unique expressive value.

As one of the important Chinese philosophies, Daoism seems to have a unique relation to the dance. Daoist philosophy has had great influence on the Chinese arts and has helped to establish the ethos of the Chinese culture because of the ability of its philosophy to satisfy people from a variety of classes. Although Daoism is not the only significant philosophical thought in Chinese culture, its way to deal with the anxiety and conflicts generated from chaotic social reality differentiates it from the other

two primary Chinese philosophies, Confucianism and Buddhism, which, unlike Daoism, do not promote dynamic relations between individuals and social reality. This uniqueness achieves powerful material embodiment in the movement principles of the dance, perhaps the most dynamic of all arts involving bodily expressivity. Nevertheless, the relation between Daoism and Chinese classical dance only demonstrates a culture affiliation rather than discloses the aesthetic values of the dance.

The expressive values of the dance are not dependent on its unique historical, cultural, or even narrative context. The dance therefore requires a different aesthetic evaluation which identifies expressive values accessible to audiences across cultures and historical eras. The value of aesthetic phenomena derives more from its intercultural communicative power than from its power to establish the authenticity of a unique cultural identity. Preservation of the Chinese classical dance entails the revelation of this power of intercultural communication through the female body. In order not to lose the qualities that make Chinese Classical Dance distinctly expressive, it is necessary to understand exactly what the qualities are in the dance that determine the value of preserving the traditional dance culture. The performance values associated with classical Chinese dance are the main sources which define

the unique significance of the dance, but these values become evident only through analysis of the dances themselves, which previous research in this area has not succeeded in doing. This thesis therefore argues that the aesthetic value of the dance depends above all on analysis of dance performance rather than on an effort to identify unique historical origins or the foundations of a unique cultural identity.

According to these conditions, this thesis will identify the aesthetic qualities of Chinese Classical Dance first by discussing the relation between the aesthetics of Daoism and the Chinese classical dance and further the historical relation between the Peking Opera and the Chinese classical dance. The intimate relation between the three will be considered as the crucial backbone from which the unique qualities of Chinese Classical Dance can be tracked historically. From this point on, the thesis will examine the performance by discussing the relation between narrative value and the performance and the performance elements. Performance elements will include descriptions of the positions of the body and its parts, basic principles of the movement and property usages, costuming and music. These each will be followed by analysis of the aesthetic significance. Associated with these discussions, this thesis will further identify what elements dominate in shaping

the expressive value of the dance by examining the relation between the performance elements.

The performance analysis will be achieved by references to books, articles and photos documenting the classical dance. By this evidence, the thesis will demonstrate that the value of dance is revealed through performance analysis rather than through cultural, or historical analysis. The values identified through performance analysis will contribute most to the preservation of Chinese classical dance. In addition to providing an opportunity to introduce the unique qualities of Chinese Classical Dance, helping to transmit Chinese culture to the Western world, this performance analysis will reveal more complex and emancipatory representation of feminine identity than much modern, feminist oriented ideology has assumed the traditional Chinese culture offered.

Chapter II:

Definitions

A. Daoism

The late period of the Zhou Dynasty (771-221 B.C.) was the "Golden Age" in Chinese academic history. Numerous schools of thought were generated during this period. The theories of these schools had significant influence on other academic thought in the following two-thousand years.

The primary cause which incited academic popularity was a change in the social structure during the Zhou Dynasty. In the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty (1027 B.C.), the political authority was based on a solid feudal system and a strict moralistic unit. The Emperor Zhou was the absolute authority and leader. In 771 B.C., the son of Zhou, King Ping, cooperated with the Chuan Rong, a nomad tribe, to defeat the Emperor. King Ping succeeded to the throne and transferred the capital of the Zhou Dynasty from the west to the east of China.

From this point on, the allegiance of the various states and cities to the Emperor became nominal. The Emperor was a figurehead and virtually powerless. This represented a decline from the earlier legitimate and glorious rule of the Zhou. The situation during the Eastern Zhou was one in which many major states were contending for territory and leadership in a changing series of alliances, intrigues

and open wars. Because of the constant increase of bitter warfare and other violent political, social, and economic upheavals, people endeavored to find answers to the pressing problems that confronted them. The period eventually became a time of fresh creativity and inventiveness in the realm of thought and social awareness. This became the great formative period for Chinese philosophy. A number of schools covering a wide spectrum of thought were contending for the minds of men in the areas of theory and of practical politics. Accompanying this revolution of thought were sweeping changes in society. Daoism was one of these intellectual currents.

Daoism is a philosophy centered around understanding the way of nature. Lao Zi was the creator of this philosophy. His maxims were later compiled in Dao De Jing by unknown authors. Zhuang Zi, the contributor of Zhuang Zi, was his successor. The lives of these two masters remain mystical and controversial, but their concepts have a significant influence on Chinese society even today. The following content will discuss the philosophy of Dao according to three primary characteristics.

First: Dao stands for an entirety which embraces everything but also includes an organic order. It cannot be defined in words and is not an idea or concept which can be explained. Lao Zi believed that the Universe

originated from a subtle phenomenon, which is not a concrete object capable of being described. As he said in the twenty-fifth chapter of Dao De Jing:

Before Heaven and Earth are born,
there is something formless and complete in itself.
In the silence and the impalpability,
standing alone and unchanging.
It revolves itself gently,
and generates itself incessantly in all dimensions.
Perhaps it is the mother of all things.
I don't know its name, Tentatively call it Dao...
(Pei,30).

Associating with the view of Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi claimed that the infinity existing in Dao itself is the creator of the world. It cannot be conceived or categorized. In the sixth chapter of Zhuang Zi, he presents his recognition on Dao:

The Dao has its reality and sign, but is without action or form. It may be transmitted but cannot be received. it may be attained but cannot be seen. It exists by and through itself. It existed before heaven and earth and indeed for all eternity...(Dong,40).

Dao is not only the origin of the world but also the course of nature. From a subtle revolving development, everything begins to have its own features in the world. Each grows and operates independently, but is also mutually related to others. In this evolution, the order of the universe is naturally produced. This "order" is not based on the following of linear rules and laws imposed from above. Rather, it is an asymmetrical and unregimented pattern which is created by the properties existing in

things themselves and the interdependence of each with the others. Lao Zi, in the twenty-first chapter of Dao De Jing, was aware of the process of the birth of nature:

...The Dao is elusive and intangible,
and yet within is image.
It is elusive and intangible, yet within is form.
It is shadowy and indistinct, yet within is essence.
This essence is so subtle, and yet so real.
It is the primal origin
of the whole of creation and non-creation.
It existed prior to the beginning of time...(Feng,23).

Besides corresponding with Lao Zi's theory, Zhuang Zi, in the twenty-first chapter of Zhuang Zi, further discussed the course of the universe created by the unique traits in everything. He said:

The fluidity of water is not the result of any effort on the part of water, but is its natural property...The height is natural to sky, the depth is natural to earth, the brilliance is natural to the sun and moon. Do they cultivate these attributes? (Cherng,38).

Another characteristic of Daoism is that Dao is not a motionless and unchangeable substance. Everything embodied in Dao is in the process of circumrotation and transformation. This quality, In Lao Zi's perspective, is recognized as the principle of polarity, which is not to be confused with the ideas of opposition or conflict. In everyday matters dualities exist in some way, yet the opposite components are inseparable; they mutually generate and support each other. In the second chapter, translated by Hua-Ching Ni, Lao Zi explained:

As soon as the world regards something as beautiful,
 ugliness simultaneously becomes apparent.
 As soon as the world regards something as good,
 evil simultaneously becomes apparent.
 In exactly the same manner,
 existence and non-existence give birth to each other.
 Difficult and easy define each other.
 Long and short form each other.
 High and low make each other distinguishable.
 Tone and voice make each other conspicuous.
 Front and back connect each other...(2).

Zhuang Zi also acknowledged this constant alternation in the universe. He realized that "Every movement is a change, every moment is a shifting. Change takes place automatically" (Ch.17). Based on this viewpoint, any culture or authority, for Zhuang Zi, which persists on making distinctions between things, is detested. In the seventeenth chapter of Zhuang Zi, he wrote:

Thus, those who say that by following the correct there will be no wrong, by following good order there will no disorder, do not apprehend the order permeating all nature nor the facts relative to all creation. One might as well talk of the existence of heaven without that of earth, or of the negative principle without the positive, which is clearly impossible. Yet people keep on discussing it without stopping; such people must be either fools or shams...(Dong,58).

Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi also applied the principle of the universe on human conduct. They stated that one should know the laws of nature and conduct one's activities in accordance with them. As a part of the enveloping order of the universe, people should follow this course of nature to develop their own infinite creativity without clinging to any particular form. This theory, in Lao Zi's words,

is called "wu-wei."

Wu-Wei can be translated literally as "non-action." Yet the principle of this translation is not to be considered laziness, complete absence of activity, or doing nothing. In the contexts of Lao Zi's writings, wu-wei actually means acting without artificiality and arbitrariness. He used metaphors and symbols in nature to suggest the significance of acting with a weak quality, which cannot be considered as timid avoidance. It is the way to overcome difficulties without using external force. Water is the essence of life and is therefore the example Lao Zi liked to use. In chapter seventy-eight, he stated:

Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water,
Yet for wearing down the solid and strong,
there is nothing which can surpass it.
The weak can overcome the strong.
The soft can overcome the hard.
Everyone knows this,
Yet no one puts it into practice...(Feng, 76).

In addition to sharing the same perspective on the principle of the universe with Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi emphasized an inner spiritual transformation. In the course of nature, everything presents its own unique quality. Each individually conducts life's activities under a state of wu-wei. Based on this belief that Lao Zi first acknowledged, Zhuang Zi spent much attention on the process of attaining the highest metaphysical state through self-cultivation. This spiritual transcendence can't be associated with an

egoistic emphasis. Rather, it is a vehicle which assists one to return to the origin of nature. Zhuang Zi found a fuller and deeper expression in tranquillity. In Chapter twenty-three, he stated:

When man is extremely tranquil, then the heavenly light is given forth. He who emits this heavenly light sees his real self. He who cultivates his real self achieves the Absolute. When he achieves the Absolute the human elements will drop away, but the heavenly qualities will come to his assistance (Dong,66).

The Aesthetic of Daoism

Although "aesthetics" is not a subject in Daoism, from the adages of the two significant masters, we can still recognize their perspectives relating to beauty. The aesthetic trait of Daoism is basically established on a transcendental sense. As one can transcend the value of beauty regarded by the sophisticated world, the real eternal beauty will be revealed. To further explain the aesthetic viewpoint suggested in Daoism, the following context will be centered around three categories: natural beauty, spiritual beauty, and simple beauty.

In Daoism, "nature," translated in Chinese as "Zi-Ran," can be taken to mean spontaneity. Everything grows and operates independently and on its own. Each is not decided by any external factor but by the essential qualities innate within it. According to this theory, both Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi detested any artificial beauty. Being able to present

the salient characteristics embodied in individuals or things, for them, can just be regarded as nature's real beauty.

In twelveth chapter of Dao De Jing, translated by Hua-Ching Ni, Lao Zi advocated that people should be aware to not be obsessed with superficial, temporal enticements or regard them as actual beauty:

The countless combinations of
the five basic colors blind the eye.
The infinite compositions of
the five basic tones deafen the ear.
The numerous varieties of
the basic flavors dull the tongue.
The pursuit of worldly pleasures, maddens the mind.
Therefore, one with whole virtue
lives only according to his true nature of wholeness,
And not by anything that is extraneous
That would split his nature (13).

Natural beauty, for Lao Zi, doesn't need to be particularly flaunted. This spontaneous trait is presented in an unpretentious circumstance. In chapter thirty-eight, Lao Zi stated: "A real virtuous man is not conscious of being virtuous,...the truly great man dwells on what is real and not what is on the surface,...". Although these words are not directly stated to be the substance of natural beauty, one can infer from this viewpoint that the actual beauty Lao Zi regarded should be appreciated without being superficially praised or additionally publicized.

Zhuang Zi also believed that the greatest beauty is naturally produced in the course of the universe. It doesn't

rely on any worldly appraisal to magnify its unique quality. In chapter twenty-two, he observed and sensed a speechless beauty:

...There are many fine things about Nature, but it does no talking. The four seasons set a clear standard, but they engage in no discussion. All creation enjoys a fixed order, but it does no expounding....(Ware,262).

Music produced by nature is another implication which suggests Zhuang Zi's realization on natural beauty. In the second chapter, he used the conversation between Zi Qi and his student Zi You to describe the magnificence of the music of nature. Zhuang Zi distinguished the difference between ordinary music played by humans and the music composed by the inherent traits existing in things of the universe. He believed that those instrumental sounds, which cannot be regarded as the greatest music, are artificially produced to serve purposes or desires of people. On the other hand, real music means nature. It conveys an interdependent harmony in the universe without other external efforts. By the example Zi Qi gave, Zhuang Zi enlightened his students into an intuitive comprehension of nature:

The belches from the Great nature are called winds....When they arise, ten thousand hollows begin crying wildly....In the mountain forests that lash and sway, there are huge trees a hundred spans around with hollows and opening like noses, mouths, ears, beans, tubes and mortars. They roar like waves, whistle like arrows, screech, gasp, cry, moan, and howl,...And when the fierce gust has passed on, all the hollows

are empty again....Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself. But who does the sounding? (Cherng,79).

In addition to spontaneous beauty, Daoism also implies that real beauty is created with a spiritual transcendence. By a detachment from the material world, a person can be liberated from an obsession of sensory enjoyment, allowing a state of pure beauty to emerge. Both Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi thought highly of surpassing worldly materialism through an inner transformation. According to the implications embodied in Lao Zi's theory, de-emphasizing self-importance (wu-won) is the vehicle to achieve the spiritual aesthetic state. In chapter seven, Lao Zi used endless heaven and earth to signify the meaning of less egoism:

Heaven and earth last forever.
Why are heaven and earth everlasting?
Because they live
without holding onto any consciousness of self.
One lives with the universal virtue of wholeness.
He dissolves all consciousness of self....
Through selfless action, he attains fulfillment(Fung, 67).

As the egocentric possession is eliminated, "...the mind attains the utmost emptiness and rests at peace..." (Ch.16). With this tranquillity of inner spirit, one is able to transcend from an individual provincial world and realize the absolute beauty of the universe.

Corresponding with Lao Zi's viewpoint, Zhuang Zi, in his adages, also sensed the importance of the tranquillity

of mind, which is the essence for advancing the inner spirit over the limitations of external value in order to observe the delicacies in the universe. In chapter eleven, he stated:

...Let there be no looking, no listening. Wrap your inner spirit in quiet. Then your body will rectify itself. You must remain quiet and unprejudiced....Let your eyes see nothing, your ears hear nothing, your heart and mind know nothing. The spirit within you will protect your body, and it will live a long time...(Fung,98).

From this point on, Zhuang Zi further elaborated the enlightened state of mind by applying creatures in nature as examples. A butterfly is one of the central metaphors in Zhuang Zi. In the end of the second chapter, Zhuang Zi described his experience of self-transformation:

I once dreamed I was a butterfly flitting and fluttering around. I was happy with myself and did as I pleased. I didn't know I was Zhuang Zhou (Zhuang Zi). Then suddenly I woke up. I saw that I was Zhuang Zhou. Now I don't know whether Zhuang Zhou dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreamed that he is Zhuang Zhou. There must be a difference between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly. This is called transformation of things (Ware, 87).

This butterfly dream signifies a spiritual elevation produced from abandoning egocentric obsession, and from this enlightenment, a transcendental beauty is simultaneously brought into being. Robert Allinson, the author of Chuang-Tzu, For Spiritual Transformation, also realizes this aesthetic significance embodied in the exquisite butterfly image:

The butterfly is the symbol of metamorphosis from the inferior to the superior, from the old to the new, from the lowly to the high, from the crawling to the flying, from the less developed to the more developed. The butterfly is in fact the symbol of birth-the birth of beauty (73).

Simple beauty also is one of the aesthetic traits suggested in Daoism. According to the principles of Daoism discussed previously, the world developed from emptiness, from which first of all essence and spirit arose. Based on the point that all being originated from one, Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi proclaimed that one should look inside and hold on to the subtlety that cannot be seen. Remaining in such a state will help one return to a state of simplicity, which is just like before one was born. Inferring from this perspective, the beauty praised by Daoism is a pure and unsophisticated aesthetic spirituality.

"Simplicity," translated in Chinese as "Pu," is frequently used by Lao Zi to describe the purity before Dao developed into various forms in the universe, and to convey that one should conduct oneself in a worldly society without losing the true nature existing inside:

The Dao, considered as unchanging, has no name.
It appears in primordial simplicity
It maintains itself
as a model of indivisible integrity...(Ch.32)
(Feng, 34).

...Being the abundant valley of the world,
Ever true and resourceful,
Return to the original simplicity of an uncarved block.
When the uncarved block is shaped

into various single vessels,
 its original qualities are destroyed.
 By preserving the original qualities,
 One maintains his integral nature...(Ch.28) (Ni,35).

...It is more important
 to see the simplicity,
 To realize one's true nature,
 To cast off selfishness and desire (Ch.19) (Feng,20).

An infant also is the metaphor Lao Zi preferred to apply for signifying the state of returning to simplicity. The world, for the infant, always fulfills infinite vitality since his innocent mind has not been blemished by mundane value. This artlessness transcending all temporal purposes is the beauty implied in Daoism:

Can you always embrace Oneness
 without the separation of body and mind?
 Attending fully and becoming supple,
 Can you be as a newborn babe? (Ch.10) (Fung,13).

...The multitude of people are contented,
 enjoying the sacrificial feast....
 But I alone remain quiet and indifferent.
 I am innocent and unknowing,
 like a newborn babe unoccupied by worldly cares...
 (Ch.20) (Dong,82).

...As the flow stream of the universe,
 never swerve from your true nature.
 Return to the integrity of a newborn babe...(Ch.28)
 (Fung,29).

He who has in himself abundantly the attributes of
 the Dao
 is like an infant....
 It has not known the union of male and female.
 Since its vitality is perfectly whole...
 (Ch.55) (Fung,97).

Zhuang Zi, in his maxims, also indirectly valued the unworldly pure beauty. He regarded highly people who have

an unsophisticated quality. "As the pristine simplicity is preserved, no one can compete with him for the excellence" (Ch.13). Zhuang Zi realized that people imperceptibly tend to disperse and lose their inherent quality as they grow up to consciousness and social standing. He, at the end of the seventh chapter, used a mystical story to indicate this dissipation of simplicity:

The ruler of the Southern Ocean was Shu (Brief), the ruler of the North Northern Ocean was Hu (Sudden), and the ruler of the central region was Hun-Tun (Chaos). Shu and Hu regularly meet in the territory of Hun-Tun, who treated them very well. They discussed how they could repay Hun-Tun's kindness. They reasoned, "All men have seven orifices for seeing, hearing, eating, and breathing. But Hun-Tun alone has not one. Let us make them for him." Then they bored one orifice in him per day, and on the seventh day, Hun-Tun died (Jame,95).

For Zhuang Zi, life and death, sensual desires and personal consciousness are not part of life in the beginning of humankind. Rather, all these develop only when people lose the simplicity connected with Dao. People should constantly examine inside of themselves in order to keep their pristine innocence, which is the aesthetic value Zhuang Zi pursued.

All of these features of Daoist philosophy indicate the political and social context for the origin of the classical Chinese dance which incorporates Daoist philosophical principles in its aesthetic system. Daoism identifies the distinctly Chinese cultural identity of

the Chinese classical dance arising from chaotic social, political conditions. Daoism clarifies a political and historical context for the origin of the classical dance, and it explains how an aesthetic style of feminine dance performance acquired a uniquely Chinese cultural identity. But it can not alone explain the communicative power of the dance aesthetic.

The weakness of contextualizing dance in Daoism or other historical circumstance alone in order to disclose its meaning is that meaning becomes embedded in context to the point that aesthetic phenomena cannot communicate outside of a precisely defined cultural and historical moment or environment. The meaning of the dance is therefore always located in specific events or conditions external to it. This contextualizing approach does not very well permit the dance to communicate meaning across cultural or historical contexts. We must examine the signifying power of the dance with a detachment that allows us to reveal how the chief components of the Chinese classical dance poses enduring expressive values capable of bringing pleasure to audiences from a variety of cultural and historical contexts.

B. Chinese Classical Dance

Chinese dance has developed for thousands of years. Exact knowledge about the style and steps of the original performances of these ancient dances has long been lost. Thus "Chinese Classical Dance" does not refer to the exact replication of the ancient dances performed in the courts of the emperors. Rather, it is a term established about 40 years ago by contemporary dance artists who wished to identify and preserve what remained of the elements of the dances recognized as being from ancient times and from sources of nobility. This would then establish a continuing heritage of a style which could be built upon and recognized as Chinese "classical" dance.

In 1952, the Committee for Promotion of Chinese dance was officially founded in Taiwan. Its primary principle was to revive and develop traditional Chinese dances. The members of the committee, according to the qualities of dances, established two primary categories of Chinese dance, Chinese Classical Dance and Chinese Folk Dance. Chinese Classical Dance was also additionally divided into two different styles, Military style and feminine style. The subject of this theses focus on feminine style.

It was known from ancient sources that movements of Chinese ancient dance were adapted and still remain in Peking Opera. As a result, the dance artists learned and

applied the technique training and performing style of Peking Opera and specifically drew from movement vocabularies of Peking Opera to establish the style now known by many as Chinese Classical Dance.

Peking Opera officially originated from "Za Ju," which was popular during the Song Dynasty (960-1280 A.D.). The Song Dynasty infused a variety of art forms generated from previous dynasties. These arts included the grotesque drama of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-219 A.D.), dance and music from the Tang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.), and literature, poetry and martial arts which had been developing from at least 1104 B.C. All of these forms provided abundant resources for Za Ju. The performing style of Za Ju was dominated by singing and dancing. One principle performer sang a song which embodied a narrative. During the presentation of the song, other performers danced to supplement the performance.

Based on Za Ju, more different types of traditional operas were developed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1643 A.D.). Kun Cheu, is one of the most representative styles of Chinese Opera of the period. Breaking through the limitations of the performing of Za Ju, Kun Cheu embodied a more expressive quality for the individual performer. According to the content of a story, performers were assigned to different roles. By combinations of singing,

dancing and acting, they individually had a chance to express the characters they played. Dancing was no longer divided from singing; it was performed by artists who simultaneously sang and acted as they danced. This performing structure was the backbone of Peking Opera.

Infusing the elegant melody of Kun Cheu, the traditional opera masters in the Qing Dynasty further developed a variety of opera tunes. These melodies, known together as "Luan Tan," were soon popular with the public. Since Luan Tan was first popular in Peking, people adopted the name of the city and it became today's Peking Opera.

The dance in Peking Opera contains an abundance of ancient Chinese dance cultures. Although we don't exactly know how these ancient cultures were absorbed, cultural artifacts from ancient times clearly exhibit a relation between the ancient dances of China and the dances in today's Peking Opera: for example, the sleeve and ribbon dances. The movements of the long or wide sleeves often seen in Peking Opera (Fig.2.1) can be traced to the Zhou Dynasty (1027-221 B.C.). Jade sculptures discovered from the epoch of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.), and the wall paintings of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) prove that the heritage of the sleeve dances has existed for a long period of time (Fig.2.2-2.4).

The application of long ribbons, which usually appear

in classical Chinese dance, also can often be seen in Peking Opera (Fig.2.5). The ribbon dance originated from the Jin dance created in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-221 A.D.). Jin dance was devised by using two sticks individually wrapped in two long pieces of silk fabrics (Fig.2.6-2.7). The addition of the short sticks reduced the effort of moving the two pieces of delicate fabric. In comparison to Jin dance of today, the ribbon dances that have evolved in the Chinese Classical style are more difficult, technically and artistically.

In the stone paintings of the Northern Wei Dynasty (Fig.2.8) and in the wall paintings of the Tang Dynasty (Fig.2.9), dancers dance with long fabrics loosely draped on their bodies and arms. Without the aid of two short sticks, dancers have to use the strength of their own arms and wrists to perform and create a variety of ribbon patterns, which produce an artistic effect. Although the original ribbon dances are lost, their graceful images can be sporadically seen in Peking Opera.

By these examples, we can acknowledge that Chinese ancient dance cultures were gradually absorbed within Chinese traditional operas. During the period of Ming and Qing (1368-1911 A.D.), traditional operas changed completely affecting the status of Chinese dance. Singing and acting became the primary content and dance was just adapted for

matching or supplementing performing content. As a result, the dances in Peking Opera are not completely original pieces but extracted dance fragments. In addition to the ancient artifacts, these fragments were the only existing performances which provided sources for the contemporary dance artists who intended to trace and continue the tradition of Chinese dance.

"The Feminine Style of Chinese Classical Dance"

As with other styles of Chinese dance, the feminine style of Chinese Classical Dance was partly revived on a base of creative thought. The movement, costumes, and performing content remained in a traditional style, yet since many original performances were already lost, the choreography is all new. The dance movements in Peking Opera, mentioned earlier, was a heritage of the dances from ancient times. They are known together as "Shen Duann", and are one of the important technique trainings for Peking Opera. Shen Duann, as Li, Tian-Min, in Chinese Dance History, further explains, "is a series of movements and postures coordinated by head, wrists, body, knees and feet, which are performed according to the melody and rhythm of music or the contents of song" (157). Contemporary dance artists referred to the "Shen Duann" to establish the system of feminine Chinese Classical Dance. They adapted the

movements in "Shen Duann" not only for choreography but also for developing the movement style.

The movement style of feminine Chinese Classical Dance embodies three primary defining qualities: the stable center of weight, movements in circular shapes, and prolonged dynamics. In the performance of feminine Chinese Classical Dance, the dancer's center of weight rarely shows a distinctive change from low to high or vice versa. Mostly the center of weight stays on a horizontal level. For example, the movement, "Sui Bu", which means running steps, needs to be performed as a boat stably sailing on a smooth sea. The dancer's upper body should keep as steady as possible while she quickly runs forward with small steps and slightly bent knees.

Circular shapes and curved lines are often seen in the movement of feminine Chinese Classical Dance. They appear not only in still poses but also during the performing process of movement. "Tuo Yun" (which means lifting cloud) is one of representative postures in a curved shape (Fig 2.10). The round shape is produced by the dancer's curved arms, and the dancer's pose creates a lyrical line by the tilt of her body and bend in her legs. The circular images are also embodied in the patterns created by the transformations between the movements and the gestures themselves. For instance, the transition from

one pose to another pose might be done in a circular pattern. The dancer's right hand goes toward the right to make a half circle before it ends toward the left front. In addition, the gestures of feminine Chinese Classical Dance also create many round images which are mainly generated by the rotation of the wrists outward and inward. For example, Yun Shou Shi (cloud hand form) (Fig.2.11-2.15) and "Liao Zhuan Shou Shi" (Fig.2.16-2.21) are frequently seen. A dancer skillfully and delicately rotates her wrists to create a variety of circular images, which produce a fine and artful impression for the feminine style of dance.

The rhythm of the feminine Chinese Classical Dance style doesn't have distinct dynamic changes. Sharp or accentuated movements are not seen often in the classical performance. Coordinated with the stable center of weight, the feminine movement tends to present a graceful impression through a tranquil and prolonged deportment. With this expression of composure, the deliberate rotation or the circular patterns of the hands are allowed to be more distinctly observed.

The second characteristic of feminine Chinese Classical Dance is the revived costumes from ancient styles. There is no authoritative evidence which can clarify what particular dynasty's costumes were adapted for today's performing costume of the feminine Chinese Classical Dance.

Contemporary dance artists individually refer to the female fineries which are suggested in the artifacts or the paintings of ancient times to design the dance costumes they consider appropriate for the content of their choreography.

As the sculpture or paintings of the Tang, Ming and Qing Dynasties present (Fig.2.22-2.24), the style of ancient aristocratic women consisted of high hair knots decorated with jewels, and widesleeve coats and long skirts covering the legs down to the feet. Based on these components, the modern choreographers revived the traditional finery style for performance. In order to correspond to the typical female hair style of ancient time, dancers have to wear wigs which include hair knots and bunches of long hair.

The performing content of feminine Chinese Classical Dance is not a depiction of a story. Rather, it presents more abstract subjects such as natural phenomena, an imaginary fairy land or a frame of mood. Therefore, audiences won't see a series of actions as the mechanism of plot, but only imaginary visions which are choreographicly created. These abstract ideas, in the performance of feminine Chinese Classical Dance, are usually expressed through group dances and applications of stage properties.

In a group dance, the special designs and the images

created by the use of the stage properties are the main components producing the images. With these elements, choreographers display some kaleidoscopic figures to convey their artistic ideas. (Fig.2.25) Consequently, movement, in the group performance, is less important and less complicated. The sleeve group dance, which is one of the classical dances usually seen, creates a mystical atmosphere through the ways and manners of tossing sleeves by the dancers. One group of stationary dancers may successively toss their sleeves one by one, while the other group of running dancers toss both of their sleeves to the back at one time.

Fig.2. Sleeve movement in Peking Opera.
From Chung, p.86.

Fig.2.2 Jade
sculpture
from Warrior
State
(403-221
B.C.). From
Wang.

Fig.2.3 Stone sculpture from
North Wei Dynasty
(386-534 A.D.). From
Gao.

Fig.2.4 Wall painting from Tang dynasty (618-907A.D.).
From Wang.

Fig.2.5 Ribbon dance in Peking
Opera. From Gao.

Fig.2.6 Jin dance in the brick painting
from Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-221
A.D.). From Wang.

Fig.2.7 Jin dance in the stone painting
from Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-221
A.D.). From Wang.

Fig.2.8 Stone painting from North Wei Dynasty
(386-534 A.D.). From Wang.

Fig.2.9 Wall painting from Tang
dynasty (618-907A.D.).
From Wang.

Fig.2.10 Tuo Yun. Performed by the author,
photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.11 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi. Performed by the author, Photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.12 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi. Performed by the author, Photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.13 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi. Performed by the author, Photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.14 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi. Performed by the author, Photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.15 The sequence of Yun Shou Shi. Performed by the author, Photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.16 The sequence of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.17 The sequence of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.18 The sequence of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.19 The sequence of Liao Znuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.20 The sequence of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.21 The sequence of Liao Zhuan Shou Shi. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.2.22 Sculpture from Tang dynasty
(618-907A.D.). From The Study
of Chinese Traditional Costume,
p226.

Fig.2.23 Painting from Ming
Dynasty (1368-1661
A.D.). From He,
p.85.

Fig.2.24 Paintinh from
Qing Dynasty
(1661-1991
A.D.). From
The Study of
Chinese
Traditional
Costume. p.464.

Fig.2.25 Group dance with fans. From Gao.

Fig.2.26 Group dance with water sleeves. From Taiwan Dance Magazine, p.11.

Chapter III

The Analysis of Performance

A. The Movement of The Classical Dance

The roles in Peking Opera individually represent distinct social status within the play. As a result, the dances in Peking Opera, known together as Shen Duan, have various styles. There are four principle classifications of these characters, Sheng, the male role; Dan, the female role; Jing, the painted face, and Chou, the clown. Each classification has a unique quality and deportment which produces abundant styles for the dances in Peking Opera. The movement of feminine Chinese Classical Dance draws from two subdivisions of Dan, "Qing Yi", meaning a virtuous lady and "Gui Men Dan", meaning an unmarried female. The following discussions on "Shen Duan" are based on the dance qualities of the two classifications of female roles.

The three primary components of Peking Opera, singing, acting, and dancing, have inseparable relationships to each other. Dancing serves for the singing and acting. On the other hand, an actor's deportment of singing and acting can't be vivid without the supplement of dancing. Every movement in Peking Opera is beautified by dancing. By applying graceful gestures and postures, actors help the progression of the plot by conveying and expressing the happenings and emotions to the audience.

The movements of "Shen Duan" in Peking Opera can be primarily classified into two types of presentations: imitations from the actions of daily life and expressions of a person's mental and emotional states. The mimetic movements in Peking Opera are not for performance in themselves, but rather for the consistency of plots. In the performances of Peking Opera, actor's lines and the songs they sing don't provide detailed descriptions of the movements which are often seen in daily life. In order to assist the development of a narrative, actors use mime to describe what they are doing.

Opening a door, for instance, is often seen in Peking Opera. Instead of reciting or singing how this action is done, an actress imagines a door in front of her and then unlocks a crossbar to open the door. In the action of sewing a cloth, an actress won't discuss or sing about sewing, instead she picks up a needle which is conceived by herself and then pretends to thread it and then to sew the cloth.

Although the contents of mime in Peking Opera are adopted from motions happening in real life, the mimed movements are not done realistically. They are beautified into a dance style. Curved patterns are generally employed for embellishing the movements in mime. "Without these circular effects," as Zeng, Yong-Yi, in The Theory On Chinese Opera, relates, "all the imitative movements are

just realistic descriptions which are not artistic to watch" (25).

Using the movements of opening a door as mentioned earlier, the actress has to rotate her wrists with a small circle before she touches the crossbar to unlock the door. Then the actress, after unlocking the crossbar, makes a circle with her wrists again to open the door. As with the motions of opening a door, the actions of sewing a cloth also embody curved images between movements. The actress rotates her left wrist with a needle held by the thumb and middle finger. After she threads through the needle with her right hand, she pulls the thread and then rotates her right wrist to make a knot.

The "Shen Duan" in Peking Opera also supplements the expression of a character's mental and emotional states, which are suggested in the content of songs and an actress's lines. As an actress sings or recites a stage dialogue, she, instead of rigidly standing on the stage, simultaneously performs diverse movements, gestures and postures to express a state of mind or an emotion beyond the verbal presentation.

In The Legend of the White Snake, which is a love story between a human being and a snake siren, the scene begins with the white snake incarnated as a maiden, Bai, Su-Zhen and the green snake incarnated as her maid, Ziao-Oing,

strolling about a lake. In this section, as Bai, Su-Zhen sings, "The sight of the side of Xi-Hu is so beautiful." With her thumb and the middle finger pinched together, she rotates her right wrist to palm facing upward and moves the right hand from the front left to the front right. Then she makes a small right half circle with both hands before she moves the hands to the left. This series of movements reinforces the character's sensation on seeing the beautiful sight of the lake.

After the prelude, Bai, Su-Zhen and Xiao-Oing perform a duet to express their states of mind while they are seeing the sights of the lake. This duet embodies more of a dance quality. They, with small steps, run in opposite directions to meet at the back of the stage and then make pivot turns together toward down stage. At the end of this section, the white snake throws her left long sleeve toward the left and then drapes the other sleeve on the left arm from the back to make a still standing pose. At the same time, the green snake moves both of her hands towards the left while lowering herself next to the white snake.

Another section in this opera, which depicts the white snake suffering from drinking a cup of wine she shouldn't have drunk, embodies dance movements expressing her emotional state. In this legend, Bai, Su-Zhen is afraid of Xiong-Huang wine, which can diminish her supernatural

powers, causing her to turn into a snake again. At the time of the Dragon Boat Festival, her husband customarily drinks the wine for avoiding evil influences. He persuades Bai, Su-Zhen to drink the wine no matter how hard she tries not to drink it. Bai Su-Zhen eventually has no alternative but to drink the wine and suffers from the decline of her supernatural power.

In this section, the actress uses many sleeve movements to express the torment she suffers. She unfurls the two sleeves and tosses them from inside to outside as she expresses her emotional tribulation. Then she, with the right hand relying on the back of a chair, lifts her left arm and tosses the sleeve backwards. As her voice expresses her pain, the lifted left hand, which is covered by the sleeve, shakes to reinforce the suffering emotion. Before becoming a snake, Bai, Su-Zhen performs a series of pivot turns with wide-opened arms and unfurled sleeves to present the apex of the agony.

The dances in Peking Opera have expressive meanings since they are embodied in narratives which are primarily dominated by singing and acting. They serve to progress plots and convey some abstract emotions and states of mind that the verbal or literal presentations can't describe. Extracted from singing and acting, the movements of "Shen Duan" in Peking Opera become the foundation of feminine

Chinese Classical Dance.

Contemporary dance artists had different ways to establish their own training systems, yet they basically adopted the movements which express abstract themes in Peking Opera, because these movements are more dancelike. These extracted movements have been named differently by different dance artists. Some of the artists directly employed the movement meanings in Peking Opera as the names, while other artists have named the movements according to their functions. Regardless, these artists have selected the abstract dance movements rather than the mimetic movement. "These visionary movements," as Gao Yan relates in The Study of Chinese and Western Dance, "have no meanings themselves. They simply are the presentations of movements and postures, which are the most beautiful movements for a dance" (454).

The dances in Peking Opera are the backbone of today's feminine Chinese Classical Dance. They have been transformed to be more spectacular. Instead of completely imitating the dance sections of Peking Opera, contemporary dance artists adopted individual movements and incorporated them into new choreography. For instance, the whole dance version in The Legend of the White Snake mentioned earlier, expressing the agony of the white snake, is not really appropriate for a pure dance, since the movements are

designed according to the performance form of Peking Opera. Certain movements themselves, however, such as the use of sleeves and the pivot turns with wide-opened arms, can be used as the movement sources for creating new pieces of choreography.

Released from the limitations of singing and acting, the quality of movement and the degree of difficulty of technique of the dance movements were free to expand. Unlike the movement arrangements in Peking Opera, which have to coordinate with singing and acting, the movements of the classical style have no certain rules on the transition between movements or in the movements themselves. This freedom has allowed for the creation of a diversity of artistic images for the classical style of dance.

Besides the unbounded variability between movements, the dance of the feminine classical style is also enhanced by the complexity of movements and by the use of stage properties. In Peking Opera, the dance movements, in order not to affect an actress's singing or the progression of a narrative, tend to remain in a simple form. As these movements were adopted into the classical dance, they become more variegated by choreographically increasing the diversity of already established gestures. For instance, the movement following the white snake's singing, which is mentioned earlier, can be augmented in a figureeight

pattern created by the rotation of the wrist before ending to the right front.

Reinforcing the performance technique of using stage properties is also one of the important functions which makes the classical style of dance more spectacular than its counterpart in Peking Opera. Dance artists further develop diverse skills to present the dance qualities. In today's performance of classical dance, for example, the sleeve movements have been embellished by the technique of tossing and withdrawing sleeves, which is more spectacular than that in Peking Opera. Since sleeves in Peking Opera are correlated with the deportment of a character in a narrative, after the actress unfurls and performs with the sleeves, she needs to gradually withdraw the sleeves rhythmically in order to continue her singing or acting. On the other hand, in the classical dance, the action between tossing and withdrawing the sleeves can be done without the consideration of singing or acting. Dancers often leave the sleeves unfurled. They may toss the sleeves upward and then catch the end of the falling sleeves, and then toss the sleeve out again. The gathering movement of the sleeves seen so frequently in Peking Opera has been totally removed in the classical dance.

The movement form of the classical style is dominated by circular shapes and curved lines. These round images

are embodied in still poses and the performing process of movement. The curved lines, in a standing position, are formed by not only the limbs but also the body. The hand positions of the style rarely remain in straight lines. No matter what directions the hands are posed, the elbows tend to be slightly bent. As the first picture shows (Fig.3.1), the dancer poses both her hands towards the right. The arms are bent rather than directly extended. In another example shown in the second figure (Fig.3.2), the dancer lifts her left arm upward with the palm facing up, and poses the other hand in front of her with the palm facing forward. The dancer's arms are both bent creating the curved lines.

The relationship of legs also creates the curved shape in a standing position. Standing with crossed legs is the typical standing position in the classical style of dance (Fig.3.1-3.2). As with the principle of hands, the legs do not remain straight. In addition, the foot crossed in back is not pointed. It touches the ground with the heel raised up to support the stance.

The curved image can also be seen in the body shape of the still stance. Using the previous two pictures as examples, in a still pose, the dancer's body doesn't remain on a vertical line. The bottom half of the body tends to go toward the right or left side. Correlating with the

tilted upper body and the front bent leg, the total stance presents an "S" pattern.

The patterns created by the gestures and the transitions between the movement also contain circular images. The gestures generate round impressions mostly from rotations of the wrist. These rotating gestures present a variety of circular shapes in different spatial levels. The dancer, for instance, rotates both her hands from the inside to the outside. This pattern generated by the motion of the hands presents a round image. In addition, a dancer can also inscribe a circle that is parallel to the floor.

The transitions of movement are also embellished with many circular forms. These patterns are choreographically produced rather than rigidly adopted from certain principles. For example, from the pose shown in the first figure to the stance shown in the second picture, there are a variety of circular changes which can be created. The dancer may move both her hands to make a circle before ending in the still stance. Or, perhaps, the dancer can first rotate her left wrist and then make a half circle ending in the final lifted position. Following the rotating motion of the left wrist, the dancer's right hand can make a full circle in front before ending in the position with the palm facing forward.

Today's dance artists codify the movements of the

classical dance according to their individual aesthetics, but the fundamental principles of the technique remain the same. The following discussions on the technique are primarily divided into two aspects: the positions of body and its parts and the flow of movement.

Positions of the Body and Its Parts

The position of the head is one of the important elements in the classical dance. An incorrect head position can affect the whole movement or the position of the body. In the movement of the feminine classical style, the head often is tilted rather than held in a vertical line. The tilting directions of the head are different according to the content of the movement, the pose, and the choreographer's choice.

Eye contact is also one of the important components in the classical dance. It is rarely seen that a dancer's eye contact is separated from her hand motions. Her eyes mostly follow the moving patterns of one or both her hands. For instance, a dancer makes a half circle with both hands from the center of the body to the right side and back under ending towards the left. At the end of the movement, she, instead of keeping the focus on her hands, continues her focus toward the left, outward and beyond the ending position of her hands.

In addition, the dancer's focus may follow the motion of one of her hands first and then of the other hand. In the coordination between the two movements (Fig.3.1-3.22), which is mentioned earlier, the dancer's eye contact first tracks the left rotated hand. As her left hand moves to the lifted position, she shifts her focus to her right hand, which is simultaneously moving and making a circle in front of her.

Besides presenting the curved shapes and lines discussed previously, the hand movements of the classical dance additionally include forms of hand gesture and unique usage of the wrists. The shapes of the hand gestures are varied in Chinese dance (Fig.3.3-3.5). Most of them have particular meanings, or functions, for different circumstances since they are extracted from the dances in Peking Opera. In the feminine style of dance, Die-Zi (butterfly form), which is mostly used in the more abstract movements in Peking Opera, is frequently used (Fig.3.6). As the picture shows, the middle finger and the thumb are pinched together. Other fingers should be intentionally straightened and raised so that the silhouette of the gesture looks like a butterfly.

The diversity of wrist movement creates abundant images for the dance. In order to actively perform these techniques, a dancer's wrists should be held in a relaxed

manner. Rotating, raising and pressing are the motions most often seen in the wrist movements. These actions are performed gently and delicately, rather than rigidly and forcefully.

The body is the core of the classical movement. In addition to the curved body line mentioned earlier, the use of the torso has important principles which can affect the poses of the dance. The chest of a dancer should be held lightly and with no tension. The center of the dancer's chest tends to go inward, as though the ribs are going towards each other. Nevertheless, the action of relaxing the chest is not to be interpreted as a weak sinking attitude. The back is a part of the core and should feel broad or full. This posture is to be accompanied with lowered and loosened shoulders.

The waist also is a key position of the torso, similar to the axis of a wheel. Since the body movements of the classical style, which will be discussed later, embody many circular activities, the waist must remain loose in order to be able to move freely.

The techniques of the lower body and extremities are diverse and individual in the forms of steps, but the principles of executing these steps are generally the same. In the classical movements, a dancer's legs are not extremely turned out. They are naturally rotated or parallel

with each other. The movement vocabulary does not include open and wide positions of the legs, or movements where a leg is lifted very far from the ground. Conversely, the legs are usually crossed or parallel and together.

Flow Movements

"Zou-Bu" (walking step) (Fig.3.7-3.10) is one of the fundamental techniques of the classical dance. Similar to the walking action in regular life, Zou-Bu first begins from a heel touching the ground and then transfers weight to the ball of the foot and finally to the toes. But the process of the motion from the heel to the toes is emphasized so that it is really not the same as an ordinary walk. As the heel contacts the ground, the ball of the foot and the toes have to be deliberately raised. Then the ball of the foot successively presses down to the ground first, and then the toes continuously go down a "rolling through" the foot.

As the walking action proceeds, the inside side of the distance between the legs should be small with the heel of the front foot along side the distal ends of the metatarsals of the back foot. The way of transferring weight from one foot to the other is executed smoothly, as though gliding. The dancer steps out with her right heel. During the process of completely transferring the weight

successively to the right foot, her left heel is simultaneously and gradually raised. Before stepping on to the left foot, the left raised heel is gradually put down in a sliding action initiated by the toes of the left foot. This walk is performed with the legs slightly bent and close to each other, and with the knees relaxed.

The position of the hands and of the upper body, in the action of Zou-Bu, can be freely created by dance artists according to the image they intend to present. No matter how the upper body and hands move, the center of weight is retained in a stable condition. During the walk, the lower body should have a sense of being grounded and connected rather than contracted and lifted against gravity.

The technique of "Sui-Bu" (running step) is developed from Zou-Bu. Besides retaining the principles of the walk as previously discussed, the pace between the steps is increased. In order to run fast, both knees and ankles should be kept loose. During the fast running, the upper body still gently performs movements without being disturbed by the grounded lower body and the quick action of the feet.

The turning movements of the classical dance are executed with friction of the feet on the floor. These turns are diversified by different usages of the body. The center of weight is never pulled up. Conversely, it

is lowering while the turning movement is proceeding. "Ta-Zhuan," "Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen," and "Wo-Yu," for instance, are the three typical turning movements which are often seen in the feminine classical dance. In the turn Ta-Zhuan, a dancer steps on one foot, and then her center of weight goes through an overcurve while she is crossing the other foot to the front or the back of the standing foot. As the dancer's two feet contact the floor, her knees and center of weight are simultanelusly lowered for making the turn. The upper body of the dancer remains vertical no matter what the arm movements are. Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen is different from Ta-Zhuan on the usage of the upper body. As with the first step of Ta-Zhuan, a dancer steps on the left foot to the left side and then crosses the other leg in the back of the supporting leg, ending in a lowered position. During the progress of the turn, both hands make a half circle from the right up and over to the left. As the feet make the friction turn, her upper body slightly tilts forward first and then performs a longtudinal axis turn (around the spine with the top of the head remining forward). Following the turn, the dancer's hands are wide-open. The turning motion presents an image like a turning car wheel.

In the turn, Wo-Yu, a dancer's center of weight lowers to the floo. With a friction turn on crossed feet, the

dancer's body spirals to the floor from a vertical standing position. At the end, the dancer completely sits on the floor with tightly crossed legs, and her upper body is twisted and bent forward with the head and chest facing upward.

The Aesthetic of The Classical Movement

In previous discussions, this theses explained primary principles of the movement of the classical dance. These accurate technical descriptions, however, have not specified the artistic quality of the dance. The following discussion will direct attention on the elements which determine the aesthetic qualities of the classical dance.

In the classical still poses, the curved shapes produced by the body and its limbs, along with the reserved deportment, create graceful feminine beauty. The S pattern formed by the tilted head, body and bent legs, presents a lyric image but also enhances the beauty of the female physique. In addition, the bent and softened arms, along with the deportment of the chin and chest, and outward eye contact, supplement the charming and modest quality of Chinese classical femininity.

With the example shown in the first picture, the body and hands embody a restraining sensation, but the eye contact outward actively reaches to somewhere without really

looking towards the audience. This correlation between the two opposite qualities creates a mystical impression. The feminine S pattern produced by the tilted head and body and slightly bent legs is not exaggerated. The head, which is held in a balanced position, and the chest and a stable center of weight prohibit the pose from overstating the physical attraction. In addition, the dancer's slightly bent arms veil the expression of her eyes. Because of the level position of the head, the dancer's eye contact tends to maintain a horizontal level. Her vision is rooted and prolonged to express some abstract dialogue. Her arms, nevertheless, are bent to further contain this expression rather than stretched, to enhance the outward expression of her eyes.

The still pose in the second picture also presents a transcendental sensation. Besides the quality of body previously discussed, the round images the dancer's arms form and the directions her palms face are not an implication of resistance, but a veil of the dancer's expression, which is mostly presented through eye contact. The dancer's gaze seemingly has no intention to draw attention from the spectator. This subtle avoidance consequently projects an attractive power of the classical femininity.

This ambiguous sensation is also fulfilled in the

flowing movements of the feminine style of dance. The mobile movements are performed with successive and prolonged gentle dynamics rather than with sharp and strong energy. The walking movement embodies a mystical quality which is established by coexistence of two opposite traits. According to the previously presented description, the classical walk is performed with bent knees and parallel feet. The distance between steps is small, and the center of weight is subtly controlled as it rises and lowers with each step. All these elements produce a restriction of the walk. Nevertheless, the rolling action of the feet and the subtlety in the transfer of the center of weight moderate the inflexibility. This neutralized rigidity additionally creates a subtle swing of the dancer's pelvic area. The minimized swing action and the dancer's eye contact, which is still fixed and prolonged, present a feminine attraction, but it seems that this quality can only be achieved by utilizing great restraint on the movement by the dancer, which moreover projects the inward strength of the classical femininity.

Developed from the principle of the walking movement, the refined quality in the running movement is not to be affected by the accelerated pace. The image created by the running step is that of a boat stably gliding on the surface of water. The dancer lowers her center of weight

as she runs with slightly bent legs, but her abdomen still needs to hold a certain degree of strength so that her feet can run lightly and quickly in the closed position of the legs. The dancer's upper body still retains the modest feminine deportment, which heightens the lightly flowing quality produced by the motion of the lower body.

The beauty of the classical dance is also embodied in the transitions between movement. This artistic quality primarily consists of the circular patterns which are generated with the application of breath. In the earlier discussion of the principles of technique, the circular images can be observed in the gestures and the performing process of the movements. These sinuous patterns enhance the gentle feminine sensation of the dance, not only by the forms themselves but also with the usage of breath, which reflects in the motion as the coordination of "Ti" (rise) and "Chen" (sink).

Ti is a successive growing action initiated by an inhalation, while with Chen this successive sinking action is executed along with an exhalation. Ti and Chen can not be interpreted as two separate motions. As in ordinary human breath, which consists of the coordination of inhalation and exhalation, the two motions are related with each other. After the growing action is performed, the sinking action is simultaneously initiated. This kind

of coordination can be mostly observed in flowing movements, which incorporate curved images. It also creates the aesthetic of the feminine classical dance.

In an individual flowing movement, generally Chen first initiates the movement. As this movement is performed in a curved pattern, Ti occurs with it. Then Chen takes place again at the end of the movement in order to initiate the next movement. Using the first picture again as an example, before the dancer poses with both her hands towards the right, she may rotate her wrists from inside to outside. At the initiation of the rotation action, the dancer first loosens both wrists with the Chen motion produced from upper body. Afterward, as she rotates her wrists in a circular pattern, Ti simultaneously occurs with this rotation. Then Chen is performed again while the dancer poses both hands in the ending position.

In the transitions between movements, the coordination of Ti and Chen can also be observed. From the movement of the first example to the ending position shown in the second picture, the flowing quality embodied in the performing progress of the two movements consists of not only circular moving patterns but also the usage of Ti and Chen. After posing both arms toward the right, the dancer initiates the coming sinuous transition with a soft growing action in the upper body (Ti). As she successively

moves her hands to make circles in front of her, her upper body simultaneously and gently sinks with an exhalation (Chen). At the end, initiated from an inhalation, the dancer's upper body softly rises again and then sinks while she executes the ending position.

The application of Ti and Chen, in the classical movements, indicates an elusive sensation in which a feminine confidence is veiled within a yielding quality. Although Ti and Chen are mutually and successively related with each other, the action of Chen tends to be more obvious. On the other hand, Ti, suggests a quality of freedom or self-assurance and is continuously restrained by the sinking action of Chen.

Chen usually occurs as a dancer's eyes and hands go inward and the hands are undercurving. This inward disposition enhances the yielding sensation embodied in the sinking motion. On the other hand, Ti usually initiates with overcurving or lifting movements of the hands. This upward tendency additionally amplifies the free, or confident, quality indicated in the rising action. Nevertheless, since the dancer's eyes still track the moving patterns of her hands, the assurance embodied in the action of Ti becomes inconspicuous, and afterward, it is reconciled by the following sinking motion of Chen.

Eye contact following hand movements also indicates

the classical beauty. This artistic quality is achieved by the indirect expression which is embodied in the relation between the actions of head, eyes and hands. According to previous description, once a dancer executes a hand action, her eyes must track the pattern her hands made before she finishes in a still position. Since the moving patterns of the dancer's hands involve a lot of circular images, the dancer's head which is correlated with the motion of her eyes also presents delicate sinuous shakes. This winding distinction provides a natural screen by which a dancer hides her expression.

Using the coordination between the two movements (Fig.3.13.2) again as an example, the dancer's eyes track both her hands which make a half circle toward the left and back under posing toward the right side. Her focus again follows the moving pattern of the hands and ends in the pose of the second picture. In the first movement, the dancer's concentration of the motion of her hands presents an ambiguity of expression. Her head, which simultaneously makes a half circle toward the left, enhances this subtle impression. After the dancer finishes the first pose in which her focus is switched to the right side, she conceals her expression again by being absorbed in the circle her hands produce. Since her hands move in a different time, the sinuous shake of her head articulates

with the action of the eyes, which additionally supplements the transcendental expression of the dancer.

The turning movement of the feminine style presents a classical quality by limiting the space to be moved in. The position of feet, which are crossed and rooted to the floor, restrain a dancer to one location, but this space limitation, correlated with the steady center of weight, also provides a condition which helps the dancer express the classical feminine beauty through her upper body.

For instance, in Ta-Zhuan as previously described, after crossing the right leg in front of the left leg, the dancer further bends her knees and lowers center of weight to make the turn. In this turning progress, the dancer's eyes still focus forward with a subtle expression to the audience as she turns toward the left. Then her head passively follows the action of her body as she continuously executes this turn with stability. This pliable passivity mystifies the dancer's expression. In other words, the centered rotating body produces a frame in which the feminine expression becomes elusive but also attractive.

B. Stage Properties in Relation to the Movements

The application of stage properties is also a distinguishing feature of the classical dance. Each property is used in a different way, which creates a diversity of unique images for the dance. Besides the sleeves discussed earlier, a ribbon and a fan are often used in classical performance.

A ribbon, in general, is made of silk. Since silk material is soft and light, the ribbon won't drop immediately after it is tossed outward or upward. According to a dancer's ability or a choreographer's decision, the length of ribbon can vary. The longer the ribbon, the more difficult is the technique to handle it, but the length also enhances the degree of spectacle.

The principles of ribbon technique need to be consistently executed during the performance. Otherwise, the ribbon won't be freely unfurled but will wreath together. A dancer's neck is first draped with the center of the ribbon. Then her hands individually hold the two sides of ribbon tightly with the index finger and the middle finger. The strength of tossing the ribbon primarily comes from the wrist rather than the whole arm. The dancer's wrists should relax first, then with an elastic energy generated from the relaxed position toss the ribbon outward. The action of the wrists can vary from side to side,

forward, backward, or even circular.

The fundamentals of posing with a ribbon have no distinct differences from those of the body positions previously described. Besides the classical deportment mentioned earlier, a dancer needs to be aware of the relation between her body and the ribbon she holds. The dancer may pose with the ribbon held by her hands or only draped around her neck. The two ends of the ribbon usually trail behind or beside the dancer as she performs a pose, which can be freely determined by a choreographer (Fig.3.11).

The dancer may also pose with a ribbon draped on her arms (Fig.3.12). For achieving this position, the dancer first gently tosses the two ends of the ribbon simultaneously from the front to the back or vice versa. With this tossing action, two half circles are produced in the air so that the dancer's arms can be more easily draped by the ribbon as both ends of it gradually drop. Then she can pose in the chosen positions. In this pose, the ends of the ribbon won't contact the floor; the ribbon appears to be a part of the classical costume.

A variety of wavelike images are usually recognized in a ribbon dance. Although these images can be accomplished in a still position, to maintain the fluent quality of a ribbon, most dance artists prefer to coordinate running

steps with the performance of a ribbon. In addition to maintaining the principles of the running step previously discussed, the dancer holds the ribbon slightly behind her so that the ribbon can float in back without tangling on her body while she is running forward. The dancer may also wave the ribbon during the forward running process. She can wave both ends of the ribbon at the same time or alternate the movement of her hands. The tails of the ribbon still float behind the dancer as she executes the waving action.

Although the dancer basically uses the whole arm to move the ribbon, producing a floating sensation of the ribbon still needs to involve a little tossing action. This is generated from the strength of the wrists. The dancer may first move both ends of the ribbon upward and then pull them down. In the process of moving the ribbon, the dancer's palms face forward. After her hands reach upward, by elastic energy from the wrists, her palms turn to face upward, and the two ends of the ribbon are tossed closer to each other right behind her. Afterwards, using wrist strength, the dancer pulls the ribbon downward. Correlated with the running steps, the ribbon won't contact the floor but, instead, will float in the air.

A dancer can also run backwards in rhythm with the execution of a ribbon effect. During the backward running

motion, the dancer presents the ribbon in a variety of billowing images, which mostly consist of a series of round patterns. The speed of this running action can't be too fast since it has to coordinate with the equal and constant strength of handling the ribbon. However, the flowing sensation in a ribbon dance will be reduced if a dancer executes the reversed running in a torpid manner.

The billowing patterns can be created by different methods of manipulating the ribbon. The dancer may wave the two ends of the ribbon to make three circles from the right and then reverse the direction to make another three circles. Or, the ribbon can be operated repetitively from side to side. Both hands of the dancer can control the ribbon in the same direction together or in opposition, creating diverse undulating spectacles. Each waving action of the hands should completely prevent the ribbon from wreathing together. The force of handling a ribbon has to be deliberately controlled in an even and continuous way so that each billowing pattern can be distinctly seen as such, rather than as a distorted shape.

A ribbon, in turning movements, usually hovers around the dancer handling it. As the dancer performs a turning movement, she needs to wave the ribbon with open arms so that the ribbon won't tangle on her body. Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen and Wo-Yu are typically used in relation to ribbon

movements. The process of executing Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen with a ribbon is fundamentally similar to the principle of the single longitudinal axis turn previously described. Yet the dancer needs to additionally apply the strength of her arms and wrists in order to keep the ribbon floating and away from her body.

After crossing the right leg in back of the standing left leg, the dancer, instead of only moving both hands from one side to the other, tosses both ends of the ribbon from the right up and over to the left, and the floating ribbon creates a half circle in the air above her head. As the dancer accomplishes the friction turn with her slightly tilted upper body and with wide-opened arms, her hands have to add a little force to unfurl the ribbon and produce a cart wheeling image retaining the wide-open arms.

The Wo-Yu turn also provides a condition for creating the round image in which the dancer is surrounded by a hovering ribbon. According to the previous description, a dancer is able to directly perform the spiral friction turn without a noticeable preparation. The addition of the ribbon, which must present a fine and ethereal round image during the descent of the turn, requires that spinning be added as a preparation movement enabling the ribbon to be properly placed for the descent of the turn. The dancer, by constantly transferring weight from one foot

to the other, first spins on a fixed standing spot with wide-open arms waving the ribbon. After the ribbon floats and forms a full circle around her, the dancer reforms a friction turn while spiraling to the floor, and the ribbon completely drops to the floor.

In the transitions between the movements of the ribbon, a ribbon is usually first moved away from a dancer on the floor before a dancer takes a new step. The dancer, in the performance of ribbon movements, often encounters a situation in which her next moving destination is the same as where the ribbon is. In order to prevent stepping on or wreathing the ribbon, the dancer needs to toss the ribbon to the two sides, or to the direction which is opposite from the path she is going to take. After presenting some undulating ribbon images with backward running, for instance, the dancer first tosses both ends of the ribbon from the front to the back. As the ribbon, which is handled on two sides, is forming two half circles above her, she directly runs forward before it drops to the floor. Then the dancer poses with the ribbon behind her, or she can continue to wave the ribbon with a forward running action.

In the transitions between movements, the ribbon is always kept away from the floor unless the dancer ends in a still pose. In other words, a dancer should change directions, movements or ways of manipulating the ribbon

without letting the ribbon descend. The previous example demonstrates the relation between the ribbon and the dancer in the alternation of moving direction. It also indicates the principle of constantly maintaining the flowing quality of the ribbon. Before the billowing ribbon gradually drops, the dancer runs forward, allowing the ribbon to float behind her. For continuing the levitating image, the dancer waves both sides of the ribbon before the tails of the ribbon completely touch the floor.

A dancer's eye contact generally follows the still location or traveling direction of the ribbon. As the dancer poses with the ribbon trailing behind or beside her, correlating with the classical stance, her eyes usually look toward the same direction as the ribbon. Yet the dancer does not directly stare at the ribbon. Rather, her upper body, which is slightly bent toward the direction of the ribbon, directs her eye contact. In addition, as the dancer creates a variety of undulating patterns with the ribbon, her focus usually follows the patterning figures. Unless the ribbon is tossed to the back of the dancer, the dancer's eyes generally follow the path which the ribbon makes.

Aesthetic significance

A ribbon performance presents a mystical atmosphere which is created by the floating quality and patterns that

the ribbon produces. In this unpredictable and creative sensation, the relation between the dancer and the ribbon additionally embodies an ambiguous tension which indicates an imperceptible feminine attraction and domination. These buoyant figures present exquisite spectacles, which veil the distance between the performer and the ribbon as produced by the expressivity and mobility of the performer's body.

The classical stance embellished by the prolonged movement of the ribbon suggests a confidence of classical femininity, which is established by the relation between the upper body and eye contact of the dancer and the ribbon which drapes and also trails behind her. The silken ribbon doesn't provide a bondage on the dancer by wreathing on her neck. Conversely, it reveals and amplifies the assured disposition concealed in the still posture, which seemingly presents a feminine gentility through the tendency of an inward focus on the body and limbs. The slightly physical arch towards the same direction of the ribbon is not a representation of consistence. The indirect eye focus of the dancer, which seems to pay no attention to the existence of the ribbon, removes the whole classical stance from the extending ends of the ribbon. This subtle remote tension suggests an unstopable elegance which is contained in the feminine stance.

The process of posing with a ribbon reveals a controlling strength within the female body. The moment after the dancer tosses the ribbon toward herself, directed by the stability of the body, the ribbon passively descends to attach on the dancer's arms and becomes as an accessory of the costume and body, which coordinating with the pose, amplifies an exhibition of dominant confidence.

The ambiguity concealed in the relation between the ribbon and the performer suggests a dominant power which the female body represents. The ribbon has an intimate connection with the dancer established by the placement and the manipulation of the ribbon. Nevertheless, the forward running coordinated with the movement of the ribbon obscures the affiliation between them. The performer waves the draped ribbon near her body, but the tails of the ribbon can't have an attachment to the dancer due to the simultaneous running action. This evasive aura created by the tension between the ends of the ribbon and the female body exhibits unstopable strength.

The images created by the diversification of handling the ribbon render an ethereal and gentle impression, which veils the feminine assurance indicated in the deportment of the performer. The silken material of the ribbon, which provides the condition for producing a quality of lightness, and the wavelike figures drawn by the series of sinuous

motions of the dancer's hands, correlate, thus rendering the splendid atmosphere which disguises the stability of the performer and signifies the veiled powerful femininity. Generally the waving action of the ribbon by the dancer, while running backwards, doesn't disturb the classical demeanor that the dancer always maintains. The poise and the tranquillity of the dancer, presented with the composed backward running, exhibit feminine confidence generated from an inner restraint, and are enhanced by the contrasting effects of the unpredictable buoyant images the dancer is produces.

The ability of the performer to maintain the constant floating quality of the ribbon through a progression of movements projects a calm feminine strength. The image created by tossing the ribbon in the air from the front over to the back seemingly radiates an aura of freedom or celebration in the air. This freedom doesn't project any emotional body expressivity of the dancer but serves to supplement the continuous and steady running deportment of the dancer. As the ribbon floats above the dancer's head, her focus, body and center of gravity are not echoed with the upward action of her arms and the buoyant sensation of the tossed ribbon. Instead of lifting her chin, chest and center of weight and rushing forward, she confidently retains the deportment of the classical run. Her gaze,

which does not acknowledge the actual audience, nor the floating ribbon, additionally defines the feminine tenacity suggested in the classical deportment.

Fans

In the performance of the classical dance, two feathered fans, one in each hand, are often used. The usage of a fan also requires technique. A fan is held between the thumb, which contacts with the front of fan, and the other four fingers, which are hidden in the back of the fan. The four fingers are not tensely curled but naturally straightened. Since the fan technique involves many rotating movements, the fingers can't tightly pinch the fan or the fan will not be moved freely.

The classical stances with fans can be created in different variations, which are mostly determined by the positions generated from handling the fans (Fig.3.13-3.15). No matter how the dancer holds the fans, the surfaces of the fans, in the feminine pose, always face toward the audience. In other words, the fans should not be tilted but held upright so that the viewers can see the complete image of each.

The movements of the fans involve a lot of flexible strength generated from the wrists. Directed by circular motions of the wrists, the fans present diverse unaligned

images. The figures produced by the fans are not consistently seen in the sequence of movement. The initiation and the completion of the fan movement usually remain in a flat plane in which the audience is able to see the frontal surface of each fan throughout the movement. The dancer, for instance, may initiate the unity of movement from both hands holding the fans in front of her. The two erected fans are overlapped to each other. Then she moves the fan held by her right hand under toward the right side. In this process of the movement, the facade of the fan is controlled so that it remains facing toward the front, even though the position of the fan is changing in the undercurving pattern. After the fan is moved to the right, the dancer continues to lift the fan upward and then rotates the fan one time. Immediately after the rotating action, the fan is directly brought back to the initial position and the face of the fan is toward the viewer again. Afterward, the other fan, in the dancer's left hand, which has remained still during the action of the fan of the right hand, is moved according to the same principles as previously executed by the right hand.

Waving fans, which is a frequently seen movement in the classical fan dance, requires strength control from the wrists. Unlike the ordinary way of waving a fan, which needs to involve much more action of the hand and arm for

producing a current of air, the waving movement in the fan dance embodies a more delicate quality which is created by a vibrating strength generated from the restraint of the wrists. As the dancer holds the fans, her wrists, instead of being relaxed, need to be deliberately controlled in order to shake the fans rapidly without consuming much space. In this manipulation, the shaking fans don't present a realistic wave but an shimmering vibration.

Although the dancer's wrists should be consciously controlled for the trembling of the fans, her arms are still moved freely. They move with the vibrating fans in diverse round patterns. The dancer, for instance, can pose the fan handled by her left hand upward with the edge of the fan facing towards the right and then move the other fan, which is horizontally held and shaken by the right hand, in a vertical circular path. The dancer may also operate both fans in front of her, creating horizontal circles with the flat surfaces facing the floor.

According to a choreographer's choice, the methods of operating the fans previously described can be freely coordinated with the classical walking or running steps. For instance, the sequences of rotating the fans, as demonstrated in the former example, may synchronize with several walking steps. As the fan held by the right hand is moved and rotated to the right side, the dancer can

simultaneously take one or two steps starting with either right or left foot. She may pose briefly as the fan returns to the initial position and then continue the walking while beginning the rotating action of the other fan. Or, the dancer may maintain the classical walk throughout the whole sequence of the fan movement. As the dancer performs the running movement, the fans can be shaken and moved in a variety of ways. During the running process, the dancer may open her arms, handling the fans with the edges of the fans facing toward each other, and then tremble the fans until the end of the running. She can also shake the fans in front of her with their surface facing upward while she runs in the classical manner.

As same as the technique principles explained in previous content, the eye contact in the fan movements basically tracks the pattern created by the movement of the fans. As the fans are posed with a classical stance, the dancer's focus doesn't directly remain on the fan, but it is still in the same direction that the body and fans are posed towards. In the moving processes of the fans, which are mostly formed in circular paths, the dancer's head also presents a sinuous sensation because of the concentration of her eyes on the movement patterns of the fans. This indirect expressivity is more obviously seen as the fans are moved in horizontal or vertical

circles. Without overemphasizing the activity of the chin, the dancer's head draws flat round images while she is moving the leveled fans in front of her while creating a few circles parallel to the floor.

Besides maintaining the classical technique as discussed earlier, the turning movement with fans requires attention on the way of displaying the fans. The surface of the fans are to be presented to the viewers throughout the rotation. In Ta-Zhuan, for example, the fans, which may be overlapped in front of the dancer, or held separately in the front and the back of her, are erected and held close covering either the front or back of her upper body. As the dancer deliberately and stably makes a friction turn with crossed feet, the upright fans retain their relationship to the body. The principle of preserving the exhibition of the fans to the viewers is also necessary in implementing Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen. In the initiation of the turn, which is accomplished with crossed feet in a lowered position, the fans, which have previously moved from the right up and over to the left, are uprightly presented on the dancer's left side. Then as the turning action, which creates an image of turning a cartwheel, is performed, the dancer should be aware of maintaining the fans in an upright position.

Aesthetic Significance

In a fan performance, the classical feminine power is concealed in the seductive attraction which is rendered through the relation between the dancer and the fan and the way the fans are moved. The position of displaying the fans and the delicate rotation and vibration the fans produce, seemingly present a submissive gentility. But the attitude of the dancer toward these presentations, which is mostly established through the dancer's focus and body movements correlated with the fans, actually further indicates alluring feminine confidence.

The surfaces of the fans in the classical stances are deliberately displayed to the viewer. This exhibition coordinated with the stability of the performer's body, which is rendered through the crossed feet and lowered center of gravity, suggests a corroboration of the feminine assurance. Although this quality is veiled by the lyrical curved body line and indirect gaze of the dancer, her composed facial expression defines her confident demeanor.

As the pictures demonstrate (fig.3.10-3.12), the dancer poses with the fans overlapped in front of her chest or held separately. Regardless where the fans are placed, the fans are basically held close to the dancer's body. With the upright fan and the gentle but steady classical stance, the dancer exhibits a confident femininity. Even

though her gaze seemingly fails to affirm this classical display, her eye expression, which is outward and slightly aloof from the viewer, and mild smile, which conveys a subtle expression, attract the spectator to survey the dancer's pose as an exhibition of sturdy feminine disposition.

Coordinating with the classical deportments, the rotations and waving movements of the fans project a delicate alluring power of femininity. This enchanting ambiguity is produced by the contrast between the restrained action of the body and the uncertainty created by the rotated or vibrated fans. In the process of rotating the fans, the circulating fan figures, which suggest an offer of temptation, are not consistently seen in the unity of the movements. They are constantly restrained back to the deliberate display of the fan surfaces. The dancer, with the *Ti* action initiated from the body, lifts her arms to perform the rotating movement as if she intends to attract the spectator's attention by the soft circulating action of fan. But this enticement is withdrawn by the following *Chen* action of the body, and the restoration of exhibiting the fan in an upright position. The reconciled transition between revealing and concealing allows the viewer to be enticed by the mystical enchantment of the feminine deportement.

The attractive quality projecting feminine assurance is also contained in the movement of the waving fans. The elusive contrast between the shaken fans and the consciously controlled wrists and body creates a radiation of allure. As the dancer waves the fans, her deportment retains a composed quality. In contrast to this seemingly conservative expression, the delicate vibration of the fans, supplemented with the concentration of eye focus, indirectly radiates an enticement which captivates the spectator and mystifies the entire classical action. In the movement previously described, the fan held by the dancer's left hand is assuredly exhibited with the steady "S" figure stance. The slightly bent upper body creates a soft remote expression in the direction of the other fan held horizontally by the right hand. Her gaze absorbs the circular mobile pattern of the fan. The dancer's attractive appeal is projected as she intentionally conceals the alluring sensation that the vibrating fan produces. Her eye contact fails to be conscious of the audience.

C. Costume in Relation to the Movements

The costume of the feminine classical dance renders a splendid impression. The combination of wig, hair accessories, embroidery, and style presents a revival of court civilization in ancient times. The remote mystical sensation the costume embodies enhances the feminine movements and culturally defines the performance context. Nevertheless, it doesn't overwhelm and determine the aesthetic quality the movements already contain. The movements have their own unique expressivity seen as the classical style.

The costume of the classical dance assists in identifying the dance style, and also reinforces the concealing quality of the movements. Although the outward design can vary according to the choreographer's decision or economical concern (Fig.3.163.18), the fundamental structure of the costume includes a wig, a substitute collar, a coat with long and wide sleeves, a belt, a long full skirt, pants, and a pair of embroidered shoes.

The classical wig consists of two parts, a high hair knot and a bunch of long hair. The latter can be omitted and substituted by the dancer's own hair, if it is long enough to be used. The high knot is made in a certain shape (Fig 3.19) and decorated by hair accessories which can be made of different materials and shapes (see also

Fig.3.16-3.18). As the pictures demonstrate, the high knot should be firmly placed on the top of the dancer's head by hair clips. The bunch of hair is joined with the dancer's real bunched hair, and the joined point is covered and wrapped by a ribbon or other accessories chosen by the designer.

The collar, pants, coat, and skirt are made of untransparent but soft material. The white collar and pants should be initiately worn under the coat and the skirt. Before or after adorning the pants, the dancer drapes the collar around her neck and then crosses the two ends of the collar in front of her collarbone. The dancer then ties the strings linking the two ends of the collar around her waist in order to fix the position of the collar. After the inner dressing, the dancer can finish the rest of the costume including the coat, skirt, belt, and shoes (Fig.3.20). These are usually embroidered with flowers or other sinuous patterns. These figures are mostly edged on the cuff, the belt, the soft flat-heel shoes and the sleeveless jacket which supplements the coat.

The classical dance costume previously introduced revives the feminine culture of ancient dynasties, and removes the atmosphere of the dance from the modern period of time. The sophistication and concealment that the costume presents create a contrast with the fashion worn by the

people in modern times. In addition to the wig, which is imitated from ancient times, and partly represents a symbol of Chinese style, the accessories on the wig and the embroideries embellishing the costume, elaborate the mystical femininity of remote times. Moreover, the costume mostly prohibits the body of the dancer from being seen. The dancer's waist, which is shaped by the fastened belt, her body and even limbs are deliberately covered by the wide-sleeve coat and the long skirt. This restriction on physical exposure suggests a limitation of freedom which consequently reinforcing the restrained trait of the movements and creates a mystical sensation for the dance.

In the classical stance, the coat with long and wide sleeves supplements the inward tendency of the chest and arms by covering the upper body. With the effect of the belt, the dancer's slightly tilted pelvis is subtly presented through the lengthy skirt which covers the real shape of the dancer's lower body. The classical costume also enhances the flowing quality of the running movement and amplifies the frame in which the feminine attraction is seen in a turning action. Because of the length of the skirt, the articulate rolling action of the dancer's feet is seldom visible. Consequently, the dancer runs with a series of invisible gliding steps that make her look as if she is floating. As the dancer performs Ta-Zhuan

or Won-Wun, the shape and the length of the skirt intensify the stability of the movement produced by the crossed legs and the lowering center of gravity. By disguising the real configuration of the dancer's legs, the attractive deportment of the dancer's upper body is additionally projected by the reserve of freedom the costume produces.

The wig embellished with splendid accessories amplifies the leveled manner of the dancer's head. The shape and the high of the solid knot create a crownlike image suggesting a feminine confidence concealed in modest disposition because of the position of the dancer's head. Correlating with the effect of the classical dress, the wig enhances the beauty of the movement by the restraint produced through its placement on the top of the dancer's head.

The costume amplifies the controlling trait contained in the classical movements, but the classical movements do not rely on the costume to produce the aesthetic values. The feminine attractive power is generated from the reconciled conflict which is expressed from the body and the movements themselves. The dancer may wear the traditional style of costume and perform the fundamental structures of the movements, but without the essential aesthetic elements previously discussed, focus following hands, coordination of sinking and rising action,

deliberate rolling action of the feet etc., the dance would only display the splendor of the costume rather than the beauty of the movements.

For example, movements in which the hands make a full circle ending to the right side, if the gaze focuses to the front instead of tracking the movement pattern of the hands, the ambiguous expression essential to the aesthetic of the movement and supplemented by the restraint of the high wig, would be destroyed by the contrasting expression of the dancer's eye focus. In another example, the costumed dancer may perform the classical running steps without controlling her center of gravity and the distance between her feet. The indulgent pelvis and striding movements directly oppose the concealment the long traditional dress provides. The supplementary effect of the costume is able to be practically employed only if the movements maintain their unique qualities.

Without the reinforcement of the costume, the aesthetic power of the classical movement is still recognized and even can be adapted into a modern content. As the picture demonstrates (Fig.3.2), the dancer poses with the blue unitard. Her figure is more clearly presented with the unitard. From this point on, it seems that the modern costume does not have the function to enhance the concealing quality that the traditional costume has.

However, since the classical pose itself maintains the unique feminine deportment, the exhibition of the dancer's physiognomy, which is produced by the modern costume, does not suggest sexual seduction but merely amplifies the curved body line and hand gestures. This feminine pose has its own enchanting power to sustain its "Chinese" classical identity.

D. Music in Relation To The Movements

Although music is an important component of dance performance, like the relationship between costume and movement, it culturally defines the content of the dance but does not have a decisive impact on the aesthetic value of the movement in the classical dance. To match the specific style of classical dance, there is a certain norm to follow in selecting the proper accompanying music. The rhythm of the music, its instrumental composition and playing style are all important considerations when determining whether it is suitable for the dance. The classical dance movements themselves, nevertheless, have a unique cultural style that does not rely on music to define the aesthetic value.

Ancient China was an agricultural society. Therefore, nature was and still is the key source of inspiration for the major fields of arts. In the traditional school of thought, the idealistic status of harmony with nature can be achieved through the form of music. By achieving such a status of harmony, the dual ideals of personal excellence in mind, and a harmonious, peaceful society can be attained.

"Kung"(C), "Shang"(D), "Chiao"(E), "Chi"(G), and "Yu"(A) are the five ancient basic music tones, which also are symbols of the harmony between the heaven and the earth and the smooth interchange of harmony in nature. This

foundation of the five basic music keys can be further used to symbolize seasonal change, locality, and the interconnectedness of the various components in the hierarchy of society. In the Book of Music, chapter three describes how the different sound features of musical instruments may symbolize various effects on people, having implications for the discipline of the mind.

This chapter uses woodwind and stringed instruments as examples. Stringed musical instruments' sounds are generally perceived to demonstrate a sense of melancholy. Their sound features are pure and rational. Such pure and rational sound features are believed to be helpful to the listener in order in developing a disciplined personality. Woodwinds are perceived to convey a sense of smoothness. A smooth and beautiful sound feature helps the masses in society to adhere to each other, thus achieving an ideal society of harmony and peace.

In terms of the forms of music, there are three general categories. The first category is instrumental music adapted from sections of music dramas, such as Kun Opera and Peking Opera. Since drama music was generally composed to reflect the feeling and thoughts of characters in the drama and for the development of the plot, the music in the drama includes many labeled tunes for describing scenes of wars, banquets, wedding ceremonies and so on. "Erhuang," one

of the labeled tunes frequently applied in music for the drama, creates a peaceful gentle kind of feeling and is often selected as the key tune in tragedies.

The second category is music composed when the composer was inspired by specific situations. For instance, "Elegant Orchid" was said to have been composed by Confucius. It was discovered in the scores dating all the way back to the Tang Dynasty. It is said that once upon a time, Confucius saw an orchid blossoming in the wilderness on his way home. Its flourishing beauty was not appreciated by people because it was located in a barren environment. Such a situation of discovering a natural object helped Confucius to associate the wild orchid with his personal situation in the political community, since his talents and ideals were not appreciated by his superiors and colleagues. It was under such a specific empathetic mood and situation that Confucius composed this piece.

The third category of music describes a phenomenon or an object in nature, such as running creeks and cascades, flying birds and high mountains. These natural phenomena and objects are often used to name musical pieces falling under this category. In "High Mountain and Flowing Water," the composer used a lot of glissando skills to imitate the flowing sounds of water. This mimicking effect was achieved by using a Qin instrument. In the piece "Ping

Sha Luo Yan" ("Wild Geese Alighting over the Sandy Beach"), the composer describes the scene of geese flying by changing the tempo and volume of the music and using a lot of vibration skills.

Although Chinese music can be divided into the three general categories, the choice of music for Chinese classical dance does not have any standard rule. It depends on the personal preference of the choreographer. In Taiwan, there are very few Chinese traditional music composers that specialize in dance music. Therefore, most of the classical dance choreographers select their music from Chinese classical music readily available, most of which was composed generations ago or revived from ancient tunes. Choreographers will structure the movements and plot of a work based on the length and structure of the music selected for the work. Not all traditional classical music can be applied as classical dance music. In order to work well with the smooth and sublime nature of Chinese classical dance, the selected dance music tends to be mostly in the form of Andante or Adagio and performed in symphonic or concerto format. Folk music, or music with grandeur styles, or percussion music tend to be excluded from selection. The more popular musical instruments are as follows: Pi-Pa(lute), Di(flute), Hu-Qin(two strings fiddle), Qin(zither). These instruments have the common sound

characteristics of being lyrical in nature. They are often used to produce smooth and sublime melodies that match the classical dance.

Generally speaking, the distinguishing features of traditional Chinese music lie not only in the special timbral features of the instruments, but also in the methods used for musical composition. Two of these methods are main components for enhancing the mystical sensation of the classical dance. The first is the sense of meandering that frequently occurs in the change from one note, or tone, to the next. The second is the use of non-metered melodies.

In either the beginning or middle of a composition, non-metered melodies usually occur to introduce the theme creating the transition into the next section. They are composed in more improvisational ways according to the composer's imagination. They refer to the mental visualization or idea of things generally of the material world. Consequently, the melodies seem to dominate musical perception more than the rhythms do. This rhythmic inconsistency within the melodic changes, creates an unpredictable sensation which enhances the mysterious quality of the Chinese classical dance.

In "A Night of Flowers and Moonlight by The Spring River," one of the pieces often used by choreographers,

there is a transition in which the new melody is not in the 4/4 meter of the previous musical phrase, resulting in a freer melodic expression. The dancer's movements are not consistently synchronized with the music. The melody is allowed to interweave between the dance movements. The choreographer may create two longitudinal axis turns (Yao-Zi-Fan-Shen) followed by a running action performed in circular patterns during which the dancer's hands also perform some actions in circular patterns. In this movement sequence, the randomized melody, which is produced by a single instrument, Pi-Pa(lute), occurs during the execution of the two turns. Afterwards, as the dancer travels with a series little steps, a plucking sound of the lute occurs and followed by silence until the plucking sound begins again to start the next music section.

With this inconsistent musical occurrence, the dancer's movements additionally present mystical qualities. The free melodic expressions break the choreographic pattern of music visualization. The movement phrase follows what should appear as the predictable path, while the music takes an actively divergent path. The unpredictable musical qualities enhance the abstract meanings that the classical turns embody. The sound of the lute, which is brief but legato, contrasts the following silence, in which the feminine ambiguous expression is allowed to be appreciated.

The balance between tonal changes, which is another distinct feature of Chinese music, also amplifies the aesthetic of the classical dance. In Chinese musical composition, the balance of tonal scheme has significance. The movement of tones is primarily devised into two contrasting qualities, "Ping" (level) and "Ze" (oblique), which can also be considered as negative and positive elements. The Ping, or level type, tones are usually related with smooth, even qualities, while the Ze or oblique type of tones are attributed to assertive and disturbed movements. The two types of tones are equally used. "A reponderance of positive or negative elements in a composition," said by John Levis in Chinese Musical Art, "will not have a good musical effect. ...where there is a distinct lack of balance between the positive and negative elements...is equivalent to bad musical composition" (56). In a similar manner, rising and falling tones, which are one of the subdivisions of the Ping Ze system, must also achieve a balance. The rising tones that flow too high must be compensated by a similar extent of depth in falling tones. Because of this quality of balance between moving tones, stress, or accentuation is not important and is hardly present in Chinese traditional music.

The way of compensating the two opposite types of tones in Chinese music enhances the reconciling and indirect

movement qualities in the classical dance. The balanced tonal composition echo with coordination of Ti and Chen actions, and the unaccented musical effect reinforces the indirect movement quality produced by the circular moving patterns. The dancer, in rotating her wrists, and then makeing a half circle to the right with both arms ending toward the left, can be elaborated by tones. As the dancer performs the next movement to the end, the reconciled tonal transitions coordinate and amplify the rising and sinking actions created from the dancer's upper body.

Chinese traditional music helps identify the style of the classical dance by the instrumental timbral features and two musical composition qualities, yet these musical values only categorize cultural content, rather than decide the core aesthetic signifying the classical feminine dance. According to the previous introduction on the fundamental concepts of Chinese traditional music, the music presumably has a value in helping create an ideal society by the placid trait of the instrumental timbre, and the balance of Ping and Ze is considered a method of pursuing a state of harmony. Nevertheless, the mystical phenomenon of the dance movements are, in some sense, in tension with the rationalizing aim of the music. The instrumental tonal quality and the harmonized tonal transitions echo the fundamental movement form, but the expressivity of the

performance with the music is controlled by the restrained and ambiguous aesthetic of the feminine movement. The round patterns of the previous example are coherent with the oblique musical visualization produced by the balanced melody. Yet the mystical uncertainty suggested in the music quality is conferred by the aesthetic created by the coordination of the delicate deportment of the dancer's eye contact and the deliberate controlled rotating action of the wrists.

Fig.3.1 Classical pose. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.2 Classical pose. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.3 Hand gesture. From Li, p.265, 1976.

Fig.3.4 Hand gesture. From Li, p.256, 1976.

Fig.3.5 Hand gesture. From Li, p.260,
1976.

Fig.3.6 Die-Zi (butterfly form). Performed by the author,
photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.7 The sequence of walking step. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.8 The sequence of walking step. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.9 The sequence of walking step. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.10 The sequence of walking step. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.11 Classical pose with a ribbon. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.12 Classical pose with a ribbon.
Performed by the author, photo
by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.13 Classical pose with fans. Performed by the author, photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.14 Classical pose with fans.
Performed by the author,
photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.15 Classical pose with fans.
Performed by the author,
photo by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.16 Costume of the classical dance. From Gao.

Fig.3.17 Costume of the classical dance. From Gao.

Fig.3.18 Costume of the classical dance.
Performed by the author, photo
by Janet Van Swoll.

Fig.3.19 Style of
classical wig.
From Li, p.111,
1978.

Fig.3.20 Structure of the
classical costume.
From Li, p.113,
1978.

Chapter IV:

Conclusion

The movements of Chinese classical dance, which directly draw from the feminine movement of Peking Opera, possess a value worth preserving. This value, according to the analysis, does not rely on an interpretation of philosophical content or on culturally defined costume and music, but, instead on the specific qualities of the movement itself. These qualities project a feminine attractive power which makes the dance distinctly a "Chinese" classical art.

Since many original ancient Chinese dances developed over thousands of years ago are lost, the Chinese classical dance actually constitutes a new dance catalog which has been established by the dance artists who intend to continue the heritage of Chinese dance. The dance movements in Peking Opera are the sources from which the dance artists have been building the foundation of the classical dance. According to some ancient artifacts and sporadic historical documents, the dances in Peking opera gradually absorbed a variety of ancient Chinese dance cultures, even though the progression of adapting those dances remains unknown. These existing dance fragments in Peking Opera are extracted for matching or supplementing the singing and acting in

order to convey the content of a plot. Yet they are the only sources for the dance artists to trace and continue the tradition of Chinese dance.

The meaning of the dance movements in Peking opera basically depends on a narrative value. Actresses perform the movements to describe or express particular meanings, emotions, or states of mind relating to the story. Detached from the legendary contents, primarily conveyed by singing and acting, the dance movements in Peking opera, are known together as Shen-Duan and are the foundation of the classical dance. They need to be assigned a deeper value and signification as an independent feminine classical art.

Daoism, which is one of the most influential philosophies in China, seems to have a connection with the classical movements. The principles of the philosophy and the aesthetic referring to them indicate its relation to the feminine quality of the movements. Nevertheless, the core significance of the aesthetic of the dance, which directly emanates from the observation of the movements, is beyond this historical association, which only presents the relation between the dance and its cultural background.

Generated by a series of drastic political, social, and economic changes in the Zhou dynasty (1027 B.C.), Daoism seemingly provides a solution for people to cope with the

pressures that confront them. By understanding the way of nature, people may find a strategy to reconcile major conflicts in life. According to the principles of Daoism, the Universe originated from an indescribable formless phenomenon. This infinity, subsumed in a subtle amorphous origin, created the world and also the course of nature in which everything began to have its own features. The order of evolution in the Universe is an asymmetrical pattern in which things are interdependent with each other.

Besides explaining the initiation of nature, Daoism also acknowledges that the Universe is constantly in motion and composed of interrelated forces. Although dualities exist in everything in some way, they are not equal to the meaning of opposition or conflict. Conversely, they are related and constantly in the process of transformation. Based on this recognition of the way of nature, Daoism advocates a non-action code of human conduct for people to solve anxieties in life. As a part of the course of the Universe, people should follow the order of nature and conduct activities in accordance with this order. Through a spiritual transcendence produced from the self-cultivation of the movement of nature, people then are able to overcome difficulties without using external force or egoistic emphasis.

The philosophical solution of Daoism tends to stress

the value of passivity for solving conflicts. This cultural content also inspires Chinese artists, even though it doesn't directly instruct what the aesthetics of the arts are or should be. The aesthetic value suggested in Daoism is based on a transcendental sense. An eternal beauty is revealed through transcendence from the sophisticated material world, which is defined through dualistic conflict.

Natural beauty, spiritual beauty, and simple beauty are the three primary aesthetic viewpoints categorized by implication in Daoism. According to the theories of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, natural beauty should be discovered from the innate traits subsumed in everything. These inherent characteristics do not need to be pretentiously praised or superficially publicized. They create aesthetic significance by their interdependent harmony in the universe rather than by external efforts. In addition, a spiritual transcendence is the crucial component of spiritual beauty. Liberated from an obsession of sensory enjoyment, a state of pure beauty will be allowed to emerge. An inner transformation, which further means an elimination of egocentric possession, is the vehicle to achieve the spiritual aesthetic state.

Based on the theory that the world initiates from emptiness, simple beauty should be revealed from people's consistent introspection for returning to the origin from

within themselves. Sensual desires and personal consciousness gradually tend to imbue the inherent trait of people as they grow up. Consequently, people need to constantly examine themselves in order to reach a state of simplicity, which is the aesthetic value Daoism pursues.

According to the interpretation of Daoism and its aesthetic perspectives, the feminine classical movements indicate a relation with the culture produced from a chaotic social situation. The indirect coordinations between the movements reflect the Daoist's ways of reconciling conflicts to achieve an harmonic state. Nevertheless, from previous performance analysis, which is based on direct observation, the classical movements contain a much more profound meaning which makes them distinct as a Chinese art. Their aesthetic values are not directly determined by the implied aesthetic of Daoism.

In the classical movements, the application of breath, which is one of the components determining the aesthetic of the dance, reflects the theory of polarity in Daoism. The coordination of Ti (rise) and Chen (sink) indicates its association with the Dao principles in which the dualities existing in everyday matters are inseparable and mutually supportive of each other. Nevertheless, the reconciliation of the two opposite motions suggests a deeper meaning which can not be revealed through this philosophical

perspective. The reconciled motion embodies a concealed ambiguous expression which signifies the attraction of classical femininity.

The implied aesthetic of Daoism (natural beauty, spiritual beauty, and simple beauty) conveys an ideal state of achieving transcendence. This mental concept does not determine the aesthetic of the classical dance but appears to reflect a contrary quality within the movement. Spontaneity, diminished egoism, and innocence, which are the central values contained in the three categories of beauty, imply a sense of intensity or a freedom of consciousness. These implied aesthetic traits in Daoism appear to contrast with the restraint and assured quality suggested in the feminine movements.

Costume and music have an intimate relation with the classical dance and presumably subsume the components of providing a new meaning for it. Yet this relation is basically established on a cultural recognition rather than an aesthetic value determination. Their unique traditional qualities, which are produced by revived style imitations or special instrumental tones and music composition, remove the atmosphere of the dance from a modern period of time. Although the costume and music, by their culture traits, echo and reinforce with some fundamental principles of the classical movement, they

are not able to overwhelm the power of the unique feminine expression. The movements themselves control the aesthetic significance and expressivity of the entire performance seen in the feminine classical style.

The splendid feminine costume, which is constituted of wig, hair accessories, embroidery and style, presents a revival of court civilization in ancient times. By its remote mystical aura and style, this classical costume assists in identifying dance style and enhancing the concealing and restraining attributes of the feminine movements. The sophistication, created by the hair accessories on the classical wig and the embroideries edged on the costume, and the deliberate concealment of the female body, generated by the structure of the costume, render a contrast with the fashion tastes of modern society. In addition, the restriction on physical exposure produced by the style of the costume indicates a limitation of freedom. Coordinated with this suggesting quality, the restraintness and mystical sensation embodied in the movements are reinforced.

The classical costume functions to identify cultural content and to supplement the mysterious aura associated with the classical restraint. Nevertheless, it is distinctly subordinate to the aesthetic of the movement since the movements themselves can be uniquely appreciated as Chinese

in style. Even though the movements are incorporated with a modern content, their aesthetic value is not effected and even provides a possible access to a new modern significance.

Music, the other important component of dance performance, also associates with the classical dance as a cultural content definition. Philosophical concept, musical forms, instrumental timbral feature and music composition are the components establishing the identity of Chinese music. Some of these traditional elements correlate and supplement the fundamental movement form of the classical dance, yet according to the analysis of the movement, these elements do not have any decisive impact on the determination of the movement aesthetics. The movements have a unique quality which controls the expressivity of the classical feminine performance.

Developing from the basic concept of nature, music in ancient Chinese society had an ideal function in which people could reach a state of harmony and achieve personal excellence in mind. With attainment of this ideal goal, social atmosphere can be improved and grow to an optimal condition. The five basic tones, which signify the harmony between heaven and earth and within nature, and the instrumental sound features, which have the effect of assisting mental discipline, are considered as vehicles

for creating an ideal society of harmony and peace.

The three categories of musical form include: instrumental pieces adapted from sections of music dramas, music compositions inspired by specific situations, and musical description of phenomena in nature. These categories also represent the cultural character of Chinese music. In addition to the first, comprised of pieces adapted from musical dramas and based more on narrative value, the other two categories reflect the intimate relation with nature in Chinese agrarian society. The music may be composed from inspiration by a specific situation or object in nature related to the composer's state of mind. Or, the composer may use music to depict a natural phenomenon or object such as flying birds, a running river or high mountains.

The use of non-metered melodies and balance between tones are two distinguishing features in Chinese musical compositions. The non-metered melodies usually occur in the overture of the music, or in the middle of the music as a means of transition into the next section. Since these free melodies are composed according to the composer's response to a mental visualization of the material world, they are less dominated by consistent rhythms. Moreover, the balance between moving tones creates an indirect meandering musical sensation, which is one of the unique characteristics determining the traditional identity of

Chinese dance. The Ping and Ze generally are the two opposite qualities divided from the movements of tones. These two tonal elements need to be equally used. As one tone excessively flows, the other needs to follow for balancing the tonal movement. With this balancing effect, stress or accentuation is not often acknowledged in Chinese traditional music.

These two primary musical features play decisive roles in enhancing the classical performance. The non-metered melodies amplify the mystical atmosphere in which the feminine classical deportment is allowed to be appreciated. The free melodic expressions interweave between the dance phrases and are unsynchronized with the movements. The ambiguous sensation embodied in the feminine movement is amplified with the inconsistent and unpredictable silence produced by the non-metered musical effect. In addition, the balanced tonal compositions associate with the reconciling and indirect qualities of the classical movements. The action of Ti and Chen is reinforced by the coordination between rising and falling tones. This balanced compositional effect, which creates meandering musical visualization, artistically articulates the round moving patterns, which are one of the characteristics of the classical dance.

In a superficial sense, the traditional value of Chinese

music, which is built upon an ideal goal of attaining a state of harmony, has an intimate coherence with the dance through its distinguishing instrumental sound qualities and the two primary compositional features. Nevertheless, as with the relation to the classical costume, the more profound aesthetic meaning of the classical movement does not depend on these traditional musical components, which only define the dance in terms of a cultural recognition. The movements are the essential source determining the unique expressivity of the classical female performance. The rationalized ideal goal of the music has a contradictory relation with the mystical quality of the movement, which is more sophisticated than the composed deportment of a performer superficially observed. The rationalized musical effect, which is produced by the placid instrumental timbral features and the balanced moving tones, is coordinated with the prolonged dynamics and the basic circular form of the classical movements. Yet, the aesthetic of the classical performance is controlled by the expression of the movements, which actually contain a subtle inner conflict of femininity.

The costume and music in the classical dance have limited cultural functions associated with the aesthetic of the performance. The dance movements themselves should be observed carefully. The profound aesthetic of the

classical dance can not be revealed from acknowledgment of the fundamental forms and principles of the movement. Its value needs to be discerned from the sophisticated and artistic implications embodied in the performance of the basic technique.

The movement of Chinese feminine classical dance is based on the dances (Shen Duan) of the two subdivisions of the female role (Dan) in Peking opera, a virtuous lady (Qing Yi) and an unmarried female (Gui Men Dan). The movements of the dances in Peking opera, which have an inseparable relation with the singing and acting, contain two kinds of presentations, mimetic movements from the actions of daily life and movement expressions of a person's mental and emotional states. The former assists to elaborate the detailed descriptions of the movements in daily life that the actor's words don't provide. The latter is conveyed through diverse movements, gestures and postures. These are more abstract and reinforce the character's expression beyond verbal presentations.

These two kinds of movement are beautified as unrealistic movements. Contemporary dance artists use the abstract movements rather than the mimetic movements in their training systems and choreographies. The expressive meanings, in Peking opera, are determined by a narrative which is mostly conveyed through singing and acting.

Detached from the narrative significance, these extracted movements subsume a unique value considered as feminine Chinese classical dance.

Although the dances in Peking Opera are the backbone of today's classical dance, contemporary dance artists only adopt individual movements rather than movement sequences to incorporate into new choreography. Released from the limitations of the opera expressions, the dance can become an independent art. The movements of the feminine classical dance are free to be expanded by varying transitions between movements, complicating combinations of movements, and enhancing performance techniques of stage properties.

There are no principal rules on the transitions between movements or in the movements themselves. The movement arrangement is created according to the ideas of the choreographer rather than by directed a particular opera plot. Simple dance movement, which is preferred in Peking Opera so as not to effect an actress's singing and acting, is choreographically enhanced to a more spectacular movement expression by elaboration of established gestures and stage property uses. Uninterrupted by singing or acting narrative, the movement has more continuity. The whole performance is more completely expressed through choreographic movement and its relation to the aesthetic images created by stage

properties.

In general, the movements of the classical dance are dominated by three primary defining qualities: the stable center of weight, prolonged dynamics, and movements in circular shapes. Sharp, accentuated type of movements are less significant. The center of weight of the performer usually stays on a horizontal level, eliminating the natural resilience found in normal walking and running. The rhythmic patterns of the movement tend to be fluent. Circular shapes and curved lines can be recognized not only in still poses, but also in the transitions between movements. The performer's poses create round images through slightly bent limbs and a tilted upper body. In a series of movements, instead of directly changing movements, the round patterns are choreographically used to embellish the movement transitions.

The defined dance qualities generally provide an essential recognition for the style of the classical dance. By the unaccented dynamic or meandering sensation they produce, the dance perhaps creates a superficial sense of a tranquil and harmonious atmosphere. Looking into the more specific principles of the movements and the coordination between them, the dance embodies deeper aesthetic significance.

Although contemporary artists have individual methods

in establishing their technique systems, the fundamental principles of posing and moving a body and its limbs are the same. The body and its parts have certain placement and movement methods to be aware of. The performer's head is usually tilted in different directions according to the choreographic choices of the dance artist, and the neck is not intentionally stretched but rather held in a more natural manner. Eye contact in the classical performance is guided by the hand movements of the performer, which are mostly moved in circular patterns.

In addition to the curved lines created by slightly bent arms, the hand movements are also unique in the stylistic gestures and usage of the wrists. Die-Zi (butterfly form), which is one of the dance gestures extracted from Peking Opera, is frequently used in the dance. This gesture needs to be executed in a particular manner to create the butterfly silhouettes of the hands. Coordinated with the hands, the rotation of the wrists also requires a precise, but not rigid, deportment in order to create many images for the classical dance.

The body is important to the classical movement, not only with its curved characteristic, but also by the usage of the torso, waist and lower body. The chest and ribs should be lightly held and go inward without presenting a sinking attitude. The waist should be held loosely in

order to be moved freely for a variety of circular movements. The use of the legs does not include wide, open and light movement. Coordinated with the stable center of weight, the dancer's legs are naturally parallel or crossed.

The flowing movement of the classical dance, which basically includes walking, running and turning movements, is also stylized in an articulated deportment, which requires a specific discipline to achieve its principles. Unlike an ordinary walk, the classical walking step (Zou-Bu) has more emphasis on the process of the walking action in which the foot articulately and delicately rolls from the heel to the toes. Developed from the walking step, the technique of the running step (Sui-Bu) differentiates from the classical walk by increasing the pace between the steps. The lower body in both steps remains with a sense of being grounded and connected, allowing the upper body to freely perform gestures without being disturbed by the rolling or speedy action of the feet. Based on the same gravity principles, the classical turning movements are usually performed with friction of the feet against the floor. They are varied by the body being vertical, or slightly tilted forward, or spiraling to the floor from a vertical standing position.

The application of stage properties, which has an

intimate relation with the classical dance, is also part of the classical technique training. In the property technique discipline, the basic movement principles still remain the same. Yet, since each property involves different operating methods, the relation between the performer and the stage property has the ability to create diverse images for the dance. It also can enhance discernment of the aesthetic.

For example, water sleeves, ribbon, and fans are frequently used in classical performance. Both the ribbon and the fans require particular technique, even though they are all able to be combined with the classical fundamental positions and movements. In the classical stances, the performer's relation with the ribbon is the important concern. With fans, the positions presented for the spectator's visual impression are the most important concern. The walking and turning steps also can be used with the classical properties. Both ribbon and fans are operated to create a variety of wavelike or circular images. Yet their associations with the performer are different. The two ends of the ribbon are usually kept away from the dancer's body in order to continue the floating sensation of the wavelike figures. Differentiating from the usage of the ribbon, the fans have a closer relationship to the body. The fans are held slightly away from the performer's

body while she is rotating or waving them. The fans are mostly moved back to an upright position in front or back of the dancer.

The movement principles and coordination are the decisive elements which determine the aesthetics of the Chinese classical dance. In a more profound sense, feminine assurance, which is veiled in the mystical ambiguity of bodily expressivity, is the essential aesthetic effect defining the unique value of the dance. The superficial visual impressions of the classical movements tend to create an ideal gentle and submissive feminine beauty. Yet this gentility masks a feminine tenacity with a unique power to reconcile contradictory forces within the body and within society.

The curved body line, indirect eye contact, the circular moving patterns with their prolonged dynamic, the images created by the flow of movements, and the use of stage properties are the central elements which enable the spectator to observe the graceful and modest classical femininity. Along with the bent arms and the reserved deportment of the chin, the "S" pattern formed by the tilted head, body and bent legs, presents a lyric image of female beauty. The avoidance of direct focus in a still pose or in flowing movement is one of the eye expressions in the classical dance and suggests the reserved feminine quality.

The performer's attitude conveys no intent to draw attention from the spectator. Supplemented with a continual dynamic, the process of movements, coordinated with the usage of Ti and Chen, creates a mellow and indulgent sensation in which the female body is visually idealized as a "submissive," classical woman.

The slight undulating and swinging sensation in the classical walk, the light glide in the running step, and the pliable passivity of the upper body expressed in the turning movement, also direct the spectator's attention to the gentle feminine image. With all these feminine deportments, the images created by the use of ribbon and fans surfacely render an ethereal atmosphere which constitutes a lyrical feminine impression. The light wavelike figures, drawn by series of sinuous motions of the performer's hands, and the delicate circular patterns and vibrations, produced by the rotating and waving actions of the fans, attract the spectator's attention to a gentility.

These components engender the first impression of femininity to the spectator. Yet behind this veil of feminine idealization, a reconciling power within the female body is the basis for transforming the superficiality of idealized movements into a substantial aesthetic of the classical dance. The center of weight, eye expression,

subtly restrained conflict in the patterns of the movements, limited physical and spatial parameters, and the relation between the performer and any stage properties, are emphatic contexts from which emanate the classical feminine assurance.

The center of gravity, which basically is maintained in a stable, grounded, and unresilient condition, plays an important role for the feminine image movement. Along with the unexpanded chest, the curved lines of the body and limbs in a classical stance are deliberately understated, creating an air of subtle mystery. In the flowing movement of walking, running and turning, the center of weight is also the principal power, producing a light and soft feminine impression. By consistent control of the abdominal muscles, the performer is able to present feminine attraction by images of a subtle swing in the pelvis, a gliding run and a gently held upper body.

Although eye contact is mostly directed away from the spectator, its rooted and prolonged expression affirms feminine presence. Eye contact following hand movement suggests an emphasis of the inner strength of the female body. The focus, which seemingly represents a reserved attitude, is directed by the body and deliberately controlled. The deportment of the eyes, which attracts the spectator's attention, is dependent on the ability

of the body to reconcile the two opposite motions, Ti(rising) and Chen(sinking).

Associated with the application of Ti and Chen, the circular images in the transitions between movements elusively embody a subtle conflict in which feminine confidence is veiled. The rising action which suggests a quality of self-assurance has to be continuously restrained by the sinking action, implying a yielding quality. Based on this reconciliation, the movement transitions project a feminine enchantment. The crossed feet in a still position and in turning movements, and the small distance between parallel feet in the walking and running steps also are substantial evidence which virtually determine the expressions of the movement. Without these foundations, the classical movements would not be able to present the gentility that the spectator perceives.

Looking at the relation between the performer and the stage properties, the inner strength of the female body is contained by retaining the relationship with which properties and the body operate. In both ribbon and fan dances, the positions of the two properties emphasize an assured feminine presence. The ends of the ribbon trailing behind, create a tension with the dancer who pays no attention to them, keeping her classical deportment. The upright fans amplify the unexaggerated and affirmative

feminine pose. In addition, the soft, light images produced by the fans rely on the dancer's ability to control and create a tension in which the composure is contrasted by the ambiguous images of the properties.

The movement of the classical dance, therefore, not only determines a substantial aesthetic in performance, but also casts a different meaning to feminism in modern society. According to the analysis of the movements, the traditional feminine power does not depend on imitating or appropriating masculine values, which feminism now stresses as the dominate way of releasing female identity from traditional values. As a complex expression of traditional culture, the classical dance achieves its unique value by maintaining the conventional identity of the "feminine". This idealized femininity is generated from the strength of reconciling oppositions within the body, providing images and examples of female power which contrast to modern feminism's tendency to dissolve the distinction between male and female in political, social and aesthetic spheres by privileging desire to appropriate male authority and "freedom". According to this uniqueness signified in the traditional aesthetic of the feminine movement, the Chinese classical dance possesses greater authority than widely supposed to contribute to the emancipation of feminine identity from traditional culture.

Bibliography

- Allinson, Robert E.. Chuan-Tzu: for Spiritual Transformation. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Dong, Xiao-Hui. The Aesthetic Significance of The Thought of Zhuan Zi. Taipei: Student Book Co., Ltd., 1993.
- Chang, Chii-Jiun. Lao Zi. Taipei: Shye-Jyh Books Ltd., 1978.
- Chang, Chung-Yuan. Creativity and Taoism. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1970.
- Cherhg, Fuh-Wang. Between Spirit and External World: Chinese Traditional Aesthetics. Taipei: Shang-Ding Culture Books, 1992.
- Chyi, Ru-Shan. The Drawings of Peking Opera. Taipei: Youth Culture Enterprise Co, Ltd., 1987.
- Clayre, Alasdair. The Heart of The Dragon. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984.
- Creel, Herrlee G.. What Is Taoism?. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Feng, Gia-Fu. Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching. New York: Vintage Book, 1972.
- Fung, Hu-Hsiang. The Aesthetic Thought in Ancient China. Taipei: Student Books Co., Ltd, 1990.
- Fung, Yu-Lan. A Short History of Chinese Philosophy. New York: The Free Press, 1948.
- Gao, Yan. The Study of Chinese and Western Dance. Taipei: Central Culture Publisher, 1983.
- He, Kung-Shang. Selected Paintings of Beauties. Taipei: Art Book Co., Ltd., 1984.
- Jiang, Xiao-Qin. The Stuffy of Kun Qu and Chinese Classical Dance. Taipei: National Taiwan Academy of Arts publishing Committee, 1984.

- Kohn, Livia. Daoist Mystical Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York, 1991.
- Legge, James. The Texts of Daoism. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962.
- Levis, John Hazedel. Chinese Musical Art. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1963.
- Li, Ping-Hai. Daoism and The Literature of Daoism. China: Teachers University Press, 1992.
- Li, Tian-Ming. Chinese Dance History. Taipei: National Publisher, 1974.
- . The Notation of The Technique of Chinese Dance. Taipei: National Publisher, 1976.
- Li, Ying-Xiu. The Study of Ni Shang Yu Yi Wu. Taipei: Chinese Music Press, 1978.
- Liang, Ming-Yue. Music of the Billion. New York: Herinrichshofen Edition, 1985.
- Liu, Da. The Dao and Chinese Culture. New York: Schocken Books, 1979.
- Ni, Hua-Ching. The Complete Wors of Lao Tzu. Santa Monica: SevenStar Communications Group Inc., 1993.
- Morton, W. Scott. China: Its History and Culture. New York: Lippincot & Crowell, 1980.
- Pei, Jen. The Wesdom of Daoism. Peking: Peking Acadmy of Physical Education Press, 1993.
- Shin, Chyi. The History of Chinese Ideology. Taipei: Wen-Jin Press, 1993.
- The Study of Chinese Traditional Costume. Taipei: Lon-Tian Publisher, 1981.
- Wang, Ke-Fen. The History of Chinese Dance. Taipei: Nan-Tain Books, 1991.
- Ware, James R. The Saying of Chuang Tzu. Taipei: Confucius Publishing Co., 1970.

Watson, Burton. Chuang Tzu. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.

Watts, Alan. Dao: The Watercourse Way. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

Zeng, Yong-Yi. Chinese Classical Drama. Taipei: Lain-Jing Press, 1982.

Zung, Cecilia S.L.. The Secrets of The Chinese Drama. Shanghai: Kellyand Walsh Limited, 1937.