

The Revitalization of Community Through Dance Communication:

A Case of Community Dance in Sapporo, Japan

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Abstract

We are currently faced with the fragile relationship and network between people. It is necessary to encourage people to revitalize their community. Projects that resolve social issues through the arts have been acknowledged and practiced worldwide. Community Dance is one such art project. It began in the 70's in England as a new extension to the social function of dance in regenerating the community, in which community members shared concerns together and negotiated these issues via communication through dance.

This study focuses on Community Dance in Sapporo, Japan where diverse activities and projects have been active since 2010. It includes public dance workshops, stage performances and their creation. Outreach was offered as part of the after-school youth program, at senior homes, hospitals, and special events for displaced persons from the Tohoku region. Based on the author's investigation this essay discusses how people can regenerate their human-network through Community Dance.

Keywords: *Community Dance, Facilitator, Community, Dance Communication, Communication Through Dance,*

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Introduction: Community Dance in Japan as a Social Movement

Nowadays human relationships are getting more fragile. Community building and revitalization have become social issues. Therefore, some projects aiming to resolve social issues through arts have been recognized and practiced worldwide. Community Dance is one of these efforts. A dance festival was initiated in 2008-2009 and Community Dance has since spread widely in Japan.¹ 'Dance Life Festival 2008 – Dance can save Japan' was a great opportunity to promote this movement. The festival was held at seven locations around the country and Sapporo city was one of them. Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN),² as the festival coordinator, concentrated their efforts on putting "the power of dance"³ to use in community dance programs in cooperation with public halls of local governments and foundations nationwide. After the festival, JCDN continued their efforts. For instance, they set up a website "Community Dance JAPAN on Web" as an ongoing project encouraging everyone from children to the elderly to participate in dance programs around the country.

As a result, the Dance Life Festival became a type of social movement. Community Dance in Sapporo is one example. Then, what is Community Dance? Its definition is very complex and ambiguous. The definition is as follows:

Community dance is a strand of participatory dance practice defined by particular values, intentions, qualities, and methodologies. It includes a broad range of practices and styles and is not dance style specific. It is about artists working with people. It's about people enjoying dancing, expressing themselves creatively, learning new things, and connecting to other cultures and to each other (Amans 2008:4).

From this definition, we learn about the complexity of Community Dance and at the same time its possibilities to contribute to the community. In this study, I discuss how people can regenerate human-networks through Community Dance.

Research Objectives and Methodology

This study⁴ focuses on the Community Dance activities in Sapporo, Japan. In addition, I would also refer to other similar cases such as Community Dance in the UK and an American dance company in order to offer more historical background. In this study, I intend to clarify the social function of Community Dance as a new way of community building and to explore how it can contribute to building and revitalizing a community through dance as communication. The methodology of this study is mainly participatory observation. In the case of Sapporo, I myself have participated in most all the activities as a facilitator for two and half years. Throughout this study, I recorded the activities and conducted a survey questionnaire and interviewed people involved. Also I have conducted field research in the United States.

1. Community Dance

1-1. Community Dance in the UK

In the UK, Community Dance started in the 70's as one of the educational activities introduced in schools. Presently, dance is introduced into the national curricu-

lum – from the elementary to middle school. Dance is a compulsory/selective subject (JCDN 2008:52). Up till now, most Community Dance programs has functioned educationally for youth in and out of school. In the 21st century, Community Dance activities have more and more permeated British society. According to a year 2000 survey, there were 75,000 local Community Dance activities per year with 4,800,000 participating. These were mainly educational programs for youths (JCDN Nov. 2010:23). The UK is highly regarded as the pioneering country for Community Dance. There is another remarkable point worthy of mentioning. Community Dance in the UK has been initiated by extensive supportive systems and organizations from the Arts Council down to other governmental and private organizations. Not only governmental organizations such as Arts Councils and National Dance Agencies, but also private dance agencies and other organizations have worked together to support dancing artists and furthermore the development and promotion of Community Dance. These major organizations are as follows (JCDN 2008, Nov. 2010):

Arts Council England: It is a non-departmental public body of the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport and its mission is to promote the performing, visual, and literary arts in England. There are nine regional councils in the country. The support for dancing for the public began in 1978.

National Dance Agency: It was established as a subdivision of Arts Council in 1989. It functions as a regional center supporting dance artists as well as dance in the local communities. There exist ten organizations including Laban⁵ in the country.

Dance Agency: This includes non-governmental, private organizations supporting dance activities. There are 64 agencies in the country including the Foundation for Community Dance.

Among these organizations, the Foundation for Community Dance (founded in 1986) plays a central role. Under the slogan of “everybody dances,” it has been challenging stereotypes of dance. Community Dance from the UK was introduced by many groups of people into Japanese society – art coordinators, producers, art NPO activists and staff members working in public facilities who went to learn Community Dance. These people’s efforts have greatly influenced the formation of Japanese Community Dance and in turn have launched a social movement.

1-2. Liz Lerman and Dance Exchange

As an American dance company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange (renamed as Dance Exchange), has greatly affected Community Dance in Japan. It has been invited to conduct workshops in Japan in 2004, 2007, and 2009 (it visited Sapporo in 2009). The aforementioned company was founded in 1976 by Liz Lerman (see Fig. 1). It has the mission to create dances that arise from asking: Who gets to dance? Where is the dance happening? What is it about? and Why does it matter? The company has reached deep into communities with its activities. Before the establishment of her company, Liz Lerman was teaching seniors at the city-run resi-

dential facility named Roosevelt for Senior Citizens in Washington, D. C. She then created “Woman of the Clear Vision,” a dance about her mother’s death with a cast of professional dancers and Roosevelt residents. This was a turning point in her life as a dancer. In her autobiographical book titled “Hiking the Horizontal (2011),” she recollected her own experience.

“My life changed when my mother was diagnosed with cancer. Only in my mid-twenties, I realized that I needed to make a dance about what my family and I had gone through. I was interested in finding older people to be in that dance.” In 1975 she found a retirement residence facility in Washington, D. C., “I told the manager I wanted to teach a dance class. ... At the Roosevelt, I was learning a way to allow for many levels of achievement as well as capacity. And at times, this diversity contributed to something quite beautiful and unusual. Toward the end of class we would sometimes use an improvisational structure composed of a free-form dance done in the center of the circle with each person taking a turn to solo. ... I also noticed that the older people dance harder, with more investment, if they understood the sources of the movement. ... It was then that I began to see that from an artistic point of view, we could change people’s lives, and from a community point of view, we could change how people interacted. ... The dance about my mother, Woman of the Clear vision, a regular performance group emerged from among the Roosevelt residents. I wonder why it is still so new, even though it has been thirty-five years since I made Woman of the Clear Vision and first considered the fact that older bodies make for great storytelling, beautiful movement, and a curious form of courage” (Lerman 2011:41-48).



Figure 1. Liz Lerman (2012).

To encounter elders and to dance with elders is indeed her starting point to approach dance as community engagement.⁶ In her latest book, I find out the origin of her concept and methodology of Community dance. She was lead by her experiences to think about an intergenerational dance termed ‘dance exchange’ rather than by elders alone After corporationalization of the dance company in downtown D.C. in 1976, the Dance Exchange established the Dancers of the Third Age⁷

as an adjunct troupe of senior adult dancers in 1980. The group goes on to give hundreds of performances in Washington-area schools and to share the bill with the core company in many major engagements. Furthermore in 1993, Dance Exchange and Dancers of the Third Age combined into an intergenerational performing troupe. The company was officially renamed the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. In 1997 Dance Exchange moved artistic and administrative operations to a former post office on Maple Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland, a progressive small town on the D.C. border. In 2011 Liz left the troupe to pursue a new independent phase of her career. Cassie Meador has taken up the position of artistic director of the company, using Dance Exchange as its official name.

Liz Lerman and her colleagues developed unique dance making methodologies known as ‘Tool Box’ and ‘Critical Response Process.’ ‘Tool Box’ contains instructions for a variety of art-making techniques and concise descriptions of principles and practices. ‘Critical Response Process’ is a method that nurtures the development of artistic works-in-progress through a four-step methodology, which facilitates the dialogue between artists, peers, and audiences. Both of them are open to the public and available as books and through a website.⁸ In addition, ‘the horizontal’ is a key concept for Liz Lerman. It is the most important idea for her dance. The horizontal (way of thinking) means to think along multiple perspectives (Lerman 2011: xvi). Against the hierarchy of the stereotyped value system – good or bad, high and low etc., she advocates that we should see and think of dances equally from this new criteria’s viewpoint. (see fig. 2). Liz Lerman and her dance company have kept communicating through dance as well as in the community based on this concept. In order to achieve the horizontal way of dance making, we are required to pay more attention to the creative process from individual bodies, stories, and interaction among people who have multiple perspectives.

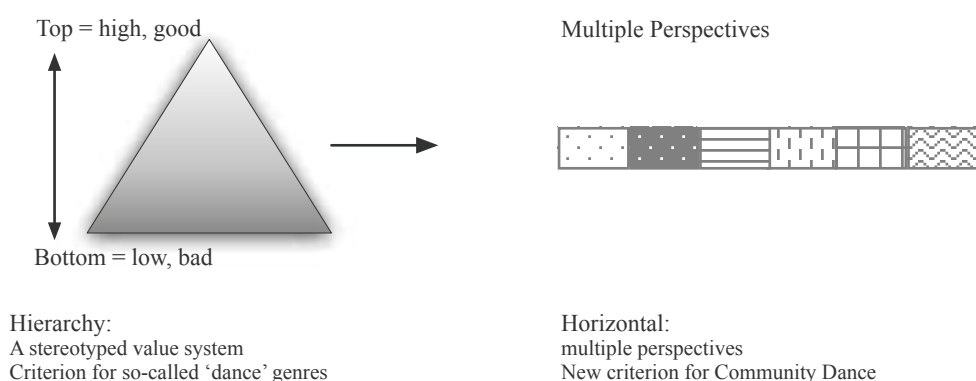


Figure 2. Comparison between two criteria: hierarchy and horizontal (based on interview with Lerman).

2. Case study: Community Dance in Sapporo, Japan

Sapporo is the capital of Hokkaido Prefecture and the fourth-largest city in Japan in terms of population (1,900,000 in 2011). Among all the cities in Japan, Sapporo has a particular historical background. Prior to the city’s establishment, this area was the region for indigenous Ainu⁹ settlements. In 1866, at the end of the Edo Period, construction began on a canal spanning the area, which enabled the early

settlers to establish Sapporo village. The settlement's name was taken from the Ainu language *sat poro pet*, and it can be translated as “dry, great river.” In 1868, the officially recognized year celebrated as the ‘birth’ of Sapporo, the new Meiji government concluded that a new capital on the Ishikari Plain should be established. Between Meiji and the early Showa era a great number of settlers had come from all over the country of Japan to this northern island seeking new land. Currently the majority of population in the Hokkaido region is the descendants of those settlers – approximately the fourth to sixth generation. The birthplaces of these settlers is diverse and thus it could be said that the Hokkaido people have relatively less sense of belonging in the community than in other regions in Japan. But the situation seems to be changing, and the residents are getting more community-orientated little by little.

2-1. A big impact from Liz Lerman Dance Exchange:

The Birth of Community Dance in Sapporo

In 2010 ‘Kyobun Community Dance Club (KCDC in short)’ was founded in Sapporo, Japan. It is open to the general public and is organized by the Sapporo Education and Culture Hall¹⁰ (*Kyoiku Bunka Kaikan*: “*Kyobun*” in short). Before the founding of this club, a contemporary dance company ‘Liz Lerman Dance Exchange’ visited Sapporo in 2009 and conducted a creative dance workshop and a stage performance with Sapporo citizens. As I mentioned before, it was a part of the ‘Dance Life Festival 2008,’ which was held in seven cities throughout the country. This festival aimed to construct the foundation in Japanese society for everyone to have access to dancing. During the 12 day workshop 34 Sapporo citizens aged from 25 to 76 years old took part and they created and performed the original dance piece titled “*Yuki no kioku* [Memory of Snow]” (JCDN Apr. 2010:99). Among the seven cities, that joined the Dance Life Festival 2008, Sapporo can be characterized as hosting dances with the aged.

Firstly the dance workshop was divided into two classes – but in the end these two classes were put together: the senior class was for people aged 50 and up and the junior class was for high school students and those 49 and under. There were participants who had experienced dance as well as beginners. The participants included some with disabilities, such as one that used a wheel chair and a deaf-mute woman. Owing to Liz Lerman and her company members’ outstanding talent and long-term experience to facilitate both the senior and junior people to dance equally, this project was regarded as successful. Moreover, most participants were fascinated by this new style of dance and some of them demanded more Community Dance. Liz Lerman Dance Exchange had a big impact on the participants. A few months later, some of participants founded a small dance group named ‘Tane [tane; seeds]’ which is still viable. Under such social circumstances, the Sapporo Education and Culture Hall held a symposium titled ‘The Power of Dance’ in order to encourage more Sapporo citizens to join Community Dance again in June 2010. Many people including newcomers got together at this symposium and as a result KCDC officially began as a club managed by Sapporo Education and Culture Hall.

2-2. Multiple Activities by Kyobun Community Dance Club

As the public hall used for promoting educational and cultural activities to Sapporo citizens, the Sapporo Education and Culture Hall launched the project of KCDC with two major missions in mind: the popularization of Community Dance and training a facilitator who can design and conduct dance workshops open to the general public. Unfortunately, in Sapporo there were no appropriate persons who could become facilitators and the Culture Hall had only a small budget for this project. Consequently, they could not afford to invite skillful professional dance artists as facilitators outside of Sapporo. Unlike the situation in the U.K., Community Dance itself is still new to Japanese society and thus even the well-experienced dance artists had no specific methodology established in facilitation. Naturally the Sapporo Education and Culture Hall determined to give the opportunity of dance workshops to amateurs and to train them as facilitators through trial and error. As a result three volunteers joined this project as trainees of facilitators. Two of them had experience with Community Dance with Liz Lerman but another who was this author had not experienced the workshop first-hand.

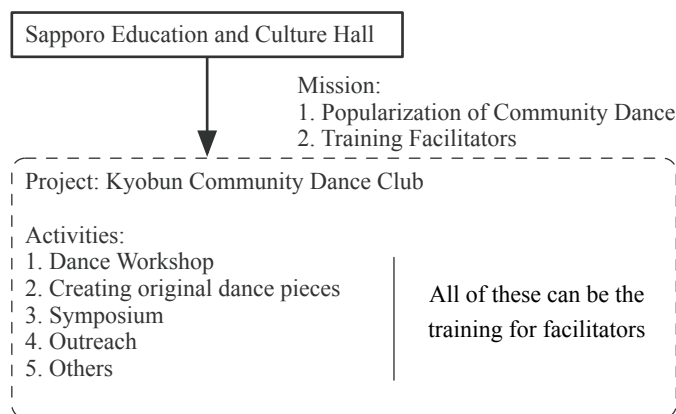


Figure 3. Mission and Activities of Kyobun Community Dance Club Project.

Currently KCDC offers diverse activities. These can be divided into five categories: dance workshops open to the general public, original dance pieces, symposium, outreach programs and others (see Fig. 3). Firstly open dance workshops is a central part of these activities and is held approximately once a month. Secondly for the creation of original works – four pieces have been already created and performed, and KCDC calls for a number of people and then practices for a few months. The creative workshop will be held for several months in collaboration with participants. Thirdly the symposium includes presentations by guest speakers – dance artists, and coordinators working in the public hall and NPO activists etc. – as well as discussions about dance (and other related arts fields) for community engagement among all of the participants and an annual activity report by KCDC. Fourthly outreach is done for the expansion of Community Dance itself. (see details in the next chapter). Finally other activities are irregularly offered and can included a *Yaei Dance* (means a dance camp) etc. It is a picnic-like dance event. The Hokkaido region is blessed with a magnificent and beautiful natural environment. *Yaei Dance* aims for dancing created through communication with the

nature (see Fig. 4). Facilitators are supposed to mainly act in all the activities from the planning until the feedback stage. This commitment is regarded as a training program for facilitators.



Figure 4. Yaei Dance at lake Shikotsu-ko in 2011.

2-2-1. Dance Workshop: *Dance for Everybody*

Dance workshop is the main part of facilitator training program. It is achieved by following the PDCA cycle, namely, Planning, Doing, Checking, and Acting. The flow of a Community Dance workshop can be listed as below:

1. Workshop design → Planning
2. Trial (rehearsal) → Planning, Doing, Checking, and Acting
3. Practice of workshop (including recording and questionnaires to participants) → Doing
4. Feedback (discussing the matter) → Checking
- 1'. Next workshop design (adding improvement/reflection from the last workshop into the new one) → Acting and Planning

The dance workshop is regularly held at Sapporo Education and Culture Hall for two days approximately once a month. The first day is a trial for facilitators and the second day is a real workshop. The day two workshop is open to the general public without any fees. The basic structure of the three hour dance workshop is as below:

1. Ice breaking: participants know each other (including self-introduction)
2. Warming up: stretching and/or simple bodily movements (walking, jumping, rolling on the floor etc)
3. Making dance: a main part of workshop, the content is different each time
4. Showing dance
5. Feedback: sharing opinions through discussion and questionnaires

Facilitators make a great effort to create different content for each public workshop and take into consideration organic relations in designing the whole process. The workshop provides unusual ways of moving and thinking to its participants, and thus they discover new ways for expression and for their bodies to move. Through communication with the others, they learn how interaction with others can influence another's movement. The important thing is not that everybody is required to dance the same choreographed movements at the same time and in sequence, but that the participants develop body awareness and personalize some interesting movements and share them with others.

2-2-2. A Method for Dance Making: Story Phrases

As I mentioned before, KCDC is greatly influenced by Liz Lerman and her colleagues. A method for dance making known as Story Phrases is one of their greatest gifts. Facilitators who experienced Liz Lerman's workshops have mastered it and often apply it in various ways. The creative process of Community Dance is to pick/dig up the hidden story – both individually and communally and then transform it into bodily movement and share it with together. "Story phrases" is an essential practice in Community Dance. Firstly facilitators provide a theme to participants and let them exchange their own experiences and/or opinions related to this theme. When creating a dance, all the participants and facilitators in particular, will pay attention to the keywords and/or gestures while participants are telling stories. People can realize and create bodily movement from such elements. After finding the core movement from each story, each participant develops it as a phrase of dance and shares it with other participants. As the next step, through combining with other movements and changing the basic movement in various ways, participants create longer phrases of dance. Story Phrases is effective for Community Dance in the sense that every participant can have confidence to dedicate themselves to dance making through his/her own story. "A letter to your dearest person" is one example of Story Phrases (see figures 5 and 6). Action in writing a letter as well as a story put into the letter can be the starting point of dance making. The human body is more communicative than we might have expected.

2-2-3. The Role of Facilitators in Community Dance Workshops

People who have different backgrounds come to KCDC: from youths to adults in their seventies, teenagers, men and women, disabled people, foreigners, housewives, teachers, dancers, actors, painters etc. Facilitators themselves also have diverse backgrounds. It is not easy for facilitator to design a dance workshop for everybody to join, but the role of a facilitator is very important in this regard. Facilitators in the art field can be defined as below:

Facilitator plays an important role in workshop. He/she is the person who has the ability to provide ideas to appropriate persons at the appropriate time for the purpose of making suggestions from participants better and more joyful. The facilitator is supposed to put such an idea into the conversation or discussion in a casual manner so the participants can expand their own ideas and they can clarify how they can put them into practice. What is important for the workshop facilitator is not only

to summarize the voices from participants, but to also bring out the unnoticed ideas in participants, improve those ideas and to help the participants to put them into practice (Yamazaki 2011:263-264).



Figure 5. (left) Writing a letter to your dearest person.
Figure 6. (right) Creation phrase of bodily movement in reading the letter.



The facilitator is not a top-down instructor, but rather is a person who encourages participants to interact among themselves creatively. The facilitator is required to have a horizontal way of thinking as Liz Lerman has advocated.

3. Social Demand for Dance Workshops

Recently it has begun to be recognized by society that communication through dance can influence communities. In various fields such as education, welfare, medical care and many other social situations, people need a deeper communication level in their human-network. If we look at the dance artists dispatch programs to school and public halls subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Sciences and Technology Japan and the Japan Foundation for Regional Art – Activities¹¹ etc., then it is obvious that society demands dance as a new way of communication. In fact, dance has distinctive powers: a power of expression through our own bodies, a power of creating something from zero, and a power of communicating with others (JCDN Nov. 2010:2). In this way, people notice the important role of dance in society and they are now searching for the better way of using it. Here I would investigate three outreach activities, which KCDC practiced in Sapporo, and through my investigation I shall explore how Community Dance can work in the society.

3-1. After School Youth Program

In January 2011 KCDC visited an after school youth program as their first outreach event. Here one of the facilitators was working as a part-time instructor and thus we were easily accepted to conduct a workshop with their elementary school kids. We designed a program with two parts: a workshop and a performance to show our production to the children. In the first part, we conducted a simple and play-

ful workshop, that both kids and instructors could experience. ‘Musical chairs’ and ‘Paper, stone, and scissors’ and so forth are very common games for children, but we altered these games for the purpose of enabling the participants to use bodily movement and communication through dance differently (see Fig. 7). The second part is to show our dance piece titled “*Ashi-ato* [*ashi-ato*; footprints].” For this outreach program, we gathered those who had participated in the regular Community Dance workshop previously. Then eight people – from a young child to a senior in their sixties participated in this creative program for two and a half weeks.

The main purpose of outreach is to have more people learn, experience, and understand Community Dance. Community Dance is the genre-less and border-less dance, but I would say that it could be categorized as a contemporary dance. However, it then could be hard for school kids and new instructors to understand it as a new dance form. To prevent their rejection, we tried to link the first part with the second as we included almost the same exact elements in the first part in the following game experience. But we also conjured up another way to link the two parts: creating the ‘object of toys’ (see Fig. 8). The acting area was an empty and flat space. We asked all the participants including the performers to create the stage set with toys and clothes prior to the show. Each of them went forward to the acting area and put their favorite thing wherever they liked. In such a process, we could see certain communication. With this stage setup it made it easier for the audience to understand the work more fully. From the answers to our questionnaires given to instructors, I found these strategies effective to some degree.



Figure 7. (left) Musical Chairs: in our variation of Musical Chairs, participants tried to connect with people who sat on the chairs in various ways. Figure 8. (right) Object of Toys: participants created the stage set with putting toys and clothes on the stage as they like.

Here I shall quote from the responses provided on the questionnaire given to the instructors. I asked the instructors to comment about each section of the workshops i.e. both the workshop and the performance. From the viewpoint of instructors, I could find out how school-children as well as instructors felt and understood the whole program of community dance.

I was completely absorbed in the game ‘Musical chairs’ and in the end everybody was getting to be connected through the game. Also it was a great fun for me to

watch kids putting toys on the stage, because of different ways of thinking. Both instructors and kids were completely immersed in the whole program. I was moved by it since there was no rules and no judgment, but unrestricted and freedom of oneself. [from a male instructor at his forties]

It seemed to me that it was a theatrical play rather than a dance. While watching the dance, kids talked to each other about it. Their opinions seemed various indeed and then each of them learned the different ways of looking at things [from a 20-year-old female instructor]

3-2. *The Senior House*

In December 2011 KCDC visited a senior house. Twenty senior citizens and seven staff took part in the program. In the one-hour program we conducted a workshop and a short dance performance. When designing the whole program, facilitators paid attention to how they could make the seniors enjoy dancing as their physical abilities varied. Facilitators decided to focus on simple body movements, which the participants could do while seated. Also the contents of the workshop had some links to our dance piece. In the workshop the participants practiced variations of hand-clapping and also tried a variation of a communication game.

As for preparation, the facilitators tried a new method of planning the workshop with the staff working in the senior house for several days before the event. In the case of their outreach program, the facilitators needed to pay attention to how the participants can accept this program smoothly. It is also important to have a prior meeting with the staff to get to know each other. In the discussion between staff and facilitators, both parties can determine the optimal way to conduct the workshop. The communication game in the workshop, which we called 'Chotto Anta game [chotto; Hey, a word to call someone else, anta; you]', was created through such an interaction between staff and facilitators. This example was fruitful because facilitators could share a common idea with the staff prior to the event and thus it was no longer a passive, but an active program for the participants.

There also I gave the questionnaire to the working staff who plays an important role in the outreach program and one staff described her feelings as:

In the preparation workshop, I was worried about how much the seniors could do and also they seemed nervous in the beginning. But later on when it was time for the Chotto Anta game in particular, they were enjoying themselves more actively than I had expected and the staff were also absorbed in it. It was a lot of fun. Afterwards we were in an unusually relaxed mood. I thought it is great for all of us as everybody that joined the event was smiling – and it lasted for a long time. I thought I need to keep this communication game from now on. [from a female staff at her forties]

3-3. *An Event for the Displaced People from the Tohoku Region*

Currently, in Japan natural disasters gives an opportunity for people to reconsider the human network or 'community.' On March 11th 2011, we suffered from both the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and consequently a large number of people

were forced to change their lives. Recovery from disasters becomes an urgent social issue to be solved, but it is yet to be completed. This earthquake displaced a large number of people. Some of them decided to move to other regions with support received from the government. The city of Sapporo is one of the local governments that accepted those that were displaced. Not only the government, but also NPOs are offering support programs and projects. 'Yokoso Attakai Do [welcome to the heart-warming Hokkaido] is one such projects. In 2011 KCDC was twice invited to join this support project. It was run by a group named 'Michinoku-kai.' The Michinoku-kai is a self-support program founded by disaster victims who moved to Hokkaido region after March 11th. It aims to create mutual aid among its members, building a human-network amongst them and with the local residents, nurturing financial independence, providing information for incoming settlers from the Tohoku region and so forth. What this group expected KCDC to do was to establish better human-networks through dance communication. This event was a good opportunity for the participants to get to know each other. Community Dance is a dance for everyone and has the power to promote communication with bodily movements. As for the small workshop, it can be said that it worked well, but we could not transform the substance of this community at all.

3-4. *The New Usage of Dance in Society*

Outreach is one of the useful ways to have more people learn about Community Dance. The other activities related to outreach are programs for those who come to join Community Dance out of his/her own free will, while they don't yet understand Community Dance well. Outreach is completely different in that participants aren't prepared to accept Community Dance yet and thus it is more important for facilitators to create opportunities to share information with the working staff and each other before the workshop. Because Community Dance is the dance for everyone, the facilitators should make an effort to search for the form in which all the participants can contribute to the dance in different ways and at different levels. The participants and audiences could profitably be included in the whole program like those offered for youths. In addition, we experienced that dance is an effective communication tool and workshops can change existing human relationships. Arts (including dance) can break through fixed human relationships (Hayashi 2011:77-78). Obviously in the senior house case, the working staff changed their views towards the seniors during the process. It is a positive ability of the arts to provide different perspectives for people. The outreach activities by KCDC were successful to a degree in that it encourages people to be aware of their own creativity so that they can communicate with each other in an innovative way and as a result strengthen the human-network. However it has not yet contributed to members solving community problems. To achieve such an aim, it takes a long time for each community to dig a bit deeper into the issues with its community members.

Conclusion: Revitalizing the Community and Community Dance as a Design Community

Through the investigation of Community Dance in Sapporo, I found that communication through dance is a useful way for revitalizing a community and for community building. Here in my summary, I would like to use this final ques-

tion to reconsider the label of Community Dance: Does the public need the label of Community Dance? And why? I believe that the question leads us to the next step of community engagement. In order to reconsider the necessity of the label Community Dance, I would like to examine it from the viewpoint in terms of the community itself.

Community is generated from activities in cooperation with a number of people. Originally the term of community derived from a Latin word, *communis* (com; with/together + munis; contribution/ task). In other words, community connotes a phenomena to contribute to something in cooperation and to execute a task with others....We could divide the usual sense of community into two types: 'local community' where residents in the same place are active working with together, and 'theme community' where people, who reside in different places but share the same concern, get together (Yamazaki 2011:259-260).

Community Dance in Japan has just begun and thus we don't know yet where it will go in the future. However, it is a fact that the emergence of Community Dance in society could encourage a number of people (including even those who have not considered dance positively) to participate in the building of their community. Below is an opinion about community from a Community Dance from one of KCDC's members.

When people get together and try to do something, they become a community. It is easy to come together, but it is also easy to fall apart. It is more difficult to keep it. But still I would say that it has more power than we expected. (from a questionnaire answer Jan. 2013: teenage female).

From her perspective, we realize that community in Community Dance can be categorized as a themed community and people can build a community by sharing dance (communication). Also we need to take into account her concern about the future: the sustainable and open (unclosed) community building. What should we consider as openness and sustainability of a community? Yamazaki advocated that now we need to go forward building 'a designed community.' A designed community means a community where people have design thinking.¹² When community with design thinking pays attention to social issues it shifts incrementally towards a better community. (Yamazaki 201:260-261). If we apply the idea of a design community to Community Dance, the intention of Community Dance can be designed and further clarified so that it will become more acceptable and accessible to society.

Endnotes

- 1 As Mashiyama referred to Community Dance program in 2002 (Mashiyama 2003:127-129), Community Dance was introduced to Japanese society before the Dance Life Festival 2008.
- 2 Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN) is an NPO with a nationwide membership of people and organizations involved in all aspects of dance, including artists, presenters, critics, corporations, foundations and other NPOs, etc. It was founded in 2001. Its mission is "to establish points of contact

between the society and dance” and to conduct programs building up systems for nationwide performance tours, support for artists’ creative activities, networking with the overseas dance community, creating forums for exchange of dance-related information, conducting surveys and research and promoting the spread of dance. Through these interactive activities JCDN seeks to enrich and strengthen the environment for dance (Japan Foundation 2012).

- 3 The power of dance means its capabilities are three-fold: an ability to express through one’s own body, an ability to create something from zero, and an ability to communicate with others (JCDN Apr. 2010:2).
- 4 This study is subsidized for three years by Japan Society of the Promotion of Science.
- 5 Laban, an institute for dance education in London, was founded by Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958) who is known as one of the pioneers of modern dance in Europe. It has a various kind of programs not only for professionals but also for the public. In 1978 Laban set up a community course (JCDN Nov. 2010:23).
- 6 You can see the dance with elders more in detail in her book “Teaching dance to senior adults (1984).”
- 7 The Third Age is a phrase coined by Liz Lerman herself. The term of elder/ senior sounds negative to her and then she teased out the positive meaning in the Third Age which refer to senior adult – the first age as kids and youth, the second age as middle-age people.
- 8 You can see Toolbox at www.d-lab.org/toolbox and Critical Response Practice in the book titled “Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process (2003).”
- 9 The Ainu is an indigenous group in Japan and Russia. In Japan, because of intermarriage over many years with the Japanese, the concept of a pure Ainu ethnic group is no longer feasible. The social and historical issues about Ainu people in this region is very complicated, which deserves a separate, paper on this subject.
- 10 Sapporo Education and Culture Hall (founded in 1977) is one of public cultural facilities managed by Sapporo Cultural Arts Foundation. It plays a central role to promote cultural and educational activities – performing arts in particular for Sapporo citizens.
- 11 The Japan Foundation for Regional Art Activities (JAFRA Chiiki Sozo) is an organization founded in 1994 with the aim of encouraging creative and innovative regional community development by promoting the development of the arts. From the latter half of the 1980s there were many public facilities such as halls, theaters and art museums built in all the regions of Japan. But low usage rates and a lack of independent activities by these regional facilities kept them from fulfilling their missions. In other words, the hardware component was in place but the software component necessary to make them function effectively was lacking. This led officials from the regional public organizations to join together to create the JAFRA as an external public service organization to provide the software component, including funding to support the arts and culture activities undertaken by these institutions and local governments. In particular, JAFRA is known not only for offering financial support but also for offering a wide range of services including training personnel

to manage public culture and arts facilities, dispatching artists to participate in regional programs, building a cooperative network among the regional culture facilities and institutions, disseminating information about regional culture programs and arts management, conducting research and surveys concerning regional culture facilities (Japan Foundation 2006).

- 12 Design thinking has two main meanings: to understand the substance of social issues in a community physically and intuitively – through heart, body and mind, and secondly to create new a system with new types of experiences. This means utilizing unused resources in a way that various stakeholders consider beautiful and integral to the future of their sustainable community (Kakei 2011:243).

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Websites

Community Dance Japan on web (produced by NPO JCDN) (in Japanese)
<http://cdj.jcdn.org/>

Dance Exchange
<http://danceexchange.org/>

Foundation for Community Dance
<http://www.communitydance.org.uk/>

Kyobun Community Dance in Sapporo (in Japanese)
<http://communitydance.blog.fc2.com/>

Liz Lerman
<http://lizlerman.com/index.html>