Reality Performed

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This paper attempts to clarify the mechanism in which how to recognize the folkloric world is seen through the body expression of the performing art. Taking, as our text, the public entertainment called “Oh-no-Mai” (King’s Dance) which occupies a specific situation at the festival performed at Mimi Shrine, Miyashiro, Mihama-Cho, Mikata County, Fukui Prefecture, we attempted to provide an example of the transfiguration experienced by that dance in varied forms in the folkloric society. We consider it certain that as a result the region-spectators will confirm their susceptibility to the multidimensional reality all through out the performance of the King’s Dance.

The Oh-no-Mai or King’s dance is one of the medieval public entertainments vigorously played at the great shrines and temples mainly in Kyoto and Nara, from the end of the Heian period to the Kamahura period. It used to be performed together with the Dengaku, the Shishimai dance, and so on. It is distributed concentratedly in wakasa district even now. We can moreover find it distributed also in a wide range under similar forms. Schematically speaking, we can grasp this King’s Dance established now in the public folkloric entertainment as a result of transfer of “central” entertainments to “local” regions.

If we want to comprehend the phases of King’s Dance in the folkloric society, we would have to read out, as respective transfigurations in that society, the individual differences between material cases, presuming a total entity of the King’s Dance as such. Our potential folkloric mentality, doesn’t it emerge all through that very transfiguration? In other words, we would like to have a certain viewpoint from which we can read that dance out as a text where the unique logic of the folkloric society has been embodied and projected.

We believe that the King’s Dance at the Mimi Shrine should also be treated through the perspective as above. In fact, it is provided with remarkable characteristics, and requires excessively unnatural actions and postures, and this all continuously through the performance. We can safely say that it is a per-
formance played with very high technical level. Moreover the causal immanence supporting that ultra technique existed in the very unique logic fostered in the folkloric society. In this sense, the King’s Dance disposed in the folkloric thinking is no other than a sort of performed philosophy for the region—spectators.