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# Transmission of skills:
# A case study of the Cirebonese masked dance

Madoka FUKUOKA

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# Transmission of skills : A case study of the Cirebonese masked dance

Madoka FUKUOKA

## 1 Introduction: Considering the transmission of skills and knowledge

This paper presents an ethnography about the transmission of dance skills in *topeng Cirebon*, a masked dance in Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia. The purpose is to focus on the method of learning dance skills, not on the analysis of dance structure in actual practice. My main concern focuses on the methods of an individual artist's achievement of dance skills. The expression "individual artist's achievement of dance skills" is indebted to the concept of "musical competence" proposed by Brinner (Brinner 1995). Brinner defined musical competence as "an entity that changes throughout individual lives and over the history of a community and tradition" (Brinner 1995: 32). This view of musical competence is significant in that it places individual mastery and the changing process of competence at the center of attention.

I support this notion of musical competence, and want to take notice of the process of individual mastery of dance skills. However, I do not consider the "individual" as an impersonal existence, but as a member of a particular community. I will focus on an individual artist's "full participation" (Lave & Wenger 1991: 37) in his/her community to attain an identity as an artist. For that purpose, it is necessary to describe how an individual dancer's masters his/her art.

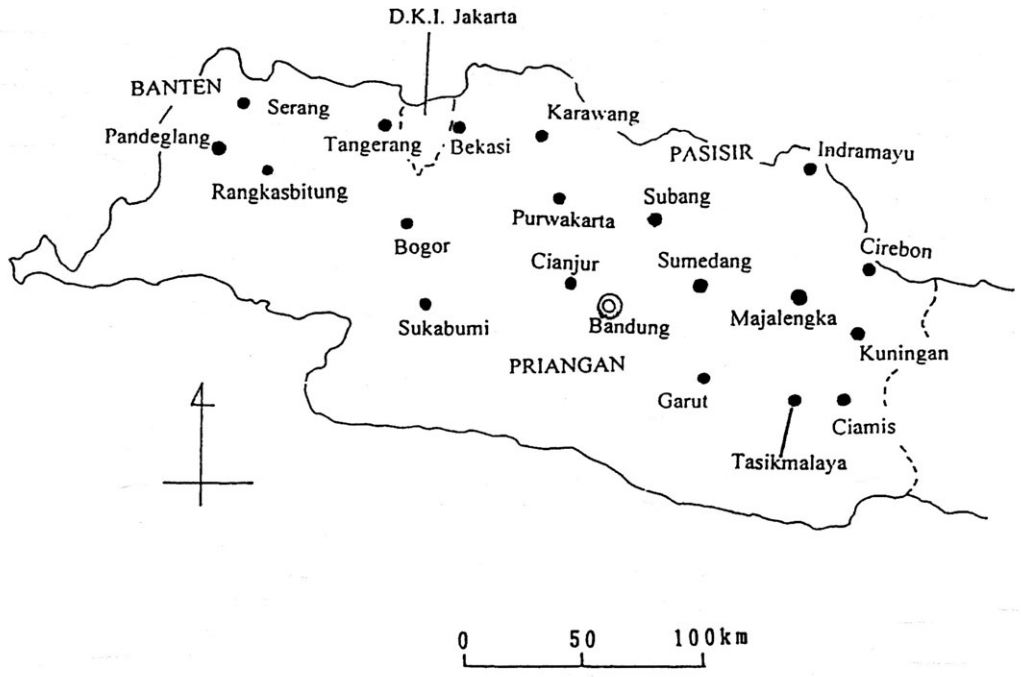
I will examine two dancers in the contrastive context of performance with the aim of considering the differences between learning systems in each case: one is the implicit way of learning dance skills in a village society, and the other is the explicit and systematic way of learning dance skills at the institute for the modern education of arts. I analyze two dancers who are mother and daughter. Keni Arja, the mother, has been active in the village. By following her artistic pursuits, I consider the process of how the mature artist develops in a village society. On the other hand, Nunung, Keni's daughter, is mainly active at the art institute. By following her artistic activity as an artist, I consider the way dance is taught and practiced at the art institute. Through this examination, I will consider the differences between the process of learning dance skills in the villages and the systematic process at the art institute.

In this paper, I will mainly deal with data produced during the Suharto Order's cultural policy in Indonesia[1)] .

## 2 Cirebon in West Java

Cirebon is located in the province of West Java. Historically and culturally, the province of West Java had been divided into three major regions: the Priangan inland area surrounding Bandung City, the Banten area located at the west end of the islands of Java, and the *pasisir* areas of the north coast, facing the Java Sea. Since 2000, Banten has been independent and formed one province[2] . Cirebon is located in the *pasisir* (Chart 1). Originally, the *pasisir* region existed throughout Java and possessed unique cultural aspects in contrast with other inland areas of the island (Sutton 1991: 2-4). Concerning music and dance, we can see some evidence of modulation in the *pasisir* music style[3] , as well as the dynamic rhythmic patterns of drumming and dance movement of this region.

**Chart 1: Map of West Java under the Suharto Order**




According to the Suharto Order's administrative divisions, the *pasisir* region was divided into the province of West Java, Central Java and East Java.

The main concern of national government policy under Suharto was to unite these administrative divisions with cultural divisions. Hence, we can see the process by which Cirebonese art forms have been integrated with West Javanese regional art forms.

As Cirebon faces the Java Sea and borders Central Java, it holds a unique position in West

Java, as does its expressive art. At the same time, Cirebon is the relay point for the transmission of various art forms from the outside world to West Java. Many types of dance in West Java have been influenced by Cirebonese styles of dance, such as *keurseus,* derived from *tayub* in Cirebon and *topeng Priangan,* which comes from *topeng Cirebon*[4] . Therefore, this region is considered the birthplace of West Javanese dance styles. Until now, *topeng Cirebon* has been known as the specific genre of *kesenian daerah* (a regional art form) in West Java because it is one of the most representative performing arts in Cirebon.

## 3 *Topeng Cirebon*

Traditionally, *topeng Cirebon* is performed in conjunction with circumcision rites, marriage ceremonies, and other occasions marking the life cycle, as well as with planting, harvesting, and agricultural rituals in the village. Each village with an active *topeng* performance tradition in Cirebon tends to maintain its own style, making it somewhat different (and sometimes markedly different) from that of other villages.

In *topeng Slangit*, which is the style of the Slangit village in northwest Cirebon, the solo dancer uses five masks and performs six acts with the *bodor* (clown figure) during the day-long performance. The six acts are as follows:

*(1) Panji*
*(2) Pamindo*
*(3) Rumyang*
*(4) Tumenggung*
*(5) Tumenggung and Jingga Anom*
*(6) Klana*

These masks do not depict the particular characters of the story[5] , except for the fifth act, in which the minister of the Bawarna Kingdom and the king of the Jonjola Kingdom depict the battle of *Tumenggung and Jingga Anom*(picture 1). Other acts merely express more abstract *watak*, or characters, proceeding from a *linyep* (refined) character through a number of stages to arrive at a *gagah* (rough) character. For ritual accompaniment in a village, dancers belonging to a particular lineage have traditionally been called upon. Therefore, these dancers have a long history of ritual performance practice and are considered to have inner powers. In order to inculcate such capabilities, the dancers undertake (in addition to training in dance technique), austerities that include fasting and meditation intended to help them attain mastery over their inner selves.

Picture 1: Battle of Tumenggung and Jingga Anom

## 4 Cultural politics in Indonesia under the Suharto Order (*Orde Baru*)

Under the New Order(the Suharto Order's) Indonesia that began in 1968, positive cultural politics came into force for the purpose of constructing an Indonesian "national culture" through the preservation and development of the diverse "regional cultures" (V. M. Hooker and D. Howard 1993: 18). The notable point of this government policy was the rhetoric of combining the concept of "ethnic group" with the concept of "region," that is, the 27 administrative units in Indonesia: 24 provinces(propinsi) and three special regions (*daerah istimewa, daerah khusus, daerah ibu kota*) at that time(Sutton 1991: 2)[6] . Under this cultural policy, the cultural region and the administrative region(the province) overlapped.

In this process, artistic genres like music, dance, and theater, have been very important factors to indicate the identity of the region. The government attaches significance to the preservation, promotion, and development of regional art forms as subdivisions of regional cultures. *Kesenian daerah* means "regional arts", and this term applies to the art forms that are rooted in the cultural past of the people. This label is often used in the sense of the "valuable" and representative art forms.

In light of this governmental mandate, the intellectual artists in various regions actively sought out their own regional art forms, including those within West Java. Considerable research was done on West Javanese art forms by documenting and reorganizing the various regional art forms. Artists and enthusiasts launched several cultural magazines concerning language, literature, and the arts of West Java, including titles like "*Warga*", "*Sunda*" ,"*Budaja*" and others[7] . In addition,

the era saw the development of new genres and original pieces of music and dance[8] . West Javanese intellectual artists founded an institute of the arts and adopted the artistic genres rooted in the particular region, noting that these arts were unique, of high quality, and had potential for development as teaching materials at the institute.

The first institute of the arts in West Java, the Konsevatori Karawitan Indonesia (Indonesian Music Conservatory, KOKAR ), was founded in 1958. This was a high-school level institution, and it was renamed as Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia (Indonesian Music High School, SMKI) Bandung in 1977. Another institute, the academy-level Konservatori Tari (Dance Conservatory, KORI) was founded in 1968 and was later renamed as the Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia (Indonesian Dance Academy, ASTI) Bandung in 1973[9] . ASTI was then elevated to a higher status as the Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia (Indonesian Art Institute, STSI) Bandung in 1995. Construction of art institutes in West Java followed similar actions in Central Java (cf. Sutton 1991: 174-185).

*Topeng Cirebon* has been widely recognized as one of the primary West Javanese regional artistic genres, and also as a subject for study as well as the material for experimental compositional works at the art institutes of West Java. In addition, the artists and teachers at these institutes encourage the successors of *topeng Cirebon* and other regional art forms to receive a systematic education and attain academic knowledge.

## 5 Traditional performance context of *topeng Cirebon* in the village

As previously mentioned, *topeng Cirebon* is performed in conjunction with some occasions marking the life cycle, as well as with planting, harvesting, and conducting agricultural rituals in the village. A performance of *topeng Cirebon* is carried out at the host person's or host village's request and is sponsored by them. Tickets are not sold for the performance of *topeng Cirebon* . In principle, the audience members are invited guests, but almost always there are many villagers around the stage who are not invited formally, and they form the most important segment of the audience. The social relationship between a dancer and a villager is an important factor in any dancer's popularity.

*Topeng Cirebon* is most often complemented by *wayang kulit* (shadow play), with the former presented in the daytime and the latter at night. Furthermore, most *topeng* dancers belong to the lineage of *wayang* puppeteers, or *dalang*, with some even being *dalang* themselves[10] . Against this background, it is not surprising that *topeng* dancers in Cirebon are called *dalang topeng*.

*Topeng Cirebon* is not always performed at all kinds of rituals, but there are some in which the performance of *topeng* is a very important element. A peculiar life- cycle ritual carried out in the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy is known as *mitoni* or *mamitu*, both words being

derived from the word *pitu*, meaning “seven”. In one type of performance, two or more *gamelan* groups face off to play simultaneously (it is called *kupu tarung*), and in the case of *mitoni*, it is desirable to have seven groups and seven dancers participating(*kupu tarung pitu* ). This may seem unachievable, however when a family of dancers puts on this ceremony, seven dancers may appear in a performance with one set of *gamelan*. Some rituals of the rice cultivation cycle are the *kasinoman* (*sinom* means “young person”) and *munjung* (*munjung* means “worship” or ”praise”). In *kasinoman*, the ceremony is held prior to the rice planting by young male and female villagers. In *munjung*, the ceremony is held after the harvest, and *topeng* is performed at the sacred grave of the village (E. Suanda 1983: 44-45). Some villages demand that a particular artist’s family perform in *kasinoman* or *munjung*. Especially in *kasinoman*, *topeng Cirebon* is performed by male dancers for the benefit of the females. Normally, there are no restrictions toward gender or age in regards to dancers in *topeng Cirebon*, but with *kasinoman* it is only males (not necessarily young) who are permitted to dance.

Performances of *topeng Cirebon* have been supported by the social relationship between the dancer and the villagers. Many villagers request a *topeng* performance not always because of the dancer’s reputation or popularity, but because of the village’s social or local relationship with the dancer’s family. A particular dancer’s territory of performance is usually limited to the dancer’s own village and neighboring villages.

## 6 Performance context of *topeng Cirebon* in urban settings

In addition to these traditional performances in the village, performances held at concert halls in urban settings are increasing. These are artistic festivals sponsored by the government, presentations for special guests invited by the government, and performances as artistic missions to foreign countries. On these occasions, we have a rare opportunity to evaluate the various regional styles of *topeng Cirebon* that could not be distinguished originally. These increasing numbers of festivals and performances in foreign countries have been a main cause for the heightened popularity of a particular regional style or a certain dancer’s style. On these occasions the audience can assess the dancer’s popularity, reputation, and artistic level in a concrete way.

Performances at the STSI performance halls are also important occasions. These presentations consist of a graduation examination that is open to the public. Sometimes teachers at an institute put forward new experimental pieces. The audience that attends these productions, which include evaluation and criticism of the works, appreciates their academic value and artistic refinement.

## 7 Education of successors of regional art at Art Institutes

With the aim of establishing the curriculum at the institute, the intellectual artists and teachers at STSI Bandung have been actively searching for their own regional art forms. They have recorded performances, learned the dance practices, and interviewed artists. Sometimes they have invited an artist to Bandung and have held a special concert of regional art forms. There is much research on regional styles of art at STSI Bandung. Scholars do fieldwork at "*daerah*" (various regions) in West Java, and write research papers. Besides acquiring dance skills, they have a thorough knowledge of the regional art forms and they produce academic discourses. Meanwhile, the artists of these regions play an important role in providing information for scholars, while these scholars also offer academic knowledge and good advice concerning the future of regional art forms.

Besides aiming for the preservation of original performances in villages, scholars also wish to develop artists' "natural (*alam*)" knowledge through modern artistic education. Through their studies, scholars realize that many performance styles are in danger of disappearing. Actually, there are presently no successors for *topeng Palimanan*, the style of Palimanan that was once extremely popular. Therefore specialists are searching for successors who can practice original art forms and encourage these dancers to enroll at an art institute. *Topeng Slangit* is one of the most representative styles of *topeng Cirebon*, and the original performance style has been well transmitted until now. Scholars have been interested in this style, and dancers in Slangit have also been thinking about the future for their successors. T.A.Suanda, one of the teachers at STSI Bandung, talked about why Nunung, the dancer mentioned earlier, was encouraged to enter STSI.

> I found that many of the artists in Cirebon did not have a chance to have a higher education. I thought that the successors would have to be educated at the institute with a broad knowledge, after which they could go back to their village. By doing that, the "natural (*alam*)" knowledge and the "modern" knowledge would be integrated" (personal communication from T.A. Suanda in 1995).

T.A. Suanda's narration expresses scholars' enthusiasm for bringing the successors of *topeng Cirebon* to the modern art institute[11] . The successors of the style of Slangit as well as other regional styles, have also attracted the scholar's attention. For instance, they have urged for successors of *topeng Losari* (the style of Losari village in the east of Cirebon) to receive an education at the art institute. It is for these backgrounds that Nunung also was educated at STSI Bandung.

## 8 Case study of Keni Arja, a dancer in the Slangit village

### (1) Lineage

In Cirebon, the dancers of *topeng* and the puppeteers of shadow play have a strong belief about their lineage. Many of them keep a record of their genealogy. In the case of Keni, she is of *turunan*, or artist descent, both on her mother's and on her father's side. She has a very detailed record of her genealogy on her mother's side. This documentation shows that Keni's mother is of "legitimate" artist descent because her ancestors came from the specific region of Cirebon in which Pangeran Panggung, one of the creators of Cirebonese traditional arts, practiced his craft[12] . Therefore, her mother's ancestry is very important for Keni in proving the legitimacy of her artistic skills. Her being of *turunan* descent, means she has been raised in the traditional training system for dancers.

### (2) Learning dance skills

Keni was eight years old when she began to learn the dance of *topeng Cirebon* from her elder brother. While training, Keni often performed with her elders on stage and played the *gamelan*. What was important for her in this learning process was the enrichment of her own experiences in performance. Keni remembers that her training was accomplished through few direct words of instruction. It was important to use some of the primary instruments of the *gamelan*, such as the *saron* (xylophone), the gong and the *kendang* (drum). The training repeated the movement patterns of dance, together with the drumming patterns. After Keni completed learning the main dances of *topeng Cirebon*, she started doing *ngamen*, or touring or street performance. *Ngamen* is performed during *paceklik* (lit. empty stomach), the hard time of scarcity before the harvest (E. Suanda 1983: 51). This experience is important for dancers because they receive some food or money, and especially for young dancers, it is a good chance to practice performing and be recognized by the village audience members.

After these experiences, Keni began performing as a leader of her own group. This was her starting point in becoming an independent dancer (picture 2). As this example shows, many dancers of *topeng Cirebon* usually initiate their activity with peripheral participation(cf. Lave and Wenger 1991), like performing together with their elders or doing *ngamen* (street performance), and progress gradually to a central role like having their own troupe. All these experiences are part of the important process of attaining performance techniques in *topeng Cirebon*. Through these experiences, the dancers learn how to arrange their accumulated dance skills empirically.

Picture 2: Keni ' s performance

### (3) The mechanics of the dance in *topeng Cirebon*

The dance of *topeng Cirebon* consists of sequences of movements called *jogedan* and *peralihan* (or *alihan*). The meaning of *jogedan* is literally "dance". These basic sequences of movements have many kinds. Another sequences of movements are *peralihan*. These sequences of movements have only some specific kinds. The word *peralihan* means "transition". These sequences of movement have the function of making transition from one *jodegen* to another. The dancer of *topeng Cirebon* has to accumulate these various movement patterns and combine them effectively. Chart 2 reveals the structure of dance in *topeng Cirebon*. (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Structure of dance in *topeng Cirebon*

J = jogedan P = peralihan |= bar G = gong

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| music | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | G\| |
| dance | J1 | | | | | J1 | | | | | J1 | | | | | P | | | | | | |
| music | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | • | \| | • | • | • | G\| |
| dance | J2 | | | | | J2 | | | | | J2 | | | | | P | | | | | | |

Dancers of *topeng Cirebon* need to mature in these techniques by continually engaging in performances in order to achieve their own individual style. They have to develop their

performances by combining existing patterns and sometimes creating original patterns. Chart 3 illustrates the mechanism to control the time of performances (Chart 3). J1 is one type of *jogedan*, and J2 is a different type, while J1' is a variation of J1. Dancers can control their performance as A→B to show their own variations, and extend the time, or as B→A to shorten the time of their performances. Although these are only a few examples, the mechanism of dance performance in *topeng Cirebon* is quite systematic. Generally, this systematization of performance is learned unconsciously by dancers.

**Chart 3: Mechanism to arrange performance**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J1 | J1 | J1 | P | ←→ | J1 | J1 | J1 | P |
| J2 | J2 | J2 | P | | J1' | J1' | J1' | P |
| part A | | | | | part B | | | |

### (4) Attaining inner power

While learning dance techniques, Keni continues the regular practice of asceticism. This practice of asceticism, according to Keni, is carried out for the purpose of attaining a special inner power (*batin*) that is different from that of the other dancers[13)] . In Cirebon, many dancers and puppeteers think that they have to obtain special mental powers through fasting and meditation, because they are expected to have some magical powers while performing, in order to safely execute the rituals. Keni has her *mantra* (a magic spell) that was handed down from her mother, and she recites it at the beginning of every performance. According to Keni, this recitation of the *mantra* helps her perform well and secure. Keni also takes over the old masks and the old *gamelan* instruments. By her taking over these objects, such as the *gamelan*, and the masks, as well as by saying the *mantra*, her status as a dancer acquires authority.

Because *topeng* dancers are believed to have special powers while on stage, audience members sometimes request that they name a newborn baby or to heal a sick person during intermissions (E. Suanda 1983: 23). *Topeng* dancers also believe that it is necessary to have magical power for dealing with the curses of other dancers.

In Cirebon, particular villages traditionally patronize certain families of dancers. Keni herself also performs each year for specific villages, in keeping with this custom. Although the influence of the media has led to the popularization of certain "star" dancers in recent years, *topeng Cirebon* performances have been supported along the lines of social relationships. Therefore, dancers normally have their own territory in which to perform, and often they run into conflicts with other dancers about these areas. It is necessary for dancers to have an inner power in order to withstand such disputes about their territory.

### (5) Mechanism to produce a mature dancer

The dancers of *topeng Cirebon* are of *turunan* artist descent, and they consistently have the experience of performing with and learning dance skills from their elders. They first perform on the street to become recognized as a *topeng* dancer. Then, they begin to dance as the leader of their own troupe. While learning dance techniques, they continue the regular practice of asceticism for the purpose of attaining special powers that differentiate them from other dancers. Through this training, *topeng* dancers are able to develop themselves as professional dancers, and this position is approved of socially in the villages. Therefore, the mechanism to produce a mature dancer is inherent in the continuing activities of the dancer in village society.

## 9 Case study of Nunung, Keni's daughter

### (1) Education at Art Institute

The following example contrasts with the previous one. Nunung, daughter of Keni, is a *topeng* dancer too. After she won a prize in a performing arts contest held at Cirebon in 1973, Nunung was encouraged to receive an arts education, and she went to Bandung City to study at one of the performing arts institutes. Therefore her artistic practice has been influenced by the educational curriculum and the modern concept of art at this institute.

West Javanese intellectual artists who fought for the reconstruction of regional art forms founded the educational institute of performing arts. They dug up and reorganized the diverse West Javanese artistic traditions. They arranged for these artistic traditions to be taught at the institute, and promoted experimental activities for composing new works using these earlier materials as sources. Presently, educational activities are practiced at this institute that promote extensive knowledge about various artistic genres and experimental compositions.

### (2) Creative Experimental Activities

It is important to note that the institute promotes creative experimental activities. Creative work is closely related to the concept of *perkembangan* (development) in the government policy that encourages the preservation, promotion, and development of the regional arts. Creativity based on existing genres is given support in order to refine regional art forms into artistic pieces known a *seni budaya,* or "cultivated art". In addition, the development of new artistic projects is encouraged, so that Indonesian art forms will appear on equal footing with other international types of art. At the public educational institute for the arts, an important issue is the development of new and experimental art forms. Academic and artistic evaluations are important factors for this experimental activity. There are two kinds of "creation" at the institute: *gubahan* and *komposisi*. *Gubahan* means to arrange (*gubah*) the existing artistic genre, and the word

*komposisi* is derived from composition in an attempt to exploit new physical movement. The concept of "creation" at the art institute includes the rearranging of the existing artistic genres. Students who excel in a specific traditional genre, like Nunung does, often challenge the creation of *gubahan* rather than that of *komposisi*. The important task for them is to create a work of art based upon their own artistic tradition. As previously mentioned, the dances of *topeng Cirebon* have systematic structures. Normally the dancers in the village learn this systematization of the performance unconsciously and empirically. However, in order to produce a work of art that is based upon the traditional *topeng Cirebon*, the creators have to analyze this systematization consciously and arrange their work.

### (3) Work of Nunung.

One example of current creative work is that of Nunung, Keni's daughter. In this piece, titled Kembang Pitu (seven flowers), seven female dancers perform specific patterns of dances in *topeng Cirebon*, expressing the abstract theme of seven flowers(picture 3). In most of this piece, Nunung uses the sequences of movement based on the existing sequences of *jogedan* in *topeng Cirebon*. The structure of the music also follows the traditional pattern. According to the rhythm (*irama*) of the *gamelan*, there are three sections in the dance as follows: *dodoan* (the slow part), *unggah-tengah* (the medium part), and *deder* (the fast part). In Kembang Pitu, we can see these standard sections. However, there are some differences between this and the traditional *topeng Cirebon* performance. First, dancers do not wear masks in this new work, and they wear the designed costumes that are based on the *topeng* costume. Second, dancers are arranged in effective floor patterns throughout this composition (cf. Nurasih 1996). Nunung talked about her work, stating ,

**Picture 3: Work of Nunung, Kembang Pitu**

> This work is composed on the theme of 'seven flowers.' It is an abstract work that is based upon the concept of traditional art, not upon concrete material such as traditional stories of history of Cirebon. I have already created a piece in which the traditional element of *kupu- tarung* (a competitive performance of two dancers) was featured: therefore, I now want to try an expression of a different type of traditional elements in *topeng Cirebon*. (personal communication with Nunung, 1995)

The work of Nunung could be categorized as "*kelompok bertema*" which means "group dancing to a certain theme" and it is different from "*drama tari* (dance drama)" which is related to a particular story. This work is based upon the *topeng Cirebon* indirectly, and the elements of the traditional art forms are crystallized in more abstract pieces. The important techniques in this kind of work are the way the traditional elements are extracted, the way they are arranged, and effective stage directions.

The problem that Nunung faces at the art institute is how to revitalize her own traditions in artistic forms that are valuable in an academic setting. Because she has been educated at a modern educational institute, Nunung has acquired the skill of reviving traditional elements into new artistic forms.

## 10 Directions for the development of regional art forms

The distinctive feature of art education at Art Institute is that explicit knowledge or direct teaching prescribes the actual artistic practices. The contents of this knowledge are the concept of artistic work, the way of composing a new work, and the effective way of presentation.

Because of the standards of this educational system, the traditional way of transmitting *topeng Cirebon* is changing. One important point is the differences in the actual ways of instruction. There are many contrasts between the traditional mode of instruction and the method of the educational institute. We can see these differences between the methods in the sole dependence on repetitions or imitations, the dependence on the notation, and also in the use of special metaphorical terms for dance and the use of explicit academic terminology.

For example, in order to do a scholarly analysis of *topeng Cirebon*, outside researchers and students require the names of the dance patterns, which were originally nameless (E. Suanda 1988: 7). In my own experience of studying *topeng* dance—both in Slangit village and at the art institute, I can see some of the names of *jogedan* used at the art institute that are supposed to be nameless in the village context[14)] . In addition, we can recognize the tendencies to analyze and classify the functions of movement. As mentioned previously, the artists in a village are not always conscious of these functions of movement, but they learned them through experience.

However, the students or the teachers at the art institute almost always analyze these movements, and make use of them in their creative works. Furthermore, we can see some change in artistic practices through the use of notation or recording technology. Through these media, many dancers learn the choreography (*susunan*) beforehand, rather than through the method of improvisation during the performance.

The concept of the valuable artist is changing. In the village society, the significance of the *topeng* dancers is primarily evaluated through their artistic descent and through their having special magical power in performances, and so on. But in this new context of performance, what is important for the audiences is artistic refinement and academic significance. The village audience also differs from the modernized urban audience in its acceptance of dance as a part of normal social relationships rather than viewing it primarily as an artistic form of performance. The artistic quality of performance is not always the most important factor for the village audience. On the other hand, for the urban audience that comes to see a work of art, the academic value and artistic quality are important factors.

In their discussion of the dilemma of Indonesian regional arts, V.M. Hooker and D. Howard point out that the techniques of the arts may be not lost because of the art institute or the mass media, but rather because the techniques are isolated from the world of thought of which they were once the vehicle (V.M. Hooker and D. Howard 1993: 16). The present state of *topeng Cirebon* reflects this conclusion. The case study of Keni shows that continuing artistic activity in the village society is important in an individual's process of becoming a mature artist. But the new generation of artists exists in a context where artistic techniques and academic values are important factors. The successors of the regional art forms need to adapt to this new context of performance.

Many up-and-coming artists who practice the regional art forms are now receiving an art educations in order to attain creative skills and a broad knowledge of the arts. But the traditional way of transmitting art in the villages is now declining on account of this situation. These conditions contradict attempts to develop the original elements, making the preservation of the original elements impossible. Although both preserving and developing the arts are important, the present situation of the regional art forms indicates the difficulty and the tension between these two factors. In the future, new generations of performing artists might be able to unite their traditional skills with an academic understanding. The artistic situation in Indonesia that I have described here is in a transitional period for the artists of the next generation.

## Footnotes

1) The cultural policy in Indonesia, after the resignation of Suharto and following several regime changes, altered the system to one called *otonomi daerah*, or regional autonomy. In

this system, the prefectures and the cities, rather than the provinces, have autonomic power, both politically and financially. In this paper, I mainly deal with the data of the cultural policy during the Suharto Order, and do not follow the data of this new regional autonomy.

2) Banten area had become independent on October 2000.

3) This modulation is often called "*kaleran*" in West Java. The word *kaler* means "north" in the Sundanese language.

4) *Keurseus* dance was created at the beginning of the 20th century. The creator was R. Sambas Wirakusumah, who was the ruler (*camat*) of Rancaekek, Sumedang prefecture in West Java. The word *keurseus* is derived from cursus in Dutch which means "course."

5) One of the performance styles in *topeng Cirebon* is a masked drama style that enacts episodes from the story of Panji. This performance style is called "*lakonan* (*lakon* means episode)." At present, it is only rarely that the enactment of stories through masked drama can be witnessed, for the dance-centered masked performances now occupy the mainstream.

6) There are currently 33 administrative units in Indonesia.

7) *Warga* was launched in 1951, *Sunda* and *Budaja* in 1952. All of their articles were written in the Sundanese language.

8) One of the well-known creators in this era was Koko Koswara (1917-1985, known as Mang Koko in West-Java), a composer and musician, who created the "*wanda anyar* (new style)" music style and left many musical pieces for the following generation. Tjetje Somantri (1892-1963) is known as choreographer and dancer under Sukarno era, and many of dancers in this era followed his way of choreography.

9) Before it branched off as ASTI Bandung, this school had been the *cabang* ASTI Yogyakarta (a satellite school of ASTI Yogyakarta) from 1970 until 1973.

10) There are some famous puppeteers in Keni's family, Amud as her nephew and the late Sam Sudin as her cousin.

11) Besides educating the successors, T. A. Suanda (a teacher at STSI Bandung) and E. Suanda (an ethnomusicologist and an activist of performing arts) made various efforts to support village artists. They built training spaces for some dancers and provided medical treatment for elderly and sick dancers in Bandung City. Their activities sometimes gained financial support from some organizations or from Indonesian or foreign enthusiasts of *topeng Cirebon*.

12) According to the records, Wardaya, Keni's great-grandfather on her mother's side is the 15th generation of Pangerang Panggung.

13) Many of *topeng* dancers in Java often carry out the ascetic practices. These practices are considered as a reflection of Javanese mysticism, *kebatinan*.

14) The names of *jogedan* in *topeng Cirebon* are metaphorical expressions, such as *tumpang*

*tali* (tie the strings), *kleang murag* (flowers falling), *jangkung ilo* (seeing from a high position), and so on. There are some onomatopoetic names derived from the patterns of drumming, such as *pakbang,* and so on. On the other hand, the new names of *jogedan,* which were originally nameless, are a mere representation of the movement, such as *ngoloa bahu* (move the shoulder), *ngola sikut* (move the elbow), and so on.

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In English

## Transmission of skills: A case study of the Cirebonese masked dance

Madoka FUKUOKA

In this paper, I have considered the transmission of dance skills in *topeng Cirebon*, a masked dance from Cirebon in West Java, Indonesia. I have mainly described the transmission of dance skills under the Indonesian cultural politics in Suharto's New Order era. I have focused on the individual artist's process of learning dance skills, and have examined two dancers - a mother and daughter pair. The performance contexts of these two dancers are in contrast with each other. Keni, the mother, has been actively giving dance performances at the village society. By following her artistic pursuits, I have attempted to study the process through which a mature artist is produced in a rural society. On the other hand, Nunung －Keni's daughter－ is mainly active at the art institute. By following her artistic activity, I have considered about the way dance is taught and practiced at the art institute.

Through this examination, I have highlighted the drastic change that the way of producing a mature artist has undergone. There are two factors behind this change. One is the difference in the actual methods of instruction and practice, and the other is the difference that has come about the concepts of“ valuable art ”and “ artist ”. The preservation and development of the arts were important constituents of the Indonesian cultural policy under suharto's New Order government. However, the contents of this paper indicate the tension between these factors as well as the difficulty of reconciling the two.

In Indonesian language

# Pewarisan keahlian penari dalam kesenian topeng Cirebon

Madoka FUKUOKA

Tulisan ini mengenai proses pewarisan keahlian penari dalam kesenian topeng Cirebon. Penulis membahas masalah tentang sistem pewarisan kemampuan penari yang telah mengalami perubahan dalam politik kebudayaan Orde Baru. Penulis memfokuskan dua orang penari(ibu dan anaknya) topeng Slangit. Keni Arja, sang ibu adalah penari topeng Cirebon yang terkenal di Desa Slangit, dan giat di dalam masyarakat desa sampai sekarang. Nunung Nurasih, anaknya adalah penari dan pendidik tari dalam lembaga kesenian, dan lebih giat di lingkungan tersebut daripada di masyarakat desa. Penulis menganalisa tentang perbedaan proses kemampuan penari antara di lembaga dan di desa.

Kita bisa mengakui adanya beberapa perbedaan yang cukup menarik di antara dua lingkungan tersebut. Di lingkungan desa, kegiatan seniman selalu ditunjang oleh masyarakat desa. Seniman-seniman menampilkan kemampuan mereka dalam upacara-upacara di desa, dan terdapat hubungan yang erat antara keluarga seniman dengan masyarakat desa. Untuk melaksananakan upacara di desa dengan selamat, seniman perlu mempunyai kemampuan baik di dalam teknik tari maupun di dalam batinnya sendiri. Sebaliknya, di dalam lembaga kesenian, yang diperlukan adalah kemampuan membuat suatu karya yang kreatif berdasarkan unsur tradisi onal. Percobaan menciptakan karya kreatif tersebut berhubungan dengan politik kebudayaan di dalam Orde Baru, di mana faktor pelestarian, pembinaan dan perkembangan kesenian daerah dipentingkan. Seniman-seniman generasi baru terpaksa menghadapi masalah misalnya bagaimana memberikan daya baru pada kesenian tradisional dan juga bagaimana menghidupkan kembali unsur tradisional di masa kini.

Kiranya masalah pewarisan keahlian seniman merupakan masalah yang sangat penting baik bagi peneliti kebudayaan Indonesia maupun bagi seniman-seniman Indonesia yang sedang mencari, masa depannya seni pertunjukan.