

*Volume 8 Number 2,*

*October 2021: 76-86*

Indonesian Dance Education in Taiwan:

Methods and Experiences as a Teacher

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# ABSTRACT

Traditional dances are a type of performing arts passed down from previous generations. Some of these dances become the cultural heritage of a nation, and therefore, they require strategies and projects to preserve their traditional forms while promoting its contemporary articulations. This study examines the process of teaching Indonesian traditional dance to Taiwanese students and analyzes how this intangible cultural heritage is perceived by the students, not only as knowledge but also as cultural connectivity that links to the cultural and socio-political positioning of Taiwan. The study aims at investigating (a) the methods and results of dance pedagogy of Indonesian traditional dances under new socio-cultural contexts in Taiwan, (b) the cross-cultural issues of education in dance, i.e., transnational aesthetic values and ethnological concerns experienced in directing dance training. It intends to reveal how to teach the dances both as knowledge and as cultural connectivity between the two nations, the pedagogical challenges in the process, and the best methodology to teach foreign dances. The study hypothesizes that dance teaching requires the mastery of the techniques, theories, and cultural knowledge, and those who study dances need to learn about the cultural background and values of the dances. In practice, sessions on theoretical knowledge and cultural values take up different portions of classroom instructions depending on the backgrounds of the students. Observations are conducted through teaching academically to students at National Taiwan University and practically to Taiwanese professional artists and dancers. Teaching these two groups poses different challenges and requires two different methods.

Keywords: transnational aesthetic values; dance teaching for foreigners; Indonesia- Taiwan cross-cultural issues

# ABSTRAK

**Pendidikan Tari Indonesia di Taiwan: Metode dan Pengalaman sebagai Guru.** Tarian tradisional merupakan salah satu jenis seni pertunjukan yang diturunkan dari generasi sebelumnya. Beberapa dari tarian ini menjadi warisan budaya suatu bangsa, dan oleh karena itu, mereka membutuhkan strategi dan proyek untuk melestarikan bentuk tradisionalnya sambil mempromosikan artikulasi kontemporernya. Studi ini mengkaji pengajaran tari tradisional Indonesia kepada siswa Taiwan dan menganalisa bagaimana warisan budaya takbenda ini dirasakan oleh siswa, tidak hanya sebagai pengetahuan tetapi juga sebagai konektivitas budaya yang terkait dengan posisi budaya dan sosial-politik Taiwan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menelaah (a) metode dan hasil pedagogi tari tradisional Indonesia dalam konteks sosial budaya baru di Taiwan,

(b) isu lintas budaya pendidikan dalam tarian, yaitu nilai-nilai estetika transnasional dan masalah etnologis yang dialami dalam menjalankan pelatihan tari. Penelitian diharapkan dapat menjawab pertanyaan tentang bagaimana mengajarkan tarian bukan saja sebagai pengetahuan melainkan juga sebagai konektivitas budaya antara kedua negara, tantangan dalam proses mengajar, dan metodologi terbaik untuk mengajarkan tarian asing. Hipotesa penelitian ini adalah pengajaran tari membutuhkan penguasaan teknik, teori, dan pengetahuan budaya, dan mereka yang belajar tari perlu belajar

76 Received: 5 April 2021; Revision: 2 May 2021

tentang latar belakang budaya dan nilai-nilai tarian. Dalam praktiknya, sesi tentang pengetahuan teoretis dan nilai-nilai budaya mengambil porsi yang berbeda dari instruksi kelas tergantung pada latar belakang siswa. Observasi dilakukan melalui pengajaran akademis kepada mahasiswa di National Taiwan University dan secara praktis kepada seniman dan penari profesional Taiwan. Mengajar kedua kelompok ini mempunyai tantangan yang berbeda dan membutuhkan dua metode yang berbeda.

Kata kunci: nilai estetika transnasional; pengajaran tari untuk orang asing; isu lintas budaya Indonesia-Taiwan

# Introduction

Teaching can be a challenging experience especially when one teaches things that are considered foreign to the learners (students). It is even more challenging when the teacher has to teach bodily practices which contain not only body movement techniques, but also aesthetic and moral values embodied in it. The teacher and the students stand in two different cultures or way of life. The process of teaching is not affecting the students but also the teacher.

In this article, I will elaborate my experiences in teaching Indonesian dance to the, in my perspective, ‘foreign’ students in Taiwan, the country where I am pursuing my Ph.D. I was co-teaching a course called Central Javanese Music and Dance with my colleague, Prof. Wang Ying-Fen from the National Taiwan University. I have also had several opportunities to give dance workshops in Taipei, as well as several other cities outside Taipei, such as Yilan, Taoyuan, Hualien, and Taichung. The experiences that I accumulated after several years of teaching dance will be highlighted here.

I taught dance for the first time in Taiwan at the Graduate Institute of Musicology, National Taiwan University (NTU). Given the restriction of the Covid-19 situation and for some other reasons, my teaching role was limited as a guest lecturer, which means that I did not teach on a regular basis per week. At that time, in early 2018, I was in my second semester as a doctoral student at the Graduate Institute of Dance, Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA). At the same time, I also gave training to theater artists. I was invited by a Taiwanese theater group called the Approaching

Theater. Their works are quite progressive in terms of its aesthetic approach. The theater has been led by a Taiwanese artist Yin-Chen Cheng and her Malaysian husband as the director. At the end of 2018, I also taught at a dance company called Wan-Chao Dance. It was founded by a dancer named Wan-Chao Chang, a daughter of a Chinese- Indonesian couple who have lived in Taipei for 50 years. I was also invited to give Indonesian dance workshops to Taiwanese friends who are active in folk dance.

# Background of the Research

For so many times, I have questioned myself why my Taiwanese students are earnestly interested in learning Indonesian dance? Why did they invite me to give workshops and train them to dance the Indonesian dances? This question popped up because I frequently received invitations to teach Indonesian dances in Taiwan. The dance associations that invited me were mostly from Taipei, but some others were from Taichung, Taoyuan, Hualien, and Yilan. The Taipei-based associations that had invited me to teach were the Approaching Theatre, Wan-Chao Dance, Trans/ Voices Project, Brilliant Time Bookstore and Horse Dance Theatre. The Camping Asia Taipei Performing Arts Center (TPAC) and Tjimur Dance Company in Pingtung canceled their invitation due to Covid-19 pandemic. In Taichung, I gave workshop to the Live Life Forever. While in Taoyuan, my workshop was organized by the A8 Arts Center. Finally, the National Ilan University (NIY) in Yilan had provided opportunity to give workshop in their place.

I initially suspected that these invitation came because the hosts were attracted with the dances that are performed by Indonesian migrant workers. It is easy to find that kind of performances all over Taiwan. Indonesian migrant workers often perform their dances in public space, such as in the halls of Taipei Main Station, in the underground Taipei City Mall, which is the basement of Taipei Main Station, or in other public spaces all over Taiwan. Indonesian migrant workers represent a large portion of migrant workers in this country. There are about 271,000 of them, which is the biggest compared to other countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, or the Philippines (Table 1). The current population of Taiwan is 23.858.892 as of Thursday, June 24, 2021. base on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data.

Indonesian migrant workers perform mostly folk dance. Their audience were mainly their fellow workers. The performances were meant to be part of celebration of Indonesian national holidays such as Independence Day or religious holiday such as Ied’l Fitri (the day when Muslims end their fasting month), or even at the Indonesian presidential campaign. The hosts of the migrant worker performance are usually business companies and the national museum of Taiwan. The business company is related to the migrant worker’s need, such as a cargo business INDEX (Indonesia Delivery Express) and telecommunication providers. The museum has invited migrant workers to perform their culture in front of public in the national museum area. There was an annual event called Indonesia Tempo Doeloe (Indonesian Past) in November 2021.

Table 1. Number of Indonesian in Taiwan.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Category | Year | Estimation Number | Source |
| 1 | Migrant workers | 2019 | 271.000 | National Immigration Agency |
| 2 | Foreign brides | 2011 | 29.000 | Ministry of Labor |
| 3 | Students | 2019 | 11.000 | Ministry of Education |
| 4 | Entrepreneurs | 2013 | 1.200 | Indonesian Business Association in Taiwan |
| 5 | Indonesia overseas Chines | 2019 | 1.500 | IOCA in Taiwan |
| 6 | Undocumented | 2018 | 24.176 | National Immigration Agency |
|  | Total Estimation |  | 337.876 |  |

The migrant worker performers are mostly not professional artists that did not learn how to dance in their place of origins. Their dance in Taiwan is best characterized as ‘invention’ or ‘interpretation’ of what they learned from the social media. So, they have to make adjustments in order to adapt with their living conditions here. The adjustments can be related to costume, music, and accessories. They create their own unique costumes and accessories, mix the music according to their taste, even modify the movements due to their limited skills in dance.

I have watched migrant workers performances in some events in Taiwan. Based on this experience, I learned that there is a significance existence of Indonesian dance in Taiwan. Indonesian migrant workers seem to have a strong feeling of nationalism and are eager to show and celebrate it in Taiwan as their identity. They often held fashion shows to promote Indonesia ethnic clothings. Indonesia has hundreds of ethnic groups with their own traditional garments and costumes. Like fashion shows, dance has become one of the cultural expressions of the Indonesian migrant workers. Their Indonesian bodies are inscribed by and become a signifier of place (Winarnita, 2016:97).

# The Role of Dance in Javanese Society

As I delved more in teaching dance in Taiwan as well as frequently watching dance performances by Indonesian migrant workers, I have learned that there is no connectivity between the two of them. The Taiwanese that I taught have learned the type of dances that have never been seen by most of the Indonesian migrant workers even while they were living in their home country. The dances that my Taiwanese students learned were too complicated for the migrant workers. Therefore, many of them have never seen the dance and let alone perform it.

My students in Taiwan are either academics or professional artists. There are several reasons of why do these Taiwanese eager to learn Indonesian dances. They mostly appreciate or want to encounter a new culture or learn new aesthetic of Asia. They want to know more about the dance and its role in Indonesia society. I have taught the Javanese court dance, a dance form that are usually exhibited

in Javanese palaces. If the performance is for the public (outside of the palace), it will be performed for a very special occasion, like the state dinner or in the wedding of important people. Another reason is related to meditation. Most of the students in Taiwan are curious about what meditation like in the movement in the Javanese court dance. For sure, just like in its original place, the court dance has been rarely performed in Taiwan (Personal interview with Taiwanese dancers: Anja, Emma Chou, and Ching-ching Mai)

# Dance as an Education of *Rasa*

There was a palace, namely Islamic Mataram, founded in 1587, at the time when “Indonesia” has not existed. When Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, there was a palace in Yogyakarta declared to be part of the Republic of Indonesia and was willing to support that independence. Yogyakarta is one of the four palaces that was originated from Islamic Mataram that was divided in 1755 by the Dutch as the colonializer. Other palaces are Paku Alaman in Yogyakarta dan two palaces in Surakarta or Solo city that are Kasunanan and Mangkunegaran. Yogyakarta kingdom move was rare among other similar kingdoms in Indonesia. Most kingdoms were sided with the Dutch power and refused to acknowledge the new Republic.

The palace was called the Yogyakarta Sultanate and reigned in the Yogyakarta areas, south of Central Java Province. The Sultanate of Yogyakarta together with another ‘blue blood’ people in Yogyakarta, the Paku Alaman, ruled Yogyakarta as a province. Due to its early endorsement of the Republic, the Indonesian government has granted Yogyakarta a status as a special autonomous region. The governor and vice governor of Yogyakarta is the Sultan and the Paku Alam. Both are entitled to keep their status permanently. The sultanate is the only monarchy that still functions and has constitutional power in Indonesia. It means the sultanate can maintain its cultural heritages and developed it to fit into modern times. The dance, and its music called *karawitan*, are parts of those heritages. Dance and music occupy an important position in the palace

cultures. It is not only an art form, but it is also a form of spiritual embodiment of the palace. Ki Tjokrowarsito, a Javanese karawitan master, said that musical art has a close relationship with social and religious functions within the palace (Tim Pengkajian Maskarja, 2003:74).

The position of Javanese court dance serves not only as a performance or a spiritual practice. It is also a medium of social interaction for those who learn the dances (Hughes-Freeland, 2008:77). The diversification of venues for court dance training has made it mainstream; people of all ages can participate in learning and performing the dance. It functions as an elegant form of education that combines arts and physical education. The dances are taught in state schools, private schools, dance associations, or transmitted by special teachers or maestro in a process called *meguru,* holistic learning process from a teacher (guru) about the dance, technically and philosophically.

I learned the court dance from various venues such as state school, dance association, and *meguru*. From *meguru* or learning through a dance maestro, I realize that through learning and practicing the dance, I am learning the *rasa*. *Rasa* carries a heavy freight of significance in Javanese philosophical, religious, and ethical discourses, and has been translated as ‘taste, feeling inner experience, deepest meaning, essence’ (Hughes-Freeland, 2008:79). Hughes-Freeland added that: although it has been associated with *priyayi* religion*, rasa* extends from the distinguishing taste of *priyayi* as an occupational class, to a spiritual capacity which is not limited to elite sensibilities. It is like what Stange’s (1984) statement that *rasa* is like a “epetition of formulae within ordinary social discourse as a way of avoiding “meaning.”

*Rasa* is the most important part of being a Javanese dancer. It can be achieved through several practices. It is not being practiced by dancers but by most Javanese. Sultan, the Javanese king, is known as a practitioner of the spiritual arts called *tirakatan*, which is a practice of enduring hardship such as climbing the highest volcano in Yogyakarta, Mount Merapi, refraining from food and drink to sharpen one’s inner feeling, *kungkum* (the method of learning patience through immersing oneself in

water and meditating at night). He once threw his ring into the water and spent the night attempting to locate it again. The belief that he possesses spiritual power is an important consideration in understanding the basic nature of the Sultanate, and consequently, the spiritual (inner) nature and structural (outer) function of some of the dances attributed to the Sultan. The order of Sultanate and the province of Yogyakarta was believed to be directly related to the universal or cosmic order.

As Ben Suharto, a dancer and scholar who was graduated from Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) asserts, “The inner aspect of Yogyakarta dance is based on Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana’s practice of these exercises to develop his inner power and strength. All of that will form the inner quality and spiritual dimension of Yogyakarta dance” (Suharto, 1998:2). Hence, it has a much wider application to the practice of “*dalaning urip”* (the “way of life”) in a dance (Suharto, 1998:2). Dance for the Javanese is one of processing “rasa.” However, in terms of mastering a dance, there are three principle of learnings that should be practiced, namely. The three must be presented in harmony; all actions have meaning.

To understand the meaning of rasa, we must know *wiraga, wirama*, and *wirasa*. *Wiraga* is the entirely body movement, the dance itself. W*irama mean* tempo or rhythm, then *wirasa* mean the philosophy, the direction, the ‘mystic Weltanschaung’ underlying the dance, the purity of it. In Javanese context, *rasa* is important in an ethnographically grounded approach to the body for understanding embodied practice. Although dance might appear to contribute to education as an embodied skill, *rasa* can only be thought of as a method to raise consciousness. The embodied self is a starting point for understanding dance, but as embodiment includes more than the biological physical self, it is important to consider local understandings of the body, the self, and the relation between them (Hughes-Freeland, 2008:79). Based on my experience of learning the dance, this kind of learning can only be clearly understood if we learn it from a guru or maestro.

# Indonesian Dance Teaching Method in Taiwan

**Culture and Education**

Jean Piaget, an educational psychologist from Switzerland, states that cognitive structures change through the processes of adaptation: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation involves the interpretation of events in terms of existing cog- nitive structure, whereas accommodation refers to changing the cognitive structure to make sense of the environment. Cognitive development consists of a constant effort to adapt to the environment in terms of assimilation and accommodation.

I will explore how education of culture through practicing the dance in three cases, i.e. dance education at NTU, dance education at a group of theatre, and a dance education in dance group. I will use the learning method and the material of learning in Java for the students in Taiwan.

**Teaching Dance at the National Taiwan University (NTU)**

I taught Indonesian traditional dance as an elective course for graduate students in one of its institutes called the Graduate Institute of Musicology. The program is also open to other students from outside NTU. There were two students from outside NTU, one from the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST), and the other from National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). The provisions of the teaching are that I taught dancing skills of Indonesian traditional court dances and cultural studies. The background of the students varies. There were four students from musicology background, three students from Anthropology. Others were from Chinese Literature, Sociology, Law, Material Science, Bio Industry, and Psychology. It is interesting because in Javanese society, practicing dance is for everyone with various background for the sake of becoming a better person.

I needed to adjust the direction of this program. I decided to undergo an “on-going curriculum” that was created by adjusting to the

existing lattice program. The on-going curriculum enabled me to flexibly adjust my teachings even though the curriculum had been completed before the class starts. The curriculum was fluid and adjusted according to the situation in the field.

**Aim of The Course**

The course that I taught was an elective course called Central Javanese Music and Dance. This course uses an interdisciplinary approach based on

Table 2. Dance Education in NTU.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Method | NTU | The Approaching Theatre | Wan-Chao Dance |
| 1. | Material of the dance | The basic movements of the court dance.  Two kinds of basic move- ments: for female character and for male character.  How to get used to wear the property and traditional costume. | The basic movements of the court dance.  A female character’s dance. How to get used to wear the property and costume. | The basic movements of the court dance.  How to get used to wear the property and traditional costume.  A solo dance.  A group female dance, Srimpi, a fighting dance that is performed by 4 dancers. |
| 2. | Time (duration) | One semester | 4 times, 3 hours/meeting | 2 years |
| 3. | Method | Reading literature about philosophy, history of the culture, and gamelan.  Practicing the gamelan to learn the movements bet- ter (or/and vice versa).  Experiencing the simple traditional costume to em- body the movements as culture.  Experiencing the complete traditional costume to feel the embodiment of culture (NTU has the costume that is the same as the costume at the court). | Practice and discussion about the aesthetic of the dance, related to the tech- nique of movements.  Experiencing the simple traditional costume to em- body the movements as culture. | Practice and discussion about the aesthetic of the dance, related to the tech- nique of movements.  Experiencing the simple traditional costume to em- body the movements as culture. |
| 4. | Goal | Performance for the final as- signment in front of public audience at the NTU’s area. | Perform in studio. | Workshop & performance at Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab (C-Lab.) in Daan district, Taipei city. A performance at Academia Sinica, Taipei. |
| 5. |  | Knowledge about the dance in theory and practice (prac- ticing the dance and the music). | Learn aesthetics of Asia. | Emphasizing more on the aesthetic.  The more you practice, the better you get. |
| 6. | Participants | Students of NTU, NTUST, and NTNU with various background of major and nationality. | Theatre artists in Taiwan. | Dance artist with the back- ground of folk dance.  Arts managers of tradition- al and folk performance. |
| 7. | Age | 20s years old | 20s-30s years old | Late 20s-50s years old |

the following website ([*Http://Www.Gim.Ntu.Edu.*](http://Www.Gim.Ntu.Edu/) *Tw/Default\_eng.Aspx*, n.d.*)*:

The Graduate Institute of Musicology at National Taiwan University offers a diverse, liberal learning environment and a wealth of academic resources at a comprehensive research university. We cultivate an integrative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of music which values the rich interconnectedness of cultures and aims to promote interactions among the subdisciplines of historical musicology, ethnomusicology, and systematic musicolo- gy as well as with other scholarly fields such as literature, sociology, and psychology.

They add that:

A primary research and teaching emphasis is the musical traditions of Asia, but from a broadly internationalized perspective that recognizes Asia’s contribution to a global dialogue and welcomes scholarship in all music of the world.

The program has a kind of research directions. Though a hallmark of the research of the Graduate Institute of Musicology’s faculty members is its diversity, three themes have stood out as common threads in this research as a whole: 1) Music and modernity, 2) Music and the body, 3) Sound and soundscape studies.

The course that I taught is in line with the second research direction above, namely music and the body. In Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, music cannot be separated from dance. Dance accompanies music, and music accompanies dance. Thus, students will learn to “practice” traditional Indonesian music through Indonesian dance. Javanese court dances are closely related to instruments called *gongs*, to indicate a movement begins or ends. Gong indicates the feeling of going home (homey) which is hit on the count of 8 or multiples, depending on the type of music.

For some Javanese, music was created first, dance followed music; so, the name of the repertoire is the name of the music. For example, there is a dance called *Bedaya Semang*. That means, the music of the repertoire entitled *Semang*, with a dance in the form of *bedaya,* one of the genres of

performances in the tradition of the palace on Java which is usually danced by nine female dancers. This dance was originally performed for ritual purposes in royal traditions, such as in the coronation program. There are also dances that were created based on negotiations between musicians (usually with a leader drummer) and dancers. Usually this happens in popular (folk) performances, so that both dancers and musicians take turns in leading the show to mark when a movement begins or ends and its rhythm. Learning the music makes the students recognize the rhythm of practicing dance. Rhythm is very important to learn, so the dance that is performed by the body has its nuance. The students are interested in encountering new culture as a new experience in an academic field.

**The Sequence in the Course of Central Javanese Music and Dance**

The lecture started in mid-September 2018 and ended in mid-January 2019. The meetings were divided into 15 meetings, with 3 hours meetings, at 9.10-12.10, including final performance as a final assignment for students. All students were involved in this final assignment as dancers. This was motivated by the Javanese philosophy that dancing is the practice of values that will influence people in their attitude and views of life as Javanese. Javanese dancing is one way to become a good Javanese (human being). Here, there is subjectivity in understanding a culture, as well as objectivity to see something is good or not.

We have 15 meetings that were divided into 3 materials, described as follows:

1. Getting to know music from Central Java. Getting to know music is done by singing a traditional Javanese song in Javanese music. Students learned how to pronounce it and understood its meaning. Students also played the song with gamelan instruments. Traditional instruments totaling around 15 include: *kendhang, bonang, bonang penerus, demung, saron, peking, kenong, kethuk, slenthem, gambang, rebab, siter,* and *gong.* When playing gamelan, students learned the rhythm of the instrument while listening to other instruments in harmony.

There is a term *ngemong rasa,* that means adjusting and tolerance to other people in the name of harmony. Before playing the gamelan, students were introduced to various kinds of instruments contained in Javanese gamelan and how to play them. There were various ways to play it, thus producing a colorful and beautiful blend of colors. It took time to be able to play the instrument.

1. Practicing female dance movements in traditional Javanese court dances. This female dance is intended to learn the femininity found in the palace. Students learned a training dance (basic dance) that is a provision to dance a repertoire of Javanese traditional dance. In Yogyakarta palace, this basic dance that is taught at NTU, will always be practiced regularly every Sunday; in addition to also performing other palace dances.
2. Practicing male dance movements in traditional Javanese palace dances. They learned the masculine style in the Javanese tradition through male dances. In the male dance there are two styles, namely the refined-male dance (*tari putra alus*) and the strong-male dance (*tari putra gagah*). Due to time limitation, the students did not perform a repertoire of dance, but only three motives of refined-male dance style in the final performance.

We originally had a plan of practicing music, practicing male and female dance that were carried out sequentially, starting from numbers 1 to 3. In fact, all three were done simultaneously that is two hours are used for dance practice the male and female dance, and one hour to play music gamelan. By practicing dance and playing gamelan, they learned to refine a *rasa*. Feelings and skills were learned together as a form of process. At this stage, artistic and aesthetic education were learned gradually. They also learned how to wear a *jarik* (sarong) and the full costume, and felr it when they performed. There will be different feelings when practicing the dance with jarik and without jarik. Wearing jarik bring them to behave politely according to the customs in which the jarik originates. For example, you may not carry your jarik up to your knees, you should not sit with your thighs open unless your thighs are covered in

jarik, work on your jarik in neat conditions when sitting or moving. In this case, this course learned not only about cognitive but also how to behave. This is a method to get to know cultural education.

**Assessment and Strategy**

In the first meetings, we assessed if any of them had ever learned dance. Some of them have Chinese opera background, others have street dance skills, while some are theater artists. These backgrounds would determine how they will get into the Indonesian traditional dance even though none of them has seen the Indonesian dance before. It will be easier for them to learn the Indonesian court dance than others that had not experienced. But in fact, sometimes the result is opposite. It is because they already had the aesthetic and the structure of the arts from their previous trainings. In the next meetings, we assessed who are interested in learning and encountering the new culture. Some students were trying hard to do it; and it works. I am interested in the process of knowing the new culture with new structure. Some students had strong spirits to learn the new thing, but the others seemed to be not easy to practice it. One of the male students even said that he would need ten years to be able to master the female dance

of Sari Kusuma.

We picked four students for performing the female dance at the end of the class. The four female dancers had to practice in a group, and they had to post their rehearsal to me to the FB messenger and I gave a comment to direct their next practice. They also had to give a comment and response to their peer’s practice. Sometimes they askd question about techniques that they did not master yet. Then, we had a discussion about it. Based on my two semesters teaching dance at NTU, it worked well. They improved very fast with intensive discussions and private practices.

# Product and Process of the Education Model

The lessons-learned from this education model can be seen from our final performance. At the end of the class, we usually had performances by

students and light workshops for the audience. The workshop was aimed for the audience to feel the dance movements that will be performed by students. I opened the final performance with a solo dance, namely Sekar Pudyastuti, for 6 minutes, then I gave a 20-minute lecture and demonstration of dance. I introduced to the Taiwanese audience about Indonesia and the Javanese culture which I come from. The audience practiced a little movement from the Javanese dance to bring out their imagination and appreciation to the students who will perform later. Final performance was intended for appreciation to the hard work that the student had achieved.

The student performance was divided into two parts. The first performance was the refined- male dance movement which was performed by all students who did not perform the female dance. Their performance was opened by two students who had stood on the stage. As the first performer, they danced 3 kinds of movements, namely *sabetan, kalang kinantang*, and *tayungan*. They seemed to be able to easly memorize the movements, so I gave them additional movement. Unlike the first dancer, the other dancers only danced 2 motives of movement, namely *tayungan* and *kalang kinantang*. When the first dancers danced, two other students walked in Javanese dance way called *tayungan*, to the stage. The first dancers then walked out of the stage, replaced by the appearance of the second group of dancers. And so on, the male dancers performed in pairs by wearing *jarik* and *sampur*. *Jarik* is a piece of batik-patterned cloth commonly worn by Javanese, then s*ampur* is a long scarf. *Jarik* is usually used to cover the body from the waist down. In Javanese tradition, *sampur* has various functions such as tying the waist, tying the sling, and as a dance equipment. Their abilities of performance were varied. At this time, they learned about the process of mastering dance and performing it as a product. They used their creativity to perform the dance by developing their skills and feelings of the dance.

The peak of final performance was the Sari Kusuma dance. The four dancers, two male dancers and two female dancers, wore a complete dance costume, just like when the dance is performed

in Java. It took about three hours to dress up and to do make up, so everything should look perfect. The experience of wearing clothes that are rather complicated with a variety of accessories throughout the body can be a special experience for the dancers. They had to rehearse four or five times on stage with the complete costumes the day before. This was intended to get them used to staged. From the beginning to the end of the performance, they mastered the spirit of this female dance, which is calm, patient, and beautiful. There was no impression of being rushed or the desire to finish soon, even though the dance is danced slowly.

# The Approaching Theatre and Wan-Chao Dance

I used almost identical methods in teaching the Javanese court dance in the group name of Approaching Theatre and in the Wan-Chao Dance. The participants of the workshops in these two institutions are professional artists. They already have had enough experience with arts and familiar with various methods in dancing.

I usually started with an introduction about Indonesia and its diverse cultures. It means that what we will learn is one of thousand ethnic cultures in Indonesia. Java is one of ethnic groups in Indonesia that is the largest one with 42% of Indonesians. From the diversity, we turned to Javanese culture which is not singular either. Javanese culture is as diverse as any other cultures that has their own traditions and customs. The court dance is one part of the various cultures in Java. The dance I introduced to the participants was the dance from one of Javanese Islamic Mataram palaces, Yogyakarta court dance. Other palaces of prior Islamic Mataram, Kasunanan in Surakarta or Solo city, Mangkunegaran in Surakarta, and Paku alaman would be taught and practiced a little bit to know the various aesthetic of each palace. Each has its own beauty of movements. The variety of the techniques of hands of each those palaces were practiced by the teacher in front of the participants. This is to underline about what style of Javanese dance we were going to learn.

As a practice, court dance workshop started with detailed technique of movements. The technique of movement is quite detail, such as the position of fingers, toes, spine, neck, head, feet, arm, wrist, knees and how to move it in to a various kind of movement. That kind of detail movements must be trained in a not so tense manner, but participants still need to be very discipline. Mastering the detail will bring the dancer to move easier. The method of learning the detail was by following the teacher’s movements step by step. This was the unknown time when the participants will adjust the feeling (*rasa*) of the dance until they are used to feel and practice the movements.

After learning the techniques, they were moving to the aesthetic of it. Watching videos of

the Javanese performance helped the participants to know and learn more about the dance’s feeling. The method of watching a recorded performance was because in Taiwan they do not have a chance to see the performance or rehearsal as one of learning methods. It can be back and forth: learning the dance and watching the video. In this case, learning the dance can be done by practicing it and watching peer’s performance or rehearsal. It will make them more considerate about themselves as well as others. The Table 3 below lists the material for the court dance workshop for professional artists and dancers for the Approaching Theatre and the Wan-

Chao Dance.

The court dance takes time to practice it. Because there were only a limited time, they

Table 3. Course material and property for dance workshop.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Property | Course Material |
| 1.  2.  3.  4. | –  Sampur  Sampur, jarik, music  Sampur, jarik, music | * Introduction of the course and the person in charge of the course * *Deg* (Basic standing technique). * It forms stiffness, with shoulders and spine relax, not tense or weak * It focuses on spine, shoulder blades, chest swells, flat stomach * Other than that, furthermore, the focus will be on the feet. Foot posture is the main thing. Because the feet are the center of strength and balance of the body as a whole. * The feet movements will be trained through the position of thighs, knees, soles of feet, toes, ankle. * The detail part of the body above will be applied to variety of movements. * Mastering the technique of hand’s movements and its posture. There are four kinds of hand gestures in Yogyakarta’s dance, namely: *Ngruji, Ngithing, Nyempurit*, and *Ngepel*. While the wrist posture there are three kinds of bending (*tumungkul*), bending standing, (*tumenga*), and straight. * Mastering the technique of using *sampur* (Javanese shawl) with the movement of hands that is *cathok, kipat*, *cangkol, jimpit,* and *seblak*. * Mastering the technique of head and neck. There is 2 kinds of head and neck movements: *Tolehan* and *pacak gulu*. Tolehan is to move the neck by moving the direction of view and the chin according to the direction of the face. *Pacak Gulu* is to move the neck from left to right or vice versa, with a fixed gaze. * The attitude and gaze in dancing can show the seriousness of a dancer in concen- trating on his role in dancing. * The attitude of the eye in the Yogyakarta dance style has the following provisions:   a. Eyelids open, b. Straight eyeball, c. Sharp view, with three times the height of the dancer, d. Point of view to the floor, e. Move your chin in line with your eyes   * Rhythm recognition of the dance with some movements. * Combine all the movements with the music to learn more rhythm recognition * Experiencing jarik * Practice the first part of the dance with music * Evaluation * Practice the last part of the dance with music   • Evaluation |

sometimes needed additional time to practice together. They would gave comment to the peer dancers, so that they could improve their movements better. For Srimpi, they needed more time to practice, outside of the workshop with teacher. The 16 meetings for practicing Srimpi were not enough for the participants. They need tens of weeks to master the Srimpi. It does takes time because each participant should master the technique well as well as master the space of the group with their movements.

# Conclusion

Teaching traditional dances to people of other cultures is not only about teaching dance skills. It is an effort to make cultural encounters – where foreigners try to explore the values and aesthetics of the origin of the traditional dance culture. Teaching traditional dances, especially highly refined dances such as the Javanese court dance in Taiwan, faces various challenges. However, the warm welcome given by Taiwanese students and artists was impressive. There are many Taiwanese who want to learn Indonesian arts regardless of never having been to Indonesia or even watching traditional Indonesian dances. The Taiwanese are interested in learning the Indonesian court dance because it is something new and provide an opportunity to them to learn and encounter a new

culture. Based on my experience, the best method to teach the court dance is by employing traditional methods like dance teaching in Java. The method is by following or mirroring the teacher. It starts from the basic technique of the movements, part per part of the body. From learning the techniques of the movements, then listening to and adjusting the music as part of mastering the rhythms. If they get the rhythm of the movements and the music, it means they get the *rasa*. The teacher will fade away as the students got into the *rasa*.

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