

Japanese Corporate Sponsorship Activities regarding Contemporary Dance  
-Centering on the “Era of the Choreographer” and the Social Role of  
Choreographers-

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## Introduction

### 0.1. Research Background and Research Objectives

Ever since the 20th century, dance, which has configured choreography methods using a wide range of methods, has formed a genre called “contemporary dance.” Compared to previous era in which the excellent bodies and skills of dancers were handled as the major highlight of a work, in contemporary dance, the choreographer plays an important role. It seems that the “era of the choreographer” has truly come. The “era of the choreographer” in this research denotes a situation in which the originality and creativity of a dance work belongs to the choreographer in the way that a theatrical work accrues to the director rather than the dancers, who are the main body that dances. Consequently, support for contemporary dance from state cultural policies and corporate sponsorship is synonymous with support for the choreographer.

In reality, the discovery of young choreographers has been propelled not only by the Bagnolet International Dance Competition in France in 1969, but also the Festival International de Nouvelle Danse in 1982, the Park Tower Next Dance Festival in Japan in 1996, and the Toyota Choreography Award in 2001. The aforementioned competitions and festivals have changed their names and merged, or the events have ended, but it is a historical fact that choreographers are viewed as important. Since the 1990s, even in Japan the phrase “contemporary dance” has become fixed as a genre, and the focus has been on the uniqueness and creativity of choreographers as auteurs, with emphasis placed on their workability.

What we want to focus on particularly here is the underpinning corporate sponsorship. In the West, contemporary dance has developed with various support such as state, local government, corporate, and foundation. In Japan, public funding for state stage arts is limited, and so the role of corporate sponsorship, which has been involved in supporting contemporary dance long-term, is important. Here, “sponsorship activities” generally denotes “art and culture support activities by companies”, but in this research it means “support for choreographers” in the broad sense. Corporate activities hint at changing little by little the contents of support for choreographers due to the changing needs of the people who are dance aficionados and changes to the social environment by supporting choreographed works and performances as works of art created by choreographers. By focusing on this support, it is possible to grasp the trends in sponsorship activities in current contemporary dance. Further, the main theme of this

paper is to attempt to grasp support for choreographers from both the aspect of cultural policy and the aspect of sponsorship activities.

The issues in this paper comprise three elements. The first is **competition**, through which the choreographers explained in the introduction are discovered and nurtured. The second is **support for the creation and performance of works** by choreographers. The third is **support for network formation**, which supports a wide range of choreographer activities. Describing these competitions, support for works creation and performance, and the various elements that support network formation in detail will also elucidate cases of the overall composition of support for contemporary dance. This research handles the contemporary dance formation process as a theme to untie historical changes in which choreographers play a core role in the history of Western dance. At this time, the particular focus is on the establishment of the occupation of choreographer together with a history of Western dance, and the related support. This is because the position of choreographers in the West and models of support for contemporary dance impacts sponsorship activities in Japan. Consequently, in a history of Western dance, the focus is on changes by which the choreographer has become a key person and the nature of their support, and by tracing this history, the aforementioned three elements come into focus, and it is possible to untangle the nature of Japanese sponsorship activities, which have become focused on supporting contemporary dance. To put it another way, we are going to elucidate cases of Japanese sponsorship activities for contemporary dance, and the nature of support, which has been transformed.

## 0.2. Previous Research

The difficulties of economic independence for stage arts are under scrutiny both in Japan and other countries, and a framework of support for stage arts has been spreading ever since the 1960s. In this context, quantitative and qualitative debate to demonstrate the vulnerabilities in stage arts autonomy was already undertaken in “Performing Arts, the Economic Dilemma; a Study of Problems Common to Theater, Opera, Music, and Dance” by the economists William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen (1966).

In France, *Nouvelle Danse* has arisen to coincide with the initial period of contemporary dance with a background in classical ballet. The situation in the world of French dance was that international festivals were held in the 1970s, and then throughout the 1980s, a system was configured based on French contemporary dance (Filloux-Vigreux 2001,

12). The cultural policies of countries with contemporary dance are mainly classified into three: “Creation,” “touring/spread,” and “education,” and in creative territories, support systems are established for activities bases and creative activities by national choreography centers and dance companies, whereas in touring and spread territories, local dance festivals are held, and in education territories, dancer training and dance education are implemented by highly-skilled professionals. Contemporary dance infrastructure is furnished therein as a linchpin for these three territories, and a system was configured to support professionalization. French contemporary dance can be said to have developed while being supported by cultural policies and theater culture.

On the other hand, the theory of contemporary dance support in Japan tends to start and end with the configuration of evaluation criteria. For example, as stated by Taneo Kato, who promotes sponsorship activities, contemporary dance sponsorship is support for works and projects with no fixed support (Kato 2002, 21–27). Fusako Shibata, who studied the evaluation criteria for contemporary dance, also pointed out that companies and foundations that offer support classify creativity as giving rise to artistic ability and new arts creations, and place an emphasis on such creativity (Shibata 2007, 27–31). In his way, research and discourse into contemporary dance tends to broadly fall into two categories: demonstrations of aspects that embrace the difficulties of stage arts autonomy, and aspects that study the evaluation criteria for support.

Long-term support from companies and foundations, which is the focus of this research, does not necessary return to the social effects of creating stage arts autonomy and, conversely, neither does it necessary come back to artistry and creativity that can be considered to have tacit support from companies and foundations. Such discourse and research find it difficult to grasp the support for choreographers, who will be transformed when expressed as the relationship between the model of support for contemporary dance in the West and the involvement of Japanese sponsorship activities, and it is difficult to gasp the social role of choreographers.

### 0.3. Research Methods and Research Subjects

In approaching this research, a qualitative survey was necessary rooted in specific cases in order to examine cases of sponsorship activities that contribute to the support of contemporary dance. Consequently, the survey method was to interview companies and foundations that support choreographers.

In selecting research subjects, Shiseido, Toyota, Wacoal Art Center, and the SAISON Foundation were cited as having supported contemporary dance since the 1990s, and conditions were set for the companies and foundations that have been engaged in long-term support for ten years or longer in order to survey changes to the dynamic support format. Specifically, the research targeted the cooperative activities of Shiseido, which was engaged in ongoing activities until 2018, the Toyota Choreography Award from Toyota, which they have sponsored continuously for 14 years as a social contribution activity, the operations and network formation of the multicultural facilities by the Wacoal Arts Center, and support for choreographers by the SAISON Foundation, which was established in 1987.

#### 0.4. Thesis Configuration

The details of this paper, which comprises three chapters, are as described below. The first chapter is first of all a preparatory study while confirming the nature of support for contemporary dance and the position of choreographers based on transformations in the history of Western dance. Next, Chapter 2 focuses on support for contemporary dance and broadly follows event transformations while elucidating that approach. Chapter 3 focuses on support for choreographers from a different viewpoint to that of foundations and companies while making clear the changes to the manifested support, and raises the question of the social role of choreographers.

### Chapter 1. The Establishment Process of Contemporary Dance

This chapter confirms in simple terms the establishment process for contemporary dance centering on the question of awareness regarding how the era in which choreographers came to the forefront was created, and the basis of the support for choreographed works as artwork leading up to modern contemporary dance.

#### 1.1. Ballet

Where to place the origins of contemporary dance depends on the situation and context in each country, but in France, the Royal Academy of Music was established as a precursor to the Paris Opera by King Louis XIV in 1669, and was rooted in ballet culture.

Rich stories were configured within the romantic ballet of the 19th century, and even

today, many great works remain, but in ballet, the musicians play a more important role than the choreographer. For example, in *Swan Lake* (1877), *Sleeping Beauty* (1890), and *The Nutcracker* (1892), the music by the composer Tchaikovsky was written before the choreography, which was created subsequently. In addition, the prominence of the étoile and principal was greater than that of the choreographer, and it was the dancers who received the applause of the crowds and whose names have gone down in history. In this way, it is rare in ballet for a choreographer to gain prominence. On the other hand, Ballets Russes, which was introduced from Europe in the early 20th century, gradually came to also focus on the creativity of the choreographers by creating original ballet works and repertory revisions in cooperation with Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, who were contemporaneous artists. The promoter of Ballets Russes Sergei Diaghilev left a selection of the dancers to the choreographer in order to create a new classical format. Vaslav Nijinsky filled a dual role as dancer and choreographer, and created *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (1912) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Today, these works are written with notations so they can be appreciated as historical artifacts, and the names of the choreographers remain well-known even after death. Further, during the 1960s, Maurice Béjart choreographed works such as *The Rite of Spring* (1959) and *Bolero* (1960) within the genres of modern ballet and neo-classical, and these choreographed works were received and culture and art by the young and the middle classes.

In ballet, ballet dancers are selected by the choreographer, and are taught and discovered, by the establishment of state education facilities and the protection of patrons. Moreover, the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland, which still runs today, was launched in 1973, and contributes to the discovery of young ballet dancers. The training and discovery of ballet dancers depend on educational institutions and competitions, and choreographers are emerging from among the ranks of dancers who have received specialist ballet training.

## 1.2. Modern Dance and Post-modern Dance

In America, the “era of the choreographer” was formed by the acceptance of dance by the masses and post-war economic recovery, and modern dance started to appear at the beginning of the 20th century as a new dance form that eschewed ballet. In America, which has no deep ballet roots, modern dance, which was started by Isadora Duncan, is mainstream and is the last word in prosperity. Modern dance creates choreographed works derived from techniques that express the dancer’s emotions in opposition to the class system of ballet. Modern dance arose and spread during the 1930s based on the US

federal government's New Deal policies (Martel 2009, 112), and is rooted in American education.

The modern dance luminary Martha Graham created choreographed works by teaching dancers to view the Graham Technique, which was based on specific physical principles that she configured herself, as a "tool", and thus contributed to the systematization of the master/servant relationship between the choreographer and the dancer (Foster 1986, 48). Further, Graham also clearly stated her ideas to the musicians and artists beforehand, thus creating her choreographed works.<sup>1</sup> From this fact, modern dance configured a master/servant relationship between the choreographer and the dancer, and on the adoption of this top-down format, while relying on the rhythm of the composer's music, it can also be interpreted as configuring the position of the choreographer as director.

On the other hand, choreographed post-modern dances, which arose in opposition to modern dance, came out of the intermingling of the fields of experimental music and fine art in the 1960s. Choreographers apply the configurations of graphic notation and use artistic drawings in their creation process in order to employ special dance moves and diagrams configured using only documents in the preparatory stages of the creation and the creation process. Choreographed post-modern dance works draw out neutral movements that have scrubbed any extraneous physical movement from the dancer by expanding the framework of choreography methods in order for the choreographer to develop play, rules, process, and spontaneity. On this point, the choreographer can create choreographed works that eliminate the control of the music's rhythm by trusting expression to the dancer and giving them freedom within the creative process.

Starting with the aforementioned Graham, many modern dance choreographers establish dance companies and disperse to the dancers the methods that they have developed themselves.<sup>2</sup> As support for such choreographers' companies, the Rockefeller

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<sup>1</sup> Graham said the following regarding her interactions with musicians. "When I work with a composer, I usually give him a detailed script. In the script are notes I have taken from books I've been reading, quotes from this and that. There is a kind of order, a sequence I try to bring to the script in terms of placement and the means of the dancers. Here, for instance, I will note that there is to be a solo, and here a duet; this is to be the company, and this is to be a return to the solo, and so on, throughout the script. I never cut a composer's music. I never cut him down to time. When I get the music, I start to choreograph. I have never, ever, cut a note of music or even a rest of music, because if I do that, then what am I asking for? I do not want, nor do I need, a mirror of myself" (Graham 1991, p.255). Further, Graham also collaborated with the artist Isamu Noguchi, but there existed a hierarchy in which Graham's vision was absolute.

<sup>2</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation's first support can be traced all the way back to the New York City Opera

Foundation, which was established in 1913, can be cited as supporting the companies of Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, Robert Joffrey, and Bill T. Jones with limited funds throughout the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Rockefeller Foundation collaborated with NEA (National Endowment for the Arts)<sup>4</sup>, which was founded in 1965, and Exxon to plan the “national choreography project,” which experimented and bequeathed repertory from traditional companies of modern choreographers in the 1980s as they tended towards supporting the creation of works. In addition, the Rockefeller Foundation supplied funding for choreographer tours in order to accomplish international exchange between America and developing countries in particular during the 1980s and 1990s.

In America, foundations, the NEA, and companies combine to support the creation and performance of works by choreographers of modern and post-modern dance, and so promote the creation of new works, the repeat performance of works by repertory, and the formation of both domestic and foreign networks. However, since the 1980s, NEA support for the arts has shrunk, and the support of local arts and culture by private leaders, mainly individual contributions, have become mainstream.

### 1.3. Choreography by Pina Bausch

In Germany during the latter half of the 19th century, Pina Bausch, who was of the German expressionist lineage that emerged as a unique style at the start of the 1900s, created choreographed works in cooperation with her dancers. She not only shared with spectators the individual stories of dancers using emotional methods for *Café Müller* (1978), *Carnations* (1982), and *Palermo Palermo* (1989), but also focused on the creative process using words in dance. The choreographers converse with the dancers during training and offer each other mutual feedback while presenting the dancers’ autobiography. The individual performance episodes not only mean the creation of art during rehearsal, but also manifest as a repetition of scenes of daily life (Siegmond 2018, 22). In this way, the relationship between the choreographer and the dancers reforms during the dialog process, so the focus on not on the dancer’s movements, but on the

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and the New York City Ballet in 1953.

<sup>3</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation: A Digital History (<https://rockfound.rockarch.org/ja/dance>: Last accessed March 25, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> In 1965, President Johnson launched the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and supported multiple arts organizations on the basis of a system of matching grants that offer assistance on the condition that half of the funds are procured from other organizations (Katayama 2006, 96).



dancer's individuality and existence. The choreographer is a dialog partner with the dancer, so while taking a position somewhat of a collaborator, ultimately they play the role of supervisor from the viewpoint of re-editing while cutting out the dancer's choreography. However, Bausch's choreography was viewed as attempting to draw out the dancer's unique physical movements by focusing on the dancer's existence, but she took on the role of choreographer as supervisor by processing all these at the final editing stage.

Bausch was called a "Tanztheater", which is a portmanteau of theater and dance, and was highly regarded for her activities that transcended the boundaries between dance and performance internationally. After becoming artistic director of the Wuppertal Dance Company in 1973, she continued to create both new works and in repertory, and was invited to festivals and theaters both at home and abroad.

However, in the background to all this, regional public theaters received money from state and local government rather than the national level, and hired countless people as choreographers, dramatists, artists, and costume and technical staff in regular employment, so this can be cited as being able to continue creating and performing works amidst an abundant budget. Moreover, in Germany, there are also festival and theater "free scenes" that receive the benefit of public money irregularly, in addition to theater dance companies, and approximately 100 groups convene, including one to three choreographers, who are given a venue to perform their works (Baumol, Jefferi, and Throsby 2004, 137).

#### 1.4. *Nouvelle Danse*

Choreographers of *Nouvelle Danse*<sup>5</sup> (hereinafter called "contemporary dance"), which arose in France in the 1980s, did not establish a class system among the dancers so as to oppose the format of ballet systematization. Consequently, the roles of the choreographer and the dancers tend to already be fixed. Cementing the role of the

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<sup>5</sup> Nearly all first-generation *Nouvelle Danse*, choreographers pass through the gateway of the Bagnolet International Dance Competition. Further, the administration of the French socialist party was established in the background of *Nouvelle Danse*, during the 1980s, and this administration can be cited as implementing new dance that should reify the political conviction of local devolution. For example, national and local governments have a history of establishing in regions all over the country dancer training institutions, the CNDC (Center National de Danse Contemporaine), and the CCN: (Centre Chorégraphique National).

choreographer does not force creators into the role of the dancer. Consequently, it becomes necessary to demand creativity and individuality in choreography from the individual choreographer. Dancers basically follow the choreographic methods of the choreographer, and keep formations in units of solo, duo, trio, and unison, so the choreographer forms the choreographed work. The choreographic methods for a chain of works are entrusted to the choreographer, with their strengths placed on the choreographic works, and generally, this model focuses on the choreographer. Within this model, not only is the relationship between the choreographer and the dancer normalized, on the points that do not reach to the level of total cooperation between the choreographer and the dancer, the dancer is often vexed by the creation of cooperation with a willing subject. Here, the role of the director of the choreographer is formed, and the choreographer becomes a perfect “signatory” to the work.

This flow goes to form the genre of contemporary dance by communicating contemporary dance to countries all over the world. For example, in France’s neighboring country of Belgium, it is called Belgian *Nouvelle Danse*, and works of choreography such as *Fase* (1982) and *Rosas danst Rosas* (1983) by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker are being performed all over the world, and the attractiveness of these works are highly regarded.

In *Nouvelle Danse*, the support of national cultural policies in the 1980s was great, with the focus on the choreographer. In France, choreographers who won the Baignolet International Dance Competition become artistic directors for national and local governments, and many such companies plan new works, tours, and interactions with foreign companies annually to create networks. Further, the Hermes Foundation and BNP Paribas continue to support the creation of contemporary dance and its festivals as sponsorship activities.

In this way, within the world of *Nouvelle Danse*, support is established for contemporary dance through national cultural policy and, further, the nature of the corporate support from companies and foundations is enriched.

### 1.5. Summary: Choreographed Works and the Image of Choreographers Responsible for Performances

In Chapter 1, we brought up the background leading to contemporary dance for each era at the gallop. Ever since modern dance, the role of the choreographer as director has

slowly come into being. Moreover, in ballet, the focus is on training and discovering dancers who are the subject of dancing, but in the process from modern dance to *Nouvelle Danse*, the image of the choreographer, who is responsible for creating choreographed works and performances has become settled alongside support from the national government, state, local government, companies, and foundations.

What we want to focus on here, however, is the central role played by the choreographer in contemporary dance and the establishment of diverse types of support. In addition, in the development of contemporary dance, choreographer competitions, support for the creation and performance of works, and support for the formation of networks is indispensable, and these various elements can be understood as having enriched the soil of contemporary dance.

The Western model which focuses on the central role of the choreographer while supporting contemporary dance, promotes globalization while impacting the world of contemporary dance in Japan, but the aforementioned elements of competition, support for works creation and performance, and network creation are viewed in Japan as sponsorship activities. For example, one factor that can be cited in the rise of Japanese contemporary dance from the late 1990s through the 2000s is the formation of networks and the operation of multicultural facilities such as the Wacoal Art Center as corporate involvement that is in contact with sponsorship activities, Toyota's choreography award, and Shiseido's collaborative activities. Consequently, during the process of creating contemporary dance in Japan, it is necessary to pick apart cases as to the nature of the support from the aforementioned companies for contemporary dance.

In the next chapter, we will also check cases of sponsorship activities in Japan and of the involvement of companies that are in contact with sponsorship activities.

## Chapter 2. Corporate Support for Contemporary Dance

In this chapter, we will cite three cases of Japanese sponsorship activities and the involvement of companies that are in contact with sponsorship activities, clarify their support for contemporary dance that can be seen therein, and discuss these approaches. As seen in the previous chapter, contemporary dance has established the position of the choreographer, as well as the support from national and local governments, companies, and foundations. In Japan, in 1990, the state and corporations established the Japan

Arts Council with the aim of supporting the arts, and they support local companies and local government theaters, but one problem is that when receiving the support, the companies are often in the red. In this way, disbursements through work cannot be subvented, so for contemporary dance, support is sought not only from the national and local governments, but also from businesses.

In this chapter, the focus is on the cooperative activities of Shiseido, which was engaged in ongoing activities until 2018 in particular, the Toyota Choreography Award from Toyota, which they have sponsored continuously for 14 years as a social contribution activity, and the operations and network formation of the multicultural facilities by the Wacoal Arts Center. Through investigating this chain of cases, we will describe in detail the diverse corporate support and its transformations, as well as presenting the characteristics of support for individual contemporary dances.

## 2.1. Shiseido Support Activities

Shiseido implements arts and culture support activities based on the policy of “discovering and creating new value,” and therein, support for actual dance arts can be traced back to support for the Sankai Juku dance company, which was sponsored in the 1980s by Ushio Amagatsu. Sankai Juku, which was active in Paris, entrusted its poster creation and supply of whiteface to the company’s advertising department, and that was how support started.<sup>6</sup> In addition, they have a history in which they offered solo collaboration with a dance exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1986, ongoing collaboration with the Prix de Lausanne, which is a gateway for young people, and they remodeled one floor of a beauty science research center as their practice space for the musical *Les Misérables*, in which they collaborated from 1987 to 1991. In this way, the company came to support experimental works and unappreciated works by choreographers while starting collaborations with the dance arts as sponsorship activities.

The company’s collaborations used an open recruitment system from 2006, and developed support for performances for dance companies and choreographers. Moreover, support for the Yokohama Dance Collection competition<sup>7</sup> and international festivals

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Sachio Ichimura, who was Sankai Juku’s administrator at the time (February 27, 2021)

<sup>7</sup> Shiseido Global Innovation Center moved from Shin-Yokohama to Minatomirai, and the company

such as the “Festival/Tokyo” and KYOTO EXPERIMENT can also be cited.<sup>8</sup> In adopting events, employees of the corporate culture department (now called the social value creation headquarters) were characterized by evaluating the various events, and support for choreographers naturally included support for competitions, support for the creation and performance of company works, and creating networks of choreographers at festivals.

The evaluation standards for collaborators were determined by staff at the corporate culture department, but at the same time they promoted an understanding of contemporary dance among the staff. In reality, the staff were granted opportunities to come into contact with contemporary dance through the distribution of tickets for them to attend presentations. Just as Miho Ogura from the corporate value creation headquarters said, “Collaborations aim to contribute to the promotion of arts and culture as well as foment an awareness of the arts among staff, and improve the ability to create new values,”<sup>9</sup> the aforementioned approach makes staff aware of their support for contemporary dance, and promotes an understanding of the genre of contemporary dance itself.

During these collaborations, they continued to adopt a stance of opening the door for applicants through public recruitment. This stance is linked to comprehensive support such as support for competitions, the creation and performance of works, and the formation of choreographer networks, and is linked to support for the activities of choreographers, who are artistes.

Since FY2019, when the public recruitment collaborations ended, the Shiseido Gallery and Shiseido Arthouse have continued their art and culture activities.<sup>10</sup> Speaking of connections to contemporary dance, during the 7th Tsubaki-kai<sup>11</sup> at the Shiseido Gallery,

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began its many-year support for the “Yokohama Dance Collection” as a collaborative activity.

<sup>8</sup> On the company’s homepage, back numbers of their main support activities are listed starting from FY2006, and so it is possible to check their support for diverse arts activities. However, the items described as support activities are their “main support activities,” and there is a postscript saying that not all arts foundations and activities are listed.

Author Inquiry into Shiseido (December 17, 2020)

<sup>9</sup> Author Inquiry into Shiseido (December 17, 2020)

<sup>10</sup> Shiseido website (<https://corp.shiseido.com/jp/sustainability/beauty-art/>: Last accessed February 21, 2021)

<sup>11</sup> The 7th Tsubaki-kai (from 2013 to 2017) comprised Ryōko Aoki, Genpei Akasegawa, Zon Ito, Rei Naito, and Naoya Hatakeyama, but due to the death of Genpei Akasegawa in 2014, Yasutake Shimaji participated from 2015 onwards.

Yasutake Shimaji, former member of the Forsythe Company, became a member, and this can also be cited as the hiring not of an artist but of a dancer and choreographer. Keiko Toyoda of the corporate value creation headquarters says of the effects of hiring a dancer-cum-choreographer that “Other members have created works influenced by Shimaji’s dancing, and Shimaji has created models, so that (abridged)... an interesting collaboration has been born”.<sup>12</sup> In this way, activities that intermix the fields of contemporary dance and fine art have gradually been spreading.

The company has come to support a wide range of choreographers amidst their ongoing collaborations. The in-house approach through this process is not only rooted in loyalty to the staff amidst this ongoing support, but also, dance appreciation through the distribution of tickets on the one hand enables the work of the event supervisors and staff to be inspired, while on the other hand Toyota says that “On a survey regarding the distribution of tickets, staff expressed the opinion that we should support major events”.<sup>13</sup> From this opinion, it is possible to infer that it has not been determined whether employees empathize with support for contemporary dance in this manner. On the other hand, amidst the support for competitions, and for the creation and performance of works, the formation of choreographer networks ended public recruitment collaborations, and amidst the ongoing art and culture activities at the Shiseido Gallery and Shiseido Arthouse, there has been a convergence on modern art fields including contemporary dance.

## 2.2. Toyota Motor Corporation’s Toyota Choreography Award

The Toyota Motor Corporation is involved in commendations for the Toyota Choreography Award (hereinafter called the “TCA”), which started in 2002, and has produced a variety of choreographers (Yamashita 2009, 44).<sup>14</sup> TCA is a limited domestic Japanese award, and which recruited a total of 1,951 applications until it ended in 2016, and was responsible for discovering and training Japanese choreographers. Its background was the aim of improving the overall position of artists, and as it relied on support from numerous choreographers at the time, the company started its commendations.

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Shiseido Gallery website (<https://gallery.shiseido.com/jp/exhibition/member/>: Last accessed February 21, 2021)

<sup>12</sup> Author Inquiry into Shiseido (December 17, 2020)

<sup>13</sup> Author Inquiry into Shiseido (December 17, 2020)

<sup>14</sup> This award was established in 2007 in cooperation with the Setagaya Public Theatre.

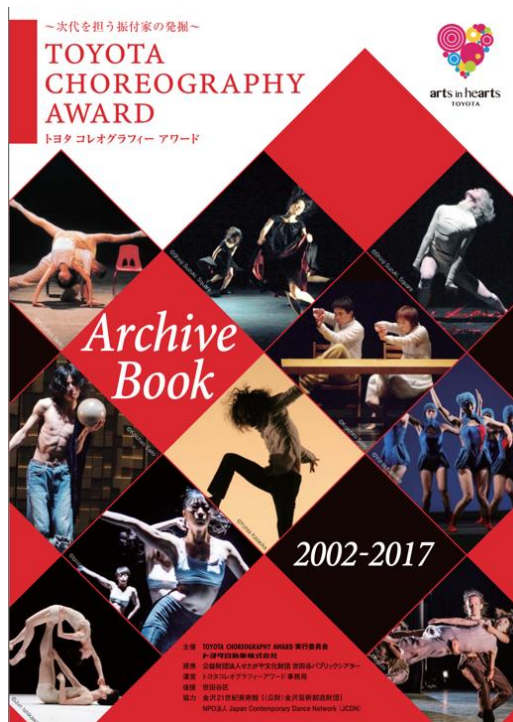


Photo 1: Cover of the “TOYOTA CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD Archive Book 2002-2017” (Taken by the author)

With the TCA, six individual or group finalists were chosen from among the applicants by a panel of judges, who decided on two awards during the Nextstage (i.e., the finals): the “Award for the contemporary choreographer” and the “Audience award.” With the “Award for the contemporary choreographer”, a theater tram is supplied as a public venue by the Setagaya Public Theatre, and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa residency program offers a residential creation and performance of the results for one to two weeks. A performance site, creation facilities, and works creation funding can all be cited as support for specific works creation. In addition, during the “Toyota creation space project,” a training venue at the sports center at the company’s Tokyo head office is offered to the six

individual or group finalists which they can then use to create their works for 12 months starting from the following year.<sup>15</sup>

TCA judging is on a wide front. Whereas on the one hand, many choreographers from developing countries applied in the beginning, and they were ranked, only young choreographers came to apply. Head of the TCA office Koichiro Takagi pointed out the problems of being unable to discover choreographers who already have careers during this ongoing event. In this way, it can be said that the TCA gives rise to a contradiction in which it is difficult to offer support to choreographers with careers in contemporary dance. However, the TCA judging methods have also improved over the last five years. The judges have switched from being critics to being public hall and foreign producers only, and they have also formed links in which people do not have to be finalists in order to be invited to regional residential schools or public halls. In other words, they have

<sup>15</sup> See: *TOYOTA CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD Archive Book 2002-2017*, 5.

Public website: TOYOTA CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD

([https://www.toyota.co.jp/jpn/sustainability/social\\_contribution/society\\_and\\_culture/domestic/tca/pdf/tca\\_archive\\_book.pdf](https://www.toyota.co.jp/jpn/sustainability/social_contribution/society_and_culture/domestic/tca/pdf/tca_archive_book.pdf); Last access February 21, 2021)

here promoted to formation of networks between choreographers and producers.

TCA recipients also receive diverse support after receiving the award. For example, it is possible to cite the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa's residency program after receiving the award. This plan was devised after people connected to the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa participated as judges in 2010, and the spread of support for choreographers can be seen in the networking with the judges. The company also offers economic support for the creations and performances of choreographers in residence at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa as a collaboration, and also participates in post-performance feedback.<sup>16</sup> On the nature of the support, Asako Kotaki from the social contribution and promotion department says that "As there wasn't really a venue for choreographers and dancers to create works as a group, we said that this was a kind gesture." Moreover, while the choreographers were in residence, they strengthened ties to the local community by hosting workshops for local children together with the coordinators for the "Toyota children and artists meet-up."

The aforementioned residency program at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa ended at the same time as the TCA events, but the "Toyota creation space project" is ongoing, and the company has not stopped supporting the creation of works by choreographers. The supply of a corporate training venue is ongoing even now as support for creation and performances by choreographers. Meanwhile, support for choreographers through the company's competitions is not subsequent support for their performances, but rather, the creation of choreographer networks.<sup>17</sup> Just as Kyoko Uchida of the social contribution and promotion department says, "It is this very network built piece by piece that enabled the current sponsorship activities to be offered," and so support for contemporary dance choreographers is ongoing as support in the form of the creation of choreographer networks.

### 2.3. Multicultural Facilities Operations and Network Formation at Wacoal Art Center

The Wacoal Art Center, which was established in 1985, operates the multicultural facility Spiral as a subsidiary 100% funded by Wacoal. The spiral is constantly gathering

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<sup>16</sup> Author Inquiry into Toyota (October 13, 2020)

<sup>17</sup> Author Inquiry into Toyota (October 13, 2020)



attention for its modern art, performances, dance, and concert introductions as well as its beauticians, household goods, and restaurants, and has been highly regarded ever since its inception as a symbol of Wacoal's cultural activities. The Spiral has been a base for art festivals and dance festivals ever since the 1990s, and this section cites as one example the contemporary dance festival "Dance New Air" (hereinafter called "DNA"), which is held jointly with the Dance New Air facilitation committee.

The Spiral is a base for the ongoing facilitation of DNA, which uses whole of Aoyama, as a joint event as described above. DNA hosts various related events (book fairs, dance and film shows, etc.) while collaborating with the Aoyama book center and image forum to offer a venue for contact with arts and culture to a wide range of people. Moreover, the dance performances are planned using showcases in the street, and this can be cited as an example of an extramural approach. Just as the Spiral's producer, Hiroyuki Kobayashi, says, "We supply performances at street venues where people who pass each other on the street can participate in art," and this does not stop at just offering progressive works,<sup>18</sup> but also means bringing contemporary dance into the streets to expand into venues where it is brought to people who pass each other on the street. In this way, the Spiral contributes to the permeation of art and culture into the Aoyama area<sup>19</sup> by functioning as an ongoing platform that we already have.

In addition, the Spiral is a core base for configuring networks between choreographers and dancers both domestic and foreign, such as establishing venues for stalwart young choreographers and dancers (the international dance network program sponsored by the NPO Kaibunsha<sup>20</sup>), and workshops and programs in addition to being a base for the display of choreographers' works both domestic and foreign in collaboration with DNA. In this way, Spiral's involvement can be interpreted as being linked to support for contemporary dance choreographers and dancers when seen from the viewpoint of network formation. In addition, the Wacoal Art Center can probably be said to be developing contemporary dance into an issue between the arts and society through the ongoing formation throughout the whole of Aoyama a network that broadens dance through DNA, which is operated and jointly sponsored by the Spiral.

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<sup>18</sup> Author Inquiry into Wacoal Art Center (October 9, 2020)

<sup>19</sup> The Yokohama Dance Collection, which started in 1996, was positioned as a "Japanese platform" for the Bagnolet International Dance Competition, and this role has continued over into the Dance Triennale Tokyo and Dance New Air (Kato 2018, 104).

<sup>20</sup> Kaibunsha website ([http://www.kaibunsha.net/archives/201607dansenet\\_j.html](http://www.kaibunsha.net/archives/201607dansenet_j.html): Last accessed February 21, 2021)

## 2.4. Summary: Legacy Configured through Long-term Corporate Support

In Chapter 2, the description was based on inquiries regarding the operation of multicultural facilities and network formations by collaborations with Shiseido, the Toyota Choreography Award by the Toyota Motor Corporation and the Wacoal Arts Center, which have been involved with contemporary dance long-term for ten years or more. The Wacoal Arts Center differs from the other two companies, and currently also operates the Spiral facility while jointly hosting the ongoing Dance New Air facilitation committee.

The individual approaches to contemporary dance are gradually being transformed, so the nature of support is dynamic, but from the long-term viewpoint, contributions have settled on the choreographers who are responsible for choreographing and performing works. Shiseido's collaborations include comprehensive support for contemporary dance, and the permeation of contemporary dance into society can be seen as synonymous with their involvement with their staff. In addition, after the company ended its collaborations, they transitioned from supporting contemporary dance to supporting artistes in a wide range of genres including choreographers. The Toyota Motor Corporation's Toyota Choreography Award finds value in supporting the formation of choreographer networks through raising the level of choreographers. The Spiral, which is operated by the Wacoal Arts Center, is a core base for the formation of networks of choreographers and dancers through joint ongoing collaboration with DNA, and this involvement could be said to lead to support for networks of choreographers and dancers in contemporary dance.

The three companies cited in the examples in this chapter fund support for competitions, the creation and performance of works, and the formation of choreographer networks, but the initial approach of each company was different. Shiseido has a history of supporting fine art, and started by supporting contemporary dance based on a meeting with a Japanese dance company. On the other hand, the Toyota Motor Corporation aimed to find and train choreographers in liaison with the Setagaya Public Theatre in Tokyo. Meanwhile, the Spiral, which is operated by the Wacoal Arts Center, has been a base for various cross-genre events and festivals ever since it opened, and has become a venue for artists' activities. The approaches of these three companies enable us to apprehend the physical expression even while it is changing, and the creation of the value of physical beauty, through investment in contemporary dance for the past ten years or

more.

The approaches of the companies offer people a contemporary dance with which they normally have no contact as a corporate involvement that has contact with sponsorship activities, and which can become the legacy of each company, even though nobody is aware of it at present. From today's viewpoint, long-term support for progressive contemporary dance by the three companies can be said to contribute to support for choreographers in the training of human resources and improvement in their standing from the viewpoint of supporting competitions, and works creation and performance, while inheriting the Western model of supporting contemporary dance, and of involvement in sponsorship activities that will cause contemporary dance to germinate in Japan.

### Chapter 3. Support for Choreographers from the SAISON Foundation

In the previous chapter, we discussed in details cases of corporate sponsorship in contemporary dance and their individual approaches. Therein, support for competition, the creation and performance of works, and for network formation contributed to supporting choreographers. Moreover, the individual approaches brought up their functioning as sponsorship activities that contribute greatly to the world of Japanese contemporary dance. However, it is not only companies that contribute to the support of contemporary dance.

This chapter focuses on the involvement of the SAISON Foundation, which has supported choreographers continuously for over ten years.

#### 3.1. Support for the Creative Process

The SAISON Foundation has been a mainstay of support since it was established in 1987 as the personal foundation of the SAISON Group founder, Seiji Tsutsumi. In particular, they are a foundation that specializes in supporting modern theater and dance, and contribute to promoting international exchange through encouraging contemporary dance and arts activities. Initially after the foundation was established, they were about “modernity”, “training the young generation”, and “internationalization”, but since 1992, they transitioned from on-off support to medium to long-term involvement. (It was in

1992 that they started their medium to long-term support program “annual support”.) Currently, the main activities policy is to develop broad support activities as “support for creative activities,” “ongoing support from a long-term viewpoint,” and “complex support that is not just financial.”<sup>21</sup>

Artist support means supporting dramatists, directors, and choreographers as “SAISON fellows.” SAISON fellows are divided into two types, and the objectives for each are different, but with SAISON fellow type I, young people are discovered as support for artists who bear responsibility for the next generation, and the support grasps opportunities, whereas with SAISON fellows type II, support is for global activities by introducing art and culture in international venues as support for career-minded artists. The support period is for two years in the short term, and approximately nine years in the long term. Kyoko Hisano, who is the foundation’s managing director and program director, says regarding the changes to choreographers who receive long-term support that “Initially, we started with network creation, building friendships, and creating bases, but as productions gradually grew more skillful in finding their way, the field of view for the activities of the people themselves swiftly broadened.”<sup>22</sup> By receiving support from the foundation, choreographers transition to activities that are focused not just domestically but internationally, and thus develop activities while maintaining contact with other cultures. Support for choreographers here includes not just support for choreographers who are responsible for choreographed works and performances, but also include support for a wide range of activities that enrich the creative process that stands up to works creation and performances. Support for the foundation’s choreographers supports choreographers stepping up, and brings about changes that enable them to spread their wings internationally. Moreover, through holding ongoing friendship meetings where the fellows gather, the foundation forges multi-generational links between theater and dance, so that, for example, choreographers and dancers are employed in theatrical fields, and this forms networks that transcend the barriers between theater and dance.

The foundation is developing not only the aforementioned support, but also a residency program that is shared with other countries. This residency program has enabled people to stay at the new Morishita Studio building since 2011, and was ongoing since before

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<sup>21</sup> SAISON Foundation website (<http://www.saison.or.jp/outline/index.html>: Last accessed February 21, 2021)

<sup>22</sup> Author Inquiry into SAISON Foundation (December 16, 2020)

then. For example, during the “Triangle Arts Program (TAP) Project in Dance”, which was jointly sponsored by the Asian Cultural Council in 1994, exchange was based on a partnership with overseas organizations. During this exchange program, choreographers, dancers, managers, and critics from the three countries of Japan, USA, and Indonesia participated, and accrued joint works through exchanges between the dance communities of the countries over a two to three-week period each.<sup>23</sup> Through this program, awareness was forged not only of the fruits of the works, but also the experience of the participants, and with TAP in particular, not only was a global network configured for the future, but also mutual understanding was promoted of the differences in the modernization of dance and of the situation of contemporary dance in each country (Katayama 2016, 150–151). Here also, the foundation not only supports the creative and performance of choreographed works, but also enables once again an understanding of the focus on support for the creative process.

On the one hand, the visiting fellow program, which supports artists from other countries, researches Japanese issues so that foreign artists can create works, and also researches the creation of works in collaboration with Japanese artists. The prototype of works created through research in Japan is improved by other regional residencies, and



Photo 2. Morishita studio (taken by the author)

recreates the form of the works through repeated creation. In this way, the foundation contributes to the birth of a positive cycle of creation. Further, with support for the creation process, program officers involved in support activities respond to the demands of the artist in the manner of a dramatist or arts manager whole offering

flexible support while at the same time accompanying the visiting fellows while continuing to dialog that includes the artists’ humanity. The program officer exists beyond the framework of the mere supporting events supervisor through knowledge that includes the humanity of visiting artists, and supports the creation process of the choreographer from various aspects.

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<sup>23</sup> TAP was subsequently implemented in 1997, 1999, and from FY2001 to FY2005.

Contributions to enriching the creative process discovered by the foundation enables the territory of dance to be gradually expanded, and broadens the support for choreographers. The role of the choreographer here can be cited as both creating choreographed works and “the choreographer creates dance amidst questioning what can be done vis-à-vis everyday life and society”.<sup>24</sup> The foundation’s support for the creative process not only pursues the image of choreographers responsible for choreographed works and performances, but also questions once again the social role of choreographers while focusing on the switch to a new image of choreographers, who ensure that dance saturates society.

### 3.2. Network Formation through Partnership Events

The SAISON Foundation supports creation and performances by choreographers, as well as the creation process, through involvement in the creation and sharing of networks that transcend national boundaries, and supporting choreographers who remain uncritiqued. In particular, the foundation’s support for choreographers can be said to yield continuous results by not being impacted to a large extent by external orders and critiques, which is different from corporate support for choreographers. These results are obtained by activities independent of the foundation as personal funding from Seiji Tsutsumi. On the other hand, pouring efforts into the creative process forms networks that support a wide range of choreographer activities.

Speaking of the formation of networks that support a wide range of choreographer activities, the liaison with the Park Tower Next Dance Festival (PNF), which was held between 1996 and 2000, can be cited. PNF was corporate sponsorship developed by Tokyo Gas, and was a festival of new performances entrusted to three rising choreographers held at Shinjuku Park Tower Hall. As, at the time, Shinjuku Park Tower did not have a practice venue for choreographers to create, the foundation offered the Morishita studio for two months for choreographers to engage in creation.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, the liaison between the foundation and PNF developed into the hosting of small performances by

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<sup>24</sup> Author Inquiry into SAISON Foundation (December 16, 2020)

<sup>25</sup> The Park Tower Next Dance Festival led the contemporary dance world, but had few practice venues. Consequently, the Nishi Sugamo Sozoshu, which used an abandoned school, was established in 2004 to offer a practice venue for artists.

Interview with Sachio Ichimura, who was the arts program dance series advisor at the time of the Park Tower Next Dance Festival (February 27, 2021)

next-generation choreographers who participated in PNF as recommended by small-scale public and private spaces and the performance of works that were under creation at the Morishita studio.<sup>26</sup> In this way, the nature of the lies between PNF, which was corporately sponsored, and the private art NPO was achieved through the mediation of the SAISON Foundation, and the partnership events are an example that led to success through interactions between the relevant parties from various sectors.

The results of these partnership events not only empower the emergence of contemporary dance, but also are evidence of support for the creative process mentioned above. The characteristics of the foundation's support for choreographers can be said to be the formation of networks that support a wide range of choreographer activities that promote the path to the steps leading to the legacy cultivated by companies while also having a deep relationship with corporate sponsorship activities.

However, as with the aforementioned partnership activities, questions remain regarding the foundation's inability to deepen relations with corporate sponsorship activities. The reason being that while the foundation has contact with the companies, this is a rare case leading to the aforementioned partnership events. Moreover, when compared to the era in which contemporary dance flourished, it must be additionally remarked that there was little actual interaction between the foundation, companies and various other sectors.

### 3.3. Summary: The Corporate Role of Choreographers

In Chapter 3, we focused on the fact that support for choreographers from the SAISON Foundation was characterized not only by support for choreographed works and performances, but also support for the creative process. Support for the creative process stacks on top of support for choreographers who are responsible for choreographed works and their performance, and broadens out to support for choreographers from the point of intervening and permeating contemporary dance throughout society.<sup>27</sup> Further, the

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<sup>26</sup> General name for the introduction of performances under construction at the Morishita studio and works by artists (Next Dance), and of small performances by next-generation choreographers who participated in PNF (Next Next). Further, the small public and private spaces were the "Session House," "ST Spot," and "Torii Hall" (Katayama 2016, 164–166).

<sup>27</sup> As of 2021, support from the SAISON Foundation for the creative process has developed as an "online research residency" that is used online amidst the cancellation and postponement of various arts and cultural activities concomitant with the spread of the coronavirus.

foundation liaises with various sectors to improve the value of partnership events by creating networks that support a wide range of choreographer activities. Such networks have not only created a base for contemporary dance in Japan since the year 2000, but also have supported corporate sponsorship from the point of close interactions between the parties responsible for the support. Support for the creative process into which the foundation has poured its efforts and the formation of networks that support a wide range of choreographer activities through liaisons with diverse sectors are positioned as procedures that open up the role of choreographers to society.

In addition, the role of choreographers as seen from the foundation is not only to manifest the individuality and creativity of the choreographers and to create and perform works of art, but also to enable a grasp of the implications of manifesting such individuality and creativity of choreographers in society and on a daily basis. In other words, the social role of the choreographer is to exist while stacking images of choreographers through dance as entrusted to the masses and as required by society. It could be said that what is important here is the point that the foundation's support for choreographers is tied to enabling inroads into the territory of the arts and society.

## Conclusion

As stated in the preface, the purpose of this paper is to describe competition, cases of support for the creation and performance of works, and of support for network formation, as well as clarifying the nature of Japanese sponsorship for contemporary dance and the nature of support for its transformation.

It has now become clear that in support for choreographers, choreographer competition, support for the creation and performance of works, and support for network formation are extremely important viewpoints. Further, we studied the nature of the social role of choreographers from the changes in involvement for their support from the foundation. In Chapter 1, we checked the ties between the image of choreographers who are responsible for the creation and performance of works in the West and support for contemporary dance. In Chapter 2, we surveyed cases of involvement in network formation with the operation of multicultural facilities at the Wacoal Arts Center in addition to the Toyota Choreography Award by the Toyota Motor Corporation and Shiseido's collaborative activities, which have supported contemporary dance long-term for over ten years, and these individual approaches have continuously inherited the



Western model while bringing into stark relief improvements to the standing of choreographers in Japan and support for choreographers through personnel training, etc. Moreover, in Chapter 3, we clarified the role of choreographers who are responsible for the creation and performance of choreographed works in society from the viewpoint of involvement in partnerships that liaise with various sectors as well as support for the creative process by the SAISON Foundation.

These above points have been presented in this paper. The “era of the choreographer” in Japan grasps the core role of the choreographer while adopting a cultural policy viewpoint of supporting contemporary dance and comprises the viewpoints of (1) Discovering choreographers through competition, (2) Supporting the creation and performance of choreographed works, and (3) sponsorship that supports network formation, the discovery of choreographers therein, and support for personnel training. As stated at the beginning of the introduction, support for choreographers that include the various elements from (1) to (3) is synonymous with support for contemporary dance. Consequently, Japanese sponsorship activities continue the discovery of choreographers and personnel training, and contribute greatly to support for the arts and culture from the point of enriching the soil for contemporary dance.

Finally, let us recall the social role of choreographers described in Chapter 3.3. The social role of choreographers can be stated as “having individuality and creativity, while making sure dance entrusted to the hands of the masses coexists with dance required by society”. However, this situation does not guarantee the originality and creativity of the dance imputed to the choreographer that is the aim of the “era of the choreographer.” In my PhD thesis “Post-choreography in the Changes of Choreographic Practices: ‘Clumsy-seeming Movement’ and Jérôme Bel” (2020), I proposed a new role for choreographers in participatory dance from the viewpoint of modern dance history, and studied the conditions for its appearance in the territory of the arts and society. However, in order to clarify the appearance of the choreographer’s work in the territory of the arts and society where a social role is demanded of the choreographer, it is necessary not only to research the contemporary dance that is rooted in the region and participatory dance, but also survey and analyze cases of sponsorship that support this. I want to pass on to the next research case surveys of sponsorship activities relating to participatory dance.

The aim of this research was to show the transformation of support for choreographers in contemporary dance through the historical involvement in the establishment process

of contemporary dance, and to clarify trends in Japanese sponsorship activities based on that background.

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### **Investigations**

Wacoal Art Center (October 9, 2020)

Toyota Motor Corporation (October 13, 2020)

SAISON Foundation (December 16, 2020)

Shiseido (December 17, 2020)

### **Interviews**

Sachio Ichimura (February 27, 2021)

### **Photos**

Photo 1: Cover of the "TOYOTA CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD Archive Book 2002-2017"  
(Taken by the author)

Photo 2: Morishita studio (taken by the author)

(LSP : Trivector Co., Ltd.)