The meaning of iemoto seido in the world of nihon buyo

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**Definition and Historical Background**

Nihon Buyo is Kabuki style Japanese dance essentially of the Edo period (1603-1867). It developed from the traditions of earlier centuries and, as a classical art dance form, it is continuing to evolve in the context of contemporary culture.1 Iemoto seido is basically a system of inherited or appointed relationships in a hierarchy within a particular group or ryu (school or guild). Today the system is widespread and encompasses many disparate professions and occupations including most of the traditional arts. In the performing arts, and Nihon Buyo specifically, this institution has a profound effect on the teaching and practice of the art, the lives of the persons involved, and also on creativity within the art form itself, including choreography.

From the first lesson, a beginner in Nihon Buyo becomes, to some degree, a part of iemoto seido. He or she, child or adult, becomes seito or deshi (student or disciple) of a particular teacher in a certain ryu, and by doing so enters into a hierarchical relationship with this teacher and all other persons in the given ryu. The most common word for teacher is sensei. Another word is shisho though this is much more formal and usually preceded by and followed by an honorific, e.g., o-shisho-sama. In the world of Nihon Buyo these words, like the Indian word guru, imply a spiritual and emotional bond between master and disciple as well as the intellectual, professional, or occupational contract to learn or to teach. This bond usually lasts for the lifetime of the individuals involved. Reverence for one's sensei, along with one's place in the pyramidal structure of iemoto seido, may be passed on to succeeding generations.

A quite literal translation of iemoto seido is a good definition. Ie can mean "family," "house," "household," and "family name," among other meanings. Moto has among its many meanings "principal." The same character with a different reading (ka) can mean "profession." Seido means "system." Iemoto at first meant the nucleus of the extended family (the honke or principal household as opposed to the bunke or a branch of the family). During the Edo period it came to mean the head household of a school and also the person in top position in that household, and thus the person in top position within the ryu (or ryuha). Iemoto seido could be translated as "head of family system," and this is most descriptive with its implications of an emotional and economic as well as an inherited system. It also has been called the "headmaster system" (Gunji 1970:182-187), "School," "guild," even "union" are analogous terms, yet each of these has notations which could be misleading to those attempting to find Western parallels. I herefore, we will revert to the Japanese words in the hope that, by eliminating preconceptions, a clearer picture of the situation will be presented.

In Japanese society in general there is great emphasis on hierarchy (Reischauer 1977:chapter 16).2 This is true in village structure (Cornell 1962 and Beardsley 1962), in wards within big cities (Dore 1962), in business and politics, lemoto seido is certainly not an isolated phenomenon, but is a part of the society with roots extending back to ancient practices of ancestor worship. To quote Reischauer:

This emphasis on hierarchy undoubtedly derives in part from the long history of hereditary power and aristocratic rule in Japan. Class divisions, hereditary authority, and artistocratic privileges characterized all of Japan's pre-modern history. The imperial line is a good case in point. Clearly traceable back to the fifth century, it has always been the symbol of the unity of the nation and until quite recently the unique source, at least in theory, of all legitimate authority. (1977:157)

And again:

Even the arts during feudal times fell into the hereditary pattern. All artistic skills came to be regarded as secret family possessions to be passed down from father to son. Schools of painting and of theatrical performance were organized on this hereditary principle, though the almost filial teacher-disciple relationship and the lenient system of adoption actually meant that artistic skills were more often passed on through talented adopted disciples. Curiously it is this aspect of traditional hereditary authority that persists perhaps most strongly in contemporary Japan. Schools of tea ceremony or flower arrangement, for instance, may be tightly organized on a family pattern, and the supreme authority in them may still be transmitted by inheritance. (1977:158)

Yes, historically the top positions in iemoto seido in Nihon Buyo were usually inherited and this is still true today. There was an instance when the Fujima Ryu (a school established in the early 1700's and continued through seven generations) was disbanded for a period of time because there was no male heir (Gunji 1970:184). This would not happen today as a woman may now become iemoto (head) of a Buyo ryu (Yamaura 1970:527)3 and in many other professions it is possible also.

In the context of this article it will not be possible to give more than an extremely brief history of iemoto seido.4 For our purposes it is enough to understand that the usual assumption is that there is ancient precedent for iemoto seido in the clan-like uji and that certain iemoto-like families and/or groups of persons were responsible for practicing and transmitting secret traditions, shamanistic rituals, and Shinto dances in pre-Nara times, that is, before 710 A.D. (Gunji 1970:185).5 In 593 Prince Shotoku founded the Shitennoji temple and subsequently established a music department from which some members of the Imperial Gagaku orchestra and Bugaku dance group claim descent. Thus, although the word iemoto is not found in print until 1689, many prototypes occur very early in Japanese history. Although the institution perhaps began with the nobility and the religious elite, there are also instances of quasi ietnoto institutions among secular groups such as the Heian period (794-1185) Dengaku theatrical troupes which had an inherited headship and a written song text to pass on (Hoff 1971). By the fourteenth century we see the bushi or warrior class involved, and by Tokugawa or Edo times several of the martial arts and even go (game) players, as well as No drama artists, were organized along family lines. In Edo (the earlier name for Tokyo) the guild system increased in strength, mainly for economic reasons, and iemoto seido, as the true system it is at present, developed. Kabuki, at its inception, was a plebeian entertainment dependent for support on the new middle class, the pleasure-seeking merchants and townspeople, and the samurai or warrior class, rather than on the religious institutions or aristocracy. A few Kabuki artists were hired as private entertainers for the military government, but earning a livelihood was risky and the ietnoto seido was needed for protection.

**Iemoto Seido in the Twentieth Century**

What specifically does this "system" mean in modern times in terms of the rules and regulations regarding teaching and learning, granting of licenses, obtaining fees, and the hierarchy, including the position of iemoto? Within a dance guild, what does iemoto seido mean to the individual dancer or choreographer or teacher? In a wider sense, what does it mean for the art form? What are the implications of the differences in values of East and West as expressed in iemoto seido? To answer these questions, certain background information will be necessary: first, information regarding the numerous schools of Buyo; second, an explanation of natori; third, information about the iemoto per se; and fourth, analogies with the Western dance world.

**Schools of Buyo**

There are more than 150 recognized schools of Nihon Buyo in Japan at present. Some of the best known are; Azuma, Bando, Fujima, Hanayagi, Ichikawa, Inoue, Nakamura, Onoe, Wakayagi, and Yamamura. More and more new n/u are being formed and the motivation for this proliferation is more financial than artistic. The Hanayagi Ryu alone has produced more than 10,000 professionals since its founding in the nineteenth century. This is one of the largest schools, but all of the other well known ryu have also produced numerous professionals. There is a distinction on several levels between those professionals who use their status in order to earn a livelihood and those who do not, as well as the distinction between amateurs and professionals.

**Natori**

Natori or "professional name" is the term applied to professional status, and in effect signifies that the person has a license to teach. One of the main sources of revenue for a n/w is the granting of natori. It is possible to purchase a cheap or bogus natori from a disreputable source just as one may purchase a spurious college degree in this country. However, it is almost impossible to perform or teach traditional Buyo anywhere in Japan without a bona-fide natori indicating professional status in a recognized school.6

In order to receive natori, the student of Nihon Buyo must pass a test of performance skill and pay fees. The examination for professional status resembles, in some ways, a Cecchetti examination in ballet. First each teacher chooses those of his pupils who he feels are qualified to become professionals. In the Hanayagi school, two dancers from the same teacher will be tested together and so these pairs are formed ahead of time. Before the examination the pair selects six dances from the traditional repertoire that they have learned. They practice all six, knowing that the judges will select two for them to perform as full-length dances and may call for sections from any of the other four. On the day of the examination, three to five professionals of that ryu, and sometimes the iemoto also, serve as judges. The many hopefuls wait in a large anteroom. After waiting, sometimes for a long time, the pair is called into the adjacent room to be examined. Since the Buyo dances are seldom less than one-half hour in length, the testing of each pair takes more than an hour.

If the student is successful in meeting the performance standards of the school, he is informed that he is eligible to receive natori. His new professional name will be formed by taking first the name of the school. This becomes his family name or last name. For example, every natori in the Hanayagi school will be a "Hanayagi." This denotes membership in the n/w. The second name, which is a given or personal name, is usually formed by adding new syllables to the teacher's given professional name. Hanayagi Isami (the author's sensei), might have been named "Hanayagi Sumiyoshi" or something of that nature, because her teacher's given professional name is Sumi. Actually, the name Isami is an exception because it was not made in this way. Isami's teacher, wishing to give her a very special honor, gave her her own nonprofessional first name (from Ohashi Isami). This was a unique award. Typically a new dance name is an adaptation of the teacher's given professional name. The Japanese characters of the dancer's new professional name are then written on a wooden plaque to be hung on the wall. A dancer with a brand-new natori will display it proudly in much the same way that a newly graduated M,D. hangs out his shingle. 7

Before the student receives natori, however, fees must be paid. Typically the cost of the wooden plaque bearing the characters of the dancer's new professional name is about ¥50,000. For many years ¥1,000 equaled U.S.A. $2.78 and so the cost in the 1950's was about $139.00. Lately the yen has fluctuated so much that the exact cost at a given time in the future is not predictable. At present ¥240 are worth $1.00 so the cost is correspondingly higher. Also there is disturbing inflation (infure) in Japan. To this cost of the plaque must be added the cost of the examination and of the gifts to each of the teachers who are between the student's teacher and the iemoto in the ryu hierarchy. If one's teacher is fifth in line, fewer gifts will be needed than if one's teacher is fifteenth, but in that case lessons were undoubtedly more expensive. It is difficult for a Japanese to say exactly how much his natori cost. This is not only because it is a delicate matter, but because a definite monetary value cannot always be affixed to the gifts. Excluding all costs prior to the examination {lessons, etc.), the total costs of a natori in Tokyo in the late 1970's were approximately ¥200,000. The iemoto receives the major portion of these fees.

**The Iemoto**

The iemoto or "head of family" is the person in the very top position in the hierarchy. The line of succession to the position usually stays quite literally in the hereditary family as well as the ryu "family." The head of a flourishing school, such as the Hanayagi, can become wealthy. Those below the iemoto in status benefit economically according to their place in the hierarchy. A new natori will be able to recoup the fees-slowly or more rapidly according to position on the ladder.

If there is no male heir, one may be adopted. Adoption, especially in families with no son and usually including marriage to a daughter, was very common and still happens today (Hozumi 1912:144-160). Iemoto may appoint a nonhereditary favorite deshi as successor or, in modern times, daughters have been appointed- Okuni, the woman considered to be the founder of Kabuki, is finally coming back into her own in terms of the hierarchy, even though women are still barred from the traditional Kabuki stage.

Some of the founders of tyti have been dancers, some actor-dancers, and some were choreographers. These lines have been continued until the present. New persons in these categories have gained a following, branched off from the original, formed a new school and set themselves up as a new ieinoto.8

**Analogies to the Western Dance World**

Analogies may be misleading especially when, as in the following comparisons, they are hypothetical. But let us suppose that, sometime before the end of their careers, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn had each appointed a successor. Imagine that Irma Duncan had been given the natori "Duncan Isadora II," and Doris Humphrey had become "St. Denis Ruth II." Charles Weidman or Martha Graham might have become "Shawn Ted II," but he chose Charles and appointed Martha, "Shawn Theodora." This title would indicate great respect since it so closely resembles the iemoto's name, but it would not place Martha in top position. Let us suppose that she is not content with this because she wants more prestige and the iemoto's fees, and so she builds up a following and starts a new school. Dancers deemed worthy who can afford the fees, and sometimes some not so worthy who can afford the fees, will henceforth take the name Graham. Before retiring from the stage, Martha would have appointed "Graham Martha II."

To a Westerner this may seem preposterous but not to a Japanese. True, some Japanese are quick to point out the disadvantages of the system which now seems so outmoded. Certain Japanese critics would like to see the powerful iemoto dethroned (Gunji 1970:179-187). They complain that iemoto seido holds down individual creativity. It seems to the author that they are quite correct. It does! Yet the Japanese, traditionally, have not valued individual creativity in quite the same way that we do in the West. It is not that they do not value innovation, change, and the contribution of the individual. They do when it occurs as a development of the tradition and not as isolated change. The clan or family is much more important than any one individual; the school and its style of dance are more important than the contributions of any one choreographer. The matter is extremely complicated, indeed as complicated as the evolution of the Japanese culture and philosophy of art, shaped over the centuries by indigenous and imported influences. Clan or family was important and there were iemoto-like groups long before Chinese imports, based on Confucian ideals, influenced the court bureaucracy in the sixth century. Perhaps largely owing to geographical isolation, the Japanese have always had a strong sense of national identity. Borrowings from other cultures have taken on a flavor uniquely and unmistakably Japanese. Iemoto seido is no exception in that it does emphasize the group rather than the individual.9 This statement might lead to the belief that the individual is sacrificed to the group, but that is a matter of cultural perspective. A statement by Reischauer points up the difference in outlook:

The cooperative, relativistic, group-oriented Japanese is not thought of as just the bland product of a social conditioning that has worn off all individualistic corners, but rather as the product of firm inner self-control that has made him master of his less rational and more antisocial instincts. He is not a weak-willed yes-man but the possessor of great self-discipline. In contrast to normal Western perceptions, social conformity to the Japanese is no sign of weakness but rather the proud tempered product of inner strength. (1977:152)

In comparing teacher-pupil relationships, schools of dance, and methods of choreography in this country to those in the world of Buyo under the institution of iemoto seido, we see that the differences do not necessarily involve opposites, but are rather differences in degree. As in Western ballet, it requires an average of ten years to train a Buyo dancer. Even after natori, serious professionals continue to practice and take lessons just as we do. But a Buyo dancer has only one teacher. If that sensei dies or stops teaching, the deshi will study with another of the same ryu, usually the successor of the first. Hanayagi Isami did not teach until after her own teacher, Sumi I, died in 1947, and then she studied with Sumi II. It is almost unheard of for a Buyo dancer to change teachers or schools.10 Buyo performers and choreographers work within the system, not trying to break away from the art of their teacher, only to develop it. They respect the work of the generation just before, as well as the long cultural history of Nihon Buyo.

In this country too, there is a great deal of love and respect of students for teachers, as well as loyalty to studio or company. Yet it is not expected that a person must devote an entire career to one choreographic style. On the contrary, we place a high value on flexibility, individuality, creativity, and originality. Bella Lewitzky is an example of the American pattern. In August 1972, in a panel discussion at Eastern Michigan University, she said, in answer to a question from the audience, that she was "absolutely opposed to shopping." By this she meant that she was opposed to having students hop from one studio to another sampling various techniques and teachers. As a student she would have been "excommunicated" had she done this. Still, she herself eventually needed to leave her teacher, Lester Horton, and the process was painful emotionally and artistically. Such separations are legion in the life stories of our leading dancers and choreographers. Although grateful for past nurturing, they have had to leave. Sometimes the departure was greeted by resentment, bitterness, and misunderstanding on the part of the artistic parent.11

Our developing young artists are often under pressure to develop an individual style. In the fifties the term "little Graham crackers" was used as a derisive epithet for those who had studied with Martha Graham for so long that they were unmistakably stamped with her style and could not break away from it. Contrast this with iemoto seido under which it would be the greatest of honors to be dubbed "Graham Martha II," and for centuries afterwards dancers would proudly receive Graham natori. Even when new choreography in the style had ceased, professionals would continue to perform the repertoire.

In Japan times have changed. The pace of life as elsewhere is faster. From the nineteenth century on, there has been an inundation of Western influence, especially since the Second World War. Along with the national inferiority complex that followed the war, there was a generalized attitude that Western ways must be better. For example, in a book regarding family kinship relationships, the oyabun-kobun (parent-child) ideal is criticized: "Our problem is to abolish the undemocratic features of the family pattern and its norms, and to bring to realization the democratic way of family living" (Kawashima, Nagai and Bennet 1962:110). The continued strength of "Asiatic feudalism" was under attack on all fronts, social, political, and in the arts.12 Disillusioned Japanese understandably wanted change, lemoto seido, with its emphasis on the preservation of tradition and its attempt to hold back change, was called reactionary, old-fashioned and conservative. However, labeling can be misleading. "Conservatism" is relative to the situation. "Conservation" groups in this country which are attempting to hold back change in order to preserve wilderness lands and natural resources are called "progressive." Sometimes they are even labeled "radical" by "conservative" groups opposed to "conservation." Perhaps those concerned professionals and an ever-growing segment of our public who seek to protect artistic resources will need a "progressive" Westernized version of iemoto seido to provide institutionalized support. Certain of its "conservative" aspects, if transferred to these shores, might seem "progressive." Take, for example, the licensing of dance teachers in order to raise professional standards and protect young bodies.

Here in America the value placed on originality—"It's got to be new," not only in advertising but in art - sometimes reaches absurd limits. In Japan each important art dance form has had several centuries to mature as a cohesive style. After a new style has emerged, the old one is still preserved - not just in pictures, notation, or by recent methods such as film or videotape, but in actual performance. Bugaku is probably the oldest art dance form in the world which has been in continuous performance since its inception and is still being performed today. All the other major Japanese art dance styles which followed Bugaku are still in performance also, which means of course that they have an audience. The powerfully entrenched iemato seido, when understood in the broadest sense, as a manifestation of the philosophy and cultural history of the Japanese people, influenced by geography and population density, is the reason for this phenomenon. It cannot be dismissed lightly.

In the West, how can we cherish our dance masterpieces when they no longer exist? Even in modern times much is being lost. How can we answer the question, "What was it, exactly, that Isadora did?" when she herself did not want her dances preserved {Ar-mitage 1947:19)?u Her attitude was not typical. Many of our choreographers have tried to save their dances from oblivion but lack of public interest and lack of funds have made this difficult if not impossible; we do not have iemoto seido.14

**Conclusion**

That iemoto seido will suddenly die out does not seem likely, criticism notwithstanding, but it will probably have to be modified to serve contemporary needs. Our purpose is not to place a value judgment on the system of either East or West. The art of the dance is served by the philosophy which functions best in the context of a particular culture at a particular time. What is old-fashioned in Japan might become new-fashioned here as we seek to honor our artists and preserve our dance heritage. The Japanese classical dance has prospered for many centuries. Iemoto seido has functioned since the establishment of the Imperial Gagaku orchestra in 593 and in certain forms even before that. Whatever the future holds for it as an institution, may the Japanese dance and the artists who create and perform it continue to prosper!

**Notes**

1For a more complete definition of Nihon Buyo and a synopsis of its long history, see Malm 1977.

2Chapter 16 entitled "Hierarchy" (Reischauer 1977:157-166) is germane to this essay. The first paragraph, for example, states:

One obvious contrast between Japanese and American society, though by no means all of the West, is the much greater Japanese emphasis on hierarchy. Despite clear allocations of authority to individuals in the United States, often to a degree that seems almost dictatorial to Japanese, Americans have a strong sense of equality or at least a compulsion to feign equality—"Just call me Joe." Japanese consider differing ranks and status natural and inevitable. In fact, their interpersonal relations and the groups into which they divide are usually structured on the assumption that there will be hierarchical differences.

3On this page a female iemoto of the Hanayagi Ryu is shown in a photograph.

4Japanese writers have provided more detail. Nishiyama (1971:326-364) gives a good account, and an English summary of Nishiyama's main points may be found in Ortolani 1969.

5This information is contained in several Japanese sources though they are rather vague. For example, Gunji says:

The headmaster system, which is chiefly responsible for this trend, stems from the days long ago when certain families or groups of dancers were assigned the special function of serving the gods by presenting religious dances. These dance groups had both the right and the obligation to transmit the secrets of their art to their successors, and it was from this custom of preserving a sacred office that the headmaster system was undoubtedly bom.

There are detailed accounts written by Westerners as well. See de Bary, Keene and Tsunoda 1958:3-92.

6The information concering iemoto seido in this century, unless otherwise noted, comes from the author's own observations or verbal or written communications from her sensei, Hanayagi Isami. An attempt has been made to give information which is generally applicable, but specific examples are from the Hanayagi Ryu.

Until fifteen years ago, assuming natori meant that one could attract disciples and perform professionally. However, after that time, the Hanayagi Ryu began a new process of name-taking. First one receives natori and then, after passing an examination, one receives shihan. Natori has been relegated to a kind of semiprofessional status and sometimes carries a different meaning than it did before. Following Hanayagi's lead, the other schools of dance established similar grades. Yet the tests for each differ depending on the school. Because the word natori is historically correct and is used frequently as the generic term for professional status, I have continued to use it. Robert Rann, Ph.D. candidate, University of Michigan, obtained the information on shihan for me. His source was Toyozawa Koka, a gidayu performer.

7In China, ancestor plaques bearing the characters of the deceased person's name were thought to contain the spirit after death. Plaques are used for many purposes in Japan, even in front of residences. However, because of the feeling tone associated with the wooden plaque for natori, it seems possible that there might be a connection, historical and emotional, with these Chinese ancestor plaques. See Kidd 1960:104-119. This book is enjoyable reading for laymen or specialists, and gives valuable information concerning the situation in China.

8 Specific if chauvinistic information relating to iemoto of the Hanayagi Ryu is given in this translation by Robert Rann, adapted by the author (Yamaura 1970:527-530):

History

The present iemoto of the Hanayagi Ryu, Jusuke, is the third in this line. The previous two both enjoyed long careers. The first Jusuke assumed the Hanayagi name in 1850 (founding the school) and was active for the next 56 years —until his death in 1907 at the age of 83. The second Jusuke took the name in 1919, at the age of 26, at a performance held at the Ichimura Theatre. In 1964 he left the name Jusuke III to his daughter, took the name Juo, and assumed the position of soha (head). He remains today the mainstay of the school.

Thus there have been but three generations in the hundred or so years since the end of the Edo period. Both the first and the second Jusuke occupied important positions in the world of Japanese dance. The activity of the second Jusuke has been particularly conspicuous. The system of dance instruction built by him overwhelmed the other schools and established the "kingdom of Hanayagi." Further, the first Jusuke created many enduring works for the dance, such as "Modori Bashi" ("Modori Bridge") and "Funa Benkei" ("Benkei in the Boat"), from the end of Edo through the Meiji period.

The first Jusuke was born on February 29, 1821. He was later adopted by a caterer. He began dance lessons at the age of five and at seven was apprenticed to the seventh Ichikawa Danjuro. He returned to the fourth Nishikawa Senzo at the age of 18, owing to the death of his foster father, and danced under the name of Yoshijiro. Senzo subsequently died. In the wrangle over who would succeed to his name, Yoshijiro was expelled from the school. So he took the name Hanayagi and set himself up independently.

He worked from that time until his death to ensure a prominent position for his school within the world of Japanese dance.

Features

As related above, the first Hanayagi School sprang from the first Jusuke. He was deeply involved with Kabuki. Thus, it is perhaps proper to term Hanayagi dance "Kabuki dance" and, indeed, the elements of theatrical dance are extremely prominent in the school. But by the second Jusuke's generation, Hanayagi dance absorbed other influences such as that of Anna Pavlova. In this way elements of "poetic dance" entered. This is what characterizes the school today. Additionally, from the standpoint of formal organization, this school held organized committee meetings early on, and made natori generally available to young women. Moreover, under the second Jusuke's leadership, many new dancers such as Sumi have appeared.

9 The reader is referred to Reischauer's specially perceptive statements which clarify and

further explain the Japanese viewpoint (1977:33-34, 127, 135, 152).

10This applies only within a given art form, profession, or occupation. There is no stigma against obtaining natori in other fields and many Japanese have more than one. Hanayagi Isami, for instance, has natori in singing, flower arranging, shamisen playing and drumming as well as Buyo.

11For an account of Doris Humphrey's "revolt," see Cohen 1972:61-81, and for a repetition with Jose Limdn, /hW:217-218. There are also many such cases in the ballet world; for example, Nijinsky's split from Diaghilev and his later insanity-not to imply direct cause and effect.

12lemoto seido is considered "feudal" by modern Japanese in the sense that Kawashima (in Kawashima, Nagai and Bennet 1962:111) uses the word. Still, as pointed out by David Hughes (1974), another Japanese writer, Nishiyama (1959:345-346), has stated that true iemoto seido could not in principle be built on a feudal society-more particularly a warrior society (buke shakai)- because there would not be a big enough base to support it. In other words, it took the birth of Edo, along with the continued growth of Kyoto and Osaka, and the rise of a "middle class" to provide the concentration of persons with the money and leisure to support such an institution. This happened, not in feudal times, but with the unification of the country and the establishment of peace in the Tokugawa period.

13Specifically Armitage (1947:19) says:

I remember a party Max Eastman gave for Isadora Duncan. She sat on the floor discussing the dance with a group of friends. Max Eastman deplored the evanescence of the dancer's art, and pleaded to have a motion picture made for posterity of Isadora's particular contribution.

"No," protested Isadora. "I want no visual record whatever to remain of my dancing. I wish to become entirely a legend. After I am gone, people will ask 'How did Isadora dance?' And no one will be able to tell how Isadora danced!"

To mention one of the many examples of the difficulties of choreographers who did want their works preserved, Cohen (1972:222-225) gives an account of the struggles to reconstruct "New Dance Trilogy" thirteen years after the death of Doris Humphrey.

14That is, there is nothing in the United States that has all the characteristics of iemoto seido. Labor unions fulfill some of the economic functions of "head of family system," but not the emotional functions. The word "family" has been used often to convey the feeling of close kinship which American dancers sometimes feel for one another. For instance, "family" is aptly used to describe the Woodford-Limdn-Weidman menage on West Tenth Street (Cohen 1972:123). The word is used to tell of the dancers' special sense of belonging (Stevens 1977:50, 57-61, and Mazo 1974:11-12). Dance "families" do exist here, but are not, as in Japan, institutionalized and independent of emotions which may or may not be part of the hierarchical relationships. "Headmaster system" implies a limited time period, as during one's school days. lemoto seido is for life. Professional fraternities or sororities come close but are usually sexually segregated and do not have an inherited hierarchy.

In Western dance history, there have been instances of students' being given their teacher's name. Certain pupils of Isadora Duncan were allowed to take her last name, for example, Maria Theresa Duncan. According to an oral communication from Kay Bardsley, an authority on the life of Isadora and her schools, this was done on the advice of her brother, Augustine Duncan, in order to protect the true disciples from the scores of imitators. (In order to make further comparisons between iemoto seido and Isadora Duncan's first school, please see Bardsley 1979.)

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