

# **Light, Shadow, and Darkness Workshop**

Organized by **Dance Medium**

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## **IDEAS of Tatsumi Hijikata**

‘It’s easy to become ‘light’. Just keep watching the sun rise for a few hours and then you can become light.’

‘Light was born of darkness as mother. Nowadays people tend to put a high value only on light, which makes their physicality get lost.’

‘*Butoh* is not about acting but creating movements by ‘feeling as real’.

‘Darkness gives birth to light and light is held in the darkness’s arms. However what *butoh* make importance on is neither light nor darkness, it emphasizes on something in between.’

‘If you see flower you become flower and if you see a star you become a star. To see is already to become’.

‘In *butoh* stage, one dancer’s silhouette looks stronger than another’s under lighting. If the dancer’s silhouette looks as if it is dancing, she or he is a good dancer.’

\*These are the words or the ideas which Seisaku heard from Hijikata and told in the workshop or in the conversation with me.

## The List of All the Exercises

### **Ex1. Light & Darkness Mantle**

Open the body from darkness to light and close the body from light to darkness –repeat this process in the posture.

Closing the body expresses that both the space and the existence are going to disappear, which suggests going into darkness. Opening the body expresses that the space is opened to bathe in light as if the sun rises. It's important to keep the balance and the positon of hip to show the space and the movements large.

### **Ex2. Hide the body**

Imagine someone who is the most scary person in your life, and hide yourself praying not to be found by him or her. Try to disappear with caring your legs, head, and dangling arms not standing out –then again appear and repeat. Sense that you're wrapped in cotton of darkness from all sides –and then later, powder of light comes in softly from the floor ahead.

### **Ex.3 From the darkness to light**

Walk from the darkness into light with your own will.

### **Ex.4 Closet**

Disappear yourself into the darkness of a closet to hide from someone scary with feeling 'I'm not here being wrapped in cotton of the darkness'

### **Ex.5 Wash hands in light**

Wash your hands and legs with light getting the parts of your body out from the darkness into light.

### **Ex.6 Lights from buildings**

Sense both lights from buildings outside of the windows and from the corridor, and move with your whole body.

#### **Ex.7 Light on a palm**

Walk in the complete darkness with a flickering light on your palm.

#### **Ex.8 Move in the darkness**

Feel breath and density of the darkness. Crawl in the darkness and gradually vanish your body into it.

#### **Ex.9-1 Moved by Silhouette**

Face your silhouette reflected on a shoji (a paper sliding door) and feel as if you soak into it or you are absorbed by it. Before long the silhouette side becomes the main form and you become as if a lifeless shell. Gradually you get used to be with it, and the silhouette starts to lead the movements instead of you do. Gradually you can move without watching the silhouette. /Feel overlapping with other's shadow- you can be one with or pass through other's shadow.

#### **Ex. 9-2 Steaming Silhouette**

Your silhouette as the main starts to steam. The more you practice this, the more you can be relaxed. Then you can hear the voice saying 'how about moving like this? How about this?' from somewhere else.

#### **Ex.10 Mover and Lighting in Pair**

In pair, one of them lights up and another moves with his own shadow reflected by that light. The one who has light also need to move as a performer on the stage.

#### **Ex.11 Lights from three directions**

Stand in the center illuminated with lights from three directions and feel all the shadows around you with your body. When three people stand at the same time in the center, others' shadows also appear around you and then move with thinking that they are also your shadows.  
(According to Seisaku, Hijikata taught an idea that a person in the center is a goldfish and shadows around it are a goldfish bowl. It means shadows can be considered as the environment or the space.)

#### **Ex.12 Waterfall**

Walk slowly towards a waterfall feeling drops of water and vapor. Feel the sensation that your body go up when you come into a waterfall.

#### **Ex.13 60 watt bulbs**

Light of a bulb shapes a triangle spreading from the ceiling toward the floor. Walk feeling the change of the amount of light which comes from the ceiling-the moment of your toe steps into the light –light that you feel just under the bulb- you go out from light.

#### **Ex.14 Walk without real bulbs**

After Ex.13, walk in the same way but without bulb lights –this time, you create lights by yourself.

#### **Ex.15 Streetlights**

You are attracted by and absorbed into streetlight. (Seisaku said, 'It's interesting to see that everyone's face gets to be the dead's face when you go closer to light.')

#### **Ex.16 Light a table lamp**

Walk with opening your mouth sometimes as if turning on a light switch of a table lamp (which has a lily-shaped umbrella).

#### **Ex.17 Powder Lion**

To express the size of a lion, expand into particles of light. When you roar, don't open your mouth large but swell your respiratory tract.

#### **Ex.18 Light and Lion**

Walk toward streetlight with becoming that lion and roar as if you eat light. Then a paper comes out from a wick of filament and you lion pull that paper as if pulling a thread. Later, the paper fall from your mouth and you go to eat another light.

#### **Ex.19 Sitting Lion**

The image which originally came from the painting (the author is unknown) was that something white clod lying down in the seashore- Hijikata saw it as a lion radiating light and used that particular posture for his choreography.

#### **Ex.20 Whole body basking in light**

Your whole body is basking in light and feeling 'give me light, more and more'. By feeling 'more', you can continue your movements longer and it's important to keep feeling light carefully and sensitively.

#### **Ex.21 Crawling Baby**

Crawl as a baby –open your mouth and a red rose blossom in there. People around you crap hands –don't react to those sounds but just feel them. You crawl seeking for mother- you can apply this state to react for lights.

#### **Ex.22 Rembrandt (*The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*. 1631.)**

See an Old man, a thin baby who is in the old man's arms, a sister who is standing nearby, a mantle of darkness, which are in the picture. Move in non-stop stream playing these four kinds of roles in shift. Feel and express each role's relationships with light.

#### **Ex.23 Flower (A morning glory)**

Stand as a flower feeling light, thin petals, the smell and the sound of surroundings, change of the air, other flowers around you and move as a flower feeling them. When night is falling, the flower wilts and when the sun rise, the flower opens. Don't haste the process from wilt to open.

#### **Ex.24 A Willow Tree**

A willow tree is trembling in the wind and you are staring at the movements calmly in distance.

#### **Ex.25 Two Moons**

You're watching the moon in the front and also sense the huge moon behind. You sense the front moon and the back moon alternately. Don't stop in the centre between these two moons but repeat to move back and forth. Gradually the body in the center become empty.

#### **Ex.26 Three Moons**

(Ex.23~) A huge moon comes down into your empty body from the above and become the one with the moon. Walk slowly emitting light with bending your knees and showing your palms to the front with which you receive lights.

#### **Ex.27 The Light of an image of Buddha**

If you bend your shoulder as if 'Father's hand pushes your back' in Hijikata's expression, the posture is more closer to the statue of Buddha.

#### **Ex.28 Stars and the Moon**

The light of a star is like a small dot which is different from large light like the moon emits. While you keep staring at it, you feel as if a shooting star pass through your heart –move with such a feeling. Then you move focusing on stars and the moon alternately. It's important that your previous sensation with stars or the moon remain when you shift your main focus.

## Categorization of the Exercises

[Light and Darkness Within]

**Ex.1 Light & Darkness Mantle**, **Ex.22 Rembrandt** and **Ex.23 Flower (A morning glory)** express the shift from light to darkness and from darkness to light in one stream by the one body.

[The Movements Coming from Sensations]

In **Ex.6 Lights from buildings**, I was purely experiencing the sway of my body following the sensation, which was as if I have lamps blinking in my body when I sensed lights from the windows. In **Ex.9-1 Moved by Silhouette**, I recognized my reaction towards a silhouette got to be more physical as if my body and mind were totally covered by it when I considered it as the main form. In **Ex.11 Lights from three directions**, I had the sense that my body expanded into the space or had a hollow inside of my body. I could feel I can transform myself into any other shadow beings. In **Ex.24 A Willow Tree**, staring at the imagined sway of a willow tree was very meditative, which was maybe similar with staring at the movements of light and shadow.

[Breath]

The more I am careful and sensitive with light, darkness and shadow, the more I am aware of how my breath try to be one with them. In **Ex.4 Closet**, trying to be one with the darkness in silence made my breath lower. In **Ex.10 Mover and Lighting in Pair**, by harmonizing my breath with the other's shadow, I could keep the balance of my movements and its rhythm.

[To See is To Become]

The process from **Ex. 25 Two Moons** to **Ex.26 Three Moons** made me think the shift from 'seeing' to 'becoming' possible. Preparing the state of an empty body is important to receive light from above and become one with it. This practice seems useful to apply to different types of ligths and see what kind of body's state will appear.