

Suriashi as Experimental Pilgrimage in Urban and Other Spaces

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For my family and kindred ancestors of slow walkers

Abstract

Keywords: Suriashi, Slow Walking, Gendered Walking, Japanese dance, Nihon Buyō, Postmodern dance, Japanese theatre, Nō theatre, Practice-led research, Artistic research, Intercultural dance, pilgrimage, critical heritage, screendance

This practice-led-thesis draws on an existing Japanese movement practice called suriashi, which translates as sliding foot. Suriashi is a specific gender codified walking technique in classical Japanese dance and theatre, and an important method for acting on stage. It is one of the foundations for how the performer positions him/herself for movement on stage. My thesis asks whether suriashi could also be a method to act, as being active, or to activate, in other spaces outside the theatre. A key feature is the practical application of this artistic practice outside the theatrical contexts where it is usually located. This relocation brings a traditional form into new configurations, connecting to everyday practices and sites of resistance and performance. It also contributes to the burgeoning field of walking arts practice, bringing a Japanese dance-based practice into a dialogue with debates and practices of Western dancing and walking.

The practice-led research includes suriashi walks, labelled as ‘experimental pilgrimages’, which are documented especially for the thesis. They have been captured on video and serve as material evidence of what kind of questions and answers suriashi as experimental pilgrimage activated. The video documentations, to which readers are guided to through specific links and timecodes, provide the possibility to experience suriashi walking both visually and corporeally. They also represent the artistic artefact and outcome of this practice-led research. The video capturing suriashi adds to an expanded perspective on screendance as durational artistic practice.

The thesis shows how suriashi embodies ideologies, such as gender, as well as discussing how our presence in urban spaces is always gendered. Suriashi as a gendered technique provided a tool for walking with integrity - a flâneuse strategy - which led to the application of suriashi for political engagement through embodiment.

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Chapter One:

Introduction and background



Figure 1. Nishikawa Senrei (1945-2012) Photo: Minoru Ichige (Minoru, 2000)

This practice-led PhD thesis draws on an existing Japanese dance practice called *suriashi*. In order to offer an embodied engagement with the practice, I begin by describing my own encounter with Japanese dance. I show how *suriashi* was practised originally in Nishikawa Senrei's studio in Kyōto, Japan. This thesis thus begins and ends in Nishikawa Senrei's

studio. Even though her studio has now closed, this thesis allowed a constant reference to Nishikawa Senrei's legacy. Places encountered in suriashi, edited together on video, were actively connected through space and time, bringing a traditional practice in dialogue with contemporary topics. The constant referencing and the relationship with previous practices enabled a creative haunting of the past, a sense of ghosting even. This authorised an important engagement with the ancestral past of suriashi, my connection to Nishikawa Senrei, but finally also to my own ancestral past.

Suriashi is fundamental to the dance training of Nihon Buyō, Japanese dance. Suriashi has often been described only with a few lines, since previous researchers have mistakenly framed suriashi either as a simple practice or a basic step (Griffiths, 2014, Hanayagi, 2008, Liu, 2016, Sellers-Young, 1993). For my thesis, I work from within a dance practice that has its origin outside Europe. My own local (at Senreinokai in Kyoto) and relocated practices of suriashi (streets in Paris, New York etc) add to the global dance canon. As such, it seeks to bid defiance to the ethnocentrism in Western dance scholarship. In order to compare and investigate the similarities and differences in suriashi walking and Western modern and postmodern dance walking (as set out in Chapter Four), I turned to scholars from dance studies and Asian studies (Banes, 1987, Foster, 1992, Hahn, 2007, Hammergren, 1996, Klens, 1995, Kolb, 2019, Thomas and Prickett, 2019, Sellers-Young, 1993, Yamazaki, 2001). Further, when making comparisons between the mind-body engagement in suriashi and other dance practices while asking questions about the genealogy of suriashi, I turned to scholars researching Asian theatre from the perspective of language, religion, and literature (Kawashima, 2001, Meeks, 2011, Nakahara, 1999, Strippoli, 2006).

Suriashi is not only practised in Japanese dance and theatre, but also in martial arts such as Iaidō, Kendo, and Sumo wrestling. It is written with two different *kanji*: 摺足. These kanji combine a verb and a substantive – the verb 'creep'/'rub' and the substantive 'foot' - thus pointing out an activity performed by the foot, that is something that the foot does. However, speaking from my own studio-based experience since 2000, the way suriashi is practised depends on the context, but this is a discussion largely missing in research on Japanese performance practices. Suriashi involves the whole body, and ideas of how to tell stories, as well as how to perform spirituality and gender. My teacher Nishikawa Senrei regarded suriashi to be a very complex practice, which I show in this thesis. Nishikawa Senrei invented her own way to teach suriashi in a more focused manner. In order to show this complexity, I describe how we as students practised suriashi in her studio. This depiction is

of importance to demonstrate what I refer to and reconstruct when I practise outside the theatrical and studio context. In order to challenge the assumption that so called ‘traditional’ practices always remain the same, I explain further how and when Nishikawa Senrei changed the way *suriashi* was practised in her studio.

In Japanese dance, there is not a hard separation between dancing and acting. Acting is seen as an aspect of dance, not the reverse (Leiter 2006, 217). *Suriashi* is indeed part of a method for acting on stage. It is one of the foundations for how the performer positions him/herself on stage. *Suriashi* prepares the performer for the particular body posture, *kamae*, which is needed for the dramatic dances of Nihon Buyō, Kabuki and Nō theatre. My thesis asks whether *suriashi* could also be a method to act, as being active, or to activate, in other spaces outside the theatre. A key feature is the practical application of this artistic practice outside the theatrical contexts where it is usually located. This relocation brings a traditional form into new configurations, connecting to everyday practices in contemporary urban spaces and engaging with questions on art as resistance to preconceived discourses. *Suriashi* is a specific gender codified movement technique in classical Japanese dance and theatre. It therefore offers an opportunity to interrogate, challenge and reflect on the performativity of gender and to make an artistic intervention into the gendered spaces of contemporary life. My thesis contributes to Dance studies, and to the burgeoning field of walking arts practice, bringing a Japanese dance-based practice into a dialogue with debates and practices of Western dancing and walking.

My thesis offers a significant addition to the canonic Western dance techniques and practices. In Sweden, there are no professional practitioners of Nihon Buyō or Nō, however there are a few professional Butō dancers. In UK, you find a few Buyō practitioners, such as Kimura Kayoko of the Wakayagi school (Kimura). Globally, practitioners increase thanks to the dissemination of studios and cultural exchange programmes. I encountered *suriashi* for the first time in July 2000 in Kyōto, the city where I have spent most of my time learning *suriashi*. I studied with Nishikawa Senrei at *Traditional Theatre Training*, informally known as T.T.T., and I also took private classes at her *keikoba* – the place for practice, which held the name *Senreinokai*. I had nine periods of study between 2000 and 2018. Traditional Theatre Training is a yearly cultural exchange programme at Kyōto Art Centre for international and Japanese artists and researchers, founded in 1984 by Kyōgen actor Shigeyama Akira and Professor Jonah Salz (1984). During the years that I studied with

Nishikawa Senrei and with other teachers at Senreinokai, I learned seven traditional dance pieces. The titles of these dances are found in Appendix H. They include movements specifically constructed for portraying gender, age, and class, which also affects how suriashi is practised. Drawing on my own extensive practical experience, suriashi is compared to walking steps from diverse dance practices. To support the practice-led lens I have used for the thesis, I have also listed studies with Western teachers and dance techniques in Appendix I.

Thesis overview

In this first chapter, the background and scope of the thesis is presented. After explaining the research questions, I present how video has been used in the research, and as an integral part of the thesis material. An introduction and background to suriashi practice and to my approach to it as an artistic activism is given, as well as an introduction to the research approach used in this thesis.

In Chapter Two, the methodological basis for the work is presented, and I describe how the phenomenological and auto-ethnographic frameworks are applied in my practice-led research.

In Chapter Three, I describe the historical and spiritual contexts that have shaped suriashi, to find the link between the ideas and thinking that have informed suriashi, and how this connects to today's practices.

Chapter Four processes how spirituality and embodiment were intertwined in suriashi, where I expand on slow walking in relation to professional dance cultures and the pedestrian. I describe and compare suriashi with walking practices in Western modern and postmodern dance. This is done in order to investigate what types of ideas and thinking lie behind other bodily constructions and movements than suriashi.

In Chapter Five, I show how suriashi embodies ideologies, such as gender, as well as discussing how our presence in urban spaces is always gendered. This is continuously explored through the feminine version of suriashi.

Chapter Six engages with sociologist Doreen Massey's research on space and Japanese concepts of space.

Chapter Seven includes a collection of practice-led experiments where I investigate the implications of suriashi in international locations called *experimental pilgrimages*. This is the part where I walk out in suriashi, alone and with others, into rural, urban and other spaces. Here suriashi built new relations with well known and unknown spaces. Mainly urban spaces were investigated, with a few visits to museum spaces, which instigated important archival issues related to suriashi as a dance practice of Japanese origin.

Chapter Eight continues to depict experimental pilgrimages but focuses specifically how suriashi worked as a critical and political activism/artivism when engaging with my hometown Gothenburg's absent and present dance history. The chapter also includes a recollection from scholar Chin-Yuen Cheung, who in 2019 performed suriashi as a peaceful act at Yuen Long Station in Hong Kong. His pro-democracy micro-activism, taught and guided by me, created a new beginning for what role suriashi and other dance techniques could play in the future. The chapter showed how the spatially targeted pilgrimages became the frame for a new methodological course for future Master-students.

Chapter Nine deepens the question processed in Chapter Four; on how spirituality and embodiment collaborate in suriashi. Activated by a pilgrimage and residency in a museum in northern Sweden, the investigations of how the ephemeral content was manifested through suriashi authorized new directions, where I used invisible legacy and Foucault's heterotopia as a lens (Foucault, 1984). This enabled an interconnection, which bridged the gap between Swedish, Western and Japanese performance cultures.

I have gathered the appendices (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I), which include a glossary containing Japanese words and concepts, extra material on Nishikawa Senrei, a full list of the experimental pilgrimages on video with timecodes, participants' reflections from two conferences and a methodological workshop with Master students/artists, ending with extra material and webpages on teachers, researchers and artists contributing to this thesis.

Research questions

For this thesis, suriashi is not seen as a definitive practice. Instead, I focus on how the practice of suriashi can reveal and engage with certain social codes and practices in historical and contemporary contexts.

Main research question:

1. What can suriashi activate and act upon when it is relocated and offered as outdoor performance or performative investigation other than studio-based performer training?

Related sub-questions:

2. What happens to the person walking slowly in suriashi in a space?
3. What happens to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi?
4. What is the connection between suriashi and legacy, and how is suriashi connected to narratives of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts?
5. How can suriashi be situated together with other contemporary performance practices, such as dance and walking practices, choreography and screendance?
6. How can suriashi elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces?
7. How can suriashi be a method for activism and politics?

Elaborating the questions above, which were all generated through and by the practice, I use the first-person perspective as to show I am conducting this research through my own experiences of relocating the suriashi practice from the studio. Walking alone outside the studio, enhanced a reflection of the self in the manner that pilgrimages are meant to achieve. Therefore, I have created the concept *experimental pilgrimage* as being the rationale of this research. The way I have used the concept aim to bridge cross-cultural practices of walking, spiritual walking and dance. A pilgrimage is performed to value the personal experience of movement, which I argue has an activist and political potential. Thus, the questions on what

suriashi can do, as in acting and activating, is elaborated in the practice-led work – the experimental pilgrimage performed specifically for this PhD. This consists of preplanned walks in suriashi that I perform in urban and other spaces, alone or with others, captured on video. These took place between 2014 and 2019. The experimental pilgrimages include a variety of situations and aspects, where each space encountered contributed with yet new questions and answers (Dahlstedt, 2021). The suriashi pilgrimages were recorded on video but also through a written process journal. The process journal and the video collection in particular work like a score for the practice and a durational performance in their own. Documented on video, pilgrimages are revisited and analysed, and function as reference for questions asked throughout the thesis and in relation to the suriashi walking. My own accounts of the spaces visited in suriashi and captured on camera are analysed in dialogue with participants, which I provide details to in the methodological chapter, Chapter Two.

There are many variations of suriashi for dance, theatre, martial arts and traditional practices such as ikebana and tea ceremony. In dance and theatre, the variations of suriashi are gendered, however previous research has not shown how (Griffiths, 2014, Hahn, 2007, Liu, 2016, Sellers-Young, 1993). Therefore, in this thesis I stress the importance of the practice itself to demonstrate how gender is performed in suriashi and investigate what the chosen body construction offered to the academic discussion on gender. The variations of suriashi include elaborated methods of how to interpret/perform the construction of gender, age, and social status through the body. The body alignment is constructed differently with regards to which gender to portray. For this thesis, I start with the fact that ‘feminine’ suriashi refers to the body alignment constructed for men to perform as women in Japanese dance, where theatrical cross gender practices were normative and part of the tradition. I therefore used ‘feminine’ suriashi in my experimental pilgrimages as a lens for processing issues with gender and gendered spaces. Since I practised outdoors and on the streets, the issues of gender were constantly actualized. ‘Feminine’ suriashi invoked reflections on gendered movements in dance, and gendered movements in urban space, where particularly the question on women walking alone was processed. This new methodological base authorised suriashi to engage critically with expanded notions of activism and politics.

Challenging the question of what suriashi is or has been, and instead ask what suriashi could do, helped to question the position of the choreographer, the dancer and the female walker. Following the emerging field of walking as research, I identified new paths where suriashi could act, and I have thus included walks with nondancers and amateurs. This supported

further experiential perspectives, which in turn followed important changes in (postmodern) dance practice and new research on walking (Banes, 1997, Heddon, Turner 2012, Solnit 2001). Relocating suriashi followed the anti-elitist ideologies as shaped by my teacher Nishikawa Senrei and the postmodern choreographers in my hometown who explored the act of walking as an important part of dancing (Lund, 2019, 2020, Nishikawa, 2011, Von Rosen 2018). I thus offered suriashi in research workshops to professionals as well as to amateurs for a non-hierarchical treatment of the practice. This elucidated yet new experiences of walking through outdoor spaces, which by no means was a simple endeavour. It also showed how new perspectives of suriashi was brought forward, where a link between slow suriashi in urban and other spaces and the theatrical, historical use of suriashi was discovered. The connection between suriashi and ancestral legacy was embedded in the original physical practice in Nishikawa Senrei's studio. It was further invoked when I relocated my practice to specific spaces, such as temples, museums, and cemeteries. On the traditional Nihon Buyō stage, suriashi represented historical characters on the move, such as storytellers, dancers, or ghosts, which corresponded to narratives and characters encountered in contemporary cities and spaces. These original theatrical spaces were often reinforced when I performed suriashi alone or with others on a bridge, in the subway, and the streets in almost a ghostly manner. I also sought to ask culturally specific aspects of suriashi, such as how to practise and perform with invisible characters. The ephemeral inclusion of nonhumans, ancestors and ghosts on stage was further processed when suriashi was relocated to urban spaces, and eventually processing my own ancestral lineage.

Throughout the thesis, I use a personal perspective to evoke the bodily experience of suriashi as performed in Nihon Buyō/Japanese dance. The personal perspective also represents the professional dancer's and choreographer's perspective. Since 1987, I have engaged with many variations of so called traditional, classical, modern, and postmodern dance techniques (Appendix I). I have also engaged with choreographing, composing, structuring theatrical performances, site specific works, and performative situations. I continue a legacy based on my master-apprentice relationship to Nishikawa Senrei, which contributes to a reflection on legacy of dance practices. My critical agenda is to claim that suriashi should have its place in the canon of dance scholarship and research.

This thesis at first showed the rarely discussed genealogy of suriashi and how suriashi is practised in detail. The relocation of suriashi practice activated new discussions of movements as gendered expressions, and slowness as activism and embodied politics.

Following the practice itself while investigating how suriashi could be put into new configurations, created new situations, connecting to everyday practices and sites of resistance and performance. The text, following a travelling step, became a travelogue, a winding wandering between international, but mostly Swedish and Japanese performance cultures. This work has influenced my own practice as a choreographer and performance-maker, as well as my professional and personal life. This thesis captured what was encountered in spaces while on the move, even when the movement went back in time. The spiritual engagement provided surprising details, which added to historical accounts of Japanese dance and Western modern dance (Notani, 2017, Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994, Yanagisawa, 2015, Yeats, 1916). Suriashi in urban and other spaces showed that movements using less expressive energy, provided spaces for people to protest peacefully; spaces where people, artists and dancers could engage with political issues through their bodies. The chosen slow tempo activated a discussion on itinerant lifestyles in our speed-up society and athlete centrism in dance practice.

Additionally, I have presented suriashi as a practice-led research presentation, as a workshop and as a text-based conference paper in several research conferences organized through Nordic Summer University, as well as the *Archives, Art and Activism Conference* at University College London in 2015, the *24th World Congress of Philosophy* in Beijing 2018, and *Walking's New Movements'* conference at University of Plymouth in 2019. At the *SIBMAS Conference* 2016 and at *Dance and Democracy - Nordic Forum for Dance Research (NOFOD)* Conference 2017, I presented suriashi as an artistic keynote, which allowed all conference participants to walk in suriashi together. Here, suriashi became the introduction and reference for the whole conference, pointing especially to the body as archive, as well as the body and democracy. Conference participants' reflections are found in Appendices D, E and G. Excerpts from these conferences are added to the video documentation of experimental pilgrimages.

This thesis contributes to the fields dance research, practice-led and practice-based research, artistic research, dance education and the growing field of walking research. This thesis also contributes to the field of critical heritage studies and Asian performance studies - by providing a deepened practitioner's view on a fundamental dance technique with profound historical legacy - and at the same time linking these traditional practices to contemporary experimental performance practices.

The role of video

For this doctoral thesis, a durational video supports the research narrative with examples of suriashi pilgrimages (Dahlstedt, 2021). Embedded throughout the chapters, there are specific links and timecodes to the video documentations of my research. They function as references to the research, as a documentation of suriashi as artistic practice, and finally as a durational exhibition of artistic work. The details and dates of these pilgrimages are listed in Appendix C. My proposal is to watch the video simultaneously while reading to create a bridge between written and walked research.

I want to point out that in order to understand the practice behind the thesis, the methods involved, and the embodied knowledge that has emanated from my investigation of suriashi, the reader has to engage with the documentary material in the videos. In support of the embodied artistic perspective, knowledge lives in the dancer's practising body, and the text is a reflection on it, providing context, disambiguation, and explanation for the non-dancing reader.

The experimental pilgrimages captured on video are supported by an itinerary manual including precise timecodes in Appendix C. Here is an overview of the types of material found in the durational video:

- Lessons with masters of Nihon Buyō and Nō, where I am the student
- Workshops where I teach suriashi to artists, theatre and dance students
- Suriashi as experimental pilgrimage performed alone and with others in Europe, U.S. and Asia
- Suriashi as a collective experience in conferences
- Discussions of suriashi inside or after a conference presentation
- Suriashi on stage
- Suriashi as screendance
- Suriashi as a foundation for interviews and narratives

I have edited together all suriashi experimentations into an eleven-hour long video-file, which is submitted together with this text. I consider the submitted video material as one long film, curated as a durational exhibition as well as a chronological manual for the artistic practice throughout the text. However, for practical reasons, the video material needed to be divided into four parts:

Video 1:

<https://vimeo.com/495898766/5b415ff3c3>

Video 2:

<https://vimeo.com/496003241/876721920c>

Video 3:

<https://vimeo.com/496152094/3c0797eb2e>

Video 4:

<https://vimeo.com/496374423/0cdf3d6f21>

Manual for engaging with experimental pilgrimages in suriashi

Here, I describe how to use the video alongside reading. The video functions as a reference and a documentation of performed suriashi walks, which are called *experimental pilgrimages*. I argue that the video also works as a critical artistic artefact, acting as reference, documentation and artistic expression. Claiming the video to represent more than documentation dissolved the boundaries between dance as training and dance as artistic practice, defending positions not yet defined when the research project started. Suriashi pilgrimages captured on video supported questions regarding ambiguity and vagueness, not knowing if or when something might be considered art before it was finally exhibited - and agreed on as representing art - in a gallery (Dahlstedt 2016a). I have used these video documentations for an analysis of each pilgrimage, which enabled a second recollection. In fact, my own journalled experiences from a pilgrimage did not always correspond with what I discovered when watching the video documentation. The video also functioned as a reference for the reader to offer multiple perspectives on suriashi, including the sensing of how temporality affects the environment as well as the actor/observer. In order to provide you, the reader, with a corporeal experience of suriashi, I invite you to watch and engage with these documentations. Written reminders and video interventions for corporeal engagement are proposed throughout the reading of this thesis. Their intention is to repeatedly create space for temporal and spatial engagements. Together with timecodes showing a particular part of the video to be watched specifically, I give instructions on how

to engage physically with suriashi. This is a method for both experiencing how suriashi works in various contexts and spaces, and to be involved in corporeal responses while reading. I call these physical mediations *corporeal reminders*. They are highlighted in a box as seen further down.

Video is also offered as a visual tool for specific discussions. My proposal to you as the reader of this thesis is to run the film on a computer screen in parallel to reading in order to experience my engagement with suriashi as a durational exhibition. I then highlight specific events throughout the text to which I provide the precise timecode. Clickable links embedded in the text will take you directly to the right sequence. If for some reason the link does not work, it is possible to scroll to the right place with the help of the time code. There is no request to watch all eleven hours, however you engage with most of the material when you use a combination of viewing the specific examples and allowing the video-file to run as a durational exhibition while you are reading this thesis. Here I provide clickable links for some of the examples of suriashi found in the durational video:

An example of *suriashi as workshop* taught to professional performers indoors and in a shopping mall in Tampere, invited by theatre director Disa Kamula 2014:

[Video 1: 1:04:18](#) – 1:08:05

An example of an *experimental pilgrimage* performed alone at Fushimi Shrine, 2015:

[Video 2: 1:45: 56](#) – 1:49:34

An example of *suriashi as a collective experience* in the *Transversality conference* at University of Gothenburg, 2017:

[Video 3: 1:49:26](#) - 1:54:22

An example of *suriashi performed as a dialogue on music and dance on stage*, from the performance *A Particular Act of Survival*, 2015:

[Video 2: 1:00:00](#) - 1:04:43

Suriashi as workshop for exploring space with BA students at Université du Lorraine, Metz, 2017:

[Video 3: 2:01:22](#) - 2:14:25

Suriashi as workshop for exploring space with design students at Tokyo Metropolitan University, 2018:

[Video 4: 1:32:39](#) - 1:36:10

Suriashi as independent example of screendance, created in a residency with researcher Anna Maria Orrù in Pietrasanta, Italy, 2016:

[Video 2: 2:18:13](#) - 2:19:50

Brief background to screendance

The suriashi pilgrimages captured by the camera offered a change of conventions of screendance work shown in festivals, which usually consist of shorter films. As such, the video submitted for this thesis entered a framework of autoethnographic, durational art. Here, I give a background to how this thesis contributes to the discussion of video, camera and screendance. Today, 'screendance' and 'dance for camera' are situated within contemporary choreographic practices. They are not separate practices since the camera has become an everyday tool, used extensively for documentation and self-expression. The camera has changed the way we look at the world. Susan Sontag wrote how the earliest photographic experiments brought about a revolution, changing our notions of 'what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe' (Sontag, 1977, 3). The camera captures the space to where we point the camera. The photograph represents both the evidence and the memory of 'being there' in a certain time and space. For this thesis, it evidenced the lived experience of practicing suriashi relocated from the dance studio. To collect photographs, Sontag meant, was to collect the world (Sontag, 1977, 3). The camera supported my collection of suriashi performed as experimental pilgrimage in urban and other spaces. I have mostly photographed myself, which activated gendered discussions on who owns the gaze, and who has agency - particularly in urban spaces. It links the thesis to the lineage of women's self-portraiture, which I particularly address for my suriashi pilgrimage to Paris (Chapter Seven). The Oxford Dictionary defines a selfie as "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website" (2013). My choice of slowness, continuous takes - with a duration much longer than the conventional editing pace - and long-distance camera angles for this thesis also provide a new version of the 'selfie'. Suriashi captured on camera showed how the 'selfie' could be something else: quietly proceeding at a slower pace. Adding visual examples of the work for this thesis also enabled further analysis of what was

activated in suriashi. The camera helped certain phenomena to become visible. The camera also contributed to the examination of how suriashi engaged with space and living beings, and what points could be drawn from that. Therefore, the eleven-hour long video collection of suriashi pilgrimages is equally important as this written text. The images communicate and register certain phenomena – societal practices, the everyday, visible, or invisible agreements in urban space - which serve as an intrinsic contribution to knowledge.

Video and film have been part of my own artistic practice since 1994, and I am active in the field of screendance ever since. Artist and screendance scholar Douglas Rosenberg stated that cinema has worked as a site-specific frame, separate and different from the live space of theater (Rosenberg, 2012, 33). The question on what suriashi might activate or act upon in urban and other spaces in terms of screendance followed the footsteps of dance film makers like Maya Deren (1917-1961) and Yvonne Rainer (1934-). Deren and Rainer were searching for new choreographic dramaturgies and part of their methods was to relocate dance from theatrical spaces to other spaces (Deren, 1960, Rainer, 2013). Early cinema and photography were occupied with the phenomenology of bodies in motion to prove images that moved (Rosenberg, 2012, 35). Film choreographers like Busby Berkeley (1895-1976) and Maya Deren were instead concerned with using dance to further a narrative or to emulate or extend preexisting structures, which thus found different purposes for bodies in motion (Rosenberg, 2012, 35). Just like the suriashi pilgrimages performed for this thesis, their choreographies were made directly for the camera without any prior life on the stage - at least not when referring to suriashi performed outdoors wearing shoes (42). Here, my use of slowness was put in conversation with earlier cinema's fascination of movement where bodies in motion were used as ways to prove the medium itself. However, slow suriashi was revealing the societal speed through my own body rather than through technology. As such it counteracted the extreme physicality performed in the 1980s and 1990s dance films choreographed by Édouard Lock, Wim Vandekeybus and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (De Keersmaeker, 1997, Hébert, 1987, Iturbe, 1990). These films, which I delved into as a young choreographer, normalized violently physical expressiveness and narratives fast forwarded through intense and fast paced editing. Suriashi captured on camera offered slower, pragmatic narratives than what earlier screendance-pieces did. Also, it introduced the creative possibility to lessen my own presence in space. Suriashi in urban spaces contributed with a different kind of plasticity, encountering situations filled with surprise and curiosity. Here I refer to audience's interactions, comments, and interventions experienced as the

practice proceeded. The experimental pilgrimages captured on camera showed how also small changes of movement could have an impact on audiences and society.

My participation in the screendance field enabled a specific point of initiation regarding dance, narrative and the videospace. I have previously written:

The narrative of dance films examines states of mind, situations, places, and meetings rather than telling a story. It does not have to be realistic or psychological. Dramatic situations that are built up only to be later resolved are absent from this realm. Dance film offers a change of the conventions of feature film (Dahlstedt, 2014c).

Cinema has supported the relocation of choreographic acts from the theatre to the new space created through the camera. Technology brought forward different temporalities through time lapse, slow-motion and speed. Video was therefore crucial and seminal for my written thesis, constantly referred to, and involved in the discussion. One of the advantages with video was the possibility to disseminate work beyond the time and space when it was created. I have therefore juxtaposed video material to point out how certain Japanese historic narratives were intertwined in the past, and how they connect with my contemporary work. For example, in Chapter Nine, I engage with legacy through my previous performances, and a residency at the home museum Ricklundgården in northern Sweden. More details and the precise time codes of the video material are found in Appendix C.

Suriashi practice

For this thesis, I draw on my experience as a professional artist and my extensive training in Nihon Buyō, traditional Japanese dance. My first encounters with suriashi were experienced from a professional dancer's perspective, which affected how I in the first place valued and assessed suriashi. Here I describe how suriashi was practised originally with my teacher Nishikawa Senrei. These introductory paths to the practice are important to position suriashi as research. I have kept notes in a process journal for the purposes of this thesis. Between 2012 and 2014, I recorded my reflections of my Japanese dance practice, which I revisit when I describe the original practice in Japan. The process journal is included in the writing where applicable in indented italics.

I repeatedly spell out the full name of Nishikawa Senrei to clarify that I refer to my teacher and not to other representatives from the Nishikawa School. Students called her by her first name *Senrei*, but added *-sensei*, instead of the honorific suffix *-san*. I called her Senrei sensei, she called me Ami-san. Sensei literally means ‘former-born’, and it is used to address authority figures, such as skilled artists and masters. Students are also called by their first names, a practice that enhances the symbolic significance of the *keikoba* (dance studio) as a centre of belonging and attachment. Choreographer and anthropologist Yamazaki Kazuko explained how this differentiated the *keikoba* from the formal school system where students are called by their family names (Yamazaki, 2001, 41).

Nihon Buyō, sometimes also called ‘Kabuki dance’, and Nō theatre are art forms that combine abstract movements with story-telling, often historic tales from the Tale of Heike and the Tale of Genji (McCullough, 1990, Shikibu, before 1021 (1978)). Dancing is thus closely related to narrative, illustrating poetry, Buddhist concepts, love stories, everyday life, and battles. Nihon Buyō, Nō and Kabuki are professional dance practices alive and performed in Japan today. They are not traditional theatre forms kept in archives. I mention *Bunraku*, puppet theatre, as well, which is an important artform closely connected to Nihon Buyō and Kabuki, however I do not refer to puppet theatre for this thesis. A few foreigners are familiar with these practices thanks to cultural exchange programmes, such as the yearly *Traditional Theatre Training* at Kyōto Art Centre, started in 1984, and the *Noh Training Project*, which began in 2000 in the U.S., and in 2011 in London, U.K. (2000, 2011, 1984). Based on my studies of the Japanese language at University of Gothenburg in 2004 and 2011, I use the Rōmaji spelling for Japanese words, such as *Nihon Buyō* and *Nō*. Rōmaji was developed to describe the sound of Japanese in Roman alphabet. I have gathered a Japanese glossary in Appendix A.

As my investigation showed, *suriashi* is much more than a basic step. By scrutinizing the practice of *suriashi* from many angles, particularly in spaces outside the theatrical context, I propose new ways of understanding the potential uses of *suriashi*. In traditional training, *suriashi* functions as a coordinator for grounding in Japanese dance, comparable to the deep *plié* in second position in ballet and jazz. Therefore, it can be understood as a foundation from which other movements can develop – such as a strike with a sword or an ornamental gesture with the arm and the fan. *Suriashi* remains as a continuous reference for the dancer/actor. At first glance, one might assume that the only goal with *suriashi* in Nihon

Buyō is to become a better and stronger performer. Indeed, there is a practicality in suriashi, where the practice offers a method to process your inner/outer and mental/physical balance, but this is not necessarily represented by a linear progress. Moving in suriashi influences the dancer's presence on stage, and how character, gender, class, age is portrayed. These and other aspects of the practice are often overlooked; for example, how suriashi engages with gender and spirituality. I therefore relate to these issues as part of my investigation of what suriashi activates. In ethnomusicologist and Nihon Buyō practitioner Tomie Hahn's research, we follow how spiritual engagement is performed throughout the whole Buyō lesson, which is why I start there, with the greetings and the openings of my training with Nishikawa Senrei, documented on video.

The video documentation includes the beginning of a Nihon Buyō lesson at Nishikawa Senrei's studio, where my teacher and I bring out our dance fans from the *obi*, place them carefully at an arm's length on the floor in front and bow to each other. The way the fan is placed is a metaphor for spiritual engagement in the dance class. Similar metaphors affect how suriashi is practised, which I elaborate in this thesis. Hahn quoted her teacher Tachibana Yoshie, who described the meaning of this greeting ritual starting the dance class:

The fan creates a line between the student and teacher, and draws attention to that space. The line symbolizes the spiritual boundary (*kekai*) located in between the individuals, honored as a kind of devotional space. When you are bowing you are demarcating and acknowledging the distinction between your teacher and yourself, but your bow respectfully honors both of you (2007, 41).

After the greeting ritual, the student says: 'Okeiko onegaiitashimasu', which means 'Please teach me'. Hereafter the lesson usually moves into suriashi practice. Nishikawa Senrei and I usually practised in silence for thirty minutes, but when this was filmed in 2011, my teacher lacked the strength for durational practices of suriashi, hence a shorter practice. Here is the link for the specific greeting sequence, followed by suriashi:

Follow the link.

[Video 1: 0:1:06-](#) 04:31

I practise suriashi with Nishikawa Senrei at Senreinokai, Tokuya-chō, Kyōto, April 2011.
Nishikawa Senrei directs: 'Towards the heel. As you breathe, go down into your hips.
One step at a time. One step at a time.'

While you watch the video, please try to repeat the practice in suriashi the best you can.
In your living room, or in your workspace, on a smooth floor without a carpet.
Wear socks. Bend your legs, feet parallel. Lean back.
Put your right foot in front of your left foot.
Then put the left foot in front of your right foot.
Imagine walking on a line. Practise as slowly as possible.
Caress the floor with the soles of your feet.
You are about to create a new body memory.
You might never do suriashi again, or you might do it for the rest of your life.

Suriashi at Senreinokai

The space experienced through suriashi is crucial for the development of this thesis, as space provides a background to this movement. In the title of this thesis, I refer to *urban* and *other* spaces, where *urban* refers to actual and real spaces in cities, and *other* refers to two main things;

1. Spaces that are different or hidden, for example cemeteries, nursing homes, backyards, which Foucault processed in his *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* (1984).
2. Spaces activated mentally "on the inside", holding ephemeral and ineffable content. This refers to an important aspect of suriashi as dance technique, which Nishikawa Senrei stressed many times. While practicing, she asked us to empty ourselves - to calm the mind down - and make space for invisible things such as our ancestors and the characters we were going to perform. This prepared us for an increased sensitivity to space, where we while training also processed the borders between which spaces (our minds, the surroundings) were real and which spaces were possibly deviating (our minds, the surroundings). Suriashi, through its body construction and slowness, later performed in urban spaces became an example of how the breaking of rules in a space also offers change to that space. Thus, bringing 'other spaces' to urban spaces not only brought studio practice out to the streets. More importantly, the relocation processed the role of artists, social norms and agreements. Chapter Seven engaged specifically with examples of suriashi in urban spaces, whereas

Chapter Nine engages with suriashi in/and heterotopic spaces. However, the original space for suriashi practice was the studio *Senreinokai* in Kyōto, which I describe here as a reference to my future investigations. When suriashi left the studio and travelled elsewhere, this original studio space and the theatrical bridgeway, *hashigakari* - the narrow corridor with a roof leading to the Nō-stage - were constantly activated and revisited through suriashi.

Senreinokai was located on Tokuya-chō in Kyōto, Japan. The Tokuya-chō is a peaceful, narrow alley even though it runs near the busy streets of Horikawa and Shijo Ōmiya in Kyōto, Japan. Ever since my first *okeiko* (lesson) with Nishikawa Senrei in the summer of 2000, I have included suriashi in my daily training. I never considered suriashi a simple step. One could focus on a muscular understanding of the bodily construction of suriashi, and one could focus on the breathing with each step to find the difficult balance and deviating slowness. However, embodying ephemeral content, such as mental and spatial issues while practising took many years to grasp. Suriashi is a walking step that constantly activates its own historical background and its mythological origin. I argue that suriashi has what philosopher Michel Foucault would call a *heterotopian* potential, since it refers to nonhumans, spirits, and ghosts (Foucault, 1984). I elaborate more on this in Chapter Four and Chapter Nine. Nishikawa Senrei explained that the leaning back acknowledged the psycho-physical space where you meet your ancestors in your dance. She continuously discussed such matters with her students, particularly before each performance. During the many years of training with Nishikawa Senrei (2000, 2001, 2004, 2010 and 2011, she always reminded her students that the immediate (and paying) audience was not our most important audience, however our ancestors were (Nishikawa, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2011).



Figure 2. I practise suriashi with Senrei sensei at Senreinokai, Kyōto Photo: Folke Johansson (Johansson, 2011)

In the following excerpt of my process journal, I describe the original practice in suriashi at Senreinokai together with my teacher:

The moment I step into Nishikawa Senrei's dance studio my movements must be carefully choreographed, my silent bowings and greetings meticulously ritualized. A physical etiquette rules: all action and no talking. I walk with my teacher, Nishikawa Senrei. The silence in the dance studio is emphasized through our serene walk. Still, under my skin it is all but quiet. There is an arch in my upper body, a vigorous muscular activation in between and in the back of my shoulders. I maintain my elbows tightly pressed against the waist. Knees and feet are collected closely, inner thighs active. My palms rest on top of my thighs, my fingers are held together, pointing inwards. The posture, the kamae in Japanese, is all about action. A physical impetus is disseminated around my spine while I tilt my pelvis backwards, and push my chest forwards, and upwards. A considerable amount of energy is generated by this intense muscle activity. Senrei sensei and I walk at the same pace, and we turn at the same time. Our white tabi brush the floor, which creates a smooth rhythm, while our bodies tremble inaudibly and imperceptibly on the inside from the physical challenge of keeping the rigorous posture. (Dahlstedt, 2012-2014)

The excerpt of the process journal above shows the complexity of suriashi practice with its focus not only on the perfection of body posture but also the mental labour involved in focusing on the many layers of space at the same time. It reveals the high level of energy spent doing slow practice, which might seem contradictory. Yamazaki depicted how the transmission of knowledge in a Nihon Buyō-class happens on a one-to-one-basis, a standard method in the studying of traditional Japanese arts (2001, 57). Exceptions were made at the Traditional Theatre Training (T.T.T.) programme where we in 2000, 2004, and 2011 were eight students and three teachers practising suriashi together in a larger *keikoba* at Kyōto Arts Center (T.T.T., 1984). Sensing the concentration and silence in that space, where only our sliding feet were heard, was an unforgettable experience, which affected all subsequent movement practices. Nishikawa Senrei made the suriashi practice remarkable and meaningful, as if it was the most important assignment of the day. The structure of classes focused on precision through repetition until suriashi and other movements permeated life.

Suriashi developed into both a challenging and soothing practice, which often gave me a deeply spiritual experience. Sometimes suriashi practice provided a metaphysical and otherworldly experience. After ten minutes of struggle and pain for each practice, there was often a moment of complete effortlessness and weightlessness, which felt like a levitation. One suriashi practice was particularly ethereal: In the autumn 2012, I walked in suriashi in dark black box theatre spaces on early mornings, next to a large video projection showing Nishikawa Senrei's last performance when alive (Dahlstedt, 2012-2014). The reason I walked next to her video projection was to be able to reflect upon knowledge transmission in suriashi, and the master apprentice traditions in dance practice. I wanted to find out what could be transmitted from my teacher's movements captured on video. It was a recording from Oe Nō Theatre on 12th of August 2011, and her last time teaching at Traditional Theatre Training.

While moving slowly in suriashi with Nishikawa Senrei, I noticed, thanks to the augmented sound from the black box theatre's speakers, how the camera had captured the sounds of quick and effective footsteps. These footsteps came from students and the Nō theatre staff running behind the stage at the theatre. It was the first time that I was able to make a comparison between suriashi and everyday footsteps. It was a reminder of just how exceptional slow movement is in society today. August 12th, 2011 was also the last time I saw Nishikawa Senrei. I understood that she was ill, but not how ill. She died from

pancreatic cancer on Dec 6th, 2012, but it was not announced until Dec 17th according to her wish. The day before she died, I presented my work with Japanese dance at Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg. My last image for my presentation was of me and her bowing to each other after class at Senreinokai, Kyōto.

I said: ‘Okeiko, arigatō gozaimashita’ (Thank you for teaching me). She replied: ‘Otsukaresamadeshita’ (You must be very tired). These are ritualized phrases always repeated in class/okeiko, but for that moment the words had a weighty, almost sacred meaning, which affected the initiation of this thesis. I have searched for strategies to include these issues of ephemeral content – such as moving with ancestors - along the writing and practice. I repeatedly get back to these issues in the thesis.

As you watch Nishikawa Senrei’s last suriashi on Oe Nō Theatre, Kyōto, notice the ‘different’ or ‘other’ space created through suriashi on the *hashigakari* (the spiritual bridgeway). Later, I show how this ‘other space’ might be reconstructed in nontheatrical, urban spaces.

Nishikawa Senrei’s last suriashi on stage, August 12th, 2011, Kyōto:

[Video 1: 06:57](#) – 09:21

Here is also the documentation of the bowing at the end of our last class together at Senreinokai, April 5th, 2011.

However, I propose you watch it after you have read the whole thesis.

[Video 4: 2:56:02](#) - 2:56:23

The dance studio becomes a space for self-practice

Here I describe how the change of practice of suriashi was affected by Nishikawa Senrei’s illness. The fact that she set up an unconventional strategy for self-practice showed that traditional training is not static, it changes with circumstances. Additionally, it showed Nishikawa Senrei’s care and concern for her students and her studio. The social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey stated that a sphere ‘of real and valued practices’ can change, which shows that space is not persistent. (Massey, 2005, 5). Spaces are never static; they transform as we move with and through them. In May 2012, the *keikoba* changed its name to *dōjō*. *Dōjō* literary means ‘practice of the way’. The word-change, proposed by Nishikawa

Senrei when she was still alive, suggested a more conceptual practice of *suriashi*. This was a forethoughtful way for her to present a possible future for her students. Before Senrei sensei died, she also recorded a thirty-minute soundtrack on cassette tape with her instructions on how to practise *suriashi* correctly, which she made available to her students. This reinforced the importance of *suriashi* as the basis for activities at Senreinokai. Cassette tapes are still used in most traditional Nihon Buyō- and Kabuki-schools, one cassette for each dance. As a student you bring your own cassette according to the dance you study. Schools are protective about legacy by restricting availability of material and preventing digital replication.

The change of *suriashi* practice without the master

This new focus on *suriashi* through the recorded cassette tape, which I encountered in February 2013, created a surprise, and showed new possibilities with the practice. Not only had Nishikawa Senrei asked students relate to ephemeral content in the practice, now we were practising with her both absent and present at the same time. I engage more with the spiritual content in Chapters Four and Nine, however, the fact that we moved together with a dead master, in her *dōjō*, taught by her recorded voice, activated new fantasies about where Nishikawa Senrei resided at this moment. We as students engaged more distinctly with rhythmical concepts, and we practised in the corridors and the dressing-room. This was an example of what Massey called the complex mixture of ‘preplanned spatiality’; ‘in the unforeseen tearing apart, in the internal irruption, in the impossibility of closure, in the finding of yourself next door to alterity’ (Massey, 2005, 116). It was as if Nishikawa Senrei’s recorded okeiko/lesson prepared for *suriashi* to become a research project. She opened up for new complexities and in-between-ness in the practice, and showed that Senreinokai did not close down, it just moved *elsewhere*. With the master moved to *elsewhere*, a concept which philosopher Michel Foucault described as a heterotopic space without geographical markers, students continued to follow her rules of the practice (1984, 5). Nishikawa Senrei resided in our bodies and continued to help realize movements in the space of the *dōjō*. I engage with Foucault’s heterotopic spaces in Chapter Nine.

In order to reflect on how Nishikawa Senrei planned for her student’s continuation after her own unforeseen death, I turn to the philosopher Edward Casey who researched the body memory. Casey explained that how we are in the world is related to our *habitual* body memory (Casey, 1987, 149). According to him, the *habitual* body memory is ‘an active immanence of the past in the body that informs present bodily actions in an efficacious,

orienting, and regular manner' (1987, 149). 'The past' is embodied in present actions, and active immanence of the past also informs present bodily actions. The cassette with Nishikawa Senrei's voice was forbidden to leave the dōjō. Her recorded voice was thus archived and made space bound to Senreinokai. However, since we constantly repeated the practice to her recorded voice, it became a new body memory. Additionally, Nishikawa Senrei followed some of the philosophers of the Kyōto School, for example Umehara Takeshi (Tsurumi, 2003, 20). According to the founder of Kyōto School, philosopher Nishida Kitarō, our bodies are 'places', which is called *basho* in Japanese; 'all beings exist with their respective *basho* as their ground; this understanding is in the "mind" of the self as a human subject (Yuasa, 1987, 58). Thus, following this thinking, we were able to carry space with us. As I previously wrote, practicing suriashi gave us a different experience of space, which we carried with us. It was possible to recreate this particular embodied atmosphere elsewhere.

We as students found ourselves next door to alterity. Nishikawa Senrei's recording included new breathing exercises for suriashi, and new changes of speed according to the rhythmic concept of acceleration: slow start, pause, faster continuously, rapid ending. In the *keikoba* or *dōjō*, we normally focused on a slow suriashi practice, and the slow suriashi was still the most prevalent. Nonetheless, it was intriguing to practise suriashi running without lifting your feet while keeping the strenuous posture. This focused recorded training session worked in new ways, which invoked ideas on how to continue and to expand the practice. Students used two different tape recorders simultaneously – depending on the schedule for class - and practised either inside the studio or in the narrow corridor just outside the studio. Without our teacher in the same space, we still followed her oral recommendations, and practised suriashi together. We then watched each other's solo dances and helped correct each other. Here is an excerpt from my process journal, which describes how the suriashi practice changed after Nishikawa Senrei's death:

The suriashi practice in the narrow corridor outside the Senreinokai dōjō was focused, but the slim space affected our movements. Since we had to fold our shoulders and twist our upper backs in order to not collide when connecting in the middle, adjustments needed to be made. We kept our eyes directed to the front, but we would smile to ourselves when these bodily encounters happened. To challenge the brushing of the floor, we helped one another by kneeling and pressing down each other's heels with our hands, especially when the transition between right and left foot happened. This helped to understand how much

weight was needed to push into the floor to keep the correct body alignment, and to create the sense of hovering over the floor. Senrei sensei's voice changed as she entered the quicker section of suriashi, and counted faster, louder, while beating her fan to her knees. We were running in suriashi in the corridor, and we quickly folded our shoulders and twisted our backs as we met in the middle. When suriashi ended in slowness, Senrei sensei's voice sounded tired. While practising, the sensation of her illness and her energy dissolving was a contradiction to the practice. Her teaching voice was asking for firmness from her students. Indeed, we practised hard even though she was not in the same space as us anymore. Simultaneously we could hear her fatigue, and we could imagine her pain. This experience gave me initial questions on how dance practices aim for stability and firmness even though the reality is quite the opposite. In the practice, we acted as if we had more space than we had, and as if Senrei sensei was still alive and in the same room as us. It was as if the practice repealed a certain kind of placelessness known to dance practitioners, where we were busy with the constant reaffirmation of our bodies as places in space. Our teacher demanded from us to be alive, active and hard-working. And we were. Despite this, Senreinokai was later closed in June 2016, because of the lack of students and licensed teachers. But the practice outside this space continued (Dahlstedt, 2012-2014).

My teacher is gone, and I feel a responsibility to continue her legacy. Nishikawa Senrei died on Dec 6th in 2012, but she still moves with me; she is a reference and a *footnote* in my artistic work and in my life. She is much more than a footnote, though I do like that this word includes the word *foot*. I think that the Japanese practice of respecting and remembering one's ancestors while dancing is something similar to what is done in academic referencing. Movements are abiding references that we continue to quote through our bodies. As artistic researcher Anna Maria Orrù stated; they are 'everlasting melodies continuing their music through our limbs (Orrù, 2016). This means that a body can house knowledge from people who have passed away. Suriashi is a physically repeatable construction that holds 'presence' from the past. This knowledge is transmittable. Now that my teacher has passed away, my practising alone also represents my loss, the necessity of walking alone, and the absence of that strong connection I had with her. I have continued with the practice, with teaching and creating new works of art. This thesis is a continuation of those previous artistic works, and now moves into research where I can ask more questions about suriashi.

Before I encountered Japanese dance in Kyōto 2000, my choreographic practice consisted of a mix between modern/postmodern composition and improvisation. These practices are important to mention as they also supported the shaping of the methodology used for this thesis. Since 1987 I worked with choreographers relocating dance practice from the theatre to the streets (Rubicon, 1987). Names of these choreographers and teachers - who I claim as my professional ancestors - are found in Appendix I. Combining my previous professional dance practices enabled the following of threads woven between global dance practices and how these were transmitted corporeally.

Experimental pilgrimage as artistic activism

This thesis relies on experiences from the collected suriashi walks, called experimental pilgrimages. By claiming the concept 'pilgrimage', I combined dance practice, walking and the reflective component activated through suriashi. Pilgrimages are performed in specific spaces on specific routes to achieve a religious experience and an enhanced reflection of the self. Suriashi performed in this thesis was not aiming for achieving a specific religious experience, however Nishikawa Senrei requested a mindful way of working, which encouraged and valued the experience of practicing slowly and in silence. I found further support for my claim from the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960) who meant the purpose of pilgrimages were not for a specific religious purpose, 'but an experience to understand art' (Watsuji, quoted by Cheung, 2018b, 141). In one of his books he described how he visited Buddhist temples in Nara (1918) in order to 'enjoy the power of ancient art, to cleanse my mind, and enrich it' (Watsuji, 2012, 10). He did not walk in suriashi, but he walked slowly in order to understand how past times interacted with contemporary times (2012, 77). Watsuji's slow walking through temples experiencing sculptures – and the rhythm of objects - from many angles was for him a source of spiritual enlightenment. A pilgrimage provided space and time for paying close attention to our being in the world. Watsuji meant that walking while appreciating art engendered an otherworldly mood, which I argue suriashi also brought about (2012, 149). The artistic or bodily experience of the practice informs an auto-ethnographic perspective, which I use extensively in this thesis. However, I aim to show how this 'otherworldly mood' achieved from suriashi also can engage critically with situations and societal issues.

The suriashi walks captured on video for this thesis present an alternative to the images and religious symbols that usually embody the experience of pilgrimage, such as ikon paintings,

relics and people in static praying poses (Turner and Turner, 2011(1978)). Allowing the concept experimental pilgrimage to be the phenomenological rationale of this research aim to bridge cross-cultural practices of wandering, spiritual walking and dance. With the focus on 'experimental', I expand on what pilgrimage can do, and what suriashi as pilgrimage can do. The way a pilgrimage is set up as a phenomenological contract with space for studying and value one's personal experience while walking I argue has an activist and political potential. Thus, the questions on what suriashi can do, as in acting and activating, is elaborated through the practice-led work – the experimental pilgrimage performed specifically for this PhD. The video of these pilgrimages are both part of the methodology and stand as an independent durational artistic research piece. It can be experienced and integrated with separately as well as providing evidence for questions raised. The video collection of experimental pilgrimages function as a durational artistic piece and as references for - and images of - what suriashi activated in urban and other spaces.

Since 1997, the term *artivism* has become frequent; 'a hybrid neologism that signifies work created by individuals who see an organic relationship between art and activism' (Sandoval and Latorre, 2008, 82-83). The claim is that an artistic experience is transformative and thus changes people and society. In 2005, literature scholar Andrew Hewitt showed through his concept 'social choreography' that ideology needs to be understood as something embodied and practiced, not just as an abstract form of consciousness (Hewitt, 2005). Choreography is a way of thinking about the relationship of aesthetics to politics. Artivism is something similar to DIY activism, which scholars Louise Fabian and Kristine Samson mean are 'small-scale user-initiated, not officially sanctioned tactics' (Fabian and Samson, 2016, 167). However, not all DIY-activities were connected to art. We have also witnessed small-scale tactics grow to involve the whole world, for example Swedish Greta Thunberg's *Skolstrejk för klimatet*, [School strike for climate] which started in 2018. What began as a one-person strike inspired the weekly demonstrations in hundreds of cities called Fridays for Future. Another concept in use is micro-activism. The political scientist Jose Marichal defines micro-activism 'as one-to-several forms of politically oriented communication that reflect expressive micro-political accomplishments' (Marichal, 2013). In micro-activism, the goal is not to mobilize one big cause. Instead, it regarded smaller activities for small changes, for example' the formation of political Facebook groups, the retweeting of articles of political interest and the sharing of politically relevant videos on YouTube' (2013).

I make a comparison to other choreographer's engagement in dance and politics. Before the concept 'activist' was coined, dance scholar Stacey Prickett showed how perceptions of the function of art in society were based on Marxist ideals in the 1920s and 1930s (Prickett, 2013, 3). There was a powerful belief in the social responsibility of the artist, where choreographers have used dance as a method to awaken consciousness and affect change in society (2013,3). As can be seen from photos from the time, dancers use explicit gestures, fists raised with eyes set to the future with forward-steaming movements (2013, 39). Such gestures - explicit for political cause - have been resisted through my suriashi walks for this thesis. I did not walk for a specific political cause, but instead began a critical examination of dance practice, choreography and gendered spaces. I entered a discussion asking what suriashi might activate leaving the dance studio as and found how movements performed in the arts and politics have shifted both in time and space. What has stayed, or what has changed was related to what we as artists and our audiences considered to be the artist's social responsibility. Suriashi relocated to the streets could be experienced as a political object in itself rather than an independent performance with a political content.

Choreographers emerging from the postmodern era in the U.S., such as Deborah Hay claimed that dance itself can be considered a political activism. However, Hay did not point to waving signs in the streets; her activism was situated in the studio and worked to change mainstream systems of dance training and choreographic transmission (Steinwald, 2012). Earlier, choreographer and researcher Pearl Primus (1919-1994) declared her dance to be 'the scream which eases for a while the terrible frustration common to all human beings who, because of race, creed or color, are 'invisible' (Courtney, 2021). Later, choreographer Liz Lerman described how it may seem 'as if the artist is behaving like an activist, when actually all she is doing is building a world in which she can live and work' (Lerman 2014, 242). Dance pieces such as Yvonne Rainer's *Street Action* (1970) and Anna Halprin's *Blank Placard Dance* (1970) performed as political marches on the streets were conceived as a way to provoke audience participation, however not as confrontational as an actual political march. Instead, they were performed to activate issues that matters to people on a personal and collective level. Bodies are always used as political tools in activism, but as phenomenologist Jaana Parviainen pointed, 'many scholars have ignored activists' highly sophisticated and intelligent ways of using their moving bodies' (Parviainen, 2010, 311). She meant that when we focus too much of the agenda of an act – such as protesting against gender - and other inequalities, we ignore how political ideas are performed as concrete gestures and postures. Bodily actions can stir awareness, and thus stimulate change. Such phenomena was asserted

in phenomenology where scholars claim that we also communicate and process issues with embodied cogitation (Noland, 2009, 55).

Dance scholar and choreographer Nicola Conibere stated that ‘choreographies make proposals for the distribution of bodies (human or otherwise) in time and space according to any number of organizing forces’, and ‘we may then consider acts of arranging bodies as deeply connected to political and economic forces, and likewise, that the ways in which we regard and relate with others on a daily basis are implicated by those same powers’ (Conibere, 2017, 77). She showed through her piece *Assembly* how ‘an impulse to gather is also an impulse to be vulnerable’ (2017,84). Its peopled gatherings did not represent protest movements, and it did not make a claim for the multitude. Still, her choreography could be political. I allow these thinkers and artists to support my own investigation on what suriashi might activate, and what the embodiment of suriashi might bring forward in performed pilgrimages for this thesis.

Research approach

Practice-led research and Artistic Research

Practice-led research and artistic research are introduced in order to set up a context for performing and analyzing suriashi. In this section, I explain the different backgrounds and rationales to Practice-led, Practice-based or Artistic Research. The term ‘practice-based research’ covers a range of research activities, and I provide a brief definition below. In all practice-based research, *practical work* forms part of the research and also represents significant contribution to knowledge. In the Nordic countries, this type of research is called Artistic Research. Art researcher Linda Candy has defined the distinction between practice-based and practice-led research. She stated that ‘If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based’ (Candy, 2006, 1). Here, my suriashi pilgrimage documented on video is submitted as a creative artefact. However, as Candy stated: ‘If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led’ (2006,1). The approach in this thesis is practice-led, which means that the practice of suriashi is necessary to the orientation and formation of the research but not as the only output.

My research journey started when higher education for creative practices in Europe changed its structures. I explain this journey to show how the new educational structure opened for new artistic research candidates, with a then unconventional commencement. I explain some main points in practice-led research, and how these points were crucial for my own research. Since this academic field is still considered young, I also introduce a few central scholars who have proposed principal frameworks to the area. Part of my methodological training in the Artistic Research field arises from my engagement with the *Journal of Artistic Research* (JAR). JAR is an international, online, Open Access journal for Artistic Research from all disciplines to which researchers include visuals and audio in their submitted papers (Klein, 2010b). When submissions are reviewed, a combination of academic text, filmed material, artistic work and reflective text are assessed, which influenced the work with my own thesis. Borgdorff and peers founded *Journal for Artistic Research* (JAR) and the field-specific *Research Catalogue* since they thought it necessary to create ways for enabling significant contribution to knowledge outcomes shaped from artistic methodologies. The Research Catalogue (RC) is an international database and publishing platform for artistic research, which serves ‘as a backbone for teaching purposes, student assessment, peer review workflows and research funding administration’ (2010). Borgdorff showed how *research* - as a result of the Bologna Declaration - became part of the primary function in higher education, also in the arts (Borgdorff, 2005, 1). Bologna Declaration was an agreement that aimed to make it easier to transnationally access the European education systems (Pape, 2010, 9). It was adopted by 29 European educational ministers in 1999. To understand early resistances towards artistic research (where the argument was that art could never qualify as research), I recommend the reading of Art scholar Henk Borgdorff’s *The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia* (2012).

Klein, Nelson, Pape, Biggs and Haseman on research with ‘ephemeral’ content

For me, five central scholars have set the stage for what has become conventional in Practice-led Research and Artistic Research. Their statements, paired with my training with Nishikawa Senrei, supported my methodological development for this thesis. Artistic researcher Julian Klein stressed the importance of valuing the *artistic experience* when conducting Artistic Research, which the following three scholars call *ineffable* or *ephemeral* content. This supported my choice to both include visual and embodied experiences through video and text, showing how phenomenological accounts from actual walks/pilgrimages functioned as research methodology. It also connected Artistic Research with earlier mentioned Watsuji Tetsurō who claimed that the purpose of pilgrimages was the sensuous

experience, which enabled the appreciation of art (Watsuji, quoted by Cheung, 2018b, 141). Watsuji thus processed ephemeral content, and advocated for its value and importance. A pilgrimage provided space and time for paying close attention to our being in the world. Klein explained that ‘to have an artistic experience means to have a look from outside of a frame and simultaneously enter into it’ (Klein, 2010a, 3). He aimed for subjective, non-dualistic accounts and new ways of presenting outcomes. The subjective perspective ‘is constitutively included, because experience cannot be delegated and only be negotiated intersubjectively in second order’ (2010a,3). Klein defended the lived experience, which in phenomenological research was known as *Leib* (Thomas, 2003, Rothfield, 2005). Assignments where spaces for lived experiences were included, enabled a critical examination of practice. In this thesis, ‘corporeal reminders’ contributed to an embodied comprehension of suriashi as artistic experience. I show how Nishikawa Senrei’s suriashi teaching enabled not only one’s own lived experience, but also ineffable experiences from one’s ancestors. This elucidated how the traditional and contemporary functions of suriashi could be activated simultaneously through research, re-examining traditional rationales for suriashi practice - for example, the engagement with one’s ancestors - and exercise them critically in a contemporary context.

Art scholar Robin Nelson insisted that although ‘a research question can be evident in the practice, it is not typically self-evident’ (Nelson, 2013, 27). For example, at first glance the suriashi walks were not self-evident as research. Suriashi as experimental pilgrimage was an example of durational arts practices, an independent site-specific performance or an exhibition on screen in a gallery (Shalson, 2012). However, when specific questions were asked about what suriashi activated in each situation, research outcomes were formulated while walking slowly through the project. Nelson described how ‘the question asked ultimately determines the answer and thus hermeneutic-interpretative models are not linear but figured as circles, spirals or networks with many points of entry’ (2013, 53). These models resonate with my own dance improvisational practice, which constantly leaves ideas behind and follow new impulses in order to stay ‘present’ on stage. Particularly in dance improvisation practices, there is never a straight path to follow, but a constant braiding of impulses. Nelson elucidated how working with ‘ephemeral’ content (live art) in practice-as-research, brought yet new outcomes, where ‘documentation of process has emerged as another key dimension’ of Practice-led research (2013, 28).

Initially, I was critical of how text tend to overshadow physical practices. In conventional research methodologies, text always seemed to take control, representing meaning and intent, where physical movements were taken for granted or considered as ornaments. Art scholar Brad Haseman explained how practice-led researchers insist that research outputs and claims to knowing must be made through the symbolic language and forms of their practice (Haseman, 2006, 4). In other words, the practice-led choreographer asserted the primacy of the dance; the composer the primacy of the music, and the novelist the primacy of the novel (2006, 4).

This insistence on reporting research through the outcomes and material forms of practice challenges traditional ways of representing knowledge claims. It also means that people who wish to evaluate the research outcomes also need to experience them in direct (co-presence) or indirect (asynchronous, recorded) form (2006, 4).

I have documented my suriashi walks for capturing and revealing moments of discovery and for providing an artistic experience of 'ephemeral content' to participants and readers. As I earlier wrote, they dissolved the boundaries between suriashi and walking, and between dance as training and dance as artistic practice. The filming and documentation of suriashi walks became a self-portraiture, a key dimension, and a database for my practice-led research.

Following the new understanding of practice-based research, suriashi walking is itself a legitimate form of embodied research. Suriashi as practice created a frame, in the same way as did theoretical perspectives. Choreographer Sidsel Pape and the dancer Trine Thorbjørnsen co-founded the first study circle (Circle 7) dedicated to practice-based research at Nordic Summer University (NSU). It was elaborated on preceding explanations of research outcomes within the field of Practice-Based-Research. Their work paved the way for the entrance of Practice Based Research into NSU (2010, 11). Pape described the initial linguistic struggle, where researchers from other fields idealized 'practice in general and artistic practice in particular', and where the choreographers 'coming from an anti-intellectual dance background' were 'not able to convey their tacit knowing' and problematize 'embodied experience' (11). It also became evident 'that art was the field of practice and the particular practice at stake was an artistic one' (12). She and her peers acknowledged there were 'two more traditional understandings of the field', 'one

understanding was that artistic practice is a legitimate form of research; while the other understanding is that the artist produces an artwork and researches the creative process, thereby adding to the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge' (Pape, 2010, 13). For example, dance studies changed after "the cultural turn" in the 1980s, rapidly followed by the "turn of the body", influenced by perspectives such as feminist theory and poststructuralism (Thomas and Prickett, 2019, 2). The "turn of the body" did not fully reach the dance practitioner's studios, which choreographer Sidsel Pape sought to elucidate through discussions at *Circle 7* (2010,11). This could be further explained using phenomenology. 'The body' (Körper) was taken for granted in dance studio practices, and therefore not examined critically. Therefore, 'the living body' (Leib) must be taken into account by reflecting on the concept of *embodiment*. The linguistic journey started with words like *body*, *practice arts*, and *research*, and arrived at *artistic*, *strategies*, and *embodiment* (2010, 11). Pape meant that embodiment can be done, as in embodying, thus *body* had to become *embodiment*. Embodiment 'is a noun that allows for a verb, an experienced process rather than (body as) an object only' (11). Sensing how the dance and artistic field often created an intellectual opposition between theory and practice, Pape set up research contexts where artists and artist academics contributed equally and where 'ambiguous, plural, polyphonic, and poetic voices' were heard (13).

According to Aesthetics scholar Michael Biggs, there were three principal types of experiential knowledge that practice-based/artistic research could generate: explicit, tacit and ineffable (Biggs, 2004, 6). First, the explicit content is what can be expressed through language: a written text, a presentation consisting of words. Second, tacit content has an experiential component that cannot be efficiently expressed with words. Third, Biggs stated that ineffable content cannot be expressed linguistically. However, Biggs rejected the idea that practice-based research would only demand non-linguistic modes of argument and communication (Biggs, 2004). Biggs thus stated that knowledge produced through practice is difficult to express through words only, but he supported that research outcomes were reflected also in text.

These five scholars, who I have chosen, approached 'ephemeral content' differently. Klein considered the 'artistic experience', Biggs named it 'tacit and ineffable knowledge', and Nelson called it 'ephemeral content'. Haseman discussed 'performative methodologies' where the symbolic language and forms of the practice must be present in practice-led research outcomes. Pape, coming from choreography, instead argued that there was a need to stop

idealizing practice and problematize that which an ‘embodied experience’ could hold (2010, 11). As mentioned previously, Pape started a new study circle within Nordic Summer University, which at first was seen as controversial collective, but then took an active part in the renewal of research rationales and attracting new international scholars (2010, 13). This study circle has influenced my methodology, where I have integrated practice-led elements by inviting participants, readers and examiners to experience suriashi both directly (in conferences, and in your own chosen space) and indirectly (through video examples of my suriashi pilgrimages in Chapters Four, Eight and Nine). Additionally, for this thesis, I have engaged with the fact that the ephemeral content in suriashi is not only tacit and ineffable, but also nonhuman and ghostly. I address this specifically in Chapters Five, Nine and Ten.

The relocation of practices

Suriashi relocated to outdoor spaces, methodologically framed as a culturally specific walking/dancing phenomenon makes an original contribution to knowledge in practice-led research. The first-person perspective served as a starting point for conceptualising the research, particularly regarding issues around professional dance techniques and what is being activated when artistic practices travel and relocate. Revealing the embodied logic behind the body alignment of ‘feminine’ suriashi, which I have kept practicing and investigating through this thesis, asked for a reflection on gendered norms both in society and in dance practice. All dance cultures are diverse and exist in relation to those who create and maintain them. Auto-ethnography/self-descriptions work as intersectional acts and help situate research into a variation of complex narratives rather than just one. In Chapter Four, I therefore compare body alignments and put suriashi in context with other dance walking practices.

Relocating suriashi to the streets and outdoor spaces was something I invented for this thesis. However, practicing suriashi outdoors was not new. In Chapters Three and Four, I investigated how suriashi origins as an outdoor practice and represented a theatrical ‘going on the road’ (Brazell and Araki, 1998, Kawashima, 2016, Klein, 1995, Lancashire, 2001). The historical facts collaborated with how site-specific dance work for urban space gained new significance through postmodern choreographers, such as Anna Halprin, Judson Church and Rubicon, which I engage with in Chapters Four, Seven and Eight. In Chapters Four and Nine, I show new and historical accounts of suriashi (time-) travelling in space, intersecting both nations and ephemeral, ghostly spaces. These accounts showed how suriashi benefited

from being examined not merely a fixed cultural symbol but as a complex dance practice with a provoking history and a contemporary potential.

First-person approach

This thesis takes a first-person approach to its research in acknowledgement of the contribution created by my subjective experience as a researcher and choreographer. My own experiences are considered in order to make connections to related issues of gender, space, walking, and suriashi. My research journey began in a gap between the vocational dance education and dance as research, which affected my thesis from the start. At first, most dance practitioners never leave the dance studio, but continue to train with teachers and masters in different schools throughout their lives. Thus, when relocating suriashi as dance practice to instead allow it to be a method for research, I neither left the studio nor the stage. After my years as a PhD candidate in UK, and after dance as academic discipline slowly entered Swedish universities, the gap has now decreased substantially. Nonetheless, as art historian Astrid von Rosen stated, in our hometown Gothenburg there was neither a manifest institutional platform for historical dance research, nor a platform for research with or through dance (von Rosen 2014, 70). The University of Gothenburg had Northern Europe's largest faculty of fine, applied and performing arts that included all art forms except dance (von Rosen 2014, 70). Therefore, I first begun my writing in relation to something missing. Dance did not exist as an academic practice in my hometown. I state that the absence of dance as a discipline at University of Gothenburg was initially an evidence for gender imbalances.

While asking why dance did not exist at University of Gothenburg, I bring in a critique of historical views on subjectivities, built on 'the order of the phallus'(Lacan et al., 2020 (1977)). The feminist philosophers Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva criticised psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's argument that men and women cannot have the same position because of how language consists of an orderly structure. The structuring element was, according to Lacan, phallus (Lacan quoted by Johansson Wilén and Sjöstedt, 2021, 12). Lacan thus proposed that woman did not exist in language until she spoke the language of men (13). Such an alleged absence also affected dance - an art form that exists in non-verbal form - where the stereotypical view of ordered structures risked suffocating attempts to make other voices and bodies heard. Dance in Western countries is an artform mostly populated by women, therefore the exclusion of dance from the academic institution affected mainly female dance artists. As I show in this thesis, the past absence of women on stage in

Japan in the 17th century has affected how suriashi has been and is practiced. Cixous', Irigaray's and Kristeva's project to destabilise and create cracks in the phallogocentric language could be compared with the situation of dance in my hometown. A struggle for dance to enter the University of Gothenburg offered a similar destabilisation. Accordingly, in Chapters Four, and Eight, I include the work by dance ensemble Rubicon. They were the female precursors for establishing a local dance scene in Gothenburg in 1987. I danced in many of Rubicon's pieces. They also established subsidized professional dance training, performed on streets in the city, and opened two theatres. Primarily, they also worked a lifetime to bring open the doors for dance in higher education. Their work laid the ground for critical questions about dance as artform and practice (von Rosen, 2016, von Rosen, 2018, Lund, 2020).

Me and my choreographing peers got access to artistic higher education when MFA-programmes opened for professional practitioners in 2008 – actors, directors, performing artists, dancers, choreographers - working with their own projects (Högskolan för Scen och Musik). These MFA-programmes were opened by Cecilia Lagerström and Pia Muchin, both academics and artistic practitioners. They were opened as a result of the Bologna Declaration. Our professional competence was validated prior to admission to the Academy of Music and Drama. Since there was no BA-programme in Dance in Gothenburg, these MFA-programmes became of specific importance for us. This change of attitude to my own work affected all my performance projects thereafter. The MFA-programmes at University of Gothenburg were initially crafted for the performing arts fields, by requiring from the artist to look at her/his work in a scientific way. Initially, we focused on Donald Schön's research on 'the reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1984).

Phenomenology in practice-led research

Phenomenology has been the main methodological approach for this practice-led thesis. I therefore give a brief background to this field. Phenomenology explores what people experience in certain occasions and focuses on their experience of a certain phenomenon. Modern phenomenology was established as a philosophy by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and further developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and Edith Stein (1891-1942). Helmuth Plessner and Merleau-Ponty were usually credited to have started the discussion on the difference between what it is to be a body and what it is to have a body, hence one needed to consider the conceptual distinction between lived body (Leib) and mere (physical) body (Körper) (Brinkmann, 2019, Krüger, 2010). A common quote by Merleau-Ponty reads

‘To understand is to experience the harmony between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the performance – and our body is the anchorage in a world’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 167). Dance scholar Philipa Rothfield has used the doctor-patient exchange in medical examinations to exemplify what we miss out when lived body experiences were neglected. There was a constant risk that the patient's body (Körper) was objectified and that his/her corporeal experience of ill-ness (Leib) was undervalued (2005, 44).

Merleau-Ponty, known as the philosopher of embodiment created a ‘school of thought that associates human understanding not with cogitation but with *embodied* cogitation’ (Noland, 2009, 55). For him, gesturing ‘is the inescapable medium in which animate forms navigate environments and enact intentions’ (2009,56). Gesturing supported the curiosity of what meanings bodies brought forward. This curiosity worked as an antidote to the so-called Cartesian body-mind split where historically the mind has been privileged over the body. As such, it supported practice-led research that examines society from a phenomenological perspective. The Cartesian split referred to the 17th century philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) who was usually held responsible for Western dualist thinking. As a result, Western thought has recognized the mind as the ‘locus of rationality and knowledge’ while the body is recognized as the ‘locus of irrationality and feeling’ (Farnell, 1994, 5). Phenomenology worked to resist such reductions. Scholar Donald Schön stated, against Descartes, that our knowing also exists in action, albeit in tacit form and implicit in our patterns of action, however, he argued that it is possible to construct and test these kinds of models of knowing (Schön, 1984,viii).

Phenomenology insists that identity and intelligibility are available in things (Sokolowski, 2000, 4). A phenomenological account includes the dissemination of knowledge on how things, choreographies, artistic objects are created and find their meaning. Since suriashi included culturally specific tasks, such as engaging with ancestors in the past, I sought to translate what such engagement meant. Walking in suriashi, while experiencing the absence of my teacher and ancestors that I never met, finally made sense in relation to the presences achieved through them. I compare the culturally specific aspects of suriashi, (including invisible characters and ancestors) with Edvardsen’s and Cummings’ filmed experiments where they perform invisible things or absences. Through choreography they make absent things present. They work with the space around them. For example, in her piece *Chicken Soup* (1981), which I watched online, choreographer Blondell Cummings performed typical

and atypical movements usually experienced in the kitchen (Cummings, 1989 (1981)). Cummings allowed audiences to perceive cleaning as dance while at the same time providing with a subjective of what the act of cleaning might activate. She invited the audiences to experience also what the dancer was experiencing alone in her own room - an imagined kitchen. Another example is the solo performance *Black* by choreographer Mette Edvardsen, which shows how a performative phenomenological script can bring meaning to the absent presence of things, which almost had a shamanistic quality, hence its relevance for this thesis (Edvardsen, 2011). While performing, Edvardsen made things appear through her spoken word. She named pieces of furniture by pointing to certain empty spots in space. Performing actions and handling invisible objects, simultaneously performing the everyday (a household) and the situation of a theatrical piece (a set design) showed how postmodern and contemporary choreographers have changed physical presence on stage and elsewhere. I state that in these two postmodern choreographies, the performance embodied less oppositions and more interactions between Körper and Leib. These dance pieces both work in a phenomenological way, addressing Körper, Leib and the tension between what was present and what was absent. The perception of the audience is angled through their bodily sensibilities, and their ability to create meaning of what they perceived in this new choreography. However, reading the derogatory comments on social media on Edvardsen's dance, showed how some audience members disagree to perceive certain acts as intelligible (Sløseriombudsmannen, 2017). Suriashi relocated from the studio encountered similar comments, but they were less than I had expected. I state that the lack of experience, the unfamiliarity of appreciating suggestive, symbolic, and indirect performance complicated the presence of experimental choreography in society. This is why I think that such phenomenological experiments should also be performed outside the theatrical spaces.

Ethical considerations

This PhD project started at Royal Holloway University in 2014, following their ethics guidelines, including undergoing initial ethical review. The research was conducted fulltime 2014-2015, then halftime 2017-2019.

The research was finalized at University of Roehampton, 2019-2021, after all video documentations were recorded. The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference DAN 20/ 044 in the Department of Dance and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 11.06.20.

This project involved human participants and technology. I completed periods of suriashi walking in urban and rural spaces alone and with participants, documented with a camera. All locations are listed in Appendix C. The project did not involve a high risk for those associated. My considerations were that participants could have collided with other pedestrians since we walked so slowly, and the camera could have been stolen when placed on the street unguarded. Also, the suriashi practice is strenuous for the body. My strategies for safe practices were to always make a risk assessment before walking. I carefully selected the spaces for suriashi walks. I sometimes asked the participant to select the space themselves. I used a professional, but old camera, not attractive for the second-hand market. I explained carefully to participants the rationale of suriashi and made it very clear that they could adjust the body alignment should they feel any pain and that they must stop the practice immediately should they feel any discomfort. Most of the suriashi walks performed for this thesis were documented on camera. My PhD project was also presented and tested at conferences. On two of these conferences, the participants contributed with written experiences of walking in suriashi: *Archives, Art and Activism Conference* at University College London on 3-5 September 2015 and *The 31st Conference of the International Association of Libraries, Museums, Archives and Documentation Centres of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS)*, 31 May-3 June 2016 at the Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark. Participants were invited to try the suriashi walk as part of my research presentation. Clear information was given verbally that the suriashi walk would be documented and filmed for my PhD project. The conference participants wrote about their experience and volunteered to donate their writings for my research. These anonymous handwritten submissions from the two conferences have been collected in Appendix D and E.

In 2016, I taught my research project as methodology to ten MFA students, described in Chapter Eight. The students gave their consent to share their own reflective essays afterwards for my thesis. I have edited these, and they are found in Appendix G. Additionally, workshop participants, students, performers, and practitioners who participated in practicing suriashi have given their verbal consent to be visible on video and to share their own experiences for my research project. This work investigated what suriashi activated when relocated from the hidden dance studio and the audiences were an important part of the research. For the filmed activities in urban spaces when involuntary audiences passed in the picture, it was difficult to get audience consent. However, the camera was always clearly visible on a tripod. I have, when possible, in the editing process worked to edit out

involuntarily featured soloists. I consider the audience responses through my own observations and reflections, both what was recorded in a personal process journal from my experience of the pilgrimage as well as revisiting and analysing the video documentation afterwards. (Dahlstedt, 2012-2014, Dahlstedt, 2014-2019)

Chapter Two:

Methodology

In this chapter I introduce how I engage suriashi as a practice-led research methodology in dialogue with phenomenological and auto-ethnographic frameworks throughout this thesis. A brief historical and theoretical background to these approaches was given in the previous chapter. Here I go deeper into how they are implemented in this thesis.

The approach for my research is practice-led, which means that the practice of suriashi is necessary to the orientation and formation of the research but not as the only output. For this thesis the original practice changed focus, and instead developed into a method for experiencing spaces and society in a new way. Suriashi was not performed as a secondary experimentation, but instead served as an overarching strategy. In that sense, suriashi practice is part of the methodological frame itself. As stated in the previous chapter, suriashi originated as a method for embodied stability, for example in dance and martial arts, where suriashi provided a precise way of using the body as an instrument/tool to get something done – such as performing a narrative on stage. Within this thesis, when suriashi was relocated to outdoor spaces, the practice changed from being a method for the articulation of the body and instead became a method for finding things out. Knowledge achieved through practising suriashi was not a static endeavour; it changed with the situations and spaces performed within and elicited a variation of artistic experiences. As such my thesis has a typical descriptive approach derived from a phenomenological first-person perspective. This affected the meandering writing style, oscillating between academic theory, video and reflective recollection. Meandering confirmed a space that was co-existing between order

and chaos in space and time while moving and travelling. Meandering also confirmed the state of mind Nishikawa Senrei asked for when practicing in the studio – ‘be water’.

I have created a meandering travelogue using movement, text and video. Suriashi performed specifically for this thesis, also meant not ignoring the historical background to the role that suriashi has played. This is to anchor the practice in a Japanese culture that was not mine from birth, but indeed has become embodied as one of my most important artistic groundings. I engage suriashi as a practice-led methodology for its unique potentials of practicing the body in relation to specific aspects of society, such as

1. reflecting on our presence in space, and being in the world
2. the performance of gender and self/other
3. questioning the legacy of dance practices
4. advocating for a place for suriashi in the global dance canon

Through doing so, the thesis engages and bridges previous research gaps in dance research. For example, dance scholar Emily Wilcox stated that dance in East Asia has eluded the attention of text-based scholars since dance was considered difficult to engage with because of its embodied expression (Wilcox&Mezur, 2020, 1). Wilcox argued that scholars of dance studies ‘often lacked the kinesthetic, linguistic, and contextual knowledge to carry out primary research on these dance forms (2020,1). Scholars Tomie Hahn’s and Barbara Sellers-Young’s contributions were an exception in which they foregrounded sensory knowledge and experience to comprehend the embodied cultural aesthetics of Japanese dance (Hahn, 2007, Sellers-Young, 1993). Their accounts have been used to compare my own experiences of the practice of suriashi and Nihon Buyō.

Collecting lived experiences from practice

This thesis identified the unique knowledges encountered through its practice by collecting not only my own lived experiences from the practice, but also from participants taking part in my research. Essential to my research practice was the inclusion of a range of participants including dancers, non-dancers, other artists. My use of suriashi as practice-led methodology thus included guiding these participants in an encounter with the practice that privileged the sensorial (Dahlstedt, 2014e, 2015b, 2016a, 2016c). This supported a process which sought to extend notions of contemporary and accessible dance practices, and the knowledges revealed through different participants. By performing suriashi alone and with others, I was able to find new questions and answers regarding the history of suriashi, gendered suriashi and gendered space and discuss these within the field of dance practice.

As a result, participants would often shift from an experience that found the physical ‘feminine’ alignment of *suriashi* ‘too strict’ to one that was ‘accommodating’ in an ongoing practice. Here, the continuation of the embodied task enabled an evolution in embodied, sensorial knowledge and awareness that could only be accessed through continued embodied practice.

My practice-led methodology enabled a way to act critically without abandoning embodiment from my own experience of decades of dance practice. I acknowledge the importance of reflecting how we think that movements are formalised and composed, and what they can activate in us, between each other and the environment. *Suriashi* was not just a means of locomotion but also a means of feeling the terrain. This was done through haptic sense, emphasized when wearing *tabi*, the split toe socks that you wear during practice in Nihon Buyō, Nō and Kyōgen. The haptic sense changed when *suriashi* was performed in winter shoes on gravel asphalt or barefoot in sand. The feeling of the terrain was also performed through the sense of balance, which was calibrated in particular ways through *suriashi*. *Suriashi* as composed walking worked to both distance and engage oneself from the ground. Returning to Senreinokai in 2013, 2015 and 2018, I noticed how my *suriashi* walks in shoes had changed my original practice. For example, my feet started to draw tiny circles when practicing *suriashi* in winter booths, and I lifted my heels too much. I was immediately corrected by Nishikawa Senrei’s co-teachers and students (Oishi Ryoko, Ota Emiko et al), which I repeatedly acknowledged and adjusted.

‘Practice-as-research raises the methodological problem of navigating the relationship between thought and matter through writing that is its own form of practice’ (Conibere, 2015, 13). For this thesis, practice-led research is valued, considered, and questioned. I do not wish to fall into the trap of assuming that creative practice is untheorized, or that theoretical writing is uncreative. Because of the transdisciplinary approach in this thesis, I encountered occasional methodological disagreement on which part of *suriashi* that was researchable. This was based on the different methodological perspectives in the research fields I encountered. Japanese literature scholars failed to recognize knowledge stemming from dance practice. Performance scholars showed little interest in the embodiment of *suriashi* since it was considered just a basic step. Western dance scholars focused mainly on Western dance practices. Here, practice-led research opened for an otherwise unattainable knowledge. There was something advantageous by constantly being in practice, where the text was not only reflecting back, but enabled further thinking about what the practice of

suriashi was continuing to process. I have followed a model where I did not start with a theoretical concept to begin with. Instead, I allowed a formal dance technique performed with my own live body ask the first questions. Thus, I have not only provided text for explicit findings, I have also included text about the experience of relocating suriashi, and how my outdoor practices alone and with others were planned. Further, I provide corporeal reminders, reflective journals and video in order to share and expand on the outcomes holding tacit and ineffable content.

Phenomenology

My practice-led focus found structural grounding in phenomenology, particularly in how this thesis use the experimental nuances of performing suriashi outside the studio as a method for research. However, I have not used the classical phenomenological vocabulary since I also made space for Japanese concepts and phenomena derived from practice. The thesis is structured from suriashi practice, and how the practice moved through spaces. It was important to evidence certain things raised from practice, however I do not trace back the historical background to how phenomenologists used the concept of ‘evidence’.

Phenomenology does not look at the body as a passive container, but instead asks what it means to be a body, to have a body, and to live in a body, which is why this philosophy has been used extensively in dance research and practice-led research. Phenomenological scholars state that it is the experience of things that shape our being in and understanding of the world (de Beauvoir, 1949 (1973), Husserl, 1999, Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Parviainen, 1998). However, how do we understand the world, and what have we agreed on? I encountered the world differently when performing suriashi in the subway and not in the studio. The work as a choreographer occasionally gave the experience of failure of creating something meaningful for an audience. Efforts frequently remained unintelligible and vague. Here, a lack of previous experiences of suriashi either failed or succeeded to create an understanding. This showed that what we perceive from others - even though we share the common basis of experience; to have and to live in a body – could still remain unintelligible. My research was made intelligible and meaningful through the constant repetition of practicing suriashi in urban and other spaces.

I have used the practice-led, phenomenological accounts for attending gaps in suriashi as a formal dance technique. This resonated with how phenomenological philosophers have defined ‘the opposition between the concepts of *Körper* (the objective, instrumental,

institutionalized body) and *Leib* (the subjective, lived, experiential body)' (Brinkmann, 2019, Krüger, 2010, Noland, 2009, Rothfield, 2005, Thomas, 2003). The phenomenological concept of *Körper*, focusing on the physically measurable body, resonated with how dance techniques have operated to produce the objective dancer's body. There was a tendency to focus on external factors, such as which techniques have shaped dancers' bodies and the outcomes of that (Thomas, 2003, 94). The objective dancer's body was present in ballet, modern dance as well as Japanese dance. There was a risk of asymmetry between *Körper* and *Leib* in the request for elitist dance techniques paired with failing to acknowledge how dancers experience these techniques. *Leib* as concept instead valued the subjective experience of the lived body, inner sensations, which I state is more present in postmodern, somatic dance practices (Eddy, 2002, Kapsali, 2017, George, 2014, Novack, 1990, Sellers-Young, 1998). In dance improvisation, practitioners shared experiences verbally as part of the training (Novack, 1990). The sensual qualities of embodied practices were considered.

I therefore spend time comparing how certain objective bodies were reproduced in ballet, modern/postmodern and Japanese dance, especially considering the uncritical gendering of bodies. Walking the streets in suriashi employing a highly composed body while writing this thesis, I sensed how the proposed opposition between *Körper* and *Leib* dissolved. I was also able to find unexplored assumptions in dance practices who were for example considered ungendered and universal (see Chapter Four).

Sameness or difference

In defence of practice-led approach, I argue that certain problems could only be dissolved by the actual practice itself. For example, suriashi bared the risk of being dismissed for lacking in virtuosity, this was something that immediately disappeared once you started to practise. Rothfield argued that a phenomenological framework predicated upon an underlying sameness between all peoples failed to process differences (Rothfield, 2005, 44). She addressed how many instances have functioned to dismiss certain dance practices as unskilled and lacking in virtuosity because they failed to acknowledge 'different' kinaesthetic values (50). Rothfield addressed how the literacy of dominant dance practices, constantly obscured the lack of literacy in other dance forms (51). When one's own kinaesthetic sensibilities, mixed with certain essentializing notions of any less known non-European dance practice, the nuances were distorted (51). For example, the lack of literacy in non-European dance might result in deep misunderstandings, e.g., around virtuosity and presence. Rothfield showed that these problems also existed at the level of state funding,

evaluation and criticism (51). My practice-led research of suriashi aimed to create an increased literacy and new kinaesthetic sensibilities.

In this thesis, I therefore allowed suriashi to enter a discussion on bodies and cultural contexts rather than representing a manual for the correct training of an objective body. To concern suriashi only from a dance aesthetic point of view blocked any other potential of what suriashi could do other than being a fixed tool for professional perfection. In Chapter Four, I show how 'correct' training was also dependent on cultural context. Nishikawa Senrei was supportive of my performing and teaching outside Japan. Neither of us held an ideal of preserving dance for an elitist minority. My methodology has thus turned away from idealistic concepts of dance culture, where many formal techniques previously represented something to strive for and something only available for the few. Though this methodological frame stem from practice-led research, I also turned to dance scholars for specific research gaps (Buckland, 1999, Hahn, 2007, Wilcox & Mezur, 2020).

For a non-hierarchical treatment of dances to take place, more dance techniques must be considered, where my contribution to this discussion is a practice-led first-person investigation of suriashi. Suriashi was often framed as a Japanese traditional technique, where the Western walking practices in postmodern dance were considered postmodern, and often positioned against classical ballet and modern dance. However, the initial resistance to slow practices from the dance field began to disappear as more techniques were included in the canon. Previous hierarchical splits in dance practices (for example between classical ballet, modern dance and postmodern dance) were disappearing. Today, researchers instead work for dance to be considered as neither universal or general nor the highest expression of civilization. This potentially led to 'a non-hierarchical treatment of all dance techniques, from street dancing to ballet and from bhangra to butoh' (Buckland, 1999, 3). In addition, Wilcox showed how conventional Western dance theory has produced dichotomies between "modern dance" and "ethnic dance", "contemporary" and "traditional", and "art" and "culture" (2020, 8). Therefore, my methodology works to resist such dichotomies by allowing a traditional Japanese dance form to engage with practices usually considered Western, contemporary or postmodern. I shared the practice with researchers as well as dancers, and with amateurs as well as artists from other fields. This continued to ground my work for this thesis where one goal was to add Japanese dance to the canon of contemporary dance practices.

Nishikawa Senrei acknowledged new perspectives of Nihon Buyō, which showed how tradition was always innovative and did not remain unchanged through time. She focused more on suriashi than what her colleagues from the same school did (Nishikawa, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2011). This thesis therefore considers and revisits the relation to Nishikawa Senrei and her explanation of how the embodiment of ancestors must be acknowledged. My practice of Japanese dance since the year 2000 depended on the guidance and time with her, supported by scholars exploring Japanese dance in a studio context (Sellers-Young, 1993, Yamazaki, 2001, Hahn, 2007). There was a correct suriashi to relate to, not only with regards to body alignment but also the ephemeral content. I have used the mind/body connection with ancestors explicitly and creatively, and I think it could be addressed as

1. the presence of absences appearing (Cummings, 1981, Edvardsen, 2011, Sokolowski, 2000)
2. an expanded artistic experience (Klein, 2010, Watsuji, 2012)
3. bodily awareness beyond technical proficiency (Thomas, 2019, 3)

Thus, engaging with the comparison of dance practices and the engagement of ancestors/mentors, I offered suriashi practice to other professionals, whom I see as my professional ancestors. These were the postmodern choreographers Marika Blossfeldt, Muna Tseng, Susan Osberg, Paul Langland, and the screendance scholar and filmmaker Douglas Rosenberg. In Chapter Nine, I show how the use of video and video editing further expands on the ancestral concept as requested by Nishikawa Senrei. Technology processed ephemeral content, such as our presence in space as we practise. This supported future methodological workshops combining suriashi, video, dance improvisation and a creative engagement with whoever we call our ancestors.

First-person approach

A central focus lies on my own experiences from being a dance practitioner since 1987, and how these feeds into the particular epistemological enquiry that practice-led research embodies. Donna Haraway, feminist scholar in the field of science and technology, argued for ‘situated and embodied knowledges’ based on a critique of ‘objective knowledge’ produced by faceless and bodiless knowers (Haraway, 1988, 583). Personal conditions and external coincidence affected this research. The knowledge I possess about and from within the dance/artistic field as well as subjective perspectives were used to highlight phenomena and to place them in the appropriate context. I have created an auto-ethnographical *meandering* throughout the thesis. I locate the term meandering in relation to walking where my writing exercised a conscious wandering in its discussions. Thus, rather than researching a

phenomenon far away from myself, an auto-ethnographic and self-critical perspective shaped this thesis, following the developments of practice-based and artistic research, asking what the suriashi pilgrimages activated through a personal recall and experience.

The first-person approach is also called auto-ethnography (Ellis, 2004, Ellis et al., 2011, Overend, 2014, Paiz, 2016, Spry, 2001). Auto-ethnography is a method where self-reflexivity influenced the research narrative. Sociologist and communication scholar Carolyn Ellis explained it as ‘research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political (Ellis, 2004,xix). The scholar and theatre director David Overend argued that the auto-ethnographic narrative offers an authentic engagement with the practitioner, and ‘a direct insight into the multiple iterations of the performance text, as informative starting points’ (2014, 5-6). Anecdotal evidence is often frowned upon, however the ‘use of anecdote and autobiographical reflection has its roots in established social science methods’ (Overend, 2014, 5). Tami Spry, scholar of performance studies, challenged the critique of auto-ethnography as overly focused on the self. She meant that auto-ethnography as a research methodology helps ‘articulate the intersections of histories, cultures and societies through the critical representation of a researcher’s experience’ (Spry, 2016, 33)

Many performance scholars allow auto-ethnography to be an intersectional act and important part of research dissemination (Cooper, 2016, Hann, 2019, Mock, 2009, Odumosu, 2020).¹ My own autoethnographic approach began by revealing the gap in higher education for dance practitioners in my hometown. Further, auto-ethnography enabled an impactful encounter with the notion of ancestral kinship for myself and others who participated in the practice-led research. This was directly connected to the relocation of suriashi. Relocating suriashi showed new problems and potentials of the practice, at first not knowing whether a relocation would be possible. Spry called for a ‘performative autoethnography that both unsettles the "I" and represents the Other with equal commitment’ (Spry, 2016, 2). This was particularly evident when performing suriashi in drag on a traditional shrine festival (see

¹ Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. The term was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989 (Cooper, 2016, 385).

Chapter 4). Choreographer and scholar Suzan Kozel combined phenomenology and auto-ethnography crafted especially for dance. (Kozel, 2007, xiv). I follow Kozel's guidance where 'the inner voice' is materialised through written process journals along the thesis (Dahlstedt, 2014–2019). These process journals support the auto-ethnographic narrative that shifts between my own recollected first-person perspective of the events occurring in urban spaces, and relevant contextual information to the purpose of the recollected narrative. Suriashi, deriving from an aesthetic and sensorial world with a particular role in performance, became a space of reflection on the practice itself. In addition, it enabled a reflection on the role of the practitioner. There is a connection between phenomenology and auto-ethnography, which supported my choice to focus on the subjective dimension of suriashi practice, and what kind of experiences walking in suriashi in the world might generate.

Auto-ethnographic accounts change how research was disseminated. Art and performance writer Patricia Milder questioned the dualities between practice and theory and pushed past the boundaries of disciplines (Milder, 2011, 13). She gave examples from dance, where choreographers could explain the philosophical foundations of their works, while 'exposing systematic structures in the dance industry,' more directly than what is 'possible through movements of the body alone' (Milder, 2011, 13). In relation to the auto-ethnographic perspective, I have collected conference participant's auto-ethnographic notes in Appendices D and E, and MFA students' self-reflective essays in Appendix G. They exemplify the variety of experiences gathered from walking together in suriashi. In addition, I have processed several dialogues/interviews of suriashi co-walkers in this thesis, which were recorded directly after the performance of suriashi pilgrimages. These are: the drag queen and performance artist Bruno the Bad Boy (Kyōto, 2015) in Chapter Five, my previous teachers Blossfeldt, Osberg, Tseng, Langland and Rosenberg (New York City, 2015) in Chapter Seven, and dance critic Inta Balode (Latvia, 2018) in Appendix C.

The corresponding suriashi pilgrimages were documented on video, with the interview edited together as a voice-over to the video material. In this way, I was able to capture my co-practitioners' experiences directly after our silent dialogue in suriashi as a recollection supporting the outcomes of our practicing together.

For these suriashi-drawn interviews, I was inspired by what filmmaker and gender scholar Trinh T. Minh-ha calls 'speak nearby' (Chen, 1992, Schneider and Wright, 2020, Wood, 2001). This sentence implies not speaking *about* something but speaking *nearby* what the interview really was processing. This is 'a speaking that reflects on itself' and can come very

close to a subject without, however, seizing or claiming it' (1992, 89). Minh-ha emphasized 'the importance of constantly having contact with what was actually within ourselves, or of understanding a structure from within ourselves' (1992, 82). Talking *nearby* instead of talking *about* was a technique for making visible the invisible and refuse to objectify the interviewee. Since my interviews also included walking together in *suriashi* as an embodied dialogue, I have added 'walking nearby' to Minh-ha's method. *Suriashi* performed as silent dialogue or as wordless, embodied interview inspired by Minh-ha's approach, I consider to be yet an auto-ethnographic perspective. This was developed for future work, for example in my artistic and academic work with screendance.

Experimental pilgrimage

Phenomenology and the first-person approach supported my investigations through *suriashi* pilgrimages asking what meaning these brought forward as experienced from the first-person point of view. The experimental pilgrimages recorded through video and text created a loop between studio practice, the Japanese theatre, and Western cities. I situate *suriashi* as experimental pilgrimage and as new choreography allowing space for an experience of both *Körper* and *Leib*. I investigate *suriashi* both as dance, as choreography, and as walking. Here, phenomenology supported the discussion on what was considered dance or not, and who was considered a dancer or not. The very experience of dancing and what we aim at was valued equally as the execution of excellent techniques. Relocating *suriashi* to the streets I was able to ask new questions to myself and the environment while practising. *Suriashi* represented and was composed as theatricalized walking, however, became something else when relocated from the stage. As I walked, I often asked myself whether I was a woman walker or a female dancer, and what parameters decide these facts. Being trained as a dancer and choreographer gave me the authority to argue that *suriashi* is a complex, choreographic practice. However, in this thesis it is shown through the process journals and video how audiences might disagree.

My contribution is thus to show how *suriashi* could be experienced differently; as dance technique, as choreographic practice, as meandering embodied philosophy, as poetry, as a feminist act, and as political activism/artivism. I invited people to try *suriashi* with their own bodies. I wanted to find out how they perceived *suriashi* through their own bodily sensibilities even as a celebration of vagueness and the uncanny. In Chapter Four, I compare *suriashi* with other movement techniques, revisiting postmodern choreographers and what

might be at stake when and why certain movement paradigms were shaped. Suriashi as a slow physical action surprised me throughout this research. The term ‘experimental pilgrimage’ was used to place suriashi and choreographed walking in other reflective movement practices, performed as well by dance practitioners as by amateurs. My argument, and what this thesis showed, was that suriashi had an activist potential that was revealed when it was relocated. This enabled a reformulation of how activism might be performed as activism, which was introduced in Chapter One (Fabian and Samson, 2016, Hewitt, 2005, Marichal, 2013, Parviainen, 2010, Sandoval and Latorre, 2008).

In my research, suriashi slowly built up to become a political march where the body alignment and self-reflexivity was an important part of the investigation. This enabled a transformation of the original agenda of feminine suriashi. The original agenda was an act of ‘becoming woman’ for male performers but in my research changed to include an activist position in which the discussion concerned gendered asymmetries in urban and other spaces. The fact that ‘feminine suriashi’ was constructed as a cause of the banning of women from stage by Tokugawa shogunate in the 17th century activated an embodied discussion of inequalities and of historical and contemporary gendered violence. The discussion was activated through the constant repetition of feminine suriashi performed on the streets for this thesis. Autoethnography enabled an honest and unsettling account from within the experimental pilgrimages in Chapters Five, Seven and Nine. It supported a reflective and slower research, suitable for suriashi as pilgrimage. This methodological perspective was further developed through the research contexts at Nordic Summer University, and explored at two conferences regarding artistic practices, archives and activism discussed below.

One important methodological application draws on social scientist Doreen Massey’s research, as explored in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. Her research underpinned my claims that suriashi was a suitable methodology to ask questions about dance, gender and society. In her book *For Space* (2005), the goal was to draw out the lines for an alternative imagination of space for contemporary times, and to think about space differently (2005). Through Massey’s research, I was able to process both the atmosphere that suriashi created, and how urban spaces were encountered and activated through suriashi pilgrimages. Her theories were particularly helpful when analysing pilgrimages performed in New York City and Gothenburg.

Methodological practice-led experiments at conferences

I end the Methodology Chapter by showing how I collected data from others as a methodological strategy to support my research. My main research question for this thesis asks what suriashi can activate and act upon when it is relocated and offered as outdoor performance and conducted as performative research. In order to process this question with others, I crafted research presentations, which included walking and reflecting together. An important input for my thesis was engaging in discussions with international academics, artists, dancers and non-dancers. The fact that practice-based research was still considered a novelty, and that I was researching a Japanese practice that few had heard of, made the beginning of my project extra vulnerable. Finding the right supportive model of institution was the necessary catalyst to allow the testing of theories, receiving critical feedback and working across other disciplines and areas of artistic research. A certain level of detail is necessary for the argument. Suriashi became a participatory space for reflection and critique at six different conferences. Here, I demonstrate my methodological work with suriashi as a paper presentation in conferences in three conferences to show how they were essential for the crafting of my research questions:

1. The artistic research symposium(s) at Nordic Summer University in 2014 (-2018)
2. The Archives, Art and Activism Conference at University College London in 2015
3. The SIBMAS Conference (International Association of Libraries, Museums, Archives and Documentation Centres of the Performing Arts), Copenhagen in 2016

The artistic research symposium(s) at Nordic Summer University

Nordic Summer University (NSU) is an international academic institution and a well-established twice-yearly symposium. NSU has a structure of funded self-organized study circles. It supports research outside the usual parameters of academia and offers a platform that encourages new research, which can be tested in a safe, welcoming, critical space. NSU is further described in Nelson's *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Nelson, 2013, 158-159). Study Circle 7 has been dedicated to Artistic Research since 2009, and Practice-Based Research since 2003. Between 2015 and 2018, I chaired the Circle 7 with the title *Practicing Communities: Transformative societal strategies of Artistic Research* together with visual artist Dr Lucy Lyons. We worked to expand the symposiums with artistic residencies for researchers to engage longer with a space outside the frame of the symposium. In Chapter Nine and Appendix C, I present, in video and text, the research outcomes of such an artistic residency.

Circle 7 was a rare research forum where I experienced research presentations performed in silence, where participants grew seeds on their own photographs and where participants collaboratively burned unnecessary papers (Kokko, 2015, Vernet, 2016, Sperry-Jones, 2016). Here is where I tested my first collaborative presentation on Japanese walking techniques (Iceland, 2014), and continuously worked as the symposium travelled to Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. I collaborated with the Finnish actress and director Disa Kamula who is a practitioner of Suzuki Actor Training Method and with the Swedish performing artist Frei von Fräähsen zu Lorenzburg who is a practitioner of the Japanese Zen walk *kinhin* (Dahlstedt, 2014e). The three of us presented three different walks, related to each other as complex Japanese walking practices with different purposes and histories.

I sought to articulate the potential for how suriashi and other types of walking could encourage a reflection on embodiment and knowledge, and how a walking paper in a conference might facilitate this. At the end of our collaborative presentation, the participants engaged with the Q&A through walking. The methodological aim was to bridge the gap between practice and theory and keep walking in suriashi while asking and answering questions in relation to written and embodied text. For example, the participants shared reflections on pain, posture, body shapes, and fatigue, which showed

1. How they were present in their bodies
2. How the lived body must be taken into account when issues of embodiment in practice-led research were discussed
3. How embodied accounts could contribute with critique to the suriashi practice

The Q&A session endorsed the shape of my research questions, for example the different approaches to suriashi as performer training in terms of rigour, and what was achieved through such training. The participants contributed with their experience and obstacles important for shaping an argument about what constructed walking like these activities:

- Are these walks composed for everyone, for all bodies?
- Could anyone practise?
- Could slowness stress you out?

The questions showed how suriashi as practice-led research was able to critically engage with 'correct dance postures' and provide co-practitioners with alternatives to 'correct alignment', despite the original rules and decrees. Therefore, in Chapter Four, the small and

parallel posture of suriashi is examined together with the over-conceptualized turn-out of legs in Western concert dance.

Archives, Art and Activism: Critical Heritage Approaches to Global Societal Challenges

The second experimental conference presentation took place on 5th Sep 2015 at a symposium exploring the role of the archive in relation to global societal challenges and the space it occupies between the academy and artistic practice: *Archives, Art and Activism: Critical Heritage Approaches to Global Societal Challenges* at University College London. The framing of the conference enabled the expanding on the concept of legacy to activism (Flinn, 2015). I was invited by scholar Astrid von Rosen to present my work with suriashi. At this conference, my paper presentation included leaving the conference building. After a brief presentation of suriashi and my teacher, I asked participants walk out with me in silence to Gordon Square, where Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group had stayed and worked early 20th century (Larsson, 2014). Beforehand, participants were encouraged to silently think of their own personal activist perspective. The purpose was to activate issues on archives and legacy, for example what had previously not been written down or what had not been considered to be important. Suriashi offered an embodied reflection on what legacies and archives might be when not text based. University College London was situated in the midst of prestigious monuments holding archives with British Museum at its heart. I informed participants about the less visible spatial connection to Gordon Square. Participants received physical instructions about the posture, and a request to reflect on one or several questions at the same time. I informed participants that we were going to practise the 'feminine' suriashi slowly, for eleven minutes. I proposed that our walk could be an activist act, but also that one could practise the walk engaging with nothing else than the physical posture.

The Bloomsbury suriashi walk on Sep 5th, 2015 is documented here:

[Video 2: 1:21:02](#) - 1:26:53

I propose a silent walk, following the instructions above.

After the slow suriashi walk on Gordon Square, everyone was offered to write about their experience, which I collected with their consent for the purpose of this thesis. The space for

reflective writing in the park was an integrated part of my conference presentation. In their writing, I identified four main issues that suriashi activated from the excerpts of which are integrated below (see more in Appendix D):

1. The holistic experience of togetherness while walking in suriashi.

The holistic experience came from ‘the trusting in those behind you, to know you are not alone, and to play your part in being behind and someone else’s back’, poetically described as ‘an embodiment of standing on the shoulders of giants, but made horizontal and equalizing the relationship’.

2. Issues of having a physical body, which suriashi helped to elucidate.

Being aware of one’s physical body gave the experience of vulnerability. One of the participants revealed feelings of discomfort performing in public, but the guiding options to the posture had been helpful. This supported my choice of spending time with exercising the alignment also with non-dancers before the actual outdoor walking.

3. How suriashi acknowledged stereotypical gendered body alignments in the everyday as well in our professional lives.

The reflections on gender were activated in relation to the choice of the ‘feminine’ suriashi. They were directly linked to the posture, where someone appreciated the leaning back as a counteract to the ‘leaning forward’, which ‘women have been instructed to do to make it in the corporate world’. Someone asked about ‘the staging of a “feminine” position and why being smaller and more connected with oneself was to be deemed ‘feminine’.

4. How suriashi worked as an archival activism, acknowledging ephemeral content of the body and spaces.

‘Archival activism’ was one of the main themes of the conference, coined by Archival Studies scholar Andrew Flinn (Flinn, 2011). Western dance scholars often credited scholar and curator André Lepecki for inventing the concept ‘Body as Archive’ (Lepecki, 2010). I instead referred to my teacher Nishikawa Senrei who indeed argued for the body to be an archive by insisting on ancestral engagement while practicing and performing. However, I also added the focus on space, and how space might be considered as we practiced. One participant reflection was an incredible poem, which processed critical archives and lost legacy related to the Bloomsbury space. It evidenced how both ancestral and archival issues were invoked as we practiced. In addition, someone referred to suriashi and other kinds of physical forms of ‘slowing’ and “slow activism” – ‘a way of refusing to move ever faster + walk ever fewer glances towards what’s around us (Appendix D). The participant proposed we might need more of these kinds of collective body actions to affect an activist attitude.

Our University College London conference suriashi walk and reflecting together enabled a significant contribution to knowledge. At first, the personal and intimate experience of suriashi walking in Bloomsbury had such a rich level of detail that it was difficult to think critically of the event. I considered this to be the problem with the auto-ethnographic position. Still, my claim was that suriashi offered to think critically together while we simultaneously had individual experiences with the body alignment, the slowness, and with space. Our moving slowly together, created arguments of resistance for future strategies and for being in the world as individuals and as collectives. The conference participants also engaged with my question on what happened to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi. Many wrote that when suriashi was performed together with others, the space was perceived as protected and secure. Practicing slow feminine suriashi together activated a sense of care among the participants, as in ‘caring about each other’. One participant wrote that the experienced bodily discomfort with the suriashi walking task was still worth it with regards to assisting a peer with bringing forward new questions and answers in their research. This showed the fact that even if we are - in research conferences, artistic practices, education, work, life - positioned against each other as if in a competition, we can always work for strategies that enable support and care about each and everyone’s different perspectives. My conference presentation, leaving the conventional conference space, evidenced how methodologies from practice-led research contributed to innovative, embodied thinking. I claim that our eleven-minute slow walk in suriashi potentially worked as ‘archival activism’. Suriashi was therefore proposed as a walking activism for the first time. In this thesis I revisit the question on ‘archival activism’ in particularly two pilgrimages – one performed at Musée Guimet in Paris (Chapter Seven) and one performed in Gothenburg, activating the local legacy of the dance ensemble Rubicon in my hometown (Chapter Eight).

SIBMAS Conference in Copenhagen

The third conference important for the methodological development was SIBMAS Conference in Copenhagen in 2016 (Dahlstedt, 2016b). I was invited as an artistic keynote by dance scholar Karen Vedel to present and walk in suriashi with researchers, librarians and archivists at the Royal Library. The participants acknowledged the ancestral engagement in suriashi more than previous participants, which was evidencing how librarians and archivists potentially had a more everyday relationship with archival topics (Appendix E). This showed that one’s personal background indeed affected the practice, even though suriashi was a new encounter. Participants experienced how the whole archive rose and came alive and showed itself to the library visitors through suriashi. The slow suriashi with its embodied practice

of ancestral matter gave the participants time and space to reflect on embodied archives and how we can make them visible. (Danbolt, 2010b, Flinn, 2011, von Rosen, 2017b) These three research conferences were important for how my research was able to proceed. My future efforts leaned towards these first research explorations of suriashi's potential as an activist walking practice, leaning back through time. These conferences and my work with NSU were of such crucial importance for continuing this research, hence why I put them in the methodological chapter.

Chapter Three:

Suriashi and genealogy

For this chapter, I ask what suriashi can activate in terms of legacy, ideas of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts. I describe briefly the historical and spiritual contexts that have shaped suriashi, to find the link between the ideas and thinking that have informed suriashi, and how this connects to today's practices. I therefore engage with the most common suriashi, the Nō-style suriashi (Griffiths, 2014, Liu, 2016, Zarina, 1967). In addition, I begin with my own extensive practice of Nō-style suriashi. The practice also includes dancing and portraying characters who performed before the 14th century when Nō-theatre became the main theatre form. Here the main characters invoked for this thesis are found - for example the Japanese medieval cross dresser, Shirabyōshi. They are early representatives of “outcast” shamans and wandering performers with ambulatory lifestyles, performing unorthodox practices (Kawashima, 2016, Klein, 1995, Nakahara, 1999, Ortolani, 1984). I investigate the politics of naming a step, and the mythologizing of bloodlines (Rath, 2004). The genealogy of suriashi is explored since these historical documents support questions regarding contemporary suriashi practice and builds a background to the practice-led part of the thesis. Besides, the history of suriashi is not usually taught or reflected upon in the dance studio. I therefore examine the ways in how ideologies are practised and made visible in the dancing body. This supports new and historical accounts of suriashi (time-) travelling in space, intersecting both nations and ephemeral, ghostly spaces.

Though this chapter offers a history of suriashi as traditional performer training, and how suriashi is practised in Japanese theatrical techniques and martial arts, I remind that these are contemporary practices with many active private schools. (See Appendix B, H and I

where I provide more information about performer training and active teachers). For this thesis, I also commissioned a translation of excerpts from the book *Odori wa Jinsei – To Dance is Life*, where Nishikawa Senrei, Hanayagi Suzushi (who was prominent in the postmodern dance scene in New York) and Tsurumi Kazuko talk about their lives in dance, which you find in Appendix B (Tsurumi, 2003, 19-22).

In the introduction, I outlined my own practice-based knowledge of suriashi, which included studies of Nihon Buyō and Nō, but also the theatrical form Kyōgen, and Iaidō, Japanese sword. There are already several ways to practise suriashi depending on the context (Griffiths, 2014, Hanayagi, 2008, Liu, 2016, Sellers-Young, 1993, Zarina, 1967). I did not change anything in the original suriashi training for this thesis, however I relocated the practise from theatrical to urban spaces. Additionally, I have studied different gendered versions of suriashi within the Nihon Buyō practice. I have also studied the martial arts version of suriashi in Iaidō as well as the most well-known theatrical version of suriashi; the suriashi practised in Nō-theatre. These traditional practices are present in contemporary work, constantly shaping new contexts. Nishikawa Senrei stated many times that Nihon Buyō is a contemporary artform. She worked with traditional narratives from folktales, Nō and Kabuki, but also her own scores, which she created in new settings, to new music, and with new choreography building on the Nihon Buyō-technique. In an interview with *Kyoto Journal*, Nishikawa Senrei explained her own constant reiteration of traditional concepts through contemporary work: ‘When you start doing something new, you begin to understand the reasons behind all the forms you were taught by rote’ (Salz, 2008). This proved to be factual also for this research journey, where I not only engage with details about suriashi never spoken about in the studio, but also with requests that were difficult to grasp for me as a foreigner to Japanese culture, for example invoking my ancestors.

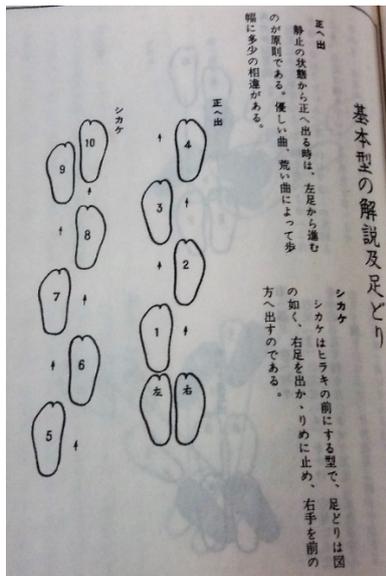


Figure 3. Suriashi outlined in a choreography from a Nō play (Hōshō Nō school., 2018)

Suriashi - a way of walking that marks both the past and the present

‘摺足...足をするようにして、畳ざわりしずかに歩む能狂言の人物の登場につかう歩き方。’

In English: ‘Suriashi... a way of walking, to calmly glide your feet, and feel your way across the *tatami* as you move, used in Kyōgen or Nō as the practitioner enters (or exits) a room’ (Masaoka, 2001 (1957), 174, translated by Tomioka 2018).

In this section, I sought to find when the word *suriashi* came in use. I asked my Japanese peers for help to find *suriashi* in Japanese dictionaries; the musician Sakurai Makiko, scholar Tomioka Michi and Nō-practitioner Fuse Makiko. The phrases above are excerpts from the first dictionary describing what *suriashi* is, in *Dictionary of Customs and Language in Tokyo in Meiji Era* (Masaoka, 2001 (1957), 174). According to the Japanese choreographer and researcher Tomioka Michi, the word *suriashi* could not be found in older dictionaries than the one from 1957 (Tomioka, 2018). However, Tomioka explained that the concept of *suriashi* had been widely known before the word was beginning to be used in ‘modern age’, that is the Meiji Restoration, after the last shogun Yoshinobu Tokugawa gave over the Edo Castle to Meiji Government in 1868 (Tomioka, 2018). *Suriashi* was taken for granted before the Meiji Restoration, but from then on needed to be marked with a name. Additionally, the

dictionary was released after World War II, in a time when the Japanese identity needed to be processed anew to claim distinctiveness in an expanding global world.

In the *Dictionary of Customs and Language in Tokyo in Meiji Era* above, suriashi was explained as 歩き方, *arukikata*, a way to walk, which supports the aim of this thesis where I investigate suriashi also as a walking technique. The dictionary revealed as well in which spaces suriashi are performed. By acknowledging these spaces, the dictionary showed further use for suriashi than for the theatrical application. The dictionary's pointing to *tatami* - tightly woven Japanese straw mats - showcases further claim for Japanese distinctiveness. Floors covered with *tatami*, are found in temples, shrines, homes, dōjōs for martial arts, and tea houses. However, Kyōgen, Nihon Buyō and Nō where suriashi is used extensively, are performed on stages and in studios with wooden floors.

There was an explanation to why suriashi, used and known in oral traditions, needed to be inscribed in a contemporary dictionary. Additionally, the Japanese word for 'dance' - *buyō* - changed names to *Japanese dance* - *Nihon Buyō* - to separate it from the new imported dances, such as ballroom, and later ballet (Yamazaki, 2001, 223). The need for mythological creation narratives increased in times of social change, and when there was an uncertainty and dislocation of ownership. Many of Japan's most cherished traditions were invented in response to modernization (Guttmann, 2001, 8). I clarify that Japanese people were no exception in reacting to 'modernity' and industrialization. In Chapter Four, I engage with how the constructed 'natural' was a reaction on the fast-developing urbanized societies, which 'caused anxieties about loss of freedom and individuality' (Huxley, 2011, 31). In Chapter Nine, I bring in narratives from my own Swedish family history, which shows a similar reaction to modernity and industrialization. Japan was quickly forced to enter into trade and diplomatic relations by the U.S. Government after more than two centuries of isolation (Britannica, 2021). The opening for 'modernization' ended the isolationist foreign policy during the Tokugawa regime (1603-1868), when foreigners could not enter Japan, and Japanese people could not leave (Welfield, 1988, 5). Yamazaki explained that it has been 'conventionally understood that premodern times ended, and modern times began in 1868, which marked the restoration of rule by the emperor (then fifteen years old) and the inauguration of the new nation-state' (Yamazaki, 2001, 14). After the isolationist policy, the Meiji Government imported an educational system based on European models where

Western dance cultures were being introduced (Hayashi, 1995, 181) For the new nation-state, cultural practices were re-examined to fit ‘modern times’.

Nō-style suriashi

Here I describe the most common version of suriashi, the one practised in Nō drama, based on my own studies with teachers in Japan. The Nō-style suriashi is the ancestor to the Buyō-style suriashi taught in Nishikawa Senrei’s studio. Most writings on Japanese performer training describe only the Nō-version of suriashi, however ignore other variations. For the Nō-style suriashi, you practise with feet parallel, but they often turn out in the middle of the choreography, and there is always a small gap in between the feet when sliding them over the floor. Your legs are almost straight, which in Kabuki and Nihon Buyō portrays a high ranked person. Toes are lifted just before shifting the weight between the right and left foot. The upper body is pushed slightly forward, shoulders are wide, and elbows are raised. However, there is a difference in between the five different Nō schools, where the Kita and Kanze schools use a more powerful upper body with elbows raised ninety degrees, while the Hōshō school use smaller arm movements and lower elbows. The Kita and Kanze school version of suriashi would in the Nihon Buyō-style instead represent a high ranked masculine character. However, in order to construct the male you would also walk with your feet turned out.

Theatre scholar Benito Ortolani pointed to the fact that Nō theatre originated as a ceremonial drama, formed through possession rituals, where masks are used as a metamorphic material (Ortolani, 1984, 169). There is a reminiscence of these possession rituals in contemporary use of suriashi, where Nishikawa Senrei reminded us to always perform with our ancestors in mind (Nishikawa, 2000, 2001, 2004). I process this fact in Chapter Nine, where I engage with spiritual embodiment and how and where to place your ancestors in suriashi. Masks are always used by the main actors in Nō-theatre. One rationale of suriashi, as explained by Japanese contemporary Nō -masters, is that suriashi is done to keep a straight line in order to ensure that the power of the (Nō-) mask is retained, and to guarantee that the kimono remains closed’ (Jonah Salz, quoted by Thorpe, 2011). Working with masks supporting transformative possibilities, such as character-shifting and spiritual embodiment, has influenced the Western performing arts practices. For example, Mary Wigman used a mask in her 1914 piece *Hexentanz* (Dance of The Crone) ‘to overcome the individual sphere in order to connect with the archetype’ (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994, 114). I

use masks from the Nō-theatre in the end of this thesis, especially the Nō-mask of *Yamanba* (the Mountain Crone). I use them in urban spaces and in my 2018 performance about my great grandmother (Chapter Nine).

Corporeal reminder and video examples of suriashi used in Nō, Iaidō, Nihon Buyō, Kabuki, and *fusion* dance

I show four recorded references for how the Nō theatre version of suriashi differs from suriashi practised in Nihon Buyō, and Kabuki. Please engage with the examples. The first example is my suriashi practice together with master Takabayashi Shinji from Kita Nō School. Notice how feet are positioned next to each other, where one foot never moves in front of the other. A larger (male) body is created with the help of wider shoulders and arms. However, the bodily gender constructions in Nō theatre are less visible compared with Kabuki and Nihon Buyō. The second example of suriashi is performed in a Iaidō lesson with Momiyama Takao teaching from a video screen (Dahlstedt, 2017). For this suriashi, you quickly slide over the floor with one foot in front while slashing with the sword through air. The third example shows Heidi S Durning, a choreographer based in Kyōto with a Nihon Buyō natori from Fujima school, and an MFA in dance from University of Michigan. She is also a Nō practitioner with Kanze school. Her contribution shows barefoot suriashi in what she calls *fusion* dance, merging Western and Japanese modern dance. The fourth example (revisited in Chapter Nine) shows a spontaneous suriashi practice with an eighty-seven-year-old female pedestrian in Asukayama park, Tokyo. She walks in the Nō-style suriashi with feet lifting, while I use the Nihon Buyō-style. I wear the the Nō-mask of *Yamanba* (the Mountain Crone):

Please try.

Suriashi with Nō-master Takabayashi Shinji, Kita Nō School in Kyōto 2015:

[Video 2: 1:27:36 - 1:31:20](#)

Suriashi performed in a Iaidō lesson with Momiyama Takao, 2017:

[Video 3: 1:06:56 - 1:07:28](#)

Suriashi in fusion dance with Heidi S Durning, 2015:

[Video 2: 1:43:54 - 1:45:53](#)

Suriashi in Tokyo with a female pedestrian, 2018:

[Video 4: 1:39:47](#) – 1:43:50

Suriashi before the Meiji Restoration

I briefly describe performance traditions from premodern times, beginning with the Heian Era (781-1192). The following examples of movements related to suriashi were gathered from Asian literature scholars and from my own experiences of Nihon Buyō studies in Kyōto. I have also interviewed two Japanese musicians, Nō flutist Nonaka Kumiko and Shōmyō expert Sakurai Makiko. Suriashi derives from creation myths and from Daoist, Shinto and Buddhist practices. The female performers *Miko*, *Asobi*, *Kugutsu*, *Shirabyōshi*, and *Kusemai*, prominent in the Heian (781-1192) and Kamakura (1185-1333) eras made a living as performing artists in both shrines, temples and on the streets (Kawashima, 2001, Meeks, 2011, Nakahara, 1999, Strippoli, 2006). The Shirabyōshi invented a special step, which is the ancestor to suriashi, as described below. They were often involved in both shamanistic Shinto and Buddhist rituals. The Shirabyōshi were called upon to bring forward beneficial weather, luck and fortune, which I interpret as an important societal engagement through the performing arts. They held strong positions in society, and they were supported by the Fujiwara and the Heike clans (Strippoli, 2006, 13). They wore robes consisting of layers of flamboyant fabric on top of oversized trousers, *nagabakama*. In the classic *Tale of Genji*, there is a Japanese verb - *kinuzure* - describing the sound that was heard when the women's oversized silk trousers brushed the wooden floor of the palace (Nonaka, 2012). The Shirabyōshi were cross-dressers, and other than *nagabakama* and long-sleeved tunic, they carried a sword and a men's hat for their dancing (see Figure 4). The Shirabyōshi return throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter Nine. The myths shaping traditional Japanese theatre show female professional dancers teaching their steps to the originators of the all-male Nō-ensemble before male performers became the norm and before female dancers were conserved as ambiguous characters; either good or evil spirits in the Nō-plays.

According to Japanese studies scholars Alison McQueen Tokita and David W Hughes, 'the position of women in Japan can be seen as having been adversely affected by the adoption of Chinese (especially Confucian) cultural values, and also by the teachings of Buddhism' (Tokita and Hughes, 2007, 14). This change in society is reflected in this *Imayō* (and other songs), created by the female performers in the Heian and Kamakura Era:

In the Eastlands
are there no women
There are only male mediums
so the gods take possession of men (Ryōjin hishō 556, Nakahara, 1999, 394).

The religious and cultural change decreased female professionals in religious ceremonies and on stage. There is a connection between this fact and my choice of the 'feminine' suriashi for this thesis. 'Feminine' suriashi was an embodied reminder of the absence of females, which I engage with more in Chapters Four and Five. It was urgent for me to understand the function of suriashi in performance and its role in gender play and gendered expressions. Before I move on, I therefore bring in the voice of the musician Sakurai Makiko, Shōmyō expert and who performs as a contemporary Shirabyōshi on independent stages in Tokyo. Sakurai explained that there was a strong sacred female culture in Japan, however since the 8th century male rulers were favoured to manage the government with China as a role model (Sakurai, 2013 - 2014). This had an effect for female professionals like Shirabyōshi. However, the fact that they dressed up like men and used Buddhist names helped their art to survive for another two hundred years before they were preserved as good or evil spirits in the Nō-plays (Brazell and Araki, 1986, Klein, 1995, Sakurai, 2013-2014). Thus, there struggle for equal recognition echoed with contemporary female artists. A more thorough investigation of these early cross-dressers is needed for future research. I wrote about Shirabyōshi for my MFA and paired my own practice-based explorations with Asian Literature studies (Dahlstedt, 2014b). Shirabyōshi are present in Japanese popular culture, but very little has been written (in English) about them in Asian and performance studies.



Figure 4. The Shirabyōshi Shizuka Gozen by Hokusai Katsushika (Hokusai, 1825)

Suriashi as theatricalization of mythological walking

For this thesis, I focus on how the practice of suriashi can be relocated to outdoor spaces to reveal and engage with whatever societal phenomena encountered along the experimental pilgrimages. I therefore process historical Japanese social codes and practices related to walking. I found the legacy of suriashi in the theatre plays written by Zeami – known as father of Nō theatre – together with the choreographic narratives created in the Meiji Era, and contemporary performer training (Alison, 2016, Kawashima, Lancashire 2001, Rath, 2004). I share these narratives - or ghost stories - about steps that were able to time-travel through mysterious accounts. These ghost stories have been used historically to claim ownership and authenticity in certain practices, while declaring others (performers, schools)

inferior. I follow the navigation through ownerships as they activate questions dealt with in this thesis. A Swedish woman walking the streets supported by Japanese suriashi complicates any fixed understanding of 'local/foreign' or 'old/new' dance practices. I sought to find a link between how suriashi in urban and other spaces connected to characters represented and performed on the traditional Japanese stages: moving travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts. Art historian Mathias Danbolt calls for unpredictable meetings with history, where we are not passive gazers. 'Setting up unpredictable encounters with history - encounters that are flirtatious and painful, funny and disturbing - they draw attention to how we are touched by the past, whether we want to be or not' (Danbolt, 2010a, 42).

Historically, suriashi and other examples of walking steps have been assigned with the power to sanctify space and thus work beneficially for society (Brazell and Araki, 1998, Lancashire, 2001, Meeks, 2011, Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984). The walking styles are reinforced through performance practices and martial arts. According to anthropologist Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953), 'the essence of traditional Japanese dancing is wandering around the stage, which originally signified sanctifying the space by treading down the evil spirits' (Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984, 33). This supports my investigation of suriashi as both a dancing and walking step. In some Nō plays, the choreography included more 'wandering around the stage' than others, for example in the play *Yamanba*, usually attributed to Zeami. In *Yamanba*, also known as Yamamba or Yamauba, the main character is 'doing her mountain rounds' (Brazell and Araki, 1998, 224). Yamanba is a mountain spirit in Japanese folklore, old, wise and sometimes portrayed as mad. She is known for guarding the mountains since the beginning of time. These mountain rounds are performed with the help of a semi-fast suriashi in circles, and they also include stomping. Yamanba plays an important part in the end of this thesis, in Chapter Nine.

The suriashi-technique activates questions about other movement techniques, and how these are placed on a scale that calibrates natural versus artificial. In Chapter Five, suriashi and 'artificial walking' are celebrated as positive concepts in performance making. In Chapter Four, I examine the concept of 'natural walking' in Western modern and postmodern dance and suriashi. Walking in suriashi on the streets in a theatricalized manner invokes narratives about pedestrians, and how walking is taken for granted. Japanese theatre scholar Samuel Leiter describes suriashi in his *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Traditional Theatre*:

The art of “walking” or “carriage” in Nō, which requires the actor to move by sliding his feet (*suriashi*) along the polished wood floor, a foundation for Nō acting. It is a theatricalization of natural walking, and, apart from leaps, the feet rarely leave the ground. (Leiter, 2006, 99-100)

Leiter stated that *suriashi* is ‘a theatricalization of natural walking’, which is similar to how dance artists have choreographed walks and worked around concepts of ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’. However, regarding the history of *suriashi*, and its societal functions, I argue that *suriashi* is more supernatural than natural. In music scholar Terence Lancashire’s research of religious music and dance, he points to the connections between Chinese and Japanese practices (Lancashire, 2001, 36). Having engaged with Lancashire’s investigations, I argue that *suriashi* could instead be called ‘a theatricalization of mythological walking’ referring to its history, or ‘professional walking’, since an expert was assigned and paid to perform the walking. That expert was partly a professional dancer, partly shaman (36).

The professional walking steps developed their own progression through time, beginning with the mythological Chinese *Yǔ bù*. This step, *Yǔ bù*, is a reminiscence of the early cultural exchange between China and Japan in the sixth to ninth centuries (Tokita and Hughes, 2007, 3). *Yǔ bù* means Emperor Yu’s walking, and there is an intriguing narrative behind it, which I revisit in Chapter Seven (Xue, 2018). Emperor Yu’s walking step *Yǔ bù* is a ‘Daoist walking ritual whereby the effect of certain stars, considered potentially harmful, was neutralized through walking and foot stamping movements’ (Lancashire, 2001, 36). I state that this mythological narrative shows evidence of the importance of choreographed walks for society. The fact that the ruling powers organized someone to be responsible for performing these walking styles showed its significant and importance. The Chinese walking step *Yǔ bù* is equivalent of the Japanese step *uho /henbai*. (2001,36). These steps are connected ritually and culturally. However, before arriving at *suriashi* we have to move through the Buddhist magic step *ranbyōshi*.

Ranbyōshi – a walking step from female spirits for mythologizing bloodlines

The historian Eric C. Rath has investigated the development of the key traditions that constituted the “ethos of Nō”, for example the mythologizing of bloodlines as the primary vehicle for transmission of secret information in the Nō theatre (Rath, 2004, 129). The reason I turn to his research is because he shows compelling creation narratives correlating

to suriashi. In these narratives, women were present as spirits, which also became their role (of absence) in Nō plays, since all roles were played by males. The misuse of these fabricated scripts reinforced gaps between the different Nō schools, and gender gaps between professional performers, still experienced today in Japan. In the mid-seventeenth century, secret scripts and secret oral transmissions were advertised to proclaim certain Nō families superior to others. The secret scripts were used to declare other branches amateurs. The argument was that ‘ultimate knowledge transcended any text, for it was located in the actor’s bloodlines, his body and his speech’ (2004, 161). These secret teachings and texts are particularly protective of the step *ranbyōshi*, which is connected to suriashi, performed by the previously mentioned cross-dressers *Shirabyōshi*. Each Nō theatre school have their own creation narrative on how this step was owned, transmitted or even stolen (2004, 157).

Ranbyōshi, originally performed by females, represented a disjointed rhythm, a chaotic rhythm, and is said to require a ‘special skill, secret knowledge and spiritual energy’ (Rath, 2014, 157). In the famous Nō play *Dōjōji*, there is a long passage where the *Shirabyōshi* dancer – a woman from past times - proceeds through the temple, hiding her demoness shape. Here, her slow walking represents her dubious character, and her forbidden access to space. She slowly walks through the temple with revenge on her mind. The scene ‘requires precise timing between the dancer’s slow footwork and the shoulder-drummer’s vocalizations and percussion blows’ (157). However, as the play continues, the Buddhist priest and the monks rub their rosaries to exorcise the *Shirabyōshi* dancer out of the temple. Literature scholar Susan Klein described how this Nō play presents us with a dramatically compelling vision of stark conflict, the masculine forces of noble and pure spirituality battling the demonic feminine, a monstrous embodiment of profane and bestial sexuality (Klein, 1995).

Nishikawa Senrei used this forbidden step, *ranbyōshi*, in her own striking version of *Dōjōji* which I saw on video in her lecture at Kyoto Art Center, Aug 2000. Knowing the political, forbidden, and mythological background of *suriashi*, and having seen how Nishikawa Senrei processed the step in her own performance, I make a short pause here to ask how these narratives could be related to through practice. I propose that a discussion on forbidden issues regarding bodies and spaces can also take place through physical responses. I offer you to do the same. Walk with me to Hagakyrkan, a church in Gothenburg, and perform your own forbidden step together with me.

This is a physical interpretation of suriashi and ranbyōshi performed in a Swedish church on Jan 24th, 2015 (Dahlstedt, 2015a)

[Video 1: 1:30:33](#) - 1:32:47

Ranbyōshi, a step that requires special skill, secret knowledge and spiritual energy

Here I retell the narrative about how the powerful step and ancestor to suriashi was inherited by turning to Rath's research: An Emperor was playing the koto, the national Japanese zither instrument, derived from the Chinese *zheng*. As he was playing, 'five heavenly maidens came down from the firmament, singing five songs, and fluttering their robes. Then all of them ascended to the heavens, where the emperor learned their dances, like saints dancing on the clouds' (Rath, 2004, 187). This was when the name for the step *ranbyōshi* was coined. The narrative continued centuries later when the founder of the Kanze Nō school and the father of director and playwright Zeami, learned the step from a mysterious, elderly female performer, a Shirabyōshi (188). This very dance class was considered the heritage of dancing in Nō theatre. The mythological dance class was conducted by the cross-dressing dancer from the past and father Kanami and son Zeami were her students. The stranger, who was the spirit of a Shirabyōshi, had selected the originator/father of the Kanze Nō school for knowledge transmission of *ranbyōshi* (188). Zeami was since then considered the main originator of Nō together with his father Kanami. These narratives show how owning the knowledge of a step was of great importance, which confirms how practicing choreographed steps was highly valued. The way these steps have been transmitted and protected showed an early discussion of copyright and immaterial properties. It also confirms an obscure positioning of the female dancer of the past, where she can return only as a spirit. Rath's investigations revealed that the stories were central in the formation of government approved theatre forms and schools (188). Thus, the absence of women in Nō theatre, and later Kabuki, was also government approved. The aesthetic choices of movement and rhythm in choreography, the theatricalization of mythological steps, and the absence of living female performers formed the creation narrative in Nō theatre.

These mythologies of suriashi are neither determinant nor conclusive, and therefore allow for a creative interpretation of how to proceed with the variation of professional walking

styles. Japanese contemporary teachers do not relate to the historical background when teaching classes of *Nō* or *Nihon Buyō*. Today's teachings of *suriashi* are secular, but teachers do relate to 'the continuity of tradition and by extension ancestors' (Sellers-Young, 1993, 36). However, Zeami wrote that even though the performing arts relies on the passing down of knowledge from our predecessors, a successful performance is also 'on an actor's individual creativity on a particular occasion' (Zeami, 1984, 38, transl. by Rimer and Yamazaki). Tradition cannot be passed on unchanged through time. Zeami thus already in the 15th century counteracted the conservative view that tradition cannot be innovative or that artistic creativity is not allowed in traditional performance forms.

Listen to *suriashi*

I end this chapter with an autoethnographic recollection from a rehearsal for a previous performance (*Dust Falling, Rain Falling*, 2012), struggling with walking in *suriashi* in *nagabakama* - the oversized Heian style male trousers, experiencing the sound they produced. This rehearsal drew a thread between past *suriashi*, invisible female spirits, and contemporary *suriashi* with Nishikawa Senrei. Stories about how *suriashi* is experienced and how *suriashi* creates sounds, such as *kinuzure*, are repeated in this thesis, as well heard in the video. The absence of textual evidence can be invoked through sound produced in *suriashi* walking and augmented by costume – *kinuzure*, the sound of rustling garments. The first experience with these sounds activated by *suriashi* was in 2011 when Nishikawa Senrei gave me a *Shirabyōshi* costume. In order to process the genealogy in this chapter, I offer a response from within the practice showing the concreteness of the situation when performing historic or ghostly material.

Michi Tomioka, whom this chapter began with, remembered the sound of *suriashi* broadcasted on the radio when she was a child. The recording of *suriashi* was from the Taishō Era (1912 -1926). The sound of a tea ceremony master's sliding feet was heard in radios all over Japan (Tomioka 2018). The radio broadcast showed that *suriashi* was practiced, talked about and listened to much earlier than the previously mentioned dictionary (Masaoka, 2001 (1957), 174). This showed the need for relating to *suriashi*'s genealogy from a variation of angles, also acknowledging sound. The fact that *suriashi* is not a very loud practice, augmented the experience of other sounds, which affected the research perspectives. Follow me to my first rehearsals (2012) wearing the pants *nagabakama*, used by men and crossdressers in the Heian and Kamakura eras.

This genderbending Heian costume created interest from my peers. The question was whether these nagabakama created restriction or freedom? At the Heian time, they showed the privilege of not having to work in rice fields, and not having to use the body for physical labour. To the contemporary athletic dancer, the trousers created restriction, even oppression of movement. However, from my perspective, they created the right number of constraints that forced me to work with only the most necessary energy. It was my own active choice to perform and move very slowly, and carefully. Where my colleagues saw an oppressed feminine, trapped by a society of restrictions, I saw the possibility to escape athleticism.

I brought out my script and looked at the Imayō, a modern song from the 11th or 12th century. I repeated the movement pattern in my head. I am eight hundred years old. It must be acceptable to be tired at my age. Suriashi was impossible in the nagabakama. For each step, the feet pulled the fabric down until I fell. Instead, the trousers must be kicked forward, by lifting the toes inside the fabric. This was more similar to how suriashi was done in Nō theatre. Nō actors lifted their toes. In the middle of the practice, I watched a DVD of the Nō play Dōjōji to compare my technique for these trousers with the (male) professional Nō actor. (Gross, 2012). The male actor Umerwaka Rokuro the 56th played the role of the female Shirabyōshi on the DVD. Umerwaka belonged to the Kanze Nō school, the school selected for the knowledge transmission to Zeami and his father by the mysterious spirit of the female crossdresser Shirabyōshi. Umerwaka performed the same kicks toward the rear before holding, which I also did to push the fabric backwards as not to fall. The trousers thus possessed their own logic. As I followed Umerwaka's movements, and as the other male actors portraying the Buddhist priest started to rub their rosaries to exorcise the Shirabyōshi dancer out of the temple, I sensed it differently. Since I watched the DVD while moving in the same long trousers, which Umerwaka Rokuro was wearing, the scene affected me emotionally. When I had watched the same scene from the audience perspective in the actual theatre, I mocked the obvious misogyny with an ironic smile.

However, experiencing how the female crossdresser Shirabyōshi was exorcised out of the temple (and out of the court/government-funded Nō theatre) from within the character's position, the scene could no longer be laughed at. Embodying the character's own point of view, I was affected by the scene, touched by history. In addition, I felt trapped by my character and by the trousers. I therefore invented new scenes for my own artistic work, processing the reduced, or even erased, space for female performers in Nō theatre plays. I

spinned around until I got caught in the fabric, and I ran until I fell. (Dahlstedt 2012-2014)

The recollection above, depicting the struggle with costume, is further discussed in Chapter Nine in connection with skiing. Literary scholar Terry Kawashima explored ambulatory lifestyles, and the cliched representation of encaged women dressed in layers of robes (2016, 18). The Shirabyōshi performers return through the whole thesis. Suriashi functioned as spacetime travelling through the body in the Nō-play *Dōjōji* about the crossdressers Shirabyōshi in the past, as well as in my 2012 performance *Dust Falling, Rain Falling*, (Dahlstedt and Nonaka, 2012). There is more on suriashi as performer training in Appendix H. However, I continue to process the genealogy of suriashi, and how suriashi is connected to ideas of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts throughout the following chapters, but with different themes and from other angles.

Chapter Four: Suriashi, dance and walking practices

This chapter seeks to situate suriashi amongst other canonical dance practices and with research on walking. It engages with my research question on how suriashi can be situated together with other contemporary performance practices, such as dance and walking practices, choreography and screendance. It aims to show the significance of suriashi compared to other dance and walking practices, both addressing differences and similarities. It brings together my own decades of studio-practicing in silence with text-based accounts from dance- and walking research. I revisit Nishikawa Senrei's explanation of performing with one's ancestors, which provided a logic for slow suriashi in traditional Japanese dance as well as for suriashi performed in this thesis. I expand on slow movement in relation to slow walking, dance- and art practices, comparing suriashi with dance practices known as Western. Further, I compare the constructed alignments in dance practices as a basis for discussing 'unnatural' and 'natural' movement to complicate both ethnocentrism and proposed universalities. I ask how walking is structured according to which dance paradigm it belongs to. I investigate how the spatial logic of the different dance techniques affected the alignment, for example how walking in the dance studios differed according to which dance technique is practised, and how indoor choreographed walking correlated to outdoor walking practices. Investigating suriashi both as walking and dance practices allowed a methodological comparison between these fields, which revealed what types of ideas and thinking lie behind these bodily constructions and movements.

In this chapter, my close scrutiny of body alignments showed how suriashi was not more foreign to my body than other dance practices that I embody. I expand on choreographer

Sidsel Pape's request for a discussion where artistic practice was not idealised and where choreographers 'coming from an anti-intellectual dance background' could convey their tacit knowing and problematise embodied experience (2010, 10-11). Suriashi as dance practice was still considered something different and foreign outside Japan. Compared to other 'professional' dance techniques, Nihon Buyō/Japanese dance risked being claimed as a more foreign and culturally marked dance practice than for example ballet. Japanese dance had not yet been implemented as 'professional dance' in Western dance studios. However, as anthropologist Joann Kealiinohomuko argued fifty years ago, ballet was also a culturally marked dance (Kealiinohomuko, 1969-1970). There was a conflict when deciding who is foreign to a dance practice, and who has the right to perform which techniques, especially in the debate over cultural appropriation (Dahlstedt, 2018, 49-50). Cultural appropriation represents 'the taking from a culture that is not one's own' (Ziff and Rao, 1997). For example, dance scholar Priya Srinivasan (2012, 9) described how 'nameless dancers' from India came to Coney Island in 1904 and how Ruth St. Denis, appointed one of the 'mothers' of North American modern dance, viewed and was influenced by these performances. St. Denis studied with Japanese traditional musicians (who are usually also trained in dance) (Shawn, 1920). St. Denis was impressed by the performance with and by Kawakami Sadayakko (1871-1946) at Loië Fuller's theatre in Paris in 1900 (Banes, 1977, 3). After encounters with Asian performers, St. Denis went on to establish her career as a soloist and choreographer; she has been considered as one of the pioneers of North American modern dance (Dahlstedt, 2018, 48).

However, Srinivasan argued that the inception of modern dance in North America was a collective endeavour (2012, 22). St. Denis did not invent her 'Egyptian', 'Indian', 'Japanese' or 'Thai' dances herself. These were appropriated artistic practices from all over the world (Foster, 2009, 10). St. Denis presented her own spiritual vision of what she acknowledged from these dances (Banes, 1977, 3). Thus Western performers unmarked their cultural root and failed to recognize its originators, which is discussed critically today (Bhaba, 1984, Bharucha, 2001, Buckland, 1999, Desmond, 1991). The failure of recognising non-Western choreographers and dancers resulted in the idea that certain dance practices, such as modern and postmodern dance, applied 'a specific framework of perception as if it were universal and unmarked by particularity' (Rothfield, 2005, 50). This can be compared to the above mentioned naming of Nihon Buyō in early 20th century since the Japanese word for 'dance'-*buyō* – had become too universal (Yamazaki, 2001, 223). The name was changed to *Japanese*

dance – Nihon Buyō - to separate it from the new imported dances, thus marking it with nationalistic particularity in unruly times. These were the critical gaps I aimed to address by continuing the practice of *suriashi* outside the dance studio.

Suriashi and slowness

Encountering the value of slowness in dance practice with Nishikawa Senrei in 2000 was a turning point in my own work as choreographer and performer. In traditional Japanese dance and theatre, walking and stillness were also considered to be dance. For my own practice, the slow *suriashi* was at first the most challenging and also most deviating from for example ballet, jazz, and modern dance. However, working with postmodern choreographers and in site-specific work, the slowness became an artistic choice, for example for the choreographers in *Rubicon*, which I describe below. I therefore explore slowness to point to the significance of *suriashi* compared with other dance- and walking practices. I do this with the help of an auto-ethnographic perspective and through dancing peers' accounts.

At *Senreinokai*, *suriashi* was performed in various tempi, which previous research had omitted. *Suriashi* had many functions and formations, and it was practiced differently depending on the narrative and atmosphere. High-speed *suriashi* was practised as well, as shown in Chapter One. The *suriashi* practice was structured according to *Jo-ha-kyū* - a rhythmical concept that indicated a progression from slow beginning to a faster middle to a slow ending (Komparu, 1983,25). Slowness was also present in faster dances, such as *MatsunoMidori* and *Tadanobu*, where *suriashi* bridged choreography and narrative. However, Nishikawa Senrei put more emphasis on the slow *suriashi*. Slowness was the foundation that we constantly returned to. Based on my own training and having witnessed many traditional Japanese plays, slow *suriashi* was used when the play or piece - or a series of plays or pieces - were about to begin. Slowness was used to portray divine characters, ghosts and spirits proceeding over the bridgeway (*hashigakari*) and the stage. Faster *suriashi* was used later in the play, and when the character represented a warrior or demon/ess. Slow *suriashi*, chosen for my thesis, usually represented a character who was divine, noble, ghost or spirit. At *Senreinokai* it represented the respect for the practice and the space, and it marked the beginning of a lesson/*okeiko*.

Suriashi and spirituality

The theatre director Eugenio Barba pinpointed *suriashi*'s effect on space, describing how Nō

performers keep the energy in their bodies as they proceed in suriashi. The energy that would have been expended in space through faster movement created a certain intense atmosphere (Barba, 1991, 88). Barba did not explain why the energy was kept in the body instead of released out to the limbs. This was however explained by Nishikawa Senrei, who declared that the technique should provide space for the embodying of your ancestors and spirits. Her explanation has for me worked as a creative guide, as it described how to think or what to imagine while you practise suriashi. The artist Hakone Yumiko trained at Fujima (Nihon Buyō) school, and now employed as geisha/professional dancer and musician, explained the concept of 'the spiritual' in a practical way. When we practiced together, she showed that before making the first movement, you imagine that you empty yourself in order to breathe in 'divine energy' (Hakone, 2013). This showed how the dancer almost took on a shamanistic role. However, the imagination also functioned as a way to build a character/performer who prayed for the wellbeing of others through dancing and walking (Hakone, 2013). It prepared performers to take the powerful highlighted position for example as a solo dancer or – as in my research - for walking on a subway platform. The image that Hakone provided explained how to embody ancestors and spirits as well. Hakone showed how the spiritual engagement is embedded in the body alignment, similar to how Nishikawa Senrei asked students to lean back in space towards our ancestors and how Hanayagi and Zeami explained how to direct your eyes.

I continue to engage with how suriashi and spirituality were practiced. For example, dance scholar Barbara Sellers-Young described how: 'despite the secularization of popular performance forms such as kabuki, Japanese theatre purports an emphasis on the spiritual dimension that is not necessarily found in western theatre' (Sellers-Young, 1993, 36). For example, the way the eyes were directed held a historical and spiritual logic (Hanayagi, 2008, Zeami, 1984). Dance master and choreographer Hanayagi Chiyo (of Hanayagi school) called the gazing in the distance 金の目 'kin no me', which translates into 'the golden gaze' (Hanayagi, 2008, 92). This logic became very important when suriashi was relocated from the studio, where eyes directed to the horizon became an ever so important focal point. In the 14th century, the Nō playwright Zeami (1363-1443) described how performers should direct their eyes in the theatre: 'the eyes look ahead, and the spirit looks behind' (Zeami, 1984, 81).

Reflect on how you would interpret this.

The eyes look ahead and the spirit looks behind.

Take four breaths while imagining it.

Thus, according to Zeami, the performer should look in front of her with her eyes, while her inner concentration was directed to the appearance of her movements from behind while being fully present in the space (Zeami, 1984, 81). The alignment embodied a metric, linear view of time: a measured progression of past, present and future, manifested through suriashi. It created a certain atmosphere that was repeatable through rigorous practice.

Slow and Buddhist?

In Chapter Nine, I consider how Japanese theatre and spirituality inspired the early modernists (Yeats, Itō and Pound, 1916, Notani, 2017). In my investigations of connections between suriashi and other slow walking practices, I found how artists active in Western countries appreciated the spiritual dimension in slow movement (Banes, 1977, Kasulis et al., 1987). Many contemporary artists, for example Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Marina Abramović and Hamish Fulton, referred the anti-dualistic body-mind stance, and the focus on experience to Buddhist aesthetics (Abramović, 2015, De Keersmaeker, 2016, Fulton, 2014, Meher, 2020, Minh-ha, 2016) I discerned a turn to Buddhist concepts on impermanence and ephemerality. I therefore briefly show how Buddhism has influenced suriashi. For example, Hahn wrote how Buddhist concepts permeated the aesthetics of Japanese dance: ‘the contemplation of the passing of time; the frailty of (human) existence’ (Hahn, 2007, 55). Hahn hesitated to place too much emphasis on Buddhism; however, she stated that the legacy to all traditional arts in Japan are overwhelmingly influenced by Buddhism during its formative eras in the mid-6th century (2007, 44). I too hesitated with the constant referencing to (Zen) Buddhism. This was related to how ‘stillness’ and ‘silence’ were positioned in Western contemporary society where Zen has been used for equalizing stillness and silence in the mindfulness industry (Dawson, 2021, Sakai, 2018, Williams, 2011). This bore the risk of both reducing stillness to a single condensed essence of Japanese aesthetics, and to portray Zen as a passive practice. Zen, like suriashi was on the contrary effortful and active. However, my biggest objection to how artists were using Buddhism was that most failed to recognise how the position of women was adversely affected by its arrival in Japan (Nakahara, 1999, Sakurai 2013-2014, Tokita and Hughes, 2007). I have therefore also included critique related to gendered asymmetries in my

research (see Chapters Three, Five and Eight). When we as contemporary artists engage with Buddhist aesthetics, I argue that gender must be present in the discussion.

Slowness and the value of age in Japanese dance

While making work for this thesis, slow suriashi became a new reflective perspective for being and practising in spaces outside theatre. There were yet connections to be made between slowness and spiritual embodiment, which brought back the ancestral perspective. Nishikawa Senrei and I often practiced suriashi in silence for thirty minutes. She often walked next to me, side by side. Her own teacher, master Nishikawa Koisaburo (1909-1983), was thirty-six years older than her when she began studying with him. She was guided through solo lessons by a very experienced teacher and performer. Choreography was never something to rush through. One solo choreography (of ten minutes) took six months to learn. This was not typical in many Western classical techniques, where group training and quick choreography was often the norm. Also, the slow suriashi welcomed a different spatial presence than my previous dance practices. Even though suriashi was tough on mind, legs and back, there was something soothing to deny the requirement to constantly invent new quick gestures. Suriashi differed from the grand allegro of classical ballet.

The slowness engaged with in this thesis, enabled a different attitude to aging and dancing, which changed my own attitude to my body and aging. The choreographer Heidi S. Durning, trained at Fujima school, explained that in the Nihon Buyō-world, you are considered to be at your best when you are between fifty and seventy years old (Durning, 2015). Classical dancers employed in opera ballets typically retired around the age of forty years with regards to physical demands during their career. However, the Japanese technique enabled mature dancers to continue to perform on stage. The role model was a mature dancer - at least fifty years old. Dance scholar Nakajima Nanako confirmed that for Nihon Buyō-dancers, aging is considered a 'progression to a higher level of ability' and 'aging therefore, neither is a disadvantage for dancers in Japan nor presupposes an inability to dance' (Nakajima and Brandstetter, 2017, 22). According to Hahn, in Japanese dance 'a mature dancer has experienced and embodied more of life and this essence can be imbued in dance' (2007, 38). As a dance practitioner, I recognised a similarity of movement logic between suriashi and postmodern walking. This was related not only to speed, but to restrained expressiveness, introversion, the holding back of energy in space, which I also experienced in dance practices derived from postmodern dance and improvisation. In addition, the contemporary dance field begins to move beyond stereotypes of the youthful, slender, white dancer, and

instead challenged the status quo on who can dance (Thomas, 2019, Kolb, 2011, Nakajima and Brandstetter, 2017).

Slow walking in postmodern dance



Figure 5. *Street Action*, Greene Street to protest the war, in 1970. Yvonne Rainer, Douglas Dunn and Sarah Rudner in the front row (Sotomayor, 1970)

Nakajima pointed to how the Judson Dance Theatre postmodern dance aesthetic also processed aging in dance, particularly through the work of Yvonne Rainer (Nakajima, 2017, 2). The above photo shows Rainer and her friends and students from School of Visual Arts performing a slow march as a street action to protest the United States' invasion of Cambodia (Sotomayor, 1970). The same year in San Francisco, Anna Halprin and her San Francisco's dancer's workshop performed *Blank Placard Dance* - an arts-based demonstration - as a protest to the Vietnam War (Jakovljević, 2018). The piece included a simple score where the participants/dancers march in a line on the streets carrying blank white protest placards. People asked what they were protesting since the placards were blank. Halprin explained 'Each person watching us could just imagine whatever protest slogan they wanted on the placards' (Ross 2007:289)

These two examples from postmodern dance show how slow and silent actions with a

political cause were not exactly explicit. Here is how I see a connection between suriashi as an experimental pilgrimage and these slow and silent activist performances. Rainer explained that ‘the inspiration came from the movement of the factory workers in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*’ (Rainer, 2013, 340). The performers walked slowly with heads lowered while swaying from side to side, which created a rhythm for walkers and watchers to engage with. Their gazing to the ground showed that this was a non-violent action. In addition, one of the reinventions of dance techniques at this time was to present everyday walking as a dance art, which also has a political agenda of importance to inclusive and participatory dance. (Rainer, 2013, 18). Through Rainer’s choice of slowly swaying while protesting, I found a connection to Emperor Yu’s (Daoist) walking, which has an ancestral connection with suriashi (see Chapters Three and Nine). Here, the choreography of the both marches - the chosen body alignment and movement - mattered as much as the agenda of the march. These two 1970 pieces help expand the concept of ‘choreography’ while simultaneously providing a space for social engagement through dance.

Postmodern dance – a collective endeavour

Sellers-Young described how Asian performance techniques laid the foundation for the more reduced and contemplative expressions in postmodern dance, such as Cunningham’s explorations of ‘motion in stillness’ and ‘stillness in motion’ (Sellers-Young, 2013, 75).

I ask what Srinivasan and other scholars argued for - regarding the development of modern dance - if the inception of postmodern dance in North America was not also a collective endeavour (Srinivasan, 2012). I direct this question both to historians and practitioners. For example, in Chapter Seven, I set up a suriashi practice at Judson Church with choreographer and contact improviser Paul Langland. After our practice, Langland compared suriashi with postmodern techniques derived from non-Western practices, such as aikido, Continuum and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen’s cerebrospinal fluid motion (2015). Like suriashi and Japanese dance, these body-mind-centered techniques provided space for mature performers, and they used walking with different perspectives. This showed a change from the movement logic embedded in ballet and modern dance, in search for different body alignments and relations to space. The postmodern technique as well as suriashi activated the space around the body, rather than claiming/possessing the space.

I acknowledge the Japanese choreographer Hanayagi Suzushi (1928-2010) since she taught and collaborated with artists from the postmodern scene at Judson Church and elsewhere (Cunningham, Yoko Ono, Halprin, Trisha Brown). You might have noticed that she bore the

same name as previously mentioned Hanayagi Chiyo. Both were licensed from the Hanayagi school. As I worked with this thesis, I coincidentally found the book 'Odori wa jinsei' – 'To Dance is Life' (part of it was translated for this thesis, please see Appendix B) containing interviews with Nishikawa Senrei and Hanayagi Suzushi. The book was about their work as dance artists in Japan and abroad (Tsurumi, 2003). This book functioned as a resistance to the dichotomies between "contemporary" and "traditional" in conventional Western dance theory (Wilcox, 2020, 8). It also evidenced how Hanayagi Suzushi continued to be a performer long after moving back to Japan. Hanayagi Suzushi was trained in Nō and Nihon Buyō and praised for her work combining the Western avant-garde 'with the stylistic severity of classical Japanese dance' (Nakajima, 2017,3). Her work affected many of the well-known North American choreographers, as well as the director Robert Wilson who was her long-time collaborator (2017, 3). Trisha Brown explained that the eighth movement in her piece *Primary Accumulation* (1972) was a direct quote from Hanayagi Suzushi's hand movements (Banes, 1977, 83). In addition, the director Robert Wilson honoured her legacy in several performances and in Richard Rutkowski's film *The Space in Back of You*. Here, Hanayagi Suzushi reminded the performers that it is 'the space in back of you,' which is the most important as you move (Rutkowski, 2011). Her advice was similar to how Nishikawa Senrei conceptualized 'the space in back of you' as something to lean towards in order to embody one's ancestors throughout the practice. Bringing in such spatial concepts in dance improvisation brought change as it structured performer's relationship to others and to space in new ways. Wilson, upon hearing Hanayagi performing a male piece in Tokyo in 2000, stated that this was very unusual (Wilson, 2020). However, cross gender acts have been part of Japanese performance since the 12th century (Kawashima, 2001, Nakahara 1999, Sakurai 2013-2014). Hanayagi Suzushi's movement logic was important for the development of the postmodern scene. In the film, Wilson described her dance as something 'abstract and pure', however the gestures she performed were originally involved in storytelling. The slow formalized gestures from Japanese dance found new meanings in the postmodern way of working (Hanayagi, 1986).

Slow walking in Swedish postmodern dance

In 1987, Rubicon - Gothenburg's first postmodern dance ensemble - exhibited a radical appreciation of pedestrian movements crafted especially for urban space where bodies of different ages with different backgrounds performed. In Chapter Eight, I describe how suriashi as experimental pilgrimage engaged with 'archival activism', honouring Rubicon

and Nishikawa Senrei (Flinn, 2011, Von Rosen, 2017b). My Swedish connection to postmodern dance began with Rubicon. Providing sustainable dance techniques, Rubicon's dance opened for new thinking about the aesthetics of aging and the athletic centrism in Western dance. Therefore, postmodern techniques shared a connection with suriashi since both techniques provide space for mature performers. Rubicon's new relation to space where dance was created outside theatres asked for new choreographic tools with different expressions. In addition, the choreographer Gun Lund (1943-), one of the founders of Rubicon, created her piece *In Shades of God* (1995), which I performed in. We performed outdoors on cliffs and in the sea in Sweden and Scotland. This was my first engagement with slow walking and dancing. What was even more compelling was that Lund affiliated slow walking to Japanese dance. In 1995, a somewhat frustrated Lund expressed: 'Slowness is not accepted in Swedish contemporary dance. According to choreographer Margareta Åsberg, only Japanese dancers are allowed to move slowly'(1995). Lund's comment elucidated the Swedish dance community's initial resistance to postmodern dance techniques, and possibly how some of the choreographers therefore searched for new strategies outside the Western context to defend the continuation of dance practice as you mature. Gun Lund is seventy-eight years old at the time of writing this, and still performing.

Corporeal reminder: Suriashi

While walking in suriashi, there is a strong sensation of pushing yourself up through space.

Where is your limit?

Study your thighs when you bend your knees

You will notice that the quadriceps are activated.

Almost as if they pop up through the skin.

If you continue, it creates a burning sensation of support to the moving body.

The muscles will carry you as you grow stronger.

The work of the lower body is similar in all versions of suriashi.

There is a continual balance act between the floor, the feet, the knees, and the hips.

Small adjustments are constantly being made, and the result is the image of a person floating and hovering over the floor.

Imagine yourself floating and hovering over the floor.

Body alignments – differences and similarities

After the corporeal reminder, I encourage you to read the following pages reflecting on your own body alignment. I continue to engage with my research question on how suriashi can be situated together with other contemporary performance practices, such as dance and walking practices, choreography and screendance. My methodology below is to compare suriashi with three different ‘Western’ dance practices, classical ballet, modern and post-modern dance through dance analysis and my own empirical experiences of these techniques.

The lowering of weight in Japanese dance

The directors and educators Gunji Masakatsu and Suzuki Takeshi assigned Japanese dance-techniques with certain qualities as to hold its specific authenticity when being compared to Western dances (Gunji, 1970, Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984). For example, ‘Western dance aspires toward the heavens while Eastern dance shows great love for the earth’ (Gunji, 1970, 68). Gunji meant that the Western dancer aspired to heaven while seeking liberation for her body, allowing her limbs out in space, while the Buyō dancer found her liberation remaining on the ground. However, such proposals have been dismissed as feeding narratives of essentialism and particularism of Japanese arts (Cheung, 2020, Isaka, 2018, Yamazaki, 2001)

Yamazaki used instead a more practical clarification of the lowering of weight in Japanese dance, where everyday activities are taking part close to the floor level. In Japanese homes, restaurants and teahouses, most sit on the floor on cushions next to low tables. Hosts constantly kneel to serve tea or food, and now and then use a quicker suriashi for smoother transitions (Yamazaki, 2011, 86). Yamazaki’s clarification approached the rationale for using pedestrian techniques in postmodern dance; when we approach the everyday in dance practice, we also open for less strenuous dance walking practices.

Speaking from actual studio practice in Japan, Sweden, the U.K., and from what you might have experienced through the corporeal reminders, the lowering of weight from hips and knees were very similar in both suriashi and in the ballet/modern dance plié. In suriashi, the legs start in ‘first position parallel plié’ with the emphasis on the whole foot, and from there you walk without lifting your feet. The female ballet dancer might enjoy escaping the challenging 180 degrees turn-out when practicing parallel ‘feminine’ suriashi instead. I

personally enjoyed letting go of both the over-conceptualised ballet turn-out but also the very straight legs and very flexible hamstrings in modern/postmodern/contemporary dance. However, what was very different from ballet and modern dance was the gendered alignment of the upper back in 'feminine' suriashi– the sway-back, the lifted rib cage, and withdrawn shoulders, originally created for men to perform as women. I propose a greater curiosity of the variation of body alignments and that we give up claims of essentialism in both 'universal' or 'culturally marked' dance practices. Body alignments were created for certain aesthetic ideas. Knowing their background supports different alignments and other ideas.



Figure 6. I look at a sign outside a ballet school in Budapest: an image of the turn-out where the feet are nailed in order to stay in a 180 degrees position (Dahlstedt, 1988)

Artificial and natural bodies - natural and unnatural chest pulled high

Drawing on my own training in ballet, modern and postmodern dance, I analyse suriashi according to concepts like 'natural' and 'artificial', and how these are framed around "liberation" and "breaking-free". The development of Western modern dance, through the lyrical Isadora Duncan-dancer, showed an idealisation of nature performed in a time when

people had already moved away from nature. This was a reaction on the fast-developing urbanised societies, which ‘caused anxieties about loss of freedom and individuality’ (Huxley & Burt, 2011, p 31). Nature was no longer close since people lived and worked in cities (Fensham, 2011, 5). Cities meant smaller spaces and fewer opportunities for movement. However, by comparing body alignments in suriashi, ballet, modern and postmodern dance, the concept of a ‘natural body’ and ‘dancing naturally’ varies. Dance scholar Ann Daly explained the same kind of suspension of the upper body used for the feminine suriashi in the lyrical modernist Isadora Duncan dancer (1995, 75). Dancers trained in ballet and modern dance techniques, such as Agrippina Vaganova, Duncan, Doris Humphrey, and José Limón would be familiar with the ‘chest pulled high’, which was however scarcely used in postmodern dance techniques (Body Mind Centering, Feldenkrais, Kinetic Awareness, Contact improvisation), simply because it felt ‘unnatural’. Duncan ‘started out by stripping the female body away from the colonising discourses of classical ballet’ (Thomas, 2003, 165). Daly described how Isadora Duncan danced with ‘the chest pulled high out of a low, grounded pelvis’ (1995, 75). The difference in alignments between suriashi and modern dance was found where the movement happened as a consequence to the ‘chest pulled high’, but also in the ideas behind the movements. Duncan ‘rises out of the legs and hips into the solar plexus’, and ‘the torso (not the feet) propels the body through space, and the legs grow from an active mobile pelvis’ (1995, 75). This was the recipe for a female, ‘natural’ and liberated body.

When I taught suriashi to the performing artist Frei von Fräähsen, to colleagues and conference participants, they did not find ‘the chest pulled high out of a low, grounded pelvis’ to be the least ‘natural’, nor ‘liberating’. The alignment of feminine suriashi did not rise out of the legs and hips to reach nature as with the Duncan dancer. The torso in Japanese dance served neither as an impetus for shooting the limbs and the body out in space for liberation nor as a natural force. For ‘feminine’ suriashi, the body laboured like classical ballet in order to keep the square within its rigorous symmetry. This was related historically to the cross-gender technique and the absence of females in Japanese theatre, described in Chapter Five, where the bodily smallness needed to be constantly reaffirmed and exaggerated in the dance. For example, when rehearsing *Kuro Kami* for a research conference with Von Fräähsen, we constantly had to remind ourselves of keeping our shoulders back and withdrawn while moving (Dahlstedt, 2014a). We were both trained to use ‘epaulement’, practised in ballet and modern dance, where shoulders are slightly twisted towards the audience. We moved with bodily accents derived from other dance techniques, not only related to cultural

understandings of dance forms but to the physical training of techniques and habitual body memory. However, in feminine suriashi, the male dancer instead strips the body from masculinist shapes and engages with stereotypical female movements in the normative cross gender techniques in Japanese dance. He does not propel through space, instead his feet remain on the ground, his knees in plié. The Onnagata performing feminine suriashi might also be involved in a liberation process, where the male dancer escaped stereotyped masculinist ideals.

Yet an example regarding the liberation of the chest came from the postmodern choreographer Trisha Brown who explained 'her desire to work with dancers who can free themselves of certain habits like the "puffed-out ribcage"' (Brown 1979, quoted in Bales and Netti-Fiol, 2008, 160). This showed, typical for the time, an attempt to avoid gender specific movements (Foster, 2001, 180). But there was also a new request for 'natural' movements. Brown argued that a classically trained dancer could not do even a simple natural kind of movement (Foster, 2011, 160). What Brown called 'the gorgeous noble ribcage-out-dancer' was considered too unnatural for postmodern dance, and instead the liberation was to be found in the pedestrian. Here is where I encountered problems, asking how contemporary dancers might combine slow suriashi, the pedestrian -however with an added artificial "puffed-out ribcage". In the postmodern era, many choreographers created new pieces inviting amateurs to work and perform. In 1967, the choreographer and performer Steve Paxton, co-founder of 'Contact Improvisation', worked with 'forty-two untrained performers walking parallel to the front of the proscenium theater, stopping, sitting, and moving on' for his piece 'Satisfyin' Lover' (Foster, 2002, 127). Here, the 'liberation' regarded not only inherited body alignments, but also the spaces used for dance, the proximity to the audience, the tearing down of walls between professional dancers and amateurs. In search of ways of choreographing the 'everyday' inside and outside theatrical spaces, many experiments in postmodern dance were done in order to challenge traditional agreements about body alignments and presences, stage practices, and the relationship between performers and audiences.



Figure 7. Female dancers at the Metropolitan Opera House (Krulwich, 2007)



Figure 8. Suriashi with toes pointed inwards for portraying the young female in Buyō (Mioldažienė, 2014)

Ribcage, feet and hips - targets for the liberation of the body

In order to show further examples of how concepts of 'natural' and 'unnatural' movements were used in dance practice, I compare the stereotyping of human gaits in Nihon Buyō, ballet and modern/postmodern dance. There was something to learn about gendered postures when scrutinizing them. One of the main differences between Nihon Buyō and classical ballet is the 'turn-out' vs the parallel (see Figures 7 and 8). In classical ballet, the turn-out was fundamental and kept constant. The turn-out was an outward rotation of the

hips, thighs, followed by knees, calves, and feet. A flawless turn-out was required by the female ballet dancer for the portrayal of female roles, which cannot be negotiated. A precise turn-out was needed when ballerinas in ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Nutcracker* etc., are lined up to perform a symmetrical precision (See Figure 7). The symmetry became a square, which dance scholar Judith Hamera described ‘captures the rigorous metaphoric symmetry prized by the technique’ (Hamera, 2007, 67). ‘Bodies stay ‘square’ by ensuring that the hips and shoulders remain aligned and in the same plane during the execution of a movement’ (2007, 67). However, in Japanese dance, the turn-out instead signaled the ‘male’ stereotype. I remind that students practicing Japanese dance study three genders; female, male and the in-between, non-binary divine.

‘The natural’ was composed as conformed alignment. Comparing three dance techniques, conformed alignment was what was claimed as ‘natural’ in both suriashi walking and ballet walking, in Nihon Buyō, ballet, modern dance and postmodern dance. For example, in 1893, Jean Gerges Noverre declared turn-out exceedingly unnatural, yet he considered the turn-out was the most important capacity for the dancer to acquire (Noverre, quoted by Foster, 2011, 120). The turn-out was reinforced through practice and imagination. The ‘unnatural’ was made natural through constant repetition and practice. The view of the female ballet dancer’s body was obscured by essentialist ideas about professional dance, however these ideas have actually been constructed historically, based on concepts of beauty (Hamera, 2007, Ritenburg, 2010, Aalten, 1997, Pickard, 2013). My informal accounts and discussions regarding girls and professional dance stem from representatives from Gothenburg Ballet Academy and the Swedish Ballet School. They show that ten-year-old girls without the perfect turn-out and flexible feet are deprived of a career as ballet dancers (Dahlstedt, 1988-2012). Educators claim the need for female dancers to begin training when they are children before their hips are stabilised in an unwanted direction for ballet ideals. Thus, medical reasons and problematic ideals based on the skeleton, and the vetting processes that were used to determine who was able to move forward, were considered ‘natural’ practices in the ballet world. These practices activated the phenomenological Körper/Leib discussion where some would argue that the ballet ideal was based on the idea of the body as an object (Körper) - only defined by its physical appearance with no space for the sensing, living body (Leib) (Brinkmann, 2019, Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Noland, 2009).

For this thesis, I revisited the movement of the ribcage: the turning away from the stiff corset-clad torso towards the moving torso, all in the name of “liberation”. I did this to

understand how to proceed with suriashi relocated to urban spaces. I carry all these movement logics in my body, not so easy to get rid of once learned. There was rarely time to reflect what these concepts really meant when training as a dancer. In suriashi, you were “liberated” from the extreme turnout, but the puffed-out rib cage was reaching out of the kimono and was used to construct the feminine, which was thus more confining. In postmodern dance walking, I encountered the “liberation” from theatricalised walking, where the desire for “natural” movement meant approaching the pedestrian and urban space. Compared with suriashi in Nishikawa Senrei’s studio where we walked together without lifting our feet, confirming the space in the front and in the back of us, I also appreciated hours spent in studios for ballet/modern/contemporary dance: walking in circles, space dissolved and shared listening to the sound of walking feet as well as the endless rhythmical diagonals walking with pointing feet to piano music or jazz. Letting go of the lifted ribcage, and letting arms drop in the postmodern techniques was difficult but felt ‘liberating’ since there was something to be liberated from, such as the turn-out of feet (see Figure 7).

More could be discussed about gendered alignments, where certain movements were created for the liberation of the female body. Dancing ‘naturally’ in modern dance was initially manifested as having powerful liberatory potential – letting go of pointe shoes and corset, performing barefoot, wearing loose garments. Modern dance was positioned against classical ballet as ‘a cultural practice that imperils the freedom and wellbeing of women’, and therefore criticized for not being natural (Madison, 2005,4) . However, many women earned economic independence and social recognition through their profession, using both ‘unnatural’ and ‘natural’ dance techniques (Hammergren, 2002, Duncan, (1977 [1928])). Although an outward rotation of hips and feet signaled femininity in ballet practice, in Nihon Buyō, this action instead signals masculinity. Literature scholar Diana Fuss confirmed the constructionist view that the body is always ‘culturally mapped, it never exists in an uncoded state’ (Fuss 1989, p 6).

Please stand up.

Place yourself in the feminine suriashi, bent legs, feet parallel, shoulders withdrawn, back muscles activated.

I ask you to slowly change to the male suriashi by following these instructions:

Turn your feet out slightly (45 degrees), let go of back, chest, elbows and shoulders.

Instead rotate your elbows and upper arms so that the elbows face the ceiling.

Direct your balance a bit more to the front.

Sense the micro-shift between the female and male construction.

Practised regularly, this becomes a practice of shape-shifting between gender-constructions in Japanese dance.

Video reference:

I practise the male suriashi for the dance *Matsu no Midori* at Senreinokai, Tokuya-Cho, 2015.

Practise with me:

[Video 2: 1:41:53- 1:42:57](#)

I show the gender shifting between suriashi practises in my performance lecture

A Particular Act Of Survival at Atalante, Gothenburg, 2015:

[Video 2: 1:04:44- 1:06:21](#)

Nishikawa Senrei and natural walking

In order to repeat the same questions regarding suriashi as a walking practice, and the 'natural', I turn to Nishikawa Senrei. I show her engagement with suriashi and natural, Romantic walking based on my training with her, and revisiting a previously recorded interview (Nishikawa, 2011). Suriashi walking emerged from the professional Daoist walking act, which I described in Chapter Three. Suriashi was both a conscious activity of the body and a conscious activity of the mind for the activation of narratives and engagement with ancestors. However, these attributes of suriashi do not fail to engage with everyday walking, as I show in this thesis, particularly in the video documentations and in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Nishikawa Senrei had a strong interest in walking, and in how walking affected artistic practices. The first initiative to engage with suriashi as an actual walking practice for this thesis - an act that could be separated from dance practice - came from her. The focusing on suriashi practice before the studying of choreography was her own invention, and rare to other schools of Japanese dance. Hanayagi Chiyo was an exception with new concepts of training through special workshops and books (Hanayagi, 2008). Claiming suriashi as a walking practice outside the dance studio found further support through the historical accounts engaged with in this thesis in Chapters Three and Eight) where suriashi performed

on stage represented the traveller in constant flux, either travelling between geographical places or travelling from a spiritual state to a human state (Alison, 2016, 226).

There was a specific connection to be made between Nishikawa Senrei's dance and walking practice and the Naturalist and Romantic walker Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

Nishikawa Senrei took a strong interest in him. Her very last performance that premiered four months after her death had the title 'Reveries of a Solitary Walker' and was based on his writings (see Figure 9). Therefore, my first engagement with a text related to walking as practice was through the excerpts from Rousseau's First Walk of 'Reveries of a Solitary Walker', published posthumously in 1782 (Rousseau, 1992 (1782)). Nishikawa Senrei's performance was also 'published' posthumously, on April 12th, 2013 (Nishikawa, 2013a).

While she was seriously ill, she collaborated with the composer Kawasaki Jun and the dancer Ogawa Tamae. She worked with them through cassette tapes, where she for example recorded her opinion on the music, the set design and dancing from the hospital, without revealing to them that she was dying. She created her last piece, knowing she would never be able to finish it, just like Rousseau's written walks were never finished. Since I know that she read Rousseau's text after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, I have myself always read Rousseau's text as if Nishikawa Senrei had written it. Rousseau was always secondary, like a ghost writer. I imagined how Nishikawa Senrei used walking (or dreaming of walking – as in reveries) to decrease her own suffering and pain, which reinforced her reminder to students: to walk with ancestors, those who are no longer here, our teachers. This thesis shows how I never stopped walking with Nishikawa Senrei.

process journal, which depicts my first walk in Kyōto after Nishikawa Senrei's death. It was an account how the ancestral engagement in suriashi practice worked in a very concrete way.

In the footsteps of Senrei sensei

On a Saturday, Feb 28th 2013, I finally got to visit Sansoo, the mountain studio that Senrei sensei loved so much, and where she spent her last days before she went to hospital for palliative care. Emiko san met me at the Shijo Omiya station and we took a bus north. I was early, and warmed my hands in the pharmacy near the bus stop. I finally bought a couple of surgical masks, the symbols of utter politeness, to be worn when you have a cold, in order to not bother other people. In the mountain studio I changed into yukata in Senrei sensei's bedroom. I could sense her presence. The class took place in the little hall next to her bed. There were beautiful black and white photographs of her on the walls. It was like a museum. I practised suriashi all by myself, starting from her bed, then across the hall, and then I turned next to the steep wooden stairs to walk back again. I was in less stress and could therefore have an image of her being there. Emiko pointed at a little white urn in a form fitted beautiful silk fabric, sewn in an interesting pattern. "There she is", Emiko san said. "She made the fabric herself." But Takae san explained that Senrei sensei's brother just had decided to move her ashes to the family temple. So, she was not in that little urn anymore.

While going back to Kyoto, Emiko san and Takae san asked whether I wanted to visit Kōzan-ji, Senrei sensei's favourite temple. Emiko san and I walked the steep stairs together through an incredibly beautiful forest. Senrei sensei mentioned these walks in my documentary, in my interview with her. (Dahlstedt, 2012-2014)

The process journal showed how the memory of Nishikawa Senrei was activated directly through the practice. Even though I relocated suriashi to other spaces, cities, plazas, there was the constant body memory of practising with or without her. Also, reading about the surgical masks now – when everyone else outside Japan started to use them during the pandemic – was a reminder of how situations always call for new embodied relations to space.

Natural walking in postmodern dance, Gothenburg 1987

In this thesis, I often refer to Rubicon (1978-1998), the name of the first city funded independent dance ensemble in Gothenburg, established by Eva Ingemarsson (1953-), Gunnel Johansson, Gun Lund (1943-) and Gunilla Witt (1955-). In 1986, their landmark piece *Götaplatsens Trappor* (the Stairs of Götaplatsen) was premiered, which I revisited in 2016 in the form of a suriashi pilgrimage, dedicated to their work. In Chapter Eight, I explore the effects of this pilgrimage, which showed that suriashi could engage in activism and politics.

Through Rubicon, the Gothenburg dancers encountered everyday walking as a method for dance. The choreographers were pioneers, 'and, arguably, founding Rubicon was a powerful feminist political strategy, centred on women joining forces in collaborative structures' (von Rosen, 2018, 221). Rubicon used pedestrian walking to formulate their new artistic practice for dance. For a full year they practiced only walking as a new radical way to explore movements (von Rosen, 2016, 122). Rubicon received funding and started the project *the City Dancers* and began performing new choreography in urban spaces. Later, they have become known as one of the pioneers of Swedish postmodern dance (Sörenson, 2007).

They originally had classical ballet as their basic training form, now they engaged with everyday walking as a protest to elitisms (Lund, 2019, 2020). The walking sessions created a new Point Zero for their work. It was a most difficult and demanding task to undertake, which showed that the aim for 'natural' walking was a real endeavour. 'Not only did such walking instigate change, it manifestly and persistently implemented it in the individual dancers' bodies and in the collective body politic' (von Rosen, 2018, 4). To argue that walking is dancing connected Rubicon with other postmodern artists, for example the New York City-based Yvonne Rainer with her *Trio A* and Steve Paxton with his *Satisfyin Lover*, who with their peers at Judson Church famously took the pedestrian and made it revolutionary. Rubicon did not have their own stage, they had so far led a so-called itinerant lifestyle, touring from town to town. I was a student at Balettakademien at the time (late 1980s) and discovering how Rubicon presented a new way of moving and to relate to space. For example, of all the walking practices in dance, the postmodern walking was the most radical in its refusal of 'high aesthetics'. For dancers trained in ballet and modern dance, the task was indeed difficult. At that time, there was no discussion on what might be political in this shift of embodiment, as we discuss it now. However, we embraced the new embodied

technology of walking, which held an 'anti-elitist ideology', sometimes framed as 'natural', and which for many Gothenburg citizens was a bit shocking.

Natural walking in postmodern dance, Duke University 1997

Adding to the discussion of the 'natural', I make a brief examination of my experience of North American postmodern dance and turn to dance scholar Sally Banes (1940-2020) for historical accounts (1977). In 1997, I encountered the legendary choreographer Anna Halprin who had a huge impact on the development of postmodern dance in New York City. Artists came to her studio in San Francisco to study improvisation and new movement techniques, such as Cunningham, Simone Forti, John Cage, Rainer, Hanayagi Suzushi, Brown, Robert Morris to mention a few (Banes 1977, p 8-9). I took Halprin's workshop at the annual six-week summer course American Dance Festival at Duke University (American Dance Festival, 1997). I have memories of struggling with swinging arms while walking 'naturally', which was similar to struggling with other 'new' dance practices. In her critical study of postmodern dance, Banes made the following distinctions between the concepts of 'natural': the forerunners of modern dance; Fuller and Duncan indeed referred to gestures that imitated or represented forms in nature, however for the postmodern choreographers, 'natural' meant something quite different (Banes, 1977, 17). It meant 'action undistorted for theatrical effectiveness, drained of emotional overlay, literary reference, or manipulated timing' (17). The natural body in postmodern dance is 'no more pulled up than it is in daily life' (17). 'Natural' movement 'came out of a relaxed state and without preparation but instinctively, organically – in contrast to movements characterized by the tension of both ballet and modern dance.' (1977, 24) The so-called relaxed state was difficult to achieve. Halprin structured tasks to help dancers find the deep concentration needed for 'natural movement'. The choreographer Simone Forti who worked with Halprin interestingly described it as: 'I felt that we were working out of a Zen state. But it wasn't Zen, so we took the word Nez' (Banes 1977, p 23). In addition, Banes praised Forti's closeness with the world of nature in her Fan Dance (1975), which clearly had Japanese associations (Banes, 1977, 37).

I conclude my examination of North American postmodern dance by discussing how gender was performed and discussed as a comparison with previous accounts on 'natural' dancing. Modern dance cannot be seen as a universal concept, as it consists of artistic choices by individuals (Graham, Humphrey, Alvin Ailey, Katherine Dunham). Also, the inception of modern dance in North America was a collective endeavour consisting of appropriated artistic practices from all over the world (Foster, 2009, 10, Srinivasan, 2012). However,

speaking from my own experience from dance education, the work by individuals was constantly made universal, and therefore difficult to criticise in the studio where the practice happened. In the book *Feelings Are Facts*, Rainer described her difficulties with the modern dance-training in 1959 with Graham, which was a starting point for Rainer to look for other forms of expressions (Rainer, 2013, 183). Rainer struggled with the body alignment in the Graham technique, such as the turn-out of hips. Graham explained to Rainer that ‘when you accept yourself as a woman you will have turn-out’, (2013, 183). After Graham’s claim about the ‘essentially feminine’ in the turn-out-posture, Rainer had enough of the mystery embedded in modern Graham dance technique (188). In 1965, Rainer formulated her own manifesto and ‘a strategy for demystifying dance and making it objective’, a ‘strategy of denial’ (Banes, 1977, 43).

The postmodern focus on ‘natural’, ‘androgynous’, ‘ungendered’ walking was almost the opposite of my own focus for this thesis: ‘supernatural’, ‘feminine’, ‘gendered’ walking. Rainer studied and worked with Halprin and performed in her well-known piece *Parades and Changes*, which premiered in 1965 in Stockholm. This held the same walking part that I encountered with Halprin in 1997 at the American Dance Festival. The task was to walk briskly, wearing shirts and pants while dressing and undressing. This was the part of the piece that was specifically about walking and gender, which I analyse differently compared to my first encounter with it in 1997. The dance techniques considered in this chapter were considered ‘essential’ for each dance form they represent. They were normative as such as they are difficult to get rid of once you have learned them. Fuss argued that ‘it might be necessary to question the constructionist assumption that nature and fixity go together (naturally) just as sociality and change go together (naturally)’ (Fuss, 1989,6). Fuss’ point elucidated the proposed dichotomies between “contemporary” and “traditional” in conventional Western dance theory (Wilcox, 2020, 8).

I end this chapter on suriashi, dance and walking practices by briefly addressing how my research entered walking research, a rather new field of study, where choreographers, artists and researchers work in yet transdisciplinary ways.

Walking as research



Figure 10. Hikyaku, an express messenger, in *nanba* walking style, courtesy of Professor Morishita Takashi, Keio University (Morishita, Edo Era, 19th century)

The thought that walking is a method in itself has existed since Aristotle became ‘the walking lecturer’ with his peripatetic gatherings in Greece around 2350 years ago (Solnit, 2000, 15). By looking at walking and movement, specific questions about society were asked. Studies on walking are now carried out in many disciplines; dance and performance studies (Hammergren 1995, Mock, 2009b, Pujol 2018), gender studies (Meskimmon, 1997, Minh-ha, 2016, Parsons, 2000, Pollock, 1988, Woolf, 2015 (1929), Wägner, 1908), geography (Massey

2005), Asian studies (Meeks 2011, Alison 2016, Kawashima 2016), and Artistic Research (Smith 2014, 2015, 2017, Lagerström 2019). Walking has become an expanded method for choreography and visual arts with many new platforms, residences and conferences ²

Performance walks since Medieval Times

Walking performances have a historical background. Suriashi is a travelling step, and in this thesis I show how suriashi engages with travellers, storytellers, walking shrine maidens and ghosts (Chapters Three and Eight). In Japan, the widely known wandering ascetic Kūya spread Buddhist practice through dancing and chanting in the tenth century (Chilson, 2007, 306). In the late Heian period (12th century), the 'touring' shrine maidens, *arukimiko*, (literally walking shrine maiden) frequented the travelling roads where they performed oracles and prophecies for a small salary (Meeks, 2011, 222). Performance scholar Jen Harvie described how the audiences of the Medieval European theatre would walk through a Biblical narrative on an aisle of different scenes set up inside a church or on temporary stages outdoors (2009, 13). These performance walks were crafted to educate audiences that were illiterate, and thus could not read the Bible or about the Christian religion.

These early walking performances have continued to inspire artists and walkers globally through time and are used in new ways. For example, in the 1971 dance piece *Vessel* by postmodern choreographer, performer and composer Meredith Monk, the audience moved from one place to another to follow the performance (Mundal, 1994). Monk was one of the front figures of the postmodern dance scene in New York City, where the pedestrian's movements were praised by the choreographers at Judson Church. Judson Church was visited specifically for this thesis, where I practice suriashi with my Contact Improvisation teacher Paul Langland, who has worked extensively with Monk (see Chapter Seven). Monk called her piece *Vessel* a 'medieval tapestry piece', loosely based on the life of Joan of Arc (Mundal, 1994). The audience participation and lived experience was valued equally as the

² Walking's New Movements' conference at University of Plymouth 2019, Thinking on the Move: the possibilities and risks of walking sociologically at University of Goldsmiths 2019, AHA-festival at Chalmers University 2014, Deveron Project's Walking Institute (2010-), including Slow Marathon (2012-) based in Huntly, Deirdre Heddon's (Glasgow) and Misha Myer's (Melbourne) The Walking Library (2012-), and Andrew Stuck's Museum of Walking (2007-) and Rethinking Cities Ltd.

performance itself. The audience co-created the choreographed walking acts around the performers. Monk's piece *Vessel* did not 'shun the artifices of the theater to probe the pedestrian. Rather, it utilizes the pedestrian, allowing it to permeate the vocabulary and setting of the action, to frame a new look for theater' (Foster, 2002, 127).

In 2014, suriashi was an important part of *Hybrid Heart – a performative promenade*, which I created in collaboration with the performance artist Frei von Fräähßen and the musician Anna Svendsdotter. The audience gathered in Gothenburg Botanical Gardens; then followed along and became bodily engaged in the performance. The audience walked with us from place to place; they were invited to move, to look, listen to the sound of the gardens, to choreography, music and poetry, and to walk together in suriashi (Dahlstedt, 2014d).

Walking identities

In the beginning of this chapter, I engaged with how walking was structured according to which dance paradigm it belongs to. I found a similar discussion on 'natural' walking in the walking as research-field. The ethnographer Suzanne Österlund-Pötzsch showed there were early attempts to categorize and theorise walking as a cultural phenomenon. For example, the writer Jean Paul (1763-1825) ranked pedestrian types in four casts (Österlund-Pötzsch, 2018, 15). According to him, at 'the bottom of the typology are those who walk to show off, followed by those who walk for health (15). The second highest is the aesthetic that admires its surroundings via the pedestrian, while the highest caste is reserved for the metaphysical hiker who both appreciates the surroundings and meditates on it' (15). These walking identities exist in dance practices. For example suriashi is performed in different ways regarding gender, age and class as well as in classical ballet, either with turned-in or turned-out feet or with toes or heels first. However, later the sociologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) argued, after having compared walking practices in different settings and in different countries, that all walking takes shape through learning, and that there is no natural way of walking (Mauss quoted by Österlund-Pötzsch, 2018, 16). My research confirmed Mauss' statement – there is no natural way neither of walking nor of dancing, all techniques are taught, learned and processed according to ideologies, gender, age, and aesthetic concerns.

Österlund-Pötzsch's research on walking elucidated how my Swedish ancestors might have walked in the 19th century (2018, 65). Walking briskly in nature was given a compensatory quality in the Nordic mindset, and my own grandmother participated in the National March competition in the 1960s (65). The Scandinavian Forest walk was seen as 'a far more

edifying form of walking than walking in the bustle of the city' and was perceived as 'a Nordic universal antidote of the same dignity as a British 'nice cup of tea' (Österlund-Pötzsch, 2018, 65-66). Slow walking seemed non-existent in earlier Nordic accounts. In this thesis, my grandmother walked with me in suriashi using a walking frame, which I documented on video and included in the collection of experimental pilgrimages (see Chapter Nine). My research offered my grandmother a slow walk, which was something she did not have any lived experience of, growing up in Sweden. For my Swedish ancestors, walking was done with a goal. My ancestor's walking practices were all for social benefit and the common good, and to pick berries in the forest. The berry-picking walker was missing in many walking-as-research discourses. The berry picking was more of an added financial resource than a retreat. However, in the Scandinavian countries there is one day per year when slow walking is accepted and normalised: On Dec 13th, an Italian saint, Lucia, is celebrated in schools and kindergartens and by amateur and professional choirs. Lucia is a pagan mix of traditions with a woman wearing candles in her hair at the center. She walks very slowly in a procession with a trail of light carriers behind her. Each year, throughout this thesis, I performed Lucia in suriashi in order to combine a multi-layered recollection of suriashi pilgrimages.

Lucia, a Scandinavian pagan tradition performed in suriashi.

There is no need to compare them or watch them all.

[Video 1: 1:17:33](#) 2014

[Video 3: 0:13:13](#) 2015 Best example, because there was an interaction with audience

[Video 3: 2:43:49](#) 2016

I enter this already existing dialogue about walking, performative walking and walking to seek a place among those practices. Here, suriashi and choreography can take part of and 'operate within a larger conversation regarding movement, mobility, travel, and displacement' (Bench and Elswit, 2016, 580). For this expanded understanding of suriashi and walking as choreography, and vice versa, I found essential support in Doreen Massey's theories of space. Her theory permeates the whole thesis. In the next chapter I engage specifically with my research question on how suriashi can elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces.

Chapter Five:

Suriashi and gender

This chapter processes my research question on how suriashi can elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces. It supports my choice to ask what suriashi can activate when not seen as a fixed tool for performer training. Coming from a practice-based background in ballet, modern dance, postmodern dance and Japanese dance, where I am trained to engage with whatever posture without a critical reflection, part of this chapter shares my own journey to think critically about performer identities and to understand how suriashi engages gender. The ‘feminine’ suriashi constructed an idea about the feminine, and when ‘feminine’ suriashi engages with space, situations occurred that asked for further critical thinking around gendered bodies and gendered spaces. This chapter focuses on the body construction of feminine suriashi, where I begin with the studio practice. This chapter also depicts one of the experimental pilgrimages, where suriashi is explored outdoors. In Chapter Four, I contextualised the gender construction of suriashi in comparison with other dance and walking practices. In Chapters Seven and Eight, I show and analyse the experimental pilgrimages performed in 2014–2019, from which I further contextualise gendered suriashi when it encountered urban and other spaces.

The construction of the feminine posture in suriashi was related to the absence of women in traditional Japanese (Nō and Kabuki) theatre, and to what has been creatively authorized by male performers to represent females. As I have explained, the absence of women was not only based on language, but on the fact that women were actually banned from performing on stage and then replaced by men. Combining my extended practice-led knowledge with historical accounts, I elucidate the act of ‘becoming woman’ or ‘performing as woman’

(Zeami 1400s, Mezur, 2005, Klens, 1995, Hahn, 2007). I lean towards gender theories by Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous and Zeami Motokiyo, both in regards of performing 'sexual difference' and 'gender trouble' (Butler, 2015, Zeami 1400s, Cixous, 1976, de Beauvoir, 1949). However, I do not analyse these theories in words, instead these theories support the practice-led investigation of suriashi and gender. Simone de Beauvoir's 'becoming woman' is explored through an auto-ethnographic perspective, where I show which strategies I have used in order to process the activity of 'becoming woman' in gendered suriashi, which actually meant to become the stereotyped image of woman. In Butler's classic work *Gender Trouble*, bifurcated definitions of gender were troubled (Butler, 1999 (1990)). Butler stated that both sex and gender are performative, and that physical and sexual differences were constructed in similar ways. Gendered body alignments, when not interpreted as universal or natural, which I showed in the previous chapter, supported Butler's argument. Proposing that gender was performative 'sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body' (1999 (1990), XV). Suriashi did not propose a certain fixed sexuality but allowed to perform an identity or a gendered stereotype. I combine Butler's notion of gender stereotypes with what has creatively been authorized to represent females in traditional Japanese theatre. I thus use a Western feminist lens when working physically and concretely with the 'feminine' body posture in suriashi. I exemplify these strategies through a suriashi pilgrimage performed by me and the drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy at a shrine festival in Kyōto, captured on video.

There are many variations of suriashi, and all of them are gendered. The variations of suriashi include elaborated methods of how to interpret/perform the construction of gender, age, and social status through the body. The body alignment is constructed differently with regards to which gender to portray. However, these historical accounts are not processed in the dance studio, and therefore never discussed. It was not until I engaged with historical research of Japanese theatre, particularly with performance scholar Katherine Mezur's *Beautiful boys/Outlaw bodies: Devising Kabuki female likeness* (2005), that I understood the narratives behind these postures. This chapter therefore also shows my practice-led journey into understanding the postures of the suriashi - practiced since 2000 - and what they were reinforcing. Mezur's research provided an explanation to why the female bodily construction of suriashi (and other gestures) was more extreme than the male bodily construction - simply because the female construction was created for male performers. My choice to focus on 'feminine' suriashi was more precisely the adult male-to-female variation of suriashi.

Feminine suriashi is the grounding for the cross-gender technique of the *Onnagata*. It was originally created by male Kabuki actors/dancers to train to become *Onnagata*. *Onnagata* is a male actor who impersonates the ultra-feminine characters in the Japanese Kabuki theatre.

Throughout this thesis, I keep repeating that the feminine suriashi represented the absence of live women in traditional Japanese theatre since it was created for men to 'become women'. However, my first years studying Japanese dance, I was unaware of this fact. I noticed how the Nihon Buyō-pieces we studied were gendered, where I found the 'feminine' pieces more difficult. Repressing physical energy, withdrawing shoulders, kneeling down and performing tiny gestures demanded a lot of effort. However, the understanding of what these movements were supposed to achieve made the feminine stereotype into an intriguing research frame for this thesis. Engaging with an absence creatively brought forward new presences that were both critical and demanding, but also ironic and humouristic. For example, when a participant at the University College London Conference (2015) compared feminine suriashi with examples from the real world; she explained that she liked the leaning back since it differed from the 'leaning forward' that women have been instructed to do to make it in the corporate world (Appendix D).

The absence of women in traditional Japanese theatre was also present in the Nō theatre, hence why cross-gender constructions have become the norm in practice. Nō theatre playwright Zeami wrote the following instructions on how male actors should portray the female crossdressers Shirabyōshi:

As for the look of a dancer or shirabyōshi or, again, a "madwoman," she should hold a fan or a branch of leaves or flowers ever so gently. She is to wear her robe and trousers very long, even stepping on them, and her bearing should be gentle. (Zeami, 2008, 32)

The previous chapter, Chapter Three, showed how female performers were essential for the creation narrative of Nō theatre, however in real life they finally lost their positions and employments (Nakahara, 1999, Sakurai 2013-2014, Tokita and Hughes, 2007). Zeami wrote the above instruction for 'becoming dancer' or 'becoming Shirabyōshi' after the Shirabyōshi had lost their popularity. Calling her a "madwoman" was an efficient way to dehumanize her and dismiss her position as a professional. The Nō theatre plays had many mad female characters, glints of gold in the eyes of a Nō mask showed a character who oppressed her

true demonic nature. Yet an example was the very successful 17th century shrine maiden and performer Izumo no Okuni. She was celebrated as the founder of Kabuki, performing on the riverbeds of Kyōto (Hartley, 2018, 2015, Leiter, 1998, Rumánek). Okuni wore unusual costumes (often male), carried a sword, and danced a wild and unusual dance, which was called *kabuki* (Hahn, 2007, 25). Later, in the 17th century, a new patriarchal intervention prevented women from performing in public, which I argue is directly related to the variation of *suriashi* that I use for this thesis. In 1629, women were banned from stage by the Tokugawa regime (Klens, 1995, Yamazaki, 2001). All female roles were replaced by male performers. One reason for the ban was that women who originally controlled Kabuki received a source of income and power that discomfited the rules of Japan's patriarchal society. The ban was reinforced with the motive to uphold public morality, since Kabuki attracted such large audiences and it was therefore difficult to control the mixing of social classes and genders (Klens, 1995, 13). I argue that the *suriashi* style created to impersonate women is a reminder of the continuous absence of women in Kabuki theatre, and as a result of the 1629-1868 ban (Klens, 1995, 13).

After the ban, only men could perform in public. Since all female roles were replaced by male dancers, it became necessary to authorize embodied gestures for males impersonating females on the Kabuki stage. During the period of the ban, women would continue to perform in shrines, and on smaller stages owned by wealthy families, and in private associations such as the matriarchal society administering the art of the *Maiko* and the *Geiko* (Geisha) (Downer, 2000). It was important for women to learn performative styles for rounding out etiquette, but they did not have access to main audiences. They were domesticated. Studying dance, tea ceremony and flower arrangement 'were considered a means of developing a woman's social graces' (Hahn, 2007, 26). This served as an example of what Beauvoir described as activities for 'becoming woman' in her revolutionary book *The Second Sex* (1949, 301). When *Nihon Buyō* entered the stage in the beginning of the 20th century, women could perform in public again (Yamazaki, 2001, ix). However, both in *Nō* and Kabuki theatre, then and now, male performers were made the norm on stage.

Suriashi, Daoism and sexual difference

I bring in Western philosophy to the discussion of male as norm and of the disagreement on sexual difference. In addition, historical Daoist notions of sexual difference supported Butler's statement that gender is constructed and performative. Lacan's linguistic and symbolic exclusion of women in language, which positioned her as something negative in

relation to the man; a non-man was criticized by feminist philosophers (Lacan quoted by Johansson Wilén and Sjöstedt, 2021, 13). However, the symbolic use of sexual difference in Japanese dance also resonated with sexual difference as proposed in Daoism. My teacher Nishikawa Senrei often used ‘be water’ as an instruction for practicing suriashi in the dance studio. ‘Be water’ historically came from the *Daodejing*, believed to be the earliest Daoist text. Here, water was used as a metaphor for submissiveness and nonassertiveness, which has historically been interpreted as the Daoist concept of the feminine (Lai, 2000, 1). As such, it has been pointed out as something in contrast to masculine notions of strength, achievement, and power. Philosopher Karyn Lai suggested instead that ‘the Daoist notion of complementarity of pairs of opposites provides interesting insights into how femininity (and masculinity) might be construed’ (2000,2).

Japanese female writers also address the same kind of subordinate symbolic arrangements in their work towards inclusion (Copeland, 2000, Kirino, 2013, Raichō, 2010 (1972)). For example, when the Japanese pioneering feminist Raichō Hiratsuka (1886-1971) created Japan’s first all-women literary magazine, *Seitō* (Bluestocking), the first issue began with the words ‘Original woman was truly the sun! A genuine person. Now woman is the moon. She lives by the strength of others, she shines by the light of others and her pale moon face is as wan as an invalid’s’ (Copeland and Ortobasi, 2006, 1). Raichō referred to the powerful Shinto Sun Goddess Amaterasu whose ‘female strength was sublimated to a patriarchal order, and woman was relegated to a second-class position, her talents forgotten’ (2006,1). Raichō was influenced by Swedish feminist writer Ellen Key (1849-1926) and translated Key’s work into Japanese. Both Raichō and Key meant that women had lost their spiritual independence, and therefore they initially asked for a spiritual revolution for women before they moved on with societal issues.

From a literary perspective, Raichō’s manifesto of woman as sun recalled the Heian era (794 – 1185), ‘when Murasaki Shikibu and her literary sisters flourished, and female genius dominated the literary world’ (2006,1). The Heian and Kamakura eras were also the time for prominent female performers. I strategically go back to these performers, especially to the cross dressers Shirabyōshi. It is my creative way to search for characters, performers, and historical purposes of suriashi where female shamans performed walks and choreographies for the benefit of society. The sonorous suriashi of Shirabyōshi performed in oversized male trousers showed how gender ambiguity has always been at stake when performing suriashi.

Sonorous suriashi, and the verb *kinuzure* disappeared when female performers were pushed out from the real world and instead entered fiction where Zeami and male Nō actors continued to mythologize them. Indeed, the fact that they dressed up like men showed their struggle towards inclusion. It also shows early (historical) non-binary performances of gender ambiguity. At Senreinokai, when studying the dance pieces of Shirabyōshi, students had to tie their obi differently; a half-knotted bow showed an ‘in-between gender’. The summer of 2011, studying a Shirabyōshi piece with Nishikawa Senrei, I walked into a kimono shop already dressed for class. The shop owner immediately rushed to correct my half-knotted bow and pull down the collar of the kimono, to dress me in the ‘feminine’ way. I explained I was a student of Japanese dance and studying the legendary piece on Shizuka Gozen. The shop owner apologized.

A dance class for becoming woman

In order to provide an embodied and visual example of how ‘becoming woman’ in suriashi labours, I share the excerpt of an auto-ethnographic process journal originally written in 2015, showing my physical struggles to ‘become woman’ in the studio:

I glance at their bodies [Nishikawa Senrei's other students], smaller and thinner than my own. I stare at their shoulders. Drawn back and down in the female construction? Broader, elbows lifted in the male construction? In between, neither male nor female, for the divine construction? There are three different gender opportunities—female, male and divine. Who am I? My own body reveals itself as a giant's body. How much should I squeeze the bones of my shoulders to make myself smaller/more 'feminine'? I am being molded into a body of ideas suitable for Nihon Buyō, where the feminine stereotype in particular is complex (Dahlstedt, 2018a, 48).

These practices of embodied gender performing in traditional Japanese dance and theatre can be considered in relation to Judith Butler's ground-breaking argument that ‘gender is a construction’ (Butler, 2007 (1990)). In Japanese dance, the portrayal of ‘Woman’ is done through and with the body, and through mimesis, which I show throughout the thesis. In the Japanese dance studio, women study both female and male dance pieces, and men study both female and male dance pieces. Ethnomusicologist Tomie Hahn explained that in Nihon Buyō, ‘each movement is prescribed, and the transmission process reflects the specificity of direction’ (2007, 112). Thus, there is no free improvisation that you find in postmodern

dance techniques, for example Contact Improvisation. Instead, ‘there is a clear idea of what constitutes a style’ and ‘it is very important that the body appear and behave in a certain way (Hahn, 2007, 112).

The cross-gender act is the norm and an important part of the training in Nihon Buyō. Performing the chosen ‘feminine’ suriashi for this thesis, the shoulders are pulled down and back, while the upper chest is pushed forward to portray and construct ‘woman’. This is hard physical work; however, this labour is not visible. The posture itself elucidated the unreasonable demands, usually placed on women, to perform the female gender identity. The portrayal of ‘Man’ follows a different logic through and with the body and is not nearly as painful. Thus, male Kabuki actors and dancers represent the feminine stereotype, however in Nishikawa Senrei’s studio, the feminine suriashi was the general practice. Importantly, this practice was not singled out as gendered; the feminine suriashi was instead made universal in her studio. The ‘feminine’ alignment was what I had most problems with both physically and artistically. I wanted to engage with the problem, hence I found it urgent to include discussions of gendered suriashi in this thesis. The following paragraph describes my journey towards these decisions.

In Nishikawa Senrei’s studio, the process journal above showed the general practice of suriashi, which was the ‘feminine’ suriashi. When I wrote the journal in 2015, I had started my PhD research, and thus began to ask questions on gender representation in suriashi. Gender was discussed only for the choreographies practiced after suriashi, for example the position of shoulders, elbows, legs and feet. You tie the obi differently according to which gendered character you are about to portray. Here is where I discovered the problem. Before 2013, I only appreciated the Japanese dances portraying male characters. In 2004, when Nishikawa Senrei picked the famous piece *Fuji Musume* (Wisteria Girl) for me to study, I had a difficult time with the gendered posture and gestures of this piece. This regarded also the content: performing shyness, being young and in love, the lowering of eyes, the swaying with the branch of flowers. Senrei sensei explained that it was a piece created by (male) Kabuki actors from an Otsu folk art picture of a young woman in love, carrying a branch of wisteria (Dahlstedt and Johansson, 2013). The Wisteria Maiden is the character in a painting, sometimes described as the very spirit of the wisteria. A traveller discovers her, and the Wisteria Maiden falls in love with the traveller and jumps out of the painting. However, her love is unanswered, and her spirit is broken. She then returns to the painting. It is a rather typical narrative for Japanese traditional plays, including travellers, storytellers,

characters, or ghosts, where suriashi is the step used for telling such stories. Even though I felt reluctant, I did not deny the studying of Wisteria girl, since I sensed there was something in the dance that Nishikawa Senrei thought was important for me to study. She was right. However, when I during the years 2004–2011 performed Japanese male and female pieces for my Western dancing peers and members of the Japanese Association in Gothenburg, the audience members explained that they also found the male pieces were more interesting. This fact gave yet a reason to the urgency of an exploration of ‘feminine’ gender in suriashi.

Here is a recording of Nishikawa Senrei and me practising *Fuji Musume* in 2011. This was before I had decided to explore the posture in relation to gender. For the video clip, I have picked out the part of the dance piece that includes suriashi:

[Video 1: 04:33](#) - 6:56

Obscuring maleness

I continue to discuss suriashi in relation to gender. Documentations of Japanese dance classes are rare, since cameras are kept out of the dance studio. Nishikawa Senrei supported my work outside of Japan and would organize extra classes for me to document to sponsor my dance practice when not in Japan. The example above was recorded in 2011 especially for my documentary film about Japanese dance (Dahlstedt and Johansson, 2013). Assessing my movements from the video excerpt above, I notice how I had not yet fully understood how to work with the exaggerated feminine posture. It was not until 2012, when I engaged with performance scholar Katherine Mezur’s explanations of the *Onnagata* body, that I could start to explore the gendered suriashi fully:

‘All the physical actions used to shape the intentional body, such as pressing the shoulder blades down and together, are onnagata gender acts’, and to ‘appear small and to create the postural line designated for onnagata gender roles, onnagata shape their standing postures by keeping their knees bent, turned inward, and pressed together’ (Mezur, 2005, 177).

This evidenced the importance of engaging with theoretical accounts also in strict dance practice. Mezur described a rather extreme stereotypical construction of the body to

understand the 'feminine' posture. Mezur also elucidated the more invisible physically challenging work: 'to keep the knees bent and pressed inward and together, the abdominal muscles must contract, which forces the solar plexus down. This creates a stable posture for kneeling and standing, and also restricts quick locomotion' (2005,177). The physical labour to make the body smaller also affected how the movements were composed from an internal contraction of muscles, never really unfolding fully in space because of the contraction. This was an example of the invisible physical work that I previously mentioned. The feminine dance roles were originally created to hide the male, and to so to speak, 'kill the body'. Mezur's research showed how several performers used the phrase *karada o korosu* (killing the body), about 'the painful physical reshaping and disciplined strength necessary for *Onnagata* gender performance (2005, 180). The performers explained that the reason they found it so difficult was because they are men. 'The "distance" between the onnagata intentional body and their own bodies, they say, requires enormous energy to even approach that ideal' (180). However, I as a female performer found it just as difficult.

Understanding that these basic gender acts were created for obscuring maleness, my resentment of 'feminine' pieces shifted into a new curiosity. In 2013, when returning to Nishikawa Senrei's studio in Kyōto, I specifically asked to study the very well-known piece *Kuro Kami* (Black Hair) in order to engage more with the (resented) feminine gender construction. I was able to ask Nishikawa Senrei's disciple Ota Emiko about the posture, and she confirmed that the exaggerated carriage was correctly performed. I share my journal from my studies of the piece:

When I agreed that it was a construction and an example of gender-play, my interpretation of Kuro Kami changed. My initial questions about this piece, which I had seen in performance since 2000, were: 'Why was Tatsuhime [the name of the character performing Kuro Kami] constantly looking down? Why does she not demand more of the world?' My new reflections were: 'If this is a gendered construction that anyone could choose, it could be used as a refusal to project physical energetic expressions on stage, stereotypically seen as male, and defend the right to look down in grief, no matter what gender you are. It could instead be appreciated as a resistance rather than ridicule. This is why I appreciated more when male students performed this piece, since with my Western eyes, the cross-gender act questioned the status quo of gender performed on stage. However, the problem remains. I still think this gendered technique of the feminine is

difficult to learn. Is it because I lack a resistance to the form? Can suriashi become a rebellious act to previous attempts to make women invisible? (Dahlstedt, 2013-2014)

Kuro Kami is a very popular piece both for *Onnagata* (performed by male performers) and *Geisha* (performed by female performers) crafted to show off the technical brilliance of 'becoming woman'. Their bodies are tools constructed from the gender act with which they excel in performing the feminine technique. This realization became my embarkation towards an investigative journey for understanding gendered suriashi.

The business of becoming woman

In this session, I engage with Beauvoir, the Nō playwright Zeami, and an interview with Japan's most famous Onnagata Bandō Tamasaburō V in order to draw a line between what theatrical postures reinforce compared with actual lived experiences. Encountering my own reluctance to perform 'woman' or a feminine stereotype put me right in the middle of contemporary feminism, which is in no way characterized by a uniform and fixed understanding of what gender is (Johansson Wilén and Sjöstedt, 2021, 9). Suriashi performed as a 'marche féminine', as feminine stereotype and as experimental pilgrimage brings forward the ambiguity and complexity of gender; both through theatrical postures (repeating the body alignment) and lived experiences (performing on streets). The question 'What is a woman?' was still relevant to ask. The gender scholar Johanna Sjöstedt writes that 'while the feminist movement has strived to make gender irrelevant', it seems that 'the differences and injustices between the sexes are what gives feminism and gender studies its raison d'être' (2021, 8-9). Earlier, Mary Wollstonecraft's publication in the middle of the French Revolution; *A vindication of the rights of women: with strictures on political and moral subjects* rejected the prevailing essentialist view that women were unable to assume the role of a political and responsible moral subjective. She demanded that women were given the possibility to become equal citizens of the emerging democracy, and we still work for the inclusion of female-identifying political- and business leaders (Wollstonecraft, 1793). Beauvoir made the statement: 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (de Beauvoir, 1949, 301). Her statement referred to living as a woman in the everyday world, not of consciously performing a theatricalised version of one. Beauvoir questioned the processes behind 'becoming woman' and showed how our notions of the essentialist concept 'feminine' limit and oppresses women. Here, I compare Beauvoir's statement with Nō playwright Zeami's 14th century instructions for acting on stage:

'First Truly Become the Thing You Are Performing; Then Find the Skill to Imitate Its Actions as Well. When performing a woman's role, the actor should slightly bend the hips, hold his hands high, sustain the whole body in a graceful manner, feel a softness in his whole manner of being, and use his physique in a pliant manner' (Zeami, 1984, 77)

Zeami's urging to truly become the 'Thing You are Performing' was related to the theatrical posture and the mind of the performer, however it resonated well with Beauvoir's early problematisation of what 'becoming woman' might consist of and showed how this reproduced gender inequalities. Both Zeami and Beauvoir confirmed that "woman," and by extension, any gender, is a historical situation rather than a natural fact' (de Beauvoir, 1949, 38). However, it is important to understand how Beauvoir's critique of acts forced upon women and Zeami's theatrical rules for becoming woman were shaped for different reasons and purposes. They both recognize the difference of biological sex and the performativity of gender. They both discuss the act of 'becoming woman' but disagree on what is considered a successful act. The women presented in Kabuki are idealized and romanticized, which should be analyzed in relation to the absence of female performers. Japan's most famous Onnagata Bandō Tamasaburō V explained in an interview that his own sense of romance was one reason he became an onnagata, and that he thinks of women as "wonderful things which are beyond our reach", but he has no intention of ever marrying one (Lohr, 1982, 16). Bandō Tamasaburō explained: "Most men would try to make their ideal woman into their wife. But I have made the ideal woman into my business" (Lohr, 1982, 16)

Compared to a Western theatrical context, there was indeed something subversive with the cross-gender acts in Japanese dance, particularly when men study and perform feminine pieces, which is part of the tradition, and not an act of parody. Women learning and studying male pieces was considered less subversive, and I have asked myself why. Nishikawa Senrei explained in an interview that her grandmother had quickly taken her to dance class, because as a child she 'was like a boy' (Tsurumi, 2003,19). The Japanese dance lesson should help her behave according to her biological sex. This explanation regarding certain appropriate gendered behaviours corresponds more to de Beauvoir's statement on 'becoming woman'. Nishikawa Senrei's grandmother believed the Japanese dance lesson would make her grandchild more feminine. In relation to the patriarchal interventions at stake in traditional Japanese (Nō and Kabuki) theatre, which historically pushed and banned

women from stage, I have struggled to process this absence of women through my choice of the 'feminine' suriashi for this thesis. Zeami's instructions for male actors to portray women and Tamasaburō's statement that he has made the ideal woman into his business showed that male performers in Japanese theatre historically have been praised for performing the female gender and could make this their profession. In order to be successful, both Zeami and Tamasaburō strived to perform the 'ideal woman', where the lineage from Nō to Kabuki became more stereotypical, and more choreographed. However, Beauvoir's statement that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' was not used as an action for success, quite the opposite. Instead, she showed how the female body was limited, shaped and set in motion in a patriarchal structure, where she became the subordinate, the Other. Butler further explained how Beauvoir, appropriating and reinterpreting the doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition, showed how gender is in no way a stable identity (Butler, 1988, 519). Gender as identity is constituted 'through a stylized repetition of acts', [], through 'bodily gestures, movements, and enactments' (1988, 519).

Beauvoir's statement 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' has gained new traction through Butler and through juxtaposing queer theories where 'femininity' and 'becoming woman' also includes cross-dressing, trans, non-heteronormativity, and anything at odds with 'the normal' (Danbolt, 2010a, Butler, 1993, De Lauretis, 1991). The feminist movement continue to arise from the category 'woman' as its landmark but asks new questions about who could be included in the category. Contemporary feminism is not about abolishing the difference between the sexes. Instead, it is a matter of 'counteracting a fixation of differences in hierarchical binary pairs based on an affirmation of differences' (Johansson Wilén and Sjöstedt, 2021, 13). This is how I have appropriated Beauvoir's statement, and where I proceed in this thesis. I perform 'the ideal' woman through my choice of suriashi, not as a gender-confirming act, but as a critical and creative response to Zeami and Tamasaburō above.

Before I move on, I offer a corporeal reminder where you can stand up and try the feminine gender construction used for this thesis:



Figure 11. Bandō Tamasaburō V, Japan's most well-known Onnagata (Shinoyama, 2008)

Stand up.
 Create an arch in your upper body, by squeezing the back of your shoulders.
 Maintain your elbows tightly pressed against the waist.
 Closely collect your knees and feet, active your inner thighs.
 Rest your palms on top of your thighs, hold your fingers together, pointing inwards.
 Tilt your pelvis backwards, squeeze the lumbar spine, and push your chest forwards and upwards.
 Notice how all muscles along the spine are activated.

As you may have experienced, the body posture above is used as a tool for male actors to look smaller as they pursue performing as women. To make oneself smaller to perform 'the ideal woman' demands a lot of muscular strength, but this is not something visible externally. The exaggerated posture revealed many gendered layers, originally crafted for men to portray women after females were banned from performing on stage (Yamazaki, 2001, ix). The posture aimed to hide the male and bring forward the female in a stereotyped, but not parodic, way.

Walking in suriashi with Bruno the Bad Boy

This section is used to elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces. It also replies what happens to space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi through, which had a more immediate effect on space in terms of audience reactions. The 'feminine' performed in suriashi originally represented an absence. Based on further investigations described above,

it was realized how and what the exaggerated feminine suriashi posture activated:

1. The banning of women from stage
2. The male gaze on 'woman'
3. Serving as method of 'obscuring maleness' for male actors.
4. Serving as method for female roles performed by both women and men in Nihon Buyō - schools.

Using 'drag' as a practice-led response to the discussion, I reappropriated the feminine posture of 'the ideal woman' together with the drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy. On Oct 10th, 2015, I invited him to walk in suriashi with me. We thus performed an experimental pilgrimage together in Kyōto. Judith Butler explained that 'drag is an example that is meant to establish that "reality" is when one cannot with surety read the body that one sees, is precisely the moment when one is no longer sure whether the body encountered is that of a man or a woman' (1999 (1990), xxiii). My aim with this particular pilgrimage was to process gendered stereotypes. In addition, the method for this section was inspired by what filmmaker and gender scholar Trinh T. Minh-ha called 'speak nearby' (Chen, 1992, 89). For her, 'speaking nearby' instead of 'talking about' was a technique for making visible the invisible and refuse to objectify what the camera captured (1992,89). For the Kyōto pilgrimage with Bruno-the Bad Boy Minh-ha's method 'speaking nearby' was expanded. Instead of asking Bruno-the Bad Boy to walk in drag alone, I walked also in drag with him. The processing of 'feminine' suriashi together became an experiment of 'walking nearby', inspired by Trinh T Minh-ha's speaking nearby (Chen, 1992, Schneider and Wright, 2020, Wood, 2001). It became an example of 'performative autoethnography that both unsettles the "I" and represents the Other with equal commitment' (Spry, 2016,2). The pilgrimage also addressed the oscillating between *Körper* - focusing on how to produce and perform a 'feminine' body, and *Leib* – focusing on the subjective experience of suriashi as gendered construction.

The African American performance artist Bruno the Bad Boy, based in Kyōto, appeared in my 2013 documentary film *The Dance of the Sun*. He compared himself with Onnagata and male actors impersonating females in early Shakespeare dramas, but he was neither an Onnagata nor a female impersonator (Dahlstedt and Johansson, 2013). He explained that he was a man celebrating women, which he thought was more similar to the Western style drag queen. Our suriashi walk took place at the yearly Saiin Kasuga Shrine Festival, which is a

large and popular Fall festival with traditional parades and performances held on the second weekend in October. It is a religious Shinto festival and therefore we decided not to walk near the shrine, as not to hijack the purpose of the festival. We moved in the marketplace outside the shrine area.



Figure 11. Bruno the Bad Boy and Ami at Saiin Kasuga Shrine Festival (Ishibashi, 2015)

Walking together with drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy in Kyōto provided evidence of what suriashi activated when leaving the studio or the theatre, and how suriashi engaged with gender and gendered spaces. As we began to walk through a rather crowded area, framed by market stalls and food stalls, we realized that our suriashi pilgrimage became quite an event for people. This was a surprise since I had - since my beginning of this thesis in 2014 - gotten used to walk alone in suriashi without notice, which I show further in Chapter Seven. At the festival, people made loud comments about us, laughed, came up close to take selfies, walked next to us to discuss who and what we were. We did not respond to the questions; we directed our gaze to the horizon and continued walking.

While relocating suriashi, we still performed it as a formal dance technique. Bruno the Bad Boy praised the instructions to perform the feminine suriashi, which helped him not to get

too distracted by the turmoil our presence created. For example, the directing of the eyes to the horizon, was what dance master Hanayagi Chiyo called 'kin no me' - 'the golden gaze' (Hanayagi, 2008, 92). The 'golden gaze' enabled him to have his own protected space. For our reflections afterwards, Bruno and I were both still in drag to remain in the experience the suriashi pilgrimage had given us. Here I provide an auto-ethnographic journal, based on our experience of the suriashi pilgrimage, directly following the walk:

Bruno the Bad Boy explained his inner voice during the pilgrimage: 'I am going over the mountains. There are many things along the way, but I am focusing on the horizon and that is where I am going'. We both noticed how a boy wearing a Pikachu mask walked with us almost the whole time, trying to follow the suriashi technique. The festival has many parades, where people walk, run, and wave portable shrines wildly from side to side to amuse the gods. I experienced how Bruno the Bad Boy and I were able to create a firm rhythm in an unruly and exuberant space as if we had created our own parade, however not announced. Those other high-spirited festival rhythms fed our slow parade and made it distinct and noticeable. I felt empowered and positive after our performance. I also felt a bit sad when people laughed and screamed at us, reflecting the fact that whoever differs from the norm will be ridiculed at some point.

I told Bruno the Bad Boy that it was the first time for this thesis that I walked in suriashi in public space wearing full costume. Bruno the Bad Boy laughed and asked: 'Which costume? No one is wearing a costume here!' He explained that for him, drag is itself the costume. Not only the glamorous female drag but also the distinguished gentleman drag, the Doctor drag, the English teacher drag. Drag works like a façade that we put on to fit into our role for the day. Bruno the Bad Boy thought that our façade worked well with the suriashi walking since we were able to address what gender, or any kind of social construct, is. He meant that 'When you receive that façade, when you receive that role - you decide to follow it. Even if we were breaking with something, we were also following something, only put in a new context. We did not put up a drag queen show. We moved slowly enough and passively enough so that people were invited to observe'. Bruno the Bad Boy heard many people asking Why? What is happening? However, we were just walking, which was our reply. Bruno continued: 'And it was almost to say OK, you asked a question - now you can answer it as well'.

Bruno the Bad Boy explained that even though I had not provided a goal on what to achieve through suriashi, our conversation on gender role models was there as an underlying theme. He shared his reflections on the 'seen' and 'unseen'. He meant that when people see something different there is always the idea of looking, even though we are taught that we should not stare. Bruno the Bad Boy believed our suriashi walk in drag gave people the permission to look. Since we were moving very slowly, we allowed people to acknowledge the uniqueness or the difference. At the same time, people admired our presence. Bruno the Bad Boy explained: 'I heard how people said Sugoi! Sugoi! (wow!), which is not a positive or negative, it means "This is beyond the norm!" And life is more interesting when you experience "beyond norm". Especially when it's non-threatening. They looked at our feet and understood we were doing suriashi, which probably not would have been noticed in Europe or United States'. Bruno the Bad Boy thought that our suriashi act was something extraordinary, simply because it was not extraordinary., we both felt that we managed to create a space-in-between where we could process each other's views and prejudices. Ending the interview, Bruno asked: "Is this your normal academic drag? Do your professors dress like this?" I replied that I do defend the right to lecture wearing fake eyelashes in an academic context. Bruno advised: "I think you must say that the panel must wear fake eyelashes. Then they must be barefoot, they must expose body hair – and from there we have started." (Bruno the Bad Boy, 2015)

I pondered: Our slow moving through space as performers with a huge audience made me think of the history of the performer, the role of the performer. This is how you had to perform without a stage. Right there in the crowd. Trying to find something that would attract people's attention. To call for laughter and to accept to be laughed at, to question what society believes in, to question what you do in a festival and what you don't do in a festival, how you dress, how you don't dress, how you buy things... Suriashi provided something different; MA even.

Our suriashi walk was a constructionist strategy, where suriashi is not natural walking, but artificial walking. By choosing the artificial, we manifested the performing arts' love of the fabricated and the esoteric. We proposed to move artificially and slowly for everything that is considered strange and against anything that goes too fast, celebrating what was considered exaggerated and deviating. (Dahlstedt, 2014-2019)

Our suriashi walk at Kasuga Saiin Shrine Festival lasted for sixty minutes, which was documented and witnessed by Bruno the Bad Boy's friends Takewaka Mori and Ishibashi Kenjiro. Since the documentation included a lot of footage of the audience interacting closely with us, I have edited it out for ethical purposes. I have kept the part where Bruno and I are in focus. Watch the documentation here, and compare it with my solitary suriashi that follows right after:

Suriashi at Saiin Kasuga Shrine Festival, October 15th, 2015

If possible, watch from within the 'feminine' gendered position

[Video 2: 1:34:03](#) (- 1:35:53)

Please continue directly to the next pilgrimage

Run the video documentation until 1:37:15

Compare the suriashi with Bruno the Bad Boy
with my solitary suriashi following right after.

The pilgrimage at Kitano Tenmangu Shrine Flea Market (Oct 25th) runs until 1:37:15

I proposed to watch two examples of suriashi pilgrimages above: The first one shows the suriashi pilgrimage at Saiin Kasuga Shrine Festival with Bruno the Bad Boy, the second shows me performing alone in a very similar crowded surrounding, at the Kitano Tenmangu Shrine Flea Market, but nobody took notice of my solitary presence in that space. These two examples showed something important regarding suriashi, gender and gendered spaces. I use the auto-ethnographic perspective to first zoom in what happened to the one walking in suriashi, that is the performer/s, before I continue to explore our pilgrimage in terms of gender, drag and space.

Performing suriashi with drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy, showed that it was possible to parade gender as a drag show in this slowly and silent manner, while refraining from parody. The agreed 'feminine' posture with shoulders withdrawn at first gave us an embodied form to follow. The focus this physical effort created helped us proceed without having to reply to people's questions or comments. However, even though we both directed our eyes to the horizon, we managed to hear and sense rather intensely what was happening around us. This

showed how the embodied logic of *suriashi* supported a different engagement with space than just the visual register. However, when we analysed the video afterwards, we considered how much *suriashi* affected the space around us. *Suriashi* in this case did not work as a tool for 'fictive invisibility'; our gendered walking received attention and created a stir. Still, we both felt that we managed to create a space-in-between where people could process their own expectations and prejudices. I also considered the fact that our feminine *suriashi* on the streets showed that we paraded like constructed women - in comparison with how women historically have walked like constructed men to escape the male gaze (Lichfield, 2013, Wolff, 1985,41) .

Above, Butler explained that 'drag is an example that is meant to establish that "reality" is when one cannot with surety read the body that one sees, is precisely the moment when one is no longer sure whether the body encountered is that of a man or a woman' (1999, xxiii). This fact provoked people around us. Since our gendered *suriashi* parade was understood as non-violent, Bruno the Bad Boy pointed to the fact that people's reactions were positive, as if they were exclaiming: 'This is beyond the norm! And life is more interesting when you experience "beyond norm". Especially when it is non-threatening'. Bruno the Bad Boy also acknowledged how people looked at our feet and understood that we were doing *suriashi*, which probably not would have been noticed in Europe or United States. In addition, I heard positive comments on how I wore my golden *obi*, outside my black shirt and pants. Dance practitioners might have noticed that I was holding a dance fan.

We acknowledged how the audiences reacted to our presence and that many people still interpreted our performance as parody. It was however important to declare the initial intention of our performance, where we kept practicing the idea of parading gender without parody. This provided a silent space where we did not initially invoke laughter and ridicule. However, 'the performative space' that Bruno-the Bad Boy and me were able to create around us was based on our own long experiences from dancing and performing on stage, where we have become experts of ignoring audiences even if we share the same space. This *suriashi* pilgrimage thus added an extra focal point for us as performers, where we could reach a contemplative state by seeking help from our invisible ancestors. We could imagine other presences inside our own presence. I want to make clear that I do not expect anyone to perform the same drag performance as ours above without experience or practice, since I cannot guarantee that *suriashi* performed in urban spaces can offer a secure space for anyone at any time. In relation to my own solitary *suriashi*, ten days after I practiced with Bruno the

Bad Boy, I regained my safe spaceship as I walked alone in suriashi at Kitano Tenmangu Shrine Flea Market without being noticed. Since I was able to compare both pilgrimages with regards to my own position as performer, I consider how this thesis and the experimental suriashi pilgrimages were able to also problematize the position that the female performer has taken on - often taken for granted - where it seems that she welcomes any gaze to scrutinize and judge her. This position made her vulnerable, even more so if her performance did not correspond to stereotypical expectations of beauty, and the dance field's repeatedly obsession of youth and athleticism.

Chapter Six:

Space

This chapter engages with sociologist Doreen Massey's research on space, then further engages with the artists Gun Lund and Lars Persson and their work with space and dance and ending with Japanese concepts of space. Lund was one of the founding members of Gothenburg-based Rubicon, a dance ensemble I continuously engage with for this thesis. In order to contextualise my research in relation to new theories on space, and how my thesis could contribute to this discussion, I give a very brief overview of how the view of space has changed through time, which also affected artistic practices. For example, bodies in space, bodies moving and falling respond to physical laws. Lund argued that 'dancing bodies creates rhythm, vibrations in the space' and 'the body itself creates a space, the dancer is the one who establishes a direction in space', where audiences can experience the 'fields of tension between the dancers, between their different movements and between their placement in the room' (Lund 1997, quoted by Hopsch, 2013, 11) By listing various physicists, one after the other, I received a quick overview, both how our movement change in actual relation to space, but also in relation to which space theory/theorist was prevalent in certain times. The result is very human-centered; the named physicists /philosophers represent power and prestige, their names constantly referred to in history. In the 17th century, physicists were considered the only ones who could provide evidence of space, however this has changed since claims about the universe were also philosophical (Stenger et al., 2015). After the historical overview, I consider Massey's spatial thinking and how dance practice and suriashi can be placed according to these theories.

Isaac Newton (1642-1727) would engage with an experimental mix of practices, combining mathematics, natural science, theology and alchemy. Newton's statement of space was 'a self-subsistent reality, a container in which all objects are placed' (Ben-Zvi, 2005, 14). 'A boundless uniform sensorium, in which God, because of his ability to be in all places is able to do His will and to move the bodies within it. However, in the dance studio, his theories of universal gravitation, where 'every object in the universe is pulled to every other object with an attractive force' were accessible at least for an embodied understanding (Todisco, 2016,1). In Newton's 'Philosophical Writings' he argued that 'Absolute space, of its own nature without reference to anything external, always remains homogenous and immovable' (Janiak, 2004, 84). Newton presented his view where space and time were infinite, as a manifestation of divine presence and existence. He thus described space as independent of time, and without the possibility to act. Newton's theory could not be proved or disproved, one had to believe in it. When society grew more secular, physicists like Einstein (1879-1955) presented a different definition of space and time – and thus a new interpretation of how spaces can be defined in his theory of relativity (Einstein and Minkowski, 1920).

Lund and Persson created their own dance ensemble 'E=mc²', where I was employed from 1995-1998. This thesis enabled further reflections of their work, which I had danced but never discussed. It thus supported new images and engagement with these physicists/philosophers. Lund and Persson interpreted Newtonian space to be static and confirmed through dance practices like ballet. Newton's Universe was fixed and complete. They compared it with the *The Sun King*, classic ballet and Bach, aesthetics that paint and ornament, but within the walls, where the sky is the limitation (Lund, 2017). However, they found that Einstein's theory enabled a more experimental view of space and time. They began to work with relative time and the concept Space-Time. They wanted to wipe out the experience of time for the audience. Lund explained: 'We started to work with the unified Space-Time, black hole, the relative time, the extent of the universe, and how all this matters to how we actually live. Generally, you could say that Einstein's universe is mirrored by contemporary dance, there are no limitations, it is open to a seemingly infinite (albeit limited) universe, and relative' (2017). Persson continued: 'What really struck me after having struggled a long time with physics, was what the dancers expressed with a sense of self-esteem: Space and time are one – we know it, it is obvious, we know it in our bodies! To stretch space, to stretch time and to shape them together is the art of the dancer. These questions are and have been central to our work and became the name of our entire artistic practice/enterprise' (2017).

I could not reply with the same self-esteem that I felt the unification of space and time when practicing suriashi. However, I did experience that space grew bigger, and time disappeared when practicing for a long time. This discussion of space opened up for further interpretations and questioning my own unconscious anticipation of space. Newton's view was later rejected by Leibniz (1646-1716) who conceived space 'as relative, something that depicts relations between objects' (Deleuze, 1988, 29). According to Leibniz, space denoted 'an order of things which exist at the same time, considered as existing together' (Jolley, 1994, 303). In Leibniz' non-secular view, there was no meaning in how God would place bodies in space in a particular way, and not otherwise (1994, 303). Leibniz meant that space would not exist were there not bodies. Kant (1724-1804) in his turn formulated his own view on space both against Newton's notion of space as being "God's sensorium", and against Leibniz' relational space (Ben-Zvi, 2005, 14). Kant did not think that space was an empirical concept, thus we could never have any knowledge of how things are in themselves. On his side, Kant argued that space was something that we construct in our minds. Space did not exist in itself, it was a form of our own intuition (Ben-Zvi, 2005, 14). He stated that human beings cannot imagine empirical reality except in the forms of space and time that are based solely on reason, regardless of experience, for example geometrical shapes: A triangle is a triangle. It was a triangle from the start, and it will remain a triangle. It can be proved to be true, without any sensory experience. Thus, like Descartes, Kant separated thinking and being in his aim for rationality. Kant's dictum [The 'I think' must be able to accompany all my representations] created yet a dichotomy between body and mind, which have been criticized by phenomenologists (Kant, quoted in Brinkmann, 2016, 1).

This was where Massey's arguments of space became relevant. Massey meant that it is in Kant's statements of space - where space represented the static 'out-there' dimension - that resulted in a dualism where space was the subordinate term, and where time was the parent term. According to Massey, this is where the imagined counter position/separation between time and space was found, which has had social and political effects (2011, 35). Instead, Massey's goal was to draw out the lines for an alternative imagination of space for contemporary times, and to think about space differently. Historically, there has been too much focus where time equalled dynamism and change, and space was seen as a dateless surface - without time and without dynamism - merely a dead area to traverse (2005, 13). Massey wanted us to rethink the assumption that space is something we simply pass through. Space was not passive, it is alive, and it held innumerable stories of buildings,

houses, of living beings, of active people involved in doing, becoming, as well as thinking. Massey believed that an analysis of spatial relations between people, cities, institutions, and work was key to understanding of politics and power. She rejected dominant conceptualisations of space as the negative opposite of time (2005, 17). She argued that if time was conceived as the dimension in which things happen one after the other – ‘the dimension of succession’ – then space was the dimension of things existing at the same time, a cut across of all those dimensions. Massey proposed that we consider space as the dimension of multiplicity (2013). She problematised the assumption that if history is about time and how things change, then geography is about space and how things are arranged geographically. If time was ethereal, intangible, and without materiality, then space was material – the landscape ‘out-there’ (Massey, 2013). Instead, space was rather an imagination of something we think is obvious, and therefore we were not fully conscious of what we mean by space. Massey argued that space is not just outer space, atomic space, but the space called society, in which we live (2005, 17). I propose that suriashi can help create consciousness about space, as the practice showed that space was neither obvious nor predictable and where the slow movements through space made other contexts visible.

Building on my own experiences and perspectives on time and space in dance and examining the contributions of Massey to the concepts of time and space, I establish a grounded framework from which to explore suriashi practice, in time and space. I examine how Massey’s theories could be used as a lens when analysing my own experimental pilgrimage in suriashi within this thesis and as it relates to dance practices in general. Dance spaces were imbued with temporality and power and were socially constructed just like any space. I have inherited an imagination of space from assumptions about the dance space, and about the way space has been practised traditionally in schools, studios and on stages. Space was structured with values and meanings, where in some dances high (heaven) is more valued than low (the floor), and where moving forward is more valued – or at least more common – than moving backwards. Dance was not separated from space. Dance and movement were active forces in space making. We look at space differently related to how we practise it, and where and why we practise it. Space in a choreography might not be driven by ‘the spatial’ only, and impulses for movement might not be picked from inner motives, but from space itself. My experimental pilgrimages discussed below provide examples of how some spaces seemed to call for suriashi, and even call suriashi for help with certain issues. Massey expressed how simple movements in space can have tremendous effect on people sharing a room at the same time. The characteristics of relations which constitute space most

important for Massey was that of power - power of many kinds - where some spaces were differentially located within the wider 'power-geometries'. She coined 'power-geometries' to show how spatiality and mobility were both shaped by and reproduce power differentials in society (2005, 102). In the dance field, this included the control over education, funding, and evaluation.

Spaces for dance and walking

The choreographer Liz Lerman and her multi-generational ensemble Dance Exchange asked four questions: Who gets to dance? Where is it happening? What is it about? Why does it matter? (Lerman 2014,xviii). These questions pointed to issues activated in dance practice regarding space and power. Massey's research on space made me consider not only the suriashi pilgrimages, but also the walks occurring daily between institutional, educational and independent spaces for dance. These walks also created meaning where embodied archives became alive. When performed within cities, the walking from where I stayed to the spaces I decided to examine through suriashi became their own kind of pilgrimages. These were the overlooked walks we take without thinking how important they are. These walks were constantly reinforced by students following teachers with their dance techniques and possible worldviews. My experimental pilgrimages, and all the in-between walks I made to plan them, became new representations of former dance classes, collective- and self-identities, and yet new embodied archives. Four cities were dominant in this thesis: Paris, London, New York City and Kyōto. Some of these cities were present in this thesis because I have travelled there to study contemporary dance, and I now revisited them to introduce and process suriashi.

Many of the European cities have been important for walking writers as well as for dance training (Baudelaire, 1982, Benjamin, 2005, Sand, 1991, Woolf, 2015 (1929)). The way these cities were walked, visited and reconfirmed also belong in a discussion about 'power-geometries'. Contemporary writers continue to follow previous writers' footsteps, with a constant flow of new books written as a result, confirming the importance of these cities (Elkin, 2016a, Hallberg, 1993, Larsson, 2014). Contemporary dancers continue to follow their teacher's footsteps. The British author Lesley Downer has instead looked outside Europe, and followed the footsteps of the poet Bashō, and his long 1689 journey to northern Japan (Downer, 1989). I too have looked outside Europe, which confirmed contemporary choreographers' nomadic lifestyles in search for work and training. Drawing on Massey's

theories of space, Kyōto has been situated outside Western power-geometries, however part of Kyōto's dance culture has through the many waves of 'japonisme' been important for producing the self-images for both Paris and London. Japonisme is a French term, coined by the art critic Philippe Burty in 1872, to describe 19th-century European artists' interest in Japanese art, culture, and aesthetics (Clarke, 2010). Suriashi as experimental pilgrimage in urban and other spaces was also practiced outside the well-known Western cities for dance and walking, for example Swedish Sápmi, rural Latvia, Wales and smaller villages in southern Sweden. This thesis thus enabled research and work outside the wider power-geometries.

Suriashi, space and inspiration

This section is related to 'inner space' and more precisely to the concept of spiritual engagement in suriashi, compared with other dance practices. Throughout this thesis, I aim to translate the different functions of 'inner space', such as focus and how you might concentrate when you practice dance or suriashi. Inner space for this thesis also meant ancestral engagement, concept of legacy and inspiration. 'Inspiration' means 'The action, or an act, of breathing in or inhaling; the drawing in of the breath into the lungs in respiration' (OED Online, 2020). But 'inspiration' also has a theological meaning: 'special immediate action or influence of the Spirit of God (or of some divinity or supernatural being) upon the human mind or soul; said esp. of that divine influence under which the books of Scripture are held to have been written' (OED Online, 2020). The spiritual engagement in suriashi was thus similar to the meaning of 'inspiration', considered to be a divine influence or a conversation with the past. 'Inspiration' was easier to grasp than the actual embodiment (possession) of spirits in an artistic context. Since the breathing was important for the practice in suriashi, 'inspiration' also worked as a translation related to breath.

Suriashi originally functioned as an introduction to embody the narrative of a dance or a play. Walking in suriashi demanded aesthetic perfection and a certain poetic power for the narrative to come through. The gliding movement implemented by the performer on the bridgeway allowed for the audience to imagine they walk alongside with the dancer/actor. Nishikawa Senrei rarely talked about 'the divine', she always referred to ancestors, spirits or 'the spiritual' (Dahlstedt and Johansson, 2013). According to her, the meaning of the dancer slowly entering to the Nō stage on the bridgeway, *hashigakari*, symbolized the transformation from spirit to human (Nishikawa, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2011). However, in

this thesis I am challenging what ‘aesthetic perfection’ represented. Supported by Nishikawa Senrei’s request for ancestral engagement and spiritual embodiment, more emphasis was put on how and what suriashi activated in spaces rather than aesthetic perfection.



Figure 12 The kanji for MA

MA-negative spacetime 間

There was yet a common Japanese concept that explained spirituality, nothingness, and the making of space for ‘the invisible’, such as ancestors. The concept was called MA. Similar to the word ‘inspiration’, MA had a religious origin. Sellers-Young described MA as ‘the silence from which the harmonious flow of the universe is derived’ (Sellers-Young, 1993, 90).

However, aspects of “negative” space and time‘ are not believed to be empty but are considered to be expansive and full of energy’ (Hahn, 2007, 53). MA was filled with nothing but energy. Nishikawa Senrei explained how each step in suriashi exists as its own. There was only one step at a time and between each step there was MA (Senrei 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2011). You do not count the steps one-two-three-four, you only count one-one-one-one. This created an economical way of moving where energy was taken care of and the breaks equally so. Using sound as metaphor, MA was the silence between each sound/rhythm, a pause in time, an interval or emptiness in space. In *Nihon Buyō*, the concept of MA was embodied ‘in a series of poses within a dance’ (Hahn, 2007, 53). Some pieces, such as *Fuji Musume*, actually involved ‘striking a pose’, where the performer represented a character coming to life jumping out of the painting -- a less obscure explanation of MA (Dahlstedt and Johansson, 2013).

Architect and researcher Kristina Fridh explained that MA was originally a way to distinguish the space where the god/desses could descend (Fridh, 2001). To call for the god/desses, a space was fenced with four poles and a holy rope around, which is often seen in Shinto shrines (e.g. Saiin Kasuga Shrine mentioned in this thesis). This was a practical way to declare a spot divine (Fridh, 2001, 35). MA occurred in the expectant stillness of the moment when such a change took place: just before the divine spirits entered the space. In order to make space for the god/desses, one needed the empty MA (Komparu Kunio, quoted by Fridh, 2001, 25). In that sense, MA was both time and space. Fridh stated that an architect used MA to represent space, and a musician used MA to represent time (Fridh, 2001, 25) I argue that MA supports an openness to the moment, a way to not weed out, and not censor what is actually happening in the moment. It enabled a response based on the embodied experience of what was happening in the time period, and in space. While practising, you set your mind to explore the inner geography of the body.

Hashigakari – bridgeway – an in-between space

Suriashi co-created space through movement. This brought out questions on where exactly the the main acting area of the stage was situated. The practice itself opened for a relocation of the main acting area. Barba explained above suriashi's effect on space, describing how Nō performers keep the energy in their bodies as they proceed in suriashi (1991,88). The energy was not expended out in space when walking slowly. Inner space travelled with the performer when her act was relocated. This fact had importance for when I relocated suriashi out of the dance studio and theatrical spaces. I therefore explain the original theatrical space, which was constantly reinforced through suriashi - the *hashigakari* (Brazell, 1998). This space was where characters, spirits and travellers slowly proceeded in suriashi to enter a narrative or play.

The *hashigakari* - bridgeway - is the wooden bridge where most entrances and exits are pursued at the Nō theatre. It leads from the left side up to the stage, lined with three small artificial pine trees. This is nowadays an indoor space, however there are many outdoor Nō theatre stages, all confirmed by these small pine trees and a big pine tree painted on the wall behind the main stage. The hashigakari represented the connection between the stage and the spiritual world, between the human and the *kami* /god/desses (Leiter, 2006, 9). Hashigakari showed MA as a spatial concept. It was suriashi - performed on hashigakari - that created the embodied connection between the stage and the spiritual world. The

hashigakari/bridgeway was around eight meters, and it took the performer from ten to fifteen minutes to walk to the stage. With the performer's initial transformation from god/spirit into human being, from transparent to visible, the audience had plenty of time to experience and reflect on which character might proceed the stage in suriashi. The audience could follow the transformational moment.

Scholar Michael Lazarin explained how 'Japanese architecture emphasized transitional spaces between rooms rather than the rooms themselves' (Lazarin, 2014, 133). The hashigakari was such a transitional space between the green room and the stage. It was a bridgeway where nonhumans, spirits, and ghosts perform transformation and transcend linear time in suriashi. It represented an in-between-space (MA) for spirits and travellers, recognisable and considered during the performance. I experienced how this in-between space was reactivated also when walking elsewhere. The first experience of this reactivation was the practice of suriashi to Nishikawa Senrei's recorded voice in the corridor outside Senreinokai's studio. We practiced with our deceased master in a space-in-between, a corridor connecting the dressing room with the bigger studio, and with the stairs leading down to the hall and to Nishikawa Senrei's home. A 'moment of transcendence becomes possible not only in terms of consciousness but also in terms of the living body' (Lazarin, 2014, 138). Throughout this thesis, I show how further transitional spaces appeared when suriashi was relocated to urban and other spaces. Through video and corporeal reminders, I allow the possibility of transitional spaces to occur between myself and my reader, thus creating a space in the shape of hashigakari and of MA, where the embodied experience transcended words.

Through my relocated suriashi practice I experienced how imagined and embodied bridgeways were helpful when practising in chaotic spaces. Nishikawa's request of ancestral engagement engendered personal narratives as my walk continued on imagined and real bridgeways throughout this thesis. The original hashigakari of the Nō theatre is designed 'to give one the experience of the span being stretched out so as to blur the discrete boundaries into a sensation of continuity' (Lazarin, 2014, 138). Moving in suriashi supported a sense of continuity and constant rhythm through busy spaces. There was an even stronger connection to the hashigakari when practising suriashi on urban and historical bridges, because of their symbolic similarity. Hashigakari as well as bridges were often narrower than for example the square, which asked for conscious, attentive movements. The space of hashigakari was recreated through the body-mind work in suriashi when I walked

on actual bridges, for example the London Bridge with the musician Ignacio Jarquin (as described and shown in Chapter Seven), the drawbridge at Raglan Castle shown below (see figure 13), the Great Wall in China, and the Nunobashi bridge in Tateyama. The last case from Tateyama represented an ancestral walk with my deceased great grandmother and a re-enactment of her emigration to New York City - a concrete example of how the space of hashigakari could bridge spaces together and merge past narratives with present ones.

Hashigakari, urban and historical bridges blurred the gap over rivers, between houses, connecting one place with another. They were built to provide passage between physical and mental obstacles. They bound streets together, allowed pedestrians walk over rivers or even transported ghosts. They served as transitional spaces where creatures could enter and depart. In Japan, there were highly rounded arched bridges built for pedestrians that requires slow movement for reflection and embodied engagement. The drawbridge of Raglan Castle was constructed to be raised up so as to permit or hinder passage if the castle was attacked. This provided an example for how spaces transform through movement, wherein I Paris discovered how suriashi performed in the subway functioned as a personal drawbridge from the immediate surroundings, and enabled the imagination of walking with deceased ancestors.

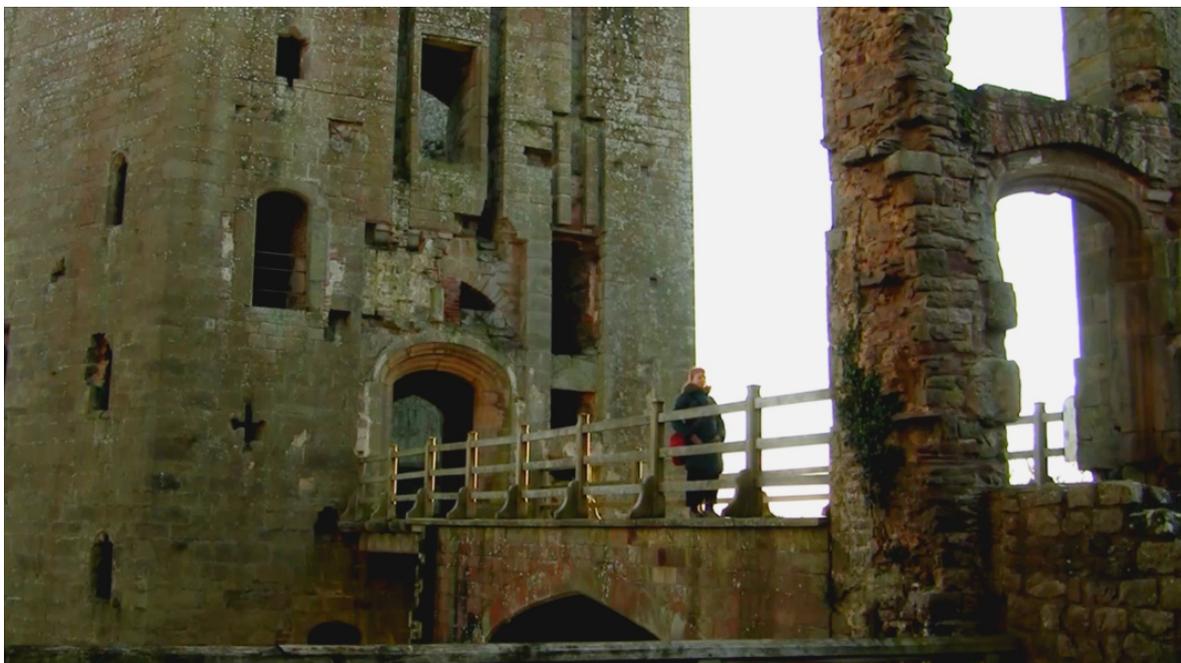


Figure 13. I perform suriashi on the drawbridge at Raglan Castle, Wales (Dahlstedt, 2015b)

When suriashi left the studio and travelled elsewhere, the original studio space and the

theatrical bridgeway, *hashigakari*, were constantly activated through suriashi even though I practised elsewhere. This showed suriashi's effect on space and how spirituality and embodiment collaborated. In the next Chapter, I invite you to experience experimental pilgrimages in spaces chosen for this thesis.

Chapter Seven:

Experimental pilgrimages through spaces

In this chapter, I have gathered the suriashi experiments for this thesis. It is a collection of suriashi pilgrimages in mostly urban, but also rural spaces. This is the part where I walk out in suriashi, alone and with others, into rural, urban and other spaces. The collection contributes to discussions of space, gender, legacy and the artists' role in society. I investigate the implications of suriashi in international locations, which I call experimental pilgrimages. Pilgrimages have represented spiritual journeys to unknown or foreign places for finding new meanings about one's self or a higher good, however today pilgrimages might instead engage with notions of 'sacred' and 'secular' (Cheung, 2018b, Okamoto, 2019, Reader and Walter, 2016, Sumption, 2011, Turner and Turner, 2011). Japanese folklore scholar and travelogue Yanagita Kunio (1875– 1962), author of the book *About Our Ancestors: the Japanese Family System*, explained that 'Travelling is a way for us to reconnect the past with the present, as an old idiom suggests that travelling ten thousand miles is better than reading ten thousand books' (Yanagita, quoted by Cheung, 2018b, 143). For this thesis, my 'feminine' suriashi urban walking often connected with walkers and dancers in the past. Thus, my pilgrimages became a tool for engaging legacy through space and time. I use pilgrimage with its expanded meaning as a frame for my thesis, since it supports phenomenological perspectives, such as lived and artistic experiences.

Suriashi travelled and followed the typical wandering life of an independent performer/academic without a fixed affiliation. Suriashi travelled to conferences, festivals

and residencies. Each pilgrimage became a kind of immaterial writing for that space through my own and participants' bodies. Mine and other people's movements co-existed with, confirmed and memorated space for a while. I agreed what Massey stated; I experienced and embodied spaces 'not as points or areas on maps, but as integrations of space and time; as spatio-temporal events' (Massey, 2005, 130). After a pilgrimage was finished, our slow movements remained like invisible ink in spaces and lingered in our bodies. The pilgrimages were also geographically specific, except for the last pilgrimages in Chapter Nine, which instead visit heterotopic spaces holding opaque geographical markers. Suriashi built new relations with well-known and unknown spaces, for example Paris – the capital for Western flânerie, Judson Church in NYC – a sacred space for postmodern dance. Active and bustling spaces were investigated, such as Grand Central Terminal and London Bridge. Judson Church, Musée Guimet and later Ricklundgården were silent exceptions, but instigated important archival issues related to suriashi as a dance practice of Japanese origin and the activation of known or unknown legacy. The suriashi walks set up with my previous teachers and mentors in New York City processed professional and ancestral lineage. This exploration contributes to the examination of how we move our bodies in space, not only in dance education, but also as humans in our everyday lives. I use my own experiences with suriashi performed as an activation of societal issues rather than limiting the practice to professional performer training. I ask how suriashi can add to discussions about gender, democracy, and space. Further, related to the auto-ethnographic perspective, I engage specifically with the female walker, and the interpretation of her presence in urban space and social life.

I begin by indicating the connection between walking, pilgrimage and Japanese medieval performers to show that pilgrimage is a global phenomenon, which can be found across cultures.

The English word "pilgrimage" derives, via the French pèlerinage, from the Latin terms peregrinus, "foreign," and per ager, "going through the fields. (Reader, 2015)

Ian Reader, scholar of Japanese and Religious studies, has written extensively on pilgrimages and their meanings (Reader, 2015). Originally, pilgrimage represented a religious journey, where sacred places were visited on foot. However, the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō expanded on the purpose of pilgrimages, claiming they were not for a specific religious purpose, 'but an experience to understand art' (Watsuji, quoted by

Cheung, 2018b, 141). By art, he meant anything appealing to the senses, because when one sharpens one's senses one strengthens one's power of observation. He called himself a pilgrim of art and not of Buddha (141). Watsuji argued that 'Inner reflections must be clear before they are made into linguistic expressions' (141). I relate Watsuji's argument with walking writers, who walked to be able to write, and with my own relocated walking to be able to make arguments about suriashi. A new application of pilgrimage has become more political. At the International Japanese Philosophy Association symposium at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy [WCP] Conference in Beijing, scholar Ching-Yuen Cheung shared insights from organising a conference in Ishinomaki, a city which saw the most damage after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami (Cheung, 2018a). The experience of a wasteland of ruins, washed away buildings made him claim that travelling to Ishinomaki was also a pilgrimage. He meant that before making any speculation about disaster, it was important to visit the actual areas devastated by the disaster to have an embodied understanding of the area (2018b, 136). He stated that a pilgrimage could be performed close to your home, which left fewer ecological footprints; engaging more with everyday practice and social work (Cheung, 2018a). My own experiments also contributed to new notions of what might be called a pilgrimage.

My question on suriashi as gendered walking and wandering raised the question who was allowed to walk where, and how? But also, who is allowed to *remain* where and how? I have previously addressed how choosing slowness for my thesis differed from my own earlier dance practices. There has been a struggle to grasp what stillness on one hand and itinerant lifestyle on the other have represented and continued to represent. In my suriashi pilgrimages, I was able to combine slowness and movement, which meant I proceeded slowly, but indeed conducted a lifestyle on the move. I therefore asked scholars engaging with gendered walking and women walking to find what has been discussed through times (Kawashima 2016, Meeks 2011, Meskimmon, 1997, Parsons, 2000, Pollock, 1988). For example, for dance professionals an itinerant lifestyle has become a structural necessity. They are forced to be mobile if they want to find work, and - in the sparsely populated North [the Nordic countries] - if they want to find an audience as well (Vedel and Hoppu, 2016, 14). However, an itinerant lifestyle often has been subject to prejudices and critique. People, particularly women, on the move were viewed as suspect. Travelling through cities and spaces have shaped professional dancers' lives not only in terms of educational institutions and professional platforms, but also in terms of their societal standing and prestige.

In Japan, there is a long history of women's itinerant lifestyles (Alison, Kawashima, 2016, Meeks, 2011, Yung-Hee, 1994). The Heian (781-1192) and Kamakura (1185-1333) Eras were times in constant motion for people of various class backgrounds. Literary scholar Terry Kawashima showed how 'wandering' itself was used as a symbol for marginality and tragic exiles. She noticed the difference in portraying on one hand 'literary-minded wanderers heralded as journeymen in search of some goal', and on the other hand 'travelling performers and other wanderers' celebrated for their subversive possibilities' due to 'social ostracization and/or divine associations' (2016, 4-5). She also addressed the stereotypical portrayal of 'encaged women dressed in layers of robes unable to move while males were free to travel like birds. Kawashima was critical of when 'empowered subjectivity is unquestioningly equated with movement' (2016, 18). Her criticism worked both as a defender of stillness and slow movement, and as an antidote to the judging of women on the move. In addition, Religious studies scholar Lori Meeks showed how in the late Heian period (781-1192), the 'touring' shrine maidens, *arukimiko*, (literally walking miko) frequented the travelling roads where they performed oracles and prophecies for a small salary (Meeks, 2011, 222). I use the word perform, as divine messages were often transmitted, and are still transmitted, through dance, music, and song (Kawashima, 2001, Meeks, 2011, Nakahara, 1999, Strippoli, 2006). There was no evidence that *arukimiko* performed *suriashi*, but *suriashi* might have been used for their chanting and choreography. The itinerant lifestyles of *arukimiko* was an important act for fund-raising, and for propagating the religious teachings of specific shrines (223). Kawashima and Meeks showed how women with itinerant lifestyles instead had important tasks to act upon and execute.

My thesis showed that slowness and slow *suriashi* were not passive practices. One point regarding women on the move was processed in 'feminist new materialism' as proposed by physicist Karen Barad and philosopher Elisabeth Grosz (Johansson Wilén and Sjöstedt, 2022, 11). New materialists warned not to fall into the trap of presenting materiality as something passive shaped by culture. They instead 'wanted to present matter as an active agent in its own right, which resists cultural imprinting' (2021, 11). However, it was the material circumstances that create the conditions for how we as humans can act. Therefore, the 'encaged women' pursuing immobile lives should not be equated with passivity. Also, mobile women - who seem to have agency on a superficial level - should not be pushed back by prejudices about women with itinerant lifestyles.

Michiyuki as suriashi as pilgrimage

Researching the connection between suriashi, itinerant lifestyles and performance, I found that suriashi performed on stage represents the traveller in constant flux, either travelling between geographical places or travelling from a spiritual state to a human state. There was therefore a connection between pilgrimage, suriashi practice and walking through the Japanese concept *michiyuki*, 道行, which means ‘to go on a road’ (Leiter, 2006, 234).

Michiyuki is a ‘lyrical description of travel in which names and sites of places are used with poetic effect’ (Inoura, quoted by Kirby, 1973, 279). I do not use michiyuki as an overall concept for this thesis, but as something already existing that supports performing suriashi on the streets as an experimental pilgrimage. In Nō, Kabuki, and Nihon Buyō performance, michiyuki is known as a travel song or travel dance that features depictions of travel and pilgrimage (Alison, 2016, 225). It was a performed narrative, referring to ‘the words and movement describing the scenery and the latter’s effect on the speaker’s state of mind’ (Leiter, 2006, 234). The term has been used for the part when performers enter the stage in the very beginning, that is when the traveller arrives on the *hashigakari*, which is always performed in suriashi. Michiyuki passed on geographical knowledge as verbal maps for people travelling or making pilgrimages (Alison, 2016, 225). However, they did not only depict geographical places, they also depicted metaphysical and liminal spaces and time with spirits entering and leaving (226). Thus, michiyuki build a bridge or hashigakari between the theatrical narratives for the stage and between the narratives created as I walk in suriashi alone or with others, and as I go on a road.

Paris

For this thesis, the experimental pilgrimage in suriashi began in the autumn of 2014 in the greatly mythologized city of Paris, the heart of Western *flânerie*. Here is where three of my sub questions on suriashi walking appeared. The planning to walk alone in suriashi, and the actual walks were very challenging and frightening. Following the body alignment, and my main research question: what suriashi could active and act upon when relocated and offered as outdoor reflective practice in urban and other spaces, was however helpful. Once afoot, the experimental pilgrimage activated yet new questions. What happened to the person walking slowly in suriashi in a space? I considered the first question to be addressed to myself, but it also had to be addressed to women walkers in the same situation. Therefore, I also asked whether ‘feminine’ suriashi could elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces? I discovered how suriashi worked as an efficient feminist strategy. Suriashi surprisingly

provided the female walker ‘fictive invisibility’, and thus allowed a sense of safety on the streets of Paris. It was the spiritual embodiment in suriashi, originally practised to connect with ancestors rather than the gaze of the paying audience, which was helpful. Finally, since one of my pilgrimages entered a museum, the question on the connection between suriashi and legacy, and how suriashi was connected to narratives of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts was raised. The question on legacy prepared for questions on the archive and to the absence of movements and living bodies when objects were archived in museums. The Nō-masks were safely stored, but how could suriashi itself be archived? I asked the question by walking in suriashi where the Nō-masks were safely stored

Paris is a city with a history of walkers saturated with juxtapositions on gender, mystery, male fantasies and cosmopolitanism. I allowed this to affect the suriashi performed in Paris, and narratives activated by it. I asked then whether the wave of French early japonisme had ebbed out. Upon arrival, I recognized that the city of Paris was literally covered with posters of one big wave – The Great Wave off Kanagawa – which was the first print of Hokusai’s series *36 views of Mount Fuji* produced between 1830 and 1832 (Hokusai, 1966). The poster showcased a big exhibition of Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) at the Grand Palais (built for the 1900 Paris Exhibition). Being confronted by this poster on a daily basis influenced my walking and writing, and I also went to see the exhibition. Hokusai’s *36 views of Mount Fuji* (actually 46 views) was a repetitive artistic practice of showing the same object many times, but with different perspectives. My research through suriashi pointed to that same direction, keeping the practice of suriashi while showing new perspectives as the lens changed. The ideas of durational arts had earlier versions than the 1960s and 1970s emergence of the live art practice (Shalson, 2012). In addition, Paris had a connection with my teacher Nishikawa Senrei since she came here to perform, for example her piece about Camille Claudel in 2007 at *La Maison de la culture du Japon a Paris* (webpage, Nishikawa). The same space where she performed hosted an exhibition by the kimono artist Fukumi Shimura (appointed Living National Treasure), which I visited; however, I did not dare to walk in suriashi in the exhibition. It was odd to walk through the exhibition with bodyless kimonos, created to be worn, but now hanging on the wall. Fukumi Shimura and Nishikawa Senrei collaborated closely, thus I recognized the kimono-style, which made the experience even stranger. I watched beautiful kimono, while acknowledging the absence of its bearer.

Run the video documentation

from Paris while reading.

Walk with me in Paris.

[Video 1: 0:23:07](#) - 0:48:13

At any time you can increase or decrease the volume of sounds.

You can also turn it off and only experience the images.

Or turn off the image and listen to the sounds.

Tour Eiffel

Carina Ari's apartment, Montmartre

Knut Ståhlberg's and Britt Ståhlberg-Norée's apartment, Trocadero

Tour Eiffel

Place Pigalle

Boulevard de Rochechouart, Montmartre

Versailles

RER

Pont Notre Dame

Centre de la danse du Marais

Musée Guimet 45:23 – 48:14

Carina Ari's smaller studio, messed up on purpose 48:15

Fictive invisibility in Paris

This section regards women walkers, activated by the initial difficulty to start walking in suriashi on the streets of Paris. How safe we feel when we walk through a city is linked to aspects of identity, such as gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. To theorize my own lived experience, I turned to scholars from dance, art and literature who showed the asymmetry regarding the spatial contracts between men and women (Hammergren, 1996, Meskimmon, 1997, Parsons, 2000, Pollock, 1988). I turned specifically to scholars from art and literature, since this was the field where I found most accounts related specifically to women walking outside the dance context. These scholars stated that the problem is that women are forced to become spectacles and to be looked at, which caused a lack of control when moving in

cities (Meskimmon, 1997, 16). Scholar Griselda Pollock, looking at modernist accounts, even argued that because of this 'there is no female equivalent of the quintessential masculine figure, the *flâneur*' (Pollock, 1988, 71). Thus, the problem for women walkers concerned visibility, looking, and seeing, where not everyone has the opportunity to be invisible in public space. In Chapter Five, I described my 2015 suriashi walk with the drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy in Kyōto, which processed the relation between suriashi, gender and space. However, in 2014 I found myself alone in Paris, looking for strategies to proceed. Since there was not a female equivalent to the *flâneur*, one had to find strategies to bring her forward. I give examples of previous strategies before I propose suriashi to become such a strategy.

At first, performing suriashi in Paris did not appear as neither realistic nor achievable. Revisiting Paris, memories of a younger version of myself were invoked, which included a fear of walking in Parisian public space because of the frequent stalking and harassment. Male Parisian friends blamed me, and explained I was not street-smart enough, and that I had the word 'foreigner' stamped on the forehead. Female Parisian friends explained I needed a different strategy. Following their advice, I isolated myself spatially and corporeally from the city, walking briskly or even running to escape unwanted invitations. In the subway, I performed the occupied, busy woman, as non-smoker even lit a cigarette, and showcased an empty gaze. Since 1991, these had been my original performative strategies to create 'fictive invisibility' in order to sustain in the city of Paris. In 2014, having the experience and knowledge necessary to deal with the potential difficulties or dangers of life in an urban environment, I still did not feel safe.

My first Parisian suriashi walk therefore started indoors, in Carina Ari's apartment (Carina Ari Memorial Foundation, founded in 1963). The apartment had been the home and work studio for the Swedish dancer and choreographer Carina Ari (1897-1970), now available as artist-in-residence-program. From my indoor position, I engaged with the absence of female walkers and with the presence of the male strollers. A key character in urban spaces is the *flâneur*, the city stroller. The concept *flâneur* was founded in the beginning of 18th century by the philosophers Rousseau and Goethe (Van Nes, 2009, 122). The city stroller has since then been promoted by the author Charles Baudelaire, and further advertised by Walter Benjamin who walked in his footsteps together with his peers. The *flâneur* surprises the prevailing purpose of urban life, by presenting his view of the city from the position of a stroller (Harvie, 2009, 51). The *flâneur* is seldom a native to the city, he observes it from a stranger's

point of view. The flâneur has been accused of lacking goal or thought, and for being lazy and useless. The carefree city stroller is well documented. The flawless lineage of walking writers has formed an ideal citizen 'with the power to see and to remain unseen': Rousseau, Balzac, Dickens, Proust, Baudelaire, Benjamin' (Hammergren, 1996, 54). Heddon and Turner argued that the constant reiteration of these writers 'generates an orthodoxy of walking, tending towards an implicit masculinist ideology' (Heddon, D., Turner, C. 2012, 224). The flâneur is a man, with the freedom to drift alone in the cities, while women historically have been confined to private spaces.

Copying the Situationists

Solnit described how walking became political in Europe after the second world war through the *dérive* or 'drift' performed by mainly male cultural theorists and artists (2001,212).

Indeed, my original and innocent plan had been to follow the Parisian Situationist (1957-1972) and Letteriste International's (1952-1957) orthodoxy of walking, like a manuscript. In order to compare *suriashi* with other walking practices, I was curious to investigate whether *suriashi* could equal the Situationists' suggested *drifting* as a way to engage with the city's utopian potential. Could *suriashi* engage with activism and politics? The *dérive* or drifting was 'a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances' (Debord 1963, quoted by Malla et al., 2017, 43). The proposal of the Situationists was a walk whose course was determined only by the impulse of the walker. This impulse should help explore and experience the terrain and its ambiances. I considered the way the Situationist sought to encounter the city through an experimental behaviour like my own *suriashi* as experimental pilgrimage. I was interested in their questioning the cultural and political meanings of urban design and its influence on emotion and behaviour; as a way of defamiliarizing the ordinary (Solnit, 2001, 212).

I studied the Situationists with a stubborn frenzy, as a preparation. I even emptied a bottle of champagne in an attempt to invoke their courage to investigate ways to encounter the city and defamiliarizing the ordinary. The Situationists performed some of their drifting in taxis, because they were too drunk to walk (Mension et al., 2001). However, drinking did not give me any courage. The fact that I stayed in a residency for artists in Paris, the heart of Western flânerie, did not help either. Trying to investigate and compare *suriashi* as 'Situationist drifting' made me question my own project. The Situationists symbolized the strong historical discourse directed by the avant-gardist flâneurs. They 'shared with the Romantics the same notions of 'adventure', 'newness' and 'freedom' and believed they could

separate themselves from space, place, identity and relations (Heddon, D., Turner, C. 2012, 227). They represented the universal walker – ‘whose experience is uninflected by gender’ (36). It was not possible for me to reproduce their universal position in the city, which I first experienced like a failure. When I, through literary scholars, explored previous women walker’s strategies, I instead considered their many attempts for getting the same access to the city as the flâneur (Meskimmon, 1996, Pollock, 1988, Woolf, 1929, Wolff, 1985).

Suriashi in Carina Ari’s apartment – A Room of One’s Own

Initially, I saw how practicing suriashi in public space offered an alternative for the female dancer: the mirror-free space that encouraged female dancers to move out of the studio and engage with urban spaces. The logic behind was how I experienced the dance studio as a domesticated space, in the way it exhibited the gendered division of artistic labour, while denying the labour of the female dancer any social status (and denying the female dancer access to higher education in my hometown Gothenburg as late as 2016). I saw how suriashi moved to the streets would still remain a dance practice, although there would now be a space for reclaiming a perspectival point, which I thought was rare in the dance studio. Suriashi represented a durational dance solo, a self-portraiture, performed in in-between spaces. The contemporary art historian Marsha Meskimmon investigated the politics of domesticity, particularly how women have used the theme of the city and self-portraiture to voice their own identities (Meskimmon, 1996, 161). Her research mirrored my own practice with dance performance as a corporeal life writing, where I since 2004 processed the politics of domesticity in many pieces staged for theatrical spaces, for example *Dust Falling*, *Rain Falling about the Shirabyōshi* (Dahlstedt, 2004, 2005, 2013a, 2015a, 2018d, Dahlstedt and Nonaka 2012). The domesticated dance studio – on the threshold to the public stage – was situated ‘at the border of the public and the private, the social and the individual’ (Meskimmon, 1996, 162). Now, my hesitating to fling the doors open and walk out in the public, called for further investigations.

The experimental suriashi pilgrimage to Paris elucidated issues with gender and gendered spaces, before its actual beginning, which provided yet new angles. For example, the writer Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) engaged early with what Meskimmon called politics of domesticity. She depicted the struggle for women to obtain access to educational institutions, and how women historically had been confined to a domestic environment, and therefore had to accept being represented by others. In her 1928 lectures captured in *A Room of One’s*

Own Woolf asked her female students to write, earn money and have a room of their own (Woolf, 2015 (1929), 83). Her lectures pointed both to the physical and mental space - where women could have creative, intellectual freedom, and financial independence. Woolf's point regarding women having to accept being represented by others had an impact for this thesis. As Woolf stated, women working in a domestic environment were obscured, which also applied to my own maternal ancestors. This fact related to suriashi and legacy that affected this thesis, which I act upon in Chapter Nine. In addition, I made a comparison between Woolf's *A Room of Ones Own* and suriashi and realized that *A Room of Ones Own* was the space needed for my project, rather than the model of the Situationists. I considered how this room of one's own had to exist in both geographical and liminal spaces.



Figure 14. American girl in Italy by Ruth Orkin, 1951 (Orkin, 1951)

Itinerant lifestyles – strategies for change

I continue to investigate strategies that female artists have invented to process a safe transfer from private to public spaces below. Take a moment to reflect on the above photo (Figure 14), *American girl in Italy*. It visually shows something happening on a street that summons the body memory to most women. Speaking from the situation as I write this (in

2021), I add that the photo summoned the body memory of anyone who is considered different with regards to sexuality, ethnicity and disability and therefore becomes the subject to the stares of others. The photo has been used many times as an example of how women cannot walk freely in cities. *American Girl in Italy* is a well-known photo by Ruth Orkin (1921–1985) taken in 1951. The photo is not arranged (Grinberg, 2017). However, for the photographer Orkin and the model Ninalee Craig, the photo was not about street harassment, it was about women's independence and self-determination, and the photo was published in *The Cosmopolitan* 1952 with the title 'Don't Be Afraid to Travel Alone' (Orkin, 1951). Still, the photo confirmed what The French historian Jule Michelet in 1860 called 'the many irritations for the single woman', and how 'all eyes would be constantly fixed on her, and she would overhear uncomplimentary and bold conjectures' (Michelet quoted in Pollock, 1988, 69). It shows that the woman walker could neither *dérive*/drift nor look at the surroundings. In fact, she lowered her eyes. She knows that she is being watched, she 'knows how those men are looking;' and 'she is acutely aware of their view at that time, in that space' (Zaylía, 2009, 119). Even though the photograph was meant to encourage women's presence in public space, it simultaneously showed an impossibility since women walkers were held up as objects of male gaze.

Doreen Massey problematised this objectification further by showing a connection between male and female walkers. The *flâneurs* observed others - for example women (Massey, 1994, 234). Additionally, 'the *flâneur*'s gaze was frequently erotic. And woman was, and was only, the object of this gaze' (1994, 234). Thus, the liberated male *flânerie* took place at the expense of others. Massey referred to 'Baudelaire's embarrassingly awful views on this' – and here she meant his 1857 poem about a female passer-by, who Baudelaire objectified and desired. But, as Massey stated – this poem is 'probably now too well known to need citing again' (1994, 234–235). Thus, I don't cite it here, but I allow the absence of this poem to be present as part of the women's walking problem.

Historically, a woman walking alone on a street has represented someone involved in a suspicious activity, and today women were still warned to walk alone especially at nights (hooks, 1981, Parsons, 2000, Pollock, 1988, Wolff, 1985). According to Art historian Janet Wolff, the woman walker therefore is invisible (1985), however Literature scholar Deborah Parsons claims she exists but in a different form (2000). hooks wrote how 'young black girls were admonished by concerned parents to avoid walking down isolated streets and to avoid contact with white men whenever possible' (hooks, 1981, 56). The existence of women

walkers in urban spaces depended on the possibility to escape the gaze from the flâneurs. First, I argue that writers like Virginia Woolf struggled to get rid of linguistic uncertainty attached to the physical activity where *street walking* does not represent street walking. She therefore formulated the utopian potential for women walkers. Woolf early proposed her version of drifting: loitering. Her request for her female students regarded reflective movements; to be able to 'loiter at streetcorners and let the line of thought dip deep into the stream' (2015,83). According to Woolf, walking and wandering freely was the necessary symbol for leading an independent life. Woolf therefore did not picture the streets as dangerous for women – it was her composed utopian strategy for female characters to hold the same fictive invisibility as the flâneurs. Many have followed the same strategy. There was thus a space available for the construction of carefree woman walkers - in fiction, providing fictive invisibility. Slowly, I realize that somewhere in the realm of fiction, suriashi could find a space. However, I was still afraid to start walking in suriashi in Paris.

As if they were men

I collect more evidence from fiction that the female loafer was an available identity for women, and therefore suriashi should be a safe activity for me and for others who needed strategies to exist in urban spaces. The problem of visibility was constantly reinforced. For example, in 1908, the Swedish literary giant Elin Wägner allowed her fictitious female characters run home on the streets after the trams had stopped or walk to the pub to get something to eat or to talk with their male colleagues as if they were men (Wägner, quoted by Johannisson, 2015, 37). Historian Karin Johannisson explained that the gender norm worked with contrasts, where 'a normal woman is a frightened woman, frightened of the dangers of the city, of darkness, of the looks from men' (Johannisson, 2015, 36). Thus, 'to be the opposite – to be brave and with eyes open, was a morally adventurous deviation (2015, 36). However, like Woolf and Wägner, Johannisson proposed utopian strategies, for example that the woman walker could make everything to an object with her sight, even the man (2015, 37). I have myself previously tried this – staring back at the men staring - but unfortunately this caused more harassment and even violence. Even Hanayagi Chiyo's concept of the golden gaze has an ambiguous connotation, when compared with some of the female Nō-masks (Hanayagi, 2008, 92). Glints of gold in the eyes shows a character who oppresses her true demonic nature, used for a woman whose jealousy transformed herself into a living spirit (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, early 17th century). However, for this thesis, directing one's eyes to the horizon worked as a good flâneuse strategy.

The contemporary writer Lauren Elkin repeated the same strategies as Woolf, Wagner and Johannisson. She encouraged women to just walk out and *become* women walkers. Elkin meant that you do not need to crunch around in Gore-Tex to be subversive, if you are a woman. Just walk out your front door (Elkin, 2016a,20).

For a woman to be a *flaneuse*, first and foremost, she’s got to be a walker – someone who gets to know the city by wandering its streets, investigating its dark corners, peering behind *faades*, penetrating into secret courtyards (Elkin, 2016b).

Elkin’s writing above also showed that a woman walking on the streets was perceived as something provocative. She confirmed that the woman walker seemed not to be fully visible, but saturated with in-betweenness, which is a fictious position. These were the many accounts of the woman walker and her in-between-position, which helped me understand the difficulty to copy the walking strategies of the Situationists. Neither Elkin nor Woolf wrote about women’s lack of control in public spaces, but both encouraged women to strategically walk out, take control, as if there never existed any spatial inequality. Thus, my investigation showed that the brave woman walker drifting safely through urban space with eyes open only existed in fiction and in-between-spaces. However, in the real world the female walker needed strategies that did not shun away from the fact that space was not equally accessible. The author George Sand (1804–1876), aware and frustrated about the streetwalking problem, tried a new strategy in an attempt for change: dressing up as a man (Wolff, 1985,41). This strategy granted her a fictive invisibility. Sand’s goal was not to become a *flaneuse*, and her time did not yet allow for such a drastic change, she just wanted to be able to walk freely. Sand had to accept the different contract with urban space that women had, which meant that she had to disguise her woman walker to protect herself from the gaze of the *flaneurs*. Wearing men’s clothes made her invisible, and she could thus move without being stopped and looked at. Through her cross-dressing act, she took a huge risk, since it was technically illegal for a woman to wear trousers in Paris without a police permit. Any woman wearing slacks, a trouser suit or jeans could, in theory, be “arrested and taken to police headquarters”, a law that prevailed until 2013 (Lichfield, 2013).

George Sand bypassed her contemporary society in 1831 by walking the streets in Paris dressed like a man (Wolff, 1985, 41). I have adopted such a strategy myself, creating stage personas with an indefinable gendered expression, particularly in my performances *20xLamentation* and *The Laugh of the Medusa* (Dahlstedt 2013, Dahlstedt 2017). The strategy was not at first directed to being able to walk safely in urban spaces, but to be able

to escape the male gaze, being a middle-aged dance practitioner. Thus, I did not make myself invisible, but I found strategies to escape the stereotypical demands from the female dancer having to be youthful and beautiful. I allowed this to be my strategic drag-persona, investigating issues with gender and gendered spaces in the suriashi pilgrimage with Bruno the Bad Boy (see Chapter Five).

Creating a domestic flâneuse

From my indoor position in Carina Ari's apartment, I decided that I no longer had to refer to progenitor male flâneurs and Situationists since there should be no fixed rules about 'walking in Paris'. This was a matter of which stories have been privileged over others, where my thesis encouraged to identify and increase the variety and styles of Parisian walkers. I argue that since there was not a female equivalent to the flâneur, one had to continue to find strategies to bring forward the flâneuse. I first turned to dance scholar Lena Hammergren's *The re-turn of the flâneuse*, in which she proposed to 'reconstrue the central aspects of the flâneur', which was the conviction that 'seeing is equated with acquiring and mastering knowledge' (1996, 54). Hammergren suggested we instead could privilege the bodily experience of space, furniture, trees, doorknobs, words, clothes, etc., over their visual appearance (Hammergren, 1996, 54). For her project, she created the female version of the fictionally and historically constituted composite figure – the flâneuse. Her method was then to require of the reader to use a trained bodily memory to instead turn printed words and photographs 'into fleeting images and sensations' (1996, 53). This was her Flâneuse Strategy. The strategy began by rejecting sight as the single magic key that unlocks society's hidden secrets, and instead 'extend and alter the metaphors of vision and to progress from observing in the mind to observing and responding in the flesh' (1996, 54). I found how Hammergren's strategy collaborated very well with the feminine suriashi, particularly through the golden gaze, with eyes directed to the front and spirits glancing behind.

Additionally, Janet Wolff stated that the recovery of *women's experience* was an important strategy in order to retrieve what had been hidden in the classic accounts (1985, 45). If women could not have an itinerant lifestyle, if she cannot walk the streets, we have to instead walk to where we can find her, to the so-called private spaces, to her home, to her 'invisible' workspace. Thus, I set up my camera on different spots inside and outside Carina Ari's apartment for documentation and proceeded with Hammergren's flâneuse strategy. The very idea of Ari's apartment was to provide a workspace and freedom for dancers, and to financially support dance education. Ari's apartment was both a domestic space and a

workspace for creating arts, since she originally created sculptures in this space. Beginning my suriashi pilgrimage in Ari's apartment interacted with the fully visible woman walker in her home, a domestic flâneuse. Walking in suriashi inside and on the terrace that embraced Ari's apartment elucidated stories of any dancers' struggle for space and survival, which I demonstrated through my walking there. The apartment through which I now moved was the result of many years of struggles by the female dance artist Carina Ari. The practice allowed the embodying of those efforts, and of the space to which I had temporary access. The practice especially connected to Virginia Woolf's 1928 lectures captured in *A Room of One's Own* as discussed above. The terrace extended Ari's and my own private space to the outer world. Here, Ari and I could walk under Parisian skies, exploring the famous monuments without being seen, and without being made subject to harassment. This was a more utopian flâneuse strategy, where I could control my relationship to the audience through the camera. The people on the streets below the apartment could not see how Ari and I lived and worked here, thus we practised factual invisibility. Here I journal the experience in the first person:

I start from a sitting position, then stand up and prepare the posture, followed by the suriashi movement across the terrace. As I walk on the roof of a Parisian apartment, it is as if I receive a call from the past. It is a clear request from Nishikawa Senrei, as she asks me to give space for ancestral engagement. With muscles fully contracted, shoulders withdrawn, chest open, she reminds me to breathe in empty space into the body. I allow that empty space invite stories, atmospheres, or even people.

I hide in a window, and on the roof top, Sacre Coeur behind me, then put my feet down to slowly walk inside. The slowness, which is my own decision, gives me the agency to not rush towards anything. I possess time and space. There are smaller doors leading to the bedrooms. There is a huge balcony door leading directly to the living room. I open this door, kneel and enter the room. I walk through the room and pass the camera.

I have passed through the apartment. In this apartment, I have created a possible subject of the Baudelaireian passer-by:

She is not the fugitive woman of your dreams.

You cannot drink from her eye.

No glances will be exchanged.

Because Baudelaire - you stare.

Her eyes are directed elsewhere.

She is busy. She works in Paris. This is her work.

She cannot be stalked, and she will not be intimidated. (2014)

Through this specific task, I exercised suriashi as a flâneuse strategy for future pilgrimages. This sensitivity, brought out by the suriashi practice, enabled a consideration of sensations and inner voices, ideas, thoughts or images taking and losing shape while I was walking. Instead of *walking in an apartment*, I sensed how I *walked the apartment*, in control of that space, as a firm reply to the poem 'now too well known to need citing again' (Massey, 1994, 234-235).

Corporeal reminder.

Engage with Nishikawa Senrei's request for ancestral embodiment.

The most important task is to empty your body
for there to be space for new thoughts,
new ambiances, and people.

The video from Paris is still running, otherwise run it again.

Where is your own A Room of One's Own?

Suriashi as flâneuse strategy for the subway platform, the street, the plaza

Speaking from actual walking suriashi pilgrimages in Paris 2014, suriashi became my own female walking strategy and my own Woolfian *A Room Of One's Own*. The specific interacting with space in feminine suriashi proved to be a good, embodied strategy. Already after a few instances of suriashi walking sessions I realized how suriashi offered me fictive invisibility. There was something in the practice that made people *look away*, instead of *looking at* me. Essentially, the strict body alignment with hips centered, bent knees and shoulders withdrawn gave me access to controlled drifting in space. The posture gave me the grounding, which I needed in order to proceed. I did not have to ward anyone off, as no one even dared to approach me. It was a new and rare experience for me. The slow controlled walking gave me almost the same agency as of the *flâneur*: I could walk without being looked at as 'the woman on the street'. However, I was left alone when practising suriashi, but not when I walked as a pedestrian. This showed there were still issues with women walking

alone on the streets of Paris, and that our positions in spaces are related to our identities, in this case gender.

Each generation of women has formed their own strategies for getting access to public space; Woolf proposed to earn money and loiter the streetcorners, while Sand dressed up like a man as did the medieval Shirabyōshi female dancers in Japan. My interacting with space in feminine suriashi was a good strategy to reclaim integrity without lowering the eyes, and without objectifying others. The strict body alignment allowed controlled drifting. I did not even have to ward anyone off, as no one even dared to approach me. The chosen female construction of suriashi also made it clear that I walk the streets like a woman and not like a man.

Suriashi at Pigalle Métro

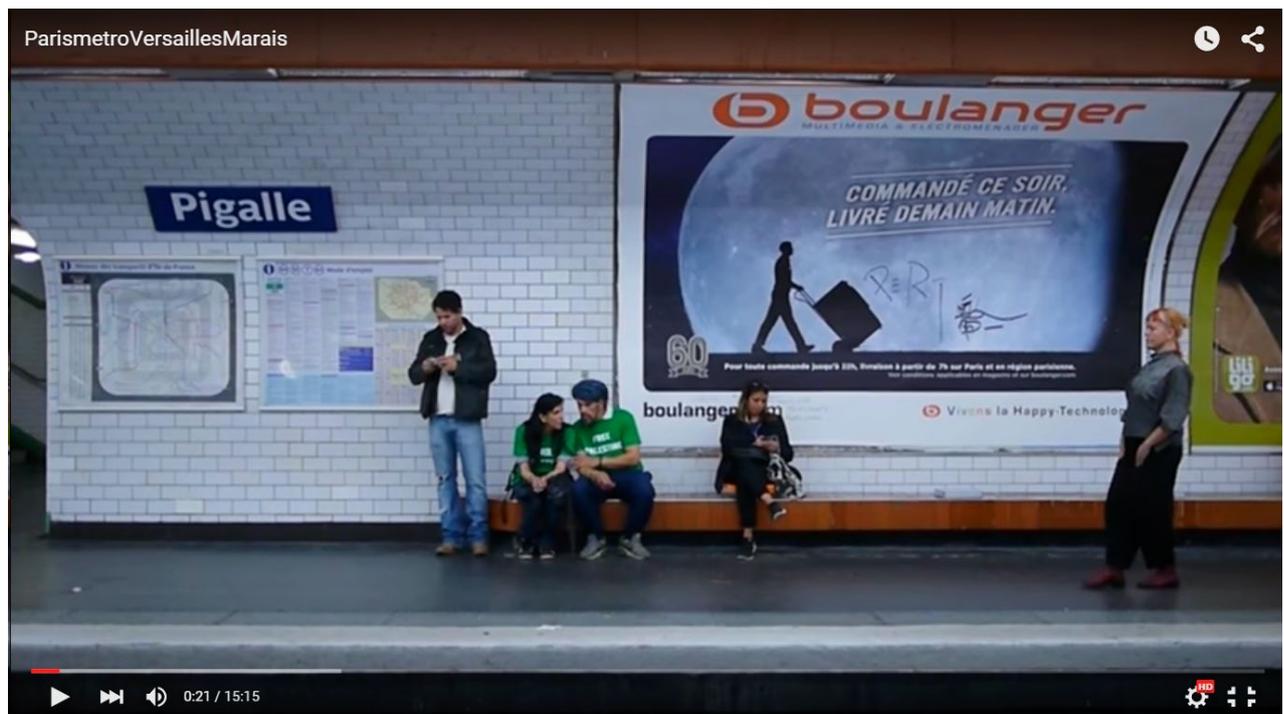


Figure 15. Place Pigalle on November 1st, 2014 Photo: Palle Dahlstedt (Suriashi, Video 1)

My first outdoor suriashi pilgrimage took place at Place Pigalle on November 1st 2014, in the afternoon, just before rush hour. For this first study, someone else assisted to help document and witnessed my act at the opposite platform (see Figure 15). It helped to know someone was witnessing, but it was still a challenging experience. The platform was neither full nor empty. My first impression was that practising suriashi on the platform at Place

Pigalle was more of an invisible intervention, hardly a performance. I clearly sensed that I was doing something abnormal. My body sensed it, as I had no previous experience to walk like this on a subway platform. Here I journal the experience in the first person:

The time and space in between trains consists of emptying and filling. Because I move so slowly, I am the person that remains when the train with its audience has left the platform. I am the passenger who does not board. I gaze in the distance rather than gazing at people or for the next train. I am practising unconventional behaviour in a place of regulated movement. I am signing a new contract with this space. I feel strange, embarrassed, and even a bit afraid. Suriashi's inner power of tension that usually helps on stage does not help me now.

What am I doing here?

Why do I do this? What do I do here?

There is a madwoman on the platform. Foreign, light-haired, and corporeal. I disturb the rhythm of the Paris Métro, by walking slowly without a busking guitar in my hand. I collect myself and breathe with each step.

I hear the voice of Senrei sensei, and I remind myself to squeeze my shoulders a bit more, and I push my feet further into the ground.

I disturb the brisk rhythm of the Paris Métro by walking slowly.

My forceful flâneuse in the Paris underground is the opposite of the boulevard drifting Baudelaireian flâneur.

No. I am certainly not a madwoman on the platform. I work. This is my work.

I am a performer in control, protected by my own project of suriashi as pilgrimage in a public place.

I have purchased a ticket. This gives me the right to use the Place Pigalle for a certain amount of time, in between trains, but no longer than that. I remain.

The platform is like a Magna Doodle drawing board. The actors of the platform enter and leave quickly. They appear and disappear.

They are leaving.

I am staying.

Their feet sketch a hurriedly drawing.

Suriashi in the underground is like a cantus firmus.

In music, a cantus firmus, a fixed song, is a pre-existing melody forming the basis of polyphonic composition. It exists in the tradition of the Renaissance counterpoint,

where a classic hymn tune remains the solid song to which other parts are added on. A solid song in the midst of chaos.

Suriashi on the platform is like Pibroch, the Scottish Highland's classical music.

Suriashi is like the drone, a continuously sounded tone.

A drone is a continuous note or chord. It establishes tonality upon which the surroundings may rest.

I draw a straight line, where the rest of the ensemble draw tiny marks, bars, dots, half circles, lines. I am both the soloist and accompaniment. My part in this score plays the bass note. But I do not determine the chord, as few notice my intervention. The other actors remain in their own spaces and in their own time and are not affected, or so it seems. I did not compose this dance alone.

I am not the soloist; I am the dancer in the corps du ballet.

Who is doing which movement? I am doing suriashi.

My rhythm is predetermined by myself as I decided to do this investigation.

By staying with this rhythm, I discover disruptions, arrhythmia, my own disruption, and the disruption of this place. This is caused by myself and by my co-dancers. The man who takes off his sweater is the soloist at Place Pigalle. Suriashi is now involved with the everyday. The two young women who notice my suriashi practice, and therefore stop their own planned activity, turn to observe me. Their pas de deux becomes a critical duo. I make things up now. The place dramatizes itself with and without my intervention.

(2014–2019)



Figure 16. Place Pigalle on November 1st, 2014 Photo: Palle Dahlstedt (Suriashi, Video 1)

Afterwards, in Carina Ari's apartment, I watched the video and reflected on what the practice did to me and to the place. As you have already read, I first described the embodied and artistic experience, activated by suriashi as pilgrimage. Thus, I begin there, immersed in the sound and the rhythm of suriashi at the platform Place Pigalle.

Pigalle Pilgrimage as Artistic Experience

For the following section, I continue to use a more reflective voice that oscillates between what I experienced and what could be analysed in order to remain in that fictive space, created through suriashi. During this first pilgrimage to a subway platform, there was already a development in the practice. However, the development was not related to how well I performed the step, but to how well I was able to merge with the space. Indeed, I needed to remember the studio practice to be able to focus. I walked several times, and for each suriashi walk, the practice offered a deeper connection to what was going on in that space as I proceeded. With regards to the Japanese radio programme broadcasting the sound of suriashi (see Chapter Three), I have previously proposed that suriashi is a dancing step that could be listened to. Experiencing the sound that suriashi produced brought evidence of the core and rhythm of the practice. I was not prepared for how the practice also augmented the sounds of spaces, which confirmed that 'experimental pilgrimage' was a good frame for my research. I was struck by the musicality of the subway. I found the sounds of the trains

extremely beautiful. The sound of metal wheels on metal tracks, the sound of sparkling electricity, mechanical rhythms, and especially the warning signal preparing for doors closing. Suriashi enhanced the senses, also the listening. This was later confirmed by people invited to practice with me. For example, at the SIBMAS conference in Copenhagen (2016), a participant shared the strong experience of sound activated through slow suriashi:

While I was performing suriashi, I started to feel that I was leaning into a frequency, that usually gets unnoticed. The leaning stretched the sounds that reached my ears, pulling me into a sub-strata of sounds. Why do the sounds sound differently here? What sounds have found their way into and sits in this strata? If I tip any further, gravity will hit and the sounds will crash. I must sit, unnoticed, silent observer of the layer of this sound (Appendix E).

Slow suriashi created a temporalized space where sounds were augmented. Sociologists Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier wrote in their *Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities* that ‘elements that compose polyrhythmic concrete times have rhythms, or are rhythms - and all rhythms apply the relation of a time to a space, a localized time, or, if one prefers, a temporalized space, the movement of a street’ (Lefebvre and Régulier, 1985, 88). Suriashi has rhythm, is a rhythm, which in this case applied to the relation of rhythms and movements of the subway platform. I state that the rhythm of a dance piece, if suriashi at Place Pigalle was also a dance piece, is only fast or slow in relation to other rhythms. By slowing down, sounds in that space were experienced differently. It became a complex concert with a rich variety of tonalities.

Pigalle was a platform for trains. I temporarily declared the platform as my stage to be able to continue the next step. I am performing. What does that activate? Was the fictive space, activated through suriashi, enough in order to claim suriashi as a flâneuse strategy? What if I let go of performing? Was that even possible with my training and position as performer? My own fantasy and experience were that nobody noticed me. However, after I watched the video, I discovered how quite a few travellers followed me with their eyes. A man even prepared to interrupt me but decided to let me go. This challenged my conclusion above that suriashi was not noticed by many. Instead, suriashi did something to my own awareness and focus. It was a surprising experience to be able to sense the subway platform as something so different. The movement of my feet created a spaceship proceeding on the bridgeway

(*hashigakari*) between the fictive and the real world. This powerful experience of sound and movement, and how my body was able to find its safe space among other bodies, supported my choice to claim the walks as pilgrimages, when using the expanded meaning of pilgrimage. For example, Tetsurō's suggestion above that the purpose of pilgrimages was to have an artistic experience of anything appealing to the senses. Also, referring back to the concept of *michiyuki* - suriashi performed as pilgrimages for the Japanese stage - did not only depict geographical places, they also depicted metaphysical and liminal spaces and time with spirits entering and leaving (Alison, 2016, 226). Thus, I was able to imagine that I walked with Nishikawa Senrei, then I invited Carina Ari, female ancestors enabling my presence at the Pigalle platform in 2014. As one train approached, I disappeared from the camera view. Instead, others moved in front and actions like putting on a shirt, tilting one's head, became very important choreographic acts in the space suriashi had created. The societal script was constantly written, erased, rewritten, erased, as I proceeded in suriashi.

Suriashi proposed to the female walker a transdisciplinary approach in order to avoid self-censorship, shame and shyness. My flâneuse performing suriashi was not only looking at and correcting her body posture, and neither looking at houses nor staring at people. Adding to Lefebvre's and Régulier's musical description, my flâneuse was able to sense how her body, and houses, streets, and human beings choreographed themselves (1985, 87). The space dramatized itself, and with the intervention in suriashi, she was able to embody it without being disturbed. Suriashi as Flâneuse Strategy gave her a new possibility to move in space, while both performing, creating, and reflecting. She was able to respond to the environment, not by building eternal structures but by constructing a temporary one to solve her contemporary issues (Hammergren, 1996, 57).

Instead of always trying to comprehend what we do not know, Hammergren proposed we can make the familiar strange. This was also part of her Flâneuse Strategy: to defamiliarize. (1996, 54). Instead of waiting for a train or catching the train, you can remain on the platform and practise suriashi for as long as you wish. This is a defamiliarizing practice, very common in performance, but not so common in the subway. I ask you to think of - or even plan - the smallest gestures and practices for making something strange in your every day.

Try it.

The Pigalle suriashi pilgrimage uncovered some of the absurdity of the contemporary world. A disconnection through the refraining from speed, the estrangement of your own body, among other bodies. Hammergren's flâneuse valued the surrealism that appreciated fragments, curious collections, and unexpected juxtapositions. She proposed two common framing devices: one is conceptualized in terms of natural/organic/harmonious qualities, the second is its opposite with its artificial/mechanized/fragmented qualities (1996, 57). The curious collection of today is harmonious walking paired with mechanized tracks, or artificial walking on organic platforms. Surrealists might have conceived suriashi as a surrealist practice and a desire for one's own disorientation. For me as a woman walker, practising suriashi in public also meant a desire for composing myself, for directing the gaze of others, and escaping the spectacle. Comparing suriashi as a flâneuse strategy with for example the flâneur strategies shaped by the Situationists, I found a similarity where walking slowly in suriashi helped explore and experience the terrain and its ambiances through an experimental behaviour. However, the fact that the Situationists sought practices to defamiliarize themselves from urban space, showed that they were already dominating the space as flâneurs. Their possibilities of subverting the space were greater. The flâneuse strategies had always been the opposite – to instead normalise the presence of walking women in cities - by dressing like a man, by pretending the streets are not dangerous, by hiding in private spaces, by never walking alone. My own contribution to these strategies was to walk in suriashi.

The philosopher Michelle De Certeau distinguished place (lieu) from space (espace) (De Certeau, 1984, 117). According to De Certeau, space (espace) was the way a place is practised, the manner in which the place is made real by our actions (117). When someone did not board the train, i.e. when someone did not practise place in the manner in which the place was made real, but instead remained on the platform to perform suriashi, the person challenged the meaning of the place. I compare Pigalle platform with Nishikawa Senrei's dance studio, a place which was made real after the female students have changed into yukata and tabi and begin their practice of suriashi. When suriashi, housing a physical construction originating from the Japanese dance studio, travelled to the platform at Place Pigalle, it opened a bridgeway where suriashi could co-exist with visible and invisible figures, humans, nonhumans, ghosts and ancestors.

In Paris, I searched for the agency of the flâneuse by walking in suriashi. Suriashi finally became my strategy to walk alone without fear in Paris. I followed Hammergren's Flâneuse Strategy by rejecting sight as the single magic key for mastering a space, however without lowering the eyes. It was possible to walk with eyes directed to the front with spirits glancing behind, and without objectifying others. All pilgrimages in Paris were rather strenuous, but as I continued to practise, suriashi became a choice, a new norm in my own practice. Whenever I wanted to find out something about a space, suriashi worked as a phenomenological method to enhance the senses, enabling a closer listening, sensing and experiencing of that space. I have described experiences from the first pilgrimages exploring the domestic and urban flâneuse, which gave me 'fictive invisibility' and thus a different access to space. Being invisible or being interpreted as strange were not an ideal relationship with space, however much more preferable than being subject to violence. I show a different kind of flâneuse strategy below, created by the performance artist Kubra Khademi.

Kubra Khademi

The performance artist Kubra Khademi encountered an uproar on the day she decided to make visible the gender inequality in Afghanistan by performing a walk on the streets of Kabul (Khademi, 2020). Her work reinforces how the female body continues to be a place for struggle. In a talk organized by the international walking network *Deveron projects*, Khademi revealed how her way into performance art came from creating 'small gestures exposed in the wild and dangerous' (2020). She explained that as a woman in Kabul, she had to have a reason for leaving home, such as shopping for groceries. Thus, she started to walk unchaperoned without a reason as a performance practice, which caused her to be harassed ten times per day (Sharrocks and Qualmann, 2017). She remembered that this had been a painful experience since childhood, and she decided to act each time (Khademi, 2020). This led to the construction of the armour – a 'protection and a defiant rebuke to the men whose groping hands and leering remarks make Kabul's streets uncomfortable for almost any woman who walks them' (Graham-Karrison, 2015).

On February 26th, 2015, Khademi put on the steel armour costume that emphasised her breasts, belly, crotch and bottom. Dressed in this armour, she walked in the centre of Kabul in Afghanistan for eight minutes, which quickly became a life-threatening situation (Figure 17). After the performance, Khademi had to hide, and finally escape to Paris where she now lives and works as an artist and a political refugee. Khademi explained that the encounter

between her own performance art and society created a situation where she had to become an activist (2015). This echoed with the earlier quoted choreographer Liz Lerman; it may seem ‘as if the artist is behaving like an activist, when actually all she is doing is building a world in which she can live and work’ (Lerman 2014). Khademi’s performance walk in Kabul made visible the lack of control in public space that women still face. The creation of small gestures in urban spaces became a micro-activist strategy for Khademi as well as for me, where my walk with Bruno the Bad Boy, described in Chapter Five, was the beginning of a formulation of a script for such strategies. In Chapter Eight, I show how *suriashi* as a flâneuse strategy continued to include more participants and grew to perform archival activism or artivism.



Figure 17. *Armor* by Kubra Khademi Photo: From Youtube (Khademi, 2016)

Listening to her speech, I realize that the composed presence of tension embedded in the chosen ‘feminine’ *suriashi* technique, also functioned like an invisible shield, an armour. In relation to Khademi’s work, in which her costume emphasized breasts and bottom, this is also what ‘feminine’ *suriashi* emphasizes through body alignment - with the upper chest pushed forward and the pelvis tilted backwards to portray and construct ‘woman’. However, this ‘feminine’ body posture, when performed slowly in urban spaces for this thesis, was never interpreted as sexually arousing, quite the opposite. Perhaps it was the exaggerated pointing to female body parts, which actually pushed glances away in urban spaces that

provided a space away from the male gaze. Khademi found refuge in Paris, a city well-known for sexual objectification of women, for example through catcalling, however compared with Kabul, Paris was more secure for women.

In this thesis, I have engaged with female artists like Kubra Khademi, Virginia Woolf and the medieval Shirabyōshi, who broke with the rules that reinforced the gendered spaces. The rules were broken by actions like crossdressing, proclaiming the streets safe for everyone, walking slowly in suriashi, escaping the male gaze through embodied strategies, and wearing armour on the streets. However, these female activists were always subject to both visible and invisible violence. This reinforces the patriarchal control of how female trailbreakers are portrayed or made invisible, as a continuous message to society. Ending this section on suriashi and flânerie with Khademi's walking piece 'Armor', which forced her out of her country showed how women were still not safe walking in cities. The constant newspaper report on women being murdered when walking the streets, when hitchhiking, when taking the wrong taxi - showed an urgent and continuous need to process the social norms behind violence on women walking in urban spaces. In 2021, the hashtag #TextMeWhenYouGetHome went viral in support of a global awareness campaign about violence against women (Oppenheim, 2021). Gendered suriashi in gendered spaces cannot solve this problem alone, however my thesis and the video documentation of experimental pilgrimages contributed to the discussion on how space is still gendered.

Suriashi at Musée Guimet

I proceed to a new space, a museum, in order to investigate the connection between suriashi and legacy through Japanese objects. I ask how what the connection is between suriashi and legacy, and how suriashi is connected to narratives of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts. The following Parisian pilgrimages was performed inside a museum dedicated to Asian art. For an analysis of suriashi performed at the museum, I turned to Von Rosen and the shift to a more pluralized understanding what an archive is (Von Rosen, 2019). This pilgrimage travelled to a space usually dedicated to collections and past times: the museum. This pilgrimage approached a museum in relation to archives and the moving body. It offered a critique of the museum collections, how things were collected, and what value certain institutions agreed for certain objects to have. For my investigation, I chose Musée Guimet, since it was known for housing the largest collection of Asian arts outside Asia with about one thousand objects from 3000 BC until Meiji Era. In 1876, the industrialist

Émile Guimet (1836-1918) was sent out by the minister of public instruction to study religions and to collect sacred art (Musée Guimet). He acquired a considerable assemblage of artefacts and built his own museum. His argument was, deploring the modernization of Japan and subsequent loss of traditional customs, which he equalled with cultural identity (Guimet's *Promenades Japonaises*, quoted by Barrow, 2002, 327). He defended his collecting of these artefacts as being an important act of saving these Japanese artefacts from the Japanese themselves.

There has been a shift from the bureaucratic institutional perception of the archive (as preservation) to a more pluralized understanding what an archive is. New theoretical aspects perceive cities and bodies as archives where anything can be an archive (Flinn, 2011, von Rosen, 2019). These new theories of archives help us rethink history and the archives, where my aim was to put suriashi as an important Japanese dance practice among the records at Musée Guimet. The Records Continuum Model (RCM), created in the 1990s by archivist and scholar Frank Upward, is a model that seeks to recognize the unity of space and time, while providing multi-dimensional and multi-layered views of archiving (McKemmish, 2017, 1). Upward's argument was that 'records can never be set aside from spacetime as they exist in and through different spacetimes' (Upward, 2017, 119). His arguments resonated with Massey's theories of space and her rejection of dominant conceptualisations of space as the negative opposite of time (Massey, 2005, 17). These new archival theories supported the view that a record can be "any account, regardless of form, that preserves 'memory or knowledge of facts and events' (Faulkhead quoted by von Rosen, 2017a, 121). However, since there was no trace of suriashi in the museum, I decided to walk in suriashi there as an example of archival activism.

Japan Hall and the Pilgrimage Narrative

I state that visiting a museum in suriashi worked as a method for understanding legacy through new archival theory and Massey's arguments for space through my own body. This archival investigation consists of a video recording of suriashi on November 6th in 2014, a recollecting of observations, and notes from my personal experiences on that day. I walked to the museum as a foreign visitor. I had not made any arrangements with the museum beforehand. I brought the video camera I have used for most video documentations in this thesis. I challenged myself to perform suriashi somewhere in the museum in order to investigate the outcomes, and what suriashi might activate. In the Japan Hall at Musée Guimet there were sacred sculptures from Buddhist temples displayed. The ones I

encountered were from *Kōfuku-ji* and *Tōdai-ji*, temples I have visited many times in Nara. *Kōfuku-ji*, the temple in Nara had historical connections to Nō theatre and to Zeami. I stop here and engage with Watsuji's 1918 art-appreciating pilgrimage to the same Buddhist temples in Nara. I allow his words turn 'into fleeting images and sensations' (Hammergren, 1996, 53). When Watsuji moved slowly between the artistic objects from the Nara period (710-781), he considered them as portals to the past (Watsuji, 2012, 78). However, some of these ancient objects had already (1885) been sold to Mr Guimet, as an act of protection from the 'modernization of Japan' (Guimet's *Promenades Japonaises*, quoted by Barrow, 2002, 327). In Watsuji's Nara pilgrimage, he experienced and reflected upon the collision between modern and past times with steam-engine trains and ancient statues covered in grime as he was moving along (Watsuji, 2012, 28). His 1918 Nara pilgrimage considered Japan's 8th century urbane engagement. Watsuji claimed that foreigners 'are our ancestors—both spiritually and physiologically' (2012, 120). He thus proposed ancestral connections outside bloodlines, constantly activated as we walk through spaces. Here was where our pilgrimages met in similar questions on legacy, walking and the activation of similar spaces.

Using *suriashi* and a phenomenological perspective, I understood with my body how the Japan Hall represented a contradictory space housing records from 'the past'. My slow movements made me sensitive to the mood in that space. Japan Hall was an example of Foucault's heterotopia - spaces that were cut, divided (1984, 2). There was the hidden presence of the sacred. In the middle of the hall, a Kannon statue was raised. In Japan, Kannon is a very popular Bodhisattva that you find in most temple grounds. S/he has a somewhat androgynous figure; a god/dess of compassion and mercy. However, temple grounds in Japan were lively; they were not only spaces for prayer, spiritual practice, rest, but also for dance and music performances, for dining, picnic and play. In the original spaces of these statues, the surroundings constantly worked to pluralize their ambiance, to make them live, celebrated and recontextualized. Watsuji's experience of steam-engine trains were juxtaposed with the ancient sculptures. The Kannon statue at Musée Guimet did not activate any memories of my walks through the many temples in Nara and Kyōto. Instead it activated memories of endless walks in museums on painful feet.

There was an emphasis on the act of *gazing* at artefacts and not sensing them (Hammergren, 1996, 54). The way the objects were placed promised a fixed truth about 'place' and about 'the past'. I therefore experienced a separation between the visitors and the authentic records from 'Far East'. On one hand, the gazing created an atmosphere of reverence for 'original'

pieces of art, on the other hand it devaluated the corporeal engagement. The visitors were expected to proceed slowly and carefully, while looking at (and not touching) the artefacts. The practice of removing the object from human touch and original context added to the heterotopic atmosphere of the museum.

The Pilgrimage

There were kimonos on the wall to be looked at, but they must not be touched. There were Nō masks safely locked away in a glass counter, protected from dust, and only available for looking at. The Nō-masks had a clear connection to suriashi, but there were no traces of the bodily practice in the corridors. With my heart beating faster, I therefore decided to perform suriashi there. After confirming that there were no signs saying that photo and video was prohibited, I placed my camera on top of my bag under the glass counter displaying Nō-masks. The Nō-masks seemed lifeless behind the glass, missing their voices and bodies. I sensed the split between the mask and the live body trained to wear this mask - and a desire to bridge the split. These masks were crafted to be worn in the Japanese Nō theatre. The Nō-masks represent historic figures, but also various stages of human expression with continued relevance for today's society. However, out of their theatrical context they lost their original purpose. My concern was that the body movements connected to these masks were considered 'unworthy of engagement' (Caswell, 2016).

I was very nervous when I started the camera and moved to the other side of the hall. I took the selected and decided feminine position. I placed my hands on the top of my thighs, squeezed my back and shoulders, bent my legs, slowed down my breathing, and started to practise. In my process journal, I described how I proceeded with my idea:

The legacy from Nishikawa Senrei sensei is archived in my limbs, as is her voice, and her verbal and physical corrections of my body posture. Whenever I do suriashi, I hear her voice, and I hear the sound of her sliding feet.

It seems my invisible investigation makes the museum guard alert, which creates a fear in me. I remind myself to slow down, bend my knees more, and squeeze my shoulders further, and hopefully this will help me focus.

Nishikawa Senrei's heritage has been transmitted through her students; a considerable assemblage of artefacts spread out through bodies.

I am indeed very nervous about the guard and about the other visitors, but at the same

time my real concern is that my performance is impeccable and focused. I worry more about my suriashi than the fact that I am doing something that the surroundings will not approve of. If I cannot keep my performance quality, my point fails its meaning. It is as if the knowledge I thought I had misplaced me, and that it does not do the work for me in this moment. My mind constantly flips back and forth, in and out of reality. I imagine Nishikawa Senrei. This is all that matters now. Keep the posture. Improve the posture. Worry about the posture. Worry about the breathing. Worry about the audience. Keep the posture. Worry about the guard. I add glances to my practice as if I am exploring a practical way of looking at objects behind glass, a walk for museums. Adding these glances makes it possible to stay in control and check my surroundings. This suriashi created a link between me and other performers practising, not only across cultural borders, but across centuries.

Suriashi bridged the gap with Japanese masters now deceased. I practise suriashi next to sculptures and masks from Japan. When practising suriashi in this place, I am questioning the selected, kept-in-custody faraway objects

Objects like the Nō theatre masks from 'the Far East'. I am traversing the border between living bodies and the masks that were created for actors now deceased. These masks are deprived of their bodies. They were created to be worn by living performers, dancing, singing, and telling stories. They were not created to be bought and sold, or to be tucked away behind glass. In suriashi, I am following a link between myself and my ancestors of the performing arts. Here I must accept that these deceased Nō actors who wore these masks will not acknowledge me as their descendant because of my Swedish origin.

My feet write their history next to the precious objects in the museum.

The movements drawn by my feet ask permission for preservation. Can these movements please go into the archive? The museum guard comes after me.

I am so afraid that the visitors will think that I am mad.

I pass the guard, and I hear her footsteps behind me. She is coming after me. Her shoes are very loud. It was a bad performance, and I am very disappointed with myself. My hands shake as I turn off the camera while I am being scolded by the guard.

(Dahlstedt, 2014–2019)



Figure 18. I sit with the Nō mask Chūjō in my piece *Atsumori/Hero* commissioned for the Nō-theatre Festival at King's Place in London (Mu:Arts, 2016)

Discussion

For ethical reasons I have edited out my encounter with the guard from the video documentation. However, I recollect it here. After the four minutes it took to practise from the end of the hall up to the Nō masks, the guard came after me, and told me in French 'I could not put my camera there'. I quickly packed my camera, apologized and left. *Suriashi* would have been an acceptable activity in Japan Hall, but not the documentation of it. My investigation helped me rethink how to plan future case studies. The experimental pilgrimage to Musée Guimet felt like a failure since the artistic quality of *suriashi* was very poor. On the other hand, the investigation was successful since I managed to raise critical questions about legacy and immaterial values through *suriashi*. Performing *suriashi* in Japan Hall, walking towards Nō masks created an unpredictable encounter with history. The objects in the Japan Hall were guarded by someone, but there was no space for movements from dance practice. In that gap, *suriashi* as experimental pilgrimage engaged with the ancestral connection between the Nō masks, Zeami, the Buddhist temples in Nara and the itinerant lifestyles of performers. *Suriashi*, relocated from its original context, just like the Nō mask, questioned the ideas of legacy both in archival practice as well as in dance practice. *Suriashi* indeed belonged to the collections in Musée Guimet but still felt out of place. *Suriashi* did not directly produce an artefact to be put in a glass counter or hung on a wall

where it could be guarded and secured as a valuable record for the future. However, the video documentation of my action qualified as a record in the more pluralized understanding of the archive. Von Rosen's research and work to democratise archives for independent performing arts provide an important change, and my own collaborations with the Swedish National Museums of World Culture opened up for new projects connecting 'ephemeral' movement with 'static' objects. For example, in 2020, I guided the exhibition *Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk* produced by V&A Museum through a variation of gendered suriashi walks, engaging with the kimono and the museum space through an embodied perspective.



Figure 1912. Suriashi explained in the exhibition *Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk* Dec 2010 Photo: Martin Hulten

Suriashi in New York City

This section explores several experimental pilgrimages to New York City in February, 2015. In Paris, I investigated what happened to a woman walking slowly in suriashi in a space, which invoked issues about gender and gendered spaces. I found that suriashi functioned as a strategy for fictive invisibility and safe walking in the city. Suriashi also raised questions about ephemeral content in museums, and how to preserve the legacy of a step like suriashi. In New York, I invited participants to the experimental pilgrimage, and asked what happens to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi. There is thus a shift from the experience of the solitary walker to what a group of walkers experience together. I have invited these co-walkers for a specific reason. In order to investigate the ancestral reference embedded in suriashi, I expanded the idea of who represented an ancestor to process the legacy emerging from the teacher-student relationship in artistic practice. The participants

of the New York pilgrimages were all prominent artists and have been important for my own professional life as independent choreographer. I suggest that you start the video documentations from New York City now. Allow them to run in the background. I will point to specific examples later in this text.

Suriashi pilgrimage to New York City

[Video 1 : 1:37: 03 – 2:51:09](#)

Suriashi is a travelling step.

Often when we (artists, researchers, educators) travel to show work at a festival or teach at a school, we are alone. We feel lonely.

This suriashi pilgrimage starts in a hotel room on West 57th Street.

Next time you stay in a hotel you might want to practise suriashi there to experience the hotel space in a new way.

My first experimental pilgrimages in this city were very lonely.

I felt detached, body shy and foreign. The first days I did not dare to practise outdoors.

After practising in the hotel space, suriashi took me to the vast Lincoln Plaza.

In search for a solution, I worked with the fleeting image that the water jets of the fountain were my dancing ancestors of the city. The phenomenological idea supported my back through the whole walk.

After inviting collaborators to walk with me, new threads were woven with the city.

This was created through suriashi in space with others, engaging with time, space and living beings at the same time.

In New York City, a thread was woven between myself and my former teachers/mentors through suriashi. In 2015, I did not yet know that I also had a connection to Swedish ancestors, which I instead turn to in Chapter Nine. I therefore booked meetings with four choreographers and one dance film director to give them (and thank them) an experience of suriashi as experimental pilgrimage together with me. They became the reply to Nishikawa Senrei's request on ancestral engagement through suriashi practice. I walked with them as a

response to Nishikawa Senrei's request to hold one's artistic practice open for ancestors. I interpreted and rephrased her request to also include live mentors and teachers who have been important for one's artistic development. I previously have referred to footnotes and suriashi, where academic footnotes refer to other people's work or extra information on a particular subject. Walking with mentors in New York City acknowledged how suriashi can bring life to and activate footnotes. Suriashi represented note writing through the feet, and while we walked together in suriashi we referred to each other, to space and to past, present, and future time. The four choreographers were Marika Blossfeldt, Susan Osberg, Muna Tseng and Paul Langland. They were based in New York City. Four of them have toured and given guest lectures in Sweden. Dance film director, artist and educator was Douglas Rosenberg, based at University of Wisconsin in Madison.

What was significant for these artists is that their work was developed during the 1960ies when the medium-specificity of visual art forms was processed and changed. The conventional skilful dancing body was replaced by pedestrians and amateurs. Postmodern choreographers like Yvonne Rainer started to use new technology, and video artists like Douglas Rosenberg choreographed and performed their own scores. Also, which I return to many times in this thesis: 'bodily cultures from different sources emerged', which shaped postmodern dance (the martial arts of T'ai Chi Chu'uan, karate, aikido, and of course the widely practiced Zen Buddhism) (Banes, 1993b, 247).

New York City attracted dancers and choreographers in search for dance education, artistic experience and inspiration. Most of my classmates at the Ballet Academy went to New York for a continuation of studying dance. I have travelled there since 1994 to study modern and postmodern dance, and dance on camera. I have also shown my films at the Dance on Camera Festival at Lincoln Center (Dance on Camera Festival, 2000, 2005, 2015). My documentary film on dance in Japan was selected to be screened in New York City at Lincoln Center on February 2nd, 2015 and I was invited to present it (Lincoln Center). After the screening, I introduced suriashi to my audience, and four of the choreographers were present. I then met them for suriashi performance in two different spaces; Marika Blossfeldt, Susan Osberg and Muna Tseng at Grand Central Terminal; Paul Langland at Judson Church. Dance film director Douglas Rosenberg stayed close to Museum of Metropolitan Art, thus we walked nearby.

Suriashi at Grand Central Terminal

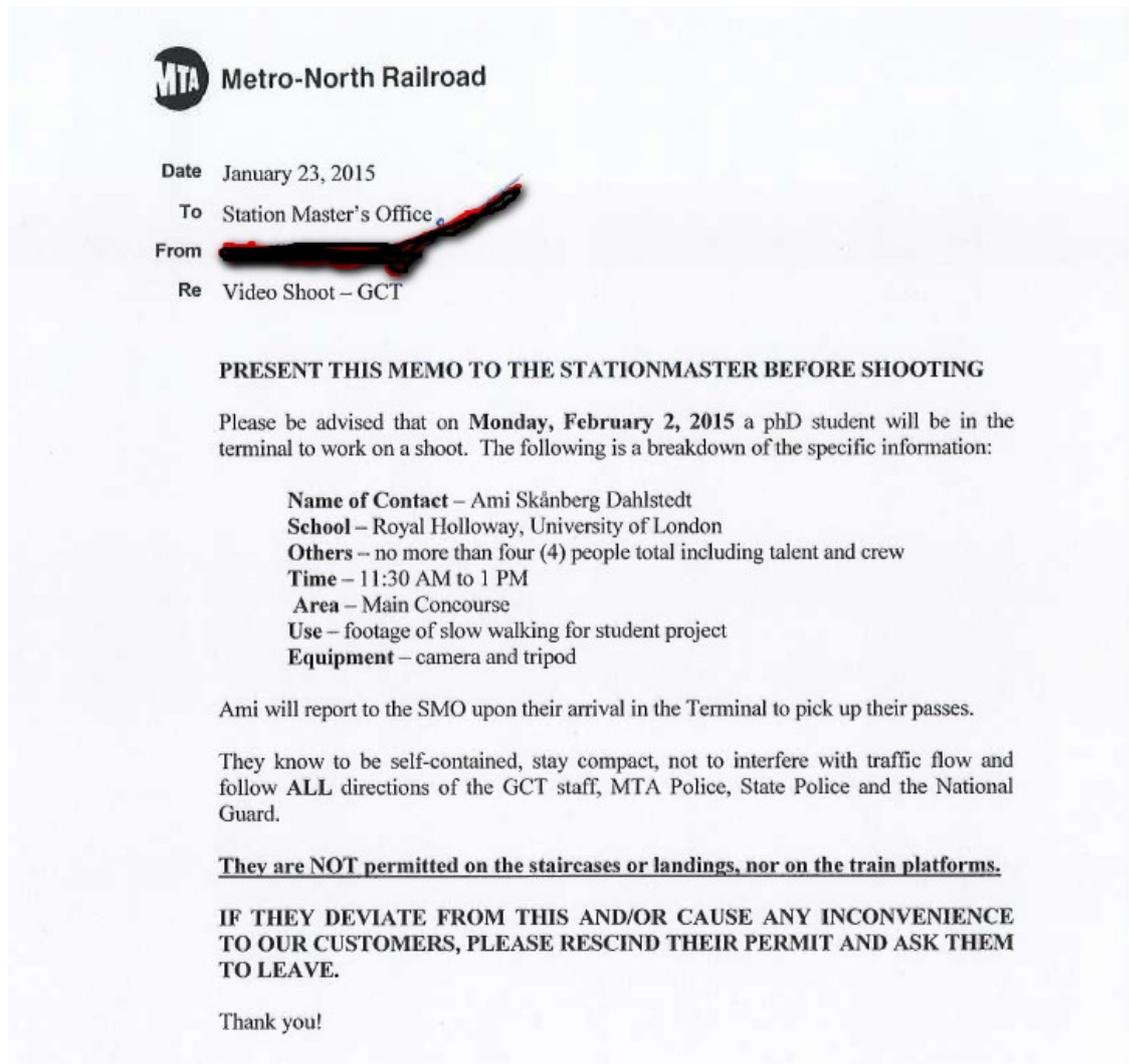


Figure 130. Permission from Metro-North Railroad to film at Grand Central Terminal Feb 2, 2015, New York City (Metro-North Railroad, 2015)

I provide a background to suriashi performed at Grand Central Terminal on Feb 2nd, 2015, beginning with the space itself. I applied for and received a permission to film 'footage of slow walking for student project', which you can see above (See Figure 20). I received four permits that we must show when asked. On the official webpage of The Grand Central Terminal there was a video of a fast forward clock, and in the background, there are thousands of people fast forwarding through space. There was also a quote by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: "Grand Central Terminal stands as a universal symbol between New York City's past and present" (Grand Central Terminal, 2015). This was a remarkable starting point for performing slow suriashi. We entered a space where there was already a strong narrative about many people passing through on rapid feet as time flew, reinforced by the

clock spinning fast. When Marika Blossfeldt, Susan Osberg and Muna Tseng and I practised suriashi together at Grand Central Terminal, we were able to experience the smaller narratives embedded in the bigger one.

Blossfeldt is an Estonian-American choreographer, Osberg is a North-American choreographer, Tseng is a Chinese-American choreographer, all three active in the New York City postmodern dance scene since the 1970s and 1980s. You find their webpages in Appendix I. My relationship to these choreographers is related to my work with Gun Lund, one of the founders of Gothenburg's first postmodern dance ensemble Rubicon.

I consider these choreographers to be my professional ancestors since their works have deeply affected my own, and this is why I invited them to my work with suriashi. For example, they taught non-Western performance techniques (kundalini yoga, Qi Gong and Butō) while being active in the postmodern dance scene in the middle of the important exchange between so called 'Eastern' and 'Western' practices (Eddy, 2002, George, 2014, Sellers-Young, 1998). They created solos based on narratives, which no one else in Sweden did at that time. They were also great advocators for dance as art, showing the importance of smaller organizations for sustainable futures. They showed that there were ways of working inside and outside 'the canon', and how each offspring from conventional dance practices lead to new findings, and yet new (conventional) dance practices. I wanted to pay my respect to these choreographers by giving something back, hence the idea to present suriashi as practice and performance together, and as a gift from student back to teacher. As a preparation for our suriashi, we practised together, and I explained Nishikawa Senrei's request to give space for whoever you consider your ancestor in the suriashi practice. All four of us were grounded in postmodern dance, and agreed we should not wear any specific costume as not to stand out from other pedestrians. However, it was decided that they would wear red gloves, and I brought three silk *obiage* of different colours. *Obiage* is a scarf traditionally used to for holding the obi and kimono together, but here they were worn as scarves.

The obstacles I had before this pilgrimage at Grand Central included the first, which was my own initial assumption of what slow suriashi practice had to achieve in the train station. I thought that suriashi not only had to activate something, it also had to resist something. My prejudice was that it had to be visible to be successful, like a flash mob, creating a surprise or stir in public space. The ideas of the Parisian Situationists still represented a 'construction of walking as an act of heroic resistance to norms', continued to affect my

own expectations of what suriashi must achieve Heddon (2012, 226). My second obstacle was related to the camera. In wanting to capture more of the space and finding more angles of suriashi in the surroundings, I was more behind the camera than in front of it. This caused a physical distance between me and Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng. The camera created more stir than the actual suriashi, however the camera was needed for my analysis of this experimental pilgrimage. Third, I was worried about performing suriashi at the huge Grand Central. There were armed guards and soldiers marching the station in full Desert Camouflage Uniforms. If we made a mistake, we would have our permits revoked and be escorted out of the building. Fourth, I was concerned with how Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng would embody suriashi and about the encounter between them and the audiences. Worrying about their well-being, I did not want to choreograph a clash. I anticipated what travellers and choreographers would experience from their positions. Speaking in Maseeyian terms, the choreographers bared the risk of being put on a different time scale and named as 'behind time' and 'late' by the travellers. The experience was very stressful with soldiers marching, guns pointing and guards constantly asking me for my official license to film. At first, this made me blind to the successful micro-activism brought forward by Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng walking in suriashi.

What happens to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi? After practising and documenting suriashi at Grand Central Terminal, I realized that suriashi did not have to resist anything in order to activate something. Suriashi could be "invisible", which in this case meant that it was absolutely not unnoticed but did not cause a stir. The pilgrimages performed in Paris and now New York City activated something. That something was space, and space was already moving, where bodies related to each other in flexible and unsettled patterns (Massey, 2013). Even though our performance was not detected by a big crowd, it created a counterbalance to the regular speed, to powerful companies renting public space for marketing purposes, and to soldiers marching the station for the safety of its dwellers, however it was never confrontational. Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng walking slowly in suriashi evoked curiosity, interest and play. The terminal, with its fast commuters, paused for a while and turned into a micro space for reflection. People rushing for their trains stopped, smiled, and called out: "You will never make it to the train!" People waiting for friends leaned back and followed the slow suriashi performance with sympathy. Tourists took photographs. Children started to practise suriashi next to the choreographers.

Watch the video documentation from Grand Central Terminal. New York City, Feb 2, 2015

[Video 1: 2:07:51 - 2:28:46](#)

The longer you watch, you start to see details of the practice and of the space.

Slow and fast movements coexist.

You might want to try to walk in suriashi in your local train station.

Contrary to my worries, the choreographers had great experiences from practising suriashi at the Grand Central, which I first could not see from my camera position. Susan Osberg expressed that suriashi 'is a form of spiritual activism - to slow down to such an extent, and to feel that your presence, a sheer presence in a space, walking and moving through people as a pedestrian – but not anymore (a pedestrian)' (Osberg, 2015). Marika Blossfeldt enjoyed the simplicity of the physical task, and 'to be able to really ground yourself, and then just move in this meditative way where you are emptying out and become very connected to the ground, the earth, and also to the sky, heavens. On the question of the visibility of our practice, she replied: 'Not everybody noticed, but the people who did notice, they were really mesmerized. They were respectful. They were waiting for us to pass. It was amazing' (Blossfeldt Marika, 2015).

Muna Tseng thought it was 'such an interesting way of entering the body.' She found it meaningful to follow the ancestral engagement in suriashi: 'that you dance with assistance from your ancestors supporting your back'. She thought it enhanced 'the meditative quality where the body became an empty vessel, open for whatever there is' (Tseng, 2015). Tseng also enjoyed 'the four of us practising and breathing together in the vast hall of Grand Central Terminal with all the space around us and all the different tempi of the people walking around, running around, some stopping and looking at us' (Tseng, 2015)

After a full day of practice, Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng decided to walk again near Lincoln Center. They found new walkable spaces. They became my accomplices, sharing a desire to bring slowness to spaces. We even discovered how Lincoln Center's rolling LED display was practising suriashi together with us. Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng with their profound experience of modern and postmodern dance techniques showed me yet a slower pace for practising suriashi, which I chose to carry into future practices for slowing down even more. The pilgrimage at Grand Central was made in order to explore what suriashi activated in

space when more people participated. Practising with these three experienced choreographers also consolidated how useful and important suriashi was for dance practitioners of any genre.

Suriashi at Judson Church

My thesis asked what suriashi might activate in urban or other spaces. In this section, I show how the activation happened in a historical space, thus engaging with legacy on many levels. On February 5th, 2015, suriashi was put in yet a conversation with postmodern techniques, as the pilgrimage travelled to a space that was almost sacred for contemporary and postmodern dance: Judson Church. The space influenced the practice in relation to the legacy of space. Judson Church was laden with narratives of mythological proportions (Banes, 1977, Banes, 1993a, Nakajima and Brandstetter, 2017, Novack, 1990, Rainer, 2013). Suriashi landed in Judson Church, which since 1960s represented the informal (and inexpensive) spaces that were so important for the development of postmodern dance (Banes, 1977, Novack, 1990). Here was where pedestrian techniques were used in search for new choreography, and where the first the first concert of dance took place on July 6, 1962 with works by Rainer, Paxton, David Gordon, Alex and Deborah Hay, Fred Herko, Elaine Summers, William Davis, and Ruth Emerson (Johnston, 1962) Today, still a functioning church and also the home to Movement Research, the space housed experimental dance practices as well as spiritual practices (Movement Research, 1978).

At Judson Church, I organized a suriashi practice and talk with one of my first teachers (after Rubicon) of postmodern dance technique: Langland. For this investigation, I acknowledge him as one of my professional ancestors. I argue that part of his knowledge as choreographer and dance educator was transmitted and archived in my body. I describe what our practising together activated, and I revisit our talk after the practice. Langland, like Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng, is a prominent figure in New York City's postmodern scene. Langland worked with Steve Paxton in depth from 1972 when Contact Improvisation was being developed. (You find Langland's webpage in the Appendix I). Our practice together enabled yet new reflections on legacy of living masters and ephemeral dance practices.

The phenomenological concept of Körper/Leib was present as I researched the differences and similarities between suriashi and other dance practices such as contact improvisation. In *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* by choreographer and anthropologist Cynthia Novack (1947-1996) wrote: 'as I started to experience an

internalized sensation of moving, my image of what my movement looked like for an observer dropped away, and I became immersed in the feeling of tiny changes of weight and the smallest movement of my joints (Novack, 1990, 152). Her writing reminded me of my encounter with Contact Improvisation as taught by Langland and wondered whether practising suriashi gave a similar experience to him.

Bare feet and “natural” movement

The desire for “natural” movement in postmodern dance meant approaching the pedestrian and urban space, performing in urban spaces, however in the dance studio the pedestrian dancer was barefoot. In relation to how dance practice historically has shifted, dancing barefoot was provocative even in my own educational background (with specific shoes for ballet, modern, jazz, flamenco, tap). I therefore organized a barefoot suriashi session with Langland, acknowledging that the feet also have been targets for liberation – from shoes (see earlier accounts in Chapter Four). Langland was the first teacher of Contact Improvisation, in 1991, at Balettakademien in Sweden, and one of the first to teach the technique in Sweden. His classes were always conducted barefoot, and we were encouraged to develop a tactile relation to the floor through our feet. I compare this briefly with suriashi practice at Senreinokai, where we could not even enter the dressing rooms without wearing tabi, the white split-toe socks. In that way, we respected the space for practice through our feet prepared for suriashi. However, in Heian Era, Shirabyōshi did not wear tabi, their feet were bare under the nagabakama (Nonaka, 2012). Combining my both legacies from postmodern dance techniques and Japanese dance, I used bare feet as a performative gesture of liberation for the 2012 performance invoking Shirabyōshi (Dahlstedt, et al., 2012). Here, the bare feet represented the desire to remove all the layers of fabric, commitments, roles, rules, positions that Shirabyōshi had had to play in her life belonging to and being subservient a particular clan, and as a messenger of a sacred art form. I lifted the nagabakama and walked slowly on bare feet (Dahlstedt, 2014b). At Judson Church, performing barefoot suriashi with Langland enabled the tactile sensation of the different surfaces, where the wooden floor confirmed its legacy as a space for dance, but the marble floor reminded that this space was still a church, and it was Reverend Donna Schaper who gave me permission to use the space.

Langland’s expertise in various postmodern techniques was valuable as he so clearly could describe his experience of walking in suriashi and compare it with other dance walking. He has been very important for my artistic and educational reflections. Each of his classes were unique, offering new perspectives on where dance improvisation can take us. He brought

politics to the dance floor, which co-existed with a meditative exploration of the body's internal and external movements. His teaching was based on the somatic techniques, which emerged during postmodernism's restless 'quest to re-examine existing physical training techniques' (Langland, 2012). It was helpful to hear his words on what he found to be significant with suriashi, and also about his experience of practising on the street. My sharing of suriashi practice with Paul Langland at Judson Church, and the following interview evoked memories of our first encounter, and of dance education in the 1990ies.

Watch the video recorded at Judson Church, where I teach

Paul Langland suriashi, on February 5th 2015.

The video has the audio recording overlaid on the visual of us practicing.

Please turn off the volume if you prefer a corporeal reminder without a discussion about dance education.

Practise with us.

Think of a teacher you have had whom you would like to practise again with.

[Video 1: 2:37:12 - 2:51:22](#)

The first part is filmed inside Judson Church.

The second part is filmed on Broadway, outside Tisch School of the Arts Experimental Theatre Wing, where Langland is an Arts Professor.

Notice at 2:48:11 how some students discover Langland and try the posture quickly before running down Broadway.

During and after the suriashi practice, Langland and I did not discuss gender in detail, mainly since I asked more about the constraints of the technique (of the feminine), in relation to postmodern dance and the pedestrian, and not in relation to gender. However, Langland's work and background in contact improvisation - a technique 'which did not segregate male from female participants' serving as a 'model for communal living and sharing, group decision making, and the sharing of power' - showed an attempt to avoid gender specific movements (Foster, 2001, 180).

Instead, the suriashi pilgrimage to Judson Church and Broadway activated issues of dance, aging and vision, where we could compare certain aspects of suriashi and postmodern dance techniques. There was no outspoken relationship to ancestors in postmodern dance, however the technique engaged with aspects of time and ways of sharing the space equally, which

were similar to suriashi (even though space shared in suriashi meant engaging with spirits and ancestors). In addition, the focus on the experiential in both suriashi and in postmodern dance practices worked as an antidote to superficial concepts of time and space. For example, time in many dance techniques, 'always seems to be running out: training should not start "too late" (Hamera, 2007, 64). The timeline for many dance techniques were predictable in that sense, pushing dance practitioners along a timeline that did not support different bodies, maturity, ageing. 'The technique is so demanding that, even at the moment of mastery, it begets a backward glance: "When I was younger, lighter, speedier..." (2007, 64). We discussed whether this way of thinking was related to visually centred dance practices, where there is almost a rule of conquering a space with one's body, surviving in the visual world. We problematized how certain postmodern techniques and suriashi bared the risk to be seen as 'not specific' or 'not rigorous' enough to be acknowledged as professional practices (2015). We both agreed that we have sight against us when we engage with movements that do not come out as very impressive. Our discussion echoed the theme of this thesis, where suriashi reinforced a different speed, a different presence in space, which was as rigorous as other visually centred dance practices. It particularly echoed my own experiences from walking alone in Paris, but also the pilgrimage with Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng, which showed that less impressive dance practices still affects space and people. Langland's own reflection on suriashi was that it is:

...one of those forms where every single shape and aligned postural choice is registered. Even a quarter of an inch. Leaning back is a big difference, or how your eyes or face can become open and focused. It is not perhaps immediately evident, by looking at it. But at least when I am doing it, I can feel...aaah! Now I'm really doing it, and woops, I lost it. But it's really a question of millimeters. I find that fascinating. I loved it. (Langland, 2015).

Even though Langland and I only practiced on two occasions, (Judson Church and Broadway) he grasped the specificity of suriashi, such as the leaning back (confirming your ancestors) and the eyes directed to the horizon (and spirits glancing behind). This was linked to his long experience of dance techniques that 'extend and alter the metaphors of vision' and progressed to observing and responding in the flesh' (Hammergren, 1996, 54). Langland was also able to define his own view on technique and virtuosity, which valued the slow and less visible: 'Oh, wait a minute. I paused for one second too short. That's virtuosic if you can understand that' (2015). I continued by asking Langland whether there were possible

connections between 'suriashi and walking' with how postmodernists invited the pedestrian movements for the dance scene. I worried that suriashi was too constructed for postmodernists. Langland replied that in postmodern dance and contemporary performance, there was a lot of interest in traditional techniques, meditative work and culturally specific work. He compared suriashi with practices like Continuum and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's *cerebrospinal fluid motion*, where the task was to enter a very subtle and precise moment with openness and exactitude (2015).

In Chapter Four, I explored slowness and suriashi and found a connection where postmodern dance practitioners in the 1970s began to critique the athlete centrism in Western dance. Therefore, postmodern techniques shared a connection with suriashi since both techniques provide space for mature performers. In addition, both practices engage with the pedestrian from different perspectives. Further, Langland's experience from practising suriashi on Broadway was that he was able to deepen the focus and connection with suriashi *because of* all the chaos around him (Langland, 2015). It was an experience of being with self in a very crowded and very rushed environment. He thought there was such a stark contrast that it became enjoyable to do the slow suriashi walk while in the periphery noticing the incredible speed and energy around him. It made him realize that when people were moving quickly on the street, they were not necessarily moving point to point. They were only thinking about their goal. Thus, he sensed brusqueness and impatience around him. When he walked through the doors of Tisch School of the Arts, he felt that there was a quickly mounting anger about how much time he was taking getting through the doors, and therefore he sped up in the end. Overall, he enjoyed very much walking down the sidewalk with the crowds around him. He said that being able to see the city, he was able to see the people around him and be more sensitive to the energy that exists on a New York sidewalk on a crowded afternoon (2015).

With his many years of experience of postmodern dance, Langland promptly understood the complexity of suriashi. He agreed that suriashi was rigorous as so many other postmodern techniques - even though our sights fail to acknowledge it - and that the rigour was important to explore for artists. He also expressed that slow suriashi activated a critique of our speed-up society, related to what suriashi did to a space like Broadway and Wall Street where everyone is in a hurry. Comparing his own experience with my own at Place Pigalle, Langland represented the solo dancer, following the slow rhythm of suriashi, which is only slow in relation to the other rhythms on Grand Central or Place Pigalle.

Suriashi on 5th Avenue

In this section I continue to engage with the question on what happened to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi. This pilgrimage engaged with walking and the everyday. For this journey's last experimental pilgrimage, I invited my teacher and mentor of screendance since 1997, Douglas Rosenberg, to a walk in suriashi (you find his webpage in Appendix I). This took place on February 4th, on 5th Avenue, and in a corner of Central Park just outside the Metropolitan Museum of Arts after not having seen each other for sixteen years. For our walk, I asked Rosenberg to engage with suriashi and the everyday, as if suriashi was something of the ordinary. Rather than trying to explain in words to Rosenberg what my thesis was about, we allowed time and space to experience it ourselves together, through our own bodies. Rosenberg is an artist and theorist working with screendance. He had previous experiences of Japanese moving techniques and some walking meditations with the actor Yoshi Oida in San Francisco and Paris, which provided a background for his encounter with suriashi.

Here is the documentation of the walk in suriashi near the Metropolitan Museum of Arts with Douglas Rosenberg.

I propose that you watch our walk simultaneously while reading:

[Video 1: 2:28:47 - 2:37:11](#)

The suriashi pilgrimage on 5th Avenue activated suriashi's potential as a friendship practice. Performance scholar Nicolas Whybrow discussed 'an opportunity to view art as containing the potential to be doing work or to be 'serious play' (2011, 35). Our suriashi meeting showed the possibility to practise suriashi as work, as a collegial activity, 'serious play'. It became an extended conversation about where to place our artistic activities in the everyday. Suriashi invoked reflections on legacy, since I was walking in suriashi with my screendance teacher, while documenting this on camera. Conventionally, I met Rosenberg in a teacher-student situation, where he was the director, chair, or photographer. In that sense our roles in this meeting in suriashi were different, with me mounting the camera and directing the practice. Our suriashi brought up daily artistic practices, finding new ways of working

continuously. Rosenberg explained that since he works as an artist and art educator, practices like these are common on a daily basis for him through workshops, teachings, and festivals. He meant that this day was thus an ordinary day in the life of an artist, however special since suriashi was new. Besides his experience of suriashi with the minutiae of focus, he also acknowledged friendship (Rosenberg, 2015). Physically, he explained that he was able to slow down, focusing, sense the lower body, and the stress of the quadriceps and legs. He was aware of the people around, people watching. He elucidated the fact that people tried not to watch or did not try to make eye contact, which did not allow further social engagement (Rosenberg, 2015). I revisit my own journaled experiences from our practice:

The people around us, our involuntary co-dancers, passed in different rhythms, which amplified our slowness. When watching the video, I saw how we were walking on the diagonal, a powerful line often used in solos and pas de deux:s on the Western dance stage. Suriashi usually activated the hashigakari, the bridgeway for spirits, but practicing with Douglas, I focused more on following the rhythm of his steps, and worried if he was in pain. Also, the way we were placed in the frame showed a rather traditional placement on stage, and in dance film. I noticed a ballet dancer stretching her legs behind us. After a couple of walking steps, she grabbed the handrail and started to do battement jetées, exercises from the classical ballet. Her rhythm was different from ours. Ours was consistent, hers was changing. The space had its own lightning, its own sound scape; sound of our slow feet, of faster footsteps, birds singing, cars accelerating, buses braking. Augmented through suriashi.

Douglas had no previous experience of the 'feminine' suriashi but revealed that the practice had invoked a sense of femininity. Suriashi in the park was peaceful but our lumbar spines were very sore from keeping the exaggerated 'womanly' spinal arch. I felt the pain more strongly, since I worried the practice was too strenuous for Douglas. It took time for the skeleton and muscles to release.

This practice was a surprise since it elucidated the loneliness felt practising suriashi on the streets alone. For my investigation of the solitary walker in Paris, I described how no one dared to approach me with questions while I was walking alone in suriashi. This created an experience of empowerment and safety. The feminine suriashi technique composed presence of tension, functioning like a shield for the flâneuse. However, it was a lonely practice. The loneliness provided the flâneuse with safety but also a sense of being

unwanted and monstrous. It felt good to walk with someone else. (Dahlstedt 2014-2019)

Suriashi as walking and friendship practice activated new questions, which were related to gendered experiences of space. Walking alone in suriashi in Paris asked how the flâneuse walker could move without harassment. Walking with mentors/professional ancestors in New York City, helped me let go of the guard, while processing the heroic stamina of the lonely flâneuse.

New York City concluded, with an opening

Massey asked how one might dance spatial disagreements (2011, 38). Her question worked as a creative tool for dance making in the studio. A group of dancers could process that question in an artistic way as a way to create new choreography. However, suriashi moved outside the dance context provided more controversy. In New York City, suriashi developed to become a practice together with mentors, which counteracted the detachment of practising alone outside the studio, and of being a foreigner in a city. It was part of my attempt to process the space for ancestors in suriashi, and where we might place them as we walk. However, my practice also encountered more spatial restrictions, more engagements with guards intervening, and with people asking me to leave. This was provoked by the camera rather than the slow walking, but it confirmed something about shrinking spaces for social interaction, art and dance. The first example of spatial disagreement was when I practised suriashi alone on Wall Street for this thesis (Appendix C). While performing, I sensed that I was not existing at the same time as the other pedestrians, with the incredible speed they triggered each other to keep. Their speed provoked me to move even slower, however very few pedestrians noticed suriashi, and if they did, they were annoyed. The security guards at Wall Street were of a more authoritarian kind, more ready for forceful intervention, and more intimidating. The second example I refer to was Grand Central, where so many guards stopped me, I was doubting whether we could proceed. Also, since one of the guards at Grand Central was not guarding the safety of commuters, but assuring that I was not transgressing the line to the space rented by one of the biggest brands in the world. The third example was an argument with a guard outside the Metropolitan Museum, who stopped me even though he just had given me permission to film suriashi in that space. I asked: "What are you protecting? What will hang on these walls in the future if we cannot make art here now?" Massey would call these examples acts of 'the purification of space',

which is waged, through the employment of security guards (2005, 94). Suriashi as experimental pilgrimage brought up new reflections on which spaces get resources for being guarded, archived, and what are considered as safe practices in shared spaces, and what acts needed to be protected from whom. These are very important reflections to be made when we create art in urban spaces.

I found the presence of security guards, armed police and soldiers worrying, they played to my fears. Their role was to create security and safety, to 'purify space', however the atmosphere around them felt treacherous. Yet so many resources were spent to make travellers moving through that space feel safe. It is engaging to compare Massey's words on 'the purification of space' through security guards, with Orikuchi's explanation of how 'wandering around the stage' in Japanese dance represented 'sanctifying the space by treading down the evil spirits' (Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984, 33). However, I do not make the claim that suriashi as experimental pilgrimage was able to sanctify the space. Blossfeldt, Osberg and Tseng walking slowly through the Grand Terminal were not able to calm down space, but their act unarguably created more opportunities for being together in space. Suriashi walking elucidated the need for more plural presences in public space. I bring these shared experiences from peers, mentors and ancestors with me on my own continuous experimental pilgrimage in suriashi. However, two years later my creative investigation of suriashi gave me new surprising details about my further ancestral connections to New York, which I write about in Chapter Nine.

Experimental pilgrimage with peers in London

Influenced by what suriashi activated in New York City, the following pilgrimages investigate suriashi with nondancers to gather experiences informally. Informal walks like these were welcome in the emerging contemporary walking research field (Meher, 2020, Mock, 2012, Smith, 2010). They could be walks negotiating landmarks such as London Bridge, or creating alternative walks to such landmarks. Walks could function as what walking artists Smith, Hodge and Turner called counter-tourism or mis-guides (Persighetti Hodge, Smith, & Turner, C. 2018, p33). These ambulatory practices were created in order to be sensitive to dominant narratives about public space, regarding monuments and statues. They correspond to scholar Chin-Yuen Cheung's pointing towards a new orientation of pilgrimages, performed closer to your home, related more to everyday practices and societal engagements (Cheung, 2018a).

Walking in suriashi with friends and colleagues with no other goal than to experience something together added to this research and showed a potential for suriashi extending professional dance practice. They act as a counterbalance to the meticulously planned suriashi research walks. The rationale altered their context and therefore the motive for their performance. I describe four suriashi walks with peers in London. You find more informal suriashi walks in the durational video documentation.

The first walk took place on February 12th on London Bridge with the artist Ignacio Jarquin, the second and third on the same day at Barbican Centre and Piccadilly Circus with artistic researcher Dr Lucy Lyons. The fourth suriashi walk took place on February 15th in Victoria Park, East London, with Lucy Lyons, the teacher Eddie Haigh, the composer Palle Dahlstedt, the young students Constance Haigh and Egil Dahlstedt. We carefully selected the spaces for suriashi walks together. Jarquin chose London Bridge, and Lyons and Haigh chose a smaller bridge in Victoria Park. Lyons also chose Barbican Centre and Piccadilly Circus.

If you have the possibility, run the video while reading. Practice with us.

London suriashi pilgrimages

[Video 2: 0:21:17 - 54:53](#)

London Bridge with Igancio Jarquin, Feb 12th

[Video 2: 0:21:17 - 29:21](#)

Barbican Center with Lucy Lyons, Feb 12th

[Video 2: 0:39:16 - 44:22](#)

Picadilly Circus, with Lucy Lyons, Feb 12th

[Video 2: 0:44:23 - 46:39](#)

Victoria Park, with Egil Dahlstedt, Palle Dahlstedt, Constance Haigh, Eddie Haigh and Lucy Lyons, Feb 12th

[Video 2: 0: 46:41 - 54:53](#)

Each of us had individual experiences, but similar questions were processed; such as how others accept or not accept new social behaviour. Additionally, the suriashi pilgrimages at London Bridge and Barbican Centre were discovered by two visually impaired pedestrians. This happened when I assumed that our suriashi walks were completely invisible with people rushing along, too busy to notice. The only persons who noticed and reacted upon our slowness were the visually impaired pedestrians. On London Bridge, I saw them from afar. They walked with a white stick sweeping it before them from left to right. They stopped really close and asked: *‘Why are you standing still here?’* to which I replied: *‘I am walking. But slowly.’* It was a memorable moment, where we caught our breaths, paused and acknowledged each other. The moment reminded not to rely on sight only, but to sense and respond in the flesh’ (Hammergren (1996, 54). I edited this part out from the video, since they involuntarily became soloists, and it would not have been ethical to have included them without their consent.

London Bridge February 12th 2015

The first London suriashi pilgrimage chosen for this section was performed with Ignacio Jarquin on London Bridge a Thursday afternoon at 5 pm. It is documented on video as seen above (Video 2), but I also recorded an interview with him. The summary of his talk recollected for this thesis comes from the same interview, thus I only cite it once in the beginning (Jarquin, 2015). Jarquin, born in Mexico City, at the time of the suriashi performance based in London, works as an artist and music director. We met at the summer course *Noh Training Project UK* at University of Reading and Royal Holloway in 2013 and 2014, thus he was familiar with the suriashi practised in Nō theatre. He chose London Bridge as our suriashi space because he was curious of its intensity, uniting the riverbeds, carrying travellers from several train lines. We walked for an hour, and then gathered to process our experiences afterwards. Jarquin’s first comment was that our suriashi performance’ felt like a meditation, like going beyond this world’. At the same time, suriashi offered the perspective of ‘looking at yourself from afar’, where Jarquin’s experience was that we co-existed in two different spaces at the same time. Being there, on the bridge, however at the same time not being there. ‘Physically there, breathing with your partner, entering this other dimension in the present’. Sensing the intensity and the speed around us but insisting on moving slow he found to be a very profound and beautiful experience. Jarquin sensed the composed presence of tension, functioning like a shield for the flâneuse: ‘there was a very powerful energy coming out of us, especially when we were really synchronized in the “suriashi reality”. Nothing else was important to us’, and Jarquin meant

that people noticed this presence from us. People stopped and turned around and looked at us and slowed down and had a thought. Jarquin said that a woman purposely pushed him with her bag, although for some we were invisible. He thought that 'suriashi became an obstacle for the others, a new reality right in front of you, very slow and very intriguing, which probably made you aware of your own way of your own walking along, of your own reality. We provided London Bridge a new reality'.

Jarquin experienced the change of light as we were walking. A metaphor for 'the passing of time, the one step after the other, one step measuring the next step. This very slowly, very rhythmic, you get this awareness of time passing by and you having a lot of space within that reality that is slowed down to its smallest expression'. Jarquin thought that 'rather than disrupting or disturbing the bridge, suriashi created a passage between one dimension and the other, which was created as we were walking along'. For me the walk on London Bridge was a very strong experience, related to the symbolic value of the bridge, a landmark. Walking in suriashi on this bridge became a tool to keep one's integrity in a crowded space. Following the artistic practice of Phil Smith, suriashi represented an alternative to the tourist guide – a mis-guide even (Persighetti Hodge, Smith, & Turner, C. 2018, p33). I sensed that for each step, the bridge grew, which was similar to what Jarquin explained – that the movement gave us a passageway between the suriashi world and the real world, just like the *hashigakari* in the Nō theatre (see Chapter Six). Contrary to Jarquin I did not notice any reactions, I assumed we remained unnoticed during the whole walk, except by the visually impaired person. I worried that the experience was painful for Jarquin. Learning that he was pushed by someone was disconcerting, but Jarquin reassured he did not feel threatened. We both agreed suriashi gave us agency to act in a new way, and that walking together provided support for the performance, where we could loosen the flâneurian shield.

Barbican Centre and Piccadilly Circus February 12th 2015

One's sense of safety can be affected by awareness of how one's gender, sexuality, ethnicity and other aspects of identity might circulate within dominant social registers. Walking through urban spaces in different times engenders a sensitivity to situations changing. The second and third London pilgrimage analysed in this section was performed with visual artist and researcher Lucy Lyons. These pilgrimages became our embodied discussion on visibility, where we both sensed the practice was empowering after a while. Our slow practice showed something important about valuing simplicity. We were attentive to these,

we could value them, and then let them pass, disappear, to reappear again. I share my personal recollection from the walk:

*Even though we did not start out with an ideal relationship to the city,
already experienced in how the subject formation of the flâneuse is
fraught with oppression.*

*Still, we were assisted by the floating sensation
through Barbican's concrete walls.*

Fear and alertness sharpened our presence.

Suriashi permitted determined proceeding.

Falling through the universe.

At the same pace.

A friendship sailing, our shoulders almost touching.

We will not leave each other's side.

We are in this together.

Together invincible. (Dahlstedt 2015-2019)

Walking in suriashi at night at Piccadilly Circus was a different experience. This was one of the few times where the practice did not reach through in regards of empowerment and the sensing of the space, specific to suriashi. It was here impossible to understand if our invisibility was related to gender or if it was related to a space that was filled with too many people going somewhere else at the same time. Piccadilly Circus was too busy, too clogged for any interaction to happen, which for a thesis is not a failure, but a reply to what suriashi could or could not activate in urban space. It functioned as a critique of a landmark in London when experienced through the senses and not the eyes. The outcome was related to our expectations of making a small, performative gesture, but we were too saddened by the experience:

A rainy evening in London

A pilgrimage of invisibility and humiliation

Massey is right

*This is exactly that space for passing through,
cutting across*

as if nonexistent
Bodies aim for activities that begin at certain times
Bodies aim in straightforward patterns
There is no here, no now

The in-between-spaces does not appear
Although we have been there practising for quite a while
no hashigakari is formed in front or back of us
No bridge way for interactions
We did not turn into ghosts
We just never became visible
We were bulldozed by sound, speed, force
One more step and we get hit
Saddened
Flattened. (Dahlstedt, 2015-2019)

Victoria Park February 15th 2015

The fourth suriashi pilgrimage with peers and friends in London took place in Victoria Park. Here, suriashi became an activity where the odd and strange became familiar. However, this was discovered in relation to my previous pilgrimages in Paris, London and New York. Research projects contain many layers of loneliness and responsibility, but also support and collaboration, and this is my way of acknowledging them also in the thesis. It was important for the continuation of this practice to also share my research explorations of suriashi with friends and family. They worked as a counteract to the lonely, heroic researcher, where the suriashi practice built yet new expressions and became more playful than ceremonial. This did not mean that this walk was not a big effort for those involved. Constance Haigh, then fourteen years old found the walk empowering. She said that she did not care about anyone else: 'I am walking, so what!' (2015). Eddie Haigh revealed that he found it very wary to start with. As he progressed along, he became more self-conscious and aware of other members of public stopping and staring. 'My mind was being taken over with the realization that others were looking at me doing this on a Sunday afternoon', he explained. Overall, however it felt good. He felt the lower back in the posture, but it became less painful when he adjusted the posture. Eddie Haigh explained that he would not feel comfortable volunteering to practise suriashi again in public, however he could imagine indoor practices in the future

(2015). Egil Dahlstedt, fifteen years old, found the walk very slow. He felt as everyone was looking at us wondering what we were doing. Lucy Lyons, with a long experience of visual arts and research expressed:

This is an intervention into – if you like – the normal world or the world where it is being seen as other or different, so we could be seen as being obstructive or alien or strange or even dangerous or just crazy. That then places you perhaps in a position of vulnerability, which you become very self-aware but also aware of your own vulnerability. As well as of your own difference. But then, once you get into the zone of it and the rhythm of it – you just focus on that and you just want to be thinking about your bending, your knees and where your feet are placed, without looking at them. (Lyons, 2015)

What was similar to the group of walkers was the uncomfortable experience of being watched, which was intimidating, however the practice enabled something else to focus on. There was no purpose of overcoming sensations of being vulnerable. Suriashi provided a silent and focused space, but it was not a detached practice. Sensing ‘the others’ was something positive for humans as well as researchers. In Victoria Park, a person came up to us and asked respectfully what we were doing. The person had enjoyed the slow intervention from a bench and waited until we were available for a chat. He asked if we were practising Butō, Japan’s (post)modern dance. This meant there was something in our practice that we managed to make intelligible. Suriashi did not cause fear, but curiosity. These kinds of informal walks were something to explore more in the future in the many forums for walking as research, which I briefly described in Chapter Four. The spontaneous suriashi practised with an eighty-seven-year-old female pedestrian in Tokyo is yet an example of what happens when suriashi engages with amateurs and pedestrians (see Chapters Seven and Nine). In Appendix C, I point to an informal, playful suriashi pilgrimage performed in a residency with dance critic Inta Balode in Latvia, 2018.



3. Do not crowd, sprint, play or fight on the steep and narrow roads and trestles. Do not appreciate the scenery while walking. And do not walk while appreciating the scenery. Keep off the



Figure 21. Signs advocating for slow walking at the Juyongguan Great Wall (Dahlstedt, 2018b)

This section sews together some of the mythological narratives of *suriashi* and its ancestor step *uho*, which I explored in Chapter Three. In August 2018, I went to China to present *suriashi* as a feminist strategy at the International Japanese Philosophy Association and the 24th World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing (Uehara, 2018). My project was met with great interest from the Japanese philosophers, and *suriashi* became a new reference for many participants, both during and after the congress. *Suriashi* proved particularly helpful for scholar Chin-Yuen Cheung, who crafted his own peaceful protest based on *suriashi*, described in Chapter Eight.

In Chapter Three, I wrote about how the walking and stomping rituals of Japanese dance were ‘integrally related to the Chinese practice of *uho* - a Daoist walking ritual whereby the effect of certain stars, considered potentially harmful, was neutralized through walking and foot stamping movements’ (Lancashire, 2001, 36). With the help of Wang Xue, an expert of

traditional Chinese dance and a postgraduate student at Beijing Dance Academy, I gathered brief information on uho, the ancestral walking step related to suriashi, as outlined here. In Beijing, I performed suriashi in spaces that the Philosophy Congress [WCP] had organized for participants to visit, such as the Great Wall and Forbidden City. These pilgrimages are found in the video, and I also share my process journals from these experiences below (Video 4).

My claim was that the mythological functions of these steps could be interpreted as societal engagement and therefore the mythology also supported the importance of choreographed walking and helped to defend practices that seemed too illogical and ghostly for our time. I did not engage with the exact historical and spatial origin of the step, instead I explored how these steps were being used by martial arts practitioners and dancers in China today.

Let the video documentation from Beijing run in the background.

Walk with me to

Mutianyu Great Wall

Forbidden City

Tiananmen Square

Walking demonstration with Wang Xue

Juyongguan Great Wall

Temple of the Earth

[Video 4: 1:49:53](#) - 2:21:44

On August 19th, 2018, I met Wang Xue, a dancer and an expert of traditional Chinese dance. At the informal meeting she provided some oral background on uho, the Chinese ancestor to suriashi, which she however did not demonstrate physically. Instead, I have included a short excerpt from my interview where Wang Xue demonstrated two other steps important in Chinese dance (Video 4). The summary of our talk recollected for this thesis comes from the same interview, thus I only cite it once in the beginning (Xue, 2018). Xue provided broader information on how the step uho had been used in various provinces and in which dynasties, and additionally its presence in folk dances and religious dances. For this thesis, I focus on

the underlying mythology, and how it might be interpreted today. In China, *uho* has a different pronunciation - *Yǔ bù*. Literally, *uho*/*Yǔ bù* means Emperor Yu's walking.



Figure 22. Wang Xue, 2018 (Instagram, 2018)

Xue read from books and showed video clips of Chinese traditional dances on Youtube. Emperor Yu's step was described as follows:

'It has been recorded that Emperor Yu had a leg disease from when he attempted to govern a flood, so that he no longer can walk like common people. Individuals call his step "Yǔ bù", and this step has been spread, especially in supernatural dances' (Ningning, 2009, translated by Wang Xue).

Xue explained that a record of the step could be found as early as the 4th century in the esoteric book *Baopuzi*, written by Ge Hong (Hong, 283-343), and that it was still performed

by professional shamans (*shigong*) in the GuangXi province, facing the border to Vietnam, and incorporated in Tai Ji, which was practised globally.

Xue showed several pictures of the Big Dipper, a notation for walking performed in order to calm down the stars of the Big Dipper using Emperor Yu's step, *Yǔ bù* (Ningning, 2009, translated by Wang Xue).



Figure 23. Emperor Yu's water control map, a Han Dynasty depiction (Wikipedia)

Xue explained the fascinating myth of Emperor Yu who fought the mythological *Great Flood*, a very demanding task regulating the waters – symbolizing the primordial chaos of the universe (See Figure 23). He worked so hard that he became lame on one side of his body. His faltering caused by the difficult performance of heroic acts then evolved into a walking choreography. Emperor Yu's limping step was incorporated in the *Seven Stars Gangbu*. His hard work was believed to establish the cosmic order. This act needed to be repeated by the coming generations to keep the cosmic order. The imperial palace in Forbidden City was built in a spot where the Big Dipper is always visible on the sky. This was thus the spot where professional dancers/walkers performed choreographed walking to calm down the universe, based on mythological narratives.

Xue continued to describe that Emperor Yu had to change the way he walked because he was injured. She left her chair and briefly demonstrated the slow limping step but explained that it was not studied at Beijing Dance Academy, thus she had not practised *Yǔ bù*/uho herself.

Xue instead showed several other basic walks from traditional Chinese dance and ran gracefully back and forth in the hotel room, leaning forward, rolling through the feet with knees together. She showed video clips of the same step used in performances. The step created a flowing expression, and with the legs covered by long skirts, it looked as if the dancers moved without feet, as if they were flying. The female dancers smiled; their expression directed outwards while they appeared like flying spirits in circular patterns.

Xue's walking lessons in the hotel room affected my subsequent walks in Beijing. Ending our walking interview, Xue showed a clip on Youtube where a male teacher in Ukraine taught Yǔ bù/uho outdoors as part of a Tai Ji Quan class (Kotlyar, 2015). The teacher demonstrated in detail to amateur practitioners how to practise the Yǔ bù/uho, which I normally would have watched and analyzed from a strictly technical perspective, such as the weight shifting, pace and alignment. However, experiencing the Yǔ bù/uho step moving from right to left as a reference to the injured Emperor Yu, activated yet new questions about correct walking. I reflected on how steps and choreographies hold narratives that change when they travel and are interpreted differently. Even though I practiced Tai Ji Quan and gong fu with teachers from the Shao Lin temple (Gothenburg, 2005-2008), I had never heard the narrative behind the step. These narratives provide more potentials to engage with the step, however as I processed in Chapter Three, narratives and naming of steps could be misused for the mythologising of bloodlines and the claiming of authenticity. There was yet a connection to be made between Emperor Yu's limping and the 1970 Street Action in New York City. Street Action by Yvonne Rainer's, Douglas Dunn's and Sarah Rudner's was performed to protest the United States' invasion of Cambodia, with dancers and artists walking slowly with heads lowered and swaying from side to side, described in Chapter Five. Rainer claimed the inspiration came from the movement of the factory workers in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (Rainer, 2013, 340). However, the choreographer of the scenes from *Metropolis* was unknown.

Xue shared more historical details about other walking steps, which I do not engage with in this thesis. There was much to explore from the creation narrative about the mythological Emperor suffering from illness and disability caused by hard, physical work, which can inform future research on integrating disability studies. What was important for my thesis was that Xue provided a reference that showed the connection between suriashi and Yǔ bù/uho, and also the connection between choreographed walking and societal engagement.

Xue also provided concrete images showing patterns that were drawn to interact and walk with the Big Dipper. They provided depth to my Beijing walks.

I share my process journals from suriashi pilgrimages in Beijing here:

Suriashi in the Forbidden City (August 15th, 2018)

In the middle of the Forbidden City: the Palace,

built right under the Big Dipper for prosperity of the imperial family and the people.

A palace where powerful Chinese Emperors, Empresses, and leaders resided, and where professional dancers/walkers performed rituals to calm down the universe.

Forbidden City is unbearably hot and crowded, but it is so huge with so many bridge ways of stone that there is space for everyone.

When the guide and group scatters, I finally manage to do my practice.

Suriashi in the palace is suitable, rational and logical. It is difficult to understand a space like Forbidden City, built in a spot where the Big Dipper is always visible on the sky from the Emperor's Palace. Being there. I am here.

I could not grasp the experience with words. However, I could understand the layers of times by sensing them through the body. Suriashi was my response in the flesh to this space.

Forbidden City was a central place for Daoist walking methods, walking to control the stars. However, the guide did not speak of it.

Is this suriashi then a performed mis-guide? The wind captures clothes, flags and conference bands. The wind blows through the western gate of the outer court. I walk slowly in the middle. To the right is the Emperor's reception room. There is no other walk suitable for me other than suriashi right here, right now.

Suriashi at Juyongguan Great Wall August 20th, 2018

The next day I climb the Juyongguan Great Wall. I decide to leave the group and walk in suriashi. Suriashi works as a flâneuse strategy, and I have turned down invitations with obtrusive co-walkers. I walk alone. I work. This is my work. The sun is cruel, but I bought a bamboo hat with wide brims, similar to what Emperor Yu wore in pictures.

The signs ask people to be careful and to slow down, but it is not enough: 'Watch your step.' 'Do not crowd, sprint, play or fight on the steep and narrow roads and trestles.'

People do not pay attention to the requests. 'Passage is narrow, please walk slowly on the right.' Out of the crowd of thousands of people, I am the only one following the sign.

'Do not appreciate the scenery while walking. And do not walk while appreciating the

scenery.' I walk and gaze in the horizon, using Hanayagi's 'golden gaze' and Zeami's 'Eyes look ahead, spirits look behind' (Hanayagi, 2008, 92, Zeami, 1984, 81). My gaze to the horizon and the slowness makes me alert, and I notice each rhythmical change around me. I walk in between a couple who are planning to photograph each other. They wait for me to pass, but while waiting they realize how slowly I move. Instead, they start to photograph me. A woman almost hits me in the eye with her selfie stick. I quickly raise my hand to protect my eye. A little boy has understood that the camera is probably mine and makes himself responsible to guard it. He waits for me at my camera and makes sure it is safe. Sweet. A group of people photograph themselves in front of a stone. Only one of them notices my intervention. I think I am being photographed.

Spirit Way, Shéndào, Aug 20th 2018

In the afternoon, I walk on the 2 km long Spirit Way lined with stone statues of generals, officials and animals. It is very hot, the sun is merciless, I wear the hat and the walk seems endless. Conference participants catch up and want to talk. I want to work. Under my hat, with my body. I try the walk that Wang Xue showed the night before, but at a slower pace. The rolling step immediately relieves the back, knees, hips, and feet. In addition, the pace is collected, which releases more patience and strength. It seems that energy is saved from collecting the limbs and by focusing on the centre of the body. In the heat, the cradling from left to right exhausts the stamina. I lean forward a bit, which gives each step an extra momentum rising. I fly, with knees together, on rolling feet. I work. This is my work. In addition, my flâneuse strategy works.

Temple of the Earth, August 21th, 2018

At 5 am, I take a taxi to Temple of the Earth, recommended by Tai Ji teacher Gudrun Gylling. This morning pilgrimage is about performing suriashi among Tai Ji-practitioners. Each corner of the park has activity, but there is space for all. Green and lovely. A man practices Jingju (Beijing Opera) by himself next to a tree. He practises a female role, he sings at a high pitch. Another man practices with a gong fu-stick. Five people walk in circular patterns around another tree with arms stretched out. A group dances energetically to pop songs. There are no Tai Ji-practitioners. I walk in suriashi. A guard walks up to my camera, I freeze, but he just laughs. I return to the hotel. At Modern Plaza, the shopping square, three elderly persons practise Tai Ji, wearing silk

uniforms. Their slow movements in the busy place are distinct from cars, people hurrying to work and school. (Dahlstedt, 2014-2019)

Please stand up and try to repeat experiences of arrhythmic walking, limping or faltering.

Imagine that you influence the stars while doing it.

How does this thinking affect your movements?

Henbai and *Yŭ bù/who* in Shinto dance, Kagura

[Video 2: 1:42:58](#) - 1:43:53

Wang Xue shows the flying step from traditional Chinese dance

[Video 4: 2:08:25](#) – 2:10:00

The pilgrimages above showed that the Parisian practising of *suriashi* as a *flâneuse* strategy continued to create spaces for safe embodied reflections in other locations. The historical spots were thoroughly examined from a slower, deep listening perspective. Also, discovering that *Tai Ji* was practised in the middle of a chaotic plaza, and not in the temple park, elucidated a kinship between the *Tai Ji* practitioners and my own practising *suriashi* in urban spaces. Travelling to Beijing and meeting with the Japanese Philosophy Association had important implications for my research. In the end of the next chapter, Chapter Eight, I describe how one of the participating scholars, Chin-Yuen Cheung, began to practise *suriashi* as feminist micro-activism, after taking part of my presentation in Beijing.

Chapter Eight:

Suriashi as archival and political activism

Chapter Eight continues to depict experimental pilgrimages but focuses specifically how suriashi worked as a critical and political practice. It replies to the question on how suriashi could be engaged in activism and politics. Here, suriashi engaged with my hometown Gothenburg's absent and present dance history as a practice-led 'archival activism' (Flinn, 2011). Suriashi was performed as a pilgrimage in the very heart of Gothenburg, both following independent choreographers' previous work, and asking new questions about artistic engagements in cities and city sponsored festivals. The chapter also includes a recollection from scholar Chin-Yuen Cheung, who inspired by my research performed suriashi as a feminist micro-activism at Yuen Long Station in Hong Kong (2019). The chapter ends by showing how the spatially targeted pilgrimage in Gothenburg became the frame for a new methodological workshop with artists and students at University of Gothenburg, which processed the question of elite dance practices in education. My suriashi workshop with them enabled an embodied discussion on artist's work in urban spaces, and where to find spaces for artistic work in the future.

Suriashi for this thesis became a critical practice, which is further shown in this chapter by revisiting and describing two experimental pilgrimages in urban spaces. Suriashi as experimental pilgrimage offered ways of understanding individual's social and political positioning, for example, through how its practice highlights issues of gender, space and politics. The first one was *Suriashi Intervention*, performed by independent choreographers,

artists and students at Gothenburg Culture Festival in August 2016. The second was an 'invisible' suriashi performed by the then Hong Kong-based scholar Ching-Yuen Cheung during the violent protests at Yuen Long Station in Hong Kong in July 2019. The two suriashi pilgrimages worked in similar ways, by creating new relations between aesthetic practice, dance and politics, between movements and monuments in the city as a way to critique the unequal distribution of power, and by looking for new ways to protest peacefully. In order to frame these concepts and apply them to an analysis of these walking experiments, I turn to scholars and practitioners who have influenced and defined society with regards to the artist; for example Astrid von Rosen's and Marsha Meskimmon's research project 'In the Footsteps of Rubicon', which 'sought to explore and articulate a specifically feminist approach to dance and the city' (von Rosen, 2018, 221). Inspired by Hammergren's flâneuse strategy (1996,54), I lean towards scholars researching spatial artistic practices and spatial relations (Borch, 2012, Massey, 2005, Mc Neill, 1997, Mouffe, 2007, Prickett, 2013). I also use my own empirical observations and experiences from participating in them. I state that the experiment and the analysis show suriashi and other dance practice's importance as a way to form democratic values, both in peaceful times and in times of crisis.

'Activism is WITH not AGAINST'

I investigate perspectives of suriashi that encouraged a more intertwined position with political discussions of space, democracy and dance practice. I examine how suriashi walking can take the shape of a critical art of inquiry, blurring the boundaries between aesthetic practice, inquiry, activism, and everyday life. The political theorist Chantal Mouffe asked whether artistic practices can play a critical role in a society where the difference between art and advertising have become blurred and where artists and cultural workers have become a necessary part of capitalist production (Mouffe, 2007, 1). She suggested we abandon the modernist idea of the avant-garde moving before everyone else, in order to oppose the program of total social mobilization of capitalism. Mouffe claimed that art can offer a chance for society to collectively reflect on the imaginary figures it depended upon (Holmes quoted by Mouffe, 2007, 1). I state that we as a collective should spend more time for such reflections to understand ourselves, and my suggestion was to slow down and allow space for whoever we call our ancestors. I propose moving slowly as a contribution to the struggle against capitalist domination and to embody a deeper understanding of democratic politics.

The historian William H. McNeill wrote how a feeling of fulfilment was enhanced when bodies found the same rhythm. He confirmed that ‘coordinated rhythmic movement - and the shared feelings it evokes - has been a powerful force in holding human groups together’ (McNeill, 1997, 1). Even though he referred to his military training, it created a sense of collective ritual; the marching in conformity with prescribed postures. It gave him a sense of pervasive well-being, personal enlargement – becoming bigger than life (1997, 2) .

I found that the conference participants who engaged in slow suriashi together gradually perceived themselves as one single body (Appendix D and Appendix E). When this slightly more secure body visited a place, feelings of gratitude, affiliation, humility, and euphoria appeared. Some felt protected and empowered by being part of the group, others endorsed a sense of achievement and yet others felt transported ‘to a space of infinite time’ (Dahlstedt, 2015a, 2016a). One participant wrote: ‘Activism is WITH not AGAINST’ (Dahlstedt, 2015a). It is through this sense of togetherness that a political force in collective suriashi practice could be found.

However, I wanted to investigate how suriashi performed in a group could also be a critique of spaces, where the group of people do not march in defence or march forward any messages, similar to the marches created by Rainer and Halprin in 1970 (Jakovljević, 2018, Sotomayor, 1970). I had practiced suriashi as experimental pilgrimage alone and as a collective for two years. My experience told me that suriashi performed at Gothenburg Culture Festival could be a way of protesting peacefully. However, sociologist Christian Borch showed how societies have reacted to a group of people protesting – they were often interpreted as a force to fear, an embodiment of danger. The notion of crowds was referred ‘to something which is intrinsic to the edifice of this social order’... ‘and therefore looked upon with terror’ (2012, 15). For example, the suriashi pilgrimage found its way into the democratic movement in Hong Kong where the ruling powers took advantage of reacting violently to ‘the crowd’, while completely ignoring the peaceful message of the democratic protest. With the result in hand, suriashi did not pose a threat in Hong Kong as it was performed as a solo act. However, in Gothenburg we were a crowd of twelve.

The suriashi for this thesis was chosen for three distinct reasons related to the performativity of female gender. First, the chosen suriashi originated as a male to female technique (see the introduction and genealogy of suriashi). The technique reminded of the absence of women in traditional Japanese theatre because of the 1629 ban by the Tokugawa regime, when all female roles were replaced by male dancers (Klens, 1995, 13). Second, this

thesis had engaged with suriashi with pilgrimage as a flâneuse strategy in urban spaces and thereby provoked issues on gendered visibility and invisibility in cities. Third, *Suriashi Intervention*, one of the experimental pilgrimages presented in this chapter was targeted towards Gothenburg's unequal distribution of funding of the arts, which had affected the local female dance artists. It reminded of the absence of female dancers in the Gothenburg's local history. My critique of the city's spatial injustice was offered through suriashi at a slow pace, where walkers lean back in space, while appropriating the 'feminine' embodiment as a feminist strategy. During the collective experimental pilgrimage, I investigated how the concept of 'lived body (Leib)' through feminine suriashi could work in resistance to gendered inequalities. My aim was to facilitate participants to walk consciously, while experiencing suriashi's 'feminine' shape of the body, interconnected with political cause. It worked as a contribution to political marching in the form of an artistic/activist pilgrimage, walking to acknowledge the absence of artistic practice, particularly by women, in the city centre. Thus, we were addressing the existing 'power-geometries' in the city by experiencing with our bodies (Massey, 2005, 101).



Figure 24. My *Suriashi Intervention* with choreographers, artists and students at Gothenburg Culture Festival, Aug 17th, 2016 Photo: Palle Dahlstedt (Dahlstedt, 2016)

Suriashi Intervention at the Gothenburg Culture Festival

Here I describe what was manifested through the suriashi pilgrimage as a political intervention, which further helped define suriashi's potential to be a critical act. In order to understand the challenges surrounding this act, I briefly provide details of the space; the local festival, and where suriashi arrived in this. The details were important since they exemplify the unconsciously signed spatial contracts not only in Gothenburg, but in other similar cities. Also, the discussions on space that this pilgrimage invoked had yet not reached the local dance practitioners. Gothenburg, founded in 1621, is the second-largest city in Sweden, fifth-largest in the Nordic countries. It has a population of approximately 570,000 in the city proper and about 1 million inhabitants in the metropolitan area. On August 17, 2016, I was invited by the choreographer/curator Benedikte Esperri to present my artistic work at the *Gothenburg Culture Festival*. I chose to perform suriashi with a group of dance practitioner-and art student-participants to explore how suriashi might address political issues regarding space and independent dance in Gothenburg. Through slow suriashi marching we were offering critique of the low funding support of the local dance scene. Local artists have long been critical of how the city's politicians allocate the money to sport and entertainment events, and their reluctance to instead support and put forward the city's art scene. This became even more evident at the start of Gothenburg Culture Festival, which at its inauguration in 1991 bore the name Gothenburg Festival (without the word culture). Gothenburg's local paper reminded how the politicians discovered that there was less drunkenness and less fighting (and less police intervention) when the festival was filled with culture (Holmgren, 2015). The festival improved its reputation with the new festival director, Tasso Stafilidis, who took the role in 2012 and has worked with dance and politics nationally since 2002 (Hultman, 2019). The Gothenburg Culture Festival now hosted many performances scattered around the city centre, with Götaplatsen at its heart. The space of Götaplatsen is the focus of this experimental pilgrimage, which illustrated its importance to the city, but also what has been left out for many years.

The suriashi performance was named *Suriashi Intervention* and took place on August 17, 2016, on Gothenburg's parade street 'Avenyen' in the middle of the Gothenburg Culture Festival. *Suriashi Intervention* was programmed early afternoon by the festival, to adapt to the large music concerts programmed at Götaplatsen, which caused a loss of participants. The starting point was the gallery space 'A~venue' and finishing point inside a newly built

fountain facing Götaplatsen. Before the performance, we met at gallery 'A~venue', a space offered for free to the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts at the University of Gothenburg by Wallenstam AB, one of Sweden's largest in the real estate industry. Wallenstam AB stated that they wanted to 'contribute to more culture and interesting elements on Gothenburg's parade street 'Avenyen' (Wallenstam AB, 2015). A~venue immediately became a successful gallery space because it brought the different artistic disciplines of the faculty together, while attracting new audiences thanks to its central location. However, despite the huge success with A~venue, the gallery shut down in 2017. The space was empty for three years, but in July 2020, an exclusive Chinese-Swedish car brand opened, announcing pride to be surrounded by art spaces. However the story told by Wallenstam AB about the parade street hereafter was not about artistic elements, but how to sell out the street itself, announcing that the estimated purchasing power of Avenyen would be 13 billion Swedish crowns in 2020 (Wallenstam AB, 2017). The art spaces were then long gone. These 'true stories' from real life showed the failure to think politically and democratically about shared spaces. We unconsciously agreed to lose these spaces to real estate speculations.

At A~venue, I explained to participants how *suriashi* was practised, and how the practice included honouring both persons and spaces (actual and liminal) through the body. Previously participants were asked to decide for themselves on who and what they want to walk with/for and encouraged them to choose their own personal motive. However, for *Suriashi Intervention*, I asked the audience/participants to engage with spatial disagreements on gender, economy and labour in our hometown Gothenburg. This invitation for reflection offered specific questions to engage with. The first question regarded space, and the audience/participants were reminded to take notice how public space was about to shrink as they walked. They were also told how many independent artists, including myself, had lost our centrally located studios to a real estate company earlier that year. The politicians had no rescue plan, and the artists were chased by powerful lawyers, and finally thrown out.

The second question addressed gender, highlighting how local female-identified dance workers had received less respect, recognition, and economic stability in the city. I argued that we must engage with the problem by walking in *suriashi* as a critical performance. I proposed that the *Suriashi Intervention* we were about to perform, would recognize Gothenburg's first independent dance group Rubicon, through my deceased teacher Nishikawa Senrei. I explained that these women were the foremothers of what we were

going to create together on this day: Nishikawa Senrei (1945-2012) - choreographer of contemporary Japanese dance, and an advocator of suriashi's role in performance; and Eva Ingemarsson, Gun Lund and Gunilla Witt - the originators of Rubicon and two independent theatres for dance in Gothenburg who paved way for many local and international artists. We ended our pilgrimage by adding a gesture from the choreographer Pina Bausch (1940-2009), carrying water bottles, while quoting Bausch's 1989 dance piece *Palermo, Palermo*.

We were going to walk to the newly built fountain, which also held its spatial and political narrative: the fountain had cost eight times more than the yearly budget for dance in Gothenburg. The fountain served as evidence for the city's lack of knowledge about the local dance history, but also the failure to fund the art of dance properly. Among the suriashi walking participants were Rubicon's founding member Gunilla Witt and the choreographer Joachim Berntsson who danced in Rubicon's original piece *Götaplatsens Trappor* (1986). Art scholar Astrid von Rosen, responsible for the project *In the Footsteps of Rubicon*, as well as choreographers, artists and students also participated in the suriashi pilgrimage.

The Space of Götaplatsen

This section provides extended background information regarding the space of Götaplatsen to better situate the events of the *Suriashi Intervention* introduced in the last section and expanded on here. I periodically shift back into moments from the intervention to provide concrete examples to illustrate perspectives and analysis of the Götaplatsen space. This discussion helps solidify the use of suriashi as a political device for performing archival activism in a peaceful and artistic way (Flinn, 2011). Götaplatsen was the ending point of our suriashi walk and also where Rubicon's landmark piece *Götaplatsens Trappor* was performed in 1986. *Suriashi Intervention* took inspiration from the previously mentioned research project 'In the Footsteps of Rubicon', in which the researchers von Rosen, Marsha Meskimmon and Monica Sand formulated a method to 'create new body-space-memories and take responsibility for our materialisation of the spaces and histories we engage' (von Rosen, 2018, 228). Their method was to use their own bodies as research tools. This opened a new phenomenological interconnection with space and local dance history where Rubicon's feminist strategy was acknowledged. Rosen, Meskimmon and Sand pointed to how Rubicon's dancing was performed 'in marked contrast to a mythic, masculine ideal of the

public sphere as a place reserved for disembodied or “objective” rationality” (von Rosen, 2018, 227). The ‘mythic, masculine ideal of public sphere’ they referred to was Götaplatsen.

Götaplatsen is framed by Greek statues, two nude female statues called *Danserskor* [*The Female Dancers*] (high arches, and pillars, with a giant statue of Poseidon at its centre. Spaces of this kind were found in cities all over the world. They seem static and unchangeable. Götaplatsen, built in 1923, held grand institutions representing all art forms except for dance. In 1986, Rubicon filled the space with what was not there – dancing bodies, dancers, and choreographers - through their project *the City Dancers*. They performed outdoors, on the stairs leading up to the Art Museum. The piece was created by Rubicon after a year of practising only walking as a new radical way to explore movements and as a protest to elitisms (see Chapter Four). As we revisited Götaplatsen in suriashi, we sensed through our bodies that the space was not only a power centre of art institutions – it was also a space of struggle for recognition and visibility.

In the following excerpts from my process journal, I retell the personal experience of *Suriashi Intervention* performed at Gothenburg Culture Festival to lay a context for a discussion on gender and performers in public space:

We had a ‘dance permit’ (danstillstånd), since this is required for public dance events in Sweden per the law of order since the 1930s. It was difficult to anticipate whether our act was perceived as dancing, and whether anyone noticed that many of us were dancers. Twelve walkers left the gallery, took the ‘feminine’ position and began the ninety minutes/three-hundred-meter journey on the parade street Avenyen. Walking, breathing, sensing, remembering. Once afoot, we noticed that our slow suriashi walking had an immediate effect on the space we were moving in. We received comments from people at outdoor seatings, which showed the visibility of our slow act. People made jokes about which one of us would reach the goal first. Some mocked us, and after all we were not that entertaining.

A memory appeared from when I recorded a scene to my film ‘The Dancer – a Fairy-Tale’ in 1996. We performed on the streets wearing sneakers and Rubicon’s yellow rainwear. This scene was yet a reference to Rubicon’s ‘the City Dancers’. A man came up to me with an irritated voice. He said: ‘You are not a dancer! A dancer has to wear pointe shoes. These are not pointe shoes!’ Twenty years ago.

Walking, breathing, remembering. We work. This is our work.

I walked in front of the group, and I now and then reminded the walkers to let go of the posture and continue the slow walking without bending and squeezing as hard.

I was worried that they were in pain.

Scenes like this were simultaneously juxtaposed with the sound of audiences, passers-by, narratives of gentrification with its closed and opened cinemas, cafés, kiosks, bars, and an increasing amount of expensive shops. The city's spatial proposal of what Avenyen represented today – an easily controllable space consisting of buying, selling, eating and drinking – was confined and restricted. We instead wanted to show that the street should also be a space for dance practice and aesthetic experiences.

Children were curious and wanted to join the slow walk. Two boys followed us for a long time; giggled and planned to jump into the group and scream: 'Allahu Akbar!' However, they left after a while. I was content that we met, and that the boys desired to make an intervention to our intervention. There were other stories than shopping and eating told on this street today, which had evoked their curiosity: Twelve grownups in slow silence.

Suriashi had augmented our sense of reality to the point that we could hear a needle fall. We had listened to and sensed the city from a particular, embodied tempo and structure.

I experienced how our floating across Avenyen in suriashi was as an exclamation mark of its own, and how we were moving in a different world on our own bridge way through the real world.

However, as we approached the fountain, there was extremely loud music and roaring sounds from a motorcyclist performing his acts on Götaplatsen to a song by Teddybears Sthlm.

These scenes brought substance to our pilgrimage in urban space – a relational and connected one. Slow suriashi with a group of people was perceived as both peaceful and provocative. Our intervention opened for both artistic experiences and a critical discussion on what we can do together in space, passing on Henri Lefebvre's question on "the right to the city" (Lefebvre et al., 1996). For this act we needed each other for support through the

durational walking, which was strenuous for both body and mind. Practicing slowly, we were also affected by our own bodies shaped in artificial positions, and by sensing the space and each other. Hearing the roaring sounds of Götaplatsen worked like a wakeup alarm, announcing what was made real in that space where slow, silent walking was juxtaposed with a motorcyclist flirting with death. It was a dissonant, ear-splitting experience; the rhythm hammered overwhelmingly through our bodies like a message from the city itself about spatial priorities, and where the real money was invested. We discerned bits of the text from the song *Hey Boy* by *Teddybears Sthlm*, which added to the dystopian encounter:

All we came to do is raise hell and just have fun

You can take the skinny girl, cos I want the fat one

You better raise the base, leave the treble on plus 1

Can you put me on the guest list, 20 girls plus 1 (Teddybears Sthlm, 2004)

The text was overly clear in how it presented itself - a culturally normalised sexist song played at the highest possible volume in the heart of Gothenburg – to which the motorcyclist performed his pernicious acts. It was impossible to override the noise.

We were programmed right after the motorcycle act. As agreed, the water jets were shut down just before we entered. We stopped and positioned ourselves inside the fountain, emptied our water bottles, and I raised the megaphone to give a speech. In the following section, I give an account of my speech and the arguments that I made for suriashi as a politically positioning artform and tool for archival activism.

A public fountain - a space reminding of the absence of dance in the city centre

I wanted to investigate suriashi's potential as a political march with a cause and added 'a speech with megaphone', since such speeches are often integrated with political marches. The purpose of my speech was to show that our slow suriashi walk held a political cause related to space, gender, economy and the art of dance. From the perspective of my research enquiry regarding activism and politics, this speech built an arch from the beginning where

suriashi was performed alone and in silence as a flâneuse strategy. There was politics at work in the earlier suriashi experiments, it just was not given explicit literal voice in the way this one was. Suriashi walking was intrinsically enough in itself as it provided its participants with an aesthetic experience of the city, while processing the confining, restricting and selling out of public space. The fountain was positioned in the middle of a junction. A megaphone was needed for my speech to be heard. The speech, combining archival and political aspects, occurred in the middle of the newly inaugurated, much-criticized public fountain that faces Götaplatsen, thirty years after the premiere of Rubicon's piece. I claimed that the fountain occupied a space that belonged to the dancers of the city. The fountain, dangerously squeezed in between two bus stops in the middle of the heavily trafficked Avenyen, consisted of a large refuge with dark stone slabs, spraying water at different heights and with coloured light from below. It was built to be looked at from the distance, however children wanted to run through it, and it became the city's biggest traffic hazard, even in need of guards to prevent accident. The fountain was poorly planned. Ninety-two water jets that perform a multi-coloured water show, generating dislike and nicknames like 'Götaspash', 'Bus-Shower', the 'Pisseria'. My proposed nickname was 'Fontana di Danza'. I thought that the fountain placed on a refuge in the middle of a junction and bus stops worked very well as a stage with walls of glass and a bit of distance from the audiences. I am also certain that the fountain never would have been built had more careful city planning been performed beforehand.

The suriashi pilgrimage in combination with the speech in a megaphone became a meta-performance and discussion on how political issues could be choreographed collaboratively. My speech amplified by the megaphone began by acknowledging Rubicon and their artistic acts in the city. I then proposed that the new public fountain with its ninety-two water jets represented the immaterial archives of the city; dancers - female working bodies demanding recognition and payment for a hundred years of unpaid work. I compared Gothenburg's female dance workers with Gothenburg's male metal and shipyard workers, where I quoted dance scholar Priya Srinivasan who stated that although the dancing body is often seen only in aesthetic terms, it is also a working body (Srinivasan, 2011, 12). Dance is hard physical work and should be recognized. Our bodies also build lasting monuments like the houses surrounding us, the statues, and city fountains. I argued that our bodies represent a not yet recognized form of work. I also proposed that since the new fountain cost thirty million Swedish crowns to build, another thirty million should be paid to compensate for the unpaid

labour of female dancers. The full speech translated into English can be found in Appendix F. I revisit my process journal to add to the recollection of this event:

The use of the megaphone made my Suriashi Intervention more confrontational than the acts by Rubicon. However, I was not prepared for just how confrontational. Suddenly, in the middle of my speech, a musical conductor ran down from the festival's main stage at Götaplatsen. He walked straight into the fountain and tried to silence me. He was worried that my talk would interfere with his concert that would begin in forty-five minutes. I was in the middle of my speech and was too shocked to reply. The megaphone was very empowering in that moment. If it hadn't been for the megaphone, I would have stopped by fear. The conductor walked into the fountain and tried to talk to the other participants. He seemed not aware that he walked straight into our performance, as justified and programmed by Gothenburg Culture Festival as his own. Since no one answered, he finally left (Dahlstedt 2014-2019).

His presence in our artwork could almost be perceived as curated, as if his performed interruption was there to stress the asymmetrical and gendered contracts performers from different artistic fields have with public space. Suriashi walking became the investigative probe that revealed the gaps on this demarcated surface. It made an impact and did not elapse un-noticed. People were made curious by the slow walking. They stopped and listened to my speech, and afterwards they wanted to know more about it. When they understood that the suriashi performance sought to activate discussions on dance, economy and the fountain, they smiled and expressed: 'We hate the fountain too!'

Discussion after the performance

After the performance, I gathered the participants at A~venue for a discussion. I was struck by the fact that Avenyen held so many new narratives of selling out goods and space; cafés that performed 'being local', however with ownership structure crafted for evading Swedish corporation tax, and franchise companies to make sure that all citizens have full access to cheap sweets. However, in the discussion with the participants, it was clear that there was a call for a discussion on gender. Two male art students revealed their shock about the interruption by the musical conductor. They found it hard to grasp that somebody could act like this against a performance in a festival. I realized our experiences were gendered. For

the male artists, this experience was new, for the female artists the experience was very common. As performers we have prepared our bodies for many years to negotiate animosity towards our performance acts. Interruptions were common, and part of the artistic communication. Through the years, we gained personal and collective experiences of hateful comments and even physical abuse while performing or watching performances by females in urban spaces. I refer to performing at an outdoor music concert in Gothenburg (1991) where a drunken man rushed after us three (female) dancers, screamed and tried to pull our wigs off; I refer to the drunken man coming after and screaming at performance artist Miriam King when she performed her solo at *Dance Screen Brighton* (2005); I refer to performing with *E=mc²* (1997) in a park at night, when three men followed my choreography, walked in the way, and finally tried to pull off my headdress; I refer to experiences both as an audience member and performer of Rubicon's *the City Dancers* project, where some audience members laughed and shouted derogatory comments (Andersson, 1991, King, 2005, Lund, 1997, Rubicon, 1986, Rubicon, 1987). This was a risk factor for female artists that should be addressed. The essence of the *Suriashi Intervention* performance was about respecting the female dancer's labour; however even this request was interrupted. The male art students' involvements, and the way they expressed their shock was yet a motivation to question the normalisation of the mocking and mistrust of female dancers walking and performing in public space.

Suriashi relocated from the domesticated studio space to the streets re-activated questions on gender imbalance. In order to address how gender was still an issue in performing art practice, I examined how the conductor's intervention revealed something rarely spoken about among female dance practitioners. Our suriashi walk, and the subsequent interruption of it, unleashed a discussion where we were able to problematize the status quo with regards to gender. This discussion included the allowed entitlement of the male conductor to interrupt female performers during an officially permitted cultural event. A dancer's main artistic tool was her own body. When physical integrity was violated, the artistic expression was also damaged. Clinical and performance psychologist Jo Anne La Flèche showed how abuse directed towards female dancers was common but rarely openly discussed (La Flèche, 2019). She acknowledged why this might not be addressed, and found that 'Risk-taking is valued and psychological pressure is culturally accepted' (2019). Dancers had developed a stoicism that prevents them from even reacting to the abuse.

However, one year after Suriashi Intervention at Götaplatsen, #metoo gained momentum; the social movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The Swedish dance community created the sub-hashtag #tystdansa (#silentdance), and even though the focus was on sexual harassment, there was also a discussion on and questioning of societal practices leading up to these harassments. I bring in Meskimmon's point again, because, as Meskimmon stated, 'wherever women seek power over spaces, they require the ability to opt out of being 'looked at' and the accompanying control of viewing as subjects rather than objects' (1997, 16). I was aware that there would not have been any confrontational encounters had I walked alone in suriashi on Avenyen during the Gothenburg Culture Festival. I would have escaped the male gaze and I would have remained invisible and 'safe'. However, being invisible was not an ideal position in society.

Please pause your reading here.

Watch the video from Avenyen.

I have extracted just five minutes from the ninety minutes' walk.

I have removed most of my speech, as not to reveal the conductor too much.

Imagine yourself walking with us.

What did you expect to experience?

Maybe you notice something else than what I have written about.

[\(Video 2: 2:26:31- 02:32:13\)](#)

Suriashi Intervention performed together with the audience at Götaplatsen (see previous section) helped me engage more critically with the space there. Through questioning what was and what was not on display there, it was possible to understand the dynamic and communicative nature of the space. When we revisited what Meskimmon, Sand and Von Rosen called 'mythic, masculine ideal of the public sphere' and with the help of Hammergren's flâneuse strategy we created 'mortal' or 'intangible' monuments of previous dance performances, monuments not built by steel or concrete, but by bodies (Hammergren, 1996, von Rosen, 2018). Our relational movements, through our own aesthetic practice with a political cause, helped us sense how space was not a static environment, but dynamic and transformable. This was an important finding for this thesis, as it must have been for

Rubicon when they decided to perform in urban space in 1986. The work with this thesis had developed an embodied sensibility. I was able to sense what the archivists and librarians experienced in suriashi performed at the Royal Library (see Appendix E). The archive was alive, and historic acts lived through my body, which yet again resonated with Nishikawa Senrei's request to always perform with your ancestors.

This thesis showed how suriashi pilgrimage worked as a critical practice, as outlined here by revisiting and describing two experimental pilgrimages in urban spaces. The first one was *Suriashi Intervention*, discussed above, and will be compared to the second example later in this chapter. The second example of suriashi was an 'invisible' suriashi performed by the then Hong Kong-based scholar Ching-Yuen Cheung during the violent protests at Yuen Long Station in Hong Kong in July 2019. The two suriashi acts functioned in similar ways, by creating new relations between artistic practice and the protesting body, and by searching for new ways to resist disembodiment and inequality. After comparing these two concrete examples of suriashi use, they will be compared to previous events in history that also utilised dance as a political tool.

Suriashi as protest at Yuen Long Station, 2019

This section concerns an event to which I was entrusted to disseminate suriashi practice for political purposes in Hong Kong. It showed a situation where there was a need for a new strategy for protest, and where my own role as choreographer was expanded. In Beijing 2018, after my presentation on how suriashi could work as a feminist micro-activism at 24th World Congress of Philosophy [WCP], scholar Ching-Yuen Cheung became intrigued by the practice-led strategy I was introducing. He was then a lecturer at the Department of Japanese Studies at Chinese University of Hong Kong and one of the founding members of International Association for Japanese Philosophy (IAJP). He researches the philosophy of pilgrimage in Japan, and recognized connections between suriashi, walking and pilgrimage. In Chapter Seven, I described his proposal for new representations of pilgrimage, related to everyday practice and to social work.

Nishikawa Senrei used 'be water' as a metaphor for practicing in a smooth way. With Cheung's Hong Kong pilgrimage this concept was used by many for peaceful, activist resistances. When clashes between police and protesters grew increasingly violent in Cheung's hometown Hong Kong, the political powers failed to protect democratic

demonstrations. Cheung was frustrated and wanted to show different strategies for his students. Cheung therefore decided to make a political act by himself based on Nishikawa Senrei's feminine suriashi (or the cross-gender suriashi for the Onnagata) that I had presented at the [WCP] conference. More people were involved in similar peaceful strategies. As Cheung arrived at the station, there were other 'peaceful' protest acts, such as low chanting. Sociologist Tin-yuet Ting meant that the Daoist concept 'be water' was employed supporting the pragmatic actions to confront riot police in Hong Kong (Ting, 2020, 362). 'Be water' was a strategy showing submissiveness and vulnerability rather than firmness (Lai, 2000,1). This brought about further engagement with non-Western claims of femininity, which I leave for others to delve into. I had myself accepted the instruction 'be water' for practice, without thinking about gender. I did this in the same manner as artists have been inspired by Buddhism without engaging with its embedded misogyny. These questions were something to process further in the future. Cheung explained that my presentation of suriashi as a feminist outdoor practice at the [WCP] conference as a discussion on gendered asymmetries had offered him a new strategy. His own first experience of suriashi came from Kendo (Japanese swordsmanship). However, in Kendo practice, the suriashi steps were the prelude of attacks. (Cheung, 2019a). This showed how some practices dominated the discourse regarding suriashi as practice – it was a step for regaining balance in battles. Suriashi as practised in Iaidō, Kendo, Sumo and Karate were more familiar than the 'feminine' suriashi used in this thesis.

On July 27th, 2019, when almost 300.000 people were marching in protest at the earlier mob attacks, and in protest of Hong Kong's extradition bill, Cheung walked in suriashi as a peaceful act at Yuen Long Station. I coached him from Sweden, feeling very nervous and responsible that something bad would happen to him. I used my knowledge as dance educator with a long practice of teaching dance, walks and movements. This time, I was teaching Cheung a walking body for peace, vulnerable and open for silent communication, which was not necessarily a feminine structure. However, I did guide him through the 'feminine' body posture and reminded him of his ancestral spiritual engagement, intrinsic for suriashi. If he directed his eyes to the horizon (kin no me, Hanayagi, 2008, 92), people would understand that he walked in peace, and it protected him from bullying and angry comments. I reminded Cheung to breathe with each step:

Breathe out when you slowly slide your right foot forward (count to four), breathe in when the feet meet in the middle (count to four), breathe out when you slide your left foot forward.
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The breathing techniques, a focus on the horizon, and meditating on ancestral support are all elements that guide your body through a space, even as the space becomes unruly.



Figure 25. Suriashi walk at Yuen Long Station, July 27th, 2019, Hong Kong Photo: Ching-Yuen Cheung

As Cheung arrived at Yuen Long Station at 3pm, 27 July 2019, he sent photos and videos, which allowed me to participate and support the walk from Sweden (See Figure 25) (Cheung, 2019b). He searched carefully for a place to practice suriashi without blocking others' way. He found a place near one of the entrances to the main hall of the station on the first floor (Cheung, 2020). He walked in suriashi for two hours and filmed the process by himself. Someone took a picture of him, but his focus was directed in the distance. Nobody talked to or approached him. I asked if the posture gave him peace and courage or if he felt terrified. He replied: 'Of course, I was very peaceful and calm. In fact, I learnt from your talk at [WCP], that suriashi is not a march or confrontation in any sense. I was not worried inside the station, as you were not worried on the London bridge or in the Tiananmen Square' (Cheung, 2020). After he noticed that there were too many people inside and outside the station, he left by train (Cheung, 2020). He met his postgraduate students right after his suriashi pilgrimage. This was an important act for him to do, to show students that peaceful protests were possible. Cheung had planned to do a suriashi four months later at the university after the police fired thousands of tear gas on the HK2 Bridge inside the campus on Nov 12, 2019 (Cheung, 2020). However, the campus was soon occupied and barricaded.

Later, the university announced that the semester was over, and the bridge was still monitored by security nowadays (Cheung, 2020). This inhibited any further interaction in that space.

When Cheung performed suriashi as experimental pilgrimage, it became an example of what political scientist Jose Marichal defined as ‘micro-activism’ (Marichal, 2013). The goal had not been to mobilize one big cause, but to create a smaller activity to show a non-violent resistance in a difficult situation. Both my own and Cheung’s activities were posted on social media, and we had an interested audience following. Even though the actions were done at a smaller scale, it did not invalidate their political purpose. Cheung’s suriashi pilgrimage could also be titled DIY-activism, through its small-scale user-initiated, and not officially sanctioned tactics (Fabian and Samson, 2016, 167). However, his suriashi act was indeed part of the bigger Hong Kong movement, a pro-democracy movement which demanded protests not to be characterised as a "riot", but a defence for freedom of expression (Cheung, 2019b). The situation in Hong Kong became worse, and the Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor finally urged the hundreds of protesters of the Hong Kong Movement to give up since the inevitable risk of the Beijing government to intervene militarily. This forced Ching-Yuen Cheung to flee his country and seek a new position elsewhere. He now works at University of Tokyo. However, Cheung has continued to present suriashi as a nonviolent, feminist protest, arguing that authorities could never label suriashi as a riot, hence its advantage over other protesting walks (Cheung, 2019b)

Massey’s propositions for an alternative approach to space

I analyse the two experimental pilgrimages through Massey’s theories of space. The performance/pilgrimage *Suriashi Intervention* on Avenyen at Gothenburg Culture Festival processed spatial disagreements, while activating the immaterial archives of dance in Gothenburg. As such, it fell under the categories ‘artivism’ and ‘archival activism’. ‘Artivism’, because it was an act planned and programmed by artists with a political cause. ‘Archival activism’ because it was concerned with un-official, non-traditional ephemeral archives (Flinn, 2011, Sandoval and Latorre, 2008). Through *Suriashi Intervention*, a practice-focused critique was brought forward, processing how city officials had failed to value work by female dance artists - while at the same time spend their budget on poorly planned and unsafe monuments. Ching-Yuen Cheung’s ‘invisible’ micro-activist DIY pilgrimage was offering a different critique, but the two suriashi acts discussed political issues through

embodied engagement. Massey argued that how we attend to space is key to understanding of politics and power. We should always be responsible for how and what we do in shared spaces. By walking slowly in *suriashi* in Gothenburg and Hong Kong, an alternative approach to space was proposed, and confirmed through our bodies. We sought to change the generalised assumptions of protesting bodies in space, moving away from such explicit gestures as forward-steaming, fists raised (Prickett, 2013, 39). This enabled multiple ways of showing non-violent resistance. Our pilgrimages were not the same as the Situationist's *drifting*, but the interest in an emotional impact of the environment was similar (Meskimmon, 1997, 49) 'An impulse to gather is also an impulse to be vulnerable' (Conibere, 2017,84). Simple movements in space can have tremendous effects on people sharing the same space, including a much wider and more nuanced range (Massey, 2011, 38). In addition, there was 'the conviction about the direction in which history is moving' (Massey, 2005,11). As we moved slowly forward in *suriashi*, we also leaned back in space to acknowledge archives and stories from the past to continue to guide us. We challenged the conviction about how history is moving.

Massey suggested three propositions for an alternative approach to space that informed the methodology of this thesis (Massey, 2005, 10). At first, she argued that space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations - they are all constitutive. She encouraged the understanding of space as an effect of interrelations created through interactions between the global space out there to the local place in here (2005, 9). When we moved in between institutional buildings, we created new choreographies, new relations in that space. Second, Massey encouraged the understanding of space as something that was made. Since space is something that is made, we should be aware that we are constantly making space together (9). Space was the dimension that offers the existence of the other. As we discovered through our slow movements on Avenyen, public space was about to shrink, bought and sold through real estate speculation. This failed to offer the existence of the other, while threatening the possibility to exist on equal terms in space, and to raise voices on inequalities publicly. Massey's third proposition for an alternative approach to space was that we should recognize space as always under construction (Massey, 2005, 11). It is never finished; never closed. There has never been a *one road* to follow, albeit this image is very classic to modernist thinking. Rubicon's artistic work was an earlier example of how artistic acts worked to keep public space open. However, because public space was shrinking, 'public art performances that are not commercial have almost become impossible' (von Rosen, 2018, 229). Re-visiting Rubicon's *the City Dancers* performing in yellow rainwear – labourers of

dance - held a sense of utopia. Because what the researchers Meskimmon, Sand and von Rosen stated 'In the extreme commercialisation of cities world-wide, public space has decreased and much art has been incorporated into the entertainment industry: public art performances have become another way of promoting 'the creative city' (von Rosen, 2018). I acknowledge the need of new performance acts to continue these kinds of movements in public space. Here is where the artist, researcher and activist became intertwined.

Suriashi on Tiananmen Square, Gate of Heavenly Peace Square

Further reflections to be made when we create art in urban spaces were to ask which spaces get resources for being guarded and archived. Cheung's DIY micro-activist suriashi act in Hong Kong showed how a tiny space was still open for very peaceful and silent interventions. However, months later he confirmed that certain spaces were policed to such extent that the tiniest movement was an impossibility (Cheung, 2019). These were certain acts of 'the purification of space' through the employment of security guards (Massey, 2005, 94). Revisiting Tiananmen Square through my embodied memory, I was incapable of grasping this space in 2018, and I still seek to understand how such a held space came to be with regards to its history. Here, suriashi provided with yet a surprise as I did practise there even though it felt impossible to start with. I journal my experience here:

Tiananmen Square is situated very close to the Forbidden City, no longer forbidden. The Gate of Heavenly Peace Square is the world's largest square and probably the most regulated square in the world. The square could only be reached through a massively controlled zebra crossing. Police cars with blinking lights were parked in each corner. It had a dramatic effect, as if something dangerous had just happened. Barricades, designed in the Emperor's yellow colour, frame the whole square, controlled how and where people could walk. The space was clogged, unavailable for any action. (Dahlstedt 2014-2019)

Still, there was the *Tank Man*, the lone individual who held up a procession of tanks around Tiananmen Square during the ill-fated 1989 pro-democracy protests (Prickett, 2017, 13). I revisit this symbolic act, through my senses, after being in contact with Chin-Yuen Cheung in Hong Kong. *Tank Man*, one man's stillness confronted the might of the military (13). It was an impossible act, and yet it happened. A small gesture of micro-activism acknowledged globally.

After having walked in circles for almost an hour, getting lost several times in tunnels, stairs, pathways, I finally performed suriashi, captured by hundreds of surveillance cameras. I rehearse what to tell if someone stops me: 'I record a postcard for my mother'. It was a small gesture of activism, part of my practice-led research and not at all an act of courage. (Dahlstedt, 2014-2019)



Figure 26. I walk in suriashi on Tiananmen square, Aug 18th Beijing 2018 (Dahlstedt, 2021)

Suriashi as activism in higher education

In conservatory training, when a 'new' dance technique was established, ideologies behind movements were often left behind. I acknowledge how a very goal-oriented view takes over in order to guarantee professionalism and preservation for the future of the dancer. This view bares the risk of censoring the possibility of acting and activism embedded also in dance practice. Therefore, in my own position as educator, I decided to introduce suriashi as a critical tool for working with artistic practices in urban spaces. My practice-led approach enabled a reflection on how suriashi as research methodology might be taught in the future, and what educational perspectives suriashi could contribute to.

Dance scholar Alexandra Kolb asked whether civil and human rights are fostered or denied through dance (Kolb, 2011, xiii). And further, 'is a dance which does not make explicit political statements consequently apolitical?'(xiii) These questions were important to engage with in order to claim that suriashi can be political, and to understand how embodied politics

can operate. For example, what happened with political gestures in dance as they become established as new dance-techniques and move into conservatories? The way an embodied politics work is subject to change. Training to become a dancer meant to both embody tradition and societal changes. Kolb's question on human rights fostered through dance was replied through historical accounts of choreographers and performers such as Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Katherine Dunham, Edith Segal, Pearl Primus, Doris Humphrey, Donald Mc Kayle, Josephine Baker, and Alvin Ailey. These dance artists and ancestors of early and late 'modern dance' have processed and worked with civil and human rights both through their art and as activists (Corbett, 2014, Franko, 1995, Jules-Rosette, 2005, Lacy et al., 2001, Prickett, 2013).

Performance scholar and artistic researcher Esa Kirkkopelto focused on the deconstruction of 'the performative body' while offering a critical examination of mediums practiced in performer training. He identified that 'a medium is not only a path, a 'method', a transition from one place to another, but also the material and technical ground on which that path is traced, a place for placing and a happening (2015, 49). I interpreted his statement as an entrance to greater curiosity of overlooked steps and practices. He meant that a performance can take place 'by either tending to hide the mediating function of the medium, for instance its materiality or technique, or by tending to lay it bare' (Kirkkopelto, 2015, 49-50). Suriashi moved from the stage, where it served as a (hidden) method for narratives through bodily constructions, laid bare the materiality and technique when relocated to urban spaces. Suriashi was made available for an explorative, open-ended and intuitive engagement. The original function of suriashi to support narratives for the theatrical stage, instead transformed and brought forward its medial nature in new ways, where new narratives were shaped.

In order to further investigate suriashi's political potential in urban spaces, I crafted a methodological course for professional artists one month after suriashi was performed at Götaplatsen (2016). I saw the possibility to involve my research questions in my work with these students who were also professional artists. The course set out to

1. investigate how elite dance- and elite actor training and societal engagement can work together through suriashi.
2. evaluate how suriashi can support artists and students to reflect and discuss their profession in a societal context.
3. reflect on the purpose of performing arts methods and the place of performing arts in

society.

4. reflect on how practice-led research can be presented.

The two-year master's programmes in Advanced Acting and Contemporary Performative Arts at the Academy of Music and Drama (University of Gothenburg) attracted professional artists from different disciplines. Central to the program is the artist's interaction with the surrounding society, as well as issues related to place-related and dramaturgical aspects of the artistic work. Here, I my own research through suriashi was helpful. The student group consisted of ten artists from Sweden, Greece, Denmark and Iran. Their artistic disciplines were acting, dance, sound art, film and performance. After an introduction to suriashi and how it was practised in Japanese dance and theater, I showed how suriashi could be used not only as an improvement of technique but as an active question to oneself as an artist and to society. They learned the background to how gender is created through the body, but for this workshop I asked specifically for them to focus more on space than the body. We practised suriashi walking together in the theater studio, then we went out into the corridor, passed the café and the library and other parts of the university.

The next day in a walking seminar we walked slowly together in suriashi down Avenyen, the same street where *Suriashi Intervention* took place one month earlier. The purpose was to reflect on the placement of art in society and to get an embodied experience of how the city is changing. For example, the students/artists were informed that some places encountered on the way were not public any longer - they were owned by companies. We therefore must leave the place if someone from the company asked us to do so. Further, I informed them that artists need to apply for a police permit for major performing arts events in the public space and that it was a good idea to also talk to security guards in advance. Although suriashi walking offered some resistance to the people who pass us, it was not a violent practice. In order to evaluate suriashi as a method of reflecting on the place of the performing arts in society, the artists were given the task of working in groups of two. They took turns documenting each other's work. For examination, they submitted a video documentation and a reflective essay. We also met at the university where they presented their work and gave each other feedback. I have compiled part of the students' reflections based on the essays they wrote and based questions I asked them to have in mind for their reflections. They used first person-perspectives for their essays (Artists-MFA-students, 2016). You find them in Appendix G.

Results / Analysis

The artists/students had different experiences of the suriashi walking seminar and of the city, which showed how space affects movement but always in relation to personal experiences, which I acknowledged previously when collecting data from conference participants (Appendix D and E). One artist explained the feeling of participating in something very important in the city center: a feeling of togetherness through a powerful group of slow walkers. They noticed that tourists photographed us as much as they photographed Poseidon, the well-known symbol at Götaplatsen. The sound of water from the fountain enabled visualizing inner images of water supporting the performance of suriashi. (And the Daoist concept Be like water). Another artist experienced the seminar as an installation or performance, they thus looked at the relocated seminar and knowledge transmission with new eyes (Appendix G). We stopped several times to stretch our backs and reflect on what we experienced, sensed, and discovered. There was a densification outside the entrance of a well-visited large department store where the movements of the surroundings took place not only in the sequence of the street but also across. People rushed horizontally up and down Avenyen, and vertically in and out of the department store. One artist expressed that the slow walking became more meaningful when we walked among more people. Audiences became curious and engaged with our act either by photographing, passing close or just by looking. The suriashi seminar ended inside a shopping mall. My artist students enjoyed the more stable and flatter surface inside the mall. They acknowledged how the escalators rolled in their own constant suriashi. Our presence was discovered by a group of young people who exclaimed, "Look! A flash mob! They are Zombies!" Afterwards, one of the artists noted: "This was an unforgettable moment among people who almost ran to shop. People, shopping, photos, laughter, curiosity, gazes, cell phones, cameras. There were so many sensory expressions to take in at the same time. This is something we do on a daily basis without thinking about it." (see more in Appendix G)

Discussion / Reflection

The initial research question of what suriashi could activate in space was in itself a clarification that it was not about performing perfect suriashi. In their reflections, the artists/students returned to the seminar and our collective suriashi walk to compare with their own walks and works. Many thought it was helpful to know about suriashi's original function and that there was a technique to relate to when the artistic work was relocated out of the studio. It elucidated how techniques must constantly be reassessed in order to build relevant characters and moods for performing arts in urban spaces. They also found support

from our initial suriashi walks together in different spaces. Working in pairs and not alone - the presence of a fellow student who not only documented but also supervised the artistic experiment was appreciated. Some artists found the feminine bodily alignment to be a support; holding ones' hands in a certain way created a clarity for passers-by showing that this act was most probably art performed with a predetermined expression with a specific intention. When passers-by noticed that 'the slow-motion act' was documented by a person with a camera, a sense of security and agreement was created between the artist and the audience. Suriashi also became a method of reflecting on the proximity to their audience, who the audience members might be and how they can coexist in space.

What unified the participants' experiences was that suriashi challenged them; first as a difficult physical balancing act, an endurance test and then also as a new relationship with the public space and the passing audience. The great value of my course was that the participants were able to spend more time with the same question. What emerged during their research was valuable for this dissertation. I was surprised how my proposed suriashi practice in urban spaces worked individually and in such different ways for these ten artists. They had different backgrounds and different artistic practices, but each of them asked new questions relevant for their own work and how they related to space. When we walked slowly in suriashi, we became more aware of space, ourselves and other people. We did not look at the city as a capitalist resource, something that we can extract. We did not consider the city as a background or backdrop to our art. I found the question, raised by one of the students, on the artist's requirement to be visually consumed particularly intriguing. The participants realized that we took our movements through space for granted and that it was difficult to change everyday behaviors. They began to value smaller gestures, and small adjustments were made to create safe spaces - these choices revealed an inherent concern for other people - their audience. I argue that this is where public art practice should begin - with a deep concern for space and other people, and a curiosity on how art could be created there.

I return to Massey's argument for the thinking of urban space and other spaces as dynamic, as opposed to static and where walking in suriashi becomes part of creating scenes together with what is around us (2013). The urban space is not passive, it lives, and it contains countless stories about buildings, houses, about living beings, about active people who are involved in doing, becoming and thinking. Massey believed that an analysis of spatial relations between people, cities, institutions and work is the key to understanding politics

and power (2013). Suriashi worked as such an analysis. The slow movements through space revealed the gap in the city's agreement between citizens and decision-makers, between artists and politicians, between tangible and intangible monuments. For my course, it also showed the need for new methodologies and seminars in the universities.

Chapter Nine:

Heterotopic space, The Crone and ending

Chapter Nine revisits the question I processed in Chapter Four and Six on how spirituality was embodied in suriashi. I hold on to my research question where I ask what suriashi can activate and act upon when it is relocated and offered as outdoor reflective practice in urban and other spaces. I shape my argument, led by the suriashi practice through my auto-ethnographic accounts. Sparked by a suriashi pilgrimage and residency in a museum in northern Sweden, the investigations on how the ephemeral content was manifested through suriashi authorized a new direction, where I used the practice itself and phenomenological experiences as a lens (Cummings, 1981, Foucault, 1984, Edvardsen, 2011, Sokolowski, 2000). My own presence in this museum engaged with the ephemeral, ineffable content through suriashi (Biggs, 2004, Klein, 2010, Nelson, 2013). The inclusion of nonhumans, ancestors, and ghosts in suriashi practice engendered hidden narratives about my own Swedish ancestors. Following this direction, I was able to conclude and merge narratives about Japanese shamans and outcast female performers with part of my own Swedish family history. This interconnection bridged the gap between Swedish and Japanese performance cultures.

In 2017 and 2018, I had an artistic residency in a museum in northern Sweden, which I describe further below. This residency at Ricklundgården evidenced yet new potentials for suriashi as a methodology for activating both legacy paired with quirky and ghostly

narratives. Ricklundgården was previously a home for two artists. Thus, it was not built originally to be a museum, but it became a museum after the inhabitants died.

The museum residency sparked the processing of ghosts and spirits; drawing a line from how suriashi created the ghostly atmospheres in the traditional NŌ drama via the spiritual illusions, early appreciated by dramatists like Ezra Pound and William Yeats, and finally landing in my own research. I state that these spiritual illusions, the ephemeral content, were made logical through my constant practice of suriashi. It transgressed my own identity as non-Japanese, as foreigner, and as Swedish. The continuous practice created a frame. Through the practice, I sensed a connection between lived experience, artistic experience and the phenomenological concept Leib, the living body (Thomas, 2003, Rothfield, 2005). As I have previously written, suriashi provided a method to handle legacy and ancestors through embodiment, which was an original request from my teacher Nishikawa Senrei. She explained to her students that our most important audiences are our ancestors. She encouraged us to lean back in space and through time to acknowledge them, while practising and performing.

As I investigated suriashi in this thesis, the expectations of what to find, and who to honour while I was doing the practice was the biggest challenge. I was frightened that I would not find anything. I contented myself with referring to Nishikawa Senrei and listening to her voice and following her corrections as I practised in urban spaces. However, I could not ignore the fact that Nishikawa Senrei demanded students to engage with ancestors from their own family tree in suriashi. Therefore, for this chapter I describe the unconventional processing of ghosts and invisible ancestors, which had the most surprising result. I have previously referred to living ancestors, mentors and teachers, whom I have walked with or remembered during my suriashi pilgrimages. In addition, at the end of this chapter I also refer to my dead (Swedish) ancestors.

Heterotopia

My analysis of the pilgrimage to the home museum Ricklundgården benefited from the use of Michel Foucault's *heterotopia* (1984). Foucault believed that 'the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space' (1984, 2). Heterotopia is the space where things are different, whereas 'utopia' is the space where everything is good, and dystopia is where everything is bad (Mead, 1995, 13). Foucault explained that we live with spatial 'oppositions that we regard as simple givens: for example, between private space and public space' (1984, 2). We

divide spaces, and unconsciously hide some, such as ‘the hidden presence of the sacred’ (2). These hidden presences, invoked by spaces such as museums, abandoned houses, cemeteries - or by moving slowly in suriashi - was made real (or accepted as real) through the actual practice (see previous chapters). There was also what Foucault called *crisis heterotopia*, or sacred, forbidden places for ‘adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly’ (Foucault, 1984, 4). These other spaces were reserved for individuals who were, in relation to society, in a state of crisis (Foucault, 1984, 4). Here is where dead ancestors were placed, in the space of the past, activated in suriashi for this chapter. Where we ‘archive’ our ancestors, such as cemeteries, represented what Foucault called heterotopia. He wrote:

We are living not in a homogenous and empty space but, on the contrary, in a space that is laden with qualities, a space that may also be haunted by fantasy. (1984,4)

However, we also archive our ancestors in our minds and memories. Thus, I argue that it was possible to walk in suriashi with your ancestors, and with ghosts while simultaneously walking in a museum in Paris or in a museum in northern Sweden. It was difficult to argue for the “realness” in this claim, therefore I propose a simplification – it was possible to walk in suriashi slowly here and now, while engaging with the past. Suriashi activated spaces that could be haunted by fantasy. I walked in a real space in front of the camera, while at the same time I walked in ‘other’ spaces, with ancestors elsewhere, and with ghosts and spirits in heterotopia. Thus, suriashi had the possibility to carry and process heterotopian content through phenomenological processes. In Chapter One, I wrote how Nishikawa Senrei opened up for new complexities and in-between-ness in the practice when she recorded her voice on a cassette. This showed that Senreinokai did not close down, it just moved *elsewhere*. With the master moved to *elsewhere*, a concept which philosopher Michel Foucault described as a heterotopic space without geographical markers, students continued to follow her rules of the practice (1984, 5). Nishikawa Senrei resided in our bodies and continued to help realize movements in the space of the dōjō. My thesis showed how the continuation of her guidance.

The call for an artistic engagement with heterotopias resulted in subsequent suriashi pilgrimages to ancestor’s homes and to cemeteries. These pilgrimages visited ‘heterotopic’ spaces, ‘other’ spaces – spaces that might not exist in reality. Practising suriashi enabled time and space to reflect on how dead ancestors affect you, through imagination but also through unanswered questions. After my artistic residency in the home museum, three strong

narratives appeared, and I engage with two of them in the end of this chapter. The first one regarded my own great grandmother, and the Swedish mass migration to the United States. The second regarded unorthodox practices by “outcast” shamans and wandering performers. This final creative and speculative research enabled further presentations and workshops for artistic researchers and students, which I presented in Vilnius, Lithuania and on Fårö, Sweden (Dahlstedt, 2018c, Dahlstedt, 2019a). It resulted in new material for my students at University of Gothenburg and at Stockholm University of the Arts (2019, 2020, 2021). I also composed a ninety-minute-long performance about my great grandmother processed through the Nō-drama Yamanba - the old and wise Mountain Crone, from which I have added video material focusing on the suriashi parts (Dahlstedt, 2018d). My last suriashi for this performance is performed in a cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, where I had Swedish ancestors I never knew of.

Suriashi with museum ghosts and snow at Ricklundgården

I provide a brief background to Ricklundgården, originally a home built by artists Emma (1897-1965) and Folke Ricklund (1900-1986) in the 1940s (Ricklundgården, 2020). After they divorced, Emma and her Sámi collaborator Lisa Stämp kept the house open for visiting artists. Foucault discussed a museum being a heterotopic space, ‘constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages’ (1984, 7). He meant that the very idea of an ‘indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place’ belongs to our modernity (7). However, when Emma Ricklund wrote in her will that she wanted her home to remain a residency for artists, she also found a solution to the dilemma of museums as immobile places for preservation of objects and of memory, where the risk is that the past is seen as something fixed, which cannot communicate with the future. By inviting artists to work in her home, artists become the agents for exchange, for creating a link with the legacy of the museum itself, and with the legacy of the local environment. Artists came to Ricklundgården to make videos, to read, to paint, to write, to research, and to dance. Thus, the visiting artists were constantly in conversation with how the place was practised in the past, and there was a connection made between “static” objects and living bodies. This fact strengthened my own work with allowing suriashi to be investigated from lenses extending performer training and preservation.

Ski-suriashi invoking Heian-style suriashi

I performed suriashi pilgrimages outdoors in the snow, which added an extra physical challenge not only to the legs; it was very painful to keep the eyes directed to the horizon (*kin no me*) since the snowflakes were sharp as nails. Some days were -30°Celsius, and my cheeks froze. I suggest that you run the video below in the background while continuing the reading:

Watch the video of suriashi practised in Sápmi in northern Sweden.

[Video 3: 0:21:24 – 0:47:49](#)

The suriashi practice takes place in deep snow outside the museum Ricklundgården, on the frozen lake Kultsjön, on the frozen lake Stensjön, and in the ski trails in Saxnäs. I also practise on Fiskonfjället together with Sámi Joel, Laila and Sára Hermansson.

If you have the possibility to practise suriashi in snow, please do it.

Pay attention to how snow affects the balance but also how it adds a louder rhythmic score to the sliding feet.

Since suriashi was difficult to practice in snow, I started to practice suriashi on skis. Suriashi worked rather well with skiing, the floating movements were similar. Practising suriashi on skis resembled practising suriashi in the oversized Heian style male trousers, *nagabakama*, used by the female crossdressers Shirabyōshi (see Chapter Three). The sound was also similar. I discovered how video could help elucidate concepts of time travel and the invocation of spirits - techniques which are embedded in suriashi. In the video editing process, the digital images were put together in a manner which increased or decreased their visibility/opacity. This facilitated a digital time travel – a ghost-invoking tool. Watching the video records from my ski-suriashi afterwards, I edited them together with my Shirabyōshi performance (*Dust Falling, Rain Falling* 2012). The video showed that a digital spacetime travel to 12th-century-Kyōto was possible, including the shape shifting between myself as a skier and as a Shirabyōshi. In the digital world, the character shifting between suriashi-skiing and suriashi-performing was enabled by decreasing and increasing the characters' presence, which was easily done via video editing. There was a moment of transparency between my two characters as they shift focus. The video evidenced the mental work of bringing forward heterotopic spaces in suriashi. In order to bring new spirits/characters to

the stage – or to co-exist with ghosts/nonhumans - the performer had to find ways to physically augment or lower her presence in space. If our physical presence in space was decreased, could we then make room for absences, such as ghosts/spirits in the artistic practice? I point to this detail of the video created at Ricklundgården:

A digital time travel between 12th and 21st Century

Suriashi performed in red pants on skis,
juxtaposed with suriashi performed in long red trousers, *nagabakama*,
from the 2012 performance *Dust falling, Rain falling* (Dahlstedt and Nonaka, 2012)
about medieval crossdressers, Shirabyōshi:

[Video 3: 0:42:40 – 0:47:23](#)

Ghosts on a daily basis

The video elucidated the psycho-physical ghostly method in suriashi, which worked as a constant play with presence and visibility. In order to continue with the activation of ghostly methods, I first reflect on my own situation in terms of cultural translation from Japan to Sweden, then describe how the European modernist movement appreciated Nō theatre, and finally engage with the potential of suriashi to portray ghosts and spirits. Many of my Japanese colleagues keep ashes of their ancestors in their homes, and they have daily conversations with them. In addition, there were practices for creating space for spirits, such as lighting incense and offering flowers and food on your home altar. Literature scholar Notani Keiji confirmed that even though Japanese traditional theatre deals not only with this world but also the world of the dead, ghosts are also part of the everyday in Japan, something dealt with at a daily basis (Notani, 2017, 159). For the *Bon festival*, a festival for the spirits of the dead, people travelled to their hometown each year to celebrate and dance with their dead ancestors. Dancing with your ancestors at Bon Festival was not a hallucination, it was a very 'real' practice, and performed by everyone in the Japanese contemporary society. These Bon dances were dances performed in heterotopic spaces where humans, non-humans and ghosts could co-exist.

The respectful dancing for dead ancestors during the Japanese Bon festival resulted in my questioning of the non-existing engagement with ancestors in Swedish cultures. A dance practice for dead ancestors did not exist in Sweden. Ancestors were not kept anywhere else

other than the cemetery - a (heterotopic) space for silence, where common activities are to light candles in the winter and bring flowers in the summer. In this sense, ancestors were made immobile, dead of course, and fixed in a space. One of my suriashi pilgrimages in snow visited the gravestones carrying my husband's name, *Dahlstedt*. I realized I did not know the gravestones of my own great grandmothers. This awareness brought me to the recreation of the historical domestic flâneuse in Carina Ari's Parisian apartment (Chapter Seven). In many families, the paternal ancestors who had professional identities obscured the maternal ancestors of whom many worked in their homes – a direct result of 'the politics of domesticity' (Meskimmon, 1996, 161). Therefore, I knew the gravestones of my husband's great grandfathers, but not the gravestones of my own great grandmothers. I finally found my initial resistance to engage with 'real' ancestors: Which ancestors and what legacy could possibly be invoked if they were unknown? I asked whether the absence of ancestral narratives thus left me with no legacy? Could spiritual engagements with ancestors - or those who were here before us - still work if they were unknown?

I continued to practise suriashi, inside the museum this time, which embodied the dead persons who had lived and worked there, for example Emma Ricklund, Lisa Stämp, Folke Ricklund, Kalle Hedberg and Helge Dahlstedt. This suriashi practice differed from the practice at Musée Guimet and from the outdoor practices. It was evocative in a different way since I did not fear to be interrupted by a museum guard or by passers-by. However, lowering my own presence, I became terrified that someone else than myself might haunt the museum space. My senses were elevated to the point that I heard my own heartbeat, and other sounds previously unnoticed. Experiencing the paintings slowly from different angles without directly looking at them gave an immersive sensation I cannot put into words. I therefore propose suriashi as a productive method for experiencing a museum, an art exhibition, and the heterotopic spaces they invoke:

Suriashi pilgrimage inside the museum Ricklundgården; Emma Ricklund's home next to Kalle Hedberg's self-portrait and his portraits of Lisa Stämp, and Sam Uhrdin's portrait of Emma Ricklund:

[Video 3: 2:47:11](#) - until the end

If you feel comfortable, walk slowly back and forth through a museum, or a similar heterotopic space.

The ghost in Nō

Suriashi functioned rather well on stage as an artistic method for embodying ghosts, spirits and ancestors through the floating movement and sliding steps. However, no Nō actor believed that the inner tension produced by suriashi was setting a ghost free, as this would make it difficult for them to perform. The practice of engaging with ghosts on a daily basis was not easy to transmit culturally. However when the heterotopic spaces for the dead, such as cemeteries, instead are embodied as in the Japanese Bon Festival, it could engage ‘a time of pleasure and of quiet recollection of dear ones gone, and also is a beautiful event symbolizing continuity with the infinite world beyond’ (Ashikaga, 1950, 228).

Artistic practices and experiences have a potential that we cannot grasp totally. I give a few examples of how components in Japanese theatre have been used as ways to express ephemeral and ghostly content, and how this influenced European early modernism. Nō plays often concerned spirits or ghosts that must be appeased. The authors Ezra Pound and William Yeats had a life-long desire to experiment with Japanese theatrical concepts after they collaborated with modern dancer Itō Michio on the 1916 Nō-inspired drama *At the Hawk's Well* (Yeats, 1916). Pound found the grasp of spiritual being the most compelling feature of the Nō drama, which dealt more with ghosts than with men clothed in flesh (Notani, 2017, 151). Author T.S. Eliot compared Western and Japanese theatre and stated that there was a difference in Japanese theatre’s ‘methods of making the ghost’, where ‘ghosts are real and not imaginarily represented in the psychology of the possessed’ (Notani, 2017, 158). These early modernists sought ways to express ephemeral and ineffable content, which was difficult to grasp and explain with words. Therefore, they turned to Japanese art forms to find claims for what they wanted to explore in their own (Western) artistic practices. However, I state that ‘methods of making the ghost’, which Eliot acknowledged as distinguished in Japanese theatre, were created through physical work, and the real concreteness of physicality. The inner tension created through physical effort filled movement with life, meaning and storytelling as the performer slowly proceeded. Here is where suriashi supported the ghost-making.

Suriashi into industrialization and the ancestral past

Since 2017, after the residency at Ricklundgården, I specifically directed my suriashi pilgrimages to heterotopic spaces. The suriashi pilgrimages continued at an ever-slower pace, and with great care. New narratives emerged as the presence of my absent maternal ancestors increased. They showed the gaps in what Massey called the modernist grand narrative, within the frameworks of progress, of development and of modernisation (2005, 11, 14). Modernist thinking about development still prevailed; however, I discovered how my own ancestors blocked the road from their positions in past times. Sociologist Bruno Latour's description of 'a vast army moving forward, preceded by the most daring innovators and thinkers', was an image still haunting us (Latour, 2010, 472) (2010, 472). Thus, we did not have time to reflect backwards, since the goal was to move forwards. Latour proposed to instead re-define what it meant to progress (473). What I found in the narratives supported the chosen slow ambulatory perspective. With support from the sociologist Bruno Latour and Massey, this thesis subverted the haunting concepts of progress, development and modernisation (Latour, 2010, Massey, 2005).

As I proceeded, I found my great grandmothers' gravestones, ancestors in Sweden and surprisingly in the United States, slowly reclaiming lost legacy. Yet new stories emerged. Nishikawa Senrei's request worked in almost a ghostly way, which caused unexpected, embodied encounters with Swedish cultural history. These pilgrimages were fragile and encountered fragile materials and information. The processing of culture and lost legacy through my own body augmented the mercilessness and ruthlessness of the early 20th century history. My suriashi pilgrimage travelled to my ancestors' hometown Hyltebruk (Hylte paper mill) in southern Sweden, a smelly industrial city, which marked the breakthrough of industrialization and modernism in Sweden. The city, founded in 1907, represented the mass movement from the farms and forests into the stinking, roaring paper mill where the trees were ground into newsprint paper. The city came to be only because of the paper industry, and it was at the time the world's largest. The factory – representing industrialization and progress – was the heart of the city, to which families moved from forests and farms. Suriashi in Hyltebruk engendered Sweden's less flattering legacy. I was worried that this content would be too personal, but I realized that the story I uncovered was shared with many. Not only in Sweden. After walking in suriashi around the factory, I ended my Hyltebruk pilgrimage by walking with my ninety-two-year-old grandmother Linnea Johansson (1924-2017) at the nursing home Malmagården, a space that Foucault

would call crisis heterotopia (1984,4). She walked using a walking frame. It was a memorable encounter, and the most important suriashi for this thesis. It was our last meeting.

Welcome to Hyltebruk, Sweden

April 8th, 2017

[Video 3: 0:47:51](#) – 1:05:58

Activating the ancestral position did not stop with the kind of ghostly spirituality that Pond and Yeats desired in order to create a new modern and embodied theatre (Notani, 2017, Yeats, 1916). This thesis searched for a critical and political content in those esoteric practices and understanding how they function in the everyday. When the suriashi pilgrimage encountered ‘other spaces’, three strong narratives appeared, and I engage with two of them here. The first one regarded migration, the second unorthodox practices by “outcast” shamans and wandering performers, which have been present throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three, Four and Eight. These narratives were uncovered as a result of my suriashi practice.

I begin with a brief outline of the Swedish mass migration to the States. *Migration* is a collective term for people moving across different distances - from the Latin *migra'tio* wandering, moving, from *mi'gro* - to wander, move - (the Institute for Language and Folklore., 2017). Some of my unknown ancestors were migrants, emigrating to the U.S. Between 1821 and 1930, around 1.2 million Swedes emigrated to North America. People fled because of famine, malnutrition, and religious and patriarchal violence (the Institute for Language and Folklore, 2017). In July 2018, with the help of newfound relatives in Sweden and the U.S., I learned details about my ancestor’s emigration from Sweden (Corbeil, 2018, Thelander, 2018).

Trying to grasp immigration from somewhere far can be a detached endeavor. However, my practice-led research showed how the traces of migration were instead embodied through many generations. These extra findings while writing my thesis, resulted in the writing of a play about my great grandmother, in which I combined the new ancestral narrative with the Nō play *Yamanba* (Brazell and Araki, 1998, Dahlstedt, 2018d). Thus, suriashi pilgrimages in heterotopic ‘other’ spaces engendered something “lost”, initially considered of no

importance. My investigation related to smaller places like Hyltebruk, and a new engagement with New York City. Through these engagements, I learned that my great grandmother Tora (1885-1960) like many others escaped a poor life in Sweden and migrated to New York in 1909. Tora served in a family for five years in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbourhood of Brooklyn. She travelled far from home, but never really worked outside the home. However, allowing these accounts to become fleeting images, Tora shaped new identities of the flâneuse together with other immigrant servants in the same Brooklyn neighbourhood. Including their lives and work in the grand narrative, it was possible to draw different stories about modernity, which this thesis was able to do through my practice-led methodology. I was finally able to respond to Nishikawa Senrei's request to include my ancestors in my dance practice. The recovery of lost legacy had a huge impact that extended the work with this thesis. While four of Tora's siblings stayed in the U.S., she herself returned to Sweden, but I do not depict her life back in Sweden for this thesis.

Waltz for a wounded ancestor

The creative work paired with the research question opened for new findings relevant for what suriashi could activate, and when comparing Japanese and Swedish practices and symbols. I describe the final creative result of this thesis, which became a performance for the stage. Researching many things through suriashi, I engaged with traditional Japanese theatre in an unconventional way. The phenomenological perspective shaped different traces and connections between historical tales and the practice. The studying of Zeami's original Nō play *Yamanba* in Tokyo (2018) included long sequences of performing suriashi in repetitive circles, where suriashi represented wandering through the mountains. This again reinforced suriashi as a walking and travelling step, originated mysteriously through the female crossdressers *Shirabyōshi* (Rath, 2004, 187). What was exciting was that the crossdresser *Shirabyōshi* who keeps haunting this thesis (see Chapter Three and earlier in this chapter) was also the main character in Zeami's Nō play *Yamanba*. The narrative depicted a professional *Shirabyōshi* dancer in Kyōto who was an expert in performing *Yamanba*/the Mountain Crone. In order to improve her dancing, she went for a walk into the mountains to sense the spirit of *Yamanba*. Since it was a Nō play, with suriashi as a ghost-invoking tool, the *Shirabyōshi* dancer encountered the real *Yamanba*, or the spirit of *Yamanba* (Brazell and Araki, 1998). The spirit appeared, became a fully visible character who brought forward Buddhist messages to the *Shirabyōshi* dancer in Kyōto. In 2018, I created the performance *Yamamba – waltz for a wounded ancestor* - as seen through the traditional Nō

play *Yamanba* written by Zeami (Brazell and Araki, 1998, Dahlstedt, 2018d). It was activated after four years of suriashi as research. The plot from Zeami's Nō play was merged with my great grandmother's life, where I used three of Zeami's original texts (Brazell and Araki, 1986). Tora's journey by boat from Sweden to New York was effectively walked and depicted in suriashi on the stage *Atalante* in Gothenburg, founded by my choreographic ancestors Rubicon in 1987.

Video of suriashi representing the mountain rounds by the old and wise crones

I have gathered three examples on video of suriashi, distinctly representing wandering, practised and implemented in the performance about my great grandmother Tora: *Yamamba – waltz for a wounded ancestor*. The first video example shows these suriashi walking circles demonstrated by Richard Emmert from Kita Nō School, the second example demonstrated by Jun Otomo from Hōshō school. Both teachers and performers are based in Tokyo. After the wandering suriashi lessons, I ask you to engage with the third video example documenting a suriashi pilgrimage to a park in northern Tokyo. This suriashi pilgrimage shows the kind of encounters suriashi in this thesis produced, where I was able to practise suriashi with a Japanese flâneuse. After practising suriashi in cherry-blossom snow wearing the Yamanba-mask, a female pedestrian presented herself and asked if she could practise with me. She revealed that she was eighty-seven years old and that it was sixty years since her last Nō-practice. Thus, she asked to hold my arm. Her Nō-posture was still perfect (Kanze school, the masculine stereotype). The fact that she lived in Tokyo but was reminded of her early traditional Nō-training by me, a Swedish researcher doing research in urban spaces, supported my aim with this investigation. The relocating of suriashi from the dance studio shifted focus and enabled new encounters with society and audiences. Knowledge achieved through practising suriashi was not a static endeavour; it changed with the situations and spaces performed within and elicited a variation of artistic experiences. The moment with her walking with me while fleeting cherry blossom petals whirled in the wind was unforgettable. The image adds to the many photos depicting Sakura, these spring confirming flowers that also symbolize impermanence.

Suriashi as wandering in the Nō play *Yamanba*, Tokyo, April 2018:

[Video 4: 1:18:30 – 1:19:31](#) Yamanba suriashi lesson with Richard Emmert in Tokyo

[Video 4: 1:29:35](#) – 1:32:38 Yamanba suriashi lesson with Jun Otomo in Tokyo

Suriashi in Tokyo with a female pedestrian, 2018:

[Video 4: 1:39:47](#) – 1:43:50

A spontaneous suriashi practise with an eighty-seven-year-old female pedestrian in Asukayama park, Tokyo

Following, you find two video documentations from the performance *Yamamba – waltz for a wounded ancestor*, focusing on the suriashi walking. The first one shows suriashi performed on Nunobashi Bridge in Tateyama, Japan, representing my great grandmother Tora's journey from Sweden to New York City. The second one shows the end of the performance where the (spirit of the) crone/old woman and my great grandmother Tora is celebrated and emancipated. The composer Kajsa Magnarsson sang a text from the original Nō play *Yamamba* by Zeami, translated by me into Swedish.

Suriashi as wandering in the performance *Yamamba – waltz for a wounded ancestor*, Gothenburg, December 2018

[Video 4: 2:34:03](#) - suriashi on Tateyama Bridge, representing Tora's journey to the U.S.

[Video 4: 2:39:13](#) – 2:41:49 suriashi representing the final mountain rounds of Yamamba/Tora

In 2019, on April 12th, I visited the brownstone row house in Brooklyn where my great grandmother Tora worked as a maid on 141 Hancock Street. Walking slowly and documenting inside the house, I considered slow walking as a privilege. Maids ran up and down the stairs, always ready to serve their families, and ran errands, shopped for groceries, they had few possibilities for slow interventions.

I walk slowly in the row house in Brooklyn where Tora worked between 1909-1914

[Video 4: 2:49:10](#) - 2:51:21

I helped Tora clean the stairs as a performative gesture:



Figure 27. I clean the stairs on Hancock Street, Brooklyn, where my ancestor Tora worked as maid in 1909-1914 (Dahlstedt, 2019b)

Unorthodox practices by “outcast” shamans and wandering performers

My findings supported the slow, unorthodox, tangled narrative, which valued all the threads that had not been seen as important and therefore ignored. It was possible to hold all these findings and narratives from many spaces and times, throughout the practise of suriashi.

Suriashi activated the understanding of 'space' as an effect of interrelations created through interactions between the global space out there to the local tiny place in here (Massey, 2005, 9). The second narrative activated by suriashi as experimental pilgrimage in other spaces regarded unorthodox practices by "outcast" shamans and wandering performers, which have been present throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three and in this Chapter Nine. Suriashi originated from Daoist shamans in China, and as shaman practices depicted in Nō theatre (Lancashire, 2001, Rath, 2004). Finding out that one of my ancestors was a well-known Swedish shaman (wise man) was thus an interesting finding for this thesis. His name was Andreas Jacobson (1826-1907), and he was the grandfather of Tora. The encounter with my shaman ancestor became a logic conclusion to all the years trying to understand what suriashi could engage with. I explain briefly who he was, and how this affected my subsequent suriashi pilgrimages.

The narrative about Jacobson bridged any fixed understandings of Swedish and Japanese cultures, and expanded on the role artists, and other wandering professionals had played in this thesis. Before Jacobson became a shaman, he had an ambulatory lifestyle. Thus, he met people from various backgrounds and cultures. Jacobson's shamanistic methods were considered unorthodox by the Swedish church; he was described using magic from a 'Jewish book', which he had bought from Jews (Bondeson, 1909, 269). This was not appropriate since the Christian traditions were regarded as the only 'real' (Swedish) and valued practices. I considered that Jacobson held the same dubious position as the contemporary artist, combining a variation of practices in order to survive; travelling and touring to people who needed his skills. Jacobson was appreciated and was able to make a living thanks to his creative practices. He resisted the ideas of modernisation and industrialisation. In the 19th century when soil and forest was sold for money, many farmers were forced to sell land and forest by the Swedish government. However, Andreas Jacobson refused both to sell the forest and to give up his pagan practices (Dickson, 1946). Revisiting his life, he processed the conflicts that arose between the old self-sufficient society and the emerging modernity of money management, capitalist exploitation and individual freedom (Dickson, 1946). As for my newly found relatives in the U.S., I learned that they often referred to the 'wise man Jacobson'. Through narratives about him, they were strengthening their Swedish identity as immigrants in the United States. They could rely on lore, and narratives about wise men in their homeland. However, this narrative was not suitable for the Swedish context, therefore he was forgotten in my own family, hence the lost legacy.

Finally, in 2019, I brought flowers to Tora's sister Jenny's gravestone at the Evergreens Cemetery in Brooklyn, one hundred ten years after Tora herself had left New York. I lamented all these times I had been in New York to study dance, not knowing there were gravestones and ancestors to visit, and a legacy to engage with.

I refrain from assessing the different suriashi pilgrimages, however, the last suriashi for this thesis was indeed a very special one. The event made complete sense, as if there had never been any other way to bring flowers to an ancestor. After years of practising without knowing where suriashi would take this thesis, it could not have ended in a better place. Indeed, ending in a cemetery was not so inauspicious since this chapter revolved around heterotopia. Besides as the cemetery, with cherry blossom and magnolia trees in full bloom, had an overview of Manhattan skyline, it was a heterotopic space with clear geographical markers. Overlooking New York, it connected with the other suriashi pilgrimages described in Chapter Seven; the pilgrimages with live ancestors in Judson Church, Grand Central and on 5th Avenue. On 15th of April 2019, I wrote on Facebook:

Honouring ancestor Jenny Andersson who was the first in her family to emigrate to New York in 1896 [and the first of my maternal ancestors]. She was very supportive of her siblings, and thus helped her sister, my great grandmother Viktoria, to emigrate in 1909. She came to Sweden twice to help in difficult times, and she would send money and gifts. She is buried in the most beautiful cemetery, and I was finally able to bring her flowers. Thankyou everyone who have helped me find out. #flowersforJennie #blommortillJenny #suriashiforJennie #suriashiförJenny @ The Evergreens Cemetery.

The following video documentation shows the last suriashi for this thesis, bringing flowers to Jenny Rasmussen from Tora. This suriashi deeply affected my newly found relatives in the United States, even though none of them works with dance or art. This was yet evidence of the potential for suriashi outside its theatrical context.

I bring flowers from Tora to her sister Jenny,

[Video 4: 2:51:24 - 2:56:00](#)

Conclusion

The starting point for this thesis was the exploration of a Japanese dance practice, *suriashi*, which was relocated from the studio and stage to urban and other spaces. The way *suriashi* is practiced depends on the context, but this is a discussion largely missing in research on Japanese performance practices. *Suriashi* has often been described only with a few lines, since previous researchers have mistakenly framed *suriashi* either as a simple practice or a basic step (Griffiths, 2014, Liu, 2016, Sellers-Young, 1993). For this thesis, I propose *suriashi* as an artistic practice, which should take place among other canonic dance and walking practices. I chose to work only with the slow and ‘feminine’ formation of *suriashi*, however *suriashi* is not slow per se. *Suriashi* has many functions and formations, and it will look very different depending on the narrative and atmosphere. As my investigation showed, *suriashi* is much more than a basic step. By scrutinizing the practice of *suriashi* from many angles, particularly in spaces outside the theatrical context, I propose new ways of understanding the potential uses of *suriashi*.

For this thesis, *suriashi* and gender was the most important topic, and here is where the comprehensive questions came together. I have chosen the ‘feminine’ *suriashi* and allowed ‘feminine’ *suriashi* to process issues with gender and gendered spaces. ‘Feminine’ *suriashi* was able to discuss gendered movements in dance, and gendered movements in urban space, where particularly the question on women walking alone was processed. This new focus enabled *suriashi* to engage with activism and politics. Following the emerging field of walking as research, I identified new paths where *suriashi* could act, and I have thus included walks with nondancers and amateurs.

Suriashi was not performed as a secondary experimentation, but also served as an overarching strategy. In that sense, *suriashi* practice is the frame itself for much of the work

in this thesis. Knowledge achieved through practising suriashi was not a static endeavour; it changed with the situations and spaces performed within and elicited a variation of artistic experiences. This affected the meandering writing style, oscillating between academic theory and reflective recollection. The suriashi pilgrimages captured by the camera offered a change of conventions of screendance work shown in festivals, which usually consist of shorter films. As such, the video submitted for this thesis entered a framework of autoethnographic, durational art, but also provided audiovisual evidence for suriashi practiced in many spaces. In a practice-led research project like this, with strong artistic foundations, the conclusions cannot simply be explicitly stated in words, as they take many forms, also as embodied knowledge and transformed practices. Still, going back to the research questions presented at the beginning of this thesis, each has been illuminated and elaborated upon by extensive documented artistic experiments, and by theoretical and historical analysis and discussion. This section reviews each question and summarize the findings.

Research questions:

1. What can suriashi activate and act upon when it is relocated and offered as outdoor performance or performative investigation other than studio-based performer training?

This thesis shows how slow suriashi practised in urban and other spaces was able to stimulate important questions both from within the practice itself, and through its placements in contemporary society. Three strong themes emerged:

a. The application of suriashi in contemporary urban spaces offered an opportunity to interrogate, challenge and reflect on the performativity of gender (see Chapters Five and Eight).

b. The experimental pilgrimages showed the potential for engaging with political issues regarding space (see Chapter Eight).

c. Suriashi performed in museums asked questions about immaterial legacy. Suriashi provided a tool to examine embodied legacy, both in relation to creation narratives about steps, and legacy that does not exist or is lost (See Chapters Four, Eight and Nine).

2. What happens to the person walking slowly in suriashi in a space?

This question was asked in order to emphasize that though the purpose of suriashi for this thesis was to activate societal and spatial issues, suriashi was grounded in many years of studio-based practice. It was therefore important not to take for granted that the relocation from the studio to urban spaces was a simple endeavour (see Chapters Seven and Eight), why this thesis includes process journals that support the auto-ethnographic reflections of the

events that occurred in urban spaces. They evidence that walking alone in suriashi was challenging and sometimes frightening, but not dangerous. Initially, I set up practices with others in research conferences and workshops. To concern suriashi only from a dance aesthetic point of view blocked any other potential of what suriashi could stimulate rather than being a fixed tool for perfection. Therefore, the practice-led work for this thesis was explored by transdisciplinary researchers as well as dancers, and by amateurs as well as artists from other fields. In order to collect information also from their auto-ethnographic experiences of moving alone through space, I set up formal and informal practices in conferences, urban and other spaces, which included reflective writing and interviews (see Chapters Two, Seven and supporting evidence in Appendices D, E and G). Suriashi provided an embodied shield but also a sensitivity to space, which enabled me and others to reflect and philosophize on presumed societal symbols and agreements. Investigations showed that the embodied shield, originally constructed to portray 'the feminine' created ambiguous feelings. Emotions oscillated between empowerment, loneliness, surrealism, pleasure, fear, oneness, fragmentation, curiosity, collections, activated by encounters with the real world.

3. What happens to the space when one or more persons proceed slowly in suriashi? There are several replies to this question. I begin with the more obvious reply where, in regards of visibility, two or more persons proceeding slowly through space had an immediate effect on space in terms of audience reactions. Suriashi as a group activity became more visible and enabled more audience contact and reactions. Second, from the walkers' point of view, when suriashi was performed together with others, the space was perceived as safer (see Chapters Seven, Eight, Appendices C, D and E). The solitary walker's experience of space differed from the group of walkers' experiences. Third, Doreen Massey declared that since space is not abstract and never passive, we could never really fully grasp what our suriashi actions did to space. Considering the relations produced from walking in suriashi; between us and space; between others walking with us; and between others in space watching us, have endless effects, which we cannot fully comprehend. Revisiting my own and participant's journaled experiences, analyzing the video documentation provided some evidence to the influence of suriashi performed in a space. Fourth, the thesis also engages with legacy in relation to space. Nishikawa Senrei explained that part of the technique had to engage with your ancestors. Following Nishikawa Senrei's request, we never walk alone, we always walk with our ancestors or memories of ancestors, which also affects how we perceive space (Chapter Nine). The last reply regards suriashi performed as drag, which attracted strong audience reactions. Through the video documentations, it was possible to

compare the suriashi pilgrimage with the drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy with my own solitary, invisible suriashi in similar surroundings (see Chapter Five).

4. What is the connection between suriashi and legacy, and how is suriashi connected to ideas of travellers, storytellers, characters, or ghosts?

For this thesis, the most important connection between legacy and suriashi is through Nishikawa Senrei, who requested to always include ancestors when practicing and performing suriashi. She is my most important link to traditional Japanese performance practices and to the pedagogical processes in passing on knowledge. She opened up for new complexities and in-between-ness in the practice when she recorded her voice on a cassette before she died. Nishikawa Senrei's call for always performing for our ancestors in order to reinforce our relations to them was both concrete and otherworldly (see Chapters One, Four and Nine). The engagement with suriashi and legacy for this thesis was two-fold; including how to process the legacy of suriashi itself, but also how to process lost legacy. In order to investigate the ancestral reference embedded in suriashi, I used several strategies:

1. I related to Nishikawa Senrei as the first ancestor in my practice
2. I processed the idea of who an ancestor might be or represent.
3. I expanded on the ancestral reference emerging from the teacher-student relationship in artistic practice.
4. I practised with live ancestors; mentors and teachers.
5. I practiced with friends and peers and asked them about their legacy and ancestors (see Chapters Two, Seven and Appendices D and E).
6. I practised in a museum holding Asian art, where suriashi was able to process the absence of movements and living bodies (ephemeral legacy) when objects were archived (Chapter Seven).
7. I practiced in specific spaces, which enabled the engagement with intangible content, lost legacy and obscured ancestors (Chapter Nine). When intangible content, such as ancestors, was processed, it symbolised the continuity with the infinite world beyond, through our living bodies.

Historically, suriashi has supported the depiction of travellers, storytellers, shape-shifting characters, and ghosts on the traditional Japanese stages, for example in the Nō-plays *Yamanba*, *Aoi no Ue*, *Atsumori*, *Musume Dōjōji* (Zeami, 1984, Brazell and Araki, 1986, Rath, 2004, 187, Kawashima, 2001, Meeks, 2011, Nakahara, 1999, Strippoli, 2006). Suriashi establishes the arrival and departure of characters, where the past and present can be combined, through the same performer on the bridgeway (hashigakari). The characters can

also be nonhumans, spirits and ghosts who travel through time in suriashi (see Chapters Three, Four and Nine). Here, suriashi functions as a tool for shape shifting, and for actual travel stories, *michiyuki*. For this thesis, suriashi was able to support similar narratives. However with the script moved out to urban spaces, it allowed for characters to appear and disappear on platforms, stations and streets in a constant, slow rhythm (see Chapter Seven). Suriashi continued to represent and support travelling and shifting ideas, as well as the narratives activated when participants passed through certain spaces. The thesis itself depicts travelling through spaces, and travelling through time, engaging with what and who appears along the way. It arrives to spaces, following and shaping stories, leaving, and arriving again. Calling the thesis an experimental pilgrimage in suriashi contributed and expanded on what historically has been called a pilgrimage.

Supported by the suriashi practice, the ambulatory investigation engendered hidden narratives about ancestors, travellers and storytellers, which enabled the inclusion of nonhumans, ancestors, and ghosts also in the thesis. These spatial engagements paired with the video editing created a new methodological concept about co-existing in creative work. Reflecting on our own presence and visibility in space, processed how we could co-exist in space. Following this direction, it was possible to conclude and merge narratives about Japanese shamans and outcast female performers with similar Swedish characters. This interconnection bridged the gap between Swedish and Japanese performance cultures, and between public and private spaces (Chapter Nine).

5. How can suriashi be situated together with other contemporary performance practices, such as dance and walking practices, choreography and screendance?

Suriashi is a very strenuous walking drill, and my aim was not to *push* the body in particularly long walks, rather to see how this kind of walking activated an inner monologue and simultaneously entered into a societal dialogue. Performance scholar Samuel Leiter's concept of suriashi being 'a theatricalization of natural walking' (Leiter, 2006, 99-100) was similar to how dance artists have choreographed walks and worked around concepts of 'natural' and 'artificial' (see Chapter Four). I therefore investigated approaches to natural walking and body alignments in dance practices, which also included travelling steps performed in choreographies for studio and stage (see Chapter Four) (Fensham, 2011). The body alignments were significant for each genre explored: ballet, modern and postmodern dance, which confirms that they are as significant and constructed as suriashi. In postmodern dance, pedestrian walking has been used as a method for escaping movements

considered too constructed. However, there are no natural walking techniques, instead all are choreographed or constructed.

Additionally, there was a connection between pilgrimage, suriashi practice and performative walking practices through the Japanese concept *michiyuki*, which means ‘to go on a road’. This supported the interpretation as suriashi representing both choreographed walking and experimental pilgrimage and contributed to the examination of how we move our bodies in space, not only in dance education, but also as humans in our everyday lives (see Chapter Four). Suriashi benefited from being examined not merely a fixed cultural symbol but as a complex dance and walking practice.

6. How can suriashi elucidate issues with gender and gendered spaces?

For this thesis, suriashi and gender was the most important topic, and here is where the comprehensive questions came together (see Chapters Five Seven, and Eight). Suriashi as a gendered technique provided a tool for walking with integrity, a flâneuse strategy, which led to the application of suriashi for political engagement through embodiment. Suriashi surprisingly provided the female walker ‘fictive invisibility’, and thus allowed a sense of safety when walking in urban spaces. It was the spiritual embodiment in suriashi, originally practised to connect with ancestors rather than the gaze of the paying audience, which worked also as a way to escape the male gaze on the streets. Beginning with the one person (myself) proceeding slowly in suriashi using an autoethnographic perspective, it became apparent that the person moving slowly walked in the footsteps of others. The solitary suriashi walker thus became the representative of women walkers, showing how they have processed their limited access to urban space, using a variation of flâneuse strategies (see Chapter Seven). One of the experimental pilgrimages presented in this chapter is targeted towards unequal distribution of funding of the arts, which affected the female dance artists (see Chapter Eight).

Engaging with the practice of suriashi enable the exploration of issues of gender combined with questions reflecting on ancestors and lost legacy. For example, paternal ancestors with professional identities obscured the maternal ancestors of which many worked in their homes – a direct result of ‘the politics of domesticity’, as investigated in Chapters Seven and Nine. Travelling through cities and spaces have shaped professional dancers’ lives not only in terms of educational institutions and professional platforms, but also in terms of their societal standing and prestige. Investigations showed that itinerant lifestyles were often

gendered and were subject to prejudices and critique. People, particularly women, on the move have been viewed as suspect.

7. How can suriashi be a method for activism and political engagement?

This question is related to the previous explorations of gender in relation to lost legacy. I wanted to investigate how the group performance of suriashi could also offer a critique of space, where the group does not march in defence or push forward any messages. Here, perspectives of suriashi encouraged a more intertwined position with political discussions of space, democracy and dance practice. Drawing from conference presentations and the experimental pilgrimage at Grand Central with three female choreographers demonstrated how suriashi activated micro-relations and micro-activisms in space, providing a new perspective on the work (see Chapters Two, Eight and Appendices D, E and G). I continued to explore how the phenomenological concept of 'artistic/aesthetic experience' through feminine suriashi could work as flâneuse strategy in resistance to gendered inequalities. My aim was to facilitate participants to walk consciously, while experiencing suriashi's 'feminine' shape of the body, interconnected with political cause. It worked as a contribution to activism/artivism - political marching in an artistic form, walking to acknowledge the absence of artistic practice, particularly by women, in the city centre of Gothenburg, Sweden. When participants engaged in slow suriashi together with me in groups, they gradually perceived themselves as one single body (see Chapters Two, Eight and Appendices D, E). Suriashi thus took the shape of a critical art of inquiry, blurring the boundaries between aesthetic practice, inquiry, activism, and everyday life. Suriashi as pilgrimage and micro-activism appeared in Hong Kong as a solo act by scholar Ching-Yuen Cheung who wanted to show his students that it is possible to protest peacefully. Here suriashi became a part of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, July 2019.

Summary of research outcomes

In summarising how the results were achieved, the thesis relied on experiences from the collected suriashi walks, called experimental pilgrimages. The video documentation of these pilgrimages is both part of the methodology, a durational artistic piece, and functioned as references for what suriashi activated in urban and other spaces. Though the thesis builds on my own and invited participants' experiences and perspectives on time and space in suriashi, a grounded framework from which to explore suriashi practice was established by examining the theories of space by Doreen Massey (2005).

The person who experienced the shift from the Japanese dance studio and out to urban and other spaces was initially me. This shift was supported by an autoethnographic process journal, enabling self-reflexivity, and followed what was activated along the practice-led research. This followed a long tradition emerging from common research perspectives in practice-led research and artistic research. For the theorizing of my own lived experience, I turned to scholars from dance, art and literature (Hammergren, 1996, Meskimmon, 1997, Parsons, 2000, Pollock, 1988) who showed the asymmetry regarding the spatial contracts between men and women, where women are forced to become spectacles and to be looked at, which caused a lack of control when moving in cities. Thus, the problem for women walkers concerned visibility, looking and seeing.

In addition, I invited others to the practice and asked them the same question. I presented my project in research conferences, where participating researchers were invited to walk together in suriashi and journal their reflections, which I collected in Appendices D and E. Peers, colleagues and friends were invited to practise suriashi to have a broader gathering of experiential input. This showed how walking informally in suriashi became a democratic, philosophical activity, which worked for nondancers as well as dancers. Suriashi practices were established with postmodern choreographers in New York City - also recognized as live ancestors and mentors in this thesis - in order to get a direct evaluation and observation from the postmodern dance field. This consolidated how useful and important suriashi was for dance practitioners of any genre. Relocating the practice also produced responses in practice, demonstrated in the durational video, and what extends this thesis in terms of how peers have been influenced by my work, for example the scholar Cheung who walked in the feminine suriashi as part of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, choreographers who started to use suriashi in their performances, friends struck by illness, walking in suriashi to comfort themselves.

From the pair of suriashi pilgrimages in Kyōto, described and analysed in Chapter Five, important observations were made in terms of gender. I performed a suriashi pilgrimage with Bruno the Bad Boy during a popular shrine festival, and soon after I performed suriashi alone in similar surroundings and context, in a crowded market street. The suriashi pilgrimage with drag queen Bruno the Bad Boy showed that it was possible to parade gender as a drag show, refraining from parody. The 'feminine' posture protected us from questions and comments. The focus created through the locked gaze (*kin no me*), paired with the slow time scale of suriashi, provided both a shield and an observer's distance to the onlookers. We

could intensely hear and sense what was happening around us, showing how the embodied logic of suriashi supported an expanded engagement with space, beyond the visual. Still, our suriashi pilgrimage deeply affected the space around us, and was far from invisible in this case. Rather, we created a stir, but we also provided a possibility for projection of expectation and prejudice. Our feminine suriashi gender parade, walking like constructed women, provided an alternative to how women historically have had to walk like constructed men, such as the writer George Sand, to escape the male gaze.

While people were ‘no longer sure whether the body encountered is that of a man or a woman’ (Butler 1999, xxiii), we were perceived as non-violent, as going beyond the norm, which confirmed the potential of suriashi. Proceeding slowly in a non-threatening way was productive and enriching. The fact that the Japanese onlookers could culturally relate to the suriashi way of walking, and to the way we referenced Japanese traditional clothing, had an affirming effect. We created an expanded space around us, thanks to our training and experience as stage performers, i.e., through help from our invisible ancestors.

In contrast, in the solitary suriashi I performed ten days later, I regained my safe spaceship and was hardly noticed. This shows how performed suriashi, in an interesting way, can protect the performer in two almost contradictory ways: First, by being a deeply concentrated performance in a different time scale, thus distancing the performer from the onlookers, while still providing a reflective surface for their reactions, and a heightened awareness of the surroundings for the performers. Second, by shielding the single performer from attention, by the same time scale difference working in reverse, here providing a distance from the surrounding people to the performer, who thus goes unnoticed.

Comparing these two pilgrimages to my own position as performer, this thesis and the experimental suriashi pilgrimages have helped me problematize the typical – and very vulnerable – position of the female performer: At the center, accepting the scrutinizing and judging gazes. The suriashi pilgrimages thus provide an important alternative to the dance field’s stereotypical expectations of beauty, youth and athleticism. Referencing choreographer Dianne Reid; being a mature dance artist is ‘a particular act of survival’ (Reid, 2016, 115). Suriashi pilgrimage has shown itself to be a viable part of my personal strategy towards this survival.

This thesis contributes to the field of dance research, practice-led and practice-based

research, artistic research, dance education and the growing field of walking research. This thesis also contributes to the field of Asian performance studies, by providing a deepened and broadened inside view on a fundamental dance technique with profound historical roots, and at the same time linking these traditional practices to contemporary experimental performance. It explores issues of gender performativity, intangible cultural heritage and 'the spiritual'. It expands on the short films usually produced for the field of screendance, where my submission of work represents durational art.

Recommendations for future:

A subject can never be exhausted, and new questions always arise from previous results, especially in practice-led research, where the practice also to a certain extent becomes research-led. New findings from research lead to new aesthetic turns and developed artistic expressions, which in turn give rise to new research questions.

The research presented in this thesis has resulted in three interesting themes, worth exploring in future work. They all relate to invisibility/visibility:

a) Education

Having shared suriashi pilgrimages with many other artists and non-artists, it is unavoidable to start reflecting on how to teach suriashi, and how to use it as a method in dance education to enable realizations and awareness of the students' own related inner practices, and as a vehicle for embodied discussions on artists' work in urban spaces. I look forward to exploring this with my students at the Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, and at the Department of Dance Education, Stockholm University of the Arts.

b) Artistic work – Suriashi as method for lost legacy

After my artistic residency in the artist's home museum, Ricklundgården, three strong narratives appeared. I engage with two of them in Chapter Nine: Migration, and outcast shamans/wandering performers. The third narrative is processed for a future documentary film about my great grandmother, created with suriashi as an artistic and reflexive method to explore long-lost legacy, the history of neglected and forgotten ancestors. This film is a work-in-progress and has been strongly influenced by the methods developed in this thesis, and will potentially carry them further into the future, while using suriashi to look back and contemplate the past.

c) Work outside education and the arts. This thesis provided a tool for dialogue and new surprising narratives when suriashi was performed as a friendship or gift act. Suriashi proceeded its own life, when we had more time together for exploration. The slow suriashi walks showed how profound simplicity could be something that held many obstacles and stories at the same time. Artist participants who have walked with me, have later described how our shared slow suriashi affected their future work. Suriashi was able to echo and justify the slowness of their own work. Trinh T. Minh-ha's method of not speaking *about* something, but speaking *nearby*, supported my methodology for interviews performed for this thesis (Chen, 1992, Schneider and Wright, 2020, Wood, 2001). When I interview co-practitioners or discuss suriashi with them, I sought to speak and walk nearby, for example with Bruno the Bad Boy in Chapter Five, and with Inta Balode in Appendix C. This approach could form a basis and method for future site-specific community projects with local habitants.

The limitations of study

Video in relation to performance, as either documentation or primary medium, is a huge topic in itself, with wide aesthetic implications. In particular, screendance is an established field of both artistic expression and research, see, e.g., (Bench, 2010, Bench, 2016, Reid, 2016, Rosenberg, 2000, Rosenberg, 2012). It is a conscious decision to not go into these topics here, as constraints of time and space would not allow for it. It would also go far beyond the main topic of this thesis. However, I do have training and experience as a director and choreographer of a large number of works for film and video, and have also published in this field, see, e.g. (Dahlstedt, 2014c). This thesis supported future work where my durational video collection of suriashi pilgrimages entered a new discussion on screendance.

Another area where there is potential for more work, is the historical background of Japanese dance and female historical and contemporary practitioners, as well as its place in the wider context of Japanese and Asian performance. Most Western scholarships focus on plays and (male) acting in the Nō theatre. The book *Women in Asian Performance: Aesthetics and Politics* (Madhavan, 2017), as well as scholars Barbara Geilhorn and Carole Fischer Sorgenfrei represented an exception in their investigations of women in Asian and Japanese performance (Geilhorn, 2017, Sorgenfrei, 2014). For further reading, see, e.g., (Gunji, 1970, Hahn, 2007, Klein, 1995, Klens, 1995, Sellers-Young, 1993, Yamazaki, 2001).

I chose to limit my presentation and analysis here to the parts of the history that are relevant for the development of the gendered suriashi that is the focus of my thesis, and

decided that the contemporary implications, practices and potentials of suriashi would be kept in the foreground. These decisions are rooted in the fact that this is a practice-led investigation in the field of dance, and not a thesis in Asian performance studies. Historical context is important, but not the focus of my thesis.

Here, this thesis ends, however, I propose for you to revisit my last lesson with Nishikawa Senrei.

My last lesson with Nishikawa Senrei at Senreinokai, April 5th, 2011:

[Video 4: 2:56:02](#) - 2:56:23

Ami: Thank you for teaching me (Okeiko, arigatou gozaimashita.)

Nishikawa Senrei: You must be very tired (Otsukaresamadeshita).

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary

Arukimiko	Walking shrine maiden
Bunraku	Traditional Japanese puppet theatre
Dōjō 道場	A place for practice, usually in martial arts
Hashigakari	Bridgeway – the path, visible to the audience, leading up to the main stage in the Nō theatre
Hyakugami 百神	‘thousand gods’, the patron deity for female puppeteers in medieval Japan
Iemoto 家元	Headmaster, lit. ‘family foundation’
Imayō	‘contemporary songs’ in Japanese, composed by female performers, based on gagaku and Buddhist melodies
Jiuta-mai	Traditionally performed by Geiko and Maiko, with focus on expressing the emotions of the joys and sorrows of women, originated in Kyōto and Osaka.
Jo-ha-kyū 序破急	a Japanese structural concept that indicates a progression from beginning to middle to end in a musical or dramatic performance.
Kamae 構	Body posture, body alignment, the structure of the body
Kanji 漢字	Chinese writing system, which was imported to Japan through the spread of Buddhism in the 6th century.
Keikoba 稽古場	A place for practice (dance, martial arts)
Kin no me 金の目	Golden eyes – the perfect space to rest your eyes when practising and performing is towards the horizon
Kinuzure 衣摺	the rustling of clothes
Kōken	after-watcher (back watcher) a professional stagehand/helper in Nō and Kyōgen
Kumadori (隈取)	powerful stage make-up for Kabuki actors, performing bold and bombastic male roles
Kurogo (or kuroko)	a professional stagehand, dressed in black
Michiyuki, 道行	To go on a road
Obi, Obiage (帯)	The belt and sash tied around the kimono
Okeiko お稽古	Lesson, practice

Ranbyōshi	Step originally performed by females, represents a disjointed rhythm, a chaotic rhythm, and is said to require a 'special skill, secret knowledge and spiritual energy'
Senreinokai 千麗の会	The Association of (Nishikawa) Senrei
Sensei 先生	Teacher, master. The full meaning is 'person born before another'
Tatami 畳	An inflexible floor unit, 90x180 cm and 6 cm thick, covered by a tightly woven straw mat used in temples, shrines, homes, dōjōs for martial arts, and tea houses.
Uchideshi	A live-in apprentice, common in the traditional Japanese arts
Yamanba 山姥	Also 'Yamamba' or 'Yamauba'. She is a mountain spirit in Japanese folklore, old, wise and a bit mad. She is known for guarding the mountains since the beginning of time.
Yukata	A simple kimono made of cotton that is compulsory for okeiko. Yukata is worn at summertime or for indoor dance practice. More advanced students always wear kimono for practice.

Appendix B: Nishikawa Senrei



アミさんと千麗さん Ami and Senrei sensei in Kyōto Minpo, 2001

The biography of dancer and choreographer Nishikawa Senrei helps to contextualize the practice, and to describe the learning process in her studio. Western research conducted on Japanese dance and theatre focus on the male dominated Nō theatre, followed by a focus on male artists. In addition, Orientalist discourses have posited Asian dance forms as 'products

of isolated national cultures separate from and irrelevant to global dance history (Wilcox & Mezur, 2020, 9) Therefore Asian dancers have been presented either as ‘objects of representation or bearers of fixed ancient tradition’ (2020, 9). Nishikawa Senrei was a well-known, innovative Japanese choreographer, dancer and artist who created her own scripts, choreographies and set design. The information I have about her artistic practice is based on a collection of information, gathered from her lessons at Tokuya-chō, Kyōto Art Center and Kyōto International Community Center, lectures at Kyōto Art Center, from informal talks with her, from her manager Hoshino Takae, from an interview in Kyōto Journal and from her own webpage and blog. I also asked Swedish Jesper Lysell, who works as a teacher and translator in Japan, to translate part of the book ‘Odori wa jinsei’ – ‘To Dance is Life’, where Nishikawa Senrei, Hanayagi Suzushi (who was prominent in the postmodern dance scene in New York) and Tsurumi Kazuko talk about their lives in dance (Tsurumi, 2003, 19-22). Nishikawa Senrei’s most important teacher was Nishikawa Koisaburo II, a dancer, choreographer, and the *iemoto/headmaster* of the Nishikawa School in Nagoya.

Nishikawa Senrei said in an interview that she never sensed that Japanese disciples have a special receptivity that foreigners do not: ‘The worst students are those amateurs who use logic to try to comprehend the forms with questions’ (Salz, 2008). This shows almost a hostile relationship between the explicit, tacit and the ineffable in the artistic field. Her view is not different from other dance masters, where the value and the knowledge exist in the practice itself. In order to understand practice, you have to practise. Masters incuse dance students with movement logic, which support the development to the right knowledge. Repetition reinforces the link between stimulus and response, a typical behaviouristic learning style (Säljö, 2003, 75). There is a correct suriashi, and students worked hard to achieve what is considered correct.

My teacher Nishikawa Senrei held the degree of shihan, Master of Dance. She was a smart and fervent performer and intriguing choreographer of new pieces, such as *Camille Claudel* (2007), *Ce que retient la rosée* (2004), and *Reveries of a solitary walker* (2013). *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* was based on texts by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It premiered on April 12th, 2013, four months after her death. She created original work, which was not unusual for teachers of her high position. In 1981, she won the first ‘promising young persons’ award of Kyōto city’ (Hoshino, 2013). Since 1987, Nishikawa Senrei created her own original dance performances, including scripts, choreography, design, and music funded by Kyōto

Prefecture and Japan Arts Fund. Because she had private sponsors, and was funded by the city and the state, she could work more independently, while at the same time belonging to the Nishikawa School (Ryū). She did not rely solely on the students' lesson fees. Nishikawa Senrei formed her own studio, which many traditional female dancers do if it can be afforded. In that way, they can enjoy some independence from the *iemoto*-system - a system that means each traditional dance school always has to have a male headmaster. These male headmasters govern the dance studios from a distance. The Nihon Buyō-schools attract mostly female students, and women can earn license for teaching and performing, but they cannot become the Iemoto. The Inoue Kyōmai School in the Geisha district Gion, Kyōto, is an exception, with only female Iemoto: for example, Yachiyo Inoue IV (1905-2004) appointed Living National Treasure in 1955.

In 2000, Nishikawa Senrei started to tour with performances and lectures to France, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, and the U.S, funded by Japan Foundation, Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, and the Kyōto Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Nishikawa). For these touring pieces she brought her manager and light designer Hoshino Takae, her *uchideshi* (live-in apprentice) Kayorei san, and contemporary dancers trained in ballet, Western contemporary dance, Butō and other Nihon Buyō styles. The dancers were Peter Golightly, member of *Dumb Types* and trained as a modern dancer in the U.S., Masami Yurabe, Butō dancer and member of *Tōhōya-Sōkai*, and Heidi S. Durning, owner of the studio *Iwakura Ku-kan*, trained as a modern dancer/choreographer at University of Michigan, and with a *nattori*/license from the Fujima School. Nishikawa Senrei always travelled with musicians trained in both Japanese and Western classical music, for example the cellist Kawasaki Jun (Kawasaki). She was interested in French culture, the japonism, and Jung's analytical psychology. She performed several times in the Jung seminars in Ascona, where also Laban's educational ideas was introduced in Ascona (Monte Verità) in 1913 (Maletic, 2011, 40). This connected her with Western dance artists like Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman.

Nishikawa Senrei belonged to the cultural elite in Kyōto, where she worked with Kawai Hayao, Minister of Culture and Japan's first psychoanalyst, the scholar Tsurumi Kazuko and with the author Uno Chiyo, to mention a few. She made several pieces based on their texts, also engaging with Kyōto school and Umehara Takeshi. In addition, Nishikawa Senrei made many pieces based on traditional Japanese texts, such as *The Tale of Genji* (known as the world's first novel) by Murasaki Shikibu, and *Dōjōji*, the most well-known Nō theatre play. I

particularly admired her striking version of *Dōjōji* since she was able to change the deeply misogynist context of the original play. Originally, the female protagonist, the cross-dresser Shirabyōshi Kiyohime, played by a male actor, transformed into a snake, after she burned down the temple bell with her jealousy caused by unhappy love. She was considered a demoness by the Buddhist priest, and the monks rub their rosaries to exorcise her out of the temple. In Nishikawa Senrei's version, she instead created empathy for Kiyohime. We follow the perspective of the unhappy Shirabyōshi and how she escapes herself after having burnt down the temple bell – effectively created by a ring of light. I saw her piece on video in her lecture at Kyoto Art Center, Aug 2000, and I uploaded it for archival purposes to the library of University of Gothenburg in 2014 with the courtesy of Senreinokai (Dahlstedt, 2014b). Nishikawa Senrei used the mythological step, *ranbyōshi* from *Dōjōji*, which she discussed in the lecture. Her 2010 solo performance was based on the *Ten Ox Herding Pictures*, in Japanese 十牛 *jūgyū*, which is an important text on Zen from China in the end of the 12th Century, and images supposed painted by the artist and Zen monk Tenshō Shūbun in the Muromachi period (Nishikawa, 2010). She had considered these pictures already in 1997 on an exhibition about D.T. Suzuki, the Japanese writer who is known to be the person who brought Zen Buddhism to the West.

Nishikawa Senrei told her students that it is important when performing to always leave a space for the audience where they can create their own image, a space for their own projections and dreams. She was using psychoanalytical concepts of the unconscious and of dreaming as important tools for performance making. She paired these ideas with Zen Buddhism. There is plenty written on the comparison between Zen Buddhism and psychoanalysis, however I did not focus on it for this thesis. In Nishikawa's 2002 piece, *Arubekiyowa/As It Should Be* (2002), Nishikawa Senrei wanted to 'dance the dream that Priest Myōe dreamt; the dream in which he sees his entire life's events happening in it (Nishikawa, 2013a). Priest Myōe (1173-1232), was a Zen monk who had kept a journal on his dreams for 40 years. He founded the temple Toganōsan Kōsan-ji (桐尾山高山寺) as a training monastery. This temple was Nishikawa Senrei's favourite temple, which I visited after her death in February 2013.

The title of Nishikawa Senrei's 2002 piece, *Arubekiyowa/As It Should Be*, is the same as the title as of Toganōsan Kōsan-ji's temple rules, which Priest Myōe created for the Zen monks in training (Unno, 2004, 153). The text is an interesting 13th century document on

appropriate training and on the life in a monastery, and it is exciting to compare with how appropriate training for artists is organized today. For *Arubekiyowa/As It Should Be*, Nishikawa Senrei worked with some of my colleagues in Kyōto. They rehearsed in her mountain studio close to Toganōsan Kōsan-ji. The piece toured to Germany, Italy and Switzerland in 2003. Nishikawa Senrei talked about how the movements in Nihon Buyō themselves were not important, which was a contradiction. She demanded absolute rigour and devotion to the correct angle of the hand or the arm. We could spend two hours on just one movement. However, the dramaturgy of her lessons seemed to follow the dramaturgy of the Ten Ox Herding Pictures. Her continuous talks to her students at the end of a series of classes were exceptional. Nishikawa Senrei Sensei would always have us all seated in seiza the day before performance. She told us about the importance to dance with an open heart, and that we should remember that we perform for something much larger than ourselves. Once she turned to me, bowed deeply and said thank you. I confusedly bowed back. Why was she thanking me? She said that that I was a ‘true performer’, and that ‘I danced with an open heart’. This was something that had moved her heart, and for this she wished to thank me. Eleven years later, she explained to me that I had helped her gain new interest and motivation for Nihon Buyō by, representing a choreographer from the west, showing respect and sincere interest to this art form (Nishikawa, 2011). Nishikawa Senrei helped me gain new perspectives of dance practice, showing me a performance tradition where the knowledge and maturity of the performer was valued higher than youth and agility, where the slow learning process was highly respected, and where choreography was seen as something not to rush through, but instead worth spending plenty of time with.

Nishikawa Senrei died on December 6th, 2012. Thus, for my last three visits, I have had lessons from her student Ota Emiko. Since May 2012, *keikoba*, the studio for dance, changed its name to *dōjō*, as the studio became a place for self-practice. Nishikawa Senrei was ill for two years, and knew she was going to die soon. This was a forethoughtful way for her to present a possible future for her students. The *dōjō* survived for four years thanks to Senreinokai's producer and manager Takae Hoshino, the teachers Nishikawa Chikage and Ota Emiko, and the students who paid a monthly rental fee that allowed us to come there for self-practice twice a week. Before she died, she recorded a thirty-minute soundtrack on cassette tape with her instructions on how to practise suriashi correctly. Cassette tapes are still used in most traditional Nihon Buyō and Kabuki-schools. Schools are protective about legacy by restricting availability of material and preventing digital replication. The cassette

included breathing exercises for suriashi, and a change of speed according to the rhythmic concept of *Jo-ha-kyū*. Students would use two different tape recorders simultaneously, and practise either in the studio or in the narrow corridor just outside the studio. Without Senrei *sensei*, as students called her, but still following her oral recommendations, we practised suriashi together and we watched each other's dances and help correct each other.

Unfortunately, Senreinokai was closed down in June 2016, because of the lack of students and teachers. However, Senrei *sensei*'s 'sister colleague' Nishikawa Chikage, has accepted me to be her student.

For this thesis, I commissioned a translation from Jesper Lysell of a couple of pages from the book *Odori wa Jinsei – To Dance is Life*, where Nishikawa Senrei, Hanayagi Suzushi (who was prominent in the postmodern dance scene in New York) and Tsurumi Kazuko talk about their lives in dance. Here are the translated pages (Tsurumi, 2003, 19-22):

My dance – Senrei Nishikawa

Tsurumi: Next, I would like Senrei to talk.

Nishikawa: I have really, ever since the so called six-sixth- Junes – which is called 4 years old now – been led by my grandmother, and been going to the master in town. At that time, all the masters went to the students' houses and taught them at home. There was a master who taught in the area I lived in, and since it soon was time for the six sixth Junes, I was invited to join a lesson, and then my grandmother felt that since I was like a boy, it would be a good idea to take me to the class as soon as possible.

It all began without me really knowing anything about it, but I started to like it, and when I became a teenager, I started to become cheekier, and started to question Japanese dance... Then I watched Koisaburo Nishikawa on stage, and I realized that I was far from done with Japanese dance and that even if I work my ass off, I would not reach his level, and then I eventually started being taught by Koisaburo Nishikawa.

Tsurumi: And after you had continued for a while, did you decide to make a living on dancing?

Nishikawa: I didn't decide that I would make a living on dancing, but I had no other choice than to do so.

Tsurumi: You first did it as an *ojosamagei*. I mean, *ojosamagei* is what it's called, but it is nothing you do in vain. (*ojosamagei* is a derogatory word for girl's after school activities)

Nishikawa: Maybe it is important that parents or other family members unconsciously let people begin their journeys like that.

Karyu: So that's why you were in Nagoya for so long.

Nishikawa: Yes. Those were Master Koisaburo's later years. After all, I started walking this path on my own in 1981, and that would be 20 years ago? I had a few opportunities like that, and the most important thing was that I this time approached the question of what Japanese dance really was useful for. Maybe I can never be like that myself, but when I thought about what Japanese dance really was useful for, I got to know about Shoen's (Uemura) book, and I realized that Japanese dance after all was something for people's minds, just like paintings. I really believe that a person finally can be whole with both their body and mind. The body and mind, the visible and the invisible, these two form one. When you realize having a job is to work towards the invisible, you also realize that you don't only have to trace the things that exist at the moment, and recall that you can dance what you have been influenced by, just like painters paint what they have been emotionally moved by on a canvas. That is the reason why I started with creative dancing.

I thought I wouldn't encounter that many things that people would be moved or surprised by, so I thought that my first piece of work I performed would be my last, and realistic things can be difficult. However, even though I thought so, it felt empty, as a hole had been opened, when it ended, and I became hollow.

And after that I encountered the next thing I had to do and other things I wanted to do, and I ended up creating new pieces of work every year for twenty years. I encountered "Yodaka no hoshi", from last year, over ten years ago. It's a children's story which appears multiple times in Takeshi Umehara's books.

Karyuu: By Kenji Miyazawa.

Nishikawa: Yes. It's from the time Master Umehara created "Mizuumi no densetsu" a bit before 1943. At that time, there was this story where somebody's chest hurt, but I am not sure why it hurt. Then I had no clue that he had made his chest pain into a dance. He felt that sharp pain in his chest many times without knowing why, but he realized that he wasn't the only one whose chest hurt. When I told the story of "Yodaka no hoshi" to a child I first had met at

a kindergarten, the child became really sad out of no clear reason. Another person, who worked at a cram school for children, who had stopped going to school, said that that story was the only one they used as their teaching material. By only using one children's story as the teaching material for many months, the children start feeling a connection to what they feel inside and the story. As I heard this explanation, I thought that "Yodaka no hoshi" describes the feeling of sadness all people carry inside themselves, in Yodaka's case, the fear of maybe getting killed, being a small bug and eating something to be able to live. You become sad because you realize that you are a living creature because you are killing other beings to live, and think that you'll never eat again. Never eat again and fly away to a distant sky. You think of doing that, and when you realize that this sad feeling of being a living being is something that everybody feels.

Even though more than ten years have passed, I remembered that I wanted to make this into a dance three years ago, but I still haven't searched for materials for making it, but...

Tsurumi: So, your ideas come from afar.

Nishikawa: Yes. It's not a commonly known work, but in the past I created a dance on "Ajikan". There is a classic traditional shakuhachi melody on the vajrayana contemplation of the Chinese character "阿" (a), which is based on a Sanskrit letter. When I heard it at a concert, I felt that it was moving towards my mind, and when I asked Shingetsu Wada about the song, I was told that it was a song which komuso played when they held memorial services for the souls of the dead, and that it was the same as reciting a sutra. Ah, so then I realized that whenever I heard this song it was like I entered a mental state of a different dimension... I wanted to make this into a dance. And I did that in 1975. At that time there was a gathering with many types of Japanese dances, right? And I decided to have my premiere performance there. But then I became unsure if it was suitable to have it there... And I ended up having my premiere at Minamiza.

The stage had a silver folding screen with a candlestick, there were shakuhachi players and I had a pitch-black costume. The fans had a silver background with a sumi-e lotus and on the back of them I had full moons painted, and only, only all of this just existed on the stage, and it moved, to at a later point return to its first state and then end... It was just like that.

I decided to dance myself on one of my shows, and when I asked the stage supervisor to watch me dance, he apparently watched me from a seat on the third floor. People watching a dance don't behave that well, right? Like when they eat boxed meals... Then when the curtain goes up, they realize that they must stop eating, and all of them starts to watch the show sitting still. And then when the curtain goes back down, they exhale in relief and go back to eating after a while. So, he said "That's why you should do this, Senrei", and the following year I made the performances "Ajikan" and "Seibisho".

A short while ago, master Han Takehara got help from Suzushi, who gets power from Master Hisao Kanze, and engaged in "Okina" and "Izutsu". I heard about what she had been up to recently and that she had gone to a dimension far from the delicate person she was. I thought that she had entered a world of another dimension since I met her during the "Ajikan"-performance.

But, just as master (Aoko) Kisaragi said, you never know to what extent ordinary people would understand this. Some might, some won't...

Tsurumi: But they stopped eating when they saw the show, so they did understand.

Nishikawa: That's right. That's when I thought that there should be pieces of work like this in Japanese dance, and this existence means a lot to me. The other pieces of work I have used, for example "Shinnyo" and "Anonimu", have "Hannyashingyou" as a theme and Kagaku Murakami as a motif.

"Arubekiyowa" is of course also a piece of work I could do just because of "Ajikan".

Translations of these pages were made in September 2020, by Japanese language tutor Jesper Lysell, Tokyo. (Tsurumi, 2003, 19-22)

Appendix C: Video details

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference DAN 20/ 044 in the Department of Dance and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 11.06.20.

The durational video submitted for this doctoral thesis has been directed, collected, and put together chronologically by me. For most documentations, I used my own camera. However, in order to facilitate my multiple positions as performer, director and cameraperson I have in some parts collaborated with photographers who received instructions from me. I used foundational skills for video recording such as implementing tripod-based camera approaches: close-up, medium shot, long shot, and basic chronological editing. Either in front of or behind the camera, I am responsible for all recorded material. In the beginning, I documented everything through a GoPro camera fastened on my chest, to capture the internal, subjective view of slow suriashi. GoPro is often used in extreme-action videos, I wanted to see how GoPro worked with slow movements. However, I decided to use only a few shots since the GoPro camera became too revealing of the passersby.

Video 1 <https://vimeo.com/495898766/5b415ff3c3>

Starting time	Date recorded	Description
00:00:00	2011.04.05	Suriashi with Nishikawa Senrei at Senreinokai, Tokuya-chō, <i>Kyōto</i> . Camera: Folke Johansson
00:06:57	2011.08.12	Nishikawa Senrei walks in suriashi on the <i>hashigakari</i> of Oe Nō Theatre, <i>Kyōto</i>
00:09:20	2011.08.12	Ami walks in suriashi on the <i>hashigakari</i> of Oe Nō Theatre, <i>Kyōto</i> (performing Shizuka Gōzen, the high-ranked Shirabyōshi (female crossdresser) Camera: Daisuke Suzuki
00:11:21	2011.04.06	Ami walks in suriashi at Shijo-Karasuma Station Camera: Folke Johansson
00:12:05	2011.04.07	Mio Azuma Durning walks in suriashi in Takaragaike park, <i>Kyōto</i> Camera: Folke Johansson
00:15:31	2011.04.29	Suriashi in <i>Gothenburg</i> Botanical Gardens on International Dance Day
00:15:59	2013.05.15	Suriashi as part of the dance theatre production 20xLamentation, choreography by Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Studio Buji, 3:e Våningen, Gothenburg, Sweden
00:17:04	2011.08.27	Suriashi with wheelchair, workshop in <i>Gothenburg</i> with dancers Mel Smith (Australia) and Aloun Marchal (Gothenburg/Paris) Camera: Dianne Reid Music: Palle Dahlstedt Video 1: 0:17:04 - 0:17:54
00:17:56	2014.07.25	Walkshop presentation at Nordic Summer University Summer symposium in <i>Sauðárkrókur</i> , Iceland

00:21:25	2014.08.11	Suriashi in the performative promenade <i>Hybrid Heart</i> , <i>Gothenburg</i> Botanical Gardens. Camera: Palle Dahlstedt
00:23:06	2014.10.27- 2014.11.10	<i>Paris</i> : Carina Ari Memorial Foundation Apartment, Place Pigalle, Versailles, Knut Ståhlberg's and Britt Ståhlberg-Norée's apartment, RER, Tour Eiffel, Boulevard Rochechouart, Pont Notre Dame, Musée Guimet. Extra footage: Palle Dahlstedt, Egil Dahlstedt
00:49:20	2014.12.11	Brännö, <i>Gothenburg</i> . Camera: Palle Dahlstedt
00:50:48	2014.12.06- 2014.12.09	Suriashi workshop in Tampereen Teatteri, Koskikeskus Shopping mall, <i>Tampere, Finland</i>
01:08:06	2014.11.27	Suriashi at <i>Tacit or Loud</i> conference in <i>Malmö, Sweden</i> : http://www.teatrweimar.se/tacitorloud/29.htm
01:17:32	2014.12.13	Lucia, Brännö. Camera: Palle Dahlstedt
01:19:23	2014.12.09	Royal Holloway Campus, Founder Library, <i>London</i>
01:22:48	2015.01.08	Suriashi with Nordic Forum of Dance Research (NOFOD) at University of Gothenburg Extra footage: Dr Mats Nilsson
01:29:00	2015.01.13	Workshop with BA-students at East 15 Acting School, University of Essex, <i>London</i> Invited by Dr MJ Coldiron
01:30:33	2015.01.24	Excerpt from the performance <i>Hybrid Heart</i> at Hagakyrkan (church), <i>Gothenburg</i> , a collaboration between Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Frej von Fräähsen, Anna Svensdotter and Gu Feng: Ling Ling Yu von Haller and Zhenfang Zhang, concert curated by <i>Levande Musik</i> . Camera: Palle Dahlstedt
01:37:02	2015.01.29 – 2015.02.06	<i>New York City</i> : Lincoln Center, Grand Central Terminal, Lincoln Plaza, East 95 th Street (Viveca Lindfors' former house), Ground Zero, Times Square, Wall Street, 5 th Avenue, Judson Memorial Church, New York University Library, High Line. Additional footage: Ann-Sophie Persson, Camilla Querin

Video 2: <https://vimeo.com/496003241/876721920c>

Corporeal reminder for Appendix C

The suriashi pilgrimages in Wales corresponded to one of the 'two enduring historical discourses in the walking traditions: The Romantics' (Heddon, Turner 2012, p 227).

This pilgrimage mirrored Romantic peripatetic traditions. I do not analyse this pilgrimage in detail, but I offer a corporeal reminder for your own experience:

Stand up. Bend your legs.

Open your chest.

Squeeze your shoulders back and down.

Breathe in

Breath out

Slide your right leg forward.

Begin to walk without lifting your feet.

Walk with me in Wales for as long as you want.

[Video 2: 6:50 - 21:15](#)

00:00:00	2015.02.08 – 2015.02.11	<i>Wales</i> : Monmouth Castle, Dingestowe Court, Abergavenny, Raglan Castle, Skenfrith castle. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
00:21:16	2015.02.12- 2015.02.17	<i>London</i> : London Bridge, Barbican Centre, Picadilly Circus, Victoria Park, Regent's Canal
00:33:16	2015.01.27	Suriashi at Senate House Library, <i>London</i>
00:54:56	2015.03.15	Suriashi performed at <i>Gothenburg Media Days</i>
00:58:06	2015.04.07	Excerpts from <i>A Particular Act Of Survival</i> Performance lecture at Atalante, <i>Gothenburg</i>
01:06:22	2015.04.28	Suriashi with students at <i>Gothenburg Botanical Gardens</i>
01:11:41	2015.07.01	Suriashi in <i>Bångnäs</i> and <i>Gitsfjället</i> , <i>northern Sweden</i>
01:14:58	2015.07.23	Suriashi with director Disa Kamula at Nordic Summer University Symposium in Europa Hotel, <i>Druskininkai, Lithuania</i>
01:21:02	2015.09.05	Suriashi on 46 Gordon Square as part of the symposium <i>Archives, Art and Activism: Exploring Critical Heritage Approaches to Global Societal Challenges</i> at University College of <i>London</i>
01:26:54	2015.10.05- 2015.11.05	Suriashi in <i>Kyōto</i> , Japan: Kita Ryu, Saiin Kasuga Shrine Festival with Bruno the Bad Boy, Kitano Tenmangu Shrine, Ryukoku University, Fushimi Shrine, Senreinokai, Heian shrine. Additional footage: Ishibashi Kenjiro, Takewaka Mori, Palle Dahlstedt
01:49:35	2015.11.25	Suriashi in the seminar <i>Life Writing</i> at University of <i>Gothenburg</i> , invited by Dr Astrid von Rosen
01:50:50	2015.12.09	Suriashi at the Handa Noh Theatre, Royal Holloway, University of <i>London</i>
01:51:34	2015.12.13	Lucia, Sweden
01:53:26	2016.02.21	Suriashi in the rehearsal of <i>Winter Spirits</i> with flutist Anna Svendsdotter at the Mediterranean house, Palmhuset, Trädgårdsföreningen, <i>Gothenburg</i>
01:54:48	2016.04.29	Suriashi under cherry blossom trees, Järntorget, <i>Gothenburg</i> International Dance Day
01:58:59	2016.06.01	Suriashi in <i>Copenhagen</i> and at the SIBMAS (the International Association of Libraries, Museums, Archives and Documentation Centres of the Performing Arts) at the Royal Library and near the Little Mermaid statue
02:14:50	2016.08.01- 2016.08.07	Suriashi in <i>Pietrasanta</i> , Italy, independent research residency with Anna Maria Orrù, Suzan Kozel and Carmen Olsson
02:26:31	2016.08.17	Suriashi Intervention at Gothenburg Culture Festival Additional

footage: Benedikte Esperi, Palle Dahlstedt

Video 3: <https://vimeo.com/496152094/3c0797eb2e>

00:00:00	2016.10.31- 2016.11.06	Suriashi near the volcano Teide, and Tamadiste wandering trails, <i>Tenerife</i> Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
00:13:12	2016.12.13	Lucia, Brännö, <i>Gothenburg</i> , Sweden
00:20:01	2017.02.25- 2017.03.12	Residency at Ricklundgården: Vilhelmina graveyard, lake Kultsjön, Ricklundgården, Fiskonfjället, Saxnäs ski-tracks, (inserted: 2012.04.04 the performance <i>Dust Falling</i> , <i>Rain Falling</i> . Additional footage: Anders Bryngel)
00:47:50	2017.04.08	Suriashi in Hyltebruk: village, paper mill, ancestor's houses, Malmagården home for the elderly with grandmother Linnéa. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
01:05:59	2017.04.15	Suriashi on <i>Brännö</i> Shipyard. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
01:06:56	2017.04.26	Suriashi with the Japanese sword and Momiyama Takao, and as support for a monologue on the war and body, excerpt from the performance <i>the Laugh of the Medusa</i> , at Atalante, <i>Gothenburg</i>
01:12:44	2017.05.05	Solitary suriashi on London Bridge, <i>London</i> Additional footage: Lucy Lyons
01:16:14	2017.05.05	Tower Hamlet Cemetery Park with artistic researchers Dr Lucy Lyons and Alia Zapparova
01:19:46	2017.07.08- 2017.07.20	Suriashi in <i>Bångnäs</i> and <i>Ankarvattnet</i> footbridges, northern Sweden
01:28:29	2017.07.25- 2017.07.31	Suriashi in <i>Saulkrasti</i> , Latvia (Nordic Summer University)
01:35:15	2017.08.26	Walking with cows and in forest, <i>Ekeby</i> , Sweden Additional footage: Egil Dahlstedt and Palle Dahlstedt
01:43:45	2017.09.19	Suriashi on <i>Brännö</i> , <i>Sweden</i> with choreographers Canan Yücel Pekiçten and Benedikte Esperi
01:49:26	2017.10.10	Transversality conference, Academy of Music and Drama, University of <i>Gothenburg</i>
01:54:22	2017.10.17	Suriashi in <i>Gabrovo</i> , <i>Bulgaria</i>
02:01:22	2017.11.09	Suriashi workshop with BA students, Université du Lorraine, <i>Metz</i> , <i>France</i>

This thesis provided a tool for dialogue and new surprising narratives when suriashi was performed as a friendship or gift act. Suriashi proceeded its own life, when we had more time together for exploration. The slow suriashi walks showed how profound simplicity could be something that held many obstacles and stories at the same time. Artist participants who walked with me described how slow suriashi affected their future work. Suriashi was able to echo and justify the slowness of their own work (Vernet, 2018).

02:14:26	2017.11.20	Suriashi with AnneLaure Vernet in <i>Metz, France</i>
02:28:05	2017.11.11	Suriashi in <i>Luxembourg</i> . Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:42:04	2017.11.13	Suriashi on a moving walkway, <i>Gothenburg</i> . Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:42:34	2017.11.21	Suriashi with Palle Dahlstedt as part of the piece OtoKin at the AHAfestival Chalmers University, <i>Gothenburg</i> .
02:43:04	2017.12.07	Suriashi with Palle Dahlstedt as part of the piece OtoKin, Academy of Music and Drama, University of <i>Gothenburg</i> .
02:43:39	2017.12.13	Lucia on Brännö, <i>Gothenburg</i> .
02:46:03	2017.12.16	Suriashi on Färgaryd Graveyard. Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
02:47:11	2017.12.27	Suriashi inside Ricklundgården Museum Video 3: 2: 47: 12- 2:56:23

Video 4: <https://vimeo.com/496374423/0cdf3d6f21>

00:00:00	2018.02.22	Suriashi in an Artistic Residency at Zirgu Pasts, Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga
00:28:27	2018.02.24	Suriashi workshop at Ma Telpa, Artistic Residency in Riga
00:34:03	2018.02.26	Suriashi as space maker narrative in Artistic Residency in Lādezers, Latvia.

I offered the artistic director Inta Balode, who is also a dance critic, to walk in suriashi in spaces she chose, and afterwards tell me what the spaces and suriashi activated. Balode confirmed that since the practice was so slow, and performed in spaces she usually rushes through, she started to remember things forgotten. We had never talked about growing up in Soviet. Our slow suriashi together activated new memories for Balode and framed a logic to talk about events without being lowered by them.

Suriashi as foundation for an interview and narrative in a residence with dance critic Inta Balode in Lādezers, Latvia, Feb, 2018: [Video 4: 0:43:03](#)-1:09:29

01:09:30	2018.03.27	Suriashi next to great grandmother Viktoria's (Tora) grave in Hestra, Sweden
01:13:17	2018.04.02	Suriashi wearing Nō-masks representing aging women in despair (the masks are Yamanba, Uba, Yamanba and Hannya) in Shibuya, <i>Tokyo</i> . Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
01:14:34	2018.04.03	Yamamba suriashi inside photo booth <i>Tokyo</i> . Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
01:15:04	2018.04.05	Suriashi wearing the Yamanba Nō-mask in <i>Tokyo</i> subway. Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
01:18:29	2018.04.10	Suriashi lesson with Richard Emmert, Nō-style, <i>Tokyo</i>

01:19:32	2018.04.11	Suriashi on Nunobashi bridge, wearing the Yamanba Nō-mask <i>Tateyama</i> Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
01:25:12	2018.04.18	Suriashi on Horikawa Street and outside Senreinokai at Tokuya-chō, <i>Kyōto</i>
01:29:35	2018.04.17	Suriashi lesson with Jun Hōshō, Nō-style, <i>Tokyo</i>
01:32:39	2018.04.20	Suriashi workshop with design students at Tokyo Metropolitan University. Additional footage: Ando Daichi
01:36:10	2018.04.06	Suriashi wearing the Yamanba Nō-mask in Asukayama park, meeting a female Nō-practitioner, Tokyo Additional footage: Meritxell Aumedes Molinero
01:43:51	2019.07.13	Satsfjället, northern Sweden. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
01:46:12	2018.08.01	Färö, Sweden (Nordic Summer University). Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
01:49:52	2018.08.16	Suriashi at Mutianyu Great Wall, <i>Beijing</i>
02:00:40	2018.08.15	Suriashi at Forbidden City, Tiananmen Sq, <i>Beijing</i>
02:08:25	2018.08.19	Walking interview with Ms Wang Xue at Beijing Yanshan Hotel
02:09:58	2018.08.20	Suriashi at Juyongguan Great Wall
02:16:54	2018.08.21	Suriashi at the Temple of the Earth, <i>Beijing</i>
02:21:45	2018.09.25	Suriashi on the Älvsborgsbron bridge, <i>Gothenburg</i> with Fulbright U.S. student Warren Enstrom. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:33:20	2018.12.05	Suriashi performed in Yamamba – Waltz for a wounded Ancestor at Atalante, <i>Gothenburg</i>
02:42:00	2018.12.13	Lucia. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:43:57	2019.04.15	Suriashi performed along the Wall of Honor, The National Museum of Immigration, <i>Ellis Island</i> . Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:49:10	2019.04.12	Slow walking performed in the house at Hancock Ave, <i>Brooklyn</i> , where my great grandmother Viktoria (Tora) worked as a maid 1909-1914. Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt
02:51:23	2019.04.12	Suriashi for Jenny, flowers from Sweden, performed at The Evergreens Cemetery, Bushwick Ave., <i>Brooklyn</i> Additional footage: Palle Dahlstedt.
02:56:01	2011.04.05	Bowing for Nishikawa Senrei at Senreinokai, Tokuya-chō, <i>Kyōto</i> . Camera: Folke Johansson

Appendix D: A compilation of participants' embodied reflections at *Archives, Art and Activism: Critical Heritage Approaches to Global Societal Challenges*, 5th Sep 2015

'I am tranquil & flow down the street. It could be any street, in any city, anywhere in the world. The movement transports me to a space of infinite time Raindrops fall about my shoulders mist caresses the face. I am alive. I am refreshed. We listen, we glide. We are in the moment & for this my body is grateful. My scarred knees & twisted spine weep at first but as we settle into a rhythm my body sighs & rejoices. It can move! It can engage itself in the place of a dance. Yes, I am dancing. I am dancing again. And I shall dance. Love the rain, love your feet & the paths they tread. Release that power & your inhibition'.

'I enjoyed the concept of suriashi walk as a female symbol of resistance. Protest like a meditative walk, I felt it hard to quieten my mind and focus at first as the walk went on, the rhythm of the steps and the slight discomfort of the position helped me to stop worrying about what the tourists were thinking of us and my mind calmed down. As a group, the action was empowering and protective – I felt protected and empowered by being part of the group and preferring the slow action with them. I did not engage with the history of the environment – perhaps as I don't hold particular respect for the Bloomsbury group'.

'Future, the wild city, possibilities. Ancestors, all there, palpable and as ghosts. The feeling of the body, the miracle of this, the substantial woman in me with me, the pleasure, the possibilities, the contrast, the activist action against stress and fragmentation. The beautiful sight and experience of being part of this group. Here in the streets of London. The ancestors of art and dance My ancestors, family, father and mother dead and alive, alive and dead The feeling and experience of being capable of filling a gesture a moving gesture'.

'Some thoughts on walking in Suriashi Clinic

1. An awareness of speed/duration – an enhanced sense of slowing down and

measuring my steps

2. An awareness of all of us together, silently walking in this way; I thought we made a sort of collective form – a moving form

3. An awareness that the position was making me tense my body in an unexpected way, hip – my hands – my neck, I could also feel my knees in this walk

4. I wondered about staging a “feminine” position and why being smaller and more connected with myself was to be deemed ‘feminine’ – historical precedents rarely see the feminine as “outward”

5. I became aware of the “end” of the walk – where to complete it, how to complete it and I was gently relieved to complete it (in my body), but wanted to maintain the concentration and timing it had suggested to me.

6. I thought about leaning back and wondered about who my spirits might be.

7. I began to think about whether these kinds of physical forms of ‘slowing’ were also akin to “slow activism” – a way of refusing to move ever faster + walk ever fewer glances towards what’s around us. Perhaps we need more of these kinds of collective body actions to effect an activist attitude.’

‘The rain came in just as we finished. I’ve been to this square many times before, but always en route to or from somewhere, never specifically to visit it.

During the clinic however, I didn’t take in much of the square or my surroundings. I focused on my posture and often had to remind myself to look up, ahead, not just at my feet. I hate doing things which draw attention to myself. This wasn’t comfortable, despite the attention being drawn to the group, rather than just me. I got through it by thinking that it is a good exercise – especially for skiing – the posture with knees bent is similar.

I can feel it now – my knees are sore... But happy to have contributed to someone else’s work and research’.

‘Strained body at slow pace

How the slowness gets normal

How I haven’t read Virginia Woolf in more than 10 years. Which book to pick up now?

In and out – concerned with my muscles, the action, posture – enjoying

the ride to take in what is around

me

The group – for an outside eye – who are we?

Majority women

Lower back pain

Did she also walk here?

Fear of new footsteps

Fear of falling

physical pain increase, but as the mind became more in tune with the
action, pain was not so painful

Realised it was the first thing I physically have done to connect or try to connect
with my ancestors.

Awareness of touching more than usual. Of touching the ground, of the history
of the place

Do I walk like everyone else?'

'Whilst Benjamin's concept of Angelus Novos moved forward, the angel has its
back to the future; thereby exemplifying Benjamin's concept of nostalgia as a
potential for radical futures, though recognizing the past. This movement seems
converge in its vertical plane as a recap of history making in plus through the
Body, whilst also moving forward via front-facing'

'The more I walked the more I felt every part of my body. In the rain. Refreshing.
I felt presence of all behind me – the sound of traffic + rain + London. And 20
or so people being silent other than the sound of feet gently scraping. In coats,
hoods jackets – mostly dark colours. We must have looked like the academic
zombie apocalypse – strangely English! Powerful – so many walking
so silent so slow so relentless

On a grey, drizzly day in Bloomsbury. Perfect.'

'Moisture all around unmoving me as I walk the spirits of the ancestors thrive in
the elements of water – transporting myself as part of the group'

'Quiet London street, leaves falling and rain droplets falling. Walking past places
where Important People have walked and lived. Looking at landscapes they

looked at every day when they went out to be in the spaces of the city, trees they may have seen from their breakfast table through the window. Passersby stare at this silent crowd of walkers shuffling down the street, a crowd of deliberate walkers stepping in paddles and being filmed’.

‘Metaphor for my life trying to hurry – obstructions sink in – find the flow – pass- began separate – flow - ended together

What I am doing is with not in competition Activism is WITH not AGAINST
A posture between m + f – But from bird’s eye view ‘

‘There was a consciousness and self-consciousness to the movement, the slowness + quietness to moving in a group, not wanting to go too quickly or fall behind, a silent effort to keep in time. I reminded me of moving meditation, which I have done before – though that was more individualized even with a bunch of people doing it at the same time. This was practised in a school’s field and a father + son walked past. Answering the son’s questions of what we were doing, the father said it was a zombie walk. But it, like this, is not that. It’s an effort to be present and attentive, to walk with intention, to be focused. I liked the leaning back – not the ‘leaning forward’ that women have been instructed to do to make it in the corporate world – but a trusting in those behind you, to know you are not alone, and to play your part in being behind and someone else’s back – an embodiment of standing on the shoulders of giants, but made horizontal and equalizing the relationship.’

‘Is this grounded theory? Are these rebel footprints? Standing under the copper beech near Rabindranath Tagore

Or sitting en aroot in a configuration with others gathered like a pantheist assembly

This was rooted. A meditation past my (oste) arthritic knees.

My orthotised feet to rooted London

The ground of act and activism and unfinished history

An onnagata moment (dressed appropriately in orange kimono style peach blossom print jacket) Accepting Female female impersonator that I am

Along with Virginia and Orlando, Lytton, Vita, Maynard

Whose ground we walk on and should walk some more, grounded ground
economic ground

Walking in the gardens, Step by step

I reconnect to Andrew Tsubaki earlier lives, masks, martial arts, spaces of
transgression, unbending arms ki, now unbending knees

Connecting feet walking meditation'

'My activism

Small movements

Dealing with pain while moving

Confusion

Strength, ability, choosing to keep position.

Self-consciousness, doubt, anxiety, liberation, freedom, transcending boundaries

physical, mental, holistic connection, imprints, footnotes, collectivity,

choice, flux, negotiation, movement, non-linear, settled, unsettling'

'I didn't at all mind being at the back

It gave me the opportunity to see

To read the backs of Etiennes shoes

fish&chips, I think it says

To watch the way in which

people took to the task

if they were agitated or if they were

settled

I was agitated inside

Walking in Bloomsbury outside Virginia Woolf's

house

I was thinking of all the artists

and activists that came to London

to Bloomsbury to UCL

from Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas

those who wanted to effect a change

to represent themselves

Where is their work

Where is their presence

I wanted to honor the tradition

we were walking in so I walked slow

and I remembered the Epstein Bronzes
in Bolton Museum + Art Gallery
The Maid/Lover (Negro)
And the emancipation sculpture
Free slaves that now lives in the library
in Bolton
The sisters for that
Where are they? Where are their families
Where is their hope? Where are the papers
that represent their struggles insights
victories
I wanted to honor the tradition
so I walked slowly'

Appendix E: A compilation of participants' embodied reflections at SIBMAS Conference, Copenhagen 2016

Report from SIBMAS' vice president, Alan R Jones:

Over the years I have watched SIBMAS conferences develop from relatively modest events to being larger, quite complex and challenging occasions to organize. It is of course not the Olympics but the amount of work that it takes to make a great experience should not be underestimated. What Alette and her team brought to the evolution of the SIBMAS conferences was the introduction of performance art papers, where a paper had a performance element built in. This may not be new for other organisations but for SIBMAS it was a new and an exciting development. I think it is important for SIBMAS professionals not to be too distant for the concept of performance in all its forms, having such presentations helps us connect. It was great to see delegates get into the performance swing of the paper by what can only be described as a crab walk or rather "Suriashi walking" in a long snake around the main foyer of the Royal Library, to the amusement of the everyday readers in the library. Ami Skanberg Dahlstedt gave a delightful paper which in part mixed ideas around archiving the thoughts of the performers of the walk, there was more to it than that but it was for me one of my favorite memories of the conference, seeing my colleagues move and perform. (Jones, 2016)

In the beginning, it was not easy to
slow down and concentrate in the specific
movements. Then, I felt like I was in a
different temporality, my thought were in another place, my body became something
different, with a different energy!
I felt that noise in the atrium was
vanishing as I was walking and proceeding.
It was a quite strange but nice experience,
I felt it like a meditation and
mindfulness experience! I'd like to try
again!
Thank you for your inspiring intervention!

"Who are they?"

They are librarians

Oh. OK:

(Like we do this everyday)"

Remembering. History. Dram. Togetherness.

Enlightenment. Storing, releasing, organising

Silence Quiet

Observation Watchfulness

engagement

Drama. Slow stillness

Scraping feet. Deliberateness.

Brightness

Vividness

Sharpness

Awareness

stopping time

Precision. Noticing Observation

Absorption Reflection Timelessness

Remarkable philosophical/meditative feeling

A bit provocative

Eyecatching

C A L M

What remains?

- Body Memory

Spectators' perspective

Kirkeby-bridge – (layers of genealogy)

Thankyou for this opportunity of suriashi
walk. It was very meditative. A very
effective way to both connect with the
innerself & be aware of the now, the
surroundings, the other walkers & the non-walkers
I think as an activism method it
can be very powerful. It's an unusual
way of being noticed, to disconcert
and invade the hectic world in a positive way.
I have experienced memories through the
Walk. Memories of other physical practices
I have attempted through my life.
There are certain principles which connects
Them all. The brushing of the feet,
The shifting of the weight....., the
Centre of the body....

I felt the oscillating push and pull of the group
In the first 20 steps or so as my mind settled and
My periphery awareness calmed. As I looked inward
It was my chest that was at the core of this oscillation –
reminding my body to lean back while carrying myself
like a singing basket forward, centering, grounding,
wobbling, sliding competed with the outward gaze and
distant thoughts

The longer I walked suriashi the slower I became
Despite this my energy became concentrated and constant,
Focusing a sense of deep nostalgia for imagined ancestry
In this northern city.

The back is dragged along from the past
Going forward, the steps go forward
The soles of your feet keep you "down to earth" (also metaphorically)
The pace calls for a slow

Being/ presence and time
to absorb in the present
I felt the air, the frame of
Dimensions, human gaze,
The tactile communication
It was comfortable
I let thoughts come, and let them
Go again. It is not dangerous if one
does not remember everything.
The body was not always in balance,
Sometimes to the left, other times to the right.
The group had a goal, a goal of being there.

I was very impressed! To walk
so slowly. All other people around
seemed to do much too quickly
Looking at the others walking slowly
Was also very interesting, like to
share the same life.
Thankyou for this strong
experience

Thankyou Ami, excellent talk!
Walking slowly
in a group
"imperfection" – the
word of today
the potential sensation
the possibility of
a past, a history that
is more, more, more
of life, living shorts.

I walk with the very

recent inspiration (the keynote)
And with all the less
Recent work – sight, writing, text
has – in this moment – no
privilege, I try to breathe
to hold my back, and keep
walking in imperfection
(drawing raindrops : did I miss the rain?)

fragile body
my grandmother quite small
the handwriting
more sure, more mere walking
more light
my ancestors freshing me with joy
don't want to stop walking
the sound suddenly at the right movement
deep sound afterwards high like a
breaking glass
inside the library, linked with its silent
world
our silent walking
together

Thankyou, it was really
great. I understood what
you mean by "having a
room for yourself " because I
had it, really, my own space
between bodies –
I should be "back in my body"
To enjoy it more. I had so
Much stress last weeks that
I sort of quit myself (hope to
be back soon!)

And as I will be a few days in
Kyōto next summer, I will
Experience this again, somewhere

to be listening to my Body
and the world around me
I was in a bubble
At the end my body was tired
I re-discover silence

Walking in these slow steps is a kind
of meditation and enforces the re-
flection about the relationship between
the space, you are moving in, and the
own body. It is not an intellectual
reflection but a reflection of the
body itself. Doing it for the first
time it is difficult not to be
disturbed by the other visitors of
the library, who don't know what we are doing.
But nethertheless it is a new kind of exploring the space.

While I was performing suriashi, I started to
feel that I was leaning into a frequency,
that usually gets unnoticed. The leaning stretched
the sounds that reached my ears, pulling
me into a sub-strata of sounds. Why do the
sounds sound differently here? What sounds
have found their way into and sits in this strata?
If I tip any further, gravity will hit and the
sounds will crash. I must sit, unnoticed, silent
observer of the layer of this sound.

Suriashi walking made me think

of my grandfather who was a sailor and travelled all over the world. I don't know if he ever went to Japan. I know he was in China though. He's passed away now so I won't be able to ask.

The experience made me a little self-conscious at first, but as I started thinking about my grandfather I calmed down and was able to disregard what was going on around me (at least a little bit). I try to avoid these kinds of things usually, but I found this an enjoyable experience, much to my surprise. So I learned a little about myself (and probably ended up on a lot of Instagram accounts!)

I find myself far from home and I am already without my usual benchmarks, in my hometown. It's hard to concentrate to do this "slow walk"

I appeal to my ancestors to come to help me, but they don't understand my approach. I had forgotten most of this slow walk.

It is a link between me and my ancestors in my reverse.

Next time I can create "my space for myself" and will invite my ancestors. Most certainly they will come.

To lead a herd of activists at the Royal Library of Denmark was something I did not think would happen.

Sorry that it rained but it was also nice to walk in the
place we are, a workplace, a place for coffee.

I got the image that I was the archive, the part of the archive that
became meat again and wanted to remind
present times of something but I do not know what it was

IMMANENSE TIME

to remember to get involved physically,
to walk in circles
to take oneself very seriously
that something in research can stagnate
that we follow structures, which perhaps should be
dissolved long ago
Why is the body so dangerous?

Fantastic experience but I'm a little
tired, I don't know why...

I think this is an experience about solitudes,
About the "space and the time"

Shared experience of walking
Walking the codified patterns of footsteps
from an ancient tradition, but in
highly contemporary physical surroundings given
ground and physicality to embodied thoughts the
links to doings over time. The devative
part that takes us backwards while
moving forwards.

When the "lunch-concert" from the Royal
Library was turned on, it was as if
all by coincidence the things that lifted
up the whole experience-

- Permanence – Impermanence
- Open heart/keep the heart open
- Empowerment

- Continuity/trace/lineage
- Embracing lineage
- Slow pace/forms/sustaining forms
- Embracing sustaining forms
- Vision forward/balance
- Weight transfer
- Sound of slowness
- Togetherness
- Meditative
- Sustaining rigorous positions/forms
- Power of invocation
- Defiance

The constraints on my body – anger

That this is considered 'feminine' – an ideal

Of how to be a woman.

But also contradictory feelings – proud

at the strength of my body.

Focusing on inner peace.

Improving walk 'technique' the more I

Walked, and it was easier to walk/move than

to stand – lessons that could be applied

To life.

Very much feeling mer stillness & focus – but

at times being aware of these around –

Some intrigued, others judging, others not looking

& we all carried on walking.

Intrigued from an archivist perspective –

this was documented through photos &

these scribbles – how very intangible the

experience was

The image of the library Garden summertime stayed with

Me. The 'falling time' with the activities around
us was striking. I thought my deceased father would have
appreciated the insistence on travelling at one's own
Speed. The circular path I found to complete a
cycle and bring me back to the vernacular. I
Missed being in the rain, because it is a strange
image to me of what is left when
The bone has decomposed – and as such it
would have brought me closer to the 'spirits' –
Or the life&death circle with which we are/were
engaged. I wondered about the gender aspect
Of this walk – why was it specifically feminine?

At first I found it rather embarrassing! I'm used to
'performing' but not doing something like that in a public
Area where people were obviously bemused as to what we
Were up to. But as it went on you stop caring and enter
Your own bubble by the end it was actually relaxing.
Not caring what people think is liberating!

Walking

Suriashi Sliding Feet

Against the stone, feet scraping,
shifting weight between feet imbalance
Balance Slipping between

In public space The group does SURIASHI, WE
STOP TIME. Others around us go between
our figures, as if we are a sculpture garden of
frozen figures.

I heard scraping sounds of other feet.

We became a ritual of mass movement.

Feeling as if we move as a wave with the walls of windows – to push us
back to control the sliding of many

feet into the abyss.

It is hard to keep sliding smoothing

effortless pulled back -

Music presses us forward

A DRONE in my feet

Appendix F: The speech at Gothenburg Culture Festival, Aug 2016 (translated from Swedish)

In November, it is thirty years since the dance group Rubicon; Eva Ingemarsson, Gun Lund and Gunilla Witt with dancers performed one of their legendary dance works of art in the project City Dancers; The Stairs of Götaplatsen. A work that I myself have danced in. When I look at the photos today, I see something incredible that strongly affects me. I see how Gothenburg's first city-funded, non-institutional dance artists forcefully choreograph themselves and the space as they take their place in the city of Gothenburg's most symbolic place: Götaplatsen, Avenyn, Poseidon, The City Library, The City Theatre, The Art Museum, The Art Hall, The Concert Hall. A place where all art forms are represented except dance.

When I saw the water jets standing here swaying, I immediately thought: These are Gothenburg's invisible dancers, spirits from the past and the now living who are trying to create art in an increasingly tough economic reality. These ninety-two water jets are forming into a water game: Already with names like Götasplash, Bus-Shower, the Pisseria.

But no, this is the Fontana di Danza. Remember this. These are ninety-two dancers in a row. There are more. There are thousands of dancers from the City Archives who step forward and demand thirty million for a hundred years of unpaid work. Spatially well-organized, physically activist, monumental, but without roofs and walls, in rain and sun in a place surrounded by institutions. This place is ours!

There is no money it is called. But this fountain has so far cost eight times more than what all dancers in Gothenburg share in a whole year.

Gothenburg! You forgot us! You forgot to ask. You forgot.

The nomadic dancer without a roof over her head is involved in a constant territorial struggle. Now we stand here. Now we stand here. This place is ours.

Although the dancing body is often seen only in aesthetic terms, it is also a working body. The dancer works when she seems to move effortlessly across the stage, in the studio, across the Avenue, in the fountain. The dancer's labour is also unique in that the work is equivalent to the product in the dance. The presence of the dancing body is the dance product itself. The dancing body as a working body disrupts the traditional Marxist understanding of the law of labor, the means of production and the product.

Dancer's labour is inseparable from its means of production: the dancing body (Srinivasan, 2011-12).

It can be difficult to see this work behind smiles, physical excellence and brilliance. Beyond this are sweaty sun kissed suits, worn out ligaments, joints, cruciate ligaments, kneecaps, tendons. The dance is her visible work. The audience is trained not to see the dancer's labour, but they are still consumers of this work.

Gothenburg. We want you to go from passive spectators to active. See our work, see our lives and see our poverty. Our bodies also build lasting monuments like these houses, this statue, this fountain. Our bodies represent a not yet recognized form of work. The dancing body is a construction worker. Acknowledge our work.

We are as much body workers as once metal workers or shipyard workers.

Hard working men. Gothenburg's pride.

Gothenburg's dancers make up ninety percent of female body workers.

Acknowledge our work. See our choreographic monuments, value them. They live in and through our bodies and we often give them completely free to you, to your parents, to your children and to the next generation. There are no salaries to raise, because there are no salaries yet for our work. Now is the time to pay attention and value our work.

Let the dancers be a part of the city of Gothenburg.

Let us have a space as obvious as the monuments in the cityscape, let us represent the city of Gothenburg along with football arenas, carousels and Tivoli rabbits.

Our monuments carry through time and space, they are also eternal. This is the Fontana di Danza. Remember this. These are ninety-two dancers in a row. There

are more of them. There are thousands of dancers from the City Archive who now step forward and require thirty million crowns for a hundred years of unpaid work. Spatially organized, physically activist, monumental, but without a roof and without walls, in the midst of rain, and in sunshine in a place surrounded by institutions. This place is ours!

Appendix G: Student reflections, Academy of Music and Drama, 2016



Figure 28. The artist/Master student Georgios Giokotos walks in suriashi Photo: courtesy of the artist (2016)

	How did suriashi change the space, or your experience of the space?	How did suriashi change you?	What can art/ists do in/for public space?
Student A	Suriashi gave an embodied awareness of what opportunities and limitations a space can hold, especially in terms of what we allow each other to do in public spaces. Through slow walking, I discovered that a space like Götaplatsen could symbolize power but at the same time be a space for vulnerability and marginalization.	At first, suriashi pushed myself out of my comfort zone. The practice gave me new inputs and energy and elucidated the need for more practical craft-based work. Suriashi was thereafter a liberation because it enabled thinking in motion. More movement activates the brain! Amidst the seriousness, there was also something incredibly comical deciding to walk	Suriashi highlighted risk-taking in artistic practice, which created a vision to expand my own artistic practice beyond the academic task. Suriashi highlighted the limitations but also alternatives. It realized Michel de Certeau's call to 'jamming the maps of urban power'.

		in such a strange way in the public space.	
Student B	I had problems revisiting a space that created stress and anxiety, linked to previous studies. I therefore chose to walk attentively in suriashi in the same space. Suriashi helped me reclaim the space and "return to the present".	There was a discrepancy between the time I experienced while walking in suriashi and the time the passersby walked in, which created stress. Suriashi provided the opportunity to work with focus and say no to the stress and pace of the surroundings, a prerequisite for artistic work.	The slow walking gave a surprising insight. I had new encounters with the audience where there was an agreement of respect even though I was not on a stage and the audience was not sitting in a salon.
Student C	I had assumed some sounds being too weak to be heard in an urban space, however they became clear in suriashi. Several sounds formed a cohesive sound image, more like music than an incoherent background. I experienced the rhythm of the passers-by. The sounds of the surroundings changed, and details were clarified. I sensed each encounter with the passers-by and became more emphatic.	My former guiding principle that 'quick walking creates a quick mind' was changed. Focus on my own movement meant that the surroundings were disconnected and then re-absorbed but in a different format. Slowness gave new insights: the mind became more sensitive, the sensations stronger. Suriashi enabled a shift in focus from one's own body, to the environment and to various details 'without it feeling fluttery'.	Suriashi changed my own experience of the space and thus became a reminder that small changes in public space are possible. Art and artists can move both against and along norms, but I believe that art exists to challenge existence; - both our own and the audience's. To ask new and different questions, we must be challenged.
Student D	I played with the time aspect of suriashi, where the practice encouraged us to not always place everything in the future but also valuing things and people that have been here before us. I asked how they might have moved through the same space. Suriashi affected the coexistence with others particularly in places with limited space, such as a small museum or a church. Suriashi made it easier to be a recipient of the existences of others and at the same time activate oneself; that is	After trying hard to stay focused, the resistance and nervousness eventually disappeared. Suriashi felt logical and remarkable at the same time. I noticed I wanted to be unique was discovered, but then came self-censorship and the requirement to 'do the right thing'. My respect for performing arts techniques and suriashi. It was difficult to allow myself to fail. However, suriashi enabled the focus and the experience of more space on the inside,	The thinking experiment about the past existing in a space through suriashi created a different kind of relationship to the space that relieved the stereotypical lonely artist role. Who has been here before and what may have happened then and how can artists relate to it? Artists can attend a space in a different time capsule and make the audience agree upon it. Artistic work can explore

	being able to receive other people's glances and comments and at the same time be the one responsible for the activation of these particular glances and thoughts.	which affected the relationship with others.	unlimited limitations or unlimited possibilities. Where is the limit for how close one can pass other people? This was a remarkable discovery and exciting experience, and even a prerequisite for being able to work artistically among people in the public space. To give oneself that agreement in order to continue working.
Student E	Suriashi created an altered space, both for myself as well as for other people in the same space. I reflected on the existing time, space and norms that existed before I entered the chosen location. There was a sense of insecurity. How to read the meaning of my behaviour – madness or nothing worth to be notified, an invisible ghost? Through suriashi I managed to change and question the norms and habits in the space, in collaboration with the people being there.	Suriashi created a strong feeling of presence and awareness of one's own body. It reminded of previous training of the slow walks. There was an experience of intense calmness and focused energy, however more vulnerable. The slow practice created a paradox to the chaotic traffic of cars and humans. Senses became enhanced and the hearing turned supersensitive. Suriashi represented an insisting manifestation for a different time and space, into the current spaces where we walked.	Suriashi walking, and the idea that you walk with your ancestors in the presence towards the future opened the door to my own professional history and archive with a long practice of performing in urban spaces, shopping malls as an intervention into the everyday.
Student F	I practised suriashi in a natural area with many exercisers walking, running or cycling. Here, most people performed something five or six times faster than suriashi. Above all, the sound image became powerful: The sound of the lake, the water, the birds in the air, my own slow trailing steps towards the ground, the squirrels in the trees in	I was affected by the philosophy embedded in suriashi's posture - an experiment that can be placed in the past, in the present and in the future at the same time. My own project is about time, Suriashi enabled imagining myself placed in a day, which does not exist, in a month, which does not exist and a time	I asked if suriashi is an action or reaction. Is suriashi an artistic expression that can act on its own or is suriashi a reaction to society? How can suriashi and other artistic practices help us further? And how can our relationship to time be? Can it be changed?

	parallel with the effort of those who ran past; their breathing with faster steps, the sound of their headphones. I enjoyed nature inside my physical silence. It was a very strong experience enhanced by other people's efforts.	period, which does not exist.	
Student G	I was at first afraid that I would perceive the space as dangerous and that walking in suriashi would be misinterpreted by others. I made different choices during the walk: 1. near the wall so as not to be in the way. 2. out of the wall so that people could pass on both sides. How close can we pass seated people? Although the gaze was kept focused far in the distance, I was very aware of the people who walked and sat around me.	Walking in suriashi was an exercise in dealing with vulnerability and fear of being attacked verbally or even tangibly. The space that was created made it possible to note both what was happening in one's own body and in the surroundings, which subdued the vulnerability. However, the audience might suspect that the person walking slowly alone could be ill or behave oddly for some reason.	Suriashi processed artistic courage, vulnerability and emotional risk-taking (on stage). Suriashi - simple deviation from the normal could still provoke strong reactions in some - comments, laughter, gestures, irritation. The deviation from the norm had an influence on me and the activist potential in suriashi became even more interesting.
Student H	It was clear that suriashi was affecting the space and the people who passed by. The slow walking was a stark contrast to previous visits at the site. Different spaces gave different experiences. In a church, people reacted differently. They were very respectful and perhaps thought that suriashi was a religious ritual. The spaces changed forever after having performed suriashi there. It was a reminder that you can change your habits and do other things than the ones you usually do.	Walking in suriashi in different places was like walking through time. I focused on objects and trees in the environment to find the same support for myself, which the group gave in the seminar. The slowness gave me greater focus and there was a sensation of my own physical presence, which was not affected by other people's reactions.	It was the encounter with other people that was specifically interesting. The audience noticed and wondered what I was doing. I think that suriashi showed what is most important about being an artist; to attract the attention of people and to encourage them to think about what we are doing.
Student I	The slow walking in front of a department store offered a great contrast to stressful movements that were about consumption. Slowness was discovered and people expressed both appreciation and condemnation. A stressed-out man shouted:	I was affected by the "audience" stress, which caused an even slower pace since I wanted to offer an alternative on the spot. Suriashi became an organic method of connecting the future with the past, a powerful	The role of the artist could be to remind people that they could walk at any pace they wanted - they do not have to follow the stress of the space. It is important to use time and space as

	"Time is just an illusion!"	reminder of what we may have neglected or forgotten, moreover, relatively easy to perform in terms of preparation and choice of location. The experience was very positive – I managed to move forward, and at the same time I had time for inner reflection on one's self and the world around.	resources in places where time and space are being controlled. Suriashi can serve as physical training for artistic work - at the same time as it could be a therapeutic tool for oneself and society.
Student J	The focus on space and spatiality made the urban space feel larger and the distances longer. People around me made an effort to ignore the slow mover. Others, however, stopped talking and followed me with their eyes. Some figured out that this was probably 'that weird dance thing' and referred to the city's artistic festival. Some laughed, but no one came and talked to me.	I experienced how the feeling of vulnerability was reminiscent of adolescence and it created a fear of being discovered by a friend or relative. This was gradually replaced by the feeling of being "untouchable". The slowness felt provocative, even dangerous, which encouraged me to plan more slow actions.	The one who walks in suriashi becomes a counterpoint to everyday pedestrians in the urban space: The one travelling through a space designed for consumption but instead choose slowness. A question was raised: Does the walker / artist require to be visually consumed but thereby actually provides an opportunity for everyone to pause a habitual pattern and question it?

Appendix H: Extra material on suriashi and performer training

There are five main schools of Nihon Buyō – or *Ryū* as they are called in Japanese – Fujima-Ryū, Nishikawa-Ryū, Hanayagi-Ryū, Wakayagi-Ryū and Bando-Ryū. The five main schools of Nihon Buyō invariably claim that they have a close relationship to Kabuki theatre, traced back to the seventeenth century (Yamazaki, 2001, 223). However, there are many teachers, choreographers and scholars who claim that Nihon Buyō is not the same as Kabuki dance. Yamazaki clarified that 'contrary to the common perception of Nihon Buyō as a traditional performing art, it is a creation of the twentieth century, however based on ancient forms of temple dance, festival dance, Bunraku, Nō theatre and Kabuki' (Yamazaki, 2001, p ix). Nishikawa Senrei taught dances from the Kabuki-, Nō- and *Jiuta mai*-tradition.

In *Karaishi no ki* (An account of puppeteers), the aristocrat and scholar Oe no Masafusa (1041-1111) depicts stereotypical portrayals of female performers such as Kugutsu and Asobi. They are skilled female singers and puppeteers of the Kamakura period. This is how he described them:

The women put on "sad-face" make up, do the "bent-at-the-hip" walk, and smile the "toothache-smile"; donning vermilion and wearing white powder (Oe no Masafusa's *Kairaiishi no ki* quoted by Kawashima, 2001, 32)

The *bent-at-the-hip walk* is a description of how the female performers were moving with their hips centered. Bent-at-the-hip-walk literally meant to walk with your hips folded. One of the instructions for walking with the correct posture when practising suriashi in the dance studio, is to move from the hips, or to move with the hips centered. This is why I found the description of the "bent-at-the-hip" walk interesting for my investigation. A phrase you often hear in the dance studio is *Koshi kara motto magete!* (Rōmaji), which means *lift more from the hips!* or *Koshi wo hikuku!* which means *scoop up your hips!*

However, Masafusa's text did not mention anything about sliding feet and it can thus not be used as a proof of suriashi's long existence. The text instead showed the use of exotifying descriptions of female wandering and touring performers. Masafusa applied Chinese equivalents in order to both domesticate and make the performers 'more foreign in quality' (Kawashima, 2001, 36). There was a strangeness added to their performance. The bent-at-the-hip-walk was said to have been invented by Sun Shou, a Chinese noble woman of the late

Han dynasty. She walked with delicate, mincing steps as though her feet could barely support her. Sun Shou was known for the *sad-face-make up* and having the *toothache-smile*, characters that Masafusa adopted to describe Japanese performers a thousand years later. I look further on the history of suriashi, which has connections to Daoist steps in China. But first, I outline the depiction of suriashi from performance studies, particularly for performer training.

Suriashi as performer training

There are descriptions of suriashi in practitioner's handbooks, such as Hanayagi's *Fundamentals of Japanese Dance* (Hanayagi, 2008, 92). A short description can be found in Griffith's *The training of Noh actors and The Dove* (Griffiths, 2014, 38).

Performance scholar Barbara Sellers-Young made a field study on how the *Fujima Nihon Buyō*-school created an important space for the Japanese American community in Ontario, in the States. Here she describes how suriashi is operating inside a choreography:

The dancer realizes this step with an erect torso, knees slightly bent and feet in parallel. With the help of the wooden floor and the sock like tabi, one-foot slides forward with the majority of the foot pressing into the floor as the toes slightly release from the floor to aid in pulling the foot forward. With the body's weight centered in the pelvis, the forward step on one foot is repeated by a forward step on another. This basic step can be integrated with various gestures of the arm and head in locomotive sequences that move through the stage space in a variety of floor patterns (Sellers-Young, 2002, 37).

Sellers-Young described the Nihon Buyō-style suriashi, which is the one I have been engaging with for this thesis, however I have added the extra focus on shoulders withdrawn for the feminine character. As I have explained, most handbooks explain suriashi the way it is practised in the Nō tradition. For example, this description in Routledge's *Handbook of Asian Theatre*:

The core movement in noh is suriashi (sliding step), a walk in which the whole foot glides along the floor, then lifts from the toes as the step is completed; the body does not rock from side to side or move up and down while travelling through space. Proper suriashi is achieved only with a strong use of koshi (Lanki, ed. Liu, 2016)

Most Western scholarships focus on plays and (male) acting in the Nō theatre. Scholars Barbara Geilhorn, Carole Fischer Sorgenfrei represented an exception in their investigations of women in Japanese performance (Geilhorn, 2017, Sorgenfrei, 2014). I continued to look for evidence of suriashi in secular performer training. I found the German performer Xenia Zarina, who in the 1930s studied with the Kabuki actor Matsumoto Kōshirō. Earlier, Matsumoto, a Kabuki actor specializing in male roles, and a teacher and performer of the Fujima School of Nihon Buyō, also taught Anna Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn in the 1920ies. Zarina never mentioned the word *suriashi* when she described how the lessons were structured. She wrote that ‘the only exercises are practising the dances, following the rules noted under *Technique of Nihon Buyō* (Zarina, 1967, 192). It seemed that Matsumoto did not provide any warmup exercises, instead he taught only the choreography, where suriashi was embedded and part of the movements. The choreographer and performer Heidi S. Durning/Fujima Kanso-o explained that there was no separate suriashi practice or other warm up contemporary practice of the Fujima School of Nihon Buyō to me: ‘(Durning, 2000, 2011, 2013, 2015). Nishikawa Senrei’s emphasis on suriashi stood out from other Buyō schools. Matsumoto’s lessons seemed to have been free from mythological descriptions, and thus secular. However, Zarina described the practice of a walk where the feet glided lightly over the floor, and where the dancer carried a mental image of the thickness of a sheet of paper separating the feet from the floor, which provided an image for thinking through suriashi (1967, 192). Time was spent practicing walking styles. Zarina’s book included close up photos of a foot with toes lifted with the title ‘Noh walk’ (202). The image of walking on paper was used in martial arts, which I have encountered in Japanese sword-training with the masters Momiyama Takao and Raili Salminen in Sweden. In martial arts, outdoor practice is encouraged. The unemployed mythological Samurai Miyamoto Musashi wrote *The Book of Five Rings*, around 1643-1645. The book is a practice-based text on various strategies for fighting with a sword, and in it you also find descriptions of walking practices. These walking practices were elaborated for fighting your enemy, and not to lose your balance.

In a Western context, suriashi is mostly known through the Suzuki Actor Training Method, a Japanese system based on Nō and Kabuki. This system is sometimes called *Grammar of the Feet*, developed especially for performance purposes, where the aim is to create a shape for the whole body, which facilitates a stronger voice. Its originator, theatre director Suzuki Tadashi, explained his method like this: ‘Technically speaking, my method consists of

training to learn to speak powerfully and with clear articulation, and also to learn to make the whole body speak, even when one keeps silent' (Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984, 28).

Appendix I: Japanese dances, artists, teachers.

I here list the dances studied with teachers in Japan. The seven traditional Japanese dance pieces I studied in Kyōto with Nishikawa Senrei were *Takasago*, *Sakura* (Cherry blossom), *Tadanobu* (from the Kabuki play *Yoshitsune Zenbon Sakura*), *Fuji Musume* (Wisteria Girl), *Shizu no Odamaki* (the Shirabyōshi dancer Shizuka Gozen's solo originally performed for the Kamakura Shogunate in 1186), *Kuro Kami*, (Black Hair) and *Matsu no Midori* (The Green of a Pine). My other Nihon Buyō teachers were all from the Nishikawa-school; Nishikawa Kayorei, Nishikawa Chikage, Ota Emiko, except for Heidi Sakurako Durning and Hakone Yumiko from Fujima school (also in Kyōto and Tokyo), Nakano Emiko from Hanayagi school (in Melbourne) and Wakayagi Kayono from Wakayagi School (in London). Adding on to that, suriashi is also practised at the Nō theatre and Kyōgen schools, however not to the same extent as in Nishikawa Senrei's school. I have studied Nō theatre with Takabayashi Shinji, Matsui Akira and Richard Emmert from Kita Nō School, with Katayama Shingo from Kanze Nō School, and with Otomo Jun from Hōshō Nō school. I have had some Kyōgen lessons with the actor Shigeyama Akira of Ōkura School. These Nō masters are based in Kyōto, Kobe and Tokyo. Suriashi is also practised in Butō, Japan's post-war dance, which I have studied with Rosa Yuki in Kyōto and Akira Kasai in Tokyo.

I have also studied other traditional Japanese practises, such as martial arts (Iaidō) and Butō in Sweden, Australia and Latvia. This shows that these techniques are global practices, spread out in the world. What is significant for these forms is that they also reinforce Japanese cultural values by calling the spaces for practises *keikoba* and *dōjō*, where Japanese objects are placed, Japanese tea is served, as well as food. In Gothenburg, I have studied the Japanese sword with the local Iaidō association 'Shōbukan' (now RaiKen), and the railway accident investigator Raili Salminen and textile artist Momiyama Takao. In Sweden, there are no professional practitioners of Nihon Buyō or Nō, however there are a few professional Butō dancers; Carmen Olsson, Frauke, Su-En and Irina Anufrieva.

I here list the practice-based knowledge from collected dance practices between 1982-1995, which are rather typical for a dancer in Sweden; classical ballet from Romania, France,

Austria, the UK and the U.S., modern and postmodern dance from the U.S. and Europe, jazz (Horton/Dunham/Ailey) from the U.S., flamenco and tap dance with teachers Susanne Lindström, Barbro Hallgren, Anna Grip, Kenneth Gustafsson, Kristina Klausson, Marie Apelberg, Claude Marchant, Joe Chvala, Julian Moss, Katiti King to mention a few. In Kyōto 2000, I met with the phenomenon *fusion dance*, which is a combination of traditional Japanese dance and North American modern dance. For instance, I have worked with the choreographer Heidi S. Durning who is an alumna of University of Michigan's MFA programme and holding a licence (nattori) from Fujima School, where her performance name is Fujima Kanso-o. She merges Nihon Buyō with Western modern dance. Based in Kyōto, she is respected internationally performing both programs of traditional Japanese dance as well as her own special fusion between Japanese dance and Western modern dance. In 2009, I invited her to a residency at Ricklundgården. She taught one of the first lessons of Nihon Buyō in Sweden, supported by Kulturrådet (Swedish Arts Council) and Dansalliansen. Durning has also appeared in Kabuki, Butō and contemporary dance performances. She runs her own studio space Iwakura Ku Kan where international and Japanese artists regularly perform. In 2011, she performed and was interviewed by me in my film *The Dance of the Sun* (released by Njutafilms in 2013), which is the first Swedish documentary on Japanese dance. I have also worked with choreographer Rosa Yuki in Kyōto. In her piece 'Angel's Bathing' (2001), she combined Nō, Korean dance and Butō. In addition, I have worked with the Kyōto-based artist Bruno-the Bad Boy and the choreographer Peter Golightly. Golightly has curated many spaces for cultural exchange at his studio Kyō Ryū Kan. He himself belonged to the Japanese experimental company Dumb Types and now creates his own work and teaches concert jazz techniques and musical theatre. In Sweden and U.S., I have worked with and studied postmodern dance, somatic practices and dance improvisation with teachers and choreographers like Maria Mebius-Schröder, Benedikte Esperri, Paul Langland, Molissa Fenley, Andrew Morrish, Danny Lepkoff, Anna Halprin, Veera Suvalo-Grimberg, Anette Torgersen and Dianne Reid (1991-2009). I have studied dance on camera with Douglas Rosenberg since 1997. In addition, I studied tai ji and Shao Lin gong fu with Shi Xingxue and Cheng Zong Bang at the Shao Lin Cultural center in Gothenburg.

List of some of the artists participating in suriashi

Marika Blossfeldt

<http://www.pollitalu.org/english/about/about.english.html>

Susan Osberg

<http://susanosberg.com/>

Muna Tseng

<http://www.munatseng.org/>

Dance Across Borders

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/danceacrossborders/community/>

Paul Langland

<http://www.paullangland.com/>

Douglas Rosenberg

<https://www.douglas-rosenberg.com/>

Ignacio Jarquin

<http://www.ignaciojarquin.com/>

Dr Lucy Lyons

<https://www.cityandguildsartschool.ac.uk/lucy-lyons/>

Disa Kamula

<https://disakamula.com/>

Åsa Holtz

<http://asaholtz.se/>

Frei von Fräähsen zu Lorenzburg

<https://www.lorenzburg.org/en/>

Anna Svensdotter

<https://www.annasvensdotter.com/>

Heidi S Durning

<https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/wisteria-maiden-in-a-rock-garden>

Peter Golightly

<https://allabout-japan.com/en/article/3977/>

Sakurai Makiko

http://zipangu.com/sakurai/new_eng/newtop_e.html

Nonaka Kumiko

http://fuu-chou-sha.jp/profile_e.html

Inta Balode

<https://movementresearch.org/people/inta-balode>

Benedikte Esperi

<https://benedikteesperi.com/>

Anna Maria Orrù

<http://www.annamariaorru.com/>

Meritxell Aumedes Molinero

<https://eye-motional.com/>

Kajsa Magnarsson

<https://kajsamagnarsson.com/>

Canan Yücel Pekiçten

<http://cananyucelpekicten.com/>

Dianne Reid

<http://www.hipsync.com.au/>

Melinda Smith

<https://ausdance.org.au/contributors/details/Melinda-Smith>

Aloun Marchal

<https://www.alounmarchal.com/>

Carmen Olsson

<https://carmenolsson.com/>

Susan Kozel

<https://nivel.teak.fi/adie/contributor/susan-kozel/>

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