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## *The Dance: Sachiyo Ito, With a Bow to the Past*

By JACK ANDERSON

Sachiyo Ito and Company performed Wednesday night at the Theater of the Riverside Church as if dance were an art of taking care.

Sachiyo Ito, the troupe's Japanese-born director, took care to respect the past with works based on 18th- and 19th-century Japanese and Okinawan dances. She also took care to make every gesture count.

"Fujimusume" ("Wisteria Maiden"), based on a Kabuki dance of 1826 by Sanjuro Seki, concerned the love of wisteria flowers for a pine tree. As the spirit of wisteria, Ms. Ito stepped demurely, often glancing downward or sideways. This was a dance with a deliberately restricted range of movement.

So was "Kanawa" ("The Iron Crown"), choreographed by Yachiyo Inoue after a classical Noh drama. Portraying an abandoned wife, Ms. Ito usually moved very slowly. But as movements grew increasingly determined, one knew this woman sought revenge.

"Yotsudake Odori" ("Four Bamboos"), an Okinawan dance, was festive. Yet it never grew unrestrained. Three women simply walked gracefully and let the clacking of their

bamboo castanets express their merriment.

The choreography for Ms. Ito's original pieces was as fastidious as that in her tributes to the past. "Natsu No Gyoretus" ("The Summer Procession") depicted a festival in honor of a god and it brought the program to a pleasant close.

But two solos were more interesting. In "Te No Iro No So" ("Auras of Hands") Ms. Ito stared at her hands and made them seem to control the space around her. At first she gave the illusion that she was confined. When her hands made broader gestures, she appeared to be dancing in a wider space — a space that contracted when she again restricted her gestures.

"Haru To Shura" ("Spring and Ashura") showed a release from suffering through the aid of divine powers. Looking careworn, Ms. Ito rose from a meditation posture to fling her arms about and beat the air with a stick. Then she fell, crushed by fate. When she arose, her gestural fluidity revealed that she had been transfigured. Unfortunately, the dance rambled slightly before it ended.

In addition to the dances, there was a percussion solo by Yukio Tsuji.