**The Development of Skidancing in Japan and the Concept of our Method**

# The president of Skidancing Association of Japan

# Mariko Shimauchi

**The Development of Skidancing in Japan**

**I was on a trail in Tsubame Onsen Ski area in 1965. The previous night it snowed heavily. Everywhere was covered with snow. I was on the slope with the blue sky above and wide area around. And nobody was there except the virgin snow and the forest. Suddenly I wanted to dance on the snow from my heart. As soon as I started dancing, I fell down on the slope. At that time I was an intermediate skier and using long skis. I’ve loved dancing from my birth. I really wanted to dance. “ Why cannot dance on the snow?” I thought it was because I used long skis. But I realized I’d never seen someone dancing on the slope, nor heard of the techniques to dance. I’ve learned classic ballet and was a gymnast in high school and in Music College. I thought if I’d had very short skis, I could have danced freely on the snow!**

**I met Mr. Takahashi in 1975 who had invented mini skis. He also wanted to do something like ballet or Figure Skating. We’d joined together and made lots of techniques one by one, and traveled around many ski areas demonstrating and teaching. We’d been filmed and interviewed everywhere. In 1978 we visited Squaw Valley and Heavenly valley in the USA to demonstrate our dance and film with TV crews from Tokyo. We gave a demonstration in Inter Ski held in Zao in1979. We danced with 8 ladies accompanied with the live music on the mountain. The musician was the famous Japanese electric guitarist, Mr. Terauchi and his band. Professor Kruckenhauzer from Australia admired seeing our dance.**

**We invented many techniques. But I’ve thought it was not enough. So I started to learn many styles of dancing to make it a genuine artistic sport.**

**I had thought that Figure Skating would be of great help and the nearest sport that I was aiming to emulate. So I started to learn Figure Skating and Ice Dancing form 1982. Fortunately Mr. Yoshiuchi, my teacher, was a very good instructor who had taught me the whole theory of Figure Skating to the detail. Additionally every summer from 1988 to 1993, I visited NJ in the USA to learn more Ice Dancing, and got a Gold medal in Adult Ice Dancing in USFSA (United States of Figure Skating Association)**

**the Concept of our Method**

**The basic of the Figure Skating is skating in a circle, where you should keep your body straight with your weight on one leg. And you should lean in toward the middle of the circle. A straight body and weight on one leg secure the freedom of movement.**

**I would have liked to dance freely like Figure Skating and Ice Dancing on the slope. So I started to try the same things on the slope. That’s the beginning of my long journey to search for the new techniques on the slope.**

**Figure Skating certainly was a great help for Skidancing. But there is a big difference between Skiing and Skating. The difference is that we are standing on the slope, in which we can’t lean in at the first section of the curve.**

**Let’s imagine a circle on the slope. Of course we cannot ski up the mountain, so imagine a semi-circle or a wider curve. Could you lean in from the very beginning of the curve? The answer is “No”. That was the biggest problem. In another words, I would’ve liked to trace a curve with a single edge on the slope. (For example forward outside edge from the beginning to the end of the curve.) If I could keep leaning in from the start to the end of the curve, I could do almost the same things as Figure Skating. If I could do this, we could use almost all the techniques of Skating and get the whole Figure Skating World that has been cultivating for 300 years.**

**So I concentrated on this point for about 7 years. Through many trial and errors, I have completely resolved the problem. And then I established Ski Dancing Association of Japan in my name in 1988.**

**How to trace a curve with a single edge ?**

**From “Semi-Circle” to “Crescent-Circle”**

**3 points resolved the difficult problems**

**No.1===== Set a limit with an incline from 8 degrees to12 degrees.**

On **the steep slope you cannot change your lean correctly.**

**So I set a limit with an incline from 8 degrees to12 degrees.**

**It will assure you to get right edge in the first section of the curve.**

**Pre- turn**

**1st-section**

**2nd section**

-Section

-Section

**Fall line**

**No.2==== Ski the pre-turn at good speed.**

**To get a right edge at the 1st section, you should ski the pre-turn for the preparation. In the pre-turn, maintain your speed to the last moment (do not slow down). Then change your lean in for the next curve, gathering your free leg tight.**

**No.3====Change lean along an oblique line, not on the horizontal line.**

**At first, I was aiming to describe a complete semi-circle like skating on the ice. But it’s a bit difficult due to snow condition or slope. If you aim to describe a semi-circle, you’ll lose your speed when you change the lean at the horizontal line. So I’ve started to aim an oblique line.**

**How much oblique is due to the incline of the slope, and also the quality of the snow. You can obtain averaged speed from that. It’ll help you dance with music.**

**Change from Semi-Circle to Crescent-Circle will assure you to many techniques far easily.**

**Crescent Circle**

**Oblique line**

**Fall line**

**Semi-circle**

**Fall line**

**Horizontal line**

##### Oblique line

**Appendix**

**Keep your body straight and firm.**

**The first section of the curve would be the unstable part, so a firm body with your abdominal muscles is expected. If you ski the Pre-turn at good speed with your firm body and gathering your free leg tight, you could change your lean easily.**

**These 3 points will help you trace curves with a single edge. If you could trace a curve with each 4 edges (forward outside, forward inside, backward outside, and backward inside edge), you‘ll be able to do almost everything like Figure Skating or Ice Dancing.**

**Thus I could get over the problem. After a lapse of years of training and searching before I knew the slopes had “disappeared” from me, and I felt like I was standing on the flat ground even though I was standing on the slope. Just now I’m doing almost the same things “on the Ice” and “on the Snow”.**

**I’d like to see many people in the world enjoying Skidancing in near future. And I hope we will see Skidancing in the Olympic Games someday.**