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Between Two Worlds: A Social History of Okinawan Musical Drama

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Ethnomusicology

by

James Rhys Edwards

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Between Two Worlds: A Social History of Okinawan Musical Drama

by

James Rhys Edwards

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Roger Savage, Chair

In 1879, Japan annexed the Ryūkyū Islands, dissolving the nominally independent Ryūkyū Kingdom and establishing Okinawa Prefecture. This helped inaugurate Imperial Japan's expansion beyond the historical *naichi* or "inner lands." It also set in motion a structural transformation of Okinawan society, marked by the end of tribute trade with China, the abolition of a centuries-old status system, and the gradual modernization of the economy. This process was painful, pitting the interests of the traditional Okinawan elite against those of Japanese administrators, with Okinawan peasants and laborers caught in the middle. The epicenter of this process was the prefectural capital of Naha – and for many Okinawans, particularly working class women, the soul of Naha was its commercial theater.

This dissertation approaches prewar Okinawan commercial theater both as an institution and as a space of experience and expression. Its main focus is vernacular musical drama or *kageki*, which was created by classical performing artists disenfranchised by the dissolution of

the court. Musical dramas such as *A Peony of the Deep Mountains* (*Okuyama no botan*) and *Iejima Romance* (*Iejima Handō-gwa*) draw selectively on both courtly and popular traditions, fusing the poetic sophistication of *kumiodori* dance-drama with the mass appeal of folk song and dance. After introducing early modern courtly and popular performing arts, I trace the emergence of commercial theater as an effect of contradictory social forces set in motion by annexation. Cross-reading actors' memoirs and newspaper reviews with writings by period scholars such as Okinawan cultural historian Iha Fuyū and Japanese critical theorist Tosaka Jun, I situate commercial performance in its socioeconomic and ideological context. I then turn from a social scientific to a hermeneutic mode of critique, offering close readings of four influential musical dramas. Unlike coeval Okinawan elite literature, these dramas do not explicitly challenge the dominant order. I will argue, however, that by representing low-status female protagonists as self-constant and morally competent agents, they invite working class female spectators to reimagine the horizons of their social experience.

The dissertation of James Rhys Edwards is approved.

Helen Rees

Carol Sorgenfrei

Timothy Taylor

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2015

For my mother and father

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Introduction

This dissertation has two interlocking aims. The first is to provide a historical overview of the performing arts in prewar Okinawa. From the late nineteenth century until the rise of cinema in the mid twentieth century, commercial theater, music, and dance were the leading forms of popular entertainment in Japan's southernmost territories, the Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama island groups. The first works staged commercially during the years following the Ryūkyū archipelago's 1879 annexation by Japan were adapted from the early modern repertoires of courtly dance-drama, courtly dance, and folk theater and song. During the 1890s, performing artists began to draw on these and other styles to create new theatrical forms. Innovation quickened throughout the 1900s-1910s. The arts scene during this period was remarkably diverse, featuring classical genres, new indigenous genres, mainland Japanese genres, Western-style realism, and even hybrid multimedia spectacles such as electrically illuminated dance. By the 1920s, Okinawan performing artists had perfected the two now-canonical styles of modern Okinawan theater (*Okinawa shibai* 沖縄芝居). These are spoken historical drama or *shigeki* (史劇) and musical drama or *kageki* (歌劇). This dissertation will focus primarily on musical drama, which was tremendously successful, especially among working-class women in the prefectural capital of Naha. I will pay particular attention to the prototypical tragic musical drama *Uyanma* (The Kept Woman, approx. 1890) and the so-called "big three" tragic musical dramas: Ganeko Yaei's *Tomari Aka* (Aka of Tomari, 1911), Iraha Inkichi's *Okuyama no botan* (A Peony of the Deep Mountains, 1914), and

Majikina Yūkō's *Iejima Handō-gwa* (Iejima Romance, 1924).¹ These intricately crafted yet thematically accessible dramas have maintained their unique affective hold over Okinawans into the present day.

My second aim is to explore the relationship between politics and aesthetics, particularly as it pertains to ethnomusicology and performance studies. This topic has been with us a long time: as Terry Eagleton observes, classical rhetoric was essentially “a mode of what we would now call ‘discourse theory,’ devoted to analyzing the material effects of particular uses of language in particular social conjunctures” (1981, 101). Already in classical debates over the nature and use of rhetoric, we find contemporary problems such as the “quarrel between ‘form’ and ‘content’” and between “the cognitive and the affective” (104). In the West, throughout the classical and medieval periods, aesthetic thought retained its affiliation with rhetoric, and with it, the political. During early modernity, however, “a rigorous division ... was gradually instituted between thought and speech, theory and persuasion, language and discourse, science and poetry” (105; cf. Gadamer 1984, 314). Mainstream modern political theory took shape under the auspices of social science, while aesthetics assumed an idealist cast, first in theories of the affections and then in formalism and romantic aestheticism.

Theorists throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have sought to work past this rupture. In a sense, however, mainstream consensus on the relationship between art and politics remains a kind of “uneasy alliance” between variations on the sociology of art (“sociologistic positivism”) and variations on formalism and romanticism (Eagleton 1981, 83). In popular and also much academic discourse, we tend to address questions of

representational content and the mode of artistic production in sociologicistic terms, and questions of composition in formalist terms. We also tend to limit our discussions of the politics of art to the level of representational content and presumed social function, identifying “political” artworks as those which more or less explicitly represent or aim to influence “the practice of power or the embodiment of collective wills and interests and the enactment of collective ideas” (Rancière 2010, 152). In ethnomusicology and performance studies, particular attention is often paid to “the relationship between musical practice and the symbolization or construction of [political, national, ethnic, gender, religious, etc.] identity” (Rice 2010, 319-324).

This modern ‘strong concept’ of the relationship between politics and art took root in Japan and Okinawa in the immediate wake of the Meiji Restoration, through the efforts of authors and translators affiliated with the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (Ueda 2005, 76). Notably, this concept was not the sole provenance of the so-called “pure literature” (*junbungaku* 純文学) and literary criticism promulgated in elite journals. Meiji and Taishō period popular literature and theater are also often political in the ‘strong’ sense of the word, grappling explicitly with “the traumatic discontinuities of the Meiji period: the replacement of the Tokugawa [feudal] order with a nation-state wedded to industrial capitalism, the destruction of an established status system and the arrival of uncontrolled social mobility, [and] the disturbance of gender roles by new discourses and beliefs” (Ito 2008, 3). Politically attuned studies of prewar Japanese literature and art often focus on works that either celebrate or challenge the Imperial state and official formulations of Japanese ethnic-national identity.

The “affirmation or resistance” paradigm is well suited to the study of certain domains of Okinawan cultural production (Tanji 2012, 112). On the “affirmation” end of the scale, for example, we find the majority of the courtly dance-dramas of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, which serve openly to transmit Confucian ideals. On the “resistance” end, we find many of the best-known works of post-annexation Okinawan pure literature (Bhowmik 2012). Ikemiyagi Sekihō’s short story “Officer Ukuma” (1922), Kushi Fusako’s short story “Memoirs of a Declining Ryūkyūan Woman” (1932), and Yamanokuchi Baku’s poem “A Conversation” (1935), for example, all take up themes of national identity and colonial discrimination (cf. Bhowmik 2012).

This being said, the strong concept of politics in art and the “affirmation or resistance” paradigm are both ill suited to the interpretation of prewar Okinawan commercial performing arts, which tend to focus on the intimate sphere and often lack immediately visible ideological commitments. This is particularly the case with the tremendously popular genre of commercial musical drama or *kageki*. The most well-known and loved works of *kageki* are “domestic plays” (*sewamono* 世話物) that focus on the romantic and familial travails of low-status female protagonists. Their main selling point is their moving articulation of subjective emotions or *ninjō* (人情), a familiar topic in Tokugawa period Japanese popular theater. Another key term is *nasake* (情け), a word etymologically related to *ninjō* which can signify a range of sympathetic affects, including compassion, pity, romantic love, and sexual desire (Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2012, 4; Kordzinska-Nawrocka 2011, 47). Protagonists are generally described as people with *nasake*, while antagonists are decried as insensitive to *nasake*.²

In many plays, the unfolding of *nasake* crystallizes in a poeticized exchange of vows (*chigiri* 契り) which inextricably bind the female and male protagonists' lives to a single fate (*en* 縁). This entanglement, which extends from this world to the next (*ano yo* あの世), often leads to a tragic end.

Until recently, there has been a tendency in Japanese literary studies to dismiss works that focus on the intimate sphere as apolitical or even anti-political. Atsuko Ueda, for example, asserts “[that] the establishment of *ninjō* as the main theme of modern fiction is inextricably linked to the establishment of political language – and its respective discursive realm – as a thing to be effaced” (2005, 64). Over the past few years, however, scholars have begun to re-evaluate the potential political significance of “voices and practices that did not [previously] seem consciously and conspicuously political” (Hirano 2014, 17-18). This project is crucial where prewar Okinawa is concerned because the majority of “consciously and conspicuously political” texts were produced by Japanese-educated male elites in Shuri and Naha, who comprised a self-selected group active in prefectural and national politics. As Tomiyama Ichirō observes, well-rounded studies of Okinawan social history should not focus entirely on records produced by elites, but should also seek out traces of the modes of cultural production through which non-elites consolidated their own sociopolitical consciousness (1995, 20).

The political ontology of art and aesthetic experience

Broadening our scope of inquiry to include non-elite arts requires us to set aside the question of explicitly political representational content and inquire into the “political

ontology” of the work of art itself (cf. Marchart 2007). Our common-sense conception of politics as collective will-formation and action rests upon an Aristotelian conception of the human being as a political being, capable of living in a shared world and pursuing a common good (*Politics* I.1-3, III.3-4). Two contemporary thinkers who have pursued this intuition to interesting ends are Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Rancière. As Ricoeur observes, living together requires exercising the shared capacities for perception, judgment, speech, and action (2005a, 90). These capacities frame our shared enviroing world, grounding the very possibility of human plurality. Rancière makes a similar argument, reminding us that the concept of collective action presumes “a distribution of the sensible that combines – according to different forms of proportionality – the sharing of a common capacity and the distribution of alternative capacities” (2009, 4). He suggests that what “really deserves the name of politics is the cluster of perceptions and practices that shape this common world” (2010, 152). Seen from this perspective, the “politics of aesthetics” is irreducible to particular artworks’ “representation of [so-called] ‘political’ events.” Rather, it inheres in “the way in which the aesthetic experience – as a refiguration of the forms of visibility and intelligibility of artistic practice and reception – intervenes in the distribution of the sensible” (2009, 5).

Of course, other genres of cultural production, such as editorial and reportage, also intervene in the distribution of the sensible. Following Ricoeur and Rancière, I will argue that what distinguishes art is a certain productive “noncongruence with actuality” (Ricoeur 1986, 2). As early modern Japanese playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon puts it, “art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal” (De

Bary 2013, 337). Art asks us to wholly or partially suspend the standards of actuality, possibility, and probability that frame our everyday lifeworld. This aesthetic bracketing can manifest as a text, a canvas, or a space-time of performance – what matters is that it opens a space of imagination in which alternative distributions of the sensible can be proposed and explored. The unique political significance of art inheres in this bracketing or *epoché*, which “implies in principle a recourse against any given reality and thereby the possibility of a critique of the real” (2007, 300). Rancière identifies this recourse against reality as “the staging of dissensus – of a conflict between two sensory worlds” (2009, 11; 2004; 226).

In this dissertation, I will argue that prewar Okinawan commercial theater stages a kind of dissensus by challenging audiences’ conceptions of human competency and expectations of social recognition. My argument is founded on the observation that dominant social groups help obviate the need for coercion in part by institutionalizing a “recognitional infrastructure,” a set of norms that govern who in society is recognized as capable of what (Anderson and Honneth 2004, 144). Weber calls this the “distribution of powers and competencies” (1968, 312). In both the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Tokugawa Japan, the distribution of powers and competencies was structured along hereditary status lines, and legitimized through Confucian and Neo-Confucian interpretations of status order as the social manifestation of a natural order structured by cosmic rational principles (*li* 理) (cf. Smits 1999; Ames 2011). The Meiji Restoration of 1868, however, qualitatively transformed Japan’s recognitional infrastructure, discrediting the purported naturalness of the status order and introducing radical concepts such as equality under the

law and inter-status ethnic-national solidarity. The 1879 dissolution of the Ryūkyū Kingdom and formation of Okinawa Prefecture promised to restructure the recognitional regimes that structured Okinawans' everyday lives. This being said, substantive reform was haphazard and delayed. Due to a confluence of political, economic, and cultural factors, Okinawans were systematically denied full legal equality, economic integration, and recognition as valued members of the national community. This resulted in the formation of a widespread and acute awareness of malrecognition, or “consciousness of discrimination” (*sabetsu ishiki* 差別意識), among Okinawans (Ōta 1996).

Excellent scholarly work has been done on Okinawan elites' articulations of malrecognition and pursuit of “parity of esteem” (cf. Hennessey and Wilson 1997). Comparatively less attention has been paid to the discourses and practices by which non-elites grappled with malrecognition. This is in part because such discourses unfolded on an “infrapolitical” rather than a macropolitical level – taking account of them requires a “[consideration] of strategy at the level of villages, families, and individuals confronted with opaque economic realities and indecipherable hierarchical relations viewed from below” (Scott 1990, 138-139). This dissertation proposes that Okinawan commercial theater constituted one such infrapolitical discourse. By portraying low-status women as not only morally capable but morally exemplary protagonists, popular dramas of the Meiji and Taishō periods such as *Uyanma*, *Okuyama no Botan*, and *Iejima Handō-gwa* called the normative distribution of powers and competencies in Okinawan society into question. By demanding that low-status female protagonists' judgments and claims be honored and that justice be done to them, even if only on a sublimated and symbolic

plane, these dramas invited subaltern audiences to recognize themselves as potential subjects rather than mere objects of social action – in Rancière’s words, as “[unaccounted-for] political subjects that disclose a wrong and demand a redistribution of the sensible order” (2013, 92).

Performance and the politics of recognition

As Clifford Geertz observes, “[the] drama analogy for social life has of course been around in a casual sort of way ... for a very long time” (1983, 26). This is because drama exemplifies key characteristics of human being-in-the-world: its outward-orientation, its other-dependence, and its teleological pretensions, among others. The enactment of theater gives sensual shape to a public sphere in which “the living flux of acting and speaking” can unfold and bear fruit (Arendt 1958a, 187-188). It also calls forth our capacity to weigh the consequences of speech and action and to pass judgment, interpellating the spectator as a socially competent subject (Halpern 2011, 562). Finally, in addition to disclosing and reproducing the spaces and faculties of social being, drama bears the potential to produce new social modalities. It does so by inviting audiences to co-interpret their own lived narrative with the mimetic world of the work.³ This work of co-interpretation or appropriation “can take on a multitude of forms, from the pitfall of servile imitation ... to all the stages of fascination, to suspicion, to rejection, to the search for a just distance with regard to such models of identification and their power of seduction” (Ricoeur 2005a, 101). I will argue that such appropriations are socially and politically significant because they subtly transform our horizons of self-recognition and

social recognition, opening up “an enormous experimental field for the endless work of identification that we carry out on ourselves” (1999, 54).

Since the 1990s in particular, a number of theorists have stressed the role of recognition in the constitution of both psychological subjectivity and political subjecthood (Honneth 1992; Taylor 1994; Fraser 1995; Ricoeur 2005a). We can trace contemporary critical discourse on this topic largely to Hegel, who grounds his politics and ethics on three interrelated modes of mutual recognition (1979). The first form, which arises in the intimate or domestic sphere, is mutual recognition between sentient beings that need one another in order to survive and flourish physically and emotionally. The second, which arises in civil society, is mutual recognition between self-interested economic actors as co-participants in a division of labor and distribution of property structured through contractual exchange. For Hegel, these “natural” forms of mutual recognition act dialectically as thesis and antithesis to generate a third form: the shared consciousness of membership in a political community bound by laws and customs (*Sitte*) that transcend the empirical interests of its constitutive subjects (1979, 102-103; 143; 235; 1991, 288-289; 329). This “intellectual intuition” synthesizes and sublates the affective character of mutual recognition as it arises in the intimate sphere with the purposive-rational character of mutual recognition as it arises in civil society. At this stage, the subject recognizes itself within the universal and the universal within itself, thus realizing the promise of the dialectic of Spirit (1991, 371). Hegel hypothesizes that such a political community would take the form of a constitutional state or *Rechtsstaat*, in which equal recognition under the law “purges the state of caprice and makes possible

such modern freedoms as contract and property, career choice, religion, and speech” (Smith 1989, 112; cf. Hegel 1991, 282; 290).

While very much a product of its time, Hegel’s theory of recognition is valuable to this project for several reasons. On a historically concrete level, the post-Hegelian *Rechtsstaat* theory of scholars such as Lorenz von Stein, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, and Hermann Roesler strongly influenced the architects of the prewar Japanese state (cf. Siemes 1968; Muramatsu and Naschold 1996; Grimmer-Solem 2005). On a more theoretical level, Hegel compellingly identifies a meta-category of experience that runs through and binds together our personal, civil, and political relations: “the logic of each cannot be adequately explained without appeal to the same mechanism of reciprocal recognition” (Honneth 1996, 108). A number of contemporary theorists have followed this insight in fruitful directions. In *Recognition or Redistribution? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, Fraser and Honneth interface contemporary discourses on recognition with classical political economic discourses on production and distribution (2003, 1-2). Fraser does so through a “perspectival dualism,” in which “[economic] maldistribution is entwined with misrecognition but cannot be reduced to [it],” while Honneth proposes a “normative monism,” in which maldistribution is identified as a particularly injurious effect of asymmetrical “recognition orders” (2-3; 141). Both Fraser and Honneth argue for the need to think past current disciplinary divides, in order to overcome the prejudices of culturalism on the one hand and economic determinism on the other (4). This makes their work relevant to this dissertation’s aim of developing a

non-isomorphic model of the connection between political economic transformations and coterminous transformations of cultural practice.

In *The Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur provides a phenomenological complement to Fraser and Honneth, connecting the Hegelian model of recognition to his own richly interdisciplinary work. At the heart of Ricoeur's philosophy is a "hermeneutics of the capable human being" (2005a, 95). For Ricoeur, being recognized as a fully human person entails being recognized as capable of speech, action, narration, and moral-ethical imputation (105). The capacities for speech and action are comparatively self-evident, as they have been central to Western theories of agency since well before Aristotle. The capacities for narration and imputation are bound up with Ricoeur's own idiosyncratic conception of the two dimensions of personhood: *idem*-identity and selfhood or "ipseity." We determine *idem*-identity by identifying a thing's distinguishing attributes and differentiating it from other things (1992, 116). This kind of identification is a relatively simple predicative operation, which we apply to ourselves, to other persons, and to objects in much the same manner. Selfhood or ipseity, on the other hand, abides in "self-constancy," or the ability to recognize and keep faith with oneself even though one's attributes may change over time (123). I believe that Ricoeur's identity-selfhood distinction offers a needed perspectival balance to the identity-driven postcolonial theory that underpins much recent Euro-American work on Okinawa.

Like Hegel, Ricoeur also provides a crucial theoretical bridge between the spheres of aesthetics, ethics, and politics. Its anchorage is his theory of narrative. For Ricoeur, self-constancy is irrevocably connected to the capacity to narrate oneself, i.e., to recount

the sequence of one's actions and sufferings in the world (140; 146-147). On an aesthetic plane, the capacity to narrate opens our imaginations to the myriad of potential shapes that a human life can assume in time (2005a, 104). On an ethical plane, it synthesizes the capacities for ascription, by which we take ownership over our actions, and imputation, by which we acknowledge responsibility for our actions' consequences (105). Ricoeur regards the failure or unwillingness to recognize these capacities, as well as the denial of such recognition by others, as pathological; for him, as for Hegel, an ethical society is one in which "mutual recognition brings self-recognition to fruition" (2006, 22). Likewise, a just political order is one that "embodies the power that provides for the full expression of the multiplicity of human capabilities ... [and] gives stability and durability to them and what they achieve" (Dauenhauer 1998, 155).

Hegel's meditations on recognition and Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the capable human being are pertinent to the historical period in question, which saw a qualitative transformation of Japanese and Okinawan regimes of recognition and conceptions of human sociopolitical and moral capacity. As previously mentioned, in the early modern Ryūkyū Kingdom, as in Tokugawa Japan, both the division of labor and the "distribution of powers and competencies" were structured by a system of four hereditary estates: warrior/administrators, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants (*shi nō kō shō* 士農工商) (Ooms 1996, 168-169; Smits 1996, 461; cf. Weber 1968, 1255). This included "powers and competencies" that would fall under the modern categories of rights (such as the right to choose one's occupation, travel, sell land, move house, wear certain kinds of clothing, etc.) and obligations (such as the obligation to pay taxes, provide corvée labor, participate

in ceremonies, etc.). It also included more abstract expectations of speech and comportment, and even of thought and feeling, all of which contributed to what Weber calls “the inculcation of *ethos* based on status honor” (1105).

The four-occupation system provided state-oriented thinkers throughout early modern East Asia with a framework through which Confucian role ethics could be transposed onto large-scale social structures (cf. Ames 2011). During the Tokugawa period, Confucian thinkers such as the Ryūkyū Kingdom’s Sai On and mainland Japan’s Yamazaki Ansai legitimized the status system by evoking “symbolic categories such as nature, descent, purity, and pollution, which are presented as direct readings of reality but are in fact nothing but political values or social norms” (Ooms 1996, 310). Ideologues ascribed the ostensibly natural capacities for “moral conduct, self-discipline, and self-reliance” to the governing samurai estate, while denying them to the laboring estates (Hirano 2014, 34; cf. Najita and Scheiner 1978, 40). As Hirano observes, this “official rhetoric of commoners’ lack of moral competence and of their troubling propensity toward corporeal pleasure ... allowed [authorities] to claim the mandate to impose stringent regulations on the [low-status] body and to make it serve the social whole as a productive instrument” (35).

Over the course of the Tokugawa period, this mandate gradually lost its credibility. The transfer of wealth and influence from the ruling warrior class to the urban merchant class opened up an irreconcilable gap between elites’ claims to inborn authority and rightful monopoly over the institutions of governance and non-elites’ willingness to accept the legitimacy of such claims. By the nineteenth century, both

rulers and ruled had begun to perceive the ideological foundation of the “feudal” status system as decrepit (199).⁴ Natural disasters, economic crises, and the appearance of the Western imperial powers on the scene in the 1850s brought these already-brewing tensions to a head, driving a cadre of young, mostly mid-ranking samurai to instigate the Meiji Restoration in 1868. These “men of high purpose” proposed that strengthening Japan economically and militarily required both top-down and bottom-up action. On the one hand, they sought to centralize and streamline power under the aegis of the Imperial institution. On the other hand, they sought to shape a new kind of economically, politically, and militarily competent Imperial subject. This involved nothing less than the inculcation of a new universal ideal of personhood: competitive individualism. The Meiji elites “firmly believed that a competitive ethos of self-motivated individuals was the key to the Western nations’ dominance in wealth, military strength, and technology” (201). It stood to reason that in order to stand its ground in the new geopolitical order, Japan would have to foster such an ethos at home.

The leaders of the Restoration articulated their top-down and bottom-up aims in the Charter Oath of 1868, and immediately began working to implement them.⁵ In 1869, the state formally returned the registries of land and people to the Emperor (*hanseki hōkan* 版籍奉還). In 1871, it abolished the domains and established prefectures (*haihan chiken* 廃藩置県). This established the groundwork for a strong central state. The same year saw the abolition of the hereditary occupational system. In 1872, legislation was introduced that gave a precedent for the right to free labor, and in 1873, traditional records of land tenure were replaced with salable deeds of ownership (Frank 2005, 254).

In the same year, the tax burden was shifted from the corporate village body or *kyōdōtai* (共同体) to the individual (Vanoverbeke 2004, 36). These reforms broadened the tax base and promoted flexibility and competition in labor markets. Releasing peasants from their land and permitting freedom of movement also enabled the formation of the mobile relative surplus population (“industrial reserve army”) necessary for more intensive urbanization and industrialization (cf. Harvey 1978). Over the two decades following the Restoration, the Meiji state introduced universal education and conscription, worked to standardize the Japanese language, and invested heavily in the importation of technology and the development of a modern transportation and communications infrastructure. In doing so, it enabled steady growth in domestic and international commerce and established the foundations for industrial capitalist production.

These social policies also transformed the “infrapolitics” of recognition that circumscribed the contours of common peoples’ everyday lives (cf. Scott 1990). In the early modern Ryūkyū Kingdom and Tokugawa Japan, as in status-based societies in general, “what we would now call identity was largely fixed by one’s social position ... and whatever roles or activities attached to this position” (Taylor 1994, 31). Persons were seen to “[contribute] to the realization of societal goals” primarily through their fulfillment of status-based expectations, rather than in their raw individual capacity as potential value-producers as such (Honneth 1996, 123; Weber 1968, 938). The architects of the Meiji state realized that the valuation of status honor over productive capacity obstructed the maturation of a society-wide competitive ethos (Itō 1906, 41). At least in theory, the elimination of hereditary status groups shifted the principle subject of social

evaluation from the status group to the individual, and the primary criterion for esteem from heredity to achievement (42). We can understand this as a radical expansion of the horizons of potential self-recognition – an implicit invitation for all Japanese (or at least all male Japanese citizens) to reimagine themselves as legally equal “private persons,” i.e., rational egoists enabled to pursue their own self-interest in markets governed by transparent regulations rather than arbitrary traditional sanctions (Habermas 1991, 56). The implementation of the Meiji Civil Code in 1898 formalized and elaborated this economic and comparatively egalitarian recognitional infrastructure, establishing “a system of norms ... [that secured] a private sphere in the strict sense, a sphere in which private people pursued their affairs with one another free from impositions by estate and state, at least in tendency” (75).

Meiji elites correctly predicted that the elimination of traditional barriers to social mobility would help “unleash energies that could propel the country toward economic and military might” (Hirano 2014, 201). This being said, many were also wary of the potentially disintegrative effects of competitive individualism on traditional institutions and industries (Sugiyama 1968, 326-333). Much as European conservatives had done earlier in the nineteenth century, the Meiji oligarchs sought a counterbalance in communitarian ideologies of statehood and nationhood. Hegel’s *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* exemplifies the perceived need to circumscribe the newly expanded horizon of rational egotistic self-recognition by reconstructing the “laws and customs” (*Sitten*) that govern social recognition (1991, 436). Hegel acknowledges the previously unequalled power of free markets to incentivize production and generate novel solutions

to human needs, but warns against the “mechanistic” reduction of society to a web of contracts between atomized, self-interested individuals (xxv; cf. Smith 1986). For Hegel, “ethical life” (*Sittlichkeit*) can only flourish within an organic community imbued with a positive essence that transcends the sum of its constituent parts. This unifying principle is manifest in the idea of the sovereign State: “the *idealism* which constitutes sovereignty is the same determination as that according to which the so-called parts of an animal organism are not parts, but members or organic moments” (315).

Hegel’s portrayal of the sovereign State as an immanent ideal points toward a particularly controversial aspect of his theory of recognition: his assertion that properly political relations of mutual recognition do not arise directly and multilaterally between autonomous subjects, but rather through subjects’ shared, unilateral self-recognition as heteronomous instances of the universal State. As Honneth observes, this idea comes to the fore in Hegel’s distinction between the subject as a bearer of property rights and the subject as a politically engaged citizen:

In the first role, one has ‘the individual as one’s end’ and follows one’s private interests within the legally regulated framework of market exchange. In the second, by contrast, one has ‘the universal as such as one’s end’, and participates actively in the concerns of political will-formation. Whereas Hegel deduces the status of the *bourgeois* (the purposively rational subject capable of forming contracts) directly from intersubjective relations of legal recognition, he sees the status of citizen as defined solely in relation to the superordinate universal of the

State ... Ethical life has become, in short, a form of monologically self-developing Spirit (1996, 61).

In Hegel's defense, when he writes of "ethical life" or *Sittlichkeit* he is not doing so in a transcendental sense of the word (i.e., as the "moral self-legislation" of the autonomous subject) (Wood 1990, 31; cf. Kant 1914, 381-382). Rather, Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* refers to the worldly "customary morality" actually prevalent in a community (1991, 404; this stands him in contrast to Kant, who writes disparagingly of "manners [*Sitten*] without virtue [and] politeness without goodwill" [1914, 55]). Nevertheless, to Honneth, Hegel's monistic logic blocks him from realizing the political promise of his theory of mutual recognition (1996, 61-63).

During Hegel's time, however, it was precisely this monistic logic that served the expeditious function of buttressing constitutional monarchism against its liberal critics (1991, 308). In theory at least, the monarch, as an exemplary public person, differs from private persons insofar as his will is "self-originating" without being empirically self-interested (317). The institution of monarchy thus hedges the atomizing effects of market-driven civil society by embodying the superordinate agency of the State, itself a self-willed sublation of the hopelessly abstract *volonté générale*: "[If a nation/people] is envisaged as an internally developed and truly organic totality, its sovereignty will consist in the personality of the whole, which will in turn consist in the reality appropriate to its concept, i.e. the person of the monarch" (318-319). Post-Hegelian scholars such as Lorenz von Stein and Hermann Roesler, who closely advised the architects of the Meiji Japanese state, developed this theory into a range of pragmatic defenses of the social

utility of the monarch as a formally disinterested balancing mechanism capable of mediating factional conflicts – in particular, class conflicts, which Roesler predicted would intensify alongside the rise of liberalism and industrial capitalism (Pittau 1965, 282; Siemes 1968, 33; 48-50).

The Meiji Constitution, promulgated in 1889 and put into force in 1890, erects the framework for a unique type of state and society, inspired in equal parts by post-Hegelian constitutional monarchism, Confucian and Neo-Confucian role ethics, and nativist myth (Itō 1906, 6). On the one hand, it acknowledges universal basic civil rights and limited political rights, particularly those deemed necessary for economic growth (i.e., it guarantees “the legal status of the person ... corresponding to the fundamental parity among owners of commodities in the market” [Habermas 1991, 75]). On the other hand, it rejects the liberal notion that “laws are contracts between the governing and the governed, and that in their enactment, the Sovereign and the people have equal share” (10; cf. Hane 1969). Rather, it locates sovereignty solely within the perennial mystic body of the Emperor, who “holds in His hands ... all the ramifying threads of the political life of the country, just as the brain, in the human body, is the primitive source of all mental activity manifested through the four limbs and the different parts of the body” (7-8; cf. Siemes 1968, 41). Both this monist conception of sovereignty and its vitalist rhetorical trappings are strongly reminiscent of Hegel and Roesler.⁶

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Meiji Japan was built on borrowed ideas. One key differentiating concept is *kokutai* (国体), a classical Chinese-derived character compound that literally means “state body,” and has been translated in

a prewar Japanese context as “national polity,” “body politic,” or “national essence” (among other variants). The *kokutai* concept emerged in its modern sense in the work of Aizawa Seishisai (1781-1863), a scholar engaged by the Mito branch of the Tokugawa clan to contribute to the massive, multigenerational project of compiling a comprehensive “Great History of Japan” (*Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史). Perhaps inspired by his engagement with the textual traces of archaic Japanese civilization, Aizawa proposes in his *New Theses* (*Shinron* 新論) that the Japanese *kokutai* is itself a kind of immanent divine entity manifest in the Imperial personage. The Imperial personage in turn is a manifestation of a perennial succession literally descended from the deity Amaterasu-ōmikami. Aizawa goes on to argue that “the Way that Amaterasu used in antiquity to administer the realm, to achieve spiritual unity among the people, and to endear them inseparably to their rulers, can [still] be used today” (Wakabayashi 1986, 171).

In the wake of the Meiji Restoration, various factions repurposed Aizawa’s *kokutai* concept to fit into their own ideological frameworks (Gluck 1985, 15). Progressives such as Fukuzawa Yukichi portrayed *kokutai* in revisionist terms as a historically formed, malleable political ethos (much as Hegel had described *Volksgeist*) (144; cf. Avineri 1962, 474). More conservative nationalists such as Yamaji Aizan and Shiga Shigetaka, on the other hand, portrayed *kokutai* as a unitary and immutable national essence, inexorably linked to the perennial Imperial institution and the concept of national purity (*kokusui* 国粹) (112). By the late 1880s, the latter interpretation of *kokutai* had become dominant.⁷ This is evident in the government’s official commentary on the Meiji Constitution, which identifies its sovereign principle in assertively nativist

terms as “the splendor of the Sacred Throne transmitted through an unbroken line of one and the same dynasty,” and cites an array of ancient sources – ranging from the Taihō Code and the *Kojiki* to poetry by Ama-no-Inukai-no-Sukune-Okamaro – as legitimizing precedents (Itō 1906, 2-5; 38; cf. Cranston 1993, 377).

The *kokutai* concept also takes center stage in key subsequent official documents such as the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education, which established the basic guidelines for “moral education” throughout Japan and its colonies during the prewar period. The ultimate aim of moral education was *kōminka* (皇民化), “making Imperial subjects” who were “willing without hesitation to identify their destinies with that of the country” (Hirano 2014, 200). To this end, the Rescript exalts the Confucian values of loyalty (*chū* 忠) and filial piety (*kō* 孝) as “the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire (*kokutai no seika*) ... infallible for all ages and true in all places” (Gluck 1985, 121). Inoue Tetsujirō’s semi-official commentary on the Rescript leans even further to the right, identifying Japan as a “family-state” (*kazoku-kokka* 家族国家) and arguing that filial piety and loyalty to the Emperor-as-patriarch are identical (Davis 1976, 21; Nolte and Onishi 1983, 285). In 1903, the Ministry of Education introduced textbooks upholding the family-state concept (Jansen 2000, 492). Imperial rescripts issued during the Taishō and Shōwa periods followed suit, upping the emotional voltage of state-subject relations by stressing that “personal feeling between you [subjects] and Us [the Emperor] is the same as that between father and son; therefore there is no other national polity that can be compared to Ours” (Morioka 1977, 187). We can understand this kind of rhetoric as an attempt to use sentiment to directly interface the state with the intimate sphere,

effectively cutting civil society out of the loop. As in authoritarian societies in general, “assessing appropriate sentiments and ... fashioning techniques of affective control” was not an afterthought, but rather, a core aim of the prewar Japanese state’s project of making Imperial subjects (Stoler 2008, 5).

In Habermasian fashion, the legal insulation of the private sphere and its subsequent collision with state regulatory mechanisms such as compulsory moral education prompted an expansion and metamorphosis (if not structural transformation) of the public sphere, which functioned as a space of mediation between groups of private persons and the state. As Hirano and others have observed, a vibrant public sphere had already taken shape in Japanese cities during the Tokugawa period. The Meiji Restoration brought freedom of movement and association, improved infrastructure, relatively relaxed censorship policies, and linguistic standardization, all of which contributed to an expansion and enrichment of this endogenous public sphere. The *Mainichi Shimbun* was founded (as the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*) in 1872, the *Yomiuri* in 1874, and the *Asahi* in 1879; by 1889, over 645 periodicals were in print (Garon 2003, 46). The same period witnessed the expansion of civic institutions such as libraries and universities, as well as of private associations such as discussion societies, professional groups, chambers of commerce, and agricultural societies (49-50). Meanwhile, education continued to improve; by 1905, school attendance rates had reached around 95 percent (48). While in 1899 literacy rates still varied widely from region to region, by 1909 rates had leveled out at around 90 percent nearly nationwide (Rubinger 2000, 184). Mass

literacy enabled a large number of Japanese outside the metropolitan elite to consume media and participate in public discourse.

This metamorphosis of the private and public spheres finally returns us to the topics of aesthetics and performance. As I have argued, the Meiji period witnessed a qualitative transformation of the recognitional infrastructure of Japanese society. We can imagine this infrastructure as consisting of a vertical plane of personal merit determined by achievement in the private sphere, crossed by a horizontal plane of sociopolitical solidarity inculcated through common participation in the public sphere on the one hand, and quasi-familial identification with the Emperor-as-*kokutai* on the other. The vertical plane is characterized by the centrifugal forces of capitalism and competitive individualism, as exemplified by the concept of “rising up in the world” or *risshin shusse* (立身出世) (cf. Maeda 1977). The horizontal plane is characterized by the centripetal forces of legalism, as exemplified by the Constitution, and communitarianism, as exemplified by the Rescript on Education (cf. Inoue 1912, 212-213; cited in Morioka 1977, 192). Various sectors of civil society trafficked between these planes in variegated and often contesting ways. The result was an amplification and diversification of public cultural production, particularly in literature and the arts (Gluck 1985, 17-18).

Later in this dissertation, I will go into detail on the fact that the Meiji state’s social reforms did not always bear out as advertised or intended. In many cases, reforms had little impact on common peoples’ everyday lives; in others, they had a negative impact. This was particularly true in Okinawa, where numerous factors worked to frustrate and pervert the development process. Nevertheless, it remains significant that

under the new regime, even a child of former outcastes was hypothetically capable of “rising up in the world” (*risshin shusse*) and winning personal esteem and public honor by succeeding in business, the civil service, or the military. It was equally significant that elites and non-elites were impelled to imagine themselves as members of a spiritually consubstantial community bound by a single “civil morality” (Gluck 1985, 102). A number of recent studies of late Tokugawa and early Meiji popular culture have suggested that this clearing of previously foreclosed horizons of human capacity had a tremendous impact on mainland Japanese and Okinawan popular cultural production (cf. Zwicker 2006; Ito 2008; Poulton 2010; Takiguchi 2011; Bhowmik 2012; Hirano 2014).

A more challenging case to argue is that popular culture had a proportionate reciprocal impact upon the public sphere, and through it, the sociopolitical framework as a whole. Anthony Giddens lays a foundation for this case, suggesting that “any and every change in a social system logically implicates the totality and thus implies structural modification, however minor or trivial this may be” (1979, 114). Richard Sennett concurs, asserting that public culture “affected the new forces of secularism and capitalism as much as they were at work on it” (1977, 19). Sennett goes on to argue “[that] in a society with a strong public life there should be an affinity between the domains of stage and street” (37). This is because both drama and modern mass society present us with a strangeness inherently disruptive to pre-given standards of recognition: in both domains, “the problem is one of audience – specifically, how to arouse belief in one’s appearance among a milieu of strangers” (38). The theater, both as a literal place of encounter and a metaphorical space of creation, gives shape to a material and imagined

“public geography” that conditions us “to believe in the reality both of unknown people and of imaginary characters as in a single realm” (40). Giddens and Sennett’s arguments interface well with Ricouer’s realization that artistic mimesis is in and of itself productive and Rancière’s conception of artistic practice as a staging of dissensus.

Over the course of the following chapters, I will develop the argument that commercial drama is a particularly effective catalyst for dissensus and imaginative remapping because commercial performers are incentivized to eschew pregiven aesthetic criteria and continually adapt their practice to the shifting tastes of “the masses,” which are never entirely predictable. Drama in its commodity form thus generates new narrative possibilities in the same way evolution generates new species – through trial and error. Because mimesis discredits the claim that the extant world is the only possible world, even narratives that do not challenge the established social order on a surface level still bear transformative potential on a deep structural level. In Brecht’s words, such narratives remind us how “people’s activity must simultaneously be so and be capable of being different” (1964, 71).

Dissertation structure and chapter summaries

This dissertation is for the most part arranged in chronological order. Chapter One reviews the pertinent Japanese and Euro-American scholarly literature and further develops the project’s theoretical and methodological framework. Chapter Two deals with pre-commercial (folk and classical) performance aesthetics, Confucian role ethics, and state ideology in the Ryūkyū Kingdom during the long early modern period (1619–

1879). Chapter Three covers the institutional and stylistic evolution of commercial performing arts between Japan's annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom and the First Sino-Japanese War (1879–1895). Chapter Four addresses the maturation of commercial theater as a distinct economic sector during the late Meiji period (1895–1912). Chapter Five synthesizes the foregoing topics by cross-reading elite discourses on popular customs and manners, social reform, and popular performing arts over the course of the Meiji and Taishō periods. Finally, Chapter Six explores the thematic and structural configuration of major works of commercial musical theater during the Taishō period, and situates these works within their intellectual historical context (1912–1926).

In Chapter One, I will establish the historical, historiographical, and theoretical background necessary to carry out this project. I will argue that Okinawan commercial theater took shape in the context of combined and uneven development, which is “the fusion of dissimilar social structures (or modes of production) within a single formation” (Allinson and Anievas 2010, 473). As a result of ambivalent development policies, prewar Okinawa Prefecture took shape as a domestic periphery dependent on sugar monoculture. Internally as well as in relation to the mainland, Okinawa came to exemplify prewar Japan's “dual economy,” combining capitalist practices in a comparatively vibrant metropolis with an agricultural periphery in which “feudal remnants” such as debt bondage remained widespread. This set the conditions for the construction of “the Okinawan” in Japanese discourse as an underdeveloped anachronism, undeserving of equal political, social, or cultural recognition. The historiography of Okinawa has been dominated on the one hand by its image as

underdeveloped and therefore sociopolitically immature, and on the other hand by reactions against this image and its concrete repercussions. The first half of Chapter One is dedicated largely to tracing this conflict of representations through prewar mainland Japanese and Okinawan discourse, followed by postwar American, postwar Japanese, and contemporary Japanese and Western discourses.

The second half of Chapter One is dedicated to developing an interpretive framework suited to the study of prewar Okinawan commercial performing arts. I will begin by pointing out trends in Japanese-language and English-language studies of Okinawan performing arts. Much Japanese research is oriented toward cultural preservation, while much Western research is oriented toward the theorization of cultural identity. After critiquing the latter research model, I will introduce two normative modes of interpreting ostensibly apolitical mass arts: a “bourgeois moralist” mode and a Marxian (or “social scientific”) mode. The former, exemplified in the West by I.A. Richards and in Japan by Shimamura Hōgetsu, advocates the utilization of art as a form of aesthetic conciliation and moral education. The latter, exemplified in the West by György Lukács and in Japan by Tosaka Jun, condemns aesthetic conciliation as a form of mass deception. I will argue that while “social scientific” ideology critique is crucial to the sociological study of art and literature, it fails to address their distinguishing aesthetic appeal. Tosaka Jun takes up this problem in his 1936 deconstruction of “popular customs and manners” or *fūzoku* (風俗) (cf. Hirano 2014). Anticipating trends in contemporary scholarship, Tosaka points toward a rapprochement between Marxian critical theory and the humanist tradition of hermeneutics. Drawing on Tosaka as well as Ricoeur and

Rancière, I will argue that Okinawan performing arts are best viewed through the lens of a critical hermeneutics that is attentive to both the socioeconomic conditions of artistic production and the aesthetic configuration of particular works.

In Chapter Two, I will shift focus to the performing arts themselves. We can trace the stylistic and thematic roots of Okinawan commercial performing arts to early modern folk arts and *kumiodori*, the courtly dance-drama of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. I will situate these traditions in their social and intellectual historical contexts. As previously mentioned, in the Ryūkyū Kingdom, as in Tokugawa Japan, the “distribution of powers and competencies” was structured by a hereditary vocational status system, intersected by a conception of gender as vocation (cf. Weber 1968; Sekiguchi 2011). Both elite and folk performing arts functioned primarily to impart sensory form to this reigning social order. They did so on an ideational level by “encouraging good and chastising evil” (*kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡), and on a corporeal level by training performers how to speak and comport themselves in a manner befitting status-contingent role expectations (Makishi 2002, 82-83).⁸ This is particularly clear in the case of *kumiodori*, which was created and performed by and for male aristocrats, and consciously regarded as a “national drama” (*kokugeki* 国劇) (Iha 1974, 153). By performing *kumiodori* and other courtly arts, young male aristocrats quite literally embodied a particular moral grammar, thus reproducing and imparting material reality to the normative distribution of powers and competencies.

This being said, the best *kumiodori* do not simply rehash the Confucian doxa promoted by court ideologues. The second half of Chapter Two will concentrate on two

famous plays that demonstrate this: Tamagusuku Chōkun's *Shūshin kane'iri* (Possessed by Love, Thwarted by the Bell) and Heshikiya Chōbin's *Temizu no en* (The Bond of Water in Hands). While written from very different ideological positions, both plays work on the level of poetic configuration to deconstruct specific doctrines, namely the binary opposition between “masculine rationality” (*otoko no ronri* 男の論理) and “the [feminine] sympathetic affections in nature” (*shizen no nasake* 自然の情け) (cf. Sueyoshi 1974; Yonaha 2012).

In Chapter Three, I will shift focus to this dissertation's primary topic of post-annexation commercial theater. I will begin by explicating two historical processes that helped bring the nineteenth century Ryūkyū Kingdom to the verge of socioeconomic collapse: the decay of rural corporate village and the disenfranchisement of the lower warrior class. Interestingly, these processes are woven into the thematic fabric of perhaps the most well known nineteenth century *kumiodori*, entitled *Hanauri no en* (The Fate of the Flower-seller), which I will analyze. I will then explore how these processes established the conditions of possibility for the growth of commercial theater in the prefectural capital of Naha. As previously mentioned, on a formal level, annexation brought Okinawans under the rule of Japanese law. However, the need to placate the former Ryūkyūan ruling class constrained Japanese administrators' ability to enact substantive social reforms. As a result, rural impoverishment continued unabated, resulting in a steady stream of migrant workers to Naha. During the 1880s, former courtly performers, who had been stripped of their stipends by the new Japanese administration, set up roughshod cabarets in which they could perform for these new

migrants for a minimal fee. By the 1890s, enterprising performers and managers had begun to establish permanent theater venues and develop new performance styles in response to their primarily working-class audiences' tastes. This included narrative dance, farce, and short musical dramas, all of which I will situate historically and describe structurally and stylistically. I will conclude the chapter with an analysis of one of the earliest extant tragic musical dramas, *Uyanma* (The Kept Woman, approx. 1890), which casts harsh light on the contradiction between Okinawan commoners' formal liberation through annexation and the continuing reality of status and gender-based exploitation under the Preservation of Old Customs policy.

In Chapter Four, I will continue to explore the changing social conditions that enabled Okinawan commercial theater to emerge as a distinct economic sector and partition of the public sphere. Japan's 1895 victory in the First Sino-Japanese War alleviated the domestic and international pressures that had necessitated the Preservation of Old Customs policy. Between 1896 and the early 1900s, the Meiji government instituted widespread reforms designed to increase Okinawa's material productivity and strengthen its political and cultural bonds with the mainland. As in other rural regions of Japan, however, the state's development agenda yielded mixed results. Naha, the prefecture's commercial hub, grew rapidly, gradually accruing many of the material cultural trappings of modernity. Commercial performing arts companies did excellent business in this environment. In the countryside, on the other hand, early modern social problems such as underproduction, over-taxation, debt, and land foreclosure continued unabated. Drawing primarily on actor memoirs and newspaper articles and

advertisements, I will trace the development of the Naha theater scene as a space of public practice in which Okinawans of various regional and status backgrounds created a shared world of communicable experiences and expectations. This scene was remarkably diverse: on any given evening in 1910, for example, one could see classical *kumiodori*, nostalgic musical melodrama, and Loie Fuller-esque “electric dances” on the same stage. After analyzing the theater sector’s unique institutional culture and exploring a number of new performance styles, I will focus in on the tremendously popular genre of long-form tragic musical drama, exemplified by Ganeko Yaei’s *Tomari Aka* (*Aka of Tomari*, 1911). Drawing on prewar Japanese social theorist Tosaka Jun and Okinawan intellectuals such as Ōta Chōfu and Iha Fuyū, I will argue that we can read the unique stylistic profile of late Meiji period Okinawan commercial theater as a symptom of the contradictions inherent in prewar Japan’s dual economy.⁹

In Chapter Five, I will bring together the various paths of inquiry opened in the previous chapters by stepping back and exploring Okinawan elites’ own ambivalent reactions to the development of commercial theater. Here, Tosaka Jun’s analysis of *fūzoku*, or popular customs and manners, will come back into play. As previously suggested, the objective of social policy in prewar Japan was to balance the centrifugal force of competitive individualism, as exemplified by the ideal of “rising up in the world,” with the centripetal force of communitarian nationalism, as exemplified by the ideals of “national morality” and “making Imperial subjects.” To this end, Japanese elites advocated a number of loosely linked *fūzoku kairyō undō*, which can be translated as “lifestyle reform movements” or “efforts to reform popular customs and culture” (among

other alternatives) (cf. Gluck 1985; Christy 1993; Hirano 2014). The aim of such efforts was to eradicate customs and manners that hindered the projects of capitalist and nationalist interpellation, and promote customs and manners that meshed with those projects. In both mainland Japan and Okinawa, *fūzoku kairyō* efforts interlocked with discourses on the social value of popular theater and the possibility of “theater reform” (*engeki kairyō* 演劇改良). After tracing the development of lifestyle reform and theater reform movements in Okinawa, I will argue that these movements closely track the consolidation of national, ethnic, and class consciousness in the prefecture over the course of the Meiji and Taishō periods.

In Chapter Six, I will turn from a historical materialist to a critical hermeneutic mode of critique. I will begin by outlining the major events of the Taishō period, which started on an optimistic note with calls for Okinawan self-governance, but which was marred by consistent quasi-colonial discrimination and economic fragility. During the first half of 1920, global sugar prices rose and the Japanese state extended voting rights to Okinawans, offering a glimpse of new economic and political horizons. In August, however, sugar prices crashed, sending the prefectural economy into a decade-long recession. The boom and bust character of the Taishō period had a profound effect on Okinawan intellectuals, in particular Iha Fuyū, who developed an increasingly pessimistic vision of Okinawan history as a history of consecutive tragedies.

As previously stressed, relatively few works of Okinawan commercial theater explicitly represent these political and economic events. I will suggest, however, that the dominant ethos of Okinawan commercial theater during the Taishō period developed

along the same downward vector as Iha's historical and historiographical writings, and that these vectors converge in a distinctly melodramatic sense of historical consciousness. This is readily visible in two of the most popular works of prewar musical drama, Iraha Inkichi's *Okuyama no botan* (A Peony of the Deep Mountains, 1914) and Majikina Yūkō's *Iejima Handō-gwa* (Iejima Romance, 1924). Both works center on low-status female protagonists who exchange vows of love with high-status men who go on to reject them. In *Okuyama no botan*, written during a time of relative optimism, the heroine Chirā sacrifices herself entirely for her illegitimate son's worldly success, eventually committing suicide to ensure that his heritage is never made public. In *Iejima Handō-gwa*, written in the midst of economic crisis, the heroine Handō-gwa flouts social convention and follows her adulterous lover to his home island, only to be viciously rebuked by him, his family, and his community. Like Chirā, Handō-gwa commits suicide; however, when her former lover's father refuses to light incense in her memory, her vengeful spirit returns to exact karmic retribution. Following Tomiyama Ichirō's analysis of Iha Fuyū, I will suggest that these musical dramas evoke the "premonition of doing violence" latent in personal and political relationships alike, particularly in colonial contexts such as prewar Okinawa (1998, 166). In both plays, the breaking of a vow sets off a chain of events that culminates in fatal violence: in *Okuyama no botan*, the heroine sublimates this violence through self-sacrifice, while in *Iejima Handō-gwa*, she channels it into righteous vengeance.

Chapter 1: History, historiography, and theory

Okinawa and the historiography of development in Japan

In order to approach the question of Okinawan identity historically, we must situate it within the broader question of the development of the modern Japanese nation-state. This requires a brief critique of the concepts of development and modernization. Since European early modernity, we have tended to think of social development as unilinear, teleological progress through successive stages of social organization toward a penultimate “modern” stage. We see prototypes of this “*meta-récit* of modernity” in the work of Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, both of whom suggest that all societies pass through four consecutive homogenous stages (“hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce”) (Apel 1998; 161; Meek 1976, 9-10). Hegel offers a more mature schema in his *Philosophy of History*, describing world political history as a progression through four consecutive forms of state organization (“Oriental,” Greek, Roman, and modern European) (2001, 358). Stage theories of history such as these underpinned a number of trends in nineteenth-century Euro-American social science, including classical political economy, classical Marxism, and sociobiological and cultural evolutionism. While the notion of discrete civilizational stages has since fallen out of fashion, unilinear models of development continue to shape mainstream discourse on the subjects of modernization and modernity (Harootunian 2010, 371).

As Eric Wolf observes, thinking of human history in unilinear terms introduces a pervasive moralistic bias by which sociocultural difference is re-coded as civilizational

inadequacy and temporal backwardness (1997, 5). Johannes Fabian identifies this bias as “allochronism,” or “the denial of coevalness” (2002, 32). The allochronic bias identifies deviations from ostensibly “modern” norms as vestiges of prior stages of development. In the allochronic imagination, then, human difference is experienced as the coexistence of multiple temporalities. Fabian’s critique of allochronism has proven influential in academia, and has interfaced productively with both postcolonial cultural theory and various strains of radical political economy (world-systems theory, etc.). While these perspectives are often represented as conflicting, they share the realization that unilinear models of development are prescriptive rather than descriptive (Ahmad 1987, 12; Dirlik 1994, 334). On a local level, allochronic rhetoric suppresses non-normative histories and denies coeval presence and historical agency to the subaltern (Spivak 1988; Chakrabarty 2000). On a global level, it occludes the fact that subalternity is itself a structural effect of the uneven and combined development of the capitalist world economy (to pirate contemporary tech slang, it’s not a bug – it’s a feature) (cf. Frank 1966; Harvey 1975; Chase-Dunn 1981; Van der Linden 2007; etc.). This legitimizes extant global divisions of labor, while at the same time facetiously promising to “[offer] societies not yet in the (capitalist) present the prospect of catching up without incurring the dislocations of a wrenching, revolutionary transformation” (Harootunian 2010, 22). As we shall see, allochronic rhetoric served all of these functions in prewar Okinawa.

Of course, development ideologies also serve the crucial social function of articulating “an imagined future toward which institutions and individuals strive” (Edelman and Haugerud 2008, 86; cf. Mannheim 1954). In a sense, the case of Japanese

modernization exemplifies the utopian aspect of development ideology. As described in the Introduction, the architects of the Meiji Japanese state quite consciously set forth an “imagined future” of Japan as a modern constitutional monarchy with formidable military and industrial capacities and a strong sense of national identity, and then implemented a wide range of policies designed to realize this vision. These modernization efforts enabled the Empire of Japan to not only survive the dual threats of endogenous socioeconomic crisis and Western imperialism, but also successfully establish itself as an imperial power. Dramatic geopolitical coups such as the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars led many Western commentators of the time to identify Japan as an exemplary “late modernizer” (cf. Veblen 1915).

This being said, on a local level, Meiji development policy bore out complex and often troubling results, eventually leading to a “schism between small-scale production in traditional (agricultural, handicrafts, and consumer) sectors of the economy and large-scale, capital-intensive industries ... based on heavy concentrations of financial capital encouraged by the state” (Hoston 1984, 48). The ambivalent effects of the 1873 Land Tax Reform Law (*chiso kaisei hō* 地租改正法) demonstrate this (Vanoverbeke 2004, 36). On a formal level, this law emancipated peasants from serfdom. Its on-the-ground effects, however, were mixed. Requiring tax payment in cash rather than kind made landowners dependent upon the rice market, which fluctuated frequently; a dip in rice prices could easily leave small producers unable to meet their tax burden (37). The late Meiji policy of fiat deflation exacerbated this risk, leading to frequent debt and foreclosure (Rath 2007, 484). Tenant farmers, who paid exorbitant rents in rice under

threat of eviction, were largely excluded from the market. As tenancy increased and market-driven incentive decreased, agricultural production hovered around zero growth (Hoston 1986, 9). By the end of Taishō period, the agricultural sector had clearly reached a “deadlock” (*yukizumari* 行き詰まり) (45). Tellingly, over the same period, production across nonagricultural sectors nearly doubled (Ohkawa and Rosovsky 1974, 284).

The prewar Japanese economy, then, epitomized the Marxian concept of uneven and combined development, which entails “the fusion of dissimilar social structures (or modes of production) within a single formation” (Allinson and Anievas 2010, 473). Prewar Japanese intellectuals – historical materialists in particular – were acutely aware of the tensions inherent in Japan’s “dual economy” (Hoston 1984, 48). Thinkers such as Yamada Moritarō, Noro Eitarō, and Hirano Yoshitarō were quick to point out that the everyday experience of many Meiji period smallholders and tenant farmers differed little from that of peasants under a coercive-agrarian mode of production. The Meiji Civil Code of 1898, for example, offered tenants few protections against expropriation of rice yields or eviction; indeed, in some ways it privileged landlords even more heavily than Tokugawa period customary law (Vanoverbeke 2004, 44-46). Moreover, the Meiji state furnished landlords with an improved police apparatus capable of better enforcing their dictates and suppressing dissent. Because tenant farmers were subject to significant extra-economic coercion rather than market forces alone, it is impossible to view them in strictly capitalistic terms as free laborers (Hoston 1986, 240). The Japanese Communist Party denounced these conditions as “‘Asiatically backward’ and ‘semi-feudal’” (172). To JCP-affiliated intellectuals, the persistence of such “feudal survivals” within an

otherwise industrial capitalist economy constituted one of the fundamental contradictions of prewar Japanese modernity (211).

The case of Okinawa Prefecture epitomizes this contradiction. After annexing the Ryūkyū Kingdom in 1879, the Meiji state quickly monopolized power in the prefectural capital of Naha. It established centralized institutions of governance, modernized the infrastructure, encouraged commercial and industrial development, and established mainland Japanese-style schools geared to increase fluency in standard Japanese and inculcate the ethnic-national “civil morality” outlined in decrees such as the Rescript on Education. Outside Naha, however, the state took a reticent and haphazard stance toward development. Under the so-called “Preservation of Old Customs” (*kyūkan onzon* 旧慣温存) policy, it prolonged the existence of various practices and institutions inherited from the former Ryūkyū Kingdom, most notably aspects of the status and tax systems. This exacerbated the already significant gap in material culture between Okinawa Prefecture and the rest of Japan. Largely as a result, throughout the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa periods, agriculture accounted for 70-75 percent of the Okinawan economy, as compared to around 50 percent in mainland Japan. If we exclude the Naha area, agriculture’s share of the Okinawan economy leaps to 90 percent (Aniya 1977, 153).

It is possible to understand the “Preservation of Old Customs” system as a mode of indirect colonial domination in which the mainland-Japanese-appointed prefectural administration delegated proxy authority to extant post-feudal elites, who in return kept surplus sugar production flowing upward. After winning the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, the Japanese state felt confident to disenfranchise these proxies and take a

more hands-on approach to governance. Rather than implementing the prefectural governance system in place throughout mainland Japan, it implemented a so-called “Special Prefectural Governance System” or *tokubetsu fukensei* (特別府県制). While the *tokubetsu fukensei* system was less arbitrary and draconian than the patchwork of vestigial extractive structures that held sway under the Preservation of Old Customs policy, it was still exclusionary and exploitative. Central authority was concentrated in the hands of the governor and high-ranking bureaucrats, all of which were appointed. Due to a mixture of cronyism and prejudice, it was notoriously difficult for native Okinawans to receive appointments in the upper echelons of government, education, agricultural management, law enforcement, or other bureaucratic departments. In 1909, a prefectural assembly was finally instated, but it lacked any substantive legislative authority (Kinjō et al. 1991, 197). National Diet representation and limited male suffrage were finally extended to Okinawa Island in 1912 and to the Miyako and Yaeyama island groups in 1920. This marked a formal normalization of governance in Okinawa.

Despite the Japanese state’s gradual acknowledgment of Okinawans as rights-bearing Imperial citizens, it is possible to argue that throughout the prewar period Okinawa was treated more as a colony than as an integral part of the national polity. Even after the extension of suffrage to Okinawans, mainland Japanese continued to dominate the prefectural administration. Much of the prefecture’s wealth lay in the hands of mainland Japanese merchants; anti-Okinawan discrimination in education and the private sector were rampant; and indigenous languages and customs were generally regarded with disdain. The central government’s approach to modernization in Okinawa

remained half-hearted; local administrators and private parties made some attempts at economic diversification, but for the most part, those in power seemed content to let Okinawa remain a sugar-producing domestic periphery. Moreover, in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, central planners shifted their attentions to the Taiwanese sugar industry, more or less leaving Okinawans to fend for themselves. The average size of peasant holdings in Okinawa during the Meiji and Taishō periods was 60% that of holdings in mainland Japan; nearly half of all independent farmers could be classified as “extremely small producers” (*kashōnō* 過小農) (Aniya 1977, 154-155).¹⁰ Despite Okinawa’s relative poverty, the central government consistently levied disproportionately high taxes on the prefecture. This exacerbated pressure on small producers, driving many into debt, foreclosure, and tenancy. As if this were not enough, Japanese administrators tended to pressure Okinawan farmers to cultivate sugar for sale rather than subsistence crops, and to use their cash income to buy mainland Japanese rice (Kinjō et al. 1991, 200). As a result, despite its agricultural economy, Okinawa was not food self-sufficient. All in all, these “discriminatory policies” (*sabetsu seisaku* 差別政策) delayed Okinawa’s integration into the national polity for over 40 years after annexation, and irrevocably stunted its economic development. This had damaging short-term and devastating long-term effects (Kinjō and Nishizato 1972, 95).

The emergence of “the Okinawan” in prewar discourse

These discriminatory policies established the conditions for the emergence of “the Okinawan” into the modern Japanese historical imagination as a discrete category of

social being. Since the Tokugawa period, the dominant model for conceiving the relationship between the Ryūkyūs and Japan had been Shō Shōken and Arai Hakuseki's "theory of shared Ryūkyūan and Japanese ancestry" (*Nichi-Ryū dōso-ron* 日琉同祖論).¹¹ Due to lack of contact, however, the Ryūkyūs did not take up much space in the early modern Japanese worldview. Japanese administrators and journalists who visited the newly-annexed islands for the first time during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often taken aback by its material poverty and cultural "backwardness" in comparison with even the most remote areas of mainland Japan (Ōta 1996, 267). In keeping with Euro-American historiographical trends at the time, they tended to portray Okinawan difference in allochronic terms as the paradoxically coeval coexistence of different stages in the historic process.

It is important to remember here that during the Meiji and Taishō periods, the concept of Japanese identity was itself still emergent and heavily contested. Two concepts crucial to the analysis of modern Japanese identity politics are *minzoku* (民族), the ethnic group or ethnic nation, and *minzokusei* (民族性), ethnic or national character. Weber defines ethnic groups as social units bound by a shared belief in common descent, which tend toward "monopolistic closure" (1968, 388-389). The belief that the Japanese constitute a unique and closed filial community arose quite early in the Tokugawa period (Yoshino 1992, 46). Like the concept of "national polity" or *kokutai*, we can trace this belief in part to the "Great History of Japan" project, which inspired fresh interest in the ancient chronicles (*Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀) and poetic anthologies (*Man'yōshū* 万葉集 and *Kokin Wakashū* 古今和歌集). A vibrant nativist intellectual

movement (“National Learning” or *kokugaku* 国学) took shape around the idea that such ancient texts preserve traces of the “archaic simplicity and purity of people in Japan prior to the importation of foreign learning” (47; cf. Burns 2003). During the Meiji period, endogenous nativism hybridized with fashionable Western social scientific discourses on ethnicity and race, imbuing the old concept of the community of common descent with a new sheen of sociobiological legitimacy (Doak 1996, 78-81). As it had in Europe, the idea of a shared ethnic national identity and character – or *minzokusei* – quickly gained ideological traction as a means of inculcating social solidarity across both vestigial status boundaries and emergent class boundaries.

Following the 1871 “abolition of domains and establishment of prefectures” or *haihan chiken* in mainland Japan, the questions arose of whether the Ryūkyū Kingdom fell within the boundaries of the Japanese national polity and of whether Ryūkyūans belonged to the Japanese national community. Stressing the Kingdom’s condition of “dual subordination” to Satsuma and China, the Ministry of the Left argued that it should not be subject to *haihan chiken* because “the Ryūkyū state and the Ryūkyū people are not the same as the people in the inside [*naichi* 内地]” (Matsumura 2007, 69). Deputy Finance Minister Inoue Kaoru counter-argued that since language and customs in the Ryūkyūs were more similar to those in Japan than in China, the Ryūkyūan king should be invited (or coerced) to “return the land and people to the Emperor” (*hanseki hōkan*) as the daimyōs had done (72). The latter argument won out, and in 1872 Ryūkyū was unilaterally informed that it had been incorporated into the Japanese polity and ordered to sever tribute relations with China. Despite protests by the Ryūkyūan government, China,

and some Western nations, Japan stuck to its claim that the archipelago was an integral part of Japan and that Ryūkyūans were natural Japanese subjects, finally annexing the kingdom under threat of military force in 1879.

Substantiating these claims required overcoming a range of obstacles. One obstacle was the Ryūkyūan ruling class' determined resistance to incorporation into the Japanese polity. Another was the raw fact of Ryūkyūan historical, cultural, linguistic, and physiological difference, which by nineteenth century social scientific standards would seem to qualify them as a distinct ethnic group (*minzoku*) or even race (*jinshu* 人種) (Uyehara 1933, 397). This problematized the Japanese state's claim that annexation constituted an act of "ethnic unification" (*minzoku tōitsu* 民族統一). Japanese social scientists charged with studying the Empire's newest subjects addressed the issue of Ryūkyūan difference by invoking updated versions of the early modern "theory of shared Ryūkyūan and Japanese ancestry." Ethnologists such as Tashiro Antei and Torii Ryūzō, for example, who were familiar with Euro-American academic trends such as sociocultural evolutionism, drew selectively on archaeological and linguistic evidence in order to identify the inhabitants of the former Ryūkyū Kingdom as a historically stagnant 'branch family' of the Japanese *minzoku* (cf. Tomiyama 1995). This not only legitimized the "ethnic unification" narrative, but also helped justify the imposition of repressive institutions on the ostensibly underdeveloped and therefore politically immature Okinawans. Notably, it also presaged state-affiliated ethnologists' later use of unilinear models of development to justify the project of building a multiethnic empire in Asia (Yonetani 2000; Doak 2001).

Around the same time ethnologists such as Tashiro Antei and Torii Ryūzō were laying foundations for the state’s official discourse on Okinawan identity, the Japanese public sphere began generating parallel unofficial discourses. During the Tokugawa period, the popularization of domestic tourism and the mass printing of travelogues and travel poetry had helped expand many Japanese commoners’ spatial consciousness beyond their own regions. Satsuma’s strict travel restrictions excluded Ryūkyū from this discursive expansion.¹² This changed early in the Meiji period. In 1871, a ship from the Miyako island group ran aground in Taiwan and a number of Ryūkyūans were killed in altercations with indigenous Taiwanese. The Japanese government seized upon this as an opportunity to demand Chinese recognition of its sovereignty over the Ryūkyūs, and requested reparations for the deaths of “Japanese subjects.” China refused. In 1874, Japan took initiative and sent an expeditionary force to Taiwan, killing a number of indigenous Taiwanese and driving China to pay an indemnity. This was a major public relations victory for the state, and superb fodder for the mushrooming press. Subsequent negotiations between Japan, China, and Ryūkyūan elites over the islands’ political status also made mainland Japanese newspapers. These incidents effectively tore Ryūkyū from the periphery of Japanese public consciousness and thrust it into the center of vigorous popular debates on the issues of sovereignty and foreign policy.

Journalistic treatment of Ryūkyū was initially quite favorable. Some newspapers expressed sympathy for the threatened Ryūkyūan aristocrats, even publishing their ““petitions to save the Ryūkyūan state” (*Ryūkyū kyū-koku seigansho* 琉球救国請願書) (Nishizato 2011, 15-16). Others, including the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement

organ *Kinji hyōron*, urged the Meiji government to respect the autonomy of the Ryūkyūan people (Matsumura 2007, 87). The state reacted by pushing a counter-narrative that stressed the Ryūkyū Kingdom's poverty and backwardness, blamed them on "oppressive" feudal institutions, and claimed a duty to modernize the islands (90). This "white man's burden"-esque narrative stoked the public's pride in their newly empowered state and fed its regional power aspirations. It also played into a widespread pop-ethnological fascination with premodern customs and manners or *fūzoku*. After annexation, mainland writers quickly learned to trade upon this fascination by proliferating newspaper articles, travelogues, and tracts on the subject of "Ryūkyūan *fūzoku*." Journalists and politicians proliferated exploitative accounts of tattooed, barefoot "aboriginals" (*dojin* 土人) living in thatched huts and eking out a living on pork and yams proliferated (Ōta 1995, 264-279). As a result, mainland readers quickly came to associate Okinawa with bizarre archaisms such as pigsty toilets, hand tattoos, incomprehensible dialects, shamanism, walking barefoot, erotically-charged spring festivals, the Tsuji red light district, and inverted gender roles ("lazy men and working women," *danitsu jorō* 男逸女勞) (269). Sympathy and solidarity gave way to prurient interest and paternalistic condescension.

Over the course of the Meiji period, the convergence of discriminatory official and unofficial discourses shaped an archetypically imperialist conception of "the Ryūkyūan" or "the Okinawan" as almost Japanese, "*but not quite*" (cf. Bhabha 1984, 126). Representing Okinawans as historically immature Japanese helped authorize the state's discriminatory policies, which were intertwined with the project of sociocultural

assimilation or *dōka* (同化), literally “making the same.” This project can be understood as an extension of the more general project of *kōminka* or “making imperial subjects,” and was euphemized as a noble effort to bring Okinawans up-to-date by making them into modern Japanese. On the level of everyday experience, *dōka* constituted a near-ubiquitous but malleable pressure, which varied in immediacy and intensity depending on time and context. At certain points, the Japanese administration took active assimilationist measures such as outlawing the practice of shamanism and forcing children who spoke Ryūkyūan languages at school to wear “dialect tags” (comparable to a dunce cap). At other times, assimilationism could appear as more of a diffuse constellation of expectations than a set of discrete directives. For an Okinawan, proving oneself as an Imperial Japanese subject meant suppressing any practices that might identify one as a “Ryūkyū-jin” (pejoratively pronounced *rikijin* by mainlanders). Japanese educator Nitta Yoshitaka exemplifies this imperative in the title of an 1896-97 series of articles: “Okinawa is Okinawa, not Ryūkyū” (*Okinawa ha Okinawa nari Ryūkyū ni arazu* 沖縄は沖縄なり琉球にあらず) (Meyer 2007, 157).

Okinawan political and business elites were sharply aware that their perceived difference from mainland Japanese was a political, social, and economic liability. This imbued them with a pervasive consciousness of discrimination (Ōta 1996, 96). Under the slogan of *fūzoku kairyō* – which can be translated as “reforming popular customs” – conservative nationalist elites encouraged the populace to learn the mainland Japanese language, refrain from speaking Ryūkyūan languages in public, and eliminate “backward” *fūzoku* such as walking barefoot, playing *sanshin* and singing, shamanism,

tattooing, wearing traditional clothing and hairstyles, consulting shamans and traditional healers, and performing certain traditional religious rites (Tomiyama 1995, 5). Ōta Chōfu, founder of the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* newspaper and perhaps the most influential Okinawan public figure at the time, went so far as to encourage Okinawans to “sneeze like the Japanese” (semi-humorously referred to as “Ōta’s sneeze theory” or *kushame-ron* クシャメ論) (Hiyane 1996, 116).

This being said, Okinawan elites were not afraid to defend the intrinsic value of some aspects of early modern Ryūkyūan culture, in particular its classical literature and arts, which they believed could help enrich and invigorate the Japanese national spirit (here Hiyane uses an appropriate idiom for invigoration: “drumming and dancing” [*kobu sakkō* 鼓舞作興]) (112). Ōta Chōfu’s *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (henceforth *RS*) frequently ran articles defending Okinawa’s “unique history as an independent [political and cultural] entity” (115).¹³ The *Shimpō* was also quick to criticize mainland journalists who misrepresented Okinawa, and occasionally even took a critical stance toward the state.¹⁴ Ōta, for example, impugned the *tokubetsu fukensei* system as an “illegal and immoral ... policy that bamboozles the people” (cited in Hiyane 1996, 112). In 1932, he went so far as to indict Japanese policy toward Okinawa as “colonial,” a bold move given the political climate at the time (15).¹⁵ As Hiyane puts it, “while Ōta strongly advocated ‘modernization’ on an external or formal level, he never intended to abandon or sell short Okinawa’s spiritual uniqueness and historical culture” (1996, 117). Significantly, Ōta also rejected Torii Ryūzō’s cultural evolutionist theory of Okinawan difference, arguing that if the Ryūkyū Kingdom had participated in the Meiji Restoration alongside the

Japanese domains and been subject to the same structural reforms on the same timeline, social conditions in the archipelago would not differ from the mainland (Ōta 1996, 378). Ōta and the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* faction of Okinawan elites hoped that by mastering mainland Japanese cultural codes and proving their civilizational maturity, Okinawans could make up for this missed opportunity and convince the state to “elevate [Okinawa] to its proper position within the Empire” (*OKINAWA MAINICHI SHIMBUN* May 15, 1910).

Japanese nativist ethnography and young Okinawan elites’ integrationist aspirations both influenced the development of Okinawan studies as a self-aware academic field. Driven by a desire to better understand their own roots, Japanese-educated Okinawan scholars such as Iha Fuyū, Higashionna Kanjun, Shimabukuro Zenpatsu, Majikina Anko, and Nakahara Zenchū took on the tremendous labor of collecting and analyzing chronicles, family records, oral histories, collections of songs and plays, and a vast range of other materials. The most influential figure in prewar Okinawan studies was Iha Fuyū, a Tokyo Imperial University-trained linguist who acted as the founding director of the Okinawa Prefectural Library. Iha once served as an interpreter for the Japanese ethnographer Torii Ryūzō and admired Torii’s work, but felt a need to reinvestigate the “theory of shared Ryūkyūan and Japanese ancestry” from an Okinawan perspective. As previously mentioned, Torii’s version of this theory holds that at some point in the distant past, the Ryūkyūan branch family split off and stagnated, while the Japanese root family continued to develop. In his 1911 breakthrough work *Old Ryūkyū* (*Ko-Ryūkyū* 古琉球), Iha counter-proposes that both the Ryūkyūans and the Yamato Japanese developed semi-autonomously as branch families of a single proto-

Japonic root group (1974a). This anti-primordialist counter-narrative is significant because it repudiates the Yamato Japanese claim to a special normative authority based upon historical priority and authenticity. Iha's scholarship appealed to mainland Japanese romantic culturalists such as Yanagita Kunio, Orikuchi Shinobu, and Yanagi Sōetsu, who crafted compelling images of Okinawa as a "living museum of Japan's past" (Siddle 1998, 127). Ironically, while these scholars gave Iha due credit and assisted him in propagating his ideas in Japan, the popularity of their work often displaced Iha's own more politically challenging writing.

Postwar reconstructions of Okinawan identity

Needless to say, the Battle of Okinawa (April 1–June 22, 1945) profoundly disrupted both Okinawan history and the historiographical project (the destruction of primary records alone was a major setback; if Iha and his contemporaries had not compiled such a vast amount of information, our understanding of life in early modern Ryūkyū and prewar Okinawa would be shallow indeed). In the aftermath of the Battle, American administrators stepped in to displace prewar Japanese historiographies with narratives that could support their own policy goals. Unfortunately, their representations of Okinawa and Okinawans are often as one-sided as prewar Japanese accounts. Here, Johannes Fabian's critique of allochronism intersects productively with Edward Said's critique of Western Orientalism. As Fabian reminds us, the allochronic imagination in its Orientalist mode conflates sociocultural, geographic, and historical difference: "that which is past is remote, and which is remote is past" (2002, 127).

The core American narrative of Okinawan identity had its genesis in reports prepared by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the Navy Civil Affairs Team (NCAT [“Operation Iceberg”]) immediately prior to the invasion. In 1944, the OSS published *The Okinawans: A Japanese Minority Group* and *The Okinawans: Their Distinguishing Characteristics*, based largely on fieldwork conducted among Okinawan diasporic communities. These tracts describe the Ryūkyū Kingdom as a “nation,” citing “customs, arts, crafts, and ancient drama” as manifestations of Okinawan cultural difference from Japan and portraying the islands’ annexation as a resented act of Japanese colonial aggression (Obermiller 2006, 64). Its conclusion – that Okinawa bore a “dubious and equivocal relationship to Japan and one which [sic] was never unanimously accepted by the southern islanders” – had obvious propagandistic significance (69). In the same year, the NCAT, led by Yale anthropologist George P. Murdock, produced the *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands OPNAV 13-31*. Based mostly on Japanese academic sources, the *Handbook* regurgitates Japanese colonial ethnographic portrayals of Okinawans as historically backward, describing them as “an inferior people that required structured and disciplined American guidance” (79-85). Though different in tone, both the OSS report and the NCAT *Handbook* concluded that “the Ryūkyūs were not a natural extension of Japan,” an assertion which became the “mantra” of U.S. occupational government ideology (91-92).

The most significant scholarly work to take up the OSS thesis of Ryūkyūan ethnic nationhood is former NCAT team member George H. Kerr’s *Okinawa: History of an Island People* (1958). While Kerr’s study remains a landmark, his tendency to

emphasize Okinawan/Japanese difference provoked a backlash in the Japanese-language academy.¹⁶ Understandably, the vector of Japanese-language Okinawan studies during the 1950s-60s was heavily swayed by debates over sovereignty: should the islands remain under American rule, attempt to transition toward independent statehood, or reunify with Japan? Immediately after the war, anti-Japanese sentiment was strong among many Okinawans, for whom memories of forced labor, coerced group suicides, and other atrocities were fresh. Several major political parties advocated Ryūkyūan ethnic nationalism and supported political independence.¹⁷ This changed as the reality of American colonial violence began to eclipse the memory of Japanese colonial violence. The suspicion set in that “independence” would lead to the establishment of a puppet regime, and would entail a perpetual American military presence (Tanji 2003, 104). As Okinawa’s leftist and centrist parties gravitated toward reunification with Japan as the most feasible path toward release from military occupation, the concept of common Okinawan-Japanese ethnic identity made a strong resurgence (106). This allowed for the rhetoric of ethnic self-determination, recently deployed by the Americans to legitimize Ryūkyūan nationalism, to be re-appropriated as an argument for reunification with Japan (107). “Reversion nationalism” eventually eclipsed Ryūkyūan nationalism as the dominant voicing of Okinawan identity politics (136).

These political developments sparked an intense scholarly debate over the old question of whether the annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom should be interpreted as an act of colonial aggression or a merely an expedient means of “ethnic unification” (*minzoku tōitsu* 民族統一). While couched in historiographical terms, this debate was

symptomatic of a more general ideological conflict between liberal-democratic and historical materialist theories of modernization and development in the Japanese academy during the 1950s-60s. The leading advocate of the liberal-democratic modernization theory perspective was Shimomura Fujio (下村富士) of Tokyo University, who edited the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Hayashi and Konoe cabinets. Shimomura argues that at the time of the Ryūkyū Kingdom's annexation, it had already been a *de facto* fiefdom of the Satsuma domain for centuries; that the Ryūkyūan king held no real sovereignty; and that the kingdom's relationship with China was "formal and ceremonial" rather than political (Kinjō 1972, 500). He goes on to accurately point out that the European powers had set a normative precedent for "coerced unification" during the movements for the unification of Italy and Germany; therefore, Japan's annexation of Ryūkyū was legitimate by the international legal standards at the time. Finally, he makes the controversial argument that annexation was undertaken "in accordance with the flow of history toward modernization and progress," that it served to "realize the long-term desires of Ryūkyūans," and that it should be praised as an act of resistance against the Western powers (501).¹⁸

The historical materialist counterargument was exemplified by historian Inoue Kiyoshi (井上清) of Kyoto University. Inoue argues that the Ryūkyū Kingdom's long history of political and economic autonomy justifies its classification as an independent political entity. He goes on to argue that the Meiji government's Ryūkyū disposition was a violation of Ryūkyūan sovereignty, and that the annexation would not have been accepted as legitimate if not for the threat of overwhelming military force. He concludes

that “if asked whether annexation comprised an ethnic unification or an invasion, we must say at least that it was an ‘invasion-esque’ unification (侵略的統一)” (1955, 30). Inoue further argues that while the eventual merger of Japan and Ryūkyū was historically probable, it was by no means inevitable, and should have been allowed to occur gradually and “naturally” as a result of deepening economic ties and bilateral political action (Kinjō 1972, 500). As it stands, Inoue concludes, “the Meiji government’s annexation of Ryūkyū must be called an invasion.” Inoue restates this argument in his widely-read *History of Early Modern Japan (Nihon kindai-shi 日本近代史)* (1962).

Inoue’s argument has proven influential among leftist Okinawan intellectuals, and has catalyzed compelling debates on the legality of the *Ryūkyū shobun* and the question of whether or not prewar Japanese rule in Okinawa can be classified as “domestic colonialism.” In the years since Okinawa’s 1972 reversion to Japanese authority, it is fair to say that the “domestic colonialism” paradigm, which is essentially rooted in Inoue’s critique, has become mainstream. Historians such as Araki Moriaki, Nishizato Kikō, Yamazaki Kaoru, Ōta Masahide, and Hiyane Teruo have developed this paradigm in unique and insightful directions. Araki, for example, describes the period of “domestic colonialism” as a preparatory stage in the planned integration of Okinawa into the nation’s economic core, while Nishizato argues that it foreshadowed Okinawa’s planned permanent marginalization as an economic periphery (Tomiyama 1995, 6).

This is not to say that Okinawan scholars have accepted Inoue’s critique and the “domestic colonialism” paradigm without qualification. A number of historians have questioned whether the Shimomura/Inoue debate adequately represents the complexity of

on-the-ground social relations in the late Ryūkyū Kingdom and post-annexation Okinawa. Writing in 1972, Kinjō Seitoku observes that both Shimomura and Inoue base their arguments on strong empirical foundations, and assesses the impasse between them as purely a clash of ideologies (503). In another article published the same year, Kinjō and Nishizato, critique both Inoue and Shimomura for premising their arguments on three problematic assumptions: that inter-ethnic conflicts are more significant than intra-ethnic conflicts, that ethnicity is an *a priori* category, and that the legitimacy of a political entity can be determined solely by the criteria of ethnic integration and ethnic self-determination (1972, 99). Contemporary scholars associated with the Okinawan Historical Research Society (including Kinjō and Nishizato) have helped offset these assumptions by contributing analyses of prewar Okinawan society from the viewpoints of formerly neglected social groups such as Yaeyama and Miyako islanders (Nishizato), migrant workers (Aniya), and labor activists (Taminato), among others.

This being said, because political tensions in Okinawa remain high, the topic of Okinawan/Japanese difference and the “domestic colonialism” paradigm frequently resurface in both scholarly and popular discourse. This is particularly evident in non-specialist literature by scholars such as Ōta, Hiyane, Nomura Kōya, and Takahashi Tetsuya. Noteworthy examples are Hiyane’s portrayal of Okinawa as an “internal colony” (1996), Nomura’s concept of “unconscious colonialism” (2002), and Takahashi’s description of postwar Japan as a “sacrifice system,” in which the benefits of modernization are concentrated in the metropolis while the costs are outsourced to peripheral regions (2012). Because the “domestic colonialism” paradigm interfaces well

with Western postcolonial theory, it has also acted as a key theoretical bridge between Japanese and non-Japanese scholars. Okinawan and Japanese scholars such as Kinjō and Nishizato, Yamazaki, and Tomiyama all draw upon first generation postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Michael Hechter, and Andre Gunder Frank.¹⁹ Western scholars of Okinawa such as Alan Christy, Richard Siddle, Julia Yonetani, and Miyume Tanji have all drawn upon these Okinawan and Japanese scholars in turn, contributing further insights from more recent postcolonial theorists (such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Tani Barlow) and poststructuralist scholars of Japan (such as Harry Harootunian, Kojin Karatani, and Naoki Sakai).

Method I: The normative Japanese research model

Richard Siddle observes that Western scholarly discourse on Okinawan cultural production still tends to crystallize around the “contrasting paradigms” (inherited from Inoue and Shimomura) of colonialism and modernization (1998, 117). Recent English-language studies of Okinawan performing arts confirm this observation (cf. Nelson 2008; Roberson 2009; Barske 2009; Bhowmik 2012). By contrast, Japanese language specialist literature on Okinawan performance arts is often less focused on the question of their political significance than on pragmatic issues such as preservation, cultural policy, and the consolidation of primary source materials. It is possible, then, to point out two distinct approaches to the study of prewar Okinawan performing arts. The Okinawan-Japanese research model prioritizes immediate, pragmatic concerns such as authentication and preservation, while the Euro-American research model prioritizes

interpretation and critique. The discrepancies between these research models testify to the ways in which different institutional norms and long-term interests can influence research design, critical analysis, and historical representation (cf. Gadamer 2004, 285).

The Okinawan-Japanese research model speaks directly to tradition-bearers' desire to canonize Okinawan performing arts as an article of intangible cultural heritage worthy of public esteem and investment.²⁰ In 1972, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology commemorated Okinawa's reversion to Japanese authority by nominating kumiodori and several other classical Ryūkyūan arts as an Important Intangible Cultural Properties. This helped secure recognition and funding for tradition-bearers and historians, who subsequently organized the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society (*Dentō kumiodori hozon-kai* 伝統組踊保存会). The Preservation Society has played an instrumental role in laying the institutional framework for a self-sustaining Okinawan traditional performing arts scene. Another crucial player is the Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts (*Okinawa kenritsu geijutsu daigaku*), which was founded in 1986 and offers comprehensive undergraduate and graduate-level courses of study in musical and dance performance, art history, performance studies, and ethnomusicology, among other areas.

The Preservation Society and Okinawa Geidai have played an instrumental role in rebuilding the war-ravaged Okinawan performing arts scene as a self-sustaining community. This community's most impressive accomplishment to date has been the planning, construction, and promotion of the National Theatre Okinawa (国立劇場おきなわ). The National Theatre was conceived in the mid-1990s, officially announced in

1998, and completed in 2004.²¹ Located in the Old Ryūkyūan capital of Urasoe, it is the premier venue for traditional performing arts in Okinawa, normally featuring several performances per week of Okinawan music, dance, theater, and storytelling, guest performances by mainland Japanese and other Asian traditional artists, and occasional lectures and conferences. Performances are often well attended, and when popular kumiodori or musical dramas are staged, tickets sell out quickly. Among the National Theatre's stated aims are "providing an opportunity where Okinawa's traditional performing arts can be widely appreciated by the general public," "nurturing successors as performers and musicians," "research and study, document gathering, performance record making and future development and public showings," and "exchange with the Asia-Pacific region" through symposiums and performance exchanges (<http://www.nt-okinawa.or.jp/en/index.html>). In the eight years since it opened, the National Theatre has succeeded admirably in furthering these goals, especially the cultivation of a new generation of performers.

The community of artists and scholars centered on the Preservation Society has also worked tirelessly to promote awareness of Okinawan traditional performing arts outside the prefecture. This has had tangible material consequences: in the 2008 fiscal year, for example, the National Theatre Okinawa and Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society spent 10.4 million yen on performer training and 32.7 million yen on promotional performances, about 85% of which was provided by the Japanese federal government (Okinawa-ken kyōikuchō bunkaka 2008, 14; cited in Gillan 2012). In 2010, with the support of the Ministry of Education, the Preservation Society nominated kumiodori for

inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, an achievement aimed to “allow groups of transmitters, the people of Okinawa, and each and every Japanese person to re-acknowledge the diversity of Japanese culture, and the human creativity from which this culture originates” (UNESCO 2010, 7). This has helped cement kumiodori’s status as a cultural resource deserving of public investment, thereby freeing it from dependence on the whims of the market. These pragmatic concerns have played a crucial role in shaping the dominant Japanese-language approach to performing arts research.

Unsurprisingly, the grander project of securing material support for the reconstruction of the Okinawan performing arts community has helped determine the course of Okinawan performing arts research. The need to prepare nominations that convincingly portray kumiodori and its affiliated arts as valuable parts of a broader Japanese (and global) cultural heritage has incentivized legitimizing projects focused on the consolidation and authentication of historical sources, the classification of styles and lineages of transmission, the comparative study of Okinawan and other East Asian performing arts, and the exploration of issues surrounding historically accurate performance (reconstructing period pronunciation, staging, props, costuming, instrumentation, etc.). In general, the Japanese-language literature on early modern and prewar Okinawan performing arts is strongly historicist if not positivist in method, driven by preservationist and pedagogical concerns, and inextricably interwoven with state cultural policy on the regional and national levels.²²

Method II: The normative Western research model

Western scholars of Okinawan cultural production, on the other hand, tend to focus less on practical matters such as preservation and more on the politics of Okinawan identity, in particular the concept of “colonial modernity” (Barlow 1977). This tendency is visible in recent work by James Roberson (music), Valerie Barske (dance), Davinder Bhowmik (literature), and Christopher Nelson (performing arts), all of whom seem less influenced by the specialist literature on Okinawan performing arts than by the more critical general historical work of scholars such as Inoue Kiyoshi, Ōta Masahide, and Hiyane Teruo. Roberson, for example, identifies Okinawan folk songs as “sites of memories of Okinawans’ unequal encounters with assimilation policies” which “reveal the conflicted position of Okinawans and necessitate readings that recognize not only Okinawans’ complicit participation in Japanese imperialism but also their implicit resistance to it” (2009, 691). Barske seeks to determine “how Okinawans employ performance and other bodily actions as historical strategy ... in the creation of a Pan-Okinawan sense of ethnic identity, constructed through and against trans-imperial contestations for power in Okinawa” (2009, 13). Bhowmik orients her study of prewar Okinawan literature toward “the question of subaltern identity and the theoretical bind Gayatri Spivak introduces when she questions whether subaltern speech is possible” (2012, 96). Interrogating various texts as to whether they “affirm Okinawa’s position within the [Imperial Japanese] nation or ... contest that same nation,” Bhowmik concludes that Okinawan fiction constitutes a “conspicuous body of social protest” (180).

While these scholars are all attentive to the particularities of the texts and practices they study, they also imply that these texts can be read as “local expressions of a metatext” of colonial domination and anticolonial resistance (Ahmad 1987, 23). Nelson’s study of Okinawan storytelling and *eisā* performance exemplifies both the strengths and the potential weaknesses of this approach. Nelson argues that by emphasizing the resourceful ways Okinawans have dealt with privation during and after the war, storytellers and performing artists Teruya Rinsuke and Fujiki Hayato “reclaim a powerful sense of [Okinawan] subjectivity” in the face of domination (2008, 23-24). Similarly, he situates *eisā* dance as a set of “memorative rituals” through which performers and audiences evoke “alternative images of the past,” augmenting their sense of empowered subjectivity with “the experience of a creative, dynamic samurai” (182). While acknowledging that such performances have nativist overtones, Nelson stresses that their final aim is “not to drag the indeterminate past into the present,” but rather, to separate performers and audiences from “the spatiotemporality of the nation and the demands of labor ... [by] linking the remembered and repeated forms of the past with an interruption of the present, the whole assemblage figuring the possibility of transformation toward the future” (18). By privileging local memories, these performances interrupt the Japanese state’s official narratives of war responsibility, which often imply that Okinawans and mainland Japanese suffered equally and that the mass death of Okinawan civilians can be construed as a self-determined sacrifice for the nation (*jiketsu* 自決). Nelson concludes that Okinawan storytelling, *eisā*, and other locally situated practices successfully recapture a sense of local agency by rejecting

mainland-centric ethnocentrism and interrupting the ahistorical nationalist narrative of shared victimhood (7-9).

Nelson's rejection of the myth of Japanese ethnic homogeneity conforms to the broader poststructuralist project of deconstructing essentialist models of individual and collective identity. In theory, this project should also entail a rejection of minoritarian essentialism – i.e., as Stuart Hall puts it in his discussion of black British cinema, “the strategy of a simple set of reversals, putting in the place of the bad old essential white [superordinate] subject, the new essentially good black [subordinate] subject” (1996, 444). In practice, however, postcolonial theory often slips into a romantic, quasi-essentialist “nostalgia for [the] lost origin” of subaltern identity (Spivak 1988, 287). For example, in his analysis of Okinawan poet Takara Ben's 1985 verse “Yādui,” Nelson depicts the early modern Ryūkyūan *yadui* or déclassé samurai village in an almost prelapsarian light:

Time passes in predictable cycles: crops planted and harvested, fishing boats launched, and festivals planned by the phases of the moon. Children are born, mature to adulthood, marry and give birth, die and join their ancestral spirits. The recognition of these cycles and the practices that produce and are reproduced by them anchor the community to the temporality of the Ryūkyū kingdom, and to that of China beyond [Mabuchi 1980, Ota 1987]. Those that live in the communities are creative, not only bringing forth a life from the soil and the sea, but also producing works of art – music, dance, and ceramics (131-132).

Nelson goes on to vividly depict an experiential rupture between the premodern Ryūkyūan village and the modern Japanese prefecture of Okinawa:

[Yādui] signify the decline of the Ryūkyūan monarchy, no longer able to support nobles with court stipends, and the fragmentation of the Ryūkyūan social order under the pressures of Japanese colonial intervention ... The evenness of Okinawan space is fragmented; the continuity of time is broken ... The Yādui is a stunning synecdoche for life in contemporary Okinawa – it is representative of the experiences of all Okinawans who were thrown from their native villages into the crumbling, postindustrial, relentlessly reconstructed world of modern Japan (132-136).

The implied historiographical narrative here is one in which the “organic spontaneity” of the precolonial ethnic community is disrupted through "technical manipulation" by colonial or neocolonial institutions (Cheah 2003, 226). This kind of critique rests upon the well-worn Romantic fiction that prior to colonization and/or modernization, subject and society were organically integrated, and that modernization somehow opened a rift between the two (Gadamer 2004, 276). *Eisā* and other traditional performing arts are portrayed as a means of suturing this rift. Performers bring “the world of the work into themselves ... [feeling] the authority of [ancestral] voices in their own song, the power of the dances in their own bodies”; this “renews the bond between the living, the ancestral spirits, and those yet to be born” (191). Performing *eisā* overcomes the alienation of the colonized, modernized subject and restores the organic ontological unity of the precolonial collective.

Nelson’s analysis of *eisā* links up with the recent trend of interpreting artistic performance in colonial and postcolonial locales as a kind of (conscious or subconscious)

political practice concerned with “recovering suppressed or lost histories, recognizing the authority in myths and other oral transmissions of the past, valorizing unofficial versions of history as well as official documents, and remapping imperial settlements of space and land” (Tompkins 2007, 71). This interpretive paradigm is well suited to many cases, including instances of *eisā* performance such as the one Nelson describes in his final chapter. However, this paradigm also risks recuperating the longstanding Western conception of aesthetic experience as a type of secular apotheosis that “promises to reunite those poles of subject and object, value and fact, reason and nature, which bourgeois social practice has riven apart” (Eagleton 1988, 332). This kind of romantic antimodernism abounds in Japanese history writing as a whole. Nelson’s portrayal of the early modern Ryūkyūan *yādui* resurrects the nostalgic image of the premodern Japanese village as “a ‘natural community’ typified by ‘village-level’ tribute extraction, ‘consensual’ decision making, and ‘autonomous’ self-governance” (Ooms 1996, 72). More specifically, it resembles Higa Shunchō’s depiction of the Ryūkyūan corporate village as a “peaceful microcosm” where “self-sufficiency, leisure, and pastoral calm reigned” (Kinjō and Nishizato 1972, 104).

Reviewing the local histories of early modern Ryūkyūan villages shows this depiction to be highly misleading. As in Tokugawa Japan, relations in many villages were neither peaceful nor determined through consensus. During the second half of the seventeenth century, for example, farmers on Tarama-jima resisted taxes for periods of months on end, eventually expelling exploitative local officials from the island (Kinjō and Nishizato 1972, 103). On several occasions during the eighteenth century, peasants

in Yonaguni and Hateruma-jima are reported to have committed mass suicide in protest of tax burdens that had driven them to the brink of starvation. In nineteenth century Miyako, peasants repeatedly petitioned against the onerous per-capita tax, sometimes clashing violently with local officials. Throughout the entire Ryūkyū Kingdom period and after annexation, indebted families regularly indentured their sons and daughters as manual laborers or prostitutes; infanticide was also not unheard of. Such incidents testify to vast inequities and perpetual struggles for empowerment (104-105). Nelson's unintentional suppression of this history of intraethnic conflict belies the romantic idealist ghost in the machine of "postcolonial reason" (Spivak 1999, 200).

Theory I: Aesthetic conciliation and sociologicistic positivism

The aim of the foregoing critique is not to dismiss postcolonial theory as irrelevant to the subject at hand, but rather, to demonstrate how prioritizing a pre-given metanarrative over local histories can lead to troubling misrepresentations and exclusions. This point is relevant because many of the most popular works of prewar Okinawan commercial theater do not cleanly fit within the postcolonial-theoretical metanarrative of "affirmation of and resistance to incorporation within Japanese nationhood" (Tanji 2012, 112). Of course, there are instances of works that explicitly treat topics such as colonialism, modernity, and the nation: in the wake of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, for example, theater advertisements bristled with nationalistic and imperialistic titles. The most well-known and enduring works, however, are comedies and romantic melodramas set in the indeterminate feudal past. In this, prewar Okinawan

commercial theater contrasts sharply with contemporaneous mainland Japanese commercial theater, which often dealt frankly with contemporary political issues (leading David Goodman to assert that politically committed theater has traditionally been “the status quo” in Japan [1971, 165]). It also contrasts with many of the better-known works of prewar Okinawan “pure literature,” which openly deal with themes of regional and national identity and colonial discrimination (Bhowmik 2012).

This contrast returns us to the theoretical question, raised in the Introduction, of how to interpret the “political being” of seemingly apolitical or even anti-political art (cf. Ueda 2005). One common approach is to interpret such art in functionalist terms as a form of aesthetic conciliation, intended to “[eliminate] as far as possible any subversive struggle between antagonistic impulses” (Eagleton 1981, 36-37). Around the same time Okinawan musical drama emerged as a genre, Japanese literati were exploring the potential social utility of theater as means of aesthetic conciliation. In a 1907 essay entitled “Second and Third Class Theater,” for example, Shimamura Hōgetsu (1871-1918), a critic affiliated with the prestigious *Waseda bungaku* literary journal, advocates for the creation of a middlebrow theater that could “console and entertain” the lower classes, while still furthering conservative didactic aims:

Since the overall purpose of art includes the consolation and entertainment of society’s “other half,” it is absolutely necessary to develop a gradation of types of art in response to the intellectual capacities of target audiences. Works of high literary value, for example, cannot provide the same type of spiritual palliation as stories based on transcriptions of folk tales. Moreover, the devotees of low-grade

literature are not merely an accident of this era, but rather, form a majority in society. Those who wish to make literature their spiritual vocation must not forget this reality ... Even if we cannot offer [the lower classes] the end of a thread that leads up the path to self-improvement, we should try at least to provide material that sustains their taste for things of the heart and spirit, in order to keep social conditions from degrading more than they have at present (*Waseda bungaku*, December 1907; cited in Kimura 2009, 39-40).

While Shimamura has not garnered the same kind of legacy as his contemporaries Tsubouchi Shōyō and Shimazaki Tōson, his ideas maintained currency throughout the late Meiji and Taishō periods, influencing younger critics such as Honma Hisao and inviting critique from Ōsugi Sakae (Kimura 2009, 44). Notably, the well respected Okinawan journalist and politician Nakayoshi Ryōkō promoted Shimamura's ideas on theater in a series of articles for the leading Okinawan newspaper *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (August 16, 1909). This kind of conceptual framework, then, was available in Okinawa during the period in question (Chapters Five and Six will revisit Shimamura Hōgetsu, the *Waseda bungaku* circle of critics, and Nakayoshi Ryōkō in greater detail).

Many works of popular Okinawan commercial theater have a strong conciliatory aspect. The wildly popular 1910 musical drama *Tomari Aka*, for example, is a melodramatic variation on the well-worn Japanese genre of double suicide plays (*shinjū-mono*), which typically exploit the opposition between emotion (*ninjō*) and obligation (*giri*) to tragic effect. In *Tomari Aka*, two young aristocrats named Aka and Umichiru secretly fall in love, but are separated by filial obligations, and both die of heartbreak.

Throughout the play, upper class and lower class characters interact harmoniously, with the latter serving in supporting roles and as comic relief.²³ Authority is depicted benignly: when the male protagonist Aka's father sends him to work on a distant island, he thinks he is doing so for Aka's own good. In the play's final scene, both fathers meet at the young lovers' grave and bless their "marriage through death," declaring their certainty that the young couple will "live together honorably as husband and wife in the next world, passing the days in peace on a bed of flowers" (Nakahodo 1994, 48). This dissolves the tension between *ninjō* and *giri*, symbolically reconciling the subject with the social order.

We cannot know whether the creators of *Tomari Aka* kept abreast of critics like Shimamura and Nakayoshi. Given its unprecedented long run, however, we can confidently state that the play serendipitously fulfilled the *Waseda bungaku* critics' ideal of providing "refreshment for [viewers'] exhausted bodies and spirits" (Kimura 2009, 42). It crucial to recall here that when *Tomari Aka* was performed in 1910, the target audience for commercial musical drama in Naha consisted largely of lower class female migrant laborers, alienated from their rural families, socially disdained, often subject to sexual harassment, and living in grinding poverty. The gap between the elegiac world of the work and audiences' lived experiences would have been vast. In Freudian terms, *Tomari Aka* combines a few simple psychological operations – displacement (the sole antagonist is fate), catharsis (tearful, empathic death), and wish fulfillment (parental blessing and happy reunion in the next world) – in order to temporarily salve its viewers'

abject misery. It thus arguably defers confrontation with the actual cause of this misery, which was, of course, structuralized inequity. This is clearly problematic.

Bearing the social conditions of its production in mind – devastating inequality under the twin afflictions of quasi-colonial domination and the dual economic structure – we could easily dismiss Okinawan commercial musical drama as a “retreat into a world of fiction where existing conditions are changed and overcome only in the realm of the imagination” (Marcuse 1978, 1). In order to pursue this course of analysis further, we must make a brief detour through political economy and the historical materialist roots of contemporary critical theory. For a given social order to remain viable, it must be capable of reproducing the regimes of property distribution and divisions of labor that structure and sustain production, i.e., the relations of production. In any given society, some of these relations will be straightforwardly antagonistic: in an ideal-typical feudal society, for example, the ruling class obtains the means to reproduce itself by expropriating surplus from direct producers. Other relations will be complex and contradictory: as feudalism developed in Japan, for example, it became increasingly difficult for the ruling class to sustain itself through expropriation alone; many samurai took out loans from merchants, thus becoming debtors to their own social subordinates. From the perspective of the dominant class, the primary social function of cultural production is to dissemble or euphemize such antagonisms and contradictions, thereby mitigating resistance to the reproduction of extant relations of production.

It is easy to see how conciliatory art and literature exemplify this function. Accordingly, from a historical materialist perspective, conciliatory art and literature are

generally condemned as “ideological” in either the strong sense of the word as intentional mass deception, or the weak sense of the word as products of false consciousness. Engels concisely describes the reciprocal relationship between ideology and false consciousness in an 1893 letter to Franz Mehring: “ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness” (cited in Merton 1973, 29). Interestingly, Hegel had already come to a similar realization, describing *Sittlichkeit* or “ethical life” as a mode of being in which “the *habit* of the ethical appears as *second nature* which takes the place of the original and purely natural will,” becoming a kind of “*customary will*” (1991, 194; 335). The difference, of course, is that Hegel considered this socially beneficial whereas Engels considered it socially harmful. While few contemporary scholars would endorse the classical false consciousness paradigm without qualification, it more or less maintains currency as a go-to means of rationalizing the apparent political “quiescence” of much non-elite cultural production (Scott 1990, 70). Influential later Marxist developments of the false consciousness paradigm include Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and Raymond Williams’ concept of embodied structures of feeling. Influential post-Marxist adaptations include Foucault’s work on discipline and Bourdieu’s analysis of habituated predispositions as a form of “embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history” (Bourdieu 1984, 56; cf. Martin, Gutman, and Hutton 1988).

György Lukács’ *Realism in the Balance* exemplifies the false consciousness paradigm as employed in aesthetic criticism.²⁴ Lukács distinguishes sharply between “openly anti-realist or pseudo-realist” literature, which seeks to “provide an apologia for,

and a defense of, the existing system,” and “true realist” literature, which seeks to “penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society” (29; 37). A work that fails to explicitly “relate [subjective] experiences to the hidden social forces that produce them” fails both politically and aesthetically (36-37). Brecht offers a comparably influential definition, arguing that “*Realist* means: laying bare society’s causal network / showing up the dominant viewpoint as the viewpoint of the dominators / writing from the standpoint of the class which has prepared the broadest solutions for the most pressing problems afflicting human society” (1977, 109). Lukács and Brecht would almost certainly have condemned bourgeois literary critics such as Shimamura Hōgetsu and Nakayoshi Ryōkō as “openly anti-realist,” and dismiss naïve works like *Tomari Aka* as “pseudo-realist” spectacles that reproduce the illusion of an autonomous intimate sphere of human emotions or *ninjō*, thereby dissembling the intimate sphere’s historical origin in shifting relations of production.

Lukács exemplifies the so-called “sociologistic positivist” strain of Marxist aesthetics, which interprets art and literature as epiphenomenal effects of the social conditions of their production and reception (i.e., society’s “material base”) (Eagleton 1981, 83). The sociologistic approach is theoretically and methodologically problematic for a number of reasons. For one, it tends to reduce the value of art to the truth-value of its representational content: as Brecht puts it, “[the sociologist’s] scale of judgment runs not from ‘good’ to ‘bad’ but from ‘correct’ to ‘false’” (1964, 21). In order to succeed by these criteria, a work of art should act as “a seismograph of society” (Bloch 1985, 243;

cited in Leppert 2005, 122). This reduction of art to reportage collapses the dimension of noncongruence with actuality that gives art its transformative potential. As Marcuse laments, this “has had devastating consequences for aesthetics ... a devaluation of the entire realm of subjectivity takes place, a devaluation not only of the subject as ego cogito ... but also of inwardness, emotions, and imagination” (1978, 3).

Perhaps more disturbingly, sociologicistic positivism transforms critical theory from an open-ended interpretive method into a purportedly authoritative science that claims to uncover “an internal bond between the object and a proper (theoretical or aesthetic) knowledge of it” (Eagleton 1981, 85; cf. Ricoeur 2007, 269). The idea of false consciousness in particular presumes an ability to look past “the naïve description of what men in fact thought, felt and wanted at any moment in history and from any given point in the class structure,” and “infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society,” i.e., “the thoughts and feelings appropriate to their objective situation” (Lukács 1967, 51). As Kofi Agawu observes, this arrogates tremendous representational authority for the theorist (2010, 327). This is particularly the case when postcolonialism hybridizes with psychoanalysis, which presumes to theorize the Other not as a social actor, but as a kind of transconscious effect of the negotiations between the socialized ego and the imputed “other within” in its various articulations as “‘pure’ desire,” the materiality of the body, revolutionary consciousness, etc. (Derrida 1994, 177; Spivak 1988, 272). Under the cover of respect for the “absolute other,” this stance risks turning cultural studies into a

kind of political inquisition that does epistemic violence to its object: “Acknowledging the otherness of the other ... [by] making him the object of objective knowledge, involves the fundamental suspension of his claim to truth” (Gadamer 2004, 303).

We can glimpse shades of the false consciousness paradigm in some Western scholarly work on Okinawan performing arts. Barske, for example, argues at one point that first-generation commercial performer Tokashiki Shuryō's work “helped to define a new era of performing arts through which Okinawans on stage and in the audience actively grappled with the pressures of colonial modernity” (2009, 223). On the one hand, the pressures of colonial modernity certainly helped shape Okinawan social experience as a whole, and left an imprint on all forms of cultural production. On the other hand, the Tokashiki brothers' own memoirs and recorded works do not explicitly take up the topic of colonial modernity (cf. Tokashiki Shuryō Kinenshi Henshū Inkai 2005). This is relevant because colonialism and modernization were certainly subjects of discourse in Okinawa at the time; we cannot simply discount the fact that the Tokashikis did not choose to focus on these subjects. When we write prewar performing arts into a postcolonial-theoretical metanarrative without giving historically specific qualifications, we risk slipping into a kind of subaltern-studies variation on the Lukácsian false consciousness paradigm, in which anticolonial consciousness takes the place of class consciousness as the “appropriate and rational reaction ‘imputed’ to a particular typical position in the process of production” (1967, 51). Eliding interpretation with imputation in this way threatens to displace what remain of performers' and audiences' own voices.

Theory II: From sociology to critical hermeneutics

In order to avoid these pitfalls, we must seek an alternate framework for interpreting and evaluating works of art that do not conform to any universalistic political metanarrative. Here, revisiting the intellectual milieu of prewar Japan can be of help. By the early Shōwa period, Japanese intellectuals had begun to join their Western contemporaries in applying social scientific methods to the study of art and literature (Harootunian 2011b). Kyoto School philosopher Tosaka Jun exemplifies this critical theoretical direction in prewar Japanese thought. In a collection of essays entitled *Ideology and Custom* (*Shisō to fūzoku* 思想と風俗), Tosaka sets forth a nuanced model of the relationship between political, economic, and cultural formations in prewar Japanese modernity. Its central theme is the aforementioned character compound *fūzoku* (風俗), which can be translated as popular culture, customs and manners, or lifestyle (etc.). Like the various forms of mainland Japanese cultural production that Tosaka critiques, Okinawan commercial theater took shape alongside new *fūzoku* in the crucible of an emergent “mass culture” (*taishū bunka* 大衆文化) (Tosaka 2001, 27). Tosaka’s inquiry into the complex relationship between social structure, *fūzoku*, and popular literature and art opens up new perspectives on the interpretation and political relevance of commercial theater and other mass arts.

Tosaka’s presentation of the term *fūzoku* is intentionally ambivalent. He compares *fūzoku* to Hegel’s *Sitten*, which he renders as “feelings and customs” (*ninjō fūzoku* 人情風俗) (42). For Hegel, *Sittlichkeit* or “ethical life in accordance with custom” refers “simultaneously to a system of social institutions ... and to the moral attitude of the

individual who identifies with and lives them” (1991, 404). For Tosaka, it is precisely this duality that makes concepts like *Sitten* and *fūzoku* compelling:

From the standpoint of social structural analysis, it is difficult to locate *fūzoku* within a conventional model of base and superstructure ... [On the one hand,] *fūzoku* as it appears in the form of patterns of labor practice is a kind of structural institution. In this view, it adjoins society’s material base. On the other hand, from the perspective of the consciousness of people born and educated within a given society, *fūzoku* also entails the feeling or apperception of being acculturated into its structural institutions. In this view, we must call it part of that society’s ideological superstructure (2001, 16-17).

One crucial insight here is that social structures are understood and experienced differently based on one’s perspective. From the theorist’s standpoint, matters of custom and style are “nothing more than immaterial phenomena abstracted from the [material] substance of society.” In the course of everyday life, however, we experience such phenomena as “preeminently concrete and embodied ... in the same way as someone in love perceives the physical body of their lover.” In a way, *fūzoku* is “abstract if we call it abstract, and concrete if we call it concrete” – it is catalytic and processual, a mobile point of transit at which ideation becomes material life and vice versa (26).

Tosaka goes on to observe that his contemporaries among the prewar Japanese intelligentsia tend to make a sharp distinction between “heavy *fūzoku*” (*jū-fūzoku* 重風俗) – political incidents and manifestos, religious belief systems, etc. – and “light *fūzoku*” (*kei-fūzoku* 軽風俗) – the practices and objects that fill common peoples’ everyday lives

(54-55). He criticizes the literary establishment for focusing too narrowly on works that thematize “heavy *fūzoku*,” reminding us that “the February 26 Incident and the Declaration of Martial Law are not the only kind of ‘current social affairs’ – the lyrics of popular songs and trends in women’s makeup count too” (53-54).²⁵ Indeed, on an everyday level, “light *fūzoku*” such as clothing, hairstyles, advertising jingles, and vocal accents play a more proximate and tangible role in shaping the texture of subjective experience and intersubjective relations. Such phenomena “have no exclusive connection to the economic, the political, or other discrete levels [analytic categories] of society’s material structure, but rather, disregard these distinctions and run through them all” (16). Tosaka argues that because of this, it is everyday or “light” *fūzoku* that provide the most insight into the cohesion of emergent sociopolitical formations such as “the masses” (*taishū* 大衆) and the “national polity” (*kokutai* 国体) (43). Accordingly, he encourages social scientists to pay particular attention to under-researched areas of everyday life, and prods literary critics to take account of “lowbrow” genres typically despised by the intelligentsia – for example, romance novels, the popular appeal of which lies precisely in their portrayal of the everyday world of *fūzoku* (28).

Tosaka’s conception of “light *fūzoku*” resonates with the recent turn in cultural theory toward embodied social practice and the concept of “the everyday” (Hirano 2014, 22-23; cf. Harootunian 2004). It is easy for theorists to neglect everyday life because we are not used to regarding it as an object of detached observation: as Dilthey observes, “the reality of lived experience is there for me because I have a reflexive awareness of it, because I possess it immediately as belonging to me in some sense” (1985, 223). We

internalize the practices of everyday life through a gradual, semi-conscious “process of training the senses” (Tosaka 2001, 29; cf. Chakrabarty 1998). Our initial approach to internalized customs and manners is not to take account of them through cognition, but simply to live through and within them as “social structures given the appearance of naturalness by history” (15). Tosaka’s phrasing here recalls Hegel’s description of *Sittlichkeit* or “ethical life in accordance with custom” as a mode of being in which “the *habit* of the ethical appears as *second nature* which takes the place of the original and purely natural will,” becoming a kind of “*customary will*” (1991, 194; 335). It also anticipates Bourdieu’s description of *habitus* as “a system of dispositions ... [that] designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body), and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*” (1984, 2).

Here, we should take care to distinguish the concept of habituated predisposition from the stronger concept of predetermination. Again anticipating Bourdieu, Tosaka suggests that neither social structures nor cultural formations strictly determine how we interpret our environing world or how we exercise our capacities for speech and action (1979, 289-290). Rather, they help shape our interests and guide our anticipation of probable outcomes of action, thus generating metrics of possibility, desirability, and reasonableness. This is what Bourdieu means when he argues that habituated dispositions circumscribe a “*sense of limits*, commonly called *the sense of reality*, i.e. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures” (1977, 164). This “sense of limits” is not static but contextually adaptive – while an agent cannot reshape her sense of limits at will, she can

catalyze its transformation by reimagining, changing, and re-evaluating her worldly situation. Habituated dispositions or *fūzoku* can thus be imagined as structuring a dynamic field of possibilities and probabilities, on which we play out “the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents' aspirations.”

Our habituation to *fūzoku* also imparts us with normative expectations by which we reflexively judge the people and things we encounter in the world. Tosaka classifies this evaluative faculty as “the concept of morality as determined by worldly common sense” (*seken no tsūzoku jōshiki ni yoru dōtoku gainen* 世間の通俗常識による道德概念) (2001, 29). Given Tosaka’s Neo-Kantian background, it is feasible to render “worldly common sense” here as *sensus communis aestheticus* or “taste.”²⁶ While Tosaka does not restate all of the intricacies of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, he does echo the crucial distinction between judgments of the understanding, which are determinant, and judgments of taste, which are reflective (2001, 21-22). Determinant judgments determine the attributes of sensory objects by subsuming them under general categories of the understanding; an example is the proposition “roses are red” (Kant 1914, 18). Reflective judgments, on the other hand, “refer the object immediately to [the subject’s] feelings of pleasure and pain;” an example is the proposition “I find this rose pleasing” (61). Determinant judgments are objective and universal, while reflective judgments are subjective and singular. This being said, some judgments of taste still seem to make a claim to universality in the form of exemplarity. Whereas the claim to objective validity lies in the deduction that any subject must agree with a given proposition, the claim to exemplary validity lies in the *feeling* that any subject *ought* to agree. Through a cognitive

misdirection that neither Kant nor Tosaka adequately explains, the subject takes account of this feeling “just as if it were a predicate bound up with the cognition of the Object” (33). Despite their subjectivity and singularity, then, judgments of taste can “claim universal assent (as if [they] were objective)” (95).

Here we should note that Tosaka’s “worldly common sense” bears less resemblance to Kant’s universalistic model of *sensus communis aestheticus* than to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s more contemporary social constructivist model. Kant describes the sense that guides judgments of taste as a special relation between universal mental faculties. Looking back to Giambattista Vico, Gadamer argues against Kant that this sense is not universal, but rather, is “acquired through living in [a particular] community and is determined by its structures and aims” (2004, 20; cf. Vico 1984). Nothing makes these models of taste incompatible: some criteria may well be *a priori* (as the relatively new field of neuroaesthetics seeks to demonstrate [cf. Skov and Vartanian 2009; Frigg and Hunter 2010; Wallmark 2014, 192-195]), while others take shape through the subject’s interaction with her environing world. The interplay between relatively inflexible inborn tastes and relatively malleable acquired tastes gives rise to a dynamic sense of “fore-understanding” or “anticipation of meaning,” which “proceeds from the commonality that binds us to [a particular cultural] tradition,” yet which is also “constantly being formed in our relation to tradition” (293).

The idea of *sensus communis* is useful to this project because it offers perspective on the complex relationship between sensation, judgment, and the nature of agency. We are used to thinking of sensation as passive and judgment as active. Reflective judgment,

however, affects us spontaneously, “as if it were a sensation, and precisely one of taste, the discriminatory, choosing sense” (Arendt 1989, 70-72). Gadamer calls this kind of non-deliberative discriminatory impulse *Vorurteil*, “pre-judgment” or “prejudice” (2004, 273). The feeling of naturalness and spontaneity that accompanies pre-judgment or prejudice imparts it with a unique regulatory power. It is our prejudices, for example, which allow us to predispose ourselves toward a stranger without deliberation, merely by looking at her clothing and hairstyle or hearing her accent (Tosaka 2001, 42-43; 45). Through a sort of cognitive misdirection that neither Kant nor Tosaka adequately explain, it is easy to misapprehend the spontaneity of taste as a “feeling of the purposiveness of the object in relation to the subject,” which gives rise to a sense of “being ‘at home’ [in the world]” (Kant 1914, xx; Tosaka 2001, 15). This seemingly autonomic sense of being “at home” contributes a kind of low-level but continuous force to the inertial tendency of any established order, which is to “produce the *naturalization of its own arbitrariness*” (Bourdieu 1977, 164; 1984, 56-62).

Tosaka’s quasi-Kantian idea of taste is central to his analysis of the appeal or *omoshirosa* (面白さ) of prewar Japanese popular culture. He argues that the *omoshirosa* of genres such as romance novels, light music, and commercial film does not attach to their ideational content or their form as such, but to a their quality of “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*” – i.e., their fit with habituated taste (2001, 28). An artwork’s “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*” does not depend so much upon whether it accurately represents “actual reality” (*genjitsu riaritī* 現実リアリティー) (22). Rather, it springs from the way it discloses an affecting “artistic reality” (*geijutsuteki riaritī* 芸術的リアリティー)

(37). In Kantian terms, this “special truthfulness” falls under the category of exemplary rather than objective validity. Another point of comparison is Heideggerean *aletheia* – truth-as-disclosure or unconcealment – which “does not mean that something is correctly portrayed and reproduced but rather that *that which is, as a whole, is brought into unconcealment and held there*” (Heidegger 2002, 32; emphasis mine). We experience truth-as-disclosure aesthetically, as a “shock of recognition ... in which the beholder experiences a fulfilled apprehension of meaning that surpasses all conscious expectation” (Gadamer 2004, 288). By presenting us with an exemplary vision of the lived depths of feeling and experience that “saturate the things-at-hand and our words and gestures to the most delicate degree,” the work of art invites us to recognize the truth of our own being-in-the-world (Tosaka 2001, 15-16). For Tosaka, this quality of “special truthfulness” is what distinguishes popular art and literature from non-artistic modes of mass cultural production such as essays and manifestos (28).

Tosaka’s deconstruction of *fūzoku* and “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*” offers new perspective on our foregoing discussion of politics and aesthetics. One important aspect of judgments of taste is that regardless of whether the subject judges the object positively or negatively, the procedure of judgment itself is to an extent pleasurable merely insofar as it imparts a sense of “being ‘at home’” in the world, a “love of the materiality of the world and a delight in the movement of things” (15; 41). Because of this, judgments of taste “not only help confirm the social fact that ‘everybody does things like this,’ but also endow this fact with compelling force and moral authority, and generate satisfaction that accompanies the acknowledgement of authority” (21). This satisfaction can easily be

grafted onto particular ideologized representations of reality, which Tosaka calls “culture ideas” (*bunka idē* 文化イデー) (1979, 288-290). He offers Tokugawa period theater as an example, observing how popular melodramas generate satisfaction by fulfilling the habituated expectation that “good will be rewarded and evil punished” (*kanzen chōaku*). By serving up *kanzen chōaku* narratives as occasions for aesthetic pleasure, popular melodramas reproduce the Confucian concept of a natural and inviolable moral order. Tosaka forthrightly denounces such celebratory, moralistic dramaturgy as a “weapon for mass indoctrination” (*minzoku kyōka no buki* 民衆教化の武器). He is no less sparing in his evaluation of “bourgeois moralist” critics and theorists who defend the idea that art should palliate the masses by reinforcing normative moral ideas (2001, 22; 31). For Tosaka, a key function of politically engaged critical theory is to dispel such “self-exclupatory” moralism, thereby clearing a path for “scientific” (i.e., historical materialist) inquiry into the causes of human suffering (24; 29; 31).

This being said, Tosaka rejects the idea that aesthetic criticism should limit itself to social scientific methods, suggesting that fictional and nonfictional representation operate under different conceptions of truth and value (1979, 290; 2001, 30-32). The scientific aim of gauging empirical truth is well suited to the study of modes of cultural production that purport to represent “actual reality” (*genjitsu riaritī*), such as editorials and manifestos. It is inadequate, however, to the study of modes of cultural production that disclose “artistic realities” (*geijutsuteki riaritī*) (28). While social scientific methods can tell us a great deal about the social conditions of an artwork’s production and the veracity of its representational content, they can tell us very little about its distinguishing

omoshirosa or interest-value and aesthetic appeal (what Ricoeur calls “the literariness of the work of literature” [1990 vol. 1, 53]). As previously argued, this is because art’s appeal does not inhere in its capacity to more or less accurately represent discrete objects, but in its capacity to disclose, through feeling or *aesthesis*, the “independent ontological value of the Gestalt” (Gadamer 2004, 474).

Tosaka suggests that in order to grasp this properly aesthetic dimension of art, we must supplement “scientific” (i.e., Marxist) critical theory with less sociologistic, more humanistic paradigms such as a “theory of literary composition” and even a “theory of [the representation of] romantic love” (2001, 33). What he seems to be calling for is a rapprochement between historical materialism and the humanist tradition of hermeneutics. The term hermeneutics as I employ it does not designate a particular method so much as the regulative idea of historically mediated understanding, which is distinct from the social scientific regulative idea of objective validity. As mentioned in the prior section, the aim of “Marxist aesthetics” as it is traditionally conceived has been to determine the truth-content of the work of art with respect to the social conditions of its production and reception (Eagleton 1981, 82). The assumption is that doing this will render visible an “internal bond between the object and a proper (theoretical or aesthetic) knowledge of it” – i.e., knowledge of whether the work is “correct” or “false” (85; cf. Brecht 1964, 21). Tosaka anticipates Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutic riposte to this assumption, which is that there can be no such “proper knowledge” of human phenomena such as literature and art – only interpretation. This is because the work of art does not stand apart from the subject “like something other,” in the manner of an object of scientific inquiry

(Gadamer 2004, 283). Rather, it addresses the subject on behalf of a tradition that she has already internalized to some extent in the form of habituated fore-understandings or prejudices (298). While prejudices do not determine our understanding and interpretation, they do irremediably color it to some extent. This leads Gadamer to argue that for the theorist as well as the uncritical spectator, interpreting a work of art “[should] be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated” (291).

From a critical theory perspective, it is easy to think of hermeneutics as practiced by Heidegger and Gadamer as a reactionary defense of social quiescence and prejudice in the common-use sense of the word. One of Gadamer’s stated aims, after all, is “the rehabilitation of authority and tradition” (2004, 278). As Paul Ricoeur observes, “the critique of critique contains a thesis that will appear very suspect to ‘critical’ eyes: namely, that a *consensus* already exists [in the form of tradition], which founds the possibility of aesthetic, historical, and lingual relations” (2007, 284). Under this assumption of pregiven consensus, “the critical instance can be developed only as a moment subordinated to the consciousness of finitude and of the figures of preunderstanding which always precede and envelop it” (289). Gadamer’s endgame, however, is not a nostalgic return to “precritical” thought (275). At no point does he renounce the need for critique. Rather, he seeks to deconstruct what he sees as a false antinomy between the idealistic vocation of critical reason and the real, immediate, and life-enriching affective claims of tradition (2004, 279). In doing so, he hopes to reaffirm the historicity and finitude of human understanding as a check against the potential

excesses of instrumentalized rationality, which (as twentieth century history has proven) can be used to expedite and legitimize violence as surely as can tradition.

Ricoeur argues that embracing hermeneutics as “metacritique” can in fact contribute to our critical practice, particularly where art and literature are concerned (2007, 284). It does so by transforming our concept of critical distancing. We commonly imagine critical consciousness as a kind of tool brought to bear upon an object (in this case the work of art) from a distance, like an optical device, a measuring instrument, or a scalpel. Lukács and Ernst Bloch’s aforementioned comparison of critical realist literature to a social seismograph epitomizes this paradigm.²⁷ Our detour through hermeneutics shows us that this kind of distancing is neither possible nor desirable. It is impossible because the observer, whether a critic or an everyday spectator, can never entirely escape her own prejudices, which not only guide her evaluations, but also predispose her to ask some questions and leave others unasked. It is undesirable because even if the critic could interrogate the work thoroughly from a standpoint outside all prejudice, this interrogation would reveal very little about the way the work speaks to an addressee who stands within its tradition. This is to say in Tosaka Jun’s terminology that it would fail to disclose the work of art’s “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*,” which lies at the root of its aesthetic appeal – and consequently, its social efficacy.

Against the positivist model of distancing, Ricoeur proposes what he calls a critical hermeneutical model. This model is grounded on the autonomy of the materially fixed text with respect to the intentions of its creator, the conditions of its production, and the understanding of its addressees (298). The idea that the work of art “decontextualizes

itself ... and is able to recontextualize itself differently in the act of reading” allows a break with the psychologism typical of Romantic hermeneutics:

“[What] is sought is no longer an intention hidden behind the text but a world unfolded in front of it. The power of the text to open a dimension of reality implies in principle a recourse against any given reality and thereby the possibility of a critique of the real ... [The] mode of being of the world opened up by the text is the mode of the possible, or better, of the power-to-be: therein resides the subversive force of the imaginary (300).

Ricoeur’s “threefold autonomy” also enables us to reconceive distanciation as a relational phenomenon rather than an objectivizing methodological operation undertaken by the subject (297). For Ricoeur, establishing critical consciousness is not a matter of attempting to step outside everyday consciousness into a hypothetical standpoint from which the relations between texts (“artistic realities”) and the world (“actual realities”) can be objectively tracked and assessed. Rather, it is a matter of allowing oneself to be addressed by the text and “[receiving] a self enlarged by the appropriation of the proposed worlds that interpretation unfolds” (301). Ricoeur’s critical hermeneutics does not claim either the distanced objectivity promised by sociologicistic positivism or the appropriative consensus promised by traditional hermeneutics. Instead, it offers to mediate between these extremes: “if distanciation from oneself is not a fault to be combated but rather the condition of possibility of understanding oneself in front of the text, then appropriation is the dialectical counterpart of distanciation.”

The idea of critical hermeneutics also broadens the vocation of critical consciousness. In addition to analyzing the work from the point of view of reality, we awaken to our ability to reinterpret reality from the point of view of the work. Gadamer observes that whenever we take stock of our situation from an unfamiliar point of view, the predispositions and prejudices that shape our everyday realities “are properly brought into play by being put at risk” (2004, 299). Ricoeur develops this observation into a bridge between hermeneutics and the Marxian critical theory tradition: “Distanciation from oneself demands that the appropriation of the proposed worlds offered by the text passes through the disappropriation of the self. The critique of *false consciousness* can thus become an integral part of hermeneutics, conferring upon the critique of ideology that meta-hermeneutical dimension that Habermas assigns to it” (2007, 301). Here, the Marxian idea of false consciousness assumes a new vibrancy. In place of the old false/correct binary, critical hermeneutics asks us to imagine a vast multitude of “different possible relations between the objective economic totality, the imputed class consciousness and the real, psychological thoughts of men about their lives” (Lukács 1967, 51-52). Rather than disdaining “the naïve description of what men in fact thought, felt and wanted at any moment in history,” critical hermeneutics seeks to understand *how it is possible* for social actors to have thought, felt and wanted what they did. If the final aim of sociologicistic critique is to impute “appropriate and rational reactions” to given positions in the relations of production, the final aim of critical hermeneutics is to inquire how it is that a person in a given position in the relations of production might come to feel as if her everyday practices are themselves appropriate and rational.

Finally, critical hermeneutics helps advance our foregoing discussion of politics and aesthetics, beyond the question of art's representational content and toward the question of the "political ontology" of art. It does so by asking us to reconsider how artistic representation or *mimesis* works. As Ricoeur observes, we are used to thinking of "re-presentation" as exactly that – an imitative redoubling of objects of sense in the theater of the imagination (1991, 138). In this view, the work of art or literature is easily taken for a copy of a copy, a reproduction of an already degraded image of "actual reality" (cf. Tosaka 2001). Ricoeur turns this model on its head, arguing that *mimesis* is itself productive rather than merely reproductive. In the narrative arts, we can see the productive dimension of *mimesis* at work in emplotment (*muthos*), the activity of configuring representations of actions, incidents, and characters into a coherent world (1990 vol. 1, 33). Non-narrative arts manifest a comparable productive power through "poetic transposition" – the symbolic evocation and imaginative reconfiguration of ideas and affective states (1977, 154; cited in Savage 2006, 128). Poetic transposition necessarily involves "holding two moments in equilibrium: suspending the reference of ordinary language and releasing a second-order reference, which is another name for what we have designated above as the world opened up by the work" (2007, 300).

As mentioned in the Introduction, we are accustomed to thinking of matters of artistic form and composition as "loftily remote from the 'public sphere'" and the vulgarities of politics (Eagleton 1981, 107). Ricoeur's image of realities in equilibrium and Rancière's similar concept of "dissensus" as the coexistence of conflicting sensory worlds provoke a rethinking (Rancière 2009, 11; 2004; 226). Both emplotment and

poetic transposition are remarkable insofar as they necessitate an imaginative step away from the pre-given conditions of our very being. They thus enable a bracketing of the habituated customs and expectations that enframe our everyday experience. The intersection between the uniquely configured world of the work and the lifeworld of the spectator serves as an invitation to sense, think, and feel differently, opening an “experimental field” in which we can envision new configurations of persons and things, explore new potential horizons of experience, indulge proscribed desires, and voice repressed anxieties (Ricoeur 1991, 149; 1999, 54). Through this intersection, “modes of narration or new forms of visibility established by artistic practices enter into politics’ own field of aesthetic [i.e., sensory] possibilities” (Rancière 2013, 60).

Chapter 2. Performing arts in the Ryūkyū Kingdom

The origin and political trajectory of the Ryūkyū Kingdom

Spanning over 1,000 kilometers between Kyūshū and Taiwan, the Ryūkyū archipelago consists of five island groups: from north to south, the Ōsumi (大隈), Tokara (吐噶喇), Amami (奄美), Okinawa (沖縄), and Sakishima (先島) groups. Ryūkyūans are generally regarded as one of three Japanese ethnic-cultural groups (the others being the Yamato and Ainu), and the Ryūkyūan languages comprise one of the two extant Japonic language families. Archeological evidence points to five phases in Old Ryūkyūan history: a Paleolithic period beginning as early as 30,150 BCE; a hunter-gatherer period beginning around 5,000 BCE; the adoption of rice, barley, and wheat cultivation in the eighth to tenth centuries CE; the formation of fortified villages around the eleventh century; and the formation of hierarchical centralized polities beginning in the thirteenth century (Kreiner 2001, 1; Pearson 2001, 245). By the early fourteenth century, polities on Okinawa Island had consolidated into three competing kingdoms: Chūzan (中山), Nanzan (南山) and Hokuzan (北山) (Pearson 2001, 246-250). In 1429, King Shō Hashi (尚巴志, r. 1422-1439) of Chūzan subjugated Nanzan and Hokuzan, thus establishing the Ryūkyū Kingdom (*Ryūkyū Ōkoku* 琉球王国). After uniting Okinawa Island, the first and second Shō dynasties worked to extend Shuri's authority to the Sakishima (Miyako and Yaeyama island groups), a task they completed by around 1500.

Aside from unification, the defining political event in early Ryūkyūan history was the establishment of tribute relations with imperial China. In 1374, Chūzan congratulated the newly ascendant Ming Dynasty on its victory over the Yuan by sending a tribute mission; Hokuzan and Nanzan followed suit in 1380 and 1383 (Steben 1998, 40). The political purpose of these missions was to legitimize local rulers by gaining the recognition of the Chinese emperor. Every time a new king took the throne, Chinese envoys were summoned to confirm his legitimacy through an investiture ceremony (*ukwanshin* 御冠船). The *ukwanshin* tradition helped drive the Confucianization of Ryūkyūan culture, a process that would continue for centuries. The Ryūkyū Kingdom's tribute relationship with China also provided access to Chinese ports and the ports of other tributaries throughout East and Southeast Asia, thereby invigorating the Ryūkyūan economy (Pearson 2001, 250-263).

According to leading Okinawan performing arts scholar Yano Teruo, tribute trade helped shape the era's performing arts as well (2003, 11). Chinese processional music (*rujigaku* 路次楽) and courtly ceremonial music (*uzagaku* 御座楽) were introduced to enhance the dignity of royal rites, and Chinese *guqin* and flute became popular among Confucian literati in the Kumemura district (Kishibe et al., Grove Music Online). Other aristocrats practiced *nō* chant, which flourished under the Japanese Ashikaga shogunate (33). The poetic form of "Japanese songs" (*waka* 和歌) also became popular, inspiring the development of "Ryūkyūan songs" (*ryūka* 琉歌), which are similar in style but rhythmically adapted to the Ryūkyūan languages. Finally, it is possible that merchants and other travelers introduced musical and dance styles from Southeast Asia, as musical

instruments are listed among the cargo of some returning ships (Kerr 2000, 96; Sakamaki 1964, 387).

The decline of the Chinese Ming dynasty and the rise of the “great unifiers” in Japan precipitated a change in political fortunes for the Ryūkyū Kingdom. In 1602, Tokugawa Ieyasu wrote to King Shō Nei demanding tribute. Shō Nei and his advisors ignored Ieyasu’s demand, perhaps believing that the Chinese would intervene as they had during Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea (Kreiner 2009, 9). In 1609, the Shimazu clan of Satsuma domain requested and received Ieyasu’s permission to launch a punitive invasion of the islands. Satsuma easily overcame the Ryūkyūan defenders, looted the palace, and removed the king to Kagoshima, where he was held hostage for two years (cf. Turnbull 2009). Before being allowed to return to Shuri, Shō Nei was forced to sign an oath of fealty, which declared that Ryūkyū had been a Satsuma vassal since ancient times and apologized for lapsing in its feudatory duties.²⁸ In addition to forcing the Kingdom to rewrite its past, Satsuma dispatched a resident magistrate to Shuri, imposed fifteen statutory injunctions and a yearly tribute, and mandated frequent tributary missions to Kagoshima and periodic missions to Edo (*Edo nobori* 江戸上り). Initially, Satsuma also instituted an assimilationist cultural policy, decreeing that the “customs and practices of Ryūkyū are not to differ from those of Japan” (Smits 1999, 18).

Fortuitously for the global cultural heritage, this assimilationist policy did not last long. In 1615, China closed its ports to Japanese ships. Satsuma quickly realized that overtly Japanizing the Ryūkyū Kingdom might drive the Chinese to cut off its tribute trade privileges. Maintaining the “garb of a sovereign kingdom” (*ōkoku no kazari* 王国

の飾), on the other hand, would establish tribute trade as a loophole through which Satsuma could access Chinese goods (Araki 1980, 179). In 1616, Satsuma reversed its assimilationist decree and prohibited Ryūkyūans from adopting Japanese customs. Among the practices specifically banned were Buddhist evangelizing, travel by non-Satsuma Japanese to Ryūkyū, the speaking of Japanese by Ryūkyūans while traveling in Japan, the wearing of Japanese-style clothing or hairstyles, the incorporation of Japanese elements into Ryūkyūan courtly ritual, and even the singing of Japanese songs (Smits 1999, 28; 45). Seeking to strengthen the kingdom's ties with China, Satsuma encouraged the court to Sinicize its ceremonial practices. It also provided incentives for Ryūkyūans to master the Chinese language and customs, mandating that only those with experience on the continent could engage in trade (around 70,000 Ryūkyūans studied in China over the entire Tokugawa period) (Kreiner 2001, 20; see also Matsuda 1966). Ironically, as a result, "Ryukyu's most intense period of Sinicization took place when the kingdom was under Japanese political domination" (Smits 2000, 117).

Balancing the desires and expectations of two suzerains required carefully choreographed cultural and political performances. On the one hand, familiarity with the Japanese language and culture was undoubtedly expected and appreciated by Satsuma officials. Moreover, the association of Japanese pursuits such as *waka* and *nō* with the islands' new de facto overlords likely increased their appeal to some Okinawan literati. On the other hand, both Satsuma and the royal government insisted that Ryūkyū maintain a front of Chinese cultural and political affiliation. It is interesting to note that for Satsuma, Sinicizing the Ryūkyū Kingdom not only helped ensure its continuing viability

as a trade loophole, but also enabled the Shimizu family to claim the unique honor of having a “foreign” kingdom as a vassal. This increased Satsuma’s prestige in the eyes of the shogunate and the other domains. On two occasions, the Shimizu even leveraged their suzerainty over Ryūkyū to gain promotions in court rank (Smits 1999, 27). To this end, during diplomatic missions to Edo, Satsuma “took every opportunity to emphasize the foreignness of the Ryūkyūans,” compelling them to dress in Ming-style robes, perform indigenous and Chinese ceremonial music and dances, and “feign ignorance of Japanese language and customs” (28). Of course, it was almost certainly courtiers who had garnered favor by mastering Japanese standards of propriety and demonstrating pro-Satsuma political affinities who were chosen to participate in these cultural performances. This contradiction-riddled condition of “dual subordination to Japan and China” (*nisshi ryōzoku* 日支兩屬) lasted from 1609 until the Japanese shogunate’s redefinition of the Ryūkyū Kingdom as a domain (*han*) in 1872.

Social structure in the Ryūkyū Kingdom

During the period of dual subordination, the Ryūkyūan state implemented a range of policies designed to realize the Confucian ideal of a rationally structured hierarchical society. Prompted by Satsuma, the royal government issued family records (*kafu* 家譜) to aristocratic families, which clarified their position within the social hierarchy. The hereditary warrior class (*shizoku* 士族 or *samurai* 侍) was divided into three segments: royal branch families (*ōji* 王子) and the descendants of regional lords or *anji* (*anjibu* 按司部), upper class samurai (*jōkyū-shizoku* 上級士族), and common samurai (*ippan-*

shizoku 一般士族 or *heishi* 平士). Upper ranking samurai were subdivided into two ranks: *uēkata* (親方), who were enfeoffed with either a district (administrative title of *sōjitō* 総地頭) or a village (administrative position of *waki-jitō* 脇地頭), and *pēkumī* (親雲上), who could be enfeoffed with a village (administrative position of *waki-jitō*), at which point the pronunciation of their courtly rank would change to *pēchin*. Common samurai were divided into a middle rank (*satōnushi* 里之子) and a lower rank (*chikutōn* 筑登之). Both could be enfeoffed with villages, thereby attaining the titles *satōnushi pēchin* (里之子親雲上) or *chikutōn pēchin* (筑登之親雲上).

The importance accorded to the rectification of names and titles in early modern Ryūkyū illustrates Ricoeur's observation that "the conventional rules that govern the distribution of first and family names, as well as the pronouns in any given culture, constitutes a veritable founding of a speaking subject" (2005a, 96). In Ryūkyū, the distribution of ranks and names not only determined social position, but also helped structure the distribution of surplus production. The royal family, royal branch families, *anji*, and upper ranking samurai received stipends based on their fief holdings (*chigyō* 知行) and/or their positions at court (*yakuhō* 役俸) (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 149).²⁹ Enfeoffed lower ranking samurai received income from their holdings, while non-enfeoffed lower samurai depended upon employment in the court bureaucracy (those who could not find court jobs were eventually permitted to leave the city and establish farming communities). In 1689, the royal government formally institutionalized the status and occupational system by establishing an Office of Family Records (*keizusa* 系

図座) and required all samurai families to submit their lineage papers (*kafu* 家譜). Those self-identified aristocratic families that could not provide *kafu* were reduced to commoner status (Meyer 2007, 79).

The broad status group of commoners was divided into three occupational groups: merchants and craftspeople who lived in the Shuri/Naha area (*machi-hyakushō* 町百姓), rural officials (*chihō-yakunin* 地方役人), and peasants (*inaka-hyakushō* 田舎百姓). The core social unit in peasant life was the tax-paying corporate village body or *kyōdōtai* (*nengu chōtatsu no kyōdōtai kumishiki* 年貢調達の共同体組敷). The highest administrative rank available to commoners was that of headman – literally, “representative of the fief-holder” (*jitōdai* 地頭代). Each village generally employed several assistant administrators (*bujitō* 夫地頭). Literate commoners could also be appointed to a number of magisterial positions (*sabakuri* 捌理) and minor clerical positions (*tikugu* 文子). Generally speaking, local elites sought to maximize their own class advantage vis-à-vis the peasantry while simultaneously satisfying the Shuri government's economic and sociocultural demands (Uehara 1977, 20). This mirrors the role of village-level elites in early modern Japan as “the backbone of [the Tokugawa shogunate's] local structure of domination” (Ooms 1996, 75).³⁰

Because samurai, townspeople, and rural officials were not taxed, the peasant *kyōdōtai* had to shoulder the kingdom's financial burdens. Taxes were based on assessed production of the land held in tenure by the members of each *kyōdōtai*; taxes were generally collected in rice, sugar, woven goods, and other species in kind. On Okinawa

Island, villages were taxed at an average rate of 40% (Sakihara 1971, 75).³¹ Conditions were worse in the outer islands of the Miyako and Yaeyama groups. In 1636, a per-capita tax (*nintōzei* 人頭税, sometimes translated as “poll tax”) was placed on every commoner from age 15 to 50, averaging about 42% of assessed productive capacity in Miyako and 52% in Yaeyama (91). In addition to land taxes, peasants were levied with special products taxes and corvée requirements, compelled to provide goods to local officials at fixed prices well below market value, and required to use goods-to-rice conversion rates that heavily favored the state.³² Because it was imperative to maintain stable tax-paying demographics, the state tightly restricted both social and physical mobility. Generally, peasants were not permitted to leave the lands allotted to their corporate village body: as Ooms puts it, the fief-holder or *jitō* “‘owned’ the land, which ‘owned’ the people on it” (1996, 16).³³ Like the Tokugawa shogunate, the Ryūkyūan royal government relied upon local elites to enforce these dictates.

Popular performing arts in early modern Ryūkyū

Due to both geographical and political restraints, early modern Ryūkyūan society was highly regionalized, and boasted a diverse range of regional performing arts traditions. These traditions are often grouped under the broad categories of “village theater” (*mura-shibai* 村芝居) and “village dance” (*mura-odori* 村踊り). Historical records pertaining to the lifestyles of commoners during the Ryūkyū Kingdom period are scarce; this is due in part to relatively low literacy rates among commoners prior to the introduction of Japanese-style education, and in part to the destruction of records and the

decimation of communities during the Battle of Okinawa (Ōno 2003, 78). Accordingly, much of what we know about both rural life and non-elite performing arts traditions is based on extrapolation from postwar ethnographic work.

Two terms that appear frequently in accounts of regional performing arts are *ashibī* (遊び), “enjoyment/play,” and *ugwan* (御願), “request/prayer/vow” (Ikemiya 1980, 277). As these terms suggest, village performing arts serve both a celebratory and a ceremonial function. While ritual calendars vary from region to region, many villages hold festivals in early January (*shōgatsu* 正月), the third lunar month (*hamaori* 浜下り), and the seventh lunar month (*tanabata* 七夕 and *bon* 盆).³⁴ The proximate object of most festivals has traditionally been to ensure a prosperous crop and convey gratitude and respect to local and visiting deities (*kami* 神).³⁵ Of course, festivals also serve the general functions of punctuating the annual labor-cycle and reconfirming shared beliefs and established patterns of practice, thereby reinforcing solidarity among the members of the community (Durkheim 2004, 86).

According to Ikemiya, many regional festival performances can be broken down into a basic structural pattern. First, there is a procession or *michijunē* (道ジュネー) to a temporary stage constructed adjacent the village’s *utaki* (御嶽) or sacred grove, accompanied by *rujigaku* (路次楽), processional music derived from Ming Chinese models (1980, 278). Second, the stage is purified with a performance called *gujinfū* (御前風), which often consists of *kagiyadefū bushi* (かぎやで風節), a fan dance performed by a venerable old man (*okina* 翁). Third, a lion dance, *shishimai* (獅子舞), is

performed. This is followed by the group dance *chōja-nu-ufushu* (長者の大主), in which a white-haired and white-bearded old man offers thanks to the gods and spirits, then summons young men and children to dance with him. After this, a number of dances, songs, kumiodori, and/or kyōgen are performed as entertainments (i.e., without any singular, explicit ritual function).³⁶ During the Ryūkyū Kingdom period, itinerant commercial performing artists called *chondarā* (京太郎) and *ninbucha* (念仏者) were also sometimes commissioned to provide entertainment at festivals.³⁷

In order to grasp the social function of festival performance arts, it is imperative to know something of the infrapolitical structure of the corporate village body or *kyōdōtai*. The primary social institution in rural villages is the *munchuu* (門中), an extended patrilineal group organized around a “stem family” (*mutu-ya* 元家; *mutudukuru* 元所; *ufu-ya* 大家) (Baksheev 2008, 328). Each village *kyōdōtai* is comprised of several *munchuu* lineage groups, one of which is typically ascribed special dignity as the family of the founder of the village, the “root family” (*nii/niiya* 根家) or “origin of the country/community” (*kunimutu* 国元). Traditionally, villages were endogamous, with heavy social sanctions levied against women who sought to marry outside the community (Lebra 1966, 130-131). Endogamy served both the bottom-up function of insulating established hierarchies within the community and the top-down function of ensuring the continuing viability of the community as a revenue-generating unit.

The *kyōdōtai* concept is based on an ideal of autonomy and self-sufficiency. This ideal is exemplified by the practice of referring to villages and village communities as

“islands” (*shima* 島). As Tanaka observes, the village-as-*shima* is imagined as an enduring genealogical and spiritual community:

There are an uncounted and uncountable number of persons who have died but still belong to the village (collectively called *uya-faafuji*, which literally means “parents and grandparents”) ... And there are others who are yet to be born (*kwaamaaga* or “offspring”; literally, “children and grandchildren”). All these persons belong to the universe called “the village” (*shima*), which would not be complete if it lacked any one of these three categories. The forebears and offspring, as well as the living members of the community, are therefore all “villagers” (*shimanchu*) who have legitimate interest in the continuity and welfare of the village ... The village as an ideological unit is thus conceived as a perpetual entity, the continuity of which is seen in the patrilineal (*shiji*) relationship binding the fore-bear, the living member, and the offspring. Superficial demographic movement hardly affects this ideological structure (1977, 33).

It is key to bear in mind that Tanaka’s description represents an idealized and ideologized conception rather than an empirical reality. As previously mentioned, historical records of severe intra-village status and class conflict abound (Kinjō and Nishizato 1972, 103-105). As Ooms has observed of Tokugawa Japanese farming villages, the Ryūkyūan *kyōdōtai*’s “semblance (*tatamae*) of internal harmony” often worked to dissemble the consolidation of land and arbitrary exercise of power by local elites, as well as expediting indirect domination by metropolitan elites (in this case, the Shuri court) (1996, 241). This leads Nishizato to identify the Ryūkyūan *kyōdōtai* as a particular type of “legal

fiction” (*gisei* 擬制) (1977, 195).³⁸ This “legal fiction” served both a representative and a disciplinary function. On the one hand, it enabled the articulation of subordinate group interests to the royal state; on the other hand, it dissembled intra-group conflict and legitimized extant regimes of distribution and recognition within the group. This being said, the idealized conception of the *kyōdōtai* as an organic community played – and continues to play – an important part in the social and spiritual lives of many rural Okinawans (Lebra 1966, 151-152).

In his writing on ritual in Chinese patrilineal groups (*hu* 戶), which are structurally similar to Ryūkyūan *munchuu* (門中), Wang Tangjia describes how ancestor-oriented performance rituals underwrite the historical continuity of the group by publically confirming “the collective identity of individuals with [the clan as] a value-community” (2012, 100). Okinawan village performing arts can be understood similarly as a means of reinforcing communal solidarity and promising historical continuity. In Lefebvre’s terms, the processional sequence of performances (*michijunē*, *gujinfū*, *shishimai*, and *chōja-nu-ufushu*) traces out a “representation of space” which is also a “representational space,” in which the village’s diachronic continuity can be articulated synchronically (1991, 33). The *chōja-nu-ufushu* dance in particular can be interpreted as a symbolic reaffirmation of the agnatic bonds that circumscribe the village as a social unit in both space and time. Participating in the dance can be understood, at least from a normative perspective, as a way of symbolically reproducing the spatial and temporal relations that define the village-as-island. Reconfiguring social bonds in transcendental terms, ritual performances such as *chōja-nu-ufushu* set in motion a “dialectic of

substitution and visibility” which simultaneously renders power legible and binds it to a myth of origin (Ricoeur 1990, 510).

It is tempting to portray village performing arts in a utopian light as expressions of organic communality (see my critique of Nelson in Chapter One). Here, James C. Scott’s concept of subordinate infrapolitics can be of help (1990; 2012). Much like the infrastructure that enables a city to function, subordinate infrapolitics undergird the macropolitical structures on which Western social science has traditionally focused. Infrapolitical networks often predate macropolitical structures – especially in colonial societies – and are generally dominated by local elites who regulate the division of labor, resources, and esteem within semi-autonomous fields of power (1990, 184). The royal state guaranteed the semi-autonomy of these local fields of power by means of the “legal fiction” (*gisei*) of the parasubjective corporate village body (Nishizato 1977). Infrapolitical power differentials are woven into the stylistic and structural fabric of village performing arts. As Wang Tangjia observes of Chinese ritual, ceremonial performance practices such as *chōja-nu-ufushu* symbolically incorporate stratification based on age, gender, and other determinants, thus naturalizing the manifest asymmetry of social bonds (2012, 102). We should not read this asymmetry as immanently antagonistic – hierarchy does not always imply injustice. This being said, we should also not assume that just because intra-village tensions were not portrayed, they did not exist. As Scott puts it, “the effective display of compliance may achieve a kind of dramatization of power relations that is not to be confused with ideological hegemony in the sense of active consent” (66-67).

Interestingly, in the wake of the Satsuma invasion, the Ryūkyūan royal state made some attempts to standardize popular ceremonial and spiritual practices (Araki 1980; Tasato 1990). In 1726, for example, shamans were forbidden from practicing in cities; ten years later, shamanism was banned outright (Lebra 1966, 119). In 1735, the state issued administrative handbooks (*kujichō* 公事帳) for at least some rural districts, which prohibited certain local ceremonial practices and prescribed a standardized ceremonial calendar based on the courtly ceremonial calendar (Tasato 1990, 87; Lebra 1966, 143-150). There are instances in which the state's prohibitions extended to popular performing arts traditions – particularly those associated with female spiritualists, who the state saw as a threat. The renowned eighteenth-century female poet Onna Nabī famously attests to this in a verse lamenting the prohibition of a tradition called *shinugu ashibi*. In a well known 1926 essay, Iha Fuyū speculates that *shinugu-ashibi* was banned because it involved female nudity, which the Shuri government found to be “damaging to popular customs” (*fūzoku wo ran suru mono* 風俗を乱するもの) (cited in Araki 1980, 77). Iha goes on to explore a case in which the Shuri government banned a Yaeyaman festival performance tradition called *uchihare-asobi*, ostensibly for the same reason.

In his re-evaluation of Iha's research on the subject, Araki Moriaki identifies similar instances in which ceremonial practices conducted by women, or by women and men together, were declared immoral and prohibited (1980, 76-86). In 1703, for example, a Kumejima festival called *shuku-matsuri* was banned (79). Similarly, in 1767, the Yaeyaman *uyagan-matsuri*, which was traditionally conducted by *noro* priestesses, was banned (80). In 1848, further prohibitions were issued in Kumejima against a local

variant on the *hamaori* festival, the *kamuri* festival (in which a cow was sacrificially slaughtered) and the *osutaiku* dance (in which “young men and women mixed late at night, which is certainly a disruption of the rites” [79]). In addition to prohibiting some local ceremonial practices, the royal government’s administrative handbooks prescribed new, standardized practices based on the courtly ceremonial calendar, which reduced the role of *noro* priestesses and actively involved local magistrates (Tasato 1990, 87). Certain reformed ritual practices also involved directing prayers toward Shuri Castle, regional political centers (Nakijin and Tamagusuku Castles), or state-affiliated religious centers (Kudaka Island and Sefa Utaki). Some such rituals were still practiced in as of Lebra’s study of 1966 (168).

Ryūkyūan cultural policy and the birth of *kumiodori*

During the Ryūkyū Kingdom’s period of dual subordination, high-level domestic affairs were dominated by the “Council of Three” (*sanshikan* 三司官), a consulate of ministers established by Satsuma as a check on royal power. Acting on behalf of relatively weak kings, a succession of visionary ministers introduced wide-ranging reforms designed to shore up the regime’s finances and reinforce its damaged legitimacy. Looking to Satsuma as a model, Shō Shōken (向象賢, 1617-1675 [Haneji Ōji Chōshu 羽地王子朝秀]), reorganized the court bureaucracy, cut back on ceremonial expenses, and restructured the rural land tenure system (Smits 1999, 53-55). His successor Sai On (蔡温, 1682-1761 [Gushichan-uekata Bunjaku 具志頭親方文若]) pursued an even more

ambitious program, ordering a comprehensive survey and restructuring of land use and administration protocols.

The Satsuma invasion was clearly problematic for Ryūkyūan elites because it demonstrated that the Ryūkyūan state did not enjoy a final monopoly on the use of force in the islands. Shō Shōken and Sai On attempted to compensate for the Ryūkyūan state's lack of political parity with its more powerful neighbors by establishing the royal court as a visible site of authority based on ritual propriety. By seizing ahold of complex ceremonial displays of fealty such as the investiture (*ukwanshin*) and the tribute parade to Edo (*Edo-nobori*) as opportunities to demonstrate exemplary ritual propriety, the Ryūkyūan court reappropriated its position of semi-colonial dependence as a platform from which to establish “moral parity” with China, Satsuma, and the shogunate (Smits 1999, 8). At the same time, court ideologues worked to align everyday social practice in the islands more closely with Sinocentric Confucian norms. This necessitated the disenfranchisement of “intra-Ryūkyūan Others” such as *noro* priestesses, Buddhist priests, and shamans. It also required the implementation of a proactive cultural policy. Under Shō Shōken and Sai On, the court drafted royal chronicles, rectified ranks and lineages, standardized and Sinicized ritual and aesthetic practices, and even commissioned the creation of new artistic traditions.

Post-invasion cultural policy had a profound effect on the development of the cultural forms we now associate with the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Perhaps its most enduring legacy is *kumiodori* dance-drama. The first *kumiodori* plays were created for the 1719 investiture ceremony of crown prince Shō Tai (which was overseen by Sai On). Matters

of courtly performance in the Ryūkyū Kingdom were administered by the royal Ministry of Dance (*odoribugyō* 踊奉行), which at the time was headed by the outstandingly talented Tamagusuku Chōkun (玉城朝薫, 1684-1734).³⁹ Chōkun created two plays, entitled *Shūshin kane'iri* (執心鏡入, “The Possession of the Temple Bell”) and *Nidō tekiuchi* (二童敵討, “Two Brothers’ Revenge”). These plays were performed to acclaim before an audience of Ryūkyūan aristocrats and Chinese envoys at the feast of the Chrysanthemum Festival (*chōyō-utage* 重陽宴), a high point of the sprawling investiture ceremony. Over the course of a successful career at court, Chōkun created three more plays: *Mekarushi* (銘苺子), *Onna monogurui* (女物狂), and *Kōkō no maki* (孝行の巻). Due in no small part to the excellence of Chōkun’s plays, kumiodori became a standard entertainment at courtly gatherings and a literary diversion for the aristocracy (Foley and Ochner 2005, 6).

Stylistically, kumiodori is comprised of the three elements of lyrics, song, and dance. Rather than analyzing these elements independently in a formalist manner, I will regard them as historically co-evolved and structurally intertwined “eminent languages” or modes of communicative action (Ricoeur 2007, 285). The kumiodori tradition synthesizes elements of three prior courtly traditions: Ryūkyūan poetry (*ryūka* 琉歌), classical song accompanied by *sanshin* (*uta-sanshin* 歌三線), and classical dance (*Ryūkyū koten buyō* 琉球古典舞踊). It also draws heavily on early modern mainland Japanese classical and commercial performing arts.⁴⁰ Like Japanese *nō*, kumiodori is a narrative form in which music and stylized motion serve to convey a sense of character

and carry forward a plot. Many kumiodori plots were modeled on nō dramas, which is not surprising given the normalcy of plot borrowing in the Japanese tradition and the popularity of nō among early modern Ryūkyūan aristocrats (Yano 2003, 89).⁴¹ Nearly all kumiodori begin with a monologue in which the main character or characters introduce themselves. A dialogue between the main characters follows, then a traveling scene or scenes (*michiyuki* 道行き), during which secondary characters enter and exit and plot complications emerge. The third scene is a climactic reunion or confrontation, followed by a celebratory final dance. It is possible to analyze this structural pattern as a variation on the “introduction – break – rapid crisis” (*jo-ha-kyū* 序破急) template employed in mainland Japanese performing arts, and/or as a variation on the “introduction – development – turning point – resolution” (*kishō-tenketsu* 起承転結) template employed in Chinese and Japanese poetry and rhetoric. These concepts were salient in aesthetic thought and practice throughout the Sinocentric world, and Chōkun would have been aware of them.

Certain specific structural elements were also likely borrowed from Japanese and possibly Chinese models. The use of traveling scenes (*michiyuki* 道行き) to advance the plot, for example, is a mainstay in kabuki and jōruri, while kumiodori’s use of a male chorus and occasional inclusion of comic interludes in otherwise serious narratives were likely inspired by nō and ai-kyōgen. Chinese musicologist Wang Yaohua asserts that the movement patterns of female characters in kumiodori may have been influenced by Fujian opera (*Mǐn jù* 閩劇), and also notes that in both kumiodori and some types of

Chinese musical drama, certain melodies are understood to exemplify given emotional states and are used by convention in scenes that portray those states (1998, 302-303).⁴²

Kumiodori's three fundamental elements are speech, movement, and music. Its mostly fixed metrical structure – 8.8.8.6 mora, with occasional switches into other meters to obtain an effect of urgency – is derived from that of *ryūka*, the court's primary indigenous literary medium. Like Japanese *waka*, *ryūka* are richly intertextual, frequently making use of allusive devices such as fixed word-associations (*engo* 縁語), allusive plays on words (*kakekotoba* 掛詞), and seasonal words (*kigo* 季語) (Sueyoshi 1974, 370). Understanding *ryūka* requires an intimate knowledge of local places, local history and customs, the special qualities of the different seasons, and the repertoire of expressions used by past poets to describe these things. Because of this, *ryūka* cannot be understood as self-contained works; to fully grasp a given poem, one should be familiar with the poetic canon and the tradition in general, specifically any prior poems it has borrowed from or alluded to (Hokama 1976, 114). This is true for kumiodori as well. Much of the aesthetic impetus behind *ryūka* and kumiodori lies in the author's ability to recombine and re-contextualize allusive expressions in tasteful yet imaginative ways, simultaneously paying homage to the literary tradition and allowing it to be seen from a new perspective.

Kumiodori effectively weaves the *ryūka* lyric form into a narrative framework. Actors chant in several fixed patterns that differ in pitch and rhythmic configuration, tessitura, and tempo. Like Tokugawa period Japanese *nō* and kabuki, Ryūkyūan courtly arts were performed exclusively by men; this necessitated the development of physical

and vocal techniques for conveying gender. Along with costume and movement, chant patterns help mark a character as an older man, a young man, a woman or child, or a clown (*maruman* 間の者). The style of chanting is clearly articulated and highly controlled. Movements are also clearly articulated and restrained, and facial expressions are subtle, centered on the eyes.⁴³ Like speech patterns, movement patterns (*kata* 型) are matched to gender and character type, and are largely drawn from the major classical dance genres: old men's dances (*rōjin odori* 老人踊り), young men's dances (*nisai odori* 二才踊り and *wakashū odori* 若衆踊り), and women's dances (*onna odori* 女踊り). In addition to marking the character types, particular *kata* are key to conveying the particular mood (*jōmi* 情味) of a scene (Iha 1974b, 382).⁴⁴

While kumiodori chant is in and of itself musical, plays also make use of songs drawn from the classical repertory (*koten ongaku* 古典音楽). Sung by a male chorus, these songs consist of short verses in *ryūka* form set to stately, melismatic melodies. They are accompanied on *sanshin*, *koto*, and large and small drums (*ōdaiko* and *kodaiko*), and sometimes also on *kokyū* (three-stringed spike fiddle) and *hansō* (transverse flute) (See Appendix II for a representative transcription). These choral interludes are often sung from the character's point of view during dances; their primary function is to offer a glimpse past the façade of stylized speech and movement (*tatemaie* 建前) into the *dramatis personae's* thoughts, intentions, emotions, and inner character (*honne* 本音):

The three strings of the *sanshin* give voice to the complex reverberations of the human spirit and the sounds of the heart. All of this is accomplished with

only three strings. The slender strings give flowing voice to the palpitations in one's breast, the sound of one's pulse; they can mimic the sound of a brook flowing through a shaded grove; a waterfall sparkling like a comet's tail; the peaceful surface of a hidden pool, the rippling ebb and flow of the tide; rolling fields dotted with fences; or the vast and dusky ocean. Shifting quickly and effortlessly from treble to bass, the *sanshin* can symbolize the emotions and clinging affections of mankind (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, February 1, 1910).

In addition to chant and choral song, kumiodori sometimes feature non-diegetic instrumental music (entrance music, for example), drum sounds used for dramatic effect, diegetic percussive sounds produced by the dancers on stage, and occasional diegetic instrumental music (36). The music is heterophonic, with some spontaneous variation between parts (Ohtani 1981, 146-79). Finally, as in other Japanese performing arts, exclamations (*hayashikotoba* 囃子詞) are often inserted between verses for rhythmic variation and to punctuate important actions and moments of intense emotion.

Courtly performing arts as Confucian political practice

Over the course of the period, kumiodori became established as a “national drama” (国劇) (Iha 1974, 163). Chōkun's five plays (*Chōkun goban* 朝薫五番), which are still regarded as the core of the repertory, served as models for other early modern Ryūkyūan literati such as Tasato Chōchoku (田里朝直, 1704-1773), author of *Manzai tekiuchi* (万歳敵討) and *Gijin monogatari* (義臣物語), Heshikiya Chōbin (平敷屋朝敏, 1700-1743), attributed author of *Temizu no en* (手水の縁), and Takamiyagusuku-pēchin

Chōjō (高宮城親雲上朝常, 1703-73), author of *Hanauri no en* (花売りの縁). By the mid nineteenth century, over 40 kumiodori had been written, and the tradition had disseminated throughout Okinawa and among local elites in the Miyako and Yaeyama island groups. Significantly, all but one of the canonical classical kumiodori focus on the strongly Confucian theme of filial piety or *kō* (孝) (Wang 1998, 294). Variations on this theme include the obligations of subjects to their lord (*Shūshin kaneiri*, *Gijin monogatari*, etc.), the obligations of children to their parents (*Nidō tekiuchi*, *Kōkō no maki*, *Manzai tekiuchi*, etc.), and the reciprocal obligations of parents and lords toward their children and subjects (*Onna monogurui*, *Mekarushi*, *Hanauri no en*, etc.).

In *Visions of Ryūkyū*, Smits points out the ideological resonance of kumiodori narratives with Ryūkyūan state's Neo-Confucian political agenda, arguing that that “from the first days of kumiodori as a recognizable dramatic form, the royal government co-opted it to serve the state's ends” (1999, 123). While Smits' argument is sound, his phrasing falls back upon a very modern conceptual opposition between artistic form and political function. The modern reader is tempted to infer that kumiodori's original quality of being was somehow altered – perhaps even corrupted – through its “co-option” by politics. This does not appear to have been the case. Rather, in the Ryūkyū Kingdom, as in other Confucian societies, performing arts were inherently regarded as a mode of ethico-political practice. As Chinese musicologist Wang Yaohua observes, Confucian thinkers have long classified the performing arts “alongside ritual, form, and governance as means of strengthening state control” (Wang 1998, 282). Book 7 of the *Analects* (“Transmission”), for example, praises music alongside ritual and calligraphy as a means

of ethical self-cultivation that must be practiced by the governing class.⁴⁵ Both Mengzi (372-289 BCE) and Xunzi (312-230 BCE) follow the *Analects* in describing music in quasi-Aristotelian terms as a means of aestheticizing the common good, thereby reinforcing social harmony (280; 291).

The most comprehensive source of Confucian thought on music, the “Record of Music” (*Yue ji* 樂記), also identifies music and ritual as complementary means of maintaining social harmony:

To unite (*he* 合) the emotions and to polish external appearances – these are the affairs of Ritual and Music. If the department of Ritual is established, then the noble and the plebeian are separated into classes. When the patterns of Music are uniform, then those in high position and those in low position get along in harmony ... Humanity (*ren* 仁) is used in loving them (the people) and propriety (*yi* 義) is used in rectifying them – if it is like this, then the governance of the people will be implemented (Cook 1995, 42).

Notably, the Confucian perception of art as a means of internalizing and transmitting moral norms and ethical dispositions was not limited to music, but extended to other modes of performance as well. In Book 3 of the *Analects* (“Eight Rows of Dancers” 「八佾篇」), Confucius confirms the role of dance in demarcating and legitimizing social stratification. This conception remained remarkably stable over time: in his “Notes on Dance” (「人舞譜」), for example, Ming dynasty music theorist and choreographer Zhu Zaiyu (朱載堉, 1536-1611) identifies specific dance movements as means of symbolizing the three bonds and five virtues (Wang 1998, 292-293).⁴⁶

During the Tokugawa period, Confucian learning experienced a renaissance that helped shape aesthetic discourse and artistic practice in both mainland Japan and the Ryūkyū Kingdom. One influential strain of Japanese Neo-Confucianism, epitomized by Yamazaki Ansai (1619-1682), adopted the Chinese Cheng-Zhu school's emphasis on the absolute priority of rational principles (*li* 理) and normative standards (*jing* 經) over non-standardized “expedient means” (*quan* 權). Ansai took an extremely critical view of art: in his 1660 tract “Japanese Lesser Learning” (*Yamato shōgaku* 大和小学), for example, he condemns literary masterworks such as *The Tales of Ise* and *The Tale of Genji* as licentious distractions that threaten to lure the cultured class into “trifling with trivial things and forgetting intentions” (*ganbutsu sōshi* 玩物喪志) (Flueckiger 2010, 34). Several of Ansai's contemporaries, however, took a stance more in line with the classical view of art as a potential means of self-cultivation. Nakae Tōju (1608-1648) and Andō Tameakira (1659-1716), for example, defended Chinese and Japanese poetry as expedient techniques for “transmitting the Way” (*saidō* 載道) and/or “encouraging good and chastising evil” (*kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡) (cf. Shirane 2002).

Sai On, the most influential Ryūkyūan thinker at the time, appears to have more or less adopted Nakae Tōju's perspective (Smits 1996, 460-463). In his “Conversations with a Rustic Old Man” (*Suoweng pianyan* 蓑翁片言), for example, Sai On urges Ryūkyūans to adhere to universal rational principles while simultaneously developing “expedient” skills befitting their assigned status groups.⁴⁷ For the governing class, this included artistic skills such as calligraphy and music. Under Sai On, the royal government encouraged artistic education and proactively incorporated performing arts

into state functions. Music was included on the Ryūkyūan civil service entrance exam, and for young aristocrats, demonstrating performance ability was one route to success at court (Wang 1998, 288-289).

Mastering classical Ryūkyūan performing arts required years of training (Foley and Ochner 2005, 13). Contemporary master Kin Ryōshō gives the following anecdote as an example of the seriousness with which early modern performers regarded their art:

While Tawata *pechin* was playing the lord of Tanora in *Uka tichiuchi*, his house went up in flames. Although he heard the report of the fire from the comments of the audience, he did not halt since performance for the king came first ... to this extent you must be serious (14).

This degree of dedication was considered appropriate because, as Iha notes, “actors were a kind of civil servant” (*kokka no yakuin* 国家の役員) (1974a, 155). The *Kyūyō* (球陽), a chronicle compiled at the behest of the royal government in 1745 by Tei Heitetsu (鄭秉哲, 1695-1760 [Isagawa-uekata Yūjitsu [伊佐川親方佑実]]), makes this clear, differentiating *kumiodori* performance from the casual performance of Chinese and Japanese arts and identifying *kumiodori* as a national art intended to glorify the kingdom and its history (Yano 2003, 40).

Dialectics of obligation and desire in *kumiodori*

As mentioned in the Introduction, any review of the scholarly literature on early modern Japanese theater will eventually lead to the linked concepts of *giri* (義理) and *ninjō* (人情), often translated as social obligation and human emotion. In popular

discourse on Japanese theater, the relationship between *ninjō* and *giri* is often portrayed as a conflict “between ‘desire’ and ‘reason,’ between our natural, ‘animal-like’ instincts and our rational, ‘civilized’ mind with its rules, morals, and responsibilities inculcated by society” (Gerstle 2010, 27). This being said, like the best works in the Japanese theatrical repertory, the most compelling kumiodori portray the *giri/ninjō* relationship as complex and multi-layered. Tamagusuku Chōkun’s *Shūshin kane’iri* (執心鏡入), for example, is compelling because it paradoxically invokes sympathy for both the male protagonist, driven by obligation, and the female antagonist, driven by emotion. Similarly, we sympathize with the protagonists of Heshikiya Chōbin’s *Temizu no en* (「手水の縁」) precisely because they are painfully aware of the conflict between their emotions and their obligations. In both plays, human affect and desire are represented as manifestations of natural law that give force to the laws of society, yet also sometimes chafe against them.

Tamagusuku Chōkun’s *Shūshin kane’iri* is often identified as an exemplar of the courtly kumiodori tradition. In the first scene, a young aristocrat named Nakagusuku Wakamatsi introduces himself and announces that he is on his way to serve at the royal court in Shuri. He states that it is late and he is tired, and approaches a nearby house to ask leave to stay for the night. A young woman answers the door and tells Wakamatsi that her parents are away and she is not free to let him in. She refuses him twice, but he asks again a third time, and she finally relents. She then tries to engage Wakamatsi in conversation. When he refuses, she becomes increasingly infatuated with him and attempts to seduce him: “For our sleeves to touch by chance like this must mean that we

are bound by fate ... A man who does not know love has not drunk deeply of the cup of life.” Wakamatsi, however, rejects her: “I do not know of such things! ... Even one born a woman must know reason, lest the world descend into hell.” He leaves, and the spurned woman chases him as the chorus gives voice to her thoughts: “We are bound in ill-fated love. If we must part, rather than be abandoned, I would have us die together.” In Scene Two, Wakamatsi arrives at a Buddhist monastery, where the head priest warns him about the danger of female passion and hides him in the temple bell. After a comic interlude featuring three irreverent junior priests, the woman arrives at the temple. Her unfulfilled emotion transforms her into a demon, which dances around the bell furiously. In the climactic final dance, the head priest drives the demon-woman from the bell with prayers (Foley and Ochner 2005, 15-27).

Shūshin kane'iri is often compared to the nō play *Dōjōji*, which tells basically the same story in the form of a recollection. In *Dōjōji*, the demon-woman enters the temple grounds disguised as a *shirabyōshi* dancer during a service for the bell's purification, hoping to atone for her sin (Klein 1991, 294). Overcome with resentment, however, she leaps into the bell and must be exorcized. *Dōjōji* is extremely well known as one of three canonical “demoness” plays.⁴⁸ As an aficionado of Japanese arts, Tamagusuku Chōkun was almost certainly aware of it. Rather than assuming that *Shūshin kane'iri* was based on *Dōjōji*, however, it is more accurate to identify both plays as adaptations of medieval didactic tales (*setsuwa* 説話) designed to warn readers about the dangers of female passion. The most famous bell possession *setsuwa* appear in the anthologies *Dai Nihonkoku hokekyōkenki* and the *Konjaku monogatari* (296). In both tales, a widow

attempts to seduce a handsome young monk while he is on a pilgrimage with his master. The young monk deceives the widow and escapes, and when she realizes the deception, she chases him to Dōjōji temple, transforms into a demon, and wraps herself around the bell in which he is hiding, incinerating him with the heat of her lust and indignation. Later, the monk appears to the head priest of Dōjōji in the form of a serpent, explaining that he has been reborn as her serpent-husband and begging the priest to copy the *Lotus Sutra* so that both of them might attain salvation. After the priest does so, both the young monk and the woman appear and thank him for allowing them to be reborn in separate heavens (297).

In his supplement to Iha Fuyū's *Ryūkyū gikyokushū* (琉球戯曲集), Higashionna Kanjun notes that *Dōjōji* takes the second half of the bell possession *setsuwa* as its point of departure: "using the legend as a background, [*Dōjōji*] appropriates the temple bell as a symbol of the eventual realization of Buddhahood through the practice of austerities – which is to say, the law of [karmic] cause and effect that binds the three worlds of past, present, and future" (1974, 387-390). This is in keeping with *nō* drama's Buddhist soteriological ethos and its frequent use of recollection as a narrative device.

Higashionna argues that because *Dōjōji* implies that the demon-woman will eventually be saved through the monks' practice of copying the *Lotus Sutra*, it represents a "triumph of Buddhist virtue" (*buttoku no shōri* 仏徳の勝利) (390).

The *kumiodori Shūshin kane'iri*, on the other hand, focuses on the first half of the *setsuwa*, the worldly encounter between the male protagonist and the female antagonist. As Higashionna observes, it substitutes a Confucian sense of sociopolitical responsibility

for Buddhist vows of chastity as the male protagonist's rationale for refusing to be seduced. Higashionna identifies the "clash between Confucian ethics and human instinct" as the point of origin of the play's dramatic crisis (391). He further suggests that the female protagonist's misfortune (*akuen* 悪縁) does not result from the karmic law of cause and effect (*inga* 因果), but rather, from her own desperate decision to "charge headlong into the contradiction" between "burning eros" (*atsuki koi* 熱き恋) and "frigid righteousness" (*hiyaki gi* 冷き義) (391-392). Higashionna argues that the male protagonist Wakamatsi's refusal to yield to passion and willingness to risk his life rather than compromising his political duty represents a "triumph of [Confucian] social obligation" (*giri no shōri* 義理の勝利) (391).

As Susan Blakely Klein makes clear, the various bell possession tales are all explicitly gendered, presenting "a dramatically compelling vision of stark conflict: the masculine forces of noble and pure spirituality ... battling the feminine forces of profane and bestial sexuality" (1991, 291). This reflects a gender bias that pervaded elite male discourse in early modern East Asia. Neo-Confucian thinker Kaibara Ekken, for example, summarizes the female character as follows:

The five worst infirmities that afflict women are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. Without any doubt, these five infirmities are found in seven or eight of every ten women, and it is they that cause women to be inferior to men ... A woman's nature is passive (yin). The yin nature comes from the darkness of night. Hence, as viewed from the standard of a man's nature, a woman's foolishness [means that she] fails to understand the duties that lie before

her very eyes, does not recognize the actions that will bring blame on her head, and does not comprehend even those things that will bring calamity to her husband and children (De Bary 2013, 266-267).

As the author of the popular tract *Method for Teaching Women* (*Joshi wo oshiyuru* 女子を教ゆる方), Ekken was regarded as somewhat of an authority on the matter of gender and domestic issues. In *Method for Teaching Women*, Ekken portrays the female gender as equivalent to a vocation (*shokubun* 婦人) (Sekiguchi 2010, 96). Ekken likely influence Sai On's thoughts on gender; in fact, Sai On's essay *Precepts for the Household* (*Kadōkun* 家道訓) is a close paraphrase of Ekken's essay of the same name (Smits 1999, 79; cf. Tucker 1989). It should not come as a surprise, then, that *Shūshin kane'iri*, which was commissioned by Sai On, portrays its female lead as indocile, discontented, jealous, and incapable of comprehending “the duties that lie before her very eyes.”

This being said, a closer reading of *Shūshin kane'iri* reveals ambiguities that potentially complicate its interpretation as a clear-cut, dualistic allegory for gender domination. Part of this ambiguity lies in the character of Wakamatsi. In the bell possession *setsuwa*, the handsome young monk does not solicit the young widow himself. His aged master, who we can assume would prevent any improprieties from occurring, asks for leave for both of them to stay at her manor. In *Shushin kane'iri*, however, Wakamatsi, who is traveling alone, repeatedly invites himself into the young woman's house despite her protests that her parents are away. Moreover, he uses erotically charged poetic language that is inappropriate to the situation: “In this floating world, even the dew borrows its lodging from the flowers – out of mercy, show me compassion and

allow me to stay.” An eighteenth century audience would have immediately grasped the “floating world” as a euphemism for the space of erotic encounter and the image of dew on flowers as an allegory for transient love. As Sueyoshi Ankyō observes, whether intentionally or not, Wakamatsi sounds like a would-be seducer (1974, 369).⁴⁹ One could argue that Wakamatsi, not the woman, is the agent of the “ill-fated bond” (*akuen* 悪縁) that very nearly leads to both of their deaths.

In a recent analysis, Yonaha Shōko argues that Chōkun’s portrayal of the female antagonist is equally ambiguous (2012, 11-12). On the one hand, her dehumanizing degeneration into murderous hysteria reproduces the well-worn stereotype that “women are psychologically and biologically determined to a weakness of will that keeps them from being able to control their passions,” and are thus “an inevitable obstacle to men’s spiritual progress” (Klein 1991, 299). The head monk says as much in his admonition to Wakamatsi: “Do not take an infatuated woman’s heart lightly – it may claim your life.” On the other hand, up until the woman’s final transformation, she is extremely cogent and sympathetic. Far from being crudely lustful, she expresses her desire in a poetically refined manner as an extension of the natural order: “Just as cuckoos in the deep mountains suck the nectar from spring flowers, [romantic love] is the way of the world.” Later, she rhetorically asks the temple monks: “How far do the woven fences of prohibition extend? Can one prohibit a butterfly from landing on a flower?”

Yonaha further notes that six of *Shūshin kane’iri*’s choral interludes are sung from the woman’s perspective (2012, 11-12).⁵⁰ This is important, as the specific purpose of choral interludes in *kumiodori* is to arouse the audience’s sympathy for a character’s

emotional and psychological state. Yonaha concludes that *Shūshin kane'iri* presents two concepts of “reason” (*ri* 理), one grounded on “masculine rationality” (*otoko no ronri* 男の論理) and the other grounded on “the sympathetic affections in nature” (*shizen no nasake* 自然の情け). In her assessment, *Shūshin kane'iri* does not aim to portray one concept of reason as morally sound and the other as unsound. Rather, it suggests that each concept of reason carries the seed of its own destruction within it, and warns against pursuing either to its extreme. To Yonaha, this gives *Shūshin kane'iri* the effect of “the waves of eros and thanatos breaking against each other” (12).

The concept of human affection as a manifestation of natural law is taken up and developed in the kumiodori *Temizu no en* (「手水の縁」), a *Romeo and Juliet*-esque story most likely modeled after Japanese double suicide plays. *Temizu no en* is traditionally attributed to Heshikiya Chōbin (平敷屋朝敏, 1700-1734), a distinguished but politically disadvantaged Ryūkyūan courtier. Chōbin is known for his Japanese verse and the romantic prose-poems *Tale of Young Grass* (*Wakakusa monogatari* 「若草物語」), *Beneath the Moss* (*Koke no shita* 「苔の下」), and *Manzai* (「万歳」) (Smits 1999, 120; cf. Ikemiya 1982b). These stories influenced several later works of early modern Ryūkyūan literature in turn, most notably the nineteenth-century romances *Tales of Rainy Nights* (*Amayo monogatari* 「雨夜物語」) and *Tales of the Path of Love* (*Koiji no fumi* 「恋路之文」) (cf. Ikemiya 1973). While Chōbin’s authorship of *Temizu no en* has been questioned, the play stands alongside Chōbin’s prose as a foundational work of early modern Ryūkyūan literature (cf. Ikemiya 1996). Chōbin is also known for his

involvement in an alleged plot against the Ryūkyūan state, for which he was executed; unfortunately, we lack detailed records of this affair.⁵¹

In *Temizu no en*'s opening scene, a young man named Yamatū (山戸) enters and introduces himself. It is the third day of the third lunar month, a traditional festival day on which “high and low come together in celebration.” Yamatū is walking to Mount Shinaga to view the flowers. A beautiful young woman named Tamatsi (玉律) then enters and introduces herself to the audience. She has come to the mountain to celebrate as well, and wash her hair in Fanja River. Yamatū spies Tamatsi and asks her to give him a drink of river water from a ladle she holds in her hands. She refuses twice, and twice he threatens to kill himself. She finally gives in, and eventually agrees to meet him again. In Scene Two, Yamatū goes to Tamatsi's home to meet her, but is discovered by a watchman. In Scene Three, we learn that Tamatsi's father has heard rumors of the affair and sentenced her to die. Her father's subordinates, Shicha-nu-ufuyaku (志喜屋の大屋子) and Yamaguchi-nu-nyishinchi (山口の西掟), take her to the beach at Chinen to execute her. She resigns herself to death, and informs Shicha to convey her final testament to Yamatū. Shicha and Yamaguchi attempt to gather the will to execute Tamatsi, but since they have helped raise her since she was a child, they hesitate. Yamatū rushes to the scene and begs for her life. Shicha and Yamaguchi take pity on the lovers, telling them to escape and conspiring to tell Tamatsi's father that she has been executed (Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11, 54-64).

Along with Chōbin's double suicide stories, *Temizu no en* clearly demonstrates the influence of early modern Japanese bourgeois culture (*chōnin bunka* 町人文化),

specifically the literary and theatrical aesthetics of Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Rather than opposing *giri* and *ninjō*, Chikamatsu tends to portray them as intertwined. In the preface to *Naniwa miyage* (1738), for example, Hozumi Ikan records a conversation in which Chikamatsu describes *giri* and pathos as dialectically related:

There are some who, thinking that pathos is essential to *jōruri*, make frequent use of such expressions as “it was touching” in their writing, or who when chanting do so in voices thick with tears ... This is foreign to my style. I take pathos to be entirely a matter of restraint [*giri*]. Since it is moving when all parts of the art are controlled by restraint, the stronger and firmer the melody and words are, the sadder will be the impression created. For this reason, when one says of something which is sad that it is sad, one loses the implication, and in the end, even the impression of sadness is slight. It is essential that one not say of a thing that “it is sad,” but that it be sad of itself. For example, when one praises a place renowned for its scenery such as Matsushima, by saying, “Ah! what a fine view!” one has said in one phrase all that can be said about the sight, but without effect. If one wishes to praise the view, and says numerous things indirectly about its appearance, the quality of the view may be known of itself (De Bary 2013, 336-337).

Here it is important to note the ability of terms such as *ninjō* and *giri* to bear different connotations in different contexts. Donald Keene, for example, notes that *giri* can mean obligation “to one’s class, or to society at large, or refer to something closer to the abstract concept of honor” (1961, 33).⁵² Chikamatsu argues that just like describing a

beautiful landscape is more effective than merely telling someone to experience the sensation of beauty, describing how an honorable character can be torn between contradictory desires and demands is more effective than merely imploring an audience to empathize with the character. He seems to be suggesting that for drama to be compelling, it must appeal to the core of pathos within rationality and the latent promise of rationality within pathos.

A close reading of *Temizu no en* reveals a complex *giri-ninjō* dynamic reminiscent of Chikamatsu. This is evident in the play's use of the polyvalent term *nasake* (情け). In *Temizu no en*'s pivotal meeting scene, Yamatū asks Tamatsi to “compassionately” or “affectionately” give him a drink of river water from a ladle she holds in her hands. This playfully alludes to the ambiguous opening scene of *Shūshin kane'iri*, in which Wakamatsi asks for lodging in the woman's “compassionate house” (*onasaki no yado* 御情の宿). Significantly, the term *temizu* (手水) refers to the water used to purify one's hands at a shrine. When Tamatsi is confused by Yamatū's use of the term, he explains: “In the old days, a drink of water from someone's hand flowed from *nasake*.” This explanation elides the soteriological sense of *nasake* as a bestowal of compassion with its secular sense as a bestowal of romantic love.

We can interpret Yamatū's elision of the two senses of *nasake* in a Buddhist framework as a reference to the Amidist notion that compassion can transcend the requirements of *giri*. Alternately, we could interpret it in Confucian terms as an attempt to refigure the bestowal of romantic love as a virtuous act under the heading of benevolence or humanity (*ren* 仁). As the *Yue ji* and other Confucian classics make

clear, the virtue of benevolence or humanity is a necessary correlate to the virtue of propriety (*yi* 義), which underpins the concept of *giri* (Cook 1995, 42). Yamatū takes full advantage of the polysemic slippage between the religious-moral and erotic connotations of *nasake* in order to anchor his appeal in an established moral grammar. By threatening to kill himself if Tamatsi does not reciprocate, he ensures that her bestowal of *nasake* can be grasped as an act of compassion and benevolence.

After giving Yamatū a drink of water, Tamatsi tries again to halt his advances, comparing herself to “a flower-bud encircled sevenfold by rough-hewn fences,” but Yamatū insists that not even her filial obligation can close off “the path of love.” Of course, at this point in the narrative we cannot be sure whether Yamatū’s words are sincere or merely a sophistic attempt at seduction. The chorus helps convince us of his sincerity by reinforcing his appeal’s soteriological overtones: “If we are bound by fate, then even when we separate—can flowers pierced by a thread and strung together be cut apart?” Reappropriating Tamatsi’s flower imagery, this verse portrays the lovers as having been pierced and bound together by an affection that transcends the power of death. Both Yamatū’s image of the “path of love” and the chorus’ commentary are reminiscent of Chikamatsu, who draws on such imagery to express popularized Buddhist concepts of the transience of this world, the circuitous routes of fate, and the deferral of romantic fulfillment to the world beyond (Heine 1994). Tamatsi confirms the soteriological quality of her love by promising that she will “wait for [Yamatū] on the mountain-road of death,” and Yamatū confirms his sincerity by interrupting Tamatsi’s

execution and admitting that he “owes a deep debt to the house of Murikuya,” implicitly affirming his willingness to die with her.

The key difference between Chikamatsu’s double suicide plays and *Temizu no en*, of course, is that in the final instance, Tamatsi and Yamatū are spared from death. It is noteworthy that the reasoning behind their salvation is worldly and social rather than soteriological. The discussion between Yamatū and the retainers Shicha and Yamaguchi can be interpreted as a sort of discourse on the nature of ethical and political judgment. Yamatū forthrightly asks Shicha and Yamaguchi to go against their lord’s command to kill Tamatsi. He acknowledges that this is technically a violation of *giri*; however, he goes on to argue that there are historical and literary precedents for pursuing forbidden love and forgiving romantic transgressions. Weighing Yamatū’s reasoning, Shicha and Yamaguchi determine that their lord’s command to kill Tamatsi is fundamentally irrational: “The gossip of the world is a short-lived thing. If we surrender Tamatsi’s life to Yamatū’s care and tell the lord that we have killed her, after some time passes, his feelings will change and she can come into the world again.” They justify their violation of *giri* as a morally sound capitulation to the higher natural law of fate: “Let us allow their love to blossom; let us bind their fates like a string of jewels.” Yamatū instantly recognizes Shicha and Yamaguchi’s decision as not only merciful but also “honorable,” and responds by declaring his “indebtedness and heartfelt gratitude.” The etymology of this phrase stresses the dialectical bond between obligation and sympathetic emotion, affirming that both are necessary components of moral judgment.

In addition to complicating the relationship between *giri* and *ninjō*, *Temizu no en* calls into question conventional links between gender and moral capacity (cf. Sekiguchi 2010). Interestingly, several other kumiodori also feature strong female characters: these include *Kōkō no maki* (The Scroll of Filial Piety), in which a loyal daughter offers to sacrifice herself to a serpent-demon to save her mother and brother from poverty, *Hanauri no en* (The Fate of the Flower-seller), in which a loyal wife travels the country in search of her husband, and *Ōkawa tekiuchi* (Ōkawa Vengeance), in which the protagonist's wife helps him revenge his fallen lord. It could be argued, however, that in each of these narratives the female protagonist merely executes her prescribed obligations in an exemplary manner. In *Temizu no en*, on the other hand, Tamatsi exercises the critical capacity to refuse some obligations while upholding others. Despite Tamatsi's decision to pursue a romantic relationship without the approval of her father, she is not portrayed as a fallen woman. On the contrary, she maintains a strong awareness of ethical and political obligations, telling Shicha to remind Yamatū “[that] he was born as a man in order to distinguish the world by serving his king both day and night.” She goes on to affirm that she will wait for Yamatū in the next life, but admonishes him against refusing his political obligations: “If for some reason he goes against my final testament ... I will not cast even one glance toward him.” The implication here is that Tamatsi is warning Yamatū not to shirk his duties by committing lovers' suicide. Sueyoshi Ankyō reads this as an endorsement of the Confucian concept of public duty (1974, 368-369). Like many of Chikamatsu's characters, Tamatsi seems to distinguish between private and public obligations, upholding “the right to a private sphere as long as it does not

transgress public law” (Gerstle 1997, 333). Resigning herself to die and yet forbidding Yamatū from joining her in death, she underscores the asymmetrical obligations placed upon aristocratic men and women.⁵³

Aesthetics, ideology, and the early modern Ryūkyūan state

Herman Ooms observes that the core function of ideology in Tokugawa period Japan was to elide “the ‘ought’ of the law” with “the ‘is’ of an imaginary order,” thereby “[transforming] originally political, economic, and legal objectives into the ‘natural’ order of things” (1996, 310). As in Japan, the social order in the early modern Ryūkyū Kingdom was based on a rigid status system, concretized by legal decree in the wake of the Satsuma invasion. This status order structured the division of labor, the distribution of resources, and “the distribution of powers and competencies” (Weber 1968, 1255). The role of ideology in early modern Ryūkyū was to legitimize this hierarchical social order by portraying it as the earthly manifestation of a cosmic order based on eternal rational principles (*li* 理) (cf. Smits 1999; Ames 2011). As we have seen, the Ryūkyūan state took a multilayered approach to ideological production: under ministers such as Shō Shōken and Sai On, it rectified lineages, commissioned historical chronicles, worked to subsume or displace extrapolitical allegiances and autonomous centers of power, standardized courtly ritual and artistic practices, and intermittently attempted to standardize village ritual practices as well.

Tosaka Jun argues that ideology is most effective when it is habituated at the level of everyday customs and manners or *fūzoku* (風俗) (2001). The Ryūkyūan state made

conscious efforts to discipline subjects' everyday customs and manners by habituating them to a prescribed image of reality. This is evident in disciplinary discourses such as the complex sumptuary codes enacted by Shō Shōken (Steben 1998, 48). Under these codes, men of *ōji* and *anji* rank wore *hachimaki* caps with special woven patterns. Men of *uēkata* rank could wear a purple *hachimaki*, while men of *pēkumī* rank could wear a yellow *hachimaki*. Men of *satōnushi* and *chikutōn* status could wear a red *hachimaki*. The descendants of *satōnushi* and *chikutōn* families could wear blue *hachimaki*. Significantly, during their tenure, village headmen enjoyed the right to use the title *pēchin* and wear a yellow *hachimaki* despite their common birth. As Weber observes, daily exposure to sensual differentiating practices such as these contributes to status awareness and “the inculcation of *ethos* based on status honor” (Weber 1968, 1105). Weber argues that while a degree of status honor generally attaches to heredity alone, a greater degree often attaches to the mastery of status-contingent customs and manners or “styles of life” (932). Tosaka concurs, suggesting that it is different modes of dress (and other manifestations of *fūzoku*) that prevent solidarities from developing across status boundaries or “between free men and slaves” (43). For Tosaka, “the secret significance of clothing, which manifests class [and status] difference, lies in this” (2001, 43).

On a social functional level, we can analyze early modern Ryūkyūan performing arts as an embodied analogue to sumptuary codes. Sociologist Paul Connerton provides a useful theoretical model. In *How Societies Remember*, Connerton identifies two modes of social memory: “inscribing practices,” which employ speech and writing to store or pass on information, and “incorporating practices,” which “keep the past” by habituating

normative gestural vocabularies, codes of etiquette, modes of speech and dress, and other embodied competencies (1989, 72; 79). Incorporating practices play a key role in structuring social life: through them, we internalize “rules for defining 'proper' behavior ... [which] will appear, depending on our vantage point, either as a structure of feeling or as a pattern of institutional control” (83; cf. Williams 1977). Connerton emphasizes the importance of incorporating practices in status-based societies, noting how “the social control which is the prerogative of court society and the self-control which is the attainment of a 'civilised' person are mutually defining.” The habituated body is the “point of linkage” between these public and private registers (84).

Performing arts such as kumiodori and Ryūkyūan courtly dance, which incorporate both texts and embodied competencies, represent a synthesis of inscribing and incorporating practices. This allows them to functioned ideologically on both a textual level and a corporeal level. Their narratives transmit Confucian moral concepts (such as “promote good and chastise evil” [*kanzen chōaku*]), while their gestural and musical repertoires showcase the qualities of grace (*hin* 品), intuition (*kan* 勘), and bearing (*konashi* 熟し) idealized by and expected of Ryūkyūan aristocracy. Sketching out normative character types and narratives in sharply defined lines, didactic plays such as *Shūshin kane'iri* reproduced the “dramaturgy of domination” in an eminently legible microcosmic form (cf. Scott 1990). From the standpoint of practice, these plays worked to habituate young men to a normative model of aristocratic *fūzoku*, interlacing cognition with muscle memory and libidinal processes, naturalizing social distinction by making its signs available as structures of feeling and aesthetic cues (cf. Honneth 1996). From the

standpoint of reception, these plays had the additional benefit of simultaneously showcasing performers' status honor and reconfirming their privileged capacity to "occupy [their] time not economically but ceremonially" (Connerton 1989, 87).

As we have seen, Confucian aesthetic and political theory provided intellectual historical context for the Ryūkyūan court's embrace of kumiodori as a "national drama" (*kokugeki*) (Iha 1974a, 153). This is compelling from a meta-theoretical standpoint because certain Confucian texts resonate surprisingly well with the modern concept of ideological interpellation. While Confucian aesthetic theory and contemporary ideology critique are based on very different epistemological premises, they both establish art and literature as "practical metaphors" that mediate between social structures and embodied structures of feeling (cf. Williams 1977; Bourdieu 1984). In the *Yue ji*, for example, we find the passage: "when the patterns of Music are uniform, then those in high position and those in low position get along in harmony" (Cook 1995, 42). This could be a paraphrase of John Blacking's assertion that music "can bridge the gulf between the true state of human being and the predicament of particular human beings in a given society ... especially the alienation that springs from the class struggle" (1978, 22). According to Chinese musicologist Wang Yaohua, early modern Ryūkyūan writings on performing arts take a comparable standpoint. For example, the "Book of Strings and Voice," written in 1789 under King Shō Boku, states that when music and ritual are performed properly, "lords will be lords, vassals will be vassals, fathers will be fathers, children will be children, the four classes will take pleasure in their occupations, the people will be prosperous, and civic order will be maintained" (cited in Wang 1998, 285).⁵⁴

Courtly Ryūkyūan performing arts were created by and for an aristocratic audience; to paraphrase Geertz, they were quite literally “the dramas of the theatre-state, mimetic of themselves” (1980, 136). Likewise, village performing arts appear to have been performed largely on a village level. This begs the question of to what extent, if any, did the two worlds meet. In *Visions of Ryūkyū: Identity and Ideology in Early Modern Thought and Practice*, Gregory Smits interprets the Ryūkyūan state’s intermittent attempts to regulate popular performing arts as part of a larger project “to conflate culture and polity and to incorporate all Ryūkyūans into the resulting political community” (1999, 6). It is certainly true that these sanctions constituted a conscious attempt to standardize the ritual calendar and integrate appointed officials, national religious sites, and other proxies of state power into the ritual lives of commoners (Araki 1980). Moreover, for royal ministers to decry traditions associated with *noro* priestesses (and women in general) as “damaging to *fūzoku*” was certainly in line with their patriarchal Confucian ideology. Finally, the state’s suppression of shamanism and forced restructuring of the *noro* priestesshood demonstrates that it had no compunctions about coercively suppressing cultural practices that did not align with official ideals.

This being said, interpreting Ryūkyūan cultural policy as an attempt at proto-culturalist nation building along Gellnerian or Andersonian lines seems hasty. As Araki makes clear, the royal state’s various attempts to regulate peasants’ performance activities were above all else intended to eliminate wasteful expenditures of time, labor, and resources (1980, 81). Following Araki, we can deduce that as in early modern Japan, “the regime regarded cultural practices [such as performing arts] that channeled life

energies (*ki* 気) into something other than the requirement of material production as dangerous excesses” (Hirano 2014, 169). Which is to say, the main point of state sanctions on popular culture was not to improve the peasants, but to improve production. In cases where peasants passively resisted these sanctions by slackening the pace of agricultural production, local officials often simply repealed them (Araki 1980, 83). The fact that peasants’ material productivity took precedence over their ideological propriety suggests that state planners regarded them as a resource to be exploited, not as co-participants in a shared community of values. As long as corporate villages served their productive function, elites appear to have been content to permit them a degree of cultural autonomy.

Given the recent priority of meta-theoretical exchanges in the discipline of ethnomusicology, our exploration of the ideological function of performing arts in early modern Ryūkyū begs a return to the broader question of the relationship between aesthetics and politics in general (cf. Rice 2010). In the wake of the deconstruction of formalism, it is generally accepted that aesthetic experience and artistic practice bear some kind of inherent sociopolitical potential. Following up this intuition with cogent theory, however, is notoriously difficult. As Rancière observes, “matters would be easy if we could merely say – naïvely – that the beauties of art must be subtracted from any politicization, or – knowingly – that the alleged autonomy of art disguises its dependence upon domination” (116). Unfortunately for the theorist (but fortunately for humanity), neither of these formulations is adequate.

As argued in the Introduction, I tend to agree with Gadamer, Ricoeur, Rancière, and others that the special political character of art is rooted in its noncongruence with actuality. Gadamer and Ricoeur make a strong case for the interpretation of works of art as hermeneutically autonomous parallel realities. I believe that the concept of hermeneutic autonomy is equally applicable to texts and non-linguistic art forms, which are also “materially fixed” and boast their own unique syntactic and semantic structures (Ricoeur 2007, 298). Moreover, I would argue that the concept of materially fixed discourse does not apply only to discourses fixed through inscribing practices, but also those fixed through incorporating practices (cf. Connerton 1989). Musical structuration in accordance with an orally transmitted tradition, for example, establishes a bracketed world of sounds as surely as linguistic structuration establishes a bracketed world of representations. We can say the same for dance. The special vehemence of multimedia performing arts like kumiodori lies in their capacity to shape a fully immersive sensory environment, disclosing “a transformed reality [which] brings before us intensified possibilities never seen before” (Gadamer 1986, 64).

Before going further with this analysis, we must wrangle with the question of “theoretical imperialism” (Sorgenfrei 2007). The idea of aesthetics as a bracketing of reality is most commonly applied to Western art of the Romantic and modern periods, during which theorists entertained the possibility that art and aesthetic experience comprised a sovereign metaphysical domain removed from worldly interests and concerns. Rancière takes care to contrast this “aesthetic regime of art” with the “regime of representation” exemplified by classical and neoclassical theater, in which “the stage,

the audience and the world are taken in one and the same continuum” (2008, 5). Ryūkyūan courtly performing arts falls definitively under the regime of representation: “the performance of the bodies on the stage was a display of signs of thoughts and emotions that could be read unequivocally because they had a grammar which was held as the language of nature itself” (6). This being the case, we should ask whether applying theoretical paradigms developed in and for the modern West to early modern Ryūkyū is helpful or even ethically permissible. The notion that art is metaphysically autonomous, for example, flatly contradicts the aforementioned Confucian view of artistic practice as political practice. Attempting to fit this concept to an art like kumiodori would only perpetuate misunderstanding.

The idea of hermeneutic autonomy is significantly more flexible. This is because it does not impute a qualitative separation between art and the world. Rather, it designates the capacity of art to speak differently to different spectators. Wang Yaohua’s description of the construction of Ryūkyūan classical songs out of pre-given melodic and textual patterns shows interesting parallels to the concept of hermeneutic autonomy:

In the practice of music, emotions born of reality are expressed from the artistic standpoint of “emptiness.” This principle of “separation from reality and receiving emptiness” (「離実得虚」) grounds the formal aspect of musical composition – which is manifest in the phrase ‘one melody, many changing uses’ (「一曲多変運用」) – and enables the restructuring of melodies and rhythms as generic types through a principle of aesthetic formalism” (1998, 299).

Wang describes this procedure of restructuring as a “generative dialectic linking human emotions to the environing world, which itself gives rise to music” (「情生於景、景生於情、情景相生、自成音律」) (298). If done skillfully, the creative recombination of familiar tropes brings about a sensation of “the synthesis of subject and object” (「物我」). From the hermeneutic perspective, is this limitless generative capacity – not some imputed metaphysical essence – that gives art its world-transformational potential.

As I argue in Chapter One, the capacity of art to make and unmake worlds infuses it with both an intensified ideological potential and an intensified counter-ideological potential. Aesthetic bracketing allows coercive normative discourses to be mimetically reconfigured on the plane of fiction, euphemized, and experienced pleurably.

However, aesthetic bracketing simultaneously frees the work of art from the social conditions of its production. The Ryūkyūan kumiodori *Temizu no en* exemplifies this in two senses. On the one hand, *Temizu no en* appropriates the kumiodori form, created by Tamagusuku Chōkun as a vehicle for royal ideology, and utilizes it to convey subversive sentiments. On the other hand, *Temizu no en* effectively transposes the thematics of *giri* and *ninjō*, which developed in the context of Japanese urban bourgeois society, into the very different context of the staidly feudal Ryūkyūan court. We can regard productive reappropriations such as these as a preview of the flurry of creative activity that followed annexation and the dissolution of the status system.

Chapter 3. Annexation and the emergence of commercial performing arts

Nineteenth century crisis and decline

Economic and social reforms introduced by the Ryūkyūan royal government during the early eighteenth century brought the kingdom to a high point of “post-invasion prosperity” (Smits 1999, 133). Unfortunately, this partial economic recovery was short lived. As in many mainland Japanese domains, the nineteenth century was a time of severe economic malaise for the Ryūkyū Kingdom. The proximate cause was instability in the sugar market. In 1646, the royal government established a monopoly on non-staple foods, directing certain villages to grow turmeric and sugar rather than rice, expropriating them at exchange rates significantly below market value, and then selling them at a high profit to Osaka merchants via the Ryūkyūan legation in Kagoshima (Sakihara 1971, 114). During the eighteenth century, the kingdom became increasingly dependent on sugar revenue to fund its trade with China and diplomatic missions to Edo. In 1745, however, Satsuma established a similar monopoly in Amami-Ōshima and began selling sugar in direct competition with Ryūkyū (Matsui 1975, 150). As supply gradually increased, prices dropped. This situation grew exponentially worse when the Tokugawa government began encouraging other domains to engage in sugar cultivation in order to reduce its dependence on imports (Sakihara 1971, 228). By 1818, prices had become so volatile that the shogunate reversed its stance and prohibited further sugar cultivation; unfortunately, this prohibition was essentially unenforceable, and did little to keep cash-

strapped daimyō from entering the market (229). Meanwhile, embezzlement and graft by Ryūkyūan and Satsuma officials had become a serious problem: in 1822, for example, only half of the kingdom's sugar revenue actually made its way to the treasury (127). By the mid 1800s, the kingdom's income was barely sufficient to cover its day-to-day affairs, much less the exorbitant expense of courtly ceremonies and diplomatic missions to China and Japan.

It is important to remember that Shuri's economic crisis was a local symptom of broader systematic contradictions that had been gradually developing for centuries throughout Tokugawa Japan. This becomes apparent when we look at the "crisis of feudalism" as it unfolded in Satsuma (cf. Sanderson 1994). The Tokugawa maintained their 260-year hegemony in part by keeping the major daimyō in a state of perpetual financial distress through enforced alternate-year attendance in Edo (*sankin kōtai* 参勤交代), periodic levies, and other measures. The Shimazu clan was made to maintain several Edo residences, which consumed upward of 50% of Satsuma's revenue (Matsui 1975, 109). As an "outside daimyō" (*tozama daimyō* 外様大名) and former Tokugawa rival, they were also subject to frequent levies (such as the 1754 Kiso river project and the 1788 Nijō castle project, which cost 18,000 and 12,000 kan of silver, respectively) (112). These impositions drove them to borrow heavily from Osaka merchants, often at exorbitant interest rates: between 1616 and 1801, Satsuma debt spiraled from 1,000 kan of silver to 72,600 kan (92).⁵⁵ By 1808, Satsuma's yearly revenue was insufficient to pay even the interest on these debts (250). Daimyō Shimazu Shigehide (1745-1833) saw some success increasing revenue by coercing interest-free loans from retainers,

mandating that peasants grow cash crops rather than rice, and cutting back on his own expenditures; however, the 1806 destruction of three Satsuma residences by fire and the 1816 imposition of a levy for highway improvement forced him to take out additional loans at interest rates of 10-12% (249-250). According to Ebihara Kiyohiro, assistant to steward Zusho Shōzaemon, the domain's financial situation was so dire during the 1820s that officials had to wait up to thirteen months for their stipends, and several residences were allowed to fall into disrepair (253).

By 1827, Satsuma was a staggering 320,000 kan of silver in debt (92). Tasked by Shigehide with rescuing the domain's finances, the aforementioned Zusho Shōzaemon instituted the Tenpō financial reform of 1830, which included strong-arming the Osaka merchants into forgiving the domain's debt, then effectively assuming control of the Ryūkyū Kingdom's sugar monopoly, demanding 750,000 *kin* of sugar per annum in lieu of tribute rice.⁵⁶ In 1865, this mandate was increased to 970,000 *kin* (Sakihara 1971, 130).⁵⁷ Zusho's reforms revived Satsuma's economy, but their effect upon the already struggling Ryūkyū Kingdom, which depended on sugar sales to fund its ceremonial expenses, was devastating. In 1828, Shō On's successor Shō Kō (r. 1804-1828) abdicated the throne due to stress; his eldest son Shō Iku (r. 1829-1848) "skimped on his investiture ceremony and distributed the surplus funds to the districts for economic relief" (Smits 1999, 141).

Predictably, the ill effects of this economic crisis trickled down the social hierarchy, accumulating at the bottom (Uehara 1977). The central government intensified its unsustainable policy of extracting 'contributions' (*hōshaku* 奉借) from

local officials and wealthy peasants (who sometimes received elevation to samurai status in return) (8). Local officials, in turn, ramped up demands on the peasantry, who were increasingly forced into debt. As the state had monopolized the sale of cash crops, and as many peasants were already living at a subsistence level, options at this juncture were limited: an indebted peasant could parcel out and pawn his tenured land (*chiwari shichiire* 地割質入れ), become a tenant farmer or wage laborer, sell himself or a family member into bond servitude or prostitution (*miuri* 身売り), or illegally leave his land to find work.⁵⁸ According to chronicles from Haneji *magire* (present-day Nago City), officials dispatched from Shuri in 1805 found extensive cases of mortgage, indenture, and land abandonment (17).⁵⁹

The effects of this economic crisis were especially disastrous in the already impoverished and overexploited Sakishima. Because indentured and wage laborers were not counted as members of the tax-paying corporate village body (*kyōdōtai*), each peasant who forfeited his land effectively increased the percentage of the tax burden falling on the remaining land-holding members. This increased the probability that they too would fall into debt and be forced to forfeit their land in turn (20). This vicious cycle brought villages to the brink of starvation, rendering them extremely vulnerable to natural disasters: strong winds and poor harvests, for example, led to 3,358 deaths by famine and disease in 1825, and another 3,928 deaths in 1827 and 1832 (16-17). While Shuri and Satsuma occasionally provided relief, they failed to enact substantive reforms; Uehara Kenzen speculates that even if reforms had been enacted at this point, because a significant amount of land had fallen into disuse and a critical mass of peasants had

exhausted their reserves and were subsisting on a hand-to-mouth basis, many villages had already reached a point where recovery were not feasible (19).

Because the ostensibly natural bond between the peasant, the corporate village body, and its allotted land undergirded the entire feudal polity, these trends disturbed the royal government, which circulated a letter proscribing land mortgage throughout the districts. For a number of reasons, however, mortgage and indenture continued to increase (18-19). First, as previously mentioned, peasants living at a subsistence level simply had no other means of alleviating their debts. Second, because it was often the local officials themselves that were acting as the usurers, their class interest dictated against enforcing the central government's prohibitions (20). Uehara describes these local elites as a self-conscious economic class that exploited the gradual decay of the feudal tenure system in order to accumulate foreclosed land and turn former smallholders into tenant farmers (20).⁶⁰

This process gradually but irrevocably altered the texture of life in rural Okinawa and the Sakishima. The de-coupling of land and labor destabilized the villages, resulting in noticeable population outflows in many districts. Inequality within the peasant strata increased dramatically, and upward mobility into the samurai strata became a possibility for rich commoners willing to make sufficient contributions to the royal government. The emergence of class alongside status as a social determinant undermined the cohesion of the corporate village body. Insofar as the village was not only an administrative unit, but also the primary locus of religious and other communal practice, these transformations eroded long-standing social bonds. Cases of embezzlement, seizure of

property, and other abuses by local officials increased in frequency and severity.⁶¹

Peasants responded with petition movements and passive resistance in the form of land abandonment, work stoppages, mass suicide, and infanticide (Nishizato 1977, 194).

Occasionally, peasants approached the point of violent insurrection, forcing the royal government's hand in dealing with abusive local officials. In one case, the official in question was reputedly executed along with his entire family (196-197).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Ryūkyū Kingdom's nineteenth-century financial crisis had a pronounced effect on lower-ranking samurai as well as on peasants. By the early nineteenth century, there were between 7,000–8,000 registered samurai families in the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Non-fief holding common samurai (*ippan shizoku* 一般士族) did not receive tax income directly; rather, they were employed by the court in various bureaucratic and ceremonial positions. From the perspective of political culture, these bureaucrats and courtiers performed vital symbolic and ceremonial labor. From a material perspective, however, their labor was “non-productive” (Naha Shishi Henshū Inkaï 1974 vol. 2, 169). As production languished and expenses rose, the royal government was forced to terminate an increasing number of common samurai's positions. Simply put, the Ryūkyū Kingdom's inefficient agrarian-coercive economic base could not support its complex political superstructure. As previously mentioned, under Sai On, the state attempted to alleviate this problem by permitting unemployed samurai to move to the country and establish farming communities called *yadui* (屋取).⁶² Later, the state permitted samurai to take up other trades and encouraged women and

children from urban samurai families to take up commerce. These stopgap measures, however, could only slow the pace of samurai underemployment, not halt it (170).

Interestingly, the Ryūkyū Kingdom's gradual economic decline provides the background for one of the most well known nineteenth century *kumiodori* dance-dramas, Takamiya-gusuku pēchin's *Hanauri no en* (「花売の縁」), first performed at the 1808 investiture ceremony of King Shō Kō (尚灑, r. 1804–1834). In *Hanauri no en*, an impoverished low-level samurai named Morikawa-no-shi (森川の子) is forced to leave his wife Otodaru (乙樽) and their son Tsurumatsu (鶴松) and travel the country looking for work. Several years later, after achieving financial security, Otodaru and Tsurumatsu go searching for him. After some time on the road they meet a woodcutter who has met Morikawa-no-shi. He directs them to the town of Taminato, where they finally find Morikawa-no-shi dressed in rags, selling flowers and singing songs for travelers. He recognizes Otodaru and tries to conceal himself in shame, but Otodaru recognizes him and rebukes him for scorning her affection and difficult journey. She and Tsurumatsu finally persuade him to accompany them back to Shuri.

Hanauri no en alludes clearly to the plight of déclassé samurai and their families. Throughout the play, Takamiya-gusuku emphasizes the persistence of status distinction despite changing economic conditions. The woodcutter takes care to inform Otodaru and Tsurumatsu that Morikawa-no-shi maintained the proper bearing of a samurai throughout his ordeals. When Morikawa-no-shi enters, he laments the arbitrariness of fate, comparing the fortunes and misfortunes of men in the world to the changing seasons. He goes on, however, to state that since his birth and fate were determined by heaven, he will

put them out of his thoughts and diligently go about his work. After discovering Morikawa-no-shi, Otodaru emphasizes the fact that both fate and her own dedication brought them together again. Morikawa-no-shi then laments the fact that his innocent son had the misfortune to be born to an unlucky parent. We can only assume that *Hanauri no en* struck a chord with courtiers who suddenly felt themselves under threat of losing their livelihoods. Its grimly persevering tone and implausible happy ending can be interpreted on an ideological level as a plea to these courtiers to “keep calm and carry on” despite the effects of worsening structural instability on their personal fortunes.

Abolishing a kingdom and establishing a prefecture

Both the 1868 Meiji Restoration and the 1879 annexation of Ryūkyū are popularly portrayed as decisive events that marked the end of feudalism and the onset of modernity. In fact, the Meiji Restoration was a decades-long process marked by internal contestations between factions with contrasting interests, ideological commitments, and visions of the future. The same is true of the Meiji government’s “disposition of Ryūkyū” (*Ryūkyū shobun* 琉球処分). Two of the key issues of the Meiji period played out dramatically during the *Ryūkyū shobun* and in its wake: the clash between East Asian and Western conceptions of territoriality and sovereignty, and the on-the-ground difficulty of “returning the land and people to the Emperor” (*hanseki hōkan* 版籍奉還) and “abolishing domains and establishing prefectures” (*haihan chiken* 廃藩置県). While these political dramas unfolded far away from the entertainment districts of Naha, they

had a formative impact on commercial theater and the other forms of cultural production that emerged in the wake of annexation.

Under the Imperial Chinese tribute system, formal sovereignty established a symbolic relation of dominance, but did not necessarily imply actual territorial rule. It was therefore possible to conceive of a polity as being “subject” (*zokkoku* 属国) to two suzerains at once, and yet under the actual rule of neither. After signing the Ansei Treaties of 1858, the Japanese realized that failing to clearly articulate their territorial claims in Western legalistic terms put them at risk.⁶³ In 1872, Japan declared the creation of “Ryūkyū domain,” with the Ryūkyūan monarch Shō Tai as “domain king” (*Han-ō* 藩王). The Ryūkyūan government expressed its displeasure, but did not take substantive action. Between 1874 and 1876, Japan made its intentions clearer by prohibiting further tribute missions to China and establishing a military garrison in Naha. This provoked the Ryūkyūan government to dispatch secret envoys to China to request intervention, as well as to send letters of protest to representatives of the Western powers (120). Despite Chinese and Western objections, Japan proceeded to annex the kingdom in 1879, sending Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Matsuda Michiyuki to Shuri along with 160 military police and 400 soldiers. While no blood was spilled, Matsuda’s dissolution of the Ryūkyū Kingdom (or domain) and establishment of Okinawa Prefecture was decidedly non-consensual, and took place under the threat of overwhelming military force.

The former Ryūkyūan ruling class almost unilaterally rejected the concept of merger with Japan, referring to Matsuda and his transitional bureaucracy as foreigners

(“Yamato people,” *Yamatojin* 大和人) and decrying annexation as “the ruination of the state” (*bōkoku* 亡国) (Nishizato 2011, 15-16). News travelled swiftly between Ryūkyūans living in Okinawa, Tokyo, Fujian, and Beijing, and “petitions to save the Ryūkyūan state” (*Ryūkyū kyū-koku seigansho* 琉球救国請願書) were drafted. Aristocrats in Shuri and local officials in rural areas circulated “blood oaths” (*keppan seiyaku* 血判誓約) pledging to resist Japanese rule even unto death, assist the wives and children of those who died in resistance, and punish collaborators. Most Ryūkyūan “patriotic gentlemen” (*aikoku no shishi* 愛国の志士) never acted on their oaths, but some did. In July 1879, for example, an official in Miyako was lynched for accepting a position as an interpreter for the new Japanese police dispatch (Nishizato 1981, 13-14).⁶⁴

Incidents of resistance such as this led the newly appointed prefectural magistrate Nabeshima Naoyoshi to crack down, conducting mass arrests, pardoning those who cooperated, and extracting confessions through torture from those who remained obstinate. A faction of hard-liners (*gankotō* 頑固党 or *kurotō* 黒党) continued to resist, fleeing to Fuzhou and Beijing. Under the leadership of influential former ministers such as Shō Tokukō (向徳宏 [Kōchi-uekata Chōjō 幸地親方朝常]) and Rin Seikō (林世功 [Nashi Shunbo 名城春傍]), these *dasshinnin* (脱清人 “refugees to Qing China”) agitated for Chinese military aid to reestablish the Ryūkyū Kingdom (Nishizato 2011, 10-20). While the *dasshinnin* were materially powerless, their close association with influential Chinese statesmen such as Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823-1901) lent some credibility to their threats. Diplomatic records show that Japan was not willing to risk war with China

over the Ryūkyū Islands, and was even prepared to cede sovereignty over the Sakishima for economic concessions (Kublin 1949, 226-229).⁶⁵ Negotiations over the division of the islands (*buntō* 分島) were first attempted in 1880, and continued off and on until 1883 (Nishizato 2011). Unfortunately, due to China and Japan's shifting geopolitical priorities and Ryūkyūan obstructionism, no progress was made (Matsumura 2007, 104).

Meanwhile, in Shuri and Naha, disposition officer Matsuda and prefectural magistrate Nabeshima adopted a cautious approach to implementing Japanese rule, leaving many Ryūkyūan institutions intact. This became known as the policy of "Preserving Old Customs" (*kyūkan onzon*). Nabeshima's first priority was to introduce Meiji-style education. His rationale was supremely pragmatic: as long as the majority of Okinawans could not speak or read Japanese, the administration had no choice but to rely upon the hostile local ruling class as intermediaries. In 1881, Uesugi Mochinori succeeded Nabeshima as prefectural magistrate. Upon arriving in Okinawa, Uesugi toured the countryside and was dismayed by what he saw. Because Satsuma's 1830 reforms forced Shuri to collect taxes largely in sugar, a number of villages had dedicated much of the land previously reserved for staple crops to sugarcane. Food insecurity, debt, mortgage, and indenture were widespread. In hopes of alleviating these burdens, peasants tried to cultivate sugar secretly in their vegetable and sweet potato plots as well. This further decreased food self-sufficiency and made the already unstable villages more vulnerable to natural disasters. Realizing that these conditions were the result of a tax and tenure system that failed to incentivize the producers themselves, Uesugi proposed dismantling the feudal bureaucracy and implementing Meiji-style land and tax reforms.

The next year, however, the Home Ministry replaced Uesugi with the conservative Iwamura Michitoshi, who decreed that administrative matters in the villages would be left to local officials. Iwamura further promised that high-ranking aristocrats would retain their privileges and continue to receive stipends, and that rural local officials would retain their positions. The next three prefectural magistrates and subsequent first appointed governor maintained Iwamura's conservative policies.

Nishizato Kikō describes the “Preservation of Old Customs” policy accurately as the incorporation of a precapitalist “stratified structure of discrimination” (累層的な差別の構造) into a modern capitalist and statist framework (1977, 210; cf. Frank 1966). With the exception of implementing education reform, the Meiji government's approach to Okinawa during this period was simply to insert itself in Satsuma's place at the top of the chain of resource extraction, leaving existing feudal institutions and practices intact while meanwhile assessing the prospects for development. Following Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Wendy Matsumura identifies these institutions of indirect rule as “archaisms with a current function” – which is to say that while their structure and effects on the ground remained much the same, their function vis-à-vis their political economic systemic context had changed (2007, 137; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1983).⁶⁶ This function was fairly straightforward: to help offset local expenditures by keeping sugar revenue flowing while Japan gradually obviated the domestic and geopolitical conditions that gave the former Ryūkyūan ruling class its leverage.

As planned, the Preservation of Old Customs policy successfully placated many high-ranking Ryūkyūan elites. Socially and economically, however, it was a disaster. As

we have seen, by the time of annexation, the contradictions inherent in the traditional economy had already strained the corporate village system to its functional limit (Uehara 1977, 20). The Preservation of Old Customs policy not only allowed local officials to continue to exploit the peasantry, but also introduced new municipal fees (Nishizato 1977, 203-210). This sparked uprisings in Aguni in 1881, Nago in 1883, Nakijin and Goeku in 1886, and Chinen in 1889, as well as a well-organized peasants' movement in Miyako between 1892 and 1895 (Meyer 2007, 142).⁶⁷ It also aggravated rural out-migration. This was not a new problem; the royal government recognized rural out-migration as a potential threat to the integrity of the corporate village system as early as the seventeenth century, but devised various regulations to prevent peasants from moving or restrict the amount of time they spent in the city. After annexation, however, these regulations fell out of force. Between 1880 and 1903, nearly 20,000 former peasants fled the impoverished countryside to seek work in the growing Naha-Shuri area.

Social mobility and the commodification of artistic competence

The annexation of Okinawa precipitated a qualitative transformation of the performing arts scene, which can be understood as a shift in the artistic mode of production (cf. Qureshi 2000, 29). The primary agents of this transformation were male courtly performers from low and mid-level samurai families (Ikemiya 1980, 285). When the court was dissolved in 1879, many bureaucrats and courtiers lost their employment. They also lost their venue, audience, and primary sociopolitical motivation for practicing courtly performing arts. Some entered professions unrelated to the arts, and continued

practicing courtly performing arts as a hobby. Others sought to make a living through commercial performance and/or teaching (Ikemiya 1982a, 415). This eventually required them to adapt their performance aesthetic to suit changing popular tastes, catalyzing the formation of new genres. It also entailed establishing new social spaces – commercial theaters – as well as a new kind of social bond – the transactional relationship between the commercial performer and his audience (cf. Lefebvre 1991; Sennett 1977).

Before delving further into the history of the commodification of performance skills and the capitalization of relations of artistic production, we must clarify what it is we mean when we talk of commodities and capital. In common sense terms, a commodity is a thing that is available for exchange, i.e., that is imputed with exchange value in excess of its use value. A thing's use value often lies in its ability to directly satisfy a need; its exchange value, on the other hand, is contingent upon the social relations that structure its production and circulation. Things, then, are not commodities in and of themselves, despite having use values. Rather, things become commodities when they are placed into a relation of exchangeability with other things, i.e., when their exchange value displaces and defers their use value. Money is that particular object imputed with exchange value but no use value – i.e., the “socially recognized *general equivalent*” (Uno 1964, 9). Capital is “value in a state of motion” between the commodity form and the general equivalent – what Marx calls “metamorphosis” (14). Capitalism is a mode of production in which goods are produced primarily for exchange rather than immediate use, i.e., as commodities. This mode of production is unique insofar as the circulation of goods remains fluid, it hypothetically generates value above

and beyond use value in perpetuity. Accordingly, John R. Bell identifies capital as “the self-augmenting motion of value” (2009, 38).

This self-augmenting quality distinguishes capitalism from coercive modes of production, in which goods are produced for their use-value and then expropriated rather than exchanged, thus stymying the generation of surplus value. One key moment in the development of capitalism as a social system is the commodification of labor, i.e., the reconception of labor power as a thing that a laborer owns and can exchange for other things or refuse to do so. This concept of “free labor” also hypothetically distinguishes capitalism from coercive modes of production, in which labor can be expropriated as readily as material goods. The right to free labor was first established in Japan by the 1872 Emancipation Order for Prostitutes (*Geishōgi no kaihōrei* 芸娼妓の解放令, Edict #295), which prohibited the sale or indenture of humans (Frank 2005, 254). The Meiji Constitution retrenched this right, declaring in Chapter Two, Article 27 that “the right of property of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate” (Marutschke 2005, 209).

Hypothetically at least, the emancipation of labor shielded direct producers from the old practice of coercive expropriation in very clear terms. It also deprived much of the old rentier class of their stipends-in-kind (*chitsuroku* 秩禄) – which is to say, their means of sustenance. This radically disrupted Okinawan society. As previously mentioned, low and mid-level samurai were perpetually underemployed in the latter days of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. The Meiji state’s sudden dissolution of the royal government worsened this problem exponentially. Out of over 2,000 samurai employed in the courtly bureaucracy, only 378 lords and former retainers were classified by the Meiji government

as “with stipend” (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 150).⁶⁸ These high-ranking aristocrats received cash stipends from the central government until 1909–1910, at which point they received interest-bearing bonds. The remaining middle- and low-ranking samurai, whether they had formerly received a stipend or not, were classified as “without stipend.” Some of these samurai received severance grants or loans to help them establish a trade, while others received nothing.⁶⁹ As many of these samurai families had been teetering on the brink of poverty for decades, the effect on their financial and psychological wellbeing was crushing. Some were offered jobs with the Japanese administration or with companies founded by high-ranking former aristocrats. Most, however, were forced to find an entirely new way of earning their livelihood.⁷⁰

Fortunately, late nineteenth-century Naha was developing into a receptive commercial environment. According to Chinese envoys’ records, Naha already had a flourishing market for manufactured goods during Shō Kei’s reign (178). Around the time of Shō Boku’s reign, rice and other foodstuffs appeared for sale at the Naha market. During the late Ryūkyū Kingdom period, the Naha market (called *ufumachi* 大町) was dominated by the wives of fishermen, the wives of samurai employed in the royal bureaucracy who received their stipends in rice, and the wives of local peasants, who sold piglets, tofu, rice, vegetables, and home-produced woven goods (179). In the wake of the annexation, merchants from Kagoshima and Osaka flooded into Naha, taking advantage of sudden deregulation to set up manufactories and trading houses (172-177).⁷¹ Around the same time, the Shō and Takamine families started the first large-scale Okinawan-owned commercial enterprises, using their government stipends as backing capital. For

peasants who had lost their land through foreclosure, finding work in shipping or commerce in Naha may have seemed preferable to becoming a tenant farmer (a vocation with no future prospects whatsoever). Judging from newspaper reviews and other early sources, this “mass” (*taishū* 大衆) of atomized migrants articulated a demand for new social spaces and forms of cultural production, which disenfranchised courtly tradition-bearers answered.⁷²

Actor memoirs provide valuable insight into the earliest phase in the development of Okinawan commercial performing arts. According to the recollections of actor Tokashiki Shuryō, former courtiers established Naha's first commercial performance spaces in the early 1880s in the area around Shianbashi (思案橋) (Ikemiya 1980, 286). These temporary outdoor stages were reportedly encircled by straw bags or *kamasu* (呷), pronounced *kamajī* in the Naha dialect; accordingly, the first phase in the development of commercial theater has come to be known as “*kamajī* theater” (カマジー芝居). Actors Majikina Yūkō and Shimabukuro Kōyū recall that these venues accommodated very small audiences and charged an entrance fee of one or two *sen* per person (1987, 350). Because performances were often conducted without the permission of authorities, they were subject to interruption and censure by residents, and were sometimes dispersed by patrolmen. Around the same time period, other former courtiers established unlicensed pubs that featured performances of classical dance (351).

During the mid to late 1880s, the focal point of commercial performance in Naha shifted to the area around Kume Kōshibyō (久米孔子廟), then to Nakamō (仲毛) and Tsuji (辻) (Ikemiya 1980, 286). Accordingly, the second phase of the development of the

tradition is sometimes called “Nakamō theater” (*Nakamō shibai* 仲毛芝居). The first permanent venue was the Nakamō Enjiba (Jp. *Nakamō engeijō* 仲毛演芸場), which is mentioned in Matsuyama Denjūrō's 1889 publication *Ryūkyū jōruri*, and was thus probably constructed by 1887 or 1888 (287). According to Ikemiya, the Nakamō Enjiba was around 300 *tsubo* in size and could accommodate upwards of a thousand people (345). It was followed by several other theaters. In 1890, the Hon-enjiba (Jp. *hon-engeijō* 本演芸場), also called Shicha-nu-shibai (Jp. *shita-no-shibai* 下の芝居) was built in Tsuji Hatamichi (辻端道). In 1892, the Shin-enjiba (Jp. *shin-engeijō* 新演芸場), also called the Uī-nu-shibai (Jp. *ue-no-shibai* 上の芝居) was built, also in Tsuji Hatamichi. Around the same time, the Shuri Enjiba (or *sungā-shibai* 寒川芝居) was founded near Kannon-dō temple and Shuri castle (Ikemiya 1982a, 424). These four venues formed the core of the commercial performing arts scene for the next decade or so. Other venues were opened in the late Meiji and Taishō periods: in January 1910, Meiji-za (明治座); in July of the same year, Naka-za (中座); in March 1914, the movie theater Teikokukan (帝国館), which was also sometimes used for theater; in June 1915, Taishō Gekijō (大正劇場); in April 1922, the Naha Gekijō (那覇劇場); and in the early 1930s, Asahi Gekijō (旭劇場) (431-432; 436; 441; 446).⁷³

Notable members of the second and third generations of commercial performers received their training in these theaters. These generations included luminaries such as Tamagusuku Seijū (玉城盛重, 1868–1945), Tamagusuku Seigi (玉城盛義, 1889–1971), Majikina Yūso (真境名由祚, 1876–1946), Arakaki Shōgan (新垣松含, 1880–1937),

Tokashiki Shuryō (渡嘉敷守良, 1880–1953), Tokashiki Shurei (渡嘉敷守礼, 1883–1922), Ganeko Yaei (我如古弥栄, 1881–1943), Takara Chōsei (多嘉良 朝成, 1844–1944), Iraha Inkichi (伊良波尹吉, 1886–1951), Majikina Yūkō (真境名由康, 1888–1982), and Uema Seihin (上間正品, dates unknown). Many of these actors began their careers as children after being fostered or apprenticed by their parents to relatives or associates who were actors. Tokashiki Shuryō, for example, first appeared onstage at the Nakamō theater in 1886 at age seven (Ikemiya 1982a, 423). Similarly, Majikina Yūkō was adopted by his uncle Majikina Yūso in 1893 at age five, and first performed at age seven (Majikina 1987, 494-495).

Matsuyama and Tokashiki's descriptions suggest that early performances were relatively subdued affairs which took place during the afternoon and early evening, in part due to regulations and in part due to the problem of lighting (Ikemiya 1980, 288). Initially, commercial theater programs consisted mainly of courtly arts. Majikina, for example, recalls that afternoon and evening programs at Okinawa-za began with drum and *sanshin* performances, moved on to classical dance (*wakashū odori*, *onna odori*, and *nisai odori*) and *kyōgen*, and concluded with *kumiodori* (1987, 462-463). By the end of the 1880s, however, courtly performing arts appear to have begun to lose their novelty value to Okinawan commoners, who gradually began to desire to see representations of themselves and their own lifestyles on stage (Ikemiya 1980, 298). The first generation of commercial performers, who had been trained in a courtly context and maintained pride in the purity and propriety of their traditions, do not appear to have been well suited to respond to this desire (288). On the other hand, younger performers who had learned

their arts in a commercial context proved ready to innovate and play to the crowd. The second and third generations of commercial performers combined technical polish with restless creative drive.

Innovations and new compositions emerged quickly from the fertile intersection of transformative social forces and individual creative genius. As early as 1889, the Nakamō theater began arranging kumiodori in a more contemporary style under the management of a man from Shuri named Okushima (*Ryūkyū Shinpō*, January 11-13, 1913). Another traditional genre amenable to adaptation was *uchikumiodori* (打組踊), a type of theatrical dance. In *uchikumiodori*, a chorus of sanshin players sing a classical or folk song while two or more dancers enact a stylized tableaux of its narrative or main themes. The Nakamō theater also staged dances from outlying regions of Okinawa and the outer islands; these were categorized alongside newly composed dances under the broad heading of “miscellaneous dances” or *zō-odori* (雑踊り). *Zō-odori* can be distinguished from classical performing arts by their use of everyday clothing rather than elaborate *bingata*; folk songs rather than (or in addition to) classical songs; faster tempos; and livelier, less restrained movements and facial expressions. One major difference between *uchikumiodori* and *zō-odori* is that in the former, only the sanshin players sing, whereas in the latter, the dancers themselves contribute interjections between verses (*hayashikotoba* 囃子詞) (Ōno 2003, 27-28).

In the hands of gifted and inventive young performers, *uchikumiodori* and *zō-odori* proved effective media in which to theatricalize the pleasures, difficulties, and frivolities of the everyday lives of average Okinawans (*minkan* 民間) (Ikemiya 1980,

282). Ōno cites the dances *Guikū bushi* (「越来節」) and *Tanchamē bushi* (「谷茶前節」) as representative of the two genres (2003, 26-28). *Guikū bushi* is a flirtatious dialogue between an administrative official and a local girl in whom he takes an interest:

This is a thing that happened in Guikū district, a thing the official Fusato did.

Yuyasa! A thing he did.

He made the rounds of the late-night teahouses, with three pretty girls on his arm.

Yuyasa! Three girls on his arm.

He called out to the one he liked, Hey, hey, pretty baby – let’s go have some fun!

Yuyasa! Let’s go have some fun!

I want to go out too, but – my parents have my evening clothes! What can I do?

Yuyasa! My parents have my evening clothes (cited in Ōno 2003, 26-27).

The *uchikumiodori* dance itself follows the song closely, in accordance with the ideal of “dancing the lyrics” (*kashi wo mau* 歌詞を舞う) (Ikemiya 1982a, 304). Tomisato dances alone during the first two verses, after which the girl enters and the two dance together. The fact that the characters themselves do not sing is really the only thing distinguishing the dance *Guikū bushi* from a short musical drama (Ōno 2003, 27). Like *uchikumiodori*, *zō-odori* usually depict scenes drawn from the everyday lives of commoners, though they are sometimes more impressionistic than narrative. Take *Tanchamē bushi*, for example:

Chorus: I hear a school of silver-stripe herring have come to Tanchamē bay

Dancers: *Hei!*

Chorus: Have come to Tanchamē bay

Dancers: *Hei! Nancha-mashi-mashi! Deiangwa-soi-soi!*

Chorus: A bamboo-grass hat is a beautiful thing, atop the head of a beautiful girl

Dancers: Ah! Light crimson in color (cited in Ōno 2003, 28).

Tanchamē bushi is quite upbeat, and Ōno speculates that to late nineteenth century audiences, who were not used to seeing dancers sing, it would have seemed quite novel and refreshing (29). Perhaps more importantly, this subtle shift in the division of artistic labor between chorus and dancers marked a transitional stage between the “weak theatricality” of narrative dance and the “strong theatricality” of genres such as spoken historical drama (*shigeki*) and musical drama (*kageki*), in which the characters on stage sing or speak most of the lines (Ikemiya 1980, 342). As Ōno puts it, giving the dancers a voice “transforms them from mere personages on stage into fellow human beings, thereby diminishing the audience’s sense of distance from the stage and bringing on a greater feeling of sympathy” (2003, 28).

From narrative dance to comic musical drama

As *zō-odori* gained in popularity, artists began to expand the creative possibilities of other genres such as *uchikumiodori* and folk *kyōgen*, weaving together various stylistic elements to create new compositions and eventually new genres. In Tamagusuku Seijū’s narrative dance *Ayagu* (「アヤグ」) for example, the dancers sing the final two lines of the song. Ōno identifies this as a step beyond *zō-odori*, in which the dancers generally only utter interjections (*hayashikotoba* 囃子詞). It is important to mention at this point that clear genre distinctions do not appear in written records until the 1900s. During the

1880s-90s, a number of styles of performing arts were referred to simply as *kyōgen* and/or dance (*odori* 踊り). Performance programs that included kumiodori, classical dance, comic sketches, and semi-theatrical *zō-odori*, for example, were advertised simply as *odori*. According to Tokashiki Shuryō, the terms theater (*shibai* 芝居) and theater venue/company (*za* 座) did not enter Okinawan everyday speech until the late 1890s, when modern mainland Japanese theater started to become popular (Ikemiya 1980, 342).

In a 1932 *Ryūkyū Shinpō* interview, Tamagusuku claimed the dance *Ayagu* as the first work of modern Okinawan theater (*Okinawa shibai* 沖縄芝居). Most contemporary scholars, however, reserve the term *Okinawa shibai* for pieces in which the performers on stage carry most of the dialogue. Adopting this criterion, Ikemiya identifies the anonymous *Futari mekura* (「二人盲」), *Futari daimyō* (「二人大名」), and *Sakana azuke* (魚預け) as among the earliest modern Okinawan spoken dramas (*hōgen serifugeki* 方言セリフ劇) (1980, 292-295). All three are short comic sketches, around 10-20 minutes in length or less, and have been recorded in the form of plot outlines rather than scripts.⁷⁴ Ōno Michio likewise identifies Tamagusuku Seisei's *Abagwa-hei* (「あば小へい」) and *Rincha-abāchī* (「りんちゃあばあちい」) and Tokashiki Shurei's *Cha-uyā-yā* (「茶売やあ」) and *Suntōji* (「主ん妻」) as among the first short musical dramas (2003, 30). These are all also short, light-hearted sketches, but the lines are sung to folk melodies with *sanshin* accompaniment rather than spoken. Because the prosody is partially determined by the contour of the melody, the musical format is less immediately conducive to improvisation. A skilled performer, however, will find space for

improvised asides. As Ikemiya and Ōno make clear, early spoken and musical drama can both be understood as organically synthesizing the traditions with which most performers would have been familiar: courtly and folk music and dance, indigenous and Japanese kyōgen, the comic *maruman* episodes in kumiodori, and possibly the early modern *chondarā* tradition.

Okinawan comic sketches are generally farcical, populated by stock kyōgen characters such as “fun-loving husbands, tyrannical wives, slow-witted masters, shrewd servants, cowardly warriors, and greedy monks” (Ueda 1965, 20). As they were almost invariably improvised from templates in *kuchidate* (口立て) style, the texts we have should be regarded as documented performances rather than authoritative scripts. Several pieces, such as *Futari daimyō*, are more or less Okinawan translations of well-known Japanese kyōgen, while others, like *Futari mekura*, *Sakana azuke*, and *Cha-uyā-yā*, adapt common kyōgen conceits to an Okinawan context. All but one of the comic sketches described by Ōno and Ikemiya adhere to Jessica Milner Davis’ broad definition of farce: “Essentially, the comic spirit of farce is one which delights in taboo violation, but which avoids implied moral comment or social criticism, and which tends to debar empathy for its victims” (the one exception is *Abagwa-hei*, which is basically an elaboration of the flirtatious *uchikumiodori Guikū bushi* mentioned above; even this could be grasped as a sort of watered-down equilibrium farce) (2003, 141).

Like Japanese kyōgen, Okinawan short comic musical dramas can be broken down into the four categories of humiliation or deception farce, reversal farce, equilibrium or quarrel farce, and snowball or escalation farce (6-8).⁷⁵ *Futari mekura*, for

example, is a basic humiliation farce: two blind men (*zatō*) go for a picnic in the country and fall asleep under a tree; two young country bumpkins come upon them, steal their food, and replace it with rocks; the blind men bite the rocks, cry out in pain, become angry, and flail about; the country bumpkins proceed to trip them up and play other nasty tricks on them (Ikemiya 1980, 292). This scenario was likely derived from the Japanese *kyōgen Tsukimi zatō* (月見座頭), part of an entire category of *zatō kyōgen* which exploit blindness as a physical failing that justifies low-level victimization (on *Tsukimi zatō*, see Golay 1973, 142-144).⁷⁶ *Futari daimyō* and *Sakana azuke* provide examples of the slightly more layered genre of reversal farce (which is often less objectionable to contemporary viewers than simple humiliation farce). In *Futari daimyō*, two traveling samurai encounter two peasants on a country road and force them to carry their luggage, gradually piling more and more on the peasants' backs, including jars of wine and finally even their swords. As the samurai stride forward fanning themselves, the peasants, overburdened and sweating, stop and drink some of the wine. Outraged, the samurai move to strike the peasants with their fans, at which point the peasants draw the hapless warriors' own swords and chase them around the stage (Ikemiya 1980, 293). In *Sakana azuke*, a samurai entrusts a dead fish on the verge of spoiling to a confused peasant and says he'll return for it in a couple of days. When he returns, nothing is left but a skeleton. He explodes in anger, telling the peasant that the fish in question was a magical fish that laid golden eggs, and demanding recompense. The peasant seeks out his clever uncle, who confronts the samurai, asking him: "how many children have your honorable departed ancestors given birth to recently?" The samurai replies mockingly that dead

ancestors can't bear children, to which the uncle replies: "yet a rotting fish can give birth to golden eggs?" The peasants then laugh the would-be huckster off the stage (293-294).

There is a long tradition of interpreting theatrical farce as a means of subverting social hierarchies on a symbolic level.⁷⁷ Perhaps the most well known theoretical model of farce-as-resistance is Mikhail Bahktin's concept of the carnivalesque (see *Rabelais and his World*, 1941). A quasi-Bahktinian interpretation was first applied to kyōgen by Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1966), a Chinese scholar who produced pioneering translations of kyōgen and other forms of Japanese literature. Zhou frames kyōgen as a form of proto-socialist "proletarian theater," arguing that it "shows contempt for and resistance toward the authority of the rulers and is the mainstream of a comic literature of the masses" (cited in Lafleur 1986, 136). William Lafleur identifies two common features of traditional Japanese comedy that problematize Zhou's interpretation: first, the tendency to mock the marginalized and downtrodden, and second, the fact that comic performances were not only permitted but often patronized by the ruling class (1986, 136-137). As *Futari mekura* demonstrates, Okinawan comic sketches also exhibit a tendency to mock the powerless; while early Okinawan commercial theater did not enjoy the patronage of the state, it was certainly not perceived as enough of a threat to warrant being banned or even rigorously policed. All indications are that the regulations imposed on performing arts during the late 1800s and early 1900s focused less on seditious content than on issues of public morality and safety, such as vulgarity, connections to prostitution, potential fire hazards, and problems with overcrowding and cleanliness (this

would change during the 1930s, when Okinawan cultural difference from Japanese norms began to be perceived as a threat) (Ikemiya 1980, 288; Ōno 2003, 93).

This being said, Lafleur also cautions against dismissing traditional comic theater as simple escapism, as this would reduce its productive social function to a mere form of “psychological release for the players and their audiences” (137). Following Satake Akihiro, Lafleur links *kyōgen* to the politically ambivalent concept of “the below overcoming the above” or *gekokujō* (下克上), a phrase which writers of the Muromachi period frequently used to explain “sudden and drastic social change, such as the quick demise of a strong clan or the sudden rise in fortune and prestige on the part of a previously lowly person or group” (138; cf. Satake 1967). Lafleur continues:

Whereas in *nō* change is envisioned as altered status in the cosmic taxonomy (*rokudō*), which is achieved through eventual rebirth and as the culmination of much religious practice, in *kyōgen* change occurs in the much more empirical world of ordinary society. The difference in pace between *nō* and *kyōgen* is therefore not merely a matter of footwork and bodily movement on stage; it extends to the world view of each art form (139).

Lafleur argues that *kyōgen*'s embrace of materialism and self-interest “represents the provision not just of lighthearted playfulness but of an alternate vision of life and society ... [which is] antihierarchical and ‘modern’” (144). According to Lafleur, “this matter goes to the heart of the way in which theater in late medieval Japan played a significant role in the cognitive and social [re-]ordering of the world” (143). *Kyōgen*'s “antihierarchical and ‘modern’” vision appealed to the late medieval/early modern

Japanese warrior elite and urban commoners alike because both groups had benefitted from new opportunities for upward mobility – the former through their displacement of the courtly aristocracy, and the latter through their canny manipulation of expanding markets, tax loopholes, and an evolving financial system. For post-annexation Okinawans, who had until recently been bound by status-based regulations governing nearly every aspect of life, simple meritocratic reversal farces such as *Futari daimyō* and *Sakana azuke* may have been similarly compelling.

The genesis of tragic musical drama: *Uyanma* (「親阿母」)

Wells and Davis echo an informal consensus when they assert matter-of-factly that farce is “the lowest” comic form (2006, 128). If any theatrical genre has garnered as much critical disdain as farce, it is undoubtedly melodrama. Popular audiences throughout history and around the world, on the other hand, have embraced both farce and melodrama without reserve. Okinawan audiences are no exception. From the early 1900s until well after the war, tragic musical dramas (*hi-kageki* 悲歌劇) with intensely melodramatic elements were arguably the most popular performance genre in Okinawa. As Zwicker and Ito note in their recent studies of Edo and Meiji period Japanese sentimental novels, the loan word “melodrama” (メロドラマ) did not index a self-conscious genre or analytical category in prewar Japanese or Okinawan literary discourse (2006; 2008). Since the eighteenth century, however, a strongly melodramatic undercurrent has run through Japanese literary and theatrical production. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, a central theme in both early modern Japanese

sentimental literature and theater and Ryūkyūan kumiodori is the tension between social obligation (*giri*) and personal emotion and desire (*ninjō*). As we have seen, *giri/ninjō* tensions also run through Ryūkyūan kumiodori and the sentimental literature of Heshikiya Chōbin and his admirers. Both kumiodori and Japanese and Ryūkyūan sentimental literature strongly influenced the evolution of modern Okinawa tragic musical drama, which developed its own historically situated strategies for resolving *giri/ninjō* tensions.

The first non-comic works performed on the modern Okinawan commercial stage were traditional kumiodori. From the late 1880s onward, however, audience demand drove fairly rapid stylistic innovation, resulting in the development of new popular genres such as modernized *uchikumiodori*, *zō-odori*, and comic spoken and musical dramas. This being said, courtly kumiodori never entirely lost its appeal, especially among the former hereditary elite and the emerging economic and educational elite, who embraced it as an indigenous “high culture” tradition comparable to Japanese *nō* and Western opera (this was held up as evidence of civilizational parity; see *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, June 13, 1910). In 1892, a company called Sanjū Shinbun-sha published the first mass-printed compilation of kumiodori under the title *Ryūkyū odori kyōgen* (「琉球踊狂言」) (Okinawa Geinō Nenpyō Sakusei Kenkyūkai 2010, 116). The availability of printed scripts helped facilitate commercial performance: throughout the 1890s and 1900s, classical kumiodori by Tamagusuku Chōkun, Tasato Chōchoku, and others often shared the stage with newly-composed *uchikumiodori*, *zō-odori*, and comic sketches. Unsurprisingly, Heshikiya Chōbin’s kumiodori *Temizu no en* proved enduringly popular,

with performances recorded in 1893, 1900, 1907, 1911, 1915, and 1918 (this is almost certainly not an exhaustive list, as many performances went unrecorded, especially prior to the 1900s) (Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Chōsa Yōseika 2004, 3-7).

Prior to 1898, primary sources regarding popular musical drama are scarce; however, it is safe to speculate with Ikemiya that most early experiments utilized stylistic and structural elements borrowed from kumiodori to extend and elaborate the kind of everyday narratives which had proved popular in *uchikumiodori* and *zō-odori* (Ikemiya 1980, 295-296). Folk music and elements of festival performing arts also found their way into early musical dramas.⁷⁸ The short musical drama *Uyanma* (The Kept Woman) exemplifies this syncretic stylistic model. We do not know exactly when and where it was first performed, although Basil Hall Chamberlain's 1895 *Essay in Aid of a Grammar and Dictionary of the Luchuan Language* utilizes examples drawn from its text. Like the comic musical sketches described in the previous section, *Uyanma* was almost invariably collectively composed in semi-improvised style (*kuchidate*).⁷⁹ It is set during the Ryūkyū Kingdom period. The male protagonist is a resident administrative official (*zaiban* 在番) sent by the royal court to govern an island in the distant Yaeyama group. Recalled suddenly to Shuri, he must bid farewell to his local maidservant and consort (*Uyanma* 親阿母), with whom he has fallen in love and fathered a son. By 1904, *Uyanma* had become a standard in the developing popular musical theater repertory, appearing in a *Ryūkyū Shinpō* review as a benchmark against which newer works were judged (January 1, 1904).

Although *Uyanma* takes place in one act, it is significantly longer than previous comic musical dramas (around 30 minutes). It is also structurally and musically more complex, involving six characters and featuring five songs (“Yonaguni shonganē bushi,” “Hatōma bushi,” “Tōbarumā bushi,” “Kohama bushi,” and “Danju-kariyushi”). The play opens with the Yaeyaman song “Yonaguni shonganē bushi,” sung by a chorus of male *sanshin* players in kumiodori fashion. A ship’s captain enters dancing via the *hanamichi*, announces that he has come to take the Resident back to Okinawa island, and dances as the chorus sings “Hatōma bushi” (with lyrics from the captain’s perspective). The Resident enters, and the Captain informs him that they must set sail that day, then tells a peasant to fetch the Resident’s consort and their son, Sanrā-gwa (三良小). These two enter as the chorus sings “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” (this time the lyrics adopt the Consort’s perspective). The Resident, the Consort, and Sanrā-gwa proceed to have an anguished conversation about their parting. Eventually, the Captain announces that they must sail immediately to take advantage of the wind, and the Resident reluctantly boards the ship and leaves. The dialogue is punctuated throughout with songs: five more verses of “Yonaguni shonganē bushi,” “Tōbarā bushi,” another verse of “Yonaguni shonganē bushi,” and “Kohama bushi.” The lyrics adopt the perspective of the Consort, then the Resident, and finally the Consort again, as the rest of the characters leave the stage. The play closes with “Danju-kariyushi,” sung by the chorus from the perspective of the Consort, who laments her fate while praying for the Resident’s safe journey.

On a stylistic and musical level, *Uyanma* clearly recalls classical kumiodori. Movement, dialogue, and song are slow, stylized, and restrained, and extravagant

displays of emotion are avoided. The *suriashi* style of graceful sliding walk is used, as are allusive gestures borrowed from kumiodori and classical dance (cf. Yano 2003, 41-43). As in kumiodori, these techniques must be understood as comprising a type of symbolic grammar with which to construct character-types with generically imputable virtues and vices. Also as in kumiodori, choral interludes are used to express the characters' inner states; however, unlike in kumiodori, folk songs as well as songs from the Shuri courtly tradition are used. This being said, the main melody employed ("Yonaguni shonganē bushi") belongs to the *fushiuta* genre of Yaeyaman song, which shares many stylistic characteristics with the Shuri courtly tradition and was associated with the local elite (Gillan 2012, 31). Like classical courtly song, Yaeyaman *fushiuta* melodies can be fitted to the *ryūka* poetic form (8-8-8-6 mora). This likely expedited the style's incorporation into a kumiodori-derived structure. As in kumiodori – and in distinction to *zō-odori* commercial dance – most of the dialogue is assigned to the characters on stage. The lines are not chanted to kumiodori's fixed patterns, but neither are they recited to folk song *ostinati* as in later musical dramas. Instead, the play's adult male characters use a restrained, slightly stylized natural speech pattern, while the Consort and the child Sanrā-gwa speak in a strident semi-chant reminiscent of the kumiodori female chant pattern. These stylistic features lead Ikemiya to argue that *Uyanma* represents an intermediary stage between courtly kumiodori and mature Okinawan popular musical drama, and that it precedes popular theater's division into the distinct genres of musical drama (*kageki*) and spoken drama (*hōgen serifu-geki*) (1980,

298). Ikemiya further suggests that this was probably typical of commercial theater of the Meiji 20s (298-299).

While stylistically conservative, *Uyanma* represents a clear thematic break from the courtly kumiodori tradition exemplified by Tamagusuku Chōkun and Tasato Chōchoku's celebratory, didactic works. Like Wakamatsi – the archetypal protagonist of Tamagusuku Chōkun's *Shūshin kane'iri* – the Resident in *Uyanma* is a young aristocratic male required to choose between his obligation to the royal court and his personal desires and emotional attachments. In the end, obligation wins out, but it is a Pyrrhic victory. The Resident displays little of the self-control that underpins Wakamatsi's aristocratic masculine virtue. Wakamatsi aspires to his bureaucratic duties; the Resident, on the other hand, has his duties thrust upon him. He tries in vain to delay the departure (“Surely, [Captain] Higa, it can't hurt / To wait two days, or three?”). When the Consort and their son Sanrā-gwa enter, the Resident is “paralyzed with sorrow” and cannot meet her gaze. He tries to win their sympathy with promises of gifts. Only after repeated prodding by the Captain does he resign himself to boarding the ship. As they depart, he laments his fate via the medium of the chorus (“I cannot leave / Although of course I cannot stay / To be bereft of one's own child / How bitter!”). While the Resident is portrayed in a sympathetic light, he is perilously close to lacking the critical virtue of principled self-mastery which Ryūkyūan Confucian ideologues promoted as distinguishing the governing class from the governed. This appears even more striking in contrast to the Consort, who maintains enough composure to bracket self-interest and express her hope for the Resident's well being (“Every night I served your dinner, and every morning your

breakfast / Now an ocean lies between us / I know not how I'll manage / But I pray for your safe journey"). Not only does *Uyanma* elevate a low-status woman to the role of primary protagonist, it portrays her as meeting her despair with greater dignity than her aristocratic male partner.

Who was this groundbreaking protagonist historically? According to the Shuri-Naha Dialect Dictionary, the word *uya-anmā* (Jp. *oya-abo*, "mother") refers to concubines of resident officials who had borne them children (Okinawa Center of Language Study 2003). Under the Ryūkyū Kingdom, resident officials were dispatched from the royal capital of Shuri to outlying islands in order to oversee local administrators and represent the royal state. During these officials' tenure, local women were expected to provide for their material needs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this often included sex. Ikemiya clarifies that *uyanma* was an "honorary title" – other, less elegant names for these women include "local wives" (*genchitsuma*), "temporary wives" (*karitsuma*), and "kept women" (*makanai onna*) (1980, 346; cf. Nishizato 1977). Like all low-status outer islanders, "kept women" were subject to expropriation: in this case, the expropriation of domestic and sexual labor. They were most likely also subject to a range of more specific social and psychological pressures.

On the one hand, becoming a resident official's consort could bring material benefits, as the character Saburō hints at in the play ("He's sure to send you lovely gifts with every mail boat!"). More importantly, the local children of resident officials were sometimes extended their fathers' aristocratic status. This potential for intergenerational advancement is also hinted at in the play via the Resident's promise to send his son "ink

and brushes” and “a fine kimono” – shorthand for literacy and presentable cultural capital, ergo the potential for social mobility. On the other hand, consorts lacked the rights of Okinawan wives, and had no opportunity for sustainable upward mobility. In keeping with the Ryūkyūan state’s systematic discrimination against Sakishima islanders, resident officials were forbidden from bringing their “local wives” or children back to Okinawa island (Meyer 2007, 240). Moreover, it is not as if most women became *genchi-tsuma* by choice. As if being subject to coerced labor and sexual exploitation were not enough, the stigma of having been indentured would have inevitably jeopardized a woman’s future standing in her endogamous community. At the very least, it would have limited her prospects for legitimate marriage. As Ikemiya notes, the title of *Uyanma* must be understood as “a refraction of the legitimate title of ‘wife’; it is a sign of the very status limitations [the Consort] wishes to overcome” (1980, 297).

Echoing Tamae Seiryō’s analysis of Heshikiya Chōbin, Ikemiya suggests that *Uyanma*’s idealized portrayal of cross-status romance can be read as anti-feudal, arguing that its tragedy inheres in “the fact that although the couple’s eventual separation is non-negotiable, they seek to transcend social boundaries and suffer the universally human pain of bereavement ... If kumiodori, which takes filial piety as its main theme, can be interpreted as protecting and supplementing the feudal order, then kageki can be interpreted as the tragedy of the spirit which sought to tear the feudal order to pieces” (297). Ikemiya’s content analysis resonates strongly with Hegel’s observation in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* that love and honor are the pathea most commonly encountered in romantic art, and that their collision is often the inception of romantic drama.⁸⁰ Even

accepting it as a given that the Resident must return to Okinawa, there is no material reason why he could not try to bring the Consort and their son with him, aside from the damage it would do to the concept of honor imputed to his social standing. This conceit was a mainstay of romantic tragic drama in Europe as well: “from a certain point of view,” he notes, “it would be contrary to the honor of a man in a higher class to love a girl of a lower class” (Hegel 1975, 565). In Weberian terms, *Uyanma* challenges this concept of “*ethos* based on status honor,” which, “consolidated by caprice alone into legal provision, presumes to set insuperable barriers to the inherently justified freedom of the spirit” (Weber 1968, 1105; Hegel 1975, 210).

We can get a sense of the perceived intractability of this capricious provision by tracing the use of nature imagery in *Uyanma*. The metonymic figures of the wind (*kaji* 風) and the auspicious wind (*junpū* 順風) are particularly important. The wind is introduced in the opening song, “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” (“The wind is blowing from the south / It is a favorable wind”), then immediately linked to the Resident’s inevitable departure in the play’s first spoken stanza (“The wind today is marvelously favorable – I believe I’ll fetch his lordship and suggest we take our leave”). The Captain invokes the wind in his mildly coercive discussion with the Resident (“a wind like this – we can’t afford to miss it”), to which the Resident reacts with characteristic resignation (“A wind like this... Of course... I understand”). The Consort goes on to impugn the wind as the agent of her suffering (“I do not hate the captain / It’s the wind that fills the sails / That I hate with all my heart”), after which the Captain signals the end of the parting ritual by deferring agency to the wind (“Ah! It’s this wind now!”). The Consort laments the

wind's cruelty once more ("When the wind fills out the headsail / It whips a tear from my eye"), and the chorus develops the theme of deferred agency as the Captain and the Resident board the ship and exit stage ("In port, we depend on the anchor / At sea, we depend on the wind alone").

Of course, the cause behind the Consort's suffering is not the wind, nor fate, but the Resident's social status and the entire institutional apparatus behind it. It carries the full force of "social institutions granted the appearance of naturalness by history, which at the same time work within the mass consciousness structured by these institutions to create a sense of comfort and pleasure" (Tosaka 2001, 15). Interestingly, the term *fūzoku*, on which Tosaka focuses his analysis, incorporates the Chinese character for wind. This character appears in compounds that designate local tradition (*kofū* 古風) and local climate (*fūdo* 風土). It is also used in a common idiomatic term for criticism or oppression (*kazeatari* 風当たり). Throughout *Uyanma*, the southern wind symbolizes the power of reified social custom to dictate an individual's fate. But might this fixation on the ineluctability of fate and tradition in fact suggest that these epistemic constants were becoming de-naturalized, and that new concepts of interpersonal and historical agency were taking shape?

Dynamics of representation during the Preservation of Old Customs period

While it would be anachronistic to interpret *Uyanma* as politically committed literature in the contemporary sense of the term, its creator clearly had a finger on the pulse of late nineteenth century Japan. In his 1875 *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*,

liberal intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi also evokes the wind as a historical-temporal symbol, writing that “the movement of [a country’s] knowledge and virtue resembles that of a strong wind, or the current of a river,” and suggesting that from a proper vantage point, scholars and statesmen can “judge its degree of advancement or backwardness” (2010 [1875], 60). Fukuzawa’s use of nature imagery to depict the movement of an individual or a society through time was hardly novel.⁸¹ He goes on, however, to propose that we can not only observe such flows, but also use our observations to determine ways to channel them. Fukuzawa’s proposal embodies the modernizing imperative to subject the pre-given world, whether natural or social, to critical reason. In *Uyanma*, we can glimpse a flash of this imperative. While status-based contingencies are still represented as natural, their emergence from a subtextual to a textual level – i.e., their mutation from presuppositions into objects of discourse – prefigures their transformation into objects of social action.

As we have seen, the transformative vision laid out by the Meiji state was ambitious to say the least. It required not only a total overhaul of the institutions of governance, but also “the reorganization of heterogeneous social groups, which possessed neither a shared consciousness of ‘national’ belonging nor a conception of the modern nation-state, into individual subjects willing without hesitation to identify their destinies with that of the country” (Hirano 2014, 200). This shift in the conception of Japanese subjecthood drove individuals to question the nature of power relations (Gluck 1985, 18). As Carol Gluck observes, Meiji Japanese political discourse evinces a fascination with emergent social actors and their correlative spaces of social action: citizens (*kokumin*)

and the state (*kokka*), the people (*jinmin*) and society (*shakai*), the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) and the national polity (*kokutai*) (25). Significantly, this kind of discourse was not restricted to the metropolis. Records suggest that by the 1880s, “people throughout Japan, in rural and urban areas alike, had come to view political participation and representation as a matter of right rather than custom” (Steele 1989, 748). This is not to say that Japanese peasants prior to the Meiji period were absent from the public sphere – the tradition of political petitioning has deep roots in Japanese history. Nevertheless, we cannot understate the significance of this shift in political consciousness from an episteme of feudal benevolence to an episteme of legally guaranteed rights.

During the 1890s, the idea that every citizen could speak and act publically to bring about political change took root in Okinawa as well. This shows most clearly in the 1892-1895 Miyako peasants’ movement to abolish status privilege and the per-capita tax (*nintōzei haishi undō* 人頭税廃止運動) (Shimajiri 1977, 65-70). In 1892, with assistance from Okinawan administrator Gusukuma Seian and mainland Japanese entrepreneur Nakamura Jissaku, a coalition of Miyako peasants submitted petitions to Yoshimura Kidahiro, the Japanese head of the island office, and Narahara Shigeru, the newly-appointed governor. The petition requests the reform of the feudal land and tax system, the abolition of officials’ right to keep indentured servants and “kept women” (*yadohiki-onna*), the abolition of the expropriative custom of “gratitude rice,” and the abolition of corvée labor.⁸² According to Shimajiri, upon hearing the peasants’ complaints, the Japanese island office director Yoshimura “investigated the matter, and

reported outrageous abuses; based on this report, the governor resolved to ban these practices” (1977, 70).

The peasants’ petition decision to go over the heads of local officials and directly address the Japanese-appointed administration outraged Miyako elites, who declared a general administrative strike. The administration capitulated and gave up on enforcing the ban. The peasants responded boldly by sending a delegation to petition the National Diet in Tokyo. With Nakamura’s aid, the Miyako delegation succeeded in securing both media attention and the patronage of high profile politicians, most notably Takada Sanae and Hamana Shimpei of the Lower House and Soga Sukenori of the House of Peers, who pressed the issue during the National Diet session of January 1895. This sparked a debate over policy toward Okinawa in general, which had the ironic effect of overshadowing the Miyako movement’s specific demands (Matsumura 2007, 161-165). Nevertheless, the peasants’ strategy of circumventing intransigent local authorities and bringing their interests and legal claims directly to the National Diet demonstrates a surprising degree of fluency with Japan’s “new political vocabulary” of constitutionalism and state nationalism, which included “expectations that local issues could and should be addressed at the center” (Steele 1989, 731).

While there is no evidence of a concrete connection between the political unrest of the 1880s–90s and the development of commercial performing arts in Naha, I believe they can be meaningfully co-interpreted on a structural level. As previously argued, commercial theater took shape at the interstice of two transformational processes: the degradation of the corporate village system and labor migration to Naha established a

demand for new forms of cultural production, while the pauperization of former courtly performing artists created a supply. The legal precondition for both of these processes was the elimination of status privilege and the establishment of the equal right of citizens to own property, most crucially his or her own labor. Under the Constitution of 1890, the central government assumed the responsibility of protecting this and other civil rights.

The Miyako peasants' movement argued quite forcefully that the Preservation of Old Customs policy, which maintained aspects of status privilege such as the aristocracy's exemption from taxes and local officials' right to keep indentured servants, contradicted both the aims laid out in the Meiji Charter Oath and the rights established in the Meiji Constitution.⁸³ While few works of Okinawan commercial theater explicitly address this contradiction, many address popular frustration with its ill effects. Musical farces based on the principle of *gekokujō* ("the below overcoming the above"), which humorously uphold the common-sense claims of peasants against the arrogant and irrational presumptions of samurai, can be understood as a bitterly ironic commentary on the arbitrary retention of status privilege under the Preservation of Old Customs policy. On a darker note, the musical drama *Uyanma* suggests that status inequality and the institution of unfree labor can only be upheld at a terrible human cost.

I find it particularly significant that both the Miyako peasants' petition and the play *Uyanma* bring up the issue of sexual indenture. Caught at the intersection of status- and gender-based structures of domination, "kept women" were doubly displaced. They were not just subordinate, but subaltern in the strong sense of the word – the Okinawan equivalent of Spivak's figurative "poorest woman of the South" (1999, 6). We can

interpret the character of the kept woman as a synecdoche for the position of low-status Okinawans vis-à-vis the traditional aristocracy, as well as for the position of Yaeyama and Miyako vis-à-vis Okinawa. By dignifying such a woman as a bearer of moral capacities and a claimant to obligations, *Uyanma* denaturalizes one of the constitutive exclusions of Old Ryūkyūan society. While we cannot know whether the creators of *Uyanma* were aware of the Emancipation Order for Prostitutes or the Miyako peasants' petition, both the play and the peasants' petition invoke sexual indenture to exemplify the social and human costs of regional and status discrimination.

Chapter 4. The Meiji theater as a space of social practice

Uneven development and the “agrarian problem”

Historian Nishizato Kikō breaks down prewar Okinawan modernity into a “primary Okinawan modern period” (*kindai zenki* 近代前期), marked by the Preservation of Old Customs policy, and a “secondary modern period” (*kindai kōki* 近代後期), marked by the introduction of modern institutions and the formation of ethnic and class identities and fractures. A particular convergence of geopolitical events leading up to the First Sino-Japanese War made Nishizato’s “secondary modernization” possible. In the wake of the 1882 Imo Incident, the focus of Japan-China tensions shifted from the Ryūkyū archipelago to Korea, bringing negotiations on dividing the islands to a halt. Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War closed the lingering possibility that China might threaten Japan’s sovereignty over any of the islands. This diminished the conservative former aristocracy’s political leverage, allowing the state to transition from a model of indirect rule to a model of centralized direct governance, the “special prefectural governance system” (*tokubetsu fukensei* 特別府県制) (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 251). In 1896, the prefectural office instituted Orders #13 and 19 (*Okinawa ken gunsei kitei* and *Okinawa ken kusei*), which restructured the county and ward system, and Orders #56 and 352 (*Okinawa ken magiri to riin kitei* and *Okinawa ken magiri kitei*), which reorganized administrative zoning in the outer islands (Matsumura 2007, 211). The following year, the mainland Japanese legal system was imported to

Okinawa, and in 1898 a department was established to administer land reform (193). Between 1899 and 1903, land values were re-assessed and the Preservation of Old Customs system of taxation-in-kind was replaced by a monetized land and consumption tax system (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 250).

On an ideological level, these reforms can be understood as an attempt to integrate Okinawa into the ostensibly homogenous national polity (*kokutai* 国体) (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 250). On a pragmatic level, they can be understood as an attempt to increase the prefecture's ability to bear its share of the fiscal burden of local infrastructural development, military expenditures, and the other inherent expenses of modern nationhood (251). This required the state to modernize the land and tax system and foster the growth of a property-owning class capable of assuming the tax burden (251-252). This was no mean undertaking, as it involved dismantling and replacing the patchwork of semi-autonomous extractive institutions that had been allowed to stay in force under the Preservation of Old Customs policy. The reform process was begun in the Naha/Shuri area and gradually extended outward to rural areas of Okinawa Island and the outer islands, and was culminated in 1903 (252). Initially, the new tax system consisted of a five percent tax on assessed land values and five percent consumption taxes on alcohol and sugar. In the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, however, taxes on land, alcohol, and sugar were increased dramatically to 20%, and additional consumption taxes were levied on textiles, salt, and other goods (253).

These reforms provided the impetus for an expansion of Okinawa's consumer economy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Naha already had a flourishing market

for foodstuffs and woven goods during the early modern period. The introduction of new commodities by mainland Japanese merchants, the monetization of the tax burden, and simple economic necessity provided new impetus for a greatly increased number of Okinawans to participate in this burgeoning commodity market. Most of the mainland Japanese merchants operating in Naha were from Kyūshū (primarily Kagoshima and Miyazaki) or Kansai, though some came from as far away as Tōkyō and Fukuoka. The Kagoshima merchants traded mostly in rice and other foodstuffs, while the Kansai merchants traded mostly in sugar. Both contingents also imported everyday goods such as kitchenware, lamps, cotton, flannel, tea, books and newspapers, and kitchenware. In 1892, Kagoshima-based merchants built the prefecture's first Western-style building in Naha, staging a grand opening featuring *eisā* and dance performances (194). Around the same time, an increasing number of merchants also began importing luxury goods such as Japanese sake, beer, and timepieces (229). Census records indicate that by 1905, there were around 126 large purchasers, 62 goods brokers, and 1,916 petty merchants in the Naha area (179).

As Naha emerged as a commerce hub, it began to take on the demographic, infrastructural, and material cultural features of a modern city (362). Between 1880 and 1903, Naha's population surged from 23,664 to 42,842, a rate of growth almost equal to that of Tokyo (Dana 1998, 25; cf. Hayami 2002). This consistent population inflow allowed Naha to develop as a regional industrial center, albeit on a relatively petty scale (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 361-362). In 1890, Naha had only two large manufactories – the Okinawa Weaving Factory (*Okinawa orikōjō* 沖縄織工場, 製紙所),

which produced textiles, and the Okinawa Industrial Corporation (*Okinawa sangō kaisha* 沖縄産業会社), which produced shōyū and indigo dye. By 1903, there were ten factories registered in the Naha area: seven in Naha-ku, one in Shuri-ku (*Okinawa shōkōjō*), and one in Mawashi-magire (a meat-packing plant, *Okinawa chozō shokuhin kabushiki-gaisha* 沖縄貯蔵食品株式会社). The largest were the Okinawa Weaving Factory, which employed 133 people, and a lacquer-ware factory (*Yoneda shikki seizōshō* 米田漆器製造所), which employed 40 people. The only other large factory in the prefecture at the time was a tobacco plant in Itoman (*Itoman tabako seizō gōmei-gaisha* 糸満煙草製造合名会社). By 1913, there were 19 factories and over 20 hat-weaving facilities in the Naha area.

On the levels of infrastructure and material culture as well, Naha gradually began to acquire the visage of modernity. The prefecture's first Western-style medical facility, for example, was a military clinic established in 1876 in the Nakamō area of Naha; in 1878–1879, this clinic was relocated to the Nishimura area and renamed the Okinawa Prefectural Clinic (188). Apparently the effectiveness of the clinic's Western medical practices impressed Naha residents (227). Between 1883 and 1885, health director Naichi Noriteru (仲地紀照) expanded the prefecture's medical facilities and spearheaded the establishment of a medical school and a maternity ward at the Okinawa Prefectural Clinic. The 1880s also saw the establishment of a Red Cross office, pharmacies, dentists' practices, hygiene-oriented public services such as sewage maintenance and street cleaning, and health regulations regarding the sale of food and drinking water (190-192). Japanese postal service was extended to Naha in 1884 (190). Between 1883 and 1884,

the Ministry of the Interior employed around 7,900 skilled stone workers and over 30,000 laborers to construct new roads in the Naha/Shuri area, which enabled rickshaws and carriages to travel longer distances; by 1893, there were over 900 rickshaws in operation in the area (192). In 1890, the Ministry of the Interior established a weather monitoring station employing modern equipment, while in 1897 a telegraph machine was installed in the Naha city post office (191-193). An Osaka-based electrical company started laying groundwork for a power plant in Naha in 1908; in 1910, it went online under the name Okinawa Denki. The next year, Okinawa Denki founded a railway company and received permission to lay track. The first stretch of electric railway, between Daemon-mae and Shuri, opened in 1914.

Despite these outward signs of modernization and even petty industrialization, historians generally assert that prewar Okinawa failed to develop an “urban industrial proletariat” in the classical sense of the term (368). According to prefectural office statistics, the number of factory laborers in prewar Okinawa never exceeded around 2,000 out of 38,274 wage laborers and 278,683 total working persons (Taminato 1977, 169-171).⁸⁴ These figures, however, do not include miners or tertiary sector workers (transportation, communications, utilities and public services, etc.). Inclusive of these workers, Taminato estimates the total number of “modern laborers” (*kindai rōdōsha* 近代労働者) in Okinawa during the Taishō and Shōwa periods as between 10,000 and 25,000 (171). Because clerks, low-level education workers, and other low-level white-collar workers also worked for wages and lived a “proletarian lifestyle,” Taminato argues that they should be included in the category of “modern laborers” as well. He concludes that

while Okinawa as a whole remained solidly agrarian, prewar Naha did indeed see the formation of a wage-earning proletariat. He further asserts that because many agricultural laborers were transient and worked on a temporary basis for wages, they should not be categorized as farmers, but rather as a kind of agricultural proletariat (171-172). The inchoate “proletarian class” was thus “intimately connected to the peasantry” (Naha Shishi Henshū linkai 1974 vol. 2, 362).

All of this innovation and growth was made possible, of course, by the consistent inflow of both migrants and tax revenues from the impoverished countryside. While land and tax reform signaled the end of the Preservation of Old Customs period and the inception of properly capitalist relations of production, it did not lead to significant economic growth. This is in part because development policy in Okinawa remained myopically focused on sugar production (Kaneshiro 1977, 115). This was in accordance with the early Meiji macroeconomic model of import substitution.⁸⁵ During the 1880s, in an effort to increase Okinawan sugar output, the central government dispatched agriculturalists to instruct peasants in modern cultivation and production techniques and provided loans to rural black sugar cultivators.⁸⁶ Between 1888 and 1899, the amount of land planted with sugarcane increased from 2,000 *chō* to 6,850 *chō* (Naha Shishi Henshū linkai 1974 vol. 2, 253). Despite these efforts, however, the increase in percentage of land planted with sugarcane failed to produce a proportional increase in actual output (Aniya 1977, 153). To make matters worse, the state maintained contradictory and inefficient tax protocols that disproportionately impacted small producers, thereby de-incentivizing production (Kaneshiro 1977, 119). According to agriculturalist and

peoples' rights advocate Gusukuma Seian, profit margins in Miyako were so low that peasants sometimes simply dumped their surplus sugarcane rather than processing it for sale (Matsumura 2007, 152). Some historians argue that these economic policies were calculated to reproduce Okinawa's position as a domestic periphery (Tomiyaama 1995, 6).

Japan's 1895 acquisition of Taiwan allowed the state to sidestep these impasses by shifting from domestic import substitution to a colonial mode of production (cf. Banaji 1972). Sugar producers in Taiwan took full advantage of coerced labor to manufacture refined sugar on a large scale, reaching profit margins unattainable through the use of wage labor. In 1900, the state established the Taiwan Sugar Manufacture Company with 1,000,000 yen in capital. By 1906, it had constructed a number of large refineries (Matsumura 2007, 175; 271).⁸⁷ This rendered the Okinawan black sugar industry more or less superfluous to the national interest. In 1901, 1902, and 1904, the Okinawan prefectural office submitted petitions for further development assistance, but these petitions were routinely ignored (Kaneshiro 1977, 120).⁸⁸ To make matters worse, the central government consistently levied a disproportionately high tax rate on the prefecture: in 1914, for example, Okinawa paid 4,849,994 yen in taxes, compared to 2,264,791 yen for Miyazaki and 1,989,569 for Tottori, which were similar in area and population (Aniya 1977, 154). Needless to say, commensurate social services were not extended to Okinawans. In short, the government's economic policy toward Okinawa was both predatory and myopic; if this wasn't bad enough, the bureaucracy charged with implementing it was plagued by cronyism, poor morale, and sheer incompetence. This had predictably deleterious results. In 1890, for example, Okinawa's per capita

manufacturing output actually exceeded that of rural mainland prefectures such as Kagoshima, Kumamoto, and Aomori; by 1909, it was the lowest in the nation by a noticeable margin (Bassino 2010, 32).

Commercial theater as a social and economic institution

At the same time the prefectural office, Japanese merchants, and aspiring Okinawan industrialists were seeking to modernize the Naha economy, the commercial popular theater was quickly taking shape as an informal sector of that economy. Period records portray the late Meiji period vividly as a time of “heated competition between theaters” (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, April 21, 1898). As previously mentioned, the major venues of the Meiji and Taishō periods (the Nakamō Enjiba; the Hon-enjiba or Shicha-nu-shibai; the Shin-enjiba or Uī-nu-shibai, and the Shuri Enjiba or Sungā shibai) were established in the Meiji 20s (Ikemiya 1982a, 424). According to actor Shimaburuko Kōyū, these theaters featured stages modeled on the nō stage and two classes of seating (booths enclosed with bamboo screens and tatami mats on the floor) (Majikina and Shimabukuro 1987, 351). Theaters were often packed, especially in the early years (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, April 9, 1898; April 10, 1898; May 3, 1898; February 2, 1899; February 4, 1899; December 5, 1899; etc.). According to the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, in 1898, the standard admittance fee was three sen (April 9, 1898). Majikina Yūkō recalls his troupe charging three sen for afternoon shows and two sen for evening shows (1987, 462). Fees were raised to four sen in 1900 and seven sen in 1906 (*RS*, February 5, 1900; January 21, 1906). This allowed theaters to make a tidy profit, pulling in as much as 20 yen daily in

1898 (*RS*, April 23, 1898). For comparative purposes, the annual per capita GDP in Okinawa was around 15 yen in 1890 (compared to around 17 yen in Kagoshima and 65 yen in Tokyo) and around 60 yen in 1909 (compared to around 55 yen in Kagoshima and 175 yen in Tokyo) (Bassino 2010, 45-46). This indicates that by the late Meiji period, the theater had progressed past a subsistence level and established itself as a lucrative and competitive economic sector.

During the Meiji 30s, branded theater companies began to "raise their banners" (*hataage* 旗揚げ), ushering in a "period of high competition" (*katō kyōsō* 過当競争) (Ikemiya 1980, 345). Economic flux and interpersonal rivalry kept Okinawan theater companies in a state of constant evolution. In 1903–1904, a group called *Kōgekikai* (好劇会) featuring Uema Seihin began performing at the Shin-enjiba (Ikemiya 1982a, 427). In March 1905, Tokashiki Shuryō formed the company *Kyūyō-za* (球陽座), taking up residence at the *Uī-nu-shibai* (428). In August of the same year, Uema formed the company *Okinawa-za* (沖縄座), taking up residence at the *Shicha-nu-shibai*. Uema left *Okinawa-za* in 1907, forming *Kasuga-za* (春日座) in Shuri; Majikina Yūso took over as *Okinawa-za*'s company chief (*zachō* 座長) (429). At this time, *Okinawa-za* featured Majikina Yūso, Majikina Yūkō, and Ganeko Yaei; *Kyūyō-za* featured Tokashiki Shuryō and Shurei, Iraha Inkichi, Arakaki Shōgan, and Takara Chōsei, among others (429). In January 1910, Tokashiki Shuryō took charge of a new venue called *Meiji-za* (明治座). Shortly later the same year, Iraha Inkichi and Arakaki Shōgan left *Kyūyō-za* to form the group *Kyōwa-dan* (協和団), soon opening a new venue called *Naka-za* (中座) (431). In

August 1911, Tokashiki Shuryō, who had been touring, formed yet another new group called Asahi-za (朝日座) (433). The next month, Okinawa-za split up and Ganeko Yaei formed Kasumi-za (香霞座), which took up residence in the Meiji-za venue. In 1912, Asahi-za merged with the remainder of Okinawa-za (434). In December 1913, Kasumi-za broke up; some actors went over to Naka-za, while others joined up with the Tokashiki brothers to resurrect the Kyūyō brand (Kyūyō-gekidan 球陽劇団) (435). The reformed Kyūyō-za took up residence in the Meiji-za/Kasumi-za venue. In June 1916, Kyūyō-za split up; some former members went on tour with Tokashiki Shuryō, while others kept performing at the Meiji-za venue under the name Shio-kai (潮会). This pattern continued over the years, with various companies emerging and disappearing: in 1916, Itomine-dan (伊渡嶺団); in 1918, Miyako-za (都座); in 1928, Matsukage-kai (松蔭会); in 1934, Sango-za (珊瑚座) (438; 440; 443; 447). Some of these left a lasting impact, while others faded into obscurity.

Unfortunately, records on theater management practices are spotty, but Majikina and Makishi shed some light on the subject. Early on, several theaters appear to have been owned or managed by stipended former aristocrats (which would make sense, as they were nearly the only Okinawans with capital at the time). The Nakamō theater, for example, was initially managed by a former aristocrat named Oroku Asahiro (小禄朝宏) (Majikina and Shimabukuro 1987, 351). Similarly, the Shicha-nu-shibai theater was initially managed by a former samurai from Shuri named Okuhama (奥浜) (Majikina 1987, 461). At some point, a group of actors established collective management over the

Shicha-nu-shibai; in 1894, however, it fell into the possession of a former aristocrat from Kumemura named Gushikawa (久米村の具志川御殿). As mentioned above, in 1903–1904, the Kōgekikai group began using the Shicha-nu-shibai (469). Eventually, tensions within Kōgekikai led to about half of the actors splitting off and relocating to the Uī-nu-shibai (470). According to Majikina, the group that remained at Shicha-nu-shibai eventually ceased to be profitable. Rather than see the theater fail, Uema Seihin and Majikina Yūso negotiated with Gushikawa to take it over. At this point, their newly formed company Okinawa-za took up residence (472). Shortly later, the remainder of Kōgekikai left the Uī-nu-shibai and merged with Okinawa-za at the Shicha-nu-shibai. The vacant Uī-nu-shibai theater was leased to the Tokashiki brothers, who formed the Kyūyō-za company and took up residence there (473).

Over the course of its development, the Okinawan commercial theater sector evolved a unique “institutional culture” (cf. Jesty 2010). This process was not without tension. In his memoirs, for example, Majikina Yūkō recalls how younger and older actors clashed over the issue of promotional techniques:

On the day it arrived, the *sōshi* theater group [visiting from Japan] promoted their opening show by parading through town in a number of rickshaws and making announcements. Inspired by this, the younger members of the local theater companies proposed doing the same thing. Most of the members of our company agreed, but some older members wouldn’t get onboard. Iha no Medama-*tārī* was particularly obstinate – he refused to work, saying “as actors, we somehow bring ourselves to perform on stage, even though it pushes the boundaries of the

traditions of warrior families – but to expose one’s face to society making the rounds of the city in the middle of the day? As a person who knows shame, I can’t do it.” The young actors exhausted their words, explaining that making the rounds of the city was the most effective kind of promotion, and that if doing so increased our popularity, the company would surely flourish. We said that if our company didn’t do it, other companies certainly would, and that it would be more profitable to start the trend rather than following it. Eventually Mr. Iha was persuaded and couldn’t sustain his objections (1987, 464).

As Majikina describes, within each company, non-market-based values such as status-group customs and traditional artistic standards intersected with the economic imperative to maximize popularity and profit. This dialectical process gradually generated new normative standards of social and artistic practice, which were transmitted to and reproduced by younger performers.

The memoirs of third-generation actor Makishi Kōchū shed light on the practices by which new actors were incorporated into theater groups, acculturated to their social and aesthetic norms, and taught the repertory. In 1932, at the age of 9, Makishi’s parents (who were too poor to care for him) hired him out to Majikina Yūkō’s theater group as an assistant (2002, 25). For some time, he was used as an errand boy, doing odd jobs such as reporting on competing theater companies’ performances and delivering actors’ love letters to geishas in the red light district (28). He was then promoted to the position of curtain-puller (*maku-gamī* 幕頭). While this was regarded as the lowest position in the company hierarchy, it also served as an invaluable form of practical training:

In society at large, being dismissed as a “theater curtain-puller” was akin to being called a little idiot; however, it wasn’t actually an easy job. This is because the theater curtain was not merely a “thing” that separated the audience from the stage – the curtain in and of itself was in fact intimately connected to the quality of the production, and the capability of the troupe. For example, if the curtain is opened violently and loudly during a scene that requires it to be opened slowly and suggestively, or if the curtain is opened sluggishly during a scene that requires it to be opened in a flash, the performance itself will be dampened and become uninteresting. Because of this, the opening and closing of the curtain was always of great concern. In fact, you could say that the opening and closing of the curtain was itself a type of art (*gei*); it took quite a bit of time to master the tricks (*kotsu*) of curtain-pulling and become a fully competent *maku-gamī* (29-30)

Serving as a curtain-puller, then, instilled in a young theater practitioner the basic aesthetic sensibility necessary to undertake other tasks. After mastering the art of opening and closing the curtain, Makishi was promoted to the position of taiko drummer (*tēku-gamī* 太鼓頭); after mastering drumming, he was entrusted with playing the wooden clapper (*hyōshigi* 拍子木). Because the wooden clapper signals each important transition in the performance, being promoted to wooden clapper-player (*ban-gamī* 拍子木頭) indicated that one had earned the trust of the performers (32). According to Makishi, progressing from *maku-gamī* to *ban-gamī* could take an apprentice as long as seven or eight years. During this time, the apprentice “studied the plots and content of each night’s plays, the techniques of performance, the proper way to intone lyrics, the

various cues used in the theater, and so on, committing them securely to memory with both his mind and body” (32).

Management realized that training and promoting an actor was a kind of financial investment, and strove to maintain stability within companies (61). This being said, conflicts between management and actors were common, and sometimes resulted in the expulsion of actors, changes in management, or the restructuring of the company.

Makishi, for example, describes a conflict that arose between the manager of a teahouse-turned-theater and a group of kumiodori performers:

Mr. Bō, who funded the performance, took all of the money from the opening night show and refused to distribute any of it to the cast. Since the performance could not be continued [due to having turned out unpopular], as the financial backer, perhaps he saw no option other than to reconnoiter the profit from the opening night, lest the entire production go into the red and turn out a financial loss. The performers, on the other hand, saw no connection between their salary and how many people came to the show, and asserted their right to be paid. It turned into a horrible argument. People are very thin-skinned in this kind of situation, and it’s difficult for negotiations to proceed. Particularly as an artist, a failed performance wraps you up in difficult emotions. When you make your own body and artistic ability into commodities and they fail to sell, it will inevitably lead to a war of words (73).

As Makishi describes, financial concerns and pride both played into this kind of conflict.

If management refused to negotiate, actors would sometimes go so far as to call

impromptu strikes, to which management would respond by hiring actors from the countryside as “scabs” (65). Conflicts between actors themselves were equally common, and often led to companies breaking up or actors being headhunted (*RS*, April 23, 1898; May 17, 1898; January 15, 1900; March 17, 1905; August 15, 1905; etc.).

One solution to tension between actors or between a company and the theater management was to organize a tour, then return once tensions had cleared (*RS*, April 23, 1898; August 1, 1906; etc.). Most tours were intra-Okinawan affairs, but on occasion groups went to Kyushu and even Tokyo (*RS*, August 1, 1906; November 23, 1910; December 25, 1910). These tours naturally inspired imitation, and during the Taishō and Shōwa periods, a number of regional troupes (*yushi-shibai* ゆし芝居) sprung up in addition to the main Naha-based troupes (*moto-shibai* 本芝居) (Makishi 2002, 53). Actors from Naha who ran into trouble with their own companies or with management would sometimes travel to the countryside and join regional troupes. Makishi, for example, spent some time performing with a troupe in Yaeyama (59-62). These regional troupes borrowed from the Naha troupes’ repertoires, and also performed plays in their own regional dialects; according to Makishi, by the Shōwa period, they had become the main source of “mass entertainment” in the countryside (76).

As previously described, on a material basis, all of this activity was made possible by the gradual growth of the Naha economy and a corresponding change in audience demographics. Many of the migrant laborers who flooded into Naha came from islands and villages with mutually incomprehensible dialects and diverse cultural traditions. As the textile and hat-weaving industries grew, an increasing number of migrants were

young women without families. These migrants exemplify Masao Maruyama's concept of structurally atomized and culturally alienated labor, marked by an "actual or imagined sense of uprootedness and the loss of norms of conduct (anomie)" (1965, cited in Nimura 1997, 44). We can hypothesize that for these migrants, commercial theater assumed some of the socializing functions formerly borne by ceremonial performing arts in rural villages.⁸⁹ By 1899, commercial performing arts had become sufficiently popular among women in Naha for the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* to mention it as a curiosity (December 5, 1899). By the end of the Meiji period, women often outnumbered men in theater audiences (Ōshiro 2000, 67). Both actor memoirs and newspaper reviews indicate that the demands of these spectators determined the stylistic vector of theater in Naha at any given moment. If a show or style proved unpopular, it would not continue to be performed; if an actor proved unpopular, he would not find work.

Interestingly, the transformation of socioeconomic relations in Naha carried over into the theater world itself as well. As previously mentioned, within individual theater companies, non-market-based standards of value such as seniority, ancestry, and artistic lineage maintained their gravity (Makishi 2002, 64). On a broader socioeconomic level, however, all performers fell into the homogenous category of free labor, and were compensated largely according to "meritocratic" standards, i.e., their ability to produce a marketable commodity – in this case, a compelling performance (15-16). Makishi's remark on the affective risk involved in "making your own body and artistic ability into commodities" shows that actors themselves were very much aware of this dynamic.

This marketization of artistic charisma drove the emergence of a star system and a variable pay scale. Majikina Yūkō, for example, was paid only one sen per day for his first performances (this being said, he went on to become a star performer) (1987, 462). Around the same time, Uema Seihin, who was in his prime, was financially secure enough to dress in imported Western-style frock coats and top hats, live in a large house, visit the red light district often, and marry a mainland Japanese geisha (Majikina and Shimabukuro 1987, 353-354). Individual stars sometimes eclipsed their companies as the focus of audience and media attention, and were often headhunted. In 1916, a survey ranked Takara Chōsei as the prefecture's most popular actor, followed by Tokashiki Shuryō, Majikina Yūkō, and Iraha Inkichi (Ikemiya 1982a, 437). While most prewar Okinawan performers and playwrights remain relatively unknown outside the prefecture, the best of them were comparable in talent and creative ability to famous mainland Japanese theater reformers like Ichikawa Danjurō IX, Morita Kan'ya XII, Izumi Kyōka, and Kawakami Otojirō and Sadayakko (in fact, Uema Seihin was known as Okinawa's Kawakami Otojirō [416]).

The expansion of the repertory and formation of genres

These various social and material developments lead Ikemiya Masaharu to argue that from the late Meiji period onward, it becomes viable to think of the Okinawan performing arts scene as a distinct sector in a modern capitalist economy (1980, 295). Ikemiya's implied assessment of the Meiji period Okinawan economy as fully "capitalist" is not entirely historically accurate; as previously mentioned in my discussion

of the Preservation of Old Customs policy, certain structural features inherited from feudalism remained intact well into the Shōwa period. This being said, the commercialization of the performing arts did closely mirror the introduction of capitalist relations of production and the expansion of the consumer economy as a whole, particularly in Naha (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 230). On an aesthetic level, the commercialization of the performing arts sector prompted rapid stylistic expansion, followed by a consolidation of new genres and taste categories. This process began early in the music world, with newspaper advertisements for mainland Japanese shamisen and Western harmonicas and organs appearing in 1899 (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, January 1, 1899; November 7, 1899). The same year, the Nakamō theater played gramophone recordings of mainland Japanese shamisen, to popular acclaim – the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* observed that young people came into the city from rural areas to see the gramophone performances, and that both afternoon and evening shows were almost always full (January 11, 1899; cf. Ikemiya 1982a, 425). Interest in non-indigenous music is also evident in advertisements for voluntary associations such as the Okinawan Music Association, which promoted a variety of music, including, “1. Organ, 2. Choral music, 3. Violin, 4. Koto, 5. Okinawan shamisen, 6. Satsuma biwa, 7. Nō flute, and others” (*RS*, February 27, 1900). Mainland Japanese shamisen was particularly popular, with shamisen societies cropping up not only in Shuri and Naha, but also in smaller cities like Itoman (*RS*, October 7, 1900).

Beginning in the early 1900s, the Okinawan commercial theater scene also began to develop in a more syncretic direction. The arrival of traveling theater companies from Japan helped spur this development. In 1904, for example, a group from Kyushu

performed *sōshi-shibai* at the Nakamō theater, staging martial spectacles with titles such as “Pistol Robbery” (*pisutoru gōtō* 「ピストル強盗」) and “The Sōma Incident” (*Sōma jiken* 「相馬事件」) (Majikina 1987, 463).⁹⁰ Because the majority of Okinawans couldn’t speak mainland Japanese at this time, the group’s tour failed. The next year, a mainland Japanese company that had been touring Kyushu crossed over to Okinawa and took up residence at the Uī-nu-shibai. This company won some local acclaim, but was forced to cut its engagement short when its popular lead *onnagata* was drafted into the military (472). According to Majikina Yūkō, these performances made a powerful impression on local actors, who started taking up the *sōshi* style of white facial makeup and swaggering movement. Majikina’s company Okinawa-za adopted “Pistol Robbery” into their repertoire; according to Majikina, first-time audiences watched it “as earnestly as if they were watching the real thing – they were caught in a dream, and applauded wildly” (464). Around the same time, both Okinawa-za and Kyūyō-za also started staging Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese War dramas, Chinese historical dramas (*shina-geki* 支那劇), sword and pike dances, and acrobatics routines such as tightrope walking (356; 465; 471).

Shortly after the *sōshi-shibai* boom, a few pioneering Okinawan actors started making study trips to Japan, bringing back a range of Japanese styles, including *kyūha* (kabuki-influenced drama), *shinpa* (modern syncretic musical drama), and *shingeki* (Western-style realism) (Ikemiya 1980, 291). According to Majikina Yūkō and Shimabukuro Kōyū, the actor and playwright Uema Seihin, who had studied kabuki in Taiwan and mainland Japan, played a major role in the introduction of these styles.

Shimabukuro recalls that when Uema first debuted kabuki-style forms and gestures on the Okinawan stage, audiences laughed; however, he was not dissuaded and strove to perfect his technique (1987, 353). According to Majikina, Uema also helped introduce a style of vocal delivery that approximated natural speech, in contrast to the fixed patterns utilized in classical kumiodori (473). While less ideologically invested, this corresponds roughly with the *genbun ichi* movement in the mainland Japanese theater world (Poulton 2010, 16).

Around the time of the Russo-Japanese War, Uema collaborated with Majikina Yūso's Okinawa-za (*Kōgekikai*) to stage a series of influential productions in the *shinpa* style. Majikina recalls Uema's *shinpa*-style production of Tokutomi Roka's *Hototogisu* as setting a new standard for rigor and effectiveness in Okinawan theatrical practice:

After each night's show, the members of the company would all gather on the stage and study the details of [the novel's] content; after this, one by one, each of us would run through all of the dialogue and actions alone, until we understood it completely. Only then did we choose which actor would play which role ...

Without a doubt, this performance of *Hototogisu* was most effective at raising the level of Okinawan theater ... After rehearsing the script, we were all moved to tears (473; 353).

Majikina further recalls that the members of Okinawa-za first cut their hair in the Western *zangiri* style in order to perform *Hototogisu* (353; cf. O'Brien 2008). Following the success of *Hototogisu*, Okinawa-za staged several other mainstays of the mainland Japanese *shinpa* repertory, such as Ozaki Kōyō's *Konjiki Yasha* and Kikuchi Yūhō's

Chikyōdai (473). Notably, contemporary commentators depicted the popularity of mainland Japanese theater positively as the result of a wartime upswing in nationalist sentiment (*RS*, March 17, 1905).

The mainland Japanese vogue for Shakespeare was also exported to Okinawa, leading to a brief Shakespeare boom in which the various companies attempted to one-up one another. In the winter of 1906, for example, Kyūyō-za staged *Othello* under the direction of Tokashiki Ippa (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, January 23, 1906). Tokashiki's production was inspired by Kawakami Otojirō's famous 1903 *shinpa* adaptation (which was based on a Japanese translation by Tozawa Koya). Shortly after, Okinawa-za performed *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* (*RS*, February 9, 1906; Majikina 1987, 473). In April of the same year, both Kyūyō-za and Okinawa-za performed *Romeo and Juliet* (*RS*, April 21, 1906). The next year, Kyūyō-za staged a production called *New Hamlet* (*Shin-Hamuretto* 「新はハムレット」) (*RS*, February 13, 1907). Majikina recalls that Okinawa-za competed by staging a Japanized version of *Hamlet* in which Claudius was re-imagined as a treacherous merchant named Hamura (1987, 353).

This influx of new influences helped shape the development of new indigenous theater forms.⁹¹ In the early 1900s, a number of new genre terms started appearing in newspaper articles and advertisements in addition to the familiar catchall terms *kyōgen* and *odori* (dance, broadly conceived). These include the terms *shin-kyōgen* (new *kyōgen*); *kigeki* (comic drama); *kigeki odori* (comic theatrical dance); *shigeki* (historical drama); *Ryūkyū koji* 故事 (traditional histories); *Ryūkyū koji* 古事 (ancient events); *Ryūkyū densetsu* (legends); and *kageki* (musical drama). When reading primary sources,

it is key to remember that prior to around the beginning of the Taishō period these designators were flexible. One 1906 production (Okinawa-za's 「不如婦」), for example, was advertised first as *shin-kyōgen*, then as *shinpa-seigeki* (*RS*, January 6 and 19, 1906). Similarly, Meiji-za's March 1910 production of the story of the courtesan Yoshiya (*Yoshiya – ransei no tsuyu* 「ヨシヤア 嵐世の露」) is referred to in different sources as *shigeki* (historical drama) and *odori* (dance) (Ikemiya 1980, 304-308; *RS*, March 19, 1910).

A survey of the vast array of advertisements published in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (henceforth *RS*) and the *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* (henceforth *OMS*) provides a snapshot of the diverse composition of the prewar Okinawan theater scene. Ikemiya, for example, lists a total of 67 works staged in 1910 (twenty-nine by Okinawa-za, twenty-one by Meiji-za, and seventeen by Kyōwa-dan/Naka-za) (1980, 304-308). Ikemiya's list, however, is limited to the various genres of historical and mythic spoken drama.

Broadening the search to include kumiodori, mainland Japanese theatrical forms, and the broad categories of *kyōgen* and dance yields a significant increase in results.

Advertisements published during the six-month period between January and July of 1910, for example, mention 86 distinct works: five kumiodori, fourteen *shigeki*, five *koji* 故事, five *koji* 古事, one *densetsu*, two *yurai*, four *kigeki*, twelve *odori*, twelve *kyōgen*, one *shinpa*, seven *seigeki*, one *shingeki*, and thirteen without genre labels. These plays range from extremely well known works, such as the classical kumiodori *Mekarushi* and the story of Yoshiya, to works of which we know next to nothing aside from the title. A glance at the full list of performances gives a striking impression of the vibrancy of the

Okinawan theater scene near the end of the Meiji period. On nearly any given night, audiences could see a wide range of styles, from classical kumiodori to Western-style realist spoken drama (which was still considered somewhat avant-garde at the time, even in mainland Japan). The January 7 to 14 playbill at Meiji-za, for example, included kumiodori, comic musical drama, dance, and realist spoken drama, while the April 9 to May 6 playbill at Okinawa-za included kumiodori, historical drama, mythic drama, and kyōgen. This suggests a degree of artistic versatility on the part of performers and aesthetic broadmindedness on the part of audiences that is remarkable even by contemporary standards.

Alongside star power and artistic versatility, novelty came at a premium during the “period of high competition” – according to Majikina, at this time, “anything new to the eyes would surely succeed” (1987, 466). Because of this, performers constantly borrowed from one another, piecing together new works through variation and improvisation on well-known narratives and themes. Managers and companies contributed to the thirst for novelty by cultivating an aesthetic of spectacle through the use of “contrivances” (*shikake* 仕掛け). Majikina recalls that around the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the Shicha-nu-shibai and Uī-nu-shibai theaters actively competed to stun audiences with increasingly spectacular productions and promotional techniques. In 1904, for example, the Shicha-nu-shibai staged a historical drama with “outlandish contrivances [and] brand-new costumes and props,” which it promoted by sending thirty actors through the streets of Naha simultaneously on rickshaws (469). The Uī-nu-shibai responded by staging an even more elaborate Chinese-style war drama, which utilized

Ming period ceremonial robes purchased from former courtiers and Chinese studies scholars in Kumemura (471). The younger actors in the Shicha-nu-shibai, who were determined not to be outdone, planned a lavish production of *Chūshingura* for the next year, but met with resistance from the older actors, who balked at the expense of the costumes and props. Eventually, the younger contingent won out, and the production was staged, to great acclaim (470).

New media technologies were sometimes given equal billing as new titles and star performers. In the late 1890s, for example, a string of advertisements appear for magic lantern shows (*RS*, December 1, 1899; etc.). Moving pictures were introduced in the early 1900s, though they did not become commonplace until near the end of the Meiji period (*RS*, March 23, 1902). In live theater, special effects enjoyed spells of popularity. Inspired by touring Japanese groups, for example, Okinawa-za incorporated stage blood into its crime drama “Pistol Robbery,” to shocking effect:

Naturally, at the moment in which the robber was about to be arrested, he held the pistol to his own chest and fired, and you could clearly see the red blood trickling down. Watching this type of cruel and pitiful scene for the first time, the audiences merely stared in mute, wide-eyed amazement. In this way, *sōshi shibai* inspired Okinawan theater, which up to that point had remained unchanged, to incorporate new techniques, scenery, staging, and various improvements – one could say that this was an initial step in the direction of the reform of Okinawan theater (Majikina 1987, 464).

Okinawan theater companies' early experiments with special effects were not without mishaps. According to Majikina Yūkō's memoirs, in 1905, an on-stage accident involving mistimed fireworks severely injured actors Nakaima Shin and Majikina Yoshifumi (Yūkō's younger brother) (475). This did not deter the further use of potentially dangerous special effects. In July 1907, for example, advertisements for performances at Okinawa-za make special mention of chemical smoke effects (*RS*, July 7, 1907; December 28, 1907; etc.).

The 1910 opening of the Okinawa Electric Company expanded the range of available special effects, plunging Okinawan theater audiences into “a dreamy infatuation with electric light” (*Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun*, July 2, 1911). Interestingly, among the promotional gimmicks employed by the company was a “Ground-Breaking Ceremony for an Electrically Illuminated Society” (*dentō shakai no jichinsai* 電灯社会の地鎮祭) featuring actors from Okinawa-za (*OMS*, August 7, 1910). Later the same year, an advertisement appeared for a comedy oddly entitled “Telephone Psyche” (*denwa no shinsei* 「電話の神精」) (*OMS*, April 23, 1910). In 1911, advertisements started to crop up for “electric dances” (*denki-odori* 電気踊り). The first of these appear to have been performed on April 25, 1911 by the Fūgetsurō Geisha Theater (*Fūgetsurō no geigi shibai* 風月楼の芸妓芝居) at the Meiji-za venue (Ikemiya 1980, 374-375; 1982a, 433). The *Ryūkyū Shimpō* reviewed these productions:

[The performer] danced a “Butterfly Dance,” which was bathed in electric lights as bright as a thousand candles. Wearing long white sleeves, he extended his arms like a butterfly's wings and gestured softly. A variety of colored electric lights

were showered down upon the scene, conveying a transformation into the colors of a butterfly's wings, and the timbre of organ music imparted these dancer's movements with a unique tone. After this, there was an electric "Flower Umbrella Dance," during which the dancers had their entire bodies illuminated by yellow, red, blue, purple, and other various colors of electric light, which continually flashed on and off intermittently. Regarding the dance as a whole, it was certainly resplendent to the eyes, and when today's final curtain fell, the tremendous applause and ovation were conspicuous (April 27, 1911).

In May of 1911, Naka-za picked up on the electricity trend, staging an illuminated production called *Spirit of Botan* (*Odori botan no sei* 「踊りぼたんの精」) (Ikemiya 1980, 375). Okinawa-za jumped on the bandwagon in June, staging an electric dance (*Okinawa denki bushi* 「沖縄電気節」) and then a mythical-historical drama in which electric lights appear to have been used to simulate witchcraft (*Majutsu* 「魔術」) (376).

The success of this production set off a mini-boom of electrically illuminated productions on mythical and magical subjects (377). Electric dance is a fascinating index of Okinawans' ambivalent relationship to normative (industrial) modernity. Sawai Manami identifies it as a symptom of the "modernization of the body" (*shintai no kindaiika* 身体の近代化) (2008). This description brings to mind the extraordinary popularity of Loie Fuller's illuminated dances in fin de siècle Europe. Presciently, Stéphane Mallarmé described Fuller's illumination as a metonym for the transfixed and transfixing "absolute gaze" of the consumer (*Crayonné au théâtre*, cited in McCarren 1995, 758). This "absolute gaze" seemed to project the hopes and anxieties of a

generation facing a world-historical juncture, which we can identify in hindsight as the point of no return in the global rise of industrial capitalism. In the West, technologically mediated entertainments grew ever more complex. In Okinawa, on the other hand, the electric dance boom was short-lived. Within a few short months, the gaze of the electric bulb appears to have lost its hypnotic power; by the end of the year, ads mentioning electric illumination had all but disappeared. Ikemiya suggests that while the electric dance phenomenon left no lasting impact on Okinawan culture, it can be understood as an index of Okinawan theater audiences' thirst for novelty, and of the way commercial performers tailored their practices in order to capitalize on this (1980, 378).⁹²

The birth of long-form tragic musical drama: *Tomari Aka* (「泊阿嘉」)

Around the time of the electric dance boom, another vogue arose for “long-form tragic musical drama” (*chōhen hikageki* 長編悲歌劇). This genre was to prove significantly more enduring than *sōshi shibai* or electric dance. The term *kageki* first appeared in 1911 advertisements for an Okinawa-za production entitled *Jinsei no haru*, a Naka-za production entitled *Kobutorin-go*, and a Kōka-za production entitled *Ume to uguisu* (Ōshiro 2000, 90). All of these productions were based on extant works that had previously been referred to as *kyōgen* or *odori*. As indicated in the previous chapter, long-form tragic musical drama evolved from short tragic musical drama (exemplified by the one-act play *Uyanma*), which is stylistically rooted in classical *kumiodori*, theatrical dance, and musical farce. Like *kumiodori*, long-form tragic musical drama uses song interludes sung by a chorus of *sanshin* players in order to elucidate characters' affective

states at key points in the narrative. Rather than chanting their lines to fixed patterns, the actors sing the majority of their lines in quasi-recitative fashion over *sanshin* ostinati based on folk melodies. During the Taishō period, some *kageki* started incorporating spoken dialogue as well. This interweaving of recitative, speech, and song makes Okinawan *kageki* musically unique among Japanese performing arts.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the most well known musical drama of the late Meiji period is the Romeo and Juliet-type fantasy *Tomari Aka* (Aka of Tomari). The basic storyline was adapted from the early modern prose work *Koiji no fumi*. Between 1906 and 1907, several different theater groups staged variations of the Aka narrative in spoken drama form.⁹³ The musical version was first staged by Okinawa-za in April 1910 under the title *Hama chijuyā* (Jp. *Hama chidori* 「浜千鳥」). It is attributed to Ganeko Yaei. This being said, the rest of the company surely also had a hand in its creation. This production was hugely popular, and inspired the other companies to create their own musical versions of the Aka narrative; competing productions ran repeatedly for months on end for the remainder of the year and during 1911 (Ikemiya 1982a, 432-4340; cf. *RS*, April 9, 1910; April 10, 1910; April 23, 1910; May 15, 1910; June 18, 1910; etc.).

Tomari Aka opens on the third day of the third lunar month, a traditional festival day. In Act One, the male protagonist Aka Tarugani (阿嘉樽金) catches a glimpse of the female protagonist Umichiru (思鶴) at the *hamaori* festival at Akazu harbor and immediately falls in love with her. In an attempt to meet her, he pretends to cast a fishing line toward the sea and snags the hook in her hair. Her protective nursemaid, however, rebukes him and sends him on his way. That evening, he visits Takahashi Bridge, near

her house, and learns from a passing ship captain that she is the daughter of the extremely protective Lord Isa. Act Two opens with Aka standing on Takahashi Bridge. He has been visiting the bridge for the past ninety-nine consecutive nights, deep in sorrow. Out of desperation, he finally decides to give Umichiru's nursemaid a love letter to take to her. The nursemaid gives Umichiru the letter, and she pretends to throw it in the fire but secretly pockets it. In the next scene, Umichiru and Aka meet outside her house. In Act Three, Aka's father speculates in a monologue that something is wrong with his son, then calls Aka and orders him to travel to Iheya Island to manage the family business interests. In Act Four, Umichiru dies of lovesickness, leaving a final testament with her nursemaid. In the final act, Aka returns from Iheya and runs across the nursemaid, who is weeping. She gives Aka the final testament. Aka reads the letter aloud and runs to Umichiru's grave, dying there in agony. The play ends with Aka's father and Umichiru's father expressing their shared grief and giving the couple their posthumous blessings.

On both a thematic and a stylistic level, we can regard *Tomari Aka* as a prototypical long-form tragic musical drama. Its source text, *Koiji no fumi*, is clearly rooted in the early modern Ryūkyūan romanticism of Heshikiya Chōbin. Like Chōbin's prose works, we can read it as a variation on the model of double suicide (*shinjū*), in which “marriage through death” mediates the contradictory forces of *giri* and *ninjō* (Nakahodo 1994, 48). Both *Koiji no fumi* and *Tomari Aka* utilize the well-established technique of allusive variation to evoke affectively loaded concepts such as love and compassion (*nasake*), fated and ill-fated human relations (*en* and *akuen*), and the transience of the “floating world” (*ukiyo*). In his exhaustive content analysis, Nakahodo

Masanori identifies a number of allusive keywords that bind *Tomari Aka* to prior works, including the corpus of Old Ryūkyūan mythology and the Ryūkyūan and Japanese literary canons (27-57). These include stock motifs such as the transient morning dew, as well as a number of less frequently utilized motifs.

Two particularly important motifs are Aka's fishing line and Umichiru's long black hair. In the second scene of *Tomari Aka*, Aka snags his fishing line in Umichiru's hair as an excuse to talk to her. As Nakahodo observes, this can be read as an allusion to the kumiodori *Mekarushi*, a variation on the *Hagoromo* story (33). In the opening scene of *Mekarushi*, a farmer spies a beautiful maiden washing her hair, then ensnares her by stealing her feathered robe (likewise, the nursemaid accuses Aka of trying to use his fishing line to ensnare a girl). Aka and Mekarushi both describe the objects of their erotic fixation as maidens that have descended from heaven, whom they intend to pull down to earth. Moreover, the village of Tomari was the supposed site of a spring called the "descending from heaven well" (天降井), reputed to mark the place where the farmer Mekarushi first spied his celestial maiden (34). Alternately, Aka's fixation on Umichiru's hair could be read as a reference to *Temizu no en*, in which Yamatū and Tamatsi meet because she has visited Fanja River in order to wash her hair.

Nakahodo goes on to trace the images of Umichiru's hair and Aka's fishing line genealogically to themes in Old Ryūkyūan mythology. He cites Ōshiro Tatsuhiro, for example, on the role of hair imagery in the legend of Madanbashi:

In ancient times, Madanbashi was a wooden bridge, and during floods it was often swept away. For this reason, King Shō Shin ordered that a stone bridge

should be built. However, the level of stonecraft in Ryūkyū at that time was not sufficient to build a stone bridge over a large river, so the work proved difficult. In addition, consistent bad weather stalled the bridge's construction. At that time, a certain priestess gave an oracle that a girl whose hair was bound with a seven-color cord must be sacrificed and laid as a "human pillar" in the foundation of the bridge. A suitable girl could not be found, however, so the priestess herself was buried alive in the foundation of the bridge (Ōshiro et al. 1976, cited in Nakahodo 1994, 45-46).

According to Nakahodo, this legend, which is interpreted as a type of admonition against the practice of giving oracles, exemplifies the use of hair imagery in the Old Ryūkyūan myth to symbolize a woman's life and destiny (46).

The image of Aka's fishing line also links up with a body of Old Ryūkyūan myths involving the *akamatā*, a serpent deity that disguises itself in the form of a handsome young man and attempts to seduce beautiful young women at night. In some *akamatā* stories, the young woman becomes pregnant and decides to determine her suitor's identity by attaching a needle and thread to his clothing and following the thread when he leaves her home. When the thread leads the young woman to the cave of the *akamatā*, she realizes that she must terminate her pregnancy. Significantly, one of the purposes of the *hamaori* ceremony that Umichiru and her nursemaid attend in *Tomari Aka*'s first scene was for young women to cleanse themselves of the potential influence of the *akamatā* (41-42). While *Tomari Aka* does not refer explicitly to the *akamatā* myth, Umichiru's nursemaid does warn her that if they stay at the beach too long, sea snakes

might creep up on them. Of course, there are no records directly indicating that Ganeko Yaei was inspired by the Madanbashi story or *akamatā* myths. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that a period audience would have been aware of these myths and intuited a connection. This lends *Tomari Aka* a rather sinister undercurrent of archaism that later musical dramas such as *Iejima Handō-gwa* would pick up on and develop.

It is possible to trace *Tomari Aka*'s hair and thread imagery through early modern Ryūkyūan literature to the classical Japanese literary tradition. Both images appear throughout the poetic canon as emblems of the bond between lovers (Cranston 1977, 76-80). In poem 3822 of the *Man'yōshū*, for example, the image of a former lover's hair signifies female sexuality and male desire, as well as arousing a bittersweet sense of loss:

She whose hair hung loose

When I led her to the longhouse

And slept with her there

At the Temple of the Orange Tree –

Has she now bound up her locks? (trans. Cranston 1977, 79).

As this poem suggests, the states of a woman's hair are also used to index the stages of her life and the events and moods associated with those stages. Uncombed hair – as worn by unmarried girls – is used as a symbol of nostalgia or fidelity, whereas white hair is used as a symbol of enduring faithfulness (79). On the other hand, tangled hair (*midaregami* 乱れ髪) appears as a symbol of the emotional and physical unrest which love can cause. A verse by Heian period poet Izumi Shikibu exemplifies this:

I fling myself down

Heedless of the wild disorder

Of my long black hair

And soon I'm yearning once again

For him who used to stroke it smooth (trans. Cranston 1977, 81).

We find an even more ominous evocation of long black hair in a well-known poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (662-710) on the suicide of a young girl:

The girl from Izumo,

Land of ever-streaming clouds,

Her long black tresses

Eddy in the current far

From Yoshino River's shore (trans. Cranston 1977, 80).

In both Izumi Shikibu's love poem and Hitomaro's lament, hair imagery implies a singular bond between two subjects, whether real or imagined (81). It also physicalizes the sensation of loss that one feels when that bond is weakened or broken.

At the play's moving conclusion, Ganeko makes use of an even more ominous poetic trope, the "mountain road of death" (*shide ga yamaji* or *shide ga yamamichi* 死出が山路). After reading Umichiru's last testament aloud, Aka cries out, "Who is it you took your leave to before departing this earth? Please wait a moment and depart with me by your side on this mountain road of death." This is a direct reference to Tamatsi's final testament in *Temizu no en*, in which she reassures Yamatū that she will wait for him on the mountain road of death. Since the days of the *Man'yōshū*, the figure of the unknown

mountain road (*shiranu yamaji* 知らぬ山路) has been used in poems that mourn the departure or death of a lover. Take for example the following poem by Hitomaro:

In the autumn hills

The trees are dense with yellow leaves –

She has lost her way,

And I must go and search for her,

But do not know the mountain path (trans. Cranston 1977, 66)

As an inheritor of the Ryūkyūan aristocratic literary tradition, Ganeko Yaei would have certainly been aware of stock image such as tangled hair, threads binding lovers, and the unknown mountain road/mountain road of death. Significantly, the latter two tropes appear together in *Tomari Aka*'s final line, a posthumous blessing recited by Umichiru's father: "Because the thread of love binds your fates from this world to the next – please go with peace of mind on the mountain road of death."

Scholars of Okinawan performing arts regard *Tomari Aka* as an important milestone in the stylistic and institutional development of Okinawan commercial theater. Ganeko Yaei and Okinawa-za's 1910 production, which ran for an unheard-of sixteen weeks, marks the point at which musical drama began to pull ahead of spoken drama in popularity (Ikemiya 1980, 360; Ōno 2003, 78). It also stands as the high water mark for the late Meiji period trend of fetishizing novelty and technical gimmicks. As Majikina Yūkō recalls, during the years leading up to the Taishō era, theater practitioners began to realize that a company's long-term competitiveness depended on the compositional quality of the works it produced (1987, 476). A single long run could bring in more

profit than a series of short runs – and cost less to produce at that. Successful works could also easily be toured to smaller cities and even to the outer islands. Moreover, once established in the public consciousness, a successful work could be re-staged without degrading its appeal and profitability. These realizations arguably slowed the pace of innovation in Okinawan commercial performing arts, but also arguably helped raise the standards of both performers and audiences.

Theater as an institution, a commodity, and an art

Harry Harootunian notes that scholars of Japanese modernity tend to view their objects of study through economistic optics, “emphasizing the primacy of structures, institutions, and movements over thought and experience, as if they were lived separately” (2000, xv). Research into popular cultural production can help balance out this tendency. Unfortunately, in Okinawa, primary sources that attest to the “thought and experience” of period audiences are scarce. In the Introduction and Chapter One, I argue that working around this problem requires a two-pronged approach, informed by both historical materialism and hermeneutics. On the historical materialist track, we must set aside matters of interpretation and ask: what are the empirical conditions of possibility for a given “distribution of the sensible?” On the hermeneutic track, we must bracket these conditions of possibility and focus on the given “distribution of the sensible” itself, approaching it as an autonomous structure of meaning configured in accordance with a particular tradition. Once we have done this, we can ask how a spectator, standing within this structure of meaning, might look back out upon her own world differently.

In Chapter Three, I introduce the basic historical conditions for the emergence of Okinawan commercial theater as an institution: rural-to-urban labor migration and the disenfranchisement of courtly performers. Of course, these two phenomena alone cannot account for the specific characteristics of the further development of commercial theater between the 1890s and 1910s. These characteristics include:

Rapid growth, high competition, and high potential for profit

The consolidation of stable theater companies

The construction of new, more sophisticated venues

The formation of normative practices and a unique institutional culture

The emergence of inter-company and intra-company conflicts of interest

The emergence of a star system

The spread of commercial theater to smaller cities

The influx of mainland Japanese and Western influences

The popularization of elaborate spectacles and special effects

The expansion and diversification of the repertory (etc.)

These trends are interwoven both directly and through mutual correlation to underlying patterns of structural change. Some of these correlations are readily apparent. This is particularly true of correlations between trends within the theater world itself. The formation of stable theater companies, for example, enabled the formation of a singular institutional culture marked by hierarchical structures, unique modes of pedagogy, etc. The formation of stable venues and companies also enabled the capital accumulation

necessary to build new facilities and invest in props, costumes, elaborate staging, and eventually special effects such as fireworks and electrical lighting, etc.

Immediate correlations between developments in theater and developments in society at large are harder to speak to with certainty, but still within the realm of reasonable conjecture. We can guess, for example, that both fierce competition within the Okinawan theater world and exposure to mainland Japan's longstanding culture of celebrity contributed to the birth of the Okinawan star system. Similarly, we can guess that both general fascination with the material cultural traces of "modernity" and the influx of new performance styles helped generate the thirst for novelty that seems to have gripped theater audiences from around 1904–1911. We can even speculate that exposure to novel sights and sounds helped generated desire for yet more novel sights and sounds: as Ikemiya puts it, "driven by the expectations and anxieties of a new era, the people hungrily demanded new things" (1980, 345).

Other, less direct correlations are harder to pin down. I am particularly interested in exploring the highly mediated relationship between artistic production and political economy. Katsuya Hirano's *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination* provides a nuanced and rigorous example of this kind of inquiry. One of Hirano's theses is that early modern Japanese aesthetic trends symptomatize the gradual shift from a restricted rice economy based on the principles of maximum production and minimum expenditure to an expansive monetary economy based on the principle of "the self-augmenting motion of value" (Bell 2009, 38). Hirano argues that the proliferation of parody and grotesquerie in late Edo popular culture "speaks to a zone of unstable or indeterminate signification – be

it word or image – wherein a professed unity of meaning authorized by given categories for classification and structured thought that underlies the categories is proven to be untenable ... [this] showed that the dominant mode(s) of representation, which supplied the rationale for status distinctions and the division of labor, was incapable of accommodating rapidly diversifying social realities or restructuring the disintegrated social life” (2014, 150). The check that keeps Hirano from veering into determinism is his observation that the crisis of the Tokugawa political economy “did not automatically guarantee cultural conflict or struggles in the symbolic arena” – rather, it established the material conditions of possibility for new ways of perceiving, judging, and representing the world (92; 103).

Like late Edo period Japan, late Meiji period Okinawa seemed to be approaching the tipping point of a political economic transformation. Hypothetically at least, the monetization of the tax burden rendered every Okinawan a participant in the monetized commodity economy (in actuality, as in Japan, many farmers actually continued to pay rent in kind). Meanwhile, the Naha consumer goods market greatly expanded in scale and scope. Certain commodities began to accrue symbolic value in addition to their use value; for example, city employees, policemen, and bankers embraced imported pocket watches as both a convenience and a status symbol (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 230). Similarly, in the early 1900s, barbershops became quite profitable as men began to adopt Western hairstyles as a mark of the “ethos of civilization.” As well as emerging as an index of class, commodities began to enter everyday intimate and public life in unpredictable ways. Around 1902–1903, for example, bicycles made their debut and

bicycle rentals became faddish (230). Several years later, a printer named Mori opened a musical instrument shop in which he set up a recording studio; apparently, crowds would gather in the evening outside Mori's shop to hear the phonograph machine, which was admired as an emblem of modernity (229).

Because contemporary spectators often unconsciously file prewar Okinawan spoken and musical drama under the heading of "traditional performing arts" rather than under the heading of commercial entertainment, it is easy to forget the dynamic socioeconomic climate in which these genres took shape. Almost by definition, commercial popular entertainment depends on mass participation in commerce – i.e., commodity exchange. It is crucial to remember that in Meiji period Okinawa, this precondition was not a given. In 1880, the majority of Okinawans had limited contact with the market; by the early 1900s, the monetization of the tax burden and the growth of the consumer economy had changed this. Tracking the development of commercial theater alongside the development of the economy as a whole, some developments seem predictable: high competition, improved facilities, a diversified repertory, the emergence of wealth and prestige hierarchies among actors, etc. We can find comparable instances of correlative artistic and political-economic development in a range of locales, including England (Guest 2006; cf. Habermas 1991), France (Charnow 2006), Germany (Marx 2006), India (Dharwadker 2011), Indonesia (Peacock 1967), and Korea (Killick 2003; Jang 2004; Cho 2006; Hwang 2012). Certain stylistic developments also match up with global trends: for example, the use of technical gimmicks such as smoke, chemical explosions, fake blood, and electric lights when they became available.

Other developments seem particular to Okinawa, and cannot as catalogued as readily as generalizable and predictable market-effects. One example is the fluctuation and eventual stabilization of taste preferences that occurred between 1910 and 1912. Ganeko Yaei's musical version of *Tomari Aka* opened in 1910 to an unprecedented long run, inspiring a flood of imitations. Within the next few years, long-form tragic musical drama had become a staple of the Okinawan stage. The next year, Fūgetsurō Geisha Theater performed what appears to be the prefecture's first electrically illuminated dance to "conspicuous acclaim" (*RS*, April 27, 1911; cited in Ikemiya 1980, 375). The next few months saw a steady flow of newspaper advertisements for long-form tragic musical dramas, alongside a proliferation of ads for electrically illuminated dances and plays. By the end of 1911, however, interest in "electric dance" had died down. Interest in musical drama, on the other hand, remained strong.

Economistic thinking reaches its limit point here, at the question of how and why some works and genres "seized the hearts of the public" and others did not (Ikemiya 1980, 358-359). In *Shisō to fūzoku*, Tosaka Jun draws the same conclusion. In contrast to Lukács, for example, Tosaka argues that criticism that focuses solely on literature's conditions of production or ideological content is inadequate (2001, 33). This is because it disregards the quality or qualities which differentiate art from reportage and didactics and make it compelling (*omoshiroi* 面白い) (28). One such quality is "special truthfulness to *fūzoku*." For Tosaka, the most compelling art draws its material from *fūzoku*, both in its everyday meaning as "customs and manners" and in its philosophical meaning as "the concept of morality as determined by common sense." He advocates

paying special attention to works that disclose neglected or disdained areas of everyday life such as “customs related to affect and emotions” (*ninjō-fūzoku* 人情風俗) and “customs related to sex and gender” (*sei-fūzoku* 性風俗) (33).

What is key to remember about Tosaka’s concept of “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*” is that it does not necessarily equate to the objective representation of customs and manners in “actual reality” (*genjitsu riaritī*) (22). Rather, it hinges upon whether a work resonates with our “worldly common sense” – i.e., our habituated tastes and predispositions. For a work to be “true to *fūzoku*,” it must disclose an “artistic reality” (*geijutsuteki riaritī*) that the spectator finds aesthetically compelling. Tosaka further specifies that we do not make aesthetic evaluations in the same way we make determinant evaluations: “The logical research of the property of a thing and the pronouncement of whether it is pleasing or displeasing are entirely different things.” Determinant judgment is a matter of cognition; aesthetic judgment is a matter of sensation. In determinant judgment, a particular sensory object is subsumed under a correlative category of the understanding. In aesthetic judgment, a particular object is held up to our apperceptive faculty as a whole, arousing a second-order sensation (*aesthesis*) of pleasure or displeasure. This pleasure or displeasure itself constitutes the judgment.

Tosaka’s deconstruction of *fūzoku*, which is inspired in equal parts by Kant and Marx, makes an excellent bridge from the social scientific analysis of the conditions of artistic production to the hermeneutic analysis of aspects of composition such as emplotment and poetic transposition. Tosaka suggests, for example, that the sense of “special truthfulness to *fūzoku*” in popular film hinges less upon its thematic content than

upon aspects of composition such as the director's choice of camera angle (38). By altering the conditions of perception, film bears the potential to augment the affective texture of everyday life. In a sense, the mode of representation achieves a degree of autonomy: a film can suit our tastes stylistically regardless of whether we find the object of representation itself pleasing or displeasing. Indeed, skillfull manipulation of the mode of representation can reorient our perceptual practices in ways that bring to light previously concealed dimensions of experience. Pleasure in the mode of representation can thus surpass pleasure in represented objects themselves. This is why "we see many things in our everyday lives, but we first realize our joy in them when they appear on screen" (41). For Tosaka, this very joy is the "special truthfulness" that distinguishes art from other modes of cultural production (27-28).

Needless to say, Tosaka's work is relevant to the study of Okinawan commercial performing arts, which are compelling precisely because of their appeal to *ninjō-fūzoku* and *sei-fūzoku* (cf. Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2012). Interpreting a work like *Tomari Aka* from the perspective of "special truth to *fūzoku*" involves gauging the ways it might have resonated with prewar Okinawans' habituated tastes and predispositions. What comes to mind most immediately is its frequent, albeit relatively subtle reference to figures in Okinawan myth. As previously mentioned, geographical and political economic factors gave rise to extreme regionalization in the Ryūkyū islands. Nevertheless, most Ryūkyūan cultures share a substratum of common myths (many of which appear throughout mainland Japan as well). For example, regardless of their regional origin, audiences would likely have been familiar with the *hamaori* festival held

on the third day of the third lunar month (though they may have known it under a different name). Similarly, the figure of the *akamatā* sits within a broad category of “serpent bridegroom myths” (*hebi-mukoiri setsuwa* 蛇婿入説話), which is part of an even broader category of “supernatural seduction myths” (*iruikon setsuwa* 異類婚説話). Variations on these myths are found throughout the Ryūkyū archipelago. It is safe to assume that despite having come to Naha from a wide range of villages with diverse dialects and cultures, most of *Tomari Aka*’s intended spectators would have been familiar with some variation on the *akamatā* myth.

Another way *Tomari Aka* engages habituated tastes and predispositions is through its heavy use of pan-Japonic poetic devices such as fixed keywords and poetic borrowing. Earlier, we looked at the poetic tropes of tangled hair and the “mountain road of death.” A third poetic trope that *Tomari Aka* effectively employs is that of a thread that binds lovers. We have already seen this trope in *Temizu no en*, when the chorus affirms the sincerity of Yamatū’s love by likening the lovers to flowers pierced and strung together on a thread. Later, Shicha and Yamaguchi declare their intention to “bind [the lovers’] fates like a string of jewels.” The author of *Temizu no en* almost certainly borrowed this phrase from classical Japanese verses such as poem 2365 of the *Man’yōshū*:

For another’s wife
Met on the highroad leading
To the sun-bright capital,
Like a string of jewels
My cord of life is tangled

With desire and sleepless nights (trans. Cranston 1977, 77).

As Cranston observes, the phrase “string of jewels” (*tama no o* 玉の緒) is homologous with the phrase “thread of the soul” (*tama no o* 魂の緒) (77). These images are highly ambivalent: like long black hair, thread can easily become tangled, causing “either a lapse into uncontrolled emotion, or death.” The chorus in *Temizu no en* hints at this by rhetorically asking whether flowers strung together on a thread can be cut apart and scattered. *Tomari Aka* combines the ambivalent images of thread and hair in the device of Aka’s tangled fishing line. This device initially appears comic; however, it takes on a darker tone in retrospect as we learn that Aka and Umichiru can only realize their fated bond through death. Given the potency of tangled hair and thread imagery in the Japanese and Ryūkyūan poetic traditions, one wonders whether a period audience might have seen the device of the fishing line as foreboding.

Finally, it is impossible to discuss the “special truth to *fūzoku*” of *Tomari Aka* and Okinawan musical drama in general without mentioning the music itself. Around the same time commercial musical drama was peaking in popularity, indigenous music was undergoing something of a renaissance in Okinawa. Iha Fuyū contributed to this, writing in his breakout work *Old Ryūkyū* on the aesthetic value and historical significance of classical Ryūkyūan music (albeit in characteristically self-deprecating fashion):

It is said that music is a universal human language; however, I find it quite doubtful that Ryūkyūan music would move the heart of a person who did not understand the Ryūkyūan language and people. Ryūkyūan music may seem

tedious, but if you really listen, it seems to tell the history of countless hundreds of years of suffering ... Ryūkyūan music is our peoples' pride (1974a, 156). Editorialists for the regional newspapers echoed Iha's sentiments. A February 1910 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, for example, states that "the emotions of the pure Ryūkyūan people and the 'scent' of Okinawa appear splendidly in the reverberations that flow from the *sanshin* – this unique type of sentiment cannot be produced by Western instruments ... in order to express a pure Ryūkyūan kind of charm and the [emotional] hue of the Okinawan people, nothing other than a *sanshin* will do" (February 1, 1910). A March article reiterates this enthusiasm: "without a doubt, when performed by an expert, the indigenous music of Okinawa can sway peoples' emotions to no small degree, in the same manner as the music performed in other civilized countries" (*RS*, March 23, 1910).

Ikemiya argues that the lyric quality of traditional Okinawan music and *Tomari Aka*'s melancholic narrative are particularly well suited to one another (1980, 358). *Tomari Aka* is entirely through-composed, as are most modern Okinawan musical dramas. Fourteen melodies are used, a substantial increase from *Uyanma*'s five melodies (this trend would continue; the 1924 musical *Iejima Handō-gwa*, for example, uses twenty melodies). The songs sung by the chorus tend to feature highly melismatic classical melodies, while the actors' lines are set to quicker-paced folk melodies. As in *kumiodori*, choral interludes mark the play's climactic moments.⁹⁴ In each pivotal scene, the chorus' choice of melodies adds an interpretive dimension to the narrative. The interludes that frame the lovers' tryst and *Aka*'s response to *Umichiru*'s final testament, for example, both use the classical romantic lament "Shukkē bushi" (「述懷節」). This establishes

an anguished parallelism between the inception and culmination of the tragedy. It also alludes powerfully to the kumiodori *Temizu no en*, in which the chorus sings “Shukkē bushi” at the moment the lovers are discovered. Similarly, the impact of the final lines, which Umichiru’s father recites at her grave, is heightened by the bitterly ironic use of the sentimental melody “Kwamuchā bushi” (Jp. *Komochi bushi* 「子持節」) – “parenthood song” or, literally, “child-holding song.”⁹⁵ This is the same melody used in *Temizu no en* during the scene preceding Tamatsi’s near-execution, in which the chorus proclaims that she must embark alone on the “mountain road of death.” In both *Temizu no en* and *Tomari Aka*, the music’s bittersweet tone shades the lyrics in a way that seems to portend the lovers’ trials and tribulations, while simultaneously affirming that they are bound “like a string of jewels ... from this world to the next.”

Ganeko Yaei’s use of poetic allusions and highly recognizable melodies as affective cues establishes a powerful link to the kumiodori tradition, distinguishing the musical version of *Tomari Aka* from its spoken drama predecessors. This testifies to a poetic turn in Okinawan commercial theatrical aesthetics. As Majikina implies, the play’s attraction hinges less on the narrative or *mise-en-scène*, and more on skillful poetic transposition in accordance with established conventions (1987, 476). In a sense, we can interpret *Tomari Aka* as a culturally conservative backlash to the late Meiji period fetishization of novelty. What spectators appear to have desired was precisely the inverse of the “modernized body” spotlighted in electric dance (cf. Sawai 2008). *Tomari Aka* vicariously restores the possibility of human relationships based in the intimate sphere of sympathetic feeling (*nasake*) rather than the “modernized” private sphere of contractually

mediated exchange. This could even be seen as an abstract repudiation of the principle of commodity fetishism, which interfaces the capitalist mode of production with its various cultural superstructural formations. In any case, Ganeko's attention to artful construction and classical literary devices set a standard that other Okinawan playwrights consciously sought to equal and surpass (Nakahodo 1994, 70).

Chapter 5. Commercial performance as an object of discourse and policy

Indigenous capitalism and the formation of class consciousness

As previously described, the early modern Ryūkyū Kingdom was the site of perpetual and often aggravated class conflict. Annexation did not change this. Former Ryūkyūan aristocrats were quite conscious of their class interests and identity, and often prioritized them over the interests of Okinawans in general. One early example of this was local officials' resistance to the Miyako Peasants' Movement, addressed in Chapter Three. Another was the protracted conflict between conservatives and progressives over land reform, taxation, and the terms of Okinawan self-governance. In 1898, for example, the question arose in the course of land reform of whether Okinawans who met tax qualifications should be allowed to vote in nationwide elections. Despite the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*'s frequent cries for increased Okinawan self-governance (*jichi*), the former nobility lobbied against suffrage at this point, arguing that extant land tenure systems would make assessing individual tax qualifications problematic. As liberal critics noted at the time, the former nobility's sole actual motivation was fear of disenfranchisement: their prior tax-exempt status, prolonged under the Preservation of Old Customs policy, would have rendered them ineligible to vote (Matsumura 2007, 202). We can deduce from this that when Okinawan elites spoke of *jichi*, they did not mean self-governance in the contemporary liberal-democratic sense of the term. Rather, they meant the maintenance of a semi-autonomous infrapolitical field within the structure of the Imperial state, in which they could continue to monopolize power and resources.

This exemplifies a persistent contradiction between Okinawan elites' political desire to be incorporated as equals into a homogenous national community and their class interest in maintaining the separate customs and institutions that sustained their privilege. Elites such as Ōta Chōfu and the Shō family realized that they would not receive stipends in perpetuity, and that maintaining their local hegemony would require leveraging status power into economic power. Accordingly, they consolidated their stipends and used them as starting capital in various business ventures (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 250).⁹⁶ In 1885, for example, a group of former samurai petitioned Governor Nishimura for a ten-year interest-free loan of 13,778 yen in order to found the Okinawa Weaving Factory in Shuri (170). Similarly, in 1887, backed with capital by the Shō family, the former samurai who had managed the Ryūkyū Kingdom's shipping concerns founded a joint stock shipping company (*Okinawa kōun kabushiki-gaisha* 沖縄港運株式会社) (185). Around the same time, the Shō family began mining operations near Haneji-mura and founded the first major Okinawan trading house in Naha, named Maruichi-shōten (丸一商店) (182). The Shō family's businesses almost exclusively hired former royal retainers, and reportedly used semi-coercive methods to obtain goods and labor from commoners at below market prices. Despite such "feudalistic business practices," these ventures provided economic and psychological stimulus, inspiring the formation of a number of Okinawan-owned trading houses in both Okinawa and mainland Japan during the following decades (182-183).

In 1899, the Shō family and other stipended former aristocrats moved to further increase their economic presence by founding the Okinawa Agricultural Bank and the

Bank of Okinawa. Their professed aim was to offer loans to would-be Okinawan capitalists at lower rates than mainland banks, thereby bolstering competitiveness. Wendy Matsumura describes the Bank of Okinawa clique's ideology as a type of "economic nationalism ... that would enable the most benevolent type of exploitation – that of Okinawans by other Okinawans" (2007, 274). With the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* as their mouthpiece, elites advocated insulating the local economy against mainland Japanese incursions by establishing capitalistic relations of production between Okinawans. In a 1901 article, for example, Ōta Chōfu laments the fact that "there is no clear division between capital owner and worker, and tomorrow's worker is today's capital owner, and vice versa" (Matsumura 2007, 249). He goes on to suggest that by seizing the share of the market held by petty craftsmen and peddlers and turning them into wage laborers, Okinawan industrialists could accumulate the capital necessary to expand their operations and increase their competitiveness (274).

One example of an organization that sought to realize this vision was the Ryūkyū Woven Cloth Dealers' Association, founded in the late 1890s by would-be textile industrialists with the aim of eliminating domestic workshops and shifting to a factory-based system of production. The Dealers' Association described its goal in modern political-economic terms as the separation of capital from labor (230). The Dealers' Association did not hesitate to adopt monopolistic practices in pursuit of this goal, posting notices in shops and mainland Japanese newspapers urging consumers not to buy uncertified products (232). Of course, craftsmen did not always acquiesce to aspiring capitalists' attempts to transform them into wage laborers. Independent female weavers

in Naha continually brought grievances against both the Dealers' Association and the Naha Chamber of Commerce (234-236). The Association's failure to accommodate workers' and peddlers' interests crippled their attempts to build an industry: by 1900, for example, Naha's main textile factory employed 20 male and 150 female workers, yet produced only around 10 *tan* of fabric per day (237). While management blamed this on a lack of work ethic, a more likely culprit was the factory's sexist pay scale, which de-incentivized skilled female weavers from self-proletarianizing (236).

Collective social actions such as the Miyako Peasant's Movement and the petty weavers' demonstrations testify to the gradual formation of "class consciousness" among Okinawan non-elites (Taminato 1977, 177). In the late 1890s, popular dissatisfaction with the status quo catalyzed the organization of a Freedom and People's Rights Movement under former bureaucrat and populist hero Jahana Noboru (Ōsato 1971). It also gave rise to sporadic organized labor activities.⁹⁷ As socioeconomic conditions worsened in the wake of World War I, populist politics and pro-labor activity intensified. Over the course of 1917-1918, twenty-four Okinawans were arrested for violation of Article 17 of the Public Peace and Police Law (*Chian keisatsu-hō* 治安警察法) (Taminato 1977, 173). In 1921, a socialist group called the *Shōmin-kai* (庶民会) was founded, and influential mainland Japanese socialist Iwasa Sakutarō visited Okinawa. The following year saw intermittent disturbances involving at least 312 workers. Notably, female textile workers, who are often mistakenly portrayed as passive by contemporary labor historians, played a visible role in the Okinawan labor movement (174).

The consolidation of taste categories

As Bourdieu would predict, the separation of capital and labor into self-conscious classes resulted in the circumscription and constriction of taste categories associated with each class (1984, 226). Okinawan elites often took pains to lay claim upon Ryūkyūan courtly arts as a legitimate high culture tradition – in Bourdieu’s words, “a symbol of moral excellence and a measure of the capacity for sublimation which defines the truly human man” (1984, 7). One factor that contributed to this was the desire to legitimize Okinawan historical identity by constructing a heritage comparable to the mainland Japanese and Western classical traditions. Newspaper features on classical Ryūkyūan performing arts took pains to place them on equal footing with Japanese and Western arts. Advertisements for mixed concerts of Ryūkyūan, Japanese, and Western classical music stressed that all three were products of high culture worthy of being performed together in a formal concert setting (*RS*, February 1, 1910; *OMS*, February 21, 1910; *RS*, May 23, 1910; etc.). Likewise, articles on kumiodori often compared it favorably to Japanese *nō* and Western opera (*RS*, April 21, 1910; June 13, 1910; *OMS*, November 23, 1910; etc.).

Advocates of classical Ryūkyūan music, dance, and drama often praised them on an ethical as well as an aesthetic level. This recalls the classical Confucian concept of artistic practice as a means of “encouraging good and chastising evil” (see Chapter Two). In 1900, for example, a group of educators formed the Okinawa Music Association, the stated aim of which was to “raise interest in refined music, promote the advantages of fellowship ... [and] contribute to the development of public-spirited men of virtue” (*RS*, February 7, 1900). In the same year, shamisen societies cropped up in Naha and Itoman

(*RS*, October 7, 1900). Christian congregations provided another venue for epistolary performances, including musical concerts and magic lantern shows (*RS*, December 1, 1899). Around 1904, women of the Okinawa Housewives' Association demonstrated that performing arts could be harnessed to the national interest by organizing musical benefits for soldiers who had served in the Russo-Japanese War (*RS*, February 22, 1904). Encouraged by this kind of activity, the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* ran articles throughout the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa periods suggesting that reviving kumiodori and other classical Ryūkyūan performing arts could help improve the cultural level of the prefecture and publicize its value to the nation as a whole (July 7, 1909; October 15, 1909; March 23, 1910; etc.). Some journalists went as far as to encourage traditional music education for women as well as men (*RS*, August 23, 1908).

Unsurprisingly, Okinawan journalists and literati tended to evaluate commercial performing arts using aesthetic criteria derived from the courtly tradition. A detailed 1898 review of a Nakamō-shibai dance and theater program, for example, praises the young men's dance (*wakashū-odori*) for its stylistic conservatism ("charming in its childlike, innocent spirit"), while harshly critiquing the *onnagata* (female-role specialists) for breaking tradition by raising their heads and meeting eyes with the audiences, which conveyed an "unfeminine" impression and "proved that sufficient art had not been put into the women's dance" (*RS*, October 21, 1898). The reviewer goes on to assess newly-written works as inferior to classical works, and suggests that dancers and actors should hone both their own skills and audiences' aesthetic standards by sticking to the classics. Similarly, a 1904 review suggests that aspiring playwrights base their prosody on

kumiodori and older musical dramas such as *Uyanma* (analyzed in the previous chapter) (*RS*, January 27, 1904).

As previously mentioned, relatively few historical sources testify to Okinawan working class lived experience, including audiences' reception of commercial theater. Conversely, we have a wealth of materials representing the judgments of Okinawan men of letters. Denunciatory attitudes toward commercial theater crystallized early: a satirical 1899 introduction to the Naha performing arts scene, for example, observes that "in theaters which we thought had failed just yesterday, ham actors flock together, mixed up indistinguishably, with faces like monkeys and skill inferior to that of an automatic doll – and for some incomprehensible reason, they draw the favor of the crowd" (*RS*, May 29, 1899). A 1904 review in the same vein mercilessly lambasts the weakness of the lyrics in newly written *kyōgen* (*RS*, January 27, 1904). Journalists blamed the poor quality of popular theater on audiences' lack of education and subsequent lack of decorum. They also decried audiences' fickle tastes and seemingly unquenchable thirst for novelty: "In these times," one journalist writes, "people strive assiduously to drink a new wine with every meal" (*RS*, August 15, 1909).

Okinawan elites' attitudes toward commercial actors themselves were even more acerbic. In a 1912 review of a Naka-za production, for example, Iha Fuyū reprimands the actors for failing to do adequate research in preparation for staging historical dramas (1993, 244). Iha also gives an ambivalent review of Iraha Inkichi's acting, more or less suggesting that he had a tendency to ham it up. Similar pronouncements appeared frequently in the *Ryūkyū Shimbun* and the *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun*. A 1909 review

column, for example, excoriates actors for their lack of familiarity with classical Ryūkyūan history, material culture, and linguistic protocol:

If the white powdered makeup, the stage decorations, the scenery, and every other element are not pure Ryūkyūan in style, it will not do. For instance, this is a small matter, but calling the Ryūkyūan king *wagimi-sama* (我君さま) is completely uneducated and indeed can be called laughable. We must improve the quality of the actors in our prefecture's theater. Currently, they are entirely uneducated, a mob of degraded people driven into the profession by the hardships of the world (*OMS*, September 5, 1909).

The column goes on to dismiss commercial performers as “sham actors [without] even a trace of art.” In addition to lambasting performers' own lack of education and refinement, journalists accused performers of cynically exploiting audiences' naiveté: “It appears as if there are plenty of idiots in the world who will come watch a show without being concerned about whether they are spoken of as uneducated by [actors and] narrators and the like” (*RS*, March 10, 1909).

Such evaluations of commercial performers and audiences were intrinsically linked to broader, class- and status-contingent conceptions of social propriety. The following 1902 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article exemplifies the elite perception of the commercial theater as a nexus of physical and spiritual improprieties:

The lack of public morals in theater halls and the like is truly egregious. In the private boxes, there are people who behave so outrageously you would think they were alone in the world. There are those who sneak in liquor in earthenware pots,

get drunk and laugh and shout like clods. There are those whose wedge their oafish bodies in front of others. There are those who befoul the toilets. There are those who munch sugarcane and toss the husks into mountainous piles on the floor, then stagger home, pushing children and the elderly off the street. If we reach the point of people stripping naked and exposing their degraded bodies to the morning mist, we will no longer be at liberty to treat the disorder and decline of public decency in the theater halls as if it were a matter of discussion rather than action ... Gentlemen in the audiences! For the sake of this prefecture's public image – nay, for the sake of the quality of the citizens of this empire – please do us the decency of minding your manners! (July 9, 1902).

While this article is somewhat extreme, a survey of newspaper articles shows that similarly hyperbolic perceptions persisted throughout the Meiji and Taishō periods. Keywords used by journalists to describe popular theaters, performers and audiences include “incompetent” (*funō* 不能), “indifferent” (*reitan* 冷澹), “illiterate or uneducated” (*mugaku* 無学), “depraved” (*daraku* 墮落), “disruptive” (*bōgai* 妨害), “disgraceful” (*hazukashii* 恥ずかしい), “filthy” (*kitanarashii* 汚らしい), “pitiful” (*ki no doku* 気の毒), “inferior” (*rettō* 劣等), “lowbrow” (*shumi no hikui* 趣味の低い), “whorish” (*jōgi-kurai* 娼妓位), and “damaging to customs” (*fūzoku wo kairan* 風俗を壊乱).⁹⁸ In a letter to the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, one irate citizen goes so far as to complain that “in the midst of this buffoonery, the morally degrading use of the buttocks to get cheap laughs is an ugly spectacle and must be stopped!” (May 9, 1900).

Popular custom as a threat and a promise

Throughout the Meiji and Taishō periods, Okinawan elite commentary on the performing arts frequently intersected with broader-based debates on *fūzoku* or popular custom. The concept of *fūzoku* played a complex role in prewar Japanese discourse. During the early Meiji period, *fūzoku* took on a somewhat pejorative connotation, signifying “the backward social practices of the rural past,” such as “nakedness, wild dances at the mid-summer o-bon festival, fox worship, topknots, and horse races” (Gluck 1985, 183). As part of the push to inculcate all Japanese with an ostensibly universal “ethos of civilization,” the state and various non-state agencies advocated various kinds of “efforts to reform popular customs and culture” or “lifestyle reform movements” (*fūzoku kairyō undō* 風俗改良運動). In 1868, for example, the government issued an order banning the sale of erotic prints; in 1870, it issued another order instructing kabuki actors, storytellers, and puppeteers to restrict their repertoires to works that adhere to the old imperative to “promote good and chastise evil” (*kanzen chōaku*). On several occasions during the 1870s and 1890s, the government attempted to eliminate the scattered open-air cabarets or *yoseba* (寄せ場) that had cropped up during the late Tokugawa period. In 1891, it went so far as to invoke the Ordinance on Security as justification for rounding up entertainers throughout the city (Hirano 2014, 213).

In a sense, such maneuvers betrayed the state’s conception of *fūzoku* as an inherently political phenomenon with the potential to upset the delicate balancing act of nation building. Over the course of the Meiji period, *fūzoku* took on a more nuanced meaning. As in modernizing societies throughout history, a significant faction of

Japanese elites worried that the decay of traditional social bonds and sanctions would bring about “a social formation (‘society’ may no longer be the term) basically atomized into individuals, thinly and weakly related, each acting out of egocentric cost-benefit calculations ... [wherein] the only binding normative culture left would be individualized cost-benefit analysis” (i.e., a *Gesellschaft* rather than a *Gemeinschaft*) (Galtung 1996, 383; cf. Weber 1968). To borrow terminology from Maruyama Masao, their concern was that the centrifugal force of the marketplace would overcome the centripetal force of the sited historical community. For many old guard elites, the ideal remedy was a selective restoration of certain *fūzoku* of the idealized past – namely the “beautiful customs” (*bifū* 美風) of village corporatism.

As Gluck observes in *Myths of Modern Japan*, a contradiction appears between the progressive and conservative visages of *fūzoku kairyō*: “at the same time that ideologues insisted that the ‘simple and beautiful customs of the village [*bifū*] be preserved in the face of industrialization,’ they berated the people for persisting in the backward social practices of the rural past” (1985, 183). This contradictory or even self-negating impulse in *fūzoku kairyō* begs a more rigorous interrogation of the concept of *fūzoku* itself. Here, Tosaka Jun can reenter the conversation. Tosaka begins *Shisō to fūzoku* by rhetorically asking why so few philosophers have written about clothing as a social phenomenon; perhaps alluding to the explosion of Western fashions onto the early Meiji Japanese social scene, he speculates that “a revolution in clothing could be called a truly significant sign of revolution” (2001, 14-15). This is because clothing emblemizes the ambiguous phenomenon we call popular custom or *fūzoku*: “Just as no

civilized person would walk around outside while naked, there is nobody in the world whose lifestyle is not determined in part by *fūzoku* ... [*fūzoku*] always accompany the various articulations of society's [material] essence (*honshitsu* 本質), like clothing draped around them" (14-17). Tosaka's implication here is that true social change would require not only institutional overhaul, but also a restructuring of the "[semi-conscious] practices, customs, manners, and habits (*fūzoku*) that have saturated the 'things at hand' and our words and gestures to the most detailed degree," which have been "granted the appearance of naturalness by history" (15).

Writing under the shadow of the Japanese ultranationalist leviathan that would eventually claim his life, Tosaka took such questions of social change quite seriously. He argues that rigorously theorizing *fūzoku* is crucial to understanding the emergent phenomena of "the masses" (*taishū* 大衆), and by extension, modern society as a whole. Because of the seeming naturalness and ubiquity of customs and manners, it would be easy to assimilate the *fūzoku* concept to a statist-nationalist vision of "Japanese culture as an organic unity ... whose outside and inside can be clearly delineated" (Harootyan and Sakai 1999, 635). Tosaka is aware of this, and harshly critiques the notion that popular customs and culture "express" some socio-moral or psycho-spiritual essence – for example, ethnic-national character or peoplehood (*minzokusei* 民族性) (2001, 25). Following *The German Ideology*, Tosaka argues that this quasi-Hegelian concept of "expression" is unscientific. He proposes instead that the ruling classes construct justificatory "culture ideas" around pre-existing *fūzoku* as a means of "self-exculpation" –

i.e., legitimization – and that over time, these ideas are internalized and woven into the fabric of *fūzoku* (29-30; cf. 1979, 288).

Within this analytic framework, we can understand *fūzoku* as a constellation of imperatives that have been internalized and familiarized to the extent that their instrumentality is obscured – in Herman Ooms’ terms, “prescriptions in the guise of descriptions” (1996, 310). Over time, this process of internalization and familiarization infuses “the social fact that ‘everyone does things like this’ ... with compelling, legalistic force and moral and ethical authority, and generates a sense of pleasure accompanying the acknowledgement of that authority” (2001, 21). As argued in Chapter One, this description of *fūzoku* resonates with Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, which he defines as “a system of dispositions ... [that] designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body), and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*” (1984, 2). Following Tosaka and Bourdieu, we can argue that lifestyle reform movements or *fūzoku kairyō undō* were not simplistic attempts to suppress the customs and practices inherited from the past and replace them with new, modern or rational practices. Rather, they were attempts to strategically excise moral authority and pleasure from some structures of thought and feeling and graft them onto others, thereby influencing subjects’ action and judgment on the subterranean level of “propensity or inclination.”

Much as in mainland Japan, Okinawan *fūzoku kairyō* movements first aimed to suppress the “visible signs of backwardness” (Christy 1993, 613). Because the very condition of being Okinawan had already been coded as backward, this required even

more radical efforts. Elites such as Ōta Chōfu urged the populace to learn the mainland Japanese (Yamato) language and discontinue practices such as walking barefoot, hand tattooing, dressing in Ryūkyūan-style clothing, wearing traditional hairstyles, and singing and playing *sanshin* in public (Tomiyama 1995, 5; Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 1998, 328-340).⁹⁹ The imperative to ‘modernize’ through assimilation to mainland Japanese norms extended to even the most mundane and seemingly innocuous everyday practices. In 1900, for example, Ōta famously instructed *Ryūkyū Shimpō* readers to “sneeze like the Japanese” (semi-humorously referred to as Ōta’s “sneeze theory” or *kushame-ron* クシヤメ論). In a sense, this progressive-nationalist strain of Okinawan *fūzoku kairyō* can be conceived as attempts to exorcise the embodied specter of the “Ryūkyūan” – i.e., the intransigent “pre-Japanese.” Educator Nitta Yoshitaka makes this quite clear in an 1896-97 series of articles entitled “Okinawa is Okinawa, not Ryūkyū” (*Okinawa ha Okinawa nari Ryūkyū ni arazu* 沖縄は沖縄なり琉球にあらず) (Meyer 2007, 157).

A more conservative strain of lifestyle reform raised its head in Okinawa as well. When rural-to-urban migrants left their villages, they also escaped the jurisdiction of traditional social sanctions, which were woven into the authoritarian structure of the corporate village system (Matsumura 2007, 215). This was disturbing to rural elites, whose authority and privilege depended in part upon the relative closure and autonomy of the corporate village body as a field of power. Throughout the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa period, conservative factions in Okinawan society attempted to recuperate *bifū* by incorporating reactionary sanctions into their discourses on *fūzoku kairyō*. This often entailed prohibitions against interactions between men and women, fines for women who

spoke to men from villages other than their own, prohibitions against non-sanctioned social gatherings, and so on (Matsumura 2007, 219-220).¹⁰⁰

It is not difficult to see the overlap between these elite discourses on the reform of popular customs and concurrent elite discourse on theater. As Gluck and Matsumura have observed, lifestyle reform movements in both early Meiji period Japan and late Meiji period Okinawa militated against “barbaric customs” on the one hand and “the ills of civilization” on the other. To many Okinawan men of letters, the commercial theater exemplified the absolute worst of both of these worlds. Despite its length, the following *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article is worth citing extensively:

Recently several writers from the three newspapers got together, and floated the idea of performing a piece of literary theater. Everyone agreed it was an interesting idea, but there was some confusion as to what to perform, who should play what role, etc. ... [We decided that] before anything else, we should go take in some Okinawan theater ... When we reached the door, we were thrust into a roiling mob of people that utterly exceeded our expectations, and quickly all but ripped any desire to watch the play out of our heads. In any case, there was no room left in the gallery, so after standing in the doorway and watching until our legs became numb, we decided to drag our heavy feet noisily upstairs to the second floor. Here, too, there was no place to sit. Despite the distasteful conditions, the space in front of us was full to capacity; we perceived that it would be pointless grumbling to ask anyone to make way, and so remained standing there swatting away the bugs as the curtains opened. It was a comedy, and the

players were dressed absurdly. A wooden clapper cracked away at a confusing tempo. At this point, the audience should have stilled their ruckus, but instead kept chattering at each other about the spectacle on stage. I wanted to run away and cut my losses despite having paid ten *sen* to be subjected to this so-called theater, but decided that the audiences' faces themselves were a spectacle worth gawking at for a while. Women with hair was done up and hardened with oil like the shell of a snail and men with topknots were wolfing down sake and snacks, looking like Edo period dolls ... With the exception of twenty or so reserved seats to the sides of the main floor, the discomfort was unbearable ... As for the sanction against wearing *geta* [sandals] on the second floor, in our opinion it was useless. This is because as a rule, this prefecture's people aren't the kind to wear sandals on their feet. Why, the majority of them are happy going barefoot all the time! Because a thing like theater tends to draw country bumpkins, at least half of the people one sees are barefoot. This being the case, the rule against *geta* is somewhat counterproductive – indeed, someone wearing *geta* would be a thousand times less offensive. Feel free to wear *geta*! ... It is worth noting that we spotted seven officials from the prefectural office watching the show from the back of the upper balcony, crammed knee-to-knee. As expected, I've had my fill of watching theater! (*RS*, April 11, 1910).

This article clearly situates normative elite opinions on commercial theater within the broader discourse of lifestyle reform.¹⁰¹ The author runs through a laundry list of the specific customs and practices commonly targeted by Okinawan lifestyle reform

movements: prostitution, crowded spaces, lack of decorum, impoliteness, poor hygiene, alcohol consumption, gluttonous eating, outmoded “feudal” hairstyles and fashions, going barefoot, and the mixing of the classes. He even reprimands theater proprietors for failing to realize the capitalist imperative to circulate capital: “It would be advisable to post a shoe-collector by the door and charge a fee of one or two sen to check one’s shoes – this would serve as a way of re-circulating money back into society.”

Moral panic and state intervention

The aforementioned article also shows interesting parallels with earlier theater reform discourse in mainland Japan. Suematsu Kenchō’s 1886 Society for the Improvement of Theater prospectus, for example, also derides contemporary theaters for targeting a lower class audience, as well as complaining about infrastructural issues such as overcrowding and congestion, poor seating arrangements, and shoddy staging (Fuhara 1965, 26-27). Discourses such as these testify to deep moralistic anxieties over the socially disruptive potential of class mixing and lower class pleasure. As Hirano observes, the early Meiji state “inherited its predecessor’s conviction that successful governance must rest on the effective containment of the [lower class] body” (2014, 213). This conviction was fed by Confucian ideologues’ dualistic conception of the mind-body relationship, in which the body appears as a “bag of desires” that lacks the capacity to regulate itself and thus must be disciplined in perpetuity (210). For Tokugawa elites, metaphorically constructing commoners as the unruly body and themselves as the regulating mind “worked as a way to condemn either different forms of excessive desire

– for example, sexual or consumptive – or new ways of life that exalted expenditure and exorbitance over austerity and material production to valorize the pleasures of the body,” providing the state with “powerful ideological language for formulating high and low hierarchies and dominating ordinary people” (48; 210)

In the Ryūkyū Kingdom, as in Tokugawa Japan, anxieties over lower-class pleasure were particularly pronounced where matters of sexuality and gender were concerned. As previously mentioned, the Ryūkyūan royal government made several attempts to ban rural leisure practices that it considered disruptive or lewd, particularly festivals during which men and women danced together or associated with one another (Araki 1980, 79-85). After annexation, Meiji authorities and Okinawan elites often targeted the same kinds of practices (sometimes referred to generically as *mōashibi* [毛遊]). A 1902 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, for example, reports that during a March *mōashibi* in Yonabaru, crowds of men and women “plucked the *sanshin* and banged on drums, fooling around and making an imbecilic racket, shattering the pleasant springtime dreams of the townspeople” (March 7, 1902). The article goes on to demand that such festivals be banned. Another *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article makes similar complaints about March celebrations held in Nakamō Theater, during which prostitutes and their clients sang “vulgar and indecent popular songs” (March 21, 1902).

Here it should be mentioned that Okinawan prostitutes were a perpetual object of sexual fascination and fantastical invention for both Okinawan and mainland Japanese men. This trend can be traced at least as far back as the legend of early modern *ryūka* poet and *juri* (*geisha*) Yoshiya Chirū, who reputedly inspired Heshikiya Chōbin’s double

suicide story “Under the Moss” (*Koke no shita* 「苔の下」) (Nakahodo 1994, 88-107). Tsuji, the licensed quarter in Naha, was the focal point of the Okinawan male gaze, which was both desiring and incriminating. One sensationalistic *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* article, for example, indicts prostitution and mixed-sex *mōashibi* festivities held in Tsuji venues as “barbaric customs” (*yabanteki fūshū* 野蛮的風習) that threaten the “imminent decimation” of the polis (June 24, 1909). Records suggest that some theater impresarios attempted to capitalize on the appeal of *juri* by featuring them as performers (*RS*, May 19, 1902). These shows, while apparently popular, were mocked and denounced in the press, and the larger ventures were pressured to shut them down (*RS*, June 5, 1902; June 5, 1903; October 23, 1903; etc.). Despite this, to the dismay of social reformers, both illicit entertainments and mixed-sex festivities continued to flourish in Tsuji.

Male visitors from mainland Japan were also drawn to Naha’s licensed quarters, which seemed to confirm their preconception of Okinawan female sexuality as something at once intriguingly exotic and potentially corruptive. Journalists capitalized on this preconception in order to sell the public sensational stories that had little or no basis in fact. A reporter for the Kansai newspaper *Doyō Shimbun* (「土陽新聞」), for example, suggests in an article that before an Okinawan wedding, the groom is expected to spend three nights in the pleasure quarters, and that this is not seen as immoral but rather as a means of preventing adultery. He further reports that wives who did not send their husbands to the licensed district several times a month “were not admitted among the number of women” (Ōta 2003, 274). Needless to say, this account, written under a

mocking pen name, was entirely spurious. Reprinted in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, the article provoked a number of heated replies from Okinawan readers.

Given the sensitivity of Okinawan female sexuality as a topic of discourse, elites were troubled by the thought that it might overflow the borders of Tsuji. As commercial theater often occupied a spatial and conceptual midpoint between the licensed quarters and the commercial and residential areas of Naha, it drew frequent criticism. Journalists portrayed commercial theaters as liminal spaces in which women could be “brought low” by libertine actors (*OMS*, September 5, 1909). They correlated the economic success of commercial theaters with nonproductive gendered consumption: “housewives and shop-girls around the ages of 12-13, although they’ve managed to save very little, are satisfied purchasing nothing else as long as they can see theater performances, which they flock to” (*RS*, December 5, 1899). The excesses of the star system and the phenomenon of theater companies poaching each others’ actors were also attributed to female audiences’ polymorphous erotic obsession with handsome male leads and beautiful female role specialists (*RS*, April 21, 1898; April 23, 1898; etc.).¹⁰²

Unsurprisingly, the same journalists generally portrayed male actors and theater enthusiasts as licentious degenerates who threatened to “lead young women and virgins astray and upset social customs” (*RS*, October 21, 1899). Occasionally, minor moral panics broke out in response to actors’ alleged improprieties. In 1909, for example, the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* ran a series of articles accusing “beggar actors” of “disruptive, odious public behavior” (July 8, 1909; December 5-10, 1909; etc.). The massive success of musical drama and electric dance in April 1910 precipitated a series of particularly

venomous articles focusing on actors' allegedly scandalous personal lives, including their penchant for "dallying with housewives" (*RS*, July 28, 1910; July 31, 1910; August 1, 1910; etc.). In a July 27 guest column, mainland Japanese critic Yokoyama Kendō called for commercial theater to be banned outright (*RS*, July 27, 1910). The next day, the issue of actors' moral laxity garnered a front-page headline (*RS*, July 28, 1910). This furor died down in 1911, but flared up again in 1913 when the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* published another series of scandal-mongering articles (Ōshiro 2000, 91; Ōno 2003, 95).

Both Japanese administrators and the Okinawan elite upheld the regulatory power of the state as a first line of defense against these ostensible social ills. As previously mentioned, the prefectural office in Naha first implemented regulations on performing arts in 1882, and further tightened these regulations in 1892 (Ōno 2003, 93).¹⁰³ Notably, the first arts-related news item to appear in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* was an announcement that a theater proprietor had been levied with a fine of fifty *sen* for an unspecified violation of regulations (April 9, 1898). Individual towns and districts sometimes implemented their own regulations as well: in 1899 and 1900, for example, commercial performing arts were either banned or heavily restricted in Nago City and Yonabaru City, as well as on Miyako Island (*RS*, October 21, 1899; December 5, 1899; July 21, 1900). Around the same time, content censorship emerged as an issue. In 1898, the prefectural office charged the Hon-enjiba and Shin-enjiba theaters with altering the content of plays after submitting false titles and descriptions for review (*RS*, July 11, 1898). Repeated incidents of this type drove the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* to publish an article in 1900 defending the prefectural administration's regulatory practices; the article states that "with intent toward

protecting the people and preserving a positive atmosphere within theaters, we believe that licenses to operate should not be given out arbitrarily” (April 7, 1900).

This being said, the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* editorialists did not hesitate to speak out against impositions that they judged as unwarranted. In 1901, for example, a military-themed morality play entitled *Gunjin meiyō* (「軍人名譽」) was performed at Shuri Enjiba. Some conservatives took offense at the idea of actors portraying the Imperial Army on stage in front of an audience of uneducated commoners, and called for a crackdown. In a short editorial, Ōta Chōfu dismissed this as an overreaction:

Recently a play that was performed which apparently made light of soldiers. The police filed a complaint, which raised a tremendous to-do. Finally, the production was put to a stop, the theater was ordered to pause its activities, and, in the end, those in charge of the box office were replaced ... Nearly all of the works submitted by the regional council were also banned, perhaps on account of these matters. However, because the offensive portions [of the proposed program] had already been identified, this action was groundless (*RS*, March 27, 1901).

Here we see a telling conflict of interests involving the Japanese administration and different factions of Okinawan elites. Judging from the plot summary provided in an April 6 review, the play itself was in no way derogatory to the Imperial Army. On the contrary, it adhered to concurrent nationalist ideology precisely; if anything, it was fawning to the point of insipidness.¹⁰⁴ We can reasonably assume that the administrators who took offense at *Gunjin meiyō* were less concerned by what was being said than by who was saying it. Ōta Chōfu quite rightly perceived their crackdown as an attempt,

conducted under the cover of patriotic zeal, to establish an arbitrary fiat over Okinawan public speech. Similar conflicts within the nationalist ranks would recur in debates on Okinawan language and culture during the years leading up to the Pacific War.¹⁰⁵

From repression to reform

Elite dissatisfaction with the general state of artistic culture in Okinawa eventually led to calls for proactive theater reform (*engeki kairyō*). Like the concept of “reforming popular customs,” the concept of theater reform originated in mainland Japan. The Japanese theater reform movement was quite diverse both aesthetically and ideologically. Politician and author Suematsu Kenchō, for example, sought to discard nearly all of the traditional trappings of kabuki, including aesthetic features such as the *hanamichi* walkway and socioeconomic features such as the connection between theaters and teahouses (Fuhara 1965, 29). Educator and poet Masakazu Toyama took a less radically reformist view, praising some kabuki staging conventions (such as the *hanamichi* and the revolving stage) while declaiming others (such as the appearance of musicians on stage and the tradition of female impersonation) (30). Meanwhile, prominent authors Tsubouchi Shōyō and Mori Ōgai argued that attempts to reform the theater by Westernizing its physical infrastructure and staging conventions missed the point, and that what the Japanese theater scene really needed were higher-quality plays and more psychologically attuned acting (31).

Like the mainland Japanese theater reform movement, the Okinawan movement encompassed a wide range of aesthetic and ideological stances. Some critics violently

opposed the concept of hybridizing Okinawan and mainland Japanese or Western styles. One 1904 review of newly written *kyōgen*, for example, lambasts the weakness of their lyrics, complaining specifically about the trend of mixing Okinawan with mainland Japanese (*RS*, January 27, 1904). Several later articles echo this attitude, complaining that Okinawan theater has become a mediocre imitation of mainland Japanese theater, or a transposition of Japanese stories into an Okinawan setting. A 1909 *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* editorial written under the penname “T,” for example, admonishes Naha’s theaters for staging Japanese rather than Okinawan works:

As “pure Ryūkyūan drama” declines, an ambiguous, somewhat laughable kind of Japanese-type drama has entered the prefecture. The lyrics are in the Okinawan language, but one can hear unknown words of Yamato Japanese mixed in – this is truly nauseating. This type of play has been performed consistently for six or seven years, leading pure Ryūkyūan drama to very nearly die out. Recently, however, our major theaters appear to have had an awakening, and have begun dramatizing ancient events (under the moniker “Ryūkyūan historical drama”) and staging them with increasing frequency. This is an excellent thing, because originally, our country’s theater existed for the sake of its people. Being that our theater audiences are 70% Okinawan, one must admit that it is egregiously foolish for our theaters to endlessly perform trivial mainland Japanese dramas ...

Surprisingly, although they are the same sort of love story, [native dramas such as] *Komurajō* (桴城) and *Tomari Aka* resonate more strongly in the breasts of Okinawans than [Japanese dramas such as] *Hototogisu* and *Konjiki yasha*.

Today's children are completely enamored by Japanese novels, but for youth such as us who have already been educated, *Komurajō*'s heroine Himegimi moves our hearts more acutely than *Hototogisu*'s heroine Nami or *Konjiki Yasha*'s heroine Miya. Moreover, this impression is deep. Although we are still young, that is the case. This is only natural for Okinawans, who do not understand Meiji period romances. Do we actually sympathize with these defective dramas' attempts to arouse a tragedy that is somehow more tragic than *Hamlet*? One shouldn't copy foreign dramatic traditions that don't suit one's character (Sept. 5, 1909).

This author's appeal to the value of "pure Ryūkyūan theater" (*junsui no Ryūkyū-geki* 純粹の琉球劇) runs parallel to the classicism espoused by Iha Fuyū and the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* editorialists, but evinces a more dynamic understanding of theater as a living tradition. Of course, the author's enthusiasm for classical Ryūkyūan performing arts was far from universal, as evidenced by a 1909 article announcing that the island of Kumejima had banned sanshin playing as a regressive "old custom" (*OMS*, April 25, 1909). Moreover, not all critics were suspicious of mainland Japanese influences. Some even demanded that performances in the prefecture adhere more closely to the Yamato Japanese tradition (*RS*, May 9, 1900).

Other commentators looked to the West for inspiration. Another 1909 article, for example, suggests that Okinawan theater could be improved though "operafication" (*opera-ka* オペラ化):

Even now, Okinawa-za and Kyūyō-za are dedicatedly pursuing theater reform, and these companies' actors have begun engaging in research and taking their art

more seriously. This is quite pleasing. What are most necessary for a business to succeed are earnestness and patience. It is precisely a serious atmosphere that awakens the spirit to engage in passionate self-improvement – and I believe that given enough patience, even the inferior will eventually become skilled, and even the clumsy will in the end become skillful and agile ... What I would like to see next is for spoken drama to incorporate songs, in order to become something more like an uncomplicated form of [Western] opera ... Of course, I am not certain whether [Western-style] opera is suited to Okinawa – or for that matter, whether comic opera is suited to Okinawa – but attempting to stage either would be interesting. For example, by creating longer songs in a so-called “Okinawan style” (but not simply by extended the vowels in the classical manner, but rather by composing many pages of different notes, as in Western music), and then arranging them for a chorus; and then staging a solo aria after the chorus cuts out; or, perhaps, by making the audience laugh by bringing fools on stage, in the manner of *maruman* comic interludes in kumiodori; or alternately, by using recitative ... Because Okinawan music is unusually beautiful, if it were improved upon, I believe a splendid Okinawan style opera or comic opera could be created ... Consider, for example, reforming Okinawan music by making it more dynamic – at one point grand and elegant and at the next point precipitous – or by creating more complicated compositions. Surely we could create a legitimate Okinawan opera (*RS*, September 5, 1909).

While this particular critic's grasp of the technical aspects of operatic composition seems dubious, he takes a remarkably open-minded stance toward the prospect of incorporating Okinawa's "unusually beautiful" music into a syncretic new form. It is also noteworthy that he briefly mentions having seen performances of Western opera. In an article on classical Ryūkyūan music the following year, another *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* critic expresses his "dream of a first-rate genius, a Ryūkyūan Wagner who can plot out the improvement and renewal of our music, adding the scent of Japanese music and perhaps the flavor of Western music" (Feb. 1, 1910). These critics' apparent familiarity with Western opera is intriguing, given the fact that the first major opera venue in Japan (the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo) did not open until 1911. Asides such as this suggest that despite their "peripheral" distance from the metropolis, Okinawan intellectuals were quite aware of global trends in culture and the arts, and were as capable as their mainland Japanese counterparts of theorizing aesthetic syncretism.

Despite Okinawan theater reformers' remarkably diverse viewpoints, they were united in their belief that improving Okinawan commoners' aesthetic tastes and artistic practices could somehow contribute to the broader effort to improve social and economic conditions in the prefecture. A series of 1909 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* articles by well-respected journalist and Okinawan politician Nakayoshi Ryōkō (仲吉良光) exemplifies this belief. Nakayoshi begins by observing that material culture in Okinawa has been progressing admirably: "an Assembly has been instated, and commercial construction is progressing busily ... as our harbor gradually opens up to trade, rows of fine houses and flashy shops will likely be built – and we must say, this is a joyous thing" (*RS*, August 15, 1909).

Nakayoshi goes on, however, to argue that equal attention should be paid to “the customs and spirit of our prefectural citizens,” and that “the art that has the most direct impact on society, and which resonates most immediately and powerfully – whether you consider it lofty or vulgar – is theater.” Nakayoshi advocates a gradual approach to sociocultural reform, proposing that “given the unique present condition of Okinawan society, it is not particularly necessary for us to establish a first-rate theater ... I humbly submit that middle-grade or even low-grade theaters are what is necessary.”

Nakayoshi derives his proposal from mainland Japanese literary critic Shimamura Hōgetsu’s concept of “second- and third-class theater.” As previously mentioned, Shimamura’s position at the journal *Waseda bungaku* made him an influential voice in literature and poetry, criticism and translation, and theater; he has been called “the most definitive critic and theoretician of the [Japanese] naturalist movement” (Nolte 1987, 71). Influenced by Turgenev and Tolstoy, Shimamura sought in his own work to move past mundane social realism toward “a literature of mystic vision, in which ‘the surface of extreme realism is lined with a sharply removed substance of absolute inexplicability’” (73-74). This being said, he was sharply aware of the social function of theater and literature in general, and perceived himself alongside Tanaka Ōdō and Ishikawa Takuboku as “allies in the transformation of an irrational socio-political order” (88). Early on, Shimamura came out strongly against censorship, but after the Kōtoku trial he joined the *Bungaku Inkai*, a state-sponsored institution that urged “self-regulation;” his essays from this time “recall the Japanese tragic hero – loyal and sincere but unable to act

decisively in a world of manipulative corruption, acquiescing passively in his inevitable destruction” (76-78).

If Shimamura’s personal relationship to politics was marked by indecisiveness and resignation, his work on the political value of theater is quite assertive. As mentioned in Chapter One, Shimamura argues, “[that] the emergence of low-grade arts, which are invested in popular customs and tastes, is an almost necessary force. Seen from the point of view of social management as well, popular arts must be acknowledged as a necessary thing ... it is absolutely necessary to develop a gradation of types of art in response to the apperceptive capacities of all target audiences” (*Waseda bungaku*, December 1907; cited in Kimura 2009, 40). Shimamura’s argument is based in part on the supremely utilitarian rationale that laborers require entertainment in order to “restore [their] energy to face the next working day.” Nakayoshi Ryōkō seizes upon this rationale, writing that “An office worker or laborer who is exhausted from a day’s work, having eaten dinner and wishing to restore his energy to face the next working day, will occasionally invite his wife and friends to pass an evening in enjoyment without cares – if this wish is not fulfilled, he is likely to fall into a lowly condition, drink and gamble – and this does not often lead to a happy conclusion” (*RS*, August 15, 1909).

Nakayoshi sees this as having already happened in Okinawa, in part due to the proliferation of unedifying or actively corrosive entertainments:

Up until now, for many years, day after day, the Kyūyō-za and Okinawa-za theaters have thrived and entertained hundreds of customers without needing to put any particular effort into it. Up until now we have abided with theaters such

as this, but there is no guarantee that the thriving conditions they have enjoyed up until now will last much longer. Moreover, together with this problem, unless both of these theaters are brought to the point of crisis, the customs of Okinawans will continue to degrade. Yet rather than acting to put a stop to this, both theaters consent to repeatedly perform petty things like love plays and erotic festival scenes, plays about geishas, farces, and folk dances all day and all night, and what's worse, both theaters indulge male and female students' interest in stories about love affairs between noble or even common men and women. Until now the theaters have catered to the interests of this type of person – but will they continue to thrive when this type of person dies out? (*RS*, August 15, 1909).

Following Shimamura closely, Nakayoshi Ryōkō argues that the only way for Okinawans to escape this downward spiral is to actively foster the creation of new plays “that are not empty of content and lead one to think about things, that makes us take our own lives seriously and realize that in these days we cannot fulfill the desires of the spirit with the common and vulgar.” Accordingly, he argues passionately that elites must “dedicate endless efforts to the end [of promoting] this ‘second type’ of [cultural] education” (*nishū no kyōiku* 二種の教育)” (*RS*, August 16, 1909).

Theater reform discourse peaked with the 1916 formation of the Okinawa Theater Association (*Okinawa engeki kyōkai* 沖縄演劇協会), which included Iha Fuyū, Majikina Ankō, a number of Okinawan educators, and various artists from the Kyūyō-za and Naka-za troupes (*RS*, March 13, 1916; cf. Ikemiya 1982a, 437). The Association's first chairman was Tōma Jūshin, co-founder of *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* and an influential

public figure at the time. Much like its mainland Japanese predecessors (the Society for the Improvement of Theater and its successor, the Japanese Association for the Performing Arts, etc.), the Okinawa Theater Association was formed for the dual purpose of preserving classical Ryūkyūan performing arts and directing research into new theater trends in Japan and the West. According to the Association's inaugural announcement, it sought to organize "respectable performances" and use the proceeds (along with club dues and donations) to broaden the scope of its activities, improve the physical condition of theaters, and print high-quality scripts. The Association also encouraged the various theater companies to refrain from staging productions that were "damaging to popular customs" (*fūzoku wo kairan* 風俗を壊礼).

Police censors also stepped up pressure on theaters. Around this time, censors reportedly denied permission to nearly 40% of scripts submitted for approval (Ōno 2003, 93-94). In May 1915, Naka-za and Kyūyō-za were charged with performing unapproved scripts and forced to briefly pause operations (Ikemiya 1982a, 436). In June of the same year, Naka-za was posed to take up residence at the newly-constructed Taishō Gekijō, but the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* protested and the theater management backed away from the arrangement, causing Iraha to lose face. In 1917, the major theaters agreed to implement a "voluntary moratorium" (*jishuteki haishi* 自主的廃止) on musical drama. The *Ryūkyū Shimpō* happily proclaimed: "the theaters have resolved to abolish musical drama entirely ... [we hope that] this evil genre can be eradicated with one clean sweep" (April 11, 1917). This moratorium even extended to the kumiodori *Temizu no en*, which upset some elite critics (Sakihara 2004, 23). Unfortunately for the Ryūkyū Shimpō faction, the

moratorium proved short-lived. In 1919, a fire swept through Tsuji, destroying Naka-za, Uī-nu-shibai, and Shicha-nu-shibai. This devastated the theater community and drove practitioners to re-adopt a “profits-first” mentality (Majikina 1987, 117). It is unclear exactly when the theaters gave up their "self-imposed moratorium," but by late 1919, musical dramas were being written and staged again (Ōno 2003, 94-95).

Of course, much as in mainland Japan, the Okinawan theater reform movement had both doubters and critics. One 1910 *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* editorial expresses skepticism as to whether such a thing as theater reform is even possible:

People have cried out for something called “theater renewal” any number of times and have meant many things by it, but the theater world cannot seem to escape the status quo ... [This is because] from a business angle, it is beneficial to base your repertory on the kind of plays the average customer prefers to see. Sadly, the preferences of the average customer follow extraordinarily arbitrary and ambivalent tendencies. Getting a clear sense of audiences’ inclinations is difficult in any case, but the confusion that afflicts the current theater scene is quite unheard of (May 24, 1910).

As the editorial itself implies, this “quite unheard of” confusion and frustration can be traced in part to the fact that would-be theater reformers’ unifying visions simply could not compete with the lure of profit and the fragmenting force of mercurial popular demands. Despite their wide range of aesthetic and ideological stances, both theater reformers and their critics often blamed the commercialization of Okinawan performing arts for their degradation. In the critics’ view, the amoral law of the market incentivized

performers to aim for the lowest common denominator, turning them into “a mob of degraded people driven into the profession by the hardships of the world ... without a talent for anything beside seducing low-class women” (*RS*, August 15, 1909).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, critics’ strident and often hypocritical denunciations of both theater reform and the theater itself inspired counter-denunciations in turn. One *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* editorial, for example, begins boldly by writing, “in Okinawa today, there is not a single truthful theater critic who will raise their voice as if in a barren field.” The editorial goes on to eviscerate both actors and critics:

The purpose of staging theater must be to attract people and immediately convey social and moral instructions – which is a different thing than just standing there and preaching one’s own ideas. Actors nowadays, however, lack the power to think over the substance of theater; when they adopt the established forms and go through the motions, performing with total indifference, can one really even say they are doing theater? [Similarly,] there is a certain kind of critic who does not pay any regard to the plot or characters, but instead just denounces. Among today’s critics, this type is all too common. There is nothing wrong with critique, but from an actor’s perspective, are critics who take an unreasonable and impudent attitude doing any good? Or are they only impeding the progress of the theater? (*OMS*, October 8, 1909).

Published right on the heels of a cluster of articles on theater reform, this editorial implies that actors who are content to provide a thoughtless and soulless spectacle and critics who intentionally alienate actors and audiences are in fact quite comparable. It expresses

particular frustration at the fact that critics of Okinawan commercial theater are quick to point out its deficiencies, yet seem unable or unwilling to make concrete suggestions for meaningful improvement. Even the more inspired and practically minded advocates of reform, such as Nakayoshi, do not adequately think through the problems of implementing their designs. Specifically, they fail to confront the possibility that the “common people,” who they hope to uplift through simple yet well-crafted and wholesome spectacles, might prove indifferent or hostile to their gracious overtures. The editorial concludes that critics’ and actors’ reciprocal failures to communicate have produced a discourse that is “muddled and chaotic – as if clean fresh water had become mixed with seawater” (*OMS*, October 8, 1909).

Reformism and the contradictions of Okinawan modernity

As Katsuya Hirano observes, we frequently assume that the primary motive behind Japanese cultural reformism was the desire to rise above “the critical gaze of Western visitors and imperialists who often commented on the practices of ordinary people ... in Meiji Japan as backward and barbarous” (2014, 214; cf. Fuhara 1965). Similarly, we tend to interpret Okinawan elites’ social reformism as an expression of the assimilationist imperative to “become Japanese.” Some voices in Okinawan theater reform discourse certainly echo this imperative. One *Ryūkyū Shimpō* columnist, for example, suggests that Okinawan theater companies should decorate their backdrops with the pine tree that graces the Japanese *nō* stage (May 9, 1900). It is impossible, however, to read this kind of sentiment into all – or even most – of the essays and articles cited in

this chapter. Many advocates of lifestyle and theater reform stood on significantly more complex ideological ground. Some even explicitly denounced the Japanization of Okinawan performing arts (*OMS*, Sept. 5, 1909). This prompts me to ask what factors other than assimilationism might have been in play.

In *Politics of the Dialogic Imagination*, Hirano calls into question the “received theory” that the discriminatory Western gaze was the prime mover of Japanese social reform (2014, 215). It is crucial to remember here that the stimulus which drove the Meiji Restoration and Japan’s subsequent modernization efforts was not the simple desire to “Westernize,” but the desire to ensure the survival of the body politic in a Western-dominated capitalist and imperialist world system. Meiji elites considered establishing capitalist relations of production to be essential to the project of “enriching the country and strengthening the military” (*fukoku kyōhei*). Noting this, Hirano takes a Marxian approach to the analysis of Meiji cultural politics, identifying cultural reform movements as part of a broader effort to “produce a national subject whose thought and behavior were consistent with the requirements of a capitalist mode of production” (215). He argues that unlike their Tokugawa predecessors, the Meiji oligarchs were not satisfied with merely containing and/or repressing lower class customs and manners (213). This is because they believed that realizing the nation’s full productive potential would require the participation, at every level of society, of self-willed individuals voluntarily committed to realizing their own full productive potential (207; 222). They also understood that this kind of commitment could not be mandated in the same manner as *corvée* labor. Rather, it must be cultivated to the degree that it becomes a habitual

preference and source of pride. The core function of both lifestyle reform and theater reform was to habituate this so-called “ethos of civilization” on the level of predisposition or *fūzoku*. Their final aim was to transmute the self-willed individual into a motor for value-augmentation and a kind of synecdoche for the “national character” (*kokufū* 国風), (Hirano 2014, 214; cf. Spivak 2005, 480).

I would argue that both the reactive desire to appease the Japanese gaze and the proactive desire to instill economic discipline helped drive Okinawan reformism. Moreover, these desires were intertwined from the start. On the one hand, Okinawan elites were certainly aware that mainland Japanese had come to perceive the very condition of being Okinawan as a deficit. An 1899 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article about a group of Okinawan performers touring in Japan distills Okinawan elites’ shame when confronted with the critical Japanese gaze:

They hung up their eight-lettered banner like a country bumpkin’s dirty loincloth from two pathetic poles of little more substance than bamboo-grass, and set up a tiny stage ... they gave public performances; apparently, a fair number of people came to see their spectacle both morning and night. The staging and the costumes were painful to behold, as was the language. This is the most gut-wrenching thing for people from our home prefecture can endure. The rumor is that the company is barely taking in enough money to support itself, and that the actors are merely waiting for the next Ryūkyū-bound ship so that they can return; this strikes me as exceedingly pitiful (January 29, 1899).

This being said, Okinawan consciousness of discrimination cannot fully explain the ideological diversity of the Okinawan theater reform movement. Take, for example, Nakayoshi Ryōkō's articles for the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*. Nakayoshi builds his argument on Shimomura Hōgetsu's idea that laborers need entertainment in order to “restore [their] energy to face the next working day” (*RS*, August 15, 1909). This aligns less with the reactive “discriminatory gaze” model than with Hirano's analysis of *fūzoku kairyō* as a means of reshaping subjects' habituated customs and preferences in order to augment their capacity for commodifiable labor – i.e., their personal “capital” (*zaihon* 財本) (Hirano 2014, 201; cf. Tomiyama 1995).

Hirano's thesis links up with classic modernization studies by Sidney Pollard and E.P. Thompson, among others. Pollard, for example, describes reform movements in industrializing Britain as driven primarily by the need to inculcate “factory discipline”:

The worker who left the background of his domestic workshop or peasant holding for the factory entered a new culture as well as a new sense of direction. It was not only that “the new economic order needed ... part-humans: soulless, depersonalised, disembodied, who could become members, or little wheels rather, of a complex mechanism.” It was also that men who were non-accumulative, non-acquisitive, accustomed to work for subsistence, not for maximization of income, had to be made obedient to the cash stimulus, and obedient in such a way as to react precisely to the stimuli provided (1963, 254).

Pollard's characterization of the precapitalist commoner as “non-acquisitive” may be romantic, but his distinction between the form and experience of subsistence labor and

that of wage labor is vital. He goes on to observe that reformers frequently saw old popular customs as incompatible with the capitalist labor regime, and sought to wipe them out. Two examples stand out to Pollard: “the campaign against leisure on Saturdays and Sundays” and “the prohibition of bad language” – a category that sometimes extended to loud talk, whistling, and singing (267-268). Pollard notes how at first glance, a worker’s choice of Sunday leisure activities and fondness for whistling while he works might seem to have little to do with his performance on the factory floor. In fact, efforts to reform workers’ habits and preferences, rather than merely their behaviors, were pivotal to the reform movement. In the view of elites at least, the implementation of factory discipline required the worker’s habituation to “the bourgeois values which he lacked ... with the one addition of obedience” (268). The true aim of reform was not the alteration of workers’ behaviors but the reconditioning of their preferences and desires: “unless the workmen wished to become ‘respectable’ in the current sense, none of the other incentives would bite” (269).

The *Waseda bungaku* critics’ aim in advocating a palliative popular theater was precisely to habituate the lower classes with normative social mores on the level of *fūzoku* or embodied custom and preference. In keeping with trends in Western political and economic theory at the time, Shimamura Hōgetsu and his disciples represent labor and leisure in vitalist terms as complementary phases of a metabolic cycle through which workers reproduce their existence from day to day. If the leisure phase of this cycle is disrupted or corrupted, then the labor phase will inevitably be thrown off balance as well. It follows that at the very least society must ensure that workers have access to “art that is

neither idealistic nor vulgar,” lest they fall victim to either daydreaming or vice and lose their ability to regulate their own labor cycles (*RS*, August 15, 1909). A more ambitious strategy would be to harness the leisure phase to the interests of society by “taking measures to gradually improve the level of [workers’] taste by offering them things adapted to them” (*Waseda bungaku*, December 1907; cited in Kimura 2009, 40). Eventually, art could be introduced that “improves the body and spirit,” thereby augmenting workers’ “personal capital” (*Waseda bungaku*, August 1916; cited in Kimura 2009, 42). This would enhance their capacity to contribute to economic and sociocultural development, thereby driving a virtuous circle of individual and social betterment.

The presupposition here, of course, is that a society composed of rational egoists competing in a meritocratic labor market will spontaneously optimize both its powers of production and its emancipatory potential. Tomiyama Ichirō argues that this premise is deceptive, because mainland Japanese policymakers never intended for Okinawans or Okinawa to either freely pursue their rational self-interests or optimize their powers of production. Following Wallerstein and Andre Gunder Frank, Tomiyama argues that elites inevitably strive to reproduce their privilege by rigging the market’s trial-by-meritocracy (1995, 14-15). The simplest means of doing this is by passing down capital to one’s descendants. A related, more complex means is the “ethnicization of the work force,” i.e., the recoding of physiognomic or cultural differences as commodifiable capacities and incapacities, and vice versa (33). These discursive maneuvers act as loopholes through which capital can introduce discriminatory disciplinary practices that limit the freedom of the labor market without technically violating the universalistic

rhetoric of commodification and meritocracy. A textbook example is the racist discourse used to legitimize the dehumanization of African-Americans and their ongoing use as slave labor in the otherwise capitalist United States during the nineteenth century (13).

Tomiyama offers prewar Okinawa as another example of how the ethnicization of the workforce enables capital to undercut the supposedly meritocratic labor market. The disciplinary discourses aimed at Okinawans were not as extreme as those employed against African-Americans in nineteenth century America, but served a similar function. Okinawans were not excluded entirely from political and civil society, much less enslaved. Rather, they were confined to the “probationary status ... [of] ‘becoming Japanese’” (17). This allowed the state to limit Okinawans’ rights and encouraged capital to regulate their access to the labor market based on arbitrary and irrelevant physiognomic and behavioral differences (130-132). On a political level, this situated Okinawans between the categories of citizen and colonial subject. On an economic level, it situated them between the categories of free and unfree labor (132). This scenario exemplifies the theoretical contradiction between the idea of ethnic nationalism and the practice of imperialism, as well as one of the core internal contradictions of “colonial modernity” (Arendt 1958b, 153; Barlow 1993, vi).

Marking Okinawans as “probationary Japanese” also acted as a kind of spurious promissory note – a carrot to the stick. Okinawan intellectuals were bitterly aware of these contradictions and their injurious effect on the prefecture. Newspaper articles on the subject of mainland Japanese perceptions of Okinawa are often tinged with a blend of obeisance and resentment, to the point of being almost painful to read. On the occasion

of a 1910 visit to Naha by a group of mainland businessmen, for example, *Okinawa Mainichi Shinbun* columnist Sasagi Shōjurō (佐々木笑受郎) wrote an article imploring them to look beyond the surface and see a place and a people worth investing in and developing for the greater benefit of Japan (Ōta 1996, 276). Ironically, in the same year, Osaka newspapers took delight in portraying a group of traveling Okinawan businessmen as bumpkins poking at streetcars with their umbrellas and yelping at the sight of automobiles (276-277). This tragicomic crossing of wires – almost certainly crushing to Okinawans and perhaps barely noticeable to mainland Japanese – distills the exhaustion of a community that had been denied the right to speak and act meaningfully for 20 years.

As we have seen, different factions within the elite adopted different strategies to mitigate these frustrations and anxieties. The prefectural office attempted to suppress or contain working class *fūzoku* through regulations (Ōshiro 2000, 91; Ōno 2003, 93; 95; 122). Theater reformers instead proposed ways to reshape *fūzoku* and harness it to the national economy. A third strain of discourse – mere denigration – seems motivated by the desire to displace the critical Japanese gaze onto the most marginalized members of Okinawan society: women, the poor, and traditional outcastes such as theater practitioners themselves. We can see this denigrative impulse in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō*'s frequent attacks on commercial performers: a 1916 review, for example, laments that “in the past, men from illustrious families were chosen to perform the Ryūkyūan investiture ceremony dances, but since theater has gradually been commercialized, performers have degraded to the point where they almost all resemble beggars” (*RS*, March 11, 1916). Reading such appraisals, we should bear in mind that many commercial performers had once been

courtiers, or were one or two generations removed from the court. It is remarkable how a fracture of material interests could divide the former ruling class so definitively within the span of a few generations.

It is hard to miss the contradiction embodied by Okinawan elites' strident reactions to the commercialization of performing arts. On the one hand, we find a progressive interest in emancipating workers from custom, only to better subject their everyday lives to the "economic law specific to the commodity economy" (Uno 1964, 75; cited in Matsumura 2007, 13). On the other hand, we find reactionary frustration at the gradual transformation of customary forms of cultural production. Of course, this transformation was itself a direct result of the emancipation of the performing arts from customary sanctions and their subjugation to the dictates of popular taste, through the mediation of the commodity form. This contradiction, which recalls Gluck's description of *fūzoku kairyō* as a kind of "social flagellation," betrays the ideological incoherence at the heart of Japanese and Okinawan bourgeois reformism (1985, 183).

This being said, nothing about the nature of power suggests that elites' "efforts to remake the whole [working] man" must necessarily aim to remake him coherently (Pollard 1963, 267). When we approach "progressive" and "reactionary" manifestations of *fūzoku kairyō* on a purely pragmatic level as bundles of disciplinary imperatives without any expectation of logical coherence, they show a complementary function. Some imperatives work to suppress old cultural forms that might impede a given desired redistribution of people and things. Other imperatives work to reshape or displace whatever new cultural forms might take shape during this process of redistribution. As

the Okinawan case demonstrates, formal contradictions between the discourses employed to legitimize these imperatives do not prevent their actual coeval deployment. In a sense, this suggests that the semantic content of disciplinary imperatives is less important than the tension between concrete speaking positions that they reveal.

Chapter 6. The politics of recognition in Taishō period musical drama

Developing dependency and crisis

Okinawa's development during the Taishō period was bound to that of the global sugar market. From around 1910 until 1920, the Okinawan sugar industry grew at a steady pace. Assisted by government dispensations, the Tainan Seito, Okitai Seito, and Okitai Takushoku sugar corporations established large facilities in the Nakagami area of Okinawa Island (Kaneshiro 1977, 122). This led to increased commercial activity and consequent development in Naha, the prefecture's commercial hub. In and around Naha, industrialization progressed in other sectors as well (albeit on a relatively small scale). As previously mentioned, the Osaka-owned Okinawa Electric Company began constructing facilities in 1908, and began providing power to Naha and Shuri in 1910. In 1911, Okinawa Electric founded the Okinawa Electric Railway Company and received permission to begin railroad construction. The prefecture's first electric streetcar began running in 1914. Around the same time, the textile and hat weaving industries reached their peaks (Ōno 2003, 69). Centered in Naha, these industries employed mostly former peasants displaced by rural pauperization, particularly unmarried women who worked in order to support their families (cf. Aniya 1977).

While the Japanese-owned sugar corporations never really managed to expand beyond the Nakagami area, industrialization still had a tangible impact on the prefecture as a whole.¹⁰⁶ In 1917, the three major corporations merged, consolidating their

dominance of the industry. Large-scale production drove down prices, incentivizing peasants to either become raw cane suppliers or sell home-produced brown sugar at “below subsistence prices” (Matsumura 2007, 302). Large firms used their position to establish “elaborate systems of cash advance for daily expenses, loans for fertilizer, and so on that appeared benevolent, but were actually designed to lure peasants into a form of debt bondage, binding them to the corporations as raw material suppliers” (287). In this way, the expansion of the refined sugar industry transformed the land and time-use patterns of even those Okinawan peasants who had not come into personal contact with the physical traces of industrialization. These developments worried Okinawan elites such as Ōta Chōfu, who warned that mainland Japanese capitalists would try to transform Okinawa into a land of “46,000–47,000 isolated producers.”

In 1914, the newly appointed governor Ōmi Kyūgorō (大味久五郎) essentially confirmed Ōta’s fears by proposing regulations requiring any developer who wished to establish machine-based production to receive special permission. Local industrialists correctly perceived that these regulations could be used to restrict their own activities and expedite crony capitalism by mainland Japanese firms with connections to officials. As Matsumura observes, Okinawan elites were particularly troubled by the similarity between Ōmi’s proposed regulations and measures that had been implemented in colonial Taiwan to prevent the formation of joint stock companies by natives, “under the rationale that ‘the Chinese are incapable of running a company by themselves’” (292). From the Sino-Japanese war on, Okinawans continually sought to differentiate their prefecture from colonial governor-generalships (*sōtokufu*) like Taiwan.

This distinction, however, was continually threatened. In the infamous 1903 “House of Peoples” incident, for example, Okinawans were included alongside Taiwanese aboriginals and Ainu in an exhibition of peoples subjugated by Imperial Japan. In 1908, a proposal to incorporate Okinawa into the Taiwan *sōtokufu* was submitted to the National Diet. Even if Okinawa were to remain a prefecture, Governor Ōmi’s obvious anti-Okinawan prejudice made it conceivable that he would attempt to run it like a colony anyway. In response to these threats, Okinawan elites intensified their protests, combining pro-Imperial rhetoric with calls for regional self-governance (*chihō jichi* 地方自治). A 1915 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, for example, declaims Ōmi for treating Okinawans “as a type of machine” rather than as citizens (January 9, 1915). Similarly, in a 1917 petition, Okinawan industrialist Inaka Akira protested that Ōmi’s stance “may be acceptable in colonial areas, but should absolutely not be permitted within a prefecture of the empire” (Matsumura 2007, 292).

The Meiji state finally responded in 1920, abolishing the *tokubetsu fukensei* and extending suffrage to the outer islands of Miyako and Yaeyama. On an economic level, however, Okinawa remained determinately peripheral. Throughout the Taishō and early Shōwa periods, agriculture accounted for 70-75% of the Okinawan GDP (90% if Naha and Shuri are excluded) (Aniya 1977, 153). To make matters worse, administrators encouraged peasants to give up subsistence farming and cottage manufacture and instead use their sugar income to purchase imported rice and goods – which is to say, to enter the center/periphery market circuit (Kinjō et al. 1991, 200). As a result, despite its agricultural economy, Okinawa failed to maintain food self-sufficiency (Aniya 1977,

155). Okinawan farmers' dependence on monoculture made them extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity markets, which by the 1900s had become thoroughly globalized (cf. Mintz 1986). Immediately after World War I, for example, the decimation of Europe's beet sugar industry led to a price spike. Between 1918 and 1920, the price of sugar in Okinawa rose from around 9 yen 20 sen per *kin* to over 22 yen. Ōta Chōfu observes in his notes on the period that during this short market boom, ordinary farmers and workmen suddenly had enough income to dabble in small-scale trade and even commodity speculation (Matsumura 2007, 305).

This temporarily invigorated the prefecture, but also set the stage for a dramatic collapse. The proximate cause of this collapse was instability in the sugar market. During the market boom, irresponsible speculation prompted overproduction in colonial and semi-colonial locales like Cuba, Java, and Taiwan, where plantation overseers could take full advantage of coerced labor and state support to keep outputs high and expenses low. Global overproduction brought on a crash in prices. In Japan, the sugar bubble burst in August 1920. Over the course of a year, prices dropped to half of their peak, remaining dismally low until the early 1930s. This was crushing to Okinawan agriculturalists, the majority of whom cultivated sugarcane as their main crop. In the wake of the crash, families overburdened by debt turned to the old practice of indenturing their children as laborers or prostitutes; this was particularly common in Miyako and Yaeyama, where children would be indentured on contract from as young as age three until age eighteen, for as little as twenty yen.

Tragic historical consciousness and the premonition of violence

Ironically, then, Okinawa's full integration into the Japanese polity – an event which had been anticipated as the beginning of a bright new era – led immediately into the events that drove the prefecture to “the peak of its ‘history of abject misery’” (Naha Shishi Henshū Inkai 1974 vol. 2, 263). The economic crash reinforced Japanese stereotypes of Okinawa Prefecture as a hopeless backwater incapable of managing its own affairs. It also had a deep impact on Okinawans' own perceptions of their history, ethnic character, and place within the Japanese nation and the imperialistic world order. This is evident in the work of Iha Fuyū, the “father of Okinawan studies.” As mentioned in Chapter One, much of Iha's early work was cautiously optimistic. After the post-WWI economic crisis, Iha's work took on a darker tone, painting a bleak picture of the Okinawan “ethnic character” (*minzokusei* 民族性) as irrevocably marked by “the anguish of an isolated island” (*kotō-ku* 孤島苦).

Throughout his work, Iha maintains a tight focus on the question of Okinawan agency (1974a, 486-488). His aforementioned 1914 tract “Liberation of the Ryūkyūans” exemplifies this. In it, Iha argues that the quasi-colonial relationship between Satsuma and the Ryūkyū Kingdom had driven Okinawans to suppress their capacity for self-determination. He goes on to celebrate the demise of the “feudalistic” Ryūkyū Kingdom as a chance for Okinawans to cast off their institutional and psychological bonds and rediscover themselves as subjects of the Japanese empire: “If Ryūkyūans could adopt a third person perspective and consider their own position, they would realize that they should restore authority to the Emperor and submit to His just governance in accordance

with the abolition of domains and establishment of prefectures as the other prefectures have done, and take heartfelt joy in the fact that for the first time in 300 years, their individual liberty, the safety of their lives and their right to own property have been guaranteed” (1974a, 493).

While “Liberation of the Ryūkyūans” is Iha’s most well known political work, it does not reflect the full range of his interests, nor the broadly dialectical quality of his thought. A section of *Old Ryūkyū* entitled “The Abolition of Domains and Establishment of Prefectures in Okinawa from an Evolutionist Perspective” exemplifies these qualities. Iha, who was fascinated by trends in Western scientific thought such as evolutionism, compares Okinawa to a mollusk forced to adapt by changing circumstances:

Released from political pressures by the abolition of domains and establishment of prefectures, the Ryūkyūan people find themselves troubled, like barnacles stuck to a rock that the waves no longer hit. Passing through the last thirty years, we have developed legs and our eyes have opened – but it is natural that we still feel a lack of freedom. For a people grown used to political pressure over the course of three hundred years, nothing is more vital than an education of purpose and intentions. Perhaps one could call this an education of the will.

Iha further speculates that social change would eventually alter Okinawans’ physical evolution: it “will naturally result in intermarriage, [through which] natural selection will occur; gradually, more children with ideal physical characteristics will be born ... because the abolition of the old system has eliminated pressures, the shriveled Okinawan people will once again begin to grow.” Although *Old Ryūkyū* is usually described as a

historical work, every section contains similar ruminations on the future. Significantly, throughout his writing, Iha mentions classical Ryūkyūan performing arts as an example of how something uniquely Okinawan in origin could enrich Japanese culture as a whole (1974a, 153-155; 156-160; etc.).

While Iha continued to advocate for Okinawan culture until his death, the post-WWI crisis shook his confidence. Iha's later work is saturated with ambivalence and anxiety, sometimes even verging on resentment. His 1924 "Psychoanalysis of the Southern Islanders," for example, inverts the celebratory tone of "Liberation of the Ryūkyūans." Drawing on Freud, Iha paints a bleak picture of the Okinawan "ethnic character" (*minzokusei*) as irrevocably stained by repeated instances of domination. Iha speculates that perhaps Okinawans have a "tragic history," and that perhaps it is the prefecture's fate to suffer "the anguish of an isolated island" (*kotō-ku*). Tomiyama Ichirō argues that around this time, Iha capitulated to the pejorative image of "the Ryūkyūan" prevalent in Japanese discourse (1998, 174; cf. Bhabha 1984, 126).

Iha's apparent accession to Okinawa's "tragic history" coincides with the entrance of a new character into his worldview: the "Southern Islander" or *Nantōjin* (南島人), a liminal figure that complicates the distinction between the "racially Japanese" Okinawan and "racial others" such as Malays and indigenous Taiwanese. For Iha, marginal Okinawan social groups such as rural Yaeyamans embodied this liminal figure, radiating an alterity that at once enticed Japanized Okinawans and threatened to drag them back into the world of "peoples without history" (Tomiyama 1998, 175). The idea of the *Nantōjin* concerned Iha, for the assimilation of Okinawans to this category would provide

a rationale for their excommunication from the fellowship of civilized Japanese. Tomiyama argues that Iha hedged off this threat by stressing his Japanese-ness over and against unreformed Yaeyaman women, Taiwanese "savages" (*seiban* 西播), and other "primitives." He thus sublimates the fear of being subject to violence into a "premonition of *doing* violence" (175; emphasis mine). This is evident in his chilling rhetorical question, "One wonders what would happen if the Okinawan people were given a sword instead of a folding fan" (1974a, 69).

Crushed by history: *Okuyama no botan* (1914)

The epigraph of Iha's "Psychoanalysis of the South Sea Islanders" is a quote from poet Remy de Gourmont: "We are suppressed and crushed by history" (1993, 295).¹⁰⁷ We can qualify this seemingly fatalistic pronouncement by recognizing that lived history is in fact an accretion of "social institutions granted the appearance of naturalness" (Tosaka 2001, 15). In Chapter Three, I argued that the short musical drama *Uyanma* drags the naturalized institution of status-based discrimination from the background of the social imaginary into the foreground, transforming it from a presupposition into an object of discourse. Similarly, the musical drama *Tomari Aka* questions the naturalness of patriarchal authority over sexual agency. Both plays, however, end with a sense of resignation and surrender of agency. The first hit musical drama of the Taishō period, *Okuyama no botan*, shatters this paradigm. Like the protagonists of *Tomari Aka*, its protagonist Chirā commits suicide; however, she does so for pragmatic rather than

symbolic reasons. By freeing her son from the weight of history, Chirā reclaims her own historical agency, albeit at a terrible price.

Okuyama no botan was created by Iraha Inkichi and staged by the Naka-za company in February–March 1914. Like *Tomari Aka*, it is set in the early modern period and takes place in and around Shuri. Structurally, it is more complex, comprising eight scenes and requiring set changes, special effects, and a large cast. Scene One is set in Aniya village, an outcaste community near Shuri. A group of villagers are gathered at the home of the headman to pray for his daughter Chirā, who is giving birth. The headman disperses the noisy crowd and exits. Chirā enters holding a child. Her lover Sandē (三良) then enters stealthily and rebukes her for keeping him at a distance. Chirā tells Sandē that she has been isolating herself because she was pregnant with his child. He is surprised. Chirā then reveals her outcaste status. Sandē is shocked, and reveals his own samurai status. He asks Chirā to promise not to disclose their affair. Chirā is hurt, but agrees: “Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.”

Scene Two opens with Sandē and his mother talking in a small hut. We learn that Sandē’s father has taken a courtesan, who has convinced him to expel Sandē’s mother. Chirā, who is (inexplicably) hiding near the hut, hears this. The courtesan then bursts in, accompanied by a thug. She orders him to bind Sandē and his mother, take them to the seashore, and kill them. The curtain drops. Scene Three opens at the shore. Sandē and his mother are bound and helpless. The thug draws his sword, but Chirā runs onstage with a knife and attacks him. He overpowers her and throws her in the ocean. He turns

back to his captives, but just as he is about to kill them, thunder crashes and a celestial maiden descends from the heavens to drive him away. Chirā enters with the child, who she leaves on the shore in front of Sandē. The curtain drops. Scene Four takes place at house of Sandē's father, where he and his conniving mistress are feasting. She is shown conspiring with a treacherous retainer to poison Sandē's father. Before they can do so, they are interrupted by a troupe of *chondarā* performers. The lead *chondarā* is Chirā in disguise. While performing, Chirā divulges all of the courtesan's misdeeds, then performs a martial dance with a spear, which she concludes by stabbing the courtesan to death. She then begs Sandē's father to take Sandē back. Chastened, Sandē's father apologizes to his wife and child, who forgive him.

Scene Five takes place several years later. Sandē and Chirā's son, Yamatū, has just passed the royal examination, and his family is celebrating. A young woman named Madamachi and her father are also present. We learn that Sandē has promised Yamatū to reveal his mother's identity if he passed the examination. Yamatū demands that Sandē keep his promise, and Sandē confesses everything. Yamatū rebukes his father and states that he will not accept an official position unless he is allowed to search for his mother first. Sandē reluctantly agrees and tells Yamatū the vow that Chirā made, so that he might recognize her: "Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved." Scene Six follows immediately after. While Yamatū is preparing for his journey, Madamachi and her nursemaid enter. The nursemaid tells Yamatū that Madamachi is in love with him, and they pledge to marry after his return. Yamatū then sets off. When Scene Seven opens, he

has already travelled long and far, to no avail. He comes upon a tiny mountain hut and asks the woman living there – Chirā – if he can stay the night. When Yamatū offhandedly sings the verse that Sandē taught him, Chirā recognizes him as her son. They both cry and commiserate. Yamatū tells Chirā about his worldly success, and asks her to come to Shuri to live with him. Chirā refuses, warning Yamatū that if his mixed-status heritage was discovered his career and marriage would be destroyed. Yamatū tells Chirā that she is more important to him than his marriage or career. Chirā tells Yamatū that she will go with him, and tells him to wait while she goes to pack some things. However, rather than returning to the house, she silently apologizes and throws herself into a ravine.¹⁰⁸ Eventually Yamatū realizes what Chirā has done, and breaks down at the edge of the ravine in tears.

Okuyama no botan was extremely well-received. Its first run lasted around three weeks, and was quickly followed by a second run in the summer of 1914. On February 11, 1914, the *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun* ran a review that praised the first-run production's singing and dancing. On March 6, the *OMS* ran another positive review with a plot outline, from which we can deduce several possible differences between the first-run version and the version performed today. Most significantly, the review does not mention Chirā's suicide; rather, it states that the play ended with a wedding scene (Ōno 2003, 81). A *Ryūkyū Shimpō* review of the same production confirms this (March 7, 1914).¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, reviews of the second-run production do mention Chirā's suicide. Similarly, while a February 11, 1914 review does not mention whether Chirā kills the concubine with a spear during the *chondarā* dance, a July 7, 1914 review does

mention this scene. Ikemiya deduces from this that the second-run version was similar to the version performed today (1980, 383).

Iraha's contemporaries have left us tantalizing hints regarding his inspiration for *Okuyama no botan*. According to Taira Yoshiyasu, prewar theaters took a three-week "spring break" each June. During this break, actors would tour the countryside with costumes and props borrowed from theater management. Taira recalls that while performing near Kadena during one of these tours, Iraha invited him to visit the famous pond Yara-maruchi (屋良漏池). Iraha saw a strikingly beautiful young girl there, and this planted the seed of *Okuyama no botan* in his mind (392). Tokashiki Shuryō's son Shushō tells a different origin story. According to Tokashiki, Iraha was returning home from the theater one night when he saw a young outcaste couple embracing; he imagined how tragic it would be if the man and woman were of different social classes, and kept mulling over this idea until it germinated into the plot of *Okuyama no botan*. Ikemiya notes that Taira's account recalls literary romanticism, while Tokashiki's account recalls literary naturalism. To Ikemiya, this is appropriate because Okinawan musical drama has one foot planted in each of these idioms (393).¹¹⁰

Unlike Ganeko Yaei and Majikina Yūkō, Iraha Inkichi was not formally educated and is said to have been illiterate (390). Nevertheless, his familiarity with the classical Ryūkyūan performing arts tradition enabled him to craft a richly allusive narrative. As in *Tomari Aka*, references to kumiodori abound in *Okuyama no botan*. It borrows many of its poetic devices from kumiodori, including formulaic motifs such as blossoming flowers, as well as more specific images such as blossoms pierced and bound together by thread,

which appears in *Temizu no en*. Several of its plot elements also refer back to various kumiodori. For example, the attempted seaside execution of Sandē and his mother is reminiscent of the attempted seaside execution of Tamatsi in *Temizu no en*. Likewise, Chirā's attempt to rescue Sandē and his mother recalls Yamatū's attempt to interrupt Tamatsi's execution. As Nakahodo Masanori observes, the goddess Kannon's subsequent intervention could be seen as a reference to the kumiodori *Kōkō no maki*, in which a young girl offers to sacrifice herself to a serpent in exchange for assistance for her family, but is saved at the last moment by the goddess (1994, 63).¹¹¹ The following scene, Chirā's murder of the evil concubine under the pretext of a *chondarā* performance, clearly refers to the final scenes in *Nidō tekiuchi* and *Manzai tekiuchi*. In both plays, two brothers revenge themselves upon their father's killer by disguising themselves as itinerant performing artists.

Nakahodo suggests that one reason Iraha was intent on crafting such a tightly woven and densely allusive narrative was his desire to surpass Ganeko Yaei's *Tomari Aka* both commercially and artistically (70). As previously mentioned, at the time *Okuyama no botan* was written, Naka-za and Okinawa-za were locked in intense competition. Moreover, Iraha's previous musical drama *Yakushi-dō*, while successful, could be interpreted unsympathetically as a "rehash" of *Tomari Aka* (69). *Okuyama no botan* strives to differentiate itself from *Tomari Aka* by inverting its key narrative devices. *Tomari Aka*, for example, begins with the *hamaori* ceremony, the purpose of which was for women to wash out the seed of the serpent-seducer *akamatā* – i.e., to induce miscarriage. Conversely, *Okuyama no botan* begins with Yamatū's birth. Nakahodo

argues that this inversion is both aesthetically and ideologically significant (70). Ganeko's tacit reference to the *akamatā* legend in *Tomari Aka* points toward the uncomfortable fact that Aka's attempt to seduce Umichiru could expose her to structural violence (as *Temizu no en* demonstrates, the potential consequences of sexual impropriety were dramatically different for men and women). In the final instance, however, Ganeko fails to deal with the ethical question he has raised. Instead, he legitimizes Aka and Umichiru's affair through double suicide – as Nakahodo puts it, “marriage through death” (48). To Nakahodo, Iraha's decision to begin with an illegitimate birth constitutes a “refusal” of this *deus ex machina* resolution (70).

This refusal allows *Okuyama no botan* to raise two interrelated topics that *Tomari Aka* fails to adequately address: filial relations and status relations. It does so through a series of allusions to *Hanauri no en*, which deals with the same topics (as mentioned in Chapter Three). In Scene Six, Yamatū disguises himself as a flower-seller in order to search for his mother – a clever recombination of *Hanauri no en*'s main motifs. The chorus opens this scene with “Sensuru bushi,” the same melody used to accompany Morikawa-no-shi's entrance in the final scene of *Hanauri no en*. Echoing Morikawa-no-shi, Yamatū rhetorically asks “whether there is anyone in this floating world as pitiful as me.” Like Morikawa-no-shi's wife and son, Yamatū is then described as traveling long miles down an unknown mountain road. In both plays, the protagonists' difficult journeys are rewarded with unexpected family reunions, which are described as the result of filial dedication combined with providence. Both plays close by proclaiming that the filial bond cannot be severed or concealed.

This being said, both plays are tonally bittersweet. Morikawa-no-shi and Chirā both describe the experience of meeting their estranged children as more illusory than a dream; moreover, although *Hanauri no en* ends with a happy reunion, the chorus' final verse is quite ambiguous: "The joy of this day on which parent and child are reunited / Is like the chance meeting of budding flowers and the morning dew." The image of flowers suggests hope, but the image of the morning dew evokes the ultimate transience of life. Dew often appears as a keyword in death poems (*jisei* 辞世), such as the death poem attributed to Toyotomi Hideyoshi: "Appearing and disappearing with the dew / This, my life / And all that was done in Naniwa / A dream within a dream."¹¹² In *Temizu no en* and *Tomari Aka*, Tamatsi and Umichiru both use dew imagery to express their willingness to die. Chirā uses a variation on Tamatsi's phrasing in order to announce her suicide: "I will extinguish this reproachful life."

What sets Chirā apart is the rationale behind her renunciation. Iraha makes it clear that Chirā's status is the root cause of her suffering: "to be born into a low status is a hateful thing." She tells Yamatū that if his mixed status were to become known, it would void any chance for social mobility: "if the people of the world knew that you were carried in the womb of a person of deplorable status, it would mean the end of your career ... Please look into my heart and see that my only desire is to go on living in this distant mountain glen, praying to the gods and buddhas for your success in the world." However, Yamatū is too naïve or too willful to accept this. Chirā comes to see her own tainted corporeal existence as the weight of history bearing down on her son. Only by

negating it can she free him of this weight. Chirā's status thus proves the precondition for moral apotheosis through self-sacrifice.

Premonitions of doing violence: *Iejima Handō-gwa* (1924)

If *Okuyama no botan* discloses a premonition of violence, Majikina Yūkō's musical drama *Iejima Handō-gwa* documents its wrenching realization. *Iejima Handō-gwa* was first performed in 1924 at Taishō Gekijō under the title *Hentona Handō-gwa*, to immediate popular acclaim. It remains the single most famous prewar Okinawan musical drama. While *Iejima Handō-gwa* is nearly as long as *Okuyama botan*, its plot is less sprawling: with the exception of the final scene, it takes place over the course of two days. In a sense we can understand *Iejima Handō-gwa* as a compression and amplification of the desires and anxieties manifest in the plays we have analyzed so far.

Iejima Handō-gwa opens in the Hentona district of Okinawa Island with a confrontation between Kana (加那), who is traveling on business from Iejima Island, and his wife, who has come to find him. His wife accuses him of having an affair with a local girl – Handō-gwa (ハンドー小) – and demands that he return to Iejima with her immediately. Kana asks permission to bid farewell to Handō-gwa, but his wife refuses. They exit, and the setting shifts to Handō-gwa's family home. Handō-gwa's cousin Machī-gwa (マチー小) enters and tells her that Kana has returned to Iejima. Handō-gwa refuses to believe this. When Machī-gwa points out Kana's ship in the distance, she falls into a deep depression. The next scene takes place early the next morning. While Handō-gwa languishes in bed, a ship's captain from Iejima enters and announces that he

will sail for home at daybreak. Machī-gwa begs him to take Handō-gwa to Iejima to find Kana, and he agrees. In the following scene, the setting shifts to Iejima. While wandering alone, Handō-gwa is crudely solicited by two young men. She refuses their advances, so they call a group of islanders together to bully her. Eventually, a village official steps in and disperses the crowd. Handō-gwa asks the official to summon Kana, which he does. Handō-gwa begs Kana to take her back, but he tells her that his vows of love were empty and that she was merely a distraction from the loneliness of travel. Kana's father then enters and demeans Handō-gwa by calling her a prostitute (*sangwanā* 娼婦). They exit, leaving her on the ground in tears.

At this point, Handō-gwa resolves to kill herself. The Captain enters and tells her that Machī-gwa has come to take her back home. Handō-gwa tells the Captain that she needs to take a walk in the mountains to clear her head. He is suspicious, but lets her go. The setting shifts to a barren mountaintop. Handō-gwa enters and reaffirms her wish to die. After asking her parents for forgiveness and wishing divine punishment upon Kana, she strangles herself with her own hair. The Captain and Machī-gwa come rushing to the scene, but they are too late. Some time passes before the final scene, which takes place at Kana's home. Kana has mysteriously fallen ill, and claims to hear Handō-gwa's voice echoing in the mountains. His father dismisses this as absurd. The Captain and Machī-gwa then enter. Machī-gwa asks Kana's father to burn incense for Handō-gwa, lest Kana continue to suffer her vengeance. Kana's father mockingly refuses. The Captain warns him not to tempt fate, but he drives them away. After they leave, Kana stands in a daze and claims to hear Handō-gwa's voice. Handō-gwa's ghost appears on stage, and Kana's

father panics and draws his sword. He tries to strike the ghost, but cuts down his own daughter and daughter-in-law by mistake. Meanwhile, the ghost crosses the stage and assails Kana. In the wake of the carnage, the Captain and Machī-gwa return to find Kana's father in tears. The play ends with a snappy I-told-you-so delivered by the Captain and a moralistic verse sung by the chorus.

As Nakahodo observes, Majikina's version of the *Iejima* story was not the first; however, this does not diminish its artistic value in the least (1994, 15).¹¹³ Like *Tomari Aka* and *Okuyama no botan*, it is richly allusive. The most obvious frame of reference for the *Iejima* narrative is the kumiodori *Shūshin kane'iri* (22).¹¹⁴ In both narratives, “an audacious and passionate woman ... goes mad to the point of being unable to see anything other than love, and follows her man's footsteps in pursuit of him” (*OMS*, March 24-25, 1911). Much as Umichiru recalls *Temizu no en*'s pure-hearted Tamatsi and Chirā recalls *Hanauri no en*'s filial Otodaru, Handō-gwa recalls the single-mindedly passionate female antagonist of *Shūshin kane'iri*. By employing this character-type, Majikina rounds off a series of references to classical female character-types in modern tragic musical dramas.

The central motif in both *Iejima Handō-gwa* and *Shūshin kane'iri* is the tension between fated and ill-fated love, or *en* (縁) and *akuen* (悪縁). As Yonaha observes, the words *en* and *akuen* appear nine times in *Shūshin kane'iri* and eleven times in *Iejima Handō-gwa* (2012, 12). Handō-gwa's first major monologue outlines the concept of *en*:

You don't understand the feelings between us! We are bound by a vow, two birds flying wing to wing. Our vow will bind us even in the afterlife. Like the devotion

that binds a pair of mandarin ducks, the thread of fate binds us together. You couldn't possibly understand! If I were to die, he would die too – if he were to die, I would die at the same moment (Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11, 393).

This passage also expresses Handō-gwa's two defining characteristics: her rather naïve faith in the dream of predestined love and her single-minded drive to force that dream into reality (actors playing Handō-gwa have expressed the balance of these traits in diverse ways; see Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2012, 5). It also acts as foreshadowing – the line “if I were to die, he would die too” predicts the eventual consequence of Kana's unfaithfulness.

The same passage exemplifies the compositional technique of allusive variation, which Majikina inherits from prior Okinawan musical dramas and elevates to an almost baroque degree of complexity. The figure of “two birds flying wing to wing,” for example, points toward a knot of interwoven allusions. The first chapter of the *Tale of Genji* uses this phrase to describe the emperor's love for Genji's deceased mother: ““In the sky, as birds that share a wing. On earth, as trees that share a branch’ – it had been their vow, and the shortness of her life had made it an empty dream.” This in turn alludes to the poem “Song of Everlasting Regret” (「長恨歌」) by Bai Juyi (772-846):

In the heavens, we vow to be as two birds flying wingtip to wingtip

On earth, we vow to be as two intertwined branches of a tree

Even the heavens and the earth have their ending times,

The regret of our parting will last forever and never end.¹¹⁵

Majikina’s phrase “like a pair of mandarin ducks [*oshidori* 鴛鴦]” elaborates this referential chain by alluding to the same legend from which Bai Juyi borrowed the image of a tree with enjoined branches (連理枝).¹¹⁶ This legend appears in the *Sōushénjì* (「搜神記」), a third century CE compilation of stories pertaining to the supernatural. In the legend, the tyrannical King Kang of Song (宋康王) exiles his retainer Han Ping (韓憑) in order to steal his beautiful wife. Han Ping commits suicide in protest, and when his wife hears of this, she throws herself from the castle wall in front of the king’s eyes. She leaves the king a letter begging to be buried with her husband, but the king spitefully buries them across from each other instead. Eventually, a tree with enjoined roots and branches grows from the two graves, and two mandarin ducks nest in the tree. Moved by the ducks’ sad song, the locals conclude that they are the spirits of Han Ping and his wife, bound together in death. Notably, King Kang’s tyrannical and warlike ways eventually resulted in his being overthrown and killed by a coalition of neighboring states.

Majikina’s use of overlapping intertextual references in this passage demonstrates a masterful knowledge of the broader East Asian poetic tradition, as well as a sharp sense of irony. His allusion to *The Tale of Genji* also foreshadows the play’s *coup de grâce*: Handō-gwa’s ghostly revenge. *Genji* contains several episodes of possession and murder by the spirits of vengeful women (*mono no ke* 物の怪). The most famous of these episodes is the haunting of Genji’s wife, Lady Aoi. A former lover of Genji’s, Lady Rokujō, is so distraught by Genji’s rejection that her spirit breaks free from her body and attacks Lady Aoi, leading to her death. When Rokujō comes to her senses, she is mortified by the thought that her crime might bind her karma even more tightly to the

world of human suffering, thus “shackling [her] conduct with the weight of historical baggage” (Brown 2001, 51). Like Rokujō, Handō-gwa is “overwhelmed by *urami* [resent] ... unable to bring her ‘troubled thoughts’ under control, since she is neither able to overcome her attachments nor appease her restless spirit” (53).

The episode of Lady Rokujō and other classical spirit-possession stories also paved the way for a proliferation of vengeful ghosts in Edo period literature and theater. Shimazaki Satoko observes that female ghosts are “ubiquitous” in the *gōkan* and *yomihon* genres of popular fiction, which often centered on “themes of prophecy, women’s revenge, and karmic retribution (*inga ōhō* 因果応報)” (2011, 236). Ghosts appeared on the kabuki stage as well, most famously in eighteenth century Kasane tales and in the plays of Nanboku, whose ghosts “remained engaged with the world, carrying out a social mission even in death” (232). In Nanboku’s *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan*, for example, the anti-heroine Oiwa’s husband Iemon poisons and abandons her in a ploy to remarry into status and money; she dies, and returns as a ghost to take unrelenting and gruesome revenge. In one famous scene from *Yotsuya*, the poisoned Oiwa’s long black hair begins to fall out. Grasping bloody clumps of hair in her hands, Oiwa cries out: “How can I rest until I’ve carried out my will?” (238). Claiming a direct relation of influence between Oiwa’s hair-tearing and Handō-gwa’s suicide-by-hair would be pure conjecture. Nevertheless, it is interesting that both plays prominently feature the image of long black hair, which is a well-established poetic emblem of female sexuality. In both plays, the poetics of *eros* are twisted into a poetics of *thanatos*.

In *The Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur suggests that our experiences of promising and remembering are inevitably inflected by “the threat of something negative that is constitutive of their meaningfulness: forgetting for memory, betrayal for promises” (2005a, 110). *Iejima Handō-gwa* stages the primeval moral drama of betrayal in exemplary form. Kana betrays Handō-gwa three times: he makes a vow to her in bad faith; he leaves her without a word; and he refuses to acknowledge her when she seeks him out. To borrow Nakahodo’s figure, Kana acts faithlessly at the junctures of coming together, promising, and parting (1994). The most bitter of these betrayals is Kana’s failure to grant Handō-gwa so much as the dignity of a farewell. What seals both of their fates is Kana’s failure to intervene when his father degrades her. Kōki Ryōshū, artistic director for the National Theatre Okinawa, hints at this in the program of a June 2012 production: “What structures this tragedy is the theme: ‘speaking is like using money’ – Kana’s father kills Handō-gwa with words” (Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2012, 4).¹¹⁷ The deaths of Kana’s family, which his father could have prevented merely by lighting incense and reciting a short prayer, attest to the grave responsibility that accompanies our preeminent human capacity to utter or withhold words.

Conclusion: Toward a phenomenology of the capable woman

At the center of gravity of each of four musical dramas we have read, we find a vow (*chigiri* 契り). In *Uyanma*, we do not witness an act of vowing, but the Resident’s behavior demonstrates that he is conscious of a certain faithlessness. The emotional climax of *Tomari Aka* is Umichiru’s final testimony, which is driven by a vow: “The

words you breathed – ‘even into the next world’ – I took them deep into my breast.” This vow binds Aka and Umichiru to “marriage through death.” In *Okuyama no botan*, Chirā’s vow to Sandē and Yamatū drives her to self-renunciation, murder, and finally suicide. Yamatū’s exchange of vows with Madamachi establishes a counterpoint to Chirā’s suicide, opening a path to new life and validating her sacrifice. In a sense, *Okuyama no botan* proposes that the capacity to promise is essential to the continuation of life. By contrast, *Iejima Handō-gwa* seems to propose the moral preeminence of the vow over life itself. When Kana spuriously promises to be faithful to Handō-gwa unto death, he unwittingly seals his own fate.

The concepts of promising and faithfulness have long occupied a place of privilege in both Eastern and Western social thought. This certainly holds for the Confucian tradition that underpins both early modern Ryūkyūan ideology and the “civil morality” of the Imperial Japanese state. As Cecilia Wee observes, the Chinese character for faith or trust, *xin* (Jp. *shin* 信), is comprised of the “person” radical (Jp. *ninben* 亻) linked to the character for speech, *yan* (Jp. *koto* 言) (2011, 517). In *Analects* 7.25, we find the saying: “The master instructs under four [headings]: culture, moral conduct, doing one’s best and being trustworthy in what one says (文、行、忠、信).” The capacity to keep faith lies at the heart of each of the Confucian Five Relationships.¹¹⁸ Following the *Analects*, Wee concludes that “a person who lacks *xin* [Jp. *shin* 信; faithfulness] is, for Confucius, like a cart from whom a crucial pin is missing, so that it cannot be driven and is wholly useless in society ... *Xin* thus plays an important social

role insofar as it is the starting point, or *sine qua non*, for any fruitful relationship with other persons” (527).

The concept of trust also concerns several of the theorists that I have drawn upon in this dissertation. In *The Just*, for example, Ricoeur suggests that promising is “the model for every speech act” (2003, 22). This is not only sociopolitically significant, but also impacts our understanding of the phenomenon of personhood. As mentioned in the Introduction, Ricoeur breaks down personhood into two complementary facets, *idem*-identity and selfhood or “*ipseity*.” On a linguistic level, *idem*-identity is declarative and descriptive: we identify a person or thing by determining its attributes. What matters in an identity statement is the propositional content that attaches to an object. Selfhood, on the other hand, is established through speech acts, in which propositional content is imparted with “illocutionary force” (2005a, 129). Unlike declarative statements, speech acts necessitate a movement of the will; thus, they impute an agent. Promising is an exemplary speech act because the utterance itself gives voice to a movement of the will, thereby executing an action: in saying “I promise,” I promise.

Speech acts and promises bridge the domains of ontology and ethics. The illocutionary force of speech acts in general attests to selfhood, while the illocutionary force of the promise in particular attests to a “will to self-constancy”:

Whence does the maker of a promise draw the force to so commit himself? From a more fundamental promise, that of keeping one’s word in all circumstances.

We can speak here of “the promise that precedes any promise making.” It is what gives every promise its aspect of commitment, commitment toward and

commitment to. And it is to this commitment that the character of ipseity of the promise attaches to ... [This ipseity] consists in a will to self-constancy, to remaining true to form, which seals the story of a life confronted with changes in circumstances and changes of heart. It is an identity that is preserved ... in spite of everything that might incline one to break one's word (131).

For Ricoeur, self-constancy synthesizes our fundamental human capacities to speak, act, narrate, and impute. Promising literally gives voice to this synthesis. In acknowledging our capacity for self-constancy, we establish the parameters for self-narration; in attesting to actions, we authorize others to impute us with consequences. When we do this, we also implicitly recognize our interlocutors' status as speaking, acting, and judging persons. The weight of these ideas cannot be overrated. The concept of ethical relations between subjects presumes the capacity for self-constancy; this is equally the case in Aristotelian virtue ethics and Confucian relational ethics. Even rational egoism would founder without a baseline expectation of self-constancy – the maximization of self-interest over time, after all, implies durative interests grounded in a durable self. I do not think that it is an exaggeration to say that this baseline expectation prevents human being-together from degenerating into a condition of perpetual mutual suspicion. To paraphrase Cynthia Wee, it is the capacity for self-constancy that is the *sine qua non* for any credible ethics or politics (2011, 527; cf. Arendt 1958a).

Ricoeur utilizes the conceptual pair “attestation- recognition” as a bridge from his phenomenology of selfhood to Hegel's theory of recognition – which, as we have seen, helped shape Imperial Japanese conceptions of subjecthood and personhood. As

previously argued, the Meiji state “renounced the Tokugawa theory of innate [status-contingent] difference and adopted a view that human interiorities possessed the same universal qualities” (Hirano 2014, 208). In his commentary on the Meiji Constitution, for example, Itō Hirobumi condemns the Tokugawa state for failing to recognize the rights and capacities of “the people,” and affirms the Meiji state’s commitment to doing so:

Under the military regime of the middle ages, warriors and the common people were placed in different classes. The former monopolized the exercise of every public right, while the latter were not only excluded from the enjoyment of these, but were also curtailed in the full enjoyment of their civil rights. The expression “public treasure” thus lost its meaning ... Since the Restoration, the privileges of the military class have been abolished by successive Rescripts, and all Japanese subjects, without discrimination among them, can now enjoy their rights and discharge their duties (39-40).

The Meiji state sought to sublimate the status-bound distribution of competencies under an ethnic-national “ethos of civilization,” which combined a centrifugal imperative to maximize economic self-interest with a centripetal imperative to identify viscerally with the imagined community of the nation-state (Hirano 2014, 214). Weber describes this gambit as the transmutation of status honor into ethnic honor (1968, 390). Like status honor, ethnic honor presumes “the conviction of the excellence of one's own customs and the inferiority of alien ones” (391). Both concepts rest upon “a distribution of the sensible that combines – according to different forms of proportionality – the sharing of a common capacity and the distribution of alternative capacities” (Rancière 2009, 4).

The reason I return to the Meiji Constitution here is because the contradiction between the de jure assignation of human capacities to Okinawans and the de facto denial of these capacities under the Preservation of Old Customs and Special Prefectural Governance systems inflicted a particular trauma upon the Okinawan psyche. This trauma is the background against which Okinawan commercial musical drama must be read. As previously mentioned, Tomiyama Ichirō refers to this distribution of capacities as the social construction of “the Japanese” (1995, 4). Identity categories such as “the Japanese” are often portrayed as descriptive labels that points toward some immutable shared essence. In fact, they are prescriptive terms that index particular attributes deemed vital to socially defined goals (in this case, the capitalist and nationalist project of “enriching the country and strengthening the military”) (5). Meiji Japanese target attributes included diligence (*kinben* 勤勉), rationality (*risei* 理性), good health and hygiene (*eisei* 衛生), etc. The state glorified these attributes in proclamations such as the Charter Oath and the Imperial Rescript on Education, and founded public institutions (most notably standardized schooling and military conscription) in order to inculcate them. Non-state actors such as reform societies also played an important role in disseminating the dominant civil morality; as described in Chapter Five, they did so by ensuring that the pressure to adapt to prescribed norms was never off. Finally, the private sector incentivized the cultivation of related virtues such as discipline, punctuality, and respect for the concept of the contract.

As we have seen, the identity category of “the Okinawan” took shape during the Meiji and Taishō periods alongside that of “the Japanese.” For reasons discussed in

Chapter One, “the Okinawan” was constructed in both official and unofficial discourse as deficient in all of the ideal characteristics attributed to “the Japanese.” Rather than being diligent, the Okinawan was said to tend toward idleness (*taida* 怠惰). Rather than being rational, he was irrational and intemperate (*kyōki* 狂気). Rather than being healthy and hygienic, he was slovenly and unsanitary (*fueisei* 不衛生). Tomiyama situates this Japanese/Okinawan binary within Wallerstein's post-Marxist theory of ethnic consciousness, which holds that ethnic identities are formed through habituation to different labor conditions in core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral economies (9). Wallerstein disputes the common-sense assumption that ethnic discrimination is primarily a result of “irrational” xenophobic bias, arguing that it is in fact a sub-function of “rational” utility maximization on the part of elites: subaltern identities are constructed strategically as loopholes through which to introduce disciplinary practices that limit the freedom of the labor market without technically violating the universalizing logics of commodification and meritocracy (13). Drawing on his own research into labor practices in mainland Japanese worksites that employed Okinawan migrants, Tomiyama concludes that construction of “the Okinawan” as a “probationary Japanese” served precisely this function (26).

The construction of “the Okinawan” as a “probationary Japanese” – i.e., a person deficient in certain core competencies – had predictably venomous psychosocial consequences. Rather than assuming the best of the prefecture and its citizens, mainland Japanese officials and employers tended to assume the worst. For example, when Odagiri Iwatarō was appointed as governor of Okinawa, he asked sardonically what

crime he had committed to be “sentenced to service in Ryūkyū,” and soon resigned (Ōta 1996, 271). Bad press such as this not only kept discrimination against Okinawans in the bureaucracy alive, but also dissuaded talented Japanese from accepting positions in Okinawa. This further inhibited the efficacy of the prefecture’s institutions, thus giving substance to Japanese prejudices. Ōta calls this vicious circle “the self-fulfilling prophesy” of colonial domination (272). The rice market crash of 1920 exemplifies this vicious circle. In addition to its immediate economic impact, the crash had a lasting impact on representations of Okinawa in mainland Japanese discourse. In 1924, all three locally owned banks collapsed (Matsumura 2007, 207). This drove governor Kamei Mitsumasa to form a “Committee for Economic Promotion in Okinawa Prefecture,” which petitioned the National Diet for economic relief (308). The Committee’s relief petitions offered up the image of families “so miserable that they have to eat the *sotetsu* [sago cycad, a type of poisonous palm] in order to sustain themselves” (312). The Japanese press, keen to profit from poverty voyeurism, began describing the prefecture in sensationalistic terms as “sago palm hell” (*sotetsu jigoku*). Unfortunately, the Committee failed to address the specific causes of the crisis (which were the promotion of sugar monoculture and irresponsible speculation); instead, it laid blame on the ambiguous scapegoat of “underdevelopment” (313). This effectively socialized losses incurred through poor administration and cronyism. It also dissembled the fact that Okinawa’s weak and crisis-prone economy was not a baseline condition, but rather, an effect of the center-periphery model of modernization adopted by Japanese policymakers throughout the Meiji and Taishō periods.¹¹⁹

The sugar crisis also inevitably dredged up familiar stereotypes of Okinawans as fundamentally incapable of being trusted to manage their own affairs, let alone contribute to the good of the Empire. For Iha Fuyū and other scholars invested in the project of re-legitimizing Okinawan culture, this was a devastating blow. As Tomiyama observes, Iha's writing changed in the wake of the sugar crisis, taking on a darker tone (1998). This being said, I believe we should view Iha's pessimistic turn less as a qualitative shift in worldview and more as a foregrounding of previously latent anxieties. These anxieties arise sporadically throughout Iha's earlier work, most strikingly in the form of caustic and self-deprecating humor. For example, Iha opens a section of *Old Ryūkyū* on classical performing arts by stating, "There is a Ryūkyūan proverb: even chicken dung has its strong point (*niwatori no fun ni mo hitsotsu no chōsho ga aru* 鶏の糞にも一つの長所がある). It stands to follow that Ryūkyū itself must have a strong point as well" (1974a, 153). In the next section, Iha predicts that despite the "universality" of music in general, most listeners would undoubtedly find Ryūkyūan music "extremely tedious" (156). Both sections, however, evolve into eloquent defenses of the social and artistic worth of Ryūkyūan culture. It is a testament to Iha's skill as a prose stylist that he is able to open a paragraph with a scatological proverb and close it by inferring that some Ryūkyūan traditions are not only moving but instructive: "They say that the twentieth century will be the century of theater, and in Japan, voices have been raised calling for a national theater ... It is notable that while this ideal may be humble, it was realized in Okinawa 187 years ago" (155).

Significantly, Iha's sharpest anxieties attached to the concept of trust. This is evident in a less widely read section of *Old Ryūkyū* entitled "The Greatest Flaw of the Okinawan People" (*Okinawajin no saidai ketten* 沖縄人の最大欠点). Rejecting the vogue for racialism, Iha writes that "the Okinawan people's greatest flaw is not a matter of racial difference ... [or of] differing culture or customs. The Okinawan people's greatest flaw is that they easily forget their obligations" (1974a, 64). He continues:

I believe that this condition was shaped by our environment and circumstances over hundreds of years. Because throughout Okinawan history rulers have replaced each other with great frequency, Okinawans learned that forgetting one's obligation to the prior lord in the course of a day and immediately singing the praises of the new lord was necessary for survival ... no matter how they loathed doing so, Okinawans had to present themselves in whorish service – perhaps the very definition of a miserable existence. This opportunism sunk in deeply, becoming a kind of latent second nature. Is this not the definitive flaw of the Okinawan people? There is nothing more fearful than this kind of person, who would sell out his friends, his teachers, and even his country for personal profit. One cannot expect such a place to produce patriots (64-65).

Setting the question of historical accuracy aside, this piece is telling. Right off the bat, Iha rejects the idea that Okinawans' perceived shortcomings are coded into their racial, ethnic, or cultural identity. Anticipating Tosaka Jun, he instead lays the blame on habituated predispositions ("customs granted the appearance of naturalness by history" [Tosaka 2001, 15]). He then implies that the reason that these predispositions have not

been reformed is that individuals in positions of power have no real interest in reforming them: “Educators [and officials] who shrilly declare their patriotism in public while seeking personal profit in the shadows will only aggravate Okinawans’ failings” (65). This is a bold indictment of the cronyism rampant among both the prefecture’s political class and its emergent capitalists. After imploring educators and administrators to take account of themselves, the prefecture, and the people, Iha closes with an ultimatum: “if modern Okinawans cannot compensate for this great failing, then as citizens and as a race they are entirely worthless.”

As I stress in Chapter Three, it is methodologically questionable to posit causal connections between these sociopolitical and intellectual historical developments and the stylistic development of Okinawan performing arts. For example, we cannot know determinately whether Miyako peasants’ 1894–95 movement to abolish sexual indenture influenced the creation of *Uyanma*, an early musical drama about a concubine who is abandoned by her lover. Likewise, I do not seek to claim that the superlative value assigned to faithfulness in mainland Japanese and Okinawan ethical and political discourse inspired artists such as Ganeko Yaei, Iraha Inkichi, and Majikina Yūkō to craft narratives driven by the act of promising. After all, promising is as close to a universal facet of human experience as one can get. I do believe, however, that political discourse on faithfulness and concurrent artistic representations of promising can be meaningfully co-interpreted. We cannot expect this project of co-interpretation to produce objective data concerning determinant relationships between particular socioeconomic structures and particular cultural formations. We can, however, hope to reach a conditional

understanding of how encultured individuals meaningfully inhabit socioeconomic structures. This can provoke us to challenge standing interpretations of the structures in which we ourselves dwell.

In Chapter Four, I suggest that after analyzing the historical preconditions for the existence of a particular materially-fixed “distribution of the sensible” – a musical drama, for example – we should provisionally bracket this analysis and approach the work as a hermeneutically autonomous structure of meaning. We can then ask how different spectators might have looked upon their own realities through the prism of the work. How, for example, might a female migrant laborer in early twentieth century Naha have “inhabited” *Okuyama no botan* or *Iejima Handō-gwa*? Ikemiya Masaharu stakes out a standpoint from which we can explore this question when he writes that “the female subjects of musical drama were double-exposures of the women of the Meiji period, and their fates would not have been regarded as the fates of strangers” (cited in Nakahodo 1994, 74-75). Another way of saying this is that audiences likely saw the protagonists of musical dramas as belonging to a common lifeworld or “world of communicable experience” (cf. Oakeshott 1966).

Among the modalities of communicable experience that saturate the lifeworld of Okinawan musical drama, sacrifice stands out. The plays we have read portray a continuum of self-other relations as stretching from a pole of martyrdom, or unconditional willingness to sacrifice the self for the other, to a pole of solipsism, or unconditional willingness to sacrifice the other for the self. On one end of this continuum stands *Okuyama no botan*'s Chirā, who sacrifices her life for her son. On the other end

stands Kana's father in *Iejima Handō-gwa*, who cannot even bring himself to make a ritual gesture of sacrifice for Handō-gwa's salvation.

Female migrant laborers in Naha would have been familiar with the experience of sacrifice. Most of these women worked at least in part to support their families. Some were effectively indentured through predatory advance payment schemes, while others faced overwhelming social pressure. For rural families, receiving a migrant remittance could mean the difference between mere precarity and absolute ruination: a 1933 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* editorial calls migrant remittances “a crystallization of the blood and sweat of the Okinawan people, given in cooperative service to the community (Aniya 1977, 161). This description is not hyperbolic, as migrants certainly sweated and often bled for their pay. According to E. Patricia Tsurumi, migrant seamstresses generally pulled twelve to thirteen hour shifts, sometimes working up to eighteen hours straight (1984, 6). Unsafe and unhygienic facilities made lost fingers and toes, blindness, deafness, and tuberculosis common workplace hazards (9). Moreover, supervisors had “considerable arbitrary power” over workers (2004, 89). Female workers were targeted with sexual violence by males at every level of the chain of command, from fellow floor workers to supervisors and managers. Tsurumi observes that “when rape and intimidation resulted in pregnancy, the male employee or employer had little to fear: he would pay the unfortunate woman a small sum, and that would be the end of the matter for him.” A number of weavers' songs testify to these conditions, including the verse, “The owner and I are like spinning machine thread: easily tied, but easily broken” (1984, 13).

Here we find a harrowing variation on the familiar poetic trope of thread binding lovers, which arises throughout the musical dramas we have explored. This variation necessarily complicates our assessment of the relationships between Chirā and Sandē on the one hand, and between Handō-gwa and Kana on the other. It is implied in *Okuyama no botan* that Chirā, the daughter of an outcaste, and Sandē, the son of a lord, are lovers bound by fate – or at least by mutual consent and legitimate affection. Period audiences familiar with the way status and class differentials tended to play out within the field of gender relations (for example, on the textile factory floor) may have taken this implication with a grain of salt. A closer look at Sandē does not help his case. He is opportunistic, mercurial, and a hypocrite. First he derides Chirā for having no feeling or *nasake*, then he hyperbolically declares his love for her; when she reveals her past, he runs and doesn't look back. He is also a coward: rather than resist the Courtesan, he submits to disownment, and when she sends a thug to kill him, he bares his own throat. When his son Yamatū calls him out for his faithless cowardice, he has the audacity to ask Yamatū to conceal his face when he goes looking for his mother so as not to bring shame on the family. Sandē is no Romeo.

These details of Sandē's characterization are interesting to me because they beg the question of why Chirā was willing to sacrifice so much for him. After all, Sandē's utter lack of selflessness demonstrates that making sacrifices for a loved one is not a foregone conclusion. I am inclined to believe that the answer is deceptively simple: Chirā's sacrifice is an expression of self-constancy. She exhausts herself entirely to preserve the honor of Sandē's family because she promised that she would. Chirā's vow

(“Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved”) appears six times throughout the play, including in every climactic scene. It is also the magic formula that reunites Chirā with her son Yamatū (an improbable meeting that really serves no purpose other than to intensify her suffering). The play’s final verse – “who do you wish to see your blossoms, mountain peony? People do not pass through a place like this?” – drives home the point that Chirā’s virtue is not directed toward a social audience, but arises entirely from the strength of her character. Tellingly, while Yamatū’s honorable characterization and his own exchange of vows imply that he will return to his fiancé, the play gives no sense of whether he will forgive his father Sandē. It is as if through his faithlessness, Sandē has ceased to exist altogether. His character is narratively significant only because his glaring flaws refract Chirā’s luminous self-constancy.

If Chirā’s self-constancy is an eternal flame, Handō-gwa’s is a flash fire. As previously mentioned, Handō-gwa inherits the mantle of an illustrious line of vengeful spirits: *Genji*’s Lady Rokujō, *Shūshin kane’iri*’s demon-woman, and *Yotsuya*’s Oiwa (cf. Brown 2001; Shimazaki 2011). All of these women harbor fatal misconceptions about a romantic counterpart. In *Shūshin kane’iri*, the misconception stems from a miscommunication. In *Genji*, it stems from a gradual divergence of desires. In *Yotsuya* and *Iejima Handō-gwa*, it stems from an intentional deception. Unlike her literary predecessors, however, I do not believe the trauma of realizing her own misconception is what drives Handō-gwa to kill. Rather, it is the antagonists’ refusal to recognize her as a person worthy of even a modicum of respect. My interpretation owes largely to the fact

that Handō-gwa does not exact her vengeance in a fit of unreason. Majikina's perverse appropriation of the poetic trope of long black hair suggests that Handō-gwa's suicide is an impulsive act of passion. Her vengeance, on the other hand, is anything but. Handō-gwa gives Kana warning in the form of illness and hallucinations. Her cousin Machī-gwa incongruously appears to ask Kana's father to light incense in Handō-gwa's honor, and warns him of the consequences of refusing. Handō-gwa only finalizes her vengeance after Kana's father refuses to make the token gesture of lighting incense on her behalf. This refusal – not Handō-gwa's vengeance – is the act of unreason that seals the characters' fate. The murder itself is a self-possessed exercise of will.

While Handō-gwa's mountaintop suicide and Kana's death are clearly *Iejima Handō-gwa's* crisis points, I believe that the most jolting single scene in the Okinawan commercial theater repertory is Handō-gwa's victimization by a crowd of Iejima villagers (Act Two). Upon disembarking, Handō-gwa is approached by two young men who attempt to seduce her, and then threaten her with rape.¹²⁰ A crowd then forms around her and jostles her, pushing her to the ground. They dance around her, tormenting her and singing, until a village official arrives and drives them away:

Young man 2: The men of this island are used to messing around. What kind of beastly woman would ignore fine young men like us?

Young man 1: Well, if she doesn't want to come, we'll make her – we'll drag her to the garden and show her how the young men here enjoy themselves until we tire of it.

Song: "Ushiushi bushi" (「ウシウシ節」)

Crowd: Promises are like broad rivers; the place to have a good time is over to the west; the place to meet and talk is east of Castle Mountain. A beautiful girl from another island comes here without shame to meet her lover. The women of Hentona are crude, seducing men from other islands!

This scene should terrify the spectator. Juxtaposing mass violence with a jaunty chorus is terrifying because it rings true – the *jouissance* of mass violence and the practice of building solidarity through the victimization of the other are both well documented (cf. Benjamin 1986; Tilly 2003; Wolin 2004; etc.). By the same logic, the scene should not be particularly shocking. The spontaneous exertion of violence by the many against the few is, after all, a central theme in human history.

Nevertheless, there is something unsettling in the way Majikina evokes and enframes this theme. Up until this point the ethos of the play has been alternatingly bittersweet and lightly comic, like its predecessors. The young men that try to seduce Handō-gwa are buffoons, and she rebukes them wittily (“I feel like I’ve stepped into a thorn bush. You vile men are like insects!”). The comic interlude should be over; the narrative should resume. Instead, before we know it, Handō-gwa is on the ground and surrounded by faceless bodies “in the throes of ecstasy.” After a few verses, the villagers disperse and the narrative resumes as if nothing had happened. The backdrop is still ocean blue; the stage is still decorated with lush foliage. The ethos of the play, however, has been irrevocably altered. What is shocking about this scene is not the violence itself but the violation of expectations. Having seen *Okuyama no botan*, we expect Kana to abandon Handō-gwa; having read *Genji* and seen *Yotsuya kaidan*, we realize that the

possibility of supernatural vengeance is on the table. However, after Handō-gwa's encounter with the crowd, we no longer feel capable of evaluating the actions on stage, projecting outcomes, and holding up our projections against the outcomes that unfold. In Tosaka's terms, we no longer feel "at home" in the world of work. This violation verifies that the spectator too is capable of being betrayed: the "law of the inside" has become the "law of the outside" (Rancière 2009, 4).

This points toward an allegorical and collectivizing reading of the sacrifices, betrayals, and acts of vengeance that *Okuyama no botan* and *Iejima Handō-gwa* offer us. Chirā quite literally sacrifices herself for the next generation. Handō-gwa's vengeance is also generational: Kana's father's final lines ("What will become of this house, what will become of this village?") reveal that by annihilating the village's root family, Handō-gwa has effectively destabilized the entire *kyōdōtai*. The image of Chirā's generational sacrifice in particular resonates strongly with Iha Fuyū's concern for the collective fate of the Okinawan people. On the one hand, her suicide saves her son from the fate of being "suppressed and crushed by history" (1993, 295). Chirā's sacrifice channels Iha's exhortation to the new generation of Japanese-educated Okinawan elites to lay aside immediate self-interest and dedicate themselves to fostering a new generation free from the burden of institutional or psychological "feudal survivals" (1974a, 65). On the other hand, Chirā's suicide is a kind of univocal dictum to which there is no fitting reply. Honoring Chirā's sacrifice would require her son to never disclose it. If he did, he would also disclose his polluted heritage and render Chirā's death meaningless. Yamatū's fate, then, is either to risk social excommunication by revealing his outcaste status, or to dwell

in the shadow of an incommunicable loss. Like the Okinawan people, he is fated to live under perpetual probation. The numbing ambivalence of Chirā's sacrifice and Yamatū's trauma recalls a letter written by Iha to the poet Ikenomiya Sekihō: "You have no language of your own in which to express your uniqueness. What you have been raised on belongs to another" (cited in Tomiyama 1998, 173).

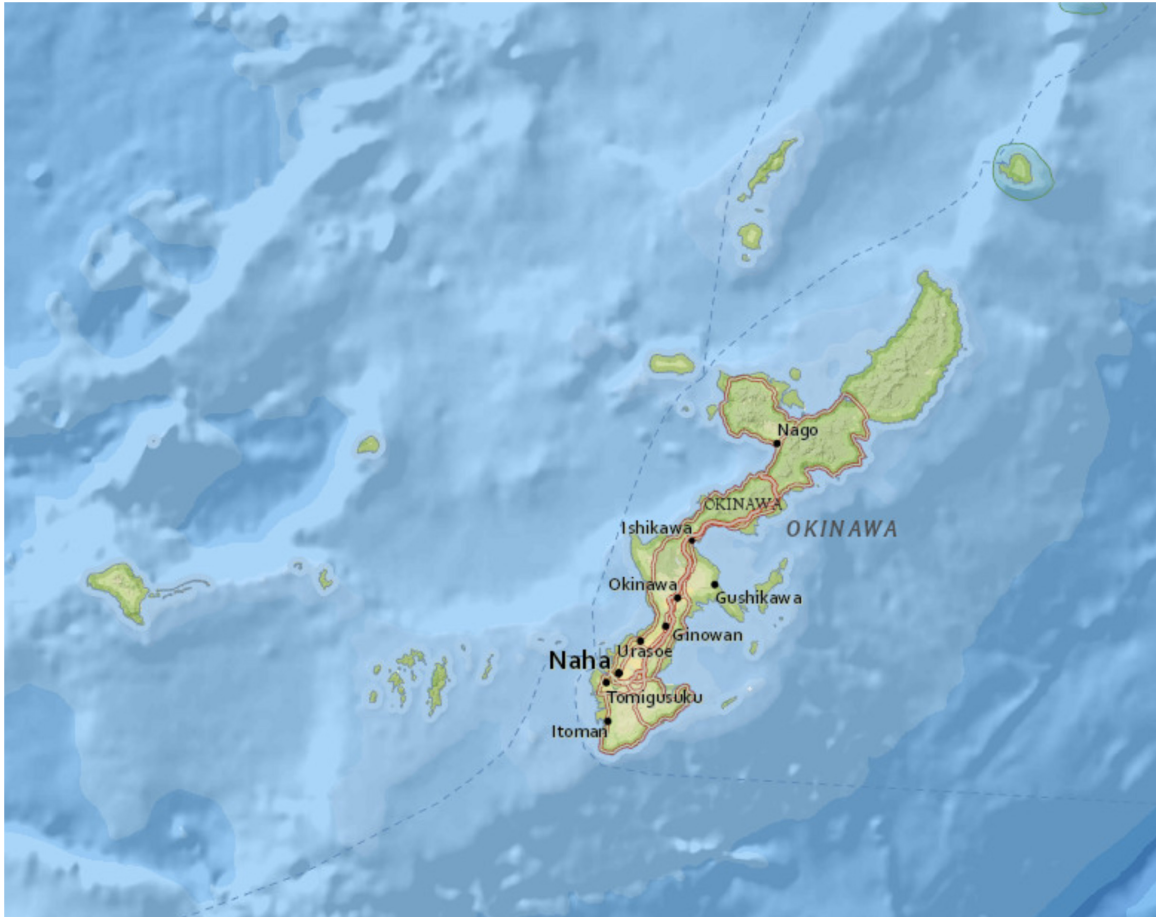
I believe that this probationary status was the reality against which Okinawan tragic musical drama took its stand. In light of this, I would like to revisit Ikemiya's assertion that "the female subjects of musical dramas were double-exposures of the women of the Meiji period, and their fates would not have been regarded as the fates of strangers" (cited in Nakahodo 1994, 74-75). This means that the heroines' seemingly hyperbolic sufferings fell within the world of possible experience inhabited by working-class Okinawan women. However, it also means that these women were able to enter parallel worlds in which hope and justice, or at the very least coherence, were not the "fates of strangers." Within the world of *Tomari Aka*, human emotion and freedom of choice are approbated. Within the world of *Okuyama no botan*, moral capacity and profound sacrifice are recognized and mourned. Within the world of *Iejima Handō-gwa*, suffering is transmuted into indignation, and vengeance falls upon the wicked. Visiting these worlds did not somehow inspire spectators to revolt against their "tragic class condition." It did, however, offer respite from the weight of history.

Appendix I: Maps

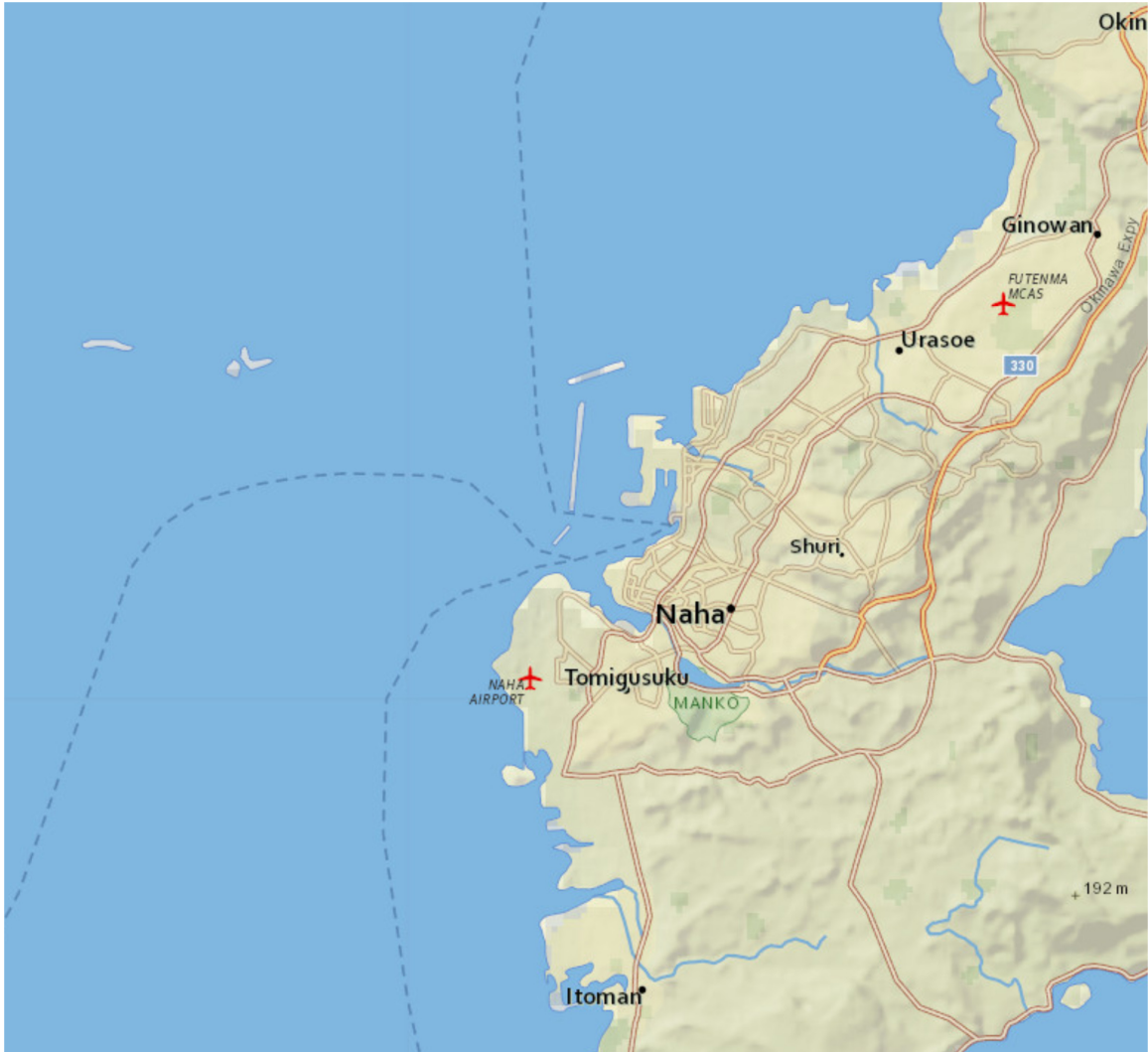
I. (1). The Ryūkyū Islands in an East Asian context.



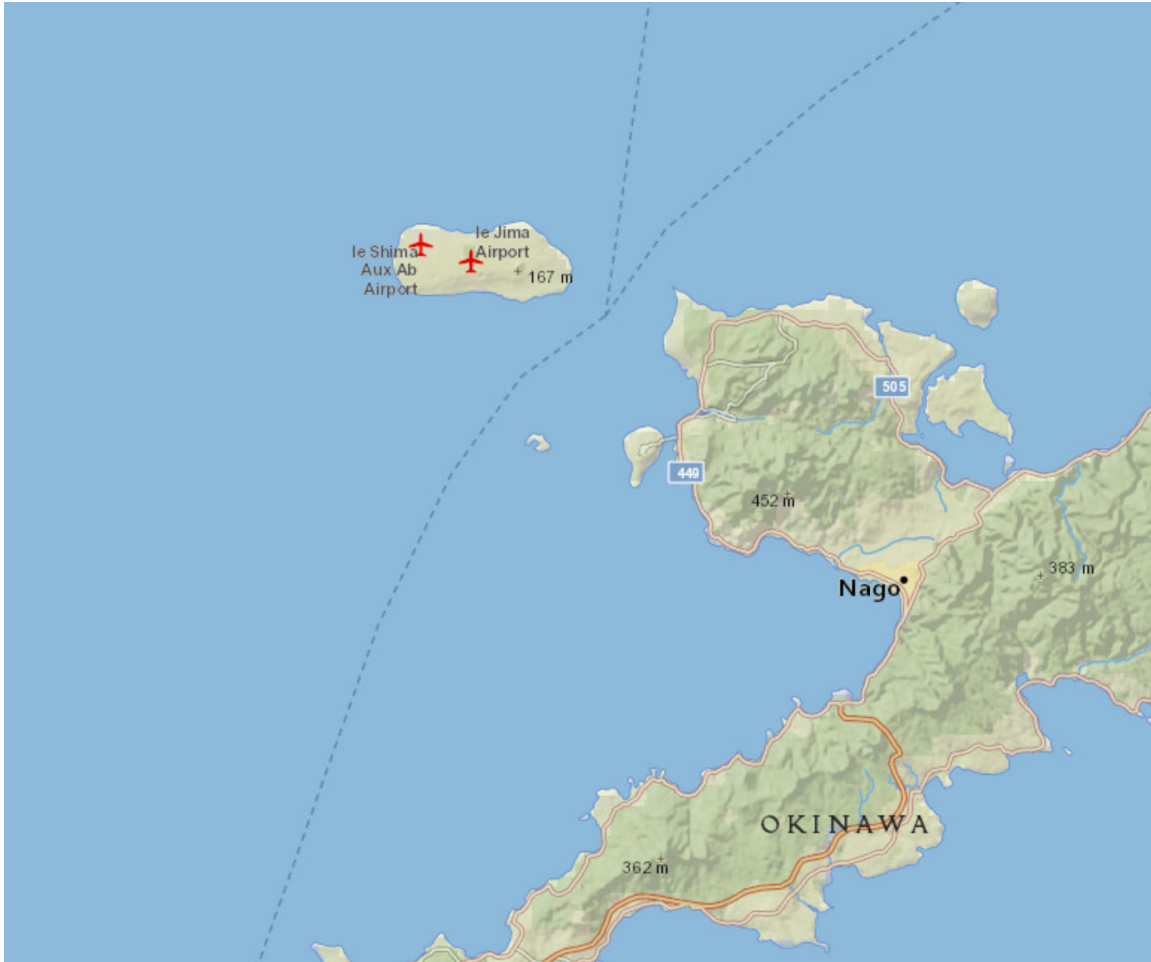
I. (2). Okinawa Island.



I. (3). The Naha and Shuri area.



I. (4). Iejima and its surroundings.



Appendix II: Musical materials

II. (1). Okinawan cipher notation: "Hama chijuyā bushi" (「浜千鳥節」)

五	七	中	五	五	五
四	五	五	四	上	中
合	中	中	五	合	五
四	工	工	中	四	中
五	五	五	七	上	五
四	中	四	五	上	七
五	四	合	中	合	五
中	合	四	五	四	中
七	上	五	中	五	七
五	上	四	五	四	五
中	合	五	七	合	中
五	四	中	五	四	上

浜^{ハマ} 千^チ 鳥^{ドリ} 節^{ブシ} 二揚

百二十四拍子一拍子七分脈
 (所要時間凡ツ一分二十六秒)

II. (2). Western notation: "Hama-chidori bushi" (浜千鳥節)

* Note that the *kunkunshi* cipher notation is provided below the staff notation.

$\text{♩} = 80$
1(10) A

五中工 五中工 五七 五七工五中七四 合老四上老上四

8(17) 19(39) B

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 ta bi ya ha ma ya du
 に て い ん わ し ら ー ら
 ni ti n wa shi ra ra

合老四上老上四 合四老四合四老四五中

24(44)

五五七七五 工 工 工 五 五 中 工 五 五 工 工 中 上 四 四
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 i i n ku sa ya nu nu
 n wa ya nu nu

七五 中五 中五 七五 中五 中五工五 中七四

31(51)

四 下 下 四 四 中 五 五 五 七 五 五 五 工 中 上 四 四
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 ya re fwa ー ー ぬ ma く ー ー ー ー ー ー
 ya re wa ー ya nu ma ku ー ー ー ー ー ー
 ya re wa ya nu u su ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー
 re wa ya nu u su ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー ー

合四老四 五中 七五 中五工五 中七四 合老四上

38(58) 59 C

乙 老 四 四 上 四 四 四 四 四 中 五
 チ ジュ ヤ 一 一 ヤ ハ マ ウ
 chi jyu ya ya ha ma u

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65

五 五 七 五 五 工 中 上 四 四
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七 五 中 工 五 中 七 四 合老四上 老上四 合老四上 老上四

72

五 中 工 五 中 工 五 七 五 七 工 五 中 七 四 合老四上 老上四

79

合老四上 老上四

Appendix III: *Temizu no en* (The Bond of Water in Hands)

Sources: Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11; Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Chōsa Yōseika 2004; Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2010.

Characters

Yamatū (山戸)

Tamatsi (玉津)

Shicha-nu-ufuyaku (志喜屋の大屋子)

Yamaguchi-nu-nyishinchi (山口の西掟)

Watchman (*monban* 門番)

Scene one

Yamatū enters.

Chorus: "Ikintō bushi" (「池当節」)

It is spring, and the wild lilies
Blossom in the fields and mountains
Their fine scent wafts about the sleeves
Of strangers crossing paths.

Yamatū: I am Yamatū, the son of the master of Fanja.
Today is the third day of the third month,
When high and low celebrate together.
The wind is blowing and I am in good spirits.
I will climb Mount Shinaga
To look at the flowers
Gather flowers and celebrate.
Gazing upon Mount Shinaga,
Known throughout the world,
The flowers are blooming beautifully
And their scent is charming.
I will rest my feet here.

Tamatsi enters.

Chorus: "Kaimiji bushi" (「通水節」)

In the third month,
My heart becomes light

I will wash my hair
In Fanja-tama River.

Tamatsi: I am Tamatsi,
A child of the house of Murikuya.
Of Chinen-yamaguchi.
In the third month,
My heart becomes light
I will wash my hair
In Fanja-tama River.

Chorus: "Hai-chikuten bushi" 「早作田節」

I will wash my hair
In the cold water that flows
In Fanja-tama River
And then return home.

Yamatū: Having gazed upon the flowers,
I will now hurry home.
Oh, oh!
My throat is dry
I cannot endure it
Beloved! Show compassion
Allow me to drink from your hands
I want to drink water
Given lovingly
From the ladle you hold
I want to drink water from your hands.

Tamatsi: I do not know you,
I know nothing of "water from your hands,"
Because I am a young girl who knows nothing of the world
Please excuse me.

Yamatū: In the old days, water from someone's hand
Flowed from compassion and love.
Today, it still flows –
The purifying water of Kyoda.

Tamatsi: When you say you want to drink water from my hands,
You're only making sport of me
In plain sight of everyone.
Hurry and leave!

Yamatū: I will sink beneath the dew
I will bind my fate to the grass.
Rather than go home
Without drinking from your hands,
I will throw my body
Into this river.

Tamatsi: Alas!
Rather than watch you
Throw away your life
Although I am ashamed
I will let you drink from my hands.

Yamatū: Ah, I am grateful.
Thanks to this river
I can drink water from your hands
This is a meeting ordained by heaven
A blessing from the gods
So you are Tamatsi,
The daughter of the renowned
House of Murikuya
Of Chinen-yamaguchi.
Because even the birds in the depths of night
Do not sing about this,
Please listen.
I am Yamatū,
The sole child
Of the lord of Fanja.
Please tell me your name
Allow me to ask where you live.
So that secretly,
Enwrapped by the darkness of night,
Unknown to any other,
I can come meet you there.

Tamatsi: Have you mistaken me for someone else?
I do not know you; I have never seen you.
I do not know this floating world.
I do not know the path of love.
I am a naïve young girl –
Please excuse me!

Yamatū: Alas, if I cannot be free to have you,

If it must be otherwise,
Please leave your scent
On my sleeve
So I can go to my death
With your face as my memento.

Tamatsi: Even when I try to withdraw, I cannot.
What else can I do?
As you said, I am Tamatsi,
The sole daughter of Murikuya
Of Chinen.
Even if I wanted to meet with you,
I am like a flower bud
Encircled sevenfold by rough-hewn fences
Is there no other flower
That you can make bloom,
No other branch you can grasp?

Yamatū: Your manor's gate could be guarded
By demons of old India –
Still, the path of love will break through.

Tamatsi: Here at this river,
People are always coming and going.
Today I will go home quickly
Let us meet again later.

Yamatū: Please do not break our engagement
Please do not deceive me.
Today I will return home
Let us meet again later.

Chorus: "Chunjun bushi" (「仲順節」)

If we are bound by fate,
Even when we separate,
Can flowers pierced by a thread and strung together
Be cut apart?

They exit. When Yamatū re-enters, he is carrying an umbrella and wearing a short sword.

Chorus: "Chin bushi" (「金武節」)

My heart goes stealthily,

Others are unaware
I hide my face behind my umbrella
Such is the path of love.

Yamatū: The love born of purifying water,
 Grows ceaselessly in my thoughts.
 Her face and her scent,
 Are the dwelling-place of my heart.
 I am crushed and caught up in love
 I could die of longing
 Like lovers in old stories
 That I have heard.
 As if *sakura* could be made to blossom
 On a weeping willow bough
 And to exude the scent of *ume*.
 Thus I drank deeply
 The water of Fanja River
 From your loving hands
 From evening until noon, as if adrift on the waves
 I have hardly slept
 Crying together
 With the birds that greet the dawn,
 My tear-stained sleeves
 Are as salty as the shallows at low tide
 They are never dry
 My emotions pour forth.
 So, over mountains and fields
 Past countless towns
 Enfolded in darkness
 I come stealthily to you.

Chorus: "Hwishi bushi" (「干瀬節」)

Over mountains and fields
Past countless towns
Enfolded in darkness
I come stealthily to you.

As the traveling song ends, Yamatū arrives at center stage.

Yamatū: In the darkness of night
 While all are silent and asleep
 Come to your door
 And let us speak of our love.

Chorus: "Nakafū bushi" (「仲風節」)

Because I could not go on as before
I came here stealthily
Please come to your door
And let us speak of our love.

Tamatsi: In the darkness, alone,
I knew your feelings
As you came creeping –
Waiting is a torment.

Yamatū: Ah, my beloved
Your face and your scent
Rise from out of the darkness
I could not go on as before
I have come to meet you.

Tamatsi: Ah, my beloved
There are people here
Please come inside
Let us talk of the love
We have felt all this time.

Chorus: "Shukkē bushi" (「述懷節」)

Do not think the promise that binds us
Is only of this world.
The love between us
Will extend to the next.

Watchman: Surely someone has come
Creeping into the manor
If you have a name, say it!
Or shall I cut you down?

Yamatū: Although I have awakened and surprised you,
Do not become angry, watchman
Can you forbid a butterfly
From landing on a flower?
I, who have come stealthily
Alone and enwrapped in darkness
If you would fix me with a name

Come toward me now
I will cut you down on the spot.

Watchman: Ah, so you have come
On some errand of love.
I am in trouble!
I will hurry and flee.

Yamatū: The love between us
Has been revealed
Tomorrow, I fear,
You will be blamed.
If this comes to pass,
Can you endure it alone?
I will come with you
And share your fate.

Chorus: "Sanyama bushi" (「散山節」)

If this comes to pass,
Can you endure it alone?
I will come with you
And share your fate.

Shicha : I am Shicha-nu-ufuyaku
An official who serves
The lord of Murikuya.
Alas, the lord's beloved daughter
The pure flower Tamatsi
Went to Fanja River
To wash her hair
Met Fanja-no-Yamatū
And fell in love with him.
Others learned of this,
And it became impossible to hide
Rumors arose
Among the people
Someone revealed this
To our lord
And in response
He has decreed
That I should take her at first light
To Chinen Bay
And cut her down with one stroke.

This is poison to my heart
But at this point there is nothing that can be done.
I must do
As I have been commanded.

Yamaguchi: Alas, as you have said,
I also sought to conceal this
As long as it could be concealed
But somebody revealed it
To our lord.
It is a sorrowful thing,
But it must be done.

Shicha: Come here, Yamaguchi
Let us hurry
And finish this business
Before the dawn breaks
Let us take her away.

Yamaguchi: Yes, my lord.

Chorus: "Shichishaku bushi" (「七尺節」)

Alas, I fear
This night will end
With the death
Of Tamatsi.

Yamatū enters.

Yamatū: Pitiful Tamatsi!
It is said
She will be taken
To Chinen Bay
Out of anyone's sight
And killed.
I have been told this
I have just now heard it.
How can allow my beloved
To go to the next world before me?
I believe I will go meet her
So that we can die together.
Is the execution already underway?
Has she already been killed?

I must hurry there
To see her while she is still alive.

Chorus (as Yamatū is traveling): "Shichishaku bushi" (「七尺節」)

Is the execution already underway?
Has she already been killed?
I must hurry there
To see her while she is still alive.

Chorus: "Kwamuchā bushi" (「子持節」)

The love between us
Has been revealed
We are no longer free.
The time has come
To abandon my beloved
And go down the mountain road of death.
If love too
Really has a patron god
Please convey this
To my beloved.

Tamatsi enters.

Shicha: Alas, alas, we have arrived at Chinen Bay.
Beloved child –
It is too late to do anything
Your fate has been decided.
Please go into the next world
With your heart at ease.

Tamatsi: I think less of this cast-off life
Than of the morning dew.
But what will become of my beloved
Who I leave behind?

Yamaguchi: To shatter the jewel of your life
At the time the flower buds
Are bursting forth
It is a lamentable thing.

Shicha: Well, Yamaguchi –
While nobody is watching

Get it over with.

Yamaguchi: Yes, my lord.

Tamatsi: Alas, Shicha-no-ufuyaku
Yamaguchi-nu-nyishinchi
The time has come
For me to discard this world
And discard my shame as well.
Please listen to what I say.
In death, can we forget
The bitterness of being alive?
I want to hurry
And go to the next world
But because I will never
See this world again
Alas! The things I would say
Are inexhaustible.
I think less of my coming death
Than of the morning dew.
But I am troubled
By what to say to my beloved.
Listen, Shicha
Tell my beloved
That he is in the prime of his life
And he was born as a man
In order to distinguish the world
By serving his king
Both day and night.
And when his fate
Is handed down from heaven
I will be waiting for him
On the mountain road of death –
Please convey these words
To my beloved.
If for some reason
He goes against my final testament
And the other world
Is like this present world,
I will not cast even one glance
Toward him –
By the end of the day
Please tell this to my beloved.

Shicha: Because I will convey
The words you have said
In secret to your beloved
Please go to the next world
With your heart at ease.
Well, Yamaguchi.
It will not do to waste time.
Hurry and carry out our orders.

Yamaguchi: Yes, my lord.
This precious child
That I cared for day and night
Even under obligation –
Can I really kill her?

Chorus: "Agarie bushi" (「東江節」)

Yes, my lord.
This precious child
That I cared for day and night
Even under obligation –
Can I really kill her?

Yamaguchi: This child that I raised
With all of my devotion
I cannot find the heart
To cut her down with one stroke.
Here, Shicha –
Please do it if you can.

Shicha: No! This is your duty –
Carry it out!

Yamaguchi draws his sword.

Yamatū: Yā, yā!
Wait a moment.
Alas, my beloved!

Yamaguchi: Who is this
That stands in the way of my sword?

Yamatū: Alas, please pay attention
Listen to what I have to say.

I am Yamatū
The sole heir of Fanja
I owe a deep debt
To the house of Murikuya.
Even a gate
Guarded by the demons of old India
Cannot but open
Onto the pathway of love.
Yā, Shicha
Yamaguchi
Please listen to the voice of reason:
Have not a hundred ancient tales
Taught us that secret love
Is among the ways of the world?
Think of this dear child's fate.
Have you not loved her like your own?
Must rumors end her life?
I could conceal her carefully
Until the gossip dies away.
Please entrust Tamatsi to me!
If you find yourself unable
To honor this request
Then draw your sword and cut us down –
I will die by her side.

Shicha: *Yā*, Yamaguchi.
I think I have an idea.
The gossip of the world
Is a short-lived thing.
If we surrender Tamatsi's life
To Yamatū's care
And tell the lord
That we have killed her
After some time passes,
His feelings will change
And she can come into the world again.
Let us allow their love to blossom
Let us bind their fates
Like a string of jewels.
Yā, Yamatū!
This precious child
This beloved child
I cannot bring myself
To cut her down with one stroke.

Because I surrender
Tamatsi's life to you,
Please go and conceal her!

Yamatū: Ah! That is honorable.
Because we owe
Our lives to you
You have our respect
And our deepest gratitude.
While there are many thoughts
Which I want to express
The birds and roosters are crying
And soon night will break.
I will later convey
My indebtedness and heartfelt gratitude.

Tamatsi: *Yā*, Shicha
Yamaguchi
I cannot put into words
The respect and gratitude I feel
For your heartfelt intentions –
I return them completely.

Yamaguchi: *Yā*, precious child.
Yā, Yamatū.
Because others
Will soon appear
And all of our lives
Will be in danger,
Before the break of day,
Hurry away from this place.

Yamatū: *Yā*, my beloved!
The secret love between us
Was discovered
And it was said
You would be killed
But I was informed
And I came to see you.
My wishes came true
And I met your still living face
Now I can take you away with me –
This is like a dream.

Tamatsi: I cannot find the words
To speak of what has happened.
The birds and roosters are crying
And dawn will soon break
Let us hurry away
To a place where others' eyes cannot see.

Yamatū: Yes, yes.
Let us hurry!

Chorus: "Tachikumu bushi" (「立曇節」)

The birds and roosters are crying
And dawn will soon break
Let us hurry away
To a place where others' eyes cannot see.

My life has been saved
And I can leave with you –
It is truly like a dream.
Could I be dreaming?

End.

Appendix IV: *Uyanma* (The Kept Woman)

Sources: *Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa kōen kiroku eizō 45* [DVD]; Ōshiro 2000.

Characters

Captain Higa (*sendō Higa* 船頭比嘉)

Resident (*zaiban bugyō* 在番奉行)

Concubine (*uyanma* 親阿母)

The Resident and Concubine's son, Sanrā-gwa (三良小)

An old man (*ānushi* 一主)

A servant, Saburō (三郎)

Scene one:

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しょんかね節」

The wind is blowing from the south

It is a favorable wind!

Haiyayo-ti-ba

Kaidaki-tituyuru

Denyo-masatimigutu

Captain: I am Higa, master of the ship
That will take his honor the Resident home.
The wind today is marvelously favorable – I believe
I'll fetch his lordship
And suggest we take our leave!

Chorus: “Hatōma bushi” 「鳩間節」

I'll go and fetch his lordship –

Departing [for Shuri] under smooth sail

Haiyayo-ti-ba

Kaidaki-tituyuru

Denyo-masatimigutu

Captain: Your honor!
Your honor!
Resident: Who is it?
Captain: It's Captain Higa, beg your pardon!
Resident: Oh, Higa. Please come in.
Well, what's your purpose?

Captain: The wind is blowing from the south –
It's a marvelously favorable wind.
If it suits your pleasure, we can depart today.

Resident: My maidservant has only begun
To get the house in order –
Surely, Higa, it can't hurt
To wait two days, or three..?

Captain: Beg pardon, but a wind like this –
We can't afford to miss it, sir.
I ask your leave to sail today!

Resident: A wind like this.. of course..
I understand.

Captain: Oi, Saburō!
Call his lordship's household together
So they can raise the parting-glass!

Chorus: “Kohama bushi” 「小浜節」

If you're bound for Okinawa,
Won't you take me with you?
Can you leave me here alone?
Can you abandon me so lightly?

Concubine: For all this time we've been together,
I've never left your side.
And yet it's said you'll leave today.
How will I go on?

Resident: How can I leave when you say such things?

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

If you must take your leave
Face me and say farewell.
If you must leave today
I have nothing left to say.

Captain: Saburō! Be quick about it.
Fill their parting glass!

Saburō: Pardon, miss, but here's the glass –
If you could just kneel here...

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

Sayo-! This glass I hold

As I say farewell
It overflows with tears
I cannot drink.

Saburō: In any case, miss
If his lordship is bound for Okinawa –
With every mail boat
He's sure to send you lovely gifts
Miss!

Concubine: Oh Saburō –
It isn't gifts I'm thinking of.

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

The path of dutiful leave-taking
Must it be this bitter?
Day and night, my lover's face
Floats before my eyes.

Resident: Sanrā-gwa, my son!
When I land in Okinawa,
Ink and brushes, a fine kimono
I'll send them by the fastest boat!
So stay here by your mother's side.

Sanrā-gwa: I want to stay with you, father,
Together, in Okinawa!

Concubine: My son, if you too leave me,
How will I go on living?

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

As if my single body were split in two
Before my eyes, my heart fills up with darkness.

Old man: If you went with your father,
Young sir, to Okinawa –
How would your mother go on living?
Come now, stay with us!

Captain: As long as you stay here, sir,
The sorrow of parting will only grow.
We'd best get under sail.

Resident: To be torn from my child like this –
Captain, I'm paralyzed with sorrow.

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

I cannot leave,
Though of course I cannot stay.
To be bereft of one’s own child –
How bitter!

Chorus: “Tōbarā bushi” 「とうばら一節」

Until the next world and the world after
I thought we’d be together.
Today’s parting
Is the most sorrowful moment of my life.
My love!
My beloved!

Captain: Sir, as long as you stay here,
The sorrow of parting will not dwindle.
We’d best get under sail.

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

When you arrive, my beloved,
Please send me good tidings.
I pray for your safe voyage.
I do not hate the captain –
It’s the wind that fills the sails
That I hate with all my heart.
Oh master!
Ha-ri-shongane-yo-

Captain: Ah, it’s this wind now!

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

In port, we depend on the anchor,
At sea, we depend on the wind alone.

Captain: Ah, it’s this wind now!

Chorus: “Yonaguni shonganē bushi” 「与那国しよんかね節」

When the wind fills out the headsail,

It whips a tear from my eye.
When the mainsail catches the wind,
Both of my eyes fill with tears.

Captain: Ah, it's this wind now!

Chorus: "Yonaguni shonganē bushi" 「与那国しよんかね節」

May the waves bear you safely,
My love.

Concubine: The ship that takes my love from me
Has reached the open ocean.
Even the shadow of its sails
Has disappeared from sight.

Chorus: "Yonaguni shonganē bushi" 「与那国しよんかね節」

There, Okinawa
Here, Yaeyama
Is it some madness of the heart
That has bound our fates together.

Old man: Your lord master's ship
Has reached the open ocean.
Even the shadow of its sails
Has disappeared from sight.
You'd best return home now, miss, and pray
For the safety of his voyage.

Chorus: "Kohama bushi" 「小浜節」

Having sent you off
On the road back home
No summer rain falls
Yet my sleeves are soaking wet.

Chorus: "Danju-kariyushi" 「だんじゅかりゆし」

Every night I served your dinner, and breakfast every morning,
Now an ocean lies between us.
I know not how I'll manage,
But I pray for your safe journey.

Appendix V: *Tomari Aka* (Aka of Tomari)

Sources: Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11; Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū Henshū Iinkai. 1995 vol. 10.

Characters:

Aka Tarugani (阿嘉樽金)

Aka's father (*Aka no chichi* 阿嘉の父)

Isa Umichiru (伊佐思鶴)

Umichiru's nursemaid (*anma* 乳母)

Umichiru's father (*Isa no chichi* 伊佐の父)

Captain (*sendō* 船頭)

Manservant (*genan* 下男)

Act One

Scene One

Akazu harbor (赤津浦)

Isa-no-Umichiru and her nursemaid enter.

Song: "Akachira bushi" (「アカチラ節」)

Umichiru: Today is the renowned third day of the third month
When high and low come together in enjoyment –
This is the custom throughout this world.
With my nursemaid, I'll go to Akazu harbor
To gather helicals and celebrate.
Well, dear nursemaid, let's hurry!

Nursemaid: Certainly, miss. Let's hurry! We have received permission from
your honored parents. Let us celebrate at our leisure.
Look, miss! A crowd has gathered and they are celebrating with
open hearts. How fitting for this happy day!

Umichiru: Indeed, on this festival of the third day of the third month, a
lighthearted crowd comes together. Aside from this day, we don't
have the freedom to celebrate. So let's refresh ourselves with
celebration and then return.

Aka-no-Tarugani enters from the upper part of the stage. He gazes fixedly at Umichiru.

Aka: Did this maiden descend from the heavens? Or rise up from the bottom of the earth? This is truly a godlike person. Before I head home from my pilgrimage to Sachihijā, I must try to find out this beloved maiden's destination!

Scene Two
Akazu harbor

A group of women are on a procession to the harbor, celebrating while beating drums. Umichiru and her nursemaid enter. Aka, carrying a fishing pole, approaches Umichiru and her nursemaid.

Song: "Shūrai bushi" (「しゅうらい節」) (Chorus)

Today is the renowned
Third day of the third month.
Let us go together to the harbor,
To gather helicals and celebrate!

Tarugani's fishing hook gets caught in Umichiru's hair.

Song: "Abagwahei bushi" (「アバ小へい節」)

Umichiru: Ah, nursemaid!
Something is pulling at my hair!

Nursemaid: Aha! This fellow – Where did he come from?
Hey, you there! How rude!

Aka: Please forgive my discourtesy! I was just trying to reel in my fishing line – forgive me!

Nursemaid: Fish tend to live in the water – are there fish on dry land?
Under the pretext of fishing, It's a girl you're trying to catch, isn't it? You shameless man!

Aka: That wasn't my intent! It was a mistake – !

Nursemaid: That was a mistake? It was on purpose, admit it! A grown man loitering by a women's side – it's a disgrace! Hurry along and get far from here!

Umichiru: If it was not his intention, it does not bother me. Please don't lose your temper, dear nursemaid. Allow the man a mistake!

Nursemaid: Even so, what is it that he thinks of us? When I imagine it, I can't contain my anger! I'm going to go and rebuke him once more..!

Umichiru: It is embarrassing when you get like this, nursemaid! Look, the sun is leaning toward the West. Come, dear nursemaid, let's hurry home.

Nursemaid: Yes, miss, if we stay too long, sea snakes will creep up on us. Quickly, put on your kimono and your overskirt. But that man's interruption wrecked our celebration – I can't contain my anger! Perhaps I'll go back one more time and complain!

Umichiru: Nursemaid –
You're acting shamefully!

Scene Three **Tomari-takahashi Bridge**

Aka enters from stage right. The Captain enters dancing from stage left.

Song: "Ichihanari bushi" (「伊計離節」)

Aka: I can see you are in a hurry, but can I ask you a question?

Captain: What business has brought you here?
Who are you visiting, my lord?

Aka: The wavering branches of that Sendan tree are beautiful.
What manor is that?

Captain: That is the manor of the leading gentleman of Tomari, the renowned Isa.

Aka: What kind of man is the master of the house?

Captain: He is an accomplished scholar and a great man.

Aka: Ah, that is an admirable thing.

Captain: Oh, it's not just that. The beauty of his daughter's visage is also rare. One could truly call her a living god – that's the appraisal of the entire village. Aha – when I said that, your expression changed. Of course, you have your heart set on her. The House of Isa is an upright and respectable house. Even if you return here again in your next life, there is no way you

could fulfill your wish. Of course, you don't need to listen to my tedious opinion.

Aka: Anything can be accomplished if a man commits himself to it. A person who gives up and accomplishes nothing is loathsome.

Captain: If it is truly a fate ordained by heaven, one can't say it's impossible. But to accomplish that you must be like the god of love himself. But this conversation has dragged on and the sun is setting in the west. I'll make one request – if you succeed in doing what you have said, let me hear about it, won't you?

Aka: Thank you for speaking with me. I will ask you one favor – please do not spread rumors of this.

Captain: Of course, of course. Well, I am much in your debt – farewell.

Aka: When we meet again, on the road, let's talk further.

Captain: If fate brings us together, let's talk again. A man who thinks that difficult things are impossible is loathsome – if you say so, I suppose it's true.

Song: "Ichihanari bushi" (「伊計離節」)

Crossing the waves at the gate of Nagijinya (和仁屋門)
Is a terribly difficult thing.

Act Two

Scene One

Tomari-takahashi Bridge

Song: "Nakafū bushi" (「仲風節」) (Chorus)

Like a plover crying on the bay at night
Going down to the harbor, making the waves my pillow
Hearing the voice of the birds at dawn, having passed the night in crying.

The curtains open to show Aka standing the bridge. Umichiru's nursemaid enters stage left.

Song: "Isa heiyo bushi" (「伊佐へいよ一節」)

Nursemaid: It's a mysterious thing for a person to pace across Tomari-takahashi from dusk until dawn, welcoming daybreak with tears. How uncommon. What

could he be thinking? I know it's none of my business, but how pitiful! I will go ask about it.

Excuse me, sir – may I ask your name? Why do you pace across Tomari-takahashi from dusk until dawn, welcoming daybreak with tears? Please tell me – don't be ashamed. If there is something I can do to help, I gladly will.

Aka: Nursemaid, I will put aside my shame and tell you, so please listen. Are you the nursemaid of Umichiru, the daughter of Isa?

Nursemaid: Yes, I am.

Aka: I am the son of Aka, born in Kumoji village of Naha. On the third day of the third month, at Akazu Harbor, I saw your mistress' face, and I cannot forget it. Now I spend each night pacing across this bridge, welcoming the daybreak with tears. Only the moon knows the suffering in my heart. Oh, this floating world is a sorrowful place! Nursemaid, if you pass this letter to my beloved Umichiru I will be in your debt until the end of time.

Nursemaid: I cannot. What are you saying? What kind of person do you think Umichiru is? Please go home!

Aka: Please, nursemaid! Since ancient times it has been said that short-tempered anger reveals a demonic character. You, too, were young once, before the years crept up on you. Honored nursemaid, I beg you to help me.

Nursemaid: What you say pains my heart. Wearing yourself thin with love's longing, you feel an urgent need to convey your intentions. I will assist you. After I pass this letter to Umichiru, will you refrain from pacing on this bridge? I will tell you her reply.

Aka: After you pass along the letter, I will not cross this bridge again. Please assist me!

Scene Two **Umichiru's room**

The nursemaid goes up the stairs to Umichiru's room. Umichiru is sitting by a small fire.

Song: "Michi-no-shima bushi" (「道の島節」)

Nursemaid: Are you still awake, miss?

Umichiru: Oh, nursemaid. What is it?

Nursemaid: Something has come that you must see.

Umichiru: What can it be, that cannot wait until daybreak? What do you have to show me?

Umichiru: What is that happened, nursemaid?
It really can't wait until daybreak, can it.
What is it, what is it you want to show me?

Nursemaid: A young man has come from Kumoji village in Naha. He is the son of Aka, around 17 or 18 years old, and good-looking. He asked me to give you this letter, so I have. I do not know its contents. Well, open it and see what is written!

Umichiru: Just a moment, nursemaid! So a young man asked you to pass on this letter, and for better or worse you did so? I don't want to hear such things! Hurry and go back to bed.

Nursemaid: For ninety-nine nights he has paced Tomari-takahashi bridge – if you tried to count the days you would break your fingers. He has worn himself thin with pining, like a withered tree. If he could not convey his thoughts to you, there was no path for that young man to choose but death – only an animal would feel no sympathy. Does your heart not break? Hair shining in the moonlight, sleeves wet with dew, his only indiscretion is welcoming the dawn with tears. Is it not ethical to save him from death? Please open the letter and see what is written.

The nursemaid passes the letter to Umichiru.

Umichiru: If you put it that way, I suppose I will take a glance...

Umichiru secretly puts the letter in her sleeve, then tears up the envelope and throws it in the fire.

Nursemaid: Your heart wants to accept this as truth, yet you act indifferent and uphold your honor.

Scene Three

Tomari-takahashi Bridge

Aka enters stealthily. The nursemaid enters stage left.

Nursemaid: Without even glancing at the letter that you entrusted to me, she tore it to pieces and threw it in the fire. So please forget all about this, dear child.

Song: "Shukkē bushi" (「述懷節」) (Chorus)

Although you are unreachable, when I think of you
My thoughts only grow stronger.
I want to see your face, if only its reflection in a mirror.

While the chorus sings, Umichiru comes outside to meet Aka. They embrace as the curtain falls.

Act Three **The Aka manor**

Aka's father enters.

Father: I am the master of the Aka household of Kumoji village in Naha. I have one son. He excels as a scholar, but recently his heart has been in disarray. I cannot comprehend it. Almost surely he has been swept up in love. I'll quickly summon him over and have a look at him. If love shows through in his words, I will not permit it to go any further. I will send him as my representative to Iheya Island, to correct his feelings. Beloved child, come here quickly.

Aka: What is it, father?

Father: There's something we must talk about.

Aka: What kind of thing?

Father: Looking at your body, you've wasted away to skin and bones. Something is out of the ordinary. Your face is completely pale. Tell me immediately what happened! Is there something wrong with your food? Your worries appear in the color of your face. Is there something you are hiding? What is plaguing you?

Aka: I don't feel sick in the least, father. There is nothing in particular to worry about. Please put aside your concern and carry on as usual.

Aka politely lowers his head.

Father: As you know, this father of yours has been alive for 50 years. You are my only support in this floating world. If I were to lose you, I would have nothing to depend on and nothing to live for. We are together, you and I. Please listen and understand your father's feelings.

Aka: Forgive me for laying worries upon you like this, father! Please tell me anything you will, I will not go against you.

Father: These words you have spoken are the words of my faithful child. Beloved son, your filial piety will persist forever as the way of the world.

Aka: Have I done enough to fulfill my filial piety? I will always pray for your health. Whatever you command, I will endeavor to carry out.

Father: The more I see, the more I hear, my opinion of you only grows. I want to ask you to leave Naha immediately and serve as my representative on Iheya-jima.

Aka: But could such an important position really be entrusted to one as young as I?

Father: It's exactly because I see potential in you that I am sending you. Have you already forgotten the words you just spoke?

Aka: Of course I must heed your words – I will do as you ask.

Father: It happens that there is a boat bound for Iheya-jima tomorrow. So, make ready for your trip!

Aka (to Umichiru): Because I cannot go against my father's commands, I will make ready for my journey. Please do not resent me! Until I return, please take care of yourself and remain in good health!

Aka performs a gasshō in the doorway. Aka's father is suspicious.

Father: Where are you looking? Is there a person somewhere? This is most unusual.

Act Four **Inside Umichiru's manor**

Umichiru is languishing on her sickbed.

Song: "Iju nu kamaku-gwa bushi" (「伊集ぬガマク小節」)

Umichiru: In accordance with his father's request, my beloved has crossed the sea to Iheya island, leaving me alone to lament morning and night. My father, not knowing my heart, has arranged for me to marry another man. When I heard this, I became lost in thought, morning until night, sick with yearning, my body as insubstantial as the morning dew. I have had no word from my beloved. If death takes me, what will become of my beloved, who I leave behind?

Umichiru's nursemaid enters. She approaches and embraces Umichiru.

Nursemaid: What's wrong, beloved child? What has happened, that you'd wake up this early? Whatever is affecting you is serious. If there's something on your mind, let's talk about it together.

Umichiru: Thank you, dear nursemaid. I have a favor to ask you. This is my death wish. I am succumbing to this illness. When my beloved returns, please give him this letter.

Nursemaid: Miss, for you to ask such a thing – what can I do, your nursemaid who you would leave behind? You will surely meet with your beloved again, so please don't worry about it so deeply! Dear child!

Umichiru: I am afraid that isn't so, dear nursemaid. I will not last until tomorrow. My fate is bitter! You alone will remain to convey the thoughts in my heart to my beloved.

Song: "Kuduchi" (「口説」)

Nursemaid: My lord! Please come here! Oh, your beloved child – alas, just now, she has passed away.

Umichiru's father enters from stage left. He embraces Umichiru's body.

Isa: Alas, my beloved child! Have you died of broken heart, leaving your parents behind? Oh, my beloved child! What can I do now?

Act Five
In front of Isa manor.

Aka, who has returned from his position on Iheya-jima, enters dancing from stage left.

Song: "Chāui bushi" (「茶売節」)

Aka: It has been three months, but it feels as if it's been half a year, or a year or more. Nothing could compare to the joy of finishing my duties on Iheyajima. Having returned in bright spirits on the rolling white waves, now I walk familiar road to Kumoji. Approaching on swift feet, looking at the gate of Isa manor, I hear no voices. What could have happened? Today nobody stands in gate of Isa manor. There is nobody here.

Umichiru's nursemaid, on her way home from visiting Umichiru's grave, enters stage right.

Song: "Uchi-tumai bushi" (「内泊節」) (Chorus)

Aka: Who is this person praying and weeping? If something sad has happened, please tell me!

Nursemaid: Something awful has happened, dear sir. This letter is my mistress' final testament. I'll give it to you quickly.

Aka recites Umichiru's final testament (*tsurane*):

Although my departure for the world beyond
Is drawing near,
My heart is in disarray, caught in a dream
My endurance is failing
My tears drip
Like water from an inkstone
Forgetting obligations and shame
From the midst of numerous thoughts
Because, even if it isn't much, I will leave you these words
As my final testament,
Please quiet your heart
And read them.
Like the Iju flowers which bloom in the,
The deep love you gave me, only an ignorant young girl –
The words you breathed – “even unto the next world” –
I took them deep into my breast,
They colored my heart.
I never forget them,
Not even for a moment.
Even if I brood,
Alone within a rough-fenced garden,
Within the fetters of obligation,
Enwrapped –
Oh, my heart

In the gloom of many nights
Pines and cries out
Like the glimmer of a firefly,
As it finally vanishes completely
Like a shape in the mist
In this heartless world
Even if my life is long,
To think bitter thoughts from morning until night –
Each instant, I long to hurry
To the world beyond –
To take my leave, glancing with one eye
At the jewel-like form of my beloved, who remains in this world –
Oh sadness, I cry, I cry,
It is my time to discard this world
And go to the next.
Even the shadow
Of the moon on a hazy night –
I cannot bear to look bitterly upon it,
I think: I am powerless
In this insubstantial floating world,
And there is nobody who I resent.
Though the earth
Rot away completely
My heart will never be separated
From your side.
Because I am praying
And that nothing troubles you
From my place under the shade of the sod –
Please lead a long life.
I am waiting here for you.

Aka (*tsurane*):

Who is it she took her leave to
Before leaving this earth?
Please wait a moment and take me with you
On the mountain road of death.

Song: "Shukkē bushi" (「述懷節」) (Chorus)

Who is it she took her leave to
Before leaving this earth?
Please wait a moment and take me with you
On the mountain-road of death.

Aka clutches Umichiru's letter to his heart and runs offstage.

Act Six

In front of Umichiru's grave.

Aka enters and collapses before Umichiru's grave, calling her name. Umichiru's father enters, accompanied by his manservant. He is holding an umbrella; his manservant is holding a small teapot.

Song: "Kwamuchā bushi" (「子持節」) (Chorus)

Although the path ahead
Is entirely dark ...

Isa: Saburō, what is this. It appears as if somebody is sleeping on my daughter's grave – could he be drunk? Wake him up!

Saburō: Hey you, wake up! My lord, this person is already dead.

Isa: What! Who could this be?

Saburō: Who indeed.

Isa: Is that a letter?

Saburō: Here, my lord.

Isa: Ah, Aka-no-Tarugani! Saburō, go quickly to Kumoji and tell them there is an urgent matter; bring Lord Aka with you immediately.

Saburō: Of course, my lord.

Isa: Had you already bound your fates together in this world? Alas, your father did not discern it.

Saburō: My lord.

Isa: What became of the master of house Aka?

Lord Aka enters.

Aka: Ah, Isa.

Isa: Ah, Aka.

Aka: What is this? Alas, Tarugani! Tarugani, what has brought to you this state?

Isa: Lord Aka, please read this letter.

Aka: Ah! Is this your daughter's final testament?

Isa: It is. I did not discern that these two had already bound their fates together. If I had only known, they would not have been reduced to this state. Instead, caught up in love for Tarugani, without breathing a word of it to her father, she passed away like a withered flower.

Aka: Lord Isa.

Isa: The two of you could not be together in this world. I pray that you can abide together on a bed of flowers as husband and wife in the next world.

Aka: Yes – if this is the way it must be, let us open this grave and place them together within it, in the hope that they might arise together in the afterlife.

Isa: It would be good to do that.

Aka: It is acceptable.

Isa: Beloved children, please listen well. Because you could not be together in this world, we pray that you can live together honorably as husband and wife in the next, passing the days in peace on a bed of flowers.

Isa: Because the thread of fate binds you
From this world to the next –
Please go with peace of mind.
On the mountain-road of death.

End.

Appendix VI: *Okuyama no botan* (A Peony of the Deep Mountains)

Source: Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11; Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū Henshū Inkai. 1995 vol. 10.

Characters

Chirā (チラー)

Chirā's father, the outcaste village headman (*shīdō* 勢頭)

Sandē (三良)

Sandē's mother, Ayā (アヤー)

Sandē's father (*shu nu me* 主の前)

Concubine (*yūbē* 妾)

Treacherous retainer (*sūchichi* 総聞)

Chirā and Sandē's son, Yamatū (山戸)

Yamatū's fiancé, Madamachi (真玉津)

Madamachi's father (*Takara no chichi* 高良の父)

Madamachi's nursemaid (*chīan* 乳母)

Hired thug (*rōdō* 郎党)

Itinerant performers (*chondarā* 京太郎)

Aniya villagers

Act One

Aniya Village, Shuri

Setting: in front of the house of the headman (勢頭の頭) of Aniya Village, an underclass village near Shuri. A group of villagers is gathered, drinking liquor and celebrating. They are praying for a safe childbirth for the headman daughter, Chirā.

Song: "Nakazato bushi" (「仲里節」) (Chorus)

It's said that Nakazato Village is famous for its flowers, when they open –
When they bloom, please bring me one branch.

Villagers: A child of the wind will be born –
Today we pray for that child's safe birth. What a joyous thing!

Headman: Why aren't you all asleep yet?

Chirā: Those people out there are making a racket – they won't let me sleep!

Headman: My daughter says you louts are keeping her awake with your noise!

Hurry home and sleep!

Villagers: We understand, sir.
A child of the wind will be born – what a joyous thing!

The villagers exit.

Song: "Nakazato bushi" (「仲里節」) (Chorus)

With what can I distract my heart while waiting?

Chirā looks distressed. Meanwhile, Sandē enters from stage right. They react to each other passionately.

Song: "Amagu bushi" (「アマグ節」)

Chirā: It has been a long time since we last met.
I hope you are well, my beloved.

Sandē: How can you ask if I'm well?
I've been going mad waiting to see you. Heartless beast!

Chirā: I knew you would surely resent me, and ceaselessly thought of how I
wanted to see you, but I didn't feel up to it so I bitterly hid myself away.

Sandē: Would someone who didn't love you burn with passion like I have?
Never mind your thoughts, go ahead along that road. You are really an
animal. You have no feeling.

Chirā: My feelings are true, my beloved –
because of this, I gave birth to your child.

Sandē: Is it true that we have had a child together? You and I have been bound
together since a previous life – the passion of a single night gave rise to a
child, what a joyous thing!

Chirā: Don't do me the kindness of saying that you are happy –
I must tell you something about myself that will surely bring you to tears.

Sandē: What kind of thing is that? Tell me.

Chirā: Beloved, I am not the child of ordinary people.

Sandē: What are you saying? Tell me, let me hear.

Chirā: Beloved, I was born the child of the headman of the underclass. I loved you and lead you astray. Please forgive me for deceiving you into loving me.

Sandē: What a pitiful birth you had – to be born into the midst of the underclass. I could not have dreamed of such a thing. If that is the case, I should tell you of my birth as well. Although I have come to the country to lead the life of a poor commoner, I am a not of common origin. I am from a samurai family with a recorded lineage. My mother and myself are despised by my father's courtesan, and as she demanded, we were driven out of our home and live in poverty. If the island and the people of the world learned of our affair or our child, my mother and myself would feel shame that extended even to our ancestors. You cannot let anyone know about us!

Chirā: Why would I ever tell anyone? Please set aside your worries, beloved one to whom my sad fate has bound me. After we part, please dedicate yourself to your studies and achieve a high position in the world. I will be here praying for you.

Sandē: What you have said is good. Let us part ways and conceal this from the eyes of the world. But what will become of this child?

Chirā: I will raise up this child, so that he will not bring shame upon you. Do not worry, my beloved.

Sandē: Alas, for love to waste away in secret. But you must never speak of this!

Chirā: Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Song: "Jajichi bushi" (「謝敷節」) (Chorus)

Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread,
I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Act Two

The hut in which the exiled Sandē and his mother are living.

Sandē's mother is weaving. Sandē enters from stage right, walking slowly and fearfully. He kneels and greets his mother respectfully.

Song: "Densā-bushi" (「デンサー節」)

Sandē: Mother, you are still awake, and still working?

Mother: For you to go about enjoying yourself, I have to work. Because I'm working hard for your pleasure, go ahead and do what you like! Look, Sandē – please listen to me. You're already nearly eighteen, and it won't do for you to fail to notice your mother's hard work. Because we are despised by your father's courtesan, he expelled us from the manor and I have been forced to live like this. If you would only dedicate yourself to your studies and receive employment at court, after that, I believe I could make my pure and serious heart known. As mother and son, how will we ever cast off our shame if you go on acting carelessly?

Sandē: Mother, perhaps I was seized with some kind of madness – everything I've done to this point has been mistaken. Is there any way you could forgive me?

Mother: So, you'll surely dedicate yourself to your studies beginning today? Go get your books and start studying!

The concubine and her thug sneak in from stage right.

Concubine: This is surely the house, so sneak inside and bind those two, for your master has commanded that it is impermissible to allow them to go on living. He has declared that you are to take them to the shore and kill them, so go carry out his order now!

Thug: I understand. Once we've killed them, we will take the promised fee of 700 *kan* without a single bar of silver missing, yes?

Concubine: If you deal with these two quickly I'll give you even more.

Thug: How much more?

Concubine: 800 *kan*.

Thug: Ho! 800 *kan*!

The thugs barge into the house.

Thug: You two, listen well. The master has decreed that there is no reason for you to be allowed to continue living in this world. I have been ordered to take you to the shore and kill you. It's best for you to give up willingly.

Mother: Can this really be? Although we have committed no crime – it isn't enough for him to expel us from the manor, he has to have us killed? I cannot accept the truth of this – I must go confirm it myself.

Sandē: Dear mother, please wait. Rather than trying to lengthen our time in this heartless world, we should resign ourselves.

Mother: Well-said – compared to remaining longer in this world of backbreaking labor, dying will be the greatest bliss. We should resign ourselves together.

Concubine: Do not resent either heaven or me. Your deaths are a result of the evil luck with which you were born.

Mother: Listen well, evil-hearted husband who fell under the spell of this demon. Even if you kill our son and I and even if you lead a long life, you will suffer an end befitting a person whose heart desires evil.

Sandē: Don't waste your words on that beast.

Courtesan: Shut your mouths! Bind them and take them away immediately!

Thug: Stand up, you two.

Courtesan: Now that I've removed you from my path, it will just be us two in this world.

Chirā: Although I am only a woman, I can't stand by and watch this happen. I must try to help them!

Act Three

Sandē and his mother are kneeling on the beach, bound.

Song: "Densā-bushi" (「デンサー節」)

Thug: Now that you are about to die, do you have any last words?

Mother: What last words would we have? Kill us and get it over with.

Thug: And with this, 800 *kan*.

The thug draws his sword. Chirā enters holding a knife.

Chirā: You evil-hearted bastards are none of my concern, but I cannot stand by and watch this without trying to help!

Thug: Aha! If you don't strike quickly someone will always get in the way. Piss off! You're between me and 800 *kan*.

Chirā attacks, but the thug easily throws her aside into the ocean. When the thug raises his sword to kill Sandē and his mother, however, thunder splits the skies and lightning flashes. A celestial maiden descends from heaven and strikes down the murderer.

Act Four Manor

Sandē's father is sitting facing the courtyard. The concubine enters from stage left carrying poison. The treacherous retainer (sūchichi) enters from stage right carrying a pot of tea. The concubine pours the poison into the tea. They enter and join Sandē's father.

Song: "Kuduchi" (「口説」)

Concubine: My lord, I trust you are feeling well?

Retainer: My lord, I trust you are feeling well?

Father: I've never felt better!

Concubine: My lord, please drink your medicinal tea.

Retainer: Yes, my lord, drink your medicinal tea.

Father: I feel so healthy today, I am fine without my medicine. Rather than that, arrange some amusements for me!

A group of chondarā performers enters.

Song: "Sensuru bushi" (「センスル節」)

Chondarā: Everyone from East to West, your attention please! We are a troupe of *chondarā*. Today we have come to incubate good fortune.

Chirā: Listen up, everyone! Don't forget to sing the songs I prepared for you beforehand.

Chondarā: We won't forget!

Sensuru sensuru! Yō-sensuru!

With Chirā at their head, the chondarā approach the doorway of the manor.

Chirā: Is there anyone home? We are a troupe of *chondarā* dancers.

Retainer: How lucky you came just now! The master has commanded you to enter and dance for him.

Chondarā: Then without further ado, let the first dancer enter!

The chondarā enter and bow. The chondarā begin to dance. The first dancer is wearing a stylized horse costume.

Dancer 1: *Hei hei!*
Oh, the foolish things the lord of this house has done.
On his right is his real wife, and on the left is his concubine.
Despite having a rightful son and heir with his legal wife, he was beguiled by the beauty of his concubine – he forgot that the eyes of the world are upon him and fell for her – how laughable!

Dancer 2: *Dō dō dō* – what’s more –
This whore has been up to something fishy!
She drove the master’s heir from his father’s house, sat in his mother’s seat, and fattened herself like a sow! She browbeats the master and keeps a gigolo by her side! Hand in hand with him, she plots to get rid of the lord, biting the hand that feeds her, nipping at his heels. How outrageous, the wickedness of her heart – *sensuru sensuru yō-sensuru!*

They dance wildly in the courtyard while singing to each other. As Sandē’s father listens, the color drains from his face. Meanwhile, the concubine and treacherous retainer look agitated and anxious that their plans will be uncovered.

Father: That song you are singing pierces my breast. Tell me, is it me you’re singing about?

Concubine: You there, dancing those vulgar dances – we don’t want to see any more – get out of this house immediately!

Retainer: That’s right, that’s right. Our lord doesn’t want to see foul dances like that. Perform something more suitable!

Chirā: Very well! Next, I will perform a spear dance for my lord.

Chirā dances a spear dance to 「作田節」 (sung by chorus). At the climax of the dance, she stabs the concubine. Sandē's father gasps in shock.

Father: What! I cannot allow this. You have killed my concubine! What was your purpose?

Chirā: My lord, under the pretext of being your concubine, this evil-hearted creature was plotting to kill you and steal your house and property – and you never realized it.

Father: For some time now, I've had my suspicions as well! *(To the treacherous retainer)* I'll dispatch you with one stroke!

The retainer tries to flee and Sandē's father follows with his sword drawn. Sandē and his mother enter from stage right and meet Sandē's father.

Sandē: Father, wait one moment. Cutting down a beast like this would only pollute your hands. Calm your sharp temper!

Father: Sandē! Wife! I made a terrible mistake. I cannot look you in the eyes. Please forgive me.

Sandē: Father, all of us make mistakes, high and low alike. From this point on let us reunite as parent and child.

Mother: Sandē, my son. This place is in plain sight – why don't we go inside the courtyard with your father and talk.

Father: What foolishness! I cannot believe I brought all of this on myself...

Chirā (*tsurane*): With the assistance of the gods, parent and child have been reunited. May you prosper for a hundred years.

Sandē: Alas, for love to waste away in secret. But you must never speak of this!

Chirā: Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Song: "Jajichi bushi" (「謝敷節」) (Chorus)

Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread,
I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Act Five

The curtain closes on Sandē's father and Sandē's mother. When the curtain opens, Sandē and Chirā's child has grown into a young man. He has just passed the civil service examination, and his family is celebrating.

Song: "Kun-nu-hashī bushi" (「古見の橋節」)

Parents: Sandē, as a testament to your purity of heart, your son and our grandson Yamatū has passed his civil service exam. Nothing can compare to the happiness and pride of this day!

Sandē: It is surely thanks to his honored grandparents that my son Yamatū has succeeded in the world.

Parents: Hey, grandson Yamatū! Come over here!

Yamatū: Honored grandfather and grandmother, it was the thought of you that drove me to succeed.

Parents: You really dedicated yourself. You are a good grandson! Let us all gather together as a family and meet our guests.

Madamachi's father: Pardon me.

Parents: Thank you for coming. Let us celebrate together today.

Madamachi's father: Yamatū, due to your diligent study you have passed the civil service examination and upheld the honor of your ancestors' name. Please continue to do credit to your parents through dedicated work.

Yamatū: What a thing to say – I feel unworthy of such praise.

Parents: Is that young lady over there your daughter Madamachi?

Madamachi's father: She is turning eighteen this year, but she's really still just a shy and spoiled child.

Parents: It is only proper for a woman to have a modest and restrained character. Isn't that right, Madamachi?

Madamachi's father: Well, come over here and pay your respects to our hosts. Why are you acting so shy? After all, you are promised to be Yamatū's bride.

Madamachi: Father! To say such a thing...

Parents: Ah, she is shy! Well, that is only proper. Let us all retire inside and celebrate further!

Yamatū: Father, please wait a moment. I have a favor to ask.

Sandē: What favor is that?

Yamatū: Father, you promised that when I passed my exams, you would tell me about the person who bore me into this world. Where is my honored mother?

Sandē: Your mother is not an ordinary person, but a pitiful non-human – she was born a child of the underclass. I did not know that she was the daughter of a non-human, and you were born in the midst of our misguided love. Knowing what would happen if this were revealed to the world, we parted in tears.

Yamatū: Alas! No matter how lowly of a person she is, she is also the mother that bore me. She should not be forgotten! I want to lay eyes on her, if only once. Please grant me the liberty to meet her.

Sandē: I do not know where your mother is now. Where would you go?

Yamatū: I would go to the bottom of the ocean or to the furthest mountain. I beg you for leave to go find my mother.

Sandē: If your mind is made up, I will give you leave. Go and find her. But wait here for a moment – I have something to give you. Please go hiding your face under an umbrella, to avoid the eyes of the people. The woman who knows this verse will be your mother.

He hands Yamatū a poem.

Yamatū (*tsurane*): Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Yamatū: The person who knows this verse will surely be my mother?

Sandē: Without a doubt, she will be your mother.

Yamatū: In that case, I will leave immediately.

Act Six

Madamachi: Nursemaid, they say that the Futenma Kannon will answer supplications with miraculous deeds. Do you think that she would hear my supplication?

Nursemaid: Well, miss – the Futenma Kannon does indeed answer supplications with miraculous efficacy, so she would certainly hear your supplication as well. Shall we walk there?

Madamachi: But nursemaid, how should I go about praying?

Nursemaid: Well, miss, how about a prayer something like this: Because I love Yamatū with all of my being, please draw us together so that I can become his bride!

Madamachi: Nursemaid! I can't say such things! Can you pray in my place?

Nursemaid: But miss, it's not me that Yamatū is going to marry! I can't pray in your place! You have to carry it through yourself!

Madamachi: But I simply can't...!

Nursemaid: In that case, I'll help to hurry you along. Look! As we've been talking, we have come close to the Futenma Kannon. Please enter here. Gods and Bodhisattvas! We have a prayer for you to hear.

Madamachi: Nursemaid, must you talk so loudly?

Nursemaid: The louder you pray, the better the gods can hear it! You clearly don't understand these things. The daughter of our house is in love with Yamatū. Because she loves him with all of her being, please draw him to her! I beg you! Miss – you have to pray too. Making me pray all alone, I've run out of breath! You wouldn't happen to have a little sugar...?

Yamatū enters.

Song: "Sensuru bushi" (「センスル節」) (Chorus)

Truly, in this floating world,
There is nobody as miserable as I.

Even among the birds and beasts
Come together in sympathy,
In this floating world.
Alas, to be born to a person you have never seen,
Not even a single glimpse –
If I become a magistrate, what good will it do?)
Quickly I'll depart for Futenma,
And pray to Kannon to bring my mother to me.
I'll disguise myself as a peddler,
Place all kinds of flowers inside small cages,
Creep from place to place.
Ah, I've already arrived at Senno harbor!
Wandering among the crowd of vacationers –
Refreshing wares, over here!
Bringing various flowers with me,
Please buy something if it catches your eye!

Madamachi: Call that flower-seller over here!

Nursemaid: Alright, I'll call him.
That's no flower-seller; it's Yamatū, who you think of constantly!

Madamachi: Ah, what shall I do?

Nursemaid: Don't ask me – I'm only your nursemaid, I can't tell you what to do!
Hey, you there – aren't you Yamatū?

Yamatū: Who are you, madam?

Nursemaid: I am the nursemaid of Madamachi. Miss Madamachi is deeply in love
with you – please come here and open up your heart to her!

Yamatū: I heard before that she had me in her thoughts, but there are difficulties. I
would have a word with Madamachi – please call her over here.

Nursemaid: Very well. Miss, miss! Yamatū said to tell you that he wants to speak to
you. Hurry over here!

Yamatū: Madamachi, I am not ignorant of your feelings. There is someone I
absolutely must find – this is why I am traveling the islands dressed as a
flower-seller. After I find this person, shall we come together and live as
husband and wife?

Madamachi: I am truly happy you have spoken the words that I have been thinking. I will pray for your success with all my heart.

Yamatū: Thank you for saying that, my beloved. I must take my leave for now, but please pray for my success.

Upon parting, Madamachi gives Yamatū a vow written on a handkerchief. She takes one of his flowers and recites a verse (in ryūka form).

Song: "Nakazato bushi" (「仲里節」) (Chorus)

(Recapitulates the verse)

Act Seven

Deep in the mountains

Song: "Uya-nu-ugwan bushi" (「親のウグアン節」)

Chirā: Gods and Buddhas, I beg your favor. Please watch over my son and let him advance in the world! I ask this of you, spirits.

Yamatū: I have wandered the islands and villages and have not met anyone resembling my mother. Walking for who knows how many hours, I have become lost on this deep mountain path. What shall I do? Ah, I see a faint light in that mountain hollow. I will go there and beg for a night's lodging. I have a favor to ask of the owner of this lodge! I am a traveler who has lost his way – I beg one night's lodging!

Chirā: Have you lost your way on these deep mountain roads? This is a humble lodge, but feel free to stay here if you like. You appear to be a child of Shuri – what brings you into these deep mountains?

Yamatū: There is someone I must find, and I have been searching constantly, but this heartless world will not bring me to that person.

Chirā: Just as you have said, this is a world without compassion.

Yamatū: The road is long, and my feet and back pain me. With gratitude for your compassion, I will take a rest.

Chirā: You must be very tired – please take a rest. When I see you, traveler, I think of days gone by. My own child must be about your age, but I have not laid eyes upon him once.

Chirā: I entreat you, gods and buddhas, please let my son come into his own in the world!

Yamatū looks at Chirā and wonders if she might not be his mother. He takes the scroll his father gave him out of his pack and looks at it.

Yamatū: This woman's prayer is a mysterious thing – could she be my mother? I'll read her this verse...

(*tsurane*) Though I am woven through with suffering like fine thread, I would never do anything to bring trouble upon my beloved.

Chirā: When I hear that verse, I am sure that you are the child I carried within me.

Yamatū: Ah, could this really be the mother that bore me?

Song: "Ākī bushi" (「アーキー節」) (Chorus)

Could this be a dream?

Yamatū: Mother, mother – you are still alive and healthy under these heavens!

Chirā: My own child – I finally have the chance to meet you.

Yamatū: Being able to meet my precious mother, I feel like I am watching a dream unfold. Beloved mother!

Chirā: I once prayed to the gods and buddhas that I would be able to lay eyes on my own child just one time. And now my prayer has been answered, in this place on this very day. It all feels like a dream. Thank you for traveling so far to find me!

Yamatū: I crossed countless hills and rivers to find my mother, and lost my way on this deep mountain road. For us to meet miraculously in a place like this must be the work of the gods and buddhas!

Chirā: That is surely the case. Perhaps the bond between parent and child simply cannot be cut.

Yamatū: I, your son, have grown to adulthood and have received academic honors – soon I will enter the world of the court in service to the king.

Chirā: You received academic honors!

Yamatū: I hope that you are happy for me!

Chirā: All I have hoped for, while living in this mountain glen and praying to the gods and buddhas, was for fate to bring my son to me. Seeing your form before my eyes on this blessed day, I feel as if I could ascend into the white clouds of heaven.

Yamatū: It could only be the result of our wishing it from morning until night. All I could think of after passing the exam was the mother that gave birth to me. Completely transfixed, I asked my father about you. After that, I resolved bitterly to cross the oceans and the mountains and search for you even unto the bottom of the sea – and now I have found you by walking to this far mountain glen. Mother, please return with me to Shuri and live together with me there!

Chirā: I deeply appreciate that you would offer to bring such a lowly person as I to Shuri to live with you. But I cannot go with you. I believe I will continue to live in this mountain hollow until the end of days. Please allow me to keep living in this distant place.

Yamatū: Mother, what are you saying? You say that you want to live here alone – don't you understand the love that drove me to cross many oceans and mountains in search of you?

Chirā: I am sorry to keep repeating myself, but if the people of the world knew that you were carried in the womb of a person of deplorable status, it would mean the end of your career. That is why I refuse to go to Shuri. Please look into my heart and see that my only desire is to go on living in this distant mountain glen, praying to the gods and buddhas for your success in the world. No matter how difficult it is, you must leave me here alone.

Yamatū: If you are of that mind, then I will not return to Shuri either – I will stay here and live by your side.

Chirā: Don't say such things!

Yamatū: How could I return to Shuri if it meant abandoning my mother alone in a place like this? I cannot be separated from your side!

Chirā: I understand your words, my son. But it befits a man of your status to be of service to the king – that is your vocation as a child of the nobility, my son. You must return to Shuri.

Yamatū: I was driven by filial piety for my mother when I decided to search for you. My heart will not tolerate throwing you away and returning to Shuri alone. Please allow me to stay here, mother.

Chirā: I understand. No matter how low my status is said to be, I am the mother that gave birth to you, and your heart cannot bear the pain of leaving me alone in a deep mountain glen like this. I will go to Shuri with you, then. Take me with you.

Yamatū: So you will go with me then! Thank you, mother! So there was a purpose to my coming here. If I return with you by my side, my father will surely rejoice. Let us leave here for Shuri tomorrow at dawn, and live there together as mother and son!

Chirā: Yes, We will take our leave of this place at dawn...

Yamatū: Together with the shining white clouds of dawn, we will leave for Shuri, dear mother!

Chirā: My son, all these years, while I was praying to the gods and buddhas for your success, I also planted mountain peony seeds. Now that their flowers are in full bloom, you are here. I want you to see them! In the meantime, I will go prepare for the journey.

Yamatū: That sounds wonderful. Of course, there was nothing else here to comfort you. I do want to catch a glimpse of the trees that my mother planted and raised!

Chirā: You must never forget that this deep mountain glen is a place that your mother nurtured and brought into being. Look over them at your ease.

Yamatū: Please hurry and prepare for the journey while I go look over the flowers, mother.

Chirā: Is such a thing as my birth still a cause of trouble in the world? To be born into a low status is a hateful thing. I cannot live for even one day in a home with the child who my birth pains brought into the world. What what is there I can do? For the sake of my son's career, I cannot give in. Now that I have seen my child's face, there is nothing left in life that I must do. If I go on living, it will put obstacles in my son's path – so I will leave this world with prayers for his success!

Song: "Shukkē bushi" (「述懷節」) (Chorus)

For the sake of my child, I will extinguish this reproachful life
Watch over him and protect him, Amida Buddha!

Yamatū comes back onstage and does not see his mother. He looks from right to left, but she has already gone from this world. He returns to center stage and breaks down in tears.

Song: "Uya-nu-ugwan bushi" (「親のウグアン節」)

Yamatū: Alas, mother! Thinking of me, you brought yourself to this. Alas, beloved mother! What can I do?

Yamatū: Who do you wish to see your blossoms, mountain peony?
People do not pass through a place like this.

Chorus: Who do you wish to see your blossoms, mountain peony?
People do not pass through a place like this.

End

Appendix VII: *Iejima Handō-gwa* (Iejima Romance)

Source: Geinōshi Kenkyūkai 1975 vol. 11; Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū Henshū Inkai. 1995 vol. 10.

Characters

Handō-gwa (ハンドー小)

Handō-gwa's cousin, Machī-gwa (マチー小)

Kana (加那)

Kana's wife (*Kana no tsuma* 加那の妻)

Kana's father (*Shimamura-ya no nushi* 島村屋の主)

Kana's sister, Aba-gwa (アバ小)

Captain (*sendōshu* 船頭主)

Iejima villagers and village official

Act One

Kunigami District, Okinawa Island

Song: "Nakandakari bushi" (「仲村渠節」)

Is this a dream? If perchance this is reality,
Ah, what a truly sad affair. At any rate, please listen to the story as it unfolds...

Kana's wife: Isn't that elder brother Kana there? When you came to Kunigami you said you'd return after twenty days, but you haven't – this is a woman's doing! Some local flower has caught your heart, while loneliness smolders in my breast as I wait for your homecoming – I can't believe it. From the bottom of my heart – you are a beast!

Kana: Don't resent me! One can't predict how a trip will go! It hasn't gone at all the way I imagined. That's why so much time has passed. Please don't feel jealous! There's no need for misunderstanding!

Kana's wife: Everyone on our island already knows of what you've done! Isn't it true, the rumor that you're having an affair with Handō-gwa of the house of Nokihayashi-guchi?

Kana: That kind of thing just doesn't stay hidden.... It was out of the loneliness of travel. There was nothing else I could do to put aside my loneliness. It was only a transient, passing love, the kind of flower that only blooms for one night – please don't cry so! I'm going back inside for a moment.

Kana's wife: I won't wait any longer! Our parents and siblings told me to bring you back immediately, so come here!

Kana: Even though she's merely an exotic flower, can I discard her so easily? I decided to make her mine because I was overcome with feeling. Leaving without saying a single word would be pitiful. Wait four or five days!

Kana's wife: Four or five days – how outrageous! I won't even wait a single day. Come with me right this moment.

Kana: If that's the way it has to be, let me go say a few words... Just wait over here, I'll come right back immediately.

Kana's wife: This is just too much! I won't give you up for a second. You'll get snagged by that wild rose's thorns and never come home. This is an outrageous, serious affair – I refuse to let you go. You wait here and I'll go in your place.

Kana: I'll just say one word and come right back, just wait here...

Kana's wife: I can't do that, do you think I'll allow it?

Kana's wife latches onto him and drags him offstage. The lights go down. When the lights come up again, the setting has changed to Handō-gwa's house.

Song: "Handō-gwa bushi" (「ハンドー小節」)

Machī-gwa: Hey, cousin Handō! That man who made vows with you has gone home to his island.

Handō-gwa: What happened? Who went where?

Machī-gwa: That man from Iejima who colored your heart with love – he returned to Iejima.

Handō-gwa: You don't understand the feelings between us! We are bound by a vow, two birds flying wing to wing. Our vow will bind us even in the afterlife. Like a pair of mandarin ducks preening each other, the thread of fate binding us together – you couldn't possibly understand. If I were to die, he would too – if he were to die, I'd die at the same moment. We made that vow before the gods. He couldn't possibly toss me aside and return to his island.

Machī-gwa: Those sweet words were empty – they did not come from his heart. He made those vows to deceive you! I saw him fling the dyed scarf you lovingly made for him around his neck and turn and dash away. He hopped on a small boat bound for Iejima, pushed away from shore and set sail. His wife took him back to Iejima. You’ve been betrayed – what will you do?

Handō-gwa: Is what you’re saying really true?

Machī-gwa: It’s true. See, look – over there – see that boat? Look at that boat, cousin. That boat riding the waves with its white sails unfurled – that is the boat your beloved is on. Now do you understand? That boat is sailing toward Iejima.

Handō-gwa: *Akisameyo!* What can I do? Can he really have deserted me? Will that boat not turn back? Ah, that boat has no mercy. That boat carrying the person to whom I turn my thoughts of love, the person I exchanged vows with – is there nobody who can send it back? He left without saying a single word of parting. I do not know the fathomless heart of this person who could leave me alone like this. Discarded by him – rather than pining or burning with resentment, rather than crying, I would chase after that boat, even if I should die.

Handō-gwa runs toward the ocean, but Machī-gwa stops her. The lights go down. When the lights come back up, Handō-gwa is sick in bed. Anmā calls for Machī-gwa to bring some food. Handō-gwa wakes up as if from a nightmare.

Song: "Chōkkari bushi" (「チョッカリ節」)

Handō-gwa: To be discarded and suffer to this extent, falling in love with a stranger from another island, even vowing to tie my fate to his. I have resolved to put this man who did me wrong out of my mind. But when I try to forget him, his form appears in dreams, and I can’t erase him from my thoughts. What can I do?

Machī-gwa: Men from Iejima have shallow feelings – they are incapable of making sincere promises. They make you fall in love, then abandon you to pass the days sobbing and pining. Didn’t I warn you not to throw your passions into love-talk and give away your heart?

Handō-gwa: This has to be a momentary separation, doesn’t it? If he was truly gone forever, he would have said something to me, whether good or bad. It’s deeply mysterious that he left without a word, there’s no reason for it. I

want to go to that island and get the truth from him. I pray, let me go to that island...

Machī-gwa: No matter how you pine for him, that heartless man's thoughts for you will last no longer than a sparkling drop of dew on the face of a morning glory. Rather than pursuing him to a strange island, you should marry the headman of Okuma village – our mother said it's possible! When you have a husband, you'll forget him.

Machī-gwa's words of consolation only appear to deepen Handō-gwa's suffering.

Handō-gwa: Tossed aside like this, even were I to die, death could not take me – how can you tell me to get married! Rather than marrying someone else, I would prefer you to just kill me instead!

Machī-gwa: Saying those words to you, smiling with flashing eyes – for him it was just a bit of holiday fun. Would you really go all the way to Iejima after being deceived by empty words like that?

Handō-gwa: If I could meet him again and then die, it would be like paradise. Please send me to the island of the person I love.

Handō-gwa clings to Machī-gwa and cries, and Machī-gwa is overcome with emotion and completely at a loss for what to do. At this point, the Ship Captain enters.

Song: "Totankani bushi" (「トタンカニ節」)

Ship Captain: Thank you, madam innkeeper! I'm off to Iejima – I will return later.

Machī-gwa: You were here quite a while this time, weren't you, Captain!

Captain: I suppose I was. On account of bad weather, I've had to stay here until today. From the moment I moored my ship, the wind would not let up – I wondered if my fate had perhaps bound me to Hentona, or if I was meant to find love here! My thoughts started straying to all the beautiful young women of Hentona... But thankfully the storm stopped, the sun came out, and the dawn broke over peaceful white clouds – a happy moment! The path before the boat will be calm as we depart from the harbor, and boats will come and go as delicately as if they were walking along a thread. We'll have a safe voyage and then return again later.

Machī-gwa: So like the white clouds that follow the dawn, you'll be able to unfasten your mooring line and depart for Iejima.

Captain: That's right. I'll go straight away and return later. Handō-gwa, what are you doing up so late – the bright dawn is almost breaking.

Machī-gwa: We passed the night bitterly talking about a man from Iejima who my fell deeply in love with, who then thoughtlessly abandoned her, leaving her to greet the dawn with tears of yearning. Looking at my cousin's suffering, I am overcome with bitterness and cannot bear it. Dear Captain, if your ship is bound for Iejima, I beg you to let her go with you. Take her to Iejima, so she can meet with this man that she loves and clear her heart.

Captain: What a heartless cad! The young men of Iejima are all shallow of heart! They make compassion their enemy. They are truly beastly. My heart breaks when I see how the abandoned Handō-gwa has wasted away with crying. But to take her on my boat to Iejima to meet him – that is not something to take lightly.

Machī-gwa: Why is it such a serious affair?

Captain: If by any chance she becomes angry and gets into a lovers' quarrel with this man who abandoned her, and things become too serious to settle, then the responsibility is on me. If come come between them, I will be pulled this way and that, and I'll have just worsened the dilemma!

Handō-gwa: I promised myself to a man who knows nothing of feeling, and he left me without so much as a parting word. But now I am suffering the consequences of my own foolishness. My regret will never be exhausted and my heart will never find peace. But all I desire is to exchange one word with that man. What do you say, Captain – can't you ferry me across to Iejima? I would be in your debt for the rest of my life. Will you consent to take me to Iejima?

Captain: Although this is not my affair, it breaks my heart. I cannot bear see you crying from lovesickness like this. I will take you to Iejima, Handō-gwa.

Handō-gwa: Will you really take me to Iejima?

Machī-gwa: Captain, thank you!

Captain: Before the dawn breaks.

Both cousins: Stowed away on the ship...

Captain: We'll reach our destination.

Both cousins: Arriving in Iejima before the sun goes down.

Captain: Send your thoughts across the sea, and you will certainly be able to meet your beloved. Hearing you cry and suffer like this is poison to my heart. Machī-gwa, I will trust you to make things right between Handō-gwa's mother and myself...

Machī-gwa: Please don't worry about that. Set sail, with Iejima as your destination. Please look after my Handō-gwa for me!

Captain: You needn't worry about that. Iejima is my home island, Machī-gwa. We have plenty of yams. So many yams that you'd tire yourself out digging them up. I'll give her more yams than she can eat!

Machī-gwa: Captain! I am indebted to you for the rest of my life!

Captain: This isn't a matter of obligation! It is natural to help others when they are troubled, Machī-gwa.

Handō-gwa: I'll leave today and return tomorrow, so wait here and don't worry. Thank you, Captain!

Song: "Shongane bushi" (「しよんがね節」)

Machī-gwa: Please return home after talking things over with him!

Handō-gwa: If I find that the prior bond between us is broken, I will tell him in all seriousness that misery will reduce me to a pile of bleached bones...

Act Two **Iejima Island**

Handō-gwa has arrived on Iejima and is walking tentatively toward the village. Two young men from the village enter.

Song: "Yoi-yoi bushi" (「ヨイヨイ節」)

Young men: Hey hey, older sister! What island are you from? How old are you? Your form is beautiful and your face is beautiful. Is this young lady drifting through the floating world? She doesn't answer when people speak to her!

Young man 1: Hey, older sister! Won't you look over here?

Young man 2: No, no – look over here!

Handō-gwa: My island? I'm from Hentona in Kunigami. What are you trying to ask?

Young men: Of course, fertile Hentona. Your skin is beautiful and you smell sweet...
It's clearly fate that brought us together. Won't you come with me?
We'll pass the night talking and playing around!

Handō-gwa: I don't know of such things! I can't tell you the things I have to say.

Young man 1: If you're plagued with thoughts older sister, lighten your heart by enjoying yourself with us – we'll show you our island's compassion as a souvenir!

Handō-gwa: I feel like I've stepped into a thornbush. You vile men are like insects!

Young man 2: The men of this island are used to playing around. What kind of beastly woman would ignore fine young men like us?

Young man 1: Well, if she doesn't want to come, we'll make her – we'll drag her to the garden and show her how the young men here enjoy themselves until we tire of it.

Song: "Ushiushi bushi" (「ウシウシ節」)

Crowd: Promises are like broad rivers; the place to have a good time is over to the west; the place to meet and talk is east of Castle Mountain. A beautiful girl from another island comes here without shame to meet a lover – the women of Hentona are thick-skinned, seducing men from other islands!

Official: Stop this rowdiness immediately!

Crowd: It's our right as young people to play around! What kind of dog are you to restrict it? What kind of scrawny cat are you? Try to rein us in while we're in the throes of ecstasy and we'll kick you like a horse, we'll drive you away, you cow!

They volley verses back and forth; eventually the village official disperses the crowd and helps Handō-gwa collect herself. He asks her why she has come to Iejima, and she tells him that she needs to talk to Kana. He agrees to lure Kana over so that she can talk to him. He goes and fetches Kana. When he enters, Handō-gwa steps out and confronts him.

Song: "Shimajiri chijuyā bushi" (島尻千鳥節)

Handō-gwa: Even though I've crossed a thousand oceans and a thousand mountains to search for you, you tread upon my heart – why won't you deign to meet me? Don't you find that cold-hearted? Even on the occasion of our parting, you didn't say a word to me, but snuck off by yourself. I became lost in thought when you abandoned me. Even were I to die, death would not take me. Setting aside all shame, I came here to find you, and you treat my feelings like waste paper – even as I suffer here before you...

Kana: How could the thread of fate close the distance between far-off Hentona and this island? Write off our vows of love as predestined to be broken. From this point on, if you think of me, it will only bring you disadvantage.

Handō-gwa: Didn't you say that even if the ocean dried up and the mountains crumbled, our love would live on like a flower growing from a stone? Didn't you swear it? How can you say such things now?

Kana: Did you really think those words I said were true? That was all just for the moment – a diversion to distract me from the loneliness of travel. Our love was only meant to last one night! I never intended those vows I made to last forever.

Kana shoves Handō-gwa away, and she falls into deep sorrow.

Song: "Shin-chijuyā bushi" (「新千鳥節」)

Handō-gwa: There is nobody I can rely on and I don't know a soul. If you're the kind of man that could toss me aside after I have journeyed here out of love for you, then kill me and toss my body aside.

Kana: I don't know you!

Attempting to disentangle himself from the suicidal Handō-gwa, Kana calls for help from his home. His father and wife come and shove Handō-gwa to the side. They pull him away. Handō-gwa falls back, utterly defeated and resigned to die.

Song: "Sakiyama bushi" (「崎山節」)

Handō-gwa: I came here thinking we could be together, but that beast of a man has turned his heart from me. I would rather die than go on living with these bitter thoughts. After I die, my shame will return to him as a curse.

Handō-gwa wraps her scarf around her neck to strangle herself, but as she is about to do it the Captain enters running. Handō-gwa clings to him.

Song: "Shin-nakazahī bushi" (「新仲座兄節」)

Captain: Is this Handō-gwa? What happened?

Handō-gwa: Oh Captain, what can I do? Even if death came for me, I could not die.

Captain: After coming all this way to meet that man and bear your heart to him, this is the state you've been reduced to? What happened? What did he say when you met him?

Handō-gwa (*tsurane*):

The flowers of words lacking in emotion
Words that blossomed like sweet-smelling flowers
I imagined they were sincere
I let myself be seduced by his hateful words!
I crossed the ocean to come to this island
Filled with sorrow, I stood here waiting
In the shadow of his forest, by the side of this road
Full of longing, I waited alone
He will not meet me – I cannot even look at him.
With the aid of a compassionate person
Who saw me crying bitter tears and knew my sorrow
I came here to tell him my bitter feelings
But he scattered my thoughts of love and compassion to the winds.
He said the words he spoke to me were false
That I was a distraction from the loneliness of travel
That I was a momentary comfort
That in his heart, he never intended to keep his vows
And from today on, there would be no bond and no love between us
He said to give up on the bond I thought we shared
He told me to forget him and fled, abandoning me.

Captain (*tsurane*):

What! That beast! Is such a thing possible?
Although only a woman, you traveled from far-off Hentona
Crossing the mountains and the ocean alone
Only for that man to make an enemy of your heart
A person who does not know honor and humanity
Is a demon or a serpent, worse than a beast.
What crime would there be in killing him and throwing his aside?
I should chase him down and kill him this instant.

The enraged Captain begins to storm off in the direction that Kana fled, but Handō-gwa stops him.

Song: "Shin-nakazahī bushi" (「新仲座兄節」)

Handō-gwa: Please wait, Captain! Holding evil intentions like that will make you no better than that beast [Kana]. It is my fault for coming here and spilling my heart to a person whose character I did not know. It is my own fault that I was treated cold-heartedly, and I must live with that. Please let the matter rest!

Captain: It's like you said just now, Handō-gwa. If you calm your heart and forget about all of this, then you can go on. As long as you're on this island, you will be unable to forget and go on suffering. If you return to Hentona and meet your parents and siblings, your heart will warm and you will forget all about this. Your cousin Machī-gwa has come here out of concern for you – please return to Hentona with her.

Handō-gwa: At this moment I cannot calm my heart, Captain. I'm going to climb Castle Mountain and collect myself before we leave. Go ahead and I'll follow shortly.

Captain: Please calm your heart and return quickly!

Song: "Michi-no-shima bushi" (「道の島節」)

Handō-gwa: The perfumed words of a person who knows human kindness make a fine souvenir to take to the other world.

Captain: The perfumed words of a person who knows human kindness make a fine memento to take on a journey away from this world.

As he gets up to leave, the Captain thinks about what Handō-gwa just said and realizes it might be a bad omen. He comes back to check on Handō-gwa and encourage her to leave with him.

Captain: But to say such a thing while crying, after having been treated so heartlessly – are you sure it isn't your intention to die?

Handō-gwa: How could I possibly die, Captain? Even if I must live forever to do so, I will see that man meet his fate.

Captain: When you're overcome with loneliness, everything becomes impossible. Please return home with us today, Handō-gwa! Such worries are the cause of illness. If you get sick, it will be to your disadvantage!

The Captain reluctantly leaves. Handō-gwa walks up the mountain.

Act Three

It becomes clear as Handō-gwa wanders on the mountain that she is looking for a place to die.

Song: "Kohama bushi" (「小浜節」)

Handō-gwa: The sad voices of birds, crossing the island from east to west. Are they crying for that man? Are they crying for me?

Song: "Gamaku bushi" (「ガマク節」)

Handō-gwa: Mistaking the empty words of a heartless man for vows of love that would bind us together from this world to the next, I was driven to seek him out on this distant island, but have not been satisfied. Now that I die, may he know a punishment befitting his crimes!

Song: "Tobarumā bushi" (「トバルマー節」) (Chorus)

Handō-gwa (*tsurane*):

Separated from the island of my birth, I discard my parents and siblings and disappear along with the dew on this unfamiliar island. When I am gone, please forgive my sins!

Song: "Shukkē bushi" (「述懐節」) (Chorus)

Separated from the island of my birth, I discard my parents and siblings; please forgive my sins!!

Handō-gwa wraps her own hair around her neck and strangles herself. Meanwhile, the Captain and Machī-gwa come searching and calling for her, but arrive too late.

Song: "Handō-gwa bushi" (「ハンドー小節」)

Captain: Ah, Handō-gwa!

Machī-gwa: Ah, Handō-gwa! Has it really come to this?

Captain: When she told me that she was climbing the mountain to calm her heart and that she would return, she was resolved to die.

Machī-gwa: When she declared that if she met that man and fate did not bind them together she would be reduced to a pile of bleached bones, she was speaking words of parting – she was resolved to die.

Captain: She has departed and her body has returned to the earth. May her spirit not die, but show its wrath to those who wronged her!

Machī-gwa: The bitterness and resentment that cost her life was brought on by human cruelty. If there is an afterlife, return your sorrow to its agents!

Both: We shall find a place in the east side of this forest facing Hentona – we should find a place facing her island and bury her there, so she can travel the path of death without worry.

The wrap up her body and exit.

Act Four **The home of Kana's father**

Kana has fallen ill. His father, wife, and sister are all by his bedside.

Father: Kana, it won't do for you to stay in bed all day. You have to eat your fill and recover. As they say, "illness stems from the spirit" – put aside your worries and get better!

Kana: I intended to eat and recovering my strength, but when evening came, I heard Handō-gwa singing, her voice echoing from the mountains behind the house – it filled me with unease...

Father: What an absurd thing to say! You can hear Handō-gwa singing? Don't spit out such foolishness. Isn't the one they call Handō-gwa dead and gone? Do the living concern themselves with the dead? It isn't fitting to speak of such an ominous thing. Hey, there's some soup cooked – somebody bring Kana a bowl!

Machī-gwa and the Captain arrive outside the house.

Captain: Well, Machī-gwa. This is the house of Shimamura. Let's announce ourselves.

Machī-gwa: Yes, let's.

Captain: Excuse me! Excuse me!

Kana's sister: Who is it? Why are you here?

Captain: My name is Captain Tamagusuku. I've come to meet with the master of the house. Shall I come in?

Kana's wife: Please wait one moment.
Hey, father – there's a Captain Tamagusuku here who says he has business with you.

Father: He wants to meet me on business? I don't want to meet anyone today. Tell him I'm not home.

The Captain enters without waiting for an answer.

Captain: Good heavens – you say you aren't home and yet here you are. I've come to settle some business with you.

Father: What business?

Captain: It isn't personal business that's brought me here. In truth, it's this young lady who has business with you. Please listen to what she has to say. Well then, Machī-gwa, tell him what's on your mind.

Machī-gwa: Well let me see. Well, father...

Father: "Father," is it? Someone of your standing dares to address me as "father" ...?

Machī-gwa: Oh – well in that case, would you prefer if I called you "old man?"

Father: "Old man," is it? The gall. Well, what's your business? Spit it out quickly.

Machī-gwa: I am Machī, cousin of Handō-gwa, who died on this island. Please give me your attention.

Father: What connection does that have to me?

Machī-gwa: Let me tell you what brought us here today. Handō-gwa came to this island to meet with Kana, but met with failure instead. I worry that

because she died here unfulfilled, her spirit will linger on this strange island...

Father: Do you mean to say you want us to light incense for her? I don't even know this Handō-gwa of yours. We have no connection to her – it's absurd to ask me to light incense for a stranger.

Machī-gwa: Headman, sir – I'm not asking this for my own sake. It is my cousin Handō-gwa's vengeance that has made your son Kana sick. If you refuse to light incense for her with us, I fear you will have to watch him suffer and die.

Father: You rascal, you filthy-mouthed child! Oi, Captain! It was you who brought that woman Handō-gwa here to die. Clearly you didn't learn your lesson – have you brought this one here to die as well?

Captain: Now now, headman! Could anyone in the world deny that your son may as well have murdered Handō-gwa himself? Coming to Hentona to buy cotton, your son met a typhoon and his boat was upset – but Handō-gwa saved his miserable life. He told her he had neither a wife nor children, and they made a vow of love together. But when it was time for him to return to Iejima, he left without so much as a word. Handō-gwa came here to ask the man who crushed her heart to become her true husband. But you – parent and child alike – forgot your obligation to the person who saved Kana's life, and heaped bitterness and scorn upon her, driving her from this world. And now you won't even light a stick of incense on her behalf? Where else in the world could I find a mean-spirited creature like you?

Father: Mean-spirited creature? How dare you! It's only natural for a man traveling on business to fool around with other women. Seducing a woman for the night is part of being a man. You can't pin her misfortunes on my son! Perhaps I should break a few bones for you.

Captain: Oh, is that so? It was your son's foul attitude that misled her – but listening to your foolishness, it's clear the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

Father: Foolishness? You dim-witted bastard!

Machī-gwa: You can say whatever you want, but eventually you'll be taught the difference between right and wrong. As they say, "when the bell rings out, it will be too late to protest." Think well on that when you choose the course of your own life.

Father: Oho, “when the bell rings out?” Why not let it ring out two or three times, then?

Captain: Don’t say I didn’t warn you, headman. Well, Machī-gwa, trying to talk to a numbskull like this is like trying to mix oil and water. Let’s fetch Handō-gwa’s bones and return home.

Machī-gwa: I’ll say just one more thing. You might be the headman of this village, enjoying the height of prosperity, but when you suffer the vengeance of Handō-gwa’s spirit, this house will be reduced to a manger. Open your eyes before it’s too late!

Captain: Exactly, Machī-gwa – this house will be reduced to a manger, and this headman will end up bleating like a sheep.

The Captain and Machī-gwa leave.

Father: What did you say? Get back here!

Kana’s wife: Father, it won’t do any good to exchange words with ill-mannered creatures like them. Calm down and come inside.

Father: Hey, Kana! It’s because you’re sick in bed like this that those villains can spout libel about you. Eat something and get better quickly! Wife, bring some food for Kana.

Kana’s wife: Please, eat something!

Kana: Handō-gwa! Handō-gwa!

Father: Kana! Hey, Kana! What’s wrong?

When Kana lifts up the rice bowl to eat, fire leaps out of it and shocks him. He drops the bowl and chopsticks. Handō-gwa’s ghost appears behind the sliding screen.

Kana’s wife: Husband! No...!

Kana stands in a daze.

Kana: Until this moment I didn’t pay heed to things like divine punishment and sin – only now, when I have suffered it, do I understand...

While Kana sings “Hābēru bushi,” Handō-gwa’s ghost appears onstage.

Father: Ah, you demon!

Kana's father picks up his sword and strikes out at Handō-gwa's ghost, but cuts down Kana's sister.

Father: Daughter! No! No!

Kana gropes at his bed and stands. Handō-gwa's ghost crosses the stage and stands by his side. He chokes and falls dead. Special effects light up the stage.

Father: Kana! No! Seeing you like this – what will become of this father of yours? What will become of our family and this island?

Song: "Sūrī agari bushi" (「スーリー東節」)

Captain: Heaven and earth mirror each other. If you sin against another, heavenly punishment will befall you. Well, the bell that marked their fate has rung out – headman, didn't you say to let it ring out two or three times? It appears you have two or three burials to prepare for.

The Captain and Machī-gwa exit as Kana's father weeps.

*In some versions, the play ends with the following song:

Song: "Sāsā bushi" (「サーサー節」) (Chorus)

The world in which humans live is shaped by compassion. Do only good in the world. Heartlessness and abnormality will not abide.

End.

Endnotes

¹ Translating and Romanizing these titles presents complexities. To accommodate searching, I have mostly used standard Japanese Romanizations in the main text. In the Naha-Shuri dialect of Okinawan, *Uyanma* can be pronounced *Uyanmā* (うやんまー) or *Uya-anmā* (うやあんまー). *Tomari Aka* can be pronounced *Tumai Akā* (とうまいあかー) or *Tumai Ākā* (とうまいあーかー). *Iejima Handō-gwa* is pronounced *Ījima Handō-gwā* (いーじまはんどーぐわー). I have rendered *Iejima Handō-gwa* as *Iejima Romance* because an earlier version of the story is titled *Iejima romansu* (「伊江島ロマンス」) (Nakahodo 1994, 14).

² In a 2012 interview, Kōki Ryōshū, artistic director for the National Theatre Okinawa, states that “the world of Okinawan theater and Ryūkyūan musical drama is a world of *nasake*” (Kokuritsu Gekijō Okinawa Unei Zaidan 2012 vol 6, 4). Iwona Kordzinska-Nawrocka provides a concise etymology of the term as it arises in classical Japanese literature: “The Japanese noun lexeme *nasake* indicated all feelings that stemmed from the emotional nature of man. Its field of meaning encompassed such feelings and emotions as: friendship, feeling of closeness, fondness, sympathy and love. The expression *nasake aru hito* 情けある人 meant a man distinguished by his sensitivity and tenderness who is able to bestow his affection upon others” (2011, 47). Sensitivity to emotion has long been recognized as a keystone of the normative moral universe of classical Japanese literature and literary criticism. In his influential exegesis of *The Tale of Genji*, for example, Motoori Norinaga argues that “characters ... who ‘know what it means to be moved by things’ (*mono no aware o shiri*), who ‘have compassion’ (*nasake arite*), and who ‘respond to the feelings of others’ (*yo no naka no hito no kokoro ni kanaeru*) are ‘good,’ whereas those who lack these qualities are ‘bad’ (Shirane 1985, 644).

³ On the formal logical concept of co-interpretability, see Giorgie Dzhaparidze, “A generalized notion of weak interpretability and the corresponding modal logic” (1993).

⁴ There has been much debate over the discursive politics of applying concepts in European history, such as feudalism, to Japan (cf. Keirstead 2004; etc.). In this dissertation, I will follow David L. Howell in adhering to Rodney Hilton’s broad definition of feudalism as “an exploitative relationship between landowners and subordinated peasants, in which the surplus beyond subsistence of the latter, whether in direct labour or in rent in kind or in money, is transferred under coercive sanction to the former” (Hilton 1978, 30; cited in Howell 1992, 270).

⁵ Jansen translates its articles as follows: “1. Deliberative councils shall be widely established and all matters decided by public discussion; 2. All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state; 3. The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall each be allowed to pursue his own calling so that there may be no discontent; 4. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of Nature; 5. Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of Imperial rule” (2000, 338).

⁶ Inoue Kawashi and Itō Hirobumi’s portrayal of the emperor as “[holding] in His hands ... all the ramifying threads of the political life of the country” further recalls Hegel’s description of the ideal monarch as “the firm, immediate knot of the whole” (Itō 1906, 7-8; Honneth 1996, 60).

⁷ Interestingly, up until the late 1880s, Itō Hirobumi questioned the interpretation of *kokutai* as immutable (Gluck 1985, 145). Gluck sees his change of heart as an adaptation to the political climate of the time.

⁸ Makishi explains this principle: “for [the character of] a king, bodily gestures, speech, and so forth that are kingly; for a retainer, gestures and speech that are fitting for a retainer” (2002, 82-83).

⁹ As Valerie Barske notes, the Shuri-Naha Okinawan pronunciation of Iha Fuyū’s family name is “Ifa.” (2013, 66). In this dissertation I mostly use standard Japanese Romanizations, not as a tacit political statement but in order to simplify intertextual citation and searching.

¹⁰ Aniya defines “extremely small producers” as farmers working plots of less than five *tan*; the average size of plots in Okinawa was 6 *tan* 7 *se* to 7 *tan* 4 *se*, compared with 1 *cho* 1 *tan* in mainland Japan (1977, 153-154).

¹¹ The “theory of common Japanese-Ryūkyūan ancestry” appears in the *Mirror of Chūzan* (*Chūzan seikan* 中山世鑑), a royal chronicle compiled in the 1650s by Shō Shōken. It was transmitted to Japan by Arai Hakuseki in his 1719 *History of the Southern Islands* (*Nantō-shi* 南島史).

¹² The most widely known popular source on Ryūkyū throughout the Tokugawa period was probably Takizawa Bakin’s fanciful serial novel *Chinsetsu yumihari tsuki* (椿説弓張月, 1807-1811), which dramatizes the apocryphal exploits of Minamoto Tametomo, imputed father of the Okinawan king Shunten. Another source of popular knowledge of Ryūkyū were the intermittent tribute missions sent by the royal government to Edo, which drew curious onlookers as they passed through the countryside.

¹³ On 1906 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, for example, harshly criticizes the implementation of policies that neglect or marginalize Okinawa’s “precious, singular history,” calling their impact “heart-chilling” (Ota 1996, 370-371). The article goes on to praise Okinawan educators who resist the trend toward “forgetting our mothers and fathers”: “Fortunately, among the teachers originating in our prefecture, there are those who oppose the central government’s policies and seek to reverse them by reminding the Okinawan people of their place of origin.” Similarly, Iha Fuyū indicts assimilationism as “the divestiture of nationhood” (*kokusei hakudatsu* 国性剥奪), which is tantamount to the divestiture of [ethical] values” (*kachi hakudatsu* 価値剥奪). In a Meiji 42 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, Iha writes: “Nationalists often speak of ‘unification,’ but I cannot admire the kind of so-called unification that would protect the special characteristics of a particular group while seeking to completely wipe out anything that differs. It may be good to judiciously eliminate harmful institutions in accordance with the logic of idealism, but there is no benefit in indiscriminantly eliminating good characteristics as well. Doesn’t true unification abide in tolerant efforts to incorporate and exhibit the good characteristics of each individual and group?” (Hiyane 1996, 21). In a Meiji 43 letter to poet Kawahigashi Hekigotō, Iha praises Okinawans’ increasing resistance to this attempted divestiture: “To sum it up, ten years ago Okinawan society sought to destroy the old and simplistically copy Japan, whereas today, we are cultivating our self-consciousness as Okinawans, preserving the old, and have opened a path to the rejection of mimicry” (Hiyane 1996, 17). Hiyane identifies this embrace of Okinawan political and cultural self-consciousness as a “Copernican revolution” in the prefecture’s intellectual history.

¹⁴ A 1902 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article, for example, criticizes the Japanese government for treating Okinawa “like a newly-occupied land” rather than a Japanese prefecture (Ōta 1996, 378). The article goes on to excoriate Japan’s semi-colonial stance toward the prefecture: “Let us examine the government’s policies one by one. Has a single step been taken to help Okinawa realize its true quality? Looking at the situation honestly, with the exception of education, isn’t it the case that not a single noticeable thing has been done? Even with regard to this single achievement, education, we can expect nothing from it but the encouragement of a ‘national spirit’ ... Once a ‘national spirit’ has been inculcated, it is clearly not considered necessary to continue [an Okinawan student’s] education.” Unfortunately for the Okinawan cause, Miyata Kurada (宮田倉太), who eclipsed Ōta Chōfu as the paper’s primary opinion columnist during the Shōwa period, abandoned Ōta’s nuanced stance in favor of a simplistic and unilateral assimilationism (Hiyane 1996, 118).

¹⁵ The year 1932 saw the Mukden Incident and the invasion of Manchuria, an assassination attempt on the Shōwa Emperor by a Korean independence activist, the official denunciation of leftist legal scholar Takigawa Yukitoki, and two violent uprisings by right-wing groups, the so-called League of Blood Incident and the May 15 Incident.

¹⁶ Writing in the year of Okinawa’s reversion from American to Japanese authority, Kinjō Seitoku and Nishizato Kikō pronounce Kerr an “American imperial ideologue,” and accuse him of overemphasizing Ryūkyūan/Japanese difference in order to legitimize the American occupation and persuade Okinawans to reject reunification with Japan (1972, 96). This being said, they also openly admit to occupying the opposite ideological position (the pro-reversion position).

¹⁷ The Japanese Communist Party and the Okinawa People’s Party (OPP) initially embraced the concept of Okinawan uniqueness and ethnic self-determination, declaring the American invaders a “liberatory force” and hailing the end of Japanese “colonial domination.” At one point, the OPP, the Okinawa Democratic League (ODL), the Okinawa Socialist Party (OSP), and the Miyako Socialist Party all supported independence (Tanji 2003, 104). During the late 1940s, however, the Okinawa Socialist Mass Party

(OSMP) and OPP began to favor reversion to Japan, organizing the Preparatory Council for Promoting Reversion (*Nihon fukki sokushin kiseikai*). The formation of the pro-reversion Okinawa Teachers' Association (OTA) in 1952 and the Okinawa Islands Reversion to the Home Country Preparatory Council (*Okinawashotō sokoku fukki kiseikai*) in 1953 further drove the movement. In the 1960s, a series of conflicts between the United States administration and Okinawan labor groups pushed the latter toward favoring reversion, adding the final element to a coalition of educators, workers, youth groups, and leftist political parties (organized as the Okinawa Prefecture Council for Reversion to the Home Country, *Okinawa-ken sokoku fukki kyōgikai*) which worked to sway the population overwhelmingly toward reversion (145).

¹⁸ In Shimomura's defense, this was a salient threat at the time. In the wake of his landing in Ryūkyū, Commodore William Perry suggested in a dispatch to Washington that the United States should colonize and 'civilize' the islands (Jansen 2000, 277). Francis L. Hawks, under Perry's supervision, recorded the following observations: "The Commodore was deeply moved, as indeed were all the gentlemen of the expedition, by the tyranny exercised toward the mass of the people. 'God pity these poor creatures!' says the former in his journal: 'I have seen much of the world, have observed savage life in many of its conditions; but never, unless I may except the miserable peons in Mexico, have I looked upon such an amount of apparent wretchedness as these squalid slaves would seem to suffer.' 'The poor, naked creatures, who toil from morning till night, know not the relaxation of a Sabbath, nor the rest of an occasional holiday, generally granted by even the most cruel taskmasters ... their stolid and impassive features express nothing but toil and care, and are a sufficient index of their abject condition.' 'I can conceive of no greater act of humanity than it would be to rescue, if possible, these miserable being from the oppression of their tyrannical rulers'" (1858, 219-220).

¹⁹ In his work on indigenous and Ladino populations in Mexico, Stavenhagen describes the radical self-transformations which an Indian must execute in order to move upward into the Ladino social strata: "Upward mobility among Indians represents a process of acculturation. But learning Spanish and adopting Ladino dress styles is insufficient. The Indian must also become socially (generally meaning physically) separated from his community. In order to become a Ladino, the mobile Indian must cut his ties with the social structure of his corporate community. He must not only modify his cultural characteristics, but also his 'social' condition as an Indian" (1965, 68). This analysis of Indian self-transformation prefigures Tomiyama Ichirō's analyses of the Okinawan "lifestyle reform" movements of the 1930s (1995). Tomiyama follows Stavenhagen in arguing that presently apparent formations of cultural difference were not the cause of political and economic subjugation, but rather, the result: "Primary characteristics of the *colonial situation* were ethnic discrimination, political dependence, social inferiority, residential segregation, economic subjection, and juridical incapacity. In the same way, class structure was defined in terms of labor and property relations ... From these conditions there emerged the corporate community and the formation of indo-colonial cultural characteristics, which we today call Indian culture" (70). Kinjō and Nishizato, Yamazaki Kaoru, and Tomiyama Ichirō apply the same argument to Okinawa (1972; 1982; 1995). Hechter's model of internal colonialism also describes the formation of interconnected class and ethnic identities as an effect of uneven modernization: "The spatially uneven wave of modernization over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. As a consequence of this initial fortuitous advantage, there is a crystallization of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups. The superordinate group, or core, seeks to stabilize and monopolize its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalization of the existing stratification system. It attempts to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high prestige are reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced groups are denied access to these roles. This stratification system, which may be termed a cultural division of labor, contributes to the development of distinctive ethnic identification in the two groups" (1975, 9-10). Tomiyama, Hiyane, and Nomura all cite this argument (1995; 1996; 2005).

²⁰ In the final chapter of *Kumiodori wo kiku*, Yano Teruo discusses the problems facing contemporary scholars of Okinawan performing arts and provides a comprehensive list of key topics for future research. On music and dance, Yano lists the following topics: 1. Consolidating, identifying, and classifying primary source documents; 2. Recording lineages of transmission; 3. Building searchable computer databases of

works, and developing computer-based methods of comparative analysis; 4. Clarifying song-naming practices and the function of the names of *omoro* and *umui* chants; 5. Tracing the influence of Ryūkyūan performing arts on mainland Japanese performing arts; 6. Further research into the influence of Chinese music on Ryūkyūan music; 7. Reconstructing sources on lesser-known lineages of transmission of modern *zō-odori* dance (lineages other than Tamagusuku Seijū-ryū); 8. Identifying patterned relationships between song lyrics and gestures; 9. Investigating the influence of Japanese *kouta odori* on Okinawan *zō-odori* (2003, 536-543). On kumiodori and musical drama (*kageki*), Yano proposes the following topics: 1. Consolidating and editing primary source material; 2. Recording the lineages of transmission of forms (型), staging conventions, and interpretive conventions; 3. Research into period costumes and props (544-547). This list of topics is largely representative of the priorities of Japanese scholars of Okinawan performing arts in general.

²¹ The others are the National Theatre, the National Noh Theatre, the National Engei Hall, the New National Theatre, and the National Bunraku Theatre (Osaka) (<http://www.ntj.jac.go.jp/>).

²² There is a significant body of work in Japanese on early modern and prewar Okinawan performing arts, which runs the gamut from encyclopedic scholarly studies to appreciation guides written for a popular readership to polemical treatises and manifestos. Four authoritative contemporary works are Yano Teruo's *Kumiodori wo kiku* (2003), Ikemiya Masaharu's *Ryūkyū bungaku ron* (1980) and *Okinawa geinō bungaku ron* (1982), and Ōshiro Manabu's *Okinawa geinō shigairon* (2000). Yano's *Kumiodori wo kiku* (2003) is a monumental work focused primarily on courtly kumiodori. In it, Yano introduces kumiodori in its historical context as a mode of performative diplomacy, describes Tamagusuku Chōkun's trips to Kagoshima and Edo, and explicates stylistic and structural similarities between kumiodori and Japanese performing arts, primarily *nō* and *kyōgen*. He goes on to analyze kumiodori's stylistic and formal characteristics, describe performance and production conventions, and give point-by-point analyses of *Shūshin kane'iri*, *Mekarushi*, *Hana-uri no en*, and *Temizu no en*. Finally, he provides a summary of courtly and folk ceremonial practices, with a focus on the Coronation Ship ceremony and Yaeyaman myth and ritual. Ikemiya Masaharu's *Ryūkyū bungaku ron* (1980) overlaps with *Kumiodori wo kiku* in many areas, however, it dedicates more attention to the arts with preceded and followed kumiodori. In its first section, Ikemiya traces the origin of the Ryūkyūan literary tradition in the *Omorosōshi* (compiled in 1532). The second section explores the *Omorosōshi*'s roots in premodern oral traditions, drawing parallels to the oral traditions that survived on the Ryūkyū Kingdom's rural peripheries, while third section treats addresses the connection between the *omoro* songs, the *ryūka* poetic form, and *uta-sanshin* music. In the fourth section, Ikemiya discusses popular performing arts. His account of the development of modern commercial performing arts is especially relevant to this dissertation. *Okinawa geinō bungaku ron* (1982) adopts a more self-reflexive approach while developing a theory of interpretation. This is especially apparent in the book's fourth section, which is directed to contemporary performers. Ōshiro's *Okinawa geinō shigairon* (2000) supplements Yano's and Ikemiya's descriptions of Miyako and Yaeyama performing arts, and provides a valuable chapter on regional kumiodori and the current condition of *shabon* (hand-copied collections of scripts) and other rare primary materials. Ōshiro also corroborates Ikemiya's account of the development of popular commercial theater, and provides several musical drama scripts translated into modern Japanese.

²³ Incidentally, this accords with Hegel's suggestion in *Lectures on Aesthetics* that because the lower classes do not know freedom of action, lower class characters in drama are best relegated to comic roles (1975, 192).

²⁴ I have chosen to focus on Lukács rather than Gramsci because "with regard to aesthetics and literary criticism, Gramsci had no direct speculative interest and did not attempt a theoretical ordering of the methodological categories he elaborated" (Boelhower 1981, 575-576). This being said, in his scattered writings on literature, Gramsci followed Lukács in rejecting aestheticism (represented in his writing by Croce) and approaching both the writing of literature and the sociological critique of literature as modes of revolutionary political praxis: "the premise of the new literature cannot but be historical, political and popular" (cited in Boelhower 1981, 576). Interestingly, both theorists also use organicist rhetoric to stress the populist nature of effective literature: Gramsci states that literature must "sink its roots into the humus of popular culture as it is," while Lukács asserts that the best works "grow out of the life and history of the

people ... [as] an organic product of the development of their nation” (1980, 54). I do not mention the third major Western European critical Marxist of the 1910s–20s, Karl Korsch, because he did not write specifically on aesthetics. Korsch’s thought, however, strongly influenced the literary and theatrical theory and practice of his friend Bertolt Brecht (Kellner 1980, 29–42).

²⁵ The February 26 Incident was a 1936 coup attempt carried out by a faction of young ultranationalist officers in the Imperial Japanese Army, who succeeded in assassinating a number of high ranking officials.

²⁶ Kant identifies *sensus communis aestheticus* or “Taste” as “[the] faculty of judging of that which makes universally communicable, without the mediation of a concept, our feeling in a given representation” (Kant 1914, 173). Prior to his engagement with historical materialism and critical theory, Tosaka studied the philosophy of science in a neo-Kantian framework at Kyoto University under Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime. For Tosaka, as for Kant, judgments determined by habituated taste can be called aesthetic “because [their] determining ground is not a concept, but the feeling (of internal sense) of that harmony in the play of the mental powers, so far as it can be felt in sensation” (Kant 1914, 80; Tosaka 2001, 22).

²⁷ Geological metaphors in particular arise throughout Marxist and post-Marxist literary theory. Lukacs, for example, states that the vocation of true realism is to “capture tendencies of development that only exist incipiently and so have not yet had the opportunity to unfold their entire human and social potential,” i.e., “underground trends” (1980, 48). Ranciere revisits the seismograph metaphor in his discussion of the concept of literature as it emerged in Germaine de Stael’s *De la littérature*: “Literature did not act so much by expressing ideas and wills as it did by displaying the character of a time or a society. In this context, literature appeared at the same time as a new regime of writing, and another way of relating to politics, resting on this principle: writing is not imposing one will on another, in the fashion of the orator, the priest or the general. It is displaying and deciphering the symptoms of a state of things. It is revealing the signs of history, delving as the geologist does, into the seams and strata under the stage of the orators and the politicians – the seams and strata that underlie its foundation” (2010, 161–162).

²⁸ Over 200 years later, the Meiji Japanese government had this oath translated as part of its campaign to legitimize its own claim on the islands: “The islands of Riu Kiu have from ancient times been a feudal dependency of Satsuma; and we have for ages observed the custom of sending thither, at stated times, junks bearing products of these islands, and we have always sent messengers to carry our congratulations to a new Prince of Satsuma on his accession” (Toguchi 1975, in Smits 1999, 16).

²⁹ Royal branch families (*ōji*) each received a base stipend of 300 koku. The *anji* aristocracy received base stipends of between 40 and 200 koku, depending on how many generations separated them from their root families. If they served an important position at court, this could be increased to as much as 600 koku. Samurai of *uēkata* rank who were employed at court or in Kumemura usually received around 40 koku; common samurai who were employed in these positions received 20–30 koku. Samurai who served as *sōjitō* or *waki-jitō* received income based on the productivity of their fief. If a samurai of *uēkata* rank was chosen to serve on the Sanshikan, he would receive 400 koku (Naha Shishi Henshū Inkaei 1974 vol. 2, 148–149). In addition, royal magistrates dispatched to Kume, Aguni, Kerama, Tonaki, Ihe, and Iheya Islands were granted a stipend of 4.5 koku (Sakihara 1971, 77).

³⁰ Here it is worth mentioning the ‘on-the-ground’ structural parallels between feudalism and colonialism. Ooms calls the Tokugawa political system a “colonial variety” of domination: the “specific nature of the political order established by the shogun and the daimyo ... was a regime of conquest like a colonial regime” (1996, 89). Similarly, on a more general conceptual and functional level, Scott observes that colonialism and feudalism are both paradigmatic examples of “relations in which appropriation and status degradation are joined” (1990, 193). Derrida goes so far as to assert an ontic kinship between colonialism and the phenomenon of culture itself, arguing that “every culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some ‘politics’ of language ... through the power of naming, of imposing and legitimating appellations” – this “reveals the colonial structure of any culture in an exemplary way” (1998, 39). In Derrida’s radical critique of culture, “‘colonialism’ and ‘colonization’ are only high points” in the variagated history of asymmetrical intersubjective relations (25).

³¹ This was comparable to tax rates in Satsuma, and accorded with the Tokugawa maxim of “four parts to the lord, six parts to the people” (*shikō rokumin* 四公六民) (Matsui 1975, 95; Sansom 1931, 467).

³² According to Sakihara, the conversion rate between goods and rice was not seriously skewed when it was initially set in the late seventeenth century, but was “definitely and seriously out-of-date in the nineteenth century, to the great disadvantage of the peasants” (1971, 94).

³³ The institution of indenture allowed some occupational flexibility. Beginning in 1680, the government permitted peasants to indenture themselves or family members in urban areas for periods of up to 10 years for the purpose of repaying debts (Sakihara 1971, 58).

³⁴ Other festivals include the New Year’s Day of the Dead (*jurukunichi / miisa / mii-gusoo* 新後生), sixteenth day of the first month of lunar calendar; *shimii* (清明), between the twenty-second day of the second lunar month and the third day of the third lunar month; *higan* (彼岸), the spring and autumn equinoxes; *shinugu* and *ungami* (海神) festivals, during the seventh lunar month; *arasachi/arashitsu* (赤節), *shibasashi* (柴差す), and *dunga/donga* festivals, during the eighth lunar month (Baksheev 2008, 284).

³⁵ The concept of visiting deities (*raihōshin*) or stranger-deities (*marebito*) is important in many variants of the Okinawan indigenous religion, and is linked to the concept of “other worlds” (*nirai*). In his study of Okinawan deification practices, Evgeny Baksheev adopts Komatsu Kazuhiko’s helpful distinction between “other worlds” (異界), of which there are many in various Japanese folk traditions, and “the other world” (他界), the singular world of the dead. In Okinawa as well, there is one “other world” of the dead (*gushoo/gusoo*), but various types of “other worlds” (*nirai/nirai-kanai*), including the overseas world, the submarine world, the subterranean world, and the celestial world (2008, 287). In many locales, *nirai-kanai* is believed to be an island in the eastern seas, which is the home of the “great master of Nirai” (*niree nu ufunushi*) and the original source of the five grains, fire, fertility, and prosperity, as well as of visiting deities and stranger-deities.

³⁶ Among the most commonly performed *kyōgen* are *Tori-sashi* (鳥刺し), *Takara-uri* (宝売り), *Sakana-azuke* (魚あづげ), and *Juriyobi-kyōgen* (ジュリヨビ狂言) (Ikemiya 1980, 282).

³⁷ Historical records pertaining to commercial performing arts during the Ryūkyū Kingdom period are scarce; moreover, the lines of transmission of most premodern commercial performing arts have died out, making ethnographic research difficult. In his *Essays on Ryūkyūan Literature (Ryūkyū bungaku-ron)*, Ikemiya consolidates extant historical and ethnographic records pertaining to two major commercial performing arts: a form of puppet theater staged by itinerant performers called *chondarā* (京太郎), and a form of lay Buddhist dance related to Japanese *nenbutsu-odori* (念仏踊り). While these arts are no longer performed in their original forms, they are historically significant, and traces of their influence can still be seen in *kumiodori*, village *kyōgen*, and modern commercial performing arts. The first historical record of *chondarā* appears in the 1713 *Record of the Origins of Ryūkyū (Ryūkyū yurai-ki* 「琉球国由来記」). The term can be translated literally as something like “fellows from the capital,” and the *Ryūkyū yurai-ki* claims that the first *chondarā* came to Ryūkyū from Kyōto. Miyanaga Masumori’s 1925 tract “Puppet theater of Okinawa” (*Okinawa no ningyō shibai* 沖縄の人形芝居), which is based on interviews with aging performers, gives a similar explanation. Ikemiya assesses this explanation as apocryphal and likely inaccurate (cited in Ikemiya 1980, 273). He does, however, leave open the possibility that puppet theater migrated to the Ryūkyū Kingdom from Japan, as the puppet and stage designs described by Miyanaga and others are reminiscent of designs used by *Ōsaka-deko*, *Ebisu-mai*, and other types of mainland Japanese itinerant puppeteer (274). According to Miyanaga, the puppets themselves were made of wood, around 15 cm in height, and of rougher construction than *bunraku* puppets. The stage was portable, and featured a three-colored curtain (reminiscent of the well-known kabuki stage curtain); the puppets were held with strings from above the portable stage in the style of marionettes, rather than operated directly as with *bunraku* puppets, and up to ten different puppets were used. Higa Seishō further records that the average *chondarā* troupe consisted of seven members, including a *taiko* drummer (cited in Ikemiya 1980, 275). The *chondarā* were especially active during weeks surrounding the old calendar New Year, when they would tour the homes of wealthy aristocrats in Shuri; they are remembered in songs such as “*Chondarā no uta*,” recorded by 船越義珍 (274). In addition to puppet shows, *chondarā* performed masked dances, sang Ryūkyūan and Japanese songs, and put on comedy sketches in local languages. Higa records the content of their performances as “*manzai-type*” (万歳形), and mentions that *chondarā* were banned from performing

while Chinese envoys were present, as their art was considered too Japanese (275). As Ikemiya notes, *chondarā* are often confused with *ninbucha* (念仏者), or *nenbutsu* dancers. Early records such as the *Ryūkyū yurai-ki*, however, distinguish between the two. Higashionna Kanjun mentions that *ninbucha* were also called *hinganā* (彼岸者), after *higan*, the equinoctial week during which Buddhist ceremonies were held (cited in Ikemiya 1980, 276). From the seventeenth century to nineteenth centuries, *ninbucha* were invited to perform at Buddhist memorial services in exchange for rice and other goods. During the later nineteenth century, presumably as the number of *chondarā* and *ninbucha* dwindled, the traditions began to overlap. Ikemiya regards Miyanaga and Higa's primary informant, a man named Tamagusuku Yama (玉城山戸), as the final bearer of both traditions. Based on his interviews with Tamagusuku, Miyanaga names the village of Aniya (安仁屋), just north of Shuri, as the hometown of many *chondarā* (276). Songs and song fragments thought to derive from the *chondarā* and *ninbucha* traditions, however, can be found in local folk repertoires from Amami to Yaeyama. Similarly, the influence of *chondarā* upon courtly and popular drama is apparent in the manzai dance scenes in the kumiodori *Manzai tekiuchi* and the kageki *Okuyama no botan*, and in the village kyōgen *Torisashi*, which is apparently based on a version of *torisashi-mai* (鳥刺し舞, “bird-catcher's dance”) performed by *chondarā* (281). Iha Fuyū also writes on *chondarā* (1975 vol. 7, 314-324).

³⁸ James C. Scott reports on similar “legal fictions” utilized (albeit for different reasons and to different ends) in Lao villages under socialist governance and in Russian villages under Catherine the Great: “the actual social organization of cultivation, apparently, remains essentially unchanged, but cooperatives have been created by slight of hand reinforced by ersatz account books, officeholders, and cooperative activities ... It is reasonable to assume that lower functionaries and villagers are coconspirators in this effort to please their demanding and possibly dangerous superiors” (1990, 60). In all of these cases, the “legal fiction” of the autonomous and organically unified communal body underscores the village's vertical relation to the rent-seeking metropolitan elite by glossing over intermediary linkages between subordinates – an arrangement which is often beneficial to both local and metropolitan elites (62).

³⁹ Iha refers to Tamagusuku Chōkun as an Okinawan Wagner (1974a, 154). It is worth noting, however, that the actual composition process of kumiodori and other courtly arts was likely collaborative.

⁴⁰ A number of Okinawan scholars have written on the relationship between kumiodori and *nō*. In his authoritative 2003 book *Listening to Kumiodori (Kumiodori wo kiku)*, Yano Teruo offers a comprehensive summary of recent comparative research on the subject. The similarities Yano identifies are: 1. Highly formalized staging; 2. An intensely introspective presentation centered on the technique of sliding feet (*suriashi*); 3. Minimal and highly symbolic stage design; 4. A gestural style that conveys internal states through restraint rather than histrionics; 5. The use of a chorus (*utai*); 6. The coordination of chanting with instrumental accompaniment; 7. The use of fixed, formalized chanting patterns rather than natural speech or free verse; 8. The unity of time (shared with *gendai-nō*); and 9. Certain shared technical terms (41-43). The major differences are: 1. *Kumiodori* does not employ masks; 2. There are no fixed role types (*shite*, *waki*, etc.); 3. *Kumiodori* costuming is based on Ryukyuan courtly dress, most notably *bingata*; 4. The use of the *sanshin* and focus on melodic song rather than abstract percussive textures; 5. The use of *ryūka* (indigenous poems) and Ryūkyūan prosodic patterns based on 8 and 6 mora lines, in addition to Japanese patterns based on 7 and 5 mora lines; 6. Less restrictive conventions regarding entrances and exits; 7. The use of clappers (*taku*) and fixed poses (*mie*) influenced by *kabuki*, as well as stage mechanisms (*karakuri*) influenced by *bunraku*; and 8. A Confucian rather than a Buddhist ideological background (43-45).

⁴¹ Tamagusuku Chōkun himself visited Kagoshima five times and Edo twice, and is recorded as having seen multiple *nō* and kyōgen performances and possibly *kabuki* and *bunraku* performances (Yano 2003, 79). A skilled dancer, Chōkun performed both Ryūkyūan dances and *shimai* (*nō* performed without a mask or costume) for the Shimazu (88).

⁴² The historical connections between classical Ryūkyūan and Chinese performing arts are less clear; however, it is widely recorded that the scholarly families of Kumemura preserved Chinese musical traditions. In addition, the records of Xia Ziyang (夏子陽), a Chinese envoy dispatched to the Ryūkyū Kingdom in 1606, mention that he was entertained with performances of Chinese musical drama (Yano 2003, 60). Regarding the convention of using certain songs to signify emotional states, Wang compares the

use of the Ryūkyūan classical melody “Agarī bushi” (「東江節」) to signify lament in kumiodori with the use of the Chinese melodies “Ku huang tian” 「哭皇天」 and “Bei zheng gong” 「北正宮」 to signify lament in Chinese musical drama (1998, 302-303).

⁴³ Yano suggests that *kumiodori* may have adopted this mode of expression from the *nō* technique of performing without a mask (*hitamen nō*) (2003, 44).

⁴⁴ On the importance of *kata* in kumiodori, see Iha (1974b, 381-385).

⁴⁵ As argued by Steven Shapin, the notion that “good character” anchors the ability to govern and the search for reliable metrics of character often informs administrative practice in hierarchical societies (1994). In her studies on governance in the colonial Dutch East Indies, Ann Laura Stoler, for example, explains how “evaluations of internal comportment – evidence of integrity, reserve, and trustworthiness – generated and motivated the density of the colonial state’s archival production and bureaucratic labors ... Appeals to sacrifice, social empathy, family honor, and parental affections guided the rhetorical strategies of bureaucratic reports, both their credibility and the future advancement of their authors” (2008, 8).

⁴⁶ Zhu Zaiyu’s gestural taxonomy recalls Lefebvre’s observation that “gestural systems embody ideology and bind it to practice. Through gestures, ideology escapes from pure abstraction and performs actions” (1991, 215).

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that “Conversations with a Rustic Old Man” (*Suoweng pianyan* 囊翁片言) resembles Nakae’s “Dialogue with the Elder” (*Okina mondō* 翁問答) both in title and in content. In both works, a venerable elder explains the application of the principles of Zhu Xi Confucianism to everyday problems (cf. Smits 1999, 88-89; Shirane 2002, 354-358).

⁴⁸ The other “demoness” plays are *Kanawa* and *Aoi no Ue* (Klein 1991, 293).

⁴⁹ Interestingly, the conservative Ōta Chōfu recognizes *Shūshin kane’iri*’s potentially transgressive overtones, writing that “[*Shūshin kane’iri*] could be misinterpreted as the kind of work that should draw the eyes of the police, however, after a number of clashes between the woman’s passion and obsession and the upright man’s intellect, he conclusively refuses her” (1974, 383).

⁵⁰ In the version of *Shūshin kane’iri* recorded by Iha, the chorus uses the melodies “Hwishi bushi,” “Shichishaku bushi,” and “San’yama bushi,” all of which typically accompany laments, including poems about “young women’s single-minded devotion to love” (Iha 1974b, 51-67; Foley and Ochner 2005, 28-29 ff. 10, 14).

⁵¹ One key primary source for information on Ryūkyūan personages is genealogical records or *kafu*, which provide curricula vitae for male members of aristocratic families. Unfortunately, due to his crime, Heshikiya Chōbin’s *kafu* was purged (Ikemiya 1982b, 158). The most extensive remaining record of Chōbin’s life is a passage in the *kafu* of his father, Neha-*pēchin* Chōbun (禰霸親雲上朝文, 1678–1706). According to this record Heshikiya Chōbin was Neha Chōbun’s first son, born in the eleventh month of the year 1700. His mother was Neha Chōbun’s concubine, daughter of the renowned scholar and poet Yara Seneki (屋良宣易, 1657–1729) (156). Because Neha Chōbun died at age 29 in 1706, it is thought that young Chōbin was raised by his mother’s family and mentored by Seneki (157). Gregory Smits has translated an excerpt of Neha Chōbun’s *kafu* pertaining to the Heshikiya-Tomoyose Incident: “... [Heshikiya Chōbin] conspired with Tomoyose [Anjō] and came up with an imprudent plot. They delivered a letter to the residence of the [Satsuma] inspector Kawanishi Hiraemon and, after that, mentioned various things about delivering another letter. They intended that the matter become a difficult problem for the country (*kokka*). Because they were evil and reprehensible, they were executed at Ajiminato on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month, 1734. The writings and emoluments of those involved in the incident were taken and are now gone” (1999, 125). A very similar account is given in the *kafu* of Tomoyose Anjō’s father, Takehara-*uekata* Ani (嵩原親方安依) (Ikemiya 1982b, 101-102).

⁵² In his partial translation of the same passage, Ueda Makoto translates *giri* as honor (“a play will be more moving ... when pathos is made to derive from its artistic structure focused on honor”) (1960, 111).

⁵³ One major difference between Chikamatsu’s and Chōbin’s romances is that Chōbin’s male protagonists are impoverished minor samurai rather than minor merchants. This is indicative of the fact that while Ryūkyūan literary romanticism was stylistically indebted to mainland Japanese literary romanticism, it served a very different social function. Mainland Japanese chōnin *bunka* can be correlated with the rise of

the urban merchant class in Edo and Kansai/Kamigata. A comparable shift in power dynamics did not take place in the concurrent Ryūkyū Kingdom. For Ryūkyūan literati like Heshikiya Chōbin, challenging established links between social status and moral virtue was probably less a response to political economic developments and more an act of personal or philosophical protest.

⁵⁴ Literally, “if things are dropped in the street, nobody will take them, and people will [feel safe to] leave their doors open” (「君々たり、臣々たり、父々たり、子々たり、四民業を楽しんで路に落ちたるをひろはず關の戸を差さず」)(『弦声之卷』; cited in Wang 1998, 285). The saying “even if things are dropped in the street, nobody will take them” (conventionally spelled 道に遺たるを拾はず) is derived from a passage in the Warring States period Legalist text *Han Feizi* (韓非子) which praises the civic order of the state of Zheng (鄭) under the administration of Zichan (子産, d.522 BCE). Interestingly, the original passage also draws a connection between music, civic order, prosperity, and the rule of law: “Duke Jian said to Zichan, ‘(if) there is no joy in drinking wine, altars are not great, and bells, drums, flutes, and zithers do not sound, it is my affair; if the realm is not stable, the common people are not well-governed, and there is no harmony between farmers and warriors, this is your wrongdoing’ ... Zichan took his leave and administered for five years, and the country had no thieves or bandits, people would not take things dropped in the street, or pluck the peaches and dates shading the avenues, and tools and knives dropped in the street would be returned within a few days. For three years this did not change, and the people did not go hungry” (簡公謂子産曰:「飲酒不樂也、俎豆不大、鍾鼓竽瑟不鳴、寡人之事不一。國家不定、百姓不治、耕戰不輯睦、亦子之罪。」... 子産退而為政五年、國無盜賊、道不拾遺、桃棗蔭於街者莫有援也、錐刀遺道三日可反。三年不變、民無飢也。).

⁵⁵ 1 kan (貫) = 1000 momme (匁); 1 momme = 3750 milligrams.

⁵⁶ 1 kin (斤) = 160 momme (匁).

⁵⁷ Historians have identified Satsuma’s Tenpō Reform as an uncommon instance of a domain thinking outside the agrarian-coercive box and converting feudal power into mercantile power: rather than merely ramping up extraction, Zusho leveraged feudal authority in order to “tap the vast revenue basis of commerce by direct participation” (Sakihara 1971, 242). The Ryūkyū Kingdom, of course, had been doing just this for generations.

⁵⁸ Technically, as in Japan, peasants were considered bound to their land, however, beginning in 1680, the government permitted peasants to indenture themselves or family members in urban areas for periods of up to 10 years for the purpose of repaying debts (Sakihara 1971, 58).

⁵⁹ It should be noted that mortgage and indenture were widespread in mainland Japan during this period as well, and contributed to a similar increase in economic inequality within the peasant strata.

⁶⁰ Ooms describes rural elites in mainland Japan in similar terms: “Analytically speaking, one can refer to those who found themselves in this stratum as an objective class, because they monopolized either economic cum political power ... or political power only” (1996, 124). He goes on to observe that social status and economic class took shape reciprocally, with the latter gaining in importance as the economy modernized: while high social status remained the *de jure* font of legitimate local authority, “economic status, whether past or present, was always at issue in claims of political social status” (243). As Crawcour demonstrates, this process of class formation established the preconditions for capitalist modernization in Japan (1974). Following Ooms and Crawcour, one could argue that constructing a false antinomy between early modern Ryūkyūan village society and modern Okinawan society under Japanese rule obscures the actual structural and experiential characteristics of early modern village life, as well as the role these very characteristics played in the modernization process.

⁶¹ Because the *kyōdōtai* was also the object of regulatory codes, its disintegration also signaled the effective “obsolescence” of the feudal juridical system (Uehara 1977, 19-21).

⁶² Sai On’s policy of allowing samurai to take up farming had precedent in Satsuma, where samurai constituted a comparatively large percentage of the population. While samurai in most domains were subject to strict occupational restrictions, Satsuma’s rural samurai (*gōshi* 郷士) were allowed to do agricultural work (Sakai 1957, 369-371). Notably, the *yadui* were often allocated the most fecund land, yet were assessed in the lowest productivity category, resulting in lower taxes. To compensate, peasant villages on less arable land were rated in higher categories regardless of their actual productivity (Sakihara 1971,

92). As a result, the distribution of the tax burden among farmers of samurai and peasant descent was radically inequitable (Nishizato 1977, 193).

⁶³ Kublin identifies the Ryūkyū “controversy” as an exemplary demonstration of the Meiji Japanese state’s ability to assess the ways Western expansionism was transforming the political terrain of East Asia, and proactively adjust its own position to maximize benefit and minimize harm. China, unlike Japan, “failed to learn ... that the sovereignty which she claimed over the states in her peripheral areas would be respected just as long as she was able to defend them against aggression. She failed to realize that the handmaiden of Western aggression was Western law, in which tributary relations, based on cultural and commercial rather than political and juridical bonds, had no place” (1949, 230).

⁶⁴ This is known as the *sanshii (sansei) jiken* (贊成事件) or “collaboration incident.” It is important to remember that this kind of reactionary violence was not unique to Okinawa. The 1876 abolition of stipends in mainland Japan, for example, prompted samurai rebellions in Kumamoto, Chōshū, Akizuki, and eventually Satsuma (Jansen 2000, 369). Two years later, home minister Ōkubo Toshimichi was assassinated by former Satsuma samurai. In 1889, education minister Mori Arinori was stabbed by a right wing radical, and pro-Western foreign minister Ōkuma Shigenobu was severely wounded in a bombing orchestrated by ex-samurai of the Dark Ocean Society (*Gen’yōsha* 玄洋社).

⁶⁵ In 1879, Li Hongzhang asked visiting former United States president Ulysses S. Grant to arbitrate the division of the islands (*buntō* 分島); in October 1880, the Chinese Office of Foreign Affairs under Prince Gong (恭親王 [Aisin-Gioro Yixin 愛新覺羅奕訢]) proposed to Japanese special commissioner Shishido Tamaka that China would grant Japan trade privileges in exchange for sovereignty over Miyako and Yaeyama (Kublin 1949, 226-227). Shishido received the proposal favorably and pushed for formal negotiations in Beijing, however, the Chinese backed off due to sharp criticism by ministers Shen Baozhen (沈葆楨) and Zhang Zhidong (張之洞) (228). Matters were further complicated by the interference of the Ryūkyūan refugees, who clung to their hope for the re-conquest of Okinawa Island itself. On November 18, 1880, the Ryūkyūan crown prince’s tutor Rin Seikō committed suicide by sword in Beijing, leaving an eloquent letter equating the division of the islands with the death of the Ryūkyūan state. His colleague Shō Tokukō used this to effectively shame Li Hongzhang into abandoning the *buntō* proposal (Nishizato 2011, 22-24). Shishido sharply expressed his frustration and returned to Japan (Kublin 1949, 229).

⁶⁶ The practices associated with these institutions can also be understood via Raymond Williams’ less polemical figure of the residual cultural element, which “has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (1977, 122).

⁶⁷ Peasant uprisings, of course, were not unique to Okinawa. The Okinawan uprisings of the 1880s-90s can be compared to the 1876 Ise Rebellion, which was caused by fluctuations in the rice market. In 1875, rice had been worth 5.15 yen per koku; in 1876, the price dropped to 3.5 yen per koku. Because taxes were calculated according to the cash value of rice the previous year, peasants were forced to sell a larger percentage of their yield in order to meet their tax burden. A local official petitioned the prefectural authorities for a temporary tax reduction, but was denied. In response, tens of thousands of farmers rioted, destroying official buildings and the houses of officials; around 50,000 were arrested and severely punished (Vanoverbeke 2004, 38). In response to this and other incidents, the government lowered the tax rate to 2.5% and made provisions for further rate reduction during crop failures (Jansen 2000, 367).

⁶⁸ The Meiji state recognized 378 high-ranking aristocrats as “with stipend” (150). Between 1880 and 1881, the state monetized these aristocrats’ stipends, qualitatively transforming them from feudal landlords into a kind of state-supported rentier class (Naha Shishi Henshū Inkai 1974 vol. 2, 154). These cash stipends were continued until 1909; in 1910, they were commuted into bonds (as had been done in mainland Japan in 1876) (158). The Shō family received a 200,000 yen bond (bearing 10% interest) – a ‘severance package’ significantly more generous than most mainland daimyo had received (147). One aim of the government’s approach to the “disposition of stipends” was essentially to buy the former ruling class’ loyalty, or at least their acquiescence. A secondary aim was to fiscally divorce them from the land itself and render them dependent on the central government (151).

⁶⁹ Many aristocrats who had in fact received stipends under the Ryūkyūan government were determined by the Meiji government to be “without stipend.” This included former envoys to China and their retinues (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 164). It also included ‘tenured’ and/or pensioned court employees, who in many cases had served for years for little or no pay in order to reach their positions (163). The prefectural office retained some of these former bureaucrats as employees, but terminated the majority. Others quit their positions in protest at the kingdom’s annexation (169). Immediately after annexation, the prefectural office sent a petition to the central government asking for assistance funds for former court employees, but this petition turned down; this resulted in intermittent demonstrations and partial strikes (164). In 1882, Governor Uesugi sent a second petition, emphasizing the harm that former court employees could do to the prefecture if they were not placated. The Home Ministry replied by pledging 70,000 yen to 772 unemployed former bureaucrats and 3,616 yen to 152 former envoys to China (164-165). On a person by person level, however, this did not come out to much; former high level employees who were owed thousands of yen often received 400–500 yen, while former low-level employees received as little as 5–6 yen each (165). For the next several years, these former employees continued to receive compensation, however, in 1884, it was decided they should receive a one-time payout of “capital to encourage their entrance into industry” (166). By contrast, the Meiji government continued to provide salaries for rural local officials of *jitōdai* rank and below (168). Former court employees protested their treatment consistently throughout the Meiji 10s and 20s. In 1897, for example, over 900 former court employees submitted a petition directly to the National Diet (167).

⁷⁰ The Meiji state’s decision to grant some low-level samurai “capital to encourage their entrance into industry” was not a systematic attempt to address the problem of underemployment, but merely a stopgap measure (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 168-169). Indeed, one could argue that the Meiji state’s greatest disservice to low-ranking samurai was not its termination of their stipends, but its failure to correct the structural imbalances that had rendered them economically superfluous in the first place.

⁷¹ Many of the first mainland Japanese merchants to arrive in Okinawa were civilian porters and purveyors who arrived with Matsuda Michiyuki’s military escort (Naha Shishi Henshū Iinkai 1974 vol. 2, 228). The majority of these civilians returned to the mainland as soon as allowed, however, a few decided to stay and establish themselves as itinerant salesmen. Around the same time, several enterprising merchants made the journey independently of official dispatch (228-229).

⁷² In his influential essay “Patterns of Individuation and the Case of Japan: A Conceptual Scheme,” Maruyama traces fundamental aspects of prewar Japanese ultranationalism to the social condition of atomized and alienated migrants: “employers, relying on the almost limitless number of available workers, were quite unprepared to maintain stable and continuous labor relations, and correspondingly, there was a high degree of migration of workers from one factory to another. This is not to be understood as social mobility in the modern world, for the laborers had not yet constituted a social ‘class,’ but existed only as a great multitude of tramps or displaced persons ... [the atomized laborer] bitterly suffers from the actual or imagined sense of uprootedness and the loss of norms of conduct (anomie) ... because he is concerned with escaping from loneliness and insecurity, he is inclined to identify himself totally with authoritarian leadership or to submerge himself into the mystical ‘whole’ expressed in such ideas as national community, eternal racial culture, and so on” (1965; cited in Nimura 1997, 42-44).

⁷³ The Naha City Museum of History hosts photographs of Teikokukan (<http://www.rekishi-archive.city.naha.okinawa.jp/archives/item3/14804>), Taishō Gekijō (<http://www.rekishi-archive.city.naha.okinawa.jp/archives/item3/33067>), and Asahi Gekijō (<http://www.rekishi-archive.city.naha.okinawa.jp/archives/item3/33071>).

⁷⁴ In her analysis of farce in Japanese *kyōgen*, Jacqueline Golay argues that *kyōgen* “belongs exclusively to the stage. Its lines are hardly more than guidelines and they possess little meaning outside of interpretation ... words are indissolubly linked to the particular forms of diction which only a trained person can emulate, and to the stage action and facial expressions which belong to *kyōgen* and *kyōgen* alone. *Kyōgen* is pure theater and can only be enjoyed as such” (1973, 139). The same can be said of early Okinawan comic theater.

⁷⁵ In humiliation/deception farce, “an unpleasant victim is exposed to their fate, without opportunity for retaliation”; in reversal farce, “the tables are turned on the original rebel or joker, allowing the victim

retaliation”; in equilibrium/quarrel farce, “the plot focuses upon a narrow, perpetual-motion kind of movement, in which two opposing forces wrestle each other literally or metaphorically, in a tug-of-war without resolution”; and in snowball farce, “all the characters are equally caught up as victims in a whirlwind of escalating sound and fury” (Davis 2003, 7-8).

⁷⁶ Wells and Davis suggest that “going through the *kyōgen* plays one by one, it is possible to produce a list of failings that Japanese audiences of the last six hundred years or so must have found psychologically convincing in liberating laughter” (2006, 140). These “conditions justifying comic punishment” include the “moral failings” of trickery, malice, cowardice, trouble-making, dishonesty, gullibility, stupidity, bullying, cruelty, ineptitude, greed, boasting, theft, pretension, jealousy, shrewishness, infidelity, ignorance, nagging, and drunkenness; the “physical failings” of blindness, ugliness, physical deformity, and being Chinese; and the “religious failings” of ritual defilement and being the King of Hell (141). A more extensive survey would be needed to determine what failings justify comic punishment in Okinawan farce.

⁷⁷ As Jameson notes, literary critical portrayals of farce tend to “oscillate between the repressive and the liberatory” (1981, 107). He dismisses such attempts at broad-spectrum genre criticism as idealist attempts to reconstruct “something like the generalized existential experience behind the individual texts” (107-108). Approaching the question from a functionalist perspective, James C. Scott observes that what little empirical data we have on farce “provides little or no support for catharsis through displacement” (1990, 187). He goes on to propose that “far from being a relief-valve taking the place of actual resistance, the discursive practices offstage sustain resistance in the same way in which the informal peer pressure of factory workers discourages any individual worker from exceeding work norms and becoming a rate-buster” (191).

⁷⁸ Ikemiya, for example, mentions a form of non-comic folk *kyōgen* in Yaeyama (*jīnu-kyōgin* 例の狂言), distinct from Yaeyaman comic *kyōgen* (*bara kyōgin* 笑わせ狂言) (291). Some early commercial performers may have been familiar with folk traditions such as this.

⁷⁹ On *kuchidate* in mainland Japanese *shinpa* performance around the same time, see M. Cody Poulton (2010, 22).

⁸⁰ Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics* exemplifies the metaphysical conception of beauty, which has permeated literary studies in Japan as thoroughly as in the West (as evidenced by Ikemiya’s idealist content-analysis of *Uyanma*). In brief, Hegel proposes that art consists of two intertwined aspects: “first, a content, an aim, a meaning; and secondly, the expression, appearance, and realization of this content. But, thirdly, both aspects are so penetrated by one another that the external, the particular, appears exclusively as a presentation of the inner. In the work of art nothing is there except what has an essential relation to the content and is an expression of it” (1975 [1842], 95). Thus, in the final instance, the “content” of fine art is nothing less than the self-objectivizing absolute spirit, manifest in the subject’s desire to achieve self-recognition through “an intuition of something that is his own doing” which he achieves by “altering external things whereon he impresses the seal of his inner being and in which he now finds again his own characteristics” (31). Hegel goes on to argue that transcendental pathos (in the Aristotelian sense of the mode of rhetoric *πάθος*) as “the proper center, the true domain, of art; the representation of it is what is chiefly effective in the work of art as well as in the spectator” (232). On the matter of tragic portrayals of love affairs across status boundaries, Hegel suggests that “if love is the *one* point of union, and does not also draw into itself the remaining scope of what a man has to experience in accordance with his spiritual education and the circumstances of his class, it remains empty and abstract, and touches only the sensuous side of life” (210). Moreover, because love is “only the *personal* feeling of the individual subject, and it is obviously not filled with the eternal interests and objective content of human existence,” Hegel regards it as inferior to the heroic passions as a topic for tragedy (566-567).

⁸¹ Kamo no Chōmei’s *Hōjōki*, for example, opens with one of the most well-known passages in Japanese literature: 「ゆく河の流れは絶えずして、しかも、もとの水にあらず、淀みに浮ぶうたかたは、かつ消えかつ結びて、久しくとどまりたる例なし。世中にある人と栖と、またかくの如し。」

⁸² 旧慣制度の改革、名子の廃止、宿引女廃止、御陰米の廃止、耕作仮筆者の廃止 (「一木書記官取調書」 cited in Shimajiri 1977, 69). Ichiki Kitokuro’s 1894 report to the Home Ministry estimated a population of around 400 officials, 3,000 indentured servants, and 31,600 peasants (65).

⁸³ Regarding Okinawan officials' arbitrary expropriation of property and labor, see Chapter II, Article 27 of the 1890 Meiji Constitution (cited above). Regarding the continually fluctuating per-capita tax paid in kind, Chapter VI, Article 62 states that "The imposition of a new tax or the modification of the rates (of an existing one) shall be determined by law" – namely, the 1873 land tax code, which established fixed rates based on land value rather than production and paid in cash rather than kind (Marutschke 2005, 209).

⁸⁴ The low number of industrial laborers in Okinawa correlates to the low number of large factories: in 1928, for example, the prefectural office recorded twenty-seven workplaces with around 10 employees, twenty-one workplaces with 10-50 employees, two workplaces with 50-100 employees, and three workplaces with 100-200 employees (Taminato 1977, 170-171). Almost all workplaces with 50-200 employees were sugar refineries (171). Around 1928, the number of workplaces with around 10 employees nearly doubled, but the other statistics remained fairly stable (170). The average number of laborers per workplace was around 17.3 in 1921 and 16.7 in 1935 (171).

⁸⁵ Between 1872 and 1882, foreign sugar imports had increased from 1,690,000 yen to 5,737,000 yen. The Meiji state looked to Okinawa to offset this imbalance (Kaneshiro 1977, 115-116).

⁸⁶ In 1880, the prefectural office loaned sugar producers 69,869 yen and 32 rin (to be repaid in sugar). In 1885, former aristocrats borrowed 5,481 yen from the state to cultivate sugar on Kumejima. The next year, the Prefectural Office borrowed 3,800 yen from the central government to stimulate sugar production (Kaneshiro 1977, 115-119).

⁸⁷ In 1900, the state established the Taiwan Sugar Manufacture Company with 1,000,000 yen in capital; by 1906, it had constructed modern sugar processing facilities that surpassed those in Okinawa (Matsumura 2007, 175; 271).

⁸⁸ This leads Kaneshiro to deduce that the Meiji state's earlier program of loans and grants was motivated less by an altruistic interest in helping Okinawan sugar cultivators and more by macroeconomic interests (1977, 115).

⁸⁹ An 1898 *Ryūkyū Shimpō* article actually testifies directly to this: "Customarily, during the *abashibarē* festival, shops close and women go to the beaches or the fields to celebrate. Recently however, it seems as if fewer people have been attending the traditional celebrations and more people have been going to the theater instead" (May 31, 1898). Throughout the late Meiji period, similar articles appear which mention traditional early spring festivities being held in commercial theaters (*RS*, March 7, 1902; March 21, 1902; etc.). Similarly, in his memoirs, Majikina recalls that the third lunar month, a traditional festival month, was particularly lucrative for commercial theaters (1987, 474). It is probably no coincidence that the long-form tragic musical drama *Tomari Aka* is set during the third lunar month festivities.

⁹⁰ "Pistol Robbery" was likely based on the exploits of armed robber Shimizu Sadakichi, who was also the subject of one of the first Japanese-produced motion pictures (「ピストル強盗清水定吉」), while "The Sōma Incident" was likely based on the case of Sōma Tomotane, former daimyō of Sōma-Nakamura-han, who was committed to an asylum for mental illness by his family and briefly broken out by a former retainer. Both incidents were the subject of numerous scandal-mongering newspaper stories in their time.

⁹¹ As Poulton observes, a similar process occurred in mainland Japanese *shinpa*, which "did not predicate its identity on a clean break with tradition but attempted to assimilate Western cultural products within the context of extant Japanese expressive forms" (2010, 24).

⁹² It is worth noting that Meiji period Japanese rakugo performers such as Katsura Konan I (初代桂小南) and Tachibanaya Ensaburō III (三代目橘家圓三郎) also used multicolored spotlights to enhance their performances; it is possible that Okinawan performers picked up the idea while traveling in Japan.

⁹³ *Tomari Aka* was billed by various companies at various times as a historical drama (*shigeki*), a *kyōgen*, an "ancient Ryūkyūan event" (*Ryūkyū koji* 古事) and a "Ryūkyūan tragedy" (*Ryūkyū higeki* 琉球悲劇) (*RS*, April 7, 1907; March 14, 1909; etc.).

⁹⁴ The scenes marked by choral interludes are Umichiru's arrival at the festival (「しゅうらい節」), the beginning of Aka's vigil on the bridge (「伊計離節」), Aka's meeting with the nursemaid (「仲風節」), the lovers' tryst (「述懷節」), the delivery of Umichiru's final testament (「内泊節」), Aka's suicidal declaration of love (「述懷節」), and the final dedication by Umichiru's father (「子持節」).

⁹⁵ The irony in Ganeko's use of "Kwamuchā bushi" (「子持節」) recalls Chikamatsu Monzaemon's ironic mode of allusion: "The language is usually complex in [Chikamatsu's allusive] passages, with references that nearly always bear directly on one or another of the main themes flowing through the play. Sometimes the quotation, seen in its original context, suggests an ironic comment on the surface meaning" (Gerstle 2010, 29).

⁹⁶ Okinawan elites' modernizing efforts were not unique, but rather, paralleled similar locally led efforts in other peripheral areas of Japan; as Nakamura observes, "provincial versions of the case for industrialization were typically expressed as a mixture of nationalist sentiment and aspirations for local development" (2000, 202). According to Nakamura, Japan's first enterprise boom "was by no means limited to urban centers," but rather involved "initiatives undertaken in many provincial areas" (197). Prominent early Okinawan entrepreneurs include Shō Tai's son Shō Jun, Shō Tai's son-in-law Gonkū Chōi (護得久朝惟), royal branch family members Takamine Chōkyō (高嶺朝教) and Takamine Chōshin (高嶺朝申), and former royal steward Izena Chōboku (伊是名朝睦).

⁹⁷ In 1900, for example, several hundred rickshaw owners and operators in Shuri formed an association and successfully lobbied to have their trade group leader's salary reduced from six sen to three sen per month, while in 1912, smallholders and small producers protested the semi-coercive transfer land rights to the Okitai Kaisha (which was owned by the Shō family) (Taminato 1977, 172). In 1913 and 1916, a number of miners fled from the Yaeyama coal pit, presumably in protest of its wretched working conditions and notoriously poor pay. In 1917, drivers working for Okinawa Electric Company held a strike and ejected their manager from his office, and baggage handlers working for Okinawa Kidō held a strike. The same year, a selection of pro-labor writings were published in the prefecture under the title *Mabushiki hikari* (貧しき光).

⁹⁸ See, for example: *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, October 21, 1898; January 29, 1899; May 29, 1899; October 21, 1899; December 5, 1899; April 9, 1900; March 21, 1902; May 19, 1902; June 5, 1902; July 9, 1902; January 27, 1904; November 23, 1906; April 16, 1908; *Okinawa Mainichi Shimbun*, April 25, 1909; *RS*, July 7, 1909; July 8, 1909; August 15, 1909; September 27, 1909; December 5-10, 1909; January 11, 1910; July 28, 1910; *OMS*, July 28, 1910; *RS*, July 29, 1910; July 31, 1910; August 1, 1910; etc.

⁹⁹ Dana Masayuki compares *hajichi* to a map to a woman's life. A young girl would receive her first tattoo around age seven to ten, and additional tattoos to mark stages in her maturation. Sometimes, the *hajichi* was completed upon a woman's marriage; in other cases, additions were made upon the birth of her first child and/or when she reached the age of 60. Some say that *hajichi* custom began as a means of ensuring that Ryūkyūan women wouldn't flee to Japan; others say that they ensure a woman will rest in peace upon death, because tattoos evoke the concept of permanence and perpetuity (永世観念). Because *juri* (geisha) also have *hajichi*, some suggest that they were originally a sign of having reached sexual maturity (Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 1998, 349).

¹⁰⁰ Mark Metzler observes that the "beautiful customs" espoused by conservative reformers were often linked to patriarchal power structures, and that both progressive and conservative versions of lifestyle reform disproportionately targeted women (2004). Dana Masayuki confirms that this was the case in Okinawa as well: lifestyle reform targeted women and female-specific customs and practices more aggressively, often leveraging legal pressure as well as social pressure (Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 1998, 328-352). In 1886, for example, governor Ōsako declared *hajichi* hand-tattoos to be an evil custom and strongly urged that they be eliminated; when middle school students were surveyed in 1895 as to which customs the lifestyle reform movement should target, 74 out of 100 named hairstyles and 68 named *hajichi*. In 1898, 30 students of Shuri girls' high school went so far as to attempt to have their *hajichi* removed using chemicals (349).

¹⁰¹ The article also shows interesting parallels with earlier theater reform discourse in mainland Japan. Suematsu Kenchō's 1886 Society for the Improvement of Theater prospectus, for example, also derides contemporary theaters for targeting a lower class audience, as well as complaining about infrastructural issues such as overcrowding and congestion, poor seating arrangements, and shoddy staging (Fuhara 1965, 26-27).

¹⁰² During the 1890s-1900s, theaters capitalized on the attractiveness of young actors by having them walk

through town announcing upcoming shows, however, as literacy rates increased, this practice was gradually abandoned in favor of newspaper advertisement (*RS*, January 21, 1906).

¹⁰³ Cf. Prefectural Decree #25, “Rules for the Management of Theaters” (*Kenrei dai-nijūgōgō, Engekijō torishime kisoku* 県命第25号「演劇場取締規則」).

¹⁰⁴ The *Ryūkyū Shimpō*’s review, for example, features the following excerpt from a conversation between a recently-drafted youth and his mother: “Mother: ‘What are you doing just now?’ The young man is surprised by her voice. Youth: ‘Is that my mother? It’s just that I was thinking about how conscription was proclaimed by the imperial court and extended to Okinawa, and about how my health inspection went off without a hitch. Also, I was just chosen in the lottery – all of these things can be deemed gifts from my parents, and I am truly happy. Serving in the military is a duty to the nation, and for those born as men, fulfilling this duty to the nation is the single most important thing (in life); moreover, there are those who, no matter how much they want to fulfill their obligation in their hearts, cannot do so because of physical inadequacy; and there are those who squander the health and vigor their parents bestowed upon them in self-indulgence and contract sexually transmitted diseases, and then cannot serve their country; this is an unending disservice to one’s mother and father and to the imperial court. It must be truly deplorable for the poor mothers of those among us who scheme to evade service. Serving in the military – in particular going to war – fulfills one’s obligation to the nation, and also raises the good name of one’s house. However, if I go to serve in the military my mother will be left all alone, and when I think about this it tears my insides apart. Mother: ‘when I heard you had been drafted from the group of village youths milling about, it was poison to my heart, but the kind of person who thinks that way doesn’t truly love Okinawa!’ She urges him to go accept conscription. Youth: ‘I acknowledge these honorable words and my heart illuminates the heavens!’ He will go to serve” (April 6, 1900).

¹⁰⁵ Roberson, for example, describes how Fukuhara Chōki was investigated in 1941 for his use of the honorable appellation *gunjin* in his 1933 Okinawa folk song “Gunjin bushi” (“Soldier’s Song”) (2009, 689). Following postwar critics Arakawa Akira and Nakahodo Masanori, Roberson proposes that the song’s Okinawan language lyrics and the “characteristic sadness in the *sanshin*-based music” can be interpreted as reflections of Okinawan “ambivalence” toward conscription (690).

¹⁰⁶ Matsumura argues that “Okinawa’s condition in the post-World War I period was simply a regional inflection of Japan’s interwar experience ... Just as the postwar period revealed the truly global nature of the world capitalist system and the embeddedness of the Japanese economy in it, it also showed the inextricable relationship that Okinawa had to the rest of the world as a monocultural producer of a global commodity” (2007, 303).

¹⁰⁷ 「吾人は歴史によって押しつぶされる。」 (Iha 1993, 295).

¹⁰⁸ Chikamatsu establishes a precedent for this plot conceit. In *Yosaku from Tamba*, the character Shigenoi “must reject her long-lost son because of her *giri* to the princess she serves; if it is known that the princess’ governess has a son who is a horse driver, the princess will be disgraced” (Keene 1961, 34).

¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, the review also makes note of the fact that the theater was electrically lit, and mentions that entertainers from Nakamō were planning to tour Taiwan.

¹¹⁰ Ikemiya speculates that another possible source of inspiration was an abridged translation of Verdi’s *La Traviata* by Matsui Shōyō (1980, 395). This translation was performed at the Imperial Theater under the title *Tsubagi-hime* (「椿姫」) in 1911. A play called *Tsubagi-hime* was performed at Naka-za the same year, although since it was not reviewed we cannot be absolutely sure it was the same play (*OMS*, March 20, 1911).

¹¹¹ Incidentally, Yara-maruchi pond, where Iraha is said to have been inspired to create *Okuyama no botan*, is the site of a well-known giant serpent legend (大蛇伝説) that closely resembles the plot of *Kōkō no maki*.

¹¹² 「露と落ち 露と消えにし 我が身かな 浪速のことも 夢のまた夢」.

¹¹³ In his preface to the 1979 Okinawa Times edition of the script, Majikina Yūkō notes that he created Iejima Handō-gwa while he was touring, which was necessary because of the poor economic climate in Naha (cited in Nakahodo 1994, 9-10). He attributes his inspiration for the Iejima Handō-gwa to the folk story “Kamado of Hentona,” which is included in the July 1919 publication *Okinawa-ken Kunigami-gun shi* (沖縄県国頭郡志) (11). In a 1957 interview with Shimabukuro Mitsukō (島袋光裕), however,

Majikina contradicts himself, asserting that a newspaper article on the tragic story of the “Iejima romance” motivated him to go to Iejima, where he was inspired to write the play (14). Nakahodo is skeptical of both stories, however, and suggests that Majikina’s actual inspiration was a historical drama entitled *Onna no shūnen: Iejima romansu* (「女の執念 伊江島ロマンス」), which was staged by Naka-za in 1916 (15; cf. *RS*, June 17, 1916; September 9, 1916). Majikina would almost certainly have heard about the Naka-za production. In 1916, the Ryūkyū Shimpō published a ranking of Okinawan actors in hopes of encouraging them to “polish their artistic competence” and advance the goal of theater reform – Takara Chōsei (多嘉良朝成), who played the Captain in Naka-za’s *Onna no shūnen: Iejima romansu*, was ranked first, while Majikina Yūkō was ranked third (Nakahodo 1994, 20-21). Given the atmosphere of high competition in the theater world at the time, actors would have taken this ranking quite seriously and kept abreast of each other’s performances. This being said, a relatively favorable Ryūkyū Shimpō review of Naka-za’s *Iejima romansu* does mention that it was inspired by an Asahi Shimbun article on the folk tale “Kamado of Hentona” – so it is possible that Majikina knew the story before Naka-za staged it (17-19).

¹¹⁴ The title of Naka-za’s *Iejima* narrative, *Onna no shūnen*, underscores this allusion by borrowing a kanji from *Shūshin kane’iri*.

¹¹⁵ 「在天願作比翼鳥、在地願為連理枝。天長地久有時盡、此恨綿綿無絕期。」

¹¹⁶ The figure of male and female mandarin ducks (*oshidori* 鴛鴦) appears in a number of classical Chinese and Japanese works. The most well known appearance of this image in English language literature is probably in the story “Oshidori” included in Lafcadio Hearn’s *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*. In Hearn’s “Oshidori,” the female duck dramatically kills herself after her male companion is killed. In the Noh play *Kinuta*, which also deals with the subject of female jealousy, Zeami uses the image of *oshidori* to evoke the estranged wife’s nostalgia for prior happiness, and by implication her frustration at her current separation from her husband (Savas 2008, 133). To Savas, this frustration is “sublimated into the suffering of the oppressed, whose lives are in the hands of those who are in power” (136).

¹¹⁷ “*Kotoba, kanazukai*” (「言葉、錢遣い」) (National Theatre Okinawa 2012, 5).

¹¹⁸ The Five Relationships are explained in the *Mengzi*: “between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity” (3A.4; Legge 1945, 630-631).

¹¹⁹ Notably, several prominent Okinawan elites, such as Ōta Chōfu and Oyadomari Kōei, publically criticized the Committee’s positions (Matsumura 2007, 324).

¹²⁰ It is worth noting here that Thomas Elsaesser describes melodrama as a genre is typified by “the element of interiorisation and personalisation of primarily ideological conflicts, together with the metaphorical interpretation of class conflict as sexual exploitation and rape” (1991, 71).

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