Wanting Memories

Histories, Remembrances and Sentiments Inscribed in Music and Dance of the Ogasawara Islands

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I, Masaya Shishikura, hereby declare that, except where otherwise acknowledged in the customary manner, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, this work is my own.

_____________________________________________

[Signature]

Masaya Shishikura
DEDICATION

To my beloved wife Monami
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While this thesis represents the culmination of my work, the end result constitutes the collective and collaborative efforts of many individuals in my life. Many Ogasawara Islanders have had close involvement in this thesis as their words appear throughout the written document as well as the photographs and videos. I extend my warmest gratitude to Edith Washington, Yamaguchi Manami, Tamura Midori and Sasaki Minako amongst the many others listed in the pages of this thesis. They are all in my memories and I express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of them. My extraordinary experiences as a student at the University of Hawai‘i greatly helped me to conduct this research. A warm and heartfelt mahalo to friends and teachers in my Hawai‘i ‘ohana, I remember you all. In particular, I recognise the long-term friendship of Made Mantle Hood and his contributions to this thesis. He was indeed another supervisor to me. Truly this is a product of the unique scholarly environment and mentorship at The Australian National University. I thank my supervisors: Stephen Wild, Tessa Morris-Suzuki and Paul D’Arcy, and my gratitude extends to other staff members and friends at ANU.
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores histories, remembrances and sentiments inscribed in music and dance of the Ogasawara Islands. Through a musical ethnography, the thesis illustrates the identity and dignity of this small, remote but extensively connected community in the Pacific. Since the first settlement of 1830, the islanders have suffered various hardships caused by colonialism, war and international politics. As a result, a fracturing of memories has occurred that created a deep sorrow in the islanders’ sentiments. However they hardly stand idle lamenting loss and absence while trying to console their sentiments through singing and dancing. The want of memories reveals a responsive sense of yearning, and calls for multiple forms of historical narratives, practices and performances. Music and dance can be vital media to recollect and retrieve things past, because they preserve various fragments of the past in song lyrics, bodily movements and dance choreographies. These fragmented memories are often judged as ambiguous, incomplete and defective in conventional historiography. A diversity of Ogasawara musical activities appears to represent the fracturing of memories, but it actually provides an alternative view to see the islands beyond mere historical factuality, and enriches our historical consciousness, understandings and experiences towards collective remembrance. In this view from the frontier, the thesis recognises Ogasawara’s own memories that are associated with many other places and peoples, and affirms its identity and dignity beyond imagined boundaries of border, nation and ethnicity.
NOTES ON STYLE, TRANSLATION AND VISUAL IMAGES

This thesis applies the Hepburn style of Romanization with few exceptions, such as Japanese names. I spell Japanese names as they appear on my ethics clearance forms or other sources indicated by each individual, and in order of family name and given name (as in the normal Japanese custom). Following the islands’ custom, I often call the Ogasawara Islanders with their first names (though this is rather unusual on mainland Japan). Other than noted, all translations and musical transcriptions are my own. Also I provide sources of visual images if they are not my own. Photo courtesy includes Edith Washington (Washington), Ogasawara Aisaku (Ogasawara), Tomita Masuo (Tomita), Sasaki Minako (Sasaki), Tamura Midori (Tamura) and Tsuji Tomoe (Tsuji). I express my sincere gratitude to the contributors of the images. All footage of the films is my own.
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