

The text opens with an overview of the recent study of islands, which has shifted the conception of islands to “places of cultural contact, rather than isolation”, leading the author to locate the “island identity” of Yaeyama “within the context of its long history of cultural and political relationships”. The text is structured in two sections. The first, chapters 2 to 6, presents an in-depth musical ethnography of local Yaeyaman traditions in their traditional contexts. Chapters 2 and 4 are analysis chapters, focusing on song and dance, and ritual music respectively. These provide an excellent overview of the construction of Yaeyaman music and its relationship to the Ryūkyū court and to Chinese traditions and notation systems. Musical analysis is central to these chapters and deals with complex vocal traditions with minute variations in pitch which are difficult to capture in transcription but are supported by the inclusion of video examples on the accompanying website, a very helpful addition. Chapter 5 explores the social organization of Yaeyaman music, and chapter 6 focuses on a single song in the Yaeyaman repertory, the *Tubarāma*, a famous Yaeyaman song that connects to local geography and the discourse of Yaeyaman history, society and politics. In this chapter the author brings to the forefront discussion of Yaeyaman feelings towards American occupation and their subsequent reunification with Japan, taking the *Tubarāma* as a metaphor for the struggles which the Yaeyamans face in reconciling themselves to the turbulent events of the past century and their uncertain present in which a sense of local resistance emerges against the “Age of Yamato [where] we are dragged/Everything has been turned upside down”, as mainland Japanese companies buy up land for tourist development projects.

The second section of the book lies in the concluding chapter, which moves away from Yaeyama towards an analysis of the roots of the Okinawan music boom, situating it within the context of the emergence of a distinctive Japanese World Music (*wārudo myūjikkū*) genre and exploring the contribution of Yaeyaman musicians to the boom.

This thoughtful text engages fully with both the Japanese and Western literature and includes a comprehensive discography which is a useful introduction to both Yaeyaman traditions and some of the popular music traditions which form part of the Okinawan music boom.

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TERENCE LANCASHIRE:

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Over the many decades of his career Honda Yasuji (1906–2001), a leading scholar of *minzoku geinō*, the Japanese Folk Performing Arts, developed and refined a highly influential classification system. This system has dominated indigenous and foreign approaches to the study of Japan’s folk performing arts. It continues to form the backbone of encyclopaedic and dictionary definitions of the Folk Performing Arts and is the system underpinning *minzoku geinō* classification in the *bunkazai hogo hō*, the national Cultural Properties Protection Law. While

politicians in the Ministry of Culture continue to champion Honda's system, it has long been recognized in Japanese academic circles that there are problems with the system and its terminology, and the death of Honda Yasuji has liberated debate, paving the way for new conceptual approaches to *minzoku geinō*. The opening chapter of Lancashire's timely volume captures this debate, tracing developments that have taken place since Barbara Thornbury's seminal 1997 English introduction to *minzoku geinō*, *The Folk Performing Arts: Traditional Culture in Contemporary Japan*. Lancashire's text opens with an overview of Honda's system and introduces some of the new approaches that are emerging, such as the classification systems developed by Misumi Haruo and Arai Tsuneyasu. Honda's classification system groups the folk performing arts into five main types: *kagura* (ritual dance, music and drama in shrines); *dengaku* (music of the field); *furyū* (ornamentally dressed dance groups); *katarimono/shufukugei* (oral narratives and entertainments of celebrations); and entertainment of foreign derivation/stage entertainments. In the opening chapter, Lancashire considers the shortcomings of Honda's system, particularly those relating to the *kagura* ("plays for the gods"), his area of research expertise. Honda's system operates by selecting "what he considers to be the central characteristic of a given *kagura* [use of hand-held objects; boiling water rites; lion dances etc], making it the diagnostic feature". However, as many *kagura* share more than one type of these characteristics and some of the historical distinctions that Honda makes between categories of *kagura* have no real basis, Honda's system does not work for many forms of *kagura*.

Herein lies a difficulty with this opening theory chapter and with the chapters that follow. Having rightly raised the issue of the problems that dominate the research and funding of *minzoku geinō*, namely the weaknesses in Honda's classification system, the text continues to follow this system. Subsequent chapters are structured around Honda's system and the author does not provide a convincing argument as to what could be a better system. It is a complex problem but answers are beginning to emerge from cross-disciplinary research. With regard to *kagura*, for example, recent ritual and literary research by scholars such as Iwata Masaru and, more recently, Yamamoto Hiroko and Saitō Hideki, recognizes the centrality of the ritual, text and the practitioners to *kagura*, and by resituating the *kagura* within its ritual context have developed an approach which provides a far more satisfactory way in to this sacred performance than scholarship driven by Honda, which concentrates on the external aspects of its performance. By covering all the folk performing arts in this one volume, however, Lancashire is unable to go in to much depth about the classification and development of any one tradition and the result is a somewhat unsatisfactory overview that raises important questions for scholars of *minzoku geinō* without really directing us towards the research that could hold the answers.

The second half of the volume contains a directory of important folk performing arts and also an introduction to Japan's cultural property law. It is a useful directory, which includes dates and location of performance and a brief guide to and analysis of each event; it would serve as a helpful guide for those interested in viewing a live performance.

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