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# Incorporating an Okinawan Perspective into Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University

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I am so honored and grateful to have this opportunity to write about Okinawa Studies outside of Okinawa. This essay looks at how I have tried to include an Okinawan perspective into my work as a faculty member in the Asian American Studies Department in the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University (SFSU). My colleague and mentor who paved the way for me to teach here, Dr. Ben Kobashigawa, and I are also co-directors of the Edison Uno Institute for Nikkei and Uchinanchu Studies (EUNUS) at SFSU. It would have been ideal to write about Okinawa Studies here in the San Francisco Bay Area with Dr. Kobashigawa, but his packed schedule as a sought-after scholar, community leader, and administrator prevented him from joining me. His work says much about how Okinawan Studies in this particular context involves constant active engagement in both academia and local Japanese and Okinawan communities. What I write in words does not even say half as much as Dr. Kobashigawa does through his work.

## 1. A Particular Okinawan Perspective

I must first add the disclaimer that what I write here will be based on my own personal Okinawan perspective and describe how I have tried to incorporate it in my work here. My Okinawan perspective is a diasporic one that has been shaped by at least two layers of complexities. One layer comes from my connection to a homeland that was once “Ryukyu” before being forcibly incorporated into Japan as “Okinawa.” “Okinawa” again became “Ryukyu” under U.S. military occupation from 1945 to 1972. In 1972, “Ryukyu” was “returned” by the U.S. to Japan and once again became “Okinawa.” Consequently, any “Okinawan perspective” is based on the unstable discursive concept of “Okinawa.”

The other layer of complexity lies in the fact that “Okinawa” for diasporic Okinawans exists primarily in the realm of memory and discourse. Most diasporic Okinawans do not experience day-to-day life in Okinawa, and our conception of “Okinawa” is shaped by an assortment of accounts of Okinawa that include stories passed down by parents or grandparents, memories of trips to the homeland, academic writings, and media portrayals.

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Adding to those base layers of complexity, my personal Okinawan perspective has been shaped by actually living in Okinawa and Japan for nearly ten years as part of a quest to “find my roots.” One vehicle in my travels to search for my roots was *sanshin* music, which I was exposed to through my Nisei mother. Experiencing discrimination for being Okinawan in the Japanese immigrant community in Hawai’i, my mother suppressed her connections to Okinawa. Ironically, however, my mother lived in Okinawa for a year and a half because my father, another Okinawan Nisei, was stationed there after serving as a U.S. Army officer in the Korean War. My mother brought back a rejuvenated love for Okinawan culture that she had found in Okinawa. Consequently, my earliest memories are filled with stories of Okinawa and with Okinawan music and dance.

My exposure to the field of Ethnic Studies as an undergraduate at the University of Hawai’i led me to search for my roots through both academic study of Okinawan history and through my interest in Okinawan music. Consequently, my Okinawan perspective early on incorporated an Ethnic Studies outlook that was critical of oppressive structures based on racial, gender, and class hierarchies and encouraged actual participation in community struggles and learning Okinawan *sanshin* music.

My search for my roots led me to live, study, and work in Okinawa and Japan. I was at the University of the Ryukyus (UR) under an Okinawan Prefectural Government scholarship for descendants of overseas Okinawa immigrants in 1984–85. I stayed an extra year as a self-funded student to study Okinawan religion in the Anthropology Department at UR. During that time, I began studying Okinawan *sanshin* music.

I returned to Hawai’i in 1986 and completed an MA in sociology in 1989. In the same year, I went to Japan on a two-year Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship to do research on Okinawans in mainland Japan. During that time, I frequented the areas in Yokohama and Kawasaki where many Okinawans had settled to live and work to carry out my research, while continuing my study of Okinawan *sanshin* music. After my scholarship ended, I remained in Japan for four more years, teaching English and doing Japanese to English translations to support my family of two young children and a wife.

I eventually capped my academic study by obtaining a PhD in Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley in 2007. Almost at the same time that I entered the PhD program in 1995, I became involved in the San Francisco Okinawa Kenjin Kai (previously known as the Northern California Okinawa Kenjin Kai) as a member and officer. This long involvement in the local Okinawan community shaped many of my ideas that I expressed in my PhD dissertation on Okinawans in Hawai’i, entitled *The Okinawan Revival in Hawai’i: Contextualizing Culture and Identity Over Diasporic Time and Space*. Actual involvement in the Okinawan community in the San Francisco Bay Area enabled me to reflect further on how discourse and practices of Okinawan culture and identity are different between Hawai’i and other parts of the Okinawan diaspora. Also of crucial importance to my Okinawan perspective was my involvement with local activists who supported Okinawan resistance against the large U.S. military presence in Okinawa. This involvement began in earnest around 1996, when Okinawan women activists came

to the Bay Area in the wake of the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan girl by three American servicemen.

Around 2003, I started an Okinawan *sanshin* music group in the Bay Area called Genyukai Berkeley. In my role as a teacher and performer of Okinawan *sanshin* music through Genyukai Berkeley, my Okinawan perspective has been shaped by a constant engagement with issues related to authenticity and commodification of culture. For example, is the *sanshin* music I teach as a Sansei Okinawan in the Bay Area authentically Okinawan? Also, because most of my students and audiences of our performances are people without ancestral ties to Okinawa, am I contributing to the commodification of Okinawan *sanshin* music?

I now return to how I have tried to incorporate my Okinawan perspective into my work. Before moving on, however, I would like to briefly summarize what I have written up to now and to make it relevant to what I will subsequently write. First, my Okinawan perspective has a *passive* connection to the marginal conditions of a homeland that is at the mercy of the political, economic, and military currents of powerful empires such as China, Japan, and the U. S. as well as on diasporic conditions in which “Okinawa” exists only in memory and discourse. However, my personal Okinawan perspective is also a result of *active* choices and decisions. That is, while it could be said that my mother may have been “passive” in being born into the discrimination that she faced as an Okinawan and in going to Okinawa due to my father being drafted by the American military, she did choose to embrace Okinawan culture after having rejecting it. I also elected to embark on the long journey from Hawai’i to Okinawa, to Japan, and to the Bay Area chasing an elusive rainbow that leads to the illusory pot of gold that is my Okinawan roots. On this long journey, I have chosen to adopt and maintain the political outlook of the field of Ethnic Studies while continuing to study, teach, and perform Okinawan *sanshin* music. I have also had to make decisions regarding my interpretation and expression of Okinawan *sanshin* music while teaching it to and performing it for non-Okinawans. Last, but not the least in importance has been the active choice to incorporate Okinawan music into my academic work. This is a subject that I will talk about later.

I must proudly say that the field of Ethnic Studies has generally embraced the Okinawan perspective. Many of my Ethnic Studies colleagues at SFSU and elsewhere continue to swim against the flow of mainstream academic thought that still relies on un-problematized top-down perceptions. Consequently, the Okinawan perspective finds a secure place in Ethnic Studies discourses over colonization, oppression, discrimination, and diasporization. Further, because Ethnic Studies was founded on such principles as “social justice” and “self-determination”—incidentally, SFSU was the site of a massive 1968 student strike that forced the school administration to implement a College of Ethnic Studies in 1969—Okinawan struggles to preserve dignity and identity are readily appreciated in the field.

## 2. *Sanshin* in Ethnic Studies: *Tinsagu nu Hana* Pedagogy

I have been fortunate to be in a field of study in which I have been encouraged to be both a musician and an academic. I have never been a virtuoso *sanshin* performer, but mainly because of the lack of *sanshin* performers in the San Francisco Bay Area, during my graduate school years in the Ethnic Studies Department at UC Berkeley and now in the College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU, I have often been asked to perform at various Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies events and functions. At an academic conference in China in 2012, the former chair of the SFSU Asian American Studies Department, who had arranged for several of us faculty members to be invited, encouraged me to perform on the *sanshin* during my academic presentation. Last year, the chair of the AAS Department assigned me to teach a course on Japanese American Arts and Literature with the request that I incorporate performances of music, including *sanshin* music, in the curriculum.

I usually perform Okinawan *sanshin* in my classes in the beginning of the semester as a self-introduction for my students. A live *sanshin* performance is startling to most of my students, who have never heard anything like it before, especially by a professor in a university class. It is also imaginably disconcerting for some of the Asian American students to be reminded of their Asian-ness by a performance of an Asian music form in public. The song that I usually perform in my classes is *Tinsagu nu Hana* since it leads to my personal narrative of how the song was taught by my Issei grandmother to my Nisei mother. I include in the narrative my mother's complicated feelings, which combined the stigma of being a "dirty" Okinawan in the context of the Japanese immigrant community and the pride of having a uniquely profound culture. The stigma kept her from actually singing *Tinsagu nu Hana*, but the pride led her to preserve the memory of the song and eventually talk about it to me when I was a child. The narrative further includes an explanation of how the racial and ethnic movements of the 1960s and '70s, which led to the birth of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies, also inspired me to return to my roots through the *sanshin* and eventually recover *Tinsagu nu Hana*.

Reflecting the literal meaning of the song itself, which I will visit shortly, there are *countless* intended student learning outcomes of the *sanshin* performance and accompanying narrative of *Tinsagu nu Hana* besides the introduction of the distinctive music of Okinawa. One set of intended learning outcomes is related to the notion of how marginalized cultures and identities persistently survive in "analog" form as they travel the path of human agency. That is, the narrative of *Tinsagu nu Hana* in my family is one where the song did not travel through time and space in discreet and unchanged "digitalized" packets of information, but instead followed an erratic yet unbroken path over time and space. The "analog" signal may have been faint and "distorted," but it still continued because of the existence of *active agents*: the signaler and the receiver. Communication takes place across borders of space and time because the signaler intends to send a message and a

receiver intends to receive that message in whatever form it exists.

In the past several years, I have often performed a jazz-inflected version of *Tinsagu nu Hana* in classes (as well as in many other settings) with the well-known saxophonist/community activist/scholar Francis Wong. By performing a rendition of the song that is not “traditional,” “original,” or “authentic,” we further emphasize the notion of agency as we show that our performance involves creative interpretation and expression that requires active listening and feeling between musicians and intentions to cross borders of music styles, backgrounds, and perceptions.

This leads to another intended outcome, which is to learn that performances have a political dimension. One aspect of this political dimension is related to the genealogy that links both Francis Wong and me to the racial and ethnic movements of the 1960s and ‘70s. However, there is a different dimension to the politics of performance. *Tinsagu nu Hana* highlights how my grandmother and mother performed for the various disciplining “gazes” from the dominant national, racial, religious, class, and gender perspectives that they felt in their diasporic experiences. In the light of these gazes, my grandmother and mother performed as dutiful Japanese/American/female, but in private they maintained an identity and culture that did not necessarily conform. While my grandmother spoke Japanese in public and deftly concealed the small dark blue marks that she had etched illegally on her left knuckles as a young girl in defiance of the 1900 Japanese ban on the Okinawan custom of tattoos on women’s hands, she passed down *Tinsagu nu Hana* to my mother. My Nisei mother grew up feeling that being Okinawan meant that she was “dirty,” but she nonetheless kept the song alive in our family until it no longer had to be hidden. A corollary story that I tell is how my grandmother produced bootleg alcohol during Prohibition and sold it to help her family with seven children survive. I introduce this “unruly” side of diasporic history from an Okinawa perspective to my students, many of whom believe in the model minority stereotype of Asian Americans, which suggests that we have achieved “success” because of a propensity (that is assumed to be cultural and/or racially determined) for accepting our lot in life and doing what we are told.

The above intended student outcomes are based on the performance of *Tinsagu nu Hana*, but an important part of my pedagogical practice is the introduction my own literal interpretation of the *Tinsagu nu Hana*. As mentioned earlier, my intended student learning outcomes in introducing *Tinsagu nu Hana* to my students are countless. This is based on my interpretation of its first two verses, which make references to knowledge being unquantifiable:

*Tinsagunu hana ya*  
*Chimisachi ni sumiti*  
*Uyanu yuushi gutu ya*  
*Chimu ni sumiri*

Dye the tips of your fingernails  
With the petals of the *tinsagu* blossom  
Dye the teachings of your parents  
Onto your heart

*Tin nuburi bushi ya*  
*Yumiba yumarishiga*

If you tried, you could  
Count the stars in the sky

*Uya nu yushi gutu ya*  
*Yumi ya naran*

But you cannot count  
What your parents teach you

Notwithstanding the disciplining expectations to be “objective,” “value-free,” “neutral,” and “rational” that have been expressed to me both explicitly and implicitly by scholars, I say in the unruly tradition of my grandmother and mother that the most important aspect of the Okinawan perspective that I try to introduce into my work is an affective tie between knowledge and heart, or *chimu*. This connection is embodied by the line *Uyanu yuushi gutu ya chimu ni sumiri* (Dye the teachings of your parents onto your heart). The message that I choose to pass to my students is that I hope to inscribe my heartfelt words onto their hearts. In an age when educational advancement seems to depend almost entirely on how much students can memorize, it is important to emphasize that their worth cannot be determined merely by counting how many facts and formulas they can memorize and how well they can perform on a standardized test.

The third verse of *Tinsagu nu Hana* has always held an interesting lesson:

*Yuru harasu funi ya*  
*Ninufaa bushi miati*  
*Wan nacheeru uya ya*  
*Wan du miati*

A ship sailing at night  
Gets its bearings from the North Star  
My parents who gave me life  
Get their bearings from me

The words invert the simplified construction I had of my Okinawan heritage. While I had the internalized idea that East Asian cultures followed a “Confucian” hierarchy that placed primacy on being male and older, *Tinsagu nu Hana* uses the metaphor of the guiding star to represent the child, placing him or her—at least symbolically—in a higher position than that of the parents. This verse of *Tinsagu nu Hana* also confronts another issue of translating from one cultural context to another. While “*Wan nacheeru uya ya*” is translated as “My parents who gave me life,” the Okinawan word “*nacheeru*” is actually the verb for giving birth. Consequently, the “parent” in this verse is more likely the female parent rather than the male parent, and the ancestral line being referred to is probably matrilineal rather than patrilineal. Taken as a whole, this verse of *Tinsagu nu Hana* provides a richer personal interpretation of my construction of my self and invites students to delve deeper into their own construction of their selves while critiquing the ways in which that construction has been shaped by unquestioned assumptions.

The effectiveness of introducing the Okinawan perspective to my students is beyond the immediate purview of this essay. I do have students who express their understanding in their written work and conversations, but this is by no means an indication of how widespread and effective my intended message is. As many educators will attest, teaching is an uncertain voyage on which the maps we follow seem to be nothing more than interpretations of reality or even interpretations of interpretations. Again, most likely to the annoyance and possible ire of scholars who prefer to conceal subjectivity behind a veil of academically appropriate emotional detachment, I proclaim that in the absence of certainty, our guide is our heartfelt love and compassion for our students.

### 3. “Floating”

The metaphor of an uncertain voyage as expressed by “*Yuru harasu funi ya* (A ship sailing at night)” is an apt one for not only teaching but also in the general intellectual task of understanding, interpreting, and expressing the ever-changing “reality” of the Okinawan diaspora. This feeling of “floating” appears in other Okinawan songs.

As mentioned earlier, I was encouraged to perform Okinawan music at a conference at Wuyi University in Guangdong, China, to which several SFSU Asian American Studies faculty were invited in 2012. The song that I performed was *Nakafū Bushi*, which I had learned when I was living in Japan from 1989 to 1995. I learned it from Nadoyama Ken’ichi *sensei*, who had left Okinawa in the late 1960s to live in Kawasaki, an area near Tokyo in which many other Okinawans have settled since before World War II.

It is ironic that I learned *Nakafū Bushi* from another diaporic Okinawan in Japan and later performed it at a conference in China on the Chinese diaspora. However, it was my sincere intention to present the countless ironies of *Nakafū Bushi* in such an ironic setting. In the full session of the conference, I sat in front of the audience of mainly Chinese scholars with a smattering of international scholars and plucked out the intricate instrumental prelude to the song on a *sanshin*. Several hundred years ago, the Chinese brought the *san hsien* to Ryūkyū, where it evolved into the *sanshin* that I had brought to China via California. The instrumental prelude ended, and I began singing in the determined voice that Nadoyama *sensei* had taught me to use to break down the perceptual walls that stand between humans:

誠一つの浮世さめ  
のよで云言葉の逢ぬ置ちゅが

*Makutu hituchi nu, uchiyu sami*  
*Nuyudi ikutuba nu, awa n uchuga*

Is this not a floating world  
Of one sincerity?  
Why is it then, that what we say  
Does not come together?

As with my teaching, I have no clear idea of whether or not my intended message was conveyed to my audience. Further, I do not even know if my own interpretation of *Nakafū Bushi* is grounded in any truth. The narrative that I have constructed about *Nakafū Bushi* is based on the story of it being composed by a court musician at the request of the last Ryukyuan king, Sho Tai. Responding to the changes in East Asia sparked by the Opium Wars and the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the rapid rise of Japan as an economic, political, and military power, Sho Tai’s ministers argued intensely over what course Ryūkyū should follow. Troubled by the discord, Sho Tai wanted a song that was more philosophical than the love songs that characterized much of the classical court music of the time. The general interpretation of *Nakafū Bushi* that I have heard from various *sanshin* performers in the diaspora is that if people speak sincerely and have a



shared goal, even if their words may be mutually misunderstood, they will eventually come to an agreement.

Regardless of whether the above narrative and interpretation of *Nakafū Bushi* is reliable or not, the enigma of *Nakafū Bushi* is that it is actually a question followed by another question: *Is this not a floating world of one sincerity? Why is it then, that what we say does not come together?* The first line seems to be a rhetorical question that elicits a confirmation that sincerity<sup>1)</sup> is the most enduring quality in this impermanent world. The second line asks the profound question of why words fail us. For the most part, the aforementioned popular interpretation of the song seems apt, but it being composed as a double question before Japan's forced annexation Ryūkyū in 1879 begs a more complicated interpretation.

The period before forced annexation is widely referred to by Okinawans as *Tō no yu* (唐ぬ世), or the “Chinese world,” in reference to the Ryūkyū Kingdom's tributary relations with China since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The period after annexation up to 1945 has been called “*Yamatu nu yu* (大和ぬ世) and *Yamatu yu* (大和世),” or the Japanese world. The time of U. S. military rule over Okinawa is known as “*Amerika nu yu* (アメリカぬ世) and *Amerika yu* (アメリカ世),” or the American world. The U. S. “returned” Okinawa to Japan in 1972, but with the continued large presence of U. S. military bases in Okinawa, it is not entirely clear what *yu* it now exists in. To talk about an “Okinawan perspective” requires an examination of time and space through the concept of *yu*, which is part of the word *uchiyu* in *Nakafū Bushi*. Taking another risk at translating words from my complicated cultural heritage, *yu* could mean “world” since it is probably derived from the Japanese concept of *yo*, which is represented by the Chinese character for *shi*, or 世. Many Westerners are familiar with the pre-Meiji Era woodblock *ukiyo-e* or “floating world pictures” that have become representative Orientalized images of Japanese culture. *Yu* thus combines dimensions of both *space* and *time* since it also refers to era or generation. In the case of Okinawa, however, *yu* needs to be understood in the context of its relationship to the world orders imposed by China, Japan, and the U. S.

Interestingly, after he was forced to abdicate, Sho Tai is said to have composed the following poem:

戦世ん濟まち弥勒世んやがてい	<i>Ikusayu n sumachi, mirukuyu n yagati</i>
嘆くなよ臣下命どう宝	<i>Najiku na yo shinka, nuchi du takara</i>

*Ikusayu* (the world/era of war) will also end,  
*Mirukuyu* (the peaceful world/era of the Maitreya Buddha) follows soon after  
 Do not lament my dear subjects  
 For life is our treasure

Again, whether or not the poem was actually composed by Sho Tai is beyond my purview, but it does contain the uniquely Ryukyuan/Okinawan sense of time and space that is reflected in the use of the concept of *yu*, as in *Ikusayu* and *Mirukuyu*, as well as

concrete realization that any gains of an armed resurrection by the small Ryūkyū against the modern militaristic might of Meiji Japan would have to be weighed against the resulting bloodshed and destruction.

It seems safe to assume that *Nakafū Bushi* was composed before *Yamatuyu* was forced upon Ryūkyū. A thought-provoking question arises if we place *Nakafū Bushi* in the context of an impending *Yamatuyu*. By questioning the singularity of “sincerity” and evoking the imagery of a “floating world” (*Makutu hituchi nu, uchiyu sami*), and by interrogating language itself (*Nuyudi ikutuba nu, awa n uchuga*), could *Nakafū Bushi* have been a prescient Ryukyuan critique of concepts that burdened Okinawans in the *yu* that followed, such as “nation,” “race,” “identity,” “citizenship,” and “loyalty”? In the academic language that I acquired over a century later, I tag these concepts “floating signifiers.” They have been able to gain immense hold and power over us precisely because they are not rooted in anything concrete or fixed. The Japanese emperor or the notion of a homogeneous Japanese heritage and culture may serve as signifiers for the concept of “Japan,” but this whole system of thought floats on a myth that ignores a much longer history of “Japan” being a checkerboard of different languages, cultures, identities, and loyalties. It also conveniently ignores the force and violence used to erase differences. This force and violence are all too familiar to Koreans, Taiwanese, Ainu, and Okinawans as well as to other people in the realm of the Japanese emperor who did not necessarily fit into the mold of the concept of a “nation-state” of one flag, one culture, one language, and one emperor, which ironically is a “Western” construct.

The creation of a fixed notion of “Japan” largely mirrors and coincides with the development of “race” in the U. S. The notion of “race” biologically determining the superiority of whites over other groups has been long disproved. With the lack of any credible evidence of “race” being rooted in something biologically “given,” racism finds a home in social discourse that persistently retains and perpetuates racially charged meanings. For example, as shown by recent events surrounding the “Black Lives Matter” movement, “Black” is a signifier that both intentionally and unintentionally assigns connotations of being unintellectual, criminal, irrational, and violent. A Google image search using the key word “Asian” will result in a disproportionate amount of online photos of sexualized women with Japanese, Chinese, and Korean features. This version of “Asian,” to which Okinawans have been annexed into, clearly illustrates that there is a race, gender, and sexuality intertwine in shaping the way we are looked at and thus determines how we perform. My own performance in the “determined voice” of a classical Okinawan *sanshin* piece that has roots in the androcentric Ryukyuan court speaks volumes here. I perform in a manly singing voice in a music form that was developed almost exclusively by male elites of the past Ryukyuan court. My choosing to perform in this mode must be critically examined within masculine nation-state discourse that shapes how I have felt and performed my identity.

Okinawans have performed as “Japanese” as a way to survive the withering gaze of the Japanese nation-state by which they were forcibly embraced not long after *Nakafū*

*Bushi* was composed. Okinawans in the diaspora have danced on the edge of the knife by protecting our fragile status in overseas Japanese immigrant societies by performing as “Japanese” while performing as loyal residents or citizens of the country we happen to be in, marked by the floating signifier of “race.” The truth that I believe in is that many of us are aware that we are performing in “floating worlds” and that our survival depends on our performance. This has led us to be critical of such fixed terms as “Japan,” “Japanese,” “America,” and “American” because we have had enough collective experiences and memories of exclusion, oppression, and discrimination to remind us that they are floating signifiers not rooted in any fixed reality.

There is no doubt that our existence as “floating” people is filled with pain and suffering, but it has also put us in contact with other “floating” peoples. For example, the African and Okinawa diasporas meet in the Americas. They also meet in Okinawa itself since so many African American soldiers have been stationed at military bases there. I would like to finally end this essay by a conscious linking with that African diaspora.<sup>2)</sup> In his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois talks about a “double-consciousness,” which was a “peculiar sensation” characterized by a:

[S]ense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world what looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.<sup>3)</sup>

In introducing my particular, peculiar Okinawan perspective into Ethnic Studies, join in an ongoing struggle over the freedom to determine our own consciousness. Du Bois adds:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.

The struggle over consciousness that the unknown composer of *Nakafū Bushi* may have unwittingly foreseen continues. In this present floating world, I ask: How do we keep our multiple selves from being torn asunder and merge a better self? What is our message to the world?

## Notes

- 1) In the first line, I have translated *makutu* into the English word “sincerity,” which is an approximate translation for the Chinese character 誠 (*chéng* in modern Mandarin) that was used to represent *makutu* in the song. Possibly reflecting its origins in Confucian thought, which venerated social and familial propriety, the Chinese 誠 also has connotations of truth and honesty. “Sincerity” is also an approximate translation for the Japanese *makoto*, which is the likely origin of the Okinawan *makutu*. Perhaps an indication that 誠 was adopted in Japan’s warrior society, *makoto* also connotes faithfulness and devotion. It is ironic that I use the English word “sincerity,” which has roots in the Latin *sincerus* and means clean or pure since translating *makutu* is a messy business that reflects Okinawa’s complicated political and cultural history.

- 2) I would like to acknowledge that the initial idea to link our diasporas came from an old friend and colleague Eriko Ikehara. Mitzi Uehara Carter has also added much to this conversation during the years.
- 3) *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*, Ed. by Eric J. Sundquist, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 102.

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## 沖縄的視点からのエスニック・スタディーズ —サンフランシスコ州立大学における実践

ウェスリー・ウエウンテン

本論文は、筆者の沖縄系アメリカ人としての視点が、サンフランシスコ州立大学 (SFSU) のエスニック・スタディーズの研究と教育方法にどのように活かされているかという問いに答えることを目的としている。本論では、沖縄の周縁性および沖縄系ディアスポラのアイデンティティの多義性を考察すると同時に、SFSU の学生運動を契機として誕生して以来、人種、ジェンダー、階級をはじめとするあらゆる不平等の問題に対し、批判的な視点を提供し続けてきたエスニック・スタディーズという学問が置かれた学術的周縁性について論じる。エスニック・スタディーズという学問を批評的な視点から考えることによって、抑圧的な現実を生きて来た筆者自身の家族の生き残りや抵抗の歴史に関わる教育実践と研究を発展させることができると筆者は考える。さらに、筆者は教育や研究に沖縄の音楽の実践を取り入れることがあるが、このような実践を可能にしているのも、エスニック・スタディーズという研究分野、特に SFSU という教育機関にある革新性によるものであると考える。

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