

# Neo-Traditional Ensemble Drumming in the Amami Islands: Mapping New Performance Traditions

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## Abstract

This article maps neo-traditional drumming in the Amami islands. Over the past two to three decades, a number of ensemble drum groups have emerged throughout the Amami islands. These drum groups cover three main styles of drumming: *eisā*, *wadaiko* and *shimadaiko*. With influences from Okinawa, mainland Japan and Amami respectively, and acknowledging that cultural flows are sometimes more complex, such styles of performance have captured the Amamian imagination and have been adopted by many community and school groups alike. This article maps the breadth of such drumming by classifying the performance styles across the Amami islands, while also exploring ideas pertaining to how and why these new styles of performance have gained in popularity in the Amami context.

**Key words:** *chijin, eisā, shimadaiko, taiko, wadaiko*

## Introduction

An inter-island drum festival in the Amami islands (Amami-guntō) in the southwest of Japan was a well publicized and publically supported event that brought diverse ensemble drum groups from these islands together on an annual basis throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since its inaugural event in the year 2000, over a twelve-year period the Amami Taiko Matsuri (Amami Drum Festival) was held on a different island each year

(a festival was not held in 2012 or 2013).<sup>1</sup> Each of the islands of Amami Ōshima, Kikaijima, Okinoerabujima (also known as Okierabujima), Tokunoshima and Yoronjima (also known as Yoron-tō) have hosted the festival (Tables 1&2).<sup>2</sup> The existence of such a festival raises questions about its *raison d'être*. “Why is there a festival that celebrates ensemble drumming in Amami?” “What type of drumming is included in the festival?” “Why was the event initiated so recently?” and “Why is the event rotated around different islands?” While

Table 1. Amami Taiko Matsuri (Amami Drum Festival) (2000-2011).

Year	Island
2000	Kikaijima
2001	Tokunoshima
2002	Amami Ōshima
2003	Okinoerabujima
2004	Amami Ōshima
2005	Yoronjima
2006	Kikaijima
2007	Amami Ōshima
2008	Tokunoshima
2009	Amami Ōshima
2010	Kikaijima
2011	Tokunoshima

Table 2. Amami Taiko Matsuri held at Tokunoshima Town Cultural Center in 2008.

Island	City/District/Town	Group	Genre
Kyūshū <sup>1</sup>	Kagoshima-shi	Kagoshima Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Kikaijima	Kikai-chō	Kikaijima Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Kikaijima	Kikai-chō	Kodomo Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Amami Ōshima	Kasari-chiku	Amami Michi no Shimadaiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>
Amami Ōshima	Tatsugo-chō	Amami Ōshima Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Amami Ōshima	Setouchi-chō	Honohoshi Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>
Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko	<i>Eisā</i>
Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Yunnu Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	Tōgyū Daiko	<i>Eisā/Wadaiko</i>
Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	Mai Yū-kai	<i>Eisā</i>
Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Kuroshio Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>
Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Senkobō	<i>Wadaiko</i>
Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Kurogumi Daiko	<i>Eisā</i>
Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Nanshū Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>
Tokunoshima <sup>2</sup>	Isen-chō	Dansu Sutajio CORE	Dance

<sup>1</sup> Not in Amami, but Japan's third largest island. Amami is part of Kagoshima prefecture to the south of Kyūshū. A guest group from Kagoshima city visited the festival.

<sup>2</sup> This group is not a drum group, but a dance company from Tokunoshima.

1 One of the key organizers of the festival expressed that while the event was not held in 2012 or 2013, he hoped to hold further festivals in the future.

2 These islands represent the larger islands in Amami, and the ones that have neo-traditional drum groups (the only island with a drum group not to have hosted the festival is Kakeromajima, which has one *eisā* group based at an elementary/junior high school).

using such questions as the basis for undertaking research on ensemble drumming in this part of Japan, this article is a preliminary investigation that maps neo-traditional ensemble drumming in the Amami islands.

The article offers a broad approach and includes a number of drum groups that have not yet taken part in the festival, on one level showing the location of the main drum groups, and on another discussing cultural flows that are associated with them (i.e., roots and routes – cf. CLIFFORD 1997). In this article, the type of drumming identified for discussion has been labeled “neo-traditional” (cf. HARPER 1969, KUBIK 1974). This style of music, along with the use of “traditional” Japanese instruments (*wagakki*), gives the impression that the groups have a long history in Japan, when in actual fact they are recently invented traditions, or cultural transformations, the concept of which has been transmitted to, or conceived on, the Amami islands (cf. HOBBSAWM and RANGER 1983). One style of drumming, *shimadaiko* (“island drum” – referring to an instrument called *chijin*), has been culturally transformed in some contexts in Amami, while another two styles of drumming, *eisā* (with roots in Okinawa) and *wadaiko* (“Japanese drum”, with roots in “mainland” Japan [i.e., Japan’s largest islands of Honshū, Hokkaidō, Kyūshū and Shikoku]), have been transmitted to and adopted in Amami as part of contemporary cultural flows to the islands (cf. EISENTRAUT 2001). In this milieu, new Amamian culture is constructed and extends traditional styles of music or recontextualizes traditional instruments.

The drums studied in this article are part of the globalization paradigm (e.g., HANNERZ 1996, CLIFFORD 1997) and are located in “contact zones” (PRATT 1991). They offer a conduit for highlighting local, regional and national cultural flows and the fashioning of new culture. While not drawing directly from diffusionist ideas such as those offered by Japanese folklorist, Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), who focused on center and periphery connections where the periphery was seen as an earlier form of culture (see MORSE 1990: 164), this paper necessarily includes discussion of cultural transmission and degrees of cultural flows to, across and within the Amami islands:

From the late 1920s onward . . . his [Yanagita’s] approach shifted to one that defined difference increasingly as a product of time rather than space. The central areas of Japan now came to be seen as representing the most modern forms of Japanese society, and the periphery as containing remnants of more ancient linguistic and social structures (MORRIS-SUZUKI 1998: 31).

Rather than following Yanagita’s line of approach, this article shows that while the Amami islands are on the periphery of Japan and Kagoshima prefecture (Kagoshima city is about 400 km to the north of Amami), as well as bordering Okinawa, through a study of drumming on the islands, cultural transmission can be seen in connection with identity construction in this archipelagic context. This article builds on the work of TAKAHASHI (2004) on *eisā* on Okinoerabujima, whose research looked at the creation of new identity for this island; it extends music research on Amami more broadly (e.g., KYŪGAKKAI RENGŌ

AMAMI CHŌSA IINKAI 1982, NIHON HŌSŌ KYŌKAI 1989-1993, ATUMI 2002, THOMPSON 2008, 2013), which has often focused on *shimauta* (island song) (see UCHIDA 1977, 1983, 1989, YAMAMOTO 1980, SAKAI 1996, 2002a, 2002b, HAYWARD and KUWAHARA 2008a, 2008b, GILLAN 2012); and is the first paper to address new styles of drumming throughout the Amami islands (cf. JOHNSON and KUWAHARA forthcoming).

While contributing to the fields of island studies and ethnomusicology in terms of providing a contemporary ethnography of new drumming traditions in Amami, the theoretical orientation of this research also draws from human geography, anthropology and cultural studies. Mapping culture has long been a tool in the social sciences for showing the distribution of culture (i.e., culture areas) (e.g., KROEBER 1925, GELL 1985, NANDA and WARMS 2007, FERRARO and ANDREATTA 2010, KRIZ *et al.* 2010, ROBERTS 2012), and in this article the method is used to show the distribution of neo-traditional drum groups, while sometimes demarcating sub-political, cultural, ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Cultural flows are mapped as a way of showing distribution patterns and the location of drums, drum groups and styles of drumming. The article extends the mapping notion with a discussion of new performance traditions and the consolidation or construction of identity through certain types of drumming at cultural sites where cultural flows are at the core. As HALL (1996: 4) has commented, “we need to understand [identities] . . . as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies”. However, the present article is a preliminary investigation and acknowledges the need for further ethnographic research on the islands.

The idea of using mapping as a tool in music research has been articulated by many music scholars, from the early years of ethnomusicology, often through the classification of culture, and especially in comparative musicology and organology (the study of musical instruments) (e.g., HORNBOSTEL and SACHS 1914, FREEMAN and MERRIAM 1956, LOMAX 1968). More recently, COHEN (2012) has used conceptual mapping (or cultural mapping – cf. UNESCO 2013) as a way of analyzing maps drawn by her informants in order to understand “multiple relations” (p. 135) connected with music: genre, society, economics, history and sites. For Cohen, the maps are about movement and help show musical journeys or pathways and the “negotiation of boundaries” (p. 168) across “musical landscapes [that] are diverse and contested, multilayered and intersecting” (p. 169). Such an approach asks insiders to draw maps, although in this paper it is ethnographic or social mapping by the researchers – albeit based on insider cultural knowledge – that forms the basis of the visual representations, classifications and discussion (cf. LASHUA *et al.* 2010). In offering a series of maps and tables on neo-traditional drumming in Amami, the article presents a way of representing the location of specific drum types, as well as offering a discussion on cultural flows connected with these new traditions in Amamian culture.

The research is based on two key methods: ethnographic field research and secondary research. Some of the research was undertaken during ethnographic fieldwork in Amami in 2012, on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima. Most of the main drum groups on these two islands were studied, with knowledge about drum groups elsewhere in Amami being gained through key informants. On this occasion, drum groups were observed either in rehearsal

or performance, and informal and formal interviews were undertaken with key members of those groups. Secondary research has been undertaken since that field trip, especially through library research and by using internet materials (especially the websites of city, town and village offices, as well as schools and community drum ensembles).<sup>3</sup> One of the authors of this article, Kuwahara, is from Amami and regularly returns for research purposes. Further knowledge about the islands and its drum groups has been gained informally through key contacts and acquaintances.

The neo-traditional drum groups that are included for discussion represent the most active and visible ones in the Amami islands at the time of undertaking this research, and especially during the first decade of the twenty-first century. While the *eisā* and *wadaiko* drum traditions of Japan have received some scholarly attention elsewhere (e.g., NELSON 2008, ALASZEWSKA 2010), and also in international context (e.g., BENDER 2012), as LANCASHIRE (2011: 15) points out, *wadaiko*, or *kumidaiko* (ensemble drumming), “has yet to draw the attention of folklorists”. That is, in Japan in general, ensemble drum performance of a neo-traditional style has risen in popularity especially since the 1950s, and in particular after a performance by Oguchi Daihachi (1924-2008) on *wadaiko* at a festival of arts at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics, which influenced the birth of many similar groups in Japan and overseas (see OGUCHI 1987, 1993). In such a national context that experienced the growth of neo-traditional drumming more broadly, as well as the success of new styles of *eisā* in Okinawa, the development of new drum groups in Amami demands study. Just as FINNEGAN (1989) has pointed out in connection with the “hidden” musicians of an English town, the drum groups discussed in this article are foregrounded as a way of highlighting a phenomenon of contemporary Japanese culture in one archipelagic setting where traditions are created as a result of cultural flows and local transformation.

The original aim of the research was to document community groups, but numerous visibly active school groups (elementary, junior high school and high school levels) have been included because of their frequent engagement in performing to the wider community, often in a local setting. Just as community groups come and go depending on the circumstances of the players, so too do school groups. For the latter, while the inclusion of *eisā*, *wadaiko* and *shimadaiko* performance might sometimes help form part of the school curriculum, some schools have particularly active teachers of one or more of these performing arts, hence the increased awareness of their activities to the wider public. However, school teachers often move to different locations, and in the Amami islands are usually required to do so every three years, so a school with a drum group that is active for several years might soon become inactive as teachers move to another location. However, some teachers are able to work for longer periods at a specific school depending on the terms of their contract. Also, some drum groups might be one-off or short-lived projects, or be formed from youth groups for special occasions (e.g., China-chō Seinen Renraku Kyōgikai and Aikō-kai Kodomo Eisā-tai *eisā* groups on Okinoerabujima), in which case they have

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<sup>3</sup> The authors are not aware of any commercially available recordings of the drum groups studied in this paper, but some of the groups have received media coverage by appearing in local publicity videos or by posting recordings of their performances on websites such as YouTube.

not been included as primary groups for study in this paper.<sup>4</sup>

Following this introduction, the article divides into three parts. The first situates Amami as an archipelago within the Nansei islands (Nansei-shotō), Kagoshima prefecture and Japan. When considering the location and flows of drums to this island setting, it is important to understand not only the geography of the islands, but also their cultural and political history. The second part of the article defines the types of drums under study and addresses questions such as: What form do the drums have? and What performance genres are the drums used in? Drums are made and played in various ways, and in the Amami context there are drums that relate to similar instruments and practices elsewhere in the Nansei islands, as well as drums that are specific to this part of Japan. The third part of the article focuses on locating (mapping) Amami's neo-traditional ensemble drum groups. Where are the drums located in Amami? and Have any drums been transmitted to, within or from Amami? In this part of the article, the discussion shows the location and cultural flows of drums and drumming in this island setting. Some groups are not always as active as others, and the ones discussed in the article are representative of a snapshot of neo-traditional ensemble drumming in Amami in the early years of the twenty-first century.

### Situating Amami

The Nansei islands (Nansei-shotō; also called Ryūkyū islands [Ryūkyū-shotō]) to the southwest of Japan form an arc of about 90 islands over 1,400km long between Japan's third

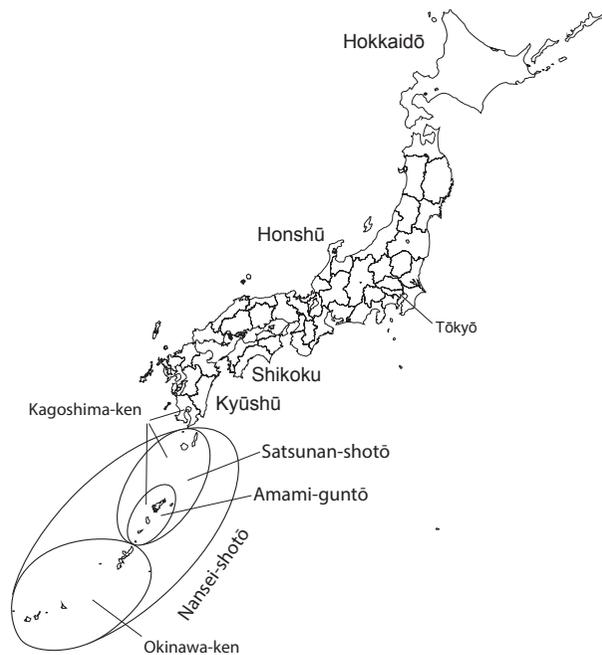


Fig. 1. Map of Japan. Adaptation of a map produced by SANKAKUKEI (2013).

<sup>4</sup> While this research did not include a survey of all schools in Amami, it has become apparent that this subject would well suit further study.



Fig. 2. The Nansei Islands. Adaptation of a map produced by SANKAKUKEI (2013).

largest island, Kyūshū, and the Asian mainland (via Taiwan) (Figs 1&2). This aquapelagic (HAYWARD 2012) region of Japan includes Japan's southernmost prefecture, Okinawa, which is a cluster of three main archipelagos (Okinawa-shotō, Miyako-shotō and Yaeyama-shotō) and several outlying islands, and part of Kagoshima prefecture, which includes several island groups within the Satsunan islands (Satsunan-shotō) (the prefecture also comprises part of southern Kyūshū): Amami-guntō, Tokara-rettō and Ōsumi-shotō. Occupying a central part of the Nansei islands, as does Okinawa-hontō (Okinawa island), the Amami islands exist as several distinct island, administrative and cultural entities.

There are eight main Amami islands: Amami Ōshima, Kakeromajima, Kikaijima, Okinoerabujima, Tokunoshima, Yoronjima, Ukejima and Yoroshima (Table 3). In terms of population, Amami Ōshima is the most populated, with the small islands of Ukejima and Yoroshima each having less than 200 people. There are several smaller unpopulated islands in the group.

The most southerly of the Amami islands, Yoronjima, is geographically very close to Okinawa-hontō, at just over 20 km away. The Amami islands are a part of Kagoshima prefecture, and, as shown in Table 3, there are several administrative units on the islands. The largest of these is Amami-shi (city), which is a part of the island of Amami Ōshima (the second largest island of the Nansei islands). The term Ōshima-gun (district) is used to group

Table 3. Amami Islands<sup>1</sup>.

Island	Administrative Unit <sup>2</sup>	Town/Village	Population	Size (km <sup>2</sup> )
Amami Ōshima	Amami-shi		45,688	308.15
	Ōshima-gun	Tatsugō-chō	6,161	82.08
		Yamato-son	1,647	89.60
		Unken-son	1,894	103.02
		Setouchi-chō	10,782 <sup>3</sup>	239.89 <sup>4</sup>
Kakeromajima		Setouchi-chō	1,547	77.39
Ukejima		Setouchi-chō	161	13.34
Yoroshima		Setouchi-chō	137	9.35
Kikaijima		Kikai-chō	7,657	56.94
Tokunoshima		Tokunoshima-chō	11,666	104.90
		Amagi-chō	6,532	84.80
		Isen-chō	7,114	62.70
Okinoerabujima		Wadamari-chō	6,992	40.37
		China-chō	6,522	53.31
Yoronjima		Yoron-chō	5,471	20.49

<sup>1</sup> Most recent data from respective town or village office website (as of 4 August, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Amami-shi (city) is an independent administrative entity within Kagoshima prefecture. Ōshima-gun (district) is term that refers to a collection of towns and villages in the Amami islands that each have an administrative sub-political office.

<sup>3,4</sup> Including all the islands in the town.

each of the other towns and villages in all the Amami islands. The divisions are important factors when mapping drum groups on the islands, especially in terms of the size of the population of each island, the distribution of the population across the administrative units, and the number of drum groups on each island or in each city, town or village.

The Amami islands occupy a somewhat ambiguous place in Japanese history. The division between the Amami islands and Okinawa (especially Okinawa-hontō) is one that in the present day divides two of Japan's neighbouring prefectures, Okinawa prefecture and Kagoshima prefecture, and historically relates to political allegiances. Kikaijima was seen as a western frontier in ancient Japan (NELSON 2006: 387), and also one of the outer islands when it was part of the Ryūkyū Kingdom (KERR 2000: 123). The Amami islands are known to have traded with the Yamato<sup>5</sup> rulers since the Nara period (NELSON 2006: 372-373), and while the islands were once controlled by local chiefs, they became part of the Ryūkyū Kingdom by the sixteenth century, which dominated most of the Nansei islands at this time. In 1609, however, the Amami islands became part of Satsuma, which dominated the southern part of Kyūshū and nearby islands. At this time, Satsuma also conquered the Ryūkyū Kingdom, although the Ryūkyū Kingdom continued to administer the south of the Nansei islands, with the Amami islands being controlled directly by the Satsuma clan (see further MATSUSHITA 1983).

The Nansei islands are far from being a single culture historically connected by sea

<sup>5</sup> The Yamato rulers were based in the Yamato province, which corresponds approximately to present-day Nara prefecture.

(and nowadays by air to some of the islands). The archipelago has a history that includes contested sovereignty, subjugation and occupation, and comprises many diverse island cultures, which sometimes show evidence of cultural flows within, between and across small and large distances in this part of Japan. As well as the cultural differences that are found on many of the Nansei islands (e.g., language/dialect and performing arts), the historical division between the Ryūkyū Kingdom and the southern Satsuma islands (i.e., Satsunan-shotō) contributed to the development of distinct cultural traits. For example, the *sanshin* (three-string lute) found in Okinawa is slightly different to the one found in Amami (see JOHNSON 2010); the *chijin* is predominant in Amami, especially in Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima (see GUNJI *et al.* 1980), while almost unknown in Okinawa; and traditional forms of the performing arts called *eisā* have cultural roots in Okinawa and not in Amami (see NELSON 2008).

In this context of the nation state, borderlands, peripheries and cultural distinction, there have been and still are numerous cultural flows between Amami and Okinawa to the south, and the Japanese mainland to the north. More recent cultural flows in the sphere of group drumming have shown how culture not only moves to local and distant regions, but also how music is adopted, transformed or localized in its new setting. The foregrounding of neo-traditional cultural forms also helps show how islanders use music as a way of expressing, consolidating and creating an island or Amamian identity in an age when Japan is celebrating local culture on the one hand and national identity on the other. Just as TAKAHASHI (2013: 383) notes that the island of Okinoerabujima in the Amami islands has a complex identity in terms of place and identity, so too do the other Amami islands: “Okinoerabu Island is geographically located in the Ryukyu archipelago and has borders overlapping multiple boundaries of ‘Okinawa/Amami’, ‘Ryukyu/Satsuma’, and ‘Uchina/Yamato [Okinawan/Japanese]’. Due to its unique circumstance, the islanders of Okinoerabu hold ambiguous and complex ethnic identity.”

### Defining Island Drums

Japan has a variety of drums (see further GUNJI and JOHNSON 2012). There is much historical evidence of drums of various types, and they are found in diverse genres and contexts, including Shintō ritual (Japan’s indigenous belief system), Buddhist ritual (transmitted to Japan by the sixth century), *gagaku* (court music dating from at least the eighth century), *nō* theater (dating from the fourteenth century), *kabuki* theater (dating from the early seventeenth century), and numerous folk performing arts (on such music styles see MALM [1959] 2000). In the Amami islands, the diversity of Japan’s drums is represented in a number of traditional, neo-traditional and contemporary genres.

At each of the Amami Drum Festivals, a variety of drum types has been presented (Table 2). As well as some non-Japanese styles that have been adopted in Japan, such as *djembe* (with African roots), which has received much interest in Japan in recent years and helps show a global cultural perspective, overall, three main types of drumming have been especially visible, each of which has showcased a type of neo-traditional performing art:

*eisā*, *wadaiko* and *shimadaiko*. In Amami, these drums have become symbols of place and identity, and offer a conduit for understanding the island cultures that make up the Amami archipelago. Indeed, as DAWE (2001: 220) has noted, “musical instruments are viewed as objects existing at the intersection of material, social and cultural worlds, as socially and culturally constructed, in metaphor and meaning, industry and commerce, and as active in the shaping of social and cultural life” (cf. DAWE 2003).

*Eisā* is a performing art involving music and dance in a colorful display of cultural symbols that has distinct roots in Okinawa, where it is predominant in traditional and neo-traditional forms; *wadaiko* means “Japanese drum”, and is a term that is often used interchangeably with *kumidaiko* (“ensemble drumming”) and refers to a style of group drumming that developed in mainland Japan from the 1950s, and popularized more widely from the 1960s (see BENDER 2012); and *shimadaiko* means “island drum” and refers to the Amami drum called *chijin*. While each style of drumming might be referred to by other names, the ones mentioned in this article are often used in the Amami islands (Table 4).

*Eisādaiko* (*eisā* drum) is a term used to refer to several types of drum found in the

Table 4. Drum types and definitions.

Drum Categories	Definition
<i>Eisādaiko</i>	Group of drum types
<i>Shimadaiko</i> ( <i>Chijin</i> )	Single drum type
<i>Wadaiko</i>	Ensemble drumming (often barrel drums)



Fig. 3. *Eisā*. Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko, Kagoshima city (photograph by Henry Johnson, 2012).

drum/dance/vocal/visual genre called *eisā* (Fig. 3). Three main types of drum are used in *eisā*: *eisā ōdaiko*, *eisā shimedaiko* and *pārankū*. *Eisā ōdaiko* (also called *eisā nagadō daiko*) are double-headed barrel drums with skins tacked onto the wooden body. The drums range from around 37 to 48 cm high (between the two drumheads) and about 18 to 45 cm wide. Makers sometimes classify the drum into three types according to size: small (*ko*: around 18 cm wide at the drum heads), medium (*chū*: around 30 cm wide) and large (*ō*: around 45 cm wide). Each type of drum is usually painted bright red and has a ring-handle on each side of the body (around the central part by the bulge). In connection with performance practice, unlike *wadaiko*, which are normally played with two wooden drumsticks (*bachī*), with the *eisā ōdaiko* the normal playing technique is with a single drumstick. With the lighter type of *eisā ōdaiko*, the player straps the drum around their body and dances while playing the drum, usually on one side only, and often chanting at the same time.

*Eisā shimedaiko* are very similar to *shimedaiko* as used elsewhere in Japan, except they are usually slightly shallower and lighter so they can be easily played while the performer holds the instrument and dances. This type of drum consists of a shallow barrel drum with a drumhead at each end, which are positioned by using cord tied between each head and pulled very tight to increase tension on the drumheads. The width of each drumhead is usually between 25 and 35 cm. As with the *eisā ōdaiko*, the body of the drum is often painted bright red, and the lacing on these drums is also often red. A single drum stick is used to strike the drum when the player is dancing, and sometimes the drum rests in a small stand on the floor when the player might use two drum sticks (as with the *shimedaiko* elsewhere in Japan).

*Pārankū* (also pronounced *pāranku*) are very small hand-held drums with a diameter of about 15 to 21 cm. The drum is usually about 4 cm high. The drum has a single skin covering and tacked onto a very shallow wooden body that is usually painted bright red. The underneath of the drum is almost “donut” shape, with a wide perimeter between the side of the drum and a large central opening (sound-hole). The large hole and wide perimeter make the drum easier to hold when playing and dancing. As with the other *eisā* drums, *pārankū* are held while playing and dancing, and are struck with a single wooden drumstick.

*Wadaiko* (literally “Japanese drum”) is a term used to define Japanese drums and a type of neo-traditional Japanese drum ensemble (Fig. 4). Several different types of drum are grouped together under the term *wadaiko*, but the most frequently used type of drum is a *nagadō daiko*, which is a double-headed barrel drum with skins tacked onto the wooden body (the same form of drum as the *eisā ōdaiko*, as discussed above). The diameter of each drumhead ranges from about 30 cm to 136 cm; the wooden body is usually varnished; and the instrument is played with two wooden drumsticks, sometimes on both sides of the drum by different players. There are a number of other drum types that are sometimes included in the *wadaiko* ensemble, including *shimedaiko* (double-headed barrel drum with skins either attached to a metal frame and then laced to the drum, or by a brace device) and *okedō daiko* (double headed cylindrical drum with skins attached to a metal frame and then laced to the wooden body – the body is usually very light so the drum can be carried), which is played using two wooden drum sticks. The width of the skins of the *okedō daiko* ranges



Fig. 4. *Wadaiko*. Kikaijima Daiko (photograph by Sueo Kuwahara, 2012).



Fig. 5. *Shimadaiko*. Amami Kōkō Kyōdo Geinō Bu “Tida nu Kwa” (photograph by Henry Johnson, 2012).

from around 36 cm to 75 cm for an instrument that could also be strapped around a player’s body, but some larger drums with a similar structure are also made and rest on a stand so that the drum heads are perpendicular to the ground. The drum is characterized by its skins, which overhang the body, as well as the lacing, which is often highly stylized in terms of the pattern formed around the drum. A drum with heads with a diameter of 48 cm would typically be attached to the instrument’s body that is around 52 cm long and 48 cm wide. Some other barrel drums are occasionally used, which differ primarily in terms of their height (e.g., *hiradaiko*).

The term *shimadaiko* (“island drum”) refers to the *chijin*, which is Amami’s own small drum (Fig. 5). The drum is similar in size and shape to the *shimedaiko* (i.e., slight barrel shape), although with the *chijin* the two skins slightly overhang the wooden body (they are sometimes attached to a metal ring), and are secured by crisscross lacing that passes between each skin and all around the body. The skins are made either of horse, goat or cow

hide, and wooden wedges are inserted all around the outside of the body, between the two skins, as a way of stretching the skins so they produce a higher pitch. The diameter of the drum is usually around 20 to 36 cm. In its traditional settings such as “Hachigatsu Odori” (“August Dance”), the *chijin* is played with a single wooden drum stick, and it is usually held and played while the player dances, although in *shimauta* (“island song”), which includes *sanshin* (three-string lute), and in the neo-traditional ensemble drum context, the drum is normally played with two drum sticks in a similar way to the *shimedaiko*. The *chijin* is considered a unique instrument to Amami, although similar types of instrument can be found elsewhere in Japan and nearby cultures (KAGOSHIMA-KEN REKISHI SHIRYŌ SENTĀ REIMEIKAN 2002). *Chijin* are also used in a number of other festivals and events in the Amami islands (e.g., cheerleading [*ōendan*] and rice-planting festivals [*taue matsuri*]) (cf. KUMADA 1989, 1991, KUMADA and TERAUCHI 1992, NISHIMOTO 2006).

### Locating Amami’s Neo-Traditional Drum Cultures

The neo-traditional drum ensembles of the Amami islands discussed in this part of the article have been identified based on performing groups that have been especially active over the past decade, particularly in the Amami Taiko Matsuri and other public performances. There are undoubtedly some drum groups that have not been mentioned in this discussion, as well as others that are no longer active, but the ones that are discussed represent visible cultures of group drumming in the Amami islands primarily in the first decade of the twentieth century. While exact information for some of the groups still needs to be verified, most were established over the past two or three decades, and some more recently, and thus represent a new trend in ensemble drumming in this part of Japan that has received very little scholarly attention.

The extent of neo-traditional ensemble drumming in Amami is shown in Table 5 and Fig. 6. In total, 40 such groups have been identified. Acknowledging that the life of drum groups may vary, and that some of the ones identified in this research may not be as active as others, the drum groups included in Table 5 help show the spread and extent of neo-tradition drumming in the Amami islands. Of these 40 groups, 17 are based at schools (seven elementary schools, one combined elementary and junior high school, three junior high schools, and six high schools),<sup>6</sup> one is for elementary school children in general (Kikaijima Kodomo Eisā), one is for children (Yō Shunkanekkwā Daiko), one is based at a *shōchū* (distilled liquor) factory (Kaiun Daiko), one is primarily for graduates of Okinoerabu High School (Buyū Beat) and 19 are for the wider community.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these neo-traditional groups, which are identified as more recent additions to the islands’ performing arts, there are some older performance traditions that sometimes

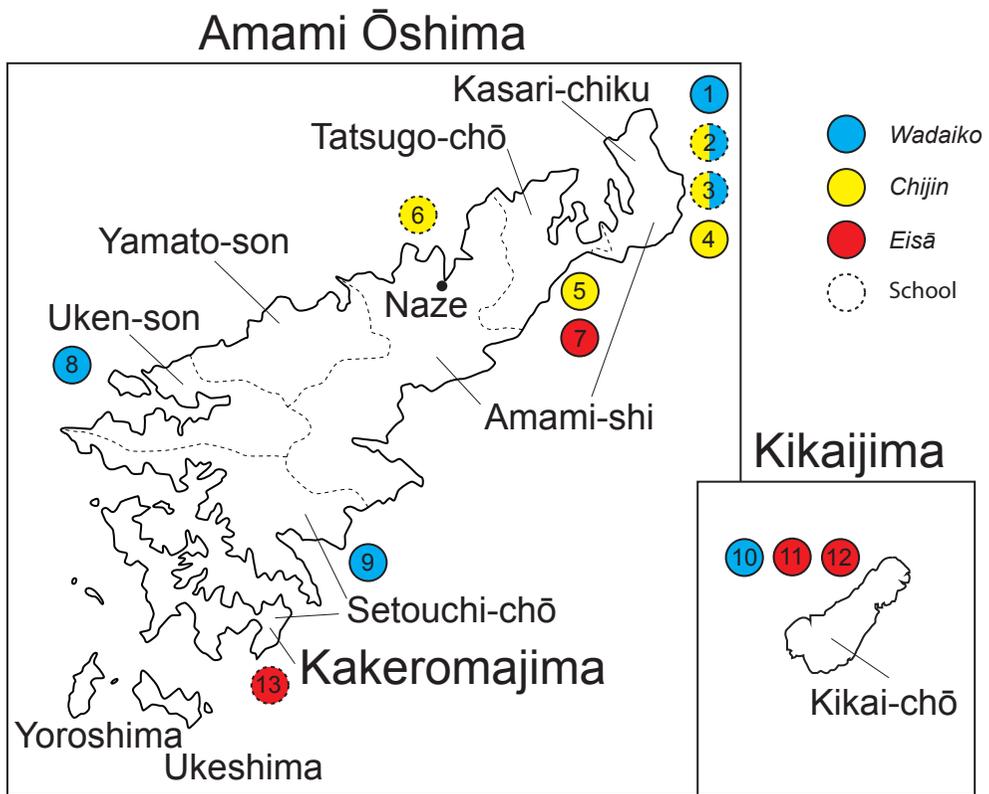
6 One of the high-school groups, Kohaku Daiko, actually comprises players from Tokunoshima’s three high schools: Tokunoshima Kōtō Gakkō, Tokunoshima Nōgyō Kōtō Gakkō and Shōnan Daini Kōtō Gakkō.

7 In addition to such neo-traditional drum groups, there are also hybrid groups such as Itsubu Shōgakkō’s (Itsubu Elementary School) “Saza Nami Bando” in Naze on Amami Ōshima, which includes *wadaiko*, *chijin* and *sanshin*. This group often uses drums to accompany *sanshin* playing.

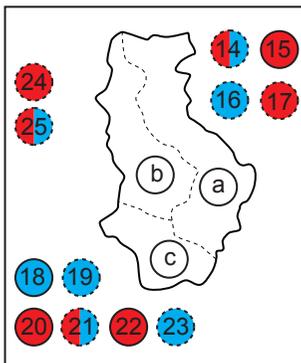
Table 5. Neo-traditional drum groups in the Amami Islands.

Map Ref.	Group/School Name	Genre	Island	Location (city [-shi], district [-chiku], town [-chō] village [-son])	Context
1	Amami Michi no Shimadaiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Amami Ōshima	Kasari-chiku	Community
(2) <sup>1</sup>	Ōshima Kitakō Taiko-bu	<i>Chijin/ Wadaiko</i>	Amami Ōshima	Kasari-chiku	High school
(3)	Setta Amandī Daiko	<i>Chijin/ Wadaiko</i>	Amami Ōshima	Kasari-chiku	Elementary school
4	Yō Shunkanekkwā Daiko	<i>Chijin</i>	Amami Ōshima	Kasari-chiku	Community children
5	Aranami Daiko	<i>Chijin</i>	Amami Ōshima	Tatsugo-chō	Community
(6)	Amami Kōkō Kyōdo Geinō Bu “Tida nu Kwa”	<i>Chijin</i>	Amami Ōshima	Amami-shi (Naze)	High school
7	Amami Ōshima Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Amami Ōshima	Tatsugo-chō	Community
8	Kaiun Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Amami Ōshima	Uken-son	<i>Shōchū</i> factory
9	Honohoshi Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Amami Ōshima	Setouchi-chō	Community
10	Kikaijima Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Kikaijima	Kikai-chō	Community
11	Kikaijima Kodomo Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Kikaijima	Kikai-chō	Elementary school children
12	Kikaijima Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Kikaijima	Kikai-chō	Community
(13)	Shodon Shō-Chū Gakkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Kakeromajima	Setouchi-chō	Elementary/Junior High school
14	Tōgyū Daiko	<i>Eisā/ Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	Community
15	Mai Yū-kai	<i>Eisā</i>	Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	Community
(16)	Shinrei Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	Elementary school
(17)	Tokunoshima Kōtō Kurakoshi Eisā Tai	<i>Eisā</i>	Tokunoshima	Tokunoshima-chō	High school
18	Kuroshio Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Community
(19)	Kohaku Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	High schools
20	Kurogumi Daiko	<i>Eisā</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Kindergarten to High school
(21)	Tiko Warabe	<i>Eisā/ Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Elementary school
22	Nanshū Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Community
(23)	Senkobō	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Isen-chō	Junior High school
(24)	Amagi Shōgakkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Tokunoshima	Amagi-chō	Elementary school
(25)	Amagi Chūgakkō	<i>Eisā/ Wadaiko</i>	Tokunoshima	Amagi-chō	Junior High school
26	Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Community
27	Erabu Yonunushi Uruma Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Community
(28)	Wadamari Shogakkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Elementary school
29	Nanshū Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Community
30	Buyū Beat	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	Wadamari-chō	Community (high school graduates)
31	Naruko DE Seryōsa	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	China-chō	Community
32	China-chō Eisā Aikō-kai	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	China-chō	Community
(33)	Okinoerabu Kōkō Eisā-tai	<i>Eisā</i>	Okinoerabujima	China-chō	High school
34	Yunnu Eisā	<i>Eisā</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Community
35	Yunnu Daiko	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Community
(36)	Yoron-chō Tachi Nama Shōgakkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Elementary school
(37)	Yoron-chō Tachi Yoron Shōgakkō	<i>Wadaiko</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Elementary school
(38)	Yoron-chō Tachi Yoron Chūgakkō	<i>Eisā/ Wadaiko</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Junior High school
(39)	Kagoshima Kenritsu Yoron Kōtōgakkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	High school
40	Yoron Bugenkō	<i>Eisā</i>	Yoronjima	Yoron-chō	Community

<sup>1</sup> Parenthesis indicates a school-based group.

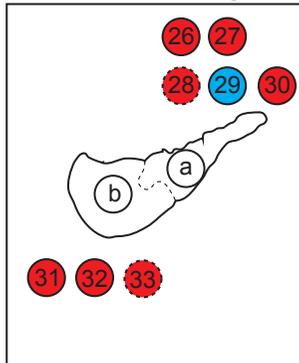


### Tokunoshima



- Ⓐ Tokunoshima-chō
- Ⓑ Amagi-chō
- Ⓒ Isen-chō

### Okinoerabujima



- Ⓐ Wadomari-chō
- Ⓑ China-chō

### Yoronjima

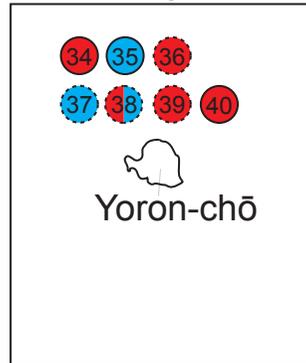


Fig. 6. Distribution of drum groups in the Amami islands based on Table 5.

include ensemble drumming. While drums such as *wadaiko* and *chijin* are found in a range of performing arts and performance contexts, their use in group drumming is outlined here in terms of new performance traditions that have been “invented” or transformed in the Amami islands over the past two or three decades (cf. HOBBSAWM and RANGER 1983). The distinction between “old” (e.g., “Hachigatsu Odori”) and “new” (e.g., *eisā* and *wadaiko*) performance contexts is sometimes broken down with the use of *chijin* in some of the more recently established drum groups. For example, while the *shimedaiko* is often used as a small type of drum in many *wadaiko* groups, several drum groups in Amami (especially on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima) include the *chijin* as an instrument that has a similar function to the *shimedaiko* in terms of instrument size and sound. Groups such as Amami Michi no Shimadaiko (on Amami Ōshima) and Kikaijima Daiko (on Kikaijima) follow such a practice. Furthermore, some groups use primarily *chijin* in a type of contemporary *chijin* ensemble, and sometimes include *wadaiko* in varying numbers to provide lower sounds (e.g., Ōshima Kitakō Taiko-bu, Setta Amandi Daiko, Amami Kōkō Kyōdo Geinō Bu “Tida nu Kwa” and Aranami Daiko – each located on Amami Ōshima).

*Eisā* is a style of ensemble drumming that has its roots in Okinawa (an island prefecture to the south of the Amami islands – see OKAZE 1992, JOHNSON 2008, NELSON 2008). In its “home” setting, *eisā* is known as a traditional performing art that combines drumming and dance, which is primarily performed during the Bon festival in the summer months.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this traditional style, since the 1950s, a modernized version of the genre was created that moved the performance style out of its ritualistic setting and into a different type of creative and usually secular context. Such was the popularity of this new form of *eisā* that it soon spread throughout the Ryūkyū islands, Nansei islands, Japan and beyond. While ritualistic *eisā* performances “are elegiac accounts of the past, narrating what could be called Ryūkyūan mythic time, a powerful fusion of time and space” (NELSON 2008: 188), the modern style of *eisā* “dealt with the past by creating something in the present” (NELSON 2008: 20). It is this modern type of *eisā* that has been transmitted to some of the Amami islands.

Contemporary *eisā* is dominated by several organizations. The largest of these is Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko, which is based in Okinawa and has numerous branches in the Nansei islands, around Japan and overseas. Another organization is Uruma Eisā, which also emanates from Okinawa, is much smaller than Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko, and has branches outside of Okinawa in Kagoshima (in the city and in the Satsunan islands) and Tōkyō. A further organization, Yoron Bugenkō, is much smaller still, and has just three branches: in Kantō (around Tōkyō), Kansai (around Ōsaka) and Yoronjima. The branch on Yoronjima was established in 2011 and is the most recent *eisā* group on the island.

Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko was founded in 1982 and has 47 branch groups around Japan and 11 overseas (RYŪKYŪ KOKU MATSURI DAIKO 2013). In the Nansei islands the organization has branches in Okinawa prefecture (eight branches on Okinawa island in Nago, Uruma, Okinawa, Nishihara, Yonabaru, Naha, Tomigusuku and Itoman; one in

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8 A Buddhist festival remembering ancestor spirits.

Miyako-shotō [Miyako islands]; and one on Ishigakijima in Yaeyama-shotō [Yaeyama islands]), one on Okinoerabujima (Okinoerabu island) and one on Tanegashima (Tanegashima island). It also has many branches throughout Japan and as far away as Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Argentina (some of the main destinations of an early Japanese diaspora).

The distribution of Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko in the Nansei islands is across five smaller archipelagos: Okinawa-shotō, Miyako-rettō, Yaeyama-shotō, Amami-guntō and Ōsumi-shotō. There is just one group belonging to this organization in the Amami islands, on Okinoerabujima, and this branch was established in 1999 (RYŪKYŪ KOKU MATSURI DAIKO 2013). The existence of a branch of Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko on Okinoerabujima is partly explained by the island's geographic proximity to Okinawa, at about 60 km (about 31 km from Yoronjima). This degree of geographic cultural influence and transmission is strengthened by the island having several other *eisā* performance groups: four community groups, one elementary school group, one high school group and one group that exists mostly for graduates of Okinoerabu Kōtō Gakkō (Okinoerabu High School).

The other Amami islands that have *eisā* groups are Tokunoshima, Amami Ōshima, Kikaijima, Kakeromajima and Yoronjima. In connection with geographic proximity of the Amami islands to Okinawa, the closest island, Yoronjima, which is just over 20 km away from Okinawa-hontō, has several *eisā* performance groups (two community groups and three school groups). There are eight *eisā* groups on Tokunoshima (three community groups and four school groups) (the island is just over 100 km from Okinawa), and a further group that is only for children up to high school. Further north, there is only one *eisā* organization on Amami Ōshima (around 175 km from Okinawa), which has sometimes had two rehearsal locations to include different performers (in Tatsugō-chō and Yamato-son), one group on Kakeromajima (an island administered as part of a town in Amami Ōshima), which is at a combined primary and junior high school, and two groups on Kikaijima (an organization that divides into two groups: adults and children, with the latter sometimes performing separately), which is an Amami island the furthest away from Okinawa (over 225 km). While Tokunoshima has several *eisā* groups, the number on Amami Ōshima is much fewer, especially when considering the difference in populations (Table 3). Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima are at the northern end of the Amami islands, and the smaller number of *eisā* groups on these islands might reflect the islands' relative distance from Okinawa, although Amami Ōshima has a much larger population than all the other Amami islands, and one might expect to see more *eisā* groups as a result of this.

Uruma Eisā is a much smaller organization in comparison to Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko. It was established in 1992 by Okinawan musicians and peace activist Kina Shōkichi (b. 1948) and currently has branches on Amami Ōshima (Amami Ōshima Uruma Eisā), Okinoerabujima (Erabu Yonunushi Uruma Eisā) and Kikaijima (Kikaijima Uruma Eisā and Kikaijima Kodomo Eisā). Like Ryūkyū Koku Matsuri Daiko, Uruma Eisā is based in Okinawa and has branches further afield, although only two outside the Nansei islands: one in Kagoshima city on Kyūshū, and one in Tōkyō, Japan's capital city on Honshū. The spread of Uruma Eisā to some of the other Nansei islands and elsewhere in Japan is explained in

part by Kina's performances in Okinoerabujima in 1993, when he promoted *eisā* (TAKAHASHI 2002, 2004), and his 1995 "Sabani Peace Connection" (Sabani Pīsu Konekushon), which was a sea journey of 1,400 km in a traditional Okinawan canoe (*sabani*) from Yonaguni island in Okinawa prefecture to Hiroshima city in Honshū (also visiting the other A-Bomb city of Nagasaki, and thus emphasizing the "peace connection" via sites of mass destruction) and calling at 23 islands on the way (see SATO 1996). Some Uruma *Eisā* groups were established as a result of key personnel being involved in one way or another in this peace movement. For example, the founder of Kikaijima Uruma *Eisā*, Sakae Tadanori, was deeply moved by the event and not only took up *eisā* as a result of this, but also established a branch organization on Kikaijima, which divides into one group for adults and another for children (SAKAE 2012). Also, along with the leader of Amami Michi no Shimadaiko, which is based in Amami Ōshima, Sakae was pivotal in helping to establish the Amami Taiko Matsuri (see JOHNSON and KUWAHARA forthcoming).<sup>9</sup>

A total of 24 *eisā* groups have been identified in the Amami islands. Of these, 10 are located at schools, and 14 are community groups, although sometimes having a specific type of membership. Most of the groups are located in the southern Amami islands (i.e., Yoronjima, Okinoerabujima and Tokunoshima), and the most populated island, Amami Ōshima (to the north of the archipelago), has just one *eisā* group. The geographic proximity of these southern islands to Okinawa helps explain the reason for some of these cultural flows, although historically there are many other types of Okinawan performing arts that have not been transmitted to the Amami islands (even traditional *eisā* is not practised in Amami). Another way of helping to understand the presence of neo-traditional *eisā* in Amami is that some Amamians, and especially those on islands that are close to Okinawa, may identify with Okinawa as part of a new Amamian identity that positions the Amami islands culturally closer to Okinawa than they have been in the recent past. Furthermore, contemporary cultural flows have much to do with the transmission of *eisā* to Amami in its modern-day form. After all, the genre is visually, audibly and physically dynamic and is one of a number of global performing arts that has attracted attention as part of a globalization of music styles. The presence of three *eisā* organizations also contributes to the dissemination of *eisā* within the Nansei islands and beyond. In a similar way to the transmission of tradition through music institutions as discussed by COHEN (2009), *eisā* organizations also transmit tradition, but in this context it is neo-traditional music through their social and cultural networks in Japan that help create real (i.e., local) and imagined communities (i.e., across sites and islands) (cf. ANDERSON [1983] 1991). Neo-traditional *eisā* performance is an adopted intercultural music/dance tradition in Amami that helps Amamians consolidate their island identity within the Nansei islands and Japan more broadly. The genre may have its roots in Okinawa, but has been adopted further afield, and especially in the islands close to Okinawa. The inbetweenness of Amami helps in the appropriation of this Okinawan-rooted/routed music genre, and, in this context, the notion of "community could be said to have

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<sup>9</sup> Four of the groups noted in Table 5 perform both *eisā* and *wadaiko*, although separately, and three of these groups are based at schools.

been generated by the music” (EISENTRAUT 2001: 102). That is, *eisā* has distinct Okinawan roots, and the performers who have adopted this performance genre in Amami are outwardly indexing Okinawa as a source culture to which they wish to identify and construct a sense of cultural affiliation as part of their musical identity. As KARTOMI (1981: 245) has commented, “the initial and sustaining impulse and impetus for musical transculturation is normally extramusical”.

There are a number of *wadaiko* groups in the Amami islands (school groups and non-school groups). While Okinoerabujima has mainly *eisā* groups and just one *wadaiko* group, which reflects the geographic proximity of the island to Okinawa (Yoronjima, which is even closer to Okinawa, actually has a mix of *eisā* groups and *wadaiko* groups), there are several *wadaiko* groups in the other Amami islands. The next island to the north after Okinoerabujima is Tokunoshima. There are seven *wadaiko* groups on Tokunoshima (five of these are at schools), three of which mix *eisā* and *wadaiko*, a practice that reflects the island’s location near to Okinawa and also to other influences from elsewhere in Japan. One community *wadaiko* group, Kuroshio Daiko, was established in 1990, and is named after the north-flowing ocean current that passes by the Nansei islands, hence adding a distinct sense of locality to the group. This group is typical of many other *wadaiko* groups in terms of its drums and performance practice. Another *wadaiko* group on the island, Kohaku Daiko, comprises students from the island’s three high schools, and shows the interest in *wadaiko* amongst islanders from an early age.

Further north still, in Amami Ōshima there are five main *wadaiko* groups, two of which especially mix *shimadaiko* (*chijin*) and *wadaiko*. The main *wadaiko* groups are located in three different parts of the island: northeast (Kasari-chiku [a district in Amami city]), southwest (Uken-son) and south (Setouchi-chō). There are no main *wadaiko* groups in the island’s main urban center, Naze, and the distribution of the *wadaiko* groups in other locations reflects the distribution of the island’s population and its geography. The oldest community *wadaiko* group on Amami Ōshima is Honohoshi Daiko, which is located in Setouchi-chō and dates from 1984. Amami Michi no Shimadaiko is a community group based in Kasari-chiku (Kasari district) and was founded in 1988 when it performed at the opening of the island’s new airport. The group primarily uses *wadaiko* barrel drums, but has several *chijin* and larger barrel drums that are tuned in the same way as *chijin* (i.e., wedge tuning). Kaiun Daiko was established in 2007 and is located in Uken-son (Uken village) and belongs to a *shōchū* (distilled liquor) factory, Amami Ōshima Kaiun Shuzō, where it performs at company and community events. In addition to these three main *wadaiko* groups, two other groups focus on *chijin* but also include several *wadaiko*. These groups, Ōshima Kitakō Taiko-bu and Setta Amandi Daiko are based in a high school and primary school respectively. The use of *chijin* in the school context – several other schools have *chijin* groups (discussed below) – is possibly explained by the size and cost of the instrument. The *chijin* is relatively small in comparison to *eisā* drums and *wadaiko*, and it is also less expensive than larger drums. In a school context, more drums can be purchased and more students can have access to them.

The geography of Amami Ōshima has much to do with the distribution of *wadaiko*

groups (JOHNSON and KUWAHARA 2013). In this part of Japan the term *shima* (“island”) is also sometimes used to refer to one’s hometown, so that there may be a notion of different “*shima*” (hometowns) on the same “*shima*” (island). As noted by Suwa, “in Japanese . . . the idea of *shima* always contains a double image: *shima* as a geographical feature and *shima* as a community. In Okinawa . . . *shima* was a political unit equivalent to a village and the term still retains such connotations there” (SUWA 2007: 7). On Amami Ōshima, the geography of the island is characterized by a rugged coastline with the central part of the island dominated by mountains. A narrow strip of land surrounds much of the island, and, in this context:

Rugged mountains and deep fjords offer thrilling scenery and meager subsistence for the 110,000 people who eke out a precarious livelihood from tiny valleys and crudely terraced mountainsides. Naze, the capital, contains about 34,000 people and one other large town has perhaps 10,000. The remainder dwell in tiny hamlets in isolated valleys and sheltered bays, often accessible only from the sea (HARING 1952: 255).

On Kikaijima, there is one *wadaiko* group, Kikaijima Daiko (the group includes a *chijin* where it is used in a similar way to a *shimedaiko*), which was established in 2006. This group and the island’s *eisā* groups, which were established in 1996, are prevalent during general island festivities.

There are at least 17 *wadaiko* groups in the Amami islands. Nine of these groups are located at schools, and eight are non-school groups. One of the non-school groups is located at a *shōchū* factory on Amami Ōshima and is not intended for wider community membership. There are more *wadaiko* groups toward the north of the Amami islands in Amami Ōshima and Tokunoshima (seven and five respectively), with the other islands having fewer *wadaiko* groups than *eisā* groups: Kikaijima (one group), Okinoerabujima (one group) and Yoronjima (three groups). The prevalence of *wadaiko* groups to the north of the Amami islands reflects the transmission of the genre from the Japanese mainland (there are also a number of *wadaiko* groups on Okinawa, which holds an annual *wadaiko* festival),<sup>10</sup> and the cultural flows of *eisā* from the south have influenced the number of groups of this type of drumming in the south of the Amami islands. Several of the *wadaiko* groups include *chijin* and *wadaiko*, and these groups are on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima, which reflects the importance of the *chijin* on these islands.

There are three main *shimadaiko* (*chijin*) drum groups on Amami Ōshima, with another two groups, as noted above, that mix *chijin* with *wadaiko*. The three main *shimadaiko* groups are Amami Kōkō Kyōdo Geinō Bu “Tida nu Kwa”, Aranami Daiko and Yō Shunkanekwa Daiko. The first is located in Naze (the main urban center in Amami city) at a high school, and has been active for about the past 15 years; the second is a community

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10 The Nihon Taiko Renmei (Taiko Federation of Japan) does not list any *taiko* groups in Amami, but includes five groups in Okinawa (NIHON TAIKO RENMEI 2013). The Nihon Taiko Kyōkai (Japanese Taiko Association) has no group listings for Amami or Okinawa (NIHON TAIKO KYŌKAI 2013).

group based in Tatsugo-chō and was established in 2004; and the third is a children's group based in Kasari-chiku. *Shimadaiko* are distinct to the Amami islands. Moreover, they are known especially on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima where they are used as the main accompanying instrument of some traditional and neo-traditional ensembles, and some *wadaiko* groups incorporate the instrument as an alternative to the *shimedaiko*, which is about the same shape and size.

The distribution of *chijin* within the Amami islands shows the instrument as an emblem of identity for some islanders, especially on Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima. For example, the Shiritsu Amami Hakubutsukan (Amami City Museum) in Naze on Amami Ōshima has several *chijin* that help show the importance of the instrument as part of the island's cultural heritage. Outside the museum there are several ornamental stone instruments, and inside the museum a *chijin* is used by visitors to call staff to the reception area. In both traditional and neo-traditional contexts, the *chijin* helps consolidate and construct a sense of musical identity that is unique to Amami; it is a musical identity that is neither Okinawan nor a part of mainland Japan, unlike the adoption of *eisā* with roots in the south of Japan, and *wadaiko* with roots in the north.

## Conclusion

Neo-traditional ensemble drumming has had a remarkable impact on Japanese culture over the past 50 to 60 years. Not only have many new drum groups been established throughout Japan, some being inspired by the now nationally and internationally well-known groups such as Ondekoza or Kodō, but many new groups have emerged within the Japanese diaspora, and styles of Japanese drumming have been adopted by performers around the globe. In the context of the Amami islands, three main styles of neo-traditional drumming have appeared over the past two to three decades: *eisā*, *wadaiko* and *shimadaiko*. The first two styles have distinct roots in Okinawa and mainland Japan respectively, while the latter is a modernized version of *chijin* drumming that includes a cultural transformation of traditional drum styles unique to Amami.

While attempting to comprehend and interpret the underpinning reasons for the increased interest in these styles of drumming in Amami, two key points have emerged in this article. The first is that neo-traditional drumming of different types is a phenomenon that has received widespread interest throughout Japan, and that its existence in Amami may be explained as a part of the spread of such drumming styles in Japan more broadly. The second point is that in Amami different styles of neo-traditional drumming have emerged as a result of distinct cultural flows in a regional context, and that these cultural influences are in part the result of a changing sense of local identity.

Underpinning the dissemination of some styles of ensemble drumming are organizations that have a base in Okinawa. These organizations practice *eisā* and have contributed to the establishment of several *eisā* groups in Amami. There are other *eisā* groups that are community or school oriented, and similarly a number of *wadaiko* and *shimadaiko* groups. One sphere of neo-traditional performance that has been identified

throughout this research has been the large number of drum groups at schools at every level. Acknowledging that further research in this area is necessary, the information that is offered helps show the spread, interest and diversity of such drum styles in Amami.

The geographic flows of neo-traditional drumming show a mixed offering of three contrasting styles of performance (including instruments, repertoire and performance practice). The research has shown that the southern part of the Amami islands has more *eisā* groups than the north of the archipelago, and that while *wadaiko* is found through Amami, it seems to be more prevalent to the north of the islands. Also, *shimadaiko* seems to be mostly found in Amami Ōshima and Kikaijima, where it expresses and consolidates local cultural identity.

Neo-traditional drumming has been transmitted to Amami, as well as adopted, transformed and recontextualized. Based on the presence of groups such as the ones outlined in this paper, it is evident that Amami islanders in general celebrate such new styles of drumming as part of their neo-traditional culture, which includes several forms of drumming that are recognized in the broader national setting. The islands offer an inbetweenness of cultures where new traditional genres have been localized and help strengthen cultural identity. Through such practices, the people of Amami are consolidating their place in Japan, both by looking to mainland Japan and to Okinawa, and also by transforming local traditions in the modern era. Future research will undoubtedly uncover more information, but the present article serves to provide a foundation for comprehending some of the aspects of ensemble drum performance in this archipelagic part of Japan.

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