

TRANSLATION AND PROGRAM NOTES

FOR

RYUKYUAN SONGS AND DANCES

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1. Kagyadifu (Kagiyadefu)-bushi or Gujinfu (Gozenfu)-bushi

Kyu nu fukurasha ya naunijana tatiru
Chibudi uru hana nu chiyu chatagutu.

- - - - -

To what shall I compare my heart
Overflowing with joy today?
To a budding flower
Met with the pearls of morn's dew?

.....

Note: This classical number, which is said to have originated in the capital of Shuri during the 15th century when there was great cultural interchange with China, is the most representative of the five dances called "Guninfu-bushi," which means songs to be performed for the king. Now, it is usually performed in the costume of that period, as the first number of a concert or happy occasion. The word "kagyadifu" implies "such happiness" or "such fortune."

2. Udui Kufadisa (Odori Kuwadesa)-bushi

Uchinarashi narashi yuchidaki* ya narachi
Kyu ya uza njiti ashibu urisha

- - - - -

It is a happy occasion today;
Let's dance together to the sound of castanets.*

.....

Note: *Yuchidaki here translated as castanets means four pieces of bamboo (Yotsudake in Japanese) attached to the thumb and two fingers.

The kufadisa is the tree known in Hawaii as the Kamani. The shade of its leaves provides a comfortable place to make love, or to watch the girls dressed in beautiful bingata (stenciled silk kimonos) dance to the sound of their yuchidaki (four pieces of bamboo). It is a classical 18th century number from the island of Kumejima, to the west of Okinawa.

3. Hanjo-bushi*

(Hanjo-bushi)

Kutushi muzukui ya an churasa yukati, Yo une***
Kura ni chin amachi, Suri,*** majim shabira,
Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi***
Wakamachi nu midui tokunuma ni kazati, Yo une***
Yuda miriba naja, Suri,*** shin ya kugani,
Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi***
Kariyushi nu ashibi uchihariti kara ya, Yo une***
Yu nu akiti tida nu, Suri,*** agaru madin,
Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi.***

(Shiraho-bushi)

Shirafu muraui na ga miruku yuyana taburari
Yuritiku, yuritiku uduti ashiba
Ashibi nu churasa ya ninju sunawai***
Uni awa nu nauri chini yuin masarashi.

- - - - -

(Hanjo-bushi)

How plentiful and abundant, (Yo une)
The bumper harvest of the year!
(Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi)
All the granaries it will fill, (Suri)
And more stacks we have besides.

Beautiful is the fresh green of a young pine, (Yo une)
Placed in the vase in the tokonoma**
(Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi)
The branches are silvery white, (Suri)
And the cores are golden.

As this auspicious party, (Yo une)
Has come into its full swing,
(Iya mashi ueeki hanjo yo masaru hanjo kachimata
iya sashi)
Let us make a night of it, (Suri)
Until the sun rises.

(Shiraho-bushi)

Blessed is the village of Shiraho,
Enjoying the years of abundance.
(Yuritiku, yuritiku uduti ashiba
Ashibi nu churasa ya ninju sunawai)
We have a still better harvest this year
Than in years before.

.....

Note: This is a modern dance based on two 18th century folk song texts of Yonaguni in Yaeyama.

*Song of Prosperity.

**Tokonoma is an alcove.

***Words used as a chorus and not significant to the meaning of the text.

4. Udui Amakawa (Odori Amakawa)

Umukaji nu tatiba, Yo kana yo,*** yadu ni urariran,
Yo kana yo shi shi,***
Dicha yo ushichiriti, Yo kana yo,*** ashidi washira
Nuchijiya nu ashagi, Yo kana yo,*** tisaji-nunu tatiti,
Yo kana yo shi shi,***
Waga umuru satu ni, Yo kana yo,*** nasaki kwirana
Nasaki kwiru bikei, Yo kana yo,*** tisaji kwiti nusuga,
Yo kana yo shi shi,***
Gamaku kunshimiru, Yo kana yo,*** minsa kwirana
Ashidi washiriran, Yo kana yo,*** uduti washiriran
Yo kana yo shi shi.***
Umui masati ichusa, Yo kana yo,*** ariga nasaki

Amakawa nu ichi ni ashibu ushidui nu
Yo kana yo shi shi,***
Umuiba nu chijiri yusu ya shiran

- - - - -

Once his (or her) image overtakes me, (Yo kana yo)
I cannot remain quietly at home
(Yo kana yo shi shi)
Let's go out, (Yo kana yo), and play away my thought.
Setting up a loom in a room of the wooden house, (Yo kana
yo)
I shall weave a kerchief to give my beloved.
(Yo kana yo shi shi)
As a token of my love.
Why only a kerchief to give, (Yo kana yo)
As an expression of love?
(Yo kana yo shi shi)
Much better would be, (Yo kana yo), the sash that ties
her waist.
No playing nor dancing, (Yo kana yo)
Can make me forget him (or her)
(Yo kana yo shi shi)
His (or Her) love is too deep, (Yo kana yo), to be
forgotten.

In the little pond near the well
Gently float a couple of mandarin ducks;
(Yo kana yo shi shi)
The deep love that binds them
No one can fathom.

.

Note: This is a duet dance, adapted from the classical song of Amakawa and another short poem. A wooden house (Nuchijiya) is associated with a higher social status than a house of thatch (Anaya) and therefore a more appropriate place to weave a gift for a lover.

*** Words used as a chorus and not significant to the meaning of the text.

5. Hatuma (Hatoma)-bushi

Hatuma nakamuri hainuburi, kuba nu shita ni hainuburi

Hai ya yo tiba kaidaki shituyuru tin yo sati
migutu***

Kaisha muitaru muri nu kuba, churasa chiritaru chiji nu
kuba

Me nu tu yu miwataseba, iku funi kuru funi umushiru ya

Ini fu chinchike umushiru ya, awa fu chinchike sati migutu.

- - - - -

Cheerfully climbing the hill of Hatoma

Come to the foot of the kuba* forest. (Hai ya yo
tiba kaidaki shituyuru tin yo sati migutu)

How beautiful are the kuba trees

That cover the top of the hill!

Many a ship comes and goes before our eyes;

What a sight we behold!

These are the ships that carry

The abundant crops we harvested.

.....

Note: *Fan palm.

This song was originally sung in praise of the hardy and diligent people of Hatuma (Hatoma) Island in Yaeyama. In olden times when a heavy poll tax was levied, they moved, opened up wasteland, and established new homes and farms. In this exuberant song they rejoice in the fine land, bountiful crops which provides not only the tax levy but also much for themselves, and the cooperative spirit of the Hatuma people.

***Words used as a chorus and not significant to the meaning of the text.

6. Munjuru (Hiragasa)-bushi

(Haichikuten-bushi)

Wakasa hitutuchi nu kayui-ji nu sura ya
Yama ni sakuhira nu kuruma tubaru

(Munjuru-bushi)

Munjuru hiragasa chura-munu ya
Miyarabi machiji ni chii ishiti, Hanazumi yo***

Hanazumi tisaji ya me ni mushidi
Nise furashi-munu, Hanazumi yo***

Tirichina hira kara yo una yo
Munjuru hiragasa kaburu na yo, Chihanuku nu***

Chihanuku nu su nu me ga
Nya uchifuriyun do, Chihanuku nu***

Umu nu umasa ya to-kanda
Kumi nu umasa ya akachi me, Miki chukuti nu***

Miki chukuti nu umasa ya
Shirafe to-kanda, Miki chukuti nu***

(Umu nu ha-bushi)

Satu ga hati kwiteru munjuru nu kasa ya
Kandiwan shidasa en ga yarura

(Akayamam-bushi)

Akayamam fesachi yo sura ni mudikuyui
Di wane umu satu tu kemudi kurana

Kataita ya katati yo mani machi ga satume
Chichi ya yama nu ha ni kakaru madim

Iki n diya yu shiga yo sudi tuyai hichishi
Makutu iki n di nu chimu ya aran

Saraba tingara ya shima yuku ni natui
Dicha yo tachi mudura yubi nu jibun

- - - - -

(Haichikuten-bushi)

For the youth hurrying at night
To meet his sweetheart far away,
The hilly path he goes through
Seems only a flat road, easy to traverse.

(continued)

(Munjuru-bushi)

How lovely the girl looks
With a munjuru hat* on her head! (Hanazumi yo)
So attractive is the red tisaji** she wears
To the eyes of the boys looking from nearby.
(Hanazumi yo)
Don't wear the munjuru hat, my dear,
When you pass the Tirichina hill; (Chihanuku nu)
(Because) the instant he sees your loveliness,
The officer of Chihanuku stationed there will want
you, (Chihanuku nu)
The sweetest of all potatoes is the Chinese potato;
And the rice from reddish soil is best of all,
(Miki chukuti nu)
The best of all wine is the one
Made from Chinese potato with white buds. (Miki
chukuti nu)

(Umu nu ha-bushi)

This munjuru hat he gave me,
How much cooler I feel with it on!
Is this because of his love?

(Akayamam-bushi)

As the runners of Akayama potato
Are twined round one another,
How I wish to embrace
My beloved sweetheart!

Where are you waiting, my dear?
I am longing to talk with you.
It's already becoming late;
The moon is setting behind the edge of the hill.

Go home, my dear,
Go now, I say to you.
Yet I am pulling your sleeve;
I really don't have heart to see you away.

Now the Milky Way is down
On the horizon far away;
Let's go home, my dear,
It's the same time we left last night.

.....

Note: *A munjuru hat is a straw hat.
 **A tisaji is a towel worn as a kerchief;

Ryukyuan dances are often composed to a group of three or four songs with related texts--in this case love songs. Munjuru-bushi is considered the principal song, the others being selected to introduce and expand the thoughts expressed in it.

***The words at the end of each stanza are a chorus which functions as a connecting link with the following stanza.

7. Shin me nu hama (Shin mae no hama)-bushi

(Shin me nu hama-bushi)

Ei ei, *** Akachira nu hama ni dete
Haruka oki o miwataseba. Ei sa ***
Ichi keru funi nu haru ga churasa,
Kurasa yui yui ***
Ei ei, *** Karari korori to ro no oto takaku
Kujiharasu morobito nu, Ei sa ***
Utau manimani kakegoe isamashi,
Omoshiro ya ***
Ei ei, *** Shiraho honoka ni nami no ue ni
Uchi chijiku chiribuni nu, Ei sa ***
Usu kaji nu mamani yurari yurari to,
Kurasa yui yui ***
Ei ei, *** Chidori naku namiuchigiwa o
Miriba iso no amaudu nu, Ei sa ***
Sara sara sara to ami o hiku yo,
Kurasa yui yui. ***

(Kachirin (Katsuren)-bushi)

Kachirin nu shima ya wataibusa ashiga
Wanamajo nu ushu nu kiai agudi
Wanamajo nu ushu nu kiai agumawan
(Unzo ni umi nashiba tsufisha nakara)
- - - - -

(Shin me nu hama-bushi)

(Ei ei) Going down to the beach of Akachira,
We gaze out across the sea, (Ei sa)
What a sight we enjoy!
Ships are sailing smoothly on the sea.
(Kurasa yui yui)
(Ei ei) Pleasant to hear is the sound of oars
Clattering against the sides of boats,
(Ei sa)
The fishermen are rowing their boats
With songs and gallant "yo-ho's."
(Omoshiro ya)
(Ei ei) Many white sails loom far
In the hazy distance on the sea, (Ei sa)
Fishing boats are drifting about
At the mercy of the fair wind.
(Kurasa yui yui)
(Ei ei) Plovers are twittering on the sandy beach.
(Ei sa)
Where the fishermen are at work
Gently pulling the nets from the sea.
(Kurasa yui yui)

(Kachirin-bushi)

I wish to go to Katsuren to see my beloved
But the tide-washed road through Wanamajo village
Is too hard to traverse.
Hard to traverse as it may be,
(My love for her will carry me through it.)

.

Note: Shin me nu hama is a modern dance adapted from an old song of Yaeyama. The song of Katsuren is added to this dance here.

*** Words used as a chorus. The beginning "Ei ei" is an exclamation.

8. Sakiyama Yunta

Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree***
Sakiyama nu aramura yu tatita su,
Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree***
Taru nu shu, giri nu, Hari***
Uya nu du tatita su,
Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree***
Kaniku shu nu, Hari***
Uya nu du tatita su.
Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree***

- - - - -

(Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree)
A new settlement was opened in Sakiyama
(Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree)
Who on earth was it, (Hari)
That had it opened?
(Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree)
It was the officer of Kaniku, (Hari)
Who had it made.
(Sura yui yui shura yo, I no ha ri yu bana uree)

.

Note: This is a part of a 20-line song which originated in Yaeyama. It expresses the sorrow of an old widow who was taken from her home for forced labor to open up a new settlement on another island. The remaining verses describe her work and her longing to return to her native island of Hateruma which can be seen from Sakiyama on Iriomote Island.

***Words used as a chorus.