

## COMPLETION REPORT

### Appropriating Japanese Puppet Theatre Traditions

Dr. Amparo Adelina Cordial Umali, III

Associate Professor  
Center for International Studies,  
University of the Philippines, Philippines

**Appropriating Japanese Puppet Theatre Traditions** is a creative research with two phases. The first phase of experiential learning was conducted by a select group of Filipino puppeteer-collaborators (including the artistic director of the puppet theatre Teatrong Mulat ng Pilipinas (TMP) and her daughter) in two ways: first by replicating the videos and chanting of Naoshima Onna Bunraku and Joruri's *Ebisu Mai*, *Sanbaso* and *Dango Uri* (female puppet only); and second by directly learning from Naoshima Onna Bunraku and Joruri to improve the skills learned from the videos through an intensive training-rehearsal in Naoshima from June 1 to June 6, 2013. A Filipino artisan, who makes wooden images of Catholic saints, replicated a Bunraku wooden puppet from sketches, pictures and videos of Japanese Bunraku puppets. Used during training-rehearsals in the Philippines, this Filipino made wooden puppet was brought to Naoshima and set side by side with Japanese Bunraku puppets to study how to make its movements more human-like.

The second phase, a combination of workshops and performances, allowed us to introduce the art of Japanese puppetry to as many people as possible and to experiment on how to appropriate *Ningyo Joruri* in the Philippines. In these workshops and performances, the Teatrong Mulat ng Pilipinas artistic director expressed that they would be appropriating the feet movement of Japanese Bunraku puppets in their future puppet performances. The UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble successfully appropriated the Japanese Bunraku in "*Alay Kay Kristel (An offering to Kristel)*," a puppet performance that combined Japanese puppet movements with Filipino gestures and a guitar and song accompaniment to reaffirm that everyone has a right to education. It was performed during the first death anniversary of Kristel Tejada, a UP student who, unable to pay her tuition fee, was forced to leave school and committed suicide.

Another workshop was conducted among the Out of School Youth of one of the indigenous peoples of Mindanao the Sama Bajao. Their families moved to Manila's Barangay 704 -77 because of poverty and conflict in Mindanao. From this workshop, the UPCIS-Brgy 704-77 Sama Bajao Youth Bunraku Ensemble was able to replicate and perform *Ebisu Mai* with joruri accompaniment. Anthropologists and other scholars who saw their performance were so impressed with the skill that the youth displayed. From this interaction with the Sama Bajao, the UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble successfully created a puppet performance of the Sama Bajao serenade *Biradali*. *Biradali* is the winged maiden, similar to the Tenyo in the *Hagoromo* narrative of Japan, whose pair of wings was taken by a man. Bunraku puppet movements were appropriated and combined with Filipino gestures and movements to express the sentiment of the man *Biradali* left behind.

Several more experiments are being made by the ensemble such as appropriating *Sanbaso* to the "*Magtanim ay Di Biro (Planting Rice is Never Fun)*" ditty and *Ebisu Mai* to the *Sawpama Bangka-bangka (When I ride my Banca)* a Sama Bajao storm-surge/tsunami-disaster related song. With the completion recently of a female puppet, the *Dango Uri* movements will also be appropriated.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference/Event, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Note: The panel **Acting Cultural Diplomacy: Staging Kabuki, Noh and Bunraku in the Philippines 2002-2013** was accepted to be presented on December 15-17, 2014 at Thammasat University, Thailand for the **State and Non-state Actors in Japan-ASEAN Relations and Beyond** conference. Details of the paper presentations for the panel are as follows:

December 15-17, 2014

Thammasat University, Thailand

**State and Non-state Actors in Japan-ASEAN Relations and Beyond**

***INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND FILIPINO COLLABORATIONS WITH MASTERS/CULTURE-BEARERS OF JAPANESE PERFORMANCE TRADITIONS***

**Amparo Adelina C. Umali, III, PhD**

Associate Professor

Coordinator East and Southeast Asian Studies

Center for International Studies

University of the Philippines Diliman

***LEARNING BUNRAKU THE FILIPINO WAY AND PERFORMING WITH NAOSHIMA ONNA BUNRAKU***

**Amihan Bonifacio-Ramolete, Ph.D**

Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts

University of the Philippines Diliman

Puppeteer, UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

UP Center for International Studies

***FILIPINO PERFORMERS AND JAPAN STUDIES STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON JAPANESE PERFORMANCE TRADITIONS' PERFORMANCE AND PRINCIPLES***

**Patricia Bianca M. Andres**

BS Psychology

Research Assistant

Puppeteer, UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

UP Center for International Studies

Note: Workshops and performances of Japanese Bunraku replication and Filipinized Bunraku have been held as follows:

## **Workshop-Performances of Bunraku**

1 July 2013

Rm C, UPCIS

Asian Performance Practice Class

*Ebisu Mai*

9 July 2013

Rm B, UPCIS

Japan Studies 100-101 Classes

*Ebisu Mai*

*Sanbaso*

20 March 2014

Rm B, UPCIS

Japan Studies 100-101 Classes

*Ebisu Mai*

## **Performances of Japanese Bunraku**

**2 June 2013**

General Social Welfare Center, Naoshima

**Naoshima Geinou Taikai**

*Sanbaso*

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

21 June 2013

Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman

**Dinner for UP Diliman's Visiting Professors and Fellows hosted by the Chancellor**

*Sanbaso*

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

28 June 2013

Aldaba Recital Hall, UP Diliman

**"Fun and Magic: Daikagura, Wazuma and Rakugo."**

*Ebisu Mai*

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

10 February 2014

University Theatre Stage

**Japan's Noh Theatre and Philippine Practice of Western Performance Traditions International Conference**

*Ebisu Mai*

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

16 May 2014

UPCIS Room B

**"Palawan Highlands: Forms, Signs, and Signals of the Landscape" Lecture of Nicole Revel, PhD**

*Ebisu Mai*

UPCIS-Brgy 704-77 Sama Bajao Youth Bunraku Ensemble

**Performances of Filipinized Bunraku**

13 March, 2014

Lobby of Vinzon's Hall, University of the Philippines Diliman

**Katarungan para kay Kristel Tejada (Justice for Kristel Tejada) 1<sup>st</sup> Death Anniversary Commemoration**

*Alay kay Kristel (An offering to Kristel)* Bunraku Performance

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

16 May 2014

UPCIS Room B

**"Palawan Highlands: Forms, Signs, and Signals of the Landscape" Lecture of Nicole Revel, PhD**

*Biradali* (Rainbow), A Sama Bajao Folk Song

UPCIS Bunraku Ensemble

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

N/A

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

N/A