

## TRANSPERIPHERAL NETWORKS

Bullfighting and Cattle Culture in Japan's Outer Islands

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### Abstract

Organised fights between trained bulls have been staged in several locations in Japan, Korea, and China for several hundred years (Ishii, 1990a). This article analyses the manner in which a group of Japanese islands have played a prominent part in this activity and now form part of inter-regional networks linking disparate, non-metropolitan communities across the region. These linkages are characterised and discussed as constituting a transperipheral network.

### Keywords

Amami, bullfighting, transperipheral networks

### Introduction

On December 23rd 2004 there was a major earthquake in the Nagaoka region of Niigata Prefecture. One of the worst-affected areas was Yamakoshi village, which is known as a centre of bullfighting. In the immediate aftermath one of the local bulls was moved 1500 kilometres south west to Tokunoshima island in Amami to recuperate. This specific instance illustrates the extent to which there is a close network between the scattered locations of Japan in which bullfighting is practiced. In Japan the prefectures of Kagoshima, Ehime, Shimane, Niigata and Iwate are known as the primary locations of bullfighting culture<sup>1</sup> and they constitute what might be termed a 'backward periphery' in opposition to the nation's 'advanced centre'. It is often assumed that the underlying geo-political/economic/cultural model is a centre-periphery one in which relationships between the two are not equal but, rather, hierarchical. That is, the centre is always elevated while the periphery has a low status.

This situation has been complicated by the recent worldwide change in information distribution brought by innovations in information technology, especially the formulation of acephalus networks - characterised by the internet - that have enabled or facilitated the construction of social networks *not* linked to the centre. This is equivalent to what we propose here as the 'transperipheral' network of Japanese bullfighting. This characterisation indicates a form of network that is not linked to 'centres' such as states and cities. In what follows we discuss the process and characteristics of the Japanese bullfighting sector as comprising a broad-based social network involving bulls, bull owners, various organisations and bullfighting venues. In addition to this, the goal of our study is to show a contemporary context of islandness in Japan from the viewpoint of network formation. Islands are often understood to have a limited "capacity" and "isolation" from the mainland and to often be

involved in a “vicious circle of smallness” (Oshiro, 2000: 27). However, by focusing on the bullfighting network, we offer a depiction of rather different aspects of islandness. This is not just an academic exercise. Most of Japan’s islands are surrounded by and linked into various networks - such as remote medical information services in Okinawa and Nagasaki and legal consultation networks in Nagasaki. The examination of bullfighting networks offers an alternative model to consider island status and potential connectivity in contemporary Japan.

In order to provide an insight into the local level operation of bullfighting networks we begin by examining the local practice and institutions of bullfighting on Tokunoshima island in the Amami archipelago. Bull owners and the ‘Bullfight Summit’ are discussed as two important aspects in the organisation of the bullfighting network. Discussion then moves to the Yaeyama islands, in the south of Okinawa prefecture, where interlinked bull and cattle distribution networks exist. Furthermore we try to show that Tokunoshima’s bull owners are connected to Yaeyama’s cattle ranchers through a beef cattle distribution network, and that Yaeyama bull owners are connected back to Tokunoshima through a bullfighting one. Although the distance between Tokunoshima and Yaeyama is about one thousand kilometers, bull owners and cattle traders readily traverse the maritime space between. We close our study by discussing the implications of such ‘transperipheral’ networks.

## I. Bullfighting in Japan

Although bullfighting occurs in six Japanese prefectures - Okinawa, Kagoshima, Ehime, Shimane, Niigata and Iwate - it is most popular in the Okinawa islands, in the Amami islands of Kagoshima prefecture and in Ehime. In Okinawa, there are eleven bullrings and thirty games a year in six locations - Okinawa-city, Uruma-city, Ginowan-city, Motobu-town, Imakijin-village, and Yontani-village. In Tokunoshima island (Amami), there are thirteen bullrings in Tokunoshima-town, Isen-town, and Amagi-town and twenty games a year. In Ehime, there is one bullring, in Uwajima-city, and five games a year. Of these locations Tokunoshima is the most prominent in terms of the ratio of bullfighting activity to population and, indeed, is famed for this<sup>2</sup>. The biggest event in Tokunoshima is the island championship, which is held three times a year in January, May and October. Each town hosts the games in rotation (but other games are open to anybody to hold anytime).

Although it has been said that bullfighting in each area arose naturally or derived from divine ritual, and so on<sup>3</sup>, the precise nature of bullfighting varies from area to area. In Tokunoshima the process of the game is as follows. First, bulls are lead into the ring one by one from the same gate accompanied by the festive music of the song *Waido-bushi*<sup>4</sup> and the sound of drums played by the bull-owners and their supporters. Usually there are ten matches from lower ranks to higher ranks. Just before the game starts, there is a ritual of purifying the ring by sprinkling salt and a distilled spirit called *shochu* in the middle of the ring. Between the matches the organising host often gives welcoming speeches. A greeting telegram from a House of Representatives member from Tokunoshima is also read out by an announcer. Advertisements by various sponsors, such as sports shops, gyms and restaurants, are often given. There is also the ceremony of returning the championship flag. An announcement by Tokunoshima police is routinely made (to little avail) asking people not to gamble on matches.

Three judges are chosen, one from each town, who pass down their final judgements by raising a white flag. Each event has ten matches. A match takes from between 5-10 minutes to more than half an hour. The overall event takes between 2-3 hours to complete. Three bullfighting assistants are allowed per bull<sup>5</sup>, rotating at short intervals. The match is over if either bull runs away. The winning bull’s owner, his family and supporters always spill into the bullring to show their delight by riding on the back of the bull and dancing with hands and legs while singing *Waido-bushi*. After the last championship match is over, the organiser hands the championship flag and trophy to the owner of the winning bull and the event concludes.

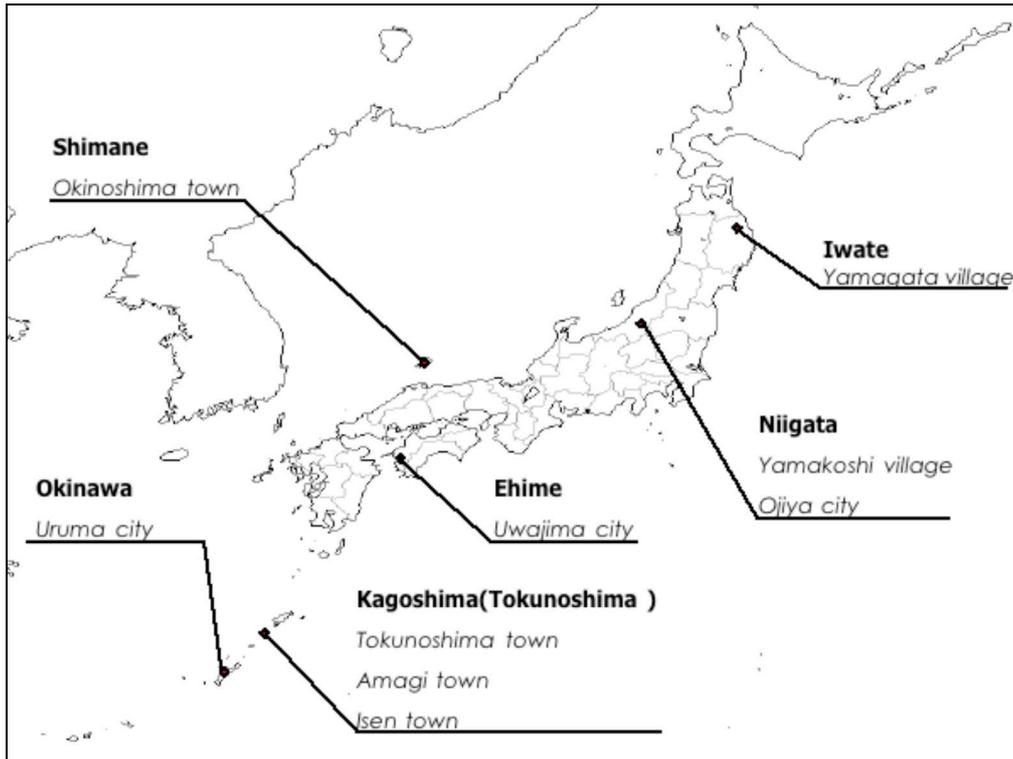


Figure 1: Location of Bullfighting Venues



Figure 2: Bullfighting in Tokunoshima



Figure 3: A winner in Tokunoshima

## II. The Formation of the Bullfighting Network

### The Bull Owner

While the particular personalities and activities of individual bull owners obviously vary, the following profile of one individual's activities is broadly typical of established bull owners. Norihisa Ito, from Tokunoshima, has travelled to every corner of Japan to buy calves but has found Iwate prefecture to be a particularly useful area. Initially he had no contacts there and had to find calves without knowing any local people. After two or three visits, he gradually came to form personal relationships and began to buy calves at particular villages. To give a sense of the logistics involved in such visits, when he bought three calves at a remote village in Iwate, first of all, he took a flight from Tokunoshima to Misawa city in Iwate, which is located about two thousand kilometers north east of Tokunoshima. He then drove himself southwest for six hours to Tono village, where he bought three calves. The calves were then sent to Tokyo by truck and shipped to Amami Oshima by sea, and then shipped again to Tokunoshima. The transport cost was more than two hundred thousand yen. The reason he travelled all the way to Iwate was that he often saw big bulls from Iwate excelling at matches in many places in Okinawa. His purchase cost him 1.8 million Yen. He has also been to Uwajima, in Ehime prefecture, to purchase three calves, but then he exchanged his bulls for calves. He has also been to Yamakoshi in Niigata, and frequently travelled to Okinawa to buy calves.

Like Ito, most bull owners often travel to bullfight-related areas such as Tokunoshima, Iwate, Niigata, Ehime and Okinawa to purchase calves, and thus form information and distribution networks. This is one of the reasons that made it possible for the previously mentioned Yamakoshi bull to attain a quick refuge in Tokunoshima following the Niigata earthquake.

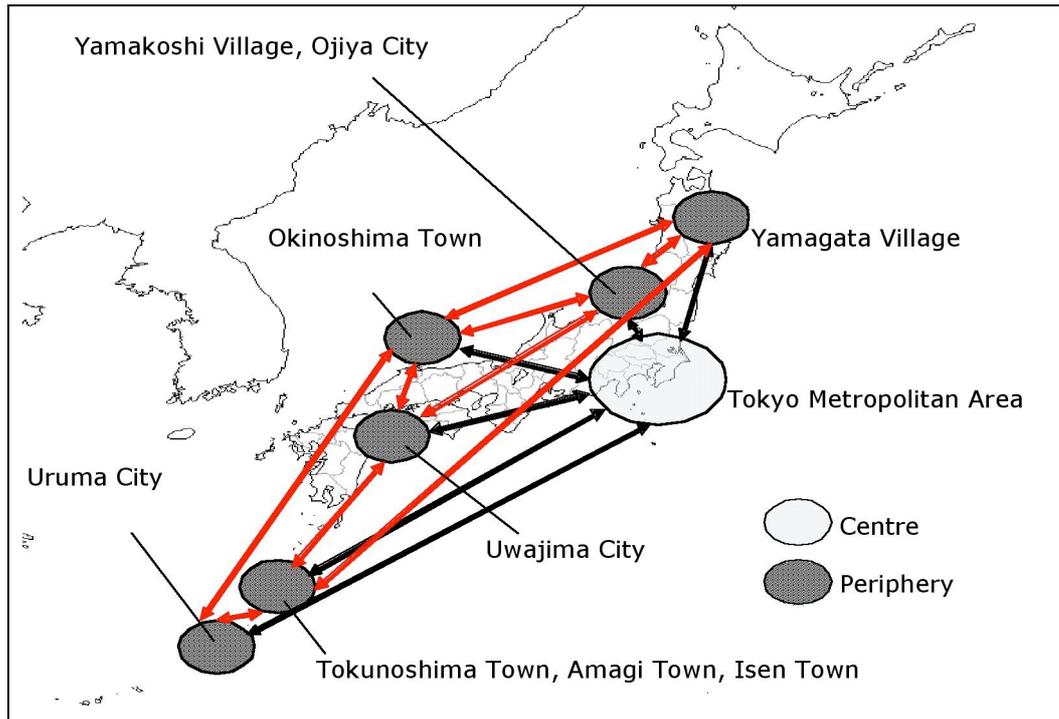


Figure 4: Transperipheral Networks among Bullfighting Venues

#### The Bullfight Summit

The first Bullfight summit was organised by the Okinoshima town office in Shimane prefecture in 1998. Its purpose was to gather the members of a municipality involved in the traditional culture of bullfighting and to encourage the preservation and continuance of the tradition, to enhance mutual exchange and goodwill, and to create local communities with their own characteristics. The Bullfight summit is now hosted in turn by the six bullfighting prefectures, and attracts not only people involved in bullfighting but also politicians and bureaucrats, and - through its political, festive and ritual performances - plays an important role of intensifying the networking among the bullfighting venues.

The bullfighting event that culminated the 8th Bullfight Summit was held at a ring in Isen-cho in Tokunoshima island in May 2005, and about five thousand bullfighting fans from Tokunoshima and elsewhere attended. The bull from Yamakoshi village also entertained people by taking part in a bullfighting match on behalf of Niigata that day. On the same day, the Tokunoshima Federation of Bullfighting hosted the 8th Bullfight Summit Meeting and, in addition to the chiefs from five prefectures and seven municipalities, eleven guests from Korea took part. In this summit, issues such as the construction of a formalised network among bullfighting regions, the enhancement of exchange, the promotion of bullfighting and the effective utilisation of bullfighting culture as a local resource were discussed and affirmed.

Bullfighting is now crossing borders and contributing to international cultural exchange. This is especially significant with regard to Korea and Japan. Whereas inter-governmental relations have stagnated in recent years, grass-roots exchange and mutual understanding through bullfighting have ensured that progress has occurred in the peripheral regions of Japan, bypassing central government.

In Korea, the national bullfighting contest is held annually at Chongdo in Kyongsang-bukdo, which is located in southern part of Korea. There has been an exchange program between Korea and Tokunoshima since 1999 when three Tokunoshiman black bulls were sent to Chongdo and fought against Korean red bulls. The match was named the ‘Korea-Japan match-up’ and attracted an audience of several hundred thousand in Chongdo. After the event, goodwill ambassadors from Chongdo were sent to Tokunoshima. Honorable guests were also sent to the Bullfighting Summit in Japan (the fifth in 2002, the eighth in 2005 and the ninth in 2006). Although Korean bull buyers visited Tokunoshima in the 1990s to buy bulls and ship them to Korea, the outbreaks of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (aka ‘mad cow disease’) that occurred in North America and Europe in 2003 resulted in a total ban on importation of bulls to Korea, effectively halting the purchase of bulls and their transportation for contests. Despite this, since the 1999 ‘match-up’ between Korean and Japanese bulls, bullfighting in Korea has been revitalised, and the exchange between Korean bull-related people enhanced. Other than Chongdo, bullfighting games are also held in Chinju-city in Kyongsang-namdo and Chonguppu-city in Cholla-bukto. The common feature in bullfighting in Chongdo and Chinju is that both cities are consciously attempting to use bullfighting for regional development, one result of which has been the construction of a huge bull ring that can house more than ten thousand spectators. In Chinju in particular, the development of rural areas, livestock industry promotion and the revitalization of traditional bull-culture have been planned by transforming bullfighting into a tourism resource. The city also plans to construct an arena for a bullring as both an amenity and leisure complex.

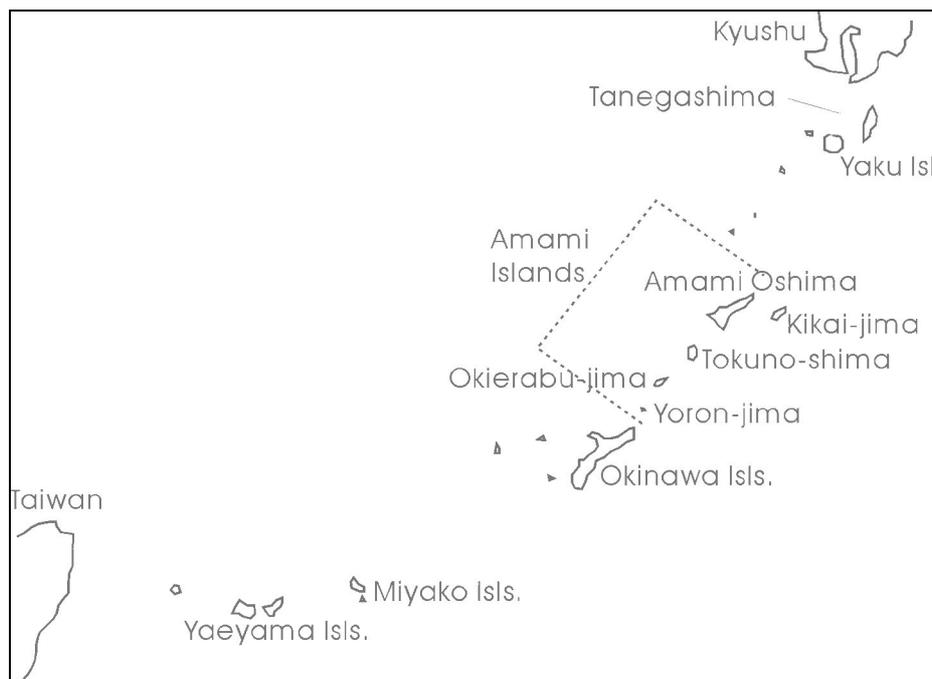


Figure 5: Location of Amami, Okinawa, and Yaeyama Islands

### III. Livestock Raising in the Yaeyama Islands

This section provides a profile of an island where livestock rearing is developed in order to locate this in relation to bullfighting networks.

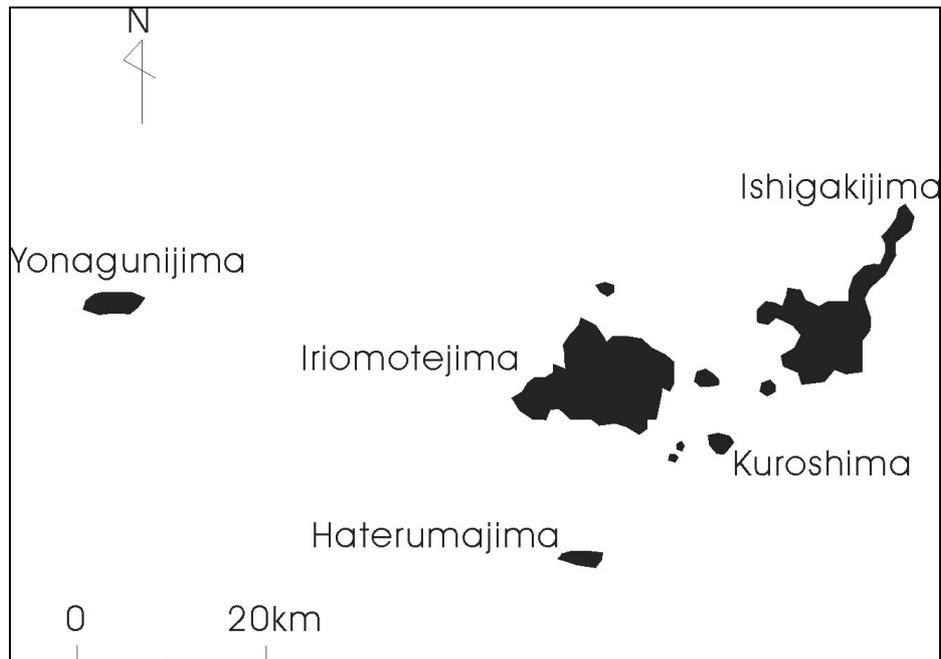


Figure 6: Detailed Map of the Yaeyama Islands

The Yaeyama group are the southernmost islands of the Japanese Archipelago, and comprise Ishigakijima, where over 90% of the Yaeyama population live, Kuroshima, which is discussed below, and several small islands. Ishigakijima is located at 24°N, 124°E, 410km from the main island of Okinawa, and 250km from Taiwan (Map 1, Map 2).

The climate of Yaeyama Islands is subtropical. Ishigakijima Local Meteorological Observatory data specifies that annual mean temperature is 24.0°C, annual rainfall is 2061.0mm and that, on average Yaeyama receives 4.1 typhoons per annum<sup>6</sup>. Geologically, Yaeyama Islands are made of coral reefs<sup>7</sup>. But in larger islands such as Ishigakijima and Iriomotejima, there are forests and swamps, one result of the latter being that malaria was formerly epidemic in some parts of the islands<sup>8</sup>. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ryukyu dynasty, based in Okinawa, enforced compulsory migration from Kuroshima, where relative population density was high, to Ishigakijima, where a large uninhabited plain remained because of the Malaria disease<sup>9</sup>. The disease prevented further immigration into Yaeyama until after WW2, when the occupation of large amount of Okinawa by the US military resulted in many landless farmers who sought migration elsewhere.

#### Environmental Constraints on Production

The mode of production in the Yaeyama Islands is constrained by the social and natural environment, some aspects of which were mentioned above. Of course, production is confined to a subsistence economy, and the warm climate and abundant products of the sea makes the islands a conducive environment. But in today's cash economy, there are social and natural constraints that can be described in terms of 'remote islandness'. This remoteness from economic or political centres makes it difficult to grow ordinary cash crops such as vegetables because of the cost and time of transportation. In this sense, such plants as sugarcane or pineapples, which can be expensive per weight after processing, and livestock, which can be transported live, are suitable for production there. While factors such as typhoons and the limited supply of water in coral islands present difficulties, livestock raising remains a reasonable choice, especially in smaller remote islands where population size limits land use, where there is only a limited need for self-sufficient food production, and little hope of crop yields sufficient to support a processing plant on any one island.

In general, pastoralism is the best and the only choice for land use in such places where the land is not arable but can be used as pasture. In contrast to the inner Asian steppe, for instance, which is mainly utilised as pasture for natural reasons (such as low rainfall and cold temperatures) in the Yaeyama Islands, land is used as pasture for economic reasons, as it is one of the most profitable uses of land in the present circumstances.

#### Agricultural History

Prior to Okinawa's restoration to Japan in 1972, when the area's present day tourist industry commenced, agriculture was the only major economic activity in Yaeyama Islands. Up until the mid-1950s the dominant mode of agriculture was a self-sufficient one, mainly planting paddy rice and sweet potato, with millet and small-scale scattered sugarcane fields<sup>10</sup>. After 1955, pineapples became a major cash crop and in the 1960s beef cattle, especially prestigious Wagyu cattle (producers of 'Kobe-style' beef that can also be used for bullfighting), became another major product. Now, in the nation-wide network of the Japanese cattle-raising industry, the Yaeyama Islands specialise in breeding calves (while suburban areas close to large cities that consume large amounts of beef specialise in fattening adult stock)<sup>11</sup>. But this was not the first time that cattle raising occurred in the Yaeyama Islands, since official documents show that its history dates back at least to the early Meiji era (1868-1912). It is reported that each Yaeyama settlement had vast common pastures for cattle raising but at that time they were mainly used as draft cattle for cultivation and pressing sugarcane or, in some cases, for beef or bullfighting.

The history of cattle export from Okinawa also dates back to the Meiji era, even though cattle were estimated to have lost 20% of their body weight while being shipped to mainland Japan. At the same time, programmatic efforts began in the 1910s to develop draft and beef cattle. In the early stages mating between indigenous breeds and foreign breeds such as Simmental was tried. But later, to meet customers' preferences, so-called 'Japanese Black Cattle', which originated in the western part of mainland Japan, were adopted<sup>12</sup>.

There was another impediment to cattle raising in Yaeyama Islands, piroplasmosis, a parasitic disease transmitted by ticks. In the Yaeyama Islands, when the first epidemic of piroplasmosis occurred in 1933, 740 cattle were affected and 41 cattle died. Since then, as it is a legally-designated contagious disease, export of cattle from the Yaeyama Islands requires certification that a medicated bath has been conducted and bill of health has to be attached. Even though control of Okinawa changed from Japan to the US in 1945, and again to Japan in 1972, the situation didn't change until April 2000, when restrictions on movements of cattle from the Yaeyama Islands was abolished. Therefore, it can be said that cattle raising, as well as bullfighting, in Yaeyama Islands became fully integrated into nationwide networks of livestock distribution from 2000 on.

#### IV. Cattle Breeding and Bullfighting in Yaeyama

##### Depopulation and Effective Land Use

Kuroshima, a small island of about 10 sq km near Ishigakijima, experienced a drastic population decrease after the war. The population had been maintained at about 1200 people until 1955, but since 1960 it steadily decreased to 280 people in 1975. While the present human population is only about 230, the number of beef cattle has grown from 672 in 1972 to the present number of 3000-4000. There is an interesting correlation between human depopulation and the increase in the number of beef cattle.

Kuroshima is a flat island made of limestone, and the highest point is only 14 meters above sea level. For islanders, the issue of how to secure an adequate supply of water has long been the most

important problem. Prior to 1955 islanders lived self-sufficiently, cultivating wetland rice and sweet potatoes. After 1955, sugarcane and pineapple production were introduced as more suitable crops for the ecological condition of Kuroshima in the 1960s. After harvest, sugarcane had been conveyed by ship to neighboring Ishigakijima since Kuroshima had no sugar refinery. But due to this problem, soil infertility and the regularity of cyclones, islanders gradually stopped growing sugarcane and began to shift into cattle production. Since the latter half of the 1960s, cattle breeding has become the main local activity. The main focus has been on breeding and shipping calves rather than fattening them. People also have been practicing an effective use of fertiliser and manure to increase grass pastures

An infrastructural improvement project to increase grassland has been carried out since the 1970s and, to date, around 80% of the total area of the island has transformed into pasture. The steady supply of grass has brought a dramatic improvement in cattle breeding productivity<sup>13</sup>.

#### The Beef Cattle Market and Bullfighting Network

Near Kuroshima port, there is a livestock auction market, where auctions of calves are held twice a month. Buyers gather from all over Japan and especially from many parts of Kyushu. The successfully acquired calves are shipped from there to Ishigakijima, Okinawa and mainland Japan. The number of breeding cattle is now five times more than in 1972, when Okinawa was returned to Japanese administration<sup>14</sup>. Quality improvement has been brought about by selective breeding, which is reflected in the prices. Now Kuroshima boasts the best unit price of calves in Okinawa Prefecture<sup>15</sup>. In the market, some buyers evaluate calves raised for veal and those raised for bullfighting. Cattle ranchers who are interested in bullfighting also choose some calves to raise for fighting and sell them to the buyers concerned. Thus the cattle production in Kuroshima is connected to the bullfighting network through a beef cattle distribution network. Beef cattle are usually castrated at six months of age. The bulls raised for fighting for a few years are judged not to be good for veal. Breeders can apparently distinguish which bulls are good for fighting from a young age. Calves thereby stand at a crossroad in their lives before they are one year old either to go to be beef cattle or fighting bulls.

#### The Tourism Boom and Beef Branding

Recently, Ishigakijima and the other islands in the Yaeyama archipelago have begun to attract tourists' attention as a 'healing spot' because of their natural environment and relaxed lifestyle. The number of visitors increased two-fold over the last decade largely as a result of the introduction of direct flights from metropolitan areas. In addition high-speed boats operate between Ishigakijima and other islands in Yaeyama and a great number of tourists board the boats at Ishigaki port all year round.

The Ishigaki beef brand has also become increasingly popular with tourists (especially after the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit was held in Okinawa in 2000). The Ishigaki beef was served as the main dish at the dinner party of the Summit and well received by the national leaders including French President Chirac. This event received international press coverage and raised nation-wide brand awareness of the Ishigaki beef. Traditionally, the calves raised in Kuroshima have been shipped to Kobe or Matsuzaka - upscale fattening places near the huge consumption markets of metropolitan areas. But now the Yaeyama islands, a major production centre for veal calves, is also trying to fatten them and provide the newly branded beef to visitors in local hotels and restaurants. Recently Kuroshima itself has been promoted as 'the Island of Cattle' - evidence of which can be seen around the island. The Kuroshima Cattle Festival is held annually in late February and includes a game of 'tug of war' between a bull and men, and selling steak at promotional events.

### Cattle Farmers and Bullfighting

Ishigakijima has three bullfighting arenas. There are only three games a year, organised as a part of annual events such as the Chinese New Year festival whereas in Okinawa island games are held almost every week. Bulls from Okinawa and Tokunoshima participated along with local animals in a New Year game held in 2006.

Yasuhiro Tamayose, from Kuroshima, the general manager of the Taketomi Town historical centre<sup>16</sup>, started a cattle ranch in Kuroshima around 1968 while working at Taketomi town office. He is one of the pioneers who ventured into livestock farming in Kuroshima and also an owner of fighting bulls, who has even participated in bullfighting games as a bullfighter. Unfortunately he was gored by his own bull during a match and was seriously wounded. Since then, his wife, Mitsuko Tamayose, has taken over the role and has been participating in games for several years. She has often been covered by national media, since female bullfighters are fairly rare. Their family bull, named 'Micchan-go', derived from Mrs Tamayose's first name Mitsuko, took part in the Bullfight Summit game in Tokunoshima in October 2002. Mrs. Tamayose participated in the game as a bullfighter. They decided to attend the Summit game since they were invited by the owner of the Okinawa main island champion, who is also the vice president of Okinawa Bullfight Association. They shipped their bull to Tokunoshima in advance to acclimatise and trained him until the match day. Their preparations proved productive, with their bull winning the Korean Governor's Prize. This is how some cattle farmers in Kuroshima themselves became interested in bullfighting, came to own bulls, and even became bullfighters. Here we can see the actual conditions and the process of networking, in which a bullfighting network is gradually formed in the centre of calf production.

### Yaeyama and Bullfighting

While the Yaeyama islands have considerable cattle-raising activity, they only support marginal bullfighting activities. The area's principal relation to bullfighting networks is as a provider of stock. Indeed, even accounting for its smaller population and landmass, bullfighting itself is less popular than in Okinawa and Tokunoshima. There is no organisation for bullfighting matches in Yaeyama and while there are three bullrings in Ishigakijima, they are only used during the Ishigaki Festival in November. As a result local bull owners wishing to enter contests take their bulls to Okinawa or Tokunoshima to join matches there. Given transportation costs and other expenses, Yaeyama bull owners require personal capital to operate and this is one of the reasons that most of the fighting bull owners are the owners of cattle ranches.

While cattle rearing has been well established in Yaeyama since the early 20th Century (and before), with bulls particularly valued as draft animals, the history of livestock breeding in the Yaeyama islands has had to overcome two major problems, the eradication of piroplasmiasis and the improvement of beef product. As discussed above, piroplasmiasis was a notifiable infectious disease, transmitted by ticks that lived in grassland. Attempts at eradication started in 1971 and took almost twenty-eight years to complete. Since then shipping of Yaeyama cattle to every part of Japan has become possible. The trigger for improving the breed into Japanese black cattle followed the cessation of supplying beef cattle to the US army in Okinawa in 1966. This event forced Yaeyama farmers to shift to providing beef for the main island Japanese market, switching to Wagyu breed. The eradication of piroplasmiasis and the Japanisation of cattle by breed improvement became the trigger not only for the advent of high-quality beef cattle production but also for breeding bulls for fighting.

The strong promotion of cattle production by the Okinawa municipal government also contributed to the conversion of Yaeyama into a significant producer of beef cattle from the the mid 1960s on. At this time Japanese consumer demand for quality beef was outstripping national production and Okinawa, with its equable climate, terrain and soil, was well-placed to capitalise on this. Responding to this, the Ryukyu government enacted legislation for special measures laws for beef cattle promotion in 1968. As a result there was a major shift from growing sugarcane and pineapple to livestock breeding in Ishigakijima and Kuroshima, and an increase in the number of farmers who ran

cattle ranches. In this regard, small island depopulation was beneficial to the expansion of ranching. On Kuroshima, for instance, the population declined from its peak of 1200 in 1955 to its current figure of 220, easing land pressures (on an island with a circumference of only 12km) and allowing abandoned vegetable fields to become available for pasture. 80% of the island's land area is now cattle pasture, supporting 3000 cattle. In this manner depopulation has benefitted local economic development, at least for those who have remained resident.

Following Okinawa's reversion to Japanese administration in 1972, travel – and general association – between Okinawa and Yaeyama became easier and a number of the new cattle ranchers developed interests in bullfighting, identified calves that were potential competitors and sold these to buyers from bullfighting centres such as Okinawa and Tokunoshima. In this way a network developed between ranchers and bull owners from other locations. A further factor in the recent establishment of bull production in Yaeyama is the great improvement in marine transportation. With the introduction of high-speed boats, travel between Kuroshima and Ishigakijima now only takes twenty-five minutes, making it possible to schedule several return trips per day. Around 15 buyers from Kagoshima regularly travel to Kuroshima for the monthly cattle market and other purchasers from Okinawa, Tokunoshima and Uwajima also attend. The bullfighting network was also extended when local ranchers (such as the previously discussed Yasuhiro Tamayose) became active in bullfighting themselves. Yaeyama is thereby unique in Japan in that it supports both bull-breeding and bullfighting enterprises.

## Conclusion

The Japanese bullfighting sector occurs in notionally 'backward', peripheral regions such as isolated islands, remote main island areas and rural villages. However, in contrast to this characterisation of peripherality, these areas vigorously exchange people, bulls, calves, and information with each other, and even organise such new developments as the National Bullfighting Summit. This gives the activity a very contemporary aspect in that it utilises modern transport and communication systems to transcend the binary opposition centre-periphery/city-region paradigms and policies of modern Japan that (literally) marginalise non-central areas. Instead, by exemplifying an effective transperipheral network it suggests the potential for broader alternative alignments of regional, national and transnational peoples, cultures and activities.

Until now, assumptions about the subordination of the periphery to the centre and/or the inability to envisage peripheries as activators of networks have inhibited the exploration of new ways of envisaging relations across peripheries. The Bullfighting and cattle raising networks discussed in this paper show that major centres are not essential to cross-regional networking. In this manner, the seemingly 'backward' activity of bullfighting shares aspects with the more general globalisation of information in which every (facilitated) individual in the world can relate to each other through the medium of the internet. The formation of a 'transperipheral' network among the bullfighting areas thereby suggests another entrance to the world of globalisation that actively counters the massification and homogenisation of centrally-produced culture in favour of translocal difference.

## Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Japan comprises the four major islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Hokkaido is located in the north of Japan, where bullfighting has never been practiced. Honshu is the largest of the four main islands, and Iwate and Niigata prefectures are located in northern parts of Honshu. Shimane prefecture is in the west part of Honshu facing the Sea of Japan. Ehime prefecture is located in Shikoku island, and Kagoshima prefecture is located in the south of Kyushu. Okinawa is an island prefecture which is far south of Kyushu and the most southerly area of Japan.

<sup>2</sup> A number of books have been written on bullfighting in Tokunoshima (For example, see Matsuda 1982, 2004, Soga 1991, Kobayashi 1997, Hiroi 1998, Kinjou 2000, Yamada 2001, 2004). Bullfighting in Tokunoshima has also been covered by various magazines (Kuwashima 2004a, 2004b, 2006) and TV programs (For example, Telementary by TBS and Tabisarada by TVAsahi in 2005). There is also a documentary film on bullfighting. "Yonaguni Cowboys," which was produced in 2003 by Youich Shima, and is the story of two brothers who grew

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up on Yonaguni Island, a small island in the westernmost part of Japan. At the age of 15, the two boys left the island with their fighting bull, and moved to Ishigaki Island in Okinawa, where they entered an agricultural high school. The film shows the three year period of the boys' school life with their fighting bull (see <[www2.gol.com/users/faff/2003.html](http://www2.gol.com/users/faff/2003.html)>). Youtube also has popular bullfighting clips now, such as <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjkyTOUAK9I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjkyTOUAK9I)> and, more recently, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-2LWDGV8Lw&mode=related&search>> (both accessed August 2007).

<sup>3</sup> According to Ishii Kan, bullfights of Niigata, Shimane(Oki) and Ehime(Uwajima) have stories of their own origin. But he also explains that bulls have a habit of fighting each other in order not to kill the other but to show their own force (Ishii 1989: 19-21). Therefore, neither bullfighters and audience are expecting to see cruel scenes of killing but are concerned with who wins or loses the matches. Bulls are pulled apart as soon as the referee judges the match. Even if they fail to do so, bulls stop fighting by instinct when any of them runs away. So in Japan bullfights are seen not as 'cruelty to animals', which is often said about Spanish corrida. Rather people in Japan seem to see them as an extension of Sumo wrestling. In this sense, bullfighting events are attracting tourists. And moreover, bullfighting is licensed by the prefectural governments and is therefore legal.

<sup>4</sup> *Waido-bushi* was composed by a famous traditional Amami folk singer Yutaka Tsuboyama in 1982. There are various versions of bullfighting CDs on sale in Amami, but – in the main - those who are interested in buying such CDs are not tourists but Amami islanders who live in Osaka and Tokyo. They visit Amami Islands often and bring back such CDs to enjoy Amami folksongs. Generally speaking, bullfighting is part of the exotic marketing appeal of many bullfighting venues in Japan but it is not always true in Tokunoshima and other Amami Islands. In Amami Islands, bullfighting events are not necessarily held for tourists but rather for the islanders' own amusement. Especially in Tokunoshima, bullfighting seems to be a great source of prestige, and is also related to ancestor worship, and thus, seems to be closely interwoven into the island culture.

<sup>5</sup> Bullfighters are also called beaters. Their role in the match is to stand by the bull and assist the fighting.

<sup>6</sup> Ishigakijima Chihou Kishoudai (Ishigakijima Local Meteorological Observatory)  
<http://www.okinawa-jma.go.jp/ishigaki/home.htm> (browsed at 1 March 2007, in Japanese)

<sup>7</sup> 'Geology' in Okinawa digital archives 'Wonder Okinawa'.  
<http://www.wonder-okinawa.jp/006/english/hyakka/tiki/tisitu/index.html> (browsed at 1 March 2007)

<sup>8</sup> Yaeyama Fukushi Hokenjo (Yaeyama Regional Public Health and Welfare Division)  
<http://www3.pref.okinawa.jp/site/view/contview.jsp?cateid=52&id=8538&page=1> (browsed at 1 March 2007, in Japanese)

<sup>9</sup> Information from an informant in Kuroshima who worked at the local museum.

<sup>10</sup> Okinawa Chiiki Kagaku Kenkyuusho (1978:6) and information collected from an informant in Kuroshima.

<sup>11</sup> Okinawa-ken Nourin Suisan Gyousei-shi Hensan Iinkai (1986: 49,59,118-119).

<sup>12</sup> Okinawa-ken Nourin Suisan Gyousei-shi Hensan Iinkai (1986: 10,14-15,98,100-102).

<sup>13</sup> Today about 50 head are produced per 1ha, since drylot feeding facilities have been established, whereas only a few heads were produced at the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japanese administration in 1972.  
*Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun (Yaeyama Daily News)* 2005.2.18.

<sup>14</sup> *Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun (Yaeyama Daily News)* 2004.2.2.

<sup>15</sup> Such a situation is contributing to a trend to bring a younger generation, who mostly live in mainland Japan and Okinawa, back to the island again and to the farm. The population of Kuroshima has reportedly grown by 17 people in a decade. *Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun (Yaeyama Daily News)* 2005.2.18.

<sup>16</sup> Taketomi Town consists of the 7 outer islands of Yaeyama Archipelago: Taketomi, Kuroshima, Kohama, Aragusuku, Hatoma, Iriomote and Hateruma. Since access between the islands is difficult the town office is located in Ishigaki city.

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