

Enoshima: Signifying Island Heritage Across Space and Place

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[Paper]

Enoshima: Signifying Island Heritage Across Space and Place

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Abstract

This article interrogates how the small Japanese island of Enoshima (江の島) signifies island heritage across space and place. Applying a critical approach at the intersection of island studies and heritage studies, Enoshima is explored through the lens of observational study in connection with the three interconnected themes of environment, ritual, and creative arts, with each illuminating knowledge on the place of the island in a broader terrestrial and cultural setting. Rather than looking in detail at heritage roots, emphasis is given to interpreting key thematic routes of heritage construction. This interdisciplinary line of inquiry consolidates and extends scholarly thought within the field of island studies and pertains to island boundaries on the one hand and island signification on the other. These interconnected and overlapping areas of thought offer a way of situating Enoshima within an interpretative scholarly framework where an island and its heritage are considered within and beyond the physical and geographic borders of land and sea.

Keywords

Enoshima, heritage, place, representation, space

Introduction

I first became aware of the small tidal island of Enoshima (江の島) (35.2991° N, 139.4809° E) when hearing its name in the title of a piece of traditional music for the Japanese *koto* (箏) (13-string zither), just as I did with Chikubu Island (竹生島) (Johnson 2021b). The lyrics of the music recount a mythical story about the island, the dragon that lives there, and Benzaiten (the goddess of music and fortune, also known as Benten) who is enshrined on the island. After learning about such fantastical connections, I was motivated to find out more about Enoshima's cultural entanglements as a heritage island that interconnects space and place. After all, "island space needs to be viewed as 'an emergent

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product of relations’ (Massey 2005, 68) arising from diverse encounters” (Hatano 2020, 57).

While knowing about Enoshima for many years, I first visited the island in 2019. A tri-lingual (English, Chinese, and Korean) tourist brochure I picked up from the island caught my attention with the wording on its front page: “Mysterious island loved by the sun and sea” (Fujisawa City Tourist Association 2015). Having already learned about Enoshima’s mythological connections through koto music, I was curious to seek out more knowledge about the so-called “mysterious” nature of the island. Looking out to Enoshima across a short stretch of water, my immediate impressions were of inter-island connections: a small, bridged island with droves of pedestrians heading there from the mainland on one bridge, numerous vehicles filling up a larger adjacent bridge, a number of yachts moored off its shoreline, a low-lying built-up area, a tree-covered higher level of the island, and a large tower near the island’s peak.

Enoshima (literally “Bay Island”) is just a few hundred metres off the coast of mainland Honshū (本州) (Japan’s largest island) in Sagami Bay (相模湾) and about 50 km southwest of downtown Tōkyō (figs. 1–2). The island’s space resonates with cultural heritage and social dynamics, with the latter evidenced by the vast number of people making the short trip to and from its shores. Enoshima may have seemed mysterious because it was offshore and steeped in traditional heritage, but in searching for its mysterious elements, I needed to explore the island, not exclusively in its immediate physical setting surrounded by sea for part of the day, but necessarily more broadly in such cultural spheres as environment, ritual, and creative arts. Most importantly, it appeared, was that Enoshima’s disarticulation as a small island in discourse was paradoxical to its heterogeneous and socially constructed territorial place in Japanese culture.

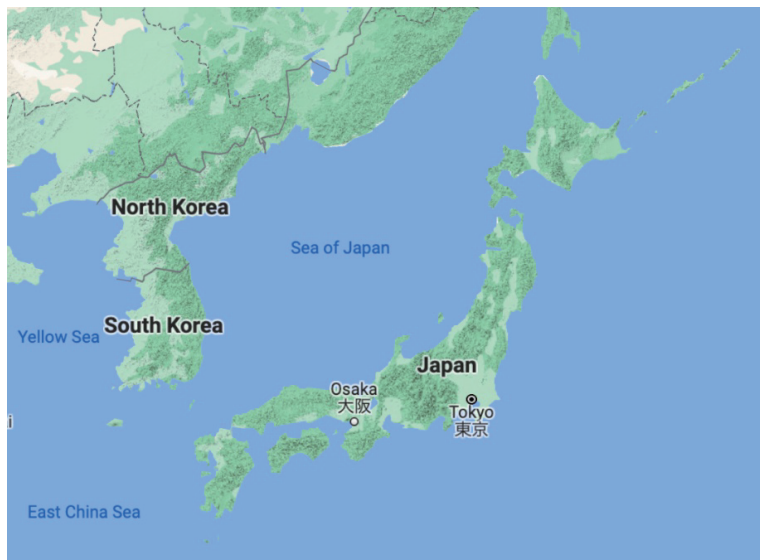


FIGURE 1. Japan (Google Maps 2021).



FIGURE 2. Enoshima and its regional setting (Google Maps 2021).

This article interrogates how the small Japanese island of Enoshima signifies island heritage across space and place. Applying a critical approach at the intersection of island studies and heritage studies and contributing to the “study of islands on their own terms” (McCall 1994, 1), Enoshima is explored through the lens of observational study in connection with the three interconnected themes of environment, ritual, and creative arts, with each illuminating knowledge on the place of the island viewed in a broader terrestrial and cultural setting (there are no interviews, questionnaires, or surveys). Rather than looking in detail at heritage roots, emphasis is given to interpreting key thematic routes of heritage construction. This interdisciplinary line of inquiry consolidates and extends scholarly thought within the field of island studies and pertains to island boundaries on the one hand and island signification on the other, thereby contributing to “an expanded concept of island studies” (Hayward 2016, 5) and especially to sacred islands (Johnson 2021a; Luo and Grydehøj 2017). These interconnected and overlapping areas of thought offer a way of situating Enoshima within an interpretative scholarly framework where an island and its heritage are considered within and beyond the physical and geographic borders of land and sea in what might be termed an “islanding of cultural geographies” (Baldacchino and Clark 2013, 132).

In this article, the study of Enoshima on its own terms must necessarily extend both the space and place of the island across aquatic and terrestrial domains. This approach relates conceptually to the idea of broadening the space of islands, as in the notion of “aquapelago,” which defines “an assemblage of the marine and land spaces of a group of islands and their adjacent waters” (Hayward 2012, 5). However, while applying the idea of “anthropogenic change to islands in connection with distinct reshaping of land, sea,

and space” (Johnson 2020, 23), a conceptual approach to the place of the island has been used as a way of foregrounding island signification in not only Enoshima’s immediate environmental setting (Baldacchino 2010; Hay 2006) but also in cultural spheres that refer to the island as a location of ritual importance in a broader cultural context. It is here that the “isolation and boundedness” (Royle 2001, 11) of islands is critiqued in terms of Enoshima’s accessibility, both physically and culturally.

The study of heritage and islands has generated much debate concerning notions of heritage production, on or off island (e.g., Grydehøj 2010; Hayward 2008; Ronström 2008). There are a number of islands around the world that are recognized as world heritage sites, including the island of Gorée in Senegal, which “is considered one of the places most emblematic of the Slave trade” (UNESCO 2017b), and Robben Island in South Africa, deemed a “place of racist and social persecutions towards minority groups” (UNESCO 2017b). For Enoshima, its heritage is varied and widespread. The island is tangible heritage as a site of ritualistic significance, but there is also intangible cultural heritage associated with the island, such as ritualistic practices and creative arts, and such “heritage provides communities with a sense of identity and is continuously recreated in response to their environment” (UNESCO 2017a).¹

Acknowledging the many interpretations of what constitutes cultural heritage, within the approach taken in this study, it is important to recognize that “not all heritage is bound to specific places” (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 4), but it can be interconnected through “location, distribution and scale” (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 4). For Enoshima, as articulated in this article, the island is representative of the intersection of geography and heritage, a further comprehension of which enhances an interpretation of island heritage “as a social construction, imagined, defined, and articulated within cultural and economic practice” (Graham 2002, 1003).

With a population of just 350 as of 2021 (Fujisawa City 2021), for Enoshima, its heritage construction is particularly active among the droves of domestic day tourists who visit the island each year. For such domestic tourists, the idea of visiting sites like Enoshima “can be tied closely to the religious pilgrimages that became popular among the masses during the Edo period [1600–1868]” (Thompson 2009, 59). As such, the social flows to and from the island resonate in diverse spheres and sources of cultural production that help consolidate island heritage in ways that extend the place of Enoshima. That is, “inheritance [of heritage] emanates not from sites and objects themselves but from the complex webs of cultural history contextualising them” (Grydehøj 2010, 87).

As a way of critically engaging with Enoshima’s space and place in geographic and conceptual terms, following this introduction, the article divides into three main sections: (1) Environment; (2) Ritual; and (3) Creative Arts. The first of these locates the island in its physical setting and explores not only the island’s spheres of spatiality but also the broader aquatic and terrestrial environment in which the island is located (Ginoza et al. 2020, 101, 109). The discussion then looks at Enoshima in connection with ritual, and specifically, religious/touristic pilgrimage to the island. The section on creative arts

explores depictions of Enoshima through representative examples of art and music as reproduced and imagined in the many works that take the island as their main subject matter. In this part of the discussion, select artwork is explored in connection with how the island is represented and what it means in the field of island studies. The discussion closes with a study of the piece of koto music mentioned at the start of this article. These sections interconnect to help show the vitality of this particular island—a model that could be applied to other islands—and embraces space and place in ways that contribute to a plurality of interdisciplinary island studies.

Environment

On reaching Katase-Enoshima (片瀬江ノ島) train station in Fujisawa City (藤沢市), Kanagawa Prefecture (神奈川県), I walked across the Benten Bridge (弁天橋)—named after a deity (discussed later)—over the Sakai River (境川) and onto the Enoshima Benten Bridge (江の島弁天橋), a crossing of nearly 400 m for pedestrians to reach the island.² Another bridge, Enoshima Ōhashi (江の島大橋), which is 324 m long and opened in 1962, runs adjacent to the walkway and is for vehicles. Together, the two bridges are recognized within “the 100 most beautiful bridges of Kanagawa” (Navitime Japan n.d.) and contribute to the making of Enoshima as an attraction within a web of heritage signifiers and signifieds. They engender an intersection of inter-island contact, extending the domain of both the mainland and the small island across a liminal space to the sacred island.

Enoshima is administered within Fujisawa City in Kanagawa Prefecture. As a tidal island (*shio no shima* [潮の島]), Enoshima becomes a tied island (*rikukeitō* [陸繋島]) at low tide, with the appearance of a sandbank tombolo that links it to the mainland. It has an area of 0.38 km², a circumference of 5 km, and an elevation of 60 m (Ritō-kei n.d.). However, in this setting of small islandness, as a site of intense domestic cultural tourism and cultural heritage, the number of people who visit Enoshima, which is primarily as day tourists, is estimated to be a staggering seven million annually (Kawasaki 2017). This socially active island is, therefore, a location that is particularly attractive to short-term visitors due to its environment and culture, which are cardinal attributes that are reflected in some other forms of cultural representation that also contribute to the making of Enoshima as island heritage.

Referred to by the Japanophile Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) as a “beautiful high green mass, an island foliage-covered, rising out of the water” (1997, 85) during his travels in Japan, the scenic locale described by Hearn has changed over time. Indeed, Enoshima’s contemporary environmental setting reveals much reshaping, especially since the mid-twentieth century as a result of anthropogenic encroachment in the form of construction. An exploration of such environmental transformation illustrates the changing setting in which cultural heritage has been consolidated within a context of change. While Enoshima may still retain such prettifying depictions, the urban impact on the island has been far-reaching (fig. 3).



FIGURE 3. Contemporary view of Enoshima (Google Earth 2021).

While noting the importance of considering the instability of islands in connection with “upward, downward, outward, and inward” (Johnson 2020, 24) change, in the case of Enoshima, such geographic reshaping as a result of human influence has been a part of Enoshima’s heritage assemblage.

While Enoshima’s lateral expansion is striking (discussed later), another type of visible change to the island’s space has been through vertical development. Within its physical landmass, the island has an added sphere of “vertical urbanism” (Grydehøj 2015, 104), although this is by no means comparable to some island cities (e.g., New York and Hong Kong). On Enoshima, human intervention through vertical development has included the building of structures that cater especially to the island’s ritualistic needs, the tourist industry, and for recreational yachting. Amongst a small number of residential buildings are many other structures that serve visiting tourists, including the Enoshima Sea Candle (江の島シーキャンドル) (observation lighthouse), which is a 60 m observation tower and lighthouse towering above the island when viewed from the mainland. While verticality has impacted much on the Enoshima’s space, it has at the same time enshrined the island with many religious and touristic heritage sites that contribute to its island gaze.

The downward dynamics of Enoshima are concerned predominantly with the natural erosion of its land to form a complex of caves. To the west of the island is Enoshima Iwaya (江の島岩屋), a small network of sea caves (Fujisawa City Tourism Association n.d.). This site has long had religious associations with Buddhism and Shintōism, particularly with the idea that it is the home of a dragon god. As part of the island’s tourism industry, the caves were opened to the public in 1993 with several routes. Interestingly, in

connection with one route that is not open to the public, “there is a legend that the cave . . . is connected to Mt. Fuji” (Travel Enoshima 2021), Japan’s highest mountain and visually connected to Enoshima (discussed later). Such downward dynamics of island space help show how Enoshima is extended beyond what is seen on its surface land mass, and how such downward space helps construct a site of island heritage.

Just as many other islands have been connected to mainlands and other islands by bridges (Baldacchino 2007) and other forms of connectivity (Leung et al. 2017), so too does Enoshima extend outward in the form of bridging and land reclamation, which are major urban features that have transformed the space of the island. As part of Japan’s island bridging process, where not only the main islands of Honshū, Kyūshū (九州), and Shikoku (四国) are connected (Hokkaidō is linked to Honshū by a tunnel), there are many small islands connected to nearby mainlands. While a bridge to Enoshima was built in 1891 (The Agency for Cultural Affairs n.d.), before this date, sightseeing visitors to the island would make the crossing by way of the sandbar formed between Enoshima and the mainland. Various changes to the bridge(s) have since been made (Enoshima Maniac 2002a).

A large part of Enoshima in the present day lies on a very flat area just above sea level, part of which was reclaimed, with the development of a marina, in preparation for the 1964 Olympics (Sabin 2009). On its east coast, around one third of the island’s land size is nowadays occupied by car parks, marinas, and adjoining piers (fig. 3). This large area helps explain the destination of the many cars I had seen earlier on my visit—they were simply crossing the bridge to park on the island’s shores and presumably for convenience, to save walking across the bridge. This change to Enoshima expanded the island’s circumference from 4 km to 5 km (Sabin 2009).

Shōten-jima (聖天島) (Shōten Island) is the name of a former islet just off the shore of Enoshima, which, from the 1960s, was de-islanded and nowadays is part of the reclamation site that is now Shōten-jima Park (聖天島公園) (Enoshima Maniac 2002b) (fig. 4).



FIGURE 4. Shōten Island (Google Earth 2021).

There is also a part of the island that has been named an island because of its shape and resemblance to the other former islets. The name of this island is Sazae Island (さざえ島) (named after the turban shell, a well-known local delicacy), which is a concrete (art) monument that was completed in 1999 and shaped in part like its namesake (fig. 5).

The inward dynamics of island space would typically involve the natural erosion of land, although with human intervention, islands are sometimes cut with waterways. While the former would have had an impact on Enoshima because of the island's smallness, the latter has not been a factor affecting its size.



FIGURE 5. Sazae Island (Google Earth 2021).

However, Enoshima's environment of changing dynamics should be considered in a broader geocultural setting. Not only is the island literally linked to the mainland by both a tombolo (for part of the day) and two artificial bridges, it is also part of a broader natural setting of landscapes that take into consideration Sagami Bay, which is a popular seaside resort area, and also Mount Fuji, which can be viewed from Enoshima and the mainland, offering a visual spectacle that includes culturally significant sites of ritual importance. It is here that the place of Enoshima is conceived within a broader environmental context, one, as discussed in the following sections, that has been captured in cultural artefacts that celebrate the complexity of islands, their settings, and their cultural meaning.

Ritual

There is much ritual connected to Enoshima. This is especially evident in the form of pilgrimage to the island, where Enoshima's inherent appeal is linked to Japanese belief systems, but it is also apparent in representations of the place of the island as found within some forms of creative arts (see next section). Such ritualistic behaviour provides examples that help reinforce Enoshima as island heritage where travel is part of a religious touristic "island lure" (Baldacchino 2010). Adding to its attraction and relating to a

“geography of religions in Japan” (Matsui 2014), the sacred island is also “considered to be one of Eastern Japan’s most famous ‘power spots’” (Gaitanidis 2012, 354), a spiritual phenomenon intersecting mystical space, cultural place, and ritualist belief (Carter 2018; Hughes 2010). Whether island or mountain power spots, such settings are particularly attractive to “domestic tourists [who] are reported to have felt spiritually rejuvenated and mentally refreshed by visiting . . . difficult-to-access sites” (Thompson 2009, 59). As early as the Edo period, Enoshima was well known for the number of pilgrims who made the journey there to pay homage to the syncretic goddess, Benzaiten (Kawasaki 2017; Nenzi 2008). This form of ritualistic travel as a type of domestic cultural tourism and pilgrimage (Coleman and Elsner 1995) continues to the present day with many day-trippers making a visit to Enoshima (Suzuki et al. 2011).³

According to Shintō belief, the goddess of music and fortune, Benzaiten, is enshrined on Enoshima (fig. 6), as she is on a number of other small island locations, including Itsuku-shima in Hiroshima Prefecture and Chikubu-shima in Shiga Prefecture (Faure 2015, 207; Johnson 2021b; Schumacher 2012, 2013; Suwa 2017). The connection between Benzaiten and Enoshima is embedded in the mythological origins of the island (see Johnson 2021b):

According to the *Enoshima engi emaki* 江島縁起絵巻, the island of Enoshima in Sagami Bay resulted from an earthquake in 552, during the reign of Emperor Kinmei 欽明. At that time, a heavenly maiden appeared in the clouds and descended on it. She was the third daughter of the dragon king of Munetsunō(chi) 無熱惱(地) Pond (also called Munecchi 無熱地), and the elder sister of King Yama. She seduced and tamed the five-headed dragon of the Tsumura Lake 津村, who had devastated the area. Subsequently, his misdeeds ended, and the mountain called Tatsunoku-chi emerged. After becoming the “bright” deity of Enoshima (Enoshima Myōjin), Benzaiten appeared to a series of eminent ascetics and monks who subsequently fabricated images of her. (Faure 2015, 213)



FIGURE 6. Notice board at Enoshima Shrine showing two forms of Benzaiten. Photo by author 2019.

On the island, and of importance to touristic pilgrims to Enoshima, are two images of Benzaiten. While “this is a recent arrangement” (Faure 2015, 213), in connection with music, it is the Myōon Benzaiten that depicts Benzaiten playing a *biwa* (琵琶) (four-string lute). While reinforcing Enoshima as a heritage site, the connection between Benzaiten and music is embodied on the island in representations of the goddess holding the biwa and off the island through pieces of music named after Enoshima, as discussed in the next section.

Creative Arts

The connection between islands and the creative arts has frequently featured in island studies research and usually focusses on practices produced on a specific island (e.g., Favell 2016; Johnson 2015, 2019; Johnson and Kuwahara 2017; Meyers 2020; Nolasco 2019; Qu 2019, 2020). In this article, however, as a way of extending the cultural geography of Enoshima, the island is discussed in connection with its appearance in two representative art forms, woodblock prints (*ukiyo-e* [浮世絵]) and traditional music (*hōgaku* [邦楽]), that have been produced off the island (i.e., beyond its immediate physical land/water border). Such art is part of Enoshima’s cultural heritage and was especially crafted during the Edo period. For example, as discussed below, as well as some traditional music referencing the island in a song title and song text, Enoshima has been particularly visible in woodblock prints, which are typically—not exclusively—works that depict the island from the Honshū mainland in what might be compared to the idea of “creative geographies” (Hawkins 2015). It is in this broader cultural domain that I look at the creative geography of Enoshima, not emanating from the island *per se* but fashioned about the island because of its ritualistic significance as and within Japanese heritage. That is, in this creative context, “the easiest way to conceptualize . . . [the] interpretation of heritage is through the idea of representation” (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, 2).

Enoshima is depicted in a number woodblock prints from the Edo period, which consolidates the island’s importance as a heritage site of ritual pilgrimage (Enoshima Maniac 2002c; Kure 1960; Kawasaki 2017). Artists such as Hokusai Katsushika (葛飾北斎) (1760–1849), Kuniyoshi Utagawa (歌川國芳) (1797–1861), and Hiroshige Utagawa (歌川広重) (1797–1858) have depicted Enoshima in their work. Acknowledging that features of the island might be open to artistic interpretation within such art, there are some aspects that help reaffirm the significance of the island’s characteristics in its cultural setting.

Hokusai Katsushika explored the scenery of Enoshima in some of his art. For example, in his print of the early 1830s entitled *Sōshū Enoshima* (相州江の島) (Enoshima in Sagami Province), from the series *Fugaku sanjū rokkei* (富嶽三十六景) (Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji), the island is foregrounded against a backdrop showing a distinct snow-capped Mount Fuji, which adds its own emblematic significance as Japan’s largest and sacred mountain (fig. 7). Clearly visible on Enoshima is a small village nestled below a forest with a pagoda towering above. The causeway to the island and leading to its main

street and shrine is depicted with a number of people making the journey to or from the island.



FIGURE 7. *Sōshū Enoshima* (Enoshima in Sagami Province). The Howard Mansfield Collection, Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (public domain).

Hiroshige Utagawa also made several prints of the island, such as *Sōshū Enoshima Benzaiten kaichō sankei gunshū no zu* (相州江之嶋弁才天開帳参詣群集之図) (Pilgrimage of Female Entertainers to Sōshū Enoshima to Pay Homage to Benzaiten) and *Katase, Shichimen-zan yori umibe o miru* (片瀬自七面山見海辺) (Katase: View of the Seashore from Mount Shichimen). In the latter print, part of Enoshima's shoreline and coastal area that existed before it was reclaimed is depicted. Not only are islets and rocks clearly visible in the print, but the tombolo that joins the island to its mainland is also a key feature, which includes a number of people making their way to or from Enoshima. With a somewhat distant view of Mount Fuji in the background, the print is one of many similar artworks that not only help depict a scenic view but also help consolidate Enoshima as an important island within a sphere of creative practice that directly contributes to the making of one particular Japanese island in terms of its broader cultural heritage and wider geographic surroundings.

Such art helps in understanding island heritage in several ways. Notwithstanding artistic licence, historical artwork can offer a depiction of an island that can help in discerning its changing landscape, including urban development, construction, and land reclamation. Also, such artwork can contribute to the creation of cultural heritage in terms of the affirmation of place, and it is with this notion that Enoshima is produced as a place

through a geographic imagination that locates the island not always on its own, or even seen as an island, but often within a broader environmental setting that includes other pictorial reference points, including distinct dichotomies such as island/mainland, Enoshima/Mount Fuji, and isolation/accessibility.⁴ Of importance in the consolidation of Enoshima as cultural heritage is that the place of the island is not constructed on its own but rather within a wider geographic frame of reference.

On the island itself, and in its touristic setting, there is also artwork in the form of touristic signage and maps that help reinforce a perception of Enoshima as a location that is entrenched with symbolic references to cultural heritage and an imagined past. For example, a pictorial map of Enoshima [Shintō] Shrine (江島神社) includes a creative representation of the island that does little to depict its physical environment in an authentic way (fig. 8). The overall shape of the map is similar to a biwa, which is the musical instrument played by Benzaiten, and the circumferential shape of Enoshima is depicted with an outline from well before any form of land reclamation. The island is shown with three steep mountainous peaks, which are disproportionate to the width of the island and with a form very similar to the *kanji* (ideograph) for mountain (山), along with Shōten Island, the islet just off Enoshima's shoreline before it was de-islanded with land reclamation. A bridge linking the island to the mainland is shown, along with a small settlement in front of the Shintō shrine gate (*torii* [鳥居]) that marks the entrance to Enoshima Shrine. Several landmarks of touristic interest are depicted, including the dragon's palace (Wadatsumi no Miya [龍宮]) and Enoshima Sea Candle. A striking misrepresentation on the map is Enoshima's lack of greenery: just a few trees are shown, some at the site of Shōten Island and a few more towards the island's peak.



FIGURE 8. Pictorial map of Enoshima. Photo by author, 2019.

This imagery helps reinforce a contemporary perspective on how Enoshima is culturally imagined as an icon of a bygone era, albeit with some contemporary landmarks. It is a very small island steeped in cultural heritage; it is offshore yet within a short walking/driving distance from the mainland; and it has a distinct connection with music by association with the deity Benzaiten.

The significance of the biwa and its association with Benzaiten is immediately noticeable when arriving at Enoshima Shrine. As well as the information boards in the shape of this instrument, which has been known in Japan since its establishment within court music (*gagaku* [雅楽]) around 1300 years ago, at the shrine's entrance there is a sign board that is also in the shape of an upright biwa (fig. 9) and states the name of the shrine ("Enoshima-jinja"), its recognition as one of the three nationally important shrines dedicated to Benzaiten ("Nihon Sandai Benzaiten" [日本三大弁財天]), the Hōjō 北条 family crest,⁵ and a figurative picture of a celestial maiden (Karyōbinga [迦陵頻伽]) playing a

transverse flute. The musical instrument symbolism connects directly with the image of Benzaiten playing a biwa and also reinforces the shrine and the island as living heritage in the national landscape. Around the island, there are other such notice boards in the shape of the biwa, along with souvenir miniature forms of the instrument amongst other island emblems.



FIGURE 9. Information board at Enoshima Shrine. Photo by author, 2019.

Just as the lake island of Chikubu-shima is represented and imagined as a significant location connecting myth, island, and music in the traditional performing arts (e.g., koto music and *nō* theatre) (Johnson 2021b), so too has Enoshima been symbolized in traditional music performances.⁶ One such piece for koto is “Enoshima no Kyoku” (江の島の曲) (Song of Enoshima) from 1777 with music by Yamada Kengyō (山田検校) (1757–1817) and an unknown lyricist (The International Shakuhachi Society 2021; Tsuge 1983, 116–18).⁷ Such is the significance of Enoshima and its connection to Benzaiten, “it is said that the devout Yamada confined himself in the shrine for three weeks, offering prayers to the goddess before he got the idea for his maiden work” (Tsuge 1983, 116).

Inherent in its lyrics are several signifiers of islandness, including sea/tide, waves, and shells. Enoshima is a tidal island, and the sea is important in defining its physical borders with the tidal flows that (un)cover the tombolo. In the song text, such features are clearly depicted (in translation): “When the tide is out, Can easily be reached, By foot—A beautiful scene Unrivalled in art” (Tsuge 1983, 116–18). Such accessibility has allowed Enoshima to be reached on land and across a narrow distance, which would allow a relatively easy flow of travelers to reach the island and experience its islandness as a result of tidal flows. In this sense, islandness is present as both an island surrounded by water and a tidal island that is joined by a causeway to its mainland as determined by tidal flows.

Enoshima's islandness is expressed in the lyrics by also stressing the context of waves, here, "The voice of the waves, Sounds the Truth", and also noted when rising up to the island's cliffs (Tsuge 1983, 116–18). Such ocean signifiers are enhanced with the mention of shells of various types, along with mention of fishermen. Also in the song is mention of Benzaiten: "The famed Goddess, Of the Muse, Plucks the strings, Of her lute", thereby stressing the connection between island, biwa, and religion (Tsuge 1983, 116–18). In the context of the creative arts, Enoshima is imagined within a fluid geography that consolidates the island as living heritage. Such practices help show how "an Island *is* a World; yet an Island *engages* the World" (Baldacchino 2005, 248).

Conclusion

This study of Enoshima has shown how a small tidal island is the focus of several kinds of heritage production. The island's immediate environment of land and sea is a location that has undergone immense change in the latter half of the twentieth century. This has included bridging and land reclamation projects that have extended the island's space and offered a more modern conduit along which to travel to and from Enoshima. Such modernization adds a layer of contemporaneity upon the island's traditional culture, but while tradition is often at the centre of heritage signification, Enoshima's remodelling contributes new types of heritage that interlink the island's present and its past.

Environmental heritage was shown to extend Enoshima's aquatic/terrestrial border, locating the island not only from a mainland gaze, as represented in the many woodblock prints that portray the location, but also beyond to include Japan's sacred peak, Mount Fuji. With such a setting, Enoshima is situated within an assemblage of islandness and mainlandness along with broader environmental icons that foreground Enoshima on the one hand, yet extend its space and place to other territorial spheres on the other hand.

The signification of Enoshima's island heritage was shown to exist not only on the island, with icons of ritualistic tradition that are inherently linked to Japanese belief systems, but also with creative cultural artefacts that have been produced outside the island. It is with such objects that Enoshima's heritage has been crafted in heterogeneous, geo-cultural spaces that offer new ways of interpreting island culture and therefore contribute to an expanded notion of island studies where heritage production is discerned not only on an island by definition but also within other cultural sites that have island signification at their core.

Notes

1. Japan does have some islands that are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, including the Ogasawara Islands (小笠原群島), Okinoshima (沖ノ島), and a number of the Nansei Islands (南西諸島).
2. The river at this point is sometimes called Katase River (片瀬川).
3. The extent of Enoshima as a site of touristic consumption is evident through the numerous YouTube videos about the island, many of which take the viewer on a tour around its scenic and ritualist landscape or

promote the local region more broadly as a touristic site with many attractions to suit diverse tastes. These create another layer of tourism heritage that intersects with the other types of cultural heritage discussed in this article.

4. Such depictions of Enoshima also fall within the typical island design that is so often used when representing islands (Baldacchino 2005).

5. Tokimasa Hōjō (北条時政) (1138–1215) was the first regent of the Kamakura shogunate, and his family crest has its origins in Enoshima, where it represented the dragon's scales.

6. Although beyond the scope of the present article, another area of heritage construction that has geographical links to Enoshima and should be mentioned is the notion of “Shōnan Sound” (湘南サウンド), which was a popular term from the 1960s and connected with the music of youth culture of the time.

7. Also written as “江の島曲.” A piece called “Enoshima” is known also in several traditional styles of *shamisen* (three-string lute) performance, including Itchū-bushi (一中節) and *nagauta* (長唄). On Enoshima, there is a monument commemorating Yamada Kengyō. In the Itchū-bushi, the piece is also known as “Sumie Island” (墨絵の島).

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