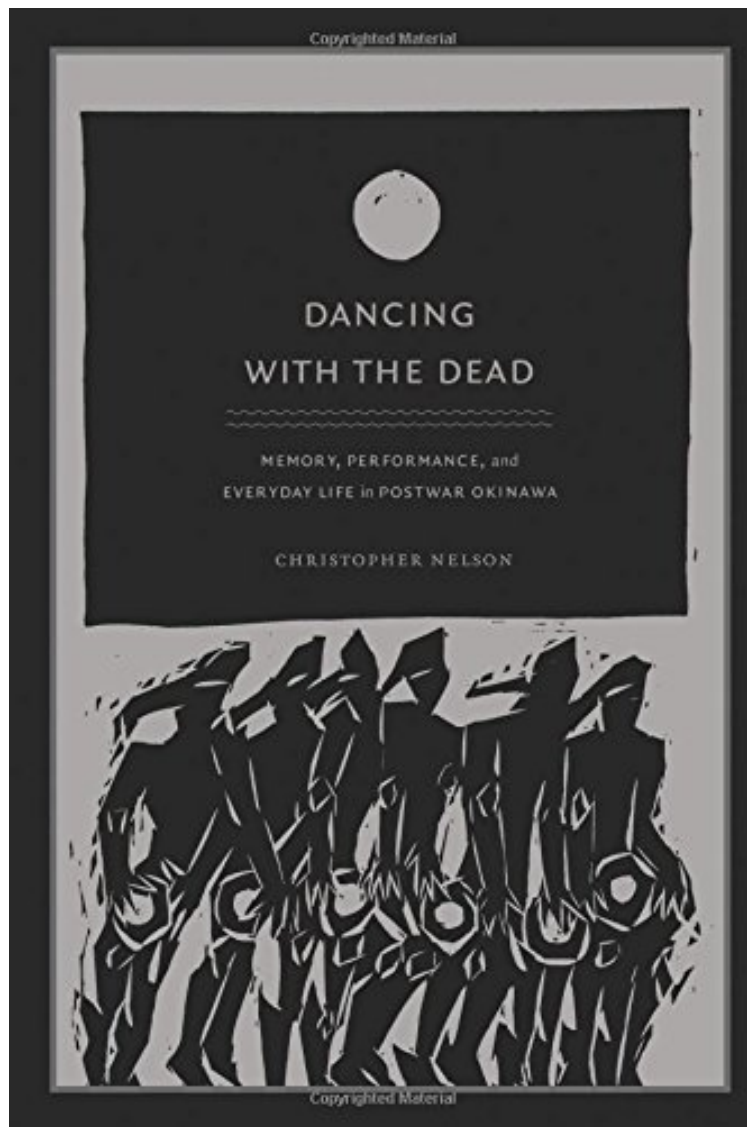


[Free read ebook] Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance, and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society)

## **Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance, and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society)**

*Christopher T. Nelson*

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**Christopher T. Nelson : Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance, and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance, and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OkinawaphileBy OkinawaphileAn important publication. Well researched and referenced. Using "Eisa" as a vehicle for the study is brilliant. A scholarly publication, it will not be an "easy read" for everyone, but well worth the effort. Highly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in the ethnology of the Ryukyu Islands.

Challenging conventional understandings of time and memory, Christopher T. Nelson examines how contemporary Okinawans have contested, appropriated, and transformed the burdens and possibilities of the past. Nelson explores the work of a circle of Okinawan storytellers, ethnographers, musicians, and dancers deeply engaged with the legacies of a brutal Japanese colonial era, the almost unimaginable devastation of the Pacific War, and a long American military occupation that still casts its shadow over the islands. The ethnographic research that Nelson conducted in Okinawa in the late 1990s and his broader effort to understand Okinawans' critical and creative struggles was inspired by his first visit to the islands in 1985 as a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps. Nelson analyzes the practices of specific performers, showing how memories are recalled, bodies remade, and actions rethought as Okinawans work through fragments of the past in order to reconstruct the fabric of everyday life. Artists such as the popular Okinawan actor and storyteller Fujiki Hayato weave together genres including Japanese stand-up comedy, Okinawan celebratory rituals, and ethnographic studies of war memory, encouraging their audiences to imagine other ways to live in the modern world. Nelson looks at the efforts of performers and activists to wrest the Okinawan past from romantic representations of idyllic rural life in the Japanese media and reactionary appropriations of traditional values by conservative politicians. In his consideration of *eisa*, the traditional dance for the dead, Nelson finds a practice that reaches beyond the expected boundaries of mourning and commemoration, as the living and the dead come together to create a moment in which a new world might be built from the ruins of the old.

Christopher T. Nelson put in plenty of legwork for this work of social anthropology -- the writer is more participant than observer. Nelson's own memories of Okinawa loop back to the summer of 1985, when, as a newly recruited lieutenant in the U.S. Marines, he recalls standing outside a bar in the Okinawan city of Koza, soaking up the "smell of the street, asphalt and exhaust, frying oil, sewage." Seasoned by experience, and with a more mature slant on the concealed intentions of Washington and Tokyo, Nelson finds Okinawan performers active in reactivating and transmitting the past, through music, film, recitation, story telling and dramatic monologues. Stephen Mansfield, "Okinawa chronicles: 10 books that show the many faces of Japan's 'island paradise'" in *The Japan Times* From the Publisher "Dancing with the Dead is a beautifully written, deeply evocative, and smartly argued book about the ways in which the past intrudes into the present and how memory is given shape, recognition, and vigor through storytelling of various forms. This will be an important book not only for and about Okinawan history but also about the times of continued violence and militarism in which we live." --Anne Allison, author of *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* From the Back Cover "Dancing with the Dead" is a beautifully written, deeply evocative, and smartly argued book about the ways in which the past intrudes into the present and how memory is given shape, recognition, and vigor through storytelling of various forms. This will be an important book not only for and about Okinawan history but also about the times of continued violence and militarism in which we live." --Anne Allison, author of "Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination"