

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

“RATHER A HUNDRED SINGING LABORERS THAN A SINGLE PROFESSIONAL”:

IMAGINING THE JAPANESE MASSES

IN THE UTAGOE MOVEMENT, 1948-PRESENT

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## **Introduction**

### **On Music as Cultural and Intellectual History**

This dissertation offers a historical study of a Japanese Communist Party-aligned singing movement in postwar Japan known as the Utagoe (“Singing Voice”) movement (1948-Present, henceforth referred to as “Utagoe” with capitalization for short). Overall, the six chapters included in this chapter are organized on both chronological and thematical bases, exploring different historical moments in (and, in the case of Chapter 1, leading up to) the history of the Utagoe movement from around 1948 and to the late 2010s. In this sense, the present study is historical in its orientation, with a keen awareness of past contexts and the limited breadth of surviving historical sources in constructing a historical narrative arch. Insofar as the dissertation’s focus lies in historical groups and individuals who sought cultural and historical significance in their activities, the present study is a work of cultural history with an element of intellectual history by way of musical subject matters.

Overall, this dissertation takes historical, intellectual, and ethnographic approaches to multiple subjects that may be categorized as “musical” in (what has now become) a conventional sense. The title of the dissertation, “Rather a Hundred Singing Laborers than a Single Professional,” reflects this dynamism. Attributed to the Utagoe movement’s founding figure Seki Akiko (1899-1973), the phrase was referenced by several active members of the Utagoe movement during my extended research in Japan between the fall of 2016 and the summer of 2017. In those instances, the members referenced the phrase to invoke Seki’s resolve during the formative years of the Utagoe movement in the late 1940s to create a movement for the masses, rather than for and by the select few professional musicians. Taken together, the Utagoe

movement has been characterized as a music-making movement in two senses of the word: music was to be not only performed but also created anew for the masses.

The phrase “Rather a Hundred Singing Laborers than a Single Professional” derives from two articles Seki Akiko wrote in reflection of May Day in 1946. It is worth noting, however, the phrase does not appear as such in either of the articles. In her article “Theory of the Utagoe movement” (*Utagoe undō no riron*) written in 1956, Seki recounts her experience of conducting the crowd at a May Day event in 1946 as follows: “Since conducting May Day songs on the first postwar May Day (the seventeenth [May Day in Japan]), I have thought time to time that, in front of this crowd of 300,000 people, a chorus of hundred people is needed rather than a single individual, no matter how talented [that person may be].”<sup>1</sup> In contrast, in an earlier article from 1947 which likewise recalls her experience on the 1946 May Day, Seki calls for the unity of laborers and classically trained performers: “I want to create a laborer’s music school. . . . Individualized discipline like the piano or violin, together with a large chorus of laborers and a large orchestra! I want to someday realize a powerful yet beautiful performance by such an ensemble, formidable (*attōteki*) in both size and quality.”<sup>2</sup> It would appear that, while the 1946 May Day definitely left a lasting impression on Seki, her resolve saw some change between 1947 and 1956.

Seen in this light, the phrase “Rather a Hundred Singing Laborers than a Single Professional” reveals several points of inquiry that can be explored from historical, intellectual, and ethnographic angles. First, as suggested above, Seki’s own reflection of the 1946 May Day changed over time (“historical”). Second, in the context of twentieth-century Japan (and

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<sup>1</sup> Akiko Seki, “Utagoe undō no riron: ongaku towa nani ka,” *Chisei* 3 no. 5 (April 1956), 58.

<sup>2</sup> Akiko Seki, “Watashi no yume furui shinjin,” *Jinmin Sensen* 3 no. 12 & 13 (July 1947), 47.

beyond), the idea of creating “a large chorus of laborers,” or organic cooperation between the masses and professional specialists, belonged to a series of music-reforming impulses since before World War II that were justified in civilizational terms (“intellectual”). Third, as also illustrated above, Seki’s early postwar resolve was variously interpreted and invoked by subsequent self-proclaimed members of the Utagoe movement, even during the late 2010s when I was conducting my research (“ethnographic”). These are indeed the three main angles through which this dissertation will examine the Utagoe movement, its historical precedents, and other contemporary musical endeavor with the name *utagoe* in them.

I call the core concept that runs through this dissertation “musical reformism.” The phrase highlights a double emphasis on music as simultaneously an object and means of reform, broadly shared within the extended network of culturally concerned intellectuals with musical inclinations in Japan. In Hiromu Nagahara’s recent book (2017), this network of cultural critiques and conservatory-trained composers in the first half of the twentieth century is referred to as “music establishment” (*gakudan*).<sup>3</sup> To this music establishment, the ideology of music was supported by the two pillars of morality and nationhood. Under this imperative, morality and nationhood went hand in hand in the name of “culture,” the latter of which was to be cultivated for Japan and its people to be properly modern. Music in this context was both to be cultivated and to cultivate the Japanese masses in the image of the Japanese nation – whatever the Japanese nation looked or sounded like.

Building upon Nagahara’s emphasis on Japan’s music establishment, I regard music itself in the first half of the twentieth century as an establishment that was sustained by self-

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<sup>3</sup> Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie: Japan’s Pop Era and its Discontents* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 8

proclaimed musical reformists. To that end, this dissertation explores the construction process of music from both transregional and epistemological perspectives. In this vein, I approach music as an ongoing discourse and a historically constructed value system. In the present study, therefore, music in early twentieth-century Japan is treated as a moral regime, or an establishment unto itself, constructed and maintained by multiple parties, becoming a source of empowerment and participation.

Accordingly, this dissertation is not so much concerned with the institutional development of music following the Meiji Restoration as with the perception and mobilization of music for social reform in twentieth-century Japan based on vague ideas. By vagueness, I am referring to a state of uncertainty on the definitional level – for example, “Should 3.99999 be treated as 4?” or “Where is the boundary between liquid and gas?”.<sup>4</sup> In the contexts of the present study, the relevant vague ideas include “healthfulness,” “nation,” and “music,” all of which served as shared positive signifiers among the stakeholders which could be attached to particular writings, compositions, performances. Over the course of the twentieth century, various musical projects in Japan, including the Utagoe movement, operated under this principle. Functionally speaking, then, music was very much an ideology, with capacity to justify action and invite participation, than merely a system of (Western) scale, notation, and composition theory.

On the surface, the patterns of historical conceptualization of music encapsulated by “musical reformism” may seem straight-forward and top-down in structure: as part of the “civilized” culture, music must be cultivated in the image of the nation; once such music is in

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<sup>4</sup> For a concise discussion of vagueness, see Rosanna Keefe and Peter Smith, “Introduction: Theories of Vagueness,” in *Vagueness: a Reader*, eds. Rosanna Keefe and Peter Smith (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 1-6.

place, culture could help the Japanese nation realize its own modernity. But therein lay a slippage: just what was the Japanese essence that could be simultaneously timeless and modern? The assumption behind such a view of the Japanese essence was that “modernity” as the Japanese knew it in the early twentieth century was “Western” in form and spirit, ultimately incongruent with the Japanese essence. This mystique of an essence that could supposedly counter Western modernity lay at the center of various musical endeavors in Japan through the first half of the twentieth century, making its effect felt well into the 1960s. Of course, such a view of the national essence was not confined to the realm of music but rather across intellectual communities concerning philosophy, literature, and craftsmanship, to name a few. As I shall relate in the pages that follow, this dissertation is not a work of music history but rather history seen through music as a civilizational and cultural category-in-making.

### Overview of Previous Scholarship on Utagoe

Utagoe is a relatively new topic of research. Overall, existing scholarship on Utagoe remains fragmentary, mostly having appeared in different scholarly contexts. Before the 2010s, Utagoe remained largely a fringe topic for scholars of music specializing in Japan. By 2005, there appeared several articles with major segments on Utagoe, but they remained introductory in character. William P. Malm, an American ethnomusicologist renowned for his works on traditional music in Japan, remains the sole author of extended English-language articles on Utagoe. His article from 1984, titled “A Century of Proletarian Music in Japan,” introduces the Utagoe movement as the most recent (and current) addition to Japan’s “proletarian music” since

the eve of the Meiji Restoration.<sup>5</sup> In 1988, Malm also penned an article on Seki Akiko (1899-1973), Utagoe's founding figure, but the article likewise fell short of examining the Utagoe movement in the larger historical contexts of postwar Japan or music in Japan since the Meiji Restoration.<sup>6</sup>

Among Japanese-language scholarly writings, Hode Yoriyuki's article from 2003 was the first to call for a historical assessment of the Utagoe movement. Though rarely referenced in subsequent scholarship, Hode's article is a pioneering work on the Utagoe movement on several points. First, Hode recognized the significance of the labor movement in early postwar Japan as a contributing factor in the Utagoe movement's rapid growth in the 1950s. Second, he also noted the musical hybridity of Utagoe, most notably Japanese and foreign folk songs (the latter of which were dominated by Russian ones), as well as new compositions in support of the labor and peace movements. Lastly, in pointing out the dearth of "objective" scholarly research on Utagoe in comparison to Utagoe's own publications, Hode suggested the need for examining Utagoe's own historical narrative.<sup>7</sup>

Since Hode's article, the most comprehensive scholarly take on Utagoe to appear remains musicologist Chōki Seiji's chapter on Utagoe in *Postwar Music (Sengo no Ongaku, 2010)*. Chōki's chapter on Utagoe (based on his article series from 2006 that appeared the classical music magazine *Record Geijutsu*) is noteworthy for its attempt to locate the Utagoe movement in

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<sup>5</sup> William P. Malm, "A Century of Proletarian Music in Japan," *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 19, no.1 (June 1984): 175-196.

<sup>6</sup> William P. Malm, "Seki Akiko: the Red Primadonna of Japan," in *Music from the Middle Ages through the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Gwynn S. McPeek*, eds. Camelo P. Comberiati and Matthew C. Steel (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Yoriyuki Hode, "Utagoe undō no rekishiteki tenkai: 1946 nen kara 1960 nen o chūshin ni." *Erizabeto Ongaku Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō* 22, no. 1 (2002): 78.

the contexts of Japanese music history. Chōki argues that the Utagoe movement does not fit easily in the conventional music history literature, which prioritized works and composers of “art music” – that is, politically, the Utagoe movement was unmistakably partisan, consistently aligned with the Japanese Communist Party; musically, Utagoe did not leave behind a particular musical style that could be associated with it.<sup>8</sup> While Chōki does not provide an answer this conundrum, his chapter still is significant for clarifying the scholarly challenge that lies ahead in working through Utagoe’s musical, social movement, and political elements.

Likewise a musicologist by training, Watanabe Hiroshi published a book titled *The Singing People (Utau Kokumin*, 2000) with a chapter on Utagoe. Though written for a general audience, the book still reflects Watanabe’s attempts to study music beyond the confines of music history defined by professional composers and their works. The key concept in *The Singing People* is the nation, through which Watanabe examines various musical developments in twentieth-century Japan as “nation-making projects.” Under this characterization, the Utagoe movement appears in the final chapter of the book, following chapters on *shōka* (songs in music classes, as will be touched upon in Chapter 1) and prefectural anthems. In Watanabe’s frame of the nation, the mixed characteristics of the Utagoe movement as a Japanese Communist Party-aligned movement with the goal of creating Japan’s “national music” is not at all idiosyncratic: since the introduction of music as a concept and discipline in Japan following the Meiji Restoration, music was mobilized for community-making purposes ultimately in the image of the Japanese nation. In Watanabe’s characterization, Utagoe was one of the last instances in the series of nation-making musical projects in Japan; the movement’s decline since the 1970s can partly be attributed to the decline of the nation as an effective frame of community.

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<sup>8</sup> Seiji Chōki, *Sengo no ongaku: Geijutsu ongaku no poritikusu to poetikusu* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2010), 80-82.

As the dissertation's Bibliography indicates, there have also been scholarly works on Utagoe from scholars outside of the music history and musicology disciplines. One of the latest works, *Postwar History of Utagoe (Utagoe no Sengoshi, 2016)* was written by Kawanishi Hideya, a historian by training. His 2016 book is a culmination of his research on choral singing in Japan. As of 2020, Kawanishi remains the only historian to have been engaged in research on Utagoe for an extended period. A characteristic feature of Kawanishi's book is that, its title notwithstanding, Utagoe occupies only half of the chapters. Instead, the book contains several chapters before and after Utagoe, essentially establishing a historical narrative of choral singing in twentieth-century Japan with pre- and post-Utagoe phases. Though Kawanishi's focus on the Utagoe movement is confined to the late 1940s and 1950s as a result, his 2016 book nonetheless offers a way to historicize Utagoe in the context of twentieth-century Japanese history of singing.

It is worth mentioning that the previous scholarly writings on Utagoe listed above end their historical narrative around 1970. Indeed, while Kawanishi's book continues its narrative from the 1970s onward, he does so by means of different subject matters (mother's choruses and representations of the chorus in films), thereby ending his historical account of Utagoe in the 1960s. In comparison, the present study is more chronologically comprehensive, covering additional decades from the 1970s to the 2010s. In view of the general dearth of new scholarly works on Utagoe since 2016, filling this chronological lacuna is one of the dissertation's aims.

### Disciplinary and Historiographical Position

Though this dissertation is deeply grounded in the discipline of history in methodology and structure, it is ultimately hybrid in disciplinary position. As Chōki Seiji has pointed out in his

aforementioned book from 2010, Utagoe is situated on the crossroad of music and history, not having received comprehensive treatment in either discipline. In response, the present study expands upon English-language literature on cultural and intellectual history of early twentieth-century Japan (if they are to be treated as separate genres of history), as well as more recent Japanese-language works on musical projects in the same decades. Put together, this dissertation can be characterized as a historical account seen through music – more specifically, how music functioned as a nexus of action, interaction, and imagination. In this vein, the dissertation situates the Utagoe movement and its repertoires of music and action in the discursive space afforded by the moral regime of “modern” culture during Japan’s *longue durée* of the twentieth century.

This dissertation’s approach to music as a discursive space has been largely informed by Anglophone scholars’ turn to modernity as a discursive space since the early 2000s. In his seminal book *Overcome by Modernity* (2000), Harry Harootunian has pointed out the plural and constructive nature of modernity as a concept, historically present in multiple locations and constantly in development. He characterizes the discursive character of modernity as follows: “[t]he new modern life was figured first in discourse, as fantasy, before it was ubiquitously lived as experienced.”<sup>9</sup> The narrative Harootunian provides here is that of the belief(s) in the corrective, from the “inauthentic” to the “authentic” – that which was believed to be able to “recontextualize everydayness in historically specific forms.”<sup>10</sup> In a certain sense, the significance of modernity as a discursive space lies not in subsequent economic, cultural, or

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<sup>9</sup> Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 227.

political development but in the series of debates that ensued in clusters in different parts of the globe. From this perspective, such clusters of networks themselves render themselves to be units of analysis for intellectual and cultural history.

The 2000s saw the publication of several notable works on cultural discourse in prewar Japan emphasizing the importance of modernity as a discursive centerpiece. In *House and Home in Modern Japan* (2003), Jordan Sand describes modernity as knowledge of “a set of conditions found elsewhere,” reactions against which are essentially his subjects of analysis.<sup>11</sup> In Sand’s account, the idea of “culture” (*bunka*) figures as the common vernacular and discursive area among the historical actors he examines. Sand characterizes culture as “ahistorical” in its language of universalism, yet powerful as a hegemonic language thanks to its “universalist justification.”<sup>12</sup> In analyzing the manners in which terms like “everyday life” (*seikatsu*) and “culture” functioned as signifiers for a modern Japanese life, Sand builds upon Harootunian’s characterization of modernity as constituted by multiple co-existing visions. From this standpoint, Sand suggests, for example, that the notion of the Japanese middle class for suburban developers depended on their shared understanding of a “modern” middle class rather than the economic existence of such a class.

Miriam Silverberg has characterized such developments in the public sphere in terms of “consumer-subjects” in Japan between the 1920s and early 1940s. In *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense* (2007), Silverberg grounds her historical analysis of “consumption” in the contexts of Japan’s mass culture and political imaginations. Silverberg conceives of consumption not so much in

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<sup>11</sup> Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 204.

economic but in cultural terms. As she unequivocally declares, “producers of modern Japanese culture were consumers: all were privy to the imagery being circulated,” for “production presumes consumption, and vice versa.”<sup>13</sup> Under this characterization, productions of the so-called “Modern Girl,” “Modern Boy,” and “jazz music,” as well as the label “erotic-grotesque nonsense” (*ero guro nansensu*), were all co-constitutive elements that sustained the seemingly Manichean struggle between (proper) modernity and decadence. Silverberg’s conception of what is essentially the “consumer-producer” in the context of early twentieth-century Japan finds much echo in the dissertation.

Both recent in its appearance and closest to the present study in the area of study, Hiromu Nagahara’s *Tookyo Boogie-Woogie* (2017) generally follows the perspectives on culture and modernity described thus far. Nagahara offers a historical account of music as a part of the larger “cultural hierarchies” sustained by “elite practitioners and gatekeepers in various fields.”<sup>14</sup> As noted earlier, Nagahara’s main unit of historical analysis is Japan’s “music establishment,” a network of musicians and critics who concerned themselves with the maintenance of public morals through rectifying the wrongs in Japan’s music scenes. In many ways, Nagahara’s structural approach to Japan’s music establishment is analogous to many of the historical inquiries that will be made in this dissertation. Most importantly, the dissertation will take into account the paradoxically hierarchical nature of musical reformism in its mission of creating a proper form of music in Japanese society.

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<sup>13</sup> Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: the Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Nagahara, 8.

Silverberg's notion of imagery consumption is useful in navigating recent Japanese-language scholarship on musical projects in twentieth-century Japan. Between the late 2000s and early 2010s, several Japan-based musicologists, sociologists, and literary scholars examined what may be called “musical culture” (*ongaku bunka*) from both social and cultural production angles. A notable strand from these works was produced by Tonoshita Tatsuya, who edited several edited volumes between the late 2000s and early 2010s. In the introduction to one of the edited volumes on wartime musical projects (2008), Tonoshita calls for examining the idea of “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*) in the context of the drive for “national culture” (*kokumin bunka*). Both cases display a wide range of participating groups from the public sphere that participated in the discourse and making of “national culture,” from the print media to professional composers and amateur performers.<sup>15</sup> Tonoshita’s perspective on Japan’s “musical culture,” which he argues was solidified during the interwar period, is in many ways analogous to Louise Young’s approach to Japanese imperialism between 1931 and 1945 in *Japan’s Total Empire* (1998). Young’s concluding remark on the paradox of total empire will prove quite appropriate for various musical endeavors that will be explored in the dissertation: “at once discrete and interconnected, plural and singular, methodological and random, overdetermined and contingent.”<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, the historical narrative provided in this dissertation will comprise of aspirations, both fulfilled and unfulfilled, forward-looking and retrospective, and simultaneously vague and specific. In the end, *utagoe* was a heterogeneous phenomenon in its interpretations

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<sup>15</sup> Tatsuya Tonoshita, “‘Sensō, media, ongaku’ no manazashi,” in *Sōryokusen to ongaku bunka: oto to koe no sensō*, eds. Tatsuya Tonoshita and Seiji Chōki (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 415.

and their respective points of origin, and points of contention therein were products of the historical contexts leading up to their respective present moment.

### A Note on the Historical Materials Examined

Due to challenging circumstances surrounding historical materials I consulted during my research, a brief note on my sources is in order. Despite historians' long-held concern with the "sanctity of the archive," the reality is that not all materials are preserved equal. Primary source materials related to the Utagoe movement are poorly preserved despite the continued existence of Utagoe's national headquarter Ongaku Center in Tokyo. To be sure, Ongaku Center today (2020) has an archive named after Utagoe's founding figure Seki Akiko and her daughter Ono Teruko, as well as complete volumes of past issues of Utagoe's periodical, *Utagoe Shimbun*. While the archive contains documents and photographs unseen and unreferenced in scholarly works on Utagoe up till 2020, the preserved materials are fragmentary, undocumented, and few in number – indeed, I would told by the staff upon my visits in 2016-2017 that even "they d[id] not know what exactly is in there." In any case, I consulted with as many surviving materials I could find at the time of my research between 2016 and 2019, including Ongaku Center's in-house publications that are available in public libraries.

To make up for the limited nature of preserved materials in Utagoe's own archive and public libraries, I have collected two kinds of materials via ethnographic research. I have interviewed over fifty individuals over the course of my research between 2016 and 2019, made possible thanks to personal connections I have established as a member of an Utagoe-affiliated chorus between 2016 and 2017. The dissertation makes use of oral history gathered from these

interview sessions, usually to cross-reference or complement information attested in written sources. Interview sessions also brought the additional benefit of allowing access to personally preserved materials. These sources allowed me to study cases and developments in manners that previous scholarship were not able to – for example, Chapter 5 of the dissertation on *utagoe kissa* (“singing voice café”) would have been impossible to write without access to such privately preserved sources.

### Structural Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of three parts, each of which contains two chapters. The three parts are thematically distinct, while the chapters are arranged in a generally chronological order, from Chapter 1 to Chapter 6. To help familiarize the reader with core concepts and frames that will be explored in each two-chapter pair, I will provide introductory paragraphs at the beginning of each part. Details of individual chapters will be provided in these introductions. What follows below is a brief sketch of the themes that will be explored in the three parts of the dissertation.

Though covering different decades of the twentieth century, both chapters of Part I explore concepts concerning culture and music in twentieth-century Japan that would form the oldest layer of the Utagoe movement’s worldview. Broadly speaking, the two chapters of Part I explore how music became a discursive space and ideology unto itself in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, acquiring cultural and historical significance in the process. Though the Utagoe movement was a historical phenomenon that emerged in the context of postwar Japanese

Communist Party's cultural policy, the latter shared much in common with cultural and musical discourses in Japan leading up to 1945.

Part II of the dissertation offers in-depth study of two central ideas in the Utagoe movement between the 1950s and 1960s that appeared in Chapter 2: *tatakai* ("struggle") and *kokumin ongaku* ("national music"). Having entered formative Utagoe's vocabulary in the wake of the Japanese Communist Party's *minzoku dokuritsu* ("national independence") rhetoric in the early 1950s, these terms relegated both cultural and political significance to Utagoe's musical endeavors. The two concepts were mutually constitutive: while *tatakai* framed local protests, including labor strikes and anti-U.S. military base protests, unto the larger struggle to win Japan's independence from "American imperialism" and "monopoly capital," *kokumin ongaku* justified musical endeavors therein in terms of creating a body of music informed by the historic and continuing livelihood (*seikatsu*) of the Japanese ethno-nation (*minzoku*), through which Japan's cultural independence would be won.

The two chapters that make up Part III chiefly explore a phenomenon with the suffix *utagoe* hitherto academically unexplored beyond brief mentions: *utagoe kissa* ("singing voice coffeehouse"). A late-1950s neologism, *utagoe kissa* emerged as a commercial venue in sizable cities across Japan where patrons could engage in group singing and drinking. Although, as the suffix *utagoe* implies, the typical *utagoe kissa* included songs born from or incorporated into the Utagoe movement in its musical repertoire, *utagoe kissa* was ultimately a business establishment whose fad lasted only a decade. Nonetheless, *utagoe kissa* was a notable part of Japan's urban landscape between the late 1950s and early 1970s so that the term *utagoe* evokes nostalgia for *utagoe kissa* among Japan's baby boom generation today. As a continuing form of group singing

in Japan as of the late 2010s, *utagoe kissa* occupies a significant presence in the public memory surrounding the term *utagoe*.

## Part I

### Establishment of Music as Ideology in Twentieth-century Japan

The more we mutually learn about different countries' songs and poems, the more we learn about [different] manners of thinking and ways of expression; we can then make our works even richer, and we can also start talking about forms (*katachi*) that are better or not yet good enough, as well as national styles (*minzokuchō*). We will come to understand what makes them different from popular songs (*ryūkōka*) and vulgar songs (*zokkyoku*), and our tastes will eventually change. . . . I feel strongly that we must create more and more good songs (*ii uta*). I hope that this fifth edition will help brighten your livelihood (*seikatsu*), engender peaceful gatherings, assist difficult struggles (*tatakai*), and become a marching song toward a more livable country.<sup>17</sup>

Seki Akiko (1899-1973), afterword to the fifth volume of *Seinen Kashū* (1956)

Was there any direct historical precedent of the Utagoe movement? Among the few scholars who authored a historical overview of Utagoe, a couple of scholars have pointed to the Proletarian Musician's League (1929-1931, 1931-1934, or "PM" for short) as Utagoe's direct predecessor. One is William P. Malm, an American ethnomusicologist who remains the only author of article-length writings on Utagoe in the English-language. His 1984 historical survey titled "A Century of Proletarian Music in Japan" begins its narrative with the (in)famous *eejanaika* ("isn't it swell") song-and-dance phenomenon among the commoners of Edo on the eve of the Meiji Restoration in 1867, then moving on to the Proletarian Musician's League as a centerpiece of the next historical phase. In the final pages of the article, Malm zooms in on the Utagoe movement, characterizing it as the latest manifestation of Japan's proletarian music – a historical continuity further strengthened by the leadership role played by the soprano-turned-activist Seki Akiko (1899-1973) in both PM and Utagoe.<sup>18</sup> An early Japanese-language

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<sup>17</sup>*Seinen kashū*, ed. Seki Akiko (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1956), 141.

<sup>18</sup> William P. Malm, "A Century of Proletarian Music in Japan," *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 19, no. 1 (June 1984): 175-196.

academic journal article by Hode Yoriyuki from 2003 likewise regards Utagoe movement to be a spiritual successor of PM, but without any extended explanation.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, this seemingly simple historical question remains effectively unaddressed in Utagoe's institutional history. Take, for example, the brief historical introduction of Utagoe movement as presented on the website of the Nihon no Utagoe National Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, 1973-Present), Utagoe's administrative body:

Amidst the rising demands, actions, and struggle for peace and democracy by the people in postwar [Japan], Utagoe movement began on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, signaled by the establishment of the Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan) under the direction of Seki Akiko. *Utagoe* movement has based its activities on three sources of creation: beautiful (*utsukushii*) songs of the Japanese people (*minzoku*), songs of peace from the peoples of the world, and the livelihood (*seikatsu*) and struggles (*tatakai*) of the people.<sup>20</sup>

The remainder of the introduction likewise grounds the Utagoe movement's rise in Japan's postwar conditions. With the exception of publications concerning the movement's founding figure Seki Akiko, Utagoe's own publications have similarly defined and located the Utagoe movement exclusively within postwar contexts. Writings acknowledging Utagoe's "proletarian" precedent remain squarely unofficial in status.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Yoriyuki Hode, "Utagoe undō no rekishiteki tenkai: 1946 nen kara 1960 nen o chūshin ni." *Erizabetsu Ongaku Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō* 22, no. 1 (2002): 68.

<sup>20</sup> "Nihon no Utagoe towa?," *Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai*, accessed October 29, 2017, <http://www.utagoe.gr.jp/syokai.html>.

<sup>21</sup> An example of this is the addendum to the two-volume sourcebook on PM materials published in 1965, written by a member of Ensemble Katyusha (see Chapter 4 for details on this group). Tamotsu Yazawa, "Nihon Puroretaria Ongaku (ka) Dōmei nit suite," in *Nihon Puroretaria Ongaku (ka) Dōmei shiryō*, ed. Puroretaria Bunka Undō Shiryo Kankōkai Vol. 2 of 2, 20.

Ultimately, however, both positions reveal only a partial picture of Utagoe movement in twentieth-century historical contexts. Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation will demonstrate that the Utagoe movement stemmed from both musical discourse in the early twentieth century and the historical moment of early postwar Japan. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the Utagoe movement was not the only musical reform movement in twentieth-century Japan, nor was it the only standard-bearer of the word *utagoe*. Rather, though the Utagoe movement arose in post-World War II historical contexts, the sense of cultural, historical, and ultimately collective mission imbedded in the term *utagoe* was hardly unique to postwar Japan. As a historical phenomenon, the Utagoe movement should be approached beyond the confines of both “proletarian music” and “postwar Japan.”

To that end, the first two chapters of this dissertation examine two concepts that acquired quasi-political significance over the course of the first half of the twentieth century in Japan: *kokumin ongaku* (“national music”) and *min’yo* (“folk music”). Between the 1940s and 1950s, both of these terms became firmly grounded in the paradoxically slippery and yet oft-mobilized concepts of *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”) and *kokumin* (“nation-people”), making their way to formative Utagoe (as will be examined in Chapter 2).<sup>22</sup> In many ways, the relationship between *minzoku* and *kokumin* is analogous to that between *volk* and *nation* as conceived by Johann Gottfried Herder, a late eighteenth-century German philologist known for his neologism *volksliedier*, of which its English equivalent we recognize as “folk song.” In his *Alte Volkslieder* (1774), Herder distinguishes *volk* and *nation* on the basis of “organiz[ation] around political

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<sup>22</sup> In the present study, I translate *kokumin ongaku* as “national music” precisely due to such a slippage, as well as the mixed use of “national music” and “folk music” in English-language literature in the late nineteenth century. Since Johann Gottfried Herder’s coining of *volkslied*, “national music” existed alongside “folk music” as its English-language translated equivalent in late nineteenth-century publications. See, for example, Carl Engel, *An Introduction to the Study of National Music: Comprising Researches into Popular Songs, Traditions, and Customs* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866).

systems;” that is, once *volk* is politically organized, it forms *nation*.<sup>23</sup> In thus asserting the timeless dimension of *volk* on one hand and historical dimension of *nation* on the other, Herder created a slippage: if *volk* is capable of becoming *nation* overtime, when was *volk* originally consolidated? Does *volk* never change? Such a paradox notwithstanding, the imaginative capacity of *volk* initiated countless quests to “recover” *volk* in songs in Europe and elsewhere, finding expression via the term “authenticity.” As Philip V. Bohlman points out: “[t]he objects that came to be called folk songs were transformed to become the new subjectivity of an intellectual history that afforded the resonance of world music.”<sup>24</sup> Seen this way, Part I of this dissertation offers a historical examination of what Bohlman calls the “ethnomusicological moment,” a historical moment “in which the past and the future are juxtaposed,” in the context of several quests for Japan’s *minzoku-volk* in the twentieth-century Japan.<sup>25</sup>

In this capacity, the two chapters that follow explore the concepts of *minzoku* and *kokumin* as enablers, or terms that were vague in definitional boundaries and yet specific enough as signifiers, therefore making written discourse possible for the culturally concerned Japanese intellectuals, conservatory-trained or otherwise. In the resulting quest for Japan’s “national music” and “folk music,” music became both the object and means of reform – in the latter case, contextualized for the sake of the Japanese “nation” and “people.” The significant role played by the Japanese government in introducing music as a school subject notwithstanding, this development surrounding music was far from simply a top-down endeavor. Rather, it involved multiple interest parties and channels of participation, though the overall perception of the

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<sup>23</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, *Alte Volkslieder*, in Johann Gottfried Herder and Philip V. Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses: Herder on Music and Nationalism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 36.

<sup>24</sup> Philip V. Bohlman, “Prologue: Again, Herder,” in Herder and Bohlman, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

societal role of music was certainly top-down (“evangelical,” perhaps) in aspiration.

Understanding such a dynamic is quintessential in understanding the Utagoe movement, whose musical outlook stemmed from the musical categories that both preceded and were concurrent with its rise in the first postwar decade of 1945-1955.

In a broader sense, Chapters 1 and 2 explore historical processes through which music acquired a categorical political significance. Accordingly, these chapters set out to explore how music developed into a modernizing concept between the 1900s and 1940s, thus becoming an ideology of its own. The resulting discourse effectively laid the groundwork for a postwar musical ideological regime: following the institutionalization of music by means of school curriculum and music schools in the late nineteenth century, music-making became synonymous with *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”) and civilization-to-be for the culturally concerned composers, critics, and intellectuals through the 1940s. The Utagoe movement was a postwar variant of such a musical reformist impulse.

## Chapter 1

### Imagining Japan's National Music, 1880s-1945

[F]or us Japanese, modernity is a borrowed thing . . . and therefore not a mental product of us Japanese. . . . The important issue at hand is to thoroughly examine Western culture, which had been imported without the necessary time for its essence to be discerned.<sup>1</sup>

Moroi Saburō, “Overcoming Modernity” (1942)

What is our music? On the surface, this seems like an extremely difficult question. But could it not be the case that, once we recover Japanese-ness (*nihonsei*) that is truly within us, a product that is born when we manage to breathe as ourselves becomes our music? Music is never born in isolation from human livelihood (*ningen no seikatsu*). On the contrary, music is something that can only come alive through total exposure to livelihood.<sup>2</sup>

Yamada Kōsaku, “The Musical View of our Enemy United States, and our Advances” (1944)

Written during Japan’s Pacific War (1931-1945), the epigraphs above were penned by two Japanese composers whose career continued into the postwar period. A comparatively forgotten Japanese composer today, Moroi Saburō (1903-1977) is arguably better known for his writings than compositions. Initially a self-taught composer who later studied composition in Berlin in the early 1930s, Moroi was the only musician to attend the famous (and equally infamous) symposium “Overcoming Modernity” (*Kindai no chōkoku*) in July 1942.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Saburō Moroi, “Kindai no chōkoku,” *Ongaku no tomo* 2 no. 11 (November, 1942): 19.

<sup>2</sup> Kōsaku Yamada, “Teki beikoku no ongakukan to warera no shingeki,” *Ongaku Bunka* 2 no. 11 (November 1944): 4.

<sup>3</sup> For an English translation of the papers prepared for the Overcoming Modernity symposium, see *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan*, ed. and trans. Richard Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). For an example of later evaluation of the “Overcoming Modernity” symposium, see Yoshimi Takeuchi, “Kindai no chōkoku,” in *Kindai no chōkoku*, eds. Tetsutarō Kawakami and Yoshimi Takeuchi (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1979), 274-341.

Though he had only written books on music theory (1932 and later 1946) at the time, Moroi began to present himself as a proponent of re-evaluating Western music toward reforming music in Japan. As he saw it, music in contemporary Japan was merely a product of “transplantation” (*ishoku*) from Europe, one configured by mindless copying without giving due consideration to Japan’s classics (*koten*) and riddled with contradictions stemming from thoughtless juxtapositions. The resulting chaos, Moroi claimed, was a unique challenge that Japan needed to overcome. At the same time, he also asserted that such an internal hierarchy in music afflicted both Japan and the West. He argued that resuscitating music from the “sensual” (*kankaku*) realm to the “spiritual” (*seishin*) realm was in fact of paramount importance in both Europe and Japan, for vile “modernism” (*kindai shugi*) had estranged humanity from human essence.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, Moroi shared the other symposium participants’ sentiment that Japan had to reclaim its own version of modernity.

Yamada Kōsaku is a more widely recognized figure as a twentieth-century Japanese composer. As the first student from Japan to learn music composition in Europe, Yamada went on to cultivate his fame as Japan’s first symphonic composer. A composer known today for his children’s songs (*dōyō*) and school songs in addition to symphonies, Yamada also remained a prolific writer on things musical before, during, and after World War II. Between the decades of 1920s and 1960s, his main concern lay in introducing music to the Japanese masses at large. The epigraph quoted in the previous page is one such example, in which he clearly echoes Moroi Saburō’s allusion to music based on “Japanese” modernity. In their wartime writings, Moroi and Yamada seem to speak the same language, both concerned with the evolution of music toward

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Saburō Moroi, “Kokumin ongaku no sōzō,” *Ongaku Bunka Shinbun*, January 1, 1942, 4.

something that is truly “theirs” in terms of both particular nationality (“Japaneseness”) and universal experience (“human livelihood”).

But what exactly were Moroi and Yamada referring to by “music”? Though Moroi clearly held a dichotomous view of music between high (as seen in his expressions like “spiritual” and “global significance”) and low (“sensual” and “isolated”), he still referred to music as though it was a singular matter with an identifiable core. A self-professed admirer of Beethoven, Moroi clearly regarded what may conventionally be referred to as “art music” as his compass for “proper” music. He provided a deceptively simple solution for what he deemed to be a civilizational crisis: *kokumin ongaku*, which, as noted in the introduction to Part I, I translate as “national music” in order to denote the slippage between the “nation” and the “people.” Moroi’s definition of *kokumin ongaku* displays typical points of slippage likewise demonstrated by his contemporaries in Japan. As he saw it, *kokumin ongaku* should not be like “*minzoku ongaku*” (“ethno-national music”), which arose by trampling over human rationality (*zen jinsei*), but should rather have a “global significance” (*sekaiteki igi*) along the trajectory of the “ethno-nation (*minzoku*)’s glorious development.”<sup>5</sup> In Moroi’s view, music was spiritually equivalent to and historically coeval with the nation, reflecting a given nation’s position along its trajectory toward modernity. Moroi was one among many culturally concerned individuals in early twentieth-century Japan who conceived of music as more than a system of sound.

This chapter will be concerned with the epistemological establishment of music in twentieth-century Japan. Chronologically speaking, like many existing English- and Japanese-language literature, this chapter begins with the Music Investigation Committee (Ongaku

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Torishirabegakari, 1879-1887) and its role in “introducing” Western music to Japan following the Meiji Restoration. At the same time, this chapter takes a thematic approach to the establishment of music as an epistemological system in early twentieth-century Japan, which involved elevating certain phenomena to the status of music (for example, “folk song”) and implicating music with concepts such as civilization and the nation. Additionally, subsequent twentieth-century movements for establishing a “proper” and “national” body of music in Japan often took a moralizing character with the Japanese masses in mind, expressed through languages such as “healthful” (*kenkō*) and “moralization” (*kyōka*).<sup>6</sup> As noted earlier in the introduction to this dissertation, I call this simultaneously epistemological and moralizing impulse “musical reformism,” in which music figured as both an object and means of reform: that which was to be cultivated in the Japanese nation’s image so that it may acculturate and modernize the Japanese nation in its own image – a tautological idealism that nevertheless fostered continuing debates well until the 1960s.

The key concept that Chapter 1 seeks to explore is *kokumin ongaku* (“national music”), a term previously referenced from Moroi Saburō’s 1942 article. Widely used among music critics into the 1950s, the term retained general relevance in Japan even after the end of World War II and will also remain an important concept in Part II of this dissertation. In the formation of *kokumin ongaku*, the establishment of *min’yō* (“folk song”) as a universal musical category was

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<sup>6</sup> For early Meiji “architects” of music, too, the moralizing aspect of music remained important for its potential to simultaneously instill and Japan’s nationhood. As Satō Keiji argues in his recent dissertation (2017), this was evident in the translation patterns in the first government-approved school song (*shōka*) songbooks since 1881 and subsequent editions, both government-approved and privately published. As was the case with school curriculum at large, morality and nationhood, both tied to the imperial house, remained important in subsequent decades until the end of World War II. See Keiji Satō, “Meiji ki no shōka kyōiku ni okeru hon’yaku shōka to kokumin keisei,” (PhD diss., Kyushu University, 2017), 93; Yasuyuki Fujii, “Kokumin gakkō geinōka ongaku no gaiyō,” in *Senjika no kodomo, ongaku, gakkō: kokumin gakkō no ongaku kyōiku*, eds. Sahomi Honda, Hiroshi Nishijima, Yasuyuki Fujii, and Kyōko Imagawa (Tokyo: Kaisei Shuppan, 2015), 35-43.

quintessential. It is for this reason that, before discussing *kokumin ongaku*, this chapter will first explore the construction of *min'yō* as a universal musical. The concept of *kokumin ongaku* bespeaks the process through which music acquired political and cultural significance with a historical dimension: *kokumin ongaku* was imagined within the “music establishment” as a cultivatable virtue and corpus of music from below. To the extent that discussions and endeavors along this line of thoughts intensified during Japan’s wartime years of 1931-1945 and continued to influence musical discourse into the early postwar decades, the 1940s was a watershed moment for musical reformism in Japan. In the years leading up to the institutionalization of the Utagoe movement in the mid-1950s (see Chapter 2), music as an establishment and a moral regime with a shared conception of national music was firmly in place among the culturally concerned across the political spectrum.

#### Music as a Means of Education: *Shōka* as a “Transplanted” Notion of Singing

Following the Meiji Restoration (1868), *shōka* was the first word that appeared in official capacity denoting an act that we conventionally (and musically) understand as “singing.” When *shōka* first appeared as a part of Japan’s educational curriculum in 1872, however, it had no textbook and was still not being taught as late as in 1879.<sup>7</sup> It was not until the publication of the first *Elementary School Songbooks* (*Shōgaku shōkashū*, published in three volumes between 1881 and 1884) by the Music Investigation Committee (Ongaku Torishirabegakari, 1879-1887) that *shōka* finally received its Japanese-language textbooks.

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<sup>7</sup> Keizō Horiuchi, *Ongaku gojūnenshi* (Tokyo: Masu Shobō, 1948 [1942]), 55.

Was *shōka* class musical in character? This is a much trickier question than it may seem, as it implicates the definition of “music.” Arguably the most comprehensive chronological account of music in Japan at the time of its publication, Horiuchi Keizō (1897-1983)’s *Fifty-Year History of Music* (*Ongaku gojūnenishi*, 1942 [revised in 1948]) offers an intriguing point of analysis in this regard. While Horiuchi’s account begins its narrative with the Music Investigation Committee and its role in “introducing” Western music to Japan following the Meiji Restoration, which in turn begins with the early history of *shōka*, Horiuchi emphasizes that *shōka* was an alien concept when it was first introduced in 1872. As he characterizes it, *shōka* was a thoughtless translation for the English “song,” as *shōka* was originally a verb for reciting a poem, thence standing for a short poem that is concise enough for melodic recitation.<sup>8</sup> In these poems, melodic lines were dependent on the phrase being recited, as opposed to being an entity separate from words. Therefore, *shōka* to Horiuchi was a “Meiji-era neologism” for a concept and practice that had not yet taken root in Japan as of 1872.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, the practice of singing that is in accordance with the Western system of music, with its notation system, scales, and categorical separation of music and words, was new in 1870s Japan. Above all, the concept of music, which itself received a corresponding neologism *ongaku* from a classical Chinese text, had yet to be established as a civilizational category, and singing, too, had yet to acquire musical association. Overall, the remainder of this chapter deals with historical processes through which “song” and “singing” became *musical* ideas of historical and cultural significance in twentieth-century Japan toward reform *through* and *of* music. In this

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

historical context, *shōka* figures as a governmental effort to employ music as a *means* of personal reform via education, or reform *through* music.

From 1907 to 1945, moralization remained a key component of *shōka* education in Japan. The emphasis on nurturing moral characters in students can be seen in both *shōka* collections and the Japanese government's official education policy. As Satō Keiji argues in his recent dissertation (2017), early *shōka* textbooks contained many “translated” songs of European origins in which the subject of the song was altered to better accommodate virtues that were consistent with the Japanese educational policy. In the very first *shōka* textbook *Elementary School Songbooks* (*Shōgaku shōkashū*, 1881-1884), eighty-one out of ninety-one songs were translated songs. Many of the tunes included in the textbook were Protestant hymns. In *Elementary School Songbooks*, these hymns were “translated” in such a way that Jesus and God would be typically replaced with the emperor. In secular songs, the male figure was often depicted as a future servant of the state and the female figure as a mother who nurtures children who will serve of the state, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Such an emphasis on gender-specific virtues was further strengthened in *Shōgaku shōka* (published in six volumes in 1892, revised 1893), edited by the former chair of the Music Investigation Committee Izawa Shūji, which had separate volumes for boys, girls, and both sexes.<sup>11</sup> As both official- and privately-published *shōka* textbooks increased in number since the 1890s, *shōka* became increasingly mandatory and consolidated. In the education reform of 1907, *shōka* became a mandatory class for the first time.

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<sup>10</sup> Satō, 93, 127.

<sup>11</sup> Specifically, volumes 1 and 2 were intended for both sexes, 3 and 4 for boys, and 5 and 6 for girls. Ibid., 133.

This was followed by the education reform of 1941, in which *shōka* was placed under the music curriculum and received government-designated textbooks.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of the present study, the historical significance of *shōka* lies in its conception of singing as a means of cultivating moral character at both individual and collective levels, in addition to the physical benefits of singing in forging a healthy body. Specifically, under the 1907 education reform, the ultimate purpose of *shōka* class was to “nurture virtues” (*tokusei no jiyō*) through lyrics and music that are “national in character (*kokuminteki*) and make the children’s sentiment bright and pure (*kappatsu junbi*).”<sup>13</sup> Following the 1941 education reform, the moral objective of *shōka* became much more explicitly tied to the imperial system, as the new pronouncement called for the “forging” (*tanren*) of the “great people [of Japan]” (*dai kokumin*) in accordance with the “imperial way” (*kōkoku no michi*) by “purifying aesthetic sentiment of moral character (*jōsō no junka*).”<sup>14</sup> From an officially dictated functional standpoint, *shōka* could be better described as a moral regime than a musical regime.

While such an aspect of *shōka* certainly points to historical continuity of music as a moral regime into the postwar period, *shōka* did not remain the sole site of discourse surrounding singing in Japan. Nor did the word *shōka* remain the only equivalent of the English “song.” Indeed, as suggested earlier, *shōka* ceased to be a neologism in subsequent decades, instead becoming historicized to signify songs specifically designed for *shōka* class in Japan’s prewar decades. In other words, *shōka* itself became a category of its own among different “songs.” In

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 160; Fujii, 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> Fujii, 39, 46.

<sup>14</sup> *Jōsō* is a complex term that has been used in Japanese educational contexts. As was the case with *shōka* education as discussed in this paragraph, *jōsō* connotes emotion of both aesthetic and moral characters – in other words, aesthetics and emotion that are morally upright in character. I chose to translate the term as “aesthetic sentiment of moral character” for this reason. Ibid., 36, 40.

the section that follows, I turn to the development of *uta* (a rather neutral term today denoting “song”) by means of *min’yō*, a term that came to designate songs of folk origins like the English “folk song” in the course of the early twentieth century.

### Elevating the Folk into Music: Emergence of *Min’yō* as Folk and Musical

Emergence of *min’yō* (“folk song”) as a musical concept and term equivalent to the modern English *folk song* and German *volkslied* took a dual process of reinvention. First, “songs of the (old) folk” had to be elevated to the status of music, worthy of a similar (but not necessarily the same) level of recognition as Western art music; second, the term *min’yō* had to triumph over other words that were used interchangeably to denote such entities. Furthermore, for its part, *min’yō* itself had multiple connotations and usages as late as in the beginning of the 1940s. At the turn of the century, *min’yō* did not necessarily connote a sense of musicality or tradition on two accounts: first, *min’yō* was merely one of many provisional translations for the German *volkslied*; second, the term did not accompany celebration of historical or ethnic heritage but rather signified any style of singing that lacked a formal line of masters. Put together, the term *min’yō* was far from unequivocal in its definitional boundary as it has come to be in the second half of the twentieth century.

*Min’yō* appears to have been in use among some late Meiji literary critics. One notable example is Mori Ōgai (1862-1922), who used the word *min’yō* in 1899 to categorize European (particularly German) poems with “peasant-like” (*minfū*) and “boorish” (*soya*) qualities.<sup>15</sup> A

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<sup>15</sup> Namely, Mori’s *Shinbi kōryō* (1899). Quoted in Yoshikazu Shinada, *Man’yōshū no hatsumei* (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 2001), 192.

contemporary observation on the use of *min'yō* can be found in an article written by Shida Gishū (1876-1946) with the title “Introduction to Japan’s *Min'yō*” (*Nihon Min'yō Gairon*, 1906). In it, Shida points out that *min'yō*, which he describes as “a direct translation of the German *volkslied*,” has only ever been used by a select number of people, thus “unfamiliar to the Japanese people at large.” Instead, Shida contends, terms like *zokuyō* (“vulgar song”), *rika* (“country song”), *riyō* (“country song”), and *chimatauta* (“song in the current”) were in much wider use, with the term *zokuyō* seemingly synonymous in usage with another similar-sounding term *zokkyoku* (“vulgar tune”).<sup>16</sup>

It is also worth noting that *min'yō* as of the 1900s belonged to the literary domain. This is historically significant on two levels: first, such a development runs parallel to philologist Johann Gottfried Herder’s interest in *volkmusik* (see the introduction to Part I); second, *min'yō* at this time did not contain the sort of musical and national connotations that it would by the beginning of the 1950s, nor was its meaning definitively fixed. As Watanabe Hiroshi points out through his study of Maeda Ringai’s *Compendium of Japanese Min'yō* (*Nihon Min'yō Zenshū*, 1907), *min'yō* at this time appeared as *textual* entities in the print media, much like Herder’s engagement with *volksmusik*.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, some *min'yō* collections published as late as in the late 1920s even included recent songs of European origins, for example “Mon Paris” (1925), with multiple versions of Japanese texts.<sup>18</sup> In short, at the turn of the century, the word *min'yō* was neither explicitly musical nor ethnic in its scope.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 186-187.

<sup>17</sup> Hiroshi Watanabe, *Saundo to media no bunka shigengaku: kyōkaisen jō no ongaku* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2013), 159-167.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 165-167.

*Min'yō* entered everyday vocabulary between the 1920s and 1930s. At this stage, *min'yō* came to include a mixed musical and literary association, as well as “rural” and “popular” (that is, of the “ordinary people” as opposed to a select few specialists) associations at large. It is worth noting that *min'yō*’s embrace of such connotations coincided with the emergence of *shin-min'yō* (“new *min'yō*”), first as a literary movement and later a musical one. In both phases, what made *shin-min'yō* “new” hinged on the notion that *min'yō*’s perceived essence, expressed by the prolific *shin-min'yō* poet Kitahara Hakushū as “universal lived emotions” (*fuhenteki na seikatsu kanjō*) specific to their times that are “unique to the ethno-nation” (*minzoku koyū*), can in fact be re-created.<sup>19</sup> This notion, in turn, derived from the perception that *min'yō* of the old was in the process of disappearance throughout Japan due to Westernization and urbanization. While the creators of *shin-min'yō* differed from the later *min'yō* “conservationists” of the 1940s in that they advocated for the creation of a new body of Japan’s *min'yō* specific to their own times, both perceptions ultimately rested on the urban gaze upon the rural – that is, the Japanese countryside as the repository of Japan’s old *min'yō*.<sup>20</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the process through which Japanese composers partook in the *shin-min'yō* movement. At this point, suffice it to raise two points: first, thanks to the emergence of the radio and record players in 1920s Japan, *shin-min'yō* musical compositions were able to reach a wider audience; second, collaboration between writers and composers provided composers with a means of justifying their works in pursuit of an

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<sup>19</sup> The quoted phrases come from Kitahara’s *Nihon min'yō sakkashū* (1927), a collection of “new *min'yō*” poems. Ibid., 170-171.

<sup>20</sup> In his work on Kitahara Hakushū’s *dōyō* (children’s song), Kamita Seiji points out that Kitahara essentially regarded “Japan” as the new *kyōdo* (“native soil,” comparable to the German *heimat*) from which Japan’s *min'yō* should emerge, now that the “local” countryside could no longer perform that function. Seiji Kamita, *Ongaku wa ika ni gendai shakai o dezain shitaka* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2010), 61-62.

expressive medium that is “national” in spirit.<sup>21</sup> Taken together, the period between the late 1920s and early 1930s was an important historical moment for *min'yō* in Japan during which *min'yō* acquired a historical dimension, becoming a discursive space whereby discussion on “old” *min'yō* and creation of new works became possible. Above all, the fact that the neologism *shin-min'yō* came into being at all demonstrates a “modern,” urban perspective on those which had been denoted by the term *min'yō*, one based on the binary of modern and pre-modern.

At this point in time, however, *min'yō* was not yet an established musical category. While recording companies, radio broadcasts, and concert halls did much to give rise to the term *min'yō*, individual *min'yō* “pieces” were not considered to be music in the same manner that Western art music and dance music were.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, despite its increasingly rural association by means of its historical dimension, *min'yō* did not become stably antiquated in its meaning. In order to explore the solidification of *min'yō* as “traditional music,” the remainder of this section will focus on the other half of the dual process mentioned earlier: reinvention of the Japanese folk as musical historical subjects.

A transitional figure worthy of note in the evolution of *min'yō* is Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), inarguably the most prolific Japanese folklorist to date. During his more than half a century-long career as folklorist, *min'yō* caught his attention in the historical moment of the late 1920s. During the years of a surge in *min'yō* discourse, Yanagita wrote two pieces exclusively dealing with *min'yō*: *The Past and Present of Min'yō* (*Min'yō no ima to mukashi*, 1929) and

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<sup>21</sup> Specifically, in his account on the “rediscovery” of *min'yō*, Watanabe Hiroshi cites the works of Fujisawa Morihiko in the early 1930s, in which Fujisawa regarded *min'yō* as the basis for “new national music (*kokumin gaku*) and national dance (*kokumin buyō*)”. Watanabe (2013), 173-174.

<sup>22</sup> David W. Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan: Sources, Sentiment, and Society* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2008), 113-118. As a small piece of evidence, Hughes also refers to a 1932 survey on musical taste which does not include *min'yō* as a musical category.

*Notes on Min'yō* (*Min'yō oboegaki*, 1940). In both works, he spends some pages discussing the current state of *min'yō* – that is, the term’s usage and floating definition among those in the know. Yanagita’s overall tone in both works is corrective. Yanagita’s general neglect of citation notwithstanding (a quirk not uncommon among his contemporaries), his works present a gradual transformation of *min'yō* into a concept of musical character.

In his 1929 article “The Past and the Present of *Min'yō*,” he laments that the term *min'yō* hindered any serious effort to collect “the real thing that ought to be sought out” (*motome tazunerubeki honmono*) due to *min'yō*’s haphazard definition. Yanagita further notes that real misunderstanding took place because of this: asking for *min'yō* in the Japanese countryside only resulted in attracting those who had learned of *min'yō* as a term denoting “popular songs” on the radio; bearers of what he saw as “real” *min'yō* would meanwhile remain silent because they did not recognize the term.<sup>23</sup> To Yanagita, “real” *min'yō*, or that which ought to be signified by the word *min'yō*, was better expressed as *uta* (“song”), to which Yanagita relegated historical dimension. Positing that *uta* ought to replace *min'yō* in this context, he regarded *Kokin Wakashū* as a repository of old *uta*, a ninth-century “song” collection that he believed reflected people’s timeless desire to sing.<sup>24</sup> Though Yanagita ultimately settled with *min'yō* “out of convenience” and continued to use the word himself, his preoccupation with “song” (*uta*) places him along contemporary composers in Europe like Bela Bartok, who were equally hard at work in their attempts to define folk music as the songs of the “people” of old.

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<sup>23</sup> Kunio Yanagita, *Min'yō no ima to mukashi* (Tokyo: Chiheisha Shobō, 1929), reprinted in *Yanagita Kunio Zenshū* Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998), 460.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 460-461

Indeed, Yanagita's *Notes on Min'yō* (1940) demonstrates his awareness of contemporary folk music studies in Europe, as well as demonstrating the development of Yanagita's own take on Japan's *min'yō* as historical heritage. Building upon his definition of *min'yō* in *The Past and Present of Min'yō* as songs (*uta*) with communitarian benefits that are "created by and sung by commoners themselves," he now attempted to identify Japanese *min'yō*'s common thread.<sup>25</sup> To that end, Yanagita regarded "labor" (*sagyō*) as the core of *min'yō* in Japan, going so far as to claim that "if the word 'labor' is to signify human being's social activity, or an act (*shigusa*) that is done by or upon another human being, then it may be said that there was not a single *min'yō* that was not a labor song (*sagyōuta*)."<sup>26</sup> His preoccupation with "labor" in defining *min'yō* is significant in two ways. First, he argued for Japanese *min'yō*'s uniqueness against Western contemporary categories of folk songs such as work songs, war songs, religious songs, and love songs. In effect, he expanded the meaning of "labor" and placed it at the center of his conception of *min'yō*. Second, in doing so, Yanagita gave historical significance to forms of labor such as crop planting (*taue*) as source material for *min'yō* in which "the beautiful things from [our] distant ancestor's times" and "historical (*rekidai*) living experiences and, particularly, those hard-to-comprehend farmers' intentions and sensibilities are folded together."<sup>27</sup> He closes his argument by asserting that it is not too late to uncover such *min'yō* and that the purpose behind such effort should not be "simply for popular entertainment (*taishū bungei*)."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Yanagita (1929), 462.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 460; Kunio Yanagita, *Min'yō oboegaki* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1940), reproduced in *Yanagita Kunio Zenshū* Vol. 11 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998), 18.

<sup>27</sup> Yanagita (1940), 198.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

By the end of World War II in 1945, *min'yō* became a discursive space buttressed by complementary points of definition including the “land” (*tochi*), “livelihood” (*seikatsu*), and (historic) people living under these conditions. For example, in his posthumously published *Research on Min'yō* (*Min'yō no kenkyū*, 1946), author Satō Sōnosuke (1890-1942), who had partaken in the *shin-min'yō* project from early on, equates *min'yō* to the “native land” (*kyōdo*) by means of “livelihood of work” (*hataraki no seikatsu*): “the secret core” (*shinzui*) of *min'yō* is a product of a merger between the “native land” and “human beings’ loving hearts” (*ningen no ai no kokoro*) – there is no “falsehood,” “ornament,” or “skill” but only “winds, water, clouds, and emotions (*kidoairaku*).”<sup>29</sup> At the same time, “conservation” attempts by means of transcription and recording took place in the 1940s, in many ways comparable to those of John and Alan Lomax and Cecil Sharp in contemporary America. In this endeavor, Machida Kashō (1888-1981) was by far the most active and prolific, reportedly recording over 3,000 *min'yō*.<sup>30</sup> Writing a decade later in 1958, ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio would credit folklorists like Yanagita Kunio and Machida Kashō for sharpening the definition of *min'yō* in comparison to that of Germany and elsewhere in Europe.<sup>31</sup>

In the context of this chapter, the most significant aspect of the development of *min'yō* can be found in what may be called a “cult of *seikatsu*.” In light of the vagueness in meaning inherent in such a term, in this dissertation *seikatsu* is variably translated as “livelihood,”

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<sup>29</sup> Sōnosuke Satō, *Min'yō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Bunka Shobō, 1946), 16, 18.

<sup>30</sup> Horiuchi (1948 [1942]), 233-235.

<sup>31</sup> Fumio Koizumi, *Nippon dentō ongaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomosha, 1958), 39-40. Koizumi’s conception of *min'yō* displays an interesting parallel to and departure from Yanagita Kunio. While Koizumi characterized *min'yō* much like Yanagita as geographically and temporally bounded, Koizumi also recognized that “local character” (*kyōdosei*) is liable to change over time, rendering discussion on authenticity and conceptual definition less effective a tool to analyze *min'yō*.

“everyday life,” and “lived experience” depending on the context due to *seikatsu*’s vague character. For Yanagita Kunio, *seikatsu* was above all a form of labor inseparable from the historic folk’s lived experience. Satō Sōnosuke uses *seikatsu* in a similar manner, but he also adds an economic spin to it when he refers to the improvement in the ordinary people’s “living power” (*seikatsuryoku*), essentially economic well-being, as the cause of *min’yō*’s separation from court poetry.<sup>32</sup> In the first half of the twentieth-century Japan, the word *seikatsu* was a vague term with cultural, moral, economic, and historical dimensions and ramifications, also employed by the “music establishment” in its members’ discussion of Japan’s *kokumin ongaku* (“national music”). In this capacity, *min’yō* would figure as the oldest layer of the Japanese people’s *seikatsu* and the basis of endeavors to create Japan’s own national music. The section that follows will explore several of the “national music” movements in Japan between the late 1920s and 1945.

### Music as an Object of Reform: Wartime Choral Singing and Reforming the Masses

During the same time frame between the late 1920s and 1945, choral singing emerged as a medium through which culturally concerned and musically inclined intellectuals in Japan sought to realize the timeless Japanese “essence” in modern contexts. In comparison to *shōka* education and the *min’yō* movement, musical movements containing choral singing between these years posited a bottom-up possibility of creating a body of music that is truly rooted in the Japanese people’s livelihood (*seikatsu*), in combination with a top-down gaze on the perceived need to

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<sup>32</sup> Satō, 37-38.

“elevate” the Japanese masses’ living culture (*seikatsu bunka*).<sup>33</sup> Such perceived need can be found as early as in 1922, when the formation of the Tokyo Citizen’s Chorus (Tōkyō Shimin Gasshōdan) by the Tokyo prefectural government was greeted with the expectation that it would rectify “citizen’s life without people’s songs that are noble (*nōburu na min’yō*).<sup>34</sup>

It is worth noting that choral competitions began to increase in number and frequency during these emerging years of amateur choruses in Japan. Of particular note is the competition held in 1927 under the title *gasshō kyōen dai ongakusai* (“choral competition big music festival”), hosted by a newly-formed association by the ambitious name of National Music Society (Kokumin Ongaku Kyōkai, est. 1927). This choral competition was the National Music Society’s first major undertaking, which bespeaks the Council’s perceived significance placed on choral singing. Indeed, the National Music Society’s chair, composer Komatsu Kōsuke (1884-1966), who had witnessed the degree of integration of music in the everyday life in Europe during his studies in Paris in the early 1920s, considered choral singing to possess the “deepest relationship with society and the people (*shakai minshū*) and also the easiest musical medium to introduce thanks to its lack of musical instruments.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In this section, I use the phrase “musical movement” to denote various endeavors of musical character under a diverse set of sponsors. As will be made clear in the pages that follow, musical “activists” between 1938 and 1945 would be engaged in their activities with the support of multiple government- and private-sector spnsors.

<sup>34</sup> Needless to say, the use of the term *min’yō* in such a way reflects contemporary usage of *min’yō*, which, as noted earlier, did not explicitly connote “songs of the people past” but rather “songs sung by the ordinary people”. Atsuko Yamaguchi, “Nihon no gasshō goto hajime: Meiji, Taishō ki,” in *Nihon no gasshōshi*, eds. Tatsuya Tonoshita and Takuya Yokoyama (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2011), 26.

<sup>35</sup> Satsuki Inoue, “Komatsu Kousuke to dai 1 kai gasshō kyōen dai ongakusai (1927),” *Aichi Kenritsu Daigaku Kiyō* no. 42 (2012): 113; Tatsuya Tonoshita, “Gasshō no Shōwa shi,” in *Nihon no gasshōshi*, eds. Tatsuya Tonoshita and Takuya Yokoyama (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2011), 60-61; Hideya Kawanishi, *Utagoe no sengoshi* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 2016), 10-11.

As Komatsu's reference to "society and the people" suggests, musical movements with an element of choral singing between 1927 and 1945 onward would entail a degree of societal reform and commitment. In this context, the term *seikatsu* acquired a renewed significance to denote that which was to be reformed, whether cultural or economic in character, and to be reflected in creative works. As noted earlier, this vague term variably signified the details of the everyday life in the past or present-day context, economic livelihood, or a lived experience in such forms of life. In line with this view, the ultimate objective for the music establishment was essentially to turn music itself into an organic part of *seikatsu*, freed from morally problematic strands of music such as jazz and popular music (*ryūkōka*).<sup>36</sup>

As many scholars have pointed out, *seikatsu* emerged in various areas of cultural discourse in 1920s Japan, generally calling for the uniting of culture with the Japanese people's everyday life. As Jordan Sand has pointed out, *seikatsu* itself became a discursive space by the 1920s, its "contested nature . . . represent[ing] a new stage of public discourse, in which top-down reforms and the products of mass culture became equally manipulable commodities."<sup>37</sup> Such a dual characteristic of *seikatsu* equally applied to musical movements in the years leading up to 1945, in which top-down idealism was coupled with the expectation of a bottom-up reform of musical practices.

One area where such a combination was conspicuously visible was the workplace. Taking the form of "recreation" (which was translated into Japanese as *kōsei*) in the 1930s, this

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<sup>36</sup> Takuya Terada, "Kōsei ongaku undō no kenkyū: Ajia Taiheiyō Sensō ki ni okeru ongaku bunka no issokumen," (PhD diss., Kobe University, 2016), 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 355. See also Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 32-33; Kim Brandt, "The Beauty of Labor: Imagining Factory Girls in Japan's New Order," in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, ed. Alan Tansman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 121-126.

development was far from unique in Japan, but was an “international” phenomenon that could also be seen in contemporary Europe and United States.<sup>38</sup> In the context of choral singing, the rise of recreational culture was accompanied by an emphasis on the role of amateur performers – that is, the non-specialist and non-professional population.<sup>39</sup> The most obvious parallel to such a perspective could be seen in the Proletarian Musician’s League (1929-1931, 1931-1934), a short-lived musical movement born from the proletarian art movement. During its years of existence, the league’s basic objective was to bring music back to the proletariat from the hands of the bourgeoisie, the latter of which were seen as having essentially monopolized the language and means of musical production.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, the basic idea that music must be reclaimed by the masses was not unique to the Proletarian Musician’s League. Among contemporary composers, Shimizu Osamu (1911-1986) has received increasing scholarly coverage in recent years as a musical figure who left behind the most comprehensive collection of writings on amateurism in choral singing. His rise as an advocate of amateur musicianship coincided with the wartime “national mobilization” (*kokka sōdōin*) of Japan’s manpower and willpower following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Against this backdrop, Shimizu found an outlet under double umbrellas of the Recreation Movement (*kōsei undō*) and the Industrial Patriotic Association (Sangyō Hōkokukai), both under partial direction of the recently founded Ministry of Health (est. 1938). Accordingly, choral singing now found an outlet as a means of increasing productivity by

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<sup>38</sup> Terada, 98; Kawanishi, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Terada, 99-101.

<sup>40</sup> In practice, League members’ attempt to create a system of music free from the evils of “bourgeois music,” while still based on its “critical absorption,” proved unsuccessful, as the Western system of music was the only frame of reference League members shared. See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

means of higher morale and cooperation among workers.<sup>41</sup> The war drive in music-making soon spread to the private sector, as vividly exemplified by the series of military song (*gunkoku kayō*) composition competitions sponsored by major newspapers. In 1943, government- and private-led “patriotic” endeavors of musical character culminated into the “National Singing Movement” (*kokumin kaishō undō*, literally “All Nation-People Singing Movement”), with the support of the Industrial Patriotic Association, musical volunteer corps (*ongaku teishintai*), and major record and newspaper companies.<sup>42</sup>

At the same time, it must be noted that advocates for wartime musical movements under these organizational umbrellas were quite heterogeneous in their interests, methods of engagement, and objectives. As Terada Takuya succinctly argues in his recent dissertation from 2016, the musical portion of the Recreation Movement (often referred to as *kōsei ongaku undō*, or “Recreation Music Movement”) harbored a diverse set of goals ranging from music composition to organizing musical volunteer corps (for which Yamada Kōsaku was a major organizer), and these efforts were framed under vague terms like *kokumin ongaku* (“national music”). Overall, the hybrid characteristics of wartime musical movements under governmental organizations’ sponsorship reflected the wide range of moralistic, modernist, populist, and nationalist aspects of the musical discourse in Japan that had manifested themselves by 1938. Indeed, participants of musical movements between 1938 and 1945 engaged in their activities in different modes, with a pen or conductor’s baton in and outside of the workplace: through writings, compositions, lectures, or performances. Though the musical reform movement during

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<sup>41</sup> Kawanishi, 25-26.

<sup>42</sup> Terada, 112-113. In his dissertation, Terada also notes that some former members of the Proletarian Musician’s League participated in the musical volunteer corps, further suggesting the affinity of the proletarian music movement with other musical movements of the 1940s. *Ibid.*, 87.

Japan's war years remained heterogeneous at the organizational and implementational level, this time period still marked a watershed moment during which different methods toward musical reform were put into practice concurrently, made possible by dual frames of wartime mobilization and "national music."

From both organizational and intellectual standpoints, wartime musical movements are significant for their continuity into the early postwar decades. As will be argued in the remainder of this dissertation, the imperative that music must simultaneously cultivate itself and the Japanese people continued to hold sway in multiple variants into the 1960s. In addition, as several scholars have argued, established musicians and amateur performers who established themselves during the war years (most notably Akiyama Hideo, a non-conservatory-trained choral conductor) would go on to occupy major administrative positions and discursive presence in the world of postwar choral singing. In the Japan Choral Association (Zen-Nippon Gasshō Renmei, officially established in 1948), for example, Komatsu Kōsuke became its first chair, while Shimizu Osamu was a founding member and became chair himself later.<sup>43</sup> Following this transition, musicians' wartime exploits were neatly forgotten among themselves. In his retrospective look at the history of choral singing in Japan, Akiyama Hideo goes so far as to argue that the National Singing Movement was a "plus" to postwar choral singing, making a brief reference to the musical volunteer corps in a similar vein.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Kawanishi, 57-66; Tonoshita (2011), 71. For a "revisionist" historical account of the Japan Choral Association's formation in challenge of the Association's official "bottom-up" historical narrative, see Kawanishi, 47-54.

<sup>44</sup> Hideo Akiyama, "Yōranki kara hattenki e: Shōwa nendai no gasshōkai (Shōwa nijū nendai made)," *Gasshōkai* 9 no. 4 (April 1964): 30.

In view of the Utagoe movement, the subject of study in the remainder of the dissertation, wartime musical movements are historically significant in two senses. First, as suggested above, the music establishment from the prewar decades would continue into the early postwar decades, in the forms of both individuals and discursive framings over music. Second, the Utagoe movement itself would display many points of parallel to those that had already appeared in prewar musical movements, including vague conceptual frameworks related to music and the conception of music as both a means and object of reform. To borrow the words of one member of an Utagoe-affiliated chorus from 1971, the Utagoe movement would in many ways become a “revolutionary inversion of the prewar National Singing Movement,” though he clearly did not mean to be ironic in his remark.<sup>45</sup>

#### Coda: Utagoe’s Founding Figure in the Context of the Music Establishment

As a prelude to the chapters that follow, it may do well to introduce the Utagoe movement’s founding figure who was nurtured in the cultural-musical milieu in Japan discussed thus far. Utagoe’s founding figure is Seki Akiko (1899-1973), who hailed from the former samurai class (*shizoku*) and was a conservatory-trained soprano from the Tokyo College of Music (Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō). Though her subsequent renown would derive from her “proletarian” involvement from 1926 onward, Seki was nonetheless a part of the “music establishment” network in early twentieth-century Japan.<sup>46</sup> That she continued to receive coverage in major

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<sup>45</sup> Hideo Nakayama, *Utagoe undō to Shirakaba*, Vol. 1 of 2 (Tokyo: Gasshōdan Shirakaba, 1971), 69.

<sup>46</sup> In the span of six years between 1920 and 1926, the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* each wrote twenty-five articles about Seki’s activities, a sizable frequency for a freshly debuted soprano singer. According to Seki Akiki’s biography from 1956, her schedule was completely booked three months in advance several months before her graduation, and for the next three years she would remain a highly paid singer, receiving as much as three hundred

newspapers such as *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* even after her turn to proletarian art movements, including the Proletarian Musician's League (1929-1931, 1931-1934, of which Seki was the first chair) is a testament to her popularity in the music establishment. In a telling episode from 1932, when Proletarian Musician's League members were soliciting donations for its periodical *Ongaku Shimbun*, Seki was easily able to achieve much of the three hundred yen milestone through donations from established music professionals such as composer Moroi Saburō and music critic Sonobe Saburō – a feat no other member of the league could replicate.<sup>47</sup> In the formative years of Nihon no Utagoe between 1948 and 1955, too, Seki would invite or refer to music critics and scholars of *min'yō* to her students.

In terms of her imperative to bring music to the people, too, Seki's writings display many points of commonality with the contemporary music establishment. In her wedding ceremony on December 23rd, 1926, Seki is recorded to have declared her intent “to make a breakthrough in today's bourgeoisie-occupied music and to devote [herself] to the democratization of music.”<sup>48</sup> As Terada Takuya points out in his dissertation (2016), such an aspiration toward bottom-up possibility of reforming music in Japan found could be found in the wartime recreation music movement. The latter movement also possessed a top-down, or “evangelical” view of musical culture in Japan in which, paradoxically, a select few individuals tasked themselves with the mission of reforming Japan's mass culture in the name of the nation. Seki's writings during the formative years of Utagoe (1948-1955) reflect these aspects, as demonstrated by her summation

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yen per performance. Shin Aochi, “Seki Akiko den,” *Chisei* 3 no. 5 (April 1956), 130.

<sup>47</sup> Sakura Kōno, *PM no omoide: Nihon Puroretaria Ongaku (ka) Dōmei 1931-1934*, ed. Tamie Komiya (Tokyo: Ongaku no Sekaisha, 1993 [1962]), 32.

<sup>48</sup> Korenari Senda, “Kanko san no koto,” in *Ōkina benibara: Seki Akiko tsuisōshū*, ed. Seki Akiko Tsuisōshū Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1981), 99. Senda quotes this remark from a contemporary newspaper article but does not name the source, though he cites his sources in other instances.

of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival in November 1954, in which a cumulative figure of 30,000 participants gathered in Tokyo over the span of three days:

There is a musical blossoming in uniting music with livelihood (*seikatsu*), the former of which used to be placed on a higher artistic ground and was a distant matter from the latter. I truly believe the development of national music (*kokumin ongaku*) and ethno-national music (*minzoku ongaku*) to be advancing forward together with the people's strong will and action for peace and independence [of Japan].<sup>49</sup>

In Seki's conceptualization of “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*), *min'yō* occupied an important space. In her own article on *kokumin ongaku* from 1953, which she authored in the wake of the Japanese Communist Party's “national independence” (*minzoku dokuritsu*) rhetoric (see Chapter 2), Seki remarks that the “true aspects of Japan” that emerge from contemporary “livelihood” (*seikatsu*), “great power” of *min'yō*, and new works of music which are essentially “*min'yō* of today” have yet to be analyzed and addressed.<sup>50</sup> Consistent with the development of *min'yō* in Japan since the 1920s, *min'yō* for Seki was both an object of preservation and a source of inspiration for future musical endeavors in Japan.

Overall, in the years leading up to the institutionalization of Nihon no Utagoe towards 1955, Seki had at her disposal her extended network in the music establishment and conceptions of *min'yō* and “national music” broadly compatible with those of reform-minded individuals in the music establishment. Though Seki was not the sole leader of the Utagoe movement as it developed institutionally and ideologically, Seki's network and worldview place what became known as the Utagoe movement on the line of musical reform projects in Japan since the early

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<sup>49</sup> Akiko Seki. “Utagoe no hatten wa kokumin no chikara,” *Chūō Kyōdō Desuku Utagoe Shinbun*, December 15, 1954, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Akiko Seki, “Kokumin ongaku ni tsuite,” *Zen'ei* no. 81 (June 1953): 70.

twentieth century. The Utagoe movement emerged from many discursive currents which musicalized several concepts and, in turn, imbued music with moral, cultural, and historical imperatives.

## Chapter 2

### Early Utagoe under the Japanese Communist Party's Cultural Policy

The singing voice (*utagoe*) that seemed to symbolize the glitter of democracy melted my cold and rigid heart like a spring breeze, and it captivated the hearts of the people. . . . I was astonished to learn that a song could be so fun, powerful, and full of spirit (*kokoro hazumu*). . . . I was always hungry, but, in the absence of food, I consumed that singing voice voraciously. There was really something satisfying about it, like eating a big rice ball made of white rice. That, I think, is what it means to consume a song.<sup>1</sup>

Saotome Katsumoto (b. 1932), recalling the Central Chorus's performance in 1948

When did the so-called Utagoe movement begin? According to the National Utagoe Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, est. 1973), current administrative body of Nihon no Utagoe (“Singing Voice of Japan”),<sup>2</sup> the answer is simple: it all started on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, with the establishment of the Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan).<sup>3</sup> In summarizing the Utagoe movement’s origins, the Council’s website offers the following historical contexts and impulses:

Amidst the rising demands, actions, and struggle for peace and democracy by the people in postwar [Japan], the Utagoe movement began on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, signaled by the establishment of the Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan) under the direction of Seki Akiko. The Utagoe movement has based its activities on three

<sup>1</sup> Katsumoto Saotome, “Gasshō dan'in' to machigaerarete,” in *Ōkina benibara: Seki Akiko tsuisōshū*, ed. Seki Akiko Tsuisōshū Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1981), 204. Though Saotome became subsequently known as a writer, he was a full-time (*senjū*) member of the Central Chorus in 1949. Hiromi Fujimoto, “Hitori no shinzō no tokimeki o bannin no kodō ni,” in *Utagoe yo tsubasa hirogete*, ed. Yoritoyo Inoue (Tokyo: Shin-Nippon Shuppansha, 1978), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth Nihon no Utagoe refers to that which was coordinated by the National Utagoe Executive Committee (Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai, 1955-1973) and, subsequently, the National Utagoe Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, 1973-Present). The term “Utagoe movement” (*utagoe undō*), which remains Utagoe’s self-description, will be used in two cases: either when the material being discussed explicitly uses the term *utagoe undō* or in reference to the significance of such self-description.

<sup>3</sup> “Nihon no Utagoe towa?,” *Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai*, accessed October 29, 2017, <http://www.utagoe.gr.jp/syokai.html>. Note that the date of the Central Chorus’s debut concert has been disputed, some publications raising the possibility of January 1948.

sources of creation: beautiful (*utsukushii*) songs of the Japanese people (*minzoku*), songs of peace from the peoples of the world, and the livelihood (*seikatsu*) and struggles (*tatakai*) of the people.<sup>4</sup>

The statement above presents a fairly straightforward picture: “struggle for peace and democracy” led to the formation of the Central Chorus, which in turn gave rise to the Utagoe movement. The narrative therefore regards the Central Chorus as the precursor to Nihon no Utagoe, through which “democratic” impulses would be channeled into what became known as the Utagoe movement.

Similarly, Nihon no Utagoe’s timeline provided in Nihon no Utagoe’s sixty-fifth anniversary DVD and CD sets (2013) equate the formation of the Central Chorus in February 1948 to the “establishment of the Utagoe movement.”<sup>5</sup> As time unfolds, the timeline presents Nihon no Utagoe’s development as a concentric one with the Central Chorus at its center, and an explosive one at that: starting with its performances in Nagoya and Osaka in August 1948, which led to the formation of regional affiliate choruses, the Central Chorus seemingly extended its reach and influence across Japan within several years, culminating into the first Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten, or “Singing Voice of Japan Festival”) on November 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 1953, which attracted a cumulative figure of 6,000 participants, according to the official

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<sup>4</sup> “Nihon no Utagoe towa?,” *Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai*, accessed October 29, 2017, <http://www.utagoe.gr.jp/syokai.html>.

<sup>5</sup> The anniversary CD- and DVD-sets contain two kinds of timeline: one included in a booklet, and another included in the fourth DVD, the latter being a slideshow-style presentation with photographs, captions, and music. “Utagoe wa ikeru chikara: shiryōshū,” in *Utagoe wa ikeru chikara*, ed. Utagoe Undō 65 Shūnen Shuppan Kikaku Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2013), 53.

estimate.<sup>6</sup> Here, too, Nihon no Utagoe's narrative is simple in structure: small to large in size, and local to national in scale.

Such a pattern of characterization of the Central Chorus's history, however, glosses over two important lines of historical development. First, the development of Nihon no Utagoe as an institution out of the Central Chorus's and its affiliate choruses' activities between 1948 and 1953; Second, historical position of the Central Chorus within Japanese Communist Party-line cultural discourse in the same period. Indeed, the Central Chorus did not bear the banner of *utagoe* ("singing voice") from the beginning, nor was it the only one to invoke *utagoe*. In fact, the term *utagoe* did not initially have an explicitly musical connotation; it was instead a shared word among many Japanese Communist Party-line cultural associations between the late 1940s and early 1950s, including literary and poetry circles. It must be noted that there exists a seven-year break between the establishment of the Central Chorus (1948) and the formation of the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee as the permanent national umbrella organization of Nihon no Utagoe (1955).<sup>7</sup> In this seven-year period, that which would become known as Nihon no Utagoe, better known as the Utagoe movement, was decidedly influenced by contemporary cultural discourse debated within the Japanese Communist Party and among party-affiliated (or sympathetic) cultural associations.

This chapter follows two-track history leading up to the institutionalization of Nihon no Utagoe in 1955: intellectual history of the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy and its

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>7</sup> The Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee initially came into being as a preparation committee for the Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten) of 1954, after which the committee became a permanent body until it was succeeded by the Nihon no Utagoe National Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai) in 1973. Incidentally, the resolution to make the Executive Committee a permanent organization is reported on the first page of the first issue of *Utagoe Shinbun*, Nihon no Utagoe's current official newspaper. "Dai 1 kai Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai ketsugi," *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 7, 1955, 1.

ramifications between 1946 and 1955 on one track, and the institutional history of the Central Chorus, whose office in the Ōkubo neighborhood in Tokyo became the seat of Nihon no Utagoe's national organization in 1955 on the other. Historically, 1955 is a watershed year for another important reason: it was in this year that the Japanese Communist Party, after five years of division in its leadership between the *shokanha* faction and *kokusaiha* faction, reconvened at the Sixth Party Congress, officially announcing the unity of the party and reaffirming the national frame of its cultural policy.<sup>8</sup> In the turbulent turn of events surrounding the Japanese Communist Party leadership between 1950 and 1955, formative Utagoe managed to remain generally free of criticism from either faction, becoming an organization of its own in a historically symbolic year.

Such seemingly smooth institutional development of Nihon no Utagoe, I contend, owes to the basic agreement across JCP factions that the party should pursue matters of culture in such a way as to bolster the party's political and cultural platforms. In other words, at the most basic level, there was no question that culture was an important asset to be cultivated and to make allies through, and that music was a part of such culture.<sup>9</sup> In following this broad framework, formative Utagoe made itself compatible with not only the general thrust of the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy but also with reformist-minded musicians outside of the party,

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<sup>8</sup> *Shokanha* ("opinion faction") faction had initially repudiated the Cominform's criticism of the JCP's policy of a "peaceful revolution" via democratic election, but, upon its leadership's move to Beijing in 1951, switched position and began to direct violent revolution from the countryside through proxies in Japan. *Kokusaiha* ("international faction") faction acknowledged the Cominform's criticism from the beginning. As a result, there emerged a peculiar situation in which, between 1951 and 1955, the Japanese Communist Party's leadership was divided into two factions that were no longer divided on the Cominform's criticism.

<sup>9</sup> To be sure, this line of argument is far from new. As early as in 1956, a conservative watchdog publication titled *Left-wing Cultural Front (Sayoku bunka sensen)* argues that the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy had consistently taken a "democratic revolution" approach since the Fifth Party Congress in 1946, in contrast to the party's political and organizational policies. *Sayoku bunka sensen: sono soshiki to katsudō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1956), 4.

though to varying degrees.<sup>10</sup> In this spirit, formative Utagoe must be understood as a product of various cultural impulses that existed in Japan between the late 1940s and mid-1950s. The various cultural discourses leading up to 1955, both in and outside of JCP cultural associations, would form the oldest “layer” of Utagoe’s politico-musical worldview.

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<sup>10</sup> In his detailed study on literary circles in the Shimomaruko area of southern Tokyo in the 1950s, Michiba Chikanobu raises a similar point in reference to Nihon no Utagoe’s alignment with the anti-nuclear movement since 1954 and support from the National Culture Conference (Kokumin Bunka Kaigi, 1955-?), a Japan Socialist Party-aligned cultural association initially convened by Sōhyō (short for Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sō-hyōgikai, or the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan). Chikanobu Michiba, *Shimomaruko bunka shūdan to sono jidai: 1950 nendai sākuru bunka undō no kōbō* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2016), 288-289. On the state of research on the National Culture Conference, see Tōru Shinoda, “Sōhyōron josetsu: 1950 nendai rōdōsha bunkaron e no shikaku o tegakari ni,” *Ōhara Shakai Mondai Keknyūjo Zasshi* nos. 707 & 708 (September and October, 2017): 50-53.

1947	December: Formation of the Young Communist League Chorus Team (Seikyō Kōrasu Tai) by Hijikata Yohei, head of the League's cultural section; Seki Akiko invited as its director
1948	January or February: Young Communist League Chorus Team changes its name to the Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan)  July: Foundation of the Young Communist League Central Conservatory (Seikyō Chūō Ongakuin) in Ōkubo neighborhood of Tokyo, of which Seki Akiko becomes the principal
1950	October: First meeting of the National Chorus Conference (Zenkoku Gasshōdan Kaigi), attended by the Central Chorus and its affiliate choruses from across Japan
1951	June: Central Chorus becomes a separate group from the Democratic Youth Group of Japan, a successor organization of the Young Communist League of Japan  July: Central Chorus's office, also located in Ōkubo, Tokyo, is renovated and acquires a new name, Ongaku Sentā ("Music Center")  December: Central Conservatory absorbed Ongaku Sentā
1953	June: Provisional meeting of the National Choral Conference held in Uchinada, Ishikawa Prefecture, decides to spread "singing voice of peace" ( <i>heiwa no utagoe</i> ) nationally  November: Central Chorus's fifth anniversary concert, titled "Singing Voice of Japan" ( <i>Nihon no utagoe</i> ), attracts a cumulative figure of 6,000 participants over the span of two days
1954	November: "Singing Voice of Japan" Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten), held annually since
1955	February: Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee (Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai), initially a preparation committee for the Nihon no Utagoe Festival, becomes a permanent national umbrella organization for Nihon no Utagoe

Table 2.1: Timeline of institutional development of the Central Chorus and Nihon no Utagoe, 1947-1955.

#### Japanese Communist Party on Culture, 1946: Origins of the Central Chorus

Contrary to Nihon no Utagoe's "spontaneous" narrative quoted in the introduction, the Central Chorus emerged from several organizational developments surrounding the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy in 1946. The epicenter of these developments was the Japanese Communist Party's Fifth Party Congress, held in February 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 1946. Following up on the Fourth Party Congress in December 1945, which declared the party's resolve to overthrow

the “emperor system” and to establish a “people’s republic,” the Fifth Congress added construction of a new culture as an indispensable endeavor to these ends. This new culture was to be “laborer in character” (*kinrōshateki*) and “productive and healthful (*kenkō*), linked with livelihood (*seikatsu*).”<sup>11</sup> In this vein, the party’s new statute (*kōryō*) called for a united front led by “vanguard intellectuals” (*zen’eiteki bunkajin*) and the working class who would organize autonomous cultural groups.<sup>12</sup>

In line with the Japanese Communist Party’s renewed emphasis on culture, there emerged several cultural organizations in early 1946 whose influence would find their way to future Nihon no Utagoe. One of the earliest associations to emerge was the Shin-Nihon Bungakukai (“New Japanese Literature Society”), whose historical significance has been associated with its debate with Jinmin Bungaku (“People’s Literature”) over the role of literature through the early 1950s. Little discussed in the many scholarly works on the debate is Miyamoto Yuriko’s article in the preparatory issue of *Shin-Nihon Bungaku* (January 1946) titled “Singing Voice, Arise” (Utagoe yo, okore). This article by the renowned female proletarian writer from the prewar decades is historically significant in two senses. First, it echoes the Japanese Communist Party’s call for the creation of a new culture in Japan by the hands of both “intellectuals” and the “working class”; Second, it also marks the first attested use of the term *utagoe* (“singing voice”) as a metaphor in line with such party-line view on culture. Emphasizing the role of literature in the endeavors to realize “Japanese culture’s true sense of euphoria (*kōyōryoku*)” and “joy,” Miyamoto calls for writers to depict “the painful experiences of the people (*jinmin*)” and make

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<sup>11</sup> “Nihon Kyōsantō no bunkaseisaku,” *Zen’ei* 1 no. 2 (March 1946): 23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 23-24. As J. Victor Koschmann points out, the Japanese Communist Party’s call for a united front in 1946 derived from the Party’s “An Appeal to the People” (October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945), which in turn partly derives from the Party’s 1932 Theses, particularly with regard to a united front. J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 28-32, 32-36.

possible livelihood (*seikatsu*)'s and literature's next step together.<sup>13</sup> This, she asserts, is the kind of “singing voice” (*utagoe*) she wishes to see in Japan: a voice small by itself, but one that would invite many more voices from different segments of society, eventually turning into a good-pitched and well-practiced “chorus of the people” (*jinmin no gasshō*).<sup>14</sup>

It is very likely that, after Miyamoto's “Singing Voice, Arise,” the term “singing voice” (*utagoe*) went on to become a keyword of a sort among Japanese Communist Party-line cultural associations big and small.<sup>15</sup> The word *utagoe* written in *hiragana* appears in and as a part of titles for writing collections published by poetry and literary circles, as well as in the Central Chorus's first periodical called *Utagoe* (1949-1950).<sup>16</sup> It is not a coincidence that, in its letter to the Central Chorus dated to January 1953, the Japanese Communist Party's Central Committee included the phrase “Singing Voice, Arise” on the envelope.<sup>17</sup> Yet, it should be noted that, in “Singing Voice, Arise,” Miyamoto uses expressions like “singing voice” and “chorus of the people” only as metaphors. A far cry from the eventual organization of a musical institution

<sup>13</sup> Yuriko Miyamoto, “Utagoe yo, okore: Shin Nihon Bungakukai no yurai,” *Shin Nihon Bungaku* 1 no. 1 (January 1946): 3, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>15</sup> Curiously, neither publications from Ongaku Center nor articles written by poetry and literary circle members between the late 1940s and early 1950s explicitly cites Miyamoto's “Utagoe yo, okore”. Nevertheless, writer Asada Ishiji (alias), who wrote the words for Nihon no Utagoe's landmark song “We Shall not Tolerate the Atom Bombs” (1954), recalled in 2017 that, while Miyamoto Yuriko's “Utagoe yo, okore” was not influential among his associates due to the Shin-Nihon Bungaku-Jinmin Bungaku divide, Miyamoto was not the only one who found a special meaning in the word *utagoe*. They had a shared image of *utagoe* akin to a “voiceless voice” (*koe naki koe*), as well as “a voice arising from below” (*shita kara wakiagatte kuru koe*). Personal communication with Asada Ishiji, Kamakura, Japan, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> According to Kiyomiya Masamitsu, the first leader (*danchō*) of the Central Chorus, he was the one who came up with the idea of naming the chorus's periodical *Utagoe* written in *hiragana* in order to more make the chorus approachable. Masamitsu Kiyomiya, “Sōseiki no koro no Chūō Gasshōdan,” *Ongaku Sentā* no. 56 (March 1977): 9. Examples of poetry collections with *utagoe* in their titles include Eds. Kokutesu Rōdō Kumiai Honbu Bunkyōbu, Kokutetsu Shinjin Renmei, and Kokutetsu Bungakukai, *Tetsuro no utagoe: 1954 nen kokutesu shishū* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1954) and Shigeharu Tsuboi and Kensuke Akagi, *Nihon no utagoe* (Tokyo: Awaji Shobō, 1955).

<sup>17</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Chūō Iinkai, “Utagoe yo okore” (Letter to the Central Chorus [Chūō Gasshōdan]), January 1953. Preserved in the Seki Akiko-Ono Teruko Archive at the Ongaku Center, Tokyo, this letter was clearly written in a hurry and is riddled with corrections marked directly on the papers.

named Nihon no Utagoe (“Singing Voice of Japan”), Miyamoto’s *utagoe* had no explicit musical connotation. At this point, the term *utagoe* represented more of the “united front” aspect of the Japanese Communist Party’s cultural policy than any explicitly musical aspiration.

Arguably, the association that perhaps most directly responded to the Japanese Communist Party’s call for a united front of intellectuals and the working class was the Democratic Cultural League of Japan (Nihon Minshu Shugi Bunka Renmei), formally established in March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946.<sup>18</sup> With the proletarian writer Nakano Shigeharu as its chair, the League was an eclectic gathering of cultural figures and associations from fields such as literature, music, visual art, journalism, and Esperanto, up to approximately 270 organizations across Japan.<sup>19</sup> Among the league’s permanent members was Seki Akiko, former chair of the Proletarian Musician’s League who would soon become the director of the Central Chorus (1948) and go on to become the Utagoe movement’s founding figure. During its existence between 1946 and 1950, the league published several periodicals which dealt with cultural matters, also hosting lectures, concerts, film screenings, and dance events, as well as organizing medical and theartic mobile units (*kōdōtai*, or “action unit”).<sup>20</sup> The league appears to have disbanded in all but name by early 1950, after an attempt to “reestablish” itself in late 1949. By 1948, the league’s musical authority, Seki Akiko, switched her primary affiliation to the Young Communist League Central Conservatory, where she taught music.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> While subsequent publications have various dates for the date of the League’s establishment, the League’s own yearbook from 1949 has March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946, as the date of establishment. Mieko Takenaka, *Nakano Shigeharu to sengo bunka undō: demokurashī no tame ni* (Tokyo: Ronsōsha, 2015), 192. For a general survey of the League, see *Ibid.*, 192-209; Ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (1956), 9-10.

<sup>19</sup> Takenaka, 192-193.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-202.

<sup>21</sup> This can be seen in Eds. Akiko Seki and Seikyō Chūō Bunkabu, *Seinen Kashū* (Tokyo: Seinen Kyōsan Dōmei

The Young Communist League of Japan (Nihon Seinen Kyōsan Dōmei), successor organization of the prewar Communist Youth League of Japan (Nihon Kyōsan Seinen Dōmei), was the Central Chorus's parent organization. Also established in early 1946 (February 1946), the league's purpose was to serve as the youth section of the Japanese Communist Party and to organize the Japanese youth in accordance with the party's platform. In this capacity, the league had its own cultural section, whose head in 1946 was Hijikata Yohei (1926-2010), the younger son of the proletarian theater director Hijikata Yoshi (1898-1959). The Young Communist League Chorus Team (Seikyō Kōrasu Tai), established in Tokyo in December 1947, was Hijikata Yohei's brainchild, who had earlier organized a similar chorus in 1946 in Hakodate, Hokkaido, before he moved to Tokyo as the head of the league's cultural section.<sup>22</sup> According to later accounts written by both Hijikata himself and others, it was Hijikata himself who invited Seki to direct the chorus sometime between November 1947 and February 1948.<sup>23</sup> Renamed Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan) in January or February 1948, the chorus was officially affiliated with the Young Communist League of Japan and then with its successor organization Democratic Youth Group of Japan (Nihon Minshu Seinendan, est. 1949) until 1951.

The three aforementioned developments were organizationally and ideologically significant in the formative years of Nihon no Utagoe. The Japanese Communist Party's Fifth Congress established culture as its political language and basis for a united front; the Democratic

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Shuppanbu, 1948). The Young Communist League Central Conservatory was one the three educational facilities founded by the League in 1948, two others being the Young Communist League Theatric School (Seikyō Engeki Gakkō, predecessor of current Butai Geijutsu Gakuin) and Central Political College (Chūō Seiji Daigaku). Ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (1956), 12-15.

<sup>22</sup> Yoriyuki Hode, "Utagoe undō no rekishiteki tenkai: 1946 nen kara 1960 nen o chūshin ni." *Erizabeto Ongaku Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō* 22, no. 1 (2002): 69.

<sup>23</sup> Yohei Hijikata, *Aru engeki seisakusha no shuki* (Tokyo: Hon no Izumisha, 2010), 67.

Cultural League of Japan was a direct response to the party's call for a united front, through which the former Proletarian musician Seki Akiko made her first significant postwar appearance; lastly, the Young Communist League of Japan was a parent organization of the Central Chorus, which in turn would become the predecessor and flagship chorus of Nihon no Utagoe. In all three instances, creation of a new culture befitting a "democratic" republic in Japan was of utmost importance. The language of the Central Chorus's statute from 1951 clearly reflects such an impulse regarding the role of culture:

The Central Chorus shall sing in order to destroy (*daha*) age-long feudalist character (*hōkensei*) and militarism, as well as to convey confidence in a bright culture [made possible] by beautiful solidarity.

We shall drive away (*kuchiku*) vulgar popular music (*hizoku na ryūkōka*) and create the people (*minshū*) from within struggle (*tatakai*).

We shall spread singing voices (*utagoe*) in order to unite the youth front (*seinen sensen*), creating singing groups in various places such as the workplace (*shokuba*), countryside (*nōson*), and school.

We shall oppose war and sing for the liberty of the [Japanese] nation (*minzoku*), peace, and establishment of democratic-people's government.<sup>24</sup>

However, such paradoxical characterization of culture as both an object and means of reforming Japan naturally raised a practical question: if culture was to be both means and an end to a greater end, what sorts of action would be appropriate? In retrospect, as J. Victor Koschmann has rightly pointed out, the conception of such a revolution from bottom-up that derived from the language of the Fifth Party Congress "provided only an ambiguous framework

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<sup>24</sup> Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai, *Sayoku bunka nenpō* (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1957), 230. The pamphlet for the Central Chorus's fourth anniversary concert in 1952 contains a "bookmark" (*shiori*) with the chorus's mission statement, which likewise uses terms like *minzoku*, *kokumin*, and *tatakai*. "1952 nen Nihon no Utagoe," 14 (unnumbered), reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunpokaku, 2017).

for political action and cultural production.”<sup>25</sup> In this line of argument, Koschmann argues that, “[t]o some extent, therefore, the direction and ambiguities of Communist policy . . . opened the space for contention among intellectuals and activists regarding the subject of democratic revolution.”<sup>26</sup> In the more specific context of music in formative Utagoe, the combination of a political imperative and “ambiguities” (perhaps better expressed as “vagueness,” in light of the discussion in Chapter 1) derived from both prewar discourse on music (“musical reformism”) and postwar Japanese Communist Party’s cultural policy.

Generally speaking, the culture question stemming from the Japanese Communist Party’s 1946 statute ran on two axes: first, whether the party’s political directive should take precedence over cultural groups’ autonomy; second, whether culture should be theorized and practiced by the “specialist” intellectuals or left to the hands of cultural workers from the masses. Seen in this light, the Democratic Cultural League of Japan’s dual emphasis on mobile groups and periodicals was a product of these unresolved dichotomies, which compelled an umbrella organization like the league to cover as much ground as possible as a result. As it expanded its activities beyond Tokyo, the Central Chorus, too, would find itself in the same position.

#### “Cultural Operation Team” Debate and its Implications, 1946-1949

Fujimoto Hiromi (b. 1932) is among the first veterans of the Central Chorus who partook in the chorus’s very first class of 1948. Initially a member of the Young Communist League of Japan, he worked with its chorus team under the direction of Seki Akiko once, after which he was

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<sup>25</sup> Koschmann, 39.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

“tricked” into staying with the chorus by Seki.<sup>27</sup> By far the most prolific writer among Central Chorus veterans from the late 1940s, Fujimoto was the first person to write comprehensive historical accounts of Nihon no Utagoe, first concerning the Central Chorus (1971) and later the Utagoe movement as a whole (1980).<sup>28</sup> In his history of the Central Chorus compiled in 1971, Fujimoto points out that the Young Communist League of Japan organized its own chorus as a part of its effort to “organize cultural operation teams” (*bunka kōsakutai no soshikika*) because it recognized the importance of “cultural struggle” (*bunka no tatakai*). In that capacity, the league’s chorus was expected to play a “leading role.”<sup>29</sup> In my personal communication in early 2018, too, Fujimoto noted that part of the Central Chorus’s lineage lies in the cultural operation team.

What, then, was the cultural operation team (*bunka kōsakutai*, also known as *bunkōtai* for short)? This term is somewhat of an enigma in both contemporary Japanese Communist Party and historiographical contexts. In the party’s official publications, the term seemingly appears out of nowhere toward 1948, as can be seen in the party’s main theoretical publication *Zen’ei* (“Vanguard”).<sup>30</sup> These articles, however, make no mention of the term’s origins or its differences from other similar terms, such as the aforementioned “action team” (*kōdōtai*). Perhaps due to such history, the term rarely appears in English-language literature on the early

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Fujimoto Hiromi, Tokyo, Japan, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> These books, published by Ongaku Center under the title *Uta wa tatakai to tomo ni: Chūō Gasshōdan no ayumi* (*Song is with the Struggles: the Central Chorus’s Footsteps*, 1971) and *Utagoe wa tatakai to tomo ni: utagoe no ayumi* (*Singing Voice is with the Struggles: Utagoe’s Footsteps*, 1980), respectively, are based on Fujimoto’s article series under the same title that appeared in *Utagoe Shimbun* between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s.

<sup>29</sup> Hiromi Fujimoto, *Uta wa tatakai to tomo ni: Chūō Gasshōdan no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1971), 13, 14.

<sup>30</sup> As will be referenced later, Miyamoto Kenji’s article “Bunka kakumei to bunka katsudō” (“Cultural Revolution and Cultural Activities”) from the November 1947 issue is one of the first such articles in *Zen’ei*.

postwar Japanese Communist Party, nor is there standard translation of the term.<sup>31</sup> Though the term had seen its usage in imperial Japan,<sup>32</sup> it most likely entered postwar Japanese Communist Party's vocabulary via the Chinese Communist Party, in which "cultural operation" (*wenhua gongzuo*) was both invoked and practiced in the countryside both before and during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).<sup>33</sup>

It is worth noting that, in the postwar Japanese context, the term "cultural operation team" entered Japanese Communist Party-line cultural circles after the Fifth Party Congress officially elevated culture as one of the main pillars of the party's platform. In parallel with what I have termed "musical reformism" in the preceding chapter, culture under the Japanese Communist Party's 1946 statute became simultaneously an object and means of national reform. In equating cultivation of Japan's culture anew under the party's directives with establishing "democracy" in Japan, however, ideas like cultural operation were invariably plagued by vagueness. The question regarding the role of cultural operation very much ran along the same two axes

<sup>31</sup> Here I translate *bunka kōsaku* as "cultural operation" on both linguistic and historical grounds. Compared to the Chinese *gongzuo*, which means "creation" in the general sense, the Japanese *kōsaku* has a strong connotation of (often secretive) "operation," especially when attached to a non-tangible entity (e.g. *hakai kōsaku* or *gaikō kōsaku*). It is possible for this reason that Brian James Delmar translates the Chinese *wenhua gongzuo* as "cultural works" without providing any explanation in his book *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Other examples of translation of *bunka kōsaku* include "cultural activism" (Thomas Schnellbächer, *Abe Kōbō, Literary Strategist*, 2004, and also Justin Jesty, *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*, 2018), "cultural maneuverings" (Ronald D. Holmes, *Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Southeast Asia: Progress and Challenges through Half-a-Century*, 2007), and "cultural mobilization" (Kenji Hasegawa, *Student Radicalism and the Formation of Postwar Japan*, 2019).

<sup>32</sup> Perhaps the earliest user of *bunka kōsaku* in this sense is Fukuzawa Yukichi, who used the term to describe his "non-militarist" strategy to win over Korea in the 1880s. In the early 1940s, *bunka kōsaku* also appeared in the context of cultural evangelization of the "Southern Territories" (Nanpō) occupied by the Japanese military in periodicals like *Ongaku Bunka Shimbun*. See Sushila Narsimhan, *Japanese Perceptions of China in the Nineteenth Century: Influence of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (New Delhi: Phoenix Publishing House, 1999), 103-105.

<sup>33</sup> Maruyama Tetsushi writes explicitly that the term *bunka kōsaku* entered postwar Japanese Communist's vocabulary from the wartime Chinese Communist Party's language. However, it must be noted that the term *wenhua gongzuo* was also employed by the Kuomintang government, as attested by the existence of its *wenhua gongzuo* committee both before and after the government's move to Taiwan. Tetsushi Marukawa, *Reisen bunkaron: wasurerareta aimai na sensō no genzaisei* (Tokyo: Sōfūsha, 2005), 221; Atsushi Sugano, "1950 nendai shoki Taiwan no chūgokuka: 'kaizō' to chūōka' no eikyō o chūshinni," *Nihon Taiwangaku Kaihō* no. 10 (May 2008): 31-32.

mentioned in the previous section: whether leadership should be conferred to party policy or individual cultural “producers,” and to what degree “specialist” intellectuals’ input should be respected in relation to the non-specialist masses’. In both cases, contention stemmed from the notion of “organic” politics, which supposedly arises spontaneously from the masses. Bluntly put, the resulting debate was over how much input from cultural workers was just right and “organic” to cause spontaneous forms of “people’s willful actions under conditions of uncertainty,” to borrow Koschmann’s implicit definition of politics.<sup>34</sup>

Debate over the cultural operation team in the Japanese Communist Party’s theoretical publication *Zen’ei* in the late 1940s suggests that the “party policy” faction was winning out. Articles exclusively dealing with cultural operation or cultural activities (*bunka katsudō*) between 1947 and 1949 assert that cultural operation must first and foremost support the party’s immediate objectives directly – for example, acquiring more party members, making party presence in unexplored “unorganized areas” (*kūhaku chitai*), and realizing a “cultural united front.”<sup>35</sup> In this vein, one author defines cultural operation team in the January 1949 issue as a way to “materialize (*gutaika*) the party’s policy through cultural methods (*hōhō*) and means (*shudan*),” conceiving cultural operation team as something that anyone can take up, as opposed to more technical ones involving agricultural and medical techniques.<sup>36</sup> This characterization was echoed by more authors two months later, one of whom goes so far as to assert that cultural operation team is “by no means special,” as it is only a “political operation team whose basic

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<sup>34</sup> Koschmann, 83.

<sup>35</sup> Tadashi Okamoto, “Chihō tō soshiki ni okeru bunka katsudō,” *Zen’ei* no. 21 (November 1947): 23-24; Kenji Miyamoto, “Bunka kakumei to bunka katsudō,” *Zen’ei* no. 21 (November 1947): 1. Intriguingly, Okamoto’s article implies that the practice of cultural operation team first began in Kyushu, then taken up by the party. His claim is not reproduced, however, in subsequent articles on the subject in *Zen’ei*.

<sup>36</sup> Toshio Aoyama, “Bunka kōsakutai ni tsuite,” *Zen’ei* no. 34 (January 1949): 32, 33.

characteristic is political activity” with “cultural operation applied (*ōyō*) on top of it.” Accordingly, the author argues, true improvement in technique and content for cultural operation team can only occur under “party character” (*tōhasei*), warning against “prioritizing culture” (*bunka shijō shugi*).<sup>37</sup> For these authors, cultural operation should be subject to the party’s “basic line [of direction],” making use of culture “from the perspective of politics.”<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately, the Japanese Communist Party’s official stance on culture remained decidedly hierarchical and circular, including during the subsequent years of its divided leadership between 1950 and 1955. In a *Zen’ei* article from April 1951 issued by the *shokanha*-led Provisional Central Leadership (Rinji Chūō Shidōbu), for example, the provisional leadership explicitly states that cultural activities must submit to the party’s strategy.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically, however, while the article further notes that the party must develop its leadership on cultural matters, the article goes on to argue that cultural activities themselves should be based on impulses from the masses, with the party’s leadership limited to political direction.<sup>40</sup> Such line of argument assumes a clear-cut division between the political and cultural realms, not to mention its reproduction of the same “organic” politics conundrum as seen in the debate surrounding cultural operation. At the very least, by this point, it was clear that the Japanese Communist Party’s non-interference clause with regard to cultural circles in its 1946 statute was untenable, given the perceived need for cultural activities to directly benefit the party in some form.

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<sup>37</sup> Hiroshi Kataoka, “Bunka kōsakutai ka seiji kōsakutai ka: dōshi Aoyama no teian ni kotaete,” *Zen’ei* no. 36 (March 1949): 43.

<sup>38</sup> Kōji Makise, “Bunka sensen no tōitsu,” *Zen’ei* no. 36 (March 1949): 45.

<sup>39</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Bunka tōsō ni okeru tōmen no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 57 (April 1951): 36-37.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

Conversely, however, the continuing debate on cultural activities as illustrated above is also a testament to the general perception of culture as *sine qua non* for the Japanese Communist Party's endeavors regardless of one's position within the *shokanha-kokusaiha* division. A figure worth examining in this context is Kurahara Korehito (1902-1991), a veteran proletarian writer from the prewar years who worked with aforementioned figures like Nakano Shigeharu and Miyamoto Yuriko. As a member of the Japanese Communist Party's Central Committee since 1946, Kurahara would remain a prolific writer on cultural matters for decades to come. Over the *shokanha-kokusaiha* division in the Japanese Communist Party's leadership between 1950 and 1955, Kurahara emerged unscathed, subsequently becoming the head of the party's cultural section throughout Seki Akiko's tenure as the chair of Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee (1955-1973). Kurahara's survival, I contend, owes in no small part to his role as an authority on the *role* of culture rather than the *practice* of culture. Indeed, while Kurahara's conception of cultural production largely derived from his theory of social realism in literature, his characterization of culture was general and broad enough to have found audience among JCP-aligned (or sympathetic) cultural workers outside of the literary field.<sup>41</sup>

A notable collection of Kurahara's writings from this period is *Bunka Undō* ("Cultural Movement"), a compendium of writings he had prepared for a lecture series hosted by the bookstore Nauka (Russian for "Science").<sup>42</sup> Though the lecture series was not an official

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<sup>41</sup> In noting Kurahara's conception of social realism as party-line, Wesley Sasaki-Uemura refers to the Utagoe movement as an example demonstrating the fact that "even circles that had been organized by the Communist Party did not necessarily consider themselves to be communist cells and often did not follow the central leadership's policies and directives." Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>42</sup> Nauka (1931-1936, 1952-2006, 2006-Present) is a bookstore in the Jinbōchō neighborhood of Tokyo specializing in imported publications from the Soviet Union and, later, Russia. "Nauka shoten: rosia go no shinise, saigo no funtō hasan, zaiko 14 man satsu hanbai ni moto jūgyōin zenryoku," *Mainichi Shinbun*, August 22, 2006, 2; "Kaisha gaiyō," *Nauka Japan*, accessed February 19, 2020, <http://www.naukajapan.jp/aboutus.html>.

Japanese Communist Party event, Kurahara's overall language suggests that his intended audience were party members or those who were at least sympathetic to the party's cultural cause. Of all lecture materials included in the book, "Cultural Movement" (October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1948), namesake of the essay collection, most vividly illustrates Kurahara's what I call "generalist" approach to culture. Kurahara takes a decidedly historical materialist approach to culture, noting that culture became class-based as "unitary culture" of ancient times became differentiated into multiple cultures due to class distinctions. For this reason, Kurahara contends, "so-called 'pure culture'" which transcends party character (*chō tōhateki*) and class (*chō kaikyūteki*) is impossible.<sup>43</sup> The goal for the masses, therefore, is to "remove class-based division of culture and class-based conflict by pushing for a healthful (*kenkō*) culture of the working class against the corrupt culture of the bourgeois class."<sup>44</sup> None of these statements contradicts the JCP's 1946 statute or the opinions on cultural operation from the "party policy" faction. Broadly speaking, Kurahara's take on culture here is wholly compatible with the contemporary debate on the role of culture in the party's endeavors.

However, towards the end of the lecture, Kurahara brings forth an equation unseen in contemporary official JCP pronouncements on culture. In ending the talk on his note on *minzoku bunka* ("ethno-national culture"), Kurahara adds that, without cultural independence, there can be no political independence of *minzoku*.<sup>45</sup> While it may seem like Kurahara is prioritizing culture over politics, this was by no means an inversion of values, for Kurahara characterizes cultural and political independence as simultaneously indispensable. Instead, what is new here is

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<sup>43</sup> Korehito Kurahara, *Bunka undō* (Tokyo: Nauka-sha, 1949), 4-6, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 47-50.

that Kurahara is more explicit about the equivalence of the masses and *minzoku* and the supposed link between *minzoku* and culture, thereby relegating *minzoku* timelessness through time. In other words, *minzoku* is timeless, and bourgeois culture is not. By ousting bourgeois culture, or any culture that disrupts *minzoku*'s historical cultural trajectory, therefore, the masses can reclaim culture that is truly based on their *minzoku*, breaking free from vestiges of cultures that are not of the masses' class or *minzoku*. As we shall see in a later section, cultural independence would be officially adopted in late 1950, making Kurahara a precursor within the postwar Japanese Communist Party cultural discourse.

As we shall in the paragraphs that follow, the Central Chorus leading up to the institutionalization of Nihon no Utagoe in 1955 would engage in cultural activities in such a way as to appeal to both “party policy” and “cultural autonomy” factions. This development was made possible in part by formative Utagoe’s double lineage from both the Central Chorus and Young Communist League Central Conservatory, each with an emphasis on performance and education, respectively. In the section that follows, I will outline the Central Chorus’s activities leading up to late 1951, by which time the Central Chorus became both a performing group and educational facility. The eventual institutionalization of (and *as*) Nihon no Utagoe thereafter, likes of which could not be replicated by JCP-line cultural circles in other fields, was significantly influenced by formative Utagoe’s dual emphasis on repertoires of music and action.

#### Early Central Chorus as and beyond Cultural Operation Team, 1948-1951

In one 1949 article in *Zen’ei*, “the Young Communist League’s chorus team” appears as a fine example of an organization that is successfully “put[ting] popular (*taishū*, that is, “non-party”)

organizations in motion.”<sup>46</sup> As the author of this article put it, such a development reflected the party’s renewed leadership over musical activities, “rather than leaving them to the hands of popular organizations.” This, above all, was a product of “party organizations and cells . . . initiat[ing] cultural activities” themselves, which resulted in more and more party-line cultural activities.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the Young Communist League Chorus Team, which had renamed itself Central Chorus in early 1948, was carrying out its share of cultural operation in Tokyo at this time. Officially affiliated with the Young Communist League of Japan and its successor Democratic Youth Group of Japan until 1951, the Central Chorus under the direction of Seki Akiko would fulfil its role as the musical wing of the Japanese Communist Party’s youth contingent.

Certainly, in terms of membership, early Central Chorus displays a clear point of continuity from the Young Communist League of Japan. Of around twenty members in 1948, many long-serving veterans of the Central Chorus from this period hailed from the league: for example, Kiyomiya Masamitsu (1925-?), the first leader (*danchō*) of the Central Chorus, was the cultural section head of the league’s Tokyo central committee circa 1946-1947; Fujimoto Hiromi (b. 1932) and Nara Tsuneko (1930-2016) were league members from Suginami Ward, Tokyo; Danjō Sawae (b. 1930) was sent to the Central Chorus to study music from the league’s Osaka Prefectural Committee.<sup>48</sup> At the Central Chorus, they were expected to learn how to sing in

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<sup>46</sup> Tsuneji Makise, “Bunka sensen no tōitsu,” *Zen’ei* no. 36 (March 1949): 45.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>48</sup> Fujimoto (1978), 31; Sawae Danjō, “Utagoe to tomo ni ikite,” in *Utagoe ni ikiru: watashi to utagoe*, eds. Takashi Michita and Kyōko Sakurada (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2016), 28; Sawae Danjō, *Nihon no onna, ai, soshite heiwa: uta ni iki, heiwa ni iki* (Tokyo: Kōyō Shuppansha, 2015), 7.

order to better agitate and organize the masses in “vacuum areas” in Tokyo and elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

Now in a position to teach these league members basics of music and singing, Seki Akiko supposedly remarked that she had been thrown into a “pit of wild beasts” – Seki may have sung in front of the “proletariats” on stage between the late 1920s and early 1930s, but she had no experience of teaching music to politically fervent but musically inexperienced eighteen-year olds.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, the Central Chorus under Seki was concerned with more than simply organizing the youth in service of the Young Communist League of Japan. It is worth noting that Seki Akiko, musical director of the Central Chorus and principal of the Young Communist League Central Conservatory, provided more musical education than would have been necessary to agitate the crowd.<sup>51</sup> In her capacity as a conservatory-trained soprano singer, Seki Akiko prepared her curriculum in an unmistakably “classical” style, to the dismay of some of her students.<sup>52</sup> Her choice of textbook for singing at the Central Chorus, for example, was Franz Wülnér’s *Choriübungen der Münchener Musikschiule (Choral Practice for the Munich Conservatory, 1877)*,

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<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the most humorous variant of this expectation I have come across was related by Okahara Susumu (1928-2018), who was sent to what was then the Young Communist League Chorus Team from one of the Osaka chapters of the Young Communist League on account purely of his “loud voice”. Okahara’s account is also noteworthy for his own term of education under Seki, which was only three-months long and was a pilot run of a sort for the Central Chorus’s “study program” (*kenkyūsei seido*). Interview with Okahara Susumu and Okahara Yoshiko, Toyonaka, Japan, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Danjō (2016), 35; Interview with Danjō Sawae, Tokyo, Japan, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, written materials from the Young Communist League Central Conservatory have not survived in Ongaku Center; the account provided in this paragraph relies on materials and testimonies from and regarding the Central Chorus.

<sup>52</sup> In an anecdotal episode, Fujimoto Hiromi recounts an episode in which his chorus mate Kiyomia Masamitsu complained about Seki Akiko’s instructions for Fujimoto to practice Robert Schumann’s “Two Grenadiers,” reasoning that the song is an “emperor-worshipping” song. Similarly, Nara Tsuneko recounts that there was a “fierce debate” in the chorus over whether it should practice *Choriübungen*, vocalization, and songs of foreign origins. Fujimoto (1978), 42; Tsuneko Nara, *Utagoe ni ikite* (Tokyo: Higashi-Ginza Shuppansha, 2007), 27.

a classic text for classical singers in Japan.<sup>53</sup> In the Central Chorus's brochure-shaped periodical called *Utagoe* ("Singing Voice," 1949-1950), too, Seki authored a year-long article series on reading sheet music and vocalization, in addition to sheet music for the Central Chorus's musical repertoire. It was in this vein that Seki also created a five-year vocal pedagogy program (*seigaku honka*) within the Central Chorus, which was meant to provide a conservatory-level musical education involving singing, conducting, composition, music theory, and music history. Only graduates of the vocal pedagogy program would be entrusted with leadership role as organizers.<sup>54</sup>

Guest lecturers Seki invited to the Central Chorus in its first five years were likewise musically educated figures. The chorus's early guests between 1948 and 1950 include music critic Yamane Ginji (1906-1982), who taught music history in early 1948, as well as younger *hikiagesha* ("repatriate") musicians who recently returned to Japan from military detainment in Siberia like cellist Inoue Yoritoyo (1912-1996) and baritone singer Kitagawa Gō (1921-1986). Additionally, Seki also referred to her students to scholars of *min'yō* such as Machida Kashō and up-and-coming ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio.<sup>55</sup> In this regard, Seki's curriculum was significantly informed by a community of musically educated or concerned individuals from what Hiromu Nagahara calls the "music establishment" (see introduction to Part I). Educational function of the Central Chorus would be physically reinforced in December 1951 with the

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<sup>53</sup> Then and now, the text is called *Kōruyūbungen* for short in Japan.

<sup>54</sup> According to Central Chorus veteran Hori Kimiyo (b. 1931), who graduated the second class of *seigaku honka* in 1957, the first *seigaku honka* class was attended by Central Chorus members who had joined the chorus before she did in 1949. An *Utagoe Shimbun* article reporting on the graduation of *seigaku honka* students in 1957 notes that five individuals from the previous class had graduated two years ago. Assuming that the first class was also a five-year program, Seki Akiko would have started *seigaku honka* in 1950. Sumie Miwa, *Hori Kimiyo utagoe ni ikite: daichi ni uta o maku* (Tokyo: Hori Kimiyo CD Bukku Seisaku Fukyū Iinkai, 2017), 22-23; "Shin sotsugyōsei o okuri dashita Chūō Gasshōdan," *Utagoe Shinbun*, February 20, 1957, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Nara, 73-76, 113; Fujimoto (1978), 66.

merger of the Young Communist League Central Conservatory with Ongaku Center, the newly renovated office of the Central Chorus in Ōkubo, Tokyo, named as such in July 1951.<sup>56</sup>

By and large, members of the Central Chorus went through both education and practice sessions. In what would become known as the “study program” (*kenkyūsei seido*, literally “researcher system”), Central Chorus members underwent a six-month program whereby they learned basics of vocalization, conducting, and music history, under Seki and guest lecturers, twice a week.<sup>57</sup> The Central Chorus’s office (site now known as Ongaku Center) also held weekly “singing gatherings” (*utau kai*), open to the public, through which Seki could not only teach Central Chorus repertoire to the public but also prepare Central Chorus members to lead singing gatherings elsewhere on their own.<sup>58</sup> Having gone through these processes, graduates of the Central Chorus would then be sent away on their missions to various places, including factories, schools, municipal facilities, and even mines far outside of Tokyo.<sup>59</sup> While tales of

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<sup>56</sup> Ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (1957), 235; “Ongaku Sentā kansei Chūō Gasshōdan sanshūnen kinen” (1951), 6 (unnumbered), reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017).

<sup>57</sup> By 1953, there could be at least two concurrent classes of the Central Chorus, as evinced by a notice for the seventeenth class, which indicates that both fifteenth and sixteenth classes were in session as of January 1954. As an exception to the rule, the very first class in early 1948 only lasted for three months (July-October 1949), according to both Central Chorus’s own timeline and oral testimonies from Danjō Sawae, who had enrolled in the program. *Sayoku bunka undō: Nihon Kyōsantō bunka tōitsu sensen no jissō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai, 1954), 166; “Sōritsu 10 shūnen kinen Chūō Gasshōdan ongakukai” (1960), 11, reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017); Interview with Danjō Sawae, Tokyo, Japan, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>58</sup> According to Central Chorus veteran Fujimoto Hiromi, the weekly singing gathering began following the establishment of the Young Communist League Central Conservatory in July 1948. He also relates that singing gatherings at workplaces (factories), schools, and elsewhere, on the other hand, were organized immediately after the Central Chorus came into being in early 1948. Needless to say, the singing gathering format was adopted by other Central Chorus-affiliated choruses. In January 1952, the event was held under the revised name *minna utau kai*, which is often used interchangeably with *utau kai* in subsequent accounts. Fujimoto (1971), 22; Fujimoto (1978), 31, 34; Taku Izumi, “Ongaku Sentā no ‘minna utau kai’ no oitachi,” *Ongaku Undō* 1 no. 1 (November 1952): 10, reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017).

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, “‘Utagoe’ wa shokuba no minna no mono da” [“Utagoe” belongs to everyone in the workplace], *Utagoe* no. 10 (March, 1950) and Masamitsu Kiyomiya, “Utagoe okoru Saitama ken” [In Saitama emerges Utagoe],

missions outside of Tokyo are common among memoirs and oral testimonies I have gathered during my research, by far the most extreme case is Danjō Sawae's first mission in 1948, which sent her to sulfur mines in the Aizu-Wakamatsu region of Fukushima Prefecture on her own. In what was a common pattern among JCP-line cultural operation teams at the time, Danjō was only given enough money to cover her fare to the destination; she was expected to receive financial and lodging support from labor unions and Japanese Communist Party organizations on her journey, as well as to sell the Central Chorus's songbooks (called *Seinen Kashū*, to be explored later in the chapter) to cover her return fare to Tokyo.<sup>60</sup> As Danjō's classmate from the first class of 1948 Nara Tsuneko writes in her memoir, early members of the Central Chorus were made to feel like "pioneers" (*kaitakusha*) – or, in light of the term "cultural operation," operatives in both spirit and action.<sup>61</sup>

Reflecting the Central Chorus's dual pedigree of cultural operation team deriving from the Young Communist League of Japan and classical music education from Seki Akiko, Central Chorus members employed several forms of performance in the field. Unsurprisingly, the most frequently referenced form of performance in surviving documents is singing, referred to as either "singing gathering" (*utau kai*) or "singing instructions" (*kashō shidō*). This form of performance appears to have been the most common at the workplace, where Central Chorus members would lead employees to sing during lunch breaks. By all accounts, the workplace was also the most competitive of all venues visited by Central Chorus members, as the "Red Purge"

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Ibid., and "Utagoe o motomete heiwa o netsubō suru Hiroshima no seinen" [The Hiroshima youth long for *Utagoe* in pursuit of peace] *Utagoe* no. 17 (July, 1950), reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 6 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> Danjō (2016), 26-27; Interview with Danjō Sawae, Tokyo, Japan, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This "one-way ticket" method is mentioned in Makise Tsuneji's article in *Zen'ei* (March 1949) in a matter-of-fact manner. See Makise, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Nara, 24.

under U.S. administration (1950-1952) resulted in the general removal of JCP-aligned unionists and many employers “countered” attempts at cultural operation by inviting conservatory-trained musicians. In such a scenario, Central Chorus members had to secure their point of entry through the help of local union figures and sympathizers. The passage quoted below is provided by Hori Kimiyo (b. 1931), a member of the Central Chorus’s sixth class (1949) and a graduate of the chorus’s vocal pedagogy program (1957):

[E]specially in the 50’s, because of the Red Purge, there weren’t many people to latch on to (*hikkakaru*). For that, I would go to the Tokyo regional committee of the Democratic Youth League (actually Democratic Youth Group at the time) and ask, “Do you know anyone in this company?,” then they would tell me, “If you meet this person, that person could tell you about someone who still works there,” so I would go and meet that person. . . . When I formed a chorus at the NTT (actually called Den-den Kōsha at the time, a state-owned telecommunication company) . . . everyone loved singing there, it was a telephone office with as many as 3,000 female workers, but they had no songs, can you believe that? So I went there to make connections. I was looking forward to creating *utagoe* after everyone was fired on the ground that they were Red (*aka*), but it was an adventurous work. And so I would visit the home of the person I had been introduced to, [who would tell me that] “I will gather a couple of people inside, so you can go and teach.” But even if I were to teach, to get past the gate you needed a passport, so you couldn’t get inside if you were not a worker at the telephone office. So, how would I get in? This person and that other person will lock their arms around [me] and say hi, as though I had already presented my passport [to the guard]. . . . [A]nd they would haul me inside, their arms locked around me.<sup>62</sup>

Once she made her way inside, Hori eventually earned enough support from the female workers so that they petitioned the union to acknowledge Hori as their music teacher. The local union,

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Hori Kimiyo, Tokyo, Japan, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Similar stories appear in “Kōankan ga deka to guru,” *Kokutetsu Shinbun*, July 18, 1953, 2 (in which two Central Chorus members were initially barred by the Ueno branch of Kokutetsu from entering the workplace but were let in by the local labor union’s education and youth sections) and Nara, 40-45.

which Hori describes as Japan Socialist Party-aligned, accepted the petition, but on the condition that the name “Central Chorus” was not to appear in flyers due to its “communist” reputation.

Similarly, placed in an uncharted territory, Central Chorus members had to come up with modifications to their repertoire of music and action to attract people who were not familiar with the chorus’s musical repertoire.<sup>63</sup> Though *shōka* and *dōyō* (children’s song) were good options thanks to mandatory music classes at elementary school since 1941 (see Chapter 1), encouraging audience participation through simple choreography and call-and-response was another strategy.<sup>64</sup> In particular, the Central Chorus’s *min’yō* (Japanese folk song) repertory appears to have been sung with choreography, as attested in both Central Chorus’s periodical *Utagoe* (1949-1950) and later accounts written by members of the first Central Chorus class of 1948.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Nara, 26.

<sup>64</sup> As an example, Hori Kimiyo cited Taki Rentarō’s “Flower” (*Hana*) in her interview. Early volumes of *Seinen Kashū*, including non-canonical ones published between 1948 and 1950, include several *shōka* and songs of European and American origins that appeared in *shōka* textbooks from the early 1940s. Interview with Hori Kimiyo, Tokyo, Japan, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Also see Nara, 24-27.

<sup>65</sup> Nara, 33-36; Hideya Kawanishi, *Utagoe no sengoshi* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 2016), 100-102.



Figure 2.1: Seki Akiko leading rehearsal with the Central Chorus's fifteenth class (1952) at Ongaku Center. Photograph from *Utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*, 1988

A well-known example among early members of the Central Chorus are modifications made to the song “Our Friends” (*Warera no nakama*), Seki Akiko and the Central Chorus’s translation of the Soviet song “Molodost” (“Youth,” 1936). According to Hijikata Yohei (1927-2010), head of the cultural section of the league around 1947 and the progenitor of the Central Chorus who invited Seki Akiko to direct the chorus, it was Hijikata himself who brought the song to Japan. The song as it was performed by the Central Chorus was, according to Hijikata

Yohei, a product of “collective creation” (*shūdan sōsaku*) from the earliest days of the future Central Chorus which congregated at Seki Akiko’s house between late 1947 and early 1948. Composed by Matvey Blanter (1903-1990), the famous author of the song “Katyusha,” “Molodost”<sup>66</sup> happened to be one of the songs Hijikata remembered from his childhood in the Soviet Union.<sup>66</sup> As Seki and chorus members transcribed his singing, Hijikata’s initial translation of the texts went through several modifications, resulting in the inclusion of contemporary youth JCP contingents such as “Young Communist League members,” “exposing corps” (*tekihatsutai*, youth groups that patrolled and exposed concealed assets by the “capitalists”),<sup>67</sup> and “Tokyo Region Organizers” (*Tōkyō chihō orugu*).<sup>68</sup> Below is a side-by-side comparison of the first verse of the two sets of lyrics, the Japanese translation as recorded in 1948 and 1949:

“Youth” (*Molodost*’),  
Words by Yu. Dantsiger and D. Dolev,  
Music by Matvey Blanter

There are many girls in the collective  
(*kollektive*),  
But you can fall in love with only one of them  
[The girl] could be a zealous Komsomol  
member

“Our Friends” (*Warera no nakama*),  
Words “arranged” by Seki Akiko

Among us friends (*nakama*), many fine  
girls  
Are at work,  
And stylish Young Communist League  
members

<sup>66</sup> Hijikata, 67. Hijikata Yohei spent his childhood in the Soviet Union (1933-1937) and France (1937-1941) with his father while the latter was in self-imposed exile. Hijikata reportedly spoke French better than Japanese, also conversant in English and Russian. “Yamaguchi Yoshiko, Hijikata Yohei ōini kataru,” *Minshu Seinen Shinbun*, March & April, 1949, reproduced in *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>67</sup> According to Central Chorus veteran Fujimoto Hiromi (class of 1948), exposing corps were already a thing of the past by the time “Our Friends” was being translated in 1947. The corps were most active in the immediate aftermath of Japan’s surrender, when Tokyo was suffering from a major food shortage. Personal communication with Fujimoto Hiromi, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> According to Central Chorus veterans Danjō Sawae and Fujimoto Hiromi (class of 1948), early translations of Russian-language songs around 1948 credited to Seki Akiko were typically first translated by Hijikata Yohei, then edited and finalized by Seki. *Ibid.*; Interview with Danjō Sawae, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

And you will find yourself sighing at the moon

How come you will sigh at the moon all  
spring?

How so, could you explain it to me?

It is because every one of us is young now  
In our young, beautiful country!  
[It is because every one of us is young now  
In our young, beautiful country!]<sup>69</sup>

Hear their heart pounding

Looking at the moon and looking at the  
stars,  
Sigh flows and laughter grows

All young and bright Young Communist  
League, they are friends at work –  
Building a wonderful country with their  
spirit, they are our friends!<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> In the Russian original, the final line is sung twice. I would like to thank members of the Chicago-based Russian folk chorus “Golosa” for their help on translating the song’s lyrics, especially Luba Romantseva. *Matvey Isakovich Blanter: Pesni*, ed. Yuozas Chelkauskas (Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompozitor, 1983), 89.

<sup>70</sup> *Seinen Kashū*, ed. Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Seinenbu (Tokyo: Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Shuppanbu, 1949), 35.



Figure 2.2: Sheet music for “Our Friends” (up to the middle of the refrain), composed by Blander [sic] and words and music “arranged” by Seki Akiko, *Seinen Kashū* (1949), reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū*, eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi (Kanazawa: Kanazawa Bunpokaku, 2017).

By the end of 1948, however, the second and third verses of “Our Friends” appear to have been dropped in favor of repeating the first verse. According to Central Chorus veterans Danjō Sawae and Fujimoto Hiromi (first class, 1948), the second and third verses were no longer being sung by the time they joined the chorus.<sup>71</sup> Though no documentary evidence exists on the precise circumstances behind the disappearance of the second and third verses, the reason for their appearance over the years may have been both practically and situationally motivated. First, as Fujimoto pointed out to me in my personal communication, repeating the first verse allowed for easier memorization at Central Chorus’s singing gathering (*utau kai*) sessions. Second, as the Central Chorus became more independent of its parent organization Young Communist League, officially so from 1951 onward, references to league-specific entities like the “Tokyo Region Organizers” would not have been relevant to the chorus’s audience. In this vein, in the first canonical edition of the Central Chorus’s songbook *Seinen Kashū* (1951), the words “Young Communist League members” (*seikyōin*) and “Young Communist League” (*Seikyō*) in “Our Friends” were replaced with “youth” (*wakamono*) and “friends” (*nakama*), respectively.<sup>72</sup> Thus adapted and adopted into the Central Chorus’s musical repertoire, “Our Friends” begot a second life in postwar Japan as de facto anthem of the Central Chorus.<sup>73</sup>

Surviving footage, recordings, and documentary evidence from the early 1950s demonstrate that “Our Friends” became a shorter and slower song with more means of audience

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Danjō Sawae, Tokyo, Japan, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Personal communication with Fujimoto Hiromi, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>72</sup> See *Seinen Kashū*, ed. Akiko Seki (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1951), 5.

<sup>73</sup> To be sure, the Young Communist League of Japan had its own tune (*danka*) called “We Know How to Sing” (*Oretachi wa utau koto o shitteiru*), composed Hara Tarō and words provided by Nuyama Hiroshi (alias for Nishizawa Takaji). However, as far as I could ascertain, the song makes no appearance at all in either contemporary or later accounts about the activities of the formative Central Chorus. The song is included in the non-canonical 1949 *Seinen Kashū*, placed just after “Our Friends.” *Seinen Kashū*, ed. Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Seinenbu (Tokyo: Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Shuppanbu, 1949), 37-38.

participation in comparison with the Soviet original. These changes were made spontaneously at singing gathering sessions led by Central Chorus members, eventually adopted by other Central Chorus members.<sup>74</sup> Most notably, participants at singing gatherings began to sing “Our Friends” locking their shoulders, swinging their bodies to left and right.<sup>75</sup> This “choreography” was accompanied by interjections between phrases that are not present in the Soviet recordings of “Molodost”: for example, “Among us friends, there are many fine girls at work” – “Ho ho!” and “Sigh flows and laughter grows” – “Wa-ha-ha-ha!”<sup>76</sup> These additions can be seen and heard in the documentary footage of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten) in 1954, held in Tokyo, as shown in still shots below:

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<sup>74</sup> According to Fujitmo Hiromi, these changes were initially introduced at singing gatherings led by Kiyomiya Masamitsu. Fujimoto (1978), 46.

<sup>75</sup> This “choreography” can be seen in the documentary footage of the 1954 Nihon no Utagoe Festival, a snapshot of which is included in this chapter. *1954 Nihon no Utagoe Genbaku o yurusumaji*, directed by Shinkichi Noda, Shinji Takeuchi, Ichirō Michibayashi, and Mari Kanke (1954; Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2013).

<sup>76</sup> These interjections, too, can be heard in the documentary footage of the 1954 Nihon no Utagoe Festival. Regardless of the validity of Hijikata’s story, the Central Chorus likely secured a copy of “Molodost”’s music by 1949. The song’s sheet music as reproduced in a non-canonical edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1949) contains slurs, ties, and breath marks consistent with Soviet publications of Blanter’s sheet music. *Seinen kashū*, ed. Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Seinenbu (Tokyo: Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Shuppanbu, 1949), 35-36; Ed. Yuozas Chelkauskas, 87-89.

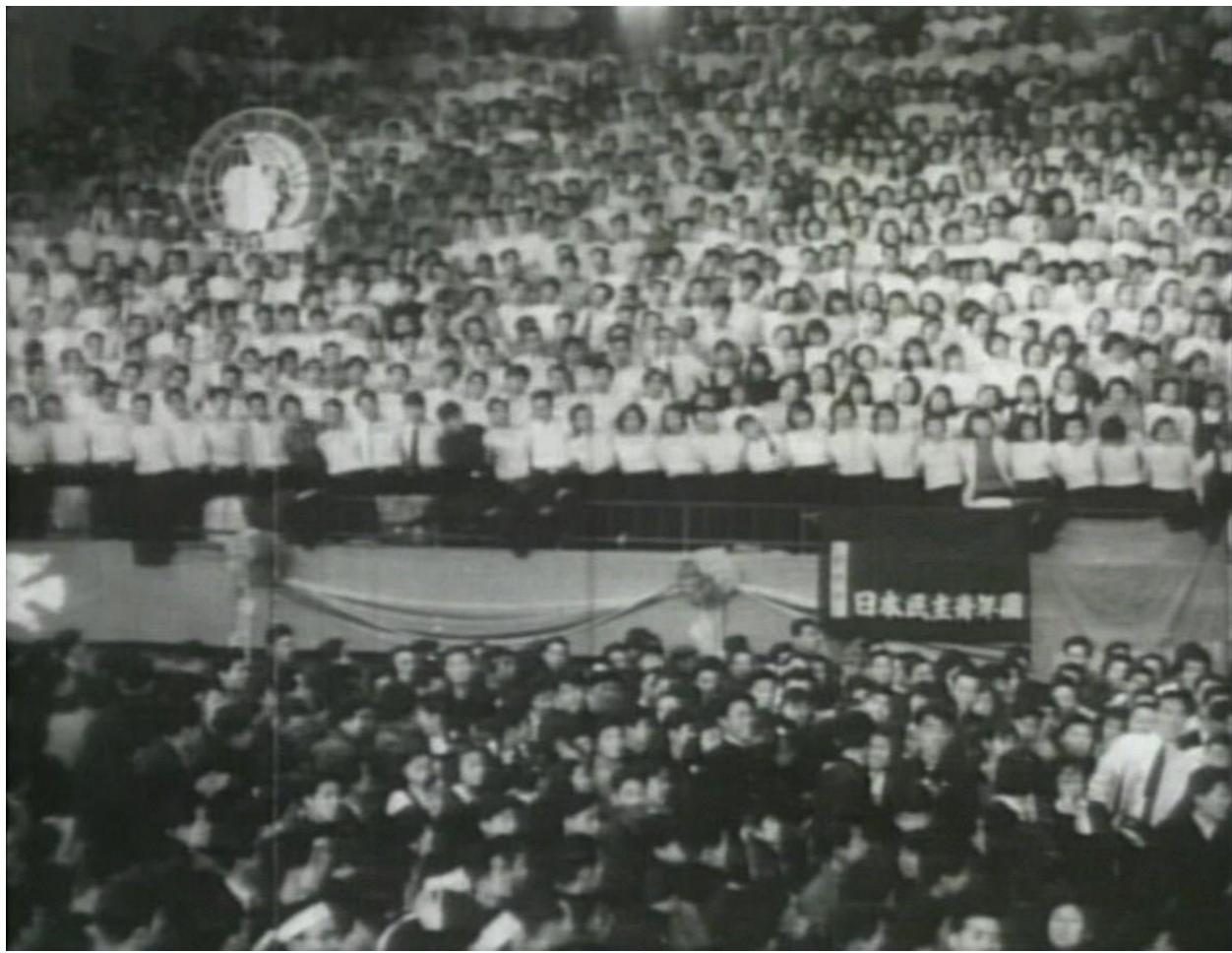


Figure 2.3: Combined “singing gathering” and chorus members from Tokyo (numbering 4,000) singing “Our Friends” at the Nihon no Utagoe Festival, November 1954. The letters on the hanging banner on the right read “Democratic Youth Group of Japan” (Nihon Minshu Seinendan), successor organization of the Young Communist League of Japan.



Figure 2.4: A closer shot of the combined “singing gathering” and chorus members from Tokyo (numbering 4,000) singing “Our Friends” at the first Nihon no Utagoe Festival, 1954.

In addition, Central Chorus members also engaged in much less musically oriented forms of performance. These included comedy skits, satirical plays, and folk dances, which could only be played by teams. Compared to singing, these forms of performance are much less documented to the degree that, in his interview in 2017, Fujimoto Hiromi lamented their loss in the Utagoe movement in subsequent years.<sup>77</sup> As he sees it, songs alone would not have captured people’s hearts; the Central Chorus was most successful when its members performed songs in

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Fujimoto Hiromi, Tokyo, Japan, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

conjunction with performing mediums that express emotion and touch on contemporary issues more directly through spoken words. Unfortunately, surviving records have little to say about the contents of Central Chorus's short plays, only providing their titles if at all, as in the case of anti-U.S. military base camp in Uchinada, Ishikawa Prefecture, as will be touched upon later.

Ultimately, song was the medium that would be standardized and canonized in formative Utagoe from 1948 onward. The Central Chorus's songbook, titled *Seinen Kashū* ("Youth Songbook"), served this purpose. Published in ten volumes between 1951 and 1969 (and at least four non-canonical volumes from 1948 and 1950), *Seinen Kashū* is noteworthy for several reasons. From a functional standpoint, this pocket-sized songbook served as a textbook for the students at the Central Chorus, a product to support the chorus's finances, and a means of propagating the chorus's musical repertoire to the masses. From a historical standpoint, *Seinen Kashū* is a compendium of songs that the Central Chorus, and later Nihon no Utagoe, considered to be current and relevant in their movement to "oppose war and sing for the liberty of the [Japanese] nation (*minzoku*), peace, and establishment of democratic-people's government." (from the Central Chorus's 1951 statute, quoted earlier). Some of the peculiarities of *Seinen Kashū*, for example the inclusion of new compositions born from labor strikes in Japan and the significant presence of Soviet and Russian songs, will be explored in Part II. In the context of this section, it should be pointed out that *Seinen Kashū* included both new songs born in association with the Central Chorus and old songs of both Japanese and foreign origins from prewar years. Examples of the latter, from the first volume of *Seinen Kashū* alone, include Japanese folk tunes that were standardized by the 1920s and were subsequently arranged by conservatory-trained composers who made their appearance in Chapter 1, including Yamada Kōsaku and Shimizu Osamu; *shōka* from music textbooks; and European folk songs with

Japanese lyrics likewise included in music textbooks. Needless to say, many of these songs would have been familiar to both Central Chorus members and their target audience in the field.

The various characteristics of the early Central Chorus discussed thus far suggest that, under the direction of Seki Akiko, the chorus took an unmistakably “classical” approach to music on top of its cultural operation activities. Whether consciously or not, in doing so the Central Chorus could appeal to both the “party policy” and the “cultural autonomy” factions; Seki herself could very well have argued that she was using her educational and professional background into full use toward cultural operation and beyond. At the very least, from 1951 onward, the Central Chorus and its endeavors would no longer be confined to the Japanese Communist Party-line youth movement.

#### Nihon no Utagoe under the Japanese Communist Party’s National Cultural Frame, 1950-1955

Through the early 1950s, the Central Chorus continued its activities in and outside of Tokyo. By the end of 1953, the Central Chorus had made tours to all major regions in the four main islands of Japan other than Kyushu (to be toured in 1954 and 1956), having established several regional choral groups starting with Osaka and Nagoya (1948).<sup>78</sup> Additionally, through Central Chorus members’ organizational efforts and interactions with workplace-based cultural circles, there emerged hundreds of *utagoe* singing circles across Japan, from Kyushu in the west and to

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<sup>78</sup> Specifically, between 1948 and 1959 the Central Chorus visited the Kansai, Tokai, Tohoku, and Suwa (in southern Nagano Prefecture) regions (1948); Tohoku region, Hokkaido, and Tochigi, Yamanashi, and Nagano prefectures (1949); Tochigi, Saitama, Chiba and Shizuoka Prefectures (1950); Tohoku region (1951); Hokkaido, Chiba and Okayama Prefectures, Kyushu, and Chugoku region (1952); Shizuoka Prefecture (1953); Gunma, Toyama, and Shizuoka Prefectures, Hokkaido, and Kyushu (1954); Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Chugoku region (1956); Kansai region (1957); Kanagawa and Shizuoka Prefectures and Tokai region (1958); Chugoku region (1959). *Seinen Kashū*, ed. Akiko Seki (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1960), 143-144.

Hokkaido to the northeast.<sup>79</sup> By 1953, these groups held their own concert-gathering under the name *utagoe* (singing voice), for example *Keihin no utagoe* (“Singing Voice of Tokyo-Yokohama”) and *Kyūshū no utagoe* (“Singing Voice of Kyushu,” see Chapter 3).<sup>80</sup>

In Nihon no Utagoe’s own historiography, 1953 has been treated as a watershed moment during which the Utagoe movement became truly national in scope. The historiography centers on two landmark events in this regard: first, anti-U.S. military base protests in Uchinada, Ishikawa Prefecture, which brought the Central Chorus and its affiliates from across Japan together both physically and spiritually; second, the Central Chorus’s fifth-anniversary concert titled “Singing Voice of Japan” (*Nihon no utagoe*) on November 29<sup>th</sup> and 30th, which likewise brought totaling 6,000 cumulative participants from western, central, and northeastern Japan. As Utagoe’s subsequent historical narrative would have it, it was through these historical moments that formative Utagoe overcame two years of the “Red Purge” under U.S. administration (1950-1952) and became a musical and peace movement known as Utagoe, organizationally no longer limited to the Central Chorus and its affiliates.<sup>81</sup>

From an organizational standpoint, this narrative is not inaccurate. Indeed, it was during the heat of the local protests in Uchinada in June 1953 that a provisional meeting of the National Chorus Conference (Zenkoku Gasshōdan Kaigi) confirmed its resolve to “spread [the] singing voice of patriotism and peace (*aikoku aikyō heiwa no utagoe*) throughout the nation” under the

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<sup>79</sup> For examples in the coal mine regions of Kyushu and Hokkaido, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>80</sup> According to Takahashi Masashi’s history of the Utagoe movement, the most recent chronological historical narrative published by Ongaku Center as of 2019, these regional *utagoe* events in Tokyo were organized in response to the second World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin under the Central Chorus’s leadership. Masashi Takahashi, *Utagoe wa ikiru chikara: inochi heiwa tatakai utagoe 70 nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2018), 32-33.

<sup>81</sup> For example, see Minoru Takaragi, “Atarashii mine ni hibiku hāken: boku no utagoe sanjūnen no ayumi,” in, *Utagoe yo tsubasa hirogete*, ed. Yoritoyo Inoue (Tokyo: Shin-Nippon Shuppansha, 1978), 132; Takahashi, 31-32.

slogan “singing voice is a force of peace” (*utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*).<sup>82</sup> The conference also confirmed that the Central Chorus and its affiliates were musical groups with peace as their objective, rather than the other way around. The Central Chorus’s fifth anniversary concert in Tokyo, which became known as the first Nihon no Utagoe Festival in subsequent Utagoe historiography, was to gather the chorus’s affiliate performing groups in this spirit.<sup>83</sup> From then on, as previously noted earlier in the chapter, Nihon no Utagoe’s national administrative organization, Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee, emerged out of a preparatory committee for the Nihon no Utagoe festival following the 1954 festival in November 1954.

What this narrative misses, however, is the emergence of the “national independence” (*minzoku dokuritsu*, literally “ethno-national independence”) rhetoric in the Japanese Communist Party from 1950 onward across *shokanha-kokusaiha* factional lines. Under the “provisional” leadership led by the *shokanha* faction, this rhetoric first appeared in late 1950 in the form of a “appeal” (*geki*) addressed to “all patriots (*aikokusha*)” on the forty-third anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The appeal calls on (Japanese) “patriots” to face “the biggest crisis the [Japanese] nation has seen” (*minzoku no saidai no kiki*) head on.<sup>84</sup> Though the appeal falls short of suggesting the means for “national independence” in the “cultural struggle” (*bunka tōsō*), the provisional leadership followed up on the matter through two articles in the periodical *Zen’ei*, in 1951 and 1952. In both articles, the term *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”) appears frequently in

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<sup>82</sup> “Uchinada ni okeru Zenkoku Gasshōdan Kaigi gjijiroku,” *Ongaku Undō* 1 no. 1 (July 1953): 6.

<sup>83</sup> From a historical standpoint, it is somewhat misleading to call the 1953 concert the first Nihon no Utagoe Festival, as the word “festival” (*saiten*) was first added in 1955. The concert “Singing Voice of Japan” (*Nihon no utagoe*) in late 1953 and 1954 were rather described as the Central Chorus’s anniversary concerts, and the National Chorus Conference did not decide to hold the “Singing Voice of Japan” concert annually at this time in 1953. As noted earlier in the chapter, it was only after the 1954 festival that its preparatory committee became a permanent entity to organize the festival annually, as well as to become a national umbrella organization.

<sup>84</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Rosia kakumei yonjūsan nen kinen ni atatte subete no aikokusah ni geki su,” *Zen’ei* no. 53 (December 1950): 3.

conjunction with an equally vague term *kokumin* (“nation-people”): namely, “*minzokuteki jikaku*” (“ethno-national consciousness,” 1951), “*minzoku bunka*” (“ethno-national culture”), and “*minzokuteki, kokuminteki bunka undō*” (“ethno-national, national-popular cultural movement”).<sup>85</sup> With regard to the role of party leadership on cultural matters, however, the two articles display a small but significant difference. The article from April 1951 is rather equivocal on the relationship between party strategy and cultural producers, arguing on one hand that the party must exercise leadership on cultural matters, while also asserting that cultural activities should be based on public impulses – a characteristic I have earlier noted as “circular.”<sup>86</sup> In comparison, the article from May 1952 takes the middle road approach, even giving credits to current-day “intellectuals” (*bunkajin*) who are engaged in struggle for the Japanese *minzoku*. The article concludes that political direction is important, but it should not be pursued at the expense of cultural producers’ autonomy. To that end, the article commends the Central Chorus for doing its part in “unify[ing] the musical movement.”<sup>87</sup>

Curiously, elevation of culture in such a manner contains many parallels to Kurahara Korehito’s view on “ethno-national culture” (*minzoku bunka*), as previously examined through his 1949 lecture on cultural movement. Their striking similarity in the treatment of cultural struggle as equal in importance as political struggle is worthy of note considering Kurahara’s tacit *kokusaiha* leaning within the Japanese Communist Party.<sup>88</sup> All in all, the JCP as a whole

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<sup>85</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Bunka tōsō ni okeru tōmen no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 57 (April 1951): 39; Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Tōmen no bunka tōsō to bunka sensen tōitsu no tame no wa ga tō no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 68 (May 1952): 47, 52, 61.

<sup>86</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Bunka tōsō ni okeru tōmen no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 57 (April 1951): 36-38.

<sup>87</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Tōmen no bunka tōsō to bunka sensen tōitsu no tame no wa ga tō no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 68 (May 1952): 62.

<sup>88</sup> One conservative watchdog publication goes so far as to point out that the cultural policy that came out of the Sixth Party Congress (1955), heavily influenced by Kurahara’s ideas, reflected a *kokusaiha*-line view on culture.

was in a peculiar situation around 1953, divided in leadership but both factions advocating for a violent revolution from the countryside; undergoing the most violent phase of its postwar history under U.S. administration-led “Red Purge” efforts and party directive for a revolution through violence, but under de facto consensus on the importance of cultural struggle on an equal ground as political struggle.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, while calls for an armed revolution from leadership of both JCP factions would become a mere “pretext” to maintain consistency with the party’s 1951 platform by 1953, the emphasis on cultural struggle would remain unchanged.<sup>90</sup>

In accordance with the “national independence” rhetoric, JCP-aligned intellectuals called for national projects in their respective fields of expertise. In this spirit, there emerged calls for “national art” (*kokumin bijutsu*), “national literature” (*kokumin bungaku*), and “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*), in seeming echoes to similar efforts during Japan’s Pacific War years (1931-1945). In Japanese Communist Party publications, “national music” was first espoused in 1953 by none other than Seki Akiko. In her aptly titled article “On National Music” (*Kokumin ongaku ni tsuite*), Seki describes national music as that which builds upon the Japanese people’s “cultural heritage” (*bunkateki isan*) and bespeaks the struggles (*tatakai*) of the Japanese people for peace.<sup>91</sup> Seki’s formulation was consistent with the party’s call to create a “national” (*minzokuteki*) culture rooted in the historical and contemporary “livelihood” (*seikatsu*) of the Japanese people, which would complement the party’s and the Japanese people’s struggle toward

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Ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (1956), 23.

<sup>89</sup> Among those who taught at or were affiliated with the Central Chorus, Seki Akiko and Inoue Yoritoyo were blacklisted by U.S. authorities. “Akai geinōjin’ nado shimedashi,” *Asahi Shinbun*, October 1, 1950.

<sup>90</sup> Kenji Hasegawa, *Student Radicalism and the Formation of Postwar Japan* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 132.

<sup>91</sup> Akiko Seki, “Kokumin ongaku ni tsuite,” *Zen’ei* no. 81 (June 1953): 70.

“national independence” (*minzoku dokuritsu*).<sup>92</sup> As Utagoe became formally institutionalized towards 1955 with the establishment of a permanent Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee, national music was codified as Utagoe’s long-term musical objective in the Committee’s first statute in 1956 and reaffirmed in 1968 (see Chapter 4 for more discussion).<sup>93</sup>

Among the phrases from Seki’s article quoted above above, the word “struggle” (*tatakai*) best illustrates manner in which cultural endeavors achieved equal importance as political endeavors in the Japanese Communist Party-line cultural discourse. In the history of Nihon no Utagoe, the term made its first official appearance as the title of the Central Chorus’s first anniversary concert (1949), “Song is with the struggles” (*utagoe wa tatakai to tomo ni*), still invoked in official capacity as of 2019.<sup>94</sup> As a nominalized verb like the English “struggle,” *tatakai* as it began to be used in early 1950s Japanese Communist Party denoted both a specific act in a specific locale and a larger campaign, regardless of its category. Accordingly, under the *tatakai* framing, formative Utagoe configured its musical activities as instances of struggle equal in importance as other forms of struggle (including, of course, Japanese Communist Party members gaining more seats in the National Diet) for the Japanese *minzoku* which, in turn, make up Utagoe’s larger cultural struggle of creating Japan’s national music. By 1953, therefore, Nihon no Utagoe’s basic ideological framework was in place.

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<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Bunka tōsō ni okeru tōmen no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 57 (April 1951): 36-39; Nihon Kyōsantō Rinji Chūō Shidōbu, “Tōmen no bunka tōsō to bunka sensen tōitsu no tame no wa ga tō no ninmu,” *Zen’ei* no. 68 (May 1952): 54-60.

<sup>93</sup> Sadaichi Watanabe, “Kiyaku kaisei ni atatte,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 1, 1968, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Along with the word “heritage” (*isan*), which also appears in Seki’s “On National Music”, the word *tatakai* remains current in Nihon no Utagoe’s statute as of 2019. Implications of this continuity will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

The last phase of the formative years of Utagoe began with *tatakai* in Uchinada, a coastal village in the central-northern prefecture of Ishikawa, where the Japanese Communist Party's *minzoku dokuritsu* frame was put to the test. Now regarded as the first of the anti-American military base protests in Japan, protests in Uchinada continued from 1953 to 1957. Uchinada was chosen by the Yoshida cabinet as the site of an artillery firing range for the United States Forces in Japan.<sup>95</sup> Though the Japanese government was able to acquire the local inhabitants' agreement on a three-month lease, the inhabitants refused the U.S. military's subsequent request for an indefinite extension of the term.<sup>96</sup> The Japanese government's failure to appease the inhabitants of Uchinada triggered a four-year long struggle that would lead to organized oppositions to the government's policy. Between 1953 and 1957, Uchinada attracted three thousand laborers, farmers, and students who participated in sit-ins, supported by a united front of several left-wing political parties, including the Japanese Socialist Party, Japanese Communist Party, and the short-lived Labor Farmer Party, for the return of Uchinada.<sup>97</sup>

In the context of this chapter, Uchinada was a historical watershed moment for formative Utagoe that solidified Utagoe's repertoires of music and action, complex relationships among the participating parties in Uchinada notwithstanding.<sup>98</sup> Uchinada was the first site to which the Central Chorus and its affiliate choruses in and outside of Tokyo were "mobilized" in all but

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<sup>95</sup> Aichi and Shizuoka Prefectures were also considered as possible options. "Te o yaku shishajō sentei," *Asahi Shinbun*, November 24, 1952, 1; "Kōho ni Uchinada Chūryū Beigun no hōdan shishajō," *Asahi Shinbun*, November 26, 1952, 1.

<sup>96</sup> "Uchinada o mukigen shiyō chūryūgun shagekijō seifu, jimoto to sesshō," *Asahi Shinbun*, April 30, 1953, 1.

<sup>97</sup> Toshio Itoya, *Rōdōka, kakumeika monogatari* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten: 1970), 261, 262.

<sup>98</sup> In reality, the "united front" began to diverge on whether to continue "belligerent" protests, in addition to the local populace's differing and changing views on the leftist political parties involved in the protests, particularly the Japanese Communist Party. On the complexity of Uchinada with an emphasis on JCP perspectives, see Hasegawa, 130-159.

name, a practice that would be repeated in Hikone (Ōmi Kenshi silk spinning factory, 1954) and Ōmuta (Miike coal mines, 1959-1960), among others.<sup>99</sup> The participants from these choruses engaged in tried-and-true repertoire of action, including a “singing gathering” (*utau kai*)-style singing session, short satirical skits about Prime Minister Yoshida’s subservience to the United States, and sharing the beds with the local residents in protest. While surviving records are unsurprisingly celebratory or, at least, positive in their depiction of the relationship between Central Chorus-affiliated chorus members and local protesters, they nevertheless indicate that simply singing the songs from *Seinen Kashū* could not yield a satisfactory result. As was the case with the first graduates of the Central Chorus, protests in Uchinada called for some means of furthering audience participation.

Protests in Uchinada produced two “folk-based” tunes that were subsequently included in the third volume of *Seinen Kashū* (1954). These tunes, namely “Uchinada Counting Song” (*Uchinada kazoe uta*) and “Uchinada Sōran Bushi,” are examples of *kaeuta* (literally “altered tune”), a practice of altering lyrics of a song that already has known lyrics.<sup>100</sup> “Uchinada Counting Song” is based on a supposedly local tune that Uchinada’s local protesters taught members of the Central Chorus and its affiliate groups; “Uchinada Sōran Bushi” is based on “Sōran Bushi,” a tune standardized as a “Hokkaido *min’yō*” in the 1920s through the radio and recording mediums.<sup>101</sup> As though to emphasize the collaboration between various chorus

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<sup>99</sup> For Nihon no Utagoe’s involvement in the Miike coal miner’s strike of 1959-1960, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>100</sup> Composer Mayuzumi Toshirō goes so far as to call *kaeuta* a cultural characteristic of Japan. Of course, such a practice was far from unique in Japan, as exemplified by the cases of contrafactum in Lutheran hymns since the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (the latter of which in turn received altered lyrics in early Meiji-era *shōka* songbooks. Keiji Satō, “Meiji ki no shōka kyōiku ni okeru hon’yaku shōka to kokumin keisei,” (PhD diss., Kyushu University, 2007), 22-23, 31-35; Toshirō Mayuzumi, “Kae uta bunka banzai!,” in *Uta ni wa kashi ga aru*, ed. Shibata Minao (Tokyo: Fukutake Shoten, 1987), 170-172.

<sup>101</sup> On the conceptual development of “Hokkaido *min’yō*” in since the 1900s, see Hiroshi Watanabe, *Saundo to*

members and Uchinada's local protesters, both of these songs appear uncredited in the third volume of *Seinen Kashū*. Below is the text for "Uchinada Sōran Bushi," which clearly reflects Uchinada's local and contemporary settings:

*Yāren sōran sōran sōran sōran hai hai*  
Old man, this is a big catch (*tairyō*), things aren't like in the past  
These fish that I caught are all mine, hey  
*Yasaēryāsā no dokkoisho*

*Yāren sōran sōran sōran sōran hai hai*  
If you want a wife, get a girl from Uchinada  
She may be dark-skinned, but she's kind-hearted  
*Yasaēryāsā no dokkoisho*

*Yāren sōran sōran sōran sōran hai hai*  
Go home, Yankees (*amekō*), this sandy beach  
Has been ours for generations  
*Yasaēryāsā no dokkoisho*<sup>102</sup>

In comparison, "Uchinada Counting Song" is less humorous, but its lyrics are meant to be a mnemonic. For example, *hitotsu*, the Japanese word for "one," is followed by a word that starts with *hi*, in this case *hi no maru* (the Japanese national flag); *futatsu* ("two") is followed by *funagoya* ("boathouse"), both which start with *fu*, and so forth. Shown below are side-by-side translation and transliteration of the text, so as to demonstrate its mnemonic aspect:

One, *hi no maru* on a straw banner  
Two, lodging in the boathouse *hoya hōya*  
Three, if we oppose together  
Four, Mr. Yoshida will be in trouble *hoya hōya*  
Five, even if you squash our lives  
Six, we won't sell the village for money

Hitotsu hino maru mushiro hata  
Futatsu funagoya ni tomari komu hoya hōya  
Mittsu minna de hantai sureba  
Yottsu Yoshida han mo komaru yaro hoya  
hōya  
Itsusu inochi o mekko ni shitemo  
Muttsu mura o ba kane de wa uranu hoya

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*media no bunka shigengaku: kyōkaisen jō no ongaku* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2013), 210-215.

<sup>102</sup> *Seinen Kashū*, ed. Akiko Seki (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1954), 120.

*hoya hōya*

Seven, we'll make Nakayama apologize  
Eight, we'll drive off officials *hoya hōya*  
Nine, we won't get fooled this time  
We won't move until the *bang* stops *hoya hōya*

*hōya*

Nanatsu Nakayama ayamarase  
Yattsu yakunin oikaesu *hoya hōya*  
Kokonotsu kondo wa damasarenai zo  
Dokan yameru made ugokiyasenu *hoya hōya*<sup>103</sup>



Figure 2.5: Central Chorus members performing in Uchinada, 1953. Picture from *Utagoe heiwa no chikara* (1988).

<sup>103</sup> Nakayama refers to Uchinada's village head (*sonchō*), and Mr. Yoshida, of course, refers to Yoshida Shigeru, who was the Prime Minister of Japan in 1953. *Ibid.*, 119.



Figure 2.6: Sheet music for “Uchinada Counting Song,” from the third volume of *Seinen Kashū* (1954).

Also present in Uchinada along with Central Chorus members were several young composers who would become the first cohort of conservatory-trained composers to actively cooperate with formative Utagoe. These up-and-coming composers included Akutagawa Yasushi (1925-1989), the third son of writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke; Hayashi Hikaru (1931-2012), whose father was Seki’s doctor; Mamiya Michio (b. 1929), who had participated in the second National Chorus Conference in late 1952. Having taught accordion classes and composition classes in Uchinada, the three composers would go on to compose, arrange, and conduct music for early Utagoe in subsequent years.<sup>104</sup> Akutagawa became by far the most prolific writer and ardent supporter of Utagoe, displaying sympathies from a viewpoint very much compatible with that of the music establishment from the prewar decades. In an article he authored for the first time for the Central Chorus presumably after his visit to Uchinada,

<sup>104</sup> Hikaru Hayashi, “Taishū ongaku undō to Akutagawa Yasushi,” in *Akutagawa Yasushi: sono geijutsu to kōdō*, ed. Shuppan Kankō Iinkai (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shinbun Shuppankyoku, 1990), 87.

Akutagawa urges the Central Chorus and its friends to create a new style of performance so that music can return to its original state (*honrai no sugata*). Akutagawa's sworn enemy was "decadent jazz and erotic popular music (*ryūkōka*)," a choice that would have been familiar to both the music establishment since the 1920s and Seki Akiko. In this sense, Akutagawa was far from novel in posing himself as a musical crusader.

In light of developments surrounding Uchinada as outlined above, the concert "Singing Voice of Japan" on November 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 1953, reflected the growing degrees of institutionalization of Nihon no Utagoe in both organizational and ideological senses. The two-day event was attended by choruses from various regions, schools, and workplaces from across Japan, numbering 6,000 in total cumulatively. The concert concluded with a choral finale, in which the choral suite *In the Mountains and Rivers of the Fatherland* (*Sokoku no sanga ni*), specially composed by Akutagawa Yasushi, resounded in fanfare. In the wake of the dramatic developments in 1953, the resulting overflow of newly composed songs was compiled and canonized in the third volume of *Seinen Kashū* (1954). Compared to the preceding two volumes, the new volume demonstrates the expansion of *utagoe*, as can be seen in the settings and protagonists of the songs: housewives, factory workers, coal miners, Kokutetsu railroad workers, telecommunication workers, and transportation workers. In this way, the Utagoe movement certainly fulfilled its part in the Japanese Communist Party's call for a united front of the specialist intellectuals and masses, under the banner of "Singing Voice of Japan."

#### Concluding Remarks: in View of the Resurgence of the Nation and Culture in 1950s Japan

This chapter has both revolved around and gone beyond the institutional history of Nihon no Utagoe up to 1953. Specifically, this chapter has examined the Central Chorus under Seki Akiko as the future core of Nihon no Utagoe, as well as the ramifications of the continuing debates on culture in the wake of the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy from 1946 onward. Within this context, the Japanese Communist Party functioned as a provider of basic cultural and political frames through which formative Utagoe could justify both its *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*: to the extent that the Central Chorus sought to both work with and on music, it could make the case that it was doing its part in the cultural “united front” toward a cultural reform of the Japanese nation. In establishing equivalency of cultural struggle and political struggle in terms of a national struggle, the nation became a transcendent locus of justification that could overwrite the political versus cultural dichotomy *without* actually resolving the issue. Knowingly or not, Seki Akiko herself employed this line of argument, asserting that “liberation of human nature” (*ningensei no kaihō*) is a musical task, through which “political nature” (*seijisei*) no longer becomes an issue.<sup>105</sup>

The Japanese Communist Party's shift to the nation as effectively a sacrosanct referent was not unique in contemporary Japan. In fact, 1950s Japan saw a resurgence of *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”) in political rhetoric and scholarly discourse. As J. Victor Koschmann has aptly pointed out, this resurgence was characterized by conflated use of *minzoku* and *kokumin* (“nation-people”), ironically substitutable with *shinmin* (“[imperial] subject-people”) as it was invoked under the Japanese Empire.<sup>106</sup> Above all, these terms conflated the locus of historical agency even in terms of the nation: if the nation can reform its people, was the nation an agent of

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<sup>105</sup> “Dai 2 kai Zenkoku Gasshōdan Kaigi Gijiroku,” *Ongaku undō* 1 no. 2 (December 1952): 9 (unnumbered).

<sup>106</sup> Koschmann, 218.

change? Or do the people have to undergo a change first in order to effect change in their nation? What, in fact, makes *minzoku* different from *kokumin* in terms of concrete action? This paradox, which effectively became a source of circular logic, very much mirrors that of what I referred to as “musical reformism” in the introduction to Part I. From a historical standpoint, however, it must be noted that such a vague language, as a means of justification, made debate and creative engagement possible, as the case of the Central Chorus demonstrates through its activities between 1947 and 1955.

That vagueness surrounding the nation acted as an enabling agent in 1950s Japan can also be seen in other self-proclaimed cultural movements in Japan at the time. A particularly illustrative comparative example is the New Life Movement (*Shin Seikatsu Undō*), a supra-governmental movement that initially responded to Prime Minister Katayama Tetsu’s call for a “National New Life Movement” (*shin seikatsu kokumin undō*) in 1947. In his comprehensive volume on the New Life Movement, Ōkado Masakatsu points out that the New Life Movement oscillated between three different objectives (“improvement of livelihood,” “economic independence,” and “national independence”), as well as between the political left (Japan Socialist Party) and right (newly formed Liberal Democratic Party).<sup>107</sup> As Ōkado implies through his reference to Japanese Communist Party leadership figure Nosaka Sanzō’s 1946 article on “the livelihood (*seikatsu*) of the people (*minshū*),” a shared imperative to reform the culture of the Japanese collective across the political spectrum bespeaks contestation of hegemony over casting the nation in the image of democracy.<sup>108</sup> This development was

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<sup>107</sup> Masakatsu Ōkado, *Shin seikatsu undō to nihon no haisen: haisen kara 1970 nendai* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2012), 46.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 35, 16.

accompanied by the persistence of equally vague terms like “healthful” (*kenkō*) and, of course, “livelihood” (*seikatsu*) into postwar years (see Chapter 1), which indeed remained in currency even among relatively young culturally concerned individuals.

A telling episode in this context is the battle over *utagoe* between the Utagoe movement and the Ministry of Education (Monbushō) in 1955. The Minister of Education at this time was Matsumura Kenzō (1883-1971), a veteran National Diet member since the 1920s and an associate of the New Life Movement Society (Shin Seikatsu Undō Kyōkai), the governmental wing of the New Life Movement formed in 1955.<sup>109</sup> On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1955, an article with the title “government-public singing voice battle” (*kanmin utagoe gassen*) appeared on *Yomiuri Shimbun*, with the portraits of Seki Akiko and the Minister of Education Matsumura Kenzō hanging side by side. Alarmed by Utagoe’s immense mobilizing capacity that could attract thousands of people in major events, as well as the mounting sales of Utagoe’s songbook *Seinen Kashū* (which reportedly sold over 700,000 copies by 1955), Matsumura sought to “disseminate a pure singing movement throughout the nation to confront the Japanese Communist Party’s Utagoe movement.”<sup>110</sup> To that end, Matsumura contended, the ministry should continue to warn against the influences of Utagoe to educators, also strengthening the effort to introduce appropriate music to the young people by performing musical pieces and publishing a songbook for the youth. Ultimately, however, the ministry failed to live up to Matsumura’s expectation. The ministry published a songbook titled *Chorus of the Young People* (*Seishōnen no Gasshō*)

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 47-50.

<sup>110</sup> “Kanmin ‘utagoe’ gassen ‘sayoku da’ ‘iya chigau’ ryūkō suru Seinen Kashū Monbushō ga taikō kikaku,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 31, 1955, 3.

through a non-governmental foundation, but its sales figure was dismal considering the one-million-yen budget that went into its publication.<sup>111</sup>

What is worth noting in this episode is Matsumura's notion that the Utagoe movement should be challenged by another singing movement. In view of Ōkado's characterization of early postwar Japan as "contestation over democracy" between multiple movements with the stated objective of improving the livelihood (*seikatsu*) of the Japanese people, the "government-public *utagoe* battle" episode illustrates the extent to which Matsumura and Nihon no Utagoe, in fact, had shared basic interests and imperatives over the Japanese nation. Insofar as formative Utagoe displays many aspects of commonality in such ideas with individuals and groups both in and outside of the musical realm, the notion I refer to as "musical reformism" was still current and influential when Nihon no Utagoe became institutionalized.

Such was also the case for up-and-coming Japanese composers like Akutagawa Yasushi (1925-1989) and Dan Ikuma (1924-2001), who spoke of reforming music in Japan in the 1950s. Though both Akutagawa and Dan believed that music in contemporary Japan was in the process and need of changing, they had different views on the Utagoe movement. While Akutagawa remained a champion and supporter of Utagoe through not only his writings but also guest appearances and compositions, Dan remained skeptical of what he perceived as Utagoe's placing of politics over music under Japanese Communist Party's control.<sup>112</sup> Still, in his conversation

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<sup>111</sup> To be fair to the Monbushō, the *Asahi Shinbun*'s coverage of the "battle" included inputs from the skeptical officials from the ministry, who displayed their skepticism toward the effectiveness of a state-led musical movement and government-published songbook in order to combat what they perceived to be a social phenomenon. Chōki, 495; Hiroshi Watanabe, *Utau kokumin: shōka, kōka, utagoe* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010), 248-249.

<sup>112</sup> Specifically, Akutagawa appeared as a guest conductor for several Nihon no Utagoe Festival in the 1950s and composed several songs that would be included in multiple volumes of *Seinen Kashū*, most famously "In the Mountains and Rivers of the Fatherland" (*Sokoku no sang ani*), the closing song of the first Nihon no Utagoe Festival in 1954. His possibly first writing authored for formative Utagoe can be found in Yasushi Akutagawa, "Ongaku wa jibun no mochimono," *Ongaku Undō* 1 no. 2 (July 1953), 13.

with Akutagawa published in 1956, Dan agreed with Akutagawa on one thing: that Japan lacks the basis for creating its own “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*), nurtured instead by top-down process.<sup>113</sup> Arguing that “modern” music should be “linked with our livelihoods” (*wareware no seikatsu to musubitsuita*), a phrase not alien to the Japanese Communist Party’s national culture frame, Dan unwittingly demonstrates his own cultural framing to be compatible with future Utagoe’s at its basic level. Ultimately, this seeming coincidence is a testament to the prevalence of the national frame and continuity of the “healthful culture” discourse in Japan at large in the mid-1950s.

As a result of the developments described thus far, the year 1955 became a defining institutionalizing moment for Nihon no Uagoe. In addition to the promulgation of the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee as a permanent organization, the year 1955 saw the formal confirmation of the cultural and national struggle frames by a unified Japanese Communist Party leadership. Until its repudiation at the Twelfth Party Congress in 1973, the party’s cultural policy centering on “national culture” (*minzoku bunka*) would remain official (see Chapter 4). The two chapters that follow in Part II will illustrate specific cases of application and eventual official abrogation of Nihon no Utagoe’s national music rhetoric – in name, at least, in the latter case.

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<sup>113</sup> Ikuma Dan, Yasushi Akutagawa, and Saburō Mayuzumi, *Gendai ongaku ni kansuru 3 nin no iken* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1956), 181.

## Part II

### Utagoe's National and International Solidarity through Music

The song “We Shall not Tolerate the Atom Bombs” . . . not only played a major role in Japan [in concert with anti-atomic and hydrogen bomb signature gathering movement] but . . . was [also] sung by young people from all over the world from the Soviet Union, Germany, France, Poland, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, China, Japan on August 6<sup>th</sup>, the Atomic Bomb Protest Day [at the fifth World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw, Poland]. . . bring[ing] a deeply moving sensation (*kandō*) as a song that brings together the hearts of the people against the atomic and hydrogen bombs. The singing voice (*utagoe*) against nuclear bombs and wars [now] reverberate even more strongly. Along with songs of peace from Japan, songs of peace by Shostakovich, songs of peace by Sibelius, “The Little Dead Girl” by Hikmet, “Constructing Peace” (*Pinghe jiānshe*) from China, and “Farmer’s Song” (*Nongmin’ga*) from Korea are continually bringing to the people a moving sensation toward world peace.<sup>1</sup>

From Seki Akiko’s acceptance speech for the Stalin Peace Prize, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1956

The year 1955 was undoubtedly a high point in the history of Nihon no Utagoe. The Nihon no Utagoe Festival that year attracted a cumulative figure of 50,000 attendees according to the official estimates, a figure that would be surpassed only once in 1964. More importantly, in August of that year, Nihon no Utagoe made itself known in the Socialist world at the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw, Poland, with the newly song “We Shall not Tolerate the Atom Bombs” (*Genbaku o yurusumaji*, 1954). The song won a second place in the festival’s composition competition and was sung by an international crowd of thousands of attendees. Finally, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, Seki Akiko was chosen as one of the recipients of the Stalin Peace Prize (soon to be renamed “Lenin Peace Prize” in September 1956 following de-Stalinization).

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<sup>1</sup> “Seki Akiko Kokusai Rēnin Heiwashō jushō kinen tokushū” (undated [1956?]), 7.

Seki Akiko received countless congratulatory notes from both in and outside of Japan, including one from now-aged Yamada Kōsaku.



Figure II.1: Seki Akiko conversing in Moscow (likely on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1956). From left to right, the four figures surrounding are film director Grigory Alexandrov, composers Dmitry Shostakovich, Dmitry Kabalevsky, and Anatoly Novikov. Photograph preserved in the Seki-Ono Archive at Ongaku Center, Tokyo.

In Utagoe's historical narrative, the song "We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb" has come to symbolize Utagoe's presence in Warsaw in 1955. In many ways "We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb" was a model creation for Utagoe. First, it was a product of collaboration

between writer Asada Ishiji, a member of JCP-aligned literary circles in the Shimomaruko neighborhood of southern Tokyo, and Kinoshita Kōji, a high school teacher in Hibiya Ward, Tokyo, who studied composition lessons at Ongaku Center. The song would remain the most recognized example of “singing poems” (*utau shi*), a series of collaborations between poetry circles and Utagoe circles called forth by Seki Akiko in early 1954.<sup>2</sup> Second, the song managed to spread outside of Japan, subsequently included in the songbook for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain under the title “Song of Hiroshima” and also becoming a part of Pete Seeger’s non-English musical repertoire.<sup>3</sup> Studies on the Utagoe movement by Japan-based scholars in recent years treat the spread of “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” as a point of culmination for the peace movement aspect of Utagoe, which became conspicuously more visible with the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>4</sup>

After 1955, however, Nihon no Utagoe would not witness such a level of international celebratory occasion again. To be sure, Utagoe’s effort to disseminate “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” in Warsaw in 1955 involved much preparation unseen in Utagoe’s participation in later World Festival of Youth and Students. Sometime between 1954 and 1955, the Central Chorus had sent the words and music to “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” to the World Federation of Democratic Youth, governing body of the World Festival of Youth and Students. The materials reached Ewan McColl, a British folklorist who penned an English

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<sup>2</sup> Chikanobu Michiba, *Shimomaruko bunka shūdan to sono jidai: 1950 nendai sākuru bunka undō no kōbō* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2016), 276. For Asada’s and Kinoshita’s later accounts, also see Ishiji Asada, “‘Uta’ o tsukuru made,” in *Genbaku o yurusumaji: sekai no sora e*, ed. Kōji Kinoshita (Tokyo: Ayumi Shuppan, 1985), 29-36; Kōji Kinoshita, “Tōkyō nanbu no katasumi kara,” in *Ibid.*, 36-47.

<sup>3</sup> Yumi Notohara, “*Hiroshima*” ga nari hibiku toki (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2015), 139-145. On Pete Seeger’s relations with Nihon no Utagoe, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-126; Seiji Chōki, *Sengo no ongaku: geijutsu ongaku no poritikusu to poetikusu* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2010), 101.

translation that would be sung in Warsaw.<sup>5</sup> Malcom Nicson sent a letter to Utagoe following his visit to Japan in January 1955 as a member of the WFDY's representatives. According to a copy of the letter that later appeared on *Utagoe Shimbun*, he proposed that Utagoe take three actions in preparation for the upcoming festival in Warsaw. First, to submit the song “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” to the festival’s composition competition; second, to hold a meeting with choruses and other “singing voices” from different parts of the world; third, to sing “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” in different languages in a specially organized event on August 6<sup>th</sup> (the date of atomic bombing of Hiroshima) with Seki Akiko as the conductor. In accepting Nicson’s suggestions, the Central Chorus noted that his suggestions were very much in line with its intent to “tak[e] up the desires and appeals of every Japanese who opposes an atomic warfare, so that the youth all through the world may clearly understand how sincerely Japanese people desire national independence and peace.”<sup>6</sup> Of these, result of the first and third suggestions was already mentioned above: at the festival, the song received a second place in the composition competition, and Seki Akiko cherished the honor of conducting the song in front of a multinational crowd.

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<sup>5</sup> “Zen sekai no dai gasshō o! Kokusai junbikai Nikuson shi kara teian,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 15<sup>th</sup> 1955, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Malcom Nicson, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1955. In the letter, stored in the Seki Akiko-Ono Teruko Archive (Seki Akiko Ono Teruko Bunko) at Ongaku Center, “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bombs” appears under the title “No More Atom Bombs”. Typed in English, this letter has several hand-written corrections and may be a final draft of the letter.



Figure II.2: Seki Akiko conducting the crowd in Warsaw, 1955 (undated). Judging from the generally festive mood of the picture, the song being sung here is most likely not “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb.” Photograph from *Utagoe wa heiwa no chikara* (1988)

However, in surviving documents, nothing more is heard of the proposition to organize “singing voices” from different parts of the world. Utagoe and the Central Chorus were clearly in favor of the idea, advocating for a “‘Singing Song [sic] of the World’ in parallel with ‘Singing Song of Japan.’”<sup>7</sup> Since a World Federation of Democratic Youth meeting in Paris on an international choral association in October 1955, nothing more is heard of the “Singing Song of

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Malcolm Nicson, 3.

the World” initiative.<sup>8</sup> Though Nihon no Utagoe continued to send its delegates to the World Festival of Youth and Students until the Pyongyang festival in 1989, Utagoe’s presence did not grow much. By and large, the delegates’ official pattern of interactions was limited to singing and exchanging music, the latter of which was subsequently and regularly incorporated into *Seinen Kashū* (up to the tenth volume in 1969).

Despite the apparent failure of Nihon no Utagoe’s overture to create Singing Voice of the World, the language therein nonetheless bespeaks the significant presence of political aspirations in Utagoe’s framing of its own musical endeavors. Chapter 3 and 4 will explore two historical ideas from Chapter 2 that remained central in Nihon no Utagoe’s worldview between 1953 and 1973: *tatakai* (“struggle”) and *kokumin ongaku* (“national music”), respectively. It must be noted that, though these ideas derived directly from the JCP language on cultural struggle, their residues are very much present in Nihon no Utagoe’s current statute, with terms like *tatakai*, *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”), and *ongaku isan* (“musical heritage”) still appearing in a matter-of-fact manner. In other words, Utagoe’s politico-cultural worldview remains decidedly nation-based and Manichaean, with all the vagueness inherent in terms such as *minzoku* and *kokumin* (“nation-people”), as well as the assumption that the voice of the people can be “composed” into a singular output – in essence, one nation, one voice.

From a framing standpoint, *tatakai* and *kokumin ongaku* were mutually constitutive ideas that also elevated political and musical actions at the local level to the national level. The concept from the contemporary Japanese Communist Party language that linked the two ideas was *minzoku*, a term which could variably signify a timeless collective or intangible (but

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<sup>8</sup> “Pari de kokusai gasshōsai,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, October 24, 1955, 2.

extractable and translatable) “essence.” Accordingly, one could argue that *minzoku*, not individuals, was the entity that was engaged in *tatakai* in the present historical moment – put differently, different groups of the Japanese *minzoku* at large were all engaged in the same struggle toward “national independence” (*minzoku dokuritsu*). For the Japanese Communist Party and Utagoe between the 1950s and 1960s, the enemies against which the Japanese *minzoku* were to struggle were expressed as “American imperialism,” “monopoly capital,” and “colonialist (or cosmopolitan) culture.” In this context, Utagoe’s *kokumin ongaku* was a form of struggle that could be local and individual on one hand, and collective and national on the other: endeavors in all of these scales would contribute to a body of Japan’s national-music-in-making. The discursive space and various endeavors born from this worldview were pillars of Utagoe’s version of “musical reformism.”

The patterns of engagement that will be analyzed in Part II, then, certainly took place during the heat of the Cold War but were not entirely unique to the Cold War-era. Indeed, as I will argue towards the end of Chapter 4, Seki Akiko’s appeal to an international solidarity against nuclear warfare and for peace in the opening epigraph found its echo in 1998, when a performing group from South Korea attended Utagoe’s annual festival for the first time. After all, Utagoe continues to define itself in terms of its enemies, allies, and that which is to be acted upon and reformed through a movement, whether individual or collective at the level of execution.

## Chapter 3

### Remembering Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer, Inside Out

Deep under the Ariake Sea  
Men are reaching toward the underground  
Raising high the flames of the working people  
And keeping the struggle alive  
For a prosperous tomorrow and peace  
They are the vanguard of the revolution – coal mine workers!

Opening chorus from the choral suite *Song of the Underground* (1961),  
Words and music by Araki Sakae (1924-1962)

Following up on the previous chapter’s discussion of the Japanese Communist Party-related historical contexts from which Utagoe’s core concepts emerged toward 1950, this chapter will examine how Utagoe’s core narrative frame was solidified by the historical moment of 1960 revolving around the notion of “struggle” (*tatakai*). As explored in the previous chapter, the idea of *tatakai* emerged following the Japanese Communist Party’s call for “national independence” (*minzoku dokuritsu*) by the hands of the Japanese people, becoming a part of Utagoe’s vocabulary and providing historical relevance to Utagoe’s role in protests across Japan from the 1950s onward, ranging from labor strikes to anti-U.S. military base protests.

Nearly seventy years since, the term *tatakai* is still current in Utagoe’s language. In the current (2019) statute of the Nihon no Utagoe National Council (approved at the forty-ninth congress, February 2018), the phrase “struggles of the people (*kokumin no tatakai*)” appears in relation to “sources of creation,” an expression consistent with the Council’s historical overview of the Utagoe movement (quoted earlier in the introduction to Part II): “the livelihood (*seikatsu*) and struggles (*tatakai*) of the people (*kokumin*)” as one of Utagoe’s historical sources of

creation.<sup>1</sup> As a historical concept that continues to define Utagoe's historical narrative to this day, *tatakai* still functions as a language through which the Utagoe movement locates its historical significance.

Analyzing Utagoe's narrative frame and its preoccupation with historical significance is important in understanding Utagoe as a continuing historical phenomenon. Indeed, as Wesley Sasaki-Uemura has emphasized in his study of the circle movement in 1950s-1960s Japan, historical narrative serves as an integral building block in maintaining a movement in the present moment: “[i]n order for movements to construct collective identities, they must historicize their situation.”<sup>2</sup> From an analytical perspective, such a process of historicization in a movement offers ways to examine how historical participants of a given movement have interpreted and interacted with developments around them over time, which in turn reinforces or modifies the discourse(s) within the movement itself. In a broadly sociological sense, this process could be considered part of framing processes, which may be generally defined as involving “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.”<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Utagoe, it is worth noting that, despite its musical aspect and emphasis on choral singing, its historical narrative has tended to highlight contemporary political situation

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<sup>1</sup> Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai Jōnin Iinkai, “Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai kiyaku kaisei(an)” (2017), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, “Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, eds. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008 [1998]), 6. The authors qualify the quoted definition as a “rather narrow” one in an attempt to “return to David Snow's original conception”.

rather than musical concerns. Seen this way, Utagoe's emphasis on the "struggles of the people" suggests the continued importance of "non-musical" factors in Utagoe's historical narrative and, by extension, its collective identities. As a crucial piece of Utagoe's collective identities, the non-musical aspect of Utagoe offers ways to make sense of how the Utagoe movement has provided its participants with a sense of contemporary relevance to their acts, with or without singing involved.

In order to delineate Utagoe's continuing historicization process over the decades, this chapter will examine a historical figure called Araki Sakae (1924-1962). As an Utagoe participant from northern Kyushu, he became subsequently celebrated as Utagoe's own "laborer-composer" (*rōdōsha sakkyokuka*). A second-generation resident of the city of Ōmuta in the Miike region (in the western prefectoral border between Fukuoka and Kumamoto), Araki was a mechanic at the Mitsui Miike Machinery (Mitsui Miike Seisakusho) who developed a great interest in music during and after World War II. During his decade-long involvement with the Utagoe movement (from 1953 to his death in 1962), Araki led several choruses in Ōmuta and composed more than sixty songs, producing his better-known songs during the famous labor strikes at Miike coal mines (1959-1960). Since his death in 1962, Araki's involvement in Utagoe was commemorated through various publications over the decades, including reprints and recordings of his compositions.

As a subject of analysis, such a role model figure reveals two aspects of collective identity-formation: as a participant, the role model figure would have been influenced by the movement's historical narrative and framings; the role model figure's life is in turn historicized in such a way as to reinforce the existing historical narrative. This perspective follows Kaminaga Eisuke's study of the Utagoe movement (2012), in which he characterizes Utagoe as a

“memetic mixture” that was sustained through “cultural self-replication” through multiple “memes” and actors. In his characterization, authoritative Utagoe choral groups like the Central Chorus acted as a crucial element in delivering the “narrative meme” (“mobilize the masses through the power of songs to change the world”) to potential participants through the “directive meme” (“correct and beautiful singing”). Put together, Kaminaga argues, Utagoe attracted participants and sustained itself by practicing its historical narrative.<sup>4</sup>

Following this characterization, I will demonstrate how Araki Sakae’s life and legacy have been remembered in Utagoe and maintained Utagoe’s historical narrative and collective identities. Araki Sakae provides ample materials that allow for such an approach. First, as Utagoe’s foremost heroic figure, Araki remains an uncontested hero in Utagoe’s historical narrative (second only to the movement founder Seki Akiko, if at all): a mechanic and self-taught composer from the coal mine region of Miike in northern Kyushu, he was posthumously elevated to the status of Utagoe activist *par excellence* through a series of commemorative events and publications immediately following his death in 1962. Second, Araki is a rare figure in Utagoe whose legacy is survived by an archive and periodic remembering by local groups in his native Ōmuta. In short, the life and afterlife of Araki Sakae present opportunities for in-depth historical analysis that cannot be done with other activist figures in the history of Utagoe.

Before examining Araki Sakae’s life and subsequent remembering, it would be worthwhile to explore the historical context from which Araki emerged as a composer-activist in Miike, a coal mine region that would become the site of a landmark labor strike in 1960 – namely, Utagoe’s relationship with the labor movement in 1950s Japan. This development is

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<sup>4</sup> Eisuke Kaminaga, “Utagoe undō towa nanika: Mīmugaku no shiten kara kangaeru,” *Niigata Kokusai Jōhō Daigaku Jōhōgakubu Kiyō*, 15, no.1 (2012), 1, 2-5.

important in understanding how Araki's works came about in the specific forms that they did. As Justin Jesty has recently argued in *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*, works of what he calls "creative externalization" born from circles in early postwar Japan represent "moments" that were made "only possible to the extent that people sustained it."<sup>5</sup> In the case of Araki Sakae, his extended community was the Utagoe movement and its participants in and outside of northern Kyushu, as well as the broader "united front" under the Japan Socialist Party (Shakaitō)-Japanese Communist Party alliance between 1954 and 1964. Much of Utagoe's formative years involved expansion into workplaces and labor unions across Japan, and Utagoe's historical claim to being a movement – and Araki's epithet "laborer-composer" – derive from the development during this period.

### Utagoe's Expansion into the Workplace, 1948-1960

The workplace was a familiar place of activity for formative Utagoe well before the establishment of its national organization Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee (Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai) in 1955. As de facto progenitor of the Utagoe movement, the Central Chorus laid the groundwork for future Utagoe groups in localities and workplaces across Japan. Through the 1950s, the Central Chorus sent its members to workplaces in and around Tokyo, including Japan National Railways (Kokutetsu) workshops, factories in the Keihin (Tokyo-Yokohama) area, and cosmetics products factories such as Kanebō. "Singing instructions" at these locales typically took place during breaks.<sup>6</sup> By 1953, the Central Chorus's activities

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<sup>5</sup> Justin Jesty, *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017), 4, 17.

<sup>6</sup> On some of the first "singing gatherings" organized by members of the Central Chorus during labor disputes circa

became noteworthy enough for the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party, which expressed its “deep respect for the [chorus’s] young and stalwart singing voice (*utagoe*) for peace and national independence (*minzoku dokuritsu*),” now spreading “across the nation and into factories and the countryside.”<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, through the early 1950s the Central Chorus was acquiring an increasing number of associate singing groups. Attracting a total of 6,000 individuals according to the official estimate, the Central Chorus’s fifth year anniversary concert titled “Singing Voice of Japan” (Nihon no Utagoe, 1953) included performances by choral groups from Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, and Kyoto, as well as groups from the Japan National Railways (Kokutetsu), Kawasaki Steel Corporation (Kawatetsu), and the University of Tokyo.<sup>8</sup> “Singing Voice of Japan” since became an annual concert-style gathering of Utagoe groups from across Japan under the revised title “Nihon no Utagoe Festival” (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten), attended by 25,000 people in 1954 and the record high figure of 52,000 in 1964 (over the span of three days in both cases).

Formative Utagoe’s involvement in workplaces coincides with the rapid growth of the labor movement in the early years of postwar Japan. Most importantly, the Central Chorus and its associate groups benefited from the Japanese Communist Party’s alliance with the two national trade union associations: the All-Japan Congress of Industrial Unions (Zen Nippon Sangyō-betsu Rōdō Kumiai Kaigi, or Sanbetsu Kaigi for short, established in 1946) and later the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sō-hyōgikai, or Sōhyō for short,

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1950, see Hiromi Fujimoto, *Uta wa tatakai to tomo ni: Chūō Gasshōdan no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1971), 45-57.

<sup>7</sup> Nihon Kyōsantō Chūō Iinkai, “Utagoe yo okore” (Letter to the Central Chorus [Chūō Gasshōdan]), January 1953. Preserved in the Seki Akiko-Ono Teruko Archive at the Ongaku Center, this “letter” was clearly written in a hurry and is riddled with corrections marked directly on the papers.

<sup>8</sup> “1953 nen Nihon no Utagoe” (1953), 3-7.

established in 1950). Clearly following the Japanese Communist Party's partnership with Sōhyō and its major benefactor Japan Socialist Party (Shakaitō), Utagoe also entered into a partnership with Sōhyō, supposedly proposed by Sōhyō's chief secretary Takano Minoru (1901-1974) according to Utagoe's periodical *Utagoe Shimbun*. Inarguably the largest labor federation in Japan at the time, Sōhyō provided Utagoe with both moral and "infrastructural" support to Utagoe, granting Utagoe access into existing labor unions.<sup>9</sup> With the help of these partnerships, formative Utagoe would expand its reach in the workplaces through unions in the remainder of the 1950s.

The importance of the laborers and the labor front in early Utagoe is amply visible in the two-way formation of subsequent individual "singing voice" (*utagoe*) sections under the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee. Divided into prefectures and industries, these sections included prefectural ones such as "Singing Voice of Hiroshima" (*Hiroshima no utagoe*), while industrial sections included ones like "Singing Voice of the Metal Industry" (*Kinzoku no utagoe*) and "Singing Voice of Coal Mines" (*Tankō no utagoe*).<sup>10</sup> Utagoe's repertoire also began to be shaped by this development, as documented in Utagoe's official songbook *Seinen Kashū* ("Youth Songbook"), which printed ten editions between 1951 and 1969. In particular, the third (1954) and fourth editions (1955) include newly composed songs from various workplaces and demonstrations where Utagoe groups joined forces with. Examples include the previously

<sup>9</sup> Under the leadership of Takano Minoru (1901-1974), Sōhyō provided support for the Japan Socialist Party's "leftist" faction and played a major role in the SDP-JCP alliance. After a decade-long cooperation in the political arena, Utagoe-Sōhyō alliance came to an end in 1964 following the April 17<sup>th</sup> General Strike incident that year, a landmark event that effectively ended active cooperation between the Japan Socialist Party and the Japanese Communist Party. On Sōhyō's relationship with the peace movement, see Mari Yamamoto, *Sengo rōdō kumiai to josei no heiwa undō* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2006), chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>10</sup> The first Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten) in 1954 included sixty-eight participating groups in "Singing Voice of Various Industries" (*Sangyōbetsu no utagoe*), including those in Students and Women's sections. Chūō Gasshōdan, "Genbaku yurusumaji 1954 nen Nihon no Utagoe" (1954), 9-13.

examined “Uchinada Counting Song” (*Uchinada kazoe uta*) and “Uchinada Sōranbushi,” both of which were based on local “folk” tunes and dealt with the protests against the construction of a U.S. military firing range in Uchinada, Ishikawa Prefecture (1953, see Chapter 2); anthems of the Japan National Railways Union (Kokutetsu Rōdō Kumiai) and All-Japan Telecommunication Union (Zenkoku Denki Tsūshin Rōdō Kumiai); and “Female Textile Workers Won’t Cry Anymore” (*Bōseki jokō wa mō nakanai yo*), a song composed in support of the labor dispute at the Ōmi Kenshi Spinning Company (Ōmi Kenshi Bōseki) factories in 1954, popularly dubbed postwar Japan’s first “human rights dispute” (*jinken sōgi*).<sup>11</sup> These songs were typically products of interactions between Utagoe groups and local protesters, who combined their musical and textual outputs to create songs, which were in turn printed into sheet music and made available to other Utagoe groups. In this sense, formative Utagoe certainly practiced what it preached: “Song is with the struggles” (*uta wa tatakai to tomo ni*), one of Utagoe’s three historical slogans that derives from the title of the Central Chorus’s first anniversary concert (1949).<sup>12</sup>

### Utagoe in the Coal Mines and Miike, 1952-1960

In the wake of such a development, future “laborer-composer” Araki Sakae’s entry into Utagoe from Miike in 1953 coincided with the emergence of the “Singing Voice of Coal Mines” (*Tankō no utagoe*) section. The Central Chorus visited the coal mine region of central Hokkaido around

<sup>11</sup> For a brief account of the Ōmi Kenshi Spinning Company from the perspective of the shift from prewar “paternalistic” labor practices to a postwar paradigm, see Elyssa Faison, *Managing Women: Disciplining Labor in Modern Japan* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2007), 145-151.

<sup>12</sup> The other two slogans are “Singing voice is a force of peace” (*utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*, 1953) and “Singing voice is a force to live” (*utagoe wa ikeru chikara*, 1980), each of which became the title of the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival in the following year.

Yūbari in 1952, after which the Coal Mine Utagoe Circle Council (Tankō Utagoe Sākuru Kyōgikai) came into being.<sup>13</sup> As Mizutamari Mayumi has shown in her 2008 study of Utagoe circles in coal mines, the circles sprang through local interaction with visiting Utagoe groups, including the Central Chorus, and this pattern was likely repeated in the coal mine areas in northern Kyushu as well.<sup>14</sup> Following participation of various local coal mine groups in the 1953 and 1954 “Nihon no Utagoe” (“Singing Voice of Japan”) festivals in Tokyo, the first “Singing Voice of the Coal Mines in Hokkaido” (March 1955) and “Singing Voice of the Coal Mines” (October 1955) festivals soon followed suit.<sup>15</sup>

The first coal mine-themed song to enter Utagoe’s songbook *Seinen Kashū* was “Coal Mine Ditty” (*Tankō bayashi*),” one of Araki Sakae’s earliest tunes composed in 1950 (included in the third edition, 1954).<sup>16</sup> Over a decade since Araki composed “Coal Mine Ditty,” Miike coal mines experienced a dramatic turn of events that shook entire Japan. As one of the major coal mines in northern Kyushu operated by the Mitsui conglomerate since the 1880s, Miike was the largest coal mine owned by Mitsui in the 1950s, boasting the coal company’s approximately one-third of total production, number of employees, and assets.<sup>17</sup> In addition, by the mid-1950s the Miike coal mines acquired reputation for its powerful labor union after winning a 113 day-long strike in 1953, which forced the management to rescind its plan to lay off 1,722

<sup>13</sup> These localities include Yūbari, Ōyūbari, Kamisunagawa, Sunagawa, Chashinai, and Asano. Fujimoto (1971), 84.

<sup>14</sup> Mayumi Mizutamari, “1950 nendai ni okeru tankō rōdōsha no Utagoe undo,” *Hokkaidō Daigaku Bungaku Kenkyūka Kiyō* 126, no. 1 (2008): 66.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>16</sup> Yaeko Morita, *Kono shōri hibike todoroke – Araki Sakae no shōgai* (Tokyo: Ōzuki Shoten, 1983), 64-66.

<sup>17</sup> John Price, “The 1960 Miike Coal Mine Dispute: Turning Point for Adversarial Unionism in Japan?,” in *The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance Since 1945*, ed. Joe Moore (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1997 [1989]), 51. For a brief overview of sociological literature on the Miike labor strikes, see Yōichi Hirai, *Miike sōgi: Sengo rōdō undō no bunsuirei* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2000), endnote 2, 8.

employees.<sup>18</sup> The next major labor dispute in the Miike coal mines in 1959-1960 over an equally massive layoff was dubbed “Japan’s most serious labor dispute in modern times” by a contemporary American observer and has subsequently become known as a turning point in postwar Japan’s labor relation.<sup>19</sup> Engulfing labor unions in multiple Mitsui-owned companies in the area, the Miike labor strikes of 1959-1960 became in many ways a labor movement-equivalent of the 1960 Anpo (US-Japan Security Treaty) protests, if in an ironic manner. Much like the more widely known Anpo protests, the “defeat” of the Miike strike seemingly marked the end of an era, after which confrontational unions gave way to the dominance of so-called “Japanese-style” cooperative labor relation.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Martin, “Japanese Mining Labor: the Miike Strike,” *Far Eastern Survey* 30 no. 2 (February 1961), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Gordon, *The Wages of Affluence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 195-201. On the aftermath of the 1960 moment in Japan’s labor movement, see Nick Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise after Anpo* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 137-144.



Figure 3.1: Araki Sakae conducting the crowd on May Day (1959) in Ōmuta (Still shot from *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer*, 1992)

However, it must also be noted that, for contemporary observers sympathetic to the Japan Socialist Party-Japanese Communist Party alliance, the Anpo protests and the Miike labor strikes were two sides of the same coin – in a decidedly positive manner. While these observers noted the Japanese government’s energy policy shift to oil from coal, they still depicted the resulting Miike laborers’ struggle as a confrontation between the Japanese people and the Japanese “monopoly capital” under American hegemony. This rhetoric was in fact an extension of the “struggle” rhetoric that was in development since a decade earlier, having now become a shared language in the Japan Socialist Party-Japanese Communist Party alliance. In the shared vision

between the Japan Socialist Party and the Japanese Communist Party, the situation in Miike in 1960 was no less important than the commotion in front of the National Diet in Tokyo: local in occurrence, but national in political implication.

By 1960, Utagoe had also undergone a similar process of elevating local events to a national-level cause. In April 1960, in response to the labor strikes in Miike, Utagoe's leadership called for organizing “*utagoe* action teams” (*utagoe kōdōtai*) into Miike. First organized in late 1958 in support of strikes at Ōji Paper Company factories in Hokkaido and in protest to the Police Duties Execution Act (Keisatsukan Shokumu Shikkōhō), *utagoe* action teams were a continuation of actions taken by early Utagoe groups since 1953, involving mobilization through teaching existing Utagoe repertoire and creation of new songs about the local protest.<sup>21</sup> Utagoe's organization of the action teams in 1958 is particularly noteworthy in the context of Utagoe-General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Sōhyō) partnership and the rhetorical merging of local labor strikes with political demonstrations, elevating both to components of a national struggle (*tatakai*). Such merging also took place during Utagoe's support for the Miike labor strikes and the Anpo protests in 1960. In a similar manner as Ōji Paper Company and Police Duties Execution Act protests in 1958, the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee issued a statement calling for “solidarity” (*danketsu*) with Miike in support of the larger national struggle for peace in Japan.<sup>22</sup> By the end of May, Utagoe groups across Japan were holding events in support of the Miike labor strikes, contextualized in terms of “dissolving the Anpo system”

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the front pages of *Utagoe Shinbun* issues from October 1, October 15, and November 15, 1958.

<sup>22</sup> “Danketsu wa rōdōsha no inochi,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 11, 1960.

(*anpo funsai*).<sup>23</sup> In this way, the Miike labor strikes became *historically* coterminous with the Anpo protests in the Utagoe movement.



Figure 3.2: Nara Tsuneko leading an *utagoe* action team (1960?, Still shot from *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer*, 1992)

In the case of the Miike labor strikes, organization of the *utagoe* action teams was triggered by the death of Kubo Kiyoshi, a Miike union member who was reportedly stabbed to

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, “Zenkokku de Miike shien: anpo funsai no utagoe shūkai hiraku,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 21 & Jun 1, 1960.

death in the eye by a thug hired by the management in March 1960. By the end of that month, several members of the Central Chorus entered the city of Ōmuta. Among these individuals was Central Chorus alumna Nara Tsuneko (1930-2016), who set up a headquarters and immediately established contact with Araki Sakae.<sup>24</sup> Since the situation in Miike was featured on the front page of *Utagoe Shinbun* all through April issues, *utagoe* action teams began entering the Miike region from Kagoshima Prefecture to the south and Hokkaido to the north, organized by regional Utagoe “center choruses” and workplace-based choruses across Japan. In total, the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee made twenty-seven calls for organizing *utagoe* action teams between 1960 and 1961, sending approximately ten thousand individuals to Miike according to official estimates (likely a cumulative figure).

Following what became a pattern since 1953, musical repertoire of the *utagoe* action teams in Miike stemmed from two major sources: songs from current and past labor struggles elsewhere in Japan, as well as songs that were newly composed in Miike. The action teams’ activities centered around providing moral support for the local protesters by performing songs and plays. An illustrative case of this development is the concert-style gathering “Singing Voice of Miike” (Miike no Utagoe), held on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1960, right in front of the Mikawa mine hopper – a strategic chokepoint through which all coal from the mine had to pass, now occupied by the protesters for two months. “Singing Voice of Miike” lasted for three hours and included performances by over twenty Utagoe groups and action teams from Miike, Kyushu, Honshu, and Hokkaido. The concert included songs from Hokkaido mines, Russian revolutionary songs, Japanese folk songs, and newly composed songs from the Miike labor strikes – in other words,

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<sup>24</sup> Tsuneko Nara, “Tatakau genchi yori,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 11, 1960.

the entire range of compositions that came out of Utagoe up to that point.<sup>25</sup> Specially featured in this event was Araki Sakae's new composition "Let's Keep it Up" (*Ganbarō*), which since became de facto Utagoe anthem of the Anpo-Miike protests.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, Utagoe's "work creation" (*sōsaku*) efforts in Miike would be effectively capitalized by Araki Sakae. Most tellingly, the first volume of *Newly Created Songs from the Miike Struggle* (*Miike Tōsō Sōsakukyōku*), compiled by the Ōmuta Center Chorus (Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan, established in 1956, of which Araki was a founding member), contained the subtitle *Collected Works of Araki Sakae (Araki Sakae Sakuhinshū)*.<sup>27</sup> It would almost seem that Araki Sakae suddenly rose into prominence in the wake of the historical moment of 1960 in Miike.

However, Araki Sakae was not made in a single year. It is worth noting that both the "Singing Voice of the Coal Mines" section and Araki Sakae joined the *Utagoe* movement during the ascendant years of the labor movement in Japan. Araki's almost decade-long activity in Utagoe between 1953 and 1962 coincided not only with the expansion of Utagoe into workplaces across Japan but also with the height of unionism in his native Miike coal mines. Depicted in Utagoe's historical narrative as a high point of the Japanese people's historic struggle for "independence" and "peace," the year 1960 would be subsequently cast in the person of Araki Sakae – as simultaneously a son of Miike and a creative and passionate Utagoe activist whose legacy extends beyond his native Miike.

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<sup>25</sup> "Miike kyōtō anpo soshi 'Miike no Utagoe' hoppā nirande gosen mei," *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 21 & June 1, 1960; "Miike no utagoe," in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 6 of 6, eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017)

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Kuniyoshi Kōya, "Ganbarō o kiku tabi ni," *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 1, 1964.

<sup>27</sup> The Ōmuta Center Chorus is an Utagoe "core chorus" (*chūshin gasshōdan*) in Ōmuta, still active to this day. "Core choruses" in Utagoe were expected to function as regional equivalents of the Central Chorus and typically carried out activities in emulation of the Central Chorus – for example, singing instructions, educating new members through multiple-month study program (*kenkyūsei seido*).

### Araki Sakae in Utagoe Historiography, 1962-2018

A second-generation resident of Ōmuta in the Miike region, Araki Sakae (1924-1962) occupies an unparalleled position in Utagoe's historiography. Often referred to as the “laborer-composer” (*rōdōsha sakkyokuka*), Araki became Utagoe's paragon immediately following his death: as a participant of the Utagoe movement, he represented the best kind of both creative spirit and leadership that Utagoe could hope for; as a native of Miike, he personifies Utagoe's role in the historical Anpo protests and Miike labor strikes of 1960; above all, Araki became the finest role model who inspired contemporary participants of Utagoe to “become the second or third Mr. Araki Sakae.”<sup>28</sup> Having received top activist award from Utagoe on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1962, only six days before his death, Araki Sakae received a number of posthumous honors: special prize from the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan, or *Sōhyō* (November 1962); commemorative concerts in a dozen cities, from Fukuoka to Tokyo (1963); Utagoe's new composition prize named after him (1963); a play based on his life with the title *The Life of a Laborer-Composer* (*Aru Rōdōsha Sakkyokuka no Shōgai*, 1966).<sup>29</sup> Rapidly immortalized following his death, Araki Sakae was the first individual in Utagoe to undergo apotheosis in all but name.

As Utagoe's celebrated “laborer-composer” figure, Araki Sakae also serves as a mirror which displays early Utagoe's frames and value system. The earliest assessment of Araki's historical significance was delivered in less than two months since his death in *Posthumous*

<sup>28</sup> “Yonjūkyūkisei no sōbetsu konpa: ‘Araki san ni tsuzukō’ no ketsui” [Farewell party for the Forty-ninth class: Pledging “to follow Mr. Araki”], *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 15, 1963.

<sup>29</sup> Tadaakira Seki, “Araki Sakae no sakkyoku o megutte: Utagoe undō ga unda sakkyokuka no shōgai to gyōseki” [On Araki Sakae's compositions: the life and accomplishments of a composer born from *Utagoe*], *Bunka Hyōron* no. 53 (March 1966): 62; Kuniyoshi Kōya, *Rōdōsha sakkyokuka Araki Sakae no uta to shōgai* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 1985), 222.

*Works of Araki Sakae (Araki Sakae Isakushū, 1962)*, compiled by the Ōmuta Center Chorus: “Araki Sakae’s achievements and works live on inside the workers and will continue to shine among people in eternity. We firmly believe that his activities and works will encourage the working class, the latter of which is engaged in the struggle to realize peace, independence, democracy, and neutrality in Japan . . .”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, during his lifetime, Araki composed songs dealing with such themes: “Give us Back Okinawa” (*Okinawa o kaese*, 1956; Okinawa reversion movement), “Let’s Keep it Up” (*Ganbarō*, 1960; Miike labor strike and Anpo demonstrations) and “Let This Victory Sound and Reverberate (*Kono shōri hibike todoroke*, 1962; anti-U.S. military base protests).<sup>31</sup> Having since become a typical summation of Araki’s historical significance, such juxtaposition of Araki’s career with Utagoe’s efforts toward “peace, independence, democracy, and neutrality” in Japan is worthy of note for two reasons. First, it suggests that concepts like “working class,” “peace,” “struggle,” and “Japan” (and by extension the Japanese *minzoku* [ethno-nation]) were very much in use among individual members and groups under Utagoe, serving as the framing language of Utagoe’s perceived historical trajectory. Second, and more importantly, Araki’s posthumous treatment in this manner has established Araki’s life as a fulfilment of these causes.

Araki’s legacy in Utagoe has long been secured through a series of posthumous publications. Since the publication of *Posthumous Works of Araki Sakae* in late 1962, Utagoe’s publishing house Ongaku Center published *Complete Works of Araki Sakae (Araki Sakae Sakuhin Zenshū*, 1969), two LP albums exclusively featuring Araki’s works (1965 and 1972),

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Kōya (1985), 219.

<sup>31</sup> “Let’s Keep it Up” (*Ganbarō*) was composed during the Miike labor strike, but the song soon found its way to Tokyo, becoming Utagoe’s de facto “theme song” for the Anpo demonstrations.

and a documentary film titled *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (*Rōdōsha sakkyokuka Araki Sakae*, 1992) in the VHS format.<sup>32</sup> Most recently, as part of Utagoe's seventy-year anniversary commemoration (2018), Araki's last composition "Song of My Mother" (*Wa ga haha no uta*, 1962) was chosen among the eighteen pieces born from the Utagoe movement to receive new choral arrangement by conservatory-trained professional Japanese composers.<sup>33</sup> Taken together, Utagoe has been engaging in periodical remembering of Araki Sakae, whereby his significance in the Utagoe movement's history is continually reconfirmed.

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<sup>32</sup> As of October 2018, CD-transfers of the two LP albums (1992, reprinted in 2008) and DVD-transfer of the *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (2011) remain rare digital transfers from the original analog formats published by Ongaku Center that are still in circulation. "Utagoe," *Ongaku Sentā*, accessed October 21, 2018, <http://www.ongakucenter.co.jp/SHOP/792845/list.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Araki's "Song of My Mother" was arranged by Nobunaga Takatomi (b. 1971), a professional composer best known for his prolific choral compositions and arrangements. "6 nin no ongakuka ni yoru nyū arenji gasshōkyokushū 'Minna no uta,'" [Songs for Everyone: Newly Arranged Choral Music Collection by Six Musicians] *Ongaku Sentā*, accessed October 21, 2018, <http://www.ongakucenter.co.jp/SHOP/K8664.html>.



Figure 3.3: Araki Sakae monument in Ōmuta (on the left-hand side; photographed by the author, July 2018)

In Araki's native Miike, too, there have been periodical occasions of remembering Araki Sakae. In 1985, which marked the quarter-century anniversary of the Miike labor strikes, the Society for Constructing the Araki Sakae Monument (Araki Sakae Hi o Tsukuru Kai) was organized with the express purpose of commemorating Araki's life through a stone monument on the date of his death (October 26<sup>th</sup>). Initiated by former and current members of the Ōmuta Center Chorus and supported by local Japanese Communist Party figures and the national Utagoe organization's leadership figures, the Society constructed a monument in time for the

twenty-third anniversary of Araki's death.<sup>34</sup> Installed in front of the Komenoyama Hospital, where Araki spent his last days, the granite-based monument is adorned with a plaque on which is inscribed a calligraphic rendition of the last verse from Araki's choral suite *Song of the Underground* (*Jizoko no uta*, 1961), one of the last works for which Araki himself authored the lyrics:

We are the glorious coal miners of Miike  
With daring hearts that fear not oppression  
We smash the enemy of the truth  
Through courageous struggle (*tatakai*)  
Let us strengthen the fortress of peace!<sup>35</sup>

The opening ceremony on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1985, was attended by Araki's family members as well as "over two hundred people from [all over Japan] who were his acquaintances, friends, and Utagoe colleagues (*nakamatachi*)."<sup>36</sup> The monument still stands in the premises of the Komenoyama Hospital today, having been relocated to its current location when the hospital moved to its current location in 2016.

Also in the year 1985, the Society for Recording Araki Sakae (Araki Sakae o Kiroku suru Kai) began its activity. Formed with the goal of preserving historical records related to Araki Sakae so that current and future generations may learn from Araki's life beyond "the confines of the Utagoe movement," the Society self-published two volumes of *Araki Sakae Research* (*Araki*

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<sup>34</sup> According to Kyūgo Hisayuki (b. 1944), a one-time member of the Ōmuta Center Chorus (1961) and one of the organizers of the Society for Constructing the Araki Sakae Monument, Araki's doctor Matsuishi Hidesuke played a central role in organizing the Society. Matsuishi is also the author of the calligraphy on the monument. Interview with Kyūgo Hisayuki, Ōmuta, Japan, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> *Miike tōsō sōsakukyōku*, ed. Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan (Ōmuta: Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan, 1961), 32.

<sup>36</sup> Araki Sakae Hi o Tsukuru Kai, *Miike tōsō 25 shūnen Araki Sakae hi konryū kinen: Fukutsu no Araki Sakae* (Ōmuta: "Araki Sakae Hi" o Tsukuru Kai, 1985), 3 [unnumbered].

*Sakae Kenkyū*) between 1985 and 1986 containing Araki Sakae's writings, memoirs written by his family members and acquaintances over the years, and a detailed timeline of Araki's life.<sup>37</sup> Currently, *Araki Sakae Research* is the only primary source collection related to Araki Sakae. In this sense, the Society for Recording Araki Sakae left behind a valuable source base through which to study Araki, greatly informing the content of the current chapter.<sup>38</sup>

In the sections that follow, I will critically engage with Araki Sakae's biographies published between the 1980s and the 1990s. This approach is a response to both previous scholarship on Utagoe and existing accounts from Utagoe, both of which have little to say about the process of historicization in the Utagoe movement and its implications in both historical and current-day contexts. In what remains the only scholarly treatment of Araki Sakae in the context of the Utagoe movement, musicologist Chōki Seiji in his 2010 study spends several pages discussing Araki Sakae as the prime example of a composer who was born from within Utagoe. However, contrary to his initial exposition, Chōki limits his discussion of Araki in terms of contemporary *min'yō* (folk music) paradigm. Chōki notes that, at the ideological level, Araki's and Utagoe's contemporary understanding of *min'yō* as the basis of "people's music" was ultimately a product of its time, specific to the contemporary paradigm.<sup>39</sup> Although Chōki is certainly correct in pointing this out (as Chapter 2 of this dissertation has also done), his account on Araki Sakae does not return to the broader historical question he starts off with: "[W]as

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<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, neither of these volumes provides a solid clue as to when the society was formed. However, according to Kōya Kuniyoshi, the Society for Recording Araki Sakae published the first volume of *Araki Sakae Research* "in conjunction with the [Araki Sakae monument's] opening ceremony [in 1985]," suggesting that the two groups worked together around 1985. Kuniyoshi Kōya, "Araki Sakae kara manabu mono: rōdōsha sakkyokuka no uta to shōgai," *Zen'ei* no. 529 (January 1986): 206.

<sup>38</sup> The first two volumes of *Araki Sakae Research* are available for viewing at the Miike Struggle-Araki Sakae Memorial Archive Corner (Miike Tōsō-Araki Sakae Kinen Shiryō Kōnā) at the Komenoyama Hospital.

<sup>39</sup> Seiji Chōki, *Sengo no ongaku: Geijutsu ongaku no poritikusu to poetikusu* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2010), 118.

Utagoe a movement rooted in the area of music, or was it a social movement? Was it a social movement that went beyond a musical movement, or was it an art creation movement that blossomed within a social movement? Better yet, are they [elements of social and musical movement] really inseparable?”<sup>40</sup> While these questions remain pertinent to scholars of Utagoe, Chōki himself foregoes addressing these questions vis-à-vis Araki Sakae’s involvement in Utagoe. In the end, Chōki’s account falls short of addressing Araki Sakae as a historical figure, whether in or outside of the contexts of the Utagoe movement.

In an attempt to touch on these issues via Araki Sakae, the remainder of this chapter will address the following questions: What did a self-identified laborer like Araki Sakae have to gain by identifying himself as a part of Utagoe? Furthermore, what did the Utagoe movement in turn gain from Araki Sakae, and what are the implications of his status in Utagoe as a continuing movement? To that end, I will be comparing two sets of writings about Araki: his biographies and his own surviving writings. In doing so, I seek in the remainder of the chapter to trace the multiple processes of remembering Araki as a passionate human being, a Communist Party member, and a movement figure – all of which emphasize Araki’s postwar transitions that specifically support each interpretation.

#### Araki Sakae in Biographies: Imperfect Artist, Passionate Revolutionary, and Role Model

As of 2018, three extended biographical accounts on Araki Sakae exist. The first to be published was *Let This Victory Sound and Reverberate: the Life of Araki Sakae (Kono shōri hibike todoroke – Araki Sakae no shōgai*, 1983) by Morita Yaeko (alias, 1928-2004), a poet affiliated

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 80-81.

with the “Circle Village” (Sākuru Mura) in northeastern Kyushu who provided words for many of Araki’s iconic songs such as “Let’s Keep it Up” (*Ganbarō*).<sup>41</sup> Two years later, in 1985, Kōya Kuniyoshi published *The Life and Songs of Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (*Rōdōsha sakkyōkuka Araki Sakae no uta to shōgai*, 1985). Formerly a functionary in the Japanese Communist Party’s Onga District Committee in northeastern Fukuoka Prefecture, Kōya was himself a newcomer to Utagoe when he met Araki for the first time in 1953.<sup>42</sup> Lastly, a documentary film was produced and published by Utagoe’s publishing house Ongaku Center in 1992 with the apt title *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (*Rōdōsha sakkyōkuka Araki Sakae*), rich in interview footage with Araki’s contemporaries both from and outside of Miike.<sup>43</sup> In general, the three biographies follow a similar chronological narrative: born in the coal mine region of Miike in 1924, Araki developed an expressive mind and grew into a passionate witness to the historical struggles to come, in particular the Miike labor strikes (1959-1960) and the Anpo demonstrations (1960), succumbing to stomach cancer only two years later in 1962.

All three biographies are sympathetic to Araki and confer historical significance to his life, but they differ in their points of emphasis. First to be written among the three biographies of Araki, Morita Yaeko’s *Let This Victory Sound and Reverberate* (1983) provides a sympathetic account of Araki Sakae as an imperfect but ultimately passionate human being who died believing in his cause. As a poet who was active in several literary circles (*sākuru*) in northern Kyushu, Morita worked closely with Araki since the late 1950s. Juxtaposing Araki’s life with

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<sup>41</sup> On Circle Village, see Part 2 of Mayumi Mizutamari, “Sākuru mura” to Morisaki Kazue: *kōryū to rentai no vijon* (Kyoto: Nakanishiya Shuppan, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Mizutamari (2008), 67.

<sup>43</sup> According to the film’s end credits, the documentary’s production was also supported by the Nihon no Utagoe National Council and the Society for Recording Araki Sakae.

her own as likewise a politically conscious poet, Morita treats Araki as a fellow activist who experienced both successes and failures. In this spirit, she references several letters from Araki to illustrate his idealistic yet sometimes precarious nature. Though Morita also regards the year 1953 as a life-changing moment for Araki, she depicts Araki as a tormented creative soul who died without having been able to completely address his inner struggles. In Morita's account, Araki felt conflicted about his expected leadership role in Utagoe and his personal desire to engage in more creative activities (*sōsaku*); his inability "to develop his energy towards the revolution from a deeply grounded lived emotion" (*seikatsu kanjō*); his acknowledgement that he could no longer write music outside of Party lines, an admission that could be interpreted in both positive and negative manners.<sup>44</sup> Although Morita still positively treats both Araki's encounter with formative Utagoe in 1953 and his decision to become a JCP member in 1959 as defining moments in Araki's life, Araki's lamentations are enough leave the reader on a suspended chord. As the first and arguably the most personal of the three extant Araki biographies, Morita's account suggests that Araki continued to seek his own voice amidst inner conflicts, both before and after his discovery of Utagoe.

Such a sense of conflict is far downplayed in Kōya Kuniyoshi's *The Life and Songs of Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (1985). Written with the express purpose of depicting Araki Sakae as an "unwavering revolutionary and a [Japan Communist] party member," Kōya's account presents Araki Sakae as a larger-than-life figure with multiple levels of historical significance.<sup>45</sup> In particular, Kōya depicts Araki's encounter with Utagoe in 1953 as an instantaneously life-changing event that defined the course of Araki's life ever since. The fateful

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<sup>44</sup> Morita 102, 125.

<sup>45</sup> Kōya (1985), 3.

encounter took place on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1953, at the first “Singing Voice of Kyushu” (Kyūshū no Utagoe) event in the city of Fukuoka, which attracted four thousand participants according to the official estimate.<sup>46</sup> Having participated in the festival with the Barbaric Voice Club (Banseikai), a male chorus he had organized in Ōmuta earlier that year, Araki is said to have been deeply impressed by “Song of the National Independence Action Team” (*Minzoku dokuritsu kōdōtai no uta*), a song composed by a Central Chorus member in 1950, which immediately became an inspiration for his future compositions. He quenched his nascent curiosity towards the Utagoe movement by inviting the Central Chorus alumna Nara Tsuneko (1930-2016, class of 1948), who was also present in the “Singing Voice of Kyushu” event, to Ōmuta. Although the other two biographies also touch on the significance of this meeting, Kōya particularly highlights this event as a historical moment in which Araki discovered the possibility of “a new choral movement that truly gives the song (*uta*) into the hands of the masses (*taishū*) themselves.”<sup>47</sup> With this newfound aspiration, Kōya contends, Araki made his “first step towards Kyushu’s Araki from Ōmuta’s Araki Sakae, and eventually towards Japan’s Araki Sakae.”<sup>48</sup>

Kōya’s account focuses on the impact that Utagoe had on Araki’s existing interests. In this spirit, Kōya describes Araki’s familiarity with local Kyushu *min’yō* from young age as the “secret” (*hiketsu*) behind Araki’s masterful ability to write music employing both Japanese and

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<sup>46</sup> Earlier in 1953, the first “Singing Voice of Kansai” took place in Osaka, in emulation of the Central Chorus’s fifth anniversary concert titled “Nihon no Utagoe” (“Singing Voice of Japan”). Towards the end of 1953, there were at least sixteen groups in Kyushu that had pledged to support organizing “Singing Voice of Kyushu”. Nearly half of these groups were based in Fukuoka Prefecture, possibly reflecting the presence of many coal mines there since the Meiji period. “1953 nen Nihon no Utagoe,” 15. On the first “Singing Voice of Kyushu”, see Kōya (1985), 38-40; Moritara, 73-75.

<sup>47</sup> Kōya (1985), 40.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Western scales; Araki's encounters and collaborations with other labor unions through Utagoe as having broadened his creative vision from the individual to the collective.<sup>49</sup> The dominant narrative in Kōya's account is that of an awakening, from a young socially conscious mechanic from Miike to a creative soul with revolutionary aspirations. As an earnest man who had derived "happiness from serving the people and the world" well before becoming a Japanese Communist Party member in 1959, Araki as depicted by Kōya died a revolutionary, faithful to his calling and selfless in working for the larger cause.

The 1992 documentary *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* (directed by Minato Kenjirō) similarly contextualizes Araki Sakae in the eventual Anpo and Miike struggles of 1960. One notable difference, however, is that the film places much emphasis on Araki's personal qualities, as told by his comrades, friends, and family members: an approachable, sensitive, and compassionate person, but not a good father who was rarely at home. The film particularly dwells on Araki's sensitive (*sensai*) nature in describing his artistic trajectories. Araki's early postwar works of *tanka* poems (which will be discussed in detail in the next section), for instance, are described as reflecting Araki's "romanticist" aspect. In this context, Utagoe figures as a major influence on Araki which provided him with a firm sense of direction for music-making. In so doing, *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* establishes two major phases in Araki's life: before and after his encounter with Utagoe in 1953.

*Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* is much more direct than the other two biographical accounts in establishing Araki's legacy. The film establishes continuity in Araki's spirit through its depiction of the remaining coal miners in Miike and former Kokutetsu (Japan National Railways, predecessor of Japan Railways) employees in the early 1990s. Engaged in their

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14-15, 77-78.

struggle to oppose the closure of the Miike mines (which would eventually be closed in 1997) and to win compensation for mass layoffs following Kokutetsu's breakup and privatization in the late 1980s, respectively, these current-day Japanese laborers are, the film narrates, in their common struggle to “protect the rights of the working people and to [establish] peace and democracy.”<sup>50</sup> As an “earnest Miike union member,” Araki figures as their predecessor who continues to inspire them – and indeed the current Utagoe members in the film pay tribute to Araki’s legacy in both words and singing. The film particularly does so through the narrator (a young member of the Ōmuta Center Chorus), who barely knew about either the Miike labor strikes or Araki but sheds tears at the end of the film, expressing her gratitude for learning about Araki’s life and her newfound love for Ōmuta. In this way, *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* presents Araki Sakae as a relatable figure whose legacy lives on not only in music but also in spirit. Ultimately, much more so than the two previous biographies, the film attempts to add relevance to Araki’s life in Utagoe’s continuing history.

### Araki Sakae and His “Self-Portraits,” 1945-1953

Although all three biographies of Araki Sakae depict Araki’s encounter with formative Utagoe in 1953 to be the most critical transitional moment in his life, they make a point of illustrating Araki as a postwar individual whose life was greatly affected by his wartime experience. In particular, Morita’s biography of Araki Sakae spends a great deal of more pages on the immediate postwar years than the other biographies do. As Morita puts it, Araki Sakae underwent his first transition soon following the end of World War II. Soon after learning the

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<sup>50</sup> *Rōdōsha sakkyōkuka Araki Sakae*, directed by Kenjirō Minato (1992; Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2011, DVD).

death of his older brother, Yasuo, in Burma, Araki expressed hatred in his diary towards the “militarists” for their “war crimes” that brought “sorrow to the thousands and tens of thousands of people.”<sup>51</sup> From then on, Morita writes, Araki began to question the emperor system (*tennōsei*) and became interested in labor issues, getting drawn to the Japanese Communist Party. Araki’s surviving writings since 1945 display synthesis of his existing motives and JCP-derived language, leading to the internalization of JCP-derived worldview and Utagoe-inspired creative drive.

It is worth noting that Araki’s writings since 1945 were public self-portraits of a sort, made available for others to see via local self-published periodicals. His surviving artifacts suggest that Araki became a remarkably self-conscious man following the end of World War II.<sup>52</sup> In fact, Araki did draw a self-portrait sometime in the late 1940s, as shown in the documentary film *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer*. But he expressed his inner thoughts much more directly and forcefully in writing, especially in genres like poems and essays which can be much more personal than, for example, short novels and plays (the latter of which he wrote a couple).<sup>53</sup> In his writings, Araki presents himself to be a self-conscious man who struggles to find his place in the postwar environ, at once familiar and new.

Araki’s earliest surviving self-portrait depicting his postwar transition is his *tanka* (a form of poem typically with five-seven-five-seven-seven syllables) collections. Written between 1945 and 1946 and submitted to the first two issues of the local self-published journal (*dōjinshi*) *Miike*

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<sup>51</sup> Kōya (1985), 21.

<sup>52</sup> As will be explained in detail in the final section of this chapter, many of his writings are now preserved in the Miike Struggle-Araki Sakae Memorial Archive Corner at the Komenoyama Hospital in Ōmuta, Japan.

<sup>53</sup> “Araki Sakae nenpyō,” *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1, 80-81.

*Tanka* (both published in early 1946), Araki's *tanka* vividly depict his changing political sentiments in the immediate postwar environment.<sup>54</sup> Having entered the Mitsui Miike Machinery's workforce in 1941, Araki fulfilled his role as the "company commander" (*chūtaichō*) of an Industrial Patriotic Association (Sangyō Hōkokukai) youth brigade before enlisting with the Japanese Navy in 1944. He witnessed the end of the Pacific War in Yokosuka, where he had been transferred from Sasebo in May 1945 to study at the Navy School of Operations (Kaigun Kōsaku Gakkō).<sup>55</sup> In several of his postwar *tanka* from 1945, Araki is still very much the "imperial child" he appears to have become during the war years, asserting his foremost political concern to lie in the preservation of the emperor system:

Holding firmly to my thought of protecting the emperor system, I seek to see for myself its fundamental nature  
(*Tennōsei yōgo no nen o kataku mochi sono honshitsu o mikiwamentosu*)<sup>56</sup>

However, at the same time, Araki presents himself to be a man lost in transition, most prominently with regard to "democracy":

In this heart of mine so accustomed to the habits of the everyday life, liberal democracy does not emerge on its own  
(*Seikatsu no dasei ni nareshi kokoro niwa jiyū minshu ga utsurazarikeri*)<sup>57</sup>

Yet, in the *tanka* sandwiched between the two *tanka* above, Araki also displays discomfort with the proponents of the emperor system whom he observes one day:

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>55</sup> Kōya (1985), 40; "Araki Sakae nenpyō," *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1, 80. I extend a word of thanks to my colleague Jessa Dahl for reviewing readability of my English translation, in which I tried to maintain the same number of syllables as in the original.

<sup>56</sup> "Araki Sakae tanka shō," *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 2, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 13.

Even more so than the talk of overthrowing the emperor system, I despise instead jeers against it  
(*Tennōsei datō o sakebu setsu yori mo mushiro abisaseru yaji o imunari*)<sup>58</sup>

As Araki's later *tanka* from 1946 indicate, the "talk of overthrowing the emperor system" most likely came from Japanese Communist Party candidates, whose political platform he clearly finds himself sympathetic to:

Though I still harbor the thought of supporting the emperor system, now my heart is getting drawn to the Communist Party  
(*Tennōsei yōgo no nen wa mochioredo Kyōsantō ni kokoro hikaretsu*)<sup>59</sup>

The *tanka* above is followed by several more *tanka* in which Araki displays his nascent sympathy toward the Japanese Communist Party's call for abolishing the emperor system. In these lines, Araki is unequivocal in expressing his increasing identification with the Party's political stance:

Giving comfort to this dormant heart of mine lying on the floor, the Communist Party is not to be taken lightly  
(*Yokobetaru wa ga kokoro o ba hogushitaru Kyōsantō wa anadorigatashi*)<sup>60</sup>

Though taken aback by the severe language for overthrowing the emperor system, I listen to it with care  
(*Kibishisa ni ononokitsutsu mo tennōsei datō no setsu o kikiiru ware wa*)<sup>61</sup>

At the same time as he was undergoing his initial political suasion, Araki was also seeking fulfilment in his life through expressive mediums. Though he also wrote short novels

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 14.

(for example, *Dan'un* in 1947) and stage plays (*Akibare* in 1948) in the late 1940s, music was the medium Araki had in mind from early on. Indeed, music is the only expressive medium Araki mentions in his *tanka* from 1945-1946. His *tanka* from 1945 include the following lines on music, though he seems somewhat conflicted whether to pursue music:

Though I keep trying to convince myself that songs are my life, my heart only turns restless

(*Uta koso wa wa ga inochi zo to itaburu ni mikiwamete yori kokoro madowasu*)

Having returned from duty, a friend of mine pays my place a visit tonight and encourages me to start writing songs

(*Fukuin rikite koyoi tazuneshi wa ga tomo ni uta o tsukure to susumuru ware wa*)<sup>62</sup>

It is not entirely clear whether the word *uta* (“song”) here refers to poetry or music, as Araki would get himself involved in both poetry and choral singing groups between 1945 and 1947.

However, considering Araki’s early interest in music since his teenage years, *uta* in these instances likely refer to music. He wrote a school essay in 1940 expressing his love for *kayōkyoku* (which may be translated as “pop music”), only a year after he had given up his dream to become a music teacher under pressure from his father.<sup>63</sup> His interest in music only grew after he became a mechanic at the Mitsui Miike Machinery in 1941. Between 1941 and 1942, Araki learned to play the cello and the violin from his coworkers who were amateur musicians, only putting an end to his lessons due to “worsening war conditions.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>63</sup> “Araki Sakae nenpyō,” 79. For discussion on the term *kayōkyoku* and its synonym *ryūkōka*, see Nagahara Hiromu, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie: Japan’s Pop Era and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 223.

<sup>64</sup> “Araki Sakae nenpyō,” 79-80; Shun’ichi Yoshimura, “Sengo no Araki Sakae,” *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* 1, no.1, 104.

In April 1947, Araki organized a chorus at his workplace, bringing in a Musashino Academy of Art graduate as its conductor. Recounting later that he started “meddling with choral music after the war when the choral music boom was in the air,” he became more clearly committed to his passion in music from this point on.<sup>65</sup> He wrote his own operetta based on Miyazawa Kenji’s children’s story *Corn Poppy and Cypress (Hinoki to Hinageshi)* in 1949, even enrolling in a music composition class through the Tokyo University of the Art (Geidai)’s newly instituted correspondence education program towards the end of 1950.<sup>66</sup> At this stage in his life, Araki was attracted to “primitive” elements in music. Araki’s praise of the primitive is visible in his appraisal of *kei-ongaku* (“light music,” a term denoting “non-art” music) from 1949:

“There’s something iffy about *kei-ongaku*” – how could anyone say such a thing? It’s a bad habit to dismiss such things by calling them vulgar or decadent, my friend. That’s a problem beyond the senses (*kankaku igo no mondai*). How could us twentieth-century people deride modes of expression based on twentieth-century sensibilities? . . . Take that manic repetition of dissonance . . . That’s great era-appropriate sensibility (*jidai kankaku*). Leave your body to that crisp rhythm. . . . That’s the breath of wild human nature (*ningensei*).<sup>67</sup>

In assessing Araki’s brief interest in dance music around 1951, Morita Yaeko goes so far as to argue that Araki might have been a victim of the company management’s deliberate attempt to neutralize the increasingly pro-union Araki.<sup>68</sup> As Morita would have it, Araki was briefly led astray during this phase, only to renew his aspirations in a couple of years.

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<sup>65</sup> Kōya (1985), 71; Yasuo Gotō, “Araki Sakae,” *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1, 89.

<sup>66</sup> “Araki Sakae nenpyō,” *Araki Sakae kenkyū*, 1, no.1, 81; Chōki, 114-115.

<sup>67</sup> Sakae Araki, “Daben,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 20.

<sup>68</sup> Morita, 47.

However, a closer look at Araki's musical endeavors between 1947 and 1953 suggests that Araki was consistently seeking fulfilment in music beyond performance. In light of his call for appreciating "the breath of wild human nature" in accordance with "era-appropriate sensibility," it is telling that Araki picked Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and *Petrushka* among his favorite compositions in his application for Tokyo University of the Art's correspondence education program (1950). Best known for his "primitivism" in works such as *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky was indeed regarded as author of "modern music" (*gendai ongaku*) by contemporary Japanese music critics at the time.<sup>69</sup> Araki's interest in the "primitive" in this sense reflects his pursuit of "human nature" (*ningensei*), to borrow Araki's own expression quoted above.

In developing his interest in choral music around the same time, too, Araki was concerned with what lay beyond the sound singing created. He saw potential in choral music for both its "artistic" and "public" dimensions, as he makes it clear in his writing from April 1949 for the Mitsui Miike Machinery Chorus's periodical:

In short, it could be argued that an art form that diffuses universally (*fuhenteki ni*) into the masses reveals one meaning of art and that such an art form has a mission (*shimei*), even if that may not be all there is to art. The same holds for choral art (*gasshō geijutsu*). In particular, in the case of Japan, the existence of choral music in the workplace may especially be threatened without a close relationship with the masses, more so than other fields of art.<sup>70</sup>

Thus establishing that "a close connection with the masses" is one measure of art, Araki goes on to suggest that "popular character" (*taishūsei*) and "artistic character" (*geijutsusei*) can be

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Yasushi Akutagawa, "Sutoravinskii," *Geijutsu Shinchō* Vol. 3.4 (April 1952), 106-111.

<sup>70</sup> Sakae Araki, "Shokuba gasshōdan no arikata ni tsuite," in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 23.

pursued simultaneously and are therefore not mutually exclusive. Taken as whole, Araki's own writings from around 1950 suggest that he envisioned "modern" music in Japan to be that which should be cultivated, both by and for the masses.<sup>71</sup>

Why, then, did Araki continue to explore amorphous concepts like "human nature" (*ningensei*), "artistic character" (*geijutsusei*), and the "masses" (*taishū*) during this period? Ultimately, he seems to have been intent on aligning his own musical interests with a cause larger than his own life that he could nonetheless pursue as an individual. As it turned out, Araki found an answer through his encounter with formative Utagoe in 1953. It is worth noting, however, that he was more awestruck by a person than a song born from Utagoe. After meeting with the Central Chorus member Nara Tsuneko (1930-2016) at the first "Singing Voice of Kyushu," Araki wrote with confidence that he saw something in Nara that could not be found in "a first-class musician who is simply studying the technical (*gijutsuteki*) dimension of music": "a connection with the masses (*taishū*)," an expression that closely follows his own writings from 1949.<sup>72</sup> Reflecting on the talk Nara delivered in Ōmuta upon his invitation, Araki reproduces Nara's speech in his writing from December 1953, as though to reiterate his own newfound hope in Utagoe: "Any kind of songs can be sung, but they must also be sung anywhere. We learned at

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<sup>71</sup> In his writing from August 1949, Araki demonstrates his Dostoevskian understanding of the term taken after *Brothers Karamazov*, arguing that there is the masses as an entity, concept, and individuals. He argues that the union movement is tantamount to loving the masses as a concept, for human beings are wont to hate others as individuals. Sakae Araki, "Atsui oriori ni," in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 26-27.

<sup>72</sup> Sakae Araki, "Shin joseizō (Nara Tsuneko san no koto)," in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 28. Nara Tsuneko was one of the first "researchers" (*kenkyūsei*) in the Central Chorus's very first class of 1948. As a veteran of the Chorus, Nara fulfilled both singing and leadership roles, instructing regional core choruses like the Saitama Chorus in the 1970s. Towards the end of her life, she authored her autobiography. Tsuneko Nara, *Utagoe ni ikite* (Tokyo: Higashi Ginza Shuppansha, 2007).

Uchinada [the site of anti-U.S. military base construction protests in 1953] that choral music that grows within and with the masses has limitless possibilities.”<sup>73</sup>

Araki’s writings since 1953 clearly reflect early Utagoe’s core concepts explored in the previous chapter, namely “livelihood” (*seikatsu*) and “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*). Araki becomes much more forceful in his language, expressing confidence in Utagoe’s musical and political visions. In an unpublished draft from 1955, for example, Araki essentially paraphrases Utagoe’s founding figure Seki Akiko’s seminal article “On National Music” (1953, see Chapter 2), arguing that the Japanese people are well capable of singing – they simply do not realize that they can sing more often because songs do not truly exist in the everyday life (*nichijō seikatsu*) in Japan yet. What needs to happen in Japan, therefore, is to let people know that there is indeed joy to be found in singing aloud and that “singing voice” (*utagoe*) is a force of peace.<sup>74</sup> Needless to say, the last statement is a reference to the Utagoe movement’s slogan “Utagoe is a force of peace” (*utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*) from 1953.

Araki makes his alignment with the “livelihood” (*seikatsu*) rhetoric even more explicit in a 1956 article, in which he exclaims: “Living songs! This is it. True art is found in songs that are born from the masses, live in them, and grow with them.”<sup>75</sup> This is basically a reiteration of what Araki heard the Central Chorus alumna Nara Tsuneko say in Ōmuta in 1953, which, as mentioned earlier, Araki records as “choral music that grows within and with the masses has limitless possibilities.”<sup>76</sup> In these writings, Araki no longer appears to have had the need to be

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<sup>73</sup> Sakae Araki, “Kagiri nai hattensei o kishite,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 30.

<sup>74</sup> Sakae Araki, “Sententeki onchi to kōtenteki onchi to,” *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 30-31.

<sup>75</sup> Sakae Araki, “Ikiteiru uta,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 37.

<sup>76</sup> Sakae Araki, “Kagiri nai hattensei o kishite,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1 (1985), 30.

apologetic about his viewpoint. He almost seems like a changed man who finally found something he could believe in and live by.

### From Araki the Christian to Araki the Communist, 1953-1962

Considering Araki's seemingly sudden transformation since 1953, Kōya Kuniyoshi's narrative in his *Araki Sakae the Laborer Composer* of an "unwavering revolutionary and a [Japan Communist] party member" would seem to lend some credence. Based solely on Araki's own writings, there seems little doubt that Araki thoroughly internalized Utagoe's cultural and political rhetoric by 1960. Nearly all surviving writings by Araki from the late 1950s are reports he prepared for Utagoe meetings at both regional (Kyushu) and national levels. In these reports, he makes repeated references to "livelihood" (*seikatsu*) and "national music" (*kokumin ongaku*) in describing his compositions and aspirations. Furthermore, Araki also changed his public spiritual affiliation from Christianity to Communism during this period. Though he had received baptism in May 1947, Araki became a member of the Japanese Communist Party in February 1959 – only after repeated attempts to win him over, according to Kōya Kuniyoshi.<sup>77</sup> As Kōya would have it, Araki was finally ready to become an "unwavering revolutionary" from this point onward.

Araki's compositions since 1959 display even clearer signs identification with the Japanese Communist Party-influenced worldview he acquired through the Utagoe movement. A particularly illustrative case is his *magnum opus* choral suite *Song of the Underground* (*Jizoko no*

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<sup>77</sup> By his own admission, Kōya was one of the Party members who continued to convince Araki to become a Party member well before 1959. Kōya (1985), 90.

*uta*, November 1961), for which Araki wrote both music and words. After decrying “monopolist Mitsui” and “American imperialism” for murdering the Japanese laborers, the suite concludes with the following triumphant march of the Miike coal miners:

We are the glorious coal miners of Miike  
With daring hearts that fear not oppression  
We smash the enemy of the truth  
Through courageous struggle (*tatakai*)  
Let us strengthen the fortress of peace!<sup>78</sup>

Here Araki echoes contemporary Utagoe rhetoric of “struggle” (*tatakai*), depicting the Miike coal miners as historic participants in the national struggle to “strengthen the fortress of peace.”

It should be noted, however, that Araki was not a coal miner himself but a mechanic. Nor, as a mechanic at the Mitsui Miike Machinery, did he compose music depicting his own workforce or his line of work. Instead, in a classically Marxist manner, Araki appealed to the solidarity of the working class. Indeed, Araki explicitly describes the dual struggles of Miike and Anpo in terms of the unity of the working class in the preface for the first volume of *Newly Created Songs from the Miike Struggle* (*Miike Tōsō Sōsakukyōku*, December 1961), published just a month after he composed *Song of the Underground*:

Having been waged with the enormous energy of the laborers, the Miike struggle, along with the Anpo struggle . . . was a historical and revolutionary struggle (*tatakai*) that called forth the coming of Japan’s dawn (*yoake*). Laborers all over the country, including the laborers, housewives, and families of Miike, fought in this glorious (*kagayakashii*) struggle with such heroism. There, unperturbed belligerence, excellent unity, and wonderful discipline were put into practice. At the same time, authenticity (*shinjitsu sa*), beauty, and richness of the class-based human beings (*kaikyūteki ningēn*)’s hearts – that is, a true art form – came alive.

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<sup>78</sup> *Miike tōsō sōsakukyōku*, ed. Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan (Ōmuta: Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan, 1961), 32.

It was expressed by the bodies, words, languages, and works (*sakuhin*) of the people engaged in struggle.<sup>79</sup>

Here Araki relegates historical significance to both the Miike labor strikes and the works that came out of them in terms of “authenticity” that can only be created by “class-based human beings.” In employing such a language, Araki asserts his multi-layered yet complementary set of identities as simultaneously a coal mine-industry laborer from Miike, a Japanese laborer, and an Utagoe activist, all connected through his conviction in the national struggle for peace in Japan. As a part of the Japanese working class, therefore, Araki placed himself alongside the Miike coal miners and the Japanese masses at large against the Anpo system, in common struggle against Miike’s oppressive “monopoly capitalist” management and the Japanese government subservient to “American imperialism,” respectively.

By the time he was hospitalized at the Komenoyama Hospital in 1962, Araki appears to have become a firm supporter of the Japanese Communist Party itself. According to Araki’s younger sister Maehara Momoe, Araki told her of his resolve to keep working for the masses (*taishū*) and the Japanese Communist Party, reminding his weeping sister that she “cannot convince other people by sobbing.”<sup>80</sup> Araki’s doctor Matsuishi Hidesuke recounts a similar statement made by Araki after the latter had an interview with the Kyushu Asahi Broadcasting on October 10<sup>th</sup>, just sixteen days before his death: “I have never felt how great the Party is like I did today.”<sup>81</sup> Araki was given a “party funeral” (*tōsō*) in Ōmuta on November 4<sup>th</sup>, attended by

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<sup>79</sup> Sakae Araki, “Taishū to tomo ni tsukuri dasō!: Miike tōsō sōsakukyoku dai isshū hakkō ni yosete,” in *Miike tōsō sōsakukyoku*, ed. Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan (Ōmuta: Ōmuta Sentā Gasshōdan, 1961), iv [unnumbered].

<sup>80</sup> Momoe Maehara, “Ani Sakae no koto,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1, 90.

<sup>81</sup> Hidesuke Matsuishi, “Araki Sakae san no omoide,” in *Araki Sakae Kenkyū* Vol. 1, 101.

many Japan Socialist Party, Japanese Communist Party, and Utagoe functionaries including Seki Akiko. Araki died a communist, both in name and seemingly in spirit.

As noted earlier, Araki Sakae was quickly transformed into a hero following his death.

The immortality of his deeds and songs was touted as early as at his funeral in November 1962.

A case in point is a commemorative poem titled “Comrade” (Dōshi yo) written and recited by Ueno Nobuyuki, a union activist affiliated with the All-Japan Free Trade Union (Zen Nihon Jiyū Rōdō Kumiai, or Zennichi Jirō for short, 1952-1980) who had collaborated with Araki for the production of the poetry- and music-based stage play *Shiranui* (1962). This panegyric is worth quoting in full because, in elevating Araki to the status of “people’s composer,” it emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship between Araki’s cause and the masses’ (and, by extension, the Party’s role as the vanguard). Above all, Ueno’s poem presages the subsequent patterns of worship in Utagoe’s historical narrative:

You are now wrapped in the red flag  
With a smile that overflows  
Glistening with the honor of being a Communist Party member  
A title most proud in the history of mankind

About the laborers and housewives of Miike  
About eternal heroism of the children  
About Okinawa, the islands raging with fury  
About Itazuke [the site of anti-U.S. military airfield construction]  
About destroying American imperialism  
About the united front, the might of the revolution  
About the wonderfulness, beatifulness, and greatness of the Communist Party and  
Party members  
You continued to sing as much as your voice would allow

About love born from struggle  
About embraces  
About the cherry blossoms and the sun  
You did sing

Your body was  
Heavy with substance  
Like the Earth,  
Your body was  
Heavy like the Earth

Just as you lay inside your coffin and never closed your eyes  
Just as you lay inside your coffin and never closed your lips

Your songs are here  
In the soils and skies of Japan

Comrade!  
Your singing voice (*utagoe*) has become  
Hundreds of Araki Sakae  
Thousands of Araki Sakae  
Millions of singing voices, swirls, floods, and storms  
Your singing voice has also become  
The banner of peace  
The star of independence  
The roar calling for a revolution  
And transforms a girl's dream into rose-tinted communism

Your singing voice has become a huge chorus  
From Moscow, from Beijing  
And also from Havana  
And makes my heart pound

Ever young and with a smile that overflows  
You live on inside me

People's composer! Superb leader!  
Glory to comrade Araki Sakae!<sup>82</sup>

In light of discussion in this chapter thus far, this poem reads equally well if the word “Communist Party” is substituted with the “Utagoe movement.” In the historical moment of 1960 under the SDP-JCP united front of union activism, Araki's life could easily be made to fit the struggle (*tatakai*) narrative.

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Kōya (1985), 214-217.

### Duality in Araki: Araki the Lyrical and Combative, and His Two Suns

If Araki's later writings and panegyrics point to his spiritual transformation into an earnest communist, what does his music say about his life? To be sure, his songs were not entirely of his own but were rather products of collaboration in the specific locales and ideas he found himself situated in. To apply Justin Jesty's characterization about works of "creative externalization" born from 1950s circles, Araki's songs were "moments" made up of specific networks that made the convergence possible.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, precisely for this reason, Araki's compositions confer a degree of development in terms especially of subjects, individuals he collaborated with, and styles of music. In particular, his compositions toward the end of his life possess intriguingly enigmatic qualities that seem to simultaneously bring a closure to and leave open Araki's postwar quest for fulfilment through self-expression.

In broad strokes, Araki's songs may be categorized into "lyrical" and "combative" ones, categories also used by some of his acquaintances. Though Araki composed both kinds of songs during the Miike labor strikes of 1959-1960 (for example, the lyrical but resolute "Miike Housewives' Lullaby" and the unequivocally combative "Let's Keep it Up"), the documentary *Araki Sakae the Laborer-Composer* presents Araki's pre-Utagoe years as his "sentimental" phase. The film reinforces this distinction through an interview footage of Hasuo Hideko, a former member of the Ōmuta-based Wednesday Chorus (Suiyō Kōrasu, led by Araki) who left Ōmuta for marriage in Tokyo. Before her departure to Tokyo, Araki prepared a song called "Stars, You Know it" (*Hoshi yo omae wa*, 1956) specially for her, a ballad reminiscing the joyful days of

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<sup>83</sup> Jesty, 3-5, 17.

singing with the chorus. In her interview footage, Hasuo recounts her surprise at discovering the “intense” (*hageshii*) character of Araki’s landmark song “Let’s Keep it Up” (1960), implying that she had only known Araki’s lyrical side.<sup>84</sup> Yet, such “combative” music did not entirely take over Araki’s musical style. Rather, he continued to compose in both styles, as though reflecting both his pre-Utagoe and post-Utagoe sensibilities.

Araki’s last pieces of music possess such dual characteristics. Take, for example, “We are the Sun” (*Oretachi wa taiyō*, words by Kadokura Satoshi), composed just three months before his death (July 1962). Kadokura Satoshi’s words liken the factory workers to a constellation of burning “suns” hard at work:

Burn bright, burn bright, even in rainy nights  
Inside the windows of a factory is a burning dynamo  
We are the sun, bring together the mash of burning hearts  
And let it burn with fierceness

Burn bright, burn bright, furnace, burn bright  
In the town at dusk, there on the rail –  
We are the sun, slam the mash of raging hope together  
And burn bright  
Grow and grow towards the sky,  
Let it burn inside our hearts  
We are the sun, we are the sun!<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Kōya Kuniyoshi also describes “Stars, You Know it” as a transitional song from Araki’s “early sentimentality to natural and carefree, bold style”. See Kōya (1985), 47.

<sup>85</sup> *Rōdōsha sakkyōkuka Araki Sakae sakuhin zenshū*, ed. Araki Sakae Sakuhin Zenshū Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1982 [1969]), 132.

ゆっくりとはげしさをもって  
(アコーディオン前奏-----)

もえろ もえろ あめふるよるも もえろ ようこうろよもえろ  
ダイナモ うなる こうばのまどに よあけの まちに レールのうえに  
おれたちは たいよう もえるこころの もえるきぼうの

Figure 3.4: Opening bars from “We are the Sun:” “Slowly, but with intensity,” starting with the accordion lead-in (from *Complete Works of Araki Sakae*)

行進のリズムで

くらいよるも さみしかないさ はぜるようにもえあがれ おれ  
そらにむかって ぐんぐんのびろ ばしばちこころに もえあがれ  
たちはたいよう おれたちはたいよう

Figure 3.5: Refrain from “We are the Sun:” “In marching rhythm” (from *Complete Works of Araki Sakae*)

The song starts out “[s]lowly, but with intensity” in 3/4 and features a prominent use of dotted eighth notes followed by sixteenth notes, the latter of which adds a forward motion to the song.<sup>86</sup> In the refrain, the song turns into a march as the sheet music specifically calls for “marching rhythms,” still maintaining dotted eighth notes followed by sixteenth notes. As the song declares towards the end that “we are the sun,” the melody ascends then descends smoothly, as if the suns are rising and setting. Though a product of collaboration like many of his compositions, “We are the Sun” bespeaks Araki’s multi-layered identity at this point in his life beyond that of a mechanic. Most significantly, the song’s setting is unspecific beyond “a factory,” appealing instead to the pride of the laborers. This song may be called Araki’s Japanese labor song, vague in setting but held together by enthusiastic rhythms and a prideful language.

In comparison, composed just a month after “We are the Sun,” Araki’s final composition “Song of My Mother” (*Wa ga haha no uta*, words by Morita Yaeko) presents a much more nuanced picture. Depicting the “weeds” waiting for the arrival of the spring (clearly an allusion to the Japanese masses after the “defeat” of 1960), the song celebrates a singular sun as the “mother” that “nurtures struggle”:

As the weeds (*aragusa*) bear fruit,  
Rooted deep in the earth in the morning  
Ah, my mother is truly the sun,  
The sun that nurtures struggle (*tatakai*)

Majesty of the weeds is such  
That they spread even after getting stomped on

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<sup>86</sup> It is worth noting that music critique Sonobe Saburō considered this rhythmic pattern (often referred to as *pyonko-bushi*, so called due to its bouncy rhythm) to be typical of *shōka* textbook songs, songs composed by Koga Masao including “Coal Mine Ditty” (*Tonko-bushi*), and even the “military song” (*gunkoku kayō*) genre during Japan’s Pacific War (1931-1945). Given Araki’s interest in *ryūkōka* early in his life, his wartime experiences in both the workplace and military, and his industrial background in the coal mining industry, he would have been quite familiar with the rhythmic pattern, possibly even associating it with (positive) aggressiveness. Saburō Sonobe, *Nihon minshū kayōshi kō* (Tokyo, Osaka, Kokura, Nagoya: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1962), 53, 124.

Ah, my mother is truly the sun,  
The sun that nurtures struggle

How fresh are the weeds,  
Welcoming the spring early on  
Ah, my mother is truly the sun,  
The sun that nurtures struggle

We are the weeds,  
Deeply rooted in struggle  
Ah, my mother is truly the sun,  
The sun that nurtures struggle<sup>87</sup>

Compared to Araki's earlier works, "Song of My Mother" is most remarkable for the absence of any gendered laborer figure in the lyrics. Instead, Morita Yaeko's lyrics center their attention to the genderless "weeds" and the "sun." Though these words were Morita's creation, her genderless depiction of the weeds seems almost fitting for Araki's newfound understanding of the Japanese working class, which he characterized in terms of its common struggle against injustice ("spread[ing] even after getting stomped on"). It is perhaps no accident that the Central Chorus's recording of the song (1965) is sung by a mixed chorus (unison in the first and last verse, male chorus in the second, and female chorus in the third), accompanied by the accordion which plays no extra note beyond the melody line. In the recording, both the male and female voice parts, as well as the accordion, are all playing the same notes, though they may be technically singing in different octaves.<sup>88</sup> The recording is indeed compact enough, like Araki's original, to allow for such a "Marxist" reading.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>88</sup> This recording was first made available in the LP album *Rōdōsha sakkyōkuka Araki Sakae daihyōkyōkushū* (Tokyo: Ongaku Center, 1965). A CD-transfer of the album is now available in the 2-CD album *Shiranui* (Tokyo: Ongaku Center, 2008 [1992]).



Figure 3.6: Sheet Music for “Song of My Mother” (from *Complete Works of Araki Sakae*, pg. 6)

Stylistically, compared to “We are the Sun,” “Song of My Mother” is succinct in almost every way: shorter in length and far simpler in structure and rhythm, but more sure-footed and dramatic in melody. For early Utagoe’s de facto musical authority Inoue Yoritoyo (1912-1996), “Song of My Mother” is Araki’s swan song in both name and quality. As a song born from Utagoe “with an unprecedented level of height and depth,” Inoue asserts, the song contains “dense and substantive melodies” that could only be composed by someone who had sought to write “songs that are simultaneously Japanese (*nihonteki*) and popular (*taishūteki*)” in character.<sup>89</sup> On the more basic level, “Song of My Mother” represents a culmination of Araki’s “lyrical” musical style, here combined with a sense of confidence that almost seems to reflect his newfound ideological conviction. In the last four measures, the song demonstrates a remarkable synergy between the melody and the words that highlight the ascending sun – burning bright with determination (“The sun that nurtures struggle”).

<sup>89</sup> Ed. Araki Sakae Sakuhin Zenshū Henshū Iinkai, 6.

Unsurprisingly, “Song of My Mother” is a critically acclaimed song in the Utagoe movement, but more so due to its perceived narrative significance vis-à-vis Araki’s life. Adding to his characterization of “Song of My Mother” as Araki’s “swan song,” Inoue Yoritoyo posits that this impassioned ballad shows Araki’s “dedication to the motherly people (*jinmin*) and their vanguard,” the latter of which clearly refers to the Japanese Communist Party. Inoue is not alone in seeing the presence of the Party in the song. Ueno Nobuyuki, author of the commemorative poem “Comrade,” goes so far as to contend that the mother in “Song of My Mother” refers to none other than the Japanese Communist Party.<sup>90</sup> In accordance with Ueno’s interpretation, “Song of My Mother” is in fact Araki’s confession of faith, in which he turns himself into a part of the weed-masses awaiting to be nurtured by the sun-party. If seen this way, the song epitomizes Araki’s transformation into a party-line activist, dedicating his life to the Party’s cause. Araki found a new mother in the Japanese Communist Party.

Chronologically speaking, this is where Araki’s musical journey ended, from a teenager who confessed his love for “pop music” (*kayōkyoku*) to a politically conscious, musically talented Japanese Communist Party member. In the absence of more personal writings by Araki since joining the Japanese Communist Party in 1959, surviving documents suggest that Araki indeed found salvation in the Party, noticeably so in his deathbed. In that sense, stylistic simplicity of “Song of My Mother” seems consistent with Araki’s state of mind, at least based on his own words: freed from his earlier inner struggles, Araki seemingly found a solution to all of his questions, political or cultural. While this chapter falls short of delivering an extended musical analysis of Araki’s music over time, suffice it to say that, as indicated by Inoue’s and Ueno’s interpretations of “Song of My Mother,” Araki’s compositions were remembered in

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<sup>90</sup> Nobuyuki Ueno, ““Utagoe’ no aru tokoro kare wa ikitsuzukeru,” *Akahata*, November 28, 1965.

relation to his growing political consciousness, emphasizing Araki's emergence as a "fighter" figure through Utagoe. In the Utagoe movement, music itself has played a dependent role in the remembering of Araki Sakae and his deeds, not to mention his music.

What sort of political subjectivity, then, has Araki provided to the participants of the Utagoe movement? To be sure, as previously mentioned, Araki's death triggered reactions such as wanting to become "the second or third Mr. Araki Sakae" (Central Chorus members in an *Utagoe Shimbun* article, 1963) and "thousands of Araki Sakae" (Ueno Nobuyuki's poem "Comrade"). Yet, although Araki was immortalized through a composition prize and composition workshops named after him, these prizes in themselves hardly indicate what precisely "thousands of Araki Sakae" would embody. Ultimately, Araki's postwar identity formation and his immediate posthumous honors were both deeply grounded in the historical experience leading up to 1960 under the Japan Socialist Party-Japanese Communist Party alliance, particularly that of contemporary labor disputes in Japan. Such historical conditions would witness a rapid change soon following Araki's death in 1962, most symbolically by the dissolution of the SDP-JCP partnership and united front in 1964. Accordingly, Araki has in effect challenged his acquaintances and later generations of Utagoe participants to make sense of his legacy after the heyday of the labor movement in Japan. It is to this continuing development that I turn to in the final section of this chapter.

#### Epilogue and Conclusion: Remembering Araki Sakae in 2018

Half a century since the Miike labor strikes and the death of Araki Sakae, the city of Ōmuta has long ceased to be a busy mining town. Designated as one of the "underpopulated areas" (*kaso*

*chiiki*) by the Japanese government in 2010, Ōmuta is one among many non-prefectural capital municipalities across Japan today that are steadily losing population. Since 1960, the city has lost nearly half of its population, from record high figure of 205,766 (1960) to the current figure of 116,620 (December 2017).<sup>91</sup> The effect of downsizing the coal mines following the Miike labor strikes and eventual closure of the mines in 1997 is not hard to imagine.

Yet, those who knew Araki Sakae are still endeavoring to derive significance from Araki's ideas in movement contexts. One such figure is Urata Isao (b. 1942), the current leader (*danchō*) of the Ōmuta Center Chorus as of 2018-2019. As I continued to talk with him both in and outside of interview sessions during my first visit to Ōmuta in July 2018, I was able to meet with, I found myself asking a rather pointed question: Given the process of “canonization” that Araki Sakae and his music underwent, would it be fair to say that he was essentially deified in Utagoe? Very much so at one point, Urata responded. As an employee at the Mitsui Chemicals plant in Miike, Urata partook in the Miike labor strike of 1959-1960, discovering Araki's music in the process and joining the Ōmuta Center Chorus shortly before Araki was hospitalized. Yet, Urata repeatedly warned against outright worship of Araki. Though he regards Araki's music as a great exemplar of ways in which Utagoe allows one to “see the world,” Urata emphasizes that respect for Araki should be conditional – that is, based on his specific deeds and beliefs that will push the Utagoe movement forward today. In this respect, Urata says, he learned much from Araki. He still remembers Araki's saying that “if Utagoe goes on to [concert] stage, Utagoe is not going to spread,” words that have since formed the basis of Urata's belief that being part of a movement must involve “broadening one's perspective and a network of cooperation.” To Urata,

<sup>91</sup> “Kaso chiiki jiritsu sokushin keikaku,” *Ōmuta-shi*, accessed December 2, 2018, [http://www.city.omuta.lg.jp/common/UploadFileOutput.ashx?c\\_id=5&id=5011&sub\\_id=8&flid=29611](http://www.city.omuta.lg.jp/common/UploadFileOutput.ashx?c_id=5&id=5011&sub_id=8&flid=29611); “Ōmuta shi,” *Ōmuta Shi*, accessed December 2, 2018, [https://www.city.omuta.lg.jp/hpKiji/pub/detail.aspx?c\\_id=5&id=5955&class\\_set\\_id=1&class\\_id=205](https://www.city.omuta.lg.jp/hpKiji/pub/detail.aspx?c_id=5&id=5955&class_set_id=1&class_id=205).

then, Araki Sakae is first and foremost a movement figure, not a musical prodigy; Araki is worthy of respect to the extent that his way of life (*ikizama*) offers insight into what it takes to be involved in a movement.<sup>92</sup>

It is worth noting that Urata's characterization of a movement calls for multiplication or replication of action via individual effort ("broadening one's perspective"), which will then foster collective action ("cooperation") as a result. This viewpoint is also implicit in his emphasis on passing down one's (commendable) "way of life": there exists a potential lesson to be learned by the collective for further multiplication. In terms of Kaminaga Eisuke (2012)'s summation of the Utagoe movement as a memetic mixture, Urata's Araki is effectively a directive meme, or a set of actions (individual-level actions that lead to collective-level cooperation) that is supposed to make the narrative (spread of a movement) come true.<sup>93</sup>

Such characterization of movement points to the continuance of the "struggle narrative" in Utagoe despite major historical setbacks. Kaminaga Eisuke (2012) sees the year 1960 as the beginning of an end for Utagoe with the defeat of the Anpo protests, which resulted in the collapse of the narrative meme's premise that the masses can change the world through singing.<sup>94</sup> To this debacle may be added the collapse of the Japan Socialist Party-Japanese Communist Party alliance (1964) and the emergence of the Japanese New Left (decidedly by 1968), after which Utagoe could no longer sustain the narrative based on "the power of songs to change the world" with the same level of intensity and appeal. At the workplace, too, under what Andrew Gordon calls the "hegemony of the values of the corporation" in post-1960s

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Urata Isao, Ōmuta, Japan, July 11, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Kaminaga, 4.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 8.

Japanese labor relations, Utagoe's confrontational memes would have become more and more difficult to replicate.<sup>95</sup> It is not a coincidence that, during my research period in Japan between 2016 and 2017, current members of Utagoe choruses told me on multiple occasions that union members today neither recognize nor sing Araki's signature tune "Let's Keep it Up" in the wake of declining unionism in current-day Japan.

Yet, Utagoe continues to emphasize the languages and ideal figures from the 1950s such as "struggle" (*tatakai*), "nation" (*minzoku*), and, inarguably, Araki Sakae to this day. Such continuity is ultimately a testament to Utagoe's self-image that harkens back to an era when Utagoe and labor unions in Japan shared the view of the Japanese laborer as the centerpiece of the Japanese people's "struggle." Indeed, laborer identity is officially current in Utagoe on the collective level. At the Nihon no Utagoe National Council meeting in 2017, for example, current chair Tanaka Yoshiharu remarked that, though the 1953 slogan "Singing voice is a force of peace" (*utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*) is the most important slogan today, all three historical slogans of Utagoe remain relevant, including the oldest slogan "Singing voice is with the struggles" (*utagoe wa tatakai to tomo ni*).<sup>96</sup> In this vein, the current statute of Nihon no Utagoe continues to emphasize interaction between different "localities, industries, and classes" – a language that Araki Sakae would have readily recognized.<sup>97</sup>

Seen in this light, Utagoe's continued commemoration of Araki as the "laborer-composer" both sustains and is sustained by the "struggle" element in Utagoe's historical narrative and collective identities. Above all, the compound "laborer-composer" itself is an expression of this

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<sup>95</sup> Gordon, 196; 195-201.

<sup>96</sup> Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>97</sup> Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, "Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai Kiyaku" (February, 2017).

persistence: Araki is a significant figure in Utagoe because he was a composer who knew his laborer roots, rather than the other way around (“composer-laborer”). Araki is unimaginable in Utagoe’s historical narrative without his supposed laborer character within himself and his music. Araki lives on as a marker for current and former participants of Utagoe, demonstrating a clear point of continuity in Utagoe’s worldview.

Broadly speaking, this chapter has suggested that the treatment of historical figures like Araki Sakae serves much like a mirror through which to examine the formation and maintenance of Utagoe’s struggle-based historical narrative. One concrete legacy that Araki set in stone for Utagoe is the continued importance placed on leading a movement, regardless of its scale. As Urata Isao’s remembrance of Araki in 2018 most aptly suggests, movements of this kind assume a forward motion, presupposing the actor and that which is acted upon, whether it be a person, entity, or political condition. It is important to note that this characterization does not assume the presence of music. On the contrary, the literature and personal accounts examined in this chapter suggest that, for Utagoe, music may be a means but not an end in itself, despite Utagoe’s program of establishing Japan’s “national music” between the 1950s and 1960s – an area of tension within Utagoe as old as the movement itself. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will discuss concrete ways in which current members of Utagoe groups continue to engage with – or, perhaps avoid to engage with – the implications of such aspects of movement in Utagoe. But first, in the chapter that immediately follows, I will shift attention to Utagoe’s national music paradigm, which existed alongside of the struggle narrative. About a decade after the death of Araki Sakae (1962), the national music paradigm, too, would effectively collapse and compel Utagoe to reconsider its musico-political vision under contemporary Cold War dynamics.

## Chapter 4

### The Rise and Fall of Utagoe's National Music Paradigm, 1953-1974

Our singing voice (*utagoe*) echoes brightly  
On the thorny road in a dark world  
In the beautiful motherland's mountains and rivers,  
Young passions rage on!

So that we can make our towns and countries around the world  
Bright and great places to live,  
Let us unite in solidarity with the friends all around the world  
Let us secure peace and march forward  
Let us march forward!

Final verse from “In the Mountains and Rivers of the Motherland” (*Sokoku no sanga ni*, 1953),  
Words by Kon’ya Kuniko and Music by Akutagawa Yasushi (1925-1989)

If there is a seeming oxymoron in the movement-organization Nihon no Utagoe (“Singing Voice of Japan”), it is the name Nihon no Utagoe itself.<sup>1</sup> For an organization and self-proclaimed movement that continues to brand itself the Singing Voice of Japan, Nihon no Utagoe has historically paid as much attention to singing voices from outside of Japan as it did to that from Japan. Utagoe’s musical repertoire during its formative years (1948-1955) more than demonstrates this tendency. In 1952, Utagoe’s predecessor and later flagship chorus Central Chorus (Chūō Gasshōdan, see Chapter 2) held its fourth anniversary concert under the title “Singing Voice of Japan” (*Nihon no utagoe*), in what became the namesake of Nihon no Utagoe (for example, the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee, 1955-1973).<sup>2</sup> Compared to the

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<sup>1</sup> Nihon no Utagoe has historically regarded 1948, the year when the Central Chorus was founded, as the beginning of the Utagoe movement.

<sup>2</sup> To be sure, Nihon no Utagoe’s governing body Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee (Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai) came into being for the first time in 1954. Between 1954 and 1955, the Committee’s role was to organize the Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten), a concert-style gathering attended by Utagoe-affiliated groups

chorus's debut concert in early 1948, which featured the Japanese folk song "Kisobushi" and the Soviet song "Polyushko-pole," the 1952 concert was far more international in its program, featuring songs from Japan, Korea, China, Spain, and the Soviet Union, each nation making up a separate musical "scenery" (*kei*).<sup>3</sup> Songs of foreign origins would continue to appear in the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten) since.

As I have contended at the end of the previous chapter, such a pattern reflects Utagoe's dual emphasis during the Cold War era on fostering "peace" (*heiwa*) and "national music" (*kokumin ongaku*). By and large, both of these ideas were binary in outlook: peace vs. "American imperialism" on one hand, and national music vs. "unhealthy," "decadent," or "colonialist" culture on the other. This chapter will focus on national music, Utagoe's core musical paradigm in development between the 1950s and 1960s. Utagoe's national music paradigm serves as a useful point of historical analysis regarding both the Utagoe movement and musical reformism at large. Though Utagoe's formulation of national music was a direct response to the Japanese Communist Party's "national independence" (*minzoku dokuritsu*) rhetoric in the early 1950s (see Chapter 2 of this dissertation), the idea and invocation of national music saw precedents as early as in the 1920s, including their broadly reformist impulse to create "proper" and "healthful" culture in Japan (Chapter 1).<sup>4</sup> Both of these precedents for Utagoe's national music were similarly binary in their worldview. In that sense, national music in Utagoe

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and individuals from across Japan that continues to be held annually to this day.

<sup>3</sup> "1952 nen Nihon no Utagoe," reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū* Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunpokaku, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> As in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I translate the terms *minzoku* ("ethnic-people") and *kokumin* ("nation-people") as "people" or "nation" interchangeably because contemporary JCP-line authors also used the terms interchangeably – and there is something to be said about such slippery usage. See, for example, "Tōmen no bunka tōsō to bunka sensen tōitsu no tame no wa ga tō no nimu," *Zen'ei* no. 53 (December 1950): 38-43.

easily complemented Utagoe's drive for peace, allowing its musical "struggle" to be equated with political struggle: cultural independence and political independence were characterized as intertwined matters.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter examines the manners in which Utagoe translated and incorporated songs of foreign origins between the early 1950s and late 1960s in the name of creating Japan's national music. Most notably, the translators involved demonstrate a shared belief in what I call "universal translatability" of the folk essence and the supposedly timeless historical experience of the "ordinary people" therein, which they argued would inform the Japanese people's effort to create their own national music. The two strands of music that particularly saw this line of argument in Utagoe came from none other than the two Cold War super powers: Russian-Soviet music in the 1950s and American folk music in the 1960s. As I will demonstrate in the sections that follow, these strands of foreign songs had different but profound effects on Utagoe's national music paradigm: while Russian-Soviet music served as a musical canon that Utagoe's leadership sought to emulate, American folk music as it entered Japan in the mid-1960s fundamentally challenged Utagoe's binary musical worldview due to the perception of the imported American folk music *genre* as an "impure" derivative of the "original" folk music thus manipulated by both the American and Japanese mass media. By 1970, the growing commercial success of the American folk music genre and its "Japanese" imitation even among the ranks and files of the Utagoe movement forced Utagoe's leadership into a defensive position. Within five years, Utagoe abandoned its national music framework, signaling the end of Utagoe's implicit

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<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s among high-ranking Japanese Communist Party figures, Kurahara Korehito most forcefully argued for the interdependence of cultural and political independence. See, for example, Korehito Kurahara, "Minzoku no shutaisei to minzoku no bunka," *Bunka Hyōron* no. 2 (January 1962): 38-39 and Korehito Kurahara, *Kakumei to bunka undō* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha: 1965).

belief in universal translatability of the nation as that which can directly inform the making of Japan's own national music.

The act of translation figures as an important point of historical analysis in this chapter. Following Maria Tymoczko's characterization of translation as a "cluster concept" after Wittgenstein, I conceive of translation as historically malleable forms of mediation between two "texts" (written or otherwise), configured as such by the mediator ("translator") and the audience ("recipient").<sup>6</sup> Tymoczko's description of translation as an act configurated *posteriori* rather than *a priori* is particularly useful in understanding translation as a historically variable form of act involving multiple parties. In view of translation as an act extending beyond simply the "translator" and the "text," this chapter deals with two sets of texts: individual pieces of music categorized as "songs," as well as "musical canons" that are in turn comprised of songs. To the extent that translation of such texts took place in and around the Utagoe movement in Japan mainly between the early 1950s and late 1960s, these texts constituted a "process" or an "activity" insofar as they were "locally limited and locally specific situations."<sup>7</sup> In this vein, this chapter will highlight how the translators and advocates of Russian-Soviet songs and American folk songs in association with the Utagoe movement assumed what I call "universal translatability" of historical experiences of the "ordinary people" therein.

To that end, this chapter will offer a historical account of Utagoe's attempt to define its national musical project based on the nation and its universal translatability via music. In the historical context of Japanese translation of foreign songs for the purpose of moralizing (see the introduction to Part I), the patterns of translating and incorporating songs of foreign origins into

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<sup>6</sup> Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007), 106-107.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 106.

Utagoe's musical repertoire mark a transitional moment from the prewar patterns. The resulting paradigm provided Utagoe's quest for Japan's national music with both political and musical significance, as well as justification for incorporating songs of foreign origins. To be sure, Utagoe's preoccupation with national music lasted only two decades, as the term national music would be removed from the Nihon no Utagoe National Council's statute in 1975.<sup>8</sup> However, the nation itself remains a current element in Utagoe's official language and collective identity to this day. Most tellingly, the Council's current (2019) statute (rafited in 2017) continues to emphasize "inherit[ing] superb (*sugureta*) musical heritage from both in and outside [of Japan]," indicating the persistence of the nation-based worldview and the self-imposed mission of reforming the musical culture of Japan.<sup>9</sup> What follows below, then, is a study of a continuing nation-centric worldview in Utagoe since the Cold War.

### Soviet Russia: Land of Healthful Culture and National Music

Up until 1970, Utagoe's core repertoire was dominated by songs of Japanese and Russian (and Soviet) origins. This tendency is amply visible in Utagoe's official songbook *Seinen Kashū* ("Youth Songbook"). The first volume (1951) of *Seinen Kashū* in fact included nearly as many songs from Russia and the Soviet Union (twenty) as songs of Japanese origins (twenty-five), followed by songs from America (ten). The Central Chorus's debut concert in 1948 featuring a Japanese folk song and a Soviet song was prophetic in this sense, foreshadowing the significant

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<sup>8</sup> In 1973, the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee renamed itself Nihon no Utagoe National Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai), which continues to be Utagoe's administrative body to this day.

<sup>9</sup> The quoted expression first appeared in the Nihon no Utagoe National Council's 1974 statute and remains unchanged in the Council's statute ratified in February 2017. Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai Jōnin Iinkai, "Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai kiyaku kaisei(an)" (2017), 4.

presence of Japanese folk songs and Russian-Soviet songs in early Utagoe. All in all, songs of Japanese and Russian-Soviet origins would continue to occupy half of the songs included in *Seinen Kashū* until the very last volume (tenth, 1969).

But what kind of lyrics were Utagoe's participating groups singing to? The simple answer is that they were singing in Japanese, with translated lyrics of serviceable quality. The more complete answer is that, throughout *Seinen Kashū*'s publication history, Russian-language songs appeared as translated works, most of which were done by the following five individuals and groups: music critics from prewar years; members of the Central Chorus, sometimes crediting Seki Akiko; Ensemble Katyusha (known between 1949 and 1950 as Hikiagehsha Gakudan, or the "Repatriates Ensemble"), a group originally composed of former Japanese prisoners of war who had returned from the Soviet camps in Siberia from 1947 onward;<sup>10</sup> Inoue Yoritoyo (1912-1996), a conservatory-trained cellist and former Japanese prisoner of war likewise detained in Siberia who would go on to develop an intimate relationship with Utagoe; and the Shirakaba Chorus (Gasshōdan Shirakaba, "Birch Chorus"), a chorus founded in 1951 that has since been specializing in Russian and Soviet songs. This variety of translators suggests that Russian and Soviet songs entered Utagoe's repertory through multiple channels, not as a series of complete packages from a single source.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The ensemble renamed itself Music and Dance Ensemble Katyusha (Ongaku Buyōdan Kachūsha) in 1952. Published several years before the group's dissolution, *Sanjūsan nen no Ayumi*, ed. Ongaku Buyōdan Kachūsha (Tokyo: Ongaku Buyōdan Kachūsha, 1984) remains the only comprehensive account on the ensemble's history.

<sup>11</sup> Surviving primary documents say nothing about where these interested individuals and groups could have acquired copies of musical scores and vinyl records from the Soviet Union. Early members of the Central Chorus, including Seki Akiko's daughter Ono Mitsuko, revealed in a roundtable talk in 2000 that Seki Akiko was receiving free copies of vinyl records from the Soviet embassy in Tokyo in the late 1940s. "Seki Akiko no ashiato dai 2 kai: Utagoe undo sōritsu chokugo no jigyō katsudō (zadankai)," *Kikan Utagoe* no. 109 (August 2000), 49.

Read against the history of Russian music in postwar Japan, the Central Chorus came into being at a fortuitous time. Towards the end of 1948, the year when the Central Chorus debuted as a separate group from the Young Communist League of Japan, two entities landed in Japan from the Soviet Union. These were the 1947 Soviet film *Ballad of Siberia* (*Skazanie o Zemle Sibirskoy*, Japanese title *Shiberia Monogatari*) and former Japanese prisoners of war who had been detained in Siberia (henceforth *hikiagesha*, or “repatriates”).<sup>12</sup> Both the film and the *hikiagesha* introduced old and new songs from Russia to Japan, captivating the Japanese audience with the energetic sights they offered. Where the film director Ōshima Nagisa recalled his enchantment with *Ballad of Siberia*’s ability to transform “the Siberian wasteland into a land of boundless hope” in his heart, likewise a youthful future composer Hayashi Hikaru saw in the film the kind of sights that he had yet to witness in Japan: “life that cannot exist without music” and “people who sing and dance with joy anywhere, anytime.”<sup>13</sup> In welcoming *hikiagesha* from Siberia between 1948 and 1949, Central Chorus’s conductor-director Seki Akiko likened the *hikiagesha* to “liberated laborers” whose music represented “Soviet life (*seikatsu*) itself.”<sup>14</sup> To at least some of the Japanese audience, *Ballad of Siberia* and *hikiagesha* from Siberia offered a vision of life that was foreign and yet captivating.

Both *Ballad of Siberia* and *hikiagehsa* from Siberia left musical marks on the nascent Central Chorus. Two songs from *Ballad of Siberia* were included in an early, non-canonical

<sup>12</sup> To be precise, the process of repatriation from the Soviet Union had begun in 1947. Since 1948, when repatriation was placed under the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kōseishō)’s authority, the term *hikiage* effectively came to be applied to both civilian and military populations. See Takanori Shimamura, “Hikiagesha no sengo” in *Hikiagesha no sengo* ed. Takanori Shimamura (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 2013), endnote 1, 8-9. For a concise overview of Japanese-language scholarship on Japanese prisoners of war in Siberia, see Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia yokuryūshatachi no sengo* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 2013), 1-5.

<sup>13</sup> Nagisa Ōshima, *Taikenteki sengo eizōron* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1975), 116; Hikaru Hayashi, “Utagoe undō no igi,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 13 no. 9 (September 1955): 77.

<sup>14</sup> Akiko Seki, “Nishūnen o mukaete,” *Utagoe* Nos. 6, 7, & 8 (1950), 2.

edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1950), one being an early nineteenth-century song and the other a modern composition specially written for the film: “By the Wild Steppes of Transbaikal” (*Po Dikim Stepyma Zabaykal’ya*), translated into Japanese as “Banks of the Lake Baikal” (*Baikaru ko no hotori*) by the *hikiagesha* cellist Inoue Yoritoyo; “The Siberian Fellow Went to War” (*Ukhodil na Voynus Sibiryak*), translated into Japanese as “Song of the Siberian Land” (*Shiberia daichi no uta*) by the Repatriates Ensemble (renamed “Ensemble Katyusha” in 1951, then “Music and Dance Ensemble Katyusha” in 1952).<sup>15</sup> Russian and Soviet songs translated by Ensemble Katyusha continued to appear in subsequent editions of *Seinen Kashū* through the 1950s, as did translations by the other four translators mentioned earlier. Since its formative years, Utagoe saw a steady flow of Russian-language songs with Japanese translations and absorbed them to its repertoire.

However, the more lasting impact from these “1948 factors” on Utagoe and, inarguably, Russian music in Japan lies in the new mode of interpretation and reception of Russian and Soviet music. Specifically, Russian-Soviet music would be celebrated in Utagoe since its institutionalization in 1955 as a successful example of “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*) that bore relevance to the contemporary Japanese cultural scenes. That is, Russian-Soviet music would decidedly influence Utagoe’s discourse on national music and “proper” music, effectively becoming national music *par excellence* that Utagoe sought to emulate in its attempt to construct Japan’s own national music. In the history of Russian music in Japan, this development marked a significant departure from that of the prewar years. Above all, the new perspective viewed the

<sup>15</sup> The two songs appeared in *Shin Seinen Kashū* (“New Youth Songbook,” 1950), an early edition of *Seinen Kashū* that is not counted among subsequent editions of *Seinen Kashū* since 1951. Later, “By the Wild Steppes of Transbaikal” (Japanese title “Banks of the Lake Baikal” [*Baikaru ko no hotori*]) appeared in the “official” first edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1951) and “The Siberian Fellow Went to War” (Japanese title “Song of the Siberian Field” [*Shiberia daichi no uta*]) in the third edition (1954). *Shin Seinen Kashū*, ed. Han Shokuminchi Tōsō Jikkō Iinkai (Tokyo: Han Shokuminchi Tōsō Jikkō Iinkai, 1950).

Soviet Union as the cultivator of Russian musical heritage. This characterization envisioned a singular, historically continuous body of Russian music which placed traditional Russian songs, art music by nineteenth-century Russian composers, and contemporary Soviet songs on the same plane – thus a “Russian-Soviet” musical canon. Within the Utagoe movement between the 1950s and 1960s, the viewpoint espoused that learning the “essence” of Russian-Soviet national music from its “popular” roots would directly benefit Utagoe’s effort to construct Japan’s own national music.

However, as noted earlier, it is important to recognize that Russian-Soviet music in postwar Japan was a dynamic phenomenon that developed over the span of several decades across multiple groups. Though Seki Akiko and the Central Chorus translated many Russian-language songs themselves, they were neither sole players nor the only ones who relegated cultural and musical significance to Russian-Soviet music in relation to contemporary Japanese culture. The rise of Russian-Soviet music as Utagoe’s musical role model was a product of interactions between many groups and individuals, including the Central Chorus, *hikiagesha*, and many others who had varying degrees of relationships with said groups. Before discussing these groups, a brief outline of Russian music in prewar Japan may provide several useful points of comparison.

#### Russian Music in Prewar Japan: Russian Folk Songs as “World Music”

In prewar Japan, songs of Russian origins do not appear to have had much *musical* significance as a possible role model for modern Japanese music. Unlike their English, Scottish, or German counterparts, Russian songs had no presence in *shōka* collections between the late nineteenth

century and early twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> When songs purported to be “Russian folk songs” (*rosia min’yō*) began to be performed in concert halls between the 1900s and 1910s as a part of “world *min’yō*,” the songs received lyrics that bore no relation to their source materials. For example, the world-famous “Song of the Volga Boatmen” (*Ey Ukhnem*) became “Scream of the Geese” (*Gan no sakebi*), in a similar manner as many Western European folk songs as they appeared in *shōka* collections.<sup>17</sup> It was only in the 1930s that Russian folk songs began to receive Japanese translations (and to be presented as such), but these translations appeared as a part of the larger world *min’yō* or vocal music collections from German-language sources.<sup>18</sup>

Around the same time, Russian-language revolutionary songs began to receive Japanese texts in the wake of the Proletarian Literature movement. The Proletarian Musician’s League (PM for short, 1929-1931, 1931-1934) adopted several canonical revolutionary songs from Soviet Russia, as evinced by the organization’s songbook and performance history. The league’s “Russian” repertory consisted of late-nineteenth century revolutionary songs such as “Comrades, Let’s Bravely March” (*Smelo, tovarischi, v nogu*), “You Fell Victim to a Fateful Struggle” (*Vi*

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<sup>16</sup> Risa Moriya, “Nihon ni okeru Rosia min’yō no juyō,” (Master’s thesis, Tokyo University of the Arts, 2005), 26-30.

<sup>17</sup> In her Master’s thesis, Moriya Risa offers five *Rosia min’yō* that were translated by Hatano Jūichirō, a literature lecturer at the Tokyo School of Music (predecessor of the current music department at the Tokyo University of the Arts) between 1898 and 1906. Of these, Moriya identifies “Scream of the Geese” (“Gan no Sakebi,” or the Sino-Japanese “Gankyū” in some prints) as Hatano’s version of “Song of the Volga Boatmen” (*Ey Ukhnem*). According to Moriya, the remaining four songs unfortunately do not have corresponding sheet music and cannot be identified with their “originals”. *Ibid.*, 26, 30.

<sup>18</sup> For example, *Rosia min’yōshū* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Ongaku Shoin, 1936), which was the first volume of *Tōkyō Seigaku Gakufu* (*Tokyo Sheet Music for Vocal Music*) series. Moriya Risa also discusses *Sekai Ongaku Zenshū* (*Compendium of World Music*, 1930), which includes eight songs labeled *rosia min’yō*. This book includes three of the four songs included in aforementioned *Rosia Min’yōshū*: “Red Sarafan” (*Krasniy Sarafan*), “Mother Volga” (*Vniz po Matushke po Volge*, better known in English as “Down the Mother Volga”), and “Song of the Volga Boatmen”. It is also worth noting that the author of both works clearly referenced German publications, as evinced by the presence of German-language titles and words for the songs included in *Rosia Min’yōshū* and references in *Sekai Ongaku Zenshū* to works by a scholar named “Riiman” – clearly referring to the German music theorist Hugo Riemann (1849-1919). See Moriya, 30-31.

*zhertvoyu pali*), and “Warszawianka” (*Varshavyanka*, a tune of Polish origins), all of which received Japanese texts loosely based on the originals by contemporary members of other proletarian art groups.<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, PM’s Russian repertory did not extend beyond revolutionary songs. Rather, league members’ musical interest continued to revolve around how to overcome “bourgeois music” so that questions regarding “Russian” or “national” characters in music remained well outside of the league’s purview.<sup>20</sup> Needless to say, this development is not unrelated to the Comintern’s disinterest in the nation at the time. In sum, as a musical category, Russian music in prewar Japan invited little enthusiasm, lagging far behind Western art and folk music in both recognition and perceived significance pertaining to music in contemporary Japan.

A seeming exception in this context is Yamada Kōsaku (1886-1965), introduced in the introduction to Part I as the first Western-educated “symphonic composer” in Japan. Following his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1931, Yamada authored several articles in which he praised the proliferation of musical associations from top to bottom in the Soviet Union. Yamada was unequivocal in his praise for the Soviet effort to “popularize” (*taishūka*) music to the masses at large. His admiration for the Soviet government in this regard was echoed in various articles he wrote since in support of transplanting music to the “everyday life” (*seikatsu*) of the Japanese people.<sup>21</sup> Yet, Yamada, too, did not have much to say about the characteristics of Russian music

<sup>19</sup> Specifically, Kaji Wataru (1903-1982) provided words for “Comrades, Let’s Bravely March” (Japanese title “Furnace of Hatred” [*Nikushimi no rutsu*]) and “Warszawianka” (Japanese title “Warsaw Labor Song” [*Warushawa rōdōka*]), and Ono Miyakichi (1900-1936), husband of Seki Akiko, authored Japanese words for “You Fell Victim to a Fateful Struggle” (Japanese title “A Comrade Has Perished” [*Dōshi wa taoren*]). All of these songs appeared in *Seinen Kashū* by 1954. For an example of the League’s songbook, see *Puroretaria kakyokushū*, ed. Nihon Puroretaria Ongakuka Dōmei (Tokyo: Senkisha, 1930).

<sup>20</sup> Former PM member Hara Tarō (1904-1988) suggests that the “proletarian music” question was an impossible conundrum to address because League members were unable to devise an alternative musical system to “bourgeois music,” including Western art music, because it was the only consistent frame of reference that League members could relate to. Tarō Hara, “PM no omoide ni san,” *Bunka Hyōron* no. 80 (May 1968): 155-156.

<sup>21</sup> Kōsaku Yamada, “Sovuēto ongaku no inshō,” reproduced in *Yamada Kōsaku chosaku zenshū* Vol. 2 of 3, eds.

itself, traditional or current. His admiration for the Soviet system was confined to the various efforts toward “popularization” (*taishūka*) of music in Soviet society.

In a seemingly ironic twist, the first Russian *min'yō* compilation that touted the unique value of Russian folk music came not from a composer or music critic but by a scholar of Russian literature Nobori Shomu (1878-1958). In his aptly titled *Russian Folk Song Collection* (*Rosia Min'yōshū*, 1920), Nobori divides Russian folk songs into two categories: songs of festivities (*sairei*) and everyday life (*jisseikatsu*). These songs, Nobori contends, are “a wonder of popular art (*minshū geijutsu*) in the [entire] world,” which contain “the joy, sorrow, ideals, and aspiration of the Russian people” and “any feeling and emotion that relates to their inner life.”<sup>22</sup>

Nobori’s *Russian Folk Song Collection* remains a difficult work to locate within the Russian music discourse in Japan because the book cites neither his source materials nor related contemporary Japanese-language literature. Nevertheless, *Russian Folk Song Collection* displays several intriguing characteristics in comparison with postwar works on Russian-Soviet music. First, *Russian Folk Music Collection* does not contain any musical notation. In this regard, the book shares much in common with nineteenth-century European “folk song” collections following Johan Gottfried Herder’s, as well as other late-Meiji works on *min'yō* by literary figures such as Maeda Ringai’s *Compendium of Japanese Min'yō* (*Nihon Min'yō Zenshū*,

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Nobuko Gotō, Ikuma Dan, and Kazuyuki Tōyama (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), 234-236.

<sup>22</sup> Nobori prefaces his statement on Russian folk music as a “wonder” by quoting “Professor Wesutofaru,” clearly a reference to the German philologist Rudolf Westphal (1826-1892) whose appreciation of Russian folk music rested upon his belief that it was one of the most well-preserved “Indo-European” folk song heritages. Shomu Nobori, *Rosia min'yōshū* (Tokyo: Ōkura Shoten, 1920), 1, 3. On Rudolf Westphal’s view of Russian music, see Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: a Biography of the Works through Mavra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), Vol. 1 of 2, 723; Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism: from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 248-250.

1907) and Mori Ōgai’s work on *volkslied*.<sup>23</sup> Second, Nobori’s book does not discuss any musical characteristic or significance of Russian folk music. Instead, as noted above, Nobori finds significance in the fact that Russian folk songs embody “the joy, sorrow, ideals and aspirations of the Russian people” and reflect their lived experience. Lastly, Nobori asserts that this great cultural achievement is on the verge of extinction: “Now great Old Russia is no more, and any shred of commemoration of its national culture (*kokumin bunka*) has been thoroughly destroyed.” Nobori laments that there is nothing left in the world anymore to “eternally commemorate the great past voice of Russian folk music.”<sup>24</sup>

In the light of subsequent Japanese-language works on Russian music in prewar Japan, Nobori’s *Russian Folk Song Collection* may very well be an outlier for its negative outlook of the future of Russian folk music. Although his book shies away from discussing musical significance of Russian folk music like postwar publications, Nobori shared one idea with postwar proponents of Russian-Soviet music: that Russian folk songs are the repository of the Russian people’s lived experience and an important part of Russia’s “national culture.” However, one crucial difference lay in his view of the Soviet Union, which he implied to be the destroyer of Russian cultural heritage. As will be described in the next section, postwar Japanese proponents of Russian and Soviet music argued for historical continuity between Russian folk music and contemporary music scenes in the Soviet Union, characterizing the latter as the legitimate cultivator of the Russian cultural heritage. To that end, *hikiagesha* from Siberia would

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<sup>23</sup> On Mori Ōgai’s works on *volkslied*, see Yoshikazu Shinada, *Man’yōshū no hatsumeい* (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 2001), 191-192.

<sup>24</sup> Nobori, 4.

play a major role in the development of Utagoe's national music theory in the Russian-Soviet image.

### Russian-Soviet Songs after 1948: *Hikiagesha* and Utagoe

As noted earlier, Seki Akiko and the Central Chorus produced their own translations of Russian-language songs. In comparison to translations provided by *hikiagesha* groups and individuals like Ensemble Katyusha, translations by Seki Aiko and the Central Chorus demonstrate a transitional form of Japanese texts for Russian-language songs between prewar and post-1948 patterns. Upon its formal debut in January or February 1948 in Tokyo, the Central Chorus had at least two Soviet songs in its repertoire, namely "Polyushko-pole" (based on the choral section of Lev Knipper's Symphony No. 4, "Poem of the Komsomol Fighters," 1934) and "Our Friends" (*Warera no nakama*; Russian title *Molodost'* [Youth], 1936). "Arranged" into Japanese under the supervision of the Central Chorus's conductor-director Seki Akiko, these songs received some localization treatments, with some elements of the lyrics indeed "arranged" to some degree.

As described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the Central Chorus's "Our Friends" was a product of collective work and modifications by the hands of Central Chorus members and Seki Akiko. As a result, "Our Friends" originally contained references to "Young Communist League members," "exposing corps" (*tekihatsutai*), and "Tokyo Region Organizers" (*Tōkyō chihō orugu*).<sup>25</sup> Below I reproduce a side-by-side comparison of the first verse of the song, as recorded in a non-canonical edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1949):

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<sup>25</sup> According to Central Chorus veterans Danjō Sawae and Fujimoto Hiromi (class of 1948), early translations of Russian-language songs around 1948 credited to Seki Akiko were typically first translated by Hijikata Yohei, then

“Youth” (*Molodost’*),  
Words by Yu. Dantsiger and D. Dolev,  
Music by Matvey Blanter

There are many girls in the collective (*kollektive*),  
But you can fall in love with only one of them  
[The girl] could be a zealous Komsomol member  
And you will find yourself sighing at the moon  
  
How come you will sigh at the moon all spring?  
How so, could you explain it to me?  
  
It is because every one of us is young now  
In our young, beautiful country!  
[It is because every one of us is young now  
In our young, beautiful country!]<sup>26</sup>

“Our Friends” (*Warera no nakama*),  
Words “arranged” by Seki Akiko

Among us friends (*nakama*), many fine girls  
Are at work,  
And stylish Young Communist League members  
Hear their heart pounding  
  
Looking at the moon and looking at the stars,  
Sigh flows and laughter grows  
  
All young and bright Young Communist League, they are friends at work –  
Building a wonderful country with their spirit, they are our friends!<sup>27</sup>

While both Seki’s “arranged” texts and the Russian original depict youthful males and females, Seki’s texts specifically depict “young and bright” Young Communist League members who are hard at work “building a wonderful country.”<sup>28</sup> In this initial version of the song, “Our Friends” was clearly repurposed into a song for the Young Communist League Chorus Group and, later, Central Chorus, replacing the original Komsomol setting with a more appropriate setting for the chorus’s audience in Japan around 1948.

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edited and finalized by Seki. Interview with Danjō Sawae, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Personal communication with Fujimoto Hiromi, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> In the Russian original, the final line is sung twice.

<sup>27</sup> *Seinen kashū*, ed. Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Seinenbu (Tokyo: Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Shuppanbu, 1949), 35.

<sup>28</sup> In the first canonical edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1951), the words “Young Communist League members” (*seikyōin*) and “Young Communist League” (*Seikyō*) in “Our Friends” are replaced with “youth” (*wakamono*) and “friends” (*nakama*), respectively. See *Seinen kashū*, ed. Akiko Seki (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1951).

While “Our Friends” was exceptional in its level of “localization” of the song’s setting, the Central Chorus’s Russian and Soviet repertoire generally contained some modifications to the lyrics. Generally speaking, the Central Chorus’s first Russian repertoire was based on “translations” which maintained the same imageries as the original Russian, while some elements were altered or cut to be more “serviceable” to the Central Chorus and its audience at the time.<sup>29</sup> The Japanese translation of “Polyushko-pole” credited to Seki (also before 1949), for example, was shortened to three verses and excises the Red Army and the *kolkhoz*, though the verses by and large maintain the same imageries as the Russian original (the soldiers riding over the wide field, leaving the weeping girls behind at home).<sup>30</sup> In the early days of the Central Chorus, word-for-word translation was not of primary importance.

Yet, it must also be pointed out that, a year after the Central Chorus’s debut as its own group from the Young Communist League of Japan (January or February 1948), the chorus began to express a renewed appreciation for the contemporary Soviet culture in terms of healthfulness. The Central Chorus’s reception of Russian-Soviet music followed this pattern, as shown in the chorus’s first periodical *Utagoe* (1949-1951). In each issue of this brochure-style periodical, the Central Chorus introduced its repertoire, complete with Japanese lyrics and, at times, accompanying articles.<sup>31</sup> The second and third issues of *Utagoe*, for example, featured

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<sup>29</sup> This sort of translation pattern involving selective replacement of certain words has been identified by Satō Keiji in his dissertation (2007) as one of the typical translation patterns in early Meiji school shōka collections (1880s-1890s), in which replacing lyrical contents was the norm rather than exception. Examples of selective replacement include a mother waiting for the return of his son was transformed into a mother of three soldiers serving in the Japanese military, replacing God with the Emperor, and so forth. Keiji Satō, “Meiji ki no shōka kyōiku ni okeru hon’yaku shōka to kokumin keisei,” (PhD diss., Kyushu University, 2007), 93, 94.

<sup>30</sup> *Shin Seinen Kashū*, ed. Han Shokuminchi Tōsō Jikkō Iinkai (Tokyo: Han Shokuminchi Tōsō Jikkō Iinkai, 1950), 87.

<sup>31</sup> An exception to be noted here is the national anthem of the USSR (music by A. Aleksandrov and words by S. Milkalkov), which appeared in the third issue of *Utagoe* (1949) with the original Russian with Japanese phonetic transliteration (*furigana*).

songs from two of the largest socialist states at the time: People's Republic of China (second issue) and the Soviet Union (third issue). Much in line with contemporary and subsequent documents from the Central Chorus, *Utagoe* cast both the songs and the nation-states from which they originate in an overwhelmingly positive light. See, for example, the following statement in the third issue of *Utagoe*, featuring several songs from the Soviet Union: “We the Central Chorus see no better day than this [October Revolution] anniversary to introduce and disseminate the bright, rich, and constructive (*kensetsuteki*) music from the Soviet Union, a country of the workers.”<sup>32</sup>

To be sure, as demonstrated by the cases of Yamada Kōsaku and the Proletarian Musicians' league in the early 1930s, admiration for the Soviet Union as “a country of the workers” with a flourishing culture of “autonomous” cultural associations (*sākuru*) was nothing new among Japanese Communist Party-affiliated organizations and individuals.<sup>33</sup> What is worth noting here is that the Central Chorus praised music from the Soviet Union for its innate qualities (“bright, rich, and constructive”) rather than by virtue of the Soviet Union being a “country of the workers.” Put differently, the Central Chorus saw in Soviet music *cultural* significance on top of *political* significance.

As *hikiagesha* began returning from Siberia in large numbers since late 1948, both *hikiagesha* themselves and *hikiagesha*'s translations of Russian-language songs started to enter the Central Chorus. Their presence can be found in non-canonical editions of *Seinen Kashū* published before 1951, which include translations by the Repatriates Ensemble (Hikiagesha

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<sup>32</sup> “Nisso shinzen sekai no heiwa to anzen o mamorō!,” *Utagoe*, no. 3 (1949): 2.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Yuriko Chūjō, Sovueeto dōmei ongaku sākuru no hanashi,” *Ongaku Shinbun*, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1932, 2; Korehito Kurahara, *Bunka undō* (Tokyo: Naukasha, 1949), 18-22.

Gakudan, predecessor of Ensemble Katyusha), as well as *hikiagesha* musicians who collaborated with the Central Chorus.<sup>34</sup> These individuals had been musically re-trained during their detainment in Siberia in all but name. From 1947 onward, Soviet military authorities overseeing Japanese POW camps began consolidating musical ensembles at both the camp- and camp block-levels, even holding competitions among the ensembles thus organized.

The best-documented of these ensembles is the Maritime Province Ensemble (Enkaishū Gakudan). This ensemble contained several conservatory-trained musicians who would collaborate with the Central Chorus upon their return to Japan circa 1949: Inoue Yoritoyo (1912-1996), a cellist in the New Symphony Orchestra (predecessor of the NHK Symphony Orchestra); Kitagawa Gō (1921-1986), a baritone singer; Kuroyanagi Moritsuna (1908-1983), a violinist and former concert master of the New Symphony Orchestra (and the father of the actress Kuroyanagi Tetsuko). Visiting the Central Chorus's office in the Okubo neighborhood of Tokyo upon their return to Japan in 1949, the three men played some educational and performative role: Kitagawa and Inoue delivered lectures on music (as well as on music in the Soviet Union), while Kuroyanagi played the violin at the Central Chorus's concerts as late as in 1952.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Seinen kashū*, ed. Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Seinenbu (Tokyo: Minshu Seinen Gōdō Iinkai Shuppanbu, 1949), 48. In addition, *Shin Seinen Kashū* ("New Youth Songbook," 1950) includes several Soviet wartime songs that never made into later editions of *Seinen Kashū*, for example "Song of the Dnieper" (*Pesnya o Dnepre*, translated as *Donyepuru no uta*) and "As I was Leaving Berlin" (*Yekhal ya iz Berlina*, translated as *Berurin o sarite*). *Shin Seinen Kashū* is also exceptional in that it makes no mention of Seki Akiko.

<sup>35</sup> In his memoir, Kitagawa recalls that he had learned of the Central Chorus through *Nihon Shimbun*, a Japanese-language newspaper for Japanese prisoners of war in Siberia which had been edited under the authority of a political officer and future Japan diplomatic specialist Ivan Kovalenko (1919-2005). Kitagawa also recalls that the Central Chorus was the first place he was "guided to" (*annai*) once he landed in Japan, though he does not mention by whose recommendation. In light of the Japanese Communist Party's efforts to "organize" *hikiagesha* in the late 1940s, Kitagawa was likely guided by a local Japanese Communist Party organization. Gō Kitagawa, *Rosia min'yō, wa ga shōgai* (Tokyo: Geijutsu Gendaisha, 1986), 20. On JCP initiatives following the arrival of *hikiagesha* from 1948 onward, see Tomita, 144-173.



Figure 4.1: An undated picture of the Maritime Province Ensemble: Kitagawa Gō (far left in the bottom), Kuroyanagi Moritsuna (second from the far left in the bottom, holding a violin), and Inoue Yoritoyo (center in the bottom, holding an accordion). Picture from *Utagoe wa heiwa no chikara: Nihon no Utagoe 40 shūnen kinen shashinshū* (1988).

Of these early *hikiagesha* contributors to formative Utagoe, Inoue Yoritoyo would go on to offer his service to Utagoe as a conductor, musical advisor, and music theorist for nearly half a century until his death. Inoue was also the first among conservatory-trained *hikiagesha* from the Soviet Union who authored a “musical” account of his experience in Siberia. Inoue’s writings during Utagoe’s formative years (1948-1955) are a precursor to Utagoe’s subsequent reception of Russian and Soviet music. In his first book, a memoir titled *Musical Life in Siberia* (*Shiberiya no Ongaku Seikatsu*, 1949), Inoue expresses his great admiration for the Soviet people’s ability to sing anywhere in group and the Soviet state’s material support for musicians. Published two years later, Inoue’s first Russian and Soviet sheet music collection *Russian Folk Music* (*Rosia no Min’yō*, 1951) characterizes folk music as containing “the true voice of the

people” (*minshū no shinjitsu no koe*), calling Soviet songs to be “consistently folk-like (*min'yōteki*) and hence healthful (*kenkō*) and bright (*meirō*).”<sup>36</sup> In his call for creating “healthful and bright songs” in order to transform music into a natural component of livelihood (*seikatsu*) in Japan, Inoue therefore posited the Soviet Union to be the best example for Japan to learn from, so that the Japanese people, too, may establish a musical canon that is “popular” in its origin.<sup>37</sup>

Champion of Russian-Soviet musical heritage, Inoue Yoritoyo would emerge as Utagoe’s go-to musical authority in the mid-1950s, serving as conductor for the Central Chorus and the Nihon no Utagoe Festival, jury for choral competition during the Festival, and adviser and lecturer on musical matters. Inoue’s rise in Utagoe coincides with the period of Utagoe’s institutionalization, signaled by the establishment of a permanent umbrella organization Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee in 1955. As Utagoe began making efforts to codify its musical and political vision during this period, “national music” was typically included in Utagoe’s “music theory” (*ongaku riron*) textbooks.<sup>38</sup> As if to follow Inoue’s lead, these textbooks referred to Russian-Soviet music as the foremost example of national music to learn from in order to create the Japanese people’s national music. Although Utagoe’s version of national music did not repeat Stalin’s famous phrase “national in form and socialist in content” (1934), Stalin’s

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<sup>36</sup> Yoritoyo Inoue, *Rosia no min'yō* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1951), 6, 70. He also published another sheet music collection *Soveto gasshōkyokushū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1953), for which the Shirakaba Chorus provided nearly half of translations.

<sup>37</sup> Inoue (1951), 114. For an example Inoue delivered to members of Utagoe, see Yoritoyo Inoue, “Ongaku undō no naka de utagoe undō no shimeru ichi to yakuwari ni tsuite,” *Ongaku Undō* (November 1955), 15-18.

<sup>38</sup> Though I have seen several references to these textbooks supposedly compiled in 1957 and 1959, I have yet to find complete copies of them. Hiromi Fujimoto, *Uta wa tatakai to tomoni: Chūō Gasshōdan no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1971), 163. For an example of a lecture outline that likewise places an emphasis on national music and Russian-Soviet musical heritage, see “1960 nen Nihon no Utagoe undo kenkyū shūkai tekitusuto,” reproduced in *Utagoe undō shiryōshū*, eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi (Kanazawa: Kanazawa Bunkokaku, 2017), 201.

stated goal of the national cultures’ “ultimate fusion into one General Culture” in the Soviet Union would not have been an alien idea in the Japanese context for Inoue.<sup>39</sup>

One Utagoe-affiliated chorus that particularly championed Utagoe’s national music program is the Shirakaba Chorus, a Tokyo-based chorus specializing in Russian and Soviet songs. Officially affiliated with Utagoe since 1961, the Shirakaba Chorus grew out of a Russian language club formed by Russian-language students from the Waseda University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Gaidai), and the Nikolai Cathedral in June 1950, becoming a full-fledged chorus in July 1951.<sup>40</sup> Working closely with *hikiagesha* musicians Inoue Yoritoyo and Kitagawa Gō (the latter of whom served as Shirakaba’s principal conductor until his death in 1986), Shirakaba provided translations of many Russian and Soviet songs that were included in subsequent editions of Utagoe’s songbook *Seinen Kashū*. Among Utagoe-affiliated choruses, Shirakaba is notable for its early adoption of the national music framework. In the concert program of the chorus’s second concert (1953), for example, Shirakaba contended that its “ultimate objective is to have [its] own songs and to project Japan’s singing voice (*utagoe*)” and that “absorbing and synthesizing Russian and Soviet songs would be a great asset” towards that end, given their “deep pathos and healthful, wide-ranging living emotions (*seikatsu kanjō*).”<sup>41</sup> A reiteration of this argument appears in Shirakaba’s 1955 statute, and, from 1957 onward, the chorus’s statutes refer to “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*) as Shirakaba’s ultimate objective.

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<sup>39</sup> For a brief description of the origin and consequences of Stalin’s phrase “national in form and socialist in content,” see Marina Frolova-Walker, “Musical in Form, Sociologist in Content”: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics,” *Journal of the American Musicology Society* 51 no. 2 (Summer, 1998), 333-352.

<sup>40</sup> *Gasshōdan Shirakaba 50 nen no Ayumi*, ed. Gasshōdan Shirakaba Sōritsu 50 Shūnen Kinenshi Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Gasshōdan Shirakaba, 2000), 24-26; Kitagawa, 22-23.

<sup>41</sup> Gasshōdan Shirakaba, “Rosia min’yō no yū,” 1953, 2 [unnumbered].

Without surveying the history of Shirakaba, suffice it to say that the case of Shirakaba demonstrates the extent to which the Russian-Soviet musical canon could legitimize efforts to not only translate Soviet and Russian songs to Japanese but also create Japan's own national music. In Shirakaba's periodical *Beryozka* ("Birch Tree"), national music begins to be discussed by chorus members on regular basis starting from late 1954, when Shirakaba participated in the Nihon no Utagoe Festival that year. National music then gains much traction from 1961 onward, when the chorus became an Utagoe "core chorus" (*chūshin gasshōdan*) in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, as if reflecting the sense of confidence some members must have acquired through their alignment and identification with Utagoe and their shared national music framework.<sup>42</sup> To the Shirakaba Chorus during this period, Russian-Soviet music was foreign only in terms of its geographical origin; as a model "national music," Russian-Soviet musical heritage was Japan's natural teacher.

By the second half of the 1960s, the prominence of the Russian-Soviet musical canon in Utagoe was such that it could legitimize Utagoe's decision to create its own opera. This opera was titled *Okinawa* (1969), which depicts a series of protests that broke out between 1955 and 1958 on the Okinawan island of Iejima against the backdrop of forcible land seizures by the U.S. military across the Ryukyu Islands.<sup>43</sup> After some initial talks in 1966, work on the opera officially began in September 1967 under the principle of "collective creation" (*shūdan sōsaku*) rather than entrusting the creative effort to a select few professional "specialists" (*senmonka*),

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<sup>42</sup> Examples of Shirakaba's own works include choral suites (in collaboration with conservatory-trained composers) and songs. In comparison to Japanese translations of Russian-language songs, Shirakaba's own compositions remained much fewer in number. Even in the chorus's fifty-year anniversary historical account, only the translated songs are listed under the book's appendix. Ed. Gasshōdan Shirakaba Sōritsu 50 Shūnen Kinenshi Henshū Iinkai, 58-59.

<sup>43</sup> Kinoshita, "Kageki 'Okinawa' no sōsaku katsudō," *Utagoe Shinbun*, January 1, 1970, 1.

with Seki Akiko herself as the general producer of this monumental project.<sup>44</sup> After some delays, the opera was finally premiered in December 1969 in Tokyo, also going through performances outside of Tokyo between 1970 and 1972. *Okinawa* was to be Utagoe's largest *kokumin ongaku* project to date and the pinnacle of Utagoe's creative efforts in all but name.

Curiously, articles from *Utagoe Shinbun* during the production of *Okinawa* (1967-1969) fall short of explaining why the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee considered opera to be an appropriate choice of medium. The Committee's call for production of the opera was strictly political and situational in its justification: "Ensuring a successful production movement for the opera *Okinawa* will encourage the struggle to return Okinawa to Japan and win Japan's independence, oppose America's invasion of Vietnam, and is [also] an act of solidarity in support of the Vietnamese people."<sup>45</sup> Instead, what contemporary *Utagoe Shinbun* reveals is the viewpoint shared among "Russianists" like Inoue Yoritoyo, which held the Russian national school of music from the late nineteenth century as a model to follow. In his lecture on national music from 1966, Inoue referred to Mikhail Glinka's opera *Ivan Susanin* (1836, renamed in 1939 as such from *A Life for the Tsar*) as the very first example of national music not only in Russia but in the entire world. As Inoue saw it, *Ivan Susanin* was a product of Glinka's effort to incorporate the voices and emotions of the ordinary Russian people by adapting folk tunes, a characterization consistent with contemporary Soviet view of Glinka as the progenitor of the Russian national school of music.<sup>46</sup> In this spirit, following the premier of *Okinawa* in late 1969,

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<sup>44</sup> On Utagoe's emphasis on "collective creation" in the late 1960s, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation. "Opera 'Okinawa' (kadai seisaku no yobikake," *Utagoe Shinbun*, September 10, 1967, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Additionally, during my research in Japan between the fall of 2016 and summer of 2017, I was told on several occasions by veteran members of Utagoe-affiliated choruses that the choice of opera may have been influenced by Seki Akiko's own dream to produce an opera. No documentary evidence exists for this claim.

<sup>46</sup> Yoritoyo Inoue, "Kokumin ongaku nit suite (jō)," *Utagoe Shinbun*, November 10, 1966, 7. On Soviet reception of

Inoue pointed to “popularization” (*taishūka*) and “modernization” (*gendaika*) as the opera’s next step.<sup>47</sup>

Also during the production of *Okinawa*, *Utagoe Shimbun* published an article authored by Terahara Nobuo (1928-1998), a member of the Miyazaki Center Chorus who was studying at the Moscow Conservatory under the Armenian-born composer Aram Khachaturian at the time. In it, Terahara calls opera “the most democratic medium” that is sure to strengthen Utagoe’s cause:

Tchaikovsky pointed out that, of all creative possibilities in music, opera is the most democratic medium that appeals to the public at large in the most powerful way . . . The reason why opera can capture the hearts of people at large lies in the fact that opera is based on singing, to which is added an element of drama; in its symphonic development, it also reflects everyday life (*seikatsu*) of the ordinary people (*minshū*) and becomes capable of conveying thoughts (*shisō*) and emotions correctly. And so it is that success of the opera *Okinawa* in its creation and performance promises to establish connections with a wider range of people.<sup>48</sup>

In the end, Terahara’s article quoted above became the only article in *Utagoe Shimbun* to describe the significance of opera as a medium in reference to *Okinawa*. To be sure, the Russian-Soviet canon was not explicitly invoked during the production of *Okinawa* from official channels. Inoue Yoritoyo had in fact cautioned in his lecture on national music from 1966 that creating Japan’s national music should not be equated with the mindset that “anything from the Soviet

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and modifications made to Glinka’s operas between 1917 and 1947, see Frolova-Walker, 61-73, 320-323.

<sup>47</sup> Yoritoyo Inoue, “Hōkoku: kageki ‘Okinawa’ ni tsuite <4>,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 20, 1970, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Terahara was hand-picked by Khachaturian to be his student during the latter’s visit to Ongaku Center in March 1963, following a performance of Terahara’s choral suite *Japan’s Dawn (Nihon no yoake)*. Nobuo Terahara, “Opera sōsaku no kadai: Rosia, Sobieto opera kara manabu mono,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 10, 1968, 4.

Union is good.”<sup>49</sup> However, to the extent no other national music received such a level of recognition in *Utagoe Shinbun*, the Russian-Soviet musical canon clearly functioned as a handy point of reference in Utagoe that no other national music could.

Ultimately, for the purpose of the present study, the concept of national music is historically significant for its imaginative capacity, precisely because of its slippery nature. Just as in prewar and wartime precedents, the concept allowed different individuals and groups to justify their endeavors in both musical and political terms.<sup>50</sup> While the definition of national music in Utagoe may have rested upon, and indeed benefited from, slippery definitions of *kokumin* (“nation-people”) and *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”), interactions and interpretations that the national music frame afforded nevertheless reveals processes of negotiation on both individual and collective levels, therefore demonstrating cases of internalization that go beyond a simple cause-and-effect relationship with the Japanese Communist Party. The Russian-Soviet musical canon was a great enabler in this sense.

### American Folk Music in Utagoe: Twilight of the National Music Regime

While early Utagoe displayed an unequivocal opposition to America’s “imperialism” and “colonialist culture,” songs of American origins nonetheless continued to have some presence in early Utagoe’s foreign repertoire. In the first edition of *Seinen Kashū* (1951), for example, the great majority of the American songs consist of late nineteenth-century tunes, including songs

<sup>49</sup> Yoritoyo Inoue, “Kokumin ongaku nit suite (ge),” *Utagoe Shinbun*, December 25, 1966, 7.

<sup>50</sup> In a similar vein, Benjamin Filene argues in the context of the 1950s American folk music revivalism that terms like “pure” and “authentic” functioned as “ciphers waiting to be filled,” for “people imbue them with meanings that have cultural relevance and power to them.” Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 3.

written by Stephen Foster (1826-1864) such as “Oh! Susanna” and “Old Black Joe” – songs that had been translated and recorded in Japanese by 1941.<sup>51</sup> Later editions of the songbook would go on to include African American-themed songs such as “Deep River” (third edition, 1954) and “Ol’ Man River” (fourth edition, 1955), possibly in association with Paul Robeson, with whom Seki Akiko had some correspondences in the early 1950s. From the mid-1960s onward, *Seinen Kashū* began to include songs of American origins with a much clearer contemporary association such as “We Shall Overcome” (ninth volume, 1965, under the title “We Will Triumph” [*Warera wa katsu*], Japanese translation credited to Seki Akiko) and “Where Have the Flowers Gone” (tenth volume, 1969).

As in the case of Russian-Soviet songs, American songs included in *Seinen Kashū* demonstrate changing reception of “American music” in Utagoe. In this context, “Old Black Joe” was the American equivalent of “Red Sarafan” in Utagoe’s early Russian repertoire: these songs had been introduced in Japan in the 1930s as parts of the larger world “folk music” (*min’yō*), and Utagoe did not relegate any newfound significance in adopting these songs. In contrast, “We Shall Overcome” as it was adopted in Utagoe represents a different kind of adaptation. Labeled “American protest song” (*Amerika tōsōka*), Seki Akiko’s translation of “We Shall Overcome” emphasizes the resolve to win “resplendent victory” (*kagayaku shōri*), rather than to *overcome*, so that the people may “live in peace.” This would have been a familiar language to the veterans of Utagoe who were operating under the slogan “Singing voice is a force of peace” (*utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*, 1953).<sup>52</sup> In Seki’s translation, this de facto Civil Rights movement anthem

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<sup>51</sup> For example, Victor Japan released a two-volume album with the title *American Folk Music Collection* (*Amerika Min’yōshū*, 1938), which included three Foster songs: “Old Black Joe,” “Oh! Susanna,” and “My Old Kentucky Home”.

<sup>52</sup> *Seinen kashū*, ed. Ongaku Sentā (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 1965), 73.

presented a more contemporary image of America cast in a language typical of the Utagoe movement.

“Where Have the Flowers Gone” presents yet another dimension of the picture. Though the song was written by Pete Seeger, who, as I shall describe later, would soon become Utagoe’s foremost American ally, “Where Have the Flowers Gone” had become a commercial hit in the United States by the time the song made its way to Utagoe’s songbook *Seinen Kashū* in 1969. The rising popularity of American folk-style protest songs had much to do with the commercial success of American folk music as a popular music genre. For Utagoe’s leadership, which viewed commercial music as antithetical to national music, American folk music’s simultaneous rise as a protest song genre and commercial genre in both the United States and Japan would have a much more destabilizing impact than it may have foreseen.

#### North American Folk Music, 1950s-1960s: Amidst Revivalism and Commercialism

Scholars of North American folk music generally regard the decade between the 1950s and 1960s as the revivalist period.<sup>53</sup> As the name suggests, the revivalist period witnessed a series of attempts to make folk music relevant to the North American public in post-World War II setting.<sup>54</sup> But what were the folk music revivalists trying to revive, and how? This question

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<sup>53</sup> There exist a variety of names to refer to this period. While the term “folk music revival” and its variants continue to be used since the early 1970s, some authors have referred to it as the “second wave folk revivalism.” In both cases, the period starting from the 1920s serves as a reference point for the “early” history of American folk music. For an example that employs the latter configuration, see Ron Eyerman and Scott Barretta, “From the 30s to the 60s: the Folk Music Revival in the United States,” *Theory and Society* 3, no.1 (1996): 501-543.

<sup>54</sup> I fully recognize the risk I run into by grouping all folk revivalists together. In the present study, by folk music revivalism I refer to what I understand to be its lowest common denominator: a number of efforts in 1950s-1960s North America to introduce music that offers a substantive affect on the listener as opposed to a fleeting experience. There were many variants of this goal by the mid-1960s, of course. For example, Irwin Silber, the editor of the *Sing*

remains pertinent to modern scholarship on American folk music, and no doubt the revivalists themselves had to wrestle with this question. In the context of the present study, North American folk music revivalism is worth exploring for the degree to which such concerns resonated with those of the Utagoe movement in Japan at the time. In other words, aspirations and obstacles that the apostles of North American folk revivalism experienced revolved around a set of questions that the more intellectually-inclined participants of Utagoe, too, struggled with.

Broadly speaking, both North American folk music revivalism and Utagoe legitimized the historic necessity of their musical program in terms of the folk's lived experience and the need to capture and absorb its essence. Take, for example, the following passage written by ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger (father of Pete Seeger, to whom I will turn to in the next section) from 1953, in which he warns against what he deemed to be careless ways of reviving "folk music traditions":

I believe it is not incorrect to say that the elite groups that have deliberately tried to either destroy or revive folk music traditions have invariably embarked upon such treatment [to revive the corpus of folk music] without much, if any, attempt at diagnosis. Treatment, ranging from publication of written texts that are mere skeletons, simplified to a point of misrepresentation, to unabashed commercial exploitation, has exhibited a conception of folk music as solely a corpus, and a very dead one at that . . . In failing to recognize the true character of the substitutes for established tradition evolved by the masses of the people themselves, they have snubbed the best ally they could have hoped for.<sup>55</sup>

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*Out!* magazine, bemoaned the loss of the "original" prewar leftist aspirations in 1960s American folk music, while Pete Seeger advocated for a wholesome musical experience based on intimacy and spontaneity, not rejecting the 1960s American folk music scene altogether.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Seeger, "Folk Music in the Schools of a Highly Industrialized Society," in *Studies in Musicology, 1935-1975*, ed. Charles Seeger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 332.

In the passage above, Charles Seeger displays two key assumptions about folk music that mirror contemporary Utagoe's take on folk music: the belief that creating people's music anew ("substitutes for established tradition") must be informed by "established tradition evolved by the people," and the notion that folk music and its "true character" had been misrepresented on multiple occasions. Implicit in such a characterization is the assumption that there existed a body of folk music that, if learned and treated properly, could be revived in contemporary setting, whether as a representation of the past or as a beacon for the future.

As Charles Seeger touched upon in the passage quoted above, one noteworthy aspect of the folk revivalist period is that it was accompanied by the rise of folk music as a commercial genre. As the case of Charles Seeger suggests, there arose concern among proponents of "pure" folk music that commercialism could damage the integrity of American folk music. It was in this context that he counted "unabashed commercial exploitation" as one of the detrimental factors that were degrading folk music into "solely a corpus," depriving the music of its "established tradition evolved by the masses of the people themselves."<sup>56</sup> The assumption that Charles Seeger expresses here, that there is an essence to be found in "established tradition evolved by the masses of the people themselves," runs parallel to contemporary Utagoe conception of music and the resulting musical imperative which posited reflecting Japanese people's "livelihood" (*seikatsu*) as the paramount objective of national music. Insofar as commercial music's ultimate interest did not lie in developing "established tradition" of the folk, commercialism was an anathema to American folk music revivalists.

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<sup>56</sup> Seeger (1976), 332.

However, modern scholars of American folk music present a more nuanced picture of the relationship between 1950s folk revivalism and commercialism. Specifically, scholars since the 1990s have argued for a symbiotic relationship between the two, pointing out that the mass media, record companies, and the youth audience each played an indispensable role in shaping the content of the revival.<sup>57</sup> According to this view, 1950s folk music revivalism was made possible in an environment vastly differently from the prewar decades', both economically and politically. One area that illustrates the shift is the audience of American folk music. In the prewar period, left-leaning intellectuals in Northern cities, including those who belonged to the Communist Party of the United States of America, collectively played the role of gatekeeper and added a decidedly political tint to the appreciation of folk music.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, in the immediate postwar decades, two significant factors altered American folk music's reception: emerging mass society and explosive growth of college enrolment.<sup>59</sup> “Popularizing” folksingers such as the Kingston Trio and Harry Belafonte were products of their time in that they could rise to fame through record companies' reaches to mass audience, as well as through the companies' “liberal attitude” to include such singers under their label.<sup>60</sup> American folk music as circulated by record companies in turn possessed “qualities as an alternative form of expression suitable for white college students” that “retain[ed] an intellectual

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<sup>57</sup> On the history of American folk music literature between the 1970s and 2000s, see Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 18-22.

<sup>58</sup> For more detail on the Northern urban left as both an arbiter and audience of American folk music in the prewar period, see Mitchell, 25-27 and Eyerman and Barretta, 508-515.

<sup>59</sup> College enrollment in the United States quadrupled between the 1940s and 1960s. Mitchell, 95.

<sup>60</sup> Eyerman and Barretta, 530, 534.

vitality.”<sup>61</sup> In the words of the revivalist figure Pete Seeger, this new audience was indeed a crucial part of the revival: “In the thirties many of us thought the folk music revival would come through the trade-union movement. We couldn’t have been more wrong. It came through the camps and colleges.”<sup>62</sup>

American folk music revivalism, then, cannot be discussed without considering its youth audience and commercial factors. In the light of massification of culture in the United States, Gillian Mitchell is correct in arguing that, if the first-wave revivalists – those who had witnessed the initial development of interest in American folk music in the prewar years – believed themselves to be fighting for “pure” folk music, they were fighting a losing battle (or, put more bluntly, the wrong battle).<sup>63</sup> Second-wave folk revivalism between the 1950s and 1960s was as much about folk music “going public” on popular media as it was about the rise of the “purist” discourse. If anything, second-wave folk revivalism was defined by precisely this tension – and this was also the kind of tension that Utagoe would find itself engulfed in the late 1960s with the American folk music-derived genres in Japan. And it was through this tension that Utagoe found its American ally in the person of Pete Seeger.

### Pete Seeger the Fighter: Utagoe’s “True” American Ally

Pete Seeger is arguably the most renowned of contemporary American figures who were in the heat of the commercialism-in-folk-music controversy. A former member of the Almanac based

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Pete Seeger, *The Incomplete Folk Singer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 24-25.

<sup>63</sup> Mitchell, 71-72.

in New York, he was a transitional figure who performed actively both before and during the folk revival in the 1950s and 1960s. He was a consistent critic of commercialization of American folk music, but at the same time he was cool-headed enough to critically analyze the effects of contemporary technology and music industry. More importantly in the context of this chapter, Pete Seeger was also the first American folk singer to establish communication with Utagoe, maintaining contact and expressing mutual admiration throughout the 1960s.

Pete Seeger first learned about Utagoe through his Canadian acquaintance John Kelly, who visited Ongaku Center, seat of the Central Chorus and the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee, in the summer of 1960. Within months, Kelly informed Pete Seeger of Utagoe, handing Seeger copies of *Seinen Kashū*. Pete Seeger then sent a letter to Ongaku Center himself in October that year, expressing his gratitude “from the bottom of [his] heart for the wonderful work [Utagoe is] doing” and asking for “articles printed which . . . would be valuable” in his effort to host more peace marches in the United States.<sup>64</sup> In fact, even before he wrote the letter to Ongaku Center, Pete Seeger had already tasted a piece of Utagoe. His 1960 album *Rainbow Quest* includes one non-English song called “Fu-Ru-Sato (Never Shall We Allow Another Atom Bomb To Fall),” which is in fact Pete Seeger’s rendition of the 1954 anti-nuclear song from Utagoe “We Shall Not Tolerate Another Atom Bomb” (*Genbaku o yurusumaji*).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> This letter is preserved in Ongaku Center, Tokyo. Letter from Pete Seeger to Seki Akiko and the Singing Voice of Japan, October 2nd, 1960.

<sup>65</sup> Coincidentally, the Summer 1960 issue of *Sing Out!*, which John Kelly had given to Ongaku Center during his visit to the Center, contains an advertisement for the album, suggesting that Pete Seeger had recorded “Fu-Ru-Sato” by the summer of that year.

Given this early contact, it is no surprise that Pete Seeger himself visited Ongaku Center during his first visit to Japan in late 1963.<sup>66</sup> During his second visit to Japan in 1967, he contacted Utagoe once again by sending a congratulatory note for the 1967 Utagoe Festival. In it, he expressed his long-time appreciation for Utagoe's adoption of traditional folk songs, touting Utagoe's engagements with “excellent works of art” that “encourage us to face today's problems,” just as in olden times.<sup>67</sup> For its part, Utagoe recognized Pete Seeger to be America's “fighting folk singer” who was a part of “America's folk song movement,” which shared “common objectives” with the Utagoe movement.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> During this visit on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1963, Pete Seeger is recorded to have sung a song entitled in Japanese “We Will Surely Triumph” (*Warera wa kanarazu katsu*), most likely referring to “We Shall Overcome,” during the Central Chorus's rehearsal. This Japanese title is very similar to the version contained in the ninth volume of *Seinen Kashū* (1965), “We Will Triumph” (*Warera wa katsu*). “Ongaku Sentā de Pīto Shīgā shi raihō,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, November 15, 1963.

<sup>67</sup> “67 saiten e kaigai kara no aisatsu,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, December 1, 1967.

<sup>68</sup> “Tatakau fōku songu kashu Pīto Shīgā,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, October 1, 1967.



Figure 4.2: Pete Seeger (right) and Seki Akiko (left) converse at Ongaku Center, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1963 (from *Utagoe wa heiwa no chikara*, 1988)

Since their initial contact in 1963, Utagoe and Pete Seeger each went on to oppose commercialism and its impact on contemporary music scenes. They shared the sentiment that commercialism was increasingly depoliticizing music, creating an irreparable divide in the national community by turning the people-audience into mindless consumers. Pete Seeger lamented in 1966 that the “pop process” was adversely affecting America’s musical culture through commercialism so that “[n]ow the word ‘folk’ [wa]s being taken over for whatever money it c[ould] make.”<sup>69</sup> Though Pete Seeger was apprehensive of the “pop process” affecting music in America, he was not dismissive of the mass media in itself. As he saw it, the fact that there were “only a few genuine old country-ballad singers left, who have not been influenced by

<sup>69</sup> Seeger (1972), 459.

radio, TV, and book learning” should not be the end of folk music: “new traditions of folk music will emerge . . . The definitions of folk songs and folk singers are liable to change also.”<sup>70</sup> In other words, Pete Seeger argued, it was not the technology he was fighting against; it was the power behind the popular media wielding such technology that he hoped to overcome.

At the same time as Pete Seeger and like-minded individuals were beginning to warn against the current state of folk music in America, Japan would experience its share of American folk music boom. As Utagoe would soon see for itself, American folk music would establish itself as a successful commercial music genre which in turn gave rise to Japanese-language variants. By the second half of the 1960s, *fōku songu* (Japanese transliteration of *folk song*, henceforth denoting American folk music as interpreted, employed, and adapted by Japanese performers) was fast becoming the latest musical trend among Japanese youth. As will be shown later, Utagoe viewed *fōku songu* as a variant of American folk music deliberately tainted by the American and Japanese “reactionary forces” and monopoly capital. *Fōku songu* would soon figure in Utagoe as the newest addition to the undesirable music from the “enemy” that Utagoe sought to dispel.

### 1960s: Golden Age of *Fōku Songu* in Japan

Entering Japan’s public airwaves and concert halls around 1961, American folk music became an established musical genre in Japan by 1965. For music enthusiasts in Japan since, American folk music stands tall as a revolutionary phenomenon that gave rise to the term *fōku songu* and

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 147.

numerous *fōku* bands in Japan.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, subsequent narratives of Japanese pop music generally regard the 1960s as the golden era of *fōku songu*, after which acoustic guitar-based bands became a common sight in Japan's pop music scene. American folk music thus became an epoch-making musical genre in Japan, just as it did in the United States.

Indeed, the establishment of American folk music as a commercial musical genre in Japan demonstrates many parallels to contemporary United States music scene. In Japan, too, popular media played a quintessential role in introducing American folk music to the Japanese public. Whether it was the radio or the television that had more impact on introducing American folk music to Japan, the genre quickly gained enthusiasts, in a matter of just several years.<sup>72</sup> In January 1961, the Kingston Trio performed in Japan, becoming the first American folk music band to perform in the country.<sup>73</sup> Early Japanese enthusiasts of the genre were quick to follow suit: the first concert in Japan dedicated to American folk music took place in the same year, and Japan's first "Hootenanny" was held in 1963.<sup>74</sup> By 1965, the tide was such that the NHK

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<sup>71</sup> The trend is such that more recent *fōku*-era song sheet music collections typically include popular music hits between the late 1960s and mid-1970s that were not advertised as belonging to the *fōku* genre – for example, Sakamoto Kyū's "Ue o muite arukō" (better known outside of Japan as "Sukiyaki"). See, for example, Yūshi Matsumoto, *Shōwa no fōku meikyoku zenshū* (Tokyo: Doremi Gakufu Shuppansha, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> For example, while Tagawa Tadasu (1982) places much emphasis on the Far East Network (now a part of the American Forces Network) channels and imported records, Maeda Yoshitake and Hirahara Yasushi (1993) argue that satellite broadcast from the United States to Japan, available since 1963, played a more important role. Tadasu Tagawa, *Nihon no fōku & rokku shi: kokorozashi wa doko e* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomo Sha, 1982), 9-12; Yoshitake Maeda and Yasushi Hirahara, *60 nendai fōku no jidai* (Tokyo: Shinko Music, 1993), 19.

<sup>73</sup> Tagawa, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Maeda and Hirahara mention Ōsawa Yasushi as a person of particular note, identifying him as the chief organizer of the 1961 concert and one of the performers at Hūtenāni (Hootenanny) '63. This is indeed a rapid development considering the fact that, in the United States itself, the term Hootenanny most likely entered popular culture vocabulary following the ABC television show *Hootenanny* in 1963. Maeda and Hirahara, 33-36.

(Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, or Japan Broadcasting Corporation), the national public broadcasting organization in Japan, was broadcasting the Newport Folk Festival that year.<sup>75</sup>

Aided in no small part by such rapid ascendancy, the transliterated term *fōku songu* appears to have gained currency by 1965.<sup>76</sup> By this time, *fōku songu* became one of the latest fads among Japanese college students, as can be seen in an *Asahi Shimbun* article titled “A Quiet Boom: *Fōku Songu*” published later that year.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, there also emerged performers and critics who expressed their concern with the rampant commercialization of the American folk music genre. What is worth noting in this context is that, as *fōku songu* became an established term, Japan also witnessed the rise of the “revivalist” understanding of *fōku songu* as a commercial derivative of American folk music. Oft-referenced in later Japanese-language works on American folk music, Mihashi Kazuo’s *Folk Song: the History of Protest Songs in America (Fōku songu: Amerika no teikō no uta no rekishi*, 1967) is noteworthy for its preoccupation with the genealogy of American folk music, including early pioneers such as Francis James Child, John and Alan Lomax, and Leadbelly, all of whom were becoming parts of the American folk music canon in the United States at this time.

In Japan, as in the United States, such multifaceted development of American folk music has long been a hot topic. In their 1993 account on the *fōku* era, Maeda Yoshitake and Hirahara

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 49. It is also worth noting here that, especially from 1964 onward, early Japanese performers of American folk music like Yukimura Izumi found their venue through Rōon (short for Kinrōsha Ongaku Kyōgikai, or Laborer's Music Congress), a federated musical association that sought to provide affordable music to the public (in terms of both pricing and approachability). See Ibid., 77-78 and Tagawa, 14-16.

<sup>76</sup> Before 1965, the word *min'yō* appears to have been in use to denote American folk music. An example of this is Yūichi Mihashi, “Amerika saikō no min'yō kashu Pīto Shīgā no rainichi,” *Gasshōkai* 7 no. 11, 32-36.

<sup>77</sup> One of the earliest comprehensive accounts of American folk music to be published in Japan is Mihashi Kazuo’s *Fōku songu: Amerika no teikō no uta no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 1967). It is also worth noting that, before 1965, the mainstream Japanese media used the generic term *min'yō* to refer to American folk music. “Shizukana būmu fōku songu,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, November 28, 1965, 20.

Yasushi make a call to examine the manners in which *fōku songu* “oscillated between ‘politics’ and ‘economy’” and how the *fōku* boom transformed overtime.<sup>78</sup> Insofar as it triggered a similar set of concerns between the 1950s and the 1960s in both the United States and Japan that has since invited historical assessments, revivalist-period American folk music was a transnational watershed moment that transcended the Pacific. While it is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the shifting modes of musical production and the growth of mass society in Japan and the United States, it is worth noting that the revivalist-period discourse on American folk music revolved around the essence of the “folk” and how to defend it – a battle that Utagoe saw itself as being engaged in since decades earlier.

### “Is *Fōku* Good Music?”: *Fōku Songu* Controversy in Utagoe

For members of Utagoe in the late 1960s, their conundrum regarding *fōku songu* came down to one question: Is *fōku* “good music” worth incorporating to Utagoe’s repertoire? This seemingly simple question in fact implicated Utagoe’s national music paradigm: What defines “good” in light of Japan’s national music that Utagoe was developing? The debates that ensued in Utagoe’s official newspaper *Utagoe Shimbun* demonstrate a historical moment of crisis during which Utagoe’s orthodoxy was forced to reevaluate its core concepts such as *kokumin* (“nation-people”) and *minzoku* (“ethno-nation”).

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1966, a question-and-answer article appeared in *Utagoe Shimbun* under the title “A Question from a Friend: Does National Music Refer to Music Without Class Characteristics?”. The question at hand was whether the word *kokumin* in *kokumin ongaku*

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 101.

(“national music”) should encompass musical experiences of all Japanese people. That is, if *kokumin* implied all Japanese, then *kokumin ongaku* must *accommodate* music of all classes, including that of the capitalist class, at which point national music effectively becomes “music without class characteristics.” In response, the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee asserted that national music must *serve* all people of a given nation and therefore possessed class characteristics, for national music “not only reclaims and maintains the traditional music of the people (*minzoku*) but also possesses a high degree of artistry based on traditions, thus representing the people (*kokumin*).<sup>79</sup> By subsuming class to the “people,” the Executive Committee also held that national music must be ethnic in character (*minzokuteki*), based on people's everyday life and history. The Executive Committee thus repeated the orthodox view that the essence of a nation's music can be found in the people's lived experience, both historical and contemporary – a set of assumptions that also echoes Charles Seeger's assessment of folk music scenes in 1950s America. In so arguing, the Executive Committee discredited popular music produced by the “capitalist class” as lacking in the substantive experience of everyday life and consciousness of political and social reality in Japan, therefore unfit for Japan's national music.

For its binary distinction between national and “non-national” elements, Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee's response to “A Question from a Friend” was a precursor to the ensuing debates on the treatment of *fōku songu* in Utagoe. As Utagoe and Japanese Communist Party-line authors saw it, the biggest challenge that contemporary popular music posed was the fact that, unlike popular music in earlier decades, some new genres like *fōku* did not appear outright

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<sup>79</sup> Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai Jimukyoku, “Nakama kara no shitsumon: 'kokumin ongaku' towa kaikyūsei nuki no ongaku no koto deshōka,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, June 1, 1966, 2.

“decadent.” A particularly pertinent neologism that was coined during this period is “socially conscious popular music” (*shakaiha ryūkōka*), which designated popular music songs that dealt with social issues and was employed in both mainstream newspapers and Japanese Communist Party publications. Japanese Communist Party-affiliated periodicals saw “socially conscious popular music” as ultimately detrimental to the Japanese people's desire to secure better “livelihood” (*seikatsu*), characterizing the music as a new tactic by “monopoly capital” to stupefy the Japanese people. In a JCP-line periodical *Bunka Hyōron* (*Cultural Review*), for instance, an article appeared in 1966 with the title “Reactionary and Militarist Currents in Music,” in which the author warned against the two-faced nature of recent popular music:

New militarism does not take such a blatant form as its prewar counterpart and rather tries to achieve its goals behind the mask of democracy. . . . There also appeared relatively healthful songs that reflect people's demand to a certain degree. But even such songs have pitfalls. . . . They are dominated by songs that idealize owning one's own home (*mai hōmu raisan*) and ones that seek happiness in a small, individualistic life. There exists neither love built upon the conviction to make a better livelihood nor solidarity among the working comrades. These songs lead people to believe that their wish to gain happiness can only be realized in the world that immediately surrounds them, turning the public's interest away from society and politics.<sup>80</sup>

Utagoe's official newspaper *Utagoe Shimbun* followed a similar pattern of criticism against contemporary popular music. The most vocal and consistent critic was Inoue Yoritoyo, who at this time was the principal conductor of the Central Chorus and a member of the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee. In his opening speech at the Executive Committee meeting in 1967, Inoue focused his criticism on *fōku songu*, decrying the mass media's deliberate, “two-faced” attempts to expunge American folk music's “purity”:

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<sup>80</sup> Shinji Higuchi, “Ongaku ni miru handōka gunkokushugika,” *Bunka Hyōron* no. 58 (August 1966): 31, 35.

[B]ecause of the emasculating two-faced policies of the American ruling class . . . the act of protest itself was capitalized upon and popularized by the mass media. There are many peace activists, but the audience of their songs has been denatured, indoctrinated to [only] imitate the style and the things that make [folk] artists slick (*kakkoyosa*) . . . Influence of American popular music (*kei ongaku*) is evident even in anti-racial discrimination songs based on old folk melodies, and [folk] artists themselves are constantly exposed to the same set of influences. Today, it is extremely difficult to hear the original naturalness and purity [of American folk music] in modern [American] folk songs. American folk song in Japan is being popularized in exactly the same manner as in America.<sup>81</sup>

Both Inoue's critique and the *Bunka Hyōron* article quoted earlier share the belief that popular music is "denaturing" the Japanese public, expunging American folk music's "natural" qualities which could empower the public. According to this view, the mass media figured as a corrupt filter through which music became contaminated and deprived of its original qualities. In terms of Utagoe's national music, this meant that American folk music and its derivatives as popularized in the United States and Japan lacked the "original" essence of the American "nation" and its "livelihood," no longer representing the voices of the American people.

Repeated denunciations of commercialized American folk music by Utagoe's leadership notwithstanding, *fōku songu* was clearly making its effects felt among young participants of Utagoe. A particularly contentious *fōku* socially conscious popular song came from *Wakamonotachi* (Young People, 1966), a television drama series depicting the toils of the children from an orphaned family. To some in Utagoe, the production of *Wakamonotachi*, complete with an opening theme song, came as a surprise attack from the mass media.<sup>82</sup> On the

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<sup>81</sup> The term *kei ongaku* is a term that arose in the 1930s denoting what may now be conventionally categorized as popular music. The term was antithetical to "serious" music that could be placed alongside Western art music. Yoritoyo Inoue, "Dai ikkai Nihon no Utagoe Jikkō Iinkai ni okeru aisatsu," *Utagoe Shimbun*, February 1, 1967.

<sup>82</sup> The opening theme song with the same title as the television drama was recorded by Broad Side Four, a *fōku* band

surface, it seemed as though the Japanese mass media was finally beginning to show interest in depicting the everyday life of Japanese youth in a meaningful way in both film and music. Indeed, *Utagoe Shimbun* from this period fully reflects the conflict and anxiety that “socially conscious popular songs” of such an outlook cast upon individual participants of Utagoe. As alluded to earlier in the section, socially conscious popular songs posed a threat to Utagoe because the songs appeared to address contemporary social issues and could not be dismissed outright as decadent or lacking in substance. As such, the socially conscious popular song controversy in *Utagoe Shimbun* revolved around whether such songs had enough qualifications to be incorporated into Utagoe's musical repertory.

Lasting about half a year between 1967 and 1968, the longest running debate on socially conscious popular songs in *Utagoe Shimbun* took place in an article series called “Let's Think Together” (*Minna de kangaeyō*). Individual articles in this debate amply display the tensions and perceived threats that Utagoe was facing at the time. The first article, which appeared in the September 10<sup>th</sup> issue, summed up the two respondents' arguments as follows: “Can we organize our friends through pop song (*ryūkōka*)?” and “Should we refuse every single song that the mass media airs?.” While the article acknowledged the growing demand among fellow Utagoe participants for adopting socially conscious popular songs, the respondent who was opposed to socially conscious popular songs argued that socially conscious popular songs like “Wakamonotachi” lack in concreteness and obscure working-class perspective: “[T]hey are not workers' creations, nor do they express workers' feelings,” for socially conscious popular songs are merely a desperate attempt by “the reactionary forces of Japan and America (*beinichi handō*)

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led by Kurosawa Hisao (b. 1945), the son of the film director Kurosawa Akira.

to win the hearts of the [Japanese] people, no longer able to ignore Japan's reality and people's livelihood.”<sup>83</sup>

Rebutting this perspective, the other respondent who was sympathetic to socially conscious popular songs displayed skepticism toward the need to antagonize everything coming out of the mass media, pointing out that the television drama *Wakamonotachi* was produced by morally conscious television staff and actors. “Despite the pressure exerted by the television station,” the author continued, the show “masterfully depicted the voice of the working people . . . in a manner that meets our demand,” and the drama’s theme song was emblematic of that effort. The author concluded that there was some good in socially conscious popular songs and that, for this reason, Utagoe should adopt exemplary socially conscious popular songs.<sup>84</sup> Though *Utagoe Shimbun* went on to print three more opinion pieces under “Let’s Think Together” until March 1968, these pieces reproduced the same dichotomy displayed in the first piece.<sup>85</sup> In the end, editors of *Utagoe Shimbun* did not provide a definitive statement on the controversy.

Subsequent issues of *Utagoe Shimbun* display a continued state of uncertainty within Utagoe. Appearing between September and October of 1969, the article series “Mass Communication and *Fōku* Song” described *fōku* as a tool used by Utagoe’s enemies: mainstream media and the emergent New Left, or “violent separatists” engaged in “anti-Communist propaganda,” as the author put it.<sup>86</sup> In calling for Utagoe to resuscitate *fōku* so that the music

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<sup>83</sup> “Minna de kangaeyō,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, September 10, 1967, 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Tamio Ishida, “Minna de kangaeyō: Wakamonotachi no hyōka ni tsuite,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, January 20, 1968; Haruoki Taniguchi, “Minna de kangaeyō: shakaiha ryūkōka ni tsuite watashi no iken,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, February 1, 1968; and “Minna de kangaeyō: masukomi de nagareteru uta to Utagoe no uta,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 10, 1968.

<sup>86</sup> Judging from the accompanying photograph and caption for the article, the “violent separatists” that the article is referring are clearly Beheiren (short for Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō, or Citizen’s Federation for Peace in

could recover its popular origin and character, the anonymous author of this article series repeated Inoue Yoritoyo's characterization of American folk music two years earlier. Yet, subsequent articles in *Utagoe Shimbun* reveal that local Utagoe choruses and gatherings found it impractical to repudiate popular music songs like *fōku* songs. Referencing opinions from Utagoe groups in Tokyo, article series "What is a 'Good Song'?" from the early 1970 concludes with the following remark:

What the young people hear all the time is popular songs (*ryūkōka*) from the mass media. So they do not know what other kinds of "good songs" there are. . . .

Young people are looking for a place where they can sing with others, even including popular songs (*kayōkyoku*) or *fōku songu*. If, on top of that, there are more 'good songs' that anyone can sing, would it not be possible to say goodbye to loneliness and resound the bright singing voice (*utagoe*) surrounded by everyone?<sup>87</sup>

It is worth noting that, in the end, the article series "What is a 'Good Song'?" does not define what a "good song" is and instead argues that Utagoe *ought to* pursue good songs – a position not fundamentally different from ones discussed earlier. To be sure, however, the article series demonstrated tacit acceptance of popular songs in a limited capacity: if existing participants of Utagoe can invite newcomers so that they could learn Utagoe songs, then popular songs should not be rejected outright.<sup>88</sup> Even in this instance, however, popular songs including *fōku songu* were not welcomed unconditionally. Taken as a whole, the two article series examined in this section demonstrate Utagoe's continued preoccupation with "good music" that

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Vietnam), a loose alliance of various groups opposed to the Vietnam War. The federation in 1969 included Folk Guerrilla, which led demonstrations in major cities in Japan with *fōku* songs. "Masukomi to *fōku* songu," *Utagoe Shinbun*, September 20, 1969, 2.

<sup>87</sup> "Ii uta towa nanda," *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 1, 1970, 6.

<sup>88</sup> "Ii uta towa nanda," *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 1, 1970, 6.

is “truly” national and popular. Insofar as such claim to authenticity remained in effect, Utagoe’s musical worldview remained decidedly binary as before.

In the end, Utagoe’s leadership made neither a declaration of war nor warm welcome towards popular song genres like *fōku songu* between the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, from 1970 onward, *Utagoe Shimbun* began to feature articles about new forms of performance among Utagoe’s younger members, including musicals and *fōku* bands. These articles showed Utagoe’s concessionary attempts to embrace *fōku* band as an acceptable *form* of performance. An article from April 1970 featuring an Utagoe-affiliated *fōku* band even contained the headline “What we are doing is *utagoe*,” as though to signal Utagoe’s willingness to accept *fōku* for what it was – if done in the “Utagoe way.”<sup>89</sup> It is likely not a coincidence that *Utagoe Shimbun* started to post advertisements for the guitar since around this time, depriving the accordion of the celebrated status it enjoyed thus far in *Utagoe Shimbun*.

Did this mark a significant shift in Utagoe’s reception of *fōku songu*? While that may appear to be the case on the surface, it must be noted that such a turn did not require a radical change in Utagoe’s musical worldview. That is, even though the movement may have declared its intent to “strengthen the progressive and active (*sekkyokuteki*)” aspects of *fōku* during the *fōku songu* controversy, the leadership continued to frame the effort in terms of “struggle against the likes of mass media, which employ [*fōku*] as a way to attack Utagoe.”<sup>90</sup> The underlining assumption here was the belief that *fōku songu* possessed “original” qualities deriving from the American musical heritage – in other words, America’s national music material. As such, still Utagoe maintained national music as its base frame.

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<sup>89</sup> “Tōkyō shitamachi ni mebuku fōku undō: fōku shūdan ‘Firentse,’” *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 20, 1970, 6.

<sup>90</sup> *Masukomi to fōku songu*,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, October 1, 1969, 2

### The (Official) End of the National Music Paradigm and Russian Supremacy in Utagoe

Only several years after the *fōku songu* controversy, national music would come under challenge. In early 1974, less than a year since death of Seki Akiko on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973, the Nihon no Utagoe National Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, 1973-Present, successor to the Executive Committee) released a statement contending that national music must be replaced due to its “erroneous theoretical residues.” The Council further added that the national music concept was in fact a product of a narrow-minded definition of the people (*kokumin*) and an “inadequate” assessment of Soviet music and its achievements. Above all, the Council asserted, circumstances in contemporary Japan and nineteenth-century Russia were different.<sup>91</sup> Finally, in the Nihon no Utagoe National Council’s 1975 statute, the phrase “national music” disappeared entirely. By repudiating the national music frame, Utagoe effectively abandoned the confrontational viewpoint since the 1950s that a historically informed body of national music could replace “bad music” in entirety; also gone was the supremacy of Russian-Soviet music, which no longer held the sort of significance it once had under the national music frame.

And yet, the 1975 statute still sets out to “[i]nherit and develop the superb (*sugureta*) tradition of Japan’s ethnic (*minzokuteki*) music,” though without any mention of a specific musical precedent or model to emulate. One way to explain this seeming paradox is the Japanese Communist Party’s shift in cultural language. Indeed, discussion leading up to Utagoe’s 1975 statute displays several parallels to revisions made to the Party’s official documents at the twelfth Party Congress (November 1973). The Party Congress made several

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<sup>91</sup> “Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai dai 7 kai sōkai hōshin (an),” *Utagoe Shinbun*, February 1, 1974, 5.

revisions to the party platform (*kōryō*), modifying phrases like “the socialist camp, with the Soviet Union in the lead” (removed in entirety) and “dictatorship of the proletariat” (*dokusai* [dictatorship] changed to *shikken* [rule]).<sup>92</sup>

Officially, the Party’s stated reason for these changes was to prevent “misinterpretation” both within and outside of the Party. However, in light of subsequent discussion on the relationship between culture and the Japanese Communist Party, these revisions reflected the Party’s turn away from some of its 1950s languages. Only three months since the twelfth Party Congress, JCP’s main theoretical periodical *Zen’ei* published an article titled “On the Problem Regarding the Party’s Leadership in Postwar Cultural Policy: Recapitulation of the ‘1950 Issue.’” In it, the anonymous author contended that the “provisional central leadership” between 1950 and 1957 implemented activities that were incongruent with the cultural policy as outlined in the fifth and sixth Party Congresses.<sup>93</sup> The biggest mistakes that came out of these years, the author argued, were the “erroneous understanding and practice of ethno-national culture” (*minzoku bunka*) and the belief that the “reformation of the Japanese culture could be accomplished . . . without active construction of democratic culture.”<sup>94</sup> The article in effect argued that national culture must be developed alongside of democratic culture, though the specifics of this “democratic culture” in the article ultimately remained no less vague than the Japanese Communist Party’s “national culture” as espoused between 1950 and 1957.

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<sup>92</sup> “Nihon Kyōsantō kōryō no ichibu kaisei ni tsuite no hōkoku,” *Zen’ei* no. 363 (January 1974): 254-256.

<sup>93</sup> “Provisional central leadership” here refers to the *kokusaiha* faction of the Japanese Communist Party led by Miyamoto Kenji, which stood in opposition to the *shokanha* faction led by figures such as Tokuda Kyūichi and Nosaka Sanzō.

<sup>94</sup> “Sengo no bunka seisaku o meguru tō shidōjō no mondai nit suite: bunka bun’ya de no ‘gojūnen mondai’ no sōkatsu,” *Zen’ei* no. 364 (February 1974): 54. 56.

As Utagoe's representative at the Japanese Communist Party National Activist Conference (Nihon Kyōsantō Katsudōsha Kaigi) in late 1974, Fujimoto Hiromi, veteran of the Central Chorus since 1948, delivered a report that in many ways responded to the conversation in the previous paragraphs. Defining "the task of cultural movements today" to be "democratic development of Japan's culture as a whole," Fujimoto expressed Utagoe's resolve to appeal to the people's "demand for healthful culture," particularly in terms of "the truth, humanism, and feeling, as well as emotion and thoughts toward democracy and peace." To that end, Fujimoto added, Utagoe would further widen its repertoire and incorporate more "progressive, popular, and ethnic (*minzokuteki*)" songs.<sup>95</sup> Consistent with the criticism on national music at the time, Fujimoto made no mention of national music, and he also alluded to the need for "development of Japan's culture as a whole." However, Fujimoto's call for a renewal notwithstanding, it is not difficult to see the continued existence of many of Utagoe's implicit assumptions from earlier decades. Most importantly, Fujimoto's report continues to assume that the Japanese people possess "demand for healthful culture," placing the Utagoe movement as the mouthpiece for this perceived demand. In this vein, Fujimoto still appeals to characteristics such as "popular" and "ethnic," assuming the existence of a singular Japanese nation and its voice. Ultimately, Utagoe's declared policy shift in 1974 may have done away with Utagoe's preferential treatment of the Russian-Soviet musical canon, but Utagoe's overall cultural worldview remained firmly binary, based on that which is desirable and undesirable.

The nation officially remains an underlying concept in Utagoe's worldview to this day. In fact, the words *minzoku* ("ethno-nation") and *kokumin* ("nation-people") still appear as

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<sup>95</sup> Hiromi Fujimoto, "Tasai na senkyoku, shin tenkai suru 'Utagoe undo,'" *Zen'ei* no. 377 (December 1974): 118-120.

keywords in the Nihon no Utagoe National Council's current statute, listing Utagoe's activities as follows:

Article 3. In order to realize [its] objectives, the organization, with the motto "Singing voice (*utagoe*) is a force of peace," shall engage in the following activities:

(1) Spread singing voice (*utagoe*) from one friend to another . . . and create Utagoe organizations, spreading singing voice to all people [of Japan] (*zenkokumin*)

(2) With the [Japanese] people (*kokumin*)'s livelihood, emotion, and demand at its root, [the organization] engages in the following activities:

- a. Develop performing, educational, and creative activities, with the [Japanese] people (*kokumin*)'s livelihood and struggle as the source of creation
- b. Inherit and develop the superb tradition of Japan's ethnic (*minzokuteki*) music
- c. Learn from the superb musical accomplishments of various peoples (*shokokumin*) and make them the Japanese people's (*nihon kokumin*)<sup>96</sup>

Even with national music gone from its statute, Utagoe continues to define its role vis-à-vis *kokumin* ("nation-people") and *minzoku* ("ethno-nation") in and beyond Japan, implying that Nihon no Utagoe continues to stand for the voice of Japan among voices around the world. Such a stance reflects Utagoe's continued belief in the compatibility of voices from all nations, that which can be learned from and understood by virtue of their supposed "popular" origins. In this way, Utagoe's worldview continues to assume a sort of universalism, though with an emphasis away from the nation itself as a repository of the national musical canon to the people's historical experience. In the final section that follows, the implication of this shift will be discussed via

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<sup>96</sup> Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai Jōnin Iinkai, "Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai kiyaku kaisei(an)" (2017), 4.

Utagoe's relationship with performing groups in South Korea since 1998, Utagoe's newest foreign ally to date.

#### Epilogue and Conclusion: Utagoe's Post-Cold War Discovery of South Korea

Utagoe's show of international solidarity both during and after the Cold War began with Korea. Consistent with its attitude toward socialist states overseas, in 1949 the Central Chorus partook in a commemorative event for the establishment of the North Korean government (1948), the earliest attested example of its kind.<sup>97</sup> Unsurprisingly, both the Central Chorus and subsequent Nihon no Utagoe considered North Korea to be their ally and source of the Korean national music. In addition to the inclusion of several songs of North Korean origins like "Song of General Kim Il-Sung" in *Seinen Kashū* from the 1950s,<sup>98</sup> performing groups from Korean schools in Japan (*chōsen gakkō*) of North Korean-affiliation continued to make appearances at both prefectural- and national-level Utagoe Festivals. In the wake of the national music program in Utagoe, *Utagoe Shimbun* articles from the 1960s include articles depicting both the North Korean government and *chōsen gakkō* as cultivators of Korea's national-music-in-making, just like the Utagoe movement.<sup>99</sup> Such a pattern of characterization was wholly consistent with Utagoe's national music paradigm on one hand, and the ethnic-line reorganization of the

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<sup>97</sup> "Warera seinen heiwa to sachi motome," *Utagoe* nos. 6, 7, and 8 (1950), 1.

<sup>98</sup> Other songs of Korean origins that were included in *Youth Songobook* are Korean "folk" tunes like "Arirang" and "Doraji", which were recorded by Japanese artists as early as in the 1920s. On the recording history of "Arirang," see Taylor E. Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 150-168.

<sup>99</sup> For example, "Hana hiraku ōgon no geijutsu: Chōsen Minshushugi Jinmin Kyōwakoku no bunka geijutsu," *Utagoe Shinbun*, October 15, 1963, 2; "Tōkyō Chōsen Chū Kōkyū Gakkō o tazunete," *Utagoe Shinbun*, May 15, 1966, 2;

communist parties following the Cominform directive of 1955: Whether living in the Korean peninsula or Japan, these Korean entities were Japan’s foreign allies engaged in their shared struggle for national culture against the (American) “imperialist” culture.

However, since sending its representatives to the thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang in July 1989, Utagoe’s contact with North Korea became far and between.<sup>100</sup> Instead, starting from 1998, interactions with South Korea began to dominate Utagoe’s foreign overtures. In 1998, Nihon no Utagoe established contact with the Korean National Musician’s Association (Hanguk Minjok Ŭmag’ in Hyōphoe, 1988-2008), an organization that set out to create Korea’s “ethnic music” (*minjok ūmak*).<sup>101</sup> The Association reciprocated the visit by organizing of a performing group called Life, Will, and Voice (Salm, Ttūt, Sori) to the Nihon no Utagoe Festival that year. The group was to be the first group ever from South Korea to partake in the Festival. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998, in a special stage prepared for the South Korean guests, the group Life, Will, and Voice and Utagoe participants, hailing from various occupational backgrounds, sang the landmark Korean protest song “Morning Dew” (*Achim isūl*) together – members of Life, Will, and Voice singing in Korean, and others in the Japanese translation provided by Kasagi Tōru.<sup>102</sup> The performance was highly praised in *Utagoe Shimbun* for its passion and energy, prompting impressions like “as if blood would come out from anywhere.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> “Dai 13 kai Sekai Seinen Gakusei Saiten no seikō o mezashite,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, June 19, 1989, 2.

<sup>101</sup> Mingap Sō, “Minjok Ŭmag Hyōp’üihoe,” *Hangguk Minjok Munhwa Daebaekgwa Sajōn*, accessed January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0072281>.

<sup>102</sup> “Uta ni ha hito o, shakai o kaeru chikara ga aru,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, December 21, 1998, 1.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

As has been the case throughout the history of Utagoe, the establishment of Utagoe’s new foreign ally was accompanied by a written proclamation. Three days after the special stage described above, the Nihon no Utagoe National Council and the Korean National Musician’s Association declared a joint statement, which displays a curious mix of Utagoe’s old nation-based worldview and a quasi-post-colonial vision of an East Asian community unseen during the Cold War-era. Acknowledging “the history of wrongdoings committed by Japan in the early twentieth century,” the statement calls for “friendly cultural exchanges based on mutual equity and trust between Japan and Korea for peace and democracy in twenty-first century Asia,” underlining “livelihood and struggle as the source of creation” and “inheritance and creative development of ethnic traditional music (*minzoku dentō ongaku*)” as the two associations’ shared objectives.<sup>104</sup> The presence of the “ethnic” (*minzoku* in Japanese, *minjok* in Korean) frame is not surprising in either Utagoe or South Korean context, given the persistence of the nation in Utagoe and the persistence of *minjok* as a historical and political frame in South Korea across the political spectrum.<sup>105</sup> In this sense, the Utagoe-Korean National Musician’s Association joint statement appears both old and new in making. That one of Utagoe’s representatives who visited the Korean National Musician’s Association in 1998 felt like he met an “old friend” is surely not a coincidence.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> “Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai Kankoku Minzoku Ongakujin Kyōkai kyōdō dan’wa,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, February 15, 1999, 4.

<sup>105</sup> For a historical survey on the rise of the *minjok* frame in colonial Korea, see Vladimir Tikhonov, “Demystifying the Nation: the Communist Concept of Ethno-Nation in 1920s-1930s Korea,” *Cross-Currents: East Asia History and Culture Review* 7 no.2 (November 2018), 69-92.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Kobayashi Hikaru, Tokyo, Japan, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



Figure 4.3: Members of Life, Will, and Voice singing “Morning Dew” with Utagoe participants, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998.

Still, subsequent patterns of incorporating songs from South Korea in Utagoe indicate that the nation is no longer the primary marker of foreign songs in Utagoe. Gone is the emphasis on learning the “essence” of foreign songs for the sake of creating Japan’s national music; in fact, the Korean songs sung by Utagoe-affiliated groups (or songs performed by groups from South Korea at the Nihon no Utagoe Festival) rarely include songs purported to be of “traditional folk” origin. Instead, the songs that have received Japanese translation in recent years are *minjung kayo* (a “people’s song” protest song genre in 1980s South Korea) classics like “Morning Dew” and “March for the Beloved” (*Im ül uihan haengjingok*), as well as new compositions that appeared in the scandal-laden years of the late Park Geun-hye presidency, particularly in the

wake of the Candlelight demonstrations in 2016.<sup>107</sup> By sharing songs in protest of recent political episodes in South Korea and Japan together, these songs become a means of sharing contemporary experiences of struggle against what they deem to be political injustice. Yet, such a role of music is hardly new in Utagoe; one noticeable change here is the shift away from the nation as the repository of music and historical experience. Instead, the nation is important insofar as it can invoke the feeling of a shared struggle around the globe.

In light of Utagoe’s historic “national music” phase, what can be said about this post-Cold War development in Utagoe? Can Utagoe’s history be divided into Cold War- and post-Cold War eras? If Cold War dynamics are to be defined in terms of opposing ideologies (if in part, at least), then Utagoe’s quest for Japan’s national music was certainly an extension of the Cold War: Utagoe by and large identified itself with socialist states and their cultural endeavors and decried the vices of “monopoly capital” and (American) imperialism, justifying both impulses in terms of creating the Japanese people’s national music.<sup>108</sup> The removal of national music from the Nihon no Utagoe National Council’s statute in 1975 may signify the beginning of Utagoe’s less “partisan” approach to songs of foreign origins, at least in comparison to its previous clear-cut alignment with the Russian-Soviet musical canon and against American imperialism, respectively. However, as argued above, Utagoe still retains a basically binary perception between desirable and undesirable music – no longer characterized as such in writing but very much implied thus in official documents’ continued use of terms like “ethnic” (*minzoku*)

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<sup>107</sup> An example of the latter kind includes “The Truth Never Sinks” (*Chinshil ünk chimmol haji annündə*), a song composed in the wake of the sinking of the passenger ferry Sewol in 2014.

<sup>108</sup> On problems of the Cold War as a unitary historical frame, see Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 5-11.

and “superb tradition.” From this standpoint, as this dissertation has been arguing from the very first chapter, Utagoe’s worldview indeed contains an underlayer that predates the Cold War.

How, then, are we to assess Utagoe’s national music project between the 1950s and 1960s? From official standpoint, the project was a failure: it was abandoned and declared to be a mistake. From a historical perspective, too, the Utagoe movement’s abrogation of national music in 1975 coincides with the decline of nation-centric community building projects and the effective end of the music critics’ regime in Japan. Watanabe Hiroshi argues that the weakening sense of national solidarity precipitated the decline of national-level movements like Utagoe. As he sees it, the 1970s signaled a turning point in the vision of community in Japan, as the sense of belonging (*kizoku ishiki*) to the nation and solidarity among the people (*rentai ishiki*) became less and less relatable. Citing the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics and the 1970 World Expo in Osaka as final moments of the national fervor in Japan, Watanabe concludes that by 1970 the nation as a unit of communal imagination became ineffective, adversely affecting movements like Utagoe that appealed to national consciousness (*kokumin ishiki*).<sup>109</sup> Following this narrative, then, the Utagoe movement was one of the numerous entities that were swept by the sociopolitical changes in Japan since the 1960s as a result of multiple-decade high-growth economic growth and market (and political) segmentation. In the contexts of Utagoe and beyond, Utagoe’s national music program was certainly a product of perceptions that were older than Utagoe itself but could also be specific in the Cold War-era choice of allies and enemies.

In a similar vein, this chapter has depicted the rise and fall in Utagoe of universal translatability of music as a text to learn a given nation’s historical and cultural “essence” for the

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<sup>109</sup> Hiroshi Watanabe, *Utau kokumin: shōka, kōka, utagoe* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010), 254-255, 256-257.

sake of the Japanese nation. In this capacity, the nation was seen as free from fault through a circular assumption of the timelessness of the “ordinary people” as the true voice of the nation. In that sense, the belief in the nation as universal fit very well with the Cold War dynamics Utagoe found itself in: a given nation may be under control of the “imperialists” and their “decadent” culture (analogous, perhaps, to the Marxist superstructure), but the nation – the ordinary people – always speaks the truth. The removal of “national music” from the Nihon no Utagoe National Council’s statute in 1975 may have signaled the end of the nation as a *source of texts* that could directly inform the creation of a body of music, but the nation remains firmly in place as a referent which justifies Utagoe’s endeavors against the backdrop of the entire world, musical or otherwise. The case of South Korea in Utagoe since 1998 is a case in point, important to current-day Utagoe insofar as the political struggles of the “ordinary people” in Korea can legitimize Utagoe’s own existence. The nation has survived in Utagoe over the decades as simultaneously musical and non-musical in invocation.

## Part III

### Dual History of *Utagoe*: the Cases of *Utagoe Kissä*

“*Utagoe*? That’s my youth (*seishun*)!

Anonymous, 2016

In the course of my research on things *utagoe* between 2014 and 2019, people who learned about my research topic typically reacted with one of the following responses. First, and most typical reaction: most people in Japan and the United States that I have talked to between age twenty and fifty could not associate the word *utagoe* with anything in particular. Second reaction type: most scholars of postwar Japan that I have met over the years immediately identified the *Utagoe* movement. And then there were people past retirement-age in Japan (typically sixty-five and above) whom I have met between 2014 and 2019, the great majority of whom reacted with joy. They would typically try to confirm my research topic: “You mean *utagoe kissä*? I used to go there when I was young!” The epigraph above is one among many reactions along this line that I have come across on more than one occasion. Clearly, the term *utagoe* meant a different thing to these age cohorts.

As of the late 2010s, it would not be an overstatement to argue that, outside of the academic circles, the term *utagoe* hardly evokes the *Utagoe* movement. Instead, by the mid-2010s, the term *utagoe* acquired a tint of nostalgia. At the forefront of this development is *utagoe kissä* (“singing voice coffeehouse”), a type of singing venue that was once a business model and is now a nearly ubiquitous self-run event and a recreation genre for Japan’s post-

retirement cohorts.<sup>1</sup> As the term indicates, *utagoe kissa* was a mixture of two developments in twentieth-century Japan: the Utagoe movement and the coffeehouse. In the two chapters of Part III, I will be exploring the life and continuing legacy of this neologism in the continuing construction of *utagoe* as an idealism since the late 1950s to the present day.

A 1950s neologism, *utagoe kissa* arguably became the term by which the word *utagoe* became engraved in public memory at the turn of the century. Perhaps most tellingly, dictionaries and encyclopedias published by major publishers in Japan typically include an entry on *utagoe kissa*. Below are two such examples:

A coffeehouse (*kissaten*) where patrons can enjoy choral singing with musical accompaniment. Following the end of World War II, it gained popularity in association with the Utagoe movement, the latter of which was propagated nationally under the direction of Seki Akiko (1899-1973). (*Daijirin*, third edition [2006])<sup>2</sup>

A coffeehouse popular in the 1950s where patrons sing the songs that they request, with accordion accompaniment. Tomoshibi was its pioneer. Since around 1998, there has been a quiet resurgence. (*Digital Daijisen*)<sup>3</sup>

The two dictionary entries above suggest some connection between *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement. But the entries leave open the nature of the relationship between the two *utagoe*'s: Did the Utagoe movement have anything to do with day-to-day operation at a typical *utagoe*

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth, I translate the term *kissa* to “coffeehouse” in light of the subsequent developments of “coffeehouses” and “cafés” (*kafe*) with different connotations. See my summary and evaluation of Takai Naoyuki (2014)'s treatment of the two terms in the pages that follow.

<sup>2</sup> “Utagoe kissa to wa,” *Kotobanku*, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://kotobank.jp/word/%E6%AD%8C%E5%A3%B0%E5%96%AB%E8%8C%B6-440151>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

*kissa*? What sorts of commonality, if at all, existed between the two? And, perhaps most significantly, what kind of historical significance does the formation of *utagoe kissa* have?

Herein lies a hitherto unexplored historical relationship between *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement. *Utagoe kissa* certainly occupied physical spaces as individual commercial establishments, but it has become a format unto itself in recent years, no longer limited to being a commercial establishment we call “coffeehouse” or “café.” Musically, too, *utagoe kissa* has developed musical repertoire that displays both overlaps and departures from that of the Utagoe movement. Writing in retrospect in 2004, former King’s Record producer Osada Gyōji (b. 1930) posits that *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement “did not have a direct link [with each other], but they were not entirely without links.”<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, there were contemporary observers who saw *utagoe kissa* as an extension of the Utagoe movement – and, by extension, the Japanese Communist Party – to infiltrate the Japanese youth’s mind.<sup>5</sup> For its part, Utagoe movement leadership remained officially silent on *utagoe kissa*, save for a couple of advertisements.<sup>6</sup> In addition, oral testimonies I have gathered from active Utagoe participants during the 1950s suggest that a significant portion of active Utagoe participants took issues with “their” songs being sung by individuals who were intoxicated or bereft of a political consciousness.<sup>7</sup> To be

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<sup>4</sup> Since his first visit to the *utagoe kissa* Tomoshibi in Shinjuku around 1958, Osada produced several vocal groups that performed at and recorded hit songs from *utagoe kissa*. These groups include the male vocal ensemble Bonnie Jacks and the female vocal ensemble Voce Angelica, both of whom also performed their new songs at *utagoe kissa* for marketing purposes in addition to recording existing hit songs in *utagoe kissa*. Gyōji Osada, *Natsukashi no utagoe hitto shū* (Tokyo: Jiyū Gendaisha, 2004), 9.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, *Sayoku bunka nenpō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1957), 222-223; *Sayoku bunka nenpō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1958), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Between 1956 and 1965, *Utagoe Shimbun* put up only two advertisements for establishments that may be called *utagoe kissa* (as they are not called as such in the advertisements), both located in Shinjuku, Tokyo: Ari (“Ant,” November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1956) and Elbe (March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1957).

<sup>7</sup> On Utagoe leadership’s initial reaction to *utagoe kissa*, see my interview with Kinoshita Sonki as referenced in Chapter 5.

sure, there were also people who regarded *utagoe kissa* as a positive sign that *utagoe* was spreading to the people.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, however, *utagoe kissa* was a commercial venue, and it was a variation of the cafés in contemporary Japan that happened to have *utagoe* as its specialty. But such commercial characteristics, too, would witness a significant change from the 1970s onward.

Chapters 5 and 6 depict how *utagoe kissa* begot a life of its own separate from the Utagoe movement over the decades, both as a format unto itself and a variant of *utagoe* on both ideological and practical levels. As noted earlier, *utagoe kissa* inarguably became the more recognized entity than the Utagoe movement over the years. A recent and pertinent example is the brief reference to *utagoe kissa* in the 2017 NHK morning television drama (referred to as *asadora* for short in Japan) *Hiyokko* (“Chick”). In one of the episodes, the female protagonist goes to a workplace chorus with her friends. The conductor has the chorus practice a nineteenth-century Russian “folk tune” “Troika,” a piece first introduced to the Utagoe movement by Ensemble Katyusha (Gakudan Kachūsha).<sup>9</sup> As the protagonist wonders “What in the world is a *toroika*?,” the narrator answers her question for the viewers:

At that time [in the 1950s], Japanese people loved Russian folk songs, so they sang these songs a lot. Russian folk songs are said to have been brought by repatriates (*hikiagesha*) from Siberia. At a time when the student movement was thriving, many young people had a feeling of admiration toward Russia. In addition to “Toroika” (Rus.: *Troika*), songs like “Kachūsha” (Rus.: *Katyusha*) and “Tomoshibi” (Rus.: *Ogonek*) were popular. There was a thing called *utagoe kissa*,

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<sup>8</sup> An example of this is an article written by Yokoyama Tarō, who was an accordionist at several *utagoe kissa* in Shinjuku, which regards *utagoe kissa* as a product of “*utagoe* enter[ing] into the people.” Tarō Yokohama, “Utagoe’ to iu na no kissaten,” *Onigaku Undō* no. 14 (July, 1958): 19.

<sup>9</sup> On Russian folk music in the Utagoe movement and the origins of Ensemble Katyusha, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

where people sang together. Isn't that kind of interesting? Isn't it unthinkable today? It's like karaoke, isn't it?<sup>10</sup>

This narration from the *Hiyokko* episode characterizes *utagoe kissa* as a part of the 1950s Japanese urban landscape, albeit without any specificity beyond that. The narration further places *utagoe kissa* as a pre-karaoke culture, a characterization that will be examined in Chapter 6. Overall, however, the drama leaves the viewers with only a brief description of *utagoe kissa* as a curiosity and a historical artifact.

How, then, did *utagoe kissa* come about? In order to answer this question, we must understand how *utagoe* and *kissa* each came about, and how the two became merged to form the neologism *utagoe kissa*. As suggested earlier, the history of *utagoe kissa* is very much tied to the dual spread of the Utagoe movement and cafés in twentieth-century Japan. In the preceding chapters, we have seen prewar origins of musical reformism also found in the Utagoe movement, as well as postwar Japanese Communist Party ideas about the role of culture in a “democratic” Japan, which in turn informed the Utagoe movement’s ideological-musical worldview. Similarly, cafés in Japan, too, have prewar and postwar points of origins and patterns of development. What follows below is an overview of the historical narrative pertaining to the café and café culture in twentieth-century Japan. Thence I describe my approach to *utagoe kissa* in the context of this history, which in turn informs the approach taken in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

### Japan’s Café Culture and *Utagoe Kissä*, and Points of Historical Inquiry

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<sup>10</sup> *Hiyokko*, episode 33, “Hibike wakōdo no uta,” aired May 10, 2017, on NHK.

Existing literature on the café in Japan generally point to the 1880s as the first historical phase in the history of the café/coffeehouse and coffee-drinking in Japan. By the end of the 1880s, Tokyo had several restaurants that served coffee, as well as short-lived establishments that served coffee as their main offering.<sup>11</sup> But related literature typically considers Café Paulista in Ginza, Tokyo (est. 1908), to be the first successful café in Japan that remained in business *as such* for multiple decades. A Brazilian-Japanese joint company formed with the support of the state of São Paulo, Café Paulista began business in Ginza, Tokyo (and, less famously, in Minoo near Osaka several months earlier) in 1908, eventually opening more than twenty locations across Japan by 1923.<sup>12</sup>

The literature then points to two subsequent café/coffeehouse booms in twentieth-century Japan. The first boom occurred in the 1930s following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the resulting development of western Tokyo. During this time, cafés/coffeehouses in Japan began to diversify in location as well as in “genre”: from the already developed areas like Ginza and Nihonbashi in central Tokyo, cafés/coffeehouses began to appear along the Yamanote train line (a loop line circling around the Imperial Palace) and the Chūō line (connecting western Tokyo with central Tokyo). It was also during this time that areas like Shinjuku, effectively the gateway to western Tokyo from the east via railway, began to grow rapidly in population and the number of cafés/coffeehouses. In tandem with this geographical spread, cafés/coffeehouses specializing in different kinds of “offering” began to open, including alcoholic beverage, pottery,

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<sup>11</sup> Early establishments generally considered to have been cafés include Kahi Sakan (near Ueno, Tokyo), which was established in 1888 and was in business for four years, Diamond (Daiyamondo, est. 1890 near Asakusa, Tokyo), and Fūgetsudō (Azabu, Tokyo, est. 1893). On these cafés, see Gihachirō Okuyama, *Kōhī henreki* (Tokyo: Asahiya Shuppan, 1983) and, more specifically on Kahi Sakan, Hiroshi Hoshida, *Nihon saisho no kissaten: “Kahi Sakan” no rekishi* (Tokyo: Inaho Shoten, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Per arrangement with the state of São Paulo, Café Paulista received free supplies of coffee beans for a twelve-year period. Taizō Hasegawa, *Nihon de saisho no kissaten “Burajiru imin no chichi” ga hajimeta: kafuē Paurisuta monogatari* (Tokyo: Bun’ensha, 2008), 88.

and classical music (played on the record player).<sup>13</sup> A postwar café/coffeehouse boom took place between the 1950s and 1960s, following similar patterns of diversification, this time extending beyond Tokyo. The prewar peak of coffee bean importation (8,571 tons in 1937) was surpassed in 1960 (10,866 ton), rising to 89,456 tons in only ten years (1970). The number of cafés/coffeehouses likewise increased proportionally to the increased importation of coffee beans, up until 1980.<sup>14</sup>

However, such narrative history does not provide enough clues to approach *utagoe kissa* as a *historical* phenomenon. For one thing, the great majority of existing literature on the café in Japan was written by insiders and enthusiasts, both of whom regard the importance of the café in Japan to be self-evident. Narratives of the café and coffeehouse in Japan found in such non-scholarly works are by and large chronological and “topical” – that is, they favor the “firsts,” landmark locations, and established *kissa* categories (often including descriptions of said categories). There are two strands of non-scholarly books: general history (or *tsūshi* in Japanese) of the postwar café/coffeehouse boom, which introduces various kinds of cafés/coffeehouses that came into existence in twentieth century Japan, for example *meikyoku kissa* (“great music coffeehouse,” where patrons could listen to classical music records), *jazu kissa* (where patrons could listen to jazz records), *utagoe kissa*, and even *jun kissa* (“pure coffeehouse,” which advertised itself as serving purely drinks and foods). Then there are books on specific cafés/coffeehouses (Café Paulista, for instance) or particular kinds of *kissa* (*jazu kissa* has a

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<sup>13</sup> Examples of the diversification narrative include *Kohakuiro no kioku: Shinjuku no kissaten – kaisō no chabō Seiga to ano koro no Shinjuku to*, ed. Shinjuku Rekishi Hakubutsukan (Tokyo: Shinjuku-ku Shōgai Gakushū Zaidan, 2000), Tetsushi Okuhara, *Kohakuiro no kioku: jidai o irodotta kissaten* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2002), Tetsuo Hayashi, *Kissaten no jidai: ano toki konna omise ga atta* (Osaka: Henshū Kōbō Noa, 2002), and Naoyuki Takai, *Kafe to nihonjin* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> These figures are derived from statistics compiled by the All-Japan Coffee Society (Zen-Nippon Kōhī Kyōkai). Quoted in Takai, 39.

particularly strong publication history). Among these works, *utagoe kissa* appears as one of the “musical” *kissa* that appeared during the postwar decade of the 1950s.

In academic writings, too, *utagoe kissa* has only received references in passing, often figuring as the marker of a bygone era. Overall, scholarly literature on *utagoe kissa* is in an even worse state than Utagoe movement scholarship in the early 2000s, lacking even an introductory work. In Watanabe Hiroshi’s *Utau kokumin* (2010), for example, *utagoe kissa* appears just as the Utagoe movement is introduced in reference to the age cohort-specific aspect of public memory surrounding the term *utagoe* (as I have also noted in the opening paragraphs).<sup>15</sup> As of 2019, Shimamura Teru’s conference paper (2003) appears to be the only academic account in print that deals exclusively with *utagoe kissa*. Shimamura characterizes *utagoe kissa* as being in a “back-to-back relationship” (*hyōri no kankei*) with the Utagoe movement, implying that there were notable commonalities between the two. He attributes the historical trajectories of both *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement to the “rise and fall of the leftist movement.”<sup>16</sup> In a similar vein, Shimamura sees parallels in the musical genres that were once popular in *utagoe kissa* but lost contemporary following since, namely songs born from the Utagoe movement (for example, “We Shall Not Tolerate the Atomic Bomb” and “Give us Back Okinawa”) and politically charged American-style folk (*fōku*) music (discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation). Though Shimamura appears to have studied songbooks from *utagoe kissa* in preparing the paper, he makes no specific reference to any songbook or finding from field research. In the absence of further study, *utagoe kissa* has yet to be historicized, from both *utagoe* and *kissa* angles.

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<sup>15</sup> Hiroshi Watanabe, *Utau kokumin: shōka, kōka, utagoe* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010), 243-244.

<sup>16</sup> Teru Shimamura, “Utagoe kissa no bunpō,” *Gobun* no. 106 (June 2003): 23.

In Part III, I intend to tackle the following three historical questions. First, how to describe *utagoe kissa* as a space that has existed across six decades; Second, how to characterize *utagoe kissa* within the history of *kissa* in Japan; Third, what to make of multiple developments among *utagoe kissa* as a variety in the notion and practice of *utagoe*. Put together, these questions deal with continuity unto the ideas and practices that were associated with and evolved within *utagoe* and *kissa*, creating hybrids made possible by individuals and groups who participated in, practiced, re-interpreted, and re-created their ideas of *utagoe* at the practical and ideological levels in the *kissa* environment.

In this regard, there are three works that inform my approach and historical question in the two chapters that follow. Closest in scope to my account of *utagoe kissa* is Michael S. Molasky's Japanese-language work, *On Jazz Kiss* (*Jazu kissa ron*, 2010). In it, Molasky interrogates the historical dimension of *jazu kissa* ("jazz coffeehouse") in postwar Japan. Molasky attempts to configure *jazu kissa* in the context of youth culture between the late 1950s and mid-1970s (past), as well as the various recording mediums available today (present).<sup>17</sup> In dealing with past contexts, he categorizes *jazu kissa* under the umbrella of "musical coffeehouses" (*ongaku kissa*), under which he also places the equally once-renowned "great music coffeehouse" (*meikyoku kissa*, which played classical music records).

Molasky argues that, between the 1930s and 1970s, *jazu kissa* approached "one step closer" to *meikyoku kissa* by transforming jazz music into music that was both "foreign" in origin and was "worth listening to."<sup>18</sup> In the process, jazz as a term became more precise in meaning, from an umbrella term in the prewar decades denoting non-art dance music from the

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<sup>17</sup> Michael S. Molasky, *Jazu kissaron: sengo no nihon bunka o aruku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2010), 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

West to, from the 1960s onward, a musical genre that was understood to be specifically American and “black” in origin.<sup>19</sup> This genre-formation was made possible by *jazu kissa*’s importation of the newest playback mediums (sound system and individual LP records), both of which were luxury consumer goods for the average Japanese salaryman at the time. In other words, jazz and the *kissa* format were complementary in the development of jazz as a recognized musical genre in Japan. To Molasky, therefore, *kissa* in *jazu kissa* was (and is) important insofar as it has enabled and developed *jazz* on the listener’s end; coffee is only an additive.<sup>20</sup>

Written in English, Merry White’s *Coffee Life in Japan* (2012) is a study on the postwar Japanese cafés/coffeehouses with a focus on the 2000s. Characterizing cafés in modern Japan with “both continuity and novelty in its attractions,” White notes that Japan’s café culture since the beginning of the twentieth century displays two levels of divergence from that in contemporary Europe: first, the café’s development into “site of expression and change” that is “more personal than political;” second, divergent developments into *kafe* (“café”) and *kissaten* (“coffeehouses”), the former as “continental European” in style and the latter as “an ordinary neighborhood locale.”<sup>21</sup> In differentiating the various kinds of *kissaten* (coffeehouses) that appeared in Japan in the twentieth century, White posits the coffeehouse in Japan to be “both a

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<sup>19</sup> I have translated Molasky’s use of the term *kei ongaku* (“light music”) to “non-art music.” *Kei ongaku* was an umbrella term that was used in Japan since the 1930s and well into the early 1970s to denote non-art music. *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Molasky offers a seven-part definition of *jazu kissa* in his book, which likewise places little emphasis on coffee: 1) owns at least hundreds of records; 2) owns a sound system that is by no means affordable for an average consumer; 3) run by an owner or employee who is very knowledgeable in jazz music or records; 4) constantly plays jazz music records during hours of operation; 5) plays records at a volume that will not be misunderstood to be background music; 6) is open in the afternoon in addition to the evening, and patrons are permitted to stay for a couple of hours with even just a single cup of coffee; 7) jazz is clearly advertised in the billboard or entrance. *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>21</sup> Merry White, *Coffee Life in Japan* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012), 18, 27, 29, 32.

public stage for performance of ‘unofficial’ culture and a backstage where no performances at all need to occur. . . . And it is at least partly about space itself, the actual as well as the symbolic.”<sup>22</sup> In White’s view, the coffeehouse in Japan should be seen as a constantly changing medium rather than an entity fixed in time and variety, historically incorporating different forms of “attraction,” including kinds of entertainment (e.g. singing, or *utagoe*) and media forms (e.g. jazz tracks on the record player).

A recently published book in Japan neatly combines Molasky’s and White’s perceptions of the café/coffeehouse in Japan. In his 2014 book, Takai Naoyuki categorizes cafés in Japan based on two axes of “base performance” (*kihon seinō*) and “additive value” (*fuka kachi*). He explains “base performance” of the café as comprised of the drinks and the place (*basho*), while describing “additive value” as a means of “soliciting” (*teian*) use.<sup>23</sup> In thus arguing, Takai implies “additive value” to be the main distinguishing factor between cafés, therefore the marker of a given café’s “attraction,” to borrow Merry White’s language.

Takai also distinguishes the “café” and the “coffeehouse,” effectively laying out three historical moments of the café in Japan based on this distinction: the oldest is *kafē* (with an elongated ē, Taisho [1912-1926] and Showa [1926-1989] eras); then appeared *kissaten* (postwar Showa years of 1945-1989), with various kinds of specialty (e.g. *utagoe* and jazz); the most recent is *kafe* (with a short e sound, Heisei era [1989-2019]), which is used today to refer to more recently opened cafés like Starbucks. These terms, Takai argues, evoke different imageries and emotive qualities – for example, *kissaten* as a place where patrons can engage in face-to-face conversation with the veteran owner, as opposed to *kafe* which offers a depersonalized service by

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>23</sup> Takai, 36-37.

multiple nameless baristas.<sup>24</sup> This distinction, too, is based on Takai's earlier emphasis on "additive value." It is worth noting that, among the three café categories, *kissaten* stands out for its respective specialty. Indeed, it is in *kissa* that Takai sees historical significance in the café culture of twentieth-century Japan, for its variety of specialty that functioned as an "additive value" whose combination with the café is rarely seen outside of Japan.

Seen this way, *utagoe* was one among many attractions (White), or additive values (Takai), that were attached to coffeehouses in twentieth-century Japan, thus giving rise to *utagoe kissa* as a category. In the case of *utagoe kissa*, its defining points of attraction and namesake were its repertoire of music as well as collective singing led by an expert (song-leader), both of which were expressed through the word *utagoe* and decidedly owed their existence to the early Utagoe movement's repertoires of music and action (as will be explored in Chapter 5). In this sense, the history I will be examining in Chapters 5 and 6 is less about the café in Japan itself than it is about the ideas, practices, and individuals that found varying degrees of compatibility with the café medium in postwar Japan. In the following two chapters, I will historicize a multi-woven phenomenon called *utagoe kissa* that was at once popular entertainment, commercial experiment, and cultural endeavor of hybrid character.

To foreshadow subsequent historical development, I would like to return to Shimamura Teru's 2003 conference paper on *utagoe kissa*. In his paper, Shimamura predicted that *utagoe kissa* would continue to decline because the time no longer calls for *utagoe kissa* today: it may "continue as local activity or cultural activity in the realm of nostalgia among those people who share these younger days, or, with a bit of political characteristic added on top, as a political

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 47-50.

movement.”<sup>25</sup> To be sure, this is an old argument, even at the time of Shimamura’s writing. In his account of Donzoko (est. 1951), an *utagoe sakaba* (“singing voice pub”) that became known as one of the first *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo, long-time patron Inobe Yasuyuki laments that *utagoe kissa* began to lose its place among the Japanese youth by the end of the 1970s:

[By the time] *karaoke* and disco appeared . . . young people [in Japan] no longer shied away from holding the microphone and singing in front of the people. . . . People who learned the joy of singing at *utagoe kissa* and *utagoe sakaba* began to crave for a stronger sensation (*shigeki*) and higher degree of satisfaction (*manzoku*). They began to acquire and nurture desire to sing in front of the microphone and have other people hear them sing, rather than singing in chorus with everyone. It follows that they stop coming to *utagoe kissa* and *utagoe sakaba*, going to *karaoke* instead.<sup>26</sup>

Shimamura similarly argues that, technologically and ideologically, *utagoe kissa* is likely to decline in size and number until it finally disappears, especially due to the general decline of citizen’s movement in Japan. From a commercial perspective, to borrow Takai (2014)’s language, this would indicate a point at which *utagoe kissa* can no longer sustain its business from “additive value” by means of *utagoe*.

On the surface, Inobe’s and Shimamura’s observations were prophetic. By the end of the twentieth century, less than five *utagoe kissa* establishments remained in Japan, and apart from two establishments that were opened in the early 2000s by veteran *utagoe kissa* figures, no new *utagoe kissa* came into being between 2003 and 2019.<sup>27</sup> But neither Inobe nor Shimamura could

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<sup>25</sup> Shimamura (2003), 28.

<sup>26</sup> Yasuyuki Inobe, *Shinjuku Donzoko no seishun* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1992), 207-208.

<sup>27</sup> These two establishments are Furusato (“Hometown”), established in 2000 by a former Tomoshibi employee Inoue Masashi, and Gori, established in 2003 by a former patron of Tomoshibi. See Chapter 6 of this dissertation on

foresee the explosive development of self-run *utagoe kissa* events across Japan since the late 2000s. Already in 2009, for example, there were at least three hundred self-run *utagoe kissa* across Japan that were known to Tomoshibi, one of the few surviving *utagoe kissa* establishments today (as of 2019).<sup>28</sup> During my field research in Japan between 2016 and 2019, I was once given an off-hand figure of at least a hundred *utagoe kissa* gatherings in Tokyo every day from an active song-leader (*shikaisha*), who then went on to bemoan the constant shortage of song-leaders in the Kanto area. This is a new historical development that demonstrates the malleability and continuity of both *utagoe* and *kissa*, well beyond the organizational confines of the Utagoe movement and the physical confines of the café. This particular development will be explored in Chapter 6, the final chapter of this dissertation.

Thus far this dissertation has illustrated the rise of *utagoe* as a concept, which acquired association with Japanese Communist Party-line cultural worldview and eventually became the name of a singing movement and organization. The two chapters that follow will explore a development of *utagoe* outside of, but certainly alongside of, the institutionalized Utagoe movement headed by the Nihon no Utagoe National Council. In a certain sense, the case of *utagoe kissa* demonstrates a story coming to a full circle: just as the Utagoe movement arose from postwar JCP-line cultural discourse and circles, *utagoe kissa* stands as another chapter in this heterogeneous history of *utagoe*.

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their respective founder-owner's take on *utagoe kissa*.

<sup>28</sup> Yukinori Ōno, *Utagoe kissa Tomoshibi no rekishi: utai tsuzuketa 65 nenkan*, Vol. 2 of 2 (Tokyo: Yuigaku Shobō, 2019), 143.

## Chapter 5

### “Utagoe Coffeehouse” Tomoshibi’s Cultural Ventures, 1962-1992

1950s Japan saw a simultaneous rise of Nihon no Utagoe (“Singing Voice of Japan,” henceforth referred to as “Utagoe movement” or “Utagoe” as in preceding chapters) and *utagoe kissa* (literally “singing voice coffeehouse”). As discussed in the introduction to Part III, *utagoe kissa* began to open in dozens from the late 1950s onward first in Tokyo, then in other urban areas of Japan. In this sense, the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* were very much contemporaneous, the most obvious point of commonality being the name *utagoe* itself. Given the fact that the term *utagoe kissa* begins to appear in newspapers and magazine articles from 1957 onward, it seems reasonable to assume that *utagoe kissa* derives its name from the Utagoe movement. However, as discussed in the Part III introduction, *utagoe kissa* would since become the better recognized instance of *utagoe* than the Utagoe movement in the public memory. In order to historicize and illustrate this shift over the decades, this chapter aims to shed light on points of historical continuity and departure between the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* between the late 1950s and early 1970s, particularly in terms of repertoires of music, action, and conceptualization revolving around the societal role of music.

Contemporary observers were quick to note the potential connection between the two incarnations of *utagoe*. Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, conservative critics typically regarded *utagoe kissa* as an extension of the Utagoe movement, poised to “poison” the minds of the Japanese youth through even less doctrinal means than the “partisan” Utagoe movement. For example, the 1957 issue of an unequivocally conservative publication called *Left-wing Cultural Yearbook* (*Sayoku Bunka Nenpō*) opens its chapter on the Utagoe movement with a description

of coffeehouses (*kissaten*) where patrons could engage in singing Utagoe songs, citing these businesses as one of the movement's measures to "make [itself] permanent" (*kōjōka*) among laborers, students, and youths.<sup>1</sup>

In reality, however, the relationship between *utagoe kissa* and Utagoe was far from simple. The two *utagoe*'s relationship may be better described as a case of mutual recognition without a formal relation. Until the early 1970s, the Utagoe movement's newspaper *Utagoe Shimbun* makes virtually no mention of *utagoe kissa*, save for a couple of advertisements from 1957.<sup>2</sup> Even when articles featuring *utagoe kissa* did begin to appear in *Utagoe Shimbun* from 1968 onward, the newspaper only introduced *utagoe kissa* as a potential mode (that is, self-run event) of recruitment and recreation for Utagoe-affiliated choruses.<sup>3</sup> On their part, even *utagoe kissa* in Shinjuku Ward generally did not extend their hands to the Utagoe movement despite their physical proximity to Utagoe's national headquarters (Ongaku Center, located near the Shin-Ōkubo Station, just one stop away from the Shinjuku Station on the Yamanote loop line). Their songbooks remain equally silent about the Utagoe movement, despite containing many songs of foreign and postwar Japanese origins that were introduced via Utagoe movement songbooks. In this spirit, many of my informants who were active in the Utagoe movement since

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<sup>1</sup> *Sayoku bunka nenpō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1957), 222-223. Also see the 1958 edition of the book, which uses the term *utagoe kissa*. *Sayoku bunka nenpō*, ed. Kokumin Bunka Chōsakai (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1958), 4.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the advertisement for a business called "Elbe" in the March 20th, 1957, issue of *Utagoe Shimbun*.

<sup>3</sup> Early examples include "Hajimete no utagoe kissa," *Utagoe Shinbun*, June 1, 1968, 7; "Utagoe kissa daihanjō: Nagano Sentā Gasshōdan no katsudō," *Utagoe Shinbun*, October 10, 1968, 6.

the 1950s described *utagoe kissa* as at best a derivative of the Utagoe movement in both spirit and performance.<sup>4</sup>

At any rate, like the Utagoe movement, *utagoe kissa* has not disappeared from Japan, nor is its past completely beyond access. One accessible recorded medium is a 1958 film *Giants and Toys (Kyojin to Gangu)*, based on Kaikō Takeshi (1938-1989)'s short novel by the same title written in 1957. In the film, *utagoe kissa* appears as a physical setting for a two-minute-long scene, giving us a glimpse into the *utagoe kissa* phenomenon in the late 1950s when it was one of the latest fads in Tokyo.<sup>5</sup> About ten minutes into the film, we see the male protagonist Nishi meeting up with Yokoyama, his friend from college years who is soon to become a rival in the caramel marketing race. They meet up at a venue that they call a “go-to place during [their] student years” (*gakusei jidai no tamari ba*), where patrons all around them are seen eagerly engaging in singing.

Although the two characters soon leave the space for somewhere more “adult,” the scene nevertheless presents the current-day viewer with several curious elements. Led by a singer accompanied by an accordionist, the young crowd, some with small books in their hands, is singing the song “Our Friends” (*Warera no nakama*), the Young Communist League translation

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<sup>4</sup> A somewhat of an exception to this tendency is Kinoshita Sonki (b. 1934), one of the most prolific composers to come out of the Utagoe movement who was a member of the composition team for the opera *Okinawa* (1969). In the early 1960s, when Kinoshita was the leader of the Utagoe-affiliated Shinjuku Chorus, he frequented the Seibu Shinjuku branch of Tomoshibi (est. 1956) enough to compose a song for the establishment, titled “Enthusiastic Friends” (*Yōki na nakamatachi*, included in a Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi songbook from 1964). Interview with Kinoshita Sonki, Tokyo, Japan, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> *Kyojin to gangu*, directed by Yasuzō Masumura (1958; San Francisco: Fantoma Films, 2001), DVD. It is worth noting that, in Kaikō's original novel, neither the meet-up between Nishi and Yokoyama nor *utagoe kissa* appears anywhere in the story. This points to creative license on the part of the filmmakers, likely with the intention to insert *utagoe kissa* as mise en scène and metaphor for the naiveté that Nishi and Yokoyama can no longer afford as full-time employees and non-student “grownups” (*shakaijin*). Indeed, towards the end of the film when Nishi and Yokoyama get into a quarrel, Nishi reprimands Yokoyama for becoming a heartless businessman, a far cry from their innocent student years when they used to “sing their hearts out at *utagoe sakaba* (*utagoe bar*).”

of the 1936 Soviet song *Molodost'* which became a part of the early Utagoe movement repertoire (as analyzed in Chapters 2 and 4). Adorning this space are various writings on the wall, such as “A store with singing voices” (*utagoe no mise*), “A chorus of tone-deaf and beautiful voices” (*onchi to bisei no kōrasu*). With lively singing in the background, the scene concludes as the crowd begins singing “Song of Happiness” (*Shiawase no uta*, 1955), a landmark Utagoe song from the mid-1950s that marked the finale of the annual Utagoe Festival in 1956.

The location of this scene is Tomoshibi (“Lamplight”), an *utagoe kissa* in the Kabukichō neighborhood in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo. In business as such by early 1956 and subsequently becoming known as one of the first *utagoe kissa* in Japan, Tomoshibi is also the only surviving *utagoe kissa* from the 1950s as of 2019, survived by a branch location not too far from the original location.<sup>6</sup> At the time of *Giants and Toys*’s release (1958), Tomoshibi would have been one of the most recent fads in Shinjuku. It is worth noting that the two friends in the film remark that they have grown too old for *utagoe kissa*, concurring that they “don’t understand why [they] used to come to a place like this when [they] were students.” Clearly, *utagoe kissa* Tomoshibi was used in *Giants and Toys* as a representation of the contemporary youth and student culture.

The Tomoshibi scene from *Giants and Toys* points to three points of historical continuity that contributed to the development and spread of *utagoe* as a meaningful word and concept outside of the institutionalized Utagoe movement. First, *utagoe kissa* was associated with youthful group singing, with some perceived degree of musical association with the Utagoe movement. Second, the Tomoshibi scene in fact captures real-life staff members of Tomoshibi

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<sup>6</sup> Although Tomoshibi celebrates 1954 as the year of its establishment, available evidence suggests that the store that would become known as Tomoshibi changed its name and made singing its main point of appeal around 1956. See the separate section on Tomoshibi in subsequent pages for more detail on the “prehistory” of Tomoshibi up to that point.

around 1957, some of whom had been members of Utagoe-affiliated groups before working at Tomoshibi. Lastly, much like the Utagoe movement, *utagoe kissa* witnessed a decade of growth between the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter investigates the case of Tomoshibi in particular. As the only surviving *utagoe kissa* among what I call the “first-generation” *utagoe kissa* from the mid-1950s, Tomoshibi demonstrates a notable example in the diffusion of *utagoe* outside of the Utagoe movement as a form of identity and idealism premised upon collective singing with a purpose – one that both responded to and was, ultimately, configured by the (perceived) successes and failures of the Utagoe movement during their simultaneous existence.



Figure 5.1: Still shot of the Tomoshibi scene from *Giants and Toys* (1958), with Aoyagi Tsuneo as lead singer and Inoue Masashi on the accordion.



Figure 5.2: Still shot of the Tomoshibi scene from *Giants and Toys* (1958) right after Nishi and Yokoyama leave Tomoshibi. Note the female figure on the left holding one of Tomoshibi's songbooks (in red) in her hand.

## The Birth of *Utagoe Kissä* and the “First-Generation” Establishments

Before I shift focus to Tomoshibi, I will first provide an overview of the “first-generation” *utagoe kissä* in Shinjuku, Tokyo. It is worth noting that, unlike the Utagoe movement, *utagoe kissä* lacks easily identifiable points of origin. In fact, no publication to date has dared to provide a straightforward answer, nor has any individual claimed to be the coiner of the term. This obscure early history of *utagoe kissä* can be attributed to the fact that *utagoe kissä* stores were, after all, individual businesses. Surviving primary documents from the 1950s are practically limited to songbooks published by individual *utagoe kissä*, and even these materials remain by and large inaccessible.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, even these sources provide at best a semi-mythical account of how each establishment came into being.

Still, based on contemporary media coverage and later accounts on *utagoe kissä*, it is possible to glean out some common elements in *utagoe kissä*’s foundation narratives. First, the narratives take place in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo. The location of Shinjuku is symbolic in historical senses: Shinjuku Ward was home to the Utagoe movement’s national headquarters Ongaku Center, as well as being one of the epicenters of both the prewar and postwar café booms owing to a population increase in western Tokyo and Shinjuku’s location as a hub linking western and eastern Tokyo.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, two of the three first-generation *utagoe kissä*, Tomoshibi and Kachūsha, were established in a neighborhood called Kabukichō, immediately east of the Shinjuku Station. Kabukichō was a newly developing area of Shinjuku at the time

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<sup>7</sup> As of 2017-2019, even these songbooks were essentially privately owned. For example, Watanabe Hiroshi, who briefly touches on songbooks from various *utagoe kissä* in his 2010 book *Utau kokumin*, remarked in 2016 that he bought such songbooks from the online Yahoo Auction. During my research in Japan between 2016 and 2017, I was able to browse these materials owned by Watanabe, as well as ones owned by former employees of *utagoe kissä* around Tokyo.

<sup>8</sup> Tetsushi Okuhara, *Kohakuiro no kioku: jidai o irodotta kissaten* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2002), 95-96.

that was transitioning from the site of a *yakuza*-controlled black market to a combination of big-money development and small businesses. Second, the stories eschew the existence of commercial venues where patrons engaged in singing before the emergence of *utagoe kissa*. This fact is remembered former *utagoe kissa* employees. For instance, Fukano (now Hashimoto) Yasuko (b. 1933), a former member of the Central Chorus and Tomoshibi who now runs her own singing establishment called Ieji (“Homeward,” 1979-Present), recounts her experience with multiple such establishments, including a bar run by a former Takarazuka actress where the owner and the patrons habitually engaged in singing Takarazuka hits and other popular songs.<sup>9</sup> Lastly, similar to that of the Utagoe movement, *utagoe kissa*’s foundation stories depict the birth of *utagoe kissa* as a spontaneous event that supposedly reflects contemporary Japanese youth’s desire for self-expression. Interestingly, in *utagoe kissa*’s foundation narratives, the Utagoe movement plays no active role. Instead, the movement typically figures as a background to illustrate the desire among Japanese youth to sing their hearts out during the eventful decade of the 1950s.

Below I will provide a brief sketch of three *utagoe kissa* locations that I refer to as the “first-generation” *utagoe kissa*. All located within walking distance from the Shinjuku Station, these establishments share one common history: none of them started out with singing as its main point of attraction. Rather, available sources suggest, these businesses adopted singing later and subsequently became known as *utagoe kissa*.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Hashimoto Yasuko, Tokyo, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

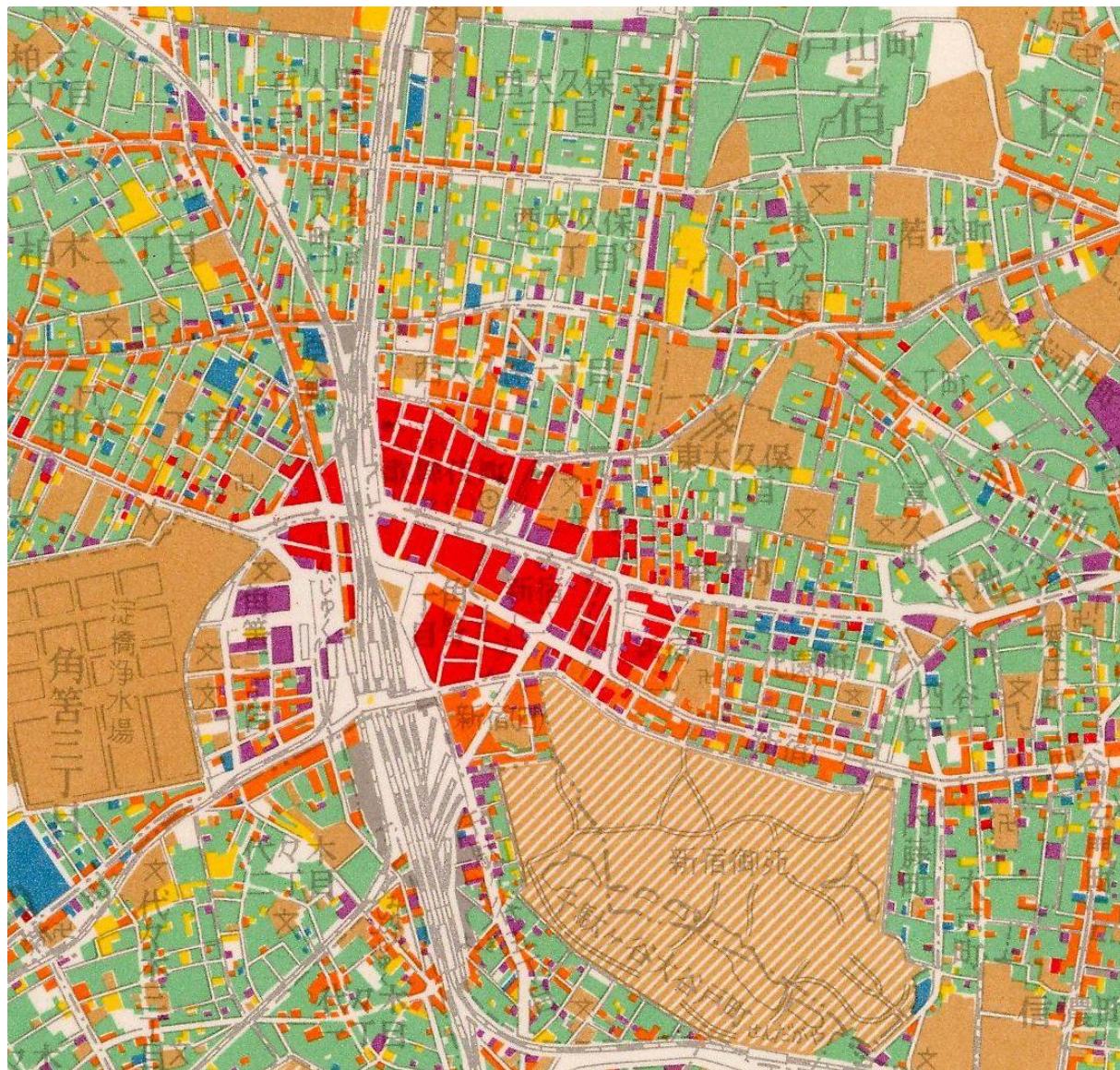


Figure 5.3: Map of the Shinjuku Ward area from *Tōkyō tochi riyō genjōzu* (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1960). Note the solid red color of the Kabukichō-Sahchōme area to the northeast of the Shinjuku Station (multi-track terminal on the center-left corner of the map), indicating the area to be dominated by restaurants. Map courtesy of the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

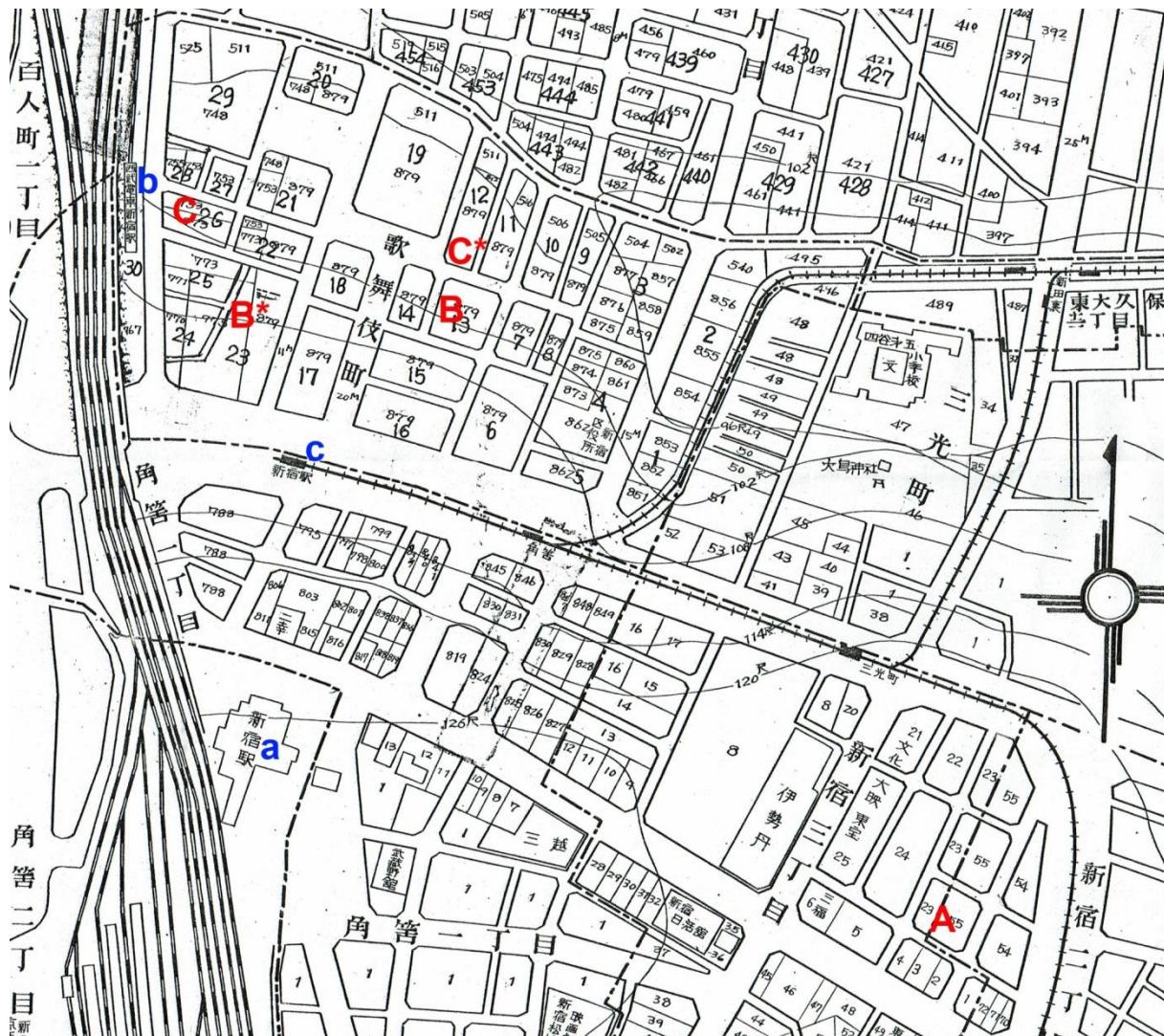


Figure 5.4: Map of the Kabukichō-Sahchōme area from a 1954 fire insurance map (Map courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Library). Pertinent landmarks in the chapter are as follow:

Marked in red:

A: Donzoko (est. 1951)

B: Kachūsha (est. 1955)

B\*: Kachūsha, “western Kabukichō” branch (est. 1957)

C: Tomoshibi (established as such by 1956)

C\*: Tomoshibi “Komaura/yoko” branch (est. 1958)

Marked in blue:

a: Shinjuku Station, Japan National Railways

b: Shinjuku Station, Seibu Shinjuku Line

c: Shinjuku Station, Seibu Shinjuku Line

## 1. Donzoko (1951-Present)

Of the three first-generation establishments, the first to open its doors was Donzoko (“The Lower Depths,” named after Maxim Gorky’s play *Na dne*), located in the Sanchōme neighborhood of Shinjuku. The store was a brainchild of Yano Satoshi (b. 1931), an aspiring actor from Hiroshima who was a student at the Butai Geijutsu Gakuin (Performing Arts Academy, est. 1948), the successor institute of the Communist Youth League Central Play School (Seikyō Chūō Engeki Gakkō, est. 1948).<sup>10</sup> Established with the help of his future wife and another friend, Donzoko was to be Yano’s first and lifelong venture as he soon relinquished his dream to become a professional actor.<sup>11</sup> Though typically counted among the first-generation *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo, Donzoko has consistently identified itself as a “pub” (*sakaba*).

After opening a “sister establishment” in Shibuya called Baron in 1954, Yano opened another Donzoko location in Ginza, a neighborhood renowned for its showy and “urban” culture since the prewar decades (December 1957, later renamed “Lausanne”).<sup>12</sup> Initially, singing was a regular feature at the Ginza location, but it soon abandoned singing after its remodeling into a more “mature” and therefore Ginza-like establishment sometime before 1960.<sup>13</sup> In the end, the

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<sup>10</sup> The Communist Youth League Central Play School was established in July 1948, and the Butai Geijutsu Gakuin in September 1948; the former was absorbed by the latter in April 1949. Tadashi Tsugami, *Hyōden enshutsuka Hijikata Yoshi* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 2014), 167, 175, 237-238.

<sup>11</sup> Since opening a Madrid location of Donzoko in 1975, Yano has resided in Spain. Yasuyuki Inobe, *Shinjuku Donzoko no seishun* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1992), 198; Interview with Wakasa Kenji, Tokyo, Japan, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> It is possible that the sister location in Shibuya, Baron, was later renamed Donzoko in a couple of years. Though this location is not counted among Donzoko branches in either Inobe’s book or Donzoko’s fifty-year anniversary publication, Donzoko in Shibuya can be found on the map of Shibuya included in a magazine called *Tabi* (May, 1957). Based on my interviews with members of the Toronto Utagoe Kissa no Kai, the branch appears to have been in business into the late 1960s, still offering singing as its main attraction. Inobe 117-119; Eds. Donzoko and Takeshobō Daiyon Henshūbu, *Donfan ni yoru “Donzoko” gojū nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Takeshobō, 2001), 20; Personal communication with Heihachirō “Harry” Kawabe, Toronto, Canada, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> It is not clear when exactly Lausanne closed, as neither Inobe’s book nor Donzoko’s fifty-year anniversary book makes note of the closure.

original Shinjuku location continued to define Donzoko's reputation. Though certainly frequented by the younger generations, Donzoko would develop a particular reputation as an enclave of young "philosophes" and middle-aged artists and writers, most notably the film director Kurosawa Akira and writer Mishima Yukio.<sup>14</sup>

Surviving documents do not give a clear picture as to when singing began at Donzoko. Instead, we are left with a semi-mythical account of Donzoko's origin of singing, much like Tomoshibi's. One oft-reproduced account attributes the beginning of Donzoko's singing culture to a group of students returning from a May Day event in the early 1950s who spontaneously engaged in singing songs from the early Utagoe movement repertory. By 1956, singing with accordion accompaniment became a fixed feature of Donzoko so that the writer Mishima Yukio, one of the regulars himself, characterized Donzoko with its singing environment:

At the pub (*sakaba*) Donzoko, they sell something called *Donzoko Songbook* (*Donzoko kashū*), and once someone starts singing there emerges a chorus of young people. Cries (*kansei*) and music come together, and the raw energy creates a certain kind of harmony. This is a healthy place of pleasure (*kyōrakuba*) beyond words. . . . [C]ompared to those people who surreptitiously indulge themselves in personal pleasures (*kojinteki kyōraku*) at high-class bars in Ginza, places like *yakitori* cabarets and the pub Donzoko seem to be on the path toward becoming world-class (*sekaiteki suisun*).<sup>15</sup>

As Mishima's description indicates, Donzoko indeed published its own songbooks, a development also seen in the other two first-generation *utagoe kissa*. The songbook is said to

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<sup>14</sup> On Kurosawa's first visit to Donzoko following the filming of his 1957 film *The Lower Depths*, see Inobe 120-123.

<sup>15</sup> Reproduced in *Shinjuku Donzoko kashū* (Publisher and year of publication unknown [after 1967?]), 2; Eds. Donzoko and Takeshobō Daiyon Henshūbu, 4.

have been edited by the Onkan Chorus at the University of Tokyo, an Utagoe-affiliated chorus that became an active performer and translator by the mid-1950s.<sup>16</sup> Donzoko's collaboration with a group like the Onkan Chorus, as well as the guest appearance of the Central Chorus at Donzoki's four-year anniversary event (1955), suggest some personal connections with the early Utagoe movement. Since the 1960s, however, there is no surviving evidence that I could find indicating such a level of collaboration with groups affiliated with the Utagoe movement.

A semi-autobiographical account of Donzoko's owner Yano Satoshi authored by Inobe Yasuyuki, a long-time patron of Donzoko, sheds some details on how singing operated at Donzoko. In 1961, for instance, there was a daily "accordion performance" between 7:30PM and 10PM on the top floor (third floor), a timeframe during which group singing presumably took place. However, as was the case with Kachūsha and Tomoshibi, singing was no longer profitable by the end of the 1970s. Yano rescinded his initial decision to abolish singing in 1979 following a petition from Donzoko's loyal patrons, but singing at Donzoko was soon restricted to the weekends in the 1980s.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, singing with accordion accompaniment continued at Donzoko thanks in part to a continued effort by the accordionist Watanabe Mitsuko, affectionately called *obachan*, who had played the accordion during the 1948 Toho strike and at the original Tomoshibi location before moving to Donzoko in 1961.<sup>18</sup> The final act of singing with Watanabe's accordion accompaniment took place in 1990. Since then, singing could be

<sup>16</sup> Mitsuko Watanabe, "Utagoe no mise 'Donzoko': furoa no fun'iki wa okyakusan ga tukutteimasu," *Ongaku no Sekai* 18 no. 11 (November 1979), 9-11. It is not clear whether Donzoko published more songbooks in subsequent decades. Ones from the 1950s were the only ones that my interlocutors and colleagues either owned or knew about. The Onkan Chorus no longer survives as of 2019, though a rock band with the name "Onkan" has been active in the University of Tokyo over at least two decades. Neither my acquaintances at the University of Tokyo nor former members of Onkan have been able to identify degrees of connection between the two "Onkan" groups beyond their names.

<sup>17</sup> Inobe, 207-211, 216.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 148-151; Interview with Wakasa Kenji, Tokyo, Japan, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

heard at Donzoko only during special occasions that called for singing. While Donzoko continues to operate today as of 2019, there remains virtually no sign of the singing culture that once existed there.

## 2. Kachūsha (1955-1973, 1983-2001)

Kachūsha (Rus. Katyusha, diminutive of the Russian name Ekaterina, clearly a reference to the 1937 Soviet song “Katyusha”) was located in central Kabukichō, east of Tomoshibi. Kachūsha was established by Lin Jinsheng (Rin Kinsei, also known by his Japanese name Hayashi Hideki), a Taiwanese-born individual who had studied at the Meiji College of Medicine and settled in future Kabukichō soon after the end of the war in 1945.<sup>19</sup> According to later accounts, Kachūsha appears to have been the first among the first-generation *utagoe kissa* to advertise live music as the main feature of the business, right from the beginning. These accounts do not make it clear whether singing, too, also began in 1955, but they indicate musical performance to have existed from the earliest days – a “feature” that a recent work on the role of Taiwanese individuals in the making of postwar Kabukichō attributes to Lin’s prior “music business” experience.<sup>20</sup>

Kachūsha belonged to Lin Jinsheng’s line of musical coffeehouses that he operated in Tokyo since the early 1950s. Together with Lin Jinsui (Rin Kinsui), the eldest of the Lin brothers who had likewise studied in Japan (at the Rikkyo University), Lin Jinsheng first opened Den’en (“Countryside,” likely named after the Japanese translation of Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony), a coffeehouse now remembered as one of the many *meikyoku kissa* (“great music

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<sup>19</sup> Yoshiko Inaba and Kenji Aoike, *Taiwanjin no Kabukichō: Shinjuku, mō hitotsu no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 2017), 156.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 164.

coffeehouse”) where patrons could listen to classical music records. After a dispute with his elder brother Jinsui, Jinsheng opened two more coffeehouses in Kabukichō in the 1950s: Sukaraza (“La Scala,” named after the prestigious opera house in Milan, Italy), a *meikyoku kissa* and therefore a direct competitor to Den’en; and Kachūsha, which provided live music performance.<sup>21</sup> Surviving records and testimonies are silent on the extent of Lin Jinsheng’s role in the making of Kachūsha’s singing culture. Still, whether or not singing was already a part of Kachūsha’s attraction in 1955, the fact that Kachūsha provided music from the beginning may have been the basis of Kachūsha’s eventual claim to being the “progenitor of *utagoe*” (*utagoe no ganso*) – a phrase that appears in Kachūsha’s songbooks by 1959.<sup>22</sup>

Kachūsha continued to be in business until 2001, expanding and downsizing through the decades. Since the opening of the first location in 1955 in central Kabukichō, Lin Jinsheng opened two more locations in Tokyo: western Kabukichō (est. 1957) and Shibuya (by 1960). In 1973, however, Lin closed all three locations due to declining revenues. A decade later in 1983, the first location reopened with the support of Kachūsha’s loyal patrons. This location finally closed permanently in 2001.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, in comparison to Donzoko and Tomoshibi, Kachūsha lacked both an active (and studious) loyal patron base and a standing organization that could preserve its memory, network, and historical materials. As a result, Kachūsha remains the least documented of the first-generation *utagoe kissa*.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 157-160. It is also worth noting that the building that used to house La Scala still retains the name “Hayashi Building” as of 2019.

<sup>22</sup> The phrase *utagoe no ganso* first appears in Kachūsha’s 1959 songbook Nos. 1-3 (September 1959, possibly reprints). The phrase cannot be found in No. 5 (March 1959).

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Usui Katsuyuki, Tokyo, Japan, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Interview with Kurosawa Kenji, Tokyo, Japan, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

3. Tomoshibi (“Lamplight,” 1955/1956-1977 [original location], 1958-1965 [branch location]; 1973-1984 and 1984-Present [current Shinjuku location])

Located in the western fringe of Kabukichō, Tomoshibi was founded by Shibata Shin, a Waseda-graduate whose father owned several restaurants in Tokyo. Although publications from Tomoshibi in recent decades have celebrated 1954 as Tomoshibi’s year of foundation, surviving accounts and maps suggest that the store that would become known as Tomoshibi was not a singing venue yet as of 1954.<sup>24</sup> When Shibata took over future Tomoshibi sometime before 1954, it was a struggling restaurant specializing in Russian cuisine prepared by émigré Russian chefs. Later accounts provide two different names for this restaurant: Aganyōku (Rus. *Ogonek*, “Little Light,” provided in the undated pamphlet *Gekkan Utagoe* No. 2) and Miraku (“Joy of Taste,” shown in a fire insurance map from 1954 an advertisement from 1956).<sup>25</sup> Though existing accounts provide conflicting pictures, they all indicate that Shibata was intent on reinventing the restaurant he had taken over, for example by offering more variety of food at lower prices. Singing was to be his winning move.

Shibata’s restaurant appears to have been renamed to Tomoshibi in late 1955 or early 1956.<sup>26</sup> By this time, singing became the main attraction of Shibata’s former restaurant. How

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<sup>24</sup> A fire insurance map of the Kabukichō area from 1954 shows Miraku, the restaurant mentioned in Maruyama’s book (2002) as the predecessor of Tomoshibi – but inside a building two buildings away from what became the Tomoshibi building from 1958 onward. In the 1954 map, the building sandwiched between Miraku and the future Tomoshibi building is shown as housing a Russian restaurant called Ōrenika, which does not appear in any of the subsequent accounts on Tomoshibi. It is possible that Shibata Shin operated both businesses: Maruyama’s account in which future Tomoshibi is presented to have been a Russian restaurant and an affordable restaurant (*taishū shokudō*) may be a conflation of this dual management. The future Tomoshibi building is shown as vacant in both the 1951 and 1954 fire maps of the area. Toshi Seizusha, *Kasai hoken tokushu chizu: 2 Shinjuku-ku 2, No. 1 Kabukichō hōmen-1 1951 nen* (1999), 10; Toshi Seizusha, *Kasai hoken tokushu chizu: 2 Shinjuku-ku 3, No. 1 Kabukichō hōmen-2 1954~1958* (1999), 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Kasai hoken tokushu chizu: 2 Shinjuku-ku 3, No. 1 Kabukichō hōmen-2 1954~1958* (1999), 13; Quoted in Yukinori Ōno, *Utagoe kissa Tomoshibi no rekishi: utai tsuzuketa 65 nenkan*, Vol. 1 of 2 (Tokyo: Yuigaku Shobō, 2019), 6; Asuka Maruyama, *Utagoe kissa “Tomoshibi” no seishun* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2002), 46.

<sup>26</sup> A Tomoshibi pamphlet, likely from 1978 or 1979, records December 1955 as the time when Tomoshibi began its business. Maruyama’s account on Tomoshibi includes pictures that were supposedly taken in 1956. Ongaku Bunka

exactly singing became a fixed feature of Tomoshibi, too, is shrouded in semi-mythical origin story. Here, again, two conflict stories exist: one version holds that patrons began singing to a Russian song on the record player one day in 1956, led by a female patron who was celebrating her birthday that day (more on this individual in a later section of the chapter); another version holds that singing became an established feature after Shibata hired a cello and an accordion player in late 1955 (these individuals, too, will be discussed in a later section).

In any case, Shibata opened three branch locations of Tomoshibi across Tokyo since 1956. In 1958, he opened a temporary location just east of the Koma Theater during the remodeling of the building that housed Tomoshibi, temporarily relocating the entire staff.<sup>27</sup> Even after the remodeling, the former temporary location continued to operate, with its staff intact, at the request of the manager who would take over the branch as the new owner. This branch location was referred to as the Komaura (“Behind the Koma Theater”) or Komayoko (“Next to the Koma Theater”) branch, depending on which public transit one took to get there (see Figure 5.4).<sup>28</sup> In 1958, Shibata opened another branch in Shibuya but sold it within months of opening, after which it was renamed Makiba (“Ranch”). Lastly, another branch was opened in the western Tokyo neighborhood of Kichijōji in 1961.

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Shūdan Tomoshibi, “Tomoshibi” (undated [likely 1978 or 1979]), 4; Maruyama, 59, 113.

<sup>27</sup> The Koma Theater (finished in 1956) was a major cultural and urban renovation project headed by Kobayashi Ichizō (1873-1957), the famous railroad tycoon who founded the Hankyu Railway and Takarazuka Revue. Kobayashi’s project of building a multi-purpose stadium that could stage a “modernized” version of *kabuki* became the namesake of Kabukichō – a dream that was to be only half-realized, as *kabuki* never became the main show at the theater. The structure was torn down in 2008.

<sup>28</sup> To be specific, there was a Seibu Shinjuku Line station to the west of Kabukichō and a Metropolitan Tram (*Toden*) station and a Japan National Railways station to the south of Kabukichō (see Figure 5.4). The branch location of Tomoshibi would have been seen behind the Koma Theater if one came from the Seibu Shinjuku Line station, and to the right of the Koma Theater if coming from the Metropolitan Tram station. These two stations typically appear as landmarks in hand-drawn maps in contemporary advertisements for businesses in Kabukichō. Personal communication with Miyamoto Suguru, Tokyo, Japan, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Over the years, each branch developed its characteristic musical style. After remodeling in 1958, the original Tomoshibi location in western Kabukichō became known as the Seibu Shinjuku branch. Noted for its extravagant stage and sound, this branch had an elevated stage where an instrumental ensemble could be seen from the second and third floor.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Komaura branch acquired reputation as a “working-class” establishment, in terms of both its patrons and performance style, the latter of which involved a lead singer and a much more modestly sized ensemble compared to that of the Seibu Shinjuku branch. Lastly, the Kichijōji location was known for its energetic instrumental ensemble, remembered by its sharp and crisp rhythms. None of these Tomoshibi locations remains in business today. By the time Shibata Shin closed the first Seibu Shinjuku location in 1977, he no longer operated any of the Tomoshibi branches.

In this chapter, the Tomoshibi branch of importance is the Komaura location (1958-1965), which became predecessor to current Tomoshibi in terms of personnel and ideas. As a business, this Tomoshibi location was much more short-lived than the other branches. In 1962, its owner decided to close the store, triggering a three-year labor dispute with the labor union. During and after the labor dispute, Komaura Tomoshibi’s union members began to perform outside of the store space, organizing multiple performing groups to call for financial and moral support to preserve their store and, later, to build their own Tomoshibi store in Tokyo. Their efforts bore fruit after several years, starting with the Kameido location (1966), Kichijōji location (1972, following a strike against Shibata Shin which led the strike committee to join the Komaura labor union), and finally Shinjuku (1973, later relocated within Shinjuku in 1984). However, these

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<sup>29</sup> As of 1964, the Seibu Shinjuku branch had at least eight instrumental players on the accordion, drums, piano, electric guitar, double bass, and synthesizer. Ōno Vol. 1 of 2 (2019), 46.

locations, too, started to experience financial downturns since the 1980s due to a combination of a dwindling customer base and increasing rent. In 1989, Tomoshibi relocated the Kameido and Kichijōji locations to Koiwa and Tachikawa, respectively, but was forced to close them down in only three years.<sup>30</sup> As of 2019, Tomoshibi runs only one store in Shinjuku.

As a surviving business and institution, Tomoshibi is best suited among the historical *utagoe kissa* for an extended historical analysis based on textual and musical materials. By analyzing individuals, musical works, and ideas that left their mark on current Tomoshibi, this chapter seeks to illustrate historical developments surrounding music-making in Tomoshibi, which played a significant role in shaping *utagoe* as a continuing form of practice and idealism into twenty-first-century Japan.

In this vein, I will put forth two arguments: First, early Utagoe movement's repertoires of music and action were instrumental in the development of *utagoe kissa*, particularly in Komaura-line Tomoshibi; Second, this process involved a continuous effort to build upon those elements that the core group of Komaura-line Tomoshibi perceived to be lacking in the Utagoe movement. Lastly, the resulting application and discussion of a “healthful” (*kenkō*) musical culture bespeak both the legacy and persistence of the “musical reformism” outlook shared by the Utagoe movement and Komaura-line Tomoshibi. On one hand, simultaneous development of the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* since the late 1950s points to the fact that the word *utagoe* could stand for musical repertoire. Yet, neither Utagoe nor *utagoe kissa* possessed prerogative to define what *utagoe* precisely entailed beyond musical repertoire – a relationship that continues to

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<sup>30</sup> Ōno Yukinori, who had been responsible for finding store spaces in the 1980s and 1990s, attributes the increasing rent in Tokyo to Japan's bubble economy (ca. 1986-1992). Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019), 110-111. Current Tomoshibi employees whom I have interviewed also indicated that, by the late 1980s, Tomoshibi's revenues were being sustained by outside performances. Interview with Saito Takashi, Tokyo, Japan, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016; Interview with Teratani Hiroshi, Tokyo, Japan, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

this day, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. In this context, the history of Tomoshibi demonstrates the centrality of both the musical and “extra-musical” aspects that the word *utagoe* has invoked among its users.

The case of Tomoshibi offers an insight through which we can study how *utagoe* as a repertoire of music and idealism spread, with some modifications over the decades. Indeed, Tomoshibi and its members created their own interpretation of *utagoe* alongside of, but not necessarily in opposition to, that of the Utagoe movement, leaving behind a decisive impact on ways in which the term *utagoe* is configured, invoked, and remembered by self-proclaimed practitioners of *utagoe* in Japan today. It is also worth pointing out that, as we shall see later, members of Tomoshibi informed their discussion on music-making based on both in-store and out-store experiences, extending their venues beyond the physical space of the coffeehouse. At its core, however, Tomoshibi’s version of *utagoe kissa* has more in common with the Utagoe movement than differences. Tomoshibi’s vision of an ideal singing culture and community is ultimately premised upon perceived need to reform the relationship between the Japanese populace and music – a legacy of the Utagoe movement and beyond that will be further explored in Chapter 6 of this dissertation, in the context of proliferation of self-run *utagoe kissa* events across Japan in the 2010s for and by the retired generations.

#### Early Tomoshibi Staff and their Utagoe Background

Maruyama Asuka’s 2002 book *Youthful Years at the Utagoe Kissas “Tomoshibi” (Utagoe kissa “Tomoshibi” no seishun)* provides some details on the daily workflow at Tomoshibi in its early years. Tomoshibi opened its door at 5PM and closed at 11PM, earlier than typical bars and

*izakaya* did in order to maintain its “healthful” (*kenkō*) image. Starting from 6:30PM, there were five thirty- to forty-minute singing “stages” while patrons consumed food, drink (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and live music.<sup>31</sup> A cup of coffee at Tomoshibi was priced at sixty yen, slightly higher than at a typical “non-musical” café (at a time when a dish of curry with rice was sold at around seventy yen).<sup>32</sup> As a business offering food, beverage, and music, Tomoshibi from early on required a mix of musical performers in addition to servers, preferably those who were familiar with Utagoe musical repertory. It is quite significant that, by the time Tomoshibi began advertising itself as a singing venue in 1956, it was hiring individuals who had learned music at some Utagoe-affiliated group. As Tomoshibi’s early employees, these individuals would become important figures in the musical and political discussions at Tomoshibi.

The first of early Tomoshibi employees whom Maruyama introduces in her book is her mother Mizuno Riya (1935-?), who was hired sometime in 1956. Mizuno, in fact, is the protagonist of the “spontaneous singing” account that is supposed to have taken place at Tomoshibi in early 1956 on her twenty-first birthday on March 20<sup>th</sup>, according to her own recollection.<sup>33</sup> Like Donzoko’s founder Yano Satoshi, Mizuno came to Tokyo in 1955 to study at the Butai Geijutsu Gakuin – in her case, from Toyonaka just north of Osaka.<sup>34</sup> Shortly before moving to Tokyo, she had been briefly involved in the Kansai Chorus (est. 1948), a regional Utagoe “center” chorus that was organized in 1948 following the Central Chorus’s performance

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<sup>31</sup> Maruyama, 80, 86.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 30-32. Maruyama is Mizuno’s daughter from Mizuno’s second marriage and had not met with her mother’s first husband, Shibata Shin, until she began working on her book.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 24-28.

in Osaka.<sup>35</sup> Mizuno soon organized a chorus of her own in Toyonaka that was targeted toward people who had difficulties visiting the Kansai Chorus's office near the Osaka Station.<sup>36</sup> Though Mizuno's involvement in the early Utagoe movement was cut short by her move to Tokyo in 1955, she had likely learned Utagoe's early repertoires of music and action during that time: she recounts that, in her native Toyonaka before moving to Tokyo, she used to "instruct singing" (*kashō shidō*, an early Utagoe vocabulary as seen in Chapter 2) at a university chorus.<sup>37</sup> This previous exposure may explain why, on her twenty-first birthday at Tomoshibi, Mizuno could not only sing Russian and Soviet songs that were playing on the record player but also encourage other patrons to sing with her. She was soon hired by Shibata Shin, working as a server-singer and, three years later, marrying him.

By the end of 1956, Tomoshibi was staffed by employees who demonstrate a mixture of Utagoe and non-Utagoe movement backgrounds. Broadly speaking, Tomoshibi during these years had three kinds of employees: those with neither past nor future involvement with an Uagoe-affiliated group; those who would have future involvement with an Utagoe-affiliated group; and those who had past involvement with an Utagoe-affiliated group. In the first group belonged individuals like the owner Shibata Shin himself, who in later sources is often depicted as sympathetic to the contemporary Japanese youth but by no means an activist figure himself;

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 2 for a brief description of the Utagoe movement's regional "center choruses," the first of which were the Kansai Chorus and the Nagoya Youth Chorus organized in 1948.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Okahara Susumu, Toyonaka, Japan, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Okahara Susumu (1928-2018) was the first leader (*danchō*) of the Kansai Chorus who had attended the Central Chorus's very first class of 1948 as a visitor from the Osaka chapter of the Young Communist League of Japan. Both Okahara's testimony and Maruyama's account (2002) point out that Mizuno's mother had been elected to Toyonaka's city assembly before Mizuno moved to Tokyo (three times, according to Maruyama). Though Maruyama's book does not explain why Mizuno chose to operate in Toyonaka, Okahara remarked that Mizuno organized her chorus in Toyonaka because her mother had a political presence there as an elected official from the Japanese Communist Party (affiliation of which is not mentioned in Maruyama's book). Okahara was a native of Toyonaka himself.

<sup>37</sup> Maruyama, 33.

the two female Russian émigré chefs, named Varya and Tamara, unfortunately silent figures whose voices and history are lost in the surviving sources; and Tomoshibi's new waitresses who had some singing experience at school. On the other end were employees who would partake in the Utagoe movement after leaving Tomoshibi. Individuals in this category include Katayama Akiko, who in the mid-1970s would become a member of the Nihon no Utagoe National Council; a male accordionist nicknamed "Ganjī-san" who later joined the Central Chorus and would visit Moscow during the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957.<sup>38</sup> Lastly, and most importantly in the context of this chapter, Shibata hired individuals who had been members of some Utagoe-affiliated group in the past before making their way to Tomoshibi. From this group emerged individuals who would since spend their lifetime with *utagoe kissa* in one way or another, for more than half a century up to the present day (2020).

It is not a coincidence that many individuals Shibata hired for his nascent singing coffeehouse had studied music under Seki Akiko at the Central Chorus. Shibata needed people like Mizuno Riya who could sing and lead the crowd, both of which were staple activities for the early Utagoe movement. The most illustrative case in this regard is Aoyagi Tsuneo (b. 1933, also known as "Yagi-san"), the first person Shibata hired expressly as a song-leader in 1956.<sup>39</sup> Born in the mountainous village of Surisawa in southern Iwate Prefecture, Aoyagi was a conservatory-trained tenor who was a member of the celebrated Fujiwara Opera Troupe in

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<sup>38</sup> Ōno Vol. 1 of 2 (2019), 7, 9-10.

<sup>39</sup> Conflicting accounts exist regarding Aoyagi's time of employment. While Maruyama (2002)'s account places Aoyagi's employment after Mizuno Riya's (therefore either in or after 1956), Kaiya Noboru's writings from the 1970s place Aoyagi's employment before his own in 1955. 1956 seems more likely, however, considering Aoyagi's own recollection that he was employed after Mizuno and that, when he was still a patron at Tomoshibi, he had been asked by other patrons to sight-read Terahara Nobuo's "Song of the Palm" (*Te no hira no uta*), a 1956 composition Terahara prepared for the second Creative Work Presentation (Sōsaku Happyōkai) at Ongaku Center on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1956. Maruyama 84-86; Masaru Yamaoka, "Nani ga motomerareteirunoka," *Gekkan Tomoshibi* 8 no. 5 (May 1977): 5; "Ongaku Sentā dai 1 kai sōsaku happyōkai yori: te no hira no uta," *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 31, 1956, 6; Personal communication with Aoyagi Tsuneo, Tokyo, Japan, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

Tokyo at the time. During the 1950s, he was also briefly a member of the Shirakaba Chorus (joining in February 1955; see Chapter 4 on the chorus) and later the Central Chorus (twenty-eighth class, ca. 1955).<sup>40</sup> It was after these adventures that Aoyagi began his career as a song-leader at *utagoe kissa*, during which he performed at least two establishments (Tomoshibi in 1956 and Elbe in 1957).<sup>41</sup> Reflecting on these years, Aoyagi reminisced that he simply “left [him]self to the times (*jidai no nagare*),” as he put it to me in the summer of 2017.<sup>42</sup>

Around the time Shibata hired Aoyagi as a vocalist, Shibata also hired his first instrumentalist duo: Inoue Masashi (b. 1931) on accordion and Kaiya Noboru (b. 1932) on cello (Curiously, neither of them appears in Maruyama’s 2002 book).<sup>43</sup> Inoue and Kaiya were middle school classmates who played in the school brass band together. Later on, they both learned and played music at Utagoe-affiliated groups: Inoue joined the third class of the Central Chorus (1949), while Kaiya formed his own instrumental ensemble called Umi Tsubame (“northern storm petrel”) before 1955 out of his “dissatisfaction with the Utagoe movement.”<sup>44</sup> Lastly, just before the opening of the Komaura annex location in 1958, Shibata hired Fukano (now Hashimoto) Yasuko (b. 1933), likewise a former member of the Central Chorus (twenty-first

<sup>40</sup> Personal communication with Aoyagi Tsuneo, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Tokyo, Japan, 2017. Aoyagi authored two articles for the Shirakaba Chorus’s bulletin *Beryozka* in 1956. See [Tsuneo] Aoyagi, “Happyōkai,” *Beryozka* no. 20 (June 30<sup>th</sup> 1956): 2; Tsuneo Aoyagi, “Ittemoraitakatta,” *Beryozka* no. 25 (December 25<sup>th</sup> 1956): 8.

<sup>41</sup> An advertisement for Elbe with Aoyagi’s name written can be found in the March 20th, 1957, issue of *Utagoe Shimbun*.

<sup>42</sup> Personal communication with Aoyagi Tsuneo, Tokyo, Japan, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> According to Inoue’s recollection, he started working at Tomoshibi at the end of 1955 or beginning of 1956. Masashi Inoue, “Utagoe to tomo ni 50 nen,” *Kaihō Furusato*, May 15, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Inoue Masashi, Hachiōji, Japan, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018; Masaru Yamaoka, “Sannin no shikisha to no deai,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (August 1977), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinsei ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’ rensei “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 30, 32. As Yamaoka (alias for Kaiya Noboru) himself notes in the article just referenced, the Umi Tsubame ensemble mentioned here is a different ensemble from the performing troupe by the same name organized by Hara Tarō, predecessor of the theater troupe Warabi-za.

class, 1954). Fukano was hired as a host (*shikaisha*), though she was asked to sing in her interview at Tomoshibi and would also serve as a backup accordionist time to time.<sup>45</sup> These four individuals would become key figures in the making of Komaura-line Tomoshibi's version of *utagoe kissa*: Inoue as the authority on musical culture (*ongaku bunka*), Kaiya the ideologue (*ronkyaku*), Aoyagi the first and arguably most popular singer at Tomoshibi, and Fukano the leadership figure (*shidōsha kabu*).<sup>46</sup>

Along with the rest of the Tomoshibi employees at the time, the four figures were transferred to the annex location near the Koma Theater in 1958 and would stay there until the location closed in 1965. It was at this location of Tomoshibi (better known as "Komaura" Tomoshibi) that the four would play their respective role during the formative years of an independent "Komaura-line" Tomoshibi. As I have described above, the four figures who made up the core group of Komaura-line Tomoshibi had "practiced" *utagoe* in the early 1950s before coming to Tomoshibi, and three of them had learned music at the Central Chorus. Through a series of analyses of the ideas and practices of this core group, I will trace the development of Tomoshibi's vision of *utagoe* since the early 1960s. Their cultural ventures, both ideological and performative, began with a labor dispute at Komaura Tomoshibi that broke out in 1964. As the remainder of this chapter will show, this venture would lead to the ideas, practices, and physical locations of Tomoshibi that would inform yet another spin on *utagoe* as a form of musical idealism in succession to the Utagoe movement and Shibata Shin's first Tomoshibi.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Hashimoto Yasuko, Tokyo, Japan, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Hashimoto Yasuko, Tokyo, Japan, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### Komaura Tomoshibi Branch (1958-1965) and its Historical Self-Perception

As briefly mentioned earlier, the second Tomoshibi location was opened in November 1958 near the newly constructed Koma Theater to serve as a temporary annex during the remodeling of the building that housed the original Tomoshibi.<sup>47</sup> Even during the remodeling process, however, the newly opened annex was by no means a second-rate establishment, as Shibata temporarily relocated all current employees to the annex location. The annex location was formerly a *mahjong* place, likely also operated by the same figure who became the manager of the new Tomoshibi annex. This manager, an acquaintance of Shibata Shin who was a *zainichi* Korean individual named Ko Hojin (or Kō Kōshin in Japanese), eventually offered to buy out the establishment and to employ the entire staff upon completion of remodeling at the original Tomoshibi location. Thus purchased, the Tomoshibi annex location came under a new management, with the veteran Tomoshibi staff intact. From this point onward, the first Tomoshibi location (“Seibu Shinjuku” store) and the former annex location (“Komaura” or “Komayoko” store, henceforth referred to as “Komaura”) would develop in separate ways under different managements and staffs.<sup>48</sup>

To be sure, the two Tomoshibi stores did not cut relations entirely. For example, the two stores used the same songbook published by the Seibu Shinjuku location. In time, however, the Seibu Shinjuku location became known for its showy, multi-story interior and a formidable band, whereas the Komaura branch developed a reputation for being a “working-class” establishment.

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<sup>47</sup> Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, “Tomoshibi” (undated [likely 1978 or 1979]), 4. The timing of the Komaura branch’s opening is partly corroborated by Hashimoto (née Fukano) Yasuko, who recalls her first day of work at the recently-opened Komaura store to be the Christmas party in the year the store opened. Interview with Hashimoto Yasuko, Tokyo, Japan, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> In the present chapter, I refer to the first Tomoshibi annex location as the Komaura branch because the name appears much more frequently in subsequent Tomoshibi publications than Komayoko does.

Writer Kaikō Takeshi, author of the previously introduced short novel *Giants and Toys* (1957), left a firsthand account from around 1964 that highlights the different atmospheres between the two Tomoshibi locations:

Inside the [Seibu Shinjuku] store there is a small stage, and a young and modest-sized ensemble on the piano, double bass, and accordion is playing, soaked in sweat. . . . There is a world map on the stage's wall, adorned with national flags from all over the world (*bankokuki*) in an Olympic style (*orinpikku chō*). The patrons include office girls around the age of eighteen, nineteen to twenty-one or two, as well as students and mechanics. . . . But [their] chorus is surprisingly skillful. . . . It is free-spirited and soft, precise and active. . . . Russian folk songs; Italian folk songs; *chansons*; Japanese folk songs; negro spirituals; labor songs; love songs; light stuff; solemn stuff; happy songs; sad songs.<sup>49</sup>

Around the same time, I visited another Tomoshibi which, I was told, had a “bloody smell” to it. But I was surprised to see how cheerless (*sabishii*) and desolate the place was, like an empty storage. . . . Four or five young people and girls sat next to the wall, mumbling songs. If anything, it was a pathetic sight. Inside the restroom, I found lots of vandalism. . . . “A true communist would never write vandalism at a place like this.” “So what are you doing?” “Nothing.” “Will there be taxation after the revolution?”<sup>50</sup>

Borrowing the words of the stage leader and main vocalist “Aoyagi-kun,” clearly referring to Aoyagi Tsuneo, Kaikō relates that the Komaura branch at this time was not generating enough revenue to cover its rent. Such a struggling financial outlook no doubt contributed to Ko Hojin’s decision to close the business and convert it to a *pachinko* venue in 1963. After a year of negotiation attempts with Ko, the Komaura Tomoshibi labor union (formed in 1962) initiated a

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<sup>49</sup> Takeshi Kaikō, “‘Utagoe’ no yorokobi to kanashimi” in *Zubari Tōkyō: Kaikō Takeshi ruporutāju senshū* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 2007), 356.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 359-360.

year-long labor dispute in 1964 against the closure of the business.<sup>51</sup> Thus began the former Komaura Tomoshibi employees' venture to establish their own store and organization, separate from both Shibata's original Tomoshibi location and Ko's Komaura location.

By the end of the 1970s, Komaura-line Tomoshibi developed both spatially, institutionally, and ideologically. By 1975, this line of Tomoshibi came to manage three locations across Tokyo from east to west, as well as one location outside of Tokyo. These locations were Kameido in eastern Tokyo (1966), Kichijōji in western Tokyo (originally established in 1961 by Shibata Shin, relocated to a different location within Kichijōji in 1972 after its labor union's decision to go under Komaura management), Shinjuku (1973, separate from the Seibu Shinjuku location), and the city of Nagano, Nagano Prefecture (1975). Amidst this expansion, Komaura-line Tomoshibi inaugurated its administrative body named Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi (Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi) in May 1969. The Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi has since continued to be the locus of a self-proclaimed "Tomoshibi movement," well after the closure of the "original" Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi in 1977.

The late 1970s was a significant historical moment for Komaura-line Tomoshibi because it established its own movement identity separate from those of the "original" Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi and the Utagoe movement. Already from the mid-1960s when the union members and supporters of Komaura Tomoshibi were engaged in a labor dispute with the owner Ko Hojin, the participants were expressing their cause under the slogan "Tomoshibi across the Entire Metropolitan Area" (*Zento ni Tomoshibi o*). This slogan contained both figurative and physical dimensions in its outlook: while Tomoshibi union members performed in formats such as "one-

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<sup>51</sup> Ōno (2019), 34-43.

day *utagoe kissa*” (*ichinichi utagoe kissa*) and operettas across Tokyo, the union members also sought to open their own Tomoshibi locations across Tokyo. Indeed, for example, the Kameido location (1966) was a conscious choice to bring “*utagoe* culture” to eastern Tokyo, historically known as a merchant quarter (*shitamachi*) and known at the time as home to factory workers.<sup>52</sup>

It must also be noted that, by the beginning of the 1970s, *utagoe kissa* was clearly on its way out as a fad. Most tellingly, when Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi converted itself to a non-singing venue with jazz, rock, and folk performers in March 1977, *Mainichi Shimbun* attributed the change to the rise of new entertainment venues such as the disco.<sup>53</sup> Four decades since 1977, Komaura-line Tomoshibi is the only surviving *utagoe kissa* as of 2020 that claims its lineage back to the 1950s. Yet, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, Tomoshibi has since become de facto standard-setter for *utagoe kissa*. Tomoshibi is still in business essentially every day and is still publishing its own songbooks, also sending its personnel for *utagoe kissa* events across Japan. In retrospect, then, the late 1970s was a historical juncture for *utagoe kissa* after which Komaura-line Tomoshibi effectively became the institution with the power to practice and define *utagoe* from the other side – that is, from the other side of Nihon no Utagoe, the self-proclaimed administrative body of the Utagoe movement.

From the 1970s onward, Komaura-line Tomoshibi became a mediating institution that has connected the Utagoe movement’s notion of *utagoe* to the larger public in the form of *utagoe kissa*. It must be noted, however, that Tomoshibi is a product of multiple historical

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<sup>52</sup> The 1960 land use map of Tokyo, part of which is shown in Figure 5.3, indicates this to be the case. *Tōkyō tochi riyō genjōzu* (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1960).

<sup>53</sup> After holding out for seven months, Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi finally closed its doors on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1977. “Shinjuku no Tomoshibi ‘ensō kissa’ ni henshin,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, March 8, 1977, 21; “Zakkichō,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, October 11, 1977, 19.

developments that were in turn significantly affected by the Utagoe movement. Intriguingly, Komaura-line Tomoshibi had in fact produced its own historical timeline of its activities demonstrating its heterogeneous origins. An undated pamphlet published by the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi circa 1978 (see Figure 5.5) includes a historical timeline of “*utagoe kissa* movement,” from the Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi (marked in the timeline as having opened in December 1955) to the present moment of 1978. The timeline begins with four points of origin: Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi (December 1955), Shibuya Tomoshibi (September 1958, renamed to Makiba in December of that year), Komaura Tomoshibi (November 1958), and Kichijōji Tomoshibi (September 1961).

However, the timeline ends with developments that are all associated with Komaura-line Tomoshibi: *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (Tomoshibi’s monthly magazine, since 1976), Tomoshibi music classes (instrumental ensemble and chorus), *utagoe kissa* (Shinjuku, Kameido, Kichijōji, and Nagano), Gekidan Tomoshibi (Theater Group Tomoshibi), and outdoor events and performances. As this timeline would have it, Komaura-line Tomoshibi is the vanguard of the “*utagoe kissa* movement,” and all of Tomoshibi’s activities – from outside performances to the labor dispute of 1964-1965, leading up to the opening of multiple stores – are parts of Tomoshibi’s program toward a certain set of goals.

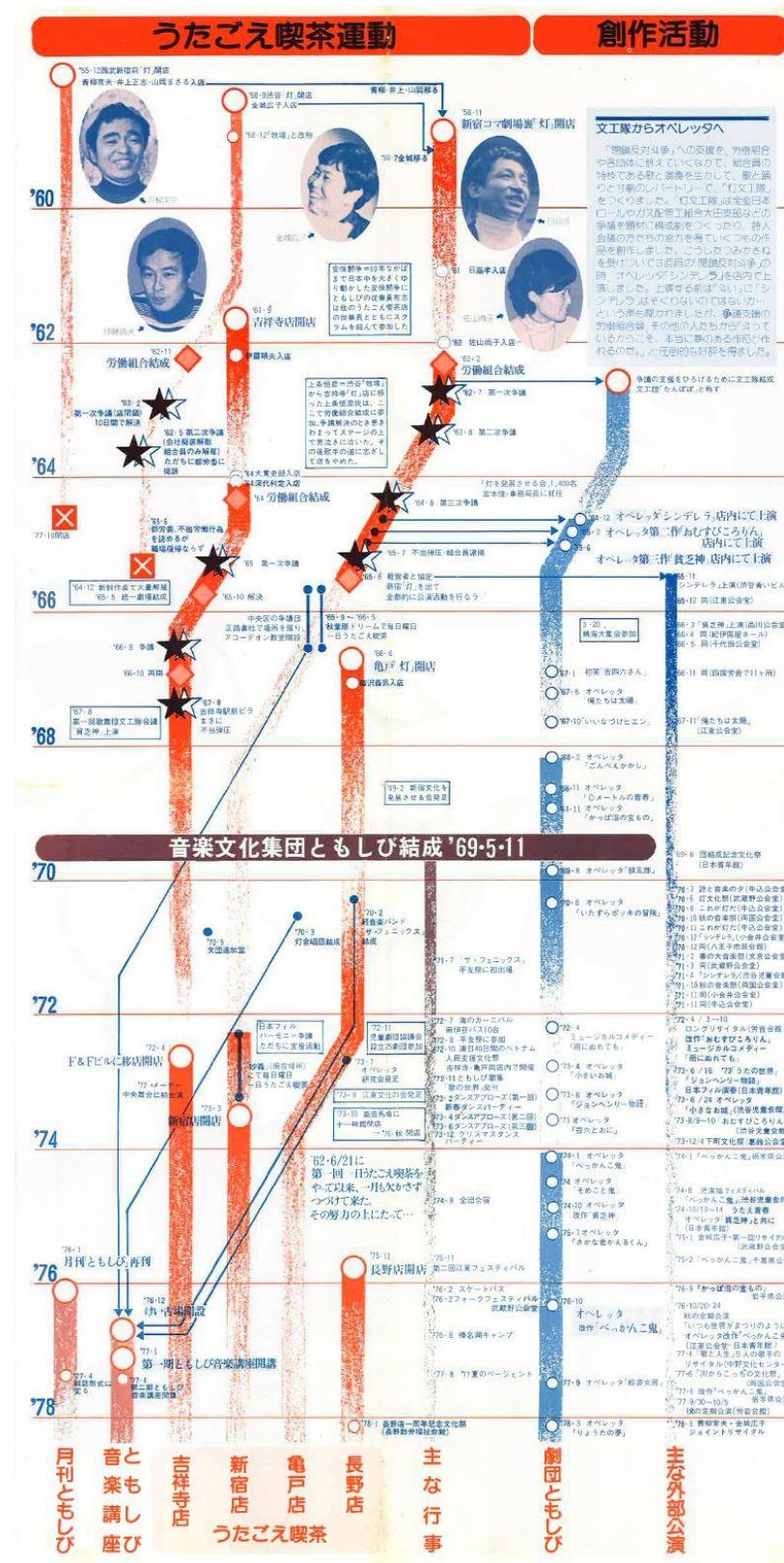


Figure 5.5: Timeline of Tomoshibi from a pamphlet (undated; 1978?). Pictured in the top-left corner is Aoyagi Tsuneo.

This timeline, however, shows only a partial story of the entire range of previous developments that influenced the formation of Tomoshibi's self-proclaimed "movement." Komaura-line Tomoshibi certainly did not come into being *ex nihilo*; nor did the "original" Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi, for that matter. In addition, Komaura-line Tomoshibi did not absorb everything that preceded its existence. Rather, this line of Tomoshibi underwent selective syntheses, while still maintaining a significant degree of commitment to the perceived cultural issues and sense of mission regarding the societal role of music in a manner that decidedly parallels those of the Utagoe movement. Such a sense of historical mission can be amply seen in the proclamation statement of the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi, which puts forth sociocultural aspirations more than anything:

We hereby solemnly and forcefully declare the formation of the Tomoshibi group.

We shall inherit and assess the Tomoshibi movement, which has been formulated, trained, and tested in the past ten years; we shall make our first step toward an even greater development.

Today, many young people are tiring themselves out due to hardening labor practices; losing hope in the tasteless school life; sacrificing their youth away to the rising cost of living and falling wages; becoming decadent (*taihai*) in the wake of media leisure culture (*masukomi goraku bunka*) and losing themselves in the midst.

But, at the same time, in the hearts of many young people, there is an emerging energy towards change in the status quo with the characteristic sense of justice and power to act that befit young people.

Tomoshibi shall put light in the hearts of these young people, shake their souls, and burn the field as one big flame.

The young people of the whole [Tokyo] metropolitan area await us in open arms.

We shall trust the young people and sons and daughters of Japan from the bottom of our hearts, leaving ourselves with confidence to their embrace.

With a firm and sure belief in the future of Tomoshibi, young people, and Japan, we proudly proclaim the formation of the Tomoshibi group.<sup>54</sup>

As a mission statement, the proclamation statement echoes the slogan “Tomoshibi movement” (*Tomoshibi undō*), which in turn was preceded by an equally mission-driven slogan “Tomoshibi across the Entire Metropolitan Area” (*Zento ni Tomoshibi o*). Worthy of note here is the assumption of an innocent Japanese youth in need of rescue – a characterization not dissimilar to that of the Central Chorus in the late 1940s (Chapter 2), which likewise sought to act upon what the chorus viewed as the spiritless youth. As its proclamation would have it, the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi was to dedicate its mission and fate to the future of the Japanese youth.

The remainder of this chapter will focus its analysis on the decades between the 1960s and 1970s, formative decades for Tomoshibi’s ideological and administrative structures. During these decades, Tomoshibi underwent a dual development as an *utagoe kissa* and a culturally-minded organization, a combination that has since tasked Tomoshibi to maintain both profitability and its sense of cultural mission. Much of this process, in fact, took place outside of the store space. As discussed earlier, from 1962 onward, the employees at Komaura Tomoshibi actively sought activities outside of the store in search of financial and moral support, doing so under the banner of the “Tomoshibi movement.” These activities, however, continued even after 1966, when the former staff of Komaura Tomoshibi established their own Tomoshibi store in 1966 in the Kameido neighborhood in eastern Tokyo. There are two features of the Tomoshibi movement that are particularly worth noting. First, these “Tomoshibi activists” practiced a

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Ōno Vol. 1 of 2 (2019), 89.

repertory of action that was employed in the early years of the Utagoe movement. In addition, the resulting musical works and writings responded to the concerns that were being raised in the Utagoe movement at the time, including vaguely defined ideas such as “livelihood” (*seikatsu*) and “creation” (*sōzō*). Through these modes of activity, Komaura-line Tomoshibi developed its own reiteration of *utagoe* as an idealism that was similar and yet slightly different from the musical works and “musico-political” writings that were being produced in the Utagoe movement at the time.

To that end, in the section that follows, I will analyze three major forms of engagement that Komaura-line Tomoshibi employees engaged in between 1962 and 1984: cultural operation team (*bunka kōsakutai*, or *bunkōtai* for short), operetta, and writings. In engaging with these three mediums, the former Komaura staff’s efforts took an unmistakably reformative character. Indeed, much like the musico-political ideas discussed and put into practice in the Utagoe movement up to that point, the three forms of engagement all deal with how to put music into everyday contexts. These three forms of engagement demonstrate points of continuity with the Utagoe movement in terms of musical reformism, or music as simultaneously both the means and object of reform.

### Tomoshibi’s Cultural Operation Team and Operettas, 1960s

The labor dispute at Komaura Tomoshibi between 1964 and 1965 was made possible by the presence of a loyal patron base. Surviving documents from the early 1960s suggest that first-generation *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo like Tomoshibi and Kachūsha had dedicated patrons who organized and partook in activities outside of the stores. These patrons organized circles

(*sākuru*) based on the kinds of activity they pursued (for example, hiking, camping, and watching movies).<sup>55</sup> The Komaura branch of Tomoshibi was no exception.<sup>56</sup> An illustrative example can be seen both in and through *Tomoshibi News* (1964-?), a series of pamphlets that began to be published around the time the Komaura Tomoshibi labor union began its labor dispute. The very first issue of the pamphlet lists a number of patron-led circles for outdoor and indoor activities, following a pattern also seen at other first-generation *utagoe kissa*. Even more tellingly, the pamphlet itself was published by the “Society for Preserving Tomoshibi” (Tomoshibi o mamoru kai), a group of volunteers who elected themselves in support of the Komaura Tomoshibi labor union. Some of these volunteers, in fact, eventually ended up in Tomoshibi.<sup>57</sup> In sum, Komaura Tomoshibi’s circle network became a support base on which the former employees of Komaura Tomoshibi could fall back.

During their labor dispute, Komaura Tomoshibi union members both sought support from existing circles and created their own circles. To that end, the union members engaged in modes of engagement that had been practiced by early Utagoe choral groups in the late 1940s and early 1950s (examined in Chapter 2). One such form of engagement was Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team (*bunkōtai*), organized in 1962 following the formation of the Komaura Tomoshibi labor union that year. Referred to as the cultural operation team “Tanpopo”

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<sup>55</sup> Circle activities among *utagoe kissa* patrons have received no coverage in existing insider’s accounts, including Inobe (1992) on Donzoko and Maruyama (2002) and Ōno (2019) on Tomoshibi. During my visits to local *utagoe kissa* gatherings between 2016 and 2017, however, on more than one occasion I was shown pictures of *utagoe kissa*-based circle activities owned by former patrons of the first-generation *utagoe kissa*, including the two Tomoshibi’s in Shinjuku and Kachūsha.

<sup>56</sup> The existence of circles at the Komaura branch is also corroborated by Miyamoto Suguru, who had been a regular patron there before he joined the strike committee in 1964. Interview with Miyamoto Suguru, Osaka, Japan, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> These recruited individuals often became support staff. These include Miyamoto Suguru, who assumed both artistic and administrative functions for Tomoshibi; Takashiba Hideki, who likewise joined the administrative staff. On Tomoshibi circles that became semi-permanent groups, see Ōno Vol. 1 of 2 (2019), 94-96.

(“Dandelion”) in later Tomoshibi documents, the activities of the cultural operation team are reminiscent of those of the Utagoe movement in its early years around 1950. Like the Utagoe movement precedent, Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team engaged mainly in “singing instructions” (*kashō shidō*) at workplaces, making use of its members’ extended networks through former patrons.

The leading figure in Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team was Fukano (now Hashimoto) Yasuko (b. 1933, better known as “P-ko” among her friends), who would soon become known as the authority on staging within Komaura-line Tomoshibi. First discovering the Utagoe movement through a singing gathering (*utau kai*) at her workplace led by a Central Chorus veteran Nakao Tomiko, Fukano joined the twenty-first class of the Central Chorus (1954) and was an active member until 1956. Between these years, Fukano partook in a number of tours made by the Central Chorus, visiting Kyushu and Shikoku. Enrolling in the Butai Geijutsu Gakuin (Performing Arts Academy), Fukano found a part-time job at the soon-to-open Komaura branch of Tomoshibi in December 1958. Having become a lecturer at the Butai Geijutsu Gakuin by 1964, Fukano became a central figure and organizer in Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team. Though Fukano was not much of a writer during her time with Tomoshibi (a fact she readily admits in retrospect), her leadership in Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team suggests continuity in her repertory of action.

Perhaps the most significant sign of continuity from the early Utagoe movement to Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team lies in the motivation for cultural operation – that is, the sort of transformation that cultural operation sought to initiate. Among the few surviving documents concerning Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s outside activities is a pamphlet from 1966. The pamphlet lists six forms of performance that Tomoshibi provided at the time: “Tomoshibi operetta,”

“Tomoshibi cultural operation team” (*Tomoshibi bunkōtai*), “singing instructions” (*kashō shidō*), “*utagoe* bus,” “one-day *utagoe* kissa” (*ichinichi utagoe kissa*), and “folk dance, game, and social dance practice sessions.”<sup>58</sup> Included in the back cover of the pamphlet is a message from a survey that records the respondent’s discovery of “singing voice” (*utagoe*) and its power to bring people together. No doubt the message was quoted at length because it was consistent with the sort of personal transformation that Komaura-line Tomoshibi employees hoped to see through their efforts:

Until recently, I had absolutely no interest in union activity. I even had reservations about [my] union’s cultural activities, which ought to be fun. . . . I learned that there was going to be some interaction with Tomoshibi at a bus hike organized by the union, so I went there expecting something good. . . . [At the event] I kept listening to songs that I did not know, but they greatly touched my heart one after another. . . . That day, people in the executive committee [in my union] who talk about abstruse things all the time and people who were going to union events with reluctance were all singing as one, and I felt a sense of real camaraderie (*hontō no nakama to iu jikkān*). . . . I had no idea that singing voice (*utagoe*) could bring people’s hearts together like this. I couldn’t help but think that our union, too, must place more emphasis on culture and call upon and befriend those people who are not yet our friends (*nakama*). Nowadays there is a chorus that meets during the lunch break every week, and a joyful singing voice flows there.<sup>59</sup>

Such emphasis on reformative capacity of cultural operation activities bespeaks Tomoshibi’s perception of music as a means to reform society at large.

Much better documented are Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s operettas, which initially began as the cultural operation team’s repertory. Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s first collective musical

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<sup>58</sup> “Goannai: operetta, *kashōshidō*, *bunkōtai* Tomoshibi,” 1966, 1 (unnumbered).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, back cover.

project involving its members across different areas of specialty, the operetta was a musical format that was arguably even more in sync in aspiration with contemporary musical discourse in the Utagoe movement than the cultural operation team. During the late 1960s, Utagoe movement's leadership advocated "collective creation" (*shūdan sōsaku*), a method of creative engagement involving the willing masses rather than a select few professionally educated "specialists" (*senmonka*). Utagoe's opera *Okinawa* (premiered in December 1969) is a case in point. As discussed in Chapter 4, the opera was celebrated in official channels not only for its subject matter (Okinawan people's resistance to US military rule) but also for its method of creation (collective work creation, for both music and libretto). Contemporary *Utagoe Shinbun* articles similarly praise works of collective creation, bringing to the fore other products of collective labor such as choral play (*gasshōgeki*) *From our Workplace* (Oretachi no Shokuba kara) by the Asahi Journalist's Chorus (1966), as well as the campaign "One-Circle, One-Song Movement" (*Ichi sākuru ikkyoku undō*, based on Nihon no Utagoe's 1965 resolution).<sup>60</sup> So, too, were the scripts for Tomoshibi's operettas created in the spirit of "collective creation," with the belief that "if we the working people unite, we can do anything" – from labor dispute to musical creation.<sup>61</sup>

The first operetta produced by Tomoshibi's cultural operation team was titled *Cinderella* (1964). Though I could only acquire second-hand descriptions of the operetta, they still indicate two features that subsequently became a pattern in Tomoshibi operettas. First, as suggested

<sup>60</sup> Since its inclusion in the five-point resolution in Nihon no Utagoe's annual meeting in 1965, "One-Circle, One-Song" came to be referred to as one of the "five pillars" of the Utagoe movement by early 1967 (see, for example, the upper left corner of the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1967, issue). "One-Circle, One-Song" movement itself was an extension of the slogan "Singing Voice to Ten Million People" (*utagoe o issenmannin ni*), which first appeared in December 1963 in the wake of the Utagoe Festival that year. Hiromi Fujimoto, "1966 nen Nihon no Utagoe katsudō hōkoku," *Utagoe Shinbun*, December 1, 1966; "Utagoe o issenmannin ni!," *Utagoe Shinbun*, December 15, 1963.

<sup>61</sup> "Binbōgami tokushū [1966]," reproduced in Ōno (2019), 61-62.

above, the operetta was created by means of “collective creation,” with several chief authors.<sup>62</sup>

Second, the operetta features a modified plot of the Cinderella tale in a manner that established parallels to the “struggles” (*tatakai*, see Chapter 3) of the contemporary Japanese labor movement, with which Komaura-line Tomoshibi identified. In this capacity, Cinderella was transformed into a “hard-working girl who is respected and loved by her peasant friends,” and the prince into an enlightened man who loves gentle souls regardless of their social status.<sup>63</sup>

Somewhat of an exception to Tomoshibi’s creative efforts in the 1960s is *God of Poverty* (*Binbōgami*, 1965), the third of Tomoshibi’s operettas.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the two Tomoshibi operettas that preceded it, this forty-five-minute-long operetta featured both script and music authored by professional writer and composer.<sup>65</sup> Performed more than thirty times between May 1965 and mid-1966, the operetta is simple in structure: the story progresses with male and female soloists accompanied by the piano and *hyōshigi* (a pair of wooden pieces often used in plays to signal the beginning of an act), with an occasional two-part or four-part mixed chorus. Such a setup would have been ideal for the kinds of venues where the operetta was performed, including schools,

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<sup>62</sup> For both *Cinderella* and Tomoshibi’s second operetta *Rolling Riceball* (*Omusubi kororin*, based on a Japanese folk tale by the same name), Kaiya Noboru is credited as the playwright, Inoue Masashi as the composer, and Fukano Yasuko as the stage director. Gekkan Tomoshibi Henshūbu, “Utagoe to Tomoshibi operetta: Binbōgami” (1966), 7.

<sup>63</sup> “Shokuba, chiiki, gakuen no bunka katsudō o tsuyomeyō: Tomoshibi no jigyō annai,” *Tomoshibi nyūsu* no. 8 (June 1969), 4 (unnumbered).

<sup>64</sup> *God of Poverty* was also exceptional in that it was the only Tomoshibi operetta for which I could find complete libretto and music, as well as a concert pamphlet, in Miyamoto Suguru’s personal archive in Osaka.

<sup>65</sup> The operetta’s script was prepared by Akimura Hiroshi, who was a founding member of the Japanese Communist Party-line Poet’s Conference (Shijin Kaigi), and its music by Hamana Masaaki. From Tomoshibi, Inoue Masashi served as music director, and Kaiya Noboru as producer. “Goannai: operetta, kashōshidō, bunkōtai Tomoshibi,” 1966, 2 (unnumbered); “Utagoe to Tomoshibi operetta: Binbōgami” (1966), 1.

small concert halls in Tokyo, and the Akahata Matsuri (region-based events organized by local Japanese Communist Party chapters).<sup>66</sup>

*God of Poverty* is a variation of the *binbōgami* tale, which exists in different forms across Japan and generally features the wit of a male figure who drives away a deity that brings misfortune. Instead of celebrating individual wit, however, *God of Poverty* depicts the value of collective wisdom and endeavor, through which one can change the status quo. Akiyama's script is unequivocally Marxist in invoking class consciousness, as the male peasant protagonist, Mihachi, declares that there can be no happiness without instilling change in his village and the people who live there.<sup>67</sup> The script further suggests that *binbōgami*, in fact, is complacency, or lack of class consciousness: “*Binbōgami* can be anywhere” and “[p]rison can be anywhere,” but if we work together we can subdue even *binbōgami*, for “[w]e are the true protagonists (*shunjinkō*) who change the world.”<sup>68</sup> Given such a clearly Marxist overtone, the fact that Tomoshibi's cultural operation team explained its motive behind the production of the operetta in terms of “that which is enacting rationalization (*gōrika*) of the workplace, as well as the struggle (*tatakai*) against *binbōgami* today” should not be a surprise.

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<sup>66</sup> Utagoe Kissa Tomoshibi, “Operetta ‘Binbōgami’: Nihon no min’wa yori” (Undated), 52 (unnumbered).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 50-51 (unnumbered).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 31, 48 (unnumbered).



Figure 5.6: Snapshots from *God of Poverty* (taken in 1967?), with Aoyagi Tsuneo as the impoverished peasant protagonist Mihachi. From a pamphlet for the Tomoshibi operetta *We are the Sun* (*Oretachi wa taiyō*, 1968).

Despite its seemingly fruitful collaboration with whom Tomoshibi cultural operation team members would have called professional “specialists” (*senmonka*), *God of Poverty* was not an end point for Tomoshibi’s creative endeavor. If anything, production of the operetta led to a heated debate among the former Komaura-line Tomoshibi staff on “whether or not to seek

cooperation from specialists” and “what kinds of endeavor are correct.”<sup>69</sup> Although, as in the case of Nihon no Utagoe, the former staff appear to have come to a conclusion that a certain degree of cooperation from specialists was necessary in order to respond to the “various demands” from the youth, the situation called for a more rigid framework. The person responsible for this task was Kaiya Noboru, one of the longest-serving members of the Komaura-line Tomoshibi staff who became known as the authority on things theoretical.

### Kaiya Noboru the Ideological Authority

Komaura line Tomoshibi’s institutional and musical developments between the 1960s and 1970s were accompanied by an ideological counterpart. In this respect, Tomoshibi’s most prolific writer was Kaiya Noboru (b. 1932), who authored a dozen articles under alias Yamaoka Noboru in the 1970s. As briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter, Kaiya, along with his high school classmate Inoue Masashi, was one of the first instrumental accompanists to be hired at the Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi location in late 1955 or early 1956. Though he initially played the cello, by 1965 Kaiya was a union activist (head of the Tomoshibi union in 1964) and “theorist” (*rironka*), becoming a de facto ideological voice of the Komaura Tomoshibi labor union and, later, the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi.<sup>70</sup> In the history of Tomoshibi, Kaiya remains by far the

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<sup>69</sup> Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi Renraku Iinkai, “Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi tōgi shiryō,” (August 1968), 35.

<sup>70</sup> Kaiya’s turn to “theorist” coincides with his departure from an orchestra he had been playing with for multiple years. He was a founding member of the Rōon Ensemble, once again together with Inoue Masashi. However, Kaiya quit the ensemble in 1964 when Akutagawa Yasushi, the ensemble’s director, had a falling out with the ensemble and created his own ensemble called the New Symphony Orchestra (Shin Kōkyōgakudan). Masaru Yamaoka, “Sannin no shikoisha to no deai,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (August 1977), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 30.

most prolific writer whose earliest surviving writings as a Tomoshibi employee can be dated back as early as to 1960, a rarity even among the early Tomoshibi employees.

As a Tomoshibi employee with the highest volume of documentary trails, Kaiya offers a multiple-decade history through which to examine the ideological progression of not only himself but also Komaura-line Tomoshibi. In the span of twenty years between 1960 and 1979, Kaiya engaged himself with mainly two questions. First, particularly in the early 1960s, Kaiya was interested in bringing various *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo together toward a shared political and cultural direction in recognition of (but not necessarily in imitation of) the Utagoe movement. Though this project does not appear to have lasted more than several years, Kaiya's experience likely informed his preoccupation with the concepts he would continue to pursue into the 1970s. Second, with *utagoe kissa* as a medium of engagement with the “people,” Kaiya responded to the ongoing questions in the Utagoe movement between the 1960s and 1970s regarding concepts such as “livelihood” (*seikatsu*), “decadence” (*taihai*), and “creation” (*sōzō*) – all vague and loaded terms that ultimately caused dissention among Utagoe participants by the end of the 1960s (as explored in Chapter 4 of this dissertation). Indeed, as acknowledged by his fellow staff members at Tomoshibi, Kaiya was the authority on “theory” (*riron*) whose assessment of *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement very much affects the relationship between Tomoshibi and the Utagoe movement to this day.

Kaiya's oldest surviving writing is an article that he submitted in 1960 to *Ongaku Undō* (“Music Movement”), a *gariban* periodical run by individuals who had variable relationships with the Utagoe movement.<sup>71</sup> In this article, we find that Kaiya was still a cellist in the

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<sup>71</sup> Partial copies of the journal (titled *Ongaku Tsūshin* until No. 13) are available at the Ōhara Institute for Social Research, Tokyo (Nos. 17 to 32, 1960-1962), and Ongaku Center (Nos. 1-14, 1956-1958, with many missing issues), Tokyo.

“Tomoshibi Ensemble” and that he also took part in the Anpo demonstrations that year. Though he expresses his disappointment with the Society of Musicians for Safeguarding Democracy (Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai), he nonetheless points out that the Anpo demonstrations still brought together people with different kinds of “livelihood” (*seikatsu*).<sup>72</sup> Kaiya does not appear to have cooperated much with existing Utagoe-affiliated groups at this time. Intriguingly, however, in evaluating the positive effect of the Anpo demonstrations, he does so in terms of *seikatsu*, a term that would have been familiar to Utagoe participants precisely due to its vagueness in meaning (as explored in Chapter 2). At any rate, we see that, already at this point in time, Kaiya was more than a cellist who was moving across different groups, seeking to realize a greater end through music.

In the second half of the 1960s, Kaiya appears to have directed much of his energy toward union activities. At this stage in his life, he almost seems to have been set to become a union figure, fulfilling roles such as the secretary of the Tomoshibi labor union (the latter of which belonged to the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan, better known as Sōhyō), member of the Sōhyō Tokyo Regional Committee, and chief secretary of the Shinjuku Ward labor union council (Rōkyō). Not surprisingly, during these years Kaiya penned articles for Tomoshibi rather sporadically, for example for the occasion of the formation of the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi in 1969 (of which he was the first secretary until 1971). Bulk of Kaiya’s articles on music and *utagoe kissa* were written in the late 1970s after this “union figure” phase, after which Komaura-line Tomoshibi once again became his primary affiliated organization. Under alias Yamaoka Noboru, Kaiya authored more than twenty articles in the late

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<sup>72</sup> Noboru Kaiya, “Minshushugi o mamoru ongakuka no kai ni nozomu,” *Ongaku undō* no. 19 (September 1960): 6-7.

1970s on *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (*Tomoshibi Monthly*), a monthly subscription-based periodical published by Komaura-line Tomoshibi from 1976.

Written between 1977 and 1979 under the subtitle *rondan* (“forum”), Kaiya’s article series is historically significant for Tomoshibi in their subsequent treatment and timing. In Tomoshibi, Kaiya’s articles from these years have since become something of a canon. To date, Kaiya is the only figure in Tomoshibi whose writings have been put together as a collection for internal use. As I shall discuss later, Kaiya’s characterization of *utagoe kissa* have informed Tomoshibi’s subsequent (and indeed current) conception of *utagoe kissa* as both a performance format and a means of personal and collective reform, with collective singing as the core element in both cases.

In addition to their subsequent treatment in Tomoshibi, Kaiya’s *rondan* articles are also historically significant in that they were written at a transitional moment in the history of *utagoe kissa*. Most symbolically, in October 1977, the Seibu Shinjuku branch of Tomoshibi closed its doors, leaving Komaura-line Tomoshibi as its sole heir. Major newspapers reported the closure of the first Tomoshibi with shock, proclaiming the end of an era. Indeed, by 1977, all self-proclaimed *utagoe kissa* in Shinjuku that opened in the 1950s were out of business: both the east and west locations of Kachūsha had closed in 1973; short-lived establishments like Ari (“Ant”) did not live to see the coming of the 1970s; Donzoko was still open, but its *utagoe* occasions were dwindling in size year after year so that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the owner almost contemplated abandoning singing sessions altogether in 1979. In Shinjuku in the year 1977, then, with the exception of Donzoko, only the newly established Shinjuku location of Komaura-line Tomoshibi (est. 1972) left standing.

Kaiya and his fellow employees at Tomoshibi faced a double challenge at this time: How to maintain Tomoshibi's movement identity while sustaining Tomoshibi as a viable business at a time when *utagoe kissa* was clearly going out of fashion. Placed in both contemporary and later contexts, Kaiya's *rondan* articles serve as a bridge connecting various legacy materials of *utagoe*, which derived from both *utagoe kissa* and the Utagoe movement, with a future development of *utagoe* that he sought to realize. Kaiya's *rondan* articles can therefore be read against two historical backdrops: first, as Kaiya's response to the ongoing concerns surrounding *utagoe* as a form of (almost utopian) activism at the time of his writing; second, as Tomoshibi's centerpiece material that informs Tomoshibi staff's own understanding of and engagement with *utagoe kissa* to this day. In that capacity, the discussion that follows in subsequent paragraphs serve both to illustrate the significance of movement identity in Komaura-line Tomoshibi and to foreshadow Tomoshibi's presence in the post-1970s development of *utagoe kissa* in 2010s Japan, the latter of which will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

The most notable feature of Kaiya's *rondan* articles lie in their vocabulary. In particular, his continuous engagement with the concepts of "everyday life" (*nichijō seikatsu*), "movement" (*undō*), and "creation" (*sōzō*) harken back to not only his earlier writings from the 1960s but also contemporary discourse in the Utagoe movement. In his *rondan* articles, Kaiya attempts to critically revisit these core concepts of the Utagoe movement from the 1950s and 1960s, still using the same vocabulary on one hand but censuring what he perceives to be misapplication of these terms on the other. In doing so, Kaiya weaves together "everyday life," "movement," and "creation" unto both individual and collective levels, characterizing them as *acts* that must start from the individual first.

In his *rondan* articles, Kaiya attempts to tackle all three concepts from early on. In his first *rondan* article, provocatively titled “On the Relationship between Musical (Performance) and Everyday Life” (February 1977), Kaiya emphasizes reciprocal relationships between music and one’s everyday experience as a key element in Tomoshibi’s way of music-making and “human-making” (*ningen zukuri*). In his own words,

I want to emphasize that the most important thing when it comes to performance (*ensō*) is the will (*ishi*) with regard to “how to sing” within the individual. . . . At Tomoshibi, [we] are simultaneously pursuing exploration (*tankyū*) of music through the chorus and instrumental ensemble, as well as human-making (*ningen zukuri*) through various group activities (*dan katsudō*), under a unified philosophy (*rinen*). Herein, I think, lies one [important] feature of Tomoshibi.<sup>73</sup>

The degree of emphasis on “human-making” (*ningen zukuri*) is worth pointing out here. To Kaiya, the individual is important because it is the nexus of both musical performance and the everyday life. In doing so, he adds his own twist to 1950s-1960s Utagoe discourse on movement, which placed the individual as a means toward contributing to and realizing a movement (compare, for example, with the case of Araki Sakae the laborer-composer in Chapter 3). Instead, Kaiya asserts the individual to be both the means and end of a movement, thereby asserting that a movement both creates and grows from an individual who likewise grows from partaking in a movement.

He makes this reciprocal relationship even clearer in his next article (March 1977), expressly stating that carrying out a creation (*sōzō*) movement must involve personal growth as a

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<sup>73</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “Ongaku (*ensō*) to nichijō seikatsu no kanren ni tsuite,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (February 1977), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’ rensei “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 8.

creatively independent and responsive individual, rather than creation for the sake of creating new works (*sōsaku*). Here, once again, Kaiya emphasizes why Tomoshibi is special in this regard, this time making his point through the phrase “emotional receptivity” (*kanjusei*):

We Tomoshibi emphasize “nurturing a rich emotional receptivity (*kanjusei*) through music” whenever possible. I believe that a rich receptivity becomes necessary not only when listening to and playing music, but also in leading everyday life (*nichijō seikatsu*) or toward the successful development of a movement. Any movement for social progress (speaking at large, from democratic movement to academic research) must arise from love for humanity (*ningen ai*) and human being’s lived experience (*jissekatsu*), and the direction and method of a movement must always be based on an endless feeling of love toward human being’s lived experience through emotional receptivity of those who lead a movement.<sup>74</sup>

In this vein, he goes on to argue that “cultural creation” (*bunka sōzō*) must not be reduced to “work creation” (*sōsaku*). Kaiya’s attempt to discern creation at large (*sōzō*) from creation of individual works (*sōsaku*) is noteworthy when contrasted with the Utagoe movement’s emphasis in the late 1960s on collective work creation (*shūdan sōsaku*) in both the Utagoe movement and Tomoshibi operettas, as previously discussed.

Kaiya’s argument regarding “cultural creation” and “work creation” in this article was clearly a response to the overt faith in collective creation that he believed had afflicted both the Utagoe movement and Tomoshibi operettas a decade earlier. As discussed in the previous section, Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s operetta works in the late 1960s likewise emphasized and engaged in collective work creation in the form of the operetta. Yet, Kaiya argues, collective

<sup>74</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “Sugureta geijutsu, bunka wa watashitachi no nichijō seikatsu ni nanika o motarasuka,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (March 1977), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 10-11.

wisdom of non-specialists alone cannot reach the level of a professional specialist (*senmonka*), citing an episode in which a professional actor immediately spotted a line from *Rice Ball Rolls over (Omusubi kororin*, Tomoshibi's second collectively-created operetta; 1965) that was modified by a professional poet.<sup>75</sup> It is in this vein that Kaiya attributes the failure of a meeting cultural and performance groups in 1969 to “a short-sighted (*tanraku*) conflation” between “cultural creation” (*bunka sōzō*) and “work creation” (*sōsaku*).<sup>76</sup>

However, this is not to say that the individual was unconditionally more important to Kaiya. On the contrary, he perceived the individual and collective to be reciprocal – specifically, he called for individuals that presupposed to the collective but still conscious as an individual who could resonate with music and everyday experience. In this vein, Kaiya asserts that voluntary participation and cultivation are the true drivers of “democratic cultural movement,” creation (*sōzō*) movement, and work creation (*sōsaku*). He goes so far to argue that neither the laborer’s struggle (*tatakai*) as a plot device nor organization (*soshiki*) by itself can satisfy the tasks associated with “democratic cultural movement.”<sup>77</sup> Here, again, Kaiya challenges the core notions regarding collectivity that significantly informed the creative efforts of the Utagoe movement and Komaura-line Tomoshibi a decade earlier.

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<sup>75</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “Bunka sōzō undō ni tsuite,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (April 1977), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 15.

<sup>76</sup> This meeting was likely the third meeting of the Song and Dance Ensemble, Chorus, and Cultural operation team Conference (Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi) held on August 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 1969. Tomoshibi’s cultural operation team had been a member of the conference by 1967. *Ibid.*, 13, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “Minshuteki bunka undō no mezasu mono: sono hitotsu no sokumen,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (April 1978), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 58, 61.

Kaiya similarly defined the Komaura lineage apart from those of other *utagoe kissa*. In distinguishing Komaura-line Tomoshibi from Shibata Shin's original Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi, Kaiya invokes "everydayness" (*nichijōsei*) to denote that which sustained the life of Komaura-line Tomoshibi. Shibata Shin, Kaiya asserts, sought to develop his Tomoshibi in a "commercialist direction," constantly pursuing "new things" to that end. This led to a chasm between Shibata and those employees in Tomoshibi who wanted to create a "socially-minded movement (*shakaiteki na undō*) in addition to pursuing the fundamentals of singing and music."

Following this historical narrative, Kaiya argues that *utagoe kissa*, or any musical activity for that matter, must "contain 'something' that can elevate that which is not present in the everydayness (*nichijōsei*), in addition to [elevating] the everyday-ness."<sup>78</sup> Needless to say, Kaiya implies that Komaura-line Tomoshibi has been engaged in such an effort for more than a decade – or, in his own words, a series of efforts toward "extracting the correct demand (*yōkyū*) in relation to the manner in which the youth truly ought to be."<sup>79</sup> In arguing thus, Kaiya places Komaura-line Tomoshibi to be not only a surviving *utagoe kissa* but also a movement at the forefront of "pursuing the fundamentals of singing and music," seemingly implying that Komaura-line Tomoshibi survived precisely because of this sense of direction.

Finally, Kaiya's repudiation of what he saw as past errors in both *utagoe kissa* and Utagoe movement is most visible in his defense of Tomoshibi's choice of repertoires of music and action. In one of his *rondan* articles from 1978, he challenges the reader to reconsider the past Japanese Communist Party-line cultural associations' emphases on the cultural operation team (*bunkōtai*) and Japanese folk music in light of the recent backlash against Tomoshibi's

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<sup>78</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, "Nani ga motomerareteiruka," *Gekkan Tomoshibi* 8 no. 5 (May 1977), 6.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 7.

adoption of chanson and tango (presumably from JCP-line cultural associations).<sup>80</sup> Adding that chanson sings the pains of the everyday life, Kaiya argues that it is not the form or genre of musical performance that should be put into question, but rather how a performance is able to effect a change within the individual. The key, he continues, is to evoke emotional responses to such a level to awaken in the listener “will to reform one self,” “love, courage, and dignity as a human being,” and “the beauty (*subarashisa*) of living.”<sup>81</sup> In arguing thus, Kaiya repudiates past frames of musical selection in both Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi (incorporating anything that sells) and the Utagoe movement (insular thinking with regard to musical genres based on their supposed ideological correctness). With this assessment, Kamiya effectively proclaimed the ideological independence of Tomoshibi, no longer chained by its part-*utagoe kissa* and part-Utagoe movement pasts. As Kaiya envisioned it, Tomoshibi’s “creation” (*sōzō*) efforts must effect a conscious change within the individual first before it could reach more collective levels.

But it must be pointed out that Kaiya was not calling for Tomoshibi to completely break away from the Japanese Communist Party-line cultural discourse. On the contrary, as previously noted, Kaiya’s musical and cultural worldview as presented in his *rondan* articles is firmly grounded in the vocabulary and assumptions from 1950s JCP-line cultural discourse. Most tellingly, Kaiya’s take on music is still justified in extra-musical terms. Indeed, this is perhaps the biggest legacy of the Utagoe movement that has survived in Tomoshibi’s ideological lineage. To be sure, Kaiya acknowledged the fact that, as an *utagoe kissa*, Tomoshibi was bounded by the

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<sup>80</sup> On formative Utagoe’s emphasis and origins of the cultural operation team and Japanese folk music, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>81</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “Hoka kara manabu koto to, tsune ni ‘genten wa nani ka’ to tou koto,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (May 1978), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 64, 65, 67.

*utagoe kissa* format, which necessarily involved the process of incorporating existing songs.

Kaiya described the resulting screening process in terms of “re-creation” (*saisōzō*), which would have to involve performing a song “in accordance with . . . the idea (*shisō*) that the composer wanted to express.”<sup>82</sup> And yet, as the preceding chapters have shown in terms of what I call “musical reformism” and the culturally concerned, music ultimately had to be a justifiable act *for the sake of the people* (or individuals) while also reinventing itself for that purpose. Insofar as such a cause is concerned, *utagoe kissa* activities and ideas espoused by Kaiya Noboru (alias Yamaoka Masaru), as well as Tomoshibi’s operettas and one-day *utagoe kissa* events, were indeed more about *utagoe* than *kissa*. Kaiya’s direct and indirect criticism of the Utagoe movement and Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi notwithstanding, in many ways the state of *utagoe kissa* from the late 1970s onward points more to a survival of *utagoe* than *kissa*. In other words, *utagoe kissa* managed to survive the 1970s thanks to individuals who found a sense of mission in *utagoe*, rather than in *kissa*. This development is also important in current-day contexts in which *utagoe* is mostly remembered in terms of *utagoe kissa*, which in turn has survived much more as events organized by the willing than as business establishments. Before considering what kind of a movement, if at all, such forms of *utagoe kissa* entail (a question to be explored in Chapter 6), a brief look at Tomoshibi’s institutionalization will prove useful.

### Tomoshibi’s Institutionalization in Context: Wherewithal the Utagoe movement?

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<sup>82</sup> Masaru Yamaoka, “‘Otona’ tachi no yakuwari,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* (September 1978), reproduced in Masaru Yamaoka, *Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi kessei 40 shūnen kinen ‘Gekkan Tomoshibi’rensai “Rondan” senshū: Tomoshibi o kizuita mono* (Tokyo: Ongaku Bunka Shūdan Tomoshibi, 2009), 77.

In light of *utagoe kissa*'s dominance in public memory surrounding the term *utagoe*, there remains one pertinent question: What was Tomoshibi's role and place among *utagoe kissa* and in relation to the Utagoe movement? Thus far this chapter has been chiefly concerned with how some of the former staff at the Komaura branch of Tomoshibi justified their activities using repertoires of music and action that would have been readily recognizable to contemporary participants of the Utagoe movement. However, as I have argued through Komaura-line Tomoshibi's endeavors, these individuals did not formulate their activities as Utagoe movement affiliates. Still, as Kaiya Noboru's writings from the late 1970s most aptly indicate, members of Komaura-line Tomoshibi continued to engage with a number of important concepts with cultural and political bearings that derived from the 1950s Japanese Communist Party cultural policy, sometimes clearly in critique of the Utagoe movement's established position, while not outright decrying the Utagoe movement and its national organization Nihon no Utagoe. Overall, it seems as though Komaura-line Tomoshibi was willing neither to explicitly associate itself with or distance itself from the Utagoe movement.

To be sure, in the early 1960s, there were attempts among *utagoe kissa* employees in Tokyo to raise the sort of political awareness that would have been compatible with that of the Utagoe movement. Between 1960 and up to at least 1963, for instance, around thirty *utagoe kissa* employees formed the Alpha Society (Arufa no kai), a biweekly gathering that sought to bring unity to *utagoe kissa* that had been formally "lacking horizontal connections" and "isolated."<sup>83</sup> Due to dearth of surviving documents, it is unclear how long the society continued to convene or for what reason the society disbanded. In any case, the society appears to have been plagued by disparities between members in their "sense of livelihood" (*seikatsu ishiki*) and

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<sup>83</sup> Shin Tominaga, "Arufa no kai ni tsuite," *Kikan Utagoe* no. 2 (April 1963): 16.

“sense of purpose” (*mokuteki ishiki*).<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, the reports (*kaihō*) from the society’s meetings from 1961 indicate some curious pictures brought together by a dozen *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo. With Shibata (née Mizuno) Riya, who had married Tomoshibi’s owner Shibata Shin several years earlier, as the Society’s chief secretary, the society discussed issues such as how to deal with “military songs” (*gunka*) and how to connect with the Utagoe movement.<sup>85</sup>

From the limited amount of information that can be gathered from the reports, it would seem that the society was generally sympathetic to the Utagoe movement, as evinced by a survey from Donzoko that is quoted in one of the reports: “As of now, the only point of connection [between different stores] is the songs, but there should be more intimate connections on both organizational and individual levels” (June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961). Indeed, this discussion was followed up by a conversation on the general paucity of partaking in the Utagoe movement “outside of *utagoe kissa*” by society members.<sup>86</sup> Though it is not clear what became of these initiatives, it should be noted that the Alpha Society did not call for a merger with the Utagoe movement. Rather, the society was calling for its members to bring music to a wider audience and to do their part in manners comparable to those of the Utagoe movement, as though to encourage alignment with the Utagoe movement in spirit but not necessarily in organization.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Tominaga Shin’s article from 1963 indicates that the society was still convening at the time of his writing. In addition, the private archive of Miyamoto Suguru in Osaka contains four reports from meetings that took place in 1961 (May 21<sup>st</sup>, June 4<sup>th</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and July 16<sup>th</sup>).

<sup>85</sup> These *utagoe kissa* include the following: the two Tomoshibi locations in Shinjuku; the two Kachūsha locations in Shinjuku; Donzoko in Shinjuku; Yamagoya (“Mountain Cottage”) in Ikebukuro; Makiba (“Ranch”) in Shibuya; Utagoe (“Singing Voice”) in Kawasaki (closed around 1961). By 1963, the society also included employees from newly-opened Shirojūji (“White Cross”) in Sugamo, Tomoshibi in Kichijōji, and El Salvador in Kawasaki. Tominaga, 16-17.

<sup>86</sup> “Arufa no kai kaihō” no. 2 (June 1960); “Arufa no kai kaihō” no. 3 (July 1960).

For its part, the Utagoe movement remained silent on the development of *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo or elsewhere, offering absolutely no coverage in Nihon no Utagoe's official newspaper *Utagoe Shimbun*. Yet, from 1968 onward, there are signs of rapprochement of a sort between the two incarnations of *utagoe*, particularly from the Utagoe movement toward *utagoe kissa* – at least as a format to learn from. *Utagoe Shimbun* from then on began to publish an increasing number of articles commenting on *utagoe kissa* as a potential recruitment platform. In 1973, *Utagoe Shimbun* even included an article in which Aoyagi Tsuneo, as a veteran song-leader at Tomoshibi, is asked about how to lead *utagoe kissa* effectively, without any reference to his past membership in the Central Chorus.<sup>87</sup> *Utagoe Shimbun* issues around this time are filled with “success stories” that emphasize how the *utagoe kissa* format managed to foster the interest of the people who would otherwise have been uninterested in singing with Utagoe-affiliated choruses. On the pages of *Utagoe Shimbun*, these articles marked the first instances in which *utagoe kissa* was given more coverage and significance beyond simple advertisements.

As if to reflect this development, it was during the decades between the 1960s and 1970s that an *utagoe kissa* and Nihon no Utagoe became equals as organizations. In 1967, Tomoshibi's cultural operation team joined the Song and Dance Ensemble, Chorus, and Cultural operation team Conference (Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi). Included in this conference were JCP-aligned (or, at least JCP-friendly) groups like the Central Chorus, Utagoe's national headquarters Ongaku Center (see Chapter 2), Ensemble Katyusha (see Chapter 4), the theater troupe Warabiza, and the Rōon. then, in 1970, Tomoshibi joined the Cultural Organizations Communication

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<sup>87</sup> “Jōzu na shikai no kotsu: ‘Tomoshibi’ no Aoyagi san ni kiku,” *Utagoe Shimbun*, November 10, 1977.

Conference (Bunka Dantai Renraku Kaigi, formed in 1963, also referred to as “Bundanren” for short), an association of “democratic cultural and artistic groups” that still exists today (2020).<sup>88</sup>

There exists a telling anecdote regarding the relationship between Tomoshibi and Nihon no Utagoe from these years. When the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi became a permanent member of the Cultural Organizations Communication Conference, Miyamoto Suguru, who was Tomoshibi’s representative, was once asked a very basic question: “Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi from *utagoe kissa* Tomoshibi? Isn’t that the same thing as the Utagoe movement?”<sup>89</sup> In addition to demonstrating the degree to which the word *utagoe* came to designate JCP-aligned (or, at least, inspired) efforts involving singing, this anecdote, in hindsight, also seems to indicate the perceived fundamental similarity in the musico-political perspectives that both Tomoshibi and Nihon no Utagoe possessed. Indeed, for the representatives of other participating groups, Tomoshibi’s interest in responding to the contemporary Japanese youth’s “demands” (*yōkyū*) through music and Nihon no Utagoe’s emphasis on giving voice to the Japanese people’s “demands” through voluntary work creation (*sōsaku*) may very well have looked like two sides of the same coin.<sup>90</sup>

And yet, interactions between Tomoshibi and Nihon no Utagoe seem to have been minimal, despite their offices’ physical proximity.<sup>91</sup> Though the two offices shared information

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<sup>88</sup> Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi Renraku Iinkai, “Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi tōgi shiryō,” (August 1968), 35-36; Ōno (2019), 153.

<sup>89</sup> Personal communication with Miyamoto Suguru, Tokyo, Japan, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Nihon no Utagoe’s report emphasizing its effort to encourage work creation and the Tomoshibi cultural operation team’s report on “responding to the youth’s various demands”. Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi Renraku Iinkai, “Kabudan Gasshōdan Bunkōtai Kaigi tōgi shiryō” (August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1968), 11-18 and 35-36.

<sup>91</sup> Between the 1970s and 1992, Tomoshibi had its office in the Ōkubo neighborhood of Shinjuku Ward, just across the street from Ongaku Center (the seat of the Nihon no Utagoe National Council). Interview with Miyamoto Suguru, Osaka, Japan, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

time to time according to aforementioned Miyamoto, periodicals from both Tomoshibi and Nihon no Utagoe indicate no history of collaboration.<sup>92</sup> As such, such a distance between the two offices, both physical and official, is almost indicative of the not-so-distant and yet not-so-cooperative relationship between the two standard-bearers of *utagoe*. In many ways this relationship continues to be in place as of 2020, a dynamic that will be explored more directly in more detail in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

#### Conclusion: Historical Conditions for Remembering *Utagoe* as a Virtue

In the second half of this chapter, I have argued that Komaura-line Tomoshibi devised its version of (and justification for) *utagoe* as an *utagoe kissa* with a cause larger than simply providing a space for singing. It would perhaps do well to revisit the year 1977 at this point – the year that *Mainichi Shimbun* reported on the closure of the Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi as the end of an era. Was this a time of transition for *utagoe kissa*, with Tomoshibi as the torchbearer for more singing voices across Tokyo and beyond? For one thing, the 1970s no doubt witnessed a generational shift of a sort among *utagoe kissa*. In 1972, Tomoshibi under the Musical-Cultural Group Tomoshibi had published its own songbook (still in use as of 2020 with several revisions), putting an end to its decade-long dependence on the Seibu Shinjuku branch's songbooks.

Though *utagoe kissa* had gone out of business by dozens across Japan by 1977, the late 1970s also saw the openings of several *utagoe kissa* by former Tomoshibi staff or Utagoe-

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

affiliated chorus members. Below is a list of such *utagoe kissa* that are attested in textual sources or by virtue of survival to this day:

1. Jūichijikan (“Eleventh-Hour House,” 1973-?) in Takadano Baba, Tokyo, founded with the assistance of Komaura-line Tomoshibi staff<sup>93</sup>
2. Andantei (a pun on *andante* and the Japanese *tei* [“pavilion”], 1976?-1993) in Niigata, founded by Koichi Shin, a former Tomoshibi employee<sup>94</sup>
3. Lark (1976-?) in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, founded by a former Central Chorus member<sup>95</sup>
4. Balalaika (1978-Present) in Sendai, opened by Nanbu Toshirō, a native of Yūbari, Hokkaido, who had “studied” (*musha shugyō*) the basics of running and performing at *utagoe kissa* at Donzoko and Komaura-line Tomoshibi in Shinjuku<sup>96</sup>
5. Ieji (“Homeward,” 1979-Present) in the Sanchōme neighborhood of Shinjuku, Tokyo, opened by the Central Chorus veteran and former Tomoshibi employee Fukano (now Hashimoto) Yasuko

These new businesses were crimes of passion by the willing few, so to speak, opened at a time when *utagoe kissa* was clearly no longer a fad. Combined with Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s new songbook, the appearance of these *utagoe kissa* point to a new phase in the history of *utagoe kissa*, in which passionate individuals continued to engage themselves in *utagoe kissa* regardless of financial outlooks.

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<sup>93</sup> Gasshōdan Shirakaba, “Gasshōdan Shirakaba dai 20 kai teiki ensōkai” (1973), 13 (unnumbered); Interview with Miyamoto Suguru, Osaka, Japan, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>94</sup> Personal communication with Koichi Shin, Tokyo, Japan, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>95</sup> “Nukumori ni afureta ‘kobeya’: Ikebukuro utagoe hiroba Raku,” *Gekkan Tomoshibi* no. 28 (September 1977): 7.

<sup>96</sup> At Donzoko, Nanbu studied under the accordionist Watanabe Mitsuko. Interview with Nanbu Toshirō, Sendai, Japan, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

It is worth noting that, against this backdrop, *utagoe kissa* would be remembered for their youthful naiveté than high-culture profile. To be sure, the image of *utagoe kissa* as youthful and naïve was already present in the 1958 film *Giants and Toys*, in which the male protagonist Nishi implores his friend from his college years, now transformed into a calculating businessman, to recall the innocent days when they “used to sing their hearts out at *utagoe sakaba* (*utagoe bar*).”<sup>97</sup> At the same, however, as previously noted, places like Seibu Shinjuku Tomoshibi were known for their lavish stage, complete with a multi-story space with balconies. Similarly, Donzoko was known as a secret quarter of a sort for sophisticated and “cultured” individuals like writer Mishima Yukio, film director Kurosawa Akira, and singer Mikawa Ken’ichi, also inviting foreign guests like members of the USSR State Academic Chorus when they visited Japan. Such a culture disappeared along with the up-and-coming entrepreneurs who opened these first-generation *utagoe kissa*, namely Shibata Shin of Tomoshibi and Lin Jinsheng (Rin Kinsei, or Hayashi Hideki) of Kachūsha, both of whom one former Tomoshibi and Kachūsha employee described as individuals with “a talent for producing” who had a knack for bringing together the right people with talent for their establishments.<sup>98</sup> What remained instead was *utagoe* as an idealism, a convergence of Tomoshibi’s and Utagoe movement’s versions by means of their shared musical reformism.

In tandem with this development, there is no denying that things *utagoe* at large rapidly declined in public recognition from the 1970s onward. The Utagoe movement and certainly *utagoe kissa* seemed to have ceased to be controversial in the mainstream media, as they no longer received the sort of yellow journalistic coverage that they once did throughout the 1950s.

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<sup>97</sup> *Kyojin to gangu*, directed by Yasuzō Masumura (1958; San Francisco: Fantoma Films, 2001), DVD.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Kaneya Moriaki, Tokyo, Japan, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The reasons for this decline in recognition are manifold, including political, cultural, and technological factors. Ōtsubo Shōichi sums up this multifaceted development in his case study of Utagoe-affiliated groups in Sendai from 1998:

It was between the late 1960s and early 1970s that . . . the [Utagoe] movement's stagnation began to be noted. It was a point in time in which, for many among the Japanese masses, an era during which they sought after "utagoe" due to lack of their own songs came to an end and the effects of Japan's remarkable growth as a music market began to be felt in the people's livelihood (*kokumin seikatsu*). Against the backdrop of major changes in popular music (*taishū ongaku*) through *enka*, *kei ongaku*, *fōku*, and rock, not to mention the spread of the television, radio, and audio device, this led to a situation in which Utagoe itself had to undergo a significant change. . . . [The late 1970s] could be described as a point in time in which, thanks in part to the flourishing of the *karaoke* and music industry in which one can sing "leisurely" (*kigaru ni*), [organizations like] the Utagoe movement which organized individuals into songs ran into even bigger difficulties.<sup>99</sup>

Ōtsubo's explanation above suggests that consumption of music became affordable, in terms both of price and availability. Indeed, at a time when portable radios and record players were becoming increasingly affordable, early incarnations of the *karaoke* machine made appeals to the consumers by means of their portability. At the very least, the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* now had to compete with more varied and affordable forms of musical consumption, on top of the general decline of the student movement since the late 1960s.<sup>100</sup>

Not surprisingly, Tomoshibi began to struggle financially from the 1980s onward. Current employees of Tomoshibi readily admit that Tomoshibi experienced serious economic

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<sup>99</sup> Shōichi Ōtsubo, "Bunka undō no fukyū ni kansuru jisshōteki kenkyū" (research report, Hirosaki University, 1998), 32-33.

<sup>100</sup> On the student movement in 1960s Japan, see Kapur, 144-154.

hardships since the 1980s. The stores were no longer self-sustaining, and Tomoshibi as a business was being sustained by the operetta troupe and outside performances. This state would not be reversed until after 1999 when Tomoshibi began to witness a surge in the “returning” patrons who were now retired.<sup>101</sup> Tomoshibi’s slump between the 1980s and 1999 reflect two historical developments: the postwar café boom in Japan certainly subsided by 1980, as the number of cafés was no longer going up; despite its primary title of *utagoe kissa*, Tomoshibi was being sustained by performances outside of its *kissa* space by the operetta troupe.

Why, then, were the employees of Tomoshibi intent on keeping the stores? The argument has remained consistent here: the stores are the “base[s] of everyday activities” where Tomoshibi employees can interact with the local patrons and supporters.<sup>102</sup> The emphasis on interaction over musical performance is worth noting here, consistent with Kaiya’s perspective in his *rondan* articles. This standpoint has survived the decades and was passed on to future Tomoshibi chairs (*shachō*), Ōno Yukinori (1949-2019, Tomoshibi’s chair 1992-2019) and Saitō Takashi (chair since 2019), both of whom similarly underline personal growth in their writing or interview from their pre-chair years.<sup>103</sup> This development highlights the politico-musical characteristic of *utagoe* as a byword with vague and yet certainly not random association. On one hand, this is a legacy of Kaiya’s emphasis on “creation” (*sōzō*) over “work creation” (*sōsaku*), which is about transforming not only culture but also the individual. More importantly, Komaura-line Tomoshibi’s continued emphasis on music as a changing agent – and the

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<sup>101</sup> To be specific, between 1995 and 1999, Tomoshibi saw a 32% increase in its revenue and a 41% increase in the number of customers. In addition, since 2001, Tomoshibi began to cater to this newfound patron base more strategically, for example opening the store in the early afternoon (2PM to 4PM) when this patron base could visit Shinjuku with a safer feeling. Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019), 143, 235-241.

<sup>102</sup> Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019), 112-113.

<sup>103</sup> Yukinori Ōno, “Utagoe o kangaeru: Tomoshibi no baai,” *Ongaku no Sekai* 25 no. 5 (May 1986): 11; Interview with Saitō Takashi, Tokyo, Japan, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

importance of self-consciousness to transform the self through musical encounters and performances – demonstrates Tomoshibi’s variation from the Utagoe movement on one hand and the shared perceived importance of music as an agent of change on the other. Indeed, for movements that privilege the power of music, culture, and, above all, “singing voice,” both Nihon no Utagoe and Tomoshibi derive significance from the collective people as one of the central nodes of transformation.

Ultimately, Tomoshibi’s survival has many points of commonality with the institutional survival of Nihon no Utagoe. Above all, both institutions have justified their historical significance since the transitional decade of the 1970s – the death of the founder figure Seki Akiko for Nihon no Utagoe, and the closure of other “first-generation” *utagoe kissa* for Tomoshibi – in terms of the continued need for fighting against undesirable kinds of culture and future. In this vein, the case of Tomoshibi demonstrates the survival of *utagoe* as a byword that is in large part defined by seemingly “non-musical” terms whereby music and the individual are significant insofar as they foster collective and societal reformation. Shared vocabulary between these two incarnations of *utagoe*, in this sense, extend beyond musical repertory, which include songs that have been touched upon in this dissertation thus far: Russian-Soviet songs, American folk songs, and songs by Araki Sakae, for example. Rather, their core shared vocabulary exists in their common faith in music as a medium, mediator, and enabler towards a better community, whose “better” nature is described in the familiar vague terms such as “democratic” and “healthful.” And this continuity will be one of the main topics that will be dealt with in Chapter 6, the final chapter of this dissertation, in which I will explore the implications of *utagoe* as an idealism in current-day contexts.

## Chapter 6

### **Betwixt Movement and Nostalgia: Practicing *Utagoe* in Japan since 2011**

What is – or isn’t – *utagoe*? This has been a pertinent question for both the historical actors who have appeared thus far in this dissertation and, to a large extent, this dissertation itself. In the preceding chapters, we have seen several incarnations of this historical term, from late 1940s Japanese Communist Party-aligned literary circles to 1960s *utagoe kissa*. Despite *utagoe kissa*’s recent turn to nostalgia, these different incarnations and evocations of *utagoe* across time and space appear to have some shared elements. Most importantly, *utagoe* evokes some sort of collectivity, suggesting interpersonal significance. In this capacity, *utagoe* appeals to some kind of connection with Japan and the people who live there, as well as people outside of Japan *through* the Japanese language. In that sense, *utagoe* is indeed not strictly musical in its definition. The great majority of the writings and testimonies that have been examined in this dissertation thus far define *utagoe* through languages seemingly beyond things sonic. There seems little to doubt that *utagoe*, despite its literal meaning of “singing voice,” has never been defined simply in terms of the sound it produces.

In a departure from existing studies on the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa*, this final chapter presents my own findings on things *utagoe* from my research in Japan between 2016 and 2019. In this vein, this part-study, part-reflection chapter is as much a reflection of themes previously explored unto present-day contexts as it is a response to the viewpoints offered by my interlocutors over the span of 2016 and 2019. To that end, this chapter will present several case studies based on participant observation: specifically, a current Utagoe-affiliated chorus in Saitama Prefecture and several *utagoe kissa* across Japan (including Tomoshibi), in addition to a

number of “unaffiliated” individuals. To the extent that this chapter revisits many of the individuals and ideas that have appeared in preceding chapters in present-day contexts, thereby exploring how these individuals propose, maintain, and put into practice their ideas about *utagoe*, this chapter is more than an epilogue in its scope. But to the extent that, in doing so, I will be reflecting upon my own conversations with the individuals and ideas examined, this chapter is also a personal epilogue that brings a sense of closure to my research on things *utagoe* in the late 2010s.

The overarching historical context that concerns this chapter is the conception of a postwar Japan in the 2010s. As a vision simultaneously projected unto the present and future, it is far from singular in imagination, aided in no small part to the various forms of natural and “man-made” disasters that greatly affected Japan in the *long durée* of postwar Japan: World War II itself and its aftermath (and the specter of another war); the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and the resulting tsunami (and the prospect of an equally destructive natural disaster); a shrinking Japan with a negative birth rate and a significant elderly population (and the prospect of Japan’s downsized social welfare system).<sup>1</sup>

In all of these contexts, the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* are historical witnesses in some capacity. First, clearly in alignment with the Japanese Communist Party, Nihon no Utagoe by and large supports the Japanese Communist Party’s vision of a postwar Japan in the present moment, most notably the Party’s “peace” paradigm most often expressed through its advocacy

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<sup>1</sup> Narita Ryūichi attributes the persistent preoccupation with *sengo* (“postwar”) as a historical frame in Japan to the multiple and conflicting views on where the watershed historical moment of postwar Japan lies, as well as to differing interpretations of various watershed moments. In his recent book, David Leheny analyzes *kibōgaku* (“Hope Studies”) in the context of post-disaster relief in many senses, not limited to natural disasters. Ryūichi Narita, “*Sengo*” wa ika ni katarareruka (Tokyo: Kawade Bukkusu, 2016), 45-50; David Leheny, *Empire of Hope: the Sentimental Politics of Japanese Decline* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 174-181.

for the preservation of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, an article which declares abrogation of use of armed forces as a means of diplomacy. Secondly, the 2011 Tohoku earthquake led to the incorporation of songs that were composed following the earthquake into Utagoe-affiliated choruses' musical repertoire (whether or not composed in-house), as well as organization of *utagoe kissa* in support of the affected families (to be touched upon later in the chapter). Lastly, current-day participants and self-professed practitioners of *utagoe* are typically well over the age of sixty. In other words, things *utagoe* are historical phenomena worth studying in the context of the late 2010s in their own right against the backdrop of different historical circumstances from those of the early 1950s when the term *utagoe* was acquiring association with youth, group singing, and the Japanese Communist Party's cultural policy.

Still, both continuing cases and new incarnations of *utagoe* in the late 2010s are very much rooted in the present historical moment, whether in view of Japan's own imperial past, unlawful termination of employees, or Japan's increasingly aging population. Such a standpoint invariably stands at odds with the more conservative historical narrative of Japan that has been tacitly approved by the ruling conservative party, Liberal Democratic Party. In recent years, this viewpoint was expressed by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's oft-quoted call for "breaking free from the postwar regime" (*sengo rejīmu kara no dakkyaku*). What separates these two narratives is the notion of accountability, or whether the government that claims legitimacy as the representative institution of a state called Japan is truly acting in the best interest of the people it claims to represent. To the extent that the notion of *utagoe* in both the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* today assumes the need for an additional action for the benefit of a given community, *utagoe* continues to implicate visions surrounding a postwar Japan – more explicitly

so in some cases, particularly in the case of Nihon no Utagoe as I observed between 2016 and 2019.

### Nihon no Utagoe and the Utagoe Movement in 2019

In January 2019, I undertook my final research trip to Japan to attend the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival (Nihon no Utagoe Saiten), held annually since 1954. This particular Festival, held in Tokyo, was a historical undertaking which marked the seventieth anniversary of the Utagoe movement (only delayed to January 2019 due to scheduling issues). As I have demonstrated in preceding chapters, the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival offers great points of historical analysis. In addition to its internal purpose as a summation of the year for Nihon no Utagoe, the Festival serves as one of Utagoe's official statements made over the decades, year by year. More importantly for the current chapter, the Utagoe Festival in Tokyo in 2019 serves as an important background against which to contextualize my findings from years leading up to 2019.

Before I begin my account of the Nihon Utagoe Festival in Tokyo in 2019, however, I feel obliged to answer a potentially burning question: How is the Utagoe movement doing today? My answer is that, from an institutional point of view, Utagoe movement is far from dead as of the late 2010s. Since its formation in 1973, Utagoe's national administrative organization Nihon no Utagoe National Council (Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai, often called “Zenkokukyō” for short) is still in place, as is its historic office, Ongaku Center, in the Ōkubo neighborhood of Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo. Ongaku Center still houses its publishing house and the office of Utagoe's official newspaper *Utagoe Shimbun*, as well as a small archival space called the Seki

Akiko-Ono Teruko Archive (Seki Akiko-Ono Teruko Bunko), which stores books and documents donated by Ono Teruko (1930-2017), the only daughter of Seki Akiko. Lastly, the National Council still hosts its annual meeting and the Nihon no Utagoe Festival, showing that Nihon no Utagoe still retains a functioning bureaucracy and a periodic ritual.

In terms of participant figure, however, current statistics suggests that Utagoe has reached a population equilibrium of a sort. The Nihon no Festival reached its record-high attendee figure of 52,000 in 1965 (cumulative figure, over the span of three days), dramatically declining in number since. Going under the cumulative figure of 10,000 for the first time in 1982, the figure has since stabilized around 11,000, exceeding 15,000 only occasionally (most notably, the 1984 Festival in Osaka with 30,000 attendees over the span of three days).<sup>2</sup> As the Nihon no Utagoe Festival lasts for three days, it may be reasonable to estimate the actual number of individual attendees to be somewhere around 4,000 to 5,000, assuming that not all attendees attend all three days of the Festival.<sup>3</sup> Though members of Utagoe-affiliated groups are by no means required to attend the Nihon no Utagoe Festival, it may be safe to assume that the total membership figure across Japan does not exceed four digits.

Reduced number of attendees notwithstanding, the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival remains an intriguing event to analyze. At the very least, from a historian's perspective, the Festival offers visual, sonic, and verbal cues on policy positions, as well as various parcels of reality of current-day Utagoe. In this sense, Utagoe's seventieth anniversary Nihon no Utagoe Festival held in January 2019 possessed many telling characteristics in terms of arrangement,

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<sup>2</sup> *Utagoe undō 65 shūnen kinen utagoe wa ikeru chikara: shiryōshū*, ed. Utagoe Undō 65 Shūnen Shuppan Kikaku Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2013), 65-106.

<sup>3</sup> The first day of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival tends to be devoted to discussion in the Nihon no Utagoe National Council.

whether in the form of musical arrangement, musical choice, or physical arrangement of different *utagoe* “sections” from Japan and beyond. The main events of the Festival, Human Festa and Peace Festa, were held inside a sports venue called the Todoroki Arena in Kawasaki, Kanagawa, choice of which in a certain sense harkens back to the early years of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival when the Festival was held in sports venues in Tokyo. Inside the square-shaped arena, the “performers” (perhaps better described as part-performers and part-audience) took turns to perform their songs.

The first thing I noticed during Human Festa was the spatial organization of the arena. Perhaps unwittingly, each of the four sides of the arena bespoke the different faces of the Utagoe movement today. To the north were the pensioner’s group and several veteran members of the Central Chorus; to the east were members of the Nihon no Utagoe Chorus (Nihon no Utagoe Gasshōdan), which has members from across Japan and performs specially commissioned choral pieces during the Festival; to the south, banners from IBM and Japan Airlines employees engaged in their respective lawsuit against unlawful termination could be seen; and in the west wing, the seats were reserved for non-performing participants, while also providing the lower-level space to performers time to time. These four faces – the aging population, choral singing intended for the concert stage, workers engaged in “struggle,” and seemingly passive individuals – very much reflect the current state of the Utagoe movement as I witnessed between 2016 and 2019.

Arguably, the most noticeable difference between the seventieth anniversary Nihon no Utagoe Festival and early Festival from the 1950s was the age group of the participants. In the footage of the 1954 Utagoe Festival, for example, nearly all participants appear to be in their twenties or thirties, with sporadic middle-aged participants. In January 2019, on the contrary, the

great majority of the participants appeared to be above the age of sixty, highlighted by the pensioners' section occupying one of the corners. Utagoe was clearly no longer a youth movement like it used to be in its earliest phase.

At the same time, the Nihon no Festival in January 2019 displayed two unmistakable contemporary characteristics of Nihon no Utagoe. These notions could be found in none other than the names of the two main events of the Festival: "Human Festa" and "Peace Festa." "Human" in Human Festa is in many ways analogous to the notion of "struggle" as explored in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, in light of the Festa's emphasis on "solidarity" (*rentai*) with "all colleagues from workplaces" (*subete no shokuba no nakama*), business owners of the Tsukiji Market against relocation in the wake of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and East Asia (China, South Korea, and *zainichi* Koreans).<sup>4</sup> In light of Chapter 4's analysis of the persistence of the "foreign ally" frame even into the post-Cold War period, such a manner of presentation is not surprising. Taken as a whole, it must be noted that the narrative of struggle across workplaces and nations was made very much visible – and, of course, audible through spoken words and singing – at the Human Festa section of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival.

In comparison, Peace Festa contained a more narrative structure to it, commemorating the struggles of the Japanese people since Japan's surrender in 1945. Following a medley that ended with the Internationale, Peace Festa memorialized victims of American air raids during World War II through a choral suite, thence moving onto scenes of contemporary struggles in Japan: anti-US military base movement in Okinawa (during which Araki Sakae's "Gives us Back Okinawa" was sung in the Okinawan *yunta*-style arrangement), anti-nuclear plant movement in

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<sup>4</sup> Nihon no Utagoe Saiten Jikkō Iinkai, "70 shūnen kinen Nihon no Utagoe Saiten" (2019), 6.

the wake of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, and finally to “a World without Nuclear Arms or Wars.”<sup>5</sup> Musically speaking, the Festa presented a mosaic of both old and newly composed songs, from “We Shall not Tolerate the Atomic Bombs” (*Genbaku o yurusumaji*, 1954) to “Fukushima is not over” (*Fukushima wa owaranai inai*), the latter of which was sung by former residents of Fukushima who were forced to relocate. In doing so, Peace Festa established a narrative of continuity: Utagoe’s and the Japanese people’s continued struggles toward a peaceful existence.

While most elements of both Human Festa and Peace Festa were within my range of expectation, the finale of Human Festa turned out to be a pleasant surprise. The last song to be sung in Human Festa was an LGBT anthem “Singing for our Lives,” appearing under the Japanese title *Inochi o utaō* (“Let us sing our Lives”). The song was sung by the female vocal quartet Women of the World, as well as by the audience who sang along the song’s words displayed on big screens. Both in the contexts of the concert program and Nihon no Utagoe’s history, the song made a sudden appearance. While the Festival’s pamphlet makes it clear that the song was composed in the wake of the surging LGBT movement in 1970s United States, there has never been a “Singing Voice of LGBT” (*LGBT no utagoe*, as it would be in Japanese) section in Utagoe, nor has there been a song explicitly about LGBT composed from within Utagoe.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the only reference to the LGBT community from my interactions with Utagoe-affiliated choruses between 2016 and 2019 came Ōkuma Akira, a relatively young full-time organizer of the Tokyo chapter of Nihon no Utagoe (Tōkyō no Utagoe) who was still in his thirties when I first met him in 2016. At a talk hosted by my “host” Utagoe-affiliated chorus (to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 15.

be discussed in a later section) in March 2017 featuring Ōkuma and myself, Ōkuma opined that the Utagoe movement has yet to align with some of the marginalized communities that are clearly engaged in their struggle. Ōkuma’s choice of example was the LGBT community: Why is there no one from Utagoe working with LGTB activists, and why is there no song in support of the LGBT community despite pride parades’ remarkably musical character?

*Inochi o utaō*, the Japanese translation of “Singing for our Lives,” was Ōkuma’s response to his own query. A product of collaboration among four individuals who exchanged their drafts under Ōkuma’s initiative, *Inochi o utaō* was first included in the 2018 May Day songbook published by Ongaku Center, then included in the Peace Festa portion of the Nihon no Utagoe Festival in January 2019 (no doubt thanks to Ōkuma’s role as the general organizer of the Festival).<sup>7</sup> The exchanges between the four collaborators suggest that their primary concern lay in conveying the spirit of the song in the existing lyrics in English, while still giving some thoughts on how best to “localize” the lyrics in the status quo in Japan. For example, while the final translation includes the line “Even if our skin color is different” (after the English “We are a land of many colors”), some collaborators noted that the problem in Japan, in fact, is discrimination against other Asians who have the *same* color of skin as the Japanese.<sup>8</sup> Curiously, the line about sexuality has been neutered, transformed into “Embracing various [kinds of] love,” though this may be due in part to a limited number of syllables of no more than ten per line.

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<sup>7</sup> As will be discussed in the next section, May Day songbook is effectively the only songbook Ongaku Center publishes and updates on regular basis as of 2019. Shingo Futami, “Kōshite dekita ‘inochi o utaō’ nihongoshi,” *Futami Shingo Tsūshin*, accessed February 20, 2020, <http://futamishingo.com/2925/>.

<sup>8</sup> In the context of Human Festa, both viewpoints made sense. Members of the vocal quartet Women of the World hail from a diverse national and ethnic background, namely Indian, Italian, Japanese, and African American; as noted earlier, Human Festa also included performances by *zainichi* Korean students in Tokyo and South Korea-based choruses.

A year since attending the Nihon no Utagoe Festival in January 2019, I cannot help but feel that the manner in which “Singing for our Lives” was included in Human Festa’s concert program reflects the persistence of Nihon no Utagoe’s historical and continuing means of identification based on occupational and national lines. As I have argued in Part II of this dissertation (Chapters 3 and 4), these two lines of identification arose during Utagoe’s ascendant decade of the 1950s and remain official in Nihon no Utagoe’s current statute. The LGBT community does not fit neatly in either category, which may explain Utagoe’s general paucity of collaboration with LGBT activists. At the same time, LGBT activists are certainly engaged in what Utagoe would recognize as “struggle” (*tatakai*), a characteristic that was visibly applied to the former and current residents of Fukushima Prefecture. This gets us back to Ōkuma’s query from 2017: Why does LGBT remain so invisible and inaudible in Utagoe today? From a historical standpoint, Ōkuma’s “activist” and “musical” principles resemble those exercised by the Central Chorus in its early years (see Chapter 2), going to various gatherings (*shūkai*) for laid off workers to sing with his guitar and composing songs on their respective “struggle.”<sup>9</sup> Are Ōkuma’s endeavors simply not big enough of a movement to initiate further engagements with the LGBT community? In the remainder of the section on Nihon no Utagoe, I will continue to explore the notions of “movement” and “struggle” as they are practiced in groups that identify themselves through the term *utagoe* today.

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<sup>9</sup> During my research in Japan between 2016 and 2019, I found Ōkuma to be an exceptional figure in current-day Utagoe in this regard. Many of the songs he composed through and in support of these ongoing court cases of unlawful termination in Tokyo have appeared in Ongaku Center’s May Day songbooks from the late 2010s.



Figure 6.1: Women of the World performing “Singing for our Lives” with the audience in Human Festa’s finale following a *taiko* ensemble performance, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Note the big screens on top, on which the song’s lyrics were displayed.

#### Interlude: Kubota Satoshi on Movement

Over the course of my research between 2016 and 2019, I have had the fortune of meeting and interviewing several individuals who experienced *utagoe*-related developments since the early 1950s. Still performing and making public appearances as of 2019, these individuals had their own take on the past and present of things *utagoe* and the world. A particularly dramatic example is Kubota Satoshi (b. 1935), a native of Tokyo whose historical presence could be felt in almost all of the historical developments in *utagoe* that I tapped my hands on throughout my research. After years of searching, I was finally able to meet with him in January of 2019. A

former member of the Central Chorus who now lives in Setouchi, Okayama Prefecture, since the 1980s, Kubota has seen everything covered in this dissertation thus far: awakening to communism and the Utagoe movement in the early 1950s; studying music and “ideology” (*rinen*) at the Central Chorus under Seki Akiko; organizing a regional Utagoe “center chorus” (*chūshin gasshōdan*) in Saitama Prefecture (whose successor I became a member of and undertook a case study on, as will be discussed in the next section); fall from grace from leadership role in Utagoe and the Japanese Communist Party in 1962; making a living by playing the accordion at multiple *utagoe kissa* in and around Tokyo; leading his own musical ensemble and “movement” outside of the institutionalized Utagoe movement.<sup>10</sup> At first glance, Kubota would seem a resilient musician with an unchanging level of conviction in musical movement.

Yet, calling himself an “Old Marxist Boy” (his own expression in English), Kubota remarks that he is no longer preoccupied with musical movement *per se*. Though he has been hosting an *utagoe kissa*-like event called “Landscape of Songs” (*Uta no mieru fūkei*) in Setouchi for more than a decade, he sees the event as no more than a “musical event” (*ongaku katsudō*), falling far short of a full-blown musical movement. For him, movement entails transformation (*henkaku*), and he believes that neither his musical activity nor current Utagoe movement (and, for that matter, labor movement in Japan) does that. Regarding the word *utagoe*, he deems it to be effectively a dead word if all it can invoke today is merely singing the songs that people like without regard to the term’s historicity and labor-class identity.<sup>11</sup> Kubota’s negative assessment is certainly in line with the mainstream view of political activism in postwar Japan. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 3, it would not be an overstatement to claim that the labor movement as we

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Kubota Satoshi, Setouchi, Japan, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

know it from 1950s-1960s Japan has been gone for a long time, as seems to be the case with organized movements in general, at least in terms of their size.

But Kubota is not alone in sensing a decline in the mobilizational power of *utagoe* in the twenty-first century. Long-time members of Utagoe-affiliated choruses, including surviving veterans of the Central Chorus from the late 1940s and early 1950s, likewise contend that neither current-day Utagoe movement nor *utagoe kissa* is doing enough of a movement – that is, not doing enough to initiate social and political change.<sup>12</sup> Their general thrust of criticism is that Utagoe-affiliated choruses today focus too much of their activities toward performance in concert halls, not going out to the streets or reaching out to those people whose voices can support the movement’s cause or have yet to be heard. The resulting estrangement of the “movement” aspect of Utagoe among many Utagoe-affiliated choruses is partly visible in the disappearance of a canonical songbook series like *Seinen Kashū* (examined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4). In fact, the only songbooks that Utagoe’s publishing house Ongaku Center continue to publish on regular basis as of the late 2010s are now limited to the “peace songbook” (*heiwa kashū*) and “May Day songbook,” both of which appear to be only in use for small-group demonstrations.<sup>13</sup> Unlike the days when *Seinen Kashū* served as Utagoe’s most up-to-date musical canon and record of political “struggles,” Utagoe today almost seems to lack a constant flow of current repertoire of music that accompanies political action.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Fujimoto Hiromi, Tokyo, Japan, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Interview with Hori Kimiyo, Tokyo, Japan, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> These songbooks display, in a sense, a mixed style of *Seinen Kashū* and *utagoe kissa* songbooks, containing sheet music (with only melody lines and chords) for relatively new songs and only words for the more established Utagoe repertoire between the 1950s and 1970s.



Figure 6.2: “We will Struggle” (*Warera wa tatakau*, 2016) and “Human Rights” (2017), May Day songbooks published by Ongaku Center.

Though I am sympathetic to these *Utagoe* veterans’ sentiment, I challenge their assessment from a historical standpoint: though the term *utagoe* evolved to evoke things like labor-class or movement identity, the term has long had a degree of vagueness that allowed for adaptation, justification, and application among self-identified practitioners of *utagoe*. As I have argued in the preceding chapters, *utagoe* at large has created discursive space for both inclusion and exclusion (both caused by vagueness), with varying degrees of political engagement. These instances of *utagoe* still presuppose the existence of that which to act upon (most notably, culture, nation, history, oppressed groups, or that which may break out, worsen, or repeat), suggesting

continuity of what I call “musical reformism” since introduction of *shōka* to the Japanese school curriculum in the 1880s.

In the section that follows, I will present an account of current-day Nihon no Utagoe based on my ethnographic research between 2016 and 2017. Much of my ethnography concerning present-day Utagoe was conducted in the Kanto area of Japan in and around Tokyo. Though my account may be partial (in both senses of the word, admittedly), my research suggests that *utagoe* as a concept and byword for a set of practices continue to function characterized by both musical and non-musical underpinnings. Above all, the movement aspect of Utagoe is still very much rooted in the notion of struggle (*tatakai*), though often without explicit invocation of the word and no longer calling for class consciousness and solidarity, appealing instead to notions that generally align with universal human rights.<sup>14</sup> Of course, individual groups affiliated with Nihon no Utagoe tackle what they perceive to be contemporary issues in different ways. In lieu of a general outline, what follows below is an in-depth study of an Utagoe-affiliated chorus in historical contexts over the decades.

#### Case Study: Nihon no Utagoe seen through the Saitama Chorus (1961-Present)

I undertook my ethnographic research on Nihon no Utagoe under a triple identity: a graduate student from the United States; a South Korea-born, native-level Japanese speaker; and a member of the Saitama Chorus. This set of identities provided me with a complementary

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<sup>14</sup> This principle is consistent with Utagoe’s slogan from 1981, “Singing voice is a force to live” (*utagoe wa iku chikara*). Nods to universal human rights can be seen, for example, in the song “Human Rights” (composed by Ōkuma Akira) and the “Human Festa” event at the Nihon no Utagoe Festival in January 2019, as noted in the two preceding sections.

personal background that admittedly won the sympathies of not only my interlocutors but also many individuals in Ongaku Center and Utagoe-affiliated choruses from across Japan who made my meetings and interviews possible. As a registered member of the Saitama Chorus between October 2016 and September 2017, I made full use of my Utagoe-group affiliation, scholarly and musical interest, and personal upbringing toward my ethnographic and documentary research (the latter of which essentially meant gaining access to privately-held materials). The paragraphs that follow below are the product of this approach.

My relationship with the Saitama Chorus (Saitama Gasshōdan, 1961-Present) may not have developed had I not disclosed my part-South Korean and part-Japanese upbringing. The Saitama Chorus was one of the two Kanto area-based choruses that Miwa Sumie, the editor-in-chief of *Utagoe Shinbun*, suggested that I contact during my preliminary visit in the summer of 2016. Miwa's suggestion was a response to my two-part criteria: Utagoe-affiliated choruses that are engaging in multiple activities, potentially including some kind of interaction with a foreign country. The Saitama Chorus certainly fit the bill: it was a regular winner of the Gold Prize in the choral presentation (*gasshō happyōkai*) during the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival in recent years, and the chorus has maintained regular contact with a South Korea-based chorus.<sup>15</sup> After my initial visit to the chorus's office and rehearsal in early October of 2016, I became a member of the chorus in the following week. The chorus's fiftieth anniversary concert later in the month would become my debut stage with the chorus.

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<sup>15</sup> First held in the 1957 Nihon no Utagoe Festival, choral presentation is not a competition in spirit, as it was meant to be an opportunity for participating groups from all over Japan to learn from the experience and performance of each other, but is a competition in form today due to the existence of Gold, Silver, and Bronze Prizes (not limited to one group for each prize). For an early account of the choral presentation, see “Kotoshi hajimete moyoosareta konkūru keishiki ni yoru gasshō happyōkai no kekka nit suite,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 10, 1958, 6; Yoritoyo Inoue, “‘Utagoe’ demo konkūru o yatteiru: sono ayumi,” *Gasshōkai* 3 no. 2 (January 1959): 22-23.

During the early decades of Utagoe, the Saitama Chorus was not a particularly renowned group. The chorus makes no significant appearance in Utagoe's publications until well into the 1980s, including *Utagoe Shimbun* and *Kikan Utagoe (Utagoe Quarterly, 1972-Present)*. If anything, when Miwa introduced me to the chorus in the summer of 2016, I was much more familiar with the other chorus she mentioned, the Santama Youth Chorus (Santama Seinen Gasshōdan, 1963-Present; called "Sansei" for short). Indeed, though both choruses have regional "center chorus" lineage, the Saitama Chorus had none of the celebrated status that the Santama Youth Chorus acquired between the 1970s and 1980s as a new hope of the Utagoe movement. The Santama Youth Chorus created its own musicals, collaborated with local schools for the handicapped and local non-Utagoe affiliate choruses.<sup>16</sup> The chorus also partook in the nascent "Daiku" ("the Ninth," referring to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9) boom in Japan that has since become a staple amateur choral singing activity on New Year's eve in Japan.<sup>17</sup> Still, as of the late 2010s, the two choruses were well-known quantities among current Utagoe-affiliated choruses, competing over the choral presentation's Gold Prize for years and musically and politically active in and outside of the concert stage.

The recent history of the Saitama Chorus reflects the great majority of the tensions, perceived issues, and aspirations (both fulfilled and unfulfilled) that are present in the current-day Utagoe movement. Many of these tensions, in fact, derive from the early years of the Utagoe movement. Overall, the predominant thread of worldview in the Saitama Chorus and

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<sup>16</sup> The Santama Youth Chorus has its origin in the western Tokyo regional school (*bunkō*) of the Central Chorus. Formed in 1963, the chorus was expected to be the "center chorus" (*chūshin gasshōdan*) of western Tokyo, based in the Tama region.

<sup>17</sup> For a concise English-language account on the "Daiku" phenomenon in Japan, see Eddy Y. L. Chang, "Ode to 'Personal Challenge': Reconsidering Japanese Groupism and the Role of Beethoven's *Ninth* in Catering to Socio-Cultural Needs," in *Identity in Crossroads Civilisations: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Globalism in Asia*, eds. Erich Kolig, Vivienne S. M. Angeles and Sam Wong (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 147-171.

other Utagoe-affiliated choruses is that of precariousness of Japan: the belief that Japan is on the brink of another calamity if the people do not act now. To be sure, such a sentiment is hardly new in either JCP-line organizations or Nihon no Utagoe, as evinced by constant cries against another war in Japan from the early 1950s. Today, Utagoe's imagination of Japan's potential calamity takes multiple forms, from war and disappearing pension to nuclear plant-induced environmental and residential hazards. It is easy to write off these sentiments as consistent with those of mainstream JCP policy positions, as did critics of Utagoe movement in the 1950s. In light of their historical continuity, however, they must be examined from a historical perspective: How is it that Utagoe's worldview has seemingly survived the end of the Cold War without major modifications? How is it that music continues to be made in Utagoe, in the form of both composition and performance? As one of the most active groups in Nihon no Utagoe today, the Saitama Chorus offers valuable insights to answer these questions, from the inside.

Officially established in 1961, the Saitama Chorus has witnessed ups and downs that mirror Nihon no Utagoe's overall development since the 1960s. Overall, based on surviving documents and oral testimonies of veteran members of the chorus, the history of the Saitama Chorus can be broken down into five phases:

- 1) 1961-1962: Foundation and Immediate Division
- 2) 1960s-1980s: Creative direction under Central Chorus veterans
- 3) 1980s-1990s: Crisis and Reconstruction
- 4) 2000s: Beginning of long-term collaboration with professional musicians
- 5) 2010s: Solidarity with South Korea

The Saitama Chorus is a comparatively late comer among Nihon no Utagoe's regional center chourses. Despite Saitama Prefecture's physical proximity to Tokyo, *utagoe* was slow to grow in Saitama. As of the mid-1950s, the prefecture had no Utagoe-affiliated chorus but only several "singing gatherings" (*utau kai*). A recent Central Chorus graduate at the time, Tokyo-born Kubota Satoshi was tasked with leading these singing gatherings and organizing more *utagoe* groups.<sup>18</sup> Out of this effort came the Southern Saitama Prefectural Chorus (Saitama Kennnan Gasshōdan), which functioned as a Saitama-area center chorus by 1957.<sup>19</sup> Organizing more permanent choral groups proved difficult, however, so that the prefecture-wide gathering of choruses titled "Singing Voice of Saitama" (Saitama no Utagoe) would be held only once until 1960.

Though no longer mentioned in the chorus's more recent documents, the Saitama Chorus came into being between 1961 and 1962 after an episode of internal division. In January 1961, following the second Singing Voice of Saitama event in November 1960, the Saitama Chorus was established as an Utagoe "center chorus" in Saitama Prefecture, effectively replacing the Southern Saitama Prefectural Chorus. At the first meeting of the Saitama Chorus in January 1962, however, dissention erupted over Soviet hydrogen bomb experiments that were conducted in 1961 (a controversy that had already plagued the Japan Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in 1961), dividing the Saitama Chorus into the Japanese Communist Party-line camp (condoning the Soviet experiments) and Kubota's camp (opposing the Soviet experiments). While both camps began to call themselves Saitama Chorus, Kubota's camp claimed the

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Kubota Satoshi, Setouchi, Japan, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> "1957 nen Nihon no utagoe saiten" (1957), 27, reproduced in Utagoe undō shiryōshū Vol. 3 of 6 eds. Chikanobu Michiba and Hideya Kawanishi, (Kanazawa: Kanawaza Bunkokaku, 2017).

majority while the Party-line camp had only thirteen individuals out of seventy-odd members before the division.<sup>20</sup>

The current Saitama Chorus descends from the Party-line camp, initially the minority group. What changed the tide was Kubota's expulsion from the Democratic Youth League of Japan and, effectively, Nihon no Utagoe.<sup>21</sup> After this, Kubota's camp slowly disappeared, and the once-minority faction along the Party-line became the sole Saitama Chorus. The official history of the Saitama Chorus, therefore, has since been written by the once splinter-minority faction. For example, the pamphlet for the chorus's fifth anniversary concert in May 1961 remarks that the chorus thwarted an attempt by Kubota Satoshi to "claim the chorus for himself" (*shibutsuka*) away from Nihon no Utagoe.<sup>22</sup> Such a turn of events foreshadows rifts of political character that Utagoe and the Japanese Communist Party-Japan Socialist Party alliance were soon to witness, as explored in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

Since Kubota's expulsion in 1962, the Saitama Chorus generally followed Utagoe's contemporary musical repertory. Under the musical direction of Central Chorus veterans,<sup>23</sup> the

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<sup>20</sup> The sequence of events from 1960 onward here is based on Tanaka Keisuke's notes based on the materials he still owned as of January 2020. Tanaka joined the Saitama Chorus several months after January 1961. Interview with Tanaka Keinosuke, Saitama, Japan, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> As Kubota reminisced in early 2019, his expulsion from the chorus was politically motivated by the Saitama chapter of the Democratic Youth League of Japan's charge that Kubota aligned himself with the "reactionaries" at the Saitama University (or "the New Left," to use a later terminology). In the end, the Saitama chapter of the Democratic Youth League of Japan ruled Kubota guilty as charged and expelled him from the organization, turning him into *persona non grata* in the Japanese Communist Party by extension. Still, both Kubota and Tanaka Keinosuke, the latter of whom belonged to the Party-line camp in the Saitama Chorus, expressed a shared sentiment during their respective interview that Kubota was ultimately a victim of his times. *Ibid.*; Interview with Kubota Satoshi, Setouchi, Japan, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> "Saitama Gasshōdan sōritsu 5 shūnen kinen ensōkai" (1966), back cover.

<sup>23</sup> These veterans of the Central Chorus have appeared multiple times in this dissertation: Danjō Sawae (1962?-1966?), Fujimoto Hiromi (late 1960s to the mid-1970s?), and Nara Tsuneko (mid-1970s to late-1980s?). During these decades, many veterans of the Central Chorus from the very first class of 1948 were teaching multiple choruses across the Kanto area. Fujimoto appears as choral director of an "U Chorus" in Saitama, most likely

Saitama Chorus between the 1960s and 1980s performed “authorized” songs that appeared in *Seinen Kashū* or *Utagoe Shimbun*. Examples include Japanese folk songs (see Chapter 2), songs by Araki Sakae (see Chapter 3), Russian and Soviet songs (see Chapter 4), American folk songs and some “socially conscious” (*shakaiha*) *fōku* songs from the 1960s (including the contentious “socially conscious” popular song “Young People” [Wakamonotachi], see Chapter 4), and later Simon & Garfunkel’s “Bridge over the Troubled Water” (which first appeared in *Utagoe Shimbun* with Japanese lyrics in 1974).<sup>24</sup> Between these years, as Saitama-area center chorus, the Saitama Chorus also played a leading role in the performances of the opera *Okinawa* (see Chapter 4) in Saitama in 1970 and 1972.

In the early 1980s, however, the Saitama Chorus was almost on the brink of disbanding. One of the surviving witnesses to this downward development is Kitzume Takao, who joined the Saitama Chorus in 1966 and has been serving as the chorus’s leader (*danchō*) for multiple years since the late 1970s. As he recalls, people stopped coming to the rehearsals one by one, until one day only three people showed up sometime in the early 1980s. Kitazume attributes this downturn to be the aging of the chorus’s core members: as core members approached the age of forty, they had more responsibilities in their workplace, labor union, and family. Such a

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referring to the Urawa Youth Chorus (Urawa Seinen Gasshōdan), in an article from 1974, during which he most likely also directed the Saitama Chorus. Nara’s tenure as choral director (*gasshō shidō*) is attested in the pamphlets for the Saitama Chorus’s fifteenth anniversary concert (1976) and twentieth anniversary concert (1981). Personal communication with Kitazume Takao, Saitama, Japan, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020; Interview with Danjō Sawae, Tokyo, Japan, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017; Hiromi Fujimoto, “Utagoe undō no atarashii hōshin,” *Bunka Hyōron* 15 no. 9 (September 1974): 32.

<sup>24</sup> Songs listed here appear in the concert programs for the Saitama Chorus’s fifth, fifteenth, and twentieth anniversary concerts (1966, 1976, and 1981, respectively), preserved in the office of Singing Voice of Saitama in the city of Saitama. A sheet music for “Bridge over the Troubled Water” in four voice parts (arranger unknown) can be found in “Konshū no gasshōkyoku,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, August 1, 1974, 5.

development and observation indicate that the Saitama Chorus was having difficulties recruiting younger people, a development clearly not unique to the chorus within Nihon no Utagoe.<sup>25</sup>

It took the Saitama Chorus not a miracle but the Nihon no Utagoe Festival to change the tide. Inspired by the Festival of 1984 in Osaka, which attracted approximately 30,000 cumulative participants over the span of three days for the first time since 1970, members of the Saitama Chorus made the push for hosting the Festival in 1987 – an initiative unheard of up to that point in a non-major urban center in Japan.<sup>26</sup> Hosting the Nihon no Utagoe Festival in Saitama proved to be a major undertaking, only made possible with cooperation from unions in Saitama-based construction companies, as well as circles belonging to Japanese Communist Party-line organizations like the New Japan Women's Association (Shin-Nihon Fujin no Kai).<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that, including the then- and current leader Kitazume Takao, members of the Saitama Chorus who served organizational role at this time still play major administrative roles today. Combined with the young graduates of the chorus's researcher system (*kenkyūsei seido*, a system that directly takes after the Central Chorus) from the 1980s, these members form the

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<sup>25</sup> Though there is a general dearth of materials on Utagoe-affiliated groups' age distribution, *Kikan Utagoe* issues from 1985 and 1986 include statistical data on the age distribution of participants and observers at the 1985 and 1986 Nihon no Utagoe National Council general meetings. Individuals under the age of twenty-five make up 16% and 18%, respectively, and those between twenty-five thirty-four make up 49% (rounded to the nearest whole number in all cases). Though there may have been a bias toward older age due to the participants' role as representatives, the age breakdown displays a stark contrast to the National Chorus Conference meetings from the early 1950s, many of whose participants I have identified and confirmed to have been in their early twenties at the time. "Nihon no Utagoe Zenkoku Kyōgikai dai 18 kai zenkoku sōkai hōshin," *Kikan utagoe* no. 49 (May 1985), 159; "85 nen do soshiki dēta," *Kikan utagoe* no. 53 (May 1986), 134-135.

<sup>26</sup> Until 1985, all but three Utagoe Festivals were held in Tokyo, the exceptions being Kyoto (1975), Nagoya and Gifu (1977, delayed from 1976), and Osaka (1984).

<sup>27</sup> "Zadankai: '87 saiten Saitama seikō no kagi o saguru!," *Kikan Utagoe* no. 60 (November 1988): 4-7.

Saitama Chorus's core echelon in both administrative and performative capacity as of the late 2010s.<sup>28</sup>

The next major shift in the Saitama Chorus's activities came with the arrival of a conservatory-trained conductor and pianist-composer. In 2001, the Saitama Chorus hired Kanai Makoto, a conservatory-trained conductor, as its conductor. Kanai was a known quantity to the chorus at the time, having led several conducting lesson sessions for Saitama-based Utagoe-affiliated choruses at the recommendation of a former student of Nara Tsuneko (as mentioned above, a Central Chorus veteran and the choral director of the Saitama Chorus between the 1970s and 1980s) in the late 1980s. Soon afterwards the chorus hired Yoshida Keiko, a conservatory-trained pianist, who went on to play piano accompaniment and to make choral arrangements and new compositions for the chorus. Since the beginning of their respective tenure, the Saitama Chorus's repertory expanded to include more classical choral music. Kanai and Yoshida remain conductor and accompanist, respectively, as of 2020.

Another consequential meeting for the Saitama Chorus took place in Seoul, Korea, in 2010, at an event commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Japan's annexation of Korea.<sup>29</sup> There, the Saitama Chorus made acquaintance of a Seoul-based mixed chorus called Tree of Peace (*Pyǒnghwa ūi namu*), a "citizen's" (that is, non-professional) chorus established with the financial support of the major progressive newspaper *Hangyore*.<sup>30</sup> Since then, in addition to

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Kitazume Takao, Saitama, Japan, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> For some members of the Saitama Chorus, this was not their first visit to South Korea. In fact, four of the chorus members were among the first group from Utagoe to visit South Korea on official capacity, specifically to South Korea's southernmost island of Jeju in April 1999 on the fiftieth anniversary of the April 3rd massacre incident, only four months after the first South Korean group's visit to the 1998 Nihon no Utagoe Festival. Sumie Miwa, "Saishūtō 4.3 tuitō, zen'yasai dai 6 kai mingei sō ensō kōryū," *Utagoe Shinbun*, April 26, 1999, 8.

<sup>30</sup> On the Tree of Peace Chorus, see Kyōng'ae Kim, "Munhwa undong tanch'erosō shimin hapch'angdan ūi kanüngsōng: han'guk p'yǒnghwa ūi namu hapch'angdan gwa ilbon ut'agoe hapch'angdan saryerūl chungshim ūro

exchanging their musical repertoires, the two choruses have been performing together at concerts every year, taking turns to visit Japan or Korea, respectively. As of 2016-2019, the Saitama Chorus is the only Utagoe-affiliated chorus that maintains yearly contact with a choral group outside of Japan.

Within the development surrounding the Saitama Chorus outlined above, the most consequential element has been the manner in which the chorus has dealt with “specialists” (*senmonka*) in its music-making. As previously noted in Chapter 2 of the dissertation, the question over the extent and manner of cooperation to be gathered from professional “specialists” has been an issue not only in Utagoe but also among Japanese Communist Party-aligned cultural circles between the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>31</sup> To be sure, conservatory-trained conductor and accompanist are no longer an uncommon sight in Utagoe-affiliated choruses as of late 2010s. Many old Utagoe-affiliated choruses that have appeared in the dissertation now sing under conservatory-trained conductors, including the Kansai Chorus (based in Osaka, mentioned briefly in Chapters 2 and 5), Shirakaba Chorus (Tokyo, see Chapter 4), and Ōmuta Center Chorus (Ōmuta, see Chapter 3). However, the case of Saitama Chorus is noteworthy for its degree of collaboration through arrangement, composition, and performance that is rare even among Utagoe-affiliated choruses today. The rest of this section will illustrate the processes of negotiation and collaboration that define a significant portion of the Saitama Chorus’s activities today.

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(Master’s thesis, Sungkonghoe University, 2014), 28-47. Kim is one of the founding members of the chorus.

<sup>31</sup> A long-term relationship between a conservatory-trained conductor and an Utagoe-affiliated chorus was not entirely unheard of in 1950s Utagoe. The Kansai Chorus (est. 1948), for example, was conducted by Kodai Yoshio, a conservatory-trained singer whom former Kansai Chorus members described as a “teacher (*sensei*) who had an understanding for social movement”. Interview with Okahara Susumu and Okahara Yoshiko, Toyonaka, Japan, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

From the outside, the Saitama Chorus looks like a typical local-based chorus in Japan today. This is most visible in chorus members' age cohort. A far cry from the 1950s and 1960s when youthful workplace choruses could be found across Japan, choral singing in Japan has seen much polarization in age distribution in the past several decades. On one end are middle school and high school choruses that enter fierce competitions hosted by the Japan Choral Association (Zen-Nippon Gasshō Renmei, see Chapter 1); on the other are local-based choruses, typically composed of retirees.<sup>32</sup> Within this spectrum, the Saitama Chorus (and Utagoe-affiliated choruses in general) reflects one side of the age polarization in choral singing populations in Japan today. This polarization at large can be partly explained in terms of the workplace environment in Japan today. First, employers in Japan greatly curtailed financial and organizational support for leisure activities since the 1980s, which contributed in the disappearance of workplace choruses across Japan.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, Japan's endemic *de facto* long work hours make it difficult for full-time employees to attend a chorus's rehearsals. In the case of the Saitama Chorus, rehearsals are held between 7PM to 9PM on Tuesday and Thursday. Saitama Chorus members below the age of sixty typically arrive to rehearsals no earlier than 8PM, if they can make it all. Due to a combination of the factors noted above, the Saitama Chorus looks like an aged mixed chorus typical in Japan today.

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<sup>32</sup> Personal communication with Tonoshita Tatsuya, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. As introduced in the introduction to the dissertation, Tonoshita has since the mid-2000s authored and edited multiple books and volumes on the history of choral singing in Japan (see bibliography).

<sup>33</sup> The impact of this development can also be seen in Utagoe, in which workplace choruses comprised of current employees has become a rarity even in the annual Nihon no Utagoe Festival. From railway companies, for example, all participating groups in the 2016 Festival's choral presentation (*gasshō happyōkai*) were made up of former Kokutetsu (state-owned predecessor of the current Japan Railways) employees. "Gasshō happyōkai ensō hihyō zadankai," *Kikan Nihon no Utagoe* no. 174 (December 2016): 14.

Some of the defining characteristics of the Saitama Chorus can be gleaned out from a questionnaire I prepared for chorus members in early January 2017. Overall, responses indicate that the chorus includes a significant portion of members who

- 1) Are long-time members (over twenty years of experience)
- 2) Came across *Utagoe* songs in college or workplace
- 3) Like the Saitama Chorus for its activities beyond singing
- 4) Consider both technique and emotion to be important elements of singing
- 5) Consider *utagoe* to be an important part of their lives, past or present

*Questionnaire to members of the Saitama Chorus, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

Number of respondents: 28 (out of around 55 members in 2017 [53 members in February 2016])

1. How long has it been since you became a member (*dan'in*) of the Saitama Chorus?

Lowest number: 1 month

First quartile: 5.5 years

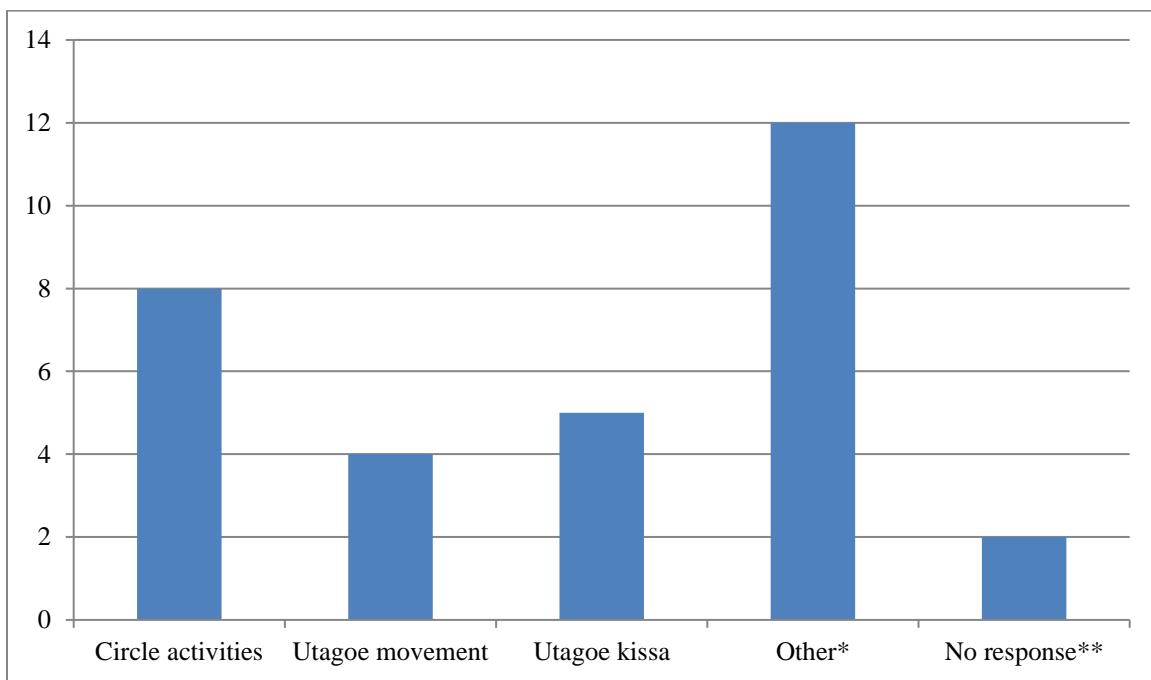
Median: 25 years

Average: 19.6 years

Third quartile: 31.5 years

Highest number: 55 years

2. How did you come across the word “*utagoe*”? [Some respondents chose more than one]

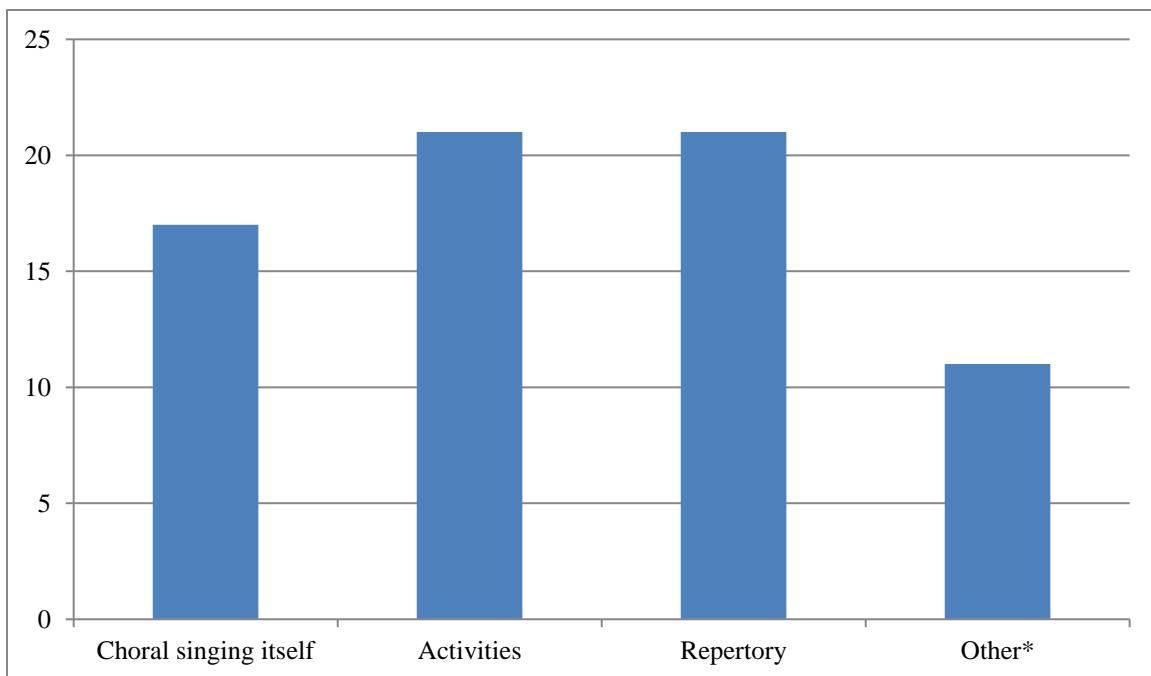


\*Responses include university circle (2); a family friend was a member of the Saitama Chorus; a friend was a member of the Saitama Chorus; after joining the Saitama Chorus (2); was taught Utagoe songs in high school; was a member of a local chorus that went to the Nihon no Utagoe Festival; university student-government committee; workplace recreation; labor union; hiking with activist parents

\*\*Written responses include the Saitama Chorus (2); singing during lunch break in university student-government committee

Table 6.1: Survey questions and responses from 28 members of the Saitama Chorus (out of around 55)

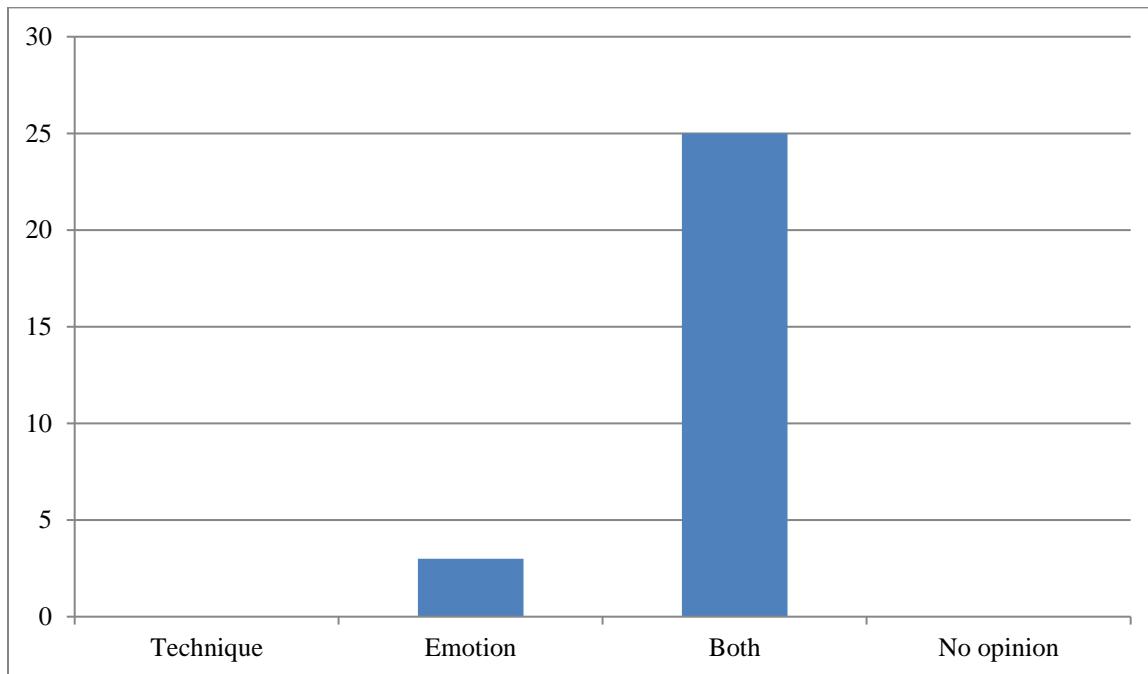
3. What did you find attractive about the Saitama Chorus? (May choose more than one)



\*Responses include “[members’] personal charm” (*ningenteki miryoku*); drawn by the members (2); wanted to sing after retirement (2); wanted to bring some change to the Utagoe movement; have been singing in chorus since high school; found Utagoe songs from the workplace to be encouraging; liked how the organization was run; liked having members with whom one could discuss social issues

Table 6.1: Survey questions and responses from 28 members of the Saitama Chorus (out of around 55)

4. Between technique and emotion (*omoiire*) for the theme of a song, which do you think is more important?



5. What kind of meaning does “*utagoe*” have to you today?

Personally identifies with one or more historical slogans of the Utagoe movement (6)

A way to get involved in society and to grow (4)

The sort of thing that must exist (2)

A way to express myself toward peace (2)

Part of my life (or everything)

That which is to be spread

Something worth pursuing for whole life

Something through which to convey something to the audience

Something I empathize with

Seki Akiko as someone I want to learn from

A way to add rhythms to post-retirement life

A proof that I am alive

Something I get energy from

Where I belong and can sing

Where I can try anything

Power to empathize with people toward a better future

Table 6.1: Survey questions and responses from 28 members of the Saitama Chorus (out of around 55)

The discussion that will follow below revolves around Question No. 4. Specifically, how do members of the Saitama Chorus and the two conservatory-trained musicians negotiate their differing views on singing as a medium that can convey a message? It should be noted that, while twenty-six out of twenty-eight respondents indicated both technique and emotion to be important when it comes to singing, they did so in terms of the need to convey a given song's message, not to mention the two respondents who considered emotion to be the more important element in singing. As will be discussed below, Saitama Chorus members and the two conservatory-trained musicians have had to settle their differences regarding *what* songs to sing and *how* singing should be done. These axes form the crux of the two parties' music-making process.

The relationship between Saitama Chorus members and the two conservatory-trained musicians may be described as an exercise in separation of power, assuming and respecting their respective area of responsibility. In this sense, accompanist Yoshida and conductor Kanai have a very specific role: to train the chorus's singing in preparation for concerts and to provide the chorus with "musical assessment," to borrow Kanai's words.<sup>34</sup> In exchange, the chorus does not hold the two musicians responsible for the "movement aspect" of the Saitama Chorus, evinced by Kanai's official position at the Saitama Chorus is "guest conductor" despite his de facto role as principal conductor. As a guest conductor, the logic goes, Kanai is neither responsible nor accountable for the activities the chorus engages in outside of rehearsals and the concert hall.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Kanai Makoto and Yoshida Keiko, Saitama, Japan, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> For this reason, Kanai has been renewing his contract every year, even though both Kanai and the Saitama Chorus's *danchō* Kitazume Takao are well aware that it is only a formality at this point. Interview with Kitazume Takao, Saitama, Japan, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

This system of separation is also reflected in the chorus's weekly rehearsals on Tuesday and Thursday, which prepare chorus members for different modes of performance and different kinds of musical repertory. The Tuesday rehearsal is the more musically oriented rehearsal under the direction of the conductor Kanai and the accompanist Yoshida, rehearsing songs in preparation for an upcoming concert (or, from the middle of the year onward, for the choral presentation in the annual Utagoe Festival). In contrast, the Thursday rehearsal is led by veteran members of the Saitama Chorus, covering a different set of songs for performances outside of the concert hall. Typically, the repertoire from the Thursdays rehearsals are songs published by Utagoe's publishing house Ongaku Center, typically advocating non-violence and world peace (for example, Hiroshima-themed songs) or solidarity with an outside group (for example, songs composed by activist singer-songwriters in South Korea for events hosted by *zainichi* Korean groups or schools).<sup>36</sup>

Consistent with the Utagoe movement's historical reputation, the chorus sings outside of the concert stage more often over the span of a year. As a member of the Saitama Chorus between 2016 and 2017, I have personally partaken in the following performance venues: the Saitama Korean Elementary and Middle School (Saitama Chōsen Shō-Chūkyū Gakkō, the only *chōsen gakkō/chosōn hakkyo* in the prefecture, October 2016), an Article 9 Association (Kyūjō no kai) meeting in northern Saitama (July 2017), and the War Exhibit in Saitama for Peace (Heiwa no tame no Saitama no Sensō-ten, July 2017). Needless to say, songs chosen for performances outside of the concert hall vary according to the place and occasion. These venues

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<sup>36</sup> The Saitama Chorus has been interacting with both Chongryon- and Mindan-affiliated groups in Saitama Prefecture since the early 2000s. Personal communication with Koyama Mariko, Saitama, Japan, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

should come as no surprise considering Nihon no Utagoe's continued emphasis on world peace particularly by way of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution.

Among Utagoe-affiliated choruses, such mixed forms of social and musical engagement are certainly not unique to the Saitama Chorus. In this context, the praises for the Saitama Chorus that I have personally heard between 2016 and 2017 are worth examining. To many, the Saitama Chorus today demonstrates an ideal mix of the "Utagoe" way of singing (more emotionally oriented) and the more "conservatory-style" approach to singing (more technically oriented). I have heard this sentiment expressed in various phrases such as "the Saitama Chorus has gotten so much better in recent years, but it still retains the essence of *utagoe* in both sound and choice of music" or "the great thing about the Saitama Chorus is that it spends more time and effort outside of the concert hall." Of course, the conservatory vs. *utagoe* and concert hall vs. outside binary views have existed in Utagoe's internal discourse as long as the institutionalized Utagoe has been in existence since the mid-1950. The issue at hand for Utagoe-affiliated choruses can (still) be summarized as follows: "For what purpose do we sing, and how should we sing to that end?" To the extent that the duality of technique and content (or, as critics of Utagoe in the past would have put it, "political elements") must somehow be reconciled, Utagoe very much retains the same tension that it did half a century ago.

In the case of the Saitama Chorus negotiation over *what* and *how* to sing becomes an issue that must be resolved precisely because of the aforementioned "separation of power." Generally speaking, members of the Saitama Chorus tend to evaluate a song by its narrative content and political message, while conductor Kanai and accompanist Yoshida consider musical soundness of a given piece. Still, both Kanai Makoto and the chorus's long-time leader (*danchō*) Kitazume Takao agree that a certain level of musical technique is necessary to make the Saitama

Chorus a “better” conveyor of a message. Ultimately, their common ground is “good music,” which they imply as that which leaves the audience with a lasting impression, enabled by adequate musical technique to that end. Kanai and Kitazume explain their take in similar terms:

[P]eople don’t regard highly [of performance] by emotion (*omoi*) [therein] alone, though emotion is important. And the emotion part hasn’t changed [in the Saitama Chorus], but the musical technique part has changed a lot. But that’s because over the past fifteen years – at first, I was very unpopular with the audience. Because they were used to hearing the Saitama Chorus sing with [raw emotion] (*waa tte utatteru*). Enter myself, and here comes classical [music]. Then came a wave of great resentment in survey responses like “Something’s different,” “It’s not fun anymore,” or “Things are not feverous anymore.”<sup>37</sup>

I hear things like . . . something has really changed so that there is some kind of depth that touches the audience’s heart, vocal projection has gotten better, the singing has gotten better overall . . . But on the other hand, there are also people who think that we don’t sound like Utagoe or the Saitama Chorus in the past. I think that’s probably because there are some people who had heard [us] when we used to sing with [brute force] (*gan gan gan gan*) who [now] believe that we might be pursuing only technical things. But overwhelmingly there are opinions that say the musical power (*chikara*) of the Saitama Chorus today has gotten better and that the chorus is able to perform in such a way as to truly convey it [the music]. . . . I think that it was a good thing to pursue both music and technique and that our direction is not wrong-headed.<sup>38</sup>

The concert program for the Saitama Chorus’s fifty-fifth anniversary concert (October 2016), too, was a product of negotiation and collaboration. Invariably, the initial screening process on the songs chorus members nominated for inclusion demonstrated chorus members’

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Kanai Makoto and Yoshida Keiko, Saitama, Japan, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Kitazume Takao, Saitama, Japan, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

general preference for songs with narrative content that they identify with, which then the two professional musicians evaluated on their musical merit (which typically meant availability of choral arrangement that met with their approval).

In what became my debut stage with the chorus, the anniversary concert revealed two prominent characteristics. First, its concert program (reproduced in the next page) contains a significant number of compositions and choral arrangements made by accompanist Yoshida Keiko, making up seven of seventeen songs that the chorus sang. Combined with some more pieces over which Yoshida exercised musical decision, Yoshida's presence is indeed strong in the concert program.<sup>39</sup> Second, the concert program follows a clear narrative arch, divided into different parts with titles and songs accompanying their respective themes. This was one of the main areas in which Saitama Chorus members were able to exercise their design choices.<sup>40</sup>

Overall, the Saitama Chorus's fifty-fifth anniversary concert was a musical exercise that delivered a "people's" historical narrative of postwar Japan. The narrative began with the emerging singing voices from the ashes, even referencing Miyamoto Yuriko's "Singing Voice, Arise" (*utagoe yo okore*, see Chapter 2), and moving on to the suffering of the ordinary people, whether by natural or man-made disasters (earthquake and war).<sup>41</sup> In its second half, the concert

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<sup>39</sup> Specifically, Yoshida suggested singing the opening song, "Motherly Hometown" composed by Kinoshita Kōji, in unison rather than in Kinoshita's original harmonization, and she also suggested including Rachmaninoff's Vocalise in the program. The latter choice in fact fulfilled both Kanai's continuing drive for incorporation of more classical repertoire and chorus members' commemoration of Central Chorus veteran Nara Tsuneko, who had passed away earlier that year and personally liked the piece. Interview with Kanai Makoto and Yoshida Keiko, Saitama, Japan, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> It is worth mentioning that the concert program includes two songs that were controversial at some point in Utagoe's history: "Tokyo Boogie-Woogie", which was singled out as a song to be combatted against at the Central Chorus's first general meeting in 1949; "Young People" (*Wakamonotachi*), a song that became the focal point of the *fōku* controversy in *Utagoe Shimbun* (see Chapter 4). That these songs can now be sung in Utagoe without much problem today in Utagoe suggests that these songs have entered historical memory in the Japanese public at large in

also demonstrates the kinds of musical resources that the two professional musicians can provide to the chorus: choral arrangement, composition, and guest performers. In this way, the concert program for the anniversary concert was one among many products of negotiation and collaboration between chorus members and the two professional musicians.

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such a way as to be able to stand for the “people’s voice”.

“Opening: With Thoughts on the History of Utagoe and the Fifty Five-Year Journey of the Saitama Chorus”

Song title	Authors	Notes
Motherly Hometown ( <i>Haha naru furusato yo</i> )	Music: Kinoshita Kōji Words: Irie Akira	Performed in unison at Yoshida Keiko’s suggestion*
Song of a Human Being ( <i>Ningen no uta</i> )	Music and words: Yamanogi Takeshi Arrangement: Yoshida Keiko*	To be discussed in detail in the next section

“‘Singing Voice, Arise’: From the Ashes Arose the Energy to Live Tomorrow, Together with Singing Voices”

Song title	Authors	Notes
My Blue Heaven (Japanese title <i>Watashi no aozora</i> )	Music: Walter Donaldson Words: George Whiting, Japanese translation by Horiuchi Keizō Arrangement: Hayashi Yūsuke	Part of the choral arrangement series <i>TOKYO monogatari</i> (Tokyo: Kawai Shuppan, 2007)
Song of the Apple ( <i>Ringo no uta</i> )	Music: Banjōme Tadashi Words: Satō Hachirō Arrangement: Inoma Michiaki	Part of the choral arrangement series <i>TOKYO monogatari</i> (Tokyo: Kawai Shuppan, 2007)
Tokyo Boogie-Woogie ( <i>Tōkyō bugi ugi</i> )	Music: Hattori Ryōichi Words: Suzuki Masaru Arrangement: Inoma Michiaki	Part of the choral arrangement series <i>TOKYO monogatari</i> (Tokyo: Kawai Shuppan, 2007)

“In Search of Work, Life, and Peace, the Troubled Youth Nevertheless Sang about Hope”

Song title	Authors	Notes
Song of the Owl ( <i>Fukurō no uta</i> )	Music and words by Hayashi Manabu Arrangement: Adachi Motohiko	Sung by the tenor and bass sections
Young People ( <i>Wakamonotachi</i> )	Music: Satō Masaru Words: Fujita Toshio Arrangement: Yoshida Keiko*	The song is discussed in Chapter 5 in the context of “socially conscious songs”
El Derecho de Vivir en Paz (“The Right to Live in Peace,” Japanese title <i>Heiwa ni iku</i> <i>kenri</i> )	Music and words by Victor Jara Arrangement: Kobayashi Yasuhiro	Japanese translation by Yamanogi Takeshi and Yamamoto Tadao
The One and Only Flower in the World ( <i>Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana</i> )	Music and words by Makihara Noriyuki Arrangement: Yoshida Keiko*	Best-selling single of 2003 in Japan recorded by the Johnny’s male idol group SMAP

[Details of the performance by the Seoul-based chorus “Tree of Peace” omitted here]

Table 6.2: Concert program of the Saitama Chorus’s fifth-fifth anniversary concert (November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Performance by a combined chorus of the Saitama Chorus and Tree of Peace

Song title	Authors	Notes
The Wind's Words ( <i>Param ūi mal</i> )	Music: Kim Chunpōm Words: Ma Chongki	Composition in memory of the victims aboard the passenger ferry <i>Sewol</i> in 2014; sung in the original Korean
To the People Much Later in Time ( <i>Zutto nochī no hitobito ni</i> )	Music: Yoshida Keiko* Words: Eugène Guillevic	Japanese translation by Ōshima Hakkō

“Standing Next to All Lives”

Song title	Authors	Notes
Child God ( <i>Warabigami</i> )	Music: Sahara Kazuya Words: Koja Misako	Guest solo performance by the soprano Itokazu Chika and string quartet
Yawn ( <i>Akubi</i> )	Music: Hagi Kyōko Words: Tanigawa Shuntarō	
To Live ( <i>Ikiru</i> )	Music: Take Yoshikazu Words: Tanigawa Shuntarō	

“The Tohoku Earthquake, Nuclear Power Plant Accident, Kumamoto Earthquake, Okinawa, and Flames of War – Beautiful is a Person who Stands by Another Person; Beautiful are Tears that Stand by Tears. With Thoughts for our Beloved Nara Tsuneko *Sensei*”

Song title	Authors	Notes
Vocalise	Music: Sergei Rachmaninoff Arrangement: P. Grillton (?)	Included at Yoshida Keiko's suggestion*
The Water is Wide ( <i>Hiroi kawa no kishibe</i> )	Music: “Scottish traditional” Japanese translation: Yagi Rinmei Arrangement: Yoshida Keiko*	Became a hit through inclusion in the 2014 NHK television series <i>Massan</i>
Worshipping Song ( <i>Ugami uta</i> )	Music and words: Hendona Naoko Arrangement: Yoshida Keiko*	Premier performance; words in Ryukyuan
Give Until it Hurts ( <i>Ataete kudasai anata no kokoro ga itamu kurai ni</i> )	Words: Mother Teresa, arranged by Kanai Makoto Music: Yoshida Keiko*	From Yoshida's musical <i>Sunflower in the Winter</i> ( <i>Mafuyu no himawari</i> )

Encore piece: “Song of a Human Being” (*Ningen no uta*), sung in Japanese by the Saitama Chorus on the stage and in Korean by the Tree of Peace Chorus in the audience

Table 6.2: Concert program of the Saitama Chorus's fifth-fifth anniversary concert (November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

The Saitama Chorus's fifty-fifth anniversary concert demonstrates that music functions as both body of texts and mode of practice that shape the relationship between Saitama Chorus members and the two professional musicians. In this capacity, musical technique serves as an enabler, first and foremost as that which maximizes the delivery of a given song's message and emotion to the audience. To the extent that both parties regard musical technique as indispensable in effectively delivering a message, rehearsals become an arena in which the two parties attempt to reach a common goal despite their differences in their political worldview.

During weekly rehearsals, the resulting contentious music-making process finds verbal expressions. As early as in the third rehearsal that I attended since I became a member in mid-October, 2016, for example, I witnessed an off-hand and laughter-inducing exchange between Kanai and Kitazume. While practicing Yoshida's arrangement of "The One and Only Flower in the World" (*Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana*), a major hit song from 2003 by the Johnnie's male idol group SMAP, Kanai remarked that the song is quintessentially a song for the so-called *yutori* ("relaxed," in reference to the "relaxed" Japanese education policy between the 1980s and 1990s) generation, content to be in the second place – "You don't have to be number one," as the song goes. Following up on his own remark, Kanai then asked Kitazume: "But, sir (*otōsan*, literally "father"), you are a *Shōwa* (era name for the emperor Hirohito's reign, 1926-1989) person, right? And you made the world a better place with your own sweats?" To which Kitazume responded, with a faint smile on his face, "That's right" – and a round of laughter ensued. This was a play on the fact that Kitazume has a union activist background, as does many other members of the chorus.

Banters of this kind are common in the Saitama Chorus's rehearsal sessions, including jokes referring to the Liberal Democratic Party's long-serving Prime Minister Abe Shinzō. For

example, Kanai once said: “You are very good at expressing anger, as in ‘We Oppose Abe Politics,’ but not so much when it comes to expressing gentleness.” That banter of this kind can be made show that music-making in the Saitama Chorus has been made possible by years of mutual acknowledgement of their respective quarks, lessening tensions that can arise from differences in political and musical orientations.

As a final note on Nihon no Utagoe as seen through the Saitama Chorus, the section that follows will explore the case of one particular song that illustrates the kinds of “arrangement” that take place in the chorus’s music-making process. As outside “specialists,” Kanai and Yoshida have been making arrangements to the Saitama Chorus’s repertoire of music, both musically and epistemologically.<sup>42</sup> This process of arrangement is reciprocal in affect and has affected groups and individuals outside of the Saitama Chorus and even Japan. The section below, then, is a reminder that a song, and indeed singing voices, too, grow both within and beyond the author’s original intension at the time of writing.

#### Musical Case Study: “Song of a Human Being” (1988), arranged by Yoshida Keiko (2002)

“Song of a Human Being” (Ningen no uta), arranged by the pianist-composer Yoshida Keiko, was one of the songs included in the Saitama Chorus’s fifty-fifth anniversary concert in October 2016. Arguably a Saitama Chorus favorite for years, Yoshida’s choral arrangement of the song (2002) is a product of collaboration between the two conservatory-trained musicians and the

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<sup>42</sup> By their own admission, Kanai and Yoshida are no Utagoe activists – and that is completely fine to Kitazume and other veteran members of the Saitama Chorus. This is also the basis of the chorus for keeping Kanai as a guest conductor in name because the chorus does not “want him to carry the burden of movement.” Interview with Kitazume Takao, Saitama, Japan, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

Saitama Chorus that demonstratively reflects the process of contestation, synthesis, and historical remembering that takes place in the Saitama Chorus's music-making today.

Composed in 1988 by a former Kokutetsu (Japan National Railways, state-owned predecessor of current Japan Railways) employee Yamanogi Takeshi (alias for Arae Yoshio, 1947-2009), "Song of a Human Being" is an emotive piece that commemorates union members of Kokutetsu both dead and alive, some of whom resorted to taking their own lives during the years leading up to the breakup-and-privatization (*bunkatsu min'eika*) of Kokutetsu in 1987. The song is both specific and vague in setting, particularly when one does not read the lyrics in advance. In setting up *kanji* (Chinese letters) in his lyrics, Yamanogi chose to "read" the *kanji* like *onna* ("woman"), *otoko* ("man"), *dōryō* ("companion" or "colleague") and *kumiain* ("union member") in gender-neutral terms, namely *hito* ("person") and *nakama* ("friends" or "colleagues"). This setup allows for double reading of the song: when read in writing, the lyrics provide enough clue for the original historical context from which the song came into being; when listened to without knowledge of the *kanji* in the lyrics, the song becomes less specific in its setting. Composed a year after the Kokutetsu labor union's fight against breakup-and-privatization was lost, and after more than a hundred suicides by union members, "Song of a Human Being" is a requiem in spirit, depicting a dream both unfulfilled and to be fulfilled:

Is there a person<sup>43</sup> who would cast her gaze  
Upon the back of a friend who is hurt and fallen  
Is there a person<sup>44</sup> who would convey his warmth  
Upon the hands of a maiden (*otome*) who is sick and tired

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<sup>43</sup> *Kanji* for "person" here is *onna* ("woman").

<sup>44</sup> *Kanji* for "person" here is *otoko* ("man").

Turning the sorrow of living into a pair of wings  
Entrusting the joy of a human being to a song  
I shall sing a song of hope  
Let us sing together the song of a human being

Do you believe in your colleagues<sup>45</sup> at work  
Who wrap broken pain with their smile  
Are you fighting on (*tatakatte iruka*), cherishing in your heart  
The thoughts of your colleagues<sup>46</sup> who chose death

Turning the pain of living into a pair of wings  
Entrusting the dignity of a human being to a song  
I shall sing a song of my friends  
Let us sing together the song of a human being

Dreaming of a neighborhood (*machi*) here  
Where people smile and songs overflow  
Sharing pains and sharing joy  
I want to keep walking, like a human being ought to (*ningen rashiku*)

Living through (*ikite*), living through it (*ikinuite*)  
Living through, living through it all (*ikitōshite*)  
I shall sing a song of freedom  
Let us sing together the song of a human being

Living through, living through it  
Living through, living through it all  
I shall sing a song of life  
Let us sing together the song of a human being<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kanji for “colleagues” here is *dōryō* (“companion” or “colleague”).

<sup>46</sup> Kanji for “colleagues” here is *kumiaiin* (“union member”).

<sup>47</sup> *Yamanogi Takeshi utatsuzuri: utawazuni wa irarenai*, ed. Yamanogi Takeshi Sakuhinshū Seisaku Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2010), 107.

1. きづつき - - たおれた - - とも - のせに - まなざし - - そそぐ <sup>※1</sup> - ひとは - いるか - や  
 2. くずおれた - いたみを - - えがおに - つづむ - しょくばの - - なかまを <sup>※4</sup> - しんじて いるか - 死  
 3. ひとは - - - ほほえみ - - うたがあふれる - そんな - - まちを - ここにも とめて - いた

Figure 6.3: Opening bars from “Song of a Human Being,” notated by Takahashi Hitoshi after Yamanogi’s original

Stylistically, “Song of a Human Being” may appear to betray its ostensible purpose as a song to memorialize the dead by its frequent use of syncopated rhythms, which appear throughout the song. This is not surprising considering Yamanogi’s own musical background as a singer-songwriter deeply influenced by the revivalist-era American folk music, particularly the music of Pete Seeger.<sup>48</sup> Written in a major key, the song’s melodic line is neither too mellow nor bright in spirit, as if reflecting the lyrics’ dual purpose as memorialization of the dead and declaration of the continued resolve to keep “sing[ing] together” so that one may “keep walking, like a human being ought to.” Nor does the song present itself to be a dirge, given its moderate tempo of 78 beats per minute as shown in one of the more recent notations published by Ongaku Center.

Lyrics of “Song of a Human Being” are worth examining in their own right for Yamanogi’s conception of *tatakai* (“struggle,” see Chapters 2 and 3). Unlike “laborer-composer” Araki Sakae’s lyrics from around 1960, for example in his *magnum opus* choral suite *Song of the Underground (Jizoko no uta)*, examined in Chapter 3), in “Song of a Human Being” the locus of

<sup>48</sup> Yamanogi translated many revivalist-era American folk song hits until his death, the last of which was Pete Seeger’s “Where Have the Flowers Gone”. *Ibid.*, 118.

struggle has shifted from a class-conscious laborer to an individual who wishes to live with dignity (“I want to keep walking, like a human being ought to”). In other words, living, or, perhaps more appropriately, survival, itself has become a mode of struggle. In this way, Yamanogi’s words for “Song of a Human Being” suggests that Utagoe’s oldest slogan “Singing voice is with struggles” (1953) and newest slogan “Singing voice is a force to live” (1980) are in fact two sides of the same coin: to live is to struggle.

Yoshida Keiko’s arrangement of “Song of a Human Being” emphasizes the memorialization aspect of the song.<sup>49</sup> When Yoshida and Kanai came to the Saitama Chorus in 2001, no choral arrangement of “Song of a Human Being” existed. The chorus only had access to Yamanogi’s original version, which only has melody lines and guitar chords (similar to Figure 6.3 above), with which the accompanist at the time would play out serviceable accompaniment on the piano. In what became Yoshida’s second choral arrangement for the Saitama Chorus, “Song of a Human Being” was a difficult piece to come in terms with for Kanai and Yoshida. In an interview conducted shortly after the Saitama Chorus’s fifty-fifth anniversary concert in late 2016, Kanai and Yoshida described their encounter with the song and the thoughts they had while Yoshida was making her arrangement:

Kanai: We were a bit unkind about it [in dealing with the song]. But the song itself, when you listen to it, it’s a good song. But I think we had a negative reaction (*kyozetsu hannō*) against the perception (*torae kata*) that

<sup>49</sup> Yoshida’s arrangement of “Song of a Human Being” displays much contrast to Kobayashi Yasuhiro’s arrangement in this regard. Kobayashi’s arrangement, while also based on four voice parts and piano accompaniment, is much more care-free in its piano accompaniment with an even more frequent use of syncopated rhythms, and the song ends triumphantly with the soprano part singing the last note an octave higher. Following my take on the “duality” of the song’s lyrics, Kobayashi’s arrangement of “Song of a Human Being” may very well be characterized as the version that highlights the continued resolve to keep living and fighting. Curiously, Nihon no Utagoe’s sixty-fifth anniversary DVD-set (2013) includes live footages of both arrangements. *Utagoe wa ikeru chikara*, ed. Utagoe Undō 65 Shūnen Shuppan Kikaku Iinkai (Tokyo: Ongaku Sentā, 2013).

the singers [at the Saitama Chorus] and the audience had, as well as the [song's] worldview. And so Yoshida made it, remade it, but even while it was being remade, I still hated it [the song].

Yoshida: But that's not really how it is, right? If you hate it – you can't make something that you hate. So I interpreted this song in my own way, [in] my interpretation, and [arranged the song] with the thought that "This is how I would interpret it." And maybe it [the song] might have been a little bit difficult compared to the songs that the Saitama Chorus was singing around that time. Though it's [an] easy [piece for the chorus] nowadays.

Kanai: Yeah, because their level [of performance] has improved. Back then, it was difficult for the four voice parts just to harmonize well.

Yoshida: So I changed the order of verses from the "Song of a Human Being" that they were used to singing, and harmonization is also different. So the people [in the Saitama Chorus] might have been confounded at first, but I made the arrangement with the idea that I can get on board [if we performed the song] like this (*laughing*).<sup>50</sup>

Here, Yoshida and Kanai make it more than clear that they did not find "Song of a Human Being" to their liking, at both musical and worldview levels. However, it is worth noting that they did not reject the song's message outright, implying instead that their resentment lay principally in what they perceived to be the musically crude way the song delivered its message. To be sure, they recount that their "negative reaction" (*kyozetsu hannō*) to "Song of a Human Being" was so great that they felt compelled to make the song compatible with their own sensibilities ("with the idea that I can get on board [if we performed the song] like this"). Yet, once premiered, Yoshida's arrangement met with the composer Yamanogi Takeshi's approval, and her choral arrangement of "Song of a Human Being" has since remained in the Saitama Chorus's repertoire.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Kanai Makoto and Yoshida Keiko, Saitama, Japan, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; *Sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana: Yoshida Keiko konsei gasshō henkyokushū*, ed. Ongaku Kōbō Hātōfuru

As a choral piece with four voice parts, musical cues, and piano accompaniment, Yoshida’s arrangement is more complete as a package than Yamanogi’s original, delivering the songs’ words in a more pre-defined manner than does Yamanogi’s original. In comparison with Yamanogi’s original, which provides only a single melody line, chords, and words to the song, Yoshida’s arrangement comes with a four-part chorus (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) with piano accompaniment. As a result, Yoshida’s arrangement precludes the sort of impromptu music-making process that was necessary (and, conversely, *possible*) with Yamanogi’s original due to its limited specification. In contrast, Yoshida’s arrangement is specific in the delivery of each verse; each verse is sung in different voice setup and dynamics, and there exists a clear sense of build-up to the final verse which opens *a cappella* in *forte*, emphasizing the song’s manifesto in a slow tempo (“Living through it . . . Living through it all . . . I shall sing a song of freedom – let us sing together a Song of a Human Being!”). Though Yoshida herself never described “Song of a Human Being” in a single word, Kanai Makoto once described the song as a “requiem” during one rehearsal – a requiem for those who resorted to taking their own lives before betraying their own friends, a sentiment he believes comes alive at the end of Yoshida’s arrangement, closing not in *forte* but with decrescendo and ritardando (see Figure 6.4 below).



Figure 6.4: The final refrain of “Song of a Human Being” in Yoshida Keiko’s arrangement

Intriguingly, since Yamanogi Takeshi’s death in 2009, “Song of a Human Being” crossed the ocean and was performed at commemorative events in South Korea by way of the Saitama Chorus. Out of exchanges between the Saitama Chorus and the Seoul-based Tree of Peace Chorus since 2010, “Song of a Human Being” (in Yoshida Keiko’s choral arrangement) became the first piece born from Utagoe to be translated into Korean in South Korea. Having since

become a Tree of Peace favorite, the song was even sung by the chorus at a hundredth anniversary event of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, together with the Saitama Chorus on stage (2019).<sup>52</sup> To the extent that the words of “Song of a Human Being” have been sung outside of the original historical circumstances from which the song emerged (remembering the protests against the breakup-and-privatization of Kokutetsu, 1982-1987), this development is another example of vagueness contributing to invitation and engagement (as proposed in the introduction to the dissertation).<sup>53</sup> More importantly, however, the case of “Song of a Human Being” also suggests that acceptance and “arrangement” of a song involves contextualization within different actors involved, which is a necessary step toward relegating relevance to the song in question. In the case of Yoshida’s arrangement of “Song of a Human Being,” the idea of living “like a human being ought to” was the common denominator which enabled Yamanogi’s lyrics to transcend their original setting. Such a process of individualized contextualization based on the common denominator is no less true in the case of *utagoe kissa* today, to which I turn now.

### *Utagoe Kissा in the Late 2010s: Will it Die with an Aging Japan?*

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<sup>52</sup> Surprisingly, the song was sung in the original Japanese, thereby becoming the first Japanese-language song to be sung in front of the South Korean National Assembly building, according to an *Utagoe Shinbun* article subsequently written by a Saitama Chorus member. The Tree of Peace Chorus and Saitama Chorus were the only non-pop song artists to perform at the event, titled “OneK [“One Korea”] Concert”. Eiji Takahashi, “Daikan Minkoku Kokkai Gijidō mae de hatsu no nihongo no uta ga hibiku,” *Utagoe Shinbun*, March 25, 2019, 1; “Ha Sōgun, Alli, Paek Chiyoung tǔng ch’uryōn... ‘k’orian tūrim’ purūnda,” *Korean Dream Times*, February 22, 2019, accessed February 20, 2020, <http://kdtimes.kr/news/view.php?no=1008>.

<sup>53</sup> As examples, I was told in 2016-2017 that both Japan Airline employees filing a lawsuit against unlawful termination and parents of Korean high school students who drowned on the passenger ferry *Sewol* found the phrase “Turning the pain of living into pair of wings” meaningful: Japan Airline employees due to their line of work in the air, and the parents of victims on *Sewol* thinking of their dead children in heaven.

As noted in the introduction to Part III, *utagoe kissa* is far from dead today, thanks in no small part to the dramatic rise of *utagoe kissa* as local events across Japan. Although there remains only five *utagoe kissa* establishments in business as of 2019 (three in Tokyo, one in Chiba, and one in Sendai), there now exists hundreds of self-run *utagoe kissa* events and concerts with the prefix *utagoe* across Japan – at least three hundred in 2009 and at least a hundred every day in Tokyo alone, from an off-hand figure from 2017.<sup>54</sup> Having attended many *utagoe kissa* across Japan (and one in Toronto, Canada), I feel compelled to ask: Is *utagoe kissa* seeing a second rise? At first glance, that would indeed appear to be the case. In addition to major urban areas like Tokyo and Osaka, I came across *utagoe kissa* events in government-designated “underpopulated areas” (*kaso chiiki*) like Ōmuta (former coal-mine town in northern Kyushu, examined in Chapter 3) and Kamaishi (locality in the Sanriku region, one of the hard-hit areas by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake).

However, it would be an overstatement to argue that *utagoe kissa* has seen a rebirth and is here to stay. If anything, *utagoe kissa* as it is spreading today began spreading as self-run events thanks to the generations that had first-hand experience at *utagoe kissa*. Possibly due to what seems like a “return” of the older generations to their old pastime, *utagoe kissa* today is at the forefront of the Showa nostalgia in the musical realm. The term *utagoe* in this instance has effectively become a prefix equivalent to “oldies” in the English language – as a colloquial term, the word evokes music from the past. Veteran *utagoe kissa*-goers today, many of whom are or were until recently involved in organizing *utagoe kissa* events, justifiably point out that what

<sup>54</sup> The figure of three hundred was the number of *utagoe kissa* events that Tomoshibi was aware of as of 2009, when Ōno Yukinori wrote an article for *Gekkan Tomoshibi* in 2009 which became a partial basis for Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019). The figure in Tokyo was given by an active *utagoe kissa* host (*shikaisha*) at several *utagoe kissa* as of 2017, including Gori in Funabashi, Chiba. He also added that there simply are not enough “professional” hosts to run these *utagoe kissa* events. Yukinori Ōno, *Utagoe kissa Tomoshibi no rekishi: utai tsuzuketa 65 nenkan*, Vol. 2 of 2 (Tokyo: Yuigaku Shobō, 2019), 143.

seems like a second coming of *utagoe kissa* will completely die out once they are gone.<sup>55</sup> As these people see it, the surge in *utagoe kissa* events today is less the case of reinvention of the wheel than self-organization of an entertainment form made by and for the post-retirement age cohort.

The shift to the older generation among current patrons of *utagoe kissa* is amply visible in Tomoshibi today, inarguably the largest and most influential surviving *utagoe kissa* today. According to Saitō Takashi, chair (*shachō*) of Tomoshibi since 2019, the number of patrons began to recover since 1993 when Tomoshibi published a live recording collection of *utagoe kissa* hits on the cassette tape and CD, advertised on major newspapers like *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun*.<sup>56</sup> It was from that point onward that magazines, radio stations, and television stations began to make coverage on the “rediscovery” of *utagoe kissa*. Unsurprisingly, the allure of nostalgia as a marketing device is strong to Tomoshibi even today. In March 2019, Tomoshibi co-hosted an “*utagoe kissa* concert” in Tokyo, whose sponsor included the television station Tokyo MX and the mainstream conservative newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*. The concert’s poster reads as follows: “Let us sing [our] era (*jidai*)! Let us sing our lives (*jinsei*)!” Adorned with the phrase “Thank you, Heisei [Japan’s imperial era name between 1989 and 2019],” the poster presents the “*utagoe kissa* concert” to be much more of a celebration of the previous eras (Heisei and Showa) than the new era to come, Reiwa, which began on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Put differently,

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<sup>55</sup> Among my interviewees, this viewpoint was most emphatically stated by Kurosawa Kenji, a former regular at Kachūsha in Shinjuku (see Chapter 4 for details on this establishment) and organizer of several *utagoe kissa* events in western Tokyo in the late 2000s. Interview with Kurosawa Kenji, Tokyo, Japan, August 31, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> In his book on the history of Tomoshibi, Ōno Yukinori also refers to the unexpected sales figure of the CD- and cassette tape-set, after which Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019), 137-139.

this *utagoe kissa* concert was a celebration for those who lived through the past eras of Japan by means of singing songs from those past eras.<sup>57</sup>

However, despite the overwhelmingly aged population of *utagoe kissa*-goers today, the word *utagoe* should not be equated with nostalgia in entirety. At the very least, nostalgia should not be the sole lens through which to analyze *utagoe kissa* today because the term does not adequately explain the sort of participatory and organizational practices that I have observed in Japan between 2016 and 2019. As will be explored in subsequent paragraphs, nostalgia, by which I am referring here to a conscious pursuit of things that are not current, may be a point of entry for many *utagoe kissa*-goers today, but their purpose of interaction in and through *utagoe kissa* are remarkably grounded in the present moment, from personal friendship to political sentiments with regard to contemporary Japan. As far as such an attitude is concerned, *utagoe kissa* and Utagoe movement share a major commonality.

Although the various *utagoe kissa* across Japan today are generally more varied in motivation than Utagoe-affiliated choruses, organizers of *utagoe kissa* generally have their respective sense of mission for which they continue to run their *utagoe kissa*. Combined with the current state of Nihon no Utagoe as examined earlier, a survey of *utagoe kissa* today demonstrates the persistence of reformative impulse with concerns as national and explicit as maintaining Japan's Article 9 and as local as providing a space for the elderly to engage in physical and mental exercise. What emerges here, then, is a return to the argument put forth in the introduction to Part I, or a variation on the theme of what I call "musical reformism" in

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<sup>57</sup> In her book on music and nostalgia in Japan, Koizumi Kyōko provides an intriguing account of "utagoe bus", whose only point of shared musical element is in the *shōka* textbook songs that students between the 1940s and 1950s would have sung at school. Kyōko Koizumi, *Memorīsukēpu: 'ano koro' o yobi okosu ongaku* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2013), 14-32.

which music served as both an object and means of social reform, with a much heavier emphasis on the latter in this case.

As mentioned above, *utagoe kissa* today is less a business establishment than an event. Over the last decade, there emerged a recognizable pattern in the kinds of *utagoe kissa* events. In a 2010 article on a periodical called *Shakai Kyōiku (Social Education)*, a man living in western Tokyo called Kurosawa Kenji categorizes *utagoe kissa* under three categories: first, ones hosted by “people who have been regularly active in the choral-singing network through the so-called Utagoe movement”; second, ones hosted by “people like [him]self who have been involved with *utagoe kissa*”; third, ones that were formed by people “who want to sing completely new songs.”<sup>58</sup> It must be pointed out that Kurosawa’s classification is based on organizing principles. As I have observed between 2016 and 2019, patrons of *utagoe kissa* events today often traverse across different “kinds” of *utagoe kissa*. Kurosawa himself is an example of this, as an organizer of several *utagoe kissa* events in western Tokyo around 2010 and as a regular at multiple *utagoe kissa* as of the late 2010s, where I made his acquaintance.<sup>59</sup>

Based on my field research, by and large Kurosawa’s classification still appears to hold true as of 2019. I would, however, make two revisions based on my observations between these years. First, there has been at least one more variation in musical genres within Kurosawa’s third category, or *utagoe kissa* organized by those “who wanted to sing completely new songs.”

When he was referring to this category of *utagoe kissa* in 2010, Kurosawa had in mind popular music genres like “Japanized” American folk music genre (*fōku*) and GS (“Group Sounds”) from

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<sup>58</sup> Yasuchika Saki, “Utagoe, wa ga seishun: Tama ‘utagoe kissa’ nettowaku kara,” *Shakai Kyōiku* no. 658 (August 2010): 42-43.

<sup>59</sup> Kurosawa was a regular at Kachūsha in Kabukichō between the late 1960s and late 1970s. Interview with Kurosawa Kenji, Tokyo, Japan, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

the 1970s. Based on my observation, these genres appear to have since become popular in both establishment-based *utagoe kissa* (including Tomoshibi) and event-based *utagoe kissa*. However, their rising popularity has led to the formation of *utagoe kissa* events specializing in an older, sidelined *utagoe kissa* repertory in recent years, for example Russian and Soviet songs and labor songs from the Utagoe movement (songs by Araki Sakae the laborer-composer, for example).<sup>60</sup>

Second, *utagoe kissa* has attracted much attraction as a method of quasi-musical and physical therapy for retired generations and at retirement homes.<sup>61</sup> Typically run by organizers who are at least a generation younger than the participants, *utagoe kissa* that can be categorized under this strand engage in physical and mental exercises involving hands, feet, and fingers, in addition to singing as in *utagoe kissa* events elsewhere. In a certain sense, these *utagoe kissa* are a variation of *utagoe kissa* events held at local public facilities called *kōminkan*, which have arguably become the most common kind of space where *utagoe kissa* events are held across Japan in recent years.<sup>62</sup> More often than not, these events do not style themselves *utagoe kissa* but rather add their own descriptor such as *saron* (“salon”) or *kurabu* (“club”), while still retaining the term *utagoe* in many cases. Unsurprisingly, *utagoe kissa* of this caliber tend to

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<sup>60</sup> Examples of these *utagoe kissa* event include the monthly *utagoe kisa* event in Kururi, Chiba Prefecture (specializing in Russian and Soviet songs) and the *utagoe sakaba* (“*utagoe bar*”) in Ōtsuka, Tokyo (specializing in labor songs). Such setup does not preclude patrons from requesting and singing songs outside of their respective area of specialty; typically, these *utagoe kissa* have a designated time range during which songs from any musical genre can be requested.

<sup>61</sup> *Utagoe kissa* itself is not officially recognized as a method of musical therapy according to Hirose Megumi, a graduate of the Music Therapy program at the Kunitachi College of Music whose activities in Yokohama place her under the category denoted in the sentence. Interview with Hirose Megumi, Tokyo, Japan, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>62</sup> Since the 1980s, *kōminkan* across Japan have become a place of learning and interaction for the local community under the slogan “lifelong learning” (*shōgai gakushū*), of which *utagoe kissa* is one example today. It is also worth pointing out that the Japan Society for the Study of Kominkan (Nihon Kōminkan Gakkai) has been active since 2003, publishing its yearly bulletin. Harusuke Kubota, “Kōminkan o meguru dōkō,” *Nihon Kōminkan Gakkai Nenpō* no. 16 (2019): 129.

emphasize nostalgia (*natsukashisa*) more than others – after all, physical exercise should be fun, and singing songs from one’s younger days in this context serves as a reward for participating.

In the remainder of the *utagoe kissa* section of this chapter, I will explore *utagoe kissa* that I have personally partaken between 2016 and 2019. In broad strokes, *utagoe kissa* today can be divided based on whether there exists an afflicted target audience to whom the organizers seek to provide moral support. Generally speaking, organizers of *utagoe kissa* can safely assume that their guests would be likely above the age of sixty who want to sing the songs that they came to learn by the time they were in their thirties. By “afflicted target audience,” I am specifically referring to a population group which the organizers of *utagoe kissa* (and, perhaps in some cases, the population group in question itself) consider to be a disadvantaged group in some manner, particularly by natural disaster (especially those affected by the Tohoku Earthquake of 2011) and old age in the context of this chapter. Indeed, this is an area where Utagoe-affiliated choruses and *utagoe kissa* intersect in spirit in contemporary Japanese contexts. In doing so, the end of this section will bring a coda to the dissertation, returning to the characterization of the *utagoe* phenomenon as presented in the dissertation’s introduction: “*utagoe* was a heterogeneous phenomenon in its interpretations and their respective points of origin, and points of contention therein were products of the historical contexts leading up to their respective present moment.”

#### *Utagoe Kissas as Means and End: in Service of the Community, Easily Visible or not*

Perhaps one defining feature of *utagoe kissa* today, either as an event or business establishment, is the fact that it is decidedly local-based. None of the five surviving *utagoe kissa* establishments

as of 2019 has the ambition to expand its business across the prefecture or Japan like Komaura-line Tomoshibi once did between the 1960s and 1980s.<sup>63</sup> Some of the staff of these businesses lead *utagoe kissa* events around their neighborhood outside of their stores themselves, as in the case of Balalaika's founder Nanbu Toshirō in Sendai and Gori's founder Suzuki Takao in Funabashi (before he passed away in late 2017). Tomoshibi is quite exceptional in this regard, as its personnel (host-singers and accompanists) are hired to lead local-based *utagoe kissa* events small and big across Japan, some of which are held in concert halls in prefectural capitals. Between 2000 and 2016, the average number of *utagoe kissa* events led by Tomoshibi's personnel amounted to 224 per year.<sup>64</sup>

In view of its influence, some description of Tomoshibi's presence in many aspects of local-based *utagoe kissa* events today is in order. Tomoshibi's influence over *utagoe kissa* events can be measured in two aspects: its songbooks and personnel. Based on my visits to *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Iwate, Aichi, Fukuoka, and Toronto, Canada, I found Tomoshibi's green songbook (originally published in 1972, up to ninth edition in 2016) to be the most widely used of all. The Tomoshibi songbooks' competitors include an *utagoe kissa* songbook published by Ongaku Center (publishing house of Nihon no Utagoe) in 2011, PowerPoint-based songbooks displayed on the projector (or the laptop screen, if one is carrying his or her laptop around), or self-made print-out songbooks. While they are all good competitors of Tomoshibi's songbooks in terms of legibility through big fonts (which is an important feature for their intended age group), they lag behind Tomoshibi's green songbook in their conciseness

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<sup>63</sup> These five establishments include Tomoshibi and Ieji ("Homeward," est. 1979) in Shinjuku, Tokyo, Balalaika in Sendai, Miyagi (est. 1978), Furusato ("Hometown", est. 2000) in Hachiōji, Tokyo, and Gori in Funabashi, Chiba (est. 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Ōno Vol. 2 of 2 (2019), 210.

in covering *utagoe kissa* classics. Additionally, Tomoshibi's green songbook is available in two sizes: original and bigger versions.



Figure 6.5: Side-by-side comparison of Tomoshibi's “green songbook” *World of Songs (Uta no sekai, 1972 [2016])* and Ongaku Center's *Utagoe Kissa Songbook 828 (2016)*.

The popularity of Tomoshibi's green songbook can partly be explained by the presence of Tomoshibi personnel at many *utagoe kissa* events across Japan. At these events, Tomoshibi's

personnel use Tomoshibi's green songbook, which essentially serves a collection of *utagoe kissa* classics from the 1950s and 1960s such as Meiji-era *shōka* textbook songs, Russian and Soviet songs, and Japanese popular music from the 1950s and 1960s, or songs that customarily appear in the songbooks from the three "first-generation" *utagoe kissa* in Shinjuku (see Chapter 5).<sup>65</sup>

By comparison, Tomoshibi's second songbook in red cover (first published in 2013), which includes mostly Japanese pop songs from the 1970s and onward, was harder to find at *utagoe kissa* events not hosted or led by Tomoshibi personnel. Though this can be partly explained in economic terms, even in this scenario the implication seems clear: between the green and red songbooks, the green songbook is likely seen as the more comprehensive and safer choice for organizers of *utagoe kissa* events.

At these local-based *utagoe kissa* events, both organizers and guests consider having a good time as the foremost concern. As noted earlier, many organizers of these *utagoe kissa* events are themselves *utagoe kissa*-goers, and most of the *utagoe kissa*-goers I have acquainted between 2016 and 2019 frequent multiple *utagoe kissa* events and establishments. An illustrative example of the latter kind is a man who goes by the nickname "Kappa," who visits Tomoshibi and *utagoe kissa* events mainly in western Tokyo on regular basis. Of all the *utagoe kissa*-goers I have met over the years, "Kappa" remains by far the most frequently encountered figure in my random visits to *utagoe kissa* in Tokyo. Before retirement, he did not have a particular liking for *utagoe kissa*, which he had visited only a couple of times as a young man.

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<sup>65</sup> An intriguing product in this context is Tomoshibi's blue songbook (first published in 2009), used exclusively at *utagoe kissa* events outside of the store space. This songbook is even more concise than the green songbook, containing only 111 songs, compared to 533 in the current edition of the green songbook. Largely based on the green songbook and including several songs that would later be included in the red songbook (first published in 2013), the blue songbook contains songs that editors at Tomoshibi no doubt considered to have become popular at *utagoe kissa* events through the 2000s. I personally sang all but a couple of songs in the blue songbook at least once during my research period between October 2016 and September 2017.

Since his second exposure to *utagoe kissa* in 2009, however, he has been keeping record of his *utagoe kissa* visits, which numbered 1,020 as of February 2017 and 1,070 in June 2017 – or a visit every two or three days on average.<sup>66</sup> Although Kappa may inarguably be an extreme example even among those who re-discovered *utagoe kissa* as their favorite pastime activity, the great majority of *utagoe kissa*-goers I have acquainted between 2016 and 2019 were mostly “returnees” to *utagoe kissa* after a multiple decade-long hiatus. As employees of Tomoshibi have also conveyed in their interviews, these “returning” populations were indeed their target age group as of 2016-2017.<sup>67</sup>

In view of a typical age group found at *utagoe kissa* in the late 2010s, there emerges a pertinent question: Is nostalgia at work here? Indeed, many first-time “returnees” to *utagoe kissa* I had opportunities to talk to between 2016 and 2019 at Tomoshibi, for example, visited the place through their friend who had started going to Tomoshibi earlier, or through news coverage on the television or internet. Their typical reaction was expressed in the phrase *natsukashii* (“It takes me back”), often after having sung Meiji-era *shōka* textbook songs or Russian folk songs, both of which they would have sung at *utagoe kissa* and in school decades earlier. Generally speaking, *utagoe kissa* staff in the five surviving *utagoe kissa* establishments and organizers of local *utagoe kissa* events whom I have talked to agree that nostalgia is indeed at work, but more as a point of entry. As one such *utagoe kissa* organizer (and, of course, himself an avid *utagoe kissa*-goer) convincingly put to me, *utagoe kissa* is a space where people above a certain age can sing songs that have become difficult to sing in group in their daily lives.

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<sup>66</sup> Personal communication with “Kappa,” February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Saitō Takashi, Tokyo, Japan, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

This sort of nostalgia in *utagoe kissa* is best exemplified by the *utagoe kissa* gathering in Toronto, Canada, which first took place and 2001. Now a quarterly event hosted at the Japanese Community Center in suburban Toronto, the Toronto Utagoe Kissा Gathering (Toronto Utagoe Kissा no Kai) is now one of the longest-surviving *utagoe kissa* events as of 2020. The first ad-hoc *utagoe kissa* gathering with six people at the *karaoke* lounge in a Toronto café in 2000 indeed emerged out of an episode of nostalgia for a venue some of the Japanese residents remembered from their years in Japan.<sup>68</sup> Over the years, the quarterly Toronto *utagoe kissa* gathering has consistently attracted about thirty to fifty people, typical participants having been born in the 1940s.<sup>69</sup> In the Japanese Canadian lexicon, Japanese immigrants who arrived in Canada after 1945 are referred to as the “new immigrants” (*shin-ijūsha*), and those who migrated to Canada since 1967 in particular are referred to as “second wave” immigrants.<sup>70</sup> Organizers of the Toronto *utagoe kissa* gathering belong to the late 1960s-1970s cohort of the “new immigrants,” and they are keenly aware of the fact that their shared musical repertoire derives from this generational background.<sup>71</sup> In this capacity, nostalgia manifests itself as an effect from singing songs from a shared musical repertoire after years of hiatus, rather than a “Janus-faced”

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<sup>68</sup> “Toronto ni hibike, seishun no uta: utagoe kissa no kai,” *Nikka Taimusu* May 19, 2000, 9.

<sup>69</sup> I extend a note of thanks to Miura Nobuyoshi, one of the organizers of the Toronto Utagoe Kissा Gathering, for statistical data on the number of participants from 2000 and to 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Japanese immigration to Canada was accelerated by the Canadian immigration policy reforms of 1962 and 1967, which were aimed at removing national origin-based discrimination and preferences for European states in visa sponsorship, respectively. The prewar-postwar divide in the Japanese Canadian community is also visible in the name of the Toronto-based Shin’ijūsha Kyōkai, which literally means “New Immigrant Society”. Atsuko Nakayama, “Toronto Shin’ijūsha Kyōkai shi,” *Toronto shin’ijūsha 50 nen no ayumi*, ed. Shin’ijūsha 50 Shūnen Kinenshi Jikkō Iinkai (Toronto: Shin’ijūsha 50 Shūnen Kinenshi Jikkō Iinkai, 2017), 32. For a near-contemporary account of the post-1962 immigration patterns in Canada, see Louis Parai, “Canada’s Immigration Policy, 1962-1974,” *The International Migration Review* 9 no. 4 (Winter 1975): 456-472.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Miura Nobuyoshi, Nakamura Yuki, Heihachirō “Harry” Kawabe, and Yamamoto Katsuyoshi, Markham, Canada, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

sentiment that can potentially “confuse the actual home and the imaginary one” and hinder “the distinction between subject and object” as Svetlana Boym has characterized.<sup>72</sup>

Rather, nostalgia in *utagoe kissa* in the late 2010s is characterized by its gaze upon the present moment. The great majority of the songs being sung may be decades old, but the patterns of interaction ranging from friendship to jokes about the guests’ old age are very much rooted in the present moment. One of the most common kinds of jokes, in fact, takes jab at the typical *utagoe kissa*-goer’s old age by way of contrast with the youthfulness of the song that is about to be sung. In my observations between 2016 and 2019 in Japan and Canada, one of the most frequent targets was “Wakamonotachi” (“Young People), a *fōku* song examined in detail in Chapter 4. When cracking jokes, the host would comment on the fact that, physically, they are not young anymore, either in positive or negative connotation: “We may not be young in age anymore, but we are still young in spirit!,” or “But alas, we are not young at all anymore!.” Or, in a more humorous take, the host would crack a “dad’s joke,” pointing out that they are not “young people” (*wakamonotachi*) anymore but “dumb people” (*bakamonotachi*), possibly in reference to the growing forgetfulness among *utagoe kissa*-goers due to their old age.<sup>73</sup> To the extent that the typical *utagoe kissa*-goer comes face to face with his or her own age through songs from the past, a typical interaction at *utagoe kissa* involving music is far from Boym’s

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<sup>72</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi, xviii.

<sup>73</sup> Forgetfulness in old age, too, becomes a subject of joke time to time, so that at the *utagoe* live house Gori in Funabashi, Chiba, its songbook includes Moriyama Ryōko’s song “Ale Ale Ale” (a pun on the Japanese *are*, or “that thing”), a song exclusively dealing with forgetfulness. During my visits to Gori in Funabashi between 2016 and 2017, its owner and founder Suzuki Takao would sometimes sing the song with comical gestures.

description of modern nostalgia, which she describes as “a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return.”<sup>74</sup>

Examined in more depth, nostalgia as seen at *utagoe kissa* in late 2010s Japan may be part-“prefabricated nostalgia” and part-“creative nostalgia,” to borrow Boym’s terms. As a marketing device (as seen in the countless advertisements for “*utagoe* concerts” and such), the term *utagoe* may have become what Boym calls “nostalgic readymades,” for an initial visit to any *utagoe kissa* establishment or event today could very well become a trip back in time thanks to a generationally shared musical repertoire.<sup>75</sup> Things get blurry, however, in light of Boym’s definition of modern nostalgia as a mourning “for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values.”<sup>76</sup> As Boym would have it, such a form of mourning cannot be “creative nostalgia,” as it reveals neither “the fantasies of the age” nor the “fantasies and potentialities that [could give birth to] the future.”<sup>77</sup> On one hand, as veteran members of the Central Chorus rightly pointed out in the late 2010s, *utagoe kissa*-goers are indeed not concerned with initiating a movement or offering a future vision of Japan in the years to come. From a functional standpoint, *utagoe kissa* in late 2010s Japan is ultimately a form of entertainment, one that celebrates survival in many ways – survival of the songs being sung, its participants despite old age, and, of course, the singing format that is still referred to as *utagoe kissa*. From this

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<sup>74</sup> Boym, 8. Following Boym’s and Roland Barthes’s characterization of “myth” in nostalgia, Hino Katsuyuki (2014) points out that the so-called “Shōwa nostalgia” hinges on individual and individualized imagined pasts, visible in both media products (e.g. films and novels) and scholars who have written on Shōwa nostalgia. Hino argues that, due to the multiplicity of positionalities and premises with regard to the Showa era, Shōwa nostalgia is essentially an “invisible semantic struggle” (*mienai imi tōsō*). Katsuyuki Hino, *Shōwa nosutarujia to wan ani ka: kioku to radikaru demokurashī no media gaku* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2014), 24, 445-446.

<sup>75</sup> Boym, 351.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 351.

standpoint, it would be fair to argue that this form of nostalgia is not creating any political discourse rooted in the present moment for the future.

In a cynical take, the same line of criticism can be extended even to *utagoe kissa* events intended for the afflicted, of which there are several kinds. The thorny question comes down to the following phrase: is consolation good enough of a political action? Within Nihon no Utagoe, *utagoe kissa* has witnessed a renewed significance in the wake of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake, which has produced relocated populations both in and outside of their home prefectures. The Saitama Chorus, for example, hosts *utagoe kissa* on regular basis for the relocated households in Saitama Prefecture from Fukushima Prefecture. Similarly, groups like the Shirakaba Chorus (Chapter 4) periodically send their members to the relocated households within the Tohoku region to host *utagoe kissa* events.

While their patterns of interaction are beyond the scope of this chapter (and, admittedly, a significantly less explored part of my research), coming face to face with the afflicted has presented a significant set of difficulties to those in the position to lead *utagoe kissa*. For Ōkuma Akira, the young full-time organizer of the Tokyo chapter of Nihon no Utagoe (Tōkyō no Utagoe) mentioned earlier, his moment of crisis occurred following the global recession of 2008: What kind of songs can possibly be appropriate for the hundreds of people who have suddenly found themselves homeless? He recounts a similar episode in the wake of the Tohoku Earthquake in March 2011, when he could not help but feel songs of the ocean – the natural environ that claimed the lives of so many – to be simply inappropriate, and old Utagoe songs like Araki Sakae’s “Let’s Keep it up” (Chapter 3) sounding too hollow in the circumstances he found

himself in.<sup>78</sup> In the end, Ōkuma found his answer from the very people he had tried to give voice to: he had to wait for them to speak up, and provide them with songs they felt like singing, whether extant or to be created anew.

In lieu of growing political consciousness and subjectivity, what could be good enough of a political action? Is remembering an acceptable form of political action? Certainly, in the context of post-2011 earthquake Tohoku, the term *fūka* (“forgetting,” literally “blown away by the wind”) has become a hot word to denote the disparity between the Japanese government’s optimistic assessment of the reconstruction process and the toils of the local residents, whether living in or outside of their homes before the 2011 earthquake. In a country plagued by decades of general political apathy, remembering can in no way be dismissed as too little a meaningful action. Is the resulting emotion, then, hope? But as David Leheny points out in the context of the reconstruction effort in Kamaishi, hope is no magic bullet, instead potentially “something akin to a placeholder for something else: perhaps worry, perhaps grief, perhaps even outrage.”<sup>79</sup> The question, then, is how to (and whether it is possible to) derive something more from remembering. During my extended research period between 2016 and 2017, the answer to this question in *Nihon no Utagoe* and the numerous *utagoe kissa* seemed to be still in the making – not surprisingly so, in view of the continuing and contentious historical narratives of a postwar Japan since the historical moment of 2011.

### Resolution before the Coda: *Utagoe* as Personal

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<sup>78</sup> Akira Ōkuma, “Jun & Akira” (talk, Jun & Akira, Saitama, Japan, March 11, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Leheny, 181-182.

It may be appropriate now to close this chapter with a brief note on quasi-*utagoe kissa* events as physical and mental exercise for the elderly, one of the growing areas of *utagoe*-themed gatherings as of the late 2010s. Here, whether hosted in senior living homes or public facilities like *kōminkan*, the relationship between the organizer and patrons, as well as among patrons, are much more local-based and personal due to general immobility of the patron population group. Towards the end of my extended research period in the summer of 2017, I acquainted myself with a lady who always sat in the first row at an “*utagoe* salon” hosted by Hirose Megumi, a certified music therapist who organizes several *utagoe* gatherings incorporating physical exercises. The third time I visited the *utagoe* salon, the lady sitting in the first row expressed her thankfulness to Hirose for hosting the salon, through which she overcame her grief over her husband’s death and parts of her paralysis. Of course, the lady’s appreciation for Hirose’s *utagoe* gathering is deeply personal, and neither the lady nor Hirose sought to create a political movement out of the experience. But who is to dismiss this tale? Who is to say that Hirose, who personally identifies with many of the *utagoe kissa* hits and even songs born from the Utagoe movement (including the aforementioned “Song of a Human Being”), is not exercising her own version of *utagoe*? Betwixt movement and nostalgia, *utagoe* remains to be continuously engaged, imagined, and practiced in contemporary Japan.

## すべての人に歌う楽しみと喜びを

うたごえは  
カラオケでもコーラスでもない  
歌の楽しみ方です



Figure 6.6: A portion of the self-introductory pamphlet made by music therapist Hirose Megumi, who leads her *utagoe* “salon” in Yokohama among other *utagoe* gatherings (2014). The three sentences read, from top to bottom: “Creating an *utagoe* place (*utagoe no ba*) proposed by a music therapist-*utagoe* piano accompanist”; “Happiness and joy of singing to all”; “*Utagoe* is a way of enjoying songs that is neither *karaoke* nor chorus.” Picture courtesy of Hirose Megumi.

In his 2003 conference paper, Shimamura Teru (see introduction to Part III) predicted that *utagoe kissa* would “continue as local activity or cultural activity in the realm of nostalgia among those people who share these younger days, or, with a bit of political characteristic added on top, as a political movement.”<sup>80</sup> As noted in the introduction to Part III, Shimamura was both correct and wrong in his prediction: while *utagoe kissa* certainly continued as local activity, he could not have predicted either the number and geographic reach or prevalence of “non-partisan” *utagoe kissa* events. Although Shimamura essentially viewed the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa* as siblings that arose together and would likely fall together, my ethnographic research suggests that they have seen enough of different patterns of development. Yet, there is no doubt that both incarnations of *utagoe* are aging, for both shared and separate reasons. Whatever

<sup>80</sup> Shimamura (2003), 28.

happens to them in the next ten years, it would not be a product of leftism or change in the patterns of musical consumption in Japan alone, but a combination of both.

## Conclusion: In Place of the Coda

This dissertation has maintained three points about multiple incarnations of *utagoe* in postwar Japan. First, the notion of *utagoe* derives moralistic and nation-centric impulses from applications of music as a concept and a moral regime in pre-World War II Japan. Second, *utagoe* has survived into the late 2010s as a socially conscious concept with musical outlooks. Lastly, reflecting these two aspects of *utagoe*, the Utagoe movement from early on and surviving *utagoe kissa* today display characteristics of what I call “musical reformism” – an idealism in which music figures as simultaneously an object and means of reform, for the sake of the “Japanese people” at large. As in the case of *shōka* when it was introduced as a part of the Japanese elementary school curriculum in the 1880s, *utagoe* remains decidedly preoccupied with music’s societal contribution, no matter how vague it may be in concrete detail.

This dissertation ends its journey here, but future scholarship and *utagoe* need not. In place of the coda with a fanfare, I will bring a sense of closure to the dissertation by means of recapitulation. First, I will revisit all six chapters of the dissertation specifically through the lens of “musical reformism.” Second, I will remark on the current state and the future of things *utagoe*. Put together, *utagoe* is a subject worth studying not only on its own but also for the related threads of inquiry it offers in historical and geographical contexts outside of postwar Japan.

### Recapitulation of the Dissertation Chapters through the Lens of “Musical Reformism”

As proposed on multiple occasions, this dissertation overall illustrates the more than a century-long history of musical reformism in Japan since the Meiji Restoration. In this context, the

dissertation has examined *utagoe* from three historical perspectives: *utagoe* as one of the postwar versions of musical reformism since the 1880s; as reflective of the early postwar Japanese Communist Party's cultural discourse; as a surviving byword in an aging Japan. To a certain extent, the dissertation's historical narrative depicts the persistence of musical reformism, albeit in much smaller and individualized manners today compared to the 1880s.

Chapter 1 surveyed two foundational instances of musical reformism between the 1880s and 1945: singing and songs acquiring a social and cultural significance, and music becoming both an object and means of cultural reformation in Japan. *Shōka*, or songs introduced in music textbooks since the 1880s, represented the first collection of songs in post-Meiji Japan under a concept equivalent to the Western notion of the song. While early *shōka* education employed singing as a means of moralization with physical benefits, discourse on *min'yō* ("folk song") since the late 1900s and the *shin-min'yō* ("new folk song") creation movement from the late 1920s onward sought to uncover and reinvent the Japanese nation's historical essence that was supposedly found in *min'yō*. The momentum to re-create Japan's "national music" coincided with the various attempts by cultural critics and conservatory-trained composers to create a "healthy" body of music and musical practices in the image of Japan's own national-historical essence and modernity. Although these movements between the late 1920s and 1945 failed to produce such a body of music, these aspirations and perceived issues in Japan's contemporary musical culture survived into the postwar decades, making their way to the formative Utagoe movement.

Chapter 2 illustrated the institutional and ideological development of the Utagoe movement toward 1955, when a national umbrella organization called the Nihon no Utagoe Executive Committee became a permanent administrative body. The Central Chorus (est. 1948),

originally a choral group belonging to the Japanese Communist Party's youth section, came into being under the Japanese Communist Party's renewed emphasis on culture since 1946. Though the party's leadership remained vague on the question of political leadership on cultural matters vis-à-vis autonomy of cultural producers, the Central Chorus engaged in both "cultural operation" activities into the workplace and intensive musical education, therefore appealing to both camps within the party. The Japanese Communist Party's elevation of cultural struggle in historical importance as political struggle also worked in formative Utagoe's favor, as formative Utagoe could now legitimate its endeavors of musical character in terms of creating "national music" (*kokumin ongaku*) toward both political and cultural independence of the Japanese nation. Such a double emphasis, inherited from contemporary Japanese Communist Party's cultural rhetoric, would become the hallmark of Utagoe's version of musical reformism.

Chapter 3 examined the life and historical remembering of Araki Sakae (1924-1962), a native of the coal-mine town of Ōmuta in Kyushu who became a celebrated "laborer-composer" (*rōdōsha sakkyōkuka*) figure in Utagoe's historiography. While his extant biographies focus on Araki's role as a movement figure, surviving documents suggest that Araki from early on hoped to cultivate artistic forms appropriate for the Japanese masses even before his discovery of the Utagoe movement in 1953. That he readily identified with Utagoe's national music program was not a coincidence. At the same time, Araki's legacy also bespeaks the persistence of the other side of musical reformism: music as a means of reform. Half a century since his death, Araki is still remembered by veteran figures of Utagoe as a movement figure whose significance lies in his aspiration to effect a social change rather than his compositions in themselves.

Chapter 4 explored Utagoe's engagement with its national music (*kokumin ongaku*) project by way of comparing the manners of incorporating and engaging with songs of Russian-

Soviet and American origins in Utagoe. Heavily influenced by the contemporary Soviet view on the Russian-Soviet musical canon, Utagoe's conceptualization of national music held that a given nation's essence can be salvaged from songs of folk origins and that this essence must form the basis of a national musical canon. This equation was seriously challenged by the rise of American popular music as simultaneously a protest music genre and a popular music genre in Japan and the United States. Utagoe's leadership maintained its mode of binary cultural struggle against what it deemed to be the corrupt popular music producers ("mass media"). This, however, proved to be a losing battle in the wake of increasing popularity of so-called "socially conscious popular songs" (*shakaiha ryūkōka*) even among lay members of Utagoe-affiliated choruses and singing groups. Utagoe's strictly binary view of music producers between the good ("nation") and the bad ("monopoly capital" and "American imperialism") was officially abrogated in 1975 with the dropping of the phrase "national music" from Utagoe's statute. The terms *kokumin* ("nation-people") and *minzoku* ("ethno-people"), however, still figure in Utagoe's current statute (2019) as political and cultural units for which Utagoe must endeavor. The assumption therein of a proper kind of music on behalf of the implicitly timeless nation bespeaks the persistence of Utagoe's characterization of music as a means of reforming the nation.

Chapter 5 presented a historical account of the three "first-generation" *utagoe kissa* in Shinjuku, Japan, an area once considered to be the Mecca of *utagoe kissa*. Among the three *utagoe kissa*, the surviving line of Tomoshibi displays several points of continuity from the Utagoe movement in its perception of music as both a performing medium and a device to nurture a "healthy" culture in Japan. Among the early Tomoshibi staff members, Kaiya Noboru was a prominent theorist figure who characterized music as a human-making process for the good of the collective. In view of the decline of *utagoe kissa* as a profitable business model from

the late 1960s onward, Tomoshibi's survival as the biggest and most influential *utagoe kissa* in subsequent decades would contribute to the survival of several *utagoe kissa* businesses by the willing few who value collective and societal values of singing.

The final chapter of the dissertation, Chapter 6, offered contemporary pictures of Nihon no Utagoe and *utagoe kissa* in the late 2010s. Celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the Utagoe movement, the annual (since 1954) Nihon no Utagoe Festival held in January 2019 displayed many points of historical continuity that had been explored in previous chapters. Above all, the event was a celebration of Utagoe's continued struggles in postwar Japan, as well as current-day struggles by the Japanese people and their foreign allies in East Asia, expressed musically. Music-making displays more nuances in the Saitama Chorus, my "host" Utagoe-affiliated chorus during my research. The relationship between the conservatory-trained professional musicians (conductor and accompanist) and chorus members produces several kinds of "arrangement," including musical arrangement and concert program. The case of "Song of a Human Being" (1988, arranged in 2002) demonstrates a process of negotiations between the conservatory-trained musicians and chorus members involving musical and epistemological aspects, through which the definition of "good music" is contested.

The second half of Chapter 6 explored the proliferation of *utagoe kissa* as local events across Japan catered to the post-retirement generations in the late 2010s. Though this phenomenon has received media coverage as an example of nostalgia for the Showa era, nostalgia is an inadequate angle to analyze the phenomenon due to the typical participant's focus on the present moment. Rather, nostalgia functions more as a point of entry and even a marketing device. These instances of *utagoe* may not entail a sense of social movement, but the term *utagoe* has been malleable in application and vaguely collective in aspiration since the early

postwar years. To the extent that the typical organizer of an *utagoe kissa* event invokes a sense of community and value of singing in contemporary contexts, *utagoe* at large still possesses a tint of musical reformism, still being variably contested and applied by self-proclaimed practitioners of *utagoe*. Though the floating concept of *utagoe* no longer calls for reforming music itself, it continues to mobilize music for collective causes, whether they be for post-retirement fraternization or anti-U.S. military base protests.

#### A Final Remark on the Current State and the Future of *Utagoe*

How will *utagoe* look like in the future? As things stand in 2020, there is no doubt that *utagoe* of the 1950s is no more. As both current members of Utagoe-affiliated choruses and organizers of *utagoe kissa* would admit, things *utagoe* are neither young nor controversial (but, by extension, “hot”) as they had been by the end of the 1950s. It would be fair to argue that *utagoe* has become history, in both narrative and colloquial senses. *Utagoe* has become historicized in the sense that both Nihon no Utagoe and *utagoe kissa* Tomoshibi regard the early years of postwar Japan as the defining moment of *utagoe*. At the same time, as surviving veterans from the first decade of the Utagoe movement would argue, *utagoe* as they know it has become history – the word *utagoe* no longer possesses the sort of imaginative qualities into the ideas of the “Japanese nation” and “Japanese music” like it may have had by the end of the 1950s. Ultimately, the general decline of *utagoe* in recognition must be attributed to a combination of changes over the decades that altered consumption patterns of music: most importantly, political culture (including the role of the Japanese nation in political and cultural discourse), music industry, and technology.

One way to predict the future of *utagoe* is to glean out points of continuity and departure from the 1950s. One area of continuity is that *utagoe* still remains corrective and collective in aspiration. Though the accompanying historical narrative likewise characterizes *utagoe* as a force of change relevant to current-day Japan, no one or organization is in complete control of its application and historical narrative, even the Nihon no Utagoe National Council. What seems clearly different from the 1950s is the age group associated with both the Utagoe movement and *utagoe kissa*. In a similar vein, *utagoe* as a concept does not seem to be able to renew itself or attract a significant number of younger “voices.” There is no doubt that *utagoe* is an old voice today, in both historical and generational senses. Yet, in the historical moment of the late 2010s in post-2011 Japan, *utagoe* reflects the tangled dreams, still-unfulfilled dreams, and idealized Japan comprised of multiple layers that are postwar Japan, continuing to haunt or remind people of their historical location as postwar generations.

At a historical moment when both scholars and non-scholars have become all too aware of the all-consuming might of the market economy, the rise and decline of things *utagoe* may seem like just another tale of our times. In the end, what other forms of expression with some sort of national frame remain unaffected? Indeed, the level of preoccupation with the nation and national standard may have been specific to the early twentieth century across the globe – but political and cultural imaginations are not. Music remains one among many means of such forms of imagination.

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