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Radio Broadcasting and the Politics of Mass Culture in Transwar Japan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Ji Hee Jung

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2010

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2010

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For Japanese and Korean names, I put surnames first, followed by given names.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Radio Broadcasting and the Politics of Mass Culture in Transwar Japan

by

Ji Hee Jung

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Takashi Fujitani, Co-chair

Professor Stefan Tanaka, Co-chair

My dissertation examines the role of radio broadcasting in constituting mass culture as an integral part of politics in Japan during the period from the mid-1920s to the 1950s, that is, during both the Asia-Pacific War and the U.S. occupation. Transwar Japanese radio broadcasting has been discussed primarily in narrow terms of state control and indoctrination during the Asia-Pacific War, and the liberation of the masses or lack of such in the postwar “democratization” initiated by the U.S. occupation. My study demonstrates that Japan’s transwar radio culture was far more lively and indicative of much more complex power relations.

Contrary to common belief, wartime discourses and practices of Japanese radio never uniformly imagined radio listeners as passive audiences. Rather, political and social elites as well as government officials and broadcasters made systematic efforts

to engage mass audiences as conscious listeners and radio participants who would choose to put what they heard into practice out of their own will. These efforts paralleled the empire's mobilization of national and colonial subjects for conducting the war. When the U.S. occupation arrived, habits of radio listening and audience participation from the former era actually facilitated, rather than impeded, the occupation's mission to transform the Japanese into active and self-responsible citizens for rebuilding the nation state in the new global order.

My dissertation demonstrates that while radio was indeed a powerful and effective medium, politicizing the masses into "responsible" members of society through radio was neither a unilateral process nor a smooth operation. I argue that if radio served as a unique intermediary in transwar politics, it did so because of its ability to channel major political themes, norms, and representations into the realms of mass culture and the rhythms of the everyday. My research documents how seemingly trivial popular genres of broadcasting such as the amateur singing contest, the quiz show, and the serial drama played a central role, although not without unexpected twists, in awakening the masses into "responsible" and "useful" members of society in work and play.

Introduction

Rethinking Radio Broadcasting in Transwar Japan

1. The Politics of Representation, Japanese Historiography, and Radio

When the Japanese Empire was defeated in the Asia-Pacific War, the imperial government had to inform both Japanese citizens and colonial subjects that with Japan's unconditional surrender the long and devastating war was finally over. Emperor Hirohito decided for the first time in the history of modern emperors to speak directly to his subjects. Officially, the emperor's voice had never been heard directly by the commoners. At this history-making juncture, Hirohito deliberately chose the radio over other mass media to reach the general populace, indicating his awareness of the power of the radio, the most advanced electronic and auditory medium available at that time. Japan's imperial broadcasting network *Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai* (Japan Broadcasting Corporation, hereafter NHK) had announced to Japanese citizens and colonial subjects that the emperor would make a special broadcast at noon on August 15, 1945, and that every single subject must unfailingly listen to the broadcast. The news that the sovereign was to speak for the first time quickly spread. People gathered around the radio and listened to Emperor Hirohito's surrender broadcast.¹

¹ NHK once broadcast the emperor's voice live accidentally as the microphone caught his voice unexpectedly during the live broadcast of his military review on December 10, 1928. It caused NHK a great deal of trouble because the emperor's voice was not supposed to be aired. Emperor Hirohito's surrender broadcast was the first case in which listeners officially heard his voice. On this issue, refer to Takeyama Akiko, *Rajio no jidai: rajio wa cha no ma no shuyaku datta* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2002), 140-155. For the pioneering study of the

The Japanese press reported the spectacle created at the moment of the broadcast through numerous newspaper articles and photographs. A picture taken by *Dōmei Tsūshinsha* (The Associated News Agency) was perhaps one of the most captivating images that caught the moment when communication was taking place between the Emperor and Japanese commoners. In the photo, a group of Japanese villagers collectively listened to the Emperor's message around a radio. The villagers were courteously on their knees, a bodily expression of the imperial subjects' reverence for the emperor and their will to obey his order. The villagers were crying and heartbroken, revealing their strong empathy for the nation's fate and the emperor himself. Despite these appearances, they stayed poised without any violent expression of feeling, as they were told by the emperor to "beware most strictly of any outbursts of emotion." This scene is but one of many pictures taken of the Japanese people listening to the radio in the same manner.²

These images frequently recurred in journalistic and scholarly accounts of the day of Japan's defeat, testifying to both the remarkable power of radio as a means of mass communication and the absolute authority of the emperor over his subjects. This medium directly connected the sovereign and his subjects by transmitting his voice immediately all over the empire. Similarly, these photos also depicted the Japanese

emperor's broadcast, see Takeyama Akiko, *Gyokuon hōsō* (Tokyo: Banseisha, 1989). On the relationship between the emperor's broadcast and postwar representation of Emperor Hirohito as the victim of the lost war, see John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 33-39.

² For the full text of the August 15, 1945 broadcast, see "Kyokuon hōsō," in *Hōsō 50-nen: shiryō hen*, edited by Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), 306-307; for the quote, 307. On the photographic images, see Satō Takumi, *Hachigatsu jūgonichi no shinwa: shūsen kinenbi no media-gaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2005), 7-68.

mass audience as loyal imperial subjects. These individuals were represented as if they were fully accustomed to this particular mode of communication and cared deeply about the political affairs of the empire, willingly obeying His Majesty's words.

My dissertation traces the historical process whereby Japan's mass audiences evolved into radio listening subjects. If we take the previously mentioned representations of the emperor's broadcast at face value, it may lead us to believe that the process was a clear-cut success story of the broadcasters and governing elites turning the masses into radio listening subjects. Certainly creating well-prepared and attentive listeners was the ultimate goal that Japanese broadcasters, government officials, educators, and diverse interest groups had pursued for the previous two decades. The popular images of the Japanese listening to the emperor's broadcast seemingly suggest that they achieved close to the best of all possible outcomes.

Interestingly enough, the radio listening subjects depicted in those popular images also delighted the U.S. occupation's information and education personnel who had desired a highly effective communication channel with the occupied. Despite their public condemnation of the deeply penetrating power of wartime radio, occupation personnel rejoiced at the possibility of utilizing the same power for its ongoing postwar "reorientation" program. Thus, U.S. occupation forces quickly made the emperor's broadcast a landmark event that showcased possibilities of both radio broadcasting and the emperor to serve the "new" era. Reviewing the radio's role in the reconstruction of Japan, Dwight B. Herrick, former NBC Public Service Director and Chief of the Radio Branch of the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE),

reflected this advantage when he spoke to an American audience at the Institute for Education by Radio in Columbus, Ohio in 1950:

Radio in Japan, for years as essential tool of those who misled their people into aggressive war, today is helping to build a democratic and peace-desirous land. [...] Its effectiveness for purposes other than arousing hatred and spreading untruths was demonstrated dramatically when the Emperor used the radio to tell his people on August 15, 1945, that the war was over. Even more than his words, his voice ensured that the Japanese would accept the surrender terms and not resist the Allied Occupation Forces. Had he used any other medium, we are told, there might have been disbelief and continued fighting.

The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers recognized this effectiveness of radio as something to be encouraged. [...] The very nature of radio makes it possible to do a most effective informational and educational job, and in Japan it is aided by the fact that the people are aggressively radio-minded.³

But the above images of Japanese radio listeners were not a transparent representation of reality. More precisely, while radio was such a powerful medium during the wartime and early postwar periods, the history of radio broadcasting in Japan defies clear cut descriptions of its effects on audiences. For example, even though the powerful visual images of the emperor's broadcast produced and continued to reproduce the myth of the emperor's broadcast, both in terms of the impressive power of radio and the absolute authority of the emperor over his subjects, many listeners' recollections defied this dominant representation.

Many individuals remember the exact moment of listening to the broadcast vividly. Quite a few listeners, though, retrospectively confessed that at that time they

³ Dwight Herrick, "Radio's Role in the Reconstruction of Japan," Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

had a hard time understanding what the emperor was saying due to the extremely formal and difficult language he was using and his untrained high-pitched voice. Individual recollections also displayed varied reactions to the radio address, including confusion, relief, despair, and fear.⁴ If we include responses from non-Japanese listeners, many of whom remember the emperor's broadcast as synonymous with liberation from Japanese colonialism, an even more complex picture develops.⁵ Moreover, Japanese scholars who reexamined this dominant representation of the war's end even point out that some photos were not taken at the exact moment of the Emperor's broadcasting. In some cases these pictures were meticulously fabricated and retaken many times by the journalists who wanted to have impeccable and effective visuals for the press.⁶

The constructed nature of these images encourages us to consider the postwar politics of representation that emphasized a particular representation of wartime radio and its audiences while obfuscating more complex historical circumstances that did not easily fit into such a narrative. Although my dissertation will show that these scenes could not have been made without a series of active and conscious engagement from listeners, dominant discourses of postwar Japan tended to associate these images

⁴ On the diverse reactions to the emperor's broadcast, see Satō, *Hachigatsu jūgonichi no shinwa*, 136-150.

⁵ The Emperor's surrender broadcast was also heard in the colonies of the Japanese Empire. For example, in Korea the radio address was aired through JODK (*Keijō Hōsō*), NHK's Korean branch, at the same time it was broadcast in Japan. For some episodes related to the broadcast in Korea, see Wōn Yong-chin, "Chōsen ni okeru 'kaihō' nyūsu no denpa to kioku," in *Higashi Ajia no shūsen kinenbi: haiboku to shōri no aida*, edited by Satō Takumi and Son An Suk (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2007), 123-126.

⁶ Satō, *Hachigatsu jūgonichi no shinwa*, 7-68.

of radio listeners with a conventional understanding of imperial subjects as blind followers, if not passive victims of top-down media messages.⁷

This idea of wartime audiences was a product of the specific discursive environment of early postwar Japan that stressed a clear binary between the wartime and postwar periods. Postwar depictions show Japan's wartime society as an extreme combination of oppressive government and submissive people.⁸ With some important variations, this view has strongly influenced our understanding of Japan's wartime mass media until recently. Japanese radio broadcasting was no exception.⁹

Lately, scholars have reconsidered this binary and dark valley image of wartime Japan.¹⁰ Some of them even suggest that wartime Japan, as a modern regime,

⁷ On the American popular media's depiction of the Japanese both during the wartime and the early postwar eras, see John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 77-146, 293-317. The American popular media often described the Japanese as a herd-like indistinguishable group of people.

⁸ For example, Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, translated by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), Thomas R. H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (New York: Norton, 1978). This "dark valley" image of the wartime society was juxtaposed with the representation of postwar Japan as brightly progressive within a normal course of modernization. This narrative tends to highlight Japan's rapid transformation from a feudal society to a modern nation-state through liberal democratic reforms under the occupation.

⁹ Peter High, *Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1921-1945* (Madison: The Wisconsin University Press, 2003); Matsuda Hiroshi, *NHK: towareru kōkyōhōsō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005).

¹⁰ These studies emphasize the importance of individual voluntary participation in war efforts (Sakai), the conscious and unforced collaboration of intellectuals and artists who found certain parallels between their own interests and government policy (Akazawa, Kogin), and the news media's lead in promoting Japan's war with China (Young); see Naoki Sakai. "Subject and Substratum: On Japanese Imperial Nationalism," *Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3-4 (July 2000); Akazawa Shirō, Kitagawa Kenzō, and Takaoka Hiroyuki, eds. *Bunka to fashizumu: senjiki Nihon ni okeru bunka no kōbō* (Tokyo: Keizai Hyōronsha, 1993); Kogin Akira et al. eds. *Fashizumu no sōzōryoku: rekishi to kioku no hikaku bunkaronteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Jinbun

shared some characteristics with postwar Japan and even with many Western democracies in the wartime and postwar era.¹¹ New studies of imperial subjects also deconstruct the depiction of the Japanese as a herd-like, indistinguishable, obedient mass by applying Foucault's notion of subject as both enabled and conditioned by relations of power.¹² Drawing upon recent scholarship, my dissertation rethinks the dominant representation of Japanese radio and its audiences.

2. Beyond Binaries: Transwar Broadcasting and Mass Audiences

My dissertation provides a history of Japanese radio broadcasting from the mid-1920s through the mid-1950s. I will specifically investigate radio both as a signifier and an actual mediator of conceptions and concrete actions for nurturing the masses into national and imperial subjects and citizens and mobilizing everyday culture as an important technology of politics. My research notes several shifts in the expected role of radio and in the subjectivity desired of mass audiences at each historical juncture. At the same time, I also highlight some continuing attempts by

Shoin, 1997); Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 55-114.

¹¹ Yamanouchi Yasushi and J. Victor Koschmann eds. *Total War and Modernization* (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1998); J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹² Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Tomiyama Ichirō, *Kinadai Nihon shakai to "Okinawajin": "Nihonjin" ni naru to iu koto* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1990); Leo T.S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Sakai, "Subject and Substratum"; Sabine Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

intellectuals, radio specialists, and educators as well as government officials to empower the masses and at the same time to regulate their everyday lives.

The time span of my study is the transwar era, a meaningful unit of history that draws upon scholarly developments of last decades in Japanese history and that includes both the wartime and U.S. occupation periods. Although we came to use the term transwar period only recently, scholars in Japanese history had critically reconsidered the conventional binary between the wartime and the postwar periods and encouraged us to see some significant political, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics shared by both periods.¹³ I do not intend to argue that radio practices during Japan's wartime and postwar periods were completely identical. But considering Japan's wartime and occupation periods together opens up possibilities of considering radio broadcasting in Japan through the lens of mass politics and culture that encompassed both periods. The concept of the transwar era fits into the history of radio quite well because the period roughly coincided with radio's increasingly significant and relatively commanding position, in relation to other media, as an important mediator of the nation's mass politics and culture. At the same time, this time frame will allow me to examine radio in two political systems that have been conventionally seen as diametrically opposed.

¹³ Andrew Gordon is one of the early users of the term "transwar period." See Andrew Gordon, "Shōhi, seikatsu, goraku no 'kansenshi,'" in *Nichijō seikatsu no naka no sōryokusen*, edited by Kurasawa Aiko et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006); Yamanouchi, *Total War and Modernization*; Gregory J. Kasza, "War and Welfare Policy in Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 2 (May 2002); John Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Japan's transwar period was characterized by the emergence of the masses through a series of socio-political crises, including interwar economic turmoil, the Asia Pacific War, and the U.S. occupation. During this era, the politicization of the masses into self-conscious national citizens and imperial subjects consumed the attention of political and social elites as well as the Japanese government and the U.S. occupation authorities. Although it might be a "forgotten medium" in the era of television and new media radio was a powerful electronic auditory medium based on the most advanced media technology of the time. Radio captured the Japanese elites' attention as a useful means of mass communication for their political purposes. The political elites in modern Japan had long wished to turn the masses into "proper" and useful members of the nation and empire. The interwar socio-economic crisis and the ensuing Asia-Pacific War elevated the political elites' desire to regulate the thoughts and behavior of the masses to an unprecedented level.

Radio as a new medium both urged and enabled Japanese political elites to rethink ways to access the subjectivity of the masses at this specific juncture of Japanese history. In his influential book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson focuses on the role of print media in imagining nation as a community, especially at the early stage of nation building.¹⁴ I am interested in the role radio broadcasting played in expanding a similar imagination beyond elite readers to mass audiences. Importantly, Japan was an empire that held multiple formal and informal colonies and

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), especially 67-82.

mass audiences of Japanese radio included colonial subjects and other populations under the empire's influence.¹⁵

Especially in Japan, radio has often been thought of as the most centralized means of communication for exhorting ordinary people to support the war efforts and later the American occupation. NHK's monopoly on broadcasting under the control of the central government and later the occupation forces is frequently cited as evidence of this. From the start of radio broadcasting in 1925 until 1951 no commercial radio stations were permitted under NHK's monopoly. It is also well-known that both Japan's wartime government and occupation personnel maintained tight censorship over radio programming and content.¹⁶ The images of radio waves and sound, penetrating and homogenizing, also contributed to this reputation for centralization.

Yet does this necessarily mean that radio was a mere tool for centralized power's exercise of top-down control over the masses? The centralized notion of power turns our attention only to the intentions and actions of the state.¹⁷ But overemphasis on the direct relationship between radio and the central government in its narrow sense prevents us from understanding the diverse interests and efforts invested in this versatile medium, as well as the actual extent of radio's effects on listeners. In addition to government officials and broadcasters, various groups of

¹⁵ For a scholarly attempt to apply Anderson's analytical frame of an imagined community to Mexico, with a focus on the role of radio broadcasting, see Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920-1950* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Gregory Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 88-97.

¹⁷ Within this framework, media policies and laws are legitimate sites to investigate.

individuals, such as social commentators, educators, reformers, and feminist and leftist activists became involved with radio broadcasting in various ways.

Thus far, the Japanese radio audience has remained largely anonymous to us due to the dominant perspective that has focused on the radio broadcasting system and the central authorities. The omission of the audience clearly limits our understanding of the effects of radio.¹⁸ Scholars in the field of communications have observed the unstable relationship between encoded media messages and their translation on the part of the receivers. In other words, mass media do not necessarily make the anticipated and homogeneous effects on individuals as media effects depend on how audiences translate the message and appropriate media in their own way within everyday culture.¹⁹ Therefore, attention to audience and culture is necessary in addition to studies on media policy for a more accurate assessment of the practices of Japanese media under U.S. occupation.

Contrary to common belief, wartime discourses and practices of Japanese radio never uniformly imagined radio listeners as passive audiences. Rather, political and

¹⁸ A notable exception is Takeyama Akiko's research on listeners' letters featured in newspapers and NHK's magazines. See Takeyama Akiko, *Shiryō ga kataru Taiheiyō Sensō ka no hōsō* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2005), 183-223.

¹⁹ This doubt of the media impact invoked the micro-sociological approach during World War II and the early postwar period that identified interpersonal relationships as the utmost intermediary factor of the reception of media messages. Audience studies that assert the complex influence of culture in the communication process emerged from the 1970s. Stuart Hall's "Encoding/Decoding," which was originally published in 1974, is a pioneering work in reception theory. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, edited by Edited by Stuart Hall, et al. (Birmingham: Center for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1980). About the development of the field of audience studies, see Pertti Alasuutari, "Introduction: Three Phases of Reception Studies," *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*, edited by Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage Publications, 1999).

social elites as well as government officials and broadcasters made systematic efforts to engage mass audiences as conscious listeners and radio participants who would choose to put what they heard into practice out of their own will. These efforts paralleled the empire's mobilization of national and colonial subjects for conducting the war. After the war came to an end, the U.S. occupation initiated massive political campaigns for rebuilding "a democratic Japan," with radio as the major vehicle for achieving this goal. Despite the imagined sharp binary in the political role of radio between wartime and postwar periods, my research takes a closer look and demonstrates that habits of radio listening and audience participation from the wartime era were less contradictory and better suited to the occupation's project to reconstruct the Japanese into active and self-responsible citizens for reconstructing the nation-state in the new global order. Focusing on these adaptations, my dissertation considers Japan's transwar radio practices within larger historiographical questions concerning the relationship between the wartime and the postwar eras, and certain compatibilities of modern Japan's politics of mass culture with those of other Western democracies.

Japanese radio is a relatively underdeveloped field of study despite its historical importance. Radio has been a central object of analysis in theoretical studies of mass media's role in and impact on modern societies in the mid-twentieth century.²⁰ There are outstanding comprehensive studies of radio in different nation-states such as

²⁰ For a useful anthology of theoretical essays on radio, see Neil Strauss and Dave Mandl, eds. *Radiotext(e)* (New York: Autonomedia, 1993).

the U.S, Britain, Germany, and Mexico for the wartime and/or early postwar period.²¹ Nevertheless, there is no comprehensive history in English of Japanese radio either for the wartime or for the occupation period, except if we include Jane Robbins's study of Japan's wartime overseas broadcasting.²² Even in Japanese academia, except for the pioneering works by Takeyama Akiko and Yamaguchi Makoto, scholars have only recently started to pay attention to radio broadcasting.²³ My dissertation will fill in the lacunae in studies on the history of radio in Japan, thereby also providing an important comparative case for media studies and the history of radio in general.

Existing works in Japanese also tend to focus only on either the wartime or the occupation period or limit their scope to broadcasting policies or to certain programs.

²⁴ To be sure, several studies of Japanese radio have sharply questioned the binary by

²¹ Susan Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (New York: Time Books, 1999); Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kathy M. Newman, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism, 1935-1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, vol.1: 1922-1939, Serving Nation* (Cambridge: Basil and Blackwell Ltd., 1991); Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio and the Public Sphere, 1923-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Hays, *Radio Nation*.

²² Jane Robbins, *Tokyo Calling: Japanese Overseas Radio Broadcasting 1937-1945* (Fuhecchio: European Press Academic Pub., 2001).

²³ See Takeyama, *Rajio no jidai* and *Gyokuon hōsō*. Also see Takeyama Akiko, *Sensō to hōsō: shiryō ga kataru senjika jōhō sōsa to puropaganda* (Tokyo: Shakai Shisōsha, 1994) and *Shiryō ga kataru Taiheiyō Sensō ka no hōsō*; Yamaguchi Makoto, *Eigo kōza no tanjō: media to kyōyō ga deau kindai Nihon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2001). Yamaguchi also published a number of insightful journal articles on early radio. See Chapter One of this dissertation.

²⁴ On wartime radio, see Takeyama, *Sensō to hōsō* and *Shiryō ga kataru Taiheiyō Sensō ka no hōsō*; Maekawa Sajūrō, "Akiraka ni natta senjika no hōsō ken'etsu," *Hōsō kenkyū to chōsa* 52, no. 12 (December 2002), Kishi Toshihiko, Kawashima Shin, Son An Suk, eds., *Sensō rajio kioku* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2006), Miyamoto Yoshio, *Senjika no shinbun hōsō*. (Tokyo: Ningen no Kagakusha, 1984); on the postwar period, refer to Okahara Miyako, *Amerika senryōki no minshuka seisaku: rajio hōsō ni yoru Nihon jōsei saikyōiku proguramu* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2007), Matsuda Hiroshi, *Dokumentō hōsō sengoshi*, vol.1, 2 (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1980, 1981) and Kōgo Hideki, "GHQ no hōsō bangumi seisaku: CI&E no jōhō to

suggesting the authoritarian nature of the American forces' control and censorship or its ideological manipulation of Japanese citizens with the hidden intention of furthering American security interests.²⁵ Yet these studies of radio under the American occupation, like those of wartime broadcasting, do not fundamentally challenge the conventional framework that primarily concerned whether radio's role was conducive to democracy or not, while assuming that independence from the state means liberation from power.

Instead of relying on the dominant framework that asks whether radio's role was conducive to democracy or not, I will employ a different approach that assumes power as ubiquitously spread throughout society and considers the power of the state as only one form among the “manifold forms of domination.”²⁶ In so doing, my dissertation considers Japanese radio and its mass audiences in the complex power relations of transwar politics.

3. The Politics of Mass Culture

Ever since its inauguration in 1925, Japanese radio broadcasting had been deeply embedded in the nation's mass politics, broadly conceived. A series of efforts

bangumi shidō,” *Masukomyunikeishon kenkyū*, no.66 (2005) and “Senryō bunsho ni miru tainichi hōsō seisaku no keisei katei,” *Hōsō kenkyū to chōsa* 34. no. 10 (October 1984).

²⁵ Marlene J. Mayo, “The War of Words Continues: American Radio Guidance in Occupied Japan,” in *The Occupation of Japan: Arts and Culture*, edited by Thomas W. Burkman (Norfolk: The General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, 1988); Catherine Luther and Douglas Boyd, “American Occupation Control over Broadcasting in Japan, 1945-1952,” *Journal of Communication* 47, no. 2 (1997).

²⁶ Michel Foucault, “Two Lectures,” *Power/Knowledge: Selective Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon and translated by Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 39.

by broadcasters, government officials, educators, and other social leaders to turn the masses into conscious radio listeners was not necessarily determined by politics, but always closely intertwined with the major political projects of the nation and empire, such as modern subject formation, the imperial subjectification (*kōminka*) movement in the war mobilization process, and the U.S. occupation's "democratization" program.

To be sure, my dissertation intends to discuss how transwar Japanese radio broadcasting mediated politics. But I wish to go beyond the narrow terms of state control and indoctrination during the war, and the liberation of the masses or lack of such in the postwar "democratization" initiated by the U.S. occupation. It is equally important to remember that transwar Japanese radio enjoyed enormous popularity, and mass audiences showed deep affection for the medium. My dissertation brings into light another little-discussed aspect of radio in Japan, namely radio as a mass cultural form greatly beloved by listeners. I explore how this specific aspect helped shape the politics of mass culture in its interplaying with multiple transwar political projects.

Even under the total war situation, entertainment was the most popular category of programming for Japanese audiences, next to news broadcasting. This seemingly non-political field of broadcasting continued to produce the intimacy of radio in everyday life. Folk songs, Japanese and Western music, period and contemporary dramas, *naniwabushi* (traditional songs with narratives), *manzai* (comic dialogue), and sports attracted a wide popular following among radio listeners. NHK increased "healthy and light" entertainment programs intended to comfort the people at war under the government policy of "Making Wartime Life Brighter" (*senji seikatsu*

no meirōka), which was launched in May 1944. NHK's official history notes that drama series such as *Miyamoto Musashi* became popular hits.²⁷ The U.S. occupation forces also utilized entertainment programs to reach Japanese audiences. They introduced new programs modeled after American radio features, such as quiz shows and soap operas, which achieved great popularity.²⁸ The occupation also encouraged “traditional” genres of art such as *naniwabushi* and *manzai* on the airwaves.²⁹

In this dissertation, I analyze how the genres and programs that were not overtly political affected the process by which radio became embedded in the everyday life of Japanese people, thereby facilitating some of the practices of power over the masses. The channeling of politics into the realm of everyday culture often involved desires, feelings, emotions, and sensibilities, domains conventionally conceived as having little relevance to politics. My research documents how seemingly trivial popular genres of broadcasting such as the amateur singing contest, the quiz show, and the serial drama played a central role, although not without unexpected twists, in awakening the masses into “responsible” and “useful” members of society in work and play. I also analyze how ideal forms of subjectivity for the nation and the empire suggested by popular radio shows reflected Japan's changing place in the world. In so doing, I wish to consider the larger role of culture in modern

²⁷ See Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki Hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, 2001), 59-61, 78, 81-85. For the policy of “Making Wartime Life Brighter,” see 165-166.

²⁸ Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, v.33: Radio Broadcasting* (Tokyo: SCAP, 1951), 19.

²⁹ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG331.

politics in compensating for and replacing some of the conventional fields of politics in modern societies.

4. Chapter Organization

The dissertation is organized into four chapters. The first chapter explores the making of radio listeners in transwar Japan, a long-term historical process involving complex interactions between listeners' desires to make the most out of the medium and the political elite's efforts to regulate listeners' reception and behavior. The second and third chapters examine an important means by which transwar Japanese radio tried to constitute ordinary listeners not as passive and silent audiences but as active participants and performers in popular radio shows and events, – namely, audience participation programs. These chapters show that, contrary to popular assumptions, audience participation constituted an important component of radio broadcasting even during the war (Chapter Two), and that some of those practices remained relevant to postwar rebuilding while the normative mode of participation shifted from group to individual performance (Chapter Three). The last chapter deals with another postwar imperative that radio inspired listeners to actively engage with postwar rebuilding and constitute themselves as liberal subjects through an emotional and sentimental serial drama based on the theme of rehabilitation.

Chapter One focuses on transwar practices called “listening guidance (*chōshu shidō*),” which consisted of multilayered interventions on the part of the government, broadcasters, and various social groups to create listeners who would be both

“autonomous” and trained in “proper” listening habits. Implementers of broadcasting were well aware that radio, despite its penetrating and homogenizing power, had only limited effects if listeners did not listen at the right time and failed to decode radio messages in the “correct” manner. I examine both discourses and the concrete implementation of listening guidance such as group listening (*dantai chōshu*) practices. Broadcasters and educators first organized this activity to enhance the media effects of broadcasting on broader audiences and individual listeners during the war. Total war mobilization strongly conditioned this effort to turn the masses into conscious and focused radio listeners. The chapter shows that the same concern with the media effects of radio broadcasting and listeners’ reception led the U.S. occupation forces to organize listening groups called *rajio no tsudo*i to facilitate their “reorientation” program in postwar Japan.

Chapter Two explores the rise of audience participation, through amateur singing in particular, in Japanese broadcasting. The starting point is *Shirōto nodo jiman*, an amateur singing contest which first came over the airwaves during the U.S. occupation of Japan and became an immediate hit, with explosive popularity. The discourses about this show revolve around the assumption that audience participation was a landmark event of the postwar liberation of Japanese society. Yet my research suggests that the show actually owed its basic concept and aesthetics to similar wartime practices of encouraging ordinary people, both Japanese citizens and other imperial subjects, to sing on the imperial airwaves. These were practices that the Japanese government and the broadcasting network systematically promoted. I argue

that the rise of these practices can be ascribed to the unique power of amateur performances to create a sympathetic and relaxed atmosphere across the lines between performers and audiences. The imperial government and NHK tried to utilize such power for mobilization purposes, hoping that the broadcast of amateur singing would contribute to building a sense of community throughout the empire, and release its populations from the mental pressure of war so that they could rededicate their energy to further war production. Postwar Japanese society welcomed the amateur singing contest specifically because the same power of amateur performances satisfied the desire of many to brighten the social atmosphere and restore a sense of community, this time throughout the nation less its empire.

Although some previous practices of audience participation were adapted to the nation's postwar era, certainly a different mode of audience participation emerged during the occupation. In Chapter Three, I document the introduction of the quiz show as a symbolic event, demonstrating the transformation in the normative style of audience participation from the former era's collective mode to an individualized one. The chapter elaborates how this change mirrored a larger historical transformation in the organizing principles of capitalist society in the contexts of the U.S. occupation and the rising Cold War. I argue that radio quiz shows, built on the individual and competitive mode of participation, proposed a "new" form of subjectivity for postwar Japan. It constructed a microcosm of an ideal future for the nation in the image of American liberal capitalist democracy, and providing a space in which Japanese

listeners symbolically practiced some of the normative participatory principles of the postwar era.

The last chapter discusses a popular radio serial drama titled *Kane no naru oka* (The Bell Hill). Originally designed by the U.S. occupation's radio personnel as a call to attention for child welfare and the prevention of juvenile delinquency, this show is in line with the amateur singing contest and the quiz show—an entertainment form that inspired listeners to take an active part in radio practices in a broad sense, but in this case not in radio programs as performers but in concrete activities to solve social problems. I analyze this sentimental drama based on the story of rehabilitating homeless children and war orphans through proper guidance and care as both emblematic of social desires for normalization in the aftermath of the war, and metaphoric of the postwar reconstruction of Japan as a benign and useful member of the international community under U.S. global hegemony. Even though the serial drama was a postwar production, the chapter demonstrates its transwar and transpacific connections to the American rehabilitation project called Boys Town, and a colonial Korean film based on a similar rehabilitation theme, *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* (Homeless Angels).

My dissertation concludes that while radio was indeed a powerful and effective medium, politicizing the masses into “responsible” members of society through radio was neither a unilateral process nor a smooth operation. I argue that if radio served as a unique intermediary in transwar politics, it did so because of its ability to channel the

major themes, norms, and representations of transwar politics into the realms of mass culture and the rhythms of the everyday.

Chapter 1

The Making of Radio Listeners: Listening Guidance and Habits of Listening in Transwar Group Listening

1. 1. Introduction

The introduction of radio as an innovative electronic and auditory medium made it necessary to constitute a new mass audience of listeners. Listening to the radio may seem natural to contemporary audiences. But we should remember that such naturalness was the product of a long, historical process of making radio listeners. This chapter deals with the making of radio listeners in transwar Japan. In Japan as in other radio-listening countries, the complicated historical process of becoming a radio listener involved both the internal transformation of individuals and external interventions by various social and political groups that intended to shape the transformation process in certain ways.¹ While sharing some of the common features of listener-making processes around the world, the process in Japan was closely intertwined with the specific historical circumstances of transwar Japan. Overlapping with the emergence of the masses in the interwar period, wartime mobilization and later the postwar democratization movement, the discourse on how to listen to radio, more specifically how to listen “properly” to radio, constituted a significant site of

¹ On the emergence of American listeners, see Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 173-234. On the making of radio listeners in Germany, refer to Kate Lacey, “The Invention of a Listening Public: Radio and Its Audiences,” in *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, edited by Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

negotiations and struggles between mass audiences and the social and political elite of the empire. The negotiations and struggles indicated complex interactions between listeners' desires to make the most out of the medium and the political elite's efforts to produce and control these desires through education, research, surveillance, and social campaigns.

Specifically, this chapter focuses on the transwar practice known as "listening guidance (*chōshu shidō*).” "Listening guidance" was a multilayered intervention of the government, broadcasters, and various social groups to create "autonomous" but "proper" listeners. I examine both the discourses and the concrete implementation of listening guidance such as group listening practice, which was first organized as part of the war mobilization effort and continued to serve the occupation's democratization policy in the postwar era. I will discuss the wartime group listening movement and the occupation-sponsored postwar efforts to organize listening groups called *rajio no tsudoi* (radio listening group) as specific examples. Previous works have either discussed group listening projects in terms of radio's role in social education or focused on the wartime activities of NHK's Promotion Department, which was in charge of the group listening movement. In so doing, they tend to consider those two projects separately, even though some previous works assumed certain similarities between the two movements.² In this chapter, I intend to locate those projects in the larger history of the attempts to shape and regulate the ways in which mass audiences

² Kuroda Isamu, *Rajio taisō no tanjō* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1999), 151-173; Ishikawa Akira, "Shadan Hōjin Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai no 'Jigyōbu' katsudō: Ōsaka Chūō Hōsōkyōku no 'dantai chōshū undō o megutte,'" in *Kindai Nihon no media ibento*, edited by Tsuganezawa Toshihiro (Tokyo: Dōbunkan, 1987), 193-216; Miura Yoshihisa, *Hōsō ni yoru shakai kyōiku no shiteki tenkai* (Kanoya: Kanoya Taiiku Daigaku, 2004), 43-66.

listened to and used the radio. I distance my approach from frameworks that explain those movements exclusively from a perspective of wartime control or postwar democratization. Rather, I interpret listening guidance as a transwar phenomenon that indicates the complex power relations surrounding the formation of listeners' attitudes and habits.

1. 2. Listening to Radio: A “New” Mode of Engagement

Listening to reproduced sound was not necessarily a new phenomenon with the introduction of radio to interwar Japan. Modern sound-reproduction technologies were already available and increasingly commercialized in Japan as in other advanced modern societies. As Yoshimi Shunya demonstrated, the telephone and the phonograph shaped a culture of reproduced sound listening in modern Japan, providing an important mass base for the adoption of broadcasting technology. The modern auditory culture was not a simple effect of new reproductive sound technologies. The specific faculty of listening gradually emerged through the training of the ear in a society where literary culture had long dominated intellectual and artistic life.³

³ Yoshimi Shunya, *Koe no shihonshugi: denwa, rajio, chikuonki no shakaishi* (Kōdansha, 1995); Yamaguchi Makoto also provides several noteworthy accounts on the early development of the faculty of listening. See Yamaguchi Makoto, “‘Kiku shūkan’, sono jōken: gaitō rajio to ōdiensu no furumai,” *Masukomyunikeishon kenkyū*, no. 63 (2003), 145-161, and “‘Hōsō’ o tsukuru ‘dai-san soshiki’: Matsushita Denki Seisakujo to ‘mimi’ no kaihatsu,” *Masukomyunikeishon kenkyū*, vol. 20 (2006), 26-49; for a theoretically insightful account of the rise of modern sound-listening culture in the American context, see Jonathan. E. Stern, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Walter Ong calls the reemergence of orality with the invention of sound reproduction technology the secondary orality compared to the primary orality untouched by any

The institutionalization of radio broadcasting marked a new stage in the cultivation of the listening ear. The radio aggressively penetrated everyday life as NHK's national networks were established. Government officials, educators, social reformers, and specialists in various fields were eager to use this new powerful medium for their own political and social purposes. While the older generation of intellectuals, who had been well-trained in literary culture, showed significant resistance and hostility against the penetration of radio into everyday life, Japanese audiences gradually adopted techniques of listening and cultivated powers of auditory reception.⁴ Drawing upon Walter Ong's study on the relationship between aurality and literacy in modern societies, Yamaguchi Makoto suggests that early radio listeners often listened as if they read, but they gradually drew pleasure from listening for the sake of listening, separating it from other senses.⁵

But it was hard to create listening habits in the initial phase of broadcasting. The early years were an era of uncertainty in many respects. Broadcasting times were irregular and it was not unusual to have dead air during broadcasting. NHK advised

knowledge of writing and print. On his discussion of the secondary orality, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), 135-138.

⁴ Yoshimi Shunya discusses the literary elite's aversion to the reproduced sound of the radio through the case of prominent writer Nagai Kafū's case as an example. See Yoshimi, *Koe no shihonshugi*, especially the introduction. For an insightful discussion of early radio-phobia as a reactionary response from intellectuals embedded in literary culture, see Yamaguchi Makoto, "Ōdiensu no sahō to media no sasō kōzō," *Masukomyunikeishon kenkyū*, no. 67 (2005), 60-64; on the rise of the modern Japanese reader, particularly the emergence of the faculty of silent reading distinctive from Japan's oral tradition in story telling and loud reading, see Maeda Ai, "From Communal Performance to Solitary Reading: The Rise of the Modern Japanese Reader," in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, edited by James A. Fuji (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁵ Yamaguchi, "Ōdiensu no sahō to media no sasō kōzō," 51-59.

listeners to keep up with the announcements of the broadcasting schedule in the newspapers and on radio in advance. But in the early days of broadcasting the actual broadcast was often subject to change according to transmitting conditions. NHK focused on providing technical advice for clear listening and proper management of radio receivers. At the same time, a systematic endeavor to create proper listening habits was virtually non-existent. Listeners often left the radio on or twiddled with the radio knob until they found whatever they wanted.⁶

The situation changed in the 1930s according to Suzuki Gen, one of the staff members of NHK's Promotion Department (*Jigyōbu*). He noted the shift in his review of the department's activities in promoting radio listening, which he wrote for the February 1943 issue of *Hōsō*, NHK's magazine. The Promotion Department had taken charge of radio distribution and popularization. Suzuki differentiated several stages in the department's efforts to promote radio listening. If promoting the use of radio constituted the major task for broadcasters during the initial period of broadcasting in Japan, making a proper habit of listening became a matter of utmost concern for those in charge of maintaining and developing listeners throughout the 1930s. Suzuki characterized the period from 1931 through the breakout of the Pacific War as the era of listening guidance (*chōshu shidō no jidai*). During this period, NHK began to target

⁶ For radio logs of the first broadcasting of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya Stations, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nen: shiryō hen* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), 271-274.

particular groups of people, such as students and farmers, to offer listening guidance during the period and soon expanded such guidance to direct general group listening.⁷

NHK's growing emphasis on listening guidance in the 1930s coincided with society's increasing interests in radio as a means of social education. Social education had been one of the major expected roles of radio from the onset of Japanese broadcasting as we can see in the radio address that Gotō Shinpei gave on the occasion of the first broadcast on March 22, 1925. Gotō, the president of Tokyo Station at that time, suggested four expected functions of radio, one of which was the "socialization of education (*kyōiku no shakaika*)." Gotō stated that he expected radio to contribute to the cultural uplift of the masses as a means for social education. Such a function was also closely connected to the first function that Gotō expected of radio, namely providing an opportunity to access culture regardless of a listener's gender, education level, or residential area.⁸

In its early years, however, Japan's radio broadcasting did not necessarily fulfill its expected role of providing social education. Radio listening largely remained an urban phenomenon. Low income and the high cost of radio sets restricted the spread of radio in rural areas. The air was mostly filled with entertainment although NHK aired news and educational programs as well. Under the circumstances, radio functioned mostly as an entertainment tool for middle class families.⁹ Japan's

⁷ The name of the department changed over time. In the postwar era it became *Fukyūbu* (Distribution Department). Suzuki Gen, "Hōsō no seijisei kyōka to fukyū gyōmu no shinro," *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 2 (February 1943), 4-12.

⁸ For the excerpt of Gotō's radio address, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1 (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Shuppan, 1965), 63.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 80-85, 122-123.

changing position in the global geopolitics of the 1930s urged NHK to refocus on radio's social educational function. As Japan's tensions with China and the Anglo-American powers rapidly mounted after the Manchurian Incident, Japan's governing elites utilized all types of media outlets to prepare the masses for a possible international crisis. NHK frequently aired lectures by army and navy generals, government officials, politicians, and specialists to raise public consciousness of the empire's current affairs.¹⁰ Discourses on radio produced in the early 1930s noted radio's potential as a powerful means of social education. From 1931, NHK began to broadcast through a second network (*dai-2 hōsōmō*), which focused on educational programs. The number of shows and themes of educational programs increased during the 1930s as government officials, social and cultural elites, and broadcasters noted radio's potential as a powerful means of social education. The Social Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education began to research foreign cases of radio's use in social education. The Ministry of Education also published books on the topic such as *Radio and Social Education*, which were released in 1930.¹¹

Early discourses on broadcasting were particularly hopeful that the auditory technology would facilitate the mass audience's painless and effortless reception of messages. Even less-educated people who were not comfortable with reading newspapers could easily listen to radio news. Some specialists adopted the crude idea that the radio could even inject certain messages directly into listeners' minds, an idea

¹⁰ On radio lectures, refer to Takeyama Akiko, "Senjika no rajio kōen," in *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū 12: kindai Nihon to jōhō*, edited by Kindai Nihon Kenkūkai (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1990), 234-258.

¹¹ Monbushō, *Rajio to shakai kyōiku* (Tokyo: Monbushō, 1930); Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 195-207.

similar to what was later known as the magic bullet theory or the hypodermic needle model.¹² But more keen-minded broadcasters were well aware that transmission alone could not guarantee any intended effects. They considered broadcasting an interactive process in which transmission and reception were inseparable.¹³ Radio specialists understood that radio's real effect depended on how listeners used the medium on an everyday basis. How to nurture proper listening habits among mass audiences constituted NHK's major concern with radio's popularization.

1. 3. The Group Listening Movement: Making “Proper” Habits of Listening

As Japanese broadcasters and educators began to focus on forming proper listening habits, a series of tutelage efforts emerged through the 1930s and the 1940s under the banner of the group listening movement (*dantai chōshu undō*). The movement promoted collective listening as an ideal form of listening that would correct some of the major flaws of individual, isolated listening. The group listening movement indicated new developments in the formation of Japanese listeners. It was the first systematic attempt to shape listening habits by Japanese broadcasters and educators. The movement marked the opening of the era of listening guidance.

Although the movement was clearly motivated by top-down intentions to ensure the maximum effect of radio messages on mass audiences, the movement did not simply

¹² This approach assumes that media messages had direct effects on mass audiences, as if the messages were a bullet fired from the “media gun” into the audience’s “head.” Arthur Asa Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 12-13.

¹³ Yamaguchi Makoto, “Mimi no hyōjunka: ninteī rajo to iu gyakusetsu,” in *1930-nendai no media toshintai*, edited by Yoshimi Shunya (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2002), 226.

force listeners to uncritically accept what they heard. Rather the movement attempted to affect listeners' attitudes and behavior through the individual's desire to make the most out of the mass medium for improving his/her life and social standing.

The concept of the movement was to maximize the effects of radio listening by providing the proper guidance and ideal environment for a group of people who had common social backgrounds. A staff member of the Promotion Department of NHK's Osaka Central Station (JOBK) and key implementer of the movement, Majima Teruo, clarified the essential conditions for effective group listening. First, participants in group listening must choose a particular program suitable for the group. Second, listeners in a group must share a "living environment." By living environment Majima meant the composite of age, class, occupation, and intelligence. Third, listeners must follow a leader's instructions. Fourth, listeners must set the radio receiver in a public space. Fifth, participants must listen collectively.¹⁴

The full-fledged endeavor to organize group listening in Japan began in 1934 when JOBK premiered *Lectures for Agrarian Villages (Nōson e no kōza)*. JOBK designed the program for agrarian youths to listen to the program as a group. The program initially sought to promote radio distribution and listening in rural areas through group listening practices. Both commercial and political interests motivated multiple groups to be involved in the program. The newly-organized Shiga Prefecture Radio Sellers' Association cooperated with Shiga Prefecture's Social Education Department and requested NHK to air a program for youth associations and vocational

¹⁴ Majima Teruo, "Dantai chōshu no soshiki to sono shidō," *Hōsō* 7, no. 8 (August 1937), 27.

training schools. Radio sellers hoped that such a program would increase the demand for radio sets in rural areas. The proposal suited NHK's Distribution Department's need to increase listeners in areas where the contract rate was still very low. The program's intention – “offering more rural youths the benefits of modern culture through radio, thereby contributing to regeneration of rural areas” – also directly corresponded to the state's need to invigorate the rural areas in the contexts of agrarian depression as well. NHK collaborated with schools, youth associations, and agricultural societies to organize group listening to *Lectures for Agrarian Villages*.¹⁵ University professors and journalists from the *Osaka Asahi Newspaper* also helped to create the program.¹⁶

In addition to spreading radio, broadcasters' concerns about effective listening constituted another major driving force for the program's promotion. Group listening had been receiving significant attention as an ideal platform for social education in advanced radio-listening societies such as Britain, Germany, Sweden and the United States since the late 1920s. The earliest and the most well-known attempt was the British listening group movement in 1927. Japanese broadcasters were well aware of the experiments conducted in other countries.¹⁷ The British case of listening group practices received special attention. NHK's Planning Department of the General

¹⁵ Nishimoto Mitoji, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (jō),” *Hōsō* 6, no. 2 (February 1936), 48-49; for the quote, 47.

¹⁶ For the names of the intellectuals who cooperated to create the program, see Nishimoto Mitoji, *Hōsō 50-nen gaishi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Kyōiku Kyōkai, 1976), 138.

¹⁷ See Nishimoto Mitoji's discussion of group listening in foreign countries and Japan. Nishimoto Mitoji, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (jō),” 47-48. Nishimoto directly referred to several studies of Western precedents including a report on American group listening activities entitled “Group Listening.” See The National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, Inc., *Group Listening* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934).

Affairs Bureau circulated a Japanese translation of “Adult Education: Wireless Listening Groups,” a report produced by the English Ministry of Education with the request of Wireless Adult Education Central Council, under the title “Igirisu ni okeru seijin kyōiku chōshu dantai.”¹⁸

Informed broadcasters and researchers had begun to recognize the benefit of group listening for social education and hoped to experiment with the practice in Japan. Japanese broadcasting had already experimented with group listening for urbanites even before launching *Lectures for Agrarian Villages*. JOBK arranged group listening for *Lectures on Abacus Calculation* in large retail stores and factories in areas in urban Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe in 1933.¹⁹ Majima Teruo considered group listening more than a supplementary measure for the popularization of radio. He argued that the movement in essence aimed at “the most effective educational use of radio.”²⁰ Nishimoto Mitoji, the key designer of *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* explained his motif in producing the program. He said, “I was immensely interested to put into practice what I had envisioned for group listening with Shiga Prefecture as a test.”²¹ Nishimoto was a former teacher and the primary implementer of Japan’s school

¹⁸ For Japanese translation of the British report, refer to Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Sōmukyoku Keikakubu, *Igirisu no okeru seijin kyōiku chōshu dantai*, 1934. Nishimoto recalled that he was aware of the British report through a magazine before he participated in Japan’s group listening movement. Nishimoto Mitoji, *Hōsō 50-nen gaishi*, vol. 1, 138.

¹⁹ Majima Teruo and Motono Kyōichi, “Toshi ni okeru dantai chōshu no hatten: ‘Shuzan kōza’ yori ‘Toshi seinen e no kōza’ made”, *Hōsō* 6, no. 8 (August 1936), 56.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

²¹ Majima, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (jō),” 48.

broadcasting. He continued to work to utilize radio for the purpose of social education during both the wartime and postwar periods.²²

Promoters of group listening also hoped that this practice would provide solutions to a couple of problems that were preventing listeners from making the most of the radio. The first problem was the possibility of listeners missing important messages. Radio messages easily escaped listeners' notice due to their transient character. Listeners' lack of background knowledge could worsen the problem. Even a word that listeners did not know could make them confused. The other problem was that radio broadcasting was a form of unilateral communication. Listeners sometimes found themselves unconvinced when they heard radio messages that conflicted with their own ideas. But broadcasters were not immediately available to answer the questions that they had. The effect of radio messages depended on how readily listeners grasped and negotiated meaning. Group listening was to provide a solution to the above problems by enabling listeners to recuperate radio messages that some of them failed to hear or did not understand, and also by discussing questions unanswered by radio programs.²³

NHK published radio textbooks for *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* and distributed them to group listening participants free of charge to encourage more groups to join the practice. The textbooks briefly explained each lesson and their organization helped listeners to prepare lessons in advance, take notes on the main

²² For his career, refer to his autobiography, Nishimoto, *Hōsō 50-nen gaishi*, vol.1, 2 (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Kyōiku Kyōkai, 1976).

²³ Nishimoto, "Waga kuni ni okeru 'dantai chōshu' no tenkai (jō)," 49.

points of the broadcast, and review the program afterwards. Group leaders were to direct preparation, listening, and post-listening discussion, and to monitor how the group listened. Then they would provide feedback to NHK. Broadcasters utilized group leaders' reports to research participants' life routines and patterns of listening. Using this data, broadcasters modified the program in order to optimize its effects. In Shiga Prefecture alone, more than two thousand people in forty groups listened to the first episode. Group listening practice spread to neighboring prefectures and to remote places such as Kyūshū and colonial Korea. NHK aired five episodes of *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* for two years and attracted an increasing number of group listeners. Later episodes attracted twenty to thirty thousand rural listeners for group listening.²⁴

After concluding that the experiment of *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* was a success, NHK created similar programs that targeted different audiences for group listening.” NHK produced radio programs and textbooks on abacus calculation, business ethics, and youth music for youth associations and youth schools in urban areas. *Rajio seinen gakkō (Radio Youth School)* got on the air for the use of both rural and urban youths in 1935.²⁵ Other groups like women's associations, factory workers, large retail stores, and neighborhood associations came to practice group listening. NHK utilized both old and new programs for the expansion of group listening such as *Women's Hour, Children's Hour, Workers' Hour, Clerks' Hour, Teachers' Hour,*

²⁴ Nishimoto Mitoji, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (ka),” *Hōsō* 6, no. 4 (April 1936), 70. Nishimoto noted that a listening group in Taegu in colonial Korea listened to the third episode collectively. Nishimoto, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (chū),” *Hōsō* 6, no. 3 (March 1936), 26.

²⁵ Nishimoto Mitoji, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (ka),” 70. On the Radio Youth School, see Nishimoto Mitoji, “Rajio seinen gakkō no genzai to shōrai,” *Hōsō* 6, no. 8 (August 1936).

Neighbor Associations' Hour, and so on. Similar to the initial *Lectures for Agrarian Villages*, these programs included both educational materials and entertainment. They combined lectures, practical examples, real life experiences, music, plays and poems.

Although the idea of listening guidance itself connoted a top-down model of listening and reception, the group listening movement did not simply aim to force listeners to absorb prescribed messages under tight surveillance. The movement had certain elements that postwar Japanese scholars such as Kuroda Isamu and Ishikawa Akira consider “democratic” or “autonomous.” For example, key designers of the movement noted that discussion was an important measure to promote interactive learning by individuals. Group listening encouraged participants to critically engage with what they heard and to exchange the views with other participants, particularly in the beginning of the group listening movement. Discourses on group listening considered voluntary participation to be ideal.

Previous studies tend to interpret the “democratic” aspects of group listening as contradictory to the implementers’ desire to use the practice to disseminate political propaganda.²⁶ But if we consider group listening as a method of producing disciplined listening subjects, the seemingly contradictory elements of the group listening movement point to a more complex mechanism of power. I argue that the actual discourses and practices reveal that group listening movement aimed to create self-conscious and autonomous listeners with normative attitudes to listening no matter how unsuccessful it may have been in the end.

²⁶ Kuroda, *Rajio taisō no tanjō*, 151-173; Ishikawa, “Shadan Hōjin Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai no ‘Jigyōbu’ katsudō,” 193-216.

The key implementers of group listening envisioned the practice as a long-term cultural movement for nurturing conscious and disciplined listening. To borrow Majima's expression, "most of all, group listening was a measure for educational training."²⁷ Nishimoto recounted that Japan's broadcasting had strived to offer better programs but seldom considered teaching listeners how to listen to and utilize those programs effectively. JOBK made a small-scale and modest effort to do so with *Lectures for Agrarian Villages*. He argued that NHK should make stronger efforts to guide listeners to use radio through group listening.²⁸ Group listening provided a controlled environment in which listeners learned and exercised normative ways of listening. Group listening could become a useful channel to research and regulate how people listened to the radio. Group listening participants' opinions and anonymous letters were delivered to the implementers.

At the same time, theorists of the group listening movement did not attempt to simply implant information. They appealed to the desires of each individual to motivate them to adopt the proper listening habits through group listening. Leaders of the movement promoted group listening as "one of the best forms of radio reception to

²⁷ Majima Teruo made the similar point in Majima Teruo and Motono Kyoichi, "Toshi ni okeru dantai chōshu no hatten: 'Shuzan kōza' yori 'Toshi seinen e no kōza' made," *Hōsō* 6, no. 8 (August 1936), 56.

²⁸ Nishimoto, "Waga kuni ni okeru 'dantai chōshu' no tenkai (ka)," 72. An exception that Nishimoto mentioned was the radio gymnastics program that NHK aired from 1928. It is possible to call Radio Gymnastics a form of group listening. But strictly speaking the goal of the program differed from the group listening movement because radio messages were not so important in radio gymnastics. For an excellent historical account of the prewar and wartime practices of radio gymnastics, see Kuroda Isamu, *Rajio taisō no tanjō*.

perfect one's moral character (*jinkaku*) and to improve community life."²⁹ They stressed radio as a useful and powerful modern invention that would help listeners improve their lives – if they used the medium properly. Accessing specialist knowledge and practical cases would help in self-improvement and this would eventually benefit one's own community. In order to make the most of radio, listeners needed to learn and practice correct ways of listening. "A Proposal for Group Listening" featured in the first issue of radio textbook for *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* indicated that setting a goal before listening to a lecture changed listeners' spirits and improve their concentration. According to the proposal such training would also help individuals discipline themselves (*kojinteki no shūyō*).³⁰

The movement needed intermediaries who could channel both the regulatory intentions of the broadcasters and government officials, and the listeners' desires to make use of radio on their end. Responsible leaders were crucial for listening groups to operate autonomously and "properly." Reviewing group listening activities related to *Radio Youth School*, Nishimoto Mitoji stated that instructing and fostering group listening leaders was one of the most important tasks for the future of the group listening movement. Nishimoto expected youth school students who had experienced group listening to go back to their own villages and become group listening leaders

²⁹ The quote appears in the second issue of the radio textbook for *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* and it was quoted in Nishimoto, "Waga kuni ni okeru 'dantai chōshu' no tenkai (jō)," 50. *Jinkaku* is often translated into human dignity, moral character or individuality, or some combination of these concepts. For a useful account of the concept's genealogy, refer to Kyoko Inoue, *Individual Dignity in Modern Japanese Thought: The Evolution of the Concept of Jinkaku in Moral and Educational Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

³⁰ Nishimoto, "Waga kuni ni okeru 'dantai chōshu' no tenkai (jō)," 49.

after graduation. He also underlined a conscious effort to “discover” group listening leaders. He considered men of influence, youth leaders, and educators in self-governing communities as desirable candidates.³¹

In reality the group listening movement did not leave much room for autonomous organizing activities. NHK and the Ministry of Education preferred administrative expediency over autonomous organization and heavily relied on government structure for rapid development of the movement. Key implementers of the movement admitted that group listening had not led to the creation of new groups for that particular purpose, but rather depended on already established organizations. Prefectural governments took over the training of group listening leaders. In 1935 the Radio Education Research Society for Agrarian Villages (*Nōson kyōiku kenkyūkai*) was formed with the head of each prefecture’s Educational Department (*gakumubu*) assuming the chairmanship and candidates for group listening leaders as members. A majority of the members were youth school teachers. The society also attracted elementary school teachers, executive members of youth associations, Buddhist monks, and intellectuals, among others. The society received financial and executive support from NHK’s Promotion Department. The society later developed into the Radio Education Research Society and then, as the group listening movement expanded to groups other than rural youths, the League of Kansai Radio Education Research Society.³²

³¹ Nishimoto, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (ka),” 71.

³² Nishimoto, “Waga kuni ni okeru ‘dantai chōshu’ no tenkai (chū),” 27-28; Majima, “Dantai chōshu no soshiki to sono shidō,” 28-30.

Limited sources prevent us from determining what exactly motivated group listening leaders and participants. Although we can imagine that many of them might have participated because of encouragement and imposition from prefectural governments, the Ministry of Education, and NHK, we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the desire to use radio to improve their own lives or their communities attracted some of the participants. Participants' opinions about *Lectures for Agrarian Villages* indicated that some group listeners clearly appreciated what they heard. They found the lectures informative, the entertainment enjoyable, and the real life experiences useful and moving. One participant noted that many listeners took notes on the radio text during the group listening session.³³ Statistics indicate that a number of individuals voluntarily joined group listening practices. For example, in the fourth episode of *Lectures for Agrarian Villages*, forty-five out of four hundred and fifty-five groups (3,161 people) voluntarily participated in group listening. Although the number was rather small, it still suggests that the regulatory intention of the promoters of group listening worked through listeners' desires to listen to the radio as well as through top-down organizing efforts.³⁴

1. 4. Listening Habits during Total War

If the 1930s was the era of listening guidance, the era after the beginning of the Pacific War was the period of guiding public opinions (*seron shidō jidai*), according to

³³ For excerpts of participants' opinions and anonymous letters, see Nishimoto, "Waga kuni ni okeru 'dantai chōshu' no tenkai (ka)," 68-70.

³⁴ For the statistics, see Kuroda, *Rajio taisō no tanjō*, 161-162.

Suzuki Gen. Government officials and broadcasters strove to affect the ways in which people considered the war and the fate of the empire during this period.³⁵ At the same time, the full-scale war with China and the Allied Powers dramatically increased the popular interest in the empire's international affairs. The radio became the medium that the Japanese mass audiences considered the most important source for the most updated news during the total war era. The number of new radio subscribers steeply increased right after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. The ratio of receivers per capita was still lower than that of some of the advanced radio-listening nations. Instead, Japanese residents in areas where radio sets were less widely distributed practiced communal listening more often than in other advanced western countries. The school broadcasting system absorbed young listeners and group listening practices continued to integrate youths and adults into broadcasting. The distribution rate continued to grow. By 1944, half of the households in Japan proper owned at least one radio set.³⁶

When the war expanded to the Pacific theater, the government chose radio broadcasting as the major means of mass communication. Broadcasting's capacity to instantaneously spread information to a wide audience appealed to government officials who desired a direct channel to the masses at the time of crisis. Government officials in the Information Bureau such as Miyamoto Yoshio did not only stress its

³⁵ The name of the department changed over the time. Suzuki, "Hōsō no seijisei kyōka to fukyū gyōmu no shinro," 4-12.

³⁶ For the distribution rate chart, see "Rajio no nendobetsu shibu bunbu fukyūritsu," in the appendix to Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1. In 1930, the distribution rate was 6.1%. It steadily increased to 26.4% by 1937. The breakout of the Asia Pacific War resulted in a rapid growth in the number of radio subscribers. In 1941, 45.8% of Japan's all households had a radio set. The rate reached 50.4% by 1944.

propaganda mission but also regarded broadcasting as crucial to the defense of the empire. Some high officials, such as Miyamoto, often revealed a top-down approach to the use of the radio by considering radio the centralized disseminator of information. According to this line of thinking, radio conveyed the will of the nation and listening to the radio was the duty of all national and imperial subjects.³⁷

But in reality broadcasting did not operate as smoothly as these officials wished. The broadcasters who had been working on the front lines of the radio business struggled to guide audiences to listen to the radio in a self-disciplined way while working to learn how they listened everyday. Despite limited manpower and material resources, the total war demand for the maximum effect of the radio urged NHK to conduct several ambitious surveys of listeners. NHK's first National Time Use Survey (*Kokumin seikatsu jikan chōsa*) took place from August 1941 through June 1942. The survey researched how different groups of people divided their time between work and leisure activities to figure out the most effective program schedule. NHK also carried out the Cultural Survey of Agrarian Villages (*Nōson bunka chōsa*) from August 1942 through February 1943 to formulate appropriate broadcasting policies toward rural listeners.³⁸

On December 8, 1941, the day of Japan's declaration of war against the United States and the British Empire, NHK broadcast a special message entitled, "Please Gather Around the Radio" (*Rajio no mae ni oatsumari kudasai*) live from the Prime

³⁷ Miyamoto Yoshio, *Hōsō to kokubō kokka* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1942).

³⁸ On the first National Time Use Survey and the Cultural Survey of Agrarian Villages, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon Hōsōshi*, vol.1, 592-593.

Ministers' official residence. Through the broadcast, Miyamoto Yoshio, chief of section three of department three of the Information Bureau indicated that the government would employ the radio to communicate with people about the government's agenda and to give the people "the correct direction" during the war. Miyamoto urged people to follow radio broadcasts for updated news and government announcements, which aired at designated times. If a special broadcast was scheduled, listeners must inform others to gather around the radio at the scheduled time. Miyamoto pleaded with listeners to trust radio messages, and to follow and practice government requests.³⁹

The Pacific War dragged on far longer than the Japanese government originally expected. The prolonged total war demanded more selective and focused listening of radio than Miyamoto's radio address had suggested at the war's beginning. As the empire suffered from a significant manpower shortage and war production became the top priority, NHK had to determine the most suitable radio listening time for not interrupting the production and reproduction of labor. The acute situation of the last phase of the war posed severe challenges for regular broadcasting and reception. The shortage of electricity made it inevitable for NHK to shorten the daily broadcasting hours. Audiences had to select the most important programs to listen to, instead of leaving the radio on, in order to save electricity. In the aerial bombardment of major Japanese cities by U.S. forces frequently interrupted radio broadcasting and reception. Afraid of interceptions of strategically important messages by enemy

³⁹ For the script, see "Rajio no mae ni oatsumari kudasai," *Hōsō* 2, no. 1 (January 1942), 9.

airplanes, the Information Bureau and NHK had to weaken the transmitting power or change frequencies, even as they knew that such actions might cause reception problems for listeners.⁴⁰

All the above developments during the last phase of the war required audiences to listen in a very selective and disciplined way. The June 1942 issue of *Hōsō*, a NHK magazine distributed to general listeners during the Asia Pacific War, featured an article that demonstrated what sorts of listening habits were deemed ideal during the war. An article entitled, “How to listen to the radio (*Hōsō no kikikata*)” suggested listeners selectively listen to appropriate programs. It was not advisable to keep the radio on throughout the day. Rather, the radio should be off while it was of no use. In order to figure out the right time to turn on the radio, listeners should review the schedule by checking the newspaper’s radio section (*rajioban*) or the radio announcement of the next day’s schedule which aired at five-fifty every evening.

The magazine article recommended several programs as “must-listen-to as a Japanese (*Nihon kokumin toshite zehi kikaneba naranai mono*)” regardless of listeners’ age, gender, or occupation. The first set of programs included the government’s explanation of major national policies scheduled for seven-thirty p.m. from Monday through Saturday and the army’s and navy’s announcements starting at eight p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The second most important was the daily news, which was broadcast eight times a day. The third group of recommended programs were those that aired from seven to ten p.m. on Sundays, which were composed of

⁴⁰ On the wartime control of the radio waves, see Takeyama, *Shiryōga kataru Taiheiyō Sensō ka no hōsō*, 88-105.

news, weekly war reports, and music/entertainment and which had been made suitable for the general public. Then special attention should be given to programs designed for particular groups such as *Women's Hour*, *Farmers' Hour*, and *Children's Hour*. It was unnecessary to listen to the programs made for other groups. Finally, the article even gave instructions for what to do during the intervals between programs. NHK played records between programs and advised listeners to adjust their radio sets for better reception. Listeners should be prepared for the resumption of broadcasting when they heard specific signals.⁴¹

Listeners were supposed to follow these practices of their own volition. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that listeners lived up to these ideal listening habits. *Hōsō kenkyū*, the NHK magazine circulated among broadcasters and not for public use, provides a valuable window to a different set of discourses from those distributed to listeners in promoting selective, focused, and self-disciplined listening as normative habits of radio listening. Within the specific discursive space exclusive to the transmitters, Japanese broadcasters discussed actual listening practices, which were often incongruent with the normative habits of listening. The reality of listening often baffled broadcasters. They expressed anxiety and frustration about their inability to control the ways in which listeners used the radio.

For example, a series of special feature articles under the theme “Various Problems of Listening Guidance” (*Chōshu shidō no shomondai*) in the February 1943 issue of *Hōsō kenkyū* suggest that Japanese broadcasters were well aware of their

⁴¹ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Kikakubu, “Hōsō no kikikata,” *Hōsō* 2, no. 6 (June 1942), 109-111. For the broadcasting schedule of the time, see “Hōsō bangumi jikokuhyō, *ibid.*, 111.

limited control of listeners. Although all the contributors agreed that the Japanese should listen to the radio and put what they heard into practice in their everyday life, these radio specialists admitted in one way or another that listeners were not necessarily following such principles. Majima Teruo asked whether listeners were putting these clear principles into practice. In reality he observed a lack of active interest in radio listening and a great number of broken-down and neglected radio receivers. Nishimoto Mitoji wrote, “Even though we say that national subjects must listen to the radio (*kokumin hicchō*), the radio has no binding power. Thus appealing to their sense of duty is the only option.” With regard to the group listening movement, Nishimoto saw no systemic efforts to cultivate group leaders, whose existence was one of the most important conditions for the movement’s success. Miyakawa Mitsuo observed the alienation of listeners from broadcasting due to their busy schedules and the increasing dullness of the content of broadcasts since the war’s breakout, despite the significance of the radio for the total war mobilization.⁴²

Frustrated with their inability to affect the listening habits of the mass audiences, some of the broadcasters and government officials turned to the extreme idea of forced listening, which was to require radio listening by law. As Ishikawa Akira and Kuroda Isamu pointed out, some of the broadcasters who had implemented listening guidance supported this plan as well. For example, Majima Teruo’s wartime writings indicated a shift in his approach to listening guidance. In his early writings he

⁴² Majima Teruo, “Chōshu shidō no hōkō,” *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 2 (February 1943), 25-29; Nishimoto Mitoji, “Chōshu shidō no kihon mondai,” *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 2 (February 1943), 5-7. The quote is from page 6; Miyakawa Mitsuo, “Chōshu shidō no gensoku,” *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 2 (February 1943), 19.

considered listening groups to be a place where listeners could hone their critical thinking skills. But we cannot find such remarks in his writing in 1939. In an article published in 1942, he suggested that NHK consider forced listening in relation to group listening. Ishikawa Akira interpreted such a transformation as a surprising conversion under pressure from the wartime state.⁴³

Even though the concept of forced listening might seem to confirm conventional images of Japan's wartime broadcasting as a top-down indoctrination machine, we should remember that such an idea was never fully materialized. The Japanese state and NHK lacked the manpower and resources to enforce such an extreme idea. Even as late as 1943, broadcasters such as Miyakawa Mitsuo were publicly expressing their stance against forced listening. Miyakawa argued that despite the order to listen to the *Government Hour* everyday, it was "impossible to visit each household and investigate whether they were listening to the broadcast." Believing that an extreme measure such as forced listening would cause adverse reactions, he suggested that must-listen programs be limited to special occasions such as the anniversary of waging the war. Miyakawa's case urges us to reconsider the forced conversion approach to Majima's changing ideas.⁴⁴

⁴³ For an example of his earlier writing, see Majima Teruo, "Dantai chōshu no soshiki to sono shidō," *Hōsō* 7, no. 8 (August 1937). For his writing in 1939, see Majima Teruo, "Jikyokuka no rōkaru hōsō to chōshu no shidō," *Hōsō* 9, no.2 (February 1939). On his later writing on forced listening, see "Senjika shūdan chōshu undō no tenkai," *Hōsō kenkyū* 2, no. 2 (February 1942). On Ishikawa's discussion of Majima's "conversion," see Ishikawa, "Shadan Hōjin Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai no 'Jigyōbu' katsudō" 207-212. Kuroda also mentions the shift. See Kuroda, *Rajio taisō no tanjō*, 165-170.

⁴⁴ Miyakawa, "Chōshu shidō no gensoku," 21.

We should also remember that even the earlier group listening movement was not completely free from the desire of broadcasters and government officials to shape and control the listeners' habits and attitudes so as to suit the empire's demands. In this light, I would like to suggest that the idea of forced listening exposed the power relations underlying the practice of listening guidance. Although Japan's wartime listening guidance was intended to give listeners room to think critically about what they heard, it presumed that listeners should behave within certain boundaries. But when mass audiences failed to become ideal self-disciplined listeners in the way that broadcasters and government officials most desired, the desire to regulate listeners' behavior underlying the listening guidance revealed itself through the crude idea of forced listening.

In sum, broadcasters' accounts of the uncontrollable nature of listeners challenge the dominant images that tend to represent wartime Japanese radio listeners as completely absorbed by state-controlled radio messages, whether they were passive audiences or blind followers of government propaganda.

1. 5. Listening Habits and the U.S. occupation

Although broadcasters and state officials failed to fully control listeners' reception of radio, habits of listening and discipline certainly developed through the prewar and wartime periods. Even before their arrival in Japan, the U.S. military forces noticed that the Japanese had developed habits of radio listening and the broadcasting infrastructure. The War Department recognized the significance of radio

as a powerful means of communication that could be conducive to the occupation's goals. A War Department pamphlet circulated in July of 1945 entitled, *Civil Affairs Guide: Radio Broadcasting in Japan* stated,

Broadcasting facilities provide an inexpensive and instantaneous means of reaching a wide audience. Possible uses of these facilities include the dissemination of proclamations and approved propaganda, and afford a medium for such political expressions as may be allowed by directives. For those or other purposes, Military Government will presumably desire to have sufficient radio facilities available to broadcast to a large portion of the populace.” In other words, the War Department planned to restore surviving facilities and utilize Japanese radio personnel for the U.S. occupation.⁴⁵

In particular, the emperor's surrender broadcast impressed the occupation forces. According to their understanding, the broadcast demonstrated not only the symbolic power of the emperor, which reasserted the imagined utility of the emperor as a puppet for occupied Japan, but also the nation-wide effect and efficiency of broadcasting in Japan. A report on radio broadcasting in Japan produced by CIE's Radio Branch stated:

The BCJ made one of its most historical broadcasts. This one brief moment on the air marked the turning for all radio in Japan. In one single broadcast, an old era was closed and a new one opened. The same broadcast which announced the admission of defeat of Japanese militarism also set the pattern for democracy to come with the Emperor taking his case directly to the people. The reverence of the Japanese people for their emperor was always strong, as was their willingness to

⁴⁵ War Department, *Civil Affairs Guide: Radio Broadcasting in Japan* (Washington: War Department, July 12, 1945); for the quote, 12. On the usability of surviving facilities and Japanese radio personnel, see page 12-19. On broadcast reception, see pages 9-11. The pamphlet cited radio broadcasting as one of the chief means of instruction in Japan. Communal listening was more widespread than in western countries. An average of four persons listened regularly to each of the 5000,000 receivers in 1941.

obey. The imperial rescript, had it been first published in newspapers, would have been read and believed. But to actually hear it from the lips of the Emperor himself made a deep and lasting impression on the people. This direct contact between ruler and people through the personal medium of radio may have made possible, more than any other single factor, the smooth, bloodless, complete surrender of the Japanese people to the force which today occupies the country.⁴⁶

Despite the severe wartime damage that destroyed nearly fifty percent of radio receivers in the nation, the preexisting broadcasting networks and infrastructure and habits of radio listening proved the power of the medium. Postwar paper shortages and the reduction in the size and number of newspapers and magazines made radio “virtually the only organ of news dissemination that reaches the entire country.” Furthermore, it was “the only medium giving full and complete coverage.” The Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) found radio particularly important for informing the large rural population of new laws, reforms, and current political and economic happenings. In contrast to the urban population, which could get its information from various sources, the “only constant source” outside metropolitan areas was radio.⁴⁷

CIE’s radio personnel began to research Japanese listeners’ tastes and habits as soon as they arrived. The Radio Unit’s reported that, “in order to understand radio in Japan, it is first of all necessary to understand the listeners. We need to know who they

⁴⁶ The Radio Branch, CI&E, SCAP, “Broadcasting in Japan, 1949,” Microfiche number (A) 09059, RG 331 (The Japanese National Diet Library). See the section, “The Emperor’s Broadcast.” Even during the war, the U.S. considered of retaining the emperor as a puppet for occupied Japan. On this matter, refer to Takashi Fujitani, “The Reischauer Memo: Mr. Moto, Hirohito, and Japanese American Soldiers,” *Critical Asian Studies* 33, 3 (2001).

⁴⁷ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

are, how many they are, where they are, what kind of people they are, when they listen, why they listen, and the conditions under which they live.”⁴⁸ CIE surveyed listener ratings and closely monitored listeners’ letters, magazine and newspaper articles on specific programs and radio broadcasting. NHK conducted a nation-wide listeners’ survey in March 1946 under CIE’s guidance for the first time since the war’s end. CIE sponsored the building of the Radio Culture Research Institute in June 1946.

During the early months of the occupation, the Radio Unit attempted to “enlighten” the Japanese listeners with “superior” American-style productions regardless of existing patterns of listening in Japan. For example, the Radio Unit of CIE wrote and produced a program on war guilt called *Shisō wa kōda* (Now It Can Be Told) and aired it from December 1945. The program presented a dramatized history of the war styled on the pattern of a successful American show *The March of Time*. It aimed to give the Japanese “the truth of the events of the war.” Following the American model, *Now It Can Be Told* provided dramatized narratives of the war accentuated by lavish sound effects and music. CIE personnel trained Japanese announcers with the fast-paced and exaggerated narration style of *The March of the Time*. But the occupation’s radio personnel had to pay for its disregard of existing patterns of listening in Japan. The ambitiously designed program turned out to be a disappointing failure. Japanese listeners hated it. A great number of letters, as many as three hundred, poured into NHK complaining about the program. As a Japanese producer Iwasaki Akira recalled, *Now It Can Be Told* gained the infamous reputation

⁴⁸ “Radio in Japan: A Report on the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 Oct 1947,” Folder 125, Box 5150, RG 331.

of “the most unpleasant radio program of the day.”⁴⁹ The Radio Unit had to discontinue the show in the face of negative reactions. From January 17, 1946, *Shinsō bako* (Truth Box), a new show with the same goal but a changed format replaced *Now It Can Be Told*. The new show had a more interactive format and presented less provocative contents by employing the method of answering listeners’ questions.

The controversial content of *Now It Can Be Told* was perhaps the most important contributing factor to its failure. The show was intended to provide information to repudiate the accounts of the war given by Japan’s wartime government, thereby emphasizing the deceptive character of wartime propaganda and invoking war guilt among the Japanese people. Some listeners even sent threatening letters to broadcasters and even called voice actors non-Japanese. But the occupation’s disregard of listening patterns of the Japanese was another main cause of such widespread aversion to the program. Japanese listeners found it hard to listen to the program due to the unfamiliar American-style tones of voice, loud music, and the fast pace.⁵⁰ The Radio Unit reported, “The program was done in the finest American dramatic tradition, but letters poured in saying: ‘I can’t keep up with it: it moves too fast’: ‘Don’t have music or sound effects behind a speech, I can’t concentrate.’ These

⁴⁹ For Iwasaki’s comment, see Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 58.

⁵⁰ Nihon hōsō kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi*, 224-225; Frank Baba, “Discussion” in *The Occupation of Japan: Arts and Culture*, edited by Thomas W. Burkman (Norfolk: The General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, 1988), 86; Takeyama Akiko provides valuable and comprehensive research on this program, using both Japanese and American sources. Takeyama Akiko, “Shinsō wa kōda,” in *Rajio no jidai: rajio wa cha no ma no shuyaku datta* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2002). For a more recent account with a limited focus on the U.S. occupation’s policy documents for those programs, see Susan Smulyan, “Now It Can Be Told: The Influence of the United States Occupation on Japanese Radio,” in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*, edited by Michael Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

criticisms are indicative of the average Japanese listener. He is not used to complicated radio technique. In fact they often request 5 minutes of silence (dead air) after a talk to thoroughly digest the contents.”⁵¹

Although the occupation’s radio personnel regarded the different listening patterns of the Japanese from the Americans as an indication of the audience’s lack of sophistication, in fact these were educated habits that Japanese broadcasters and educators had encouraged listeners to develop during the prewar and wartime periods – namely, habits of serious listening. NHK purposely inserted dead air in programs of an educational nature as a way of promoting serious listening. Listeners were supposed to use the intervals to take notes, meditate on what they had just heard on the radio, and readjust their radio sets for better reception if needed.⁵²

Before long occupation’s radio personnel realized that Japanese listeners showed distinctive patterns of listening while in some ways sharing habits of listening with their American counterparts. CIE’s report on the condition of Japanese radio broadcasting stated, “Listening habits are not dissimilar to those in the states. There is a tendency to turn on the radio for company, and for a background to the day’s activities in the home.”⁵³ But through a series of survey and opinion research, CIE concluded that “Japanese listeners are more serious-minded in their choice of radio fare than are American listeners. They not only tolerate, but request a great many more

⁵¹ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

⁵² NHK sometimes played music for the intervals. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Kikakubu, “Hōsō no kikikata,” 110.

⁵³ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

programs of a purely informational nature than would Americans.”⁵⁴ SCAP was using the radio to “insure public understanding of all directives, policies and plans for the political, economic, and social rehabilitation of Japan.”⁵⁵ The Radio Unit produced information programs and public campaign programs for this purpose. With some minor revisions, the previously learned habits of serious listening could serve the occupation’s on-going reorientation project for the Japanese.

But the occupation’s radio personnel encountered the same problems that had plagued Japanese broadcasters during the war. First, not every household owned a radio set. The radio distribution rate, which reached half of Japanese households in 1944, dropped acutely due to war damage. Particularly, the air raids that had devastated Japan’s major cities had also destroyed the radio sets. As early as November 13, 1945, the occupation forces ordered the Japanese government to submit a concrete plan for producing and repairing radio sets so that half of all Japanese households could own radios.⁵⁶ But only one-third of Japanese families owned a radio in May 1947 according to the occupation’s tally.⁵⁷ Secondly, despite Japanese listeners’ appetite for informational programs, the Radio Unit could not guarantee that the listeners would unfailingly receive the transmitted messages and decode them in

⁵⁴ “Radio in Japan: A Report on the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 October 1947,” Folder 125, Box 5150, RG 331.

⁵⁵ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

⁵⁶ On the occupation’s orders to the Japanese government about the production of radio sets, see Rengōkoku Saikō Shireikan Dairi H. W. Aren [Allen], “Rajio jushinki no seisan ni kansuru ken GHQ oboegaki,” in *Hōsō 50-nenshi: shiryō-hen*, edited by Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), 450-451. This collection of primary materials has two memorandums dated November 13, 1945 and January 28, 1946 respectively.

⁵⁷ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 14 May 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

the prescribed way. To solve this problem, the Radio Unit came up with an idea very similar to one that wartime Japanese broadcasters had utilized: radio listening groups.

1. 6. *Rajio no tsudo* (Radio Listening Group): “Old” Habits and “New” Subjectivity in Postwar Group Listening

The Radio Unit’s weekly reports indicate that the plan for radio listening groups, which were later named collectively *rajio no tsudo* (radio listening groups), took shape around May 1947. A Radio Unit weekly report dated May 15, 1947 indicated that a Field Liaison Officer of the Radio Unit had been conducting a study of radio listening groups. The desire to expose the maximum number of the Japanese to radio messages was an important driving force. As only one-third of all Japanese families owned radios, the occupation aimed to “provide community listening places in all localities” so that people without radios could gather and listen to the radio.⁵⁸ The Radio Unit also envisaged that radio listening groups would stimulate community discussion of radio programs of public interest, which would lead listeners to a deeper understanding of radio messages.⁵⁹ The listening group plan was to complement the occupation’s nationwide campaigns for the extension of adult education.⁶⁰ Another weekly report of the Radio Unit dated June 4, 1947 more clearly demonstrated that the Radio Unit aimed at the maximum effects of the occupation’s political campaigns programs on Japanese listeners with radio listening groups. According to the report,

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 21 May 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁶⁰ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 18 June 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

A study was completed by the Radio Unit of a plan to urge BCJ [Broadcasting Corporation of Japan. The occupation forces used this acronym instead of NHK.] to establish listener groups throughout the nation in order to achieve maximum benefits of informational-educational programs. Under the listener group plan, local groups of listeners would gather at a town hall, meeting place, or other suitable location to hear programs in which they are primarily interested, and to take part in a discussion of the subject material following the broadcast. As a result, the informational-educational programs would achieve a more lasting effect through group interest and discussion of common problems.⁶¹

Upon completing the study and concluding that the plan was practicable, the Radio Unit urged NHK to develop listener groups. The Radio Unit wanted local and central station officials to organize listening groups with the help of military government officers. Radio stations should use spot announcements and other publicity media to “instill and maintain interest in the listener group plan.” Programs concerned should also contain announcements that encouraged listener group participation. Those programs were scheduled for times that would facilitate group listening.⁶² Station managers should form listening groups wherever it was possible, including town halls, public meeting places, and the radio studios. The Radio Unit also advised NHK to mobilize local specialists for the listener group project, expecting

⁶¹ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 4 June 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁶² “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 4 June 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

them to be able to “guide the discussion and present authoritative opinions on the local aspect of the problem under discussion.”⁶³

The Radio Unit decided to use *The National Radio Forum* (*Hōsō tōronkai*) as the first program around which to organize listening groups. The program was one of the occupation’s earliest creations for the “democratization” of Japan. Each week the program invited three speakers whom the occupation identified as conservative, moderate, and radical. The forum allowed the floor audience to ask questions afterwards. The Radio Unit considered it natural to use this program for its audience participation-based format, and altered the format of *The National Radio Forum* so that the portion of the program furnished by the three speakers would come to a definite end at the thirty-minute mark. For listeners who were listening in their homes, the program would continue as usual, following a short break. This break would provide the signal for listening groups to turn off their radios and start their own local discussion of the problems posed by the speakers in the broadcast.⁶⁴

The Radio Unit also referred to the Australian precedent for the listening group project. The Radio Unit reviewed how listening groups formed and operated in Australia and acquired Listening Groups Bulletins from the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The Bulletins not only included information about basic principles and tips for organizing listening groups but also included radio scripts and summaries of

⁶³ “Progress Report on Long Range Plan: Intrasectional Memorandum from Chief, Radio Unit to Chief, CI&E Section through Chief, Information Division (dated 9 August 1947),” Folder 12, Box 5316, RG 331.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

listening groups' discussions with the time, place, occasion and program used for the group, as well as the subjects of the subsequent discussion.⁶⁵

After some early experiments, NHK began *rajio no tsudoï* in January 1948 and programmed *People's Radio School* (*Rajio minshū gakkō*) specifically for group listening activities. NHK translated and edited the two booklets acquired from the Australian Broadcasting Commission, *Listening Groups: Handbook for Leaders* and *Listening Groups: How They are Formed and How They are Functioned*. NHK distributed them under the title *Rajio no tsudoï no tebiki* (Guide to the Listening Group) to Japanese broadcasters, local communities, and occupation's field officers from January 1948. The Guide provided instructions on how to form a listening group in the family, larger social groups such as workers' unions and schools, how to operate the listening group smoothly, and how the chairman should guide the discussion.⁶⁶

In motivating the Japanese to organize listening groups, the preface of the Guide tried to appeal to their desire to improve their community and lives. The preface entitled, "In order to Make Our Life [sic] Better," first reminded the Japanese of the current unsatisfying social situations of postwar Japan such as shortages of food, housing, clothing, tools, fertilizers, and electricity, and the high rate of crime. Then it suggested that to "establish a better society and a better life," the Japanese should listen to the opinions of specialists, produce their own conclusions by critically

⁶⁵ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 31 Dec 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331; "Correspondence from D.R. Nugent, Lt. Col., USMC Chief, CI&E Section to Broadcasting Corporation of Japan, 19 January 1948" Folder 5, Box 5319, RG 331; for the bulletin, see "Australian Broadcasting Commission Listening Group Bulletins," Folder 25, Box 5313, RG 331.

⁶⁶ "Guide to the Listening Group," Folder 19, Box 2530, RG 331.

thinking about those opinions with listeners' own experiences in life, and then apply these conclusions to their own lives. The easiest way to do this was to use "the nearest thing around us, the modern thing which brings us the freshest information [: the radio]."

The preface also explained that group listening was much more effective than individual listening for maintaining listener attention and drawing maximum knowledge and deeper meaning. Group listening would encourage more active engagement from the listeners than mere passive listening as explained in the following:

But we have to think again on the conception that the radio is a means to listen. Because only to listen is, some times, apt to lose our attention. Even when we are trying to listen as hard as possible our ears forget to listen, if our attention turns to something else. So, we need an atmosphere in which we can concentrate our attention on the broadcasting. And at last we can grasp the deep meaning which we cannot get only by listening, when we stand in the position to have the positive criticism. If many people gather to listen, it produces laughs, tears and thus, the broadcaster comes very close to the listeners in feeling. Especially, our radio, stepping out from the mere means to listen, approaches to our mind [sic]. The time we are satisfied only in listening, keeping silence [sic], is going to be buried in the past.⁶⁷

At the same time, the Guide revealed the occupation's, and perhaps also the Japanese broadcasters', desire to know how Japanese listeners listened to the radio and how effective the occupation's radio messages were. The Guide suggested that every group should have a clerk whose role it was to keep close connections between members of the listening group and NHK. When a listening group formed, the group

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1-2. The quote is on page 1.

was supposed to inform NHK of the name of the clerk, the address of the meeting place, and the number of the group's members. The Guide asked listening groups to make reports by people selected by the attendants as well as the chairman and the clerk. The clerk should send these to NHK. The Guide explained the purpose of the reports as the following: "The necessity of arranging one opinion from one listening group lies in itself, but by this report your opinion is to get the criticism of others, outsiders of the Listening Group. It will prevent you from being one-sided and NHK will be able to know the direction where you want to go." The reports should include information about whether the attendants hear the broadcast clearly, whether they could understand what the broadcaster said, whether the broadcast was interesting, whether all of them gathered at one place to listen to the radio as a Listening Group, whether they wanted further information on the broadcast as well as a summary of the discussion. NHK urged each listening group to make two copies of the report, one to retain for themselves and the other to submit to NHK. The Guide clearly stated that NHK wanted to get the report for every broadcast, even if it was part of a continuing program. NHK also encouraged listener groups to include frank opinions, criticisms, and suggestions in the reports.⁶⁸

CIE received those listening group reports via NHK. *The CIE Bulletin* recorded information about the listening groups and featured a report of a successful listening group meeting that was held in the Tokai Village Public Hall of Chiba Prefecture on June 28, 1948. Eighteen men and seven women showed up. The

⁶⁸ Ibid., 10-11; for the quote, 10.

chairman led the discussion with the presence of a delegate from Radio Tokyo. The given topic was daily cooperation between men and women. The meeting followed the instructions given in NHK's *Guide to Listening Group*: the chairman explained the day's subject and then the members listened to the radio collectively. At the conclusion of the radio speakers' comments, the radio was turned off for local discussion. The chairman asked the attendants to consider what they had just heard in the context of their own lives. The attendants pointed out that what the broadcast was saying was great, but too remote from their own lives. The program talked about joint social responsibilities and the advancement of women's rights but the female attendants commented that their lives were too busy to devote time to self-development. Therefore only rich women could do so. The chairman tried to reconnect their lives with the broadcast by encouraging them to consider cooperation between men and women as a matter of mutual affection and respect. The delegate from NHK praised the chairman's good skills in directing discussion and the attendants' preparation for the subject prior to the meeting as keys to the successful meeting.⁶⁹

NHK's Promotion Department (*Fukyūbu*) issued *Rajio no tsudoī tsūshin* (*Listening Group Correspondence*) from October 1949. This was a periodical for promoting *Rajio no tsudoī*. It featured program schedules for listening groups, listening group news, letters from listening group attendants, and so on. Local stations in the areas known for relatively active listening group practices such as Hiroshima and Matsuyama had already published separate editions of *Rajio no tsudoī tsūshin*.

⁶⁹ "CIE Bulletin 1 September 1948," 10-12. Reprinted in *CIE Bulletin, vol. 2: June 1947 -21 December 1949*, edited by Mitsuo Kodama (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1985), 415-417.

Those periodicals noted that radio study groups (*rajio kenkyūkai*) had been formed and discussed better ways to practice group listening with other radio-related issues.⁷⁰

NHK also held leader training sessions (*shidōsha kōshūkai*) in order to educate group leaders.

CIE's reports indicated the gradual growth of listening groups in 1948. NHK submitted weekly and monthly reports of listening groups to the Radio Unit and the Radio Unit kept a record of the number of group listening meetings held and statistics on attendance. According to the *Monthly Reports on Listening Groups* submitted by NHK, in June 1948 thirty-nine separate listening groups submitted reports and the number of people that participated in the discussions totaled over 1,300. The occupation personnel considered that the movement to establish listening groups in Japan had "met with its greatest measure of success so far."⁷¹ For September of the same year 1,217 persons participated in group discussions at 54 different meetings.⁷² According to NHK's tally, in 1948 18,000 men and 14,000 women attended about 460 meetings and listened to more than thirty programs. Listening groups utilized a number of programs in addition to *The National Radio Forum* and *People's Radio School* such as *Women's Hour*, *Children's Hour*, *Workers' Hour*, *Teachers' Hour*, and *Radio PTA*. In 1949, listening groups spread in various local communities around PTA, public halls, and youth associations. More than 1,000 meetings were held nationally,

⁷⁰ Several issues of those periodicals are attainable from the Prange Collection. NHK, *Rajio no tsudoi tsūshin*, no.1 (Tokyo: October 1, 1949); *Shikoku rajio no tsudoi tsūshin* (September 25, 1948 and March 3, 1949); FK tsūshin rajio no tsudoi 1, no.1 through 1, no.3 (July 1, 1949 through September 1, 1949).

⁷¹ "CIE Radio Activities in the Two-Week Period Ending 31 July 1948," Folder 15, Box 5312.

⁷² "CIE Radio Activities in the Two-Week Period Ending 1 December 1948," Folder 15, Box 5312.

including 305 meetings in general groups, 223 in women's groups, 186 in youth groups, 191 in cultural and public groups, 82 in PTAs and 191 in study groups.⁷³

We have only sporadic information on what motivated the participants and how they responded to group listening. But several personal accounts indicate that some Japanese listeners were relating their participation in this practice to the specific postwar situation of Japan and its rebuilding process, and also acknowledged that the listening group helped them to learn how to listen to the radio effectively. The previously mentioned report from Tōkai Village Public Hall in Chiba Prefecture featured the following statement from a participant: “Everyone is looking for something in this postwar, gloomy life [...] perhaps we can find the truth through meetings like those.”⁷⁴ Suzuki Kazuaki, a listener from Ōmiya City of Saitama Prefecture connected the group listening movement to the rebuilding of the nation, commenting that he wished the practice would help Japanese youths “have youthful enthusiasm about the democratic nation and become the foundation for rebuilding Japan.”⁷⁵ Fukuoka Takeo, another participant from Sumida District in Tokyo introduced his own experience of group listening and acknowledged its potential benefits to both individuals and the Japanese society. He confessed that he had not listened to the radio carefully and had not tried to criticize the broadcast or make it his own (*jibun no mono to suru*). But after attending a listening group he was able to carefully listen to the broadcast and think about its contents deeply. The listening

⁷³ Nihon Hōsō kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 826.

⁷⁴ “CIE Bulletin 1 September 1948,” 10.

⁷⁵ A letter from Suzuki Kazuaki, *Rajio no tsudoī tsūshin*, no. 1 (October 1, 1949).

group experience enabled him to criticize the broadcast profoundly and exchange opinions with other attendants. Thus he came to listen to the broadcast with full attention.⁷⁶

1. 7. Closing: Habits of Radio Listening and the Subject Formation of Tranwar Japan

The occupation forces and NHK personnel stressed *rajio no tsudoï* as “a new way of listening to the radio” while linking *rajio no tsudoï* to postwar democratization. They explained that *rajio no tsudoï* was intended to result in self-improvement and mutual education through discussion and that such discussion would help the Japanese cultivate a democratic attitude toward life. These postwar discourses often adopted stereotypical images of the Japanese vis-à-vis westerners to stress the new, democratic nature of listening group activities. According to these broadcasters, the Japanese were too reserved to express their opinions, and group discussion in listening groups would help them overcome their “traditional” mental reservation.⁷⁷

NHK publications often featured British, American, Canadian, and Australian cases as the movement’s precedents. These included the British experiment of 1927, to which Japan’s wartime group listening movement had also referred. But they did not

⁷⁶ Fukuoka Takeo, “Shakai mo kojim mo òkina purasu,” *Rajio no tsudoï tsūshin*, no. 3 (December 1949).

⁷⁷ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Kikakubu, “Rajio no tsudoï no kaishi,” in *Hōsō 50-nenshi: shiryō-hen*, edited by Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, 313-314; Kaneda Rokurō, “Atarashii rajio no kikikata toshite ‘rajio no tsudoï’ to wa,” *Hōsō bunka* 6, no. 8 (August 1951), 46-47; “NHK tanbō: Fukyūbu,” *Hōsō kyōiku* (November 1949), 11.

mention wartime Japan's group listening movement.⁷⁸ The longer history of group listening in Japan sank into oblivion as the occupation stressed the efforts to rebuild post war Japan as a new democratic society by assuming a clear break from the former era.

But as discussed above, Japan's wartime group listening movement had already developed during the wartime period in reference to similar movements taking place coevally in other advanced radio-listening countries. Japanese listeners had already engaged with group discussion and criticism of radio contents in wartime radio listening groups. If Japan's postwar listening group movement was related to western precedents, as NHK's publications pointed out, it was also in line with Japan's wartime group listening practices in several respects. The organizing principles and methods of the postwar listening groups were similar to those of the group listening movement that NHK and the Ministry of Education had promoted during the war. The target populations also overlapped with those mobilized for group listening during the war: school children, women's associations, youth associations, teachers, factory workers, farmers, and so on. Many of the radio programs used for group listening stayed on the air in the early postwar era as CIE decided to exploit the established programs for their own educational purposes instead of abolishing them. Informational programs such as *Women's Hour*, *Teachers' Hour*, and *Farmers' Hour* retained the

⁷⁸ Kaneda, "Atarashii rajio no kikikata toshite 'rajio no tsudoï' to wa," 46; "Gaikoku no 'rajio no tsudoï,'" *Rajio no studio tsūshin*, no. 3 (December 1949).

same titles and now propagated the policies of the occupation. Many of the postwar listening groups organized around those programs.⁷⁹

The initiatives of both wartime and postwar listening groups did not come from listeners themselves. Rather the initiatives came from educators, broadcasters, and later government officials during the war and the U.S. occupation forces during the postwar era. In both cases, implementers of group listening were deeply concerned with learning how effective radio messages were and hoped to improve media effects on listeners by providing listening guidance and monitoring listeners' activities. Both wartime and postwar group listening movements were designed to serve larger political projects for transforming mass audiences into individuals who would fully grasp transmitted political messages through disciplined and focused radio listening. At the same time, wartime and postwar group listening movements did not simply impose such political intentions in a forceful manner. Instead, they attempted to appeal to listeners' desires so as to make the most out of radio as a means to develop the individual's potential and to improve everyday life and society. Postwar Japan's listening guidance was not intended to turn mass audiences into passive and obedient listeners who would unreflectively absorb the given messages. Rather it aimed to make them listening subjects who would actively engage with radio messages through critical thinking and discussion.

Of course the political intentions of the transmitters strongly conditioned the range of information that listeners received and the possible discussion topics that

⁷⁹ Nihon Hōsō kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 826; “‘Rajio no tsudoi’ niwa konna bangumi o,” *Rajio no studio tsūshin*, no. 3 (December 1949).

listeners could think of. Japan's wartime radio programs focused on constituting listeners as loyal imperial subjects who would understand the current conditions of the empire and voluntarily participate in war efforts. In the post-Pearl Harbor phase of the war, the official broadcasting policy that was enforced by the Information Bureau suggested that, "broadcasting fulfill all possible functions to carry out the Greater East Asian War."⁸⁰ Accordingly, very selective information and a limited range of discussion topics were available for wartime group listening activities.

Japan's postwar radio programs produced or supervised by the occupation forces publicized liberal democratic principles under the "democratization" policy and allowed listening groups to discuss some of the previously-prohibited topics, such as whether to retain the emperor system or not. But it is equally important to remember that the occupation's liberation also had its limits. Even in its early phase of "democratization and demilitarization," the occupation conducted censorship on all Japanese mass media, preventing the Japanese from broaching a range of topics such as the criticism of the Allied Powers.⁸¹ The occupation introduced additional restrictions as the escalating Cold War strongly shadowed the occupation's attitudes toward Japan's national rebuilding, prompting the dramatic change in U.S. policy toward Japan in 1947 known as "the reverse course." The occupation's anti-

⁸⁰ Takeyama, *Shiryōga kataru Taiheiyō Sensō ka no hōsō*, 29.

⁸¹ On the removal of old restrictions and newly-placed restrictions during the first phase of the occupation, refer to SCAPIN 66 (Further Steps toward Freedom of Press and Speech), SCAPIN 93 (Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberty), and SCAPIN 43 (Radio Code for Japan), in the appendix 7-9 in Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan*, v.33: *Radio Broadcasting*.

communist attitudes alienated Japanese politicians, intellectuals, and broadcasters deemed leftist or radical.⁸²

The listening groups began to form only after the occupation's major concerns shifted away from its initial "democratization and demilitarization" policy toward Japan's rebuilding. The strained atmosphere strongly conditioned the radio programs most often used for group listening purposes. Those radio programs reflected limited political dimensions as the occupation restricted the topics that could be discussed and the individuals who could appear on radio. The occupation forces recorded discussion programs often used for group listening such as *The National Radio Forum*, *The Radio Round Table*, and *The Diet Roundtable* in advance and edited them before broadcast "to reduce Communist interference to a minimum."⁸³ As a result, some radical comments on those discussion programs were deleted. For example, in a radio forum discussion as to whether basic rights had been insured during the postwar era, Sanzō Nosaki (1892-1993), a Communist member of the Diet, brought up the law regulating public demonstrations as a negative example. He argued that the law pointed at labor unions. The Civil Censorship Detachment caught this case and brought it to G2,

⁸² On the occupation's red purge, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 433-438. On the discussion of "leftist" elements in NHK by the Broadcast Section of CCD, see "Monthly Operational Report, Broadcast Section for the Period, 25 April through 24 May 1949," Folder 20, Box 8585, RG 33. On "leftist" broadcasters' criticism of NHK for "undemocratic" programs and for refusing to permit the broadcasting of leftist rallying songs, see "Monthly Operational Report, Broadcast Section for the Period, 26 May through 25 June 1949," Folder 20, Box 8585, RG 331.

⁸³ "Intrasectional Memorandum: Efforts of Radio Branch to Combat Communism, 18 June 1951," Folder 15, Box 5317, RG 331.

SCAP's intelligence unit. The speech was deleted prior to broadcasting.⁸⁴ The subject of the discussion of *The National Radio Forum* on July 3, 1949 was "Will Japan be able to secure peace?" Hani Gorō, prominent leftist proponent, stated that, "in order to maintain peace, basic human rights must be fully defended. The contrary is now being carried on in this country." Three such passages were deleted before the broadcast.⁸⁵ The Radio Unit also considered of making the Communist party representative appear less frequently on *The National Radio Forum*.⁸⁶ Communist Party members were no longer invited to participate in *The Diet Roundtable* as of June 1951 or perhaps even earlier.⁸⁷

The above cases suggest that postwar group listening practices did not guarantee completely free discussion but they operated within certain limits as to received information and permissible topics. Those limits urge us to reconsider the early postwar discourses that assumed a clear break between wartime and postwar group listening activities.

By considering both wartime and postwar group listening, I have pointed out the multi-layered interventions of the government, broadcasters, educators, and social

⁸⁴ "Log of Stories Referred to or Checked with SCAP Sections, 7 May 1948," Folder 5, Box 8641, RG 331.

⁸⁵ "Monthly Operation Report Broadcast Section to Chief, PPB Division, Civil Censorship Detachment, G-2 for the Period, 26 June through 25 July 1949," Folder 20, Box 8585, RG 331. For the published script, see Okuya Kumao, ed. *Hōsō toronkai: Nihon wa ika ni shite heiwa o mamoruka* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1949), 2-23.

⁸⁶ In April 1949, the Radio Branch considered having the representative of the Communist party appear once every three weeks rather than three out of four weeks as occurred under the existing basis of selection. "Weekly Report of Radio Branch for the Period of 14 April through 20 April 1949," Folder 7, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁸⁷ "Intrasectional Memorandum: Efforts of Radio Branch to Combat Communism, 18 June 1951," Folder 15, Box 5317, RG 331. The memorandum stated that *The Diet Roundtable* had stopped inviting Communist Party members but did not specify exactly when this happened.

leaders into the behavior and everyday life of the masses continuing through the transwar era. Yet shaping proper listening habits was not the only way of engaging radio with the everyday life of the ordinary people, as Japanese broadcasting also had listeners perform on radio. In the following two chapters I will discuss how radio broadcasting in transwar Japan tried to make listeners active participants in radio events.

Chapter 2

Radio Singing Show *Nodo jiman* (Amateur Hour) and Audience Participation in Transwar Japan

2. 1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the emergence of amateur performances in the field of entertainment in Japanese broadcasting during the transwar period. The starting point is *Shirōto nodo jiman* (hereafter *Nodo jiman*), an amateur singing contest that first came on the radio during the U.S. occupation. NHK's Tokyo Central Station (JOAK) premiered *Nodo jiman shirōto ongakukai* (Amateur Hour for Vocalists) on January 19, 1946. As the word *shirōto* implies non-professional, the concept of the show was to invite ordinary listeners to sing on the microphone. The program became an immediate and explosive success within Japanese society and it continues even today, over sixty years later, under the title *NHK Nodo jiman*. *Nodo jiman* deserves scholarly attention as it remains the most renowned audience participation-based entertainment program in Japanese broadcasting history. More important, the established image of *Nodo jiman* has had an enormous influence upon the discourses and conceptions of radio-mediated amateur performances in general in the history of Japanese broadcasting.

The conventional approach to *Nodo jiman* sees it as an expression of the voluntarism of liberated citizens and as a sign of an emerging grass-roots democracy in the postwar period. Previous discourses on *Nodo jiman* have considered the show's

participatory concept to be in stark contrast to the top-down approach of wartime radio practices. In this understanding, *Nodo jiman* symbolizes a break in radio culture between the authoritarian wartime period and the democratic postwar era.¹ However, a closer look reveals that the idea of broadcasting amateur performances on national/imperial airwaves had already been put into practice during the wartime period. By recuperating the forgotten history of amateur radio performance prior to the era of U.S. occupation, I will demonstrate that these performances were not sporadic episodes but practices consciously promoted by the NHK during the wartime period. I discuss the attempt by the central authorities and broadcasters during the Asia Pacific War to utilize these cultural practices in order to constitute Japanese citizens and colonial subjects as active imperial subjects through voluntary participation in meticulously orchestrated media events. At the same time, I am attentive to the actual

¹ For example, *Nihon hōsōshi*, published in 1965 by NHK states that the emergence of audience participation programs denoted a major shift in radio broadcasting between the wartime and postwar periods. According to this official history of NHK, postwar radio aired ordinary people's voices as "the first step of democratization of broadcasting." NHK contrasted this so-called democratization with the fact that "wartime broadcasting was entirely top-down and the ordinary people only received the broadcast unilaterally." *Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 703-704; a prominent novelist and literary critic, Shimizu Tetsuo, sought to explain the great success of *Nodo jiman* in terms of "the sense of liberation from the military dictatorship" prevailing in the early postwar period. In so doing, he indicated that the show signified "the return of the means of communication once monopolized by the authorities to the masses through singing, which anybody is able to do." Shimizu Tetsuo, "Dai 2-ki *Nodo jiman*-kyō jidai kō," *Kakushin*, no. 49 (August, 1974), 138-139; The *Nodo jiman* Research Group notes that "Japanese people were not free to speak out under the authoritarian political system, and the media were incorporated into the state as a means of propaganda during the war. But the broadcasting of *Nodo jiman* enabled a realization that the media were liberated to ordinary people." Jōchi Daigaku *Nodo jiman* Kenkyūkai, "Hōsō bangumi NHK *Nodo jiman* no media bunka kenkyū: maiku ni utau Nihonjin," *Komyunikeishon kenkyū*, no. 36 (2006), 24; John Dower argues that before Japan's surrender, it was "unthinkable for ordinary people to be heard on the national airwaves." Claiming that the initial spirit of *Nodo jiman* implied "simple, unprecedented, and remarkably good-natured egalitarianism," Dower framed the show as an example of the potential for Japanese people to engage at the grassroots level within the newly-adopted democracy. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 244-245.

operation of these amateur performances, especially those that did not necessarily conform to the norms of the time.

Much more room for participation was given to the postwar *Nodo jiman* than its wartime counterparts. The strong influence of the occupation's liberation narrative on the postwar politics of memory, however, has shaped the specific way in which *Nodo jiman* has been remembered.² This chapter deconstructs the myth that *Nodo jiman* "liberated the microphone (*maiku no kaihō*)" so that ordinary people could freely use it by demonstrating that the show imposed its own set of behavioral norms upon the participants and restricted the participation of ethnic and political minorities.

The conventional approach to the participatory format of amateur radio performances limits the meaning of the practice to a representation of political democracy. Instead, I illuminate the unique function of radio-mediated amateur performances to create a sympathetic community across the boundary between

² Newspapers and magazines have also contributed to (re)creating the collective memory of the show's sensational debut under the occupation. Interviews and memoirs of radio personalities and participants appear every once in a while in the print media. These articles peaked with the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Asia Pacific War in 1995 and the release of a feature film titled *Nodo jiman* in 1998. For example, "NHK *Nodo jiman* 50-nen," *Asahi shinbun* (evening edition, August 23, 1995), "Nodo *jiman* arubamu kara," *Asahi shinbun* (morning edition, January 12, 1995), and Odagiri Makoto, "Akaruku tanoshiku genki yoku: uta to tōku no ningenshō," *Shin chōsa jōhō*, no. 458 (May-June, 2004). On Izutsu Kazuyuki's film *Nodo jiman*, see the special feature articles under the title, "Tokubetsu kikaku kagayake *Nodo jiman* to Nihon kayō eiga daizenshū," *Kinema junpō*, no. 1275 (January 15, 1999) and "Tokushū *Nodo jiman*," *Shine furonto* 24, no. 1 (January 1991). For an elaborated version of the occupation's liberation narrative and its political and psychological function in maintaining the amicable U.S.-Japan relationship during the Cold War, refer to Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). On the lingering influence of the narrative on the understanding of the occupation in the U.S. domestic context, especially in terms of making the decision to launch a preemptive attack on Iraq, see Lisa Yoneyama, "Liberation under Siege: U.S. Military Occupation and Japanese Women's Enfranchisement," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (September 2005).

performers and listeners, and by extension at the national and imperial levels. I argue that this sympathy-making effect was the primary reason that listeners were attracted to the amateur performances, as well as the primary motivation for the promotion of these practices by the central authorities, broadcasters, and other opinion leaders of society in the contexts of interwar social crisis, wartime empire management and postwar nation building.

2. 2. Ordinary People Perform on Radio: “The Liberation of Microphones”?

The discourse of *Nodo jiman* as an example of grass roots democratization relies on the fact that *Nodo jiman* appeared on the airwaves after the war. It is true that the debut of *Nodo jiman* coincided with the “democratization and demilitarization” phase of the U.S. occupation. Yet emphasizing chronology often distracts us from considering the larger historical conditions and long-term social changes within which new concepts or practices became thinkable. Since historical memory is a consequence of the process of disremembering as much as that of remembering, we need to be attentive to the influence of the politics of memory of a given time on the general understanding of history. Historicizing the politics of memory requires a recuperation of the historical circumstances that were removed in the process of

constructing the dominant memory.³ In this light, it is imperative to take a closer look at how the idea of *Nodo jiman* first came into being.

Nodo jiman is often categorized with other audience participation programs initiated by the U.S. occupation forces. However, *Nodo jiman* was first proposed by Japanese personnel. The original designer of the show was Saegusa Kengō (1910~?), a producer in the Music Department of Tokyo Central Station. Immediately following the end of the war, NHK's radio personnel sought to create a radio program that would "at least cheer up the mood within the devastated society (*susanda yo no naka de kimochi dake demo akaruku shiyō*).” They wanted a bright and humorous program for this purpose.⁴ In NHK's official history of the program, Saegusa Kengō reports that the idea for an amateur show came to him in late 1945. “Isn't the poor performance of complete amateurs sort of interesting in and of itself?”⁵ He proposed the idea of broadcasting amateur performances on national airwaves. Maruyama Tetsuo (1910-1988), a senior personality in the Music Department agreed with Saegusa that broadcasting an amateur show on radio would cheer up society. Amateur performances seemed to have the unique power to make people relaxed and cheerful regardless of the performers or the audience. Saegusa and Maruyama proposed an amateur singing show to the Chief of the Music Department of JOAK, Yoshida Shin. The show premiered in January 1946.

³ For a useful piece on the social construction of memory, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6-40.

⁴ Maruyama Tetsuo, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai *Nodo jiman* zenkoku konkūru taikai,” *Shūkan Tokyo* 3, no. 10 (1957), 30.

⁵ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 239.

Recalling his initial idea for the program, Saegusa stated that “the model of *Nodo jiman shirōto engeikai* had existed since the old days,” referring to customary practices of amateur entertainment in Japan.⁶ Even more intriguing, Saegusa hinted that his idea for *Nodo jiman* stemmed from his experience in the Japanese military.

The source of the idea was the talent shows (*engeikai*) performed by new recruits during my military service. They performed popular songs, folk songs, comic dialogues (*manzai*) and so on. These shows were put on in every troop as a gathering to have a brief escape from our hard lives within the military. I found amateur performances more interesting than professional ones. It was in late 1945 that I proposed the plan for *Shirōto nodo jiman*.⁷

Saegusa, who was born in 1910, must have experienced these soldiers’ talent shows during the prewar or wartime period. Moreover, talent shows took place throughout the military, prompting him to note that they were prevalent enough “for anyone who has lived in military barracks to know.”⁸ In addition to the broad base of the practice, Saegusa believed that a radio program modeled after the soldiers’ talent shows would succeed because the shows were quite entertaining, even more so than some professional performances. He said, “The performances were interesting even as the participants winged it. If the radio program were able to showcase such energetic and amateurish characters, it would be enough.”⁹

Although Saegusa consistently linked the conception of the show to his experiences prior to the occupation period, scholarly accounts of *Nodo jiman* have

⁶ Saegusa Kengō, “Nodo jiman shirōto engei kaikoki,” *Nodo jiman*, no. 1 (sōkangō) (May 15, 1948), 2.

⁷ “Shirōto Nodo jiman dai 1-kai gōkakushatachi,” *Shūkan Shinchō* (January 5, 1984), 50.

⁸ Saegusa, “Nodo jiman shirōto engei kaikoki,” 2.

⁹ “NHK Nodo jiman 50-nen.”

tended to treat Saegusa's testimonies of his experiences in the military as minor episodes in the birth of the program, or have simply omitted them. Saegusa's story thus has never threatened the dominant image of *Nodo jiman* as a demonstration of postwar liberation. Recently, the *Nodo jiman* Study Group has brought Saegusa's experiences with amateur performances in the military to the attention of scholars. Yet the Study Group dealt with Saegusa's testimony by generalizing his experience as an example of "the Japanese experience of war (*Nihonjin no sensō taiken*)." Explicitly proclaiming their desire to contribute to "discourses of Japaneseness" through their study of *Nodo jiman*, the Group focused on educing particular national characteristics (*kokuminsei*) supposedly latent in the habits of singing on the microphone, rather than considering potential continuities with the prewar and wartime periods.¹⁰ Instead, the Study Group repeated the dominant understanding of *Nodo jiman* as a symbol of the liberation of microphones during the U.S. occupation.¹¹

While appreciating the Study Group's concern with Saegusa's experiences in prewar/wartime period as an important contribution, I want to turn the inquiry in a different direction. It seems to me that Saegusa's testimonies provide an entrée into the longer historical trajectory of broadcasting amateur performances.

2. 3. The Rise of Amateur Performance

¹⁰ See special feature articles under the title of "Nodo jiman ni miru kokuminsei," *Sofia* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2006): Ueda Yasumu, et al., "Uta ga tsunagu sekai: Nodo jiman to Nihonjin" and Kaneyama Tsutomu, "NHK Nodo jiman ga umidashita hōsō bunka." For Saegusa's testimony, see "Uta ga tsunagu sekai," 312-313.

¹¹ See Jōchi Daigaku Nodo jiman Kenkyūkai, "Hōsō bangumi NHK Nodo jiman no media bunka kenkyū," 28-29.

Saegusa's testimony suggests that amateur performance was a widespread practice prior to *Nodo jiman*. Yet I am not primarily interested in tracking down the habitual practices per se. Instead, I wish to consider how and why such practices became significant and appealing enough to be put on a national broadcasting network. After all, the broadcasting of a singing show on national radio played a decisive role in elevating an otherwise common practice into a historical event.

In the early years of broadcasting, airing the performances of ordinary people was unimaginable. By the time of the introduction of broadcasting into Japanese society in 1925, the rapidly rising culture industry had already commercialized major popular entertainments and precipitated the disappearance of communal modes of art and other pastimes.¹² Under the dominance of commercial forms of performance, NHK's radio stations consciously exploited the reputation and intimacy already built up by eminent professionals in the existing show business to draw maximum interest to this unfamiliar medium from a broad range of audiences. Consequently, the gateway to broadcasting was "tightly closed to amateurs." The barrier was particularly high in regions like Tokyo and Osaka where plenty of professionals were actively engaged in show business.¹³

¹² For an excellent account of the rise of commercialized mass culture in modern Japan, refer to Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). See also Sharon A. Minichiello, ed., *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issue in Culture and Democracy 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), especially chapters by Jeffrey Hanes and Christine Yano. On the fall of the old modes of performance, theaters in particular, see Iizuka Tomoichirō, *Kokumin engeki to nōson engeki* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1990 [1941]), 181-191.

¹³ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 225.

NHK's attitudes to amateur performances changed notably in the 1930s. In June 1932 JOAK held an audition to discover new radio performers for the first time in NHK's broadcasting history. Anyone sixteen years or older was eligible, whether professional or amateur. The results of the recruitment indicated the dominant presence of amateurs in this event. Out of two hundred and ninety applicants, nineteen passed the final screening. Of these nineteen, only three were professionals. The rest were amateurs.¹⁴ The successful recruits were granted a chance to perform on a radio program titled, *Shinjin shōkai no gogo* (Afternoon for Introducing New Voices). Listeners' responded to the amateurs positively. After that, the audition became routine. JOAK broadcast *Shinjin shōkai no gogo* monthly.¹⁵

The practice of recruiting amateurs became a national trend as local central stations in Osaka (JOBK), Nagoya (JOCK), Kumamoto (JOGK) and Sendai (JOHK) adopted the format of the audition for new voices. The initial JOAK audition had ten categories including *nagauta* (long song), *gidayū* (chanting) and *mandan* (comic chat). Popular song (*kayōkyoku*) was not among them. Osaka Station started its own audition in January 1934 under the three categories of *gidayū*, *shin-ryūkōka* (new popular song), *rōei* or *rōgin* (poem recitation). Out of five hundred twenty applicants, twenty-eight finalists were chosen from the first audition. Nagoya, Kumamoto, and Sendai introduced the category of folk songs (*riyō* or *minyō*) and Kumamoto and Sendai

¹⁴ Ibid., 226. For statistics on applicants and successful participants in JOAK, JOBK and JOHK, see "Saikin no hōsō shutsuen shinjin boshū seiseki JOAK, JOBK, JOHK" *Hōsō* 4, no. 7 (April 1934).

¹⁵ *Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 225-226.

included *ryūkōka*.¹⁶ JOAK made it an unwritten rule to treat those who passed the screening three times would be treated as the equivalent of professionals. Several stars emerged from NHK auditions with a foothold in show business.

If contemporaries had conceived of the audition only as a gateway for want-to-be professionals, the open door to amateurs might not have challenged the existing order of radio performance. Yet a closer look suggests that the audition-related practices point to broader changes in attitudes toward amateur performances vis-à-vis professional ones. Strictly speaking the audition was for both amateurs and professionals. However, attention to amateur participants overshadowed the event's image. Although broadcasting insiders tended to use a neutral term for this event, "the recruitment of new voices (*shinjin boshū*)," newspapers often referred to it as an "amateur entertainment examination (*shirōto engei shiken*)," or a "recruitment of amateur performers (*shirōto engeisha boshū*)."¹⁷ Newspaper coverage reflected a certain excitement about the emergence of amateur performers on the radio.

A contemporary observation of the audition by the music critic Sunaga Katsumi (1900–1934) also demonstrates the changing evaluation of amateur performances in the field of broadcasting. In "A Review of the New Aspects of Recreation Broadcasting," which appeared in the NHK periodical *Hōsō* in May of 1934, Sunaga described the broadcast of new recruits as one of the most outstanding

¹⁶ Ibid., 226.

¹⁷ For example, "Konshun chūgaku de no mandanka AK shirōto engei shiken o pasushi chikaku omemie suru," *Asahi shinbun* (August 8, 1932); "AK ni ōbo no shirōto shutsuensha" *Asahi shinbun* (September 24, 1934) and "AK shirōto engeika iro toridori no kaobure kimaru," *Asahi shinbun* (February 9, 1936).

positive developments in recent recreation broadcasting (*ian hōsō*).¹⁸ He conceived of the primary appeal of the broadcast of new voices as the intimacy it created between performers and audiences:

Listeners would be able to respond to newcomers who emerged from among their neighbors with a different sense of intimacy from ordinary entertainment programs if radio broadcasting introduced new men on the street. Rather than discovering and recommending those who struggle to become professionals, we can find performers good enough to put a professional to shame among amateurs who consider performance as a hobby (*shumi*) or a pastime (*dōraku*). If the performance is good it is not distracting at all. Yet even a slightly poor performance would be favorable if it is an enthusiastic effort (*nesshin na chikara*).

Sunaga argued that the essential value of the audition must reside in bringing “the characteristic taste of amateurs (*shirōto no mochiaji*)” forward in order to generate “a fresh sense” in Japanese broadcasting. But contrary to his ideal, the practices related to new voices had lost “the original relaxed mood of the citizens’ pastimes” become a “scene of a fierce struggle for life” among those eager to seize quick fame by simply mimicking professionals. The most serious problem in his mind was the selection process whereby experts in Japanese music constituted the jury and evaluated the contestants by the standard of professional art. He urged NHK to retain the amateurish character as the core of the broadcast of new voices.¹⁹

¹⁸ The term “*ian hōsō*” was often used interchangeably with a more common word, “*goraku hōsō*.” The term came from “*ian goraku*,” the translation of “recreation” in English or “*zerstreuung*” in German. Ōbayashi Munetsugu, “*Ian hōsō no shakaiteki kichō*,” *Hōsō* 6, no. 10 (October 1936), 4.

¹⁹ Sunaga Katsumi, “*Ian hōsō no shinseimenkan*,” *Hōsō* 4, no. 8 (May, 1934), 12-13. The quotes appear on page 12.

NHK's favorable reaction to Sunaga's critique suggests that he was not alone in his appreciation of amateur performances. After his public criticism, the Literary and Art Department (*bungeibu*) of JOAK made the remarkable move of offering Sunaga the position of non-regular staff (*shokutaku*) in the field of music broadcasting. NHK allowed him to participate in the screening process as a judge and to alter the operation of the audition. Sunaga himself proudly recalled that following his involvement with the audition, the selection criteria changed.²⁰

Concrete practices in broadcasting reflected the new look of amateur performance. In addition to *Shinjin shōkai no gogo*, wartime radio waves carried amateur performances more often than we now remember. The program logs of the national hookup broadcast transmitted from 1934 to 1936 offer a useful index of how often the radio aired ordinary people's voices in the mid-1930s. These logs provide information on transmitting stations, titles of programs, and, most important, the names of performers. The majority of performers were professional. Yet amateurs certainly had their voices heard, with the most frequently heard amateur performances on radio being choral concerts and amateur plays by school children and youth organization members under the category of school broadcasting or children's hours. Amateurs often performed the subcategory of folk songs (*min'yō*) called *riyō*, or customary songs supposedly "preserved" in remote villages. Performers on *riyō* programs often appeared on program logs as "fellows" or "volunteers" from a specific

²⁰ For JOAK's offer to Sunaga and his involvement in the audition process, see Sunaga Katsumi, "Engei hōsō shinjin tesuto o miru," *Hōsō* 4, no. 11 (August 1934).

village/town (*mura/machi no renchū/yūshi*).” Workers’ amateur groups also occasionally performed on the radio.²¹

The remarkable changes in the evaluation of amateur performances within the broadcasting world should be understood in the context of larger socio-political transformations in the interwar and wartime periods. The masses (*taishū*) were emerging as a new constituency, which was a phenomenon shared by all advanced capitalist societies. While the majority of listeners, often called mass audiences, certainly showed affection for well-trained and skilled professionals, they also enjoyed listening to ordinary people like themselves. The rise of amateur performances in other modern societies also suggests that broadcasting companies noticed the folksy appeal of ordinary people to mass audiences. Adoption of the audience participatory format led to the commercial success of many stations.²²

The masses, such an amorphous and ambiguous entity evading any clear definition, constantly evoked doubts and anxiety among government officials, as well as among intellectuals on the left and right alike. The masses were not yet “proper” agents of society. At the same time, with proper guidance they were supposed to have the potential to become actors in the future, whether as revolutionary agents, retainers

²¹ The section title carrying the program logs changed several times, from “The Monthly Report of Business Statistics (*Gyōmu tsūkei geppō*)” to “The Monthly Report of Broadcasting Programs (*Hōsō bangumi geppō*)” and again to “The Monthly Report of the National Hookup Programs (*Zenkoku hōsō bangumi geppō*).” The logs are available for July 1934 through November 1936 in *Hōsō* 4, no. 12 (September 1934) through vol. 6, no. 12 (December 1936).

²² For example, in the U.S. radio stations adopted the competitive audience participation format following the popular success of the first such radio show, *Vox Pop*. Jason Loviglio, “Vox Pop: Network Radio and the Voice of the People,” in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*, edited by Michael Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York and London: Routledge, 2002). The author states that the success of the audience-participation format was an indication of “the era of the people.”

of Japanese tradition, or as national/colonial subjects. One of the major roles expected of radio broadcasting was to be a popular channel for providing guidance when social leaders or the state wanted to make interventions into the thought and behavior of the masses. Not unlike other modern nation-states, the Japanese government and various interest groups discovered culture, especially everyday culture, as an important field for restoring, negotiating, and cultivating the agency of the masses.²³ Moreover, when society was suffering from the growing economic disparity and social disjunctions that resulted from rapid capitalist modernization, culture seemed to have the unique power to hold together the fragmentation of life and to quell the sense of uncertainty in a constantly changing world, at least on the level of representation. The focus on the everyday culture of the masses was also closely intertwined with the emerging attention in the 1930s to the social function of recreation as a necessary part of work for stable economic reproduction in advanced capitalist nation-states.²⁴ As labor questions and agrarian problems from the Taishō era continued to trouble Japanese society, mass culture, and more specifically popular entertainment became the focus of social concern.

²³ On the Marxian approach to the concept of culture in Japan, which had great resonance with its European counterpart, particularly the work of the Critical Theory group, see Miriam Silverberg, *Changing Song: The Marxist Manifestos of Nakano Shigeharu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). For Marxist intellectuals' idealization of everydayness and folklore scholars' elevation of customary cultural practices as the timeless essence of a Japanese folk, see Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*. For a critical account of the concept of the folk as a modern construction, refer to Harry Harootunian, "Figuring the Folk: History, Poetics, and Representation," *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, edited by Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

²⁴ Sunaga, "Ian hōsō no shinseimenkan," 12-13. Takaoka Hiroyuki explains that the rise of concerns about recreation for industrial workers was a global phenomenon of the 1930s that corresponded to a new stage of capitalism and mass culture. Takaoka Hiroyuki, "Sōryokusen to toshi: kōsei undō o chūshin ni," *Nihonshi ken'yū*, no. 415 (March 1997), 148-151.

At this juncture, amateur performance in entertainment (*shirōto engei*) had several key elements that attracted government personnel, industrialists, media specialists, social reformers, and educators. While in the early years broadcasters considered amateur performers inadequate due to their lack of experience and competence, as Sunaga suggested in the 1930s the very deficiency captured contemporaries' minds as the basis of the sense of intimacy between listeners and performers and the relaxed atmosphere of the shows. Amateur performances implied a certain voluntary agency on the part of the masses that the state and social leaders were eager to see. The passionate and enthusiastic attitudes of amateurs could be channeled into larger social and political mobilizations.²⁵ Amateur performances also provided a solution to two critical problems in existing entertainment between urban and rural areas, namely the disparity in available entertainment, most of which was commercial, and the alienating effects of entertainment in its highly commodified and professionalized forms.

In all, the genealogy of amateur performance in broadcasting demonstrates that broadcasting ordinary people's voices was not inconceivable and actually had some precedents during the war, contrary to the dominant memory of audience participation as an unprecedented event and indicator of the postwar "liberation" of the Japanese people under the U.S. occupation. The reevaluation of amateur performance in the 1930s vis-à-vis the early years of broadcasting demonstrates that amateur performance

²⁵ Another notable example of this move was the National Theater (*kokumin engeki*) Movement. On this subject, see Iizuka, *Kokumin engeki to nōson engeki*, Jennifer Robertson, "Theatrical Resistance, Theatres of Restraint: The Takarazuka Revue and the "State Theatre" Movement," *Anthropological Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (October 1991), and Sang Mi Park, "Wartime Japan's Theater Movement," *WIAS Research Bulletin*, no.1 (March 2009), 61-78.

paralleled multiple movements of the time and revolved around the rise of the masses in Japanese society. Hyōdo Hiromi describes amateur performance as a grass-roots preparation for ultra-nationalism in the long-term historical process of national subject formation. Yet I doubt that amateur performance was predetermined to be ultranationalist. It seems to me that there were a number of possible routes that the early practice of amateur performance could take, which was probably the reason that many contemporaries found amateur performance so appealing.²⁶

2. 4. The Making of Self-Entertaining National Subjects on Wartime

Radio

With the escalation of the war and the predominance of fascist trends in the late 1930s and early 1940s, we can see consciously orchestrated activities utilizing the popular appeal of amateur performances to promote the strong imperialist and productivist goals of the state. I will discuss several outstanding examples of such movements on Japanese radio during the late phase of the Asia Pacific War as well as the socio-political implications of such radio practices. In particular, I focus on amateur singing, which is the most relevant genre of performance in line with *Nodo jiman*.

In 1936, Osaka Central Station of NHK (JOBK) released new songs under the category of “new popular songs” (*shin kayōkyoku*) and launched a radio program called *National Popular Songs* (Kokumin kayō). There were coordinated moves to

²⁶ See Hyōdo Hiromi, *Enjirareta kindai: "kokumin" noshintai to pafōmansu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005).

encourage singing activities among ordinary people while trying to keep the practice within the boundary of the official culture of the war time period. Proposed by the Literary and Art Department of JOBK, the National Popular Song Movement showed a remarkable consonance between the broadcasting system and the government in their understanding of the ideal state and function of popular music.

The National Popular Song Movement was a reaction to the rapid growth of popular songs (*ryūkōka*) during the 1930s, the “era of the deluge of popular songs (*ryūkōka hanran no jidai*).” Popular songs remained on “the throne of popular culture (*minshū goraku no ōza*)” because of the genre’s appeal to the sensitivities of the contemporary masses (*taishū no kankaku ni hatarakikakeru miryoku*). Popular songs had “something that captured the soul of the masses (*taishū no kon wo tsukamu mono*).” Yet the uncontrollable manner in which their popularity grew generated great anxiety within broadcasting circles since the contents of this increasingly influential genre did not necessarily remain within the boundaries of the broadcasters’ ideals. Under ideal circumstances, the National Popular Songs were to provide “proper” songs for the masses from above while co-opting the firmly-established mass appeal (*taishūsei*) of the genre. The movement sought to replace the undesirable elements of existing popular songs, disdained as “decadent,” with new “healthy creations.”²⁷

JOBK’s National Popular Song Movement was incorporated into the National Music Movement (*kokumin ongaku undō*), which was a larger attempt to promote

²⁷ Okuya Kumao, “Kokumin kayō no sōzō undō,” *Hōsō* 6, no. 7, (July 1936). See especially “The Outlines of Intent (Shui gaiyō),” prepared by the Literary and Art Department (*bungeika*) of JOBK, on page 56. The document also indicates that the movement was partly motivated by NHK’s strong sense of rivalry with the record industry.

“music predicated upon the Japanese spirit (*Nihon seishin*).”²⁸ The title of the radio program *National Popular Songs* changed to *Our Songs* (*Warera no uta*) in February 1941 and again to *National Chorus* (*Kokumin gasshō*) in February 1942. The contents had nationalist and militarist overtones with much emphasis on Japanese-style melody and patriotic lyrics, which reflected the wartime social atmosphere. The Information Bureau and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association utilized the radio programs and the songs to instruct national subjects (*kokumin kyōka*) and boost the militant spirit (*sen'i kōyō*).²⁹

Overall, the National Popular Song Movement and the National Music Movement were attempts to utilize the popular music genre for the purpose of “instructing and mobilizing” the whole nation, if not the whole empire, “from above.”³⁰ Yet these movements envisaged the active musical engagement of mass audiences. The ideal National Popular Songs were to be “performable loudly, cheerfully, and excitedly even at home.”³¹ By design, the National Music Movement was “for the whole nation to sing in chorus or play in concert on a daily basis.”³² Both movements promoted amateur performances as a way of letting mass audiences actively engage with music. Performing in person could foster a greater degree of

²⁸ “Hagaki kaitō: Nihon kokumin ongaku e no yōbō,” *Hōsō* 7, no. 10 (December 1937), 65.

²⁹ Tonoshita Tatsuya, “Denpa ni notta kasei: ‘kokumin kayō’ kara ‘kokumin gasshō’ e,” in *Senji ka no senden to bunka*, edited by Akaszwa Shirō (Tokyo: Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 2001). For a content analysis of National Popular Music, see 121-125. On the Information Bureau and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, see 129, 136-137; the Information Bureau’s *Weekly Reports* (*Shūhō*) carried the musical scores of *Kokumin Gasshō* from February 18, 1942. Takeyama, *Shiryōga kataru Taiheiyō Sensōka no hōsō*, 130.

³⁰ Tonoshita, “Denpa ni notta kasei: ‘kokumin kayō’ kara ‘kokumin gasshō’ e.”

³¹ Okuya, “Kokumin kayō no sōzō undō,” 56.

³² Hagaki kaitō: Nihon kokumin ongaku e no yōbō,” 65.

internalization of music than in passive appreciation. In addition, radio broadcasting provided chances for the masses to perform in front of national and imperial audiences.

The participatory format of amateur performance constituted the backbone of another massive cultural movement known as the Welfare Movement. The movement started in 1938 with the Japan Welfare Association (Nihon kōsei kyōkai), an extra-governmental organization of the Welfare Ministry, as its convening body. Membership in the Japan Welfare Association reached its peak in 1941 and 1942. The Welfare Movement was a coordinated effort by the government, cities and industries to encourage recreation mainly among industrial workers and youths living under poor conditions within big cities in order to “improve physiques (*taii no kōjō*)” and to spread “healthy and cheerful entertainment.” While the welfare movement promoted physical activities through various sports, it also encouraged amateur performances as it developed into a broad cultural movement.³³ The movement urged ordinary people to perform in choruses, symphonies, amateur bands and troupes organized in work places, Youth Associations and town associations (*chōnaikai*). Talent shows and entertainment shows offered a chance to present such activities.³⁴

³³ The most well-known example of the involvement of Japanese broadcasting in physical training was radio gymnastics. On this issue, refer to Kuroda, *Rajio taisō no tanjō*. Kuroda provides a very insightful historical account of the development of radio gymnastics in interwar and wartime Japan in comparison with the same practice in other advanced capitalist societies. He does not go further to clarify the socio-political implications of the postwar reemergence of radio gymnastics with regard to its relationship to the wartime practice, which could provoke a meaningful discussion of the relationship between wartime and postwar history.

³⁴ Takaoka, “Sōryokusen to toshi: kōsei undō o chūshin ni.” Takaoka offers an excellent account of this movement specifically in urban contexts.

The main purpose of the Welfare Movement was for the government, industries and cities to mobilize the working masses into higher labor efficiency for war production. Yet on the surface, the movement encouraged a voluntary mode of participation in which “the masses perform on their own and all enjoy together.” The desirable characteristics of the entertainment were still limited to the officially approved boundary of being “healthy and cheerful” for the common good. Yet the open recognition of relaxation and enjoyment signified a departure from the monolithic emphasis of self-discipline and seriousness of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement. The performers in the amateur groups were certainly under pressure to join in the activities regardless of their desire to participate. But the amateur performances had a certain ability to draw unforced participation as the participation was mediated through pleasure and the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals.³⁵

Although the Welfare Movement started outside of the broadcasting system, the expansion of the movement added momentum to the broadcast of amateur performances. Wartime radio consciously broadcast entertainment shows designed for the various categories of workers in order to give them comfort and urge them into production despite the severe mental and physical strain that the war produced. At the same time, broadcasting technology brought the otherwise scattered and local performances of amateur groups under the Welfare Movement to a shared mass

³⁵ Ibid. Takaoka demonstrates the complexity of the movement by showing that various combinations of coercion, voluntarism and opportunism motivated the participants in amateur groups.

experience. Developments in relaying technology enabled radio stations to deliver the performances from stages, factories and workplaces to national/imperial audiences.³⁶ Performances by amateur choruses, bands and workers' orchestras played on the air frequently, especially in 1941 and 1942, through radio programs such as *Music for the Workers* (Kinrōsha no ongaku), *Music for the Working Youths* (Kinrō seinen no ongaku) as well as *National Chorus*.³⁷ Large-scale entertainment events employed professional performers but occasionally gave amateur groups a chance to appear on stage. For example, the Welfare Music Festival to Boost the Morale of the Nation (Kokumin shiki kōyō kōsei ongaku taikai) held on February 7, 1943 put three workers' bands on stage: Tōyō Woolen Industry Harmonica Band, Tokyo Railway Bureau Ōmiya Machinery Department Wind Orchestra and Tokyo Ishikawajima Shipyard Self-Effort Wind Orchestra. NHK broadcast this event from the stage at the Hibiya Public Hall.³⁸

The Welfare Movement organized under the Japan Welfare Association focused on city dwellers. But local cultural movements in rural areas also promoted amateur performance more aggressively than before with the growth of the Imperial Rule Assistance Movement.³⁹ The scarcity of entertainment in rural areas had been an important social issue during the process of modernization, but the gravity of the

³⁶ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 572-573.

³⁷ *JOAK yōaku hōsō kiroku Shōwa 16-nen* and *JOAK yōaku hōsō kiroku Shōwa 17-nen*. These documents are available at the NHK Museum of Broadcasting.

³⁸ *Tōyō Bōmō Kōgyō Hāmonika Gakudan, Tokyo Tetsudōkyoku Ōmiya Kōkibu Suisōgakudan* and *Tokyo Ishikawajima Zōsencho Jikyō Suisōgakudan*. See *JOAK yōaku hōsō kiroku Shōwa 18-nen jōhanki*.

³⁹ Kitagawa Kenzō, "Senji ka no chihō bunka undō: hoppō bunka renmei o chūshin ni," in *Bunka to fashizumu: senjiki Nihon ni okeru bunka no kōbō*, edited by Akazawa Shirō, Kitagawa Kenzō and Takaoka Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1993).

problem escalated with the expansion of the war and the demand for increased production.⁴⁰ The central authorities responded to this problem by trying to spread the practice of amateur performance outward through the National Singing Movement (*kokumin kaishō undō*), in which the Imperial Rule Assistance Association had the Japan Music Culture Association (*Nihon ongaku bunka kyōkai*) organize and dispatch troops of performers to teach villagers in remote farming and fishing communities how to sing (*kaishō shidōtai*).⁴¹ Local groups also promoted amateur performances in communal settings.⁴² Local cultural groups encouraged the residents of rural communities to participate in events associated with festivals and talent shows. Youth Associations often played an active part in these efforts. The local people's contribution to such events was easily translatable to the highly-promoted notion of the folk as the embodiment of authentic Japanese traditional culture. Radio broadcasting adopted a participatory format for the broadcast of local activities.⁴³ The program logs indicate that it was not unusual to hear local residents perform folk

⁴⁰ Asahi Shinbun Chūō Chōsakai, *Chihō goraku chōsa shiryō* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Chūō Chōsakai, 1941).

⁴¹ Tonoshita Tatsuya, "Ongaku ni yoru kokumin kyōka undō," *Ritsumeikan Daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo kiyō*, no. 73 (February 1999). On the National Singing Movement, refer in particular to 94-98.

⁴² The rural encouragement of amateur performances overlapped with the war regime's long-term efforts in conjunction with local cultural groups to reconstruct communal performances under the category of folk arts and to promote the image of farming villages and the remote countryside as the reservoir of authentic Japanese culture.

⁴³ Broadcasting played a crucial part in collecting and recording folk songs by using its well-developed local networks. Local stations competed with one another to discover songs from the remote countryside and preserve them within the category of folk songs. NHK also launched a project to explore folk songs in Tōhoku. One of the participants in this project was Yanagita Kunio, the most eminent scholar of folklore studies in Japan. "Tōhoku minyō shichōdan zadankai," *Hōsō* 11, no. 7 (August 1941).

songs on the microphone during the Welfare Movement period. Moreover, program logs described the participants as “volunteers” from various local places.⁴⁴

The above cases of amateur performances demonstrate that during the late phase of the war, audience participation did not only happen more often than we now assume, but also constituted an essential part of the wartime politics of mass culture. It is true that the Japanese government and opinion leaders took the initiative in promoting ordinary people’s performances in both everyday and mass-mediated settings for war mobilization. We cannot dismiss the possibility that a variety of pressure and coercion might have been involved in the listeners’ decisions to perform on the microphone. Yet it is also undeniable that the promoters of amateur performances allowed some room for voluntary participation, albeit closely orchestrated and limited. Radio broadcasting granted ordinary listeners such opportunities for participation and at the same time provided chances for the wartime regime to utilize audience participation as evidence of support from below.

2. 5. Amateur Performances, the Imperial Airwaves, and the Community of Sympathy

Amateur radio performances were integral to Japan’s wartime politics. Yet these performances are not completely reducible to political participation in its narrow sense. Rather the amateur radio performances encourage us to consider these cultural

⁴⁴Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 551. It was not certain from this book whether folk songs were relayed from local places or recorded first and then played on-air. The performers of folk songs were labeled as “volunteers (*yūshi*) from XX Prefecture XX County XX Village” in *Hōsō bagumi kakuteihyō*. For example, see the log of December 1, 1943.

practices as a channel for steering the enthusiasm and energy of the masses into political consent. The sensory appeal of entertainment in particular could serve as an intermediary to encourage voluntary participation from mass audiences in broadcasting events that were strongly colored by the official lines of war propaganda and imperialism. Fascist regimes presented the most explicit examples of utilizing cultural productions that were designed to please the senses for political ends, what Walter Benjamin famously called the “aestheticization of politics” in Nazi Germany.⁴⁵ However, the most incisive accounts of the relationship between politics and culture suggest that the replacement of politics with cultural sensations is neither a deceptive tactic specific to fascist governments nor an aberration from modernity. They point out the strong undercurrents of culture in modern politics in order to demonstrate that the two realms have never been clearly separated. Modern governance does not operate solely upon political reasoning. Emotions and senses have been constantly in play as critical, if not primary, resources to organize and mobilize modern societies.⁴⁶

Drawing upon the complex interplay between politics and culture, I want to elucidate some of the socio-political implications of ordinary listeners’ performances of music. These performances took place in collective settings with the expectation

⁴⁵ Benjamin claimed that the politicization of culture was the revolutionaries’ mission, necessary to confront the aestheticization of politics. Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, edited by Hanna Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

⁴⁶ For an inspiring account on this issue, refer to Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, translated by Keith Botsford (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). Also, see Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). For an insightful discussion on aestheticization of politics in the postmodern context, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), especially Part IV.

that they would be broadcast on the national and imperial airwaves for the purpose of entertainment. Sakai Naoki's articulation of the unique function of community formation in the action of chorus singing offers valuable insights into the cultural, and more specifically sensory effects of the participatory practice of amateur performance. In the cases of Japan after defeat in the Asia Pacific War, the United States during the post-Vietnam War era and the United States in the post-9/11 crisis, Sakai connects the act of collective singing to the constitution of imperialist national subjects mediated by a shared sense of loss and victimhood at the national level. He interprets chorus as "a ritual of sharing pathos predicated upon synchrony." Through the act of singing simultaneously, the performers restore their sense of belonging and achieve a "community of sympathy (*kyōkan no kyōdōtai*)."⁴⁷

Practices of collective singing during the war were set in a slightly different context from the situation that Sakai discusses. Yet his concept of community of sympathy remains relevant to my attempt to trace the meaning of amateur performances since the aesthetics of amateur performance on radio relied upon the sympathy-making effects of such practices. As Sunaga's earlier remarks suggested, the aesthetics of amateur performance had much to do with its unique power to break down the division between performers and audiences. The strong sense of intimacy

⁴⁷ Sakai Naoki, *Nihon eiga Beikoku: kyōkan no kyōdōtai to teikokuteki kokumin shugi* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2007). The quotes are from page 111. Especially relevant is his analysis of the scenes from the American film *Deer Hunter* in which the characters sing *America the Beautiful* together, and the repeated play of a children's chorus in the Japanese movie *Twenty-Four Eyes* (*Nijū yon no hitomi*) in chapters 2 and 3, respectively. For a more general approach to the longing for a lost community in modern societies and subject formation through the effort to restore it, see Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Inoperative Community," in *The Inoperative Community*, edited by Peter Connor and translated by Peter Connor, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

that amateur performers generated among listeners was ascribable to the recognition that the performers were “ordinary people,” not unlike the listeners themselves. Amateur performances also contributed to the diminution of the division in authority between the small number of individuals who used to have exclusive access to the microphone, such as broadcasting personnel, professional performers, experts, government officials, and military leaders, and mass audiences.⁴⁸ The boundary-blurring effects of amateur performances could serve the desire of the wartime government to amplify its populist appeal and to restore a sense of horizontal connection among members of society, as well as a vertical connection between the governing elite and the masses.

Radio events utilized a setting in which amateur performances could serve to imagine a community of sympathy on a national and imperial scale: national/imperial conventions. A notable example was the *Workers' Music Convention* (Kinrōsha ongaku taikai), which was co-hosted by NHK and the Greater Japan Industrial Patriotic Society (Dai Nihon Sangyō Hōkokukai). The aim was to encourage Welfare Music (*kōsei ongaku*) as “the absolute driving force for boosting national morale” in order to “cultivate a new and refreshing spirit and to awaken the self-consciousness [of workers] as industrial warriors.” This event was held annually from 1941 through 1943 and broadcast on radio. In principle, participation was voluntary. The convention called for applications from workers' music groups organized in factories, mines, companies, government offices, stores, banks, and hospitals. The applicants went

⁴⁸ See Takeyama, “Senjika no rajio kōen.”

through a preliminary round at the prefecture level, then on to local contests at seven central stations, and finally on to a national contest.⁴⁹ The 1965 *History of Japanese Broadcasting* states that this event was organized in “completely the same manner as today’s *Nodo jiman zenkoku taikai* (Amateur Hour of National Singing Contest).” The regional preliminary rounds allowed participants in the final event to be displayed as local representatives, implying synchrony and an equal footing across national and imperial spaces, which was a crucial basis for community making. NHK publicized that “the competition was absolutely a secondary matter” to its main purpose, which was to bolster a sense of community, although the event was conducted in the format of a contest.⁵⁰ Instead, the event should be “a convention purely for exchanging workers’ music.” The Workers’ Music Convention honored groups of excellent performances yet made sure that winning or ranking should not be the major concern.⁵¹

Another remarkable national amateur performance event in a similar format was the *School Children’s Singing Contest* (*Jidō shōka konkūru*). It was an annual chorus contest for elementary school students that had been held since 1932. While the *Workers’ Music Convention* remained a national contest, the *School Children’s Singing Contest* began as a national contest and gradually developed into an imperial event, as participation extended to Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, Northern China and

⁴⁹ For the guidelines and reviews of the first convention, see Yoshizawa Matsujirō, “Dai 1-kai Kinrōsha ongaku taikai gaikan,” in *Shiryōshū sōryokusen to bunka 2: kōsei undo, kenmin undo, dokushō undo*, edited by Takaoka Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 2001), 109-114. The quotes are from page 109.

⁵⁰ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 554.

⁵¹ “Dai 3-kai kinrōsha ongaku taikai,” *Hōsō* 3, no. 9 (September 1943), 40-42.

other Asian countries under Japanese occupation. The title of the show changed to the *Greater Asian Children's Singing Contest* (Daitōa jidō shōka taikai) in 1941, in accordance with the extended range of participation. In 1942, NHK developed the singing contest into a new type of national event utilizing the ability of broadcasting technology to actualize synchrony. It networked the central venue and each local meeting place through broadcasting, thereby attempting to make all the “little national subjects (*shōkokumin*) from all over the country sing the same song at once.”

Consequently the format shifted from a contest to a chorus festival (*gasshōsai*) and the title changed to the *Convention for the Little National Subjects All over the Country to Sing Together* (Zenkoku shōkokumin minna utae taikai).⁵² In the following year, the NHK expanded the same practice to the Japanese Empire with the modified title, the *Convention for Greater East Asia's Little National Subjects to Sing Together* (Daitōa shōkokumin minna utae taikai). This festival invited not only young Japanese national subjects but also colonial subjects from all over the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere who were staying in Tokyo to sing in a chorus at the central venue, Hibiya Public Hall. Other children in various local meeting places such as elementary schools joined the chorus as well. Group listening facilities were established in the Japanese mainland and also in each country within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere so that the concert could be heard at the exactly same time. This ambitious project to

⁵² NHK shichōsha honbu jigyōbu bangumi seisakukyoku gakkō kyōikubu, *NHK zenkoku gakkō ongaku konkūru 50-nen no ashi ato* (Tokyo: NHK shichōsha honbu jigyōbu bangumi seisakukyoku gakkō kyōikubu, 1983), 9-12. In 1942, the format shifted from contest to festival. The title changed to *Zenkoku Shōkokumin Minna Utae Taikai*. It became *Daitōa Shōkokumin Minna Utae Taikai* in the following year. For the *Minna Utae Taikai*, see also Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi* 1, 538.

make all the national and colonial subjects of school age sing together at the same time was inconceivable and impracticable without the broadcasting networks of the Japanese Empire. It was “what broadcasting made possible in the first place (*hōsō ni oite hajimete kanō na koto*),” as the broadcasters proudly remarked.⁵³ With the broadcasting technology and infrastructure, the incredible idea to make “one hundred million minds into one (*ichioku isshin*)” by singing together was not just a wild dream.

The role of electronic technology as a key intermediating force in constructing a community of sympathy and colonial subjects cannot be overemphasized. Radio broadcasting as an auditory medium is known for its electrifying sensory appeal and unique capability to foster a strong communal sensibility.⁵⁴ More important, in transwar Japan radio broadcasting was the most powerful means of communication for actualizing synchronicity, the basis for sympathy making in Sakai’s analysis, all over the national/imperial space. In a non-electronically mediated situation, a community of sympathy could be conceived only indirectly through the nationalist content of songs,

⁵³ “Dai 2-kai Daitōa Shōkokumin ‘Minna utae’ taikai,” *Hōsō* 3, no. 10 (September 1943), 26-28.

⁵⁴ The auditory media’s advantage in generating group sensibility is often juxtaposed with the print media’s individualizing power to turn readers in on themselves. One useful account of this subject is Ong, *Orality and Literacy*. Ong’s main subject is the transformation from orality to literacy. Yet his discussion of the reemergence of orality, what he calls second orality, is relevant to the discussion of the sympathy-making effect of radio broadcasting and radio’s characteristic capacity as an auditory medium. For Ong’s articulation of second orality and radio broadcasting, see 135-138; Marshall McLuhan also sees radio in Nazi Germany as an enhancer of group sense but he ascribes this function of radio to the lack in history of literacy and civilization, which allowed the easy return of the archaic past in Germany. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964), especially Chapter 30, “Radio: The Tribal Drum.” Ong’s subtle differentiation between primary orality (orality prior to literacy) and second orality (orality mediated by literacy) works better for me in considering the longing for a sympathetic community as a modern phenomenon rather than as an unfortunate residue of pre-modern habits.

for example “America the Beautiful” in Sakai’s analysis of a scene from *Deer Hunter* where a group of people joined in singing this patriotic song in a private setting.⁵⁵ Mediated by broadcasting networks, the action of singing in chorus could acquire a national/imperial connotation immediately regardless of the content.

The above national/imperial radio events were held and experienced in a setting meticulously controlled to shape the messages and effects of amateur performances so that they conformed to the official cultural codes of the wartime period. NHK proudly announced that these radio events drew significant and enthusiastic participation from the listeners.⁵⁶ At first glance, the spectacle of such events might reinforce the stereotypical image of the Japanese as a mass of indistinctive individuals who blindly follow the state’s lead. However, it is uncertain whether individual performers necessarily interpreted the meanings of their own participation in the prescribed way. Even in May 1942 when the Welfare Movement was at its peak, the Greater Japan Industrial Patriotic Society was disturbed to find that many participants in amateur choruses were there simply because they enjoyed singing, without necessarily being conscious of the movement’s given goal to boost morale for war production. The association lamented that such an attitude was “far from the ideal of the Welfare Movement.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Sakai Naoki, *Nihon eiga Beikoku*, 110-111.

⁵⁶ For example, *Hōsō*, one of NHK’s magazines for the general public, noted that the first Minna utae taikai “were greatly welcomed from the little national subjects nationwide.” “Dai 3-kai kinrōsha ongaku taikai,” 40.

⁵⁷ Dai Nihon San’gyō Hōkokukai, “Gasshō shidō no hōhō,” in *Shiryōshū sōryokusen to bunka 2: kōsei undo, kenmin undo, dokushō undo*, edited by Takaoka Hiroyuki (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 2001), 149.

It would have been hard for the participants to miss the meticulously implanted political messages in the large-scale national and imperial radio events. These radio events subjected participants to more systematic regulations under the constant attention of the broadcasters and the authorities, and therefore left less room for deviation than small group practices. Yet as the war turned decisively unfavorable to the Japanese Empire around 1943, even more complex dimensions of amateur performances emerged that radio broadcasting could not easily integrate into the greater auditory theater of national/imperial events.

2. 6. Self-Entertaining Subjects off the Hook

The increasingly acute conditions of the last phase of the war hollowed out the Welfare Movement. Under the incredibly high demand for production, regular group activities became unaffordable. The frequent air raids over major cities made it impossible for urbanites to hold large open-air gatherings.⁵⁸ The broadcast of amateur performances displayed a similar trajectory. Facing the risk that radio frequencies would expose transmission stations to enemy planes, the government imposed regulations upon transmission and consequently crippled the normal operations of broadcasting.⁵⁹ The limited resources made it difficult for the government and broadcasting network to invest in systematic efforts to invite amateur performers to

⁵⁸ Takaoka, “Sōryokusen to toshi: kōsei undō o chūshin ni,” 166-167.

⁵⁹ Governmental regulations included suspension of the transmission, cutting electric power, occasional changes in the frequencies or use of a single frequency. For a valuable account of the dilemma that the broadcasting system had to face under the governmental regulation of transmission (*denpa kansei*) between setting up air-raid precautions and securing radio listening, see Takeyama, *Shiryō ga kataru Taiheiyō Sensōka no hōsō*, 88-105.

frequent media events, especially as these would-be performers were also expected to focus on productive work. The musical performances of workers' amateur groups disappeared from music programs for workers. The broadcasting system's own chorus and symphony replaced workers' amateur groups in 1943.⁶⁰ At the same time, the severe war situation increased the demand for entertainment as people were forever in search of some distraction from the current hardships. In this situation, the prevailing practices of amateur entertainment shows in everyday settings captured the attention of the central authorities.

A revealing document in this regard is “Guidelines for Workers’ Talent Shows (*Kinrō geinōkai shidō yōkō*)” that the Culture Department of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association issued in August 1943. The Culture Department observed that talent shows (*geinō taikai*), entertainment shows (*gorakukai*) and gatherings for side shows (*yokyō no atsumari*) by amateurs had been growing vigorously in farming and fishing areas, factories and mining areas, as well as in town associations, neighborhood associations and other groups. While considering these events to be “desirable as part of cultural movements in the war situation,” the Culture Department was deeply concerned to find that there was “no small possibility of a series of undesirable harmful effects if the shows are left in the hands of the performers or like-minded people.” The Guidelines therefore were intended to admonish the leaders of local communities and workplaces to keep the amateur talent shows under “proper supervision and guidance.”

⁶⁰ *JOAK yōaku hōsō kiroku Showa 16-nen, 17-nen, 18-nen.*

To this end, the document set out meticulous rules for the hosts of such events and for the format of the show itself, including procedures for opening and closing the show, and the maximum length and frequency with which shows could take place. The Guidelines also specified appropriate items (*enmoku*) for the shows. The persons in charge of amateur talent shows should choose contents that were “directly consonant with the changes in current situation and the demands of the nation.” The entertainment should be “healthy.” Anything associated with the U.S. and Britain should be avoided. The Guidelines even provided exact scripts for the announcements in each step of the opening, part of which was devoted to national ceremonies (*kokumin girei*), including a vow to the Emperor, the singing of the national anthem and a memorial service for the war dead (*kinen*). As the events should aim to foster “harmony and cooperation” within local communities and workplaces, the Guidelines instructed that shows could not be held in the form of a contest. Group performances were preferable, while individual performances were “to be avoided as much as possible.” The participants should neither imitate professional performances nor become professional. The event must charge no admission. The Guidelines even required that hosts report to police in advance of a big event.⁶¹

In short, the Guidelines demonstrated the Culture Department’s attempt to keep private amateur entertainment shows under control as the war situation worsened. The authorities’ intent to utilize amateur entertainment for war mobilization was not in

⁶¹ Taisei Yokusankai Bunkabu, “Shiryō 13: Bunka undō shiryō dai 1-shū” (August 1943), *Shiryōshū sōryokusen to bunka: Taisei Yokusankai Bunkabu to yokusan bunka undō*, edited by Kitagawa Kenzō (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1993), 68-70.

essence different from other huge national and imperial movements and media events. Yet the subjection of amateur entertainment shows to extremely circumspect guidelines and top-down supervision does not necessarily evidence the wartime government's ability to put its intention into practice or its power to cow the population into absolute conformity. Rather the authorities' urgent desire to place amateur practices under control reveals an anxiety as to whether or not groups such as the Imperial Rule Assistance Association still had the ability to control amateur shows.

The unambiguous fear that the amateur talent shows would get out of control was not ungrounded. With the progress of the war turning against the Japanese Empire, some symptoms of the dwarfed authority of the war regime began to appear. The community-making capacity of amateur performance, the very reason the war regime promoted such a practice in the first place, could present a serious danger to the war regime if sympathy were to turn in an unauthorized direction.

A series of feature articles entitled, "Field Reports from Rural Communities (*Nōson genchi hōkoku*)" in *Hōsō kenkyū* (Broadcasting Research) offers us a glimpse into the ambiguous status of the amateur talent shows (*shirōto engei taikai*) at the end of the war. Ōnaka Kenzō, a radio staff member in the Research Department, documented the amateur talent shows that he encountered during a trip to a number of rural communities. Observing an amateur talent show in Ōhara village of Niigata Prefecture, he was pleased to see the villagers collectively enjoy singing, dancing, knee drum playing and theatrical performances. He believed that the events were making the villagers into one community. He noted:

All the community members gathered regardless of age and sex. It seems that the performers are enthusiastic and the audiences are also very interested [in the show]. They enjoyed the show together in one body without distinction between providers and recipients of the entertainment.

Yet the actual contents of the show disturbed Ōnaka. He found that those performances were “a little distasteful due to the vulgarity.” A solo dance performed by a female member of the Ōhara Village Youth Association made him uncomfortable due to the sexual connotations of a certain pose. Ōnaka was not sure whether or not the pose fell into the category of “healthy eroticism.”⁶²

The substance of a theatrical performance in Ōta village of Nagano Prefecture puzzled him further for its potentially political implications. The play was supposed to portray “a cheerful aspect of soldiers on the war front.” It started with soldiers marching to a military song. But the serious mood quickly changed as a humorous-looking soldier provoked laughter with his “dubious body language (*ayashige na miburi*).” While other soldiers were busy chatting about girls in their native places a soldier quietly took out his girl friend’s photo and chuckled to himself. Then his fellow soldiers “went into an uproar (*baka sawagi*)” trying to steal it until the captain of the troop appeared and scolded them for their behavior. As the captain was about to leave a soldier snuck up to him and made a “disrespectful imitation (*murei na mane*)” behind his back. In doing so, the soldier was left behind by his troop marching out. In the end, however, he managed to catch up without getting caught. Ōnaka was

⁶² Ōnaka Kenzō, “Mura ga kōsei suru made,” *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 2 (February 1943), 88.

perplexed by the somewhat derisive caricature of the soldiers and the laughter that the skit evoked. He was left “feeling strange that there was not even one leader who would huff over” the play “for mocking the warriors of the Imperial Army.”⁶³ Ōta village was not the only place where amateur talent shows adopted this sort of trope. The concept of the play was first proposed to the village youths by a former-factory girl who had seen the same play in an amateur talent show held in her workplace. Ōnaka also noted that he had “often seen similar types (of plays) in urban districts.” Therefore, it is safe to say that in the last phase of the war this sort of mild satire was not only possible but also widespread.

Ōnaka’s observation illuminates the gap between the ideal type of amateur talent shows outlined by the state and the broadcasters and the actual implementation of the event. The wartime government could not afford to control all of the local amateur performances at the end of war. The lack or absence of leadership in particular posed a serious problem. Ōnaka found that in Ōhara village, the leaders who were supposed to instruct the youths in entertainment were actually not interested in such a role as they were already burdened with multiple obligations. In Ōta village, leaders were absent as young adults had already been sent to the war front for military duties. These circumstances left youngsters, the main age-group in charge of amateur talent shows in both of the villages that Ōnaka’s visited, alone to practice whatever they wanted without anybody to help or supervise them.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ōnaka Kenzō, “Mura no shirōto engei,” *Hōsō kenkyū* 3, no. 4 (March 1943), 100.

⁶⁴ Ōnaka indicates that the specific boom in amateur performances in Ōta village began with the Manchurian Incident for the purpose of comforting soldiers’ families left behind in

In this light, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association's endeavor to impose strict rules upon amateur talent shows indicated the war regime's desperate attempt to maintain control over the people's cultural activities rather than an aggressive attack on society by a disproportionately strong state. The point to make here is that the loosening of control over the people's energy, if not a sort of liberation, was already in process even prior to the actual end of the war. It is true that some relaxation had always been part of the wartime government's plan to encourage gatherings for amateur performances. Certainly these practices could offer the chance for an occasional and temporary release of frustration and anxiety among the people, thereby contributing to the maintenance of the status quo and avoiding any explosions of discontent. Yet as the examples in Ōta and Ōhara villages demonstrated, the shared pleasures and laughter at the amateur talent shows could also go beyond calculated relaxation to undermine official culture.⁶⁵ Ōnaka's complaints about the absurdity of the aesthetics of amateur talent shows mirrored the uneasiness with the unpredictable

villages and also for the welfare of the general public. The police used to ban local amateur entertainments in most quarters of Ōta village in the mid-Taishō period. Because of their relatively short history, amateur performances were more familiar to young adults than older-generation villagers, who did not have much experience with these practices. In this situation, the lack of young adults presented a serious problem for the central authorities in assuring that proper guidance would be given to youths. Ōnaka, "Mura no shirōto engei," 101-102.

⁶⁵ In this regard, the ambivalent implications of amateur talent shows at the end of war demonstrate certain parallels with the dual effects of the carnival in Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis as a temporary liberation from the established order. While the carnival may work as a linchpin to stabilize the status quo in moments of crisis, the pleasures it produces retain a certain potential to break social control. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968). Bakhtin's analysis deals with the pre-modern practices of carnival yet his account of the carnival was closely related to the issues of his time, specifically the culture of the Soviet Union in the transformative moment of revolution. On this point, see Renate Lachmann, "Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-Culture," *Cultural Critique*, no. 11 (Winter 1988-1989).

directions that the shared joy and laughter among the people might take. As Miriam Silverberg convincingly demonstrated, the categorization of a certain culture as nonsensical was often inseparable from the political concern to (re)establish the authority of the normative culture in modern societies. Wartime Japanese broadcasters' attitudes to amateur talent shows were no exception.⁶⁶

As a broadcaster, Ōnaka came up with an idea to steer the amateur talent shows back on track. He suggested that NHK should pick up some “model examples” of amateur talent shows from rural areas and relay the live broadcasts to the national audience. Due to the scarcity of materials that survived the last years of the war, it is hard to determine whether NHK ever adopted his proposal. Yet Ōnaka noted that an attempt had already been made to air a live broadcast of an amateur talent show over the nation-wide network even prior to his suggestion, although it was unsuccessful for an unstated reason.⁶⁷ Despite its failure, the attempt indicates that by the end of the war it was not unthinkable for NHK to broadcast amateur talent shows with programs chosen and prepared by the people, unlike the huge national and imperial media events that were arranged in an obviously top-down manner.

We cannot deny the possibility that NHK might have orchestrated the contents or format of the amateur shows beforehand to ensure that the shows represented the official lines of culture. Yet it is important to remember that the official codes of broadcasting were also losing public confidence. The central authorities and

⁶⁶ Miriam Silverberg demonstrates that so-called nonsensical behaviors make a lot of sense if we are sensitive enough to understand that they carried a certain political meaning that was potentially subversive to the contemporary order of society—what she calls a “political punch.” Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, xv-xvi, 117.

⁶⁷ Ōnaka “Mura no shirōto engei,” 104.

broadcasters were well aware of the problem and had to show some conciliatory gestures, no matter how grudgingly. During the final years of the war the columns of readers' letters and listeners' voices in the major newspapers and journals publicly pronounced criticism of the government and NHK for various reasons, including, as Takeyama Akiko has demonstrated, false or exaggerated reports of the war situation. The appointment of Ogata Taketora (1888-1956), a former journalist for the Asahi Newspaper, as Chief of The Information Bureau facilitated the further loosening of the atmosphere with the policy change to allow the media more latitude.⁶⁸

The desire to defend the official culture clearly appeared in the guidelines for media personnel and individuals in the field of art, "On the Matter of Making Wartime Life Cheerful" (*Senji seikatsu no meirōka ni kanrusu ken*). This was an agreement proposed at the meeting of vice ministers on May 1, 1944. It was given to broadcasting personnel through *The Bulletin of Broadcasting Guide for the Great East Asian War* (Daitōa sensō hōsō shishin ihō), the Information Bureau's bulletin for internal circulation on the subject of broadcasting. The guidelines aimed to increase entertaining elements in every field of broadcasting. Although the proclaimed aim and desirable characteristics of entertainment remained the same – the promotion of a healthy and cheerful pastime to make people regain energy for tomorrow's production – the guidelines suggested a regression from the central authorities' position on the proper dose of political messages in entertainment. It recommended to welcome entertainment "free of the war situation," such as classics, "unless against the state

⁶⁸ Takeyama, *Shiryōga kataru Taiheiyō Sensōka no hōsō*, 195-212.

policy.” It also clearly instructed the broadcasters to eliminate war entertainment in which “the implications to the war situation were too outstanding to be interesting at all,” or state-policy plays that were “crude enough to repulse listeners.” Yet the guideline refused to make the change official by noting that the new policy was for the broadcasters to keep in mind but “not to be announced or propagated to the general public.”⁶⁹ Apparently high-ranking government officials were not willing to change the established cultural norms. Nevertheless, the vulnerable position of the status quo made it inevitable for them to concede some relaxation of the rules for popular cultural practices.

Under the policy of Making Wartime Life Cheerful, NHK broadcast programs accommodating popular tastes such as the radio drama *Miyamoto Musashi*, a familiar classic of a vagabond samurai, narrated by the popular orator (*benshi*) and comedian Tokugawa Musei.⁷⁰ In amateur talent shows held by the military, the most frequently performed genres were not military songs but indulgent popular songs and folk songs.⁷¹ Popular entertainment could still work to galvanize the war-weary

⁶⁹ “Senji seikatsu no meirōka ni kansuru ken” Jōhōkyoku dai 1-bu hōsōka, *Daitōa Sensō hōsō shishin ihō*, no. 36 (September 5, 1944), 3-4. *Daitōa Sensō hōsō shishin ihō* was the new name of *Daitōa Sensō hōsō shirube*. The name changed to *Daitōa Sensō hōsō shishin ihō* in July 1943. These were monthly publications that the Information Bureau issued to provide guidelines for officials in charge of broadcasting and NHK broadcasters. Twenty six issues, which were published from July 1942 to November 1944, survived. I am very grateful to Professor Takeyama Akiko for sharing these rare materials with me. For her review of these publications, see Takeyama, *Shiryōga kataru Taiheiyō Sensōka no hōsō*, 9-53.

⁷⁰ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi*, 165-166.

⁷¹ Takaoka, “Haisen chokugo no bunka jōkyō to bunka undō: engeki undō o chūshin to shite,” 176-182. Takaoka documents the same situation in professional performances to comfort soldiers and workers. In those events, which were sometimes operated without any supervision or censorship, the audiences often expressed deep affection for entertainment of

populations and distract possible dissidence. Yet at the same time the prevailing popular appetite for entertainment outside the category of official culture signified the disintegration of the wartime politics of mass culture, which had attempted to produce imperial subjects who would be willing to sacrifice themselves for war effort. Cultural practices of the ordinary people were already disentangled to some extent from the political norms and official cultural codes years before the U.S. occupation's much-publicized liberation began.

2. 7. Voluntarism, Mobilization and Liberation: *Nodo jiman* and the Postwar Politics of Memory

With the end of the war, the already prevalent practice of amateur performance was finally released from the constraints and regulations of the war era. This led to a sudden, rapid growth in amateur talent shows, especially from the fall of 1945 through 1946. This boom, which Takaoka Hiroyuki called “the amateur talent show phenomenon” demonstrated the broad popular base for the practice of amateur performance and also provided an important ground for the explosive popularity of *Nodo jiman* in the postwar era.⁷² Maruyama Tetsuo anticipated in the early stage of the planning of *Nodo jiman* that the show's concept would work because he had frequently seen ordinary people engaged in singing contests off the air during the early postwar days. Whenever a number of people gathered together or people had a drink,

an “unhealthy (*fukenzen*)” nature. Takaoka also notes that the soldiers showed distaste for the films aimed to “boost the war spirit” during the last phase of the war.

⁷² Takaoka, “Haisen chokugo no bunka jōkyō to bunka undō: engeki undō o chūshin to shite,” 172-176.

it was a routine to put on a singing show. Such a widespread practice of amateur singing convinced him that only if he could have people sing on the microphone as delightfully as they did in these gatherings, an audience would find it appealing.⁷³

Nodo jiman was a big hit from the very first episode. In the Tokyo area alone, more than nine hundred people responded to a radio announcement inviting participants and applied for the opening show. One thousand volunteered for the second.⁷⁴ After its initial success in Tokyo and the surrounding areas, the *Nodo jiman* fad spread out all over the country through the NHK network. Local stations scrambled to put local versions of the show on the air and later *Nodo jiman* traveled around the country. *Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru* (Amateur Hour of National Singing Contest) began in 1948 as an annual wrap-up of the program and elevated *Nodo jiman* to a national media event. *Nodo jiman* continued to be among the top-ranked programs in listening ratings throughout the occupation. The title of the contemporary film *Nodo jiman-kyō jidai* (The Era of Crazy Amateur Song Contestants) epitomized the explosive popularity of *Nodo jiman* that swept Japanese society in the immediate postwar period.⁷⁵

On their arrival in Japan, the U.S. occupation forces consciously promoted audience participation in Japanese radio broadcasting. The Radio Unit of CIE (Civil

⁷³ Maruyama, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai *Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai*,” 31.

⁷⁴ *Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, 20-seiki hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 239-240. For the numbers of applicants in the following episodes, see Maruyama Testuo, “Taishū ongaku hōsō tenbō,” *Hōsō bunka* 1, no. 1 (June, 1946), 12.

⁷⁵ For a brief description of the film, see Shimizu, “Dai 2-ki *Nodo jiman-kyō jidai kō*,” 138. The film came out in 1949. Directed by Saitō Torajirō (1905~1982), a major director of the time, this film is also famous for featuring the first onscreen performance of Misora Hibari, one of the most beloved superstars in the history of Japanese popular song.

Information and Education Section) launched shows with participatory formats such as the man in the street, the roundtable, the forum and the quiz show. The occupation's information outlets publicized the "opening up (*kaihō*)" of microphones to listeners as an unprecedented event that evidenced Japan's "liberation (*kaihō*)" from totalitarian rule.⁷⁶ Early postwar discourses on audience participation in radio frequently used phrases such as "the liberation of microphones" or "liberated microphones" (*kaihō sareta maiku*).⁷⁷

Man on the Street (*Gaitō rokuon*) was probably the most publicized program in this regard.⁷⁸ First broadcast on 29 September 1945 as a part of the freedom of thought campaign, this program adopted the audience participation format that made the American show *Vox Pop* on Houston's KTRH a popular success, namely the "man in the street" format in which the announcer stopped random pedestrians and asked their opinions of current topics.⁷⁹ To demonstrate that "Japan at last has freedom of thought and speech on the air," *Man on the Street* consciously chose controversial topics directly related to national affairs such as food shortages, war crimes trials, war

⁷⁶Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 703-704; Asahi Hōsō, ed. *Shinpojiumu kenshō sengo hōsō* (Tokyo: Asahi Hōsō Kabushiki Kaisha, 1996), 168-169; "Sengo ninki rajio bangumi no oya, Hantā-san 41-nen buri ni rainichi" *Asahi shinbun* (September 21, 1990). The article calls the venue of the first recording of *Gaitō rokuon* "the birth place of the freedom of speech in Japan."

⁷⁷ The discourses of audience participation programs often used the two homonyms of *kaihō* interchangeably, one meaning "opening up" and the other implying "liberation." The English version of the NHK history translated "the opening-up of the microphones" in the original Japanese version of the publication into "the liberated microphones" in the English edition. NHK Sōgō Hōsō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *50-years of Japanese Broadcasting* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, 1977), 142-144.

⁷⁸ The initial title of the program was *Gaitō nite* (In the Street) although the program was better known under the revised title, *Gaitō rokuon*, whose acronym *Garoku* was also generally used. It was in May 1946 that the title changed from *Gaitō nite* to *Gaitō rokuon*.

⁷⁹ Loviglio, "Vox Pop: Network Radio and the Voice of the People," 94.

responsibility and black markets.⁸⁰ NHK recorded a series of interviews in busy intersections that had been carefully-selected for maximum publicity, including the University of Tokyo, Ueno Station, Shibuya Station, Yotsuya Station and the courtroom of the Yokohama War Crimes Trials.⁸¹ Numerous pedestrians witnessed the recordings. The Radio Unit also circulated photographed images of the recordings through newspapers, newsreels, magazines and films, thereby creating a spectacle of postwar liberation. *Gaitō rokuon* remained one of the most remembered and most frequently publicized examples of postwar radio shows based on audience participation.⁸²

The Radio Unit also carefully designed and publicized a radio forum called *Hōsō tōronkai* (Roundtable of the Air). The show aimed to demonstrate the postwar liberation by giving the participants an opportunity to speak up about previously taboo subjects. One of the most sensational topics of this forum was whether or not Japan should maintain the emperor system. Tokuda Kyūichi (1894-1953), a famous Communist intellectual imprisoned during the war and radical opponent of the

⁸⁰ “Broadcasting in Japan 1 February 1946,” in Folder 43, Box 5313, RG 331, 12; “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331. This report states that “contrasted to the “folksy” quality of similar programs in America, this program deals with a problem of national importance each week.” The American counterpart dealt with a variety of issues, many of which were not overtly political.

⁸¹ “Daily Report for 10 October 1945” and “Daily Report for 17 October 1945,” Folder 1, Box 5148, RG331; “Daily Report for 16 November 1945,” Folder 2, Box 5148, RG331; “Broadcasting in Japan 1 February 1946,” Folder 43, Box 5313, RG 331.

⁸² For example, see “Gaitō rokuon: sengo anaunsâ no genten” *Asahi shinbun* (June 3, 2006). The article defines *Gaitō rokuon* as “a landmark of the postwar journalism, which embodied the freedom of speech.”

emperor system, appeared in the forum aired on 21 November 1945.⁸³ *Roundtable of the Air* did not invite ordinary people as discussants but let the floor audiences ask questions.

Because the premiere of *Nodo jiman* coincided with the occupation's promotion of audience participation and the show adopted the audience participation format, contemporaries and later generations have directly associated *Nodo jiman* with occupation's democratization project. *Nodo jiman*'s reliance on the voluntary application of individuals fit with the image of liberal democracy that the occupation was promoting. The founding fathers of the show Saegusa and Maruyama quickly adopted postwar language to praise the show, stating that *Nodo jiman* "opened the microphone to the general public (*ippan ni maiku wo kaihō*)"⁸⁴ and that the show was "conforming to (*gacchi*) the current democratic trend."⁸⁵

But *Nodo jiman* in fact developed separately from other audience participation programs that the occupation designed and introduced. Occupation's radio personnel began to pay attention to the show and praise the show's contribution to the on-going democratization project only after the show had become a popular success. *Nodo jiman* managed to get on the air with little involvement from the occupation and, for a while, operated off of the occupation's radar. Testaments regarding the early episodes of *Nodo jiman* almost exclusively recorded the happenings inside NHK without bringing up any encouragement or disapproval by the occupation about the initial

⁸³ For details on "*Zadankai: tenno sei ni tsuite*" (Symposium on the Emperor System)," see Takeyama, *Rajio no jidai*, 274-301.

⁸⁴ Saegusa Kengō, "Nodo jiman shirōto engeikai," *Ongaku no tomo* 4, no. 3 (March 1946), 22.

⁸⁵ Maruyama Tetsuo, "Nodo jiman shirōto ongakukai," *Heiwa no Nihon* (June 1949), 20.

concept and plan for the show.⁸⁶ *Nodo jiman* rarely appeared in the early reports of the Radio Branch and CIE, even though the same documents carried detailed descriptions of the progress of *Man on the Street*, roundtable discussion programs and quiz shows, including chronicles and listeners' comments.⁸⁷ Furthermore, much-polished overviews of radio broadcasting in Japan did not include *Nodo jiman* in the list of democratization programs.⁸⁸ According to Maruyama Tetsuo, in the initial stage of the occupation the Radio Unit left entertainment programs in Japanese broadcasters' hands. The occupation was "particularly finicky about public-interest programs (*shakai bangumi*) such as *Truth Box* (Shinsō bako) and the speeches of former political prisoners (*shutsugokusha no hōsō*)."⁸⁹ But as for entertainment programs, "NHK was able to make any broadcast almost as it proposed to do with no settled framework whatsoever."⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Yoshida Shin, "Nodo jiman tanjōki," *Zenkoku Nodo jiman nyūsu*, no.1 (January 25, 1949); for Saegusa's account, see "Shirōto Nodo jiman dai 1-kai gōkakushatachi," and "NHK Nodo jiman 50-nen," *Asahi shinbun* (evening edition, August 23, 1995); Maruyama, "Dai 1-kai Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai."

⁸⁷ "Daily Report to Chief of Staff October 1945," Folder 1, Box 5148, RG331 and "Daily Report to Chief of Staff November 1945," Folder 2, Box 5148, RG331; "Weekly Report Confidential 1946," Folder 16, Box 5319, RG331.

⁸⁸ For example, see "Radio in Japan Feb 1, 1946" and "Broadcasting in Japan 1 August 1946," Folder 43, Box 5313, RG331.

⁸⁹ *Truth Box* was a sequel to *Now It Can Be Told* (Shinsō wa kōda). As briefly discussed in Chapter One, these shows were intended to provide information to repudiate the accounts of the war given by Japan's war regime, thereby emphasizing the deceptive character of wartime propaganda and invoking war guilt among the Japanese people.

⁹⁰ Maruyama, "Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai," 30. Later the Radio Unit came to focus more on entertainment and directly produced a number of programs such as quiz shows, serial dramas and western music programs. Yet quite a few entertainment programs were left in the hands of Japanese radio personnel, especially in the field of Japanese popular music and "traditional genres" such as *naniwabushi*, *rakugo* and *manzai*.

The testimonies of Saegusa and Maruyama also suggest that in the initial planning of *Nodo jiman* they did not necessarily associate *Nodo jiman* with freedom of speech or expression as later generations often did. Rather, their explanation of the show's concept often drew upon wartime discourses on radio amateur performance. The concept of the show was to “make the radio’s microphones, which had been dominated by the specialists and professionals, available to amateurs.”⁹¹ Saegusa and Maruyama expected that the cheerful and relaxed mood of amateur performances would release the people from the current hardship and unease. Maruyama stated that “the aim (of the show) was to allow both singers and listeners to enjoy themselves in a relaxed atmosphere.”⁹² As mentioned earlier, Saegusa speculated that the specific power of amateur talent shows to amuse and energize the people, which he had witnessed among the soldiers during the war, would help to raise the morale of the devastated society in the aftermath of war.

The wartime practice of amateur performances on radio also facilitated the immediate reactions from some of the applicants. For example, Shimokado Eiji, one of the participants in the first *Nodo jiman*, testified that he had auditioned for JOBK's *Shinjin boshū* during the war. He passed the audition at the age of nineteen, which would have been in 1938. Upon hearing the call for *Nodo jiman* right after the war, he quickly responded and became one of the successful performers on the first show. This story encourages us to consider the relationship between the history of amateur

⁹¹ Maruyama Tetsuo, “Shinsain no kataru Nodo jiman yomoyama banashi,” *Nōson bunka* 27, no. 8 (October, 1948), 24.

⁹² Maruyama, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai,” 31.

performances during the war and the instant popular reactions to *Nodo jiman* in the postwar.⁹³

The songs performed in *Nodo jiman* did not necessarily represent a new Japan. What the people wanted to perform on radio in the early days of *Nodo jiman* were “mostly old popular songs (*hotondo mukashi no ryūkōka*)” that already had established broad popularity by the time of the show’s debut.⁹⁴ The most favored songs were Kirishima Noboru (1914~1984)’s *Tare ka kokyō wo omohazaru* (released in 1940), and Shōji Tarō (1898~1972)’s *Akagi no komoriuta* (1934) and *Meigetstu Akagiyama* (1939). An exceptional and outstanding favorite of postwar origin was *Apple Song* (*Ringo no uta*, 1946) sung by Kirishima Noboru.⁹⁵ The prevalence of old songs in *Nodo jiman* confused some people who were quite conscious of the postwar emphasis on the discontinuity of the present with the former era. Shimokado Eiji, the participant in the first *Nodo jiman* mentioned above, even created a song himself since “it was right after the war ended” and he thought that “old songs would be unperformable as the world had changed.” He titled his song *Seishun nikki* (*A Diary of Youth*). Yet when he joined the event he was bewildered to find that people were “still performing the old songs.” Although he was among the winners of the first *Nodo jiman*, singing a new song “unknown by others” did not give him any advantage under the circumstances. He “just threw the song away” after that.⁹⁶

⁹³ Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai *Nodo jiman* gōkaku no hiketsu,” *Yomimono jiji* 5, no. 4 (April 1949), 19.

⁹⁴ Maruyama, “*Nodo jiman* shirōto ongakukai,” 21.

⁹⁵ For the actual statistics of the titles of the songs in the program’s early days, see Saegusa, “*Nodo jiman* shirōto engeikai,” 23.

⁹⁶ Ōmi Toshirō et al., “Zadankai *Nodo jiman* o kataru,” *Heibon* 4, no. 12 (December 1948), 35.

The primary objective of pointing out the continuities between wartime practices of amateur talent shows and *Nodo jiman* is neither to make a hasty denunciation of this radio program as a legacy of the military past nor to blame the creators of the media event for their insufficient break with the former era.⁹⁷ I am concerned rather with the parallels between amateur performances and audience

⁹⁷ For instance, Miyamoto Ryūji, an executive announcer for NHK, quickly ascribes his uneasy feeling at the “seemingly unnatural cheerfulness” of the atmosphere of *Nodo jiman* to the militarist past as soon as he learns that the original idea of the show came from Saegusa’s experience in the wartime military. “Uta ga tsunagu sekai: *Nodo jiman* to Nihonjin,” 312. Yet it seems to me that this kind of hasty move to define the show as militarist carries some danger of missing the complexity of the practice and its enduring relevance even to the postwar era. Although Saegusa’s wartime activities are less known due to his low rank at that time, Maruyama and Yoshida certainly worked continuously for NHK in the wartime and postwar period, as did a majority of other radio personnel. Nevertheless the continuing careers of these broadcasters do not necessarily imply that they followed old ideas and habits uncritically. For example, even though he built his career during the war, Maruyama Tetsuo was also well known within NHK for his progressive political position during the occupation period, especially in the later years when the relatively liberal atmosphere of the initial stage of the occupation switched to the much-pronounced anti-Communist hypersensitivity. His celebrity was often outshined by his younger brother Maruyama Masao, who was an ardent advocate of postwar democracy and one of the most renowned Japanese liberal intellectuals in English-speaking academia. But Maruyama Tetsuo’s postwar career also earned him a reputation as a hero of postwar democracy in the broadcasting field. *Sunday Serenade* (Nichiyō gorakuban), one of Maruyama’s productions, was quite popular among listeners with higher education for its sarcastic caricatures of the postwar Japanese government and the socio-political situation under the occupation. Even some leftist groups that did not hide their distaste for *Gaitō rokuon*, *Round Table Forum* and popular entertainment shows highly appreciated *Sunday Serenade* for its political punch. When NHK decided to take the show off the air, there was widespread speculation that the primary reason was pressure from the Japanese government, which had been disturbed by the show’s causticity. For a brief profile of Maruyama’s career in NHK, see Maruyama, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai *Nodo jiman* zenkoku konkūru taikai,” 31 and Shiga Nobuo, *Jinbutsu ni yoru hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Genryūsha, 1977), 25-90. Maruyama entered NHK in 1934, right after graduation from the Economics Department of Kyoto Imperial University and built his career in the Programming Department (Henseibu) and the Literary and Art Department during the war. In 1946, he became the Assistant Chief of the Music Department. For brief biographical information on Maruyama Tetsuo in comparison with his younger brothers, Masao and Kunio, a literary critic, see Nakajima Makoto, “Maruyama Tetsuo, Masao, Kunio sankyōdai,” *Gendai no me* 14, no. 3 (March 1973), 213-215. On the favorable reviews of *Sunday Serenade* in contrast with other shows, see “NHK ze ka hi ka,” *Zentei*, no.10 (March 1949), 30. On the pressure from the government to stop *Sunday Serenade*, see “Shichōsha zukuri ga kadai shinpojumu kenshō sengo no hōsō kaikaku,” *Asahi shinbun* (April 27, 1995).

participation in the wartime and postwar eras because it raises historiographical questions about our understanding of transwar Japan. The recuperated past demonstrates the constructed nature of the conventional contrast between the glorious postwar liberation and the totalitarian control of the war regime over society and media. In other words, the historical circumstances silenced by postwar history give us an opportunity to consider a politics of memory strongly conditioned by the dominance of the occupation's liberation narrative. Presuming that the Japanese audiences under the war did not have any choice but to listen to the state-controlled radio messages passively, the narrative allows no language to address the old practices of amateur performances and audience participation in wartime broadcasting. Under the hegemony of this narrative, the history behind the widespread popularity of amateur radio performances was easily glossed over while the enthusiastic response to the show remains as an expression of democratic agency in the collective memory.

In pointing to the constructed nature of the dominant representation of *Nodo jiman* associated with the postwar liberation, however, I do not intend to claim that the representation is simply bogus. Although democratization policy did not initiate the phenomenon of *Nodo jiman*, some of the aspects of the older practices of amateur performances and audience participation in the entertainment broadcasting were easily accommodated to the transformative political atmosphere of the immediate postwar Japan. The amateur performances once rendered as the enhancer and evidence of voluntarism and popular support for the imperial government now could be translated into an indicator of the participatory spirit of democratic citizens. It seems to me that

the smooth translation reveals a complex relationship among mobilization, liberation and voluntarism, which has been ignored by the dominant representation of audience participation as an embodiment of an active postwar citizenship antithetical to the passive subjects of previous years. I would argue that some voluntary and egalitarian elements of wartime participatory practices were boosted further in the postwar period and finally translated into and remembered as the expression of postwar democracy under the discursive hegemony of the occupation's liberation narrative.

It is probably true that the occupation allowed a much larger range of participation for ordinary people to perform on the microphone than Japan's wartime state. However, we should remember that audience participation under the occupation was also a meticulously supervised activity. The Radio Division/Unit/Branch of the Civil Information and Education Section was set up to keep Japanese broadcasters under guidance and surveillance.⁹⁸ The occupation forces did not eliminate censorship over the Japanese media. The Press, Pictorial, Broadcast (PPB) section of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) began to censor broadcasting as early as September 10, 1945.⁹⁹ New prohibitions replaced old ones. On September 22, 1945, even before the "freedom orders" lifted restrictions on political thought and expression in Japanese broadcasting, the occupation issued the Radio Code and prevented broadcasters from making any critical references to occupation forces or the Allies.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ For a pioneering account of radio guidance by the Civil Information and Education Section, see Mayo, "The War of Words Continues."

⁹⁹ For the censorship policy in radio broadcasting, see Kogo, "Tai-Nichi ken'etsu seisaku no keisei katei to hōsō ken'etsu."

¹⁰⁰ Refer to SCAPIN 43 (Radio Code for Japan). The remarkably restrictive clauses of the Radio Code were c., d., e. and f. of the news broadcasts; "there shall be no false or destructive

The “liberated microphones” were carefully controlled. From the onset, U.S. forces expressed a fear that “certain minority groups” might try to pack the audience or use the microphones for their own propaganda. The first several episodes of *Man on the Street* were recorded in a studio with an audience and not on the street with passersby. Even after the show became popular and left the studio, CIE still seriously considered not announcing the time and place in advance for fear that such calls might invite an organized attempt to interfere with the recording by alleged “Communist” or “leftist” dissidents who opposed the postwar reorientation of Japanese society. Recordings were made in advance and shows were carefully edited prior to broadcasting through censorship procedures, as the Radio Unit’s report clearly stated: “In the case of ad-lib and interviewed programs, where no advance script is prepared, the programs are recorded and listened to and passed by CCD censors before being broadcast.”¹⁰¹ Yet the pre-censorship of the listener’s voices was not public knowledge as the occupation forces made it clear to the media personnel that any indication of censorship should not be made and would be removed in the process of censorship.¹⁰² Under the circumstances, audience participation programs continued to spread the image of liberated microphones.

criticism of the Allied Powers, there shall be no destructive criticism of the Allied Forces of Occupation and nothing which might invite mistrust or resentment of those troops, and no announcement shall be made concerning movement of Allied troops unless such movements have been officially released. Newscasts must be factual and completely devoid of editorial opinion.” For the full text, see appendix 7 in GHQ SCAP, *Radio Broadcasting: Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers Historical Monographs, 1945-1951*, no. 33 (1951).

¹⁰¹ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG331. Also see Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 60-61.

¹⁰² For example, the censored manuscripts of *Hōsō bunka* and *Hōsō*, NHK’s magazines for broadcasting circles and mass audiences, showed that many articles were subject to deletion

Regardless of the occupation's engagement in the show's early planning or lack thereof, *Nodo jiman*'s widely publicized principle of open participation was the reason that the show attracted notice as the manifestation of postwar democracy among contemporaries and later generations alike. However, the actual show did not operate by open participation. Saegusa originally proposed open participation for *Nodo jiman*, referring to the wartime amateur talent shows held in the military. Any soldier could jump into (*tobiiri*) the talent show, regardless of rank or talent. The vibrant image of entertainment shows owed much to the dynamics that allowed the frequent interruption of the division between performer and audience as well as the difference in rank among soldiers on stage.¹⁰³ The title that Saegusa first proposed for *Nodo jiman*, *Tobiiri shirōto nodo jiman ongakukai* (Amateur Hours Singing Contest Open to All Comers), epitomized the concept.

When Saegusa first presented his idea, however, his boss rejected it by saying “how dare do we do such a ridiculous thing as letting just anybody dive into (broadcasting) (*tobiiri nante baka no koto dekiruka*)?” In the end, NHK accepted Saegusa's plan only after it was agreed to limit performers to those who passed a preliminary audition. With the modified title of *Shirōto nodo jiman*, the format of the

due to their indication of censorship. The manuscripts with the censorship marks on them are available at the Prange Collection at the University of Maryland.

¹⁰³ According to Saegusa, after the members of a troop gathered, each participant was to jump out and perform various acts such as songs boasting of one's own native land (*okuni jiman*), popular songs and narrative singing (*naniwabushi*). See Saegusa, “Nodo jiman shirōto engi kaikoki.” Saegusa's wife confirmed the same story as she recalled what she had heard from Saegusa. She describes the soldiers' talent shows primarily as an event in which “soldiers from different local areas jumped in and sang folk songs, and so on.” Refer to “Hibari o otoshita gankosha,” *Yūkan Fuji* (March 22, 1997); Jōchi Daigaku *Nodo jiman Kenkyūkai*, “Hōsō bangumi NHK *Nodo jiman* no media bunka kenkyū: maiku ni utau Nihonjin,” 29.

show combined an element of contest and discovery, similar to the auditions for new voices held in the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ The first broadcast of *Shirōto nodo jiman* granted only those contestants who passed an audition the opportunity to have themselves heard on the air. One of the successful participants from the first show recalled that they were taken to the studio after the screening was over, where they sang the songs from the audition again on the microphone.¹⁰⁵ This procedure was identical to the wartime broadcasting of *Shinjin shōkai no gogo*.

Later, NHK changed the format of the show to include the broadcast of the audition itself under the title of *Scenes from the Amateur Singing Contest* (*Nodo jiman tesuto fūkei*). This was closer to what now we remember as the authentic format of *Nodo jiman* than the in-studio broadcast of the successful performers in its first episode. Yet the change did not necessarily reflect a conscious effort to push the program toward open participation. According to Saegusa the new format was a technical change, designed to compensate for “the decrease in the number of successful participants.”¹⁰⁶ More important, the *Tesuto fūkei* also conducted a prescreening to select performers suitable for the broadcast before the contest was actually aired.¹⁰⁷ In terms of the actual broadcast of *Nodo jiman*, therefore, Saegusa’s

¹⁰⁴ “NHK Nodo jiman 50-nen.” Saegusa neither named the boss nor identified the level of decision making at which his proposal met opposition. The objection to Saegusa’s proposal may have come from a higher rank than the Music Division since Maruyama and Yoshida testified they were favorable to Saegusa’s idea from its inception.

¹⁰⁵ Shimokado Eiji, “NHK Nodo jiman gōkaku dai 1-gō ‘tokoya no Ei-chan,’” *Bungei shunjū* 58, no. 9 (September 1980), 154. Saegusa confirmed the fact in Ōmi Toshirō et al., “Zadankai Nodo jiman o kataru,” 36.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Nodo jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 18, 21. Yoshida Shin, the Chief of the Music Department at that time, is known to have suggested the format. His

concept of open participation for anybody to dive into the microphone was never fully realized.

2. 8. Singing Individuals and the Rebuilding of National Community

To be sure, *Nodo jiman* indicated postwar changes in the mode of audience participation from the wartime group-oriented performances to individual-based participation. At first glance *Nodo jiman*'s format may appear to be predicated upon individual competition, which was one of the major principles encouraged by the U.S. occupation's democratization project. *Nodo jiman* provided an opportunity to test one's talent against others in front of a national audience, and also to estimate one's own judgment against that of a panel of experts. The broadcasters noticed that quite a few listeners enjoyed the thrill of the interval between the performances and the announcement of the results. In this situation, listeners often imagined themselves to be in the position of judge. It was "a heart-beating moment for them to wait to see

proposal was based upon his memory of a French radio singing contest of the same type, according to Maruyama. Yoshida's reference to a similar French show encourages us to reconsider the *Nodo jiman* Study Group's approach to the show as an exemplary expression of peculiar characteristics of the Japanese. Radio amateur singing contests existed in the U.S. as well. Major David Bowes's *Amateur Hour* is the most famous example. The show's name and transmitting stations changed a few times. *The WHN Amateur Hour* was broadcast on WHN. Its success led dozens of stations to copy the idea. Within in a year, Bowes sold the show to NBC. NBC broadcast *Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour* from 1935 to 1936. The show moved to CBS in 1936 and was broadcast until 1945. In 1948, ABC amended Bowes' program and broadcast *Original Amateur Hour* with Ted Mack as the host. The show stayed on the air until 1952. These American singing shows, unlike *Nodo jiman*, awarded cash prizes to amateur performers selected by audience phone-in voting. See Thomas DeLong, *Quiz Craze: America's Infatuation with Game Shows* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 11-12, and Jim Cox, *The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows: Seventeen Programs from the 1940s and 1950s* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001), 226, 228.

whether their own estimation would match up to the judgment” of the experts associated with the broadcasting stations.¹⁰⁸

But straightforward competition was not the defining feature of *Nodo jiman*. *Nodo jiman* lacked the intensity of a serious competition. The evaluation measure was rather simple. According to the quality of the performance, a judge would ring a bell one to three times. If the bell rang three times the contestant passed. If the bell rang only once or twice, the contestant did not pass.¹⁰⁹ When the show started the classification was even simpler with only two categories of pass and not-pass.¹¹⁰ According to Mikami Hidetoshi, a former judge of *Nodo jiman* in the early years of the show, the intermediate category was added later for the performances that “fell somewhat short of pass marks but were not too bad.”¹¹¹ About ten percent of the participants received three bells in the preliminary auditions for the first broadcast when “the quality of performance was the highest.” Ten percent remained the average rate of success even though the level of performance “went down at every event.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰⁹ Osaka Chūō Hōsōkyoku Enshutsuka, ed. *Zusō Nodo Jiman tokuhon* (Osaka: Yūki Bunko, 1949), 2-6.

¹¹⁰ This lack of intensity appears even clearer when *Nodo jiman* is compared to other audience participation programs introduced under the direct guidance of the occupation forces, such as quiz shows. These shows were based on the principle of the acquisition of wealth and fame through open competition and the standardized measurement of the ability of the participants. It would be interesting to compare the aesthetics of *Nodo jiman* with those of *American Idol* on U.S. network television, whose main goal is to discover future stars for the entertainment industry through a series of severe competitions.

¹¹¹ Mikami Hidetoshi, “Nodo jiman to kane mochi,” *Fujin kōron* 64, no. 2 (February 1979), 328.

¹¹² Saegusa, “Nodo jiman shirōto engeikai,” 22-23; Maruyama, “Taishū ongaku hōsō tenbō,” 12.

Maruyama Testuo appreciated poor performances for generating the magnetism that kept listeners engaged with *Nodo jiman*. He wrote, “Speaking from the position of the listeners, the drawing power of *Nodo jiman* is that they can listen to amateurs’ poor performance (*shirōto no hetakuso na uta*). Those whose performance is more terrible than one’s own are singing in front of the microphone with out-of-tune, high-pitch voices. [The listener] enjoys poor performances with zest (*sakana*) while wondering how come such gutsy people exist in the world.” Maruyama also recalled that some listeners wrote letters commenting, “In this program I want to hear poor singing as much as possible since excellent performances of popular songs or vocal solo are available in other occasions.”¹¹³

Although *Nodo jiman* took a contest format, active sharing of the pleasure of singing with audiences and other participants remained essential to the aesthetics of the show. Thus, similar to wartime amateur performances, *Nodo jiman*’s mass appeal in the early postwar era owed much to its capacity for drawing intimacy and a sense of connectedness among the attendants of the event regardless of whether they were performers, live audience members, listeners or even judges. Andō Yō, Chief of the Production Department of JOBK, observed:

The charm of *Nodo jiman* lies in the aspect that the performers, audiences, judges and listeners come to consist in one body (*ittai*). Even though I would not say it family-like, the harmoniousness derives as if from the ambience of an internal gathering (*uchi uchi no tsudoï*) or a friendly get-together among intimate companions. For this reason, the

¹¹³ Maruyama, “*Nodo jiman kōzairon*,” 10.

flavor is completely different from conventional symphonies or formal concerts.¹¹⁴

In fact, the audition setup presented a serious danger to the friendly atmosphere that *Nodo jiman* created through this sort of imagined companionship. Auditions divided participants into two mutually-exclusive groups, winners and losers. The distinction and unavoidable tension made many listeners and floor audiences rather uncomfortable and even upset. Listeners showed a strong compassion for the participants, who had to go through the evaluation under the cold gaze of the judges, especially when the performance seemed obviously short of pass marks. Listeners also raised their voices to blame judges, moderators and even some of the floor audiences for their seemingly-unsympathetic attitudes toward those who failed. They accused the moderators of “unduly mocking the performers.” Some were enraged at the audiences’ laughter, which often burst out at the moment of the ringing of the bell. They thought that the laughter demonstrated a “sneer at the failure of the participants” or an expression of “twisted self-satisfaction with a sense of superiority.” Judges received the most severe criticism. One listener said, “There is no kind of human more brazen-faced and shameless than the judges who ring the bell in cold blood.” Another listener chastised the judges, saying, “It is an insult to the participants to cut off the singing by ringing the bell even before finishing the first passage.”¹¹⁵

The unhappy marriage between the show’s nature and its format brought hardship to the broadcasters, who had to deal with listeners’ uneasy feelings about

¹¹⁴ Andō Yō, “Nodo jiman kōzairon,” *Rajio Osaka* 3 no. 1 (January 1949), 5.

¹¹⁵ Andō, “Nodo jiman kōzairon,” 5

fellow performers being judged failures in front of the nation. According to Mikami Hidetoshi's recollection, *Nodo jiman* began to use the bell as a means of announcing the evaluation in April 1946. Before, the staff informed the participants of the result when the judges made their decision. They said to the unsuccessful performers, "It is enough (*mō kekkō desu*)," meaning that the performance was poor enough to require no more listening. Yet, much to the broadcasters' chagrin, the equivocal phrase was often blissfully-mistaken to mean "good enough" by amateur performers, some of whom even asked in return "when would [the performance] be aired."¹¹⁶ While the broadcasters had to come up with a way to inform the participants of the result unambiguously in order to avoid such miscommunication, they found it felt "odd" to say, "stop it" or "go home" in a straightforward manner.¹¹⁷ The bell helped the radio personnel to deliver the intended message very clearly without the emotional burden of uttering it directly to the performers. The broadcasters tactfully distanced themselves from frustrated performers. But they could not prevent this very detachment from incurring criticism from listeners, who considered the bell to be an "inhuman and cruel" form of notification. Such complaints were especially strong in the early days of the show and had not faded away even three years later.¹¹⁸

The contradiction between the concept of the show and its format led to *Nodo jiman* being labeled "a program against humanism." NHK needed to make failure manageable and innocuous in order to sustain the amicable atmosphere of communal

¹¹⁶ Maruyama Tetsuo, "Nodo jiman kōzairon," *Hōsō kyōiku* 4, no. 8 (November 1949), 10.

¹¹⁷ Mikami, "Nodo jiman to kane mochi," 328.

¹¹⁸ Iwasaki Osamu, "Nodo jiman no kane," *Rajio Osaka* 3, no. 1 (January 1949), 6.

entertainment that the listeners desired. The broadcasters stressed that competition was only secondary to *Nodo jiman* by reminding the listeners that the show was entertainment for recreation's sake. For example, Maruyama said, "I cannot think of ending up ringing just one bell to be a life turning point. It is different from the entrance exams to schools or companies." As the singing contest was not a real-life competition poor performances should not necessarily be a source of humiliation. If only listeners did not bother with winning, the poor performances and even the bell-ringing had enough humor and sensational pleasure to invoke a genuine laugh.¹¹⁹

According to Saegusa Kengō the atmosphere of *Nodo jiman* remained "truly amiable."¹²⁰ Such an amiable atmosphere comforted and reenergized the minds of the people. One listener remarked in a letter that, "I am very pleased that *Nodo jiman* is really brightening and cheering up our agonizing soul of these days."¹²¹ The cheer did not solely come from the humorous character of the performers. *Nodo jiman's* participants often performed sad songs, reflecting the social mood of the time. The catharsis generated by the shared experience of compassionate moments in *Nodo jiman* was the very source of comfort. If the sense of community helped the performers and listeners to relieve anxiety and regain hope and courage as a group, *Nodo jiman* overlapped with postwar Japan's effort to rebuild the national community. Given the prevailing sense of loss and disorientation after defeat in the war and suspended sovereignty under the U.S. occupation, the shared joy and comfort in the

¹¹⁹ Maruyama, "Nodo jiman kōzairon," 10.

¹²⁰ Saegusa, "Nodo jiman shirōto engeikai," 23.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

nationally-broadcast participatory event had significant historical implications in the early postwar Japanese society.

Nodo jiman was intertwined with postwar national reconstruction not only in the psychological sense of regaining a sense of community but also through its potential effect on material production to rebuild the postwar economy. *Nodo jiman* created a compassionate moment of sharing that helped individuals regain enough energy to return to the sober reality of life after a brief separation from the realm of fierce competition and tensions. Postwar discourses expected *Nodo jiman* to develop into “healthy recreation for the working populations (*hataraku hitobito no genkō na rikurieishon*).”¹²² The desired social role of *Nodo jiman* in this respect paralleled very much that of amateur entertainment during the war, reflecting the productivist concerns of Japanese broadcasters and social commentators. Such productivist concerns about amateur performances both in wartime and postwar Japan were also congruent with the common line of reasoning that postulated recreation’s social function in modern industrial societies as a reproductive practice for refreshing the strength and spirit of workers for further production, or as a balance keeper for maintaining individual mental equilibrium by temporarily removing the restraining effects of the purposeful and rational principles of modern life.¹²³

Nodo jiman’s actual and potential ripple effects on Japanese society generated serious concerns in the specific context of Japan’s postwar hardship, which created a

¹²² Maruyama, “Shinsain no kataru *Nodo jiman* yomoyama banashi,” 27.

¹²³ On the balancing effect of leisure, see Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), especially 64-90.

great demand for mental serenity and hard work. When individual participants on the show did not seem to play their expected role as productive and responsible members of society, the sensational popularity of *Nodo jiman* posed an unexpected challenge. Some of the participants appeared to indulge in *Nodo jiman* so much that they did not take care of their own work and family. These cases stirred up great anxiety among broadcasters and listeners alike about the show's potentially damaging effect on society. There were rumors of individuals who embraced the dream of becoming a future star through *Nodo jiman* and abandoned their own jobs or even deserted families in desperate need of working hands in order to participate in the show as often as possible. Successful participants were often invited to local talent shows, festivals, and special events in various occasions and spent much time away from their work.

A farming family in Tochigi Prefecture became an oft-cited example of the danger of *Nodo jiman*. The father of a successful participant on JOAK's *Nodo jiman* remonstrated with the broadcasters for spoiling his son, who "puffed himself up so much" with his onetime success on JOAK's *Nodo jiman* contest that "ever since he has been only singing while completely disregarding the farm work (*hyakushō shigoto*)." Dragged to village festivals or talent shows of neighboring villages, he "rarely stayed home." The father said, "He used to be a nice young man who would work hard but these days he has totally changed. Your broadcasting station is responsible for this, so I want you to do something to teach him a lesson."¹²⁴ Such

¹²⁴ Maruyama Testuo, "Nodo jiman gōkakusha no yukue," *Josei kaizō* 4, no. 1 (January 1949), 38. The same story also appeared in "Shirōto engekidan no ikusei o kataru," *Akarui nōka* 2, no. 12 (December 1948), 12.

cases caused serious concerns in the countryside, where *Nodo jiman* was especially popular.¹²⁵

The commercial advantages of the show's popularity exacerbated the indulgent tendencies of *Nodo jiman*'s participants. The explosive popularity of the show inspired both would-be professionals and record companies to consider the event as an opportunity for easy success in show business. Some of the participants stood in front of the microphone dreaming of becoming a future star. Success in *Nodo jiman* might lead to a breakthrough to national stardom since the show was heard all over the country through the national network. Such a vision was not completely gratuitous as record companies did make offers to some of the outstanding participants. *Nodo jiman* gave birth to a number of successful professional singers, especially in the early years of its history, such as Yoshioka Taeko, Yamashita Tomoko, and Aoyama Ichirō.¹²⁶ Yet since this kind of stardom was available to only the exceptional few, social commentators worried that *Nodo jiman* would threaten society as a whole if it stirred up the desire for a professional career among people with little likelihood of success. For example, one of the judges on *Nodo jiman* heard the story of a *sake* brewing family in Sangenjaya of the Setagaya District of Tokyo that demonstrated the possibly disastrous effects of *Nodo jiman*. After the only daughter of the family passed the test of *Nodo jiman*, the parents fussed with making their daughter a professional singer. They bought an expensive record player and new clothes, hired a private music tutor

¹²⁵ Takahashi Keizō, the host of *Watashi wa dare deshō*, a quiz program, observed that “*Nodo jiman* smashed up farming villages.” Satō Hachirō, et al., “Zadankai ninki hōsō no ura o kataru,” *Hōpu* 4, no. 6 (June 1949), 45.

¹²⁶ Maruyama, “*Nodo jiman* kōzairon,” 9.

for the daughter, introduced her to local power figures and let her sing in festivals while “putting aside their own profession (*honshoku*).” In the meantime, growing debts nearly caused the failure of the brewing business.¹²⁷

As concern escalated, the question of whether NHK should limit the number of times an individual could participate became a subject of discussion.¹²⁸ Fearful that “the show might lose its character as cheerful, healthy entertainment (*meirōna kenzen goraku*),” the broadcasters tried rather consciously to discourage people from considering *Nodo jiman* as a gateway to show business. By December 1947, the issue had even provoked a debate on the future of the show. Despite defense of the show by some radio personnel, it was decided to discontinue *Nodo jiman*. A nation-wide contest, *Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai*, would be its finale.¹²⁹ Those who wanted to continue the show still needed to reaffirm the centrality of amateur performances in *Nodo jiman* and to remind the listeners of their expected role as responsible members of society in order to assuage the anxiety over the potential of *Nodo jiman* to destabilize the status quo. Ironically the explosive popularity of the first nation-wide event in 1948 actually ensured the survival of the show. Between late 1948 and early 1949, the producers of the show (with Maruyama on the top of the list), released a number of articles in popular magazines and books targeting a variety of readers, including farmers and housewives, in order to dissuade audiences from dreaming of becoming future stars through *Nodo jiman*. Maruyama emphasized, “The purpose of

¹²⁷ Maruyama, “Nodo jiman gōkakusha no yukue,” 38.

¹²⁸ Satō Hachirō, et al., “Zadankai ninki hōsō no ura o kataru,” 45.

¹²⁹ Maruyama, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai Nodo jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai,” 30-31.

the show is not to discover and bring up future stars but to provide a chance for the ordinary people to sing on the microphone.”¹³⁰ The Osaka Station also declared the same line to the would-be participants in a book entitled, *Zuisō Nodo jiman tokuhon* (Reader of Reflections on Nodo jiman). The book stated, “*Nodo jiman* does not aim to discover new songs or new singers in policy.”¹³¹ In a different occasion, Maruyama wrote, “[T]he major purpose was to give an opportunity for the masses who were enjoying their favored songs and music in their spare time during work.” He argued that only the hard-working masses were eligible for *Nodo jiman*.¹³²

The broadcasters’ discourses on *Nodo jiman* divided participants into two groups: those who understood the ethos of the show and who did not. In a magazine targeting farmers, *Nōson bunka*, Maruyama singled-out for criticism “those who quit farm work and convert to professional singers” after success on *Nodo jiman* because they did not conform with “the spirit of *Nodo jiman* (*Nodo jiman no seishin*).” On several occasions, Maruyama mentioned the story of the son of the farmer in Tochigi Prefecture as an unfortunate example of those who simply “misunderstood *Nodo jiman*’s way of thinking.”¹³³ While recasting the individuals who once aroused great anxiety about *Nodo jiman*’s potentially negative social impact as deviants, the broadcasters created a model participant who would give the audiences and performers a concrete sense of the correct way of enjoying *Nodo jiman*. The hero was Shimokado Eiji, one of the successful performers from the first *Nodo jiman*.

¹³⁰ Maruyama, “Nodo jiman kōzairon,” 9.

¹³¹ Osaka Chūō Hōsōkyoku Enshutsuka, *Zusō Nodo Jiman tokuhon*, 19.

¹³² Maruyama, “Shinsain no kataru Nodo jiman yomoyama banashi,” 25.

¹³³ Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Nodo jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 21; Maruyama Testuo, “Shirōto Nodo jiman uchiwabanashi,” *Akarui nōka* 2, no.11 (November 1948), 25.

Shimokado was a perfect model participant in several respects. When Shimokado joined the first *Nodo jiman* held by JOAK, he was a workman in a barbershop called *Tsurunaga* at Okaramachi in the Ueno neighborhood of Tokyo. Shimokado rang the bell three times in the first event of *Nodo jiman*. Unlike many of *Nodo jiman*'s participants who sang from memory because they did not know how to read music, Shimokado had a competence in music "comparable to veteran professional singers in the record industry."¹³⁴ Shimokado enjoyed great popularity among radio listeners. Saegusa Kengō observed that Shimokado was "extraordinarily favored" by audiences whenever he appeared on stage at NHK events. Of course Saegusa did not forget to clarify that Shimokado was beloved "in a different sense from ordinary popular singers," adding his opinion that Shimokado's mass appeal was related to his occupation, a barber, which had "a common touch (*shominteki na tokoro*)."¹³⁵ Most important for the producers, Shimokado remained an amateur despite his competence and popular appeal.

Maruyama praised Shimokado as the opposite of those who failed to enjoy *Nodo jiman* in a responsible and productive way:

[I]t is Mr. Shimokado Eiji, often called *Ei-chan*, the barber, who is the most consistent with *Nodo jiman*'s spirit since he is still working in his original profession as a barber with an electric hair clipper in one hand while declining calls from record companies and show managers, and occasionally performing only for radio after his success in the first test [of *Nodo jiman*].¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Maruyama, "Nodo jiman gōkakusha no yukue," 38.

¹³⁵ Saegusa Kengō, "Nodo jiman omoshirosō," *Omoshiro sekai*, 2, no. 3 (May 1949), 86.

¹³⁶ Maruyama, "Shinsain no kataru Nodo jiman yomoyama banashi," 27.

Even when Shimokado was invited to the broadcasting events, “he would receive permission for the date from the owner of the barbershop” and after the events “would immediately return to the shop and work.” Maruyama said again, “Such serious attitudes are the most consistent with *Nodo jiman*’s spirit.”¹³⁷ Maruyama used the same lines in various magazine articles aimed at preventing the “misunderstanding” of *Nodo jiman*’s purpose.¹³⁸

Shimokado also lent his voice several times to confirm the broadcasters’ representation of himself, thereby contributing to NHK’s effort to reorient the participants of *Nodo jiman* toward responsibility and productivity. He announced his will to keep his occupation as it was with “no intention to become a professional performer, or a pop star in the show business” in the round table discussions in popular magazines.

I am a bona fide barber. I have buckled to learning [the skill] since sixteen [...] so even when I have to join the broadcast, say at six o’clock, I make it a rule to barb until four. People often encourage me to quit the barber shop and become a [professional] singer, yet I have no desire to do so. If possible I would like to continue in the way I have done as ‘*Ei-chan*, the barber.’¹³⁹

When he was asked to give tips for successful performances on *Nodo jiman*, he stressed the importance of being a responsible and productive worker who would “learn at free times, transcending whether [the performance was] good or bad and

¹³⁷ Maruyama, “Nodo jiman gōkakusha no yukue,” 39.

¹³⁸ In addition to the previous two articles, see Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Noto jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 19, and Maruyama, “Shirōto Noto jiman uchiwabanashi,” 25.

¹³⁹ Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Noto jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 19.

know one's limits" instead of giving practical tips to receive pass marks.¹⁴⁰ In a magazine essay, he recollected that he heard from broadcasting staff as early as his first audition for *Nodo jiman* that "the purpose of *Nodo jiman* was to send ordinary people a message that those who were working at a variety of workplaces are singing songs in this cheerful and delightful manner." Agreeing with the broadcasters on this point, he wrote, "We sing just simply in order to live healthily and cheerfully everyday. That's it." Shimokado encouraged amateur performers to think of the singing event as "an extension of workplace," while making a vow that he would spend his entire life in a barbershop.¹⁴¹

In a sense he kept his promise. In 1960 he left the barbershop *Tsurunaga* and started to serve for the barbing department of Tokyo Electric Power Company Hospital (Tokyo Denryoku Byōin) and retired in 1988. In 1984, however, he confided information to the popular magazine *Shūkan shinchō* that undermined his image as a model participant. Contradicting his earlier solemn statements in support of the broadcasters' version of the show's true aim, he confessed that he actually had "wished to become a professional singer" but the expense of recording had prevented him from doing so. According to his recollection, after the recording (*fukikomi*) the future singer was supposed to buy meals and drinks for the staff of the record company. He gave up a professional career since he "hated it and first of all did not

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴¹ Shimokado Eiji, "Santen-gane hiketsu no kōkai: shokuba no kimochi de," *Omoshiro sekai* 2, no. 2 (April 1949).

have money for that.”¹⁴² Shimokado’s confession suggests that he might have been under pressure to collaborate with the broadcasters’ attempts to contain the direction and effects of *Nodo jiman* within the normative way of enjoying amateur performances in the social context of the early postwar.

The politics of the postwar period released listeners and participants in *Nodo jiman* from wartime principles that had demanded that participants exhibit tightly disciplined behavior as loyal imperial subjects. Nevertheless, amateur radio performers in the postwar period had to follow standards of behavior as well. Postwar participants had to behave as diligent and responsible citizens of postwar Japanese society in order to merit their new freedom. Despite the changes in format, repertoires, and restrictions between the wartime and postwar periods, amateur performances continued to be a strong presence on radio waves in the transwar period as “healthy and cheerful entertainment.” The broadcasters’ attempts to keep the activities within normative boundaries, whether combined with the active intervention from the central authorities or not, involved the marginalization and exclusion of behaviors, repertoires, or even performers deemed unfit for radio from the community of sympathy. In the following section, I discuss the exclusionary practices in *Nodo jiman* specifically in relation to the process of reconfiguring the national community under the occupation.

2. 9. The Culture of “Ordinary Japanese”: The Exclusionary Logic of the Postwar National Community

¹⁴² “Shirōto Nodo jiman dai 1-kai gōkakushatachi,” 50.

From its first call for participation, *Nodo jiman* advertised that anybody could join. The broadcasters proudly stated that *Nodo jiman* opened its doors to “the general public,” allowing a broad range of participants across gender, occupation, and class lines. “Anyone can join” became the catchphrase that symbolized the inclusionary principle of the show.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, *Nodo jiman* did not invite everyone in an unconditional and equal manner. There was an important condition: any *Japanese* (*Nihonjin nara dare demo*) could join. This condition reflected the nationalist logic of exclusion that underlay postwar Japanese politics and national rebuilding. The imagination of postwar Japan as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous unit was quite different from the wartime empire.

During the late phase of the war, the Japanese Imperial Government made a series of inclusionary gestures to colonial subjects under the imperial subjectification (*kōminka*) policy. The empire increasingly suggested the possibility that colonial subjects could gain full membership as Japanese while at the same time utilizing such promises to encourage the participation of Asian populations in war efforts.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ For a description of the various participants, see Osaka Chūō Hōsōkyoku Enshutsuka, *Zusō Nodo jiman tokuhon*, 6-7. Eighty-five percent of the participants were young men and women and fifteen percent were adults. According to Maruyama, the majority of the participants were in their twenties and thirties and the gender ratio was six to four. In terms of occupation, the largest number were unemployed while there were many repatriated soldiers and factory workers who had been discharged after wartime recruitment. There were also elementary school teachers, students, office workers, factory workers, typists, conductors and civil servants. Maruyama, “Nodo jiman shirōto ongakukai,” 21.

¹⁴⁴ On the concept of *kōminka*, refer to Ching, *Becoming Japanese*. Especially useful is Chapter 3, “Between Assimilation and Imperialization: From Colonial Projects to Imperial Subjects.” For the details of the policy, see Wan-yao Chou, “The Kōminka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, edited by Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton

Scholars produced discourses on the Japanese as a multi-ethnic nation to further these inclusionary gestures, as Oguma Eiji has demonstrated.¹⁴⁵ As I discussed earlier in this chapter, NHK invited amateur colonial subjects to perform along with Japanese citizens in imperial radio events. Now that the war was over, GHQ, the Japanese government and social and political leaders quickly began to redefine Japanese society. The postwar Japanese government and social commentators stressed the racial homogeneity of the nation while shaking off all the burdens and memories of the imperialist past under the auspices of the occupation. On September 4, 1945, GHQ officially ordered the discontinuation of overseas broadcasting in non-Japanese languages. The following week, on 10 September, the occupation ended overseas broadcasts in Japanese as well, except for the purpose of directing the repatriation of Japanese civilians and former soldiers.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, the numerous former colonial subjects physically present in Japanese territory were simply deprived of their membership in Japan's newly defined national community and placed on the sidelines of postwar politics and society.¹⁴⁷

University Press, 1996) and Miyata Setsuko, *Chōsen minshū to “kōminka” seisaku* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1985).

¹⁴⁵ Oguma Eiji, *A Genealogy of “Japanese” Self-images*, translated by David Askew (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002).

¹⁴⁶ NHK Hōsō chōsa kenkyūjo, *GHQ ni yoru senryōki hōsōshi nenpyō, August 15–December 31, 1945* (Tokyo: NHK Hōsō chōsa kenkyūjo, 1987), 12-13. SCAPIN 2, issued on September 3, 1945, ordered the cessation of overseas broadcasting in foreign languages. International broadcasting was resumed in October, 1952, seven years after the defeat. For more detail about the cessation and resumption of international broadcasting, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi: shiryō hen*, 325-328.

¹⁴⁷ On the status of the former colonial subjects, Koreans in particular, refer to Mark E. Caprio, “Resident Aliens: Forging the Political Status of Koreans in Occupied Japan,” in *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, edited by Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita (New York: Routledge, 2008). SCAP's “Basic Initial Post-

Nodo jiman's eligibility mirrored such orientation of postwar Japan. To be able to participate in the National Contest of *Nodo jiman*, an applicant had to "be a Japanese national" aged sixteen or older.¹⁴⁸ *Nodo jiman* became a Japanese pastime that excluded ethnic minorities, the majority of which were former colonial subjects, from the culture of "ordinary Japanese." *Nodo jiman* did not even welcome the singing of foreign songs. For example, a former winner of *Nodo jiman* remembers that a radio staff member discouraged her from singing a French song. The staff member implied that the pressure came from the occupation authority, saying "the occupation forces are fussy (*urusai*) about foreign songs."¹⁴⁹ An exception was *kakyoku* (art songs), which were not very popular anyway. *Nodo jiman*'s participants predominantly performed Japanese popular songs and folk songs.¹⁵⁰

Yet even Japanese nationals who wanted to perform Japanese songs were not completely free from the possibility of exclusion. As the overwhelming majority of the participants performed old songs, many people chose to sing military songs that they

Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan" suggested excluding Formosan-Chinese and Koreans from the category of "Japanese." Caprio points out that the occupation and Japanese government treated these former colonial subjects residing in Japan as troublesome and agreed to encourage them to repatriate to their newly-liberated countries. Koreans who desired to stay in Japan had to maintain a separate status from that of their Japanese neighbors.

¹⁴⁸ "Dai 2-kai NHK *Nodo jiman* zenkoku konkūru no oshirase," *Rajio Osaka* 3, no. 1 (January 1949), 6.

¹⁴⁹ "Shirōto *Nodo jiman* dai 1-kai gōkakushatachi," 55.

¹⁵⁰ For an inspiring account of the effect of the use of exclusively Japanese songs in *Nodo jiman*, refer to Shohei Hosokawa, "Singing Contests in the Ethnic Enclosure of the Postwar Japanese-Brazilian Community," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 9, no. 1 (2000). Hosokawa deals with amateur singing events off the air, which were also called *nodo jiman* in the Japanese Brazilian community during the postwar period. He shows how the choice of exclusively Japanese songs was closely intertwined with the community's attempt to construct and preserve a certain "Japanese-ness."

had become accustomed to singing during the war (*utai nareta*). According to Ōno Shintarō, one of the announcers of *Nodo jiman*, probably one out of ten participants in *Nodo jiman* wished to sing a military song. Yet “there was no case in which a military song was broadcast” since the broadcasters were “conscious of GHQ” and “dropped military songs at the stage of preliminary tests.” Ōno said, “To put it in current terms, it was self-regulation (*jishu kisei*).”¹⁵¹ NHK’s Public Relations Office testified that “there should have been no case in which military songs got on the airwaves given the character of the show.”¹⁵² In other words, in its early years *Nodo jiman* denied as many as ten percent of participants a chance to have their voices heard on national radio because they chose songs that went against the occupation’s demilitarization policy of encouraging a quick retreat from the past.

Nodo jiman also did not welcome those who were seen as leftists. As the occupation took on an anti-communist stance, GHQ became increasingly attentive to the activities of radical groups within the NHK and media labor unions. As the occupation and the Japanese government intensified their anti-communist and anti-labor union attitudes, labor union members became the major critics of the current broadcasting practices for not reflecting all listeners’ opinions equally. The unions deemed these programs “undemocratic.” In order to find on the air, the union chose to utilize audience participation programs on radio in order to make their views heard. They called on union members to send out listeners’ letters to radio music programs

¹⁵¹ “NHK *Nodo jiman* 50-nen.”

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

with listener request segments.¹⁵³ The unions also attempted to change the content of *Nodo jiman*. The leftist Broadcast Unit Union (Hōsō tan'itsu) held a meeting on May 12, 1949 to discuss a plan to sing laborers' songs over *Nodo jiman*. *The All Communications Newspaper* (*Zentei shinbun*) carried a proposal that encouraged workers to sing "From Towns, Villages, and Factories" (*Machi kara, mura kara, koba kara*) on *Nodo jiman*. However, the extensive apparatus of media censorship enabled the occupation to intercept these plans and label them as an "indication of leftist infiltration into broadcast media." In a monthly operation report dated June 1, 1949, the Broadcast Section of CCD brought these cases to the attention of the occupation's radio personnel.¹⁵⁴ A report from the Civil Censorship Detachment noted that the "leftist elements" inside and outside NHK "continue[d]" to attack NHK "for refusing to permit the broadcasting of communist rallying songs" in May and June 1949.¹⁵⁵ An intra-sectional memorandum issued in June 1951 stated that one of the efforts of the Radio Branch to combat communism was to eliminate anonymous letters to request programs and listeners' feature programs.¹⁵⁶ It is hard to determine whether there were actually any cases of leftist songs being sung on *Nodo jiman*. But the above circumstances suggest that in the later phase of the occupation, leftists were not

¹⁵³ "Hōsōkyoku wo taishū no te ni," *Zentei shinbun* (May 20, 1949).

¹⁵⁴ "Monthly Operational Report, Broadcast Section to Chief, PPB Division, Civil Censorship Detachment, G-2 For the period, 25 April through 24 May 1949," Folder 20, Box 8585, RG 331.

¹⁵⁵ "Monthly Operational Report, Broadcast Section to Chief, PPB Division, Civil Censorship Detachment, G-2 for the Period, 26 May through 25 June 1949" dated 1 July 1949, "Folder 20, Box 8585, RG 331.

¹⁵⁶ "Intrasectional Memorandum: Efforts of Radio Branch to Combat Communism," 18 June 1951," Folder 15, Box 5317, RG 331.

welcome on *Nodo jiman*, despite being both Japanese nationals and critics of the military past. *Nodo jiman* was reserved for “ordinary Japanese.”

Even without direct political pressure from the occupation authorities and the Japanese government, the broadcasters, professionals, and listeners with higher education disapproved of some of the performances. These educated elites often rebuffed the cultural tastes and behaviors of *Nodo jiman* participants as low and vulgar. For example, some complained to the broadcasters that *Nodo jiman* was promoting vulgar breeds of popular songs and therefore was not desirable in terms of the music education of the people.¹⁵⁷ A former judge on *Nodo jiman* recalled that at first he did not want to be a judge for the contest since he thought that “it was not a job for a musician to do.” He was a percussionist in the NHK Tokyo Broadcasting Station Symphony at that time.¹⁵⁸ The judges discouraged certain songs and singing styles as “unhealthy” even though a number of participants preferred these “unhealthy” songs and styles. Some participants in *Nodo jiman* could not pass no matter how good they were if the judges found their performances to be “offensive (*iyamina*)” for their use of an unnatural, nasal voice, vibrato, or *enka* (traditional ballad)-style singing.¹⁵⁹ Old songs classified as *yakuzabushi* were the most frequently performed in the initial period of *Nodo jiman*. But in 1948, Maruyama Tetsuo criticized the genre as anachronistic and announced that radio would not accept it any more.¹⁶⁰ It was no secret that broadcasters used their own criteria to fail some participants behind the

¹⁵⁷ Maruyama, “Nodo jiman kōzairon,” 9-10.

¹⁵⁸ Mikami, “Nodo Jiman to kane mochi,” 328.

¹⁵⁹ Osaka Chūō Hōsōkyoku Enshutsuka, *Zusō Noto Jiman tokuhon*, 18.

¹⁶⁰ Maruyama, “Shinsain no kataru Noto jiman yomoyama banashi,” 25.

scenes. Magazine articles and guide books publicized such occurrences for the listeners of the show. The broadcasters repeatedly told potential participants to avoid specific genres of songs and ways of singing if they wished to pass. In other words, the broadcasters were well aware of their own power as judges and exercised it to influence the participants' choice of songs and singing style. The broadcasters dropped the applicants in the preliminary audition stage, which meant that those applicants would not have a chance to perform on the radio if they ignored the broadcasters' advice.

There were some sporadic episodes of unruly behavior by performers and audiences that threatened the authority of the broadcasters. Some of the participants who failed would not accept the specialists' judgment and began to argue. The disagreements indicated a gap in the idea of what constituted a good performance between amateur performers and broadcasters. Broadcasters dismissed such appeals as "undesirable" behavior that "disturbed the atmosphere." They criticized the disputers for blaming innocent accompanists or judges without admitting their own incompetence. The disputes put broadcasters in an awkward position in front of the live audiences, who tended to sympathize deeply with the participants for their failures and humiliations. The audiences would easily turn against the broadcasters when they felt the judgment to be unfair. A broadcaster observed that "even when the performer did not protest, the audiences would not allow" unfair-looking results.¹⁶¹ As a method of announcing the results, the bell-ringing helped the judges to deal with disputes or

¹⁶¹ Andō, "Nodo jiman kōzairon," 5.

unruly behavior. As the prominent novelist Iwata Tomoyo (1893~1969) observed, there was “nothing as decisive and authoritative as the bell.”¹⁶² Ringing a bell was more effective than an utterance in person to clear up the ambiguous element of human judgment and display the result as fair and undisputable. Judges and successful participants advised listeners/participants to believe themselves to be the best singer in Japan at performance time but also to understand their own limits when facing the results. Such an attitude, they explained, was the key to success.¹⁶³

The broadcasters were able to reorient the participants’ manners and expectations for performances. For instance, the songs in the *yakuzabushi* category, which were the overwhelming majority among the performed songs in the initial phase of *Nodo jiman*, almost disappeared from the show by 1949.¹⁶⁴ The disputes between performers and broadcasters seemed to decrease as time passed.¹⁶⁵ This could be interpreted as the story of the broadcasters’ successful taming of the behavior and tastes of the participants. Yet it also resulted in the estrangement of some of the listeners from *Nodo jiman*, which undermined the proclaimed openness and democratic character of the show.

¹⁶² The quote is from Iwasaki, “Nodo jiman no kane,” 6.

¹⁶³ Mikami, “Nodo Jiman to kane mochi,” 329; Shimokado Eiji also mentioned it was important to know one’s own limits regardless of whether the performance was good or bad. Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Noto jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 19.

¹⁶⁴ Maruyama, “Nodo Jiman kōzairon.” 9.

¹⁶⁵ Maruyama, “Chūshian kara kyō no ryūsei dai 1-kai Noto jiman zenkoku konkūru taikai,” 31. Also, Maruyama stated that the quality of applicants grew “much better” than the early days when “buggers (*anchan*) wearing sleepers came in a half-teasing manner (*hiyakashi hanbun*),” since more people came with a serious attitude. Kamiyama Keizō et al., “Zadankai Noto jiman gōkaku no hiketsu,” 18.

The seamless operation of *Nodo jiman* as “healthy and cheerful” entertainment for ordinary Japanese was only possible by excluding the unfit and regulating the behavior of participants. If *Nodo jiman* was a media event for ordinary people, as Japanese broadcasters proudly proclaimed, the notion of ordinary people itself was predicated upon the exclusion of ethnic and political minorities and the popular songs and singing styles that broadcasters deemed unhealthy. The socio-political situation of occupied Japan strongly conditioned the boundary-making of *Nodo jiman* in terms of eligibility, behavioral codes, and repertoires. The circumstances in which the permissible range of the practices on *Nodo jiman* was defined were a microcosm of the larger historical process of reconceptualizing the national community after the war.

2. 10. Closing: Amateur Performances and the Postwar Longing for a Community of Sympathy

In this chapter, I argued that the practice of amateur performances on radio was a transwar phenomenon rather than a postwar-specific occurrence enabled exclusively by the U.S. occupation’s democratization policy. The participatory character of amateur performances in radio entertainment made room for listeners to engage actively with national and imperial events. Japan’s wartime government and broadcasters intended to utilize participatory activities as a means of transforming the masses into enthusiastic and sympathetic imperial subjects, who would be willing to join the war effort for the national/imperial community not necessarily because of the enforcement by the state but because they were motivated by a shared sense of

hardship and its collective, although temporary, release. After the war, the participatory nature of amateur radio performance easily fit into the occupation's on-going activities to take advantage of audience participation programs on radio to publicize the liberal democratic reorientation of Japanese society under the occupation.

While the sensational debut of *Nodo jiman* and the spectacle created by the annual national contests during the U.S. occupation lingers in collective memory, the show has remained a routine of Japanese broadcasting, first on radio and then on television with a strong but quieter presence than in its initial years. If you turn on NHK's television channel on Sunday afternoon, you will still see amateurs singing in front of the microphone, often with nervous voices yet with a look of genuine pleasure. The quality of their performances is, with a few exceptions, mediocre. Yet it does not seem to really matter whether one rings the bell three times or not, as long as both contestants and audiences find the performance enjoyable. Those who demonstrate considerable talent garner great applause. But, those who are on the opposite extreme often draw an even more enthusiastic response from the floor. Although its popularity has decreased gradually over time, the show still records a respectable audience rating of ten to fifteen percent every year in the twenty-first century.¹⁶⁶ A chief producer of *Nodo jiman* in recent years explained the aesthetics of the program: the NHK staff are trying to make a show in which “[a] participant does not have to be good at singing if (s)he makes an interesting performance, displays characteristic costumes or adds a

¹⁶⁶ The household audience rating in the Kantō area was 11.1 percent for January 4, 2009, 10.1 percent for January 6, 2008 and 9.9 percent for January 7, 2007. Video Research Ltd. <http://www.videor.co.jp/>

human touch to the show with family anecdotes.” What is important is to keep the show “bright, pleasant and cheerful (*akaruku, tanoshiku, genki yoku*) so that both participants and audiences are able to spend an enjoyable Sunday afternoon. NHK explained that this approach has been “the unchanging concept of the show” since its first broadcast back in 1946, although it is important for us to note that despite the same keywords in the slogan, the specific meanings and expected effects of the show have gone through slight changes over its long history.¹⁶⁷

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to trace the changing implications of the show in each phase of postwar Japanese history. I want to close this chapter, however, by discussing one of the most recent occasions in which the show came to attention since the instance suggests the enduring relevance of the capacity of the broadcasting-mediated amateur performances to create an imagined sympathetic community. The remarkable resurgence of *Nodo jiman* within Japan’s discursive space came with a release of film entitled *Nodo jiman* in 1998. This film, directed by the well known director Izutsu Kazuyuki, came out in the post-Bubble era deeply shadowed by the long economic recession in the 1990s, the so-called “the lost decade.” The film had significant repercussions among critics and audiences. The characters of the film are suffering from the sense that their lives are falling apart in one way or another: an *enka* singer with a failed professional career who is willing to disguise herself as an amateur, hoping to have her performance heard by the nation, a middle-aged husband and father who has to take a rather challenging test to get a job

¹⁶⁷ Odagiri, “Akaruku tanoshiku genki yoku: uta to tōku no ningenshō,” 18.

in a franchise grilled chicken shop after changing his employment from place to place, and a high school girl agonizing over her dysfunctional family, among others. They latch on to *Nodo jiman* as a way to breakthrough the fragility and uncertainty of their current lives.

The producer of the film, Li Bong-u, reported that *Nodo jiman* captured his attention because of the widespread sense of instability in the post-Bubble era. When he was having lunch in a restaurant in Okayama, news about the handling of the Aum Shinrikyō incidents was on television. He felt, “The world is dark.” Yet shortly after the news, *Nodo jiman* started with its delightful theme song, which utterly changed the atmosphere. He was very much impressed by the participants of the show. They seemed so “bright” and “cheerful” that he could not believe that they were living in the same world as Aum Shinrikyō. The world of *Nodo jiman* seemed so “cinematic” that it inspired him to make a film about it. In the film, we see that the participants become connected to each other, each other’s family and friends, and the audiences through songs and the individual life stories behind their choice of song. According to Li, this shows that the “backbone of *Nodo jiman*” is to “return to the trustable,” such as family, one’s own spouse or friends, when the world is dark and individuals cannot trust each other.¹⁶⁸

The enduring appeal of broadcasting-mediated amateur performances reflects the recurrent crisis and the ensuing sense of instability in the modern Japan. Although

¹⁶⁸ Murakawa Hide, “Nodo jiman Ri Bon’u purodyūsā intabyū,” *Kinema junpō*, no. 1275 (January 1999), 80-81. For an inspiring account of the Aum Shinrikyō incidents as an exposé of the constitutive fragility of the stabilized sense of everyday life in postwar Japan, see Marilyn Ivy, “Tracking the Mystery Man with the 21 Faces,” *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 1 (Autumn 1996).

audience participation did not begin with the postwar period and its old patterns stayed relevant in the “new” era, the occupation certainly brought a different participatory format to Japanese broadcasting, a format that particularly suited the occupation’s intention to reintroduce individualism and merit-based social values to Japanese society. In the following chapter, I will discuss the transformation with the quiz show as the major object of analysis.

Chapter 3

The Quiz Show: A ‘New’ Mode of Audience Participation and the Construction of the Postwar Subject

3. 1. Introduction

In August of 1947, Ben Grauer made a visit to U.S.-occupied Japan. Grauer, who was a renowned announcer from the National Broadcasting Company in the United States, was on his way to see his brother, Major A. Grauer, who was an officer in the occupation forces. But during his stay, Ben Grauer also stopped by CIE’s Radio Unit to talk with his former coworker from NBC in New York City, Wynthrop Orr. Orr showed Grauer a recording of the Japanese radio program *Hanashi no izumi* (Fountain of Knowledge). Grauer was quite surprised to see the show, since “it was,” he said, “exactly the same set-up as used on the *Information Please* program in the United States.” *Information Please* was a successful NBC quiz show on which Grauer himself had earlier served as announcer. While Frank B. Huggins, the action chief of the Radio Unit, was giving a brief history of the Japanese version of the show and explaining its success in Japan, Grauer appeared “frankly amazed with the smoothness and efficiency of the operation.”¹

Grauer’s observation of the similarities between *Information Please* and *Hanashi no izumi* was correct. The Radio Unit of CIE designed *Hanashi no izumi* to

¹ “Report of Conference dated August 28, 1947,” Folder 2, Box 5136, RG 331; “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 3 Sep 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

be “an exact replica of *Information Please*.”² *Hanashi no izumi*, the first quiz show in Japan’s broadcasting history, was only the first of such replicas. Before the occupation was over, the Radio Unit would guide NHK to air two additional quiz shows modeled on American precedents: *Nijū no tobira* (Twenty Gates, November 1, 1947 through April 2, 1960) and *Watashi wa dare deshō* (What’s My Name? January 2, 1949), which were patterned after *Twenty Questions* (WVTR) and *What’s My Name?* (MBS), respectively. Before long, NHK appropriated the genre to produce original quiz shows such as *Tonchi kyōshitsu* (Quick Wit Classroom, January 3, 1949) and *Mittsu no uta* (Three Songs, November 3, 1951). Commercial stations, allowed in 1951 for the first time in Japanese broadcasting history, rushed to put imitators of NHK quiz shows on the air hoping to capitalize upon the guaranteed popularity of the genre.³ The popularity of quiz shows stayed intact and even grew after the occupation forces’ official departure in 1952. The quiz show has remained a popular genre in Japanese television broadcasting since then.

The import of exact replicas of American quiz shows to occupied Japan invokes a variety of questions. Why did the occupation bring these shows into Japan at the specific historical juncture of the U.S. occupation? What were the U.S. occupation forces hoping that copies of American quiz show would do for postwar Japanese society? In what way did the specific entertainment genre relate to the occupation’s

² “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of May 1947,” Folder 35, Box 5313, RG 331.

³ For the quiz programs on commercial stations, see Ishizaka Takashi, “Atemono kara no seichō: terebi kuizu no genkei o motomete,” *Hōsō bunka* 21, no. 3 (March 1966), 38-39.

involvement with radio broadcasting as a crucial means of reorienting Japanese society? How did Japanese listeners make sense of the genre?

In the previous chapter I tried to show that some of the war mobilization practices of audience participation in Japanese radio entertainment remained viable in the nation's postwar era, and that they fit surprisingly well with the liberal social atmosphere under the occupation's democratization policy. At the same time, it was also true that a new mode of audience participation emerged under the occupation's guidance and replaced the normative mode of audience participation from the previous era. In this chapter I focus on the introduction of the quiz show as an important index of a new mode of audience participation that mirrored the larger historical transformation in the organizing principles of society and the desired form of subjectivity in the context of the U.S. occupation and the rising Cold War.

Even though the quiz show has drawn scholarly attention in the field of Japanese television studies, Japanese radio quiz shows in the early postwar years remain understudied. A notable exception is Japanese media scholar Niwa Yoshiyuki's valuable account of the introduction of the quiz show and its consolidation as a genre.⁴ Conceiving of the quiz show as "a cultural apparatus that provoked desire for urban, mass consumer society" in the image of America, Niwa explains the settlement of the genre in Japanese broadcasting primarily as an indicator

⁴ The quiz show drew scholarly attention in Japan as an important genre of Japanese broadcasting, but has been primarily studied in the field of television studies. For example, Ishita Saeko and Ogawa Hiroshi eds., *Kuizu bunka no shakaigaku* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2003). This volume includes Niwa Yoshiyuki's chapter on the radio quiz show as a prehistory to the genre's full blossoming in the 1950s and 1960s with the consolidation of commercial stations and the rise of television. See chapter 3 "Kuizu bangumi no tanjō," 75-103.

of the Americanization of Japanese society. Relying on the Americanization framework, Niwa tends to focus on the unilateral impact of American culture on Japanese society and does not properly address the recipient's concrete conditions and appropriation of the genre. At the same time, Niwa mentions briefly the genre's connection to the occupation's democratization project. But his study deals with this issue separately from his discussion of Americanization. Rather, Niwa follows the conventional view that associates the genre's audience participation-based format with the liberation of Japanese society under the occupation.⁵

While appreciative of Niwa's analyses of the quiz show's conventions and the idealized images of American society in them, this chapter aims to make an intervention by focusing on the specific mode of participation in the quiz show as a reflection of some of the principles underlying the peculiar form of democracy preferred by the occupation. I do not assume that audience participation per se is evidence of democracy, as if there is such a thing as a universal notion of democracy. I argue that radio quiz shows provided milieus for Japanese listeners to practice and familiarize themselves with the ethics and aesthetics of a specific form of democracy firmly anchored in a romanticized image of American liberal capitalist society. In doing so, I intend to discuss some of the socio-political implications of the quiz show genre with regard to the formation of a new subjectivity for postwar Japanese citizens in the context of the U.S. occupation of Japan and the Cold War. At the same time, I

⁵ Niwa Yoshiyuki, "Kuizu ga Amerika kara yatte kita," in *Bunka no jissen bunka no kenkyū: zōshoku suru karuchuraru sutadīzu*, edited by Itō Mamoru (Tokyo: Serika Shobō, 2004). The quote appears on page 200.

will be equally attentive to the socio-political conditions and appropriation of the genre on the recipient side of the transfer of the genre, which the Americanization approach has obfuscated.⁶

3. 2. A “New” Mode of Participation

Many contemporaries and later generations saw the introduction of the quiz show as part of the occupation’s project to utilize radio broadcasting as a means of democratizing Japan.⁷ The occupation’s representation of the quiz show has contributed to the formation of this master narrative. The following statement from F.B. Huggins, the chief of the Radio Unit who guided and supervised the production of the first quiz show in Japan, exemplifies the occupation’s view. In the first issue of *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, a coterie newspaper published by the hosts and panelists of *Hanashi no izumi*, Huggins wrote a celebration message:

In giving the Japanese people a weekly half hour of information and entertainment, you have in my humble opinion, contributed to the rebuilding of a democratic Japan. What the concrete effects of this program which could never have been presented in militaristic Japan are, can probably never be measured. But I’m sure that you have done much to destroy feudalistic fear of loss of face and accelerated the rebirth of freedom of speech and thought.⁸

⁶ Americanization discourses tend to assume that Japan and the U.S. are two internally coherent but mutually incompatible cultural units. The problematic nature of this assumption has been much discussed by recent scholarship that challenges the conventional notion of the nation-state as a homogeneous cultural unit. For insight into the conceptual pitfalls that trap the discourses of cultural differences between Japan and the U.S., see Harry D. Harootunian, “America’s Japan, Japan’s Japan,” in *Japan in the World* edited by Harry D. Harootunian and Masao Miyoshi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁷ Nihon Hōsō kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol.1, 703-704.

⁸ F.B. Huggins, “To Messrs Wada, Horiuchi, Watanabe, Haruyama, and Sato,” in *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 1 (December 4 through December 10, 1947), 3.

Here Huggins did not exactly clarify how the quiz show would contribute to the rebuilding of a democratic Japan. But his statement was certainly in line with the prevailing liberation narrative of the occupation, which emphasized audience participation as an unprecedented and liberatory event in Japan's postwar broadcasting. As the previous chapter discussed, the occupation and NHK publicized audience participation-based programs a "liberation of the microphones." Once only for use by the wartime military government, the occupation claimed to have released the microphones for use by the general public.

If we look at the actual operation of the quiz shows, however, it is possible to see several ruptures underneath the presumed association between audience participation and postwar liberation. Like most other audience-participation programs, quiz shows were prerecorded, censored and then aired.⁹ For instance, *Hanashi no izumi* was consistently prerecorded, with the exception of several special live broadcasts. According to the producer of the show, Nagayama Hiroshi, about ten broadcasts in the beginning of *Hanashi no izumi* were recorded even without studio audiences, edited and then aired. It was not until early March of 1947 that *Hanashi no izumi* invited audiences to the studio for its first public recording (*kōkai hōsō*).¹⁰

Contrary to the dominant representation, quiz shows under the occupation were not necessarily audience-participatory programs in the strict sense of having ordinary

⁹ "In the case of ad-lib and interviewed programs, where no advance script is prepared, the programs are recorded and listened to and passed by CCD censors before being broadcast." See "Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947."

¹⁰ Nagayama Hiroshi, "Hanashi no izumi no enshutsu," *Hōsō bunka* 5, no. 7 (July 1951), 4-5.

listeners perform on the microphone. The quiz shows on Japanese radio did not invite listeners to be actual contestants for more than two years after the genre's introduction. It was only after the release of *Watashi wa dare deshō* in January 1949 that ordinary listeners actually spoke on the microphone. The first two quiz programs, *Hanashi no izumi* and *Nijū no tobira*, instead adopted a panel system on which four regular members and one weekly guest member composed a board of experts and served as contestants. Panelists were eminent intellectuals and persons of culture (*bunkajin*) of the time with widely recognizable names. Even when *Watashi wa dare deshō* invited ordinary listeners to be contestants, the show only granted them a very limited chance to speak. The operation was meticulously controlled. Yamakawa Kin'nosuke, the producer of the show, stated that the question master "dominated the whole operation (*dokuen*)."¹¹ According to his estimation, the question master occupied approximately twenty-two minutes out of the thirty-minute running time of the show, leaving only thirty seconds for each contestant to give his/her answer.¹¹

To be sure, audience participation in quiz shows included, in its broadest sense, a series of interactive practices such as mailing opinions, questions, requests, as well as becoming in-studio audiences. Quiz shows in Japan certainly encouraged listeners to submit questions to challenge the board of experts and on-stage contestants. The quiz shows that aired under the occupation – *Hanashi no izumi*, *Nijū no tobira*, *Watashi wa dare deshō*, *Tonchi kyōshitsu*, and *Mitsu no uta* – invariably had listeners mail in questions to be thrown at the contestants on the shows. In this light quiz

¹¹ Yamakawa Kin'nosuke, "Watashi wa dare deshō no enshutsu," *Hōsō bunka* 5 no. 7 (July 1951), 9.

audiences were not exactly absent even in the shows that did not invite listeners to be on-stage contestants.

But a closer examination of the history of Japanese broadcasting suggests that audience participation in the broad sense was not a novel concept exclusive to postwar broadcasting. Japanese broadcasting already allowed similar listeners' engagements during the war by encouraging listeners to mail comments and requests.¹² Wartime radio even adopted the genre called *nazo nazo*, a sort of riddle often identified as the Japanese quiz prototype for a recreational radio show for soldiers on the front line entitled *Zensen ni okuru yū*. In September 1943, the NHK magazine *Hōsō* made a prize contest call (*kenshō boshū*) asking for listeners to submit riddles for the program. The best questions were broadcast. The questions selected for the second best category appeared in the subsequent issue of *Hōsō*. NHK's call for riddles promised to grant "a moderate amount of prize money" to the winners in both categories.¹³

By pointing out that audience participation per se was neither liberatory as such nor unprecedented in Japanese broadcasting, I do not intend to denounce the

¹² Immediately after the arrival of occupation forces in Japan, Captain Roth, a CIE officer in charge of music, called up Yoshida Shin, the head of NHK's Music Department and said, "Now that the war is over, I want you to create a show that will respond to listeners' wishes." Yoshida answered, "We have already done so even during the war by receiving listeners' requests via postcards for a program called *Kibō ongakukai*." See "Zadankai rajio sōsetsu jidai no hōgaku hōsō," *Kikan hōgaku*, no.4 (August 1975), 53; NHK magazine *Hōsō* featured selected letters from listeners in its *Chōshusha no koe* (Listeners' Voices) column from January 1942 through January 1944 issue. For a valuable analysis of listeners' letters sent to NHK during the war, see Takeyama, *Sensō to hōsō*, 186-195.

¹³ "'Zensen e okuru nazo nazo' kenshō boshū," *Hōsō* 3, no. 9 (September 1943), 7; "'Zensen e okuru nazo nazo' dai 1-kai happyō," *Hōsō* 3, no.10 (October 1943), 95; "'Zensen e okuru nazo nazo' dai 2-kai happyō," *Hōsō* 3, no. 11 (November 1943), 67. The announcement of the results included the selected questions for the two categories and the names and residences of the submitters.

association between the quiz show genre and the occupation's democratization project. But I wish to consider the association from a different angle by turning our attention from a generic reading of audience participation to the specific mode of participation that structured the quiz show. The introduction of the quiz show was remarkable because it signaled a break from the normative participatory principles of the former era, as the genre's operation was specifically based on the logic of competition in which individuals strove to obtain a prize.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Japanese government's cultural policies during the war actually encouraged listeners to participate and had common people perform in various radio programs and events. Yet the normative mode of participation reflected the wartime valorization of unity within the nation over individualism. Wartime radio broadcasting consciously disfavored an individual-based, competitive mode of audience participation. When the broadcasting company held a radio event in the form of a contest, it discouraged listeners-performers from concentrating on winning or ranking. The events had to focus on sharing and honoring excellent cultural practices. Furthermore, the wartime emphasis on austerity over materialism did not allow a lavish cash reward for listeners' participation.¹⁴

Historically, individual competition was not a foreign concept in Japan. The modern education system, established in the early 1870s, intended to encourage Japanese individuals to acquire knowledge and skills in order to secure a job, earn money and move ahead in capitalist society. Japanese individuals received formal

¹⁴ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon hōsōshi*, vol. 1, 554; "Dai 3-kai kinrōsha ongaku taikai," *Hōsō* 3, no. 9 (September 1943), 40-42.

education based on the meritocratic principles of modern education, which shared the basic rationale with the rules of the quiz show genre, as scholars like Herta Herzog and John Fiske have already pointed out.¹⁵ As recent scholarship has revealed, interwar Japan witnessed a rapid surge of individualism, materialism and commercialization in various sectors of society.¹⁶ But a series of economic crises during the late 1920s and early 1930s and the growing fascist influence in Japanese society significantly diminished the legitimacy of liberal capitalist ideas such as individualism, competition and material rewards. When Japan plunged into war with the Anglo-American powers, the official language of the time condemned these ideas as “Anglo-American” influence to be expelled. Imperial Japan propagated a romanticized formula of Japanese culture vis-à-vis Western Civilization. The formula rested upon a rhetorical binary that framed Japanese culture as spiritual, harmonious

¹⁵ The U.S. occupation also saw that the universal education of pre-occupation Japan was based on advancement by merit. See Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 348. Also see Benjamin Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872-1890* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009). Particularly useful to an understanding of the basic principles of modern education in Japan is Chapter 4, “*Gakusei*: The First National Plan for Education.” Duke explains that the key themes of modern education included individualism and utilitarianism or rationalism. The U.S. occupation viewed the system established in 1872 as “essentially the same,” despite modifications, as the system in place at the end of the Asia Pacific War in 1945. For an overview of Japanese modern education by an occupation personality, refer to Joseph C. Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor Memoir* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1983), 1-8. The quote appears on page 4. For the similarity between the modern education system and the quiz show, refer to John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London and New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1987), 273-274 and Herta Herzog, “Professor Quiz: A Gratification Study,” in *Radio and the Printed Page: An Introduction to the Study of Radio and Its Role in the Communication of Ideas*, edited by Paul Lazarsfeld (New York: Duell, Sloan & Peace, INC., 1940), 85.

¹⁶ For example, Silverberg, *Erotic, Grotesque, Nonsense* and Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

and collective welfare-minded, while Western Civilization was materialist, egoistic and motivated by personal profit.¹⁷

With Japan's defeat in 1945, the U.S. occupation used the same binary to attack the collective ethics and aesthetics of wartime as Japan's feudal, totalitarian past – a past that had to be expelled from postwar Japanese society in order for the nation-state to democratize. Individual freedom, free competition and socio-cultural hierarchy as a natural outcome of the differential ability of individuals were some of the key ideals that the occupation promoted as an antidote to Japan's wartime indoctrination of group-oriented behavioral codes.¹⁸ The U.S. occupation brought the quiz show into Japanese broadcasting at this specific juncture, when the occupation's democratization policy was attempting to transform not only Japan's political, social and economic institutions but also the attitudes, values and beliefs of the Japanese people.

How does the quiz show, a seemingly trivial broadcasting genre, fit into the democratization project of the occupation? The introduction of the quiz show to Japanese society signified liberation from old restrictions. Yet more important is how the “new” mode of participation in the quiz show interacted with the notion of democracy preferred by the occupation. As recent scholarship has pointed out,

¹⁷ On the Japanese war regime's campaign to expel Western influence from Japan, see Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 141-151.

¹⁸ “Positive Policy for Reorientation of the Japanese” (SWNCC-162/D) called for major changes in “ideologies and attitudes of mind... designed to bring about a Japan which would cease to be a menace to international security.” The crux of the problem, SWNCC-162/D asserted, was Japan's feudal outlook, Imperial cult and “an extreme racial consciousness and an anti-foreign complex” which produced a chauvinistic “common attitude of mind.” The document discusses a strategy of redirecting the nation's habits of mind. Quoted in Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 349.

democracy in the context of the occupation was a particular set of ideas and practices bound to the specific historical circumstances and the hegemonic ideology of the time, namely liberal democracy in the idealized image of American capitalist society, often called “the American way.”¹⁹

“The American way of life” was a historically contingent notion. As Wendy L. Wall shows, during the time from the Great Depression era to the early postwar period, the key struggle over a desirable formula of the nation’s political economy and culture took place between New Dealers and business communities and their political allies. From the late 1930s on, the latter began to assert that private enterprise and economic freedom were the backbone of the quintessentially American social system by launching aggressive public campaigns against New Deal “radicals” who stressed majoritarian democracy and economic security for all Americans. Toward the 1950s, the idea of “free enterprise” outweighed New Deal egalitarianism in public images of the “American way of life.” The new postwar consensus identified individual freedom and economic competition as the fundamental virtues of life in a capitalist democracy while at the same time acknowledging the federal government’s role in ensuring sustained economic growth and the minimal expansion of the welfare state.²⁰

To be sure, this form of democracy had certain liberating effects on Japanese society despite its differential impact on groups of people according to their political

¹⁹ Lisa Yoneyama writes, “The seemingly universal ideal of ‘living democratically’ has hardly been practiced apart from the notions of private property, free market economy, or the images of the North American affluence.” See Lisa Yoneyama, “Habits of Knowing Cultural Differences: Chrysanthemum and the Sword in the U.S. Liberal Multiculturalism,” *Topoi*, no. 18 (1999), 76.

²⁰ Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

positions, gender, class and ethnicity. But the same idea simultaneously operated to keep the occupied populations thinking, behaving and living within bounds.²¹ The Japanese had to learn and follow new normative codes in order to live democratically. Participatory energy from Japanese citizens that did not conform to the new normative codes – for example, Japanese workers' grass-roots movements for production control – did not count as a demonstration of democratic subjectivity but only as an indication of disorderly conduct.²²

A helpful hint for discerning how the quiz show fit into the occupation's democratization project comes from television studies, particularly those in the tradition of the Birmingham School of British cultural studies. They have pointed out that the quiz show is a cultural form implicated in the capitalist social system. The quiz show's participatory rules, such as equal opportunity and free competition, are reflective of the rudiments of capitalist democracy. For example, John Fiske, a scholar of television culture, articulates the specific mode of participation in which the quiz show operated as "an enactment of capitalist ideology." The quiz show starts by taking differentiated individuals and constructing them into equal competitors. The equality here implies equality of opportunity, not that of ability. For this reason, as the show progresses, the inequality of ability is discovered. Competitors, who were granted equal footage in the beginning, gradually become differentiated into the winner and the rest as a natural outcome of their differential abilities. The prize is given to the

²¹ On this issue, see Yoneyama, "Liberation under Sedge."

²² On the production control movement and SCAP's reaction to it, see Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, 18-21, 39.

winner as a fair reward for his/her ability within the framework. Fiske argues that such a construction of individuals as both equal and different in the competition for prizes naturalizes the inequality in capitalist society. In other words, the quiz show makes inequalities that were instituted by the capitalist social structure appear to be the logical consequence of individual differences. The prize symbolizes upward mobility into the realm of social power which, the modern capitalist society promises, naturally brings material and economic benefits.²³ The actual ideological effects of the genre are not predetermined but dependent on how the show's participants negotiate and articulate the meanings of their participation, winning and losing. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that by voluntarily participating in the quiz show both contestants and audiences willingly submit to the rules of the game, which simulate the organizing rules of the capitalist social system.

At the same time the quiz show, which first appeared on American local radio during the 1920s and consolidated as a genre toward the late 1940s, was a cultural form deeply embedded in transwar American society. It was a product of the specific historical circumstances, ethics and aesthetics of the given time. Today, lavish material or monetary rewards and excessive commercialization may dominate the image of American quiz shows. But cultural elites and listeners of American radio from the transwar era believed that the quiz show clearly had much to do with a set of

²³ See Fiske, *Television Culture*, 265-280; Fiske's analysis remains a classic frequently referred to by major studies of quiz shows. For recent examples see, Olaf Hoerschelmann, *Rules of the Game: Quiz Shows and American Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006) and Su Holmes, *The Quiz Show* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

principles that they identified with “American values,” such as fair play, free competition and hard work.²⁴

Controversy over a subgenre of quiz show called “giveaway,” which offered prizes to randomly selected listeners for simply answering a phone call from the radio station or answering non-challenging questions that anyone could answer, illustrated such a belief about the quiz show. The effortless acquisition of money and merchandise was the reason that the FCC suspected that the giveaways were a form of lottery. Cultural elites and listeners criticized the genre as “un-American.” Some opponents of the giveaway believed that the genre’s promise of easy riches ran counter to “American values of hard work” and requested that the national networks drop shows in this category. Others claimed that the giveaway promoted “un-American” morals by prompting gambling, engendering envy and provoking anti-social behavior. Some of the most hostile adversaries exploited the authority of Cold War language to express their aversion to the genre, for example, by castigating the genre’s rewards system as simply “Communist.”²⁵

²⁴ For a brief account of the transferences of American quiz shows to BBC radio in the earliest years, see Holmes, *The Quiz Show*, 39-40. For an historical analysis of the quiz show in the U.S., see DeLong, *Quiz Craze*.

²⁵ The typical example of the giveaway was NBC’s *Pot o’ Gold* (1939-1941). *Pot o’ Gold* called random people chosen from phone books and awarded them with one thousand dollars just for answering the phone. The FCC charged *Pot o’ Gold* with being a lottery. Although the Department of Justice dismissed the charge, the giveaway faced another backlash in the late 1940s. In August of 1948, the FCC decided to deny license renewals to any station broadcasting giveaway shows while discrediting them, again, as radio lotteries. See Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 34, 47-48. On the listeners’ letters to the FCC committee accusing the giveaway as “un-American,” see 50.

Question-centered, intellectual quiz programs were at the opposite pole. These shows, which had a serious question-and-answer format, focused upon the intellectual challenge between contestants as they competed for modest prizes. Listeners and radio critics found the rationale of this genre, unlike that of the giveaway, to be conforming to what they believed were “American” virtues. The logic of rewarding individuals based upon the scores gained through rigorous, intellectual competition precisely fit with a belief in hard work and fair play as the premise of acquiring wealth and fame.²⁶

Although the defenders of the giveaway appreciated it for offering “hope to average Americans,” by the 1940s the generic conventions of the quiz show consolidated around question-centered, rigorous intellectual shows. The dominance of the question-centered, intellectual quiz show clearly paralleled the emergence of the new postwar consensus about the American way, centered around the ideas of private enterprise, free competition and meritocracy against the New Deal-inspired majoritarian values of the post-Great Depression era. Occupied Japan was a convenient site for the U.S. to experiment with its global agenda of selling the American way to fight Communist propaganda.²⁷ In this context, the quiz show came to Japan as a symbolic form, what Jean Baudrillard would call hyper-real simulacra, of

²⁶ Mittell, *Genre and Television*, 31-55; DeLong, *Quiz Craze*, 10. *Professor Quiz* and *Dr. IQ* were the typical examples of question-centered, intellectual quiz shows at that time. For a contemporary account of *Professor Quiz*, refer to Herzog, “Professor Quiz.” For *Dr. IQ*, see Jim Cox, *The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows: Seventeen Programs from the 1940s and 1950s* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001), 85-91.

²⁷ For a useful account on the topic, see Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). Especially useful chapters are “Defining Democracy: Images of the American Political System” and “Selling Capitalism: Images of the Economy, Labor, and Consumerism.”

American culture.²⁸ With the exception of *Mittsu no uta*, all of NHK's quiz shows during the occupation, the majority of which were Radio Unit creations modeled on American programs, belonged to the category of question-centered, intellectual quiz shows.

3. 3. Experimenting the Genre: *Hanashi no izumi* (Fountain of Knowledge)

Hanashi no izumi, the first quiz show in Japanese broadcasting history, provides an important reference point for experimenting with the genre in Japan. This show was a thirty-minute program broadcast on Wednesday evenings.²⁹ Like its American model *Information Please*, *Hanashi no izumi* was a highly intellectual, question-centered quiz show on which four regular experts and a guest each week matched wits and knowledge against listeners' questions.³⁰ The opening announcement of the first broadcast of *Hanashi no izumi* on December 3, 1946 explains the operation of the show as follows:

Starting tonight, each week at this time four contestants will answer questions from our listeners. Any question will be fine. Please send us

²⁸ The reality in the intellectual quiz show was more "American" than actual American society. Many American listeners enjoyed the giveaway, even though it was accused of being "un-American." In 1954, the American Supreme Court ruled that quiz shows were not a form of gambling and paved the way for high stakes prizes on quiz shows. On the concept of simulacra, see Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1-42.

²⁹ The broadcasting schedule changed a couple of times from 8:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. when *Information Hour* was put on 8:00, and to 7:30 from April 1948. "Zadankai Hanashi no izumi o ginmi suru," *Hōsō bunka* 3, no. 3 (May 1948), 3.

³⁰ "Radio in Japan, May 1, 1947." There was no guest for the first broadcast, and four regular members played the contestants.

all sorts of eccentric questions, tricky questions, and difficult questions (*chinmon, kimonon, nanmon*) along with the answers. . . . Sometimes questions can be outside the domains of these four experts. We offer some cash prizes to those who send excellent questions that stump the experts. So please send lots of questions to the broadcasting station. Now we will show you a demonstration (*jitsuen*), so that you can get a feel for the general nature of the questions.³¹

On the show, the moderator, who was also the question master delivered questions selected from listeners' letters. The experts raised their hands to get the moderator's call. If the experts failed to give the correct answer, the bell rang and the listeners who had sent the questions received two hundred yen as a reward for stumping the experts. The questions tested academic and specialized knowledge as well as the wit and humor of the experts.³²

The board of experts on *Hanashi no izumi* were prominent intellectuals of the time, famous as know-it-alls. They were well versed in the arts, literature and sciences. The experts selected by the occupation's Radio Unit to be on the first broadcast were: Satō Hachirō (1903-1973), a song writer, poet and columnist; Horiuchi Keizō (1897-1983) a composer, song writer and musical critic; journalist Nakano Gorō (1906-1972); and Nakano Yoshio (1903-1985), a professor at the University of Tokyo.³³ The

³¹ The first broadcast of *Hanashi no izumi*, December 3, 1946. The record is accessible at the NHK Museum of Broadcasting and other NHK's Open Libraries (*Kōkai Raiburari*) throughout Japan. For the script of the opening, see Niwa, "Kuizu bangumi no tanjō," 86-87.

³² For a useful collection of questions and answers used in *Hanashi no izumi*, refer to Wada Shinken, ed., *Shumi to jōshiki no hyakka Hanashi no izumi shū* (Tokyo: Chūōsha. 1950). Wada Shinken, the longtime moderator of the show observed that witty questions grew rare later on.

³³ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 27 November 1946," Folder 16, Box 5319, RG 331. Originally the occupation chose Kigi Takatarō (1897-1969) a scientist and writer instead of Nakano Gorō. However, Nakano replaced Kigi on the premiere according to

regular members changed slightly over time. Journalist Watanabe Shin'ichirō (1900-1978) and poet Haruyama Yukio (1902-1994) were among other renowned regular members who later joined the board of experts. The host of the first broadcast was famous comedian and NHK master of ceremonies Tokugawa Musei (1894-1971).³⁴ After the second episode, he became a regular panelist. Wada Shinken (1912-1952), a long-time NHK announcer who was especially famous for his broadcast of the end of Asia Pacific War on August 15, 1945, took over Tokugawa's role and continued to serve as the host of *Hanashi no izumi* until his unexpected death in August 1952.³⁵

Hanashi no izumi practiced a competitive mode of participation. The show put the contestants in direct opposition to each other in an intellectual competition. NHK's radio personnel observed that in the early days "rivalry among the contestants was tangible" and it "attracted interest" in the show.³⁶ *Hanashi no izumi* also established a rivalry between contestants and listeners by rewarding listeners for stumping the experts with their questions. The cash reward, even though a small amount, was given as an honor. *Hanashi no izumi* rearticulated the meaning of trying to win a competition for prize money, which used be criticized as profit-minded and greedy, as admirable in the postwar socio-political environment. The occupation's democratization policy

Tokugawa Musei's introduction of the panel in the recording of the first broadcast of *Hanashi no izumi*.

³⁴ The Radio Unit planned to use Tokugawa as the interrogator with knowledge of his reputation as a "famous comedian and master of ceremonies" even before the board of experts had been picked. "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 20 November 1945, Nov. 21, 1946," Folder 16, Box 5319, RG 331.

³⁵ Wada, *Shumi to jōshiki no hyakka Hanashi no izumi-shū*, 4.

³⁶ Furu Takeo, "Ninki bangumi o kentō suru (ka)," *Hōsō bunka* 5, no. 10 (October 1951), 24. Furu noted that later the tension between contestants diminished as the regular members tacitly reached "a gentlemen's agreement" against the listeners.

provided the larger context for this re-articulation. The occupation stressed the individual as the basic unit of society through a number of channels. On the radio, forums and roundtables featured debates among individuals with different points of view.³⁷ The occupation encouraged competition and contests as a way of individualizing and democratizing the Japanese. A secondary school textbook on democracy, which was written by Japanese scholars, supervised by CIE, and approved by the Ministry of Education, underscored the “advantages of free competition” in a democratic life.³⁸ A radio program devoted to introducing the concept of democracy took “a contest where the best man wins and not the most influential, as in a rugby match,” as an example of democracy.³⁹ CIE promoted school contests to foster the “spirit of healthy competition.”⁴⁰

In terms of audience reactions, the quiz show experiment turned out to be an unprecedented success. Right after the first broadcast of *Hanashi no izumi*, the Radio

³⁷ For example, *Hōsō tōronkai* (The National Radio Forum) and *Rajio zadankai* (Roundtable of the Air) often invited individuals to represent what CIE termed leftist, conservative and rightist points of view on a given topic. These programs were censored and edited by CCD. CCD often suppressed and deleted speeches from individuals deemed to be communists. For a brief account of these programs, see Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 64.

³⁸ Monbushō, ed. *Minshushugi: Monbushō chosaku kyōkasho* (Tokyo: Komichi Shobō, 1995), 163-168. This is a reprint of Monbushō, ed., *Minshushugi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kyōiku Tosho Kabushiki Kaisha, 1948) and vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kyōiku Tosho Kabushiki Kaisha, 1949). For the English translation circulated to occupation officers, see “Primer of Democracy, vol. 1,” Folder 8, Box 5632, RG 331 and “Primer of Democracy, vol. 2,” Folder 9, Box 5342, GR 331. On the supervision of CIE, see “Report of Conference, CIE: Chapter Manuscript of the Primer of Democracy (reported by Howard Bell, February 19, 1948), Folder 3, Box 5138, RG 331.

³⁹ Quoted in Mayo, “The War of Words Continues: American Radio Guidance in Occupied Japan,” 65-66. The Radio Branch designed this show under the title *An Introduction to Democracy* in early 1946.

⁴⁰ Kodama, *CIE Bulletin*, vol. 2 June 1947 - 21 December 1949, 332, 402.

Unit noticed the potential of the show to become extremely popular.⁴¹ On the second week of its release, “unprecedented” responses to *Hanashi no izumi* indicated the possibility that it would become “one of the most popular shows on the air.”⁴²

Questions from listeners poured in. *Hanashi no izumi* elicited more than ten thousand letters weekly almost from its inception,⁴³ which was five times as great as the next runner-up, *Movie Hour*, according to the Radio Unit’s estimation.⁴⁴ Before long the Radio Unit’s expectations materialized as *Hanashi no izumi* turned out to be “sensationally popular” and “broke all BCJ [NHK] records for audience reaction.”⁴⁵

The Radio Unit conceived of *Hanashi no izumi*’s success with the listeners as evidence of progress in the occupation’s project to reorient the Japanese toward a new culture. After airing two episodes, Acting Chief of the Radio Unit F.B. Huggins wrote on the Weekly Report of the Radio Unit to the Chief of CIE, “This is heartening, as it seems to prove the Japanese radio public is now ready for some new programs, an

⁴¹ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 4 December 1946,” Folder 16, Box 5319, RG 331.

⁴² “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 11 December 1946,” Folder 16, Box 5319, RG 331.

⁴³ “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of May 1947”

⁴⁴ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 11 December 1946”; another weekly report stored in a folder classified as confidential confirms the point by stating “Japanese radio personnel expressed grave doubts when the idea was first presented. Today, then weeks after the first program “wowed” them, they are ready for more new shows and admit that the Japanese public will accept new ideas.” See “Weekly Report of Radio Branch for Week Ending 19 Feb 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁴⁵ For example, the exact same statement of *Hanashi no izumi* appears in another version of a report prepared by the Radio Unit, “Radio in Japan: a Report on the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 October 1947,” Folder 125, Box 5150, RG 331.

opinion not shared until now by the BCJ program staff.”⁴⁶ By February 1947, the Radio Unit concluded that “a quiz craze has hit Japan.”⁴⁷

The overwhelmingly favorable reaction to *Hanashi no izumi* significantly contributed to the widespread understanding that the genre’s translation into Japanese culture had been completely smooth, and that the embrace of the genre by the Japanese was immediate. But such clear-cut images obfuscate the complexities of the appropriation of the quiz show genre. There were groups of individuals who did not accept the genre as enthusiastically as the dominant image of the genre’s reception would suggest. From the early days of the show individuals the occupation designated as Japanese “leftist intellectuals” frequently criticized *Hanashi no izumi* for being “shallow and lacking in cultural value.”⁴⁸

The reactions of contestants further address some of these complexities. If we take a closer look at how the actual contestants came to participate in *Hanashi no izumi* and how they reacted to their role in the quiz show, we can see a picture that is quite the opposite of the general image of the enthusiastic embrace of the quiz show genre. The panelists on the board of experts did not necessarily adopt the new mode of participation as voluntarily and promptly as the genre’s success with listeners would lead us to assume. First of all, unlike listeners who chose to send questions to *Hanashi no izumi*, the contestants were not necessarily joining the show of their own will. The contestants were individuals whom the occupation forces selected and mobilized for

⁴⁶ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 11 December 1946.”

⁴⁷ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 11 June 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁴⁸ “Weekly Report of Radio Branch for Week Ending 19 Feb 1947.”

the experiment of the quiz show genre. The contestants had to get used to the unfamiliar genre whether they liked it or not. All the participants including the question master went through rehearsals under the supervision of the occupation's radio personnel. They had to master the basic rules and techniques of the quiz show's participatory mode prior to the first recording so that they could perform the genre in a seamless manner. Even after all the rehearsals, however, Tokugawa Musei, the moderator at that time, wrote in his diary that the first recording of *Hanashi no izumi* was a "strange recording under the guidance of a major of the occupation forces."⁴⁹

The contestants were particularly uncomfortable with the competitive mode of participation of the quiz show because it would disclose their individual ability (or lack thereof) and might lead them to lose. For example, Tokugawa Musei recalled that on his first appearance on the show as a contestant, he felt as if he was exposing how stupid or smart he was (*baka ka rikō ka*) to the world. Ever since his first performance as a regular contestant, he "could not help feeling it somewhat unpleasant and troublesome to record this show." Tokugawa confessed in his memoir, "Once cast as the regular panelist, I felt myself compelled to fight back against the fire directed to my camp. Nonetheless, honestly on the inside I hated [playing a regular panelist] so much that I couldn't contain myself."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ For a brief note on the plan for the first rehearsal, see "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 27 November 1946," Folder 16, Box 5319, RG 331. For Tokugawa's diary, which he later included in his published memoir, see Tokugawa Musei, *Tokugawa Musei: hōsō wajutsu 27-nen* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1998), 208. The American officer present was F.B. Huggins of the Radio Unit.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 209-210.

Yamamoto Kajirō (1902-1974), a film director and frequent guest panelist of *Hanashi no izumi* who later became a regular expert on the board, noted in NHK's postwar magazine *Hōsō bunka* (Broadcasting Culture) that contestants generally felt that being on the show as a contestant was rather unpleasant. As a guest member Yamamoto “felt pity” toward the regular panelists who had to appear on the show every week. Yamamoto wrote,

People like Tokugawa Musei are complaining querulously that it [playing the regular panelist] feels like survival requires selling whatever knowledge they have (*chie no takenoko seikatsu*). Every single regular panel expert seems to feel this way. Actually, nothing could be more unpalatable than that [being a contestant on the show]. Being brought in front of the microphone, which couldn't be creepier and more annoying, gives me a chill to imagine that behind the microphone eight million fellow citizens from all over the country are wearing a thin smile with a needling remark as if saying “let's get this man into trouble (*koitsu komarasete yare*).”⁵¹

Hesitation to serve as quiz contestants also made it hard for NHK to cast guest panelists, according to Tokugawa's recollection. While there were numerous knowledgeable people around only a few were willing to become guest panelists. Even for those who joined the show, it was rare to accept the offer to perform at the first approach. They would agree to appear on the show only after a series of negotiations. Even after the deal was made, some cast members disappeared on the very day of

⁵¹ Yamamoto Kajirō, “‘Hanashi no izumi’-byō,” *Hōsō buka* (June-July 1947), 28.

recording to avoid it. For four years only about forty to fifty people served as guest experts for this weekly program.⁵²

Occupation officers, including Huggins, often ascribed the contestants' reluctance to participate simply to a "feudalistic fear of loss of face," or "Japanese fear of loss of face" – in other words to some essential character of the Japanese which, they believed, the quiz show genre would eventually help to destroy.⁵³ But scholars of media studies remark that losing face was a common fear among quiz contestants in Western culture as well, encouraging us to reconsider the presumed transhistorical character of the Japanese as the determining factor.⁵⁴ If the contestants for *Hanashi no izumi* appeared excessively concerned about losing face, their privileged position within society could have furthered such concerns more than a general fear. The experts on the board were respected intellectuals in Japanese society, and they were under strong pressure to come up with smart answers. Failing to answer a question posed by a commoner could be great humiliation given the high expectations.⁵⁵ The experts on the board also expressed their fear that joining a mass entertainment show

⁵² Tokugawa, 210-212. Of the approximately forty experts he could recall, Tokugawa names eight female panelists, including literary critic Itagaki Naoko (1896-1977), politician Katō Shizue (1897-2001) and novelist Hayashi Fumiko (1903-1951).

⁵³ The Radio Branch's weekly report wrote, "Further, this program can be subtly used to disseminate democratic thought; it is, in itself, democratic, and the fact that experts can muffle a question and not commit *hara-kiri* because of loss of face, may indicate that the Japanese are making progress." See "Weekly Report of Radio Branch for Week Ending 19 Feb 1947."

⁵⁴ For the contestants' re-articulation of losing and a face-saving alibi structured in quiz shows, refer to Fiske, *Television Culture*, 275-276.

⁵⁵ Furu, "Ninki bangumi o kentō suru," 24. For example, Tokugawa Musei wrote that one of the underlying reasons for his aversion to playing a contestant was his fear of showing defects or humiliating himself in public. Tokugawa, *Tokugawa Musei*, 210.

might end up jeopardizing their reputation in their specialized fields.⁵⁶ Most of all, the involuntary nature of their participation explains much about their lack of enthusiasm.

Having only a small number of intellectuals on the show as contestants, *Hanashi no izumi* put the majority of the Japanese in the position of spectator. This format allowed some room for the majority of Japanese citizens to enjoy the intellectual competition lightheartedly. In contrast to the board of experts, listeners as questioners had nothing to risk or lose by participating in the show. It was the panelists' business to worry about losing face. Of course listeners of *Hanashi no izumi* engaged in self-testing, trying to see how many questions they could answer. But listeners did not have to experience the same pressure imposed upon actual show contestants. Togawa Yukio, again, commented on the relaxed position of the listeners, "It will be frustrating if you must come up with the answer for yourselves. But audiences are listening to the quiz show, wondering about the answer without such a burden. . . . Listeners accept the results, feeling good only when they are able to answer while they just ignore it (*tana ni agete iru*) when they are not."⁵⁷

Interestingly enough, the experts on the board also found *Hanashi no izumi* appealing when they did not have to compete on the show. Yamamoto Kajirō remarked that his attitudes to the competition changed when he switched from a guest panelist to a listener. While feeling deeply sympathetic to fellow regular panelists for

⁵⁶ Responding to a remark that middle students respected him very much because of *Hanashi no izumi*, Horiuchi Keizo lamented, "Instead, I am being disdained (*keibetsu sarete oru*) by music lovers." See "Zadankai Hanashi no izumi o ginmi suru," 3; Tokugawa Musei wrote that he did not like being on the show because he did not want to be considered a fool who self-complacently performed on "such a radio show." Tokugawa, *Tokugawa Musei*, 210.

⁵⁷ "Zadankai kuizu bangumi no miryoku o kentō suru," *Hōsō buka* 7, no. 5 (May 1951), 25.

what they had to go through as the quiz contestants, Yamamoto admitted that it was an irresistible attraction for listeners and audiences to observe contestants competing with each other. He wrote, “While so unpleasant [to play the contestant], nothing could be more interesting [than listening to *Hanashi no izumi*]. This must be human wretchedness. When it is not my turn, although I could just relax and take a nap at home, I purposely go to the radio station and find myself listening, all smiles, to other people compete in *Hanashi no izumi*. I bet it is really interesting.”⁵⁸ Even Tokugawa Musei wrote on December 5, 1946 that he found *Hanashi no izumi* “highly interesting” when he listened the tape of the first broadcast in order to prepare himself for the second recording as a moderator. It was only after Huggins and Nagayama, the producer of the show, asked him to be a contestant from the third episode that Tokugawa’s attitudes dramatically changed. He noted later in his memoir, “If it was the moderator, I would do it anyway, but it felt depressing to play the contestant.”⁵⁹

No matter how the contestants felt inside, their discomfort and reluctance could not be discernible on the show. The experts on the board had to perform the quiz show in front of Japanese listeners who had no idea about this new entertainment form. In order to draw listeners they were required to present the show as exciting and pleasing. The contestants of *Hanashi no izumi* had to play their role as if they were in the competition willingly and were enjoying themselves. In so doing, they served to create a radio-mediated reality of *Hanashi no izumi* in which individual competition appeared delightful and interesting. The constructed reality did not exactly correspond

⁵⁸ Yamamoto, “‘Hanashi no izumi’-byō,” 28.

⁵⁹ Tokugawa, *Tokugawa Musei*, 210.

to the contestants' experience, but it certainly fascinated Japanese listeners, as observations of the quiz show craze suggest.⁶⁰

Of course we can take multiple elements of *Hanashi no izumi* into account apart from the competitive participatory formula to analyze what made *Hanashi no izumi* so appealing to Japanese listeners. The educational benefit that the show offered was a definite attraction for Japanese listeners who were known for their strong appetite for educational content. The show dealt with highbrow knowledge, which was unfamiliar to many ordinary listeners. The listeners enjoyed learning new things through the show.⁶¹ Nakamichi Sadao, NHK personality in the Entertainment Department, pointed out that the quiz show drew in listeners by having them participate in the program actively through "thinking of the answer" even when they were not actual contestants.⁶² *Hanashi no izumi*'s success also owed much to the attractive personalities of the host and the regular panelists, and the chemistry among them.⁶³

Nevertheless, the competitive aspect constituted a large part of the appeal of *Hanashi no izumi*. The program was more interesting when the rivalry between the

⁶⁰ On media reality's relation to "outside reality," see Holmes, *The Quiz Show*, 75-83, 119.

⁶¹ Herta Herzog noted that in American contexts listeners most emphatically stressed the educational value of the quiz show. Herzog, "Professor Quiz," 74. Yet the intellectual quiz show could have even greater appeal to Japanese listeners who in general showed a much stronger preference toward informational content on radio compared to American listeners as discussed in Chapter One. Essayist Shibusawa Hideo suggested that the impressive level of knowledge that the contestants demonstrated was a contributing factor to *Hanashi no izumi*'s appeal. "Zadankai Hanashi no izumi o ginmi suru," 3.

⁶² "Kuizu bangumi no miryoku o kentō suru," 22.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

contestants was most apparent.⁶⁴ An imagined rivalry between experts and listeners was a crucial element that engaged mass audiences with the show. The cash prize could have motivated listeners to make the effort to submit their questions to the show to some extent.⁶⁵ But the attraction was not so much the cash prize per se as the symbolic meaning of winning the prize: gaining a victory in the competition against some of the smartest individuals in society. As an article in *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi* explained, “Greater satisfaction comes from taking down the five experts universally recognized as know-it-alls more than from receiving the two hundred-yen cash prize.”⁶⁶

The idea of “stumping the experts” merits further discussion because this concept made it particularly exciting for the mass audiences to engage with *Hanashi no izumi*. Although an imagined rivalry with the contestants constituted a major appeal of intellectual quiz shows in general, the idea of average listeners stumping the experts satisfied the desire of mass audiences to subvert society’s cultural hierarchy, no matter how temporarily. This concept of stumping the experts was a conscious choice of Dan Golenpaul, the producer of *Information Please*, who disliked the basic concept of the

⁶⁴ Furu, “Ninki bangumi o kentō suru,” 24.

⁶⁵ According to statistics compiled by the Listener’s Section (*tōshohan*) of the NHK Radio Culture Research Institute, the number of listeners’ letters to radio programs with cash prizes was significantly higher than other radio programs that received listeners’ requests and letters. The NHK Radio Culture Research Institute noted that the monetary reward was the reason for the majority of letters sent to the high-ranked programs. Nevertheless, the cash prize alone cannot fully explain why audience reaction was particularly enthusiastic to the quiz show. Although quiz shows stayed on top of the list of the top twenty most-mailed programs, quiz shows did not necessarily grant more cash than other shows did. See “Weekly Statistical Table of Mails from Listeners” no. 87, 93, 100, 108, 117, 135, 136, 139, 152, 153, 169, 179, (January 1949 through October 1951), File 11, Box 5314, RG 331.

⁶⁶ Sado Kin et al., “Kane ga naru made narasu made,” *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 10 (February 12 through 18, 1948), 2.

usual intellectual quiz shows in which a man of knowledge tested average listeners as quiz contestants. Referring to *Professor Quiz*, a classic show in the question-and-answer format, Golenpaul said, “I used to get annoyed when he [the question master of *Professor Quiz*] made such a great fuss over the fact that a contestant didn’t know an answer. A bit sadist, I thought.” Golenpaul would like to ask “these quizmasters and so-called experts” some questions, suspecting that “[t]hey’re probably not much brighter than the average listener.”⁶⁷ He imagined that putting the audiences on the questioning rather than answering end would “turn underdogs into champions” and make them “look far more scholarly” than on other shows.⁶⁸ While *Information Please* stayed with the quiz show genre’s basic rules, the concept of stumping the experts had certain potential to undermine the meritocratic rationale of the quiz show. This concept gave a twist that made the show specifically appealing to mass audiences. Such a twist certainly attracted Japanese mass audiences as well. Psychology professor at Waseda University Togawa Yukio explained in analyzing *Hanashi no izumi*’s appeal to Japanese listeners that “[w]hen great people cannot answer, this makes listeners feel happy, as if they were greater [than the experts on the show].”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ DeLong, *Quiz Craze: America’s Infatuation with Game Shows*, 26-28. For a general account of *Information Please*, refer to Jim Cox, “Information Please,” in *The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows: Seventeen Programs from the 1940s and 1950s* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001).

⁶⁸ As quoted in Cox, *The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows*, 104. The announcer Howard Claney made this reversed setting clear to the listeners when he introduced the show by saying, “You, the very much quizzed public, will quiz the professors. Yes, the worm turns, and now the experts will have to know the answers to your questions, or else you win five dollars.” As quoted in *Ibid.*, 106. For the full text of the opening announcement, see Vincent Terrace, *Radio Program Openings and Closings, 1931-1972* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 112.

⁶⁹ “Zadankai kuizu bangumi no miryoku o kentō suru,” 25.

The idea of commoners stumping the experts was actually not a foreign concept to Japanese listeners. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the interwar and wartime years the masses emerged as the major social constituency and commoners and amateurs came to challenge the authority of experts and professionals. *Hanashi no izumi*'s basic concept – that ordinary listeners, the majority of whom did not have as much formal education and cultural capital as the intellectuals on the board of experts, could match their knowledge and wits with experts – was quite consonant with the trend that had emerged in the interwar period. Yamada Fumio, the vice governor of Tokyo once said that *Hanashi no izumi* was “probably, among an array of U.S. imports since the end of the war, one of the most suited to the taste of the masses.”⁷⁰ If *Hanashi no izumi* was particularly suited to the taste of the Japanese masses during the immediate postwar years, the familiarity of the show's concept among Japanese listeners was certainly a contributing factor.

The concept of “stumping the experts” also alleviated some of the listeners' antipathy to individual competition-based audience participation programs. In the immediate postwar years, many Japanese listeners found rating the ordinary people's performance on national radio rather distasteful and uncomfortable, as I suggested in the previous chapter. For example, listeners often expressed strong sympathy for amateur performers on *Nodo jiman* when specialists judged their talent in public. In *Hanashi no izumi*, panelists on the board of experts were highly educated celebrities who were supposed to be smarter than most of the listeners. The experts' ability to

⁷⁰ Yamada Fumio, “Kodomo Hanashi no izumi hakkan ni yosete,” *Kodomo Hanashi no izumi*, no. 1 (November 15, 1948), 2.

answer difficult questions often “awed” the listeners and drew their “admiration.”⁷¹ But the majority of listeners did not identify themselves with the contestants. Thus, experts failing to answer correctly on *Hanashi no izumi* spared the listeners many of the bad feelings they often felt when they observed their fellow commoners losing in a competition. Hosei University Professor of Philosophy Fukuda Sadayoshi explained the audience’s attitude in the following way: the audience would have felt “quite a strong sympathy toward the contestants” if the contestants were ordinary people. In contrast, listeners “did not think that they should try to become experts.” Listeners did not expect the experts to be “fellows of the audience” (*chōshū no nakama*) although they might “feel affection” toward these star intellectuals as fans.⁷²

The unique format of the show, existing radio practices and the cultural conditions of Japanese society might have played a mediating role in the quick adoption of the quiz show genre. Regardless of what caused the easy translation of the genre, *Hanashi no izumi* as the first quiz show in Japan allowed the majority of Japanese citizens to voluntarily learn and practice some of the basic formulae and the underlying value system of the quiz show, which was predicated on an individual-based, competitive mode of participation and reward by merit.

3. 4. Familiarizing with the Genre

⁷¹ Even the essayist Shibusawa Hideo confessed that he did not know the answers to most of the questions dealt with in *Hanashi no izumi*. Shibusawa raised the impressive level of knowledge as a contributing factor to the show’s appeal. He also mentioned that junior high school students in particular admired the regular members. “Zadankai Hanashi no izumi o ginmi suru,” 3.

⁷² Fukuda Sadayoshi, “Kuizu no omoshirosa,” *Hōsō bunka* 8 no. 10 (October 1953), 4-5.

With the sensational success of the first experiment, the quiz show became a staple of Japanese broadcasting and an integral part of everyday life for Japan's citizens. Print media also contributed to the quiz craze. Magazines and newspapers featured *Hanashi no izumi*, the moderator and contestants of the show in one way or another. Sets of questions and answers were made available in magazines, newspapers and books. Even weekly newspapers devoted to the show came out. In commemoration of the first anniversary of *Hanashi no izumi*, the moderator and regular experts formed a coterie (*Hanashi no izumi Dōjin*) and launched a weekly newspaper specializing on the show, titled *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi* (Fountain of Knowledge Weekly). This weekly publication featured questions and answers for each episode of *Hanashi no izumi*, interviews with the panel of experts, opinions and suggestions for the show, selected letters from listeners, responses to questions from the experts and reports of the shows recorded or held in various venues.⁷³

The success of *Hanashi no izumi* with adult listeners inspired a new format for school children. By spring of 1948 this idea crystallized into an effort to organize a cultural movement for encouraging students to practice their own version of the quiz show, called *Kodomo hanashi no izumi* (Children's Fountain of Knowledge), in which school children played contestants as well as question-makers. The event took place in a number of locations in the Tokyo area, often in schools. Yamada Fumio, the vice governor of Tokyo at the time led the movement. He had support from schools and

⁷³ *Hanashi no izumi dōjin* were Watanabe Shin'ichirō, Satō Hachirō, Shikiba Ryūzaburō (1898-1965, psychopathologist), Horiuchi Keizō, Haruyama Yukio and Wada Shinken at the time of formation.

PTAs, and cooperation from members of the *Hanashi no izumi* coterie. The latter often appeared on the stages of *Kodomo hanashi no izumi* to popularize the event. On November 2, 1948 *Kodomo hanashi no izumi* held a grand-scale general convention (*chūō taikai*) in the Hibiya Public Hall with four of the regular experts for *Hanashi no izumi*. A biweekly newspaper with the same title *Kodomo hanashi no izumi* also came out in November of 1948 targeting young listeners, parents and teachers.⁷⁴

The format of *Hanashi no izumi* was also widely borrowed. Newspapers and magazines posted reports of numerous local events titled *Hanashi no izumi* that did not necessarily have the sponsorship or approval of NHK. Teachers utilized the show's format as a useful teaching tool in classes. The prevalence of practices of *Hanashi no izumi* as a parlor game in workplaces, private gatherings and public transportation demonstrated that both the radio show and its format had penetrated various sectors of everyday life.⁷⁵ Yamamoto Kajirō succinctly described the explosive popularity of *Hanashi no izumi* and its far-reaching repercussions on Japanese society by using the metaphor of an epidemic. He wrote, "It is not just us [radio listeners, who are enjoying the show]. Judging from the craze of privately-operated *Hanashi no izumi* in such places as companies, factories and trains, each of eighty million fellow citizens from all over the country seems to be caught in an epidemic of *Hanashi no izumi* (*Hanashi*

⁷⁴ Fujimoto Mitsukiyo, "Kodomo Hanashi no izumi no hajimari," *Kodomo Hanashi no izumi*, no. 3 (January 20, 1949), 2; Yamada, "Kodomo Hanashi no izumi no hakkan ni yosete." The four experts were Horiuchi, Satō, Watanabe and Haruyama; "Dō ni mitsu haru no kaze Tama shōnein de 'Kodomo no Hanashi no izumi' dai 9-kai," *Kodomo Hanashi no izumi*, no. 6 (April 15, 1949), 1.

⁷⁵ Reports indicate that both city and rural groups organized themselves into small quiz groups. Employees in factories were also reported to have taken up the new "game." "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 11 June 1947"

no izumi-byō).⁷⁶ Even the imperial family was not an exception. The emperor's brother, Prince Takamatsu, Prince Takeda, Princess Takeda and Prince Higashikuni, son-in-law of the Emperor, observed a recording of the show on May 14, 1947.⁷⁷ The young Crown Prince Akihito and his brother Prince Yoshinomiya were part of an enthusiastic audience of Peer's School students who viewed a recording of the show on October 2, 1947.⁷⁸ Prince Chichibu, the emperor's other brother, was known to be a fan of the show. He confessed in an interview with Wada Shinken that he sent questions four times under the name of his servant, but none was selected.⁷⁹

Inspired by the success of *Hanashi no izumi*, the Radio Unit premiered another quiz show patterned after WVTR's *Twenty Questions* on November 1, 1947 with the title *Nijū no tobira* (Twenty questions).⁸⁰ *Nijū no tobira* shared a couple of qualities with *Hanashi no izumi*: four regular experts and a weekly guest answered questions mailed in by listeners, while listeners received cash prizes when their questions

⁷⁶ Yamamoto, “‘Hanashi no izumi’-byō,” 28.

⁷⁷ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 7 May 1947,” “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 14 May 1947,” and “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 7 May 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁷⁸ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 8 Oct 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331. The Crown Prince's presence achieved great publicity through the print media. For example, “Kōtaishi-sama Hanashi no izumi e,” *Kodomo Asahi* 8, no. 8 (October 15, 1947), 3-5. Also, “Hanashi no izumi ni chinkyaku: Kōtaishi-sama rokuon o sankan,” *Shōnen Yomiuri* 2, no. 9 (November 1947), 1.

⁷⁹ “Chichibunomiya-sama mizukara shutsudai, daga yondo tomo botsu ni,” *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 7 (January 22 through January 28, 1948), 1.

⁸⁰ From the first broadcast, the occupation personnel conducted rehearsals in a very meticulous manner to make sure that contestants could perform the genre seamlessly. It was well known that CIE summoned sixty individuals from various fields in order to choose panelists for *Nijū no tobira*. CIE took considerable time and a number of auditions to select the right people for *Nijū no tobira*. See Fujiura Kō, “Kuizu no kōgengaku,” *Hōsō Asahi*, no. 34 (May 1959), 12; the preparation took two months, during which tens of people gathered, studied the show and rehearsed intensively. Yuasa Shūichirō, “Nijū no tobira o hiraku,” *Hōsō bunka* 2, no. 8 (December 1947), 16.

stumped the experts. Many of the contestants for *Nijū no tobira* were individuals in the culture industry who had a folksy charm. The regular cast included Miyata Shigeo (1900-1971), a painter and writer; Fujiura Kō (1898-1979), a lyricist (*sakushika*); Takehisa Chieko (1912-2006), a screen actress; and Ōshita Udaru (1896-1966), an author of detective stories (*sui-ri shōsetsuka*). Yet unlike *Hanashi no izumi*, the show was a guessing game based upon deductive reasoning in which the contestants confronted the question master collectively. For each question, the question master revealed the general category of each answer such as animal, vegetable or mineral. Contestants took turns asking the question master a yes-or-no question, which had to be answered correctly within twenty rounds of interrogation. The responses of the question master and the reactions of studio audiences were the only hints to help contestants move closer to the answer.⁸¹

Audience reactions to *Nijū no tobira* were favorable. As *Nijū no tobira*'s popularity grew *Hanashi no izumi* showed a slight decrease in listeners' ratings. Yet the two shows maintained popularity overall. *Nijū no tobira* followed in the footsteps of *Hanashi no izumi*. *Nijū no tobira* enjoyed extensive media publicity. The producer, announcer and regular experts on the board issued a biweekly newspaper for the show called *Nijū no tobira shinbun* (Twenty Gates Newspaper).⁸² Soon it was common to

⁸¹ Ibid., 16-18. Fujikura Shūichi (1914-2008), the question master, also contributed to the approachable atmosphere of *Nijū no tobira*. Fujikura had built a unique intimacy with listeners as the exclusive interviewer for *Gaitō rokuon* (Man on the Street) who met pedestrians face-to-face.

⁸² This newspaper is held in the Prange Collection at the University of Maryland.

find young people enjoying the format of the show as a game on the train. Journalists, too, played the fame in their own gatherings.⁸³

As *Hanashi no izumi* and *Nijū no tobira* familiarized Japanese listeners with the rules of the game and the pleasure of quizzing, some listeners began to request that listeners be allowed to play as contestants as a way to make the shows more interesting. Such requests often appeared in the "letter-to-the editor" column of *Shūkan hanashi no izumi* around early 1948. A listener from Isesaki City in Gunma Prefecture requested that NHK give in-studio audiences a chance to answer the question in case the board of experts was not able to give the correct answer.⁸⁴ Another listener from Osaka suggested that the board of experts throw back one question in each broadcast to the listeners.⁸⁵ A listener's letter proposed that question senders be invited to the studio since it would be fun to observe the board of experts and question makers "confront (*taiji*) each other" in person.⁸⁶

It was at about the same time that the occupation forces considered broadcasting a new quiz show in which Japanese listeners would participate as contestants. According to Kimura Ryūzō, the head of the Entertainment Department of NHK, in March 1948 Japanese broadcasters received background information on an American quiz show called *What's My Name?* as the basis for a new quiz show in Japan. The plan to air the show was postponed due to concerns that it was premature

⁸³ Yuasa, "Nijū no tobira o hiraku," 16.

⁸⁴ A letter from Iijima Katsuya from Honmachi, Isesaki City, "Tōsho no izumi," *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 8 (January 29 through February 4, 1948), 4.

⁸⁵ A letter from Kishi Yoshinori from Kitayama-cho, Tennōji-ku, Osaka City, "Tōsho no izumi," *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 13 (March 4 through 10, 1948), 2.

⁸⁶ A letter from Kuryū Kosaburō from Motohongō-cho, Hachiōji City, "Tōsho no izumi," *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 14 (March 11 through 17, 1948), 4.

to offer instant cash rewards given the social conditions of the time, including the food shortage.⁸⁷ The show premiered on January 2, 1949 under the title *Watashi wa dare deshō* (What's My Name?). As the title suggests, it was a guessing game in which contestants identified the names of famous figures from categories such as current figures (*toki no hito*), historical figures, people in the humanities (*bunka keitō*), people in science (*rika keitō*), entertainers and athletes. This show also selected questions from listeners. Contestants picked a preferred category and received hints from one to as many as five times.

Watashi wa dare deshō was a landmark program in Japanese quiz show broadcasting in two respects. It was the first quiz program that invited ordinary listeners to be contestants. In principle, eligibility was granted to anybody who was “able to engage in conversation satisfactorily and possessed well-rounded common knowledge.” The age limit required that applicants be at least high school students or older since NHK designed the show as “a game for adults.” The producers selected contestants by drawing from applicants’ postcards classified in advance according to desired question categories and gender.⁸⁸ Secondly, it was the first time in its broadcasting history that NHK offered instant cash rewards. The show gave contestants up to ten yen for each correctly answered question.

Although NHK kept the cash prize moderate, the unfamiliar concept of instant cash awards initially offended a considerable number of listeners. Some listeners charged that *Watashi wa dare deshō* was not a “decent (*hin no ii*)” program because

⁸⁷ “Zadankai ‘Watashi wa dare deshō’ o kentō suru,” *Hōsō bunka* 5, no. 1 (January 1950), 26.

⁸⁸ Yamakawa, “Watashi wa dare deshō no enshutsu,” 8.

the show was “dealing with money.” Others suspected the show of promoting gambling. Some even claimed that the show was a kind of street gambling that was notorious for tricking pedestrians (*densuke tobaku*). Yamakawa Kin’nosuke recalled that, “at the outset, the criticism was severe (*taihen na mono*).” As of March 1949, two months after the show’s premiere, criticism of the cash prize had not faded. But a year after the first broadcast of *Watashi wa dare deshō*, Hijikata Masami, a *Tokyo Newspaper* (Tokyo shimbun) journalist and radio critic, wrote in *Hōsō bunka*, “It is the power of radio. After all, listeners got trained into it (*kunren sarete*), so by now, I think, they wouldn’t be fussy at all about the cash reward.”⁸⁹

The concept of offering instant monetary rewards to competing listeners led to the misunderstanding that *Watashi wa dare deshō* was a giveaway show.⁹⁰ The occupation once called it “the first giveaway show in Japan.”⁹¹ Structurally speaking, however, *Watashi wa dare deshō* was closer to the intellectual quiz show than the giveaway. First of all, the cash prize was granted as a reward for the contestants’ performance. If the contestants gave the correct answer on the first hint, they received ten yen. The fewer hints the contestants used, the more prize money was granted. Thus prize giving in *Watashi wa dare deshō* followed the rationale of the intellectual quiz show: a merit-based reward which was distinguishable from the chance-based logic of the giveaway. To be sure, *Watashi wa dare deshō* adopted relatively simple questions

⁸⁹ “Zadankai ‘Watashi wa dare deshō’ o kentō suru,” 26-27; Yamakawa Kin’nosuke, “Watashi wa dare deshō gakuyabanashi,” *Fujin kōron* (October 1949), 65.

⁹⁰ For example, Uda Michio, the chief of NHK’s Production Department jumped to the conclusion that *Watashi wa dare deshō* was a giveaway simply because the show offered prizes to the contestants. See “Zadankai ‘Watashi wa dare deshō’ o kentō suru,” 26.

⁹¹ “Weekly Report of Radio Branch for the Period 6 January through 12 January, 1949,” Folder 7, Box 5318, RG 331.

compared to *Hanashi no izumi* because the show put average listeners on the answering end. If overly difficult questions were given, it could discourage average listeners from applying to be on the show. Still, answering the questions required a certain level of knowledge and effort. Japanese listeners did not welcome easy questions either. According to Yamakawa Kin'nosuke in the Production Department of NHK, at the beginning many listeners complained that the questions were too easy, which eventually forced the program staff to adopt more difficult questions.⁹²

The stage arrangement also emphasized an imagined rivalry between contestants and the question master. Every week the show presented twelve contestants on the stage. Each of the twelve contestants was individually summoned in front of the question master, the representative of the listeners who made questions. Although *Watashi wa dare deshō*'s contestants competed individually with the question master, the show employed a gimmick that had all the contestants compete with each other in the closing round. The gimmick was called the "one hint game," and it offered only one hint and gave one thousand yen to the person who first figured out the right answer.⁹³

Finally, the cash prize that *Watashi wa dare deshō* offered was rather moderate for a giveaway. It was structurally impossible for NHK to offer the lavish prizes given by American giveaway shows. Unlike American commercial broadcasting companies sponsored by numerous manufacturers and advertising agents, NHK was a public

⁹² For Yamakawa Kinnosuke's comment on this matter, see "Zadankai 'Watashi wa dare deshō' o kentō suru," 27.

⁹³ On the stage plan for *Watashi wa dare deshō*, see Yamakawa, "'Watashi wa dare deshō' no enshutsu," 9.

broadcasting system, most of whose income came from licensed listeners' fees. From the beginning of *Watashi wa dare deshō* some Japanese listeners expressed discontent over the cash prize, believing that while "listeners had taken trouble to pay expensive fees," NHK was "wasting it [money] like water." NHK limited the maximum amount per person to one thousand yen plus an additional thousand yen for the one hint game. The maximum budget allotted for each episode's cash prizes was ten thousand yen.⁹⁴

Furu Takeo, a staff-member of NHK's Opinion Research Department, remarked that *Watashi wa dare deshō* manifested the tensions between the question-master, contestants and listeners, which Herta Herzog has identified as the source of the appeal of a question-centered intellectual quiz show in her research on audience reactions to the American quiz program *Professor Quiz*. Drawing on Herzog's study, Furu demonstrated that *Watashi wa dare deshō* maintained the proper balance among the four appeals of an intellectual quiz show: competitive appeal, educational appeal, self-rating appeal and sporting appeal. Furu observed that commoners' participation as actual contestants significantly increased the competitive and self-rating appeal, in Herzog's terms, compared to *Hanashi no izumi*, which had experts as contestants. Furu noted that "as the [knowledge] level between contestants and listeners came closer" it sharpened "the sense of rivalry" that listeners felt toward the contestants. This was the major source of competitive appeal according to Herzog. The questions

⁹⁴ BBC's adoption of American quiz shows provides a comparative perspective on this issue. In the British context, the giveaway was a symbol of highly commercialized American broadcasting culture, which BBC believed unsuitable to Britain. As a public broadcasting system BBC consciously maintained a low cash prize level and disregarded giveaways in order to avert the accusation of using license holders' money inappropriately. On this matter, refer to Holmes, *The Quiz Show*, 37-38.

for *Watashi wa dare deshō* did not require as much specialized knowledge to answer as *Hanashi no izumi*, thereby enabling average listeners to answer more questions. The lowered bar in *Nijū no tobira* intensified the listener's interest in testing one's ability, or what Herta Herzog called the self-rating appeal of the quiz show.⁹⁵

With *Watashi wa dare deshō* Japanese listeners finally encountered a typical audience-participation based quiz show and practiced the genre in person as on-air contestants. Most important, participants chose to be quiz contestants and voluntarily subjected themselves to the rules of game and underlying rationale of the quiz show. In so doing, they, whether consciously or not, simulated the idea that individuals could acquire wealth and fame by proving their ability through a supposedly fair competition. Listeners also willingly and actively participated in such a simulation by identifying and competing with contestants. In this light, the success of *Watashi wa dare deshō* indicated acceptance of the quiz show genre by Japanese radio culture, and was the culmination of experiments with the replicas of American shows in this genre. From 1949, NHK staff began to broadcast original quiz shows. *Tonchi kyōshitsu* (Quick Wit Classroom), the first quiz show created by Japanese radio personnel, simulated an everyday practice that was very familiar to Japanese listeners, namely a school class. The question master played the role of a teacher and the contestants acted as if they were students.⁹⁶ Another successful quiz show produced by NHK personnel was

⁹⁵ Furu, "Ninki bangumi o kentō suru (ka)," 23. For the four appeals categorized by Herzog, see Herzog, "Professor Quiz," 65-90.

⁹⁶ For these shows' concepts, formats and operation, see Kimura Ryūzō, "Tonchi kyōshitsu are kore," *Hōsō bunka* 4, no.4 (May-June 1949), 42-43 and Nakamichi Sadao et al., "Bangumi shōkai 'Mitsu no uta kikaku kara hōsō made,'" *Hōsō bunka* 7, no. 5 (May 1952), 40-42.

Mitsu no uta (Three Songs), a program that offered a cash prize when the contestants successfully sang one, two or three songs without stumbling on the lyrics.

3. 5. Configuring the Future: Quiz Shows and Postwar Rebuilding of the Nation-state

Japanese citizens' voluntary engagement with the quiz show genre signified the reconstitution of a subjectivity in which individuals came to accept free competition as a justifiable and fair criterion for determining one's position in a meritocratic socio-cultural system. Once Japanese listeners believed in the rationale of free and fair competition underlying the quiz show genre, they demanded corrections when they found the quiz shows' actual operations going against the premises of the genre's participatory rules. Unequal opportunity to participate was one of the charges listeners brought up in this regard. When *Watashi wa dare deshō* first started on JOAK (Tokyo central station of NHK) the show tended to invite listeners who lived near the radio station. Listeners noticed that the Tokyo-centered operation of the show ran counter to the principle of equal opportunity to join in free and fair competition. Yamakawa Kin'nosuke, the producer of *Watashi wa dare deshō* recalls that there were letters saying, "It is a disadvantage [to local residents] if only people from Tokyo are on the show. I won't pay for the listening fees any more."⁹⁷ This kind of complaint forced the show to start visiting local stations from the summer of 1950.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Yamakawa, "Watashi wa dare deshō gakuyabanashi," 65.

⁹⁸ "Zadankai 'Watashi wa dare deshō' o kentō suru," 26; the announcer and the producer, and later the planner, traveled around local stations. It took about two years to go around forty five

As I have noted earlier, individualism, free competition and meritocracy were not entirely novel concepts in postwar Japan given the long history of modern subject formation. Nevertheless, the reemergence of these values in occupied Japan certainly emblemized the transformation of the organizing principles of society and the role of individuals under the hegemony of American liberal capitalist democracy. It is misleading, however, to interpret this transformation through a simple binary between the wartime submission of individuals to the national polity and the postwar liberation of individuals. If the government and political and cultural elites pressed for unity among social members as the key to a stronger nation during the war, social discourses of postwar Japan envisioned that individuals' pursuit of personal material advancement within the society would also eventually lead to social good.⁹⁹ Japanese liberal political thinkers such as Maruyama Masao also conceptualized the individual subjects desirable in postwar Japan as free and autonomous, but simultaneously conscious of their role as responsible, self-disciplined members of the nation.¹⁰⁰

The social discourse of radio quiz shows during the occupation also associated individual activities with the fate of the nation-state. Both opinion leaders and average listeners often claimed that quiz show practices would serve to reconstitute Japan as a

stations including seven central stations (*chūō hōsōkyoku*). Yamakawa, “‘Watashi wa dare deshō’ no enshutsu,” 8.

⁹⁹ Even though complete *laissez faire* was not a popular notion in the post-Great Depression context, the modified global capitalist system reasserted some of the basic principles of liberal capitalism such as private enterprise and free competition with guaranteed minimum social security.

¹⁰⁰ For a useful analysis of Maruyama's understanding of postwar individuals and the nation, refer to Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, 170-193.

“cultural nation (*bunka kokka*)” by encouraging Japanese individuals to “acquire common knowledge” and “good taste (*kenzen na shumi*).”¹⁰¹

But perhaps more important than simply acquiring “common knowledge” was the sense of purpose and certainty that quiz shows provided in the postwar chaos. Hirakawa Tadaichi, the host of the radio English conversation program *Come, Come English*, said in an interview explaining the social atmosphere of the occupation period, “Unless the Japanese could recover their sense of optimism and find something positive in their lives, a reason to believe in the future, there seemed little hope of trying to rebuild the nation.”¹⁰² To put it differently, postwar Japanese society had to motivate individuals to care about themselves and strive for a better future instead of giving way to despair and self-abandonment.¹⁰³

In this situation, the quiz show provided a radio-mediated alternative reality that was diametrically opposed to “outside reality.” The quiz show reality had clear rules that everyone followed as they progressed through the game. There was only one answer to a given question, which left no confusion. NHK staff member Okuya Kumao observed that the question-and-answer format of the quiz shows “touched subtleties (*kibi*) of the mass psyche of the era” which was longing for the “one and

¹⁰¹ A listener’s letter from Idezuki Kiyoto from Ōta-ku, Tokyo, “Tōsho no izumi,” *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 12 (February 26 through March 3, 1948), 2; A listener’s letter from Shimada Yoshio, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, “Tōsho no izumi,” *Shūkan Hanashi no izumi*, no. 7 (January 22 through January 28, 1948), 4; Fujimoto, “Kodomo Hanashi no izumi no hajimari.”

¹⁰² Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 401.

¹⁰³ On the social situation of early postwar Japan under the U.S. occupation, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, especially Chapter 3, “Kyodatsu: Exhaustion and Despair.”

only truth.”¹⁰⁴ This was a plausible argument given the social disorder in the early postwar era and utter confusion about the “truth” of the recent war. In the initial phase of the occupation, SCAP’s education and information policy focused on the moral and psychological disarmament of the Japanese. The Radio Unit advised NHK to air information programs designed to provoke “war guilt” and replace the information released to the Japanese during the war with the CIE-approved history of the war, such as *Shinsō wa kōda* (Now It Can Be Told).¹⁰⁵ The reality “within” the quiz show provided a sense of certainty for Japanese listeners in an era of uncertainty.

Not only did the quiz show provide a temporary escape from harsh reality, it also delivered a positive vision for the near future. Here we may benefit from John Fiske’s insights into the time contraction in a quiz show. He explains that the school system sells itself to its students by promising that good work at school will lead to a good job, which in turn will provide the “good life.” In school, the work must be done now while the ultimate reward exists only in the distant future. Yet the quiz show collapses the time gap with instant rewards.¹⁰⁶ Although the occupation offered the American model by disseminating ideal images of American liberal capitalist society, the actual benefits that the model promised were not given to Japan’s citizens during the occupation period. The economic situation slowly improved. Not until around 1955, three years after the departure of the occupation forces, did Japanese economic production recover to its pre-war level. Around the same time Japanese society began

¹⁰⁴ Okuya Kumao, “Atemono hōsō no kōzui,” *Hōsō* 9, no. 2 (February 1949), 24-25.

¹⁰⁵ On the radio programming for “war guilt,” see Mayo, “The War of Words Continues: American Radio Guidance in Occupied Japan,” 57-60.

¹⁰⁶ Fiske, *Television Culture*, 274-275.

to enjoy the material affluence that the Japanese citizens had dreamed of during the occupation.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of the slow progress of the national economic recovery, however, quiz shows gave instant rewards to Japanese citizens. In so doing, quiz shows motivated Japanese listeners to take immediate action and sharpened their sense of purpose in participating in an intellectual competition. The quiz show helped Japanese citizens to envision that rewards would unfailingly follow if they successfully carried out their roles according to the given rules under American hegemony. The clear vision of forthcoming rewards could serve as “a reason to believe in the future” in the process of rebuilding the nation-state.

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate that radio quiz shows posed a “new” form of subjectivity for postwar Japan by constructing a microcosm of an ideal future for the nation in the image of American liberal capitalist democracy. I argued that the quiz show provided a space in which Japanese listeners symbolically practiced some of the normative participatory principles of the postwar era. In the following chapter, I will discuss another radio show, which proposed an ideal form of subjectivity for postwar Japanese society, a CIE-designed popular radio serial drama titled *Kane no naru oka* (The Bell Hill). Based on a story of war orphans and homeless children who

¹⁰⁷ John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, edited by Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 16-17. On the images that the U.S. occupation actively circulated in order to arouse desire for the American model, see Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory*, 78-79. Igarashi talks about household appliances; for *Blondie*, the popular cartoon which depicted a “typical” middle-class American family and had great influence in shaping popular desires for consumerism and the material comforts of the United States, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 252; On the radio show *Amerika dayori* (Report from America), a weekly review of important events in the United States and American lifestyles, refer to Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, *Yokubō no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Kōsaidō, 1989), 44.

seek to rehabilitate themselves and build a community with the assistance of a sympathetic young repatriate soldier, this drama urged Japanese listeners to take an active part in helping troubled and “distrustful” youths transform themselves into worthy citizens of postwar Japan. If the quiz show offered an alternative reality or a vision of the ideal future in liberal capitalist form, *Kane no naru oka* publicized liberal principles, such as the belief in human goodness, self-correction and self-help, in a sentimental narrative. This drama motivated numerous individuals to put into practice what the characters did in the show, demonstrating the power of radio reality in mediating the formation of new subjectivity in postwar Japan.

Chapter 4

Radio Serial Drama *Kane no naru oka* (Bell Hill): The Vision of Rehabilitation in Occupied Japan

4. 1. Introduction

Shortly after the U.S. occupation forces left Japan, prominent playwright and radio drama author Kikuta Kazuo (1908-1974) made a striking confession in the June 1952 issue of the Japanese popular magazine *Bungei shunjū*. The magazine featured a retrospective account of Japanese broadcasting during the seven years of U.S. occupation. Recalling his service to NHK in producing several popular radio serial dramas during the occupation, Kikuta revealed that the majority of radio shows broadcast since the end of war were “beyond Japanese control.” The programs were actually designed by the Radio Unit of CIE and aired under the name of NHK. They were “*Ame-chan bangumi* (American-made programs)” in contemporary broadcasters’ jargon. Most important, he admitted that the radio dramas that he had written for NHK were no exception.¹

Kikuta’s confession should have surprised the majority of listeners. To be sure, many listeners were aware that some radio programs aired during the occupation were copies of American shows. Some listeners easily discerned the occupation’s political intentions in overtly political information programs even during the occupation. But it had not been public knowledge until the end of the occupation that radio dramas, a

¹ Kikuta Kazuo, “Kane no naru oka no zengo: 7-nenkan no hōsō o kaerimite,” *Bungei shunjū* 30, no. 9 (June 1952), 156-157.

popular entertainment form often assumed to be non-political, were also meticulously designed to serve the occupation's political agenda. An anonymous writer to the *Asahi shinbun* later recalled, "I knew that quiz shows such as *Hanashi no izumi* and *Nijū no tobira* were replicas of American quiz shows but did not know that *Kane no naru oka* and *Mukō sangen ryōdonari* (Good Neighbors) resulted from SCAP's orders that aimed to educate [the Japanese] about the prevention of juvenile vagrants from becoming juvenile delinquents and about democratization of family life."²

This chapter explores how the radio serial drama, another popular entertainment genre implemented during the Occupation, interplayed with larger political projects, such as the rebuilding of the nation-state and the making of postwar liberal subjects. The major analytical object of this chapter is the serial drama *Kane no naru oka* (Bell Hill). It was the first children's serial drama in Japanese broadcasting and an "*Ame-chan bangumi*" that the occupation designed as part of the political campaign for child welfare and the prevention of juvenile delinquency. It was one of Kikuta's most beloved creations and also remained one of the most popular shows that aired during the occupation. NHK premiered the show on July 5, 1947. While calling for public attention to the welfare of children, namely the war-affected homeless children known as "juvenile vagrants (*furōji*)," *Kane no naru oka* featured the story of a group of children who built their pointed-roof home on a green hill in Nagano Prefecture after overcoming a series of hardships and social prejudices. Running for more than three years with a total of seven hundred-ninety episodes before its

² "Rajio ga kagayaita jidai," *Asahi shinbun* (January 22, 1996).

conclusion on December 29, 1950, *Kane no naru oka* and its theme song, an organ music accompaniment composed and played by Udoyama Yūji, became a favorite children's program.³ The radio drama was also adapted to film and theatrical plays.

Even though scholarly efforts to analyze *Kane no naru oka* as a major historical object are few, the show has appeared in empirical studies of war orphans and juvenile vagrants in early postwar Japan. These studies, however, have dealt with juvenile vagrants and war orphans mainly as social problems that “objectively” existed in the aftermath of the war, and have been concerned with whether *Kane no naru oka* reflected such a reality correctly or publicized the given issue effectively.⁴

Approaching the problem of “juvenile vagrants” as a discursively constructed category, this chapter proposes that the historical significance of *Kane no naru oka* resides in its contribution to stimulating social interest in “juvenile vagrants” from the particular perspective of a vision of rehabilitation based upon progressive ideas of human redeemability and the liberal notion of the individual as a self-governing agent. I will show how the particular vision that this radio drama offered came to hold enormous fascination both within the social atmosphere of occupied Japan, and in the global context of Japan's place in the postwar world order under U.S. hegemony. At the same time, this chapter argues that the sentimental narrative of *Kane no naru oka* was an important contributing factor in the great sensation that the show created and that this

³ “Weekly Report of the Radio Branch for the Period of 29 December 1950 to 4 January 1951,” Folder 26, Box 5597, RG 331; “‘Bell Hill’ Program to Be Discontinued as of End of April,” Folder 17, Box 5312, RG 331. This document is the English translation of a Japanese article featured in *Tokyo shinbun* on March 30, 1950.

⁴ Kitagawa Kenzō, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” *Minshūshi kenkyū*, no. 71 (May 2006), 27-43; Henmi Masa'aki, “Haisen chokugo no Nihon ni okeru furōji/sensō koji no rekishi,” *Hokkaidō Daigaku daigakuin kyōiku kenkyūin kiyō*, no. 103 (December 2007), 11-53.

quality eventually inspired numerous individuals to take concrete actions to foster the rehabilitation of juvenile vagrants.

4. 2. Discursive Construction of “*Furōji* (Jvenile Vagrants)”

As Kikuta’s postwar confession revealed, the initiatives to broadcast *Kane no naru oka* came from the occupation’s radio personnel. The Radio Unit of CIE designed *Kane no naru oka* as part of its larger information campaign on child welfare and the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Occupation radio personnel developed the plan for the drama, often called a “child welfare program” in the early stages of its production, in April 1947 or earlier. The “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 16 May 1947” provides one of the earliest records on this subject in the occupation documents, stating that “a plan for a series of twice-weekly ‘child welfare’ programs is in [the] process of development.” The report designated the objective of the show to be a “story with central characters that will carry the plot through which positive actions pertinent to the situation, as it exists today, may be revealed.” In the following week, the Radio Unit instructed Kikuta to begin to develop the plot outline and the format for the show. The synopsis for fifty-two episodes, which in retrospect may be considered the first season of the show, presented the theme of the whole project in the most definitive way and came out around late May 1947.⁵

⁵ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 16 May 1947,” “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 23 May 1947,” and “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 21 May 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

Kane no naru oka's plot focused on the struggle of juvenile vagrants to renounce bad habits and adjust to a "healthy" and disciplined lifestyle through liberal guidance and the care of a young, devoted repatriate soldier named Kagami Shūhei. Shūhei returns from the war to learn his father has died and his younger brother Shūkichi, who had been left in the hands of his uncle, has been sent to a juvenile detention camp. Confused with what happened but keeping faith in his brother's good nature, Shūhei comes to Tokyo to discharge Shūkichi from the reformatory, only to discover that his brother has already fled the institution. In search of his brother, Shūhei ventures to Tokyo where he meets a waif and orphan named Ryūta, who is about the same age as his own younger brother. Ryūta introduces Shūhei to the world of juvenile vagrants. Witnessing the juvenile vagrants' miserable living conditions and their ill treatment by prejudiced adults, including police and social workers, Shūhei commiserates with these unfortunate children and concludes that adults are responsible for what is happening to the children. He first takes Ryūta to his home village and starts an independent farm while encouraging Ryūta to rediscover his inner ethics and to rehabilitate himself. Later Shūhei brings Ryūta's homeless friends from Tokyo to join them. Overcoming a series of difficulties, both financial and social, Shūhei finally creates a small community for juvenile vagrants with some assistance from sympathetic private individuals in the village and finds his younger brother.⁶

⁶ For the English translation of the original synopsis submitted to the Radio Unit, see "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for Week Ending 21 May 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331. For a synopsis published in Japanese, see Kikuta Kazuo, "Kane no naru oka' no arasuji," *Kurasu* 3, no. 5 (May 1948), 8-15. For published scripts, refer to Kikuta Kazuo, *Kane no naru oka dai 1-hen Ryūta no maki* (Tokyo: Rajio Shinbunsha Shuppanbu, 1948) and *Kane no naru oka dai 2-hen Shinū no maki* (Rajio Shinbunsha Shuppanbu, 1948).

Kane no naru oka was a part of the occupation's political campaigns, as I have mentioned. But it is imperative to note that as a fictional drama, *Kane no naru oka* contributed to the occupation's campaigns in quite a different manner from informational programs. Occupation personnel conceived of *Kane no naru oka* as an experiment for promoting political campaigns through popular entertainment forms. One of the unit's weekly reports indicated that this radio drama "presents child welfare problems in an entertaining manner, and is an excellent medium for the painless projection of constructive child welfare principles."⁷ Kikuta's talent as an experienced popular writer made an important contribution to the presentation of political themes in an amusing manner. Kikuta managed to give a cliffhanger ending to each script so as to carry interest onto the next episode. The Radio Unit praised the show as "probably the best written and produced show being aired over the BCJ [NHK] network."⁸

Kane no naru oka was a massive hit. Monitoring listeners' responses in the first week of its broadcast, the occupation's radio staff noticed its potential as "a first class listener appeal program." The show drew considerably favorable reactions from listeners and attracted in particular young girls and boys.⁹ The most enthusiastic listeners were those who were about the same age as the main characters of the show,

⁷ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 16 July 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁸ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 1 October 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

⁹ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 9 July 1947," "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 16 July 1947," and "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 30 July 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

elementary school sixth graders to first graders of middle school.¹⁰ Writer Hatayama Hiroshi's recalls that *Kane no naru oka* became an integral part of the everyday life of school children. What the main characters did in the previous day's episode was always the topic of conversation in school. When there was someone who missed the show, about ten children who were eager to talk about the show gathered around him/her and reenacted the drama. He himself was a big fan of the show. He enjoyed the drama so greatly that he would not miss a single episode, no matter how bad the radio reception was and no matter how distracting his younger siblings were, whom he was supposed to look after. The theme song also became an object of great affection. Many listeners mentioned their love for the theme song, with its characteristic bell-ringing sounds accompanied by the Hammond organ. Hatayama recalls that the theme song and sound of the ringing bell in the song were not simply background music but "penetrated into" his "pace and rhythms of everyday life."¹¹ *Kane no naru oka* reportedly even caused crowds of children to congregate in front of a radio shop around broadcasting time in an area affected by frequent blackouts in the fall and winter of 1947 when the program was at the zenith of its popularity.¹² In the tenth week of its broadcast, pleased with extraordinarily enthusiastic reactions from listeners, the Radio Unit concluded that *Kane no naru oka* was "effective [at] performing the

¹⁰ It is Udoyama's observation. See Kokubun Ichitarō et al., "Zadankai Kane no naru oka," *Kyōiku*, no. 1 (December 1948), 10-11.

¹¹ Hatayama Hiroshi, "Kane no naru oka kara 30-nen," *Ushio*, no. 219 (August 1977), 156-157.

¹² Kikuta Kazuo, "Kane no naru oka kara: mishiranu S-ko e no tegami," *Fujin kōron* 32, no. 4 (April 1948), 44.

functions for which it was designed” and that the results appeared to “have justified the experiment.”¹³

The popular success of the experiment held particular significance for the occupation since the typical political campaign programs directed by CIE’s radio personnel often aroused antipathy from Japanese listeners. By order of CIE, NHK had been airing information programs during the late evening, a time that numerous surveys indicated were the most widely listened time slots. Some listeners complained about the scheduling, saying that there was “too much preaching” and that the programs were “tiresome” to most listeners, who were tired after work.¹⁴ They desired more entertainment programs and even suggested that NHK abolish some of the information programs that they considered “unnecessary.” A listener wrote in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai nippō* that the information programs “have become very unpopular within various circles” and “listeners are offended because NHK broadcasts this program [sic] even on Saturdays and Sundays.” The listener, introduced as Mr. Toyama from Kamata-ward of Tokyo, was confident that if NHK conducted a public opinion survey on the matter it would prove the truth of his claim.¹⁵

Others sharply criticized certain similarities between the information programs that aired during the occupation and the indoctrination programs that aired on the radio during the war. According to an NHK survey on listeners’ wants conducted in June

¹³ “Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 10 September 1947,” Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

¹⁴ “Statistics on Letters from Listeners (Feb), Hosō Bunka Kenkyūjo Geppo [sic],” Folder 2, Box 5235, RG 331.

¹⁵ “Radio Criticism: Hour for Information Unnecessary, *Sekai Nippo* [sic], 2 June 1948,” Folder 2, Box 5235, RG 331.

1949, many listeners hoped that NHK would “abolish lecture programs like Industrial Hour, Labor Hour, New Farm Village, Report to the Nation, etc.” on the basis that “these programs closely resemble government broadcasts during the war.”¹⁶ A review of radio programs published in the popular magazine *Bungei shunjū* declared “the intention of the government to educate the people through radio programs” to be unsatisfactory because listeners could “easily find this intention in such programs as the Labor Hour, New Farm Village and others.” The review pointed out that a similar tendency to disseminate government intentions through radio had been seen during the war in the programs controlled by the Information Bureau.¹⁷

Thus, a typical information program was a double-edged sword at best: it served the occupation as a direct means of disseminating political messages but simultaneously exposed the occupation’s intention to shape the political attitudes of the Japanese. The compatibility between wartime and postwar information programs could undermine the image of the occupation as a democratic force radically different from the wartime Japanese government. *Kane no naru oka* in the form of mass entertainment offered the occupation a useful alternative to typical information programs by creating a popular channel to audiences without arousing ill feelings. The listener reactions documented in newspaper reports, magazine articles, individual recollections and memoirs, however, indicate that the Radio Unit’s remarks were rather an understatement of the show’s effect. *Kane no naru oka* not only presented

¹⁶ “Radio Organ Magazine Opinion Survey on ‘What the Public Wants from BCJ Broadcasts,’ Hoso [sic], 1 Jul 1949,” Folder 4, Box 5320, RG 331.

¹⁷ “Brief Review of Recent Radio Programs, Bungei Shunju [sic], June 1948,” Folder 2, Box 5325, RG 331.

child welfare problems and principles in a painless and entertaining manner; the radio drama created a profound sensation in early postwar Japan, a sensation that emotionally engaged numerous individuals with the drama's story and characters and eventually propelled them into heated debates and social commitments.

Before analyzing *Kane no naru oka*'s characteristics and social impact, I would like to discuss the particular implications that juvenile vagrants had in the early postwar context. Even though the drama was produced under the larger banner of the child welfare campaign, the occupation's radio personnel had from the very beginning a clear intention to bring the rescue of a particular category of children, homeless children affected by the recent war, to the attention of listeners. According to Kikuta's diary, on April 2, 1947 NHK producer Udoyama informed him that NHK was planning to produce a radio serial drama on "war-affected juvenile vagrants" (*sensai furōji*) on the advice of occupation forces and asked him to meet with Major Huggins, the chief of the Radio Unit.¹⁸ When the meeting took place, Huggins requested that Kikuta write a "story of the rescue of juvenile vagrants (*furōji kyūsaimono*)" for a fifteen-minute radio serial drama to be aired twice a week. Occupation personnel and Kikuta agreed to inform listeners of the drama's special concern with children in this particular category. The opening announcement said that *Kane no naru oka* was intended to prevent juvenile delinquency and specifically "to call for social attention

¹⁸ Kikuta Kazuo, *Shibaitasukuri 40-nen* (Tokyo: Nohon Tosho Sentā, 1999), 245-246.

to the aid to juvenile vagrants.” During the first seven months of broadcast, listeners were repeatedly reminded that the show’s theme was saving “juvenile vagrants.”¹⁹

Scholarly consensus agrees that GHQ stressed the problem of “juvenile vagrants” primarily out of concern for the maintenance of social order and security within occupied Japan. Previous works tend toward empirical research on children in this category and the political measures used to regulate them, as if juvenile vagrants existed in the margins of normal society, seriously threatening the social body and therefore inviting political intervention from the occupation authorities and Japanese government.²⁰ This approach, however, does not adequately address the socially-constructed nature of the category’s significance and what made the handling of “juvenile vagrants,” among various juvenile delinquency issues, a top priority of the occupation government and radio personnel.

Of course juvenile vagrants existed in the pre-occupation era. Yet this notion did not become a major category in the field of juvenile delinquency and child welfare until after the war. Sujimura Yasuo, an official in the Children’s Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare during the Occupation, noted that in the prewar era juvenile vagrants did not exist at all as an established category of juvenile delinquents in surveys of the number of children institutionalized in protection facilities. Kitagawa Kenzō, a scholar of the transwar social history of Japan, confirmed this point in his

¹⁹ Kikuta Kazuo et al., “‘Kane no naru oka’ zadankai,” *Shōnen jidai* 1, no. 1 (January 1949), 41.

²⁰ Kitagawa, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” 37-38; Iwanaga Kiminari, “Senryō shoki no PHW no jidō fukushi seisaku kōsō: Kōseishō Jidōkyoku no setchi katei o tōshite,” *Shakai fukushigaku* 42, no. 2 (March 2002), 1-10.

recent research on juvenile vagrants in the early postwar years.²¹ The question is what historical circumstances made *Kane no naru oka* publicize the specific category of juvenile vagrants as an urgent target of socio-political interventions.

Of course, the recent war provided an important context. Despite the lack of reliable prewar statistics, child welfare specialists speculated that the number of juvenile vagrants in the previous era was extremely small. War damages and the repatriation process of the immediate postwar years were factors that drove a larger number of children to homeless living conditions than in normal times, thereby making these children more physically visible. The term “juvenile vagrants” was often used interchangeably with or alongside “war orphans” in the specific social context of early postwar Japan.²² Sujimura posited that the postwar phenomenon of juvenile vagrants was the product of war. Social critic Nii Itaru also noted that the poor social conditions of the early postwar years were responsible for the increase of juvenile vagrants.²³

Nevertheless, an increase in number alone does not fully explain the degree of attention paid to war-affected juvenile vagrants. The testimonies of contemporary officials and social workers involved in juvenile delinquency and statistics from the early postwar years suggest that juvenile vagrants and war orphans did not necessarily overlap. The actual number of children who fell into the category of “war-affected juvenile vagrants” was rather small for the amount of attention given to the subject

²¹ Kikuta Kazuo et al., “Zadankai ‘Kane no naru oka’ no mondai wa nanika,” *Fujin kōron* 32 (September 1949). Kitagawa, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” 12, 29.

²² Kikuta et al., “Zadankai ‘Kane no naru oka’ no mondai wa nanika,” 22; Kitagawa, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” 27.

²³ See Kikuta et al., *Zadankai ‘Kane no naru oka’ no mondai wa nanika*, 22.

and the heated debates on the proper social approach to juvenile vagrants that *Kane no naru oka* kindled.

A national survey on orphans conducted by the Ministry of Health and Welfare on December 6, 1947, one of the earliest full-scale surveys on the subject, estimated that among the total number of 123,511 orphans twenty-two percent were war orphans and 9.1 percent were repatriate orphans. The overwhelming majority of orphans, eighty-six percent in all, were under the care of grandparents, elder siblings, relatives and acquaintances, and 9.9 percent were institutionalized. Only 3.4 percent of orphans were classified as “those who lead an independent life without guardians.” Orphans who had experienced vagrancy comprised about 5.8 percent (7,117). According to another survey undertaken by the Tokyo Central Child Consultation Office from April 1947 through June 1948, 46.2 percent of juvenile vagrants under custody were runaways from home and 50.3 percent had been affected by war and repatriation. The proportion of runaways from home vis-à-vis war- and repatriation-affected juvenile vagrants was growing by June 1948.²⁴

According to national surveys conducted by the Children’s Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, 15,501 juvenile vagrants were institutionalized or placed in the custody of guardians from April 1946 to April 1947. Out of 17,660 institutionalized children, 4,080 were juvenile vagrants as of June 15, 1947.

Nationwide statistics of juvenile vagrants often provided only the number of

²⁴ Kōseishō, “Zenkoku koji issai chōsa ni kansuru ken,” Tokyo-to Chūō Jidō Sōdansho, “Tokyo-to Chūō Jidō Sōdansho Shūyōji Chōsa,” and Kōseishō Jidōkyoku, “Shisetsu ni shūyōchū no kakushu hogo jidōsui chō,” quoted in Kitagawa, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” 28, 30-31.

institutionalized juvenile vagrants. The number tended to change corresponding to the cycle of crackdowns on juvenile vagrants and did not necessarily reflect changes in the total number of juvenile vagrants or non-institutionalized children.²⁵ Fortunately, Sujimura Yasuo, the administrative official in the Children's Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, provided a useful estimate in a roundtable discussion on *Kane no naru oka*'s problems in the September 1948 issue of the women's magazine *Fujin kōron*: approximately ten thousand children were institutionalized, while the number of juvenile vagrants in the narrow sense, namely homeless children on the street, was about two thousand. The number of war orphans among juvenile vagrants on the street was rather small, estimated at less than ten percent. It is no wonder that some contemporaries were under the impression that "only juvenile vagrants were receiving extraordinary attention due to the radio drama '*Kane no naru oka*' even though they were in the minority among children in general." In his discussion of the social impact of *Kane no naru oka*, Sujimura admitted that juvenile vagrants became a disproportionately big issue for their "rather small number."²⁶

The extraordinary attention given to this special category of children suggests the discursive construction of the significance of war-affected juvenile vagrants in occupied Japan. *Kane no naru oka* played an important role in casting those children as a serious issue in disproportion to their relatively small number. Kikuta mentioned

²⁵ Quoted in Henmi, "Haisen chokugo no Nihon ni okeru furōji/sensō koji no rekishi," 15 and Kitagawa, "Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji," 29.

²⁶ Kikuta et al., "Zadankai '*Kane no naru oka*' no mondai wa nanika," 20-22. Sujimura reasoned that the hyper-visibility of juvenile vagrants considering their actual number was partly attributable to the fact that they were particularly crowded in easily-noticeable urban locations such as train stations, amusement quarters, parks and black markets.

that Japanese society had showed very little interest in the wellbeing of juvenile vagrants until the time *Kane no naru oka* came out, indicating the significance of the drama in bringing the subject to public attention.²⁷ Moreover, *Kane no naru oka* served to reinforce the imagined association between juvenile vagrants and war orphans by setting up the main characters as war-affected juvenile vagrants. They were homeless children who were forced out on the street after losing or separating from their parents and/or elder siblings due to the direct or indirect results of war mobilization and damages, or the chaotic social situation of the early postwar era.

The involuntary manner in which the characters became juvenile vagrants provided a convenient dramatic device for *Kane no naru oka* to unfold the show's theme. The occupation designed *Kane no naru oka* to show "how children without parents or a home, under the guidance of interested adults, may learn to make adjustments in their relations with society."²⁸ By choosing these particular children, *Kane no naru oka* represented juvenile vagrants as unfortunate children who would not have fallen into their current situation under normal circumstances, but were driven by poor economic and social conditions in the aftermath of the lost war.²⁹ The image of juvenile vagrants as unfortunate victims of war but otherwise normal children furnished a crucial platform for the drama's progressive and humanistic

²⁷ See Kikuta et al., "'Kane no naru oka' zadankai," 41.

²⁸ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 24 Dec 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

²⁹ Kikuta et al., "Zadankai 'Kane no naru oka' no mondai wa nanika," 22. In the roundtable discussion, Kikuta publicly displayed his limited sympathy for vagrant children as of September 1948, for contemporaries believed that many of them were not war-displaced children but runaways from home who chose to be on the street even though they had parents and other guardians. He admitted his pessimism over these children's rehabilitation. Refer to page 23.

agenda to promote the self-rehabilitation of these children: the optimistic vision that these children could be saved if only given the proper guidance and aid.

The concept of juvenile delinquents as redeemable children was neither wholly new in Japanese history nor peculiar to the postwar era. Studies of juvenile delinquency have pointed out that the progressive understanding of juvenile delinquency based on liberal ideas, such as the inherent goodness of individuals, human imperfection and the capacity for self-realization, had gained currency from the nineteenth century onward in various modern societies by challenging the older pathological model for child regulation.³⁰ As David R. Ambaras has demonstrated, Japan was no exception.³¹

But the enduring idea of human rehabilitation came to a new light in the particular socio-political conditions of occupied Japan. The vision of rehabilitation carried enormous gravity and urgency not only in the field of juvenile delinquency but also in the larger process of rebuilding the nation in the wake of the lost war. The occupation campaigned to “reorient” the Japanese to liberal democratic and capitalist principles and attitudes. The self-rehabilitation of the Japanese was the overarching

³⁰ For a critical account of the rise of a progressive, humanistic model for dealing with juvenile delinquency as integral to the American liberal capitalist political economy and welfare state system from the nineteenth century onward, see Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969). For the British case, see Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). On child saving as an important site of citizenship debates in the Canadian context, refer to Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (University of Toronto Press, 2005).

³¹ Ambaras traces the discursive formation of juvenile delinquency as a social problem in modern Japan. David R. Ambaras, *Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

theme and principle for achieving this goal. It is no coincidence that some of the key ideas stressed in *Kane no naru oka* such as self-realization, self-discipline and self-management were in line with liberal democratic principles, which the occupation's on-going "democratization" campaigns were reviving as the new fundamentals for postwar Japanese society.

4. 3. Redeemable Children and Child Savers: Liberal Guidance and Sentimental Connections

The specific ways in which Shūhei attempts to enlighten and motivate those children to redeem themselves merit discussion. His liberal approach comes to the fore in his first encounter with Ryūta. Right after Shūhei catches Ryūta stealing his shoes, Shūkichi asks Ryūta to follow him. Ryūta assumes that Shūkichi is going to report him to the police but notices that Shūhei is not going in the direction of the police station.

Ryūta: Aren't you turning me over to the police? Hey bro, I was going to steal your shoes. I busted your ass. You're gonna turn me in to the police. You won't get to the police station if you go that direction. You're an idiot.

Shūhei: You're afraid of the police, aren't you?

Ryūta: ... (Pause) ... Stop messing with me! I dare you to say that again. You're gonna pay for that. [...]

Shūhei: I'm not going to the police. Come with me.

Ryūta: (Stunned) ... Pish, you're putting on airs. Where are you going? (A little anxious) Where are you taking me?

Shūhei: You don't have to come if you don't feel like it. If you don't want to come, it's all right to go back.

Ryūta: If I want to, I can get away any time. I won't be taken into your care.

Shūhei: I'm neither keeping you in a net nor grabbing your arm. If you want to run away you can do so whenever it suits you.

Ryūta: ... Pish, that's why I don't run away. If you bind me or grab me I'd run away any second. But you don't. [...]

Shūhei: You're not gonna run away, are you?

Ryūta: (Frustrated) Stop bugging me. You talk too much. I won't run away. (Yelling) I won't run away!

Shūhei: Why?

Ryūta: What are you talking about? Because you're not binding me ... so, I won't run away.³²

This scene foreshadows the ways in which Shūhei treats the juvenile vagrants in the process of rehabilitating them. Shūhei does not take the juvenile vagrants he meets in Tokyo to his hometown by force. Instead, he asks them about their goals and tells them it is possible to realize their dreams like other normal children, if they just try. In order to do so, he suggests, they should discard their old habits and start a new life. But Shūhei waits until the children independently make up their mind to go with him instead of imposing his will directly.³³ He maintains the same liberal principles while encouraging children to work and to study for their own good.

³² Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 1-hen Ryūta no maki*, 48-49. Interestingly enough, Shūhei introduces Babe Ruth to the children as an exemplary figure who was an orphan but became a world-famous baseball player by pursuing his dream and keeping a good heart. See page 144.

³³ *Ibid.*, 140-145.

Kane no naru oka stresses the liberal and humanitarian nature of Shūhei's method of guiding children by casting it as diametrically opposed to some of the older practices that had focused on strict reinforcement of discipline and rules in a unilateral and coercive manner. First, his non-coercive approach and respect for the child's will was in complete contrast to the prevailing practices of juvenile institutions and law enforcement, which forcibly contained and corrected juvenile delinquents. *Kane no naru oka* also features an anti-hero who represents a non-official implementer of the older model of child guidance: Kagami Kanzō, Shūhei's uncle and an authority figure in the extended family and village. Kanzō is a well-respected leader of the village but a believer in punishment who callously sent Shūkichi to the reformatory while Shūhei was serving in the war. As a parent and teacher of strict discipline, Kanzō educates the children by coercing them into submission. He is also a man of tradition who leads village children in a private reading group of *Taiheiki*, a Japanese military epic. Kanzō, a middle-aged man, is prejudiced against juvenile vagrants, as are many other older-generation Japanese in the story.

A head-on collision between the two characters' views occurs when Kanzō insults Ryūta in front of the other "normal children" during his *Taiheiki* tutoring session. Despite his enthusiasm to learn, Ryūta has a hard time keeping up with the other children due to his lack of education and fatigue from his hard work in the fields. Showing no sympathy, Kanzō accuses the juvenile vagrant of being "disqualified as Japanese (*Nihonjin ja nai*)" when Ryūta fails to answer his question about *Taiheiki*. Witnessing the other children side with Kanzō and mock Ryūta in order to avoid

Kanzō's scolding, Shūhei confronts Kanzō. Shūhei argues that Kanzō's strict and forceful manner of treating children only terrifies the children, causing them to become liars or sycophants who willingly backstab other children in order to flatter Kanzō. Shūhei further points out that Kanzō's way of teaching is responsible for nurturing "detestable, subservient and selfish adults."³⁴

The above scene suggests that in featuring juvenile vagrants' rehabilitation, *Kane no naru oka* actually invoked much larger issues faced by postwar Japanese society. Shūhei's practice of rehabilitating juvenile vagrants clearly resonated with the on-going reconsideration of the basic principles of educating children into citizens for the "new" nation. At the same time, the clash between Shūhei and Kanzō mirrored and reinforced the dominant discursive framework of the early postwar era that represented Japan's past as "feudal" and "totalitarian" and stressed the discontinuity of the present and former eras. Some contemporaries consciously posed *Kane no naru oka*'s liberal and humanitarian approach to juvenile vagrants as new in opposition to Japan's prewar and wartime practices in the field of child education and correction. For example, Yamada Kiyodo at the Education Research Center (Kyōiku enshūsho) pointed out in a symposium on *Kane no naru oka* sponsored by the journal *Kyōiku* (Education), that Japanese social work had been "anti-humanistic from a humanitarian view point," and that this drama was criticizing the social work of Japan from a new, humanitarian perspective.³⁵

³⁴ Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 2-hen Shinū no maki*, 32-42.

³⁵ Kokubun et al., "Zadankai Kane no naru oka," 14.

Shūhei's guidance, based on mutual trust and care, and the voluntary will of the juvenile vagrants, is distant from Kanzō's overbearing manner, which the drama implicitly poses as "traditional" and "feudal" in contrast to Shūhei's new and liberal manner. Shūhei's approach to juvenile vagrants was liberatory compared to the restrictive practices imposed on children detained in the reformatories. However, Shūhei's guidance does not completely liberate these children. Even though he relies on beneficent and non-coercive measures, Shūhei aims to drive "troubled youth" to become good children and appropriate future citizens. For this purpose, Shūhei subjects the children to a type of power similar to what Michel Foucault has termed "pastoral power" in his genealogical study on practices of governing. Pastoral power is a fundamentally beneficent power whose objective is the salvation of the flock. The pastor's role is to show the direction that the flock must follow and to watch over them. At the same time, pastoral power is an individualizing power. A shepherd directs the whole flock but this job can only be accomplished so far as not a single sheep escapes him. Thus pastoral power targets each sheep, its inner ethics and conduct.³⁶ Shūhei's role is comparable to that of a shepherd. He plays a benevolent guardian and watchman for juvenile vagrants and directs his gaze to the inner ethics of each and every child in his charge. He never tries to awe these children into obedience. But his benevolence and care cause the children to behave voluntarily in a "correct" way that

³⁶ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, edited by Michel Senellart and translated by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 115-170.

will eventually guide them to become “good children,” and by extension, “good citizens” in the future.

Foucault’s discussion of pastoral power helps us see the specific ways in which Shūhei exercises his influence on each of the juvenile vagrants. Without directly imposing his will he usually suggests ways in which a juvenile vagrant can become a normal, “good child.” He always leaves some room for the children to make choices. Yet Shūhei’s power is constantly in operation and guides the children of *Kane no naru oka* to make the “right” choice as if out of their own free will. But what if a child chooses not to follow his guidance out of his/her free will? What would Shūhei do? If he forces the child to obey, his liberal principles, which distinguished his guidance from the old, authoritarian disciplinary model in the first place, would be ruined. If he leaves the defiant child alone, it means disaster to his liberal rehabilitation project.

Not all the juvenile vagrants are receptive to Shūhei’s moralistic idea of self-correction. In a scene when Shūhei meets juvenile vagrants institutionalized in a detention center, he tries to persuade these children to come with him to his home town and to “become good children” together with those already under his guidance. A detained child refuses his offer while arguing that Shūhei is doing essentially “the same thing that the detention authorities are doing there.”³⁷ Once juvenile vagrants build human connections with Shūhei, however, they become highly susceptible to what he says as a guardian. It is imperative to note that *Kane no naru oka* delivered a moralizing theme through the touching human story of friendship and emotional

³⁷ Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 2-hen Shinū no maki*, 172.

bonding between Kagami Shūhei and juvenile vagrants.³⁸ The drama's emphasis on the sentimental connections between the characters deserves discussion as it reveals an important mechanism of Shūhei's power.

Kane no naru oka was built on a sentimental narrative. Drawing upon recent studies, I consider sentimentalism not as shallow emotionalism but as a particular mode of representation that is anchored in an optimistic overemphasis on human goodness and that locates empathetic caring about others and expression of such feelings in one's actions. While prioritizing human sensibility and spontaneous feeling and passion over reason and judgment, sentimental narratives often champion human connection as the highest value and stress the forging of bonds and solidarities across the divides of race, class, gender, nation and religion. These sentimental human connections are characterized by reciprocity and exchange, and emotions act as an important intermediary for this exchange. Sympathy for another person's suffering in particular is a major channel for bridging differences. While opposing direct conquest of the other, sentimentalism often serves as a representational strategy for another type of power that operates through the arts of reciprocity and mutual benefit. Studies of sentimentalism have shown that this specific narrative mode has served historically as an important technology of power in a variety of social control programs, colonial

³⁸ “Weekly Report of the Radio Branch for the Period of 29 December 1950 to 4 January 1951,” Folder 26, Box 5597, RG 331; “‘Bell Hill’ Program to Be Discontinued as of End of April,” Folder 17, Box 5312, RG 331. This document is the English translation of a Japanese article featured in *Tokyo shinbun* on March 30, 1950.

enterprises and global hegemonic projects specifically because of its non-coercive and reciprocal manner of communication across the lines of class, race and gender.³⁹

Kane no naru oka's narrative is sentimental in several respects. The drama begins with a scene in which normal, innocent kids encounter seemingly dangerous and vicious vagrant boys, runaways from a reformatory. In the opening the gap between "ordinary" children and juvenile vagrants seems unbridgeable. But the story unfolds to discover that these seemingly dangerous juvenile vagrants share the same humanity as other kids. Despite their bad language and unruly attitudes these juvenile vagrants are not inherently ill-natured but simply unfortunate victims of war and/or neglectful adults. Kikuta makes this point clear in the closing narration of Act Four. He writes about Kagami Shūkichi, one of the juvenile vagrants in the opening scene and Kagami Shūhei's little brother, in the following way:

³⁹ Mary Louise Pratt uses the concept of anticonquest to explain how seemingly reciprocal discourses of human and cultural contacts actually became an ideological apparatus for the U.S. colonization of South America. See her inspiring work, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 7, 39, 78, 80. For a valuable account of the role of sentimental drama in American colonialism in the Philippines, see Vincent Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 19-51. On American sentimental novels and slavery, refer to Philip Fisher, *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 87-127. On the relationship between the sentimental mode and imperial designs and operations in Eighteenth Century, see Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). In order to see how sentimentalism was related to educational reforms, slavery, class and gender in the nineteenth-century U.S., refer to Shirley Samuels, *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Christina Klein demonstrates how sentimentalism offered a crucial means for the designers and producers of U.S. middlebrow culture to support the U.S. hegemonic project in Asia during the early postwar period. She suggests that sentimentalism has been a "double-edged sword" with both progressive and expansionist implications. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), especially 13-60.

When he was left in his uncle's place, Shūkichi injured a man who had hit his head by stabbing him with a knife. This could be considered a bad thing to do. Shūkichi not only disobeyed the authorities of the reformatory but also fled, taking another younger boy named Keiichi with him. This could be considered a bad thing to do as well. Yet only if someone asked about his pitiful situation with warm words before all this happened, he might not have done these things. He was not loved by his parents and his elder brother Shūhei, who had loved him, was taken by the war. . . . He was not able to trust anyone except his brother Shūhei who loved him.⁴⁰

While appealing to listeners' sympathy toward juvenile vagrants, the drama follows Shūhei's journey of making sentimental connections with juvenile vagrants. First Ryūta attempts to steal Shūhei's shoes and immediately gets caught by Shūhei. Instead of taking Ryūta to the police, however, Shūhei befriends him and several other juvenile vagrants under Ryūta's leadership. Shūhei finds these children pure in heart despite their rough lives.

The process in which Shūhei and Ryūta form strong, emotional bonds follows the sentimentalist formula mentioned above. First shocked at Ryūta's unruly behavior and violent language, Shūhei asks, "How come you're such a bad boy?" Not giving in to Shūhei, Ryūta replies, "Aren't adults also all bad?" Then the story centers on how these characters overcome the glaring gap and distrust of each other displayed in their first encounter. The initiative to break the wall comes from Shūhei. Shūhei follows none of the patterns of behavior that Ryūta's previous experiences with other adults have led him to expect. Shūhei refuses to call Ryūta a juvenile vagrant, a stigmatic category into which other adults would automatically put him in order to differentiate

⁴⁰ Kikuta Kazuo, *Kane no naru oka dai 1-hen Ryūta no maki*, 118.

him from normal kids. After Ryūta pretentiously claims that he is a gangster in order to scare Shūhei away, Shūhei says, “You’re not a gangster, but just a kid.” Nor does Shūhei beat Ryūta as others would easily do. Instead of taking Ryūta to the police, Shūhei offers to buy him a meal. The series of sympathetic gestures urges Ryūta to give adults a second chance.⁴¹

Their relationship is strengthened when they stand up to the jaundiced view that other adults hold of juvenile vagrants. Shūhei takes Ryūta to a restaurant but the owner refuses to let Ryūta in, and the customers humiliate both Shūhei and Ryūta without hiding their biases against juvenile vagrants. Frustrated, Ryūta steals money from the restaurant as revenge and runs away. Watching the police arrest Shūhei for what he has done, Ryūta regrets his own behavior. Ryūta returns the money to the restaurant and spends the night outside of the police station, waiting for Shūhei to be released. Shūhei, disappointed by Ryūta’s behavior and advised to stay away from vagrant children by a police officer, tries to break their tie. But this time, Ryūta makes a reconciliatory gesture by apologizing from the bottom of his heart and promising that he will never steal again. By this time, their emotional tie is very obvious to listeners. Ryūta confesses that he likes (*suki*) Shūhei and wishes to stay with him. Shūhei feels deep sympathy toward Ryūta, finding this boy pitiful (*kawaisō*) and lovable (*kawaii*) at the same time, just like his own younger brother.⁴²

The human connections between Shūhei and the juvenile vagrants play a significant role in the unfolding of the drama’s moralizing plot. Shūhei’s deep

⁴¹ Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 1-hen Ryūta no maki*, 40-53. The quotes are from 44-46, 49.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 58-72, 82-107, 112-113, 123-147. The quote appears on page 85.

sympathy for the juvenile vagrants leads him to the moral conviction that he “must do something for them.” Likewise, the juvenile vagrants’ strong affection for Shūhei motivates them to voluntarily try to adopt a “normal” and self-disciplined life style. The mutual attachment between Shūhei and the juvenile vagrants in *Kane no naru oka* enables Shūhei’s power to operate effectively. In exchange for the emotional and material support provided by Shūhei, the juvenile vagrants under his benevolent and caring hand are obliged to show a genuine effort to rehabilitate and discipline themselves. Otherwise, they could lose their emotional bond and human connection with Shūhei, which would be a traumatic experience for those who are in a sentimental relationship.⁴³ The children’s redeemability is the evocative source of Shūhei’s sympathy toward them. Ryūta swears to Shūhei that he will “become a good child” in several scenes in which he tries to reassure his emotional connection to Shūhei.

It is no coincidence that Shūhei’s debate with Kanzō about child-educating principles ends with a scene in which Shūhei, in tears, laments why Kanzō cannot affectionately guide children.⁴⁴ Shūhei’s ability to make emotional bonds with the juvenile vagrants distinguishes him from other old-fashioned adults and makes him a new type of guardian who can convince the juvenile vagrants to transform themselves into self-disciplined and good children as if from their own will.

4. 4. Sentimentalism, the Aesthetic of Commitment, and the National

Community

⁴³ Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 14.

⁴⁴ Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 2-hen Shinū no maki*, 40-41.

Kane no naru oka's sentimentalism not only served as a channel for Shūhei's liberal power to reach each juvenile vagrant's subjectivity but also enabled the redemption story to draw very emotional, empathetic reactions from listeners. Many listeners expressed sympathy with the show's view of juvenile vagrants as unfortunate but redeemable children who deserved social attention and aid. The intense feeling for the child characters, which *Kane no naru oka*'s sentimentalism encouraged, constituted the base for creating a strong sense of commitment to help real juvenile vagrants in occupied Japan.

According to a survey of listeners conducted by the Public Opinion Research Institute in Tokyo's Sakurada Elementary School on July 12 of 1948, 76.1 % of the two hundred eighty-four respondents "felt sorry for" the children in *Kane no naru oka*.⁴⁵ Hieda Ryō, the child voice actor who played the role of Kagami Shūkichi spoke at a roundtable discussion on *Kane no naru oka*. He stated that when he visited juvenile vagrants housed in a juvenile detention camp to entertain them with a picture-card show (*kamishibai*), he "felt sorry for" them. He thought, "Those children would be able to become just like us only if they had mothers as we do."⁴⁶ The sympathy based on the redeemability of the children stimulated the listeners' urge to reach out to these children. Watanabe Fumiko, voice actress who played the role of Hatano Yurie, Kagami Shūhei's supporter, testified that the show "opened" her "eyes to the children's world." After joining the show, she began to observe and follow vagrants

⁴⁵ Yoron chōsa kenkyūjo, *Kodomotachi wa 'Kane no naru oka' o dō mite iruka* (Tokyo: Yoron chōsa kenkyūjo, 1948). This survey was translated into English and reported to the occupation's radio personnel. A copy of this survey and its English translation are stored in Folder 11, Box 5894, RG 331.

⁴⁶ Kikuta et al., "Hōsō 'Kane no naru oka' zadankai arasuji," *Kurasu* 3, no. 5 (May 1948), 14.

that she encountered on the streets. She felt drawn to them: “I felt like somehow I should go further inside juvenile vagrants’ lives.”⁴⁷

The sensation the show generated stimulated numerous individuals to take concrete actions to help those in situations similar to the drama’s main characters. School children, the most enthusiastic listeners of the show, became involved in a very famous case. About twenty children at Ōmiya elementary school in Saitama Prefecture raised money for juvenile vagrants after they listened to *Kane no naru oka* and brought Kikuta the contribution box. They informed Kikuta that they had collected the money without consulting their teachers, implying that they had voluntarily initiated fundraising. This story became a favorite anecdote for Kikuta and NHK personnel as it demonstrated that “the show’s ethos was actually working.” Perhaps such an assessment was not an exaggeration. At the time of the collection each child put a note explaining why he or she had donated. “I picked up fifty-*sen* in the school corridor, so I donated” or “I was going to buy candy but instead I put the money in the contribution box.” No matter how simple and childlike it may appear, the note-taking implied that a certain level of conscious, moral decision-making was involved in the process and that the children somehow figured that it was important to show that fact to Kikuta, the creative father of the show, and possibly to the juvenile vagrants with whom the “normal children” were hoping to make connections.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁸ Kikuta et al., “Kane no naru oka zadankai,” 48. Udoiyama Manji also happily cited this case in his interview with *Tsūshin bunka shinpō* when he needed to defend *Kane no naru oka* against criticisms that the show was a bad influence on children. “Ninki hōsō o tantōsha ni kiku: Kane no naru oka no maki,” *Tsūshin bunka shinpō*, no. 219 (May 12, 1948)

The testimonies of their contemporaries, however, urge us to question the impact of the sentimental narrative of *Kane no naru oka* on actual juvenile vagrants. By the time of the show's broadcast, listening to the radio was a common home or community practice, although random reception was possible in some public places and radio shops. Due to a lack of access to radio and their irregular lifestyles, it was not easy for juvenile vagrants to listen to the radio at a certain time everyday. Sano Mitsuru, a writer who was a juvenile vagrant during the occupation era, testifies that it was almost impossible for a juvenile vagrant to listen to a radio serial drama at the time and that he has little memory of having listened to *Kane no naru oka* on the radio.⁴⁹

Some of the institutionalized juveniles had better chances to listen to the show. Yet they did not easily empathize with the drama's characters. In a detention center known for housing "the worst kinds of vagrant children within Tokyo area," every single detainee crouched around the radio and ended up bursting out crying. Excited by this scene, a staff member asked them, "Well, don't you think it's time for you to become good kids just like those in the drama?" The children scoffed, saying, "Pooh, this is cloying." Hearing the story, Kikuta admitted that "this drama has not reached the hearts of those children yet."⁵⁰ An observation from Nishimura Shigeru, a former juvenile vagrant who grew up and served in Tokyo's juvenile detention center during the early postwar years also indicates that Kikuta's confession was not an exaggeration. Nishimura himself had a chance to watch *Kane no naru oka* in a

⁴⁹ Sano Mitsuo, "Kane no naru oka," *Asahi janāru* 15, no. 1 (January 1973), 135.

⁵⁰ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka kara", 44.

theatrical play with institutionalized juveniles. The children sent loud cheers in support of a juvenile vagrant character when he was accused of stealing by a happy child in the play by shouting “Bust his ass!” One detainee yelled out, “Do it cleverly, come on!” In contrast, the scene where Shūhei was speaking for juvenile vagrants in warm tears drew no response from the institutionalized children.⁵¹

Sano Mitsuru’s recollections give us a clue about what might have touched the restrained the children’s hearts, causing them not to identify with the drama’s characters. Sano remembers crying while watching the film adaptation of *Kane no naru oka*. But it was not because he was touched by the show’s theme of self-rehabilitation or the ideals that Kagami Shūhei was teaching the children. He could not stop his tears because he felt himself “too pitiful” and his reality “too miserable” compared to the children in the drama. The characters of the show were living in a fine place on a green hill with a red roof and a pointy hat-like clock tower, where a bell was ringing, as described by the theme song. If *Kane no naru oka* had existed in reality, he himself would have liked to have turned himself in, but he knew that it was merely a fiction and that reality was more brutal.⁵²

The above testimonies illustrate that the show did not move some disillusioned juvenile vagrants. It may be true that *Kane no naru oka*’s idealist intention appealed more effectively to “normal,” happy children than the juvenile vagrants who had to face the cold reality of daily life. Sano even suspected that the normal children’s tears of pity toward unhappy kids were “nothing more than tears of joy based on the

⁵¹ Quoted in Kitagawa, “Sengo Nihon no sensō koji to furōji,” 35.

⁵² Sano, “Kane no naru oka,” 135-136.

recognition of their own superior position.”⁵³ However, as discussed above, as a sentimental drama *Kane no naru oka* sought not to reinforce the existing divisions between normal children and juvenile vagrants, but to create a sense of connection by urging listeners to overcome differences. A large number of listeners enthusiastically responded to the drama’s call to reach out to juvenile vagrants.

The show also deeply affected some children who were deemed juvenile vagrants or who were institutionalized in juvenile detention centers. For these children and their guardians, *Kane no naru oka* was not a fantasy, but an inspiration. *Kane no naru oka* provided concrete narrative and personified examples, no matter how fictional the figures, as models for interested individuals to follow. Newspapers and popular magazines reported a number of cases of newly-built boys’ homes in various locales as private “*Kane no naru oka*’s. Hachijōjima’s local newspaper *Nankai taimuzu* featured a nursery school built by former school teacher Yanagino Yoshikuni as a case of a “private ‘*Kane no naru oka*.’” Yanagino, his wife and an elementary school teacher took eight children, including former juvenile vagrants, under their care.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most remarkable example was the Boys Town of Bell Hill (*Kane no naru oka shōnen no ie*), a community created by six former juvenile vagrants housed in a detention center for orphans and juvenile vagrants in Hamamatsu City of Shizuoka Prefecture. A staff member of the institution, Shinagawa Hiroshi, was their guardian.

⁵³ Ibid., 137.

⁵⁴ “Shisetsu ‘Kane no naru oka’: moto kyōshi Yanagino-san no itonami,” *Nankai taimuzu* (March 30, 1949), 2.

In his memoir Shinagawa writes that *Kane no naru oka* had inspired him from the time that he served at the detention center.⁵⁵ He taught the detained children the drama's theme song and performed his duties as if he was Kagami Shūhei. Assuming that there should be a real model person for Kagami Shūhei's character, Shinagawa contacted Kikuta Kazuo to request an introduction to the person, only to hear that Shūhei was a strictly fictional figure. Yet far from dispiriting Shinagawa, Shūhei's fictive status rather boosted his motivation to put what Shūhei did in the drama into practice. If *Kane no naru oka* was a fiction, Shinagawa and his boys thought, "All right! Then we will make it real by building a boys' town of *Kane no naru oka* for ourselves."⁵⁶

The six boys had lost their families and homes during the war and had become juvenile vagrants. They were rounded up and housed in the juvenile detention center. Although they found that the institution did not truly care about their welfare and future, they did not desire to return to the life of a juvenile vagrant. The six boys set up a plan to build their home by working for themselves with Shinagawa as a guardian and left the detention center. They began to make money working as shoeshine boys in Ueno station. Although one boy ran away, the rest finally built a small community in Ōko Town of Seta County in Gunma Prefecture in December 1947. They released

⁵⁵ Contemporary accounts uses several different terms for the institution, a nursing home for war orphans (*sensai koji yōgo shisetsu*), a detention center for juvenile delinquents (*furūō shōnen shūyōjo*) and a detention center for orphans and juvenile vagrants (*koji furōji shūyōjo*), which demonstrates that orphans, juvenile vagrants and juvenile delinquents were often used interchangeably in the early postwar context.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Sano, "Kane no naru oka," 136-137. Shinagawa's memoir titled *Hikari no naka o ayumu kora* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1958) recounts the details of how he and the five boys built the community.

“Our Oath” (*Watashitachi no chikai*) in order to exhibit their determination for self-rehabilitation and the organizing principles of the community based on self-help and self-discipline. They swore not to do bad things like pickpocket, racketeer, free ride and chain-snatch. The boys agreed to dress appropriately and use civil language, keep their bodies clean, collect and save all their money from work and not use it for themselves, share joys and sorrows and be nice to each other and never fight. In the process, the boys were supposed to be autonomous subjects who worked to rehabilitate themselves without any external imposition.

The boys also became active agents who evangelized the liberal and humanitarian ideals and optimism that *Kane no naru oka* proposed. The boys reached out to other juvenile vagrants and requested sympathy and aid from society. Calling for juvenile vagrants in the Tokyo area to join them, they stated, “We believe that if we make a sincere effort, the people of society will appreciate how we feel and they will cooperate with us and support us.” They promised to work cheerfully and vigorously to accomplish their goals, tightly holding each other’s hands, and preaching that “love and sincerity can overcome any obstacles.” The Oath revealed the boys clear awareness that their efforts to rehabilitate themselves had much to do with getting recognition from society as proper members of the nation. They vowed, “We must keep in mind pride in being upright boys of Japan (*tadashii Nihon no shōnen*) although we have neither home nor family.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ For the details of how Shinagawa and the boys met, decided to leave the institution and built their new house, refer to Hayafune Chiyo, “‘Kane no naru oka’ ni tachite: sensai koji no yume

A number of individuals and religious groups responded to these boys' call for sympathy and aid. Three of the boys turned out to be very successful in their careers: one grew up to be a pediatrician at Shōwa University Medical School Hospital and another rose to become head of a small commercial company. The third went to the U.S. and became a French and Spanish teacher at Fort Atkinson High School after graduating from Laurence University. Twenty years after the establishment of *Kane no naru oka shōnen no ie* Shinagawa pointed out in a magazine interview that the majority of war orphans and war victims were “unsaved” and, unlike those three lucky individuals, had to live hard lives with little protection. Even two of the boys who originally established the community lost touch with Shinagawa after one was adopted by a building contractor and the other became a taxi driver. However, the three successful individuals from the community remained in the spotlight, often obfuscating the fact that they were rather exceptional cases. The images of the juvenile vagrants who reformed themselves into successful citizens of the nation gratified contemporary Japanese.⁵⁸ *Kane no naru oka shōnen no ie*'s story furthered the sensation created by the radio drama *Kane no naru oka* by offering living evidence of individuals who fought for redemption against all odds.

The great sensation that *Kane no naru oka* generated should be considered within the context of the specific historical circumstances of occupied Japan. It is known that sentimentalism often enables a sense of imaginative community by

o hagukunda ‘Shōnen no ie,’” *Ushio*, no. 64 (September 1965), 286-298. “Our Oath” appears on pages 289-290.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 288, 298.

encouraging a strong feeling of sympathy for other people and empathetic responses. *Kane no naru oka*'s sentimentalism, in combination with its optimistic view of human redeemability, appealed to Japanese listeners who were longing for positive visions of rebuilding national community. The years immediately following the lost war in Japan were an era of exhaustion and despair, as John Dower succinctly put it. The majority of Japanese were so absorbed in their own survival that they could not afford to pay much attention to others.⁵⁹ Restoring the sense of community was an important task of society. In such a situation, *Kane no naru oka* called for sympathy and a sense of commitment toward the young and vulnerable victims of the war. The drama sent out the optimistic message that the care and love of interested individuals could assist seemingly hopeless children to transform themselves into decent members of society. The process of building solidarity among individuals who used to be total strangers and forming brotherly ties made *Kane no naru oka* an emotionally-gratifying drama in the particular context of the occupation era.

A number of contemporary Japanese testified that *Kane no naru oka* offered hope and a spirit for life. Hayata Masako's case was perhaps one of the best known examples, showing that the program inspired underprivileged children to rekindle their will for life in the depressing social atmosphere of the early postwar era. Her story became famous after the "Voices (*koe*)" column of *Tokyo asashi shinbun* featured her letter on June 18, 1948. Masako was a first-year middle school student in the new

⁵⁹ It was an era during which the topic of *Gaitō rokuon* (Man on the Street) was "how are you eating these days?" See Ishikawa, *Yokubō no sengoshi*, 16-18. On food shortages in Japan in the wake of war, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 89-97.

system, and a war orphan who was living with her uncle's family. She wrote, "*Kane no naru oka* was the show that entertained me and cheered me up everyday. The language was not good. But I felt as if the author was saying to me from his heart, 'Get a grip on yourself (*shikkari yaru no yo*)' and it enabled me to get through the day, full of energy. So I would like to request Mr. Kikuta Kazuo to continue (the show) until the world becomes completely delightful."⁶⁰ Japanese writer Hatayama Hiroshi recalls that when he listened to the show as a child, he felt that some kind of transition was coming. He was especially impressed by the scene in which the main characters expressed their determination to build a home for juvenile vagrants using the four year-old trees on the green hill as the foundation. Hatayama writes, "I felt as if someone was tapping me on the shoulder saying that it was about time to end the war play." It was from that moment that he "began to consider the new coming era seriously." Hatayama also notes that the scene's image of making a fresh start produced a deep impression on many of his contemporaries.⁶¹

Overall, the sensation that *Kane no naru oka* generated in early postwar Japan indicated the prevailing desire for the visions of rehabilitation in the early postwar Japan. The emotional and actual commitment of contemporary individuals to such a vision was often analogous to the nation's rebuilding effort under the occupation.

⁶⁰ Kaneko Akira, "Seron wa waku Kaneno naru oka: Kikuta Kazuo no hōsōgeki to sono mondai sanpi ryōron daga genjitsu no shakai wa?" *Sandei nyūsu* 2, no. 29 (July 17, 1948), 16.

⁶¹ Hatayama, "Kane no naru oka kara 30-nen," 155, 157, 160. Sano also notes that the drama gave hopes and cheers to the postwar Japanese, boys and girls in particular. Sano, "Kane no naru oka," 137.

4. 5. Father Flanagan Goes to Japan: The Vision of Rehabilitation and U.S. Global Hegemony

The historical significance of the visions of rehabilitation must be considered not only in the domestic sense, but also in the global context of the U.S. occupation of Japan. The reconstruction of postwar Japan as a benign and useful member of the “free world” became a pressing issue for the occupation as the Cold War gradually intensified. The rehabilitation of the Japanese constituted the necessary precondition for the readmission of Japan into the international community under U.S. hegemony. American mass media and national character studies redressed the Japanese, whom they used to portray as pathologically wicked and hopeless during the war, with new images that represented them as immature but trainable. John Dower demonstrated that pupils and children replaced the extensively-publicized demonic and non-human portraits of the same populations from the wartime era. *Kane no naru oka*’s portrayal of the juvenile vagrants and Shūhei easily overlapped with images of Japan as a troubled child and the U.S. as a respectful guardian in the occupation’s reorientation of the Japanese.⁶²

Perhaps the most symbolic event that helps locate *Kane no naru oka* in the global context of the early postwar years is Father Flanagan’s visit to Tokyo, which took place from April through June of 1947. Father Edward Joseph Flanagan (1886-

⁶² On the changing popular representations of the Japanese in American media in the postwar transformation, see Dower, *War without Mercy*, 293-317. In particular, Ruth Benedict’s *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* was frequently taken as a manual for occupation personnel. For a valuable account of the role of the national character studies, in recreating the images of the Japanese as easily guidable, see Yoneyama, “Habits of Knowing Cultural Differences,” 71-80.

1948) was an Irish immigrant and priest who founded a famous rehabilitation home for orphans and homeless children in Omaha, Nebraska called Boys Town. Boys Town came into being as a shelter for five boys in 1917 and gradually developed into a village-sized self-governing political, economic and religious community with a school, dormitories, a chapel, dining hall, full-sized baseball and football fields, a post office and its own elected mayor, council and commissioners. In 1936 the State of Nebraska recognized Boys Town as an official village.

Flanagan's emphasis on the redemptive human spirit and his liberal principles of guiding children to self-correction and self-government drew great publicity and admiration as transwar American society found Boys Town to be a model program for preventing juvenile delinquency and for turning "troubled" children into responsible citizens. The success of Boys Town inspired Hollywood filmmakers to produce two feature films based on the real story, *Boys Town* and *Men of Boys Town*. The former, released in 1938 and starring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, garnered box office successes and an Oscar for Tracy in his role as Father Flanagan. When Washington decided to enter WWII on the Allied side, Boys Town produced scores of soldiers who fought in the war, demonstrating the concrete results of Flanagan's efforts to turn homeless children on the verge of delinquency to "worthy citizens of our great country," in Flanagan's words, along with other successful examples of former

residents of Boys Town who became college students, entrepreneurs and business professionals.⁶³

The War Department saw Flanagan's project as pertinent to U.S. global management of the occupied areas in the aftermath of war. Flanagan visited several strategically important areas under U.S. purview including Germany, Japan, Korea and the Philippines, where he organized rehabilitation programs for war orphans until his unexpected death in Germany on May 15, 1948, which cut short what I would call the "global Boys Town project." As recent works on the elevation of the U.S. to global power suggest, shaping the image of the U.S. as a benevolent and friendly helping hand was integral to its transformation from an imperialist power to a global hegemon in the decolonizing world of the postwar era.⁶⁴ Flanagan's tours, which were extensively publicized and celebrated both domestically and internationally, contributed to spreading certain images of the U.S. in the postwar world.

Father Flanagan visited Japan on April 18, 1947 at the invitation of the U.S. War Department. He was recruited for two months' employment as an expert consultant to the Japanese government in the fields of child welfare, institutional care, and training with special emphasis on care of abandoned and orphaned children. His

63 Fulton Oursler and Will Oursler, *Father Flanagan of Boys Town* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949), Robert Hupp, *The New Boys Town: The Story of Father Flanagan's Boys' Home and How Its Programs Were Reshaped to Meet the Complicated and Challenging Needs of Today's Troubled Youth* (New York: Newcomen Society of the United States, 1985). Also see Boys Town's homepage on the web, www.boystown.org.

⁶⁴ Refer to Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*. Also see David A. Hollinger, ed. *The Humanities and the Dynamics of Inclusion since World War II*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) and Yamamoto Tadashi, Akira Iriye, and Iokibe Makoto, eds. *Philanthropy and Reconciliation: Rebuilding Postwar U.S.-Japan Relations* (Washington D.C.: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2006).

assignment was to give professional advice on the institutional organization and management of child welfare programs that Japanese authorities were developing. The Welfare Division of CIE took full advantage of Father Flanagan's visit to raise public interest in and support for public and private organizations dedicated to care of homeless children and to organize community interest in local problems of childcare.⁶⁵ Not only did Father Flanagan attend a series of meetings with government officials and social workers; he also appeared in public meetings and conferences. He even met with Emperor Hirohito and the empress to discuss some of his findings in the field of child welfare after his trip to southern Japan.⁶⁶ Emperor Hirohito himself had visited a number of orphanages and institutions for juvenile vagrants during his early-postwar progresses in order to demonstrate the human emperor's benevolence.⁶⁷

Through these public events, meetings, and interviews, Flanagan stressed the redeemability of juvenile vagrants by repeatedly saying, "There are no bad boys. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad thinking." He also introduced the liberal and humanitarian principles and measures that he relied on to nurture the desire for self-improvement and consciousness as a responsible and productive member of the nation. His story of building Boys Town and his call for attention to juvenile vagrants in Japan became the object of extensive media consumption. Japanese media scrambled to feature outstanding individuals who transformed themselves from

⁶⁵ "Memorandum for Colonel Sams: Areas of Need in Child Welfare Programs in Japan (April 17, 1947)" and "Memorandum for Colonel Sams: Magrs: Flanagan's Itinerary (April 11, 1947)," Folder 11, Box 5134, RG 331.

⁶⁶ Tennō kōgō ryōheika to Furanagan shinpu to no ekken," *Amerika kyōiku* 2, no. 7 (June-July 1947), 15.

⁶⁷ Henmi Masa'aki, "Dai 2-ji Sekai Taisen go no Nihon ni okeru furōji sensō koji no rekishi," *Nihon no kyōiku shigaku: kyōiku shigaku kiyō*, no. 37 (October 1994), 110-112.

juvenile delinquents and homeless children to successful politicians and businessmen under the influence of Flanagan. One of these examples was the brother of a robber who later became a mayor after learning how to make self-adjustments in Boys Town.⁶⁸

Flanagan stressed the Boys Town project's broad implications for Japan's postwar rebuilding process, claiming that, "Japan's future depends on how to deal with children." His claim found receptive audiences among Japanese learned individuals who were deeply concerned about the nation's future in the aftermath of war. *Jidō kenkyū* (Child Research), a journal published by the Department of Child Culture Research at Meiji University, featured responses of key figures from various fields to Flanagan's call for attention to child welfare as a pressing matter for postwar Japanese society. These provide us with a sterling index of social discourses prompted by Flanagan's visit. Respondents included scholar of law Minobe Tatsukichi, feminist Oku Mumeo, educator and museologist Tanahashi Gentarō, children's literature writers Ogawa Mimei and Yoshida Kinetarō, theater researcher Iizuka Tomoichirō, novelist Ishizaka Yōjirō, politician and lawyer Uzawa Fusakai. Many of the respondents stressed that child education was the key to rebuilding Japan as a new

⁶⁸ "Seirai no akudō wa nai' Furanagan shinpu wa kataru: kōdō no otōto o shichō ni shita Shōnen no machi no chichi," *Josei raifu* 2, no. 6 (July 1947), 10-11. In addition, a number of magazines headlined Flanagan's visit and Boys Town: "Furanagan shinpu wa kataru," *Fujin kōron*, no. 362 (January 1947); "Furanagan shinpu to Shōnen no Machi," *Sandei Mainichi* 25, no. 21/22 (May 25, 1947); "'Shōnen no Machi' no Furanagan shinpu wa kataru," *Hitotsu no sekai* 1, no. 4 (July 1947); Peter K. Okada, "Furanagan shinpu to Shōnen no Machi," *Kodomo to shakai* 2, no. 2 (September 1947); "Furanagan shinpu no raichō," *Chūtō kyōiku* 2, no. 4 (April 1947); Yamanaka Rokuhiko, "Shakai jigyō to Furanagan shinpu no kaisō," *Shinhoiku*, no. 7 (September 1947); "Yono naka ni furyō shōnen wa inai: Furanagan shinpu no koto," *Kodomo no shiawase* 1, no. 3 (November 1948); Tashiro Fujio, "Furanagan shinpu no 'Shōnen no Machi: shokugyō kyōiku o chūshin ni shite,'" *Jidō*, no. 1 (October 1949).

“cultural nation” in that they shared Flanagan’s belief in children’s redeemability. They believed that reorienting children would be much easier than reeducating the older generation. In their replies, these intellectuals often brought up democracy, individuality, autonomous but responsible behavior, self-awareness as a full-fledged member of society (*shakaijin toshite no jikaku*) and a cooperative and benevolent spirit as virtues that Japanese children needed to learn to make a new Japan.⁶⁹

Father Flanagan’s visit was not the sole factor leading to *Kane no naru oka*’s broadcast. Yet Father Flanagan’s timely visit offered a favorable juncture to launch this long-contemplated project.⁷⁰ During the occupation, producer of *Kane no naru oka* Udoyama Manji implied linkages between Flanagan and *Kane no naru oka* by telling the general public that “some people” suggested that “NHK feature the issue of war orphans” around Father Flanagan’s visit to Japan.⁷¹ Thus, even though the occupation’s strong hand behind *Kane no naru oka*’s production remained a secret, the connection between Farther Flanagan’s visit and the radio drama did not.

During the occupation, Kikuta Kazuo told his contemporaries that Kagami Shūhei was not motivated by any religious conviction but that his care for juvenile vagrants was derived from his love for his brother. Kikuta also publicly stated that there was no real model for Kagami Shūhei’s character, denying speculations of direct influence from Father Flanagan’s Boys Town program.⁷² Nevertheless,

⁶⁹ “Nihon no shōrai wa kodomo o dō atsukauka ni yotte kimaru,” *Jidō kenkyū* 1, no. 1 (January 1948), 7-11.

⁷⁰ Kikuta, “Kane no naru oka no zengo,” 161.

⁷¹ Kokubun et al., “Zadankai Kane no naru oka,” 11.

⁷² When Kikuta was asked in a roundtable discussion whether Kagami had a religion such as Christianity, his answer was negative. Kikuta explained that religious themes came though

contemporaries easily made the association between Boys Town and *Kane no naru oka*. When a listener's survey conducted by a research group in the Department of Social Welfare at Japan Women's University led by Minami Hiroshi asked school children to name the historical figure they thought the greatest, many of them mentioned Father Flanagan along with other, mostly Western, men.⁷³

Some of the ideal images of the community that Kagami Shūhei wished to build clearly overlapped with concrete practices implemented by Flanagan in Boys Town. Kagami indicated that the home should have a steeped red roof with a bell tower and that it should also have a baseball team and band.⁷⁴ Although Kagami reveals no overtly religious convictions, understated Christianity is still noticeable in *Kane no naru oka*. The theme song was played on a Hammond organ. The bell that Ryūta occasionally finds in a mountain valley was “a bell of the kind you can see in a church.”⁷⁵ Most important, Kagami's and Flanagan's approaches to juvenile vagrants demonstrated great compatibility in terms of their belief in human goodness and redeemability and their emphasis of principles such as self-correction, self-government and economic self-sufficiency. Under the discursive conditions of the U.S. occupation *Kane no naru oka* became emblematic of a “new” perspective on juvenile vagrants and children in general, a perspective that was consistent with those of an

while Shūhei was taking care of juvenile vagrants, but all of such religious themes were only “added later.” Kikuta et al., “Zadankai ‘Kane no naru oka’ no mondai wa nani ka,” 25. When Shinagawa Hiroshi, who later created a community for juvenile vagrants modeled after *Kane no naru oka*, once asked Kikuta the name of the model person for Kagami Shūhei's character, Kikuta said that there was no model person and that Kagami was a fictional character built upon data from reformatories and first-person accounts. Sano, “Kane no naru oka,” 137.

⁷³ Minami Hiroshi, “‘Kane no naru oka’ to kodomotachi,” *Gensō* 3, no. 3 (April 1949), 21-33.

⁷⁴ Kikuta, *Kane no naru oka dai 2-hen Shinū no maki*, 50-51

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

influential American priest endorsed by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers General MacArthur.

4. 6. Kikuta Kazuo, Juvenile Vagrants and the Celebration of New Subjectivity

Despite the fact that the occupation created *Kane no naru oka* with considerable influence from Flanagan's global Boys Town project, it is misleading to regard the radio drama simply as a unilateral imposition. Kikuta Kazuo's interaction with occupation radio personnel provides an insight into the complex power relations, and competing and converging intentions between the occupiers and the occupied in the production of *Kane no naru oka*.

To be sure, Kikuta Kazuo's reminiscences suggest that the whole process of the show's production was under the control of the occupation's radio personnel. Kikuta's script was subject to the occupation's screening. The Radio Unit held "script conferences" in order to bring "weaknesses or omissions" to the attention of the writer.⁷⁶ The running time, the frequency and the duration of broadcasts were beyond his purview. For example, the occupation officers insisted on a fifteen-minute running time with American soap operas in mind. Kikuta doubted that the American concept of a fifteen-minute serial drama would work for Japanese broadcasting, mainly because Japanese and American serials unfold at different paces due to the slower tempo of the Japanese language.. He requested reconsideration but occupation's radio

⁷⁶ "Weekly Report of Radio Unit for the Week Ending 7 May 1947," Folder 5, Box 5318, RG 331.

personnel simply disregarded his suggestion. Kikuta had to make each episode fifteen minutes long as the occupation personnel had originally intended.⁷⁷

Kikuta did try once, in vain, to refuse the occupation's demands. The original plan was to air the show on Saturdays and Sundays for six months. But once the show had become extremely popular, Huggins wanted to prolong the show's run and to broadcast it every weekday for several years or for an unlimited duration. Kikuta described the manner in which Huggins made the request as "like a consultation meeting (*kondanteki ni*)," suggesting certain parallels in his position vis-à-vis occupation personnel and his relationship to wartime Japanese government officials. The consultation meeting was a practice that Japanese government officials exercised during the war in order to supervise and regulate the activities of individuals in various fields including culture, art and mass media. The consultation meeting often appeared as a non-coercive and reciprocal way of communication. But it was a mechanism of exercising power: individuals summoned to these meetings knew that it would be smart to conform to the officials' suggestions given the unequal power relationship.⁷⁸ Japanese broadcasters were freed from wartime governmental control with the war's end. But they had to submit themselves to the power of the occupation. It was common knowledge that quite a few Japanese radio directors and planners were either fired or transferred to different divisions of NHK precisely because their opinions conflicted with those of the occupation's civilian employees. When Kikuta opposed

⁷⁷ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka no zengo," 159; Yoshikawa Yoshio, "Rajio dorama no ōgonki," *Higeki kigeki* 33, no. 30 (March 1980), 19-20.

⁷⁸ For a brief illustration of the mechanisms of *kondan* during the war, see High, *The Imperial Screen*, 82-85. High deals with consultant meetings held between film makers and supervising government officials.

Kane no naru oka's continuation, Huggins warned him that he was not in a position to dissent by simply asking whether he was "aware of the Potsdam Declaration."

Reminded of how to behave as a national of the defeated nation whose government had accepted the declaration's demand for unconditional surrender, Kikuta stopped arguing and acquiesced to extension of the show's run.⁷⁹

As illustrated above, Kikuta's postwar recollections tended to stress the unequal relationship between the occupier and the occupied. However, some other circumstances attest to a more complex power relation between Kikuta and CIE personnel. Even though Kikuta had to obey the occupation authorities on important decisions about the show, the same authorities also enabled Kikuta to continue to work. Kikuta's name was on the list of nine literary men publicly accused as war criminals by the Japan Communist Party, but the occupation did not charge him with war crimes. Kikuta was in charge of interface with the Information Bureau as an executive director of the Japan Theater Association since August 1944. He joined the mobile theater movement, a state-initiated cultural movement, as a captain of the Tōhō Furukawa Roppa Mobile Corps affiliated with the Japanese Federation of Mobile Theaters, and wrote a number of commissioned plays. He also wrote and staged *Annan no kekkon* (Marriage in Annam) on contract with the Information Bureau. When he heard rumors about war crime charges from an official at the Information Bureau on August 14, 1945 Kikuta escaped from Tokyo to Iwate Prefecture. There he completed his last play written at the request of the Information Bureau, *Nanpū* (South Wind), on August 25,

⁷⁹ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka no zengo," 160.

1945. Returning to Tokyo at the request of Shōchiku Productions in September, Kikuta confessed his wartime activities to CIE's military officer in charge of theater and actually won praise for being "the only person who stepped forward and confessed to his collaboration with the wartime state." Never indicted for war crimes charges under the occupation, Kikuta began to work for NHK as a non-regular staff member in 1946. He wrote, publicized and defended *Kane no naru oka* – all of which helped the occupation to further the democratization campaign. In a sense Kikuta himself embodied the "rehabilitated" Japanese individual.⁸⁰

Kikuta's role in producing and publicizing *Kane no naru oka* surpassed that of a mere functionary. He himself was rationally and emotionally invested in the drama's theme. Kikuta asserted that his strong belief in the importance of the show's theme significantly affected his decision to take part in the production. He wrote, "I would not have accepted the continuation of the show if the show's theme was not about saving juvenile vagrants, or if the mission was not to provide information about democratic education for Japanese children."⁸¹ He was not simply trying to make an excuse for his compliance with occupation policies by bringing up his own interest in juvenile vagrants' wellbeing and children's education. Rather, this statement suggests that Kikuta had found common ground with the occupation and that he chose to take part in the show's production in conformity with his own beliefs, despite his frustrations with the occupation's radio personnel.

⁸⁰ "Kikuta Kazuo ryakunenpu," *Higeki kigeki* 33, no. 30 (March 1980), 66. For a recent account of the state-initiated mobile theater movement in wartime Japan, see Park, "Wartime Japan's Theater Movement," 61-78.

⁸¹ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka no zengo," 160.

It is worth remembering that Kikuta had already invested in the theme of the program even before Huggins approached him with the plan for *Kane no naru oka*. As mentioned earlier, Kikuta had conducted research for a half month-period on juvenile vagrants under the railway overpass of Shinbashi and in the vicinity of Ueno Station. Based upon his observations he wrote and staged the theatrical play *Tokyo aishi* (Tokyo Elegy) with the famous troupe *Baraza* (Rose Troupe) at the Small Theater of Japan Theater (Nihon Gekijō) in January of 1947. This was about six months before *Kane no naru oka*'s premiere. *Tokyo aishi*'s success prompted NHK's producer Udomyama Manji to contact Kikuta when Huggins was looking for a script writer for the "child welfare program."⁸² Even in the prewar and wartime years, Kikuta had dealt with stories of orphans and children. Kikuta dramatized Hase Ken's Akutagawa Prize-winning novel *Asakusa no kodomo* (A Child of Asakusa) in 1941. Well before *Asakusa no kodomo* he wrote the theatrical play *Ai no gakkō* (A School of Love). This was a comedy, but he made the audience burst into tears with a scene where the hero lamented that nobody loved him since he was "a dirty-looking orphan."⁸³

Kikuta's personal history provides a clue to his special interest in juvenile vagrants and underprivileged children. Kikuta himself grew up as an orphan in Taiwan and Japan. He was seven months old when his parents divorced and left him with adoptive parents who lived in Taiwan and who eventually gave him up to a second pair of adoptive parents after their own son was born. After he returned to Japan at the age of twelve he was sent to a shop in Osaka for service. He had to overcome a series

⁸² Kokubun et al., "Zadankai Kane no naru oka," 11.

⁸³ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka kara," 40-41.

of economic and social hardships while wandering from place to place and working his way through school, until he entered the literary world with Satō Hachirō's support at the age of twenty.⁸⁴

In a publicly released letter to a granddaughter of his fourth adoptive father, Kikuta implied that his own experience as an orphan had triggered his sympathy toward juvenile vagrants.

While going around [Shinbashi and Ueno] and observing [juvenile vagrants], I realized that I was much happier than them in the past [when I was at a similar age]. During the days when I was a servant boy in a pharmacy and an art dealer shop, I was unhappy, often beaten up and pushed around. Nevertheless compared to war-affected juvenile vagrants (*sensai furōji*) like them, I ate a decent amount of food, which was several times more than what they get, and I never had to sleep on the ground or on the concrete floor under the eaves."⁸⁵

Later Kikuta had an opportunity to give a speech to four hundred war orphans at an event organized by NHK and Tōhō when Japan Theater staged a theatrical version of *Kane no naru oka*. While confessing that he himself had been an orphan, he told the children not to “presume” themselves to have “the saddest lives in the world.” Kikuta's speech, which was based on his own experience, touched audiences' hearts: when he looked around the audiences he noticed them weeping.⁸⁶ As much as his talent as a drama writer brought the show popular success, his personal conviction regarding the show's theme helped provide *Kane no naru oka* with a certain authenticity as a heart-touching sentimental drama. CIE's radio personnel were well

⁸⁴ For a brief timeline and description of Kikuta's life and career, see “Kikuta Kazuo ryakunenpu,” 64-67.

⁸⁵ Kikuta, “Kane no naru oka kara, 41.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

aware that Kikuta was irreplaceable. This was the reason that the occupation personnel prevailed on him to continue writing for the show.

Kikuta also served as a very enthusiastic spokesperson of the show's message and the principles with which Shūhei guided the juvenile vagrants. Kikuta's personal commitment to the show's theme can be perhaps best seen in his defense of the program against criticism from middle-aged parents and social workers who complained that the show had a bad influence on children or that its approach to troubled children was misguided. Unlike school children and young adults who were sympathetic to the show, middle-aged or older listeners tended to be critical, often claiming that "children's speech is getting worse" and "the show informs children of what they did not have to know."⁸⁷ Some parents even forbid their children to listen to *Kane no naru oka*. Kikuta remembered a boy who came to the radio station and told Kikuta that he had to come in order to listen to the show because he could not do so at home due to his disapproving mother.⁸⁸ The divided opinions sometimes developed into intergenerational tension. If newspapers featured letters from adult listeners critical of the drama, supportive children quickly responded with letters saying, "Grownups don't understand children's feelings" or "Even though adults do not approve, you should not discontinue the drama." Kikuta defended the younger generations by stating, "Children have a sense of judgment. Even though they do not

⁸⁷ According to NHK's magazine *Hōsō bunka*'s March 1949 issue, ninety percent of listeners' letters to NHK favored the show and ten percent did not. The most enthusiastic listeners of the show were school-aged children between the fifth and sixth grade in elementary school and middle school students in the new system. Young adults were also supportive of the show. Satō Katsuhiko, "Kane no naru oka no kodomodachi," *Hōsō bunka* 4, no. (March 1949), 29.

⁸⁸ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka kara," 49.

say a word, they can distinguish right from wrong among the social situations that this radio drama throws to them.” In Kikuta’s view the problem resided with parents who did not trust their children.⁸⁹ He figured that “this is not merely an issue of language but the underlying parents’ hostility to the gap between their children’s democratic education and the conventional family system.”⁹⁰

By representing discontented middle-aged parents as reminiscent of *Kanzō*, a symbol of “feudal” legacies to be reoriented to new ideas, Kikuta revealed that he shared the critical stance on Japan’s older generations with his hero *Shūhei*. As Kikuta believed it necessary for Japanese children to break off the “feudal” ideas that their parents could not easily discard, he encouraged an independent mind as an important quality that children should cultivate in postwar Japan. In his speech to war orphans mentioned earlier, Kikuta made the bold statement that being a war orphan was actually “a blessing” while stressing that it was extremely important “for a man to stand up by himself without being dependent.” According to him, in contrast to normal children who inevitably depended on caring parents for their living, orphans were already living for themselves. Kikuta’s statement might sound sophistic. But his celebration of war orphans as independent children should be considered in the specific postwar situation when many Japanese sought to make a radical break with the nation’s past.⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹⁰ Kikuta, “Kane no naru oka no zengo,” 160-161.

⁹¹ Kikuta, “Kane no naru oka kara,” 44.

Kikuta and CIE's radio specialists shared an interest in the salvation of juvenile vagrants and the distrust of Japanese parents. Predicting negative reception from conventional parents, both parties agreed to announce at the opening of the show that the program was based on research into the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Kikuta concluded that the foresight of CIE's radio personnel and the opening announcement enabled this show to stick to its original theme despite the criticism of disgruntled Japanese parents.⁹² CIE's radio staff sided with Kikuta in the midst of the controversy over the potentially harmful effects of the drama's bad language, saying "Never mind unenlightened parents." CIE's encouragement continued at least until the summer of 1948. Around this time Kikuta noticed that the occupation's policy noticeably shifted toward compromising enlightenment in order to please adult listeners. Kikuta lamented that from this time *Kane no naru oka* became "an orphan of democratic education (*minshu shugi kyōiku no koji*)."⁹³

Kikuta often appeared to be a more enthusiastic and consistent supporter of *Kane no naru oka*'s motif than some of CIE's radio personnel. Even after *Kane no naru oka* concluded and the occupation forces left Japan, Kikuta continued to work to bring underprivileged children to public attention from a humanitarian perspective. *Fujin kōron*'s November 1955 issue featured Kikuta's reportage on two teenaged boys of poor family background who reportedly killed themselves on the railroad tracks. Tracing what led these deprived children to death, Kikuta stressed that these boys

⁹² Ibid., 42.

⁹³ Kikuta, "Kane no naru oka no zengo," 161.

were good by nature but had suffered from their neglectful father and economically incompetent mother as well as from flaws in the government's poor relief.⁹⁴

In short, Kikuta was a postwar subject in occupied Japan in the dual sense as Foucault theorized: he was subject to the occupation's power and simultaneously was a willing subject who actively participated in the production of *Kane no naru oka* out of his own desire and beliefs.⁹⁵ Behaving within the limits that the occupation authorities set up, he pursued the theme of juvenile vagrants' rehabilitation under liberal and caring guidance, out of his own experience, desire and beliefs. Both utilizing and serving the occupation, he sensitized Japanese listeners to the show's ideas.

4. 6. Closing: Three Redemption Stories of Juvenile Vagrants in the Transwar Transpacific

In this chapter I have argued that through a moralizing and sentimental redemption story of juvenile vagrants, the radio drama *Kane no naru oka* suggested a larger vision of rehabilitation for postwar Japan, a vision strongly shadowed by the occupation's liberal model for the reorientation of the Japanese and the U.S. hegemonic project in Asia. Although the occupation's political intentions constituted the major thrust for the production of *Kane no naru oka*, I have chosen to illuminate the specific way in which the radio show engaged listeners mentally and emotionally

⁹⁴ Kikuta Kazuo, "Shōnentach wa shinda: futari no jisatsu shōnen no kiroku," *Fujin kōron* 40, no. 11 (November 1955), 148-155.

⁹⁵ See Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, edited and translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208-228.

in its political messages. The enthusiastic reactions of listeners to the show's humanitarian and liberatory ideas owed much to the show's sentimentalism and optimism. These inspired a sense of solidarity and commitment as well as hope for a better future for the nation. Such an emotional impact often induced various individuals to make *Kane no naru oka*'s visions real, demonstrating the fictional drama's power to constitute some of the young Japanese as self-helping and self-disciplined liberal subjects in occupied Japan.

To be sure, *Kane no naru oka* was a cultural production embedded in the specific atmosphere of the early postwar years. The idea of turning problematic children into productive, useful citizens of the nation through liberal means fit into both the fundamental rationale of the U.S. occupation's reorientation program and the prevailing desire for a new start within postwar Japanese society. Yet it is questionable whether some of the key principles publicized by *Kane no naru oka* were necessarily as foreign to pre-U.S. occupation Japan as early postwar discourse, which tends to overstress a break from the former era, often leads us to believe. As a closing point, I would like to look into a case that attests to a longer history of the use of liberal rehabilitative subjects in transwar mass culture—namely, the colonial Korean film titled *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* (*Homeless Angels*, *Ie naki tenshi* in Japanese).

The film, directed by Korean film maker Ch'oe In-kyu, came out in 1941, only three years after the Hollywood feature film *Boys Town*. Not only did it appear at about the same time, the film also showed great similarities to Father Flanagan's story in terms of subject, characters, plot and themes. *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* was the story of

a young Korean pastor who picks up homeless children wandering around the street of colonial Seoul and creates Hyangninwŏn, a self-supporting and self-governing community for juvenile vagrants to live and work. The Christian theme of redemption and the liberal mode of guidance underlie the narrative of rehabilitation. The film portrays the children's rehabilitation not as violent deprogramming but as a gradual process of persuasion and enlightenment in which the pastor awakens juvenile vagrants to diligence, the value of work, and discipline. The pastor's love and care are inspirations for the homeless children to adjust themselves to and live up to a new disciplined life style. His humanitarian and liberal approach faces a test when two boys attempt to escape. But another boy named Yŏng-kil shepherds the escapees back to the pastor's care by risking his own life to stop them. Yŏng-kil's voluntary and self-sacrificing action to "save" the children and the community manifests the effect of the pastor's efforts to turn juvenile vagrants into self-conscious and responsible subjects.⁹⁶

The reception of *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* suggests that imperial authorities and Japanese film distributors did not take the film's liberal and humanitarian approach to juvenile vagrants as foreign or contradictory to the imperial enterprise. Rather, the film was considered to be a sequel to the same director's earlier film *Suōmnyō* (Tuition), which was considered a work that promoted the slogan "unity of Japan and Korea (*naisen ittai*)" through its depiction of a Japanese teacher who guides Korean children toward imperial subjectification (*kōminka*). The pastor's efforts in *Chip*

⁹⁶ *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* is one of the colonial films recently rediscovered and made available to the public by the Korean Film Archive. The Korean Film Archive has been releasing a series of DVD collections of these films under the title *Palgultoen kwagō*. *Chip ōmnŭn ch'ōnsa* is included in the first of the series, *Palgultoen kwagō: Ilche sigi kūkyōnghwa moŭm, 1940-nyōdae* (2007).

ōmnūn ch'ōnsa to constitute juvenile vagrants as self-disciplined and industrious modern subjects overlaps with the larger colonial project of making loyal and productive imperial subjects. It is no surprise that the film ends with a scene where all the residents of *Hyangninwōn* gather and recite the Pledge of the Imperial Subjects.⁹⁷ After passing censorship by the Governor General of Korea, *Chip ōmnūn ch'ōnsa* was going to play in Japan by recommendation of the News Service Section of the Japanese Army in Korea (*Chōsengun Hōdōbu*). The film once passed the Japanese Home Ministry's censorship and even made it to the list of the films recommended by the Ministry of Education, although it became subject to re-censoring later for an unknown reason.⁹⁸

It is unclear whether *Boys Town* had any direct influence on the creation of *Chip ōmnūn ch'ōnsa*. Hollywood films had been popular and frequently circulated throughout Japanese Empire since the 1910s. The situation changed when Japan levied import restrictions on American films both in the domestic Japanese market and all of its imperial possessions in 1937. A complete embargo on U.S. feature films began on

⁹⁷ For a valuable discussion of the subject, refer to So Hyōn-suk, “‘Hwangguk sinmin’ ūro purūm padūn ‘chip ōmnūn ch'ōnsadūl’: yōksa saryo rosō ūi yōnghwa ‘Chip ōmnūn ch'ōnsa,’” *Yōksa pipyōng*, no. 82 (Spring 2008), 484-494.

⁹⁸ On the censorship of the film, refer to Yi Yōng-chae, *Chekuk Ilpōn ūi Chosōn yōngwha* (Seoul: Hyōnsil munwha, 2008), 155-205. Right before the film's showing in Japan, the Home Ministry suddenly changed its stance to the film and ordered the director to cut more than two hundred meters of the film. The Ministry did not include the film in the revised version of the recommended film list. While the exact reason for the Ministry's belated censorial control remains undetermined, Yi Yōngchae speculates that the pastor's character as an active, overachieving subject might have been a reason. According to her, the pastor, a Korean man, embodies and practices the essential principles of imperial subjectification policy without any intermediary, and therefore had the potential to threaten the hierarchy between colonizer and colonized built on the imagined superiority of the former.

December 8, 1941.⁹⁹ But we cannot completely discount the possibility that colonial Korean filmmakers were able to see *Boys Town*, an Oscar Award-winning film. Even though the restrictions decreased the number of imported American films by half within a year, 144 Hollywood films still played in Japan in 1938. Despite all the prohibitions, filmmakers managed to watch American films more often than we imagine. For example, renowned Japanese film maker Ozu Yasujiro recalled watching films from the 1940s such as *Gone with the Wind* (1940) and *How Green Was My Valley* (1941).¹⁰⁰

Regardless of the direct influence of *Boys Town* on *Chip ǒmnŭn ch'ǒnsa*, the point to be stressed is that juvenile vagrants' rehabilitation in both cultural productions served as an important model for urging mass audiences to constitute themselves as self-disciplined, responsible, and useful members of the society across the Pacific. Whether the creators of *Kane no naru oka* referred to *Chip ǒmnŭn ch'ǒnsa* or not, the same patterns of representation that functioned for the making of imperial subjects continued to serve the postwar subject-making program under the occupation's liberal democratic motto. Thus, three cultural productions based on the idea of self-rehabilitation suggested certain shared patterns in subject-making in the transpacific during the transwar era, thereby encouraging us to reconsider some of the

⁹⁹ On the import restriction, see Tanaka Junichirō, *Nihon eiga hattatsushi*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1980), 354-359 and vol.3 (1980), 65-80. In September 1937, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry banned additional import of American films but allowed Japanese theaters to play fifty American films already in stock. In 1939, the Ministry permitted a limited number of American films to be imported.

¹⁰⁰ For a useful account of the competition between Hollywood and Japanese films in the Asia Pacific region, see Michael Baskett, *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 106-131. On the Japanese embargo on American films and Ozu, see 111 and 114.

conventional historiographical presumptions that emphasize simple binaries between wartime and postwar eras, and between Japanese and American culture and politics.

Epilogue

The San Francisco Peace Treaty, signed on September 8, 1951, and effective April 1952, marked the end of the U.S. occupation and Japan's return to the international community. The occupation forces finally concluded their mission in Japan and left the nation, Japan officially regained its sovereignty, and Japanese international broadcasting, which had been banned by the occupation ever since Japan's surrender, resumed on February 10, 1952.

Two important developments in Japan's broadcasting history took place during this transformative period. In 1951, for the first time in Japanese history, commercial radio stations were allowed to broadcast. The second important event in Japan was the introduction of a new medium in broadcasting—television, which began broadcasting in 1953. These two events reshaped radio broadcasting and listening in Japan in significant ways.

The establishment of commercial broadcasting companies ended NHK's monopoly and brought pluralism to Japanese broadcasting. For the first time, NHK had to compete with various radio stations. At the beginning of commercial broadcasting NHK still maintained a leading position, exploiting the rich experience of its broadcasters and the Japanese mass audience's long-established habit of listening to its programs.¹ New companies had less experience but, to develop rapidly,

¹ The NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute surveyed listener ratings from December 1952 to January 1953. According to the survey, overall, NHK won much higher ratings than the total ratings gained by the commercial companies. However, during the time of night that

certainly took advantage of features that were not available to NHK, such as an advertising income and commercial items provided by sponsor companies. New stations also scouted NHK broadcasters and often borrowed formats from NHK's successful shows. Among them were the amateur singing show and the quiz show discussed in chapters two and three. These replicas came to draw more participants than NHK's original shows, since commercial networks usually offered much more generous prizes than did NHK.² Even after commercial stations firmly settled themselves into business and often edged ahead in entertainment broadcasting, NHK managed to retain its authority with regard to informational and educational programs. Nevertheless, it was no longer possible for NHK to expect an exclusive relationship with radio listeners.

The introduction of television also fundamentally changed radio listening practices in Japan. Although it took some time for mass audiences to become familiar with the new broadcasting medium, the television set gradually took over the living room, pushing radio into private rooms.³ Radio listening increasingly became an isolated and individualized practice.

focused on entertainment broadcasting, commercial companies sometimes gained more ratings than NHK, particularly in the Osaka and Nagoya areas. See Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), 349.

² This trend provoked a debate about the negative social effects of quiz shows, which was similar to the controversy surrounding the giveaway in the United States. For example, see Nanki Yoshirō, "Kuizu bangumi no kōzai ni tsuite," *Minkan hōsō*, no. 32 (June 1955), 8-10 and "Kuizu zeka hika," *Tokyo shinbun* (August 19, 1953). Contemporaries often blamed commercial broadcasting companies for catering to vulgar tastes, thereby degenerating mass culture. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi*, 349-353.

³ For an informative account of the early introduction of television in Japanese society, see Jason Makoto Chun, *A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots?: A Social History of Japanese Television, 1953-1973* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35-52.

It soon became the case that one primarily listened to the radio when alone in the car once the automobile became a necessity of Japanese life. The invention of portable radios and the frequent use of earphones also accelerated the trend toward private listening. While these more recent developments heavily affected the Japanese understanding of radio listening as a private practice, radio practices from the former era generally slipped out of collective memory.

This description of radio listening as predominantly an isolated practice may apply to some degree to the early introductory period of the radio, when the limited capacity of radio sets forced listeners to use individual headsets. Except for the introductory period, however, radio listening in transwar Japan was never a private practice. Many people had to listen collectively due to the scarcity of radio sets. NHK set up radios with louder speakers in public places, such as train stations and busy parts of downtown areas. In 1932 and 1933, NHK also built roughly forty “radio towers” (*rajitō*)—towers with radios installed inside—for public listening in large parks, such as Osaka’s Tennōji Kōen.⁴ The group listening movement promoted collective listening in public spaces, as discussed in Chapter One.

Even if an individual listened to the radio in an isolated setting, (s)he was never free from the gaze of broadcasters, government officials, and educators. Messages received by radio audiences were already deeply embedded with the politics of the empire and the postwar nation state. The blurred boundaries between public and private in Japan’s transwar radio listening urge us to rethink the clichéd assumption

⁴ On radio towers, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Nihon Hōsōshi*, vol.1, 284-285.

that radio and television dispersed audiences back to their homes and turned radio listening or television watching into a private experience rather than a public occasion.⁵

In sum, the transwar period was an era when broadcasters, government officials, and intellectuals with various political orientations not only became deeply concerned with radio audiences' thoughts and behaviors but also ambitiously strove to shape them. During this time, NHK and the government, with support from various intellectuals, actively experimented and implemented practices for transforming mass audiences into individuals who would care about the public affairs of the empire and the postwar nation state and who would actively engage in the on-going war efforts and postwar national rebuilding. Although well aware that listeners did not necessarily follow the given instructions and decode radio messages "correctly," broadcasters shared a certain degree of optimism that they could eventually reconstruct the masses into disciplined and politically conscious listeners through research and education. No other period of Japanese broadcasting demonstrated the same degree of ambition to politicize the masses and to intervene in audiences' habits and behaviors.

Of course, this particular characteristic of radio broadcasting was closely associated with transwar politics. Contrary to common belief, however, wartime practices for turning mass audiences into politically conscious radio-listening imperial

⁵ Some scholars consciously take this approach to stress that prevailing electronic media negatively affected the collective political activism of the masses by severing their connections. For example, see Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences*. I do not necessarily deny these political implications of electronic media. Nevertheless, I am still not comfortable with the clear-cut binary between private and public. Transwar radio listening in Japan does not completely fit into such a binary.

subjects did not necessarily impede the U.S. occupation's mission to transform the Japanese into active and responsible liberal subjects under U.S. global hegemony in the face of the rising Cold War. Some wartime habits of listening and audience participation easily adapted themselves to the postwar environment and facilitated the U.S. occupation's liberal missions. Active and participatory, but self-disciplined, listeners easily fit the ideal image of the postwar citizen. This smooth transformation demands a reconsideration of the conventional binary between Japan's wartime and postwar periods.

Certainly, radio served as a unique intermediary in transwar mass politics. However, this was not exclusively due to the medium's homogenizing and penetrating power, as is conventionally assumed. Radio's real power resided in its capacity to channel politics into mass culture and everyday life. Such a channeling process relied upon radio's versatility and mass appeal. These characteristics enabled broadcasting to operate through mass audiences' desires and needs and to draw them into radio programs that were deeply embedded in transwar politics. The transwar political elites and central authorities took advantage of this medium's mass appeal. However, there were limits to the efforts to utilize radio to politicize the masses. Mass audiences appropriated radio for their own purposes and enjoyment, which led elites and central authorities to adapt to listeners' desires. The history of Japan's transwar broadcasting shows that it was not a clear-cut story of top-down control and indoctrination but was characterized by complex interactions between the intentions of the transmitters and the desires of the audiences.

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