Diffusion and Appropriation of the Western Taste of Music: An Experience of People's Music in Modern Japan

Ethnomusicology and the Music Industry: Appropriating the “Ethnic”

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I Introduction

How the western taste of music was diffused into, and appropriated by the people’s music in modern Japan? Focusing on socialist and labor movements’ music. Why? Socialist and labor movements’ music were the earliest to become international among people’s music in Europe and North America.

Contents

I Introduction
III Labor and Socialist movements’ songs in Japan before the First World War
IV Labor and Socialist movements’ songs in Japan after the First World War: 1920s
V Conclusion
II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies

1. Was cross-border diffusion of music easy or difficult for modern European people?

It is not easy question. When we argue about the border of music, we tend to suppose there is a “national music” within border. But making of “national music” beyond locality, class and religion is not self-evident phenomenon, and needs to be explained and elucidated.

In the period from 1860s to the early twentieth century before the First World War, Labor and socialist movements in Europe had acquired their common songs beyond border. Within borders there still remained local, class and religious differences. In the same period European and American nations began to build their respective “national music”.

Cross-border diffusion of music by labor & socialist movements did not started after the completion of “national music”.

II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies

1. Was cross-border diffusion of music easy or difficult for modern European people?

Far before the completion of “national music”, by the 16th and 17th centuries there emerged the European common musical taste such as (1) heptatonic scale, (2) metrical structure and (3) tonality with triad chord, as the common base of people’s music in Europe. And European classical music stood upon this common base.

In Europe cross-border diffusion of music was made possible on such common base of musical taste.

So, how was cross-border diffusion of European music to the outside of this common base (for example, Japan) was acquired? ⇒ III
II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies

2. Common base of the European classical music: An international standard of the classical music?

The normal state of the classical music was not national.

- Some kind of church music & court music
- Baroque dances were not national claim, but colouring.
- Universalism and enlightenment of the 18th century
- But the classical music in its heyday, i.e. in the 19th century was characterized not by internationality or universality, but by nationality, or locality and ethnicity. “The age of romanticist/nationalist schools”.
- But again there acted the common base of music in Europe.
II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies

2. Common base of the European classical music: An international standard of the classical music?

The classical music were highly common in Europe, even in its heyday, “the period of the romanticist/nationalist schools” in the 19th century.

For the classical music border was not so high, therefore John Field, born in Ireland, apprenticed to Muzio Clementi, could be accepted with ‘nocturne’ by the salon in St.Petersburg. Or Hector Berlioz’s *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (Henry Lemoine, 1844) could be the common textbook all over Europe.

So, how border was high for the people’s music in Europe?
II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies

3. People’s music in Europe and borders

Definition of “People’s music”: other music than practical music (Gelegenheitsmusik) as court, church, army and naval musics, and music performed at the public paid concerts. Therefore people’s music was performed mainly by the people themselves in the same place, without written or printed sheet music.

As people’s music was diffused through ‘hear and play’ method or oral instruction, it tended to be a closed phenomenon within a locality. Language and dialect would become a barrier.

A chance to be obliged to hear and sing a song regardless of individual favor was limited to traditional feast, tavern, school, army and navy, where foreign music was naturally unpopular. So a chance to touch foreign strange music was limited before the First World War and establishment of reproduction technology.
**II Diffusion of Musical Taste: Chance to touch Foreign Music, and Cross-Border Strategies**

4. **Internationality of labor and socialist movement’s music**

Double sided cross-border strategy

(1) In such situation of people’s music, it was labor and socialist movement that positively adopted foreign songs by altering the words. This cross-border strategy was effective in order to mobilize a mass to a movement because National hymn sung popularly by a nation were proved as quite effective means to carry whatever causes, if other than nationalism.

(2) Socialist movements originally had an orientation to become international, “Unite, Workers of All Nations!” National hymn could be easily transformed into Socialist song, if words were altered in the manner of socialist internationality. So could nationalism be easily taken over by internationalism.
Songs sung common in the European and north American socialist and labor movement by 1880s.

(1)”Die Wacht am Rhein” (The Watch on the Rhine)”, originally German National Hymn since 1854, and adopted as socialist song by a Swiss socialist Herman Greulich in 1871.

(2)”La Marseillaise”, originally French National Hymn since 1795, adopted as socialist song since 1880s.

(3)”L’internationale”, original socialist song composed in 1888.

(4)”The Red Flag”, originally Silesian folk song “O Tannenbaum”, and adopted as socialist song by Gim Connell in 1889.

(5)”Warszawianka (1905 roku)”, original socialist song, words written in ca.1880.
1. Origins of labor and socialist movements in Japan

(1) Temporary and short lived movements could be observed by 1880 in Japan. There is neither evidence for the movements’ music, nor evidence for standing organizations.

(2) But the ideas and theories of trade unionism and socialism were introduced into Japan, stimulated by the Western ideas introduced since late 1860s such as “liberté, égalité et fraternité”

(3) The first organization with clear name was formed in the USA by Japanese habitants; “Shokkou Giyuhkai (the Friends of Labor)” founded in 1891 with the leadership of Fusataro Takano. In 1897 this organization was re-built in Japan, under which the Tekko Kumiai (iron trades workers’ union), the Kappankou Kumiai (Printers’ Union) and the Nippon Tetsudoh Kyohseikai (Railway Workers’ Union) were affiliated. They used songs borrowed from “Enka”.

III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War
III  Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

2. Jiyuh-Minken-Undoh and Enka

“Jiyuh-Minken-Undoh” (The Popular Movement for People’s Civil Rights and Democracy since the 1880s Japan)

(1) Forerunner of the socialist and labor movement, its style of assembly and songs are succeeded by the early socialists and trade unionists in 1890s and 1900s.

(2) NAKAE Chohmin (1847-1901), central leader of the Jiyuh Minken Undoh. And he was succeeded by a group of socialists as KOHTOKU Shuhsui (1871-1911) and the Heiminsha-party.

(3) They were the typical old style activists, but very popular and influential. So at last they were executed in a frame-up case of a project of assassination of the Emperor (Taigyaku-Jiken).

(4) “Enka” (addressing song) proved very effective in the Jiyuh-Minken-Undoh, and gave an influence early socialists’ songs.
III  Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War
2. Jiyuh-Minken-Undoh and Enka

(5) Background of the early leaders and activists

① The nature of the old type activists, “sohshi” (stalwart)
   a. Sons of wealthy farmers and merchants with classical knowledge
   b. Educational backgrounds not uniform, but higher education very rare.
      Someone educated in the traditional school since the Yedo period.
   c. But they were strongly fascinated by the idea of the European bourgeois
      revolution, such as liberty, equality and fraternity.
   d. The social circumstances was traditional, and such traditionality was part of
      the leaders’ own nature.

② The introduction of the western(ized) music into Army and Navy since 1860s, then into primary schools by a group of early
   music educator as IZAWA Shuji (1851-1917) in 1880s and 1890s.
   Thus the early leadership was characterized by traditional culture
   in one side and westernized culture in another side.
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

2. Jiyuh-Minken-Undoh and Enka

(1) Enka’s origin was supposed to be cleverly invented when the speaker was stopped by police attended the movement’s assembly. 

(2) But every speaker could not be so skillful to sing as the occasion might demand, and the real origin should be found in a change of the form of movement from logical speech to addressing song.

(3) In such transition main activists were transformed into street performers (enka-sohshi) who sang “enka” and sold song paper (utahon). The right picture shows the style of enka-sohshi, putting on wooden sandal, with stick and conical straw headpiece, and a sheaf of utahon between the chest and his kimono.

(4) Selling utahon could be considered the pre-history of oldest music industry in Japan, far before music reproduction technology.
3. Early Socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(1) The tradition of enka was succeeded by the first professional enka singer song writer (enka-shi), SOEDA Azenboh (1872-1944), in the period that Jiyuh-Minken-Unodh was slowly declining after the establishment of the Diet in 1890.

(2) Azenboh collaborated with early socialists as KOHTOKU Shuhsui and SAKAI Toshihiko (1871-1933), and written words for “Shakaishugi Rappa-bushi (socialist trumpet song)” on the melody of “Rappa-bushi” in 1905. And in 1907 he wrote with SAKAI “Aa, Kane-no-yoya (Alas, money is almighty key for all doors)”.

(3) Thus Azenboh adapted the tradition of enka to the early socialist music; the first pedigree of socialist music in Japan.
3. Early Socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

There was another pedigree of the early socialist music in Japan. That was parodies of military and student’s songs.

“Tomi no Kusari (Liberate ourselves from a chain of wealth),” 1904, originally military song “Nipponkaigun (Japanese Navy),” 1904 (In the North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) this song is assumed to be composed by Kim Il-Sung with the title of “People’s Revolutionary Army”).

“Kakumei-ka (song for revolution),” 1908, originally students’ song of the First High School, “Ikkou Ryohka: Aa Gyokuhai ni hana ukete (dormitory song of the First High School, Tokyo: Oh our jade cup shall be filled with flowers)”

These parodies seems to have represented modernized side of Japan as Army, Navy and modernized schools, while enka-based socialist songs represented traditional side of Japan.

Is this comparison true? ⇒4.
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(1) At first enka-based songs as “Rappa-bushi” and “Aa Kane no yoya” were not genuine Japanese traditional songs, but themselves were an adaptation of Western music into Japanese taste in 1890s and 1900s. Their original tune was “Battoh-tai(swords corps)” composed by Charles Edouard Gabriel Leroux, French teacher for military music for the Imperial Japanese Army in 1885. The original music was composed in heptatonic scale, however these parodies were sung in a pentatonic scale (in Yo-scale, or Inaka-bushi) melody. So the phrases which includes the fourth or seventh note were modified into pentatonic notes. ⇒ examples 1 & 2
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(2) Two pedigrees of the early socialist songs had in common four characters, ① scale and tonality, ② relations of words to music, ③ instrumental usage, ④ theme of songs.

(3) Scale and tonality: Japanese traditional people’s music was supposed to be played in pentatonic Yo-scale which consists of five notes, do, re, mi, sol and la. In this point, Yo-scale resembles to the Western pentatonic scale which is easily found in the peripheral regions of Europe, such as Scotland and Bohemia. The famous “Auld lang syne” is sung in the same pentatonic scale, but Scottish or Bohemian tunes have the tonality with triad chord, while Japanese pentatonic lacks such tonality. It lacks the chord progression from tonic to subdominant and dominant, and returning to tonic at last.
4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(3) Scale and tonality continued

Enka and enka-based socialist songs are not genuine Yo-scale, but they includes the fourth or seventh tone.

**Example 1**: the oldest enka survived, “Dynamite-bushi”, 1885.
Example 2: “Battoh-tai”, “Rappa-bushi” & “Aa kane no yoya” “Outlining principle” (J.R. Cowderry 1990) of parody or adaptation
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(3) Scale and tonality, continued

Enka and enka-based socialist songs were not genuine Yo-scale, because it often includes the fourth (examples 1 & 2) or seventh note.

This would suggest the following two hypothesis,

① The notion that the traditional Japanese music is of genuine pentatonic Yo-scale is erroneous, and that the traditional Japanese music sometimes includes as a normal state other notes than five notes in the pentatonic scale.

② Enka and enka-based socialist songs in modern Japan was not genuinely traditional, but was tacitly influenced by the Western music during the period from 1860s to 1890s.
III  Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War
4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(3) Scale and tonality, continued

① In the present sense of music, enka and enka-based songs sound traditional Japanese, while parodies of military and students’ songs sound more Westernized.

② But enka and enka-based songs did not fit into supposed traditional pentatonic, while parodies of military and students’ songs fit completely into pentatonic scale.

③ Enka and enka-based songs lacks tonality with triad chord, and the melody tends to start and end with a note other than Do or Sol, while parodies of military and students’ songs proceed with Western chord progression.

④ The determinant of Japanese or Western sounds seems to be lie not in scale, but in tonality.
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(4) Relations of words to music

Japanese traditional music is often supposed to be play melismatically as Jiuta and Nagauta, but enka and enka-based socialist songs are sung very syllabically. ⇒ examples 1 & 2

In this point, parodies of military and students’ songs were also syllabic. In the both pedigrees early socialist songs consisted of seven-and-five syllable meter and were sung in duple or quadruple time within highly metrical structure.

So, looking at the relations of words to music, early socialist music in Japan was not genuinely traditional, but influenced from Western music or Westernized military and school music introduced since 1860s to 1890s.
III  Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(5) Instrumental usage
Enka performer sometimes sang his song accompanied with western instruments as violin and trumpet, rarely with Japanese instruments as shamisen or kokyū. KAMINAGA Ryohgetsu (1888-1976), the first enka-performer with fiddle. This typical performance style of enka originated from him.

(6) Theme of songs
Theme of the early socialist songs were not traditional but introduced from European ideas and representations, such as liberty, people’s right, criticizing capitalism and plutocracy, commonwealth, etc.
III Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan before the First World War

4. Common characters of two pedigrees of early socialist songs in Japan: 1890s and 1900s

(7) Musical environment and undeniable western influence
The musical environment for the Japanese people in 1890s and 1900s were quite traditional, besides school and military experiences. But school and military music had an undeniable influence over the early socialist music, as metrical structure, syllabic music and fixed speed.

(8) Western music was transplanted into Japanese people through military training and school education with state power, but the western taste of music was, in fact, tacitly accepted and appropriated by the people in very hushed manner. Enka and the early socialist music could not be explained and understood as “genuine” traditional music, but a form of new experience in people’s music.
IV Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan after the First World war: 1920s

1. European socialist songs introduced into Japan

(1) New type of leaders and long lasting organizations
Japanese social movements experienced a change after the War.

a. Leaders were children of urban middle class

b. Higher education. They could get knowledge of European socialist and trade-unionist theory and thoughts directly by the books and newspapers in foreign language.

c. Their movement based on universities, such as the Shinjin-Kai (Freshmen’s Society) of the University of Tokyo.

d. Experiences of studying abroad ⇒ European manner of movement: Assembly, marching, placard, and chorus music

Therefore western music could be accepted and introduced with lesser difficulty than the old type leaders and activists.
Assembly of the First May-Day 1920

A local May-Day march lead by trumpet (or flugelhorn) and drum 1922 in Ohtsu.
IV Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan after the First World war: 1920s

1. European socialist songs introduced into Japan

(2) European socialist standard songs introduced in 1920s.

① “The Red Flag” sung at the second May Day in 1921, introduced by AKAMATSU Katsumaro and his wife YOSHINO Akiko from a labor song book brought by NOSAKA Sanzo from London. All of them finished higher education and read English.

② “L’internationale” introduced in 1922 at a meeting to celebrate five years since the Russian socialist revolution, but performance and printing of this song was prohibited in the next.

③ “Warszawianka” introduced in late 1920s by Avant-garde Art Union.

④ “La Marseillaise” introduced in 1930 at the Literature Lecture Meeting.

These songs became popular in Japan 40 years behind Europe.

“Die Wacht am Rhein” was not introduced as a socialist song, as this became unpopular in the Allied nations during the War because of its origin as German National Hymn. But this song was introduced as a college song of the Doshisha University through Yale University, and sung at present.
IV Labor and Socialist Movements’ Music in Japan after the First World war: 1920s

2. Socialist songs with western taste made in Japan

“Kike Bankoku no Rohdohsha” (May Day Song, “Listen, Working Men of All Countries”), at the third May Day in 1922.

Originally the college song of the First high School, Tokyo “Amuru gawa no Ryuketsuya” in 1901, and its grand origin was Army Military Song “Shonanko” composed by NAGAI Kenshi in 1899. This grand original song is made various parodies into college, socialist, and children’s songs such as “Oyama no Sugi no Ko”.

Background: By 1920s western taste in music became neither strange nor awkward. After sixty years experience in military music and forty years in school music, western taste was fully appropriated by Japanese people.
IV Labor and SocialistMovements’ Music in Japan after the First World war: 1920s

3. People’s music in 1920s and 1930s in Japan

Japanese labor and socialist movements acquired European standard socialist songs in 1920s, but this was the period that the recording and reproduction technology as music disc, cinema (even silent movies took a role of music transfer from one country to other), and radio broadcasting in late 1920s. Thus other popular music commercialized by music industry was introduced into Japan from Europe and the USA. In such situation labor and socialist movement lost their pioneering cross-border strategy which had been effective in Europe and north American countries. Socialism became not sole circuit to transfer foreign music.
V Conclusion: Difference of the Experience of the First World War

European labor and socialist movements accommodated themselves to the age of the first globalization in late nineteenth and early twentieth century by means of internationalization of their movement and acquisition of common music beyond borders. “International” was not only fanfare but also actual and realistic strategies for European socialists.

But in Japan labor and socialist movements, however influenced by the European ideas of democracy and socialism, faced a barrier sound feeling. Therefore the enka-based early socialist songs carried double characteristics, traditional Japanese and tacitly western taste. At last in 1920s after the experience of the First World War, economic development, and military/school music, Japanese socialists caught up the European standard songs under the new leadership. But this was the period of new technology of music reproduction and commercialized popular music.