

Postwar Japan through Music

Lecture 5: February 18, 2003

Pop as Anti-Art

- Adorno and Horkheimer reject mass culture
 - but if Japan's popular culture resists American hegemony does that give it more value?

Pop Music

- **Key points:**
- Sign of era: recovery from devastation
- Production style
 - in house writers and studio musicians
 - cute idol in front
- What Americans hear may be different from what Japanese hear

"Sukiyaki"?

Growth, 1955 - 1974

- era of high speed growth
- preconditions for growth
 - occupational and demographic structures
 - skills and motivations of laborers Tokyo 1945 and today
 - experience of war and reconstruction
 - corporate organizations primed for economic advance

Demographic factors for growth

- abundant supply of **young workers**
 - Population growth rapid
 - 1940 63 Million
 - 1945 72 Million
 - 1950 83 Million
- attributes of workers also contribute to growth

Moving Forward, Looking Up

- SAKAMOTO Kyû
 - *Ue o muite arukô* or "Sukiyaki"
- Pop song of 1961 becomes #1 Hit on Billboard charts in U.S.
- Japan on the rebound
- Japanese goods can make it the U.S.

SAKAMOTO Kyû

"You Better Listen Up"

- Alternative visions of society
- Media power in economics, politics, and culture
- Fan and artist positions
- The future of culture is in the balance

Political Processes

- triangle of government, bureaucrats and businesses
- *gyosei shido* (government advisories) - informal means of guiding policies
- LDP gains support of big business and rural farmers
- opposition, yes, but limited impact

Jun'ichiro KOIZUMI

Current prime
minister of Japan

Economic Processes

- international environment
 - access to raw materials
 - currency exchange rate stability
 - open world markets
 - booming international demand
- domestic context
 - Integrate production with small, medium firms
 - high personal savings rate
 - *keiretsu*

Social Processes

- occupational and geographical mobility
- cities expand, suburbs grow
- new style of family life: “New Middle Class”
- Education system meets needs of employers
- Wealth distributed more evenly, sources of status change

Is Japan's education system still doing the job?

New Middle Class Japan

- New divisions
 - rural / urban
 - generational differences
 - salaryman, educationa mama, samurai schoolkids
 - rise of "educational arms race"

What kind of generation is being raised in the new Japan?

(Wharf of Sadness) sung by MISORA
Hibari (1960)

“Jukensei Burusu” (Exam-Student Blues) Sung by
NAKAGAWA Goro (Victor, 1961)

Affluence, 1974 - 1989

- Cornerstones of expanding economy crumble in early and mid-1970s.
- The end of:
 - access to raw materials
 - stable currency exchange
 - free international trade
 - high global demand

High Growth: Occupations

Occupational distribution change over high growth era

	1955	1974
primary		
(farm, fish, forest)	41%	14%
secondary		
(mining, construction, industrial)	23%	34%
tertiary (commerce, service, professions, gov't)	36%	52%

Source: Allinson (1997: 110)

Domestic responses

- consumer goods saturation
- structural adjustment
- agricultural change continues
- rise of retail and service sectors
 - Japan becomes affluent, post-industrial society during this period (1974 - 1989)

(Dango Three Brothers) (1999)

Japanese Hip-Hop

- East End X Yuri
 - pop idol combines with hip-hop group
 - youth slang --> big hit

- Rhymester
 - underground hip-hop
 - requires oppositional stance
 - speaking truth

See:

http://www.sonymusic.co.jp/Music/Arch/KS/RHYMESTER/m_disc.html

Rhymester "Respect" (1999)