

Tears of Longing

Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese

Popular Song

Christine R. Yano

Published by the Harvard University Asia Center
and distributed by Harvard University Press
Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London, 2002

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Printed in the United States of America

The Harvard University Asia Center publishes a monograph series and, in coordination with the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, the Korea Institute, the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and other faculties and institutes, administers research projects designed to further scholarly understanding of China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and other Asian countries. The Center also sponsors projects addressing multidisciplinary and regional issues in Asia.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Yano, Christine Reiko

Tears of longing : nostalgia and the nation in Japanese popular song / Christine R. Yano.
p. cm. — (Harvard East Asian monographs ; 206)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-674-00845-6 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 0-674-01276-3 (paperback)

1. Enka—History and criticism. 2. Popular music—Japan—History and criticism.

I. Title. II. Series.

ML3501.Y3 2002

782.42164'0952—dc21

2001039594

First paperback edition 2003

Index by the Jaida n'ha Sandra

♻ Printed on acid-free paper

Last figure below indicates year of this printing

12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03

Acknowledgments

No one writes a book without incurring large debts, and this book is no exception. First, I thank those funding agencies and institutions that supported my fieldwork and writing: the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship (especially Mr. Ralph Honda, for his wit and encouragement), the Japan Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Hawai'i, the William P. Lebra Scholarship, the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship Fund, the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies Fellowship Fund, the Northeast Asia Council of Association for Asian Studies, and the Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University.

My heartfelt thanks go to my teachers: Takie Lebra, who suggested this topic and subsequently helped to shape it with incisive critique and infectious enthusiasm; Sharon Minichiello, for her continuing, multifaceted support; Alice Dewey, who read this work as both a dissertation and a book manuscript. Corky White stands alone as a friend and bon vivant, whose generous spirit and intellectual energy have taught me much.

I extend special thanks to my enka teachers: in Honolulu, Mr. Harry Urata, for his long-standing friendship, humor, and spirit; and in Tokyo, Mr. Hisashi Noda (and his wife), for his welcoming kindness, eagerness, and intensity. Both have invested much of their lives in enka, and I hope this book does justice to the time they relinquished for me.

During my fieldwork, my life was enriched by friendships with Sachiko Frauenknecht and Reiko Mori. My sincere appreciation also goes out to

those in the enka world who went beyond politeness to help me: Mr. Sakurai Takeshi of NHK, Jiromaru-san of the Mori Shin'ichi Kōenkai, Kimata-san of the Yashiro Aki Fan Club, Ishikawa-san of Kitajima Jimusho, and members of Noda sensei's karaoke circle.

I also extend special thanks to those at the Reischauer Institute and Harvard University for making my year there so special and productive: Helen Hardacre, Galen Amstuth, Ruiko Connor, Tim George, Aviad Raz, Kyu-Hyun Kim, and Adam Kern. Thank you also to the anonymous reviewers of the Asia Center Publications office at Harvard University and to John Ziemer and Linda Howe, whose editing advice has made this a better book.

I am grateful to students at the University of Hawai'i who have listened to parts of this book and given me feedback: Jeffrey Maret, Matthew Carlsen, and Gaku Kinoshita. Thanks go as well to those who have helped in various ways in preparing this work: Yoko Kurokawa, Yumiko Tateyama, Takaki-sensei, Kitsutani-sensei, Marlene Patton, Brandon Ledward, Jaida n'ha Sandra, and Paul Li.

I have presented portions of this work to colleagues at the following institutions and organizations, whose stimulating input has left its mark: Harvard University, Columbia University, Stanford University, Yale University, Bowdoin College, the University of Washington, Haverford College, the University of Hawai'i, the East-West Center, the Japan Society (New York), the Japan-America Society (Honolulu), and the International House of Japan.

Other friends and colleagues have also left their imprint, both directly and indirectly: Nancy Cooper, James Roberson, Nobue Suzuki, Laura Miller, Carolyn Stevens, Joe Tobin, John Zuern, Mike Hayes, Jane Moulin, Karen Jolly, Kōichi Iwabuchi, Shūhei Hosokawa, Aaron Fox, Nina Erkin, Miriam Stark, and Joanne Izbicki.

Last, but in no way least, I thank my family for their support and forbearance: my grandparents, now gone, who never had to talk of heart because they lived it daily, and my parents, whose humor, encouragement, and constancy have been invaluable. My biggest thanks go to Scott, who has seen this through from start to finish with patience and grace, sometimes at the sacrifice of his own work, and to Eli and Marika, now both miraculously taller than I, whose laughter and tears have provided necessary distraction. These last three have been my mainstay.

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Tears of Longing



Fans Waiting for Doors to Open at Shinjuku Koma Gekijō

Prologue

Wednesday, June 16, 1993, 12:45 P.M. Exiting the east gate of the massive Shinjuku train station, one of the hubs of the Tokyo megalopolis, I dodge umbrellas held high to ward off the dripping rain of tsuyu (the early summer rainy season). Talk of Japan's economic bubble bursting fills the newspapers, but there is little evidence of it yet on the streets of Tokyo. As I cross Shinjuku Dōri, I glance down toward Kinokuniya Bookstore, but I have no time to browse today. Instead, I head toward Kabuki-chō, described by one tourist guide book as "one of the raunchiest, wildest, and most fascinating nightlife districts in all of Japan" (Reiber 1990: 157) and by another as Tokyo's "sleaze center" (Conner and Yoshida 1984: 180). It is comparatively tame by day, yet hucksters await potential customers outside their strip joints, peep shows, and massage parlors. I bypass karaoke bars, conveyor-belt sushi restaurants, and shops displaying over thirty varieties of doughnuts. My destination in this polyglot mix is at once a location, an institution, and an event. I am heading to the Shinjuku Koma Gekijō theater to catch a matinee performance of fifty-seven-year-old Kitajima Saburō, a veteran male singer, during his month-long run.¹

Outside the theater, long lines of fans, who have, in effect, been waiting since Kitajima's last appearance at this same theater a year ago, wind around the corner and down the street. Many have traveled for hours by tour bus or train and paid from ¥2000 (\$18) to ¥9500 (\$86) for a ticket to today's performance.² I stand out not for my face, since I could be anyone's daughter or neighbor, but for my relative youth, height, and brightly colored clothes. Most of the fans, women and men in their fifties and sixties, are well under my five-feet, six-inches and are attired in somber dresses or dark, slightly worn suits. Judging by the signs on the tour buses I see idling at a

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distance, I conclude that many are from less urban areas—Nagano, Niigata, Shizuoka. They wait, their hands, far more used to working than lying idle, at their sides. At 1:30 P.M., there is a flurry of excitement as the doors open and the crowd rushes in. The orderly lines give way to brief mayhem, and I feel shoulders against my back and insistent shuffling at my sides. As people take their seats, the snacking begins—sushi, rice crackers, dried cuttlefish, deep-fried potato croquettes, fish cakes, pickled vegetables. The rustling of plastic bags and containers mingles with the general din of half-conversations, grunted replies, and appreciative lip-smacking. Fifteen minutes before the show is scheduled to begin, the house is nearly full.

I glance at the program, which announces the usual format: period drama, intermission, song show. By the time the lights dim and the curtains part, at 2:05 P.M., most of the food and drink have been consumed. Hands and mouths free, the crowd murmurs, some even shouting in delight and waving enthusiastically as their star appears on stage. They do not applaud him so much as greet him as if he were a friend, a brother, an uncle, or a father. He looks like them, although his clothes are those of their grandfathers or great-grandfathers. Gleaming skyscrapers are less than a kilometer away, but we are being transported to eighteenth-century Edo (premodern Tokyo). Kitajima plays the sword-fighting wanderer who fends off twenty assailants in the name of justice and then picks up his belongings and goes on his way. By the end of the hour-long period drama, which is only the first half of the show, the audience has laughed and cried with "Sabu-chan" (their affectionate nickname for Kitajima), the tough guy with the heart of gold. His tears—for his hometown, for the mother has not seen for seventeen years, for the lover from whom he has had to part—are theirs. In sharing his tears, the audience becomes his.

During the half-hour intermission, I browse through the array of *kyarakutā gudzu* (character goods) displaying Kitajima's picture and signature, which members of his fan club are selling at a booth in the lobby: sweatshirts (¥10,000/\$91), decorative wall panels (¥50,000/\$455), handkerchiefs (¥1000/\$9), telephone cards (¥1000/\$9), folding fans (¥2000/\$18). Adjacent to this booth is a stand sponsored by Crown Records, the company for which Kitajima records, selling cassettes, compact discs, and videotapes. Business is brisk, despite the threat of economic recession. I buy a prepaid telephone card, one of the least expensive articles, which, I rationalize, would at least prove useful in an emergency.

When the lights go down again, the crowd eagerly anticipates the spectacle of the "hit parade," the song portion of the program. Kitajima does not disappoint. His songs express many of the same themes as the earlier historical drama: hometowns, mothers, lovers. In their pathos and sentimentality, they remind me of American country and

western songs, although the music sounds completely different. He sings stoically of the ties that bind men to men, of the "path of a man" and what it means to be a man. Kitajima's costumes range from a white sequined tuxedo to the hakama (traditional Japanese male formal wear). The stage effects, too, are stunning—laser-emblazoned images, flashing strobe lights, fireworks, and as a finale, a twenty-foot-high rolling festival mikoshi (palanquin), on top of which Kitajima stands, singing. None of this goes unappreciated by the audience, who come to see the spectacle almost as much as to hear the singer. The music Kitajima sings, the songs audience members relish, the cassettes Crown Records sells, are enka, the focus of this book and the point where music, emotion, gender, and, as I argue, one version of nationhood converge in contemporary Japan.

Enka, a popular Japanese ballad genre that originated in the early twentieth century, combines Western instruments with Japanese scales, rhythms, vocal techniques, and poetic conventions in melodramatic songs of love, loss, and yearning. To the Japanese public, enka sounds timelessly old, although it is still actively created and consumed. The erasure of passing time is in fact part of its attraction. A 1993 hit is deliberately contrived to be easily mistaken for a 1953 one, and for the duration of the song, the forty-year gap is neatly erased. What helps to achieve this timelessness are not only the sounds and the images of enka but also—and most important—its sentiment. Here are hometowns left long ago but not forgotten, lovers parted, mothers remembered for their sacrifices. Amid the tumult and complexity of today's Japan, which faces challenging questions of political leadership, economic recession, and globalization, these affairs of the heart, dredged up from a reconstructed past, seem wonderfully simple, direct, and untarnished. What ties listeners to these songs is not so much a particular turn of melody or twist of phrase but an engagement in what, throughout this book, I call an "imaginary," which holds up to public view a communally broken heart.

Let me say at the outset that I do not approach enka as a fan of the music. Indeed, my own distance from it makes it all the more suitable as the focus of a study of what George Lewis (1987; cf. Bourdieu 1984) calls "taste cultures," especially as they intersect with concepts of emotion, gender, history, identity, and here, nationhood. My purpose in studying enka is twofold. First, I am interested in the emotions and their construction in particular cultures (Lutz 1988). In enka, among all the popular music genres in Japan, emotion runs particularly high. Enka is known as a form of *naki-bushi* (crying

song), songs whose merit is measured by their ability to elicit tears. One composer calls enka "songs that make many tears flow [*namida o takusan nagasaseru uta*]." In this book I analyze those tears—their commercial production and promotion, and their individual and collective consumption.

This is not to say that enka's tears are wholly different from those of earlier Japanese narrative forms or those of other cultures, since they share much in common. What I wish to explore here, however, are the ways in which these tears are culturally constructed to suggest a boundary of difference through which Japanese define themselves to themselves and signify who they are. As one enka lyricist puts it, "The Japanese are a people who like to cry [*Nihonjin wa nakitai minzoku*]." I take his statement, and others like it, as invocations of an identity that is based in emotion. Enka's tears become collective tears that define a racial, a cultural, and even a national community.

This brings me to my second, related interest in studying enka, which is its reputation as "*nihon no uta*" (song of Japan), an expression of "*nihonjin no kokoro*" (the heart/soul of Japanese), and even "*dentō no oto*" (the sound of Japanese tradition) (see, e.g., Anonymous 1987: 14; IASPM-Japan 1991: 12). Amid the nationalistic cultural fervor of the 1970s, the record industry promoted enka as one emblem of national culture. Amid this larger project of collectively imagining what it means to be Japanese, the labels "*nihon no uta*" and "*nihonjin no kokoro*" thrust enka and its talk of emotions into the spotlight of this public construction of Japaneseness (Anderson 1983).

Enka is one dimension of Japan's national self-image, and like all such images, it glosses over, even masks, certain parts of that national self in order to shape a homogeneous whole. On stage, within clouds of synthetic fog and swirling lights, these songs provide a seductive spectacle of a past, superimposed on the present, that evokes nostalgia for a world in which cultural nationalism is unnecessary. In its representation of the collective imagination, enka offers up highly charged individual pasts bundled together and recast as the nation's own. This book examines this enka version of "Japan" as a reified past that is consumed in the present.

Enka and its consumption pique our interest as social practices of active, personal choice. One may "do" enka as an individual, as a spectator in an audience, as a member of a fan club, and as a student in a classroom of amateur singers. That "doing" takes many forms and requires varying levels of personal investment: buying tapes, requesting songs, tuning in to television

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and radio programs, listening to and watching performances, joining fan clubs, singing at karaoke bars. By "doing," one participates in a form of commercially produced national culture. This is not to say that all who "do" enka necessarily give the same meaning either to their actions or to the genre itself. For some, enka is merely an excuse to perform on a karaoke stage. For others, however, it may be a way to recover the intimate memory of an engaged heart, even if that intimacy brought heartbreak. For still others, it calls forth a sense of Japan's past and their own entitlement to that past.

The Japan of which enka sings builds upon, and is itself built by, a nostalgically framed collective memory. The aim of this book is to analyze this nostalgia, this deeply embedded relationship between a nation and its past(s). The sentimental music of enka evokes issues of class, power, and history and ties them together through the intimacy of emotion. What this book asks, then, is this: If enka provides one version of an imagined Japan, who is doing the imagining and to what purpose? In other words, whose "Japan" is this?

Some consideration must be given to those who control the production and marketing of enka. The power behind the industry is overwhelmingly male: Men compose, manage, and create enka throughout the entire production and distribution process. Although female singers outnumber male singers by almost two to one, the words, the music, and the singers' images are under the control of men. Thus, I argue, the voices of enka become a chorus of male expression. Through record-company-led fan clubs, whose membership is primarily female, men also control the organized consumption of enka (see Chapter 6). The axes of subjugation and manipulation fall along predictable lines: male over female, producer over consumer, manager over singer. And yet there is also power in the choices consumers make and in the meanings and uses they give these songs—what Michel de Certeau and Henry Jenkins have dubbed "textual poaching" (de Certeau 1984; Jenkins 1992), that is, fans' appropriation of media texts for their own uses. Rather than take a strictly ideological approach, I look for what William Kelly has called the "multiple zones" of interaction that surround any cultural product (quoted in Treat 1996a: 6).

Enka becomes one of a bundle of characteristics that identify, through their consumption, a particular life-stage in Japan. Sales of enka lagged far behind the levels of other genres in the 1990s—4 percent of all recording

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sales in 1992, shrinking to just over 1 percent by the end of the decade (Oricon 1993, 1998)—but according to fans and industry sources, its place within national culture is confirmed by AM radio, karaoke, and cable broadcasting. One particular supporter of enka is the state institution NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai; Japan Public Broadcasting), which schedules regular radio and television broadcasts and concerts.³ These sites of consumption focus on attracting middle-aged and older adults, the primary fans of enka. In contrast, an activity like gateball is considered exclusively and appropriately of interest to the elderly (Traphagan 2000: 126).

Although some fans have listened to enka since early adulthood (and even longer), many others claim to have turned to it only as middle-aged and older adults. For them, listening to enka becomes part of a general turning toward “things Japanese,” what Lise Skov and Brian Moeran call the “consumption of tradition” characteristic of the “old-age end’ of the media market” in Japan (1995: 8). Fans characterize their interest in enka as a stage in the process of moving from youthful consumption of Euro-American-influenced music and goods to more nativistic “Japanese sensibilities” in later adulthood. What is striking is the inevitability with which enka and “Japan” are paired. Fans explain their turning to enka in terms of a musical taste that lay dormant, waiting only for their life experiences and, for some, a sense of their own innate Japaneseness, to catch up to its lyrics and music. They are prodigal sons and daughters who return to “Japan” (and thereby to enka) during this later stage of their lives. One enka lyricist in his late fifties recalls his eventual shift to enka in these terms: “When we were young, our idols were first Elvis Presley, then the Beatles. We all did this, listening to [Western pop] music, and enjoying it. But when we hit our forties, somehow the pop music from abroad didn’t appeal anymore, and we naturally [*shizen ni*] began searching for something else. It was enka.” This book attempts to understand the process and the meaning of this shift to enka by older consumers.

When I asked an enka composer in his sixties whether or not non-Japanese could appreciate enka, he said that they might understand the words (at a dictionary level) and even like the music, but that a true appreciation of the genre was something only Japanese come by “naturally.” According to him, this appreciation rises out of the very soil into their souls. The same arguments have been heard delimiting the ability of non-Japanese to speak Japanese, to fully understand Japanese aesthetics, or to muster the

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hinkaku (dignity) befitting the top rank of a *yokozuna* (grand master of sumō wrestling), and they do not bow in the face of foreigners’ fluency in speaking Japanese, foreign achievements in the Japanese arts, or the victories of non-Japanese sumō wrestlers.⁴ Language, art, sport/ritual, food, music, and emotion, as sites of racial exclusivity, become critical tropes of identity, which surface in talk of *kokoro* (heart/soul) as Japan’s intangible, essential spirit.

Although enka’s main audience is primarily an older one, enka forms a ubiquitous layer in the national soundscape. Promoted as the center of national culture through state-run media networks such as NHK in a geographically compact country with a high population density and relatively limited media options, enka becomes at the very least what I call “music overheard”: one may not be a fan of enka but one cannot help having some general exposure to it or knowledge of it. In Japan I am constantly surprised by nonfans’ familiarity with enka songs and singers; with enka’s reputation as an expression of “*nihonjin no kokoro*” (heart/soul of Japanese); with the titles and tunes of some of its greatest past and present hits; and with the names, faces, and gossip surrounding its stars. Certain media mechanisms, such as NHK’s annual New Year’s broadcast of the *Kōhaku Uta Gassen* (Red and White Song Contest; see Chapter 4), ensure such “overhearing.” Other ways enka may be “overheard” include daily morning television “*waido*” (“wide”; celebrity gossip) shows; “sports” newspapers and magazines that print the latest entertainment news and scandals; cable broadcasting into bars, sushi restaurants, and other nighttime entertainment businesses; and karaoke. “Music overheard” is not uniformly multidirectional but points instead to several loci of control, all of which define a society’s mainstream. Enka’s ubiquity is thus the result of a highly manipulable, power-laden distribution of cultural resources.

Enka’s fans are said to constitute not only a life-stage group but also a class and regional group. According to its reputation, enka is most popular in rural areas and among blue-collar workers, but this claim overlooks the many white-collar urban office workers who sing enka nightly in karaoke bars and karaoke *bokkusu* (“boxes”; private rental booths). Blue-collar workers and rural areas thus become the loci of “otherness”—a “vanishing periphery” (Ivy 1995)—that coexists with the white-collar urban world of Japan’s international achievements. To enka’s fans, this “other” Japan and its music represent a “truer” and more fundamental indigenous Japanese culture.

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In fact, many in Japan, particularly young people and intellectuals, actively contest enka's claim to national status, arguing that enka, an older, reputedly blue-collar, rural genre, retains outdated values and concepts. Japan, they say, has moved well beyond this feudalistic world to gain a foothold in the international economic and political arena. They dismiss enka as an anachronism whose place within present-day Japanese society is peripheral, not central. They prefer to project an image of a Japan that looks forward rather than backward. One of the ironies of enka as national culture is the degree to which the genre and its fans may be criticized, even mocked, not simply as old but as *furu-kusai* (literally, "smelling of old"; outdated). These opposing viewpoints, structured in part along generational lines, form the very core of the competing and highly polarized internal debates about modernity, internationalization (*kokusaika*), and "Japan" itself that are characteristic of contemporary Japan.

The debate goes on behind closed doors. Japan does not include enka among the examples of "official national culture" it offers either internationally or domestically. Instead, its cultural ambassadors include kabuki, *koto* (*zither*), the tea ceremony, flower arranging, even sumo wrestling, all of which perform "Japan" to an international (primarily European and American) audience. This Japan presents itself with colorful dramaturgy, refined aestheticism, spirituality, and exoticism on a grand scale in performances that also play to a domestic audience, marking class, history, prestige, and the official national culture. Japanese popular culture industries, meanwhile, export another, unofficial image of Japan in youth-oriented *manga* (comics), *anime* (cartoons), and "cute" products such as Pokémon and Hello Kitty, as well as cars, sushi, karaoke, and electronic appliances. Alongside these official and unofficial presentations of a national self are other images of Japan and Japanese. Among its Asian neighbors, for example, bitter memories of Japanese colonial rule and wartime atrocities linger. For other international eyes, the image of Japan is one of mixed accomplishment: the Japanese are technological wizards but robotic workhorses, and sometimes, xenophobic global citizens.

Enka buys into none of these images. These songs are small performances of the heart meant to play primarily, although not exclusively, to a home audience. Through a wash of tears, enka contradicts official international cultural images: not Japan as number one, but Japan as vulnerable to the subtlest affront; not Japan as cute or smiling, but Japan in tears and by its

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Prologue as 1920s. context/nation?*

own definition (*nihonjin no kokoro*, "heart/soul of Japanese") at its most Japanese. This construction may be interpreted as a kind of "self-orientalism": Japan exoticized for its own consumption, synopticized in its own stereotype.

Other factors further complicate enka's status as the site of national culture. Whether direct from Japan or in the form of stylistically similar melodramatic ballads in other indigenous Asian languages, enka or enka-like music can be heard on juke boxes, in karaoke, and over the broadcast airwaves in Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, and parts of Southeast Asia (Ching 1996). What is curious—and significant—is that within these Asian locales, people claim enka or its counterpart as their own music sung for generations, a legacy of the colonial period. Teresa Ten, a female enka singer born in Taiwan in 1953, has been quoted as saying, "I grew up in Taiwan listening to Japanese songs, so I cannot think of Japanese songs as being foreign music. Japan's music is Asia's music" (Anonymous 1995: 13). More accurately, perhaps, what Ten expresses is the degree to which Japan's popular culture has become part of the popular culture of its former colonial subjects.

The performance of enka as an expression of national culture is made all the more ironic by the appearance of non-Japanese singers on the enka stage, including both "hidden" Koreans long resident in Japan and passing as Japanese, and overtly Korean and Taiwanese singers from Asia. Just as the Japanese music industry has been exporting enka to other Asian countries, it has since the 1980s also been importing new singers from these countries, especially Korea and Taiwan. Teresa Ten was one of them,⁵ and others include the Korean male singer Chō Yonpiru (debuted 1982) and the Korean female singers Kye Unsook (debuted 1985) and Kim Yonja (debuted 1988). In view of its various links throughout Asia, one might ask whether enka should more appropriately be called "the heart/soul of Asia." The answer depends on how and when the Japanese music industry, which jumps from "Japan" in one instance to "pan-Asia" in the next, decides to address the issues of boundaries and difference.

Critical issues, such as waning domestic popularity, dependence on state support, internal divisions, and pan-Asian markets and singers, are among the contingencies within which enka must be situated. In this book, Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for what I call the "cultural logic of enka's imaginary" by introducing the basic argument linking popular song, emotion, patterned form, and the nation. Chapter 2 examines the invention, definition, and

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place of enka in the history of modern popular music in Japan. Chapter 3 looks at ways in which the commercial production of enka contributes to its reputation as a nostalgic version of national culture grounded in emotion. Chapters 4 and 5 analyze the characteristic patterning of the genre and the ways in which these patterns render emotion both formulaic and real. Chapter 6 examines two modes of consumption, fan clubs and karaoke, both important ways in which individuals personally involve themselves in the enka world. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the imaginary of enka as it links emotion and the nation through nostalgia and romance. The book ends where it began, at Kitajima Saburō's concert at the Shinjuku Koma Gekijō theater in Tokyo, but, as I hope, having reached a larger destination.

The fieldwork on which this book is based took place primarily in the Tokyo-Yokohama area of Japan from August 1991 through July 1993, with later research sojourns in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and parts of Japan through June 2000. Although I have updated certain aspects of the work since its first writing in 1995, I have kept the body of the research intact, in part to serve as a historical record of this aspect of Japan in the early 1990s and in part because of my conviction that many of the processes I observed, recorded, and analyzed remain fundamentally unchanged today.

Geinō-kai (the entertainment world) is a closed-door world in Japan, and the segment of it that produces enka is notorious for being even more tightly closed than most. My study is by necessity broad, as is its design, since no business establishments would allow me sustained access to their operations when they could foresee little economic profit for themselves. I therefore cast a wide net in carrying out a multi-sited ethnography anchored in sounds rather than places, institutions, or people. In my fieldwork I have been an enka fan club member, a karaoke student, an observer of the training and recording process, a live concert and studio audience member, a media viewer, an amateur performer, an interviewer, and an interviewee.⁶

My net spreads ever wider. As I meet Japanese overseas, many of them now listening to enka with increased interest, I see ways in which this music continues to be reconfigured outside its homeland. As I go to karaoke bars and to singing lessons in Hawai'i and listen to older Japanese-Americans sing enka—not as their parents did but as they have chosen to do, often taking lessons from a local expert in what might be characterized as a new kind of interaction with leisure, performance, and "Japan"⁷—I see enka forging

new identities and connections. These Japanese-Americans of my parents' generation ask me, who never sang or listened to this music as a child, "What is enka? What does it mean?" I find this reversal of positions unexpected and even poignant. The ties of enka stretch and bind, sometimes ironically so. My purpose here is to question those ties but at the same time to embrace them in an effort to understand the processes and the conditions through which they work.

① SW of TIME
TIES OF ENKA VS. THE
TIES OF ISOKA.

② How DOES ENKA
ACCOMMODATE?
DISSENT OR IS STRATEGIC?

CHAPTER ONE

The Cultural Logic of Enka's Imaginary

Japan has long been fascinated with itself, but no more so than during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when national introspection has been framed within issues of modernity.¹ Whether modernity is approached as a matter of technological achievement, global capitalism, or mass-mediated public culture, its competing definitions have thrown into high relief the subject, and the subjectivities, of Japan as a construct that is embedded within these definitions. Periodic reiterations of national-cultural definitions have resulted in slogans and categories contrasting Japan with "the West." Whole fields of cultural production—from clothes to food to toilets—have become dichotomized as Japanese (*wa-*) or Western (*yō-*), defining difference while also shaping national-cultural boundaries (Tobin 1992: 24–25).² These dichotomies coexist as competing choices in a menu of shifting identities and affiliations.

The question of identity is further complicated by Japan's ambivalent attitude toward "the West," which has been characterized variously as one of admiration and disdain, envy and contempt, infatuation and fear, a reverential view of the foreign that Yoshino Kōsaku calls "exocentrism" (quoted in Hosokawa 1999: 520) and ethnocentrism. The musicologist Hosokawa Shūhei argues that these opposing attitudes are "constitutive of and complicit in Japanese modernity" (ibid.). The primary point is that however Japan defines *wa-* and *yō-* and wherever it places them within cultural hierarchies, the two are kept marked and separate as if by a tacit agreement to continue to differ. In many (although not all) spheres of consumption, "Japanese" and

"Western" elements coexist as fundamental oil-and-water differences, unresolved and irresolvable. As a consumer, for example, one chooses to lodge in a Japanese inn or a Western hotel, to squat above a Japanese toilet at a train station or sit on a Western one, to eat rice or bread for breakfast. These choices are not neutral: these actions of the body are strategic assertions and practices of identity.³ It is not that sitting on a Western toilet makes one more "Western" but that repeatedly choosing to do so when a Japanese version is also available serves as a small bodily signifier of one's choices, both to oneself and to others. Nor does it matter that what some might consider Japanese, for example, tempura, has European/Portuguese roots, or that what others might consider Western, for example, spaghetti, has Asian connections. What matters are the meanings and categories already in place, the continuing concern with markers of distinctiveness.⁴ The presence of these choices suggests multilinear paths to coexisting, often competing, modernities. Each choice involves interlocking fields (e.g., Western clothing/steak/toilets with seats) that extend to the smallest details (e.g., nail polish color or perfume fragrance). One steps into the prefabricated scene much like an actor speaking lines in a play or a carnival-goer placing his or her face in the cutout of a cardboard frame.

Enka feeds into this dichotomization as part of the "introspection boom" of the late 1960s and 1970s, which repeatedly asked one question: "Who are we Japanese?" But what is the logic behind this introspection, this practice of identity-making? What lies behind the Japanese construction of "Japaneseness"? What is at work when Japan becomes "Japan"? And, as I asked earlier, whose "Japan" is this? These are the questions that shape my approach to enka.

Collective Remembering, Collective Forgetting

The cultural logic of "Japaneseness" builds upon processes of nostalgically framed expression and desire.⁵ Kathleen Stewart identifies nostalgia as a cultural practice that increases in importance as social life becomes diffuse, ambiguous, and fragmented (1992: 252). But the nature of this cultural practice varies according to where one situates oneself in the cultural landscape: nostalgia could be "schizophrenic exhilaration" in response to the multiplicity of images, or it could be "pained, watchful desire" framed by loss (ibid.: 253). Enka lives between these two extremes. Rather than evoking "memory with the pain removed" (Lowenthal 1985: 8), enka invokes the memory of pain

prolonged into a state of aestheticized desire, the experience of life lived on emotional edge.

Fred Davis's (1979) proposal for a "sociology of nostalgia" is crucial in analyzing the sources, expressions, and meanings of nostalgia within group life, although Davis does not address different conceptualizations of nostalgia itself or how it is perceived by different members of the same group. Enka, for example, is not simulated nostalgia for a fictive past, as John Treat's (1996b) analysis of the Japanese writer Banana Yoshimoto suggests. Yoshimoto may write longingly of stereotypical happy families, but these families exist—as dreams, images, and memories—only in her stories. Here, nostalgia has no referent.

The enticement of enka is that it suggests a forum for collective nostalgia which actively appropriates and shapes the past, thereby binding the group together. Enka encodes within nostalgia a historical moment of self-reflexivity, establishing a particular relationship with the temporal past that distances it from, while also placing it firmly in, the present. It is not the nostalgia described by Christopher Lasch, which "is all too eager to pronounce the past dead and gone and shed a sentimental tear in its memory" (1984: 69–70). Rather, it is nostalgia compartmentalized, assigned a place, just as "things Japanese" are kept categorically separate from "things Western."

What is past and distant becomes a kind of "internal exotic," a resource at once removed from people's lives yet central to their version of national cultural identity (cf. Ivy 1995).⁶ Borrowing the concept of "frontier," which, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki (1998) shows, was important in creating a sense of the Japanese nation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one can posit enka as a kind of ironic frontier: it pulls the margins in to serve as a version of the center. Enka's internal exoticism, its domestic "frontierness," works on several levels. Setting songs in past times and remote areas of Japan establishes a sense of temporal and spatial otherness. Moreover, the characters that inhabit the enka world—bar hostesses, gangsters (*yakuza*), sailors—are today marginalized. Their actions, concerns, and emotions—the conflict between *giri* (duty, obligation) and *ninjō* (human feelings), a theme found in numerous kabuki plays and other narratives associated with Japanese tradition—become links with the past. These internal features may be considered exotic to mainstream Japanese life in the present. As Marilyn Ivy (1995) points out, "Discover Japan," the tourism campaign launched by Japan National Railways in the 1970s to encourage domestic travel to the more remote areas of the country, follows this same cultural logic.⁷

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 Nostalgia's function within this framework is to preserve distance—but to preserve as well a yearning to transcend it. In fact, distance itself, a “desire for desire,” as Susan Stewart puts it (1993: 23), becomes nostalgia's sustaining mechanism. The erasure of distance threatens the very need for desire. Enka is thus not so much a “custodian of the past,” as Carol Gluck (1993: 65) suggests, as an active exoticizer of many pasts.

This concept, the “internal exotic,” finds parallels in Stewart's theory of the souvenir, the “portable” exotic, a piece of the faraway one can bring home, which simultaneously maintains distance and collapses it (1993: xii). The souvenir asserts its exoticism even when thrust into new settings. Thus, enka becomes the souvenir that brings the margins closer together in order to define the personal, or the subjective, and the national. Maintaining enka's “otherness” is a deliberate production and marketing tool.

Manipulating the past is not unique to Japan, as the extensive literature on the invention of tradition shows (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). But according to Robert Smith, Japanese “are unusually adept at it” (1983: 9), by which he does not mean to imply duplicity but to suggest a thoroughgoing rigor in shaping not simply the past but also the present and the future. What I call *tsukutta mono* (things made), a concept I borrow from an interview with a record producer, is helpful here in understanding the general Japanese attitude toward manipulation. *Tsukutta mono* suggests that 1) the human world functions most smoothly when one controls one's surroundings, including people, objects, and ideas; 2) the natural world is best appreciated when the human hand has shaped it to suit its own tastes (Kalland 1995); 3) human effort is the fundamental unit of value (cf. Singleton 1995); and 4) acceptance of these “truths” is part of being a mature human being (cf. Plath 1980). Manipulation becomes a way to valorize, aestheticize, and harmonize with one's physical and social surroundings. Obviously, this kind of cultural explanation masks various sociopolitical processes, especially hegemonic ones; at the same time, however, one must not overlook the concept of *tsukutta mono* in analyzing both the processes of manipulation and attitudes toward it. In the context of this study, *tsukutta mono* is a frank expression of the goal of the music industry, which regards its products—songs, singers, and images alike—as objects of “making” and manipulation (see Chapter 3).

Among “things made” and manipulated are collective memories. I take Marita Sturken's notion of “cultural memory”—memory that is shared

outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning” (1997: 3)—as critical to an understanding of enka's place in the lives of its listeners. Cultural memory accrues through public gatherings and utterances, memorials and anthems, televised concerts and ballads—and through the sometimes heated contestation that surrounds them. Popular song, particularly a nostalgically informed genre of popular song such as enka, becomes a “technology of memory,” an active shaper of memory rather than merely its vessel (ibid.: 9). Each song creates a snapshot of individual experience that is publicly displayed and collectively recalled. Moreover, this technology of memory is also a commercial commodity, bought and sold in a marketplace of competing memories. Thus, popular song and the memories it shapes must be considered not only within the social framework of national, cultural, and personal concerns, but also within an economic framework of business decisions and profit-making.

Constructing the past is as much a matter of collective forgetting as of collective remembering (Sturken 1997: 7). The amnesiac quality of nostalgia continually surprises. It selects which details to obscure in order to naturalize memory, history, and identity and then build its own phantasmic utopia. Memory itself suggests the ongoing interaction of what Jonathan Boyarin calls the “creative collaboration between present consciousness and the implicit shaping of consciousness, its selection of the contours that experience or have expression of the past” (1994: 22). The politics of memory lies in accommodating its purposes. The conundrum here is that memory is neither entirely individual nor wholly collective; it is an embodied social practice that constantly creates and tests identities (ibid.: 26). Memory becomes the substance of identity as well as its legitimation. The processes of remembering, forgetting, and, in effect, inventing, are central to enka and to its role in the larger project of creating a national culture (cf. Fujitani 1993). Enka, a genre that looks old and sounds old, thus assumes dual roles: it is a technology for creating national and cultural memory and it is an archive of the nation's collective past.

Localizing the National, Nationalizing the Local

In enka, the focal point of nostalgia and memory is *urusato* (hometown), literally, “old village,” but generalized since the 1970s and 1980s to refer to the idea of originary, emotive space: homeland (Reader 1987; Robertson 1991: 5, 14).⁸ Jennifer Robertson's (1991) excellent work on *urusato* as a trope of Japanese nostalgia in the 1980s analyzes the politics of place-, history-, and

tradition-making during that period. Although the "furusato boom" of the 1980s has ended, in cities as well as rural areas enka continues to convey the sound of furusato—over the radio, on television and in cable broadcasting, and in karaoke.

Furusato is conveyed through other sounds as well, in particular *min'yō* (folk song), which occupies a privileged status in Japan as a preindustrial rural "folk" art.⁹ Celebrated in concerts, competitions, and preservation societies, *min'yō* is part of national culture, but its status is higher than that of enka and its place more esoteric. Enka is commercial music, professionally produced and distributed from urban centers. Although many of its singers are said to come from the countryside, its relationship to regional Japan is based in the sentimentality and nostalgia of distance. *Min'yō*, on the other hand, might be recorded professionally, but it retains its link to "the folk" through its rootedness in amateurism (sometimes semiprofessionalism) and regionalism.

"Homelands," a concept borrowed from cultural geography, is useful in discussing the furusato element in enka. Richard Nostrand and Lawrence Estaville, Jr., citing interlinking factors of place, power, and history, define homelands as "places that people identify with and have strong feelings about" (1993: 2-3). Both furusato and homelands share the sense of an ascribed rootedness, of belonging not by choice but by way of "natural" bonds of blood, birth, and soil. In the case of Japan, however, homeland has retained both the specific meaning of one's family's rootedness to a particular place and the more generalized sense of "national family" rootedness in a mythic Furusato Japan (Robertson 1991: 32-37; cf. Ivy 1995). Conceiving of the nation as homeland lends it an affective immediacy and intimacy often lacking in the larger political sphere.

In Furusato Japan, place is given meaning through discursive practices that include song. As Henri Lefebvre emphasizes, place is not mere land area, it is "a projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice" (1991: 8; Keith and Pile 1993). I would argue that in contemporary Japan, the meanings given to place through the concept of furusato have transformed the local into the national. Regional spaces, once individuated through sometimes minute differences, have been incorporated into the national project of homogeneity and majority making (cf. Gladney 1998; Weiner 1997). In defining the meaning of these spaces, provincial regions such as northern Honshū, with its harsh winters and strong folk

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traditions, have been generalized as center(s) of a "true" national identity and particularized as the idiosyncratic periphery of the nation-culture. These spaces are at once core and periphery, internal and exotic, whole and part. One of the most effective conduits of these spatial/national meanings and identities is enka.

NHK, Japan's national public broadcasting system, is here considered part of "the apparatus of discourses, technologies, and institutions (print capitalism, education, mass media, and so forth) that produces what is generally recognized as 'the national culture'" (Donald 1993: 167). Enka is not, of course, the only, or even the most prestigious, component of national culture. Prestige, as I have noted, can be found in Japan's "cultural ambassadors": kabuki, koto (zither), flower arranging, the tea ceremony, and sumō wrestling. Enka stands apart, less refined perhaps, but hardly less confined and self-conscious before an audience of insiders. As James Donald suggests, the nation, by which he means a "sense of" the nation, is an effect of these cultural technologies, not their origin (ibid.: 167). The process of nation-making that concerns us here is not one of sheer invention or fiction (cf. Gellner 1983). As Benedict Anderson's by now well-known argument puts it, "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (1983: 6). Enka is a factor in Japan's "styling," the process of imaging and imagining that is fundamental to the symbolic production of the "nation as community."

The cultural logic of "enka as national culture" arises from its discursive production of "values, dispositions, and differences" reified as "Japan" (Donald 1993: 167). Through its analysis of the twinned concepts of romance and furusato-homeland (see Chapter 7), this book examines how these values, dispositions, and differences link enka to the nation. Enka, this "homeland in song," fuses the local to the national, thereby giving the imaginary a sense of place.

One of the most effective ways in which regional localities have been nationalized is through a process of incorporation: various urban-rural divides become less relevant than a single center-periphery divide. The symbolic split in twentieth-century Japan is therefore not so much city vs. country (although this is still a relevant dichotomy) as it is Tokyo vs. not-Tokyo,¹⁰ labeled variously *chihō* (provinces), *inaka* (rustic countryside), and *kokyō/furusato* (hometown), each of which gives different nuances to the sense of place. *Chihō*, which defines lands that are outside Tokyo, is most neutral; *inaka* imparts a sense of cultural backwater as well as physical distance; *furusato* is the most

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emotionally binding. Areas labeled with these "not-Tokyo" terms include cities such as Sapporo, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka, whose populations total well over one million (Ueda 1992: 36). With the incorporation of rural areas into what has been constructed as a Tokyo-centric national urban culture, the urban-rural split carries less and less meaning (Ivy 1993; Kelly 1993).

At the same time, the concept of rusticity otherwise associated with an urban-rural split becomes reconfigured here as a Tokyo-provinces divide, and, within Tokyo, as a *yamanote-shitamachi* (uptown/foothills-downtown) axis of difference. Therefore, although urban centers such as Osaka, Nagoya, Kobe, and Hiroshima may not be rural, they are "rustic"—that is, not-Tokyo—in Japanese terms. Outside the boundaries of Tokyo there is also a sharp drop-off: even cities such as Yokohama and Kawasaki, less than an hour away on Tokyo rail lines and visually contiguous with its urban landscape, are considered "rustic." What is important to consider, then, is a concept of rusticity that is based not on population density, strict geographic location, or even economic base, but on cultural distance from a single national center, Tokyo. On this cultural map there is no real in-between, no real suburban.

Dorinne Kondo's astute analysis of difference as an idea constructed around the *yamanote-shitamachi* axis clarifies some of the issues surrounding enka (1990; also Bestor 1989; Dore 1958; Seidensticker 1983). *Shitamachi* connotes far more than geographic areas within Tokyo; it becomes a significant characterization of the class, lifestyle, ethos, and aesthetics of these areas: working-class, artisanal, preindustrial, informal, straightforward, cooperative, intimate, warm, emotional, Edo-period *chōnin* (townspeople) *panache* (Kondo 1990: 57–68). For the purposes of this study, however, what is most significant about *shitamachi* is that, while it is supposed to be the locus of the "truly Japanese," as Kondo is careful to point out, this characterization involves some ambivalence: as much as non-*shitamachi* may look fondly upon *shitamachi* and its people, they would never want to become *shitamachi* dwellers (ibid.: 68). Like enka, *shitamachi* is a nostalgic "reminder of who they [white-collar middle-class] are—the repositories of what is 'traditionally' or 'truly' Japanese—and of what they have lost" (ibid.: 72). Rusticity (and enka, the music linked with it), which brings different kinds of cultural capital together in an uneasy tension, is both reviled as a cultural backwater and celebrated as a cultural repository.¹¹

Regional differences, often built upon the smallest details but zealously upheld, are also a factor in the construction of *urusato* in song and in other

forms of public discourse, and become part of its general texture. Various regions of Japan are characterized not only by language, food, folklore, music, and scenery, but also by the look and character of the people who live there. But more than texture is at work here. Through their regional and subregional differences, residents become bound to local spatial identities; but when these differences come together under the umbrella of *urusato*, then being a "local" means being a national citizen. Difference becomes the basic thread—separate, distinct, and representative—of the national fabric. As Ivy points out, "Representative value becomes a mobile sign, detachable from locale but dependent on perpetually evoking it" (1995: 13). These interrelationships between sign and signified, part and whole, are the crux of the matter here. Yet separate does not mean equal; the distribution of power and control over national culture is not shared evenly by center and periphery, by urban and rural, or even by various regions within peripheries.

As a result of this uneven balance of power and control, rural communities need to negotiate their own identities within the competing ideologies emanating from urban centers. Kelly (1986) documents a rural community in northern Honshū whose inhabitants respond to pressure to adopt *gōrika* (rationalization) in their agricultural techniques while continuing to value nostalgic evocations of themselves (and other rural communities) as repositories of Japan's past. Even when communities are not strictly rural, they constantly invoke *urusato* as the model of authenticity, which links them not only to pastness and tradition but also to sociality and morality. Therefore, as Robertson (1991; also Moon 1989) argues, *urusato-zukuri* (*urusato*-making), a government policy of the mid-1980s that aimed to produce a sense of the past in these communities, became a deliberate production of "tradition," emotion, and virtue. Enka, reinvented as a genre of Japanese "tradition," has played a role in this process. In fact, "traditionalism," defined by Theodore Bestor as "the interpretation, creation, or manipulation of contemporary ideas about the past to bestow an aura of venerability on contemporary social relations" (1989: 4), informs communities, songs, and ideas that seek to legitimate themselves.

The notion of homeland is related to another concept frequently invoked in Japan, that of *shimaguni* (island country). Enka also supports what Dru Gladney (1998) calls "majoritarian discourse"—Japan's continuing self-definition as *shimaguni*, isolated, unique, and homogeneous, a land and culture unto itself. Moreover, Japanese are said to have the mentality of

island people, looking inward rather than outward. These constructions shape a culturalism that ignores Japan's present internationally embedded condition as well as its past experiences of permeable boundaries. Japan may indeed be an island surrounded by water, but water is not an unbridgeable barrier. Yet the persistent myth of shimaguni transforms Japan into a homeland with nowhere else to go.

The homeland presented in enka builds the nation from its individual blocks. As the local narrows down to the specificities of individual mothers, distinctive hometowns, and regional food, language (or dialect), and song, locale becomes a critical link to the larger constructs of racial blood, "virtual" furusato, and national culture. Underlying much of the ideology expressed in enka is a firm belief in a collective sense of the Japanese people, an "us-ness" frequently invoked in daily conversation as "wareware Nihonjin" (we Japanese people). This "us-ness" forms a canon of belief known collectively as *nihonjinron* (treatises on being Japanese). Flourishing in the late 1960s and 1970s, a time when Japan could be said to have emerged from its postwar dependence on the United States, *nihonjinron* was (and remains) a powerful ethnocentric ideological tool. At its center is a strong belief in the homogeneity and uniqueness of the Japanese people, the Japanese language, and Japanese culture. Harumi Befu delineates six main features of the *nihonjinron* canon: 1) ecology (geographic determinism; Japan as a resource-poor island subject to frequent natural disasters); 2) subsistence economy (wet rice cultivation that necessitates cooperative social organization); 3) social structure (group orientation organized in hierarchical structure); 4) psychology, in particular, *amae* (dependency); 5) language; and 6) ethos, in particular, an emphasis on the spiritual side of the Japanese character (1993: 109-13).¹² In its own explicit reification of "Japan," enka encompasses many of these same assumptions.

But enka encompasses much more, including emotion, which influences and shapes the cultural logic of its imaginary. In the analysis that follows I examine enka in terms of "emotional style," defined by Dwight Middleton as "the normative organization of emotions, their indigenous classification, form of communication, intensities of expression, contexts of expression and patterns of linkage with each other and with other domains of culture" (1989: 188). The concept of "emotional style" embeds emotion firmly within a particular society at a particular time. My aim is not to characterize "the Japanese" as a composite of timeless patterns—shame culture, social

embeddedness, dependency (Benedict 1946; DeVos 1973; Doi 1971; Lebra 1976)—but to deal with song as one of many forms of "emotion talk" in Japan, and with enka as emotion talk that is linked to identity-production. Moreover, I consider the emotional style presented in enka within its broader sociopolitical framework, what Raymond Williams has called "structures of feeling" (1965). These structures situate emotion within ideological, political, and economic forces. Enka may be held up as one way in which emotion becomes implicated in the highly ideological act of producing "the nation."

This form of cultural nationalism contrasts sharply with the overt nationalism that prevailed before World War II. As Darrell Davis (1996) shows in his analysis of Japanese art films, the aggressive nationalism of the 1930s may be seen in the monumental film style built around "a certain Japanese aura," which infused the country's feudal heritage with spiritual, even sacred, attributes. Enka's nationalism, however, concerns not the public Japaneseness of the 1930s but a kind of private, painful longing, which its proponents would say is more characteristic of Japan in general. What links both of these versions of national-cultural identity together is their emphasis on spirituality. One version of spirituality is the warrior,¹³ the other, the lover. As Davis puts it, "in the end, it [Japan's spiritual self-image] is an appeal to the holiness of Japan, over against the secular blandishments of Western materialistic corruption" (1996: 10).

In the face of Japan's assertions that it is a classless (or, at least, a middle-class) society, enka provides stubborn testimony of the covert structures that continue to support stratification. Enka is often presented as a "taste culture" (Gans 1974) associated with the blue-collar working classes, or *taishū bunka* (laboring classes culture), and class does in fact become part of its rhetoric of emotion, past, and place. The process of designating one class/taste culture as the national culture is critical here, but even more interesting is the process of deciding which one. According to Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory that class is structured around consumer distinctions, one would expect a national culture to be drawn from the tastes and lifestyles of the dominant class. Indeed, Gerald Creed and Barbara Ching (1997) speak of the domination of the urban gaze and its devaluation of the rustic as a source of national-cultural identity. In Japan, however, through an internal exoticization, *taishū bunka* has become a version of national culture that keeps enka simultaneously at the margins and in the center of national-cultural identity.

Through a series of transformations, the folk/rural/working class is defined as the "real" nation (cf. Sorensen 1997: 41). The ideology at work here suggests a deliberate heterogenizing of social strata that is akin to Stewart's sense of nostalgia as "desire for desire." Blue-collar distinctions keep enka separate and "exotic," and this same separateness characterizes the construction of Japaneseness. The story the Japanese tell themselves about themselves becomes one private face of the nation. It is not a face with which all Japanese would agree or even one all would accept, but it persists as "music overheard," as ambient public culture.

The relationship between "international Japan" and "domestic Japan" may be contextualized by the very performativity of Japanese social life and the identities expressed through the contrasts between *tatema* (public face) and *honne* (private feelings); *omote* (surface, front side) and *ura* (underside, back side); *soto* (outside) and *uchi* (inside) (cf. Bachnik and Quinn 1994; Doi 1986; Goodman and Refsing 1992).¹⁴ The "domestic Japan" that enka helps to define draws on "honne culture" constructed as Other: working-class, feudal past, distant rural homeland. When Other is reconfigured as Self, enka expresses the ambivalent contradictions of these different "Japans" (cf. Ohnuki-Tierney 1990).

Patterning Forms Through Kata

Emotional expression in enka takes the form of stylized formulas I call *kata* (patterning; patterned form).¹⁵ The concept, from the traditional arts of flower arranging and the tea ceremony, the martial arts, and kabuki, is here extended to include patterning in Japanese culture in general.

Theodor Adorno's (1990) well-known critique of Western popular music analyzes formulaic structures as the product of capitalist industrial production, which seeks to standardize its commodities. His criticism is based on a Marxist economic determinism and the "duping of the masses" as well as on a eurocentricism that devalues repetition in favor of originality. While it is true that standardization and patterning lend themselves to more efficient production of commercial music, how people in various cultures regard that patterning may differ. According to Simon Frith, the fixedness of popular music is intrinsic to recording technology, which effectively captures and replicates one particular performance in time (1987: 61). What I am seeking, however, are ways to understand not only Adorno's standardization and Frith's replication, both certainly very much a part of the genre, but also people's attitudes toward these processes and their precedents in traditional

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arts. Analyzing these patternings as *kata*, rather than simply reducing them to aspects of capitalist production or technological replication, shows how they give form to and aestheticize the emotions they express.

My emphasis on *kata* may understandably result in a structuralist approach, but I would justify that approach as one that is already deeply embedded within this cultural form. In enka, *kata* exist on several levels at various stages of production, performance, and consumption. They display varying degrees of "patternedness" that can include the smallest nuance of breathiness, the lifting of a heel, and the streaming of tears, as well as the sounds, sights, and situations that evoke those tears.

There are good reasons for choosing *kata* over the English words "pattern," "style," or "formula." First, *kata* emphasizes an embeddedness in daily life. Linguistically, there is both a character for formal *kata* and a verbal suffix, *-kata* (written in syllabary), that denotes a patterned way of doing things. Second, *kata* emphasizes surface form and beauty: the viewer's attention is drawn to the surface of the staged event and to the effects produced by the performers. This emphasis on form and effects gives a highly theatrical sense to performance and a performative sense to daily life. Third, *kata* emphasizes detail, which makes of a knowledgeable audience a highly refined one, acutely aware of the finest differences and their aesthetic effects. Fourth, as a system of theatrical display, *kata* places emphasis on technique, on the process of doing: a performance becomes a presentation of presentation. The audience enjoys the product and the process of transformation. Fifth, *kata* separates the whole into discrete, patterned units, which create a recognizable code of the performance action, a code whose goal is beauty. Through patterns, beauty and emotion are created, perceived, and evaluated.

Sixth, *kata* is important as a way for art forms to be taught and handed down from one generation to the next. *Kata*, and the related concept *katachi* (form), becomes a means by which one may "enter" (*katachi de hairu*) an art form: it is a manner of doing, a way of being (Kondo 1990: 106), which creates its own historical links. As Thomas Kasulis explains, "By absolutely standardizing the practice, the student sees the master perform the movement in exactly the same way each time" (1993: 317). Kata becomes not merely a distillation of one individual way of doing things but a historic panoply of teachers past and present, embedding the doer and the doing in a thick diachronic context. *Kata* at once establishes, constructs, and verifies a relationship with the past.

JUSTIFICATION
[MP]
ENKA
TRANS
GUSTAVAS
MARXIST
AMBIVALENT
I CAN BE
DIFFERENT
JAPANESE
KATA
ENKA
AND A
THICK
DIACHRONIC
CONTEXT
HISTORY

At the same time that it formalizes, aestheticizes, and historicizes, kata also spiritualizes, and this seventh characteristic may be the most crucial one of all. Working on the external through kata transforms and defines the internal. The two are interrelated parts of the same whole. For this study, what is important is that, unlike much Western thought that gives primacy to what is below the surface and behind the mask as somehow truer and more significant, a theory of kata gives the surface its due. Jacob Raz's explanation of yakuza behavior fits well with this theory of kata: self-presentations "are not merely outward expressions of some inner substance of identity, but a constant process of creating that identity, while simultaneously signifying and demonstrating it" (1992: 213). The Western hierarchized dichotomy of form (the false) vs. content (the true) becomes reconfigured as continuous and interpenetrating parts. Here, cultural elements such as tsukutta mono and tatemae/honne can be brought together. Kata is at the same time superficial and profound; it is content attendant upon form (Kondo 1990: 106).

These aspects of kata—surface aesthetic, attention to detail, performativity, codification, historical significance, and transcendence—contradict the approach to emotions, expression, and temporality assumed by many Western scholars. Emotions as kata are at once raw and cultivated, and their very cultivation through time provokes moral and aesthetic admiration. The notion of kata, however, also includes its negation. In the aesthetic realm, the master perfects kata to the point where it vanishes. The creative goal of kata-training is to fuse the individual to the form so that the individual becomes the form and the form becomes the individual.

In spite of what might seem a highly formulaic system of popular "hit-making" in a conservative genre, not all enka songs are hits, nor do all well-trained singers become stars. Herein lie the limits of kata. Teachers of enka teach pattern, while singers of enka speak of *kosei* (individuality, originality), which they consider necessary for success in the enka world. One needs to balance doing things as they have been done before using a standard formula and trying something a little new to gain notice. One must recognize the value of both.

The cultural logic of enka's imaginary uses kata to add new dimensions to what might, on the surface, be interpreted as mere nostalgia. Enka is not a museum that seeks to preserve the past. A genre called *natsu-mero* (from *natsukashii*/nostalgic, *merodii*/melody), which consists strictly of rereleased

THE ATTITUDE TO SURFACE AS SUPERFICIAL

RAW; UNREFINED

TSUKUTTA MONO NOT JUST A FORM

old songs, serves that purpose. Enka, on the contrary, is always newly created. The music industry is constantly busy: new songs are composed every year, and new singers groomed for their debut. Amid this constant busyness, however, enka denies that the past is past and provides a space within the present where the values, interactions, and emotions associated with the past can continue to exist. It does so in part through *furusato*, which becomes a spatialized metonym for temporality, but even more important, it does so through kata. By taking the past as patterning, enka is able to evoke the patterning of the past even as it pushes patterns to new limits. This cultural logic situates enka firmly in the present and gives force to its particular version of nationhood.

KATA IS SUPERFICIAL STANDARDS FORMULATIONS.

FURUSATO AS OLD

CHAPTER TWO

Inventing Enka

Definitions, Genres, Pasts

"There is no definition of enka [Enka no teigi wa nani mo nai n desu]."

—Producer/manager of a top enka star

"Before the war, all you heard was ryūkōka [umbrella term for Japanese popular song]. Then some time after the war, everyone said 'Enka, enka!' So, tell me, what is enka?"

—Seventy-year-old Japanese-American amateur singer

"Enka is any kind of [Japanese] popular music which, when you hear it, you know it's Japanese."

—Elderly Japanese-American proprietor of Japanese music store, Honolulu

Although enka is an indigenous popular song genre whose roots stretch back well before 1868,¹ this historical account begins in the Meiji era (1868–1912). During that time, Japan introduced and promoted Western music and instruments in a deliberate, self-conscious attempt to modernize itself in the image of the West. Inasmuch as modernity is shifting and relational, enka is "modern" music that brings Western instruments together with Japanese scales, vocal techniques, and textual themes. Since the 1970s, enka has also come to be regarded as "traditional" music that reaches back to the roots of Japaneseness.

My purpose here is not to situate enka as either "modern" or "traditional" but to examine it as an invention. In using the word "invention," I am aware that, as is true of most inventions, enka is not wholly new; it draws on a name ("enka") and a group of musics with roots in the past. What is new,

however, at least since the 1970s, is the combination of the name and the music under the self-validating mantle "heart/soul of Japanese" (nihonjin no kokoro). Enka's credibility as a traditional genre rests on historicizing and naturalizing its progressive evolution. Yet its evolution is not linear but one that has been reconstructed to invoke "tradition." In commenting on the invented traditions of modern Japan, Stephen Vlastos points out, "Traditions of any duration are diastrophic rather than flat and unified; hence they function as multivalent and somewhat unstable cultural signifiers" (1998: 6). This chapter focuses on the instability of enka—as music, as named genre, and as cultural signifier.

ENKA'S INSTABILITY

Defining Enka

The *Oricon Yearbook*, the standard publication of the Japanese music industry (akin to America's *Billboard*), divides popular music into five broad categories (listed by percentage of sales in 1993): 1) *fōku* ("folk"; urban folk-music inspired music) and *rokku* ("rock"), 77.0 percent; 2) *poppusu* ("pops"; Euro-American derived middle-of-the-road pop music), 10.3 percent; 3) *yōgaku* (popular music imported from Euro-America), 8.1 percent; 4) enka, 4.2 percent; and 5) other, 0.5 percent (*Oricon* 1993: 3).

As the comments quoted at the beginning of the chapter suggest, defining enka is difficult not only in Japan but wherever the music is heard and sung. One Japanese musicologist defines enka as "popular songs of the *kayōkyoku* [broadly, twentieth-century mainstream Japanese popular music] genre that are said to have Japanese musical and spiritual characteristics" (Gondō 1988: 4). That enka "sounds Japanese" may be the result of certain traits of musical style or poetic conventions (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the listener's sense of what is and is not Japanese shifts over time: conventions change, as do even those boundaries between genres established by the music industry. For example, "Kayōkyoku Chōsa" (Popular Music Survey), a 1968 survey on popular music conducted among Tokyo urbanites, attributed different genres to their favorite singers. Although enka was included as a category, some singers of what is today considered enka were at that time labeled "*mūdo kayō kashu*" ("mood song" singers) (Komota et al. 1980: 64–65).²

Defining enka is difficult not only because the genre is slippery but because the word itself has been used to mean different things over time and been written with different ideographs.³ The two most common meanings of enka, based on different spellings, are "performed song/speech song," its

演歌

earliest usage during the Meiji period, and "love song," a later usage with strong sexual, even erotic, connotations. The composer Hoshino Tetsurō (n.d.), who distinguishes six different ways of writing the word, has compiled and categorized 105 of his own songs according to these groupings. Altogether I have come across ten different ideographic spellings and definitions of enka.

The music industry defines enka by singer, not by music or text (Fujie 1989: 199). The songs sung by "enka singer X" are considered enka by the very fact that they are sung by singer X.⁴ Of course, not all singers are happy with this situation. As the manager of M.H., a female star, puts it, "The biggest problem is that of placing a singer's entire output into a single genre." This practice is particularly strong in the field of enka. Therefore, an enka singer like M.H. gets into a lot of trouble. For her, it's really an inhibiting thing [totemo ikigurushi koto na n desu yo]. "The genre restricts a singer's repertoire and likewise becomes defined by what a singer sings. Theoretically, when and if a singer broadens his or her scope, the genre might possibly expand. M.H.'s manager gives an example: "So it may be that the songs that M.H. sings are classified as enka. However, you know her famous 'song X'? That was 1975. At the time it came out, people were criticizing her, saying, 'Why is M.H. singing folk songs?' However, now 'song X' has become a representative enka song. Strange, isn't it?" In this case, a song once considered (and criticized) as being outside the genre has subsequently become central to the genre. More often, the genre becomes a kind of self-censoring, delimiting factor in a singer's repertoire. The conservatism of singers (or, more accurately, of those in charge of producing enka) and audiences tends to cap any expansion of the genre into other modes of expression. That this is "old-sounding" music, then, is no accident (see Chapter 3).

Whether or not enka is defined according to style ("all popular songs that sound Japanese") or performer ("all songs that enka singers sing"), the Japanese public and the popular media continue to use the term as an important catch-all for popular music considered to be of indigenous origin. Thus, in Japan the question of enka's possible Korean roots remains a controversial one. Those who make this claim point to the similarities in musical form and content between enka and many Korean popular songs, the "affinity" of many singers of Korean ethnicity for enka, and the historical link between Koga Masao (1904-1978), the man who created the prototype of enka style, and Korea, his home during part of his early life. Others, who claim that enka has indigenous roots, acknowledge possible Korean borrowings but

most restrictive definition

old "love song" or "folk song" words

mainly of traditional

point to enka's origins in Japanese popular music forms such as naniwa-bushi (Osaka song), also known as rōkyoku (narrative song). My aim here is neither to verify nor to dispute enka's indigeneity but to recognize enka as a native category that has emerged out of specific historical circumstances.⁵

Meiji Era (1868-1912)

The word enka⁶ is an abbreviated form of "enzetsu no uta" (oratorical song). It originated in the 1880s to describe the antigovernment protest songs sung in the streets in support of the jiyū minken undō ("freedom and people's rights movement") of 1874-90, which sought to establish a democratic constitution and a nationally elected assembly. Japanese intellectuals, who had read the works of Western philosophers in translation and embraced their ideals of popular representation, began to call for representative government. In an attempt to suppress the movement, the Meiji government imposed restrictions on public expression. The movement's intellectual leaders, meanwhile, hoping to gain popular support but hindered by the low level of literacy among the general population, sought some form of oral communication that would promote the movement's ideas and ideals. Using a kind of speech-song and taking it directly to the streets would not only avoid government restrictions on published materials and avert police interference at large gatherings, it would also make these ideas more accessible to the public. Enka ("speech-song") was born.

In its attempt to appeal to the general public, the movement also broadened its initial interests to include the problems of farmers and land tax reform. In its original form, enka was half-sung and half-spoken by an enkashi (enka singer/caller; otherwise known as sōshi, singer/caller) unaccompanied by a musical instrument. In its rhythmic exaggeration of certain syllables, it was musically similar to the cries of street vendors, but its goal was political: to deliver a message in an entertaining way and gain support for a political agenda.

The enkashi, described in these early days as "singing street guerrillas," printed and sold enka lyrics, but did so "hastily in the streets, with one eye always out for the police" (Nakamura 1991: 270). Gradually, however, their role shifted from that of political guerrilla to that of entertainer, and they began to organize into groups such as the Seinen Kurabu (Youth Club), formed in 1890, to write songs and print and distribute lyrics.

An important aspect of enka during this early period was the kae-uta (substitution song) tradition of setting different lyrics to the same melody.

演説の歌

ENKA WAS A PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND SUBSTITUTION

UP. PROTEST SONGS, CONSIDERED ALWAYS OUT FOR THE POLICE OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

substitution of lyrics

*
news of
copyright laws
2/25.

Given their lack of musical background, the relative importance of their political message, and the absence of copyright laws, the enkashi used *kaeta* as a wide-ranging tool. The resulting *enka* were collections of verses written by different people but set to one musical form.

With the establishment of the Diet in 1890 and Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the impetus for protest songs diminished, and *enka* went into decline. By 1901, the *Seinen Kurabu* had disbanded. But the onset of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 reinvigorated nationalistic fervor, and the immense popularity of *Soeda Azembō's* (1872-1944) *enka* song "Rappa Bushi" (Bugle Call Song) launched a revival. During this resurgence in popularity, *enka* began to focus less on politics and more on entertainment. *Soeda*, who had been a member of the *Seinen Kurabu* since 1892, became the most famous *enka* composer and performer of the Meiji era.

school + military.

The earlier, more political *enka* was closer to stylized speech than to song. But that changed during the Meiji era, when the schools, the military, and other institutions of public life began to adopt Western music in the larger project of creating a "modern" Japanese nation.⁷ Through the continuing influence of two particular types of Western-based songs—*shōka* (school songs composed to introduce Japanese children to Western music) and *gunka* (military songs)—*enka* became more "musical" in the Western sense, emphasizing melody over speech. *Soeda Azembō's* *enka*, characteristically describing historical or current events in a personal and emotional manner, drew on these school and military songs to reshape what had begun as a stylized speech performance into a new, more tuneful genre.

1910 of
violin

In 1907, the violin, a prestigious—and portable—Western instrument, was introduced in *enka* performance, heralding the age of what was known as *baiorin enka* (violin *enka*). According to *Sakurai Toshio* (b. 1910), whom I interviewed in 1993 as the last enkashi still living and performing, the idea of using the violin to accompany the singing came not from the enkashi themselves but from the more intellectual strata ("*erai hito*"),⁸ who felt that the instrument would give the genre greater prestige, attract more attention—and sell sheet music. The *enka* performed during this period consisted of news of contemporary events set to preexisting melodies.

The stylistic forerunners of what is today considered *enka* include various kinds of *min'yō* (folk song), *naniwa-bushi/rōkyoku* (narrative song), and *kouta* (a ballad form), all of which were accompanied by the *shamisen* (lute). Like *baiorin enka*, *naniwa-bushi* flourished among street performers before the

? vs.
RiWA

advent of electronic media (but has continued into the electronic era through recordings issued by major record companies). *Naniwa-bushi* recounted familiar stories of the past as well as newsworthy stories of the present, often on a moralistic theme such as *giri-ninjō* (duty vs. human feelings). Its heroes included valiant samurai, chivalrous thieves, charismatic outlaws, dutiful sons, and devoted wives. Although *naniwa-bushi* was popular in the streets, intellectuals regarded it as an expression of "cheap taste and feudalistic morals" (Koizumi 1980: 551), some of the same criticism leveled at modern *enka*. The heritage of *naniwa-bushi* vocal production, singing technique, and ornamentation, along with the subject matter of its texts, has carried over into contemporary *enka*.

Taishō Era (1912-1926)

Although Japanese *ryūkōka* (popular music) originated during the Meiji, many Japanese scholars consider the Taishō era to be its true founding period, since at that time these songs were well known throughout the country and sung by a broad spectrum of the population (Minami 1987: 469). The *ryūkōka* of the Taishō era is the musical form most closely linked with today's *enka*. Contemporary Japan nostalgically reconstructs the Taishō as the period during which modern urban Japanese culture, with its mix of prewar innocence and appetite for the latest fads, began. The Taishō era witnessed a major social upheaval as rural people migrated en masse to the cities in search of work, spawning a new but increasingly common social phenomenon, the lonely urbanite. *Ryūkōka*, the music of these urban migrants, spoke directly to the personal experience of lost love, separation, and loneliness. *Mita Munesuke* cites "*Sasurai no Uta*" (Song of Wandering), written by *Kitahara Hakushū* in 1917, as the first modern popular song to deal with loneliness, in particular, the loneliness of leaving home (1992: 96).

① This of
Mita's
migrations
→ the lonely
urbanite
as a subject
of composition.

The Taishō era gave birth to many forms of popular culture, including a new musical genre, *shin-min'yō* (new folk song). Although in various ways this new urban song form mimicked traditional regional folk songs, it was composed by professional urban songwriters and recorded in urban studios for nationwide sale. One of the favorite themes of these new folk songs was that of *furusato*, glorified as utopian rural hometowns. By the early 1930s, however, *shin-min'yō* had begun to diminish in popularity as *enka*, another genre about *furusato*, emerged. Whereas *shin-min'yō* referred to specific regions and often mentioned actual place names, *enka* songs expressed a generalized *furusato* (*Mita* 1992) more meaningful to displaced urban dwellers from a variety of

② Kōji
Mita's
nostalgia
→ Utopian
Hometown
Glorified
as Utopian
Hometown
→ nostalgic
nostalgia
→ Utopian
Hometown

regions. From about the middle of the Taishō era, enkashi, who by now were professional singers, were able to make a living in bars singing customer requests.⁹

The growth of radio broadcasting and the record industry in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s popularized ryūkōka and its use of Western instruments, such as the violin, the harmonica, the guitar, the mandolin, and the xylophone, to accompany popular songs. Syncretized pentatonic scales derived in part from Japanese traditional scales provided melodic material. Some texts departed from the traditional 7-5 meter in accord with more Western-influenced musical phrase lengths.¹⁰ And, according to Mita, only since the Taishō era have romantic love songs played such a major role in Japanese popular song (1992: 52). The "en-" (speech; performed) of earlier Meiji enka thus became the "en-" (romance, eroticism) of Taishō enka.

"Sendō Kouta" (Boatman's Song), with words by Noguchi Ujō (1882-1945) and music by Nakayama Shimpei (1887-1952), is considered the oldest example of popular, commercial, urban Taishō enka (IASPM-Japan 1991: 12). A dark and gloomy song first popularized in 1921 by enkashi, who sold the sheet music, it was recorded and released by several record companies in 1922 and 1923, with great success. Nakayama, among the first generation of composers to be educated in the Meiji school system, was very familiar with Western-based music (Mita 1992: 55). In its use of the syncretic Japanese *yonanuki onkai* (pentatonic scale) in its minor mode, "Sendō Kouta" was the first popular hit influenced by the lessons of Western-based school music.

During this period, a song gained popular momentum as it moved from sheet music to recording to film, each medium building on the previous one. In 1923, a low-budget film based on "Sendō Kouta" capitalized on its popularity (Nakamura 1991: 266). Other songs followed a similar pattern: Tottori Shun'yō's "Kago no Tori" (A Bird in a Cage) of 1924, for example, also achieved nationwide popularity, moving from medium to medium. Performed by enkashi standing near the screen, these songs flourished as background music for silent films in the 1920s (IASPM-Japan 1991: 19-20).

Although what we today call enka emerged in the 1920s, it was included under the broad category ryūkōka, which encompassed nearly all domestically produced popular music. Here were the musical beginnings of urban-based mass culture, which also included newspapers, magazines, advertising, comics, radio, movies, and department stores. This emergent national consumer culture brought industrial capitalism into the homes of ordinary

citizens. Popular songs recalling lost loves and distant hometowns became one of its most widely consumed products.

Shōwa Era (1926-1989)

The long, cataclysmic Shōwa era, during which Japan developed its industries and technology, fought and lost a war, and rebuilt itself to international economic prominence, marks the maturing of enka and its "birth" as national music.

PREWAR (1920S-1930S)

The introduction and spread of electronic media such as the radio and the phonograph led to a major change in the evolution of enka. In 1925, radio stations in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka—the first in Asia—began broadcasting. The Japanese government immediately recognized the ideological power of these media and placed them under tight control (Kasza 1988: 72), forming the Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK), which monopolized broadcasting in Japan from 1926 until 1951. Japan's nationalist goals of the 1930s and 1940s included the creation of an electronically unified country. In the early days of broadcasting, however, radios remained a luxury item even among urban dwellers: in 1932, just over 25 percent of urban households and less than 5 percent of rural households owned a radio (NHK *Nihon Hōsō-shi* [History of Japanese Broadcasting], vol. 1, "Rajio no Nendo Betsu Toshi Gunbu Fukyūritsu" [Yearly Urban-Rural Rate of Diffusion of Radios], quoted in Kasza 1988: 88). During the 1930s, the national government decided to distribute radios to rural villages as a means of broadcasting its own messages throughout the country. But the dawn of a national mass media society spelled the gradual demise of street arts and artists such as enkashi.

During this period, as recording technology improved, phonograph records became more affordable for a wider segment of the population. In 1927, foreign investment helped establish all three major recording companies in Japan: Nippon Columbia (American Columbia and British Columbia), Nippon Victor (American Victor), and Nippon Polydor (Deutsche Polydor). Fortuitously, these new companies were able to take advantage of the latest innovations in recording when setting up their own facilities.

Until this time, songs generally originated outside record companies and were recorded and released only if they were already popular. For example,

RADIO
KILLED THE
AKIHO
STAR

1922

pentatonic

②

"Kachūsha no Uta" (Kachusha's Song), with words by Shimamura Hōgetsu (1871–1918) and Sōma Gyofū (1883–1950) and music by Nakayama Shimpei (1887–1952), was recorded by Orient Records after gaining great popularity in Shimamura's 1914 *shingeki* (new theater) dramatization of Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection*.¹¹ "Habu no Minato" (Harbor of Habu), written by Noguchi Ujō and Nakayama Shimpei, was recorded in 1928 by Victor Records at the suggestion of a women's magazine editor. Benjamin Gardener, the president of Nippon Victor, suggested that his company follow the lead of its American parent company and others in the United States and generate hits of its own. The first such hit was "Kimi Koishi" (You, Sweetheart), produced and recorded in 1928 by Nippon Victor with words by Shigure Otowa (1899–1980) and music by Sasa Kōka (1886–1961). As the movie industry also grew, record companies and movie companies cooperated to release records and movies simultaneously, ensuring maximum public exposure throughout the country.

In the 1930s, popular songs were performed by geisha as well as by enkashi and other professional singers. Although typically trained in "traditional" song and dance, geisha sang *ryūkōka* to remain competitive with café waitresses and bar hostesses, their more Westernized counterparts,¹² infusing these songs with components of traditional Japanese music from *kouta* ballads, the genre with which they are most often linked (Dalby 1983: 80; Fujie 1989: 204). Many popular songs of the time also borrowed scales, vocal techniques, and other elements from regional folk song genres. During this decade, *naniwa-bushi/rōkyoku* also flourished. Because its feudalistic themes lent themselves to a nationalistic ideology, the government encouraged and supported *naniwa-bushi* throughout the World War II years, and its influence on enka, especially the more conservative subgenre called *do-enka* ("real enka" enka) remains strong.

At the same time, American popular music also influenced *ryūkōka*. In 1937, the hit "Wakare no Burūsu" (Parting Blues), composed by Hattori Ryūichi and sung by Awaya Noriko, prompted a flurry of "blues" hits. The Japanese version of the blues, however, generally ignored the standard sixteen-measure chord progression and "blue notes" characteristic of American blues, latching on instead to its melancholy mood, which helped lay the foundation for the enka of the postwar period. Japanese *burūsu* (blues) was characterized by its slow tempo, *yonanuki* minor scale, 4/4 rhythmic structure, and general atmosphere of sadness, all combined with a vague "Western" feel.

The "father of modern enka" is the composer Koga Masao, whose major influence on the genre is reflected in the codified style known as "*Koga merodii*"

(Koga melody). This term refers to songs based on Koga's style, which features dark, introspective lyrics, a slow tempo, guitar or mandolin accompaniment with idiomatic melodic patterns, the *yonanuki* minor scale, and solo voice.¹³ Koga's membership in a mandolin club during his university years influenced his compositional style, as did the years he spent in Korea. The hits "Sake wa Namida ka Tameiki ka" (Is Sake a Teardrop or a Sigh?) of 1931 and "Kage o Shitaite" (Following after Your Image), which illustrate the elements of his style, feature the musical and textual patternings—the *kata*—of today's enka.

One of the popular song themes of the time was that of "wandering or rootlessness," the antithesis of *furusato*, hometown, and family. Songs such as "Akagi no Komori-uta" (Lullaby of Akagi) (lyrics by Satō Sōnosuke, music by Takeoka Nobuyuki, sung by Shōji Tarō) and "Nozaki Kouta" (Nozaki Short Song) (lyrics by Imanaka Sakkei, music by Omura Nōshō, sung by Shoji Tarō) accompanied movies and plays based on popular novels about wanderers. In postwar enka, wandering or rootlessness remained an important theme (IASPM-Japan 1991: 10).

During the mid to late 1930s, increasingly volatile political conditions began to affect music and other expressions of popular culture in Japan. Whereas the Japanese public embraced American culture and music in the 1920s and early 1930s, once Japan had embarked on the road to the 1937 war with China, the government attempted to eliminate certain elements that were considered too American. Baseball was purged of American words and newly created Japanese terms were adopted.¹⁴ The government closed the popular dance halls where one could see and be seen listening and dancing to American music. It also shut down foreign-owned record companies and exerted strong control over the remaining Japanese-owned companies, such as King and Teichiku Records. Some Japanese popular singers turned from more overtly American music, such as jazz, to enka.¹⁵ Popular culture echoed the political imperatives of nationalistic militarism.

WORLD WAR II (1940S)

During World War II,¹⁶ Japan's efforts were increasingly concentrated on achieving victory. Under the National Mobilization Law of 1938, the government took a two-pronged approach to popular music: suppress unwanted elements and promote elements useful to the war effort. In January 1942, immediately following the dramatic entry of the United States into the war, the Information Bureau banned all "enemy [i.e., American] music,"

WAKARE BURUSU
A-DELSM E

W
BLUES

such as jazz,¹⁷ as well as Japanese popular songs with sentimental or romantic themes (Shillony 1981: 144). The government also banned all overt expressions of sadness, such as the word *namida* (tears), in lyrics (Mita 1992: 7, 35). It took additional measures to prohibit music it perceived to be heavily influenced by the decadent popular music of the West, banning electric guitars, banjos, and ukuleles, for example, in 1944 (Iritani 1991: 174; Shillony 1981: 144). Yet banned songs, including parodies of official music and romantic ballads, continued to capture the hearts of the citizenry, albeit in private.

Under government directives, popular music turned increasingly to *gunkoku kayō* ("military country" popular songs), including *gunka* (marchlike military songs), which promoted nationalistic, imperialistic ideals. Iritani Toshio explains that daily broadcasts of *gunkoku kayō* and the national anthem were intended to instill group consciousness in the Japanese nation and foster a fighting spirit (1991: 167). Along with films, jingoistic phrases, and propagandistic posters, popular music became one of the military government's ways of spiritually mobilizing the citizenry for the tremendous sacrifices that would be required during what has been called Japan's "valley of darkness" (Havens 1978: 13; Davis 1996). These songs tended to focus less on the enemy and more on the spiritual strength of the Japanese people themselves (Dower 1993: 40). The government also produced songs promoting more direct war messages, which were then released by commercial record companies. Often, however, these propagandistic songs, dictated from above, never gained true popularity; people tended not to sing them and not to buy recordings (Komota et al. 1981: 127). Even the musicians who performed them turned to jazz and other banned music during their off-hours and found other ways to skirt military rules (Atkins 1998: 367).

On the other hand, some government-sanctioned songs did become popular and are still sung today. These songs tend to dwell on themes such as the family, and especially mother, that, when taken together, form a kind of sentimental education. One example, "Kudan no Haha" (Mother of Kudan [area of Tokyo around Yasukuni shrine, where Japan's war dead are memorialized]) (1939), tells the poignant story of an elderly mother who travels from the countryside to the Yasukuni Shrine, where her son has been enshrined as a war hero.¹⁸

Songwriters and musicians, along with other entertainers and artists, joined in the patriotic mood. In 1943, both the Japan Patriotic Arts Association and the Roving Musical Patriotic Volunteer Corps were established.

Ben-Ami
Shillony
Jazz
3
1944
guitar, banjo, ukulele
banned

People in the arts helped propagate and glorify the country's wartime goals. As Ben-Ami Shillony remarks, "the patriotic mood generated by an all-out war, on top of the repressive measures of the government, created a remarkable consensus in the fields of thought, literature, and the arts" (1981: 119).

POSTWAR (1950S-1960S)

The miracle of Japan's postwar recovery is nowhere more dramatically demonstrated than in the contrast between conditions immediately after the war and those in the late 1960s. Popular music likewise exhibited striking changes. The nationalistic musical expression of the prewar period, such as *naniwa-bushi*, faded quickly as American popular music swept the country amid the overriding presence of the American Occupation forces. "Big Band" jazz was performed live in cities and on military bases, and could be heard throughout the country over the airwaves of the Far Eastern Network (FEN), the American armed forces network. Moreover, Japanese historical accounts credit this bright and lively Western-inspired but Japanese-produced music with spurring the nation forward. One of the first hit songs was "Ringo no Uta" (Apple Song), sung and recorded by Namiki Michiko in 1945. The musical elements of this and other songs of the period—avoiding *yonanuki* scales and Japanese vocal ornamentation such as *yuri* (a vibratolike "swinging" of the voice to alter pitch)—were heavily influenced by American popular music.

A central figure in boosting public morale was the immensely popular Misora Hibari (1937-1989), who debuted in 1949, at the age of twelve. A child star in the movies, she sang and danced, performing a variety of popular songs. Her portrayal of a streetwise orphan, forever captured on film in *Tokyo Kiddo* (1950), made her emblematic of Japan's postwar period, and her energetic brightness amid hardship became a source of national optimism. It is her association with enka, however, for which she is primarily remembered. Dubbed the "queen of enka," she embodied emotion and pain, remaining the people's singer even as she rose above them (Tansman 1996: 121). Attesting to her enduring popularity is the elaborate Misora Hibari memorial museum built outside Kyoto after her death,¹⁹ as well as the continuing activities of her nationwide fan club.

Although the government suppressed "gloomy songs" immediately after the war, by the late 1940s and 1950s this kind of song had resurfaced. One example, from 1948, is Koga Masao's "Yu no Machi Erejii" (Bath Town

File of
yuri

1948

Elegy). This song, which features the yonanuki scale and Koga's characteristic plaintive guitar accompaniment, is said to have begun a postwar performance trend (Fujie 1989: 205). The theme of loneliness also resurfaced in popular song but with an important difference: it "began to change from the loneliness of separation from the hometown, to the even deeper loneliness of people without a hometown, [the loneliness] of living truly alone" (Mita 1992: 104). Whereas songs of loneliness in the 1920s and 1930s expressed the plight of the urban migrant yearning for a rural hometown, in the late 1950s such songs might also express the plight of the rural dweller left behind. During the phenomenal growth of the postwar period, Japan developed a modern transportation infrastructure of highways and high-speed trains, which effectively diminished the distance between urban and rural areas, even as popular songs retained the symbolic city-country separation. Increasing job opportunities in cities brought urban growth and rising material affluence. Before World War II the rural population stood at about 60 percent of the total; by 1961 it had decreased to 45 percent (Bennett 1967: 418-19). For the first time in Japan's history, over half the population lived in cities.

The Broadcasting Law of 1950 established the NHK as a special public corporation intended to serve the needs of various segments of the population²⁰ and mandated the establishment of private commercial broadcast stations. The opening of commercial radio stations in 1951, and of commercial television stations in 1953, was one of the most significant developments affecting popular music in Japan.²¹ Neutralizing the monopoly, although not necessarily the dominance, of NHK, these companies brought new voices to the media airwaves.

In another development of the late 1950s, separate production companies gradually began to take control of record production from record companies (Kawabata 1991: 333). Under this system, production companies managed singers and coordinated lyricists, songwriters, and all other aspects of producing a record. As they grew in size and power, some even took over the copyright of the songs they recorded. As a result, particular songs became linked with particular singers (Fujie 1989: 206). Songs and singers could now be marketed to record companies as a package and their involvement limited to promoting and selling.

In 1966, for the first time, sales of *hō-ban* (Japanese-originated recordings) exceeded those of *yō-ban* (foreign-originated recordings), a trend that continues (Kawabata 1991: 336).²² This turning of the tide of popularity toward

RETAINED
that
symbolic

domestic recordings and Japanese-originated music suggests a retreat from the wholesale embrace of American popular music and a retrenchment of domestic styles and genres. In a practical sense, however, this shift also meant that record companies now began to adopt the same kinds of budgets and promotional tactics for *hō-ban* they had previously used for *yō-ban* (ibid.: 338).

Japanese "blues" of the 1930s experienced a revival in the 1960s, when singers such as Mori Shin'ichi (see Chapter 6) released a series of "blues" hits. These "blues" hits, as well as the popular songs known as *mūdo-kayō* (mood songs), were slow-to-medium tempo ballads about failed romance that featured Western instruments such as the saxophone and steel guitar. They too have been incorporated into today's enka.

POST-POSTWAR (1970S-1980S)

The word *enka* reemerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, during the waning days of the *enkashi*, when it was used by media and record companies to differentiate between the more indigenous forms of Japanese popular music and other, Western-influenced forms.²³ According to Nagata Gyōji, a popular music critic, after World War II the flood of American popular music into Japan seemed to affect just about all forms of popular music (reference to Nagata in Anonymous 1987: 14). To differentiate more clearly between this American-influenced music and the songs it considered more characteristically Japanese, the record industry chose the word *enka*. In one spelling of *enka*, the *en*- ideograph denotes erotic sexual liaisons, which fit the songs more closely (i.e., *Taishō enka*), but the industry censored that ideograph and adopted a more neutral one meaning "to present or perform" (ibid.). In this sanitized form, *enka* became especially widespread as a result of Nippon Victor's advertising campaign for the singer Fuji Keiko, who debuted in 1969 (IASPM-Japan 1991: 12). The music critic Nakamura Tōyō claims that the word *enka* denotes the "most conservative strain in popular music" because of earlier *enkashi* associations with premodern performance styles (1991: 272). Here, then, in an industry-determined cultural product, sound and sentiment coalesce.

This genre-making—or, as I call it, "genre-izing"—hinges on the music and the meanings given to that music as an invented tradition, but it tends to erase the processes of invention. In the case of *enka*, the music has historical precedents yet was only identified as a separate genre in the postwar period:

the music sounds "old," but the genre itself is young. Stylistically, according to one amateur singer now in his seventies, enka sounds even more "traditional" in its use of vocal ornamentation and inflection than the prewar *ryūkōka* of which it was a part. This "genre-izing" process coincides with other examples of cultural nationalism in the late 1960s and 1970s, in particular the emergence of "nihonjinron," discussed earlier, and the prominence of a nostalgic version of *furusato* in representations of Japanese identity (Robertson 1991: 5). During the introspection boom of the period, enka became one more boundary marker of national taste, this time in the field of popular music.

In the 1970s, proliferating youth-oriented popular music genres served as the backdrop for the emergence of enka. These popular genres included a new "folk" movement, influenced by American urban folk singers such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, and *gurūpu saunzu* ("group sounds"; pop groups), influenced by groups such as the Beatles. Performers adopted not only the sounds of Euro-American popular music but also, in some cases, its individualistic ideology, writing their own music and opposing dominant, profit-making business practices (Fujie 1989: 208). Few songs appealed to both the young and the old, and the resulting musical generation gap still characterizes Japan's musical scene (IASPM-Japan 1991: 11–12).

The typical instrumental accompaniment to enka songs during this period included the saxophone (tenor, and later, soprano), trumpet, electric guitar, electric bass, piano, and strings. The ponderous sounds of Koga merodii enka gave way in the 1970s and 1980s to lighter, brighter lyrics and music that veered closer to "*nyū myūjikkū*" ("new music"), a term newly coined to describe young adult-oriented (as opposed to teen-oriented), Western-influenced popular music. The darker, more melancholy enka never disappeared, however, remaining under the enka umbrella as one of several types.

Heisei Era (1989–Present)

Enka's various reconfigurations are most obvious in its subgenres, although those I encountered most frequently during my fieldwork reveal often arbitrary distinctions. The type of enka considered most "traditional" is called *do-enka* ("real enka" enka; in Osaka dialect, the prefix *do-* means "real, true, the extreme"). Influenced most strongly by *naniwa-bushi*, and therefore displaying a pronounced Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto) regional flavor, *do-enka*

songs focus on themes of *giri-ninjō* (duty vs. human feelings), morality, and hardship. Musically, they follow the *yonanuki* (Japanese pentatonic) scale and employ a slow-to-medium tempo, often including a dramatic spoken *serifu* (recitative) between verses. The singing technique for these songs relies on narrative inflections and extra-musical vocalizations such as grunts and growls, which reflect the influence of *naniwa-bushi*. Men's *do-enka*—songs expressing a male point of view—tend to be more common than women's (although singers of either sex sing these songs). Well-known contemporary *do-enka* singers include Kitajima Saburō, Toba Ichirō, Miyako Harumi, Nakamura Mitsuko, and Sakamoto Fuyumi.

Another important subgenre of enka, this one influenced by the *burūsu* (Japanese version of the blues) and similar melancholy genres, is *mūdo enka* ("mood" enka), which is concerned with the heartbreak of romance. Often written in the *yonanuki* minor scale to express sadness, these songs tend to be slow, pensive ballads. Singers of *mūdo enka* employ traditional vocal techniques, especially *yuri* and *ko-bushi*, the vibratolike ornamentation that can produce an effect much like stylized crying. Women's "mood" enka are more common than men's (although again, these songs are sung by members of both sexes). Representative *mūdo enka* singers include Mori Shin'ichi, Itsuki Hiroshi, Yashiro Aki, and Ishikawa Sayuri.

The last major contemporary enka subgenre is *poppusu-kei enka* ("pops"-style enka), which straddles the line between enka and "new music" or even "pops." Its lyrics tend to be about love and heartbreak, but in a lighter vein. The music tends to be lighter as well, often in a major key with slightly faster tempos and less traditional vocal ornamentation. The singers, who tend to be younger (whether in age or merely in image), include Horiuchi Takao and the Korean singer Kye Unsook.

Of these three major subtypes, *mūdo enka* is the most common, while *do-enka*, the most "traditional" subtype, is the least common, but relative popularity is often a reflection of regional preferences. My study is based on the Tokyo area (Kantō plain), but I have been told that in the more conservative and "traditional" Osaka (Kansai region), *do-enka* is more popular. However, given *do-enka*'s connections to *naniwa-bushi*, which originated in Osaka, it is not surprising that many consider it the embodiment of Kansai culture.

In recent years, enka has remained popular, but it continues to face difficulties. The number of radio and television programs featuring enka has declined since the 1970s, and some critics also claim that the quality of the

songs themselves has declined (Arita 1991). As its fans age, whether today's young people will embrace enka when they too reach their forties remains uncertain. Articles in popular journals and industry publications (e.g., Anonymous 1992c) continue to decry enka's decline in popularity since its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. But even if enka is no longer as popular as it once was, it retains the loyalty of many older Japanese and its hold on certain population groups, such as truck drivers, farmers, fishermen, and *yakuza* (organized crime figures, gangsters).

I prefer to think of enka not as "in decline" but as one part of a more segmented market, a trend that began in the 1970s and still continues. That segment, however small in number terms, commands an inordinate amount of cultural weight because of its position, however disputed, as an expression of the "heart/soul of Japanese."

Moreover, in spite of dwindling record sales, a wide cross-section of the population retains a general knowledge of enka as what I have called "music overheard" (see Prologue). The same young people who profess an aversion to enka can still name its major stars and hum many of its tunes. They might sometimes sing enka in karaoke in a parodic way but at other times sing it sincerely, as a culturally acceptable if highly codified expression of particular emotions. Similarly, avowed nonfans might "hear" enka without really listening to it and sing it without embracing it.

The process of inventing enka invokes what Bourdieu has called "genesis amnesia": "history turned into nature, i.e., denied as such" in its collective forgetting (1977: 78-79). Forgetting the origins of enka has been made easier because of its links to the past: to the politically activist *enkashi* turned *raconteurs* and the *enkashi* who sang and sold popular songs. Furthermore, songs we would in retrospect call enka have been sung for decades, from "Sendō Kouta" (Boatman's Song) of 1921 to "Sake wa Namida ka Tameiki ka" (Is Sake a Teardrop or a Sigh?) of 1931 to "Namida no Renraku-sen" (Ferryboat of Tears) of 1965. In the late 1960s and 1970s, reinventing enka served to situate national culture within a specifically popular musical frame: it could be sung, listened to, overheard, manipulated, even bought and sold, but it remained deeply felt.

CHAPTER THREE

Producing Enka

Lessons in Perseverance

Tokyo, June 24, 1992, 11:35 P.M., approaching the fourth hour of a recording session that has continued without a break. Koguchi Junko (pseudonym), a sixteen-year-old female singer recording her debut song, is in tears, but these are tears of frustration, not longing or sadness. She can't seem to get a six-note passage right. The composer plays it for her on the piano. She tries to sing it back to him and fails. Her mother talks with Junko earnestly, but to no avail. The producer tries, also without success. Yet instead of letting Junko take a real break, everyone pushes ahead, asking her to sing the passage just one more time. As the session drags on, Junko's mother sends Junko's father out to buy everyone canned coffee. It finally ends an hour later. Although neither producer nor composer is fully satisfied, they will splice together something acceptable. There is no sense of achievement, only resignation.

What makes the behind-the-scenes production of enka significant are the ways in which the particular modes and behaviors associated with it reflect, or are said to reflect, certain themes of "traditional" Japan: perseverance, effort, spirit, repetition, and rank. Enka is singled out as different from the rest, an underdog with low sales, a long-lived genre that does not go in for passing trends, a conservative anachronism that in a high-tech industry still relies on face-to-face interaction. Most significant here is the fact that these characteristics become constructed as ways to link enka with notions of "Japan." Enka not only speaks of old-fashioned values, it is also said to

CHAPTER FIVE

*Clichés of Excess**Words, Music, Bodies, and Beyond*

"In a lesson, the teacher will say to do it in a particular way, but as a professional, you have to find your own way to sing the song. If you don't have a bit of kosei [individuality, originality], then you cannot really sing well."

—Female *shinjin* in her twenties

The spectacle of enka is meant to affirm, not to unsettle, and affirmation relies on recurring patterns of expression, emotion, interaction, and movement. Here, familiarity breeds a sense of national intimacy, even as enka's critics challenge its national status. Chapter 4 discussed the patterning of the presentation in live and mediated enka performances. This chapter examines three basic components of the genre itself—the text, the music, and the singer's physical movement—which comprise its *kata*, or patterned forms. Not only do the *kata* provide a language for expressing emotion, they also embody that emotion, sensually wrought and theatrically staged. The practices of enka are grounded in artifice, whose clichés become formulaic expressions of intimacy.

What the clichés of enka deliver is excess. Its melodramatic forms express convention through an overwrought style (cf. Frye 1976), what Kathleen Stewart, in relation to American country and western music, has called "an excess of sensation that overwhelms 'the senses' (or ordinary sensibilities); there is too much pain, too much longing, too many memories" (1993: 222).

This sense of "too much," implicated in what Bourdieu calls "the facile" (1984: 486), stamps enka as a kind of class expression that overflows the emotional containers of middle-class society.

Listening to the plethora of new enka releases every year, few of which will ever become hits, one hears cliché after cliché. The song titles alone—"Sakaba" (A Bar), "Sakaba Hitori" (Alone at a Bar), "Ame Sakaba" (Rainy Night at a Bar), "Ame Yo-zake" (Sake on a Rainy Night), "Sake Kizuna" (Bonds of Sake), "Sake Yo!" (Sake!), "Kokoro-zake" (Sake of the Heart), "Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake), "Tejaku-zake" (Pouring Myself Sake), for example—repeat a limited set of key words, expressions, and themes. Each song also relies on a ghostly recombination of musical forms and phrases drawn from older songs. In a similar way, new singers adopt the images and gestures of their predecessors, not wholly but selectively, conceiving of and structuring the present in relation to the patterns of the past.

Redundancy and cliché are one reason for enka's directness. The music of enka is imprinted bodily (*mimi ni hairu*, entering one's ears): listeners do not necessarily hear one particular song repeatedly, they overhear a whole corpus of songs with overlapping phrases, melodies, and tonal arrangements. The repetitiveness of the genre creates its own kind of "musical habitus" (cf. Bourdieu 1977), a "structured and structuring structure," bodily imprinting a set of musical expectations and familiarities over time. This musical habitus allows the listener to consume the song at a primal level, through direct emotional, even bodily, appeal.¹ The aim of the following analysis, then, is to recognize the patterning or *kata* in enka as critical elements of that appeal. They are not mechanical triggers of emotion but rather the ground where industry, singer, song, performance, and listener interact.

Yet, as the singer quoted at the beginning of this chapter notes, *kata* is never all there is. For a singer to succeed in the professional enka world, *kata*, although necessary, is only the first step. A performer must go beyond *kata* and give the buying public something new, even if within familiar patterns. One has to project some kind of *kosei*, an individualism that is as important to the genre and its consumption as *kata*. The concept of *kosei*, and the degree to which teachers and singers mention it, provides a rejoinder to the patterns discussed in this chapter.

To probe the *kata* of enka, I have analyzed the texts of 115 songs dating from the 1950s through the 1990s as well as the music of 28 of these 115. I chose these songs as representative of consumption in the 1990s (see

Appendix C for a full list).² Despite the sociopolitical changes during that period, I discuss the songs as one corpus, because my purpose is to analyze the contemporary uses to which these still-popular songs are put.

Textual Kata: A Modern Musical Recasting of Waka

Enka songs, which usually consist of three verses of five to eight lines each, follow the poetic features of *waka*, a traditional form of Japanese secular poetry and Japanese folk song.³ Robert Brower lists the following elements as central to *waka*, and they characterize enka song texts as well: 1) lines of five or seven syllables; 2) an emotional lyricism expressing beauty and sadness, particularly through images of nature; 3) content that is occasioned by an event or a natural scene; 4) a xenophobic sense of Japanese linguistic and cultural purity; 5) a simple structure combined with sophisticated rhetoric; and 6) a reliance on conventional patterns we might here call *kata* (1983: 201–2). Enka-as-waka exploits limited resources through word play, imagery, and repetition. Enka may, in fact, be considered a modern commercial recasting of *waka* set to Western instruments and transmitted electronically.

SERIFU: TALKING EMOTIONS

A form particularly common to the traditional do-enka subgenre of enka is the *serifu* (recitative), a brief spoken section between verses similar to the “talking” section of many American country and western songs and often serving the same function. An expression of the song’s most dramatic highlights, the *serifu* makes the greatest demands on the singer’s acting ability.⁴ On stage, the *serifu* invokes a different kind of framing and evokes a separate response. In anticipation, a hush falls on the audience, and the instrumental accompaniment becomes softer or falls altogether silent. A spotlight singles out the performer on stage, who may prepare by shifting his or her bodily presentation. These stage conventions convey the impression that the singer is temporarily dropping the *kata* of song to speak from the heart, although in fact, the *serifu*—written and well rehearsed beforehand—is itself a form of *kata*. A comparison of the same singer’s performances of the same *serifu* (or, to make the point even clearer, of *different* singers’ performances of the same *serifu*) reveals far greater similarities than differences in, for example, breath pauses, speed, and emphasis. Following a particularly moving *serifu* performance, the

audience might applaud or call out the performer’s name, as the singer continues with the song.

The language of the *serifu* is conversational. It abandons the orderly rhythms of the five- and seven-syllable verse form in a flood of words and emotions. In print, most *serifu* suggest the tumbling rush of words and the comparative messiness of speech. A singer is more likely to cry while performing the *serifu* than while singing the verses. The vocal delivery might include exaggerated whispering, begging, pleading, imploring, or plaintive shouting. For example, the last “*Kāchan* [Mama]!!” in the final *serifu* of “*Miso Shiru no Uta*” (Song of Miso Soup) (1980) is delivered as a wail. Some *serifu* actually shift from the third-person narrator to a first-person main character, so that a different voice is heard. In “*Ganpeki no Haha*” (Mother at the Wharf) (1954), for example, the verses, which tell about a mother and her plight, are in the third person, but in the *serifu* section, the mother herself speaks. Other *serifu* may reveal new information, casting a completely different light on the drama in the sung verse. In “*Ringo Oiwake*” (Apple Folk Song/Packhorse Driver’s Song) (1952), for example, a girl sings plaintively of a painful parting (*tsurai wakare*); only in the *serifu*, however, is it revealed that she has been parted from her mother, who died in Tokyo. Only here, that is, is the girl identified as an orphan.⁵ As a narrative device, then, the *serifu* acts as a revelatory tool that conveys peaks of emotion as well as critical details of fact.

KEY WORDS: THE POETICS OF EMOTION

An analysis of the key words—the clichés—common to this version of Japan’s national emotional culture inevitably requires some discussion of their semantic content. Although many would regard the study of meaning in isolation from its particular sociohistorical context or reception as problematic (e.g., Hall 1985, De Certeau 1984, Jenkins 1992), meaning is not purely context-driven, nor is it entirely in the hands of its interpreters. It derives from a broadly agreed-on range of designations, even when these are intended ironically or as a form of resistance. The following discussion addresses some of the main themes enunciated in the words of enka songs (acknowledging, of course, that different audiences may respond to these themes in different ways). Table 5.1 is a list of words that occur in 22 or more (19.1 percent) of the 115 enka songs in the corpus. I take Mita Munesuke’s (1992) historical

Table 5.1
Word Frequency in Song Texts

Word	English	Number of songs	Number of Occurrences
<i>Yume</i>	dream	59	93
<i>Kokoro</i>	heart/soul	57	92
<i>Anata</i>	you	55	68
<i>Sake</i>	rice wine	41	149
<i>Namida</i>	tears	53	68
<i>Naku</i>	cry; weep	45	85
<i>Onna</i>	woman	41	81
<i>Hito</i>	person	41	72
<i>Koi</i>	love	37	70
<i>Hana</i>	flower	35	46
<i>Hitori</i>	person alone	34	49
<i>Mune</i>	chest; heart; breast	35	38
<i>Watashi</i>	I; me	33	63
<i>Ame</i>	rain	30	56
<i>Futari</i>	couple	29	42
<i>Inochi</i>	life	29	37
<i>Saku</i>	bloom	25	31
<i>Kaze</i>	wind	25	30
<i>Otoko</i>	man	24	45
<i>Yuki</i>	snow	24	42
<i>Nomu</i>	to drink	23	36
<i>Fune</i>	boat; ship	22	29
<i>Kanashii</i>	sorrowful; sad	22	28
<i>Shiawase</i>	happy	22	28

study of key words in Japanese popular songs as an important reference and point of departure.⁶ The point of this analysis is not simply to outline the occurrence of these words—here restricted to *dream*, *heart/soul*, and *tears*—in enka songs but to highlight them as the delimited, stereotyped vocabulary of a past poetics that has been reconfigured in the present.

The word that occurs in the largest number of enka songs and is among the highest in frequency is *yume* (dream). In Mita's study, *yume* has the second highest frequency after *namida* (tears). In enka, dreams dwell on past loves, on mother, and on *furusato*. They do not goad the dreamer into action but encapsulate the dreamer in a state of inaction and resignation:

aa yume hagure koi hagure

Ah, my dreams are lost, my love is lost.

"Koi Uta Tsuzuri" (Love Song Spelling) (1989)

Dreaming becomes a state of being cut adrift from the everyday world. Instead of working toward fulfillment, the dreamer waits:

*anata ni yume de aetara ii to
kon'ya mo omou ame no yado*

Wishing I could meet you in my dreams
Is something I ponder tonight in this house
of rain.

itsu-ka soeru to shinjite matte

I wait, believing that someday
I will be with you.

"Nakase Ame" (Rain Which Makes One Cry) (1991)

Waiting becomes an activity unto itself (not unlike training for one's debut).

Dreams occupy a central place in the life of the dreamer. But these are not the dreams encountered through happenstance during a typical night's sleep; they are laden with hopes and promises. In everyday life, opportunities are limited, but in the imagined life of dreams the possibilities for fulfillment are limitless. Through dreams, life is given meaning and made enduring:

*yume o kokoro no tsue ni shite
noboru jinsei tsuzura-zaka*

Dreams have become the staff of my heart
As I climb the winding slope of life.

"Jinsei Tsuzura-zaka" (The Winding Slope of Life) (1991)

Without dreams life would seem pointless and formless; in dreams it gains focus and shape. Dreams carry the dreamer out of the past and into the future:

*kurō o kasaneta namida nara
yume o ashita ni tsumaida mune o*

Since these tears are laden with hardship,
My heart is bound with dreams
of tomorrow.

"Kokoro-zake" (Sake of the Heart) (1991)

A common enka metaphor links *dreams*, *boats*, and *floating*:

yume o tsumi ni no inochi-bune

This boat of life carries our load of dreams.

"Kaji" (Rudder) (1992)

mizu ni nagashita yume ikutsu

My many dreams have drifted away
in the water.

"Koi Momiji" (Autumn Leaves of Love) (1992)

Their association with a floating world (*ukiyo*), with wandering, transitoriness, and rootlessness, imbues dreams with an otherworldly quality that is

separate from but coexistent with the everyday world. This emphasis on a floating world parallels the narrative introduction to the television show *Enka no Hanamichi* (see Chapter 4)

The second most frequently occurring word is *kokoro* (heart/soul). In conjunction with *mune* (breast, chest), which shares some of the meaning of *kokoro* as its physical seat, the concept heart/soul is central to *enka*. It is the core of the self, where truth, purity, and emotion reside. The further one goes from that core, the further removed one is from truth and purity. What one says, even how one looks, becomes a social mask that hides the core of how one feels:

hitori-potchi ga suki da yo to I said that I liked being alone,
itta kokoro no ura de naku But in my heart, I cry.

"Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) (1966)

According to these songs, one's emotions live most truly in one's *kokoro*, and in *enka*, that *kokoro* is always in turmoil—throbbing, yearning, reeling:

kagami no naka de aitai kokoro In the mirror, my heart, which wants to be
ga tokimeku with you, throbs.

"Ma-yonaka no Shawā" (A Shower in the Middle of the Night) (1990)

kokoro mo mune mo boroboro de My spirit, my heart are in tatters

"Shiroi Kaikyō" (White Straits) (1992)

Heartache is a theme also common to many Euro-American popular songs, but the assumption in at least some of those songs is that wounds will heal, that the protagonist will see a brighter day. In *enka*, the pain continues as a condition of life, as of art. Life without pain may be comfortable, but it is not necessarily worth singing about; it is a life lived in pain that inspires song.

And the heart in pain may burn or freeze. In *enka*, the ultimate tragedy is a heart so cold it can no longer feel:

yagate kokoro wa fuyu-geshō Soon my heart will be frozen over
in winter make-up.

"Fuyu-geshō" (Winter Make-up) (1991)

fuyu de nakute mo kokoro wa samui Even if it is not winter, my heart is cold.

"Nakase Ame" (Rain Which Makes One Cry) (1991)

The remedy for a cold heart is human warmth, especially in the form of a lover's embrace.

aa samui mune ni Oh! In my barren heart
namida ga kōru kokoro ga moeru... My tears freeze and my passion burns...
aa daite kudasai Oh! Please embrace me.
aa samui mune o Oh! Please embrace my barren heart.

"Haguresō" (Drifter) (1991)

futari no kokoro atatame-atta To heat up each other's hearts
nukumori ga aa nukumori ga There is warmth, yes warmth,
aru ja nai ka Isn't there?
yasuragu negura o omae no mune ni At last I have found a comforting nest in
your breast.
yatto mitsukete kono ore wa I will not let you go; I draw you close to me.

"Nukumori" (Warmth) (1992)

But the peaceful warmth and the "comforting nest" described in "Nukumori" are fleeting. What remains far longer than warmth itself is the memory of warmth, and the seat of memory is the *kokoro*.

The concept of *kokoro* in *enka* is highly gendered: although men's songs sing of *kokoro*, far more women's songs dwell on the affairs of the heart. "A woman's heart" is such a common phrase, it has become a single word, *onna-gokoro*, which occurs seven times in four of the analyzed songs. For example,

onna-gokoro no yarusenasa... The impossibility of a woman's heart...
onna-gokoro no nokori-bi wa The embers of a woman's heart
moete mi o yaku... Sets my burning self aflame...

"Minato Machi Burūsu" (Harbor Town Blues) (1980)

The parallel expression *otoko-gokoro* (man's heart) occurs only once, and then, only in contrast to *onna-gokoro*:

baka yo baka baka baka na no I was a fool! A fool, a fool!
ne baka deshita What a fool I have been!
onna-gokoro no kizu-ato ni... The scars of a woman's heart...
otoko-gokoro mo shiranai de A man's heart is something I
shiranai de don't understand, don't understand.

"Tejaku-zake" (Pouring Myself Sake) (1992)

A woman's heart loves foolishly. She commits herself to one person only to suffer painful longing thereafter. A man's heart, on the other hand, may or may not love, or love long; romantic liaisons seem to play a lesser role in defining who a man is. Men's songs sing instead of *otoko-michi*, the "path of a man," and of his longing for *furusato* (hometown). This tension between *onna-gokoro* and *otoko-michi* defines the gendering of *enka* (see Chapter 7).

Tears (*namida*) and crying (*naku*) are also among the most common words in enka songs. Singly or together, they appear in 75 of the 115 songs in the corpus (65.2 percent). In Mita's study, *namida* was the most common noun among all songs, and its occurrence increased steadily over time, to a high of 36.7 percent in the postwar years 1946–63 (1992: 31). If tears in enka are a sign of intense emotion, that emotion is rarely happy, since it arises from heartache, parting, and sorrow. To examine the gender dynamics of enka, I will consider several defining criteria: who cries, when, where, why, how, and for how long.

In enka, both men and women cry, but women cry more often and for slightly different reasons. Among the 33 men's songs in the corpus, for example, 15 (45.4 percent) include words for crying and/or tears; among the 76 women's songs, 53 (69.7 percent) include references to crying. Clearly also, men and women cry in different ways. The following examples describe men:

<i>omoi-dasu tabi ni, kono mune ga kyū' to itaku naru n desu. omowazu namida ga dete kuru n da nā.⁷</i>	When I recall [my furusato], my heart aches terribly. Without my realizing it, tears well up in my eyes.
"Miso Shiru no Uta" (Song of Miso Soup) (1980)	
<i>ase to namida o wake-atta ikutose no kibō no michi ni</i>	We shared both sweat and tears For many years on this road of hopes.
"Kita no Daichi" (The Land of the North) (1991)	
<i>... namida to ase koso otoko no roman</i>	... The life of a man is one of sweat and tears.
"Matsuri" (Festival) (1984)	
<i>tsurai namida ya kuyashisa o hara ni osamete niō-dachi</i>	I will store my bitter tears and regrets In my gut, standing firm with feet apart.
"Otoko-michi" (The Path of a Man) (1991)	
<i>kimeta michi nara otoko nara</i>	If you are a man and have decided upon a path,
<i>naku na nurasu na yoru no ame</i>	Then do not cry, do not get drenched in the evening rain.
"Otoko no Jōwa" (A Man's Love Story) (1989)	

Men may sometimes cry for lost loves, but they cry more often for their furusato (including their mother) (see Chapter 7). Crying is part of life's

struggle, and tears intermingle with sweat. More interesting, however, is the discovery that men try not to cry. They hold back their tears, which are obstructions to a higher principle, and suppress their sobs for the sake of their chosen path.

For women, on the other hand, crying is an essential part of *onna-gokoro*, a woman's heart:

<i>nurete setsunai onna no namida</i>	I am drenched with sadness— the tears of a woman.
"Fuyu no Eki" (Winter Train Station) (1993)	
<i>namida namida namida namida namida karete mo kareru na koi yo</i>	Tears, tears, tears, tears! Even if my tears run dry, it won't mean that my love has withered.
"Onna no Defune" (Woman of the Sailing Ship) (1983)	

In addition, women's songs contain far less about public issues, such as furusato and life's path. Instead, women cry copiously over men. Their tears flow because of broken hearts, private affairs, and failed romance.

Mita (1992: 37–38) refers to the "pearling of sadness" in Japanese popular songs dating from the beginning of the Shōwa period (1926) to the present. By this he means that sadness, enveloped in layer on layer of beauty, is valued in and of itself. In enka too, tears aestheticize sadness. One does not simply cry, one waits, allowing sadness to mount until one perfect teardrop (or more) forms and falls.

<i>namida ga porori to koboretara utai-dasu no sa funa-uta o</i>	When a teardrop wells up and spills over, I begin to sing the sailor's song.
"Funa-uta" (Sailor's Song) (1979)	
<i>ochiru namida wa miren desu tsurai kedo</i>	My falling tears are tears of lingering affection, painful as they are.
"Koi Momiji" (Autumn Leaves of Love) (1992)	

Crying includes the welling, pooling, and falling of tears, each one a stage to be cherished. One does not wipe tears away: in enka's aesthetic of hardship, suffering, and pain, they are a mark of beauty.

Tears in enka arise not willfully but "naturally." They appear "in spite of oneself, unaware" (*omowazu ni*):

<i>namida ga omowazu waite kite</i>	My tears are flowing, in spite of myself.
"Ginza no Koi no Monogatari" (Ginza Love Story) (1966)	

shirazu-shirazu ni afureta namida Before I knew it, tears welled up in my eyes.
 "Haha-goyomi" (Calendar of Memories of Mother) (1988)

According to this view, tears tap into that part of a person that is outside human control, an elemental quality of tears that accounts for some of their beauty. In theory, that is, tears spring not from the social face but from the *kokoro/mune*, which does the actual crying:

ano hito koishi to mune ga naku My heart sobs with longing for him.
 "Airenka" (Song of Pity) (1992)

mune ga shin-shin naitemasu My heart overflows with tears.
 "Kita no Yado kara" (From an Inn in the North Country) (1975)

kokoro ga susuri-naite iru My heart sobs a bit.
 "Funa-uta" (Sailor's Song) (1979)

Tears play *honno* (private feelings) to a smile's *tatemaie* (public face). In fact, although the structure of *enka* songs frequently portrays the protagonist in confrontation with the social world, the tears he or she cries are usually "secret tears" ("*sotto namida*"), hidden from the outer world that has caused them. Private tears, of and from the heart, belie the public face:

hito-me o shinonde kakurete naita We cried, hiding from the eyes of the world.
 "Inochi Kurenai" (Crimson Life of Passion) (1986)

Sotto namida no ko-yubi kamu With secret tears, I bit down on my finger.
 "Omoide-zake" (Sake of Memories) (1979)

Like dreams, tears come more often at night than during the day:

aa yanagase no yoru ni naite iru Ah, I cry at night in Yanagase.
 "Yanagase Burūsu" (Blues of Yanagase [in Fukuoka]) (1966)

*aitakute koishikute nakitaku
 naru yoru* I want to see you and love you
 on this night when I want to cry.
 "Yuki-guni" (Snow Country) (1986)

Like dreams, crying is also associated with drinking. Alcohol allows one to let down one's social guard, exposing a more "natural" self; the exposed *kokoro* finds expression in tears. Oftentimes, the drinking and the tears come together in a synesthetic merging of the senses:

sake ga namida o sasō no ka Doesn't sake make you cry?
namida ga fuka-zake nedaru no ka Doesn't crying make you drink?
 "Airenka" (Song of Pity) (1992)

o-choko ni o-sake isugu tabi ni Every time I pour sake in my glass,
namida ga ochiru oto ga suru It sounds like tears falling.
 "Ame Sakaba" (Rainy Night at a Bar) (1988)

yoeba kanashiku naru sake o I drink the sake which makes me sad,
nonde naku no mo koi no tame And cry for the sake of love.
 "Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) (1966)

naite ii yo to iu sake ni To the sake which seemed to say
 that it was all right to cry,
namida bakari o misete iru I showed nothing but tears.
 "Ame Yo-zake" (Sake on a Rainy Night) (1988)

o-sake no shizuku wa This drop of sake
watashi no namida yo Is my teardrop.
 "Yoi-gokoro" (Drunken Heart) (1992)

nagasu namida no tejaku-zake I serve myself sake of flowing tears.
 "Tejaku-zake" (Pouring Myself Sake) (1992)

*namida sakazuki eee sake
 kizuna* My sake cup fills with tears—yes
 —the bonds of sake.
 "Sake Kizuna" (Bonds of Sake) (1993)

The merging of sake and tears makes every drink a cup of sorrow. Sometimes tears are linked to other liquids, such as rain and rivers:

sore to mo namida ga kareru made Will [this late autumn shower] rain
 until my tears run dry,
makura nurashite kazoe-uta Drenching my pillow?
 "Koi Uta Tsuzuri" (Love Song Spelling) (1989)

tomedo naku hoho tsutau A river of tears down my cheeks
namida no ato o Runs endlessly, runs endlessly.
oikakete oikakete
 "Yuki-guni" (Snow Country) (1986)

... *ā kawa mo naku* ... even the river cries.
 "Omoide no Yado" (Inn of Memories) (1992)

<i>umi ni namida no ā guchi bakari</i>	The ocean is filled with nothing but tears of lament.
"Minato Machi Burūsu" (Harbor Town Blues) (1980)	
<i>kokoro ga naki-nurete hitori de naki-nurete</i>	My heart is soaked with tears. Alone, I cry soaked with tears.
"Tokai no Tenshi-tachi" (Angels of the City) (1992)	

In this national discourse of song, one may become drenched in sentiment. Tears provide an emotional "wetness," in sharp contrast to one's unemotional public "dryness."

Enka's emphasis on tears endows even nonhuman, inanimate objects with the ability to cry. The deliberate use of one homonym (*naku*, to cry) for another (*naku*, to cry out, to roar, to shout) calls attention to the tearfulness of the crying. In these songs we hear the wailing of the shamisen, or plucked lute ("naki-jamisen," "Bōkyō Jonkara" [Song of Homesickness] 1985), crying nights ("naku yoru," "Michinoku Yuki Akari" [The Gleam of Snow in the North Hinterlands] 1992), howling north winds ("kita kaze ga naite fuku," "Yagiri no Watashi" [Yagiri Crossing] 1976), even blizzards that, together with the low moaning whistle of a train, sound like sobs ("Kita no Yado Kara" [From an Inn in the North Country] 1975: "fubuki majiri ni kisha no oto / susuri-naku yō ni kikoemasu"). In enka, everything, from shamisen to storms, has the potential to cry; everything possesses a kokoro that can feel pain. This projection of emotion onto objects and elements of nature makes for a kind of "environmental" empathy: the jilted lover does not cry alone but in concert with everything around her.

The crying lasts a long time, until it becomes less a passing condition than a state of being:

<i>naite urande yo ga fukeru</i>	I cry and cry, and the night wears on.
"Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) (1966)	
<i>naite miru wa kon'ya mo namida kareru made</i>	I will cry and cry tonight Until my tears run dry.
"Midare-bana" (Strewn Flowers) (1988)	

If the attachment lingers and the conditions that thwart a successful union remain unchanged, the crying continues, even many years later.

These keywords (dreams, heart/soul, tears) and others form one aspect of the textual kata of enka. In their use of allusion and their predilection for ambiguity, enka songs turn the spotlight on emotion, offering a vocabulary

of redundancy and excess through which emotions are shaped and expressed. This kind of emotive language shares a common past with pre-modern Japanese poetry, waka in particular, whose tears have for centuries gone unwiped. In these songs, the line between states of consciousness is constantly slipping, and the slippage itself is aestheticized. At the same time, nature's seasonal ephemerality becomes the metaphoric topos for human society. The ever-flowing tears of enka have been enculturated as enshrined national idiomatic expression.

Musical Kata: Aural Processes of the Past

Enka is a vocal performance (usually a solo but sometimes a duet) accompanied by Western instruments in some combination of guitar, violin, mandolin, saxophone, clarinet, oboe, and accordion.⁸ Several enka songs also feature a male or female chorus singing wordless vocables. Japanese instruments, such as the *shakuhachi* (end-blown flute), *koto* (zither), *shamisen* (plucked lute), and *taiko* (drum), play a limited role, often serving merely to impart a traditional Japanese "flavor" to the music.

The great majority of enka songs are written in duple meter with a slow to medium tempo (the median tempo of my 115-song corpus is 74 beats per minute). Most enka songs use one of two pentatonic scales, known as *yonanuki* major and *yonanuki* minor (*yonanuki* means "without the fourth and seventh degrees of the scale"), which were popularized through Meiji-era school songs.⁹ Of the 28 song melodies I analyzed, 27 are written in a *yonanuki* scale: 8 in *yonanuki* major, and 19 in *yonanuki* minor. The melodic movement within a song tends to follow the conjunct intervals of the *yonanuki* scales; melodic leaps often signal an emotional highpoint. The melodic range is generally wide and exploits both the upper and lower vocal registers. Among the songs I analyzed, it varied from an octave to a fourteenth (minor), six notes wider than an octave, with a median of an eleventh.¹⁰

I divide musical kata, or patterning, into two types: compositional and performative. Compositional kata (CK) are those patterns that can be recognized by looking at a musical score. Because enka is primarily a vocal genre, however, I examine singing more closely through what I call "performative kata" (PK)—patterning of vocal expression in the actual performance of a song that are discerned only through listening.

Although these performative kata are not indicated in the score, they constitute an important aspect of the musical language of enka. In theory, a

singer who had never heard a particular enka song could sing it “straight” by reading the score note for note as written. The result would be recognizable as enka, but few fans of the genre would savor the listening experience, since it would lack the real flavor (“*aji*”) of enka. A skilled enka performer embellishes the score in codified ways, playing with the rhythm (Okada 1991) and sometimes the notes, and adding appropriate vocal ornaments. Through these embellishments, the performer conveys the sense that the song springs from the heart rather than from a composer’s dictate. The real flavor of enka, then, lies in the conventions of heartfelt expression, and these, at least in theory, are as individual as a person’s *kokoro*. In practice, however, and this is critical to enka’s appeal, even individual expression follows set patterns (see Chapter 3) implying that all hearts (or at least the hearts of all enka fans) beat as one.

Both compositional and performative *kata* are essential to the aural definition of the genre. For example, when composer Sone Yoshiaki “enka-fies” non-enka pop songs during the “Musical Academy” segment of *Enka TV*, a regular feature of this late-night show (see note 8), he basically does two things. First he adds the compositional *kata* of rhythm to the pop song’s chordal accompaniment, as shown in Example 1.¹¹



Rhythmic Chordal Accompaniment

Example 1 (top): Sone Yoshiaki. Example 2 (bottom): Kawai Personal Keyboard.

This accompaniment pattern is in fact almost identical to the one produced by the Kawai Personal Keyboard’s “enka” selection shown in Example 2, which is notable for being so unremarkable (not unlike that of various genres of “middle-of-the-road” Western pop music). It is not particularly significant in other Japanese musics, nor does it serve to propel the music forward

rhythmically. Its blandness, however, serves as a steady ground that highlights the more expressive figure of the melody. But then Sone adds performative *kata*—vocal ornaments and inflections appropriate to enka. He naturalizes his singing and adopts a wide, slow vibrato. Most significantly, he adds *ko-bushi*—quick melodic ornaments—especially on the penultimate notes of a phrase. By Sone’s definition, these performative *kata* are enough to “enka-fy” any pop song.

The reaction of the co-host and the guest singer to Sone’s adaptation is typically one of amazement. When Sone first adds rhythmic chords, the listeners nod cautiously, as if to say, “Yes, this is beginning to sound a little like enka.” However, when Sone begins to sing in the enka style, listeners express surprise bordering on disbelief. They seem totally astonished that something as supposedly foreign to “Japanese sensibilities” (e.g., a rhythm-and-blues song sung by an African American) could be made to sound so indigenously familiar. The performative *kata* of singing clinches Sone’s magic act.

COMPOSITIONAL KATA (CK)

Table 5.2 is a listing of compositional musical *kata* in enka, musical elements that the composers with whom I spoke interpret as conveying particular affective expression. The *yonanuki* minor key (CK-1) is, as mentioned earlier, more prevalent in enka than the *yonanuki* major key (CK-2). Several composers say that CK-1 imparts a sadder quality and is used more often in women’s songs. CK-2, on the other hand, is said to impart a more positive, energetic quality and is used more often in men’s songs. That said, however, I would point out that two of the biggest commercial hits of the early 1990s, “*Kokoro-zake*” (Sake of the Heart; see Chapter 3) and “*Setchūka*” (Flowers in the Snow), both women’s songs, were written in *yonanuki* major, suggesting a possible trend toward enka songs in this key.

The acoustic guitar (including the mandolin) (CK-3), one of the instruments that defined enka in the 1930s *Koga merodii* (see Chapter 2), still does so. Its portability suggests intimacy, as does its soft-to-medium dynamic range. As a plucked instrument, it cannot sustain a pitch for long before it must be plucked again, and the repetition, in its tremolo, gives a fine-grained texture. Textured sound is clearly an important element in enka, one that will reappear in the discussion of performative *kata*.

Table 5.2
Compositional Kata (CK)

CK-1	Yonanuki minor
CK-2	Yonanuki major
CK-3	Guitar/mandolin
CK-4	Saxophone
CK-5	Chorus
CK-6	Low vocal register for female singers
CK-7	"Conversation" with instrument(s)
CK-8	Accented repeated notes (instrumental)
CK-9	Syllabic text setting
CK-10	Even note values
CK-11	Repeated notes (vocal)
CK-12	Melodic ornamentation preceding end of phrase
CK-13	Phrase ending with long held note
CK-14	Leaps

By contrast, the saxophone (CK-4) sustains a pitch as easily as a singer and does so within a more extensive soft-to-loud dynamic range. The instrument is closely associated with *mūdo enka* (mood enka), popularized in the 1960s and the most common subgenre in the 1990s. In its ability to bend pitches, undulate between notes, and swell in volume, the saxophone transmits a kind of aural sensuality. Furthermore, its distinctive timbre can easily cut through a typical stringed instrument background to produce a wail-like sound.

In several enka songs, a male and/or female chorus (CK-5) intermittently sings wordless syllables, becoming a kind of human instrument in the ensemble. In fact, the chorus acts much like an aural *miuchi* (fellow insiders), sanctifying the emotions expressed by the individual singer as those of the in-group/support group as well (cf. Lebra 1992: 108–11).

A significant number of women's enka songs are sung in a low vocal register (CK-6),¹² in sharp contrast to the high-pitched voice that is the socially sanctioned speaking voice for women in Japan. To a certain extent, the more highly pitched the voice, the more socially elevated the person, since pitch indicates levels of politeness as well as social class (cf. Kinsella 1995). One explanation for the low register here may be that in enka, the female protagonists—typically barmaids, mistresses, or jilted lovers—often come from the lower classes, and a low voice indicates their social position.¹³

In many enka songs, one or more instruments (often a guitar) engage in a "conversation" with the singing voice, filling in between sung phrases (CK-7). This kind of voice-instrument dialogue is found in premodern Japanese popular song, in particular in the *ai no te* (light shamisen accompaniment) to narrative genres such as *kiyomoto* (narrative music for kabuki) and *gidayū-bushi* (narrative song in *bunraku* puppet theater). In these musical conversations, the plucked instrument supports the voice with short iterations and figures that resemble Japanese conversational patterns: one person does most of the speaking, while the listener supplies intermittent but essential support in the form of *aizuchi* (listener utterances) (cf. Smith 1983: 76–77; Lebra 1987: 344).¹⁴ In enka, as in the premodern genres, instrumental "aizuchi" comment on and empathetically support the emotions expressed by the singer.

The instrumental accompaniment to some enka songs includes accented repeated notes (CK-8), as shown in Examples 3 and 4. Taken by themselves, these instrumental accents do not necessarily convey any particular meaning, but they are noteworthy as illustrations of the kind of formulaic artifice, bordering on musical triteness, found in enka songwriting.

The image contains two musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'CK-8', shows a melodic line in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features several accented repeated notes, indicated by a greater-than sign (>) above the notes. The bottom staff, also labeled 'CK-8', shows a similar melodic line with accented repeated notes. Both staves have a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

Accented Repeated Notes

Example 3 (top): Excerpt from "Kokoro-zake" (Sake of the Heart).

Example 4 (bottom): Excerpt from "Setchūka" (Flowers in the Snow).

During my fieldwork, teachers, composers, and singers repeatedly reminded me that enka is above all a verbal art form intended to tell a story or convey an emotion. The next series of compositional kata (see Table 5.2) all demonstrate this belief. The text setting of songs is primarily syllabic (CK-9), and the rhythmic note values of these syllabic settings are even (CK-10),

reflecting the rhythms of spoken Japanese. Also emulating speech, the pitch of these even notes tends to be repeated (CK-11) or to occur in a narrow range within one phrase. In addition, after a flurry of repeated notes, a phrase usually comes to a brief rest before circling above and/or below the final note (CK-12) to end on a held note (CK-13). Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate this kind of phrase structure, as well as other compositional kata.¹⁵ To a certain extent, this kind of structuring, which combines repeated notes and melodic ornamentation before the held end note, mirrors Japanese sentence patterns

Example 5 (top): Sung Repeated Notes: Excerpt from "Funa-uta" (Sailor's Song).

Example 6 (bottom): Melodic Ornamentation Preceding End of Phrase: Excerpt from "Hi no Kuni no Onna" (A Woman of Volcanic Land).

whose semantic force is shaped by the end of the sentence rather than the beginning. Here, too, melodic interest focuses on the end of phrases.¹⁶ Although most melodic movement within a yonanuki scale is stepwise, many enka songs include an occasional musical "leap" (CK-14) that often parallels an emotional leap in the text. These leaps occur in conjunction with higher pitches (approached by the leap), rhythmically denser phrases, and/or increased volume.

Examples 7 and 8 illustrate this kind of musical-emotional leap. The text in Example 7 is "A-na-ta [octave leap from C to C] ko-i-shi-i [major sixth leap to an even higher D]" (I long for you). The sentence is the confessional centerpiece of the entire song, but each word also carries its own emotional force. In combination with the musical setting—within an otherwise smooth, stepwise melody, two consecutive spiky leaps to the highest notes of the song, each leap jumping from *jigoe* (chest voice; "natural voice") to *uragoe* (head voice; falsetto), discussed below as PK-1 and PK-2, respectively—the effect is one of an agonized musical scream. This agony is echoed in Example 8. Here also the musical leap evokes a cry on the wordless syllable "A-a" to express an emotion that is beyond words.

Musical-Emotional Leaps

Example 7 (top): Excerpt from "Kita no Yado kara" (From an Inn in the North Country).

Example 8 (bottom): Excerpt from "Tsugaru Kaikyō Fuyu-geshiki" (Winterscape of the Tsugaru Straits).

PERFORMATIVE KATA (PK)

Table 5.3 lists performative musical kata, which, although not notated in the score, are as important to the emotional expression of an enka song as the compositional kata, if not more so.

Table 5.3
Performative Kata (PK)

PK-1	<i>Jigoe</i> (chest voice; "natural" voice)
PK-2	<i>Uragoe</i> (head voice; falsetto)
PK-3	<i>Hanagoe</i> (nasal voice)
PK-4	<i>Rubato</i> (rhythmic playing with melody); lag
PK-5	Gliding between pitches
PK-6	<i>Ko-bushi</i> (ornamentation)
PK-7	<i>Yuri</i> ("vibrato"), including delayed <i>yuri</i>
PK-8	Exploiting voice breaks
PK-9	Extreme and variable dynamics
PK-10	Whisper
PK-11	Sigh, breathy pitch
PK-12	Groan
PK-13	Sobbing pitch
PK-14	Guttural rasp
PK-15	Grunt; pre-pitch and post-pitch
PK-16	Gasp
PK-17	Husky, exaggerated low register
PK-18	Thinned, exaggerated high register
PK-19	"Digging" emphasis at beginning of syllables
PK-20	Prolonged initial consonants
PK-21	Glottal stops before vowels
PK-22	Rolled "r"

One of the most basic elements of singing is the question of which "voice" to use, or rather, where in the body vocal sound resonates. In Japanese vocal theory, the three main voices are *jigoe* (chest voice; "natural" voice; PK-1), *uragoe* (head voice; falsetto; PK-2), and *hanagoe* (nasal voice; PK-3). Of the three, the chest voice (PK-1) and the nasal voice (PK-3) are used most frequently in enka and may be considered characteristic of the genre. The nasal voice in particular is farthest from the Western *bel canto* ideal, and so becomes an even more distinctive cultural marker. However, according to enka composers and voice teachers, the mark of a truly skilled enka singer is the ability to use each of the three voices as the song requires. The choice is determined to a certain extent by pitch (PK-1 vs. PK-2), as shown in the "leap" discussed above, but to a larger extent by expressivity: a singer may sing three same-note pitches in a row, but each will have a different expressive quality in relation to the voice the singer uses. What is important is not whether the singer achieves a smooth, seamless whole but whether he or she

can change timbres, even within the same pitch, to produce a textured sensuality.

An expressive element that can be heard in every enka performance is *rubato* (PK-4), the rhythmic manipulation of the melody. Instead of singing the melody exactly as written, the singer alters the rhythm slightly, speeding up here, slowing down there, to impart a sense of personal expression to the song. Even this personal expressiveness, however, is a codified part of the song's *kata*. In enka, *rubato* is most often achieved through a vocal lag within, rather than between, phrases. A singer may drag a melody throughout a phrase yet preserve the rhythmic unit of the phrase and start again in time with every new phrase, so that each remains a discrete unit of measure. The practice of *rubato* also sets up a degree of tension between the vocal melody and the instrumental accompaniment. While the melody takes rhythmic liberties, the accompaniment keeps strict time, juxtaposing what sounds like individual expression with a controlled ground beat. This kind of opposition between voice and accompaniment is also apparent in other aspects of performative *kata*.

Melodic movement is generally stepwise also, but even within these steps singers glide notes, especially by gliding up to pitches from below (PK-5), effectively dissolving the beat. Instead of attacking a note straight on the beat, the singer begins with either a quick or a prolonged build-up to the pitch and reaches it off the beat, thus creating a sense of vocal lag (*rubato*). The sometimes sliding pitches of the vocal melody contrast with the crisp notes of the instrumental accompaniment.

One of enka's main vocal characteristics is its use of ornamentation, or *ko-bushi* (PK-6). These quick-turn ornaments most often occur on or near the penultimate note of a phrase and build up to the phrase's end. Slower, *ko-bushi*-like musical gestures may be written into the score as part of the melody (as in CK-12), but true *ko-bushi* is a decorative vocal addition. In theory, *ko-bushi* is optional, and some singers use it more than others. In practice, however, as Sone Yoshiaki demonstrates, it is as important to the genre and as essential to a good performance as the composer's melody. Some singers are, in fact, known for their skillful *ko-bushi*.

Another important vocal characteristic of enka is *yuri* (PK-7), a distinctive "swinging" of the voice that is similar to vibrato, but slower and broader than that common to Western song.¹⁷ Within *yuri* there are subpatterns. Sometimes the *yuri* is so slow as to be "rhythmicized"—set to a rhythm of

repeated eighth or sixteenth notes. At other times, it is performed faster, on notes of shorter duration, or delayed on a long, held note. The singer sings the note straight, and only midway through introduces a narrow yuri, which widens as the singer holds the note.¹⁸ The yuri may also serve to adjust a singer's pitch. One top female enka singer is known for her technique of singing a long, held, slightly flattened note, then resolving the tension by gradually rising through yuri to the correct pitch. In the enka context, yuri is an affective tool for building and resolving tension and for expressing the primal emotions associated with a quavering voice, a tremulous sigh, or a racking sob.¹⁹ Yuri gives aural expression to the tears of enka.

In moving from one voice to another, especially between the chest voice (PK-1) and falsetto (PK-2), and shifting vocal register, a singer's voice "breaks" in a slight cracking sound (PK-8). This effect is heard especially in performances by female singers, who sing in falsetto more often than male singers do. This sound effect gives further texture to the singing, further flavor to the expression. The singer manipulates the result, deliberately choosing to use falsetto here and not there, guided in part by the anatomy of the throat and vocal chords and by the conventions of cultural expression.

Some of the best-known enka singers, especially those who perform the "traditional" do-enka, make use of highly variable vocal dynamics (PK-9) going from very soft to very loud not only within a single song but within a single phrase or subphrase. This technique reinforces the notion that enka is a verbal art form more akin to dramatic storytelling than to ear-pleasing song. In some performances I have attended, the enka singer at times sings inaudibly, her head turned away from the microphone, a mode of performance that comes very close to speech-song.

Related to but distinct from the dynamics of volume (PK-9) are the vocal techniques of the whisper (PK-10) and the breathy sigh (PK-11). Female singers use these "soft-touch" kata more often, and in a pleading fashion that suggests feminine vulnerability and passivity (see, for example, the enka lessons in Chapter 3). These techniques, which rely on electronic amplification for their effect, re-create the emotional bond between lovers by suggesting an aurally enhanced one between the singer and the listener(s). The effect is one of staged intimacy.

When pleas fail, the resulting pain is often expressed in groans (PK-12). This is not pain externalized in a loud outcry, but self-reflexive pain internalized in moans. An expressive technique more characteristic of female

singers, it is subtle and sensual, suggesting a mix of pleasure and pain. It effects a kind of aural seduction built upon intimacy, empathy, and vulnerability. A more overt expression of pain is the sobbing quality added at the beginning of a pitch through a brief vocal glide from a higher note (PK-13). Heard in non-Japanese genres, such as American country and western music, this kata of pain is also the more usual provenance of female enka singers. It gives the songs a staged crying sound.

A characteristically male expression of pain is the guttural rasp (PK-14). This grating, scraping vocal sound is almost amusing: the melodic pitch of the song is thrown over in favor of timbre and texture. Another kata more often associated with males is the grunt (PK-15), which usually occurs before a pitch as an extra, nonmelodic utterance, but also at times after a pitch as an emphatic finale. In contrast to the pain-centered kata associated with helplessness and passive resignation, the grunt is associated with strength and active resolve. It is the kind of abdomen-centered sound that requires physical exertion even as it metaphorically expresses such exertion.²⁰

Both male and female singers also sometimes gasp (PK-16) during singing, especially as they approach or reach a musical climax. The gasp conveys a feeling of breathlessness, a build-up of emotional intensity. An inhaled gasp may also precede an exhaled sigh (PK-11) in a natural pairing of breathed expressions.

In singing, both female and male performers may exaggerate low (PK-17) and high (PK-18) extremes of the vocal register to intensify the emotions they convey. In PK-17, the singer exaggerates low notes with a throaty huskiness. In PK-18, the singer exaggerates high notes with a thin, edgy reediness. In both cases, the point is not beauty but sheer artifice: these deliberately applied techniques give the singer greater expressive range.

Enka singers might elaborate in various ways on the sounds within a word to add texture, create another kind of rubato (cf. PK-4), or dramatize the story. For example, some singers give dynamic and melodic emphasis to the beginning of a phrase through what I call "digging" (PK-19). Approached by way of a gliding lower pitch, initial sounds swell before the actual pitch is sung. The use of prolonged initial consonants (PK-20), another kind of elaboration, almost makes one syllable into two (e.g., *no* becomes *n- o-*). Still another inserts glottal stops before vowels (PK-21) or rolled "r" sounds within a word (PK-22) to add texture.²¹ Yet not all vowels are glottalized and not all r's are rolled. The point here is that the singer inserts

these elaborations selectively to emphasize an emotion or to highlight regional or subcultural display. The rolled "r" (PK-22) marks enka's expression as polysemically atmospheric.

Bodily Kata: Gendered Display

Making sense of enka's imaginary also requires attending to the visual display of the enka singer, in particular, to the spectacle of the body.²² As Richard Leppert points out, "The semantic content of music . . . is never solely about its sound. . . . It is especially to be understood as the result of mediations between the ear and the eye" (1993: 18). These mediations become all the more important in commercial music-making, whose success depends on the trade in bodily images. The body—amplified by the power of the stage, captured and reproduced in glossy advertisements, and electronically transmitted via television into homes throughout the nation—somaticizes identities that are at one and the same time gendered, racialized, and nationalized.

THE BODY IN SPACE: POSES

The singer's pose, captured in the cartoon figures and promotional photographs of record albums, is an important aspect of the enka performance. Like the dancers of *nihon buyō* (Japanese classical dance) and kabuki, whose movements have been likened to a series of poses (Brandon 1978: 84–86), enka singers, especially female enka singers, dramatize their presence on stage and the emotional crystallization of their songs through posing—before, during, and after their actual singing. Table 5.4 summarizes the kata or patterns of posing.

In general, the singer's pose and how it is framed are a reflection of gender constructions, which physicalize the dichotomy between *onna-gokoro* (woman's heart) and *otoko-michi* (path of a man). In photographs, female singers tend to be viewed at an acute angle to the camera, their bodies sometimes in a curved or bent position. Raised camera angles and views shot from above allow the viewer to look down at the singer. A female singer's head, especially when isolated in a close-up, is often tilted to one side at about a thirty-degree angle from the frontal plane of her body and slightly lowered. Male singers, on the other hand, tend to be photographed straight on or at only a slight angle. Still shots of male singers are sometimes taken from below, giving an impression of greater physical stature. They are also more likely to be depicted with head straight, or even slightly raised, rather than tilted.

Table 5.4
Male and Female Poses

	Male Kata	Female Kata
HEAD:	Straight	Cocked to one side Tilted to the side and slightly down
EYES:	Direct gaze Frontally directed gaze	Some direct gaze, but if head is down, eyes must be looking up Looking down and to the side
MOUTH:	Little smiling	Some smiling
SHOULDERS:	Straight	Slight twist to form S-shape
ARMS:	Down at sides Elbows out	Down at sides Elbows in Elbows bent
HANDS:	At sides On hips In pockets	Touching collar of kimono Touching front of obi Holding sleeve Clasped together low in front of body Clasped together loosely at chest level, fingertips touching in prayer gesture
FINGERS:	Fist Loosely curved	Fingers held together Loose grouping of fourth and fifth fingers (together and bent in), second and third fingers (together and stretched out), thumb cocked straight up
CHEST:	Upright	Slightly concave
HIPS:	Weight evenly distributed	Weight unevenly distributed
LEGS:	Straight or spread out in shoulder-wide stance	Together
KNEES:	Straight	Bent; slightly knock-kneed
FEET:	Straight or pointing out, heels at 90-degree angle	Pigeon-toed

As might be expected, in the majority of photographs the singer gazes at the camera, addressing and engaging the audience by looking directly at them, selling recordings by locking potential buyers in a mutual gaze.

Depending on the position of her head, the female singer's gaze may be directed slightly upward or shown as downcast. Male singers, on the other hand, are often shown gazing directly at the camera or, if photographed from a low camera angle, looking slightly upward.

Both males and females smile, but their smiles are those of promotional pleasantry rather than sincere emotion: they are controlled and social rather than broad and exuberant. When I spoke to enka fans, they explained that it is acceptable, even admirable, for a male singer to smile very little on stage: it demonstrates a seriousness of intent, a kind of male sincerity. There is a notable gender difference, too, in the cultural interpretation of an unsmiling face. A woman's normal social face is a smiling face. She shows that she is accommodating herself to others, putting their needs before hers, and encouraging a pleasantly sociable atmosphere by providing a visually appealing environment. When a woman does not smile, therefore, the typical interpretation is that something is out of place. She may be sad, lonely, or angry. What is worse, by not smiling she also commits the social sin of imposing her unhappiness on others. When a man does not smile, however, the interpretation is that he is serious, thoughtful, weighing things in his mind. He is sincere.

The kimono-clad female body is often posed in an S-shape—head to one side, shoulders slightly twisted, hips counterbalancing shoulders, knees together and bent, and feet in a distinctive pigeon-toed stance—to emphasize graceful angles and curves rather than straight lines. The female body thus becomes a series of planes, intersecting at subtle angles, which are revealed as the eye moves from one plane to the next (see Chapter 7). In television and video performances, the camera, serving as the viewer's eye, often captures the female singer in kimono in a slow upward pan: from toes to knees to hips to chest to face. In Western dress, the female body still tends toward curves and angles, but it does not in general assume this S-shaped pose. The pose of the male body, by contrast, whether attired in Japanese or Western dress, is one of well-defined parallel lines: shoulders straight, chest upright, weight evenly distributed at the hips, knees unbent. And, unlike the female body, which curves in upon itself trying to take up ever less space, the male body—hands on hips, elbows outspread, legs a shoulder-width apart, feet splayed at a ninety-degree angle—constantly enlarges its claimed space.

The positioning of a singer's hands (including fingers) is also gender-specific. The hands of a female singer can almost be said to "contain" the female body during a performance: they touch each other and the singer's

upper body, fondling the kimono collar or the edge of a sleeve; they are clasped together in her lap or held loosely at chest level in a praying gesture. They also move asymmetrically, one hand gesturing, the other motionless at the singer's side. The fingers of the hand, sometimes the fourth and the little finger, sometimes the index and the middle finger, are often held together, or nearly so.

Male hands, by contrast, appear stiff and graceless during performance. If they are not down at the singer's sides, they are resting on his hips (arms akimbo) or hidden in his pockets. In one common variation, the singer stands, one arm down at his side, the other held stiffly at almost a ninety-degree angle, as if waiting for someone to catch hold of it or cling to it, the hand at waist level in a loose fist. In actuality, however, this is a standard male portrait pose, an alternative to standing at attention, arms down at sides. Male hands might be clenched in a fist or rest loosely curved and separate, but they seldom hold onto anything, whether collar, sleeve, or the other hand.

The male and female poses represented in record advertisements, I would contend, suggest that women are the main dramatic and emotional focus in enka (cf. Gledhill 1987). Both male and female singers are presented according to the stock clichés of portraiture, but female singers are also shown in unusual, dramatic, or colorful poses—vivid bodily representations of onnagokoro. Their faces, lit dramatically, are caught in frame-filling close-ups. Wearing or surrounded by reds, pinks, mauves, oranges, and purples, they are shown crouching, kneeling, or lying down. In one photograph, a woman, her back to the camera, turns, her mauve kimono loose and low around her back, her hair down. In another, a woman in a rose-colored kimono, resting on one arm and with one tabi-clad foot showing, crouches against a swirled background of rust and green and stares up at the camera.

These and other, similar depictions visually situate women at the heart of the drama, the emotional ground zero. In contrast to men's stillness and steadiness, they are eye-catching, volatile, heart-rending. In enka, the female body is an object of beauty specifically tied to emotional turmoil. Women carry the burden of the genre's tears.

THE BODY IN SPACE AND TIME: MOVEMENTS AND GESTURES

Photographs and drawings capture a posing body that in performance becomes a live spectacle in space and time. Although a complete kinesic analysis of the movement patterns in enka performances is beyond the scope of

this study, the following overview of gestures is intended to illustrate and emphasize their patterning. My focus is on repeated movements, whether those of one singer singing one particular song or those of various singers singing different songs. The implication is that these movements are not spontaneous but rather patterned, predetermined, and sometimes even choreographed.

One group of gestures involves the use of the back, echoing songs in which the back becomes a canvas for conveying emotion.

dakareru sono tabi ni senaka This time when you held me,
ga kanashikute my back felt so lonely.

"Kokoro Kōrasete" (Freeze Our Hearts) (1993)

onna no senaka no samishisa The loneliness of a woman seen
ga from behind
naite naite ta As she cried and cried
wasurenai Is something I will not forget.

"Sakaba" (A Bar) (1990)

In a live performance, the singer's back can become an eloquent means of expression. Although on the Western stage it is a cardinal rule that one does not turn one's back to the audience, on the enka stage a performer may do so deliberately as an expressive gesture. Enka performers and audiences are well aware of the subtle emotional message conveyed by a turned back.²³ In their view, the back may reveal tension, disappointment, rejection, or elation more truthfully than the face (cf. Lebra 1992: 106–8). As the singer Itsuki Hiroshi comments, "In a way, it [i.e., strength as well as tenderness] is expressed by a man's back. You have to be most sexy when you turn around and show your back [on stage]" (quoted in Wilson 1995: 49). What is interesting about Itsuki's statement is the expression "show your back." The back, even fully clothed, is at once sensuous and expressive.

In enka performances, codified gestures that fall into overlapping categories—female vs. male singer/Japanese vs. Western dress—demonstrate qualitative differences. Female singers in kimono, for example, tend to use their bodies in a more dancelike manner, and with more aestheticized elements of control, energy flow, and grace, than male singers in Western dress. The contrast between the aestheticized movements of female singers and the physical restraint of male singers suggests a gendered approach to both quality (what men and women do on stage) and quantity (where, on the "slide-rule" of performer-audience interaction, one performs; see Chapter 4).

Table 5.5

Female Enka Singer's Patterned Body Movements

HEAD:	Singing with face turned away from camera Singing with face turned into shoulder, head slightly lowered Fast or slow shaking of head at moments of emotional intensity Small movement of the head from side to side, led by the jaw, like a doll with its head on a spring
EYES:	Turned upward Turned downward Closed during moments of emotional intensity
MOUTH:	Small, random movements of mouth and lips, as if preparing to speak
SHOULDERS:	Shrugging of shoulders, head turned upward, chest sunken in
ARMS:	Reaching forward at chest level (gesture of longing) Slowly lowered from raised position while undulating wrist and fingers (flame gesture)
HANDS:	Holding microphone with both hands at upper chest level Clenching end of sleeve with same hand (e.g., right sleeve with right hand) Clenched fist, sometimes with light punching in air or at obi-level for emphasis Touching hand to cheek Resting hand on top of obi
FINGERS:	Rhythmic flicking of fingers to emphasize particular beats or ends of phrases
LEGS/KNEES:	Bending of knees, twisting of torso into S-shape Sudden slight bending of knees, as if they are buckling Slight bouncing, knees bent
FEET:	Asymmetric pigeon-toed stance, including small kick to the side and back with inward-turned foot Asymmetric pigeon-toed stance, with the inward-turned foot on tiptoe, bearing no weight
WHOLE BODY:	Turning around completely, back to audience, contrasted with turning to face audience (also performed by males, but more common among females) Tense to the point of quivering, in contrast to drooping limply between verses or collapsing into a bow at the end of the song

Table 5.5 lists some of the patterned gestures and body movements used by female enka singers (the order within each category is from more frequent to less frequent). In most instances, the list does not include gestures discussed previously under poses or those related directly to producing sound (e.g., the jaw movement necessary to produce a wide vibrato or hand clapping). These female body movements express two main themes: emotional intensity and emotional intimacy. Female singers mark peaks of emotion by shaking their head, closing their eyes, making small soundless motions with their mouth and lips, flicking their fingers, buckling their knees in a slumping posture, and tensing and untensing their body. One pattern involves shrugging the shoulders, raising the chin, and caving in the chest to suggest a body shrinking in pain. Other, smaller movements suggest a quivering intensity. In portraying intimacy, female singers occasionally lower their head or turn away from the audience ("showing one's back"), as if they sing within a private space defined by their shoulder. Their eyes gaze above or below the audience, or even into the distance, conveying a sense of detached intimacy, as if audience members are eavesdropping on the singer singing to herself.

One gesture that is ubiquitous among female singers but less common among male singers is what I call the "gesture of longing": the singer extends an arm out in front of her body slowly, at chest level, often as she is singing the long-held note at the end of a verse. Through her outstretched arm and her voice, the singer expresses her yearning for her absent lover. In an exaggerated version, the singer's chest, chin, and hips follow her outstretched arm, a gesture that throws her body off balance, in tune with her emotional state. Other gestures serve for the most part as rhythmic time-keepers, accentuating a particular beat or the end of a phrase. This rhythmic emphasis increases the emotional intensity, infusing the female body with a sense of dramatic tension.

Both male and female enka singers cry, but female singers do so with greater frequency. Tears, a hallmark of sincerity, and on stage one of the most effective and primal kata, testify to the singer's intense engagement with the song. In a kind of "emotional contagion" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson 1994), the singer's tears also induce tears in audience members, who have come to empathize and perhaps to experience their own emotional catharsis. As a singer performs on stage, the audience may watch at a distance and with a certain degree of detachment, but when audience members sense

that the singer is actually crying, her tears draw them into the drama, erasing the divide between spectator and participant. Tears transform the stage into a platform of authenticity.

Like other body movements, crying also has its own kata. The most unabashed example is that of Misora Hibari, the late (but still reigning) "queen of enka" and to my mind the "queen of tears." Misora's tears are profuse, unchecked and unwiped. As the camera follows her in close-up during a performance, her eyes fill with tears that well, pool, and finally spill over. The viewer is caught in the moment's dramatic tension, some of which dissipates once the first tear falls. The unsettling question, Where will her tears flow?—down her cheek? along her jawline to her neck? off her face?—remains. The crying of other singers is not as profuse or overt. A common pattern is what might actually be called "near-crying": as the singer looks up, tears well in her eyes but are not allowed to fall. Instead, she withdraws, sometimes biting her trembling lower lip, the song, or at least this episode of near-crying, ended.

In certain cases, the audience is aware of the singer's tears because of the gulping that has preceded them. In others, the singer waits until she is bowing to audience applause to cry: the audience discovers her tears only when she wipes them away with her hand. In both cases, the audience's awareness of the performer's crying enhances its perception of her. This ultimate embodiment of emotion becomes proof of her merit, involvement, and vulnerability. As she reaches within, to a personal reservoir of pain and tears, she also reaches out to tap that common reservoir within members of the audience. Tears, and the suffering they display, become an irresistible link between singer and audience.

In enka performances, posing, gesturing, and crying serve to further dichotomize the human body, already differentiated by sex, according to the culture's constructions of gender. The body becomes a canvas upon which the kata of sexuality are painted in giant strokes. Embodiment becomes engenderment. At the same time, and with equally grave results, the body parades emotion even as it evokes emotion: it becomes the medium through which pain, longing, and resignation are conveyed, eliciting in turn an empathic, cathartic response in audience members. In enka, this "song of Japan," sexuality and emotion come together in a visual display made comprehensible by a shared sense of national desire.

Brian Moeran argues that the construction of femaleness in Japan's glossy monthly women's magazines is unrelated to sexuality (1995: 117), by which,

however, he means overt depictions of sexuality, such as an open mouth and exposed breasts and thighs. Yet sexuality is revealed not only through mere embodiment; it is also revealed through highly enculturated modes of expression. I would argue that the construction of Japanese femaleness in enka is entirely about sexuality on its own terms. Here, covertness is essential to desire. Just as social interaction encompasses the well-practiced, controlled public face, so desire (male) is constructed from a public mastery of modesty and vulnerability (female). Modesty plays upon sexual subtlety in a strand of hair or a wayward tear.

This kind of desire is in some ways the direct opposite of what Anne Allison (1996: xv) has dubbed "the infantilization of female sex objects," exemplified in the "Lolita-complex"/schoolgirl fetishes found in *manga* (Japanese comics), pornography, and other forms of popular culture (Schodt 1996: 37; Clammer 1995; cf. Kinsella 1995). Enka is "mature," heterosexual desire, racialized as "Japanese" by this "song of Japan." And yet, both "Lolita-desire" and "enka-desire" share a common definition of femaleness that is based on passivity, helplessness, and vulnerability. In enka, female subjectivity is physicalized in the body's stereotyped performance of pain and longing. Desire becomes a volatile commodity "in heat" for the nation, the culture, the race. The connections between the body, the past, and the nation may be complex, but that complexity only serves to tie them more firmly together.

Beyond Kata: Cliché and Its Limits

Although enka is defined in part by the written score (notes, tempo, words, and so on), it is defined in even greater part by what happens in performance. Musically, the instrumental accompaniment easily comes across as trite and clichéd. It proceeds in an even rhythm and according to formulaic phrases that on electronic keyboards are actually preprogrammed. The songs themselves are also highly clichéd, yet their familiarity is seen as a positive quality that makes deeper, more direct communication possible. The singer's performance, in contrast, is dramatic and emotional, bending rhythms and melodies, adding colorful vocal texture, and breaking down in the near sobs of emotional suffering. The staid background music foregrounds the dramatic vocal theatrics. Yet what may surprise those unfamiliar with enka is that many of these vocal techniques of gendered emotional

expression are as unspontaneous and formulaic as the instrumental accompaniment.

In the enka world, bodies and voices communicate through a language of patterning. In fact, the formulaic nature of kata allows what might almost be considered anomalies to proliferate: young performers sing of hard life experience; singers of Korean ancestry perform songs considered to be "the heart/soul of Japan"; female singers perform men's songs (and vice versa). These crossovers—of age, ethnicity, and gender—are made plausible by the kata of performance: the elements of performance have been broken down into well-rehearsed units of expression, from a breathy whisper to an outstretched arm.

Actual performances by top singers, however, demonstrate the power of *kosei* (individuality, originality), of going beyond the conventions. In other words, what puts singers at the top of the field and keeps them there is that they extend the genre even while staying within it, doing what has been done before but also, in subtle ways, what has not been done before. Originality and creativity, based firmly in kata training, are what take one to the apex of the singer hierarchy. To the untrained ear, the difference may be nearly undetectable, but to one more experienced, it is resounding.

Although kata is still the basic language of emotional expression in enka performance, breaking out of the conventions—standing apart even while standing within—is what makes a star a star. One must find and develop one's *kosei*, even if the goal is a recording industry product. Most singers start out singing safely, following kata closely, as they have been trained to do. But even record company scouts are looking for that little bit of something extra in a new singer. As a singer rises, she or he breaks out little by little, although never forsaking kata completely. True mastery of kata means mastery *over* kata. Those at the top convey the impression that no one can sing quite like them: their kata is not only distinctive, it is elusive.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Enka as Engendered Longing
 Romance, *Furusato*, "Japan"

MALE: *Furusato wa o-mae* You are my *furusato*.
 FEMALE: *Furusato wa anata* You are my *furusato*.

"*Furusato*" (Hometown) (1990)

Enka constructs a world of longing and suffering on a personal level that extends to the cultural and national levels. The two main arenas of suffering, romance and *furusato* (hometown), are defined along gender lines: broken-hearted romance for women (onna-gokoro/a woman's heart) and pining for *furusato* for men (part of otoko-michi/the path of a man). The separation between the two, however, is far from neat, as the lyrics from the song "Furusato" illustrate. *Furusato* is invoked within the context of romance for the power of its links to primacy, origins, and rootedness. One may therefore have a "'furusato' of emotions" or a lover who is one's "furusato." Moreover, there is considerable overlap between the gendering of the song and its focus (for example, men's songs of romance or women's songs of *furusato*). What ties the spheres of (women's) romance and (men's) *furusato* together is a sense of longing. Words such as *koishii* (long for, miss) and *akogare* (longing) focus the imaginary on yearning. A sense of longing infuses enka's gendered world, from the constructions of femaleness and maleness (whose kata allow for cross-gendering on stage), to the patterning of romance, to the invocation of *furusato*, and finally to this version of Japan's "Japan."

Romancing the Nation

The individual broken hearts of enka become collective broken hearts in the larger context of this "song of Japan" (*nihon no uta*). It matters little that others elsewhere sing songs like these, or that these songs have found a wide audience in other Asian countries. What matters is that in contemporary Japan, through deliberate processes of collective remembering and forgetting, aided by state institutions such as NHK, these songs have been infused with the aura of national culture. Here the suffering nation becomes the victim nation, and its stories transform that pain into moral, spiritual, and, ultimately, national virtue.

CONSTRUCTING FEMALENESS

In enka, "femaleness" follows the predictable lines of beauty, passivity, and longing. Female songwriters, as noted earlier, are few,¹ although significantly more women than men occupy the enka stage and concert hall. The genre molds female singers, songs, and subjectivities in its own male-dominant image. As a result, the discourse and performance of femaleness are determined by the men who control the genre rather than by the women who people it.

In enka, a woman is defined primarily by onna-gokoro (woman's heart): she is old-fashioned, out of step with modern times, and (traditionally) virtuous to the point of ridicule:

furui onna to warewareyō to People may laugh at me, an old-fashioned woman,
hada wa dare ni mo yurusanai But I will not surrender my body to anyone else [but you, who have died].

"*Sake Kizuna*" (Bonds of Sake) (1993)

Her heart also makes her foolishly stubborn in love.

onna-gokoro no oroka yue It is all because of the foolishness of a woman's heart.

"*Taki no Shiraito*" [woman's stage name] (1988)

baka ne baka na onna ne Foolish, huh? I was a foolish woman, wasn't I?

iji o hatteta watashi I was foolishly stubborn.

"*Yuki-guni*" (Snow Country) (1986)

The inner life of her heart contrasts with her outer, physical beauty. Enka songs frequently remark on the transience of female beauty:

<i>inochi o moyasu kisetsu wa mijikai mashite onna no kirei na toki wa</i>	The season in which one's life burns brightly is short; Much shorter is the time when a woman is beautiful.
--	--

"Higurashi" (Cicada) (1993)

<i>onna no sakari wa atto iu ma desu</i>	A woman's prime is gone before you know it
--	---

"Hanamachi no Haha" (Flower Town [Geisha Quarters] Mother) (1973)

While her heart remains loyal, even foolishly so, her beauty (and thus her desirability) fades quickly.

A woman is, by definition, one who is socially embedded as daughter, lover, wife, mother. She is always part of a larger human unit. One of the most searing images, therefore, is that of "onna hitori," a woman alone, socially adrift, untethered by the bonds of *ryōsai-kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), one of modern Japan's primary historicized female models. Of course, the woman is alone not by choice, and in no other way does she parade her failure more symbolically than by drinking alone. Like eating, drinking (especially alcohol) is supposed to be a social activity, whose etiquette requires that one pour another's drink or be served by another. Drinking alone, especially *tejaku-zake* (pouring oneself a drink of sake), thus takes on poignant significance as a lonely act. When the solitary drinker is a woman, its social transgressiveness increases:

<i>inaka-zukuri no izakaya de onna hitori no shinobi-ame</i>	At this rustic-looking tavern I [a woman] sit alone, drinking furtively.
--	---

"Ame Sakaba" (Rainy Night at a Bar) (1988)

<i>onna hitori no sabishisa ni sugaru yo-ake no tejaku-zake</i>	I cling to the loneliness of a woman all by herself; As dawn breaks, and I pour myself some sake.
---	--

"Tejaku-zake" (Pouring Myself Some Sake) (1992)

In these songs, woman is constructed as a victim of men's actions; the result is "the loneliness of a woman." Her position contrasts markedly with that portrayed in some American country and western songs, especially

those written by women, which, through their anger and defiance, even threat of retaliation, proclaim an end to victimhood and mistreatment by men. The female enka songs I analyzed, however, express little anger or defiance and threaten no retaliation. Among these songs, the strongest expression of assertiveness appeared in "Sasori-za no Onna" (Scorpio Woman), a female song sung by a male singer (discussed in "Crossing Gender Lines" later in this chapter). The larger kata of "femaleness" is neatly summed up in the following lines:

<i>moete koboreru onna no nasake . . . nurete setsunai onna no namida . . . tsuite ikenai onna no kokoro</i>	I burn with desire and fall— the compassion of a woman . . . I am drenched with sadness— the tears of a woman . . . I cannot be with the one I love— the heart of a woman.
--	---

"Fuyu no Eki" (Winter Train Station) (1993)

"Compassion," "tears," "heart"—these define the enka woman, but they are themselves defined by the men who cast her as a victim of her own heart and the men she loves.

The kata of "femaleness" is also expressed in the musical patterning of enka. As noted earlier, composers of enka report that women's songs use a minor key more often than men's songs. Although I have not analyzed a large enough sample to be able to confirm this assertion, it is significant that composers themselves think in these terms, or at least say they do. Women's songs also tend to be slightly slower and less rhythmically driven than men's songs. A female singer is more likely to manipulate her voice to impart a sense of intimacy or pain, using techniques such as the whisper (PK-10), the sigh (PK-11), the groan (PK-12), and the sob (PK-13) (see Chapter 5). The female voice more readily exploits a break in the vocal register (PK-8), taking on a sobbing quality.

The intimacy conveyed through the female voice is matched by the intimacy expressed through bodily kata. In wearing the kimono, the female singer becomes emblematic of "traditional Japan." Although the kimono and its aesthetic restrict her outward movement and focus her attention inward, she might occasionally stretch out an arm in a gesture of longing. More than male singers, she "dances" throughout her performance, her movements small (sometimes barely perceptible beneath her kimono), graceful, curving, and artfully controlled—not action as much as aestheticized inaction.

Stereotypical stage effects reinforce this version of "femaleness." Foremost among these special effects is simulated fog, which is used most often during performances by female singers. The fog seeps onto the darkened stage, sometimes unrolling slowly like a carpet, sometimes swirling in a cloud around the feet of the spotlighted figure to create a dreamlike setting.

In televised performances, the camerawork, especially in shots of female singers, enhances this dreamlike quality. Although it is often static—a stationary camera captures the performer from the front—the camerawork sometimes aids in evoking a subjective world of fantasy. Female singers in particular are shot in extreme close-up and from the side rather than the front. One unusual camera angle is the pan from the rear to one side, taking in part of the shoulder, the nape of the neck, the tip of one ear, and the lower half of the face, as if the viewer were looking over the singer's shoulder from the intimate vantage point of a lover. Another unusual shot, one also more often used in photographing female singers, is the close-up of the singer looking off into the distance at an angle to the camera. What makes this so unusual is her position within the shot, gazing off beyond the edge of the frame—at what, we do not know. Her gaze finds no resolution.

A final noteworthy camera shot, one that I have seen used only with female singers in kimono, is the slow vertical pan from a tabi-clad foot to the top of a carefully coiffed head. This long pan, which subjects the objectified surface of the singer to a stereotypical "once-over," is electronically transmitted to thousands of television viewers. To a certain extent, the object of the gaze is the kimono, a wash of color and design: the eye follows the folds and the pattern of the fabric as the lens traverses the female body. The person encased within the kimono, however, is objectified by the camera's movement. Viewed in an angled close-up or as a full-length canvas, the singer subject to such scrutiny—and her pain—becomes an exquisite object of art.

CONSTRUCTING MALENESS

Enka songs about men, as noted earlier, speak of *otoko-michi* (the path of a man). The essence of being a man is committing oneself to a single path or dream and following it "to the end." In "Otoko-michi" (The Path of a Man), these lessons are passed down from father to son:

*ichi-do kokoro ni kizanda
yume wa*

Once I etch a dream in my
heart,

*nani ga nan demo yari tōsu
tsurai namida ya kuyashisa o*

I will pursue it, no matter what.
I will store my bitter tears
and regrets

hara ni osamete niō-dachi

In my gut, standing firm
with feet apart.

*taete miseru ga
taete miseru ga otoko-michi*

To endure and show one's face,
To endure and show one's face
is the path of a man.

*giri to ninjō no furi-wake
nimotsu
se-ou otoko no mune no uchi
oyaji anta no kuchi-guse o
kokoro ni himete doko made mo
yume o sakasu ga
yume o sakasu ga ore no michi*

"Within the heart of a man
lies the double burden
Of giri [duty] and ninjō [feelings]."
Father, I kept your favorite sayings
Concealed in my heart wherever I went.
The flowering of my dream,
The flowering of my dream is
this path of mine.

"Otoko-michi" (The Path of a Man) (1991)

Whereas women's faces and bodies display high emotion, those of men display stoicism. Even when men feel as deeply as women, songs like these imply that their feelings must be "stored" (in the words of the song), or kept inside, rather than exhibited. In fact, "storing" one's emotions is considered a sign of masculine strength, just as emotional display is considered a feminine art. While women's songs dwell on the private emotions of romance, men's songs tend to focus on more public emotions—the conflict between duty and human feelings (*giri-ninjō*) or longing for *furusato*.

In *enka*, a man stands alone, not, like a woman, in loneliness, but in spiritual strength, which helps him to endure:

*yaru to kimetara otoko ja nai
ka*

I am a man, therefore I will
do what I have set my mind to
do.

*hito ga waratte mo tada
hito-suji ni
ikiru zo jinsei o
moero moero moero
(fuēmu furēmu furēmu)
honō no yō ni
ai ai ai raiku enka . . .
kaketa otoko no michi naraba*

Even if people laugh, I will
earnestly
Live my life!
Let us burn, burn, burn!
(Flame, flame, flame)
Like a flame!
I, I, I like enka! . . .
If this is the road of a man

kui wa nai who wagered his life,
Then I have no regrets.
"Honō" (Flame) (1992)

This song's premise lies in the poetics of "I am a man, therefore. . . ." A man's spiritual strength and zeal come "naturally," as if they are a by-product of male hormones. The enka male antihero rises up committed to his path, even in the face of social censure. Passion, without regret, paves *otoko-michi* (here, *otoko no michi*, the "burning"). The song expresses this passion in part through repetition, including a phrase of English (ai ai ai raiku enka /I, I, I like enka), which is somewhat unusual for the genre.² Curiously, although enka is directly implicated, the actual connection between song and passion is not made clear.

Not all constructions of "maleness" in enka display this public virility. As several song lyrics attest, "to be strong is not all there is to being a man" (e.g., "Honō" [Flame], 1992; "Otoko no Jōwa" [A Man's Love Story], 1989; "Sen-shū Harukikō," [old name for Osaka Harbor], 1992). In love, a man's heart weeps just as a woman's does.

*sake ga furaseto otoko no
namida* The sake makes my tears flow—
the tears of a man.
"Suika" (Drunken Song) (1990)

This show of heart, of private vulnerability, infuses the construction of "maleness" with greater complexity. A man is one who may be outwardly strong but inwardly vulnerable to love and heartbreak.

A man learns the lessons of attachment at his mother's knee, but he also learns them through homosocial bonds—father to son, brother to brother, buddy to buddy. Far more often than women's songs, men's songs express deep attachments between persons of the same sex. Just as the song "Otoko-michi" (The Path of a Man) tells of the lessons of life learned from a father, the following song tells of blood-based affective ties between brothers and between father and son:

*kyōdai-bune wa oyaji no
katami* This ship of brothers is the
pride of our father.
*kata wa furui ga shike ni wa
tsuyoi . . .* It may be old, but in a storm,
it is strong . . .
*keredomo oki no ryōba ni
tsukeba* When we arrive at the fishing
grounds of the open seas,

*yake ni ki no au kyōdai-
kamome* We become brother gulls who
pull together fiercely.
chikara awasete yo ami o We join forces and hoist our
nets. . . .
maki-ageru. . . .
yo oyaji It is hot, this blood of ours,
passed down from our father.
yuzuri da ze

"Kyōdai-bune" (Ship of Brothers) (1982)

A father passes down to his sons not only a boat but a way of life based on brotherly interdependence and passion. This way of life allows father and sons to withstand the natural elements and to harness them to make a living.

Another kind of homosociality exists between friends:

. . . naniwa-machi . . . In this town of Naniwa [Osaka],
hoshi no kazu hodo aru sono Where there are as many people
naka no as there are stars,
tatta futari ga shiri-atte The two of us became friends,
otoko-dōshi no sake o kumu And now drink together as
buddies.³

"Otoko-bore" (Admiration Between Men) (1992)

Men "bare their souls" to each other through drink; many men's songs address the general public or other men. Most women's songs, in contrast, are almost soliloquies addressed to oneself or to an absent lover.

Constructions of "maleness" emphasizing positive action, strength, and inner drive are given distinctive musical expression. The compositional musical kata of maleness (see Chapter 5) are reputed to make more frequent use of major keys and faster tempos, and to demonstrate a greater sense of rhythmic drive. Men's performative kata include such vocal techniques as the guttural rasp (PK-14), the grunt (PK-15), and the nonsemantic shout. These sometimes explosive utterances convey an impression of energy released, not controlled.

Physically, male singers hold a different position on the "slide-rule" of performer-audience interaction (see Chapter 4) than female singers. They are less aestheticized, less theatrical, less performative. Some simply stand on stage facing the audience and sing (see Chapter 5). Others move rhythmically to the music, although no more so than crooners in the United States and elsewhere, their movements conveying energy but not necessarily grace.

Although men feel and cry, most of the drama, tension, and tear-filled emotion rests with women.

CROSSING GENDER LINES

The kata of gender provides a language that makes crossing the lines of gender on the enka stage not only possible but quite reasonable. If “femaleness” and “maleness” are constructs built upon kata, then theoretically, anyone can perform them. “Crossing” in enka—whether this refers to a female singing a man’s song or to a male fully costumed as a woman—shows kata as sheer performance, unburdened by the biological housing of the male or female body.⁴ And far from being some kind of fringe or avant-garde stage presentation, such crossing is a part of national culture.⁵

The simplest form of crossing is through song. Men’s songs and women’s songs are differentiated by language and by narrative. In enka, male and female singers may sing both types with lyrics unchanged. The song is itself a kind of kata that is separate from the singer. It is important to note, however, that the question of who sings which song is not completely open to chance. In other words, it is not all a matter of kata. If it were, then half of men’s songs would be sung by females, and half by males. Instead, the majority of men’s songs are sung by male singers. But it is also true that a Japanese audience does not consider it unusual for a female singer to sing a man’s song or for a male singer to sing a woman’s song.

“Funa-uta” (Sailor’s Song), for example, is a man’s song made famous by Yashiro Aki, a female singer known for performing in a full, floor-length evening gown and a sparkling tiara.

<i>o-sake wa nurume no kan ga ii</i>	I prefer my sake warmed up.
<i>sakana wa abutta ika de ii</i>	I prefer grilled squid for a chaser.
<i>onna wa mukuchi na hito ga ii</i>	I prefer women who don’t talk too much.
<i>akari wa bon-yari tomorya ii</i>	I prefer lights that are dim.
<i>shimi-jimi nomeba shimi-jimi to</i>	If I drink to the core, then
<i>omoide dake ga yukisugiru</i>	Only those memories from the core will come flooding back.
<i>namida ga porori to koboretara</i>	When my tears well up and spill over,
<i>utai-dasu no sa funa-uta o</i>	I begin to sing the sailor’s song.

<i>oki no kamome ni fuka-zake</i>	Let the seagulls get drunk so
<i>sasete yo</i>	that
<i>itoshi ano ko to yo asane</i>	I can sleep late in the
<i>suru dancho ne</i>	morning with my sweet maiden.

“Funa-uta” (Sailor’s Song) (1979)

During her performance, Yashiro gives no hint in her dress, make-up, gestures, or vocal intonation that this is a man’s song. She sings it as she would any love song, in a straightforward manner.

Male singers also sing women’s songs, lyrics unchanged, and for some, this kind of crossing has become the basis of a singing career. Mori Shin’ichi (see Chapter 6), for example, is known as “a woman’s man” because he sings both women’s songs (i.e., crossed) and songs about mother (i.e., uncrossed). When he performs, he usually wears a tuxedo, giving no physical hint of the crossed nature of some of his performances. His fans, primarily female, say that he understands women’s feelings especially well, although it is unclear whether this empathy is innate or whether he learned it from the songs.

A few female enka singers extend “crossing” beyond song to gesture and singing style. A case in point is Sakamoto Fuyumi (see Chapter 3), whose manager has deliberately contrived a cross-gendered image for her. The following is an excerpt from her debut man’s song:⁶

<i>guchi wa iu-mai genkai sodachi</i>	I am not one to complain;
	I was raised on the rough seas
	of Genkai.
<i>otoko inochi o nasake ni kakete</i>	I put all my manly passion
	into
<i>tataku taiko no abare-uchi</i>	The wild beating of the drum.
<i>sake to kenka wa ato e wa</i>	No one can match me when it
<i>hikanu</i>	comes to drinking sake or
	fighting.

“Abare-daiko” (Wild Drums) (1987)

Sakamoto’s performance is partially mimetic. She adopts some men’s kata, using drum-beating gestures, clenched fists, and extra-musical grunts. Yet in her hair, clothing (*furisode*, the long-sleeved kimono of an unmarried girl), make-up, and gestural grace she retains women’s kata. Her expressions of masculinity are highly contained and stylized, even feminized. Sakamoto always appears *onmarashii* (feminine), even when her femininity encompasses

these quasi-men's kata. In fact, her use of men's kata eroticizes her image, placing her in "anodyne modes" of "manly passion" (Senelick 1993: 81).

A performer whose crossing goes beyond song and gesture to include costuming and make-up is Mikawa Ken'ichi (b. 1946), a male enka singer who, after his debut in 1965, successfully boosted his career by gradually adopting more feminine clothes, make-up, and mannerisms, and singing women's songs. He designs many of the outfits he wears; in 1994, a well-known Tokyo department store held an exhibition of his costumes.

Mikawa's crossing is partially mimetic but still within well-defined limits. He never wears a dress or a skirt, yet any viewer would interpret his clothes as feminine. He favors beaded pant suits, tunics with loose pants, or glittery hip-length jackets and pants in bright (female coded) colors; on one televised variety show he wore ensembles of emerald green, canary yellow, and cerulean blue, one after the other. He may accessorize his outfits with a turban, a long scarf, or a feather boa. On his feet, however, he wears low pumps rather than high heels, and even these are discreetly hidden by the hem of his pants. His hair is styled in an ear-length unisex bob that sweeps across his forehead, and his make-up is modest. He also favors rings and gold chains but never wears earrings.

The songs he sings, such as "Sasori-za no Onna" (Scorpio Woman), his signature song, are women's songs:

<i>ie watashi wa sasori-za no onna</i>	Well, I am a Scorpio woman.
<i>oki-no-sumu made warau ga ii wa</i>	You may laugh all you like.
<i>anata wa asobi no tsumori demo</i>	Even if you only intend to love me in jest,
<i>jigoku no hate made tsuite yuku</i>	I will follow you to the ends of hell.
<i>omoi kondara inochi- inochi- inochi-gake yo</i>	If I have fallen head over heels in love, Then it's for life.
<i>sō yo watashi wa sasori-za no onna</i>	Yes, I am a Scorpio woman
<i>sasori no hoshi wa ichizu na hoshi yo</i>	And a person born under the Scorpio constellation loves with all her heart.

"Sasori-za no Onna" (Scorpio Woman) (1972)

When Mikawa, wearing his characteristic clothing, hair style, and make-up, and swaying to the music in a female-kata gesture, sings these words in his low, nasal, obviously masculine voice, the effect is nothing short of striking.

Unlike Sakamoto's crossing, which eroticizes, Mikawa's serves as a neutering device that makes him a safe haven for the middle-aged housewives who are his primary fans. An entertainer like Mikawa can create a cross-gendered spectacle unlinked to any particular sexual orientation. Various Japanese with whom I spoke emphatically denied that Mikawa is homosexual; in fact, they considered him asexual. His fans like him, according to a fan club spokesperson, because he sings women's songs and understands women's feelings. His crossing allows him access to the emotions of these female fans while posing no (hetero)sexual threat.⁷

One of the most fascinating examples of crossing within the tangential reaches of the enka world is Umezawa Tomio, nicknamed "Shitamachi no Tamasaburō" (Downtown's Tamasaburō) after the well-known kabuki *onnagata* (male performer of female roles), Tamasaburō.⁸ Umezawa performs as a member of Umezawa Takeo Gekidan, a family-based itinerant troupe, in a vaudeville-like form of entertainment called *taishū engeki* (theater of the masses), about which Marilyn Ivy has written extensively (1995: 192–239). As she points out, this form of theater represents "an older, vanishing aesthetic that is rooted in a conception of the *taishū* [the masses] as down-home, lower-middle-class, and raised on the pre-war ethics and aesthetics of samurai drama" (1995: 209).

A typical performance by this troupe is much like the enka performance I describe in the Prologue. It includes 1) period drama; 2) a song show, during which Umezawa appears as the troupe's crooner; and 3) a dance revue of quasi-classical dance, during which Umezawa appears as the troupe's *onnagata*. A commercial video of Umezawa's performances, *Mei Bamen Shū* (Collection of Famous Scenes), highlights his artistry. Dressed and made up as a woman, he is sultry and erotic, his eyelids half-lowered, his lips half-parted. His hair (a wig), strands of which trail down the sides of his face, is on the verge of disarray. His kimono is open at the neck and down the back in an exaggerated fashion. Within a kimono aesthetic that emphasizes the nape of a woman's neck as visually erotic, Umezawa Tomio not only exposes the nape of his neck, he allows his kimono to plunge almost halfway down his back. Several still shots in the publicity brochure that accompanies his



Taishū engeki Performer Walking Near Congratulatory Displays

performance show him holding a scarf or a sleeve in his teeth, a gesture not uncommon in the premodern period but one which today, in combination with his make-up, hair, dress, and demeanor, suggests a smoldering sexuality. His appearance is one of complete and seductive mimesis.

It is interesting to note that the troupe includes female members who could perform the women's parts. Umezawa, however, does not play the part of a woman; he is an onnagata, a representation of womanhood constructed by men and for men.⁹ The erotic, premodern onnagata and the suave modern male crooner are contained within one person and within successive acts of the same performance. Umezawa crosses temporal and gender boundaries with sensual ease, and in so doing, becomes one of the most potent examples of gender as kata.

In the historically linked context of the taishū engeki stage, crossing (male to female) occurs more completely because of the frank performance of gender. Likewise, in period dramas, female enka singers may appear as swashbuckling swordsmen (female to male crossing). In modern enka stage contexts, however, crossing has its limits. In general, male singers do not adopt women's clothes or movements, although they may sing women's

The few who do, such as Mikawa Ken'ichi, depoliticize their transgressive actions through self-deprecating humor and careful attention to the boundaries placed upon crossing. Put simply, one is freer to cross and to do so more completely in a kimono (coded as Japanese and historic) than in an evening gown or tuxedo (coded as Western and "modern"). This points not only to the interrelationship of the past and the present in Japan, but also to the complexity of the resulting gender system.

What are the effects of these crossed performances? How do notions of "femaleness" and "maleness" iterate targets of the cultural imaginary? When a female sings a man's song, her performance is considered chic, *furesshu* (fresh), even *sekushii* (sexy), as having a sense of *iki* (stylishness), an evaluation that for the most part addresses only the concerns of male desire (cf. Mulvey 1989). When a male sings a woman's song, however, his performance is considered sensitive and empathetic, and while these qualities may evoke female desire, they also convey significant cultural values that embed him tightly within the social order. In effect, what these crossed performances demonstrate is that the cultural imagination places women at men's (sexual) service, but men at society's service. The persistence of these performances on the enka stage is thus a running commentary on constructions of femaleness and maleness, and on the interactions of women and men in heteronormative romance.

THE KATA OF ROMANCE

Women and men connect, as sexual beings, through the structures of hetero-normative romance, which determine the circumstances—the ways, reasons, and objects—of desire. In enka, the kata of romance is framed as a negotiation between desire and duty, between the individual and the group, and between the heart and the nation.

In enka, a distinctive aspect of romance is its brevity. At the extreme, romance may be as fleeting as a one-night stand or "*wan naito rabu*" (one-night love), as the song "Ma-yonaka no Shawā" (Shower in the Middle of the Night) puts it:

ma-yonaka ni atsui shawā o abite

In the middle of the night, I took a hot shower.

natsu ga kureta wan naito rabu

The "one-night love" which summer bestowed upon me

shizuku ni shite mita kedo Is what I tried to wash away with each drop
of water,
sore wa munashii doryoku mitai But it seems that my efforts were in vain
kagami no naka de aitai kokoro ga In the mirror, my heart, which wants to be
tokimeku with you, throbs.

"Ma-yonaka no Shawā" (Shower in the Middle of the Night) (1990)

And again,

shinu made kono koi I want this love to burn until
moyashite itai death,
hito-yo no nasake ni mi o This one-night love to which I
makase surrender.

"Kizuna-gawa" (River of Bonds) (1992)

This "one night" pattern informs an extremely poignant view of romance as the stuff of dreams, fantasy, and illusion. This is not romance lived but romance imagined. The prime imaginer is the woman, who fabricates romance out of passion and contrives commitment out of capricious fancy. For her, "one night" initiates an eternity of loyalty and longing. She anchors her love in a fleeting moment of happiness and proves its value through her subsequent devotion and desire.

In clichéd metaphors of fleetingness, enka songs express the evanescence of happiness:

shiwase mijikai ichinen sō Happiness is brief for an
annual plant.
hōsenka hōsenka Touch-me-not flower, touch-me-
not flower!

"Hōsenka" (Touch-me-not Flowers) (1981)

hanabi mitai na hito-yo demo Even if our one last night is
fleeting like fireworks, . . .
koi wa hakanai koi wa hakanai Love is fleeting, love is fleeting,
niwaka-ame Like a sudden rain shower.

"Niwaka-ame" (Sudden Rain Shower) (1991)

Here again, evanescence is not merely a fact of life but a criterion of aesthetic value. The beauty of a flower (like the beauty of a woman) is that much more precious because it is perishable. So, too, romance is that much more cherished because it is transitory.

In these songs, men's and women's roles are dichotomous by nature:

otoko ni wa hito-toki de For a man, love is a mere
sugiteku arashi passing storm;
onna tadayou kami no fune But for a woman, love drifts
on in a paper boat.

"Kami no Fune" (Paper Boat) (1991)

otoko no koi wa hito-yo no A man's love is the tenderness
nasake of a single night.
onna no koi wa shinu hi made But a woman's love lasts until
the day of death.

"Nakase Ame" (Rain Which Makes One Cry) (1991)

A woman's love gains cultural value through its single-mindedness and its loyalty. At the same time, it makes her an object of ridicule, as in "Sake Kizuna" (Bonds of Sake), "Taki no Shiraito" (woman's stage name), and "Yukiguni" (Snow Country) quoted earlier: people laugh at the "old-fashioned woman," at the "fool." Ironically, a man also possesses single-mindedness and loyalty, but for different ends and more public purposes, and with no hint of ridicule. In these songs of romance, both women and men are seen as noble, but women's nobility is trivialized by its romantic focus.

Another important aspect of romance in enka is its reliance upon fate.

umareru mae kara musubarete We were connected even before
ita we were born—
sonna ki ga suru beni no ito This is the red thread of fate
that I feel.
dakara shinu made futari wa Therefore, we will be together
issho until death.

"Inochi Kurenai" (Crimson Life of Passion) (1986)

Fate, viewed so often in these songs as a river, becomes an immutable force moving along a predetermined course. On this river of fate, women and men can do no better than to accept its course, which guides life and love, as their own and try to stay afloat. Fate determines everything about romance: who loves, for how long, under what circumstances, and with what result.

The ways in which men and women love are also patterned. Men love actively, even passionately, but leave abruptly. Women, on the other hand, love passively, sometimes pleadingly, as in the following woman's song:

<i>suteru koto mo kamawanai</i>	I don't care if I throw my life away,
<i>dakara onegai soba ni oite</i>	Just please let me be here by
<i>ne</i>	your side.

"Nagare ni Mi o Makase" (Surrender to the Flow of Time) (1986)

Women love by giving all they have:

<i>kono inochi hoshii nara</i>	If you want my life,
<i>itsu demo shinde misemasu wa</i>	I would die in a moment and present it to you.

"Kaze no Bon Koi Uta" (Love Song of Owara Bon Festival) (1989)

<i>kokoro kokoro kokoro</i>	Heart, heart, heart,
<i>kokoro</i>	heart!
<i>kokoro agemasu onna no</i>	I give you my heart, this
<i>kokoro</i>	heart of a woman.
<i>hoka ni nan ni mo nai</i>	I have nothing else
<i>ageru mono nante</i>	To give.

"Onna no Defune" (Woman of the Sailing Ship) (1983)

The tone of these songs is one of unabashed begging and pleading—in some cases even groveling—yet women's offers of their lives and love to men go unheeded. A woman clings and waits:

<i>mi-sutenai de to sugatte mo</i>	Even if I cling to you, begging you not to forsake me,
<i>yurete omokage</i>	Your flickering visage
<i>tō-zakaru tō-zakaru</i>	Grows distant, grows distant.

"Nakase Ame" (Rain Which Makes One Cry) (1991)

<i>watashi itsu made machimasu</i>	Tell the ship [with my lover aboard] in one brief moment
<i>to</i>	
<i>fune ni tsutaeru tsuka no ma o</i>	That I will wait forever.

"Namida no San-bashi" (Wharf of Tears) (1987)

Men leave without warning or explanation:

<i>doko e iku to mo iwanai de</i>	Without saying where he was going
<i>yo-ake ano hito fune</i>	He left aboard the ship at
<i>no ue . . .</i>	dawn. . .

<i>nani mo oshiezu iku nante</i>	He left without telling me anything.
<i>ikanai de ikanai de</i>	Please, do not go, do not go,
<i>ikianai de</i>	Do not go!

"Namida no San-bashi" (Wharf of Tears) (1987)

On the river of fate, men appear and disappear, leaving women the victims.

The one-sidedness of this version of romance is unremitting. Inasmuch as a woman may be defined by her loyalty in love, a man may be defined by his disloyalty, even alongside his loyalty in public affairs. According to this convention, a man is one who leaves the woman who loves him, while upholding the moral fabric of the community and the state.

Women (and men) love because they were so destined; but just as their love is destined, so too is their heartbreak. The following example shows a kata of parting that is situated in the past:

<i>namida namida namida</i>	Tears, tears, tears,
<i>namida</i>	tears!
<i>namida karete mo kareru na</i>	Even if my tears run dry, it won't mean that my love has withered.
<i>koi yo</i>	
<i>fune ni watashi wa noru</i>	I board the ship, while
<i>anata san-bashi de</i>	You remain on the pier.
<i>shiroi tēpu o hiku</i>	The white streamers unfurl—
<i>o-wakare hatoba</i>	The pier of parting.
<i>sayonara sayonara onna no</i>	Goodbye, goodbye! I am a
<i>defune</i>	woman of the sailing ship.

"Onna no Defune" (Woman of the Sailing Ship) (1983)

The ship recedes slowly in the distance, a gradual, drawn-out process and one that gives this kind of parting a particular poignancy. Moreover, the "white streamers" thrown by the person on the ship to the person left behind on the pier become a last physical bond uniting the two. As the ship departs, the streamer unfurls until finally, it can connect the two no longer. The result, symbolized by the streamer, is heartbreak.

For a woman, heartbreak rapidly transforms itself to *miren* (lingering affection), but I have heard of only a few instances in which *miren* was used in reference to men. This kind of structural poignancy seems to be the purview of women, as passive in heartbreak as they are in loving:

onna-gokoro no miren deshō Is this the lingering
affection of a woman's heart?
"Kita no Yado kara" (From an Inn in the North Country) (1975)

aa miren tsunaide Ah, but I [a woman] cannot
help this lingering affection.
"Ame Yo-zake" (Sake on a Rainy Night) (1988)

Lingering affection, considered foolish yet normalized as a part of "femaleness," gives the woman a certain moral currency. She exemplifies loyalty, beauty, and passivity. Within an aesthetic built on pathos and evanescence, her love, in *miren*, becomes exquisite and touching.

The combination, however, is also volatile. In a tumult of emotion, she may love and hate at the same time:

itoshiku natte wa nikuku naru Loving you can also mean
hating you.
"Kizuna-gawa" (River of Bonds) (1992)

ai suru kimochi to onaji dake My feelings of love are
matched by
midarete saite mo hana wa hana My growing feelings of hate.
"Midare-bana" (Strewn Flowers) (1988)

anata urande koishigaru [My lips] Will not forgive
you, yet long for you.
"Koi-bune" (Boat of Love) (1990)

*hada ga samishii hada ga
samishii* My body is so lonely, my body
is so lonely.
"Koi Banka" (Love's Elegy) (1991)

In many enka songs, the failure of romance is culturally structured but individually wrought. In others, however, the failure is culturally structured and socially wrought. What keeps men and women apart is society itself:

suki de soenai hito no yo o I cry with bitterness toward
a world that keeps me apart
from the one I love.
"Kanashii Sake" (Sorrowful Sake) (1966)

Whatever the specific reasons for societal censure—barriers of social class, family feud, morals—they themselves are less important than the fact that they are unchangeable and insurmountable.

These romantic relationships must be conducted in secret, hidden from the eyes of the world" and the glaring social spotlight of gossip.

hito-me shinonde fune o kogu Hiding from the eyes of the
world, we will ply our boat. . . .
yukue mo shirenu saza-nami no Without knowing our
destination, we find the
ripples of
uwasa ga tsurai ko-no-ha-bune . . . Gossip harsh on our boat of
leaves.

Kinokawa" (Kinokawa River [Wakayama Prefecture]) (1991)¹⁰

Through gossip, the "eyes of the world" become effective watchdogs against infractions of the moral and ethical code.

Romance in these songs goes against the grain of the social order. Individual desire is at odds with the family, the village, and, potentially, the nation. Lovers become violators of the moral code. And yet the stages of romance—meeting by chance, loving, parting, and longing—in effect reaffirm the values that hold the nation together: acceptance of fate, emotional strength, endurance of hardship, and perseverance. Those who go against the grain, in an ironic turnabout, become upholders of the nation's values.

These melodramatic patterns of romance may not be literal reflections of everyday lives, but they are grounded in what is construed as a common heart, one that can empathize with them to the point of tears. The ultimate failure of romance and the heart-wrenching longing portrayed in enka songs become metaphors (if exaggerated) for the everyday processes and practices of ordinary people. Fans of enka assert the contiguity between the highly saturated lives of the songs' characters and their own relatively ordinary lives. I would contend that the contiguity rests in shared tears—there public, here private. These melodramas also suggest larger cultural lessons. Men and women fall in love stereotypically, defining themselves through action (or inaction). The active man who loves and leaves holds controlling power. The passive woman who loves and longs grovels in powerlessness, her life bound up in tension, emotion, and internal drama. Men and women both play victim to fate and society, the larger forces that control them.

What does the enka version of romance give women? In important ways, it subverts the nineteenth-century "good wife, wise mother" paradigm upon which the modern Japanese nation was built, replacing it with a "mistress, bar hostess" paradigm of female antiheroes at the margins of society. And if its cast of characters is subversive, so also is its glorification of their actions—engaging in illicit love affairs, fleeing from social scorn, hiding from the eyes of the world—which contradict the culture's idealization of the family, the village, and the nation. At the same time, the songs endorse the moral substance underlying the traditional paradigm: sincerity, loyalty, and devotion.

Failure is intrinsic to the enka version of romance. In their unfulfilled longing, enka songs create a bond of suffering between singer and audience, and between listener and listener, a pact sealed in tears that draws the nation closer together. Emotional bonds born of romance are sustained by its failure. By negotiating between desire and duty, the individual and the group, romance constructs nationhood. It is a nationhood in affirmation of what is considered "right" about "traditional" Japan: warmth of human feeling, loyalty to commitment, duty. It is also a nationhood that negates what is considered "wrong" about modern Japan: urban anonymity, electronic dehumanization, a waning sense of personal loyalty. Ultimately, it is a nationhood built on the glorification of suffering—in romance, but also in the workplace, on the factory line, in the home. In romance, as in contemporary Japan, one accepts the flow of fate and suffers valiantly and passively, one's private tears falling unchecked.

Longing for Furusato

Tears of longing also flow for furusato (hometown). In enka's imaginary, furusato creates what is perceived to be a particularly (although not exclusively) male arena of longing.

"VIRTUAL" FURUSATO

The close link between enka and furusato is epitomized in such television broadcasts as Terebi Tokyo's weekly daytime song show *Enka no Furusato* (The Hometown of Enka), whose final program aired in March 1993. Each program featured a "rural" region of Japan and brought representatives of the region together with several enka singers and the two regular (male and

female) hosts. The regional representatives usually included a member of the local tourist board, who displayed the *meibutsu* (well-known products of the area) and offered regional food for tasting. At the end of the show, the hosts produced a map of the area and explained how to get there from Tokyo. Through shows like these, enka, furusato, and tourism have become discursively linked.

Enka no Furusato's opening sequence deserves closer scrutiny because it introduces some of the iconography of furusato (cf. Daniels and Cosgrove 1988).¹¹ The program title, superimposed on a background shot of a castle, links the present not merely to a premodern past, when those inhabiting such castles held power, but to a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century past, when regional castle towns (*jōka machi*) dominated the country economically and politically. The next shot, a blur of green, gradually comes into focus as a close-up of maple leaves. Green—a signifier of nature, freshness, and youth—is one of the most common visual evocations of furusato. The final shot, a train crossing a bridge over a ravine and heading into a tunnel, is, on closer inspection, not an ordinary electric train but an old-fashioned steam-powered locomotive with open-air cars transporting tourists deep into the mountainous countryside.¹²

Although each week's program purported to showcase a specific area of Japan, discussion was not restricted to that area. The enka singers sang songs with no relationship to the featured region, and when they talked about their own furusato, which might or might not be the featured region, what they said could also apply to many others. The result was a generalized discussion of furusato tied together through enka.

Comments about furusato tended to focus on several themes: 1) it is peaceful and quiet; 2) it has many beautiful natural features; 3) it is a place where one can hear, see, and smell nature (e.g., the sound of cicadas, the color green, the fragrance of flowers); 4) the food is especially good (and there are often specific references to the freshness of the harvest); 5) there are *onsen* (hot springs); 6) there are *matsuri* (festivals); 7) there are rice paddies, evocative of Japan's agrarian, rice-based past; 8) one's childhood there was blissful; 9) one's parents are there, especially one's mother.

The version of furusato portrayed here, however, is sanitized: there is no talk of the long hours of labor, the poverty, the lack of modern amenities, the depopulation, or the gossip prevalent in small towns. This furusato is sensualized: program guests are asked to taste the products of the region, and at

least one invariably comments on smell, whether in reference to the food they are sampling or a new perfume made from regional flowers, or they recall the pleasure of bathing in the hot waters at the onsen, with its particular smells and sensations. This furusato is commodified: one can buy a taste of it or a piece of it as a souvenir. Finally, this furusato is exoticized: it is "hometown" seen from afar, a Tokyo resident's nostalgic tourist destination. Nobody claims they want to live there; they only want to visit.

Even those television shows that do not overtly attempt to establish this kind of link between enka and furusato do in fact assume such a link. The major enka television program of the 1990s was Terebi Tokyo's primetime weekly show *Enka no Hanamichi* ("Flower Way"/Stage Passage of Enka; see Chapter 4). In a special interview marking the fifteenth anniversary of the show, producer Hashiyama Atsushi explained its purpose: "I want to create a furusato of emotions. Everyone probably has a furusato, a place to which he or she wants to return. Probably people who have left their rural hometown, as well as those who have no such rural hometown, have a nostalgic desire to return. However, in reality, there are few people who have the luxury of actually visiting these places. Therefore, the purpose of this program is to give the sense of a temporary return through music and images" (Anonymous 1993d: 14).

Hashiyama's explanation suggests that furusato is no longer a place: it has become a concept, an abstraction, a kind of "atmosphere" (cf. Field 1989). And the more abstract the concept, the more effective the metonymic shorthand. Here, the music and visual images that effect this return to furusato are those of enka, sung in a dimly lit country inn or a forlorn bar on a wharf.¹³ For many in the listening and viewing audience whose own life experience does not necessarily include such places, such referents become symbolically evocative. These homelands are theatricalized settings for the emotions defining this version of the nation.

The introductory segment of a January 1993 broadcast of *Enka no Hanamichi* drew on these images of the enka imaginary: "I have nothing but unforgettable memories of that trip to the snowy north country. I think over and over of that person, the awakening of love [*koi-gokoro*] in me. When I look at the sky that flows onward to the north, it touches my heart [*mi ni shimu*]. These are songs of the heart [*kokoro uta*]." These images—snowy north country, memory of past love, and most important, songs of the heart—define enka. The heart is the link between enka's two main themes,

failed romance and a yearning for home. *Furusato* (hometown) becomes the place where the heart is.

PERFORMING FURUSATO

In the following song, a regional matsuri (festival) that supplies the rhetoric for the local also extends to the national:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| (1.) <i>otoko wa matsuri o sōsa</i> | Men bearing the festival |
| | palanquin |
| <i>katsuide ikite kita</i> | On their shoulders were living |
| | life to the fullest. |
| <i>yama no kami umi no kami</i> | God of the mountains, god of |
| | the seas, |
| <i>kotoshi mo hontō ni arigatō</i> | We truly thank you for this |
| | past year. |
| <i>shiroi fundoshi hiki-shimeta</i> | The snow swirls atop the young |
| | men |
| <i>hadaka wakashu ni yuki ga mau</i> | In white loincloth[s]. |
| <i>matsuri da matsuri da</i> | Festival! Festival! |
| <i>matsuri da</i> | Festival! |
| <i>hōnen matsuri</i> | It's a festival for the year |
| | of abundance. |
| <i>tsuchi no nioi no shimi-konda</i> | These young men, who have |
| | become permeated with the |
| | smell of the earth— |
| <i>segare sono te ga takaramono</i> | Their hands, which till the |
| | soil, are treasures. |
| (2.) <i>otoko wa matsuri de sōsa</i> | At the festival men |
| <i>otoko o migakunda</i> | Honed themselves as men. |
| <i>yama no kami umi no kami</i> | God of the mountains, god of |
| | the seas, |
| <i>inochi o hontō ni arigatō</i> | We truly thank you for life. |
| (3.) <i>moero yo namida to ase</i> | Burn! The life of a man is |
| <i>koso otoko no roman</i> | one of sweat and tears. |
| <i>ore mo don-to mata ikite</i> | I am living to the fullest. |
| <i>yaru</i> | |
| <i>kore ga nippon no matsuri da yo</i> | This is a festival of Japan! |

"Matsuri" (Festival) (1984)

Although there is in fact no one festival that might be called a "festival of Japan," here the particular is generalized; a local festival becomes a generic festival representing a version of nationhood (Ivy 1995: 12–13).

This song was performed in 1993 by the veteran male singer Kitajima Saburō (see Prologue) as the finale of NHK's 44th annual Kōhaku Uta Gassen (Red and White Song Contest), whose theme was "*kawarazu Nippon*" (unchanging Japan). Through song, particularly through enka, the program presented the nation to itself as unchanging and stubbornly refusing to be changed. Kitajima's performance included a panoply of the symbols of furusato *cum* Japan—cherry blossoms, festival, fans, rice, traditional costume, and enka—amid the public virility of this version of nationhood.

Musically as well, the "exoticism" of enka's vocal technique thrusts it into the enclaves of the furusato imaginary. I use the word *exoticism* to highlight the fact that many of enka's performative kata are not common in the world of popular music. They find precedent instead in Japanese narrative genres, such as *gidayū-bushi* (narrative song in *bunraku* puppet theater) and *naniwa-bushi* (narrative song originally from Osaka). Moreover, the very aesthetic of the genre—that what is important is not a "beautiful voice" but the ability to tell a story effectively or inspire tears—links it to premodern vocal genres.

The intertwining of distant places and times in enka is further confirmed by the language enka singers speak, the image they cultivate, and the clothes they wear. As Godai Natsuko, one of the top "enka bijin" (enka beauties), proclaimed during a Honolulu news conference in July 1994, "I am a real Edokko [Tokyoite of the premodern period, when the city was called Edo] and can only speak Japanese." She invokes not only shitamachi (downtown)/"furusato Tokyo," but also uncosmopolitan "furusato Japan," which projects Tokyo back to Edo, a sophisticated urban culture of nineteenth-century Japan little touched by Western influence.

Female singers invoke the past by wearing kimono, while their male counterparts wear Western suits. Both male and female singers further enhance an image of rootedness in the past by appearing in nonsinging dramatic roles in televised *jidai-geki* (period dramas) most often set in the Tokugawa Era (1600–1867), or in month-long runs of period plays performed in combination with concerts (see Prologue). The past is not remote in time; it is compartmentalized within daily life.

As an "internal exotic," furusato is an important element in enka song texts. Many songs are set outside big cities, often, as their titles suggest—

"Kita-guni no Haru" (Spring in the North Country), "Kita no Daichi" (The Land of the North), and "Kita no Yado Kara" (From an Inn in the North Country), for example—in the wintry countryside of northern Japan. The north becomes a place of "otherness" not only because it is remote but because it involves inherent physical hardship. And as the composer Yoshioka Osamu has discovered, the more remote, the better. One of his most famous songs, "Setchūka," was originally set in Niigata (a prefecture in the northwest of Honshu). Subsequently, however, especially in view of the high-speed trains that linked the area to Tokyo, he decided that Niigata had become too familiar in the public mind and substituted the Echizen *misaki* (cape) in the more remote Fukui prefecture. The song became one of his biggest hits (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai 1992).¹⁴

Several songs, such as the duet quoted at the beginning of this chapter, link furusato and romance. "You are my furusato," an image that draws on the emotional ties of kinship and place, becomes the ultimate statement of intimacy. Furusato conjures up family members who live in the hometown but also the lover long ago left behind. The unbridgeable distance between "here" and "there" echoes the heartbreaking sadness of lost love:

<i>umi no tori sae tsubasa o</i>	Even sea birds spread their
<i>yosete</i>	wings,
<i>haruka kaikyō koete yuku</i>	And cross the broad channel.
<i>shima wa miete mo watarenai</i>	I can see the island, but I
	cannot cross over to it.
<i>kokoro hiki-saku mujō no umi</i>	It tears at my heart—the
<i>yo</i>	cruel sea. . . .
<i>aitai yo aitai yo</i>	I long to see you, I long to
	see you.
<i>umi no mukō ni furusato ga</i>	My furusato is there across
<i>aru</i>	the sea.
<i>aitai yo aitai yo</i>	I long to be with you, I long
	to be with you.
<i>shima wa miete mo watarenai</i>	I can see the island, but I
	cannot cross over to it.
<i>umi no nikurashisa</i>	The sea's heartlessness.

"Mujō no Umi" (Cruel Sea) (1992)

These songs place furusato, like romance, on the far side of a "cruel," "heartless" distance: it is visible but unreachable, and the fact that one can see the

Ties of kinship connect furusato to family, but more specifically, to mother, one's "biological furusato." The figure of mother herself rarely appears in enka songs; she surfaces instead as "mother remembered," especially by sons. The construction of femaleness represented in "mother" is different from that found in romance: these women are not fragile and passive, not victims, but stalwart and active, the practical and emotional backbone of the family. These are "country" women who recuperate a different kind of space within the patriarchy as active shapers of their surroundings.

Memories of mother are primal and sensory. Several enka songs speak nostalgically of mother's breast, of listening to her lullabies and sleeping in her arms:

<i>haha no yasashii te-makura de</i>	Lying on my mother's gentle
	arm like a pillow,
<i>nemuri-tsuku made komori-uta</i>	I listened to her lullabies
	until I fell asleep.
<i>yume de yume de mezameta</i>	I dreamt and dreamt, and upon
<i>toki wa</i>	awakening,
<i>itsumo sagashita haha no mune</i>	I always searched for my
	mother's breast.

"Haha-goyomi" (Calendar of Memories of Mother) (1988)

<i>ima mo chichi-kusaku</i>	Even now, I earnestly long for the smell of
<i>hito-suji ni shita</i>	my mother's milk.
<i>haha no omokage namida ga</i>	I yearn to see her face, her
<i>koishii . . .</i>	tears. . . .
<i>tōku e moshi mo kaereru</i>	If I could only return to that
<i>naraba</i>	distant time and place.

"Haha-kage" (The Figure of Mother) (1992)

ame no juru ni wa kasa ni
nari
o-mae mo itsu-ka wa yo no naka
no
kasa ni nareyo to oshiete
kureta
anata no anata no shinjitsu
wasure wa shinai

umb
You ta
umb
For ot
I will
The tr

"O-fukuro-san" (Mother)

When Mori Shin'ichi sings this song (see the eyes of his audience, which consists mainly of women), "Mother remembered" is furusato, the standard bearer and spiritual teacher.

Mother is also the bearer of national identity, the hold in which Japanese citizens are molded. She is the soup served at breakfast, lunch, or dinner,

(Serifu) shibareru nē
fuyu wa samui kara miso
shiru ga umai n da yo ne
umai miso shiru attakai
miso shiru
kore ga o-fukuro no aji na n da
nē . . .

It's fr
Wint
soup
Delic
soup
This
mot

(1.) itsu-ka otona ni natta
toki
naze-ka eraso na kao suru
ka . . .
atsui miso shiru nomu tabi

Why
beco
they
big
But v

ni
omoi-dasu no sa o-fukuro o
wasurecha naranē otoko iki . . .

(Serifu) neru no wa futon
shitagi wa fundoshi

gohan no koto o raisu da nante
iu n ja nai yo

sore ni shite mo chikagoro no
hito wa nani-ka wasureteru ne
kore de mo nihonjin nan da
beka nē

(2.) nipponjin nara
wasurecha komaru
furusato to miso shiru o . . .

(Serifu) furusato o dete kara
jū-roku-nen
itsumo o-fukuro-san no futokoro o
yume mite orimashita
omoi-dasu tabi ni kono mune
ga kyū' to itaku naru n desu.
omowazu namida ga dete kuru n
da nā . . .
o-fukuro-san no misoshiru ga
kuitai nā
kā-cha-a-n

"Miso Shiru no Uta" (Song of Miso Soup) (1980)

Mother—the maker of soup, the keeper of a house in which people still sleep on futon, wise in her moral teachings, hard working, uncomplaining—becomes the repository of the homeland and, by extension, of all things Japanese.

This mother-child or, more specifically, this mother-son relationship, establishes a pattern of interaction that extends to heterosexual romance. In many enka songs, one of the ways in which a woman expresses her love for a man is by tending and nurturing him as a mother would. Parts of the

soup,
they think of their mother
and cannot forget her—such is
the male spirit . . .

We should sleep on futon [mattress],
and our underwear
should be *fundoshi* [loincloth],

And don't call *gohan* [rice]
"ra-i-su"!

Yes, people these days forget
the important things in life.
Can we still call them
Japanese?

If people are Japanese, they
shouldn't forget
their furusato and their miso
soup . . .

It's been sixteen years now since I
left my furusato,
and I always see my mother's
breast in my dreams.

When I recall thus, my heart
aches terribly.

Without realizing it, I find tears
welling up in my eyes . . .

I want to taste my mother's
miso soup again.

Mama!!

Following song could as easily be spoken by a mother to her son as by a woman to her lover:

anata kawari wa nai desu ka
hi-goto samusa ga tsunorimasu

kite wa moraenu sētā o

samusa koraete andemasu

onna-gokoro no miren deshō

anata koishii kita no yado

How are you, my dear?

Day by day the cold weather
gets worse.

Although I will never see you
wear it,

I knit this sweater for you,
enduring the cold.

Is this the lingering
affection of a woman's heart?

I long for you from the inn in
the north country.

"Kita no Yado kara" (From an Inn in the North Country) (1975)

Both relationships (mother-child, lover-lover) share a similar core of *amae* (dependency). As child to mother, so lover to lover: the child/lover seeks and accepts dependency, but that acceptance is contingent upon the presumed indulgence of the mother/lover. When romantic relationships are patterned after familial ones, men are placed in the position of children and women in the position of mothers, an arrangement that would seem to contradict the pervasive pattern of male domination in Japanese society. But just as there are active and passive dependencies, there are also different kinds of power. The dependent child wields power in his very helplessness because things are done for him, while the indulgent mother holds power by doing those things. As Dennis Wrong points out, the child retains "power over," while the mother retains "power to" (1995: xv). If one rethinks the child-mother relationship in terms of a master-servant relationship, the master/child/man and servant/mother/woman dynamic of lovers is more obvious. Mother-as-servant becomes the woman who empathetically anticipates the needs of others.

Within Japan's nation-as-family (*kazoku kokka*) ideology, mother becomes the source of national as well as personal identity. In reifying the most physically intimate of relationships, that of mother and child, enka songs establish a sensual link between all Japanese citizens (particularly men) as children of mothers. As the primary caregiver in the Japanese family, mother is the primary socializer, the primary nationalizer. Through her, whether from the foods she cooks or from her example of humility, diligence, and suffering, a

child learns what it means to be Japanese. In evoking mother, enka songs establish a biological definition of national identity that is powerful and irrevocable. Just as an adult, especially a man, will always be the child of a mother, so, theoretically, Japanese will always be Japanese. National identity, particularly masculine identity, courses in the blood. Through mother, these enka songs also create an emotional definition of national identity, which gives that identity a different, but no less important, kind of potency. Just as a man will always love and yearn for his mother, so, theoretically, will Japanese always love and yearn to be Japanese. Enka thus roots national identity in the heart.

The relationship between child and mother, however—and between Japanese and their identity as Japanese—becomes ambiguous. The child, separated from his mother, forever seeks her. In the same way, according to the logic of enka, Japanese separated from their *furusato* now seek to reclaim the sources of their own Japaneseness. This internal monologue of song seems to be saying, "We long for our past Japanese selves." Nostalgia, expressed in enka, becomes a means through which this imaginary of *furusato* takes hold, keeping desire in place.

"Japan"

The nostalgia expressed in enka occupies a particular niche in the social practice of contemporary Japan. One may "do" enka—buying tapes, requesting particular songs, tuning in to radio and television programs, listening to and watching performances, attending concerts, joining fan clubs, singing at karaoke—and in the doing, participate in this one form of commercially based national culture. This is not to say that enka's adherents accept all its ideological aspects or even agree on its meaning. "Doing" merely serves to keep enka afloat in whatever guise and with whatever meaning individual doers seek and find for themselves.

Yet this is a "Japan" circumscribed by its borders, whose local hometowns have become nationalized as Homeland. Enka, a commercial cultural product, brings the traditional hearth of *furusato* to the center of cultural nationalism, drawing the nation around it through the fluids of intimacy—mother's milk, tears of longing, the sweat of exertion. With the faces of the homeland on television, with the sounds of *furusato* overheard, enka makes visible and audible the nation as imaginary. Japan becomes "Japan," and its peripheries, its center.

This "Japan" serves different masters, not all of whom may be found in government ministries or business conglomerates. But it is this very multiplicity that gives it force. Some aspects of this imaginary would certainly be approved by the government, while others, which glorify antiheroes as repositories of past ways and values, are subversive of the social order. Nor is this solely big business dominated by male producers at the expense of unwitting female consumers and aspiring singers. As formulaic as much of enka is, there is no guarantee of success for either singers or songs. Male and female consumers select products and use them for purposes beyond the control of producers. What they select affirms their participation as consumers of this "Japan," as official citizens of this national culture.

The enka imaginary constitutes a "Japan" uncertain about its relationship to the outside world and to its own past. But instead of confronting these uncertainties, the imaginary withdraws into an insular notion of a common heart. The tales it tells—of emotional pain, of failed romance, of longing for *furusato*, of nostalgia for a past just out of reach, of suffering as moral virtue—provoke tears of empathy and recognition. In these tears lie the critical links of the self to the imaginary, of the home to the nation, and ultimately, of Japan to "Japan."