

# Takarazuka under Occupation: Transnational Female Performers and Femininity in Japan, 1945-1952

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## I. Introduction

In April 1946, after the long and demoralizing war, the Takarazuka Revue finally came back to perform in the Takarazuka Grand Theater in Hyogo prefecture. Several Takarazuka female performers posted their opinions about the future of Japan and Takarazuka in *Kageki*, a magazine re-published right after the war.<sup>1</sup> For example, a performer named Shijō Hideko expressed her excitement for the American Occupation, saying, “In my hometown Kyoto, we could see the Occupation forces’ cool jeeps passing on Shijō Street and listen to swing jazz everywhere. Kyoto suddenly became a modern city.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, another Takarazuka performer, Awashima Chikage, related a more ambiguous opinion about the Occupation: “I am not sure whether imitating ‘America’ truly leads to building a ‘New Japan.’ But during the war, we could not even emulate America. Now, we have to make a new start by selecting what we need to revive ‘New Japan.’”<sup>3</sup> As we see here, each woman in Takarazuka had a different view of the American Occupation.

However, each shared a decisive passion to play a role in constructing a New Japan by standing on the stage as Takarazuka performers. For example, Shijō mentioned the important role of Japanese women in this endeavor by saying, “Our brilliant new future is waiting for us young females.”<sup>4</sup> She also illustrated her decision to do her best as a new woman through performing onstage as a “gorgeous flower,” and in so doing, encouraged Japanese people to look ahead to the future.<sup>5</sup> Koshiji Fubuki, a famous *otokoyaku* (male role) star, demonstrated her pleasure in performing Western-inspired *otokoyaku* characters by saying, “Finally, I will play a prince called Antonio. It has been a while since I have danced or given any Western-inspired performances… I know I have to take

over the dreamy and traditional Takarazuka.”<sup>6</sup> Koshiji showed a high degree of motivation to overcome these difficulties and protect Takarazuka by performing onstage.

Although there are still very few academic works on Takarazuka’s Occupational history, Baku Sonmi, Kevin J. Wetmore and Kawasaki Kenko mention about Takarazuka’s occupational era in each work. In her book, *Teikoku to Sengo no Bunka Seisaku*, Baku explains what the Takarazuka company did during the Occupation and did not pay attention to the Takarazuka women nor their voices about the time period.<sup>7</sup> In his article, “A Note on Takarazuka”, Wetmore offers an analysis of the transformation of the Takarazuka performance through the Occupation. While he examines several repertoires, Wetmore does not see any voice of Takarazuka females performing on the stage.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in her book, *Takarazuka to iu ūtopia*, Kawasaki illustrates the Occupation of Takarazuka, but she also does not show the activeness of Takarazuka females, and neglects to pay attention to what the Takarazuka women actually said about the Occupation and Americans.<sup>9</sup> In portraying Takarazuka females as subjugated and voiceless, the aforementioned works did not treat the Takarazuka females as active figures nor mention the voices of these women. But as the anecdotes of female Takarazuka performers show, each woman had strong opinions about her own role in invigorating the vision of a New Japan.

There are two main specialties for this particular focus on the Takarazuka performers. The first is for the wider range of femininities that they enacted, including those of *otokoyaku* (male-roles), which involved dressing and performing as “males” onstage. Since Takarazuka performers’ wide range of femininities also included forms of “masculinity,” attending to them allows for analysis of a broader spectrum of Japanese femininity during the Occupation era. Secondly, since Takarazuka had been performing Euro-American inspired repertoires since the 1920s, the Occupation policy of “Americanization” was not a new development for the troupe. That is, while “Americanization” suggests the powerful influence of an “aggressive” American Occupation, for these women it simply meant returning to the original repertoire that they wished to perform again. This particular female perspective allows us to reexamine the relationship between the American Occupation and Japan by revealing that “Americanization” was not merely a one-sided policy imposed by the U.S. in the

postwar years.

In his article, “Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” David Thelen explains that an exclusive focus on nation-state borders and inter-state relations only illuminates the power relations between powerful nations and state actors.<sup>10</sup> This, however, overlooks the complexity of the multi-layered historical interactions between Japan and the U.S. As a result, Thelen proposes the concept of “transnational history,” because it allows us to focus more on actors who challenged, reinforced and negotiated the constructions and unmaking of nation- states. Drawing on transnational theory, with this research I offer a more nuanced and multilayered analysis of Japanese females during the occupation era. This viewpoint allows us to see a more complex set of relations that were not clearly divided into active Americans and passive Japanese females. To achieve their goal of performing on the better stages, Takarazuka females used the opportunities available to them within the framework of their interactions, and negotiated by turns with Americans.

In this paper, Japanese names are written with the family name first followed by the first name. Translations into English are my own unless otherwise noted.

## II. American GIs and Japanese Women

In general, American GIs depicted Japanese women differently from Japanese men, and showed clear preference for the former. In *Atlantic Monthly*, for example, Lieutenant John Ashmead stated, “I have seen a few samples of the Japanese male at work, both here and in the Philippines, and I trust very few of them. But certainly this feeling of mine does not apply to the women and children.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Lucy Herdon Crockett, a female Red Cross worker for the Occupation, bluntly suggested the Japanese men and women “might be two different races entirely.”<sup>12</sup> While Japanese men were depicted as barbarous enemy race, American GIs saw in Japanese women “a vision of excellent, attentive service and pampering.”<sup>13</sup> At the same time, they saw Japanese women as a romanticized, “Oriental Eden” from which to procure sexual services.<sup>14</sup> In fact, in addition to a Japanese government-sponsored brothel system employing 70,000 Japanese women as prostitutes, there were at least 59,000 women working outside the government system as well.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in the context of the Occupation's promotion of civilization and

democracy, Japanese women were regarded as important gendered figures in demonstrating the successful transformation of a “New Japan.” GHQ’s predominantly male policy makers, starting with General Douglas MacArthur and SCAP (the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), regarded the emancipation and electoral participation of Japanese women as a key reform in constructing a New Japan. In his autobiography, *Reminiscences*, MacArthur portrayed himself as an advocate and liberator working for Japanese women.<sup>16</sup> Although a number of previous works have accordingly celebrated him as a hero who offered a new path for Japanese women, MacArthur and other executives were in fact quite cautious about the radical feminist movement in Japan. Furthermore, MacArthur suggested that Japanese women should revert to the “home.”<sup>17</sup> He argued that the emancipation of Japanese women should be undertaken upon the premise that women pursue social activities based on gendered divisions of labor. Moreover, while MacArthur likened Japan to “a boy of twelve” who had the potential to become a “man,” he did not think Japanese women could become anything other than women, let alone leaders of a modern society.<sup>18</sup> While the Occupation encouraged “restricted” freedoms of Japanese women, and sexual relationships between American males and Japanese females had been a problem, American GIs still allowed Takarazuka performers to return to the stage. However, it was also clear that there was a power hierarchy between them, and the majority of GIs treated Takarazuka women as immature and submissive girls.

### III. Occupation and Takarazuka

In 1945, the Occupation forces took over the Takarazuka Grand Theater and the Tokyo Takarazuka Theater. While the Takarazuka Grand Theater was returned to Takarazuka within a month of the Japanese surrender, however, the Tokyo Takarazuka Theater was transformed into the Ernie Pyle Theater and remained under Occupation control until 1955.<sup>19</sup> Although the Occupation censors oversaw all the repertoires and publications that Takarazuka had published, they still allowed a great deal of freedom for Takarazuka and its performers. For example, from the earliest performances of the Occupation period, censors completely allowed the theater to perform Western-themed repertoires and allowed for male role performers who had been banned by the

Japanese government during the war.<sup>20</sup> While the censors strictly hampered or banned Kabuki and other forms of traditional theater that seemed to reflect “feudal” inclinations toward “revenge” and “suicide,” they did not do so as strictly for Takarazuka because, as mentioned in the Introduction, Takarazuka had relied on Western models of repertoires and did not feature “feudalistic” themes before the interference of the Japanese military government.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, since the writers, choreographers, and female performers in Takarazuka were accustomed to Euro-American inspired repertoires and techniques since prewar era, accepting orders by the Occupation censors was not difficult for them. However, it did not mean that they simply followed what the Censor commanded. Although a certain power relationship always existed between the Occupation forces and the company's female performers, to make Takarazuka flourish again, Takarazuka females were able to adapt to and negotiate with the authorities in order to revive their original repertoires in which *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* performed romantic, Western-inspired love stories.

#### IV. The Voices of American GIs about Takarazuka Females

American GIs occupied, seized, and censored Takarazuka, but at the same time, they enjoyed Takarazuka as an entertainment in various ways and willingly reached out to Takarazuka performers with their curiosities. An article from the newspaper *En Corps* illustrates the popularity of Takarazuka among Occupation forces in the Kansai area in particular. *En Corps* was a weekly newspaper published by the Kyoto Occupation forces authorities. It states,

Each month the world famous Takarazuka Girl's Opera School presents a new show to the public, which has for many years been flocking there to see the performances of one of the world's most unusual and outstanding organizations. And since the coming of the U.S. Army to Japan, so popular have been these shows with the GI audiences that a special invitation is extended to all military personnel for the April performance, which is to start on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month with a double feature- the opera “Carmen” and the revue “Spring Dances”- given each day from 1 p.m.··· Their stage

art is unusual in that it combines the most ancient and beautiful of Japanese work, with some of the most modern music and dancing of the Western world. For anyone who enjoys music and theatrical performances of any sort, the presentations by these girls in the picturesque valley town to Takarazuka, midway between Kyoto and Kobe, promise one of the most interesting and valuable experiences in Japan.<sup>22</sup>

Here, *En Corps* advertises Takarazuka and its special invitation for the Occupation forces. It portrays Takarazuka as a form of entertainment in which the Occupation forces could enjoy both “the most ancient and beautiful of Japanese work” and “some of the most modern music and dancing of the Western world.” Analyzing these parts, the newspaper clearly divided “uncivilized” Japanese works and “civilized” Western works. Yet, at the same time, it celebrated the combination of Japan and the West and promoted the plays performed by Japanese girls. Although the newspaper did not mention anything about *otokoyaku*, the article contained a photograph by Edward P. Holland of an *otokoyaku* wearing male kimono at the center of the stage.

Whether Takarazuka female players were *otokoyaku* or *musumeyaku*, many Americans (and especially male GIs) mentioned Takarazuka performers' common beauty and cuteness. For example, Lt. Be Randolph MC sent a letter with his opinion of the performance *Rōzu Marī* to Takarazuka. He illustrated the beauty of the Takarazuka females, stating:

Above all shining out as a brilliant celestial body was the most delightful Rose Marie.<sup>23</sup> I hold no reservation in declaring that she is one of the most beautiful of all the lovely ladies that I have had the fortune and privilege of looking upon. She seemed as a Goddess brought from the days of yore and set upon our Earth for the pleasure of mortal beings. There are no words that can express the beauty of this creature of the heavens, this nymph of glory.<sup>24</sup>

From descriptions such as this, it is clear that American GIS were captivated by the beauty of Takarazuka performers. For example, Randolph marveled at Awashima's “brilliant celestial body.” The word “celestial” suggests an untouchable and dreamy physique. Furthermore, he identified *Rōzu Marī*

(played by Awashima) as a “Goddess,” suggesting that he had even deified Awashima’s sacred beauty. Since this letter needed to be translated into Japanese and approved by the censors, it did not clearly mention anything associated with sexuality. Yet, phrases such as “celestial,” “Goddess,” and “creature of the heavens” more than implied Randolph’s romanticized and Orientalized gaze towards Awashima.

While Randolph illustrated female roles, some of the American voices introduced the *otokoyaku*. Second Lieutenant William Haim, for instance, watched *Karumen* and *Haru no odori*, and wrote that,

It was my first time ever seeing the Girls’ Revue. I was so impressed to watch such a beautiful and entertaining show... Kasugano Yachiyo and Shinryoku Natsuko in *Karumen* were perfect...While watching the two shows, the finale of *Haru no odori* with its many American hit songs made me feel nostalgic. Although they were sung in Japanese, it still seemed very natural... Having *otokoyaku* is another specialty in Takarazuka. But, I think it was less kitsch than I had expected. Rather, they were very pretty and natural.<sup>25</sup>

Overall, Haim had a very positive reaction, even considering the *otokoyaku* as “pretty.” He also did not distinguish male roles and female roles clearly in Takarazuka. While *otokoyaku* performing Western inspired male characters seemed to represent “new women” and showed the justification of GHQ’s practices as helping to “civilize” native Japanese women, the GIs continued feminizing Takarazuka females. Moreover, since the *otokoyaku*’s masculinity was laced with a certain kind of femininity in their makeup, costumes and voices, the GIs never fully regarded Takarazuka girls as entirely “masculine” males. Haim’s use of the word “pretty” represented this perceived adolescence, childishness, and innocence in Takarazuka females.

Considering these examples, American GIs seemed to view Takarazuka merely as entertainment performed by beautiful, adolescent Japanese females. At the same time, giving Takarazuka females a chance to perform a variety of characters including *otokoyaku* could have also served to emphasize their own American self-image as liberators of Japanese women. And indeed, the Occupation forces’ allowance of such masculine forms within Takarazuka’s

broader representation of femininity can certainly be taken as a suitable example of the emancipation of Japanese women. However, it did not mean that GIs permitted complete freedom for Takarazuka female performers. While the Occupation forces banished certain Japanese male displays of masculinity for seeming too tightly bound to nationalism, *otokoyaku*, which included a certain femininity and was played by innocent Japanese females, did not seem to pose a threat to the demilitarization and democratization of Japan. In other words, *otokoyaku* did not present the same peril as the seemingly savage Japanese males. Rather, the American male GIs' infantilizing gaze towards Takarazuka girls can be associated with a broader colonial gaze that sought to shore up feminine roles for Japanese women after the war.

## V. The Voices of Takarazuka Females about the Occupation

Even if American GIs had treated Takarazuka females as immature and submissive in a romanticized and Orientalized way, however, Takarazuka females were never passive and subjugated women. Rather, many of them were adventurous, curious, and eager to learn more about America through the Occupation, and so cleverly exploited special opportunities to join the Takarazuka theater.

Various Takarazuka females expressed their thoughts and opinions about getting permission to perform at the Takarazuka Theater again. Most of them compared the theater's re-opening to "spring," implying new Japan and new life. In so doing, they showed great hopes and pleasures in performing both traditional-style as well as Euro-American inspired repertoires with both *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* onstage. For example, one performer, Kodama Haruka said, "During the wartime, all repertoires in Takarazuka were far from ideal art forms. We had few pleasures performing those highlighting militarism and nationalism. Now, we can re-perform the gorgeous Takarazuka we've had had since the prewar era."<sup>26</sup> In addition to Kodama, in another article of *Kageki*, Fujino Takane explained how long she had waited to be in the Takarazuka Theater again: "While I experienced a lot of difficulties and sadness during the war, I got some courage in return. I became mentally strong. When I performed in the Grand Theater even for the solace of the Occupation forces, I could not help crying because I was glad to be at the Grand Theater again."<sup>27</sup> Considering



their voices, although it was the Occupation forces that gave Takarazuka females the chance to be back to the stage, the Takarazuka performers did not care who exactly gave them the permission to return to the theater. Rather, their main concern was being on the stage and performing their original repertoire again. That is, Takarazuka females had manipulated the permission to return to the stage on their own terms, rather than being passive victims or following orders directly from the Occupation forces.

At the same time, it was also clear that some of them had maintained a passionate admiration for Euro-American-style repertoires. For example, a male-role performer, Kasugano Yachiyo, who had passionately studied the “ideal” *otokoyaku* technique since the prewar era, discussed the importance of learning “ideal” male figures from Euro-American films in her autobiography. She defined Euro-American male actors as “the best examples for me to learn the way to smoke, walk and make gestures.”<sup>28</sup> Kasugano also mentioned her struggles and efforts to imitate those males in the films; “To look my legs much longer, I ordered the special shoes that looked me very tall... and to have square and big shoulder, I secretly began exercising.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Kasugano was the first *otokoyaku* in Takarazuka to get a perm haircut: “In 1937, I asked a hair stylist working in Ginza Shiseidō whether I could get a hair style like a Euro-American actor in a film, and he said, ‘Yes.’”<sup>30</sup> Even during the Occupation, Kasugano expressed clear excitement in meeting with the Broadway director Billy Rose and his wife Eleanor. In her diary, she wrote that when she welcomed the Roses at Haneda airport, she gave them a bouquet of flowers and said, “Welcome to Japan” in English. From there, she continued,

February 15<sup>th</sup>, Takarazuka invited Mr. and Mrs. Rose to the Nichigeki theatre at Yurakuchō in Tokyo. We performed *Futari hakama*, a play based on *Kyōgen*, in front of them. In the middle of the show, while I was greeting them in Japanese, Kei-chan (Awashima Chikage) was translating my words into English. I was telling them that when I toured around America about ten years ago, I was very impressed by seeing the technical skills of Mrs. Rose in the production. I also said that we Takarazuka girls were very proud of ourselves that Mr. and Mrs. Rose would come to see our repertoire... After the performance, Mr. Billy Rose praised our performances and called us ‘Zuka Girls!’ To this, we all screamed like,

'Kyaaa!!' We and Mr. and Mrs. Rose swung together to the tune of the finale, *Reinbō*...<sup>31</sup>

According to Kasugano's diary, the whole cast was proud to be seen and praised by such a famous Broadway producer. But while they treated him like a star, they were excited for themselves as well. Although the war prevented Kasugano from gaining exposure in America, her admiration towards America continued to endure.

Another example of showing the interactions between Takarazuka females and Americans is the shooting of USSBS (United States Strategic Bombing Survey).<sup>32</sup> In addition to filming areas damaged by bombings such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki and other cultural facilities in color, the USSBS filmed Takarazuka performances as part of its survey of sceneries of Japan and Japanese cultural facilities. It is also an articulate example demonstrating that American male GI, Lieutenant Sassoon clearly regarded Takarazuka females as immature girls. For example, when the girls were sweating during the performance, Sassoon brought tissue cases to the girls and wiped their faces with tissue papers.<sup>33</sup> By analyzing the description, a white male Sassoon treated Takarazuka female performers as children. Helping wipe their faces with tissues associates with taking care of babies or children.

Even if the GIs had treated Takarazuka females as immature girls, Takarazuka females were never passive and subjugated women when interacting with American male GIs. Rather, they willingly communicated with the GIs and used cleverly the special opportunities they got that usual Japanese women could not experience. They had other opportunities, beyond performing stage shows, to interact with American male occupiers, such as when shooting the USSBS, which gave Takarazuka females to touch the new filming technology coming from America. Since the technology of filming in color in Japan was not developed enough yet at that time, it was the first time for Takarazuka females to be filmed in color. Also, since it was filmed for the American audience, one of the Takarazuka females said, "Takarazuka females finally go to Hollywood!"<sup>34</sup> Regarding their words, we can see how Takarazuka females had global cultural admirations. They were pleased with getting the chance to be seen by wider audience beyond the small theater in Takarazuka. Moreover, an *otokoyaku*, Kodama Haruka said that she was putting more make

up than usual because she was so excited and cared being filmed in color for the first time.<sup>35</sup> Although this filming was one of the orders by the Occupation forces, Takarazuka females were excited to get the chance to be filmed in color and released their films in America for the first time. In *Kageki*, they expressed their admirations toward Hollywood by saying that “Our films will be developing in Hollywood. It was like a dream for us.”<sup>36</sup> Considering their words, Takarazuka females enjoyed the filming and their promotions by utilizing the chances they got from the Occupation forces. Through Takarazuka, they opened for themselves new worlds, and new opportunities to present themselves as performers who had fully ambitions to revive Takarazuka and even promote it beyond the national border.

While some Takarazuka females expressed pleasure in being onstage again and venerated the Occupation for opening the door for them, others also pointed out the value of preserving the Japanese-ness that they had cultivated before the Occupation had begun. For example, one finds Takarazuka females’ voices discussing their images of the Japanese female after the war. Ōmi Fujiko mentioned that, “We should not forget the gentleness of *yamato nadeshiko*.”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Hanamura Yuriko said that, “These days, since the number of working women (*shokugyō fujin*) is increasing, some have totally forgotten the beauty of traditional feminine Japanese females who were modest and polite.”<sup>38</sup> In addition to that, Kojima Isoko indicated that, “By advocating democracy, we now have freedom of speech. But I do not want to lose my dignity as a Japanese female.”<sup>39</sup> Their words lead us to think that while Takarazuka females appreciated and caught up with the postwar reconstruction for Takarazuka undertaken by the Occupation forces, they emphasized the importance of preserving their identities as gentle, humble, yet strong Japanese females even under the Occupation. Accordingly, they did not simply follow the policy of emancipation and democratization of Japanese females to the point of throwing their own gender and national identities as Japanese females away entirely. From these accounts, we can see that Takarazuka females actively chose their own ideal figures of Japanese femininity from both their past as well as their future.

These female performers celebrated the restoration of the original Takarazuka repertoire with the assistance of the Occupation forces. They valued their permission to play various styles of characters, including the masculine *otokoyaku*. Moreover, through the Occupation, they rekindled their

suppressed aspirations, and willingly learned, appropriated and absorbed western-style modes of performance. At the same time, they were never submissive dolls controlled by the Occupation forces. Some of them valued the feminine identities that they had constructed before the war, and sought to preserve those qualities that would allow them to take on active roles as women in reconstructing a New Japan. Regardless of the gender roles they played, they nonetheless shared definite opinions and thoughts about the ideal and future images of Japanese females.

## VI. Conclusion

While American GIs portrayed themselves as liberators who could rescue Takarazuka females by granting them the rights to perform a wider range of womanhood, the majority of them still treated Takarazuka females as immature girls. They were attracted to the immaturity and the oriental beauty of Takarazuka females, and gazed upon the performers in a romanticized manner. On the other hand, however, the performers themselves refused to be passive observers and instead worked hard to rebuild their own place in the Takarazuka Theater. By negotiating and utilizing various opportunities to interact with Americans, Takarazuka female performers eagerly took actions to perform original Takarazuka repertoires in which *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* played Euro-American-inspired characters. With an enduring admiration for Euro-American cultures, some enjoyed meeting various Americans directly and learning of “America.” At the same time, they also had strong opinions about what they should be like as Japanese females in the future. In examining the multiple discussions surrounding Takarazuka females during the Occupation period, this paper reveals that Takarazuka females’ diverse opinions and actions played a major role in restoring the all-female Takarazuka Theater.

By taking a look at Takarazuka female performers who actively manipulated their positions as performers to take on a wider range of femininities, this paper introduces a figure of Occupation-era Japanese womanhood. For Takarazuka female performers, even under the power hierarchy, the Occupation constituted a more complex turning point in rethinking their own identities as Japanese women living in a New Japan.

Notes

This essay is based on my oral presentation on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the American Studies Association of Korea's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, held in Seoul at the Korea University.

- 1 *Kageki* was one of the magazines published by the Takarazuka Company for its Japanese fans. Of the many official Takarazuka publications, it also contains the greatest number of articles, comments and photographs. During the Occupation, these included commentary by the various Takarazuka females, the members of Takarazuka administration, and letters from American GI viewers of Takarazuka.
- 2 "Haru toukaraji," *Kageki* no. 248, April 1946, 45.
- 3 "Sōshun zakkan" *Kageki* no. 248, April 1946, 40.
- 4 "Haru toukaraji," *Kageki* no. 248, April 1946, 45.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 "Haha heno tegami," *Kageki* no.248, April 1946, 43.
- 7 Baku Snomi, *Teikoku to Sengo no Bunka Seisaku* (Iwanami-shoten, 2017).
- 8 Wetmore, Kevin. "A Note on Takarazuka." In *Rising from the Flames: the Rebirth of Theater in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Eds Leiter, Samuel. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009. 381-390.
- 9 Kawasaki Kenko, *Takarazuka to iu ūtopia* (Iwanami-bunko, 2005).
- 10 David Thelen, "Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History," *The Journal of American History*, Vol.86, No.3, *A Special Issue* (1999): 968. Besides Thelen, there were numerous scholars defining the "transnational framework." Pierre Yves- Saunier, *Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (New York: Palgrave, 2007). Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen eds., *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).
- 11 Lt. John Ashmead, "The Japs Look at the Yanks," *Atlantic Monthly* (Atlantic, April 1946), 88, 90.
- 12 Lucy Herdon Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza: An Informal Portrait of Postwar Japan* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949), 131.
- 13 Shibusawa, Naoko, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010), 51.
- 14 Ibid., 22.
- 15 Takemae, Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swan (New York: Continuum, 2002), 580, note 28; 69-71.
- 16 Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 305.
- 17 Kazama, 209.
- 18 Shibusawa, 57.
- 19 Kevin Wetmore, "A Note on Takarazuka," in *Rising from the Flames: the Rebirth of Theater in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*, eds. Leiter, Samuel and others (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 383.
- 20 Ibid., 384.
- 21 According to the official document, *Political Reorientation of Japan, Sep. 1945- Sept. 1948*, CIE had censored public information media such as newspapers, news agencies, radio broadcasting, magazines, books, motion pictures and theaters. (59)
- 22 "Takarazuka shōjo kageki from EnCorps," *Kageki* no. 250, June 1946, 34.

- 23 Rōzu Marī was played by Awashima Chikage at that time.
- 24 “Rōzu Marī no kansou,” *Kageki* no. 254, October 1946, 20-21.
- 25 “Takarazuka no inshō,” *Kageki* no.250, June 1946, 8.
- 26 “Zuihitsu,” *Kageki* no. 248, April 1946, 44.
- 27 “Kurou banashi areya koreya,” *Kageki* no. 248, April 1946, 25.
- 28 Kasugano, Yachiyo, *Shiroki Bara no Shō*, (Takarazuka Kagekidan Shuppan, 1987), 100-101.
- 29 Ibid., 98-99.
- 30 Ibid., 101.
- 31 “Birī Rōzu fusai wo mukaete Tokyo dayori,” *Kageki* no.282, 1949, 14-18.
- 32 USSBS (United States Strategic Bombing Survey) was filming the bombed areas like Hiroshima and Nagasaki and cultural facilities in Japan. To restore the sources clearly, they filmed in color. We can see the video taken by USSBS in the National Archives catalog <https://catalog.archives.gov>.
- 33 “*Tennen iro eiga satsuei kengaku ki*,” *Kageki* (Takarazuka kagekidan shuppanbu, no.251,1946), 38-39.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 “Yoron chōsa,” *Kageki* no.249, May 1946, 29.  
“*yamato nadeshiko*” stands for the Japanese women who are delicate but have a strong spirit. “*yamato*” means Japan and “*nadeshiko*” originates from a flower of the same name.
- 38 Ibid., 36.
- 39 Ibid., 37.

**Abstract**

# Takarazuka under Occupation: Transnational Female Performers and Femininity in Japan, 1945-1952

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This research focuses on the Occupation-era history of the all-female Takarazuka Revue Theater, one of the most recognized theatrical revue companies in Japan. Having been unable to perform over the wartime period, the U.S. Occupation marked a turning point for Takarazuka female performers in allowing them to return to the stage. In this new era, however, their performances were subject to censorship by Occupation authorities, as well as the pressures of a new racial and cultural hierarchy introduced by the American presence.

Under this paradigm, scholars on Takarazuka history have tended to highlight the subjugation that Takarazuka female performers faced during the Occupation. It very often neglects to pay attention to the voices of the performers themselves, and can therefore fail to recognize more complex and diverse forms of femininity that fall outside this established gender binary.

In contrast, this article offers a more nuanced and multilayered analysis of Japanese female experience during the Occupation era by focusing on the perspective of Takarazuka performers. Given their ability to inhabit a wide range of roles across the gender spectrum, attending to the voices of these performers affords a more complex picture of Japanese females' role in shaping the transnational landscape of Occupation culture. Moreover, given their experience in performing Euro-American style musical repertoires dating back to the 1920s, I argue that Takarazuka women took on far more active and collaborative roles in advancing their careers than has been acknowledged in existing scholarship. Far from passive, sexually and racially "inferior" observers, then, this article explores how these performers approached the Occupation era as a turning point in rethinking their own identities as Japanese women living in a New Japan.

