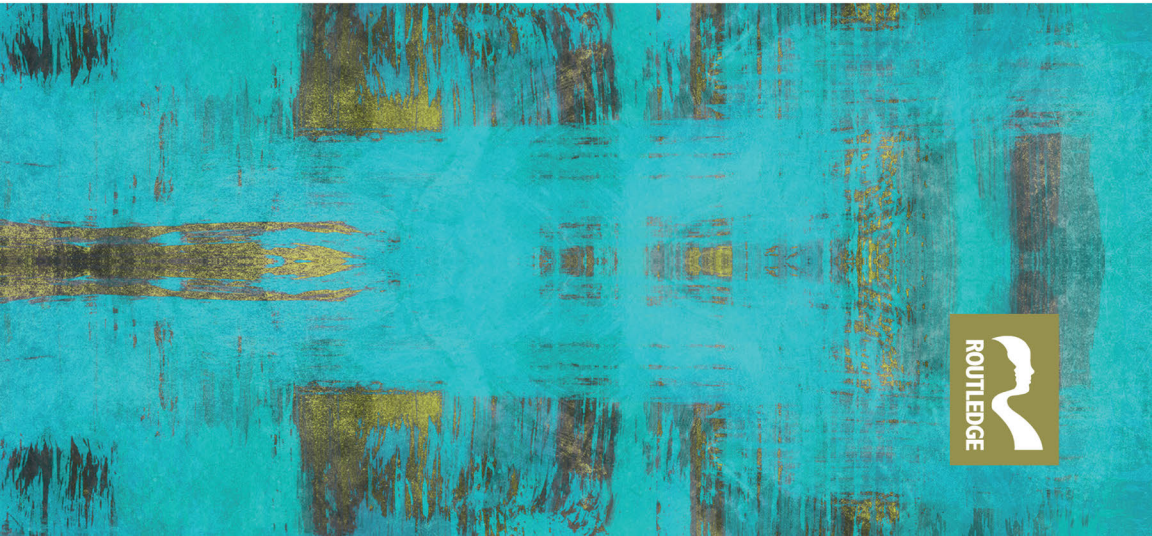
Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia

PERFORMING THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION IN MODERN JAPAN

STAGING THE RESISTANCE

Aragorn Quinn



Performing the Politics of Translation in Modern Japan

Performing the Politics of Translation in Modern Japan sheds new light on the adoption of concepts that motivated political theatres of resistance for nearly a century and even now underpin the collective understanding of the Japanese nation.

Grounded in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and analyzing its legacy on stage, this book tells the story of the crucial role that performance and specifically embodied memory played in the changing understanding of the imported Western concepts of "liberty" (jiyū) and "revolution" (kakumei). Tracing the role of the post-Restoration movement itself as an important touchstone for later performances, it examines two key moments of political crisis. The first of these is the Proletarian Theater Movement of the 1920s and '30s, in which the post-Restoration years were important for theorizing the Japanese communist revolution. The second is in the postwar years when Rights Movement theatre and thought again featured as a vehicle for understanding the present through the past. As such, this book presents the translation of "liberty" and "revolution", not through a one-to-one correspondence model, but rather as a many-to-many relationship. In doing so, it presents a century of evolution in the dramaturgy of resistance in Japan.

This book will be useful to students and scholars of Japanese history, society and culture, as well as literature and translation studies alike.

Aragorn Quinn is assistant professor of Japanese at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA.

Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia

Borneo in the Cold War, 1950–1990
Ooi Keat Gin

International Rivalry and Secret Diplomacy in East Asia, 1896–1950
Bruce A. Elleman

Women Warriors in Southeast Asia
Edited by Vina A. Lanzona and Frederik Rettig

The Russian Discovery of Japan, 1670–1800
David N.Wells

Singapore—Two Hundred Years of the Lion City
Edited by Anthony Webster and Nicholas J. White

Borneo and Sulawesi
Indigenous Peoples, Empires and Area Studies
Edited by Ooi Keat Gin

Tuberculosis—The Singapore Experience, 1867–2018
Disease, Society and the State
Kah Seng Loh and Li Yang Hsu

Caste in Early Modern Japan
Danzaemon and the Edo Outcaste Order
Timothy D. Amos

Performing the Politics of Translation in Modern Japan
Staging the Resistance
Aragorn Quinn

For a full list of available titles please visit: www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-the-Modern-History-of-Asia/book-series/MODHISTASIA

Performing the Politics of Translation in Modern Japan

Staging the Resistance

Aragorn Quinn

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-367-19240-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-20126-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

For my father

Contents

Figures

Acknowledgments

All first books are as much a product of the mentors who fostered the new scholar as they are the efforts of said scholar. This book is no exception. I am primarily, overwhelmingly, unceasingly, and in every other way in debt to my doctoral advisor, Indra Levy. Her clear and insightful feedback through every stage of my research and writing is central to the completion of this project. She is and will always be the model of scholarly and teaching excellence by which I measure my own professional development. Her unwavering support and guidance is indicative of the rigorous yet mutually supportive culture fostered by the faculty in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department at Stanford University, and I am forever grateful to all of those who helped create this intellectual community. Melinda Takeuchi's warmth and generosity helped foster a latent love of teaching, and all of my research going forward will bear the mark of her guidance and inexhaustible patience. I am indebted to Steven Carter and James Reichert for teaching me the literary and scholarly canon.

I also thank the many friends and colleagues who strengthened this project with feedback and suggestions for avenues of research I had not even considered. A far-from-inclusive list must begin with my senpai Andre Haag, for his invariably insightful guidance as well as unflagging support, and Molly Valor for feedback on early versions of this manuscript. Other colleagues who provided criticism and support include Michael Wert, Hilary Snow, Kevin Mulholland, Jason Protass, Adrian Thieret, Nicholas Witkowski, Andre Deckrow, Allain Daigle, the members of the Midwest Japan Seminar, the members of the junior faculty writing group at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and members of the Association for Asian Performance, who have been supportive of this project from its very beginning. I am indebted to Yoshihara Yukari of Tsukuba University for her mentorship during my Fulbright fellowship, for organizing public talks during my fellowship, and for insights and guidance on my research. I am also grateful for fellowship support from the Center for 21st Century Studies. Director Richard Grusin and my cohort of fellows offered the invaluable gift of perspectives from fields far removed from my own bubble, and this project is stronger for their insights. For foundational guidance early in my academic career, my deep thanks to Maria Tymoczko, as well as the East Asian and Translation and Interpreting Studies faculty at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

This project is also only possible through the generous institutional funding, both public and private, which allows research in the humanities to continue during these challenging times. This includes the Fulbright IIE fellowship, the Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford University, and Title VI National Resource Center. During times of increasing political, ideological, and financial pressure on the humanities, these and other institutions allow for the creation of new knowledge and pay back to society far more than they cost.

Finally, my deepest thanks to my family, without whom none of this work would have any meaning.

Introduction

No regrets! Struggle is the seed of happiness
That will cause liberty to bloom
The rights of the citizens must increase
To nourish the power of the people
If not, dynamite: *boom*![1]

So goes the song "Ballad of Dynamite" (ダイノマイト節) performed by politically active sōshi youth in the early and mid Meiji Period (1868–1912). The lyric's idealistic cry, couched within a threat of terrorism, encapsulates the imbricated virtue and violence motivating the political performance and music of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement in the years after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Tsuchitori Toshiyuki (土取利行, 1950–) recorded "Ballad of Dynamite" for his 2013 album of popular political Meiji Period songs which highlight the role played by music in shaping newly introduced notions of rights and liberty. In its chronology of politically resistant tunes reaching from deep into the past and extending into years well after the Meiji Period, Tsuchitori's album tells a story in song of the Rights Movement which could serve as the soundtrack of the argument of this book.[2] My aim in the chapters which follow is to shed new light on the adoption of concepts that motivated political theaters of resistance for nearly a century and even now undergird the collective understanding of the Japanese nation. Grounded in the aftermath of the Restoration, this monograph tells the story of the crucial role that performance—specifically embodied memory—played in the translation and changing understanding of the imported Western concepts of "liberty" (自由 *jiyū*) and "revolution" (革命 *kakumei*).

The players in this story are not simply or even primarily the names that typically drive historical narratives of Japanese performance, translation, and political history for the century after the Restoration. Certainly, leading intellectuals such as Nakae Chōmin and Nakamura Keiu were central figures in introducing new political philosophy through their translations of the work of Rousseau and J.S. Mill, respectively. Likewise, leading political figures including Itagaki Taisuke

and other elites in the oligarchy worked with various competing agendas to implement new policies, including the Meiji Constitution itself. In the common historical narrative, the translation of "liberty" and "revolution" was both a textual and political process overseen by these cultural and political elites. However, the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, the retroactive term for a broad swath of people and groups involved in post-Meiji Restoration cultural and political change, was also made up of disenfranchised youth and others who occupied some of the lowest rungs of society's hierarchy. This book shows how performers at all levels of society engaged in the process of determining how new political terms which articulated the relationship of the people to the state were understood in their new context. In other words, performance and performance texts enlisted elite and plebian circles in order to enact translation of new political philosophy. Indeed, the music and theater of the sōshi youth (sampled in Tsuchitori's album) proved popular across boundaries of class, status, and geography.

The "memory" part of the embodied memory in play in this book has two components. The historical moment between the Meiji Restoration and the adoption of the constitution was a key political, national, and cultural touchstone as future generations continued to contest the meaning of liberty and revolution in a Japanese context. The stories and performances of the Rights Movement inspired a century's worth of content in performance which in turn traced the translation history of liberty and revolution through performances in and about the Meiji Period in three key moments of political resistance in the development of modern Japan. The story begins during the Meiji Period itself in theater by members of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement in the 1870s and 1880s. It then rediscovers how the Meiji Period became a topic of performance in socialist plays that featured the aftermath of the Restoration by members of the Proletarian Theater Movement in the 1920s and '30s. Finally, it demonstrates how the Restoration Period became a lens through which to understand the post-war period in film and stage productions about early Meiji theater performed during the Occupation and postwar period after 1945. Thus, these performances represented new interpretations of a shared moment at the birth of the Japanese nation.

In addition to this function of memory for understanding the transformative role of the Restoration in later decades, the historiography of the Rights Movement was even framed as embodied memory at the very moment it played out on stage during the Restoration Period itself. In other words, before they became a subject in popular memory, Rights Movement dramatists themselves looked to the past to define their present. The first three Japanese translations of Shakespeare, for example, were Roman Plays. These scripts were doubly refracted historical imaginings: the memory of Rome seen through the lens of Elizabethan England transported to Meiji Japan. Dramatists and other performers looked to the history of Europe, Japan, and China to make sense of the momentous socio-political changes facing their new nation. As Marvin Carlson makes clear, the stage is a memory machine. In the case of the early Meiji Period, sometimes this machine produced "memories" which were brand new to both viewer and performer.

By seeing performance as a vehicle of translation, I highlight the synergistic relationship of these two seemingly discrete activities. Throughout the century of theater and translation history in these chapters, theater and film professionals produced performances that directly engaged with the historiography of the Restoration in order to understand questions introduced through translation that were fundamental to the national project begun in 1868. This study argues that the role of modern Japanese political performance was more than just a means of agitprop, but that it served as a tool for political movements to engage in translation in non-textual venues. The process of translation here is thus multivalent. It involves traditional interlingual translation of scripts, including translation into Japanese of Western language scripts; it also examines intra-lingual translations of history across time; and it takes as its subject inter-semiotic translations across genre and boundaries of mediation and liveness. In doing so it presents an example that troubles the traditional one-to-one correspondence of meaning. By examining the translation of liberty and revolution in multiple places and times with myriad ideological interests, this study sees translation as a many-to-many relationship. Further, by viewing translation as a performative process, it highlights the ways in which performance and translation served as a central hub for the generation, contestation, and propagation of foundational national narratives and concepts. Alternatively, viewing translation as a performative process allows for new ways to understand the emergence of modern Japanese theater. In contrast to conventional theater scholarship's focus on the development of Japanese theater from within the context of the theatrical world, I attempt to broaden our understanding of Japanese theater through its historical relationship to translation (literary and otherwise) and internationally informed domestic politics.

The historiography which served as the subject of this embodied memory proved conveniently pliable over time. The three periods of performance examined here, that of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, the Proletarian Movement, and the Occupation/postwar period, span an entire century. As such, it is not surprising that theater practitioners in each period would espouse different political ideals. Yet in the 1920s and '30s, and again in the 1950s and '60s, performers looked to the Meiji Period and the Freedom and People's Rights Movement to understand existential challenges on a national scale. Key figures in the Proletarian Movement and the postwar period developed strands of thought that were first approached during the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. Key questions included: What is the nature and role of revolution? Can the Meiji Restoration be thought of as a revolution that parallels 1789 France, 1688 England, and other European models? What is the relationship of the subject to the state? Where is the locus of authority in an ideal governing system? Fundamentally, to what extent should the translation/importation of foreign ideals be reshaped by domestic context, and to what extent should it be mobilized to restructure the same?

These questions over the nature of liberty and the locus of authority remain contested and relevant in our current context, perhaps even more so now than in most of our lifetimes. The recent global emergence of notions of "illiberal democracy", "authoritarian capitalism", and similar notions trouble the principles which

undergird the foundation of post-Renaissance political ideals and ostensibly motivate the actions of the post-World War II international order. These anti-liberal ideologies which reduce liberalism to economic prosperity find themselves prominently featured in the current political and intellectual landscape in Japan as well. Iwata Atsushi, for example, argues that the very notion of liberty which was introduced in the Meiji Period was and remains incompatible with Japanese political and cultural tradition.[3] This resistance to the ideals of liberalism, and a re-framing of the very notion of "liberty" and "freedom", unsurprisingly emerged shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Japanese economic bubble, and the death of Showa emperor at the end of the 1980s. The current re-negotiation of Japanese liberal democracy can be traced at least as far back as the 1990s, when calls for a "liberalist view of history" (自由主義史観) reframed notions of "liberalism". Right-wing figures argued that the Japanese should be "free" to view their history in ways that were not "masochistic"—in other words, citizens should feel at liberty to deny uncomfortable and inconvenient historical truths, particularly in relation to war guilt.

This reframing of the concept of liberalism in the 1990s coincided with the emergence of the new katakana word "*riberaru*" (リベラル) as a new translation word for "liberal". This new term, ostensibly a redundant translation word for the already widely used *jiyū* which had been the codified translation of "liberty" and "freedom" for well over a century since the Meiji Period, is more focused in meaning than *jiyū*. It is defined in large part by its antonym, "conservative" (保守), and it describes left-of-center political leanings which represents a smaller subset of the territory carved out from the existing lexical field of *jiyū*'s broader philosophical principles of human rights. In that sense, this new translation word disambiguates underlying assumptions of the relationship of citizen to government which *jiyū* put into play in the early Meiji Period (1868–1912).

The use of katakana in the rendering of this nuance of the notion of "liberal" accentuates the conceptual split between old and newer notions of liberalism by visually and conceptually separating notions (left-leaning politics from liberal democracy) that had previously been semantically and orthographically linked. As Chapter 1 of this book details, because the normative practice was for translators to use kanji compounds for new translation words in the Meiji Period, the use of katakana as an orthographic translation choice was unavailable to Nakamura Keiu in his translation of J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*. It was this text, and ultimately the word that he settled on in this translation, which served as the nucleus of the debate over the meaning of liberty in a Japanese context. It is thus significant that the term was partially re-translated in the 1990s when notions of liberty became newly contested. This new term *riberaru* does not carry any obvious etymological links to its Japanese root word. The katakana word, in contrast to the character compound jiyū, is an orthographic blank slate upon which a new lexical field was mapped without the interference of prior associations.

In the void left by this orthographic shift and obfuscation of the etymological familial links of the sign, the socio-political referent of liberty is as contested a term in contemporary Japan as it was in the Meiji Period. An article in the October

8, 2017, Asashi News (朝日新聞) goes so far as to ask, "What Exactly Does 'Liberal' Mean?" ("「リベラル」って何？"), and it wrestles with the way that liberty is claimed as a motivating principle for a wide range of political parties and politicians. The article points out that the word is understood in a variety of ways (解釈は多様だ) and that *riberaru* cannot be easily defined. Like libertarians and left-wing liberals in the United States, the term is claimed by Japanese politicians of diametrically opposing viewpoints.[4] Edano Yukio of the Constitutional Democratic Party particularly crystallizes this dichotomy in words which recall the rhetoric of the 2016 US presidential election in calling for "a return via liberalism to the golden era of Japanese society" (リベラルによって日本が輝いていた時代の日本社会を取り戻す). In other words, it is a conservative call for liberalism using language which resonates with the current global right-wing nationalist movement, a movement which also entertains notions of illiberal democracy.

This serves as just one current example of the historically fraught nature, as far back as the coining of the word, of the concept of liberty in Japan outlined throughout the following chapters. The fact that *jiyū* has its roots in what we now have labeled the early Meiji Period's Freedom and People's Rights Movement should not suggest that the wide range of figures and groups that fall under this umbrella represented a unified resistance movement demanding a liberal democratic political agenda. The title of Tsuchitori's album cited at the beginning of this introduction speaks to the challenge of framing the ideals of Meiji Period performers of resistance. It carries the mixed Japanese and English title "明治の壮士演歌と革命歌: the song of civil rights movement at Meiji Period in Japan (1868–1926) by Toshi Tsuchitori [sic]".[5] The title suggests a close connection between the sōshi, the notion of *kakumei* (revolution), and Western notions of rights (in the sense that those rights are literally rendered in English). It seems to suggest that the Rights Movement was a movement for civil rights, but also it suggests some degree of ambivalence with this equivalence by displacing the explanation across a linguistic divide. In other words, how exactly we should think of the Rights Movement is a muddy question. Central figures such as Itagaki Taisuke, for instance, were as concerned with the creation of a constitution based on liberal principles as they were in pursuing a colonial, expansionist foreign policy. Performers such as Sudō Sadanori and Kawakami Otojirō (along with their audiences), were as concerned about domestic income inequality as they were with the encroachment of Western culture into Japanese life and victory in the Russo-Japanese War. The broad lexical field included in the word *jiyū* allowed the newly imported notion to be put into use in pursuit of all of these political ends and more. This heteroglossia is mirrored in fragmented Western political notions of the term. The United States Constitution, for example, houses competing Western conceptions of political representation, with direct election for the House of Representatives and election by state legislatures for the Senate. Thus, the status of liberty as a translation word has always been contested terrain, even in its source contexts. The century of performance rooted in the embodied memory of the Rights Movement around which this book

revolves may be largely fuzzy and forgotten. Yet the implications of the Rights Movement–contested translation of liberty and the locus of authority over which the performances in the following chapters wrestled is very much relevant today.

The "embodied" quality of the embodied memory in this book is partly rooted in the fact that the stage was a key mode through which collective memory was created and shared. In the early twentieth century, liberty and revolution were sites of divisive conflict and rupture within the Japanese Proletarian Movement and prompted a newfound interest in the historiography of the Restoration. This enthusiasm manifested itself on stage in a genre of what I call "Restoration Plays" produced for the Proletarian stage that would later play an instrumental role in shaping post-war historical dramas made for film and television. This book looks at well-studied figures such as Kubo Sakae and Murayama Tomoyoshi, who were just two of many who produced examples of this genre. It also examines the work of Sasaki Takamaru, an often overlooked but influential translator, actor, director, and political activist who led both the Trunk Theater and the Avant-Garde Theater in the 1920s and '30s. In the postwar period, prominent film maker Inagaki Hiroshi, screenwriter Mishō Kingo, and playwright Fukuda Yoshiyuki picked up these threads in helping to understand the meaning of 1945 through the lens of 1868.

Throughout most of this nearly 100 years of Rights Movement performance, government and Occupation censorship policies dictated dramaturgical choices. To accommodate these challenges, performers actively sought alternative ways to embody the new notions of liberty and revolution. Could the ideologies of the present and future be performed using the conventions of the past? Alternatively, could the performance conventions of the past help to forge a path for a radically unstable future? What is at stake when actors modify, or even more drastically reject entirely, inherited performance conventions that had developed over centuries? In what ways can the performance traditions of the past be coupled with new modes to leverage liveness for political ends in an increasingly codified and mediated performance environment?

In other words, the "embodiment" of the embodied memory at play in this book is grounded in a specific kind of liveness in pursuit of a particular mode of inquiry. Meiji performers and their artistic descendants interested in the performance of resistance operated on the cutting edge of formal and legal challenges that had never before been addressed in Japan's long, sophisticated performance tradition. In the early Meiji Period, numerous barriers hindered politically motivated would-be thespians from co-opting the kabuki stage for political resistance. Yet mainstream kabuki was not the only available performance mode for political expression in the early and mid Meiji Period. The earliest translations of Shakespeare were drawing room dramas read collectively by friends or closet dramas read at home. The sōshi performances and songs of Rights Movement youths utilized street corners and informal *yose* performance halls. Performances of Kawakami Otojirō's song *Oppekepe* and his performances of the story of Rights Movement Leader Itagaki Taisuke's attempted assassination, which appear in Chapters 1 and 3, rely for their success upon audience engagement and unscripted violence by the audience and authorities. These performances utilize informal

spaces and blur boundaries between audience and performer, and these formal properties are as central as the content to their political effectiveness. In later years, when Rights Movement performance became the subject of its own embodied memory, theaters of the Proletarian Movement strove for that same level of spontaneity and chance by seeking ways to dismantle the fourth wall and to make the audience a more active contributor to the performative event. The Trunk Theater and the "moveable theater" movement, for example, looked to dislocate performance from what was seen as the confining space of the formal stage.

Concern over the threat posed by codified, script-driven performances appeared in new performance genres, and even productions in highly scripted forms featured representations of spontaneous performance and violent demonstrations. In other words, spontaneity was valued in both form and content. Beginning in the 1930s, the threat of increased mediation to the political effectiveness of performance prompted formal experimentation such as the stage-film hybrid genre of the "talkie *rensa-geki*" which puts liveness and mediation in dialog and works to theorize the role of liveness in an increasingly mediatized world. The unscripted and confrontational nature of Rights Movement performance was foregrounded even in performances which espoused more traditional dramaturgies. Sasaki Takamaru's *The Secret Account from Tsukuba*, explored in Chapter 2 features communal performances on stage of Rights Movement songs while those performers are preparing for certain defeat to government forces in the Chichibu Incident. Chapter 5 features three postwar backstage dramas of the sōshi theater which foreground the way that Rights Movement theater and song eschews the restrictions of the fourth wall. The performances in this chapter suggest a political impact on society at large that the loss of this kind of dramaturgy through the codification of passive viewing of theater has upon the political potency of performance. In this sense, too, Tsuchitori's album mentioned previously provides a musical companion argument to that in this book. His song selection spans a range, from tunes that originated in the Edo Period, to "Oppekepe" which was recently called the "origin of rap music", to music of the early socialist movement in the twentieth century.[6] These songs, which in performance embraced the free-wheeling nature of Meiji political performance, create an ideological and performative continuity across decades of change in political resistance. The political and artistic legacy of performance traced in this book thus finds a corresponding trajectory in political music.

Each of the three of pillars of Japanese culture at the center of this book—translation, performance, and politics—looms large in histories of the modern Japanese nation. Pairs of this triad undergird a strong body of scholarship, in both Japanese and English, which examines the political nature of translation in modern Japan, the performative element of politics in modern Japanese theater, and the role of performance in Japanese translation. Some of this work that *Staging the Resistance* is indebted to include Ayako Kano's *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan*, which explores the intersection of politics and early modern Japanese performance; Douglas Howland's *Translating the West*, which focuses on the political role of translation in modern Japan; and Indra Levy's *Sirens on*

the Western Shore, which explores the role of performance in Meiji Period translation. Yet, *Staging the Resistance* is located at the node of all three of these components of Japanese culture. As such, it is the first work to highlight the prominent space occupied at the overlap in Japanese society of performance, translation, and politics. In not recognizing this intricately imbricated condition, we risk an incomplete understanding of all three pieces of this puzzle, and by extension the larger context in which they operate. For example, the Proletarian Theater Movement, indeed the Proletarian cultural movement generally, is now almost exclusively remembered as a theater of socialist realism and avant-garde performance (as seen in two of the most widely noted examples of the movement, *The Crab Cannery Boat* based on the novel by Kobayashi Takiji and *The Skeleton Dance* by Akita Ujaku). The tri-pronged approach in this book helps to highlight the degree to which political resistance for at least a century after the Restoration was deeply concerned with the question of Japan's past in relation to its present.

Organization and chapter outline

This monograph follows the performative history of the Rights Movement, and as such is roughly chronological in its narrative. Yet there is inevitably some degree of rushing ahead and moving back to fill in the blanks. Chapters 1 and 2 share some texts and together tell a narrative spanning from the Meiji to early Showa periods. Chapter 3 backtracks in time to trace within a single chapter a similar temporal trajectory in a series of performances from Meiji to Showa. Chapter 4 focuses on a relatively narrow time span in the 1930s. Chapter 5 focuses on postwar performances from the early Occupation to the 1960s. In other words, this book is organized both chronologically and thematically.

Chapter 1 examines the translation history of "liberty" in the Meiji Period. It is a curious fact that the first three translations of Shakespeare into Japanese were the Roman Plays—*Julius Caesar* twice, followed by *Coriolanus*. By eschewing entries in the canon such as *Hamlet* and *A Midsummernight's Dream* that are more highly praised for their dramaturgical and literary qualities, not to mention their appeal with audiences, these translation choices foreground the nexus of translation, politics, and performance in Meiji Japan. Theater was widely seen by Meiji intellectuals as a key measure of European modernity and as a tool with which to advance the consciousness of the Japanese nation. These three scripts in particular were valued as a way to think through the newly imported notion of liberty. This chapter sets these translations of Shakespeare in dialog with Kawakami Otojirō's hit song *Oppekepe*, demonstrating the impact of performance across class divides.

While the Japanese word for "liberty", *jiyū*, was first coined in the translation of John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, the translation was complicated on both ends of the translation process. The concept for the word "liberty", and its associated "liberal democracy", has undergone radical change throughout the centuries in Europe after its first incarnation in the Greek city states. The Athenian notion of democracy required the participation of all citizens in governance. Mill's notion, however, reflects a competing notion of liberal democracy that relies upon representation