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Chindonya Today Japanese Street Performers in Commercial Advertising

Abstract

The *chindonya* are companies of street musicians engaged primarily in advertising for shops, stores, cabarets, and pachinko (pinball game) parlors. Their development is closely linked to the economic and cultural development of Japan since the end of the nineteenth century. Although once a common sight in urban Japan, the number of *chindonya* has greatly decreased since the late 1960s. Recently, however, some signs of a new interest in this nearly obsolete profession have appeared. The job profile has changed somewhat; job offers from rural communities are increasing and engagements as main attractions in large hotels and at festivals have begun to be booked. The music has even influenced some pop music groups, who are taking up the *chindonya* repertory. After a brief historical introduction and a description of the present-day situation for *chindonya* in Tokyo and Osaka, some of the possible factors responsible for the newly awakened interest in *chindonya* are discussed.

Keywords: *chindonya*—advertisement—performing arts—nostalgia—pop music

MANY READERS OF THIS ARTICLE¹ are probably familiar with Kuroyanagi Tetsuko's book, *Madogiwa no Totto-chan* 窓ぎわのトットちゃん, which depicts the childhood of a little Japanese girl at the end of the war. Before Totto-chan attends the alternative school Tomoe-gakuen, she goes for a few days to a normal elementary school. However, the teacher at this school finds that Totto-chan is ill-behaved and only causes trouble. For example, in the middle of class she runs to the window to see the *chindonya* チンドン屋 and even asks them to play something. All the children leave their seats and the teacher can do nothing but wait until the loud music is over (KUROYANAGI 1981, 16–17).² For the author, Kuroyanagi, the sight of *chindonya* during her childhood in Tokyo was still something quite common. Today most young Japanese no longer have this experience.

When I tell Japanese that I am interested in *chindonya*, it invariably causes a smile accompanied by a slightly embarrassed giggle and, after my interlocutor has reassured himself that I really mean *chindonya*, I am often asked, “*chindonya*—do they actually still exist? Naturally in my youth, back then...” Some admit that as children they were always a bit afraid of these curious characters.

Chindonya do still exist. We can still find these groups of colorfully costumed street musicians who are employed to advertise for shops, stores, cabarets, and pachinko parlors—though nowadays they are very rarely seen and have long since ceased being a common aspect of big city life.

They parade through the streets, usually in troupes of three to five, dressed in gaudy costumes (samurai, clown, etc.), wearing sandwich boards or car-



FIGURE 1. Chindonya. Drawing by Kohari Yoshio 小針美男. From the pamphlet of the National Chindon Competition in Toyama, 1990.

rying large banners with their employers' names and playing a mixture of Japanese and Western musical instruments. Once their music has attracted a crowd, they deliver their employers' advertising messages (*kōjō* 口上), distribute flyers, and sometimes even present a short dramatic performance such as a *chanbara* sword dance.



FIGURE 2. Takada Yōsuke with his Tokyo Chindon Kurabu.

Their indispensable instrument is the so-called *chindon* チンドン, which is made up of two traditional Japanese drums (namely, *ōdō* 大胴 and *shimedaiko* 締太鼓) and a small metal gong (*kane* 鉦) mounted on a wooden frame. This instrument, probably developed in the middle of the Taishō era³ (1912–1926) (ASAKURA 1986, 128), is usually played by a man. Accompanying this, and generally played by a woman, is a large cylindrical drum, the *gorosu* ゴロス (from the French *grosse caisse*). The melody instrument may be either a clarinet, trumpet, saxophone, or accordion. The *shamisen* 三味線 was often played in prewar times. Since there are now just a few, mostly quite old *chindonya* musicians left, cassette recorders are used more and more frequently. They are carried in a wooden chest on the back of the *chindon* or *gorosu* player. The repertoire consists of military marches (*kōshinkyōku* 行進曲, *guntai mōchi* 軍隊マーチ), old Japanese pop songs (*enka* 演歌), and songs (*hayashimono* 囃子物) from *kabuki* 歌舞伎 theaters or *yose* 寄席 variety theaters.

Though once a common sight in urban Japan, the number of *chindonya* has greatly declined since the 1970s. More recently, however, some signs of a new interest in this nearly obsolete profession have been noticeable. The job profile is changing somewhat; job offers from rural communities are increasing and engagements as main attractions in large hotels and at festivals have begun to be booked.

After a brief historical introduction⁴ I will describe the present-day situation based on personal observation and numerous interviews.⁵ I will then conclude by considering some of the reasons for the increasing popularity of the *chindonya*.

HISTORY

The historical roots of the *chindonya* troupes are to be found in the activities

of the street performers (*daidō-gei* 大道芸), especially the street vendors of the late Edo period (1600–1867). In 1845 in Osaka, a candy salesman named Amekatsu 飴勝 had the idea of offering his special oratorical and theatrical talents to advertise for a local variety theater owner. This is seen as the birth of *chindonya* since it was the first documentation of advertising undertaken not for the promotion of one's own products but rather for those of someone else. (The actual term "*chindonya*," however, does not appear until the early twentieth century.⁶) Later, under Amekatsu's followers, this new type of service was given the name *tōzaiya* 東西屋. For many years to come, skillful presentations of imaginative and pointed advertising slogans were acknowledged as especially characteristic to the advertising style in Osaka.⁷

In 1885, in Tokyo, a similar advertising business, known as *hiromeya* 広目屋, used brass bands (*gakutai* 楽隊) and marched through the streets. This *hiromeya* type of advertisement was started by Akita Ryūkichi 秋田柳吉,⁸ who had been much impressed by Western military music. In 1887, he left for America, where for two years he studied Western methods of advertising. On returning home, he took up lucrative job contracts, sometimes staging week-long parades throughout the whole of Japan to advertise for new consumer products of the Meiji era such as Kirin beer, various cigarette brands, and Lion toothpaste.⁹

This initial flourishing of advertising parades continued for about ten years at a time when industrialization was advancing. It was framed historically by the Japanese-Chinese war of 1894–1895 and the Japanese-Russian war of 1904–1905; it then followed a period of decline during the Taishō era.

In 1910, the mounting complaints about disturbances of the peace and obstruction of traffic brought about restrictions that limited the size of these parades to ten participants and three advertising vehicles. Other forms of advertising—newspapers, magazines, posters, advertising pillars, neon signs, and advertising cars—became increasingly important. Many musicians began to leave the *chindonya* troupes to play in movie orchestras or to work as "commentators" (*benshi* 弁士) in the silent film theaters that were becoming popular at the time.¹⁰

In the early 1930s, however, with the introduction of sound, their work



(俗風の配西東)

FIGURE 3. *Tōzaiya no fūzoku*
(Manners of the Tōzaiya) In
Kamigata 1931, no. 2, p. 93.



FIGURE 4. Handbill (*hikifuda* 引札) depicting the advertising of a music band for a miso shop in the Meiji era. From FUJIMOTO 1990, p. 27.

in the film theaters became superfluous¹¹ and many musicians turned back to the advertising business. Actors and variety hall (*yose*) artists followed suit.

The years preceding the war in the Pacific witnessed an overall economic boom and an influx of new products due to propagation of modern Western ways of life. As a result of this, the *chindonya*, who had in the meantime been forced out of the city centers into the poorer urban shopping areas (*shitamachi* 下町) and who performed only in small troupes, were once again finding enough work. According to the short novel *Hiromeya no michi*, written by Takeda Rintarō in 1935, there seems to have been a virtual flood of *chindonya* at that time (TAKEDA 1948).

The peculiar melancholy (*monokanashisa* もの悲しさ) that is associated with much of *chindonya* music today stems from this prewar period when the sentimental melodies of the *kayōkyōku* composer Koga Masao 古賀政男 such as *Sake wa namida ka tame-iki ka* (Sake—Tears or Sighs?) or *Kage o shitaite* (Yearning for Her Shadow) enjoyed enormous popularity. On the other hand, during the heyday of the advertising parades around the turn of the century, the preference was for invigorating march music (*kōshinkyōku* 行進曲). This dynamism that precedes the emergence of the actual *chindon* instrument was never again recaptured.

During the second world war, when the government propagated the slogan “Luxury is an enemy” (*zeitaku wa teki da* 贅沢は敵だ), the selling of fancy goods was forbidden, dance halls were closed, and the *chindonya* as well as other forms of street performance were prohibited. After the war, at a time when the economy to a certain degree recovered but the advertising industry still lagged behind, the *chindonya* again blossomed. This was further aided by an explosive boom in the number of pachinko parlors whose

advertising was carried out exclusively by *chindonya* until the late 1950s. During those years, many circus artists also joined these advertising troupes. Estimates are that there were about 2,500 *chindonya* in Japan at that time. Their way of life suffered from social discrimination but provided financial security. The majority of them advertised consumer products. There were also some who worked as operators of *kamishibai* 紙芝居 (picture-theaters).

As television commercials became more widely used, the interest in street advertising troupes decreased. As a result of the oil crisis of 1973 and the ensuing economic depression, the number of *chindonya* diminished drastically.

Since 1955 a national *chindon* competition (*zennihon chindon konkūru* 全日本チンドンコンクール) has been held annually in the city of Toyama.¹² This city, once renowned throughout Japan for its medicine salesmen (*baiyaku* 売薬), was completely destroyed during the war. In the 1950s, city officials saw in the competition a tourist attraction that promised a renewed popularity for Toyama. For the competition, participants are divided into groups of three. The *chindonya* are then allotted to a sponsor for whom they must perform a four-minute advertisement on stage. The presiding jury is made up of city officials and businessmen.

Until 1972 there had been about fifty groups participating each year, but in the 1980s the number dropped to less than 20. In 1995 an upward trend seemed to begin: 21 groups appeared that year, 29 the following year, 32 in 1997, 30 in 1998, and 35 in 1999.

However, these figures say nothing about the sum total of *chindonya* in Japan because each *chindonya* agency may send several groups; furthermore, not all *chindonya* wish to take part in the competition.

PRESENT SITUATION

Today there are an estimated 30 to 35 *chindonya* troupes in Japan.¹³ Since there is no national union organizing the individual agencies it is difficult to carry out an exact count. Before the war there were several attempts to form unions but they all failed. The majority of troupes are located in Tokyo, with a few in Osaka; on the southern island of Kyushu there are just two *chindon* agencies. In Hokkaido there is a newly founded young group.

In Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, Horiguchi Saburō 堀口三郎, at age 84 (in 1999), probably is the oldest active *chindonya*. He manages his business with his wife and four elderly freelance employees, who also have other jobs. Himself a son of a *chindonya* business owner, Horiguchi founded his agency (named, Atariya Engei Sendensha アタリヤ演芸宣伝社) after the war following other unsuccessful business ventures. It once had around ten full-time members. There were daily jobs, often even several jobs, to be fulfilled. The

troupe used elaborate props, danced, staged little scenes with sword fights, or ran about on high stilts. Horiguchi, who could play various brass instruments as well as the *chindon*, during jobs demonstrated magic tricks and performed clever feats—skills that he probably enhanced when he was a member of a theater group or when he performed comedy (*manzai* 万才). Managing to retain something of this colorful atmosphere today, this agency still does about five jobs per month, such as at grand openings and final closing sales for stores, at sports events, or at parties for business firms or homes for the elderly.

CHINDONYA IN TOKYO

There are about fifteen *chindonya* agencies in and around Tokyo today and a small number of freelance musicians (*gakushi* 楽士) who play saxophone or clarinet with the various *chindonya* groups.¹⁴ Almost all of these are family businesses that, even if they have been around for two generations, cannot afford to hire outsiders as permanent employees. Should one agency happen to have two job contracts for the same day, they go to one of the other agencies for temporary help. Most of the *chindonya* are over 60 years old. Born in 1917, Ōi Kanji 大井勘至 of the Kikunoya 菊乃家 is the oldest *chindonya* in Tokyo. He was just fourteen when he and his mother started their business. Recently, he has taken on three new apprentices: two young men in their early 20s and one man in his mid 50s who had worked as a librarian at the University of Tokyo for 25 years.¹⁵

Tokyo's youngest independent *chindonya* is Takada Yōsuke 高田洋介, born in 1960. He began his apprenticeship in his early 20s, then went on to work as a freelancer (*dekata* 出方) and since 1994 has been in the process of establishing a business of his own. Concerned that it might be taken by the elder *chindonya* as an affront, he has not yet put a listing in the yellow pages. Takada Yōsuke is unmarried and until now has hired employees only on a part-time basis. Because he receives only an average of seven to eight contracts per month (in 1998 it was even less), he also works as a craftsman on the side.

There is no middle generation of *chindonya* between the ages of 45 and 55. *Chindonya* from this age group who had not already changed professions by the 70s stopped in 1989 when the emperor Shōwa was terminally ill and all outdoor public performances were prohibited. The younger *chindonya* from this generation could still find other job possibilities; the older ones could not.

In Tokyo today there are a number of young *chindonya* between the ages of 25 and 35 who have studied with masters and who would like to start advertising agencies of their own but jobs are scarce.



FIGURE 5. Poster of the 41st National Chindon Competition in Toyama, 1995.



FIGURE 6. Takada Sendensha (Saitama Prefecture) in front of a pachinko parlor.



FIGURE 7. Chindon Kikunoya advertising a special sale in the Daimaru department store (Tokyo).



FIGURE 8. Hayashi Kōjirō and members of his agency Chindon Tsūshinsha (*tōzaiya*).



FIGURE 9. Ariga Chindon Purodakushion Kozuruya.



FIGURE 10. Members of the Chindon Tsūshinsha and Tokyo Chindon agencies in Toyama.

Type of Work

Well over half of the advertising jobs for *chindonya* in Tokyo come from pachinko parlors. The work hours are from ten or eleven in the morning until five in the evening with several breaks throughout the day. They are sometimes hired to play for a store opening or sale, to perform at special events and festivals, or even for television commercials, though this is rare. Because there are so few of these advertising street groups left today, the *chindonya* sometimes get calls from all over Japan, regardless of their location.

In the past it was not uncommon for advertising campaigns to last for several days, but today a *chindonya* group is usually hired for a single performance, for which it is often necessary to travel long distances. This means they can no longer afford to invest in elaborate special props—like those used at the competition in Toyama—and therefore the connection of the performance to the product they are advertising is not immediately obvious. Today, since the art of verbal promotion (*kōjō*), which traditionally was an art of not merely praising the product but of inventing slogans with clever word play, is no longer cultivated, a job often consists of mere announcements void of imaginative promotion.

The number of participants is usually determined by the contractor. The day's wages are then negotiated and a group is assembled by the head (*oyakata* 親方) of the *chindonya* agency. At least three days prior to the advertising performance, a street permit (*dōro shiyō kyōkasho* 道路使用許可書) must be obtained. In certain densely populated areas such as Shinjuku or along the Ginza, *chindonya* parades are illegal; the prohibition, however, is not necessarily enforced.

The members usually meet in the office of the *chindonya* advertising firm before beginning the job. There they dress in their costumes, apply makeup, and take the subway or train to work. Their conspicuous appearance sometimes gives rise to derogatory remarks but this is considered part of the job.

As a rule, the open-air appearances take place regardless of weather conditions. In rainy weather, the instruments are put into protective, plastic covering should the employer not wish to cancel the performance.

The skill of a *chindonya* musician (*gakushi*) is measured not just by his technical and musical skills but also by his ability to assess and cleverly integrate the ambiance on the streets. If the passers-by are predominantly elderly, nostalgic songs should be chosen; for performances in front of pachinko parlors, old pop songs such as those about the yakuza are suitable; for children, theme songs from television series are more likely to be played.

Organization

The master-apprentice (*oyakata-kojata* 親方子方) relationship that was once characteristic of the structure of the *chindonya* agencies is rarely found nowadays. However, the Kozuruya Agency is still a prime example of the old system. I will describe it briefly here.¹⁶

The owner, Ariga Tomeyoshi 有賀留喜, also known as Kozuruya Kōtarō 小鶴家幸太郎, born in 1926, dealt in the black market after the war until 1950 when he became an apprentice to a *chindonya*. In 1960 he opened the Ariga Chindon Kozuruya enterprise. It was expected that his wife (his junior by four years) would help him as a *gorosu*-player even though she never liked the work and to this day finds it embarrassing to run around the streets in costume.

Kozuruya has taken part in the Toyama competition every year since it began in 1955. His team has been awarded the first prize five times. In 1982 he flew to Los Angeles to make a television appearance in the capacity of an official *chindon* representative for the whole of Japan. In 1987 he was honored with an invitation to the National Theater in Tokyo.

In the fall of 1996 Kozuruya's work force consisted of himself (*oyakata*), his wife (*okamisan* お上さん), eight apprentices (*kojata*), one part-time employee (a 65 year old), and two relatives (a grandson and niece) to assist.

By the fall of 1998 some of the apprentices had left. One was a young woman who after seven years of apprenticeship turned to a completely different line of work; two were men who are trying to make a living as freelance *chindonya*. Kozuruya had at that time five disciples, one of them a 30-year-old man from Tunis.

Payment

Chindonya are always paid on the day of the performance. The fee paid by the *oyakata* to the members is based on the number of actual performances (*hito genba* 一現場) and not on the number of hours invested (a system which is comparable to freelance jazz musicians). The payment received by individual members is decided by the *oyakata*, who also delegates the jobs.

The distribution of payment might be as follows: approximately 50% goes to the agency as a commission fee, with the remainder divided among the participating employees. If the owner and his wife are among the participants, they could take up to 75% of the fee.

Any discussion among the apprentices about this pay system is discouraged by the *oyakata*, for whom it proves to be quite lucrative. It also explains why a master is reluctant to let his apprentices become self-employed. Should apprentices from another *oyakata* be hired as so-called *dekata* (part-

time help), they must be payed more than the regular apprentices. It is therefore advantageous for an *oyakata* to have many *kokata*.

Education

Though it was once customary for apprentices to live with their *oyakata*, today that is no longer the case. From the very beginning of the apprenticeship, the *kokata* participate actively in the jobs, either by handing out flyers or by carrying a flag with the advertising logo. It is said that to learn to handle a flag properly one needs three months; for the *chindon* instrument three years. To be a good *chindonya* actor or musician, though, one must have at least ten years of experience; it is the ability to make appropriate tempo adjustments while walking and dancing and to integrate the ambiance at the job site that is of real importance.

There is little actual instruction given to apprentices. After a brief introduction, they take up the *gorosu* drum, follow the *chindon*-playing *oyakata* and learn by observation and imitation. It is much the same for the musicians (*gakushi*), who are responsible for mastering their (wind) instruments as well as the musical repertoire. Some apprentices do take private dance (*buyō* 舞踊) or *Edo sato-kagura* 江戸里神楽 lessons.

There are several reasons for the lack of a formal curriculum. Theoretical explanations are not customary in the handing down of traditional arts in Japan. In music, for example, the learning process is effected almost exclusively through imitation, without resorting to verbal, that is, non-musical instruction. The earlier *chindonya* did not regard their profession, which suffered strong discrimination, to be worth seriously propagating. Each *chindonya* developed a personal style of his or her own, and the tricks were carefully guarded from the competition. Unwillingness on the part of the elder *oyakata* to pass on their knowledge is often lamented by the new generation who see *chindonya* as a very special type of advertising skill whose preservation they are at pains to ensure. In order to promote the most comprehensive study and preservation of the profession, the Tokyo youth often hold meetings at which they share their experiences and to which older artists are not invited.

CHINDONYA IN OSAKA

The five active *chindonya* agencies that exist today in Osaka present a situation that is very different from Tokyo. In Tokyo there are still a number of very old *chindonya* and family businesses that have been practicing the profession for two generations. The prewar tradition is not yet completely broken and informative documentation about it can still be gathered. In Osaka the *chindonya* profession was never split up among so many small family

businesses but has been dominated since the 1920s primarily by the *tōzaiya* style, which emphasized the artistic presentation of street cries (*kōjō*) and a very limited number of other techniques. After the war, however, this style of advertising fell completely out of fashion and the Tokyo *chindonya* method took over.

The tendency to emphasize the music and a colorful atmosphere was greatly advanced by the founding of the *chindonya* enterprise called Aozora Sendensha 青空宣伝社.¹⁷ The founder, Saeki Yōsan 佐伯陽三, joined a traveling actors troupe before the war, then worked for a film company, and in 1948 assembled the Aozora Gakudan 青空楽団, an eighteen-man band that divided into small groups and went about the streets playing the newest pop songs (*ryūkōka* 流行歌) and selling songbooks. In the same year that the business began to decline, he turned to *chindonya* advertising, contracted several traveling actors (after many of his musicians quit out of protest), and, after winning a battle with the more conventional *tōzaiya*, who disdained the wearing of wigs and makeup, became so successful with his colorful advertising parades that his operation soon employed fifty to sixty members.

In 1985, despite a general depression in the *chindon* industry, there were still seventeen *chindonya* working for Aozora Sendensha.¹⁸ They were almost all over the age of sixty, and some of the musicians earned additional money by taking on other evening engagements.¹⁹ By 1998 the business employed only four other members beside the manager Saeki Chieko 佐伯知栄子 and the music came from a cassette recorder. Since the business is based in one of the traditionally poorer sections of Osaka (Nishinari-ku), the old *chindonya* do not expect very high wages and the group can work for low fees. Lack of business opportunities is not a problem; the agency takes on a promotion whether it calls for a sandwich man, an advertising car (*senden-kā* 宣伝カー), or a hot air balloon (*adobarūn* アドバルーン), and will even provide decorations for occasions such as clearance sales.

Of particular importance today, inside as well as outside Osaka, is the Chindon Tsūshinsha ちんどん通信社 agency and its founder, Hayashi Kōjirō 林幸治郎. Born in 1956, Hayashi is the only representative of a self-employed *chindonya* from the “middle” generation. It is largely due to his example that the *chindonya* profession is generating renewed interest.

Hayashi Kōjirō, received a degree from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto in business administration. He saw and heard a *chindonya* for the first time when he was still a student and amateur trumpet player. He was so fascinated that he founded a club on campus to research this commercial art. Following an apprenticeship with the Aozora Sendensha, he turned independent in 1984 and, together with his former wife, established his own agency.²⁰ The emergence of this new-generation *chindonya* with a university

degree at a time when the profession was experiencing its lowest ebb attracted considerable attention, which was not limited to professional circles (where the phenomenon was greeted with skepticism). Numerous newspapers and weekly magazines have run picture accounts and reports expressing sympathy and admiration for this young man who entered voluntarily into a society of outsiders and who, despite the extreme hardships accompanying *chindonya* work, carries on this “nostalgic,” “typically Japanese” profession that seems out of place in an age of mass media.²¹ A slight tendency toward romantic glorification of the “good old days,” when the poor but jolly and colorful *chindonya* practiced their trade, cannot be overlooked.

Type of Work

In contrast to Tokyo where most of the work done by *chindonya* is for pachinko parlors, in Osaka pachinko parlors discontinued this form of advertising following a self-imposed censorship in the late 50s. Since then, the main occupation of Osaka-based *chindonya* troupes has been advertising in shopping areas (*shōtengai* 商店街) and open markets (*ichiba* 市場), which once numbered in the hundreds. With the rise of large department stores this number has declined drastically. Today *chindonya* advertising is generally used by small retail shops, restaurants, video shops, and beauty parlors. The Chindon Tsūshinsha firm also carries out campaigns for politicians, city officials, and major telephone companies such as NTT and KDD. In addition, more and more job offers are coming in for company functions, wedding parties, and summer festivals for communities in Osaka and the outlying rural towns. At such events, Hayashi Kōjirō and his employees perform on a stage. In addition to musical numbers, the audiences might be entertained with theatrical acts or performances of the nearly extinct traditional *daidōgei* 大道芸 street art forms such as, for example, *nanjin tama sudare* 南京玉すだれ.²² Occasionally, for example, at the opening of a new retail store, nothing more than a lovely show will be requested, without any explicit advertising message. According to Hayashi, the *chindonya*'s function at such events goes beyond mere entertainment and approaches the religious function formerly filled by the ancient *geinō* 芸能 folk arts, in which cleansing rituals for new homes (*jichin-sai* 地鎮祭) or songs and dances of benediction (*iwau-gei* 祝う芸) were performed. Since there are almost no practitioners of these old art forms left today, the *chindonya* are called upon.²³ They are still capable of creating an auspicious atmosphere in costumes that appear fairly traditional, though in fact they are closer in character to cabaret.

The Hayashi Kōjirō group, for example, is summoned each year by a Shintō shrine in the city of Tenri where they go from house to house (*dankā mawari* 檀家廻り) in the congregation, playing a few measures of music for

which they receive a small cup of sake and a modest gift (*go-shūgi* 祝儀).

For Hayashi, the correct evaluation of the rural or urban street atmosphere as it affects the selection, the number and volume of musical pieces, and the announcements and overall presentation, is an extremely important and critical skill that can only be acquired through extensive practical experience. For him, the real fascination of the *chindonya* profession is found in the knowledge of human nature that can be gained from the streets, and in communicative aspects of street performing, which are evident in the various reactions of the passers-by.

Organization

The agency, under the directorship of Hayashi Kōjirō, had about twenty employees in 1998, of whom five had permanent positions and monthly wages. Two of these are former university classmates. The others work under exclusive contracts (*senzoku tarento* 専属タレント).

Chindon Tsūshinsha procures about 700 job contracts a year, which their staff, divided into three groups, is able to manage. Besides the purely *chindonya* work, the agency takes on other types of jobs, from sandwich board advertising to the complete organization of festivals at Shinto shrines (*matsuri* 祭) or Buddhist temples (*ennichi* 縁日). By taking on engagements from Japanese businesses based abroad, they have also made appearances in America, and in the cities of London, Rome, Paris, and Singapore. Since 1997, the Chindon Tsūshinsha has released two CDs and two videotapes.

REASONS FOR A RENAISSANCE

After this brief description of the present-day situation for *chindonya* in Tokyo and Osaka, some of the factors responsible for the newly awakened interest in this profession should be discussed. In doing so, a distinction must be made between the *chindonya* advertising form and its new-found role as a folkloric street or stage performing art.

Change in the Profession's Image

Whereas about twenty years ago the emergence of a young *chindonya* with a college degree was cause for a flood of newspaper articles, today, as *chindonya* become increasingly socially accepted, well-educated *chindonya* are seen less and less as anomalies. The social profile of the *chindonya* and with it the motivation for choosing this profession has changed decisively.

In the past the *chindonya* occupation was often chosen as a last resort by those who for one reason or another had no prospects in the regular job market. The advertising agencies functioned as a social buffer, as a protection

from lawlessness, and to restrain potential criminal elements in the interest of public order. *Chindonya* were tolerated by society in general, though strongly discriminated against.²¹ Even today, most Japanese are familiar with the saying, *Baka, kaba, chindonya, o-mae no kâchan debeso* (Stupid, idiot, *chindonya*—your mother has a protruding belly button); a saying that children used to shout at each other during squabbles. “*Chindonya*” was a derogatory term with a sense similar to “ragpicker” or “gypsy” among the English. All of the older, currently practicing *chindonya* were exposed to such humiliations. The momentous choice of this profession meant, as far as one’s social career was concerned, a dead end from which there was no turning back.

Today, on the other hand, young people come to *chindonya* with no prejudices or inhibitions and not, so to speak, “out of necessity” but purely out of interest. Discrimination does not bother them as much because they have chosen their role consciously and without shame. Many consider their employment in a street advertising group in one or more of the following ways: as a first entry into the job market; as an alternative means of earning some money; as a basis of reference; and/or as an aid in the subsequent choice of a fulfilling career. In fact, Hayashi explains that one of his duties as head of the Chindon Tsûshinsha agency is to help young people to find their way in a conforming and middle-class society through *chindonya* work in the streets, which involves diverse human contacts and observing human behavior. Inhibition about presenting oneself in public has greatly decreased. Formerly, persons came to *chindonya* with certain artistic skills already developed, such as those of traveling actors, speakers, circus artists, or musicians. During their apprenticeship under the direction of a *chindon* master, they used these skills in street advertising. Hayashi has ascertained that since the 1990s, on the contrary, young people often just out of school come and want to perform in the street without having learned anything.

Street Advertising as a Form of Interactive Communication

Today, in the era of mass media, advertising represents a form of one-sided communication from sender to receiver with no direct feedback. The *chindonya*, on the contrary, say that personal contact with potential costumers is an important element of their occupation through which the delivery of the promotional information, if clever and unobtrusive, should be a pleasant experience. *Chindonya* hand out flyers, converse with passers-by, clown with the children, and sometimes also fulfill musical requests.

Just how much this advertising strategy, with its goal of community, actually promotes sales can only be shown through a study of its effectiveness. As far as I know no such study has yet been undertaken. It is possible

that the effectiveness of the big marches and parades at the turn of the century has never again been achieved. At that time, according to press reports, the main emphasis was on the egregious marketing of new products, but later on advertising content became less of an issue. The performers themselves now occupy center stage—performers who prior to World War II were seen through the lens of mild social criticism,²⁵ but who are now regarded with nostalgia.

If advertising can be seen as an expression of the times, as symptomatic of social values and personal notions of lifestyle, then the return to the *chindonya* advertising form is perhaps indicative of much more than the state of the art of advertising at the end of the twentieth century. It is remarkable that in the West old forms of advertising are also being quoted and copied, and how advertising (in the much-discussed postmodern age) increasingly avails itself of its own history.

According to Reinhold BERGLER, advertising is only constructive when it is concerned with “wishes, aspired values and latent desires, with the world in which the consumer wishes to live and thus ultimately with the things of the future” (1989, 35). If nostalgically glorified historical relics are now considered to be the “things of the future,” we can claim that, as was written in a Japanese advertising slogan, “The society of the future has the taste of an old home town” (*Mirai shakai wa furusato no aji*) (ROBERTSON 1996, 35).

Sentimentalization and Exoticization

In connection with *chindonya*, the word *natsukashii* 懐かしい occurs repeatedly. It can best be translated as “to long for,” or “to feel homesick for,” but actually—and this is probably symptomatic—there is no adequate English translation for this much-used Japanese word. It means, for example, the vivid memories, the smell and taste of brief moments in the past such as are invoked by Marcel Proust’s description of savoring a little oval “Madelaine” Madeira cake, a description that requires several pages of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. It is also similar to the feeling that may still be awakened in Europeans by the mention of an organ-grinder: that more or less bittersweet memory of a postwar urban childhood when one threw a few pennies down from the window to the war-ravaged musician in the back alley.

Whereas formerly in Japan a sentimentalized interpretation of the *chindonya* life was at most reserved for those far outside the profession, it is now beginning to spread among the ranks of *chindonya* themselves. On the part of the younger *chindonya*, the word “*natsukashii*” is readily used to describe if not to glorify themselves. They market themselves as a source of touchingly sentimental feelings and present themselves as the antithesis of the

common in Japan, as the Other from a bygone time. Hayashi of the Chindon Tsūshinsha sees nostalgia (he uses the word *nosutaruji*) as the main lure with which the *chindonya* draw favorable attention to themselves.²⁶ To this end, they represent themselves as outsiders by dressing-up as clowns or as free spirited, Robin Hood-like, samurai outlaws: that is, they project themselves for their own advantage as a kind of picturesque marginal character, whose existence seems indispensable to every society.²⁷ In the role of *chindonya*, one can encounter these characters in person without putting oneself in danger.

Perhaps the success of Chindon Tsūshinsha, which receives significantly more job commissions than all other *chindonya* advertising agencies, has little to do with how “real” its mostly young *chindonya* are, at least in respect to their social origins, but is instead based on the style they have adopted.

How do we explain the current longing for nostalgia, the appeal of “identity,” of so-called tradition (*dentō* 伝統), that has resulted in a renewed interest in folk arts (*minzoku geinō* 民俗芸能, *daidōgei*), the same folk arts that were nearly extinct, and, stripped of their hereditary contexts, are now brought on stage as folkloric attractions?²⁸

Japan’s growing interest in her own heritage has been evident for almost three decades now. Since the 1970s, with the growth in prosperity and leisure time, the increasingly organized and commercial pursuit of what is called “traditional” has found its way into a wide section of the population. This is evidenced by the increasing number of local societies, clubs, and cultural centers (*bunka sentā* 文化センター) offering courses in every possible type of traditional art and folkloristic artistic skill, as well as by the increasing number of television programs about cultural treasures. One of the most frequently used catchwords in Japan today along with “*kokusaiika*” 国際化 (internationalization) and “*gurobaruzeishon*” (globalization) is the word “*furusato*” 故里, literally “the old village.” It does not necessarily refer to an actual existing village, but rather in the emotional sense to the general character of such a village, its friendly, familiar atmosphere, which is perceived as “traditionally Japanese.” *Furusato* has a spatial and a temporal component; it is a distant place that constitutes an antithesis to the present. The “old village” represents, accordingly, the ideal focal point for exoticizing and sentimentalizing. It functions, as KELLY has put it, as a “necessary, romantic counterpoint to the ‘modern’ vision of a New Middle Class society” (1987, 13). According to BARDSLEY, “the opposition Japan Past / Japan Present creates a nostalgia for an imagined Japanese past which was less westernized, less materialistic, and more ‘human’ than the affluent, fast-paced, sophisticated Japan of the present” (1997, 2). *Furusato* is the *Heimat* (homeland), which Ernst BLOCH at the very end of his *The Principle of Hope* says “shines

into the childhood of all and in which no one has yet been" (1995).

According to various scholars, a prerequisite for the *furusato-būmu* (*furusato* boom) in which Japan presently finds itself is the equally oft-quoted and only superficially opposed "internationalization."

As early as 1961, Hermann BAUSINGER wrote that

The dissemination of the current concept of *Heimat* thus directly coincides with the dissolution of the horizon.... The two movements must be seen both as running in opposite directions and as connected. Because the whole world, as it were, had turned into a stage, the backdrop of what pertains to *Heimat* was erected in place of the former horizons to counter the demolition of the force field. (1990, 55)

According to this statement, a nostalgia for the "old village" would serve as a compensatory strategy (stemming from a fear of loss) to insure one's cultural autonomy. "Nostalgia is one of the means—or, better, one of the more readily accessible psychological lenses—we employ in the never-ending work of constructing, maintaining and reconstructing our identities" (DAVIS 1979, 31).

The Japanese magic word "*dentōteki*" (domestic/traditional) is not so much a temporal concept as a value judgement, a designation for that which is in every sense right. In the representation of an "authentic Japan" the actual "age" of a "tradition" plays a secondary role. The nostalgic longing is less for the authentic Japanese past than for a sentimentalized notion of a premodern Japanese life. In reality, presenting a picturesque or even romantic image of the past—and this is often just what we are dealing with—means not just an escape from the present but from history as a whole. Through the "presentation of the historical" the historical is, as BAUSINGER emphasizes, removed from the dimension of time and in a sense de-historicized (1990, 82, 85, 87).

This sentimentalization, or the establishing of a nostalgic relationship, however imaginary, between past and present, frequently goes hand in hand with exoticization. The sociologist KURITA Isamu wrote in 1983, in connection with the renaissance of Japanese traditions, that "The very internationalness of the lifestyle makes the traditional Japanese arts appear quite alien and exotic. We look at our tradition the way a foreigner does, and we are beginning to love it" (KURITA 1983, 131). Kurita does not believe that the sudden interest in traditional Japanese arts, which can be observed not just in established adult circles but also in the youth subculture, can be traced solely to sentimental feelings for the culture of the homeland. Rather, he sees in this turning toward the past evidence of a complete estrangement from

that past so that the bygone can appear anew, fresh and pristine. According to Kurita, the fact that Japanese find their traditions so attractive reveals the extent to which they have become alienated from these traditions. For this form of preserving tradition, with its orientation toward the picturesque, Bausinger conceived the term “Binnenexotik” (interior exoticism), which, “because the exotic no longer exists beyond a fixed horizon but is experienced in the midst of a discoverable world, and because conversely the quality of *Heimat* is no longer confined to the original area of the *Heimat*,” blends the formerly opposite tendencies (BAUSINGER 1990, 59).

It is perhaps revealing that the eyes of the Japanese were often first opened to the fascination of their own culture by Westerners (e.g., Ernest Fenollosa), so that in Japan today one speaks of cultural reimportation (*gyaku yu'nyū* 逆輸入). In this connection it is worth noting that some of the young people who entered the *chindonya* profession were influenced by Fellini's film *La Strada*. Enthralled by the portrayal of European street artists, they had the idea, for totally pragmatic reasons, of looking for a similar way of life in their own country.

From the beginning, *chindonya* was a form of advertising whose attractiveness lay in the “exotic” mixture of domestic and Western, of traditional and modern elements. Today, *chindonya* is just as “typically Japanese” as, for example, the foods *kare raisu* (curry rice) and *anpan* (bean paste filled bread), which appeared around the same time.

Comforting Role

Along with the generally observable tendency towards sentimentalization and exoticization of the Japanese folk arts, there is yet another factor that seems to play an important role in the *chindonya* renaissance: the increasing social longing for excitement and enjoyable diversions to compensate for an unsettling everyday existence. “The more the administered world spreads,” Theodor W. ADORNO wrote, “the more events are appreciated which offer the consolation that things are not quite so bad. The yearning for that which has remained undamaged by the process of socialization is mistaken for the very existence of the same and even for some supra-aesthetic essence” (1956, 68).

In the summer of 1996, thirteen employees of the city of Kumayama in Okayama Prefecture formed a non-professional *chindonya* group that appears in homes for the elderly, in hospitals, and at all types of events. As its leader explained, the group was formed as a reaction to the numerous frightening occurrences during the last few years in Japan: namely, the Hanshin earthquake, the poison gas attack by the Aum religious sect, and the instability in the financial market. In these dark times one should try to

create, at least for a brief moment, a feeling of inner peace and charm (*uruoi* 潤い) for everyone. On the Internet, the group has a so-called “*Chindondo*” melody, which is accompanied by the following lyrics: “The good old *chindonya*, wandering *kabuki* or *chindonya*, changing the world from dark to light, people both young and old clap their hands, *chinchira dondon chin dondon*, *chinchira dondon chin dondon*.”²⁹

Chindon Workshop in Osaka

Under the slogan “Chindon for stress management” Hayashi Kōjirō, head of Chindon Tsūshinsha, conducted a four-month long workshop entitled “Let’s *chindon* (Let’s ちんどん)” at the Sumiyoshi Liberation Center (Sumiyoshi Kaihō Kaikan 住吉解放会館)³⁰ in Osaka during the fall of 1998. The announcement for the course, which was free of charge, read, “Let us joyfully free ourselves from stress through *chindon* participation.”³¹ The goal was to work out a *chindonya* performance for the stage at the Sumiyoshi Liberation Center as well as a parade, which would be done through the streets of the neighborhood. Of the thirty-nine participants who signed up at the beginning, twenty-five (ten men and fifteen women) were still enrolled after two months. Every age group from about 20 to 70 was represented. For the most part, the participants were not from Sumiyoshi-ku; many had come from quite far away.³² Some heard of the workshop through the sponsor’s announcements, many through the newspaper or TV, and several through Chindon Tsūshinsha’s home page on the Internet. With the exception of two of the young female participants, everyone had at some time seen *chindonya*, though some had seen it only on TV. The motivations for participating in the workshop varied: five of the older people had had experience in the traditional Japanese arts such as *taishū engeki* 大衆演劇, *rakugo* 落語, *nankin tama sudare*, *kyōgen* 狂言, *minyō-shakuhachi* 民謡尺八 or Japanese dress (*wasō* 和装). A few played a musical instrument (e.g., clarinet, saxophone, accordion, violin, guitar, drums, or *sanshin* 三線 [i.e., a lute from Okinawa]). Eleven participants said that they had had no previous musical or artistic experience whatsoever. They were interested in dance, in the makeup technique of the *chindonya*, or in the *chindon* instrument. Five of the participants were fans of the pop group Soul Flower Mononoke Summit, who use the *chindon* instrument in their music and who also play songs and marches from the old *chindonya* repertoire. For the closing performance, nine of the participants wanted to play the *chindon*. Since they of course did not have an instrument of their own and a *chindon* costs about 80,000 yen, Hayashi Kōjirō showed them how to build an instrument themselves by fastening onto a wooden frame children’s drums and a metal ashtray as a substitute for a bell (*kane*). Japanese songs and *chindon* rhythms would be

practiced each week and, as far as I can tell, aside from the common musical experience, the workshop actually did have a “stress relieving” effect. Until the spring 1999 a few of the participants still got together every once in a while to practice.

Chindon Influence on Pop Music

The great Hanshin earthquake in January of 1995 inspired the pop group Soul Flower Union³³ to take up the *chindon* drum and various traditional instruments. Just three weeks after the earthquake, Soul Flower Union was playing within the ruins of Kobe to try to “cheer up” the victims. As there was no electrical power, they exchanged their electric guitars for the Okinawan *sanshin* lute, and used the Korean *chango* drum, clarinet, accordion, and, most importantly, the *chindon*. Ever since then they have been travelling regularly from their Osaka base to Kobe, especially to the poorer Nagata district, visiting numerous temporary housing settlements to comfort and entertain the people. Their audiences, which mainly consisted of the elderly, reacted enthusiastically to the music, singing, and dancing by both laughing and crying.³⁴ Gradually, a new sound and repertoire of songs began to emerge. “We didn’t do anything on purpose,” says the vocal leader Nakagawa Takashi 中川 敬, “it’s *chindon* but there’s also a lot of other styles. It just came together naturally.... We also started getting requests from people. ...I wrote new lyrics, though, because the original lyrics weren’t that interesting” (FISHER 1996, 31). The newly developed style became such an important part of the Soul Flower Union repertoire that the band—under their alternative name of Soul Flower Mononoke Summit—released two entire collections of this *chindon*-influenced music on CD.³⁵ On these CDs Japanese, Okinawan, and Ainu traditional songs, old popular urban songs (*enka* 演歌), many of which popularized Western democratic ideals, “labor songs” (*rōdōka* 労働歌) of the Taishō era that were inspired by the Russian Revolution, even the “Internationale” and an American marching song, all are given the *chindon* treatment.

“We all suddenly realized we were just a poor imitation of Western bands,” explained Nakagawa. “The rock music we had been playing had a rhythm which fit the English language, but we had been trying to fit the Japanese language into that rhythm and it wasn’t right. It’s as if you’re stealing something that doesn’t belong to you. Then I heard about the cultures of the Ainu, Okinawans, Native Americans, Koreans. I started to realize that we needed to be more involved with our own Japanese culture” (POTTER 1996, 24). When they sing or talk about the plight of minorities and the situation in Japan, they most certainly make some people think rather more critically than they would otherwise have done. In this sense, they compare

themselves to the former *enkaishi* 演歌師, itinerant musicians who performed songs of political resistance at the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁶

Because Ki/oon Sony, their major recording partner, refused to include the *chindon* CDs, they were released on the new independent label Respect. The rejection was not so much due to the musical content as to an oversensitivity to certain words in the songs. One such song is *Fukkkō bushi* 復興節 (Revival Song).³⁷ It had been the most popular song about the ruins left by the great Kantō earthquake that struck the Tokyo area in 1923, so it seemed particularly appropriate. Ki/oon Sony objected to the new lyrics by Nakagawa, which mention the place name Nagata, an area in Kobe which is still associated with *hisabetsu buraku* 被差別部落, areas in which people who were subjected to discrimination once lived. Today, Nagata is known for its Asian, in particular Korean, immigrant population. The text of *Fukkkō bushi* says that there are songs in Nagata in Kobe and that there is money in Nagata in Tokyo (which is the area where the national government's main buildings are located). According to Nakagawa, the recording company feared "that the song might give the idea that some Koreans in Japan are poor and this would be a bad image" (POTTER 1996, 24). In 1996, when Soul Flower Union played at the Ryūkyū Festival in Tokyo, Nakagawa again was given a severe warning by a government official to "watch his lyrics" (FISHER 1996, 31).

Nakagawa Takashi was greatly influenced by the Okinawan musician Daiku Tetsuhiro 大工哲弘 and his CD *Uchinā Jinta* ウチナージンタ, released in 1992, in which Daiku mixes Okinawan music and old Japanese songs with *chindon*.³⁸ Daiku was introduced to the *chindon* instrument by Shinoda Masami 篠田昌巳, a former jazz and rock saxophone player who had joined the *chindonya* Hasegawa Advertising Company in Tokyo and released the first *chindon* CD, *Tōkyō Chin Don*.³⁹ The members of Soul Flower Union acquired some instruction in the techniques of playing *chindon* from Hayashi Kōjirō of the aforementioned Chindon Tsūshinsha in Osaka, and they were joined by Ōkuma Wataru 大熊 亘, a former clarinet player of the *chindonya* Hasegawa agency in Tokyo.

CONCLUSION

The present situation in the world of *chindonya* seems to be characterized by two types of groups. The first is made up of the large number of very old *chindonya* with at least forty years of professional experience. The second consists of a few motivated young people who, by their initiative, would like to help the *chindonya* profession to gain renewed popularity by promoting their own cause and by drawing upon elements of the *daidōgei* and *taishū-*

shibai. Some from the second group find the elders' unwillingness to pass on their tradition and lend support regrettable. The elder *chindonya*, however, have never understood their profession, which was rarely chosen voluntarily, to be an art (*gei*). One young *chindonya* told me that the elder *chindonya* can hardly conceive the notion of making other people happy with their street performances.

This is especially true in Tokyo, which has been a stronghold for the *chindonya* profession since the founding of Hiromeya. The tradition of numerous small advertising businesses was carried on here almost without interruption even after the war. The result has been that the few remaining *chindonya* in Tokyo today comprise a fairly closed, guild-like world in which a young newcomer has almost no chance of entering. In Osaka, on the other hand, whose characteristic *tōzaiya* tradition was almost completely demolished by the war, there has been virtually no old-school competition and no conservative critical establishment with demands for stylistic authenticity. The situation in Osaka meant that there were no major obstacles for Hayashi Kōjirō to start his agency, Chindon Tsūshinsha.

Whether or not the initiative of a very few young people can give the profession of the *chindonya* a new chance for survival remains to be seen. It is precisely among the young *chindonya* in Tokyo that critical voices can be heard saying that an exaggerated emphasis on events and folkloric performances will be the downfall of this traditional advertising profession. On the other hand, as stated in an article published in the newspaper *Mainichi shinbun* on 23 February 1994, it is particularly during the present, economically troubled times that this profession, offering such an affordable method of advertising, could enter a new stage of prosperity. This potential, as discussed some years ago, does not at present seem likely to be fulfilled. In 1999, after Japan's economic situation again turned downward, most street advertising initiatives were receiving fewer and fewer commissions.

In recent years several factors have contributed to a general increase in public awareness of the *chindonya*: newspaper and TV reports, the dynamic activities and clever marketing strategies of the Chindon Tsūshinsha in Osaka, the use of the *chindon* musical instrument and repertoire in a folkloristic genre of pop music, a general growth of interest in everyday culture, and, perhaps, even the 1993 novel *Chin don jan* チン・ドン・ジャン by Nara Hiroaki, which won the Subaru Prize in literature. In August 2000 the first National Chindon Exhibition (Zenkoku Chindon Hakurankai 全国ちんどん博覧会) took place in Tokyo.

Despite this increased public awareness, however, a genuine revival for the *chindonya* as a widely accepted style of advertising is not in sight.

NOTES

1. My research was supported by a three-month fellowship from the Japan Foundation, which was awarded in the autumn 1998.

2. In the English version the term “*chindonya*” has been translated simply as “street musicians.”

3. When Ōi Kanji 大井勘至, leader of the Kikunoya 菊乃家 enterprise, started his business around 1931, the *chindon* drum set had a knobbed gong or *dora* 銅鑼 on the left side and a *kané* and *taiko* on the right. The noisy “music” was called *dongajaga-dondon*. At first the *chindon* player went alone. When the flute (*yokobue*) and the *shamisen* were added, the *dora* became too loud and was exchanged for the *shimedaiiko* (Interview 14/9/1996).

4. For a historical overview see, for example, ASAKURA 1986, 85–208, ASAKURA 1991, HORIE 1986, HORIUCHI 1935, HOSOKAWA 1991 and 1992, KATA 1980a, 131–40.

5. Between 1996 and 1998 I interviewed members of the following companies to whom I am immensely indebted: Adachi Sendensha 足立宣伝社 (Fukuoka), Aozora Sendensha 青空宣伝社 (Osaka), Ariga Chindon Purodakushion Kozuruya アリガチドンプロダクション小鶴家 (Tokyo), Atariya Engei Sendensha アタリヤ演芸宣伝社 (Maebashi), Chindon Sanoya ちんどん綾乃也 (Okayama), Chindon Tsūshinsha (Tōzaiya) ちんどん通信社 (東西屋) (Osaka), Hananoya 華乃家 (Osaka), Kirakuya 喜楽家 (a.k.a., Asuka Chindon Kurabu アスカチンドン倶楽部) (Tokyo), Kikunoya 菊乃家 (Tokyo), Tokyo Chindon Kurabu 東京チンドン倶楽部 (founded by Takada Yōsuke 高田洋介) (Tokyo).

6. According to KATA (1980b, 135), the word *chindonya* has been used since 1929 or 1930 to mean advertising companies. According to HOSOKAWA (1992, 10), the term was used already in the 1870s in reference to certain street turmoils or noisy street vendors but the exact meaning is not clear.

7. Early descriptions are to be found in the journal *Kōkoqu daifuku-chō* 広告大福帳 (Meiji 38 [1905], no. 2, pp. 23–31 and no. 3, pp. 11–17) and in the journal *Kamigata* 上方 (Shōwa 6 [1931], no. 2, pp. 91–95). The article in *Kamigata* documents a talk given by Kagetsutei Kurimaru 花月亭九里丸, son of Tanbaya Kurimaru 丹波屋栗丸 (九里丸), who played an important role in the development of the *tōzaiya*. For further comments see HORIE 1986, 64–96, ASAKURA 1986, 142–55.

8. Akita gives a short talk on his life in the journal *Kōkoqu daifuku-chō* (Meiji 38 [1905] no. 2, pp. 17–23). For a commentary on this essay see ASAKURA 1986, 136–41 and HORIE 1986, 21–23.

9. See the vivid description and photographs in RAION HAMIGAKI KABUSIIKIGAISSIA 1973, 86–88. See also UCHIKAWA 1976, 138–41.

10. In 1899 Akita Ryūkichi did the advertising for a Vitascope film in the Kabuki-za. One of his collaborators, Komada Kōyō 駒田好洋 took over the role of the *benshi* and in so doing founded this profession (see HORIE 1986, 28 and NAKADA 1983, 83–84). A testimony to Akita’s early interest in the cinema can be found in the journal *Kikan Nihonbashi* 季刊日本橋 (Shōwa 11 [1935], no. 4, p. 112). A photograph of a *tōzaiya* (O-Hiromeya) group, who is doing the advertising for a film in Kobe around 1900 is given in SATŌ 1995, 15.

11. In the year Shōwa 7 (1932) there was a disturbance caused by 3,000 suddenly unemployed *benshi* and musicians that spread over the entire country (HORIE 1986, 110).

12. In the past there were various other *chindonya* competitions in Japan. At the present time, in addition to the Toyama competition, there is an annual competition in the small town of Ichinomiya (Aichi Prefecture).

13. A few of them are presented in the journal *Sarai* サライ (1993, vol. 5, no. 11, pp. 32–45). See also TSUNASHIMA 1992.

14. See ASAKURA 1986. GOTŌ (1991) describes a working day of four *chindonya* agencies or *sendensha*: Midoriya, Kozuruya, Miyakoya, and Takada Sendensha.

15. For more information on the Kikunoya, see ŌYAMA 1995, MINAMI 1998.

16. See also ONO 1991. Ono studied ethnology at Wakō University and chose *chindonya* as the theme of her bachelor's thesis after she happened to see one of these, as she puts it in my interview, "colorful and nostalgic" (*natsukashii*) advertising troupes performing in front of a pachinko parlor. She had initially planned to study the *chindonya* for only eight months, until her paper was finished, but wound up becoming a *chindonya* herself for seven years.

17. For more information on Aozora Sendensha, see HORIE 1986, 126–32, 156–91.

18. See also the report in *Asahi Gurafu* 朝日グラフ 9/5/1982.

19. According to Hayashi Kōjirō, some musicians used to wear sunglasses for their *chindonya* appearances because this type of work and its connection with such advertising businesses embarrassed them. This was the case with the recently deceased Mr. O. (1906–1998) who, during an interview with HORIE Seiji, would only give the name "Yamano" and would only let himself be photographed in profile with sunglasses (1986, 181–87). He was the grandson of a famous *tōzaiya* entrepreneur, had received a real musical education and had worked as a pianist for silent films. Until shortly before he died, he played trumpet during the day for Aozora Sendensha and in the evenings played in a piano bar.

20. Together with his then-wife, Hayashi has published two books about the early stages of the Chindon Tsūshinsha and their lives as *chindonya*. See HAYASHI and AKAE 1986 and 1993.

21. See, for example, the magazine *Shūkan Hōseki* 週刊宝石, 17/4/1982, pp.74–82, which contains an anonymous article with the headline: *Shūshoku nanqa yamete chindonya ni narō! —Ninji bakuhatsu!! Naniwa no gakusei chindonya* (Let's give up stuff like employment and become *chindonya*!—Explosion of popularity!! A university student from Osaka as *chindonya*).

22. The *nanqin tama sudare* consists of a number a bamboo canes that are loosely strung together. While giving rhythmically accentuated statements (*kōjō*), the performer, who may be accompanied by a drum and a flute, throws the bamboo blind in a skillful way to create different images, such as a weeping willow, the fishing pole of Urashima Tarō, the cottage of a charcoal maker, or the Tokyo Tower. The art, which actually has no connection to Nanjing, is said to have been originated in Gokayama 五箇山 in Toyama Prefecture. While singing and dancing the *kokiriko-bushi* こきりこ節, the villagers used a bamboo blind for the demonstration of various figures. During the Tokugawa period the *tama sudare* entertainment spread under various names all over the country. In Edo it was first called *nanqin tama sudare*. According to Shibatsuji Takashi 芝辻たかし, leader of the *daidōgei bunqa ātisto kyōkai* 大道芸文化アーティスト協会, the name derives from the text of the old *kōjō* messages, where it is said that such a *tama sudare* is not found in the Netherlands (*Oranda*) or in Nanjing (*Nanqin musō tamasudare* 南京無双玉すだれ). Today this entertainment form has regained popularity (see MAGOSHI 1998, 18–21).

23. The employer requested that they "create an atmosphere of celebration" (*omedetai fun'iki o tsukutte kudasai*).

24. In some older magazine articles the actual names of the *chindonya* were, out of discreetness, not given (see, for example, *Asahi geinō* 朝日芸能 17/12/1970, pp. 40–43 and *Gekkan pen* 月刊ペン 1977, no.5, pp.172–79). Depictions of how *chindonya* were discriminated against can be found, for example, in the short novel *Chindonya no musume* チンドン屋の娘 written by HIRAIWA Yumie (1976), and in the film *Oyabaka Taishō* 親馬鹿大將, which was put out in 1948 by Daiei Tokyo, was directed by Sunohara Masahisa 春原政久, and starred Yanagiya Kingoro 柳家金語楼.

25. See, for example, the novel *Chindon sekai* チンドン世界 written by MURŌ Saisei (1990).
26. *Nosutaruji ga buki nandesu* (nostalgia is a weapon). See also the article *Chindonya nao kenzai* (*Chindonya* still active) in *Nihon keizai shinbun*, 4/7/1992.
27. In this connection, we might consider the extent to which advertising, with its exaggerations and sometimes taboo-breaking caricatures, makes use of ancient “trickster” or jester techniques to promote commerce, rather than, as was traditionally done, to criticize social norms.
28. In this regard it is interesting to look at the *Ibento tsūru jiten* イベントツール事典 (Performance-Service Catalogue) in which entertainment artists and people from show business advertise their services for public and private parties. Under the heading “Entertainment, no.10: Package Event” (*pakḱēji ibento*), one finds “Noh and Kyōgen Theater” alongside the offerings of “Western Show,” “Orange Pumpkin for Halloween,” “*Chindon* Variety Show,” and “Fashion Show.” The “representative, traditional arts,” according to the advertisement, are presented so as to be “easily understandable by people who have never seen these forms of theater before.” Under the heading “Performer,” it is stated that one can order a package event with traditional *daidōgei* (street performing) artists who will perform such shows as *Banana no tataki uri*, *Nankin tama sudare*, *Gama no abura uri*, *Ame saiku* and even *Iwai-mochi tsuki kogane-kai* (the traditional and auspicious preparation of rice balls at the New Year) (see INTAKUROSU KENKYŪSHO-IHAN 1996).
29. *Mukashi natsukashii chindonya aruku kabuki ka chindonya kurai yo no naka akaruku kaette oi mo wakaki mo tebyōshi de chinchira dondon chin don don chinchira dondon chin don don*
(See: <http://www.netforward.or.jp/kumayama/kuma4.html>)
30. The Sumiyoshi quarter of the city was a location where the discriminated *burakumin* traditionally used to live.
31. *Minna de tanoshiku, chindon pafōmansu de sutoresu kaihō*.
32. Some participants came from Kyōto, Itami, and Kyōbashi.
33. The group was formed into a punk band in 1993 when the female duo Mescaline Drive and the male trio Newest Model merged.
34. See the interview with Soul Flower Mononoke Summit by FURUTANI 1997, 4–9.
35. Interestingly, both CDs were on the shelf of a large bookstore in Osaka under the heading “*daidōgei*” (street performing arts).
36. The first *enka* were protest songs performed on street corners in the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (Jiyū Minken Undō 自由民権運動) of the 1870s and 1880s.
37. *Fukḱō bushi* is a song based on a traditional Chinese melody. The original words by Soeda Satsuki 添田さつき (grandson of the famous *enka* singer Soeda Azenbō 添田啞蟬坊) have been rearranged by Nakagawa Takashi. The track *Fukḱō bushi* can be found in Europe on the Strictly WorldWide X5 compilation on Piranha Records (Berlin), CD-PIR 1041.
38. See the interview with Daiku Tetsuhiro in FURUTANI 1998, 2–7.
39. See the interview with the musicians Shinoda, Ōkuma, and Fujii in TANAKA 1991, 65–74.

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