

TRADITIONAL FOLK SONGS OF JAPAN

Selected and arranged by Ryutaro Hattori from his own collection

Part One: East Japan Folkways Ethnic Library Folkways Records FE 4534 A/B

SORAN SONGS (Soran Bushi)
OIWAKE SONGS (Ezashi Oiwake)
DANCE-SONGS AT BON IN HOKKAIDO
THE SONG OF RICE-HUSKING
SONGS OF SAITARA (Songs of Toshima)
SONGS OF PICKING SAFFLOWERS
SONGS OF SAWAUCHI (Sawauchi Zinku)
THE SONGS OF MOUNTAINS (Oyamako Bushi)
DANCE-SONG AT NIKKO
SONGS OF KUSATSU THE HOT SPRING
COAL MINER'S SONGS OF JOBAN
BON SONG OF CHICHIBU (Chichibu Ondo)
SONG OF YAGI-SHUKU (Yagi Bushi)
THE HACK-DRIVER'S SONG OF HAKONE
SONGS OF SADO ISLE (Sado Okesa)
SONGS OF KISO (Kiso Bushi)
SONGS OF INA (Ina Bushi)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET



TRADITIONAL FOLK SONGS OF JAPAN

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Part Two: West Japan Folkways Ethnic Library Folkways Records FE 4534 C/D

DEKANSHO SONG
SONGS OF SHIGESA (Shigesu Bushi)
SONGS OF THE STONEMASON
THE SONG OF THE SHELLFISH-GATHERER
THE SONG OF BATHING IN THE HOT SPRING
SONGS OF SHIMOTSUI (Shimotsui Bushi)
SONGS OF YASUGI (Yasugi Bushi)
SONGS OF TOSA (Yosakoi Bushi)
THE COAL MINER'S SONG IN KYUSHU
SHINTARO SAN OF THE MOUNTAIN
SONGS OF KURODA (Kuroda Bushi)
THE MOWER'S SONG
HIE-POUNDING SONG
SONGS OF KUMAMOTO
LULLABY OF ITSUKI
OHARA SONGS OF KAGOSHIMA (Kagoshima Ohara Bushi)
THE SONG OF HOTOTOI AT LOOCHOO (Hatoma Bushi)
ASADOYA YUNTA OF OKINAWA

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BRIEF NOTE ON JAPANESE FOLK SONGS

An American acquaintance of mine said dispassionately after hearing a half dozen Japanese folk songs, "They all have the same sorrowful, mournful tune." The look on his face showed that he wasn't in the least interested.

One month later when he was about to return home after traveling along various parts of Japan, this American came to see me again. When I met him, he began to sing the Kuroda Bushi (Imayo), an old Japanese folk song, and dance with rather uncertain steps to the tune.

Some years earlier, a large American publishing company sent me a letter asking for permission to publish in some primary school books the "Yosakoi Bushi of Tosa" and the "Coalminer's Song in the Joban District", which I had edited in a collection of Japanese Folk Songs.

Foreigners usually prefer folk songs with a light, rhythmical tune. The songs which the foreigners know, however, are only a small part of the great number of Japanese folk songs -- songs which have rich varieties of tune, meaning and rhythm.

Folk songs, whose origins and authors have long since been forgotten, have been handed down through the ages from generation to generation. It is only natural that Japan, which has a long history, should be rich in folk songs.

Foreigners who hear Japanese folk songs for the first time usually say they all sound the same -- sorrowful and melancholy -- and they cannot tell the difference one from the other. If they listen carefully, however, they will discover that there is a difference. The folk songs of the Tohoku district in northeastern Japan differ from those of the Kyushu district in southern Japan.

Japanese folk songs differ with each district, but they all have one common characteristic. They are all in double or quadruple time, and there isn't a single one that has three beats. This is in striking contrast to the Korean folk songs, which are all in triple time.

Anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of music will immediately recognize that Oriental music is based on the pentatonic scale. But very few people know that there is a difference in the pentatonic scale of Chinese music and that of Japanese music.

This should be an interesting subject for music students, but I will limit my explanation to the following: The melody of Chinese music is based on the pentatonic scale -- do-re-mi-sol-la, while the Japanese music scale is do-re-fa-sol-la.

No one knows exactly how many Japanese folk songs there are, but there are over 300 representative folk songs of the various prefectures.

There are work songs of farmers and fishermen, as well as songs for wedding ceremonies and banquets. Perhaps the most popular are the "Bon" lantern festival songs, which are sung on the Buddhist All Souls' Day.

The "Bon" festival dance are held every year on August 15-16 to mourn the dead, but they are now devoid of all religious significance, and are sung by the people as popular songs. Every summer, a center stage is built in each town or village in Japan and the

neighbours gather in a circle around it to sing and dance.

"Bon" dance of Japan is of such unique character that a similar dance type is found nowhere else in the world. The same is also true of the "Bon" songs which accompany the dances. The "Bon" dances and songs which came into popular favor in feudal times are still being danced and sung from generation to generation.

In the present collection there are 36 pieces selected as representative from all that have been gathered from the islands of Japan. It is to be remembered, however, that there are many songs other than those in the selection that may be as melodious as those selected and equally popular or frequently sung in some parts of the country.

So compactly arranged and so many of folk songs as in the two LP records have not appeared so far in Japan. Listening to the songs in this collection, one may obtain a fair knowledge of Japanese folk songs.

These songs are being sung by singers of many sorts scattered throughout the land. Some singers are experts or professionals, while others are amateurs. The names of these singers are not mentioned herein, many of whom have given me a great help, for which I express hereby my sincere thanks. Many songs have been recorded in the recording studios or broadcasting rooms, while others have been taken down from the songs sung by farmers or fishermen in their own seats of activity. Therefore, it is natural that the sounding effect varies in the records.

Since these songs are of pure Japanese origin, sometimes they were sung without musical accompaniment at all. The combination of Japanese musical instruments, was not uniform. On many occasions, the accompaniment consisted of only samisen, koto, or shakuhachi (bamboo flute). Again, sometimes an old woman sung her simple or rustic songs without any accompaniment.

It may be interesting for students of folk songs to know the history, the derivation, and the background of each song, but because of space

limitation, such has been dispensed with.

By listening to the songs given here, one may know that the position the Japanese folk songs occupy is unique in the world, and for those students who are concerned with musical theory and tone-scale, the Japanese folk songs will be a new field of study.

For all those who are interested in the Japanese folk songs my hope or wish is to give them as many opportunities as possible for listening to the songs sung or seeing the dances performed to the songs, in the future.

The translations of the songs in this collection into English have been done by Mr. Iwao Matsuhara. They are only to give the meaning of each song to those who are unable to understand the Japanese, and are meant not to be sung along with the melody.

Ryutaro Hattori
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Suginamiku, Tokyo

TRADITIONAL FOLK SONGS OF JAPAN

EAST JAPAN - A

- 1) Soran Songs
(Soran Bushi)
- 2) Oiwake Songs
(Ezashi Oiwake)
- 3) Dance-Songs at Bon,
in Hokkaido
- 4) The Song of Rice-husking
- 5) Songs of Saitara
- Songs of Toshima
- 6) Songs of Picking Safflowers
- 7) Songs of Sawauchi
(Sawauchi Zinku)
- 8) The Songs of Mountains
(Dyamako Bushi)

EAST JAPAN - B

- 1) Dance-Song at Nikko
- 2) Songs of Kusatsu the Hot
Spring
- 3) Coal Miner's Songs of Joban
- 4) Bon Song of Chichibu
(Chichibu Ondo)
- 5) Song of Yagi-shuku
(Yagi Bushi)
- 6) The Hack-Driver's Song of Hakone
- 7) Songs of Sado Isle
(Sado Okesa)
- 8) Songs of Kiso
(Kiso Bushi)
- 9) Songs of Ina
(Ina Bushi)

Soran Songs (Soran Bushi)

Yaren soran, soran, soran, soran,
Hear the songs of sea-gulls
Over the ocean waves
And you can't give up
The life on the sea.

Yoichi is a goodly town
You've to visit once at least,
For the golden waves
Are seen upon the sea.

If the sea-gulls on the offing
Were to speak as we do,
Your message I would hear from them
Or the message I would send to you.

Soran Song is the most famous folk
song of Hokkaido. It is so named
from the shouting to mark time,
like yo-ho, as it is originally the
shouting at drawing up herrings.

Oiwake Songs (Ezashi Oiwake)

Oshyoro or Takashima,
'Tis too far away to go to,
But Utasutsu or Isoya at least
I wish to get to.

Is it my beloved's boat
Out upon the offing of Shiragami,
As it goes away fading
Like the clouds and mountains?

Oiwake Songs were originally ditties
sung by drivers of horses in the
province of Shinano; thence passed
to the province of Echigo, and then
to Hokkaido. In Hokkaido they are
called Matsumae or Ezashi Oiwake.

Dance-Songs at Bon, in Hokkaido

Over the stormy waves,
(what of them?)

Over the rough sea of Tsugaru,
(what then?)

To this island of Yezo,

When did you come?

At the age of seventeen, I came,
(what of it?)

The age of budding, as it were,
(what then?)

And now am twenty-one, in full bloom.

Haa, the famed produces of Hokkaido,
(what are they?)

There are many of them,
(what then?)

The most famous is the dance at Bon,

The dance of this land of ours.

Five ri, nay, even six ri,
(what of it?)

Beyond the mountain steepes,
(what then?)

Have you come to see me;

How could I let you go away!

This song has become lately one of
the most favorite folk songs in
Hokkaido.

The Song of Rice-husking

Run, run, run the mortar;
As it runs, the bags of rice are
piled up higher,
In the shape of chrysanthemum.

Not even a single grain of rice
Should be wasted,
For it takes eighty-eight processes
To make it good to eat.

This is a bumper year,
The rice-ears are well ramified;
In the store house in the back of
house,
There's a mountain of rice.

One thousand bags of rice
For Daikoku the god of fortune
And a big festival for all of us.

One of the folk songs in Yamagata
Prefecture, the North-Eastern
Provinces.

Songs of Saitara

On Matsushima the isle
Stands Zuiganji the Buddhist temple;
As the sea is in front
And the mountain on the back,
Shoals of fish may abound there.

At Ishinomaki the famed port,
Still more famed is Mt. Hiayori;
In the east and in the west
A view may command Matsushima,
And Toshima - all before you.

Songs of Toshima (Toshima Zinku)

Row, row, row,
Row your double oars
So that the port
May come near to you.

With the ship of full sail
Bound for Sendai the town,
For Ishinomaki the port.

In Miyagi Prefecture it is customary
that Songs of Saitara and Songs of
Toshima are sung in succession.

Songs of Picking Safflowers

From Mt. Chitose downward,
The Safflower seeds have been sown,
So the flowers are now all over
Yamagata,
(Come, O come and pick the
flowers).

The picking of flowers, ah, if it
were done only with you,

I'll never mind if the thorns may
hurt me,
(Pick, O pick the flowers
right away).

The clear skies overhead,

Beautiful is the field of Safflowers
in full bloom,
(Pick, O pick the flowers).

The flowerly June has come to
brighten the world,

Love'll come out from the flowers
picked,
(Pick, O pick the flowers
right away).

At the beginning of the present cen-
tury, the Safflowers ceased to be
cultivated in Yamagata Prefecture.
Song of picking Safflowers is the
only one which survived.

Songs of Sawauchi
(Sawauchi Zinku)

Sawauchi produces
Three thousand koku of rice,
An offering to be made,
And stored in the godowns.

Oshida the village lies
In the midst of ferns,
Kaisawa in the wild field,
Ogiharu in the heart of a mountain.

Better to lullaby the baby
Than to dance to Jinku songs.
No other than the parents
Can lullaby the babies.

Even in the night of moon,
I was escorted home,
How can I go home alone,
In this moonless night!

Sawauchi, a mountainous village, is
well known for producing rice in
Iwate Prefecture.

The Songs of Mountains
(Oyamako Bushi)

The Song of mountain
From where does it come and go over?
From the town of Kakuno, Semboku
County,
In the province of Akita.

Long have I waited, waited
For your coming;
But you have gone away
Like a cloud astray.

You are the blowing wind,
And I the fallen leaves blown;
Where I shall settle down
May depend upon you the wind.

You are the peony,
And I the butterfly;
Hovering over the flower,
I may end my day.

The thought of you
May bedim even the eye of day;
I can hardly set my hands
Upon samisen the three-stringed
guitar.

Akita Prefecture is most abundant in
folk songs in the North-Eastern part
of Japan. We may pick up Oyamako
Bushi as the representative one of
Akita folk songs.

Dance-Song at Nikko

What is famed at Nikko -
The vermilion colored bridge,

With the running stream far below
Named the Daiya river.

Go on the street at Nikko
Along the age-old trees;
Cool is the breeze
In summer time.

I wish to show -
Even for a moment
To the parents at home,
My figure of Waraku dance.

Dance the dance;
Beat the drum
So the music may reach
The world of moon.

The dancing song which spreaded from
Nikko, the town of the famous Nikko
shrine in Tochigi Prefecture.

Songs of Kusatsu the Hot Spring

Kusatsu is a goodly place.
You may take home with you
The fragrance of spar in your sleeves.

Climb Mt. Shirane,
And you'll find the flowers all
abloom,
Kusatsu the town may be in bloom,
too.

Kusatsu is a goodly place
For skiing in winter,
All the talks of the town
Are heard in the hot bubbling spring.

The songs are comparatively of late
composition and expressive of the
characteristics of the hot springs
at Kusatsu in Gumma Prefecture.

Coal Miner's Songs of Joban

From six in the morn,
I work in the mine,
Carrying a lantern to and fro -
All for my parents' sake.

Three thousand feet down the mine
And you are in hell;
Ere long you'll lie among the dust
Of an abandoned mine.

You explode dynamite,
You'll find some fragments left over;
And the fragments will bring
Gold enough for you.

Listen, you young girls,
Wives of coalminers
Will become widows
The moment the rocks fall.

Joban coal mines in Ibaragi Prefect-
ure have given birth to the song
since the beginning of the Meiji era.

Bon Song of Chichibu
(Chichibu Ondo)

Birds, too, fly
Over the mountain top -
That cloud-swelling,
Cloud swelling
Mount of Chichibu.

Look at the chapped hands
That are trimming charcoal sacks.
By the time that
Your hands are chapped,
Karisaka ridge'll be snow-capped.



Night fete when Chichibu Ondo is
sung throughout the day in Saitama
Prefecture.

Flowering Nagatoro is
All rock-floored;
Awaiting whom,
Awaiting whom I wonder;
O look, the misty moon rises!

As Chichibu is isolated region, this
song retains its local color. The
song is sung in the hope and joy of
the rich harvest of the year at the
time of Bon, the festival of the
dead, which takes place usually in
the middle of July.

Song of Yagi-shuku
(Yagi Bushi)

Suzuki Mondo was a samurai.
Though having a wife and two chil-
dren,
He visited gay quarters day and night.
Being unable to suffer any longer,
O Yasu, his wife, broached the
subject one day: -
'Tis not from jealousy that I speak...

This is widely popular both in Gumma
and in Tochigi Prefecture. The
words often vary according to the
place where they are sung, because
of their being a chanted story.

The Hack-Driver's Song of Hakone

One may go riding for eight ri
On the Hakone pass,
But impossible to go across Oi,
The river that lies beyond.

Azateas at Odawara,
They've bloomed beautifully;
They were but wild azaleas at Hakone.

This was sung by the hack-drivers at
Hakone district during Tokugawa era.

Songs of Sado Isle
(Sado Okesa)

Toward Sado, and toward Sado,
Even the trees and the herbs bend
toward it
Is Sado a good place to abide?

How could I come to Sado,
Though you may urge me so?
The isle is forty-nine ri away
Over the rough wide sea.

Beautiful is the field of Safflowers
in full bloom,
(Pick, O pick the flowers).

The flowerly June has come to
brighten the world,

Love'll come out from the flowers
picked,
(Pick, O pick the flowers
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And I the fallen leaves blown;
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And you are in hell;
Ere long you'll lie among the dust
Of an abandoned mine.

You explode dynamite,
You'll find some fragments left over;
And the fragments will bring
Gold enough for you.

Listen, you young girls,
Wives of coalminers
Will become widows
The moment the rocks fall.

Joban coal mines in Ibaragi Prefect-
ure have given birth to the song
since the beginning of the Meiji era.

Bon Song of Chichibu
(Chichibu Ondo)

Birds, too, fly
Over the mountain top -
That cloud-swelling,
Cloud swelling
Mount of Chichibu.

Look at the chapped hands
That are trimming charcoal sacks.
By the time that
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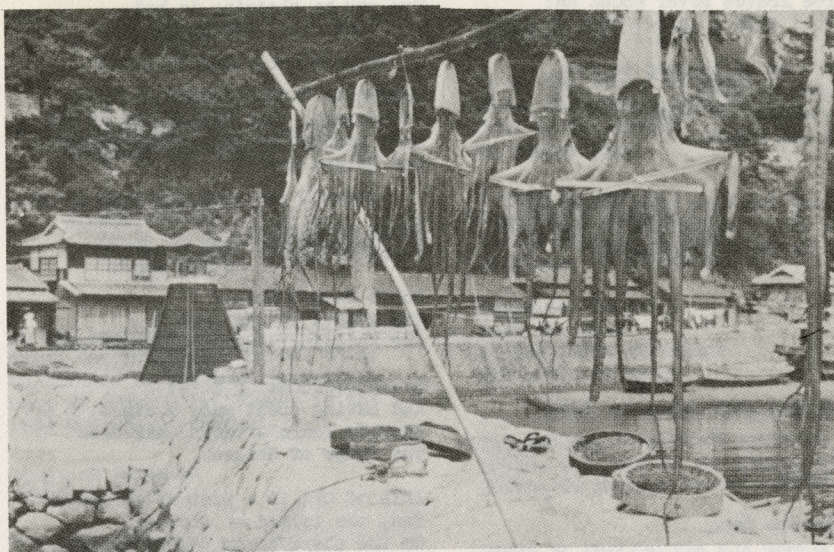
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(Sado O'kesa)

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Even the trees and the herbs bend
toward it
Is Sado a good place to abide?

How could I come to Sado,
Though you may urge me so?
The isle is forty-nine ri away
Over the rough wide sea.



Shimotsui, the native place of Shimotsui Bushi, is noted for its sea food, particularly its fresh bream and octopus.

Songs of Shimotsui
(Shimotsui Bushi)

Shimotsui is a goodly port,
The ships may come in or out,
Whether the wind is favorable or not.
Tokohai tonoe nanoe sore-sore.

When you cast anchor at Shimotsui the
port,
The lanterns over the town beckon
you.
Tokohai, etc.

A big ship comes in Shimotsui the
port,
That ship of Daimyo's with thirty-
five oars,
Tokohai, etc.

Is it the anchor or rope that stays
a ship at Shimotsui?
'Tis the frail hands of girls that
tie up the ship,
Tokohai, etc.

During the Tokugawa period Shimotsui
in Okayama Prefecture served as the
gateways respectively for Shikoku
and Kyushu. Shimotsui today, how-
ever, is a deserted fishing village.
Only historical traces remain of the
old prosperous Tokugawa days. Perhaps
most interesting of those traces are
the traditional folk songs - called
Shimotsui Bushi.

Songs of Yasugi
(Yasugi Bushi)

To take away what's famed
In Izumo will never make a load,
Before you leave, just listen
To the songs of Yasugi.

In that dear province of mine
How proud they are the Shrine of
Izumo
And the songs of Yasugi.

Yasugi is known over the country
For a thousand houses in a row,
Shanichi Cherry blossoms abloom,
And the Mount of Tokami afar.

Yasugi Bushi are the songs around

Yasugi Port in Izumo (Shimane
Prefecture). Since the opening of
railway, the port has lost its
significance, but formerly the
port being situated along the main
highway of Sanin district had
flourishing days as it was crowded
with ships and the town was full of
merchants as the words "Yasugi
sengen" (a thousand stores of Yasugi)
testify its prosperous business.

Songs of Tosa
(Yosakoi Bushi)

On the Harima Bridge of Kochi
In the province of Tosa,
I saw a shaved-head priest.
Buy a hair pin from a vendor.

'Tis no surprise that a shaved-head
priest
Should purchase a hair pin,
For I saw a crawling cripple
Buy a pair of wooden clogs.

Come, come, come at eve,
You always say so,
But when I come, I find
there's no truth in your koi

A thing so trifling
To you I should say -
Only a whale swimming
And spouting in my pond-like sea!

That the stanza speaks of a priest
bought a hair pin is due to a legend:
Long ago there lived a young priest
at the village near Kochi City in
Shikoku, who fell in love with a
maiden. To please the maiden the
priest sent to her a hair pin which
he had bought at a store nearby the
Harimaya Bridge. The two met secret-
ly from time to time, the fact of
which was known to the town people,
so they eloped, but later they
were captured, and were exiled each
to a different country. The matter
was thus settled, but the song about
this episode gave rise to a popular
ballade.

The Coal Miner's Song in Kyushu

The moon has risen, has risen
Over the coal mine of Miike,



Girls dancing on the seashore to
Shimotsui Bushi.

But the chimney is so high,
The moon may feel smoky, I
suppose.

Climb over the mountains, one, two,
three,
And there blooming hidden in
the deep,
You may find azaleas all aglow;
Pretty and fragrant they may be,
They would be all for nought,
Were there no lovers to court.

If you really mean from your heart,
I may give you leave to part
from me,
Only you have to restore me
To the girl of eighteen that
I was,
I will part with you then forever.

The Coal Miner's Songs have been sung
in the mining district in Fukuoka
Prefecture from olden days. Since
World War II, they have become quite
popular all over Japan, and are often
sung even at banquets.

Shintaro San of the Mountain

When Shintaro San* of the mountain
Comes down all the way to town,
Pray light up the road all over,
With thousands of golden lanterns,
For so handsome, so gallant,
Yea, so lovable a man is he!

When Shintaro San of the mountain
Goes back home from town,
Throw water upon and make the road
slippery
(So as to detain him by all means),
For so handsome, so gallant,
Yea, so lovable a man is he!

Shintaro San of the mountain be
likened to
The fair and ripened persimmons on
a tall tree;
Your pole will never reach them,
Climb the tree you never can,
For so handsome, so gallant,
Yea, so lovable a man is he!

* San is a respectful word applied
either to men or to women.

On the boundary between Saga and Nagasaki prefectures, there is a mountain named Tara-dake about 1000 meters high. On the top of this mountain stood a Buddhist temple, though it no longer exists. About 150 years ago a Samurai known as Shintaro, a devotee of this sect, lived in the temple. He was sometimes seen by people, coming down from the temple to the village on some errands, and he was so handsome and gentle in his manners unlike others of his class that he became the cynosure of all young maidens of the village or thereabouts. The song is expressive of the ardent yearning or love of the maidens for this young and handsome Samurai.

Songs of Kuroda (Kuroda Bushi)

Drink sake, drink you may,
But if ever you drink,
Win this fairest of lances all;
That is the true samurai
Of the clan of Kuroda.

Is it a wind over the peak
Or a wind among the pine trees,
Or the music of Koto?
Halting his steed, the rider listens;
Ah, the heart cry for her beloved!

Not a few melodies have come down as Imayo, or modernized songs, from the old songs which were sung among the clans in the district centering on Hakata in Kyushu. Kuroda Bushi are some of these songs. As they were originally sung by Samurai, the songs though elegant are fiery and recitative as might be expected.

The Mower's Songs

The mowing is done
All over the mount;
Tomorrow we'll be in the field,
Cutting the rice stalks down.

As the day is dying,
The shadows are lengthening;
You horse, we will go home,
So shoulder the grass gently for home.

The harvest is done all over -
There goes a bride's party, I ween,
Along the winding road through the field;
The lighted lanterns, five of them
I see.

The mower's songs are heard in Miyazaki Prefecture and may be counted as one of the most beautiful Japanese melodies.

Hie-Pounding Song

On to the wild ash tree
I will put a bell, yo hoi;
When it jingles, you come out, yo.

When it jingles, jingles,
For what excuse shall I come, yo, hoi?
For watering the horse, I'll come out,
yo.

Daihachi of Nasu had to part
With Tsurutomi the maid, yo hoi,
In the village of Shiiba;
His eyes were bathed in tears, yo.

The song was originally sung in and around the mountainous village of Shiiba in Miyazaki Prefecture. Hie resembles rice, as it often grows mingled with the latter, the seeds of which are used as fodder.

Songs of Kumamoto (Otemoyan)

Say, Otemoyan,
You have wedded lately, have you not?
I've wedded, to be sure.
But the man was pockmarked
And so I'm not legally married.
The town head, boss, and go-betweeners,
And there are a lot more of them,
They would come through Kawabata
the town
To round them all up, I reckon,
Mr. Pumpkin, too, is among them.
A crowd of people, pushing, shoving -
A flowery season all around,
Larks twittering, twittering all about;
They've produced nice eggplants at
last.

The song originated from Kumamoto Prefecture and is expressive of humorousness peculiar to the people of this district.

Lullaby of Itsuki

I'm poor like a beggar, beggar;
You people are goodly people,
With goodly obi and goodly kimono on.

As for me, if I should die,
Who would weep for me?
Only cicadas sing 'mong the pines on
the hill.

If I should die, bury me by road-side,
Every passerby may offer flowers.

This was formerly sung in the mountainous part in Kumamoto Prefecture and is now very popular all over the country. The fact that such elegiac songs as this have survived for a long period of time show among many things the richness of melody in the Japanese ballads.

Ohara Songs of Kagoshima (Kagoshima Ohara Bushi)

Flowers at Kirishima,
Tobacco at Kokubu,
And smoke ever aglow
Above the Isle of Sakura.

Though no rain rains,
The Somuta river becomes muddy -
The water for beauty
The maidens at Ishikiharara

Over Sakura-jima
A mist hungs;
Upon my mind hungs
O-Han the maiden fair.

'Tis seen, 'tis seen
Through the pine forest
The sail of the ship marked
With an encircled cross.

Though I may be gone far away,
It will ever visit me in my dreams;
Sweet breezes through the beach pines,
On the isle of Sakura ever dear.

This originated in Kagoshima Prefecture as folk song and became recently so popular as to be sung throughout the land.

The Song of Hototoi at Loochoo (Hatoma Bushi)

Climb the hill on Hototoi
And cast your eyes over there,
You will see the kuba trees,
Growing ever stately on the summit.

Although folk songs of Okinawa are so numerous and varied as to command a study, this one is especially well known in Japan.

Asadoya Yunta of Okinawa

You are the wild rose,
Blooming in the field;
You take a hold of me,
Going home at sundown.

Partly glad and partly ashamed am I,
For an ill-fame you give rise to;
You are the white lily
Far above my reach.

If you do weeding,
Do it on the fullmoon night,
For there'll be you and I
And nobody else there'll be.

I will dye for you
The blue wedding garment;
To tuck your sleeves, put on cords
Of compassion as for me.

One of the most popular folk songs of Okinawa. Yunta means a ballad in the language of the natives.



A throng looking forward to the start of Bon dance. A central turret being seated by singers and players of various instruments. (West Japan)