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Author(s)	秋吉, 康晴
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Osaka University

Modern Japanese folk song which invited travelers:
on the place of Yasugi-bushi

Yasuharu AKIYOSHI

In this essay, I argue about an organization, *Seichou Yasugibushi Hozonkai* which tried to preserve *Seichou Yasugibushi* (from *Meiji 44*) as an authentic local folk song of Yasugi district in Shimane province. From *Meiji* period to *Taishou* period, many types of this organization had emerged. Someone points out the characteristic of these organizations in the context of Japanese cultural nationalism, because they were “invented traditions” that modern nation state urge to organize local people within authentic national culture. Such argument tends to point that differences among local folk songs had been vanishing as a result of correcting untouched folkways according to national ethic. Moreover, many folklorists also said that these preserved and varied folk songs were not authentic local culture, because they were no longer oral heritage. *Seichou Yasugibushi* has been criticized as “simulacre” invented for cultural nationalism, inauthentic culture which

does not have roots in local place.

But, I want to discuss the representation of locality in several mediums. *Seichou Yasugibushi Hozonkai* had used auditory and visual mediums for self-representation, and invited many urban tourists to the place of *Yasugibushi* in *Taishou* period.

In preserving movement, *Seichou Yasugibushi* was changed and improved. For example, a text of *Seichou Yasugibushi* is composed of staff notation called *Seiyougakufu* to transmit *Yasugibushi*, not only for local people but for the masses. This notation is made for violin, *Taishou-goto* (one of modern Japanese instrument for the masses), harmonica. As a result of such a device, many urban people came to know *Yasugibushi* and be interested in this folk song and the local place where this song was born. But, at the same time, *Yasugibushi* ditributing away from Yasugi had difficulty to point out the local place. Therefore, performers of *Yasugibushi* tried to localize this song by taking in lyrics names of places or notable sights called *mei-sho* such as *Izumotaisha* (a famous *Izumo* shrine) and so on. These places were out of place for *Yasugibushi*, but performers invented the place of song by representation. In analyse of these representation, I want to set out the way to discuss Japanese modern folksongs as folklore in the age of mass culture.