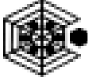

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Why are Most Filipino Workers in Japan Entertainers?: Perspectives from History and Law

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ABSTRACT. This article traces the development of overseas Filipinos' occupation in Japan from musician to "entertainer." As it establishes the not so well-known fact that music has been the occupation of most Filipinos in Japan way back in the late nineteenth century, it elucidates the factors that brought about the phenomenon. Demand-supply and push-pull factors explain a great deal, but not all. Immigration laws of Japan do not provide a key to the phenomenon, but, as this article argues, they provide a large window toward understanding it. American influence on the Philippines and Japan is another factor that has impacted on the job configuration of Filipino workers in Japan. The United States introduced jazz into the Philippines and Japan. The Filipino musicians who entered Japan before World War II were trained by Americans in the Philippines. They were hired and brought to Japan by American recruiters and were appreciated by the Westernized Japanese. Again, in the 1950s and 1960s, Filipino musicians entered Japan—usually accompanied by their American recruiters—and entertained the Japanese who had embraced a second Americanization.

KEYWORDS. immigration · jazz · *Mizu shobai* · musicians · Okinawa · skilled workers · United States · westernization

Introduction

It is not common knowledge that since the nineteenth century up to the 1960s, almost all Filipino workers in Japan were musicians. Indeed, they were called musicians, not entertainers. Their situation was both similar to and different from the situation of the present Filipino entertainers in Japan. They were popular among the Westernized Japanese of the 1920s and the Japanese middle class of the 1960s (Uchino 1997). At present, Filipino entertainers in Japan are popular too in the sense that they are all over, but they are nameless and majority of them would rather remain so (Ballescas 1992). The

Filipino musicians of old, like the present entertainers, also existed at the periphery of Japanese society, but they were not suspected of engaging in prostitution. Singing was the core of their performance, while pouring drinks in between dancing on stage tends to be the main talent of the present-day entertainers in Japan (Ballescas 1992). And last but not least, almost all the musicians were male, while majority of the entertainers today are female.

This article traces the development of overseas Filipinos' occupation in Japan from musician to "entertainer." Through a historical account, it shows that the presence of Filipino entertainers in Japan is not a recent phenomenon. Filipino entertainers first appeared in Japan in the 1880s. Since then, most Filipino workers in Japan have been entertainers.

Researchers and scholars on Filipino migrant workers have observed that the jobs of Filipino workers in Japan are a result of the demand-supply nexus and the push-pull factors (Ballescas 2003; Komai 1995; Mori 1997; Osteria 1994). Socioeconomic conditions in Japan, such as demand for cheap labor, aging population, decline in birth rate, and demand for foreign women for reproductive purposes, explain the need for foreign workers per se, as well as the need for women workers and foreign wives (Ballescas 2003, 561-70). These factors partly explain why majority of Filipino workers in Japan are female, but they do not explain why most of them are entertainers. Moreover, these factors do not explain at all why entertainment has been the dominant occupation of Filipinos in Japan since the late nineteenth century. On the supply side, available literature explains that poverty, unemployment, higher expectation, and other economic factors push Filipinos to seek employment in Japan. But again, these factors do not adequately explain why most of the Filipinos become entertainers.

Ballescas (2003) hints why most Filipinos in Japan are entertainers: "Entertainment (sans sex) constitutes part of the early socialization of many Filipino children who are made to sing, dance and perform for family guests" (567). This socialization, Ballescas (2003) concludes, results in a positive attitude toward entertainment. This explains the positive Filipino attitude toward entertainment, as well as the willingness to do entertainment jobs, but it does not explain why most Filipinos become entertainers in Japan. It does not explain why entertainment is not the dominant job of Filipinos in other countries such as the United States (US), Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, and all other destination countries of Filipino overseas workers.

As this article narrates the history of Filipino musicians, it elucidates the factors that brought them to Japan. Why musicians and not cooks, manual laborers, doctors, nurses, dentists, teachers, or any other kind of workers? Immigration laws of Japan do not provide a key to the phenomenon, but, as this article argues, they provide a large window toward understanding the phenomenon.

Musicians and Entertainers

The *Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (Reader's Digest Association1964) gives the following definitions of related words. A musician is a "person skilled in art or practice of music." Music is the "art of combining sounds for reproduction by the voice or various kinds of musical instruments in rhythmic, melodic, and harmonious form so as to express thought or feeling and affect the emotions." An entertainer is "one who gives a public entertainment." Entertainment means "amusement; public performance or exhibition intended to interest or amuse."

Entertainment has a broad meaning, and what entertains varies from person to person. Boxing, for example, is more often considered as sports rather than entertainment, but boxers are indeed public performers, and do amuse many spectators. However, they do not carry out the fight with music and they do not have to. Since this article focuses on Filipino entertainers in Japan whose predecessors used to be called musicians, "entertainment" will be used in the limited meaning of that public performance that is carried out with music. This does not negate the fact that boxing is also an old occupation for Filipinos in Japan (Takahata 2000; Tapp 1996). It is not a common practice, however, to call the pugilists entertainers.

Kenkyusha's *New Japanese-English Dictionary* (1954) gives the following definitions. A *kashu* is a "singer; a vocalist; a vocal performer; a crooner." *Mizu-shobai* is a "profession of entertainment; a gay trade." *Mizu-shobai no onna* is a "woman of a certain character; a gay lady." The *Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (Reader's Digest Association 1964), in turn, gives "dissolute, immoral, living by prostitution" as the real meaning of "gay" when used euphemistically.

Today, when Japanese think that a public performer who carries out his or her job with music engages in prostitution, they tend to call the performer "entertainer," Japanized as "*entateyna*." When Japanese do not harbor such suspicion, they tend to call the performer "kashu"

Table 1. Number of Filipino musicians in Japan vis-à-vis the number of Filipinos in other jobs, 1914-1938

Year	Musicians	Other jobs
1914	1	11[a]
1915	1	9[b]
1919		2[c]
1920	6	3[d]
1921		
1922		
1923		5[e]
1924	1	11[f]
1925	1	9[g]
1926	7	17[h]
1927	14	11[i]
1928	23	11[j]
1929	10	15[k]
1930	33	23[l]
1931	30	14[m]
1932	29	16[n]
1933	15	19[o]
1934	17	24[p]
1935	33	22[q]
1936	22	14[r]
1937		
1938	2	8[s]

Source: Data for 1914-15 are from the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (JMFA) J.1.2.0-J8; 1919-20 are from JMFA 3.9.6-15; 1923-35 are from JMFA K.3.7.0.15, vol. 1; and 1936-38 are from JMFA K.3.7.0.15-1, vol. 2.

[a] Employee, public official, teacher, painter, missionary, restaurateur.
[b] Journalist, employee, public official, teacher, trader, painter.
[c] Employee, ceramic maker.
[d] Employee, teacher, sailor, miscellaneous (?).
[e] Journalist, doctor/dentist, employee, ceramic maker.
[f] Employee, public official, teacher, restaurateur, painter, missionary.
[g] Journalist, employee, public official, teacher, trader, painter.
[h] Journalist, doctor/dentist, employee, public official, teacher, engineer, assistant engineer, trader, restaurateur, painter.
[i] Doctor/dentist, employee, public official, teacher, trader, actor/entertainer.
[j] Doctor/dentist, employee, public official, trader, restaurateur, actor/entertainer, glass maker, laborer.
[k] Employee, public official, teacher, trader, restaurateur, actor/entertainer, glass maker, laborer, private tutor.
[l] Employee, teacher, trader, restaurateur, missionary, actor/entertainer, glass maker, boxer, agriculturist.
[m] Employee, public official, teacher, trader, restaurateur, glass maker, boxer, baker.
[n] Employee, restaurateur, glass maker, boxer, baker, dancer, servant.
[o] Doctor/dentist, employee, trader, boxer, baker, dancer, servant.
[p] Employee, public official, teacher, trader, boxer, baker, agriculturist, dancer, servant.
[q] Doctor/dentist, employee, teacher, trader, boxer, dancer, servant.
[r] Teacher, businessman, trader broker, laborer, actor.
[s] Trader, researcher, laborer, agriculturist.

or, simply, by the English word "artist." Such nuance did not exist in pre-World War II Japan. Musicians were frankly called kashu or artist and those engaged in the gay trade were bluntly called persons of the gay trade. They were not called entertainers.[1]

Thus, "musician" was a job classification for Filipinos in pre-World War II Japan (table 1) and it had no other meaning aside from what the word says. "Entertainer," on the other hand, is a status of stay or purpose of entry to Japan which, when used outside the legal terminology of immigration laws, is usually taken as a euphemism for the real occupation. "Musician" no longer appears as a job classification for foreigners in post-World War II Japan. "Artist," "entertainer," and "skilled laborer" do (tables 3 and 4). Japanese immigration laws have given "entertainer" and "entertainment" a technical meaning, the true import of which is known only to the visa holder.

Japanese Immigration Laws

During the first decade following the opening of Japan to world trade, foreign settlements were opened in designated areas of Yokohama, Nagasaki, Hakodate, Kobe, and Niigata. Residents here were Western merchants, mainly British and American, plus their compradors, cooks, servants, and longshoremen, most of whom were Chinese. According to the unequal treaties imposed on Japan, residents in the foreign settlements were outside the jurisdiction of the Japanese government. Strictly speaking, the Chinese were not supposed to reside in the settlements, but the Japanese authorities allowed them because they were employees of the Westerners (Yamawaki 2000, 40).

In 1894 the unequal treaties were terminated and Japan obtained jurisdiction over foreign residents, who now were allowed to reside and work anywhere in Japan. (Yamawaki 2000, 41). The Japanese government maintained surveillance over them by requiring owners of inns and other lodgings for Japanese and foreign travelers to submit to the police the guests' full name, nationality, domicile, age, occupation, place of previous lodging, destination upon checking out, and time and date of arrival in the lodging. Further, foreigners who intend to stay in Japan for ninety days or more were required to report to the police their name, nationality, occupation, age, places of residence and dates of stay in Japan, address in home country, and names of family members traveling with them (Ministry of Home Affairs 1981, 66).

Table 2. Reasons for refusal of entry to foreigners, 1935-1940

Cause of Denial	Year										
	1935		1936		1937		1938		1939		
	Denied entry	Not allowed to land	Denied entry	Not allowed to land	Denied entry	Not allowed to land	Denied entry	Not allowed to land	Denied entry	Not allowed to land	Not allowed t stop over
No passport		4,274		2,197		821	1	350	6	352	2[illegible]
Void passport	2	18		31		5					
Public charge	1	2,049	2	2,686		3,179	3	3,859	2	1,150	2,36
Security risk		3		1		19	1	70			
No visa		169	1	25		16		19		1	1
Void visa				3		3		1			
Deported		4		7		63		1		7	
Might work										1	
Illegal entry		7		1							
Others		25		8		42					
Total	3	6,549	3	4,959		4,148	5	4,439	8	1,511	2,64

Source: Naimusho Keiho Kyoku 1980, volumes 1-8.

The Japanese government first controlled the areas of occupation in which foreign laborers could engage through Imperial Ordinance 352, proclaimed on July 28, 1899, and enforced from August 4, 1899. This ordinance gave local government officials the power to allow or prohibit foreigners from engaging in agriculture, fishing, engineering and public works, manufacturing, construction, mining, transportation, and other areas considered competitive and should be reserved only for Japanese (Ministry of Home Affairs 1981, 65-66).

This ordinance, which remained in effect until 1945 (after World War II, Japan was occupied by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, which made decisions on immigration matters), must have been a great impediment to Filipino migrant workers whose skills were in the field of agriculture and fishing, as attested by the large number of Filipinos in the plantations of Hawaii and the mainland United States in the 1920s and 1930s (Lasker 1931). The other regulated areas did not concern them because very few had the skills or the financial capital required in such occupations.

While most Filipino migrant workers in the United States were plantation laborers, most of the workers in Japan, who were just a handful to begin with, were musicians, an occupation most unlikely to be considered by local government officials as competitive. To do music, they did not have to stay for long in one place. Indeed, as will be seen in the subsequent pages, they could just disembark to perform, and return to the ship after performance. Neither did they need substantial capital.

On February 1, 1918, Japan passed Ministerial Ordinance 1, which regulated for the first time in the history of modern Japan the entry of foreigners. The ordinance prohibited the entry of foreigners who could not take care of themselves, such as the mentally unfit or ill, and those who would need public aid, such as the poor. Passport or any documentation of nationality began to be required of all foreigners. Local prefectural governors were authorized to give special permits to those who had legitimate reasons for not possessing it (Ministry of Home Affairs 1981, 67-68).

In 1924 visa began to be required on top of passport, except for citizens of countries who had no visa requirement for Japanese citizens. In 1939, Ordinance 6 was passed, which, *inter alia*, made a distinction between foreigners who "entered" Japan and those who were in "transit" (Sebald 1939). Foreigners who "entered" Japan could stay for fifteen days or more, while those in "transit" could stay only for

Table 3. Classification of foreigners in Japan based on the 1951 Immigration Control Act

1969		1986	
Official, etc.	89	Short stay	920
Tourist, student, etc.			
Investor, businessman	8		
Student	29	Student	264
Researcher	2	Researcher	286
Artist	1	Humanities specialist	6
Salaried professional	115	Professor	4
Religious	13	Religious	40
Journalist		Journalist	2
Specialist	1	Business	28
Skilled labor		Skilled labor	1
Long-term resident	6	Long-term resident	292
Minor (5)	12	Dependent	127
Minor (6)	5	Permanent resident	
Minor (7)		Entertainer	9,075
Minor (8)			
Minor (9)			
Minor (10)			
Minor (11)	3		
Minor (12)			
Minor (13)			
With Japanese family	15	Dependent of Japanese family	5,299
With Japanese family, born after 1952		Designated activities	
Others, no record of stay limit		Business	7
Others, 30-day stay	2	Pre-college student	834
Others, 60-day stay	20	Instructor	13
Others, 90-day stay	23	Cultural	11
Others, 180-day stay	84	Permanent resident	116
Others, 1-year stay	131	Companion	244
Others, 2-year stay	5	For employment	770
Others, 3-year stay	107	Others	515
Unclassified	5	Others	27
Cannot be classified	1	Cannot be classified	16
Total	677	Total	18,897

Sources: Homusho Nyukoku Kanri-kyoku 1970: 30-31; Homusho Nyukoku Kanri-kyoku 1987: 2-5.

fourteen days or less. If allowed by the local governor, a foreigner could stay in Japan for a maximum of one year.

There is evidence, however, that the 1939 ordinance only formalized an already existing procedure of refusing entry or transit to foreigners. As can be seen in the police reports (table 2), an annual average of more than 2,500 Filipinos were not allowed to land between 1935 and 1939 because of suspicion that they might become public charges.

All the pre-World War II Japanese rules and regulations on immigration, except Imperial Ordinance 352 which was in effect from

Table 4. Classification of foreigners in Japan based on the revised (1991) Immigration Control Act

Purpose	Number
Diplomat, government official	354
Professor	17
Artist	
Religious activities	34
Journalist	2
Investor/manager	5
Legal/accounting services	
Medical services	
Researcher	16
Instructor	14
Engineer	114
Specialist in humanities, international relations	62
Intra-company transferee	155
Entertainer	60,455
Skilled labor	30
Cultural activities	50
Temporary visitor:	
Tourist	8,552
Business	12,814
Cultural, educational activities	856
Visit relatives	7,062
Others	815
College student	154
Pre-college student	65
Trainee	3,727
Dependent	287
Designated activities	250
Spouse or child of Japanese	5,477
Spouse or child of permanent resident	33
Long-term resident	2,924

Source: Ministry of Justice Homepage (moj.go.jp/PRESS/010613-1/010613-1-3.html).

1899 to 1945, were silent on permission for foreigners to work. In lieu of a clear regulation, local government officials were given the power to decide on the application of foreigners to work. There is no reason why these local government officials could be expected to be generous in giving permission. Moreover, the short stay allowed to foreigners was

an indirect way of discouraging them to initiate what would turn out to be tedious bureaucratic tape. Besides, even if they were miraculously given permission to work, they would not have had enough time for any serious work of long duration.

In 1951 the Immigration Control Act was enacted and became the fundamental law for matters concerning immigration. It was revised in 1952 (Ministry of Justice, Immigration Bureau, 1952) upon the termination of the Allied Occupation of Japan and again in 1981 and 1990 (Mori 1997, 2). The evolution of the classification system before and after 1981 is reflected in table 3, which has two columns, one for 1969 and the other for 1986. Table 3 may then be compared with table 4, to see the classification before and after 1990. As revised in 1990, the Immigration Control Act now has a more thorough classification of status or purpose of stay of foreigners.

Despite the revisions, the Immigration Control Act has remained basically unchanged as far as the limited opportunity for foreigners to work in Japan is concerned. A close examination of the various statuses will readily show this. It is particularly limiting for workers from a developing country like the Philippines, very few of whom possess the skills and the financial capital required for these statuses.

The status of "entertainer" first appeared after the 1981 revision. This opened the door of Japan to workers from developing countries, including the Philippines. Since then, majority of the thousands of Filipino workers who enter Japan every year have been Filipina entertainers (table 3, column for 1986).

It is a well-known fact that Filipino workers are all over the world, but it is only in Japan where most of them are entertainers. In 1995, there were Filipinos classified as "composers and artists" in Malaysia, but they numbered only 500, as against 11,000 in Japan (National Statistics Office 2002). In 1996, the top-six destination countries of Filipino workers were Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the United States, and Singapore, in descending order. Only in Japan were there "composers and artists," numbering 13,000 (National Statistics Office 2002).[2] Since Japan, among the numerous destinations of Filipino migrant workers, holds the distinction of being the country that has the biggest number of female entertainers, the explanation for this phenomenon most likely lies in Japan rather than the Philippines.

One possible explanation is that jobs in service sectors like restaurants are closed to Filipinos because Japanese employers believe that Japanese customers would not like to be served by foreigners (Cornelius 1994, 385). Jobs in Japanese homes, such as housekeeping,

cooking, baby-sitting, and the like, are also closed to them probably because of the reluctance among the Japanese to have an outsider in the household. And such reluctance may be on account of the traditional idea that what is outside is impure or unclean (Cornelius 1994, 385).

Socioeconomic and cultural factors may have excluded more respectable and decent jobs from among the occupations that Filipino women can engage in, thus leaving them no choice but the entertainment business. It is clear, however, that the immigration laws of Japan have reinforced these socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Popularity of Filipino Musicians in Japan through the Centuries

The earliest written record of Filipino musicians in Japan is the application of an Italian Circus Group to the Japanese government to bring in thirteen musicians from Manila. In August 1886 Joseph Chiarini, an Italian, brought the Chiarini Circus to Japan. It was a multinational group, consisting of Italians, Americans, Germans, Australians, French, British, Greeks, Dutch, and thirteen "Manila men" (JMFA, 3.9.3-51). The "Manila men" were all musicians. They were J. Espiritusanto, 45 years old; Jose Simplicio, 26; Macario Silva, 32; D. Geronimo, 23; Jisan Espiritusanto, 16; E. Mariano, 21; P. Victoriano, 23; Martin Sinforoso, 22; Julio Cobot, 27; Jose Medina, 32; Pedro Eduardo, 41; Juan Tambor, 19; and Diego Gonzales, 24 (JMFA, 3.9.3-51). The musicians from Manila were identified as Spaniards. It is highly probable, however, that they were Filipinos or Filipino-Spanish *mestizos* (mixed-blood), and were simply identified as Spaniards because the Philippines was a colony of Spain at the time.

Another evidence of the presence of Filipino musicians in Japan may be seen in anecdotes about Jose Rizal, who made a stop over Japan from February 28 to April 13, 1888, on his way to Europe. While taking a walk in Hibiya Park, one of the largest parks in Tokyo, Rizal met some Filipinos who introduced themselves as members of the Japanese orchestra that had just finished playing Strauss (Lanuza and Zaide 1961, 24-25).

Still another evidence is a newspaper account. In 1918, Filipino musicians in Japan made it to the news when the Filipinos there organized a concert to raise funds for the American and Japanese Red Cross that were assigned to care for the soldiers stationed in Siberia during World War I. The *Japan Times and Mail* (October 25, 1918, 4) reports:

> The Filipino community in Tokyo is giving every effort to make a splendid success of the first Filipino concert in Japan, which is in aid of the American and Japanese Red Cross in Siberia, to be given at the Y.M.C.A. Hall in Kanda, tomorrow afternoon ...
>
> A large attendance is expected not only because it is the first concert of the kind in Tokyo, but because of the cause it is devoted to and organized by Filipinos who wish to show their patriotism and loyalty to the Allied cause.
>
> Filipino music is very different from other Oriental music. It has the pathos of the Italian notes and the gaiety of the Spanish airs. When it is dedicated to a happy event, it sparkles, inviting its hearers to join in the gaiety, but when emblematic of sadness it is transformed into a soft, sweet, and touching melody, picturing the warm soul of the tropics.
>
> It is interesting to recall that in 1904 the Filipino Constabulary Band won the first prize in the St. Louis Exposition in America.

It is highly doubtful that the handful of Filipinos in Tokyo in 1918 made a community. There are no data available about the number of Filipinos in Japan in 1918, but in 1915 there were only twenty-three, and in 1919, five (JMFA, J.1.2.0-J8 and 3.9.6-15). Nevertheless, this piece of news shows that it was in the area of music that the few Filipinos in Tokyo were able to organize themselves, and it was music that brought them to the pages of one of the major English newspapers in Japan.

Much later, in 1922, the Manila Jazz Band had the honor to provide the music in a reception for Marshal Joffre, the hero of the Battle of the Marne. The reception was arranged by the French for Joffre and his family. According to a news report, invited were members of the Kobe post of the American Legion, the British War Veterans Association, the Belgian and other war veterans, their families, and the high officials of the local government. The Manila Jazz Band provided the music, assisted by Japanese talents (*The Japan Times and Mail*, February 15, 1922, 1, 8). The Manila Jazz Band was also known as the Philippine Jazz Band. It had played in the Oriental Hotel for about three years before its performance in honor of Joffre in the same hotel (*Philippines Free Press*, July 30, 1921, 2, 4).

In the 1930s, Hotel New Grand, a first-class hotel in Yokohama, featured a Filipino jazz band (Shirato 1977, 167-68). The hotel's

special menu was American-style grill, popular with the young foreign residents of Yokohama. When the Filipino jazz band would play, the young residents would actually come not because of the grill, but because of the band (Shirato 1977, 167-68). One of the advertisements of the hotel mentioned a Bonipacio (perhaps Bonifacio) Filipino Band, under the baton of Francisco Mariano (*Japan Times and Mail*, May 23, 1931, 2).

The presence of Filipino musicians in Japan in the nineteenth century was sporadic and spotty, but not in the twentieth, especially in the 1920s and the 1930s. An analysis of table 1 will reveal this. The table covers 1914 to 1938, the years before World War II. Unfortunately, there are no data for 1921, 1922, and 1937, and the data for 1919 and 1923 are incomplete. The table, culled from various sources, shows only "musicians" and "other jobs." The "other jobs" for each year are identified below the table. In eight years (1920, 1927, 1928, 1930-32, 1935-36), among the seventeen years that have complete data, the number of musicians is obviously bigger than the number of those with "other jobs." The years 1929, 1933, and 1934 may be added to those years that record more musicians even though at a glance, they are less than those with "other jobs" (ten as against fifteen in 1929, fifteen as against nineteen in 1933, and seventeen as against twenty-four in 1934). This is because in 1929, there are nine different "other jobs," making the holder of each of this job only 1.6 persons. In 1933, there are seven different "other jobs," making the holder of each job only 2.7 persons. And in 1934, there are nine different jobs, making the holder of each job only 2.7 persons. Another way of looking at the table is by getting the average number of Filipino workers every year. For musicians, there is an average of 14.4 musicians a year, for the seventeen years reflected in the table. For "other jobs," there is an average of 8.7 Filipinos every year, in the span of nineteen years that data is available.

The Oriental Hotel, the only place of amusement in Kobe before World War II, seemed to have a particular liking for Filipino musicians. For years, until 1940, it advertised in *Japan Times and Mail* (various dates) a Filipino Quartette.

After World War II, Filipino musical bands came back to Japan and performed in bars in American bases. Gradually, they spread to clubs in the entertainment districts of Tokyo. As in the early 1920s, many of them worked under American managers. A Filipino singer became very popular, a cut above all the others. He was Bimbo Danao,

who came to Japan in 1952 and instituted package shows featuring himself as the singer, plus topless Japanese dancers, and a variety act. "Soon all the other clubs and cabarets in town were copying the format" (*Asahi Evening News*, November 30, 1976, 15). Bimbo Danao's popularity reached its peak in the 1960s. A proof of his popularity was that the *Asahi Shimbun*, a reputable major newspaper, considered his death on July 22, 1967, newsworthy (*Asahi Shimbun*, July 25, 1967, 15). It was a piece of news mourning the death of a celebrity.

The American Connection before World War II

Jazz was the music that brought Filipinos to Japan, and the Americans played a role in linking Filipinos and Japanese to jazz and Filipino musicians to Japan.

American jazz came to Japan in the 1920s (Uchino 1997). Live jazz bands played in reputable dance halls, such as those of Oriental Hotel in Kobe and Hotel New Grand in Yokohama. Reputable dance halls, where most of the guests were foreigners, boasted "real" American jazz bands (*The Japan Times and Mail*, April 23, 1927, 3). Many of these bands were from Hawaii. Jazz was also played in less reputable dance halls where there was a thin line between dancing and prostitution, and most of the guests were Japanese.

Hotels and dance halls, especially those located near the ports, would usually sign a contract with the orchestras of passenger liners scheduled to dock at the ports. Some hotels would have to cancel dances if the arrival of the passenger liner was delayed. Only those with in-house performers or those who could hire freelance performers were spared of such dependence on passenger liners' bands.[3]

In the Philippines, many clubs were owned and managed by American residents. Some Americans in the entertainment business opened dance studios and organized musical bands consisting of Filipinos (Smith 1956, 125-32). The bands played not only in the Philippines but also abroad—Japan, Hong Kong, Shanghai—brought by their American managers.

Most Filipino jazz musicians entered Japan in the early 1920s as members of "real" American jazz bands. Some of them could have joined bands not in Manila but in Hawaii, where they had immigrated as plantation workers. A few Filipinos would enter individually, to be hired by a Filipino jazz-band contractor only upon arrival in Japan (JMFA, J.2.3.0.J/X1-U2).

Towards the end of the 1920s and through the 1930s, Filipino jazz bands entered Japan on their own, no longer brought by American managers. They had become known to be as good as the "real" American bands, if not better. For instance, Hotel New Grand in Yokohama hired a Filipino band upon the recommendation of its Swiss chef, who, in the 1930s, observed hotels in the US (Shirato 1977, 167-68; *Japan Times and Mail*, April 23, 1927, 3). In the course of his hotel tours, he received advice that if he wanted the hotel to be popular, he should hire a Filipino jazz band to provide the music.

Filipino musicians in Japan were isolated from the mainstream Japanese society. Those who performed in first-class hotels had tourists and snobbish members of the high society as their audience. Many who played in clubs frequented by *mobos* and *mogas*—Japanese pronunciation of "modern boys" and "modern girls," respectively—and where Japanese women who were in the periphery of Japanese society worked as taxi dancers. Such social isolation was a result of mainstream condescending attitude toward jazz. Even the Japanese consul-general in Manila was cautious about giving Filipino musicians visas. Even if they were given visas, the police in Japan would be notified and advised to keep an eye on them (JMFA, J.2.3.0.J/X1-U2).

By the time the number of Filipino musicians in Japan increased in the 1930s, jazz and dance halls had become "immoral" in the eyes of conservative Japanese authorities (Seltz 1929). Such a condescending attitude toward jazz was part of an anti-American sentiment among the Japanese, triggered by the passage of the so-called anti-Japanese immigration law of 1924 in the US Congress. The brewing anti-Americanism coincided with a type of nationalism characterized by anti-Westernism and anti-modernism. Jazz became a target of movements to purge Western and modern influences from the Japanese system.

Finally, on January 1, 1943, the Japanese Information Bureau prohibited jazz, describing it as decadent, lascivious, and vulgar. It was the music of the enemy country. A Filipino trombone player, Teodoro Giansarin, was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of being a spy. Military police searched the house of Raymundo Conde, clarinetist, and confiscated his musical records (Hirai 1999, 221).

Nevertheless, dance halls survived the moralistic1930s and 1940s; jazz remained their music. Mobos and mogas continued to frequent them (Yado 1929, 2). Japanese girls from poor families had remained and continued to work as taxi dancers.

During World War II, the Japanese war propaganda machine even used jazz to demoralize American soldiers in the battlefield. A propaganda broadcast called the "Zero Hour" made Norman Reyes, a Filipino announcer who became a prisoner of war and "who knew quite a bit about jazz," read censored news scripts in between jazzy American music, meant to make the Americans long for home (Duus 1979, 77).

The American Connection after World War II

At the end of World War II, the US occupied Japan. During the American occupation, jazz, which had not been totally eradicated but only went underground during the moralistic 1930s and 1940s, resurfaced. It was especially appreciated in the American bases. Filipino musicians who stayed in Japan throughout the war performed again. For instance, Teodoro Giansarin, Raymundo Conde and his brother, a Filipino pianist, and three Japanese musicians who played the guitar, bass, and drums, formed the Gay Quartette in 1946 (Hirai 1999, 221).[4] On top of this, American and Filipino musicians began to enter Japan to play in the American bases.

Japanese immigration laws were suspended during the Allied occupation. The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) took over immigration control. In the first two years of the occupation, no foreigner was allowed to enter Japan, except the personnel of SCAP, persons attached to them and their families, personnel of official missions recognized by SCAP and their families, and other foreigners given permission by SCAP (Ministry of Home Affairs Immigration Bureau 1980, 76-78).

In the face of such strict regulations, musical bands who claimed they would perform in clubs in the American military bases could get clearance from SCAP relatively easier than others (Uchino 1997, 73-74). Once inside Japan, they would be able to find ways to perform in nightclubs in the entertainment districts of Tokyo outside the American bases.

SCAP gradually relaxed immigration control in order to help rebuild the Japanese economy. Thus foreign businessmen were allowed to enter Japan. Passenger liners were allowed to dock in Yokohama for six hours, giving passengers time to do some sightseeing in Tokyo, Kamakura, and Hakone (Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration Bureau 1980, 76-78).

Table 5. Number of Filipinos in Japan, 1947-1988

Year	Number of Filipinos	Year	Number of Filipinos
1947	240	1968	632
1948	307	1969	758
1949	298	1970	932
1950	367	1971	863
1951	450	1972	2,250
1952	341	1973	2,424
1953	431	1974	2,758
1954	476	1975	3,035
1955	435	1976	3,083
1956	376	1977	3,600
1957	395	1978	4,281
1958	365	1979	4,757
1959	431	1980	5,547
1960	390	1981	6,729
1961	444	1982	6,563
1962	495	1983	7,516
1963	494	1984	11,183
1964	497	1985	12,261
1965	539	1986	18,897
1966	520	1987	25,017
1967	539	1988	32,185

Source: Homu Daijin Kanbo Shiho Hosei Chosa-bu Chosa Tokei-ka 1992, 548-50.

Filipino live bands played in well-known nightclubs in Ginza and Akasaka, such as the Club Mandarin, the Latin Quarter (later, the New Latin Quarter), and Club Cherry. The promoters who brought in singers from the United States and the Philippines were Americans, in partnership with *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese born in the US) (*Asahi Evening News*, November 30, 1976, 15; Uchino 2002; Alexander 2002). An example would be Universal Promotions, a partnership between Dan Sawyer (American) and Tats Nagashima (Canadian-Japanese). Universal Promotions, later renamed S and N after the initials of the last names of the partners, not only brought Filipino musicians to Japan but also to the US, Korea, and other places. Sawyer operated in Japan from 1954 to 1964, promoting Filipino singers (Sawyer 2002).

American and Filipino musicians were the only foreigners who performed in Japan in the 1940s and 1950s. As before the war, Filipino fluency in the English language and their ability to sing Spanish and English songs made them the only Asian in the postwar entertainment scene in Japan. “They were the best musicians. Japanese singers tried to learn from them” (Alexander 2002). Unfortunately,

Table 6. Location of Filipinos in Japan by prefecture, 1964-2000

Prefecture	1964	1968	1972	1976	1981	1991	1995	2000
Hokkaido		4	20	40	128	580	726	1,177
Aomori				37	35	290	321	686
Iwate				16	38	306	392	744
Miyagi	2	6	10	56	90	272	516	881
Akita				14	58	286	378	825
Yamagata					45	229	329	783
Fukushima	4	1	6	19	63	521	1.001	2,572
Ibaragi	4		6	16	109	1,286	2,203	5,174
Tochigi			2	50	150	992	1,338	2,710
Gunma	3	3	16	33	125	1,613	2,499	6,063
Saitama	2	1	6	59	214	3,622	6,007	10,059
Chiba	8	9	12	37	266	3,577	6,665	12,111
Tokyo	260	341	533	837	1,472	11,224	15,382	24,597
Kanagawa	85	99	149	215	529	3,726	6,876	11,484
Niigata			12	37	77	760	1,101	2,243
Toyama			2	23	23	313	532	1,234
Ishikawa		8	2	9	25	334	265	432
Fukui			3	2	22	330	469	1,061
Yamanashi	3	1	1	2	29	555	816	1,741
Nagano			1	8	90	1,467	2,142	4,375
Gifu	2		6	13	74	477	1,107	3,541
Shizuoka	4	7		52	151	1,864	2,943	7,614
Aichi	8	15	23	87	406	2,274	4,650	10,764

Filipino singers were not paid as much as the American singers, although they were as good, if not better (Alexander 2002).

In postwar Japan, there were more Filipinos in Okinawa than in the mainland. As shown in table 5 there were only hundreds of registered Filipinos in Japan annually from 1947 to 1971. The statistics do not include figures in Okinawa because it was legally a US territory (table 6). Table 6, however, clearly indicates that in 1972, after Okinawa reverted to Japan, it had the largest number of registered Filipinos among the prefectures of Japan. Tokyo slightly outnumbered Okinawa in 1976, four years after the reversion.

And yet, despite the presence of only a few hundreds of Filipinos in the mainland, the Filipino musicians gained an excellent reputation as singers from the end of World War II to the 1960s. In Okinawa, too,

Table 6 *(continued)*

Mie			2	16	22	510	764	1,628
Shiga					25	277	359	1,208
Kyoto	10	11	13	37	98	612	727	1,646
Osaka	34	58	135	218	429	1,649	2,429	3,938
Hyogo	29	35	97	182	211	680	1,280	2,463
Nara			2	11	44	183	270	458
Wakayama		1		22	47	213	259	676
Tottori				11	36	256	206	501
Shimane				4	16	234	338	942
Okayama	3	2	1	21	56	531	752	1,141
Hiroshima	2	5	4	22	119	1.087	1,510	2,811
Yamaguchi	3	1	6	22	70	471	479	1,090
Tokushima			2	7	15	140	196	707
Kagawa			1	11	68	365	412	1,192
Ehime	1		2	19	29	429	376	643
Kochi	1	1	1	3	14	106	226	518
Fukuoka	9	4	15	63	187	1.091	1,257	3,265
Saga					15	162	204	622
Nagasaki	8	16	21	34	35	302	298	691
Kumamoto	1			2	82	480	737	1,482
Oita	2			14	38	277	366	873
Miyazaki				1	33	325	345	633
Kagohsima	9	3	4	17	81	654	700	1,216
Okinawa	[a]		1,132	684	740	1,160	1,149	1,656
Total	497	632	2,250	3.083	6,729	49,092	74,297	144,871

Sources: Ministry of Justice Homepage (moj.go.jp/PRESS/010613-1/010613-1-3.html) for 2000; Homusho Nyukoku Kanri-kyoku for all other years.

[a] Not under Japan yet.

Filipino band members were popular, but entertainment was not the dominant occupation of the Filipino workers. Most of them were employees in the American bases, doing professional jobs. They were computer engineers, managers, barbers, cooks, doctors, and dentists. In 1966, for example, of the 1,723 Filipinos in Okinawa, including dependents, 850 were employed by the US military establishment (USCAR 1966).

After Okinawa's reversion to Japan, a number of Filipino doctors and dentists who used to work in the American hospitals opted to

establish their own clinics in Okinawa. Initially, their patients were only Americans, but gradually, Japanese patients began to patronize them (Jose 2002, 112-13).

American rule over Japan ended in 1952; in Okinawa, in 1972. The Japanese Immigration Control Act replaced American immigration rules and regulations. In mainland Japan, the number of Filipinos continued to be small, but gradually increased since the 1970s. When it reached more than ten thousand in the 1980s, most of them were female entertainers. Even in Okinawa, where Filipinos had not been in the entertainment business, female entertainers have taken over since the mid-1980s.

That Was Real Entertainment

In the 1920s and 1930s and immediately after World War II, when the occupation of Filipino jazz band members was clearly to sing or play a musical instrument, they were called singers, or kashu in Japanese. Alternately, they were called jazz band members or soloists. When identified with the musical instrument they played, they were called pianist, guitarist, or saxophonist. Society and the government did not hide them in the generic term "entertainer," which today is often used as euphemism for bar girl or prostitute.

There was real entertainment provided by Filipinos from the pre-World War II days to the 1960s. They were the stars of the show (or at least, next to the Americans), and almost all of them were male.

There are still a number of Filipino jazz band members who perform in Japan, apart from the more widely known Filipina entertainers. Some of these Filipino musicians are not easily identifiable as Filipino because they have adopted Japanese names. An example is Jake Concepcion, a saxophonist, who has assumed the name Tamura after marriage to a Japanese and becoming a Japanese citizen (*Kamusta* 1995, 2-3).

Filipina singers have made names in Japan. Some of them, like Marlene Peña Lim, sing in dinner shows in first-class hotels, like ANA and Takanawa Prince. Moreover, they cut recordings with Japanese record companies like Toshiba-EMI and CBS/Sony (Baltasar 1991, 16). Unfortunately, because of the common impression that Filipina workers are prostitutes, the likes of Marlene are sometimes unjustifiably identified as entertainers with the label's negative connotation. To the knowledgeable, however, they are truly admirable, not unlike the jazz

band musicians of pre-World War II days and Bimbo Danao of the 1960s. There is still real entertainment.

Conclusion

This article has traced the development of overseas Filipinos' occupation in Japan from musician to "entertainer"; in Okinawa, from professionals such as doctors and dentists to "entertainers." It has established the not so well-known fact that entertainment has been the occupation of most Filipinos in Japan way back in the late nineteenth century. It has also traced the evolution of Japan's immigration laws, and has argued that the basic principle of opening the doors of Japan to migrant workers as narrowly as possible has remained through the centuries.

American managers and promoters brought Filipino musicians to Japan from the 1920s through the 1960s. In Okinawa, the American authorities brought professionals and musicians in 1945. In the early 1980s, Filipina entertainers took over—both in mainland Japan and Okinawa. The American managers and promoters are no longer in mainland Japan, nor are the American authorities in Okinawa, but entertainment has remained the occupation of most Filipino workers in Japan.

The American influence on the job configuration of Filipino workers in Japan was limited in time. It played a role only from the 1920s to the 1960s on the mainland, and from the end of World War II to the 1960s in Okinawa. On the other hand, the impact of Japanese immigration laws and their implementation have always been there. Very limited kinds of skilled labor and professional positions are open to foreigners, and these are even irrelevant to many Filipino workers who do not have the skills these jobs require. The revisions in 1981 and 1990 did not actually open the doors wider to Filipinos. A 1981 revision that allowed singers and dancers to enter Japan for a short duration made official the Japanese practice of allowing entertainers to work in Japan, already practiced since the mid-nineteenth century.❁

Notes

1. As can be seen in table 1, however, the word "entertainer" was used interchangeably with the word "actor".
2. The NSO (National Statistics Office of the Philippines) uses this classification, which also includes entertainers.

3. One who browses through issues of *Japan Times and Mail*, which I did, and sees the advertisements of dances and the names of the jazz bands, as well as announcements of cancellations, will arrive at this conclusion.
4. Conde, married to a Japanese, stayed in Japan until the late 1990s. He sang in Asari, a music lounge in Kawasaki, until his return to the Philippines (Valiente 2002)

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