JAPANESE HIP HOP IN KYOTO, 2000-2002:
LOCALIZING A GLOBAL POP CULTURE IDIOM

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Hip Hop: Background</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The U.S.-Japan Hip Hop Connection</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Kyoto: Background</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Kyoto: The Hip Hop Scene</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Theoretical and Discursive Context</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Research Methodology</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Music Transcription Method</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two: Music Performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Kyoto-specific Considerations</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 On-stage Performance: General Format</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Club Grind and Venue-Performer Relationships</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Makuro MC's/Absolute Crew: &quot;Big Venue&quot; Performance</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 No Mercy/Mack Family: Japanese &quot;Gangsta&quot; Style</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Off-stage Performance: The Kyoto Hip Hop Identity</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three: Rap Text Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Hip Hop Lyrics as Text</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Makuro MC's: Local Pride and the &quot;Concrete Jungle&quot;</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Zibro: A Marginalized Voice and Urban Narrative</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Jimmy: &quot;Gangsta&quot; Discourse and Message Rap</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four: Music Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Music as Text</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Notation Method, Special Signs and Other Considerations</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Makuro MC's: &quot;Grow&quot;</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Jimmy/Mack Family: &quot;Fuck the Police 2002&quot;</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Rabbit Punch: &quot;Waza Ari&quot;</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Makuro MC's: Ostinato Flexibility</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 DJ Kyoju, Jimmy: Quasi-functional Harmony</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Rabbit Punch: Quasi-hōgaku Style and Nationalism</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Five: Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Map of Kyoto City................................................................. 146
Appendix B: Questionnaire................................................................. 147
Appendix C: Event Flyers and Photographs........................................ 149
Appendix D: Complete Rap Texts......................................................... 154
Appendix E: Music Transcriptions....................................................... 168
Bibliography....................................................................................... 235
Discography......................................................................................... 242
Compact Disc (Listening Samples)
CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction
Nearly thirty years since its inception in New York City in 1974, hip hop culture and style have become worldwide phenomena with local scenes appearing somewhere on nearly every continent. In the case of hip hop in Japan, the local scene has a relatively long history and has already developed into a "subculture" (Hebdige 1979) with an extensive infrastructure that is widespread across the archipelago. I chose Kyoto, Japan as the site for this study of the localization of hip hop outside of the U.S. The basic problem is to understand how a transnational pop culture form, which originated as an empowering expression among urban minorities in the U.S., has managed to take root in a city such as Kyoto where both social conservatism and Japanese traditional "high art" culture are prominent. The thesis argues that the Kyoto hip hop scene has taken root because it allows the performers and fans to reconstruct an identity for themselves which challenges discourses of essentialized "Japaneseness" which are manifest both in Japan and in the West. At the core of the Kyoto hip hop identity is a challenge to the hegemony of the Japanese socio-cultural mainstream. This mainstream is of course partly a discursive construct, but also stems from a daily reality lived by salaried workers, students on the university track, and mothers who struggle to keep stability in the family under stressful circumstances. Hip hop identity in Kyoto entails refusal of this "mainstream" through rap lyrics and on levels of personal style and lifestyle. The local hip hoppers' identity also entails a correlated refusal of white American culture and of the perceived economic and military subjugation of Japan by white America.
I use the term "Japanese hip hop" to refer to hip hop which is produced by Japanese people and which is rapped mostly in the Japanese language. When I talk about "hip hop in Japan" I am referring to a number of categories including U.S. hip hop and Japanese hip hop which includes both locally and nationally recognized performers. "Kyoto hip hop" and "the Kyoto hip hop scene" refer to hip hop that is produced and performed in Kyoto by Kyoto residents, and also that which is produced by other people who perform in Kyoto on a regular basis. In nearly all cases these performers are ethnically Japanese. Within my discussion of "Kyoto hip hop," I at times switch to the designation "Japanese hip hop" to indicate an aspect which is not unique to the Kyoto scene but is common among Japanese hip hop scenes nationwide, including the Kyoto scene. I use the term "Japanese" without quotation marks to refer to ethnically Japanese people or in reference to culture (including language) which exists within the boundaries of present day Japan. The term "indigenous" is used to refer to socio-cultural elements, both traditional and modern, which have existed in Japan since several decades prior to the influx of hip hop culture. The thesis contends that hip hop, too, is in the process of becoming an "indigenized" Japanese music, in multiple senses of the word.

The topic of Kyoto hip hop and the hypothesis of this study are connected to a complex body of inter-related theory and discourse. To set the stage for an overview of this body, I will first provide a brief history of hip hop and its arrival in Japan. Next, I will introduce Kyoto and the hip hop scene there. I will then give a theoretical overview and explain my field study methodology and transcription method. I then present the field study results in Chapters Two
(performance), Three (text), and Four (analysis of musical form, style, and content).

1.1 Hip Hop: Background

Concretely speaking, hip hop culture consists of three main elements including music ("rap music," also simply "hip hop" in abbreviation), breakdance, and graffiti art (Thompson in Perkins, ed.: 211). Hip hop style permeates a number of other aspects which fall under the broader rubric of "hip hop" including custom cars, clothing fashion, hair style, slang, gesture, and demeanor. In abstract terms, hip hop is a culture (attitude and lifestyle), a stance based on competitive creative originality and on development of a sense of self in connection to one's "hometown," be it by nature of birth, upbringing, or sphere of activity. Also, hip hop culture valorizes commitment to one's fellow performers, "crew" members (see glossary), extended family, and community. In specific localized instances, this attitude affects all of hip hop's main elements in multiple permutations. The thesis is based on my interpretation of the Kyoto hip hop attitude. The thesis focuses primarily on hip hop music in terms of performance, rap lyrics, and musical style and form. Other relevant aspects of the Kyoto hip hop scene will be considered in relation to these foci. First, we must consider the roots of hip hop in the U.S.

Following the lead of Cool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash (the three original Bronx hip hop DJs), we can designate 1974 as the year of hip hop's inception in the U.S. (Perkins 1996: 5). Around this time, urban working class minority populations were experiencing severe economic and social hardship due to the collapse of the U.S. industrial manufacturing base. Conditions were
particularly bad in the South Bronx, and "urban renewal" and other "re­
development" initiatives further disrupted the social fabric of the communities in
this area. It was within this environment that hip hop culture was born in an
effort to channel the energy of urban minority youth into positive, creative
pursuits and to provide an alternative to the destructive aspects of gang life and
to the desolation around them (Rose 1994).

Keeping the basic aspects of hip hop in mind, we should also be aware that it has
changed over the years and diversified as it spread across the U.S. giving birth to
regionally characteristic styles as well as individual re-interpretations. In the
early years, hip hop music was mostly lighthearted in terms of lyric content. Its
function was to provide a good groove for the breakdancers and to keep the
energy flowing at the block parties and night clubs. In 1982, Grandmaster Flash
and the Furious Five featuring guest rappers Melle Mel and Duke Bootee came
out with "The Message" which was voted best pop song of the year (Rose 1994:
55). This was the first rap which succeeded in reaching a wide audience that had
lyrical content pertaining to the social and economic plight of Bronx residents.

By the late 1980s, other prominent rappers such as KRS-One and Chuck D were
speaking directly to their audiences about the need to think and act responsibly
about the marginalization of urban minorities in the U.S. From this point
onward, hip hop music has entailed conscientious resistance to the social
marginalization of minority groups as one of the core aspects of a hip hop sub­
genre often referred to as "message rap" or "political rap". Message rap MC's
introduced to hip hop a consciousness of current political, economic, and social
problems in relation to urban minorities. Although the "borders" around hip
hop sub-genre are fluid and contextual, the social commitment of "teacher" MC's such as KRS-One and Chuck D poses a clear contrast to the values expressed by MC's of the next major sub-genre, "gangsta" hip hop. Also, the "message rap" sub-genre designation does not represent the full range of hip hop MC expression during the late 1980s. During this same period, groups like De La Soul were re-interpreting hip hop music into a lighter, more esoteric and abstract form which set the stage for an opening of the genre to a broader lyrical and musical stylistic range.

It was also during the late 1980s that the next major wave, "gangsta" hip hop, began to emerge in the Los Angeles suburbs of Compton and Watts. During the next four to six years, the center of hip hop creativity and notoriety was relocated from the East to the West Coast including performers such as NWA, Ice T, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, and Tupac Shakur. Gangsta rap was not without a message, but it was expressed in language which was offensive to the white establishment. NWA's rap "Fuck The Police" (1988) remains one of the best examples of this sub-genre. While the lyrics draw attention to police profiling and violence towards urban blacks, they are phrased in terms of anger and outrage in contrast to the more tempered polemics of "message rap" MCs. Gangsta hip hop was never strictly a West Coast phenomenon, and it continued to spread across the US mainland during the 1990s from both the West Coast and from inner city neighborhoods on the East Coast. Wu-Tang Clan from New York's Staten Island rose to prominence in the mid-1990s and re-focused attention on the East Coast as a site of hip hop creativity. Some members of the Wu-Tang Clan mixed gangsta hip hop style with R&B and so can be considered as precursors to the current generation of commercially successful performers of
hip hop/R&B collaboration and fusion (including Mary J. Blige, Foxy Brown, Eve, Jah Rule, Nelly, and DMX). Among the more prominent developments in recent years: the resurgence of Latino hip hop (Big Pun, Cuban Link, Fat Joe), the breakthrough to commercial success of performers from the U.S. Midwest (Nelly) and South (Ludacris, Pastor Troy), and the ongoing and constantly shifting dialogue between African American hip hop and hip hop-influenced white U.S. artists (Eminem, Linkin' Park, Limp Bizkit).

Although hip hop has come to be coded as a "black" thing by the mass media, it was originally (and perhaps remains) a multi-ethnic project. The African and African American (rhythmic and melodic ostinato, signifying, the dozens), Afro-Caribbean (the sound system, toasting), and, later, the Chicano (homeboy style, lowrider vehicles) influences on hip hop are distinct and have been acknowledged by critics (Toop 1984, Hebdige 1987, Rose 1994, Perkins ed. 1996, Henderson 1999). According to many commentators, hip hop culture is not the exclusive domain of any nationality, region, or ethnicity.

One common critique of the expansion of hip hop worldwide, based partly on a glossing of "hip hop" with "message rap," is that it is driven by emulation of "hip hop style" without a grasp of hip hop concept and attitude. This may be true in some cases, but I found a substantial amount of material that refutes this critique, at least in the case of the Kyoto hip hop scene. Also, the glossing of "hip hop" with "message rap" is somewhat misleading. Tricia Rose's *Black Noise: Rap Music and Contemporary Culture in America* (1994) is among the most sophisticated scholarly works on U.S. hip hop. Some of the terms of her definition of hip hop can give us a fuller understanding of the nature of the U.S. hip hop prototype:

12
Hip hop culture emerged as a source for youth of alternative identity formation and social status in a community whose older local support institutions had been all but demolished along with large sectors of its built environment (Rose 1994: 34).

Without overlooking the severity of conditions in the South Bronx during the 1970s and 80s, I can say that the Kyoto hip hop scene fits this definition with fair accuracy, excluding the final phrase about the built environment. Otherwise, if we substitute "had started to de-stabilize somewhat" for "had been all but demolished," this component of Rose's definition of hip hop can be seen to be analogous to the Kyoto scene. The Kyoto hip hop scene is a source of alternative identity formation, and the older support systems (school, employer, family) have experienced turmoil and accelerating change in recent years. Another component of Rose's definition pertains to re-claiming a sense of connection to locale:

Hip hop replicates and reimagines the experiences of urban life and symbolically appropriates urban space through sampling, attitude, dance, style, and sound effects (Ibid.: 22).

The "appropriation of urban space" is a component of the Kyoto hip hop scene which, once again, fits Rose's discussion of U.S. hip hop. Further parallels with Rose's work are of limited use in a discussion of the Kyoto scene, but the points shared by the hip hop scenes in the U.S. and Japan should not be overlooked.

1.2 The U.S. - Japan Hip Hop Connection

The details of the earliest exposure of hip hop in Japan are not well documented. It is possible that radio broadcasts of the U.S. armed forces Far East Network (FEN) and contact with U.S. servicemen at discos near the U.S. military bases in
Japan played a role. In any case, exposure preceded 1981 when there were a few examples of Japanese pop music which included rap vocals. In 1983 *Wild Style*, Charlie Ahearn's drama-documentary film about hip hop in the Bronx was released in the U.S. and also was first shown in Japan. In the same year, performers from the film performed in Tokyo discos. These two occurrences left a lasting impression on a significant number of Tokyo youth, leading to the "breakdance boom" of the following year (Condry 1999: 11, 40, 60; Fujita 1996).

During the mid to late 1980s, U.S. hip hop performers and related industries began to access audiences and markets abroad. Japan in particular seems to be considered as a major benchmark by U.S. performers. For example, a word search for "Japan" on the website *hiphoparchives.com* (October, 2000) yields over one hundred hits, the vast majority of which are brief references by U.S. performers citing their performances in Japan or their fan base in Japan as milestones in their careers. In their recent track "Big in Japan," (ca. 2001) Boston underground MCs Snacky Chan and Reks deal entirely with this sort of theme, albeit in blatantly Orientalist turns of phrase. Run-D.M.C. toured Japan in 1986, setting the precedent for the 1989 "rush" which included the Jungle Brothers, Public Enemy, De La Soul, and Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince. The Japanese hip hop trio Scha Dara Parr opened for De La Soul during their Japan tour, setting an example which eventually led to extensive collaborative integration between Japanese and U.S. hip hop performers.

In 1994, hip hop by Japanese performers (East End X Yuri, Scha Dara Parr) first achieved a brief boom of commercial success in Japan, breaking the one-million sales mark. Since that time, a large body of Japanese hip hop has been released
both by major and by independent recording labels, but which has failed to achieve sales on the scale of the 1994 boom. Television and FM radio programming which includes U.S. hip hop (and Japanese to a lesser degree) began around this time, but is generally sporadic and limited to late night spots. Following the 1994 boom, Japanese hip hop made only brief appearances (i.e., Zeebra) on the Ori-Con hit chart until recently when "lighter" hip hop groups like Rip Slyme, Kick the Can Crew, and Steady & Co. began to establish a presence for themselves on the hit charts.

During the summer of 1996, two major outdoor Japanese hip hop festivals (Thumpin' Camp and Dai LB Summer Festival) took place in Tokyo's Hibiya Park. These shows featured a number of talented Japanese performers who had recently emerged from the Tokyo "underground" to attain nationwide fame among hip hop circles. Thumpin' Camp especially left a lasting nationwide impression on hip hop fans who started to acknowledge that Japanese hip hop, too, can be "cool" (kakko ii). This realization provided direct impetus for many fans who undertook performing careers of their own, including some of whom are established figures in the Kyoto underground hip hop scene today. Around this time, hip hop scenes began to take root all over Japan from Hokkaido to Kyushu. These scenes began with the consolidation of a fan base but soon led to the opening of venues where aspiring performers could work on improving their level of skill. With the ever-present challenge of creating original music, Japanese hip hop performers began to draw upon local cultural expressions and narratives in order to make music which is representative of themselves and their daily reality. This general developmental pattern may also be applicable to a number of other hip hop scenes outside of the US., but the terms in which
locality is expressed may differ. For example, the anti-Mafia lyrical content of Italian rap (Mitchell in Mitchell, ed. 2001: 201) offers a distinct contrast to the Kyoto scene where a general sense of sympathy for the "gangsta," yanki, and yakuza (as well as alleged direct personal connections to one or more of these elements) is evident in a substantial section of hip hop fans and performers.

Hip hop in Japan today exists in three discernible aspects: US. performers who are popular in Japan, Japanese performers who are known nationwide, and local "underground" performers. US. and Japanese hip hop share mostly the same fan base in Japan, but a distinction is often maintained between the two. Many Kyoto fans describe the two as "different genre," and DJs in the Japanese club scene play nearly entirely US. hip hop music. Nonetheless, I have designated US. hip hop as the "background" of hip hop in Japan. The US. scene is the prototype from which Japanese hip hop was derived, and in this sense is the "origin" or the "background." Nationally famous Japanese performers can be considered the "foreground," in that a creative and successful Japanese performer holds a more immediate importance to Japanese fans than do performers from the U.S. I designate the local performers, little known outside of the immediate area that they live and perform, as the "underground" of hip hop in Japan. The designation "underground" is also used by Japanese hip hoppers to indicate that some of the essence of the U.S. prototype has been retained. The Kyoto hip hop scene exists mostly on the underground level. Some Kyoto performers have broken through to the foreground, but none have yet made it onto the Ori-Con hit charts. Therefore, it is problematic to designate Kyoto hip hop as "popular" music. Hip hop's musical and performative styles are popular nationwide, but these specific crews and performers are (mostly) not well known outside of
Kyoto, and certainly are not "popular" nationwide. The term "underground" ("not nationally known" and/or "authentically non-commercial") is used by the local Kyoto performers in reference to themselves, as well as by Kyoto's Makuro MC's to indicate that they have not "sold out" even though they are well known among hip hop circles nationwide.

My choice of the two-dimensional metaphors of "foreground" and "background" may seem poorly matched with the three-dimensional "underground" designation. The term "underground" is used by Japanese hip hop fans and performers themselves, and thus deserves to be represented in the nomenclature. The other two designations are fairly representative according to the definitions given above, but a more accurate spatial metaphor would place the three dimensions in a triangular configuration with multiple shifting points of contact between the three. Keeping this in mind, I have retained the "fore-", "back-", and "underground" designations for their convenience as a representational device.

Due to the rapid development of the Japanese hip hop scene, my tripartite organizational schema does encounter mismatches and may be bound to gradually lose its representational accuracy. Already there are numerous performers who do not clearly fit the tripartite schema. DJ Krush, expatriate DJ Honda, and San Francisco native Shing02, for example, have made names for themselves in the U.S. and Europe in recent years. Many other Japanese performers including Muro, Twigy, Rino, DJ Hasebe, and DJ Kensaw have earned the respect of U.S. performers through collaborative projects. The Kyoto crew Mack Family in particular has succeeded in cultivating collaborative
relations with U.S. performers including Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. (Carlson, CA) and members of Living Legends (San Francisco Bay area). Accordingly, I should acknowledge that trying to separate "hip hop in Japan" and "Japanese hip hop" has already become complicated. Due to the rapid rate of expansion of Japanese hip hop scenes, the tripartite schema may in the process of losing its representational accuracy.

Given that there are many U.S. hip hop-derived elements of Japanese hip hop, it is not surprising that references derived from the US. East Coast-West Coast polarity are manifest in the Japanese context. Numerous Kyoto performers and fans proclaim personal and musical identities in terms which emulate U.S. West Coast symbolism. These identities resonate with Kyoto as a city in the Kansai area in the western part of the island of Honshu. MC Zibro, for example, identifies his music as a "real westside gang style" ("Bang This Shit"), and audience members at the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. (from the Los Angeles suburb of Carlson) performance in Kyoto (March 10, 2002) enthusiastically returned the "Westside" hand gesture to the performers, with the second and third fingers entwined to signify the letter "W." April Henderson has discussed how the term "Westside" was

...quickly re-referenced...into an ubiquitous battle cry, both geographically widespread and specifically referential in each place it was manifested...People on the Westside of cities, regions, and islands had a whole new context (or a least soundtrack and image) for their localism (Henderson 1999: 100).

However, in contrast to the at times open hostility between U.S. East and West coast performers, the Japanese hip hop scene is characterized by autonomy of
the local scenes rather than by hostility between them. A sense of rivalry between the local scenes is apparent, but what is notably absent is the sort of highly personalized verbal jousting between embittered rivals in the U.S. such as that which occurred between Tupac and Biggie or Benzino and Eminem. Tokyo rapper Zeebra has characterized the dynamic between the Tokyo and Osaka hip hop scenes as "rivals, in a good sense" (Zeebra 2001). In contrast, MC NICE of Kyoto states that the Tokyo scene is currently in a period of stagnation ("kusatteru"). He depicts Tokyo, originally the center of Japanese hip hop, as having been surpassed by the creativity of performers from all over Japan, including the Kansai region. This pattern, of the center being surpassed by the periphery, is perhaps the best depiction of the geography of Japanese hip hop, despite the emulation of U.S. West Coast symbolism by Kyoto fans.

1.3 Kyoto: Background

Kyoto was founded in 794 AD as the seat of the imperial household which remained there for many centuries. With the imperial palace at the center, artisans and artists who served the needs of the imperial family expanded the city's population. The imperial palace, along with numerous Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples comprised the most discernible features of the early Kyoto landscape. City streets were deliberately kept narrow in order to serve as an additional defense against invasion. Although sections of the city were burned repeatedly over the centuries, a number of the basic features of the cityscape were retained through reconstruction. During World War II, the U.S. military command designated Kyoto "off-limits" during aerial bombing campaigns in recognition of the value of the city's cultural heritage. As a result, Kyoto still retains some of the character of old Japan: the narrow, winding neighborhood
streets, an abundance of temples and shrines, and a few dwindling pockets of traditional wooden *machiya* townhouses. Some of the traditional arts and industries including painting, pottery, tea ceremony, and kimono-making still maintain a tenacious presence even since the downsizing and bankruptcies of the post-bubble Japanese economy during the 1990s.

But Kyoto is not simply an urban anachronism. While retaining some of the character of old Japan, Kyoto also shares a place alongside of Tokyo and Osaka at the forefront of technological and social change in Japan. In 1895, Kyoto was the first city in Japan to have an electric railway system (Aoki et al. 2000: 24). Kyoto has also been a significant locus of support for Marxist thought in Japan (Beckmann 1969) and for the Japanese Communist Party (Langer 1972). And high-tech electronics (i.e., Kyocera Inc.), in combination with tourism and traditional arts and artisanal trades, comprise the mainstays of Kyoto's economy today. Kyoto is also a major center of Japanese higher education and intelligentsia between Kyoto University, Doshisha, Ritsumeikan, and a number of other universities. The Kyoto International Conference Hall has hosted lecture-demonstrations by John Cage (early 1990s) as well as numerous international conferences and the codification of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997).

Kyoto's different aspects, including the locus of traditional Japan as well as an aspect of the cultural forerunner, are correlated in complex ways with sometimes unexpected results. For example, tourists from around Japan and the world travel to Kyoto to see sites which can satisfy a yearning for traditional Japan. Kiyomizu Temple is one such location, but it also has an inconspicuous art
gallery which hosts world-class exhibits of contemporary art. On a given day in the early 1990's, an exhibit from Dennis Hopper's photography collection might complicate our experience of the yearned-for "Japan."

The prevalence of support in Kyoto for the Japanese Communist Party was a factor leading to a lengthy term in office (1950-1978) for the communist governor Torazo Ninagawa of Kyoto prefecture. During his term in office, tax revenues dwindled to the point that municipal projects such as road development and the construction of fully closed sewage systems in Kyoto City have lagged behind those in other cities in Japan. Ironically, the receptivity of Kyoto intellectuals, political leaders and voters to new ideologies (communism) appears to have impeded municipal development. Some people blame the traffic congestion in current day Kyoto on Ninagawa's governorship. Also, substantial areas along the Kamo River in Central Kyoto City still lack fully closed sewage facilities (email communication, Keiko Shiojiri, March 8, 2003).

Kyoto's exemption from bombing during World War II also had some unpredictable results. Kyoto residents retained enough economic stability and well-being that during the postwar U.S. military occupation they were able to enjoy FEN radio broadcasts. Some Kyoto listeners heard the likes of Bill Monroe, Gene Autry, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and in 1949 Hank Williams' debut, all on the "Grand Ole Opry" on FEN broadcasts. These Kyoto listeners played a central role in Japan's bluegrass and country music boom (email communication, Robert Talbot, May 5, 2002). With the layering of tradition and modernity, conservatism and innovation, Kyoto reflects the complexity involved
in discourses of "Japaneseness" today and is thus a good locus for this study of identity production among hip hop youth.

1.4 Kyoto: The Hip Hop Scene

The Kyoto scene dates back at least to 1994-1995. Although there was a fan base for U.S. hip hop prior to this, it was during this time that signs of a local scene began to manifest itself. The bar R&R (now defunct) in the Kiyamachi entertainment district (see map in Appendix A) began to attract a full crowd of both Japanese and foreign customers on weekend nights around this time. R&R was run by a hip hop crew which came to be known as No Mercy (now Mack Family), and was one of the first bars in Kyoto which featured DJs who spun U.S. hip hop records (along with club Viva's DJ Prince) and which hosted occasional Japanese hip hop freestyle and live shows. It was at R&R that two of Kyoto's major hip hop crews (No Mercy and Makuro MC's) gave some of their earliest performances. Also around this time, custom "lowrider" cars, replete with hydraulic jacks and booming stereo systems, were first put on display on Saturday evenings along Kawaramachi Street in downtown Kyoto. By 1997, Makuro MC's had attracted enough attention that they started to be solicited for interviews by music magazines with nationwide sales. They were by this time well on their way to becoming the only crew of Kyoto hip hop performers with a nationwide reputation who did not renounce their Kyoto residency for the attraction of Tokyo's business and career offerings. As such, Makuro MC's occupy both the Japanese hip hop foreground and underground.

The Kyoto hip hop scene today is firmly rooted in a number of night life venues. Although R&R no longer exists, there are numerous other bars that feature hip
hop music (mostly U.S.) on a regular basis including Dejavoo, Viva, Rokuhan, Voodoo, Collage, and Secret Cafe in the Kiyamachi-Kawaramachi nightlife area and Soul Roll on Kitayama Boulevard (see map in Appendix A). This may entail simply the bartender playing CDs as background music, a resident DJ spinning LP records, or a featured DJ. There are currently four nightclubs that feature hip hop live shows on a regular basis. Club Grind and Hati-Hati feature mostly underground Japanese hip hop. Whoopee's features mostly underground and nationally famous Japanese hip hop performers. Metro features the foreground, nationally famous Japanese performers, and is also the venue that draws the largest number of U.S. hip hop performers. There are currently a number of established "families" of hip hop music performers (which include both DJs and MCs) in Kyoto including Makuro MC's and their cohort (Absolute), 2inFLUENCE, Mack Family (including members of Ashura Squad, Seishi and Motye as well as the now defunct No Mercy), Groove Productions and their cohort (Zibro, Block Area), and Ruff Neck Crew. Including regular and semi-regular featured performances by Kyoto and Osaka DJs, the list is expanded considerably (Shark, Sancon, Kensaw, Shin, Kyoju, Naokey, Mr. Camp, Tahara, Lark, Metan, Show, Win, Mas, Hastler, Sowkow). Makuro MC's are nationally famous among Japanese hip hop fans, but perform mostly in Osaka and Kyoto. Makuro MC's belong in the foreground category, despite the fact that they conscientiously strive to retain an underground identity. Mack Family, 2inFLUENCE, and Groove Productions are squarely within the underground category, and there are also numerous lesser-known underground performers and crews in Kyoto. There are also three established non-Japanese rappers who are residents of Kyoto, one of whom (B-Bandj) occupies the foreground category and two of whom (P-nut, MC First Class) occupy the underground category.
Considering that these three rap in English (B-Bandj in French also) and perform and record in collaboration with Japanese musicians, I should acknowledge that the designations "Kyoto hip hop" and "hip hop in Japan" do not fully do justice to the complexity of the Kyoto scene.

In addition to nightlife venues, the Kyoto hip hop scene is also manifest in graffiti "tags" and "pieces" around town. Piece work can be found in all the places one might expect, on the concrete pillars of highway overpasses, along train tracks, on the shutters of storefronts along the trendy Teramachi and Shinkyogoku shopping arcades (see map in Appendix A), and, to a certain extent, at a number of sanctioned locations (entry staircase to Dejavoo and Mack Family’s short-lived barbecue spot Last Meal on Kiyamachi to the south of Sanjo Street). Tags, albeit often stylistically crude ones, can be found all over town in both highly visible and in less prominent locations.

Breakdance is also a part of the Kyoto hip hop scene. Following the impact of Wild Style, dance footage on music videos of the Japanese pop singer Amuro Namie resulted in a nationwide "street dance boom" (encompassing styles ranging from house to hip hop and freestyle) which emerged beginning around 1997. Amateur dancers practicing in front of the plate glass windows (used as mirrors) of train stations and department stores are a fixture of the urban landscape in Japan, including Kyoto. A number of private dance schools targeting these "street dancers" have appeared in Kyoto in recent years, and amateur and semi-professional Japanese breakdancers make appearances at most large-scale hip hop performances in Kyoto.
The Kyoto hip hop scene is also manifest in youth fashion. "Hip hop style" including oversize pants, baseball caps askew, and Timberland boots is common (cultural) currency among a section of Kyoto youth. With stereo systems spilling hip hop beats out into public space, retail shops catering to these consumers comprise another discernible feature of the Kyoto hip hop landscape.

1.5 Theoretical and Discursive Context
I now return to the central problem of explaining the meaning of hip hop within the Kyoto context. I have drawn on a number of theories and authors in this regard. I have considered discourses of essentialized "Japaneseness" including Nihonjinron (see Befu 2001, Revell 1997, Tsukaguchi-le Grand 1991, Atkins 2001) and the trope of the Japanese as gifted in imitative skills but lacking in the inventive (Tobin 1992, Atkins 2001). Hebdige's model of subcultural style is posited in relation to Japanese hip hop as a refusal of the mainstream (Hebdige 1979). I use Ian Condry's dichotomy of the Tokyo hip hop scene: "party rap" versus "underground hip hop" (Condry 1999) and E. Taylor Atkins's examination of jazz in Japan (Atkins 2001) as points of departure for a discussion of "authenticity" in Japanese hip hop. I cite Condry's dual focus on "both the 'push' of globalizing forces and the 'pull' of local consumers" in relation to the appeal of hip hop to the identity production agenda of Kyoto hip hoppers (Condry 1999). Joseph J. Tobin's model of "domestication" (Tobin 1992) and Shunya Yoshimi's model of the "internalization" of America in Japan (Yoshimi 2000) are applied in relation to the locality of Kyoto hip hop. John Russell's (1991, 1998), Karen Kelsky's (1996), and Nina Cornyetz's (1994) reservations about the appeal of "blackness" to Japanese youths are cited in relation to Kyoto youths' affinity for blacks and the pull which the Kyoto scene exerts on U.S. hip hop culture. Ikuya
Sato's (1991) work on the *bōsōzoku* in Kyoto is cited in relation to the limited duration or "staying power" of liminal identities.

The Kyoto hip hop scene is derived from U.S. hip hop which originated as an empowering expression among marginalized urban populations. This poses the question of how this translates in Kyoto where nearly all hip hoppers and the social "mainstream" share the same ethnicity and middle class background. Let us begin with a stereotypical response to Japanese hip hop, expressed by many Japanese and non-Japanese alike, that it "must surely be nothing other than simple mimicry of U.S. hip hop." This reaction usually comes from people who have little or no specific knowledge of Japanese hip hop, but the prevalence of this "inauthenticity" criticism indicates the importance of identifying some of its underlying discourses. Acknowledging that debates about "authenticity" tend to disintegrate into conundrums of semantics and terminology slippage, it is still worthwhile pursuing them in order to elicit the meaning that hip hop holds for Kyoto youth. The thesis is intended to demonstrate some of the ways that reductionist models (such as the "inauthenticity" critique) fail to accurately represent the full multiplicity of expressions within the Kyoto hip hop scene.

Atkins's *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* elicits a number of discourses which are equally applicable to Japanese hip hop (Atkins 2001). He points out that comments made by some well known U.S. musicians reflect racial essentialism in that African American jazz musicians are posited as having an innate sense for the music which evades Japanese audiences and even the most "diligent" Japanese musicians. Saxophonist Branford Marsalis's comments are a good example: "I don't think they understand it most times, especially at my
shows, they just stare at us, like, "What the hell are they playing?" (Atkins 2001: 20). According to comments made by members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and the basic premise of the "black music ideology" espoused by Amiri Baraka and others, the Japanese lack not only a "sense" for the music but also the moral authority to perform music that "stands atop Afro-American traditions" (per AEC, Atkins 2001: 19). Atkins posits that these discourses have produced an "authenticity complex" among Japanese jazz fans and performers which is the driving force behind numerous strategies to "authenticate" Japanese jazz. While his specific phrasing ("complex") is not a perfect fit with the Kyoto hip hop scene, there is a pervasive awareness of authenticity discourse among Kyoto performers and fans, an awareness which is manifest in lyrics, musical style, lifestyle, and demeanor in both overt and subtle ways.

Given the slippery nature of authenticity discourse, it is helpful that Atkins draws our attention to Peter Kivy's subdivision of "historical authenticity" (authorial intention, contemporary sound, and contemporary performance practice—the kind of authenticity valued by practitioners of 'early music'); and "personal authenticity" (emotive sincerity, expressiveness, or assertiveness) (Atkins 2001: 23-4, re. Kivy 1995). Kivy acknowledges that the two types of "authenticity" are often at odds with each other. In the case of the Kyoto hip hop scene (as well as the Japanese scene nationwide), critiques of "historical inauthenticity," conflated with racial essentialism, work to obscure the ways in which performers and fans have achieved "personal authenticity," which (in my own terms) includes creativity, originality, and a self-representative stance.
Ian Condry has demonstrated (1999, 2000) how the basic parameters of the debate on authenticity in Japanese hip hop are replicated within the Tokyo hip hop scene. He draws our attention to a basic dichotomy between performers who have targeted a presence on the hit charts (Scha Dara Parr, East End X Yuri) and those who have cultivated an underground persona (ECD, Rhymester, Zebra, K Dub Shine):

There is a broad split between artists who associated themselves with "party rap" and those who espouse "underground hip hop." Party rap tends to be lighthearted and upbeat, and one argument is that this style is more appropriate to the happy-go-lucky life of Japanese youth. Underground hip hop musicians, in contrast, associate themselves with "hip hop culture" and its oppositional stance towards mainstream society (Condry 1999: 112).

If indeed the majority of Japanese youth do lead a "happy-go-lucky life," then perhaps "party rap" can be considered "authentic" in that it is true to their daily lived reality. "Underground hip hop" can be considered "authentic" in that it has stayed true to its roots in the U.S. hip hop scene. Conversely, either type of Japanese hip hop can be criticized as "inauthentic" according to the criteria of the other type. As Condry acknowledges, this dichotomy is an over-simplification of Japanese hip hop. All underground performers play the role of the party MC to some degree at live shows. Also, however lighthearted in terms of rap text, musical style and vocal delivery, there are few "party rap" performers who do not at times engage, at least indirectly, with some of the issues confronting Japanese youth.
What is missing from Condry's analysis is an attempt to synthesize the two facets of Japanese hip hop. I propose that this "dichotomy" demarcates the boundaries of a spectrum, a liminal zone within which Kyoto hip hoppers negotiate their multiple "Japanese" identities. This spectrum is composed of elements including the subcultural, tame, menacing, familiar, and recently acquired. Different hip hoppers construct their identity in different ways, utilizing different combinations of elements drawn from this spectrum. The point is not that party rap and underground hip hop are not entirely separable, but that these two interdependent versions of hip hop identity are drawn from a complex common source.

My approach to the Kyoto hip hop scene shares much common ground with Condry's examination of the Tokyo hip hop scene, especially regarding discourses of imitation and authenticity (i.e., Condry 2000). However, Condry's analysis focuses mostly on well known performers from Tokyo, most of whom established themselves four to six years ago, and most of whom have maintained nationwide recognition among hip hop circles since around that time (King Giddra, Rhymester, ECD, B-Fresh, Buddha Brand, Ito Seiko, Sha Dara Parr, East End X Yuri). It may have been this scarcity of material from the younger and lesser known Japanese performers that has led Condry to make some questionable statements about hip hop in Japan. For example, he states in his recent chapter in Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the U.S. (Mitchell, ed. 2001) that "(i)n (Japanese hip hop lyrics) there are no guns, no misogyny, and little violence," and "(n)ot a single Japanese rap lyric mentions crack cocaine" (2001: 223). Due to the rapid rate of expansion and change in youth culture,
analyses of Japanese hip hop can benefit from the inclusion of material from the younger and the lesser known performers.

The "inauthenticity" critique can be manifest on a number of specific levels. In terms of musical style, for example, one might note that hip hop compositions by Kyoto performers generally lack any hōgaku elements. If one wishes to hear shamisen, shakuhachi, or koto in order to consider the music "Japanese," examples of Kyoto hip hop which satisfy can be found and will be considered in the thesis. But, by nature, hip hop music is based on sampling and on digital programming technology. As a result, hip hop can and does incorporate musical elements of any and all types. Japanese pop music in general also incorporates very few hōgaku elements, but any assessment that these musics "don't sound Japanese" can only be based on an essentialized concept of "Japaneseness." As Atkins points out regarding Japanese jazz, this sort of approach assumes that there is a prevalent homogeneity of the Japanese sub-genre and that there is a "naturalness" of Japanese musicians including indigenous musical elements (Atkins 2001: 30). In order to understand the ways in which Kyoto hip hop expresses "Japaneseness" for the performers and fans, it is necessary that we first acknowledge the falseness of this sort of racial essentialism.

On a less simplistic level, the "inauthenticity" critique is often connected to a presumption that Japanese hip hop cannot help but fail to do justice to the role which (some) U.S. hip hop serves in providing marginalized populations with a means of social resistance. If we accept this viewpoint, hip hop as a means of resistance is poorly suited ("historically inauthentic") to Japanese youth who (mostly) share with the "mainstream" the same middle class background and
ethnicity. Granted, there are a number of performers and fans in Kyoto who are in agreement with this critique. Also, a portion of Kyoto's younger "hip hoppers" do listen to U.S. hip hop music and emulate hip hop fashion without an appreciable understanding of the origins or the meaning of the U.S. prototype.

Nonetheless, there is a basic problem with this type of critique in that it is often based on potentially misleading discourses of consensus and homogeneity within Japanese society. Consequently, this critique works to obscure the full range of expressions within the Kyoto hip hop scene. As my research findings demonstrate, Kyoto MCs including Jimmy of Mack Family do incorporate an element of social resistance, according to the parameters of the U.S. prototype but which is also true to themselves and their daily reality, into their versions of Japanese hip hop. MC NICE of Groove Productions often raps about the importance of self-belief, an "indigenized" version of some of the rhetoric of U.S. message rap. Groove Productions affiliate MC Zibro alludes in his lyrics to his (socially marginalized) upbringing in the "buraku" neighborhood at the eastern end of Nanajo Street, Kyoto (see map in Appendix A).

_Nihonjinron_ discourse is one major component underlying racially essentialist models of "Japanese culture" (see Befu 2001, Revell 1997, Tsukaguchi-le Grand 1991, Atkins 2001). Embodied in the mass market and academic literary genre of the same name, _Nihonjinron_ purports that there is a uniqueness to Japanese society, based on the supposition that all Japanese people share an "unadulterated" ethnicity, language, and culture. _Nihonjinron_ has been criticized by a number of Western critics who suggest that it is in part a construct of elite power brokers who maintain myths of homogeneity in Japan through strategies
which obscure the presence of ethnic and social multiplicity, including Japan's own marginalized populations (Ainu, Korean-Japanese, Okinawans, "buraku"). Kyoto hip hop very occasionally engages with some of these marginalized "Japans." In the single case that I encountered during a year and a half of field study in Kyoto, MC Zibro is outspoken about his upbringing in the "buraku" neighborhood around east Nanajo Street. However, if we expand our definition of "marginalized" to include the yanki and the yakuza, there is a considerable degree of engagement with the Kyoto hip hop scene. In general, Kyoto hip hoppers do not speak out for Japan's marginalized populations. Nonetheless, the identity produced by Kyoto hip hoppers is stylistically and ideologically derived from U.S. hip hop. Also, Kyoto hip hoppers' gestures in refusal of the mainstream are encompassed in a comparable but localized version of U.S. hip hop's role as social resistance. As such, the identity of Kyoto hip hoppers works against discourses of consensus and homogeneity in Japan.

The essentialist notion that the Japanese are "by nature" an imitative people is another element underlying the inauthenticity critique. As numerous writers point out, this myth is shared by some Japanese and non-Japanese alike (Tobin 1992: 3, Atkins 2001: 28, Iwabuchi 1998). Working against this myth, a pattern has been identified whereby the acquired culture is "altered" or "localized" into the Japanese context. In his introduction to Re-made in Japan, Tobin proposes that the term "domestication" best describes this process. He defines "domestication" as

...a process that is active (unlike westernization, modernization, or postmodernism), morally neutral (unlike imitation or parasatism), and demystifying (there is nothing inherently strange, exotic, or uniquely
Domesticate has a range of meanings, including tame, civilize, naturalize, make familiar, bring into the home. This book argues that the Japanese are doing all of these things vis-a-vis the West. The term domestication also suggests that Western goods, practices, and ideas are changed (Japanized) in their encounter with Japan. Japan is unmistakably westernized, and yet Westerners who visit Japan do not necessarily find what they see familiar (Tobin 1992: 4).

Hip hop has been "domesticated," along the lines of Tobin's definition, by Japanese youth in a number of ways. Most obviously, this is evident in terms of language. Japanese hip hop in Kyoto is rapped in a pastiche of standard Japanese, colloquial Japanese, standard English loan-words, and U.S. hip hop colloquial. Also, as my research findings will demonstrate, Kyoto hip hoppers have incorporated indigenous cultural elements on the levels of rap text, musical style, lifestyle, and personal style. The significance of these elements changes as they are selected and retained within the context of the Kyoto hip hop scene. Choices of this sort can be seen as part of the remaking of hip hop, in addition to processes of formal change.

Although I believe that Tobin's "domestication" model is apt, the processes he is referring to should not be reduced to a unilateral pattern. For example, there also exists a process whereby Japanese hip hop is becoming hybridized with congruous "indigenous" (pre-existent) cultural elements, many of which are in part borrowings themselves. The most obvious example of this is the recent "gangsterization" of Kyoto hip hop. As the gangsta element of U.S. hip hop has received much publicity, I hardly need mention that this does not comprise a "re-making" of the U.S. prototype. Neither does it entail a change in Kyoto's socio-
cultural landscape. Rather, a significant number of Kyoto hip hoppers are actively and passively involved in the connection of hip hop, Japanese "gangsta" style, to the indigenous quasi- (yanki, bōsōzoku) and proto-gangster (yakuza) subcultures. Another conspicuous indigenous precursor to and co-constituent of Japanese hip hop is the Japanese reggae scene, reggae being basically a sibling genre to hip hop in the U.S., Japan, and elsewhere. The Kyoto reggae and hip hop scenes share an overlapping fan base, similar lifestyles, mostly the same performance venues, and frequently the same stage. Surfer and hip hop subcultures in Kyoto are also overlapping in terms of membership and lifestyle.

As hip hop becomes hybridized with pre-existing and parallel cultural elements, it gradually takes on "indigenous" form and style. Kyoto has provided fertile ground for hip hop, exerting an attractive force which has resulted in a dense set of processes whereby the indigenous and the acquired have intersected and re-intersected. Koichi Iwabuchi (1998) discusses "hybridism" in the context of a discursive construction of "Japan" as an organic cultural entity that absorbs foreign cultures without changing its national or cultural identity. The type of hybridism represented by Kyoto hip hop entails a departure from Iwabuchi's model. The point is not that "Japan" is essentially unchanging, but that its meaning can shift dramatically depending on historical and discursive context. The appeal of hip hop in Japan is based partly on an affinity for blacks and on a relatively new ambivalence towards the white male as "the foreigner." While the affinity towards blacks is not a new phenomenon in Japan, the direct personal ties that are developing between some Kyoto and U.S. hip hop performers may, over the course of decades, contribute to less racialized relations between Japanese and U.S. black youths. Social and cultural shifts of this sort are part of
the underpinnings of the type of hybridism found in the Kyoto hip hop scene. Combined and recombined with pre-existing socio-culture elements (some of which are part borrowings in themselves i.e., yanki, bōsōzoku), these shifts contradict discourse on "Japan" as an organic cultural entity.

In some ways, the Kyoto hip hop scene is a comparable version (has retained some of the essence) of the U.S. prototype. Kyoto hip hop is comparable in that it functions as a means for the performers and fans to produce a "Japaneseness" which distances themselves from the social "mainstream." I acknowledge that this "mainstream" is partly the product of native and Western discourses on "Japaneseness." Nonetheless, there are commonly held social values which have allowed discourses such as Nihonjinron to take root in Japan, and there is a social mainstream which is evidenced by the predominance of the Japanese middle class. The Kyoto hip hoppers' refusal of the mainstream does not come from a position of ethnic or social marginalization, but they stand in opposition to discourses which work towards obscuring the full complexity of their identity as "Japanese." Dick Hebdige's explanation of how subculture functions as resistance can help to illustrate the nature of the Kyoto hip hoppers' refusal of the mainstream.

Style in subculture is...pregnant with significance. Its transformations go 'against nature', interrupting the process of 'normalization'. As such, they are gestures, movements toward a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus (Hebdige 1979: 18, emphasis mine). The Kyoto hip hoppers' refusal of the mainstream exactly fits the challenge to unity and cohesion which Hebdige describes. This sort of subcultural challenge is
also fundamentally similar to the social opposition of U.S. hip hop. Racial considerations in the Kyoto hip hop scene are backgrounded in comparison to U.S. hip hop, but there is a basic common principle of taking responsibility for the terms of self-representation. As such, Kyoto hip hop is "domesticated" in Tobin's terms and is also a version of U.S. hip hop, retaining some of the essence of the prototype.

Issues of race are a relatively minor component of the Kyoto hip hop scene, but they do comprise one facet of the refusal of the mainstream. On an aesthetic level, the Kyoto hip hop identity (as well as of Japanese hip hoppers in general) is obviously derived from U.S. hip hoppers. Some of the borrowed elements include dreadlocks and corn-row hair, oversize pants, urban designer brand clothing such as Tommy Hilfiger, baseball caps askew, expensive athletic shoes, and Timberland boots. The borrowing of these stylistic elements indicates a clear aesthetic affinity (akogare) for blacks. However, the strong attractive force which U.S. hip hop culture exerts over Kyoto hip hoppers suggests that the akogare exists on more than the aesthetic level. John G. Russell (1991, 1998), Karen Kelsky (1996), and Nina Cornyetz (1994) have examined Japanese youths' affinity for blacks from a generally shared perspective, viewing the affinity as equally racial essentialist in the way that the black male, for example, is reduced to a fetish of physical and sexual power. The three scholars are in general agreement that attitudes towards blacks in Japan are influenced by white American views of U.S. blacks, and thus are equally racially essentialist. The results of my field research suggest that this model does not adequately represent the "black affinity" of Kyoto hip hoppers. Russell (1998: 141), for example, points out that the "tradition" of black minstrelsy in Japan is "derived
from forms originally introduced to Japan by Commodore Matthew Perry in the
nineteenth century." Japanese hip hop, however, entails alternate identity
formation in part through emulation of some of the terms of self-identification
by U.S. blacks, although these terms are filtered through the mass media, and
their reception limited by the English language ability of Japanese youth. This is
not to say that the majority of Kyoto hip hoppers actively support African
Americans' struggle against racism. However, the Kyoto hip hoppers' affinity
for U.S. blacks represents a shift towards -emic representations of blacks. This
affinity functions as a refusal of the Kyoto social mainstream, a rejection of white
America, and an expression of an ambiguous sense of sympathy for or fraternity
with U.S. blacks.

The affinity for blacks among Kyoto hip hoppers can be considered problematic
in relation to the existence of racialized attitudes towards blacks in Japan.
Despite the fact that the existence of racism in Japan is widely denied in public
discourse, racist attitudes do dwell in the hearts of social conservatives and many
others in Japan. One Kyoto-specific case in point is the karaoke bar Kuronbo on
Higashoiji Street between Kitaoji and Kitayama, with an illuminated portable
neon sign bearing the venue name set out on the sidewalk during the evening.
"Kuronbō" is a highly derogatory designation for blacks. The choice of this
epithet for this shop front was perhaps intended as a reference to "black
minstrelsy" which has its own chapter in Japanese music history (see Cornyetz
1994 and Russell 1998), but the assumption that the reference (and inflammatory
phrasing) would be socially acceptable is indicative of the sort of racial
essentialism that exists among a significant section of Kyoto residents.
Racist attitudes and discriminatory behavior in Japan often pose serious obstacles to Japan's native marginalized populations (Ainu, Korean-Japanese, Okinawans, "buraku") as well as to non-white foreigners in many situations including employment and marriage. The Kyoto hip hoppers' emulation of "black style" is rooted in a desire to stand out in a crowd and to look "cool," and so in this sense is partly an aesthetic alternative to white America as well as the mainstream "Japans" of the post-occupation and bubble economy eras. The affinity is also rooted in the desire to fit in among Japanese hip hop youth. However, it is in the Japanese context of racialized attitudes towards blacks that hip hop becomes an ideal means for the refusal of the mainstream. The emulation of "black style" may comprise a gentle and indirect reminder that not all Japanese are uncomfortable around blacks, or it may entail a deliberate effort to offend Japanese people who hold racialized attitudes. Whether or not the gesture registers on the target audience is another matter, but I believe that the meaning behind the gesture remains the same regardless. The Kyoto hip hoppers' affinity for blacks does go beyond the level of emulation of "black style." My research findings indicate that although Kyoto hip hoppers often do not understand most of the lyrics to U.S. hip hop, they often do have a basic understanding that U.S. hip hop entails an element in resistance of racial and social marginalization. From this understanding, they have arrived at their own version of hip hop as a refusal of the mainstream.

The second component of Kyoto hip hoppers' affinity for blacks is conversely related to an implicit refusal of "whiteness" and of white America specifically. In terms of the cultural capital of "whiteness," my research findings suggest that Japanese people are approaching the point of over-exposure. This is perhaps not
surprising considering the prevalence of white faces in advertising media and the abundance of white Westerners in the English-teaching industry. But my research findings also suggest that this refusal of "whiteness," whites in Japan being often conflated with "white America," entails partly a refusal of white America on a deeper conceptual level. As I will discuss this further in section 2.7, on this level the refusal is connected to a sense of resentment against white America which stems from the perceived economic and military subjugation of Japan by the United States. This refusal of white America comprises one facet of the Kyoto hip hoppers' "Japaneseness."

Having exposed some of the problems with the inauthenticity critique of Japanese hip hop, we need to find a model which can better account for the sort of cultural integration which is taking place in the case of the Kyoto hip hop scene. I have explained how a number of indigenous elements of the Kyoto cultural and subcultural landscape are intertwined together with the hip hop scene. We can view this from the perspective that hip hop has taken root in Kyoto partly due to the "pull" which this landscape, along with the identity production agenda of a section of Kyoto youth, have exerted on hip hop. Condry has pointed out the importance of acknowledging this "pull" in relation to the specific case of Japanese hip hop:

...I have chosen to focus on globalization, on the one hand, as a process of increasing connection between diverse locales, and on consumption, on the other, as a process of reception in specific locales. The goal is to try to represent both the "push" of globalizing forces and the "pull" of local consumers (Condry 1999: 15-16).
It is important not to overemphasize consumption, given that the Kyoto hip hop scene entails a significant aspect of production (composition, performance, identity), but his point about the "pull" is well taken. Too often, commentary on "globalization" is framed from the perspective of a monolithic Western presence aggressively engulfing and erasing local identity. This hegemonic perspective sometimes entails a racially essentialist element in that some Western commentators engage in hand-wringing over the presumed erasure of their own imagined and exoticized "others." This is not to say that the erasure of local culture has not actually occurred at times. However, in this case we can identify a set of indigenous elements which exert "pull" on the acquired culture. Focusing on the "push" of globalization therefore misses the point and can work to obscure the meaning which cultural integration holds on a local scale. The Kyoto scene has taken root primarily due to the "pull" which the identity production agenda of one section of Kyoto youth exerts on hip hop, not due to the "push" of international marketing and advertising strategies.

Shunya Yoshimi's model of cultural integration between the U.S. and Japan in the late 1970s can help to frame our understanding of the Kyoto hip hop scene:

The point is that this process was not the "colonization" of Japan by American cultural imperialism, nor the mere "domestication" of America into the Japanese context. Throughout the process, Japan has been externalized to the same extent as America has been internalized. So the very structure of opposition between "Japan" and "America"; the "internal" and the "external" was no longer able to function from the 1980s (Shunya 2000: 221).
Yoshimi acknowledges that models of cultural colonialism do not fit the case of cultural integration between Japan and America, and thus he agrees with Condry's balancing of the "push" perspective with that of "pull." Yoshimi’s position, that the structural opposition between "America" (external) and "Japan" (internal) has become dysfunctional, suggests that attempts to determine whether the Kyoto hip hop scene is predominantly "Japanese" (indigenized) or "American" (derivative) in character can be a misleading approach.

In addition, changes in Japan since the late 1980s and the collapse of the bubble economy have started to erase some of the social and economic features which had previously been commonly cited as distinguishing Japan from the U.S. Consider, for example, that the likelihood of finding employment, even for recent university graduates, has dwindled. Also, following corporate bankruptcies and "restructuring," there has been a substantial decrease in public trust of Japan's system of secure employment based on seniority. As a result, a trend has emerged whereby many young Japanese people, unwilling or unable to find steady employment, have turned to an alternative lifestyle of self-employment or semi-unemployment (furitā). At the same time, Japan is experiencing a much publicized increase in rates of unemployment among all age groups, homelessness, violent juvenile crime, and domestic abuse. It is therefore becoming increasingly problematic to try to cite low crime rates, public safety, and the commitment of industrious university-bound students as sociocultural elements which distinguish Japan from America.

Another cultural trend which has emerged in the 1980s is what can be called the "rise of Asianism." This is manifest in business and mass media ploys to access
Asian markets. Also, it can be seen in a new sense of chicness for Asian goods, food, and cultural commodities. This sense of chicness is apparent, for example, in the lyrics of U.S. MCs who reference Japan or Japanese culture (Mos Def: "Travellin' Man", Snacky Chan and Reks: "Big in Japan"). This indicates that the rise of hip hop in Japan, as well the network of personal and professional ties between U.S. and Japanese hip hop performers, are not taking place within the context of any single or unilateral process. It is within this context of the inter-layering of "Japan" and "America," and the erasure of distinct "boundaries" between the two that Kyoto hip hoppers are producing their version of "Japaneseness." This identity is articulated in terms of difference from the social mainstream, in terms which oppose discourses of Japanese homogeneity and discourses of racialized "Japaneseness."

One of the central elements of public discourse on Japanese hip hop, as expressed by a significant number of my informants, is a skepticism regarding its "staying power." Although there is little to be gained from predictions about the longevity of Japanese hip hop as a genre of music or as a subculture, we can assess the longevity of the alternative identity for individual performers and fans. Ikuya Sato's Kamikaze Biker (1991) depicts bōsōzoku activity in Kyoto as a temporary liminal identity. In the words of the biker gang members themselves, individual members "graduate" (sotsugyō suru) or disengage themselves from the Ukyo Rengo (Ukyo Ward Confederation) sometime between high school and age twenty when they come to be held accountable to Japan's penal codes as adults. The Kyoto hip hop scene suggests a different type of liminal identity. Many of the better known performers in Kyoto and Osaka are in their middle to late twenties, or older. Osaka kingpin DJ Kensaw is over
thirty years of age and his monthly event Owl Night has passed its tenth anniversary. Given that Japanese hip hop has around a twelve year history, it is not surprising that the age bracket of Kyoto hip hoppers ranges from around eighteen to thirty, with the majority between twenty and twenty eight. For these people, the hip hop identity is clearly not a passing phase or a rite of coming-of-age.

The Kyoto version of hip hop entails a number of changes in the U.S. prototype. Obviously, the refusal of the mainstream is a version of the social resistance of U.S. hip hop. Also, indigenous cultural elements are hybridized with hip hop. Finally, some of the unique social aspects of Kyoto city are reproduced in the hip hop scene. I will demonstrate what has been retained and what has been changed through an examination of Kyoto hip hop on the three levels of performance, text, and musical style and form.

1.6 Research Methodology

The thesis is based on field study done in Kyoto between October, 2000 and April, 2002. I attended numerous live shows where I observed performances by local musicians, gathered independently released recordings of Kyoto hip hop, and conducted numerous informal interviews. I analyzed rap texts in most cases with the assistance of the lyricists themselves. In other cases, I was assisted by other performers or by knowledgeable fans. I conducted formal interviews with several hip hop performers as well as one night club manager. I also interviewed a number of "non-fans." All interviews were conducted in Japanese, and all English translations are my own. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the thesis material, I have substituted pseudonyms in place of my informants'
true and alias names. In doing so, I have tried to retain the linguistic character of the original name, be it Japanese, English, or quasi-English. As a result, my discussion of the style and content of performer names is pertinent, despite the use of pseudonyms.

In the case of both rap lyric and interview text, portions which were in English (or "Japanese-English") in the original form are underlined to distinguish them from the translated body. Written surveys (in Japanese) were distributed to fans, performers, and "non-fans" at nightclubs, bars, universities, and by hand to my colleagues and acquaintances (see copy of questionnaire in Appendix B). Survey respondents number over one hundred, but many of these were only partially completed. In the thesis, citations of total sample size for any given survey question are adjusted, omitting blank entries and "don't understand" ("wakaranai") responses. Observations of the emergence of hip hop culture into Kyoto public space also comprise a part of my research findings. Overnight trips to attend Japanese hip hop performances in Osaka and Tokyo as well as my study of a large body of Japanese hip hop recordings from outside of Kyoto have helped to give perspective to my analysis of the Kyoto hip hop scene.

Ironically, it was my study of the shakuhachi and Japanese traditional music which led me, by way of ethnomusicology, to the thesis topic and the cultural studies - ethnomusicology framework of the thesis. During the field study period, my background in Japanese traditional music had little impact on how I was received by the informants. In contrast, the fact that I am a (white) American male appears to have played out in my favor. People were, in general, quite receptive to me and interested in my research. Notably, I question whether MC Shuzo of
Makuro MC's would have made a special trip to Club Grind one Saturday evening in the Spring of 2001 to meet me (and give me a tape containing the track "Grow" by Makuro MC's) if I had been a Japanese researcher, for example. Due to the ways in which (white male) foreigners are sometimes allowed to bypass standard protocol in Japan, I believe that I encountered less resistance than a Japanese researcher might have. In addition, some of my performer-informants clearly had presumed that I might be able to provide them with connections to U.S. performers. Although the affinity for blacks represents a shift of interest away from white Westerners, structures of social privilege for these "preferred foreigners" appear to remain.

The main impetus for Shuzo's visit was the fact that Sakayama-san, the manager of Grind, mentioned me over the phone when Shuzo called regarding an unrelated matter. But, considering that Makuro MC's maintained a ban on the release of any recorded material until the summer of 2002, one cannot help but wonder if nationality and ethnicity did not play out in my favor considerably. Shuzo even rapped a brief freestyle for me on the spot. In part, my research achievements may have been accelerated simply by the novelty of any "outsider" having a research interest in them and their music. Still, considering how readily I was received by the informants, I strongly suspect that the decisive factor was that I am from the U.S., the "authentic site" ("honbu") of hip hop, and that I am a white male. This may seem to contradict my assertion that Kyoto hip hop entails a refusal of white America. On the other hand, being a white American from Boston who is researching the Kyoto hip hop scene for the University of Hawai`i, I believe that the informants received me more as an amusing "anomaly" than as a representative of white America.
1.7 Music Transcription Method

Given that hip hop music is based on sampling as well as on digital programming technology, it is completely fluid in terms of the range of musical styles and elements which can be incorporated into it. As a result, each transcription of Kyoto hip hop posed different problems. In terms of tonality, the music is mostly diatonic and therefore is fairly compatible with Western staff notation. Even when non-Western sounds are employed, they often are produced using a specific keyboard setting rather than sampled portions of "real" recordings and so the tonality of these parts is rarely non-diatonic.

The predominance of the melodic and rhythmic ostinati simplify the transcription process. However, there is quite a range in the degree of vertical layering of different tracks. Tracks with a high degree of vertical layering pose a challenge to the transcription process. The problem is to clearly represent the relationships between the different vertical layers so that individual lines are not obscured. I have adopted a system of standard staff notation, combined with some specialized graphic symbols, which is flexible enough to accommodate this range of vertical layering.

The digitally produced elements of Kyoto hip hop music posed some unexpected challenges to the transcription process. The keyboard part in "Fuck The Police 2002," for example, was produced on DJ Kyoju (Mack Family)’s MPC 3000 sampler using the timbre of a Yamaha keyboard as the sound source. The resulting melody and harmony lines function independently enough from each other that they cannot be notated according to standard methods which would probably place all of the lines of the keyboard part on the same staff. The
keyboard melody and harmony of "FTP 2002") have been separated onto two staves for this reason.

Due to the structure and style of hip hop music, the use and usefulness of music transcription in the thesis may represent a shift from some of the standards of ethnomusicology. The predominance of the ostinato, for example, lessens the importance of rendering a complete transcription of the entire "track." As long as the basic period of the ostinato is transcribed, the changes in, additions to, and subtractions from the ostinato can be addressed without notating all that occurs in between. Also, given the logogenic nature of hip hop, vocal tone, articulation, and intonation comprise a major component of musical style. It is unlikely that music transcription can serve to adequately represent this component of Kyoto hip hop. Music recordings, on the other hand, are by far the best document of vocal style.

On the other hand, transcription can serve a valuable role as an objective written representation of hip hop music, and may also support a more objective evaluation of the music within the academy. The latter point concerns a negative evaluation of hip hop music that is held by a number of academics. Tricia Rose's account (1994: 62) of her interaction with a university music department head is informative. The chair informs her that "...you must be writing on rap's social impact and political lyrics, because there is nothing to the music." Perhaps in part because of this type of evaluation, little has been written on hip hop by musicologists or ethnomusicologists. Consequently, I doubt that there exists even a handful of written work on hip hop which incorporates music transcription. Lacking either a recording or transcription, the scholar is left with
little more than verbal description which serves as a subjective record at best. From this perspective, transcription of Kyoto hip hop music serves an important function.
2.0 Kyoto-specific Considerations

In order to get a sense of Kyoto as a specific locus in the Japanese hip hop scene, I will discuss some of the characteristics of the Kyoto scene that set it apart from the Tokyo and Osaka scenes and set it apart from the foreground of Japanese hip hop in general. On the whole, the specific character of the Kyoto scene is considered in negative terms by fans and clubgoers. Responses to my written questionnaires are indicative. When asked what the most discernible feature of the Kyoto underground club scene is, 42% of responses (20 of 48 total responses) were phrased in negative terms in contrast to 29% positive evaluations (14 of 48). Specifically, some of the respondents identified the following as the most distinct quality of the Kyoto scene: "closure" (heisa, miuchī), "narrow" (semaī), "clubgoers are too well-acquainted with each other" (minna shirai ga ōi), "audiences are unresponsive" (moriagaranaī), or just "uninteresting" (omoshirokunai). MC NICE of Groove Productions has pointed out that these qualities are not specific to Kyoto, but are accentuated in the case of Kyoto in comparison to the Osaka or the Tokyo scenes (personal communication, Kyoto, Japan, April 8, 2002).

The scale of the Kyoto hip hop scene is quite limited, in accordance with the size of the city. As an indication, one evening when I was poring over MC NICE's hand-penciled lyric sheets at the dormitory near Takaragaike, I stopped for a study break and bumped into him at a neighborhood convenience store. Kyoto night life venues that feature hip hop live performances are few and limited in size. Among clubgoers, there is a general sense that "everyone knows everyone" which tends to restrain the energy at live events. Activity on the
dance floor is often somewhat subdued, and performers may find the audience unresponsive. Limitations of scale ensure the value of gossip as a means of developing name recognition, but also creates a slightly oppressive atmosphere which can impede audience enthusiasm and performer collaboration.

The "closure" (literal translation of *heisa*, the fans' and performers' own wording) criticism is equally applicable to performers and audience. Sakayama-san, the owner and manager of Club Grind, had this to say when asked what he thought can be identified as the most distinctive feature of the Kyoto hip hop scene:

Well, to begin with the various hip hop crews are not so friendly. They're all trying to go it alone, group by group separately. I get the sense that there aren't too many performers in Kyoto who have the inclination to collaborate with their peers (personal communication Kyoto, Japan, March 21, 2002).

A number of established performers in the Kyoto scene agreed with him on this point. This sort of closure can be seen as the result of competitiveness and territorial behaviors, influenced in part by the relatively few number of performance venues and from how the limitations of scale have raised the stakes for Kyoto hip hop performers.

DJ Kyoju of Mack Family describes the distinctiveness of the Kyoto hip hop scene in the following terms:

In terms of (music) quality, it's high quality. Each of Kyoto's hip hop crews have been producing music of high quality for some time now. But on the down side, Kyoto crews tend to restrain each other. There isn't much unity between the different crews. They're not open
(uchitokenai) with each other (personal communication, Kyoto, Japan, April 4, 2002).

It is indicative that Kyoju identifies the high quality of music by Kyoto hip hop performers. There is a lot of musical talent in Kyoto, and a number of nationally well known performers started out or were based partly in Kyoto (DJ Gossy, DJ Sancon, DJ Shark, B-Bandj). Given the small scale of the club scene, talented performers can earn a reputation for themselves quickly.

However, Kyoju's comments about the restraining influences and that lack of candid interaction between performers echoes Sakayama-san's sentiments. The better-known performers find themselves competing for venue and audience alliance. This results in territorial behavior which contributes to the restrained social climate of the club scene. Aspiring hip hop performers in Kyoto seem to be at a disadvantage in terms of limitations of scale, the demanding audience, and the closure of the club scene. The assessment of this closure, both by performers and fans, suggests that the "elitist" social character often associated with Kyoto has been replicated in the hip hop scene. Thus, the "gap" between one's actual feelings and expressed sentiment is evident in that lack of candid interaction between hip hop crews. The social exclusiveness typically associated with longtime Kyoto residents is evident in the "restraintment" (closure) that Kyoju describes. The "sense of place" associated with the Kyoto hip hop scene can therefore be viewed as quite close to that which is evoked by social and cultural trends typically associated with Kyoto.
I begin this discussion of Kyoto hip hop performance with a description of the
general format of live events in Kyoto, followed by a discussion of performance
practice in three sections: performance at Club Grind, Makuro MC's/Absolute
Crew, and No Mercy/Mack Family. Then I discuss off-stage performance of the
Japanese hip hop identity. This chapter has been divided into sections bounded
by venue in the case of Club Grind (2.2) and performer in the cases of Makuro
MC's/Absolute Crew (2.3) and No Mercy/Mack Family (2.4). This is because
Club Grind is the only venue that has a particular "character" which has been
determined by manager Sakayama-san. In general, performer personalities and
on-stage practices at Grind are in accordance with Sakayama-san's vision of hip
hop and thus are treated as a single body of performance.

2.1 On-stage Performance: General Format
Kyoto hip hop "performance" takes place on and offstage at live events. Beyond
the DJing, live show, and dance showcases, all members of the hip hop club
scene perform some variation of the Japanese hip hop identity. Hip hop
"performance" in this sense also takes place at all times in the daily lives of MCs,
DJs, crew members, and fans to various degrees. A number of local performers
have connected with a fan base through regular live appearances at established
local hip hop events. A number of performers from Kyoto or who became well
known while active mostly in Kyoto (DJ Shark, B-Bandji, DJ Gossy, DJ Sancon)
have broken through to nationwide recognition among hip hop circles. On the
whole, these performers have not kept close ties to the local hip hop club scene.
This trend may be because economic opportunities for performers are better in
larger cities such as Osaka and Tokyo, or it may be due to critical judgments
regarding the quality of music in the Kyoto scene. The "underground"
designation therefore best describes the Kyoto scene. Underground performers usually express a deep sense of personal connection to Kyoto. These performers are also limited mostly to Kyoto in terms of sphere of activity and recognition. This limitation is partly an indication of their youth and level of skill, as well as the limits in scale of the Kyoto hip hop scene in general.

Kyoto underground hip hop events are organized by a host crew and involve a cohort of colleague performers and dancers. Live shows take place mostly on Saturday nights with the club door opening around 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. DJ "club play" which features mostly U.S. hip hop and R&B occupies the first few hours after opening while the clubgoers mingle, dance, and haunt the DJ booth. Notably, Japanese DJs rarely play Japanese hip hop recordings. The DJs and other informants whom I asked about this consistently offered the explanation that the preference for U.S. hip hop is due to a qualitative difference between Japanese and U.S. hip hop, that "Japanese hip hop just hasn't made it to that level yet." Qualitative distinctions of this sort (judgments of "authenticity") were a central aspect of discourse between my informants.

According to one of my informants who is a knowledgeable fan and who has performed as a hip hop MC,

U.S. and Japanese hip hop are totally different genre. I really like Japanese hip hop, it's cool, but there's no way it could rival U.S. hip hop (personal communication, ZaZa, Kyoto, Japan, April 9, 2002).

Zaza speaks of an objective difference between U.S. and Japanese hip hop, but phrases it terms of qualitative difference. Recognizing both the U.S. and the Japanese versions of hip hop, he anticipates critiques of the Japanese version by
stating openly that it is not as good as the U.S. version. His defensive stance, although it entails a qualitative judgment first and foremost, also indicates that Zaza is quite aware of the possibility that Japanese hip hop might draw critiques of inauthenticity. He also has misgivings about some performers:

...(A)nd what about the content of Japanese rap lyrics? If you rap about the same sort of things (as U.S. hip hop), well, it’s like U.S. rappers made it for themselves coming from conditions of poverty. It isn’t like that for Japanese people so what’s the use of rapping like that?...I was in (Absolute Crew), so I have a very good idea about which Japanese MCs really are dangerous types. I know, so when I see someone who isn't that sort rapping like they are, I feel like "Huh?! What?!" (ibid.).

Zaza acknowledges that some Japanese MCs are "posers," but others really are "dangerous" types. It can be inferred that Zaza uses "dangerous" to refer to people who are involved in illegal activity (narcotics sales, yakuza racketeering) or to elements who may be prone to violence (yanki, yakuza, Japanese "gangsta").

His comments demonstrate how inauthenticity critiques of Japanese hip hop are sometimes applicable, but at the same time Japanese hip hop is accumulating "authenticity" according to the paradigm of U.S. gangsta hip hop. According to Zaza's comments, though, the type of "authenticity" that he valorizes in Japanese hip hop is one in which the MCs' personae correspond to the relative lack of adversity or threat in Kyoto daily life, specifically in contrast to his perception of the circumstances of minority populations in U.S. cities. In this sense, he allies himself with the ideology of the "party rap" side of Condry's dichotomy.

The Japanese DJs' preference for U.S. recordings is based partly on these subjective and objective judgments of Japanese hip hop. It is also based on the
musical appeal of the U.S. recordings (there is no way to argue with a good
groove). But, considering that most of the clubgoers cannot understand much of
U.S. rap lyrics (lyric comprehension in the case of Japanese hip hop will be
discussed in Chapter Three), perhaps there is something more to it than
enjoyment on musical or lyrical levels. MC Dai from (now defunct) No Mercy
explains the appeal of U.S. hip hop music to Japanese youth as follows:

I don’t understand English. I don’t know what they are saying, but
somehow I get power from the music (personal communication,
Kyoto, Japan, March 9, 2002).

Dai’s comments suggest that there is more to the appeal of U.S. hip hop than
simply that it “sounds cool.” His comments allude to the affinity (akogare) for
blacks which is one element underlying the appeal of US. hip hop in Japan. This
affinity is partly for “black style” in terms of clothing and musical style (for that
which is “cool”), but, as I have discussed above, for a number of my informants
the affinity also includes an element of sympathy for blacks in a broader sense.
The Kyoto DJs’ predominant selection of U.S. hip hop (and R&B) is an expression
of this multi-faceted affinity.

DJing is not just a matter of music selection. A fair amount of skill is required
just to cue the records up for a smooth transition from one turntable to the next.
The turntable can also be used as a musical instrument. Depending on ability,
the DJs may enhance the performance using a number of elaborate techniques
including scratching, back-spinning, and using the mixer to switch rapidly back
and forth between syncopated records on two turntables. These techniques
produce numerous musical effects through which the DJs can "version" the
original recorded material (create a variation of a pre-existing track or musical
fragment) while referencing (paying respect to) their favorite U.S. performers. This process is a good example of the indigenization of U.S. hip hop by Kyoto performers. When successfully executed, the DJ's take over the music as their own, re-making it for that single performance. This sort of performance is often expected of the better known DJs, whose live sets are during or closer to the evening's peak hours (12:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m.). Development of "turntablist" (a DJ who is skillful at reshaping the original music by manually affecting the function of the turntable) skills requires hundreds of hours of solo practice and (often) an informal "apprenticeship" under a senior DJ. As such, a skillfully executed set of club play is partly an expression of the DJs' diligence in training and of their commitment to hip hop as a way of life.

The live show proper begins around 1:00 a.m. Younger members of the host crew's cohort or younger guest performers usually perform first. One or more MCs take the stage and their DJ supports them with backtracks for two or three numbers. This may be followed by a dance showcase or by another DJ set. The tension gradually builds until the host crew or the special guest performance. The main portions of the live performance are usually finished by around 2:30 a.m. when the regular DJs take over the turntables again and some clubgoers return to the dance floor. The tension in the club gradually dissipates, and the audience has usually thinned out considerably by 3:30 a.m. Clubs close at 5:00 a.m. by which time those who attended the event by public transportation have enough time for a leisurely stroll before the first morning departure.

Hip hop DJ performance in Kyoto is about selection, technique, and stylistic originality. MC performance is about the rap lyrics, vocal skill, and development
of an original style. Although MCs are foregrounded during the live performance, the lyrics themselves come across with various degrees of clarity. This depends on the skill of individual performers, but also on the limitations of live performance. Because MCing is partly about the ability to use the voice as a musical instrument, technique and originality of musical style take on paramount importance. Originality of personal style is also a consideration. Successfully executed, MC performance provides a foil to authenticity discourse in that the MC is talented and original, "authenticity" takes on secondary importance. Because originality is such a major consideration, discussion of specific performers is more useful than an overview approach.

2.2 Club Grind and Venue-Performer Relationships
With four established regular hip hop events, Club Grind is one important center of the Kyoto underground hip hop scene, although it is separated from the Kiyamachi nightlife area by about a mile (see Appendix A). Unlike Whoopee's, which features hip hop only once or twice a month, Grind holds modestly sized hip hop events almost every week and the venue itself has a sense of a hip hop "community center." Hip hoppers and other clubgoers hang out with their peers at events on the weekends and some take dance lessons (R&B/hip hop) on weekday nights at adjoining Dance Studio Grind. On Wednesday evenings the club is open to anyone during the regularly scheduled DJ rehearsal hours (roughly 9:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.). Also contrary to Whoopee's, Grind almost never draws nationally famous performers. Owner-manager Sakayama-san mentioned that although he has featured some of these performers in the past, the "gap" between these and the regular performers was too wide and tended to mislead audience expectations of the club. His strategy has been to establish a
working relationship with a resident crew of underground hip hop performers,
Groove Productions (hereafter GPro), and to provide MCs, DJs, and turntablists
with a space to practice and perform.

The interior of Club Grind is configured according to the limitations of scale in
the Kyoto scene. MCs stand on portable risers about six inches high in front of
the DJ booth at showtime, or they may stand on the dance floor. In either case,
the performers and audience are nearly face to face much of the time. The DJ
booth is raised about six inches and separated from the dance floor by a barrier
of concrete blocks with a glass shield attached to the top. This setup is required
to protect the equipment from being bumped when the audience is near full
capacity, but the separation allows for maximum visual access to clubgoers who
can get right next to the DJ booth. Grind is designed to allow for maximum
contact between performers and audience. Stage setup, in combination with the
small size of the venue, the low ceilings, dim lighting, and artfully designed
interior create an intimate mood which attracts somewhat older clubgoers
(roughly ages 20 to 28).

In contrast to the Makuro approach, GPro performance practice works together
with the intimate scale of the Kyoto scene. At both of their monthly events
(PTA, Increase), GPro have developed a more open relationship with the
audience and are more interested in distributing recordings. On event nights,
they sell recordings of their music at the door and anyone who asks is allowed to
videotape the performances. Taking advantage of the audience-stage proximity
at Grind, MCs NICE and Morning Star often walk out among the audience while
performing. NICE will often halt performance to expound on the importance
that hip hop holds for him as a lifestyle and as a system of self-belief. Open microphone sessions are a fairly common event, and GPro have collaborated on-stage with live instruments. Also, as there is no backstage or VIP lounge at Grind, MCs NICE and Morning Star congregate together with the clubgoers for much of the evening both before and after their performance.

Groove Productions performance practice sometimes draws on traditional Japanese culture. On July 17, 2001, the evening of Kyoto's biggest traditional festival (Gion Matsuri) all GPro members dressed in _kimono_ on-stage, and female clubgoers who dressed in kimono were given a discount. GPro see no incompatibility between the "Japan" of the classical era and the "Japan" of the Kyoto hip hop scene. In the words of Morning Star, "everyone loves the matsuri." The overall atmosphere at hip hop events in general is quite similar to that at the traditional matsuri, most obviously in terms of crowd density.

Physical contact in these contexts is not a random phenomenon (in contrast to a crowded train), but is guided by social convention. In the case of the Kyoto club scene, "skinship" (a Japanese-English term for platonic physical contact) is expressed through a handshake or other greetings, dance, physical horseplay, or jostling through the crowd. On one occasion at Club Grind, a group of six male clubgoers clustered around the DJ booth stripped off their shirts, declaring it an "otoko matsuri" (literally "men's festival"). As in the case of the matsuri, physical contact in the club context is determined by a temporary suspension of some of the social protocol which guides their daily lives. Membership in the Kyoto hip hop "community" is determined in part by the empathetic bonds which are developed through "skinship."
Performance practice at Grind engages with gangsta discourse in a number of ways. GPro live shows often feature performances by colleague Zibro who makes frequent "gangster" allusions in his rap lyrics. On the other hand, MC NICE, noticing the prevalence of gangsta style among the audience one evening, halted the show for one of his frequent "mini-sermons" on how the gangsta stance is unsuited to Japanese hip hoppers ("There aren't any 'gangsters' in Japan.") To put the debate in perspective, I should mention that Grind has hosted events which resulted in fights, damage to the venue, and a visit from several police cars on at least one occasion. It is not likely that the troublemakers have any real connections to organized crime (or they probably would not have engaged in such high-profile behavior), but this sort of occurrence indicates that there is a dangerous element affiliated with the Kyoto hip hop scene.

Another prominent aspect of performance at Grind is the foregrounding of DJs and turntablists (see glossary). Two regular events showcase DJ "club play," Lesson and Sounds Cool!? Lesson features only DJs and dance showcases. Of the four resident DJs (Mr. Camp, Lark, Tahara, and Yuki), Mr. Camp is the most notable. He has earned a reputation with his affable personality and perfectly fluid turntablist technique. His reputation is enhanced by the fact that he spent two years in New York City practicing and performing at the well-known club Tunnel. His level of turntablist skill speaks for itself, but his "apprenticeship" in the U.S. and his good English speaking ability lend a type of authenticity to Mr. Camp which is based on his direct personal connection to the New York scene. The profile of Mr. Camp on the flier for one of his performances demonstrates
that this U.S. scene-derived authenticity has become part of the public discourse surrounding his popularity:

In contrast to our club scene which is still restrictive, from his club play we can get the sense of a progressive experimental attitude and an original style which was made possible by what he absorbed during his years in New York (Resource at Whoopee's, January 12, 2002).

These promotional flyers are intended to "sell" the event, so the wording here is significant. Beyond his DJ and turntablist skills, his sojourn in New York is clearly a part of his cultural capital. When we consider that he has an affiliation with DJ Master Key from the very prominent Tokyo group Buddha Brand (who also trained in New York City), Mr. Camp actually occupies all three levels of the Japanese hip hop scene. Despite limitations of scale and restrictive attitudes, the Kyoto scene involves and creates performers who can hold their own on-stage around Japan or in the U.S. Talented performers like Mr. Camp provide linkage between the Kyoto underground and the U.S. hip hop scene and catalyze the ambitions of even the most underground performers.

DJ Show (winner of the nationwide DJ competition DMC 2001 Japan Finals) makes frequent guest appearances at the bi-monthly Sounds Cool!? He arrives at Grind with a professional flourish, bringing his own sets of needle cartridges and slip pads, in addition to the standard crates of vinyl LPs. His performances are mostly about his turntablist skills, and would be ineffective at Whoopee's due to the elevation of the stage. Leaning up against the concrete barricade around the DJ booth at Grind, the audience gets a downwards visual angle on the turntables which is similar to that of DJ Show himself. He starts out with two copies of the same record and gets both cued up visually, never using
headphones at any time. Records are prepared with tape tabs of numerous colors which mark the "sweet spots" on the album for scratching and for backspin, or which are meticulously positioned to bump the needle back outwards a single groove to keep the record in a smooth musical loop. Otherwise, he controls the needle cue positions (nearly) precisely by hand and eye at all times, creating a spectacular performance. In one of his flashiest techniques he walks the needle four steps down the record by hand, hitting in rhythm the exact downbeats targeted while keeping cleanly tacet on the upbeats. This level of skill is valorized by the fans and DJs who are clustered around the DJ booth, as indicated by outbursts of "a'aight" ("alright" in Ebonics) and "yabai" ("risky" or "dangerous," a positive evaluation in this context). Even in the case that DJ Show selects well known recordings of U.S. hip hop, the performance spectacle comes across more than does the music selection. On this level, the performance is nearly entirely about re-shaping the borrowed selections, about making the music one's own. Although turntablism of this sort is also a central aspect of U.S. hip hop, DJ Show’s performance is one obvious example of how U.S. hip hop has been re-made by Japanese performers.

With the intimate setting, flexible performance style, and the focus on DJ diligence and skill, performance at Club Grind differs considerably from the gangsta-yakuza style big city venue performance by Makuro MC's/Absolute Crew (hereafter Makuro-ABS) at Whoopee's. The Makuro-ABS approach has been more successful in financial terms and in gaining national recognition. Sakayama-san's more "underground" approach has earned Grind venue recognition. It is indicative that Makuro chose Grind, not Whoopee’s, to host their private year-end party in December, 2001, even though they regularly
perform at Whoopee's. These two performance approaches represent partially overlapping sections of the spectrum from which the Kyoto hip hoppers are constructing their version of "Japaneseness." In Makuro's case, the "indigenization" of hip hop is clearly linked with the native subculture of the yakuza. The gangsta-yakuza style can be seen as a source of "authenticity" in that it is "true" to U.S. gangsta hip hop ("we have our "gangsters" over here in Japan, too"). The GPro approach has been to interpret hip hop as an adaptable form which only requires a means of creative expression, a sense of connection to locale, and a clearly defined sense of self. This approach fits parts of Rose's definition of hip hop (a source of youth identity formation, social status, and as a reclamation of urban space).

2.3 Makuro MC's/Absolute Crew: "Big Venue" Performance

Considering that they are perhaps the best known of all Kyoto hip hop performers, Makuro MC's and their roughly bi-monthly event, Absolute, deserve some attention. Makuro leadmen MCs Shuzo and YAS carry themselves very confidently and seriously, exuding a vaguely intimidating aura with their expensive hip hop clothing and inner-city Japan "bad boy" personae (see photographs in Appendix C). Makuro are a special case in that they represent the Kyoto hip hop scene on a nationwide scale but perform in Kyoto on a regular basis and retain an "underground" identity through various strategies. Kyoto native MC's YAS and Shuzo keep their office in Kyoto's southern Fushimi ward where they both grew up. They prominently display affection for their hometown in their rap lyrics. For example, they kept the chorus to "Grow" according to the original version, "...this land, this town K-y-o-t-o...", even when performing in neighboring Osaka.
switching to "this land, this town Osaka" only once at the end of the final chorus (Absolute Younggunz Tour at Mother Hall, December 21, 2001).

Makuro are also a special case in that they have released next to no recorded material. Members of their cohort Absolute Crew are forbidden by Makuro boss MC Shuzo from recording at all. Cameras of any type are strictly forbidden at Absolute and the door staff conduct bag and body checks. These prohibitions are strategies to increase the "value" of the live performance and, presumably, audience attendance. They are also efforts to evoke an "underground" persona through keeping themselves relatively inaccessible. The fact that music magazine writers have referred to them as "guerrillas of the hip hop scene who you'll never see on the mass media" indicates that this effort has been successful (Blast Sept. 2001: 6). The inaccessibility of Makuro's music translates into "authenticity" in that something which is kept so closely guarded must have some "real" value to it. "Inaccessibility" also translates into "privacy" of performance event and rap lyrics which works to enhance their impact. Makuro MC's savvy promotion of themselves as "real underground hip hop" indicates that they are quite conscious of authenticity discourse in Japanese hip hop. Not only are they aware of it, Makuro and other Kyoto performers are actively engaged with authenticity discourse as part of their creative process and performance practice. Authenticity discourse is therefore an unavoidable element of both the Kyoto hip hop scene and the Japanese scenes nationwide, recalling Atkins's "authenticity complex" among Japanese jazz musicians (Atkins 2001: 19-43).
The inaccessibility of their music and the overall shape of the event Absolute entail a deliberate statement by Makuro MC's that they are Kyoto's best hip hop crew. Although this statement may be true, it implies a separation from the Kyoto underground hip hop scene and a judgment of it as "small scale." Some of the specifics of Absolute events are indicative. Ticket prices are well above average at 3,000 to 3,500 yen ($25 to $29) at the door. Absolute Crew members run aggressive publicity and pre-event ticket sales campaigns, and events often draw capacity crowds. On a day that Absolute is hosting a junior MC competition or a special guest, advance ticket purchase is no guarantee of admission for those who do not arrive early. On these evenings, clubgoers are lined up along Higashioji Boulevard for entry to Whoopee's well before the 11:00 p.m. opening time. Guest performers and Makuro MC's cohort Absolute Crew begin the live show around 1:30 a.m. at the earliest. Additional DJ sets and dance showcases may go on until 4:00 a.m. before rappers YAS and Shuzo take the stage. Makuro MC's increase audience anticipation by refusing to release recordings and by staying mostly backstage until their showtime, even if they take the stage after 4:00 a.m. Part of the message is that Makuro are trying to project is that the music is worth waiting for. Another part is the promotion of Makuro's vision for "big venue" style performance which is ideally suited to Club Whoopee's with its built-in stage, relatively high ceilings, good sound system, and bare interior.

Makuro's frequent on-stage collaboration with other nationally famous performers is companion to their big venue approach to hip hop. Absolute events which are held in both Kyoto and Osaka have often featured performances by nationally famous guests and colleagues including Twigy, Rino,
MOSAD, and Ozrosaurus. Makuro are therefore promoting themselves and the Kyoto hip hop scene as one which is closely connected to Japanese hip hop nationwide. As the subtitle ("Oriental Dope Hip Hop") that is listed on Absolute flyers indicates, Makuro promote an expansive vision for the Kyoto hip hop scene as one which is on par with any of the hip hop scenes throughout Asia. Ideally suited to Whoopee's, Makuro-ABS offer a style of performance that pushes the limitations of scale in the Kyoto scene.

Another prominent aspect of Makuro-ABS performance is an expression of the "gangsta-yakuza" aspect of their identity which includes some elements typically associated with the iemoto system. This is manifest in their crew structure as well as in the organization of the performance event itself. Duties related to Makuro-ABS performance and to Makuro's clothing stores are methodically allocated among the "apprentice" performers and laborers of Absolute Crew, with a clear chain of command leading to MCs Shuzo and YAS. Including performers and extended crew, ABS is quite large by Kyoto standards (up to 12 MCs on-stage at times), but has a high rate of turnover. Some of the dropouts from Absolute Crew have allegedly been subject to various sorts of hazing, and Makuro kingpin Shuzo allegedly has prohibited "dropout" MCs from performing ever again, anywhere. During live events, ABS members are not allowed to drink alcohol until after they are finished performing. Members are also forbidden from using marijuana during performance events. The strict ordering of Absolute Crew by YAS and Shuzo, which is somewhat atypical among Kyoto crews, is similar to that which we might expect of the yakuza or of the bōsōzoku (Sato 1991). For that matter, allegations of actual yakuza affiliation at the upper level of the Makuro-ABS hierarchy have been acknowledged by a number of my
informants. On-stage, Absolute Crew come across as a unified gang with up to
twelve MCs on-stage at times trading phrases, lines, and verses in an obviously
well-rehearsed set. A number of ABS performers are certain to be dressed in
clothing of the Ecko Unlimited label which, in Kyoto, is featured exclusively in
Makuro-affiliated clothing stores. The predominance of red clothing suggests an
indirect reference to the Crips gang of the U.S. West Coast and an affinity for
West Coast gangsta style in general. Absolute Crew MCs present an overall on-
stage persona of (talented) "bad boys."

Although Makuro MC's and Absolute Crew do not draw on Japanese traditional
culture much in their rap lyrics, there are some indications that they keep a sense
of the connections between Kyoto as Japan's pre-modern cultural capital and
discourses of "Japaneseness" in hip hop. This is evident in the original artwork
on a number of their promotional flyers (see Appendix C). The flyer to the
January 27, 2001 Absolute, for example, shows a traditional stone standing
lantern lighting the evening with a shower of sparks. In the background is a
blunt-smoking Japanese youth with knit eyebrows exhaling through his nostrils.
The flyer on February 23, 2001 shows the silhouette of an MC with microphone
in hand standing at night hunched over in thought against the background of a
traditional style machiya townhouse front with light glowing out from between
the window slats. The flyer on March 3, 2001 shows Kyoto Tower (a modern
style pinnacle with an enclosed observation deck) viewed from beneath the
eaves of a machiya and illuminated from behind by the light of the rising moon.
Absolute flyer design clearly represents Kyoto as both a locus of traditional
Japan and a site of modern "Japaneseness" in all three of these cases. These
physical icons of Kyoto, both old (machiya, and stone lantern by association with
"old Japan") and modern (Kyoto Tower) are chosen by Makuro as defining features which serve to reinforce a sense of place within the hip hop scene. In doing so, they are claiming the same terms of identification with Kyoto as do many of the social mainstream. In laying claim to these terms of identification, Makuro demonstrate the "common ground" which they share with the social mainstream. Makuro appear to see no contradiction between their identification with "old Kyoto" and their refusal of the mainstream as expressed in their lifestyle and personae.

Talented performers and businessmen, Makuro-ABS "coerce" their audience with the music rather than with violence. Their gangsta-yakuza persona has worked well for them in attracting nationwide recognition. Their live shows usually draw full capacity crowds, and they reportedly are enjoying financial stability. To some degree, the performance strategy has been less successful. A number of my informants commented that the performer-audience vibe at Absolute events is not good, that they just don't feel at ease around Makuro-ABS. One incident that occurred in the Spring of 2002 is indicative of this dynamic. At a live performance in Osaka, MC Shuzo turned and dived backwards into the audience. Apparently surprised or intimidated, enough members of the crowd backed away that Shuzo hit the floor and was hospitalized with a concussion (he has since recovered fully).

Although a portion of Japanese hip hop fans have been turned off by Makuro's persona and performance style, a large number of the younger (roughly ages 18 to 24) hip hoppers are drawn to them. The appeal of their quasi-yakuza persona is operative on more than one level. In the sense that "yakuza" is equivalent to
"gangster," Makuro express a hyper-masculinized aspect of the Kyoto hip hop identity. This aspect functions as a rejection of the self-abnegative version of masculinity which is typically associated with the white collar "sarariman," an icon of the cultural mainstream. The appeal of the quasi-yakuza persona is also related to a refusal of "legitimate" power structures such as the police and the national government. Disenchantment of this sort is not surprising given that Japan has been plagued in recent years by numerous scandals of embezzlement and corruption among politicians. At least the yakuza have strictly enforced codes of discipline. Given the ongoing economic slump and the apparent inability or unwillingness of elected officials to take the necessary steps to get the economy back on track, the issue is also simply one of competence. As was revealed during the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake of 1995, the yakuza may at times have an edge on the national government in terms of competence within their infrastructure. According to popular discourse, while the government bureaucrats were in a panic of paperwork and procedural nightmares, the yakuza arrived first at some of the scenes of devastation with donations of blankets, water, and food (personal communication, Byong-Hee Song, Kyoto, Japan, March, 1995).

Makuro's success in hybridizing hip hop with indigenous "gangsta" (yakuza) elements suggests the appeal of this combination. Makuro's performances strike a responsive chord with Kyoto fans because Makuro has created a version of hip hop that is comparable to the U.S. (gangsta) prototype and that also stays true to "Japan." They represent Kyoto as a locus of the yearned-for traditional "Japan" and also as a center of cultural change. Keeping a sense of themselves as "underground" performers, Makuro give the fans a chance to experience their
hometown hip hop scene in connection with the Kansai scene and the Japanese scene nationwide. Skillfully working with and against the Kyoto-specific aspects of the scene, the Makuro approach is as of yet unrivaled as a means of establishing nationwide name recognition. However, during the course of the writing of this thesis, Absolute Crew (Makuro MC’s junior cohort) allegedly have split from Makuro and re-established themselves independently under a new name. This suggests that the alleged yakuza structure of Makuro-ABS and iemoto-style proscriptions were not conducive towards fostering a musically creative environment. Also during the writing of the thesis, Makuro MC’s have released a mini-LP of their original music, which none of my informants purchased. When challenged on this point, one informant (finally) flatly admitted that “Makuro just aren’t popular in Kyoto.” Makuro’s revision of their recorded music release prohibition can be seen as either an inevitable development in their career or as a recognition on their behalf that their coercive/proscriptive approach was too intense.

2.4 No Mercy/Mack Family: Japanese "Gangsta" Style

No Mercy were established figures in the Kyoto scene until Spring of 2002 when they partially disbanded and re-formed as Mack Family. Some fans have described them as "number one or two in the Kyoto scene." No Mercy have cultivated gangsta personae throughout the nearly ten years of their involvement in the Kiyamachi area night life industry where the yakuza are engaged in protection racketeering. Considering the extent to which No Mercy’s gangsta persona is foregrounded, any discussion of the "gangsta" aspect and "authenticity" in the Kyoto underground hip hop scene would be incomplete without at least a brief look at their performance practice.
To begin with, the flyers for their regular event, Change The Game, are subtitled "MP gangsta party," and MC Jimmy and junior DJ Naokey frequently appear on-stage with their hair in gangsta style cornrows such as those of rapper Snoop Dogg or NBA star Allen Iverson. During one Change The Game live show, an MC from the No Mercy cohort shouts out to the audience "put your hands up if you're a gangsta" (roughly, in English) and gets a rousing response. More so than in the case of Absolute Crew, the gangsta aspect of No Mercy is clearly directly derived from U.S. West Coast gangsta style. Are they trying to "imagine" themselves into the community of U.S. hip hoppers? Some evidence suggests otherwise. For example, No Mercy was one of the opening acts for The Kyoto showcasing of Los Angeles based gangsta hip hop Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. (March 10, 2002). In this case, the affinity for West Coast style does not reflect an imagined connection to the U.S. scene. It is an indication of a broadening network of performance collaboration between Mack Family and U.S. performers.

The No Mercy gangsta identity is not exclusively derived from the U.S. prototype. MC Dai's personal appearance is more clearly indigenized than either his partner Jimmy or members of Makuro-ABS. He often appears on-stage dressed in tsunagi, the Japanese version of laborer's overalls. Aside from the obvious connotation of a blue collar identity, the tsunagi is also frequently worn by Japanese lowrider enthusiasts during their driving sessions. Because Japanese lowriders are associated with the bōsōzoku (vehicular hell-raisers), the tsunagi in the hip hop context implies a connection to Japanese quasi-gangster subculture. A tattoo artist in training, Dai sports partially complete tattoos covering the full length of both of his arms. Although tattoos are becoming popular in Japan
among people who have no yakuza affiliation, Japanese style tattoo art still retains a nuance of the organized crime underworld, even when it is on "normal" people. Between the tsunagi and the tattoos, Dai's personal style comes across as entirely indigenized until we notice the word "doggystyle" stenciled onto the back of his tsunagi. This single word, also the title to Snoop Dogg's first solo album, indicates Dai's affinity for the U.S. West Coast style gangsta.

Dai's partner MC Jimmy, dressed in a white sleeveless T-shirt with an unbuttoned casual shirt displaying gold chain and hair braided like Snoop Dogg (see Appendix C), represents the blatantly derivative aspect of their gangsta persona. Jimmy's appearance invites queries into the meaning behind the style. In one sense, No Mercy do have a legitimate claim to "gangsta" notoriety according to some of the parameters of the U.S. prototype. For example, Dai and Jimmy have both been to prison for relatively short terms and Jimmy for a lengthier repeat term. This translates into a type of "authenticity" according to the irony of the U.S. gangsta hip hop scene where "life" (the violent deaths of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls) apparently has come to imitate "art" (rap narratives of gun-toting and vendetta). Incarceration therefore equals "authenticity" for No Mercy so that by the time Jimmy started performing "Fuck The Police 2002" they were already well on their way towards "legitimate" gangsta status, even though they were convicted for non-violent offenses. I hardly need mention that their terms of incarceration also place Jimmy and Dai outside of that which is socially acceptable by the mainstream. Although the MCs certainly did not anticipate their arrests, the lifestyle (involving narcotic consumption) definitely was a conscious choice which exemplifies the gangsta variation of gestures in refusal of the mainstream within Kyoto hip hop.
One other prominent aspect of No Mercy performance is that of the playboy persona. For example, MC Jimmy calls the women in the audience towards the front at some point during his live performances on a regular basis, with the clear assumption that he should be the center of their attention. Also, No Mercy's event Change The Game often featured a duo of scantily clad female dancers who draw much attention with sexually explicit maneuvers which sometimes reference lesbian coupling for the benefit of a clustered, mostly male audience. On the evening of the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. performance, these dancers appeared on-stage with Jimmy and Dai. Dance of this sort is not unique to No Mercy events, but is noteworthy in the context of the misogynist nature of some of Jimmy's lyrics and his on-stage playboy persona. The type of masculinity that he represents is clearly based around frank acknowledgment of (hetero-)sexual activity. As such, Jimmy's masculinity distinguishes him from the trope of the Japanese man as emasculated salariman.

These raise the question of whether his persona is modeled after the U.S. hip hop prototype, or if his own connection to the U.S. gangsta is driven by a sense compatibility with his own "native" misogynist-playboy persona. I am inclined to side with the latter view, but there are some signs that the gender roles of the U.S. scene are being replicated in Kyoto. For example, the broad division of hip hop as a primarily male domain and R&B as mixed male and female is reproduced in the Kyoto scene. There are no female rappers in Kyoto and very few in the Kansai area, but there are numerous female R&B singers in Kyoto. The lack of female rappers can perhaps be attributed to the relative youth of the Kyoto hip hop scene. Female rappers in the U.S. did not start to reach prominence and any degree of career longevity until Queen Latifah in the latter
1980s, nearly fifteen years after the establishment of hip hop music and culture. If we begin to see female rappers establishing themselves as performers in Kyoto over the next five to eight years, it will confirm that the gender divisions of the U.S. scene are being replicated in the Kyoto scene. In either case, the absence of female rappers in the Kyoto scene draws attention to the possibility that it is partly due to the exclusivity of hip hop as a masculinized genre. The misogynist leaning of some male performers suggests that suggest that the borrowed (U.S. gangsta hip hop masculinity) and the indigenous (Japan's gender hierarchy) are in a process of mutual reinforcement.

In Jimmy's case, "masculinity" and the "playboy" persona are closely linked to that of the "bad boy." This persona is performed through physical imagery, especially tattoos. Although the full-torso artwork on his back is visible only in specific situations (at the public bath-house, at the beach), the two teardrops tattooed on his left cheek (a la Bryan "Baby" Williams of Cash Money records) are visible at all times. Also, the bad boy persona is performed through fighting. Although Jimmy does not have a fighter's reputation among the Kyoto club scene, other members of the defunct No Mercy do, and Jimmy shares the bad boy aura by association. His aggressive on-stage persona also reinforces this image. Through his bad boy image, Jimmy subverts the norm of "the Japanese" as a non-violent people. At the same time, he reinforces the image (albeit in hip hop stylization) of the Japanese young urban "thug" (yanki, bōsōzoku, yakuza) which is represented in Hollywood movies such as Black Rain.

The "real" gangsta and the playboy aspects of No Mercy help to balance this picture of Kyoto hip hop performance. In contrast to Makuro's vaguely
menacing gangsta-\textit{yakuza} identity, No Mercy come across as more frank with the audience about who they are. As the subtitle to their event ("MP Gangsta Party") indicates, they are offering the audience an opportunity to enjoy themselves while sharing, vicariously at least, in the gangsta lifestyle. In the case of Makuro, attention is channeled in the direction of the performance itself ("Oriental Dope Hip Hop"). The No Mercy approach also differs from that of Groove Productions and from performance at Grind in general. Whereas GPro offer a version of Japanese hip hop which relates to gangsta and \textit{yakuza} in minimal ways (beyond Zibro’s metaphorical gangsta), No Mercy have a claim to "authentic" gangsta status. As the subtitle to GPro’s hip hop event Increase indicates ("Realize the Power of Hip Hop"), the focus at GPro events is on the transformative power of hip hop itself in contrast to the hedonistic tinge of No Mercy events. It should be clear by this point that the Kyoto underground hip hop scene has diversified over the roughly seven years of its existence and now encompasses a fairly wide range of performance strategies. What the three groups of performers share is a commitment to hip hop as a means of expressing versions of Japaneseness which distance the performers from the Japanese mainstream.

2.5 Off-stage performance: The Kyoto Hip Hop Identity

MCs and DJs do not perform the Japanese hip hop identity only on-stage. The live performances reflect versions of "Japaneseness" which are present in the daily lives of the musicians through personal style (clothing, hairstyle, appearance), attitude, and lifestyle (work/leisure activities). As in the case of on-stage performance, there is no single pattern here. For some people hip hop is not just an expressive form or a system of self-identification, but also a means of
earning a living. Makuro MC's are among the few hip hop performers who support themselves entirely through hip hop. DJ Kyoju of Mack Family had stopped doing part-time work as of Spring 2002 and was attempting to support himself entirely through music.

Some other performers support themselves through a combination of music and work in related industries such as bars (Morning Star, MC Jimmy of Mack Family) or unrelated industries such as tattooing (MC Dai of Mack Family). A number of non-musicians support themselves through the hip hop apparel industry or through part time work at bars which feature U.S. and a bit of Japanese R&B and hip hop on their stereo system. The ability to support yourself off of hip hop related earnings translates into respect within the scene and thus becomes a source of authenticity. Makuro MC's, DJ Kyoju, Morning Star, Jimmy, and Dai enjoy a degree of freedom in their daily lives afforded by the nature of self-employment and part time work. Their lifestyle therefore entails a refusal of the mainstream as represented by the "standard" profile of diligence during one's student years leading to lifetime employment and enjoyment of the benefits of the corporate seniority system.

As we might expect in Kyoto, a number of performers support themselves primarily through employment in traditional industries and professions, plus a bit on the side from their music. MC NICE of GPro works at the family business of manufacturing kimono fabric, but calls the work "vulgar" (ge'hin) and states emphatically that he will quit someday. DJ Sowkow of GPro is a Buddhist monk. MC Yohei of 2inFLUENCE works at his family's traditional Japanese cake and sweets (wa'gashi) factory. Although we might find irony in the gap between
their day jobs and their hip hop identities, these three are all very serious about their performance careers. Traditional "Japan" as represented by these sorts of professions was part of GPro performance on July 17, 2001 when they wore *kimono* on-stage. On the whole, though, traditional "Japan" is taken as a matter of fact by GPro and by Kyoto performers in general. This "Japan" is seen as compatible with Japanese hip hop, but as having a minor part to play in the Kyoto scene.

The Japanese hip hop identity and the gestures in refusal of the mainstream are also performed by fans and clubgoers at live events and through their personae and lifestyles. In the most basic sense, staying up until daybreak at a live show entails a refusal of the strict regimentation of time that is basic to the rigors of the mainstream system of education and salaried employment. Time at live events is usually measured by the course of the evening’s performances, and sensation of time is tempered by the intoxicating effect of the ostinato rhythms and melodies. Although the "repetitive nature" (ostinato) of hip hop music is frequently cited by critics of its "simplicity," the ostinato in Kyoto hip hop is actually quite significant. The passage of time, as measured by the 24 hour day and the six or seven day work week, is distorted or "stretched," allowing the clubgoers to lose themselves in an experience of the present moment. "Time" for the clubgoer therefore contrasts starkly with the regimentation of the work day in Japan and the typically imagined "Japanese" traits of efficiency and punctuality. Consider, for example, that if the clubgoer happens to find him or herself rushing along side of businessmen to catch the last train of the evening, they are certain to be headed towards opposite destinations (home for the businessman, an evening out for the clubgoer). Sitting among businessmen on the early
morning train, it is a given that the clubgoer is on their way home. Steeped in cigarette smoke and alcohol at 5:45 a.m., the clubgoers draw puzzled looks from groups of businessmen on their way to work. This is a good example of a relatively tacit or introspective type of gesture in refusal of the mainstream, in contrast to the pointed rap diatribes of Jimmy ("Fuck The Police 2002") or the emulation of "black style" by Kyoto hip hoppers (Zibro, Jimmy).

Fans and clubgoers express "Japaneseness" in their personal style which is often informed by "black style" including hairstyle, clothing, and accouterments. This emulation of "black style" is evidence of the affinity for blacks which I mentioned above. When asked in the written questionnaire what they thought about "black style" including music, clothing, and hairstyle, 43% of respondents (43 of 101 total respondents) indicated unqualified affinity, 19% (19 of 101) indicated qualified affinity, 22% (22 of 101) responded neutrally, 7% (7 of 101) responded that Japanese people and "black style" are poorly suited to each other, 5% (5 of 101) responded that outward appearances are of no importance, and 2% (2 of 101) responded that my question was phrased in racist terms. Aside from the basic margin of error, these numbers may be higher than the national average for the age group of (mostly) 19 to 28, considering that questionnaire distribution targeted people who are knowledgeable about hip hop. Still, the top two categories combined (63%, 62 of 101) indicate that one person in two indicates a degree of affinity, even with a 10 percent margin of error.

So what is the meaning of this affinity? In my informal interviews, the most common responses were along the lines of "I like it (black style') because I like it" or "Cool is cool." Although it is difficult to argue with this logic, it is tempting to
try and find a deeper meaning behind the affinity. Writers such as John G. Russell (1998), Karen Kelsky (1996), and Nina Comyetz (1994) have examined this topic in depth, and the three are in general agreement that the affinity is based on racially essentialized attitudes towards blacks that either replicate racism U.S. style or that are manipulated towards the purposes of Japanese gender politics. Although each has supported their theses quite convincingly, I have found evidence in the Kyoto scene that the affinity is based on less complicated discourse. In the most basic sense, hip hoppers are claiming a "Japanese" identity for themselves which entails an openness to blacks. This version of "Japaneseness" sets the hip hoppers apart from the social mainstream where racialized attitudes toward blacks still linger.

Among a significant number of my performer and fan informants, the affinity is tied to a more informed sympathy for blacks which develops either concurrent with or following their interest in hip hop. MC NICE of Groove Productions commented at length about how he developed a sense of sympathy for blacks:

Yes, I used to feel that sort of an affinity...When I first got into hip hop I was very interested in "blacks." I started listening to the music...I also studied black history a bit. For me, there is a kind of strength among blacks which does not exist among Japanese people. It was when I saw the movie Malcolm X that I first got interested. I'd taken social studies and history in school, but I was never interested so this was when I first realized that America has much more ethnic diversity than Japan. From there I got into Spike Lee movies. I watched them often, thinking "that's cool!" So why is it "cool?" In a sense, I feel sympathy. I mean, take Japan. It's below America, it's seen as below America. There's a sense that
Americans are better or that the country as a whole is better than Japan, because we lost the war and also because it's like the Japan of today was made by America. It would be wrong for me to compare this to slavery, that would be overstating it. On the other hand, there is a similarity to blacks who were brought by force and put to work. They say these are the days of equality but still there's something like discrimination in some places. I guess I just spontaneously felt sympathy (personal communication, Kyoto, Japan, April 8, 2002).

NICE indicates that although his own affinity for blacks originated from an interest in hip hop music, he developed a sense of sympathy that is based on an understanding of some aspects of the situation of U.S. blacks. In NICE’s case, this sympathy is connected to the sense that Japan has been subjugated by the U.S. during the postwar period. The specifics of this sense of subjugation is a topic in its own right, but I will offer two points to put it in perspective. As Chalmers Johnson has pointed out, Japan was forced by John Foster Dulles to recognize the Chiang Kai-shek regime on Taiwan even though mainland China had been Japan’s leading pre-World War II trading partner. There is also the legal status of Okinawa which makes it little more than "a de facto colony of the United States" (Johnson 2001). The inflammatory rhetoric of Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara indicates how this sense of subjugation has become foregrounded in recent years (Ishihara 2001). As NICE’s narrative demonstrates, an informed sense of sympathy for blacks is shared by a portion of Kyoto hip hoppers. This sympathy is partly the result of the sense of Japan’s subjugation by the U.S. As such, the affinity for blacks, and the appeal of hip hop to Kyoto youth, are related to a refusal of white America which holds responsibility for the subjugation of Japan.
"Japaneseness" for Kyoto hip hop fans and clubgoers is often connected to "gangsta" discourse. Some fans show a clear affinity for U.S. gangsta style through hairstyle, headgear, and clothing. The display of a number of vintage customized Chevy Impala lowriders outside of Club Grind on the evening of a DJ show by Hirata Kogyo is another indication of the affinity for the West Coast gangsta. On that evening, some of these lowriders passed by Whoopee's on the way home to neighboring Shiga prefecture with the front wheels hopping three feet or more off of the pavement and sparks flying off of the rear bumper. This prominent display may have been intended to target the B-boys congregating outside of Whoopee's that evening, but it attracted the attention of all passers-by regardless of their understanding of hip hop.

The gangsta element of the Japanese hip hop identity may be partly affected, but it alludes to actual connections to dangerous elements. The mayhem at Club Grind on the evening of Hirata Kogyo's show (numerous fights, venue damage, police presence) is one indication of this sort of connection. MC NICE visited Grind that evening and gave his impression of the clubgoers as "Scary, truly scary" ("kowai, honto ni kowai," personal communication, Kyoto, Japan, December 6, 2001). The lingering odor of paint thinner in the bathroom of Whoopee's on the evening of the December 29, 2001 Absolute is evidence to the presence of a yanki element that evening (paint thinner is inhaled by some Japanese youths, including some yanki, for its intoxicating effect). A group of clubgoers who kept their own cooler of beer out on the club floor that evening were flouting venue policy and general etiquette in a way that is evocative of the quasi-gangster. Through these connections between hip hop performers, clubgoers, and "truly scary" elements, we can see that "authenticity" discourse, according to the U.S.
gangsta prototype, does at times have a parallel applicability to the Kyoto hip hop scene.

Both on and offstage in the Kyoto scene, a number of versions of the Japanese hip hop identity are performed. Performance strategies differ especially in the case of engagement with gangsta identity. Zaza and NICE express their disapproval of what they see as gangsta posturing by some, yet acknowledge the presence of actually dangerous elements within the Kyoto scene. Absolute Crew emulate West Coast gangsta style, but also are "indigenized" in that the Makuro-ABS crew has a basic structure which is evocative of the yakuza. The Makuro-ABS "big venue" style performance style differs from the Grind-GPro approach which is more congruent with the limitations of scale in the Kyoto hip hop scene. There are also a number of affinities for blacks ranging from the emulation of black style by some of the younger members of the Kyoto scene to the more informed sympathy of those like MC NICE. These performance approaches are unified in their engagement with authenticity discourse and in the refusal of the mainstream. My discussion of performance was framed partly by authenticity discourse because of its predominance in the Kyoto scene. "Authenticity" does mean different things for the gangsta-yakuza approach of Makuro-ABS as compared to the more esoteric approach of GPro, but all share a degree of self consciousness about what it means to be "real Japanese hip hoppers."
CHAPTER 3. RAP TEXT ANALYSIS

3.0 Hip Hop Lyrics as Text

because of the logogenic nature of hip hop, the rap lyrics comprise a major component of the music's meanings. For example, while it is common practice for the DJ or producer to version (to create a variation of a pre-existing track or musical fragment) an original melody, or to change it altogether for one specific set of lyrics, the practice of composing new words for a pre-existing original music track (not including samples) is nearly unheard of. And, as questionnaire responses indicate, the fans do consider it important to have an understanding of lyric content. 50% (56 of 111 total respondents) indicated that they consider it so in the case of both live shows and at-home listening, and 30% (33 of 111) indicated that they consider it so in the case of at-home listening but not in the case of live shows. For at-home listening, 89% (101 of 113) indicated that they do check lyric content on CD liner notes.

From these numbers, we can discern two basic types of listening within the Kyoto hip hop scene: at the live show when attention to the MC's lyrics are given less attention and at-home listening when they are given more. The live show type of listening is but one aspect of the total experience including sights and smells, social interaction, dancing, and (often) alcohol consumption. The significance of the event is rooted in participation in the hip hop community, which is bounded in part by the club scene and live shows. For at-home listening, due to ease of access to the song texts (CD liner notes) and limitations of space which preclude dancing, the MCs' lyrics are given considerably more importance.
Before taking a look at specific examples, I should caution against approaching Kyoto hip hop lyrics from a point of view which equivocates "hip hop" with "message rap." "Message rap" is one aspect of hip hop MCing in Kyoto, but only one. U.S. and Japanese MCs often use the voice primarily as a musical instrument, in which case the rap lyrics are of a secondary importance as compared with vocal texture and rhythm, delivery, intonation, and performer charisma. Also, lyrical content is often based around wordplay and verbal imagery rather than on conveying a message of social resistance. However, if we want to find "authenticity" in Kyoto hip hop according to the lyrical standards of either "message" rap or U.S. gangsta rap, we need not look far.

Part of the Kyoto audience seems to be quite receptive to Japanese MCs with some depth of message. When asked if they know of a Japanese MC whose lyrics contain some depth of message, 86% of questionnaire respondents (51 of 59 total) indicated that they did, and 22% (13 of 59) named a specific Kyoto MC. The Kyoto hip hop scene therefore should satisfy even those who approach it from a message rap/hip hop-conflated viewpoint. Acknowledging that all rap lyrics have some meaning, not just those which are overtly didactic, my examination of hip hop lyrics targets "message rap" and gangsta discourse in the cases that a specific lyric or performer holds a prominent place in the Kyoto scene. At the same time, beside the 14% (8 of 59) that responded that there are no Japanese MCs with any depth of meaning to their lyrics, 49% (56 of 115) of respondents who were issued the questionnaire left the entry blank or responded that they "don't understand" (wakaranai). Considering that this represents nearly half of the total sample, we should keep in mind that the rap lyrics are only one component of the total meaning of the Kyoto hip hop scene.
English translations of the rap lyrics are organized corresponding roughly line for line with four beats of original text. Each line therefore corresponds roughly to one bar (four beats) of music. To distinguish the portions of rap text that were originally in Japanese from those that were in English, I have underlined sections of translated text that were originally in English.

I discuss three different crews/performers in the examination of Kyoto hip hop lyrics: Makuro MC’s, Zibro, and Mack Family. Complete transcriptions of the lyrics are provided in Appendix D.

3.1 Makuro MC’s: Local Pride and the "Concrete Jungle"

Although the gangsta-yakuza aspect of Makuro is evident in their crew structure and live show format, MCs YAS and Shuzo rarely address this aspect directly in their rap lyrics. This is a distinct point of contrast between their lyrics and those of a considerable number other Kyoto rappers whose lyrics often include "gangsta" narrative. As demonstrated by "Grow," Makuro’s lyrical approach focuses mostly on image pastiche, on reflexive material pertaining to themselves as performers, and on portrayal of their sense of connection to Kyoto as a locus of Japanese hip hop.

Makuro’s type of approach to hip hop is apparent in their use of language. MCs Shuzo and YAS, as well as Makuro DJ Hiroichi and Absolute superstar MC Shigechiyo all keep their Japanese names (YAS being a version of "Yasu," the first part of his given name) rather than adopting English or English-derived names such as Morning Star, NICE, or Zibro. Also, "Makuro" (the literal transliteration of the Japanese phonetic approximation of "macro") is taken from an English
word but, by exchanging "ku" for "c," Makuro pass the written word through the Japanese phonetic system. Finally, Makuro rap mostly in Japanese with a light scattering of English slang and loan-words which are often "Japanese-English" phonetic approximations rather than standard U.S. pronunciation.

In lines 1 to 4 of verse 1 of "Grow," YAS starts out with imagery of violent struggle:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{size XXL, rough and tough} \\
\text{struggling to see tomorrow and the day after} \\
\text{attack uncertainty with no guarantee, expecting and} \\
\text{swearing to kick them apart...}
\end{align*}
\]

Over the course of the stanza, it becomes clear that this sort of imagery is being used mostly in a reflexive manner to portray Makuro's struggle in rising to the top of the Kyoto scene. YAS's choice of combat lingo for this boast narrative is a fairly standard pattern of both U.S. and Japanese hip hop, eliding music and violence in numerous ways. In the case of Makuro, the martial phrasing operates primarily on the level of a metaphor for competition between performers in the Kyoto hip hop scene. Of course, it also resonates with Makuro's gangsta-yakuza persona.

Makuro's refusal of the mainstream is expressed metaphorically in lines 9 to 11 of verse 1:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lost sheep wander aimlessly} \\
\text{values influenced by the system} \\
\text{common sense changing at a frightening speed}
\end{align*}
\]

86
The "rejection" theme is well suited to Makuro MC's who live nearly entirely outside of the Japanese mainstream lifestyle. YAS's implicit message of the importance of finding oneself and one's own way in life is a recurrent one among Kyoto MCs. Presumably, this is because "anti-system" discourse has a relevance to the performers and fans and a "truth" to their daily lives.

In line 22 of verse 1, YAS uses the image of "the four seasons tumble onwards," an image that he has also included in more recent compositions. This image is a good example of the sort of image pastiche that Makuro favor. The spring blossoms and autumn color are among the touted charms of Kyoto city, as are the much lamented hot, humid summer and cold winter. Japan National Tourist Organization posters of the sakura (cherry) and momiji (maple) in Kyoto are among some of the archetypal images of the city, and so YAS's imagery here is specific to Kyoto.

Lines 23 to 24 of verse 1 are notable for YAS's covert reference to marijuana: "...(our) underground dope sound, thick and rich like resin sticking to the crutch..." In lines 17 to 20 of verse 2, Shuzo also makes a reference to marijuana:

- wandering caught between reality and dreams
- I smoke that stuff, deep breathing exercises again today
- exhale, begin writing,
- a sound borne by hard struggle

In contrast to YAS's casual reference, Shuzo ties his use of marijuana to his work as a lyricist. For better or worse, "that stuff" ("soitsu"), marijuana, is evidently a part of Shuzo's lifestyle and creative process. Flouting the Narcotics and Stimulants Control Act and making thinly-veiled references to doing so on-stage
puts Makuro well beyond the limits of acceptability within the Japanese mainstream. At the same time, they are simply acknowledging that marijuana use is fairly widespread among a section of Kyoto hip hop performers and fans.

YAS and Shuzo trade phrases in the chorus in which they express a sense of connection to Kyoto which is couched in agrarian terminology:

\[
\text{this land, this soil, K-Y-O-T-O} \\
bears lyrics, an original flow... \\
(\text{repeat 3 times)}. \ldots\ldots\ldots M \text{ to the} \\
A-A-G-G-U-M-A \\
\text{red hot Makuro!}
\]

Shuzo uses agrarian phrasing again in lines 9 to 12 of verse 2:

\[
\text{cultivating the land, K-Y-O-T-O} \\
\text{daily devotion, hip hop day by day} \\
\text{watering without fail, never losing our heat} \\
\text{together with our crew, one day for sure}
\]

The agrarian imagery may seem to be an awkward fit with "Kyoto" as Japan's center of traditional "metropolitan" culture. Shuzo is representing Makuro as the "fruit of the soil" of the Kyoto "underground" hip hop scene with this sort of agrarian wordplay. By casting himself in the role of the cultivator (lines 9 and 11, verse 2), Shuzo alludes to himself as one "boss" of the Kyoto scene (Shuzo ostensibly has final word in all decisions regarding Makuro-ABS). Line 10 of verse 2, "daily devotion, hip hop day by day" ("hibi shōjin, hibi hip hop") refers to Makuro's diligence in training and to hip hop as a way of life. This single line appeared in one of my questionnaire responses, the only direct quote from specific Kyoto MC's lyrics by any of the total of 117 respondents.

88
Lines 1 to 2 of verse 2 are notable for Shuzo's usage of "concrete jungle" imagery, "struggle" imagery, as well as the Kansai dialect negative "seh'hen" (line 3):

this jungle, this scramble, human

crossroads, we'll never surrender

This sort of imagery, directly derivative of the "concrete jungle" imagery of reggae and U.S. hip hop, may seem to be a poor fit with the "Kyoto" of Buddhist temples and sakura. But Fushimi ward (YAS and Shuzo's home turf) is divided by three major train lines, by the Meishin Expressway, and by a number of other major traffic routes (see Appendix A). Train track embankments and highway overpasses provide plenty of concrete to inspire the imagination of Shuzo and graffiti artists alike. The Fushimi ward neighborhood of Mukaijima allegedly contains the highest concentration of amphetamine junkies in Kyoto, and yakuza connections allegedly are not uncommon among residents. In this sense, Makuro's "Kyoto" fits with lyrical approaches which employ "concrete jungle" or "ghetto" imagery. While Makuro recognize and appear to respect Kyoto's legacy of traditional Japanese culture, the "ghetto" imagery is an important part of their identification of themselves as "Japanese." Shuzo's lyrics to "Grow," representing urbanized Kyoto or representing Japan as an urbanized nation, offer a version of "Japan" which is true to their own upbringing as well as to the lived daily reality of most of the fans. However, Shuzo's lyrics are not Kyoto-specific on a literal level outside of the chorus. In combination with YAS's abstract lyrics, we do not get a clearly defined sense of how Makuro situate themselves within the Kyoto scene, or the Kyoto scene within the Japanese hip hop scenes nationwide.

During the period of my field study, Makuro MC's collaborated with Ozrosaurus from Yokohama and MOSAD from Nagoya under the name Young Gunz. A single track by the same name was included on Ozrosaurus' 2001 major label
(Polystar) release, Rollin' 045. This track merits our attention because the album was among those played on the stereo systems of hip hop shops along Kyoto's Teramachi shopping arcade and because the album attracted much attention among hip hop circles nationwide. As the group name implies, Young Gunz consciously represent a younger generation of performer. It is indicative of the relative youth of the Kyoto scene that Makuro, "bosses" of the Kyoto scene, identify themselves as "young." In the latter 1990s hip hop started to spread throughout Japan from Tokyo and Osaka, and local scenes began to appear in cities such as Nagoya, Kyoto and Yokohama. Nationally famous artists such as MOSAD, Makuro MC's, and Ozrosaurus took their places among the second generation of Japanese hip hoppers. The track "Young Gunz" an anthem to this generation of performers and hip hoppers.

YAS and Shuzo's contributions to "Young Gunz" demonstrate a more mature lyrical style (in comparison with "Grow") which clearly situates the Kyoto hip hop scene as a contender within the nationwide scene. This is apparent in the chorus which Makuro share with four other MCs including the nationally famous Tokona X and Maccho:

(unison)  \textit{Young Gunz in the house}

Maccho: \underline{045 952 075 rollin'}

(unison)  \textit{Young Gunz in the house}

Tokona X: \underline{we don't give a fuck, middle finger you}

(unison)  \textit{Young Gunz in the house}

Makuro: \underline{pass around the smoking mic}

(unison)  \textit{Young Gunz in the house}

(unison)  \underline{Nagoya, Kyoto, Yokohama}
In line 2 of the chorus, Maccho refers to the three cities by their telephone prefixes (045=Yokohama, 052=Nagoya, 075=Kyoto), a fairly common practice among MCs in the U.S. and Japan to situate the performer according to their specific point (district) of origin. The final unison binds the three cities together as representative of the second generation of Japanese hip hoppers. While Tokyo and Osaka are conspicuously absent, Kyoto shares a place alongside of Nagoya and Yokohama. Tokona X's line is a self-explanatory gesture towards the mainstream. Makuro's line elides two images: the group of MCs passing the mic around and the group passing a joint around. As always, the marijuana reference in rap lyrics or in on-stage ad-lib is an acknowledgment by the performer that they and a section of the audience stand together in defiance of Japan's Narcotics and Stimulants Control Act.

The chorus is notable not only for the refusals of the mainstream and the portrayal of the MCs' roughness, but also because it is nearly entirely in English. In Maccho's line, the "045 052 075" is in Japanese (nearly: the "0" is read "zero"), as is part of Makuro's line. Makuro's indigenized approach to hip hop is evident in that they are the only MCs who contributed a mostly Japanese line to the chorus. The predominance of English in the chorus indicates that the ability to speak English is considered to be an important attribute among this generation of hip hoppers. This is not to say that this was not the case among the first generation of performers, but the stakes have been raised since then by the constantly widening network of performance and business activity between the U.S. and Japanese hip hop scenes. Some of the younger Japanese performers are well aware that this network provides an opportunity, or at least indicates the possibility of creating music that can "hold its own" not only nationwide but also
in the U.S. and abroad. It is indicative that the album Rollin' 045 is the first of over one hundred Japanese hip hop CDs that I have seen which includes an English translation of the lyrics in the liner notes, albeit a sloppy one which obviously was never checked by a native speaker. The second generation's expansive approach to hip hop is evidenced by Makuro's performance practice including the "Oriental dope hip hop" subtitle to Absolute, and by Young Gunz' nationwide collaboration and transnational ambitions.

YAS's verses to "Young Gunz" are characteristically abstract and he does not specifically locate himself other than his reference to the "Kansai area" in his first solo verse. Shuzo's narrative is more specific and concrete, as in his first solo verse:

the big men of this town, Makuro
my partner YAS
from the B to the B, Young Guns'
digi diggi diggi di, I'll tell the
tale of three cities
turning darkness into light at the drop of a needle
spreading word of our ties
Young Gunz, fresh on the scene

Shuzo deems it unnecessary to even name the "town," equating "Makuro" with "Kyoto hip hop" and placing them as leaders of the scene. This is followed by the standard introductory nature of line two, "B-boy" wordplay in line three and the onomatopoeic "digi diggi diggi di" in line four which references a DJ's turntable scratch. In lines five and six Shuzo narrates the "enlightenment" of Nagoya, Kyoto and Yokohama by the arrival of hip hop music and culture which is
represented by the drop of a DJ's turntable needle. The enlightenment metaphor posits hip hop as having rejuvenated the three cities ("turning darkness into light"). In this sense, I propose that Shuzo's narrative of hip hop in Japan suggests congruency with Rose's description of hip hop as "reclamation of urban space" (1994: 22).

Shuzo continues his narration of the second generation of Japanese hip hoppers in his second solo verse to "Young Gunz:"

from Tokyo to Kansai and then Kanto
the true account of each region's dope B-boys
Young Gunz '96 shit continues
our second shot reaches the whole country by way of the beach

The first two lines refer to the spread of hip hop culture around Japan which began in Tokyo and then emerged in the Kansai scene before spreading to the Kanto region surrounding Tokyo. In lines three and four Shuzo warns that this Young Gunz track will reach hip hop listeners all over Japan. Yokohama, the "beach" of line four and the home of Ozrosaurus, is cast as the site from which they have launched their hip hop "invasion." His martial choice of words resonates with the abstract use of struggle and combat imagery in "Grow," but in this case Shuzo's lyrics portray a concrete sense of purpose behind the prose. His allegory of a hip hop "invasion" alludes to how hip hoppers can find a new sense of meaning in themselves and in their relationship with their home. This process of re-connection to the urban neighborhood is fundamentally the same as the one which Rose refers to when she speaks of "reclamation of urban space" (1994: 22).
3.2 Zibro: A Marginalized Voice and Urban Narrative

MC Zibro is among the most talented underground performers in Kyoto and, with several CD releases of solo material on the local independent recording label Hudou Music, he is also among the most prolific. He has been affiliated with Groove Productions since around 1998, and often performs with them at Grind events including PTA and Increase. His lyrical style is notable for the quantity of English words used (including profanity), for his U.S. hip hop-derived MC style, and for his frequent "ghetto" and "gangsta" references. Also, Zibro's rap lyrics are frequently specific not only to Kyoto city but to Nanajo Street, his home being located near its eastern end. The title and chorus 1 of "On da 7th Street" are good examples:

- hi! hi! what's up muthafuckin people?
- what! what! on da Nanajo Street
- hi! hi! love this town until the end
- what! what! repre-represent Kyoto
- hi! hi! keep your hands up!
- what! what! Zibro, man of the hour
- hi! hi! we'll bring glory to this town

someday

Zibro's hometown area, a small zone between Kyoto Station and the Kamo River, is aptly described by Zibro as a "downtown ghetto" ("Bang This Shit" verse 2, line 3). Given that it is also a well known "burakumin," neighborhood, Zibro's declaration of his home turf resonates with the social resistance of U.S. message rap. Also, his lyrics are suited to his relatively unknown position as a performer and to the scale of the Kyoto hip hop scene as demonstrated in the last line of the chorus where he refers to his unfulfilled ambition.
Zibro's strong affinity for blacks is apparent in his name, in his personal appearance, and in his rap lyrics. "Zibro" ("zeebro") rhymes closely with "negro," and he has referred to himself as a "Kyoto gangster, Japanese negga style" (sic). His naturally dark complexion further accentuates his U.S. black-derived personal style, amalgamating black mimesis on a visual level with performance of highly Kyoto-specific lyrics. Also, he often borrows the lyrical conventions of U.S. hip hop as is evidenced by the "What! What!" of chorus 1 of "On da 7th Street," his predilection for "muthafucka" and "muthafuckin,'" which he shares with a number of other Kyoto MCs, and by the overall predominance of English in his rap lyrics. Zibro represents the heavily U.S. hip hop-derivative end of the spectrum of Japanese hip hop, but still keeps a strong sense of his rootedness in Kyoto Nanajo. Having grown up in the "buraku" neighborhood lends "authenticity" to Zibro's version of Japanese hip hop (even according to the parameters of the U.S. prototype), and also offers a basis for his affinity for blacks.

Zibro points out that his upbringing in a buraku neighborhood is related to his affinity for blacks:

I was raised at Kyoto Nanajo. Let me explain about Nanajo. In Japan, we have a thing called "buraku discrimination" ("buraku sabetsu"). Do you know? One part of Nanajo is that type of area, a discriminated area. I was born and raised in that type of area. For me, hip hop is a shout, a cry from a kindred spirit with blacks ("kokujin to dōyō tamashii no sakebi de aru"). This type of discriminated area exists all over Japan. Marriage prejudice, employment prejudice...exist in reality and in
people's hearts. The world is one, people are equal. I want to shout that from my heart (email communication, May 19, 2002).

Zibro displays an understanding of the marginalization of U.S. blacks and of U.S. hip hop's role as resistance. His own version of "message rap" is derivative of the U.S. prototype but is indigenized to the domestic agenda of the marginalization of "burakumin." Zibro's frequent references to his Nanajo upbringing in rap lyrics is an oblique approach as compared with the often explicit approach of U.S. message rap, but the gesture in refusal of the mainstream, where prejudice towards "burakumin" still exists, is undeniable.

The chorus to "Bang This Shit" is a good example of his U.S. hip hop-derivative lyrical approach:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bang this muthafuckin' shit} \\
\text{ghetto life from A to Z, this is} \\
\text{real westside gangstyle yeah} \\
\text{bang, bang, bang}
\end{align*}
\]

(repeat)

Zibro's "ghetto life" makes sense given his Kyoto Nanajo upbringing, but what meaning does "real westside gangstyle" hold for him? After all, Zibro is a university graduate who holds a stable position as a civil servant. He had this to say on the matter:

The "gangsta" that I often refer to is a "sound gangsta." In the Japanese language, "gangsta"="yakuza." "Yakuza"="wickedness" in that they push their ways to the extreme. I'm thinking from the point of view of someone who has pushed the way of music to the extreme, using music as a weapon with a combative spirit. Using music to get money, to draw
people together. That's surely the same as the yakuza, except that violence has changed into music (email communication, June 1, 2002).

Zibro's "gangsta" offers a contrast to Makuro MC's "gangsta-yakuza" identity and aggressive performance practices (publicity and promotions, ethically questionable ticket sales procedures, and rumors of a somewhat menacing stage presence). Although Zibro is much more lyrically explicit about the "gangsta" than are Makuro, his stage presence is generally benign and is tempered by the romantic balladeer aspect of his persona.

Anyone who is familiar with Zibro on these terms can only understand the gangsta narratives on the level that he intended, the metaphorical. Taken on these terms, Zibro the "gangsta" is not incompatible with the civil servant, although the gap between the two may seem to be quite wide. Zibro demonstrates his seriousness in his ability to compartmentalize his "job" and his "work" as an MC. For him, there is no issue of compatibility, and his ghetto background and MC skills ameliorate issues of "authenticity." Zibro is a good example of how different aspects of "Japan" including the traditional industries, the yakuza, and (in Zibro's case) the civil bureaucracy and discourse on the burakumin are coming into contact with the Kyoto hip hop scene to various degrees. Layering of this sort, of indigenous "Japan" and the Kyoto hip hop scene, is not uncommon and was not considered by my informant-performers as an issue of compatibility.

In contrast to Makuro's abstract lyrical approach, Zibro includes concrete narratives of his Kyoto Nanajo youth such as that in lines 1 to 4 of verse 1 of "Bang This Shit":

97
riverside campfire enclosed in midnight
racing cars, picking-up dates, fights and
ganja, time spent meaninglessly

even when the town's colors faded, it still was brilliant

Reflexive nostalgic narrative of this sort clarifies Zibro's connection to Kyoto city. Makuro do include a considerable amount of reflexive lyrical material such as that of their struggle to the top of the Kyoto scene, but their lyrics lack the highly specific nature of Zibro's. The second chorus to "On da 7th Street" is another good example of Zibro's highly Kyoto-specific lyrical approach:

Kyoto City, connecting east to west
heart to heart, Seventh Street
Kyoto City, running north to south
the success road, Kawaramachi
born and raised in this town, nothing’s changed
dreams sketched across the sky
floating visions of glory
oh! the capital of sound

(repeat)

Zibro pinpoints his home near the intersection of Nanajo-Kawaramachi and depicts an affectionate panorama of the "capital of sound" ("oto no miyako"). This fairly simple turn of phrase alludes to "Kyoto" (literally "capital city") as the historical seat of the imperial throne and as a center of Japanese traditional culture, and so connects Zibro's "downtown ghetto" with the Kyoto of sakura and traditional architecture in a way that is reminiscent of the artwork on Absolute flyers. This is partly an attempt to boost Zibro's performer image, but also
recognizes the Kyoto scene as one established center of Japanese underground hip hop.

Zibro's highly Kyoto-specific lyrical approach offers a different version of "authenticity" than do Makuro. Zibro is "true" to his upbringing and to his hometown. Makuro are "true" to the gangsta element of U.S. hip hop, but have indigenized this aspect and come up with the "gangsta-yakuza" approach. Ironically, Zibro the civil servant is much more lyrically explicit about "gangstas" than are the allegedly quasi-yakuza Makuro. Zibro also draws more directly on U.S. hip hop in his lyrical approach and in mimesis of personal style. His approach is derivative in this sense but also indigenized in that Zibro employs the abstract sort of a "concrete jungle" lyrical approach evident in "Grow" (verse 2, lines 1 to 3), taking it to a higher level as Kyoto-specific narrative prose. Despite the derivative aspects of his lyrical approach, his skill as a lyricist and his sophisticated understanding of "gangsta" discourse within the Kyoto context put Zibro somewhat beyond the reach of inauthenticity critiques.

3.3 Jimmy: "Gangsta" Discourse and Message Rap

In Spring of 2002 No Mercy, the "gangstas" of Kyoto Kiyamachi, disbanded and re-formed under the name Mack Family. DJ Kyoju and MC Jimmy, who by this point had accumulated an abundance of gangsta authenticity, took over as leading performers. The track "Fuck the Police 2002" was part of Jimmy's standard performance repertoire prior to and after the group's re-birth, including on the evening that they opened for Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. As the title indicates, this rap is a denouncement of the Japanese police which Jimmy casts in a concretely narrative style similar to that of Zibro. The difference lies between
Zibro as the "metaphorical" gangsta and Jimmy as the "literal" one. As the title of "Fuck the Police 2002" also indicates, Jimmy is versioning an anti-police theme of the sort common to reggae and U.S. hip hop. This is not an isolated incident of Kyoto MCs rapping on this sort of theme. "Police Praise Song" ("Keikan to Sanbi Uta") by the lesser known crew Rabbit Punch (no relation to No Mercy, although they have shared the same stage) contains virtually identical critiques of police corruption and abuse of authority. Specifically, Jimmy's version is obviously referencing West Coast "gangsta" hip hop NWA's 1988 track "Fuck the Police" (NWA 1988) as well as by KRS-One's "Sound of Da Police" (KRS-One 1994). Although Jimmy obviously commandeered NWA's title, his lyrics are original and the sentiment behind them are "true" to his "real gangsta" persona. Also, according to Japanese news media coverage of police misdeeds over the period between October 2000 and April 2002, Jimmy's criticisms are based on fact as well as being motivated by his own partiality. Therefore, "Fuck The Police 2002" is a good example of how some Kyoto MCs have adopted the role of the social critic in a way that is equivalent to the stance of U.S. hip hop "message rappers."

Beginning in verse 1 of "Fuck the Police 2002," Jimmy gives a detailed depiction of the workings of Japanese police departments:

- on the news again tonight, another police scandal
- so insincere, the ministry representative
- earnestly apologizes at the press conference
- the constitutional state, Japan's absurdity
- how can you judge people?
- you've got no right to make arrests
- amphetamines, obscenity, embezzlement, police-politician networks
frame jobs, you do the whole works
the injustice remains hidden to the end so
my men in lock-down can’t find peace of mind
sneering oily pigs
make arrests just like kidnappers
made your quotas this month? so
you’ll be drinking in the hostess clubs tonight
you shit-stained pigs
tried to put me down?
what’s up with that?

and in verse 2, lines 5 to 10:
when promoted, gifts arrive from the
district yakuza and industry bosses
half reminder, half threat, captain for
three years and you can build your own house
career cops nip the recruits’ advancement in the bud
so the non-career cops (underlings) neglect their duties

and lines 19 to 22:
I’ll tell you about their wholehearted concerns,
bribe money from pachinko and entertainment trades
if one has to, the unknown doesn’t exist
the blundering underling is disposed of

Jimmy’s critique is not limited to the police but extends to what he depicts as a
corrupt network of police, yakuza, the construction industry, and publicly contrite
but privately complicit politicians. He demonstrates a sense of social
consciousness through a critical stance towards institutionalized corruption and
abuse of authority, but complicates things with his acrimony at the end of verse one and later in the chorus when it becomes clear that Jimmy's critique of the police is not merely objective:

\[
\text{shit, police piss me off} \\
\text{in enforcement campaign month} \\
\text{shit, police piss me off} \\
\text{we hang out, wander the streets}
\]

Jimmy seems to be discursively attacking the police more because they are an obstruction to his pursuit of the gangsta lifestyle than out of any sense of social commitment. His shout-out ("...yeah yeah yeah! to all the yakuza and gangsters of this town, Yeah!") at the fade-out of "Fuck The Police 2002" clearly positions Jimmy on the side of the outlaw. However, the exhaustive nature of his critique (two 16 line verses and one 24 line verse) indicates that Jimmy has had plenty of time to formulate his rebuttal of the police in objective terms drawn from the widely decried corruption of the Japanese police force. Jimmy's lyrical blend of vitriol and objective "message" in "Fuck The Police 2002" puts his refusal of the mainstream in concrete terms and also is well suited to his U.S. West Coast gangsta-derived personal appearance. His personal style is clearly U.S. hip hop derivative, and although he sometimes references themes from U.S. hip hop, his lyrics are concretely related to Kyoto city and Japan in general. His lyrical approach is notably indigenized in that he raps nearly entirely in the Japanese language, but he has cultivated connections with established names in the U.S. scene including Boo-Yaa Tribe and Living Legends, as well as underground figures such as Honolulu/San Francisco bay area MC D'Vious E.

In verse three, Jimmy repositions his critique of the police from the point of view of a man who has been wrongly accused of rape. The subtext of this verse is

102
police corruption, but the main topic is the story of a nightlife playboy who gets in trouble after one of his casual lovers makes a claim to her steady boyfriend that she was raped by him. The boyfriend urges her to press charges, and the police process the indictment even though they presumably realize that the charges are false. By this point, Jimmy has distanced himself considerably from the moral high ground of "message rap." Consider for example, that (according to popular discourse) there is an overall lack of support and therapy infrastructure for rape victims in Japan in general. Also, the Kyoto city police have a reputation, at least among the foreigner community there, for sometimes shirking their professional duties when (foreign) rape victims step forward. Numerous police officers around Japan have been convicted in recent years of molestation and assault while on and off duty.

Because Jimmy's story ignores these matters, he begins to complicate any claim to having an objective message. By the end of the third verse, Jimmy has depicted the female prosecutor as "single, paranoid, and in her thirties" and offered his assurance that the "injured party" is going to "give up the booty again somewhere." By the time we hear him rap about "throw(ing) away the bitch with a stinky pussy like she was litter" in verse one of his self-introductory rap "U Keep Forgettin'" (Jimmy: 2002), it appears that he is channeling personal frustration towards women into his MCing. Lyrics such as these are clearly devised to attract attention and to shock, as is the title to "Fuck The Police 2002," and are also often partly a convention to set up or resolve the rhyme scheme.

Also, it would appear that Jimmy is constructing these gendered narratives as an extension of his playboy persona, much along the lines that eroticized female dance was incorporated into No Mercy performance.
Beyond these levels, Jimmy's gendered narratives indicate a demeanor which I would have to characterize as tending towards the misogynist, on a scale which rivals that of some U.S. MCs. But is it derived from the U.S. prototype, or is it of an indigenous variety? Unlike his U.S. "gangsta"-derived personal style, this is ambiguous. This is obviously a problematic issue in terms of gender relations, but Jimmy's misogyny demonstrates some of the complex ways that "America" and "Japan" have become layered together. Due to this complexity, when selecting any given social or cultural aspect it is not always possible to identify it as most discernibly "Japanese" or as most discernibly "American." The appeal of the playboy-gangsta persona to Jimmy and to a section of his audience is based on the ways that this persona resonates with this ambiguity and thereby adequately represents the breadth of elements that are incorporated into their version of "Japoneseness."

Between Makuro, Zibro, and Jimmy, I have outlined a fairly wide range of lyrical approaches involving discourses of message rap, gangsta rap, and hip hop as a means of self-identification and reclamation of urban space. I have targeted these areas because of their relevance to authenticity discourse and because of the prominence of these performers within the Kyoto scene (and, in the case of Makuro, beyond). A portrayal of the full range of Kyoto MCs' lyrical approaches is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I should point out that there are numerous MCs who engage with message rap but not with gangsta discourse at all. MC NICE's musings on how hip hop has affected his sense of purpose in life and on the importance of self-belief fall into this category. For other MCs including Morning Star, rapping is often about clever rhyming, word play, vocal tone, intonation, and delivery rather than about any didactic...
"message." MC NICE and Morning Star have been successful in attracting an underground following, roughly to the same degree as have Jimmy and Zibro. The multiplicity of lyrical approaches demonstrates that Kyoto hip hop performers are working to develop personalized approaches to rapping. Authenticity discourse may be one driving force behind the diversification of lyrical approach, but the resulting musical culture offers points of greater interest than questions of "historical authenticity."
CHAPTER 4. MUSIC ANALYSIS

4.0 Music as Text

I precede my examination of Kyoto hip hop musical style, form, and content with summarized descriptions of some vocabulary that Tricia Rose has found useful in her examinations of U.S. hip hop. Then I examine three tracks by Kyoto performers: "Waza Ari" by Rabbit Punch, "Grow" by Makuro MC's, and "Fuck the Police 2002" by Jimmy and DJ Kyoju of Mack Family.

We are faced with a number of challenges when talking about the style, form and content of hip hop music. To begin with, the music is "omnivorous," meaning that elements of any musical style can be incorporated using digital sampling technology (DJ Kyoju of Mack Family uses the Akai MPC 3000). The trackmaker is free to reference, version, or appropriate any pre-existing recorded material as long as they do not infringe on copyright law, or at least as long as they do not get caught doing so. Even in the case that samples of other musicians' recordings play a minor role in the overall musical structure, trackmakers employ digital programming technology with the same sort of omnivorous approach. Because of this, we are faced with what sometimes seems like an amorphous body of musical style and form.

Rose's work helps provide a basis from which we can approach Kyoto hip hop music. She has identified three basic concepts which the black film-maker, artist, and cultural critic Arthur Jafa has identified as fundamental to all of hip hop's expressions: flow, layering, and ruptures in line (Rose 1994: 38).
What is the significance of flow, layering, and rupture as demonstrated on the body and in hip hop's lyrical, musical, and visual works? Interpreting these concepts theoretically, one can argue that they create and sustain rhythmic motion, continuity, and circularity via flow; accumulate, reinforce, and embellish this continuity through layering; and manage threats to these narratives by building in ruptures that highlight the continuity as it momentarily challenges it (Rose 1994: 39).

Jafa's terms and Rose's definitions as presented here may require further explanation. "Flow" refers to the rhythmic and melodic ostinati which are some of the basic elements of hip hop music. Although the "repetitive" nature of hip hop music is often cited in support of assertions of its lack of substance, the ostinato is actually quite meaningful. Rose draws our attention to Christopher Small's description of the function of repetition in African music:

...The repetitions of African music have a function in time which is the reverse of (Western classical) music: to dissolve the past and the future into one eternal present, in which the passing of time is no longer noticed (Small 1977: 54-55 in Rose 1994: 67).

Derivative of some of the African American elements of U.S. hip hop, Kyoto hip hop music shares the predominance of rhythmic and melodic ostinati with the U.S. prototype. Arguably, the function that the ostinato plays in Kyoto hip hop is comparable to Small's description of the function of the ostinato in African music.

In the Kyoto context, the ostinato functions to suspend the performers' and audience's sensation of the passing of time which is measured by the passing of DJ sets, MC live shows, and dance showcases. There are no clocks visible at
either club Grind or Whoopee's. The basement level setting of both clubs, with a total absence of windows, accentuates the temporal suspension. Timetables, deadlines, and work schedules are forgotten for the duration of the evening which is experienced as a single unit of *mu* (space, pause) in the daily lives of the performers and clubgoers. For those clubgoers who are living outside of the employment mainstream (*furitā, yakuza, "gangsta," etc.), attending the event is partly an expression of the freedom that their alternative lifestyle affords them. The attraction of live events for the "regularly" employed clubgoers is that the suspended sensation of time releases them temporarily from the regularity of their daily schedule. In both cases, the ostinato plays a fixed role in altering sensation of the passage of time. In my interpretation, the ostinato functions as a metaphor for a pattern of lifestyle change, one which has been realized by some Kyoto hip hop youth and has drawn the attention and/or envy of many others.

"Layering" refers to the vertical embellishment of the sound by "adding more parts to the score." Unlike much Western music, in hip hop the different lines are free to move in parallel or contrary motion, or to function in relative independence from the other vertical lines of the ostinato. Melodic interest may shift between the different lines in fixed patterns and, as Rose points out, often appears in the bass and other low-frequency lines (Rose 1994: 67). In the Kyoto context, these aspects function as a metaphor for social and cultural multiplicity including the traditional, postmodern urban, mainstream, and subcultural. In the manner that melodic interest shifts between different vertical layers in hip hop music, layering metaphorically resists the reduction of "the Japanese" into tropes of social homogeneity.
"Ruptures in line" in the context of hip hop music refers, for example, to DJ scratch technique which literally ruptures the horizontal flow. The break (see glossary) also functions to interrupt the melodic ostinato. Both the scratch and the break can be said to function as "anti-cadences" in that they periodically confirm the steady presence of the ostinato by temporarily suspending it. In the context of Kyoto hip hop music, ruptures temporarily take over the role of the ostinato, "breaking the routine" in an analogous way to how the ostinato functions as a metaphor for gestures (alternative lifestyle, etc.) in refusal of the social mainstream.

In the case of U.S. hip hop, certain distinct musical styles (the "West Coast sound", "Miami Bass") are associated with the city or region of their origin. Kyoto hip hop, however, consists of a heterogeneous body of music which cannot be characterized by a single phrase or catchword. I now discuss tracks by three Kyoto crews (refer to accompanying CD), giving attention to how they have produced individualized musical styles. As there is no discernibly homogenous "Kyoto sound," the aim is to identify some of the creative techniques employed.

4.1 Notation Method, Special Signs and Other Considerations:

A. Makuro MC's: "Grow"

A number of instrumental parts including the percussion, bass, chimes, cabaca, kalimba, and guitar are generated using samples of the actual instrument. Because the tonality of the "shawm" part is diatonic, it is safe to assume that it is electronically produced rather than sampled.
vocals The placement of noteheads on the staff is not an indication of relative or absolute pitch, given that hip hop lyrics are delivered entirely in heightened speech rather than sung. As a reminder, clef marks and key signatures are omitted from the vocal part.

hi-hat As in the other two transcriptions, standard noteheads are used to indicate closed articulations and the sign (<) is used to indicate open articulations.

bass The relatively poor sound quality of the recording of "Grow," in analog on a normal bias cassette tape, places limitations on the accuracy of the transcription of the bass part. As tonality is a minor consideration in the case of "Grow," this is not an obstacle to the analysis and discussion.

chime Although more than one tone sounds simultaneously in the chime part, only the tone that stands out most is notated.

B. Jimmy/Mack Family: "Fuck The Police 2002"

All of the instrumental parts are electronically produced approximations of the timbre of the actual instruments.

vocals All of the three vocal lines are performed by MC Jimmy. Two are sung, and the clef marking and key signature serve as reminders of this. The main vocal line is rapped rather than sung. Clef markings and key signatures are omitted from this part as a reminder.

police siren Notehead placement is not an indication of pitch, which in this case is not a significant factor in the discussion.
C. **Rabbit Punch: "Waza Ari"**

All instrumental lines are generated using electronic approximations of the appropriate timbre.

**vocals** The placement of noteheads on the staff is not an indication of relative or absolute pitch, given that hip hop lyrics are delivered in heightened speech rather than sung.

**mokkin:** Although the two-piece set of wooden gongs is differentially pitched, neither the tones themselves nor the interval between them are significant to the analysis and therefore are not notated in the transcription.

**bass drum/snare drum** To keep the transcription from being too vertically diffuse, the bass drum and snare drum parts are condensed into a single line. A standard notehead is used for the bass drum part and an (x) is used for the snare part.

4.2 **Makuro MC's: Ostinato Flexibility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages and Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>p. 168, m. 1 - p. 169, m. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1 (YAS)</td>
<td>p. 169, m. 13 - p. 175, m. 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>p. 175, m. 37 - p. 177, m. 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2 (Shuzo)</td>
<td>p. 177, m. 45 - p. 183, m. 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>p. 183, m. 69 - p. 185, m. 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda (YAS and Shuzo)</td>
<td>p. 185, m. 77 - p. 187, m. 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion Coda</td>
<td>p. 188, m. 87-94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Grow" was a performance standard for Makuro MC's during the field study period (Oct. 2000-April 2002). I chose "Grow" because of Makuro's relative prominence in Kyoto and in the nationwide foreground, and because of the way
that their prohibition (at the time) of the release of recorded material had inflated
the "value" of Makuro's music (see pp. 64-65).

One of the most notable aspects of Makuro MC's DJ Hiroichi's track to "Grow" is
the dense vertical (the "density" of the sound) and horizontal texture (the
frequency of musical notes and vocal syllables). The vertical layering is built up
gradually during the introduction (p. 168, m. 1 - p. 169, m. 12) beginning with
four bars of hi-hat eighth notes leading to eight bars of the basic instrumental
track which contains six parts including the shawm, bass, hi-hat, snare, bass
drum, and chimes (i.e., p. 168, m. 9-10):

During the verses, there are between seven and eight parts including the vocal,
the occasional bell tones (p. 169, m. 13-14; p. 177, m. 45-46; p. 185, m. 77-78) and
keyboard octave intervals (p. 173, m. 27-30). In the chorus (i.e., p. 175, m. 37 - p.
177, m. 44), MCs Shuzo and YAS trade phrases and rap in unison, so the vocals
during the chorus entail two semi-independent parts. Combining the vocals
with the six basic "instrumental" lines and the keyboard chords (which run
throughout the chorus), there are a total of nine parts in the chorus.
The horizontal texture of "Grow" (the frequency of melodic motion/vocal articulations and rhythmic density) is also fairly dense. The "shawm" (the timbre of this part is closer to double reed woodwinds from western Asia and northeast Africa than it is to the indigenous *hichiriki*) part, for example, consists nearly entirely of sixteenth notes. Sixteenth note subdivision is predominant in the bass, snare, and bass drum lines. The vocal parts consist of a mixture of metric subdivisions. Both YAS's (i.e., p. 170, m. 15-16) and Shuzo's (i.e., p. 178, m. 47-48) lyrics are delivered using eighth and sixteenth notes in fairly equal amounts, plus frequent sets of sixteenth note triplets:

Sets of sixteenth note triplets and sextuplets also appear in the bass drum part at certain points (p. 168, m. 7-8; p. 169, m. 11-12; p. 175, m. 35-36; p. 176, m. 39-40; p.177, m. 43-44):
Considering the tempo of "Grow" (quarter note = M.M. 98), this degree of subdivision entails quite brisk motion in the melodic and rhythmic ostinati. The vertical layering reinforces the horizontal density in the way that Rose depicts in her description of "flow," enhancing the effectiveness of the ostinato in suspending the audience's sensation of the passage of time.

The vertical density of "Grow," however, is not specific to DJ Hiroichi but has many counterparts in the music of other Japanese (Master Key) and U.S. trackmakers (Timbaland). Also, in some ways the texture is similar to a distinct body of funk-derived U.S. hip hop (see i.e., Toop 2000 regarding the influence of James Brown's music on U.S. hip hop music). The bass line rises and descends a full octave within the duration of each bar in a way that is similar to the rapid melodic motion of the bass in funk music, and the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum (digitally approximated in the case of "Grow") are also standard to the genre. The strident timbre of the keyboard and shawm parts, however, evoke that of the rhythm guitar in punk rock or heavy metal. Hiroichi's combination of these two musical styles represents a fairly unique aspect of "Grow." At the Dec. 21, 2001 Absolute, for example, where Makuro MC's shared the stage with other nationally famous performers such as Ozrosaurus, MOSAD, and Word Swingaz, "Grow" was the only track that featured this particular texture and mixed timbre.

Among some of the other distinct aspects of "Grow" is the way that DJ Hiroichi alters the texture by temporarily reducing the number of parts in the instrumental track. During four out of the six final measures to verse one, for example, Hiroichi omits the shawm and chime parts and strips the bass part down to a skeletal form (p. 7, m. 31-34):
Although the temporary reduction in vertical density may appear to be simply an instrumental break of the sort common to U.S. hip hop in general, Hiroichi's "breaks" differ in that YAS's lyrics run throughout this section. The "break" during measures 31-34 highlights the lyrics during this section and builds tension to the upcoming chorus. Rather than drawing attention to itself, Hiroichi's track reinforces the logogenic nature of the music and helps to accentuate the stanza form by demarcating the beginnings and ends of the verses. In the latter sense, these temporary reductions in vertical density create transitional musical segments without lengthening the piece of music as a whole.

Reductions in vertical texture also occur mid-verse in "Grow." These mid-verse reductions serve two functions, according to my interpretation: to draw attention to the lyrics and to allow room for DJ Hiroichi's temporary additions to the vertical texture which I discuss below. Measure 18 (p. 170) is a good example of the first function: all instrumental parts drop out for two beats to accentuate
the lyrical phrase "b-boy in da house." Page 4, measure 22 to page 5, measure 23 is a good example of both functions. The omission of the shawm part for these two bars accentuates Makuro's lyrical critique of how people's "values (are) influenced by the system" (see verse 1, lines 9-11 of the English translation of the lyrics to "Grow"). The lyrical message is also accentuated by the timbre of YAS's voice which is altered electronically for these two bars. But, the keyboard chords are first introduced during these two bars. The omission of the shawm at this point also functions to accentuate the entrance of the keyboard part.

Another distinct characteristic of "Grow" is Hiroichi's occasional temporary additions and substitutions to the vertical texture. These additions function partly to demarcate the stanza form of "Grow." The bell toll sample, for example, occurs only in the opening phrases of both verses and the final "coda" (p. 2, m. 13-14; p. 10, m. 45-46; p. 16, m. 77-78). At one point (p. 13, m. 57 - p. 14, m. 60), the temporary additions occur mid-verse. The addition of the electric guitar and samples of African percussion instruments including the cabaca and the kalimba at this point demarcate the lyrics as a sub-unit of the verse as a whole, as does Shuzo's mezzo-forte vocal delivery during these four bars:
The occasional and single-instance additions to the vertical layering of "Grow" are a fairly distinct aspect of DJ Hiroichi's trackmaking, distinguishing him from many Japanese and U.S. trackmakers.

Although the basic musical style of "Grow" is determined by the ostinato, a standard convention of U.S. and Japanese hip hop, DJ Hiroichi distinguishes himself as a trackmaker partly through temporary alterations of the ostinato. As in the case of the reductions in the vertical texture of "Grow," these alterations help to demarcate the junctures between verse and chorus, but they also add musical interest at the midpoint of the introduction and the choruses. This is especially the case in the bass drum part. Halfway through the introduction to "Grow" (p. 168, m. 1 - p. 169, m. 12), the syncopated sixteenth note subdivision in the bass drum part shifts to the rhythmically denser sets of sixteenth note sextuplet subdivision. The same shift occurs in the middle of the choruses (i.e., p. 176, m. 39-40). In all but one of the remaining occurrences of sixteenth note
drum part (p. 2, m. 13), the denser rhythm builds tension leading up to the start of an upcoming verse or chorus (p. 2, m. 11-12; p. 8, m. 35-36; p. 10, m. 43-44). The transitional function of these rhythmic phrases is reinforced by a rhythmic and melodic shift of the bass line from the sixteenth note subdivision of the standard two phrases to a straight eighth note ostinato on the tonic F. DJ Hiroichi's use of transitional musical fragments sets him apart from most Japanese and U.S. trackmakers.

There are, of course, a number of musical elements in "Grow" that do not reflect much originality. I have already alluded to the funk band-derived structure of the ostinati in the bass and percussion parts. Also, Hiroichi's use of the "shawm," cabaca, and kalimba follows a trend in both U.S. and Japanese hip hop whereby trackmakers include samples or electronic approximations of elements derived from Asian traditional music cultures. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the trend (among Japanese trackmakers) in detail, I offer a couple of general comments. The formulaic nature of the borrowing process, even be it intended only to create "ambiance," references the original music culture in a highly reductive way. The timbre of traditional instruments is approximated electronically, "arabesque" tonality is employed, or recordings of indigenous are sampled into the mix. These sorts of seemingly "World Music" inspired techniques ignore the full cultural context of non-Japanese music "traditions," reducing them through vague stylistic or tonal imitation. Samples of original sources are treated as all-purpose sound bites. These creative strategies reflect a type of racial essentialism towards non-Japanese "Asian musics" which is similar to the essentialism underlying "authenticity" critiques of Japanese hip hop.
This is cause to consider whether a significant number of Japanese trackmakers, as well as hip hoppers, may have adopted a mode of viewing the Asian "other" derived from the racial essentialist manner in which "the Japanese" are often viewed by the West. After all, the basic pattern of this type of process has its precedents in postwar Japan. For example, as John G. Russell has pointed out, "...Japanese views of blacks have taken as their model distorted images derived from Western ethnocentrism and cultural hegemony" (1991: 5). Although Russell's paradigm does not accurately depict the akogare for African American culture within the Kyoto hip hop scene, the paradigm is an apt one for the Kyoto hip hoppers' perspective on the music traditions of the Asian "other."

Overall, DJ Hiroichi's approach to trackmaking on "Grow" differs significantly from that of Rabbit Punch. His method of altering texture and ostinato to create transitional fragments and phrases is distinctly different from the highly formulaic shifts in texture which demarcate introduction, verse, and chorus in "Waza Ari," "Fuck the Police 2002" (see below), and the majority of Japanese and U.S. hip hop in general. Even in the case that Hiroichi's musical choices are derivative of U.S. hip hop, his methods of appropriation reflect some individuality. The "shawm" part, for example, is imbedded within the overall texture of "Grow" by DJ Hiroichi at a low enough volume that it does not stand out in the mix. This contrasts with the standard pattern of "indigenous" instrument usage in Japanese (Gaki Ranger, Ilmariachi) and U.S. (Noreaga, DMX) hip hop music whereby the exoticized musical "other" usually dominates the overall texture in the manner of a prominent melodic line. The track to "Grow" demonstrates Hiroichi's ability to work within the hip hop idiom in an original, personalized style. This reflects the role that originality plays in
promoting the status (local and nationwide) of underground performers and Makuro MC's ability to attract musical talent.

4.3 **DJ Kyoju, Jimmy: Quasi-functional Harmony**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages and Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>p. 189, m. 1 - p. 191, m. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1:</td>
<td>p. 192, m. 17 - p. 195, m. 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 196, m. 33 - p. 199, m. 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2:</td>
<td>p. 200, m. 41 - p. 205, m. 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 206, m. 65 - p. 209, m. 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break:</td>
<td>p. 210, m. 73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 3:</td>
<td>p. 211, m. 77 - p. 214, m. 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 215, m. 93 - p. 218, m. 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda:</td>
<td>p. 219, m. 101 - p. 220, m. 108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I chose "Fuck the Police 2002" because of the prominence of Mack Family within the Kyoto hip hop scene. Performing in Kyoto much more often than Makuro MC's, Mack Family are contenders (along with 2inFLUENCE) for the number-one spot in the Kyoto underground. Jimmy is the leader of Mack Family, and "Fuck the Police 2002" (hereafter "FTP 2002") has been a performance standard since the group's formation early in 2002. Considering that they have recently shared the stage with nationally famous performers such as DJ Kensaw, Maccho, and Soul Scream, increasing prominence of Mack Family outside of Kyoto is to be expected.

Much of the distinctiveness of the track to "FTP 2002" lies in the keyboard part. The necessary tones on a Yamaha keyboard were recorded by DJ Kyoju onto his MPC 3000 sampler and then digitally produced into melody and harmony. The timbre of the tones is similar to that of an organ, but the attack is closer to that of
the piano. Overall, the keyboard part evokes a carnivalesque or calliope music-styled mood, the pathos of which underpins MC Jimmy’s lyrical vitriol towards the Japanese police in an almost ironic way. The tonality of "FTP 2002," based loosely on e minor, emulates Western functional harmony. Of the two-bar melodic and harmonic ostinato (i.e., p. 190, m. 9-10: keyboard and bass), the first four beats are based on the i chord. The first two beats of the second bar are based on the ii (diminished) chord, moving to the V chord on the fourth beat to create a quasi-cadence leading back to the i chord:

Ostinato reduction of Western functional harmony and melody are fairly common strategies of both U.S. and Japanese hip hop trackmakers, and DJ Kyoju is no exception. However, his manipulation of vertical layering reflects an approach which is distinctly different from that of Rabbit Punch ("Waza Ari") and DJ Hiroichi ("Grow"). Kyoju repeatedly changes the vertical density of the track
according to a fixed pattern. The full melodic part (i.e., p. 189, m. 5-6: keyboard) is prominent during the choruses and conclusion. In the first four bars of the introduction (p. 189, m. 1-4), Kyoju presents the main melody with slightly less horizontal motion before filling in the second downbeat of each measure (p. 189, m. 5 onwards). The keyboard melody is stripped down to a skeletal form (i.e., p. 192, m. 17-18) during the verses in order to draw attention to the lyrics:

The texture of the introduction and conclusion differ in that the percussion parts are tacet during the conclusion which retains Jimmy's "backing vocals" (vocals 2 part) in its place. The vertical texture is shifted again during the break (p. 210, m. 73-76) which features only keyboard and percussion (including scratch):
Similar to "Waza Ari," changes in texture are limited to section junctures. However, unlike the minor and formulaic texture shift in "Waza Ari" (the shamisen part is tacet during the verses), the texture of "FTP 2002" undergoes numerous changes in a fixed pattern based on the section breaks. The degree of musical complexity of "FTP 2002," reflected in these texture shifts, is closer to that of "Grow" although Kyoju does not alter the texture mid-section in the manner of DJ Hiroichi. Individuality of approach to musical texture is clearly one of the means by which these three trackmakers have developed a distinct style.

The title of "Fuck The Police 2002" is clearly borrowed from the Compton, California crew NWA's original, "Fuck Tha Police" (NWA 1994). Although "FTP 2002" bears no musical resemblance to the original, it is thematically related to U.S. hip hop. Kyoju samples the vocal imitation of a police siren from KRS-One's "Sound of da Police" (KRS-One 1994), as well as the vocal rhythm and cadence of the rap chorus during the chorus of "FTP 2002." Considering that the three songs are thematically related through anti-police lyrical content, the choice of the siren sample is a statement of Kyoju's familiarity with the U.S. hip hop prototype. The thematic connection of "Fuck The Police 2002," "Fuck Tha Police," and "Sound Of
Da Police” demonstrates an approach that is fairly unique among Kyoto hip hop music. Mack Family openly acknowledge that their music is partly derivative of the U.S. prototype. The title "FTP 2002" almost invites criticisms of U.S. hip hop mimicry, but the originality of DJ Kyoju’s track defies critiques of “inaauthenticity.”

4.4 **Rabbit Punch: Quasi-hogaku Style and Nationalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>p. 221, m. 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1:</td>
<td>p. 222, m. 7 - p. 223, m. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 224, m. 15 - p. 225, m. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 2:</td>
<td>p. 226, m. 23 - p. 227, m. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 228, m. 31 - p. 229, m. 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 3:</td>
<td>p. 230, m. 39 - p. 231, m. 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus:</td>
<td>p. 232, m. 47 - p. 233, m. 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fade-out</td>
<td>p. 234, m. 55-58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approached from a racial essentialist perspective, the majority of Kyoto hip hop music is likely to evoke comments along the lines of "it doesn't sound Japanese" from Western listeners and from Japanese initiates, a reiteration of the general authenticity critique of Japanese hip hop on an aural level. Commentary such as these are based on premises that the musicians would have a "natural" predisposition to include hogaku elements or that the music should contain hogaku elements in order to be considered "Japanese." The prevalence of such commentary is confirmed by the fact that a number of Japanese performers, including some from the nationally recognized foreground (i.e., Hazu) and the Kyoto underground (Zibro, Rabbit Punch), have included hogaku elements in their recordings. A small body of work by artists such as these represents a
I chose the track "Waza Ari" (Rabbit Punch 2002) because, unlike Zibro on Keitaro (Zibro 1999), MC Sam layers concise lyrical content regarding "Japaneseness" in hip hop and Japanese popular culture over a musical track which contains hōgaku-derived elements. Rabbit Punch does not hold a prominent place in the Kyoto hip hop scene, but the intent of the trackmakers (the entire Rabbit Punch crew including Sam, Taichi, Dai, and Yu-kun are credited) and lyricist remains the same regardless of audience or consumer response. On lyrical and musical levels, "Waza Ari" resists the hegemony of "America" in Japanese popular culture, boasts of Japan's cultural superiority over the U.S., and berates Japanese youth for blindly following U.S.-derived fads.

I begin with a discussion of musical texture, style, and form. "Waza Ari" is derivative of both ko'uta and min'yō in that the consistent stanza form is punctuated by the "shamisen" (actually a keyboard or synthesizer setting approximating of the timbre of the shamisen) part running throughout the introduction (p. 1, m. 1-6) and the choruses (p. 4, m. 25 - p. 5, m. 22). The koto (also a synthesized approximation) part, which runs throughout the piece, is evocative of hōgaku in general but extraneous to the ko'uta and min'yō. The usage of the two-piece mokkin set is evocative of the use of the hyōshigi in kabuki, and so contributes to the conglomeration of wa (as in wafū, meaning "Japanese(-style)") elements in "Waza Ari." The single shakuhachi (isshaku rokusun) "lick" at the end of the third verse is sampled from the first three tones (d and e flat pickup notes to an e half-note) of a professional recording of the hōgaku classic "Haru no Umi."
The specific reference will probably be missed by all audience members and listeners, but the single shakuhachi phrase overtly evokes hōgaku and re-enforces the lyrical text at that point, as I will demonstrate below.

The trackmaker is clearly not concerned with "historical authenticity" (Atkins 2001: 23), as is evident in the ad hoc assemblage of quasi-hōgaku elements in "Waza Ari." The track lacks heterophonic texture, and the metric structure and melodic and rhythmic ostinati do not allow for the incorporation of any appreciable element of ma. However, the assemblage of wa elements functions as an overt reference to Japanese traditional music and aesthetics (wabi-sabi, shibui) in general. "Waza Ari" therefore resists, on a musical level, the processes by which hōgaku has come to be relegated to a position of minor if not marginal importance to the vast majority of Japanese youth. Well-suited to MC Sam's lyrical didacticism, the track functions as an oblique reprimand to the audience for their (presumed) complicity in these processes of marginalization.

The tonality of "Waza Ari" is quite close to that of hōgaku. The scale is a standard minor pentatonic (e, g, a, b, d). In accordance with hōgaku practice, the second and fourth scale degrees differ depending on whether the melodic motion is ascending (a natural tone) or descending (a double-flat downwards-leading tone). The two-bar ostinato melody in the shamisen part (i.e., p. 221, m. 1-2) consists of two phrases: the first one ascending a perfect fifth from the tonic e to the "dominant" b, and the other descending from b to f (not g) before returning to the "dominant":

126
Also in accordance with hōgaku practice, the koto ostinato, a two-beat ascending series of two-tone "chords," includes the tones e, g, a, b, and d only, without the double-flat second and fourth scale degrees (i.e., p. 221, M. 3-4):

The trackmakers clearly are aware of or have researched some of the basics of hōgaku tonality.

Tonality, in combination with the wa and quasi-hōgaku elements in the texture, form and style of "Waza Ari," offer an ironic counterpoint to the appropriation of Asian "ethnic" music stylizations by many U.S. hip hop performers in recent years. Def Jam recordings (U.S.) mainstay DMX, for example, has included an
eight-beat ostinato of (sampled and digitally manipulated) single-tone articulations on the koto. This is only one example of many wherein U.S. trackmakers sample or digitally approximate "ethnic music" elements, albeit in a highly formulaic and reductive way. Ironically, the treatment of hōgaku elements by trackmakers from the Kyoto hip hop scene is equally formulaic. It is almost as if Rabbit Punch have fallen victim to the racial essentialism of "inauthenticity" critiques of Japanese hip hop and responded with a conversely but equally essentialist argument. The inclusion of quasi-hōgaku elements by Kyoto hip hop trackmakers has evoked little attention from the fans, suggesting that Rabbit Punch may have misjudged audience expectations. Perhaps "Japaneseness" in Kyoto hip hop music is not significantly related to hōgaku but, at least, "Waza Ari" demonstrates that discourses of "historical authenticity" do have take place in Kyoto hip hop music.

In consideration of the prominence of quasi-hōgaku elements in "Waza Ari," the lyrics also deserve attention, especially considering that the lyrical and musical layers both reinforce the "message" of the track. The overall tone of Sam's lyrics, which can be described as neo-nationalist, underscores the musical challenge which issues from "Waza Ari." But Sam's nationalism is articulated in terms which are distinctly different from the right-wing iconography of the bōsōzoku, for example (Sato 1991). In contrast, Sam offers a collage of Japanese pop culture icons such as the internationally-renown anime artist Miyazaki Hayao and manga writer Tezuka Osamu (verse 1, line 1), as well as anime characters such as Pokemon and Doreamon. Also, he cites the pre-eminence of Japanese companies such as Sega and Preste in the computer games industry (verse 2, line 4). In an idiosyncratically notable abstraction, he rebukes Harvard University for
failing to produce game programmers who could propel U.S. game companies
to a competitive level (verse 2, lines 7-8). In these instances, Sam balances the
musical essentialism of "Waza Ari" with numerous lyrical indicators that
"Japaneseness" is not necessarily tied to traditional culture. His lyrics therefore
counterbalance the counter-racial essentialism of the musical track.

In verse three Sam boasts the talent of film-maker Kurosawa Akira, specifically
in opposition to Arnold Schwarzenegger's blockbuster movies of the 1980s and
1990s (verse 3, lines 1-4). Kurosawa and his films have been referenced by other
Japanese MCs including CQ from Buddha Brand, one of Tokyo's best-known
groups (Shakkazombie 1996: "Okega"; Buddha Brand 2000: "Buddha Brand
Kyujitsu"). CQ borrows Kurosawa's cultural capital and reflexively applies it as a
boast of his own performance status. In contrast, Sam positions Kurosawa as a
representative of Japanese culture in opposition to the Hollywood icon Arnold
Schwarzenegger whose films he dismisses as "total masturbation, makes me
sick" (verse 3, line 4). Clearly, Sam's intent is to posit "Japanese culture" in a
broad sense, including pop culture icons, as "victors" rather than "competitors" in
a (presumed) struggle for cultural supremacy between Japan and the United
States. In the last four lines of verse three, Sam berates Japanese youth for
superficially emulating U.S. derived musical trends, urging them instead to bear
the shakuhachi in one hand and a sword in the other. The single shakuhachi
phrase in the musical track at that point (verse 3, line 8), as well as the quasi-
 hôgaku and wa elements in the track of "Waza Ari" reinforce his lyrical message.
Sam seeks a re-valuation of "Japanese culture" in its full range of expressions. In
an overtly didactic manner, he urges Japanese youth to take pride in their culture
and to embrace a competitive, combative spirit in accordance with Japan’s (presumed) pre-eminence.

Both in rap text and musical style, Rabbit Punch demonstrate their attention to discourses of "Japaneseness" in Kyoto hip hop. In doing so, they distinguish themselves from the creative strategies of Makuro-ABS and No Mercy/Mack Family who cultivate individual styles through selecting elements from a much broader musical range. Perhaps it is evidence of the relative youth of the Kyoto hip hop scene that no discernibly "Kyoto" sound has emerged as of yet. On the other hand, if the crews continue to expand their presence outside of Kyoto, the specific styles may develop into part of "the Kyoto sound" through long-standing association with the local scene. The other possibility is that, as the crews become more prominent outside of Kyoto, they may follow the lead of nationally prominent performers (i.e., DJ Gossy) who have chosen to relocate from Kyoto to Tokyo or other larger centers of Japanese hip hop. The recent decision of Mack Family to relocate to Osaka as their center of activity suggests that this latter trend will continue, despite the fact that DJ Kyoju maintains that they will continue to perform in Kyoto (email communication, Feb. 3, 2003).

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the similarities and differences between U.S. and Kyoto hip hop music exhaustively, the three tracks demonstrate some of the ways that local hip hop music differs from the U.S. prototype. Rabbit Punch seek to address discourses of cultural authenticity by drawing upon 来遊 influences in their trackmaking. They adopt this strategy not only in "Waza Ari" but also in "Pet," which features shamisen and shakuhachi samples (Rabbit Punch 2002). DJ Hiroichi’s approach to trackmaking on "Grow"
is notable in that he employs a flexible ostinato, changing the basic rhythmic patterns and the degree of vertical layering at numerous points other than the section breaks. This strategy is fairly uncommon among both US. and Japanese hip hop trackmakers. While the U.S. hip hop-derived title to "FTP 2002" is certain to draw attention from critics of mimicry in Japanese hip hop, DJ Kyoju's track works against this type of critique.

The "quality" of Kyoto hip hop music is perhaps the final issue pertaining to the authenticity debate. While a discussion of "quality" may seem to have little place in an academic discussion, Simon Frith argues to the contrary that

(t)o deny the significance of value judgments in popular culture (to ignore popular taste hierarchies) is...hypocritical. How often, I wonder, do populist culture theorists celebrate popular culture forms which they themselves soon find boring?...to gloss over the continuous exercise of taste by the pop cultural audience is, in effect, to do their discriminating for them, while refusing to engage in the arguments which produce cultural values in the first place (Frith 1996: 16).

Frith's assertion can be applied to Kyoto hip hop music. As the three tracks demonstrate, there is creativity and originality of musical approach among Kyoto trackmakers. "Grow" and "Fuck The Police 2002" demonstrate some of the strategies which have drawn positive value judgments from Kyoto audiences, based on the success of Makuro MC's and Mack Family in attracting an audience following in and around Kyoto. However, Rabbit Punch's formulaic, intellectualized approach to "indigenizing" Kyoto hip hop, as reflected in "Waza Ari," has been less successful. Although I doubt that the approach of including hōgaku elements in and of itself is at fault, Rabbit Punch's rigid,
formulaic use of these elements has had little success in attracting an audience following. This indicates that value judgments by fans and consumers are in effect in the Kyoto hip hop scene and are, as Frith's assertion demonstrates, relevant to the thesis.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

The thesis has examined some of the ways that Kyoto hip hop is both derivative of the U.S. prototype and localized to Kyoto, Japan on the levels of performance practice, text, musical form, style, and content. One of the main points of the thesis is that there is a significantly wide range of strategies on these three levels in the Kyoto scene. Rabbit Punch’s approach to the "indigenization" of Kyoto hip hop music through drawing on hōgaku influences ("Waza Ari"), for example, differs greatly from DJ Hiroichi’s rock-funk style ("Grow") and DJ Kyoju’s Yamaha keyboard-based sound (Fuck The Police 2002"). Regarding "gangsta" discourse also, Kyoto performers demonstrate a range of strategies from Zibro’s metaphorical "gangsta" to the less metaphorical styles of Makuro MC’s and Mack Family. Kyoto hip hop lyrics also entail a range of approaches including Zibro’s highly Kyoto-specific style, Makuro MC’s reflexive abstractions, and the social resistance of Jimmy’s critique of the Japanese police.

The heterogeneity of Kyoto hip hop helps lend some perspective to authenticity discourse and to "inauthenticity" critiques of Japanese hip hop. Essentially, there is adequate material in the Kyoto scene to argue either "authenticity" or "inauthenticity" from numerous angles. Conversely, any single position in the debate is certain to overlook numerous facets of the Kyoto scene. Critiques of "authenticity" are therefore shown to be flexible and highly context specific. The thesis has addressed discourses of "authenticity and imitation" (Condry 2000) because of their prominence in the literature on hip hop in Japan (Condry 1999, 2000) and beyond (Prevos, Wermuth, Morelli, etc. in Mitchell, ed. 2001). In recognition of the limitations of the debate on authenticity in Japanese hip hop, I
have also focused on different expressive methods which represent some of the heterogeneity in the Kyoto hip hop scene.

One of the questions which is beyond the scope of the thesis is the issue of whether the Kyoto hip hoppers' "gestures in refusal of the mainstream" have had any impact on the target audience. However, the more pressing matter is to identify the meaning of hip hop for the Kyoto fans and performers. It is for this reason that I have chosen the phrasing "gestures in refusal of...," because whether or not the gestures register on the "mainstream," the meaning behind these gestures remains the same. In contrast to the "social opposition" of U.S. hip hop, Kyoto hip hop is a "refusal" of discourses of socio-cultural hegemony in Japan and of the aesthetics, lifestyle, and mores of the social conservative sector of Kyoto's population. Although the activities comprising these "gestures" range from the passive and subliminal to the conscientious, on the whole these lifestyle choices indicate increasing tension between the cultural hybridity of Japan and hegemonic tropes (*Nihonjinron*) which work to obscure heterogeneity. Thus, while some US. hip hop functions as part of a reactive project of addressing social and economic inequality, Kyoto hip hop represents one facet of the increasingly complex social and cultural hybridism of Japan. This shift from the "social opposition" of U.S. hip hop to the "gestures of refusal" model of Kyoto hip hop represents Tobin's "domestication" of Japanese hip hop in its most basic sense.

For better or worse, "gangsta" discourse plays a significant role in these gestures of refusal. Lest this be interpreted as an imitative aspect of the Kyoto scene, I have pointed out some of the ways that Kyoto hip hoppers have created their own "Japanese gangsta style" including MC Dai's "doggystyle" *tsunagi*. Also, it is
important to remember that the *yanki* and *yakuza*-derived stylizations of numerous Kyoto hip hop fans and performers are based on subcultural elements which substantially pre-date the emergence of the Kyoto hip hop scene. Therefore, the prominence of "gangsta" discourse in Kyoto hip hop is more an indication of the adaptability of the indigenous subcultures than of imitation in Kyoto hip hop.

The thesis has not followed the lead of Russell, Kelsky, and Cornyetz who have identified some of the ways in which public discourse on blacks in Japan has reproduced the racial essentialist attitudes towards blacks in the U.S. I believe that the more significant phenomenon in the Kyoto hip hop scene is the rapidly developing collaborative network between Kyoto and African American hip hop performers. Mack Family, for example, have hosted and performed with well-known U.S. performers including Boo-Yaa Tribe and MC Murs of Living Legends in Kyoto. There is an equity in these collaborations which contradicts the literature on racial essentialism towards blacks in Japan. Boo-Yaa Tribe are able to add another date to their performance roster, with minimal concerns about logistics, before moving on to the major venues in Osaka and Tokyo. Mack Family gain cultural capital through the collaborative performance in front of a full house. Of course, the collaborations remain fairly unilateral in that relatively few Kyoto performers have developed any sphere of activity in the U.S. Still, the collaborations suggest that bonds of trust and understanding are developing between some U.S. and Japanese hip hop performers.

The Kyoto hip hop scene is not without its unfortunate ironies. The "closure" of the Kyoto hip hop scene which is identified by 23% of questionnaire respondents
(11 of 48), for example, poses the question of whether the single most easily identifiable characteristic of the Kyoto hip hop scene mirrors the social conservatism of Kyoto. Following this line of comparison, the "lack of frankness" and "unfriendliness" between different crews (see p. 43) is a reproduction of Kyoto politesse by hip hop youth which entails a (stereotypical and actual) gap between what is spoken and what is thought. Whether or not this is an apt analogy, the closure of the Kyoto scene is undeniable. It remains to be seen whether or not the increasing momentum of the Kyoto hip hop scene will overcome its closure.
GLOSSARY

akogare
A longing for... ; a yearning for... (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition)

anime
A "Japanese-English" term for "animation."

backspin
DJ technique of revolving an LP record backwards on the turntable in short, measured motions and then releasing it to "loop" a musical fragment manually.

backtrack
"Japanese-English" for "backing track." All of the "produced" (composed) elements of a hip hop performance or recording. "The music," not including the vocals.

B-boy
("break-boy") Referring originally to breakdancers, the term "B-boy" was later used in reference to those who follow the fashions associated with break dance performance. The term is often used interchangeably with "hip hopper."

B-girl
Same as above, female equivalent.

block party
Impromptu or locally organized outdoor events originating in New York City which often feature live music by local performers, including hip hop. Block parties are intended to provide urban youth with safe, drug-free recreation.

blunt
Homemade cigarette, often made using an emptied cigar wrapping, which may contain marijuana or possibly crack cocaine.

bōsōzoku
Japanese "hell-raisers" who use either motorcycles or automobiles to create spectacle and public nuisance. The bosozoku are roughly equivalent to the "yanki" except that the latter term does not include the vehicular aspect. The bosozoku's impetus to disturb the public can be seen as a precursor to the gestures in refusal of the social mainstream which are encompassed within Japanese hip hop.

break
The "break" section of a musical track or recording is the point at which one or more melodic lines drop out and the bass and percussion lines are featured and embellished. It is a "break" in the horizontal melodic flow, and also is a "breakdown" of the sound, or a reduction in the number of vertical lines.
The break sections of funk records were targeted by DJ’s such as Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash who created a continuous dance beat using two copies of an LP record. Later, using digital production and recording technology, DJs and trackmakers created music based partly on break structure.

**breakdance**
An acrobatic and competitive dance form which fuses African, African American, and martial arts-derived maneuvers, among other elements. Breakdance is one of the central expressive elements of hip hop.

**burakumin**
A term historically used to designate Japanese people who were subject to discrimination due to family trades related to handling animal flesh, etc.

**cabaca**
A gourd shaker encased in a mesh of beads or shells.

**club play**
"Japanese-English" for DJ live performance, without any substantial live vocal elements.

**cornrow**
Any one of a number of hair styles derived from those of indigenous African peoples, popularized and stylized in the U.S. and elsewhere, especially in association with hip hop culture. Locs are braided tightly to the scalp in ornamental patterns.

**crutch**
A paper mouthpiece for a "joint." See Maguma MC’s "Grow," verse 2, line 23.

**DJ**
Disc jockey. In the hip hop context, DJing entails not only selecting and cueing LP records for broadcast or live performance, but also manual manipulation of phonographic turntables with a mixer to produce various musical effects. DJs may also be trackmakers, or they may specialize in live performance. DJing is one of the central expressive elements of hip hop.

**DJing**
"DJ," verb form.

**enka**
Japanese nostalgic/melancholy popular song which incorporates elements of traditional and modern Japanese musics.

**event**
In the Japanese hip hop context, a regular monthly or bimonthly live show hosted by a group of regular performers. Established events take on an
individual character which is determined by performer and by venue. In popular discourse, Japanese hip hop is often talked about using event names to designate specific performers and specific hip hop scene sub-niches and eras.

**famicon**
A "Japanese-English" contraction of "family" and "computer," meaning "computer games."

**family**
A group of hip hop performers and their cohort of junior performers and other associates.

**FEN**
Far East Network. The radio broadcasting system of the U.S. armed forces in Asia and the Pacific during and after World War II.

**freestyle**
Improvised rap.

**furitid**
A contraction of the English word "free" and the German loan-word "arbeit" ("work"), designating a post-bubble economy trend among Japanese youth who, either unable or unwilling to find steady work, support an alternative lifestyle through self-employment or sporadic part time work.

**gangsta**
A term popularized during the boom of U.S. West Coast hip hop, used in reference to a number of lifestyles possibly involving firearms, drug use or sale, lowrider vehicles, etc., and in reference to personal style or to hip hop performance which is styled in such a manner. Stylistically derivative of the homeboys.

**gangsta-yakuza**
My own term, designating a stylistic, professional, or a lifestyle fusion of hip hop "gangsta" with the Japanese yakuza. See Maguma MC's.

**gangster**
i.e., Mafia. Organized crime syndicate, Western style.

**graffiti**
In the hip hop context, (usually) un-sanctioned outdoor urban mural artworks ("pieces"), or more simple signatures marking and individual's or group's space ("tags"). Graffiti is one of the central expressive elements of hip hop.
heterophony
A term used in ethnomusicology to refer to musical texture in which a single melody is played, with differences, by two or more instruments or voices simultaneously.

hip hop
A cultural movement originating in the Bronx, New York City during the early 1970s. Hip hop music and fashion are now worldwide phenomena. According to the U.S. prototype, hip hop allows marginalized populations to re-gain control of terms which articulate their identity. It also re-connects urban populations to the neighborhood and channels urban youths’ energies into creative directions such as self expression via DJing, MCing, breakdancing, graffiti, or any of hip hop’s other central expressive forms. Also used interchangeably with "hip hop music."

hip hopper
A performer of hip hop (music, dance, graffiti) or one whose identity is constructed through hip hop’s related expressive forms (clothing, custom car culture, clubgoer lifestyle) and who follows hip hop attitudes and beliefs.

homeboy
"Following the pachucos and chulos who preceded them, homeboys were the stylistic innovators of the 1970s and 1980s. Many stylistic elements of African American 'gangsta rap,' including the adoption of the term homeboy, are attributable to Chicano influences." (Henderson 1999: x).

hōgaku
A general term for "(traditional) Japanese music" (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition).

hyōshigi
Oblong wooden clappers used for dramatic effect in Japanese traditional theatrical genre, to beat out rhythms, and on evening patrols by neighborhood officials.

iemono
The position of master within the Japanese traditional guild system of strictly codified apprentice-master relations.

kabuki

kalimba
Thumb piano of African origin. Also m'bira.
Kansai
"Gateway to the west" (western Japan). The Osaka-Kyoto-Shiga-Nara-Kobe area.

koto
Japanese 13-string oblong zither.

ko'uta
(A) Japanese ballad accompanied on the samisen (sic) (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition).

live

logogenic
(from ethnomusicology) Music that focuses primarily on lyrical or oral elements rather than on melody ("melogenic") or on pathos/emotive aspects ("pathogenic").

lowrider
Custom cars, typically with lowered suspension, hydraulic lifts, custom tires and rims, and a powerful sound system with boosted bass frequencies. Lowrider culture originated among U.S. West Coast Chicano populations. It was also adopted by African Americans, especially in the context of gangsta hip hop.

ma
Space; pause. In the context of Japanese traditional arts, ma refers to an Zen-influenced aesthetic which purports that, in the case of traditional Japanese musics, the "space" between notes is of equal importance as the musical tones themselves.

manga
Japanese cartoons.

matsuri
Japanese for "festival." In my own understanding, matsuri are one locus where a sense of "Japaneseness" according to the terms of traditional culture is foregrounded.

MC
Master of ceremonies. MCing originated at hip hop live shows in an effort to prevent the audience from giving too much attention to the DJ. MCing soon developed into a complex expressive form. According to current usage, "MC" is equivalent to "rapper." MCing is one of the central expressive elements of hip hop.
MCing
"MC," verb form.

melogenic
(from ethnomusicology) Music that focuses primarily on melody rather than on lyrics ("logogenic") or on pathos/emotive aspects ("pathogenic").

message rap
The second major wave of New York City hip hop. Rappers such as KRS-One of Boogie Down Productions and Chuck D of Public Enemy engaged in pointed social critique addressing racism, police corruption, racial profiling and other problems facing urban minority populations.

min’yō
Folk song. A literal translation of the German volkslied, the term "min’yō" was used from the early 20th century as a blanket term for a codified body of traditional and traditional-style music derived from Japan’s rural performance traditions.

mokkin
1) Xylophone. 2) A struck instrument used in shingaku and other music genre (translated by myself from Kenkyusha Kojien, 5th edition). A spherical wooden gong.

Natsu Yasumi
The title of a famous manga by Tezuka Osamu.

Ori-Con
Japan’s hit music charts. Also, a Japanese corporation with a de-facto monopoly on pop music and mass media entertainment hit charts.

pachinko
Japanese pinball gambling. According to popular discourse in Japan, the pachinko industry has netted yearly profits second only to that of the entire Japanese automobile industry.

piece
Graffiti lingo for mural artwork, to distinguish graffiti art from the simple signature "tags."

producer
In the hip hop context, someone who makes musical tracks (similar to "composer") and who is also concerned with the technical aspects of music recording. DJs may also be producers, but a producer is not necessarily a DJ ("performer").
**rap, rap music**
Roughly equivalent to "hip hop music," the term "rap" focuses more on the MC in isolation than on the full context of hip hop culture.

**sabi**
An antique look;...patina;...elegant simplicity (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition).

**sarariman**
"Japanese-English" term for a white-collar salaried worker.

**scene**
A specific locus of hip hop performance or expression.

**scratch**
DJ technique of manually swiping an LP record back and forth on the turntable to create various rhythmic and percussive effects.

**shakuhachi**
Japanese end-blown bamboo flute.

**shamisen**
Japanese three-string plucked lute.

**shawm**
A double reed woodwind, originally of western Asia. A forerunner of the Western oboe.

**shibui**
Bitter; astringent; quiet and simple; tasteful; sober; austere (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition).

**Shinto**
Japan's indigenous belief system. Shinto ties the imperial bloodline to Japan's origin myth.

**shout-out**
A common aspect of hip hop performance practice. The MC gives thanks by calling out the names of crew members, colleagues, etc.

**signify**
"...[(R)efers to a way of encoding messages or meanings which involves, in most cases, an element of indirection." (Mitchell-Kernan in Perkins, ed. 1996: 4).
sound system
Afro-Caribbean outdoor live DJ performance/dance events, originating in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica. A progenitor of hip hop culture, including block parties.

tagged
My own term (?) for precise spots on a record which the DJ uses as reference points while manually creating musical effects on the turntables.

tag
Graffiti lingo for an artist’s stylized signature. Younger would-be "writers'" tags may be simple (an perhaps in inappropriate locations), but more accomplished writers' tags may be elaborately stylized.

the dozens
"a ritual exchange of insults among black Americans." (OED).

toasting
"(of a DJ) accompany a reggae backing track or music with improvised rhythmic speech." (OED).

track
Backing track. See "backtrack."

trackmaker
Similar to "producer" but with a focus on track making ("composition,") rather than on the mechanical and technical aspects of music production and recording.

tsunagi
Japanese laborers' overalls

turntablist
A virtuoso DJ. The turntablist uses two phonographic turntables with a mixer and LP records to play, mix, create and orchestrate new and original musical compositions. The automatic function of the turntables is manually altered by turntablists to manipulate the recorded sound.

version
(verb) To create a variation of a pre-existing musical track.

vibe
The explicit and empathetic bonds between performer and audience. The psychological ambience of performance.
wa
One reading of a Sino-Japanese character which literally means "sum; harmony; reconciliation." Wa is most often used in Japan as a generalized adjective prefix equivalent to "Japanese-".

wabi
The beauty to be found in poverty and simplicity (Kenkyusha Shinwaei Chujiten, 4th edition).

writer
A hip hop graffiti artist.

yakuza
Japanese organized crime syndicate. Also, members of an established crime "family" in Japan.

yanki
Junior hooligans and "hell-raisers" in Japan, typically junior-high school students and dropouts, some of whom "graduate" to yakuza membership. "Yanki" is roughly equivalent to "bosozoku" except that the term "yanki" does not include use of motor vehicles to create spectacle and public nuisance. Yanki style has at different stages been composed of various elements including those derived from U.S. greaser culture (hairstyle) and African American culture (hairstyle, gold chains), as well as "indigenous" bleached hairstyles which have been co-opted by Japanese "mainstream" youth during the 1990s.
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE
(English translation next page)

アンケート

このアンケートは私がハワイ大学に出す卒業論文のためです。よろしくお願いします。アンドリュウより

年齢：

職業：

音楽のどちらのジャンルが好きですか？

J-POPは A) 好き（誰が） B) 気に入らない C) 何もわからない

UTADA HIKARU のことをどう思いますか？

DRAGON ASH？

RIP SLYME？

J-POPで深いメッセージを伝えている人はいますか？それは誰ですか？

あなたの好きなミュージシャンのどういうところが好きですか？

A：かっこいい（人か？ 音楽か？） B：歌詞にメッセージがある C：他：
音楽を聞く時、歌詞の内容まで理解することが大切だと思いますか？

A：LIVE SHOW： はい / いいえ B：CD、レコードなどを聞く時： はい / いいえ
CDなどを聞く時、歌詞カードを出して読むことがありますか？ はい / いいえ

京都のアンダーグラウンド ライブイベント（R&B/SOUL/HIPHOP）へ行くことが好きですか？

好きな場合：）何というイベントですか？

京都のアンダーグラウンドシーン（CLUB SCENE）の特徴は何だと思いますか？

「HIP HOP」というのは、あなたにとって、どういうものですか？

あなたは HIP HOPが好きですか？ はい / いいえ

（好きな場合）：好きなミュージシャンは誰ですか？

あなたは日本 HIP HOPが好きですか？ はい / いいえ

京都 HIP HOPで、好きなミュージシャンはいますか？

（いる場合）：それは誰ですか？

日本 HIP HOPのライブへ行くことがありますか？

（行く場合）：RAPの歌詞を何％ぐらい聞き取れますか？

日本 HIP HOPは： A) おもしろい B) かっこいい C) メッセージがある D) メッセージがない

E) 他：

日本人 HIP HOP RAPPERで、深いメッセージを伝えている人はいますか？ はい / いいえ

（いる場合）：それは誰ですか？

いわゆる「BLACK STYLE」（音楽、服装、ヘアスタイルなど）をどう思いますか？

あなたは、日本人としてのプライドがありますか？

日本の現状（あらゆる分野）について、あなたの意見をのべてください：

147
QUESTIONNAIRE
This questionnaire is for the purpose of my MA thesis at the University of Hawaii. Thank you.

Age:   Occupation:  M / F
What genre of music do you like?
Regarding J-Pop: A) I like it B) I dislike it  C) No opinion
What do you think of Utada Hikaru?
Dragon Ash?
Rip Slyme?
Are there any J-Pop artists with any depth of message? For example?
What is it about your favorite musicians that appeals to you?
A) They're cool B) They have depth of message C) other:
Do you think that it is important to understand the lyrics when you listen to music?
A) Live show: Y / N  B) When listening to CD/record, etc.: Y / N
When you listen to CDs, do you take out the lyrics sheets and read them?: Y / N
Do you like to attend Kyoto underground live events (R&B/Soul/Hip Hop)?
(if yes:) Which events?
What is the outstanding feature of the Kyoto underground club scene?

What does “hip hop” mean to you?
Do you like hip hop?: Y / N
(if yes:) Which artists?
Do you like Japanese hip hop?: Y / N
Do you have any favorites among Kyoto hip hop performers?
(if yes:) Who?
Do you attend Japanese hip hop live shows?
(if yes:) About what percent of the lyrics can you comprehend?
Japanese hip hop is:
A) interesting/fun  B) cool  C) has a deep message  D) has no message  E) other
Are there any Japanese hip hop performers with any depth of message?
(if yes:) Who?
What do you think of so-called “black style” (music, clothing, hairstyle)?

Do you feel a sense of pride as a Japanese person?
Please give me your opinion of current conditions in Japan, in any sense of the question.
APPENDIX C. EVENT FLYERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

members of Absolute Crew (left), Makuro MC's (right)

members of Absolute Crew (left), DJ Hiroichi (right)
Makuro MC's

ABSOLUTE
ORIENTAL DOPE HIPHOP
VOL. 11
2001. 1/27 (Sat)
OPEN 11:00 pm CLOSE 5:00 am
GUEST RINO LATINA II FROM TOKYO
LIVE DJ AMEKEN FROM TOKYO
ABSOLUTE CREW

ROCK THE HOUSE: MC BATTLE KYOTO 2000
ADMISSION 3000 yen
Makuro MC's

ABSOLUTE
ORIENTAL DOPE HIP HOP
VOL. 1-3
2001. 2/23 (Fri)
OPEN 11:00am
CLOSE 5:00am
LIVE
ABSOLUTE CREW
RYUZO
SHIGEHIYO
TIGHT MC
GORI MIC
DJ AKITO
GUEST DJ
and more...

at WHOOPPEE'S
ADMISSION 2500yen
DOOR 3000yen
Makuro MC's

ABSOLUTE
ORIENTAL DOPE HIPHOP VOL.15
2001.3/31(sat)
OPEN 11:00pm CLOSE 5:00am
LIVE CHAMPIONSHIP
WHO HAZ NO.1 SKILL?
LIVE PAINTING
UNION PAINT DISCATION
MASARUH/MUNETOSHI
LIVE
ABSOLUTE CREW
RYUZO
SHIGECHIYO
TIGHT MC
GORI MIC
MASK
and more...

at WHOOPEE'S
ADVANCE 1,000 yen, DOOR 3,000 yen
Mack Family

(Me Jimmy top center and bottom left)
Makuro MC's: "Grow"

verse 1
1 size XXL, rough and tough
2 struggling to see tomorrow but tomorrow comes
3 attack uncertainty with no guarantee, expecting and
4 swearing to kick them apart, grab onto and believe
5 ride the racing bus M-O-S, Shigechi-
6 yo and Ryuzo, "B-boy in da house,"
7 stop and run do it again, sometimes
8 healed sometimes minus sometimes plus do it
9 again, hustle, lost sheep wander aimlessly
10 values influenced by the system
11 common sense changing at a frightening speed
12 into the vortex, feet touch the ground and
13 slip washed away, tears flow unnoticed
14 search and find humor again
15 people close to us slip away
16 each other feeling the same, our network expands
17 people crossing paths, pushing the envelope
18 looking for something, survivor's technique
19 like the four seasons, acquaintances and events pass
20 a sensitive catch, drawn with a sensitive touch
21 sampler, spirit, running alone with paper and pen
22 the four seasons pass, a perfect
23 scratch, sparks fly, sticking to the crutch
24 like resin, deep underground dope sound

chorus
1 this place, this town, K-Y-O-T-O
2 bears lyrics, an original flow
3 this place, this town, K-Y-O-T-O
4 bears lyrics, an original flow
5 this place, this town, K-Y-O-T-O
6 bears lyrics, an original flow, M to the
7 A-A-G-G-U-M-A
8 red hot Maguma!

verse 2
1 this jungle, scramble, human
2 crossroads, we'll never surrender
3 tightening our base, big up my men
4 not appearances, the root connecting us is
5 on the inside, repeated experience
6 buffeted fiercely by the waves
7 sad events, regretted events, progressing
8 fuel for tomorrow, yo! (yo!)
9 cultivating the land, K-Y-O-T-O
10 daily devotion, hip hop day by day
11 watering without fail, never losing our heat
12 together with our crew, one day for sure
13 by oath, living in this city
14 unseen, without taking form
15 turning feeling into words, changed into
16 sound, soaking into my soul
17 wandering caught between reality and dreams
18 I smoke that stuff, deep breathing exercises again today
19 exhale, begin writing
20 a sound borne by hard struggle
21 the walls between people
22 can’t contain feeling
23 the dope beat borne by the street gets into us
24 with notebook and pen, always fighting

chorus

coda
1 showing our link, the middle of a moment’s instant
2 dissolved soaked into our connection, looking on
3 balanced, keeping up with 2000
4 stepping up climbing up the stairway
5 from somewhere to where? eternity
6 the pen writes the theme, the music tells the story
7 NOB, Ryuzo, hey yo!
8 words, drum, base my pace
9 soldier, red hot Maguma area
10 playing a pure and core sound

Maguma MC’s: "Grow" (Japanese)

verse 1
1 size XXL rough de tough
2 tsuraku naru mienu asu tsunagu asu
3 hoshō nashi de osou fuan, kechi-
4 rashite chikau hazu, dakishime shinji
5 norihashiru bus M-O-S, Shigechiyo
6 ni Ryuzo, "B-boy in da house,"
7 tomatte wa hashiri kurikaeshi, toki ni
8 iyasu toki ni minus toki ni plus kuri-
9 kaesu, hustle, meiyō ga samayou
10 system ka sareru umareru kachikan ga,
11 susamajii sokudo nurikaeru jōshiki ga
12 uzumaki naka wo, chi ni ashi tsuitari
13 tsukazu ni nagasare, shiranu ma ni naitari
14 waraidasu kotoba oitsuki oikoshi
15 hanashitakunai hito hanareru
16 deau saru tomoni kanji, takameau
17 hito kōsa shi, hirogaru utsuwa
18 sagasu butsu wa, ikinuku jutsuwa
19 shunkashūtō, deai dekigoto meguri
20 binkan ni catch, egaku sensai na touch
21 sampler, kokoroiki, kami to pen de dokusō
22 korogaru four seasons, sairyō no
23 scratch, hibanachiri, crutch ni kobiritsu
24 yani no yō ni, koi underground dope sound

chorus
1 kono tochi, kono machi, K-Y-O-T-O
2 umidasu kashi, original flow
3 kono tochi, kono machi, K-Y-O-T-O
4 umidasu kashi, original flow
5 kono tochi, kono machi, K-Y-O-T-O
6 umidasu kashi, original flow, M to the
7 A-A-G-G-U-M-A
8 makka na Maguma!

verse 2
1 kono jungle, scramble, ningen
2 kōsaten, kōsan wa seh'hen
3 teihen katameru, big up my men, gai-
4 ken ja naku, tsunagaru kongen wa nai-
5 men, keiken, kurikaeshi
6 mucha hageshi nami ni momare, kana-
7 shii koto mo, kuyashii kotomo, susu-
8 mu, ashita no koyashi, yo! (yo!)
9 tagayasu dojō, wa K-Y-O-T-O
10 hibi shōjin, hibi hip hop
11 mizumaki kakasazu, netsu tayasazu
12 crew to tomo ni, itsuka kanarazu
13 to chikai, ikiru kono tokai de
14 me ni mienai, katachi ni naranai
15 kanjō ga kotoba to nari, oto ni ka-
16 wari, hairikomu ore no naka ni
17 genjitsu to yume hasama de samayou
18 soitsu wo sutte, kyō mo shinkokyū shi
19 hakidasu no wa, kakidasu no wa
20 akusanikutō de umidasu oto
21 hito hito soko ni aru kabe
koeru kando
street ga unda dope beat ni yarare
nōto to pen, de maido fight

chorus

coda
1 tsunagari miseru, shunkan wa aida no chū-
kan toke shimikomi tsunagari, mezasu
2 2000 tamotsu balance, dan-
3 kai fumi nobote iku kaidan
4 nobori dokkara doko ni, eien
5 tēma shirusu pen, shimesu oto ni
6 NOB, Ryuzo, eî yo
7 kotoba, drum, base my pace
8 soldier, makka na Maguma area
9 pure de core na oto wo kanaderu

Zigro: "On da 7th Street"

shout-out
1 hi! hi! what's up muthafuckin people?
2 what! what! on da Seventh Street
3 hi! hi! love this town until the end
4 what! what! repre-represent Kyoto
5 hi! hi! keep your hands up!
6 what! what! Zigro, man of the hour
7 hi! hi! we'll bring glory to this town
8 someday, listen:

chorus 1
1 the black sun rises and sets here
2 muthafuckin' street
3 filled with people, sound, and hopes
4 the last paradise
5 the black sun rises and sets here
6 muthafuckin street
7 filled with people, sound, and hopes
8 the last paradise

free rhythm rap
1 code number 106097
2 000, area "G," a.m.
3 4:21 on Seventh Street
4 the western capital of Japan, take a good look at this town
5 the spectacle, five suns rising
awakening the country of gold, the morning sun
reflected in the asphalt, taking the day’s first breath
tacet)

verse 1
writing graffiti in the alleys
breathe deeply, the gentle air
flowers of all colors, the cars
start rolling and my men are easy to find
hopeless characters, a scrambled
gathering, people intertwined at the crossroads,
pushing my way through the crowd, sent out
into the city, no money but I’m not worried
beginning here producing the
real thing, ah, skilled at the pleasure of
irresistible sound, those of you not satisfied by
the natural high try and keep up
it’s just around that corner
the hometown where dreams are closest
from lot number zero to all over, without fail
warmth and light

shout-out

chorus 1

verse 2
when the sun is pierced by Kyoto Tower
sound moves us towards a free world
heated spirits revived, look up to the
mirror ball at the pyramid’s top
special high quality sound reaches
everyone, drawn by the neon
again here on Seventh Street
muthafucka’s can endure the
heat that could melt an iceberg
don’t kneel down there like the statue at Sanjo-Keihan
oh shit!, the sirens echo again today
around this town at midnight, yeah,
everday’s a battle, if they do you once
get revenge ten times, that’s what my momma taught me
let’s live it up in this town, always
yeah, always, in this town

chorus 2
Kyoto City, connecting east and west
heart to heart, Seventh Street
3 Kyoto City, running north to south
4 the success road, Kawaramachi
5 born and raised in this town, nothing's changed
6 dreams sketched across the sky
7 floating visions of glory, oh! the
8 capital of sound
9-16 (repeat)

shout-out

chorus 1

**Zigro: "On da 7th Street" (Japanese)**

shout-out
1 hi! hi! what's' up muthafuckin' people?
2 what! what! on da Nanajo Street
3 hi! hi! kono machi ai shite yamanu
4 what! what! repre-represent Kyoto
5 hi! hi! keep your hands up!
6 what! what! Zigro, kyo no otoko
7 hi! hi! itsuka kono machi ni nishiki
8 kazaro, listen:

chorus 1
1 the black sun rise and set here
2 muthafuckin' street
3 hito, oto, kibô ni mitasare-
4 ta last paradise
5 the black sun rise and set here
6 muthafuckin' street
7 hito oto kibô ni mitasare-
8 ta last paradise

free rhythm rap
1 code number 106097
2 000, area "G," a.m.
3 4:21 on da 7th Street
4 nishi no miyako **Japan**, aru machi yoku mi-
5 ru, kôkei, itsutsu no taiyô ga nobori, meza-
6 meru ôgon no kuni, asahi asphalt
7 terikaeshi, kokyû kaishi...
8 (tacet)
verse 1
1 rojiura ni kaitta rakugaki fumi, sui-
2 komu hu, ha yasashii kūki
3 iro toridori no hanatachi, kuruma
4 korogaseba sugu ni mitsukeru, dōshi-
5 yō mo nai character, tamuro suru
6 scramble, kōsaten karamiau hito
7 no mure kakiwake, machi ni kuri-
8 dasu, ore wa no money dakedo don't worry
9 kokorade mazu ichchō honmono wo
10 todko, ah, tamaranai oto no
11 kannō wo tannō, natural high
12 mitasarenai yatsunara tsuitekoi
13 ano kado wo magareba sugu soko, yume ga
14 ichiban chikai hometown, zero-
15 banchi kara subete, machigaenaku
16 netsu to hikari wo

shout-out

chorus 1

verse 2
1 taiyō tower ni sasaru koro
2 oto shihai naki tōitsu, yomiga-
3 eru atsui tamashii, pyramid
4 zujō miagereba mirror ball, spe-
5 cial high quality na sound de
6 mina eikyō, neon ni hikyōserare
7 mata koko Nanajo Street, sude ni
8 hyōzan tokasu hodo no ondo
9 taerarenai muthafucka', Takayama
10 Hikōkurō mitaku dogeza shina, oh
11 shit, kyō mo siren narihibu
12 kyō no machi gozen reiji, sō,
13 mainichi ga tatakai, ichi yararetara
14 jū kaese, sore ga mama no oshie, ha-
15 de ni yarō kono machi de, itsumademo
16 sō, zutto, kono machi de

chorus 2
1 Kyoto City, higashi nishi tsunagu
2 kokoro to kokoro, Nanajo Street
3 Kyoto City, kita minami hashiru
4 success road, Kawaramachi, kono ma-
5 chi ni umare sodachi nanimo kawarazu
6 yume sora ippai egaku ukabu

160
7 eikō no eizō, oh! oto no
8 miyako
9-16 (repeat 1-8)

shout out

chorus 1

Zigro: "Bang This Shit" (Japanese)

chorus
1 bang this muthafuckin shit
2 ghetto life no A to Z kore ga
3 real west side gang style yeah
4 bang, bang, bang
5-8 (repeat 1-4)

verse 1
1 riverside takibi kakomu midnight
2 kuruma hashirashi nanpa ya kenka sore ni
3 ganja imi mo naku sugoshita
4 jikan wa machi ga iro asetemo azayaka
5 arekara sūnen doki wa tachi
6 minna yukue totae doko eh itta
7 ano kao mimi ni suru no wa uwasa dake
8 ima doko de nani wo shi nani wo omou
9 itsumo mune ni confidence tomo ni
10 hashite kita long way itsu no
11 ma ni ka kitsukeba stage ni hitori
12 omaera to no yakusoku zenbu se ni
13 nokke kore de shōbu maru de
14 shōfu no yō ni onore no mi kiri saite
15 kono uta o hakobu can you
16 feel me, see me, hear me?

chorus

verse 2
1 seventy-nine kara hajimatta story
2 katari tsugareru line wo tadoru
3 yurai wa Kyoto downtown ghetto
4 fukutsu no mental kore
5 made kono na wo agete kita no wa nan no tame
6 yume oikake genjitsu to
7 kattō suru dreamer hitori tokai no
8 zassō ni magireru brother nakama ya

161
9 lover ni sasaerare ataeare
10 kono uta wo sasage ore no migite ni
11 nigraretara mic kara speaker
12 subete no chi mizukara sumizumi made sa
13 savage te ni wa chaka? sonna mon
14 shimae MMC wa microphone
15 DJ mawasu 2 turntable
16 floor yurero, yurero, yurero

chorus

free rhythm rap
1 ore ga lecture shiyō street no okite
2 jin to gi no A to Z ghetto life raku ja nai
3 yo listen this shit all my brotha all my sista all my thug M.O.B.
4 tomo ni sawagi yoakashita floor
5 MCs, DJs, dancers domo ni muke
6 bang this shit muthafucka

Supafly Entertainment (Shimmy, DJ Hakase): "Fuck The Police 2002"

verse 1
1 on the news again tonight, another police scandal
2 so insincere: the ministry representative
3 earnestly, "I'm sorry" at the press conference
4 the constitutional state: Japan's absurdity
5 how can you judge people?
6 you've got no right to make arrests
7 amphetamines, obscenity, embezzlement, police-politician networks
8 frame jobs, you do the whole works and
9 the injustice remains hidden to the end so
10 my men in lock-down can't find peace of mind
11 sneering oily pigs
12 make arrests just like kidnappers
13 made your quotas this month? so
14 you'll be drinking in the hostess clubs tonight
15 you shit-stained pigs
16 tried to put me down?
17 what's up with that?

chorus
1 shit, police piss me off
2 in enforcement campaign month
3 shit, police piss me off
4 we hang out and wander the streets
verse 2
1 there's more, much more, don't mend their ways
2 show no shame, line their pockets
3 talking about their low-down tricks: make
4 even a beggar look like a saint
5 when promoted, gifts arrive from the
6 district yakuza and industry bosses
7 half reminder, half threat, captain for
8 three years and you can build your own house
9 career cops nip the recruits' advancement in the bud
10 so the non-career cops (recruits) neglect their duties
11 faking the receipts again today
12 yesterday's Hennessey was on the department
13 skillfully flash their notebooks
14 abuse their authority for certain
15 rusty handcuffs tell the tale of
16 their dwindling arrest rates
17 loitering among the police is a malignant polyp
18 a hyena who can never be a wolf in sheepskin
19 talking about their wholehearted concerns:
20 bribe money from pachinko and entertainment trades
21 if one has to, the unknown doesn't exist
22 the blundering underling is disposed of
23 the boss long since scarcely seen
24 swings his double-iron at his summer resort

chorus

verse 3
1 out for an evening on the town
2 the would-be playboy checks out the girls
3 felt like he was on that evening and
4 takes home a girl who looks like Goto Maki of Morning Musume
5 her steady boyfriend finds out sometime later and
6 "He forced me" she lies
7 she incurred damage at his hand so
8 the miserable playboy is put under arrest
9 the officer casually
10 makes out the report
11 you knew it was a false charge?!
12 once indicted it's out of the police's hands
13 the prosecutor is an over-thirty, single
14 and neurotic woman DA
15 the end to a sordid love game but
16 the injured party's gonna give up the booty again somewhere

chorus
Supafly Entertainment (Shimmy, DJ Hakase): "Fuck The Police 2002" (Japanese)

verse 1
1 きょうもろくじにノーニュース、ワサツノフシホジ
2 ひょもまくとモノイクナダナルソリ
3 キシャカイケンジャヒタスウラ、"I'm sorry"
4 ホーチコッカニホンノフジホ
5 なんじヒトヲサバクノナカレットカ
6 アンタニパキュラレルイワレワナイネ
7 シャブ、ニワイスツ、オリョウ、ユチクウ
8 デジェイアメデ、ナンデモゴザレ
9 ネデフユクノハテフセイノトクノコレ
10 ヤムシュノアイツウモウカバレーネ
11 イブリガッタバタアザケワライ
12 テイホスルサマワマルデヒトサライ
13 コンテツモノノルウマタセキニョノハ
14 コンバンワキバクウラデシュクウハイ
15 クソマムレノバタヤロウオレウオ
16 ヘコマシニタナントモウノヨウナ

chorus
1 ムカツク、クソポリ（ポリス）
2 ゲッカンゴロニ
3 ムカツク、クソポリ
4 ブラツクウゼストリート

verse 2
1 マダマダ、ツズクツツズク、ゴリモセーゾ
2 ハズカシゲモノナク、シフクウコヤサー
3 ヤツクラノテクチノイャシハノトイヤ
4 モノイオサエシンセイニミエランバ
5 ショウシンスベバ、ショクサンアイノヤクサ
6 ヤキヨジョチターカラノセネツ
7 サイソク、ナカバキヨッカツ、ショホ
8 サンナントツトメレバイガタツ
9 カリアガツミトガルメンノオコケノメオカゲ
10 デノンカリアガワシゴトソチュウノ
11 キヨモセッセツクルニネリョウシユショ
12 キョノヘンネセイモノソサヒヨ
13 キヨモニチラツクサスレバテホ
14 ショクケンランヨモトニエンデソ
15 サビタテジョモノガタラゲンヨ
16 マスムサツオシツウキクンキョウリツ
17 ポリスニスケアクセイポリピ
18 シープスウィルフォンワラリハン
19 モッパラヤツクラノカンシンノトイヤ
20 パチンコトフユクノノサドノシバタ
21 izato narya, shiranu zonzenu, heta
22 utta shitappa soku kiriseru
tokku ni bakkureteru erai san ima
goro wa hishôchi de double-iron

chorus

verse 3
1 yoru no machi kuridasu, girl no shina
2 sadame suru yatsu wa jishô nanpashi
3 sono hi no chôshi ii kanji Mo-musu
4 no Goto Maki ni no ko omochikaeri
gojitsu sore shitte kire ba kareshi ni
6 "muriyari yararetan" nante uso tsuki
7 higai todoke made dashita mon dakara
8 jishô nanpashi aenaku onawa
9 ato wa tekitô ni tsujitsuma awashi
10 gôkan de chôsho wo tsukuru omawari
11 enzai shitta kochjianai? kiso
12 sae sureba ato wa kankatsugai
13 kensatsu gawa wa misoji sugi, dokushin
14 no henshitsu teki na onna kenji
15 harenchi na love game no ketsumatsu
16 higaisha wa mata dokka de ketsu kasu

chorus

Rabbit Punch: "Waza Art"

verse 1
1 Tezuka Osamu, Miyazaki Hayao started showing
2 our pride to the world, Japanese culture, anime
3 giving us big dreams and hopes and moving our hearts, mention Natsu
4 Yasumi and the spirit changes
5 who's number one, Pokemon or Doraemon?
6 would they lose to some foreign product?
7 even without spending so much on production costs
8 let's test it on content, from America, Disney

chorus
1 we've got a contest, Japan, got work to be done, a big one
2 -8 (repeat)
verse 2
1 stupid fools, your answer is a total failure
2 how about TV games? the top invention of the 20th century
3 the top batter is famicon from Nintendo
4 then Sega, Preste, front runner at all times
5 attack modes complete! hurry up or
6 you’ll never make it into this circle
7 what’s wrong, Harvard? Your credentials are a bluff?
8 robots like that can’t compete, America!

chorus

verse 3
1 Kurosawa Akira's artistic sense
2 ridiculous, Schwarzenegger’s imitation movies
3 The Seven Samurai gets a standing ovation
4 Terminator II total masturbation, make me sick
5 rock and rap trash
6 stop that terrible music right now
7 get rid of the electric guitar, the gold chains
8 bearing shakuhachi in one hand and sword in the other

chorus

Rabbit Punch: "Waza Ari" (Japanese)

verse 1
1 Tezuka Osamu, Miyazaki Hayao wo hajime, se-
2 kai ni hokoru, Nihon no bunka, anime
3 őkii na yume to kibō to kandō ataeru, Natsu
4 Yasumi toieba do-konjō gaeru
5 number one da Pokemon ka Doraemon ga
6 gaikoku mon nanka ni makeru mon ka? sei-
7 sakuhiki sonna taikin wo kakezu ni
8 naiyō de shōbu shitemiro, from America, Disney

chorus
1 shōbu ari, Nippon, waza ari, ippon
2 shōbu ari, Nippon, waza ari, ippon
3 shōbu ari, Nippon, waza ari, ippon
4 shōbu ari, Nippon, waza ari, ippon-pon-pon
5-8 (repeat)

verse 2
1 aho no yatsume, omae no kotae migoto hazure
2 terebi game kosō nijū seiki saidai no hatsumei
3 top batter wa famicon from Nintendo
4 tsuzuita Sega, Preste, tsune ni sentō de
5 sentō mode kanryō! hayaku sen (seh'hen) to
6 kono wa no naka ni haite korenzo
7 dōshita, Harvard? katagaki wa hattari ka?
8 sonna robot ja tachiuchi dekinzo (dekihenzo), America

chorus

verse 3
1 Kurosawa Akira no geijutsusei ga
2 azawarau, Schwarzenegger no maneri eiga
3 Shichinin no Samurai de standing ovation
4 Terminator II marude masturbation, mune ga ezuku
5 rock ya rap suru kuzu
6 sonna saitei na ongaku yamenasai, sugu
7 electric guitar, gold chain nado sute
8 shakuhachi to katana wo ryōte ni mote

chorus
176
VERSE 2:

MADA MADA DON ZU KU TSURO ZU KU KO RI MO SE ZU
RA ZU KA SHILAE PO NAYE SHI BYO KO NO YA SY

200
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